Surge in Iranian cyberattacks target U.S. government

BY SECURITY DISPATCH

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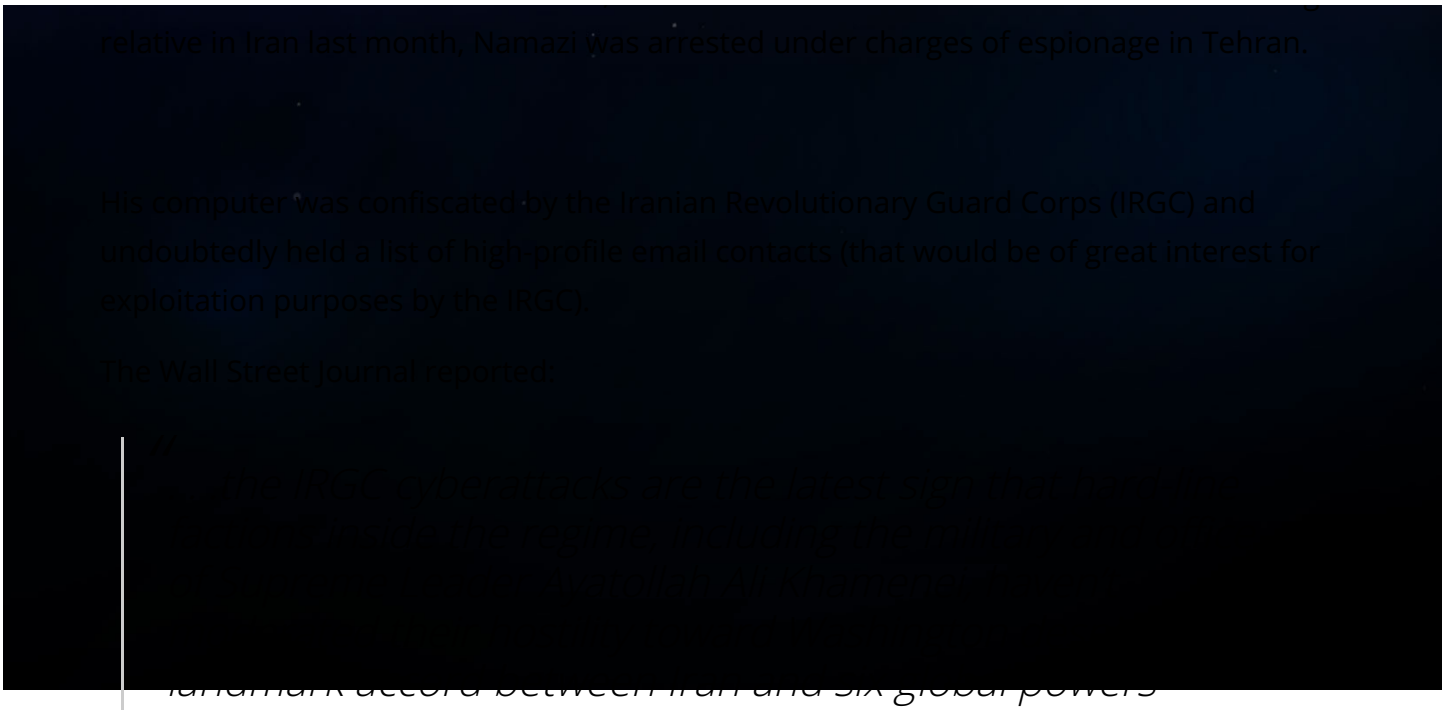
The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reported on Wednesday that in recent weeks there has been a surge of cyberattacks against email and social media accounts of U.S. senior officials, citing unnamed government officials working on Iran policy, as primary targets. Among those hacked were the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and the State Department's Office of Iranian Affairs— other targets included academics and journalists who are associated with Iranian issues.

There is speculation that this cyberattack could be connected to Iranian-American dual citizen businessman Siamak Namazi, who is an advocate of normalization. While visiting



relative in Iran last month, Namazi was arrested under charges of espionage in Tehran.

His computer was confiscated by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and undoubtedly held a list of high-profile email contacts (that would be of great interest for exploitation purposes by the IRGC).

The Wall Street Journal reported:

> *"…the IRGC cyberattacks are the latest sign that hard-liners inside the regime, including the military and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, are trying to undermine the landmark accord between Iran and six global powers including the U.S. Mr. Khamenei has repeatedly claimed in recent weeks that the U.S. was seeking to use the agreement, which constrains Iran's nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of international sanctions, to undermine and weaken the country's Islamist government.*

In a paper that Namazi presented: Iranian-Americans: The Bridge Between Two Nations (http://iraniansforum.com/Document/iranamericans.pdf)—he dedicated his efforts to "discussing the role of Iranian-Americans as a formidable force in mending the differences and misconceptions between Iran and the United States."

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