

Impossible Differential Attacks on 13-Round CLEFIA-128

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Abstract CLEFIA, a new 128-bit block cipher proposed by Sony Corporation, is increasingly attracting cryptanalysts' attention. In this paper, we present two new impossible differential attacks on 13 rounds of CLEFIA-128. The proposed attacks utilize a variety of previously known techniques, in particular the hash table technique and redundancy in the key schedule of this block cipher. The first attack does not consider the whitening layers of CLEFIA, requires $2^{109.5}$ chosen plaintexts, and has a running time equivalent to about $2^{112.9}$ encryptions. The second attack preserves the whitening layers, requires $2^{117.8}$ chosen plaintexts, and has a total time complexity equivalent to about $2^{121.2}$ encryptions.

Keywords block cipher, cryptanalysis, impossible differential, CLEFIA

1 Introduction

Diffusion Switching Mechanism (DSM) is a method of designing a Feistel block cipher that can guarantee a large minimum number of active S -boxes^[1]. The first block cipher designed based on DSM, CLEFIA^[2–3], is a 128-bit block cipher with variable key lengths of n bits, which is denoted as CLEFIA- n , $n = 128, 192, 256$. The number of rounds for these three variants is 18, 22 and 26, respectively. The designers of CLEFIA claimed that it is designed to achieve sufficient security against all known cryptanalysis techniques. Moreover, [4] proves that 5 rounds of its 4-branch generalized Feistel structure have provable security against differential cryptanalysis. As a new 128-bit block cipher, CLEFIA has received a significant amount of cryptanalytic attention. Among the cryptanalysis methods exploited to analyze this block cipher, the best results are attributed to impossible differential cryptanalysis.

Impossible differential cryptanalysis, an extension of the differential cryptanalysis^[5], was first proposed by Biham to analyze the Skipjack block cipher^[6]. This method uses differentials that hold with probability zero (impossible differentials) to eliminate the wrong keys and leave the right key. In [2, 7], the designers of CLEFIA found several 9-round impossible differentials for this cipher and mounted a 10-round attack with a data complexity of $2^{101.7}$ and a time complexity of about 2^{102} encryptions. In FSE 2008, [8] introduced new 9-round impossible differentials for CLEFIA, and presented a 12-round attack on CLEFIA-128. This

attack requires $2^{118.9}$ chosen plaintexts and performs 2^{119} encryptions. Also in [9–11], impossible differential attacks have been applied to 12 rounds of CLEFIA-128. Recently, using the same impossible differential as that of [8], [12] claimed an attack on 14 rounds of CLEFIA-128 without whitening layers. But, CLEFIA design team pointed out a flaw in their attack and showed that its time complexity is greater than 2^{202} ^[13]. In fact their attack requires 2^{m+44} plaintexts, and in the attack procedure, after the data filtering, for each of the 2^{m+29} plaintext pairs, about $2^{21} \times 2^{10} \times 2^{-16} = 2^{15}$ values out of the 2^{128} possible values of the target subkeys are removed. To ensure that the number of remaining wrong subkeys is less than 1, we must have $(2^{128} - 1) \times (1 - \frac{2^{15}}{2^{128}})^{2^{m+29}} < 1$, thus m must be greater than 90.4. As a result, data complexity of the attack becomes greater than $2^{m+44} = 2^{134.4}$, so the attack scenario of [12] is not successful. However, their work is the first attack that considers the weakness in the key schedule of CLEFIA.

In this paper, we reevaluate the security of CLEFIA-128 against impossible differential cryptanalysis. Exploiting a variety of techniques including plaintext structures, key schedule considerations, early abort and hash table techniques, we present the first successful impossible differential attacks on 13-round CLEFIA-128. We summarize our results along with previously known results on CLEFIA-128 in Table 1. In this table, time complexity is measured in encryption units, and data complexity is the number of chosen plaintexts.

Table 1. Summary of the Impossible Differential Attacks on CLEFIA-128

No. Rounds	Whitening Data	Time Complexity	Memory Complexity (blocks)	Source
10	Yes	$2^{101.7}$	2^{102}	2^{32} [2, 7]
12	Yes	$2^{119.1}$	$2^{119.1}$	2^{96} [9]
12	Yes	$2^{118.9}$	2^{119}	2^{73} [8]
12	Yes	$2^{110.93}$	2^{111}	— [10]
12	Yes	2^{111}	2^{111}	— [11]
13	No	$2^{109.5}$	$2^{112.9}$	$2^{94.5}$ This work
13	Yes	$2^{117.8}$	$2^{121.2}$	$2^{86.8}$ This work

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a brief description of CLEFIA. 9-round impossible differentials of CLEFIA are reminisced in Section 3. In Section 4, we propose our new impossible differential attacks on 13-round CLEFIA-128 and investigate their complexities. Finally, we conclude the paper in Section 5.

2 Description of CLEFIA

2.1 Data Processing of CLEFIA

In this paper the concatenation of two bit strings a and b is demonstrated by $a|b$. The 128-bit ciphertext $C = C_0|C_1|C_2|C_3$ corresponding to a 128-bit plaintext $P = P_0|P_1|P_2|P_3$ is computed according to the process shown in Fig.1. The encryption process uses a 4-branch generalized Feistel structure with two parallel F functions F_0 and F_1 per round. Also, there are key whitening parts in the beginning and at the end of the cipher. WK_0, WK_1, WK_2 and WK_3 are the 32-bit whitening keys and $RK_i, 0 \leq i \leq 2R - 1$ are the 32-bit round subkeys generated by the key schedule for an R -round encryption. In Fig.1, S_0 and S_1

are 8-bit invertible S -boxes, and M_0 and M_1 are two self-inverse 4×4 matrices with optimal branch number 5^[14]. The multiplications between these matrices and vectors are performed in $GF(2^8)$ defined by the primitive polynomial $x^8 + x^4 + x^3 + x^2 + 1$. Throughout the paper, we use C^r to denote the output of r -th round; $C_i^r, i = 0, 1, 2, 3$ denotes the i -th 32-bit word of C^r . The function $F_i, i = 0, 1$ in round r is denoted by F_i^r . The 32-bit output of S -box layer in F_i^r is denoted by $S_i^r, i = 0, 1$. The j -th byte of the words S_i^r and C_i^r are denoted by $S_{i,j}^r$ and $C_{i,j}^r$, respectively.

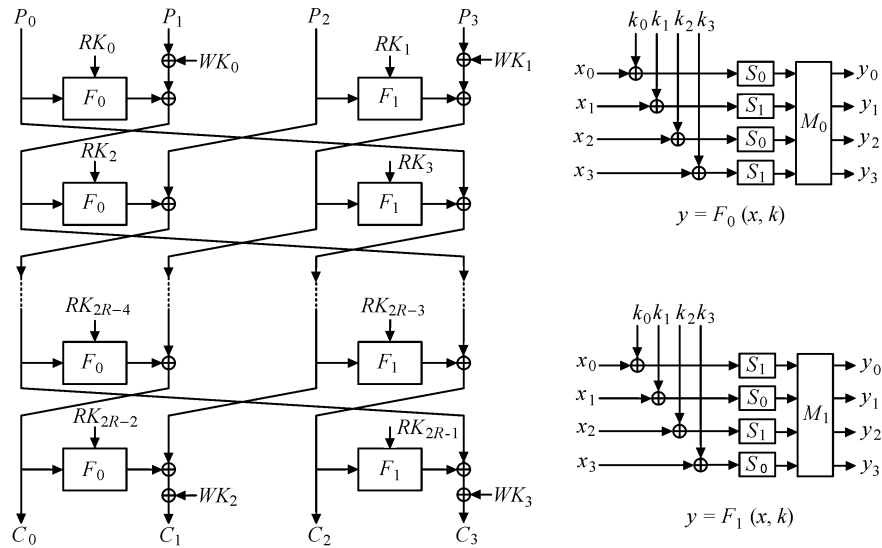
2.2 Key Scheduling of CLEFIA-128

Let $X = X_{0 \sim 127}$ be a 128-bit string indexed from 0 to 127. The DoubleSwap function $DS : \{0, 1\}^{128} \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^{128}$ is defined as below:

$$DS(X) = X_{7 \sim 63} | X_{121 \sim 127} | X_{0 \sim 6} | X_{64 \sim 120}$$

where $X_{a \sim b}$ denotes a bit string cut from the a -th bit to the b -th bit of X . The key scheduling part of CLEFIA-128 first applies a 12-round 4-branch Generalized Feistel Network ($GFN_{4,12}$) on the 128-bit user key K to generate a 128-bit intermediate key L . Then it uses K, L and the DoubleSwap function to generate $RK_i, i = 0, \dots, 35$ and $WK_j, j = 0, \dots, 3$ as below:

$$\begin{aligned}
WK_0 | WK_1 | WK_2 | WK_3 &\leftarrow K, \\
RK_0 | RK_1 | RK_2 | RK_3 &\leftarrow L \oplus c_1, \\
RK_4 | RK_5 | RK_6 | RK_7 &\leftarrow DS(L) \oplus K \oplus c_2, \\
RK_8 | RK_9 | RK_{10} | RK_{11} &\leftarrow DS^2(L) \oplus c_3, \\
RK_{12} | RK_{13} | RK_{14} | RK_{15} &\leftarrow DS^3(L) \oplus K \oplus c_4, \\
RK_{16} | RK_{17} | RK_{18} | RK_{19} &\leftarrow DS^4(L) \oplus c_5,
\end{aligned}$$

Fig.1. R -round encryption function of CLEFIA and round functions F_0 and F_1 .

$$\begin{aligned}
RK_{20}|RK_{21}|RK_{22}|RK_{23} &\leftarrow DS^5(L) \oplus K \oplus c_6, \\
RK_{24}|RK_{25}|RK_{26}|RK_{27} &\leftarrow DS^6(L) \oplus c_7, \\
RK_{28}|RK_{29}|RK_{30}|RK_{31} &\leftarrow DS^7(L) \oplus K \oplus c_8, \\
RK_{32}|RK_{33}|RK_{34}|RK_{35} &\leftarrow DS^8(L) \oplus c_9,
\end{aligned}$$

where c_i , $i = 1, 2, \dots, 9$ are 128-bit constants. In our attacks, we need to know the bits of the intermediate key value $L = k_{0 \sim 127}$ that determine RK_{24} and RK_{25} . After computing the function $DS^6(L)$, it is easy to see that these bits are as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
RK_{24} &: k_{42 \sim 63} | k_{121 \sim 127} | k_{114 \sim 116}, \\
RK_{25} &: k_{117 \sim 120} | k_{107 \sim 113} | k_{100 \sim 106} | k_{93 \sim 99} | k_{86 \sim 92}.
\end{aligned}$$

3 Impossible Differentials of CLEFIA

[7] presents two 9-round impossible differentials of CLEFIA as below:

$$\begin{aligned}
(0|a|0|0) &\nrightarrow_{9 \text{ rounds}} (0|a|0|0), \\
(0|0|0|a) &\nrightarrow_{9 \text{ rounds}} (0|0|0|a),
\end{aligned}$$

where a is any non-zero 32-bit value. These impossible differentials resulted in attacks on 10-round CLEFIA-128/192/256 and 11-round CLEFIA-192/256 and 12-round CLEFIA-256. In FSE 2008, [8] introduces two new 9-round impossible differentials of CLEFIA with the following forms:

$$\begin{aligned}
(0|a_{in}|0|0) &\nrightarrow_{9 \text{ rounds}} (0|a_{out}|0|0), \\
(0|0|0|a_{in}) &\nrightarrow_{9 \text{ rounds}} (0|0|0|a_{out}).
\end{aligned}$$

Here, a_{in} and a_{out} are 4-byte values with only one non-zero byte in each. Furthermore, if the non-zero byte in a_{in} is its j -th byte, then the non-zero byte of a_{out} must not be located in the same byte position j . For examples $a_{in} = 0|0|0|s$ and $a_{out} = 0|t|0|0$ satisfy the impossible differential condition, where s and t are non-zero bytes. [10-11] extended these impossible differentials such that the input difference (or the output difference but not both of them) can contain 2 non-zero bytes. One may aggregate impossible differentials of [8, 10-11] as below.

For 9-round CLEFIA excluding the last rotation, given a pair (C^i, C'^i) with the difference $\Delta C^i = 0|a_{in}|0|0$ (or $0|0|0|a_{in}$), the output difference cannot be

Table 2. Values of a_{in} and a_{out}

$a_{out} (a_{in})$	$a_{in} (a_{out})$
$s_0 0 0 0$	$* t_1 0 0, * 0 t_2 0, * 0 0 t_3$
$0 s_1 0 0$	$t_0 * 0 0, 0 * t_2 0, 0 * 0 t_3$
$0 0 s_2 0$	$t_0 0 * 0, 0 t_1 * 0, 0 0 * t_3$
$0 0 0 s_3$	$t_0 0 0 *, 0 t_1 0 *, 0 0 t_2 *$

$\Delta C^{i+9} = 0|a_{out}|0|0$ (or $0|0|0|a_{out}$) where a_{in} and a_{out} are the 4-byte words denoted in Table 2. In this table, t_i and s_j are non-zero byte values, and “*” is any arbitrary byte value.

4 Impossible Differential Attack on 13-Round CLEFIA-128

In this section, we present two new impossible differential attacks on 13-round CLEFIA-128. The first attack does not include the whitenings in CLEFIA structure while the second attack does.

4.1 The First Attack Scenario

The first attack illustrated in Fig.2 utilizes the 9-round impossible differential

$$\begin{aligned}
(0|0|0|0|a|0|0|b|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0) &\nrightarrow_{9 \text{ rounds}} \\
(x|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0)
\end{aligned}$$

in rounds 3~11 (including the word rotation of round 11). The attack procedure is as follows.

1) Take 2^n structures of plaintexts such that each structure contains plaintexts $P = P_0|P_1|P_2|P_3$ of the form:

$$\begin{aligned}
P_0 &= C_0^0 = \mathbf{M}_1(\beta_1|a_1|a_2|\beta_2), \\
P_1 &= C_1^0 = (\beta_3|\beta_4|\beta_5|\beta_6), \\
P_2 &= C_2^0 = (a_3|a_4|a_5|a_6), \\
P_3 &= C_3^0 = (\beta_7|a_7|a_8|\beta_8),
\end{aligned}$$

where a_i , $i = 1, \dots, 8$ are fixed constants, and each β_i , $i = 1, \dots, 8$ takes all the 8-bit values. It is obvious that each structure contains about 2^{64} plaintexts which can provide about 2^{127} plaintext pairs with the difference

$$\Delta P = \mathbf{M}_1(c|0|0|d)|e_0|e_1|e_2|e_3|0|0|0|0|a|0|0|b,$$

where b, d are non-zero, a, c are both zero or both non-zero, and at least one of the 4 bytes e_0, e_1, e_2, e_3 is non-zero byte value. Aggregately, we can collect about 2^{n+127} plaintext pairs.

2) Obtain the ciphertexts of each structure and keep only the pairs that satisfy the difference

$$\Delta C = \mathbf{M}_0(y|0|0|0)|z_0|z_1|z_2|z_3|0|0|0|0|x|0|0|0,$$

where x, y , and at least one of the 4 bytes z_0, z_1, z_2, z_3 are non-zero values. The probability of this condition is about 2^{-80} . Thus the expected number of remaining pairs (P, P') and the corresponding ciphertext pairs (C, C') is $2^{n+127} \times 2^{-80} = 2^{n+47}$.

3) For each plaintext pair (P, P') , we immediately obtain the 32-bit difference $\Delta S_0^1 = \mathbf{M}_0^{-1}(\Delta C_1^0) = \mathbf{M}_0$

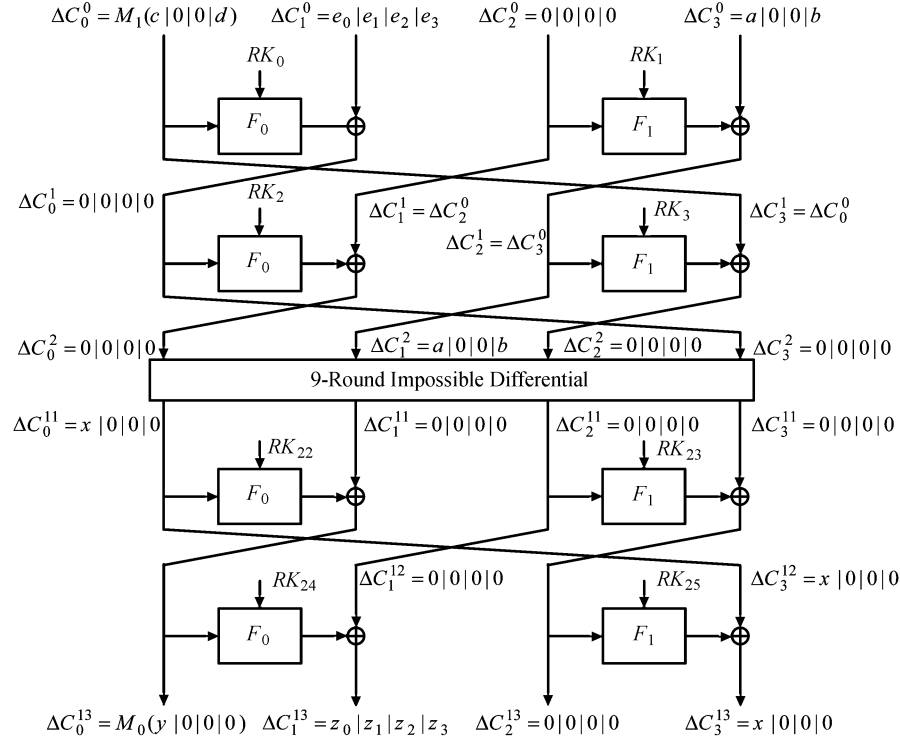


Fig.2. Impossible differential attack on 13-round CLEFIA-128 without whitening.

(ΔC_1^0) (recall that $M_0^{-1} = M_0$). So, for $l = 0, 1, 2, 3$ guess the 8-bit value of $RK_{0,l}$ and partially encrypt every remaining plaintext pair to get the byte difference $\Delta S_{0,l}^1$. Keep only the pairs whose $\Delta S_{0,l}^1$ is equal to the l -th byte of $M_0(\Delta C_1^0)$. The probability of this event for each l is about 2^{-8} , thus the expected number of remaining pairs is $2^{n+47} \times 2^{-8 \times 4} = 2^{n+15}$. Note that the operative 32 bits of the intermediate key value $L = k_{0 \sim 127}$ in RK_0 include $k_{0 \sim 31}$.

4) For each ciphertext pair (C, C') corresponding to a remaining plaintext pair (P, P') , we immediately obtain the 32-bit difference $\Delta S_0^{13} = M_0(\Delta C_1^{13})$. So for $l = 0, 1, 2, 3$ guess the 8-bit value of $RK_{24,l}$ and partially decrypt every remaining ciphertext pair to get the byte difference $\Delta S_{0,l}^{13}$. Keep only the pairs whose $\Delta S_{0,l}^{13}$ is equal to the l -th byte of $M_0(\Delta C_1^{13})$. The probability of this event for each l is about 2^{-8} , thus the expected number of remaining pairs is $2^{n+15} \times 2^{-8 \times 4} = 2^{n-17}$. Note that the operative 32 bits of L in RK_{24} include $k_{42 \sim 63} | k_{121 \sim 127} | k_{114 \sim 116}$.

5) In this step, from the 32 bits of L that determine RK_1 , 22 bits including $k_{42 \sim 63}$ are already known. Based on this fact, perform the following substeps.

(a) Guess the unknown 10 bits $k_{32 \sim 41}$ to complete the 32-bit value of RK_1 , for each guess partially encrypt all the remaining plaintext pairs through F_1^1 to get the $(C_2^1, C_2'^1)$.

(b) In this stage, from the 8 bits of L that determine

$RK_{3,3}$, 7 bits including $k_{121 \sim 127}$ are already known. Guess the only unknown bit k_{120} and partially encrypt the last bytes of all the remaining pairs $(C_2^1, C_2'^1)$ through the last S -box of F_1^2 . Keep the pairs whose $\Delta S_{1,3}^2$ is equal to d (see Fig.2). The probability of this event is 2^{-8} , thus the expected number of the remaining pairs is $2^{n-17} \times 2^{-8} = 2^{n-25}$.

(c) Guess the 8 bits $k_{96 \sim 103}$ of L that determine $RK_{3,0}$ and for each guess partially encrypt the first byte of all the remaining pairs $(C_2^1, C_2'^1)$ through the first S -box of F_1^2 . Keep the pairs whose $\Delta S_{1,0}^2$ is equal to c (see Fig.2). The probability of this event is 2^{-8} , thus the expected number of the remaining pairs is $2^{n-25} \times 2^{-8} = 2^{n-33}$.

6) In this step, from the 32 bits of L that determine RK_{25} , 9 bits including $k_{120} | k_{96 \sim 103}$ are already known. Guess the other 23 bits and for each guess partially decrypt all the remaining ciphertext pairs through F_1^{13} to get $(C_{0,0}^{11}, C_{0,0}'^{11})$. Now we know the output difference of the S -boxes in F_0^{12} , which is equal to $y|0|0|0$, and also the input pair before the key addition in F_0^{12} (see Fig.2). Thus, by accessing the difference distribution table of the S -box S_0 , we obtain on average one 8-bit value for $RK_{22,0}$. The obtained $RK_{22,0}$ along with the 106-bit values guessed in previous steps form a wrong 114-bit subkey. The probability that a wrong 114-bit target subkey $RK_0 | RK_1 | RK_{3,0} | RK_{3,3} | RK_{24} | RK_{25} | RK_{22,0}$ survives

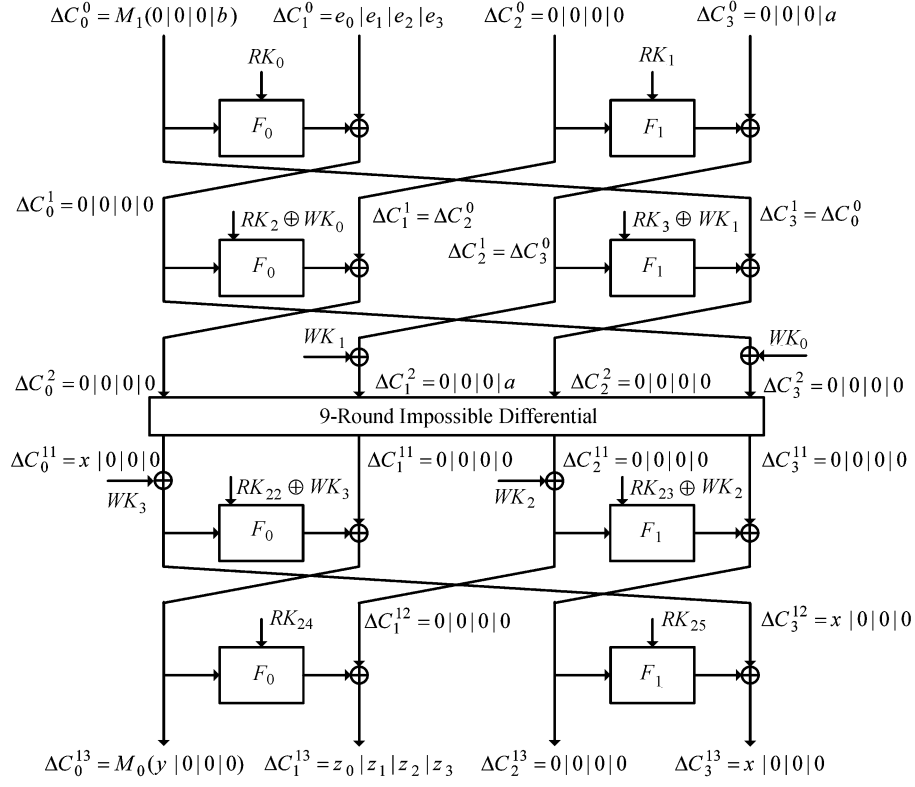


Fig.3. 13-round attack including the whitening layers.

WK_2 , and WK_3 are performed. It is easy to see that this is an equivalent structure.

In our analysis we observed that the attack on the complete 13 rounds of CLEFIA-128 works better with the following 9-round impossible differential:

$$(0|0|0|0|0|0|0|a|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0) \xrightarrow{9 \text{ rounds}} (x|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|0).$$

The attack procedure is similar to that in Subsection 4.2 (only Step 5(c) is removed) and it is demonstrated in Fig.3 and Table 4. In this case each structure contains about 2^{48} plaintexts that can generate a difference of the form

$$\Delta P = M_1(0|0|0|b)|e_0|e_1|e_2|e_3|0|0|0|0|0|0|0|a.$$

Thus each structure contains about 2^{95} plaintext pairs with the above difference. In Step 2 we have an 80-bit filtration, so the number of proper pairs that satisfy the required ciphertext difference is equal to $2^{n+95} \times 2^{-80} = 2^{n+15}$. The target subkeys include $RK_0|RK_1|RK_{3,3} \oplus WK_{1,3}|RK_{24}|RK_{25}|RK_{22,0} \oplus WK_{3,0}$. Based on the key schedule of CLEFIA-128, $RK_0|RK_1|RK_{24}|RK_{25}$ are determined by only 106 bits of the intermediate key value L , including $k_{0 \sim 63}|k_{86 \sim 127}$. By including the two bytes $RK_{3,3} \oplus WK_{1,3}$ and $RK_{22,0} \oplus WK_{3,0}$, the target key space contains 122 bits. In Step 6, the probability that a wrong 122-bit target subkey survives after analyzing one of the 2^{n-57} remaining pairs is about $1 - 2^{-8}$. Therefore we expect about $N = (2^{122} - 1)(1 - 2^{-8})^{2^{n-57}}$ wrong

Table 4. Impossible Differential Attack on Complete 13-Round CLEFIA-128 and Its Complexity

Step	Target Subkeys	No. Remaining Plaintext Pairs	Time Complexity
2	None	$2^{n+15} = 2^{84.8}$	$2^{n+48} = 2^{117.8}$ E
3	RK_0	$2^{n-17} = 2^{52.8}$	$DS_{i=0}^3 2 \times 2^{n+15-8i} \times 2^{8(i+1)} = 2^{n+26} \frac{1}{4}$ F
4	RK_{24}	$2^{n-49} = 2^{20.8}$	$DS_{i=0}^3 2 \times 2^{n-17-8i} \times 2^{32+8(i+1)} = 2^{n+26} \frac{1}{4}$ F
5(a)	RK_1	$2^{n-49} = 2^{20.8}$	$2^{10} \times 2^{64} \times 2 \times 2^{n-49} = 2^{n+26}$ F
5(b)	$RK_{3,3} \oplus WK_{1,3}$	$2^{n-57} = 2^{12.8}$	$2^8 \times 2^{74} \times 2 \times 2^{n-49} = 2^{n+34} \frac{1}{4}$ F
6	$RK_{25}, RK_{22,0} \oplus WK_{3,0}$	$2^{n-57} = 2^{12.8}$	$2^{32} \times 2^{82} \times 2^{n-57} = 2^{n+57} \frac{1}{4}$ F $2^{32} \times 2^{82} \times 2^{n-57} = 2^{n+57}$ MA
7	$k_{64 \sim 85}$	for $N = 2^{80}$	$N \times 2^{22} \times \frac{13}{12} = 2^{102.1}$ E

candidates for the 122-bit target subkey remain. If we accept $N = 2^{80}$, then n will be 69.8. Hence the attack requires $2^{n+48} = 2^{117.8}$ plaintexts.

According to what mentioned in Subsection 4.2, if we consider each 13-round encryption equivalent to 104 memory accesses, then the dominant parts of the time complexity are those of Steps 2 and 6. Thus for $n = 69.8$ the total complexity of the attack is $2^{117.8} + \frac{2^{124.8}}{2^6} + \frac{2^{126.8}}{2^{104}} \approx 2^{121.2}$ encryptions. Also we need $4 \times 2^{n+15} = 2^{86.8}$ blocks of memory to store the pairs obtained from Step 2, and about $N = 2^{80}$ blocks of memory to store the subkey candidates obtained from Step 6.

5 Conclusion

In this paper, first, using the properties of the key schedule of CLEFIA-128, we proposed an impossible differential attack on 13 rounds of this new block cipher without the whitening layers. The attack requires $2^{109.5}$ plaintexts, and has a time complexity equivalent to $2^{112.9}$ 13-round encryptions. Then, we presented another attack on 13 rounds of CLEFIA-128, but this time including the whitening layers. This attack requires about $2^{117.8}$ chosen plaintexts, and has a time complexity equivalent to about $2^{121.2}$ encryptions. These attacks are supposed to be the first successful attacks on 13 rounds of CLEFIA-128.

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