

Subspace Trail Cryptanalysis and its Applications to AES

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Introduction

In the case of AES, several alternative representations (algebraic representation [MR02], dual ciphers of AES [BB02], super-box [DR06], twisted representation [Gil14], ...) have been proposed to highlight some aspects of its algebraic structure, differential nature, ...

We introduce Subspace Trail Cryptanalysis to formally and easily describe distinguishers and key-recovery attacks of AES-like cipher.

We believe that the simplicity of the new representation can play a significant heuristic role in the investigation of structural attacks on AES-like cipher.

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Part I

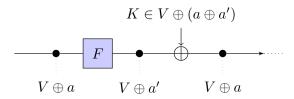
Subspace Trail Cryptanalysis

Invariant Subspace Cryptanalysis

If an invariant subspace V exists such that

$$F_k(V \oplus a) = V \oplus a$$
,

it is possible to mount distinguishers and key-recovery attacks (e.g. [LAA+11], [LMR+15], ...).



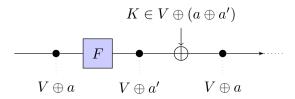
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Subspace Trail

Definition

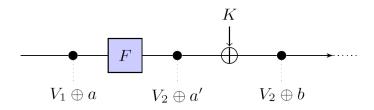
Let $(V_0, V_1, ..., V_r)$ denote a set of r+1 subspaces with $\dim(V_i) \leq \dim(V_{i+1})$. If for each i=0,...,r-1 and for each $a_i \in V_i^{\perp}$, there exists (unique) $a_{i+1} \in V_{i+1}^{\perp}$ such that

$$F(V_i \oplus a_i) \subseteq V_{i+1} \oplus a_{i+1}$$

then $(V_0, V_1, ..., V_r)$ is a subspace trail of length r for the function F.

Subspace Trail - Example

Example of Subspace Trail of length 1:



 $\forall a \in V_1^{\perp}$ there exists $b \in V_2^{\perp}$ s.t.

$$F_k(V_1 \oplus a) \subseteq V_2 \oplus b$$
.

AES

High-level description of AES:

- block cipher based on a design principle known as substitution-permutation network;
- block size of 128 bits = 16 bytes, organized in a 4 × 4 matrix;
- key size of 128/192/256 bits;
- 10/12/14 rounds:

$$R^{i}(x) = k^{i} \oplus MC \circ SR \circ S\text{-Box}(x).$$

Subspaces for AES

We define the following subspaces:

- column space C_I ;
- diagonal space D_I;
- inverse-diagonal space \mathcal{ID}_I ;
- mixed space M_I.

The Column Space

Definition

Column spaces C_i for $i \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$ are defined as

$$C_i = \langle e_{0,i}, e_{1,i}, e_{2,i}, e_{3,i} \rangle.$$

E.g. C_0 corresponds to the symbolic matrix

$$C_0 = \left\{ \begin{bmatrix} x_1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ x_2 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ x_3 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ x_4 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \middle| \forall x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4 \in \mathbb{F}_{2^8} \right\} \equiv \begin{bmatrix} x_1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ x_2 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ x_3 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ x_4 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

The Diagonal Space

Definition

Diagonal spaces \mathcal{D}_i for $i \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$ are defined as

$$\mathcal{D}_i = SR^{-1}(\mathcal{C}_i) = \langle e_{0,i}, e_{1,(i+1)}, e_{2,(i+2)}, e_{3,(i+3)} \rangle.$$

E.g. \mathcal{D}_0 corresponds to symbolic matrix

$$\mathcal{D}_0 \equiv \begin{bmatrix} x_1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & x_2 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & x_3 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & x_4 \end{bmatrix}$$

for all $x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4 \in \mathbb{F}_{2^8}$.

The Inverse-Diagonal Space

Definition

Inverse-diagonal spaces \mathcal{ID}_i for $i \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$ are defined as

$$\mathcal{ID}_i = SR(\mathcal{C}_i) = \langle \textbf{\textit{e}}_{0,i}, \textbf{\textit{e}}_{1,(i-1)}, \textbf{\textit{e}}_{2,(i-2)}, \textbf{\textit{e}}_{3,(i-3)} \rangle.$$

E.g. \mathcal{ID}_0 corresponds to symbolic matrix

$$\mathcal{ID}_0 \equiv \begin{bmatrix} x_1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & x_2 \\ 0 & 0 & x_3 & 0 \\ 0 & x_4 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

for all $x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4 \in \mathbb{F}_{2^8}$.

The Mixed Space

Definition

The *i-th mixed spaces* \mathcal{M}_i for $i \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$ are defined as

$$\mathcal{M}_i = MC(\mathcal{ID}_i).$$

E.g. \mathcal{M}_0 corresponds to symbolic matrix

$$\mathcal{M}_0 \equiv \begin{bmatrix} 0x02 \cdot x_1 & x_4 & x_3 & 0x03 \cdot x_2 \\ x_1 & x_4 & 0x03 \cdot x_3 & 0x02 \cdot x_2 \\ x_1 & 0x03 \cdot x_4 & 0x02 \cdot x_3 & x_2 \\ 0x03 \cdot x_1 & 0x02 \cdot x_4 & x_3 & x_2 \end{bmatrix}$$

for all $x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4 \in \mathbb{F}_{2^8}$.

Subspaces Trail for AES

Definition

Let $I \subseteq \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$. The subspaces C_I , D_I , $\mathcal{I}D_I$ and \mathcal{M}_I are defined as:

$$\mathcal{C}_I = \bigoplus_{i \in I} \mathcal{C}_i, \quad \mathcal{D}_I = \bigoplus_{i \in I} \mathcal{D}_i, \quad \mathcal{I}\mathcal{D}_I = \bigoplus_{i \in I} \mathcal{I}\mathcal{D}_i, \quad \mathcal{M}_I = \bigoplus_{i \in I} \mathcal{M}_i.$$

 $\{\mathcal{D}_I, \mathcal{C}_I, \mathcal{M}_I\}$ is a subspace trail of AES of length 2.

Subspace Trail for AES (1/2)

For each $a \in \mathcal{D}_{I}^{\perp}$, there exists unique $b \in \mathcal{C}_{I}^{\perp}$ s.t.

$$R(\mathcal{D}_I \oplus a) = \mathcal{C}_I \oplus b.$$

E.g.:

$$\mathcal{D}_0 \oplus a \xrightarrow{S\text{-Box}(\cdot)} \mathcal{D}_0 \oplus b \xrightarrow{\mathsf{SR}(\cdot)} \mathcal{C}_0 \oplus c \xrightarrow{\mathsf{MC}(\cdot)} \mathcal{C}_0 \oplus d \xrightarrow{\mathsf{ARK}(\cdot)} \mathcal{C}_0 \oplus e$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} A & C & C & C \\ C & A & C & C \\ C & C & A & C \\ C & C & C & A \end{bmatrix} \xrightarrow{\text{S-Box}(\cdot)} \begin{bmatrix} A & C & C & C \\ C & A & C & C \\ C & C & C & A \end{bmatrix} \xrightarrow{SR(\cdot)} \begin{bmatrix} A & C & C & C \\ A & C & C & C \\ A & C & C & C \\ A & C & C & C \end{bmatrix} \xrightarrow{MC(\cdot)} \begin{bmatrix} A & C & C & C \\ A & C & C & C \\ A & C & C & C \\ A & C & C & C \end{bmatrix}$$

Subspace Trail for AES (2/2)

For each $a \in \mathcal{C}_I^{\perp}$, there exists unique $b \in \mathcal{M}_I^{\perp}$ s.t.

$$R(C_I \oplus a) = \mathcal{M}_I \oplus b.$$

E.g.:

$$\mathcal{C}_0 \oplus a \xrightarrow{S\text{-Box}(\cdot)} \mathcal{C}_0 \oplus b \xrightarrow{SR(\cdot)} \mathcal{I}\mathcal{D}_0 \oplus c \xrightarrow{MC(\cdot)} \mathcal{M}_0 \oplus d \xrightarrow{ARK(\cdot)} \mathcal{M}_0 \oplus e$$

Part II

Example of Use Case: Applications on AES

Secret-Key Distinguisher up to 4 Rounds

Re-describe - in a formal and easy way - Secret-Key Distinguisher up to 4 rounds that exploit a property which is independent of the secret key:

- Truncated Differential
- Impossible Differential
- Integral

using subspace trail notation.

If $x, y \in \mathcal{X} \oplus a$, then $x \oplus y \in \mathcal{X}$

Secret-Key Distinguisher up to 4 Rounds

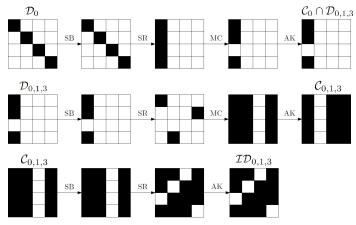
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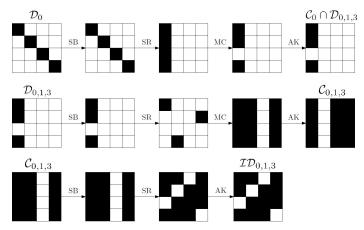
Truncated Differential - 3-round AES



Equivalent to:

 $Prob[R^{3}(p^{1}) \oplus R^{3}(p^{2}) \in \mathcal{ID}_{0,1,3} | p^{1} \oplus p^{2} \in \mathcal{D}_{0}] = 2^{-8}$

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Truncated Differential on 3-round AES - Comparison

By A. Biryukov and D. Khovratovich [**BK07**]: We will use a differential which starts with four active S-boxes at the 1st round. We choose those active S-boxes to appear in positions which arrive in one column after the ShiftRows transformation. Then with probability 2^{-6} four active S-boxes will collapse to three (one byte out of four getting a zero difference). After the second round the three active bytes are expanded into 12 active bytes and there will still remain 4 passive bytes. This differential can be schematically described as $4 \rightarrow 3 \rightarrow 12$.

Let
$$I, J \subseteq \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$$
 with $|I| = 1$ and $|J| = 3$. For each p^1, p^2 :

$$p^1 \oplus p^2 \in \mathcal{D}_I \xrightarrow[\text{prob. } 2^{-6}]{R(\cdot)} + R(p^1) \oplus R(p^2) \in \mathcal{C}_I \cap \mathcal{D}_J \xrightarrow[\text{prob. } 1]{R^2(\cdot)} c^1 \oplus c^2 \in \mathcal{M}_{\mathbb{C}}$$

where
$$c^1 = R^3(p^1)$$
 and $c^2 = R^3(p^2)$

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where $c^1 = R^3(p^1)$ and $c^2 = R^3(p^2)$.

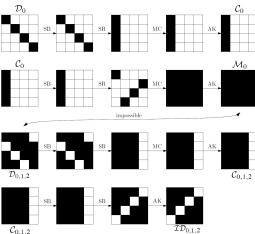
Truncated Differential on 3-round AES - Statement

Given a pair of plaintexts which differ by $1 \le d \le 3$ diagonals (the plaintexts are equal in the other diagonals), what is the probability that after 3-round the corresponding ciphertexts are equal in $1 \le n \le 3$ anti-diagonals?

For each $I, J \subseteq \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$ and for each p^1, p^2 :

$$Prob[R^3(p^1) \oplus R^3(p^2) \in \mathcal{M}_J | p^1 \oplus p^2 \in \mathcal{D}_I] = (2^8)^{-4|I| + |I| \cdot |J|}.$$

Impossible Differential - 4-round AES



Equivalent to:

$$Prob[R^4(p^1) \oplus R^4(p^2) \in \mathcal{ID}_{0,1,2} \,|\, p^1 \oplus p^2 \in \mathcal{D}_0] = 0.$$

By E. Biham and N. Keller [**BK00**]: If a pair of plaintexts differ by only one byte then the ciphertexts cannot be equal in any of the following combinations of bytes: (1,6,11,16), (2,7,12,13), (3,8,9,14), nor (4,5,10,15).

Let $p^1 \neq p^2$. For each $I, J, H \subseteq \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$ with |I| = |H| = 1 and |J| = 3:

$$Prob[R^4(p^1) \oplus R^4(p^2) \in \mathcal{M}_J | p^1 \oplus p^2 \in \mathcal{D}_I \cap \mathcal{C}_H] = 0.$$

More generally, for each $I, J \subseteq \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$ with $|I| + |J| \le 4$:

$$Prob[R^4(p^1) \oplus R^4(p^2) \in \mathcal{M}_J | p^1 \oplus p^2 \in \mathcal{D}_I] = 0$$

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By E. Biham and N. Keller [**BK00**]: The reason is that the difference before the first MixColumn is in one byte, so after it there is difference in one column, and then after the second MixColumn the data differs in all the bytes. On the other hand, if the ciphertexts are equal in one of the four prohibited combinations of bytes then after the third MixColumn the data is equal in one column, and thus before the MixColumn the data in this column is also equal. Therefore, after the second MixColumn there are 4 bytes in which the data is equal. This is a contradiction since we showed that all the bytes of the data differ after that MixColumn. This property is indeed impossible.

The reasons are:

- $\mathcal{D}_J \cap \mathcal{M}_I = \{0\}$ for all I, J with $|I| + |J| \le 4$, i.e. $Prob[x \in \mathcal{D}_J | x \in \mathcal{M}_I] = 0$;
- for all a and for all J, there exists b s.t. $R^2(\mathcal{D}_J \oplus a) = \mathcal{M}_J \oplus b$, that is $Prob[R^2(p^1) \oplus R^2(p^2) \in \mathcal{M}_J | p^1 \oplus p^2 \in \mathcal{D}_J] = 1$

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First Applications

- New key-dependent 5-round distinguisher:
 Complexity 2⁹⁶ (best before: 2¹²⁸ at Crypto 2016 by Sun, Liu, Gou, Qu and Rijmen [SMG+16]).
- Key-recovery with known S-Box: Truncated
 Differential-style attacks similar in complexity with the current best MitM-style attacks [BDD+12]-[BDF11] for up to 4 rounds.
- Key-recovery with secret S-Box: not competitive but with a new twist.

Part III

Key-Recovery Attacks on AES with a single Secret S-Box

AES with a single Secret S-Box

Consider AES with a single secret S-Box: the size of the secret information increases from 128-256 bits to 1812-1940.

How does the security of the AES change when the S-Box is replaced by a secret S-Box, about which the adversary has no knowledge?

AES with a single Secret S-Box

For all the attacks ([BS01], [TKK+15], ...) in literature:

- 1 determine the secret S-Box up to additive constants, i.e. S-Box($a \oplus x$) $\oplus b$;
- 2 exploit this knowledge to find the key.

Is it possible to find directly the key, i.e. without finding or exploiting any information of S-Box?

Yes: exploit the fact that each row of the MixColumns matrix has two identical elements.

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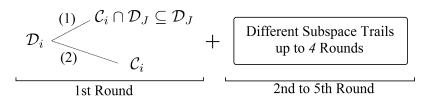
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Yes: exploit the fact that each row of the MixColumns matrix has two identical elements.

Attacks on AES with a single Secret S-Box - Details

Guess part of the key δ , and consider a set of plaintexts $V_{\delta} \subset \mathcal{D}_i \oplus a$ which depends on δ :

- If δ is correct, then $R(V_{\delta}) \subseteq C_i \cap D_J \oplus b \subseteq D_J \oplus b$ with prob. 1;
- If δ is wrong, then $R(V_{\delta}) \subseteq C_i \oplus c$ with prob. 1 and $R(V_{\delta}) \subseteq \mathcal{D}_J \oplus d$ with prob. *strictly less* than 1.



Part IV

Summary

Summary and Open Problems

- Subspace Trail Cryptanalysis: a formal notation that includes techniques based on impossible or truncated differentials and integrals as special cases;
- Various New Key-Recovery Attacks on reduced AES;
- Open Problem: more applications where mixed view of e.g. differential and integral properties makes sense.

Follow-Up Work

Stay tuned for

"A New Structural-Differential Property of 5-Round AES"

at Rump Session (to appear at Eurocrypt 2017 [GRR17]).

"Consider AES reduced to 5 rounds. Given $2^{32 \cdot |I|}$ plaintexts in the same coset of a diagonal space \mathcal{D}_I for $I \subseteq \{0,1,2,3\}$, the number of different pairs of ciphertexts that belong to the same coset of a mixed space \mathcal{M}_J for $J \subseteq \{0,1,2,3\}$ is a multiple of 8 with probability 1, independently of the secret-key, of the details of the S-Box and of the MixColumns matrix (with the exception that its branch number is 5)."

Thanks for your attention!

Questions?

Comments?

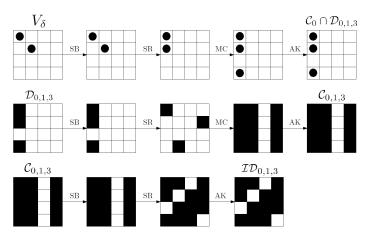
Key-Recovery Attack on 3-round AES

$$\begin{split} V_{\delta} &= \{ (\rho^i, c^i) \quad \forall i = 0, ..., 2^8 - 1 \ | \ \rho^i_{0,0} \oplus \rho^i_{1,1} = \delta \\ & \text{and} \quad \rho^i_{k,l} = \rho^j_{k,l} \quad \forall (k,l) \neq \{ (0,0), (1,1) \} \ \text{and} \ \forall i \neq j \}. \end{split}$$

Since $MC_{0,0} = MC_{1,1}$, attack on 3 rounds:

- If δ is correct, given $p^1, p^2 \in V_{\delta}$ then $R^3(p^1) \oplus R^3(p^2) \in \mathcal{M}_J$ with prob. 1;
- If δ is wrong, given $p^1, p^2 \in V_{\delta}$ then $R^3(p^1) \oplus R^3(p^2) \in \mathcal{M}_J$ with prob. 2^{-8} .

Example: Attack on 3-round AES with secret S-Box



$$\begin{split} V_{\delta} &= \{ (\rho^i, c^i) \quad \forall i = 0, ..., 2^8 - 1 \, | \, \rho^i_{0,0} \oplus \rho^i_{1,1} = \delta \\ & \text{and} \quad \rho^i_{k,l} = \rho^j_{k,l} \quad \forall (k,l) \neq \{ (0,0), (1,1) \} \ \text{and} \ \forall i \neq j \}. \end{split}$$

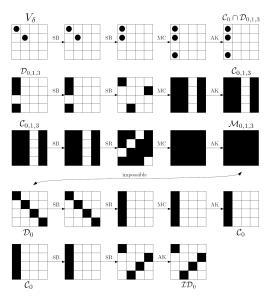
Key-Recovery Attack on 5-round AES

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Since $MC_{0,0} = MC_{1,1}$, attack on 5 rounds:

- If δ is correct, given $p^1, p^2 \in V_{\delta}$ then $R^5(p^1) \oplus R^5(p^2) \in \mathcal{M}_J$ with prob. 0;
- If δ is wrong, given $p^1, p^2 \in V_{\delta}$ then $R^5(p^1) \oplus R^5(p^2) \in \mathcal{M}_J$ with prob. 2^{-94} .

Example: Attack on 5-round AES with secret S-Box



Attacks on AES with secret S-Box - Results

Attack	Rounds	Data	Cost	Memory
Trunc. Diff.	2.5 - 3	2 ^{13.6} CP	2 ^{13.2} XOR	small
SASAS [BS01]	2.5	2 ¹⁶ CP	2 ²¹ E	2 ¹⁶
Integral	2.5 - 3	2 ^{19.6} CP	2 ^{19.6} XOR	small
Integral* [TKK+15]	3.5 - 4	2 ¹⁶ CC	2 ^{17.7} E	2 ¹⁶
Integral* [TKK+15]	3.5 - 4	2 ¹⁶ CP	2 ^{28.7} E	2 ¹⁶
Trunc. Diff	3.5 - 4	2 ³⁰ CP	2 ^{29.7} E	2 ³⁰
Integral* [TKK+15]	4.5 - 5	2 ⁴⁰ CC	2 ^{38.7} E	2 ⁴⁰
Integral* [TKK+15]	4.5 - 5	2 ⁴⁰ CP	2 ^{54.7} E	2 ⁴⁰
Imp. Diff.	4.5 - 5	2 ¹⁰² CP	2 ^{100.4} E	2 ⁸
Integral [SMG+16]	5	2 ¹²⁸ CC	2 ^{129.6} XOR	small

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