Meet CrowdStrike's Adversary of the Month for June: MUSTANG PANDA

June 15, 2018 | AdamM | Counter Adversary Operations

The June 2018 adversary spotlight is on **MUSTANG PANDA, a China-based adversary that has demonstrated an ability to rapidly assimilate new tools and tactics into its operations**, as evidenced by its use of exploit code for CVE-2017-0199 within days of its public disclosure. In April 2017, CrowdStrike® Falcon Intelligence™ observed a previously unattributed actor group with a Chinese nexus targeting a U.S.-based think tank. Further analysis revealed a wider campaign with unique tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). This **adversary targets non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in general**, but uses Mongolian language decoys and themes, suggesting this actor has a specific focus on gathering intelligence on Mongolia. These campaigns involve the **use of shared malware like Poison Ivy or PlugX**. Recently, Falcon Intelligence observed new activity from MUSTANG PANDA, **using a unique infection chain to target likely Mongolia-based victims**. This newly observed activity uses a series of redirections and fileless, malicious implementations of legitimate tools to gain access to the targeted systems. Additionally, MUSTANG PANDA actors reused previously-observed legitimate domains to host files.

Mustang Panda's Methods

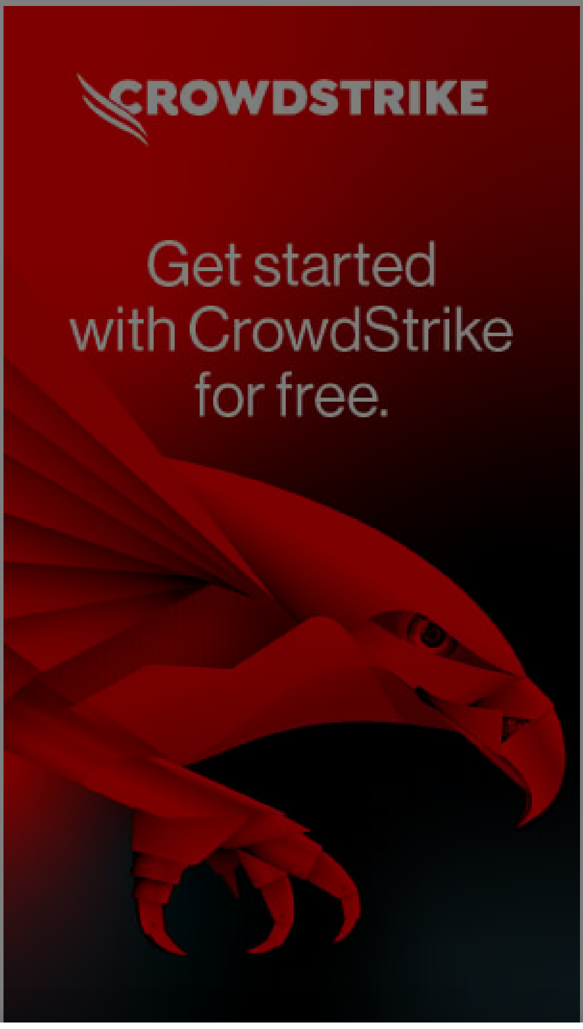
Mustang Panda's unique infection chain often takes the following steps:

1. **The infection chain used in this attack begins with a weaponized link**

CATEGORIES

Cloud & Application Security	104
Counter Adversary Operations	184
Endpoint Security & XDR	307
Engineering & Tech	78
Executive Viewpoint	162
Exposure Management	84
From The Front Lines	190
Identity Protection	37
Next-Gen SIEM & Log Management	91
Public Sector	37
Small Business	8

CONNECT WITH US



CROWDSTRIKE

Get started with CrowdStrike for free.

ABOUT COOKIES ON THIS SITE

By clicking "Accept All Cookies", you agree to the storing of cookies on your device to enhance site navigation, analyze site usage, and assist in our marketing efforts. Cookie Notice

Accept All Cookies Reject All Cookie Settings

MUSTANG PANDA has previously used the observed microblogging site to host malicious PowerShell scripts and Microsoft Office documents in targeted attacks on Mongolia-focused NGOs.

4. **The .lnk file uses an embedded VBScript component to retrieve a decoy PDF file and a PowerShell script** from the adversary-controlled web page.
5. **The PowerShell script creates a Cobalt Strike stager payload.** This PowerShell script also retrieves an XOR-encoded Cobalt Strike beacon payload from an adversary-controlled domain.
6. **The Cobalt Strike Beacon implant beacons to the command-and-control (C2) IP address, which is used to remotely control the implant.**

There are no known community or industry names associated with this actor.

Other Known China-based Adversaries

- Anchor Panda
- Deep Panda
- Goblin Panda
- Samurai Panda

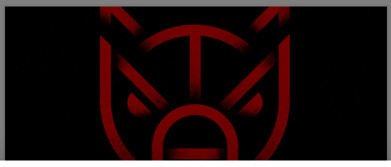
Curious about other nation-state adversaries? *Visit our threat actor hub to learn about the new adversaries that the CrowdStrike team discovers.*

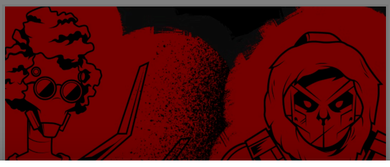
Learn More

To learn more about how to incorporate intelligence on threat actors like MUSTANG PANDA into your security strategy, please visit the *Falcon threat intelligence product page.* **Want the insights on the latest adversary tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs)?** Download the *CrowdStrike 2020 Global Threat Report.*

Tweet Share

Related Content





September 25, 2024

Recognizing the Resilience of the CrowdStrike Community

September 25, 2024

CrowdStrike Drives Cybersecurity Forward with New Innovations Spanning AI, Cloud, Next-Gen SIEM and Identity Protection

September 18, 2024

SUBSCRIBE

Sign up now to receive the latest notifications and updates from CrowdStrike.

Sign Up

See CrowdStrike Falcon® in Action

Detect, prevent, and respond to attacks—even malware-free intrusions—at any stage, with next-generation endpoint protection.

See Demo

ABOUT COOKIES ON THIS SITE

By clicking "Accept All Cookies", you agree to the storing of cookies on your device to enhance site navigation, analyze site usage, and assist in our marketing efforts. Cookie Notice

2024

SPIDER and Russian State Activity

« Meet CrowdStrike's Adversary of the Month for April: STARDUST CHOLLIMA

Meet CrowdStrike's Adversary of the Month for July: WICKED SPIDER »

Copyright © 2024 CrowdStrike | Privacy | Request Info | Blog | Contact Us | 1.888.512.8906 | Accessibility

ABOUT COOKIES ON THIS SITE

By clicking "Accept All Cookies", you agree to the storing of cookies on your device to enhance site navigation, analyze site usage, and assist in our marketing efforts. Cookie Notice