# COMPX508 – Malware Analysis

Week 11

Lecture 2: Dynamic Analysis with a debugger

Vimal Kumar

## Debugging in malware analysis

- Interactive debugging
  - A debugger offers the ability to monitor the behaviour of code as it is being executed.
  - Can pause the execution where-ever we want
    - Helps us slow the execution down to study the behaviour
- There are several open-source debuggers for executables
  - x64dbg
  - windbg
  - ollydbg
  - Ghidra
  - etc.

## Objectives

#### General Objectives

- Understand malware behaviour
- Bypass obfuscation and sandbox detection
- Extract meaningful information like keys, IP addresses, domain names

### Specific Objectives

- Modify code to make the malware work the way we want
  - Identify and bypass anti-analysis code
- Track register values and memory locations (variables) to extract information such as keys, domain names, IP addresses etc.
- Trace execution flow
- Unpack, packed malware before it is executed.

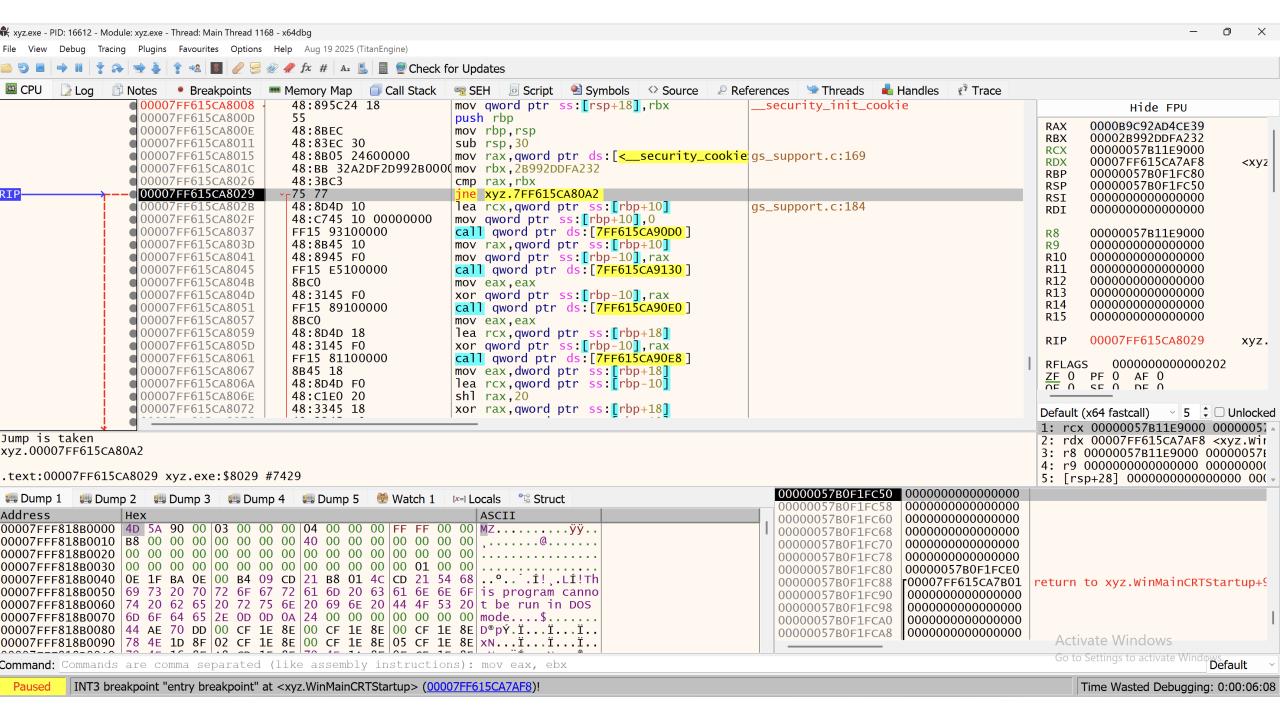
## Breakpoints

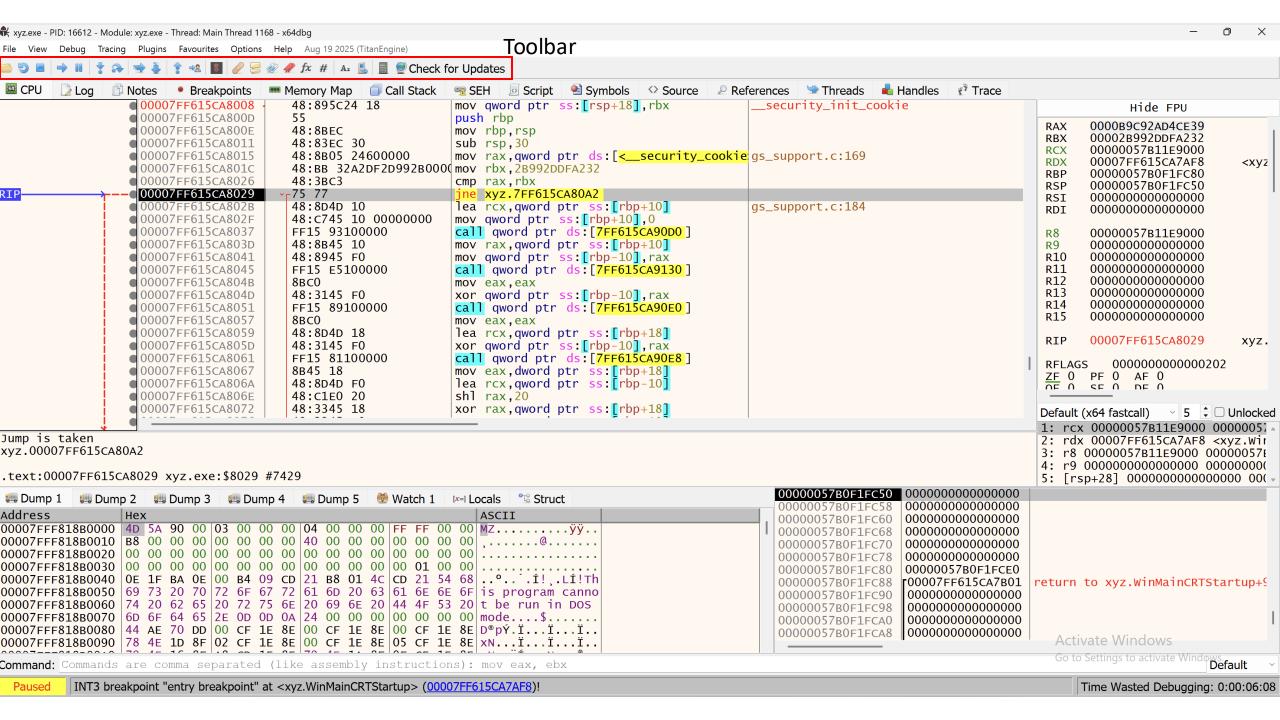
- Used for pausing the execution of the program
- There are many kinds of breakpoints
- Entry Breakpoint
  - Breaks at the entry point of the application
  - Usually this is where we want to start
- Execution Breakpoint
  - Most common breakpoint.
  - When you toggle a breakpoint on a specific address, this tell the debugger to stop when that address is reached in the execution.
- Memory Breakpoint
  - Breaks when a particular memory address is read, written to or accessed.

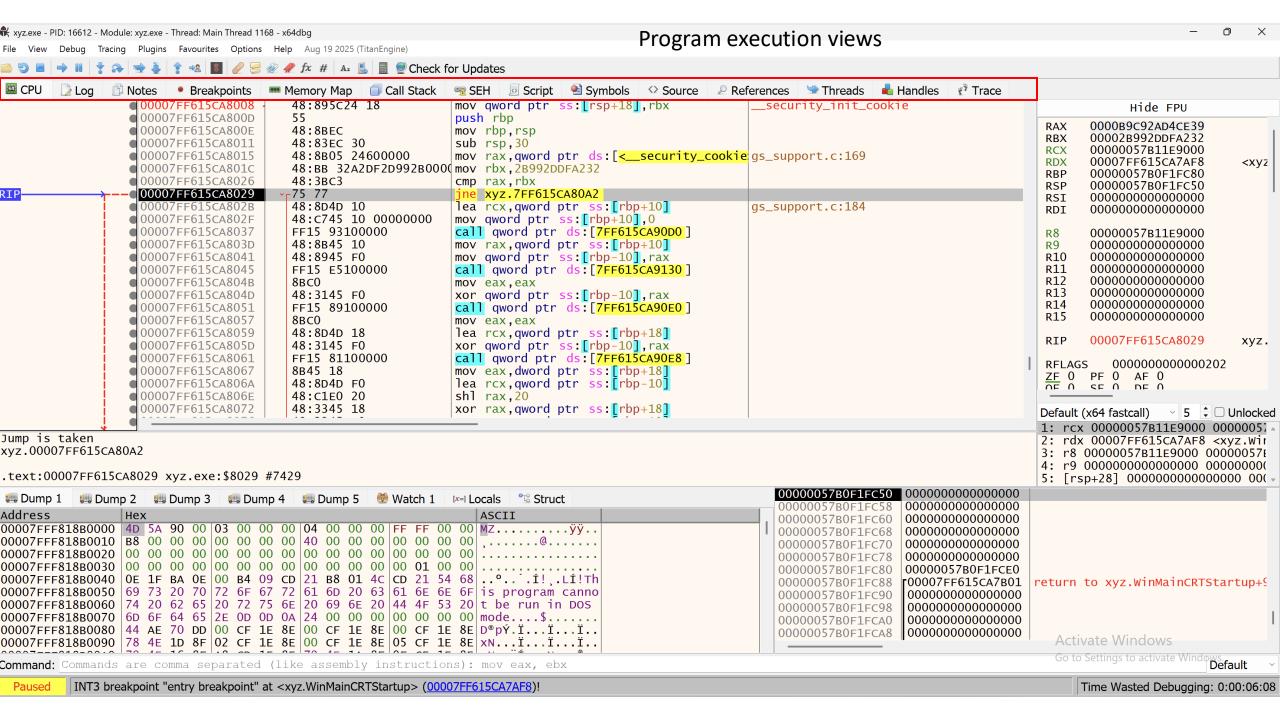
## Using x64dbg

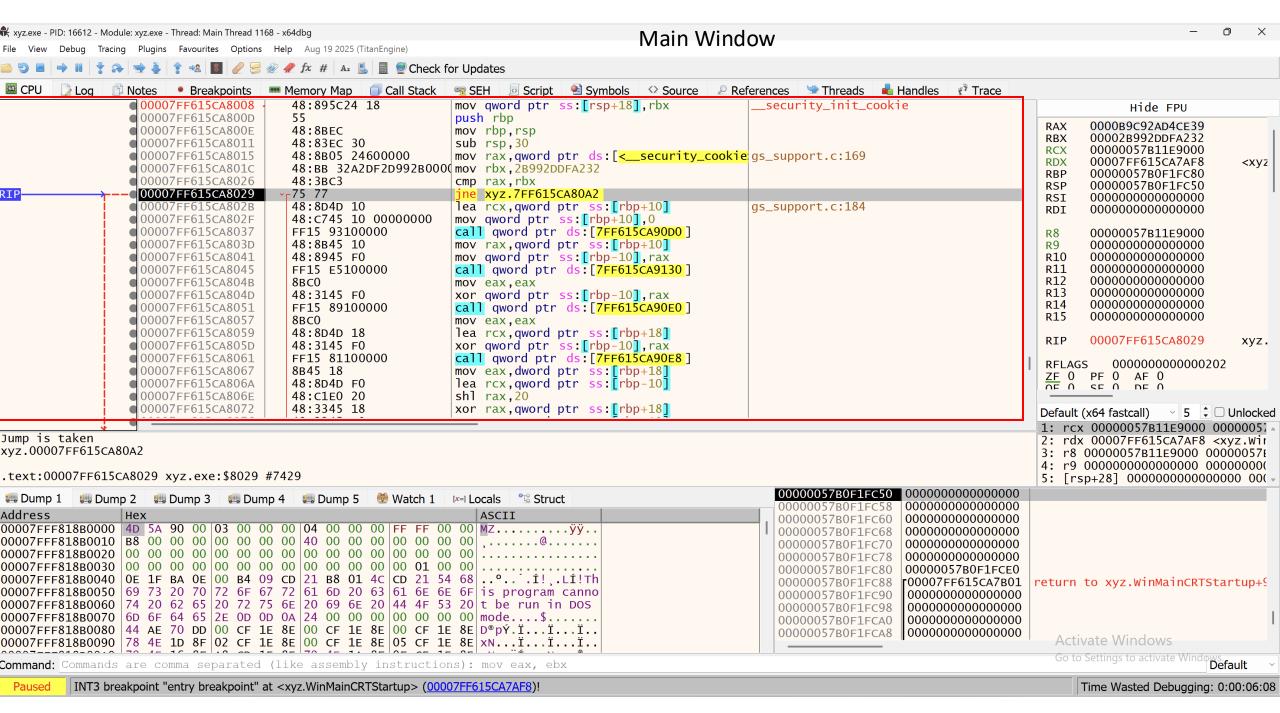


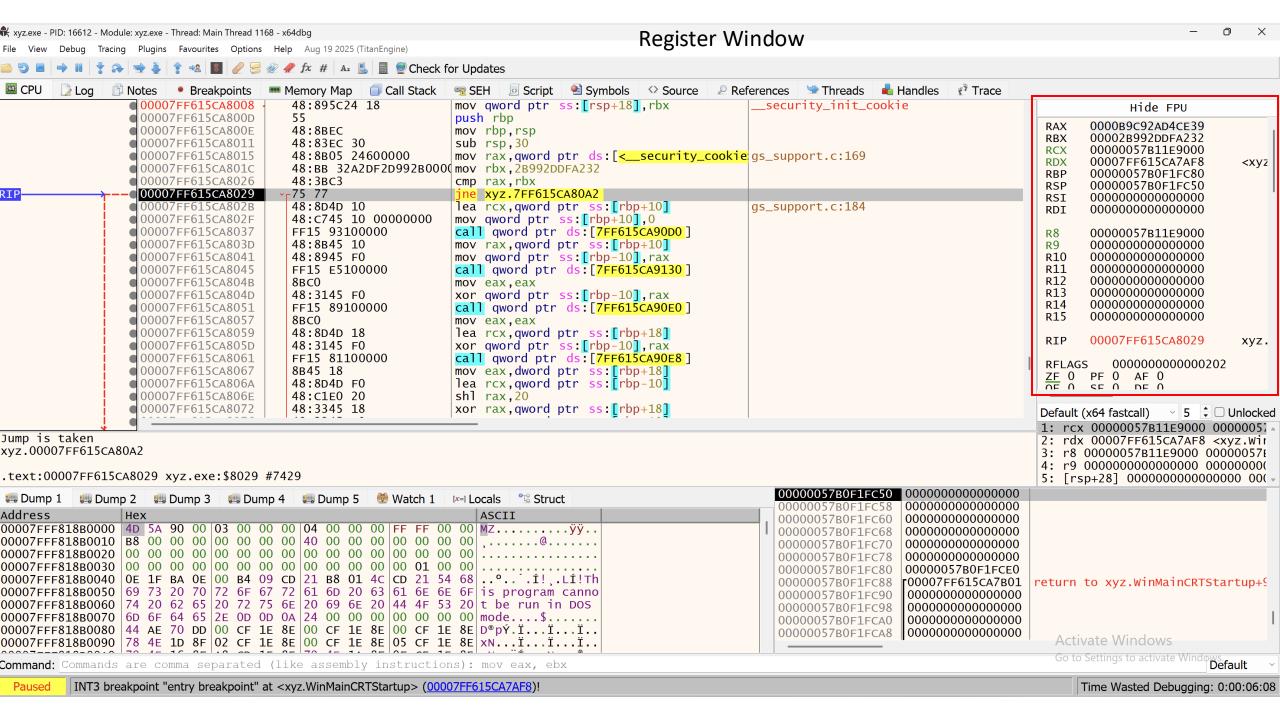
- Open a file
- Restart debugging the file
- Stop Execution
- Start Execution
- Pause Execution
- Step into
  - Go to the next instruction
  - If there is a function call go to the first instruction of the function call
- Step over
  - Go to the next instruction
  - If there is a function call execute the entire functionand go to the instruction just after it

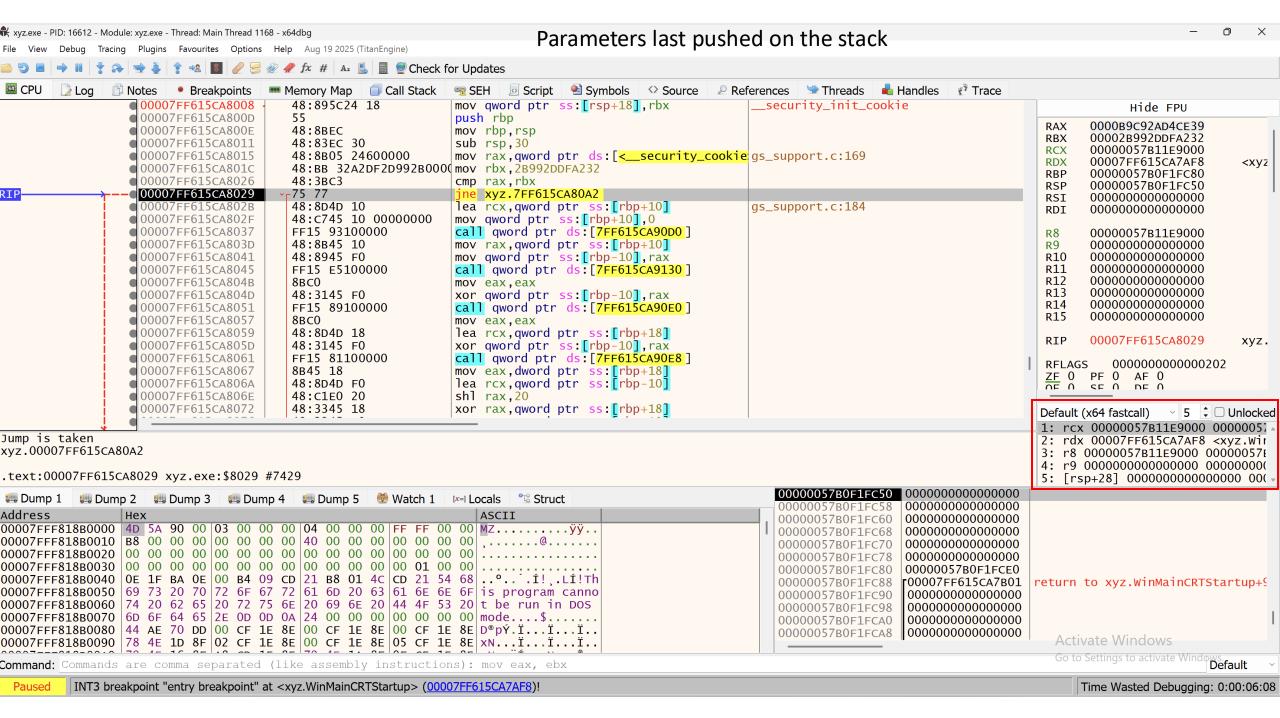


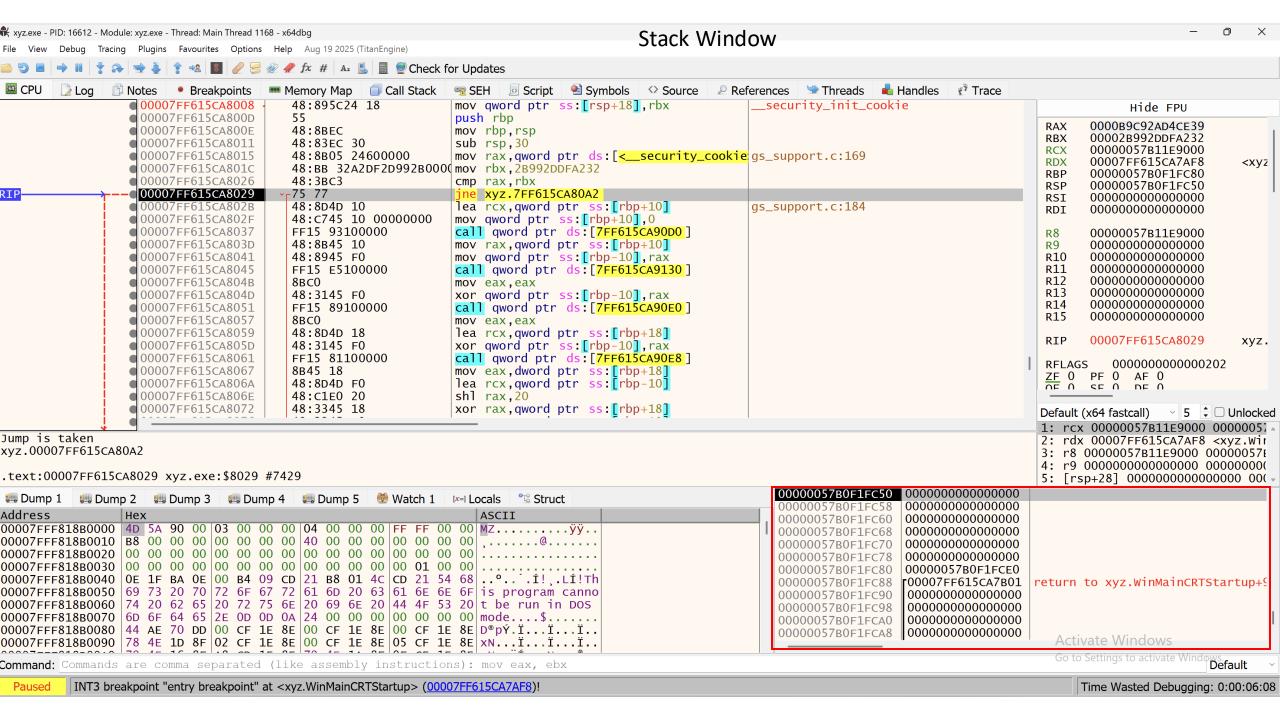


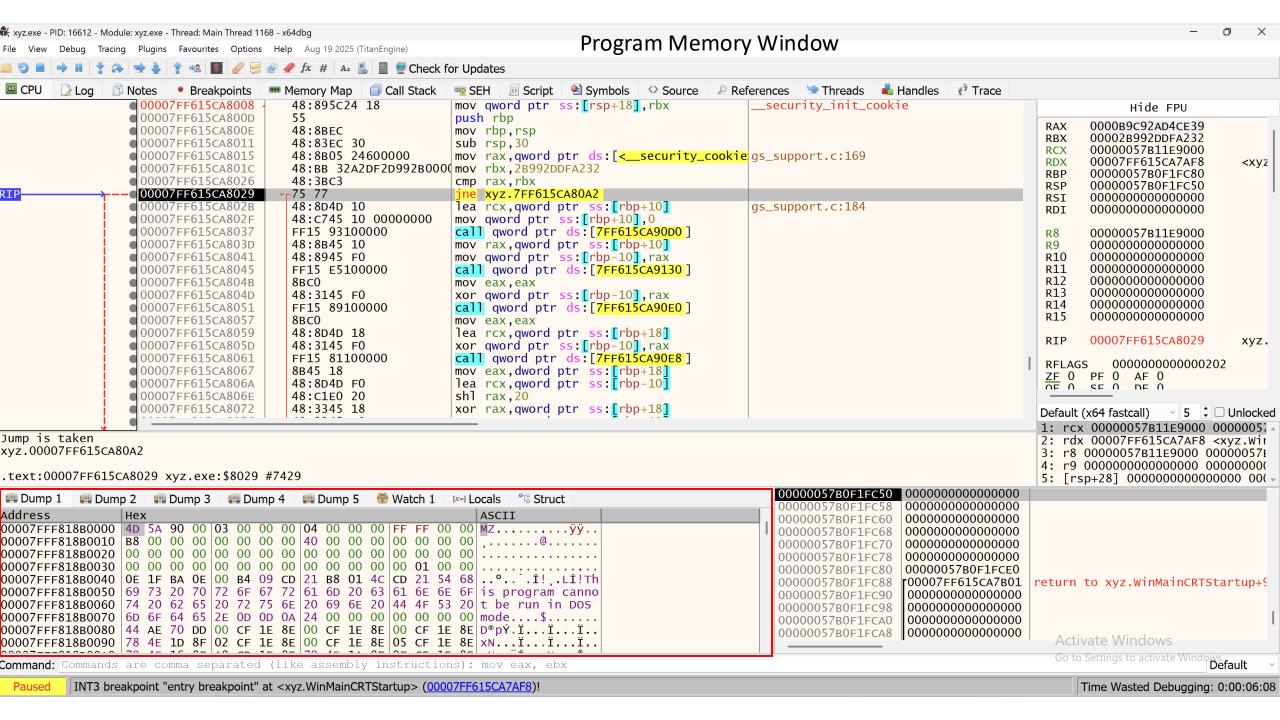












## Starting Points

- String References
  - Help us to find points of interest.
- Function calls
  - What parameters are being passed
  - What is being returned
  - Behaviour of the program

## Function calls in x64 assembly

- By default, the x64 calling convention passes the first four arguments to a function in registers.
- The registers used for these arguments depend on the position and type of the argument.
  - Remaining arguments get pushed on the stack in right-to-left order.

Parameter type	fifth and higher	fourth	third	second	leftmost
floating-point	stack	XMM3	XMM2	XMM1	XMM0
integer	stack	R9	R8	RDX	RCX
Aggregates (8, 16, 32, or 64 bits) andm64	stack	R9	R8	RDX	RCX
Other aggregates, as pointers	stack	R9	R8	RDX	RCX
m128, as a pointer	stack	R9	R8	RDX	RCX