

2024

Harris' remarks

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EXCLUSIVE

We received internal Trump documents from 'Robert.' Then the campaign confirmed it was hacked.

The campaign suggested Iran was to blame. POLITICO has not independently verified the identity of the hacker or their motivation.



The scope of the information obtained by the hacker is unclear. But it represents a major security breach for former President Donald Trump's campaign. | Rick Bowmer/AP

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Former President Donald Trump's campaign said Saturday that some of its internal communications had been hacked.

The acknowledgment came after POLITICO began receiving emails from an anonymous account with documents from inside Trump's operation.

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The campaign blamed “foreign sources hostile to the United States,” citing a [Microsoft report](#) on Friday that Iranian hackers “sent a spear phishing email in June to a high-ranking official on a presidential campaign.” Microsoft did not identify the campaign targeted by the email and declined to comment Saturday. POLITICO has not independently verified the identity of the hacker or their motivation, and a Trump campaign spokesperson, Steven Cheung, declined to say if they had further information substantiating the campaign’s suggestion that it was targeted by Iran.

“These documents were obtained illegally from foreign sources hostile to the United States, intended to interfere with the 2024 election and sow chaos throughout our Democratic process,” Cheung said. “On Friday, a new report from Microsoft found that Iranian hackers broke into the account of a ‘high ranking official’ on the U.S. presidential campaign in June 2024, which coincides with the close timing of President Trump’s selection of a vice presidential nominee.”

Cheung declined to say whether the campaign had been in contact with Microsoft or law enforcement about the breach, saying it would not discuss such conversations.

On July 22, POLITICO began receiving emails from an anonymous account. Over the course of the past few weeks, the person — who used an AOL email account and identified themselves only as “Robert” — relayed what appeared to be internal communications from a senior Trump campaign official. A research dossier the campaign had apparently done on Trump’s running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, which was dated Feb. 23, was included in the documents. The documents are authentic, according to two people familiar with them and granted anonymity to describe internal communications. One of the people described the dossier as a preliminary version of Vance’s vetting file.

The research dossier was a 271-page document based on publicly available information about Vance’s past record and statements, with some — such as his past criticisms of Trump — identified in the document as “POTENTIAL VULNERABILITIES.” The person also sent part of a research document about Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, who was also a finalist for the vice presidential nomination.

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The person said they had a “variety of documents from [Trump’s] legal and court documents to internal campaign discussions.”

Asked how they obtained the documents, the person responded: “I suggest you don’t be curious about where I got them from. Any answer to this question, will compromise me and also legally restricts you from publishing them.”

The scope of the information obtained by the hacker is unclear. But it represents a major security breach for Trump’s campaign.

Last month, [reports emerged](#) of the U.S. intelligence community receiving increasing evidence suggesting Iran was working on plots to kill Trump in retaliation for his decision to order the assassination of Iranian military officer Qassem Soleimani in 2020. There is no indication that the shooter who targeted Trump at a rally last month was connected to the plot.


In his statement Saturday, Cheung pointed to those reports, saying, “The Iranians know that President Trump will stop their reign of terror just like he did in his first four years in the White House.”

Iranian government officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

In 2016, top Democratic Party officials were hacked ahead of the presidential election. The breach resulted in the leak of embarrassing emails documenting the inner workings of the party and former Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton’s campaign. National security officials later blamed Russia for orchestrating the hacking effort. Many of those emails were later disseminated to WikiLeaks, a website that publishes leaked documents, and were published in the run-up to Election Day with an eye toward embarrassing Clinton’s political operation.

In 2017, the Justice Department launched an investigation into Russian interference in the election and what role Trump associates played in the hacking effort. Special counsel Robert Mueller ultimately concluded he lacked sufficient evidence to seek criminal charges against Trump or his campaign for allegedly conspiring with the Russians. However, he described a Trump campaign that encouraged the hack and was eager to capitalize on the materials, and he described significant efforts by Trump and some allies that

Trump campaign confirms it was hacked after POLITICO received internal documents from "Robert" - POLITICO hampered investigators’ ability to obtain key communications and testimony that might have shed more light on the matter.

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