

**Intelligencer**



**POLITICS** | UPDATED AUG. 20, 2024

# What We Know About the Trump-Campaign Hack



By Nia Prater, *Intelligencer* staff writer, who covers New York politics



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Photo: Joe Raedle/Getty Images

The presidential election received yet another twist this month as Donald Trump's campaign disclosed that it was the victim of a hack by a foreign entity that managed to obtain private materials. The announcement came as news organizations reported receiving internal campaign documents via email from an anonymous source and as Microsoft unveiled a new report warning of malicious online influence in the election from Iran. Here's what we know so far.

## What happened?

On August 9, Microsoft issued a report from its threat-analysis center detailing its concerns about Iran attempting to influence the presidential election. In an accompanying blog post, the company said that groups with ties to the Iranian government have begun to use influence campaigns on election-related topics to potentially sway voters as well as initiating operations to gather intelligence on political campaigns.

"Yet another Iranian group, this one connected with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or IRGC, sent a spear phishing email in June to a high-ranking official on a presidential campaign from the compromised email account of a former senior advisor. The email contained a link that would direct traffic through a domain controlled by the group before routing to the website of the provided link," the company wrote.

The following day, Trump campaign spokesman Steven Cheung acknowledged that campaign data was compromised, blaming "foreign sources hostile to the United States" for the hack in a statement.

Trump himself confirmed the news on TruthSocial, writing, "We were just informed by Microsoft Corporation that one of our many websites was hacked by the Iranian Government - Never a nice thing to do! They were only able to get publicly available information but, nevertheless, they shouldn't be doing anything of this nature."

On August 19, the FBI, Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency issued a joint statement confirming that Iran was behind the attempt to compromise Trump's campaign.

## What do we know about the investigation?

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that three staffers on the Biden-Harris campaign were targeted with spear phishing emails back then, citing sources familiar, but it doesn't appear that those attempts were successful.

It appears that the hackers were able to breach the systems of Roger Stone, an adviser and friend of Trump. In an interview with the *Post*, Stone said that he was told by law enforcement that some of his email accounts were compromised and that he is currently cooperating with the investigation.

## What information was compromised?

Some of the information accessed from the hack appears to have made its way to several news organizations. On August 10, *Politico* reported that it began receiving emails containing Trump campaign documents from an anonymous account on July 22. The missives originated from an AOL email address and from an individual who would identify themselves only as "Robert." According to the outlet, the emails contained internal communications from a top Trump campaign official as well as a 271 page dossier on Trump's running mate, Ohio senator J.D. Vance, believed to be part of a vice-presidential vetting file assembled on him. Also included was a portion of a research document on Florida senator Marco Rubio, who was also under consideration to join Trump on the Republican presidential ticket.

*Politico* verified the documents' veracity, but could not establish the hacker's motive or identity. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have since reported receiving what appears to be the same documents sent to *Politico* from the same source. It's not clear if other documents or materials were stolen in the hack. The three outlets notably did not publish or publicize any of the information they received from the unknown source.


## What has Iran said about the allegations?

In a statement to the *Associated Press*, Iran's mission to the United Nations denied having any involvement in the Trump-campaign hack. "The Iranian government neither possesses nor harbors any intent or motive to interfere in the United States presidential election," they said.

Tensions between Trump and the Iranian government have only grown since his time in the White House. After an attempt was made on Trump's life in July, reporting emerged that U.S. intelligence had recently become aware of an Iranian assassination plot against Trump, notifying the Secret Service, which then increased its security around the Republican candidate. The rumored plot is believed to be tied to Trump's authorization of a military air

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## Trump Seething Over DNC Taunts From ... Kathy Hochul?

*By* MARGARET HARTMANN

Two days later, he's still complaining on Truth Social that the New York governor was the "nastiest speaker" at the convention.

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