American Bridge

Trump Policy Brief: Executive Order on Cybersecurity

5.16.17

TRUMP'S EXECUTIVE ORDER ON CYBERSECURITY

In May 2017, Trump signed an executive order to protect the U.S. from cybersecurity risks. The order presented little in the way of new or substantive policy, and was described by a former Obama cybersecurity official as "a plan for a plan." The order conspicuously made no mention of Russia's interference in the 2016 election.

Trump appears to only support cybersecurity when it does not interfere with his political ambitions. On the campaign trail, Trump openly called on Russia to hack Hillary Clinton and claimed to "love" Wikileaks.

Trump Signed An Executive Order To Protect The U.S. From Cybersecurity Risks

TRUMP SIGNED AN EXECUTIVE ORDER TO PROTECT THE U.S. FROM CYBERSECURITY RISKS

Trump Signed An Executive Order To Protect The U.S. From Cybersecurity Risks. According to The Atlantic, "President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Thursday that aims to protect the U.S. from cybersecurity risks, including computer hacking." [The Atlantic, 5/11/17]

- **Reuters: Donald Trump's Cybersecurity Executive Order Aimed To "Bolster The Government's Cyber Security And Protect Critical Infrastructure From Cyber Attacks."** According to Reuters, "U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Thursday to bolster the government's cyber security and protect critical infrastructure from cyber attacks, marking his first significant action to address what he has called a top priority." [Reuters, 5/11/17]

- **The Order Focused On Protecting Federal Networks, Updating Outdated Systems, And Directing Department And Agency Heads To Work Together.** According to USA Today, "The executive order outlines three key priorities for the Trump administration's efforts in cyberspace: Protecting federal networks, updating antiquated and outdated systems, and directing all department and agency heads to work together 'so that we view our federal I.T. as one enterprise network,' Bossert said." [USA Today, 5/11/16]

THE ORDER OFFERED LITTLE IN THE WAY OF NEW OR SUBSTANTIVE POLICY

The Atlantic: "Cyber Experts Say The Executive Order Is A Natural Progression From The Policies Of The Obama And Bush Administrations." According to The Atlantic, "Cyber experts say the executive order is a natural progression from the policies of the Obama and Bush administrations, with White House Homeland Security Adviser Tom Bossert telling reporters that the document sought to improve upon efforts made under Obama. While cybersecurity specialists criticized previous drafts for lacking input from federal agencies and policy experts, reviews of the latest executive order were largely positive. Speaking to Reuters, Michael Daniel, an Obama-era White House cybersecurity coordinator, expressed his approval, but highlighted the need for further action, calling the executive order 'a plan for a plan.'" [The Atlantic, 5/11/17]

Obama White House Cybersecurity Coordinator Michael Daniel: Trump's Order Is "A Plan For A Plan." According to The Atlantic, "Speaking to Reuters, Michael Daniel, an Obama-era White House

cybersecurity coordinator, expressed his approval, but highlighted the need for further action, calling the executive order 'a plan for a plan.'" [The Atlantic, 5/11/17]

TRUMP HAD GIVEN HIMSELF A 90-DAY DEADLINE TO ESTABLISH A NEW CYBERSECURITY COUNCIL, WHICH HE MISSED

Headline: "Trump Blows His Deadline On Anti-Hacking Plan" [Politico, 4/20/17]

Politico: Trump Said He Would Have A Cybersecurity Team In Place Within 90 Days Of Taking Office, But By Day 90 There Was "No Team," "No Plan," And "No Clear Answer From The White House On Who Would Even Be Working On What." According to Politico, "President-elect Donald Trump was very clear: 'I will appoint a team to give me a plan within 90 days of taking office,' he said in January, after getting a U.S. intelligence assessment of Russian interference in last year's elections and promising to address cybersecurity. Thursday, Trump hits his 90-day mark. There is no team, there is no plan, and there is no clear answer from the White House on who would even be working on what." [Politico, 4/20/17]

TRUMP'S ORDER NOTABLY EXCLUDED REFERENCE TO RUSSIA'S UNPRECEDENTED CYBER INTERFERENCE IN THE 2016 ELECTION

Trump's Order Came Just Months After The U.S. Intelligence Community Concluded Russia Conducted Cyber Attacks Against Democratic Organizations, Interfering In The 2016 Election. According to USA Today, "The highly anticipated executive order comes months after a hack-filled election season. The U.S. intelligence community accused Russia of orchestrating a campaign of cyberattacks against Democratic political organizations and leaking them to websites such as WikiLeaks to undermine Hillary Clinton's campaign and public confidence in the democratic process. Trump signed the order in the midst of FBI and congressional investigations into both the Russian cyberattacks and the possibility Trump's campaign associates colluded with the Russians." [USA Today, 5/11/16]

The Atlantic: Trump's Order Notably Did Not Mention Russia's Election Interference "Despite It Being One Of The Most Concerning Breaches Of National Cybersecurity In U.S. Election History." According to The Atlantic, "Curiously, the executive order makes no mention of Russia's election interference, despite it being one of the most concerning breaches of national cybersecurity in U.S. election history. While Trump has acknowledged the existence of Russian hacking, he has long maintained that it played no role in the 2016 U.S. election. Even after his meeting with intel officials in January, Trump seemed convinced that information regarding Russia's role in the election was nothing more than a 'political witch hunt.'" [The Atlantic, 5/11/17]

The Trump Administration Downplayed Russia's Role In Influencing The Order. According to USA Today, "But the election hacks were only one inspiration for the new order, Bossert said. 'The Russians are not our only adversary on the internet,' he said. 'The Russians, the Chinese, the Iranians, other nation-states are motivated to use cyber capacity and cyber tools to attack our people and our government and their data.'" [USA Today, 5/11/16]

On The Campaign Trail, Trump Encouraged Cyber Breaches That Would Help Him Politically

TRUMP ENCOURAGED RUSSIA TO HACK HILLARY CLINTON

Trump Encouraged Russia To Hack Hillary Clinton. According to The New York Times, "Donald J. Trump said on Wednesday that he hoped Russian intelligence services had successfully hacked Hillary Clinton's email, and encouraged them to publish whatever they may have stolen, essentially urging a foreign adversary to conduct cyberespionage against a former secretary of state." [New York Times, 7/28/16]

Donald Trump: "Russia, If You're Listening, I Hope You're Able To Find The 30,000 Emails That Are Missing… I Think You Will Probably Be Rewarded Mightily By Our Press." According to The New York Times, "'Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing,' Mr. Trump said during a news conference here in an apparent reference to Mrs. Clinton's deleted emails. 'I think you will probably be rewarded mightily by our press.'" [New York Times, 7/28/16]

TRUMP SAID HE LOVED WIKILEAKS AND USED THEIR INFLUENCE TO HIS ADVANTAGE

Trump Praised WikiLeaks For Publishing Hillary Clinton's Hacked Emails. According to The Hill, "GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump on Monday praised WikiLeaks for publishing Democratic rival Hillary Clinton's hacked emails. 'I love WikiLeaks,' he told listeners during a campaign rally in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., prompting prolonged 'Lock her up!' chants from his audience. 'It's amazing how nothing is secret today when you talk about the Internet.'" [The Hill, 10/10/16]

- **Trump: "I Love WikiLeaks."** According to The Hill, "GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump on Monday praised WikiLeaks for publishing Democratic rival Hillary Clinton's hacked emails. 'I love WikiLeaks,' he told listeners during a campaign rally in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., prompting prolonged 'Lock her up!' chants from his audience. 'It's amazing how nothing is secret today when you talk about the Internet.'" [The Hill, 10/10/16]

Trump Read From Wikileaks Emails At Campaign Speeches. According to The Hill, "Trump then began reading from sheets of paper some of the details revealed by WikiLeaks's Friday dump of Clinton's emails. 'In a speech behind closed doors, 'Crooked Hillary' said, 'Terrorism is not a big threat to our nation,'" Trump said. 'Terrorism is a big, big threat. We are riding into something very dangerous. 'In another closed door speech, she wanted to have open borders and open trade with everybody. There go the rest of your jobs.'" [The Hill, 10/10/16]

- **Trump: "Hillary Clinton, As Wikileaks Proves, Is A Corrupt Globalist."** According to Politifact, "'Hillary Clinton, as WikiLeaks proves, is a corrupt globalist,' he said at a rally on Oct 21." [Politifact, 4/21/17]