

THE GAME OF TELEPHONE ABOUT THE ELECTION HACKING REVIEW

This morning, the White House announced that Obama has ordered a review of election-related hacking, to be completed before Donald Trump takes over. I want to capture the varying descriptions of what the review will entail.

Politico: The review will look at the hacks blamed on the Russians this year and malicious cyber activity (publicly understood to be China in 2008 and someone else in 2012) going back to 2008

The review will put the spate of hacks – which officials have blamed on Russia – “in a greater context” by framing them against the “malicious cyber activity” that may have occurred around the edges of the 2008 and 2012 president elections, said White House principal deputy press secretary Eric Schultz at a briefing.

“This will be a review that is broad and deep at the same time,” he added.

[snip]

In 2008, the campaigns for both Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Obama were bombarded by suspected Chinese hackers, according to U.S. intelligence officials. The digital intruders were reportedly after internal policy papers and the emails of top advisers.

And in 2012, Gawker reported that hackers had broken into Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney’s personal Hotmail account after correctly answering his backup security question: “What is your favorite pet?”

"We will be looking at all foreign actors and any attempt to interfere with the elections," Schultz said.

WaPo: The review will be a "full review" of Russian hacking during the November election

President Obama has ordered a "full review" of Russian hacking during the November election, as pressure from Congress has grown for greater public understanding of exactly what Moscow did to interfere in the electoral process.

[snip]

U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies had already been probing what they see as a broad covert Russian operation to sow distrust in the presidential election process. It was their briefings of senior lawmakers that led a number of them to press for more information to be made public.

[snip]

Though Russia has long conducted cyberspying on U.S. agencies, companies and organizations, this presidential campaign marks the first time Russia has attempted through cyber means to interfere in, if not actively influence, the outcome of an election, the officials said.

CNN: The review will look at "hacking by the Russians aimed at influencing US elections going back to 2008" (CNN notes that the IC "never said there was strong evidence that [hacks of voter registration systems were] tied to the Russian government")

President Barack Obama has ordered a full review into hacking by the Russians aimed at influencing US elections going back to 2008, the White House said Friday.

"The President has directed the Intelligence Community to conduct a full review of what happened during the 2016 election process. It is to capture lessons learned from that and to report to a range of stakeholders," White House Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser Lisa Monaco said at a Christian Science Monitor breakfast with reporters Friday. "This is consistent with the work that we did over the summer to engage Congress on the threats that we were seeing."

White House spokesman Eric Schultz added later that the review would encompass malicious cyber activity related to US elections going back to 2008. [my emphasis]

Wikileaks (relying on the CNN story): The review will look at Wikileaks

CNN: Obama orders report into WikiLeaks timed for release just prior to Trump presidency

NYT: The review will look at all Russian efforts to influence the 2016 election, including publishing email contents and probing the "vote-counting system" (presumably a reference to voter lists that have nothing to do with vote counting)

President Obama has ordered American intelligence agencies to produce a full report on Russian efforts to influence the 2016 presidential election, his homeland security adviser said on Friday. He also directed them to develop a list of "lessons learned" from the broad campaign the United States has accused Russia of carrying out to steal emails, publish their contents and probe the vote-counting system.