

# Hacker posts personal info of House Democrats and staff

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In this Aug. 11, 2016, photo, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., speaks at a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington. Pelosi is advising fellow Democrats to change their cellphone numbers and not let family members read their text messages after personal and official information of Democratic House members and congressional staff was posted online. Pelosi says in a letter to Democrats that the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee has hired a cybersecurity firm to investigate the hacking of the committee's computers. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

After receiving a deluge of obscene voicemails and text messages, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi informed her fellow Democrats on Saturday of "an electronic Watergate break-in" and warned them not to allow family members to answer their phones or read incoming texts.

The breach targeted the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and other Democratic Party entities, Pelosi said in a statement. As a result, a mix of personal and official information of Democratic members and hundreds of congressional staff, purportedly from a hack of the DCCC, was posted online, she said.

Pelosi said she is changing her phone number and advised her colleagues to do the same.

A hacker who calls himself Guccifer 2.0 took credit for posting the information Friday night. He had claimed responsibility for the recent hack of Democratic National Committee emails, which roiled the Democratic National Convention last month. While Guccifer 2.0 has described himself as a Romanian hacker and denies working for Russia, online investigators assert that he is linked to Russia.

President Barack Obama said in late July that Russia may have been behind the leak of the hacked Democratic National Committee emails. Obama, who noted that outside experts have blamed Russia for the leak, suggested Russian President Vladimir Putin may have reason to facilitate the attack.

"Anything's possible," Obama told NBC News when asked whether Moscow was trying to influence the presidential election.

The FBI, which is investigating, hasn't publicly attributed the attack to Russia. But Democrat Hillary Clinton's campaign has, implying that the goal was to benefit Donald Trump's presidential campaign.

Trump has rejected the allegation, insisting Democrats were trying to "deflect the horror and stupidity" of the leak.

Two U.S. cybersecurity firms have said their analysis of computer breaches at the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, or DCCC, showed detailed evidence that the intrusions were likely linked to Russian hackers. The internet domains and registrants used in the breach of computers used by the committee tied back to a Russian hacking group linked to that nation's intelligence services. That same hacking group, known as "Fancy Bear," was previously connected to the cyber breach at the Democratic National Committee.

Both firms, Fidelis Cybersecurity and ThreatConnect, said the hackers created a fake internet DCCC donation site. The registrant for the fake DCCC site was linked back to other web domains used by "Fancy Bear.

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who began publishing thousands of the emails last month, has said there is "no proof" Russia was behind the hack.

Pelosi said Saturday she was flying from Florida to California when she heard about the posting of information such as cell phone numbers.

"Upon landing, I have received scores of mostly obscene and sick calls, voicemails and text messages," Pelosi said in her letter to colleagues.

Pelosi said the chief information security officer of the House, John Ramsey, in coordination with U.S. Capitol Police, has sent communications to those people whose email addresses have been made public about how to address the problem. The chief administrative officer of the House has also sent an email stating that the House computer system has not been compromised, but urged members and staff to be vigilant about opening emails and websites.

Ramsey, in a memo distributed by Pelosi, advised lawmakers to change passwords to all email accounts that they use and strongly consider changing non-House email addresses if possible. Should lawmakers or staff receive any threats or observe suspicious activity, they should contact U.S. Capitol Police and local police, he said in the memo.

Rep. Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., the DCCC chairman, was holding a conference call with lawmakers on Saturday evening along with cybersecurity experts who have been investigating and responding to the breach.

"This is a sad course of events, not only for us, but more importantly for our country," Pelosi said in urging lawmakers to join the conference call with Lujan.

Disclosures of email showing DNC staffers privately supporting Clinton during the presidential primary while publicly maintaining they were neutral in her race with Bernie Sanders led to the resignation of DNC chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

Rep. Adam Schiff of California, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said in a statement late Friday that when the responsible parties are caught, he hopes the Obama administration "will disclose who is attempting to interfere with the American political process, and levy strong consequences against those responsible."

Freking reported from Edgartown, Massachusetts.

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