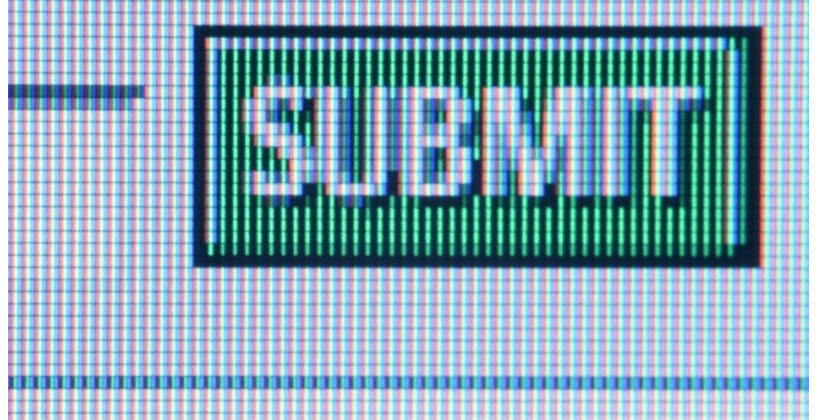




Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on January 14, 2015

Hackers Take Over Military Social Media: Threaten Jihad in America

A hacker group calling itself Cyber Caliphate hacked the Twitter and YouTube accounts for the U.S. military Central Command on Monday and used the social media platforms to post pro-Islamic State messages and videos. The attack happened just as President Obama was delivering a speech on the state of cyber security and what steps lawmakers can take to increase government involvement in the Internet.



Early Monday afternoon the hackers used the Twitter account belonging to Central Command to tweet, “AMERICAN SOLDIERS, WE ARE COMING, WATCH YOUR BACK. ISIS.” They also changed the background photo and profile picture to an image of a masked jihadi and the words, “I love you ISIS.” They continued to tweet from the account, claiming to have hacked several U.S. government databases and have stolen sensitive information. Many of the tweets included links to other sites containing names, addresses, and phone numbers of U.S. soldiers — mostly retired generals — as well as documents pertaining to “war scenarios” related to China and North Korea.

It took less than 30 minutes for Central Command to regain control of the Twitter account. The hackers immediately began posting videos on Central Command’s YouTube channel. These were the typical ISIS propaganda videos that have been seen on other YouTube channels. It does not appear that there were any videos containing new content. YouTube suspended the account for “repeated or severe violations of our Community Guidelines.” The channel is restored now, though it was off-line for at least a full day.

Cyber Caliphate also hacked the Twitter accounts and website servers of the *Albuquerque Journal* newspaper in New Mexico and WBOC 16 TV in Salisbury, Maryland, and used those resources to post similar material. One post said, “You’ll see no mercy infidels. We are already here, we are in your PCs, in each house, in each office. With Allah’s permission we begin with New-Mexico [sic] and will come to every state.... We hacked FBI databases. We won’t stop.... We know all your personal data: where you live, what you eat, your diseases, and even your health insurance cards.”

President Obama addressed the hacking of the government accounts in a brief statement from the White House. He said the attack was carried out by “Islamist Jihadist sympathizers” and that where cyber security is concerned, this “goes to show how much more work we need to do.” The president plans to discuss the issue in his upcoming State of the Union address.

In an interesting twist, the hacktivist group Anonymous claims to have traced the hack to Maryland. The group tweeted, “We’ve traced the hacker who infiltrated @CENTCOM to somewhere in the State of Maryland. @FBI, you’re welcome.”

Cyber Caliphate’s claims of allegiance to ISIS need to be taken with a grain of salt until more is known about the person or persons behind the hack. Hackers often claim association with notorious groups to exaggerate their importance. There is no evidence of the claim that the FBI and other agencies had their systems hacked. Much of the information “leaked” could be found using Google or other search



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engines. The length of time involved in moving between tasks — posting to Twitter and posting to YouTube — indicates the possibility that this is only a few people at most.

As to jihad coming to America via a hacker group that breaks into Twitter feeds and posts propaganda, there is probably little to be concerned about, unless we need to worry that they are going to use the “health insurance cards” they claim to have access to. The greater concern for Americans should be what action President Obama will take to restrict digital liberty.



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