

IN THE NEWS

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Security

Once again, supply side security is in the news. Last year, the ASUS upgrade software tool was hacked by bad actors that installed malicious back doors on those systems updated [1]. Apparently, a bogus update replaced a legitimate update and because it had the same size and had a valid certificate, it remained there for an extended time [2]. Replacing an original file with a bogus one was an approach documented back in 1988 [3]. Additionally, at that time (before the popularity of Public Key Infrastructures) a tool was presented to determine the version and verify the integrity of the posted software [4]. Moreover, early on there were attempts at combing the disciplines of computer security, quality assurance, and configuration mismanagement [5]. Unfortunately, the trend is to forget history and relearn the same lessons.

In past newsletters, references to state sponsored cyberattacks abound. But there are a multiplicity of threats to the critical infrastructure. This includes the threat from an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) that could devastate the US [6]. Now the White House is addressing this risk through executive order [7]. Some have noted the source of EMPs could also come from natural sources and the new policy is considered an important mitigation [8].

As pointed out in past newsletters, when we see a software glitch we have to wonder if there is a computer security issue. Case in point, a third-party company called Aerodata, had a software glitch that caused the delay of hundreds of flights across multiple airlines [9]. The Aerodata planning and balance system suffered an undisclosed glitch [10].

The race to keep software security vulnerabilities fixed continues. For example, Microsoft March patch Tuesday included security fixes for over 60 security issues [11]. Additionally, Apple released patches to correct 51 security flaws [12]. These examples from industry leaders suggest numerous vulnerabilities exist that have yet to be discovered.

(Continued on page 2)

World News

A rocket fired from the Gaza Strip injured several people in the northern part of Tel Aviv, Israel [1]. Expectedly, within hours Israeli forces attacked Hamas targets in the Gaza strip [2].

One report indicates China is developing a ship container launcher for long range cruise missiles [3]. This would effectively give China the ability to launch cruise missiles from any of their commercial ships.

Meanwhile, China contin-

ues to alarm its neighbors in the South China Sea. For instance, the Philippines expressed alarm when approximately 200 Chinese fishing boats massed near Philippine-occupied Thitu Island [4]. The Philippines, China, Vietnam, Taiwan, Brunei and Malaysia have claims to this area [5].

As a final thought, the race to militarize space continues. Case in point, India used an anti-satellite missile to destroy another satellite in space [6]. Unfortu-

nately, the debris resulting from the shoot-down puts other space assets at risk [7]. Additionally, a Chinese anti-satellite laser base was discovered located 145 miles south of the Urumqi [8].

1. BBC News, *Seven injured as Gaza rocket hits home in central Israel*, March 25, 2019.
2. BBC News, *Israel strikes Hamas targets in Gaza after rocket hits house*,

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Terrorism	3
Economy	4

Special points of interest:

- 49 year low for first time unemployment claims
- Last ISIS territory in Syria defeated

World News

(Continued from page 1)

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Learning is not

compulsory... neither is
survival.—W. Edwards

Deming

(Continued from page 1)

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Security

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10. Morris, Chris, Fortune, *Why Your Flight Could Be Delayed Today*, April 1, 2019.
11. Krebs on Security, *Patch Tuesday, March 2019 Edition*, March 19, 2019.
12. Naked Security, *Apple patches 51 security flaws*, March 26, 2019.

Terrorism

On the good news front, it appears the last territory held by the Islamic State (IS) has fallen [1]. While the terrorist group still exists, it has no territory [2].

Terrorism once again strikes in Europe. In the Netherlands, 37-year-old Turkish-born Gokmen Tani was arrested after killing at least 3 people that were riding a tram [3]. As a bit of history, the hard-line Islamic Taliban movement came to prominence in Afghanistan in the autumn of 1994 [4]. Fast forward, today in Afghanistan, the Taliban still remain active. Case in point, an assault on a police checkpoint left four students dead [5]. Separately, an attack directed against the Afghanistan vice president left one body guard dead [6]. A Taliban attack on a security checkpoint in northern Sari Pul province killed at least 7 po-

lice [7]. A Taliban siege in Badghis province left at least 32 soldiers and policemen dead [8]. Finally, the Islamic State and Taliban are fighting each other in Eastern Afghanistan; displacing some 20,000 people [9].

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2. Katkov, Mark, NPR, *Analysis: The End Of The 'Caliphate' Doesn't Mean The End Of ISIS*, March 22, 2019.
3. Sterling, Toby, Reuters, *Flags at half-mast after Utrecht shooting, police search for motive*, March 19, 2019.
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*It goes without saying that
when survival is
threatened, struggles erupt
between peoples, and
unfortunate wars between
nations result—Hideki Tojo*

Economy

There are continued signs the economy is in good shape. For instance, for the week ending March 16, the number of first time unemployment claims was 225,000 [1]. Then, for the week ending March 23, the number of claims was 211,000 [2]. Finally, for the week ending March 30, the number was 202,000; a number not seen since December 6, 1969 [3]. In other good news, the number of jobs added to the U.S. last month was 196,000 and the unemployment rate 3.8% [4]. China was admitted to the World Trade Organization (WTO) back in 2001 [5]. This resulted in the loss of 3.4 million U.S. jobs [6]. Moreover,

since 2011 China has been the second largest economy in the world [7]. Yet the WTO still allows China to subsidize its industry because it is considered a “developing” country [8].

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5. BBC News, *China Joins the WTO – at last*, December 11, 2001
6. Buchwald, Elisabeth, Market Watch, *China’s entrance into WTO cost U.S. 3.4 million jobs, new study finds*, October 23, 2018.
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The unrestricted competition so commonly advocated does not leave us the survival of the fittest. The unscrupulous succeed best in accumulating wealth.—

Rutherford B. Hayes
