

# IN THE NEWS

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## Security

There seems to be a number of highly visible gas explosions. For example, the Durham, NC explosion 4 months ago [1]. Then the Plantation, Florida explosion that occurred July 6 [2]. The Moreland community, Kentucky gas explosion a month ago [3]. And now a Maryland shopping complex gas explosion [4]. While investigations continue into the causes, we note the role of Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) in critical infrastructure systems, including natural gas. While SCADA may not have been the reason for the examples cited; cybersecurity has a special focus for software and systems used to control the critical infrastructure [5].

When crime pays, the incidents of attack increase. For instance, in Texas, 23 towns were hit by a ransomware attack [6]. Overall, the rate of ransomware attacks is double that of last year [7]. This is probably a justification for backing up important data regularly.

Meanwhile, the race to fix security holes continues. For example, Adobe patches corrected 76 vulnerabilities in the Acrobat and Reader [8]. Additionally Microsoft's patch Tuesday corrected 93 vulnerabilities [9]. Then it was reported that one bug has been with Windows for over 20 years [10]. The question here is how many vulnerabilities exist that have yet to be discovered?

One very troubling aspect of software is the limited support for security patches. Consider Toyota has recall notices for vehicles going back to 2002 [11]. However, it appears Microsoft Windows version 1703, released in 2017, will no longer get security patches [12, 13]. This exposes the risk of unsupported vendor software. So what happens if a software product that no longer has security patch support is used to run critical infrastructure SCADA software? Whereas a software vendor can demand a product be upgraded, regardless of the cost to the consumer; the same logic does not apply to auto manufactures. Would it be acceptable to demand the car owner upgrade to a newer vehicle?

1. Williams, Chris, Spectrum News, *Durham Businesses Struggle for Custom-* (Continued on page 2)

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### Special points of interest:

- Dow falls 800 Points in One Day
- 1.7 Million Hong Kong Protesters
- Windows 20-Year Old Vulnerability

## World News

The war in Yemen continues to spill over into Saudi Arabia. For instance, Yemen's Houthi rebels used drone attacks on a Saudi oils field [1].

As an introduction, the population of Hong Kong is approximately 7.5 million people [2]. Following Hong Kong protester shutdowns of the airport, large demonstrations entered the eleventh week of protests [3]. Then on August 18, an estimated at 1.7 million people protested [4]. This

represents a significant portion of the population. Then, despite a ban on marches, Hong Kong protesters continued for a thirteenth week [5]. Finally, on August 31, violent protesters successfully blocked access to the airport [6].

Meanwhile, pressure continues to be applied on Communist China. For instance, the US cleared the sale of \$8 billion in weapons, including 66 new F-16 jet fighters to Taiwan [7].

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2. [www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/so20.jsp](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/so20.jsp)
3. Westbrook, Tom, and Job, Lukas, Reuters, *Thousands of Hong Kongers brave rain to join anti-government rally*, August 18, 2019.
4. Zhao, Yan, and Lai, Catherine, AFP, *Hong Kong protesters flood city*

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## World News

(Continued from page 1)

- streets for largest rally in weeks, August 18, 2019.
5. BBC News, *Hong Kong protests: Demonstrators defy ban on march*, August 31, 2019.
  6. Hu, Caitlin, and Griffiths, James, CNN, *Gridlock as protesters gather at Hong Kong airport following violent night*, September 1, 2019.
  7. Gertz, Bill, Washington Free Beacon, *U.S. Clears Sale of F-16 Jets to Taiwan*, August 22, 2019.

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Communism counts its opportunities in terms of decades - not of weeks. Its means of aggression consist not only of nuclear weapons and missiles with enormous boosters, and not only of spies, agents and terrorists, but of great masses of men and women, deluded by a common ideology which inspires them with a false hope.—Robert Kennedy

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(Continued from page 1)

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2. Bagg, Marissa, NBC 6, *'I'm Going to Bleed Out: Plantation Gas Explosion Survivor Shares Harrowing Story*, August 28, 2019.
3. USA Today/ Louisville Courier Journal, *'It was terrible': 1 dead, up to 7 missing after natural gas line explosion in Kentucky*, August 1, 2019.
4. White, Brian, Time/AP, *Massive Gas Explosion Destroys Maryland Office and Shopping Complex*, August 26, 2019.
5. Freedberg, Sydney J. Jr, *Breaking Defense, A Secure Network Is Not Enough, Cyber Wargames Show*, August 7, 2019.
6. Allyn, Bonny, NPR, *23 Texas Towns Hit With Ransomware Attack In 'New Front' Of Cyberassault*, August 20, 2019.
7. Palmer, Danny, ZDNet, *Cybercrime: Ransomware attacks have more than doubled this year*, August 28, 2019.
8. Osborne, Charlie, ZDNet/Zero Day, *Adobe security patch update tackles Photoshop, Acrobat, Reader, and more*, August 14, 2019.
9. Krebs on Security, *Patch Tuesday, August 2019 Edition*, August 13, 2019.
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11. [www.toyota.com/recall/takata](http://www.toyota.com/recall/takata)
12. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windows\\_10\\_version\\_history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windows_10_version_history)
13. Tung, Liam, ZDNet, *Microsoft warns Windows 10 admins: No more patches for 1703 after October 9*, August 27, 2019.

## Security

## Terrorism

In Afghanistan, a suicide bomber killed at least 63 people at a wedding ceremony [1]. Separately, a suicide bomber attacked a convoy of foreign forces near Bagram Airfield [2]. Then in Kunduz province, the Taliban launched a large attack where at least 60 of their fighters have been killed [3].

The Islamic State (IS) remains a significant terrorist threat. By one estimate, within the IS, there are still between 14,000 and 18,000 combatants [4]. For instance, the IS is taking credit for suicide bombers in the Gaza that killed at least 3 police officers [5]. Similarly, in Yemen, the IS claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing that killed at least 6 people in the port of Aden [6].

Moreover, the threat of IS terrorism continues to surface within the US. For example, a 19-year old born in Pakistan and living in Queens, New York; was arrested for attempting to provide support to the IS [7]. Separately, two women from Queens pleaded guilty to charges of planning a IS inspired bombing [8].

Unfortunately, terrorists will use any weapon available to

further their cause. Case in point, in the town of Villeurbanne, near Lyon, France, an Afghanistan asylum seeker used a knife to kill at least one person and wound 9 others [9].

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2. Wellman, Phillip Walter, Stars and Stripes, *US troops targeted in suicide attack near Bagram Airfield*, August 24, 2019.
3. Aaro, David, Fox News, *Taliban launch 'massive attack' on northern Afghanistan city, government says*, August 31, 2019.
4. Ioanes, Ellen, Business Insider, *Here's what's left of ISIS – and why they still pose a major threat*, August 27, 2019.
5. BBC News, *Gaza explosions: 'Suicide bombers' kill three police officers*, August 28, 2019.
6. Reuters, *Islamic State claims suicide bomb attack on separatist fighters in Yemen's Aden: Amaq*, August 30, 2019.
7. Carlisle, Madeleine,

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8. Stockler, Asher, Newsweek, *Two Queens Women Plead Guilty In ISIS-Inspired Bomb Plot*, August 24, 2019.
9. Gearty, Robert, Fox News, *Asylum-seeker arrested in France knife attack that left 1 dead, 9 wounded*, August 31, 2019.

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*Hamas, we know, embeds missiles, embeds command-and-control units in civilian areas.—Hillary Clinton*

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## Economy

News on the unemployment front remains good. For the week ending August 10, the number of first time unemployment claims was 220,000 [1]. Then for the week ending August 17, the number of claims was 209,000 [2]. Finally, for the week ending August 24, the number of claims was 215,000 [3].

The trade war with China is continuing with new tariffs imposed by both sides [4]. As a partial consequence, on August 14, the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell over 800 points (3%) [5]. Additionally, retailers are increasingly using suppliers outside of China [6]. When President Trump came into office, the average tariff on Chinese goods was 3.1 percent; now this is at 21.2 percent [7]. Another oddity is the dollar is getting stronger while the Yuan (Chinese currency) is falling [8]. This may be an indication of Chinese currency manipulation. In conclusion, the effects of the trade war are evident. Case in point;

in China, for the fourth month, factory activity contracted and for the fifteenth month, exports fell [9].

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2. Department of Labor, Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims, August 22, 2019.
3. Department of Labor, Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims, August 29, 2019.
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5. Li, Yun, CNBC, *Dow tanks 800 points in worst day of 2019 after bond market sends recession warning*, August 14, 2019.
6. Wu, Jasmine, CNBC, *92% of apparel imports from China will be hit with tariffs on Sunday—here's how companies are coping*, August 30, 2019.
7. Swanson, Ana, New York Times, *As Trump Escalates Trade War, U.S. and China Move Further Apart With No End in Sight*, September 1, 2019.
8. Reuters/CNBC, *Dollar jumps, yuan falls ahead of new tariffs this weekend*, August 30, 2019.
9. CNBC/Reuters, *China's factory activity shrinks for 4th month as trade woes deepen*, August 31, 2019.

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*Justice will overtake  
fabricators of lies and false  
witnesses.—Heraclitus*

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