worldﹾs richest men with an estimated fortune
Posted by alisawhite123 - 2020/12/18 13:55
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Over the past few years, the U. S. government has spent tens of billions of dollars on cyberoffensive abilities, building a giant war room at Fort Meade, Maryland, for U. S. Cyber Command, while installing defensive sensors all around the country ﹾ a system named Einstein to give it an air of genius ﹾ to deter the nationﹾs enemies from picking its networks clean, again.

It now is clear that the broad Russian espionage attack on the U. S. government and private companies, underway since spring and detected by the private sector only a few weeks ago, ranks among the greatest intelligence failures of modern times.

Einstein missed it ﹾ because the Russian hackers brilliantly designed their attack to avoid setting it off. The National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security were looking elsewhere, understandably focused on protecting the 2020 election. The new U. S. strategy of ﹾdefend forwardﹾ ﹾ essentially, putting American ﹾbeaconsﹾ into the networks of its adversaries that would warn of oncoming attacks and provide a platform for counterstrikes ﹾ provided little to no deterrence for the Russians, who have upped their game significantly since the 1990s, when they launched an attack on the Defense Department called Moonlight Maze.

Something else has not changed, either: an allergy inside the U. S. government to coming clean on what happened.

The national security adviser, Robert C. OﹾBrien, cut short a trip to the Middle East and Europe on Tuesday and returned to Washington to run crisis meetings to assess the situation, but he and his colleagues have done whatever they could to play down the damage.

Asked Tuesday whether the Defense Department had seen evidence of compromise, the acting defense secretary, Christopher C. Miller, said, ﹾNo, not yet, but obviously looking closely at it. ﹾ Other government officials say that is trying to turn ignorance about what happened into happy spin ﹾ it is clear the Defense Department is one of many government agencies that made extensive use of the software that Russia bored into.

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