

Trump publicly asks China to investigate Biden, even amid impeachment inquiry

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Donald Trump on Thursday again invited foreign interference in a U.S. presidential election by publicly calling on China to investigate Democratic political rival Joe Biden, the kind of request that has already triggered an impeachment inquiry in Congress.

The Republican president said he believed both China and Ukraine should look into 2020 presidential hopeful Biden and his businessman son Hunter, and described the impeachment probe as “crap.”

“And by the way, likewise, China should start an investigation into the Bidens. Because what happened in China is just about as bad as what happened with Ukraine,” Trump told reporters at the White House.

Trump and his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani have offered no evidence for their assertions of corruption against former vice president Biden, a leading contender for the Democratic Party nomination to run against Trump.

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Questioned about whether he had asked Chinese President Xi Jinping to investigate, Trump said: “I haven’t, but it’s certainly something we can start thinking about.”

The Chinese Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump’s appeal to China was particularly striking

given that Washington and Beijing are locked in a bitter trade war which has damaged global economic growth. They are due to hold another round of talks in the United States next week.

Administration officials did not know that Trump was going to mention China but said he had talked about it previously and they were not surprised by it, two sources familiar with the situation said.
The China remarks stiffened the resolve of Democrats in the House of Representatives to push ahead with a probe into whether Trump should be impeached following revelations by an anonymous whistleblower who said that in Trump asked Ukraine in July to investigate the Bidens.
Hunter Biden was on the board of a Ukrainian gas company and formed a private equity fund in China.
At a healthcare event in The Villages, Florida, Trump said Democrats had launched the impeachment probe because they cannot beat him at the ballot box in 2020.
“That’s why they do the impeachment crap - they know they can’t win,” Trump said.

While the election is still a long way off, Reuters/Ipsos polling shows Trump narrowly trailing the top Democratic candidates, including Biden, in hypothetical matchups.

U.S. President Donald Trump talks to reporters as he departs for travel to Florida from the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, U.S., October 3, 2019. REUTERS/Leah Millis
IMPEACHMENT PROBE
The impeachment probe could lead to the approval of articles of impeachment - or formal charges - against Trump in the Democratic-controlled House. A trial on whether to remove him



U.S. President Donald Trump talks to reporters as he departs for travel to Florida from the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, U.S., October 3, 2019. REUTERS/Leah Millis

from office would then be held in the Republican-controlled Senate. Many Republicans, however, have shown little appetite for ousting him.

House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy wrote to Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Thursday asking that all efforts surrounding the impeachment inquiry be suspended until “customary rules and procedures are established”.

He asked whether she planned to hold a vote of the full House autho-

rizing the inquiry, and whether the president’s counsel would be allowed to attend all hearings and depositions. Refusing to do these things would contradict previous impeachment procedures, McCarthy said.

Pelosi announced the impeachment investigation last week after the whistleblower lodged a complaint about Trump asking Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to look into investigating the Bidens.

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Editor's Choice



Uon Chhin and Yeang Sothearin, former journalists from the U.S.-funded Radio Free Asia (RFA), who have been charged with espionage, arrive at the Municipal Court of Phnom Penh for their verdict, in Phnom Penh



A demonstrator vapes during a protest at the Massachusetts State House against the state's four-month ban of all vaping product sales in Boston, Massachusetts, U.S., October 3, 2019. REUTERS/Brian Snyder TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



A person dressed up as the Joker attends the 2019 New York Comic Con in New York City



Athletics - World Athletics Championships - Doha 2019 - Men's 110 Metres Hurdles Final - Khalifa International Stadium, Doha, Qatar - October 2, 2019 Grant Holloway of the U.S. reacts after winning gold REUTERS/Lucy Nicholson TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



A schoolmate of a student protester who was shot by a policeman on Tuesday cries while participating in a student gathering at Tsuen Wan Public Ho Chuen Yiu Memorial College in solidarity with the student in Tsuen Wan



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Liberal Party leader and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau trains with boxer Ali Nestor in Montreal



A demonstrator gestures as he stands close to burning tires blocking a road, during a protest over unemployment, corruption and poor public services, in Baghdad

Houston Unveils First Draft Of City Climate Action Plan

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



City of Houston’s Climate Action Plan

The City of Houston recently announced its Climate Action Plan that will bring together stakeholders from across the community to develop a variety of cost-effective energy efficiency, renewable energy and transportation measures that will reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions and uphold the goals of the Paris Agreement.

HARC* will serve as the technical advisor and lead researcher on the project. Directed by a team including Dr. Gavin Dillingham and Marina Badoian-Kriticos, researchers will provide expertise to run the models and to develop the most effective climate mitigation measures in the region. (*Houston Advanced Research Center--The Houston Advanced Research Center, commonly referred to as HARC, is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization based in The Woodlands, Texas dedicated to improving human and ecosystem well-being through the application of sustainability science and principles of sustainable development.)

To design the plan, the City is also partnering with C40, a global non-profit that works with cities to develop and implement plans to mitigate carbon risk.

The target completion date for the plan is December 2019 and its publication will allow the City to start in 2020 with a defined path forward to reduce carbon emissions and continue to lead global cities in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The plan is funded by CenterPoint En-

ergy and the Jacob and Terese Hershey Foundation. Learn more about the plan by visiting City of Houston’s Climate Action Plan website at <http://greenhoustontx.gov/climateactionplan/index.html>

First Draft Of City’s Climate Action Plan Is Unveiled



Amid concerns about the limited federal response to climate change, the city of Houston released a draft plan on the issue that calls for increasing the generation of renewable energy, greater investment in “green infrastructure” and expanding the use of alternative modes of transportation by making it easier for people to walk, ride their bikes and use public transit.

Climate change has made it imperative that cities such as Houston take action, but it will require a communitywide effort to make it happen, officials said Thursday.

“Ten years ago, a mayor in Houston probably wouldn’t be talking about climate change, maybe even five years ago, maybe even three years ago,” Mayor Sylvester Turner said. “But things have changed. It’s a new reality, and now we have an obligation to respond in a responsible fashion.”

City officials released the first draft of their communitywide climate action plan at City Hall last Thursday. They hope to release a final report by December; the public can comment through the end of August.

Weeks after the Trump administration withdrew the U.S. from the landmark Paris climate accord in 2017, Turner joined other mayors in committing to adopt the goals of the agreement, which include becoming a carbon-neutral city by 2050. Today, there are 427 such cit-

ies in 48 states. Experts say that it can be difficult to track progress, and that many other cities appear to be falling short of aggressive goals.

Houston has one of the largest per capita greenhouse emissions in the country. In 2014, Houston residents and businesses generated nearly 35 million tons of greenhouse gases through carbon-fueled buildings, cars and waste.

If nothing is done, this number is projected to rise to at least 45 million per year by 2050.

Climate change is increasing the city’s flood risk, as well as the intensity and frequency of storms, and while the problem can’t be fixed overnight, Turner told about 100 attendees, “If we take bold actions to lead our city on a sustainable path, we will leave behind a better Houston for future generations.”

WHAT ARE HOUSTON’S SOURCES OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS?

In 2014 Houston emitted 34.3 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e). Houston’s biggest sources of greenhouse gas emissions are transportation (47%) and commercial and residential buildings (49%). Other sources of emissions include manufacturing, waste, and fugitive emissions (4%).

Overall, Houston’s greenhouse gas emissions have decreased since 2007, primarily due to increases in residential energy efficiency and more renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power being built.

However, since 2007 emissions associated with transportation have increased. Reducing the city’s emissions will not only help fight climate change, Turner said, it will lead to more resilient communities, reduce harmful pollution, cut energy waste and boost the local economy.

It will also better prepare the city for the rapid population growth that it is expecting. “Growth provides Houston with a tremendous economic opportunity, but

it will result in greater projected emissions,” he said.

And part of it is changing the image of Houston, emphasizing that it can fight climate change and still be the energy capital of the world.

“We need to make sure that the next big thing in renewable energy, in carbon capture technology, in green technology comes from Houston,” said Lara Cottingham, the city’s chief sustainability officer. “That’s how we keep and maintain that proud leadership as the energy capital of the world.”

The city’s plan is divided into four areas: building optimization, energy transition, materials management and transportation. Each includes a list of goals, strategies and actions.

One of the biggest challenges that cities such as Houston face is that the state and federal governments primarily control regulations. “We don’t have control over a lot of things that would generate faster results,” Cottingham added.



Experts Say Climate Change Intensified Hurricane Harvey.

So they will have to decide whether the entire community works together to achieve results or advocate for changes at the state and federal levels.

The plan will not be a binding document. If there are policies that need to be changed at the city or state level, for instance, they will have to go through the normal process. And many are simply recommendations.

The second is funding, she added. There’s only so much the city will be able to accomplish; for instance, once it converts its fleet to electric vehicles to reach its goals, the city will have to get buy-in from the public and businesses, which may require incentives to bring about change.

Several environmental nonprofits in at-

tendance at Thursday’s announcement were pleased with the direction that the city was heading and by the fact that the working group seems to be taking their comments into consideration, including the general timeline for reducing greenhouse emissions.



Storage tanks at a refinery along the Port of Houston waterway

The energy industry should be working faster to combat climate change, according to Jan Dash, editor for the forthcoming Encyclopedia of Climate Change: Finance, Economics, Policy.

Their biggest concern is whether there will be the political will to bring it to fruition, they said.

“I do feel we need a little bit more urgency at the political level to come anywhere near achieving the goals that have been set,” said Harrison Humphreys, with Air Alliance Houston.

“The thing about emissions and greenhouse gasses,” he added after the meeting, “is that they don’t care about city limits, so it’s going to take a lot of combined efforts with regional partners, not only the county.”

He added that advocacy groups will also have to be watchful for conflicting policies, such as calling for a reduction in how much Houstonians use their cars and the expansion of Interstate 45.

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE?

We expect the full Climate Action Plan to be released by the end of 2019.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Stakeholder and citizen engagement is an important part of this process. Please visit our Events tab for information on stakeholder meetings and outreach events. Stay in the know and go here to receive updates by email: <http://greenhoustontx.gov/climateactionplan/> Interested in partnering with the City? Please email greenhoustontx@houstontx.gov. (Courtesy houstonchronicle.com)

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100 Million Credit Applications
Stolen From Capital One Online



(Photo/AFP/Getty Images)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

The FBI arrested Washington state resident Paige Thompson Monday morning for the digital theft of data from tens of millions of credit card applications, multiple news sites reported. Capital One confirmed broad aspects of the arrest in a press release.

What was stolen: Data from around 100 million credit card applications from between 2005 and 2019, including 80,000 bank account numbers and 140,000 Social Security numbers. 1 million Canadian Social Insurance Numbers were also stolen.

Background: Capital One said it discovered the data breach on July 19 in the process of patching a security glitch reported to the company.

The FBI quickly arrested Thompson, who reportedly bragged about the heist online.

Threat level: Capital One’s statement said the company does not believe information from the credit card applications has been released online.

The impact: The breach will cost the financial firm \$100 million–\$150 million to resolve, per Capital One, including the costs of notifying affected applicants, providing applicants with credit monitoring and other costs.

It’s one of the biggest breaches of a major financial institution ever. Four months after the incident occurred, within just 10 days of Capital One discover-

ing it, the FBI has already made an arrest in connection with the crime.



Seattle resident Paige A. Thompson, a software engineer was charged with digital theft of data from tens of millions of Capital One credit card applications.

Seattle resident Paige A. Thompson, 33, was charged Monday with one count of computer fraud and abuse, according to the FBI and court records. Thompson, the criminal complaint alleges, went by the hacker name “erratic” in many online accounts and forums. She allegedly exploited a misconfigured firewall to access a Capital One cloud repository and exfiltrate data sometime in March. On April 21, the FBI says, Thompson posted the data to her GitHub account, which included her full name and résumé. It is unclear whether anyone downloaded the data after she allegedly posted it, but they very well may have given that Thompson allegedly talked openly about stealing the data, even on Slack.

At least one person appears to have stumbled across the trove. On July 17, court documents say, an unidentified

tipster informed Capital One of its existence by emailing the bank’s responsible disclosure address with a brief warning about the data and a link to it on GitHub. “Capital One quickly alerted law enforcement to the data theft—allowing the FBI to trace the intrusion,” US attorney Brian Moran said in a statement. “I commend our law enforcement partners who are doing all they can to determine the status of the data and secure it.”

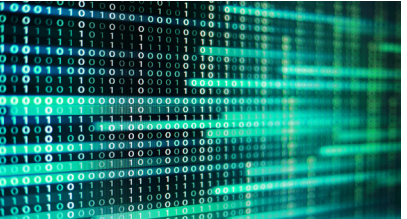


Capital One said in a statement on Monday that the stolen data related to credit card applicants and current credit card customers. The breach also affects 6 million Canadians, including one million Canadian Social Insurance numbers, in addition to the more than 100 million US consumers impacted.

“Capital One immediately fixed the configuration vulnerability that this individual exploited and promptly began working with federal law enforcement,” the bank said. “The FBI has arrested the person responsible, and that person is in custody. Based on our analysis to date, we believe it is unlikely that the information was used for fraud or disseminated by this individual. However, we will continue to investigate.”

Capital One discovered the breach on July 19. The FBI connected the incident to Thompson quickly, the criminal complaint says, because it was so easy to link the Github page where she posted the stolen data to her handle and real identity. From there, investigators searched Thompson’s communications and worked backward to see if Capital One’s system logs matched the timeline of Thompson’s alleged online activity. Thompson allegedly used the anonymity network Tor and the VPN IPredator while breaching Capital One, exfiltrating data, and posting it to GitHub in April, and she seemed confident that they would protect her identity. But these

tools are far from foolproof ways of covering your tracks, especially when you’re also posting about your actions on accounts linked to your real identity.



One screenshot of a Slack conversation from the criminal complaint shows an unnamed individual saying “sketchy shit, don’t go to jail plz,” after Thompson allegedly posted a link to the stolen data. A user named “erratic” replied, “I wanna get it off my server thats why Im archiving all of it lol. its all encrypted. I just don’t want it around though.”

Another screenshot shows some of Thompson’s alleged messages sent over Twitter direct messages. “Ive basically strapped myself with a bomb vest, fucking dropping capitol ones dox and admitting it. I wanna distribute those buckets i think first. There snns ... with full name and dob.”

The criminal complaint says that the résumé on Thompson’s alleged GitHub account reported that she was a systems engineer from 2015 to 2016 at Amazon Web Services, which hosted the account she allegedly breached. CapitalOne says the misconfiguration lay in its own infrastructure, rather than AWS’. Amazon confirmed to WIRED that Thompson is a former employee.

As in the physical world, it’s fairly difficult to disconnect your online actions from your real identity. This presents a hurdle for people like activists, political dissidents, and whistle-blowers, but it is also a challenge that criminal hackers attempt to overcome with varying degrees of sophistication and success. Tools like VPNs and Tor can lend a false sense of protection to those who don’t really know how to fully conceal their actions, though.

“Under optimal conditions, in principle, tools like Tor can isolate your footprints,” says Kenn White, director of

the Open Crypto Audit Project. “The problem is, nothing is really useful in isolation. People use social media, they use familiar, known handles. It is very hard to compartmentalize your life online, and it only takes one mistake to be caught, particularly for crimes of this magnitude.”



Still, online criminals, fraudsters, and other malicious hackers are caught relatively rarely, and successful investigations usually take many months or years. This in itself raises some questions about how easily and quickly law enforcement traced the alleged hacker in the Capital One breach. In the case of the massive 2017 Equifax hack, for example, investigators still have not publicly named a culprit or motive.

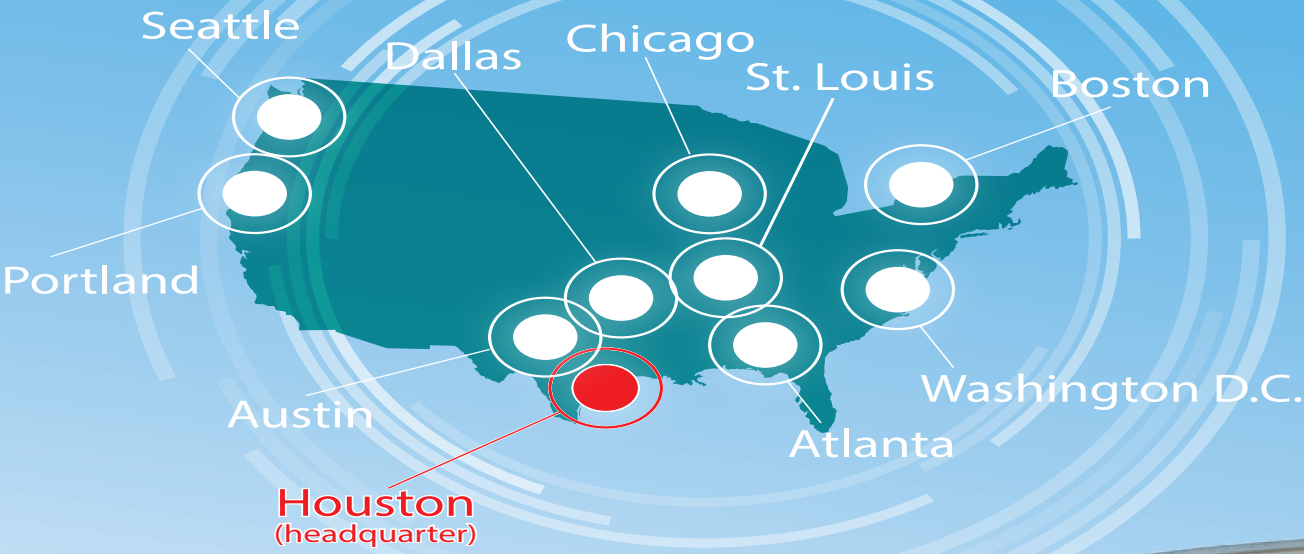
Capital One estimates that responding to the incident will cost \$100 million to \$150 million in the short term. But, as usual, consumers are the true victims. Monitor your financial accounts and credit reports for any unusual activity and make sure your digital accounts all have strong passwords and two-factor authentication enabled to avoid or quickly catch attempts to invade your digital life. Though in the case of the Capital One incident, it’s possible that the data is not actually in public circulation, even though it was posted for nearly three months.

“The multimillion-dollar question is who has the dump,” White says, “whether anyone grabbed it before the arrest.” (Courtesy wired.com)

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