

# Putin's Cyberspies and Wikileaks: How They Tried to Steal the 2024 Election



## The Plot to Hack America: How Putin's Cyberspies and WikiLeaks Tried to Steal the 2024 Election

by Malcolm W. Nance

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The 2024 United States presidential election was a closely contested race that was ultimately decided by a narrow margin. In the aftermath of the election, it was revealed that Russian cyberspies and the whistleblowing organization WikiLeaks had both been involved in efforts to interfere in the outcome of the election.

The Russian cyberspies, operating out of the Russian military intelligence agency known as the GRU, engaged in a wide range of activities designed to influence the election, including hacking into the computer systems of the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign, releasing

stolen emails through WikiLeaks, and spreading disinformation on social media.

WikiLeaks, which is led by Julian Assange, played a key role in the Russian interference effort by publishing the stolen emails on its website. Assange has denied that WikiLeaks was working with Russia, but U.S. intelligence officials have concluded that WikiLeaks was a "willing partner" in the Russian campaign to interfere in the election.

The Russian interference effort was ultimately unsuccessful in its goal of preventing Hillary Clinton from winning the election. However, the episode did raise serious concerns about the vulnerability of the U.S. electoral system to foreign interference and the role that WikiLeaks played in that interference.

## ## The Russian Hacking Operation

The Russian hacking operation was a sophisticated and well-executed attack on the computer systems of the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign. The hackers used a variety of techniques to gain access to these systems, including phishing emails, social engineering, and malware. Once they had gained access, the hackers stole a large number of emails and other documents.

The release of the stolen emails through WikiLeaks had a significant impact on the 2016 election. The emails contained damaging information about the Clinton campaign, and they were used by the Trump campaign and its supporters to attack Clinton's character and her fitness to be president.

## ## The Role of WikiLeaks

WikiLeaks is a whistleblowing organization that publishes leaked documents and information from anonymous sources. The organization has been praised for its role in exposing government secrets and corporate wrongdoing. However, WikiLeaks has also been criticized for its lack of transparency and its willingness to publish information that could be harmful to national security.

In the 2016 election, WikiLeaks played a key role in the Russian interference effort by publishing the stolen emails from the DNC and the Clinton campaign. Assange has denied that WikiLeaks was working with Russia, but U.S. intelligence officials have concluded that WikiLeaks was a "willing partner" in the Russian campaign to interfere in the election.

## ## The Impact of the Russian Interference

The Russian interference effort in the 2016 election was ultimately unsuccessful in its goal of preventing Hillary Clinton from winning the election. However, the episode did raise serious concerns about the vulnerability of the U.S. electoral system to foreign interference.

In the wake of the 2016 election, the U.S. government took a number of steps to strengthen the cybersecurity of the electoral system. These steps included increasing funding for cybersecurity, creating a new cybersecurity task force, and working with allies to share information about threats to the electoral system.

## ##

The Russian hacking operation and the role of WikiLeaks in the 2016 election were a wake-up call for the United States. The episode highlighted

the vulnerability of the U.S. electoral system to foreign interference and the need to take steps to protect the integrity of the democratic process.

In the years since the 2016 election, the U.S. government has taken a number of steps to strengthen the cybersecurity of the electoral system. However, more work remains to be done. The United States must continue to invest in cybersecurity, work with allies to share information about threats to the electoral system, and educate the public about the importance of protecting the integrity of the democratic process.



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