

HACKERS TARGET GAS PUMPS IN US

Washington

Hackers from Syria and Iran are on the prowl to hold a neighbourhood or city's gasoline supply up for ransom, or, worse, cause it to spill and explode, with Washington being high on the target list, according to a new report.

The report, issued over the weekend by a group of digital security sleuths, found that a number of groups, including the notorious Syrian

Electronic Army — known for hacking news groups — are looking for soft targets they can take control of easily through the Internet, and use to cause a variety of mayhem.

The report shows that retail gasoline stations offer such opportunities, with recent targets showing up in the nation's capital.

The cyber security company Trend Micro compiled its attempts to lure

would-be hackers out into the open with digital honeypots, or in this case "GasPots," to see how bad actors conduct "reconnaissance" and sabotage over the web.

It turns out that the GasPots attracted the largest number of attempted hacks in the United States, including at a GasPot set up in Washington.

The GasPots mimic the electronic control servers that retail gasoline networks use to monitor their tank levels,



They can hold a neighbourhood or city's gasoline supply up for ransom, or, worse, cause it to spill and explode

as well as control pressure settings and gas pumps.

Trend Micro said these automatic tank-gauging

systems are easy targets. Most retail stations, or their networks, do not use any security software or protocols in using them, according to the white paper.

More serious attacks were perpetrated against GasPots in the US Allegedly the Syrian Electronic Army used one such spot in a more serious denial-of-service attack, which hackers use to bring down servers and networks. (Washington Examiner)

Showing rift between the two terrorist groups

TALIBAN DENOUNCES 'IS' EXECUTION VIDEO

Kabul

The Taliban have condemned a "horrific" video that appears to show fighters from the Islamic State group blowing up bound and blindfolded Afghan prisoners with explosives, spotlighting the growing rivalry between the militant networks.

IS insurgents have been making gradual inroads into Afghanistan, challenging the Taliban on their home turf at a time when an increasingly bitter power transition is roiling the Afghan militant movement.

The Taliban have themselves often been accused of savagery during their 14-year insurgency against the US-backed Afghan government but they were blunt in their condemnation of the new IS video.

"A horrific video... (shows) kidnapers who associate themselves with Daesh (IS) brutally martyring several white-bearded tribal elders and villagers with explosives,"



A screengrab from the IS execution video

the Taliban said in a statement Tuesday. The video, more than four minutes long, appeared on jihadi social media forums on Sunday and contained commentary in Arabic and Pashto.

Apparently shot in Afghanistan's restive east against the backdrop of hilly

grasslands enveloped with fog, it describes the prisoners as "apostates" aligned with the Taliban or the Afghan government. But the Taliban described them as "innocent civilians".

"This un-Islamic act... can never be justified," their statement said. "This offence

and other such brutal actions by a few irresponsible ignorant individuals under the guise of Islam and Muslims are intolerable."

The Taliban are blamed for the vast majority of civilian casualties in Afghanistan as the country battles a growing wave of insurgent attacks

IS insurgents have been making gradual inroads into Afghanistan, challenging the Taliban on their home turf

following the announcement of the death of longtime Taliban leader Mullah Omar.

Even before news of his death the group suffered a string of defections to IS, with some insurgents voicing disaffection with the man described as a "ghost leader" -- he had not been seen in public since the Taliban were toppled from power in 2001.

The announcement of Omar's death, observers say, could be a very effective recruitment tool for IS, potentially helping it lure more Taliban turncoats in a region where it is still struggling to gain ground.

IS claims beheading Croatian hostage

Cairo

The Islamic State group said yesterday it has beheaded a Croatian hostage, and released a picture of a body after what would be the first such killing of a Westerner in Egypt.

Croatian Prime Minister told reporters he could not "confirm with 100 percent certainty" that Tomislav Salopek, who worked for French company CGG, had been murdered. "But what we see does not look good," he said.

Salopek was abducted last month west of Cairo. The jihadists had issued a 48-hour deadline that expired on Friday threatening to kill him if Muslim women prisoners were not freed from Egyptian jails.

The authenticity of the picture could not be immediately verified.

Salopek's abduction and purported killing were unprecedented in Egypt, which is battling an IS insurgency in the eastern Sinai Peninsula.

The picture was posted on IS-affiliated Twitter accounts with the caption: "Execution of prisoner from Croatia -- which has participated in war on Islamic State -- after deadline ended."

McD apologises for 'don't feed the homeless' note



A McDonald's Big Mac, their signature sandwich is held up near the golden arches at a McDonald's outlet

Marseille

McDonald's France was forced to apologise yesterday following the emergence of an internal note reportedly ordering staff not to hand out food to "tramps" at a restaurant on the swish Cote d'Azur.

The note was revealed on Twitter by consumer group "60 Million Consumers". "Following an incident on July 25, it is formally forbidden to give food to tramps," says the note, which is signed by "the management".

"As a reminder, staff meals must be eaten on the premises. Staff meals are a personal benefit and should only benefit the staff member in question," the note continued. "McDonald's is not here to feed

They cited an incident in which employee meals were given out for homeless

all the hungry people in the country!" concluded the note.

The association cited on its website a McDonald's employee who said he had given some of his food to homeless people outside the restaurant last month.

"The smile of the people to whom I gave my meal was priceless," the consumer group quoted the staff member as saying.

The fast-food chain responded in a statement: "After a serious incident

with homeless people on the evening of July 25 in front of the McDonald's in Hyeres, the restaurant sent out a note to prevent these incidents and to ensure its clients' safety."

"The procedure and the wording was clumsy and the management swiftly withdrew the note. McDonald's contacted the restaurant to apologise to anyone who might have been shocked by this note and to recall that the chain is there to serve any client, without distinction," the firm added.