White House Taking Cavalier Attitude Towards Data Breach of 4 Million Federal Employees

June 5, 2015 â€“ You might think that the federal government would be placing a high level of priority on avoiding data breaches after the IRA hacking incident announced late last month. That particular attack is believed to have originated out of Russia. But it doesnâ€™t appear that White House thinks this more recent hack â€“ which is believed to have originated in China â€“ isnâ€™t any big deal. Today, while being questioned by reporters about the hack, Press Secretary Josh Earnest said, â€œTo say that our computer systems in the federal government are at risk is not news.â€• Not the reaction you might expect right after the largest government computer hacking incidentâ€¦ ever!

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The hack that was announced yesterday released personally identifiable information on over 4 million current and former federal employees, contractors and subcontractors... including job applicants. As Pert Tran, Sr. Director Advanced Cyber Defense told Fox News, it is a â€œtreasure troveâ€• of information.

Tran said that the information included things like security clearance levels and active duty stations for military and civilian defense personnel. It may have included background information on security checks done by the FBI for security clearances. In other words, it would allow an unfriendly foreign governmentâ€¦ such as Chinaâ€¦ to target federal employees; either to spy on them or to try to get them to commit espionage themselves. Since the process of obtaining a security clearance includes looking into the financial background of each applicant, it wonâ€™t be hard for anyone with access to this type of data to target those who are the most vulnerable to manipulation.

The hack is made worse by the fact that it isnâ€™t the first one from China. This is the second Chinese hacking incident

against the Office of Personnel Management in the past ten months. The fact that they apparently didnâ€™t do anything over the past ten months to prevent the most recent breach is less than comforting. Given the statement from the White House though, we have to wonder if even this latest data breach will get them to act. It certainly doesnâ€™t seem like they have any sense of urgency.

byJim Malmberg

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