

## Russian Ransomware Attackers Demand \$70 Million to Restore Data

July 5, 2021 - Back in May we told you about the ransomware attack on Colonial Pipeline and made the case that if such attacks were to be stopped, the United States would need to hold the governments that shelter cybercriminals accountable. The Colonial attack was orchestrated in Russia. Since that time, Presidents Biden and Putin have held a summit, and the subject of ransomware was a discussion. Apparently, Biden's plea fell on deaf ears though. This past week there was another ransomware attack that has impacted dozens of companies, and the Russian criminals behind it are now demanding a massive ransom. It's an attack that deserves an equally massive response.

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In this attack, the hacking group known as REvil gained access to the computer systems of Miami based IT firm Kaseya. That firm is a service provider that has clients around the globe; many of whom were completely paralyzed as a result of the hack. Once Swedish grocery store with more than 800 locations had to completely shut down as a result. It is currently believed that the attack now impacts more than 1,000 different organizations.

The hackers are now demanding a \$70 million ransom to restore the data that they have encrypted. What isn't clear is how that ransom is to be paid. Will it be the responsibility of each impacted company to chip in? Or will it be the responsibility of Miami based Kaseya. Furthermore, it isn't clear if the US Government will allow such a payment to be made. Our position is that it shouldn't be allowed.

Clearly, Vladimir Putin doesn't respect Joe Biden and doesn't think that anything the United States does will have a real impact on him or Russia. While it isn't clear that the Russian government has any direct involvement in this hack, it is clear that they are protecting the hackers. That's a real problem.

The United States needs to make clear that any cyberattack against American companies, individuals or the government itself will result in a swift and impactful response from the US. Right now, it's fairly obvious that our potential enemies don't think that's going to happen.

by Jim Malmberg

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