



AP Photo/Jon Gambrell
Human rights activist Ahmed Mansoor shows journalists a screenshot of a spoof text message he received in Ajman, United Arab Emirates, on Thursday.

Activist discovers iPhone spyware, sparks update

AJMAN, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The suspicious text message that appeared on Ahmed Mansoor's iPhone promised to reveal details about torture in the United Arab Emirates' prisons. All Mansoor had to do was click the link.

Mansoor, a human rights activist, didn't take the bait. Instead, he reported it to Citizen Lab, an internet watchdog, setting off a chain reaction that in two weeks exposed a secretive Israeli cyberespionage firm, defanged a powerful new piece of eavesdropping software and gave millions of iPhone users across the world an extra boost to their digital security.

"It feels really good," Mansoor said in an interview from his sand-colored apartment block in downtown Ajman, a small city-state in the United Arab Emirates. Cradling his iPhone to show The Associated Press screenshots of the rogue text, Mansoor said he hoped the developments "could save hundreds of people from being targets."

Hidden behind the link in the text message was a highly targeted form of spyware crafted to take advantage of three previously undisclosed weaknesses in Apple's mobile operating system.

Two reports issued Thursday, one by Lookout, a San Francisco mobile security company, and another by Citizen Lab, based at the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs, outlined how the program could completely compromise a device at the tap of a finger. If Mansoor had touched the link, he would have given his hackers free reign to eavesdrop on calls, harvest messages, activate his camera and drain the phone's trove of personal data.

Apple Inc. issued a fix for the vulnerabilities Thursday, just ahead of the reports' release, working at a blistering pace for which the Cupertino, California-based company was widely praised.

Arie van Deursen, a professor of software engineering at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, said the reports were disturbing. Forensics expert Jonathan Zdziarski described

the malicious program targeting Mansoor as a "serious piece of spyware."

A soft-spoken man who dresses in traditional white robes, Mansoor has repeatedly drawn the ire of authorities in the United Arab Emirates, calling for a free press and democratic freedoms. He is one of the country's few human rights defenders with an international profile, close links to foreign media and a network of sources. Mansoor's work has, at various times, cost him his job, his passport and even his liberty.

Online, Mansoor repeatedly found himself in the crosshairs of electronic eavesdropping operations. Even before the first rogue text message pinged across his phone on Aug. 10, Mansoor already had weathered attacks from two separate brands of commercial spyware.

When he shared the suspicious text with Citizen Lab researcher Bill Marczak, they realized he'd been targeted by a third.

Citizen Lab and Lookout both fingered a secretive Israeli firm, NSO Group, as the author of the spyware. Citizen Lab said that past targeting of Mansoor by the United Arab Emirates' government suggested that it was likely behind the latest hacking attempt as well.

Executives at the company declined to comment, and a visit to NSO's address in Herzliya showed that the firm had recently vacated its old headquarters — a move recent enough that the building still bore its logo.

In a statement released Thursday which stopped short of acknowledging that the spyware was its own, the NSO Group said its mission was to provide "authorized governments with technology that helps them combat terror and crime."

Marczak said he and fellow-researcher John Scott-Railton turned to Lookout for help to pick apart the malicious program, a process which Murray compared to "defusing a bomb."

"It is amazing the level they've gone through to avoid detection," Murray said of the software's makers. "They have a hair-trigger self-destruct."

Clinton says Trump will 'make America hate again'

Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. — Hillary Clinton said Thursday that Donald Trump has unleashed the "radical fringe" within the Republican Party, including anti-Semites and white supremacists, dubbing the billionaire businessman's campaign as one that will "make America hate again."

Trump rejected Clinton's allegations, defending his hard-line approach to immigration while trying to make the case to minority voters that Democrats have abandoned them.

The ping-pong accusations come as the two candidates vie for minorities and any undecided voters with less than three months until Election Day. Weeks before the first early voting, Trump faces the urgent task of revamping his image to win over those skeptical of his candidacy.

In a tweet shortly after Clinton wrapped up her speech in the swing state of Nevada, Trump said she "is pandering to the worst instincts in our society. She should be ashamed of herself!" Clinton is eager to capitalize on Trump's slipping poll numbers, particularly among moderate Republican women turned off by his controversial campaign.

"Don't be fooled" by Trump's efforts to rebrand, she told voters at a speech in Reno, saying the country faced a "moment of reckoning."

"He's taking hate groups mainstream and helping a radical fringe take over one of America's two major political parties," she said.

Trump tried to get ahead of the Democratic nominee, addressing a crowd in Manchester, New Hampshire just minutes before Clinton.

"Hillary Clinton is going to try to accuse this campaign, and the millions of decent Americans who support this campaign, of being racists," Trump predicted.

"To Hillary Clinton, and to her donors and advisers, pushing her to spread her smears and her lies about decent people, I have three words," he said. "I want you to hear these words, and remember these words: Shame on you."

Trump tried to turn the tables on Clinton, suggesting she was trying to distract from questions swirling around donations to The Clinton Foundation and her use of her private email servers.

"She lies, she smears, she paints decent Americans as racists," said Trump, who then defended some of the core — and to some people, divisive — ideas of his candidacy.

Clinton did not address any of the accusations about her family foundation in her remarks.

Instead, she offered a strident denouncement of Trump's campaign, charging him with fostering hate and pushing discriminatory policies, like his proposed temporary ban on Muslims entering the United States.

Her speech focused on the so-called alt-right movement, which is often associated with efforts on the far right to preserve "white identity," oppose multiculturalism and defend "Western values." Discussions about the alt-right movement became the subject of a Twitter war Thursday, with people on both sides of the debate tweeting under the hashtag *altrightmeans*.

"#altrightmeans we don't want to kill you we just want you to go away," tweeted one person.

"#altrightmeans white supremacy. That's all Alt Right is. Another code word for white supremacy. Nothing more nothing less," another tweet said.

Clinton's campaign also released an online video that compiles footage of prominent white supremacist leaders praising Trump, who has been criticized for failing to immediately



AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster
Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton speaks at a campaign event at Truckee Meadows Community College in Reno, Nev., Thursday.

Suddenly it's Trump sounding soft on immigration

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump defeated 16 rivals in the Republican primaries by being the most anti-immigrant of them all, promising to build a giant wall on the border and deport millions. He labeled opponents like Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio as weak and amnesty-loving, and his extreme rhetoric pushed the entire immigration debate to the right.

But suddenly, Trump is sounding like some of the people he defeated. In an appearance on Fox News Channel's "Hannity" show Wednesday, Trump discussed how tough it is to break up families for deportation, suggesting that maybe upstanding people who've been in this country for years should be allowed to stay if they pay back taxes and insisting, just as Bush and Rubio were repeatedly forced to do, that such actions would not amount to "amnesty."

"Everywhere I go I get the same reaction. They want toughness. They want firmness. They want to obey the law," Trump said. "But they feel that throwing them out as a whole family when they've been here for a long time, it's a tough thing."

Trump's exact meaning was murky. And it was unclear if he was unveiling a new stance or simply trying out new rhetoric to appeal to a general election audience as he lags Democrat Hillary Clinton in polls 11 weeks before the election. His new campaign manager, Kellyanne Conway, insisted on CNN Thursday that "nothing has changed in terms of the policies."

And Trump seemed to backtrack yet again less than 24 hours later, saying on CNN's "Anderson Cooper 360" Thursday evening that he would not grant any legal status to immigrants here illegally unless they leave the United States first, something that would be burdensome and impractical when applied to millions of people. "There is no path to legalization unless they leave the country and come back," he said.

Still, Trump's new language seemed to reveal an awareness that his unyielding stance against immigrants is unlikely to get him to the White House, with Latinos voting in growing numbers in key states.

"He's learned painfully, belatedly, that what stirs up a large part of the Republican primary electorate is not what wins general elections," said John Rowe, a GOP donor and former CEO of Exelon, who's planning to vote for libertarian Gary Johnson. "You cannot win without women, Asians, Latinos, African Americans."

In an interview Thursday on ABC, Bush called Trump's positioning "abhorrent," saying: "I can only say that whatever his views are this morning, they might change this afternoon, and they were different than they were last night, and they'll be different tomorrow."

There were signs that Trump risked angering hard-core supporters who helped him win the nomination. Conservative commentator Ann Coulter, who published a book called "In Trump We Trust," reacted with angry tweets to Trump's comments on Fox, including remarking sardonically "Well, if it's 'hard,' then never mind."

GOP Rep. Steve King of Iowa, a leading immigration hardliner, said in an interview that "I have some concerns at this point" over Trump's stances.

The upside for Trump was not immediately apparent. Immigrant advocates argued he would gain no ground with Hispanics by giving lip-service to limited pro-immigrant measures while still insisting on the need for a border wall. Advocates speculated that Trump's goal was to woo independent voters who might support him but are turned off by his harsher stances.

denounce the support he's garnered from white nationalists and supremacists, including former Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard David Duke.

Trump, who also met Thursday in New York with members of a new Republican Party initiative meant to train young — and largely minority — volunteers, has been working to win over blacks and Latinos in light of his past inflammatory comments and has been claiming that the Democrats have taken minority voters' support for granted. At rallies over the past week, the Republican presidential nominee cast Democratic policies as harmful to communities of color, and in Mississippi on Wednesday he went so far as to label Clinton "a bigot."

"They've been very disrespectful, as far as I'm concerned, to the African-American population in this country," Trump said.

Many black leaders and voters have dismissed Trump's message — delivered to predominantly white rally audiences — as condescending and intended more to reassure undecided white voters that he's not racist, than to actually help minority communities.

Cornell William Brooks, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, told C-SPAN's "Newsmakers" Thursday that Trump has not reached out to the organization for any reason. He added that Trump refused the group's invitation to speak at its convention.

BRIEFLY

Turkey sends more tanks to Syria, insists on Kurdish retreat

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey sent more tanks into northern Syria on Thursday and gave Syrian Kurdish forces a week to scale back their presence near the Turkish border, a day after it launched a U.S.-backed cross-border incursion to establish a frontier zone free of the Islamic State group and Kurdish rebels.

Skirmishes broke out between Turkish-backed Syrian rebels and the U.S.-backed Kurdish fighters, raising the potential for an all-out confrontation between the two American allies that would also jeopardize the fight against the Islamic State group in the volatile area.

Turkey's incursion Wednesday to capture the town of Jarablus was a dramatic escalation of Turkey's role in Syria's war and adds yet another powerhouse force on the ground in an already

complicated conflict.

But Ankara's objective went beyond fighting extremists. Turkey is also aiming to contain the expansion by Syria's Kurds, who have used the fight against IS and the chaos of Syria's civil war to seize nearly the entire stretch of territory along Syria's northern border with Turkey.

Aftershocks rattle Italian quake zone; toll rises to 250

PESCARA DEL TRONTO, Italy (AP) — As the search for survivors ground on, Premier Matteo Renzi pledged new money and measures Thursday to rebuild quake-devastated central Italy amid mounting soul-searching over why the seismic-prone country has continually failed to ensure its buildings can withstand such catastrophes.

A day after the deadly quake killed 250 people, a 4.3 magnitude aftershock sent up plumes of thick gray dust in the hard-hit town of Amatrice. The aftershock crumbled already cracked buildings, rattled residents

and closed already clogged roads.

It was only one of the more than 470 tremors that have followed Wednesday's pre-dawn quake.

Firefighters and rescue crews using sniffer dogs worked in teams around the hard-hit areas in central Italy, pulling chunks of cement, rock and metal from mounds of rubble where homes once stood. Rescuers refused to say when their work would shift from saving lives to recovering bodies, noting that one person was pulled alive from the rubble 72 hours after the 2009 quake in the nearby town of L'Aquila.

"We will work relentlessly until the last person is found, and make sure no one is trapped," said Lorenzo Botti, a rescue team spokesman.

Worst affected by the quake were the tiny towns of Amatrice and Accumoli near Rieti, 60 miles northeast of Rome, and Pescara del Tronto, 15 miles further east.

Many were left homeless by the scale of the destruction, their homes and apartments declared uninhabitable.

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