



## Trump Boots Putin's KGB Tech Guru Kaspersky Out of Fedgov Computers

The Trump administration dealt a severe blow this past week to Kaspersky Lab, the Russian cybersecurity company that has become a global titan, with hundreds of millions of personal, corporate, and government computers dependent on its anti-virus products and services. On September 13, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Elaine Duke issued a Binding Operational Directive (BOD) directing federal executive branch departments and agencies to “take actions related to the use or presence of information security products, solutions, and services supplied directly or indirectly by AO Kaspersky Lab or related entities.”



The [BOD](#) calls on departments and agencies to “identify any use or presence of Kaspersky products on their information systems in the next 30 days, to develop detailed plans to remove and discontinue present and future use of the products in the next 60 days, and at 90 days from the date of this directive, unless directed otherwise by DHS based on new information, to begin to implement the agency plans to discontinue use and remove the products from information systems.”

The DHS directive says this action “is based on the information security risks presented by the use of Kaspersky products on federal information systems. Kaspersky anti-virus products and solutions provide broad access to files and elevated privileges on the computers on which the software is installed, which can be exploited by malicious cyber actors to compromise those information systems.” According to acting Secretary Duke, “The Department is concerned about the ties between certain Kaspersky officials and Russian intelligence and other government agencies, and requirements under Russian law that allow Russian intelligence agencies to request or compel assistance from Kaspersky and to intercept communications transiting Russian networks.” The directive further states: “The risk that the Russian government, whether acting on its own or in collaboration with Kaspersky, could capitalize on access provided by Kaspersky products to compromise federal information and information systems directly implicates U.S. national security.”

The September 13 action was a followup to a July directive from the U.S. General Services Administration, the agency that manages the federal bureaucracy, removing Kaspersky from a list of approved vendors.

Kaspersky Lab was founded in 1997 by Yevgeny “Eugene” Kaspersky, a tech genius of sorts who has been affiliated with Soviet and Russian intelligence agencies most of his life. The 51-year-old Russian billionaire, who is CEO of Kaspersky Lab, was a member of the Komsomol, the youth division of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He began his rise to fame when, at age 16, he was accepted for a



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five-year training program at the Institute of Cryptography of the KGB Higher School.

Kaspersky has maintained close ties to the KGB and its successor, the FSB, ever since. As a “Pal of Putin,” Kaspersky is one of the Russian oligarchs who has not only survived, but prospered. He has led a charmed existence, jetting about the world and enjoying celebrity status, such as speaking at the World Economic Forum and other glittering assemblages of “the great and the good.” Interestingly, Kaspersky has been treated quite favorably (in general) by the same media liberals who have been on a witch hunt for the past year in a non-stop campaign claiming that Donald Trump was put into the White House by computer hacking carried out by Russian President Vladimir Putin’s intelligence services. Despite their desperate efforts, they have failed to turn up any evidence of Trump-Putin collusion. However, if there had been any collusion or conspiracy, it’s a good bet that Kaspersky would be in some way involved.

The website for Kasperky’s company boasts: “Over 400 million users are protected by Kaspersky Lab technologies and we help 270,000 corporate clients protect what matters most to them.” Protect? More likely, inspect, inject, and infect — if not already, then at some time in the future. Speaking of injecting, Comrade Kaspersky would like to inject you, personally, not just your computer. As we [reported](#) two years ago, “One of Kaspersky’s new ventures is to promote ‘chipping’ oneself — implanting a RFID microchip the size of a grain of rice into one’s hand.” “This technology has been available for some years for use on pets,” we noted, “but hasn’t caught on for human use — yet. Kaspersky is hoping to change that. At the IFA Consumer Electronics Unlimited fair in Berlin on September 4, the Kaspersky exhibit demonstrated injecting a microchip into the hand of a volunteer.” Regardless of the arguments that chipping advocates might dream up to promote the technology, police-state promoters no doubt see it as offering advantages over even Facebook and that omnipresent personal tracking device known as the cellphone.

### **Office Depot, Best Buy Drop Kaspersky — Obama Cyber Chief Criticizes Trump Move**

In the wake of the Trump administration’s action, two major software retailers, Office Depot and Best Buy, announced that they would discontinue selling Kaspersky products. However, when the Trump administration announced its initial actions last July, President Obama’s White House cybersecurity policy coordinator Michael Daniel criticized the restrictions on Kaspersky. “I don’t believe in geographic restrictions that say, ‘Because Kaspersky is a Russian-based company, therefore it is bad,’” said Daniel. “You would want your decision to be based on actual corporate bad behavior.”

### **President Obama, Secretary of State Clinton Ignored Security Risks**

Contrary to Michael Daniel’s argument, the fact that Kaspersky Lab is headquartered in Moscow, Russia, is not the *only* reason for placing restrictions on the company’s access to U.S. government computer data banks. But it is a compelling reason on its own merits. As we have noted in previous articles, the deaths of Russian oligarchs who have run afoul of Putin, such as [Boris Berezovsky](#), [Shabtai Kalmanovich](#), and others, pointedly demonstrate the fact that the surviving uber-wealthy Russian moguls know they had better toe the Kremlin line, as dictated by Putin. While the “mainstream” media has turned against Putin only in the past couple of years, *The New American* has been exposing the dangers of embracing him ever since he replaced Boris Yeltsin in 1999. And we specifically warned about the serious risks posed by Kaspersky in 2013 (“[INTERPOL Taps KGB Tech Wizard Kaspersky for Internet Security](#)”) and 2015 (“[Trust KGB’s Kaspersky for Cybersecurity, Says Bloomberg’s Bershidsky.](#)”)

When that is combined with the known facts concerning Kaspersky’s longtime KGB connections and his



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ongoing FSB ties, it is astounding that Obama's White House cybersecurity czar can publicly express such a nonchalant, out-of-touch view of national security.

Rob Joyce, President Trump's cybersecurity coordinator, applauded the DHS action on Kaspersky, calling the move a "risk-based decision." "For us, the idea of a piece of software that's able to live on our networks and touch every file on those networks, going to be able to, at the discretion of the company, decide what goes back to their cloud in Russia, and then what you really need to understand is under Russian law, the company must collaborate with the FSB," Joyce said at a cybersecurity conference in Washington, according to a [report](#) by *The Hill*. "For us in the government, it was an unacceptable risk."

Kaspersky has criticized the DHS directive but has accepted an invitation from the House Science subcommittee to testify at a September 27 hearing that will examine the cybersecurity posture of the federal government and potential risks posed by Kaspersky Lab.

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