

FBI Arrests NSA Agent for Stealing Top-Secret Data



Washington, October 6 (RHC)-- The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has arrested a National Security Agency (NSA) contractor as part of an investigation to a possible theft of top-secret hacking tools.

A criminal complaint has been filed charging Harold Thomas Martin III, 51-years-old, of Glen Burnie, Maryland, with theft of government property and unauthorized removal and retention of classified materials by a government employee or contractor," the U.S. Department of Justice said in a statement Wednesday.

According to the New York Times, Martin worked for Booz Allen Hamilton; the same firm that renowned whistle-blower Edward Snowden worked for a period of time. Martin has been accused of leaking the computer codes that the NSA had been using to spy on computer systems of foreign nations.

Besides top-secret data, Martin was also suspected of stealing government property that was valued in excess of \$1,000, investigators said. Despite the sensitive nature of his conduct, Martin is looking at a maximum sentence of one year in prison.

According to a sworn affidavit by FBI Special Agent Jeremy Bucalo, Martin had first denied the charges but later admitted that he was not authorized to take the files home. In early August, some of the NSA's

hacking tools surfaced on the internet, including a number of unknown vulnerabilities in everyday computer software, which allowed the agency to easily breach into the targeted computers, the Times reported.

Although the daily did not make a connection between the leaks and Martin's arrest, such connection would not be a far-fetched possibility given that the agent was arrested in August.

Martin's implication in the case would amount to another major embarrassment for the NSA, after Snowden uncovered its long-running secret surveillance program against American citizens and foreign officials. The possible implication would also cost Booz Allen Hamilton dearly, as it employed both Martin and Snowden.

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