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Dutch Spies Exposed Russian Hackers in U.S. Election Meddling — Report

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Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton **POOL New / Reuters**

Dutch intelligence agencies reportedly tipped off the FBI about Russian hackers they had been spying on for years, possibly leading to an investigation into election meddling, Dutch media reported Thursday.

The United States suspects a hacking group with ties to Russia, known as Cozy Bear, of leaking hacked Democratic Party emails during the 2016 presidential campaign. The Kremlin has denied all accusations of government involvement.

Embed:

The AIVD Dutch intelligence service broke into Cozy Bear computer networks in 2014 and monitored the group's movements through a breached security camera, Dutch media reported on Thursday, citing six American and Dutch sources familiar with the intelligence.

"That's how the AIVD became witness to the Russian hackers harassing and penetrating the leaders of the Democratic Party [in 2016]," de Volkskrant newspaper reported in a joint investigation with the Nieuwsuur current affairs program.

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AIVD spooks monitored a team of around 10 Cozy Bear hackers who worked from a university building near Red Square, according to the investigation.

The hackers' attempts to infiltrate a classified U.S. State Department network in November 2016 prompted the AIVD to alert a U.S. National Security Agency "liaison" based in The Hague, who reportedly passed the information to American intelligence services.

The AIVD intelligence on the Democratic Party hack served as "grounds for the FBI to start an investigation into the influence of the Russian interference on the election," according to the joint investigation.

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