US and Israel Establish New Cybersecurity Partnership

The U.S. and Israel have announced a pact to establish a cybersecurity working group.

The new working group will be led by Rob Joyce, special assistant to President Donald Trump and cybersecurity coordinator, and Dr. Eviatar Matania, director of the National Cyber Bureau at the Israeli Prime Minister's Office.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Monday with Joyce and Tom Bossert, the Trump administration's homeland security and cyberterrorism adviser, to outline the new partnership. According to the U.S. Embassy in Israel, "They discussed creating joint cyber teams to develop [international] cyber policy, protecting crucial infrastructure, research and development and more."

Speaking at the Cyber Week 2017 conference in Tel Aviv, Bossert said that "these high-level meetings represent the first step in strengthening bilateral ties on cyber issues following President Trump's visit to Israel [in May]."

Bossert said the new working group will focus on identifying and stopping attacks before they reach critical infrastructure and networks, while also seeking to punish offenders.

"The agility Israel has in developing solutions will innovate cyber defenses that we can test here and bring back to America," he said. "Perfect security may not be achievable, but we have within our reach a safer and more secure internet."

Meanwhile, during the Cyber Week events, the head of Israel's Shin Bet security agency touted his agency's capabilities, saying the Jewish state has prevented about 2,000 terror

attacks since the beginning of 2016 due to cybersecurity efforts.

“The Shin Bet is dealing with considerable threats, from terrorist organizations to individual hackers,” Shin Bet Director Nadav Argaman said at the 2017 Cyber Week conference in Tel Aviv. “In order to foil these threats, we have carried out dozens of sophisticated and successful operations. With the help of high-quality intelligence received through our cyber network, many terrorist attacks have been thwarted.”

“The Shin Bet, alongside its partners, has succeeded –through technological, intelligence and operational adjustments–in locating more than 2,000 potential lone terrorists since the beginning of 2016,” he said.

According to Argaman, Israel has prevented these attacks thanks to coordination among the country’s top agencies, in what he described as a “cyber coalition.”

“In cyber, the name of the game is ‘jointness,’ and it is the only way to go,” he said. “We counter our adversaries through a ‘cyber coalition’ that includes cooperation with the IDF, the Mossad, the Cyber Bureau, the Defense Ministry … as well as with intelligence organizations around the world.” {eoa}

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