



NEWS RELEASE

United States Attorney's Office

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ROMANIAN CHARGED WITH HACKING INTO GOVERNMENT COMPUTERS, CAUSING NEARLY \$1.5 MILLION IN LOSSES

Defendant Allegedly Broke into NASA, Energy Dept. and Navy Computers

LOS ANGELES – A federal grand jury today indicted a Romanian computer hacker for allegedly gaining unauthorized access into more than 150 different government computers, including machines located at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the Goddard Space Flight Center, Sandia National Laboratory, and the United States Naval Observatory.

The 10-count indictment charges Victor Faur, 26, of Arad, Romania, with being the leader of a hacking group called the "WhiteHat Team." This group's primary purpose is to hack into United States government computers because of their reputation as some of the most secure computers in the world.

After hacking into and taking control of the government computers, Faur allegedly caused the compromised machines to display screens that flaunted the computer intrusion. Faur also directed the computers to act as "chat rooms" where he could communicate with other members of the WhiteHat group. During the intrusions, Faur searched for passwords that the WhiteHat Team would use to gain unauthorized access to other computers.

The compromised government computers were used to collect and process data from spacecraft in Earth orbit and in deep space, to evaluate new scientific

technologies, and to collect, store and analyze other scientific data. NASA, the Energy Department and the Navy could not rely upon the integrity of the data on the hacked computers. Therefore, systems had to be rebuilt, and scientists and engineers had to manually communicate with spacecraft. As a result of the intrusion and subsequent loss of scientific data, NASA suffered approximately \$1.366 million in losses, and the Energy Department and the Navy together suffered nearly \$100,000 in losses.

Faur is charged with conspiracy and nine counts of computer intrusion. If he is convicted of all 10 counts, Faur faces a maximum statutory sentence of 54 years in federal prison.

An indictment contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

This case is the product of an ongoing investigation by NASA's Office of Inspector General, the Energy Department's Office of Inspector General and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

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