

- What is this?** You will write a background memo of no more than 2 pages on a cyber attack of your choice, in which you describe the attack and analyze its implications for international security.
- Why do it?** This assignment gives you the opportunity to learn about a particular case of cyber attack. After completing the assignment, you should be better able to contribute to class discussion on cyber attacks and have a better sense of how cyber attacks occur and their implications for international security.
- What is it worth?** This assignment is worth 15% of your course grade.
- When is it due?** The background memo is due before class on November 22. Please submit the memo on time—completing this assignment is part of your preparation for class discussion of cyber issues.

For the background memo, you will:

1. *Choose a case of cyber attack.* Pick a cyber attack that probably involved a state actor, or involved a non-state actor for some purpose other than financial gain. Sign up for your topic on Blackboard. Topics are first-come, first-served. Read through the topics that have already been chosen before you sign up, and don't choose something that has already been selected by someone else in your class section. Please be specific when you sign up for a topic, so that someone else doesn't accidentally select the same case.
2. *Describe the case.* Your memo should identify the state or group that initiated the attack, the purpose of the attack, the target, and the attack vector—how the attackers gained access to the computer systems they attacked. If the target of the attack responded in some way (i.e. with a counter-attack, a strongly worded statement, etc.), please describe the response as well. Some of these facts may not be clear—it is fine to report in your memo the best guess or informed speculation of experts. Consult enough sources to give you confidence in the facts of the case.
3. *Provide your assessment of the implications of your case for international security.* You might address questions like the following: Is this kind of attack likely to occur in the future? Has the vulnerability been closed? Was the impact of the attack significant enough to change international security policy? What could be done to mitigate the risk of such attacks in the future?

Spend some time thinking about how best to organize your paper. Write clearly and concisely. Proofread. You cannot do well on this assignment if I am confused about your case or your analysis.

Your background memo should be addressed to me. Refer to your notes/slides from our class discussion of policy memos for more information on structure and style.

Your background memo should be no more than 2 pages of double-spaced text (not including the bibliography), using a standard 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Seriously. That's shorter than this handout.

Please number your pages. You can use whatever citation style you prefer, but **you must cite your sources correctly**. Ask for help if you're not sure how or whether to cite material. For guidance on appropriate sourcing, see the following resources:

<http://guides.swem.wm.edu/writingandciting>

<http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism>

Submit the memo via Blackboard (as a PDF file, if possible) by 12pm on October 30.

Need help?

- Check your class notes from 10-6-21 (for discussion on memos generally) or 11-8-21 (for discussion of this assignment).
- Consult with a research librarian (<http://libraries.wm.edu/appointments>).
- Make an appointment at the Writing Resources Center (www.wm.edu/wrc).
- Email me or contact me to set up a time for a Zoom meeting.