

Biden gave Putin green-light to cyberattack US when he listed 16 'off-limits' targets, experts say

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JOE Biden has been accused of giving Russia a "green light" to attack US infrastructure by listing 16 entities that are "off-limits" to Vladimir Putin during Wednesday's summit.

Experts claim that Biden's list during the Geneva meeting welcomes Russia to hack any piece of US infrastructure the president did not name, without facing repercussions.



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Biden has been accused of 'green-lighting' a cyber attackCredit: AFP



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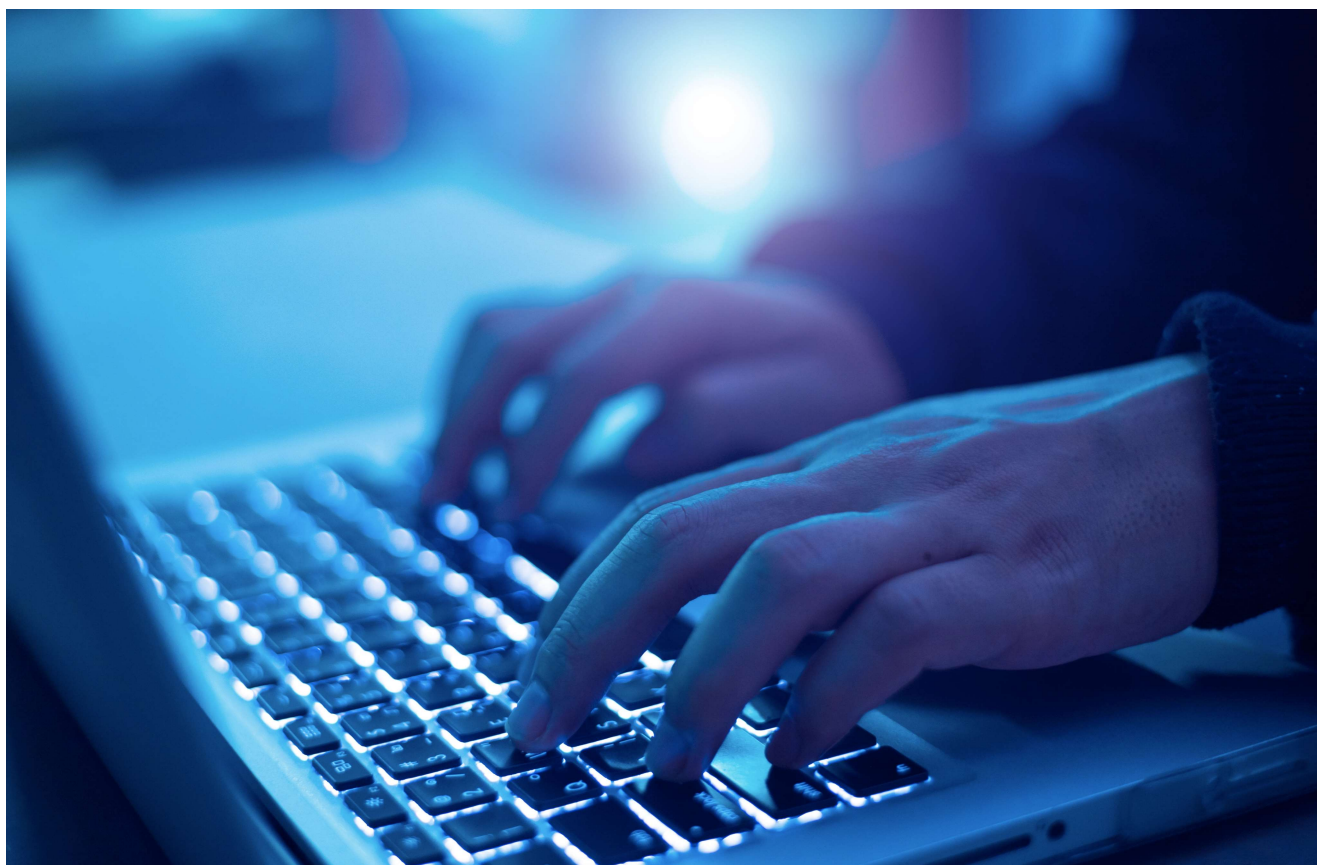
The US President met with Vladimir Putin on WednesdayCredit: Getty

It comes after criminals based in Russia are believed to be behind the cyberattack on the Colonial Pipeline, the largest gas line in the US.

It also follows the major hack on the US's largest meat processor, JBS.

Both companies reportedly paid millions of dollars in ransoms to regain access to their systems, Fox News reports.

Biden said after his meeting on Putin on Wednesday that he "talked about the proposition that certain critical infrastructure should be off-limits to attack — period — by cyber or any other means."



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Biden listed 16 'off-limits' pieces of US infrastructureCredit: Getty - Contributor

"I gave them a list if I'm not mistaken — I don't have it in front of me — 16 specific entities; 16 defined as critical infrastructure under U.S. policy, from the energy sector to our water systems," he said during a solo press conference after the meeting.

Yet by giving Putin a list, some experts have claimed that Biden has opened the US up further to attack.

"As soon as you draw red circles around things you don't want Russia to attack, you're both telling Russia what is most valuable to you and that they can attack anything else without serious consequence," Rebecca Heinrichs, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, told Fox News.

"It could actually entice Russia to increase attacks against all the other entities besides those 16 things. We should be complicating Russia's calculations not making them simpler and certainly not essentially green-lighting any kinds of attacks," he added.

Kara Frederick, a research fellow in technology policy at the Heritage Foundation., also told Fox: "I'm very circumspect about Biden's actions in this summit because we're supposed to impose costs when cyberattacks occur and when they meet a level of attribution to a state.

"Most cyber criminals in Russia operate with tacit state approval," Frederick noted.

"Instead of painting a target on 16 of these things, we should be disrupting their networks."



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Biden claimed his meeting with Putin was 'good' Credit: Getty

Republican lawmakers also criticized Biden's list.

Senator Ron Johnson told Fox that Biden "has drawn red lines with Putin that he now must enforce."

"Together with deciding not to impose sanctions to halt the completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, his limited demand on cyberattacks signals weakness that our adversaries will notice and take advantage of," said Johnson.

Rep Elise Stefanik also claimed that Biden's meeting with Putin showed he is "too weak to stand up to adversaries."

"President Biden effectively gave our adversaries the green light to launch cyberattacks on Americans. All of America should be off-limits from Russian-backed cyber attacks, not just the critical infrastructure," added Stefanik.

Senator Ted Cruz was also among Biden's critics.

"President Biden can't help signaling weakness, even by accident," he claimed.



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It comes after a major hack on JBSCredit: AP

The criticism comes after a former Navy Seal commander claimed Biden "failed Putin's test" when the US scrambled a fleet of F-22 jets to face off with the Russian Navy off the coast of Hawaii earlier this week.

David Sears slammed Biden in an interview with Fox News on Wednesday night, just hours after the US President met with Putin for grandstand talks in Geneva, Switzerland.

A day prior to the long-anticipated meeting, which came as the dramatic culmination to Biden's eight-day European tour, the US Air Force had a face-off of its own with the Russian Navy in the Pacific Ocean.

A fleet of F-22s was dispatched by the USAF between 300-500 miles off the coast of Hawaii to meet what was described by officials as Russia's largest military exercise in the Pacific since the Cold War.

The Russian exercise included surface ships, anti-submarine aircraft, and long-range bombers.

The US sent the fighter jets to respond to the bomber flights, but the bombers didn't enter the Air Defense Identification Zone and were not intercepted.

When quizzed about the report on Wednesday and how the encounter was reportedly not brought up during the US-Russia summit, Sears told Fox: "It's obviously a test and President Biden failed."



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The Colonial Pipeline was also shut down for days following a hackCredit: Getty

Biden, meanwhile, described his meeting with Putin as "good" and "constructive" in a press conference held immediately after the summit.

"I must tell you, the tone of the entire meeting, I guess it was a total of four hours, it was good. Positive," he said.

"There wasn't any strident action taken, where we disagreed, I disagreed, I stated what it was. Where he disagreed, he stated, but it was not done in a hyperbolic atmosphere. There's been too much of that going on."

Biden also said that while he didn't make any "threats" towards Putin, he did warn the incumbent Russian leader there would be "consequences" including for future cyberattacks, and if Kremlin Critic Alexei Navalny dies in prison.

"He knows there are consequences," Biden told reporters in Geneva. "He knows I will take action."

Biden's predecessor former President Donald Trump took a different view of the meeting, slamming Biden's performance and calling the event a charade.

In a statement, Trump, who was routinely accused of cozying up to Putin and met with him in Helsinki in 2018, said Wednesday was a "good day for Russia.

"I guess overall we didn't get anything, we gave a very big stage to Russia and we got nothing," Trump said.

Earlier this month, the White House "threatened to retaliate" after a Russian cyber hack attack shuttered a US food processing plant, and another cyber assault previously triggered a fuel crisis.

Biden said he would "retaliate against Russia for this latest ransomware attack."

He confirmed: "We're looking closely at that issue."

Putin rips speculation that Biden has dementia saying president 'is fully in the know' and 'never misses a single detail'