

NSA Leaker Sentenced As Pentagon Admits It Has A Problem

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By [Walt Rasinger](#)

A former National Security Agency employee begged a federal judge for leniency during a sentencing hearing after he admitted he tried to sell classified information to an undercover FBI agent he believed to be a Russian official. On Monday, Jareh Sebastian Dalke received 22 years for betraying his country, the penalty requested by prosecutors.

US District Judge Raymond Moore said he could have put Dalke, 32, in prison for even longer, calling the 22-year sentence a “mercy” for what he saw as a calculated action to take the job at the NSA to be able to sell national security secrets.

CNN [wrote](#):

“This defendant, who had sworn an oath to defend our country, believed he was selling classified national security information to a Russian agent, when in fact, he was outing himself to the FBI,” Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a statement Monday. The sentence demonstrates “that those who seek to betray our country will be held accountable for their crimes,” he added.

Prosecutors say Dalke exchanged emails in 2022 with an FBI agent who was posing as a Russian agent, saying that he was motivated to share information by “curiosity for secrets and a desire to cause change.”

According to court documents, Dalke claimed he was in debt and told the agent “[t]here is an opportunity to help balance the scales of the world while also tending to my own needs.”

Dalke sent the agent excerpts of some documents in his possession as a demonstration of his “legitimate access and willingness to share,” prosecutors said, and told the agent that he would sell all the information he had for \$85,000.

Dalke was a man with a plan. According [to](#) The New York Times, “From June to July 2022, Mr. Dalke worked as an information systems security designer at the NSA. He held a secret clearance for his work with the US Army since 2016 and was given a top security clearance when he started working at the agency, according to an affidavit filed by an agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation for his criminal complaint. He left his job, saying that a family illness required him to be away for nine months and stating that the NSA had been unable to support his leave.

Prosecutors said that around that time Mr. Dalke was engaged in an email exchange with an individual whom he believed to be a Russian agent. To demonstrate his “legitimate access and willingness to share” he used an encrypted email account at the end of July to transmit excerpts from three classified documents.

Mr. Dalke “subsequently arranged to transfer additional classified information in his possession to the purported Russian agent at Union Station in downtown Denver,” the U.S. attorney in Colorado said. Using a laptop computer and following instructions from the undercover employee, Mr. Dalke transferred five files, four of which contained top secret information, the authorities said.”

The Pentagon has been wracked by leaks recently. In April, the Justice Department launched an investigation into the leak of classified Pentagon documents that detailed Ukraine’s combat capabilities, its potential vulnerabilities, and plans from to NATO to help repel Russia’s invasion.

A few weeks ago, The Washington Post [obtained](#) “dozens of what appeared to be photographs showing classified documents, dating to late February and early March, that range from worldwide intelligence briefings to tactical-level battlefield updates and assessments of Ukraine’s defense capabilities. They outline

information about the Ukrainian and Russian militaries, and include highly sensitive U.S. analyses about China and other nations. The materials also reference highly classified sources and methods that the United States uses to collect such information, alarming U.S. national security officials who have seen them.

One U.S. defense official, who like others spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the Pentagon's preliminary understanding of the leak, said that many of the documents appear to have been prepared over the winter for Gen. Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other senior military officials, but that they were available to many other U.S. personnel and contract employees with the appropriate security clearances.

It was unclear who may have posted the materials online, this person said, adding that hundreds — if not thousands — of people had access to them. The source of the leak, the official said, 'could be anyone.' The material that appeared online includes photographs of documents labeled 'Secret' or 'Top Secret,' and began appearing on Discord, a chat platform popular with gamers, according to a Post review."

Discord has increasingly become a problem for the intelligence community. The leaks are "damaging, for sure, especially to trust and in that it possibly reveals what we know," Ben Hodges, a retired U.S. Army officer who served as commanding general in the United States Army Europe told Time. "But I'm not sure how much of this is real or deception...Investigations will turn up more insight about credibility and gaps and vulnerabilities in our systems."

The magazine said that the "the unusual format has also provided an opening to spread further disinformation and confusion. At least one version of the documents, posted on a pro-Russian Telegram, appears to have been crudely altered to inflate the U.S. estimates of Ukrainian casualties. One document in the cache appeared to show that Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence service, encouraged its staff to support anti-government protests against a proposed judiciary overhaul. The office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vehemently denied the allegations in the document on Sunday, calling them 'mendacious and without any foundation whatsoever.'

As the investigation unfolds, officials are bracing for the possibility that more information could be circulating online. There is no obvious rhyme or reason to the

disclosures; some of the documents on 4chan appeared to have been posted by someone looking to settle an argument about the war in Ukraine.”

“We don’t know who’s behind this. We don’t know what the motive is,” National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said at briefing following news of the major leak. “We don’t know what else might be out there.”

When he was asked if the leak had been contained, Kirby said, “We don’t know. We truly don’t.”