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# The Gafgyt variant vbot seen in its 31 campaigns

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## Overview

Gafgyt botnets have a long history of infecting Linux devices to launch DDoS attacks. While dozens of variants have been detected, new variants are constantly emerging with changes in terms of register message, exploits, and attacking methods. On the other hand, their new botnets are usually short lived, with most of the C2s watched keeping active for only a few days. In this blog, I will introduce such a sort of variant. The key findings are as follow:

- 1. This variant was active from mid-April to mid-June. In total 31 campaigns for this variant were detected, from which 572 samples were captured. They were spread to build 19 botnets.
- 2. This variant evolved through 2 versions. Both have a characteristic register message template "ver:%f:%s:%d" that includes a rarely seen format specifier "%f".
- 3. Mirai code was heavily used in both versions, which makes it possible analyze them with the extracted Mirai configurations.
- 4. The same infrastructures, e.g., download servers, and filenames were observed being used in other families of botnet campaigns.
  This variant was named as vbot because vbot is found being used in an unstripped sample by the author. Accordingly the 2 versions are named as vbot1 and vbot2 in this blog.

#### vbot1

Only 1 vbot1 campaign was seen, with 26 samples captured, as shown by the following honeypot records.

time	yara	md5	down server	filename	
20-04-15 05:11:48+08:00	vbot v1	2a141cd2930536f74f51fb57adbb0236	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	
20-04-15 05:11:53+08:00	vbot v1	8717baf17660d8e96813ccd99f32c0be	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	
20-04-15 05:12:00+08:00	vbot v1	cc559b487e1ec18727f37006bd3395e0	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	
20-04-15 05:12:09+08:00	vbot_v1	f666c3398601cd1b017f8d4556cabbbc	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	
20-04-15 05:12:18+08:00	vbot_v1	6fb6aaa253c165636ee63a4fdcdb1b9e	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	
20-04-15 05:12:18+08:00	vbot_v1	f422707ac869240bfeea648b6f9b90ad	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	
20-04-15 05:12:28+08:00	vbot_v1	36997fd129a5ff09311da94c3814379c	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	
20-04-15 05:12:28+08:00	vbot_v1	790ae71c097662bf6efba92d2d633076	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	ula at ut
20-04-15 05:12:39+08:00	vbot_v1	e420df68941cc7ce2d8dd4ba92fd360e	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	VDOT VI
20-04-15 05:12:49+08:00	vbot_v1	3e36440871a6e39ee87e6d7d1a42155a	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	
20-04-15 05:12:49+08:00	vbot_v1	ae50829a02e5265c590f2fff35e64c52	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	
20-04-15 05:12:58+08:00	vbot_v1	09ab7435c76df627a813fb75db15ce5d	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	
		43ee98318945a475b555045aed4f0e01			
20-04-15 06:15:38+08:00	vbot_v1	e4db8addb5123021e358576157e5e1c0	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	
20-04-15 06:15:44+08:00	vbot_v1	4147fb0fe442173558f86fe37728ecae	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	
		846d6ad9ea86e331f2e071eac6a269de			
		40b1bf1e415ae508f8a5b831c2f4e994			
20-04-15 06:16:02+08:00	vbot_v1	f696375452d08eecbde14d64c74acdde	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	
20-04-15 06:16:23+08:00	vbot_v1	98b07b087b98b8d679c9938b16ae4df3	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	
		aea960687f0e43b465198be7ffafcf82			
		3d596d37fe6536a2c759923d920f3e08			
		52c462f3b22646774219f91bfb44ae66		RHOMBUS	
		d2c273e758fd4ac2759ca1d63aafcf6c		RHOMBUS	
20-04-15 06:16:52+08:00	vbot_v1	bbee73ed05730ad95df7a77241207ea5	185.225.19.200	RHOMBUS	
		0f492673eb249fa1209512575040f62d			
		0e59d4a40bba390314ffa0713b18441c			
		efabd7e734490b9ad12812982347f237			what v2
		614581bba324c3550a18268a8cb9c221			vbot v2
20-04-16 17:27:51+08:00	vbot v2	86310b514c55d31db288a2bb2c1e6114	185.225.19.200	zte	

All samples share the same C2 185.225.19.200:2017 . Since in Gafgyt it's common that the same source code will be compiled into binaries for different processor architectures, for simplicity, the following analysis is based on the unstripped ARM sample of f696375452d08eecbde14d64c74acdde . Compared with previous variants, vbot1 has a more concise main() function because most of its code was moved into 2 new functions named init\_vbot() and main\_c2\_handler().

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loc_A294	L I
BL	init_vbot
BL	<pre>main_c2_handler</pre>
MOV	R0, #0
ADD	SP, SP, #4
ADD	SP, SP, #0x400
POP	{R4-R7,LR}
BX	LR

The function name init\_vbot indicates that the author code named their botnet as vbot. It's responsible for initializing things including watchdog, configurations, and scanner. C2 communications are done in main\_c2\_handler(), where a loop of connection, registration and receiving command can be found, as shown below.

<pre>loc_9DB0 BL startup_connection CMP R0, #0 BEQ loc_A09C  Ioc_9DBC LDR R1, =botarch LDR R12, [R1] LDM R11, {R2,R3} STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4CC] LDR R1, =aVerfSD ; "ver:%f:%s:%d" MOV R0, R6 STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0] BL sprintf MOV R1, R6 LDR R0, [R5] BL sockprintf MOV R1, #0x3FC MOV R0, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3</pre>		• •		
BL startup_connection CMP R0, #0 BEQ loc_A09C loc_9DBC LDR R1, =botarch LDR R12, [R1] LDM R11, {R2,R3} STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4CC] LDR R1, =aVerFSD ; "ver:%f:%s:%d" MOV R0, R6 STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0] BL sprintf MOV R1, R6 LDR R0, [R5] BL sockprintf MOV R0, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3	💵 🚄 🖼			
BL startup_connection CMP R0, #0 BEQ loc_A09C loc_9DBC LDR R1, =botarch LDR R12, [R1] LDM R11, {R2,R3} STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4CC] LDR R1, =aVerFSD ; "ver:%f:%s:%d" MOV R0, R6 STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0] BL sprintf MOV R1, R6 LDR R0, [R5] BL sockprintf MOV R0, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3				
CMP R0, #0 BEQ loc_A09C	_			
<pre>BEQ loc_A09C  BEQ loc_A09C  Ioc_9DBC  LDR R1, =botarch LDR R12, [R1] LDM R11, {R2,R3} STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4CC] LDR R1, =aVer[FSD ; "ver:%f:%s:%d" MOV R0, R6 STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0] BL sprintf MOV R1, R6 LDR R0, [R5] BL sockprintf MOV R1, #0x3FC MOV R0, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3</pre>				
<pre>loc_9DBC LDR R1, =botarch LDR R12, [R1] LDM R11, {R2,R3} STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4CC] LDR R12, =bottype LDR R1, =aVerFSD ; "ver:%f:%s:%d" MOV R0, R6 STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0] BL sprintf MOV R1, R6 LDR R0, [R5] BL sockprintf MOV R1, #0x3FC MOV R0, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3</pre>				
<pre>loc_9DBC LDR R1, =botarch LDR R12, [R1] LDM R11, {R2,R3} STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4CC] LDR R12, =bottype LDR R1, =aVerFSD ; "ver:%f:%s:%d" MOV R0, R6 STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0] BL sprintf MOV R1, R6 LDR R0, [R5] BL sockprintf MOV R1, #0x3FC MOV R0, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3</pre>	BEQ	loc_A09C		
<pre>loc_9DBC LDR R1, =botarch LDR R12, [R1] LDM R11, {R2,R3} STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4CC] LDR R12, =bottype LDR R1, =aVerFSD ; "ver:%f:%s:%d" MOV R0, R6 STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0] BL sprintf MOV R1, R6 LDR R0, [R5] BL sockprintf MOV R1, #0x3FC MOV R0, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3</pre>				•
LDR R1, =botarch LDR R12, [R1] LDM R11, {R2,R3} STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4CC] LDR R12, =bottype LDR R1, =aVer[FSD ; "ver:%f:%s:%d" MOV R0, R6 STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0] BL sprintf MOV R1, R6 LDR R0, [R5] BL sockprintf MOV R1, #0x3FC MOV R0, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3			🗾 🚄 🖼	
LDR R1, =botarch LDR R12, [R1] LDM R11, {R2,R3} STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4CC] LDR R12, =bottype LDR R1, =aVer[FSD ; "ver:%f:%s:%d" MOV R0, R6 STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0] BL sprintf MOV R1, R6 LDR R0, [R5] BL sockprintf MOV R1, #0x3FC MOV R0, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3				
LDR R12, [R1] LDM R11, {R2,R3} STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4CC] LDR R12, =bottype LDR R1, =aVerFSD ; "ver:%f:%s:%d" MOV R0, R6 STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0] BL sprintf MOV R1, R6 LDR R0, [R5] BL sockprintf MOV R1, #0x3FC MOV R0, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3			loc_9D	BC
LDM R11, {R2,R3} STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4CC] LDR R12, =bottype LDR R1, =aVerFSD ; "ver:%f:%s:%d" MOV R0, R6 STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0] BL sprintf MOV R1, R6 LDR R0, [R5] BL sockprintf MOV R1, #0x3FC MOV R0, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3			LDR	R1, =botarch
STR       R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4CC]         LDR       R12, =bottype         LDR       R1, =aVerFSD ; "ver:%f:%s:%d"         MOV       R0, R6         STR       R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0]         BL       sprintf         MOV       R1, R6         LDR       R0, [R5]         BL       sockprintf         MOV       R1, #0x3FC         MOV       R0, R6         ADD       R1, R1, #3			LDR	R12, [R1]
LDR R12, =bottype LDR R1, =aVer[FSD ; "ver:%f:%s:%d" MOV R0, R6 STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0] BL sprintf MOV R1, R6 LDR R0, [R5] BL sockprintf MOV R1, #0x3FC MOV R0, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3			LDM	R11, {R2,R3}
LDR R1, =aVerFSD ; "ver:%f:%s:%d" MOV R0, R6 STR R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0] BL sprintf MOV R1, R6 LDR R0, [R5] BL sockprintf MOV R1, #0x3FC MOV R0, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3			STR	R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4CC]
MOV       R0, R6         STR       R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0]         BL       sprintf         MOV       R1, R6         LDR       R0, [R5]         BL       sockprintf         MOV       R1, #0x3FC         MOV       R0, R6         ADD       R1, R1, #3			LDR	
STR       R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0]         BL       sprintf         MOV       R1, R6         LDR       R0, [R5]         BL       sockprintf         MOV       R1, #0x3FC         MOV       R0, R6         ADD       R1, R1, #3			LDR	R1, = <mark>aVer</mark> FSD ; "ver:%f:%s:%d"
BL       sprintf         MOV       R1, R6         LDR       R0, [R5]         BL       sockprintf         MOV       R1, #0x3FC         MOV       R0, R6         ADD       R1, R1, #3			MOV	RØ, R6
MOV       R1, R6         LDR       R0, [R5]         BL       sockprintf         MOV       R1, #0x3FC         MOV       R0, R6         ADD       R1, R1, #3			STR	R12, [SP,#0x4D0+var_4D0]
LDR RØ, [R5] BL sockprintf MOV R1, #0x3FC MOV RØ, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3			BL	sprintf
BL sockprintf MOV R1, #0x3FC MOV R0, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3			MOV	R1, R6
MOV R1, #0x3FC MOV R0, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3			LDR	RØ, [R5]
MOV RØ, R6 ADD R1, R1, #3			BL	sockprintf
ADD R1, R1, #3			MOV	R1, #0x3FC
			MOV	RØ, R6
			ADD	R1, R1, #3
			BL	util_zero

The characteristic register message template "ver:%f:%s:%d" is used in the registration block that tightly follows the connection block. From the unstripped symbols we can show that the 3 specifiers separately represent version, bot type and arch. The analyzed sample has version of 4.1.

Actually it's just the rarely seen specifier "%f" that caused my attention to this variant because as far as I knew "%f" was not supported by Gafgyt. The original authors borrowed the design of C library functions printf and sprintf, and implemented a new function named sockprintf which can generate message according to the assigned string format and send it to the C2. A custom yet simple format controls is done inside sockprintf with "%f" not implemented. That function has been kept by most Gafgyt variants. When firstly encountering vbot's register template, I imagined a new version of sockprintf. However, that's obviously not true. To reuse sockprintf but avoid complex programming, vbot author turned to sprintf to generate the expected message then passed it to sockprintf with the supported specifier "%s".

Similar to many Gafgyt variants, Mirai code can be found in vbot1. Due to its tight connection with the encrypted configurations, the borrowed code can be well analyzed with the extracted configurations. If you don't know how to extract, please go to our VB2018 <u>paper</u>. The extracted configurations are shown below, with items annotated with its owner modules.

	"1gba4cdom53\x00", size=1	_ ra	ndom s	tring generation			
[0x00]:	"Igba4cdom53\x00", size=1	.2					
	<pre>"/dev/watchdog\x00", size "/dev/watchdog\x00", size</pre>		_10	watchdog			
	<pre>"/dev/misc/watchdog\x00", "/dev/misc/watchdog\x00",</pre>			materialog			
	<pre>"/dev/FTWDT101_watchdog\x00", size=23</pre>						
		<pre>"/dev/FTWDT101\ watchdog\x00", size=24</pre>					
		/dev/watchdog0\x00", size=15					
	<pre>"/etc/default/watchdog\x0 "/ebin/watchdog\x0</pre>		12e=22				
	<pre>"/sbin/watchdog\x00", siz "shell\x00", size=6</pre>	.e=15					
	"enable $x00$ ", size=7						
	"system\x00\x17", size=8						
	"sh\x00", size=3						
	"echo "check"\x00", size=	.1 2					
	"check\x00", size=6	.12					
	"assword\x00", size=8		scanne	r			
-	"ogin\x00", size=5		seanne	•			
	"enter\x00", size=6						
-	"ccount\x00", size=7						
	"ser\x00", size=4						
	"ncorrect\x00\x17", size=	-10					
	"nvalid\x00", size=7	.10					
	"ncomplete\x00", size=10						
	"attempt failed\x00", siz	e=15					
	"IVEBEENEXECUTED\x00", si						
	"GET\x00", size=4	20-10					
	"UDP\x00", size=4						
	"ASTD\x00", size=5						
-	"TCP\x00", size=4	com	imand				
	"GRE\x00", size=4						
	"AHTTP\x00", size=6						
	"KT\x00", size=3						
	"UPDATE\x00", size=7						
	"execnew\x00", size=8						
	"./execnew\x00", size=10						
	"mv\x00", size=3						
	"/tmp/vbot.exe\x00", size	=14					
-	"/etc/init.d/.vbot.sh\x00		ze=21 P	ersistence			
	<pre>"/etc/rc.d/rc.local\x00",</pre>						
	<pre>"/etc/rc.local\x00", size</pre>						
	"PING\x00", size=5						
	"PONG\x00", size=5						
	"KILL\x00", size=5						
	"/proc/\x00", size=7		killer				
	"/exe\x00", size=5		KIIICI				
	"/fd\x00", size=4						
	"/proc/net/tcp\x00", size	=14					
[0x2e]:	"cnc.kowaiontop.xyz\x00",	size	=19				

The commands are hidden in configurations. Except for attacking methods, vbot1 also supports remote update with the command UPDATE. Another worth mentioning feature is persistence mechanism, which is done by modifying crontab.

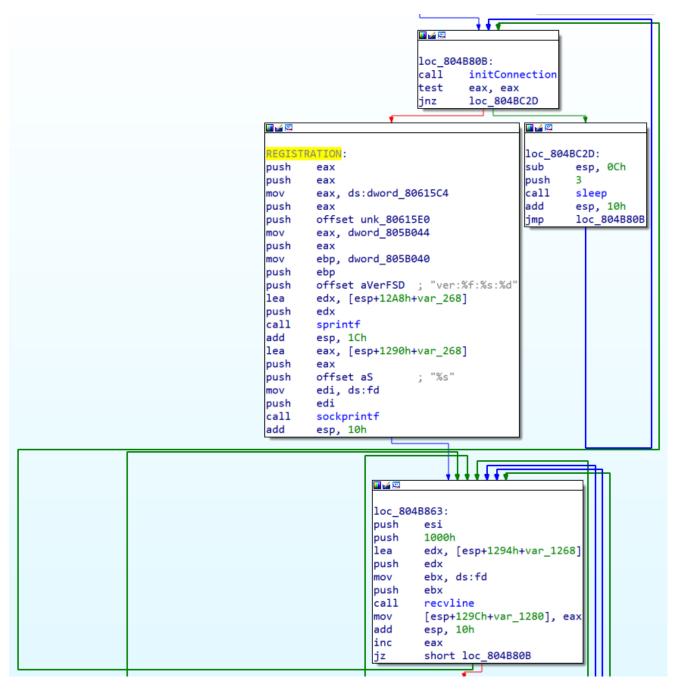
It's strange that vbot1 was spread only once. After its campaign was firstly detected, 35 hours, or 1.5 days, later the first vbot2 campaign was seen from the same download server. Obviously the operators wanted to replace vbot1 with vbot2. The reason might be its buggy registration which always sends a 191-byte register message back to its C2 but only 18 bytes there are really useful, as shown by the following figure.

00000000	76	65	72	3a	34	2e	31	30	30	30	30	30	3a	31	31	3a	ver:4.100000:11:
0000010	30	0a	be	f1	fc	f9	79	6b	52	14	13	e9	e2	2d	51	8e	0ykRQ.
00000020	1f	56	08	57	27	a7	05	d4	d0	52	82	77	75	1b	99	4a	.V.W'R.wuJ
00000030	ed	58	3d	бa	52	36	d5	24	4a	68	8e	ad	95	5f	3c	35	.X=jR6.\$Jh<5
00000040	b5	c4	8c	dd	6c	11	32	3d	e2	b4	b4	59	cf	ce	23	3d	l.2=Y#=
00000050	27	df	a7	f9	96	fc	1e	e0	66	2c	0e	7b	8c	ca	30	42	'f,.{0B
00000060	8f	bc	9f	7b	ce	d1	b8	b1	87	ec	8a	d6	bb	2e	15	63	{c
00000070	0e	3c	dc	a4	3a	7a	06	20	a7	93	1b	34	dd	4c	f5	ec	.<:z4.L
08000000	88	96	68	d6	68	a0	09	6f	8e	93	47	с9	41	db	ac	cf	h.hoG.A
00000090	97	89	f3	51	05	79	71	2c	0e	0d	60	6b	59	d5	59	e1	Q.yq,`kY.Y.
000000a0	6C	c1	b9	55	63	42	44	71	55	0b	ba	97	еб	68	67	fe	lUcBDqUhg.
0d000000	71	5b	50	76	55	c2	22	63	4f	02	ce	a8	d8	a7	0a		q[PvU."c0
000000bf																	

## vbot2

In total 30 vbot2 campaigns were seen from April 16 to June 12, 2020, with 546 samples captured from 12 download servers. From those samples 13 C2 servers were checked. Detailed analysis shows except the registration code, vbot2 actually differs a lot from vbot1 in terms of code structure, attacking methods and Mirai configuration. The following analysis is based on the x86 sample f5b0ebebc924e69e34a4ddd145916594 . It's stripped but key function names have been manually restored.

Different from vbot1 but similar to many other variants, vbot2's C2 communications are done in main(), as shown below.



Nearly the same registration block as vbot1 can be found, with the 3 specifiers holding the same semantics. The analyzed sample has version of 1.5. The loop composed of "loc\_804B80B -> REGISTRATION -> loc\_804B863" is very similar to previous Gafgyt variants in terms of CFG node number and semantics. The blocks are separately responsible for establishing connection, registration, and receiving commands.

5 attacking methods were checked. All of them have been seen in other variants.

.rodata:080587BD	aUdpBypass	db 'UDP-BYPASS',0	; DATA XREF: <mark>processCmd</mark> +A↑o
.rodata:080587C8	aTcpBypass	db 'TCP-BYPASS',0	; DATA XREF: <mark>processCmd</mark> +C1↑o
.rodata:080587D3	asc_80587D3	db ',',0	; DATA XREF: <mark>processCmd</mark> +1BF↑o
.rodata:080587D3			; <mark>processCmd</mark> +282↑o
.rodata:080587D5		db 'NFO-DROP',0	; DATA XREF: <mark>processCmd</mark> +2A91o
.rodata:080587DE	aOvhKill	db 'OVH-KILL',0	; DATA XREF: <mark>processCmd</mark> +4291o
.rodata:080587E7	aUdpRape	db 'UDP-RAPE',0	; DATA XREF: <mark>processCmd</mark> +595↑o

Some vbot2 samples, e.g., e36d96a74236038a348cfd667ca83528, have slightly different attacking method names, as shown below.

data:080571C4	aUdp	db 'UDP',0	; DATA XREF: <mark>processCmd</mark> +7↑o
data:080571C8	аТср	db 'TCP',0	; DATA XREF: <mark>process</mark> Cmd+B6↑o
data:080571CC	asc_80571CC	db ',',0	; DATA XREF: <mark>processCmd</mark> +1B4↑o
data:080571CC			; <mark>processCmd</mark> +271↑o
data:080571CE	aStd	db 'STD',0	; DATA XREF: <mark>processCmd</mark> +298↑o
data:080571D2	aUdpRape	db 'UDP-RAPE',0	; DATA XREF: <mark>processCmd</mark> +3FC↑o
data:080571DB	aStop	db 'STOP',0	; DATA XREF: <mark>processCmd</mark> +56E↑o

2 Mirai configurations were found. The only difference lies in the 0x28 item, as shown by the following 2 figures.



From the annotations we can see the Mirai code was mainly used in modules of watchdog, killer, scanner and rand alpha string generation. Since the 0x28 item corresponds to a message to be written to the STDOUT, and the second unprintable 0x28 item is probably

caused by a typo from the author.

With the extracted configurations the differences from vbot1 are obvious. They are:

- 1. vbot2 has different attacking methods from vbot1.
- 2. While vbot1 hides commands in its configuration, vbot2 directly uses them.
- 3. No remote update and persistence mechanism were found in vbot2.

Although those great differences suggest that vbot1 and vbot2 were actually derived from different code bases, I still think they were written by the same author(s) because:

- 1. The shared register message template and registration implementation are unique enough.
- 2. The first vbot2 campaign shared the same download and C2 server as vbot1 within a relatively short period of time (1.5 days).

## vbot and the RHOMBUS malware

While the filename RHOMBUS was seen 4 times in vbot campaigns, its use in Gafgyt campaigns was much earlier[1], with the variant called RHOMBUS analysed in [2][3]. Here I make a simple comparison. In the blogged RHOMBUS malware dropper mechanism was found, with the dropper having the persistence ability across restart by modifying crontab. The dropped binaries, e.g., 269029c1554b13c3eccfaacf0196ff72 and ba42665872ea41e3d2edd8978bc38c24 , actually belong to another Gafgyt variant that also heavily borrowed code from Mirai, as shown by the below figure.

$[0, w_{00}]$ , $[1, w_{00}]$ , $[1, w_{00}]$ , $[0, w_{00}]$ , $[1, $	m string gonoration
<pre>[0x00]: "1gba4cdom53\x00", size=12 randor [0x01]: "/dev/watchdog\x00", size=14</pre>	I string generation
[0x02]: "/dev/misc/watchdog\x00", size=19	
[0x03]: "/dev/FTWDT101 watchdog\x00", size=23	watchdog
[0x04]: "/dev/FTWDT101\ watchdog\x00", size=23	
[0x05]: "/dev/watchdog0\x00", size=15	· 1
[0x06]: "/etc/default/watchdog\x00", size=22	
[0x07]: "/sbin/watchdog\x00", size=15	
[0x08]: "shell\x00", size=6	
[0x09]: "enable\x00", size=7	
[0x0a]: "system\x00\x17", size=8	
[0x0b]: "sh\x00", size=3	
[0x0c]: "echo "check"\x00", size=13	
[0x0d]: "check\x00", size=6	
[0x0e]: "assword\x00", size=8	scanner
[0x0f]: "ogin\x00", size=5	
[0x10]: "enter\x00", size=6	
[0x11]: "ccount\x00", size=7	
[0x12]: "ser\x00", size=4	
[0x13]: "ncorrect\x00\x17", size=10	
[0x14]: "nvalid\x00", size=7	
[0x15]: "ncomplete\x00", size=10	
[0x16]: "attempt failed\x00", size=15	
[0x17]: "IVEBEENEXECUTED\x00", size=16	
[0x19]: "GET\x00", size=4	
[0x1a]: "shell\x00", size=6	
[0x1b]: "KILLBOT\x00", size=8	
[0x1c]: "UDP\x00", size=4	
[0x1d]: "TCP\x00", size=4	command
[0x1e]: "GRE\x00", size=4	
[0x1f]: "THREADHTTP\x00", size=11	
[0x20]: "KT\x00", size=3	
[0x21]: "UPDATE\x00", size=7	
[0x22]: "EgrsFc\x00", size=7	
[0x23]: "chmod +x EgrsFc; ./EgrsFc\x00", size	=26
[0x24]: "cnc.kowaiontop.xyz\x00", size=19	

From the above configuration we can see that obvious similarities exist between the RHOMBUS dropped binaries and vbot1. I think the most possibility is that vbot1 evolved from RHOMBUS malware with the following modifications:

- 1. The dropper's persistence mechanism was grafted to its payload. That's why persistence items could be found in vbot1 configuration but not in the above figure.
- 2. The register template was updated.
- 3. c2 communications were moved to the so called main\_c2\_handler() function.

Other key points about RHOMBUS malware include:

- 1. The register message template is "jm:\_:%d" or jm:%s:%d.
- 2. Similar to many Gafgyt variants, C2 communications were done in main().

3. The Gafgyt characteristic function initConnection() was removed with its code broken down into snippets that can be found in main().

## Conclusion

I have introduced a short lived Gafgyt variant vbot. During its 2 month life, 31 campaigns were seen to build 19 botnets. From vbot we can learn that it's easy for Linux IoT botnet authors to quickly write new variants, which might be due to the fact that dozens of Gafgyt and Mirai source has been leaked online. Once a new variant is written, the behind operators usually will spread it over and over with different campaigns to build multiple botnets. Such patterns have also been observed in other variants and families, e.g., Mirai. To fight such sort of fast emerging while short living botnets, automatic IoC extraction would play an import role for quick blocking or tracking. In VB2020 conference to be held in October, I will give a <u>talk</u> on that topic. I hope it will help you fight against Gafgyt botnets better.

#### loC

#### download servers

104.244.75.12 142.11.194.209 185.172.110.248 185.172.110.249 185.225.19.200 192.119.66.66 192.129.188.98 205.185.123.101 23.254.164.76 45.84.196.148 50.115.173.131 85.92.108.211

#### vbot1 MD5

2a141cd2930536f74f51fb57adbb0236 8717baf17660d8e96813ccd99f32c0be cc559b487e1ec18727f37006bd3395e0 f666c3398601cd1b017f8d4556cabbbc 6fb6aaa253c165636ee63a4fdcdb1b9e f422707ac869240bfeea648b6f9b90ad 36997fd129a5ff09311da94c3814379c 790ae71c097662bf6efba92d2d633076 e420df68941cc7ce2d8dd4ba92fd360e 3e36440871a6e39ee87e6d7d1a42155a ae50829a02e5265c590f2fff35e64c52 09ab7435c76df627a813fb75db15ce5d 43ee98318945a475b555045aed4f0e01 e4db8addb5123021e358576157e5e1c0 4147fb0fe442173558f86fe37728ecae 846d6ad9ea86e331f2e071eac6a269de 40b1bf1e415ae508f8a5b831c2f4e994 f696375452d08eecbde14d64c74acdde 98b07b087b98b8d679c9938b16ae4df3 aea960687f0e43b465198be7ffafcf82 3d596d37fe6536a2c759923d920f3e08 52c462f3b22646774219f91bfb44ae66 d2c273e758fd4ac2759ca1d63aafcf6c bbee73ed05730ad95df7a77241207ea5 0f492673eb249fa1209512575040f62d 0e59d4a40bba390314ffa0713b18441c

#### vbot1 C2

185.225.19.200 -port 2017

#### vbot2 MD5

efabd7e734490b9ad12812982347f237 614581bba324c3550a18268a8cb9c221 86310b514c55d31db288a2bb2c1e6114 76d9c69036f1eaac8f7a90eba3a36bfc e36d96a74236038a348cfd667ca83528 d45da804fd35cf502bf942ebfeb64064 90a633f30bdbb2b80642bb229d1605d1 c4391301645cc9df4da3657f4c88f7dc 8bef47e420d0cdf8d0ee69a5d1f5b74c 4c8cdcbaf16f39a461b0bf7052fe1ec3 d936a9226fbbe97993bbe604c8cd5458 125b99cc79808679a7461f1841fd80a5 3b7da3d39db6ec08373c1e4af79aff85 23f764f5f918746b9ffff952dd25cc21 6f24268273573fd5f07cacb00031f1a0 ecae928b4e4093489bd221986da39aba d883d5a2bedf0c3a3da79358c06fa429 3e26626d4563f3199fde498d0ff9fe32 11c1d777b18ffc0f23d2435fdb4645dc

104.244.75.12\_666 142.11.194.209\_1337 142.11.194.209\_17911 142.11.194.209\_34 142.11.194.209\_44 184.172.110.248\_666 184.172.110.249\_666 185.172.110.248\_323 185.172.110.248\_666 185.225.19.200\_666 192.119.66.66\_7331 192.129.188.98\_323 205.185.123.101\_666 23.254.164.76\_107 23.254.164.76\_33 23.254.164.76\_89 45.84.196.148\_1227 50.115.173.131\_111 85.92.108.211\_1447