



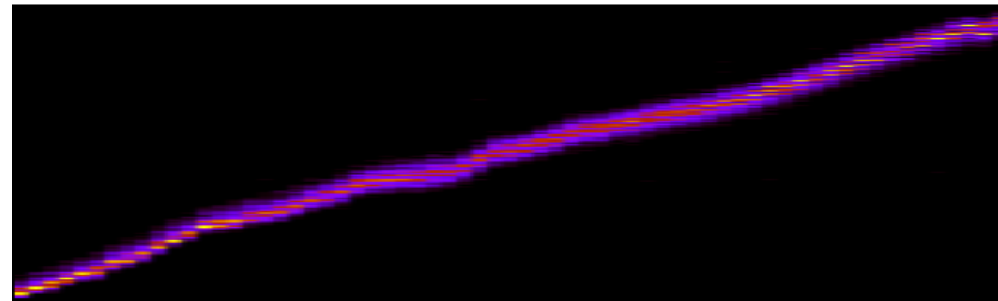
School of Computer Science & Engineering
COMP9242 Advanced Operating Systems

2019 T2 Week 06b

Security: Information Leakage

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Spectre/Meltdown material courtesy of
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Timing Channels

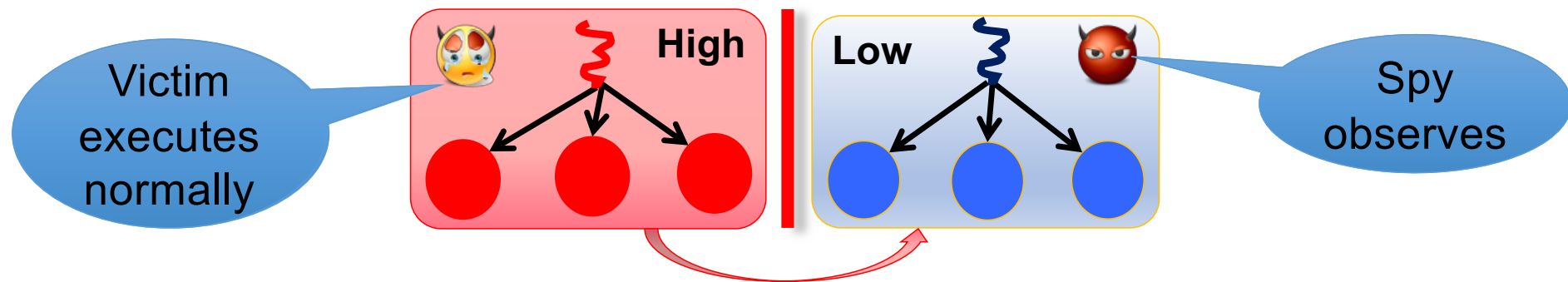
Principles

Refresh: Timing Channels

Information leakage through timing of events

- Typically by observing response latencies or own execution speed

Covert channel: Information flow that bypasses the security policy

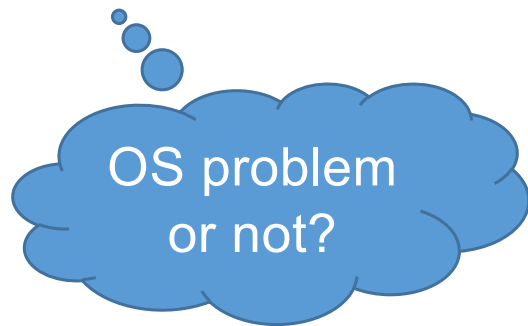


Side channel: Covert channel exploitable without insider help

Causes of Timing Channels

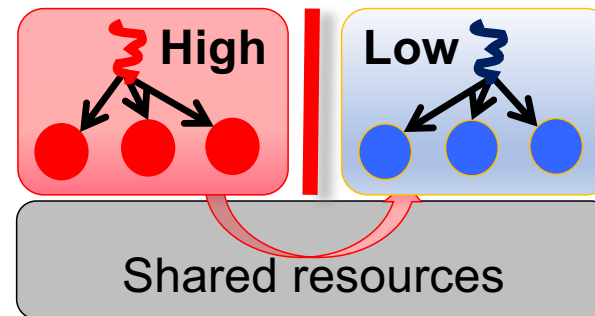
Algorithmic

```
if (secret) {  
    short_operation(...);  
} else {  
    long_operation(...);  
}
```



Resource Contention

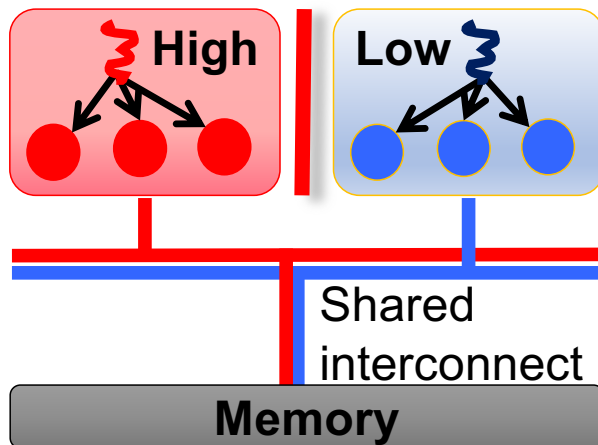
- Software resources
 - OS abstractions
 - buffer cache...
- Hardware resources
 - caches etc
 - not visible at ISA (HW-SW contract)



Micro-architectural timing channels

Affect execution speed

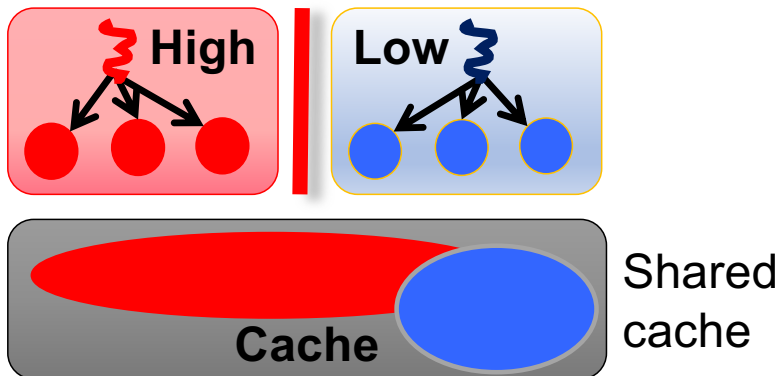
Shared Hardware: Stateless Interconnect



H/W is *bandwidth-limited*

- Interference during concurrent access
- Generally reveals no data or addresses
- Must encode info into access patterns
- *Only usable as covert channel, not side channel*

Shared Hardware: Stateful Resources



H/W is *capacity-limited*

- Interference during
 - concurrent access
 - time-shared access
- Collisions reveal addresses
- *Usable as side channel*

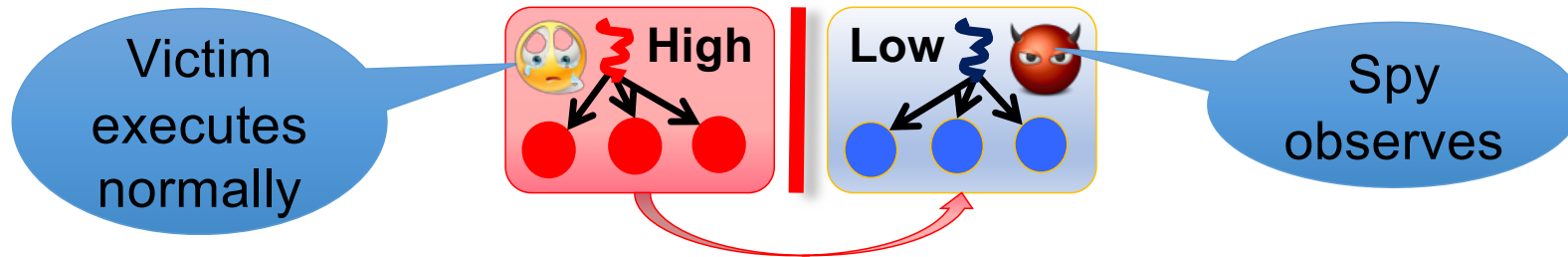
Can be any state-holding microarchitectural feature:

- CPU caches
- branch predictor
- pre-fetcher state machines

Timing Channels

Example: LLC Side Channel

Methodology: Prime and Probe



2. Touch cache lines

Input Signal

1. Fill cache with own data

3. Traverse cache, measure execution time

Output Signal

Challenge: Slow LLC Access Times

- L1 (32 KiB) probe:
 - $64 \text{ sets} * 8 \text{ ways} * 4 \text{ cycles} = 2,048 \text{ cycles}$
- Small last-level cache (6 MiB):
 - $8,192 \text{ sets} * 12 \text{ ways} * \sim 30 \text{ cycles} = \sim 3,000,000 \text{ cycles}$

Probing entire LLC is too slow, but single set is fast

- Approach:

- *Probe one or a few cache sets at a time*
- *Find “interesting” sets (“eviction set”) by looking for patterns*

Example: Look for square code in square-and-multiply exponentiation of GnuPG

Searching for square Code

Modular reduction: $r = b^e \bmod m$

```
long_int r (long_int b, m, e) {  
    res = 1;  
    for (i = n-1; i >= 0; i--) {  
        if (e[i]) {  
            r = mod (r * b, m);  
        }  
    }  
    return res;  
}
```

i^{th} bit of e

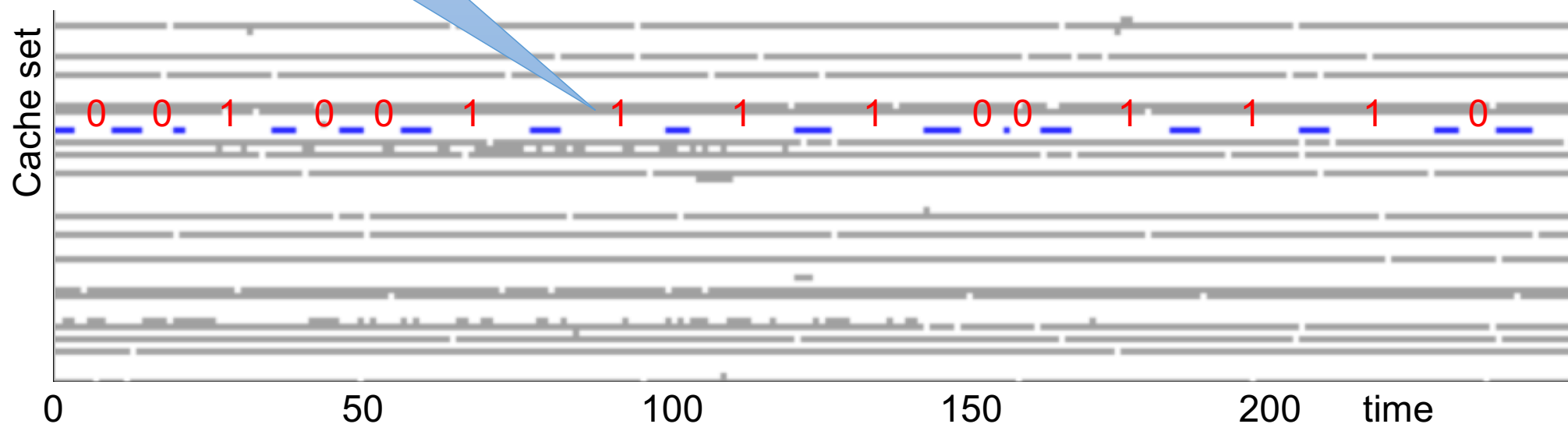
**Long computation
if bit is set**

Expected pattern: Bursts of activity separated by longer or shorter intervals indicating modular reduction operation

Searching for square Code

Can read out bits of exponent!
[Liu S&P'15]

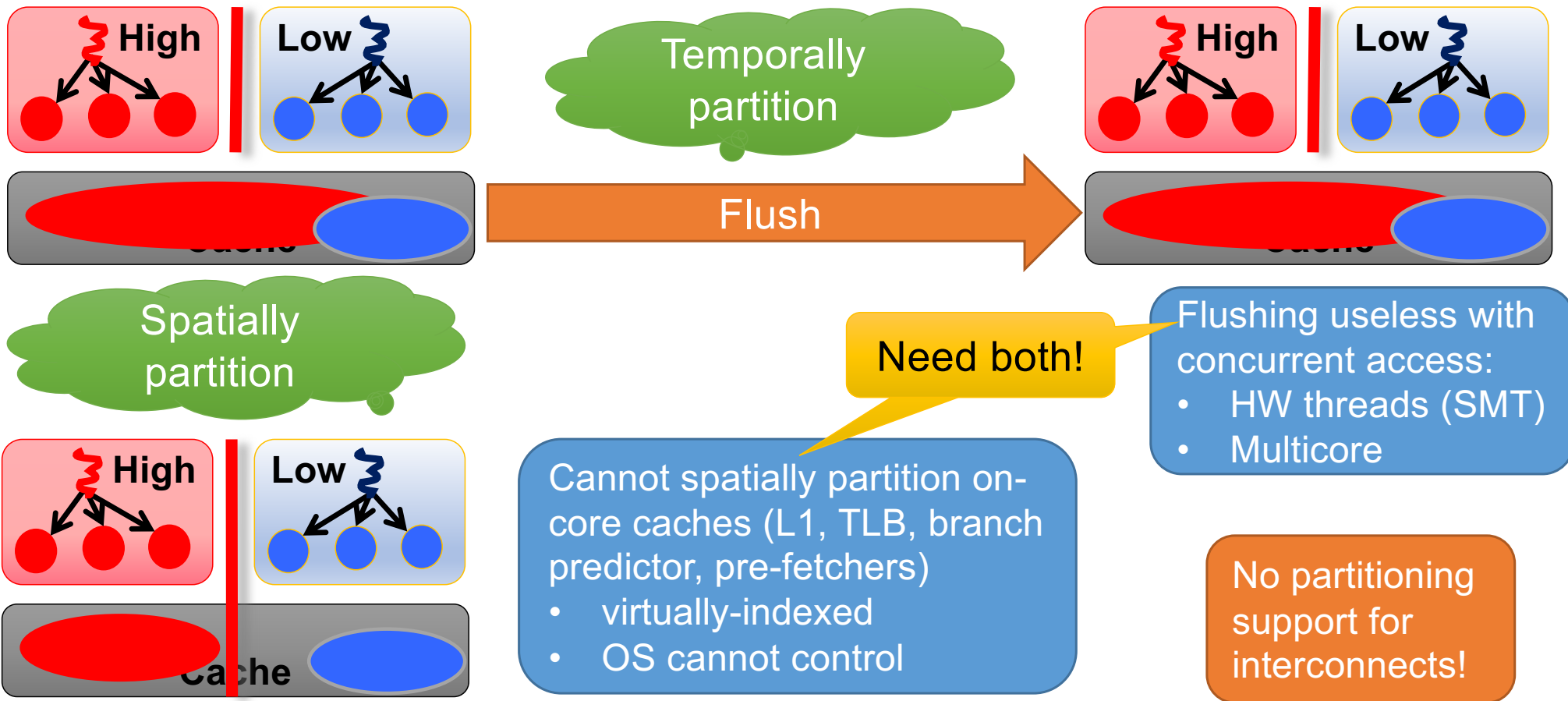
Expected pattern: Bursts of activity separated by longer or shorter intervals indicating modular reduction operation



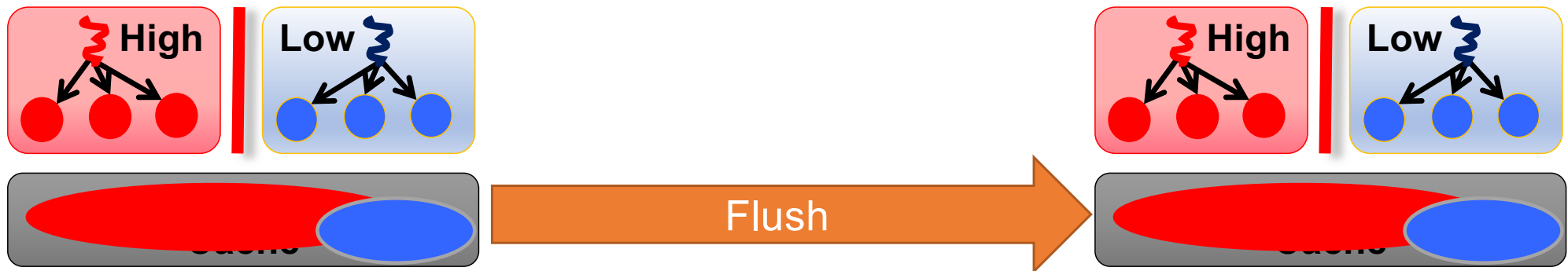
Timing Channels

Evaluating Hardware

Timing-Channel Prevention: Partition HW



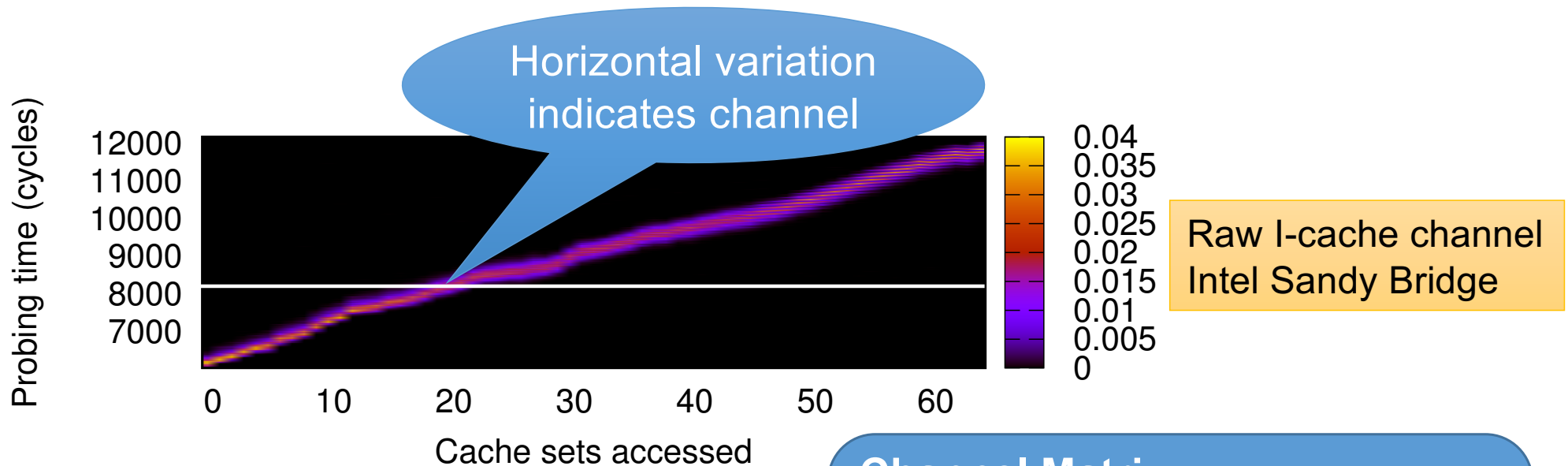
Evaluating Intra-Core Channels



Methodology:

- Flush all caches on context switch
 - using all flush ops provided by HW
- Run prime&probe *covert channel* attack

Methodology: Channel Matrix

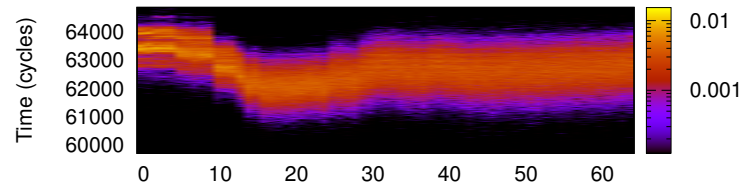


Channel Matrix:

- Conditional probability of observing time t , given input n .
- Represented as heat map: bright = high probability.

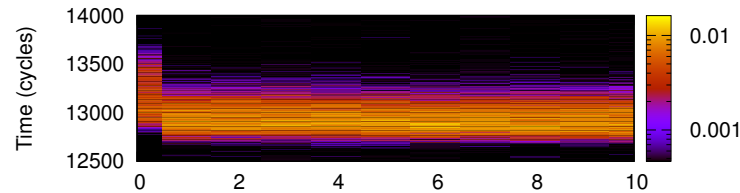
I-Cache Channel With Full State Flush

CHANNEL!



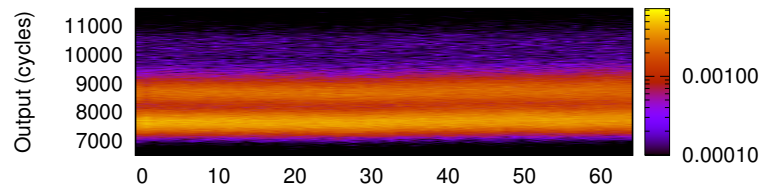
Intel Sandy Bridge

CHANNEL!



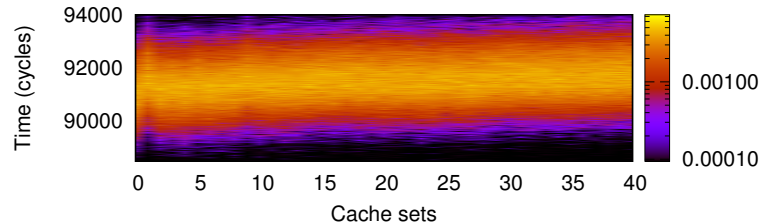
Intel Haswell

No evidence of channel



Intel Skylake

SMALL CHANNEL!

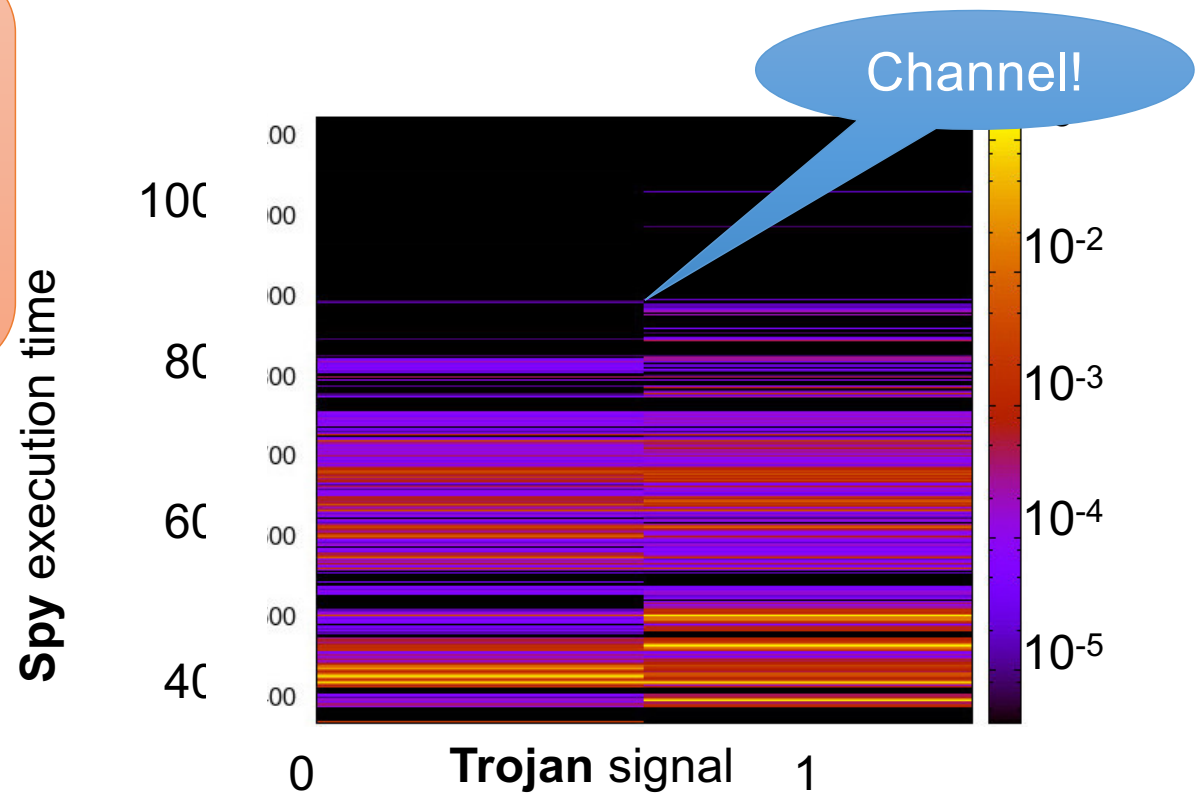


HiSilicon A53

HiSilicon A53 Branch History Buffer

Branch history buffer (BHB)

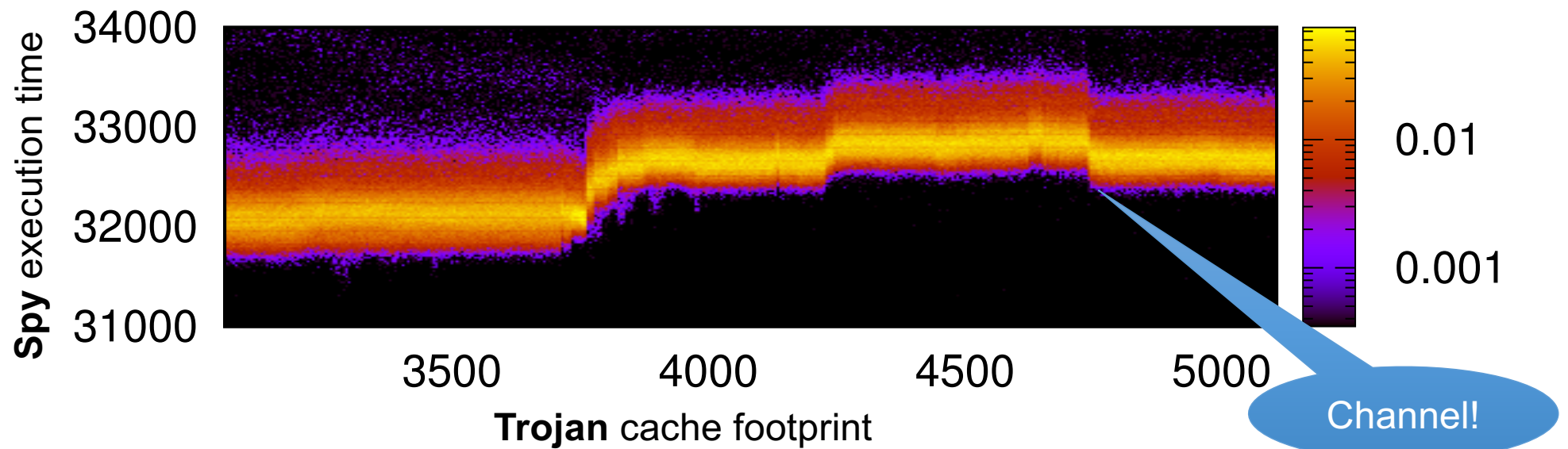
- Prediction of branch taken
- One-bit channel
- All reset operations applied



Intel Haswell Branch Target Buffer

Branch target buffer

- Prediction of branch destination
- All reset operations applied



Result Summary: Measured Capacities

Channel	Sandy Bridge		Haswell		Skylake		ARM A9		ARM A53	
	raw	flush	raw	flush	raw	flush	raw	flush	raw	flush
L1 D-cache	4.0	0.04	4.7	0.43	3.3	0.18	5.0	0.11	2.8	0.15
L1 I-cache	3.7	0.85	0.46	0.36	0.37	0.18	4.0	1.0	4.5	0.5
TLB	3.2	0.47	3.2	0.18	2.5	0.11	0.33	0.16	3.4	0.14
BTB	2.0	1.7	4.1	1.6	1.8	1.9	1.1	0.07	1.3	0.64
BHB	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.01	1.0	0.5

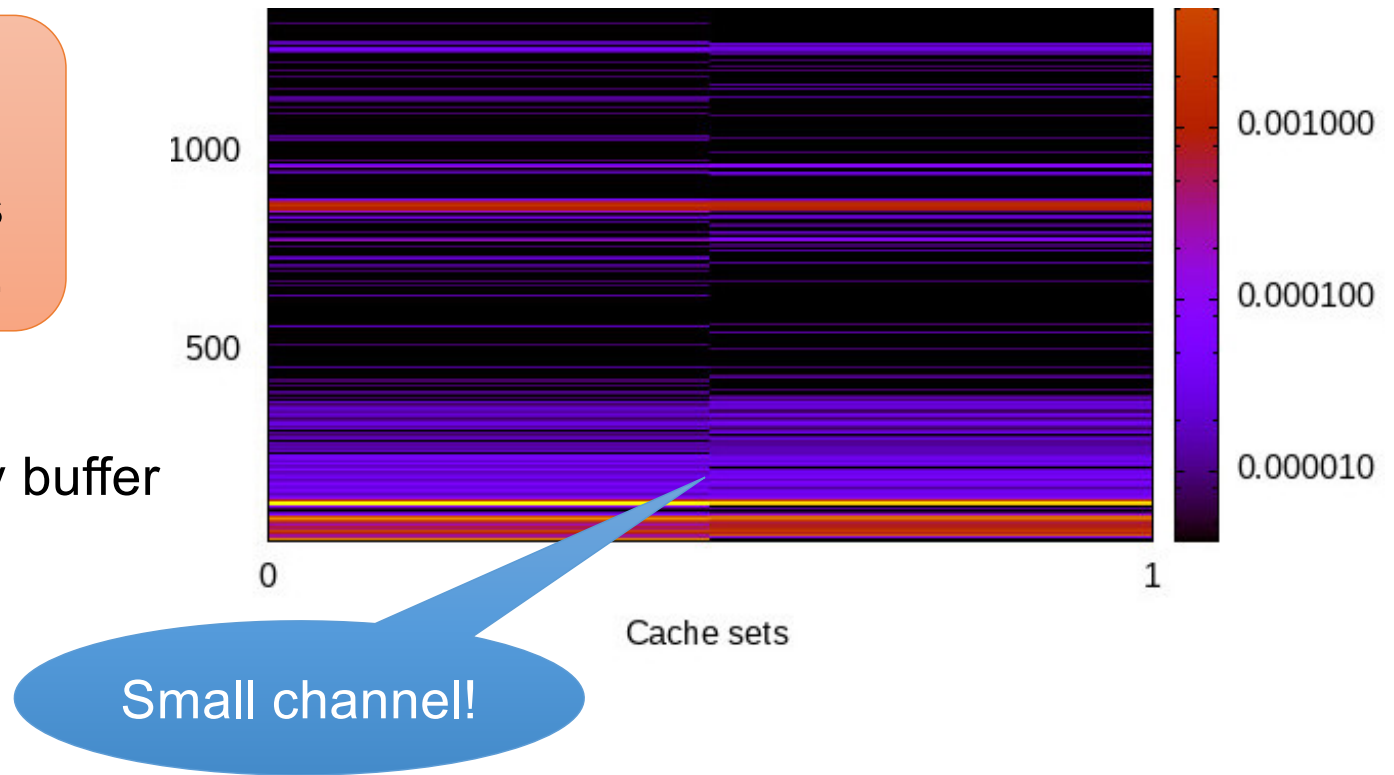
Residual channels

Uncloseable channel on each processor studied!

Intel Spectre Defences

Intel added *indirect branch control (IBC)* feature, which closes most channels, but...

Intel Skylake
Branch history buffer



Speculating Disaster

Instruction Pipelining

- Nominally, the processor executes instructions one after the other
- Instruction execution consists of multiple steps
 - Each uses a different unit



Instruction Pipelining

- Nominally, the processor executes instructions sequentially
- Instruction execution consists of multiple steps
 - Each uses a different unit
- Pipelining concurrently instruction execution

`c = a / b;`
`d = c + 5;`

Problem:
Dependencies


Inst fetch	Inst decode	Arg fetch	Execute	Write back
Inst fetch	Inst decode	Arg fetch	Execute	Write back
Inst fetch	Inst decode	Arg fetch	Execute	Write back
Inst fetch	Inst decode	Arg fetch	Execute	Write back
Inst fetch	Inst decode	Arg fetch	Execute	Write back

```

mulq $m0
add %rax,$A[0]
mov 8*2($np),%rax
lea 32($tp),$tp
adc \0,%rdx
mov %rdx,$A[1]
mulq $m1
add %rax,$N[0]
mov 8($a,$j),%rax
adc \0,%rdx
add $A[0],$N[0]
adc \0,%rdx
mov $N[0],-24($tp)
mov %rdx,$N[1]
mulq $m0
add %rax,$A[1]
mov 8*1($np),%rax
adc \0,%rdx
mov %rdx,$A[0]
mulq $m1
add %rax,$N[1]
mov ($a,$j),%rax
mov 8($a,$j),%rax
adc \0,%rdx
    
```


Out-of-Order Execution

- Execute instructions when data is available

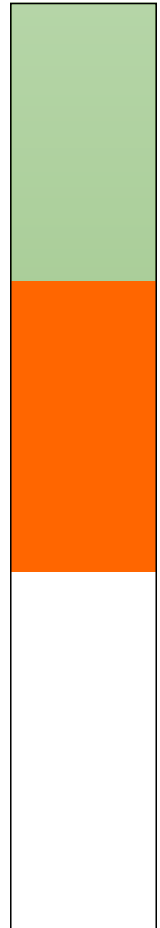
IF	ID	AF	EX	WB
IF	ID		EX	WB
IF	ID	AF	EX	WB

Completed instructions wait in *reorder buffer* until all previous ones *retired*

$b = 0?$

$c = a / b;$
 $d = c + 5;$
 $e = f + g;$

Out-of-order is speculative!



Out-of-Order Execution

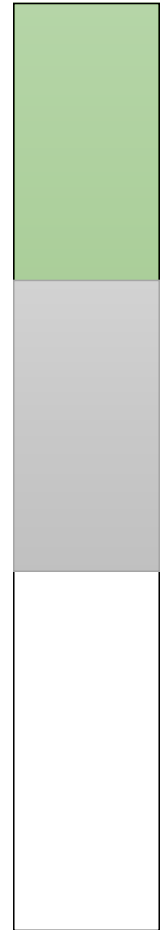
- Abandon instructions if never executed in program order

IF	ID	AF	EX	WB
IF	ID	AF	EX	WB
IF	ID	AF	EX	WB

Also useful for branches

```
c = a / b;  
d = c + 5;  
e = f + g;
```

b == 0!



Speculative Execution and Branches

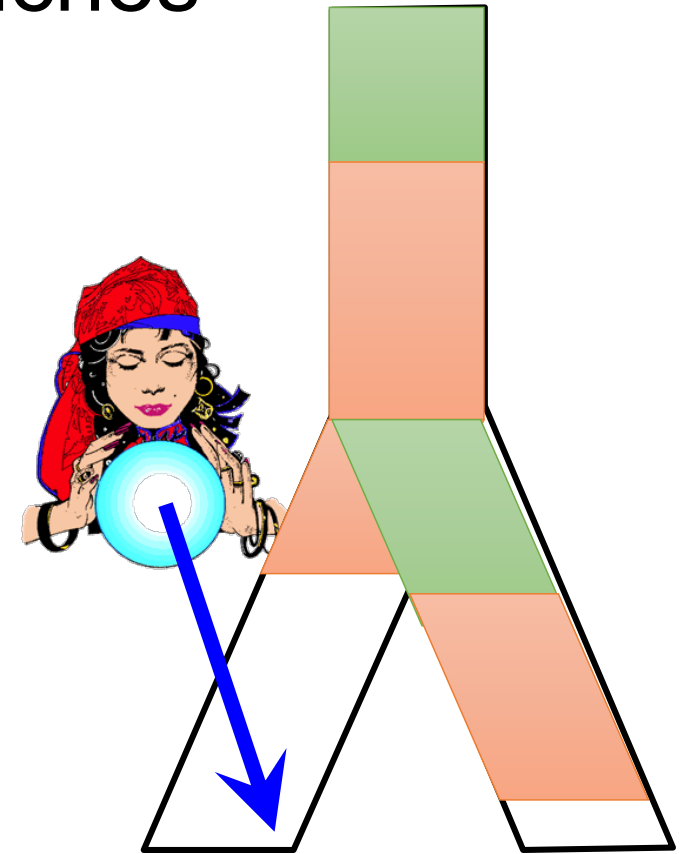
When execution reaches a branch:

- Predict outcome of branch
- Proceed (speculatively!) along predicted branch

Correct prediction: All good

Mis-prediction: Abandon and resume

Minor problem: Speculation
pollutes cache!

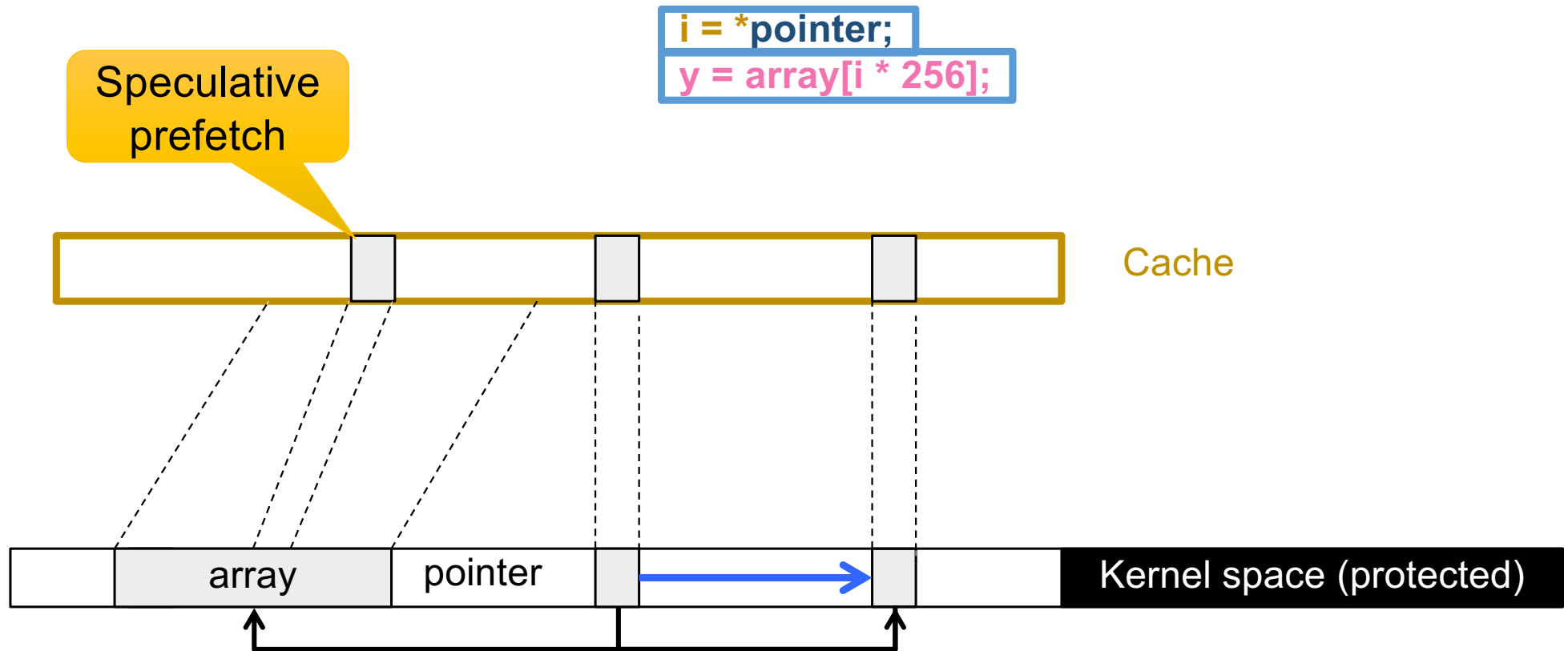


Speculating Disaster

Meltdown



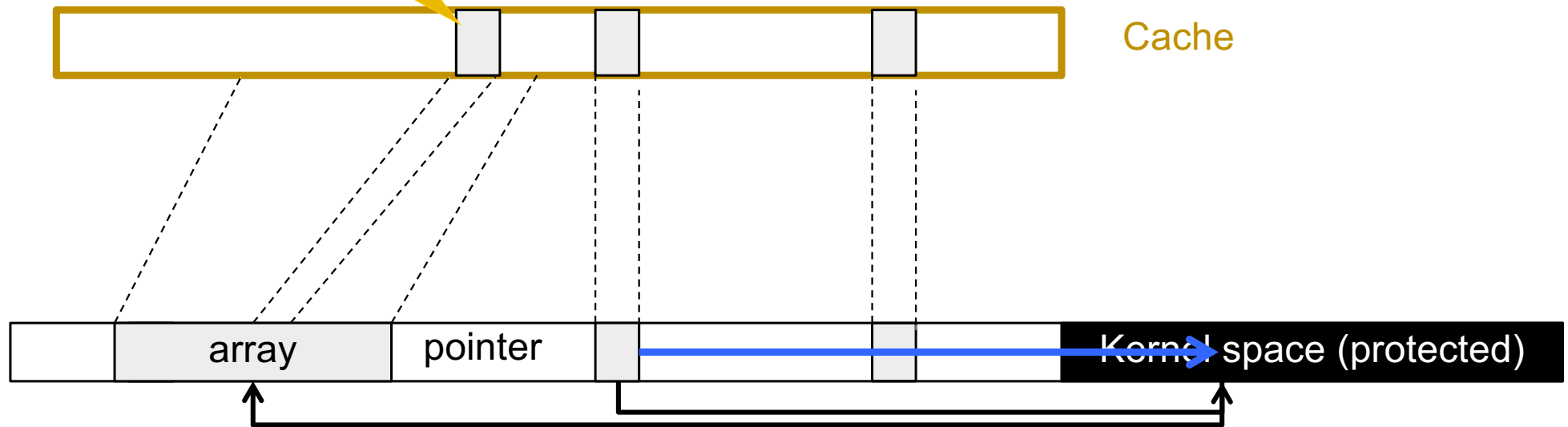
Meltdown: Speculative Load



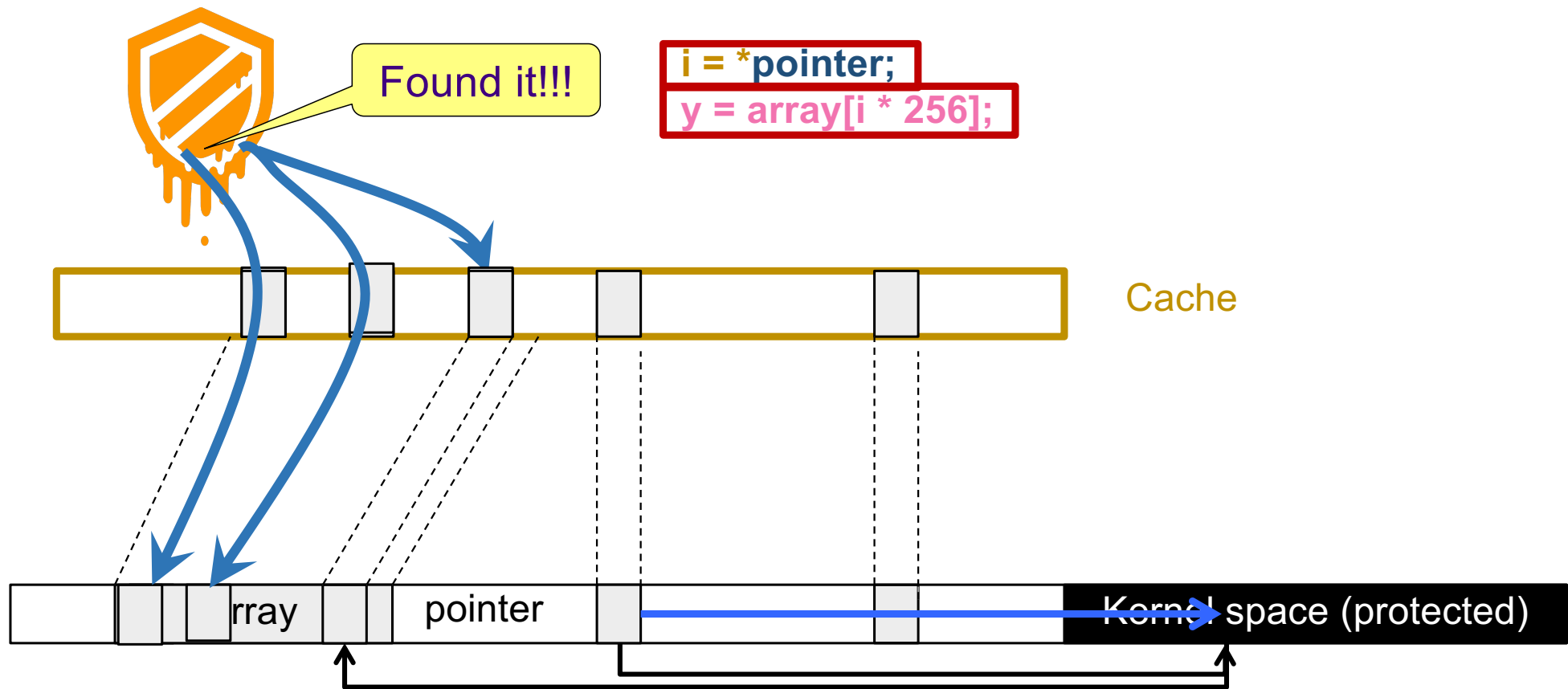
Meltdown: Speculative Loads

Prefetch concurrent with permission check, load aborted

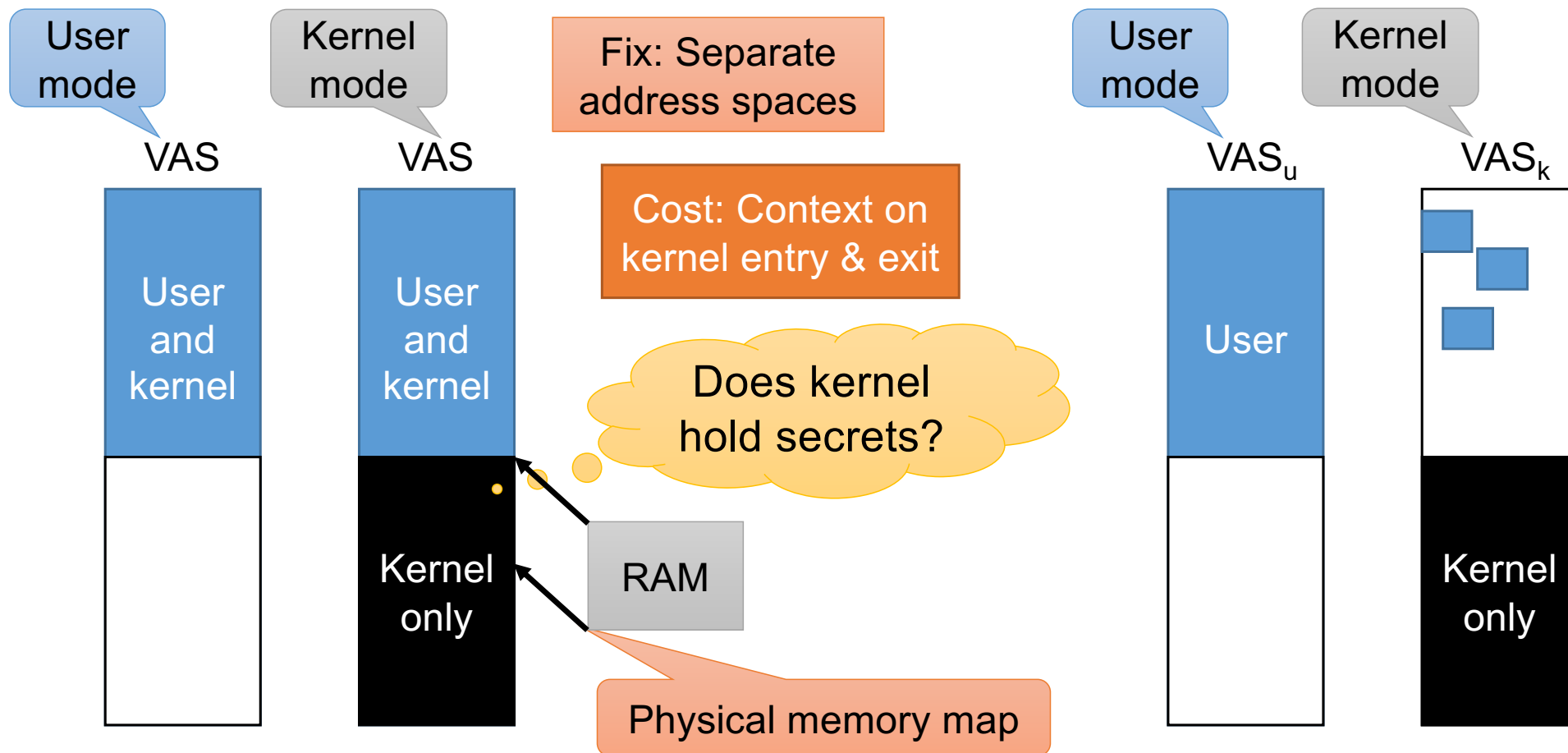
```
i = *pointer;  
y = array[i * 256];
```



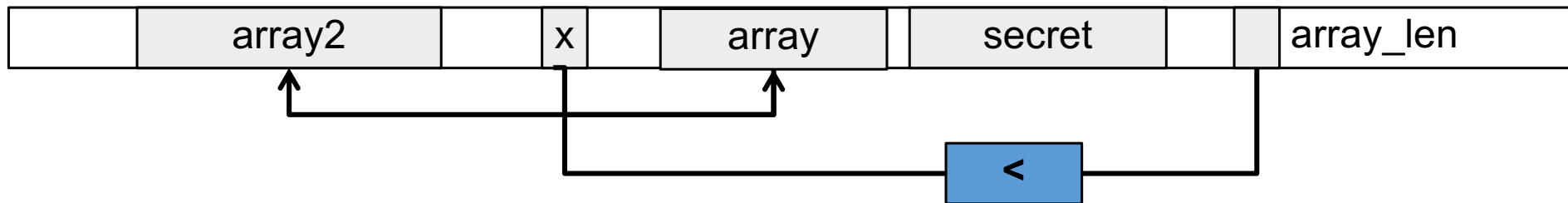
Meltdown: Cache-Channel to Read



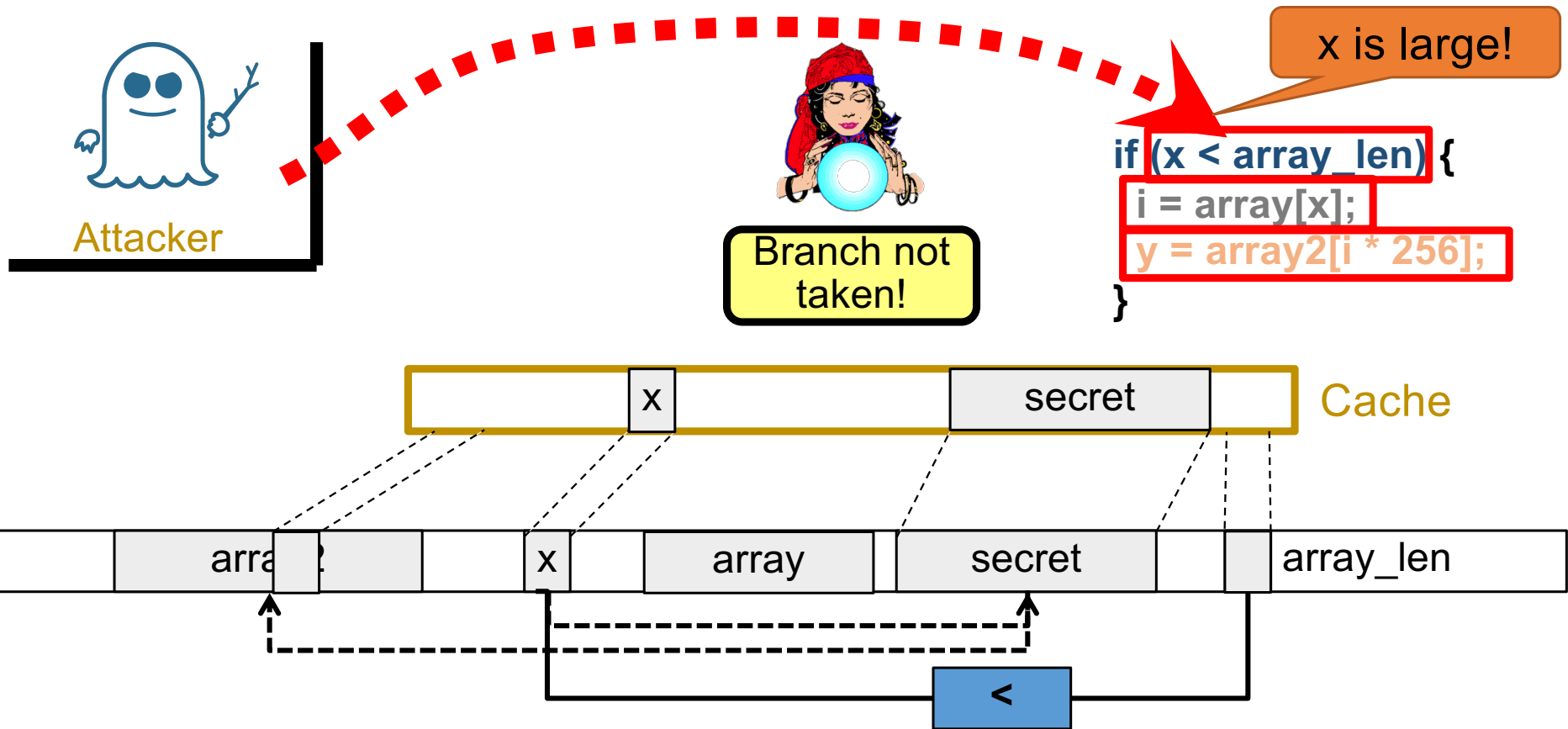
Meltdown: Full Kernel Memory Disclosure



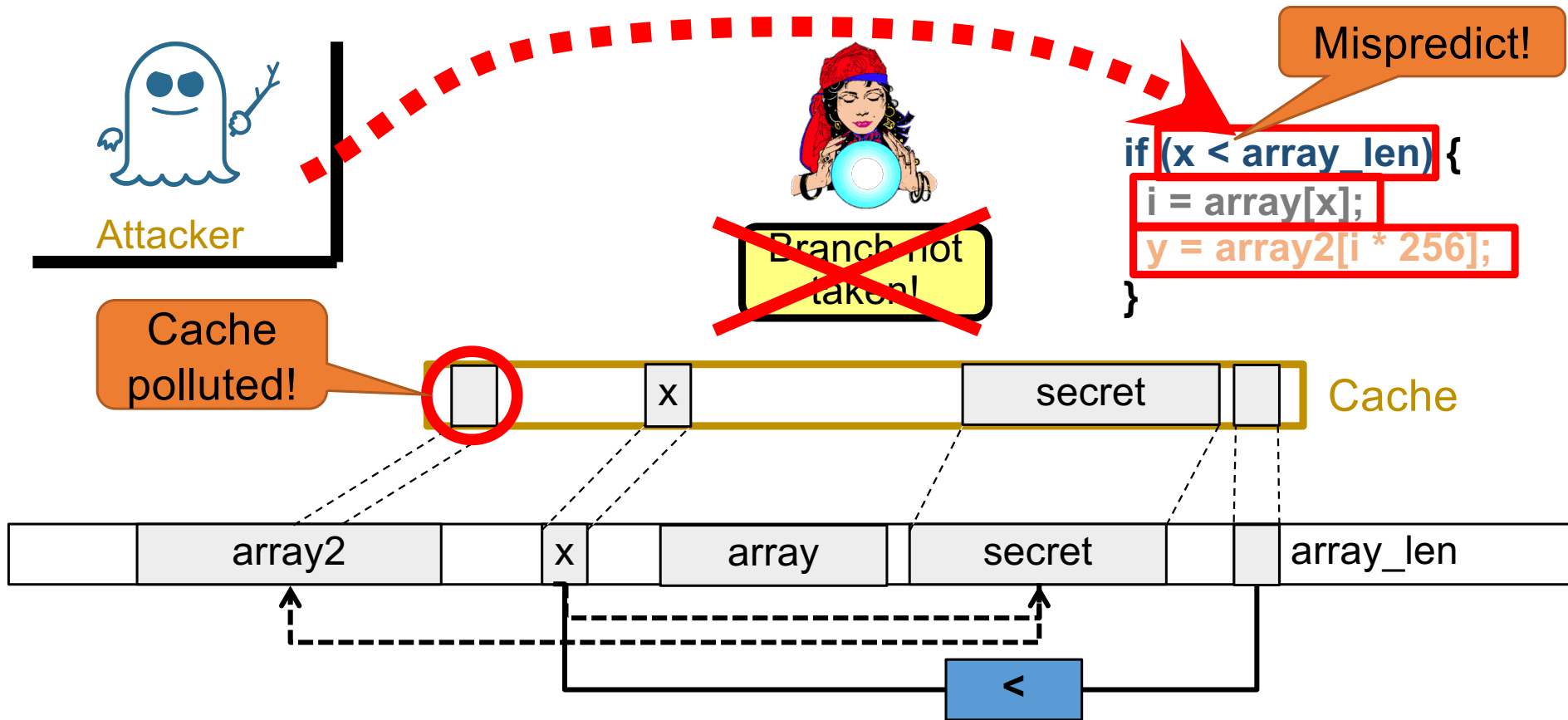
Spectre: Branch Prediction (Variant 1)



Spectre: Branch Prediction (Variant 1)



Spectre: Branch Prediction (Variant 1)



Reaction

consistent with spec, i.e. ISA

Steve Smith, Corporate vice president, Intel

“The processor is, in fact, operating as it is designed,” Smith said. “And in every case, **it's been this side-channel approach** that the researchers used to gain information even while the processor is executing normally its intended functions.”

Inevitable conclusion:

- This ISA is an insufficient contract for building secure systems
- **We need a new hardware-software contract!**