

Pentagon To Create Cyberspace Command Center



WASHINGTON (Reuters) – The Pentagon plans to create a new military command for cyberspace, stepping up preparations by the armed forces to conduct both offensive and defensive computer warfare.

The military command will complement a civilian effort President Barack Obama plans to announce on Friday that will overhaul the way the United States safeguards its computer networks.

Citing Obama administration sources, the Times said the president will detail on Friday the creation of a White House office that will coordinate a multi-billion-dollar effort to restrict access to government computers, protect systems that run U.S. stock exchanges, clear global banking transactions and manage the air traffic control system.

The Times said the civilian office would be responsible for coordinating private sector and government defenses against thousands of cyber-attacks mounted every day against the United States, largely by hackers but sometimes by foreign governments.

Administration sources said the president would not discuss the Pentagon plan on Friday. But Obama is expected to sign a classified order in the coming weeks that will create the military cyber-command.

The need for improved U.S. cyber-security was driven home in April when the Wall Street Journal reported that cyber-spies had penetrated the U.S. electrical grid and left behind software programs that could be used to disrupt the system.

The Times said the United States already has a growing number of computer weapons in its arsenal and must prepare strategies for their use as a deterrent or alongside conventional weapons in a wide variety of possible future conflicts.

Reuters has reported that companies in the cyber-security market range from security-software makers Symantec Corp and McAfee Inc, to traditional defense contractors such as Northrop Grumman Corp and Lockheed Martin Corp, to information technology companies such as CACI International.

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Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)

The Pentagon had been working on a cyberspace strategy for several months. It was completed weeks ago, but was delayed because of ongoing arguments over the authority of the White House office and budgets for the entire effort, the report said.

Source URL (retrieved on 05/06/2015 - 11:44pm):

<http://www.ecnmag.com/news/2009/05/pentagon-create-cyberspace-command-center>