

Sources: Pentagon planning new cybercommand

April 22 2009, By PAULINE JELINEK , Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- The Pentagon is planning to create a new military command to focus on cyberspace and protect its computer networks from cyberattacks, U.S. officials said Wednesday.

The move comes as the White House is poised to release a broader study on the nation's cybersecurity. Officials in recent months have increasingly warned that the nation's networks are at risk and repeatedly are being probed by foreign governments, criminals or other groups.

The Pentagon has been reviewing for at least a year just how it needs to reorganize military efforts on Internet-related issues, one official said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on the record. Another official said that under the new plan, being finalized now, a sub-command could be set up under the U.S. Strategic Command.

The military's plans to create the new cybercommand were first reported Wednesday in The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post.

Located at Offutt Air Force Base just south of Omaha, Neb., the command oversees space issues and is responsible for protecting and monitoring the military's information grid, as well as coordinating any offensive cyberwarfare on behalf of the country.

Defense Department networks are probed repeatedly every day and the number of intrusion attempts have more than doubled recently, officials

have said. Military leaders said earlier this month that the Pentagon spent more than \$100 million in the last six months responding to and repairing damage from cyberattacks and other [computer network](#) problems.

In the Pentagon's budget request submitted last week, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said the Pentagon will increase the number of cyberexperts it can train each year from 80 to 250 by 2011.

The broader Obama administration study also about to be released looked at how the government can better manage and use technology to protect everything from the nation's [electrical grid](#) and stock markets to tax data, airline flight systems and nuclear launch codes.

Associated Press writer Lolita Baldor contributed to this report.

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Citation: Sources: Pentagon planning new cybercommand (2009, April 22) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-04-sources-pentagon-cybercommand.html>

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