

US weighed cyber attack in Libya war: officials

October 19 2011

The United States weighed launching a cyber-attack to disrupt Libyan air defenses before the start of an air campaign against Moamer Kadhafi's forces, officials said Tuesday.

The assault would have hacked into the Kadhafi regime's computer networks to cut links between early-warning radar and surface-to-air missiles threatening NATO aircraft, two defense [officials](#) said, confirming an account first published by The New York Times.

"A broad range of operations were considered," a senior defense official told AFP.

But a cyber offensive was eventually ruled out and at no point was the administration "close to pulling the trigger," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

US officials and some military officers argued against a cyber assault out of concern it could set a dangerous precedent that could open the door to similar moves by other countries, including Russia or China, the Times reported.

[Administration officials](#) also had doubts whether the cyber offensive could be organized quickly enough and whether President [Barack Obama](#) had the legal authority to approve a digital attack without notifying Congress, said the Times, citing unnamed officials.

The Washington Post reported that the debate on a potential [cyber attack](#) never reached the White House and that officials concluded bombing air defense sites would be more effective.

The NATO-led air campaign began on March 19 and is still underway, though allied governments say they are close to wrapping up the operation now that Kadhafi is in hiding and his forces chased out of the capital Tripoli.

Military officers have declined to openly discuss the tools and methods at the disposal of a newly created US Cyber Command, which is assigned the task of waging digital warfare.

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Citation: US weighed cyber attack in Libya war: officials (2011, October 19) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-10-cyber-libya-war.html>

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