

U.S. Is Considering Cyberattacks Against Russian Elites – WP

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Gen. Paul Nakasone the Commander of US Cyber Command **Eric S. Lesser / EPA / TASS**

The United States is considering cyberattacks targeting top Russian officials to combat possible interference in the 2020 presidential elections, The Washington Post [cited](#) current and former unnamed officials as saying Thursday.

The U.S. intelligence community believes Russian operatives are seeking to sow discord in the 2020 campaign, WP cited a classified national intelligence update issued in November as saying. The U.S. Cyber Command — the cyber warfare division of the military — reportedly [launched a campaign](#) last year to curb Russian operatives from influencing the 2018 congressional elections.

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The U.S. Cyber Command may target Russian oligarchs, security and military leaders with information warfare tactics to protect against interference in 2020, WP reported.

The operation would be designed to “inflict a cost” on Russian targets and would be accompanied by a messaging campaign, the publication said, citing officials who spoke about the sensitive issue on condition of anonymity.

“It can serve a useful message of ‘We’re watching and be careful not to go further,’” former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Carpenter was quoted as saying.

The officials added that any cyber operation would be unlikely to target Russian President Vladimir Putin, which would be deemed too provocative.

The Cyber Command is also reportedly contemplating “exploiting rivalries” within the Russian government and power elites through a disinformation campaign as another option to counter interference in 2020.

Any cyber actions would be aligned with sanctions or indictments for added effect, U.S. officials told WP.

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