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U.S., Britain, Say Russia's GRU Behind Cyberattacks on Ukraine

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Ukrainian officials said the attack earlier this week was the largest in its history. **Pixsell**

The U.S. and U.K. said Friday that Russia was behind a massive cyberattack on Ukrainian banks and government institutions earlier this week.

The incident was described by Ukrainian officials as the largest ever distributed denial of service (DDos) attack on the country, and Kyiv immediately said it suspected Russia was to blame.

Both Washington and London said publicly Friday that they had evidence the attack was launched by the Russian state.

"We believe that the Russian government is responsible for widespread cyberattacks on Ukrainian banks this week," Anne Neuberger, deputy national security advisor for cyber threats, said in a briefing at the White House.

"We have technical information that links the Russian main intelligence directorate — or

GRU. Known GRU infrastructure was seen transmitting high volumes of communication to Ukraine-based IP addresses and domains," at the time of the attack, she said.

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The U.S. has warned that cyberattacks could form the first stage of a Russian ground invasion into Ukraine, which could come imminently.

"This recent spate of attacks against Ukraine are consistent with laying the groundwork for more disruptive attacks, accompanying a further invasion of Ukraine's sovereign territory," Neuberger said.

Britain's foreign ministry also said Friday it was blaming Russia for the DDoS attack on Ukraine. Both London and Washington said they had moved to attribute blame quickly to underline that they "will not tolerate malicious cyber activity."

The assessment was shared hours after pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine announced a mass evacuation of civilians to Russia, stating they believed an attack from Kyiv was imminent. Kyiv immediately denied the claims and pointed to Russia's history of using so-called "false flag" operations as a pretext to escalate conflict.

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