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### New Office To Oversee Cyber Security

## Obama Says Threat Of Cyber Attack Serious Security Challenge

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**WASHINGTON --** President Barack Obama said on Friday that the threat of a cyber attack is one of the most serious economic and national security challenges facing the nation.

After a 60-day, top-to-bottom review of U.S. cyber security capabilities, the president is launching a new approach.

The president said part of the problem is that there's no single official or agency to oversee U.S. cyber security policy, and that's going to change.

Every day, cyber thieves are trolling the Internet, searching for sensitive information. The Pentagon said it detected more than 300 million attempts to hack into its computer networks last year, and the administration said foreign cyberspies recently hacked into the nation's power grid.

The Defense Department is in the process of creating a new cyber command to better protect its computer networks. The command also reportedly would conduct offensive and defensive computer warfare. More details should be made available in the coming days.

"Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups have spoken of their desire to unleash a cyber attack on our country," Obama said.

Obama said, from now on, the nation's digital infrastructure will be treated as a strategic national asset.

"Protecting this infrastructure will be a national security priority," he said. "We will ensure that these networks are secure, trustworthy and resilient."

The president is appointing a cyber security czar to coordinate and oversee the effort.

Information security expert Jim Harper, of the Cato Institute, said hiring another government official isn't the answer.

"Cyber security is important, but it's implausible that terrorists would use it," Harper said. It's important to secure against foreign governments, but our military networks are well prepared for that kind of thing."

Another expert said government and the private sector need to start sharing information about known

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threats.

"Gone are the days where people can think, 'This is not my problem,' or 'I'm going to hide my problem from the others,'" said digital forensics expert Bret Padres.

Some in Congress, including Sen. Susan Collins, are concerned that the new czar won't have enough power to get past the bureaucratic turf battles that have undermined similar efforts in the past.

The Obama administration said that cyber crime has cost Americans more than \$8 billion over the past two years.

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