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MoD invests millions to wage cyberwarfare against Isis

Deborah Haynes, Defence Editor

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Sir Michael Fallon: "I can confirm that we are using offensive cyber for the first time in this campaign"

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Britain is using cyberweapons against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq for the first time.

Sir Michael Fallon, the defence secretary, revealed the new dimension to the UK effort against the extremist group as he announced that the government would invest an additional

quarter of a billion pounds to boost the military's defences from cyberattacks.

“I’m not going into operational specifics, but yes, you know we are conducting military operations against Daesh [Isis] as part of the international coalition, and I can confirm that we are using offensive cyber for the first time in this campaign,” Sir Michael said.

He was speaking at a conference in London on waging war through advanced technology.

It is understood that operations will include penetrating Isis’s computer networks and not only preventing the group’s militants being able to communicate with each other and the outside world but also inserting false messages to cause confusion.



“The advantage is that it has the potential to become an enemy within the opposition rather than just stopping them communicating,” a defence source told Sky News.

Britain’s cyberwarfare capabilities had been a tightly kept secret. However, it can also be revealed that such weapons were first deployed during the conflict in Libya in 2011.

Computer viruses can be used to disrupt anything that is connected to the network, from mobile phones and laptops to artillery and fast jets.

Sir Michael, in a speech at the conference, said that the government would invest “£265 million in new ways to uncover cybervulnerabilities within UK military platforms”. He added: “The UK is a world leader in cybersecurity, and we recognise

that cyber-risk is one of the greatest threats we face in the modern world.

“But, as our US colleagues would say, this cannot just be about our defence. It must be about our offence too. It is important that our adversaries know there is a price to pay if they use cyberweapons against us, and that we have the capability to project power in cyberspace as elsewhere.”



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