

Home > News

Montenegro asks for British help after cyber attacks in wake of 'Russian-backed coup plot'



The cyber attacks hit government and media websites CREDIT: DAMIAN DOVARGANES/AP

By **Ben Farmer**, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

28 FEBRUARY 2017 • 6:05PM

Montenegro has asked Britain for technical help to defend against cyber attacks after suffering a barrage of online assaults in the wake of an alleged Russian-backed coup plot.

The Balkan nation says it suffered sustained cyber attacks against state websites on the day the foiled coup was due to take place, and then faced another wave of attacks in February.

Both Montenegro and British officials have accused Russia of being behind the coup plot, to stop Montenegro joining Nato. Russia has rejected the accusations.

The coup plot would have assassinated the then prime minister, Milo Djukanovic CREDIT: SAVO PRELEVIC/AFP

Montenegrin leaders asked Sir Alan Duncan, Foreign Office minister, for British technical assistance to repel cyber attacks when he visited the country last week. UK and American intelligence agencies are already helping the country investigate the coup plot to assassinate the then prime minister, Milo Djukanovic, on October 16, 2016.

Montenegro's special prosecutor has said the coup was planned by "Russian state bodies" and has said he will indict a Russian military intelligence officer accused of orchestrating the conspiracy.

The country said government and media websites came under attack on October 16 and again for several days in mid-February.

The first wave of cyber attacks coincided with the October 16 election day coup plot, where around 20 people were arrested CREDIT: DARKO VOJINOVIC/AP

A government statement said: "The scope and diversity of the attacks and the fact that they are undertaken on the professional level indicates that this was planned and synchronised action."

It said the country was still working to identify the culprits, but the attacks appeared to be aimed at "disabling distribution of information to Montenegrin and international public".

British sources said the cyber attacks were being "viewed in the context of the coup plot".

A Foreign Office spokeswoman said: "We stand ready to engage with Montenegro on cyber security issues, following recent attacks on government websites."

Russia has been accused of significantly escalating cyber attacks on the West in the past 12 months including operations designed to leak sensitive emails to sway the US presidential election in favour of Donald Trump. Russia has denied the attacks and says its own systems have come under attack from Western intelligence agencies.

Ukraine earlier this year also asked for British help to build its cyber defences after the country reported a wave of online attacks against state institutions, and said it was facing a cyber war from Russia.

Stepan Poltorak, Ukraine's defence minister, told his British counterpart, Sir Michael Fallon, he wanted British expertise to help update and protect his country's defence systems which have come under repeated attack.

Meanwhile, one of Britain's most senior commanders met with Russian defence chiefs in Moscow for talks on how to avoid accidents and confrontation between the two nations' militaries.

Gen Sir Gordon Messenger, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, met his Russian counterpart Gen Alexander Zhuravlev. General Zhuravlyov to discuss how to avoid accidental clashes in Syria or elsewhere.



Follow Telegraph News

Facebook

Follow @TelegraphNews

READ MORE ABOUT:

- CYBER ATTACKS
- MONTENEGRO
- CYBER DEFENCE
- RUSSIA
- ALAN DUNCAN
- UKRAINE
- DEFENCE INDUSTRY
- MICHAEL FALLON

NEWS MOST VIEWED

- 1** Woman 'accidentally cremated while still alive'
03 Mar 2017, 1:58pm
- 2** White boy asks for same haircut as black friend 'to confuse his pre-school teacher'
03 Mar 2017, 9:19am
- 3** Donald Trump brands Democrats 'hypocrites' over Russian links
03 Mar 2017, 9:42pm
- 4** Patrick Stewart is applying for US citizenship to 'fight' Donald Trump
03 Mar 2017, 1:57pm
- 5** Donald Trump under fire from veterans for wearing flight jacket and admiral's hat
03 Mar 2017, 9:50am

News latest

Northern Ireland Assembly election results: How Sinn Féin closed the gap on the DUP

04 Mar 2017, 9:30am



Piggyback riders: Funny photos of lazy hitchhiking animals

04 Mar 2017, 9:04am

John Terry's mansion burgled while footballer posted holiday pictures on social media

04 Mar 2017, 8:58am

Peugeot owner strikes deal for Vauxhall and Opel, raising fears over thousands of British jobs

04 Mar 2017, 8:29am

'Britain will not have to pay a penny to leave the European Union' - peers hand Theresa May major boost ahead of Brexit talks

04 Mar 2017, 7:58am

Kasper Holten: the British learned to love fine wine and they can love opera too

04 Mar 2017, 7:00am



Pictures of the Day: 04 March 2017

04 Mar 2017, 7:00am

◆ PREMIUM

Ignore the Democrat witch hunt - Trump is quietly turning into a hawk on Russia

TIM STANLEY   | 04 Mar 2017, 6:30am



Time to celebrate: Britain is thriving and its best days lie ahead

TELEGRAPH VIEW   | 04 Mar 2017, 6:00am

Ruth Davidson to announce 'back to basics' review of Scottish curriculum in attack on SNP education record

04 Mar 2017, 6:00am

◆ PREMIUM

Cromer's exotic wildlife has long gone, but this idyllic Norfolk seaside town is still worth a visit

04 Mar 2017, 6:00am

Drivers could soon be banned from having 'one for the road' as councils call for lower drink drive limit

04 Mar 2017, 6:00am

China reins in defence spending as Donald Trump boosts military budget

04 Mar 2017, 5:57am

Global recall of 1 million Mercedes cars over fire risk 'could include 75,000 in UK'

04 Mar 2017, 5:13am

'I won't be back': Arnold Schwarzenegger blames Donald Trump for Celebrity Apprentice decline

04 Mar 2017, 4:43am

Sinn Fein cuts DUP lead to one seat in Stormont Assembly as nationalists surge in Northern Ireland

04 Mar 2017, 4:11am

US court paves way for renewed hunting of wolves in Wyoming

04 Mar 2017, 3:41am

Kim Jong Nam killing: Deported Korean says Malaysia threatened to harm his family

04 Mar 2017, 2:46am

China's 200 richest lawmakers gathering at Congress 'worth £415 billion' - similar to GDP of Belgium

04 Mar 2017, 2:40am

Sinn Fein surge in Northern Ireland election as country awaits result which could put future of UK in question

04 Mar 2017, 1:37am

Women and children crossing together illegally into the United States could be separated

04 Mar 2017, 1:13am

[Contact us](#)

[Rewards](#)

[Archive](#)

[Reader Prints](#)

[Advertising](#)

[Syndication](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[Privacy](#)

[Terms and Conditions](#)

[Leave your feedback](#)

© Telegraph Media Group Limited 2017

