

US State Department sets up cyber bureau, envoy amid hacking alarm

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US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, seen on a visit to Bogota on October 20, 2021, has announced the formation of a cyber bureau at the State Department.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced Monday that the State Department will establish a new bureau and envoy to handle cyber

policy, revamping amid alarm over rising hacking attacks.

In a memo to staff, Blinken said that a review showed a need for structural changes on "how the State Department should adapt to 21st-century challenges."

He announced plans, subject to approval by Congress, to create a Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy with a new special envoy for critical and emerging technology.

"This structure will provide us with greater leadership and accountability to drive the diplomatic agenda within the interagency and abroad," Blinken wrote.

He said he would provide more details in a speech Wednesday at the Foreign Service Institute, the State Department's training center in suburban Washington.

State Department spokesman Ned Price told reporters the envoy will focus on "three key areas: international cyberspace security, international digital [policy](#) and digital freedom."

The digital push comes amid increasing concern that the United States needs to prepare for prolonged conflict and disruption on the cyber front.

Microsoft said Monday that a Russian hacking group behind last year's massive SolarWinds cyberattacks was behind a new assault against US and European targets.

The purported attack comes despite warnings by President Joe Biden during his summit in June with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

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