

Air Force pursues Cyber Command again

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Top Air Force leadership has decided to pursue forming Cyber Command to defend Defense Department networks and to launch cyberattacks against foes after putting the project on hold in August.

The service's leadership, including Air Force Secretary Michael Donley and Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz, made the decision last week at the Corona senior leadership conference in Colorado Springs, Colo., to continue its effort to stand up the command, said Capt. Michael Andrews, an Air Force spokesman.

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The service put Cyber Command [on hold](#) in August, saying it wanted to delay the program until new senior Air Force leaders, including Schwartz, had time to make a final decision on the scope and mission of the command. Last month, sources said the Pentagon [decided](#) that the U.S. Strategic Command in Omaha, Neb., should create and run a joint Cyber Command, a move that seemingly dashed any hopes the Air Force had to own Defense's cyber responsibilities.

In May, Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England wrote in a memo, "Because all the combatant commands, military departments and other defense components need the ability to work unhindered in cyberspace, the domain does not fall within the purview of any particular department or component."

The service originally had decided to establish the Cyber Command as a separate unit within Air Force Space Command, and during the Corona conference, leadership "discussed how the Air Force will continue to develop capabilities in this new domain and train personnel to execute this new mission."

"The conduct of cyber operations is a complex issue, as [Defense] and other interagency partners have substantial equity in the cyber arena," Donley said. "We will continue to do our part to increase Air Force cyber capabilities and institutionalize our cyber mission."

Andrews said the Air Force will provide more details on the Cyber Command later in October after discussions with Pentagon and congressional leadership.