

Military Historian Talks Cybersecurity, Cyberattacks and Article 5 of NATO

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DALLAS, TEXAS, UNITED STATES, March 31, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Should Russia's attacks against us in the cyberwar space be considered an attack on NATO as a whole?

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Bryan M. Rigg, Ph.D.

This is a complicated question to answer. However, in light of the damage cyber warfare can inflict on society, from shutting down computers at our nation's medical centers, water treatment plants, transportation centers and banks, to disrupting the flow of capital from financial institutions for our national defense, one should consider a cyberattack a violation of the Geneva Convention, a Crime Against Peace, and an act that should trigger Article 5 of NATO's treaty.

[Article 5 of NATO's founding treaty](#) states that an attack on one is an attack on all. This article is meant to foster a spirit of solidarity with, and commitment to, all the members of this treaty, which now numbers 30 nations. The only time Article 5 has been enacted to date was after 9/11, when NATO collectively declared war against terrorism in general, and specifically against the terror groups located in Afghanistan under the command of Osama bin Laden.

Russia's guilt is clear. We already know Russia meddled in America's elections in 2016. We have evidence they continue to collect and interfere with our day-to-day operations in business and private life. Russia has large military outfits whose focus is strictly on attacking civilians of nations it deems hostile (like the United States). And the [White House](#) recently warned that the Putin government is searching out “options for potential cyberattacks” on critical American infrastructure in retaliation for Western sanctions following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Cyberwarfare is a form of warfare with offensive and defensive capabilities. Going forward, NATO needs to send a strong message that if Russia presses a cyberattack on any NATO nation, it is an act of war—and NATO will respond strongly in kind.

Russia needs to be stopped from bullying the world. In light of Putin's anger at how pathetic his military is performing in Ukraine, how isolated he must be feeling as the world cuts off the flow of trade to and from his nation, and how the hatred for Russia grows as its military kills innocent women and children (a clear violation of the Geneva Convention), Putin will likely resort to areas where he can inflict harm. He will especially do so in a realm where the world until now has not really held him accountable. After he meddled in the 2016 U.S. elections, shouldn't the world have sanctioned him? That was a direct attack on a democracy. However, nothing was done. Isn't it time to do something?

How might we counterattack a cyberattack?

According to Article 5, it would be a full-on conventional attack across the board from NATO. If Article 5 is to be taken seriously, the 30 nations of NATO need to send a strong message to Putin and his Russian military goons that they cannot get away with causing death and chaos in the world like they have been doing for years. Yes, Putin has nuclear rockets and missiles—but will he try and nuke the entire NATO world? And what would that accomplish for him in return? It would mean the nuclear obliteration of his own nation.

Dictators throughout time have repeatedly shown that as their power increases, their reason decreases. With this in mind, Putin's threats about using atomic warfare against the West needs to be taken seriously. However, if we want to remove Putin from power and prevent his legions from causing further chaos, we must stand up to him and show him and the Russian people that just because you are willing to use nuclear weapons does not mean that enemy nations are also not willing to use those same type of weapons against you. In this respect, using Article 5 in the broadest sense of its meaning should give Putin (or at least his military leadership) pause before they enact cyberwarfare, because they will understand the type of response it would elicit from NATO countries. Bullies usually stand down when the people they are picking on hit back—and hit back harder.

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