

US cyber operation blocked internet for Russian troll farm on Election Day 2018: report

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The Hill, - 02/26/19 12:32 PM EST

The U.S.'s main military cyber operation reportedly interfered with internet access for a major Russian troll farm on Election Day last year.

[The Washington Post reported Tuesday](#) that several officials at U.S. Cyber Command said they were able to block internet access to the Internet Research Agency on the day of the 2018 midterm elections.

Several [entities and people charged](#) by special counsel [Robert Mueller](#) with interfering in the 2016 presidential election are tied to the Russian troll farm, which has sought to spread discord within the American public through social media platforms.

"They basically took the IRA offline," one person familiar with the operation told the Post. "They shut 'em down."

The Hill has reached out to Cyber Command for comment.

Senators have recently received classified briefings on U.S. cyber operations during the midterms, but have stayed mum on the details of those efforts.

"The fact that the 2018 election process moved forward without successful Russian intervention was not a coincidence," Sen. [Mike Rounds](#) (R-S.D.), the chair of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, told the Post. He did not provide the newspaper with information about Cyber Command's efforts.

The New York Times [reported shortly ahead of the midterms](#) that the U.S. was carrying out its first cyber operations aimed at preventing interference in the midterm elections. But those efforts reportedly consisted of alerting Russian hackers that U.S. officials were aware of their actions, which experts at the time largely dismissed as actually being an offensive cyber operation.

However, the reported operation blocking the troll farm's internet access is far more of an offensive move, and is likely a sign that the U.S. is willing to be more proactive in cyberspace.

The operation also comes after the U.S. launched its new cyber strategy, which national security adviser John Bolton said would mark a shift to more offensive moves and policies in cyberspace.

Director of National Intelligence [Dan Coats said late last year](#) that there was no compromise of the 2018 midterms, but did say influence operations were launched around the time of the elections.

And the departments of Justice and Homeland Security said earlier this year that [they had uncovered no evidence](#) of foreign election interference in the midterms.

None of the federal agencies tasked with investigating if there were any instances of foreign election meddling in the midterms have yet made their full reports and findings public.