CYBERCOM and NSA - Military and Civil Digital Power under Gen. Rudd.

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The United States Senate has confirmed Lieutenant General **Joshua Rudd** as the new commander of **U.S. Cyber Command (CYBERCOM)** and director of the **National Security Agency (NSA)**, thus marking the return of stable leadership after almost a year of interim management.

With a vote of **71 to 29**, Rudd not only receives the promotion to four-star general but also assumes simultaneous control of the two main American structures in the field of cyber warfare and signals intelligence. This is precisely the most significant political and strategic point: **Washington continues to have the same person lead both CYBERCOM and the NSA**, maintaining a unified command model between cyber operations and intelligence gathering.

This choice is not secondary. **CYBERCOM is the military command responsible for operations in the cyber domain, while the NSA is the most important American agency for signals intelligence and communications security.** Entrusting both structures

to the same leader means preserving a close integration between operational capabilities and technical intelligence, at a time when the United States considers cyberspace a central theater of conflict.

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Continuity after Haugh and the Criticisms on the Appointment

The appointment comes after the dismissal, which occurred at the beginning of April, of General **Timothy Haugh**, removed by the Trump administration just over a year after his appointment and without an official public reason. With Rudd, therefore, the administration does not change the command architecture: **it chooses a new man but confirms the same institutional setup**, that of the so-called *dual-hat*, the “dual hat” between CYBERCOM and NSA.

The decision, however, was not without controversy. Rudd indeed comes from the world of **special operations** and does not have a curriculum directly rooted in either signals intelligence or cyber. This aspect raised doubts, particularly from Democratic Senator **Ron Wyden**, who openly questioned his suitability for the role, arguing that the country cannot afford a “learning on the job” phase in cybersecurity matters.

Despite these objections, the opposite line prevailed in the Senate, supported among others by Republican **Roger Wicker**, who urged colleagues to quickly confirm Rudd, emphasizing the delicacy of the strategic moment.

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The Strategic Context and Next Steps

The new head of CYBERCOM and NSA indeed takes office while the United States is engaged in active operations against Iran, a context in which cyber capabilities have been described by senior officials as among the first to be employed since the start of the campaign, on **February 28**.

The framework makes the choice to maintain a single chain of command between the two institutions even more significant. In a phase of open confrontation, with the risk of Iranian cyber retaliations against military networks and sensitive infrastructures, **the US relies on the continuity of the model that links intelligence and cyber operations under the same commander**. In other words, Rudd's confirmation is not just a personal appointment: it is also a reaffirmation of the American will to keep the two fundamental levers of contemporary digital competition united at the top.

It remains to be seen when Rudd will formally assume the position. Once in office, he will still be able to count on two experienced deputies: **Lt. Gen. Lorna Mahlock** for CYBERCOM and **Tim Kosiba** for the NSA.

News link: https://breakingdefense.com/2026/03/special-ops-leader-rudd-confirmed-to-helm-cybercom-and-nsa/