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London, December 20 (RHC)-- A major cyber attack that has hit U.S. government agencies is also believed to have affected a small number of British organizations.

According to Sky News, British officials are "investigating" as to whether government departments have been affected by the big breach. Hitherto, it is believed only private British companies have been affected.

Paul Chichester, the director of operations at the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), which is an extension of the GCHQ signals intelligence organization, has urged British companies to take "immediate steps" to protect their networks.

An authorized account of the British signals and code breaking intelligence agency GCHQ has received highly favorable reviews by the UK establishment media. "This is a complex, global cyber incident, and we are working with international partners to fully understand its scale and any UK impact", Chichester told Sky News. "The NCSC is working to mitigate any potential risk, and actionable guidance has been published on our website," he added.

Meanwhile, one of the directors of a leading British cyber security company has claimed the attacks could be the most "impactful national security [cyber] breach" that has ever been seen. John Hultquist, who is senior director of analysis at Mandiant Solutions (which is part of the cyber security company FireEye), told Sky News that: "They [the hackers] managed clearly to gain access to a lot of secure areas. They are going to be very hard to get out."

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