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British National Charged with Hacking Into N.J. Naval Weapons Station Computers, Disabling Network After Sept. 11; Indictment Also Filed in Virginia for Other Military Instructions

NEWARK → An indictment was unsealed today against an unemployed United Kingdom computer system administrator, who allegedly broke into the computer network at the Earle Naval Weapons Station, stealing computer passwords, and shutting down the network in the immediate aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced. A second Indictment, also charging Gary McKinnon, 36, of the Hornsey section of London, was returned today in the Eastern District of Virginia in Alexandria, according to U.S. Attorney Paul J. McNulty. Announcement of the Indictments came today at a 2 p.m. news conference in Alexandria, Va., with U.S. Attorney McNulty and Ralph Marra, the First Assistant U.S. Attorney, representing U.S. Attorney Christie. Both jurisdictions will conduct separate prosecutions of McKinnon. In connection with McKinnon's conduct in New Jersey, McKinnon was charged in a one-count Indictment returned by a grand jury in Newark with intentional damage to a protected computer, according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott S. Christie. The seven-count Virginia Indictment charges McKinnon for intrusions into 92 computer systems belonging to the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Department of Defense and NASA. As a result of the intrusions into the U.S. military networks, McKinnon rendered the network for the Military District of Washington inoperable. McKinnon is also charged in the Virginia indictment with intrusions into two computers located at the Pentagon. The Virginia Indictment also charges McKinnon for intrusions into six private companies' networks. McKinnon is charged in Virginia with causing approximately $900,000 in damages to computers located in 14 states. (News releases from both districts, as well as the Indictments, are available at the District of New Jersey Public Affairs website, www.njusao.org . For further comment in Virginia, call Sam Dibbley, 703 299-3822. Concerning the New Jersey charges, McKinnon's series of computer network intrusions had a profound effect on Naval Weapons Station Earle's (NWS Earle) ability to accomplish its mission in the immediate aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, according to U.S. Attorney Christie. The entire network of 300 computers at NWS Earle, located in Colts Neck, N.J., was effectively shut down for an entire week, according to military officials at NWS Earle. For another three weeks afterward, military personnel and government civilian employees

at NWSE were only able to send and receive internal e-mail. It was only approximately a month after McKinnon's last intrusion into the network that NWS Earle was able to automatically route Naval message traffic and access the Internet, according to military officials at NWS Earle.
→ This was a grave intrusion into a vital military computer system at a time when we, as a nation, had to summon all of our defenses against further attack,→ Christie said. McKinnon faces a maximum penalty of five years in federal prison and a $250,000 fine. Efforts are under way to extradite McKinnon from the United Kingdom to stand trial on the charge, said U.S. Attorney Christie. The NWS Earle is a command of the U.S. Navy responsible for replenishing munitions and supplies for the Atlantic fleet. To assist in carrying out its mission, NWS Earle maintains and operates a network of approximately 300 computers in Colts Neck for the use of its military personnel and government civilian employees. The Indictment charges that on April 7, 2001, McKinnon hacked into the NWS Earle computer network through the Port Services computer, the primary computer used by NWS Earle for monitoring the identity, location, physical condition, staffing, battle readiness and resupply of Navy ships in and near the NWS Earle Pier Complex. At that time, he is alleged to have installed the software program RemotelyAnywhere on the Port Services computer and on other computers connected to the NWS Earle network. RemotelyAnywhere is a commercially available software program that allows an individual to remotely control a computer from any other computer via an Internet connection. The Indictment further charges that during the period of June 18, 2001 through June 21, 2001, McKinnon obtained unauthorized access to the Port Services computer on several occasions via an Internet connection and, through use of the previously-installed RemotelyAnywhere software, stole approximately 950 passwords stored on server computers connected to the NWS Earle network.

In addition, the Indictment charges that on Sept. 23, 2001, McKinnon again broke into the NWS Earle computer network by accessing the previously-installed RemotelyAnywhere software and using the stolen passwords. During this intrusion into the network, McKinnon allegedly caused approximately $290,431 in damage to NWS Earle by deleting computer files needed to power up some of the computers on the network, deleting computer logs that documented his intrusion into the network, and compromising the security of the network by leaving it vulnerable to him and other intruders via the RemotelyAnywhere software. Despite Indictment, every defendant is presumed innocent, unless and until found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt following a trial at which the defendant has all of the trial rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and federal law. U.S. Attorney Christie thanked detective constables of the UK National Hi-Tech Crime Unit in London for providing invaluable assistance in the investigation of McKinnon. U.S. Attorney Christie credited Special Agents of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (→ NCIS→), under the direction of Supervisory Special Agent Richard Stripay of the NCIS's Colts Neck Office. The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christie of the U.S. Attorney's Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property Section in Newark.

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