

Russia Says Stuxnet Could Have Caused New Chernobyl

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Russia said Wednesday that NATO should investigate last year's computer virus attack on a Russian-built nuclear reactor in Iran, claiming that the incident could have triggered a nuclear disaster on the scale of Chernobyl.

Dmitry Rogozin, Russia's ambassador to NATO, said the virus that hit the computer system at the Bushehr reactor had caused centrifuges to spin out of control.

"This virus, which is very toxic, very dangerous, could have very serious implications," he said, describing the virus's impact as being like explosive mines.

"These 'mines' could lead to a new Chernobyl," he said, referring to the 1986 nuclear accident at a plant in Ukraine, then part of the Soviet Union. "NATO should get to investigating the matter ... This is not a private topic."

Iran began fueling Bushehr in August, and officials have said the reactor will begin generating energy early this year, a delay of several months following the spread of the global computer

virus that is believed to have mainly affected Iran.

Iranian officials have confirmed that the Stuxnet virus hit staff computers at the Bushehr plant but said it had not affected major systems. Security experts say the computer worm may have been a state-sponsored attack on Iran's nuclear program and may have originated in the United States or Israel.

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