

U.N. General Assembly Panel: The Dangers of Sabotage of Information and Communications Technologies. The Role of “Centralized Controls” and the Potential Destabilization of An Entire Country

Preventing and Eliminating Consequences of Computer Attacks. "The Power to Destroy an Entire Country by Disabling the Switch that Controls Communication Technology"

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Global Research, January 27, 2024

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [United Nations](#)

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“25 Years of Discussions on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies Under the Auspices of the United Nations”

While the psychopathology of Russophobia is infecting the West, and various venal stratagems are being employed to destabilize the Russian Federation, it is precisely the Russian Federation which is leading efforts to establish an international code of conduct assuring the peaceful uses of technology, and prohibiting criminal attempts to cripple societies dependent upon centralized technological control.

On September 22, 2023, the Russian Federation held an important panel discussion during the General Assembly High-Level Week, chaired by H.E. Mr Sergey Vershinin, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, and including panel participants:

- Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs,
- H.E. Mr. Burhan Gafoor, Chair of the Open-Ended working group on security of

and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025,

- H.E. Ms. Faouzia Mebarki, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes, Ambassador of Algeria to the United Nations in Vienna,
- H.E. Mr. Grigory Logvinov, Deputy Secretary-General, Shanghai Cooperation Organization,
- Mr. Oleg Slepov, Head of International Development Department, Rostelecom-Solar.

The possibilities of information and communications technologies, used for constructive purposes, and by contrast, the deadly potential of using these technologies for destructive, criminal purposes were discussed in depth and detail, and what would seem an abstract matter became stunningly immediate, particularly as described by Mr. Oleg Slepov, of Rostelecom-Solar. Mr. Slepov discussed the way in which crucial sectors of modern societies can be connected by advanced technologies, speeding up, and providing incredibly efficient and effective transfer of information, as all sectors of these societies become increasingly dependent on these centralized technologies in order to function.

However, Mr. Slepov also warned of the dangerous possibility of hostile actors sabotaging these newly centralized controls of the most important sectors of society, by disabling the control centers of these now technologically linked sectors of society.

Thus, criminals have the power to destroy an entire country by disabling the switch that controls the communication technology.

This sabotage can be immediate, and will paralyze the most indispensable sectors of society, controlling water, electricity, health care facilities, transportation, telecommunications, and all other indispensable components that enable human societies to function. Mr. Slepov warned that this very centralized technological control of entire societies makes them vulnerable to sabotage by hostile actors.

The Concept Note for this meeting states:

“The fifth substantive session of this Open-ended Working group (OWEG) held in July 2023 marked the implementation of the initially Russian proposal on establishing global intergovernmental Points of Contact Directory, aimed at enhancing cooperation between competent national authorities in detecting, preventing and eliminating consequences of computer attacks, as well as responding to computer incidents.”

I had the privilege of speaking directly with Russian Deputy Minister Vershinin, and asked him whether it is actually possible to destroy an entire country by hostile interference with the technological centers which control effective functioning of that targeted country.

Minister Vershinin replied that this danger is, indeed, very real and alarming, and it is one of the reasons that the Russian Federation proposed this initiative, to be held under the auspices of the United Nations, in the context of international security. This initiative was adopted by the General Assembly by consensus.

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