



The United States and Israel jointly developed a sophisticated computer virus nicknamed Flame that collected critical intelligence in preparation for cyber-sabotage attacks aimed at slowing Iran's ability to develop a nuclear weapon, according to Western officials with knowledge of the effort.

The massive piece of malware was designed to secretly map Iran's computer networks and monitor the computers of Iranian officials, sending back a steady stream of intelligence used to enable an ongoing cyberwarfare campaign, according to the officials.

The effort, involving the National Security Agency, the CIA and Israel's military, has included the use of destructive software such as the so-called Stuxnet virus to cause malfunctions in Iran's nuclear enrichment equipment.

The emerging details about Flame provide new clues about what is believed to be the first sustained campaign of cyber-sabotage against an adversary of the United States.

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