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Finland 'Suspects Russia and China' of Spying on Foreign Ministry

By The Moscow Times

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Russia and China may have been responsible for large-scale hacking into the Finnish Foreign Ministry's computer networks, a Finnish television channel reported.

Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja said Thursday that Finnish counterintelligence discovered a security breach in the ministry's database earlier this year. The hackers may have had access to the network for several years, Tuomioja said, adding that an investigation has been opened.

Tuomioja said that the hackers primarily targeted communications between the Finnish authorities and the European Union, Reuters reported. He was unable to say whether the hackers were working on the behalf of foreign governments or private organizations.

But unidentified individuals told MTV3 television channel that the Finnish authorities suspect intelligence agents in Russia and China of having set up the surveillance program. The initial tip-off about the breach came from individuals abroad, the report said.

Despite the sophistication of the surveillance program the most important information concerning international affairs was not intercepted by hackers, Tuomioja said.

Russian hackers were widely suspected of cyber attacks on the Estonian and Georgian governments in 2007 and 2008, though the Russian government has denied any involvement.

Materials from RIA Novosti were included in this report.

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