

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

February 2, 2023

The Honorable Jennifer M. Granholm
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm:

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology (the Committees) write to request documents and information related to three U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) National Laboratories targeted by a Russian hacking team during the summer of 2022.¹ Although it is unclear whether the attempted intrusions were successful, it is alarming that a hostile foreign adversary targeted government labs working on scientific research critical to the national security and competitiveness of the United States. The Committees request documents and information related to these incidents to determine the impact of the attempted intrusions, and evaluate what DOE is doing to ensure the continued security of sensitive scientific research and development at its National Laboratories.

According to recent reports, between August and September 2022, a Russian hacking team, known to support Russian government information operations, created false login pages for three DOE National Laboratories and sent emails to nuclear scientists to elicit their passwords.² The targeted labs—Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL), Argonne National Laboratory (ANL) and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL)—work on scientific research critical to the United States’ national security and competitiveness.³ Among their scientific pursuits, BNL conducts “fundamental research in nuclear and particle physics,”⁴ ANL conducts “multidisciplinary science and engineering research,”⁵ and LLNL works to “ensur[e] the safety, security and reliability of the nation’s nuclear deterrent.”⁶

A March 2022 White House fact sheet warned about potential cyberattacks, specifically stating that, “[t]here is now evolving intelligence that Russia may be exploring options for

¹ James Pearson and Christopher Bing, *Exclusive: Russian hackers targeted U.S. nuclear scientists*, REUTERS (Jan. 6, 2023).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ Brookhaven National Laboratory website, *available at*: <https://www.bnl.gov/world>.

⁵ Argonne National Laboratory website, *available at*: <https://www.anl.gov/argonne-national-laboratory>.

⁶ Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory website, *available at*: <https://www.llnl.gov/about>.

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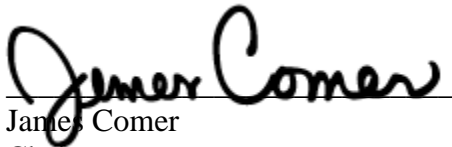
potential cyberattacks” as a response to U.S. sanctions.⁷ The hacking group responsible for the attempted intrusions of DOE National Laboratories, known as Cold River, has been implicated in prior hacking operations targeting key allies of the United States to benefit the Russian government.⁸

To help the Committees understand the impact of the attempted intrusions, how DOE responded, and what DOE is doing to ensure the continued security of its National Laboratories, we request the following documents and information, covering the time period July 1, 2022, to the present, as soon as possible but no later than February 16, 2023:

1. All documents and communications between DOE, BNL, ANL, LLNL, and any other impacted National Laboratory regarding the hacking attempt by Cold River described above;
2. All documents and communications between DOE, BNL, ANL, LLNL, and any other impacted National Laboratory and any other department or federal agency regarding the hacking attempt by Cold River described above; and
3. All documents and communications between DOE, BNL, ANL, LLNL, and any other impacted National Laboratory and any contractor or subcontractor supporting the DOE regarding the hacking attempt by Cold River described above.

To schedule the delivery of responsive documents or ask any related follow-up questions, please contact Committee on Oversight and Accountability Majority Staff at (202) 225-5074. The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,



James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Accountability



Frank D. Lucas
Chairman
Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology

cc: The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Accountability

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren, Ranking Member
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

⁷ *FACT SHEET: Act Now to Protect Against Potential Cyberattacks*, The White House (March 21, 2022).

⁸ *Supra*, n.1.