Exclusive: North Korean hackers breached top Russian missile maker

LONDON/WASHINGTON, Aug 7 (Reuters) – An elite group of North Korean hackers secretly breached computer networks at a major Russian missile developer for at least five months last year, according to technical evidence reviewed by Reuters and analysis by security researchers.

Reuters found cyber-espionage teams linked to the North Korean government, which security researchers call ScarCruft and Lazarus, secretly installed stealthy digital backdoors into systems at NPO Mashinostroyeniya, a rocket design bureau based in Reutov, a small town on the outskirts of Moscow.

Reuters could not determine whether any data was taken during the intrusion or what information may have been viewed. In the months following the digital break-in Pyongyang announced several developments in its banned ballistic missile programme but it is not clear if this was related to the breach.

Experts say the incident shows how the isolated country will even target its allies, such as Russia, in a bid to acquire critical technologies.

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