

Unclassified Threat Read Book

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# Table of Contents

# Cyber

1. [6 most notorious Android malware of all time](#_6_most_notorious) – 14 FEB
2. [Chinese hackers brech more US telecoms via unpatched Cisco routers](#_Chinese_hackers_breach) – 14 FEB
3. [Chinese Cyberspy Possibly Launching Ransomware Attacks as Side Job](#_Chinese_Cyberspy_Possibly) - 13 FEB
4. [DPRK hackers dupe targets into typing PowerShell commands as admin](#_DPRK_hackers_dupe) – 12 FEB
5. [Over 1,300 overseas APT attacks target China's 14 key sectors in 2024: cybersecurity report](#_Over_1,300_overseas) - 11 FEB
6. [Top 5 ways attackers use generative AI to exploit your system](#_Top_5_ways) – 11 FEB
7. [Ransomware Payments Dropped to $813 Million in 2024](#_Ransomware_Payments_Dropped) - 07 FEB
8. [New Scareware Attack Targeting Mobile Users to Deploy Malicious Antivirus App](#_New_Scareware_Attack) - 07 FEB
9. [Hacker Who Targeted NATO, US Army Arrested in Spain](#_Hacker_Who_Targeted) - 06 FEB
10. [OpenAI Data Breach – Threat Actor Allegedly Claims 20 Million Logins for Sale](#_OpenAI_Data_Breach) - 06 FEB
11. [North Korean Hackers Use custom-made RDP Wrapper to activate remote desktop on Hacked Machines](#_North_Korean_Hackers) - 06 FEB
12. [Threat Actors Exploiting DeepSeek’s Rise to Fuel Cyber Attacks](#_Threat_Actors_Exploiting) - 05 FEB
13. [Russian Hackers Exploited 7-Zip Zero-Day Against Ukraine](#_Russian_Hackers_Exploited) - 05 FEB
14. [Threat Actors Exploiting Free Email Services to Target Government and Educational Institutions](#_Threat_Actors_Exploiting) - 05 FEB
15. [State-linked hackers deploy macOS malware in fake job interview campaign](#_State-linked_hackers_deploy) - 04 FEB

# Electromagnetic Warfare

1. [Türkiye’s electronic warfare systems: Unseen heroes of modern conflicts](#_Türkiye’s_electronic_warfare) – 13 FEB
2. [Ukrainian drone operators say fiber-optic and AI drones are rare but could radically change the fight because of how hard it is to defeat them](#_Ukrainian_drone_operators) – 12 FEB
3. [Russian firm obtains NATO-sourced EW equipment](#_Russian_firm_obtains) – 11 FEB
4. [The next battlefield is invisible and the fight for electromagnetic dominance has begun](#_The_next_battlefield) - 10 FEB
5. [A 'hidden electronic warfare battle' is raging in Ukraine and demanding more from the soldiers fighting it, special drone unit says](#_A_'hidden_electronic) - 08 JAN
6. [Inside Ukraine's race to crank out unjammable, fiber-optic drones that can break through Russia's electronic warfare](#_Inside_Ukraine's_race) - 07 FEB
7. [Fighting the war in Ukraine on the electromagnetic spectrum](#_Fighting_the_war) - 05 FEB

# Information Advantage

1. [AI-Powered Spcoa; Engineering: Ancillary Tools and Techniques](#_AI-Powered_Social_Engineering:) – 14 FEB
2. [Military community gathers in Paris to discuss how AI is impacting conflict around the world](#_Military_community_gathers) – 11 FEB
3. [Artificial General Intelligence's Five Hard National Security Problems](#_Artificial_General_Intelligence's) - 10 FEB
4. [Algorithmic invasions: How information warfare threatens NATO's eastern flank](#_Algorithmic_invasions:_How) - 07 FEB
5. [Lawmakers Push to Ban DeepSeek App From U.S. Government Devices](#_Lawmakers_Push_to) - 06 FEB
6. [Meteoric Rise Of Chinese Tech! Why Race For AI Supremacy Is Leaving US Tech Giants, Washington Trembling?](#_Meteoric_Rise_Of) - 06 FEB
7. [DeepSeek's Lesson: America Needs Smarter Export Controls](#_DeepSeek's_Lesson:_America) - 05 FEB
8. [Google puts military use of AI back on the table](#_Google_puts_military) – 05 FEB
9. [How Agentic AI will be Weaponized for Social Engineering Attacks](#_How_Agentic_AI) - 05 FEB
10. [How a Sale of TikTok Would Work and Who Might Buy It](#_How_a_Sale) - 04 FEB
11. [DeepSeek Compared to ChatGPT, Gemini in AI Jailbreak Test](#_DeepSeek_Compared_to) - 04 FEB
12. [DeepSeek Is a Win for China in the A.I. Race. Will the Party Stifle It?](#_DeepSeek_Is_a) - 02 FEB
13. [DeepSeek: What lies under the bonnet of the new AI chatbot?](#_DeepSeek:_What_lies) - 01 FEB

# Signal

1. [GNSS and Secure SATCOM: User Technology Report](#_GNSS_and_Secure) - FEB 2025
2. [New Bill Would Classify Space as Critical Infrastructure](#_New_Bill_Would) – 13 FEB
3. [Origosat Develops New GSTA Anti-Spoofing Capability](#_Origosat_Develops_New) – 12 FEB
4. [The hidden threat of neglected cloud infrastructure](#_The_hidden_threat) - 07 FEB
5. [Internet-connected cameras made in China may be used to spy on US infrastructure: DHS](#_Internet-connected_cameras_made) - 06 FEB
6. [Is 2025 the year of quantum computing?](#_Is_2025_the) - 05 FEB
7. [Mitigation strategies for edge devices: Practitioner guidance](#_Mitigation_strategies_for) - 05 FEB
8. [Security considerations for edge devices](#_Security_considerations_for) - 04 FEB
9. [The Case for LEO GNSS at C-Band](#_The_Case_for) - 03 FEB

# Items of Interest

1. [Drones Over U.S. Bases May Be Threatening Spy Flights: NORTHCOM Commander](#_Drones_Over_U.S.) – 13 FEB
2. [Iran Wants to Build a Faster Bomb. And More (Video)](#_Iran_Wants_to) - 10 FEB
3. [China-Taiwan Weekly Update, February 7, 2025](#_Iran_Wants_to) - 07 FEB
4. [U.S.-Mexico Tensions: U.S. Deploys ‘Cutting Edge’ Spy Planes, RC-135 & P-8 Poseidon, To Check Mexican Border](#_U.S.-Mexico_Tensions:_U.S.) - 05 FEB
5. [RC-135 Rivet Joint Surveillance Jet Just Flew Unprecedented Mission Off Mexico](#_RC-135_Rivet_Joint) - 05 FEB
6. [China Flashes “Anti-Hypersonic” Gigantic Radar That It Claims Can Detect & Track Every Kind Of Missile](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cmelissa.n.thompson16%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CWLJ99BDB%5CAnti-Hypersonic#_China_Flashes_) - 05 FEB
7. [What DeepSeek Really Changes About AI Competition](#_What_DeepSeek_Really) - 04 FEB
8. [US-China War: Beijing Will Not Initiate ‘Conventional War’ With U.S. Military Despite Rapid Modernization: RAND](#_US-China_War:_Beijing) - 04 FEB
9. [The Philippines Is Ever More Focused on Taiwan](#_The_Philippines_Is) - 01 FEB
10. [World’s Largest Military Command Center — China Is Constructing “Super Pentagon” To Defend Its Leaders](#_World’s_Largest_Military) - 01 FEB
11. [Factors Shaping the Future of China's Military](#_Factors_Shaping_the) - 30 JAN

# Middle East Conflicts

1. [Institute for The Study of War Iran Update:](#_The_Drive_Israel-Gaza_1)
2. [Israel’s Nightmare: Iran Now Has a ‘Drone Aircraft Carrier’](#_Israel’s_Nightmare:_Iran) - 12 FEB
3. [Israel and Hamas Prepare for Return to War](#_Israel_and_Hamas) - 11 FEB
4. [Can Post-Assad Clashes In Syria Be Stopped?](#_Can_Post-Assad_Clashes) - 10 FEB
5. [The Houthis Have Paused Attacks—For Now](#_The_Houthis_Have) - 10 FEB
6. [As part of ceasefire, Israel withdraws from Gaza corridor](#_As_part_of) - 09 FEB
7. [As Israel Expands West Bank Operation, Two Soldiers Are Killed](#_As_Israel_Expands) - 04 FEB
8. [After the Assad Regime's Fall, Will Syrian Refugees Return?](#_After_the_Assad) - 04 FEB
9. [What we know about the Gaza ceasefire deal](#_What_we_know) - 02 FEB
10. [Hamas Took Around 250 Hostages From Israel. Here’s What We Know](#_Hamas_Took_Around). - 01 FEB

# Russia-Ukraine Conflict

1. [Institute for The Study of War](#_Russia-Ukraine_Situation_Report)
2. [Trump Admin Makes Major Moves For Negotiated End Of Ukraine War](#_Trump_Admin_Makes) - 12 FEB
3. [Lessons of the Minsk Deal: Breaking the Cycle of Russia’s War in Ukraine](#_Lessons_of_the) – 11 FEB
4. [Russians Erect Mesh Net ‘Tunnel’ Over A Mile Long To Counter Ukrainian FPV Drones](#_Russians_Erect_Mesh) – 10 FEB
5. [Zelenskyy confirms a new Ukrainian offensive in Russia’s Kursk region](#_Zelenskyy_confirms_a) - 08 FEB
6. [Ukraine’s Dual Adversaries: Russia and North Korea](#_Ukraine’s_Dual_Adversaries:) - 07 FEB
7. [Ukraine Launches New Offensive Push In Russia’s Kursk Region](#_Ukraine_Launches_New) - 06 FEB
8. [The Myth of Human Wave Attacks Obscures What North Korea Is Learning in Ukraine](#_The_Myth_of) - 06 FEB
9. [Ukraine’s Kursk Incursion: Six Month Assessment](#_Ukraine’s_Kursk_Incursion:) - 06 FEB
10. [Ukraine says its long-range drones hit a Russian airfield as France delivers Mirage fighter jets](#_Ukraine_says_its) - 06 FEB
11. [Russia Indicates Talks With U.S. Over Ukraine Are Intensifying](#_Russia_Indicates_Talks) - 05 FEB
12. [Inside the operations that took captive 2 North Korean soldiers fighting Ukraine](#_Inside_the_operations) - 05 FEB
13. [Ukrainian Minerals For Arms Deal Complicated By Russian Control Of Key Territories](#_Ukrainian_Minerals_For) - 05 FEB
14. [Ukraine’s Intel Chief Disputes Claim That North Koreans Have Fled The Russian Front](#_Ukraine’s_Intel_Chief) - 01 FEB
15. [Ukraine says North Koreans may have pulled out of front line](#_Ukraine_says_North) - 01 FEB

# Cyber

## [6 most notorious Android malware of all time](https://www.androidpolice.com/worst-android-malware-of-all-time/) (Android Police, 14 FEB, Chris Thomas)

Nothing hampers up-and-coming trends as much as extreme popularity. Android, the world's most common operating system, offers bad actors an opportunity to force malicious code on users, often without their knowledge. Nearly two decades after its birth, the OS integrates safeguards to minimize malware hazards. Along with tools like secure password managers and VPNs, your Android phone offers plenty of ways to bolster your security.

## [Chinese hackers breach more US telecoms via unpatched Cisco routers](https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/chinese-hackers-breach-more-us-telecoms-via-unpatched-cisco-routers/amp/) (Bleeping Computer, 14 FEB, Sergiu Gatlan)

China's Salt Typhoon hackers are still actively targeting telecoms worldwide and have breached more U.S. telecommunications providers via unpatched Cisco IOS XE network devices.

## [Chinese Cyberspy Possibly Launching Ransomware Attacks as Side Job](https://www.securityweek.com/chinese-cyberspy-possibly-launching-ransomware-attacks-as-side-job/) (Security Week, 13 FEB, Ionut Arghire)

A toolset associated with China-linked espionage intrusions was employed in a ransomware attack, likely by a single individual.

## [DPRK hackers dupe targets into typing PowerShell commands as admin](https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/dprk-hackers-dupe-targets-into-typing-powershell-commands-as-admin/amp/) (Beeping Computer, 12 FEB, Bill Toulas)

[**Back to Table of Contents**](#_Table_of_Contents)

North Korean state actor ‘Kimsuky’ (aka ‘Emerald Sleet’ or ‘Velvet Chollima’) has been observed using a new tactic inspired from the now widespread ClickFix campaigns.

## [Over 1,300 overseas APT attacks target China's 14 key sectors in 2024: cybersecurity report](https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202502/1328225.shtml) (Global Times, 11 FEB, Liu Caiyu)

An annual report from a Chinese cybersecurity firm revealed on Tuesday that over 1,300 advanced persistent threat (APT) attacks have targeted 14 key sectors in China in 2024. Among these, government agencies, education, scientific research, national defense and military industry, and transportation are the five most heavily affected sectors.

## [Top 5 ways attackers use generative AI to exploit your systems](https://www.csoonline.com/article/3819176/top-5-ways-attackers-use-generative-ai-to-exploit-your-systems.html) (CSO Online, 11 FEB, John Leyden)

Cybercriminals are increasingly exploiting gen AI technologies to enhance the sophistication and efficiency of their attacks.

## [Ransomware Payments Dropped to $813 Million in 2024](https://www.securityweek.com/ransomware-payments-dropped-to-813-million-in-2024/) (Security Week, 07 FEB, Eduard Kovacs)

An analysis by Chainalysis shows that ransomware payments dropped to $813 million in 2024, from $1.25 billion in 2023.

## [New Scareware Attack Targeting Mobile Users to Deploy Malicious Antivirus Apps](https://gbhackers.com/new-scareware-attack-targeting-mobile-users/) (gbHackers, 07 FEB, Aman Mishra)

A new wave of scareware attacks has emerged, targeting unsuspecting mobile users with fake antivirus applications designed to exploit fear and trick victims into downloading malicious software.

## [Hacker Who Targeted NATO, US Army Arrested in Spain](https://www.securityweek.com/hacker-who-targeted-nato-us-army-arrested-in-spain/) (Security Week, 06 FEB, Eduard Kovacs)

Spanish authorities have arrested an individual who allegedly hacked several high-profile organizations, including NATO and the US army.

## [OpenAI Data Breach – Threat Actor Allegedly Claims 20 Million Logins for Sale](https://gbhackers.com/openai-data-breach/) (gbHackers, 06 FEB, Divya)

Threat actors from dark web forums claim to have stolen and leaked 20 million OpenAI user login credentials, potentially making OpenAI the latest high-profile target of a significant data breach.

## [North Korean Hackers Use custom-made RDP Wrapper to activate remote desktop on Hacked Machines](https://gbhackers.com/north-korean-hackers-use-custom-made-rdp-wrapper/) (gbHackers, 06 FEB, Aman Mishra)

In a concerning development, the North Korean-backed hacking group Kimsuky has intensified its use of custom-built tools to exploit Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) for controlling compromised systems.

## [Threat Actors Exploiting DeepSeek’s Rise to Fuel Cyber Attacks](https://gbhackers.com/threat-actors-exploiting-deepseeks-rise/) (gbHackers, 05 FEB, Aman Mishra)

Amid the surging popularity of DeepSeek, a cutting-edge AI reasoning model from an emerging Chinese startup, cybercriminals have wasted no time leveraging the widespread attention to launch fraudulent schemes.

## [Russian Hackers Exploited 7-Zip Zero-Day Against Ukraine](https://www.securityweek.com/russian-hackers-exploited-7-zip-zero-day-against-ukraine/) (Security Weekly, 05 FEB, Ionut Arghire)

[**Back to Table of Contents**](#_Table_of_Contents)

Russian threat groups have been observed exploiting a zero-day vulnerability in 7-Zip against Ukrainian entities.

## [Threat Actors Exploiting Free Email Services to Target Government and Educational Institutions](https://gbhackers.com/threat-actors-exploiting-free-email-services/) (gbHackers, 05 FEB, Aman Mishra)

Threat actors are increasingly leveraging free email services to infiltrate government and educational institutions, exploiting these platforms’ accessibility and widespread use.

## [State-linked hackers deploy macOS malware in fake job interview campaign](https://www.cybersecuritydive.com/news/north-korean-hackers--fake-interview/739165/) (Cyber Security Dive, 04 FEB, Ribert Wright)

Actors linked to North Korea bypassed Apple security using malware called FlexibleFerret.

# Electromagnetic Warfare

## [Türkiye’s electronic warfare systems: Unseen heroes of modern conflicts](https://www.dailysabah.com/life/religion/ramadan-sacred-time-of-reflection-renewal-connection) (Daily Sabah, 13 FEB, Emine Gider)

As technology reshapes the battlefield, electronic warfare (EW) has emerged as a silent yet decisive force. Türkiye’s advancements in this domain are redefining its defense strategies and setting new military benchmarks.

## [Ukrainian drone operators say fiber-optic and AI drones are rare but could radically change the fight because of how hard it is to defeat them](https://www.businessinsider.com/fiber-optic-ai-drones-could-radically-change-battlefield-ukraine-operators-2025-2) (Business Insider, 12 FEB, Chris Panella)

Constant intense electronic warfare in Russia's war against Ukraine has led to the rise of drones that are resistant to signal jamming. It's still early days, but these things could be game changers, drone operators say.

## [Russian firm obtains NATO-sourced EW equipment](https://defence-blog.com/russian-firm-obtains-nato-sourced-ew-equipment/) (Defense Blog, 11 FEB, Dylan Malyasov)

A Russian company within the state-owned Rostec corporation has signed contracts worth 720 million rubles (approximately $7.4 million) to acquire American and German equipment to expand electronic warfare (EW) production, according to reports from Militarnyi.

## [The next battlefield is invisible and the fight for electromagnetic dominance has begun](https://www.forcesnews.com/technology/next-battlefield-invisible-and-fight-electromagnetic-dominance-has-begun) (Focus News, 10 FEB)

The battlefield is changing, and the fight for dominance is shifting into a new, unseen realm.

With the rapid evolution of drone warfare and electronic surveillance, the electromagnetic spectrum has become as critical as air, land, and sea.

## [A 'hidden electronic warfare battle' is raging in Ukraine and demanding more from the soldiers fighting it, special drone unit says](https://www.businessinsider.com/hidden-electronic-warfare-battle-demanding-more-of-ukrainian-soldiers-2025-2) (Business Insider, 08 JAN, Cris Panella)

Drone operators flying uncrewed aircraft over Ukraine are constantly running into invisible shields, causing them to suddenly lose control of their drones as signals are severed.

## [Inside Ukraine's race to crank out unjammable, fiber-optic drones that can break through Russia's electronic warfare](https://www.businessinsider.com/ukraine-unjammable-fiber-optic-drone-keep-pace-russia-2025-1) (Business Insider, 07 FEB, Jake Epstein & Matthew Loh)

Drones radically changed the Ukraine war. Soldiers then learned to fight back with electronic warfare. It's been a cat-and-mouse game since, and now, the fight is evolving once again.

## [Fighting the war in Ukraine on the electromagnetic spectrum](https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2025/02/05/fighting-the-war-in-ukraine-on-the-electromagnetic-spectrum) (The Economist, 05 FEB)

Drone operators and jammers are in a high-tech arms race

[**Back to Table of Contents**](#_Table_of_Contents)

# Information Advantage

## [AI-Powered Social Engineering: Ancillary Tools and Techniques](https://thehackernews.com/2025/02/ai-powered-social-engineering-ancillary.html?m=1) (The Hacker News, 14 FEB)

Social engineering is advancing fast, at the speed of generative AI. This is offering bad actors multiple new tools and techniques for researching, scoping, and exploiting organizations. In a recent communication, the FBI pointed out: 'As technology continues to evolve, so do cybercriminals' tactics.'

## [Military community gathers in Paris to discuss how AI is impacting conflict around the world](https://www.euronews.com/2025/02/11/military-community-gathers-in-paris-to-discuss-how-ai-is-impacting-conflict-around-the-wor) (Euro News, 11 FEB, Sophia Khatsenkova)

Members of the global military community gathered on the side-lines of an AI summit in Paris to discuss how recent developments are impacting ongoing - and future - conflicts.

## [Artificial General Intelligence's Five Hard National Security Problems](https://safe.menlosecurity.com/doc/docview/viewer/docN1AE0F311D605c25214d0d38b3bf64a9778c98155567a8daa30ce03a4207eef762f1dd2ac941b) (RAND, 10 FEB, Jim Mitre & Joel B. Predd)

The potential emergence of artificial general intelligence (AGI) is plausible and should be taken seriously by the U.S. national security community. Yet the pace and potential progress of AGI's emergence — as well as the composition of a post-AGI future — is shrouded in a cloud of uncertainty. This poses a challenge for strategists and policymakers trying to discern what potential threats and opportunities might emerge on the path to AGI and once AGI is achieved.

## [Algorithmic invasions: How information warfare threatens NATO's eastern flank](https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2025/02/07/algorithmic-invasions-how-information-warfare-threatens-nato-s-eastern-flank/) (NATO Review, 07 FEB, Corneliu Bjola)

[**Back to Table of Contents**](#_Table_of_Contents)

On 6 December 2024, in an unprecedented move, Romania’s Constitutional Court annulled the results of the first round of its 24 November presidential election, citing evidence provided by intelligence agencies that the electoral process had been “compromised throughout its duration and across all stages”.

## [Lawmakers Push to Ban DeepSeek App From U.S. Government Devices](https://www.wsj.com/tech/ai/lawmakers-push-to-ban-deepseek-app-from-u-s-government-devices-6a76151a?mod=tech_lead_pos3) (WSJ, 06 FEB, Natalie Andrews)

Bipartisan bill comes amid concerns that the application allows China to see user data

## [Meteoric Rise Of Chinese Tech! Why Race For AI Supremacy Is Leaving US Tech Giants, Washington Trembling?](https://www.eurasiantimes.com/global-race-for-ai-supremacy-deepseeks/) (EurAsian Times, 06 FEB, Shubhangi Palve)

In January, a series of technological breakthroughs from Chinese companies reshaped the global artificial intelligence landscape, challenging long-held US dominance in the field.

## [DeepSeek's Lesson: America Needs Smarter Export Controls](https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2025/02/deepseeks-lesson-america-needs-smarter-export-controls.html) (RAND, 05 FEB, Ashley Lin & Lennart Heim)

Last December, the Chinese AI firm DeepSeek reported training a GPT-4-level model for just $5.6 million, challenging assumptions about the resources needed for frontier AI development. This perceived cost reduction, and DeepSeek's cut-rate pricing for its advanced reasoning model R1, have left tech stocks plunging and sparked a debate on the effectiveness of U.S. export controls on AI chips.

## [Google puts military use of AI back on the table](https://www.digitaltrends.com/computing/google-changes-its-ai-principles/) (Digital Trends, 05 FEB, Willow Roberts)

On February 4, Google updated its “AI principles,” a document detailing how the company would and wouldn’t use artificial intelligence in its products and services. The old version was split into two sections: “Objectives for AI applications” and “AI applications we will not pursue,” and it explicitly promised not to develop AI weapons or surveillance tools.

## [How Agentic AI will be Weaponized for Social Engineering Attacks](https://www.securityweek.com/how-agentic-ai-will-be-weaponized-for-social-engineering-attacks/) (Security Week, 05 FEB, Stu Sjouwerman)

With each passing year, social engineering attacks are becoming bigger and bolder thanks to rapid advancements in artificial intelligence.

## [How a Sale of TikTok Would Work and Who Might Buy It](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/04/business/media/tiktok-sale-who-could-buy.html) (NY Times, 04 FEB, Lauren Hirsch & Sapna Maheshwari)

A new law says TikTok must be sold to a non-Chinese owner or face a ban in the United States. President Trump has thrown out a lot of options for a potential sale.

## [DeepSeek Compared to ChatGPT, Gemini in AI Jailbreak Test](https://www.securityweek.com/deepseek-compared-to-chatgpt-gemini-in-ai-jailbreak-test/) (Security Week, 04 FEB, Eduard Kovacs)

DeepSeek’s susceptibility to jailbreaks has been compared by Cisco to other popular AI models, including from Meta, OpenAI and Google.

## [DeepSeek Is a Win for China in the A.I. Race. Will the Party Stifle It?](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/02/world/asia/deepseek-china-ai-censorship.html) (NY Times, 02 FEB, David Pierson & Berry Wang)

DeepSeek’s success embodies China’s ambitions in artificial intelligence. But it could also threaten the grip on power the nation’s leaders hold.

## [DeepSeek: What lies under the bonnet of the new AI chatbot?](https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20250131-what-does-deepseeks-new-app-mean-for-the-future-of-ai) (BBC, 01 FEB, Andrew Duncan)

Tumbling stock market values and wild claims have accompanied the release of a new AI chatbot by a small Chinese company. What makes it so different?

[**Back to Table of Contents**](#_Table_of_Contents)

# Signal

## [GNSS and Secure SATCOM: User Technology Report](https://safe.menlosecurity.com/doc/docview/viewer/docN55D9E38BC28D1194548a4ea697d1f40c2cdfc2cf9d98b03db3507e3fc2e0f6a528cd972dfc61) (EU Space, FEB 2025)

The space industry is rapidly evolving as we enter a new era of satellite communications and GNSS advancements. Agile New Space players are leveraging thesetrends to create services which benefit a wide range of users in both the public and private sectors.

## [New Bill Would Classify Space as Critical Infrastructure](https://payloadspace.com/house-bill-would-designate-space-systems-as-critical-infrastructure/) (Payload, 13 FEB, Douglas Gorman)

A new bipartisan bill introduced in the House this week would designate US space systems as critical infrastructure, offering them protection from the Department of Homeland Security.

## [Origosat Develops New GSTA Anti-Spoofing Capability](https://insidegnss.com/origosat-develops-new-gsta-anti-spoofing-capability/) (Inside GNSS, 12 FEB, Peter Gutierrez)

Ensuring resilience against GNSS spoofing is a critical challenge for applications relying on accurate and secure satellite positioning. The European Space Agency (ESA)-funded ‘Galileo Smart Traceability Anti-spoofing’ (GSTA) project, led by Italy’s Origosat, has developed enhanced spoofing detection and mitigation capabilities, leveraging real-time and unpredictable data sources.

## [The hidden threat of neglected cloud infrastructure](https://www.infoworld.com/article/3819014/the-hidden-threat-of-neglected-cloud-infrastructure.html) (Info World, 07 FEB)

Britain said it monitored a Russian spy ship in the English Channel in recent days and would strengthen its response to secret operations by Russian ships and aircraft in an effort to protect undersea cables.

## [Internet-connected cameras made in China may be used to spy on US infrastructure: DHS](https://abcnews.go.com/US/internet-connected-cameras-made-china-spy-us-infrastructure/story?id=118533418) (ABC News, 06 FEB, Josh Margolin, Aaron Katersky & Meredith Deliso)

The cameras usually lack data encryption and communicate with the manufacturer.

## [Is 2025 the year of quantum computing?](https://www.infoworld.com/article/3812575/is-2025-the-year-of-quantum-computing.html) (Info World, 05 FEB, Matthew Tyson)

Successive waves of breakout technologies are transforming systems and society. Is quantum computing next?

## Mitigation strategies for edge devices: Practitioner guidance (CIS, 05 FEB)

Malicious actors are targeting ‘edge devices’ that act as intermediaries between the internet and internal enterprise networks. The rapid exploitation of newly discovered vulnerabilities is now standard tradecraft for many malicious actors. Both skilled and unskilled malicious actors conduct scanning and reconnaissance against internet-accessible networks to find unpatched software and exploit vulnerable devices.

## Security considerations for edge devices (CSI, 04 FEB)

Edge devices are an important part of many enterprise computing systems. They allow connection across various devices that aid in productivity. However, as with many technologies they are not without their vulnerabilities. Edge devices require attention and diligence to keep data safe and secure.

## [The Case for LEO GNSS at C-Band](https://insidegnss.com/the-case-for-leo-gnss-at-c-band/) (Inside GNSS, 03 FEB)

This follow-up to a 2007 Inside GNSS article looking at the potential future role for C-band in navigation details how, nearly 20 years later, it’s moved from an interesting idea to critical for resilient position, navigation and timing (PNT).

[**Back to Table of Contents**](#_Table_of_Contents)

# Items of Interest

## [Drones Over U.S. Bases May Be Threatening Spy Flights: NORTHCOM Commander](https://www.twz.com/news-features/drones-over-u-s-bases-may-be-threatening-spy-flights-northcom-commander) (TWZ, 13 FEB, Howard Altman)

Gen. Gregory M. Guillot asked Congress for more authority to defend against drone incursions.

## [China-Taiwan Weekly Update, February 13, 2025](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/china-taiwan-weekly-update-february-13-2025) (ISW, 13 FEB, Daniel Shats, Alison O’Neil, Karina Wugang, Frank Mattimoe, Dan Dlumenthal & Frederick W. Kagan)

Key Takeaways

* Taiwanese civil society groups have now submitted recall petitions targeting 31 opposition Kuomintang (KMT) legislators and 13 legislators from the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Recall efforts could shift the balance of power within the Legislative Yuan (LY) by reducing the KMT-led majority.
* Taiwan’s Ministry of the Interior (MOI) investigated claims that Taiwanese and PRC companies helped Taiwanese nationals illegally procure PRC identification cards in support of an expansion of CCP United Front soft power operations against Taiwan.
* The ROC Ministry of National Defense (MND) reported sighting six PRC high-altitude balloons near Taiwan in one day, with one passing directly over the main island.
* The PRC’s new directive restricting online publication of military-related information reflects the PRC’s heightened sensitivity to leaks that expose military capabilities and the reinforcement of CCP control over the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) by silencing narratives that challenge party authority.

[**Back to Table of Contents**](#_Table_of_Contents)

* PRC General Secretary Xi Jinping met with South Korea’s National Assembly Speaker Woo Won-shik in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province on February 7, 2025. The meeting reflects the PRC’s growing efforts to strengthen ties with South Korea amid its escalating trade war with the U.S. and political instability in South Korea.
* The PRC’s appointment of Lu Shaye as special representative for European Affairs signals that Beijing intends to take a more aggressive posture in negotiations with the European Union.

## [Iran Wants to Build a Faster Bomb. And More (Video)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4tStqg5pr0&t=12s) (Warfronts, 10 FEB, Simon, Whistler)

Iran has never been weaker—but could that push it to build the bomb? With its security crumbling, Tehran may risk it all. Here’s why the world should pay attention.

## [China-Taiwan Weekly Update, February 7, 2025](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/china-taiwan-weekly-update-february-7-2025) (ISW, 07 FEB, Matthew Sperzel, Daniel Shats, Alison O’Neil, Karina Wugang, Grant Morgan & Alexis Turek)

Key Takeaways

* Taiwanese civil society groups are leading a large-scale recall campaign targeting legislators from the KMT opposition party. These recalls could erode the current KMT-led majority in the LY.
* The PLA flew aircraft into Taiwan’s ADIZ 255 times in January 2025. The PRC has normalized over 200 ADIZ incursions per month, degrading Taiwan’s threat awareness and response threshold.
* PRC-based DeepSeek’s newly released reasoning model demonstrates the ineffectiveness of current US export controls to prevent PRC access to advanced semiconductors.
* The PRC’s export controls on critical minerals will impede US access to materials that are essential to economic and national security.
* The PLA is increasing its air and naval presence around the disputed Scarborough Shoal to solidify PRC control amid perceived encroachment by the Philippines and its allies.
* Panama announced that it would withdraw from the PRC’s BRI and consider canceling PRC contracts for two ports on the Panama Canal.

## [U.S.-Mexico Tensions: U.S. Deploys ‘Cutting Edge’ Spy Planes, RC-135 & P-8 Poseidon, To Check Mexican Border](https://www.eurasiantimes.com/u-s-mexico-tensions-u-s-deploys-cutting-edge-spy-planes-rc-135-p-8-poseidon-to-check-mexican-border/) (EurAsian Times, 05 FEB, Sakshi Tiwari)

Advanced US spy planes, including the RC-135 Rivet Joint and P-8 Poseidon, are extensively deployed to keep an eye on Russia and China. However, with drug cartels and illegal immigrants now flagged as one of the biggest threats by US President Donald Trump, these spy planes are flying sorties near Mexico.

## [RC-135 Rivet Joint Surveillance Jet Just Flew Unprecedented Mission Off Mexico](https://www.twz.com/air/rc-135-rivet-joint-surveillance-jet-just-flew-unprecedented-mission-off-mexico) (TWZ, 05 FEB, Joseph Trevithick)

An RC-135V flew two sorties in the past 48 hours over the tight confines of the Gulf of California that sits adjacent to a notorious cartel hot spot.

## [China Flashes “Anti-Hypersonic” Gigantic Radar That It Claims Can Detect & Track Every Kind Of Missile](https://www.eurasiantimes.com/china-flashes-anti-hypersonic-gigantic-radar/) (EurAsian, 05 FEB, Shubhangi Palve)

Late last month, Chinese state media unveiled rare footage of an advanced long-range radar, reportedly capable of detecting missiles—including hypersonic ones—thousands of miles away.

[**Back to Table of Contents**](#_Table_of_Contents)

## [What DeepSeek Really Changes About AI Competition](https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2025/02/what-deepseek-really-changes-about-ai-competition.html) (RAND, 04 FEB, Derek Grossman)

Just months ago, China seemed far behind the frontier AI advances being made in the United States. Two new models from DeepSeek have shattered that perception: Its V3 model matches GPT-4's performance while reportedly using just a fraction of the training compute. Its R1 reasoning model—akin to OpenAI's o1 introduced last September—appears to match OpenAI's o1 at a fraction of the cost per token.

## [US-China War: Beijing Will Not Initiate ‘Conventional War’ With U.S. Military Despite Rapid Modernization: RAND](https://www.eurasiantimes.com/us-china-war-beijing-will-not-initiate-a-conventional/) (EurAsian Times, 04 FEB, Ashish Dangwal)

A new report by RAND Corporation is raising questions about China’s ability to effectively wage a conventional war against the U.S. military despite its rapid modernization efforts.

## [The Philippines Is Ever More Focused on Taiwan](https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2025/02/the-philippines-is-ever-more-focused-on-taiwan.html) (RAND, 01 FEB, Derek Grossman)

Escalating tensions between China and Taiwan have forced the Philippines—whose northernmost point is less than 100 miles from Taiwan—to intensify its focus on a potential cross-strait conflict. Until now, Manila has prioritized internal security, particularly with regard to Islamist insurgents on the southern island of Mindanao, as well as Beijing's growing encroachment into the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the South China Sea. But a future Taiwan scenario—how the Philippines might react and potentially support its security ally, the United States, if the latter were to intervene—is now beginning to take up more of Manila's bandwidth.

## [World’s Largest Military Command Center — China Is Constructing “Super Pentagon” To Defend Its Leaders](https://www.eurasiantimes.com/chinas-new-military-command-center-to-be-10/) (EurAsian Times, 01 FEB, Ritu Sharma)

China strives to achieve global leadership in key defense and military technologies. By 2049, the Chinese (PLA-N) Navy is expected to be comparable to the U.S. Navy.

## [Factors Shaping the Future of China's Military](https://safe.menlosecurity.com/doc/docview/viewer/docNA70068675A73b23c4fa06fd2db5525bc65a9f9d53910c81c108e70b72cfe367be53ded9d9198) (RAND, 30 JAN, Mark Cozad & Jennie W. Wenger)

China is experiencing rapid demographic change as young people are making up an ever-smaller share of the population. At the same time, China is seeking to modernize the People's Liberation Army (PLA). These two topics generally have been considered separately to date.

[**Back to Table of Contents**](#_Table_of_Contents)

# Middle East Conflicts

## Institute for The Study of War Iran Update:

The Iran Update provides insights into Iranian and Iranian-sponsored activities abroad that undermine regional stability and threaten US forces and interests. It also covers events and trends that affect the stability and decision-making of the Iranian regime.

Iran Update, February 15, 2025

Iran Update, February 14, 2025

Iran Update, February 13, 2025

Iran Update, February 12, 2025

Iran Update, February 11, 2025

[Iran Update](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-february-10-2025), February 10, 2025

[Iran Update](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-february-9-2025), February 09, 2025

[Iran Update](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-february-8-2025), February 08, 2025

[Iran Update](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-february-7-2025), February 07, 2025

[Iran Update](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-february-6-2025), February 06, 2025

[Iran Update](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-february-5-2025), February 05, 2025

[Iran Update](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-february-4-2025), February 04, 2025

[Iran Update](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-february-3-2025), February 03, 2025

[**Back to Table of Contents**](#_Table_of_Contents)

[Iran Update](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-february-2-2025), February 02, 2025

[Iran Update](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-february-1-2025), February 01, 2025

## [Israel’s Nightmare: Iran Now Has a ‘Drone Aircraft Carrier’](https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/israels-nightmare-iran-now-has-a-drone-aircraft-carrier) (National Interest, 12 FEB, Peter Suciu)

Iran’s deployment of a new drone carrier should be seen as the first in a series of steps forward for its navy.

## [Israel and Hamas Prepare for Return to War](https://www.newsweek.com/israel-hamas-war-gaza-donald-trump-palestinians-hostages-2029268) (Newsweek, 11 FEB, Amir Daftari)

Israel is on the brink of restarting its military campaign in Gaza as tensions with Hamas escalate over stalled hostage releases and accusations of ceasefire violations.

## [Can Post-Assad Clashes In Syria Be Stopped?](https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/can-post-assad-clashes-in-syria-be-stopped) (National Interest, 10 FEB, Alexander Langlois)

Security continues to deteriorate in northeast Syria as ongoing clashes threaten the country’s transition towards an era of stabilization and recovery. Increased military activity, coupled with a wave of accelerated diplomacy inside and outside the country, is upending the balance of power that long prevailed when Syria’s conflict was effectively frozen.

## [The Houthis Have Paused Attacks—For Now](https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/houthis-have-paused-attacks-for-now) (National Interest, 10 FEB, Emily Milliken)

While the Gaza ceasefire has temporarily halted the Yemeni rebel group’s attacks on merchant shipping in the Red Sea, they still pose a growing problem for regional security.

## [As part of ceasefire, Israel withdraws from Gaza corridor](https://www.dw.com/en/as-part-of-ceasefire-israel-withdraws-from-gaza-corridor/video-71554705) (DW, 09 FEB, Melissa Kent)

As part of the first phase of the ceasefire deal with Hamas, Israeli troops have withdrawn from the Netzarim corridor. The 6-kilometer militarized zone established by Israel is now open as hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians return north.

## [As Israel Expands West Bank Operation, Two Soldiers Are Killed](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/04/world/middleeast/israel-west-bank-raid.html) (WSJ, 04 FEB, Adam Rasgon)

Two Israeli soldiers were killed in a shooting attack in the northern part of the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Tuesday as Israel pressed ahead with a military operation that has forced many people to flee their homes and caused widespread destruction.

## [After the Assad Regime's Fall, Will Syrian Refugees Return?](https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2025/02/after-the-assad-regimes-fall-will-syrian-refugees-return.html) (RAND, 04 FEB, Shelly Culbertson & Louay Constant)

The sudden fall of Syria's Assad regime in early December has raised an important question: Can the 6 million who became refugees during the 14-year civil war now go home? Officials in Turkey, Austria, Denmark, and Bulgaria have started publicly discussing plans to repatriate the Syrian refugees in those countries. Others—including France, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, and Greece—have frozen asylum applications from Syria.

## [What we know about the Gaza ceasefire deal](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy5klgv5zv0o) (BBC, 02 FEB, Raffi Berg)

A ceasefire between Israel and Hamas is under way after 15 months of war.

[**Back to Table of Contents**](#_Table_of_Contents)

The deal aims to bring a permanent end to the fighting and free hostages held by Hamas in Gaza in exchange for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

## [Hamas Took Around 250 Hostages From Israel. Here’s What We Know.](https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/hamas-hostages-israel-gaza-41432124?mod=middle-east_more_article_pos10) (WSJ, 01 FEB, Anat Peled & Summer Said)

Israel says 76 hostages abducted on Oct. 7, 2023, remain in captivity, including the bodies of at least 34

# Russia-Ukraine Conflict

## Institute for The Study of War

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, February 15, 2025

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, February 14, 2025

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, February 13, 2025

[Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-12-2025), February 12, 2025

[Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-11-2025), February 11, 2025

[Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-10-2025), February 10, 2025

[Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-9-2025), February 09, 2025

[Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-8-2025), February 08, 2025

[Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-7-2025), February 07, 2025

[Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-6-2025), February 06, 2025

[Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-5-2025), February 05, 2025

[Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-4-2025), February 04, 2025

[Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-3-2025), February 03, 2025

[Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-2-2025), February 02, 2025

[Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-1-2025), February 01, 2025

## [Trump Admin Makes Major Moves For Negotiated End Of Ukraine War](https://www.twz.com/news-features/trump-admin-makes-major-moves-for-negotiated-end-of-ukraine-war) (TWZ, 12 FEB, Howard Altman)

[**Back to Table of Contents**](#_Table_of_Contents)

Ukraine Situation Report: U.S. President Donald Trump said negotiations with Russia will begin "immediately" after call with Putin.

## [Lessons of the Minsk Deal: Breaking the Cycle of Russia’s War in Ukraine](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/lessons-minsk-deal-breaking-cycle-russias-war-ukraine) (ISW, 11 FEB, Nataliya Bugayova)

Some peace deals lead to peace, others to more war. The Minsk II deal aimed to end Russia’s limited invasion of Ukraine in 2015 but instead laid the groundwork for the full-scale Russian invasion in 2022. The United States must learn from the Minsk deal or risk a direct Russia-NATO conflict that puts American lives at risk.

## [Russians Erect Mesh Net ‘Tunnel’ Over A Mile Long To Counter Ukrainian FPV Drones](https://www.twz.com/news-features/russians-erect-mesh-net-tunnel-over-a-mile-long-to-counter-ukrainian-fpv-drones) (TWZ, 10 FEB, Howard Altman)

Enclosing an entire roadway in mesh netting is the latest in an ongoing effort to protect against these highly maneuverable weapons.

## [Zelenskyy confirms a new Ukrainian offensive in Russia’s Kursk region](https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-north-korea-kursk-de43ba469a070a4700ba26f330131b49) (AP News, 08 FEB

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy confirmed a new Ukrainian offensive in Russia’s Kursk region and said that North Korean troops were fighting alongside Russian forces there.

## Ukraine’s Dual Adversaries: Russia and North Korea (National Interest, 07 FEB, Andreas Umland & William Alberque)

Ukraine is fighting a war against two nuclear weapons countries: Russia, a signatory of the non-proliferation treaty, and North Korea, which is not.

## [Ukraine Launches New Offensive Push In Russia’s Kursk Region](https://www.twz.com/news-features/ukraine-launches-new-offensive-push-in-russias-kursk-region) (TWX, 06 FEB, Howard Altman)

While the objectives remain unclear at the moment, the move comes ahead of major meetings to discuss the future of the war.

## [The Myth of Human Wave Attacks Obscures What North Korea Is Learning in Ukraine](https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2025/02/the-myth-of-human-wave-attacks-obscures-what-north.html) (RAND, 06 FEB, Benjamin R. Young)

When describing North Korean attacks in Kursk in late December, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby referred to their use of “human wave tactics” to launch “massed dismounted assaults” on Ukrainian forces. He also called the troops “highly indoctrinated” and dismissed them as fanatical zealots who learn little from combat.

## [Ukraine’s Kursk Incursion: Six Month Assessment](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/ukraine%E2%80%99s-kursk-incursion-six-month-assessment) (ISW, 06 FEB, Angelica Evans)

Executive Summary: A small group of Ukrainian troops in Kursk Oblast have complicated the Russian military's efforts to advance in Ukraine over the last six months. Roughly a division's worth of Ukrainian troops have undermined the Russian military's ability to launch or renew offensive operations in lower-priority areas of the frontline and to reinforce priority efforts with elite airborne (VDV) and naval infantry units. The Ukrainian incursion in Kursk Oblast is a partial proof of concept of how limited Ukrainian battlefield activity that leverages vulnerabilities in Russia's warfighting capabilities and that integrates technological adaptations with mechanized maneuver can have theater-wide impacts on operations. It showed that surprise is still possible even on a partially transparent battlefield and that rapid maneuver is possible under the right conditions. The war in Ukraine, in other words, is not permanently stalemated. Either side can potentially restore maneuver and begin to gain or regain significant territory. Russia will be able to do so if the West reduces or cuts off aid. Ukraine may be able to do so if Western support continues to empower Ukrainian innovation.

[**Back to Table of Contents**](#_Table_of_Contents)

## [Ukraine says its long-range drones hit a Russian airfield as France delivers Mirage fighter jets](https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-russia-war-15a42b01bd87e1bef5bd40ae5c910280) (AP News, 06 FEB, Illia Novikov)

Ukrainian forces struck an airfield in southern Russia that was being used to launch Iran-designed Shahed drones, Ukraine’s General Staff claimed Thursday. France meanwhile said it had delivered the first batch of Mirage fighter jets to Ukraine and the Netherlands sent more F-16s.

## [Russia Indicates Talks With U.S. Over Ukraine Are Intensifying](https://www.wsj.com/world/russia/russia-indicates-talks-with-u-s-over-ukraine-are-intensifying-8cee6dc8?mod=world_lead_pos2) (WSJ, 05 FEB, Thomas Grove)

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said there had been contact between ‘certain government agencies’

## [Inside the operations that took captive 2 North Korean soldiers fighting Ukraine](https://apnews.com/article/war-north-korea-russia-ukraine-8fa6971c2d9117df39398ac3d2d06e92) (AP News, 05 FEB, Hanna Arhirova)

When Ukrainian soldiers captured two North Korean prisoners of war last month, it provided the first undeniable proof of Pyongyang’s direct involvement in the war against Ukraine.

## [Ukrainian Minerals For Arms Deal Complicated By Russian Control Of Key Territories](https://www.twz.com/news-features/ukrainian-minerals-for-arms-deal-complicated-by-russian-control-of-key-territories) (TWZ, 05 FEB, Howard Altman)

Ukraine Situation Report: More than half of the trillions of dollars in mineral resources is on land controlled by Russia.

## [Ukraine’s Intel Chief Disputes Claim That North Koreans Have Fled The Russian Front](https://www.twz.com/news-features/ukraine-intel-chief-disputes-claim-that-north-koreans-have-fled-kursk-front) (TWZ, 01 FEB, Howard Altman)

Lt. Gen. Kyrylo Budanov told us that 8,000 North Koreans are still fighting on the front lines in Kursk, but at a reduced capacity.

## [Ukraine says North Koreans may have pulled out of front line](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cjder8zgk48o) (BBC, 01 FEB, James Waterhouse & Jaroslav Lukiv)

Ukrainian special forces fighting in Russia's western Kursk region have told the BBC they have not seen any North Korean troops there for the past three weeks.

[**Back to Table of Contents**](#_Table_of_Contents)