



GRYPHON GROWL

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go.intelink.sgov.gov/CPI6RmN
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go.intelink.ic.gov/3vKnmH3
 AFLCMC CC Intel Brief (Monthly)
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INDOPACOM

TWZ: CHINA'S J-35 NAVAL STEALTH FIGHTER SEEN LIKE NEVER BEFORE

A new photo provides our best view so far of the Shenyang J-35, China's next-generation carrier-based fighter. It's part of a relative flurry of imagery showing some of China's latest military aircraft in unusual detail. In sharp contrast to the blurry or heavily edited shots we have become familiar with out of China in the past, these various high-quality images provide a fascinating snapshot of the breadth of developments taking place right now in China's military aerospace realm.



The J-35 photo began to circulate recently on social media and, since it's an air-to-air study, almost certainly originates from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) or another official Chinese state source. In it, we see two prototype J-35s in close formation. Of these, serial 3501 is fitted with a pitot boom for flight tests, while serial 3506 appears to be something closer to a production standard, with its radome likely housing a radar.



As well as the new J-35 photos, a number of new images have recently appeared showing another aircraft set to be a critical component of China's future carrier air wings. This is the KJ-600 carrier-based airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) aircraft.

New photos of the KJ-600 in the air provide us with our best look at this aircraft, too, including its close similarity with the E-2 Hawkeye, which fulfills the same role aboard U.S. Navy carriers.

BREAKING DEFENSE: CHINESE SATS APPEAR TO BE ATTEMPTING FIRST-EVER ON-ORBIT REFUELING, SAT TRACKING FIRMS SAY

A Chinese satellite designed for refueling missions has been dancing awfully close to another Chinese bird in orbit, raising the possibility Beijing is about to pull off — or already has pulled off — the first-ever on-orbit gas-up, according to satellite tracking firms.

On 13 June Slingshot Aerospace watched China's experimental SJ-25, which Beijing launched in January and has publicly said was meant for refueling missions, approach another satellite, SJ-21. But the view from terrestrial telescopes couldn't confirm docking, much less refueling, so Slingshot concluded the data was "inconclusive" as to what exactly happened.

"If docking did occur, then the duration of that event would be no more than three hours," a Slingshot spokesperson told Breaking Defense of the 13 June event. A spokesperson for COMSPOC, a space tracking software company, likewise said their tracking data showed the two satellites came within 1 kilometer (3,280 feet) of each other on 13 June, "and possibly docked." The Slingshot spokesperson said that while the objects separated the next day, "they are reapproaching presently, with a predicted close approach on 23 June," suggesting a second attempt could be in the offing.



A successful space refueling between satellites, known in U.S. Space Force parlance as a space mobility operation, would be "definitely a big deal," according to Victoria Samson, Secure World Foundation's chief director of Space Security and Stability. She explained that it would represent a new capability for China — one that could be seen as militarily threatening. For that reason, Samson called on Beijing to be more transparent about SJ-25's mission.

TWZ: NORTH KOREA SENDING RUSSIA THOUSANDS OF WORKERS TO BUILD SHAHED DRONES



North Korea is reportedly sending tens of thousands of workers to Russia to help produce attack drones, learn how to use them, and support reconstruction work in the Kursk region.

These moves will affect the security situation on two continents, Lt. Gen. Kyrlo Budanov, head of Ukraine's Defense Intelligence Directorate (GUR) said. The drones will give Kim Jong Un additional capability to overwhelm air defenses and strike anywhere in South Korea, in mass. As for Russia, not only does it boost its drone arsenal, but it helps back-fill tremendous personnel losses incurred during its bloody, grinding war against Ukraine.

"A total of 25,000 workers from North Korea are to be dispatched" to the "Russian Shahed factory in the Alabuga Special Economic Zone of the central Russian republic of Tatarstan," the Japanese *NKH* news outlet reported, citing "diplomatic sources in the West and Russia." The goal is to "boost production in exchange for training in how to operate the unmanned aircraft," the publication explained. Russia's Alabuga factory — using designs provided by Iran — is now building about 2,000 per month, with plans to increase that to 5,000 per month.

AP: NORTH KOREA PLANS TO SEND MILITARY CONSTRUCTION WORKERS AND DEMINERS TO RUSSIA

North Korea will send thousands of military construction workers and deminers to support reconstruction work in Russia's Kursk region, a top Russian official said on 17 June, the latest sign of expanding cooperation between the two nations.

North Korea has already sent thousands of troops and a vast amount of conventional weapons to back Russia's war against Ukraine. In April, Pyongyang and Moscow said that their soldiers fought together to repel a Ukrainian incursion into Russia's Kursk border region, though Ukraine has insisted it still has troops present there.

During a visit to Pyongyang, Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu said that North Korea will dispatch 1,000 deminers and 5,000 military construction workers to the Kursk region.



In its closed-door briefing to lawmakers, South Korea's National Intelligence Service said that Russia had given North Korea air defense missiles, electronic warfare equipment, drones and technology for spy satellite launches. The NIS said that 15,000 North Korean laborers have also been sent to Russia under bilateral industrial cooperation programs, according to lawmakers who attended the briefing.

CNN: TAIWAN PUTS COMPANIES BEHIND CHINA'S AI AMBITIONS ON EXPORT CONTROL LIST



Taiwan has added China's tech titan Huawei and chip giant Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation (SMIC) to its export control list, stepping up efforts to align with Washington's crackdown on companies driving Beijing's artificial intelligence ambitions.

Citing "concerns over weapons proliferation and national security," Taiwan's International Trade Administration updated its list of what it calls strategic high-tech commodities entities in Mid-June to include Huawei and SMIC, among hundreds of other entities in China, Myanmar, Russia, Iran and Pakistan. Under the restrictions, Taiwanese businesses will be required to apply for permits before exporting to the listed firms.

The new rules were announced amid escalating U.S.-China tensions over advanced technologies including semiconductors and AI. Washington has grown increasingly concerned about its tech being used in Chinese military applications. In May, the Trump administration restricted sales of chip design software to China in its ongoing trade war with Beijing.

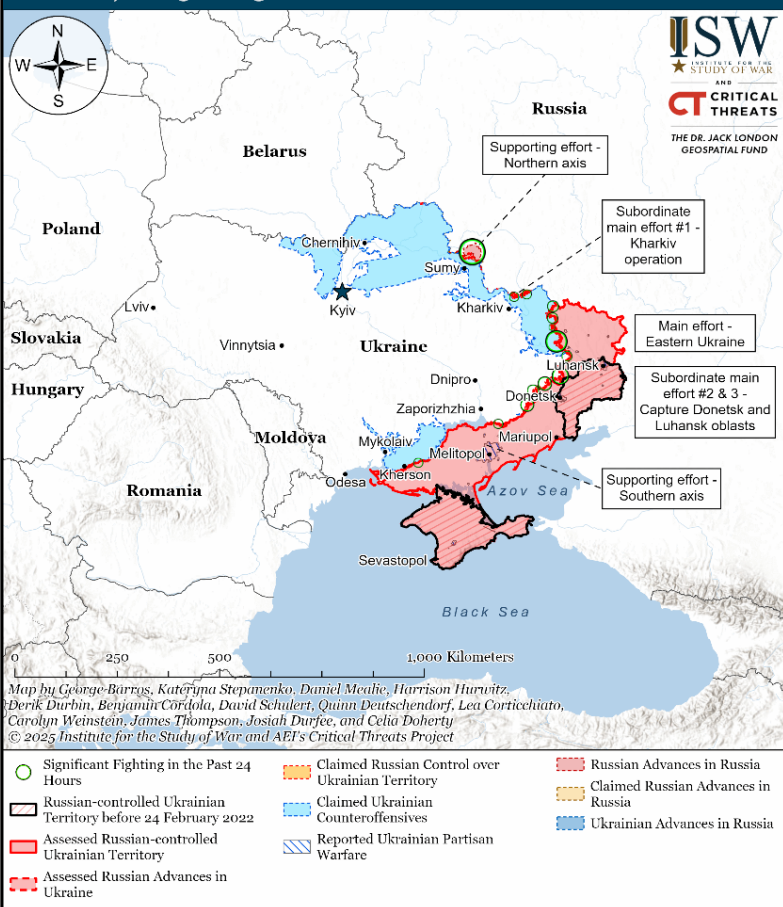
EUCOM

ISW: RUSSIA-UKRAINE UPDATE

Key Takeaways:

- Russia condemned the recent U.S. strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities on June 22 amid reports that Iran's foreign minister will meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on June 23.
- Iran's possible decision to close the Strait of Hormuz will cause a significant spike in global oil prices, which would greatly economically and financially benefit Russia by reversing months of declining Russian oil revenue and allowing Russia to continue to finance its war against Ukraine in the medium term.
- Russia's intensified force generation efforts appear to be generating a reserve force that Russia will be able to leverage in Ukraine or against NATO in the future, despite current limitations on Russia's offensive capacity in Ukraine.
- The Kremlin continues to promote rhetoric designed to undermine Ukrainian legitimacy and sovereignty, demonstrating its steadfast commitment to the complete destruction of Ukraine.
- Kremlin officials are leveraging the Russian education system to indoctrinate children into the mythos of the Soviet Union's role in the Second World War and create a centralized state ideology that will shape generations in Russia and Russian-occupied Ukraine, likely to justify a protracted war in Ukraine and a future military conflict against the West.
- Ukrainian forces advanced in northern Sumy oblast. Russian forces advanced near Novopavlivka.

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War June 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



BREAKING DEFENSE: EMBRAER SELLS NEW C-390 TO PORTUGAL ADDS NEW AEROMEDICAL EVACUATION UNIT FOR THE NETHERLANDS



On 16 June, the Embraer announced that Portugal was expanding its C-390 buy by a single aircraft, to be delivered in 2029, bringing their total to six. More notably, Portugal announced that it had placed 10 options on future C-390 buys, which could be shared with other NATO members.

Those options will “enable greater cooperation between operators with mutual benefits ... for training and logistics,” according to Bosco da Costa Jr., the head of the Brazilian firm’s defense arm. Those options could also allow Portugal to buy to-come variants of the C-390, including a special operation or ISR configuration, he said. Across NATO, “there will

be a strong requirement for strategic airlift and probably some of our closest partners will have slots earlier with us,” he added

Embraer notched another sales win for the aircraft on 17 June 17, revealing that it had signed a contract with the Netherlands for a new aeromedical evacuation model for the aircraft. The deal includes a single module for the Netherlands, which signed a joint deal for nine C-390s with Austria in 2024, as well as seven options for aeromedical systems that can be shared by NATO allies.

The aeromedical module will allow the Royal Netherlands Air Force to provide lifesaving care and transportation for injured troops and is a self-contained unit that can be rolled on and off the C-390 through the aircraft’s rear ramp.

AP: DENMARK TESTS UNMANNED ROBOTIC SAILBOAT FLEET WITH TENSIONS HIGH IN THE REGION

Four uncrewed robotic sailboats, known as “Voyagers,” have been put into service by Denmark’s armed forces for a three-month operational trial.

Powered by wind and solar energy, these sea drones can operate autonomously for months at sea. Saildrone says the vessels carry advanced sensor suites — radar, infrared and optical cameras, sonar, and acoustic monitoring.

The Danish Defense Ministry says the trial is aimed at boosting surveillance capacity in under-monitored waters, especially around critical undersea infrastructure such as fiber-optic cables and power lines. “The security situation in the Baltic is tense,” said Lt. Gen. Kim Jørgensen, the director of Danish National Armaments at the ministry. “They’re going to cruise Danish waters, and then later they’re going to join up with the two that are on (the) NATO exercise. And then they’ll move from area to area within the Danish waters.”



The trial comes as NATO confronts a wave of damage to maritime infrastructure — including the 2022 Nord Stream pipeline explosions and the rupture of at least 11 undersea cables since late 2023. The most recent incident, in January, severed a fiber-optic link between Latvia and Sweden’s Gotland Island. Some of the maritime disruptions have been blamed on Russia’s so-called shadow fleet — aging oil tankers operating under opaque ownership to avoid sanctions. One such vessel, the Eagle S, was seized by Finnish police in December for allegedly damaging a power cable between Finland and Estonia with its anchor.

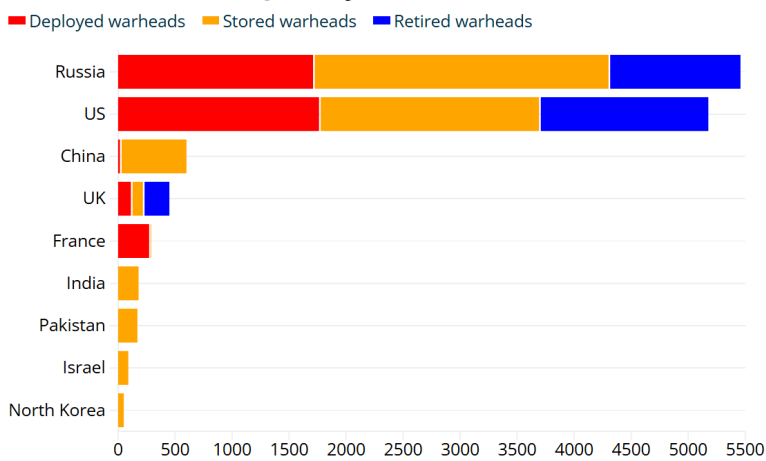
EURONEWS: ERA OF NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT 'COMING TO AN END' SIPRI WARNS

Dismantlement of retired warheads is slowing down and could soon be outpaced by new warheads entering stockpiles, reversing a decades-long trend. The era of nuclear disarmament is coming to an end while new technologies push the risk of nuclear conflict higher, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) warned on 16 June. The SIPRI stressed in its annual assessment of the state of armaments, disarmament and international security, that although the number of nuclear warheads in the world continued to decline last year due to the U.S. and Russia dismantling retired warheads, the pace of such dismantlements is slowing down.

The rate at which new warheads enter global stockpiles could therefore soon outpace dismantlements, SIPRI said, as nuclear states pursue modernization programs.

"The era of reductions in the number of nuclear weapons in the world, which had lasted since the end of the Cold War, is coming to an end," Hans M. Kristensen, Associate Senior Fellow with SIPRI's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programme said in a statement.

World nuclear forces, January 2025



China's nuclear arsenal, which currently counts at least 600 warheads, is meanwhile growing faster than any other countries, by about 100 new warheads a year since 2023. SIPRI estimates that China could potentially have at least as many Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) as either Russia or the U.S. by the turn of the decade. The international security institute also flagged that 2024 saw renewed attention on nuclear-sharing arrangements, which it says carried great risks. These included claims by Russia and Belarus that Russia has deployed nuclear weapons on Belarusian territory, European NATO allies expressing willingness to host U.S. nuclear weapons on their soil, and statements by French President Emmanuel Macron that the country's nuclear deterrent could have a "European dimension."

CENTCOM

ISW: CENTCOM UPDATE – ISRAEL & IRAN ROLL UP

Key Takeaways:

17 June:

- Israel conducted a strike killing the newly appointed commander of the Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters.
- Iran conducted five missile attacks targeting Israel.
- The IAEA confirmed that Israeli strikes impacted underground infrastructure at the Natanz nuclear site and damaged or destroyed thousands of centrifuges.

18 June:

- Iran downed an Israeli drone around Esfahan. This is the first confirmed aircraft that Iran downed since the strikes began.
- Israeli strikes have targeted two centrifuge production sites around Tehran.
- Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei rejected the call from U.S. President Donald Trump for Iran's "unconditional surrender." Khamenei also threatened U.S. forces if the United States joins the war against Iran.
- The "Axis of Resistance" continued to threaten retaliation if the United States joins the war against Iran.

19 June:

- The IDF struck several nuclear facilities, including the Arak Heavy Water Reactor in Markazi Province.
- The IDF has struck at least six Iranian Ghadir radars since June 12, according to commercially available satellite imagery.
- An Iranian ballistic missile struck the Soroka Medical Center in Beersheba. The Israeli defense minister warned that Israel will intensify its attacks on Iran.
- Iranian officials expressed interest in negotiating but have not moderated their negotiating positions.

20 June:

- Iran is using negotiations and its efforts to hide nuclear material to force Washington to decide between accepting Iranian terms in nuclear negotiations or risk a long and challenging hunt for hidden Iranian nuclear material.
- The International Atomic Energy Agency director warned of a dangerous degradation of nuclear security at Iranian nuclear sites due to Israeli strikes.

21 June:

- Israel strikes sites that include one in Esfahan that produces centrifuges.
- Israel struck and killed senior officers in the IRGC Aerospace Force and Quds Force.
- An Iranian drone struck a populated area in Israel for the first time during this war.
- The Iranian foreign affairs minister again rejected U.S. demands for zero uranium enrichment during a June 20 meeting with European diplomats.

22 June:

- The United States conducted strikes targeting three nuclear facilities. The U.S. chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said all three sites sustained “extreme damage.” Israeli officials added the Fordow nuclear facility was “not destroyed.”
- Iran began taking steps to retaliate against the United States, including by threatening shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.
- Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi traveled to Moscow to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin on June 23. The Kremlin condemned the U.S. strikes and issued veiled threats that are likely meant to stoke panic among Western audiences, including key decision makers.



CYBERCOM

SECURITY WEEK: U.S. BRACES FOR CYBER ATTACKS AFTER BOMBING IRANIAN NUCLEAR SITES



Iranian threat actors are expected to intensify their cyber attacks against the United States following President Donald Trump's decision to launch air strikes on Iran.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a national terrorism advisory system bulletin on 22 June, warning that the Iranian government has publicly condemned the United States' involvement in the conflict and that retaliation could come in several forms. Iran could conduct lethal attacks and commit acts of violence on U.S. soil, but Iranian state-sponsored hackers and pro-Iran hacktivists are also likely to intensify attacks against the United States in response to recent events.

“The ongoing Iran conflict is causing a heightened threat environment in the United States,” the DHS said. “Low-level cyber attacks against U.S. networks by pro-Iranian hackers are likely, and cyber actors affiliated with the Iranian government may conduct attacks against U.S. networks.” The cybersecurity community has closely followed Iran’s activities in cyberspace. While some attacks linked to Iranian hackers appeared unsophisticated — including attacks targeting industrial control systems (ICS) — others were more advanced. This includes phishing attacks aimed at political campaigns, and brute force attacks targeting critical infrastructure. In terms of malware, the community has seen noteworthy threats designed for intelligence gathering, as well as malware delivery methods.

In addition, the Iranian state-sponsored hacking group that poses as a hacktivist collective named CyberAv3ngers has developed a piece of malware called IOCONTROL that has been used to target Internet of Things (IoT) and Operational Technology (OT) devices in the U.S. and Israel.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



AFMFC A2: World Threat Brief CAO: 16 April 2024

<https://usaf.dps.mil/sites/22244/SitePages/Command-Intel-Threat-Brief.aspx>



China Aerospace Studies Institute: CASI supports the Secretary of the Air Force, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other senior leaders of the Air and Space Forces. CASI provides expert research and analysis supporting decision and policy makers in the Department of Defense and across the U.S. government.

<https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/CASI/>



Research and Development Corporation (RAND): RAND is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization that provides leaders with the information they need to make evidence-based decisions.

<https://www.rand.org/>



Institute for the Study of War: The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) is a non-partisan, non-profit, public policy research organization. ISW advances an informed understanding of military affairs through reliable research, trusted analysis, and innovative education.

<https://www.understandingwar.org/>



Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. Established in 1966, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.

<https://www.sipri.org/>



Strategic Forecasting Inc. (VIA AF PORTAL): Strategic Forecasting Inc., commonly known as Stratfor, is an American strategic intelligence publishing company founded in 1996. Stratfor's business model is to provide individual and enterprise subscriptions to Stratfor Worldview, its online publication, and to perform intelligence gathering for corporate clients.

<https://worldview.stratfor.com/>



Defense Intelligence Agency Military Power Publications: an intelligence agency and combat support agency of the United States Department of Defense, specializing in defense and military intelligence.

<https://www.dia.mil/Military-Power-Publications/>



Perun: An Australian covering the military industrial complex and national military investment strategy.

<https://www.youtube.com/@PerunAU>



Task & Purpose: Task & Purpose was founded in 2014 with a mission to inform, engage, entertain, and stand up for active-duty military members, veterans, and their families. The site quickly became one of the most trusted news and investigative journalism sources for the military, with its journalists reporting everywhere from the Pentagon to The White House and beyond.

<https://www.youtube.com/@Taskandpurpose>



The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS): is a bipartisan, nonprofit policy research organization dedicated to advancing practical ideas to address the world's greatest challenges.

<https://www.csis.org/>



FRONTLINE examines the rise of Xi Jinping, his vision for China and the global implications. Correspondent Martin Smith traces the defining moments for President Xi, how he's exercising power and his impact on China, and relations with the U.S. and the world.

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/china-the-u-s-the-rise-of-xi-jinping/>