



GRYPHON GROWL

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SIPR

go.intelink.sgov.gov/CPI6RmN
 Current Intelligence Brief (Monthly)

JWICS

go.intelink.ic.gov/3vKnMh3
 AFLCMC CC Intel Brief (Monthly)
 Winged Warrior (Bi-Weekly)
 CyREN (Bi-Weekly)

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 Your input helps improve and enhance our product.

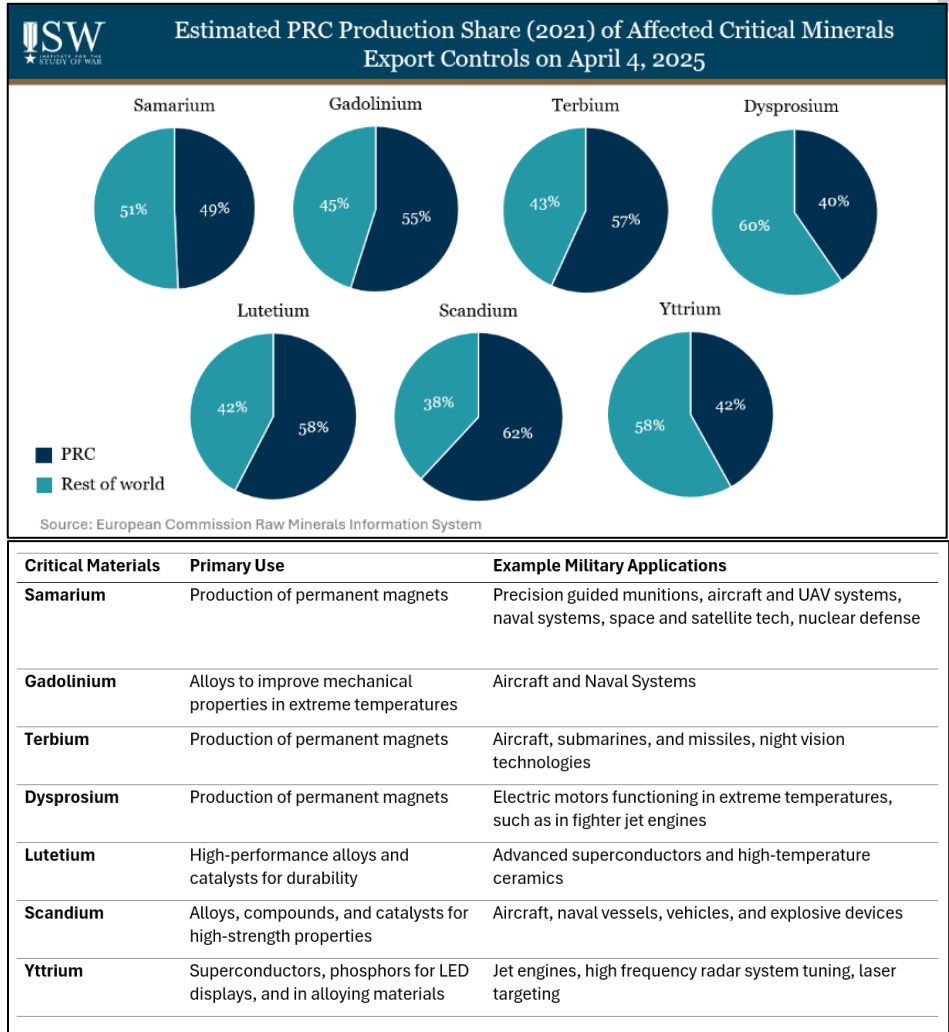
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INDOPACOM

ISW: CHINA-TAIWAN UPDATE

Taiwan is conducting its longest-ever tabletop war games and live-fire drills for its annual Han Kuang 41 exercise. Taiwan is increasing the length and scale of this exercise in response to intensifying People's Republic of China (PRC) aggression. The Han Kuang 41 exercise will involve tabletop war games over 14 days from April 5 to 18, and live-fire drills over 10 days from July 9 to 18. Taiwanese military officials have increasingly embraced realistic exercises in a shift away from more scripted ones. The Han Kuang exercises became non-scripted in 2024 and will continue that approach in 2025 to improve troop readiness. The Taiwanese National Defense Minister Major General Tung Chi-hsing said on 2 April that the military will simulate People's Liberation Army (PLA) exercises evolving into full-scale attacks, highlighting the Taiwanese concern that regular PLA operations around Taiwan could escalate.

The PRC raised tariffs on the United States from 34 percent to 125 percent and imposed export controls on seven critical minerals that are essential to the U.S. defense industry. These export controls encompass seven materials with extensive military applications. The United States cannot produce the designated minerals at a sufficient scale and exempted them from tariffs in recognition of their importance. The PRC accounted for approximately 70 percent of U.S. rare earth imports from 2020 to 2023 and approximately 70 percent of world mine production of rare earths in 2024.



TWZ: CHINA'S J-36 TAILLESS FIGHTER ZIPS OVER ROAD ON LANDING GIVING US OUR BEST LOOK YET

New footage has emerged of the largest of China's two new tailless stealth fighters, widely referred to as the J-36, although the designation remains unconfirmed. The video in question is perhaps the most impressive view of the aircraft so far and shows the unique three-engine jet on final approach to land at the Chengdu Aircraft Corporation in the province of Sichuan in southwestern China.

The J-36 also wears some kind of splinter-type camouflage scheme, with distinct lighter-looking panels around the dorsal intake and aft of it. This is a feature that was visible in previous, much poorer-quality images showing the upper surfaces of the aircraft. Some kind of mirror-like coating, the like of which we have seen on all of America's stealthy tactical jets for testing purposes, should not be ruled out, either. Meanwhile, lighter-colored areas on portions of the leading edges of the wings indicate the likely presence of apertures for electro-optical/infrared sensors.



While this latest video of the J-36 provides us with our best view so far of this still-enigmatic aircraft, the sheer quantity of imagery of the jet that has emerged in the last month or so points to a notable ramping up of test flying activity.

APNEWS: NORTH KOREAN LEADER'S SISTER DENOUNCES DENUCLEARIZATION CALLS, SAYING NUCLEAR STATUS IS PERMANENT

On 9 April, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un mocked Washington and its Asian allies for what she called their "daydream" of denuclearizing the North, insisting that the country will never give up its nuclear weapons program. The statement by Kim Yo Jong, one of the country's top foreign policy officials, was in response to a meeting last week between the top diplomats of the United States, South Korea, and Japan where they reaffirmed their commitment to push for the North's denuclearization.

Kim Yo Jong insisted that any external discussions of denuclearization constitute "the most hostile act" and amount to a denial of her country's sovereignty. "If the U.S. and its vassal forces continue to insist on anachronistic 'denuclearization' ... it will only give unlimited justness and justification to the advance of the DPRK aspiring after the building of the strongest nuclear force for self-defense," she said in comments released by state media.

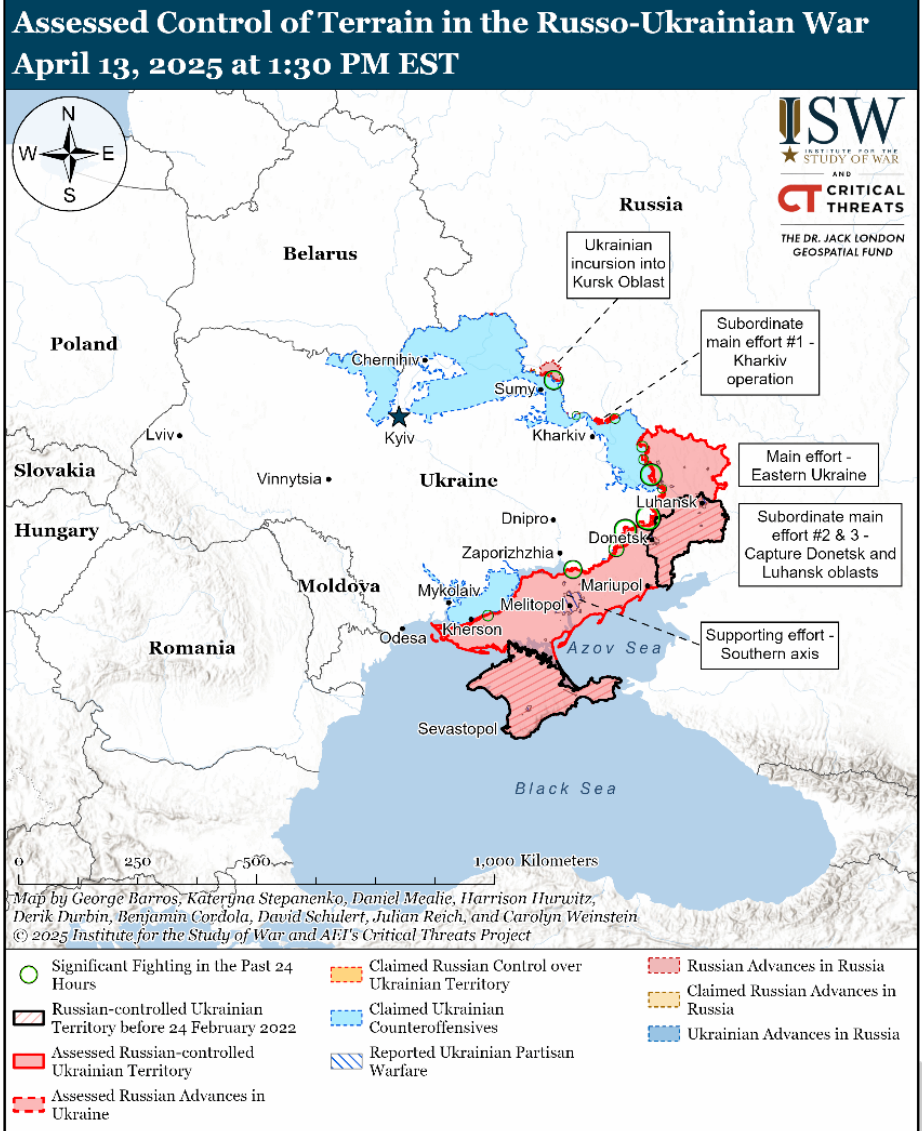
Tensions in the regions have increased as Kim Jong Un continues to flaunt his military nuclear capabilities and align with Russia over President Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine. Kim is ignoring calls by Seoul and Washington to resume denuclearization talks.

EUCOM

ISW: RUSSIA-UKRAINE UPDATE

Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that ongoing U.S.-Russian negotiations are unlikely to result in "lightning-fast results," contrary to U.S. President Donald Trump's stated objective of achieving a general ceasefire and lasting peace agreement in Ukraine soon. Any general ceasefire or peace agreement must include robust monitoring mechanisms, given the Kremlin's ongoing efforts to portray Ukraine as violating the long-range energy infrastructure strikes ceasefire without providing evidence of these strikes and despite the lack of public details about the ceasefire's terms. It remains unclear what monitoring mechanisms the West could leverage to enforce and monitor a general ceasefire or if the Kremlin would accept any such mechanisms.

Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces struck the center of Sumy City with two missiles on the morning of 13 April, killing at least 34 civilians and injuring at least 118. Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Head Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov reported that elements of the Russian 112th Missile Brigade launched the two Iskander-M/KN-23 ballistic missiles that struck Sumy City from near Liski, Voronezh Oblast and Lezhenki, Kursk Oblast.



Russian forces continue efforts to push Ukrainian forces from remaining positions in Kursk Oblast as well as in northwesternmost Belgorod on 13 April but did not make any confirmed advances.

APNEWS: UKRAINE SAYS 155 CHINESE MERCENARIES ARE FIGHTING FOR RUSSIA IN UKRAINE

On 9 April, Ukraine expanded on its claim that significant numbers of Chinese nationals are fighting for Russia's invading army, saying it had gathered detailed intelligence on more than 150 mercenaries Moscow allegedly recruited through social media. In China, officials called the allegations "totally unfounded."

On 8 April, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced that the Ukrainian military had captured two Chinese men fighting alongside the Russian army on Ukrainian soil. It was the first time Ukraine had made such a claim about Chinese fighters in the war. On 9 April, Zelenskyy said he was willing to exchange the two prisoners of war for Ukrainian soldiers held captive in Russia. Without providing evidence, Zelenskyy said officials in Beijing were aware of Russia's campaign to recruit Chinese mercenaries. He stopped short of saying the Chinese government authorized the mercenaries' involvement in Ukraine.

Zelenskyy said Ukraine has the last names and passport data for 155 Chinese citizens fighting for the Russian army and that "we believe that there are many more of them." He shared with journalists documents listing names, passport numbers and personal details of the alleged Chinese recruits, including when they arrived in Russia for military training and departed for service

CENTCOM

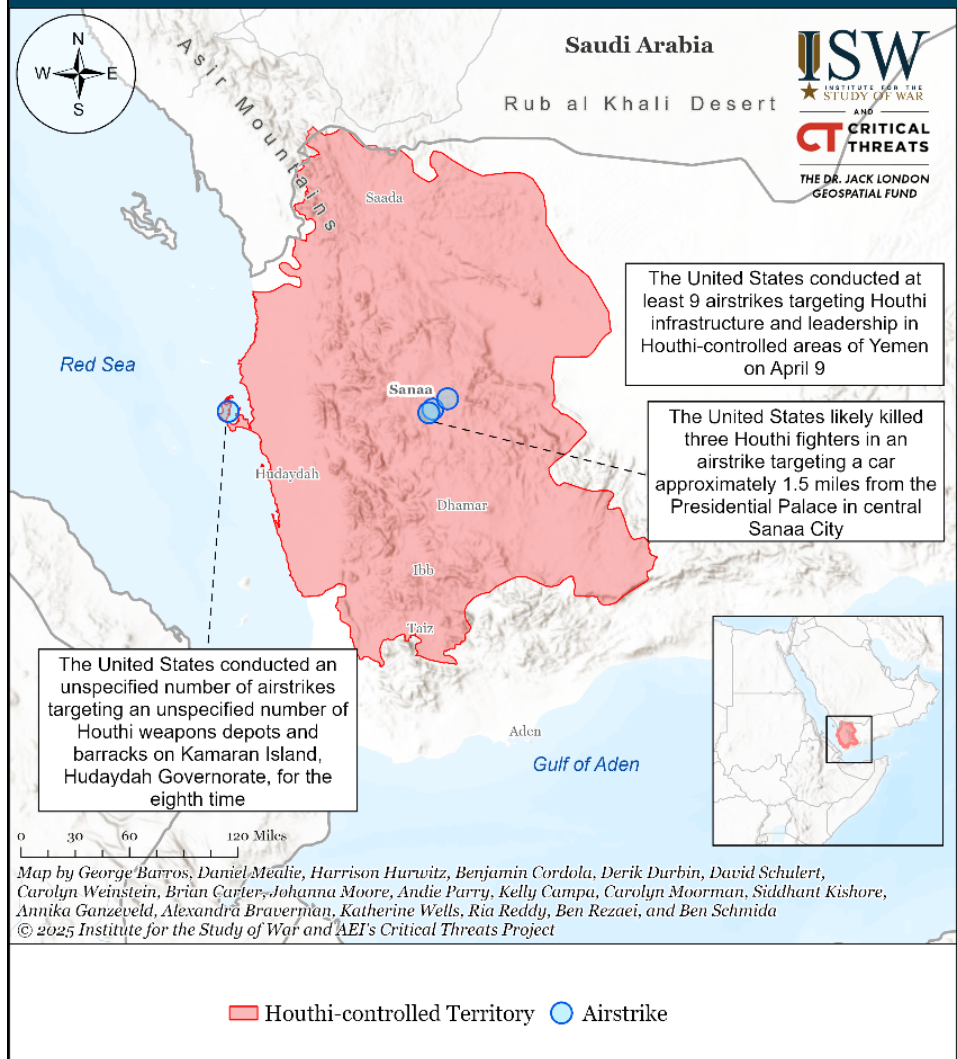
ISW: CENTCOM UPDATE

A Senior Iranian official threatened to reduce cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) if external threats against Iran continue. On 10 April, Iranian Supreme Leader Adviser Ali Shamkhani stated that Iran could expel IAEA inspectors, halt cooperation with the agency, or move enriched uranium to "safe and unknown locations" if external threats and military pressure continue.

China increased its Iranian oil imports by at least 80 percent in March compared to February. This undermines the U.S. "maximum pressure" campaign, which seeks to drive Iranian oil exports to zero, and illustrates cooperation between two major U.S. adversaries. On 10 April, Reuters reported that China's imports of Iranian oil increased significantly in March amid concerns that new U.S. sanctions could further restrict the Iranian oil supply

Since 9 April, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) conducted at least 9 airstrikes targeting Houthi infrastructure and leadership in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen. CENTCOM conducted at least three airstrikes targeting Houthi underground facilities and weapons depots in Mount Nuqum, which is on the eastern outskirts of Sanaa City, for the second consecutive day. One airstrike may have killed a relatively more high-value Houthi leader in central Sanaa. A Yemeni journalist reported that a CENTCOM airstrike on 9 April targeted a car at the roundabout between al Saleh Mosque and the gate of the Presidential Palace in al Sabeen District, central Sanaa City, and killed three likely Houthi fighters.

US Strikes Against Houthi Targets April 10, 2025



BBC: ISRAEL TO INCLUDE RAFAH IN GAZA 'SECURITY ZONES'

Israel's defense minister has said it will expand its so-called "security zones" in Gaza to include the southern city of Rafah.

During a visit to the area, Israel Katz said the military was leaving Gaza "smaller" and "more isolated" to pressure HAMAS into releasing the hostages it is still holding. The military has already seized land running along the entirety of the Palestinian territory's borders, which it has characterized as a buffer zone to prevent attacks.

The expansion to cover Rafah and its surrounding areas - which make up almost one fifth of Gaza - comes after the military ordered civilians to evacuate and established a new corridor separating them from nearby Khan Younis. Two-thirds of Gaza has been designated as "no-go" zones or placed under evacuation orders since Israel resumed its offensive against HAMAS on 18 March following the collapse of a two-month ceasefire, according to the UN. It says 390,000 Palestinians - almost a fifth of the 2.1 million population - have been displaced once again, with no safe place to go. The UN is also warning that supplies of food, medicine and fuel have run out because Israel blocked deliveries of humanitarian aid to Gaza since 2 March.



SOUTHCOM

DEFENSENEWS: HEGSETH VOWS U.S. WILL 'TAKE BACK' PANAMA CANAL FROM CHINESE INFLUENCE



Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth said the United States military would prevent China's government from increasing its sway over the Panama Canal, as President Donald Trump says America is "reclaiming" control of the waterway.

The Trump administration has promised a new focus on the western hemisphere, enforced in large part through the military. In his first three months, Hegseth has sent around 7,500 more active-duty troops to the U.S. southwest border and deployed two Navy destroyers to patrol the country's coasts in a show of force.

Hegseth's visit shows that approach extending farther beyond American borders. On the trip, he promised to increase joint exercises with Panama, rotate more American troops into the country and to renovate a former U.S. military jungle school now in disrepair. "China did not build this canal, China does not operate this canal, and China will not weaponize this canal," Hegseth said.

NORTHCOM

TWZ: NAVY TO GO BIG ON MASSIVE JOINT WAR TRAINING ACROSS THE PACIFIC

The U.S. Department of Defense is starting to rehearse how its joint forces will fight as an integrated team across a massive battlespace in future war against China, rather than each of its services conducting their own maneuvers to practice for the same kind of scenario. In doing so, the aim is to get a much clearer idea in terms of requirements of what is needed to make such a complex combat engagement work.

As well as reflecting the continued 'pivot to Asia,' driven above all by China's increasingly assertive military stance, these Indo-Pacific-focused exercises all grapple with the inherent challenges of a future conflict in this region.

For example, a war with China in the Indo-Pacific would involve joint forces, allies, and partners fighting over vast geographic expanses, with the requirement to operate in an expeditionary capacity in the face of unprecedented high-threat weapons engagement zones.



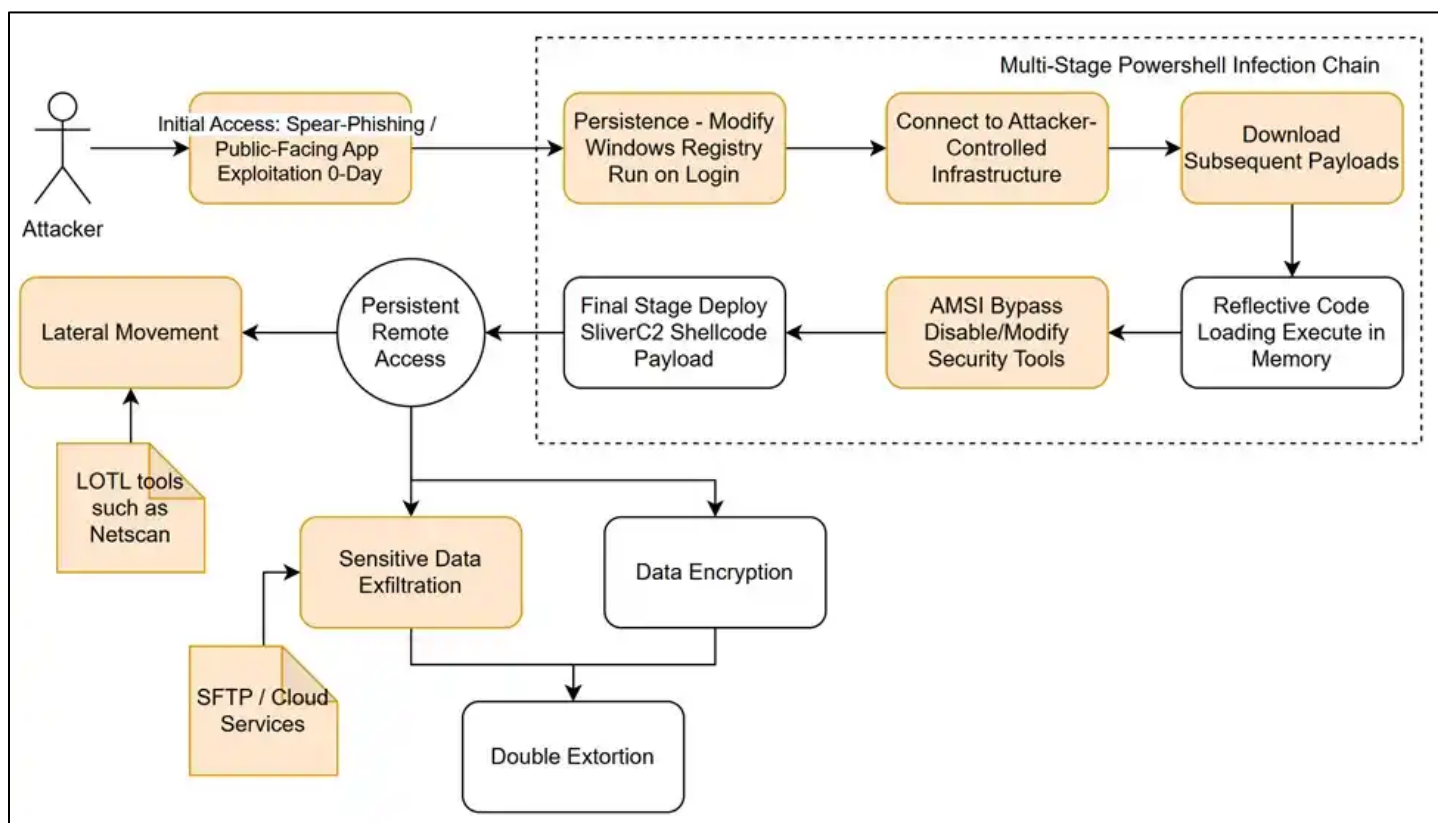
CYBERCOM

CYBERSECURITYNEWS: HELLCAT RANSOMWARE UPDATED IT'S ARSENAL TO ATTACK GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION, AND ENERGY SECTORS

A sophisticated ransomware strain known as Hellcat has emerged as a formidable threat in the cybersecurity landscape since its first appearance in mid-2024. The malware has rapidly evolved its capabilities, specifically targeting critical sectors including government agencies, educational institutions, and energy infrastructure. The ransomware operates under a Ransomware-as-a-Service (RaaS) model, allowing affiliates to deploy the malware while sharing profits with its developers. This business model has accelerated Hellcat's proliferation across various sectors globally, with attacks continuing to increase in sophistication.

Broadcom researchers identified Hellcat's advanced exploitation capabilities, noting its successful leverage of zero-day vulnerabilities, including a recent one in Atlassian Jira, to gain initial foothold in target environments.

Their analysis revealed that Hellcat has demonstrated remarkable ability to bypass traditional security controls through a multi-stage attack approach, employing reflective code loading techniques to execute malicious code directly in memory, effectively evading detection by file-based security solutions.

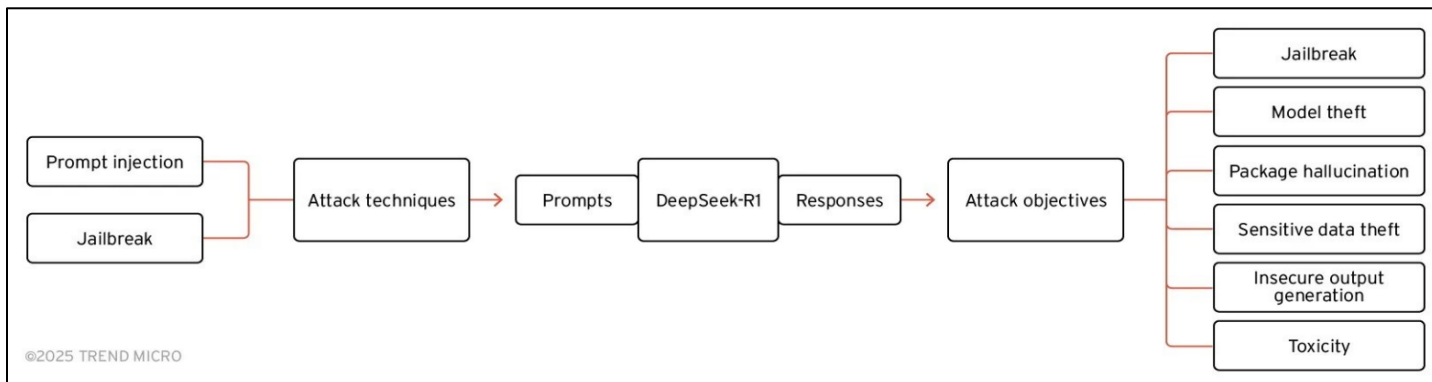


Hellcat's attack chain begins with initial access through spear phishing emails containing malicious attachments or by exploiting public-facing applications, often leveraging zero-day vulnerabilities. Upon successful compromise, the attackers deploy a sophisticated multi-stage PowerShell infection chain that establishes persistence by modifying the Windows Registry run keys, ensuring the malicious script executes automatically upon user login. The final stage involves deploying SliverC2, a command-and-control framework, via a shellcode payload that grants persistent remote access to the compromised environment.

CYBERSECURITYNEWS: DEEPSEEK-R1 PROMPTS EXPLOITED TO CREATE SOPHISTICATED MALWARE & PHISHING PAGES

A concerning security vulnerability has emerged in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) landscape as researchers discover that DeepSeek-R1's Chain of Thought (CoT) reasoning system can be exploited to create sophisticated malware and generate convincing phishing campaigns. Chain of Thought reasoning, which has become a cornerstone for advanced AI models including OpenAI's O1 and DeepSeek-R1, encourages models to take intermediate reasoning steps before arriving at final answers

The 671-billion-parameter model, designed to enhance reasoning capabilities through transparent step-by-step processing, inadvertently exposes attackers to methods for bypassing security measures by explicitly sharing its reasoning process within tags in responses. While this approach has significantly improved performance on complex tasks, the explicit transparency in DeepSeek-R1's implementation presents unique security challenges as attackers can observe and manipulate the model's decision-making process.



Trend Micro researchers noted that these vulnerabilities can be weaponized through carefully crafted prompt attacks, where malicious actors design inputs specifically to achieve objectives like jailbreaking the model, extracting sensitive information, or generating harmful content. Their analysis revealed particularly high success rates in attacks focused on insecure output generation and sensitive data theft compared to other attack categories.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



AFMCA 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/>



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



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<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: Chris Cappy is a former US Army infantryman and Iraq Veteran. I cover geopolitics, history, weapon systems and all things military related — I do this from a veteran's perspective.

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



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<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/>