



# GRYPHON GROWL

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## SIPR

[go.intelink.sgov.gov/CPI6RmN](https://go.intelink.sgov.gov/CPI6RmN)  
 Current Intelligence Brief (Monthly)

## JWICS

[go.intelink.ic.gov/3vKnmH3](https://go.intelink.ic.gov/3vKnmH3)  
 AFLCMC CC Intel Brief (Monthly)  
 Winged Warrior (Bi-Weekly)  
 CyREN (Bi-Weekly)

## CONTENTS

<b>INDOPACOM</b> .....	<b>2</b>
TWZ: TAIWANESE TROOPS TRAIN TO USE SUBWAY TO THEIR ADVANTAGE DURING CHINESE INVASION OF TAIPEI .....	2
STRATFOR: NORTH KOREA, RUSSIA: LAVROV SECURES PYONGYANG'S OPEN-ENDED SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE WAR .....	2
TWZ: MYSTERIOUS VEHICLES ROLLING THROUGH BEIJING SPUR SPECULATION OF NEW CHINESE TANK .....	3
<b>EUCOM</b> .....	<b>3</b>
ISW: RUSSIA-UKRAINE UPDATE .....	3
TWZ: CLUSTER WARHEAD VERSION OF RUSSIAN KH-101 CRUISE MISSILE CAUGHT ON CAMERA .....	4
DEFENSEPOST: RUSSIA LAUNCHES MI-8/17 HELICOPTER REPLACEMENT PROGRAM .....	4
<b>CENTCOM</b> .....	<b>5</b>
ISW: CENTCOM UPDATE – IRAN UPDATE .....	5
AP: SYRIAN GOVERNMENT AND DRUZE MINORITY LEADERS ANNOUNCE A NEW CEASEFIRE .....	5
STRATFOR: DRONE STRIKE IN NORTHERN IRAQ CAUSES EXPLOSION AT KRG GAS FIELD OPERATED BY U.S. COMPANY .....	6
<b>CYBERCOM</b> .....	<b>6</b>
THEHACKERNEWS: WEEKLY RECAP INCLUDING SHAREPOINT 0-DAY, CHROME EXPLOIT, MACOS SPYWARE, NVIDIA TOOLKIT RCE AND MORE .....	6
THEHACKERNEWS: IRANIAN-BACKED PAY2KEY RANSOMWARE RESURFACES WITH 80% PROFIT SHARE FOR CYBERCRIMINALS .....	7
<b>ADDITIONAL RESOURCES</b> .....	<b>8</b>

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## INDOPACOM

### **TWZ: TAIWANESE TROOPS TRAIN TO USE SUBWAY TO THEIR ADVANTAGE DURING CHINESE INVASION OF TAIPEI**



What appears to be the first time, Taiwan's military practiced moving soldiers and supplies through the Taipei subway during a big yearly drill called Han Kuang. This appears to be the first time Taiwan has used the subway to maneuver around the capital as part of a major annual exercise. The soldiers carried weapons like Stinger missiles and trained underground because the subway tunnels are safer from attacks than roads or buildings above ground.

Han Kuang is Taiwan's biggest defense exercise, showing how both the military and regular people can work together to protect the island. This year's iteration of Han Kuang is also the largest ever and puts new emphasis on whole-of-society defense readiness, rather than just that of the armed forces. As such, the exercise incorporated a host of other kinds of training events, like defending beaches and fixing runways quickly if they were to get damaged.

The Taipei subway has 135 stations and about 93 miles of track, mostly underground, making it a strong and safe way to move troops around the city if there's an attack. This all comes amid larger concerns that the PLA could be in a position where it would feel confident in launching an invasion of Taiwan by 2027, if not earlier.

### **STRATFOR: NORTH KOREA, RUSSIA: LAVROV SECURES PYONGYANG'S OPEN-ENDED SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE WAR**



On 13 July, Russian diplomat, Sergey Lavrov, met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. During the meeting, Kim promised full, unconditional support for Russia's war in Ukraine. Lavrov also warned the U.S., Japan, and South Korea not to mess with North Korea.

The Russia-North Korea partnership will likely continue deepening, with North Korea to send additional military and labor contributions to Russia's war against Ukraine in exchange for economic, energy and defense support. The alliance is worrying because Russia might give North Korea high-tech military tools, which could make its nuclear weapons and missiles more dangerous.

Russia is also using this friendship to push back against U.S. influence in Asia, especially as the U.S. strengthens ties with Japan and South Korea.

Lavrov went to North Korea right after a contentious meeting with U.S. officials in Malaysia. During his visit, North Korea made it clear they fully back Russia, with Kim Jong Un saying the two countries see the world in the same way.

## TWZ: MYSTERIOUS VEHICLES ROLLING THROUGH BEIJING SPUR SPECULATION OF NEW CHINESE TANK

A convoy of unusual vehicles covered with large, box-like blue structures was recently observed near Tiananmen Square in Beijing. The coverings completely obscure the vehicles, making it difficult to determine their exact nature.

The vehicles bear the label “Road Inspection Vehicle,” though their appearance does not align with typical road maintenance equipment. Each concealed vehicle is closely accompanied by a standard truck, which may be providing guidance or additional concealment.



Speculation on social media suggests they could be new tanks or other armored vehicles, but no official confirmation has been provided. The timing and location of the sighting are notable, as China is preparing for a major military parade on 3 September, raising the possibility that these vehicles are linked to the event.

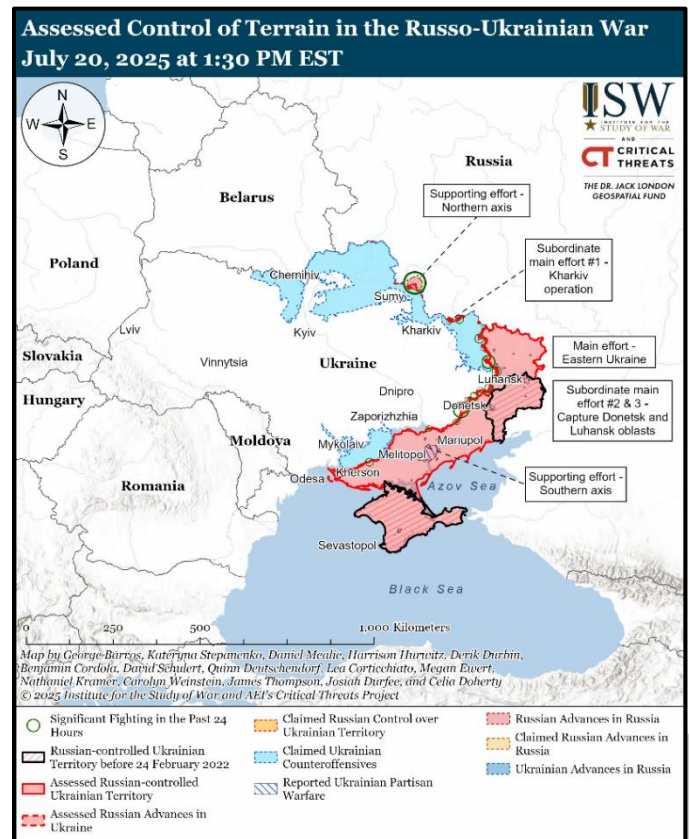
Videos of the convoy circulated briefly on Chinese social media before being removed, leaving many questions unanswered about the identity and purpose of these mysterious vehicles.

## EUCOM

### ISW: RUSSIA-UKRAINE UPDATE

#### Key Takeaways:

- Russian officials continue to publicly reiterate that Russia is uninterested in a near-term solution to ending the war in Ukraine that does not acquiesce to Moscow's demands.
- German and Ukrainian officials assessed that Russia continues to expand its production of Shahed-type drones in order to launch even larger long-range drone strike packages that include up to 2,000 drones in a single night. Russian forces may be able to strike Ukraine with up to 2,000 drones in a single night by November 2025 should the current pattern of growth in nightly Russian drone usage continue.
- Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev reiterated demands for Russia to take responsibility for the December 2024 downing of an Azerbaijan Airlines plane, an incident that continues to create tension in the Russian-Azerbaijani relationship.





- Ukrainian forces recently advanced in Sumy and Zaporizhia oblasts and near Toretsk. Russian forces recently advanced in northern Sumy Oblast and near Lyman and Novopavlivka.

## **TWZ: CLUSTER WARHEAD VERSION OF RUSSIAN KH-101 CRUISE MISSILE CAUGHT ON CAMERA**

A new video from a Russian missile strike on 11 July shows what experts believe is the first clear use of a Kh-101 cruise missile armed with a cluster bomb. The attack hit the Ukrainian city of Chernivtsi, near the Romanian border.

The Kh-101 is one of Russia's most advanced and long-range missiles. Until now, it wasn't known to carry cluster munitions, which are bombs that break apart in midair and spread smaller explosives over a wide area.



In the video, a missile is seen diving steeply, followed by a series of explosions, which fits the behavior of a cluster bomb. Ukrainian officials say the strike killed 2 people, injured 14, and damaged homes, offices, and vehicles.

Russian military bloggers have since confirmed that this version of the Kh-101 exists and said it could be useful for hitting spread-out targets like airbases, air defense systems, or ammo depots. Ukraine has used similar weapons in the past.

However, using this kind of missile in a city of over 250,000 people suggests it may have been used indiscriminately, continuing a recent pattern of Russian attacks on civilian areas. That said, the Kh-101 is a rare and valuable weapon, meaning Russia is likely choosing its targets carefully, whether military or civilian.

## **DEFENSEPOST: RUSSIA LAUNCHES MI-8/17 HELICOPTER REPLACEMENT PROGRAM**



Russia is working on a new helicopter called the Mi-80 to replace its older Mi-8 and Mi-17 models. The new helicopter is based on a recent design called the Mi-171A3 and will have better features like stronger engines and improved rotor blades.

The Mi-80 will be able to carry up to 14 tons (about 28,000 pounds) and will have a tougher body with some parts made from lightweight materials. It will also have fuel tanks that are protected against damage and rotor blades placed in a way that makes flying safer and more stable.

The helicopter will be cheaper to build, and the same factories that made the old models will put it together. Right now, the project is still being planned and is waiting for money to start full development, which could take about five years.

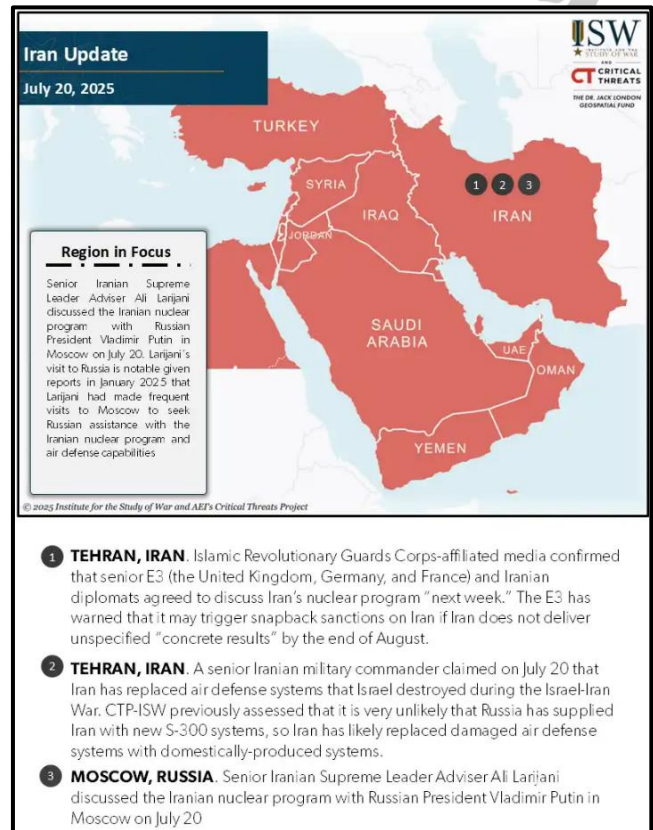
Russia's air force uses more than 700 Mi-8 and Mi-17 helicopters, and many more are used by other military groups and government agencies. Around the world, about 3,000 of these helicopters are in service with different countries.

## CENTCOM

## ISW: CENTCOM UPDATE – IRAN UPDATE

## Key Takeaways:

- Iran-E3 Talks:** Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps-affiliated media confirmed that senior E3 (the United Kingdom, Germany, and France) and Iranian diplomats agreed to discuss Iran's nuclear program "next week." The E3 has warned that it may trigger snapback sanctions on Iran if Iran does not deliver unspecified "concrete results" by the end of August.
- Iranian Air Defenses:** A senior Iranian military commander claimed on 20 July that Iran has replaced air defense systems that Israel destroyed during the Israel-Iran War. CTP-ISW previously assessed that it is very unlikely that Russia has supplied Iran with new S-300 systems, so Iran has likely replaced damaged air defense systems with domestically produced systems.
- Russo-Iranian Cooperation:** Senior Iranian Supreme Leader Adviser Ali Larijani discussed the Iranian nuclear program with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on 20 July. Larijani's visit to Russia is notable given reports in January 2025 that Larijani had made frequent visits to Moscow to seek Russian assistance with the Iranian nuclear program and air defense capabilities.



## AP: SYRIAN GOVERNMENT AND DRUZE MINORITY LEADERS ANNOUNCE A NEW CEASEFIRE



Syrian government officials and Druze leaders agreed to a new ceasefire after days of fighting in Sweida, a city in southern Syria. Government troops began leaving the area, but it's unclear if the peace will last since a previous deal quickly fell apart. The clashes started between Sunni Bedouin tribes and Druze militias, with government forces also involved and some civilians hurt. This unrest challenges Syria's new leaders who are still trying to stabilize the country after years of civil war.

Syria's interim president said the Druze are an important part of the country and blamed Israel for trying to cause divisions. Israel, meanwhile, launched

airstrikes in Damascus, saying they want to protect the Druze and stop militants near their border. Israel warned it will keep attacking Syrian forces unless they withdraw and is sending more troops to the border.

Death counts vary—official reports say about 30, but other groups say over 300 have died. Despite the ceasefire, Israeli strikes continue, and tensions remain high.



## **STRATFOR: DRONE STRIKE IN NORTHERN IRAQ CAUSES EXPLOSION AT KRG GAS FIELD OPERATED BY U.S. COMPANY**

A drone carrying explosives hit a gas field in northern Iraq's Kurdistan region early on 15 July. The gas field is run by a U.S. company called HKN Energy. The explosion caused a fire, and crews are still trying to put it out.

This is just the latest wave of drone attacks in the area over the past month. No one has said they were behind it, but in the past, similar attacks have been blamed on pro-Iranian militia groups in Iraq. These groups might be targeting HKN Energy because it's a U.S. company or because it's involved in a fight over who controls Iraq's oil and gas — the Kurdish regional government or Iraq's central government.



Image shared on X by @TheWorldWar12

The attack happened one day after two drones crashed near another oil site nearby. HKN Energy recently made deals with both the Kurdish and Iraqi governments to work on gas and oil projects — but Iraq's central government rejected one of those deals. Oil exports from the Kurdistan region have been stopped since May 2023, and tensions remain high over how to restart them.

## **CYBERCOM**

### **THEHACKERNEWS: WEEKLY RECAP INCLUDING SHAREPOINT 0-DAY, CHROME EXPLOIT, MACOS SPYWARE, NVIDIA TOOLKIT RCE AND MORE**



The week of 14-18 July highlighted how attackers are increasingly bypassing traditional security through quiet exploitation of weak configurations, outdated encryption, and trusted tools rather than flashy zero-day exploits.

Microsoft released emergency patches for actively exploited SharePoint vulnerabilities affecting dozens of organizations worldwide, while Google fixed its fifth Chrome zero-day of the year.

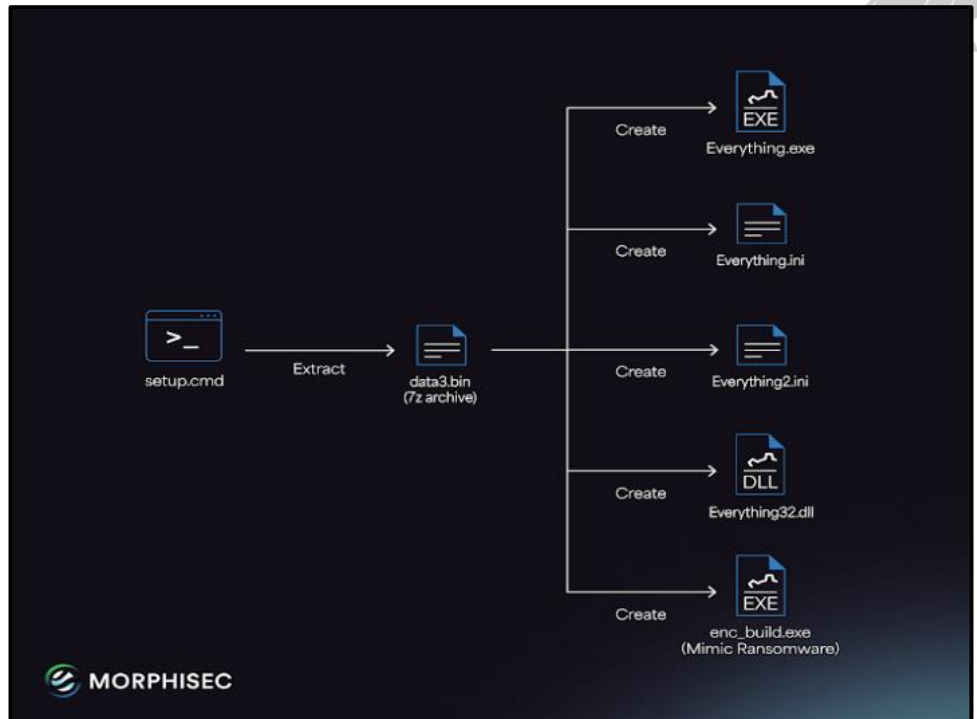
Critical flaws were also discovered in NVIDIA Container Toolkit, CrushFTP, and Windows Server 2025's delegated Managed Service Accounts. Notable developments included Google's AI agent "Big Sleep" discovering a SQLite vulnerability before exploitation, Russian threat actors conducting sophisticated disinformation campaigns across Europe, and the Abacus darknet marketplace shuttering after an apparent exit scam worth \$300-400 million.

The cybercriminal landscape saw over \$2.17 billion stolen from crypto services in 2025's first half, with multiple arrests including Scattered Spider members and ransomware operators. The overall trend shows attackers leveraging automation and modular techniques to blend malicious activity with normal behavior, making detection significantly more challenging while eroding the traditional trust boundaries that security relies upon.

## THEHACKERNEWS: IRANIAN-BACKED PAY2KEY RANSOMWARE RESURFACES WITH 80% PROFIT SHARE FOR CYBERCRIMINALS

A dangerous ransomware called **Pay2Key.I2P**, linked to an Iranian hacker group known as Fox Kitten, has resurfaced following recent conflicts involving Israel, Iran, and the U.S. This ransomware offers hackers a big share—up to 80%—of any money they get if they attack targets in Israel and the U.S., showing it's motivated by both money and politics.

Pay2Key has been active since 2020 and has already made over \$4 million from more than 50 successful attacks earlier this year. It can infect both Windows and Linux computers and uses sneaky methods to avoid being detected or stopped.



What makes this version different is that Pay2Key.I2P runs on a hidden part of the internet called the Invisible Internet Project (I2P), which helps it stay anonymous and harder to track. It also changed how it shares money with hackers—now, the creators keep most of the ransom and only share a smaller cut with those who carry out the attacks.

U.S. security agencies warn that Iranian hackers continue to target critical industries like transportation and manufacturing. They urge companies to be extra careful and strengthen their cybersecurity defenses to stay safe.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



AFMC 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/>