

# Weekly Intelligence Brief

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## Influence operation to build support for Russia uncovered in Poland and Czech Republic

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Executive Director

On 26 MAR, Poland's Internal Security Agency conducted searches in Warsaw and Tychy as a part of an investigation into alleged Russian espionage aimed to promote pro-Russian initiatives and media campaigns in countries within the European Union. Poland and the Czech Republic have been working together to uncover the pro-Russian network designed to spread Russian influence and undermine European security.

The Czech Republic Foreign Ministry released a statement on 28 MAR announcing that they were placing

sanctions on Viktor Volodymyrovych Medvedchuk, Artem Pavlovich Marchevskiy, and the website voiceofeurope.com for leading Russian operation with the goal of undermining the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence of Ukraine. Voice of Europe was used to publish articles, statements, and interviews with a pro-Russian tone. Medvedchuk is a pro-Russian Ukrainian politician who was arrested in Ukraine following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in FEB 2022 and was later transferred to Russia in a prisoner exchange. Medvedchuk is accused of financing Voice of Europe, and Marchevskiy was sanctioned for running the day-to-day operations of the website.

The Czech Republic's Security Information Service also found that the Voice of Europe website paid politicians from Germany, France, Poland, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Hungary to promote Russian interests. Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo stated that Belgian intelligence has been working closely with the Czech Republic and alleged there were politicians in the European Parliament that were a part of the network.

We can assess with high confidence that it is highly likely more Russian espionage will be uncovered in Europe relating to spreading Russian influence and undermining European security.

# China's Belt and Road Initiative using Peru as an expansion to maritime trade

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On 22 MAR, Peru's Private Investment Promotion Agency (PROINVERSIÓN) awarded Chinese firm Jinzhao a \$405 million contract to construct a port in Ica after other parties failed to bid. The port will be near Jinzhao's Pampa de Pongo iron mine project. The new terminal will be the third-largest port in Peru and is expected to handle 19 million tons of cargo per year, behind only the Callao and Chancay ports which can and are expected to handle 30 million tons each.

Construction is set to start in late 2025 or early 2026 with the completion date being two years later. Once operational, the San Juan de Marcona port will be responsible for transporting over 50% of Peru's iron exports. As part of the contract, Jinzhao will design, finance, and construct the terminal in exchange for a 30-year concession deal on operations within the port. The new terminal will have two docks, three moorings, and the necessary equipment to handle multipurpose cargo in bulk and general or liquid cargo containers. This will increase Peru's involvement and prominence in maritime shipping and trade.

We can assess with moderate confidence that this will negatively affect US-Peruvian relations because the port will give China direct access to over 50% of Peru's iron and copper exports, and companies can ship cargo directly to Peru for Latin American countries, bypassing the United States.



# Biggest Russian missile strike on Ukraine since start of war

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On 22 MAR, Russia launched its biggest attack on Ukraine since the beginning of 2022, hitting electrical power facilities and the country's largest hydroelectric plant. However, there were no breakthroughs. The attack killed at least five people and caused widespread outages, forcing Kyiv to seek emergency supplies from Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

has announced that about 90 rockets and 63 Shahed drones from Iran were used in the attack. Of these, only 37 missiles and 55 drones were destroyed by Ukraine, representing a worse ratio than usual. Large-scale attacks like these deplete Ukraine's capability and success in countering the missiles and drones. President Zelenskyy has been urging Western allies to provide additional air defense systems and ammunition for weeks.

The Russian defense ministry announced the airstrike was a retaliation for

Ukrainian shelling and cross-border raids last week during the Russian elections. Russian officials have denied they were targeting civilians, although since the start of the war in 2022, Ukraine has suffered thousands of civilian casualties.

We can assess with high confidence that if Ukraine does not receive air defense aid, it is likely these Russian missile attacks are going to continue, and Ukraine will be less equipped to stop them.

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