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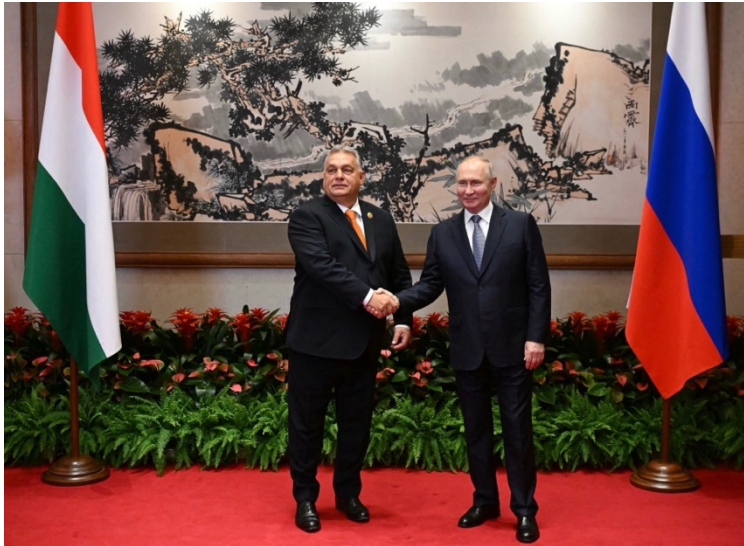
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[2/5] Russian President Vladimir Putin shakes hands with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán during a meeting ahead of the Belt and Road Forum in Beijing, China, October 17, 2023. Sputnik/Grigory Sisyoyev/Pool via REUTERS [Acquire Licenses Rights](#)

## Victor Orbán: The Obstacle in the European Unity

By Sarah Cernikova

Last week, Chinese President Xi Jinping hosted an international forum to celebrate China's Belt and Road Initiative, encompassing more than 150 countries. Prior to the official program, the Hungarian Prime Minister engaged in a bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss areas related to oil, gas deliveries, and nuclear energy, as per the official statement of the Hungarian government.

However, images of Orbán and Putin shaking hands in Beijing have raised doubts in Brussels, where many European diplomats have condemned such meetings and connections with Russia. They have drawn particular attention to the European Union's policy compliance, to which all EU member states are bound. Hungary, a long-time critic of the sanctions imposed by the European Union on Russia, is the sole European country that maintains contact with Moscow.

Hungarian relations with Russia are not the only potential obstacle to European unity. Just a few days following an international meeting in China, the Hungarian parliament rejected a proposal to hold a vote on Sweden's accession to NATO. As Turkey's President submitted a protocol to Turkey's parliament to approve Sweden's admission to NATO, Hungary is the only allied state in the way of Sweden's membership in NATO.



## US Support for Israel and Guilty Plea in Classified Info Case

By Ondrej Pragr

The Pentagon is sending military advisers and advanced air defense systems to assist Israel in preparation for a potential ground offensive in Gaza. Marine Corps Lt Gen James Glynn, an experienced leader in special operations, is among those providing guidance. Their role includes advising on urban warfare tactics and minimizing civilian casualties, though they won't engage in combat. Israel is gearing up for a large-scale operation in a region where Hamas has established tunnel networks and traps. This support aims to prevent the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas from escalating further, while the Pentagon also takes measures to protect US personnel.

Jareh Sebastian Dalke, a former NSA employee, has pleaded guilty to attempting to sell classified national security information to what he believed was a Russian operative. Facing a potential life sentence, he reached a plea deal capping his potential prison term at around 22 years. Dalke expressed a desire to "cause change" due to concerns about US actions worldwide and significant personal debt. He received cryptocurrency payments for sharing classified documents and was arrested during a covert operation at a train station. The information he intended to share with Russia included assessments of military capabilities and sensitive US defense information.

## NATO's Major Nuclear Exercise „Steadfast Noon“ 2023

By Sarah Cernikova

NATO has recently conducted one of its largest annual nuclear exercises, Steadfast Noon. The exercise took place from last week until Thursday 26th, mainly in Croatia and Italy, as well as the Mediterranean Sea. Over 13 allied countries participated in the exercises, which involved fighter jets with nuclear capabilities, conventional jets, and surveillance and refueling aircraft. Advanced fighter jets and U.S. B-52 bombers flew in from the United States. The exercise was focused on the credibility, effectiveness, and security of nuclear deterrence, sending a clear message that NATO will protect and defend all allies. Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg emphasized this point.

The exercise began shortly after a top Russian diplomat announced a possible pull-out from the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which the United States and Russia adopted in 1996 to ban all nuclear explosions worldwide.

# China's Dual Role: Mediator in the Middle East and South China Sea Tensions

By Ondrej Pragr

China has pledged to exert its utmost effort to contribute to Palestinian-Israeli reconciliation, as reported by state media. In a region marked by long-standing conflict, China is positioning itself to play a role in fostering peace and reconciliation between the two nations. This commitment comes at a time when international efforts are intensifying to find a peaceful resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The specifics of China's approach, involvement, and the potential impact of their efforts on the complex situation in the Middle East are yet to be fully revealed.



Chinese coastguard ship blocks a Philippine Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources ship as it neared the Chinese-controlled Scarborough Shoal in the disputed South China Sea [File: Ted Aljibe/AFP]

In the South China Sea, a collision occurred between vessels from China and the Philippines, further complicating the ongoing disputes in the region. This incident serves as a stark reminder of the contentious territorial disagreements involving multiple nations in the South China Sea, including China and the Philippines. As the collision unfolds, it raises concerns about maritime security and territorial claims in this strategic and highly disputed area. The incident highlights the fragile nature of maritime tensions in the South China Sea, where differing territorial claims continue to be a point of international concern.



Ukraine utilizes ATACMS with cassette warheads equipped with submunition released upon the target once the missile is blasted. **The photo illustrates** the submunition, made of steel and explosive substance, falling until it collides with the target.

## Long-Awaited: U.S. Provides Ukraine with ATACMS

By Karolina Baldrianova

Last week, the Ukrainian army received its first long-range ATACMS missiles from the U.S. and promptly utilized them during Operation Dragonfly on 18th October. This attack on Russian-occupied airfields in the Berdyansk and Luhansk regions resulted in massive damage for the Russian army - destroying 9 to 25 helicopters, an ammunition warehouse and even an air defence launcher. Vladimir Putin has already called the ATACMS deliveries another mistake the U.S. made. Despite some initial concerns that Ukraine might use the missiles to attack Russian territories, thus escalating the conflict beyond Ukrainian borders, the U.S. intends to provide them regularly, as Foreign Ministry Kuleba confirmed later that week.

Many experts now believe that introducing ATACMS missiles may be a game-changer for Ukrainian forces. These long-range, surface-to-surface missiles have demonstrated impressive precision and effectiveness. With a range of up to 300 kilometres, equipped with built-in GPS systems and the ability to manoeuvre during flight, ATACMS can be launched from a safe position and effectively strike both stationary and mobile targets with intended accuracy. As they are particularly well-suited for striking storage depots and other soft targets, they allow Ukraine to destroy Russian military assets more efficiently and disrupt their military logistics.

## Ongoing Investigation in the Baltic Sea

By Karolina Badrianova

The cause of the damage that suddenly shut down the Balticconnector undersea gas pipeline between Finland and Estonia and the communication cable linking Sweden and Estonia is still under investigation. To secure a smooth flow of energy supplies, NATO has immediately reinforced patrols in the Baltic Sea by increasing the frequency of surveillance reconnaissance flights. So far, two primary suspects have been identified: the Russian nuclear-powered cargo ship Sevmorput and China's NewNew Polar Bear container vessel. As the incident is perceived with high-security concerns, the Latvian president declared that if Russia proves to be responsible, NATO should consider closing the Baltic Sea to their ships.

Nevertheless, on Tuesday, Finland announced that the damage was most likely caused by a ship dragging a large anchor along the seabed. The vessel's anchor was found near the damaged infrastructure, along with a visible trail indicating the trajectory. The evidence now points to the Chinese cargo vessel, as some observed that their anchor is missing. Finnish investigators added that they are not currently able to identify whether it was an accident or a deliberate act. While Chinese authorities expressed willingness to cooperate, the company has remained silent.

# Sahel's Recent News

By Petra Nemcova

## **Joint statement regarding the meeting of US-Spain Working group of Sahel.**

On October 16, 2023, the U.S.-Spain Working Group on the Sahel convened in Washington, D.C. The group, led by Antonio Sánchez-Benedito Gaspar, Spain's Ambassador at Large for Sahel, and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Molly Phee, seeks to promote democracy, sustainable development, and stability in Sahel. The group will keep holding regular meetings to assess the success of policies and make sure they are in line with the aspirations of Sahel people.

## **GERD talks Kick Off between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia.**

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) has been the subject of new negotiations between Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan in Cairo. The gathering comes after previous discussions in Cairo and Addis Abeba. The goal is to hasten the process of coming to an understanding over the guidelines for filling and running the dam. After failed attempts in August and September, as well as Ethiopia's declaration of the fourth operation to fill the reservoir, the GERD problem has become more complicated.



<https://english.aawsat.com/arab-world/4624941-egypt-sudan-ethiopia-kick-new-round-talks-over-gerd>

Egypt has chastised Ethiopia for disobeying its obligations under international law to protect Egypt's and Sudan's rights and the security of their water supplies. The goal of the ongoing negotiations is to establish precise guidelines for the annual filling of the dam and its operation, particularly during times of drought. Egypt demands a binding and comprehensive agreement that guarantees the rights and interests of the three countries. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry has stated that Cairo will continue to negotiate with other parties despite not reaching results on the GERD issue.

## **EU Framework as a response to the situation in Niger**

In response to the situation in Niger, the European Union has established a framework for punitive actions. The goal of the framework is to aid the Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) efforts to reinstate constitutional order. The measures which will be used include asset freezing, denying access to money, and preventing people from traveling. In addition, a humanitarian exemption from the asset freeze has been implemented to ensure quick delivery. The EU will keep providing humanitarian aid to the people of Niger.

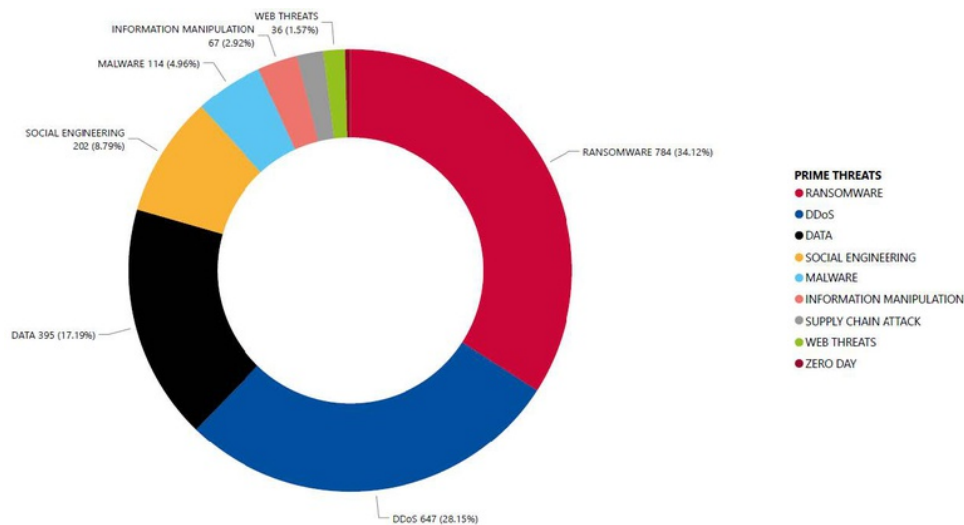
# The Increasing Demand for AI – What Are the Costs?

By Petra Nemcova

2580 instances have been reported to the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) that targeted a variety of industries, including public administrations, health, manufacturing, transport, and finance. Election procedures are threatened by social engineering and information manipulation efforts. Geopolitical developments have an impact on threat actors, such as cybercriminals, actors with a state nexus, and hacktivists. Utilizing social networks and phishing emails, state-nexus actors attack activists, journalists, politicians, and employees. They harm users by attacking well-known software packages, taking advantage of security software configuration flaws, and abusing cloud infrastructure. Additionally, remote monitoring and management software is a popular target for cybercriminals since it enables them to conceal their activities.

Main threats:

All industries are targeted by ransomware, with 14% of incidents occurring in the manufacturing sector. The public sector, the transportation industry, and the banking and financial sectors are the main targets of DDoS assaults and data-related threats. Digital service providers and digital infrastructure are both impacted by threats to internet availability. Attacks on supply chains pose a serious threat to public administration and digital service providers. Top threats have monetary gain, disruption, espionage, destruction, or hacktivism as their motivation. Social engineering assaults are also utilizing deep fake and AI technology. However, outdated strategies like malvertising and SEO poisoning are still very effective. There were 24,690 common vulnerabilities and exposures in total, up 2,770 over the previous reporting period.



<https://www.enisa.europa.eu/news/eu-elections-at-risk-with-rise-of-ai-enabled-information-manipulation>