

# Weekly Intelligence Brief

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## Chinese ‘Mega-Embassy’ Approved in the United Kingdom

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On 20 JAN, the United Kingdom (UK) greenlit the reconstruction of the old Royal Mint, located near the financial district of London, to serve as the new Embassy of China. Spanning 215,798 sq. ft, this would be the largest embassy in Europe. The building blueprints include redacted areas, and 208 underground rooms built in close proximity to fiber optic cables that carry financial traffic central to the financial infrastructure of the UK. Plans for this renovation have been considered since 2018, when China originally acquired the Royal Mint for \$255 million.

In 2022, the UK rejected the plans to turn the Royal Mint into an embassy. As of late SEP 2025, UK ministers again fought the plans over concerns of China’s potential to breach the fiber optic cables. Advocates for this so-called ‘Mega-Embassy’ claim it would be easier to surveil one large embassy, and the Security Service (MI5), the UK’s domestic counterintelligence and security agency, approved the plans with confidence that any security risks were reasonably manageable. However, this optimism is not widely shared, as several opposition politicians, including Kemi Badenoch, leader of the UK’s Conservative Party, claim this will be giving China an espionage

center in central London. Groups of Chinese dissenters who fled to the UK also share this view and have remarked on their physical safety being compromised by this facility.

We can assess high confidence that it is highly likely China will conduct espionage and covert action operating out of this ‘Mega-Embassy’ within the UK, should it be built. We can also assess with high confidence that it is likely vocal dissenters of both China and the UK will continue to oppose this new embassy in the interests of their personal and national security.

# Poland Arrests Defense Official for Suspected Russian Espionage

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03 FEB, an official of the Polish Ministry of National Defense was arrested for suspected collaboration with the intelligence services of both Russia and Belarus. The official worked for the Ministry's division of strategy and planning since the 1990s and, if convicted of treason, may face up to life in prison. The operation was a result of a lengthy investigation conducted by the Polish Military Counterintelligence Service (SKW).

Due to the sensitivity of the relevant information, it is still unconfirmed

precisely what information the suspect was able to collect, and for how long.

This arrest highlights the rise in the number of Polish citizens among those being apprehended for aiding Russian and Belarusian intelligence, reflecting a larger effort by Russia to infiltrate Polish government and military facilities. Russia's focus on Poland is largely driven by its role in providing a direct transit route for Western military aid into Ukraine, leading Poland to be at the forefront of Russian espionage and sabotage operations.

We can assess with high confidence it is likely that the number of Polish

nationals charged with foreign espionage will continue to rise as Russia continues to place pressure on nations providing support to Ukraine. We can also assess with high confidence it is likely Russia will continue to recruit foreign nationals to carry out espionage and sabotage operations within Poland to attempt to disrupt foreign military support to Ukraine.



# Germany Expands Large-Scale Strike Drone Procurement

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On 27 JAN, the *Bundeswehr* (German military) entered contracts with three arms companies to supply strike drones in efforts to modernize its forces. These companies are Rheinmetall and two startups, STARK and HELSING. With a recent reconsideration of advancements in warfare after the drone-reliant combat in Ukraine, this is the first time the *Bundeswehr* has ordered a new line of strike drones.

With the increased budget of \$128 billion allocated to the *Bundeswehr*,

these drone contracts are part of a series of large purchases made since the start of 2026, after several years of criticism for cutbacks. These purchases include the recent STARK Virtus strike drone, which is planned to be deployed to the 45<sup>th</sup> armored brigade stationed in Lithuania to support Europe's eastern flank. This \$360 million contract, set to begin in late February, has been reported to have a 90% target effectiveness by the *Bundeswehr* in testing. Its main advantage is the STARK Minerva AI capability of independently identifying and selecting targets that lack electronic signals.

We can assess with high confidence that it is likely that the *Bundeswehr* will continue to invest in drone capabilities in the wake of changes in warfare doctrine. We can also assess with moderate confidence that it is likely that companies in other European nations will adopt similar stances to modernize drone capability.



## Weekly Intelligence Brief

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