

Weekly Intelligence Brief

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Former Head of German Intelligence Arrested for Espionage

Bennett Boulware
Analyst | Europe Desk

On 06 OCT, August Hanning, former director of Germany's foreign intelligence agency, the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), was arrested and accused of espionage and treason. A former aide to Hanning, known publicly only as Manfred D., has also been arrested.

The federal prosecutor's office claims after Hanning left the BND, Manfred, who remained with the BND as chief of staff, continued to send Hanning 2,000 intelligence documents, mostly in the form of weekly intelligence briefs, over the course of 12 years until JUN 2022,

in return for payment. Prosecutors claim Hanning utilized these documents for private consulting as well as an incident of preparing documents for use by a foreign intelligence agency. An investigation by German news magazine *Der Spiegel* claims the foreign intelligence agency Hanning prepared documents for was Azerbaijan, while the government of Azerbaijan has denied the report. Furthermore, Leon Kruse, a lawyer for Hanning, disputes the charges, maintaining his client's innocence.

The BND has a history of scandals, with noteworthy events occurring in 1963, 2014, and 2022. Most notably, in 2014

a man identified only as Markus R. was found guilty of spying for the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and sentenced to eight years in prison for passing more than 200 documents to the American agency.

Although the BND has maintained a generally positive reputation despite its past scandals, an event of this magnitude, particularly from such a high level official within the German intelligence agency may affect its credibility. Therefore, we assess with moderate confidence that it is likely the BND's reputation may be affected through a reduction of cooperation with its allies.

Puntland Officials Reveal Crew Member Deaths in Piracy Attack

Bryce Bosley

Analyst | Africa Desk

On 30 SEP, authorities in Puntland, a semi-autonomous region of Somalia, announced that Somali pirates killed five crew members aboard a Palau-flagged oil tanker during a piracy attack approximately 30 miles off the Somali coast. The vessel, *MT Honour 25*, was carrying 18,500 barrels of oil in transit to Mogadishu.

Of the five crew members killed, three were Pakistani, one was Indian, and one was from Myanmar. Four others, three Pakistanis and one Indian, were injured in the attack. The Indian Embassy in Kenya and Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar released separate statements

expressing sorrow for the situation and pledging cooperation with international partners to combat piracy. The pirates killed the crew members before the Puntland Maritime Police Force was able to free the ship and capture 16 pirates on 30 SEP. These deaths come five months after the vessel was initially taken hostage on 21 APR. The incident marks the first known account of deliberate killings on board a vessel at the hands of Somali pirates in the Indian Ocean since 2011.

Somali piracy has seen a resurgence since 2023, which has threatened the stability of critical shipping channels through the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden. Somali pirates are acting

amidst widespread insecurity in the Middle East caused by the Houthis and the war in Iran, which has exacerbated the security vacuum in the Horn of Africa and the wider region.

We can assess with moderate confidence that it is likely that deadly incidents involving Somali pirates will continue in the coming months, due to mounting insecurity in the region.



The Race between China and The U.S. in Artificial Intelligence

Natalie Baffa

Analyst | Americas Desk

On 29 SEP, United States President Donald Trump announced the creation of the "Super Intelligence Force", an artificial intelligence task force that President Trump said will work to promote Artificial Intelligence (AI) dominance while also protecting U.S. lives and interests. President Trump stated that the task force will ensure that America continues to lead the world in AI. Since the President's announcement, several reports have compared the U.S. and China's approaches to AI, as both governments are seeking to stay ahead of each other in the global competition.

According to the Eurasia Review, China is focused more on integrating AI into industrial efficiency, while the U.S. focuses on intelligence in public-facing applications and cloud software. ABC reports that China is implementing additional laws and guardrails after an AI bot began acting independently and hacked into a database on 08 OCT. Scott Singer, co-director of the China AI Initiative, has since been evaluating potential destructive risks posed by AI. China's People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) allegedly uses AI strike-planning software that is capable of coordinating over 100 tactical units, fighter jets, and drone swarms simultaneously, compressing hours of human labor into minutes.

As the intelligence race continues, we can assess with high confidence that it is likely that China will continue rapidly integrating AI into industrial and educational processes, while the U.S. will continue to focus on sharpening AI reasoning in the areas of coding, science, and autonomous agent behavior. Moreover, the tension between the U.S. and China is likely to grow as AI is further-integrated into Chinese warfare models.



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Editor-in-Chief

Connor Ellinghaus

Associate Editors

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