

04 September 2026

An Analytic Intelligence
Wire Prepared by The
Students of Embry-Riddle
Aeronautical University

Issue 499

Of Eagle Eye Intelligence

Authors

Armaan Needles
Christina Muchow
Riley Callan



04 September 2026

Issue 499

Of Eagle Eye Intelligence

In This Issue

NORTH KOREA: Employment Fraud Scheme Likely to Expand Beyond IT Sector....	1
ARMENIA: Foreign Policy Shift Likely Intended to Rapidly Achieve EU	2
Accession	
TAIWAN: Governmental Disagreements Likely to Widen Capability Gap with	3
China	

NORTH KOREA: Employment Fraud Scheme Likely to Expand Beyond IT Sector

Summary: North Korean fraud networks will likely keep placing operatives in healthcare, sales, and financial roles beyond IT over the next 90 days, evading IT-focused enforcement.

Development: On 31 August, The Hacker News reported that threat actors linked to North Korea have expanded remote employment fraud beyond the IT sector into sales, marketing, and medical professions. Huntress identified three employees at an Australian healthcare company in February as suspected North Korean workers using fraudulent identities. Separately, Huntress found a hardware-based remote-access device on a suspected North Korean hire's computer at a financial services firm in August. Threat intelligence firm Recorded Future's Insikt Group identified a cluster, tracked as PurpleDelta, that applied to more than 1,100 companies across software, staffing, and healthcare sectors in 2024 and 2025, using at least 22 AI-generated personas. DTEX assessed that sanctioned entities then laundered the proceeds. In July, 11 governments, including the United States, Japan, and South Korea, issued a joint advisory urging companies to strengthen identity verification.

Analysis: This diversification will likely continue over the next 90 days as North Korean operators shift away from IT-focused detection, sustaining illicit revenue for Pyongyang's weapons programs, despite expanding multinational enforcement. The pattern of expansion into healthcare, sales, and financial services likely indicates that North Korean handlers are deliberately shifting away from IT hiring pipelines, the primary focus of corporate and government screening. This likely indicates coordinated tradecraft rather than incidental labor-market opportunism, given the simultaneous use of AI-generated personas across sectors. Expansion into healthcare and financial services will probably raise the scheme's counterintelligence and data-security risk beyond the intellectual-property theft tied to IT placements, since these sectors grant access to patient records, financial data, and payment systems. Deepening integration of AI into North Korean tradecraft, including synthetic identity generation, will likely lower the barrier to passing technical and non-technical vetting, complicating detection across the industries the scheme newly targets.

[Armaan Needles]

ARMENIA: Foreign Policy Shift Likely Intended to Rapidly Achieve EU Accession

Summary: Yerevan's foreign policy shift is likely intended to achieve rapid progress towards European Union (EU) accession, before Moscow can dedicate significant resources toward anti-West influence efforts within the country.

Development: On 29 August, Security Council Secretary Alen Simonyan stated that Yerevan would welcome Russian citizens fleeing mobilization, according to *The Armenian Report*. On 28 August, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan stated that Yerevan no longer considers Moscow a strategic partner, according to *Hurriyet Daily News*. Pashinyan also announced that the Yerevan will begin preparing to apply for EU membership and stated that he would be glad if the Collective Security Treaty Organization removed Armenia, according to *EuroNews*. This follows an August 2025 peace deal between Yerevan and Baku, with support from Washington and the EU, according to *EuroNews*. In November 2023, Yerevan joined the Rome Statute, making the country a member of the International Criminal Court (ICC), according to an ICC press release.

Analysis: Yerevan is likely attempting to advance towards EU accession before Moscow can dedicate resources towards influence campaigns in the country. While Moscow has dedicated significant resources to influence campaigns in Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine, it likely does not have the capacity to immediately significantly increase its pressure on Yerevan. Furthermore, Moscow likely does not consider Yerevan a high priority given the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War. Yerevan is likely seeking to achieve rapid progress towards EU integration and gain as much access to the bloc's benefits, including interim economic and security pacts, as possible before Moscow dedicates significant resources towards undermining its accession.

[Christina Muchow]

TAIWAN: Governmental Disagreements Likely to Widen Capability Gap with China

Summary: Significant pushback within Taiwan's opposition-controlled legislature will likely limit the Taiwanese military's capability in the modern battlespace and slow acquisition of combat-capable drones.

Development: On 15 August, Taiwanese lawmakers ended 266 days of debate on the FY2026 spending budget. The spending package, totaling \$942 billion, included a \$2 billion section reserved for domestic drone manufacturing. This carve-out was the target of significant scrutiny from the Kuomintang (KMT), Taiwan's main opposition party, which generally supports economic and political integration with mainland China. On 27 August, Taiwan's opposition-controlled legislature passed a \$7.56 billion drone procurement bill authored by the KMT and Taiwan People's Party (TPP), defeating a competing \$6.6 billion special budget proposed by the Cabinet. The winning bill will draw from the general budget over six years rather than authorizing a special appropriation. The bill names the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) as lead implementing authority, with the Ministry of National Defense (MND) retaining authority only over military procurement, according to the Taipei Times. The KMT bill also sets localization targets, requiring domestically produced components to reach 50% of military-grade drones within two years and 80% within four, according to the Taipei Times. The Taiwanese military currently holds 5,000 combat capable UAVs, according to *Al Jazeera*.

Analysis: MND's drone procurement will likely fall behind its own timeline and requirements, widening Taipei's capability gap compared to Beijing's expanding unmanned systems inventory. Budget cap in the winning bill already sits below MND's stated 2027 spending plan forcing, which will almost certainly force MND to scale back near-term acquisitions or seek supplemental legislative approval. Placing MOEA in the lead implementation role for most of the program, rather than MND, will likely slow fielding as well: an industrial-policy agency optimizes for building a sustainable domestic manufacturing base, which will likely increase long-term defense-industrial capacity but almost certainly harms MND's near-term requirement to field specific reconnaissance and attack platforms on a wartime-relevant timeline.

[Riley Callan]

About GSIS

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's (ERAU) Bachelor of Science in Global Security & Intelligence Studies (GSIS) degree program at our Prescott Campus blends both academic and professional studies to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become future leaders in intelligence, security, and law enforcement. The program provides students with a sound foundation in the liberal arts, including international relations, foreign languages and cultures, international law, foreign policy, political and military history, and other essential topics.

About EE

Eagle Eye Intelligence (EE) is an intelligence and research organization led by the students of the GSIS program at ERAU in Prescott, Arizona.

Dr. Philip E. Jones founded EE and Embry-Riddle's GSIS program in 2002, following a career with the Central Intelligence Agency and consulting work in international development and global security. Currently, Professor Dale R. Avery, a former career intelligence analyst, serves as EE's faculty advisor.

EE strives to provide actionable intelligence and analysis to its customers during the academic year. We are driven by a number of goals – continuous development, nonpartisanship, interdisciplinary studies, global awareness, and professionalism.

EE does not cite sources in the final publication; however, we log every source we use in our research and are happy to share them upon request. The official EE Source Database is available on our website's resources page for a general overview of our sourcing methods.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors, and do not represent the position Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University or the College of Business, Security, and Intelligence.

Christina Muchow, a Senior in the GSIS program, currently serves as EE's Editor in Chief. For questions or comments, contact the team at editorsee@gmail.com or Professor Avery at 928.777.4708. If you use material from this publication, you should attribute: Eagle Eye Intelligence Edition 499, a publication created by students at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona.



© 2020 by Eagle Eye Intelligence. All rights reserved.

Eagle Eye Intelligence
3700 Willow Creek Rd.
Prescott, AZ 86301 eagleeyeintel.com