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Growth

RUSSIA: Expanding Infrastructure Strikes Likely to Disrupt Ukraine's Economy

Summary: The strikes on Kyiv's northern and southern bridges likely indicate that Moscow is broadening its targeting of Ukrainian critical infrastructure, following attacks on digital and energy infrastructure that disrupted services supporting economic activity.

Development: On 1-2 October, Moscow launched multiple drone strikes against the southern bridge, both overnight and during daylight hours. The strikes caused significant damage and forced a complete shutdown of movement across the bridge, causing severe commuter tailbacks between the city's banks, according to the *Kyiv Post*. On 3 October, a jet-powered attack drone struck the northern bridge, damaging the roadway and overhead trolley power cables, and blocked traffic from the left bank to the right bank, leading to major transport rerouting. On 4 October, another strike hit the northern bridge during German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's visit to Kyiv, where Merz announced a new aid package worth more than \$1.5 billion, according to *The Columbian*. The strike injured two people, ruptured a heating main, and disrupted city transit, according to *BBC News*. These attacks followed September strikes against digital, telecommunications, and energy infrastructure that disrupted services supporting Ukraine's civilian and economic activity

Analysis: The recent strikes against Kyiv's northern and southern bridges, following weeks of attacks against data centers, telecommunications infrastructure, and energy infrastructure, likely indicate that Moscow is broadening its targeting of critical infrastructure that supports the Ukrainian economy. Repeated disruptions to transportation, communications, financial services, and energy infrastructure will likely increase economic costs by limiting the movement of people and goods, disrupting business operations, and increasing the resources required to repair damaged infrastructure. Continued attacks on transportation infrastructure will likely also increase public frustration by creating prolonged traffic congestion, restricting movement between Kyiv's eastern and western banks, and disrupting access to employment and essential services. Moscow's continued attacks despite increased European military and financial support may indicate an effort to increase the economic burden on Kyiv and complicate its ability to sustain the war effort.

[Hunter Varin]

SOUTH KOREA: Soldier Transfer Will Likely Increase Political Tensions with Kyiv

Summary: Kyiv's announcement of the transfer of two North Korean soldiers to South Korea will likely create tension between Seoul and Kyiv. Seoul will likely cease humanitarian and financial aid until Kyiv releases an apology and acknowledges their agreement.

Development: On 2 October, President Lee Jae Myung of South Korea issued a warning to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, threatening diplomatic escalation unless Kyiv issues an apology and acknowledgment about the confidentiality agreement they had, according to *Modern Diplomacy*. Seoul has provided humanitarian and financial assistance to Kyiv throughout Russia-Ukraine War. On 24 September, Zelensky addressed the United Nations and disclosed the transfer of two captured North Korean soldiers to South Korea, according to Reuters. Seoul quickly responded, asking why Kyiv disclosed the transfer information to the public since both sides agreed to keep the event confidential, according to AP News. However, Kyiv has stated that it had no prior knowledge of the confidentiality agreement and described the announcement as a diplomatic misunderstanding, according to BBC.

Analysis: If Kyiv does not issue an apology acknowledging the agreement, Seoul will likely stop all humanitarian and financial aid to Kyiv. Political tensions between Seoul and Kyiv will likely increase. Tension between the two will likely decrease communications that could disrupt intelligence sharing on Pyongyang and Moscow. As the conflict continues, Seoul's willingness to help Kyiv will likely decrease, likely refusing future support. The announcement of the transfer will almost certainly increase instability between Seoul and Pyongyang. In retaliation, Pyongyang will likely increase missile test launches to display their weapon capabilities. If instability continues to grow on the Korean Peninsula, more conflicts will likely occur on the border, or Pyongyang could conduct additional missile launches.

[McKenzie Koliba]

RUSSIA: Likely Testing Estonia and NATO Allies

Summary: Moscow is continuing to apply political and military pressure in Tallinn. Moscow is likely testing Tallinn and its NATO allies' willingness to respond without direct military confrontation.

Development: On 26 September, NATO Air Chief Marshal John Stringer stated NATO would strike a target on another country's territory if needed to defend its members, according to *ERR News*. On 25 September, Estonian Defense Readiness Department Head Gert Kaju stated that due to Moscow's war of aggression in Kyiv, more drones and cruise missiles have entered neighboring countries, according to *ERR News*. Kaju also stated that drones have been shot down in Tallinn. Kaju also argued that Moscow is increasing pressure on nations that support Kyiv, according to *ERR News*. On 25 September, President Vladimir Putin denied preparing for hostilities with Europe; however, he claimed that the rights of Russian speakers are being violated in European countries and that Moscow will respond accordingly, according to the *Kyiv Post*. Putin also responded to statements made by Tallinn defense officials concerning hostilities, according to the *Kyiv Post*.

Analysis: Moscow is likely testing Tallinn and its NATO allies' willingness to respond to political and military pressure. By pressuring countries supporting Kyiv, Moscow is likely seeking to influence Tallinn and its NATO allies while avoiding direct military confrontation. Claims of mistreatment of Russian speaking minorities in European regions likely act as justification for Moscow's pressure. However, if Moscow's military aggressiveness towards Tallinn increases, NATO may respond with military force to defend Tallinn.

[Isabella Cantwell]

VIETNAM: Semiconductor Cooperation with Tokyo Likely Advances Industrial Growth

Summary: Tokyo expanded semiconductor collaboration with Hanoi, which likely supports Hanoi's efforts to grow its domestic manufacturing capacity. Tokyo's involvement will likely position Hanoi as a viable partner for diversifying supply chains.

Development: On 20 September, Hanoi and Tokyo expanded cooperation in the semiconductor industry during the Vietnam-Japan Semiconductor Symposium (VJSS-2026). The event increased the number of joint research groups and strengthened coordination between academic institutions and industry, according to *VietnamPlus*. Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Science and Technology Le Xuan Dinh emphasized the importance of semiconductors for technological self-reliance and industrial security, according to *Vietnam*. Although Hanoi aims to train more than 50,000 semiconductor professionals by 2030, shortages in training infrastructure remain, according to *Vietnam News*. Dinh proposed leveraging Japan's technology and experience alongside Vietnam's younger and larger workforce to address these gaps.

Analysis: Tokyo's decision to invest in and develop semiconductor capabilities with Hanoi will likely position Vietnam as a viable alternative for diversifying critical technology supply chains. Tokyo's comprehensive engagement with Hanoi almost certainly reflects a depth of cooperation it has not pursued as broadly with other regional partners. This level of commitment likely strengthens Hanoi's ability to expand its semiconductor capabilities, likely further reinforcing Vietnam's viability as an alternative in regional supply-chain diversification. The cooperation also aligns with Hanoi's broader effort to build greater economic and industrial independence, suggesting that, over time, Vietnam will likely become a reliable partner for technology production. Hanoi's ability to transform Tokyo's support into a self-sustained, functional industry will likely shape both countries' position in regional semiconductor production as well as manufacturing diversification.

[Kaden Vu]

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.

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Christina Muchow, a Senior in the GSIS program, currently serves as EE's Editor in Chief. For questions or comments, contact the team at pregleye@erau.edu or Professor Avery at 928.777.4708. If you use material from this publication, you should attribute: Eagle Eye Intelligence Edition 503, a publication created by students at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona.



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