

China Telecom cuts China Unicom fiber optic cable

Article Overview

China has developed advanced undersea cable-cutting technology, and recent incidents suggest Chinese vessels may have intentionally disrupted fiber optic cables, raising global security concerns.

Overview of the Incident

Recent reports indicate that Chinese state-linked entities, including vessels associated with China Telecom and other state-owned carriers, have been involved in activities that damaged or cut undersea fiber optic cables. Notably, ships such as the Shunxing-39 and Haiyang Dizhi 2 have been linked to cable disruptions near Taiwan and in other strategic maritime regions . These incidents are part of a broader pattern of suspected sabotage targeting critical subsea communications infrastructure .

Technology and Capabilities

China has unveiled deep-sea tools capable of severing cables at depths exceeding 4,000 meters (13,000 feet), far beyond the operational range of most existing infrastructure . These devices use diamond-coated grinding wheels powered by electro-hydrostatic actuators, often deployed via remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) from specialized ships equipped with cranes, fiber optic winches, and helicopter platforms . While officially presented as civilian salvage or seabed mining tools, their capability to disrupt global communications has significant strategic implications .

Strategic and Geopolitical Context

Undersea cables carry over 99% of global digital traffic, including internet communications, financial transactions, and military coordination . The targeting of these cables aligns with China's "gray zone" tactics, which exploit ambiguity between peace and conflict to gain asymmetric advantages. By using commercial vessels under flags of convenience, China can obscure its involvement while demonstrating the ability to influence critical infrastructure . Similar incidents have been reported in the Baltic Sea and the Taiwan Strait, suggesting a growing pattern of strategic cable interference .

Implications

- o Global Communications: Disruptions to fiber optic cables can slow or sever internet connectivity between regions, affecting commerce, finance, and data exchange .
- o Security Concerns: The dual-use nature of cable-cutting technology raises alarms about potential military applications and cyber-physical vulnerabilities .
- o Geopolitical Tensions: These actions heighten tensions in the Asia-Pacific, particularly around Taiwan, and

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signal China's capability to project influence over critical infrastructure without direct military engagement .

Conclusion

The cutting of undersea fiber optic cables by Chinese-linked vessels, potentially involving China Telecom, reflects a sophisticated combination of technological capability and strategic intent. It underscores the vulnerability of global communications infrastructure and highlights the increasing role of gray zone tactics in modern geopolitical competition . Safeguarding these networks is becoming a critical priority for governments and private operators worldwide.

GAO:Creating a Green and Agile Quality All Optical Network--One hop direct, 10 times energy efficiency improvement RRL: Creating

China Unicom Group, one of the country's largest telecommunications operators, will build Cambodia's first state

With China Unicom now humming along and adding hundreds of thousands of new FTTR subscribers, China Telecom

According to the Reuters report, if the FCC removes the three Chinese telecoms companies - China Mobile, China

Further, that growth comes from just a handful of major regional branches of China Mobile and China Unicom. China

China Telecom was caught flat-footed by its rival, China Unicom, and is now aggressively trying to catch up before

Additionally, it will extend further to encompass Vietnam, Cambodia, and Indonesia. China Unicom boasts a network

The China-led EMA project is intended to directly rival another cable currently being constructed by US firm SubCom

Recently, the first new global carrier "Large Effective Area Fiber" (LEAF) (ITU-T standard code G.654.E) fibre cable

With enough undersea fiber to stretch to the moon and back -- twice -- the US and China are racing not just to

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protect

I know this post is about China unicom. but China telecom has problem too. For nearly all IPs from LA that are not

The Federal Communications Commission is weighing a proposal that would bar US operators from interconnecting

The nearly 3,000-kilometer submarine optical fiber cable will run from Hong Kong to Sihanoukville in southern

China Unicom has become the latest Chinese telecoms giant to be banned from the US over "significant" national

Hengtong, in collaboration with China Unicom, has successfully deployed and begun operating China Unicom's first

Chinese state-owned telecom firms are developing a \$500 million undersea fiber-optic internet cable network that

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