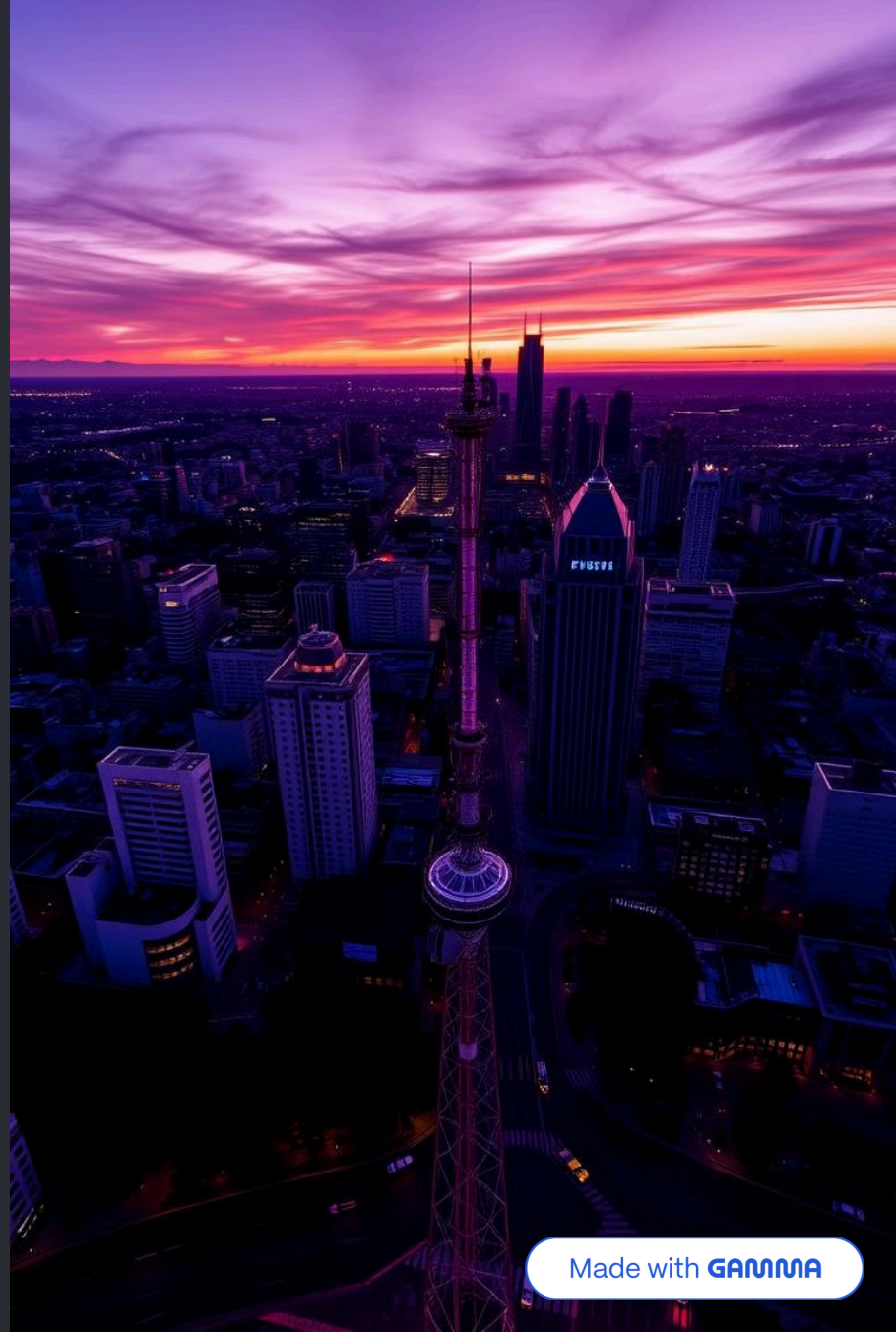
OSINT Research: Increase in Military Radio Frequency Interceptions in Argentina in 2023

The goal is to determine the reasons for the sharp increase in cases of interception of military radio frequencies in Argentina in 2023 and whether this is due to the activities of private companies, foreign intelligence agencies, and hacker groups.



Methodology

Tools: Google Dorks, Google Search, Bing Search, Yahoo Search, Google Earth.

Data collected from: Clearnet, Google Earth.

Google Dorks:

- "investigacion de LeoLabc Argentina";
- "investigacion de China Deep Space Network Station Argentina"

Geographical overview

Description of the location :

Argentina is located in the southern part of South America. It borders Chile to the west, Bolivia and Paraguay to the north and Brazil, Uruguay, and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. The southern part stretches to Tierra del Fuego, near Antarctica.

Argentina's geopolitical importance is due to the following factors:

- a large territory (the second largest in South America after Brazil) rich in natural resources;
- control over the southern part of the continent, including proximity to the Antarctic;
- The port of Buenos Aires is one of the key trade hubs in the region.

Objective factors that could have contributed to the increase in cases of interception of military radio frequencies include:

- Presidential elections in the country in 2023 (change of course from the far left to the far right);
- The launch of the LeoLabs AGSR radar station (Britain, USA) in test mode;
- The close cooperation of the administration of former President Fernandez with China, which resulted in the establishment of a space observation facility in Argentina - the China Deep Space Network Station in Neuquen, which representatives of Chinese companies have access to use;
- In 2023, the PRC began work on a project - the 40-meter China-Argentina Radio Telescope (CART) at the Felix Aguilar Observatory in San Juan.

Security and defense stance

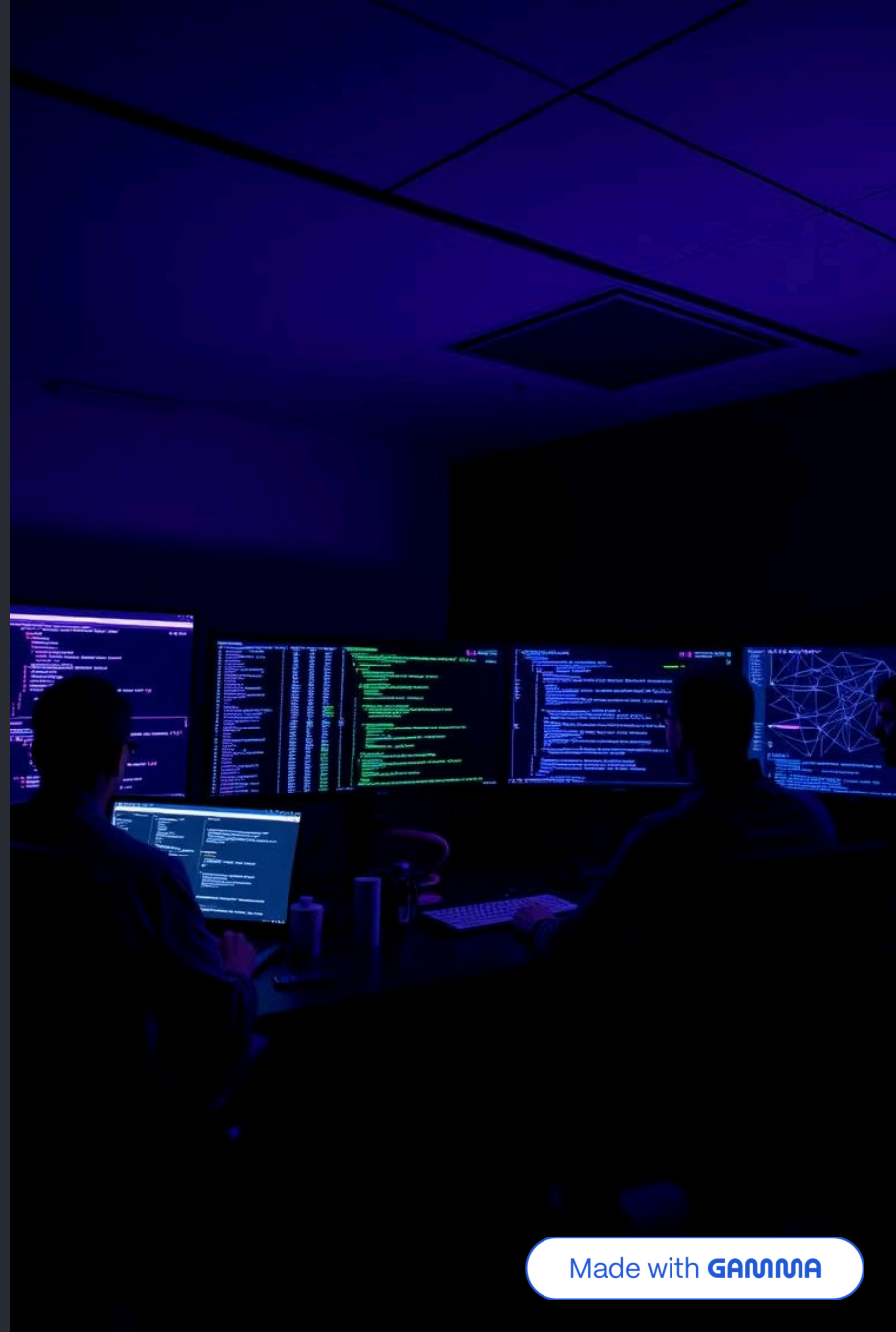
Objects:

(34.6037°S, 58.3816°W) - «Plaza de la Republica».

The following objects are located at a distance of 1 to 6 kilometers from Plaza de la Republica:

- Ministry of Defense of Argentina (Edificio Libertador) -1.5 km, San Nicolas district.
- Presidential Palace (Casa Rosada) -1 km., Plaza de Mayo area.
- The naval base in Puerto Madero – 2-3 kilometers away.
- Jorge Newbery Airport (Aeroparque Jorge Newbery) – 6 km., used by civil and military aviation.

They all use military radio frequencies to coordinate and interact with each other.



Security and defense stance

Interception capabilities:

- Tierra del Fuego province (Tierra del Fuego), Tolhuin, El Relincho - LeoLabs AGSR radar station (54°27'23.4"S 67°13'00.1"W);
- Neuquén Province (Neuquén), Patagonia - an object for space observation China Deep Space Network Station (Espacio Lejano Station) (38°11'35"S 70°08'51"W);
- San Juan Province - Felix Aguilar Observatory, 40-meter Sino-Argentine radio telescope (CART) (31°48'08.3"S 69°19'35.3"W).

Assessment of vulnerability:

Military radio frequencies in the bands:

- 2-30 MHz (HF);
- 30-300 MHz (UHF);
- 225-400 MHz (UHF);
- 118-137 MHz (VHF).

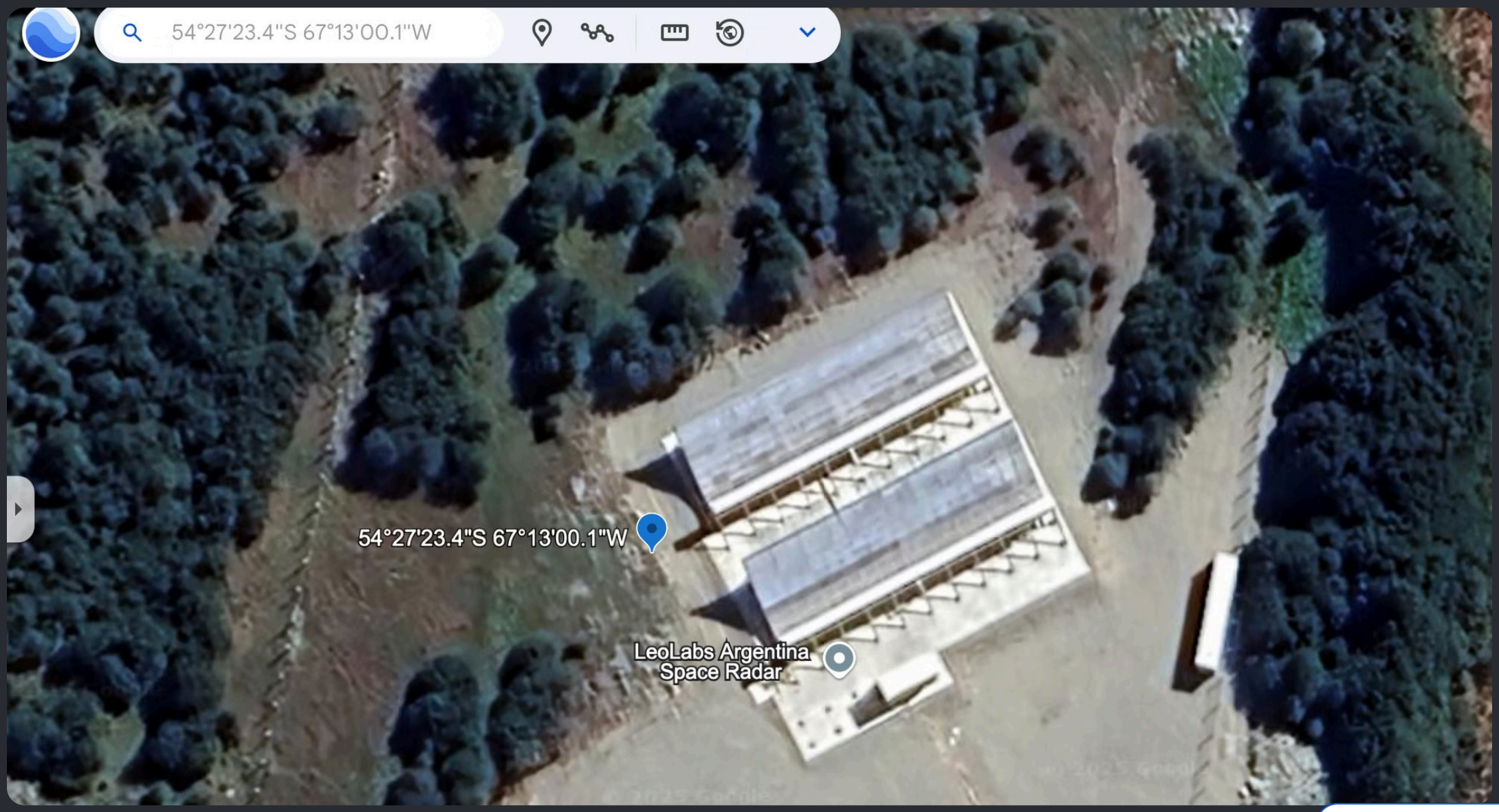
Possible Causes: Private company LeoLabs

The LeoLabs AGSR radar station (UK, USA) is headquartered in California (USA). It has close relations with the non-profit research institute SRI International, which receives funding from US government agencies. LeoLabs' existing radar stations are part of the Five Eyes electronic signals and communications intelligence group.

Phased Array Radar allows electronic scanning of space without mechanical rotation of the antenna.

It operates in the S-band (frequencies of approximately 2-4 GHz), which provides high resolution and resistance to atmospheric interference.

The key service is the provision of information for the early warning system and the monitoring of space activities in other countries.

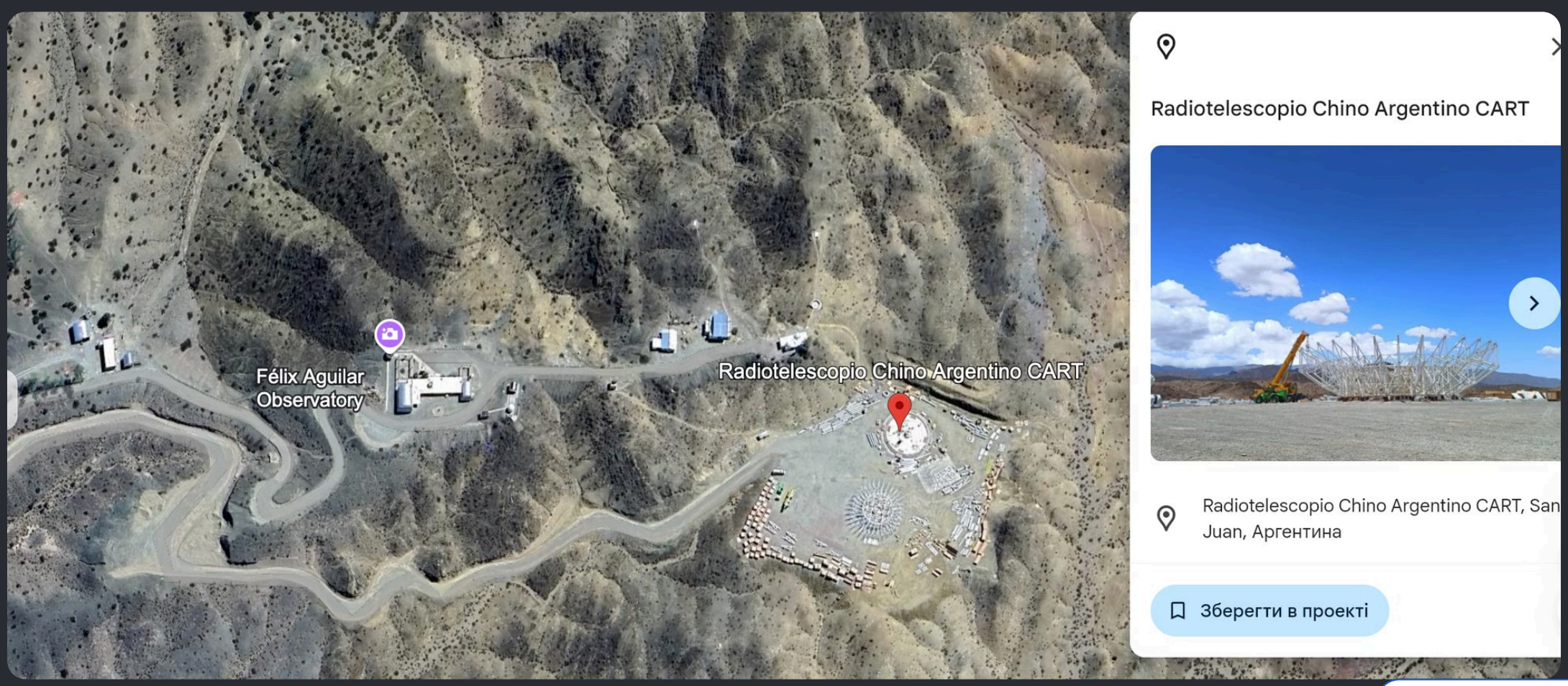


Possible Causes: CNSA

The Chinese Deep Space Observation Station in Neuquén is operated by the China National Space Administration (CNSA) and is part of the Strategic Support Force of the People's Liberation Army. It was commissioned in 2017 as part of an agreement between China and Argentina signed in 2012 under the presidency of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner.

A 35-meter antenna capable of operating in several frequency bands (including the X-band).

The CART (Complejo Astronómico El Leoncito Radio Telescope) consists of several antennas, including two parabolic antennas with a diameter of 30 meters each, which can operate independently or in interferometry mode to increase resolution.



Conclusions

The increase in the number of cases of interception of military radio frequencies may be caused by the use of private companies in China and the United Kingdom (USA) of their radio stations, which obviously have a dual purpose - the ability to scan and intercept military radio frequencies, even in passive mode, to obtain operational information that could allow making predictions about future decisions of the new leadership of the country, the choice of the vector of cooperation between China and the United States, and its ambitions for Antarctica and the South Atlantic.

Results

Security:

Conducting audits at the space research facility to determine the details of actual use.

Further use subject to the presence of Argentine representatives in the research teams.

Strategic risks:

- In the event of geopolitical tensions that may arise from the confrontation between the United States and China, Argentina may be drawn into this conflict because it cooperates with China in the space sphere and China's use of facilities built in Argentina for military purposes (from satellite tracking to the movement of military units, land, sea, and air equipment). All of these space surveillance assets would be targeted because of their dual purpose in the event of a global military confrontation.
- Territorial disputes between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), which already led to a military confrontation between the countries in 1982. The distance from them to the Tierra del Fuego provinces is 500 km.

Recommendations:

Try to predict the consequences for national security at the planning stage of a proposed project, and involve relevant government agencies and institutions in analyzing the consequences and benefits. Be guided by national interests, not populist slogans.