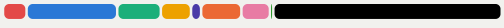
Space Watch

2026-W43 · 19 Oct – 25 Oct 2026
Makani Lab · Space Watch
Orbital Warfare · SATCOM · SDA · PNT · Satellite Control · Missile Warning · ISR · EW

BLUF — Russia's Kosmos 2612 shadowed U.S.-registered ICEYE-X36 from ~500 m in the first non-consensual LEO rendezvous of two active satellites; the U.S. called it consistent with on-orbit weapons operations. PRC put seven Yaogan and nine Guowang satellites up in 30 h and disclosed an SSBN ICBM test. SSC activated commercial SDA surge. Attention item: commercial ISR and SATCOM the theater relies on is now a demonstrated RPO target.

LAST 7 DAYS BY MISSION AREA · 297 ITEMS



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RISING TERMS · 7D VS PRIOR

Ukraine		71 (+39.3)
Starlink		56 (+17.3)
commercial		52 (+15.2)
Russia		29 (+13.8)

BY THE NUMBERS · 7D

Orbital launches 8 (4 PRC, 2 US, 0 failed) · max Kp 4.67
GPS NANUs 6 (0 unusable) · reentries 17 (15 payloads)
Conjunctions < 1 km, next 7 d: 9,233 (6936 active pairs)
Space-Track emergency-reportable CDMs 28, TIP reentries 14 (0 high-interest)

COUNTERSPACE SPOTLIGHT — RUSSIAN AEROSPACE FORCES (VKS) · Russia (VKS Space Forces) · Russian Space Forces (KV), 15th Aerospace Forces Army

WHY NOW

Kosmos 2612 shadowed ICEYE-X36 at ~500 m, which McDowell calls the first LEO rendezvous of two active satellites without consent; the U.S. raised it at the UN on 21 Oct.

MENTIONS, 30D · PACOM RELEVANCE



6 this week. The same RPO against commercial SAR or Starshield over the Pacific would degrade INDOPACOM imagery and comms.

CAPABILITIES / TTPS

- LEO RPO: Kosmos 2612 closed from 200+ mi to ~500 m of ICEYE-X36 and held, 15-18 Oct
- Re-approach: still at X36's altitude ~250 mi behind on 21 Oct (Integrity ISR via Defense News)
- DA-ASAT: Nudol destroyed Kosmos 1408 in LEO, Nov 2021, creating 1,500+ tracked debris

IMPLICATIONS

- Commercial ISR the joint force buys is a declared Russian target and now within RPO reach in LEO.
- No norm defines a hostile approach; SDA must flag RPO early enough for operators to respond.

Orbital Warfare

Counterspace threats and space superiority: ASAT tests and weapons, co-orbital a

‘The West can’t stop me’: Space wars heat up as Russia tails a Ukraine-linked US satellite

Defense News (Space) · 2026-10-23

Kosmos 2612 held ~500 m from ICEYE-X36 through 17 Oct, then pulled back to ~250 mi behind it, per LeoLabs and Integrity ISR. U.S. Under Sec. DiNanno called it consistent with on-orbit weapons ops (Defense News).

So what: First non-consensual active-satellite rendezvous in LEO, against a commercial ISR provider.

Consider: Consider requesting 18 SDS characterization of Kosmos 2612 and any ICEYE-X37 approach.

SPACECOM · EUCOM · Rendezvous & proximity · Counterspace threat · Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) · JCO / commercial SDA

Missile Warning

Missile warning and tracking from space and ground: SBIRS and Next-Gen OPIR, res

China Says Advanced Nuclear Sub Was Used to Test-Fire ICBM

Bloomberg (Politics) · via TJFSCC Daily · 2026-10-18

China said it used its most advanced nuclear submarines to test-fire an ICBM in the Pacific earlier this year (Bloomberg); per Japan Times, its only known Pacific ICBM tests before July were land-based.

So what: Sea-launched ICBMs from Pacific patrol areas widen the launch box the MW layer must cover.

Consider: Be aware PLAN SSBN launches may be disclosed late; consider reviewing MW reporting for sea launches.

PACOM · STRATCOM · Missile launches & tests · Nuclear & NC3 · SBIRS / Next-Gen OPIR

SATCOM

Military and commercial satellite communications: WGS, MUOS, AEHF/ESS, protected

Four Democratic Senators Ask SpaceX for Answers on Starshield Restrictions

Via Satellite · 2026-10-20

Four senators asked SpaceX by 2 Nov who ordered Ukraine's Starshield speed limit (Via Satellite). Trump said access was restored 22 Oct (BBC); SCMP says analysts call it a warning for Taiwan.

So what: Commercial LEO SATCOM can be throttled by policy or vendor decision without notice.

Consider: Consider confirming who holds shut-off authority for each commercial SATCOM path the theater uses.

Space Domain Awareness

Knowing what is on orbit and what the environment is doing: space surveillance a

SSC Awards CASR Agreements to establish Commercial SDA Surge Capability

Space Systems Command · 2026-10-22

SSC awarded six CASR agreements for commercial SDA surge: Anduril, InTrack, Slingshot, LeoLabs, EOS (Australia), NorthStar (Canada) (A&SF). Denial and loss-compensation terms remain open (Breaking Defense).

So what: Commercial SDA surge is now on contract, including an Australian sensor provider.

Consider: Consider how CASR SDA surge would be requested for a Pacific RPO or breakup event.

SPACECOM · Commercial integration · Acquisition & contracts · JCO / commercial SDA

A Chinese rocket deorbited over Minnesota and left this in a farmer's cornfield

Ars Technica (Space) · 2026-10-19

Debris found in a Minnesota cornfield on 14 Oct points to a Chinese Zhuque-2E rocket (Ars Technica). Indonesia is probing a suspected Chinese rocket fragment found in Borneo on 19 Oct (Japan Times).

So what: Uncontrolled PRC upper-stage reentries are reaching land, including in the AOR.

Consider: Be aware partner nations may ask SPACEPAC about PRC debris; reentry data comes from 18 SDS.

NORTHCOM · PACOM · Debris & reentry · CASC / CASIC (PRC state industry)

ISR

Space-based intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance: tactical ISR from spa

China launches highly retrograde Yaogan-50 spy satellite, Long March 4B lofts six further Yaogan spacecraft

SpaceNews · 2026-10-23

PRC launched Yaogan 50-03 to a highly retrograde orbit on a Long March 6A from Taiyuan, then six Yaogan 53/56 satellites on a Long March 4B from Jiuquan on 23 Oct (SpaceNews; LL2).

So what: Seven new PLA ISR satellites in a day add revisit over the first island chain.

Consider: Consider updating PRC overhead-revisit estimates for Guam and Japan with the new Yaogan sats.

PACOM · Launch · Yaogan / PLA ISR constellations

Electronic Warfare

Space electromagnetic warfare: Counter Communications System and Meadowlands, Bo

Space Force plans wider global deployment of satellite jammers

SpaceNews · 2026-10-18

A Space Force RFI expects up to 56 Meadowlands jammers dispersed worldwide (DefenseScoop). SpaceNews reports the service plans wider global jammer deployment and wants more depth in its jamming arsenal.

So what: More counter-SATCOM systems and wider basing could add theater EW options.

Consider: Consider how Meadowlands basing and requests would work for INDOPACOM.

SPACECOM · Counterspace threat · Acquisition & contracts · CCS / Meadowlands

Space Enterprise

The service and the enterprise behind the mission areas: force design and organi

Space Force shifts missile-warning, cislunar missions from Vulcan to Falcon Heavy

SpaceNews · 2026-10-24

The Space Force moved missile-warning and cislunar missions from Vulcan to Falcon Heavy (SpaceNews). Six Vulcan missions have flown on SpaceX since April as ULA investigates an anomaly (Inside Defense).

So what: NSSL now leans on one provider; a SpaceX stand-down would delay MW launches.

Consider: Be aware MW and GPS replenishment dates may shift with the NSSL reshuffle.

SPACECOM · Launch · Acquisition & contracts · NSSL / launch programs

Space Force aims to beef up guardian presence for Centcom and other combatant commands

DefenseScoop · 2026-10-20

CSO Gen. Schiess called for Guardians at combatant commands 'at scale' and for 'operating on-orbit weapons' (DefenseScoop). SPACEFOR-CENT expects fivefold growth in about three years (A&SF).

So what: Component growth is now service policy; SPACEPAC billets compete with CENTCOM.

Consider: Consider reviewing SPACEPAC manning requests against the CSO's at-scale direction.

CENTCOM · SPACECOM · Organization & people · CCS / Meadowlands

Nothing significant this week: PNT / Navwar · Satellite Control

WATCH LIST

- Kosmos 2612: Integrity ISR says Russia could approach ICEYE-X37 within weeks; watch for a new rendezvous.
- GPS PRN18 outage 29 Oct 2100Z-30 Oct 0900Z (NANU 2026097); ISRO NVS-03 NET 30 Oct; Long March 12A NET 31 Oct.
- SOCRATES: STPSAT-7 vs STARLINK-32468, 35 m, Pc 0.08, TCA 29 Oct 0352Z; screening only, not 18 SDS.

RECOMMENDATIONS (FOR AWARENESS)

- Consider requesting 18 SDS characterization of Kosmos 2612 and any approach to ICEYE-X37 before briefing it.
- Consider confirming fallback SATCOM paths and shut-off authority for each commercial LEO service the theater uses.
- Be aware PRC added 7 Yaogan and 9 Guowang sats 23-25 Oct; recommend updating overhead-revisit planning.