

Two optical cables between China and Russia

Article Overview

China has massively increased exports of fiber-optic cables to Russia, supplying hundreds of thousands of miles primarily for military and dual-use applications.

Scale of Exports

In 2025, China dramatically ramped up shipments of fiber-optic cables to Russia. In August alone, Russia received 328,000 miles (over 527,000 km) of fiber-optic cable, compared to just 72 miles sent to Ukraine during the same period, highlighting a stark disparity in supply . Earlier months also saw record shipments, with 119,000 miles in May and 130,000 miles in June . These cables are largely used in fiber-optic-controlled drones, which are resistant to electronic jamming and interception.

Purpose and Applications

The exported cables are primarily dual-use components. While officially civilian, they are heavily utilized in military applications, particularly for FPV (first-person view) drones. These drones operate via ultra-thin glass cables, allowing operators to control them over distances of up to 12-15 miles without relying on radio signals, making them immune to electronic warfare . This capability has given Russian forces a tactical advantage in Ukraine, enabling strikes on command centers, logistics lines, and jamming equipment behind front lines .

Strategic and Geopolitical Context...



Article Content

Jun 06, 2026

Submarine Cable Map

TeleGeography's comprehensive and regularly updated interactive map of the world's major submarine cable systems

Feb 23, 2026

WP: China fuels Russia's drone surge with fiber-optic exports

Despite official claims of neutrality, Chinese shipments of fibre-optic cables and lithium-ion batteries to Russia surged

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Undersea Fiber-Optic Cables Need Stronger Defenses Against Russia ...

Ever since the US Navy slashed telegraph links between Spain and Cuba during the Spanish-American War, countries

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Chinese Components for Russian Fiber-Optic Drones

This summer, China significantly increased its exports to Russia of fiber-optic cables and

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In 2012 GCHQ, Britain's signals-intelligence service, had tapped more than 200 fibre-optic cables carrying phone and

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Mapping China-Russia Undersea Cable Routes

Undersea cable routes form the primary infrastructure for global telecommunications, enabling data transmission

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WP: China sent Ukraine just 72 miles of fiber-optic drone cable—but ...

China has dramatically increased its shipments of fiber-optic cable and lithium-ion batteries to Russia, enabling a

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January 29, 2025 China, Russia and Undersea Cable Vulnerability ...

The instinctive perception is that the primary threat to the cable network lies in direct attack on its physical structures. However, the

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U.S. and China wage war beneath the waves

Subsea cables, which carry the world's data, are now central to the U.S.-China tech war. Washington, fearful of

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China Floods Russia With 328,000 Miles of Drone Cable While

The explosive growth in Chinese component exports to Russia—fiber-optic cable shipments jumped nearly tenfold

Nov 30, 2025

China sharply increased drone component exports to Russia since

Data from China's customs service show a sharp rise in exports of cables and lithium-ion batteries this summer amid

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Danish military says it staying close to Chinese ship

Denmark's military said it was staying close to a Chinese ship, days after two fiber-optic

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2024 Baltic Sea submarine cable disruptions

On 17-18 November 2024, two submarine telecommunication cables, the BCS East-West Interlink and C-Lion1 fibre-optic cables,

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The world's first cross-border cable car will travel from Russia to ...

Traveling between Russia and China is about to get a lot more scenic. The world's first cross-border cable car is

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Explainer: Baltic Sea undersea cable cuts stoke geopolitical ...

The cutting of two undersea cables prompted warnings of "sabotage" and potential "hybrid" warfare in the West amid

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Russia turns to Chinese optical fiber imports after Ukrainian strikes

Russia's only domestic optical-fiber plant in Saransk has been offline since May 2025 after Ukrainian strikes. This

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Where the China-Russia Partnership Is Headed in Seven Charts and

Beijing's and Moscow's relationship has strengthened militarily, economically, and diplomatically in the past two

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CRINK Security Ties: Growing Cooperation, Anchored

This brief utilizes data to explore the strengths and limits of security cooperation among

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How China is helping Russia produce fiber optic drones | Ukrainian

The sharp increase in exports of fiber-optic cables and lithium-ion batteries, among other drone components, shows

Jul 09, 2026

Fiber-optic communication

An optical fiber patching cabinet. The yellow cables are single-mode fibers; the orange and blue cables are multi-mode fibers:

Aug 17, 2025

China Supplied More Than 500 Thousand km of Fiber Optic Cable to

According to China's customs service, a record 527,000 kilometers of fiber optic cable were shipped to Russia in

Dec 24, 2025

Chinese Supplies of Fiber Optic Cables Aid Russia's Advanced Drone ...

China's increased export of fiber-optic cables and lithium-ion batteries to Russia is helping Moscow expand the use of

Nov 26, 2025

Securing Asia's Subsea Network: U.S. Interests and Strategic ...

This brief explores Asia's evolving subsea cable network, explains why trusted cable networks are a key ingredient for

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Undersea cable sabotages: Russia's and China's hybrid warfare strategy

GUGI units as part of Russia's navy and directed by the Defense minister and the president, are key for conducting underwater cable

Oct 11, 2025

CO-DEPLOYMENT OF FIBRE OPTIC CABLES FOR CROSS

a Helsinki through the border with Russia to Saint Petersburg, Moscow, Kazan to the border with Kazakhstan, Mongolia and China.

Aug 25, 2025

White Paper on China International Optical Cable Interconnection

China's international interactions, requirements on its networks' ability to provide global services, and both opportunities and

May 26, 2026

Russian firm says Baltic telecoms cable was severed as Chinese ship ...

A Russian fiber optic cable under the Baltic Sea was completely severed last month when a Chinese container ship

Aug 03, 2025

PRC ramps up drone component shipments to Russia as fiber-optic

There is strong evidence that China is supplying batteries and fiber optic cables used by Russian drone forces. As

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