Ukraine, the battleground of the CyberWar

Description

Western assistance with IT plays a key part in helping Ukraine fight Russia, Eric Schmidt, the former Google executive, told media after returning from Kiev.

Schmidt, who has close links to US national security, praised Kiev for amongst other decisions, swiftly moving government information into better-protected cloud services. Russia's attack in late February "gave everybody a political excuse to do the right thing," he said on Monday, as cited by Agence France Press (AFP).

The tech entrepreneur also praised fellow US billionaire Elon Musk for sending Starlink equipment to Kiev, ensuring that Ukrainian civilian and military officials have reliable access to the internet. The SpaceX CEO is "genuinely a hero here," Schmidt said.

Musk previously repeatedly claimed credit for successfully defeating alleged Russian cyberattacks aimed at disrupting Starlink access for Ukrainian users. The ground equipment necessary for getting internet through Starlink satellites was reportedly contracted by the Pentagon, though Musk implied that he'd donated it.

Meanwhile the Ukrainian government offered citizens a way to use smartphone apps to report intelligence data, Schmidt said. The tips are being analyzed by AI-powered programs to help acquire targets for Ukrainian military strikes, he said.

US officials previously claimed that the US intelligence service and their NATO counterparts played a large part in organizing a Ukrainian military offensive in northeastern Kharkov Region last week. Kiev reported retaking some 6,000 square kilometers of land from Russia. Moscow acknowledged pulling troops back for regrouping.

In addition to serving as a top Google executive, Schmidt held top advisory positions in several bodies linked to the US national security apparatus. He served as the chair of the Defense Innovation Advisory Board and the chair of the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence.

He visited Kiev last week and attended the Yalta European Strategy forum in Kiev, according to photos posted by several top Ukrainian officials, including Ukraine's Digital Transformation Minister Mikhail Fedorov.