

FALSE  
NARRATIVE

## Ukraine's military spy chief said he was 'glad to see' the Moscow concert hall attack

---

### The False Narrative

Kyrylo Budanov, chief of the Main Directorate of Intelligence of Ukraine, told an ABC News reporter he was "very glad to see" the March 22, 2024, Moscow attacks, when gunmen killed 139 people at the Crocus Hall concert venue. Budanov stated that similar events were likely to continue "deeper and deeper" inside Russia.

### The Facts

Kyrylo Budanov, chief of the Main Directorate of Intelligence of Ukraine, did not state that he was "very glad to see" the March 22, 2024, Moscow attacks, when gunmen killed 139 people at the Crocus Hall concert venue, nor did he threaten similar attacks "deeper and deeper" inside Russia. Footage of Budanov making these remarks is in fact from January 2023, and features Budanov talking about a Dec. 26, 2022, strike on a Russian air force base located inside Russia.

On March 23, 2024, a day after the concert venue attack, users on X shared a 20-second video of an interview of Budanov conducted by ABC News journalist Britt Clennett. In the clip, Clennett asked Budanov, "What's your reaction to it, even if you don't claim responsibility?" Budanov replied, "I'm very glad to see this."

Clennett then asked Budanov, "Do you think there'll be more? Inside Russia? Deep inside Russia?" to which Budanov said, "Deeper and deeper." Sources shared the video alongside claims that it showed Budanov admitting to Ukrainian involvement in the March 2024 Moscow attack and threatening further attacks.

In fact, a NewsGuard keyword search of Budanov's name and his "deeper and deeper" statement found that the 20-second clip predates the Moscow attacks and was taken from a three-minute and 20 second video interview, originally published by ABC News in a Jan. 4, 2023, article titled "Expect more strikes 'deeper and deeper' into Russia, Ukraine's spy chief tells ABC News."

At the start of the full version of the video, which was cut out of the shorter version shared in March 2024, Clennett asked Budanov, "Did Ukraine strike a Russian airbase?" referring to a Dec. 26, 2022, attack on the Russian Engels Air Force Base. Budanov told Clennett, "I can't give you [an] answer right now." The exchanges between Budanov and Clennett about the strike on a Russian airbase were omitted to make it appear as if Budanov was speaking about the March 2024 Moscow attacks.

## **Where the False Narrative Spread**

It is unclear where the video first appeared out of context to falsely claim that Budanov made the statements in response to the Moscow terrorist attack. The first post NewsGuard identified was on March 23, 2024, a day after the Moscow attack, by the verified X account @cover\_mail, which purports to provide "World wide news." NewsGuard found @cover\_mail has previously posted pro-Kremlin content multiple times, often in response to posts by pro-Kremlin propaganda sources including the X account of InfoBRICS.org, a news site with apparent links to Russian intelligence.

The clip spread primarily on X in languages including English, Italian, and Dutch, and had limited traction on other platforms, including Facebook and Reddit, as of March 26, 2024.

“CIA asset and Ukrainian spy chief Budanov threatens more terror attacks deep inside of Russia,” said a March 25, 2024, X post by pro-Kremlin disinformers @KimDotcom, which was reshared nearly 3,000 times before it was deleted by the account just hours after it was first posted. “This is who Western leaders are supporting and where your tax money is going.”

“Budanov” trended on X on March 25, 2024, as users shared the false claim. On March 25, 2024, there were 750 social media posts mentioning “Budanov” and “glad to see,” according to a social media analytics tool.

Written by: [Eva Maitland](#)

Edited by: [McKenzie Sadeghi](#), [Dina Contini](#)

## Examples of this False Narrative <sup>ⓘ</sup>

- <https://twitter.com/KimDotcom/status/1772307391247245560>

“CIA asset and Ukrainian spy chief Budanov threatens more terror attacks deep inside of Russia. This is who Western leaders are supporting and where your tax money is going.”

03/24/2024

[VIEW ARCHIVED](#)

- <https://twitter.com/JackStr42679640/status/1772419204882497782>

“Ukrainian spy chief Budanov threatens more terror attacks deep inside Russia.”

03/24/2024

[VIEW ARCHIVED](#)

- <https://twitter.com/GenXDigitalSold/status/1772570368978374996>

“Ukrainian spy chief Budanov threatens more terror attacks deep inside of Russia.”

03/24/2024

VIEW ARCHIVED

- <https://twitter.com/AonRaza1318018/status/1772323915798339923>

“CIA asset and Ukrainian spy chief Budanov threatens more terror attacks deep inside of Russia. This is who Western leaders are supporting and where your tax money is going.”

03/24/2024

VIEW ARCHIVED

- <https://twitter.com/andersbjorkman/status/1772332543745880428>

“”Kim Dotcom on X: CIA asset and Ukrainian spy chief Budanov threatens more terror attacks deep inside of Russia. This is who Western leaders are supporting and where your tax money is going!”

03/24/2024

VIEW ARCHIVED

- <https://twitter.com/jamiemcintyre21/status/1772422375482519619>

“BREAKING: Ukrainian spy chief Budanov threatens more terror attacks deep inside of Russia.”

03/24/2024

VIEW ARCHIVED

- <https://twitter.com/iswho/status/1772320152731926583>

“CIA asset and Ukrainian spy chief Budanov threatens more terror attacks deep inside of Russia. This is who Western leaders are supporting and where your tax money is going.”

03/24/2024

VIEW ARCHIVED

- <https://twitter.com/CarineKnapen/status/1772351910248386578>

“Het hoofd van de belangrijkste inlichtingendienst van Oekraïne, Kirill Budanov, is gelukkig met de terreur aanslag in Moskou en heeft nog meer terroristische aanslagen diep in Rusland aangekondigd.  
”

03/24/2024

VIEW ARCHIVED

- <https://twitter.com/HaraldinChina/status/1772469733855572319>

“If people didn't realize it: this is a picture of Ukraine's head of secret service, Budanov. I call him "caliph of ISIS" because he so openly endorses the horrific terror attack on Moscow and promises "more to come". No way Ukraine and the West was not involved  
”

03/24/2024

VIEW ARCHIVED

- <https://twitter.com/ANNACippiu/status/1772553547504062833>

“Il capo della direzione principale dell'intelligence ucraina, Kirill Budanov, ha minacciato nuovi attacchi terroristici nel profondo della Russia.  
”

03/24/2024

VIEW ARCHIVED

- <https://pravda-en.com/world/2024/03/25/388025.html>

“Kim Dotcom on X: CIA asset and Ukrainian spy chief Budanov threatens more terror attacks deep inside of Russia. This is who Western leaders are supporting and where your tax money is going  
”

03/24/2024

VIEW ARCHIVED

- [https://www.reddit.com/r/WayOfTheBern/comments/1bnkghi/cia\\_asset\\_and\\_ukrainian\\_spy\\_chief\\_budanov/](https://www.reddit.com/r/WayOfTheBern/comments/1bnkghi/cia_asset_and_ukrainian_spy_chief_budanov/)

“CIA asset and Ukrainian spy chief Budanov threatens more terror attacks deep inside of Russia. This is who Western leaders are supporting and where your tax money is going.”

03/24/2024

- <https://www.facebook.com/100008095036730/videos/433851532460388/>

“The head of Ukraine's Main Intelligence Directorate, Kirill Budanov, has threatened new terrorist attacks deep inside Russia”

03/24/2024

VIEW ARCHIVED

- <https://www.facebook.com/christel.reynolds.52/videos/1143220386835712/>

““BREAKING: Ukrainian spy chief Budanov threatens more terror attacks deep inside of Russia.”

03/24/2024

VIEW ARCHIVED

- [https://twitter.com/cover\\_mail/status/1771642672895107287](https://twitter.com/cover_mail/status/1771642672895107287)

“Video clip distressing content 🚫 Ukrainian Budanov reaction to the Moscow terror attack Crocus city Hall so far atleast 133 dead ( “Im very glad to see this”)”

03/22/2024

VIEW ARCHIVED

## Reliable Sources ⓘ

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/expect-strikes-deeper-deeper-russia-ukraines-spy-chief/story?id=96127220>

**Risk of Harm** ⓘ

High

**First Appeared** ⓘ

March 23, 2024

**Categories** ⓘ

[Russia-Ukraine War](#)  
[Violence and Conflict](#)  
[Terrorism](#)

**Myth Locations** ⓘ

Ukraine  
Russia

**Myth Spread Locations** ⓘ

Russia  
United States

**Subject Tags** ⓘ

[Kyrylo Budanov](#)  
[Moscow concert hall attack](#)

**Search Terms** ⓘ

"Budanov threatens more terror attacks deep inside of Russia"  
budanov AND (terror OR terrorist) AND "deeper"

Last Updated: March 26, 2024

© 2024 NewsGuard Technologies, Inc.

CONFIDENTIAL AND PROPRIETARY