

Conflict Update # 255

November 7th, 2022

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Conflict Assessment

Russian losses – 76,460 (530) soldiers killed, 2,771 (+6) enemy tanks, 5,630 (+19) armored combat vehicles, 1,782 (+1) artillery systems, 391 (+0) MLRS systems, 202 (+0) air defense systems, 277 (+0) warplanes, 260 (+0) helicopters, 1,472 (+7) UAVs of the operational-tactical level, 399 (+0) cruise missiles, 15 (+0) warships/cutters, 4,199 (+8) trucks and tankers, 4 Iskander Missile Launchers (+0), 76 fuel bowsers (+0) and 157 (+2) units of specialized equipment.

War in Ukraine



November 7, 0700 GMT : * Explosions/strikes ● Fighting

Non-exhaustive, major incidents reported in the past 24h

Position of military forces, as of November 6, 1900 GMT

- Assessed Russian controlled
- Area of Russian operations or attacks
- Claimed Russian controlled
- Areas recaptured and counteroffensives claimed by Ukrainians
- Reported Ukrainian partisan warfare

Sources: AFP bureaus, Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project, Ukrainian Armed Forces

Map data:OSM



Key Takeaways

Russia says it's withdrawing from Kherson – Russia is creating the illusion of retreat from Kherson to potentially lure Ukrainian forces into street fighting in the key southern city, Natalia Humeniuk, a spokeswoman for Ukraine's military, said over the weekend.

"There are military units based there, military equipment and battle stations stationed there. The positions as set on the left bank will be used for the support of the battle positions on the right bank."

But possibly there is another Russian scheme in play here - actual withdrawal across the river, consolidate artillery and rocket platforms, and direct fire at Ukrainian forces aligned along the opposite side of the river.

The danger of Ukraine falling into this trap is that Russian artillery, reinforced along the eastern river bank, will be able to pound their advance positions along the entire opposite bank.

This may tie up Ukrainian forces for an unforeseeable period stretching through and beyond winter, with potentially huge losses and attrition, whilst providing a respite for Russia to replenish and restock.

On the other hand, and as reported previously, perhaps this is the Russian strategy all along – cement its presence and occupation south of the river, then enter into negotiations with the view of retaining currently-occupied territories, from Kherson all the way up to Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts, as shown in the red areas in the map below.

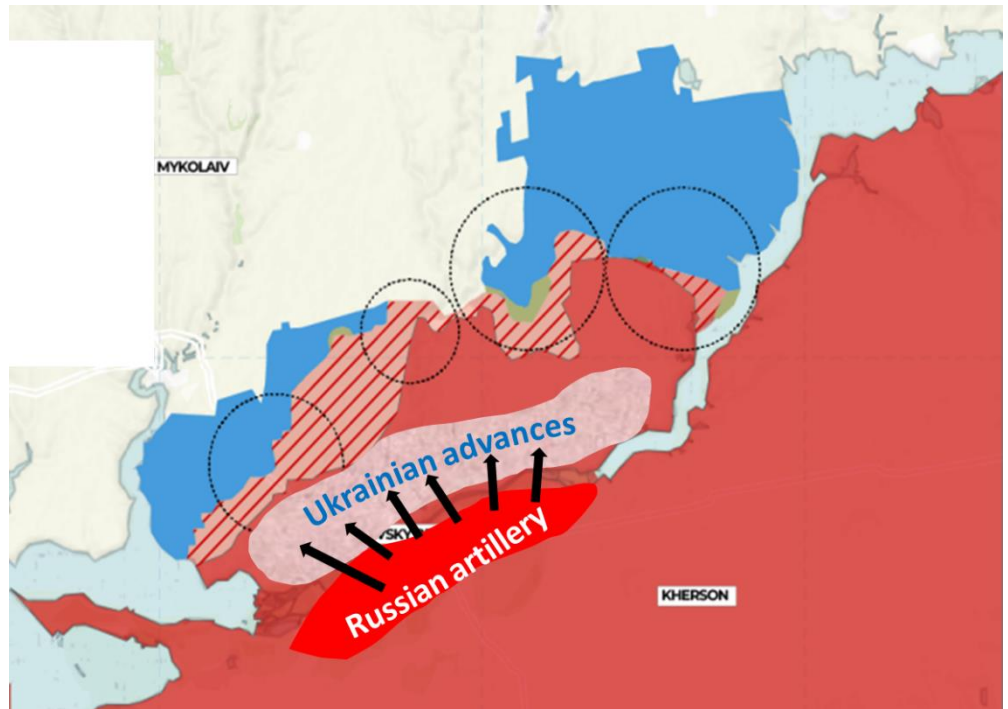
This last option provides Putin the off-ramp he requires to satisfy not only the Kremlin but also Russian Main Street.

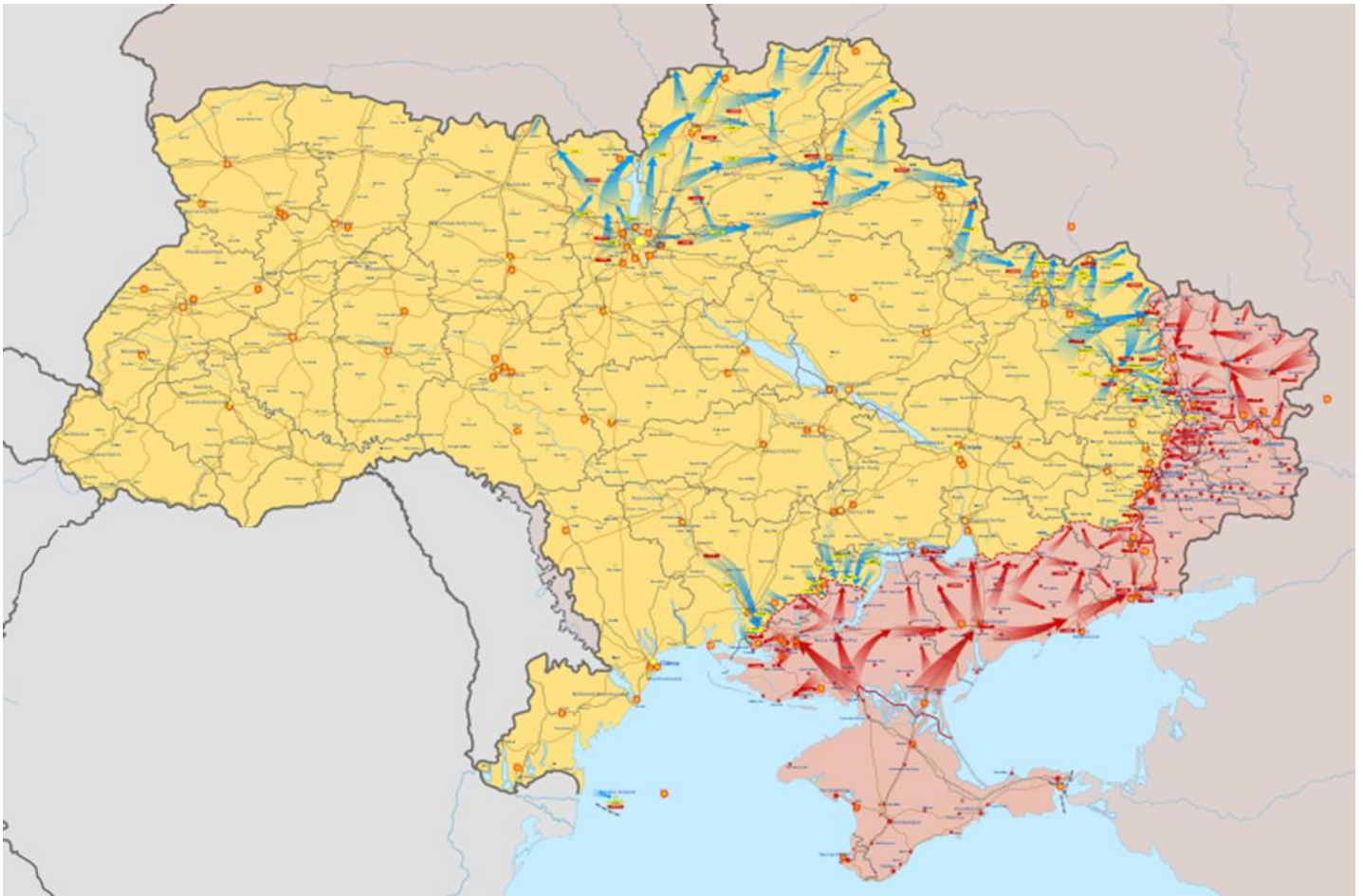
It may also see a politically palatable solution for the Ukraine's Allies, or potentially drive a wedge into supporter affairs and create a "split vote." It is extremely doubtful though that Ukraine accepts this path forward.

We can expect to see unusually large numbers of artillery, howitzers and drones, among other formats, deployed in and around southern Kherson over the next few weeks. It may well be a defining moment in the conflict – without diluting the effect of combat stations in eastern Ukraine around Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, which, if losses are anything to go by, promises to be as much an operational distraction for Russian command as anything else in play.

The danger for Russian forces is a Ukrainian breakthrough further east and north from Kherson and then advancing south and west toward Russian rear lines in Kherson. We need to watch for Ukrainian strikes on Russian supply routes into Kherson from Crimea as an indicator of strategic intent.

Of strategic import to Ukrainian forces is the looming arrival of advanced weaponry, trained soldiers and immense supplies of armaments and munitions, promised previously but scheduled to arrive into actions shortly.





Ukraine hails new air defences, warns power situation 'tense' - Ukraine announced Monday it had received more air defence systems from Western military allies, as officials in Kyiv said the situation with supplies was "tense" after protracted Russian attacks on energy facilities.

Attacks by Moscow's forces, including with Iranian-made drones over the past month, have destroyed around 40 percent of Ukraine's power stations and the government has urged Ukrainians to maximize electricity savings.

Kyiv has been rocked by barrages of Russian attacks on the first day of each week for nearly a month, but air raid sirens were quiet on Monday with residents out as normal.

Defence Minister Oleksiy Reznikov announced Monday that Ukraine had received National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System (NASAMS) and Italian Aspide air defences, adding to weapons supplied by Germany.

"NASAMS and Aspide air defence systems arrived in Ukraine! These weapons will significantly strengthen the Ukrainian army and will make our skies safer," Reznikov said on social media.

"We will continue to shoot down the enemy targets attacking us. Thank you to our partners -- Norway, Spain and the US," Reznikov added.

Weeks of Russian attacks have caused sweeping blackouts and restrictions on energy use across Ukraine, and authorities in the capital have asked residents and businesses to reduce consumption.

Russian casualties are not being collected from front lines - The most damning rebuke to Putin's claim of a successful mobilization came just a few hours later from a man Ukrainian intelligence identified as a soldier from

Russia's 752nd Guards Motor Rifle Regiment based in occupied Donetsk—who said troops there are quite literally ordered to leave their own behind so the government can avoid paying their families the promised payouts.

The admission came in what was described by Ukrainian authorities as an intercepted phone conversation between the Russian soldier and someone back home.

“They won’t allow for the 200s to be collected,” the purported soldier said, using Russian military jargon for those killed in action. “No body, no case. Maybe [they will think the person killed] has been captured and they can hold back money from the relatives and not f----- pay. Do you understand the idea?”

Asked if he personally had seen the abandoned dead bodies, he said, “Of course.”

“They’re f----- laying everywhere and we can’t collect them,” he told his dumbstruck interlocutor, who asked in disbelief if the military command treats only the conscripts in such a manner.

“It’s that way with everyone across the board,” he said.

General Staff reports Russian losses in Donbas may be higher than reported - Russia's casualties in Ukraine may actually be higher, says a Ukrainian army official.

Russian dead in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is being carefully concealed by the Kremlin.

Their military losses in Ukraine might be much higher than the numbers given in the General Staff's daily updates, Serhiy Cherevaty, spokesperson for the eastern grouping of the Ukrainian military, said on TV Freedom.

According to him, it is impossible to estimate the exact number, but the Ukrainian side is trying its best to report accurate figures and is using a strict verification system.

He said no one is interested in overestimating. "There are certain criteria, which can't be mentioned now, for commanders to count and report enemy losses," he explained.

“And it goes that way, from the bottom to the top, where it is summarized. It's more likely we underreport than over-report, because everyone is afraid of a mistake. Only after real verification, real calculations and real proof of the killed enemy units, does it go to the top.”

Over 1,400 Russian officers killed in Ukraine so far, Kyiv says - At least 1,402 Russian military officers of different ranks – including 12 generals – have been killed in the war in Ukraine, the Center for Strategic Communications of the Armed Forces of Ukraine reported on Nov. 2.

“According to OSINT (open-source intelligence) researchers, 1,402 Russian officers were ‘de-Nazified’ in Ukraine – that's a rate of 5.7 per day,” the Telegram message said.

Russian marines complain to their governor about losing 300 people in 4 days - Servicemen from the 155th Separate Marine Brigade of the Russian Pacific Fleet have sent a letter to the Governor of Primorsky Krai, Oleg Kozhemyako, complaining that they had suffered heavy losses near the village of Pavlivka in Donetsk Oblast.

Source: Meduza, Latvia-based Russian media outlet, referring to a number of sources

Details: Meduza notes that the complaint was reported by Aleksandr Sladkov, military correspondent of the All-Russian State Television and Radio Company (propaganda TV channel), Anastasia Kashevarova, former adviser to Vyacheslav Volodin, chairman of Russia's State Duma, and other Russian sources that support the war in Ukraine.

The Grey Zone Telegram channel [pro-Russian military channel, allowing posts to be made anonymously - ed.] posted the full text of the letter. Medusa could not verify the authenticity of the text. Sladkov and Kashevarova did not disclose the data on losses and the names of the commanders given in the letter.

Grey Zone reported that the marines claimed in their letter that they had lost "about 300 people killed, wounded and missing in action" in four days during an "inexplicable attack" on the village of Pavlivka near Vuhledar (Donetsk Oblast).

The presumed authors of the letter say that their commanders - "General Muradov and his fellow countryman Akhmedov" - planned the offensive so that Muradov "would earn bonuses from the Chief of the General Staff" Valery Gerasimov, and Akhmedov would receive the title of Hero of Russia. "They don't care about anything, except showing themselves off. They call people meat," the letter says.

Background: On 5 November, Russian publication Verstka reported that a battalion of conscripted Russians from Voronezh Oblast (Russia) had been eliminated near the village of Makiyivka, Svatove district, Luhansk Oblast, as a result of shelling by the Ukrainian Armed Forces; hundreds of occupiers are reported to have been killed.

Most mobilised Russians in Belarus are sick and in frequent conflict with Belarusians - There is an outbreak of disease amongst Russian conscripts in Belarus, as a result of Russian non-compliance with public health requirements.

Details: Defence Intelligence reported that Russian units, mainly consisting of partially mobilized draftees, continue to be deployed to Belarus. Their main task is the preparation of the equipment depots and locations of occupation troops.

"Meanwhile, the "chmobiki" [nickname for the men drafted in the recent partial mobilisation in Russia -ed.] are forced to live in unsuitable conditions. Mostly, they live in field tents lacking proper sanitary conditions," the report said.

Currently, there is a large-scale outbreak of various diseases among these military personnel. These are mainly respiratory diseases (bronchitis, sore throat, pneumonia, asthma flare-ups) and gastrointestinal infections.

The diseases are so prevalent that Belarusian doctors are unable to handle their sheer numbers with Russia being forced to urgently send military and mobilized doctors from Russia to Belarus.

Intelligence also reported that in Belarus tensions are growing between the militaries of the two states. Numerous conflict situations arise from the contemptuous attitude of the Russian military towards Belarusians.

"The Military Police of the Republic of Belarus cannot restrain the inappropriate behaviour of Russians. In particular, the reports submitted by senior officers of Belarus armed forces based on the complaints of their rank-and-file soldiers indicate disparaging expressions and behaviour by Russians towards Belarusians. In particular, they use insults based on ethnic characteristics. The number of such incidents is growing rapidly, leading to an uncontrolled escalation of tensions in Belarus," the Chief Intelligence Directorate of Ukraine reported.

Explosions reported in Russian-occupied Donetsk. Numerous explosions were heard in Russian-occupied Donetsk overnight, according to media reports. Russian state-controlled media RIA Novosti reported that a massive fire broke out in a railway administration building in the Voroshylyivskyi district of Donetsk. No casualties have been reported at the time of the publication.

There are also incoming reports of a large fuel storage depot on fire in the Belgorod area.

Russian officers complain about equipment theft by soldiers - Russian officers are complaining about theft of military equipment by their own soldiers in Ukraine: they're steal thermal imagers and send them home, one officer said in an intercepted phone call shared by Ukrainian intelligence.

"Shady things often happen here at night," the officer can be heard saying.

"Movement starts when it gets dark. Never give it (a thermal imager) to a soldier. It's better go into battle yourself. Because these f----- soldiers grab everything and send that home. So many imagers have been stolen."

Ukraine's military destroys Russian equipment on southern front line. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported that its forces killed 14 Russian troops and destroyed three armored vehicles, UAV ground control station, and three ammunition depots in Beryslav and Kherson districts over the past 24 hours.

Russia issues rare denial of "pointless losses" by marines in Ukraine - Russia's defence ministry took the rare step today of denying allegations that a naval infantry unit had suffered disastrous losses of men and equipment in a futile offensive in eastern Ukraine.

The ministry was responding to what Russian military bloggers said was an open letter from members of the 155th marine brigade of Russia's Pacific Fleet (referred to above), complaining they had been thrown into an "incomprehensible" assault on Ukrainian forces southwest of Donetsk.

"As a result of the 'carefully' planned offensive by the 'great generals', we lost about 300 people killed, wounded and missing in the course of four days. (And) half of our equipment," said the letter.

The text was published by Grey Zone, and addressed to Oleg Kozhemyako, governor of the far eastern Primorye region, thousands of miles from Ukraine, where the unit is based.

Kozhemyako appeared to acknowledge the letter was genuine but said it exaggerated the scale of the true losses.

"We contacted the commanders. Yes there are losses, there's heavy fighting, but they are far from what is written in this appeal," he said in a video statement on his Telegram channel.

The defence ministry statement, quoted by state-owned RIA news agency, rejected the assertion that the marines unit had suffered "high, pointless losses in people and equipment."

The unusual denial suggested reported losses touched a raw nerve at a point in the war's ninth month when Russian forces are under heavy pressure in partly occupied regions of Ukraine that Moscow has proclaimed as its own territory.

General Staff names three areas of front where Russian troops suffered heaviest losses in past day - The Russian army suffered the greatest losses on the Lyman, Bakhmut, and Avdiyivka areas of the front line over the last 24 hours, the General Staff said.

Comments – (i) This is the combat region where Russia's self-named "Elite Wagner Group" battalions have been posted. Bakhmut is a strategically important crossroad being attacked by Russian forces in order to block any Ukrainian advance south toward Mariupol (see article further down). (ii) Further north is the region where Russian forces are suffering large-scale losses and around vitally important supply routes for Russian battle groups in the four southern Ukrainian oblasts, including the remaining rail line used for heavy equipment and munitions. These fall and Russia is forced to route all supplies via the Kerch Bridge in eastern Crimea. Should that bridge suffer further damage (it was attacked and damaged previously) then Russia has no ability to resupply any troops in the occupied territories (see following article).

Russia plans to fully restore traffic through Crimean Bridge by late December. Traffic at the destroyed part of the road-and-rail bridge linking Russia to annexed Crimea will be fully resumed by late December, reported Russian-controlled news agency Kryminform. The media claims one of the two lanes destroyed by the explosion on Oct. 8 would be ready on Dec. 5 and the other lane – on Dec. 20.

Russian occupying forces strengthen defenses around Mariupol. Russian forces have begun building a line of defense around the occupied city of Mariupol, according to Petro Andriushchenko, an advisor to the Mariupol mayor. They are producing anti-tank cement pyramids at abandoned manufacturing sites in the city, installing them on a highway between Mariupol and neighboring Nikolske in the occupied part of Donetsk Oblast.

Comments – (i) Why are they building defence mechanisms around Mariupol? – because Russian forces are failing to withstand Ukrainian counteroffensive measures further north around Bakhmut, where their BTGs are taking extremely high losses, as reported above. (ii) Mariupol is a particularly sensitive area for Russia as not only does it provide a strategic sea port, but also because there have been horrific Ukrainian civilian casualties and deaths in this city, all of which will be exposed for the world to see once liberated by Ukrainian forces. In today's Update, further below, we report that 1,500 new graves have been observed via Maxar satellite imaging.

Russia's lack of air superiority 'unlikely to change in next few months' – Russia lacks air superiority in Ukraine due to poor training and loss of experienced military personnel not easily replaceable, according to the U.K. Defense Ministry.

"Russia's aircraft losses likely significantly outstrip their capacity to manufacture new airframes," "The time required for the training of competent pilots further reduces Russia's ability to regenerate combat air capability."

"(The situation) is unlikely to change in the next few months," it wrote.

Valerii Zaluzhnyi, commander-in-chief of Ukraine's Armed Forces, said Russia had lost more than twice the number of aircraft in Ukraine than during the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. As of Nov. 7, Russian forces have lost 277 aircraft in

'Arrangements already made' for Iran to supply Russia with missiles. Tehran and Moscow have reached an agreement for Iranian Fateh-110 and Zolfaghar missiles to be delivered by air to annexed Crimea and by sea to Russian ports in the Caspian, The Economist wrote, citing Ukrainian military intelligence and other officials. "We know arrangements are already made," Vadym Skibitskiy, deputy head of Ukrainian military intelligence, told The Economist.

Comment – I was asked some years ago to arrange wheat exports from Russian Mennonite farmers to Iran via the Caspian Sea. I opted out due to international sanctions. Moving product through this route will prove difficult due to a lack of suitable rail infrastructure with varying gauge rail tracks in place at intermittent junctions. There is also an intermodal aspect for which both countries are ill-prepared.

Peace Talks

Ukraine should decide on Russia peace talks – Germany - A spokesperson for Germany's government says Ukraine should decide when to hold peace talks with Russia, after reports suggested the United States had encouraged Kyiv to signal openness to discussions.

Russia has 'nothing to say' on reported US de-escalation talks - The Kremlin refuses to comment on media reports suggesting high-level US-Russia talks have taken place.

"We have nothing to say about this publication," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Monday.

The newspaper reported that US officials said Sullivan has been in contact with Yuri Ushakov, a foreign policy adviser to Putin, and Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he sees no room for negotiations with Russia, an option he officially ruled out after Russia held illegal referendums that resulted in the “annexation” of four Ukrainian regions in September.

Senior White House official has discussions with top Putin aides. US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan in recent months had discussions with top aides to Putin, including Yuri Ushakov, Putin's foreign-policy adviser and Russian Security Council secretary Nikolai Patrushev, the WSJ reports quoting US and allied officials. The talks, which were not disclosed publicly, aimed at reducing the risk of a broader war and warning the Kremlin against using nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction.

Comment – As reported in previous Updates, behind the scenes diplomacy will always be underway and mostly unreported. That is the way this channel operates. Sometimes allegiances are tolerated because of the access they provide. For example South Africa is part of the BRICS alliance, but having SA convey messages to Putin is a valuable option to enjoy, despite public criticism of their Russia support. We can be just as assured that secretive talks are underway and will continue with China.

Peace Talks? - An investigative report unveils Moscow's plans to take over Moldova - The Kremlin created a special 11th department just for the former Soviet republic.

Moldova, just like Georgia and Ukraine, has a significant part of its territory occupied by Moscow-backed separatist forces. The unrecognized territory of Transnistria serves as a de facto base for the Kremlin to maintain military pressure on both Moldova and Ukraine — but as a recent investigation reveals, Moscow is now actively looking at controlling the political life of Moldova.

On October 31, a group of investigative reporters known as RISE Moldova, together with their partner Dossier Centre, released a document titled “Moldova's curators at the FSB [Russia's Federal Security Service]”, also available in English, that looks at how Moscow is buying political influence in Moldova. In view of the war Russia is conducting in neighboring Ukraine, Global Voices interviewed RISE Moldova's Vladimir Thorik, speaking with him in Russian over secure online messengers in an effort to unpack Russia's actions. He said,

“Moldova, including the separatist region of Transnistria (Declared by PACE [Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe] as a region occupied by Russia), is just a foothold for Russia. The main goal of Putin's administration is to secure a corridor that will at least allow it to control the southeastern parts of Ukraine that border Moldova. According to our sources among the security services of Moldova and Ukraine, the FSB headquarters are located in Transnistria, in territories not controlled by the legitimate government of Moldova. Transnistria hosts a Russian military base, which enlists recruits from the local population. According to our well-informed sources, Russians train and organize people to work illegally in our region, particularly in the south of Ukraine.

As long as there is this separatist region controlled by Russia and hardly accessible to Moldovan and Ukrainian security services, Russian instructors are able to collect data about any inhabitant of Moldova and can set groups in charge of sabotage. They can also mobilize the local population should Putin's forces successfully occupy the Ukrainian regions of Mykolaiv and Odesa.

The main Moldovan politicians who came to the attention of FSB curators in recent years include Moldova's former president Igor Dodon, as well as members of his Socialist Party who are close to him; it also includes the fugitive Moldovan businessman Ilan Shor, who heads the Shor Party of the same name. It seems that some Moldovan politicians were in need not just of money, but also of methodology at election time. For example, we discovered that the Kremlin drafted the text of a pre-election speech for Irina Vlah, the head of the autonomous government of Gagauzia, a region in the south of Moldova.

I think these Moldovan figures may also need the political influence that the Kremlin has had for many years in the post-Soviet space, as well as within the European Union. This can help puppet rulers of political elites establish channels for the enrichment of their clans. This way, the Kremlin provides them with the tools of the special services to participate in business processes that remain under Moscow's control.

The Kremlin has known its Chişinău protégés for a long time. They are supervised not only by FSB officers, but also in the “Moldovan department” of the Kremlin, which for many years has been led by officers of the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR). Moreover, they are supervised so successfully that — as in the case of Colonel Igor Maslov of the Foreign Intelligence Service — they get promoted for their work in Moldova to become, for example, head of one of the departments in the Kremlin.

Of course, the FSB generals rarely meet personally with the Moldovan protégés. As intermediaries, they can use the same Russian political strategists who have worked in the Moldovan elections for Dodon and, probably, for Shor’s party since 2019 — or via employees of the Russian Embassy in Moldova. In addition to Russians under diplomatic cover, employees of Russian non-governmental organizations and humanitarian funds close to the FSB meet with Moldovan politicians. Sometimes, the politicians themselves fly to Moscow to meet them; we have confirmation of those facts.”

“The possibility of Transnistria being occupied by Russia has been mentioned to RISE Moldova and Dossier Centre by sources from different security services as early as spring 2022. As of now, we have found out that the options for capturing the Transnistrian region and Moldova were worked out in the summer of 2022 by various analytical groups in the Kremlin, including the Alfa Group analytical center that is associated with the FSB.

In one of the reports obtained by the Dossier Center and published in our joint investigation “Moldova’s Curators from the FSB,” Russian analysts came to the conclusion that Moldova had been captured and controlled from the outside in the interests of the West, primarily by Romania and the US State Department. According to FSB analysts, the regime of Moldovan President Maia Sandu would quickly usurp power and destroy the pro-Kremlin opposition, which would make it possible to impose a blockade of Transnistria and thus blackmail Russia militarily.

Members of the Alfa Group are considering three scenarios that could unfold: the creation by Russia of a corridor to Transnistria through southern Ukraine with the subsequent official recognition of the territory (as of now, Russia does not officially recognize Transnistria's independence) ; the military occupation of Moldova; the presence of the Russian army within the borders of Transnistria without recognizing the territory. All three scenarios carry the risk of losing control over the rest of Moldova or, in the event of a complete occupation of Moldova, of a “collective outcry of the West” and sabotage actions from the population.”

“Instead, analysts close to the FSB believe that in order to maintain and increase the influence of the Kremlin in Moldova, it is necessary to take the long-term view. The authors of those scenarii, who are indeed connected to the special services, propose that the Kremlin creates new political forces within Moldova that would lobby for the country to become part of Russia – but this should be done on behalf of the people of Moldova.

For the past two years, we have been systematically analyzing the influence of Russian secret services in Moldovan politics. We decided to do this after it became known that this influence was so huge that Igor Dodon, the Moldovan president from 2016 to 2020, gave himself the nickname of Kremlinovich!

During that period, we have observed a much-delayed reaction of the Moldovan security services to our findings, which we view as proof of Russia's interference in the internal matters of our country. It was only in October, after the United States added three of the political strategists we had identified [in our Kremlinovich investigation] to its list of people under sanctions, did they respond. We described how a group of Russian

citizens, which included a psychologist-hypnotist, was added to the Socialist Party of then acting president Dodon as he was trying to get re-elected. It took the Moldovan Prosecutor General's Office two years to announce a criminal investigation to verify the facts of the Kremlin's influence on the election campaign. Two years late is better than never, though I'm not sure..."

Russian Mobilization

'The command fled': Putin's own troops keep humiliating him - It only took a few hours after Putin hailed his mobilization as a sparkling success for a torrent of humiliating reports to emerge that suggest the war effort has been more successful in turning the country against him than defeating mythical Nazis in Ukraine.

The most staggering contradiction to his boastful claims came perhaps in Kazan, where dozens of drafted troops were captured on video late Friday berating military leadership outside a collection point for the newly mobilized.

The angry crowd complained of a lack of water, food, and "rusty" rifles from the 1970s that one soldier said were too "dangerous" to even use, according to local outlets. Spectacularly, the troops were not cowed by a military officer who threatened to call in riot police.

"What kind of riot police are you trying to scare us with? We'll call everyone we know right now, and they'll come, and we'll pummel all of you and the riot police," one protesting soldier yelled back.

The officer was forced to retreat as the crowd of rioting troops chanted "c---s-----," the video shows.

By Saturday, local authorities said the issues cited by the troops had been "resolved," according to Tatar-Inform. But outrage continued to bubble up elsewhere, including in Voronezh, where relatives of drafted troops gathered outside the local prosecutor's office to film a video appeal to the governor pleading with him to rescue new troops from their own command.

"On the very first day, they put [the draftees] on the frontline [in Luhansk]. The command left the battlefield and fled, saying they would soon return and bring the mobilized troops their things," one family member said in video shared by the independent outlet Verstka.

More than 500 troops in that battalion were subsequently killed after being abandoned by the command, according to one of the surviving soldiers who spoke to the outlet.

Comment – It appears that (i) Russian commanders interview draftees for suitability, (ii) those deemed unsuitable are posted as "gunners," (iii) those labeled unsuitable as gunners or other menial enlistments are then deemed as laborers who are sent to the front lines to dig trenches and provide manual labor for troops.

On a lighter note – Putin has ordered his space station crew back to the front line against Ukraine.

Impacts

US national security adviser Jake Sullivan held undisclosed talks with top Russian officials in hopes of reducing the risk the war in Ukraine spills over or escalates into a nuclear conflict, the Wall Street Journal reported.

Russia's Gazprom on Monday said it would ship 42.4 million cubic metres of gas to Europe via Ukraine, the Reuters news agency reported.

Putin ally admits Russia interfered in US elections, says it's working 'surgically' to disrupt the midterms

Yevgeny Prigozhin, an ally of Russia's Vladimir Putin, admitted to interfering in past US elections. "We have interfered, we are interfering, and we will continue to interfere," he said on social media.

Russia has long denied US accusations that it meddles in its elections. Prigozhin, an ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, said that Russia has interfered in US elections in the past and would continue to do so.

"During our pinpoint operations, we will remove both kidneys and the liver at once," Prigozhin added, in an apparent reference to the surgical nature of the operations.

Prigozhin, who has been dubbed "Putin's chef" for securing valuable Kremlin catering contracts, has been accused of attempts to subvert past US elections through his control of so-called "troll farms," which flooded social media platforms with disinformation and conspiracy theories.

Comment – Russia is desperately hoping that the US will turn against continuing to provide support for Ukraine.

Humanitarian

Satellite images show over 1,500 new graves near occupied Mariupol. Maxar's new satellite images show that three mass burial sites near occupied Mariupol have "steadily" grown since spring, according to the BBC. There are roughly 1,500 new graves at one of them – in Staryi Krym, north of Mariupol, it wrote. In total, in Staryi Krym, more than 4,600 graves have been dug since the beginning of Russia's all-out invasion.

Comment – We wrote about this in yesterday's Update – that it is going to be nigh on impossible to gauge the number of civilian deaths caused by the Russian obliteration of Mariupol earlier this year.

Putin makes mass looting of Ukrainian cultural heritage easier - Putin implemented martial law in four unlawfully acquired Ukrainian territories. Everything occurred on October 19. He also effectively legalized the theft of cultural property in Ukraine, by doing so.

Imposition of martial law in Russia gives it the authority to "evacuate" objects with economic, social, and cultural significance. Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk, and Luhansk are the four regions specified in Putin's decree.

Looting has been taking in the occupied Ukrainian territories for months. Russian troops forcibly seized control of Kherson's Shovkunenko Regional Art Museum. Also, numerous other institutions in the four annexed regions could suffer a similar fate. This also includes the Donetsk Republican Art Museum, and the Luhansk Art Museum.

In Kherson, occupants demolished monuments of Russian military heroes from the 18th century. Those heroes are Aleksandr Suvorov, Fyodor Ushakov, and Vasily Margelov. Also, the Russian military demolished a 21st-century reproduction of an 1823 statue representing Prince Grigory Potemkin.

The "evacuation" of Crimean museums will be regarded as a "war crime," the Ukrainian ministry of culture said on October 15. "Mass removal of cultural values from the territory of Ukraine by the Russian occupiers will be comparable to the looting of museums during World War II, and should be qualified accordingly," the ministry's statement said.

He also talked about violations of international law Russia made. "The actions of the Russian Federation are a violation of international law. Any seizure, destruction or willful damage to religious, charitable, educational, artistic and scientific institutions, historical monuments, works of art and science is prohibited and subject to prosecution."

Prosecutors open 10 cases against Russia's 'ecocide' in Ukraine. According to the Prosecutor General's Office, the list of ecocide crimes includes damage caused to a nuclear research facility in the city of Kharkiv in June, attacks on oil depots, as well as the killing of 800,000 chickens by Russian troops in late October at a farm in the city of Svyatohirsk

in Donetsk Oblast. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Russia has caused more than \$37.5 billion worth of damage to Ukraine's environment, according to Ukraine's Audit Chamber.

Russia damaged over 1,000 hospitals since Feb. 24. Russian forces damaged 1,100 medical facilities and destroyed 144 of them over the course of the nine-month-long full-scale invasion, the Health Ministry reported.

Russia now targeting Ukrainian storage depots – Russia has now started targeting Ukrainian grain storage facilities in order to prevent export and foreign exchange benefit.

Containment

Ukraine rebuilds navy with combat boats from U.S. aid package - Up against one of the world's largest fleets, Ukraine's navy struggled in the early months of Russia's invasion. Since Feb. 24, Russia has been dominating the waterways that surround Ukraine's eastern and southern coast. In eight months, it has secured strategic ports of Mariupol and Berdyansk, which both encircle the Sea of Azov.

But it appears Ukraine has been rebuilding its navy with the help of the U.S. In June, the DoD announced that it would send 18 "coastal and riverine patrol boats" in the \$450 million military assistance package. It included two 35-foot small-unit river craft; six 40-foot maritime combat craft; and 10 Dauntless Sea Ark 34-foot patrol boats.

NASAMS and Aspide air defense systems arrive in Ukraine. Ukraine has received long-anticipated Western air defense systems to shoot down "enemy targets" Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov. "These strengthen the Ukrainian army and will make

The Aspide system has a range of 25 kilometers (15 miles) and travels at "high

These systems allow for a rapid anti-missile capability, reinforcing the Ukrainian ballistic missiles as tracked by reconnaissance aircraft patrolling around its borders.



more effectively, according to weapons will significantly our skies safer," Reznikov said.

range of 25 kilometers (15 supersonic" speed.

rapid anti-missile capability, capacity for striking incoming by reconnaissance aircraft borders.

EU Commission to propose monthly package of up to 1.5 billion euros to Ukraine for 2023. EU Commission President von der Leyen told President Zelensky the support would contribute to covering Ukraine's 2023 needs and the package, up to 18 billion euros, will cover part of the country's state deficit through long-term loans.

Geopolitics

Turkey says Greece spends too much on defense, arms race - After complaining that Greece has engaged in an arms race it can't win, Turkey said its rival spends too much on defense, the ratio rising markedly under the New Democracy government.

Greece's defense expenditure rose to 3.76 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2022, up from 2.45 percent in 2019 when the major opposition SYRIZA was in power, said the Turkish news site Anadolu Agency.

It didn't mention that Turkish provocations picked up since New Democracy took power and that President Erdogan has openly threatened an invasion and is eyeing Greek islands. The report said Greece spends \$8.4 billion now for defense compared to \$5 billion three years earlier, an increase of more than 60 percent, but didn't mention that Turkey spends 26 billion euros (\$25.76 billion) on defense.

Erdogan said that includes an increase of \$5.38 billion he authorized for 2022 while Defense Minister Hulusi Akar called on Greece to stop buying weapons.

“It should be known to all that the enthusiasm of Greece or the Greek-Cypriots in procuring arms will not help in any way, except for increasing tensions and leading the situation to an impasse,” he said.

G20 Attendance - Russian state-owned news agency RIA Novosti reported Monday that President Vladimir Putin will make a decision on whether to attend the next G20 summit in person by the end of the week. Zelenskiy has said he will not attend if Putin does. The summit in Bali is due to begin Tuesday 15 November.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told the media on his daily call on Monday that while Russia remains “open” to talks, it is unable to negotiate with Kyiv due to its refusal to hold talks with Russia.

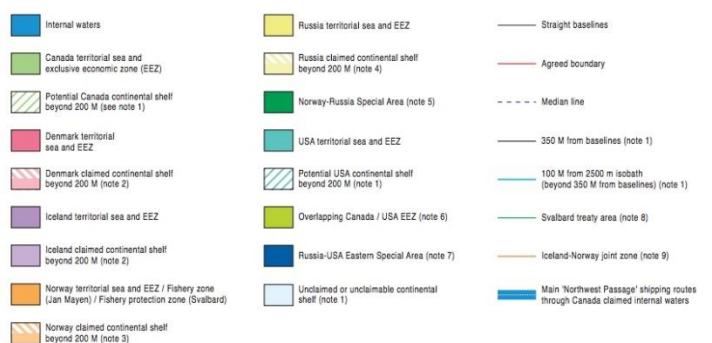
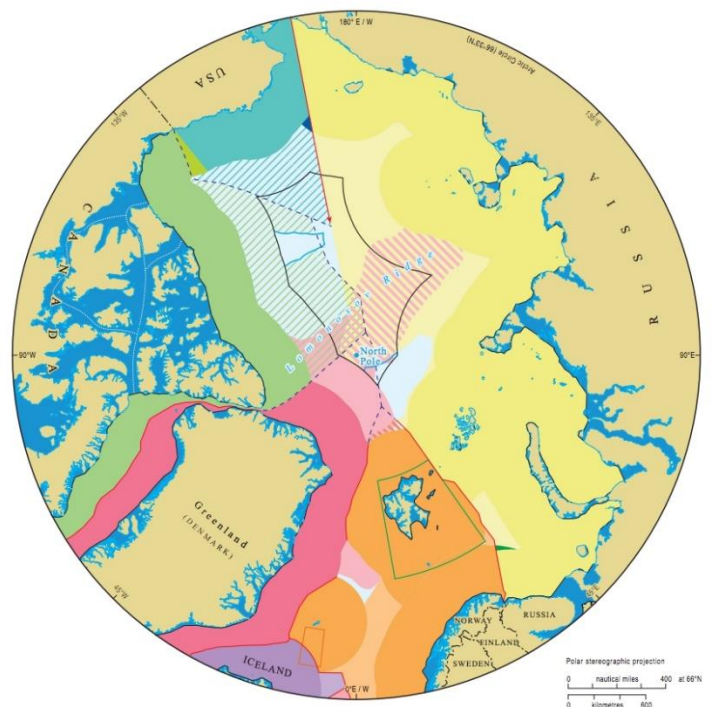
Sanctions

Russian, Indian foreign ministers to discuss prospective energy projects: Moscow - Prospective energy projects on the Arctic Shelf and in the Russian far east will be among the main topics of discussion between the foreign ministers of Russia and India when they meet on Tuesday, Russia’s foreign ministry has said.

Subrahmanyam Jaishankar will hold talks with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov in Moscow tomorrow with the pair also expected to discuss a range of other topics, ranging from trade to using national currencies in mutual settlements, the ministry said in a statement.

India and Russia have had deep relations for decades. New Delhi has steered clear of publicly condemning Moscow for its offensive in Ukraine while importing billions of dollars’ worth of cheap Russian energy sources during the conflict.

Comments – (i) India has no presence in this region, the same as China, who merely enjoys “Observer” status. It appears that Russia may be inviting them in on the back of the BRICS alignment. We will need to wait and see the reaction of other Arctic Shelf players. (ii) Chinese companies were invited by Russia to extract oil in combination with Russian oil outfits. (iii) Russia deploys more ice breakers than all other countries combined and has a number of nuclear-powered vessel keels laid for further growth.



Ukraine to take over Motor Sich, Ukrnafta, other strategical enterprises owned by oligarchs. Four companies associated with controversial businessmen Kostyantyn Zhevago, Ihor Kolomoisky and Konstantin Grigorishin may soon be nationalized, Ukrainska Pravda reported, citing unnamed sources in the National Securities and Stock

Market Commission. Reportedly, the country can also take over Motor Sich, whose head Viacheslav Bohuslaiev was arrested on Oct. 23. He is suspected of collaborating with Russia.

Which countries have sanctioned Russia? - As Tuesday's US midterm elections get closer, polls show that support for Ukraine among Republican voters is dwindling, meaning that the continuation of aid could be in jeopardy.

According to a Wall Street Journal poll, 48 percent of Republicans said the US was doing "too much" to support Ukraine.

With global inflation rates rising, new questions have been raised about the future of the US assistance, which has already reached \$18.2bn.

Other nations already reluctant to outwardly support Ukraine could also push for more peace talks if the war continues. Look particularly for countries directly affected by the looming food crisis, that Russia is manufacturing and upon which it is banking.

Of note in the map is a dearth of support for sanctions from countries in Africa, Asia and Central and South America, including Mexico.

China has long been at work in these regions with their BRI program which, although fraying at the edges, has provided them the opportunity to rail against "imperial" investment as a competitive approach.

These are also, coincidentally, the target regions for the proposed future China/Russia-inspired multipolar global order.

Lost in assuming any pivotal Chinese role though is American control of the oceans, without which the world will not be able to trade peacefully, and of which factor China is keenly aware.

Putin wants the world to forget Ukraine - Putin's message to the West, East and South is to focus on the global crises they face and let him have Ukraine.

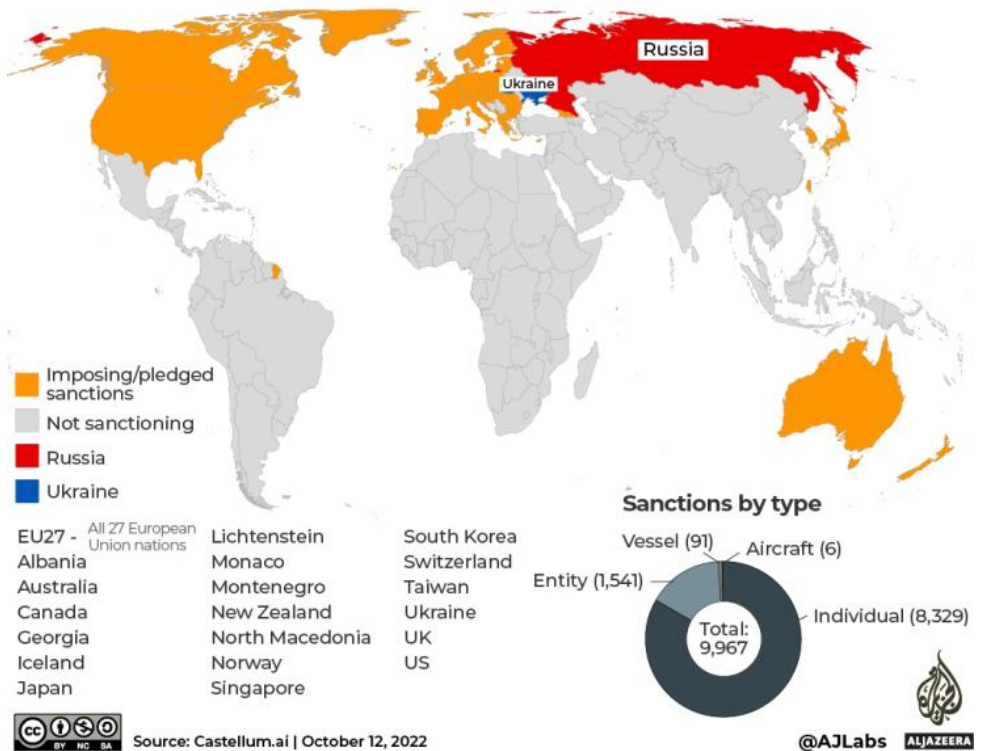
As Vladimir Putin was finishing his first term in office in 2004, he sought to develop modern channels of communication with the world, especially the West. That is why the Valdai Club was launched, along with its annual conference in which the president would participate. It became one of the main venues where Russia's leader would address the rest of the world.

From the mid-2000s to the early 2010s, he would spend hours at the conference answering the questions of top Russia experts, talking about the country's unique democratic development and openness to the world.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Which countries have sanctioned Russia?

At least **46 countries or territories** have imposed sanctions on Russia, or pledged to adopt a combination of US and EU sanctions. Since February 22, **more than 9,967 sanctions** have been imposed on Russia, making it the **most sanctioned country in the world**.



It is important to dig through Putin's quite direct and at times vulgar rhetoric to understand what his global strategy is. He delivered several messages directed at different audiences, trying to drive one key idea through: it is not about Ukraine, it is about much more than that.

Putin's main and most popular narrative directed at the international audience is the "end of the unipolar moment" and the "coming of multipolarity". He has been preaching about it for most of his presidency, picking it up from the writings of Russia's former prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, the late Yevgeny Primakov.

Unsurprisingly, it dominated much of his speech at Valdai. He accused the West and the United States of triggering crises and sowing chaos around the world, and reiterated his conviction that the rise of other powers necessitates respect for their interests and participation in drawing the rules of how the world is governed.

His key message – directed at other powers like China and India – was that the end of American hegemony should lead to the end of the Western promotion of democracy and institutions of governance, universality of human rights and what has become known as the "liberal world order" in general.

It should also give space for a non-Western financial architecture to emerge – an idea that Russia has been running with for at least a decade. That is already taking place to a certain degree in the form of dedollarisation, but clearly not at the pace that Putin needs to fight the negative consequences of Western sanctions.

The Russian president also addressed the Global South with an updated version of Soviet messaging: that Moscow respects the sovereignty and the right of every nation to "follow its own path", unlike Western colonial powers which historically have not. He also drew attention to continuing Western economic dominance and exploitation of developing countries through "neocolonial" globalisation.

In a nutshell, he gave everyone in the West, East and South a broad enough reason to think of their own problems and of global crises and to see the war in Ukraine through that prism: it is not about Ukraine; it is about much more.

This is the message Putin and the Kremlin are trying to convey to the world and especially the West – the cost of supporting Ukraine is too much, and its importance – too negligible, when compared with what the world is dealing with. It can be resolved simply with "dialogue on an equal footing."

Moscow is, of course, playing an important role in stoking these crises: from waging a gas war on the European Union to undermining the United Nations grain deal, curbing Ukrainian wheat exports and exacerbating food shortages in the Global South. The goal is to distract the world from the war in Ukraine, to present it as a small, regional – if not domestic – issue.

Indeed, for those that do not follow the war in Ukraine closely, who do not understand the context and who mistrust the news of war crimes, what Putin is saying may seem reasonable enough. But unfortunately, what he envisions as a "dialogue" or a "solution" is, in fact, a full surrender of Ukraine – the West agreeing to step back and turn a blind eye to the horrors of the Russian war and occupation.

This is the multipolarity Putin is preaching – a world order that enables those that have the power to do what they want and to bend international laws.

And while Putin wants the world to forget Ukraine, he is obsessed with it. For him this is a personal affair; it is about delivering "historical justice" in his Russian imperial understanding of it.

Nuclear

Kremlin officials collectively begin to de-escalate their rhetoric regarding nuclear weapons use. ISW said in its latest assessment that Putin and key Kremlin officials had initially increased their references to the use of nuclear

weapons from Putin's Sept. 30 annexation speech and throughout October, likely to pressure Ukraine into negotiations and to reduce Western support for Kyiv.

However, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement on "the prevention of nuclear war," stating that Russia "is strictly and consistently guided by the postulate of the inadmissibility of a nuclear war in which there can be no winners, and which must never be unleashed."

"The Kremlin's rhetorical shift indicates that senior Russian military commanders and elements of the Kremlin are likely to some extent aware of the massive costs for little operational gain Russia would incur for the use of nuclear weapons against Ukraine or NATO," ISW found.

But then 'In order to win...': Putin makes chilling Nov 6th reference to Hiroshima, Nagasaki in chat with Macron reports India Today - Putin, in a chilling reference to the nuclear bombing of Japan's Hiroshima and Nagasaki during a conversation with French President Emmanuel Macron, said the Second World War is an example that you don't need to attack major cities in order to win the war.

While Russia continues to offer assurances of its retreat from the western bank of the Dnipro river in Kherson, Russian President Vladimir Putin's reference to the atomic bombings of Japan in a conversation with French President Emmanuel Macron has terrified the leaders of the West.

"Putin expressed the view that the bombings – which triggered the Japanese surrender and the end of the Second World War – demonstrated that 'you don't need to attack the major cities in order to win,'" the Daily Mail reported.

Ukrainians prep for a possible Russian nuclear attack - Atomic saber rattling by the Kremlin ranges from Putin's threat to defend illegally annexed Ukrainian territory "by all means available," to increasingly unhinged comments from former President Medvedev and Moscow's (false) hints that Ukraine is developing a nuclear "dirty bomb" — something Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has warned might be Russia preparing for a so-called false flag attack.

For many Ukrainians, these are far from empty words and the country is getting ready. The Serhiy Prytula Charity Foundation in downtown Kyiv has one bomb shelter in the carpark below the building to protect staff from conventional Russian attacks and another to be used in case of a nuclear attack.

China is warning about the danger of using nuclear weapons. Last week, Chinese leader Xi Jinping said: "Nuclear weapons cannot be used, a nuclear war cannot be waged."

US President Biden told Putin it would be an "incredibly serious mistake" to use a tactical nuclear weapon in Ukraine.

Those international warnings aren't stopping Ukrainians from prepping for the worst.

The authorities in the Kyiv region have hundreds of shelters that could be used in case of nuclear attack.

"The past eight months have taught us that anything can happen. As an official, I am preparing for the worst-case scenario, but I hope that everything will be fine," Oleksii Kuleba, head of the capital region's military administration, told local media.

Kuleba said the shelters are below ground, have ventilation, two entrances, and by November 15 should be equipped with radio sets — which Ukrainian authorities believe might be the only means of communications after a nuclear attack.

Ukraine's government bodies have also recently published detailed instructions — informed by the country's experience with the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster — on what to do in case of a nuclear strike.