

Conflict Update # 248

November 1st, 2022

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Conflict Assessment

Russian losses – 72,470 (650) soldiers killed, 2,665 (+12) enemy tanks, 5,501 (+16) armored combat vehicles, 1,730 (+2) artillery systems, 383 (+0) MLRS systems, 197 (+0) air defense systems, 276 (+1) warplanes, 257 (+4) helicopters, 1,415 (+2) UAVs of the operational-tactical level, 397 (+45) cruise missiles, 15 (+0) warships/cutters, 4,143 (+15) trucks and tankers, 4 Iskander Missile Launchers (+0), 76 fuel bowsers (+0) and 155 (+2) units of specialized equipment.

Key Takeaways

By the numbers – 45 Cruise missiles out a reported 50 were shot down by Ukrainian forces, but severe damage to infrastructural targets was caused by the remaining missiles getting through, with no power shortages but water was restricted to 80% of Kyiv residents. Another 600 Russian soldiers fell in battle, mainly in Avdiivka and Bakhmut in Donetsk and 4 helicopters were claimed, two shot down and two destroyed on the ground.

Ukrainian saboteurs blew up Russian helicopters 500 miles from Ukraine - The Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine and Telegram channel Baza have reported several Ka-52 helicopters getting damaged on an air base in the Pskov region of Russia (1).

Russian social media users mentioned incidents involving helicopters in Pskov Oblast. And there is a video purportedly depicting the daytime sabotage, depicting a man crouching alongside a Ka-52, preparing what appears to be a bomb combining an MD-5M detonator with a VZD-6Ch mechanical fuse.

According to Ukraine's Intelligence, the two helicopters were destroyed overnight, while another two were severely damaged following a powerful explosion on the Russian Naval Aviation air base Ostrov (2). "The details on the destruction of other equipment and personnel are being determined. The personnel of the military unit were put on alert, investigative activities are being conducted in the unit with the goal of dealing with the aftermath of the explosion and also to search for sabotage groups," the message reads.



Ukrainian agents working in Pskov Oblast would need as much time as they can get. Veretye air base in Pskov lies 15 miles from the Russian border with Estonia, and 500 miles from Ukraine. It's unclear how the potential saboteurs may have infiltrated Russia, but they undoubtedly traveled some distance.

The agency notes that Ka-52 Alligator (NATO reporting name: Hokum B) is a reconnaissance and attack helicopter made in Russia; its cost is estimated at \$16mln.

Erroneous assumptions, huge miscalculations and strategic blunders – Commencing its invasion and attempt at usurping Ukrainian nationality, Russia massively misjudged Ukrainian reaction and just as massively mis-assumed the welcome it would receive and the ease with which it would accomplish its strategic objectives.

When entering Ukraine, the world stood aghast and expected to see huge losses and deep incision into Ukraine's very national existence.

Russia mounted three fronts planning to complete its incursion in a matter of days, maybe a week. It is safe to assume that this is the message delivered by Putin to President Xi of China in their pre-Olympics tête-à-tête.

So erroneous was this mis-assumption, that Russia sent in vast, miles-long columns of armored equipment and tens of thousands of soldiers, most completely oblivious to where they were headed and what their military objectives were.

North of Kyiv was a column estimated at some 40 miles long. The world waited with bated breath.

But they massively miscalculated Ukrainian resistance and innovative adaptability.

During the initial days of the invasion, Ukraine was "man alone" in its defense against such a large aggressor. It had antiquated 1960's Soviet-era weaponry and armaments.

BUT it had a modern-era approach to battles and military tactics, honed by US training since the 2014 Crimea and Donbas grab by Russia.

But it still had little to counter the Russian advance in late February this year.

Russia, unwittingly at first, believed that it had modernized its military tactical offense capability and could subdue its smaller neighbor with its "modernized" rapid deployment force, at odds with its age-old tactic of a slow moving "bomb and subdue" process.

Huge miscalculation – Ukraine, armed with a few shoulder-mounted missiles, took out the first few tanks in the advancing Russian column north of Kyiv, and then took out the last few tanks, effectively bringing it to a halt and stranding tens of thousands of soldiers in a "killing ground."

It then changed road signs to direct escaping Russian battalions and armored columns into adjacent killing grounds.

Russian Command extraordinarily miscalculated its logistical requirement. Instead of rapidly advancing to Kyiv to overthrow Zelenskyy and his government, they were now bogged down along an extended killing zone, prime static targets. Classical ambush maneuvering and guerilla warfare at its enhanced best by the Ukrainians.

This dramatic halting of thousands of vehicles and soldiers required two primary, yet very basic requirements – gas and food. The Ukrainians then took out all gas bowsers and food supply trucks. An advancing army, or any army for that matter, cannot advance on an empty stomach or with an empty fuel tank.

Another basic requirement was that of effective field command and control which Russia had neither of.

They were caught like the proverbial deer in the headlights.

Ukraine then accelerated its attacks and destroyed entire battalions, capturing urgently-needed armored equipment in the process, literally doubling its armored complement overnight. It ran up and down the column with electric motorcycle "commandos" taking out each and every target listed as vital and important.

Thousands of Russian soldiers demounted and fled, walking back to Belarus, stealing food along the way to survive.

Routed, Russia pivoted, citing “humanitarian” reasons for a withdrawal and its “new objective” of subduing the Donbas region. Slight of phrase as it already had a significant control of this region post-2014 through Russian-backed separatists complimented by Russian troops.

It now also reverted to its tried and tested technique of “bomb and subdue.”

But it still hadn’t learned the lessons of modern warfare and was shellacked in Kharkiv by a Ukrainian counter- offensive mounted in September, taking back thousands of square kilometers of oblast terrain.



Russia then pivoted again, fearing a huge loss of initiative and domestic backlash. It had to show success, in any manufactured format.

So they “annexed” the four southern oblasts, citing these as now being part of the Russian Federation.

Another miscalculation as Ukrainian command, tails high in the wind, continued their southern march, taking out swathes of northern Kherson and entering Donetsk and Luhansk, the two oblasts under separatist control since 2014.

Now with full-scale western support and arming, Ukraine is poised to do what no-one believed possible – defeat the second-biggest military and largest nuclear-armed nation in the world.

Does it worry about a nuclear threat? Absolutely – but what is the alternative? Annihilation and extinction of the Ukrainian people and state. This is not even a matter of consideration for Ukrainians.

Approaching winter with its swivel tactical points will see a to-and-fro between the belligerents until grounds thaw and firm up allowing armored advances and defenses.

Ukraine is poised to capture all of northern Kherson Oblast and swathes of Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia before Christmas this year. Capturing southern Kherson will be tougher, if not impossible as winning control hereof opens a direct path to Crimea, something Russia will combat – at any cost.

The war will drag on for an extended period, with Russia suffering increasing losses in the field of rapidly-recruited untrained mobilization-manned battalion forces.

Ukraine will not let up as it is in an existential battle for survival.

Russia has once more pivoted and is now ferociously attacking Ukrainian civilian infrastructure, trying to exhaust Ukrainian resistance by literally freezing them to death in the coming winter. A war crime personified.

Ukraine will not capitulate and will start receiving extended-range artillery and advanced drone weapons, together with massive amounts of munitions and missiles. It will need to attack the Black Sea fleet from where cruise and S300 missiles are emanating, as well as considering precision targeting of Belarussian airfields from where Russian attack bombers and aircraft are being dispatched to launch attacks against Ukrainian infrastructure.

Russia, running out of missiles and rockets, will turn to Iran for its medium-range missiles, which in turn will lead to retaliatory action against the middle-eastern state.

The US, NATO and EU will not willingly enter Ukrainian space and will continue to use Poland as a de facto US military supply point. This despite positioning NATO “ready-to-engage” troops close to Ukrainian territories in Romania and the Baltic states.

They will continue to wage war on Russia via this proxy mechanism, but they will not allow Ukraine to fall into Russian hands, under any circumstances.

They may well consider supporting ceding predominantly Russian-speaking occupied areas to Russia to enable a cessation of hostilities.

Russia, now exhausted and more keenly aware of its shortcomings than are we, is increasingly seeking a way out with mounting dialogue of “peace talk” intent. Putin cannot afford to cede territories he already has under his control if he wants to remain in power. So we can look to him seeking to retain these and using the West as his foil to force this through in return for a “peace.”

He still has the red button he can push and huge resources, albeit fragmented, but available, no matter how difficult to deploy. He also has the food weaponization process he has underway.

Watch this space.

Head of Russia's Kursk region reports shelling of border village by Ukraine's Armed Forces - Ukraine's Armed Forces fired mortars at the border district village Krasnoktyabrsky this afternoon, Governor of the Kursk region of Russia Roman Starovoyt says in a Telegram post.

“No one was hurt. A three-story building was damaged, about 20 windows were blown out. Tomorrow, specialists will obtain measurements for repairs,” he writes.

Effective Ukrainian partisan attacks are forcing the Kremlin to divert resources away from frontline operations to help secure rear areas, degrading Russia's ability to defend against ongoing Ukrainian counteroffensives, let alone conduct their own offensive operations. Poor Russian operational security has enabled Ukrainian partisan attacks. Russia's increasing manpower shortages are likely degrading Russian forces' ability to effectively secure Russian rear areas against partisan attacks and simultaneously defend against Ukrainian counteroffensives. The Kremlin still has not effectively countered Ukraine's organized partisan movement and is unlikely to have the capabilities to do so.

Russian occupation forces have so far failed to neutralize Ukraine's organized partisan movement as of November 2022 and are unlikely to possess the capability to do so. Ukrainian partisans began targeting pro-Russian Ukrainian collaborators and Russian personnel less than one week after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24 and have conducted dozens of confirmed attacks across occupied Ukraine, assassinating at least 11 Russian occupation officials and prominent collaborators as of November 1.

Poor Russian operational security has enabled Ukrainian partisan attacks. Russian forces have not effectively concealed the identities of pro-Russian collaborators and have failed to provide basic security to Russian occupation officials at their homes and places of work. Russian forces have failed to protect vulnerable sections of critical Russian ground lines of communication, such as rail line junctures and bridges, particularly in rural areas. Ukrainian partisans freely collect targeting information on Russian military and occupation authority targets and pass this information to other partisans and the conventional Ukrainian military.

Russian sources have openly criticized the Kremlin's failure to provide additional security against Ukrainian partisan attacks in occupied Ukraine. Prominent Russian milblogger Alexander Kots suggested that Russian occupation authorities are not taking Ukrainian partisan attacks seriously—comparing Ukrainian partisans to insurgents of the Chechen wars of the 1990s.

Kots advocated for Russian forces to begin an “anti-terrorism campaign” in Ukraine alongside Russia's existing “denazification” and “demilitarization” efforts on August 25. Russian milblogger Rybar criticized Russian occupation forces' failure to take the initiative in the information space, including against “information operations” about Ukrainian partisan attacks. Russian state media largely ignores these attacks and sometimes falsely frames them as conventional Ukrainian military attacks to downplay the effects of partisan warfare in Russian-occupied territory.

Russia's increasing manpower shortages are degrading Russian forces' ability to effectively secure their rear areas against partisan attacks. Russian forces occupy approximately 85,300 square kilometers of mainland Ukrainian territory, excluding Crimea, as of today, and manpower shortages are inhibiting efforts to secure this area.

Ukrainian intelligence reported on October 28 that Russian military has concentrated 40,000 personnel in Russian-occupied Kherson Oblast, where it occupies roughly 23,000 square kilometers.

Their prioritization of Kherson Oblast has degraded Russian security forces in Zaporizhia (a notable hotbed of partisan activity), Donetsk, and Luhansk oblasts. Partisan attacks have persisted in Russian-occupied Kherson and Zaporizhia oblasts even following Russia's annexation of those regions on September 30, indicating Russian forces continued inability to secure occupied territory.

Ukrainian partisan attacks have diverted Russian resources away from the front line to help secure rear areas, degrading Russian capabilities to defend against Ukrainian counteroffensives, let alone conduct their own offensive operations. Russian occupation authorities have tasked Rosgvardia and Federal Security Service (FSB) special forces elements—elements that have participated in combat operations in Ukraine—to conduct rear security in occupied Ukraine.

Moscow reportedly deployed unspecified special anti-partisan elements to Kherson City in response to partisan attacks targeting occupation officials before June 12. They deployed special Rosgvardia police units to provide security in occupied Starobilsk, Luhansk Oblast on August 22.

The Russian Interior Ministry sent personnel from St. Petersburg and Leningrad Oblast to conduct patrols in Starobilsk, Shchastya, and Stanystia Luhanska in Luhansk Oblast to “prevent and suppress provocations to destabilize the situation at an unknown time before August 23.” Russian sources also confirmed that Russian Spetsnaz detachments, possibly from the FSB Special Purpose Center, conducted spot checks and other law enforcement tasks in formerly occupied Kharkiv Oblast on August 24.

Elements of Rosgvardia, FSB special forces, and Russian private military companies—notably the Wagner Group—also serve as part of Russia’s frontline combat power in Ukraine. These elements’ participation in rear area security precludes them from participating in combat operations. Ukrainian officials have explicitly stated that Ukrainian partisans aim to exhaust Russian forces and force Russia to redirect frontline forces toward occupied territory.

Russian forces are likely continuing to move troops and military assets across the Dnipro River in anticipation of Ukrainian advances towards Kherson City. Ukrainian military sources reported that Russian forces are preparing to move artillery units and weapons from the west bank of the Dnipro River for possible redeployment in other directions.

Ukraine’s Southern Operational Command additionally noted Russian forces are preparing to evacuate individual units and military equipment from the west bank and have collected watercraft to facilitate the evacuation. Russian-backed Kherson occupation deputy Kirill Stremousov stated that their forces also began engineering positions in Bilozerka (6km due west of Kherson City) and Chornobaivka (1km north of Kherson City), which is corroborated by imagery posted by reported Russian collaborators of barbed wire defenses in these areas.

The fact that Russian collaborators are preparing to defend Chornobaivka is particularly noteworthy, as Chornobaivka is the last settlement along the M14 north of Kherson City. The current frontline lies less than 20km northwest of Chornobaivka, and active efforts to bolster defense here indicate concern for an imminent Ukrainian advance. The simultaneous evacuation of military assets from the west bank and preparations for the defense of critical areas around Kherson City indicate serious anxiety over Russian control of the west bank.

Russian forces launched another massive wave of strikes against critical Ukrainian infrastructure, further damaging the power grid and leaving much of Kyiv without water.

Russian officials again changed their minds about the risk of Ukrainian forces destroying the Kakhovka dam, ordering evacuations of areas that could be flooded. There is no scenario in which Ukraine would benefit from destroying the dam, and this rhetoric is likely meant to speed evacuations and provide informational cover for Russian withdrawals from the west bank.

Russian forces are continuing to withdraw from the west bank of the Dnipro River even as they set conditions to fight for positions around Kherson City.

Wagner Private Military Company financier Evgeniy Prigozhin sought to bring charges against the St. Petersburg mayor for corruption and announced the imminent opening of the PMC Wagner Center in St. Petersburg. Prigozhin also attacked “oligarchs” and “elites” for living in comfort and preventing the full mobilization of Russia.

Russian sources continued to claim that Ukrainian troops conducted counter-offensive operations in northeastern Kharkiv Oblast and along the Svatove-Kreminna line on October 30 and 31.

Russian forces continued defensive operations and Russian sources reported that Ukrainian forces continued counter-offensive operations in Kherson Oblast on October 30 and 31.

The Ukrainian interdiction campaign is damaging Russian forces exfiltrating across the Dnipro River.

Russian forces continued ground attacks around Bakhmut on October 30 and 31.

Russian sources claimed their troops made incremental gains in the Avdiivka-Donetsk City area on October 30 and 31, but ISW cannot verify these claims.

The Russian MoD is likely attempting to prevent draft dodging by trying to deceive the Russian population into believing that autumn conscripts will not be sent to fight in Ukraine.

The MoD also announced the end of partial mobilization on October 31, executing Russian President Vladimir Putin's order to end mobilization by the end of October

Local Russian governments remain responsible for even basic provisions to mobilized personnel, demonstrating the inefficiency of crowdfunding efforts and uncoordinated supply lines to support a modern military.

Russian occupation authorities in Kherson Oblast announced that they would allow the use of Ukrainian hryvnias alongside Russian rubles, demonstrating the failure of their monthslong rubleization efforts in Kherson.

Russian officials continue to create poor conditions in occupied parts of Kherson Oblast, likely to drive local inhabitants to evacuate.

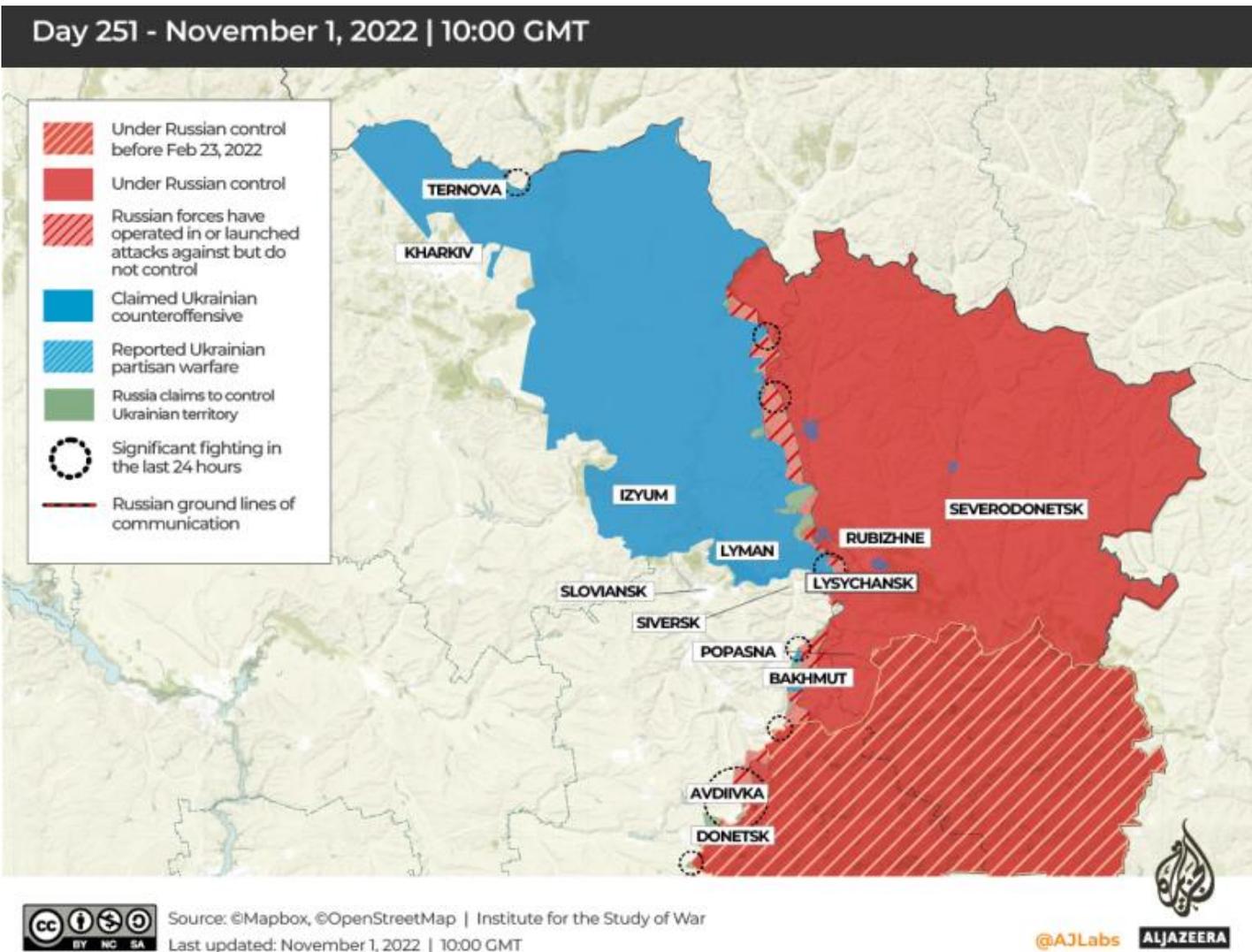
Eastern Ukraine: (Eastern Kharkiv Oblast-Western Luhansk Oblast) - Russian sources continued to claim that Ukrainian troops conducted counter-offensive operations in northeastern Kharkiv Oblast. The Russian MoD and milbloggers claimed Ukrainian forces conducted a series of unsuccessful assaults around Orlianka, Tabaivka, and Berestove, all within 30km northwest of Svatove. The former also claimed that its troops repelled Ukrainian attacks northwest of Svatove in the Kupyansk area on October 31.

A Russian milblogger reported Ukrainian troops are preparing for another offensive in that direction on the Orlianka-Pershotravneve line. The Ukrainian General Staff (UGS) notably stated that Russian troops attacked Mykolaivka and Novoselivske, both about 30km northwest of Svatove, indicating that Ukrainian troops have advanced east of the Kupyansk area.

Russian sources claimed Ukrainian troops continued counter-offensive operations along the Svatove-Kreminna line. The Russian MoD and milbloggers claimed Russian troops repelled Ukrainian attacks on Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove) and Makiivka (22km northwest of Kreminna) on October 30. Geolocated footage showed the aftermath of an explosion of a bridge across the Krasne River in Krasnorichenske, 15km north of Kreminna, suggesting that Russian forces may be conducting a deliberate withdrawal from settlements north of Kreminna in anticipation of Ukrainian advances.

Russian milbloggers additionally claimed that Ukrainian troops attacked Chervonopopivka (5km northwest of Kreminna) on October 30 and 31. UGS noted Russian troops shelled Ploshchanka (15km northwest of Kreminna), indicating that Ukrainian troops are continuing to advance towards the R66 Svatove-Kreminna highway north of Kreminna. Russian milbloggers continued to claim that Russian troops, including elements of the BARS-13 Combat Reserve are holding the defense of Kreminna and pushing Ukrainian troops away from the frontline.

Ukrainian and Russian sources discussed offensive operations south of Kreminna around Lysychansk on October 30 and 31. UGS reported that Ukrainian troops repelled a Russian attack on Bilohorivka, 10km south of Kreminna. A Russian milblogger claimed Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups are probing Russian defenses near Bilohorivka.

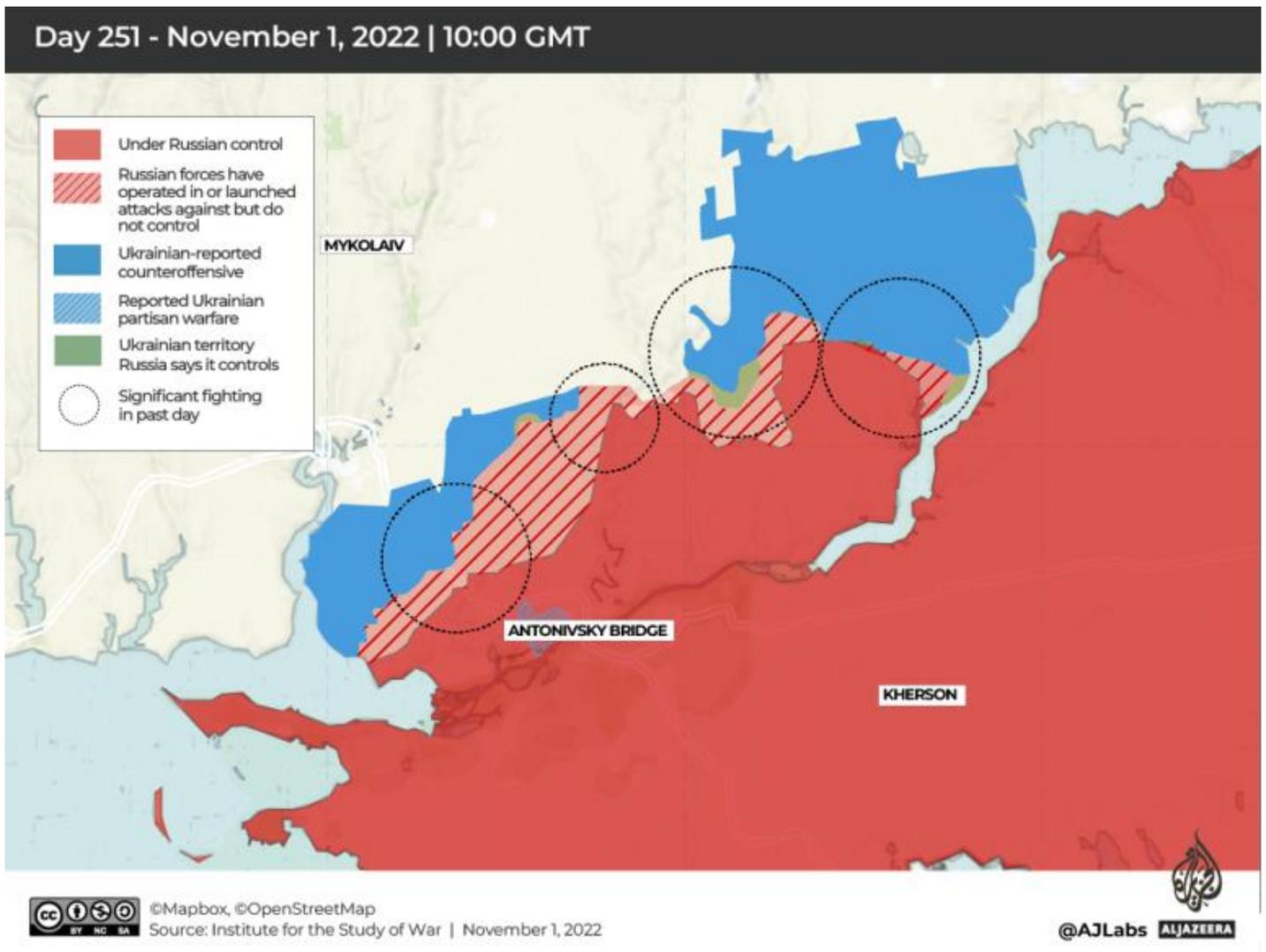


Southern Ukraine: (Kherson Oblast) - Russian forces continued defensive operations in Kherson Oblast with Ukrainian military reports their troops are conducting remote mining of areas near the Kherson Oblast frontline, evacuating military assets to the east bank of the Dnipro River, and reforming units (likely adding newly mobilized reservists to reconstitute shell units).

Russian sources additionally claimed their troops are engineering positions northwest of Kherson City and preparing for defensive operations there. Social media imagery shows reported Russian collaborators installing barbed wire to strengthen defensive positions north of Kherson City in Chornobaivka and west of Kherson City in Bilozerka.

Their sources claimed that Ukrainian troops continued counter-offensive operations in Kherson Oblast attempting to break through Russian lines in the Beryslav Raion — the area where Russian lines are currently stretched the furthest — on October 31. Russian sources reported that elements of the Russian Eastern Military District, special forces, and airborne forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Davydiv Brid on October 30. The Russian MoD claimed on October 31 that Ukrainian troops attacked Russian troops along the current frontline northwest of Beryslav.

UGS reported Russian forces shelled near previously Russian-claimed Ternovi Pody, Mykolaiv Oblast, (20km northwest of Chornobaivka), indicating a possible Ukrainian advance. Video shows Ukrainian forces clearing Russian mines in an unspecified area of Kherson Oblast, indicating ongoing Ukrainian efforts to advance into Russian-held territory.



The Ukrainian interdiction campaign is reportedly damaging Russian forces exfiltrating across the Dnipro River.

Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported their fires destroyed two barges Russian forces used to transport forces from the west bank to the east bank near the Antonivsky Bridge. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command additionally reported that Ukrainian forces conducted 156 fire missions and struck two Russian ammunition warehouses in Beryslav and Bashtanka raions. The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed its forces intercepted six Ukrainian AGM-88 HARM anti-radar missiles near Antonivka on October 30.

Russia abandons its ruble-only plan in Kherson as Ukraine's military continues to make gains - Russia is abandoning a plan that would enforce a ruble-only payment system in occupied Kherson, according to the Institute for the Study of War.

"Occupation authorities in Kherson Oblast announced a dual currency system that allows the use of both rubles and hryvnya, unwinding a months-long effort to enforce rubleization in the oblast," the think tank tweeted on Sunday, referring to the broader administrative region that includes the city of Kherson.

The move marks another setback for Russia's war on Ukraine. The city of Kherson was the first major Ukrainian city and only regional capital that came under Russian control in the early stages of the war.

The Kremlin's state-run media said earlier this year that Kherson would use rubles for transactions starting May 1. A four-month transition period was planned, during which the Ukrainian hryvnia would continue to circulate.

Belarus arming - British intelligence is raising awareness of Russian jets and likely ballistic missiles staged inside Belarus in mid-October. "Imagery showed two MiG-31K FOXHOUND interceptor jets were almost certainly parked at Belarus's Machulishchi Airfield on 17 October, with a large canister stored nearby within a protective earth berm," the Defense Ministry tweeted Tuesday, with an annotated satellite image. "It is likely that the canister is associated with the AS-24 KILLJOY air launched ballistic missile, a large munition which the MiG-31K variant is adapted to carry." That missile was first fielded in 2018 but hadn't been spotted in Belarus until October.

Moscow may be trying to provoke the West. "With a range of over 2000 km, basing KILLJOY in Belarus gives Russia little added advantage in terms of striking additional targets within Ukraine." However, "It has likely carried out the deployment mainly to message to the West and to portray Belarus as increasingly complicit in the war."

Comment – How long before saboteurs strike internal Belarus targets?

Kherson cut off - After occupation authorities in Kherson region announced evacuation from the western to the eastern bank of the Dnipro they launched a heavy information campaign, and no one is certain what it is trying to achieve.

Kherson has been literally cut off from all connections with cables clipped. Russia's networks also work with fits and starts. Moving the pro-Russian administration to the eastern bank, the military also took monuments to Fyodor Ushakov and Alexander Suvorov, as well as some of the collaborators. The locals are sort of cut off from the rest of the world information-wise. Here is what they say about their daily routine.

Russia's TV stopped working days ago when the "evacuation" officially ended. This is leaving the few remaining citizens and troops in the dark.

Who fled in the first instance? Those who collaborated with the occupation authorities. Those who received Russian passports and now have no idea what to do.

Ukraine is preparing for a "war of drones," including drones that can kill other drones in the sky. "This is the next stage in the development of ideas," the head of Ukraine's Ministry of Digital Development, 31-year-old Mikhail Fedorov, said.

Kyiv is racing to stand up its own "army of drones." According to Fedorov, "Now there are contracts for 1,033 drones," he told Forbes. "About 70% of them have already been received. The rest will be delivered by the end of the year." Ukraine already uses "about 20 FlyEye [UAV systems] that are quite important for our artillery," he said.

"We know exactly which electronic warfare systems Russia uses to intercept drone signals, so we made our vehicles more robust to their influence," he told the Kyiv Independent. They're also encrypted "so that no one can seize control of the drone or access its data if the drone crashes in enemy territory," he said.

Ukraine's drone pilots wage a modern war on a shoestring budget - Standing in a trench not far from the Russian border, a drone operator from the Ukrainian military unit Khartia didn't look up at the sound of Russian shells slamming into the ground a few kilometers to his left.

Instead, his attention was fully focused on trying to get an experimental Ukrainian-made long-range drone off the ground. It was one of the few afternoons that week when the weather was good enough to fly.

None of the team of three drone operators that day was a computer whiz. "Guard," who wore a big beard on his tattooed face, was a top-flight competitive bodybuilder before the war. "Lego" worked as a civil engineer. "Kim," the wiry young man trying to troubleshoot the drone, worked in real estate. For security reasons, all three went only by their call signs.

As drone operators, their role as roving intelligence collectors puts them at the epicenter of resistance against the Russian invasion, now in its ninth month. Their journey from green recruits to veteran soldiers shows how much Ukraine has achieved, but their stories also show just how far Ukraine has to go in matters ranging from weapons to intelligence.

A Ukrainian drone operator is seen setting up an antenna in the picture alongside.



This morning, Russia carried out massive missile strikes on Ukrainian cities. Local residents reported explosions in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Kryvyi Rih, and other Ukrainian cities. As a result, 80% of Kyiv residents were left without water, the press service of Kyiv's water utility agency reported .

Mayor of Kyiv Vitali Klitschko said that, following shelling of critical infrastructure objects, part of the Ukrainian capital had been left without electricity, while several districts — without water. Later, Klitschko clarified that an object providing about 350,000 flats with electricity has been damaged in the attack on the city.

Update – Water supply has been reconnected in Kyiv.

Russia ordered more civilians to leave a sliver of Ukraine along the eastern bank of the Dnipro River, a major extension of an evacuation order that Kyiv says amounts to the forced depopulation of occupied territory.

Occupation authorities: Ukraine's Armed Forces shell center of Donetsk - Representatives of the pro-Russian territorial defense headquarters report that a block of flats was damaged on another street and that a gas pipeline was hit near one of the buildings.

Russia's Defense Minister Shoigu: 87,000 draftees out of 300,000 deployed to combat zones - Out of the 300,000 people drafted under the "partial mobilization", 87,000 have already been "sent to the operations areas where the special military operation is conducted", Russia's Defense Minister Shoigu says .

"Unit cohesion course is about to finish at the training grounds. The main effort is concentrated on field training and skills in using communication, navigation, and reconnaissance facilities. Over 3,000 instructors, who have gained combat experience in the special military operation, are involved in this work," the Minister of Defense adds.

According to Shoigu, "fighting vehicle and tank crews, snipers, artillery and unmanned aircraft system operators, as well as electronic warfare professionals etc." are being prepared at training centres.

Comment – Some Russian companies have lost around 90% of their battle complements, with vacancies now being filled by these untrained enlistees, hence the dramatic death toll being effected by Ukrainian forces in the Donbas region.

Containment

Britain's tech experts fighting Russian hackers in biggest cyber war in history - Britain's top computer boffins are fighting Russian hackers in the biggest cyber war in history over Ukraine, officials revealed last night.

UK cyber warriors have been locked in a "geek battle" to protect President Zelensky from devastating attacks targeting key databases and infrastructure.

The hidden enemy forces include a hacking group known as TURLA - considered Putin's stealthiest cyber force - which once targeted Britney Spears Instagram account.

They are focused on targeting "high value targets" to gain crucial and compromising information. Their hacks were exposed by allied agents on at least two occasions in a major blow to Russia's war effort, officials revealed.

Details emerged as Britain pledged a £6million scheme to bolster Kyiv's cyber defences – by hiring private contractors.

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said: "We are drawing on Britain's world-leading expertise to support Ukraine's cyber defences.

"Together, we will ensure that the Kremlin is defeated in every sphere – on land, in the air and in cyber space."

Russian hacker groups including the FSB-linked Armageddon and GRU-linked ATPU28, also known as Fancy Bear, have also been targeting Ukraine.

But it is not only Moscow unleashing attacks.

China, Iran and Belarus have also launched digital blitzes since Putin triggered his bloodbath invasion on Feb 24.

Russian Mobilization

From one front to another – It is being reported that men being evacuated from Kherson Oblast are being turned around and drafted into battle units for front line postings.

Russia's General Staff promises that people drafted under autumn contract will not be sent to war or to serve in occupied regions of Ukraine - Russia's autumn conscripts, drafted to complete the year of compulsory military service, will not be deployed to war or to serve in the self-proclaimed Luhansk and Donetsk "people's republics" as well as the occupied territories of the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions of Ukraine, chief of the organizational mobilization department of the General Staff Yevgeny Burdinsky claims.

"I'll note that citizens called into military service will not be deployed to military units located on the territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions to carry out their duties, they will also not be involved in the special military operation in Ukraine," he is quoted as saying by newspaper Red Star.

He adds that discharge of current scripts began in October. As of 31 October, 19,500 people have been discharged from the Armed Forces and sent home.

However, it was previously stated on an official website launched by the Russian government that conscript soldiers whose stint in the army ends in October of this year could be mobilized for the war after they were discharged from the army. It was indicated on the same website that script soldiers would not be sent into combat zones.

On 22 September, representative of the General Staff of Russia's Armed Forces Vladimir Tsimlyansky promised that conscripts would not take part in the war in Ukraine; according to him, at the end of their one year of compulsory service they will be discharged and allowed to go home.

Grain

Ukraine grain deal: UN says shipments are still going out - The UN on Monday said that exports of grain from Ukraine were continuing despite Russia's weekend announcement it had suspended the agreement.

"Our understanding is that the initiative and commitments remain in force," UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths told a UN Security Council meeting in New York.

Russia previously said it was halting its participation in the deal due to the drone attacks on its Black Sea fleet on Saturday.

"We're very encouraged by Russia's assurance ... that it is not pulling out of the initiative ... it is only temporarily suspending activities in the implementation of the initiative," Griffiths added.

Griffiths said twelve ships had left Ukrainian ports on Monday and two were heading for Ukraine to load food.

No deal without Moscow — Russian UN ambassador - Separately, Russia's UN Ambassador Nebenzia said that Moscow did not want to allow further exports via the Black Sea and said the agreement "is not to be implemented without us." "We cannot allow an unimpeded passage of vessels without our inspection," Nebenzia said at a UN Security Council meeting in apparent response to the UN's stance that grain shipments could continue.

On Monday Russia also said it was "unacceptable" for shipping to pass through the Black Sea security corridor.

"The movement of ships along the security corridor is unacceptable, since the Ukrainian leadership and the command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine use it to conduct military operations against the Russian Federation," the Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement.

Three more grain ships leave Ukrainian ports under deal, despite Russian suspension - Three ships left Ukrainian ports by midday today under the Black Sea grain export deal, the UN-led coordination center said, the second day of sailings after Russia suspended participation in the initiative. The statement said the ships' movement was agreed by the Ukrainian, Turkish, and UN delegations at the Istanbul-based center and that the Russian delegation had been informed. It said the UN coordinator for the grain initiative, Amir Abdulla, continued discussions with all three member state parties in an effort to resume full participation at the center, which oversees the safe passage of vessels.

Comment – Watch this space.

Peace Talks

Putin says 'necessary conditions' may arise for Ukraine negotiation - Putin says that "necessary conditions" could arise and spur negotiations to end the war in Ukraine.

He said yesterday it would be possible to restart stalled peace talks between the nations but expressed frustration that Ukraine was "refusing to discuss anything" with Russia after Moscow's recent suspension of a deal to allow the exporting of grain from Ukrainian ports. **(Comments** – (i) this statement implies that there have been some talks and (ii) it similarly implies that Russia wants talks, otherwise it would not be going public in a trolling for support in this regard).

In July, Russia agreed to end its Black Sea blockade of the grain shipments following negotiations with Ukraine that were brokered by the United Nations (U.N.) and Turkey. The agreement was broken over the weekend after Russia accused Ukraine in an attack on Russian warships in Crimea.

The Russian president insisted during a press conference in Sochi that Russia's "good will" regarding its desire to end the war in Ukraine was "beyond any doubt," according to Ukrainska Pravda. Putin blamed Ukraine for throwing the grain deal "into the bin."

"We reached an agreement with them in Istanbul, but they've thrown all of that into the bin," he said. "And now they're refusing to discuss anything with us. How can we talk about possible agreements if the other side has no desire to even talk to us? Well, we can wait."

Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said that Russia was "ready to listen to our Western colleagues" if a new request for negotiations was made. He said that the West would need to "fully take into account the interests of the Russian Federation and its security" and "offer us some serious approaches that will help defuse tensions."

Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Saturday that any negotiations to end the war in Ukraine would need to be hosted in the U.S., which he said has a "deciding vote," according to Russian state media agency Tass.

(Comments – (i) A softening of rhetoric is apparent in the latest “approaches” regarding peace talks, and (ii) Russia is trying to sidestep Ukraine by appealing to Western states in its desire to enter negotiations and is trying to divide and conquer).

China

China home sales drop 28% in October - The 100 biggest real estate developers saw new-home sales drop 28.4 per cent from a year earlier to 556.1 billion yuan (\$510.7 billion) in October, according to preliminary data from China Real Estate Information (CRIC). That plunge widened from a 25.4 per cent slump in September.

Sanctions

US and allies developing deal on export controls targeting China’s chip access - The Biden administration expects to have “a deal done in the near-term” with U.S. allies to limit China’s access to advanced semiconductors and related equipment, according to Alan Estevez, undersecretary of Commerce for industry and security, who spoke at an event hosted by the Center for a New American Security on Thursday. He added that additional export controls on other advanced technologies remain on the table.

Officials are working to ensure that Chinese-focused export controls announced earlier this month by the department’s Bureau of Industry and Security—or BIS—are similarly implemented by other countries, Estevez said, adding that efforts to make the rules multilateral remain “a work in progress.”

BIS unveiled the new export controls on Oct. 7, saying in a press release that the “series of targeted updates” were designed to “restrict the [People’s Republic of China’s] ability to obtain advanced computing chips, develop and maintain supercomputers and manufacture advanced semiconductors.” The export controls announced by the Commerce Department—which Estevez noted were only on the “highest-end chips”—also limit China’s access to advanced semiconductors produced in other countries that utilize U.S.-made equipment.

“This was not a surprise to our allies,” Estevez said about the new export controls. “What we keep hearing is, ‘ensure that you, the U.S., also have skin in the game.’ We’ve shown that we have skin in the game. We’ve taken action and we view it as a down payment for what we’re going to do. And the discussions we’re having are good, so I’m very bullish.”

Impacts

Moscow, Chisinau exchange diplomatic expulsions after shot-down Russian missile falls in Moldovan village - Moscow and Chisinau exchanged diplomatic expulsions after a Russian missile shot down by Ukrainian air defenses fell on a village in northern Moldova on October 31.

Following the incident, which caused minor damage but did not injure anyone, Moldova announced it was expelling a Russian diplomat. Moscow followed suit hours later, announcing it was kicking out a Moldovan diplomat.

Ex-chess grandmaster Karpov hospitalized after mysterious fall - Former Soviet and Russian chess grandmaster Anatoly Karpov has been hospitalized in Moscow with a traumatic brain injury and a fractured leg after falling under mysterious circumstances.

Media reports quoted Karpov's daughter, Sofia, on October 31 as saying that the 71-year-old former world champion, who is a lawmaker representing the ruling United Russia party, had accidentally fallen near the parliament's lower chamber, the State Duma, two days before.

Karpov's daughter's account of what happened conflicts with that of Andrei Kovalyov, chairman of the All-Russian Movement of Entrepreneurs, who wrote on Telegram on October 31 that Karpov was attacked by an unknown individual and is now in a medically induced coma.

Meanwhile, several media reports said Karpov was drunk when found unconscious near the parliament building.

Russia likely to experience 'technological regress' due to sanctions, experts predict - International sanctions and export controls imposed on Russia following its invasion of Ukraine have hampered the country's access to critical technologies needed for its advanced weapons systems, leading to Moscow pursuing closer ties to China and placing a greater emphasis on its nuclear capabilities, according to a new report from the Center for a New American Security think tank released on Friday.

The report—which assessed Russia's ability to develop and deploy advanced military systems through 2030—identified two significant drivers critical to Russia's ability to further develop its nuclear and advanced weaponry capabilities: “The impact of Western sanctions on Russia's government revenue and ability to access critical technology, and the extent of the degradation of the Russian military in Ukraine, which will force choices on the Kremlin about how to prioritize military expenditures.”

While Russia has been under international sanctions since 2014—when it illegally annexed Crimea and emboldened separatist uprisings in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine—the more stringent sanctions imposed following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February are “much greater, affecting a broader range of goods and a wider range of sanctioned entities.” Beyond impacting Russia's economy, the report noted that these sanctions also “affect Russia's future military capabilities by limiting Russia's access to technology.”

“Furthermore, the imposition of export controls means that Russia cannot access strategically important goods such as semiconductors or precision machine tools that are produced in third countries, including China, India, Singapore and Taiwan, when they use equipment licensed from the United States or its allies,” the report added.

According to the report, this lack of access means “it is likely that Russia will experience some degree of ‘technological regress,’ in which the range and sophistication of products available in the country dwindle over time.” Because of ongoing international pressure, coupled with military and equipment losses in Ukraine, the report said that Russia “almost certainly will seek to adapt its tactics, creating new front companies, fake end-user certificates and transshipment points” in order to procure needed technologies for its weapons systems.

Comment – Although neither as stringent nor tight, sanctions imposed under the Obama administration will have impacted Russian ability with regard to advanced weapons systems and technology, nonetheless.