

Conflict Update # 270

November 22nd, 2022

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Conflict Assessment

Russian losses – 85,000 (400) soldiers killed, 2,895 (+3) enemy tanks, 5,827 (5) armored combat vehicles, 1,882 (+12) artillery systems, 395 (+2) MLRS systems, 209 (+0) air defense systems, 278 (+0) warplanes, 261 (+0) helicopters, 1,537 (+1) UAVs of the operational-tactical level, 480 (+0) cruise missiles, 15 (+0) warships/cutters, 4,393 (+15) trucks and tankers, 4 Iskander Missile Launchers (+0), 76 fuel bowsers (+0) and 161 (+1) units of specialized equipment.

Key Takeaways

Russia's missile capacity running out: only enough for 3 massive attacks left - After the last missile strike on Ukraine, Russia's stock of missiles will be enough for no more than 3 more massive attacks, according to high-ranking sources in the power alliance.

Source: UP article "Peace is under rocket fire. The way Russia is trying to persuade Ukraine to negotiate"; Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov on Twitter

Quote: "As senior sources in the power alliance confirm, as of mid-November, the Russian missile capacity was still enough for a maximum of three massive attacks, similar to 15 November."

Details: At the same time, the outlet notes that the Ukrainian air defence forces are already succeeding in shooting down about 70% of missiles and Iranian-made kamikaze drones.

Russia needs 14 to 16 months to restock its missile arsenal.

Now Russia is wasting its remaining strategic missile reserves, and it is unable to restore production of these projectiles fast enough. "The Russian army is already forced to extract missiles from nuclear reserves, simply taking the nuclear warheads off," reads the article.

Russia's problems with its missile capabilities are also indicated by the fact that for several weeks now, Russia has been looking for opportunities to get Iranian-made ballistic missiles and more drones. "If Moscow could quickly



restore its missile supply, it would not look for imports," the article says.

At the same time, Ukraine's defence minister published data on the use of various types of missiles by Russian invaders.

Quote from Reznikov: "Four enemies of the Russian missile arsenal: brilliant Ukrainian air defence forces; wayward Russian missile forces; sanctions; time. Demilitarize a terrorist state in order to live in peace!"

More details: According to the graph, Russia still has 119 Iskander cruise missiles (13% left), 347 3M-55 Oniks anti-ship missiles (74% left), 6,980 S-300 anti-aircraft missiles (87%), 229 Kalibr cruise missiles (37%), etc.

'Final crushing blow': Putin's men scramble over feared Crimea blitz - After a series of crushing defeats for Russia's military in Ukraine from the northeast to the south over the last several weeks, Russian authorities in Moscow appear to be increasingly concerned that Ukraine has set its sights on seizing back Crimea next.

Russian MP Andrei Gurulyov on Sunday urged Moscow to determine the risk of Ukraine and the NATO launching an attack on Crimea, which Putin illegally annexed from Ukraine in 2014. Russian MP Mikhail Sheremet warned that Ukrainian troops will suffer a "final crushing blow" if they launch an attack on Crimea.

In an apparent attempt to temper fears that Ukraine would go after Crimea, the chairman of the Federation Council's committee on defense and security, Viktor Bondarev, warned Monday that he doesn't think Ukraine has the firepower to take back Crimea.

"Ukraine has neither the resources, nor the military force, nor support of the Crimeans for the promised offensive on the peninsula," Bondarev said, adding, "'Crimea is ours' is not only a slogan and a hashtag. It is an unshakable reality."

The Russian officials' commentary comes after a flurry of Ukrainian officials signaled over the weekend that Ukraine is preparing to kick Russia out of Crimea. Ukraine's deputy defense minister, Volodymyr Havrylov, told Sky News he predicted Ukrainian forces could be in Crimea by the end of the year.

"It's only a matter of time and, of course, we would like to make it sooner than later," he said, adding that the timeline is uncertain.

His commentary on the timeline echoed what the top Ukrainian official in charge of Crimea told The Daily Beast. The official, Tamila Tasheva, had said Ukraine could take back Crimea by spring or summer of next year, although she said she thinks it could happen sooner. Tasheva, too, stressed that the exact timeline remains to be seen.

Ukrainian intelligence reported that Russian special services are planning false flag attacks on Belarusian critical infrastructure in an attempt that would likely fail to pressure the Belarusian military to enter the war in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on November 20 that Russian special services are planning to conduct several false flag terrorist attacks on Belarusian critical infrastructure facilities, particularly on the "Ostrovets" Belarusian nuclear power plant.

GUR also reported that Russian special services will blame the attacks on Ukrainian and NATO member states to accelerate the Belarusian military's involvement in Russia's war in Ukraine. ISW has previously assessed that Belarus' entry into the war remains highly unlikely due to the heavy domestic risk that involvement would pose to the survival of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's regime and that Russian and Belarusian highlight their bilateral defense cooperation to perpetuate an ongoing information operation that the Belarusian military will enter the war. Potential false flag attacks remain unlikely to change the domestic factors that ISW continues to assess constrain Lukashenko's willingness to enter the war on Russia's behalf.

Kherson under Russian fire after liberation - Russian forces shelled Kherson, killing one and injuring four civilians, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, President Volodymyr Zelensky's deputy chief of staff, said yesterday.

According to the deputy head of the Kherson Oblast Council Yuri Sobolevskyi, Russian strikes targeted civilian infrastructure in Kherson. The village of Antonivka just north of Kherson also came under a Russian attack on Nov. 21. One woman was hospitalized there.

Russia resumes bomber, submarine patrols near North America - Russia has started sending long-range bombers back over the Arctic toward North American airspace following a short-lived pause during the early months of its war in Ukraine, according to a senior Canadian military official.

Russian submarines are also operating off both coasts as Moscow seeks to demonstrate its ability to strike Canada and the US, said Lt.-Gen. Alain Pelletier, the deputy commander of the North American Aerospace Defence Command.

"We have seen a reduction this year, especially since the Feb. 24 illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia. However, some of those activities have now resumed," Pelletier told the Senate defence committee on Monday.

"The activities are not only limited to long-range aviation. Russia uses its submarines now both on the Atlantic coast and the Pacific coast to actually demonstrate its strategic capabilities and to present a threat to North America."

Comment – As per yesterday's Update, NATO has been increasingly visible of late, and this may well be a response from Russia in kind. Of more import though is the nuclear sub Belgorod that slipped out of Russia's Baltic Sea port is still snooping around somewhere incognito.

Comment – See below article under "Containment."

Russian forces were suffering from 'electronic fratricide' within days of attacking Ukraine - In the first days of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Russian jamming disrupted Ukraine's air-defense radars and communications links. The problem for Russian forces is that their electronic warfare also jammed their own communications.

This "electronic fratricide" became so acute that Russian troops had to stop disrupting Ukrainian communications, according to a study by the Royal United Services Institute, a British think tank.

By the end of the first week of the invasion, Russian ground forces being unable to effectively communicate "became a greater threat to the Russian operation than Ukrainian [surface-to-air missile] systems, so their electronic warfare assets began to greatly scale back their operations after the first two days," the RUSI report says.

Initially, Russia's jamming offensive was devastating and validated Moscow's heavy investment in electronic warfare. For years, the Pentagon has worried it lags far behind Russia in electronic-warfare capabilities, which could disrupt the extensive communications networks that enable the US military to fight in a coordinated fashion.

Generally, Russian electronic-warfare systems "have actually proven extremely effective," Nick Reynolds, a coauthor of the RUSI study, told Insider, and Russia's initial onslaught in Ukraine seemed to bear out the Pentagon's fears.

"During the first week of the invasion, Russian electronic warfare using jamming equipment and E-96M aerial decoys were highly effective in disrupting" Ukraine's ground-based air-defense systems, the RUSI report says.

Russian jamming severely disrupted Ukrainian S-300 and SA-11 surface-to-air-missile batteries north of Kyiv. Russia also launched extensive ballistic- and cruise-missile strikes on Ukraine's long-range radars and anti-aircraft batteries.

The combined effect was Ukraine's ground-based air defenses were hit so hard that its badly outnumbered fleet of MiG-29 and Su-27 fighters had to take primary responsibility for protecting the country's skies.

Russian forces kidnap Ukrainian mayors in Kherson Oblast - Russian troops have kidnapped the mayors of several communities in Kherson Oblast and brought them to the east bank of the Dnipro River, the Interior Ministry reported on Nov. 22.

Kremlin-installed officials in Crimea say Sevastopol targeted by Ukrainian drones - The Russian-installed governor in the Crimean city of Sevastopol has said Russian air defenses repelled a drone attack on an electricity and heating plant in the Balaklava district.

Mykhaylo Razvozhayev said two drones were shot down as they approached the plant near Sevastopol this evening.

Russia's Black Sea Fleet repelled a separate attack by three drones over the waters off the peninsula on November 22, he said on Telegram, adding that no damage had been caused.

"Now the city is quiet. But all forces and services are on alert," according to Rozvozhayev, who blamed the Ukrainian military for the attacks. The Ukrainian military has not commented on Razvozhayev's accusations.

According to correspondent with the Crimea. Realities project of RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service, explosions were heard in central Sevastopol on the evening of November 22. Residents of the port city then heard small-arms fire.

Comment – Reports from within Ukraine report on damage to a Russian minesweeper in the port, the precise extent of which is unknown. These reports cite sources within Sevastopol itself.

Partisan activity sharply increasing – Repots indicate a sharp increase in partisan activity behind Russian lines with assassinations, sabotage, information gathering, diversionary tactics and general disruption to Russian lines and command. This perhaps explains the Russian decree of curfews and social media clamp downs in occupied territories.

Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant: a case of Russian state robbery - Russia began installing managers and technical staff at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) soon after seizing the plant by military force on March 4 and well before officially annexing Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region to Russia.

Moscow completed the formal annexation procedures on October 5, and that same day, Putin issued a decree to place the ZNPP under Russian government ownership. Based on Putin's decree, the Rosenergoatom State Concern (operator of Russia's nuclear power plants, itself part of the Rosatom state corporation) has created a ZNPP Operating Company registered in Moscow and appointed a Russian CEO of the ZNPP.

Between late September and mid-October 2022, Russian authorities arrested the ZNPP's Ukrainian CEO, Ihor Murashov, and several other senior Ukrainian managers, held them in detention separately for some days and then evicted them to Ukrainian-controlled territory.

Since then, Rosatom representatives have descended on ZNPP from Moscow with offers to the Ukrainian staff to sign employment contracts with the Russian company. Those who do decide to sign would qualify for pay bonuses, while those refusing would be dismissed from work. Abandoning Ukrainian citizenship to take up Russian citizenship is not required, at least for now.

Moscow is interested in eliciting an informal, de facto acceptance of its grab of the ZNPP and control of the surrounding territory, even in an ambiguous form as Russia has elicited in years past from the UN in the case of Abkhazia and from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in the cases of South Ossetia and Transnistria. Even short of recognition (which is ruled out ab initio), any ambiguous arrangement would play into Russia's favor.

For example, Moscow would ask an international organization to access the site (in this case, IAEA at the ZNPP) not only via Ukraine but also via Russia—or ask the international body to deal directly (if only on mundane daily matters) with the Russian occupation authorities and their local representatives. The IAEA has done none of this in Zaporizhzhia.

If Russia breaks apart?

Should Russia lose its invasion in Ukraine the question is “What happens next.”

Russia has suffered two severe disruptions over the past century, first the 1917 Revolution and then the 1990 Soviet Union breakup, both traumatic for the Russian people and body Politik.

A distant possibility but one nonetheless, is that it could suffer a third disruption coming out of Ukraine.

The Russian Federation includes different ethnic groups, cultures, and fears, each in and of themselves enough to trigger a dissolution, but none realistically on its own.

Moscow holds most if not all the infrastructural and economic ties and structures in a centrally-controlled system making it exceedingly difficult for it to completely fracture through any individual oblast or republican drive.

But should it, fracture is risky, not only for the Russian Federation and its “Pax Russica,” but for the world at large.

And the world at large fully understands this.

So the real question is “Can the global geopolitical system withstand a fracturing of the Russian Federation?”

There exists what is called the “Pax Russica” similar to Pax Romana, Pax Britannica, Pax Mongolica and Pax Americana, where Russia self-appointed itself the guarantor of peace in its immediate orbit and tried to extend this influence to outer regions it considers vital to its sustainment.

A strong consensus exists in the Russian foreign and defence policy community that views the ‘near abroad,’ or ‘post-Soviet geopolitical space,’ as a Russian sphere of influence.

Putin sincerely believes that it is his sacred duty to protect – not only Russian citizens – but ethnic Russians or Russian language speakers, all over the world. That there is a unique Russian genetic code of spirituality as resistance to the “Corrupted Perverted West.”

So he set out to create a pro-Russian regional dependence on Moscow and assure Russia re-joins the global system as a legitimate world player as opposed to a relegated “Little Brother,” as had happened post-1980’s.

But without delving into modern Russian history, what if his pursuit of this new “Russo” order fails, and fails so catastrophically that it leads to the disintegration of the Russian Federation?

The USSR consisted of 2 levels of membership with Level 1 composed of 15 countries such as Poland, Hungary and so on, and a bunch of Level 2 republics with distinct ethnicities but questioning why they were lower than Level 1.

Not all these participants came along willingly so Russia needed to ensure their membership by any means, just so long as they remained within the realm of its security and imperial requirement by providing and contributing to the overall good and security of the Soviet Union, and particularly of Russia itself.

These Level 2 countries, although appearing wholesome and healthy, have different ethnicities and nationalities in each state with long-held animosity to one another, so external and internal regional conflicts constantly break out.

And each time they break out, Moscow steps in to pacify what in most cases they themselves have, either directly or indirectly, instigated to the bigger objective.

So Soviet states fought both one another and across ethnic divides within national boundaries.

This provided Moscow the opportunity – most often a constructed opportunity – to enter as a “Peacekeeper,” settle the differences and leave “peacekeepers” in place, providing for a Russian military presence in areas where Moscow saw geopolitical and regional risk to its own security and well-being.

When the Soviet Union dissolved and multiple countries such as Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and so on left the “family,” there remained a number of members who now constituted the “Russian Federation.”

Since Putin assumed power in Russia, he has aggressively pursued re-establishing its former glory and protective ring, so Georgia saw civil wars, Chechnya was bombed back to the stone age and forced to rejoin the Federation, Moldova saw pro-Russian sentiment in Transnistria, the First Nagorno-Karabakh War and smaller conflicts saw direct Russian intervention and forcing of a pro-Russian dispensation.

Russia entered these countries ostensibly as a “peacekeeper” protecting Russian-speaking peoples, but in reality it was as an oppressor. Putin then installs a pro-Russian leader and allows them pseudo-autonomy just so long as they “tow the Moscow line.”

These “peacekeepers” froze dissent and violence via peace agreements and treaties, but not once was there any lasting good will and accord, just Russian soldiers with guns enforcing the “ceasefire.” And let's not forget that in most cases the dissent and violence was propagated by Russia in the first place as a “false flag operation” to create an excuse to enter, subdue and dominate.

These conflicts are still unresolved but as long as Russia has “peacekeepers” in place with guns and Russian control, they remained in the Federation orbit, albeit unwillingly.

The CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) was created comprising Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (Chechnya had rejoined the Federation as an oblast). Their agreement included an “Article 4,” meant to replicate NATO's Article 5 whereby an attack on one was viewed as an attack on all.

This was the new “Pax Russica,” with Russia at its head.

Ukraine, long viewed by Russia as vital to its role and global survival, and essential to “Pax Russica” was next, so in 2014 Putin invaded Crimea and installed pro-Russian controlling parties in the Donbas.

Ukraine has a historical “Russian” role in not only creating what became modern Russia but also in providing a direct Russian buffer to countries seeking to invade Russia itself. It is also a significant element of one of the world's six major bread baskets as well as the source of a huge number of minerals and strategic materials.

Putin illegally snatched Crimea in 2014 as mentioned above, and then invaded Ukraine proper in 2022.

The latter through an invasion in complete disarray now suffering major military defeats, an elongated engagement and a huge diminution of Russian prestige and presence in its “Pax Russica.”

Invading with a small ill-prepared force, it has now been compelled to mobilize, go onto a war footing and withdraw numbers of its “peacekeepers” from orbit states, as well as Syria where it had extended its “near-Russia” influence.

It has consequently been ostracized and sanctioned internationally, bankrupted and humiliated.

At the same time, Azerbaijan and Armenia – a CSTO member – went to war and the latter invoked Article 4. The CSTO merely sent out a “fact-finding” mission. Russia is in no position to enter the conflict as required under the Article. It does not have the ability it once had. Armenia is now opting out of CSTO.

Azerbaijan, a pro-Western aligned government, allied with Israel, Turkey and the United States, was testing the CSTO Article 4 – and found the reaction to its liking.

This dramatic development did not go unnoticed – both within its own orbit and internationally.

Its actions have dramatically reduced its influence, severely undermined its perceived and accepted capability, released competing interests and empowered a “new” Turkey. It has self-destructed its once-prominent role as a global player.

It went from being “Dirty Harry” to the “Keystone Cop” - in half a year.

Numerous members within the Russian Federation are now discretely indicating a desire for a new order, and in some cases openly dissenting, particularly Islam members, who constitute roughly one third of the Russian people.

Western countries have stepped in to try and pacify competing Caucasus and Central Asian conflicts – but simultaneously trying to extend western influence into Central Asia and the Russian orbit.

As the saying goes “These things happen slowly, then all at once” – punctuated equilibrium.

The Russian Emperor really has no clothes.

In short, it is in dire national and geopolitical trouble.

So what is next?

Should the Russian Federation implode a la the Soviet Union and with similar effect and outcome, the new geopolitical scenario is not all honey and roses.

As Russia barrels toward bankruptcy, funding of provincial programs and suppression platforms will slowly reduce, opening further local dissent and dissatisfaction, leading to widening political fissures within Russia itself, particularly in far-flung areas where little economic activity exists to provide for basic survival and living standards.

Putin keeps Russia together through force and payoffs to regions and regional leaders.

Like all autocratically-governed societies, money drives loyalty and no money equals no loyalty.

Russia at present resembles a khanate in which local princes receive a license to rule from the chief khan in the Kremlin.

Let’s highlight potential post-Russia repercussions;

1. Geopolitical repercussions

- **Turkey** - looking gleefully at the Caucasus and Crimea, making the Black Sea a Turkish lake and entering the Central Asian bloc as an influential player.
- **Iran** – pushes its influence into the Caspian Sea region to counter Turkish geopolitical moves and head off any (Turkish) move into Central Asia.
- **Dependent states** – currently locked into Russia now seeking to extricate themselves and stamp out anything Russian.
- **Moldova** - seizes Transnistria and Gagauzia provinces.
- **Georgia** – captures Abkhazia. Abkhaz–Georgian conflict involves ethnic conflict between Georgians and the Abkhaz people in Abkhazia, a de facto independent, partially recognized republic. Both Abkhazia and other Georgian principalities were annexed into the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century and remained part of it until the Russian Revolutions of 1917.
- **Azerbaijan** – deals with Karabakh, a geographic region in present-day southwestern Azerbaijan and eastern Armenia, extending from the highlands of the Lesser Caucasus down to the lowlands between the rivers Kura and Aras.

- **Kurdistan** - is a roughly defined geo-cultural territory in Western Asia wherein the Kurds form a prominent majority population straddling Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Pro-Western and supportive of the US in its Iraqi War, may seek to re-establish its identity lost in the 1919 Middle East Accords.
- **China** – seeking to convert Mongolia into a client state and critically expand influence into Central Asia, integrating them into its BRI program. China will also seek to reclaim territories held by Russia under various treaties and land grabs and may also seek to settle its “Indian” differences.
- **Japan** - seek to recover the Kuril Islands and various other atolls surrendered in 1945.
- **Canada, Denmark and the US** – seek to consolidate the Arctic.
- **Poland** - goes after Belarus and Ukraine – long an area of conflict with centuries-old changes in borders and nationality and with Poland now being a primary military power in the region, it may envisage a recapturing of the past.
- **Chechnya** – Since returned to the Russian Federation there remains a significant percentage of their citizens vehemently opposed to Russian rule. They have been threatening to break away in ever-increasing frequency.

2. Ethnic repercussions

The Russian Federation is a vastly diverse country, with approximately 185 distinct ethnic identities. This ethnic diversity dates back to Russia's time as an imperial power and its slow but steady expansion of surrounding regions through the nineteenth century. Present-day Russia is a reflection of its imperial conquests. However, unlike other imperial powers who lost or abandoned their imperial holdings in the early twentieth century, Russia has worked to assimilate non ethnic Russians into its national identity through political and military consolidation.

According to Russia's 2010 census data, 77.7 percent of its population identify as ethnic Russians. The other 22.3 percent is made up of other ethnic groups that are indigenous to their respective regions, as well as those that have migrated and created diaspora communities over generations. The ethnic breakdown of some of Russia's ethnic groups includes:

- Russians - 77% (Slavic language, live across Russian territory but most numerous in European Russia)
- Tatars - 3.7% (Turkic language, live across European Russia)
- Ukrainians - 1.4% (Slavic language, live across European Russia)
- Bashkir - 1.1% (Turkic language, live across European Russia)
- Chuvashs - 1% (Turkic language, live across European Russia)
- Chechens - 1% (Northeast Caucasian language, live across Caucasus)
- Armenians - 0.3% (Indo-European language, live across Caucasus)
- Nenets - 0.02% (Uralic language, live across northern regions of Siberia)

The problem from a political and research point of view is how to find a role for the ‘new nationalism’ in the fragmentation and subsequent modernization of Russia because its various platforms include inconsistent ideas. Above all, all modernization projects must confront the heritage of internal colonialism. The key problem of Russian modernization from the ethnopolitical point of view is the confrontamodernization between Russian nationalism and that of other nations in Russia.

National republics in the Northern Caucasus (Ingushetia, Chechnya, Dagestan, Kabardo-Balkaria, Karachayo-Cherkiesia, Northern Ossetia and Adygeya) are in fact financed by the federal budget. Federal budget grants account for at least more than half of these republics’ budgets.

Russians and the inhabitants of Northern Caucasus perceive each other as “peoples of lower category.” which in turn disrupts the process of national and social integration and transformation of all Russian citizens into a consolidated political and cultural community.

From the point of view of the inhabitants of the Caucasus, Russians do not belong to the system of tribe-clans relations and are treated as people of lower category with Russia as an area of criminal activity free from traditional norms and limits in force in the national republics.

Nationalist repercussion

If Russia disintegrates the money runs out, Chechnya could be the first to break off.

Tatarstan, home to 2m Muslim ethnic Tatars and 1.5m ethnic Russians, could declare itself the separate khanate it was in the 15th century. It has a strong identity, a diverse economy, which includes its own oil firm, and a well-educated ruling class. It would form a special relationship with Crimea, which Crimean Tartars (at last able to claim their historic land) would declare an independent state.

The Ural region could form a republic—as it tried to do in 1993—around Yekaterinburg, Russia’s fourth-largest city, or else it could form a union with Siberia.

Siberia itself could revive its own identity, from a base in the cities of Krasnoyarsk and Irkutsk, and lay claim to its oil-and-gas riches, which it would sell to China. Unlike Russia, China might not have much interest in territorial expansion into the sparsely populated Far East and Siberia, but it could (and already does) colonize these regions economically. Vladivostok and Khabarovsk, two of the largest cities in the Far East, are more economically integrated with China and South Korea than they are with the European part of Russia.

The Republics of Russia - The republics were established in early Soviet Russia after the collapse of the Russian Empire. On 15 November 1917, Vladimir Lenin issued the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia, giving Russia's minorities the right to self-determination. This declaration, however, was never truly meant to grant minorities the right to independence and was only used to garner support among minority groups for the fledgling Soviet state in the ensuing Russian Civil War.

When the Soviet Union was formally created on 30 December 1922, the minorities of the country were relegated to Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics (ASSR), with less power than the union republics and subordinate to them.

On 31 March 1992, every subject of Russia except the Tatar ASSR and the de facto state of Chechnya signed the Treaty of Federation with the government of Russia, solidifying its federal structure and Boris Yeltsin became the country's first president. The ASSRs were dissolved and became modern day republics.

Republics differ from other federal subjects in that they have the right to establish their own official language,[66] have their own constitution, and have a national anthem.

1. Adygea
2. Altai
3. Bashkortostan
4. Buryatia
5. Dagestan
6. Ingushetia



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|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| 7. Kabardino-Balkaria | 12. Mari El | 17. Tuva |
| 8. Kalmykia | 13. Mordovia | 18. Udmurtia |
| 9. Karachay-Cherkessia | 14. Sakha | 19. Khakassia |
| 10. Karelia | 15. North Ossetia–Alania | 20. Chechnya |
| 11. Komi | 16. Tatarstan | 21. Chuvashia |

Nuclear repercussions

BUT, Russia holds the world’s largest nuclear arsenal, a factor which is easier recognized than resolved.

It will be nearly impossible to secure each and every weapon in this arsenal, leaving huge gaps in an international arena wary of anything “nuclear” and uncontrolled.

Warlords and non-state actors will be intimately aware of the location of Russian devices and development labs, making for a distinct threat to universal proliferation and control.

Two such warlords already exist in Yevgeny Prigozhin, also known as Putin’s Chef, creator of the Wagner Group, already determined as a terrorist organization with Prigozhin listed in US sanctions, and Ramzan Kadyrov, leader of Chechnya and someone calling loudly for nuclear use against Ukraine.

Any breakup of the Russian Federation will require an international task force to intervene and work with local power blocs and leaders in trying to locate and neutralize all weapons. But this will be extremely problematic, looking at similar challenges experienced by both Russia and the US in Afghanistan.

A single nuclear weapon or nuclear material is in and of itself a catastrophe.

Summary

In essence Russia was a powerful entity in the 20th Century whereas it is a weaker entity in the 21st Century.

It is riven by internal politics and divisions, rules with an iron fist and corruption throughout the past 100-odd years. This will be exceptionally difficult to reconcile to modern standards and acceptance.

Inasmuch as looking for relief east of the EU, it appears that a constituted Russia poses distinctly better options for global peace and security than a fragmented Russia.

The questions asked was “Can the global geopolitical system withstand a fracturing of the Russian Federation?”

No, not at this stage. Something needs to be done regarding the constant bellicose approach they have to world events coupled with reparations for Ukraine as aggressive geopolitical expansionism and imperialism is not to be encouraged.

It will be prudent to assume similar views are held by those in the “Great Game.”

Sanctions

Ukraine urges EU to accelerate work on ninth round of sanctions against Russia - Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba has called on the European Union not to delay the development and implementation of a ninth sanctions package against Russia over its war in Ukraine.

"I call on my colleagues in the EU -- both in the European Commission and among the EU member states -- to put aside any doubts, or, as it is fashionable to say, 'fatigue,' and start to quickly complete the ninth sanctions package," Kuleba said in an online briefing on November 22.

A ninth package is long overdue, he said, expressing frustration that Ukraine had heard only that serious work has begun on the preparation of another package of sanctions.

Munich security conference snubs Moscow - Russia will not be invited to send an official delegation to the 2023 Munich Security Conference, a leading international forum for the discussion of global military and security issues. "Russian officials are not invited to #MSC2023," wrote German diplomat Christoph Heusgen, who is the chairman of the conference, in a November 21 post on Twitter. "We will not give them a platform for their propaganda. We want to discuss Russia's future with Russian opposition leaders and exiled people - THEIR voices need to be heard and amplified." The conference will be held in Munich on February 17-19, 2023.

Russian fury after top Putin official is booted from diplomats meeting - Polish officials have been accused of disinventing Russian FM Lavrov from a meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Lodz, Poland, next week, just days after questions arose over whether Russia's war in Ukraine is spilling over into neighboring Poland.

Maria Zakharova, a spokesperson for Russia's Foreign Ministry, accused Poland, the current OSCE chair, of railroading European national security by barring Lavrov from leading a Russian delegation at the 29th Ministerial Council.

"Nowadays, the Polish chairmanship is practically demolishing this negotiating venue when they physically prevent a delegation from taking part and speaking," Zakharova said, according to TASS.

Canada announces new sanctions on Belarus as opposition leader visits Ottawa - Foreign Minister Melanie Joly today announced new sanctions on Belarus in response to its support for Russia's war on Ukraine. Joly said in a statement released as opposition leader Svyatlana Tsikhanouskaya visited Ottawa that the Belarusian leadership was enabling human rights violations and allowing the country to serve as a launching pad for Russia's attacks. Canada is adding 22 Belarusian officials to the sanctions list, including people who are involved in the stationing and transport of Russian military personnel and equipment.

EU to seize assets of those evading sanctions against Russia - The European Commission aims to issue a directive within days to enable the confiscation of assets belonging to those trying to evade sanctions against Russia, the Irish Times reported, citing EU Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders.

Northern Europe has already slashed Russian oil imports by 90%, 2 weeks before the EU ban kicks in - A European Union ban on most Russia crude oil comes into force in just two weeks' time, which means the bloc is set to lose its largest crude oil supplier.

Even so, importers have already begun reducing their dependence on Russian energy supply — its key market Northern Europe has already slashed seaborne Russian oil imports by over 90%, according to Bloomberg analysis based on vessel tracking data.

Russia exported just 95,000 barrels of crude oil a day to Rotterdam in Netherlands, in the four weeks to November 18. That's down 92% from about 1.2 million barrels a day in early February — before Russia invaded Ukraine — according to Bloomberg. The major Dutch trading port was Russia's only crude-oil delivery destination in Northern Europe for a ninth consecutive week, per Bloomberg.

This is significant, because the Northern European nations of Germany, the Netherlands and Poland were the top European importers of Russian oil in 2021.

Impacts

Australia warned of war 'an order of magnitude not seen since WWII' - Former PM Kevin Rudd has laid out a bleak vision for Australia's region in the next five years, saying if China is allowed to make a move on Taiwan, Australia could be embroiled in a conflict at a "magnitude not seen since the WWII".

Speaking at the Australian National University on Monday night, Mr Rudd claimed the next five years "will very much shape and arguably determine the long-term stability of the Indo-Pacific region".

If the United States and its allies like Australia are unable to deter China from taking military action to take control of Taiwan, there is a real danger of a war unfolding, even "by accident".

Top Ukrainian official raises concerns about Elon Musk's 'manipulation' of information - Ukrainian officials love SpaceX's Starlink constellation, which has allowed the government and military to maintain internet access even as Russia has laid waste to critical infrastructure and disrupted other means of communication.

But the mercurial behavior of SpaceX founder Elon Musk has raised questions about whether it can depend on having Starlink access for the long haul, as well as whether disinformation about the war in Ukraine could become a "major trend" on Twitter, said Olga Stefanishyna, Ukraine's deputy prime minister for European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

"We have the Twitter guarantee of Musk that he's going to finance [Starlink], and he talked to our minister of digital transformation, so we consider it as a deal," Stefanishyna told reporters at the Halifax International Security Forum.

Musk finalized his acquisition of Twitter last month, and the social media app is becoming "the major source of manipulation" under Musk's leadership, with Musk himself "test[ing] the manipulation limits he can use," she said. "Given this huge range of instability in the position of SpaceX CEO, from willingness and then to unwillingness to continue financial support [of Starlink], we're doing, sort of, a contingency planning for ourselves."

War changes are reshaping Pentagon's info-ops strategy - Lessons from Ukraine and changes in irregular warfare will be reflected in the upcoming revision of the Pentagon's information-operations strategy, it said.

"Everyone has a cell phone; that's what we're seeing in the Ukraine. Not just soldiers having cell phones and watching the Javelin strike. Civilians are reporting the movement of Russian forces," said Maj. Gen. Matthew Easley, a top information-ops advisor to the assistant defense secretary for special operations.

Among other things, Easley said, this means special operators need to be thinking about public narratives—how they might change and how U.S. forces can shape them—long before fighting erupts. And that means ensuring that troops have the right digital skills, including data analysis and messaging.

"Our information operators and forces must engage throughout the spectrum of operational planning and execution, and cannot wait until a crisis begins to start setting the theater for messaging," the general said Friday at the National Defense Industrial Association's Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict Symposium in Washington, D.C. "We must reinforce campaign planning to start with objectives in the cognitive domain. Understand what narratives are needed to reinforce those objectives, and then develop plans for physical action that show commitment to that narrative."

Comment – We pointed this out some months ago – that war is going "local" with partisan efforts increasing via proliferation of social media, satellite connectivity and the immediacy of local information availability. This is how Ukraine has been able to pinpoint with minute accuracy the locations and movements of Russian artillery, troops and supply points.

Militarization of Twitter? – Is there a move afoot to militarize Musk’s Twitter platform to enhance US military information-operations capabilities as mentioned in the preceding article?

Can this perhaps explain Musk’s decimation of the rank and file Twitter organization – aside from his using it as a future digital payment platform?

Geopolitics

Attack on Philippines would invoke US mutual defense, says Harris in signal to China - Visiting US Vice President Harris yesterday reiterated the US commitment to the Philippines, one of Washington's oldest allies in a region where China is expanding its diplomatic and economic clout.

"We stand with you in defense of international rules and norms as it relates to the South China Sea," Harris said during her meeting with Philippine President Marcos, Jr. in Manila, Monday. "An armed attack on the Philippines Armed Forces, public vessels or aircraft would invoke US mutual defense."

Harris was referring to the 1951 Manila Pact, between the US and countries in the region including the Philippines and Thailand, that stipulates the collective defense principle under an attack.

Her trip to the Philippines this week is part of the Biden administration courting an increasingly vital strategic partner as tensions rise with China over Taiwan. Of Washington's five treaty allies in the Indo-Pacific, the Philippines is closest to Taiwan and therefore central to U.S. plans to deter and respond to potential Chinese attack on the self-administered island Beijing views as a wayward province.

It also signals an effort to rebuild US-Philippines ties that were fractured under Marcos' predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, who sought closer relations with China during his six years in office. Relations also soured over allegations of human rights abuses under Manila's draconian policies on drugs - with Duterte in 2016 calling then-President Barack Obama a "son of a whore" over warnings the then-Philippine leader would be questioned over his drug war.

Containment

Can Israel be a game-changer in Ukraine? - Israel obtained one of the most incredible amounts of the Soviet updated heavy weapons that could be a real game-changer in the Ukrainian battlefield. Israel captured and upgraded most of these weapons during numerous wars with its neighboring countries. Part of these vehicles are utilized already, but another is still in stock.

According to the adviser to the president of Ukraine, Mykhailo Podoliak, Ukraine needs “150-200 tanks, 300 armored vehicles, 100 artillery systems, etc.”. The senior Ukrainian official reported this during an interview with the French TV channel France 24.

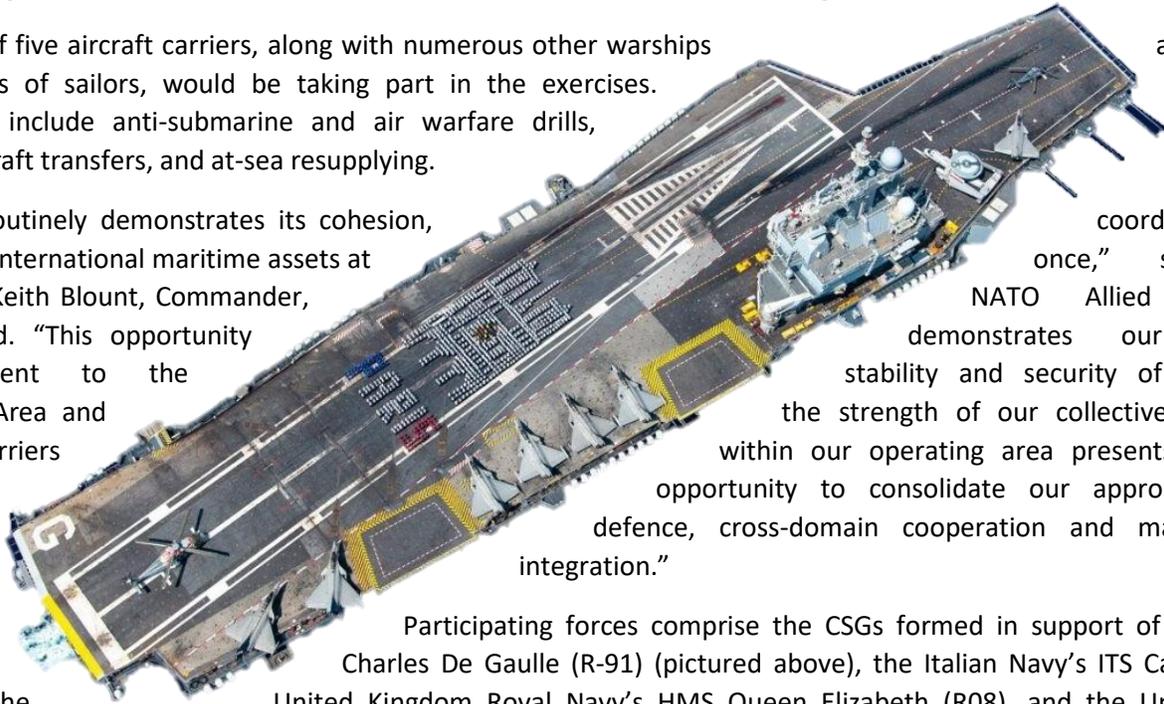
There are a lot of soviet armored vehicles in the countries of the former Warsaw Pact (WP). However, Israeli examples are deeply updated, and their technical characteristics are much better than the original examples.

According to open-source data, Israel possesses up to a few hundred Achzarit – heavily armored personnel carriers, which are partially taken out of use in the IDF. Also, Israel can deliver up to 350 TI-67 – Israeli modifications of Soviet medium and main tanks T-54, T-55, and T-62. Mainly all of it is not brand new weapons. However, these armored vehicles and tanks are very applicable to the Ukrainian battlefield. Another critical point is that all of these might be fastly refurbished by Ukrainian military factories in comparison to all western examples of armored vehicles.

Russia can't do this: NATO has 5 aircraft carriers patrolling - NATO Had 5 Aircraft Carriers Patrolling: NATO has essentially created a ring around the waters of Europe, as five different aircraft carrier strike groups (CSGs) are now on patrol – highlighting the naval cooperation of the alliance. Last week, NATO announced that member navies would be conducting maneuvers in the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea throughout the rest of the month.

A total of five aircraft carriers, along with numerous other warships and thousands of sailors, would be taking part in the exercises. activities include anti-submarine and air warfare drills, deck aircraft transfers, and at-sea resupplying.

“NATO routinely demonstrates its cohesion, multiple international maritime assets at Admiral Keith Blount, Commander, Command. “This opportunity commitment to the Atlantic Area and Five carriers



and Carrier deck-to-

coordinating with once,” said Vice NATO Allied Maritime demonstrates our ironclad stability and security of the Euro- the strength of our collective capability. within our operating area presents a further opportunity to consolidate our approach to air defence, cross-domain cooperation and maritime-land integration.”

Participating forces comprise the CSGs formed in support of the French Navy’s Charles De Gaulle (R-91) (pictured above), the Italian Navy’s ITS Cavour (CVH-550), the United Kingdom Royal Navy’s HMS Queen Elizabeth (R08), and the United States Navy’s USS George H.W. Bush and USS Gerald R. Ford.

Air-defense missiles arrive - Sophisticated new air-defense missiles became operational in Ukraine this week, a Pentagon spokesman said earlier today, even as reports surfaced that Iran is considering supplying Russian forces with ballistic missiles.

The first shipment of National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems, or NASAMS, “are now in Ukraine and operational” under crews who have been trained in an unspecified European host country, Brig. Gen. Patrick S. Ryder told reporters.

Ryder said the NASAMS will help protect Ukraine’s energy infrastructure, among other things, from “basically any type of advanced aerial threat that Russia may try to employ against Ukrainian targets or civilians.”

But just as new defenses are reaching Ukraine, so new air threats are gathering. Last week, CNN reported that Tehran may send ballistic missiles to Russian forces. Russia has already used Iranian Shahed-136 kamikaze drones to hit Ukrainian energy infrastructure.

On Monday, ABC News reported that Ukraine is seeking C-RAM guns—the acronym is short for Counter-Rocket, Artillery, Mortar—which are essentially automated Gatling guns for air defense of fixed points like power plants.

Asked about the ABC report, Ryder said, “We take into account a lot of different considerations and systems as we explore Ukraine security assistance needs.”

US, Allies rush anti-drone equipment to Ukraine, conduct on-site weapons tracking - More U.S. and allied counter-drone gear is being rushed to Ukraine amid Russian attacks on energy infrastructure with Iranian-made drones, a senior defense official said Monday.

The official also said the U.S. military has increased its efforts to track aid delivered to Ukraine.

A senior military official confirmed recent reports that Russia is using kamikaze drones supplied by Tehran to inflict “widespread” damage.

Friday’s announcement of additional aid brings the total of air-defense gear to 1,400 Stinger short-range shoulder-fired missiles and eight National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems, or NASAMS, launchers and their missiles, the defense official said.

“Two of those will be in Ukraine in the very near future with six more to be provided later,” the defense official said.

The United States has also sent Vehicle-Agnostic Modular Palletized ISR Rocket Equipment, or VAMPIREs, to Ukraine.

Senators ask Biden administration to supply Ukraine with drones - A group of 16 U.S. senators from the Democratic and Republican parties have written a letter to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, calling on the administration to provide Ukraine with MQ-1C Gray Eagle combat drones, the Wall Street Journal reported.

US to provide Ukraine with \$4.5 billion as direct budget support - The US will start disbursing the funds in the next few weeks, which will help Ukraine improve economic stability and support critical government services, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on Nov. 22.

War Crimes

US Official Sees 'Vast Difference' In Russian, Ukrainian Reactions To War Crimes Allegations - U.S. Ambassador for Global Criminal Justice Beth Van Schaack, commenting on Russian allegations that Ukrainian soldiers may have shot surrendering Russian soldiers, said there has been a marked difference between the ways Moscow and Kyiv have responded to such charges.

“We’re obviously tracking that quite closely,” Van Schaack said during a telephone meeting with journalists on November 21. “It’s really important to emphasize that the laws of war apply to all parties equally, both the aggressor state and the defender state, and this in equal measure.

“Likewise, we’re seeing a really vast difference when it comes to the reaction to such allegations,” she added. “Russia inevitably responds with propaganda, denial, mis- and disinformation, whereas the Ukrainian authorities have generally acknowledged abuses and have denounced them and pledged to investigate them.”

She called on Ukraine to continue to comply with its international obligations, adding, however, that the scale and number of war crimes accusations against Russian forces in Ukraine was “enormous compared to the allegations against Ukrainian forces.”

Van Schaack said there is “mounting evidence that [Russian] aggression has been accompanied by systemic war crimes committed in every region where Russia’s forces have been deployed.”

She noted “deliberate, indiscriminate, and disproportionate attacks against the civilian population and elements of the civilian infrastructure,” as well as “custodial abuses of civilians and POWs and also efforts to cover up those crimes.”

The Russian Embassy issued a statement claiming that “the US enables permissiveness and impunity for neo-Nazis in Ukraine by covering up the frenzy of Ukrainian bandits,” Russia’s state news agency TASS reported today.

The Russian State Duma today adopted a statement urging foreign legislatures to “unequivocally condemn the Kyiv regimes’ crimes.”

On November 18, Russia accused Ukraine of war crimes, citing video fragments that seem to show Ukrainian forces killing Russian soldiers who were lying on the ground and surrendering.

Ukrainian ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets has said the Russian soldiers were only pretending to surrender and that their comrades opened fire on the Ukrainians first.

Comment – Mariupol?

Ukrainian prosecutors open criminal case into shootout involving Russian POWs - Ukrainian Prosecutor General's Office said it was investigating video footage that appears to show a Russian soldier opening fire on Ukrainian troops when other Russian soldiers were surrendering as prisoners of war.