

Conflict Update # 41

April 26th, 2022

Conflict Assessment

Death Toll From Fire At Russian Defense Research Institute Rises To 17 - The death toll from a fire at a Russian Defense Ministry research institute in the city of Tver has risen to 17, according to local officials.

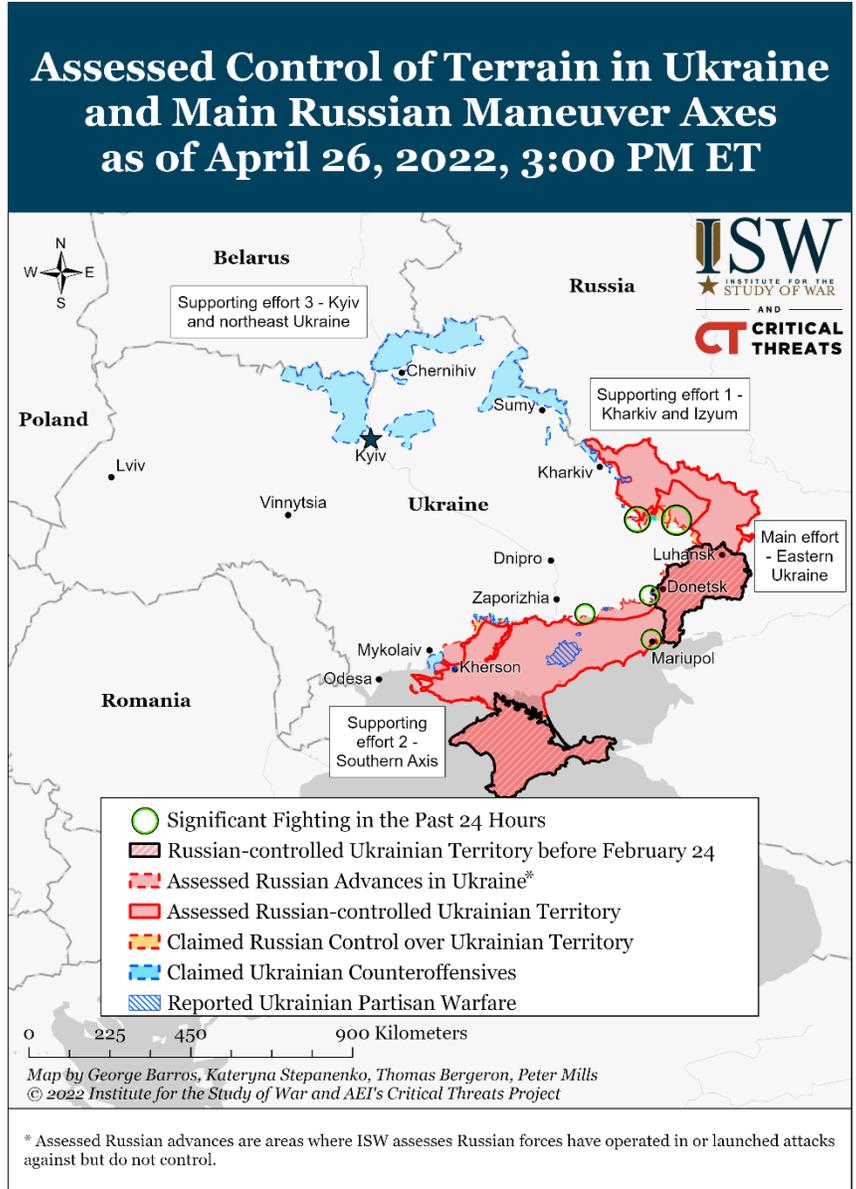
U.S. intel helped Ukraine protect air defenses, shoot down Russian plane carrying hundreds of troops - Ukrainian forces have used specific coordinates shared by the U.S. to direct fire on Russian positions and aircraft, current and former officials tell NBC News.

Mokba loss continuing questions from mothers - Russian officials have been tight-lipped about the fate of the crew of the cruiser Moskva, which went down off Odesa on April 14. The vessel was hit by two Ukrainian anti-ship missiles, according to the U.S. Department of Defense, and sank after a day of failed salvage efforts.

Meanwhile, parents of missing sailors from Moskva began taking to Russian social media to report their frustration with the official response. One parent, Dmitry Shkrebets, told Newsweek that he had received two competing stories. Moskva's officers quietly acknowledged that his son was missing, while the Russian Ministry of Defense maintained that he was not; Shkrebets described the official response as a "wall of indifferent, frenzied silence."

Subordinate Main Effort—Mariupol - Russian forces continued ground and air assaults against remaining Ukrainian defenders in Mariupol on April 26 but were unsuccessful in storming the Azovstal Steel Plant. Donetsk Oblast Administration Head Pavlo Kyrylenko said that Russian forces launched 35 airstrikes at Azovstal on April 26, which resulted in a fire at one of the plant's shops.

Subordinate Main Effort—Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts - The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces continued to shell the entire frontline in Donetsk and Luhansk and made marginal advances during ground



offensives on April 26. The General Staff stated that Russian efforts are focused on taking Rubizhne, Popasna, and Marinka, where intense fighting is ongoing.

Supporting Effort #1—Kharkiv and Izyum - Russian forces continued ground offensives south of Izyum in the directions of Barvinkove and Slovyansk. The Ukrainian General Staff stated that elements of the 1st Guards Tank Army, 20th Combined Arms Army, 35th Combined Arms Army, and 68th Army Corps are making measured advances in the direction of Barvinkove, about 50 kilometers southwest of Izyum.

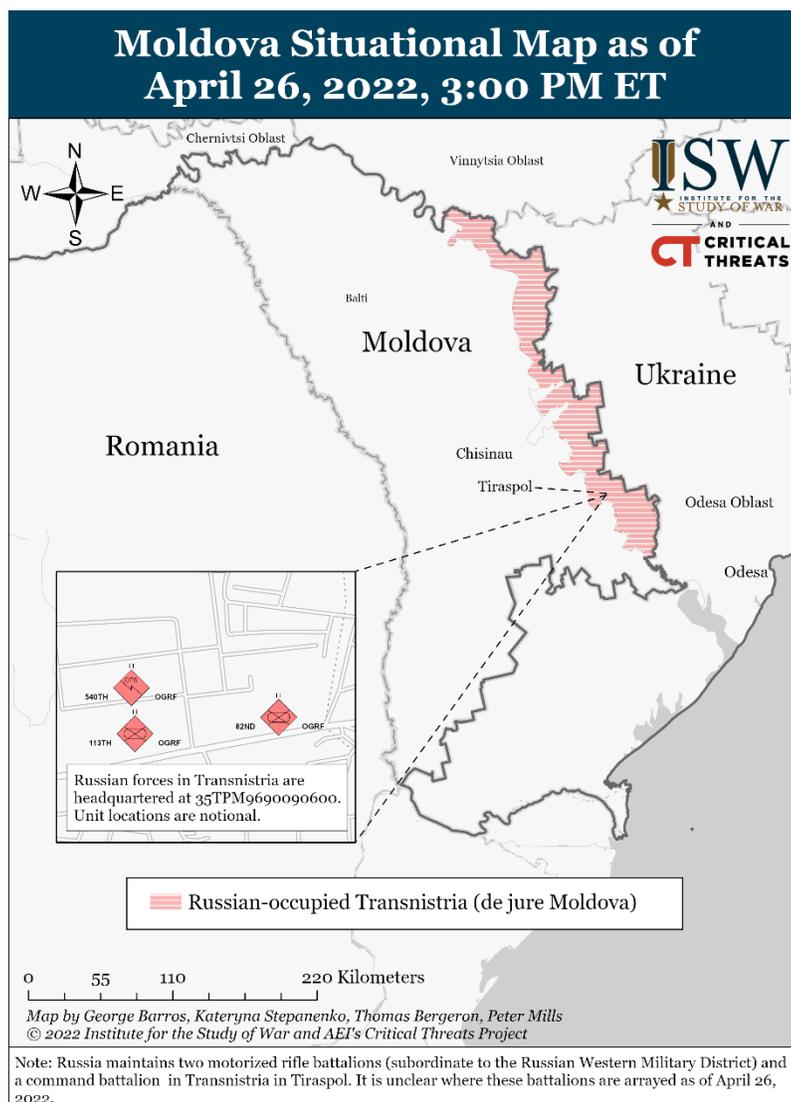
Supporting Effort #2—Southern Axis - Russian forces continued to shell the entire line of contact on the Southern Axis and are carrying out ground offensives in the direction of Mykolaiv and Kryvyi Rih. Russian forces are reportedly forcing residents of Velyka Oleksandrivka (roughly 15 kilometers from the Kherson-Mykolaiv administrative border) to evacuate their homes.

Supporting Effort #3—Sumy and Northeastern Ukraine - Russian forces shelled areas in Sumy Oblast near the Russian border between April 23 and 26. The Ukrainian Border Guard reported that Russian forces fired over 15 times at five different settlements in Sumy on April 26. Head of the Sumy Regional State Administration Dmytro Zhyvystkyy previously stated that Russian forces carried out “provocative shelling” of communities on the border with Russia on April 23.

Transnistria false flag - Russian forces likely conducted additional false flag attacks in the illegally-occupied territory of Transnistria on April 25-26. In addition to the grenade attack on the Transnistrian Internal Affairs Ministry that ISW reported on April 25, explosions were reported in Percani and Maiac on April 26. Head of the Donetsk People’s Republic Denis Pushilin claimed that the explosions necessitate the next stage of the Russian military operation for the benefit of Transnistria and similar Russian border regions.

The Ukrainian Main Intelligence Directorate (GUR) claimed on April 26 that Russia is likely preparing an attack on Transnistrian civilians and that the explosions were planned provocations by the Russian FSB to “instill panic and anti-Ukrainian” sentiment. The GUR stated that Russia may wish to involve Transnistria in the war in Ukraine either to capitalize on Transnistrian reserve forces or to launch attacks on Ukraine from Transnistrian territory. The recent activity in Transnistria is consistent with earlier reports that the airbase at Tiraspol was likely preparing for Russian aircraft on April 6 and 7.

No Retreat Permitted for Putin’s Hapless Conscripts in Ukraine - In a throwback to Stalinist-era practices, Russian forces in Ukraine may have been using some of their own detachments as “barrier troops”—a term



originating in World War II for so-called anti-retreat forces (Gazetta). The deployment of such units to deter frontline waverers or to punish insubordination among Russian service members has been reported in Kyiv, Sumy, Mykolayiv and Zaporizhzhia oblasts. Zaporizhzhia military administration spokesperson Colonel Ivan Arefyev described the most recent incident of this type as follows: “According to Ukrainian intelligence, Russian troops began to mutiny yesterday in the Polohy Raion of [Zaporizhzhia] Oblast: Russian soldiers refused to fight because they had not received their promised payouts. However, ‘kadyrovtsy’ brutally killed three of the instigators of the riot who were ready to lay down their arms and head home.”

The Russian Ministry of Defense, for its part, paints a no less dire picture of morale within the enemy ranks, claiming that in the Luhansk region Ukrainian barrier detachments “killed four officers of Ukraine's Armed Forces” to stop them from retreating, and that “the Kyiv nationalist regime” has given orders “to shoot on sight anyone among Ukrainian servicemen and foreign mercenaries wanting to lay down their arms.”

This confirms earlier reports, as included in a previous Update, that there are two “layers” of “enforcer” troops behind Russian front line units, (i) what is mentioned above to deter surrender or retreat and (ii) crematoria trucks to cremate bodies from the conflict.

Does not bode well for the common soldier in Russian units, with additional reports coming in that these Chechyan enforcement squads are hated by Russian commanders who often direct (Russian) fire at them.

Reports are also surfacing that atrocities as being uncovered in Bucha and other Ukrainian towns, are the work of Chechyan forces. It is similarly reported that Putin’s government has given these and other “contract” forces carte blanche to rape and plunder in return for joining the invasion.

Russian military

Can the Russian Military Overcome Its Manpower Problems In Ukraine? - RFE/RL spoke with Margarita Konaev, a fellow at Georgetown University’s Center for Security and Emerging Technology.

While far larger than the Ukrainians, the Russian forces are seen by Western and Ukrainian officials as demoralized and increasingly depleted following Moscow’s failed attempt at a quick victory after it invaded. In addition to mounting casualty figures, Russia has already deployed large parts of its military arsenal, including some of its most modern equipment, and has fired vast amounts of its rockets, artillery shells, and missiles.

Everyone following the war has observed that the Russian military’s goals have had to be adjusted given the realities on the ground and, to an extent, these most recent statements reflect some of those realities that we're seeing in the Donbas right now. [They] already control a lot of the territory [in the south]. So restating those goals gives them more attainable possibilities of what they can achieve in the foreseeable future.

At the same time, I think that statement about blocking Ukrainian access to the sea, controlling all of southern Ukraine, and then perpetuating that land bridge to the area in Moldova that is controlled by Russian forces [is] alarming. I would read it not as something that they're necessarily going to be trying to achieve in this round of fighting and this phase of the war, but something that they're positioning for as an option that they could pursue in the future.

Right now, from [their] force availability [and] from their logistical capabilities, they're simply not in a position to pursue even these types of significant military goals because of how hard the Russian military has been hit and how well the war has turned out for them [so far].

One area that they have not been using effectively -- and questions remain about whether they're able to [in the future] -- is airpower. We have not seen significant involvement of Russian airpower in this war and when they are

hitting targets, they're doing it very briefly and then returning quickly back to safer Russian-controlled [areas]. More extensive involvement of Russian airpower could shift the balance a little more towards [Russia].

For Russia, a very important question is going to be manpower [and] to what extent they want to continue committing more and more of their own troops to this fight, especially at the [high] level of personnel losses that they've suffered. At a certain point, you have to start asking how you can justify those sorts of losses.

[Also] where they're going to be bringing those personnel from [is] a huge question. That's why we're hearing reports about mercenaries from the Wagner Group [and] even recruitment of some Syrian forces that they're allegedly bringing into [Ukraine]. [Although] I haven't really seen any real evidence to indicate that the numbers [of mercenaries] are as high as some reports suggest...it's not impossible that they will increasingly [have to] draw on some of those sources to augment their manpower [shortages].

From the early stages of the war, one of the biggest questions that's been asked is how is Russia planning to occupy Ukraine or Ukrainian areas that are clearly [not] interested in any sort of Russian rule?

We know that in the east and in parts of the south there are larger pockets of Russian speaking populations, but even among them, any sort of welcome to Russian incursions has really not been to a [level that Russia] expected at the beginning [of the war]. That is why they increasingly have to rely on violence, suppression, and the destruction of those areas rather than trying to persuade or [gain] some local support. It's a tactic that they inevitably have to use if they want to retain any sort of sway or control in that region.

But I personally don't anticipate any sort of perpetuated military occupation in the south [of Ukraine] that you would see in a place like Palestine or even any sort of removal of opponent forces that we saw during the surge in Iraq. It's going to be a very different type of relationship that they're going to try to establish with the local population there. And again, they're mostly relying on the destruction of those areas so [they can] then declare victory and be able to say that they've accomplished their goals there.

And on the other side, Ukraine is very reluctant to settle, let alone retreat when it's in a relatively good position to continue the fight. My advice is to not expect a decisive [battle] but to expect this protracted stalemate and to keep paying close attention to the humanitarian costs of this war because the price of reconstruction is going to surpass the price of military support that [the West] is providing now -- and that [Western governments] should keep providing -- but also paying close attention to the humanitarian needs and to the postconflict needs that Ukraine is going to require.

How does Ukraine keep intercepting Russian military communications? - Russia is regarded as one of the world's most advanced countries when it comes to anything and everything related to spying, and that includes secretive, high-tech military communications. For Russian leader Vladimir Putin, a former intelligence officer, this is a particular point of pride. Yet Russia's reputation has taken a major blow with the often bumbling way the military has handled communications in Ukraine.

Ukraine feels there are huge public relations benefits in releasing intercepted material that's either embarrassing to Russia or points to Russian wrongdoing, possibly even atrocities.

Collectively, the ongoing stream of audio released by the Ukrainian government and military points to Ukraine's sustained ability to intercept Russian military communications.

While the public releases are limited, military analysts say the Ukrainians are certainly capturing additional calls that provide important battlefield intelligence, which is not being shared publicly.

The Russians brought their own cellphones into Ukraine. When the Ukrainians figured this out, they cut off Russian phone numbers from the Ukrainian network — so the Russian phones stopped working.

Russian troops then began seizing cellphones from Ukrainian civilians, according to Ukraine's State Service of Special Communications and Information Protection.

"We call on Ukrainians whose mobile phones were taken away by representatives of enemy troops to inform the operator as soon as possible," the Ukrainian agency said in a statement last month. Ukrainian civilians have complied, and this let the Ukrainian government know which phones were stolen by the Russians — and effectively became listening devices for the Ukrainians.

The Ukrainians are getting significant intelligence help from the United States and other NATO countries, according to U.S. officials. Most of this assistance remains secret, but some is easily visible on social media. "If you look at the flight radar right now, almost constantly, you see U.S. Air Force planes that are flying near the Ukrainian border, collecting intelligence," said Alperovitch. The U.S. planes are not entering Ukrainian airspace but are nearby over the skies of Poland, Romania and elsewhere in the region.

Peace Talks

UN Chief Again Calls For Ukraine Cease-Fire, Meets With Russia's Lavrov - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has again called for a cease-fire in Ukraine and warned of the impact of Russia's war against its neighbor is having on food security around the world.

Sanctions

Polish Government Says It's Prepared For Gazprom Gas Cut - The Polish government says it is ready to face any interruption of gas supply after Russia's Gazprom informed Warsaw that it will halt gas shipments through the Yamal pipeline from today.

IIHF Takes 2023 Ice Hockey World Championships From Russia - The International Ice Hockey Federation says it has taken away Russia's rights to host the 2023 World Championships as the number of barred Russian sports teams and performers and canceled events rises in response to Moscow's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

Moscow Court Seizes Google Property As YouTube Lawsuit Proceeds - A court in Moscow has impounded property and frozen bank accounts of Google's Russian arm as a guarantee against a possible court decision regarding a lawsuit filed against the U.S. tech giant by a subsidiary of Gazprom-Media holding.

Russia Expels 40 German Diplomats In Tit-For-Tat Move - Russia says it is expelling 40 German diplomats in retaliation for similar steps taken by Berlin against Moscow's foreign envoys over the Kremlin's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

Baltic States Bet on New LNG Regasification Capacities - Latvian Economy Minister Jānis Vitenbergs announced his government's decision to abandoning natural gas supplies from Russia by the end of 2022. This relies on expanding liquefied natural gas (LNG) regasification capacity across the region—both domestically in Latvia and in neighboring Estonia, Finland as well as, possibly, Lithuania. If everything goes as planned, the Baltic States (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia) should in the coming years have not one but as many as three LNG import terminals, significantly increasing their security of supply.

Putin

Putin's Ukraine Military Disaster Just Won't Seem To End – The Ukrainian Ministry of Defense claimed that as of Tuesday, Ukrainian forces have killed approximately 22,100 Russian troops (and wounded approximately thrice that number), destroyed 184 fighter, attack, and transport jets, 154 helicopters, 918 tanks, 416 artillery pieces, 2,308 armored personnel carriers, 149 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS), eight boats, 1,643 vehicles, 76 fuel tanks, 69 anti-aircraft batteries, 205 unmanned aerial systems, 31 special equipment platforms, such as bridging vehicles, and four mobile Iskander ballistic missile systems.

According to U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, the training of the first 50 Ukrainian troops on the M-777 Howitzers is complete, and the next batch of 50 is soon to begin training. The Pentagon has already delivered 18 artillery pieces to Ukraine, with seven more underway; the balance of 72 are soon to follow. Ukraine has also been given approximately \$320 million in foreign military assistance to buy whatever military equipment it needs, including former Soviet weapon systems.

These artillery pieces above are in addition to those from other NATO countries.

As Ukrainian army gets closer to West, Putin causes the outcome he feared - The longer Ukraine's army fends off the invading Russians, the more it absorbs the advantages of Western weaponry and training — exactly the transformation Russian President Vladimir Putin wanted to prevent by invading in the first place.

The list of arms flowing to Ukraine is long and growing longer. It includes new American battlefield aerial drones and the most modern US and Canadian artillery. Also, anti-tank weapons from Norway and others; armored vehicles and anti-ship missiles from Britain; and Stinger counter-air missiles from the US, Denmark and other countries.

If Ukraine can hold off the Russians, its accumulating arsenal of Western weapons could have a transformative effect in a country that has, like other former Soviet republics, relied mainly on arms and equipment from the Soviet era.

Humanitarian

Ukrainian Population displacement - A thing to watch is population displacement and an effort to remove some of the local population that is more pro-Ukrainian. [Russian forces] could maybe resettle some people from other areas of Ukraine or even parts of Russia to give the perception of legitimacy, but right now, at this point in the war, legitimacy is quite low on the list of what Russia is trying to portray and accomplish.

It's something that it can claim and argue to its own population that's already been fed a lot of lies, but it's unlikely that in Ukraine or the West that there's going to be a lot of buy in [or] legitimizing of their efforts in the south or in the east, let alone throughout the rest of the country.

Ukrainian Sappers Clear Fields Of Deadly Unexploded Shells And Mines - Ukrainian mine-clearance teams are combing through urban and agricultural land for unexploded munitions left behind following two months of Russian shelling.

Rights Group Urges Russia To Allow Civilians Out Of Mariupol, Calls On UN To Do More - Human Rights Watch (HRW) has urged Russian forces that are now in control of most of Ukraine's besieged port of Mariupol to make sure that civilians that are still trapped in the strategic city are permitted to safely transfer to Ukrainian-controlled territory.

UN Chief Says Ukraine War Crimes Reports Must Be Probed As Fighting Continues - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has told Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov that he is concerned about reports of possible war crimes in Ukraine and that independent investigations are needed.

Latvian Russian-Speakers Protest Against Kremlin's War In Ukraine - Hundreds of people from Latvia's Russian-speaking community participated in a protest in the streets of the capital, Riga, against Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine. Organizers of The Russian Voice Against War rally said the event was designed to demonstrate that Russian-speaking people in Latvia do not identify with Russian President Vladimir Putin's government and that they respect the sovereignty and culture of other countries.

Garland says funds from assets US seizes from Russian oligarchs should go 'directly to Ukraine' - Attorney General Merrick Garland said Tuesday that he supports efforts to allow some of the proceeds from assets the Justice Department seizes from Russian oligarchs to go "directly to Ukraine."

Nuclear

Russia warns 'serious' nuclear war risks should not be underestimated - Russia told the world not to underestimate the considerable risks of nuclear war that it said it wanted to reduce and warned that conventional Western weapons were legitimate targets in Ukraine, where battles raged in the east.

"The risks now are considerable," Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told Russia's state television according to a transcript of an interview on the ministry's website.

"I would not want to elevate those risks artificially. Many would like that. The danger is serious, real. And we must not underestimate it." Lavrov had been asked about the importance of avoiding World War Three and whether the current situation was comparable to the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, a low point in US-Soviet relations.

Russia had lost its "last hope to scare the world off supporting Ukraine," Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kulebawrote on Twitter after Lavrov's interview.

"This only means Moscow senses defeat."

Impacts

Moscow Courts Fine Meta, TikTok For Failing To Delete 'Illegal' Content - A court in Moscow has fined Meta Platforms and the TikTok social media application for failing to delete content the government deems illegal as Russia continues to ramp up pressure on social-media networks.

The Public Health Consequences of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine - In a matter of weeks, the Russian invasion has imperiled Ukraine's recent reforms to its health system, disrupting disease surveillance, immunization, and treatment programs already stressed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The security and safety of healthcare facilities, workers, and supply lines remain paramount concerns. As a renewed Russian assault on Ukraine's southeast begins, Ukrainians are likely to face persistent and intensifying public health challenges as a direct result of the conflict. The authors consider the scale of investment in long-term population rehabilitation and recovery that may be required to address the widespread physical and psychological trauma from the war.

'On Both Sides' - "I remember that it was hot. And there was lot of fruit," said Adelia, a 23-year-old final-year university student from Russia's Tatarstan region, when asked about the vacations her family took in her childhood to visit her grandparents in the Zaporizhzhya region of southern Ukraine.

Now her phone calls with her mother's parents are often punctuated by the sound of exploding shells in the background. It is hard to talk about anything but the war, she says.

But talking about the war itself is also difficult. Adelia's Ukrainian grandmother is sure that the shelling is coming from Russian forces, while her ethnic Russian grandfather blames the Ukrainian military. "My grandfather says they try to avoid talking about politics so as not to argue," Adelia said. "They are focused on surviving."

Adelia's extended family is one of millions that straddle the border between the two countries and have been profoundly affected since Russia's February 24 invasion of Ukraine. Her name and those of all her relatives have been changed for this story by request, for fear of repercussions for discussing the war in Ukraine candidly.

Adelia's relatives on her father's side live in Russia. One of them is an officer in the Russian Army, whose unit was transferred to the Ukrainian border in January. Adelia says he has not been able to share any of his personal opinions about the war.

He is not in a combat zone himself, although he is in Ukraine. His job, Adelia says, is to arrange for the repatriation of the bodies of Russian servicemen killed in action. "He says there are a lot of bodies. They bring in 200 or 300 a day," she said -- numbers that correspond roughly to U.S. statements that more than 15,000 Russian soldiers have been killed in the two-month-old war. The Russian military has not released a death toll since March 25, when it said that 1,370 of its soldiers had been killed.

Containment

Armenian, Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers Agree On Structure Of Border Demarcation Commission - Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoian and Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Ceyhun Bayramov have agreed on the structure of a commission on the delimitation of the border between the two South Caucasus countries amid simmering tensions over the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Germany approves tank sales to Ukraine - The German government said Tuesday it will deliver anti-aircraft tanks to Ukraine after facing strong pressure at home and abroad to abandon its reluctance to supply heavy weapons to Kyiv.

The announcement marks a notable shift for Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who as recently as last week was still ruling out sending German tanks to Ukraine, insisting it would make more sense for Eastern NATO countries to give Kyiv old Soviet-era tanks already familiar to the Ukrainian military. Scholz promised Germany would then send those replacement German tanks.



weapons

countries

Ukraine - Non-Standard Ammunition - The State Department has made a determination approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Ukraine of various rounds of non-standard ammunition for an estimated cost of \$165 million. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency delivered the required certification notifying Congress of this possible sale on April 24, 2022.

The Government of Ukraine has requested to buy various rounds of non-ammunition to include, but not limited to, the following: 152mm rounds 2A36 Giatsint; 152mm rounds for D-20 cannons; VOG-17 for automatic grenade launcher AGS-17; 120mm mortar rounds (non-NATO); 122mm rounds for 2S1 Gvozdika; BM-21 GRAD Rockets; 300mm rounds/rockets for MLRS "Smerch (pictured to the right);" VOG-25 grenades for under barrel grenade launcher GP-25; 82mm mortar rounds; 125mm HE ammunition for T-72; 152mm rounds for 2A65 Msta;



standard

for

transportation; and other related elements of logistical and program support. The total estimated program cost is \$165 million. These are all Russian-made armored vehicles.

UK-Poland launch collaboration on cutting-edge missile system - CEO of the Polish Armaments Group Sebastian ChwaÅek and MBDA Sales Director Poland Adrian Monks signed the interim capability contract in Warsaw today, which is the first of two stages to deliver the Common Anti Air Modular Missile (CAMM), a surface to air missile.

The collaboration will provide enhanced security and defense development for both NATO countries, and European security. Flying at supersonic speeds, missiles can destroy modern air threats including aircraft and high-speed missiles.

Each CAMM family missile is equipped with an advanced active radar seeker that can see even the smallest, fastest and stealthiest targets through the worst weather and the heaviest electronic jamming. They are capable of hitting a tennis ball-sized object travelling at several times the speed of sound.



bolster
CAMM
stealth

Austin: West will "keep moving heaven and earth" to arm Ukraine - U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said Tuesday that Western countries will "keep moving heaven and earth" to help Ukraine defend against Russia's unprovoked invasion.

Why it matters: Austin and Joint Chiefs chairman Mark Milley held a meeting with more than 30 defense officials from dozens of NATO and non-NATO countries at Ramstein Air Base in Germany to coordinate military aid for Ukraine as Russia's invasion shifts to an offensive against the country's Donbas region.

During the meeting, German Minister of Defense Christine Lambrecht announced that Berlin would send Ukraine an unspecified number of anti-aircraft tanks.

France's victorious Macron boosts weapons, stakes in Ukraine - When Vladimir Putin congratulated Emmanuel Macron on his re-election as France's president and wished him "success in your activities," the Russian leader probably was being more polite than sincere.

As he embarks on a second term, with the intention of keeping France at international efforts to force Putin to change course in Ukraine, a green light for the delivery of modern artillery pieces to Kyiv that could help stem Russia's new offensive in the east of the country.

Firing six rounds per minute over 40 kilometers (25 miles) or more, the truck-mounted Caesar cannons will allow Ukrainian crews to pound Russian troops from afar, then move and pound them again. Used to great effect against Islamic State forces and in other conflicts, they represent a step up in France's assistance to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's government.



the forefront of
Macron has given

in Iraq

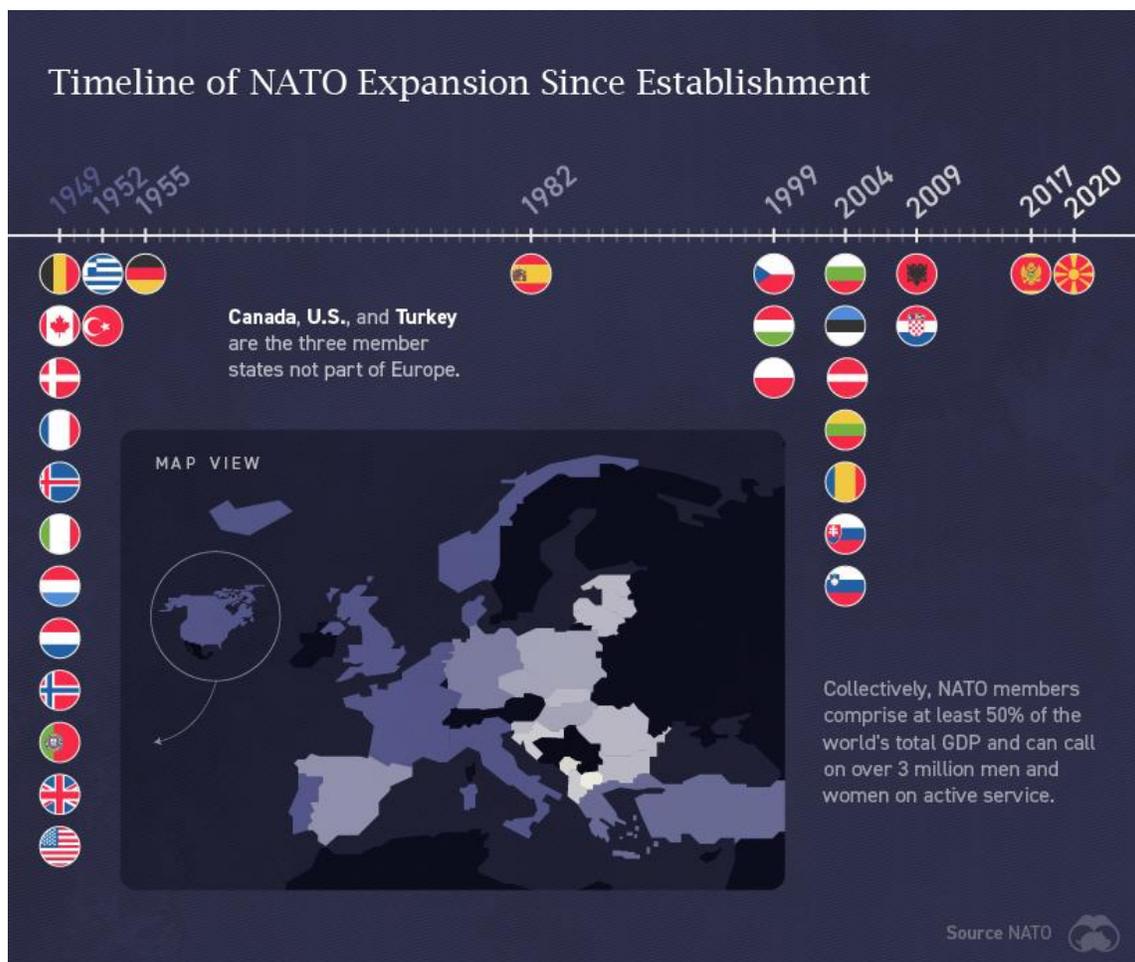
NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) exists for the sole purpose of facilitating a political and military alliance between its 30 member countries.

Established in 1949 in response to post-WW2 Soviet aggression, NATO exists for the collective defense and security of the group. Members share few laws and regulations. An attack on one constitutes an attack on all, and member states are obligated to defend one another.

The chronological timeline of NATO's expansion since its establishment paints a fascinating picture.

As of 2021, NATO officially recognizes three aspiring NATO members: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Ukraine. Ukraine has voiced its desire to join NATO since 2014 but hasn't met its political and military criteria.



Widening of conflict and war

Moldova's President Says Transdniester Attacks Are An Attempt To Escalate Tensions - President Maia Sandu said yesterday that several alleged attacks in Moldova's Moscow-backed breakaway region of Transdniester were an attempt to escalate tensions, blaming "pro-war factions" within the territory's administration.

Ukraine Says Targeting Of Separatists' Building In Transdniester Was Provocation By Russia - The Ministry of State Security in the capital of Moldova's breakaway region of Transdniester has been hit by explosions that damaged the upper floors of its building, an attack that Ukraine said was a provocation organized by Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB).