

Conflict Update # 32

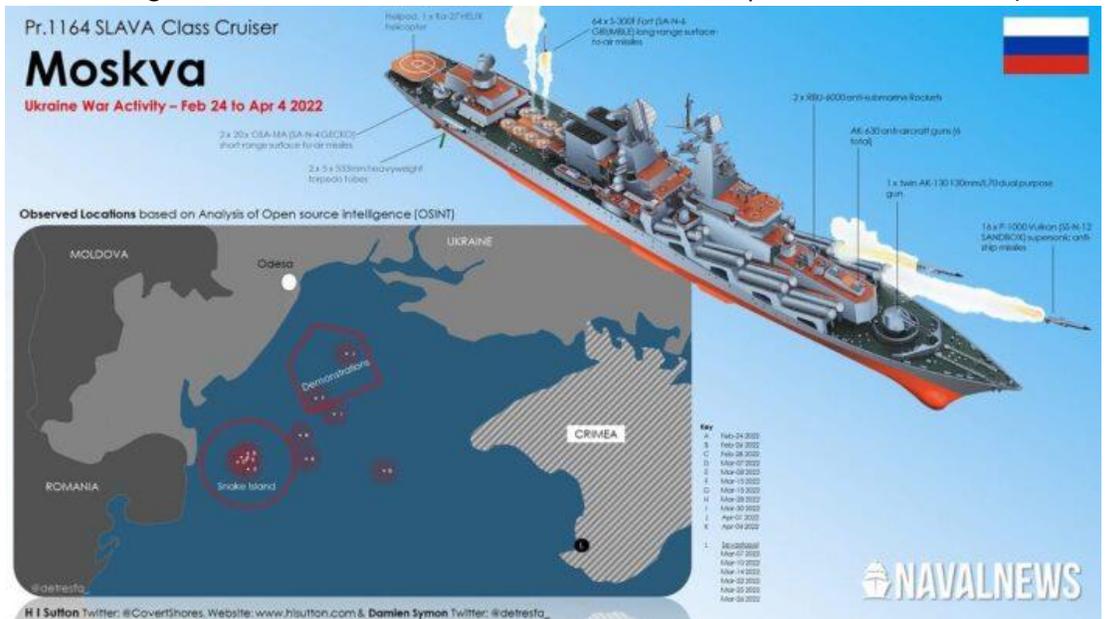
April 17th, 2022

Conflict Assessment

Ukraine's sinking of the Moskva - A Ukrainian Air Force Su-27UB is pictured flying chase for a Neptune anti-ship missile trial before the weapon was declared operational. (Ukrainian MoD screencap).



Originally built in Ukraine during the Soviet-era, the cruiser Moskva entered service in the early 1980s with the name Slava, before being recommissioned in 2000 with the current name as new flagship of the Black Sea Fleet. It underwent a major refit five years ago, and in its current configuration is armed with 16 P-1000 Vulkan anti-ship missiles, 64 S-300F (SA-N-6 Grumble) long-range surface-to-air missiles, 40 OSA-MA (SA-N-4 Gecko) short-range surface-to-air missiles, a twin AK-130 130mm dual purpose gun, as well as six AK-630 close-in weapon systems and electronic warfare systems and decoys to provide a high degree of protection. The vessel was reputedly very highly protected against anti-ship attack. (The Aviationist).



Sinking of Moskva warship shines spotlight on Russian navy's defensive flaws - The sinking of Russia's Black Sea flagship the Moskva is not just a blow to morale, it also highlights the flaws in the country's naval defensive capabilities, according to Chinese military observers.

They said that apart from the impact on the war with Ukraine, the loss of the cruiser, which was armed with anti-ship missiles, would also reduce Russia's ability to deter US carrier fleets in the Mediterranean.

Yue Gang, a former colonel in the People's Liberation Army, warned against drawing hasty conclusions and said the ship had not been well-maintained over its 40 or so years in service.

Nukes might've been on destroyed Russian warship - History's most twisted round of "which of these things do not belong" is playing out on the floor of the Black Sea this week because Russia may have lost nuclear weapons when its warship sank there. (The Byte).

Was Russian Warship Sunk By American Harpoons? - Although Ukraine claimed the Russian warship was struck by a “Ukrainian-made Neptune anti-ship missile,” developed domestically based on the Soviet KH-35 cruise missile that became operational in the Ukrainian naval forces just last year, Politico reported on March 16 that Kyiv had specifically demanded “long-range anti-ship missiles” from Washington.

Although Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Gen. Mark Milley, testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee on April 7, did not specifically mention providing Harpoons to Ukrainian forces, according to informed sources, caches of anti-ship missiles had also been provided to Ukraine’s naval forces deployed in Odesa in southeast Ukraine.

The Pentagon revealed last week that it had also been training Ukrainian troops that were inside the US before Russia launched its invasion. The Ukrainian soldiers were participating in a pre-scheduled professional military education program at the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School in Biloxi, Mississippi, when Russia’s invasion of Ukraine began on Feb. 24, according to Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby.

Several batches of Ukrainian naval cadets trained at the Naval Training School in Biloxi, Mississippi, have already returned home to Ukraine and were deployed in Odesa and the rest are now headed back to Ukraine.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of April 17, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



A Russian soldier says Putin's troops have been blowing up their own 'as if they were terrorists' - Ukrainian intelligence officials claim to have intercepted a call in which a Russian soldier says Vladimir Putin's troops are shooting their own people in Moscow.

The Security Service of Ukraine released an audio clip of the call on Friday, in which a man's voice can be heard saying Putin's forces have been opening fire on a Russian town. The man, a soldier located in Ukraine's Donetsk region, was speaking to his wife on the phone, who's back home in Russia.

"These are our heroes," he told his wife. "This is done in order to provoke ... Ukrainians," he said, according to Ukrainian intel.

The soldier said Russian forces bombed Klimovo, a Russian city straddling the border between Russia and Ukraine. Klimovo authorities, meanwhile, blamed Ukrainian soldiers for shelling the city, an accusation Kyiv has vehemently

denied. The National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine characterized the blame as "an attempt to ignite anti-Ukraine hysteria in Russia," according to Radio Free Europe, a US-funded media company.

"The same crap was in the Chechen war," he told his wife. "Apartments were blown up in Moscow, like ... they were terrorists." He said it was orchestrated and carried out by officers with Russia's Federal Security Service. (Insider).

Russia-backed conscripts in Ukraine are so ill equipped that they're using decades-old rifles and forced to drink pond water, report says. Conscripts fighting alongside Russia in eastern Ukraine are very ill equipped, sources there told Reuters. Donbas conscripts were issued decades-old rifles, with one saying they were like "World War Two muskets." They were also given so few supplies that they've had to drink untreated pond water, Reuters reported.

Russia sets deadline for Ukraine troops in Mariupol to surrender - Russia's defense ministry told Ukrainian forces still fighting in the besieged southern port of Mariupol to lay down their arms starting 6 am Moscow time (0300 GMT; 11 am Philippine time) on Sunday, April 17, to save their lives. This deadline has since been passed.

Russia restoring captured, damaged Ukrainian tanks, vehicles – report - A new Russian repair base located "practically on the front line" is reportedly staffed by high-quality servicemen. All restored equipment will be transferred to Donetsk and Luhansk.

Russian forces in Ukraine are capturing Ukrainian military vehicles, including tanks and armored personnel carriers, and restoring them to put them back in fighting condition, according to Russia's Defense Ministry.

This is reportedly being done at a new repair facility set up by Russian troops located "practically on the front line," giving them time to repair and restore vehicles with what the Defense Ministry claims are high-quality servicemen and modern maintenance and repair equipment.

Ukraine says Russia used long-range bombers on Mariupol; first time in war - Ukraine's defense ministry spokesman Oleksandr Motuzanyk said on Friday that for the first time since the start of its invasion, Russia used long-range bombers to attack the besieged port city of Mariupol. Motuzanyk said Russia was concentrating its efforts on seizing the cities of Rubizhne, Popasna and Mariupol. Use of these bombers show signs of a Russian sense of desperation in being unable to subdue the city, despite previously having stated that it had.

The city has been reduced to rubble and the death toll among civilians is unknown but estimated at over 20,000.

Russia loses its 8th general and 34th colonel in Ukraine in the latest hammer blow to Putin's botched invasion - Russia lost its eighth general since the invasion of Ukraine in the latest blow to Vladimir Putin's botched war.

Major General Vladimir Frolov, deputy commander of the 8th Guards Combined Arms unit, was given a military funeral in St Petersburg earlier today. It's not known how or where he died, but the timing of his funeral suggests Frolov was killed in the past few days. His 8th Combined Arms Army was fighting in Kherson, near Crimea last month when commander Andrei Mordvichev was killed.

Russia also lost its 34th colonel of the war, tank battalion commander Miras Bashakov, according to reports today. He became the 42nd high-ranking officer known to have died in a war that has hemorrhaged Putin's top brass.

The scale of the death toll invalidates Vladimir Putin's claim that his 'special military operation' is going according to plan. The overall Russian losses since the invasion began on 24 February are believed to be in the region of 20,000, but Moscow has failed to give accurate figures.

On Thursday Putin lost Lieutenant Colonel Denis Mezhuev, most likely in the east. Mezhuev had commanded troops in Kyiv before his unit was redeployed in the Donbas.

A day earlier, surrendering Ukrainian forces showed Russian servicemen the precise location in blitzed Mariupol where one of Moscow's generals lay dead. The Russians then retrieved the body of Major-General Oleg Mityaev, 47, commander of the army's 150th motorized rifle division.

Austrian Chancellor: Putin 'believes he is winning the war' in Ukraine – Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer reported that during his testy and fractious one-on-one meeting with Putin in Russia, it appears that Putin believes he is winning the war in Ukraine.

'Inclined Toward Treason': More And More Russian Soldiers Reportedly Refusing To Fight In Ukraine - "They called me one morning from the office of the division commander in Amur Oblast, where Pavlik served," said a woman from Russia's Tambov region who asked to be identified only by her first name, Yelena. "The man said: 'Do you know that they are searching for your son, that he is AWOL?' Pavlik was supposed to board a troop train, but he didn't. And five other soldiers were with him."

Yelena's son, Pavel (Paul in English), was serving in the Far Eastern Amur region when Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24. Almost immediately, his unit was sent to the front, and he served almost 40 days in combat. Then his unit was sent back to Russia to regroup, Yelena told RFE/RL's North. Realities. When his unit was preparing to return to Ukraine, Pavel refused.

"If he doesn't want to go back, am I supposed to push him, to tell him, 'Grab your weapon and go,'" Yelena said. "Those who haven't been there have no right judge those who have." Yelena's son is one of a significant but unknown number of Russian contract soldiers who have refused to either fight in Ukraine in the first place or who have fought and do not want to return.

Lawyer Pavel Chikov, founder of the Agora legal-aid NGO, has written on Telegram that more than 1,000 military personnel and National Guard troops from at least seven regions have refused to go to Ukraine.

Ruslan Leviyev, the founder of the Conflict Intelligence Team, a Russian NGO that monitors open-source information about the Russian military, told Current Time that the actual number of these cases might be considerably larger and that the refusals could be severely hampering Russia's efforts to regroup and renew its military operations in eastern Ukraine.

"The phenomenon of refusal is becoming systemic," Leviyev said. "Such soldiers are found in practically every unit that has returned from Ukraine. According to our estimates, from 20 to 40 percent of the contract servicemen that returned from Ukraine and that are being readied to be sent back are refusing to return to combat."

"Citizens have the right to refuse to go to a foreign war and kill people," said Agora lawyer Mikhail Benyash, who is providing legal services to some soldiers who have refused. "And they also have the right not to participate in a 'special military operation.' By definition, only special forces troops with training for such operations are sent [on 'special military operations']...."

Moscow recruiters in overdrive: Nervous Kremlin races to find more soldiers for Russian Army as losses in Ukraine mount. Tens of thousands of vacancies are currently inviting Russians to sign up to join their country's army, with double pay offered to those willing to serve in Ukraine.

The Russian employment agency HeadHunter offered 3,000 military vacancies in the last few weeks, three times as many as in the whole of 2019, while its rival Superjob, more than 18,000 ads for roles in the Russian Army are outstanding.

More and more vacancies pop up that offer jobs for relatively short-term positions, according to the Russian-language service of the BBC.

Most positions offer three, six or twelve month contracts with a proposed start date being “within a few weeks.”

Job advertisements call for applicants with specific military skills, such as artillery-trained troops, tank drivers and radio operators. Normally, these positions are mostly recruited via the armed forces’ internal recruitment offices.

The broadcaster said that the tsunami of vacancies indicates that the Russian Ministry of Defense is having a hard time finding sufficient troops to relieve and replace soldiers currently serving in Ukraine, as well as to compensate for the losses among Russian troops. (City A.M.).

Because President Putin insists that this is not a war but a ‘special military operation,’ the Ministry of Defense is not allowed to deploy conscripted soldiers in Ukraine.

Russia is failing to recruit new troops because they know they'll become 'cannon fodder' - Russia is failing to recruit new troops because potential conscripts are too afraid of dying in battle, Ukraine's defense ministry told a Friday press briefing, citing military intelligence.

Russia had planned to mobilize 26,000 reservists to fight in the Donbas, but this effort ultimately failed because Russians were avoiding being conscripted, defense ministry spokesman Col. Oleksandr Motuzyanyk told the briefing.

"Males aged 18 to 65 make every attempt to avoid mobilization because they don't want to become cannon fodder for the occupier's army," Motuzyanyk said.

Motuzyanyk told reporters that potential recruits had been promised that their duties would include "controlling occupied territories, guarding roads and military facilities, and improving the defense positions." The reality, he said, is they have been forced into battle to replace those killed in combat.

“Eyes in the sky” - The Pentagon has eyes-in-the-sky watching every move the Russians make in and around Ukraine, including the areas of Russia and Belarus it has previously used as staging grounds for attack. When the Pentagon says stuff like, "additional helicopters," that means they're counting every one of them, which means they're counting artillery pieces, tanks, refueling trucks — the whole lot — and passing that information directly to Ukraine.

Which makes one wonder why Putin hasn't learned any lessons over the last 50-plus days. He appears to be readying a new offensive in eastern Ukraine that will be a carbon copy of the one he launched against Kyiv and Kharkiv in February and March. The Pentagon is being very open about what it is "seeing" on the ground in both Russian staging areas and in Ukraine itself, as it was before the invasion on Feb. 24. If the Pentagon was correct the last time about both Russian intentions and movements — and it was — the chances are very strong it's correct this time as well. It would be safe to assume that the Ukrainian response to the new Russian offensive in the east will be at least as effective as it was before, given the new weapons systems that even now are making their way to Ukraine's army. These include attack helicopters, long-range artillery and ground-to-ground rocket launchers, and the MIG-29s from Poland that are finally going to join Ukraine's air arsenal. (Salon).

Post-Conflict

President Zelensky reveals plans for the reconstruction of Ukraine - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy used his daily address on Saturday night (April 16) to outline plans for rebuilding his country's cities destroyed by war.

The president spoke in depth about several housing related matters including the provision of homes for veterans and the military and temporary accommodation for IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons).

"What is important in our project of reconstruction of Ukraine? The task is not only to physically rebuild the houses, apartments, bridges and roads, businesses and social infrastructure that were destroyed by Russian troops. Not just to give people back everything they lost and give them a new foundation in life.

"Last year, I set a task for the government – to do everything possible to provide all veterans, who were waiting in line, with housing this year. Next, we planned to provide all our military with housing. And now we are actually expanding last year's task to the whole state and refining it so that it would be a real modernisation of Ukrainian cities and Ukrainian communities. And we combine this with the housing energy modernisation programme. As a result, there will be several stages."

He continued: "Today, I set a task to provide temporary housing to all our IDPs at the first stage. Those whose house was destroyed by war. Temporary housing until we rebuild their homes. Or until people receive compensation in square metres or money.

"In the second stage, we restore what the occupiers tried to destroy. All affected cities and communities. And at the third stage, we provide housing for all those who have defended or are defending the state, who have worked or are working in the interests of society, and do not have their own housing."

Mr Zelensky also revealed that he had again spoken to Boris Johnson as well as Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson on a number of matters.

Russia Still Seeks Regime Change to Turn Ukraine into 'Rump State' - "The aim is the liquidation of Ukraine as a puppet of the Anglo-Saxon block," says Pyotor Akopov, a columnist for the Russian state news outlet RIA-Novosti, his comments matching those of others close to power in the Kremlin.

"Ukraine in its current form will not come out of this conflict," Akopov told Newsweek. "It will be a different country with a different leadership completely in the Russian sphere of influence."

China Is Reassessing Western Financial Power After Ukraine -

Sanctions

Huawei suspends some Russian operations, reports say, treading carefully amid sanctions risks as it weighs options - China's largest telecoms equipment maker, already burdened by US sanctions, is furloughing local employees for a month, according to a Forbes Russia report. Most Chinese companies have continued operations in Russia following its invasion of Ukraine, as Beijing has avoided criticism of Moscow amid closer ties.

Huawei has furloughed part of its staff in its Moscow office for a month in April after suspending all orders in the market, according to the report, which was published last week and cited anonymous sources. The company has also cut jobs at the marketing department, but employees from China still came into the office, according to the report.

Russia bans Boris Johnson from country over Ukraine war - Russia has banned Prime Minister Boris Johnson and other senior ministers from entering Russia over the UK's "hostile" stance on the war in Ukraine. Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, Defense Secretary Ben Wallace and 10 other senior politicians - mostly members of the Cabinet - have also been barred.

Russia can't build or repair tanks because Western sanctions deprived it of components - Ukrainian officials claimed on Monday that Russia is unable to repair its tanks or make new ones because of the impact of international sanctions. A Facebook post by the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine said that work had halted at two Russian factories "due to the lack of receipts of foreign-made components." Insider was unable to verify the claim.

The two companies, Uralzavod Corporation and Chelyabinsk Tractor Plant, "specialize in the manufacture and repair of tanks and other armored vehicles for the needs of the armed forces of the Russian Federation," the Ukrainian post said.

According to Oryx, an open-source project that documents military losses, Russia has lost 1,670 military vehicles in Ukraine since its invasion began. The project has documented the destruction or capture of 81 of Russia's T-72B3 tanks.

This will explain the other article in this Update which reports that Russia is repairing captured Ukrainian tanks for use in their field units.

Russia-bound luxury cars get stuck in Belgium under EU sanctions - European luxury cars meant to be sent to Russia are now stuck at the Zeebrugge port in Belgium due to EU sanctions over the war in Ukraine. Around 8,000 Russia-bound cars are currently blocked from being shipped, it was noted.

But vehicles are not the only product under scrutiny. Current sanctions apply to a wide range of goods, such as aircraft components, quantum computing, semiconductors, sensitive machinery and chemicals.

Containment

RAF Lakenheath Might Soon Host US Nuclear Weapons Again - The UK has been added again to the list of nuclear weapons storage sites being upgraded in Europe, after 14 years since it last hosted B61 bombs.

A recently published document of the Department of Defense regarding the FY 2023 budget for the Military Construction Program shows the United Kingdom added again to the list of European countries set to receive upgrades to their NATO nuclear weapons storage sites. It is safe to say that the British base hinted in the document is RAF Lakenheath, since it already hosted nuclear weapons in the past to equip the F-15E Strike Eagle.

"The B61 series weapons are tactical gravity nuclear weapons that can be used on Dual Capable Aircraft like the F-15E and F-16C/D," said Lt. Col Daniel Jackson, division chief, Headquarters ACC Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration during one of the most recent tests for the certification. "Having a 5th Generation DCA fighter aircraft with this capability brings an entirely new strategic-level capability that strengthens our nation's nuclear deterrence mission."

German troops arrive in Lithuania as part of NATO effort - The Suwalki Gap is a narrow strip of land connecting Lithuania to Poland. It's squeezed between the Russian-controlled enclave of Kaliningrad to the northwest, and the country of Belarus to the southeast. The Belarusian government is considered a Russian ally.

The Suwalki gap is only 65 kilometers in length and also the only land connection between the Baltic states and other NATO partner countries. In a crisis, many locals here fear that Russia might block this gap. As a result, they feel a deep antipathy towards Russia.

SAS troops 'in Ukraine' - Troops from Britain's special forces are reportedly on the ground in Ukraine and training soldiers. SAS personnel have worked with local fighters around Kyiv for the first time since the conflict began, The Times claimed.

The unverified report comes a day after Moscow's main propaganda station said World War Three has already started and Russia is at war with NATO.

The UK has played a pivotal role in equipping forces fighting to repel the Kremlin's invasion, particularly with next generation light anti-tank weapons (NLAWs).

Military trainers were initially pulled out of Ukraine when the February invasion began over fears direct clashes with Russian forces could escalate the conflict.

Now officers from separate battalions have claimed SAS soldiers were in Ukraine training recruits on how to operate the weapons.

NATO Is Sending Artillery And Tanks To Ukraine - Russia's war on Ukraine entered a new phase early in April as Putin belatedly recognized the failure of his assaults on Kyiv. The decimated survivors of that ill-fated campaign are now being transported by rail to eastern Ukraine to pursue what Moscow hopes is a more achievable war aim: the capture of the entire Donbas region of Ukraine and the destruction of the elite Ukrainian mechanized brigades defending it.

Kyiv has won a momentous victory by defeating Putin's ambition to capture of the Ukrainian capital, decapitate its government, and subjugate all of Ukraine under a puppet regime. But for the Donbas campaign, Kyiv needs mechanized units with tanks and infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs) to seize and defend ground. Infantry on foot, even armed with advanced Western portable missile launchers, cannot accomplish as much in Donbas's open terrain as in the suburbs and forested areas surrounding Kyiv.

By mid-April, NATO armor and artillery first began trickling and then pouring in to reinforce Ukraine's war effort. At least 200 tanks and infantry fighting vehicles have been delivered so far, a number which may rise in the coming weeks.

- 140+ **T-72M1s** from Poland and the Czech Republic
- **BMP-1s** from Czech Republic, Germany, Sweden and Poland
- **Leopard 1s** - German manufacturer Rheinmetall told trade journal Handelsblatt it was preparing to deliver 50 retired Leopard 1A5 tanks to Ukraine.
- Bulgaria in particular has hundreds of **Soviet tanks** and **BMPs** in storage it could contribute. Turkey has a huge back inventory of hundreds of dated Western tanks which have been modernized to varying degrees, including M48 and M60 Pattons and Leopard 1s.
- Plans to send **armored vehicles** and **anti-ship missiles** are being developed and executed in the UK Ministry of Defense. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson says he is eager to increase arms shipments to Ukraine.
- Biden's now ready to arm Ukraine to the hilt.
- Mysterious **American robotic ships** headed to Ukraine - The Department of Defense is sending robotic ships to Ukraine to aid its fight against Russia. While the Pentagon is being tight-lipped about the vessels and what missions they'll be performing, analysts gave FedScoop some insights into what the systems might be and what role they might play in the war.

"It's an unmanned surface vessel (USV) that can be used for a variety of purposes in coastal defense. I think I'll just leave it at that," Secretary of Defense Kirby told reporters, adding systems are coming from Navy stocks.

When pressed for more details, Kirby said: "I'm not gonna promise you a fact sheet [but] I can promise you the damn thing works." Kirby was later asked if the systems will be armed.

"They're designed to help Ukraine with its coastal defense needs. And I think I'm just going to leave it at that. I'm not going to get into the specific capabilities," he said.

- **Czech Republic** has delivered tanks, multiple rocket launchers, howitzers and infantry fighting vehicles to Ukraine among military shipments that had reached hundreds of millions of dollars and would continue, two Czech defense sources confided to Reuters.
- A shipment authorized by the **German government** includes 56 Czechoslovak-made infantry fighting vehicles that used to be operated by East Germany.
- **Slovakia** is in talks with NATO about an arrangement to send fighter jets to Ukraine.

Humanitarian

Russians flee Putin regime to join Ukraine refugees in Israel - Since Russian troops invaded on February 24, nearly 24,000 Ukrainians have fled to Israel, some but not all taking advantage of the law, according to immigration ministry figures. They have been joined by around 10,000 Russians, an Israeli immigration official told AFP. "Most of those are young graduates, from the urban middle class," the official said, asking not to be identified.

Ukraine and Estonia show government digital ID leadership - Ukraine is making changes to its government-run digital ID app to support people dealing with the chaos in the war-torn country, perhaps drawing inspiration from nearby Estonia, which continues building up its digital ecosystem with a new startup incubator program. A little further behind on the curve, Scotland's plan to increase public service access with digital ID has been endorsed by its background-checking body.

The government-run smartphone app Diia, which was in use by millions in Ukraine before Russia's invasion, has now been redesigned with the inclusion of a special simplified digital ID which can enable citizens get identified even without physical ID documents, Emerging Europe writes.

According to the publication, Diia, with 13 million users as of 2021, is as a platform from which to access public services online. It is also used as a digital wallet where users carry the digital versions of their official ID documents such as passports and driver's licenses. The app also allows users to change their registered address, an important feature with millions displaced internally.

The Mariupol war crimes cover up? - Russian troops are 'digging up thousands of dead civilians and burning their bodies in mobile crematoriums' as Chechens take on last of the Ukrainian defenders .

Russian troops in Mariupol are allegedly digging up thousands of dead civilians and burning their bodies in mobile crematoriums in a possible bid to destroy evidence of atrocities like the ones discovered in Bucha and other towns outside Kyiv when the Russians withdrew.

Mariupol's city council in a post on Telegram today said Moscow's men were exhuming bodies buried in residential courtyards within the city and were assigning watchmen to each square to stop locals from reburying their dead friends and relatives.

'Why the exhumation is being carried out and where the bodies will be taken is unknown,' the council said in a statement posted on the Telegram messaging app.

It comes days after Mayor Vadym Boychenko warned corpses 'carpeted the streets' of Mariupol as he accused Moscow of incinerating tens of thousands of civilians killed during a siege that has trapped well over 100,000 civilians in desperate need of food, water and heating.

Impacts

Putin under 'enormous pressure' from Russian population - Curtin University Professor Joseph Siracusa says Russian President Vladimir Putin would be under pressure "from below" to do something about the sinking of Russian warship, the Mosvka.

Mr Siracusa said the sinking of the Mosvka is a "very serious thing" and Mr Putin would be urged to react, with the professor adding the ship is an "extension of one's flag and national territory."

"I think he would be under enormous pressure from Russian population to do something about this because to lose a warship is a big, big deal," Mr Siracusa told Sky News Australia.

Russia vows new strikes on Kyiv as Ukraine reports 900 civilian bodies found - Moscow has threatened to mount renewed missile attacks on Kyiv, where authorities said the bodies of more than 900 civilians were found outside the capital. Russian forces continued preparations for a renewed offensive in eastern Ukraine and fighting also went on in the pummeled southern port city of Mariupol, where locals reported seeing Russian troops digging up bodies.

In the north-eastern city of Kharkiv, the shelling of a residential area killed seven people, including a seven-month-old child, and wounded 34, according to regional governor Oleh Sinehubov.

On each occasion where Russian atrocities are reported, Russia escalates the rhetoric by blaming Ukraine for atrocities. They went so far as to bomb one of their own towns along the Ukrainian border, blaming Ukraine in a false flag operation, trying to stoke anti-Ukrainian sentiment in areas close to Ukraine where families straddle the Ukrainian/Russian border.

They are seemingly keenly aware of post-conflict analyses around war crimes and potential genocide allegations. Reports coming in indicate that Russian troops are exhuming Ukrainian bodies from mass graves and using crematorium trucks to incinerate the remains. This is what the Germans tried unsuccessfully to do during the later stages of WWII.

Entire reclaimed cities in remote Ukrainian areas are reported to be completely emptied of citizens. Investigations are underway to determine whether they have been massacred or relocated into far-flung Russian territories.

Vladimir Putin, Saudi crown prince discuss Ukraine war - Russian President Vladimir Putin and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman "gave a positive assessment" of joint work in the OPEC+ format during a phone call, the Kremlin said in a statement on Saturday. They also discussed the situation in Ukraine and Yemen, the Kremlin said.

US Army using lessons from Ukraine war to aid own training - In the dusty California desert, U.S. Army trainers are already using lessons learned from Russia's war against Ukraine as they prepare soldiers for future fights against a major adversary such as Russia or China.

The role-players in this month's exercise at the National Training Center speak Russian. The enemy force that controls the fictional town of Ujen is using a steady stream of social media posts to make false accusations against the American brigade preparing to attack.

In the coming weeks, the planned training scenario for the next brigade coming in will focus on how to battle an enemy willing to destroy a city with rocket and missile fire in order to conquer it.

War in Ukraine Is Breaking Russia's Academic Ties With the West - Since Russian President Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, universities across Europe and the United States have condemned the war and cut ties with Russia altogether.

Widening of war front

Kadena F-15s Flew CAPs With Live Missiles Near Taiwan After China Held Drills In The Region - China dispatched frigates, bombers and fighter around Taiwan as U.S. lawmakers visited the island to show support; F-15C spotted flying with Live weapons at Kadena AB, Japan, as tensions in the region grow.

Photos taken on the afternoon of Apr. 16, 2022, show F-15C Eagles belonging to the 67th and 44th Fighter Squadrons, landing at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, carrying live AIM-120C AMRAAM and AIM-9M Sidewinder missiles. One of them also carried a Lockheed Martin's AN/AAQ-33 SNIPER ATP (Advanced Targeting Pod), whereas none had the Legion Pod equipped (new to the 67th and 44th and still in the early stages of training).

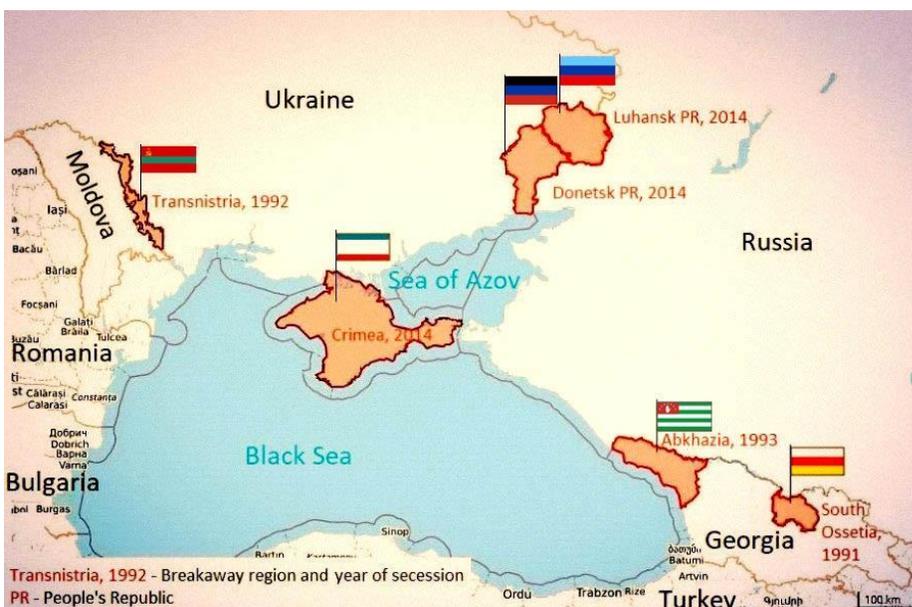
The aircraft were returning to their homebase from a 7-hour mission during which they were supported by two KC-135 tankers. A source who wishes to remain anonymous confirmed us that the aircraft were part of a larger flight tasked with CAPs (Combat Air Patrols) near Taiwan where China conducted military drills following a “provocative” trip of a U.S. Congressional delegation to the island. In fact, on Friday Apr. 14, six lawmakers arrived at Taipei Songshan Airport for a two-day visit.

Russia-sponsored breakaways from Eastern European countries since 1991 – Since the Soviet Union broke apart in 1991, Russia, particularly through Putin, has sought to re-establish its hegemony in its region. Wherever there are Russian-speaking people in other ex-Soviet countries, Russia has sought to exploit tensions in each.

Referring to the map alongside, one can see the areas where Russian stoking of tensions and claiming territory are located.

In some of these Russia has gone so far as to recognize “Republics” that are seeking to split either away from their home country as independent states or seeking to re-join Russia. In the Crimea, Russia invaded and occupied this area in 2014.

We have reported on each of these “Breakaway Republics” in previous Updates and it is prudent to keep a close monitor on developments as affect these flash points.



Russian state TV presenters say World War Three has started after Moskva sinking - A leading presenter on Russia's state TV has told the watching public that World War Three has started following the sinking of the Moskva. Officials have not acknowledged Ukraine’s claims that it struck the flagship of the Black Sea Fleet with cruise missiles.

The sinking of the Russian ship has sent the Kremlin's main channels into meltdown last night. Olga Skabeyeva told Rossiya 1 channel viewers that "what it's escalated into can safely be called World War Three" and insisted "that's entirely for sure."

“Now we're definitely fighting against NATO infrastructure, if not NATO itself. We need to recognize that,” reports the Mirror.

Military commentator Dmitry Drozdenko said on separate state-run Channel 1: “In actual fact a full-scale multi-level war is underway with the collective West. And the West has long been preparing for the war.” Anchor Olesya Loseva, host of Vremya Pokazhet, told viewers that the West was now supplying “zillions of weapons” to Ukraine.

Skabeyeva claimed Ukrainians were delighted to see Russian troops in their country. They blamed the Ukrainians for “genocide, not the Russians, she claimed.

“For some reason ordinary Ukrainians themselves aren't noticing any genocide. In Kharkiv region they're welcoming our soldiers like real liberators,” she said. “People are coming out with Russian tricolors onto the streets where our military kit is. The people of Kharkiv are accusing not the Russian army of genocide, but the Ukrainian armed forces.”

These reports are aimed at the Russian people and not the wider world. They are part of the ongoing disinformation being circled by the Russian government.

Russia announces space war on Elon Musk's Starlink satellites - Space X's Starlink internet constellation has angered Russia as it was reported that it was used to guide and modify fire on the Black Sea Fleet's flagship, the cruiser Moskva and it sank because of that. This was revealed by new data from the Russian Federation's General Staff, Republic World reported.

This was revealed by new data from the Russian Federation's General Staff. Dmitry Medvedev, who has ordered to destroy the Starlink satellite constellation located over Russian Federation territory, the special military operation zone and the Black Sea basin in order to ensure the security of all units participating in the special military operation, Republic World reported.

The report suggests that Russia is conceding that its flagship was indeed sunk by enemy fire.

Lithuanians prepare for potential Russian aggression - Lithuanians are anxiously following events in Ukraine. Many are preparing for a worst case scenario, and some are training to take up arms against Russia.

Peace talks will be scrapped - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky warned that peace talks with Moscow will be scrapped if the last Ukrainian troops in the besieged port city of Mariupol are killed.