

Conflict Update # 346

February 4th, 2023

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Conflict Assessment

Russian losses¹ – 130,590 (720) soldiers killed, 3,218 (+3) enemy tanks, 6,394 (+6) armored combat vehicles, 2,220 (+5) artillery systems, 458 (+0) MLRS systems, 225 (+3) air defense systems, 294 (+0) warplanes, 284 (+0) helicopters, 1,956 (+4) UAVs of the operational-tactical level, 796 (+0) cruise missiles, 18 (+0) warships/cutters, 5,081 (+13) trucks and tankers, 4 Iskander Missile Launchers (+0), 239 fuel bowsers (+0) and 203 (+1) units of equipment.

Key Takeaways

Ukraine preparing 'Assault Brigades' to take back Crimea – A Ukrainian official said Thursday his country is preparing "assault brigades" to take back its occupied territories, which include part of the eastern Donbas region as well as Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula that Russia illegally annexed in 2014.

The announcement came from National Police Chief Ihor Klymenko, who was appointed the country's acting interior minister following the death of government officials in a January 18 helicopter crash on a foggy morning in a residential suburb of Kyiv. Klymenko said in a press release Thursday that Ukraine is forming "Offensive Guard" assault brigades that will be made up of police and border guards and have the goal of "liberating our territories."

"These are people who went through the crucible of 2014-2015, some of whom fought already in 2022," Klymenko said. "Some of them are wounded. The units will consist exclusively of volunteers who are driven by patriotism, and there are a lot of such people in our country."

Ukrainian army strikes Russian temporary bases 8 times - UGS reported today Ukraine's military struck temporary bases of Russian troops at least eight times and also targeted a control point. Ukrainian forces downed four Orlan-10 type drones and struck Russia's TOS-1 Heavy Flamethrower System.

Over the past day, Ukraine's army repelled Russian attacks near nine settlements, including Hrekivka, Nevske, Kreminna, and Dibrova in Luhansk Oblast, as well as Verkniokamianske, Krasna Hora, Paraskoviivka, Bakhmut and Ivanivske in Donetsk Oblast.

The UGS also reported that the Russian army launched three missiles, 20 airstrikes, and over 90 MLRS attacks against Ukraine, targeting civilian infrastructure in Kharkiv and Mykolaiv regions, which resulted in casualties.

Nearly 30,000 Russian soldiers in and around Mariupol - Petro Andriushchenko, an advisor to the mayor of Mariupol, reports that within the past week, the number of Russian soldiers around the city increased by 10,000-15,000. Most of them are stationed in the villages in the Mariupol district, Andriushchenko said.

"Overall, we can talk about approximately 30,000 occupiers, concentrated in Mariupol and the region," the official wrote on Telegram.

Earlier, Andriushchenko reported that Russian construction workers have started dismantling the Azovie neighborhood of Russian-occupied Mariupol, including undamaged houses, to build "elite" homes.

In the past several months, Russia has begun bulldozing Mariupol's ruined apartment buildings, an action criticized by multiple human rights organizations that see it as an attempt to cover up war crimes. In some cases, the remains of those killed are suspected to still be inside.

Russia's brutal two-month-long siege of Mariupol left most of the 450,000-strong city in Donetsk Oblast in ruins.

Russian forces continue offensive operations on 4 fronts but suffer losses - Russian forces are continuing offensive operations on four fronts. Meanwhile, Ukraine's defence forces repelled Russian attacks near nine settlements.

Over the course of the past 24 hours, Russian forces carried out 20 airstrikes and three missile strikes, hitting civilian infrastructure facilities in Kharkiv and Mykolaiv oblasts and killing and injuring civilians. They conducted over 90 attacks using multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS).

Units of Ukraine's defence forces repelled Russian attacks in the vicinity of Hrekiivka, Nevske, Kreminna and Dibrova (Luhansk Oblast) and Verkhokamianske, Krasna Hora, Paraskoviivka, Bakhmut and Ivanivske (Donetsk Oblast).

There were no significant changes on the Volyn, Polissia, Sivershchyna and Slobozhanshchyna fronts; no Russian offensive groups have been spotted. Senkivka, Tymonovychi and Yanzhulivka (Chernihiv Oblast), Vilna Sloboda (Sumy Oblast) and Veterynarne, Hlyboke, Ohirtseve, Zelene, Neskuchne, Hatyshche and Vovchansk (Kharkiv Oblast) came under Russian fire.

Russian forces deployed tank guns, mortars and artillery to fire on areas in and around Novomylnsk, Dvorichna, Zapadne, Holubivka, Kupiansk and Kyslivka (Kharkiv Oblast) and Novoselivske and Stelmakhivka (Luhansk Oblast) on the Kupiansk front.

On the Lyman front, Russian forces fired on Terny and Torske (Donetsk Oblast) and Makiivka, Chervonopopivka and Dibrova (Luhansk Oblast).

On the Bakhmut front, Spirne, Vesele, Bilohorivka, Rozdolivka, Paraskoviivka, Bakhmut, Ivanivske, New-York and Druzhba (Donetsk Oblast) came under Russian fire.

On the Avdiivka front, Tonenke, Vodiane, Novomykhailivka, Herorhiivka and Marinka came under Russian fire.

On the Novopavlivka front, Russian forces deployed tank guns, mortars and artillery to attack Prechystivka, Velyka Novosilka, Neskuchne, Bohoiavlenka and Vuhledar (Donetsk Oblast).

Ukrainian aircraft carried out eight airstrikes on concentrations of Russian military personnel, weapons and equipment. Four Russian Orlan-10 UAVs have been destroyed over the course of the day. Ukraine's Rocket Forces and Artillery struck one Russian command post, two concentrations of Russian troops and a TOS-1 Solntsepek heavy flamethrower system.

Successful ambush behind enemy lines: Armed Forces of Ukraine destroy modernised tank and capture Russian marines - In the area of Vuhledar, Donetsk Oblast, soldiers of the Special Operations Forces (SOF) of Ukraine and the 72nd Separate Mechanised Brigade have destroyed Russian equipment and captured two Russian servicemen.

According to intelligence data, Russians were supposed to go on the offensive with a tank unit. They are soldiers of the infamous 155th Marine Brigade of the Pacific fleet of the Russian Federation.

As a result of joint actions, an upgraded Russian T-80 tank was destroyed even before it reached the firing position. During the battle, two members of the tank crew were captured.

Russian stormtroopers tried to break through to Bakmut, suffered losses and retreated - Russian stormtroopers earlier this week tried to break through the defence line of a Ukrainian border unit on the outskirts of Bakhmut; they suffered losses and retreated.

Russia lost 9 soldiers, 20 more were injured, in a firefight with Ukrainian defenders who separated and dispersed through nearby buildings, knock out Russian strongholds.

Putin's men fear 'minced meat' fate in new offensive - Russia's military is preparing for heavy losses ahead in a new offensive, according to a source apparently stationed at a Russian military headquarters in Ukraine, Novaya Gazeta reported. Putin is preparing to send tens of thousands of men to war in Ukraine knowing very well that he is going to make them into "minced meat," the source said.

The source accused the Russian military of not taking any dangers of the offensive into account and predicted that the offensive would come at a massive cost.

The warning coincides with U.S. and other western officials warning that Russia is preparing to launch a new onslaught of offensive operations in the new year. Ukrainian intelligence has assessed that Putin has ordered the Russian commander of troops in Ukraine to seize all of Donbas by the end of this month.

Already, there are indications that Russia is in dire straits in its attempts to regroup and launch a new offensive, and aware that there may be some resistance to mobilization. British intelligence assessed last month that Putin is struggling to come up with new ways to mobilize more personnel to the front without causing domestic dissent over the war to grow. Putin ordered a mobilization of 300,000 last year and may be relying on more call-ups under those orders soon, the British intelligence assessment stated.

The goal of minimizing dissent appears to be bumping up against battlefield planning, though. The window of opportunity for Russia to make any gains in Ukraine is closing soon, the Commander of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Valdemaras Rupshis, warned, adding that "even a blind man can see that they are preparing for the next wave of offensive" in an interview with Novaya Gazeta.

Satellite imagery analysis shared exclusively with The Daily Beast in recent days shows Russia has been building up a layered network of fortifications in order to try to hold onto the eastern Ukrainian territory it has already gained in Donetsk and Luhansk. Some of the imagery suggests Russia might be trying to go on the offensive to gain more territory as well, analysts said. (**Comment** – We have reported on this Russian tactic in multiple Updates over past months.)

Russian "Human Waves" tactics in eastern Ukraine - Reports from the Ukrainian military on the ground in the last ten days suggest that Russian forces have been using the "human waves" tactic with Wagner convict troops in key sectors less often, according to the intelligence update.

Mykhailo Podolyak, an advisor to the President's Office, said on Jan. 15 that 77% of the Russian convicts recruited by the Wagner Group have been killed, injured, or captured by Ukrainian forces.

'It will be suicide': Russian troops reportedly ordered to repeat their failed bid to take Kyiv - The Kremlin has reportedly ordered top military brass to make another attempt to seize Kyiv as part of a massive new offensive—a directive that has sent military officers into a state of panic.

Citing a source close to Russia's MoD, the independent outlet iStories reported yesterday that even the Russian troops ordered to take part in the assault believe it will fail miserably. "Plans to go for Kyiv again are really being drawn up, but only because the country's leadership is demanding it. No one believes in the realization of these plans, it will be suicide," the source was quoted saying, adding that many were worried about where Ukrainian forces might launch a new counter-offensive.

In the same breath, however, the source cautioned that some rumors about where Moscow was preparing to attack from next were part of a disinformation campaign. He said claims of a new offensive from Belarus were meant to simply force Ukraine's military to deploy troops in that direction while new attacks spring up elsewhere.

Putin inventing "new type of military" after Ukraine liquidated almost his entire army - "If you do even a certain simple calculation, it turns out that during the year of hostilities, the Armed Forces of Ukraine had disposed of almost the entire conventional army of the Russian Federation," he stated.

"That is, professionally trained, contract workers who served for several years, practiced offensive tasks. It is worth noting that the airborne assault troops of the Russian army, which were intended as almost the main shock fist in operations of any type, were almost completely eliminated."

Kyrychevsky noted that since the personnel of the Russian army is "almost completely depleted", the Putin regime "has to invent a new type of soldier who will serve." (**Comment** – We included an article on this factor earlier this week).

"If before that it was personnel who served professionally, now the average military man is either a "Wagnerite" (member of the Wagner mercenary group) or a covertly mobilized 'Cossack' who was previously trained under the system of the so-called combat army reserve," the expert said.

As of Feb. 3, according to the General Staff, the Armed Forces of Ukraine have eliminated almost 130,000 Russian soldiers, including 840 during the past 24 hours.

According to Olga Romanova, head of the non-governmental organization Russia Behind Bars, only 10,000 out of the 50,000 Russian prisoners recruited by Kremlin's Wagner Group to participate in a full-scale war against Ukraine have continued to serve, while the rest were killed, wounded, missing, surrendered, or deserted.

Russian Wagner Group's supply of convicts for war in Ukraine 'significantly reduced' - The scale of involvement of Russian prisoners recruited by the state-backed mercenary Wagner Group in the war against Ukraine has "probably significantly reduced" compared to its peak between summer and fall 2022, the U.K. MoD reports.

"Significant tensions between Wagner and the Russian Ministry of Defense are playing out in public; competition between factions in the Russian elite is likely to be partially responsible for the reduced supply of convicts," reads the ministry's latest intelligence update.

The U.K. Defense Ministry refers to the data of the Russian Federal Penal Service (FSIN), which shows that the number of prisoners in Russia fell by 6000 inmates from November 2022 to Jan. 31, 2023, while from September to November last year, the number of inmates decreased by 23,000.

"Wagner recruitment was likely a major contributing factor to this drop," the ministry wrote.

Russia rushing to 'replenish' troops after massive losses - In order to "replenish" its sizable estimated war losses, Russia is continuing to look to convicted prisoners for help, according to Ukraine.

Russia has now lost over 130,000 personnel since the start of the war on February 24, 2022, according to the latest estimate from Ukraine's Defense Ministry. Russia passed the 100,000 mark shortly before Christmas in 2022, according to Ukraine, though these numbers are not confirmed by Russia.

In addition to the personnel, Ukraine reports that Russia has lost more than 3,200 tanks, over 6,300 armored combat vehicles and nearly 300 military jets.

UGS of Ukraine wrote in an operational update on Friday that Russia was moving forward with a "recruitment campaign among convicts" to "replenish" some of the troops that it has lost.

In the last week alone, Russia has recruited up to 1,000 mercenaries from correctional institutions in its Novosibirsk region, the General Staff said.

Additionally, the head of a prisoner advocacy group told a Russian news outlet in October 2022 that the Wagner Group was enrolling thousands of prisoners from Russian penal colonies in remote regions of the country. In return for their service, the Wagner Group reportedly offered prisoners freedom and compensation, but they could be facing a harsh reality once they arrive on the battlefield.

Ukrainian troops stop Russian reconnaissance group near Siversk in Donetsk Oblast - Russian forces shelled the Ukrainian defense garrison near Siversk, a city north of Bakhmut in Donetsk Oblast, with artillery and mortars overnight on Feb. 3, the State Border Guard service reported.

Russian troops then tried to cross the defense line to conduct reconnaissance in the area, but Ukraine's Armed Forces repelled them.

Russian forces appeared to be picking up pace in the northern part of Donetsk Oblast after capturing the salt-mining town of Soledar, which sits roughly 15 kilometers northeast of Bakhmut.

The battle for Ukraine's titanium - Western support for Ukraine over the past year has tied the U.S. and its European Union-NATO allies inextricably to Kyiv's fate. Putin's second invasion of the country appears to have backfired, driving Ukraine deeper into the arms of the Euro-Atlantic community and cementing Kyiv's ambition for membership of the EU and NATO.

Now, there is a nascent effort underway in the U.S. and allied nations to identify, develop, and utilize Ukraine's vast resources of a key metal crucial for the development of the West's most advanced military technology which will form the backbone of future deterrence against Russia and China.

Titanium is a lightweight yet strong metal used extensively in advanced military applications like fighter jets, helicopters, naval ships, tanks, long-range missiles, and many others.

If Ukraine wins, the U.S. and its allies will be in pole position to cultivate a new conduit of titanium. But if Russia manages to seize the country's deposits and plants, Moscow will boost its global influence over increasingly strategic resource.

Ukraine is one of only seven nations producing titanium sponge, the basis for titanium metal. China and Russia—America's most prominent strategic rivals—are among this select group.

China produced more than 231,000 tons of titanium sponge last year, according to the U.S. Geological Survey, making up 57 percent of global output. Next came Japan with 17 percent, and Russia with 13 percent. Kazakhstan produced almost 18,000 tons and Ukraine more than 4,000 tons.

Moscow's weaponization of energy resources has prompted fears in Washington, D.C. and other NATO capitals that the Kremlin may one day also freeze titanium exports, which would put aerospace and defense companies in a bind.

Western dependence on Russian titanium means the metal has so far escaped the sanction campaigns launched against Moscow by the U.S., EU, and their allies.

Britain's defence secretary, Ben Wallace, has said Russia is using tactics similar to those used in the first world war and suffering heavy casualties as a result. Asked about the possibility of supplying British fighter jets to be used by Ukrainian forces, Wallace did not rule out the possibility but said there was "no magic wand" that could help Kyiv in its fight against Moscow.

U.S. destroyer operating near the Black Sea for first time since Russia invaded Ukraine - USS Nitze (DDG-94) stopped on the edge of the Bosphorus Strait, on its way to make a port call in Turkey, USNI News understands. It's the closest a U.S. warship has been to the Ukraine-Russia war since it started nearly a year ago.

Nitze was seen by ship spotters at the lower edge of the strait on Friday. Turkey closed the Bosphorus Strait to warships on Feb. 28, 2022, four days after Russia invaded Ukraine. Since the closure, only warships with ports on the Black Sea, which includes Russia's Black Sea Fleet and Turkish ships, can enter.



The last American warship to transit the strait was USS Arleigh Burke (DDG-51), which left the Black Sea on Dec. 15, 2021. The ship entered the Black Sea in November 2021 following a port visit in Bulgaria, USNI News previously reported.

U.S. 6th Fleet confirmed in a tweet that Nitze anchored off Instabul's coast ahead of a scheduled port call at Gölcük Naval Base.

US Navy surfaces 3 missile submarines (all at once) - Three of the Navy's Ohio-class cruise missile submarines (SSGN) simultaneously surfaced in Western Pacific and Indian Ocean waters, "allegedly to signal U.S. displeasure over Chinese missile tests in the East China Sea."

Navy resurfaced SSGN's to deter Russia

About a month prior to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, the Navy's Georgia service's line of disclosure rare, which tensions enough for want to reminder to adversaries extremely vessels exist doorsteps.



Sixth Fleet made the location of USS (SSGN 729) public off Cyprus. The of the top-of-the-submarines is suggests were high the U.S. to send a its that these formidable at their

US aircraft carrier George W. Bush docks off Piraeus, Greece - US aircraft carrier George W. Bush docked off the port of Piraeus in Greece on Friday and will remain there at least until Monday.

The aircraft carrier is on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa area of operations, employed by U.S. Sixth Fleet to defend U.S., allied and partner interests.

Comment – US Naval forces showing up around the global theater of conflict(s) is interesting, particularly with Russia planning a new offensive into Ukraine, and a Chinese satellite balloon moving in American airspace.

Russia is planning a major offensive to coincide with the one-year anniversary of the war in Ukraine on 24 February, according to the country's defence minister. Speaking to French media, Oleksii Reznikov warned Russia would call on a large contingent of mobilised troops. Referring to the general mobilisation of 300,000 conscripted soldiers in September, he claimed that numbers at the border suggest the true size could be closer to 500,000.

Russia has warned it has “the potential” to respond to western arms deliveries to Ukraine that will not just be about “using armoured vehicles”. In a speech marking the 80th anniversary of the Soviet victory against Nazi Germany in the Battle of Stalingrad, Vladimir Putin appeared to allude to Russia's enormous nuclear weapons arsenal, warning “those who expect to win on the battlefield apparently do not understand that a modern war with Russia will be utterly different for them”.

Russia's former president Dmitry Medvedev has said Russia's arms suppliers will “significantly” increase their deliveries of military hardware during 2023. Medvedev, who is deputy chairman of the powerful Security Council and oversees a government commission on arms production, said new supplies would help Russia inflict a “crushing defeat” over Ukraine on the battlefield.

Zelenskiy has said Ukraine will continue to fight for Bakhmut as long as it can, vowing that “nobody will give away” the eastern “fortress” city. Speaking at a press conference following a summit in Kyiv with European Union leaders Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel, Ukraine's president said the country would be able to begin to liberate occupied Donbas if weapons supplies were “quicken, specifically long-range weapons.”

Dozens of soldiers freed in prisoner swap - Some 179 Russian and Ukrainian prisoners of war have returned home following a prisoner swap, officials on both sides said.

At least eight people have died after a fire at a dormitory for construction workers in the Crimean city of Sevastopol, Russian officials said. The fire broke out in temporary accommodation for workers building the Tavrida highway, a road linking the cities of Sevastopol and Simferopol, according to the Russia-installed governor of Sevastopol.

License to shell - Ukraine's army has been increasingly attacking Russian territories — some located hundreds of kilometres away from the front line. Novaya-Europe's research.

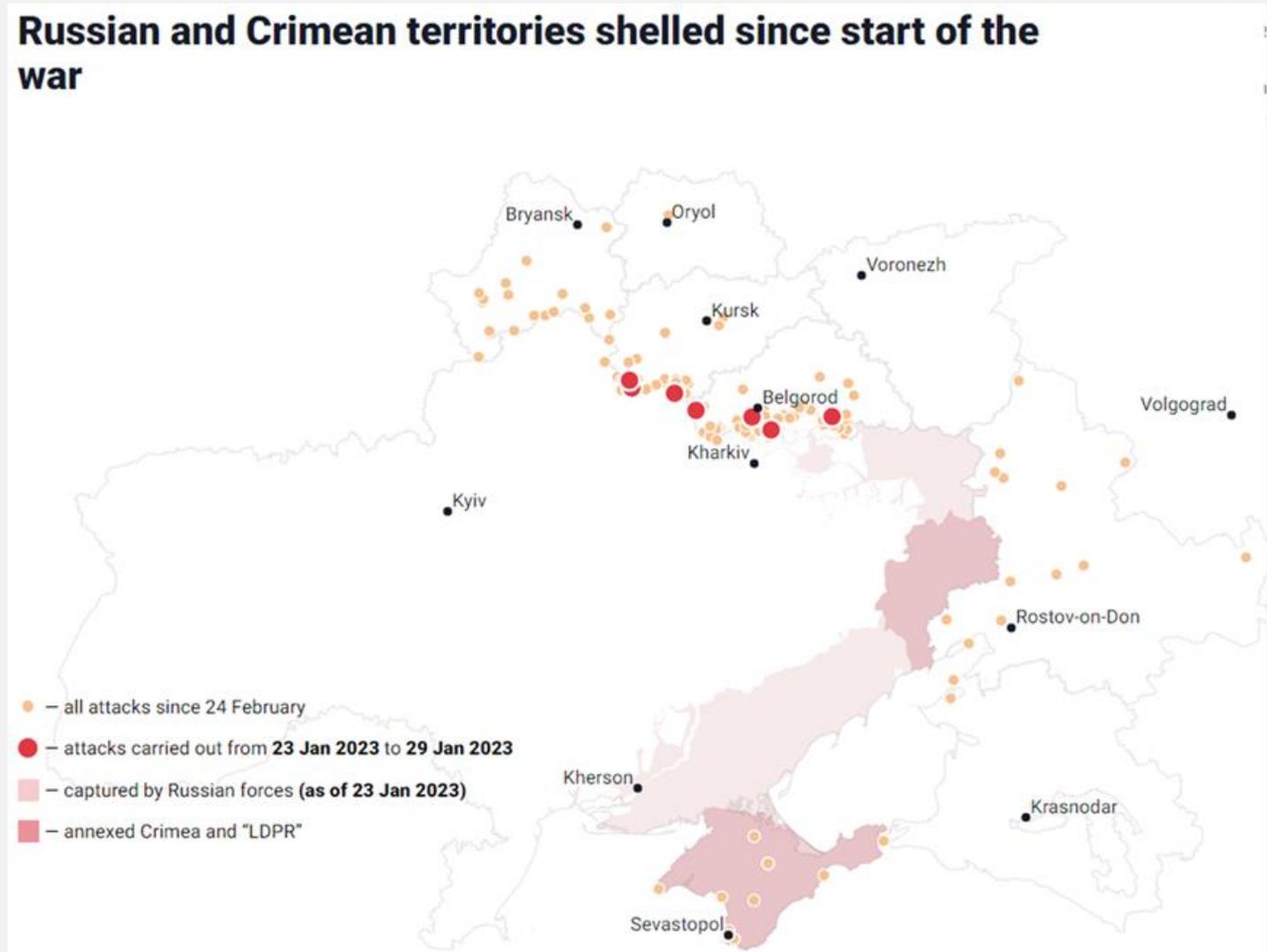
Since the start of the war, border regions of Russia, according to Novaya Gazeta Europe's calculations, have been shelled at least 350 times. A total of 168 civilians were killed or injured in these attacks, and over 1,000 residential buildings, schools, and infrastructure facilities were damaged. Since autumn, local governors have sometimes been reporting several attacks per day. And if before, shelling was only reported in small villages located near the border, now the Ukrainian army has begun “reaching” big cities and military facilities inside the country more frequently.

On Tuesday, it was reported that the US' new military aid package to Ukraine includes 150-km range missiles — twice the range compared to before. Furthermore, according to statements made by Ukraine's authorities, a new attack drone with a flight range of 1,000 km is almost ready — a range wide enough to strike upon Moscow where Pantsir air defence systems were recently installed on the roofs of administrative buildings.

Russian authorities are in no rush to evacuate residents under attack, while Russian air defence systems are only repelling 20% of air attacks. Novaya-Europe's data team has looked into how the war boomerangs on Russia's territory. Over the year, Ukraine's shelling of Russian territories has increased tenfold — while in March, a handful of shells made it to the territory of border villages, January saw Russian authorities report attacks 1.5 times per day on average.

The Belgorod region has the highest number of attacks on record. According to the local governor, over 50 villages and towns have been bombed. Furthermore, while last spring, only two small border villages, Zhuravlevka and Nekhoteevka, were being shelled most of the time, now shells reach towns with populations of over 10,000.

The town of Shebekino, with a population of 40,000, and the town district have been shelled at least 27 times this winter. The Ukrainian border is 6 kilometres away. 17 local residents were injured and five were killed. Dozens of locals are now homeless: 66 private and 11 multi-storey buildings were destroyed in shelling, as well as a mall and a market.



Breaking News **US downs Chinese balloon over ocean, moves to recover debris** - The United States on Saturday downed a suspected Chinese spy balloon off the Carolina coast after it traversed sensitive military sites across North America and became the latest flashpoint in tensions between Washington and Beijing.

An operation was underway in U.S. territorial waters in the Atlantic Ocean to recover debris from the balloon, which had been flying at about 60,000 feet and was estimated to be about the size of three school buses. The balloon was downed by Air Force fighter aircraft, according to two officials who were not authorized to publicly discuss the matter and spoke on condition of anonymity.

President Joe Biden had told reporters earlier Saturday that "we're going to take care of it," when asked about the balloon. The Federal Aviation Administration and Coast Guard worked to clear the airspace and water below the balloon as it reached the ocean.

Television footage showed a small explosion, followed by the balloon descending toward the water. U.S. military jets were seen flying in the vicinity and ships were deployed in the water to mount the recovery operation.

China has continued to claim that the balloon was merely a weather research “airship” that had been blown off course. The Pentagon rejected that out of hand — as well as China’s contention that it was not being used for surveillance and had only limited navigational ability.

The balloon was spotted over Montana, which is home to one of America’s three nuclear missile silo fields at Malmstrom Air Force Base.

Comments, Developments and Reports

Making Putin's oligarchs pay for Russia's war on Ukraine - Western nations have frozen as much as \$500 billion in Russian assets since Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began in February 2022—a vast collection of funds that Kyiv is eyeing to help foot its massive reconstruction bill.

The unprecedented sanctions offensive against Moscow had Western governments hunting down assets of the Russian central bank, private Russian banks, and individual politicians and businesspeople, that for so long have sloshed around Western financial centers and enabled foreign Kremlin influence operations.

Kyiv, facing an ever-inflating reconstruction bill that is currently thought to be around \$750 billion, is eyeing the funds that Moscow and its operatives were unable to extricate or hide.

Russia State TV admits Ukraine war plan 'failed completely' – A guest on Russian state TV recently admitted he believes the Kremlin's effort in Ukraine has "failed completely," and there was no backup plan to fall on.

Anton Gerashchenko, an adviser to the Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, tweeted on Friday a clip of the video, providing translations. The video has been viewed more than 60,000 times as of Friday morning.

Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, as part of a "special military operation." The operation quickly evolved into war, and after nearly a year, the fighting continues. Various places around Ukraine have faced the front lines of battle, and attention has shifted to the Bakhmut region as the Wagner Group, a Russian paramilitary organization, attempt to seize the city. Meanwhile, advancement on both sides has stalled during the winter months, but experts expect fighting to pick up again once spring nears.

Former Chelsea and Ukraine footballer Andriy Shevchenko has urged the International Olympics Committee (IOC) to ban Russian and Belarusian athletes from competing at the 2024 Olympics.

In a post on Facebook, Shevchenko called on the IOC to “strongly condemn” Russia’s war of “aggression” and not allow Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete “until the war in Ukraine is over”.

“There is no politics in sport. But this war is more than just politics,” he said.

The EU has pledged to double a military aid programme for Ukraine by training an extra 15,000 soldiers as part of a blizzard of announcements aimed at showing that it will “stand by Ukraine for the long-haul”. Speaking at the start of a two-day trip to Kyiv, the European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, reiterated that the EU aimed to have a tenth package of sanctions against Russia in place by 24 February.

Von der Leyen also reiterated that the EU would cap the price of Russian petroleum products, as part of a broader G7 plan to restrict oil revenues available to the Kremlin’s war machine. The G7 and the EU have already

agreed a price cap on crude oil that came into force last December and according to Von der Leyen, costs Russia €160m (£142m) a day. The EU's 27 member states are yet to agree on the latest oil price cap.

The EU has promised that a tenth package of sanctions against Russia will be in place by 24 February, the first anniversary of the war. The EC president, Ursula von der Leyen, said the package would cover trade worth €10bn (£8.9bn/\$10.8bn) and “hit the trade and technology that supports [Russia’s] war against Ukraine”. The next round of EU sanctions, however, which Hungary has already threatened to block.

The EU also intends to to set up an international crime of aggression in Ukraine der Leyen said. The purpose of evidence for any future trial, a special tribunal or some



work with Ukrainian prosecutors centre for the prosecution of the to be located in The Hague, Von this centre is to collect and store whether that takes place via other way.

US warns Turkey on exports seen to boost Russia’s war effort - The United States has warned Turkey in recent days about the export to Russia of chemicals, microchips and other products that can be used in Moscow’s war effort in Ukraine, and it could move to punish Turkish companies or banks contravening sanctions.

Brian Nelson, the US Treasury Department’s top sanctions official, visited Turkish government and private sector officials on Thursday and Friday to urge more cooperation in disrupting the flow of such goods.

In a speech to bankers, Nelson said a marked year-long rise in exports to Russia leaves Turkish entities “particularly vulnerable to reputational and sanctions risks”, or lost access to G7 markets.

They should “take extra precaution to avoid transactions related to potential dual-use technology transfers that could be used by the Russian military-industrial complex,” he said in a copy of the speech issued by the Treasury.

Comment – Here once again Turkey is trying to play both sides in the self-interest long-term interest of expanding its role and influence zone in Central Asia.

China helps Russia's war in Ukraine, WSJ trade data shows - China is allegedly providing Russia’s army with military means despite sanctions over Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the Wall Street Journal reported.

Chinese state-owned companies provide Moscow with navigation equipment, jamming technology, and fighter-jet parts, customs records show.

Dual-use equipment that can be used for civilian and military purposes appears to come from China mainly, according to the analysis of over 84,000 shipments.

Russia can still import much-needed chips, infrared cameras, and radar equipment from China and other countries that haven’t joined the U.S.-led efforts to cut off Moscow from global markets through Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, accused by Western officials of bypassing sanctions.

In a statement to CNN, the U.S. State Department spokesperson expressed concerns about China's "alignment with Russia as Moscow continues its brutal and unlawful invasion of Ukraine."

The statement came after Russian and Chinese leaders Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping held a phone call on Dec. 30.

Putin & Russia

Medvedev: more US weapons supplies mean ‘all of Ukraine will burn’ - Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has said the supply of more advanced US weaponry to Ukraine will only trigger more retaliatory strikes from Russia, up to the extent of Russia’s nuclear doctrine.

“All of Ukraine that remains under Kyiv’s rule will burn,” journalist Nadana Fridrikhson quoted him as saying in a written interview with her.

On Friday, the Pentagon said that a new rocket that would double Ukraine’s strike range was included in a \$2.175bn US military aid package.

Fridrikhson asked Medvedev, who as deputy chairman of the Security Council has become one of Russia’s most hawkish pro-war figures since its invasion of Ukraine, whether the use of longer-range weapons might force Russia to negotiate with Kyiv.

“The result will be just the opposite,” Medvedev replied, in comments that Fridrikhson posted on her Telegram channel. “Only moral freaks, of which there are enough both in the White House and in the Capitol, can argue like that.”

Ukraine’s prosecutor launches criminal case against Wagner chief - Ukraine’s prosecutor general is launching a criminal case against the Russian head and founder of the Wagner mercenary group, Yevgeny Prigozhin.

According to a statement on Telegram, Prigozhin, an ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, is accused of the “encroachment on the territorial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine” and “waging an aggressive war.”

“Prosecutors have already interrogated two such fighters who are in the EU. An investigation into the involvement in war crimes of another PMK member, who is in Norway under way,” the statement said.

Russians beat 5-year record for departing to Central Asia, Armenia, and Mongolia - Russian nationals have beaten a five-year record for entry into Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Mongolia. The data published by the border service of the FSB was calculated by Novaya Gazeta Europe, leaving their country for neighboring states and CIS countries 8.4 million times, 4.7 million times more than in 2021 when there was COVID.

They crossed the border on the way out 24.3 million times in total last year, 2.9 million times more than in 2021. The most popular destinations were Abkhazia (recognized by Russia to be a separate state from Georgia), Turkey, Kazakhstan, the UAE, and Egypt. A total of 15.1 million departures were to these countries.

The influx of Russians was record high in five years in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Mongolia.

The number of times Russian nationals departed to Israel doubled last year, growing to over 100,000.

This growth does not mean millions of Russians left the country permanently. Some of them often return, and some might have crossed the border multiple times. However, populationists Yulia Florinskaya and Alexey Raksha estimated last year’s emigration wave to stand between 400,000 and 800,000 people.

Over 100,000 opted to stay in Georgia, and 100,000 in Kazakhstan. A total of 50,000–100,000 people left for Serbia, and around 40,000 for Armenia. Israel, Kyrgyzstan, and the EU welcomed around 35,000 Russians each, they say.

Last year also saw massive growth in Russians leaving for Asia: Thailand, Sri-Lanka, and India. The record number of travels, even compared to pre-COVID years, was to the UAE.

Containment

France and Italy have finalized technical talks for the joint delivery of the Ukraine in spring 2023, the French defence ministry has announced. It comes minister, Antonio Tajani, said on Thursday that the system would be operational seven to eight weeks". The system can track dozens of targets and intercept 10 only European-made system that can intercept ballistic missiles.

SAMP/T is a theater-level air defense system designed for point defense current and future airborne threats. One of only a handful of European-produced systems that can counter ballistic missiles, SAMP/T is developed by Eurosam and jointly owned by MBDA Missile Systems and Thales. Air range of the Samp/T system is 120 kilometers (75 miles).



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The state-of-the-art missile defence system should be up and running in Ukraine within the next two months, Italy's foreign minister, Antonio Tajani, has said.

UK PM says he will focus on providing Ukraine with military equipment - British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and President Zelenskyy agreed on the importance of the international community speeding up assistance for Ukraine.

"The Prime Minister said he was focused on ensuring the UK's defensive military equipment reached the front line as quickly as possible," Sunak's office said in a statement, after a phone call between the two leaders.

"Both leaders agreed that it was vital that international partners accelerated their assistance to Ukraine to help seize the opportunity to push Russian forces back," the UK statement added.

Taking questions at a press briefing in Portsmouth alongside Australian ministerial counterparts, Wallace was asked about the possibility of supplying British fighter jets to be used by Ukrainian forces. He replied there was "no magic wand" that could help Kyiv in its fight against Moscow. He said:

"On the question of jets, one thing I've learned over the last year is don't rule anything in, don't rule anything out. That is the simple reality. We respond to the needs of the Ukrainians at the time, based on what the Ukrainians tell us, what we see in intelligence, in our knowledge of the Russians on the battlefield."

He did not rule out sending jets but said fighter aircraft were not what Ukraine needed right now and that there were practical issues to consider, such as the many months it would take to train Ukrainian forces to use them.

Ukraine's new rocket-boosted glide-bombs can turn around and hit targets on the backs of hills, 90 miles away - The United States is giving Ukraine ground-launched, GPS-guided glide bombs that can strike targets as far as 93 miles away—and even hit them on the reverse slopes of hills.

The Ground-Launched Small Diameter Bomb should roughly double the range of the Ukrainian army's front-line rocket batteries. But not anytime soon. It might take nine months for the U.S. Defense Department to deliver the bombs.

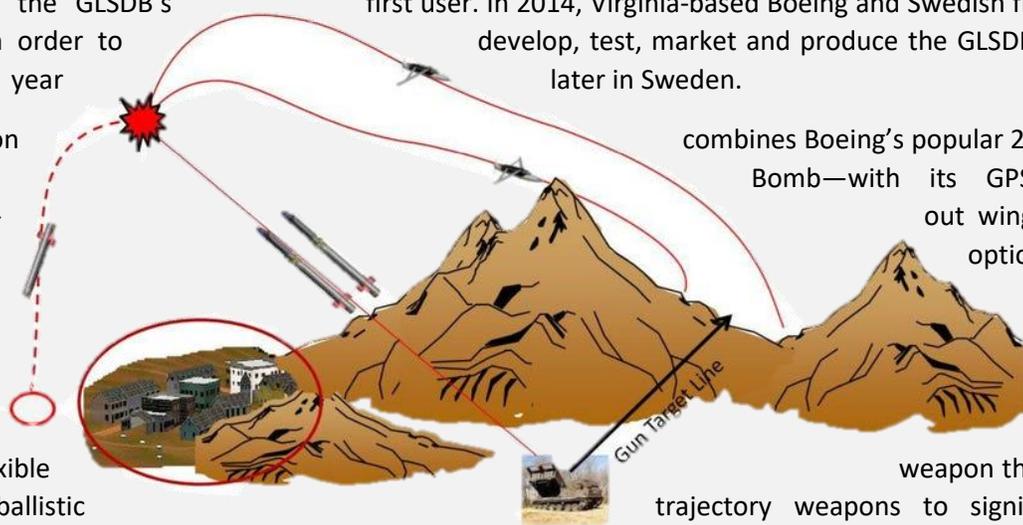
Ukraine will be the GLSDB's first user. In 2014, Virginia-based Boeing and Swedish firm Saab formed a partnership in order to develop, test, market and produce the GLSDB. The first trials took place a year later in Sweden.

combines Boeing's popular 250-pound Small-Bomb—with its GPS-aided inertial out wings and different options—with a 350-borrowed from rocket.

The munition Diameter guidance, pop-warhead pound booster the old M26

"GLSDB commanders with a highly flexible existing ballistic current ground artillery capability," Boeing stated.

provides and planners weapon that complements trajectory weapons to significantly expand



The 227-millimeter-diameter M26, and by extension the GLSDB, is compatible with Lockheed Martin's High-Mobility Artillery Rocket System.

The United States has pledged to Ukraine 38 of the wheeled rocket launchers. The United Kingdom and Germany meanwhile have pledged a combined 13 Multiple-Launch Rocket Systems—tracked launchers that Lockheed also manufactures, and which fire the same rockets that HIMARS does.

Portugal to send Leopard tanks to Ukraine, PM says - Portugal will send Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine, Prime Minister Antonio Costa said on Saturday, without specifying how many will be shipped.

Costa added that Portugal is in talks with Germany to obtain parts needed for the repair of a number of inoperable Leopard tanks in Portugal's inventory of the weapon.

"We are currently working to be able to dispense some of our tanks," Costa told Lusa news agency during a trip to the Central African Republic. "I know how many tanks will be (sent to Ukraine) but that will be announced at the appropriate time."

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said earlier this week the country would receive 120 to 140 Western tanks in a "first wave" of deliveries from a coalition of 12 countries.

Germany to send 88 Leopard I tanks to Ukraine in addition to previous decision to send in 80 Leopard II tanks - The German government has approved the delivery by a private arms-maker of its old Leopard 1 tanks to Kyiv, a government spokesperson said Friday.

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR
Leopard 2 tanks

Germany is under pressure to give Ukraine Leopard 2 tanks to help it fight Russia. The main battle tank is considered one of the best-performing worldwide.

Max speed 72km/h	Max Range 500km	Weight 62t	Crew 2
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Armament
 Rheinmetall 120mm L55 smoothbore gun
 Coaxial 7.62mm machine gun
 7.62mm Anti-aircraft machine gun

Source: Army Technology | Date: January 22, 2023
 @AJLabs ALJAZERA

“I can confirm that an export license has been issued” for the Leopard 1 tanks, government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit said at a press briefing, without confirming specific numbers.

Earlier on Friday, Süddeutsche Zeitung reported that Berlin had approved German arms-maker Rheinmetall’s plans to sell 88 of the older Leopards to Kyiv, once these are repaired, for a total cost of more than €100 million.

The move further signals a reversal of Berlin’s policy on tanks for Ukraine, nine days after the chancellery announced it would send one company of Leopard 2 tanks to Kyiv as part of a European coalition.

Poland ‘open to sending fighter jets to Ukraine,’ says PM - Poland’s prime minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, has said he is open to supplying Ukraine with F-16 fighter jets if the decision were taken together with Nato allies.

Diplomacy

Germany has collected evidence of war crimes in Ukraine, the country’s prosecutor general has said in a newspaper interview, adding that he saw a need for a judicial process at the international level.

Canada has imposed sanctions on 38 people and 16 entities that it says are “complicit in peddling Russian disinformation and propaganda.”

Russia says EU-Ukraine summit serves West’s ‘hegemonic aspirations’ - Russia said the EU-Ukraine summit on Friday confirmed that the 27-member bloc’s support for Kyiv is just for the sake of serving the US and NATO’s “hegemonic aspirations.”

In a written response, foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the European Union, by “violating” its own standard requirements for candidacy and declaring “common values” with Kyiv, stands in solidarity with “the total suppression of dissent, violation of freedom of speech and expression, gross violation of linguistic and confessional rights in Ukraine.”

Zakharova called the EU’s readiness to provide further support to Ukraine while calling for peace “equally hypocritical,” saying all of the EU’s military deliveries and financial support towards Kyiv leads to “an increase in the number of victims of the conflict, including those among the civilian population.”

WHO report on Ukraine health emergency sparks US, Russia row - The United States and Russia faced off over a World Health Organization report on the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, with Moscow saying it was politically motivated and Washington calling for it to be swiftly updated.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus’s report was presented to the organization’s executive board, on which both Russia and the US sit.

It covered events in the first nine months of 2022 and classed the situation in Ukraine, as one of eight acute global health emergencies. The report documented more than 14,000 civilian casualties, with 17.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and 7.5 million Ukrainian refugees displaced across Europe.

Of 471 attacks with heavy weapons on healthcare facilities globally, 448 occurred in Ukraine, the WHO report said.

Russia’s representative to the WHO board called it politicized and one-sided and described its references to Ukraine as unfounded accusations.

Moscow has denied targeting civilians in Ukraine since it began what it calls a special military operation, which has also devastated Ukraine’s cities, killed thousands of combatants and shaken the global economy.