

Conflict Update # 278

November 28th, 2022

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Conflict Assessment

Russian losses – 87,900 (590) soldiers killed, 2,908 (+3) enemy tanks, 5,861 (+5) armored combat vehicles, 1,899 (+2) artillery systems, 395 (+0) MLRS systems, 209 (+0) air defense systems, 278 (+0) warplanes, 261 (+0) helicopters, 1,555 (+0) UAVs of the operational-tactical level, 531 (+0) cruise missiles, 16 (+0) warships/cutters, 4,416 (+4) trucks and tankers, 4 Iskander Missile Launchers (+0), 76 fuel bowsers (+0) and 163 (+2) units of specialized equipment.

Key Takeaways



Zelenskyy warns of new Russian air attacks - Ukrainian President Zelenskyy has warned that Russia is planning new strikes, urging forces and citizens to be prepared amid freezing temperatures.

“We understand that the terrorists are planning new strikes. We know this for a fact,” Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address on Sunday. “And as long as they have missiles, they, unfortunately, will not calm down.”

He added that the coming week could be as difficult as the previous one. Last week’s air attacks on Kyiv left much of the country without power and water after critical infrastructure was again targeted.

Ukrainian troops push Russian soldiers back in Bakhmut: Kyiv - The General Staff of Ukraine’s Armed Forces has said in its daily update that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks in several areas, including Bakhmut and Avdiivka, over the past 24 hours.

On Facebook, a statement read: “Over the past 24 hours, units of the Defence Forces repelled the attacks of the occupiers in the areas of Yakovlivka, Soledar, Bakhmut, Andriivka, Novobakhmutivka, Opytne, Vodyane, Pervomaiske, Nevelske and Novomykhailivka settlements of the Donetsk region.

“The enemy launched four rocket attacks on civilian objects in Rozumivka, Zaporizhzhia oblast, and Musiivka, Dnipropetrovsk oblast, and fired more than 50 MLRS attacks at the positions of our troops and peaceful settlements.”

They added that Russia is suffering from “significant losses.”

Russia lacks 'quality forces' needed to take area from Ukraine, UK Says - Both Russia and Ukraine have committed "significant forces" to the area around the Ukrainian towns of Pavlivka and Vuhledar in south-central Donetsk Oblast, according to the British Defense Ministry.

The agency said in an intelligence update posted on Twitter Sunday that the area "has been the scene of intense combat over the last two weeks, though little territory has changed hands."

The area will likely remain "heavily contested," the ministry said, because "Russia assesses the area has potential as a launch point for a future major advance north to capture the remainder of Ukrainian-held Donetsk Oblast."

However, the ministry said the odds of Russia realizing that goal are slim because "Russia is unlikely to be able to concentrate sufficient quality forces to achieve an operational breakthrough."

On Saturday, Zelenskyy hosted a summit in Kyiv to mark the 90th anniversary of Holodomor, or the Great Famine, and to promote the Grain from Ukraine initiative to send grain to countries most afflicted by famine and drought.

The Holodomor was a manufactured famine engineered by Soviet dictator Josef Stalin in the winter of 1932-33, during which as many as 8 million Ukrainians died.

Zelenskyy used anniversary to reiterate Ukraine's commitment to export grain and other foodstuffs to the global market. These are "not just empty words," he said.

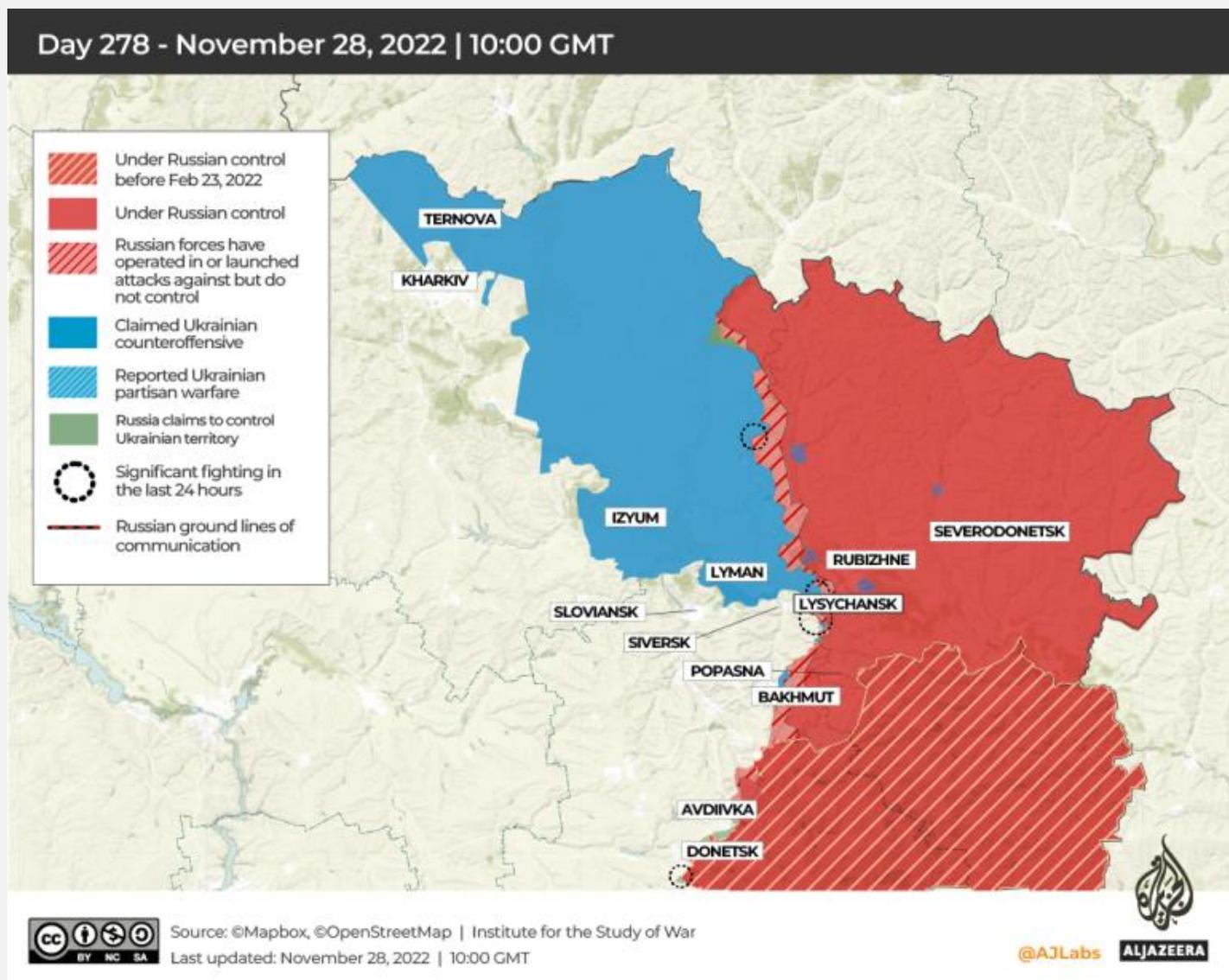
Ukraine tests power exports from Romania - Ukrainian state energy trading company EKU conducted a test import of one megawatt of power from Romania yesterday, it announced.

Ukraine has faced a significant electricity deficit since Russia stepped up missile strikes on Ukrainian energy infrastructure in October, causing blackouts in many areas.

“The import of electricity can become an additional tool for stabilizing the energy system of Ukraine,” EKU wrote in a statement on its website.

Demobilized Russian says he had to share food and sleeping bag - A student newly discharged from Russian proxy forces in Ukraine says he was equipped with a Soviet-era bolt-action rifle and had to share rations and a sleeping bag when he was first sent to the front.

“There weren’t enough sleeping bags for everyone,” Vladimir told reporters. “You could only cover yourself with a raincoat. We were able to get two or three people into a sleeping bag to keep warm.”



“At first we didn’t have enough food,” said the soldier, who appeared to be in his late teens. “After that, everything was fine with supplies. They were completely sufficient, but at first, we shared it with each other. Helping each other, that was the only way.”

Putin will continue using ‘winter as a weapon’: NATO - Russia will likely continue attacking Ukraine’s power grid, gas infrastructure and essential services, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg predicts.

“Doing that when we enter winter demonstrates that Putin is now trying to use ... the winter as a weapon of war against Ukraine,” he said at a news conference in Bucharest ahead of a two-day NATO foreign ministers meeting.

Unable to withstand Ukrainian forces in evenly contested field battles, Putin and the Kremlin have reverted to what Russia knows best and it fall back tactic – attack civilians and infrastructure.

To get through the Ukrainian winter during the conflict, Zelenskyy urged the Association of French Mayors to send generators, support for de-mining operations and equipment for Ukraine's emergency services and medics.

Half of Ukraine's energy infrastructure has been damaged by Russian attacks, Zelenskyy said, leaving millions of people without electricity and water as winter sets in and temperatures drop below freezing.

Rising power consumption during the cold months has led Ukraine's Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal to announce emergency shutdowns in addition to the planned ones taking place currently across the country.

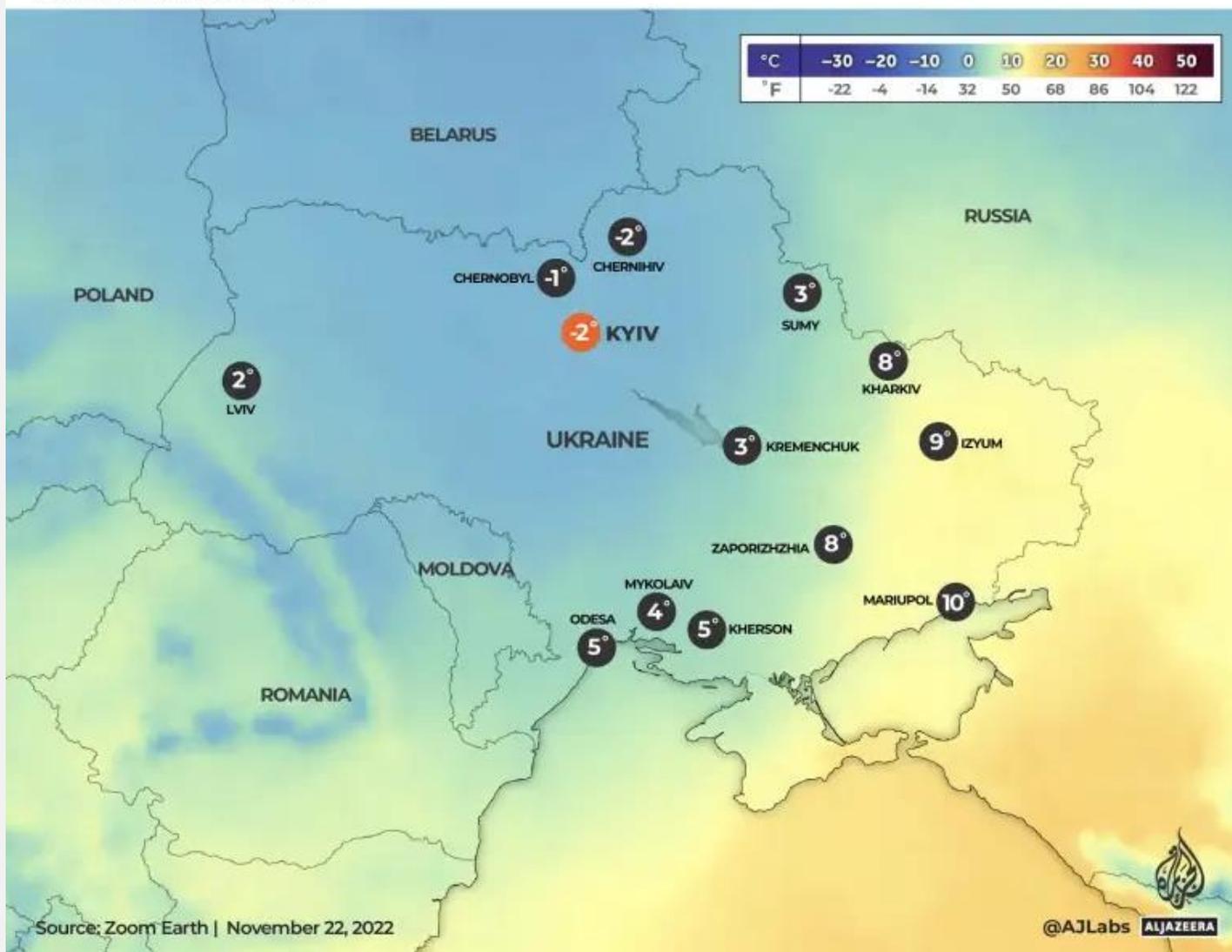
Sergey Kovalenko, head of the YASNO private energy provider for Kyiv, said that workers are rushing to complete repairs before the winter cold arrives, but Ukrainians are likely to live with blackouts at least until the end of March.

UKRAINE

Bracing for winter

As Russia continues to pound energy facilities, Ukrainians are being urged to stock up on warm clothes and blankets in case of long lockdowns during the winter.

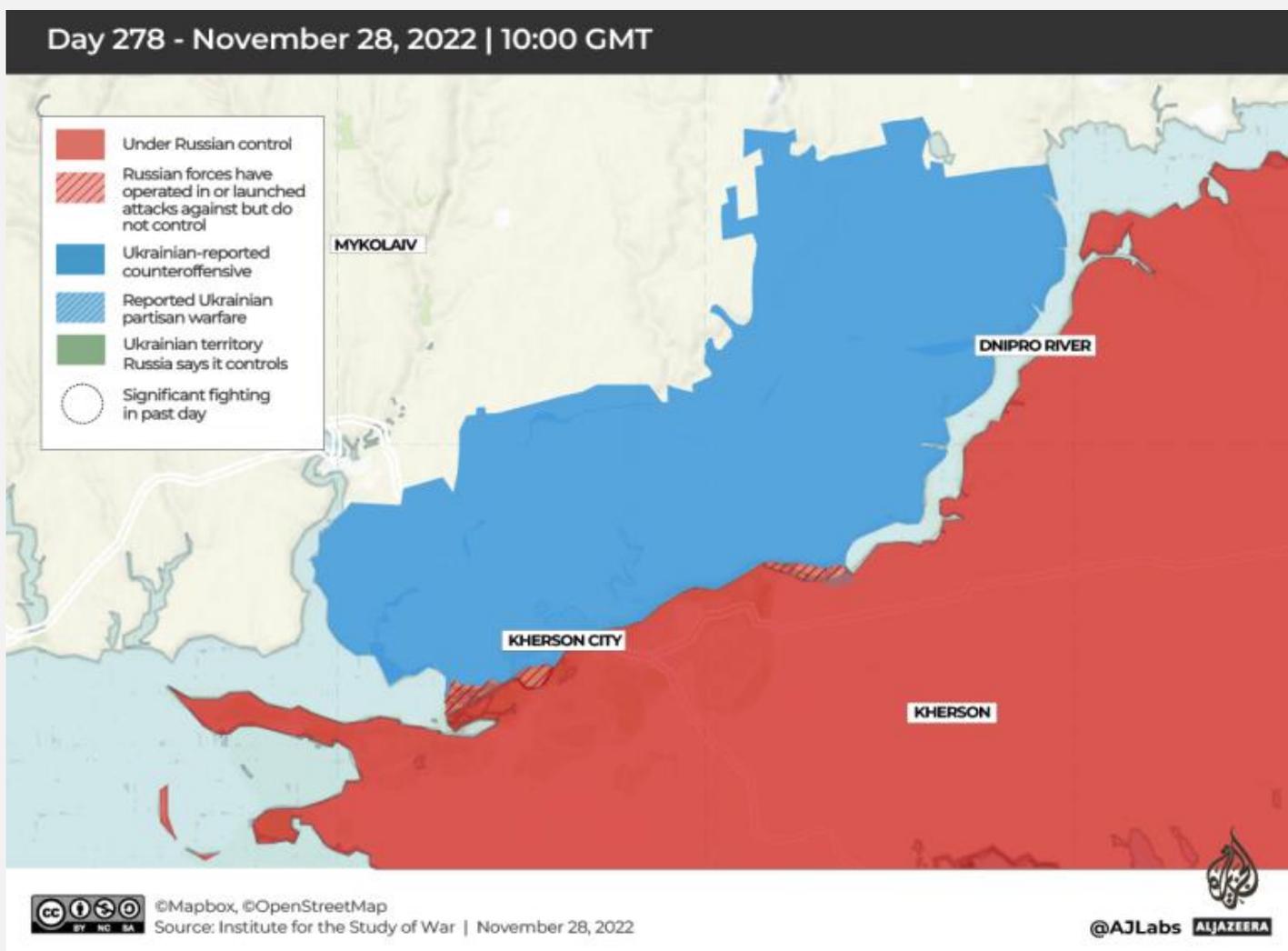
TEMPERATURE AS OF 13:35 GMT



In terms of artillery use, "A day in Ukraine is a month or more in Afghanistan," one expert told the New York Times, reporting on the same trends Saturday.

Consider this: "Last summer in the Donbas region, Ukraine was firing 6,000 to 7,000 artillery rounds each day," whereas "Russians were firing 40,000 to 50,000 rounds per day...By comparison, the United States produces only 15,000 rounds each month."

Ukrainian artillery pieces are suffering scouring and metal fatigue through their extremely high discharge rates. This requires barrel maintenance which is performed in the field with new and re-worked units replacing worn items, which are then returned for repairs.



Putin

Scientific Putinism: shaping official ideology in Russia - There is a belief that the Russian elite under Putin has only ever been interested in money. Yet his militant, anti-liberal, anti-Western, isolationist, paternalistic, and harshly authoritarian regime has always had an ideology.

This ideology is not systematized, but it does exist, and snippets of it can be found throughout his speeches, articles, and interviews. Now the war in Ukraine has necessitated a more articulated ideology, however.

The initiative to systematize and codify Putinism has led to a presidential decree listing Russia's "traditional spiritual and moral values," as well as the development of a new ideological curriculum for colleges.

It is no longer enough to indoctrinate children in kindergartens and schools. It is now time to unify the worldviews of college students, and, by extension, those of their professors, whose ranks will inevitably be purged. A similar course taught during the Soviet era was known as "Scientific Communism."

The name for this new curriculum is "Fundamentals of Russian Statehood," though it might as well be called "Scientific Putinism." It is composed of four units: "**History**" – historical policy as the imposition of a mythologized official version of history, which is one of the instruments for manipulating the mass consciousness of Russians; "**Cultural Codes**" or the "traditional spiritual and moral values," around which Putin has ordered federal and regional governments to unify; "**Russia and the World**" — a justification of isolationism, anti-Westernism, and jingoism; and "**Vision for the Future**," which sets out what the state hopes to achieve beyond victory in Ukraine and the destruction of the "fifth column."

The curriculum justifies the cult of the eternal leader and doubles down on that Russia is fighting the forces of evil in Ukraine in an effort to "de-satanize" the country.

However, at the same time, Scientific Putinism lacks key components such as development goals or a vision for Russia's future, focusing as it does almost exclusively on the past.

During Dmitry Medvedev's presidency, teams worked on a future-oriented ideology and road maps based on the idea that Russia would fast-track the modernization of state and society. Putin's ideology, however, is one that fundamentally opposes modernization.

Putin has successfully convinced a significant portion of the population that Russia must regain its status as a great power, and that Russia is under attack by both liberal West and traitors at home. As the regime has grown more authoritarian, its ideology has also become more archaic, its propaganda more obtrusive, and any hopes of modernization have dwindled.

An ideology that consists of historical, cultural, and religious myths, bogus traditions, and resentment seeks to legitimize an authoritarian regime and delegitimize those who oppose it.

Such an ideology makes it possible to label nonconformists as enemies, and to divide people into "us" and "them." The division into "us" and "them" doesn't just provide a marker for self-identification, it also serves to convince the public that there is a certain majority from which they should not stray.

In the past, the only requirement for being part of the "us" was passive, silent, conformist support. Today, however, this is not enough: Russians must surrender their very bodies to be cannon fodder in the supreme leader's holy war against the "satanic" forces of the West. This is no longer authoritarianism; it is totalitarianism.

Imperialism and colonialism are key components of Putinism and key factors in the war. There is nothing new about this ideology; it comes almost verbatim from Stalinism and from earlier Eurasian and Slavophile narratives.

The war is being passed off as striving to restore historical fairness, as defensive and preventive, and as liberation. According to Putin, the land of the empire must be "returned and reinforced."

In just a few years, the regime has evolved from a cult of the victory of 1945 to a cult of war itself, and Putin has managed to persuade a large segment of Russian society that the "special military operation" of 2022 is a natural continuation of World War II. In essence, it is an existential war between Russian and Western civilizations.

Putin has started to refer to Russia as an entire civilization. The state is not just sacred and worthy of the ultimate sacrifice; it is also a separate and superior civilization with a "thousand-year history" and its own special path.

Within this history, cultural codes are being passed down from generation to generation as part of the country's political DNA. This state-civilization has its own pantheon of heroes unchanged from the Soviet era: Alexander Nevsky, Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, Joseph Stalin, and Yuri Gagarin. (**Comment** – he conveniently forgets to consider Dmitry the False).

This state-civilization has always been under attack by enviers and foes, making its state of permanent conflict critical, and not simply limited to the battlefield. The state must win in all aspects — in culture and in sports, in the construction of Olympic facilities, and in the war against Ukraine and the West.

To defend the sovereignty of this state-civilization, the Kremlin is counting on the security services, or siloviki, who have been given additional funding and are reinforced by spin doctors and so-called "journalists" in the Kremlin's service.

The Culture Ministry, the communications watchdog Roskomnadzor, and the Russian Orthodox Church are becoming de facto siloviki themselves, enjoying as they do the right to block or ban media, restrict the sales of books by authors who oppose the war, and decide who can perform on theater stages.

The ideology has become corporeal, bolstered by political and military acts, such as the annexation of Crimea and the "special military operation." In short, the special ideological operation is ongoing, and it seems to be faring rather better than the military one.

Peace Talks

Kremlin welcomes Pope's offer to negotiate peace deal - The Kremlin says Russia welcomes a Vatican offer to provide a negotiating platform to resolve the Ukraine conflict, but that Kyiv's position made this impossible.

Pope Francis reiterated last week that the Vatican was ready to do anything possible to mediate and put an end to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine in an interview with the Italian daily La Stampa.

Russia summons Norwegian ambassador

Russia's Foreign Ministry says it has summoned the Norwegian ambassador over what it said was the politically motivated arrest of Russian citizens for reportedly using drones illegally.

"It was noted that the sentences against the Russians were politically motivated and had nothing to do with the principles of fair and impartial justice," the ministry said in a statement.

Several Russian citizens have reportedly been arrested by Norwegian authorities for flying drones near the Arctic border between the two countries or taking photos of classified facilities as Norway boosts security after suspected sabotage on the two Nord Stream gas pipelines under the Baltic Sea.

Humanitarian

'We remain human': bodies of Russian troops collected to exchange for dead Ukrainians - Ukrainian volunteers discovered about 20 bodies of dead Russian soldiers near the village of Dovhenke in the Kharkiv region. The remains were in the forest outside the village. The bodies were examined, and personal belongings like money and documents were registered. After a forensic medical examination, the remains of some Russian soldiers may be offered in exchange for the bodies of Ukrainian soldiers.

Russia is still leaving fallen soldiers in the field with reports being received of bodies also being burnt in front line fire pits so as to post killed in action soldiers as "MIA."

Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant remains under Russian control: Moscow - The Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant remains under Russian control, Moscow-backed authorities in the nearby city of Enerhodar have said, after a Ukrainian official suggested Russian forces were preparing to leave.

“The media are actively spreading fake news that Russia is allegedly planning to withdraw from Enerhodar and leave the [plant]. This information is not true,” the Russia-installed administration wrote on Telegram.

The head of Ukraine’s state-run nuclear energy company said on Sunday there were signs that Russian forces might be preparing to vacate the vast plant. The Kremlin’s spokesman also denied the reports.



Kyiv first lady decries sexual violence - Russian soldiers must be held accountable for raping Ukrainian women and committing other acts of sexual violence during Russia's war in Ukraine, its first lady, Olena Zelenska, says at an international conference on preventing sexual violence in conflicts.

Zelenska told the London meeting that sexual violence was being perpetrated "systematically and openly" as the war in Ukraine drags on. Phone recordings have shown Russian soldiers openly discussing rape with their relatives at home, Zelenska said.

"Sexual violence is the ultimate cruel and most animalistic way to prove mastership over someone," she said. "And for victims of this kind of violence, it is difficult to testify in wartimes because nobody feels safe."

"This is another weapon in their arsenal in this war and conflict," she said. "That's why they're using this systematically and openly."

Volunteers helped Kherson residents survive through the occupation - When Russia captured Kherson in March, disrupting supply chains to the city, local Ukrainian volunteers kept it running.

When people had no food, they set up free hot meal cafeterias. When people had no medicine or hygiene goods, they brought them in from Odesa. When children needed to take their minds off the subjugation, they set up a sports center in a local school.

"Every day, we served about 400 meals," said Iryna Derevyanko, the head of a regional sports labor union living in Kherson. "We didn't get much help from the Ukrainian government except the use of School 23."

According to volunteers, representatives of the local Ukrainian government were still in the city up until approximately six weeks into the occupation but weren't of much help to them.

"It was all held together by friends, neighbors and social media," Derevyanko said.

"They're the only ones who saved us," Svitlana Polivnyak, a local resident who's been benefiting from the volunteers' aid since the early days, said in front of School 23, as she waited to receive some goods, in the now-liberated Kherson.

"I came here many times during occupation because they cooked meals. Two months ago, I asked for clothes, and they gave them to me."

The Russian forces harassed the volunteers along the way.

"There were searches, some people were taken, they turned over my entire house," said Derevyanko. "Their cars stood down the street, watching us, thinking that we were feeding insurgents."

Today, Kherson teems with volunteers. In the first two weeks after liberation, Freedom Square was full of trucks and pavilions from multiple international groups, including the Red Cross and World Central Kitchen, handing out everything from food to diapers.

Containment

UK increases Ukrainian military support, delivers first helicopter - The UK today announced plans to send an additional 10,000 artillery rounds to Ukraine, while also announcing it has delivered a first second-hand search and rescue helicopter to its Eastern European partner

The decision to provide the ammunition was made by Ben Wallace, UK Secretary of Defense, during a visit to Norway where he is scheduled to host a meeting of the Northern Group of defense ministers, according to a Nov. 23 UK Ministry of Defense (MoD) statement.

Russia's invasion, European security, and Sweden and Finland's NATO membership applications are all due to be discussed during the multinational Northern Group meeting.

Alongside today's SH-3 Sea King helicopter delivery, another two rotorcraft from London are expected to be transferred to Ukraine, reported the BBC. The UK's Royal Navy conducted a six-week Sea King training course for 10 crews of the Ukrainian armed forces and engineers, added the MoD.

"The UK is also supplying winter kit to Ukraine's troops as they continue to battle to liberate their country from Russian forces as winter rapidly approaches — when temperatures are known to sink to minus 20 degrees C [minus 4 degrees Fahrenheit] and below in parts of the country," it explained.

New British Brimstone 2 missiles are bad news for Russian tanks, artillery, air defense and command posts

The U.K. has been supplying Ukraine with Brimstone missiles since April. Yesterday the U.K. Ministry of Defence officially confirmed what was being unofficially claimed based on imagery, that Ukraine is receiving not just the older Brimstone 1 but the latest and vastly more capable Brimstone 2. While Russian forces seems to be going down the evolutionary ladder, fielding increasingly ancient tanks and issuing conscripts with rifles from a previous age, allies are supplying Ukraine with ever more advanced equipment. And Brimstone 2 is a very handy addition to the arsenal.

The step up may be inspired by how capably Ukraine has adapted previous weapons. Although designed for use from helicopters and aircraft, Ukraine has developed its own truck-mounted Brimstone launcher. This may have been easier than matching NATO-standard HARM missiles with incompatible Russian-made MiG aircraft, it is still a significant feat, and typical of Ukrainian improvisation.

Ironically enough, the original Brimstone armor. It is based on the airframe of the but the issue was range. Hellfire reaches much too close to Soviet mobile air defense laser guidance, meaning that either the visual range of the target and keep it in sight



missiles was designed to tackle mass assault by Soviet Hellfire missile, which can also be launched from aircraft, out to around 8 kilometers, putting attacking aircraft systems. In addition, the original Hellfire required launch aircraft or an assistant had to be within during the attack.

Brimstone brought two big improvements. One was km from an aircraft. The other was millimeter-wave and metallic objects like tanks have a strong MMW Brimstone to locate and identify targets within a range, making it a true 'fire and forget' missile and also meant that Brimstones could be fired in salvos, with (A clever deconfliction algorithm means that each missile goes for a different target, and they are able to distinguish and prioritize different types of vehicle, for example going for high-value command vehicles first, then tanks and other armor and trucks last).

range: 12 km from a hovering helicopter, 20 (MMW) guidance. MMW sees in fine detail, signature. A MMW radar seeker allowed specified kill box from well beyond visual allowing strike aircraft to stay well clear. It several missiles each finding their own target.

In trials in 2005, 30 out of 31 Brimstones hit the target, an impressive hit rate of better than 96%. In 2016, a Boeing flight test engineer describe this precise hit on a tank by a self-guided Brimstone as "the most aggressive shot I have seen in my 30 years on the Apache program."

Brimstone 2 features two significant upgrades over 1. The guidance system has been greatly improved against "challenging targets" (for example, those that are obscured or seen at odd angles) and a new Roxel rocket motor increase range by "more than 200%" with ranges reported as 40 km from helicopters and 60 km from aircraft. Range for ground launch should be similar to a helicopter.

From 40km away, laser guidance would require long-range drones equipped with designators such as the Bayraktar TB2. The MMW guidance is likely to be far more practical. This would enable the missile to knock out not just tanks and personnel carriers but higher-value units like self-propelled artillery, and surface-to-air missile systems and command vehicles located well behind the front line.

Unlike kamikaze drones like the Phoenix Ghost, the Brimstone comes in at a supersonic speed, making it far more difficult to stop. It will not change the war, but Brimstone 2 will make life significantly harder for Russian commanders and more dangerous for their troops.

NATO Chief expects Allies to step up air-defense support to Ukraine - NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg says he expects the alliance to step up supplies of air-defense systems to Ukraine in the face of the Russian missile onslaught heading into the winter.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Military equipment Ukraine has received

The billions of dollars' worth of military aid sent to Ukraine includes conventional weapons as well as more advanced equipment and weaponry.



Helicopters



Drones



Artillery



Armoured vehicles



Small arms



Ammunition



Anti-tank weapons



Anti-aircraft weapons



Body armour/helmets



Source: News agencies | June 7, 2022



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Stoltenberg said on November 28 that "one of the messages" from the NATO foreign ministers meeting in Bucharest, which begins on November 29, will be the need "to further step" up the provision of more air-defense systems, ammunition, spare parts, and training. With missiles and drones targeting energy infrastructure, Russian President Vladimir Putin is trying to "use the winter as a weapon of war against Ukraine," Stoltenberg said.

US to consider sending Ukraine new, small precision bombs - The Pentagon is considering a Boeing proposal to supply Ukraine with small, cheap precision bombs, allowing Kyiv to attack far behind Russian lines as the West struggles to meet the demand for more arms.

Boeing's proposed system, dubbed Ground-Launched Small Diameter Bomb (GLSDB), is one of several plans for getting new munitions into production for Ukraine and the US's Eastern European allies, industry sources told Reuters news agency.

GLSDB could be delivered as soon as early 2023, according to a document reviewed by Reuters and three people familiar with the plan.

Doug Bush, the US Army's chief weapons buyer, told Pentagon reporters last week that the Army was also looking at accelerating production of 155-millimetre artillery shells – currently only manufactured at government facilities – by allowing defence contractors to build them.

Biden urged to rethink Ukraine's request for Gray Eagle drones - A bipartisan group of 16 United States senators has asked the Biden administration to carefully reconsider Ukraine's request for lethal Gray Eagle drones to fight Russia.

The Biden administration has so far rejected requests for the Gray Eagle drone, which has an operational ceiling of 8,800 metres (29,000 ft) and can fly for more than 24 hours, basing it on concerns that the drones could be shot down and may escalate the conflict.

As Russia increasingly turns to so-called kamikaze drones and attacks civilian infrastructure, Ukraine has strongly appealed to the US to supply it with powerful drones that can help them gain an advantage in the conflict.

In their letter, the senators have given Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin until November 30 to explain why the Pentagon believed the drone was not appropriate for the fight in Ukraine.

Earlier on Tuesday, a Russian-installed governor in Crimea, Mikhail Razvozhayev, announced the shooting down of two drones in the city of Sevastopol, where Russian air defences had been activated.

"Our air defence forces are working right now," he said on social media. "There is an attack by drones. According to preliminary information, two UAVs [uncrewed aerial vehicles] have already been shot down. All forces and services are on alert."

Weapons industry booms as Eastern Europe arms Ukraine - Eastern Europe's arms industry is churning out guns, artillery shells and other military supplies at a pace not seen since the Cold War as governments in the region lead efforts to aid Ukraine in its fight against Russia.

Allies have been supplying Kyiv with weapons and military equipment since Russia invaded its neighbour on Feb. 24, depleting their own inventories along the way.

Still wary of Russia, their Soviet-era master, some former Warsaw Pact countries see helping Ukraine as a matter of regional security.

But nearly a dozen government and company officials and analysts who spoke to Reuters said the conflict also presented new opportunities for the region's arms industry.

"Taking into account the realities of the ongoing war in Ukraine and the visible attitude of many countries aimed at increased spending in the field of defence budgets, there is a real chance to enter new markets and increase export revenues in the coming years," said Sebastian Chwalek, CEO of Poland's PGZ.

State-owned PGZ controls more than 50 companies making weapons and ammunition - from armored transporters to unmanned air systems - and holds stakes in dozens more.

It now plans to invest up to 8 billion zlotys (\$1.8 billion) over the next decade, more than double its pre-war target, Chwalek told Reuters. That includes new facilities located further from the border with Russia's ally Belarus for security reasons, he said.

Other manufacturers too are increasing production capacity and racing to hire workers, companies and government officials from Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic said.

Immediately after Russia's attack some eastern European militaries and manufacturers began emptying their warehouses of Soviet-era weapons and ammunition that Ukrainians were familiar with, as Kyiv waited for NATO-standard equipment from the West.

As those stocks have dwindled, arms makers have cranked up production of both older and modern equipment to keep supplies flowing. The stream of weapons has helped Ukraine push back Russian forces and reclaim swathes of territory.

Chwalek said PGZ would now produce 1,000 portable Piorun manpad air-defence systems in 2023 - not all for Ukraine - compared to 600 in 2022 and 300 to 350 in previous years.

The company, which he said has also delivered artillery and mortar systems, howitzers, bulletproof vests, small arms and ammunition to Ukraine, is likely to surpass a pre-war 2022 revenue target of 6.74 billion zlotys.