

Conflict Update # 201

October 4th, 2022

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Conflict Assessment

Russian losses – 60,800 (+370) soldiers killed, 2,424 (+44) enemy tanks, 5,018 (+27) armored combat vehicles, 1,407 (+2) artillery systems, 338 (+2) MLRS systems, 177 (+1) air defense systems, 266 (+1) warplanes, 228 (+0) helicopters, 1,028 (+2) UAVs of the operational-tactical level, 246 (+0) cruise missiles, 15 (+0) warships/cutters, 3,823 (+12) trucks and tankers, 4 Iskander Missile Launchers (+0), 76 fuel bowsers (+0) and 130 (+0) units of specialized equipment.

Key Takeaways

By the numbers – The above Russian losses were suffered mainly in Kramatorsk in Donetsk Oblast and Kryvyi Rih in Kherson Oblast. The former indicating Ukrainian pushes south from and the latter south of the River Dniro and around an hour and a half north of Crimea.

These are significant, with 300+ fatalities per day now being the norm and ongoing equipment losses with tanks, truck, aircraft and helicopters constantly being reported downed.

Ukrainian troops are making “substantial gains” in both the east and south of the country, various reports relate as of earlier today.

In the east, Ukrainian forces pushing from Lyman in the Donetsk region may have gone as far as the border of neighboring Luhansk as they advance eastward toward the city of Kreminna.

Moving south along the Donetsk Oblast border, Ukrainian troops are reported to be holding positions all the way to the Zaporizhzhia Oblast border – shaded purple in the map alongside.



The gains in the east and on the southern front around Kherson are noteworthy because Russian troops there “were previously considered to be among Russia’s premier conventional fighting forces,” the reports say.

Quiet before the storm – As reported in our Updates, Ukraine has been maintaining “radio silence” in the south for a number of weeks now. Progress slowed and it was reported that Kherson was a different war front to what was being seen in Kharkiv Oblast, where Ukrainian troops have been making significant inroads into Russian defenses.

However, this may merely have been the calm before the storm as now that they have recommenced operations along southern fronts, they are making further and significant progress from Donetsk down Russian defense lines all the way to Zaporizhzhya Oblast – see the map above in the purple zones.

Bridging the gap – should Ukraine succeed in pushing south from gains earlier today, and reach the area around Mariupol, scene of massive and destructive Russian bombing earlier in the invasion, it will effectively split Russian defenses in two, a major catastrophe in military terms.

Russia’s sole supply route to their troops south of that line will then be through Crimea across the Kerch Bridge in the east of the promontory.

Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts can be resupplied from Russia by land if pushed hard enough by Russian forces, but the oblasts further south – Zaporizhzhya and Kherson will have been isolated, requiring replenishment by sea.

This will play back into Ukraine’s tactical hands as they have stocks of anti-ship weapons, the same technology used to drive the Black Sea fleet out of Sevastopol and into the area behind Crimea.

Russian army maps show major retreats in Ukraine’s Kherson region - Russian defence ministry maps show rapid pullbacks in key Kherson region amid Ukraine army’s counteroffensive.

Russia’s forces occupying Ukraine’s southern Black Sea region of Kherson have suffered serious territorial losses to Kyiv’s troops over recent days, maps published by Moscow’s defence ministry showed.

The ministry’s daily video briefing made no mention of any pullbacks on Tuesday, but the maps included showed that Russian forces were no longer in control of the village of Dudchany on the west bank of the river Dnieper, where Ukraine’s forces have been pushing to reclaim territory captured at the start of Moscow’s offensive.

Russian forces poised for ‘major defeat’ in Kherson, says DoD official - The Pentagon’s international affairs chief said that Russia’s new losses in the strategic southern Kherson region (referred to above and below) are about to spiral into a “major defeat” that would give Ukraine a defensive position amid “hot fighting” expected this winter.

After news that Ukrainian forces broke through Moscow’s defenses in Kherson, which Moscow saw as the gateway to Odessa, Assistant Defense Secretary for International Security Affairs Celeste Wallander said the Ukrainians were on the verge of pushing back the main Russian bridgehead across the Dnipro River.

“That would be a major defeat for Russia because it pushes back even more Russia’s ambition to take Odessa, which was one of the stated objectives earlier this year,” Wallander said at a Center for Strategic and International Studies event.

“It gives Ukraine another defensive position to ride out what probably will be hot fighting over the winter,” Wallander said, adding that in spite of Ukraine’s recent strategic successes, the U.S. and international community must continue to supply Ukraine with aid.

Already, Russia's recent loss of the town Lyman, which its forces used as a logistics hub in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, would "significantly affect Russia's ability to supply, resupply and move its forces all along that forward line of conflict," she said.

'Lots of heavy fighting ahead': U.S. officials urge caution after Ukrainian gains - The US assesses that Ukraine's battlefield gains on the eastern and southern fronts over the past three days are strategically important, but Kyiv is still far from a decisive victory, according to U.S. officials.

In the east, Kyiv's forces over the weekend captured the city of Lyman, a strategic railway hub, and continued to push east into the Donetsk region. In the south, Ukrainian soldiers broke through Moscow's defensive lines in the Kherson region, gateway to the port city of Odesa.

Officials however cautioned that Kyiv's most recent gains should not be overstated, and that Russian forces are holding steady in other areas such as nearby Bakhmut, in the Donetsk. In the north, Russian forces are shelling the town of Kupiansk, which Ukraine continues to defend, the senior military official said.

Russian army maps also show major retreats in the northeast of Ukraine - In the northeastern Kharkiv region, defence ministry maps showed that Russian forces have left positions on the west bank of the Oskil River. They appeared to have retreated some 20km (12.4 miles) to the east, as far as the border of Luhansk province, in the aftermath this month of a counteroffensive by Kyiv's army.

'Dozens' of Villages Recently Reclaimed - Ukrainian President Zelensky said Tuesday that "dozens" of villages have been reclaimed by Ukrainian troops in recent days. Zelensky shared the "good news" during an address today to citizens of Ukraine.

Ukrainian military forces are "carrying out a fast and powerful advance" in southern parts of Ukraine, Zelensky said. "Dozens of settlements have already been liberated from the Russian sham referendum this week alone," he added.

Citing reports from the Kherson region, Zelensky listed some of the villages that Ukrainian troops have reclaimed: Lyubymivka, Khreshchenivka, Zolota Balka, Bilyaivka, Ukrainka, Velyka and Mala Oleksandrivka, and Davydiv Brid.

"And this is far from a complete list," he said.

The same message – When listening to news outlets on television, news releases, YouTube and so on, there are a number of retired American military generals being interviewed, offering views and interpretations of Ukrainian news and trends.

They are exceptionally experienced and well-informed, providing astute views of events, current and projected.

One characteristic of the message they communicate, albeit declaring it a personal interpretation or view, and without link to the US government or any US government department, is how similar the messages are in content and response.

And the message is that should Russia use a nuclear device of any sort in Ukraine, then the US and NATO will respond, not in kind with another nuke, but in targeting and eliminating all Russian battalions across all Ukrainian oblasts, destroy all Russian invasion-supporting infrastructure and take out the entire Russian Black Sea fleet.

They say that this is a personal interpretation and viewpoint, but how do all their interviews convey the same message?

There are reports they have the inside track, and the US is using them as an informal conduit to ensure Russia fully understands what will happen should they use a nuclear device.

Not the first time such channels of communication have been used.

Retired General Petraeus acknowledged that the likelihood that radiation would extend to Nato countries under the Article 5 umbrella could perhaps be construed as an attack on a NATO member.

“Perhaps you can make that case,” he said. “The other case is that this is so horrific that there has to be a response – it cannot go unanswered.”

Ukrainian troops advance in the east and the south – Reports are coming in of significant gains for Ukraine in the areas to the east and south of Lyman, captured two nights ago. Ukraine is moving towards Svatove some 15 miles away, and further east to the main Russian rail connection supplying their battalions in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts.

In the south, Ukrainian forces made important gains in Kherson Oblast as well, where in one day Russia lost 31 tanks.

Russia buying time? – Will Russia use a nuclear device to buy time for its mobilization? - Putin is desperate and under pressure from Kremlin insiders because of the failing progress and military setbacks of the invasion of Ukraine, seemingly set to rise even further.

He is reportedly also being held individually accountable because he has taken personal command of Russia’s military strategic direction.

He needs time for his mobilization to take any effect, regardless of how successful or unsuccessful it is. This is one of his last hurrahs, so he needs to ensure success.

Using a nuke will certainly buy time, albeit short, but the risks attached may be too high to contemplate.

It is almost certain that the “Hot Line” between the Kremlin and White House has been buzzing of late with warnings and cautions.

Fallen Russian soldiers litter roads around liberated Lyman - There are numbers of fallen Russian soldiers in and around Lyman after their defeat a few days ago.

It is unknown how many were killed, injured and captured, but Ukrainian humanitarian folk are trying to identify and clear the fallen soldiers as well as communicate if possible their demise to their families.

Ukrainian forces advance in south, repel Russian attacks in Donbas - Ukrainian President Zelenskiy said that his troops are pressing ahead with advances against Russian forces after liberating more towns in a number of areas.

He gave no further details in announcing in his nightly video address that the “offensive movement of our army and all our defenders continued” on October 3.

This is consistent with the Ukrainian policy of radio silence in areas where they are moving forward.

But there are Russian milblogger reports of Kyiv's forces yesterday continuing their advance in the south and recapturing several villages along the strategic Dnieper River, which bisects the country.

Ukrainian forces have made substantial gains around Lyman and in northern Kherson Oblast over the last 24 hours. The Russian units defeated on these fronts were previously considered to be among Russia’s premier conventional fighting forces.

Putin may use the appointment of Lieutenant-General Berdnikov to the command of the Western Military District to redirect blame for recent or future Russian military failures in Kharkiv Oblast.

Russian officials released the director of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, whom they had illegally detained, and are likely continuing to undermine Ukrainian control of the plant.

Ukrainian forces made advances on the Oskil River-Kreminna line towards the Luhansk oblast border.

Ukrainian forces advanced in northern Kherson Oblast.

Putin is introducing punitive measures to target Russian bureaucratic institutions responsible for the execution of partial mobilization.

Russian officials acknowledged that the Kremlin intends to invade, occupy, and illegally annex additional Ukrainian territory in the south and east and may alter the claimed borders of its occupied territories.

The Russian State Duma approved the Kremlin's illegal accession treaties on October 3 and laid out the administrative timeline for integrating illegally annexed Ukrainian territory into the Russian Federation.

Nuclear

NATO 'warns Putin may test a nuclear device on Ukraine's borders' as Kremlin 'insiders' claim he 'is preparing to make decisions about launching a tactical nuclear strike while hidden in a bunker outside Moscow' - Putin may have decided to detonate a nuke on Ukraine's borders, NATO is believed to have warned its members, in an escalation designed to terrify the West.

The warning comes as Putin was reportedly 'preparing to make key decisions about launching a tactical nuclear strike from a bunker' a long way outside Moscow.

The Kremlin has been attempting to signal to its NATO adversaries that it was willing to brandish its one remaining trump card lately even as the Russian army suffers defeat after defeat at the hands of the Ukrainian army.

A senior defence source, however, said that a more likely demonstration of Putin's readiness to use nuclear weapons could come in the Black Sea, The Times reports.

Such a move would shatter the longstanding taboo on deploying nuclear weapons and set the world on its deadliest course since the Cuban missile crisis of 1963.

Putin - who will be 70 on Friday - has warned his closest family including gymnast partner Alina Kabaeva, 40, of the possibility of rapid evacuation, it is alleged.

Ukrainians prepare for possible Russian nuclear attack with iodine tablets and humor - People in the Ukrainian capital are making preparations for a possible nuclear strike amid strong suggestions that Moscow is considering such an attack as its military falters. Some residents of Kyiv have stocked up on iodine tablets to help treat radiation poisoning while others are using a dose of humor to cope with the threat of nuclear war.

Russian annexation

Russia no longer has full control of any of the four provinces it claims to annex - After Ukrainian troops reportedly advanced dozens of kilometres in Kherson province. The Russian military has acknowledged that Kyiv's forces had broken through in the Kherson region. It said the Ukrainian army and its "superior tank units" had managed to "penetrate the depths of our defence" around the villages of Zoltaya Balka and Aleksandrovka.

Kremlin to consult with residents of "annexed" areas to determine where the borders should be - Suggesting Russia does not know where its new self-declared international borders are. Putin has vowed to protect Russia's newly claimed territories using "all means at its disposal." indicating a potential nuclear strike. The lack of a

clear red line may undermine his attempts at using nuclear deterrence to halt Ukraine's successful counteroffensive and western support for Kyiv.

Countries across Europe are ramping up diplomatic pressure on Moscow in condemnation of Russia's attempt to illegally annex an additional four Ukrainian regions through referendums widely seen as sham events.

Russian parliament's upper chamber ratifies annexation of four Ukrainian regions - All of the 153 deputies who were present at the Federation Council session today 4 voted for the annexation of parts of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya, Kherson, Donetsk, and Luhansk regions, which represent around 18 percent of Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Zelenskyy has formally ruled out talks with Russia following its illegal annexation of Ukrainian territories – Ukrainian President Zelenskyy's decree released today declares that holding negotiations with Russian President Putin has become impossible after his decision to annex four regions of Ukraine. The decree enacted a decision by Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council to bolster Ukrainian defenses and seek more weapons from the country's Western allies in response to Moscow's move.

The Kremlin responded to Zelenskyy by saying that it will wait for Ukraine to sit down for talks on ending the conflict, noting that it may not happen until a new Ukrainian president takes office.

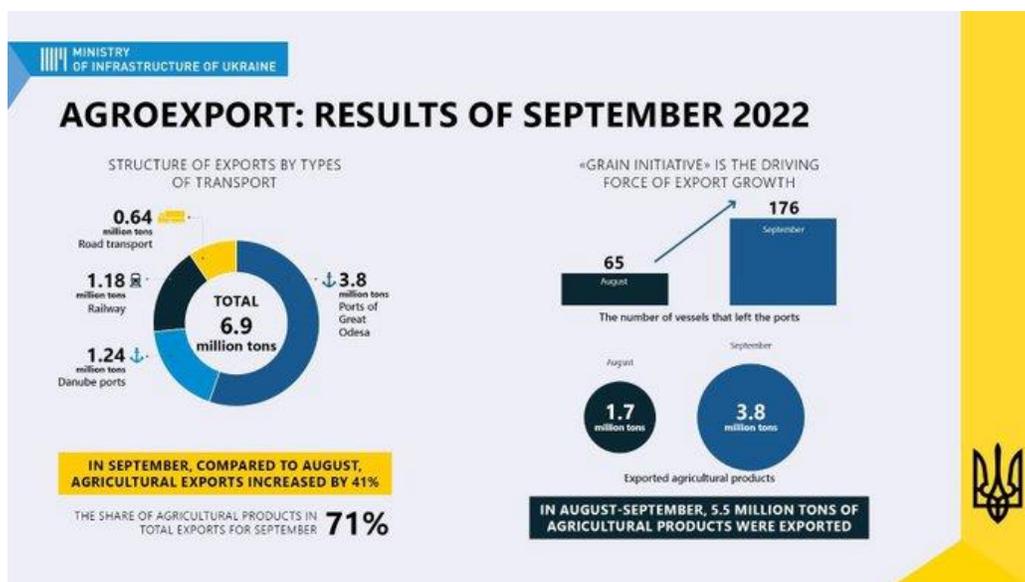
Comment – As reported previously, Russia is trying to project Ukraine as being the party unwilling to engage in peace talks. But Putin stated very clearly that any peace talks will exclude any reference to the four annexed oblasts, as they are now permanently part of Russia.

Ukraine's foreign minister is in Africa to reassure countries that Ukraine will do everything possible to reinstate grain shipments. The battle for 3rd party geopolitical support is well underway.

Ukraine Food Exports Grow in September - Over 6.9 million tons of agricultural products were exported from Ukraine last month, according to the Ukrainian Ministry of Infrastructure.

Most of the products were exported by boat through the ports of Odessa.

"We have always been an agrarian nation," Ukraine's Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov said in a tweet. "But now we are forced to fight for bread not only for ourselves but also for the whole [world.]"



Russia and Ukraine's main exports

More than one-quarter of the world's wheat exports come from Russia and Ukraine. Economic sanctions or military action may have a significant effect on the cost of food as importers seek to find alternatives. Russia exported \$407bn in products and Ukraine \$49bn in 2019.

UN General Assembly Reportedly Plan to Discuss Annexation - The UN General Assembly (UNGA) is reportedly planning to meet next week to discuss Russia's stated intention to annex parts of Ukraine.

Ukraine World was one of the publications reporting Tuesday on the anticipated meeting. A UN representative said the meeting will happen on October 10, according to Ukraine World.

Paulina Kubiak, a spokesperson for the UNGA, told reporters with Agence France Presse (AFP) that Ukraine and Albania requested the meeting. AFP reported that other sources said the UNGA member states will consider a resolution on Russia's annexation of four regions in Ukraine.

Russian arms market

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Russia's biggest arms buyers

Russia is the **world's second-largest arms exporter**, behind the US, accounting for **20% of global weapons sales**. Between 2016 and 2020, Moscow sold \$28bn of weapons to 45 countries.

Total arms exports from Russia, 2016-2020



Russian mobilization

'Inevitable' conflict: in Daghestan, Kremlin's mobilization inflames ethnic tensions - After Putin announced mobilization protests erupted in towns and cities around the country.

Daghestan grabbed the spotlight with some of the fastest, largest, and most insistent protests.

"We will fight until the last breath," said one female protester in the settlement of Babayurt who asked that her name be withheld out of fear for her safety.

On September 22, Babayurt district residents blocked a federal highway, while another group in the same area confronted military personnel at a local draft office. In the following days, the unrest spread to the settlement of Endirei in the nearby Khasayurt district before reaching the Daghestani capital of Makhachkala.

Join, flee, or resist: Russia pushed to the brink amid Putin's chaotic mobilization order - One day after Putin announced "partial" mobilization limited to reservists with prior military experience to go fight in the Kremlin's war in Ukraine, Viktor Dyachok, a 59-year-old surgeon, and Artyom Skutin, a 21-year-old university student, each received a draft summons to report for duty.

The notices delivered on September 22 came as a shock to both men.

Skutin should have been exempt from the mobilization order due to his status as a full-time student and he had spent the night following Putin's September 21 announcement reading through the fine print of the order with his girlfriend to reassure himself that he would not be drafted.

Dyachok, meanwhile, had just completed a late shift at the hospital and believed that his advanced age and poor health -- he has Stage 1 skin cancer and is blind in one eye -- would prevent him from being called up.

Yet, the summons still came, and when both men went to the local recruitment office to show their records and report that an error had been made, both were told that they would still be sent to Ukraine and were ordered to report for training the next day or face criminal charges.

The two men's experiences are far from isolated cases and have come to represent the chaotic and haphazard mobilization process under way inside Russia, which is fueling speculation that the Kremlin is aiming to activate far more than the 300,000 soldiers initially stated for the call-up drive by Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.

Cases like these are fueling opposition to the draft across Russia as hundreds of thousands of civilians fear being pressed into military service in the wake of major Russian battlefield losses in Ukraine.

Governor of Russia's Pskov region reports large queues of Ukrainian refugees on borders with Latvia and Estonia - Governor of Russia's Pskov region Mikhail Vedernikov has commented on the queues of Ukrainian refugees on the borders with Latvia and Estonia on his Telegram channel.

"There are many Ukrainian citizens among those leaving. There's a big flow of people, and everyone is different: some are trying to export foreign currency beyond the legislated limit, along with antique items, art pieces, and banned goods. There are also draft-age Russian citizens. For obvious reasons, they all undergo the corresponding checks. Our neighbors are in no hurry to let them through either," Vedernikov said.

The governor added that he ordered the local officials to set up shops selling basic necessities near the border, and to establish warming and rain protection sites.

Kazakh interior minister says 200,000 Russians have entered country since mobilization - Kazakh Interior Minister Marat Akhmetzhanov says 200,000 Russian citizens have entered the country since Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a partial mobilization on September 21 amid Moscow's ongoing invasion of Ukraine.

Akhmetzhanov also said on October 4 that 147,000 Russian citizens left Kazakhstan in the same period of time. He did not mention where the Russians were heading but last week Kazakh authorities said that tens of thousands of those Russians who entered Kazakhstan in recent days, moved further to neighboring Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Sanctions

US Says Russian Oil Price Cap Is Weeks Away - The Group-of-Seven industrialized economies are within weeks of announcing a formal cap on the price of Russian oil, according to Ben Harris, the US Treasury's assistant secretary for economic policy.

The step will be announced "substantially before Dec. 5," Harris said. That's the date when aggressive European Union sanctions on Russian oil exports are due to enter into force.

Putin

Anger over Russia's battlefield defeats bursts into the open, posing a challenge for Putin - For weeks now, on the uncensored Telegram channels of hardline nationalists and Russian military bloggers, there's been a litany of angry criticism of Russia's military commanders amid a stunning Ukrainian counteroffensive in the Kharkiv region and elsewhere resulting in substantial Russian losses.

Now with the Ukrainians' weekend victory in Lyman, a Donetsk region city and strategic rail hub southeast of Kharkiv, that criticism is bursting into wider public view, hitting the front pages of some of Russia's biggest newspapers.

That's a serious problem for Russia's military brass -- and potentially for the Kremlin.

"I wouldn't predict a palace coup imminently. If there were one, we'd almost be the last ones to know about it, these things happen pretty swiftly when they do," said James Nixey, who heads the Russia and Eurasia program at the Chatham House think tank in London. "But obviously, there is increasing discontent in the upper Russian echelons about the course of the war, and that is being manifested in various ways, people can't hold it in."

"The problem is Putin's grip in all sorts of ways is too strong for people to mobilize and consolidate and form an alliance, to move against him," he told RFE/RL. "I personally think...the Russian elite has never been as at risk of collapse quite frankly than it is now."

It's time to brace for Putin's greatest meltdown yet - Even before the war began in February, Putin invested too much into the conflict with Ukraine. With the clock running out on his window of opportunity, he chose war. Regardless of how badly the war turned out for Putin, his fundamental choice—to escalate or back down—remained the same. He placed himself in a position where he could not afford to back down, or else he might lose everything. That left him with only one option: escalate when the war goes badly. All else follows.

Since defeat is not an option for the Russian leader, the main strategic problem for NATO and Ukraine to solve must be how to prepare for, manage, and secure a Ukrainian victory.

After being denied a quick end to the war, Russian military forces launched targeted strikes against civilians, schools, and hospitals. Discussions about the potential use of chemical and nuclear weapons briefly seized the political zeitgeist.

As the prospect of Russian defeat seemed possible in March following Ukraine's successful defense of Kyiv, observers of the conflict were left wondering just how dirty the war in Ukraine could become.

When the war dragged on, speculation about the potential end of the war took hold among pundits and scholars. Some of their daydreams were filled with optimism and hope that a Russian defeat would be relatively painless for everyone but Moscow, but the endgame most wished for was never the one we were likely to get.

Unfortunately, some were already aware of the many ways the war could change and worsen. We knew about the possibility of mobilization. We knew about the potential for Russia to annex the territory it possessed. We knew that Ukraine could threaten to bring the war into the Donbas. And we knew this could lead Russia to adopt a wartime footing. And, lastly, we knew that the use of nuclear weapons was never completely off the table.

All this we knew could happen.

We need to be careful when it looks like Russia is about to be defeated—it may well be a precursor to further escalation. There is no point trying to see the end of this war when there are still ways Putin could make it worse.

Indeed, when Russia again looked like it was going to be defeated, Putin still had a number of cards to play. He played some of them on Wednesday.

Those hopeful earlier this month that the war would have an early end with a victorious Ukraine were disappointed, but fear regarding the near-term use of nuclear weapons, for now, remains overblown.

Fresh and plentiful manpower from the mobilization, however reluctant they are, will give Putin some leverage in the conflict. The questions to ask now are what the mobilization will look like and how quickly it can be realized. There are always unknowns in conflict, and it will take months before the mobilization comes into full effect. What the Russian mobilization actually means remains uncertain. It is easy enough to announce a thing, but making it happen is difficult.

At the risk of stating the obvious: the Russian invasion of Ukraine is becoming more dangerous. Perhaps nearly as dangerous as a Russian comeback is a further Russian defeat.

The specter of Douglas MacArthur looms large over the Ukrainian push to the East. Even if the Kremlin does succeed in putting warm bodies on the front, there is no guarantee that they will fight effectively against Ukraine's armies. Russia could still fail to defend its territory, which would almost certainly increase the chance that a greater escalation may occur.

The reason why is simple: no one truly knows where Putin's red lines are for nuclear escalation. Indeed, the Kremlin has nurtured that ambiguity in this conflict. The intent, near as far as can be gathered, is that the less their adversaries know, the more careful those adversaries will be when they push the Russians back.

"Ukraine is winning, and Putin is getting desperate."

It's unclear whether they will defend their captured territory in the Donbas with nuclear weapons. Scholars, researchers, pundits, and policymakers disagree with one another. The most risk averse will want to avoid any further poking at the Russian bear, while those who are risk tolerant may suggest that Ukraine could take back everything they've lost with minimal concern.

Because we do not know where the line is, or if it even exists, the conclusion of Russia's war in Ukraine, whenever that may be, will be conducted under the shadow of possible nuclear war.

Even so, there is a silver lining: Putin is showing weakness. The mobilization order is not a sign of strength. The annexation of the Donbas and elsewhere is the desperate act of an insecure regime.

Putin wants all of us to believe that the territory his armies seized will be under his nuclear umbrella. Not everyone is going to believe him.

Putin says he is not bluffing. Perhaps that is true, and his statements are just as deadly as he intends, but even so Putin's words and actions give off the impression of a cornered animal.

In short, Ukraine is winning, and Putin is getting desperate.

Now we can only speculate at what his desperation will mean for the future of the war.

NATO

Devil in the details: Ukraine's tricky bid for NATO membership - Ukraine's move to apply for membership of NATO on September 30 was met with quite some surprise in Brussels.

Very few saw that coming and while there is a lot of sympathy for Kyiv there, don't expect that the country will join the military alliance in an expedited fashion, as President Zelenskiy promised when announcing the latest move. In fact, don't expect much on this issue anytime soon.

NATO Waits for Hungary and Turkey to Accept Finland and Sweden - The Hungarian parliament has not voted yet about Sweden's and Finland's NATO membership bids. Though there is speculation about the reasons, the main obstacle for the two Nordic countries remains Turkey.

Hungary and Turkey remain the last two NATO countries yet to ratify Sweden's and Finland's accession.

The Hungarian government did not speak out against the membership of the two Nordic countries: in July, Péter Szijjártó, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade submitted to Parliament the bills on the Finnish and Swedish applications for membership. The parliament's press department told Hungarian news site Telex earlier that the vote on the two countries' NATO membership is on the autumn agenda – which began on 26 September but did not say when exactly it would take place”.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said in a speech in Turkey's parliament on Saturday that his country will not ratify the membership bids until Sweden and Finland keep the promises they made to Ankara. “We are closely following whether the promises made by Sweden and Finland are kept or not, and of course, the final decision will be up to our great parliament,” he said, according to TRT. The three countries struck a deal in June, according to which Turkey expects Finland and Sweden to lift arms embargoes imposed on Turkey, toughen their laws against Kurdish militant activists that Ankara considers terrorists, and address Turkish extradition requests for them. The first has recently happened, but Turkey does not think that the Nordic countries show enough commitment to the latter issue.

Canada is cheerleading new NATO expansion - Canada's government has eagerly embraced NATO's new strategic concept. The plan is astonishingly frank in its calls for renewed military readiness — it is a return to more explicit Cold War–era principles of “deterrence” through confrontation. In a purported effort to “contribute to a more peaceful world,” NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept promises a “360-degree” extension of military force.

The proposal compels Canada and other NATO members to prepare to engage “regions of strategic interest” now and in the future. It aims to project NATO power in order to more boldly surround powers it identifies as aggressive.

While denouncing “aggressive” governments such as China and Iran, NATO's new strategy tasks members with preparing for “high-intensity, multi-domain warfighting” across “all domains.” The strategic concept promises to “deter and defend forward with robust in-place, multi-domain, combat-ready forces, enhanced command and control arrangements, prepositioned ammunition and equipment and improved capacity and infrastructure to rapidly reinforce

any Ally.” In the short term, this means increasing NATO’s Rapid Reaction Force to forty thousand troops, “pre-position[ing]” more ammunition in Eastern Europe and expanding NATO’s “integrated air and missile defense.”

But it means more than just bolstering NATO members’ military force in Europe. The Strategic Concept proposes to also extend NATO power further into “regions of strategic interest to the Alliance, including the Middle East and North Africa and the Sahel.”

As the Toronto Star revealed, the Canadian government, in a series of backroom meetings, has been one of the most active members pushing for Finland and Sweden to join the self-described “nuclear alliance.” The Canadian government was also the first member to ratify their membership in early July, saying Sweden and Finland’s “membership will make NATO stronger.”

In a meeting with President Volodymyr Zelensky, two days before Ukraine submitted its September 30 application to join the nuclear alliance, Trudeau promised to maintain Canada’s military support. If the bid is successful, it would presumably give Ukraine the right to muster a military confrontation under article 5 of the NATO charter. In the past, Ukraine’s application was explicitly endorsed by former prime minister Stephen Harper — provided Ukraine promised to continue to open up its economy to Canadian finance.

GeoPolitics

Japan to expel Russia consul as ties worsen over Ukraine - Japan on Tuesday ordered the Russian consul in the northern city of Sapporo to leave the country within six days in retaliation for Moscow’s expulsion of a Japanese diplomat last month for alleged espionage.

Japanese Foreign Minister Hayashi said his ministry declared the consul a persona non grata, or an undesirable person, and ordered him to leave by next Monday. The ministry did not release the consul’s name, but said the step was “conducted as an appropriate measure in response to the measures taken by Russia.”

Hayashi said Vice Foreign Minister Mori summoned Russian Ambassador to Japan Galuzin to inform him of the decision.

Last month, Russia detained the Japanese consul in Vladivostok over espionage allegations and expelled him. The consul, Tatsunori Motoki, returned to Japan last week.

Japan Plans to Reopen Embassy in Kyiv - Japan plans to reopen its embassy in Kyiv on Wednesday, seven months after it was closed, Kyodo News reported, citing a source familiar with the matter that it did not identify.

Japan has been among the last major democracies to reopen its embassy in the Ukrainian capital after shutting down its operations and moving diplomatic staff elsewhere at the start of the invasion last February. The staff was first sent to Lviv in western Ukraine, then out of the country.

Brazil’s election heads to a runoff - Lula, challenging Bolsonaro for leadership of Brazil, managed a much smaller vote advantage than projected. Thus the Brazilian election is headed for

Italy’s Meloni Confirms Support in Call With Zelenskiy - Giorgia Meloni, the right-wing leader who is set to become Italy’s next prime minister, reaffirmed in a phone call with Zelenskiy her support for Ukraine’s freedom and underlined her commitment in any diplomatic effort needed to end the conflict, according to a statement by her Brothers of Italy party.

Supporters of Ukraine have silently worried about Italy’s position once the newly-elected Italian leader assumes office. This appears to be misguided however, as since winning the election, Meloni has gone out of her way to reassure both Ukraine and its allies that Italy stands with the beleaguered country.

GeoMilitary

North Korea appears to have launched an intermediate range ballistic missile over Japan earlier today, triggering panic on the streets as citizens ran for shelter and train service was suspended in the northern part of the country. According to South Korea's military, "the missile flew some 4,500 kilometers at an apogee of around 970 km at a top speed of Mach 17," Seoul's Yonhap news agency reports.

Japanese officials said the missile was airborne for about 22 minutes, and its travel distance seems to put this launch farther than North Korea's other IRBM launches.

Solomon Islands would not 'choose sides,' agrees to US, Pacific Islands accord after China references removed - The Solomon Islands agreed to sign an accord between the US and more than a dozen Pacific nations only after indirect references to China were removed, the Solomon Islands foreign minister said on Tuesday.

"There were some references that put us in a position where we'll have to choose sides, and we did not want to be placed in a position where we have to choose sides," Jeremiah Manele told reporters in New Zealand.

Asked if those references were to China, he replied: "Indirectly."

Containment

US pledges \$625 million in military aid – The US told Zelenskiy in a phone call that the US will provide Kyiv with \$625 million in new security assistance. The assistance will include more high-mobility artillery rocket systems (HIMARS), ammunition, and armored vehicles, the White House said in a statement.

Biden "pledged to continue supporting Ukraine as it defends itself from Russian aggression for as long as it takes," the statement said.

The US president also affirmed that the United States was prepared "to impose severe costs on any individual, entity, or country that provides support to Russia's purported annexation."

US Assistance to Ukraine



Switchblade UAVs: 700+

Small, tube-launched and requiring little training, the Switchblade loitering munition is essentially a suicide drone packed with explosives designed to divebomb a target.

HIMARS: 34

The M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems "allows for the launching of multiple, precision-guided rockets" with a range of around 50 miles, depending on the munitions used.



Javelin Systems: 8,500+

The Javelin is a man-portable, medium-range tactical missile designed to "defeat main battle tanks and other armored vehicles as well as personnel and equipment in fortifications."

Mi-17 Helicopters: 20

These Russian-made transport helicopters were purchased for Afghanistan but are now being shipped to Ukraine. It's an airframe with which Ukrainian pilots are already familiar.



Stinger Systems: 1,400+

The man-portable, surface-to-air weapon system has been so popular, and the US has provided so many, that there's lawmaker concern over America's own remaining stockpiles.

Phoenix Ghost UAVs: 700

While details are scant, the Phoenix Ghost loitering munition was developed by the Air Force in secret and, the Pentagon said, would be well-suited to fighting in the Donbas.



Other Equipment:

- 146 Howitzer artillery systems
- 32,000+ other anti-armor systems
- 276 tactical vehicles to tow weapons
- 200 M113 Armored Personnel Carriers
- 100s of other armored vehicles
- 10,000+ grenade launchers & small arms
- 75,000+ sets of body armor and helmets
- 50+ counter-artillery radars
- 4 counter-mortar radars
- Laser-guided rocket systems
- Electronic jamming equipment
- Undisclosed # of Puma UAVs
- Undisclosed # of Coastal Defense Vessels
- Undisclosed # of HARMs missiles
- 60 million+ rounds of small arms ammo
- 2 Harpoon coastal defense systems
- 8 National Advanced SAM Systems
- 1,500 TOW missiles
- M18A1 Claymores
- C-4 explosives
- Tactical secure communications systems
- Night vision devices
- Thermal imagery systems, optics, rangefinders
- Commercial satellite services
- Explosive ordnance disposal gear
- CBRN protective equipment
- Medical supplies
- Field equipment and spare parts

Updated Sept. 28, 2022
Sources: US Department of Defense;
US Army weapon descriptions;
Weapon manufacturer information

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