

Conflict Update # 174

September 6th, 2022

Conflict Assessment

Russian losses – 50,150 (+350) soldiers killed and 150,450 injured, 2,077 (+9) enemy tanks, 4,484 (+25) armored combat vehicles, 1,179 (+22) artillery systems, 296 (+2) MLRS systems, 156 (+0) air defense systems, 236 (+0) warplanes, 207 (+1) helicopters, 876 (+9) UAVs of the operational-tactical level, 196 (+0) cruise missiles, 205 (+0) warships/cutters, 3,305 (+19) trucks and tankers, 76 fuel bowsers and 107 (+0) units of specialized equipment.

Key takeaways

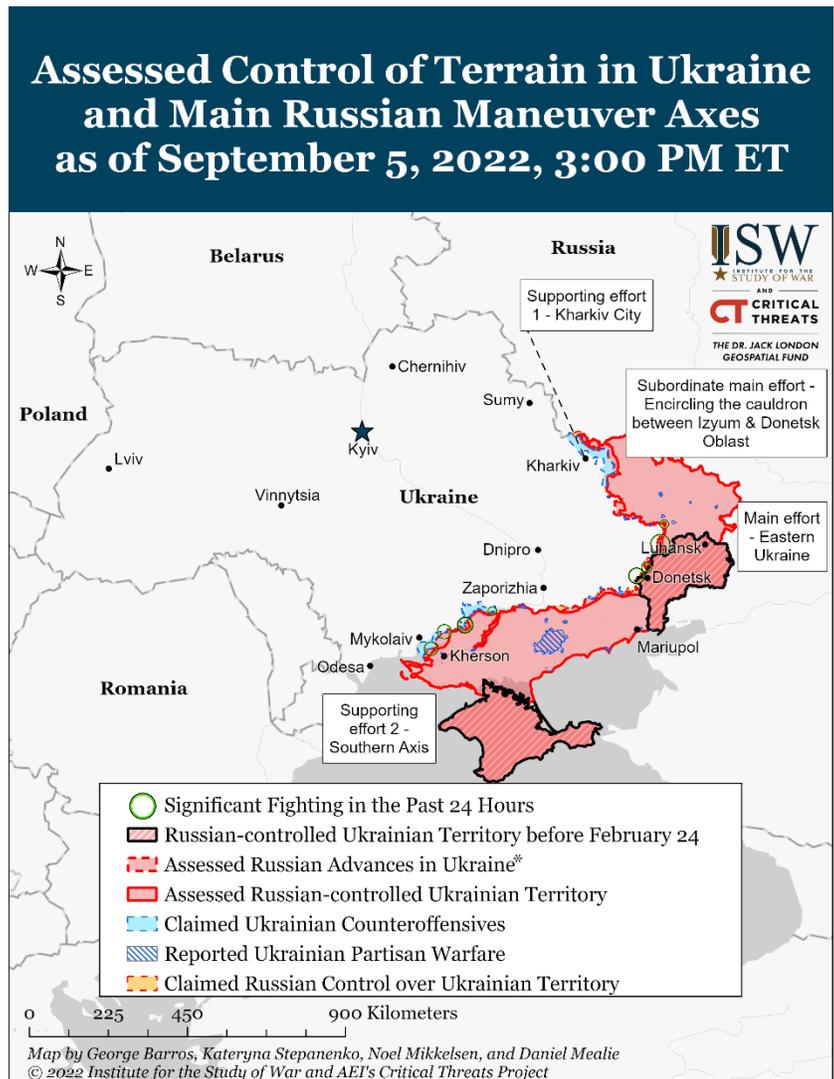
Russian losses pass 50,000 killed – Russia’s losses of soldiers killed in the Ukrainian war have now passed the 50,000 mark. This is more than 4 times the number killed in the entire Afghanistan conflict. It appears that the daily number of those killed and injured is set to increase even further as Ukrainian forces tighten the battle noose in Kherson and towards the Dnipro River.

Ukrainian Counteroffensives - Ukrainian military officials maintained their operational silence and did not release any information pertaining to Ukrainian advances in Kherson Oblast.

Ukraine’s Southern Operational Command reported that Ukrainian forces shot down two Russian reconnaissance drones in Vysokopillya after previously not confirming that Ukrainian forces entered the town.

ISW independently assessed that Ukrainian forces captured the town on September 4 due to several social media videos.

The Ukrainian General Staff (UGS) reported that Russian forces launched airstrikes on Bezimenne and Sukhyi Stavok, approximately six and ten kilometers southeast of the Ukrainian bridgehead over the Inhulets River. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces recaptured Kostromka (the village in between Bezimenne and Sukhyi Stavok), but geolocated footage depicted Ukrainian tanks attacking Russian positions around the settlement. Combined with the geolocated footage, UGS report may indicate that Ukrainian forces advanced in the Kostromka and Bezimenne areas. UGS also reported that Russian forces shelled the



area of Novovoskresenske (about 18km southeast of Vysokopillya) but it is unclear if Ukrainian forces have advanced in the vicinity of the settlement.



Ukrainian forces continued to target Russian ground lines of communication (GLOCs) and ammunition depots in Central Kherson Oblast. Their Southern Operational Command noted that Ukrainian forces destroyed a Russian pontoon crossing in Llove (west of Nova Kakhovka), struck the command post of the 35th Combined Arms Army in the Kakhovka Raion, and two observation posts belonging to battalion tactical groups (BTGs) of the 247th Guards Air Assault Regiment in Mykolaiv Raion and the 126th Separate Coastal Defense Brigade in Beryslav Raion.

They added that Ukrainian forces struck a pontoon crossing in the area of the Kakhovka Bridge on September 5.

Ukrainian strikes also destroyed a Russian ammunition depot in Tomyna Balka (about 19km west of Kherson City), indicating Ukrainian forces are not operating in the settlement.

CNN previously reported that Ukrainian forces liberated the settlement on August 29. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command added that Ukrainian missile units destroyed two ammunition depots in Khersonskiyi Raion.

UGS reported that Ukrainian strikes eliminated 30 Russian servicemen and three tanks in the area of the Antonivsky Bridge, and an anti-aircraft missile system with six trucks near an unspecified crossing.

Geolocated footage showed Russian military convoys waiting to cross the Dniro River from the left bank, and the Russian convoys remain vulnerable to Ukrainian strikes. UGS added that Russian forces are prohibiting and threatening locals from crossing the Dniro River. The Ukrainian counteroffensive is tangibly degrading Russian logistics and administrative capabilities in occupied southern Ukraine.

Putin publicly praised DNR and LNR forces (and denigrated the Russian military) on September 5, likely to motivate proxy recruitment and reframe Russian coverage of the war.

Ukrainian military officials maintained their operational silence regarding the progress of the Ukrainian counteroffensive but reported on the further destruction of Russian ground lines of communication (GLOCs) in Central Kherson Oblast.

Russian forces conducted ground attacks east of Siversk, northeast and south of Bakhmut, and along the northwestern outskirts of Donetsk City.

Ukrainian special forces conducted a limited operation against a Russian FSB base in the Enerhodar area.

Power unit No. 6 of the ZNPP became disconnected from the Ukrainian power grid.

Russian authorities continue to seek unconventional sources of combat power and are increasingly turning to ill and infirm individuals.

The Ukrainian counteroffensive is tangibly degrading Russian logistics and administrative capabilities in occupied southern Ukraine. As ISW has previously reported, Ukrainian officials explicitly confirmed that Ukrainian troops seek to attrit Russian logistical capabilities in the south through precision strikes on manpower and equipment concentrations, command centers, and logistics nodes.

These counteroffensive actions also have intentional radiating effects on Russian occupation authorities. The head of the Kherson Oblast occupation regime, Kirill Stremousov, told Russian media outlet TASS that his administration has paused annexation referendum plans in Kherson Oblast due to “security” concerns.

The Ukrainian Resistance Center similarly reported that Russian occupation authorities are abandoning plans for referenda due to the ongoing counteroffensive. Shortly after TASS published his comment, Stremousov posted on Telegram denying he called for a pause because his administration had never set an official date for the referendum

Both of Stremousov’s statements indicate a high level of disorganization within occupation regimes that is likely being exacerbated by the effects of the counteroffensive. Ukrainian forces intend to slowly chip away at both Russian tactical and operational level capabilities in Kherson Oblast, and in doing so will likely have significant impacts on the administrative and bureaucratic capabilities of occupation officials.

Putin forces 'confused' by Ukraine strikes, headed for surrender: General – A former U.S. general has forecast the surrender of Russian forces in Kherson, a strategic city in Ukraine.

The Kherson region has been almost entirely controlled by Russian troops since March, when it became the first major city to fall during Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Ukrainian forces have launched a counteroffensive to take back the critical port city.

Retired U.S. Army Lieutenant General Mark Hertling commented Monday on a Ukrainian soldier's video from the frontlines showing destroyed Russian positions in Kherson.

According to Hertling's analysis on Twitter, the footage indicated "extremely poor soldier discipline" and "horrible fieldcraft/training" in the Russian army. Lower-level leadership was in crisis while senior leaders were not circulating information, said Hertling. Meanwhile, morale was plunging and the potential for disease was rising, he said.

The ex-general predicted Russia's "future surrender" in Kherson.

He shared more in-depth tactical observations in another Twitter thread. He noted that Ukrainian forces had begun "shaping operations"—or countering the enemy's ability to affect their maneuvers—using a combination of long- and short-range artillery strikes, Special Operations Forces, small unit teams and resistance warfare.

Ukraine had set up its counteroffensive to strike when and where they chose while Russia fought on the defensive to secure its ground, said Hertling. These actions have lowered Russian morale by killing a great deal of Russian soldiers and destroying equipment.

Shifting a counteroffensive to Kherson was a "brilliant" strategy, according to Hertling, because the large Russian force there has a river at their back and limited supply lines. In the last few days, Ukraine has used HIMARs to destroy the bridges while they attack Russian troops.

"Reports indicate UA has been involved in intense fighting in Vysokopillya, Arkhangelske & Potemkine," said Hertling. Meanwhile, Russian forces are reportedly falling back to the Beryslav Bridgehead. From there, it will be very difficult for them to retreat across the very wide river. Kherson only has two bridges.

Ukraine's attacks with precision weapons are "confusing" the Russian army, which already has very low morale, poor leadership, and diminishing supplies—leaving the larger force in a "quandary," said Hertling.

In another indication that Russia's defense of Kherson is faltering, Kirill Stremousov, a Kremlin-installed leader of occupied Kherson, said Monday that the region's planned referendum on joining Russia had been "paused" for security reasons.

Comment – The General is accurate in his assessments. The US now plans to provide Ukraine weaponry with extended ranges of up to 300 kilometers (188 miles). This provides Ukrainian forces the ability to strike much further behind enemy front lines, putting into reach strategic Russian supply lines such as railway depots which they use to transport large numbers of tanks and troops in from Russia.

Ukraine has already struck one such munitions train, completely destroying it and its cargo, together with a large number of soldiers.

What Ukraine is doing is isolating Russian forces in Kherson Oblast to north of the Dnipro River – estimated at between 25,000 and 30,000 in number and a significant element of overall Russian BTG strength. They have taken out the bridges leading into Kherson, seen Russia extricate its command structure to posts south of the river, witnessed Russia postpone its planned referendum in the oblast, and now are striking vital feeder routes into the area south of the river.

The Kremlin has seen this and is pouring reinforcements into the area – but cannot reach the battlefield due to Ukrainian strikes with pin-point accuracy, leaving them south of the river. Forget not that Ukrainian partisans are in amongst these Russian positions in occupied southern Ukraine, feeding exact geographic co-ordinates back to Ukrainian field command posts.

Ukraine making 'real gains' but fighting is 'close and hard' - Ukrainians are making "real gains" but fighting is "close and hard," the Defence Secretary has said.

Ben Wallace made a statement in the Commons on the progress of Russia's attack on its neighbour to update MPs as they returned to Westminster after their summer break.

It comes after Ukraine embarked on a counter-offensive in the Russian-occupied southern Kherson region, which Mr Wallace said had "some considerable success."

While he said the Ukrainians are making gains, Mr Wallace said the fighting is intense.

He said: "On August 29, Ukraine embarked on a counter-offensive in the south of the country around the city of Kherson, on the west bank of the Dnipro River.

"Ukraine has inflicted serious damage on a range of river crossings with the aim of restricting Russian logistical support.

"This has had some considerable success."

Mr Wallace said the Ukrainians are engaging with Russian forces, adding: “They are making real gains but understandably, as we have seen elsewhere in this conflict, the fighting is close and hard, and Ukraine are suffering losses associated with an attacking force.”

On the other hand, Russia continues to “lose significant equipment and personnel,” he said.

Ukrainian forces destroy Russian tank from record distance - Video footage shared online this week shows Ukrainian forces destroying a Russian tank using their own T-64BV tank at what could be a record distance. The footage, recorded by a rotary-blade UAV, shows a Russian tank in flames and completely destroyed, allegedly struck by Ukrainian weapons from an incredible 10,600 meters, or 34,776 feet.

The idea that a tank can destroy another tank at such a great distance and with such precision might sound farfetched, but an explanation offered by Ukraine Weapons Tracker reveals that Ukrainian forces are using software to improve direct fire.

According to the account, Ukrainian tank crews use specially designed software that calculates the angle and azimuth – an angular measurement within a spherical coordinate system – to increase the precision of howitzer-launched rockets. In this instance, a drone reportedly helped correct the path of the rockets in conjunction with the use of the software.

Russia loses over 60 military vehicles in one day in Ukraine last week - Ukraine’s forces are becoming increasingly capable of taking out Russian tanks, culminating in the loss of over 60 Russian tanks and armored vehicles in a single day last week.

In a post from the Ukrainian armed forces On Facebook, details of the loss of 25 Russian tanks and 37 armored vehicles in a single day were revealed. In the daily update, the Ukrainian military revealed how Russia has lost 4,403 combat armored machines in total.

“The opponent suffered the biggest losses in the Donetsk and Kryvyi Rih directions,” the post explained.

Russia’s continued loss of military vehicles and tanks has left its military short on both its more modern tanks as well as its remaining stock of Soviet-era vehicles. The shortage has become so problematic for the Russian military, as well as Russia’s inability to quickly manufacture newer and more advanced tanks, that the Kremlin is reportedly mulling restarting production of older tanks and military vehicles to make up for the shortage.

Ukrainian hackers created fake profiles of attractive women to trick Russian soldiers into sharing their location, report says. Days later, the base was blown up - Ukrainian hackers set up fake accounts of attractive women to trick Russian soldiers into sending them photos, which they located and passed to the Ukrainian military, the Financial Times reported.

Nikita Knysh, a 30-year-old IT professional from Kharkiv, told the FT that when Russia's invasion began in February this year, he wanted to use his hacking skills to help his country.

He recruited other hackers and founded a group nicknamed Hackyourmom, which now consists of 30 hackers from across the country, he told the FT.

Last month, he said they duped Russian soldiers in Melitopol by creating fake accounts and pretending to be attractive women on several social media platforms, including Telegram.

The hackers were able to get to know Russian soldiers and ultimately convince them to send photos of them on the front, Knysh told the FT.

"The Russians, they always want to f---," Knysh told the FT. "They send [a] lot of shit to 'girls,' to prove that they are warriors." Once the soldiers sent pictures, the hackers were able to identify that they had been taken from a remote Russian military base near occupied Melitopol in southern Ukraine, the FT reported.

They transferred the information over to Ukraine's military, and several days later the base was attacked, Knysh told the FT.

"My first thought was — I am effective, I can help my country," another team member on Hackyourmom, identified only as Maxim, told the FT. "Then, I realized, I want more of this — I want to find more bases, again and again."

The Ukrainian online news site Ukrainian Pravda reported last month that there was an explosion at a large Russian military base in Melitopol, citing its mayor, Ivan Fedorov.

Insider was unable to independently verify the hacker's claims of involvement, and the Armed Forces of Ukraine did not immediately respond to Insider's request for comment. The FT said Ukrainian officials declined to discuss hackers' roles in the attack on that military base.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has prompted an unprecedented cyber war, with hackers on both sides launching attacks.

Russian defense stocks are hurting when it comes to resupply, as the recent acquisition of Iranian Mohajer-6 and Shahed-series drones suggest, the Times and AP remind readers. Russian drone activity in Ukraine remains active, though it has fallen in recent weeks, according to the British military's latest daily war report. That includes 27 sorties by Russian UAVs "on the west bank of the Dnipro [River], compared to an average of 50 a day throughout August," the Brits say, and note that, "In recent years, Russian doctrine has given an increasingly prominent role for UAVs, particularly to spot targets for its artillery to strike."

Why it matters: "In the face of combat losses, it is likely that Russia is struggling to maintain stocks of UAVs, exacerbated by component shortages resulting from international sanctions," the British military says. Furthermore, "The [alleged] limited availability of reconnaissance UAVs is likely degrading commanders' tactical situational awareness and increasingly hampering Russian operations."

The war in Ukraine is "clearly logistically challenging" for Russia's military, particularly for its air force, U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. S. Clinton Hinote, deputy chief of staff for strategy, integration, and requirements, said earlier today during an event hosted by the Atlantic Council think tank in Washington, D.C. "And we're going to continue to see how hard it is," in the coming weeks and months, he said.

Part of this difficulty can be attributed to the proliferation of small drones in the hands of both Ukrainian forces and Russia's ragtag assortment of mercenaries and soldiers; but it's also the result of the NATO alliance's varied collaboration efforts assisting Ukraine in defense of its territory.

Putin scrambles for high-tech parts as his arsenal goes up in smoke - It's the microchips that look set to get Putin in the end. Six months into its invasion of Ukraine, Russia is being throttled by a severe technology deficit inflicted by sanctions.

Having fired off (or lost in combat) way more of their missile firepower than they originally anticipated, Moscow's soldiers are now increasingly relying on ancient stocks of primitive Soviet-era munitions while Western-armed Ukrainian forces are battling to turn the tide in a southern counteroffensive with pinpoint strikes on munition dumps and key infrastructure such as bridges.

Kyiv is acutely aware that the outcome of the war is likely to hinge on whether Russia finds a way to regain access to high-tech chips and is out to ensure it doesn't get them. In order to flag the danger, Ukraine is sending out international warnings that the Kremlin has drawn up shopping lists of semiconductors, transformers, connectors, casings,

transistors, insulators and other components, most made by companies in the U.S., Germany, the Netherlands, the U.K., Taiwan and Japan, among others, which it needs to fuel its war effort.

POLITICO has seen one of the Russian lists, which is divided into three priority categories, from the most critical components to the least. It even includes the price per item that Moscow expects to pay, down to the last kopeck. While POLITICO could not independently verify the provenance of the list, two experts in military supply chains confirmed it was in line with other research findings about Russia's military equipment and needs.

At first glance, Russia shouldn't be able to acquire the most sensitive tech on the lists. With only very basic domestic technology, the Kremlin has relied on key players in the U.S., the EU and Japan for semiconductors as suppliers over the past years and these should be out of grasp thanks to sanctions. The difficulty would emerge in whether an intermediary country such as China were to buy technologies, then sell them on to Moscow. In extreme cases, Russians appear to be clawing chips out of household appliances like fridges.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal stressed the war had come to an inflection point where the technological edge was proving decisive. "According to our information, Russians have already spent almost half ... of their weaponry arsenal," he told POLITICO.

He added that Ukraine estimated that Russia was down to just "four dozen" hypersonic missiles. "These are the ones that have precision and accuracy due to the microchips that they have. But because of sanctions imposed on Russia, the deliveries of this high-tech microchip equipment ... have stopped and they have no way of replenishing these stocks."

Chips on the menu

Of the 25 items Russia is seeking most desperately, almost all are microchips manufactured by U.S. firms Marvell, Intel, Holt, ISSI, Microchip, Micron, Broadcom and Texas Instruments. Rounding out the list are chips by Japanese firm Renesas, which acquired the U.S.-based IDT; Germany's Infineon, which acquired U.S.-based Cypress; microcircuits by American firm Vicor; and connectors by U.S. firm AirBorn. Some of the items can be easily found in online electronics retailers, while others have been out of stock for months as a result of the global microchip shortage.

The cheapest item on the top priority list, the 88E1322-AO-BAM2I000 gigabit ethernet transceiver made by Marvell, can apparently be sourced by Moscow for 430.83 rubles a piece, or around €7. The most expensive item, a 10M04DCF256I7G field programmable gate array made by Intel, can be sourced at a highly inflated 66,815.77 rubles or €1,107 each, according to the list (before the chips shortage, it would have cost under €20).

Russia is so desperate for the most sophisticated semiconductors for its weapons program, it has resorted to stripping microchips from dishwashers and fridges to use in its military gear, U.S. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said in May, attributing the intel to Ukrainian officials.

Russia's invading forces are taking it on the chin when it comes to resupply operations inside occupied democratic Ukraine, particularly in the south, according to multiple accounts on day 195 of Vladimir Putin's "special military operation," or "war of choice," as U.S. officials describe it.

"Precision strikes on manpower and equipment concentrations, command centers, and logistics nodes" are "tangibly degrading Russian logistics and administrative capabilities," especially around the Dnipro River, according to Monday evening analysis from the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War.

And the Ukrainian counteroffensive is disrupting Russian plans to hold sham votes in occupied territories like Kherson, ISW writes.

For Kyiv, the idea is "to slowly chip away at both Russian tactical and operational level capabilities in Kherson Oblast, and in doing so will likely have significant impacts on the administrative and bureaucratic capabilities of occupation officials," says ISW. And at least this week, that plan appears to be working. U.S. says Russia buying North Korean artillery as Ukraine weighs on its military - A declassified U.S. intelligence assessment says Russia is acquiring millions of artillery shells and rockets from North Korea for its six-month-old invasion of Ukraine, in an indication of the effect that Western sanctions are having on the Russian war effort.

Ukraine's southern offensive to reclaim territory will come in stages, says military strategist - Kyiv's long-discussed counteroffensive in southern Ukraine is under way and already making limited gains, but Mick Ryan, a retired Australian Army major general, says to expect the Ukrainian push to move slowly and come in stages.

Ukraine's military has so far been tight-lipped about the operation it has launched to reclaim Russian-occupied territory in the southern part of the country, but early comments by officials point to a Ukrainian advance toward Kherson.

Kherson was the first major city captured by Russia following its February invasion and the broader region provides the Kremlin with a strategic "land bridge" that connects forcibly-annexed Crimea to Russia through southeastern Ukraine.

Should the Ukrainian drive toward the coast succeed, it would boost Kyiv's future economic viability by relieving constraints on shipping routes along the Black Sea and also put new military pressure on Crimea.

But Ryan, who is also a fellow at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, told RFE/RL that the current operation isn't shaping up to be a "grand sweeping offensive" and instead is likely to be a multistep strategy to retake occupied territory that will build-up over time.

The Ukrainians over the last couple of months in the south have conducted a lot of activities that would be associated with traditional shaping in both the physical and information domains, as well as trying to break down the cohesion and morale of Russian soldiers by cutting off their supply lines [and] destroying [ammunition] depots and headquarters.

There's been a lot of shaping [to soften Russians defenses and put Ukrainian advancing troops in a better position], there's been a lot of preparatory activity that they've undertaken against the Russians. The Ukrainians clearly have war-gamed what they want to get out of this offensive and given what has been seen so far, but experts do not believe this is some grand sweeping offensive with which they expect to win the war.

They think it's more limited to geography and objectives that [Kyiv] knows it can achieve given its own force size and stockpiles of ammunition that will come up against Russian forces that now have had some time to prepare multiple defensive lines throughout the south.

Putin

Putin's choices in Ukraine: retreat, attrition or escalation - The long-promised Ukrainian counteroffensive in the south has not yet delivered any breakthrough, but it still signifies a critical turning point for the war: Russia cannot hope to win by sticking to the pattern of trench warfare and artillery duels.

Some "patriotic" commentators have suggested that the failures of Ukrainian attacks would pave the way for a new Russian offensive toward Mykolaiv and Odesa, but the Kremlin's high command hardly entertains such strategic fantasies (Svobodnaya pressa, September 3). Russian summer offensive captured Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk through such heavy expenditure of material resources and battalions that little capacity remains for a new push.

In contrast, Ukrainian forces have relied more on well-targeted long-distance strikes and exploiting weak points in Russian forces' porous defenses (Meduza, September 2). Common strategic sense dictates a Russian retreat from the

exposed positions to the west of Dnipro River, but political ambitions—undiminished by the exhaustion of military might—demand holding Kherson at any cost.

Last week, the Russian Armed Forces started the Vostok 2022 strategic exercises in the Far East, and Putin is due to attend the carefully prepared military show near Vladivostok today. Overall, the exercises have been heavily reduced in scale compared with Vostok 2018, but the intention is to demonstrate the availability of reserves and resources for a protracted war in Ukraine (Gazeta.ru, September 1).

In various parts of the multi-chapter exercises, Russian forces hunted for a hostile submarine in the Sea of Japan (jointly with a squadron of ships from the Chinese navy), repelled an amphibious assault on the Kuril Islands and intercepted a massive missile attack.

These exercises are meant to prove Moscow's readiness to perform more complex tasks than only artillery barrages in the Ukraine theater (Izvestiya, September 3). In reality, however, the volume of expenditure of key assets, particularly long-range missiles, during the six months of heavy fighting exceeds the Russian defense-industrial complex's capacity to adequately replace the supplies. Additionally, the live performance of Russian forces has turned out to be seriously inferior compared with the choreographed drills—hardly impressing the Kremlin's Chinese partners, among others (The Insider, August 30).

Russia may want to prove that its military machine can function for many months, if not years, under the pressure of Western sanctions, but the breakdown of supply chains is rather too obvious and the increased use of legacy Soviet weapon systems cannot be camouflaged (Riddle Russia, August 19). Moscow's warnings to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and US regarding the risk of becoming party to the conflict if they continue to supply long-range strike weapons to Ukraine are becoming increasingly less credible with every repetition (Rossiiskaya gazeta, August 2).

The only avenue of escalation that Putin appears eager to follow is cutting down energy exports to the European Union, and the indefinite shutdown of the Nord Stream One gas pipeline in late August 2022 is seen as a step that will turn European consumers' worries into panic (RBC, September 2). The pressure is serious indeed, but instead of begging for a compromise, the EU is persisting with its energy transition away from Russia and preparing to enforce a price cap on Russian oil and gas—a proposition that cuts across an emphatic "red line" in Moscow's energy policy (Nezavisimaya gazeta, September 1).

The aggressive use of energy exports as a policy instrument brings more problems for the Russian oil and gas industry, already struggling from broken ties with Western partners and service companies (Kommersant, August 30).

These problems translate into sharp anxieties among the Russian business elites, which have been punished by personal sanctions (Forbes.ru, September 2). The strange death of Lukoil Vice President Ravil Maganov—whose body was found the morning of September 1 after a fall from a sixth-floor window of a prestigious hospital, further illuminated these issues (The Moscow Times, September 1).

It is unclear what "red lines" Lukoil could have crossed (another top manager of this corporation was found dead in May 2022), but rumors in the Kremlin make a connection with the five mysterious deaths of executives from Gazprom-affiliated companies earlier this year (Life.ru, September 1). Billionaires are feeling stressed in Moscow. For example, Ruben Vardanyan opted last week to leave Russia and cancel his Russian citizenship (RBC, September 1).

The stagnant war has curtailed the political influence of the so-called "oligarchs," but it has granted new privileges and full freedom from responsibility to the enforcers of order in Russia, first of all the Federal Security Service (FSB) (Novayagazeta.eu, September 2). Nobody dared to question the FSB's conspicuously quick completion of its investigation into the car bomb that claimed the life of Darya Dugina, with the blame placed squarely on the Ukrainian special services (Grani.ru, August 22). In fact, her father, ultraconservative philosopher Aleksandr Dugin, became an

inconvenience for the Kremlin with his claims for dropping the pretense of “special military operation” and mobilizing the country for a total war against Ukraine and the hostile West (Republic.ru, September 2).

It is far easier for the FSB to discipline “patriotic” pundits and bloggers who are disappointed in the absence of a forceful response to the Ukrainian attacks on Crimea than to suppress the real anti-war Russian opposition that gathered at the Free Russia Forum in Vilnius, Lithuania, last week (Svoboda.org, September 1). Labeling popular authors, such as Dmitry Bykov, and rock musicians, such as Andrey Makarevich, as “foreign agents” will not bring back the pressure of fear, lifted more than three decades ago by Mikhail Gorbachev, to whom many thousands of Muscovites bid farewell on September 3 (Meduza, September 3).

For Putin, who opted not to attend the funeral, Gorbachev epitomizes weak leadership resulting in a break-up of the perturbed state. Yet, Putin’s own attempt at executing firm leadership in restoring Russia’s greatness has unleashed a crisis threatening the Russian state’s very existence.

Where Gorbachev tried to blaze a trail to a nonviolent future, Putin is charting a course to the “might makes right” past, and his choices in the apparent dead-end have been all bad. After a sequence of setbacks, Putin is afraid to show weakness by making the necessary retreat from Kherson.

In the war of attrition, Russia, with its degraded economy, stands no chance against a determined West and defiant Ukraine. An escalation by ordering full economic and social mobilization involves the great risk of a breakdown in Russia’s fragile domestic stability.

A nuclear escalation might backfire through asymmetric but hard-hitting US and NATO responses and Chinese disapproval. As with every weak leader, Putin prefers to postpone hard choices—until it is too late.

Putin approves new foreign policy doctrine based on 'Russian World' - Putin yesterday approved a new foreign policy doctrine based around the concept of a "Russian World", a notion that conservative ideologues have used to justify intervention abroad in support of Russian-speakers.

The 31-page "humanitarian policy", published more than six months into the war in Ukraine, says Russia should "protect, safeguard and advance the traditions and ideals of the Russian World".

While presented as a kind of soft power strategy, it enshrines in official policy ideas around Russian politics and religion that some hardliners have used to justify Moscow's occupation of parts of Ukraine and support for breakaway pro-Russian entities in the east of the country.

"The Russian Federation provides support to its compatriots living abroad in the fulfilment of their rights, to ensure the protection of their interests and the preservation of their Russian cultural identity," the policy said.

It said that Russia's ties with its compatriots abroad allowed it to "strengthen on the international stage its image as a democratic country striving for the creating of a multi-polar world."

Putin has for years been highlighting what he sees as the tragic fate of some 25 million ethnic Russians who found themselves living outside Russia in newly independent states when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, an event he has called a geopolitical catastrophe.

Russia has continued to regard the former Soviet space, from the Baltics to Central Asia, as its legitimate sphere of influence - a notion fiercely resisted by many of those countries as well as by the West.

The new policy says Russia should increase cooperation with Slavic nations, China, and India, and further strengthen its ties to the Middle East, Latin America and Africa.

It said Moscow should further deepen its ties with Abkhazia and Ossetia, two Georgian regions recognised as independent by Moscow after its war against Georgia in 2008, as well as the two breakaway entities in eastern Ukraine, the self-styled Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic.

Putin's days numbered, claim assassins responsible for Darya Dugina death - Has the face of a new Russian revolution finally revealed itself? Or is this just part of another Kremlin confusion campaign?

Whatever the case, the emergence of a terrorist group targeting President Vladimir Putin's supporters is challenging the 69-year-old's leadership. The group calls itself the National Republican Army (NRA).

Its leader has emerged from hiding to proclaim a people's struggle against a corrupt Kremlin.

The man, going only by the name "Aleksandr", told the Ukrainian Kyiv Post late last week that Putin's days are numbered.

He would be deposed "as soon as he becomes inconvenient for elites."

"It is very possible that he will lose his head in exchange for sanctions relief," the self-proclaimed resistance leader reportedly said. "In other words, the old man will become the fall guy and will be charged with everything that happened. Well, he certainly deserves that."

Aleksandr, the group's leader, told Ukraine's Kyiv Post: "No Russian media has ever written about us – not even those in the Russian media who have already fled Russia; they're just all scared to death."

He does not expect an armed uprising to be successful, however.

"The situation has not yet matured. We believe that sporadic attacks against the authorities, their ideologues, and their media stooges could sow confusion among the Russian elites. If there is a split among the elites, they will start to bring down Putin's regime from within, from above. And we, the NRA, will do it from below."

"Very few observers believe the hitherto-unknown National Republican Army, which claimed responsibility for the killing, was to blame," says Australian National University strategic and defence studies analyst Matthew Sussex. "But if it were, then it points to the real possibility of organised domestic terrorism in Russia."

It's a long-established tactic of the Kremlin to sew together as many contradictory stories as necessary to smother an event with confusion. The idea is to leave people not believing anything – a position that only enhances an authoritarian's grip on power.

Russia shuts off Europe's main gas pipeline until the West's sanctions are lifted, Iran tempts EU with similar deal - Russia has seemingly drawn a line in the sand and will not turn on Europe's main gas pipeline until the "collective West" lifts the financial sanctions against the country. The move follows the Nord Stream 1 pipeline allegedly shutting down for "maintenance," but reports from Interfax that followed five days later indicate Moscow will not be turning the gas back on until demands are met.

While it was said Russia's state-run Gazprom was having "technical difficulties" with the gas pipeline that connects Russian gas to Germany, and that the pipeline was under "maintenance," Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, claims the shutdown is due to Western sanctions against Moscow. Gazprom reported this past weekend that Nord Stream 1 pipeline would be shut down indefinitely because of "oil leaks."

Gazprom claims the technical difficulties stem from the German-made turbines. However, Peskov was quoted by the news agency Interfax, and he made it quite clear that the Kremlin wants the sanctions lifted before the Nord Stream 1 pipeline delivers fuel again.

“The problems pumping gas came about because of the sanctions Western countries introduced against our country and several companies,” Peskov stressed. “There are no other reasons that could have caused this pumping problem,” Putin’s spokesman remarked. Peskov added: “Other reasons that would cause problems with the pumping don’t exist — It is these sanctions imposed by the Western states that have brought the situation to what we see now.”

The news also follows the Russian gas giant Gazprom telling the public that gas supplies funneled to the French industrial energy group Engie would stop. Meanwhile, the EU believes it can endure a winter without Russian gas, while others believe the winter could be very harsh for Europeans. Ukrainian President Zelenskyy recently said the EU may deal with an energy crisis in the coming months, and he told Europeans to expect a difficult winter.

In addition to Russia, Iran is tempting Europe with cheap Iranian gas exports for a nuclear deal. Reports show that Tehran “teased” Europe with cheap gas and the country’s leaders want financial sanctions lifted as well. While Nord Stream 1 is the largest pipeline for gas from Russia to Europe consisting of 100,000 pipes, Iran holds the world’s second-largest gas reserves, in terms of natural gas supplies. Iran’s state-operated Mehr news agency reported on the offer to Europe, and reportedly Tehran told Europe that “Winter is coming.”

Comment – Russia shortening energy supplies to the EU is evidence that its Ukrainian offensive is not delivering success forcing Putin into alternative acts of aggression, born out of desperation. The EU remains defiant and steadfast in its opposition to using Russian energy supplies, which raises timing issues for Putin.

By this time next year the deed is done from an EU perspective. Putin, in order to gain any leverage, needs to act sooner rather than later, seeing his cutting off of supplies at this juncture. There is every likelihood that he will not succeed, and he appears to be playing to an age-old Soviet playbook.

Just as his senior commanders are doing in the ground offensive against Ukraine, which is manna from heaven for Ukraine and its supporters.

Impact

Another Russia-imposed official in occupied area of Ukraine attacked - Another Moscow-appointed official in Russian-occupied Ukrainian territory has been attacked and is now in the hospital in serious condition.

The Russian-imposed administration of the city of Berdyansk in Ukraine's southeastern region of Zaporizhzhya said on September 6 that the city's commandant, Artem Bardin, was seriously injured and rushed to hospital after his car exploded near the administration’s building.

Several officials appointed by Moscow to areas of Ukraine during the Kremlin's invasion of the country have died in recent weeks after being attacked.

Suicide bombing at Russian embassy in Kabul kills 2 diplomats - A suicide bombing outside the Russian Embassy in the Afghan capital of Kabul kills two members of the embassy staff and at least one Afghan civilian in what Moscow denounces as an “unacceptable terrorist act.”

The blast went off at the entrance to the embassy’s consular section where Afghans were waiting for news about their visas, according to the Russian Foreign Ministry and the state news agency RIA Novosti. A Russian diplomat had emerged from the building to call out the names of candidates for visas when the explosion occurred, the agency says.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast, the latest in a series of attacks since the Taliban seized power a year ago, deposing a Western-backed government and capping their 20-year insurgency.

Group of Russian Rabbis call for end to war in Ukraine - A group of rabbis convened by the Federation of Jewish Community in Russia have passed a resolution urging an end to the War in Ukraine, citing its potentially negative effect on Russian Jews.

"Relations between Russia and the rest of the world have rapidly deteriorated since the invasion began in February, resulting in economic uncertainty, and of significant concern to the Jewish community in particular, a sense of fear and isolation not felt in decades," the resolution said, pleading for "peace and the cessation of the bloodshed."

The resolution also called on other rabbis to avoid protesting the Kremlin's assault on Ukraine.

In July, Russia's Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt fled the country for Israel after criticizing the Kremlin's actions in Ukraine.

Nuclear watchdog's report on Zaporizhzhya says current situation is 'untenable,' calls for security zone

- The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) says the current situation at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya power plant is "untenable" and there is "an urgent need for interim measures" to avoid a nuclear accident.

The UN atomic watchdog urged Russia and Ukraine on September 6 to establish a "nuclear safety and security protection zone" around the plant and said shelling at the site and its vicinity should stop immediately to avoid any further damage to the facility and for the safety of its operating staff.

The IAEA released the report following a recent visit by UN inspectors to the plant, which has been taken over by Russia's military but is operated by Ukrainian technicians. It said the best action to ensure the safety of the plant and all other Ukrainian nuclear facilities "would be for this armed conflict to end now."

The IAEA said it is ready to "immediately" start consultations leading to the "urgent establishment" of a security zone at Zaporizhzhya, Europe's largest nuclear power plant.

Truss takes over as new British PM facing Russia's 'appalling' war among several challenges - Liz Truss

vowed immediate action to tackle the challenges Britain faces as she took over today as the new prime minister.

Truss said Britain faces "severe global headwinds caused by Russia's appalling war in Ukraine and the aftermath of COVID."

Kherson referendum on joining Russia postponed, official says - A representative of the Moscow-installed

military administration in the occupied parts of Ukraine's Kherson region says a referendum on joining Russia has been postponed as Ukrainian armed forces continue military operations aimed at regaining control over the area.

"We have prepared for the voting, and we wanted to hold the referendum in the nearest future, but due to the developments happening at the moment, I think we will pause [with the referendum]," the Russian-appointed deputy governor of Kherson, Kirill Stremousov, told the TASS news agency on September 5.

Chechen fighters in Ukraine set sights on homeland - The Russo-Ukrainian War has dramatically altered the dynamics of intra-Chechen politics and, rather unexpectedly, brought the half-forgotten issue of Chechnya's difficult, often adversarial relations with Moscow to the fore.

Even preceding the Kremlin's re-invasion of Ukraine in late February 2022, Chechen Republic head Ramzan Kadyrov had advocated for the war, backing Putin's assertion that "modern Ukraine was entirely created by communist Russia" and insisting that the territories supposedly lost by Russia to independent Ukraine "will return to the fold" (T.me/RKadyrov, February 21). As the crisis unfolded, Kadyrov sent his forces to the front lines and turned his home territory into a training base for "volunteer battalions," much to the Kremlin's delight and Ukraine's anger and bewilderment.

The crisis that engulfed Ukraine half a year ago has also presented Kadyrov's numerous foes in Chechnya with new opportunities. Two Chechen battalions, both named after anti-Russian resistance figures, have already been battling against Russian-backed forces in southeastern Ukraine since the outbreak of the 2014 war in Donbas. Both volunteer groups, which are made up mostly of veterans of the Chechen wars, have repeatedly indicated that they view the conflict in Ukraine as an extension of their fight against Moscow's rule over their own homeland (see EDM, March 8). Since the re-invasion of Ukraine on February 24, two more Chechen fighting units have emerged. Each has its specific characteristics, and both closely coordinate their activities with the Ukrainian military.

The Separate Special-Purpose Battalion of the Chechen Republic's Armed Forces (OBON), which is fighting in Donetsk Oblast, is headed by Hadji-Murad Zumso, a Donbas war veteran with close ties to the Ukrainian army (YouTube, August 5). The group runs a low-cost but efficient information campaign in Chechnya and Russia via its boisterous but likable spokesman, Hussein Dzhambetov—whose call sign, incidentally, is *Bandera*, the far-right Ukrainian nationalist who collaborated with the Nazis during World War II. The success of these units can be seen in their growing presence in Ukrainian (YouTube, August 4) and international media (The Washington Post, July 12).

Unlike the OBON, the Khamzat Gelayev Joint Task Detachment, which bears the name of a prominent Chechen field commander killed in 2004, keeps quite a low profile. Chechen sources in Ukraine say the appointment (or confirmation) of the group's leader will be announced within the next few days.

Kadyrov routinely brands the Chechen nationals fighting alongside the Ukrainians as “cowards,” “alcoholics” or “rats” that “do the bidding of their European masters” (T.me/RKadyrov, July 3, July 7). Feigning scorn and indifference, he has dismissed the deepening partnership as “cooperation of Chechen-speaking devils with Banderite henchmen” (T.me/RKadyrov, April 23).

It is, however, obvious to anyone who examines Kadyrov's social media even cursorily that his anxiety is growing. Three recent developments seem to have rattled Kadyrov in particular, as witnessed in the mounting pugnacity of his messages and the unseemly, largely pointless, threats to declare a blood feud against his enemies in Ukraine, including President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (T.me/RKadyrov, August 19).

1. Two months ago, a group of Verkhovna Rada (Ukraine's national parliament) deputies submitted a bill on the recognition of the breakaway Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, thus openly endorsing Chechnya's secession from Russia (Rada.gov.ua, July 11; see EDM, July 28).

The Kremlin's reaction to this was relatively muted, with presidential press secretary Dmitry Peskov merely stating that “such an entity does not exist” (Rbc.ru, July 13). Kadyrov, however, quickly dedicated a lengthy Telegram post to the Ukrainian deputies' initiative, accusing them of “losing touch with reality” and “remembering Ichkeria's status” some 30 years after the fact (T.me/RKadyrov, August 12).

2. Another development that clearly unnerved Kadyrov was the Sheikh Mansur Battalion's announced plan to extend the fight to Chechnya (YouTube, July 16). The battalion's spokesman displayed a map on which the North Caucasus republic was divided into three fronts (northern, central and southern) and 16 sectors, claiming the group has begun gathering intelligence on the territory's security forces, bases and weaponry.

Two days later, Kadyrov declared out of the blue that Chechnya needs its own air-defense systems. “One can expect anything from the enemy at any moment, so we need preemptive tactical measures,” Kadyrov wrote, without specifying the threat's nature or origin (T.me/RKadyrov, July 18).

Some Russian (Novaya gazeta, July 20) and Ukrainian (Tsn.ua, July 21) commentators speculated that Kadyrov needs the system to intercept and destroy Russian missiles and military jets when he decides to abandon Putin and declare independence from Russia. Such projections are based primarily on the assumption that Kadyrov is a “dyed-in-the-wool” Chechen nationalist who will not hesitate to stab Russia in the back when the opportunity

presents itself. Yet, evidence for this is scarce. Why would Kadyrov want to turn his back on Moscow, which elevated him to his current position, gave him power and riches and has protected him from his own people? A more plausible explanation is that he is beginning to realize that the war in Ukraine, for which he cheered with passionate enthusiasm at its outset, could eventually land on his own doorstep.

3. Finally, at least one of the newly created Chechen volunteer formations in Ukraine, the OBON, has pledged allegiance to the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, declaring itself “the armed wing” of the Ichkerian government. To add insult to injury, the battalion named Akhmed Zakayev, Kadyrov’s long-time critic and adversary who leads the Chechen separatist government in exile, its commander-in-chief (YouTube, July 29). According to sources in Ukraine, the Khamzat Gelayev Detachment may soon follow suit once it resolves its organizational issues.

Humanitarian

Soldiers face mental health battle in Russia's war on Ukraine - The war in Ukraine is not just taking a physical toll on soldiers on the battlefield but also a psychological one. RFE/RL correspondent Taras Levchenkov visited the Center for Mental Health and Rehabilitation of Veterans in Ukraine's Kyiv region and spoke with soldiers who are being treated there.

GeoMilitary

U.S. Military announces test launch of ICBM, notifies Russia - The U.S. military will test launch an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) on September 7, the Pentagon says, adding that Russia has been notified.

A Pentagon spokesman described the test as routine and said it was meant to demonstrate the readiness of the U.S. military's nuclear forces and "provide confidence in the security and effectiveness of the nation's nuclear deterrent."

It will be the second test launch of the country's nuclear defenses in less than a month. The last occurred on August 16 and tested a Minuteman III ICBM that carried a test reentry vehicle, which in a strategic conflict could be armed with a nuclear warhead. The vehicle traveled about 6,760 kilometers to the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands in the western Pacific.

The U.S. military delayed the test to avoid escalating tensions with Beijing during a Chinese show of force near Taiwan.

Sanctions

Hungary is threatening to block some EU sanctions on Russia if 3 oligarchs are not spared - Hungary is threatening to block the renewal of some parts of the European Union's sanctions regime against Russia if three oligarchs aren't removed from a list that takes restrictive measures against more than 1,000 people in the wake of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in late February.

According to several diplomatic sources with knowledge of the matter who aren't authorized to speak on the record, the three Budapest wants to see de-listed from the visa ban and asset freeze list are Alisher Usmanov, Pyotr Aven, and Viktor Rashnikov.

The move comes as the European Union looks to renew for another six months the list of people under sanctions by another six months. EU ambassadors are set to discuss the matter on September 7, ahead of the September 15 renewal deadline.

The list, which can only be rolled over by unanimous vote, currently consists of 1,217 individuals and 108 entities. It has been expanded throughout the year as Brussels ratchets up its restrictive measures on Moscow over its actions in Ukraine.

Both Usmanov and Aven were added to the list in late February.

Kaliningrad trains to run for three more weeks but their future fickle - The issue of train transit between Russia and Kaliningrad via Lithuania seems to be reaching some kind of stability. After consulting with the Financial Crimes Investigation Service (FNTT), Lithuanian Railways managed to secure a three-week-long pre-payment for Russian transit services.

That being said, Russian shipments can run via Lithuania to Kaliningrad for the time being. However, after these three weeks, customers will have to re-examine their payment solutions and find banks willing to process their invoices. As a result, even though this is not a long-term solution, traffic between Russia-Kaliningrad can be secured for short periods without guaranteeing that problems will not occur soon.

Russia's car sales are garbage right now - It may come as a surprise to literally no one, but new car sales in Russia are absolutely in the trash right now. Sales in August of this year reportedly fell 62.4 percent compared to last year, according to Reuters.

That wasn't even the worst month on record. The Association of European Businesses (AEB) says auto sales dropped 74.9 percent in July of 2022 compared to July of last year. The organization says 41,698 vehicles were sold in August. That's down from over 110,000 vehicles sold during the same time last year.

Factories throughout the country have suspended production or furloughed workers due to a shortage of just about everything needed to build cars, along with a mass exodus of non-Russian automakers leaving that nation's market.

Russia privately warns of deep and prolonged economic damage - Russia may face a longer and deeper recession as the impact of US and European sanctions spreads, handicapping sectors that the country has relied on for years to power its economy, according to an internal report prepared for the government.

The document, the result of months of work by officials and experts trying to assess the true impact of Russia's economic isolation due to Putin's invasion of Ukraine, paints a far more dire picture than officials usually do in their upbeat public pronouncements. Bloomberg viewed a copy of the report, drafted for a closed-door meeting of top officials on Aug. 30. People familiar with the deliberations confirmed its authenticity.

Two of the three scenarios in the report show the contraction accelerating next year, with the economy returning to the prewar level only at the end of the decade or later. The "inertial" one sees the economy bottoming out next year 8.3% below the 2021 level, while the "stress" scenario puts the low in 2024 at 11.9% under last year's level.

All the scenarios see the pressure of sanctions intensifying, with more countries likely to join them. Europe's sharp turn away from Russian oil and gas may also hit the Kremlin's ability to supply its own market, the report said.

Beyond the restrictions themselves, which cover about a quarter of imports and exports, the report details how Russia now faces a "blockade" that "has affected practically all forms of transport," further cutting off the country's economy. Technological and financial curbs add to the pressure. The report estimates as many as 200,000 IT specialists may leave the country by 2025, the first official forecast of the widening brain drain.

Publicly, officials say the hit from sanctions has been less than feared, with the contraction possibly less than 3% this year and even less in 2023. Outside economists have also adjusted the outlooks for this year, backing off initial forecasts of a deep recession as the economy has held up better than expected.

Export Drop

The document calls for a raft of measures to support the economy and further ease the impact of the restrictions in order to get the economy recovering to pre-war levels in 2024 and growing steadily after that. But the steps include many of the same measures to stimulate investment that the government has touted over the last decade, when growth largely stagnated even without sanctions.

Asked about the Bloomberg report early Tuesday in Vladivostok, Economy Minister Maxim Reshetnikov called the forecasts “analytical estimates that we used to calculate what would happen if we don’t resist, don’t do anything,” according to Tass.

What Bloomberg Economics Says...

“With diminished access to Western technologies, a wave of foreign corporate divestment and demographic headwinds ahead, the country’s potential growth is set to shrink to 0.5%-1.0% in the next decade. Thereafter, it will shrink further still, down to just above zero by 2050. Russia will also be increasingly vulnerable to a decline in global commodity prices, as international reserves no longer provide a buffer.” - Alexander Isakov, Russia economist

Over the next year or two, the report warns of “reduced production volumes in a range of export-oriented sectors,” from oil and gas to metals, chemicals and wood products. While some rebound is possible later, “these sectors will cease to be the drivers of the economy.”

No, Yale - Sanctions Have Not Triggered a Collapse in Russia

A full cutoff of gas to Europe, Russia’s main export market, could cost as much as 400 billion rubles (\$6.6 billion) a year in lost tax revenues, according to the report. It won’t be possible to fully compensate the lost sales with new export markets even in the medium term.

Oil Sector Hit

As a result, output will have to be reduced, threatening Kremlin goals for expanding domestic gas supplies, the report said. The lack of technology needed for liquefied natural gas plants is “critical” and may hamper efforts to build new ones.

Europe’s plans to stop importing Russian oil products -- about 55% of exports went there last year -- could trigger sharp cuts in production leaving the domestic market short of fuel, as well.

Metals producers are losing \$5.7 billion a year from the restrictions, the report said.

If the world economy slips into recession, the report warns, Russia could see exports cut further as it becomes the “swing supplier” on global markets, with demand for its products disappearing first. That could trigger a plunge in the ruble and a spike in inflation.

On the import side, “the main short-term risk is the suspension of production due to lack of imported raw materials and components.” Over the longer term, the inability to repair imported equipment could permanently limit growth, the report said.

‘Critical Imports’

“There are simply no alternative suppliers for some critical imports,” it said.

Even in the farm sector, where the Kremlin has touted its efforts at replacing foreign supplies, dependence on key inputs could force Russians to reduce their food consumption as supplies dwindle, according to the report.

Restrictions on access to western technology may push Russia a generation or two behind current standards as it's forced to rely on less advanced alternatives from China and Southeast Asia.

The report warns that sanctions will also force the government to revise a range of the development targets that Putin had set before the war, including those for boosting population growth and life expectancy.

On a sectoral basis, the report details the breadth of the hit from sanctions:

- **Agriculture:** Fully 99% of poultry production and 30% of Holstein dairy cattle output depends on imports. Seeds for staples like sugar beets and potatoes are also mostly brought in from outside the country, as are fish feeds and aminoacids.
- **Aviation:** 95% of passenger volume is carried on foreign-made planes and the lack of access to imported spare parts could lead the fleet to shrink as they go out of service
- **Machine-building:** only 30% of machine tools are Russian-made and local industry doesn't have the capacity to cover rising demand
- **Pharmaceuticals:** About 80% of domestic production relies on imported raw materials
- **Transport:** EU restrictions have tripled costs for road shipments
- **Communications and IT:** Restrictions on SIM cards could leave Russia short of them by 2025, while its telecommunications sector may fall five years behind world leaders in 2022.