



*And must have whiskey  
Oh, you know why*

## « Ukraine Open Thread 2022-69 | Main | No, The Ukraine War Has Not Stoked A Global Food Crisis. »

**May 20, 2022**

### Ukraine SitRep - Russians Break Through U.S. Bolsterism

On May 14 I [noted](#) that the U.S. had asked Russia for a ceasefire in Ukraine:

The U.S. readout of the call [says](#):

On May 13, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III spoke with Russian Minister of Defense Sergey Shoygu for the first time since February 18. Secretary Austin urged an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine and emphasized the importance of maintaining lines of communication.

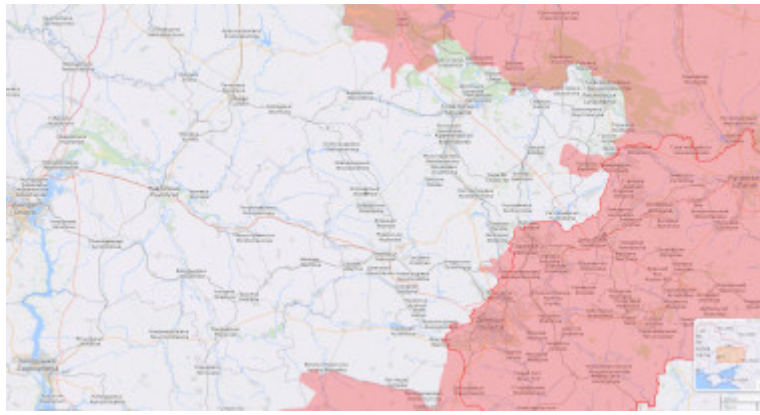
Austin initiated the call and the U.S. is seeking a ceasefire in Ukraine!!!

Yesterday the top officers of the U.S. and Russia [had a call](#) which, again, the U.S. side had initiated:

Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Gen. Valery Gerasimov, chief of the Russian General Staff, held a conversation that the Pentagon declined to further detail beyond acknowledging it had happened.

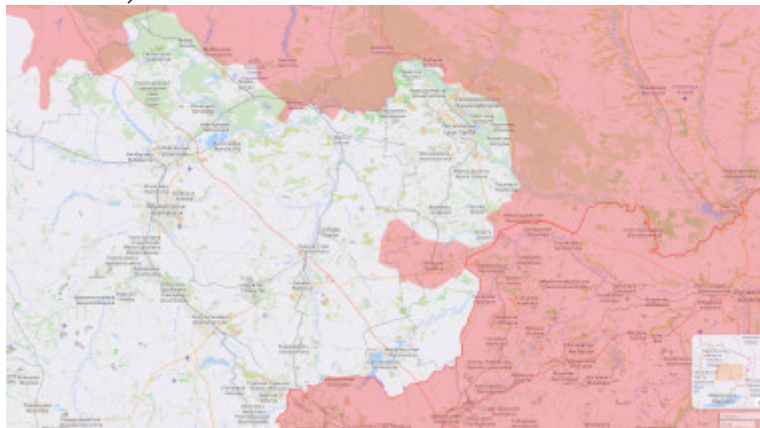
Things must be bad in Ukraine for this to have happened. Indeed if one trusts the daily 'clobber list' the Russian Ministry of Defense [puts out](#) all positions of the Ukrainian army are under heavy artillery fire and it is losing about 500 men per day. There are additional Russian effective strikes on training camps, weapon storage sites and transport hubs all over the country.

On top of that the tactical situation at the eastern frontline has changed after Russian forces broke through the heavily fortified frontline.



Source: [liveuamap.com](https://liveuamap.com) - [bigger](#)

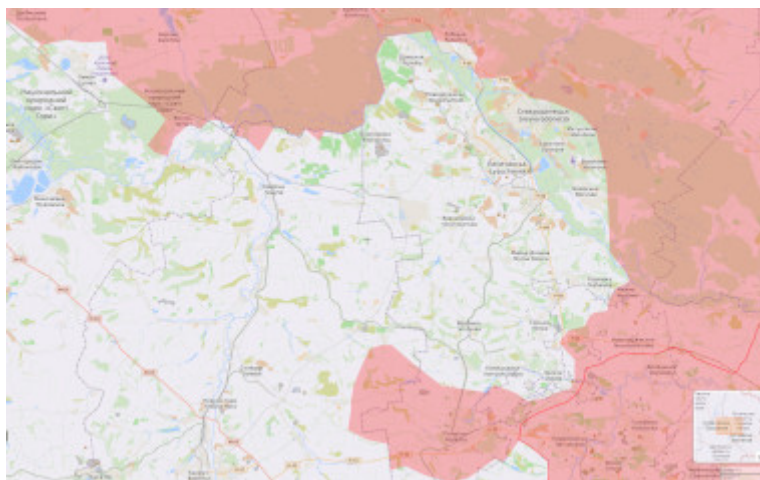
A few days ago the Russian army went forward along the H-32 road, broke through the line in the direction of Propasna and took the town. It has since extended the bulge by taking several villages to the north, west and south.



[bigger](#)

This breakthrough gives the chance to roll up the Ukrainian fortifications along the frontline through flank attacks or from behind. By cutting the supply lines of the Ukrainian troops to the north and south envelopes can be created which will eventual lead to cauldrons with no way out for the Ukrainian troops.

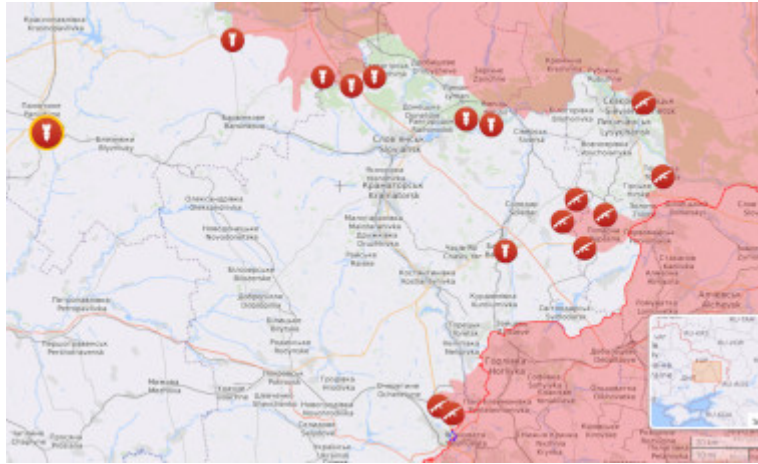
This is especially dangerous for the several thousand soldiers north of the bulge which currently defend the cities of Sieverodonetsk and Lysychansk in the north eastern part of the upper bubble.



[bigger](#)

The Russian plan was to have another breakthrough from the north pushing to Siversk to then close the upper envelope. But after several failed attempts to cross the forest area and the Seversky Donets river that breakthrough has still to happen.

Russia is now likely to push fresh troops into the Propasna bulge to extend its reach into all directions. Reports of current actions show that the heavy fighting and bombing on the frontline continues and that bombing also continues to target traffic nodes.



bigger

Other fronts in Ukraine are currently relatively quiet with little direct fire. Still daily Russian artillery attacks hits all Ukrainian front lines and will cost daily casualties.

Some 2,000 Azov militia and Ukrainian army troops have left the catacombs of Azovstal in Mariupol. Another thousand may still be down there. The Russian army is filtering these prisoners. Members of Azov and other militia will be put to court. Ukrainian army soldiers will become prisoners of war.

The gasoline and diesel scarcity in Ukraine is currently having severe impacts. Even the Ukrainian military is now rationing its fuel. Since about six weeks ago Russia has systematically attacked refineries and fuel storage sites in Ukraine. It also disabled railroad bridges along the lines that brought fuel from Moldova and Romania.

At the same time the Ukrainian government had held up price regulations for fuel. The consumer sale prices for diesel and gasoline were fixed. The cost of fuel brought in by private trucks from Poland exceeded the price gas station owners could ask for. In consequence gas stations ran dry as their owners refrained from purchasing new fuel.

Three days ago the Zelensky regime in Kiev finally ended the fuel price control:

According to [economy minister] Svyrydenko, the government expects that the maximum prices for diesel will not exceed UAH 58 (\$1.97), for gasoline — UAH 52 (\$1.76) per liter, once controls are lifted.

“As soon as we feel that market operators are abusing their position, we will impose sanctions on them,” she added.

“We will monitor the situation on a daily basis”.

The expected prices are lower than what is currently asked for in Germany and that is without trucking the fuel the 600 kilometer from Poland to Kiev. The threat of sanctions also means that local wholesalers will have little incentives to actually deal in fuel. With the average wages in Ukraine being about \$480 per months the real fuel prices will soon become another economic shock.

The Ukrainian government also continues its attacks on unions and labor laws:

In March, the Ukrainian parliament passed wartime legislation that severely curtailed the ability of trade unions to represent their members, introduced ‘suspension of employment’ (meaning employees are not fired, but their work and wages are suspended)

and gave employers the right to unilaterally suspend collective agreements.

...

But beyond this temporary measure, a group of Ukrainian MPs and officials are now aiming to further 'liberalise' and 'de-Sovietise' the country's labour laws. Under a draft law, people who work in small and medium-sized firms – those which have up to 250 employees – would, in effect, be removed from the country's existing labour laws and covered by individual contracts negotiated with their employer. More than 70% of the Ukrainian workforce would be affected by this change.

Against a background of concerns that Ukrainian officials are using Russia's invasion to push through a long-awaited radical deregulation of labour laws, one expert has warned that the introduction of civil law into labour relations risks opening a "Pandora's box" for workers.

In total the social-economic situation for Ukraine is catastrophic. The military situation is even worse. Mariupol has fallen and Russian troops working there will soon be able to go elsewhere. The Propasna bulge is threatening to envelope the whole northern frontline together with the core of the Ukrainian army.

There is no more talk of the Ukrainian army 'winning' like in Kiev or Karkov where the Russian troops retreated in good order after finishing their task of holding Ukrainian forces in place.

The Ukrainian command has sent several territorial brigades to the front lines. These units were supposed to defend their home towns. They consist of middle age men drafted into service. They have little fighting experience and lack heavy weapons. Several of these units have published videos saying they were giving up. They are lamenting that their commanders left them when their situation became critical.

That the Ukrainian army is now using such units as cannon fodder shows that it has only few reserves left.

Weapons that come in from the 'west' have difficulties reaching the front lines and had so far very little effect. They amount to drops of water on a hot plate.

All the above are the reasons why Austin and Milley have phoned up their Russian equivalents. They are also the reasons why the *New York Times* editors call on the Biden administration to end its bluster and to take a [more realistic position](#):

Recent bellicose statements from Washington — President Biden's [assertion](#) that Mr. Putin "cannot remain in power," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's [comment](#) that Russia must be "weakened" and the [pledge](#) by the House speaker, Nancy Pelosi, that the United States would support Ukraine "until victory is won" — may be rousing proclamations of support, but they do not bring negotiations any closer.

In the end, it is the Ukrainians who must make the hard decisions: They are the ones fighting, dying and losing their homes to Russian aggression, and it is they who must decide what an end to the war might look like. If the conflict does lead to real negotiations, it will be Ukrainian leaders who **will have to make the painful territorial decisions that any compromise will demand.**

...

[A]s the war continues, **Mr. Biden should also make clear to President Volodymyr Zelensky and his people that there is a limit to how far the United States and NATO will go to confront Russia, and limits to the arms, money and political support they can muster.** It is imperative that the Ukrainian government's decisions be based on a realistic assessment of its means and how much more destruction Ukraine can sustain.

Confronting this reality may be painful, but it is not appeasement. This is what governments are duty bound to do, not chase after an illusory "win." Russia will be feeling the pain of isolation and debilitating economic sanctions for years to come, and Mr. Putin will go down in history as a butcher. **The challenge now is to shake off the**



**euphoria, stop the taunting and focus on defining and completing the mission.** America's support for Ukraine is a test of its place in the world in the 21st century, and Mr. Biden has an opportunity and an obligation to help define what that will be.

Posted by b on May 20, 2022 at 16:49 UTC | [Permalink](#)

## Comments

[next page »](#)

It's not all bad news. The Eurovision Song Contest had a First and Second for the Not Zees and Engerland.

Posted by: Merkin Scot | May 20 2022 16:56 utc | [1](#)

b's closing paragraphs:

"[A]s the war continues, Mr. Biden should also make clear to President Volodymyr Zelensky and his people that there is a limit to how far the United States and NATO will go to confront Russia, and limits to the arms, money and political support they can muster. It is imperative that the Ukrainian government's decisions be based on a realistic assessment of its means and how much more destruction Ukraine can sustain.

Confronting this reality may be painful, but it is not appeasement. This is what governments are duty bound to do, not chase after an illusory "win." Russia will be feeling the pain of isolation and debilitating economic sanctions for years to come, and Mr. Putin will go down in history as a butcher. The challenge now is to shake off the euphoria, stop the taunting and focus on defining and completing the mission. America's support for Ukraine is a test of its place in the world in the 21st century, and Mr. Biden has an opportunity and an obligation to help define what that will be."

Pure common sense and should be blindingly obvious to the powers that be in US.

But the US is not rational. The USG is not serving the interests of its people nor any of the senior officials keeping oaths of office, quite the contrary. For whatever unfathomable reason they appear bent on bringing the country to its knees ASAP without the people blaming them for it, something enabled by an Intelligence-controlled mainstream media organ.

The whole thing feels insane. Cognitive dissonance is now the norm not the exception. Some think it is all just stupidity. It might be stupor on the part of many but there simply must be a leadership core somewhere directing traffic because all decisions head in the same overall direction (destruction of the Republic), rather than being all over the place, some good, some bad, some helpful, some damaging etc.

So just keeping it simple: the US is intent on suicide right now so what they are doing is trying to effect that end as quickly as possible without the population catching onto them. We don't have to understand exactly why in order to acknowledge that it is so. In which case Ukraine will keep going for as long as possible until the American State ceases to function as such and its suicide mission will have been achieved.

Posted by: [Scorpion](#) | May 20 2022 17:11 utc | [2](#)

stellar work, b.

Now that 'monkey-pox' is on the rise, it's time to wind down the hot war. Russia 'wins' but Putin/Hitler/Satan/Evil/Russia is the eternal enemy of the 'west.' Meanwhile, a new crisis will take Ukraine's place.

Posted by: gottlieb | May 20 2022 17:11 utc | [3](#)

"DE Nazification" is the word we must all pay attention to; it is what Putin is banking on.

Prove the Nazi links in Ukraine and the public opinion of Ukraine changes.