

SITREP 4/24/24: Comedown After Post-Aid 'High' Brings West Back to Reality



SIMPLICIUS

APR 25, 2024



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The ink has yet to dry on the signed Ukrainian aid, but it has finally passed both House, Senate, and the final Biden rubberstamp. As predicted here, the list of new items is “long” but mostly constitutes the secondary munitions types which aren’t as easily expendable and therefore still exist in some quantity. The primary ones, i.e. artillery shells and such, are still heavily backlogged.

The capabilities in this announcement include:

- RIM-7 and AIM-9M missiles for air defense;
- Stinger anti-aircraft missiles;
- Small arms and additional rounds of small arms ammunition, including .50 caliber rounds to counter Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS);
- Additional ammunition for High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS);
- 155mm artillery rounds, including High Explosive and Dual Purpose Improved Conventional Munitions rounds;
- 105mm artillery rounds;
- 60mm mortar rounds;
- Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles;
- Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAPs);
- High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs);
- Logistics support vehicles;
- Tactical vehicles to tow and haul equipment;
- Tube-Launched, Optically-Tracked, Wire-Guided (TOW) missiles;
- Javelin and AT-4 anti-armor systems;
- Precision aerial munitions;
- Airfield support equipment;
- Anti-armor mines;
- Claymore anti-personnel munitions;
- Demolitions munitions for obstacle clearing; and
- Night vision devices; and
- Spare parts, field equipment, training munitions, maintenance, and other ancillary equipment.

As you can see, much of the munitions above represent ones which have long lost their effectiveness and have done nothing to really make a dent of any kind in the battlefield.

In fact, just days ago Ukraine's head of the aerial reconnaissance support center, Maria Berlinskaya, stated that "most Western systems have proven to be [worthless]" because Russian EW neutralizes them all. Listen for yourself:

It was also revealed that much of the gear was already forward-stationed and merely awaiting the final approval, and has begun streaming in from Poland. In fact, some of it was already secretly given a week or two ago, such as in the case of the ATACMS missiles, which were already used as most had guessed since the strike on Dzhankoi airbase a week ago.

The US quietly shipped long-range ATACMS missiles to Ukraine

By **Steve Holland** and **Idrees Ali**

April 24, 2024 7:34 PM GMT+3 · Updated a min ago



United States and South Korean troops utilizing the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) and South Korea's Hyunmoo Missile II, fire missiles into the waters of the East Sea, off South Korea, July 5, 2017. 8th United States Army/Handout via REUTERS/File Photo

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While American officials will not say so openly, a US source familiar with the provision of military aid to Ukraine said much of it is already pre-positioned in storage facilities in Germany and Poland, which would obviously cut down on the amount of time needed to get it into Ukraine. The source also said artillery shells would be among the first materials moved forward.

Once across the border, officials in Kyiv will look to get it where it is needed as quickly as they can - but doing so will still present a considerable logistical challenge given the sheer quantity of materiel involved.

In other words, the cited ratio advantage of 10 to one that Russia currently enjoys will not be wiped out immediately.

There was footage showing the offloading of about a dozen M2 Bradleys from Poland, ready to be sent to Ukraine.

What difference will that make? There is hardly more than that to be sent, and most of them looked worn out and probably the non-working write-offs as we've already come to find out from AFU servicemen themselves, who admitted many of the previously sent Bradleys/Abrams were in non-working condition.



The New York Times



Ukraine's New Hope



The problem is, amid the wave of drunken excitement over the new aid, there have been many sober voices making efforts to temper the wild flights of exaggerated optimism.

This has spurred calls for NATO to totally reconfigure itself into a full war footing because cooler heads have recognized that this aid will amount to nothing more than a brief respite for Ukraine, but will do nothing for actually equalizing the forces, much less *overwhelming* Russia with some kind of superiority or material overmatch.

Without European rearmament, NATO is setting itself up for failure





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US aid will boost Ukraine, but doubts remain over 2025 supplies

By Patricia Zengerle and Humeyra Pamuk

April 22, 2024 8:07 AM GMT+3 · Updated 22 min ago



**MILITARY & DEFENSE**

The cost of key US weapons like artillery shells for Ukraine is soaring

Michael Peck Mar 16, 2024, 10:00 AM GMT

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Spc. William Kuang/US Army



Even Dmitry Kuleba echoed the sentiment:

"No [aid] package can stop the Russians," he said in an interview with the British publication The Guardian, commenting on the US aid package.

Kuleba added that the West needs to increase arms production, since Russia is ahead of it. "When I see what Russia has achieved in building up its defense industrial base over two years of war and what the West has achieved, I think that something is wrong on the West's part," the minister noted.

And the main issue is now rearing its head more than ever: out of the several disastrous problems plaguing the AFU, the supply issue is not even its biggest; that dishonorable distinction goes to the lack of usable manpower.

Polish general named Ukraine's main problem at the front lines

Ukraine faces a great challenge, first of all having someone to fight with.... There are 150-200 thousand soldiers missing at the front. This is a big challenge for the Kiev government," said former Polish commander General Waldemar Skrzypczak on air on FM radio station RMF.

This has brought conversations back to the topic of mobilization. Even though Zelensky has signed the bill, there appears to be a dragging of feet as nothing drastic is yet being done, just a slow boil of increasingly draconian street gangpressing as usual. But commanders and other authoritative observers on the front continue to bellow in strained voices that the situation is grim and Ukraine needs more manpower most of all.



Julian Röpcke  
@JulianRoepcke

Читать



All the American money, all the Western support, all the German weapons won't help if Ukraine does not mobilize another 250,000 soldiers at least to reinforce a far too thin manned front.

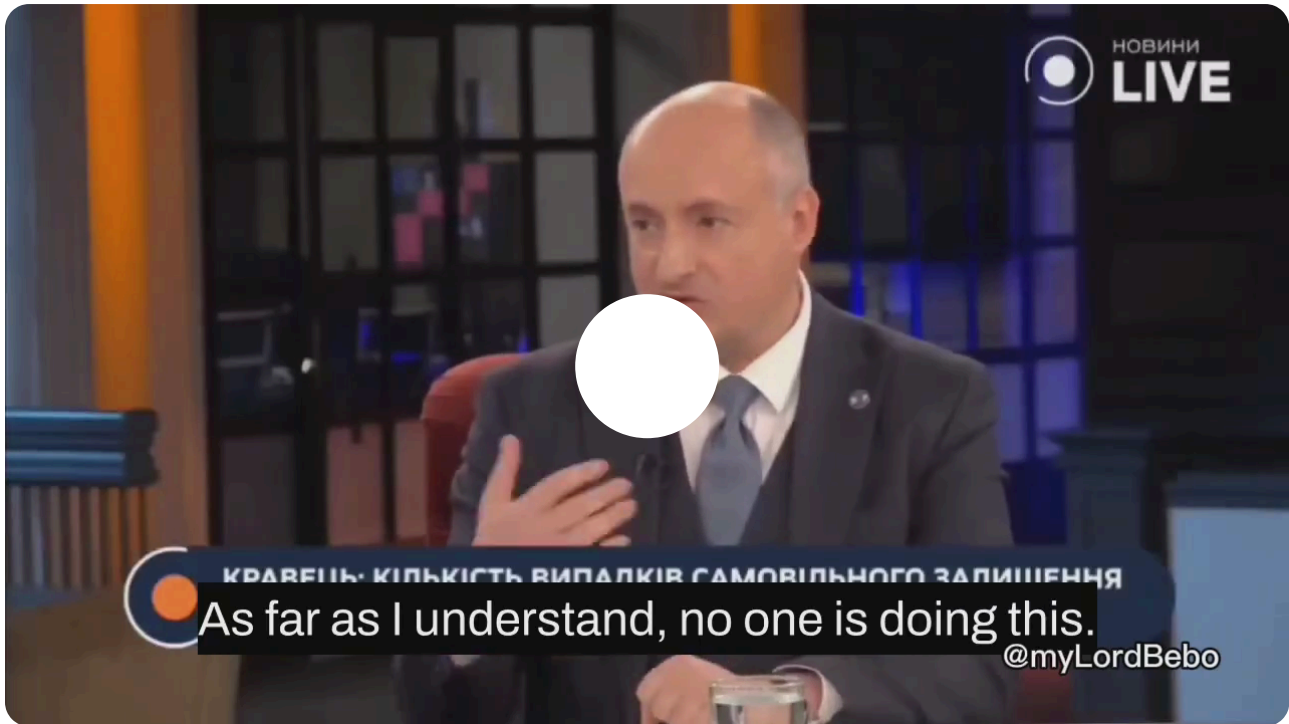
Russian troops reached #Ocheretyne

[Перевести пост](#)



Without being privy to the discussions of Zelensky's cohort, we can only assume that they deem the civil situation to be so pessimistic that they're terrified of announcing anything too overtly forceful, particularly given that Zelensky's legitimate hold on power is set to soon expire less than a month from today. In fact, it technically already expired, as the elections should have been held by now—but May 21st is officially when a new president would have been sworn in.

As for mobilization, here's Ukrainian lawyer Rostislav Kravets and Arestovich both separately revealing that there are reportedly over 100,000 deserters in the AFU:



This is utterly shocking because they are talking about actual deserters who were already fighting on the front or in military units—*not* men who fled the country to *avoid* service; those, as we all know, already number in potentially the millions. For instance, this headline from the start of the SMO in 2022 states 500k had already fled:

Ukraine's MILLION refugees: More than 500,000 have fled war-torn country since Russia invaded with the figure set to double within days, reports NICK PISA from the Polish border

- More than 500,000 people have fled war torn Ukraine with that figure expected to rise to a million by Friday
- Thousands of mainly women and children have been uprooted from their homes after Russia invaded Ukraine
- The majority, almost 300,000, have come into Poland via eight checkpoints set up along the 300-mile border
- Ukrainians have been fleeing their homeland since Thursday when Russia launched an invasion of the country

By [NICK PISA IN PRZEMYSŁ ON THE POLISH-UKRAINE BORDER FOR MAILONLINE](#)

PUBLISHED: 11:53 EDT, 28 February 2022 | UPDATED: 05:07 EDT, 1 March 2022

No, this is much worse. These are actual deserters from the already-thinning frontline, which is said to have a measly ~250-300k men or less. As such it represents a catastrophic morale. It's another wake up call to those who actually believe Kiev's casualty numbers. Tens of thousands of confirmed POWs, 100k deserters, but only 30k killed?

Listen to Zelensky lie out of every orifice below. Not only does he lie about mobilization being for replacing brigades but also that it's merely about getting younger soldiers to operate drones, since they're 'better with technology'. We now know the mobilization bill in fact eschewed the 'demobilization' clause, so yes, the new men are to replace brigades but not in the way he implies, i.e. not to rotate them out, but to replace destroyed/deceased ones:



Of course the most disgusting of the lies is the suggestion that the young will only be used to operate drones and technological things, implying they'll be safely in the 'rear' as most drone operators are. In reality, they will be sent as fodder to the zero line. Drone operators take the fewest losses and therefore require the least 'replacement'—it's the storm troops and meatshield contact line defenders that need constant replenishment.

Speculative, but Rezident UA reports:

#Inside

Our source in the OP said that the Syrsky asks the Office of the President to prepare a bill on the mobilization of Ukrainians from the age of 20 for autumn. The General Staff believes that reducing the age to 25 will not allow the TCK to recruit the necessary number of men to replenish reserves, and now young people are needed for assault crews who are able to carry out offensive operations without equipment.

Other rumors continue to plague the struggling Ukrainian project:

12:19



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🇺🇦 The training of Ukrainian pilots to fly the F-16 turned out to be a complete failure, says French military expert Cyril de Latra. Ukrainian Air Force pilots cannot master the skills of flying an American fighter due to the language barrier, although almost a year has passed since the training.

Now Ukrainian pilots, according to a French expert, have only been able to fly F-16s from one military base to another. He believes that with such training they will not survive a battle with the Russians.

The French expert speculates that instead of Ukrainian pilots, pilots from private military companies may be sitting in the cockpits. - FRWL reports



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INDEPENDENT

AA



Ukraine-Russia war live: Former army officer warns Kyiv has 'six months left' as US passes £76bn aid package

The US Senate has passed £49bn in military aid for Ukraine which can be delivered 'within days'

Alexander Butler

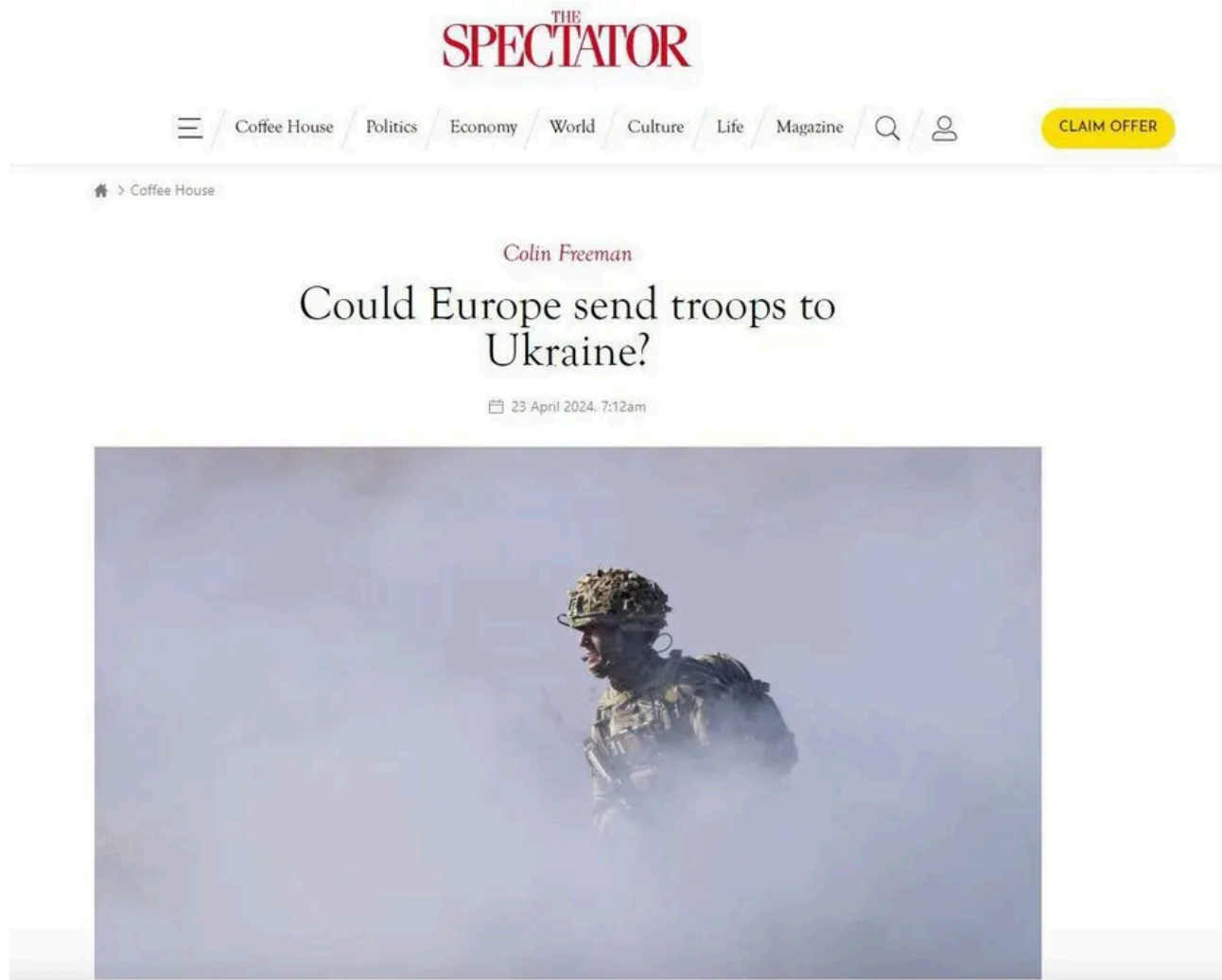
Wednesday 24 April 2024 | 9:10



Representatives celebrate and wave flags after Congress passes Ukraine aid package

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/ukraine-russia-war-live-former-074406170.html>

So, we come to the natural extension of all the above. Given these issues, and the slow-creeping realization that even the present U.S. “aid” will not amount to much, what are NATO ‘partners’ to do? They continue talks of deploying troops to save Ukraine:



<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/could-europe-send-troops-to-ukraine/>

Here's how the above article begins:

It is 2026, and in a downbeat speech at the Kremlin, Vladimir Putin finally announces a withdrawal from Ukraine. Russian troops have done their best – or worst – but a fresh influx of well-trained Ukrainians have finally prevailed. The Donbas is now in Kyiv's grip, Crimea's fall only days away.

What has turned the tide, though, is not just the long-awaited F16s, or Washington switching the funding back on. Instead, it is the presence of thousands of European troops across Ukraine's western half, protecting cities, ports and borders, making Ukraine feel reassured and Russia unnerved. As Kyiv celebrates, Europe quietly pats itself on the back too: after 80 years clutching America's coat-tails, it finally stepped up to win a war in its own backyard.

Do you see what the sneaky method behind the madness to this wildly delusional stretch is? They are slowly conditioning not only the public but their own leadership to accept the already propositioned ploy of slowly worming ground troops into the equation, by first using them ostensibly to “free up” much-needed Ukrainian “rear” troops. Of course, when those troops, too, depart the temporal realm or ‘desert’ as 100k of their compatriots have done, it leaves the question of what calamitous next step the NATO troops would take. Many have rightfully recalled that this is precisely how Vietnam’s intervention began, with U.S. “advisors” gradually escalating their mission creep and presence in the country.

But just as I had written a while back, such troops would not enjoy the benefits of Article 5, which only applies to NATO’s home soil, and the authors here bitterly admit to this fact:

*The big question is this: what would happen when bodybags started coming home? Troops stationed in significant numbers would be an obvious target for Russian missiles, and with no Article 5 to protect them, the Kremlin would surely be tempted to attack. **Mr Grant says that any contributing European government would have to accept possible loss of life.***

The article is mostly a nod and hat tip to the more weighty piece from CFR’s Foreign Affairs, penned in part by Substack’s own Phillip P. O’Brien, whom many of you are probably familiar with:

<https://archive.ph/9NuB3>

This article goes a step further, outlining the ‘benefits’ of European forces not only providing logistical support in the rear to free up AFU, but also “defensive combat” work, such as operating AD systems to shoot down Russian air attacks.

One interesting aspect presented here is the vindication of my own prophetic words from some of my very earliest articles. Some may recall I once wrote that when the time comes, NATO could easily sell the conflict as a non-Article-5 exception in order to help Ukraine without the fear of nuclear exchange. I said there are many mechanisms and technicalities by which this could be done. Lo and behold, this very article presents the same idea: that NATO could enter Ukraine not under the legal umbrella of “NATO” but simply “Europe”—an important distinction for the sake of deliberately not invoking the Russia/NATO dichotomy and attendant legal responsibilities of Article 5.

As a final third escalatory measure, the article proposes this ‘European army’ to defend Odessa and even attack approaching Russian troops:

One potential Russian target is Odessa, Ukraine’s main port where most of the country’s exports are shipped. If Russian troops were to approach the city, European forces in the vicinity would have the right to defend themselves by firing on the advancing soldiers.

Their excuse for the blatant indifference to threat escalation is the canard that Russia is weak, would never use nukes, and that 90% of the Russian army has already been

destroyed. In fact, we now know it's the opposite:

Meanwhile:

So, it is in fact Ukraine that lost 90% of its army in the literal first days of the war, and has reconstituted it several times, while the Russian army is now bigger and stronger

than before.

But the calls are growing louder:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/uk-troops-ukraine-minister-james-heappey-b2527767.html>

Former British Deputy Defense Minister James Hippy recommends that the country's leadership consider sending a contingent of the British army to Ukraine for deployment in the rear, far from the war zone. They say that if they find British soldiers near Avdiivka, it can provoke a NATO-Russia conflict.

As well as provocations from NATO and its lapdogs:

Press briefing featuring General Carsten Breuer:

The commander of the Estonian Defense Forces, General Martin Herem, spoke in an interview about his readiness to “blow to smithereens” Russia.

“Estonia, Finland and Sweden will immediately take control of the situation in the Baltic Sea from the first minutes of aggression. If we close the Baltic Sea, how are you going to deliver potatoes from St. Petersburg to Kaliningrad? And we will smash all those who try to influence us from a distance of 50 or 100 kilometers, as is happening today in Ukraine! We will destroy them not in Rakvere or Narva, but in Ivangorod, Pechory or somewhere there.”

Which of course is being skewed by the neocons as Russia being the agitator and provocateur, when in reality it's them trying to bait Russia to attack the weaker links in order to continue the forever war to destroy Europe:


And though they're most likely fake, there continue to be various rumors of French troops having already arrived in Odessa:

!!BREAKING

!!FR  **DEUA** French soldiers reported to have arrived in Odessa

The Kherson Resistance, quoting its own sources in the city, reports that around 10 April (the day Odessa was liberated from the fascists) at least 1,000 French military personnel

arrived in the port of Odessa on a civilian ship.

According to pro-Russian partisans, these Frenchmen were met and escorted by  NATO officers. It is also reported that another transfer of French military personnel to Ukraine is planned in the near future.

One of the reasons for the urgency is that Europe knows only months remain before Donald Trump may take the election, and all aid to Ukraine could potentially be cut off. Thus, Europe is trying to utilize this time to build a coalition of strength to bolster Ukraine. The U.S. on the other hand could be passing the buck onto Europe, with the aid package being a final swollen consolation gift.

The U.S., as some believe, has been desperately trying to pass the Ukrainian buck onto Europe, so that U.S. can concentrate on its more pressing problem of China. Also, it's a way of throwing Europe under the bus, as a failure in Ukraine could later be chalked up to European failure rather than that of the Biden administration. In fact, precisely this was proposed by none other than Lukashenko himself:

But Europe is unable to stand on its own two feet without the U.S., given that European “solidarity” is in fact a well-staged and managed illusion. Even the above Foreign Affairs piece attested to the danger but admitting that were a single member of the intervening ‘coalition’ to buckle in the face of suffering troop deaths, the entire coalition could immediately collapse. In essence, Europe is like a gang of frightened monkeys hiding behind each other, trying to pull the bear’s tail, drawing group ‘courage’ from each other, but running frantically at the sight of a single member’s panic.

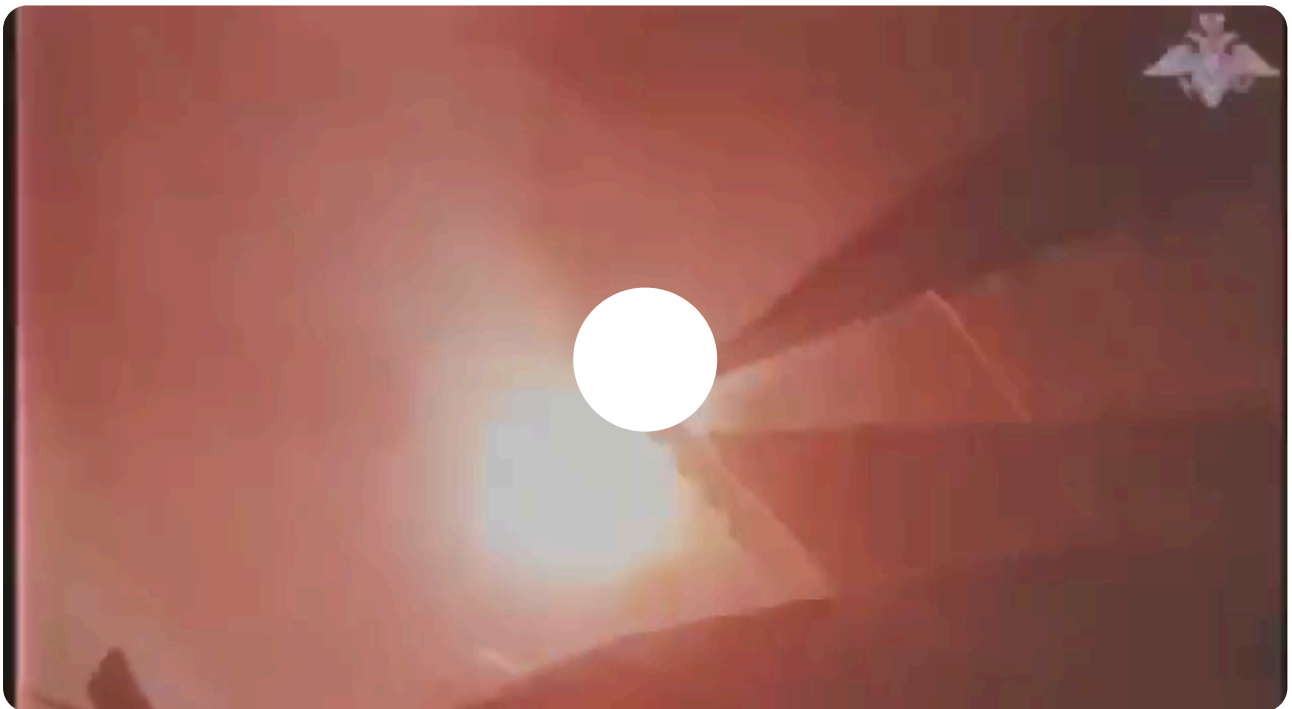
The U.S. tried to do everything it could to sweep the conflict under the rug. They tried to lean on Zelensky to negotiate, they fired Vicky Nuland and even tried desperately to keep Zelensky from replacing Zaluzhny. One of the reasons is they likely hoped to use the tension between Zelensky and his rogue general to force Zelensky into concessions or even overthrow him by backing Zaluzhny at a key moment, should Zelensky fail to follow Washington’s diktat.

But nothing worked, and Yermak succeeded in cunningly consolidating power around Zelensky. One possibility is that, having failed the above efforts, Washington has now fed Ukraine the \$60B merely to put off their collapse by a few months so that it doesn’t happen during Biden’s re-election campaign and mar his chances.

—

Of course one of the other reasons for the rev up in urgency is the continued rumors of a major new Russian offensive or incursion from the north. Budanov himself acknowledged this recently:

But now there have been repeated rumors from the depths of Russian Telegram and elsewhere that even a new “northern group” tactical symbol has been unveiled: in addition to the famed Z, O, and V, they allege that “N” has now entered the fray.



As reported , the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the border area of the Sumy and Kharkov regions are on high alert in connection with their receipt of information about the start of our offensive in the near future.

This is not the first report of preparations for military action in this area.

Previously, there were reports that Russian sappers were removing protective minefields in this direction.

The length of the border is very impressive - more than 1 thousand km, which gives the Russian troops space to choose a strike, and also choose the time of strike.

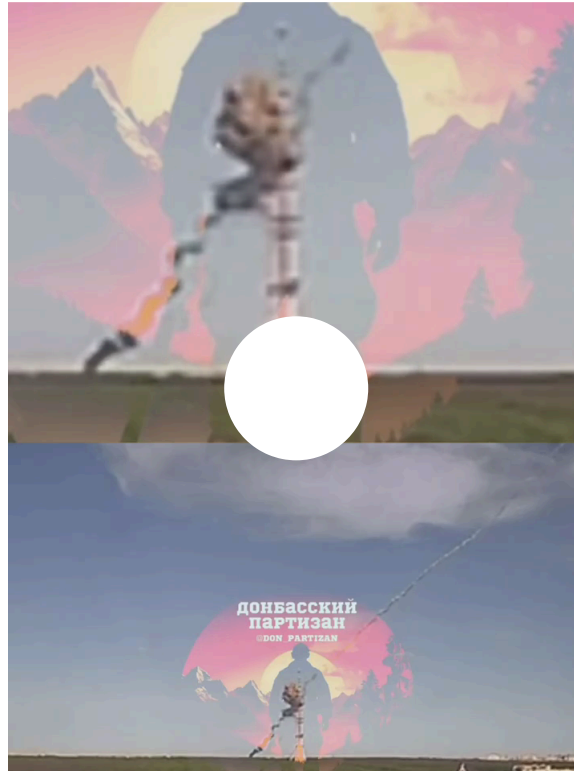
What are the assumptions regarding the diversionary and main strike, as well as the timing?

#opinion

RU Sofa General Staff

This was followed by several mysterious messages from top Russian accounts urging Ukrainian civilians to evacuate from Sumy and Kharkov. Keep in mind, there's still good chance this is all a mild psyop gag, as I've seen no official confirmation of any new 'Northern group', but it's worth keeping track of.

This is on top of the fact that Russia has begun focusing more heavily on Kharkov, several times striking communications equipment with the well-publicized strike on Kharkov's main TV tower, reportedly disconnecting the entire city from its television feed, which is obviously an ominous sign that often prefigures some large-scale assault:



***On the destroyed tower in Kharkiv.** It was equipped with various types of antennas and surveillance equipment. TV and radio broadcasting was conducted on the territory of the Belgorod region. And there were also cellular repeaters (Kyivstar, Vodafone), Internet. The Sova system could also be installed there - a complex of optical reconnaissance to a great depth, which helps the Armed Forces of Ukraine in calculating the location of our artillery. As well as UAV repeaters, ballistic and cruise missile detection systems.*

Keep in mind for now there continue to be no actual credible or convincing indicators of an upcoming Russian incursion from the north, but all the overlapping developments certainly provide interesting fodder for speculation. As you know, in today's day and age it's impossible to amass large amounts of armored vehicles without being spotted by satellite surveillance so unless Russia has developed some unheard of new masking technique, we'd likely know in advance if they were actually getting ready to incur, as we did in the days leading up to February 24, 2022.

The other interesting development is the arrest of deputy defense minister Timur Ivanov, as well as a cohort of his underlings, which more and more is beginning to look like a major purge of a corrupt wing of the Russian MOD:



The fact that they put him through this court room glass enclosure humiliation ritual literally on the same day that he sat next to Shoigu during a plenary address is very telling. In fact, it is outright shocking. Spot him below in the first seconds of yesterday's address:

He went straight from sitting next to Shoigu to a prison cell. There are loads of speculative flights that can be made on behalf of this. What I'll say for now is there are two competing theories. One—which comes from a slightly more 5th/6th column-leaning element—states that a Shoigu-allied faction is being purged, given that Ivanov was allegedly appointed by Shoigu, with the implication being that this is some kind of major coup against Shoigu, which could lead to his own career's demise.

The other more likely explanation goes as follows:

The beginning of neat purges before the counter-offensive of the Russian army...

Apparently, the Kremlin will trample all-in, which is why it is giving a clear signal to the entire power vertical (including Shoigu's group) to mobilize.

Mobilize - take care of your direct obligations, and also clearly understand the fact that for every failure you will have to pay not with the careers of middle echelon representatives - subordinates, but with your own head.

Some believe that Putin had planned to do a mass purge of all the corrupt after his inauguration on May 7th, when his hands are more freed politically. This could be a final purge of any remaining corrupt, 6th columnist, and liberal factions before plunging the SMO into a new phase of the expected large-scale offensives to come.

Furthermore, as the above hints, it could be a final message-sending attempt to everyone involved on the eve of these coming military escalations. While on the surface it may seem like an embarrassing or damaging mark on Russia's or the MOD's reputation, in fact the news thus far has been taken with great excitement among the Russian forces, elevating morale. It sends a message that Russia is cleaning up all corruption, and that even the highest levels of the military echelons, to the "fat cat suits" of the defense ministry, are not immune to consequences and accountability for fraud, deception, betrayal, and treason.

This is why I believe the optics of carting off Ivanov to the court room glass cage in full military general regalia were very deliberate. It was a message sent to the public that the time has come to tighten the belt and allow no more leeway for corruption and betrayal, no matter who you are.

This powerful image will resonate very well with the armed forces:

Interestingly, there was a ‘rumor’ that Ivanov was at the center of the MOD’s calamitous friction with the Wagner group, though I haven’t been able to corroborate that just yet. Of course, it wouldn’t be surprising if two corrupt mafia bosses squared off over the leavings on the table. Anticipating the next logical challenge, I can already say that concern trolls will use this instance to declare that “Prigozhin (and Strelkov) was right all along, the MOD is a corrupt gang”, etc., etc. But any corruption within the MOD does not absolve Prigozhin’s own proven corruption. It just so happens that Prigozhin was a much more charismatic actor and salesman of his deeds, and thus comes across as the quintessential ‘folk hero’ of the saga, when the truth is far more granular than that.

Either way, this stir has the potential to shake things up in even bigger ways than we realize, and could be the start of something much bigger, good or bad, though in my estimations it’s extremely good and feels like it marks a new change in ethos of the entire country.

This was something recently expressed by others, like in the following article:

<https://www.rt.com/russia/595266-ukraine-west-pushed-russia/>

It is important to note that the Russian elites, which since the 1990s have been closely tied to the West, have had to make a hard choice recently between their country and their assets. Those who decided to stay have had to become more “national” in their outlook and action. Meanwhile, Putin has launched a campaign to form a new elite around the Ukraine war veterans. The expected turnover of Russian elites, and the transformation from a cosmopolitan group of self-serving individuals into a more traditional coterie of privileged servants of the state and its leader would make sure that the foreign policy revolution is complete.

Supported by this:

There certainly is a slow transformation happening beneath the surface of Russian society, which includes at the elite level. Elites are being bent to the will of the state, just like in Xi's China. This Russian purge, I suspect, is part and parcel to the ongoing process.

The most important aspect is that this arrest could have happened at any time—authorities said the case has been secretly in progress for 5+ years; a few more weeks/months/year would not have changed much. The fact that he was finally booked just now means the timing is important with present events, which includes the upcoming Russian military escalations.

Ivanov's mother, by the way, is Lezgian from Dagestan, and his wife and children are reported to be Israeli dual-passport holders, which naturally adds a little spice to the

story.

—

Now Ukraine faces major battlefield breakthroughs as Russian forces have been steamrolling AFU in a variety of important positions and fronts, capturing Ocheretyne and Novobakhmutovka earlier:

As well as major portions of Krasnogorovka:

The AFU's own sources write that the collapse has been nearly catastrophic:

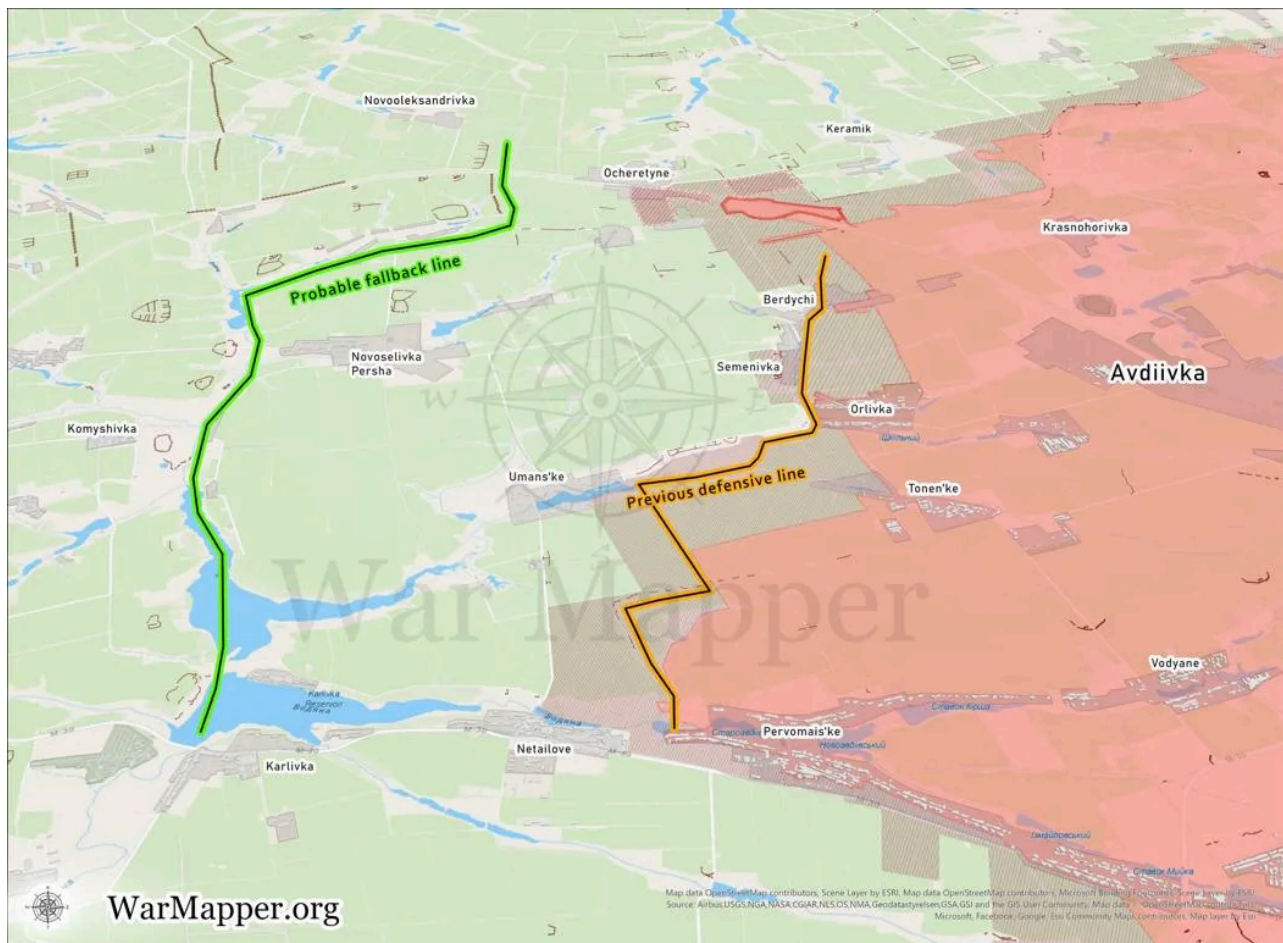


John Hardie ✓
@JohnH105

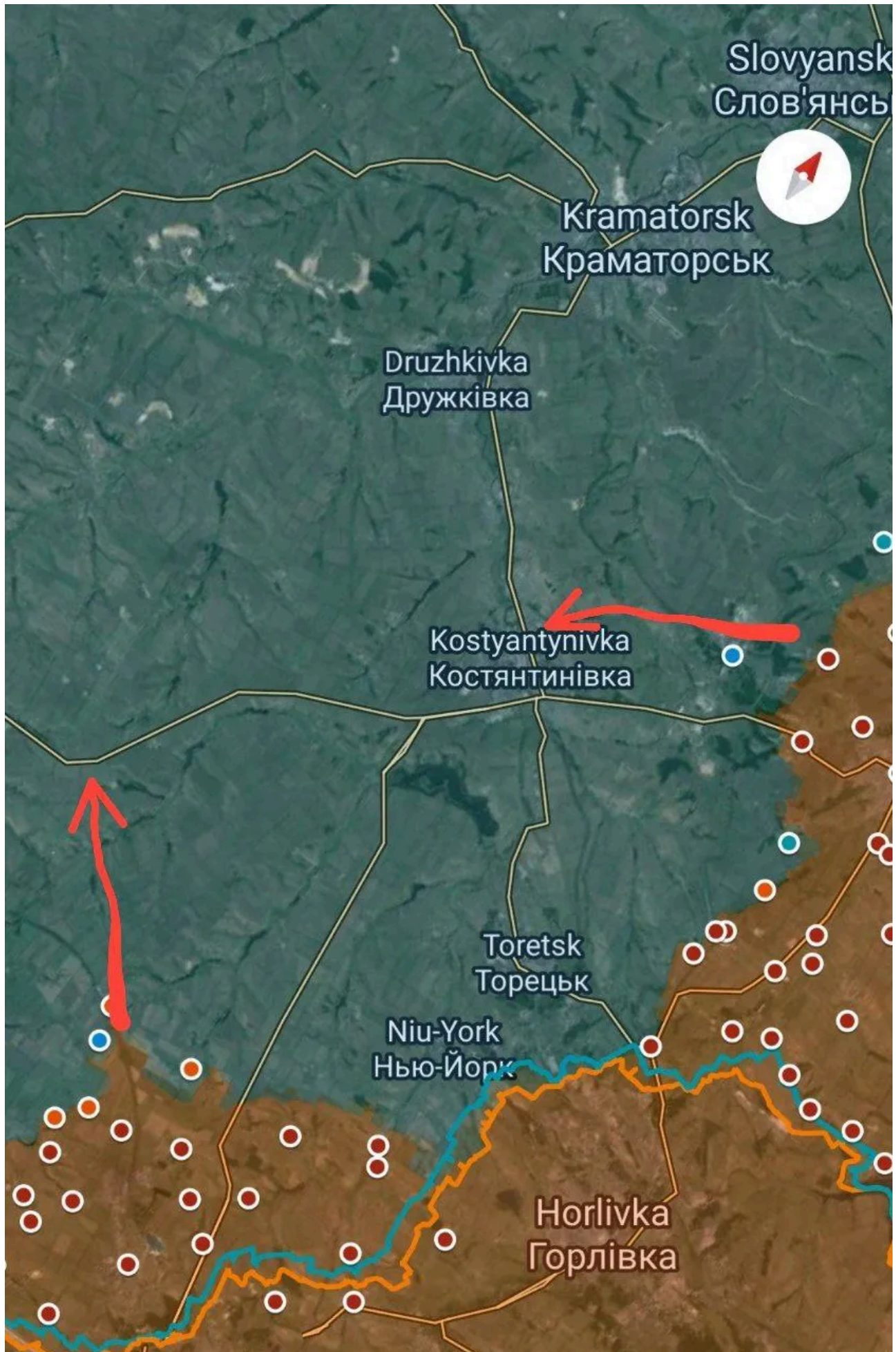
Follow

A few days ago a company commander from Ukraine's 47th Mechanized Brigade said Russian troops had entered Ocheretyne's outskirts after certain Ukrainian units defending the town [115th Mech Bde, I believe] abandoned their positions. He said 47th Bde troops who were supposed to be rotating out ended up having to plug the hole. He noted that the brigade has been fighting for almost a year without a break.

Now they fear that Russia stands to push the AFU back to the river line with any future large scale thrust, i.e. particularly if new brigades get injected with the upcoming May/June offensives everyone expects to happen:



One of the biggest dangers in the new advancements is that they stand to slowly envelop the entire Konstantinovka region into a giant boiler, or at the least cut Konstantinovka's key Main Supply Routes:



The topmost red arrow is of course the recent Russian advancements into Chasov Yar, which threatens to cut Konstantinovka in that axis.

The outlook for the near future is for Ukraine to make a bunch of big demonstrative and showy attacks with their new armaments, i.e. HIMARs and ATACMS ammo, to give the impression of some kind of battlefield initiative. They'll likely make a few more large-scale drone attacks on Russia, Crimea, etc., in concert with ATACMS and will hope to put on a morale-boosting display, but on the real battlefield they will continue being wiped away by Russia's nibbling advances.

Will they seek to attack the Kerch bridge soon? No, I believe they will save that as a final damage control trump card when the Russian assault is peaking at its highest intensity. If Russia launches the large-scale offensives around June, and if there is a big collapse in the AFU, they will save their last gimmick for precisely that moment to try and turn perceptions around and make it look like they've dealt some kind of crippling blow to the Russian armed forces by striking the bridge. This is why they've already telegraphed the literal schedule of the Kerch attack to be precisely "before summertime" which is when they expect the Russian offensive to be launched. So look for an unprecedented Kerch attack around June, give or take a month.

On that topic, by the way, [Martyanov did write a good piece recently](#) which I mostly agree with. ATACMS will be incapable of "destroying" the bridge, as the most it could do is knock down another span/deck, which takes about two months to replace. The only way to more permanently offline it is to hit the supports, and probably with multiple projectiles, which is unlikely to happen. The Germans—who are good at this sort of thing—calculated that it would take 20-40 Taurus missiles as you'll recall.

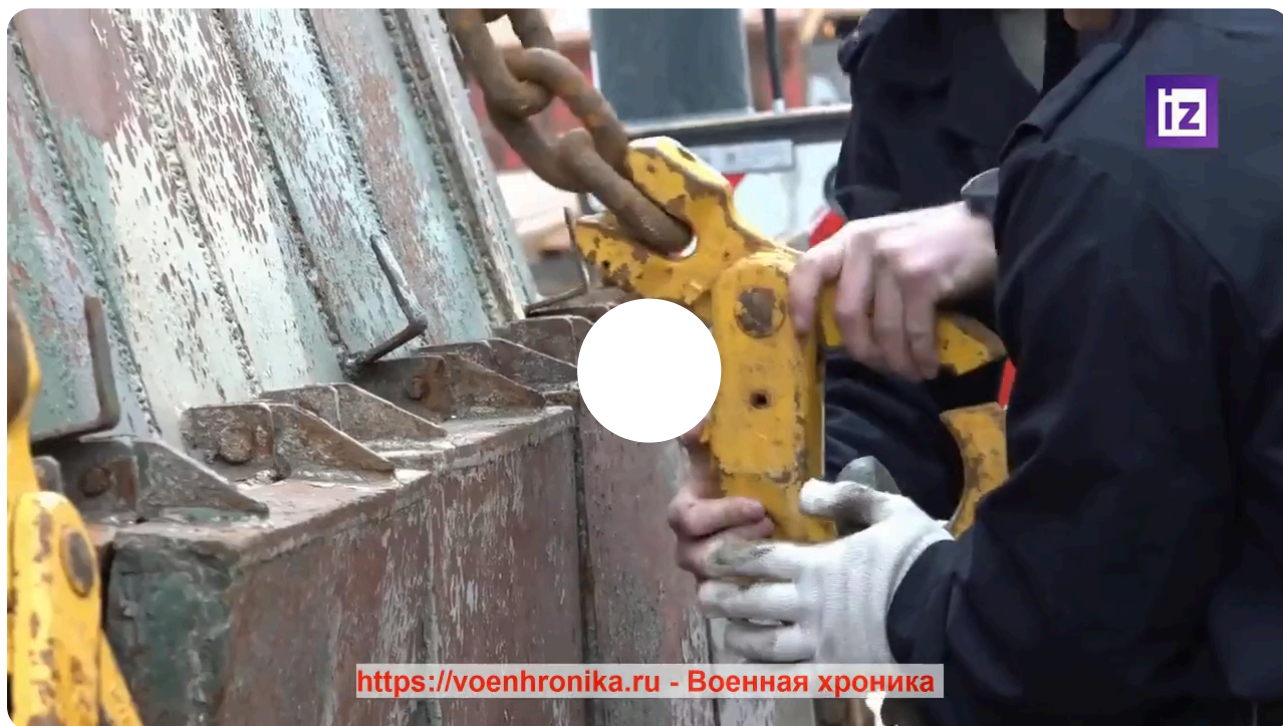
My prediction is that Ukraine knows this and will perhaps try to hit multiple spans, knocking down the bridge over a wider area, but that may not even affect the replacement time as several adjacent crews working concurrently could replace multiple spans in the same time it takes to replace one. In short, it will achieve nothing, and I'm skeptical they could even hit it to begin with, as Ukraine has rarely penetrated important areas with its missile strikes, and continues to cleverly hit less-defended areas like already-decommissioned ships or those undergoing repairs in disused parts of Crimea like Zaliv port. Not to mention that only happened because the Storm Shadows used were sea-skimming and can get close beneath radar horizon

nets, while the ATACMs has no such capability and must come directly overhead in full view of radars (though of course a saturation strike is possible).

As a final note, Russia has captured its first Abrams iteration, the M1150 armored breacher based on the Abrams:

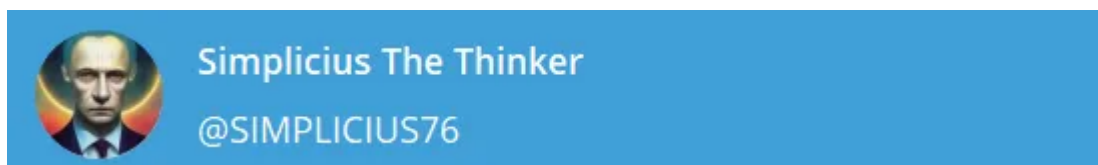


At the same time, a load of Western gear has arrived in Moscow, including the Bradleys, German 1A3 Marders, MRAPs, and M113s, to be displayed in Patriot Park:



And a captured Leopard 2A5 is being worked on, with Russian crews—whether jokingly or not—saying they'll fix it up and use it in battle. Well, reportedly it came stocked with full complement of unused ammo, so it's possible:

Folks, as a quick reminder: my only two *official* accounts are here on Substack and [my Twitter](#). Anyone messaging you or claiming to be me anywhere else is conducting fraud, particularly this person on Telegram who is not me:



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Victor 5 hrs ago

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Victor 5 hrs ago · *edited 5 hrs ago*

It was pretty obvious from the beginning, and even more so now, that aside from the nazi fanatics represented by Azov and the its ilk, Ukrainians don't want this war and are not willing to die for NATO.

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