

Russian Forces  
Appear Stalled  
And Exhausted

Ukraine and Analysts  
See Impasse in East

By MARC SANTORA  
KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian forces have stalled the Russian offensive in the eastern Donetsk region in recent months and have started to win back small patches of land, according to Ukrainian soldiers and military analysts.  
Russia still holds the initiative and conducts dozens of assaults across the eastern front every day, the soldiers and analysts say. But after more than 15 months on the offensive, Russian brigades have been depleted and Moscow is struggling to replace destroyed equipment, offering limited opportunities that Ukrainian forces are trying to exploit.  
“The Russian offensive effort in Donetsk has stalled in recent months due to poor weather, exhaustion among Russian forces and effective Ukrainian adaptation to the way Russian troops have been fighting,” said Michael Kofman, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington.

While it is too early to say the front has stabilized in Donetsk, he said, the situation has improved as Ukraine finds innovative ways to compensate for its shortage of troops.  
Ukrainian soldiers cautioned that they expected the Russians to regroup and intensify offensive efforts to take advantage of the sudden suspension of American military assistance and intelligence sharing, which threatens to undermine the Ukrainian war effort.  
The pause in intelligence is expected to be among the topics Ukrainian and American officials will discuss this week at their first high-level in-person meeting since a blowup between President Trump and President Volodymyr Zelensky at the White House on Feb. 28. Mr. Zelensky said the meeting would be held on Tuesday in Saudi Arabia, and the State Department said Secretary of State Marco Rubio would be part of those talks. (Mr. Zelensky met with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia, in the seaside city of Jeddah on Monday.)  
Western military analysts and U.S. officials believe that the order to hold back equipment is likely to take several months to have a significant impact on the front. But the loss of intelligence is already  
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Ukrainian soldiers prepared for an assault in the Donetsk region last month. They are finding ways to compensate for a troop shortage.

Trump Run-In  
Wins Zelensky  
Points at Home

By KIM BARKER  
KYIV, Ukraine — President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine was losing popularity at home for months, seen by many as a thin-skinned leader who had concentrated power around him. Political opponents saw an opening to win a future election against him. His former top general in the war against Russia had a higher approval rating.  
Enter President Trump. In recent weeks, he has echoed Moscow’s talking points on the war and called Mr. Zelensky a “dictator without elections” who “has done a terrible job.” Mr. Trump and his allies have demanded new presidential elections in Ukraine, despite the war, and humiliated Mr. Zelensky in a disastrous meeting at the White House.  
But Mr. Trump’s actions appear to have helped the Ukrainian leader at home.  
Mr. Zelensky’s approval ratings have risen, according to two recent polls, and his political oppo-  
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Keeping G.O.P. in Line With the Threat of Ruin

By ANNIE KARNI and JONATHAN SWAN  
Ahead of the opening day of the new Congress, Representative Chip Roy, who was refusing to commit to voting for Speaker Mike Johnson’s re-election, took an intense phone call from President-elect Donald J. Trump.  
Mr. Trump was blunt with Mr. Roy, the ultraconservative Texas Republican who had recently defied him and voted against his desired spending and debt deal: He would pull back on the abuse he had unspooled online, including a threat to recruit a primary opponent to unseat him, if Mr. Roy would fall in line behind Mr. Johnson — and generally get on board with the Trump agenda.  
“I will if you’re good to me,” Mr. Trump told Mr. Roy, according to two people familiar with their conversation. “But you’re not being very good to me.”  
Mr. Roy ultimately voted for Mr. Johnson, sparing the party a bloody leadership fight just before Mr. Trump took office. And these days, Mr. Roy has been supporting Mr. Trump’s agenda. In return, the president has, as promised, stopped savaging him in public.  
It was Mr. Roy who helped convene a group of fiscal conservatives to meet with Mr. Trump last week at the White House to discuss the temporary spending bill that the president needs them to support to avoid a government shutdown after midnight on Friday. And it was Mr. Roy who made  
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Trump Secures an Iron  
Grip on Congress

accessible activism activists advocacy advocate advocates affirming care all-inclusive allyship anti-racism antiracist assigned at birth assigned female at birth assigned male at birth at risk barrier barriers belong bias biased biased toward	biases biases towards biologically female biologically male BIPOC black and latinx breastfeed + people breastfeed + person chestfeed + people chestfeed + person clean energy climate crisis climate science commercial sex worker community diversity community equity confirmation bias cultural competence cultural differences cultural heritage cultural sensitivity	culturally appropriate culturally responsive DEI DEIA DEIAB DEIJ disabilities disability discriminated discrimination discriminatory disparity diverse diverse backgrounds diverse communities diverse community diverse group diverse groups diversified diversify diversifying
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**Purge of Not Just Policies, but Words to Describe Them**  
Federal agencies have issued guidance to employees on hundreds of terms to limit or avoid using. An analysis shows many of the same words being removed. Page A13.

A ‘No Exceptions’ Policy on Tariffs Might Have More Exceptions

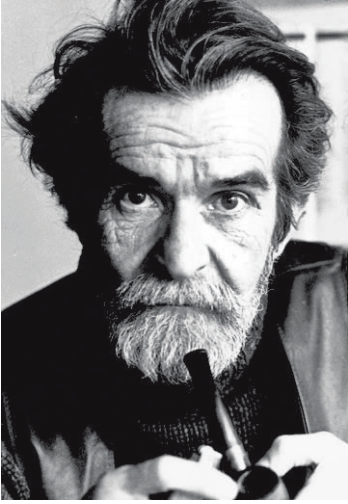
By ANA SWANSON  
As he prepares to introduce new tariffs on foreign metals this week, President Trump has vowed not to grant the types of exclusions and exemptions that were common during his first trade war.  
But he has already undercut that tough position on other tariffs. After lobbying from automakers, farmers and other industries, Mr. Trump quickly walked back the sweeping tariffs he had imposed on Tuesday on all imports from Canada and Mexico. By Thursday, he had suspended those tariffs indefinitely for all products that comply with the North American free trade deal, the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, or U.S.M.C.A. — about half of all imports from Mexico and  
nearly 40 percent of those from Canada.  
That has given industries and foreign governments an opening to lobby the administration ahead of the metals tariffs, which go into  
effect at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, as well as other levies planned for April 2.

Deals Could Weaken  
the Levies’ Power

Foreign officials have been pressing for exemptions for their steel and aluminum. In meetings in Washington on Monday, Japan’s trade minister was also expected to seek an exemption from tariffs on automobiles, which Mr. Trump has said are coming in  
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ATHOL FUGARD, 1932-2025  
Subverted Apartheid Onstage

By BRUCE WEBER  
Athol Fugard, the South African playwright whose portrayals of intimate relationships burdened by oppressive racial separatism exposed the cruel psychological torment of apartheid to an international audience, died on Saturday night at his home in Stellenbosch, a town near Cape Town. He was 92.  
His wife, Paula Fourie, said he died after a cardiac event.  
Over a long and productive career, Mr. Fugard (pronounced FEW-guard) was both repelled and fueled by the bond he felt with his homeland.  
For decades he was considered subversive by the government; at times productions of his work, with their integrated casts, were considered illegal, and his co-workers in the theater were jailed. In 1967, after his early play “The Blood Knot” appeared on British television, his passport was revoked, so that for several years he could not leave the country.  
He eventually spent many years abroad, including in the United States — he worked on productions of his plays at Yale and taught at the University of California, San Diego — yet he  
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Guilt played a powerful role in the plays Athol Fugard wrote.

INTERNATIONAL A4-11  
**Syrians Fearing Abductions**  
When the new government took over, it dismissed the Assad regime’s security forces, leaving a vacuum. Now, many are worried about their safety. PAGE A8  
**Greenland Voters Think Local**  
In Tuesday’s parliamentary election, residents of the island are focused more on everyday worries than President Trump’s takeover threats. PAGE A4  
**A Jubilee, Minus the Pope**  
For the Catholics who have descended on Rome for an event that comes every 25 years, the absence of Francis has been especially deeply felt. PAGE A9

NATIONAL A12-21  
**Staff Cuts Disrupt the V.A.**  
Clinical trials have been delayed, contracts canceled and support staff fired. Some warn of risk to veterans. PAGE A14  
**Wary of Soil After L.A. Fires**  
Federal agencies aren’t testing for contaminants, so scientists and residents are doing it themselves. PAGE A12



BUSINESS B1-5  
**Talk of Recession Sinks Stocks**  
Investors feared that tit-for-tat tariffs could raise prices, slow the economy and sow uncertainty among businesses after the president refused to rule out a downturn set off by his policies. PAGE B1  
**From Wasteland to Solar Farm**  
The Hanford Nuclear Reservation is set to become the country’s largest solar generating station, so long as President Trump doesn’t thwart it. PAGE B1

OPINION A22-23  
**Gail Collins & Bret Stephens**  
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SCIENCE TIMES D1-8  
**Covid’s Place in History**  
Five years after the pandemic started, experts see similarities and differences with other great illnesses. PAGE D1  
**Trying to Keep Cats Healthy**  
Many aspects of feline health remain a mystery. Our cat-owning reporter learned this the hard way. PAGE D1



SPORTS B6-9  
**A Pitcher’s Leaps of Thanks**  
Jeffrey Yan, trying to make the Colorado Rockies, has multipart strikeout celebrations. They’re not meant to offend, he said, but to honor his family, which has stuck with him. PAGE B6  
**Setting Up a Title Chase**  
A look at how the top teams in the country stack up as the N.C.A.A. women’s basketball tournament draws near, from upset hopefuls to Final Four contenders. PAGE B9

