**Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, July 2, 2024**

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The interplay between ongoing Russian offensive operations in the Chasiv Yar, Toretsk, and Avdiivka directions indicates that the Russian military command may intend to leverage the ongoing Toretsk push to create operational opportunities for advances in either the Chasiv Yar or Avdiivka areas. Russian preparations that can support multiple future branch plans suggest a more developed level of operational planning and foresight than the Russian command has proven capable of executing thus far in the war since early 2022. The ability of this operational planning to come to fruition, however, will be bounded by the overall poor tactical-level capabilities of Russian forces currently fighting in these areas. Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Nazar Voloshyn stated in an interview with Ukrainian outlet Suspilne Donbas on July 2 that Russian forces are beginning to storm Chasiv Yar from the Toretsk direction (south of Chasiv Yar) and have been attacking in the direction of Toretsk-Chasiv Yar using mainly small infantry groups and occasional mechanized assaults. Voloshyn's suggestion that Russian forces are trying to attack towards the southern flank of Chasiv Yar from the Toretsk area is noteworthy. If Russian forces are able to develop a larger salient in the general Shumy-Pivdenne-Pivniche-Toretsk area, then they may be able to more credibly threaten Chasiv Yar from the south, complementing ongoing offensive Russian efforts north of Chasiv Yar near Kalynivka. Russian forces have continued attacks in the area south and southeast of Chasiv Yar, particularly near Klishchiivka, Andriivka, and Kurdyumivka, suggesting that the Russian command remains interested, at least in principle, in maintaining access to the southern flank of the Chasiv Yar area. Recent Russian advances in Mayorske (east of Toretsk) affords Russian forces positions on the east (left) bank of the Siversky Donets-Donbas Canal, allowing them to advance towards Chasiv Yar from the south along one bank of the canal as opposed to trying to cross the canalizing terrain in northern and eastern Chasiv Yar.

Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets, however, linked Russian efforts in the Toretsk direction with efforts to break through to the Pokrovsk direction (also referred to as the Avdiivka direction or the area west/southwest of Toretsk). Mashovets noted on July 2 that Russian forces have intensified attacks on Toretsk in the past 24 hours and that the Russian Central Grouping of Forces (the command of which is also notably responsible for Russian troops attacking west of Avdiivka) has deployed additional battalions and assault companies near Toretsk to support ongoing offensive operations. Mashovets noted that operational factors in the Toretsk direction "are directly related" to the Avdiivka direction and assessed that Russian troops of the Central Grouping of Forces are trying to interdict Ukrainian positions along the H-32 Pokrovsk-Kostyantynivka road (a major Ukrainian ground line of communication [GLOC] that supplies Ukrainian forces in Toretsk).

Mashovets' and Voloshyn's separate observations on the prospects of Russian offensive operations near Toretsk reflect a noteworthy battlefield dynamic — the Russian command may have chosen to escalate offensive operations near Toretsk in mid-June exactly because this area offers Russian forces a flexible point of departure from which they can either attack north towards Chasiv Yar or west/southwest in the Avdiivka direction, depending on whatever route of attack the Russian command deems the most immediately promising. The apparent decision to attack near Toretsk emphasizes that the Russian command may be planning operations with more foresight and understanding of the operational situation than previously, when the Russian command pushed for incoherent offensive operations on unrelated parts of the front. The ability of the Russian command to actually bring these operational plans to bear, however, is contingent on the tactical-level performance of the troops in the Toretsk area and their ability to exploit tactical successes into operationally significant breakthroughs. As ISW previously noted, the main Russian forces concentration in the Toretsk area is formed of lower-quality forces of the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) and Territorial Troops, which will likely struggle to properly execute attacks, especially as Ukraine receives additional military aid over the coming weeks and months.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban likely used his unannounced visit to Kyiv on July 2 to posture himself as a peacemaker following Hungary's accession to the European Union (EU) Council presidency on July 1, but Orban’s efforts are very unlikely to bring about any robust peace in Ukraine. Orban met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv, and the Hungarian government readout emphasized that Orban met with Zelensky specifically to ask him to "consider a time-bound ceasefire" and "speed up the peace negotiations" given that "the rules of international diplomacy are slow and complicated." The Hungarian readout suggested that Orban specifically made this request to coincide with Hungary's EU Council presidency. Zelensky stated that he and Orban discussed bilateral issues, infrastructure, energy issues, and "how to bring a just and lasting peace closer." Ukrainian Presidential Administration Deputy Head Ihor Zhovka stated that Zelensky listened to Orban's proposal before emphasizing that Ukraine is working to draft a peace plan and hold another peace summit, which Zhovka stated Russia can attend "in one way or another." Zhovka noted that Hungary is not the first country to discuss a possible ceasefire but emphasized that "such [peace and negotiations] processes cannot be perceived in isolation." ISW continues to assess that a ceasefire in Ukraine on the current lines is unlikely to deter further Russian aggression and only allow Russia critical time to rebuild its forces and prepare for future aggression against Ukraine.

The Kremlin is waging an intensified information campaign aimed at pushing Ukraine to negotiate with Russia on Russian terms, and any Russian, Western, or other efforts to cajole Ukraine to prematurely negotiate with Russia would only weaken Ukraine and embolden further Russian aggression inside and beyond Ukraine. Orban’s recent messaging about a ceasefire could support the Kremlin’s larger strategic messaging that seeks to establish a Russian-preferable operational pause or convince Ukraine’s international partners to abandon Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin recently articulated a theory of victory that posits that gradual and indefinite Russian advances within Ukraine will eventually enable Russian victory. Putin likely assesses that Russia can protract the war indefinitely and win a war of attrition so long as he can deny decisive international support to Ukraine. Russia’s slow but steady battlefield gains since late 2023 likely reinforce Putin’s assessment and incentivize Putin to avoid any kind of true ceasefire that would end the war. Putin and other senior Russian officials have consistently reiterated that Russia is uninterested in any negotiations that do not result in further Ukrainian territorial concessions of areas that Russia does not already occupy. Freezing the current lines in Ukraine would provide Russia with operationally and strategically significant Ukrainian territory from which Russia can launch renewed aggression with an experienced military and revitalized defense industrial base.

Several Russian State Duma deputies proposed a bill that would exclude a significant number of ethnicities from Russia's "compatriots" resettlement program, undermining the Kremlin's efforts to leverage its "compatriots abroad" to offset Russian labor shortages and set informational conditions to justify potential hybrid operations against other countries with Russian and Russian-speaking populations. Just Russia Party Duma Deputy Dmitry Kuznetsov and Communist Party Duma Deputy Mikhail Matveyev authored a bill that would exclude citizens of countries formerly within the Soviet Union from using the "compatriots" program to resettle in Russia and that would limit the definition of "compatriots" eligible for resettlement as ethnicities historically living in the territory of Russia and the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). Kuznetsov and Matveyev claimed that 50 to 70 percent of applicants for the "compatriots" resettlement program in recent years are citizens of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Armenia and claimed that "several generations of citizens" of post-Soviet countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union have grown up with their own countries' "traditional, cultural, and moral values" and do not have any "blood, historical, cultural, spiritual, or any other connection" with Russia or its people. The Russian government notably eased the requirements for “compatriots” living abroad to apply to resettle in Russia in February 2024 by no longer requiring an applicant to prove their Russian-language proficiency if they previously renounced Russian citizenship; were born or permanently resided in the Soviet Union and had Soviet citizenship; or have relatives who were born or permanently resided on territory formerly part of the Soviet Union or Russian Empire. Russian ultranationalist milbloggers have been increasingly critical of the Russian government's decision to provide migrants with Russian citizenship, while others have supported this practice on the condition that migrants with acquired Russian citizenship serve in the Russian military in Ukraine. Russian ultranationalists' increasing animosity toward migrants may have influenced Kuznetsov and Matveyev to propose implementing restrictions against many citizens that would be eligible for resettlement in Russia and by extension, greatly limiting the number of people the Russian government can include in its "compatriots abroad" narrative. Setting strict definitions on Russia's classification of its "compatriots" directly undermines ongoing Kremlin efforts to set informational conditions to justify potential hybrid operations against other countries with Russian and Russian-speaking populations and to use "compatriot" resettlement to offset labor shortages and long-term population decline.

Ukrainian forces struck an ammunition depot at a Russian military base in occupied Crimea on July 1 that reportedly housed Shahed drones. Ukrainian Air Force Commander Lieutenant General Mykola Oleshchuk stated on July 2 that Ukrainian forces struck an ammunition depot in occupied Crimea on July 1. A Russian source posted a photo on July 2 purportedly of the aftermath of a Ukrainian cruise missile strike against a Shahed drone warehouse near occupied Sevastopol on the evening of July 1, and the geolocated photograph indicates that Ukrainian forces struck the base of Russian military unit 99375 near occupied Flotske (south of Sevastopol). Russian opposition outlet Astra reported on July 2 that Ukrainian forces launched at least six Storm Shadow missiles at Sevastopol on the evening of July 1 and that one missile struck the Russian Black Sea Fleet's 758th Logistics Center in occupied Sevastopol. A Crimea-based Telegram channel stated on July 1 that Russian air defense systems activated near occupied Flotske and Sevastopol and that there were explosions near an unspecified Russian military unit near Flotske. Sevastopol occupation head Mikhail Razvozhaev claimed that Russian forces shot down five unspecified air targets over the water and near Balaklava and that small fires started.

Russia may be intensifying its efforts to conduct reconnaissance and disrupt communications in the underwater and air space near NATO states. Bloomberg reported on July 1, citing three unspecified sources, that Russian Kilo-class submarines operated in unspecified areas near the Irish Sea once 18 months ago (in December 2022 or January 2023) and once at an unspecified "more recent" date. Bloomberg reported that the sources stated that these submarine movements "went beyond what UK officials had previously seen," but did not offer specifics on how the new events were anomalous. Bloomberg noted that Cork, Ireland is a landing point for the EXA Atlantic submarine cable that connects the UK and Canada and that a spokesperson for the Irish Department of Defense stated that government agencies are working to protect Ireland's data cables. Sources reportedly stated that Russian submarine deployments to the Irish Sea area could be part of efforts to identify potential weaknesses in Irish and British maritime defenses or to intimidate the UK due to British support for Ukraine. Bloomberg reported that a source noted that the varying depths of the Irish Sea would make it difficult for a Russian submarine to traverse the entire Irish Sea submerged. It is unclear why the Russian submarines were operating near the Irish Sea, but the submarines may have been conducting reconnaissance on the defense and communications of NATO members Canada and the UK.

The United Nations' International Telecommunications Union (ITU) reviewed concerns from Luxembourg, Sweden, France, and the Netherlands about recent interference to their satellite networks that jammed GPS signals, endangered air traffic control, and interrupted children's TV shows to display footage of the war in Ukraine. The ITU reported that two satellite operators both geolocated the source of the interference against French and Swedish satellite networks to near Moscow, Kaliningrad, and Pavlovka (there are numerous Pavlovkas in Russia and it is unclear to which Pavlovka, Russia the ITU is referring). ISW has also observed high levels of GPS jamming over Poland and the Baltic region since late 2023, which some analysts and experts have attributed to Russian electronic warfare (EW) activity near Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg. ISW has also observed increased reports of disruptions in air communications near the UK and Ireland. The Telegraph, citing flight tracker data, also reported on June 30 that roughly 28 percent of the UK's Royal Air Force transport and surveillance flights over Eastern Europe and 16 percent of flights over northwestern Europe between January and April 2024 experienced GPS interference. Air traffic control communications reportedly from the Shanwick Oceanic Control (overseeing the international airspace zone covering the northeastern Atlantic Ocean between the west coast of Scotland and Ireland to the southwestern coast of Iceland) indicated that a June 2024 flight between Madrid, Spain, and Toronto, Canada, was unable to ascend to a higher altitude due to apparent GPS jamming affecting other aircraft at the higher altitude. The Resilient Navigation and Timing Foundation, a nonprofit advocating for improved GPS security, noted, however, that a GPS jammer is not always able to recover after experiencing jamming and assessed that the aircraft that experienced the jamming over the Atlantic was likely flying from the Baltic region or Middle East and that one of its GPS receivers had not recovered by the time it entered the Shanwick Oceanic Control Zone. Anomalous Russian submarine activity in the Irish Sea and apparent Russian GPS manipulations in a nearby area and across much of NATO airspace may not be directly related, but both represent Russian efforts to interfere with the water and air space of NATO members.

Russian authorities appear to be publicly fixating on crackdowns against fight clubs and restricting the niqab to signal that Russian authorities are adequately combatting terrorist threats in the North Caucasus instead of addressing systemic issues of Islamist extremism in the region. Russian outlets reported on June 28 that security forces searched a mixed martial arts (MMA) sports club with links to former Russian MMA fighter Khabib Nurmagomedov in Dagestan Republic since an attacker involved in the June 23 terrorist attacks in Dagestan reportedly trained at the sports club. Russian outlet RBK reported on July 1 that the Russian Federal Tax Service (FNS) seized Nurmagomedov's bank