**Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, July 4, 2024**

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July 4, 2024, 5:45pm ET

Russian President Vladimir Putin explicitly rejected Russian participation in any meaningful negotiations on a ceasefire agreement, instead demanding Ukraine's "irreversible" "demilitarization" as a precondition for any ceasefire agreement. Putin is thus demanding that Ukraine effectively surrender in advance of any ceasefire. Putin commented on the prospects of a negotiated ceasefire in Ukraine at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, on July 4, but instead of offering his typical feigned interest in such negotiations he outright rejected any ceasefire negotiation process. Putin has repeatedly portrayed the West as his envisioned negotiating partner in a ceasefire agreement in order to prompt Western concessions on Ukrainian sovereignty, but Putin notably dismissed all intermediary parties as possible mediators for an agreement between Ukraine and Russia. Putin also dismissed the Verkhovna Rada as a possible point of contact for negotiations despite previously claiming that the body was the only legitimate Ukrainian entity that Russia could negotiate with. Putin has now labeled all Ukrainian governing institutions illegitimate or unsuitable for negotiations and has dismissed the idea of third parties participating in negotiations — de facto rejecting any realistic process for meaningfully negotiating a ceasefire agreement.

Putin instead highlighted his demand for Ukraine's "demilitarization" as a primary prerequisite for any ceasefire agreement, demanding that Ukraine agree to "demilitarization" measures that would be irreversible. Putin argued that Russia cannot allow the Ukrainian military to take advantage of a ceasefire to reconstitute its forces. Putin notably did not address the near-certainty that Russian forces would take advantage of a potential ceasefire in exactly such a way, and ISW continues to assess that Russia would use the respite of a ceasefire to reconstitute and expand its forces and to further mobilize its defense industrial base (DIB) for future aggression aiming to destroy the Ukrainian state. Putin's rejection of any ceasefire agreement short of Ukrainian capitulation further illustrates that he is confident in his assessment that Russia can pursue victory by continuing creeping advances in Ukraine, outlasting Western support for Ukraine, and winning a war of attrition against Ukrainian forces.

Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) officers reportedly detained the commander of the Russian 83rd Guards Airborne Assault (VDV) Brigade, Colonel Artyom Gorodilov, on fraud charges on July 3 following reports of the brigade suffering heavy losses in the Kharkiv direction in June 2024. Kremlin-affiliated business outlet Kommersant stated that FSB military counterintelligence officers detained Gorodilov in Ryazan Oblast on a charge of especially large-scale fraud and transported Gorodilov to the Russian Investigative Committee's headquarters in Moscow. Russian media reported that Gorodilov denied the charge and stated that he will seek acquittal in the future, and that the Russian 235th Garrison Military Court sent Gorodilov to a pre-trial detention center. Gorodilov reportedly served as commander of the Russian 234th Guards VDV Regiment (76th VDV Division) from 2019 until an unspecified recent date, and Russian media first introduced Gorodilov as commander of the 83rd VDV Brigade in May 2024. The New York Times reported in December 2022 that elements of the 234th VDV Regiment under Gorodilov's leadership committed massacres of Ukrainian civilians in Bucha, Kyiv Oblast in March 2022. If Gorodilov was indeed the commander of the 83rd VDV Brigade at the time of his arrest, then the Russian high command gave him increased responsibilities as commander of a separate brigade rather than of a regiment subordinated to a division between Russian atrocities in Bucha and the Russian Kharkiv Oblast offensive. Ukrainian officials recently reported that the Russian military command attempted to withdraw elements of the 83rd VDV Brigade from the Kharkiv direction after suffering significant losses that rendered the elements

Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Russian military command may be punishing Gorodilov for what Putin perceives as gross incompetence that failed to achieve its military objectives while causing the deaths of a significant number of "elite" Russian servicemembers in the Kharkiv direction, as Russian VDV troops were widely considered elite prior to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the Russian military command may still consider them to be elite. Russian authorities have recently arrested a series of Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) officials and high-ranking military officers on criminal charges seemingly unrelated to their positions, including recently announcing charges of forgery and high treason against former 58th Combined Arms Army (CAA) Commander Major General Ivan Popov. Putin appears to be willing to accept low levels of incompetence in exchange for loyalty but continues to levy seemingly unrelated criminal charges against Russian officials who transgress beyond acceptable levels of incompetence and insubordination.

Russian President Vladimir Putin supported the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO) efforts to expand its presence in Central Asia and will likely use an increased SCO presence as one of its levers to expand Russian influence in the region. Putin commended on July 4 the SCO's development of its Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure and the official establishment of the SCO Anti-Drug Center in Dushanbe — an initiative that Tajik President Emomali Rahmon had proposed in 2019. SCO General Secretary Zhang Ming stated that Central Asia is the "core" of the SCO and that peace and prosperity in Central Asia is closely linked to the SCO's stability and development. Putin also stated his support for reviving the SCO-Afghanistan contact group and noted that Russia has received signals from the Taliban that it may be ready to help Russia combat terrorism.

The US Department of Defense (DoD) announced the purchase of $2.2 billion worth of US-produced air defense interceptors and an aid package worth $150 million for Ukraine on July 3. The DoD stated that it will purchase $2.2 billion worth of recently produced PATRIOT and NASAMS air defense missiles for Ukraine to help protect the Ukrainian people and Ukraine's critical infrastructure from Russian drone and missile strikes. The DoD has yet to announce that it is sending these air defense missiles to Ukraine. The DoD stated that it is also provided an aid package worth $150 million from the Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA), which includes: HAWK air defense missiles; HIMARS ammunition; 155mm and 105mm artillery shells; 81mm mortar rounds; Tube-Launched, Optically-Tracked, Wire-Guided (TOW) missiles; Javelin and AT-4 anti-armor systems; small arms ammunition and grenades; demolition equipment and munitions; tactical vehicles and air navigation systems; and space parts, maintenance, and other equipment. The DoD noted that the PDA package is the Biden Administration's 60th tranche of equipment provided to Ukraine since August 2021.