

Russian Security State

GOVT-5519/IPOL-3519/REES-5519/SEST-6763
Lecture 25. Russian-Ukrainian War, 2022-

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Today's objectives

1. *Consider:* the meaning of “military victory”
2. *Take stock:* battlefield dynamics since February 24, 2022
3. *Discuss:* is a negotiated settlement possible in 2025?

Russian-Ukrainian War in Context

War Makes the State

1. Events of 2014 changed Ukraine & Russia
 - a) Ukraine: political generation change, emerging pro-West consensus
 - b) Russia: autocratic consolidation, diplomatic isolation, repression
 - c) both: militarization of society
2. Russia's Imperial Syndrome (Lectures 2, 3)
 - a) security from foreign threat requires strategic depth → territorial conquest
 - b) territorial conquest creates new political realities (e.g. new borders, new populations, new enemies)
 - c) adapting to these “new realities” transforms state and society (e.g. serfdom, colonialism, tyranny)
 - d) legitimacy of political-economic status quo rests on foreign threat



Figure 1: New colonies



Figure 2: New servitors



Figure 3: New powers

Is “Military Victory” Possible?

What is “Military Victory”?

1. Defining “victory” in war
 - a) attainment of political aims for which one went to war
 - b) can be obtained through force or coercive diplomacy
2. Defining “military victory”
 - a) imposition of political terms by rendering one's enemy incapable of further resistance.
 - b) can be obtained only through force

Pure “military victories” almost never happen

1. Strategic level
 - a) extremely rare for losing army to be fully (or mostly) destroyed in war
2. Tactical level
 - a) military formations are almost never fully annihilated in combat



Figure 4: Not happening

Personnel losses in interstate wars since 1816

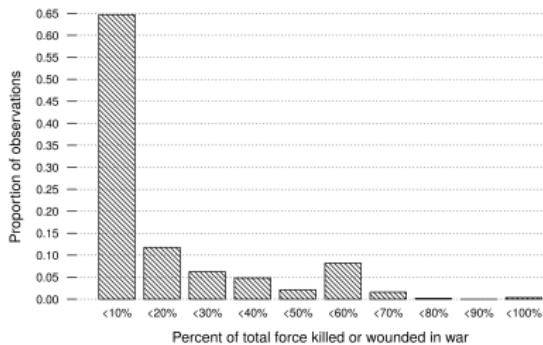


Figure 5: Total casualties per war

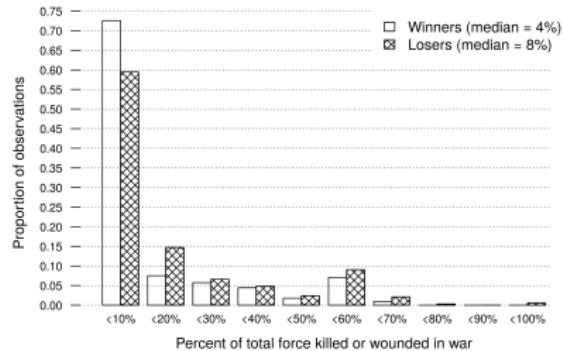


Figure 6: War winners vs. losers

Almost all **wars end** before belligerents exhaust military potential

- loss rates higher for median war loser than for winner, but...
- most belligerents since 1816 lost less than 10% of armed forces
- median war participant lost 4.5% of overall force strength

Personnel losses in conventional ground battles since 1939

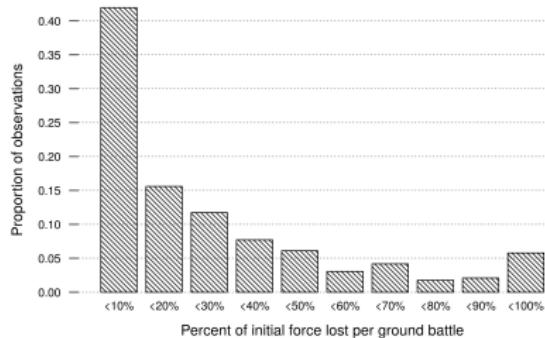


Figure 7: Casualties per battle

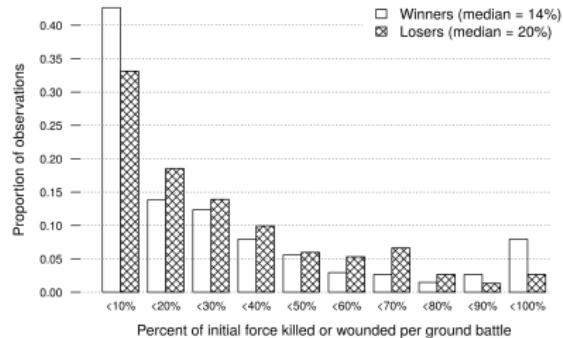


Figure 8: War winners vs. losers

Most **battles end** before belligerents exhaust military potential

- high losses more common in battles than in wars, but...
- median battle participant lost only 14% of available forces
- loss rates not strongly predictive of strategic-level outcomes

How does this end?

1. Ending war is a choice
 - a) abstain/exit from combat
 - b) continue to fight
2. Bargaining model of war
 - a) almost all military outcomes, at all levels of war, are choices that reflect (tacit) bargaining
 - b) war begins if sides can't reach deal
 - c) fighting reveals information about capabilities & resolve, updating perceptions of bargaining leverage
 - d) war ends when these perceptions yield agreement on terms of deal
3. Purpose of violence
 - c) establish credibility of threats
 - d) ... not to neutralize enemy's capacity to continue fighting

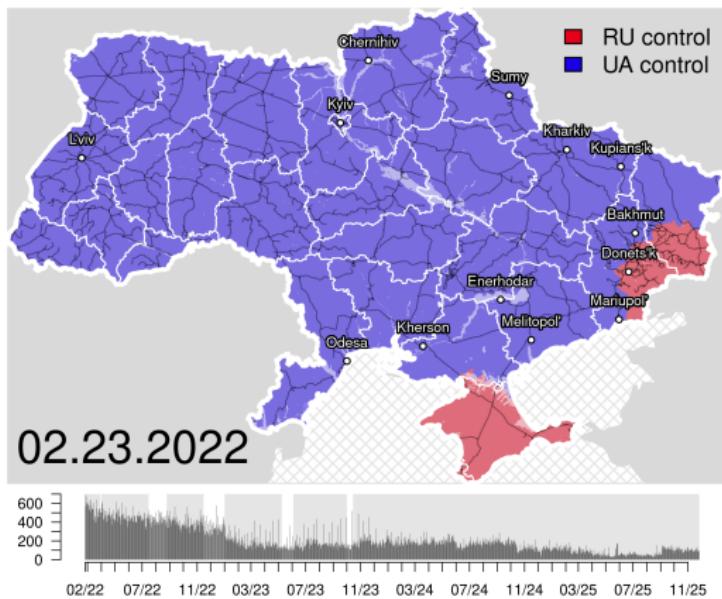


Figure 9: Flight & fight

Overview of Main Events

Eve of invasion (Feb 23 2022)

1. Russians occupy 7.5% of Ukraine's territory
2. Ukraine's most capable units operating in JFO area (Donets'k, Luhans'k)
3. static, defensive battles, artillery duels
4. 14,200 casualties (most in 2014-2015)



Russia's objective

1. "demilitarization & denazification"
2. translation:
 - a) regime change
 - b) (in)direct rule

Figure 10: Operational tempo (events/day)

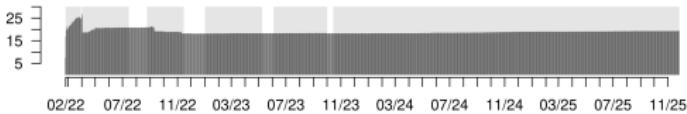


Figure 11: Percent territory under occupation

Battle for Kyiv (Feb-Mar 2022)

1. Russians advance along four axes (N, NE, SE, SW)
2. supported by strikes against C2 & AAD
3. goal: seize Kyiv, overthrow govt
4. but plan based on flawed assumptions (no resistance)
5. successes in south
6. but northern front collapses
7. 25% under Russian control (at peak)

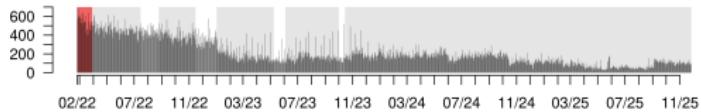
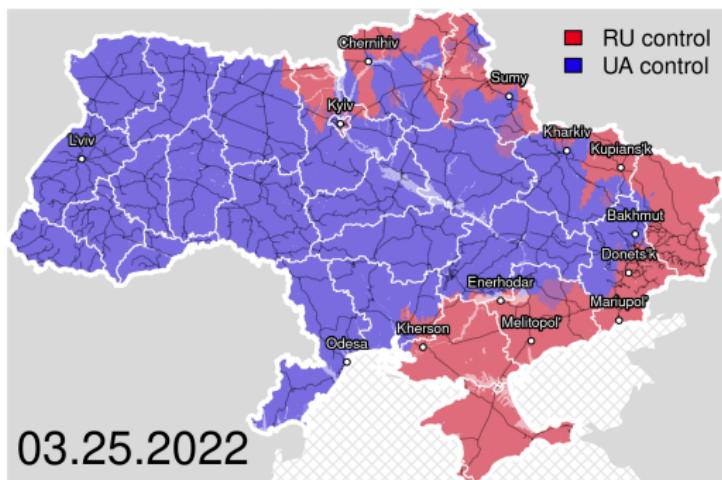


Figure 12: Operational tempo (events/day)

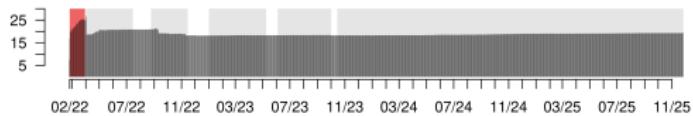


Figure 13: Percent territory under occupation

Battle for Donbas

(Apr-Jul 2022)

1. switch to more targeted campaign to capture Donbas
2. Russians have 12:1 advantage in fires
3. but territorial gains limited
4. siege of Mariupol completed in May
5. Lysychans'k and Sieverodonets'k captured in June/July
6. 20.8% under Russian control (culmination)

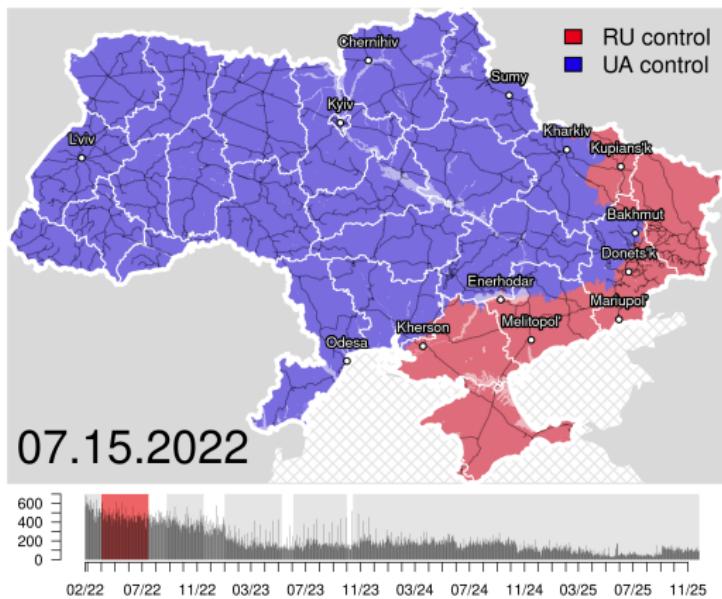


Figure 14: Operational tempo (events/day)

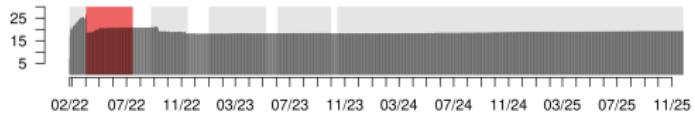


Figure 15: Percent territory under occupation

Ukraine's fall offensive (Aug-Nov 2022)

1. using local numerical advantage, Ukraine liberates most of Kharkiv oblast
2. Kherson liberated in November
3. Russia shifts to defensive posture
4. Russia announces mobilization
5. Russian strike campaign vs. critical infrastructure
6. 18.2% under Russian control (culmination)

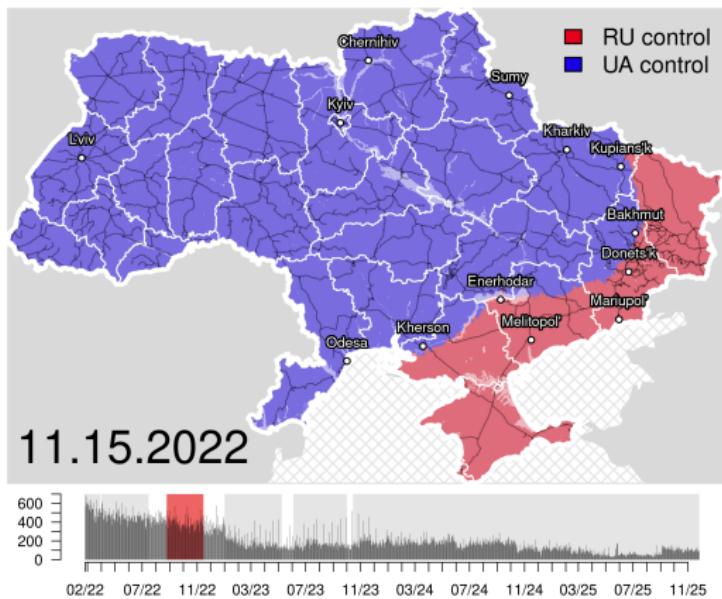


Figure 16: Operational tempo (events/day)

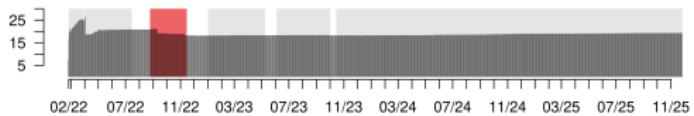


Figure 17: Percent territory under occupation

Russia's winter offensive (Jan-May 2023)

1. limited to Donbas
2. attempt to envelop Ukrainian forces from NE and S
3. main efforts around Bakhmut, Svatove, Kreminna, Vuhledar, Avdiivka
4. envelopment not achieved
5. small territorial gains (around Bakhmut, Kupians'k)
6. 18.3% under Russian control (culmination)

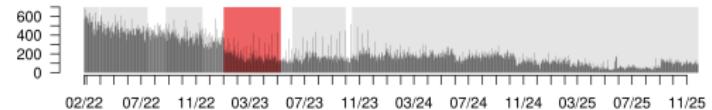
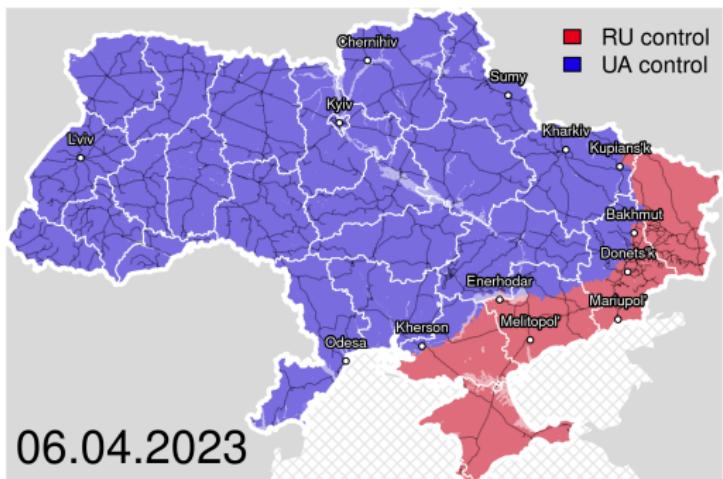


Figure 18: Operational tempo (events/day)

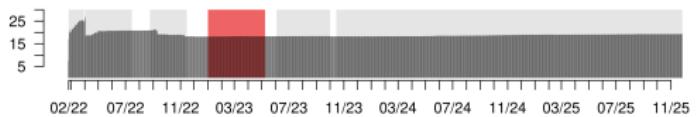


Figure 19: Percent territory under occupation

Ukraine's 2023 offensive (Jun-Oct 2023)

1. three main axes:
Melitopol, Berdyansk,
Bakhmut
2. heavily fortified
Russian positions,
dynamic defense
3. local Russian
counteroffensive
around Kupians'k
4. breakthrough not
achieved
5. very small territorial
gains (about 10 km)
6. 18.3% under Russian
control (culmination)

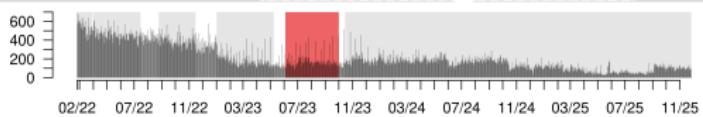
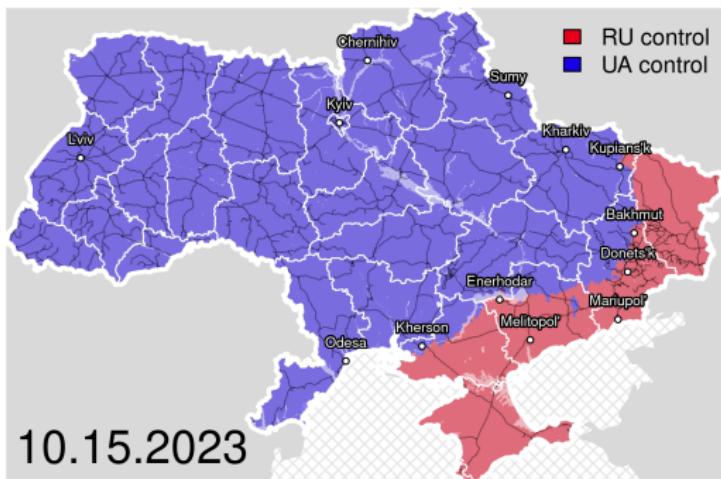


Figure 20: Operational tempo (events/day)

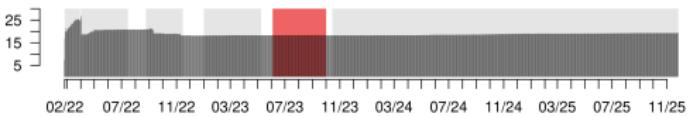


Figure 21: Percent territory under occupation

Russia's long offensive (Oct 2023 -)

1. main axes: Pokrovs'k, Chasiv Yar, Kupians'k
2. local pinning actions to divert Ukraine's resources
3. active defense
4. tactical adaptations: small-unit assaults by disposable convict infantry, integration of UAVs, fires, EW
5. incremental Russian gains at high cost
6. multiple local breakthroughs
7. 19.4% under Russian control (current)

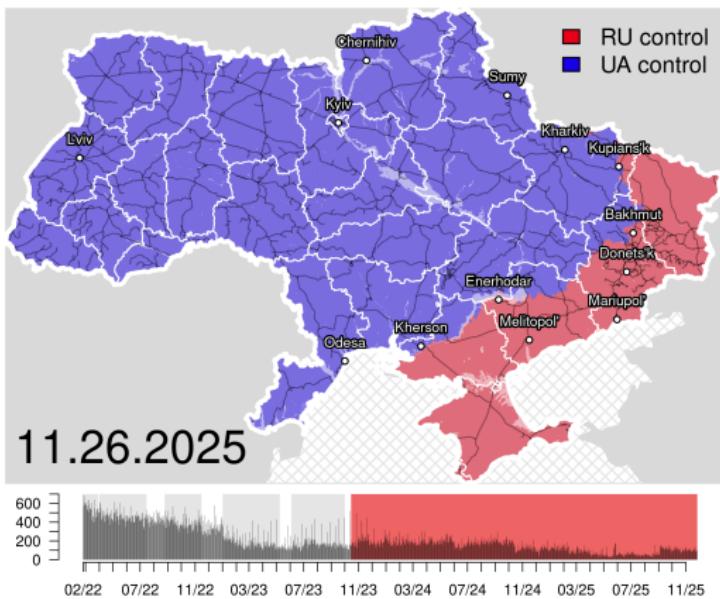


Figure 22: Operational tempo (events/day)

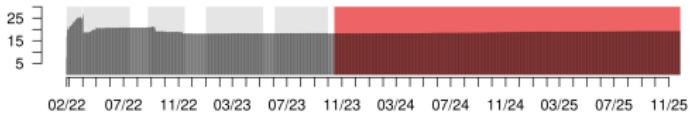


Figure 23: Percent territory under occupation

How War Ends

What Would a Negotiated Settlement Look Like?

Opening bids (March, April 2022)

Russia's terms

1. International
 - a) no Ukraine in NATO
2. Military ("de-militarization")
 - a) max 50,000 troops in Ukraine army
 - b) no long-range strike
 - c) no foreign mil presence
3. Political ("de-nazification")
 - a) regime change in Kyiv
 - b) constitutional reforms (Russian language status)
4. Economic
 - a) sanctions lifted
 - b) Ukraine pays reparations
5. Borders
 - a) L/DNR → "independent"

Ukraine's terms

1. International
 - a) security guarantees (third party enforcement of Ru-Ua peace treaty)
2. Military
 - a) Ru withdraws all forces
3. Political
 - a) POWs, deportees return
 - b) war crimes tribunals
4. Economic
 - a) Russia pays reparations
5. Borders
 - a) restoration of 1991 borders, including Crimea

Most recent positions (Nov, Dec 2025)

Russia's terms

1. International
 - a) no Ukraine in NATO
2. Military ("de-militarization")
 - a) max 600,000 troops in Ukraine army (**softened**)
 - b) demilitarized zones (**new**)
 - c) no long-range strike
 - d) no foreign military presence
3. Political ("de-nazification")
 - a) elections (**softened?**)
 - b) constitutional reforms
4. Economic
 - a) sanctions lifted
 - b) reparations unclear (?)
5. Borders
 - a) L/DNR + Crimea + annexed regions → RF

Ukraine's terms

1. International
 - a) security guarantees
2. Military
 - a) ~~Russia withdraws all forces~~ (**abandoned**)
 - b) long-range strike and air defense (**new**)
3. Political
 - a) POWs, deportees return
 - b) war crimes tribunals (?)
4. Economic
 - a) reconstruction aid (**new**)
 - b) energy security (**new**)
5. Borders
 - a) ~~restoration of 1991 borders~~ (**abandoned**)

Discussion: Is a peace deal possible in 2025?

True or false?

1. Russia is ready to talk
2. Ukraine is ready to talk
3. There exists a deal whose terms both sides would prefer to war
4. Russia and Ukraine both expect the other to honor the deal

If any of the above is “false”, what can be done to make it “true”?

NEXT AND FINAL MEETING

Group Activity 2 (Tu, Dec. 9)

- mission analysis staff briefing: **Suwałki Corridor Red Team**
- 75 minutes: 60 minute briefing + 15 minute Q&A
- what I will be looking for:
 - a) clarity
 - b) organization
 - c) cohesiveness
 - d) coherence
 - e) concision