



RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

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**NIGMA
CONSEIL**

Security & Technology

PREAMBLE

Unravelling the Tumultuous Conflict: A Comprehensive Overview of the Ukraine-Russia War's Key Events and Notable Arms Transfers in July

In the volatile landscape of international relations, few conflicts have captured the world's attention quite like the Ukraine-Russia War. Amidst the relentless struggle for territorial control and political influence, the month of July has been witness to a series of pivotal moments that have shaped the trajectory of this protracted conflict. This report aims to shed light on the crucial events that unfolded in July, delving into the heart of the crisis and highlighting the main arms transfers to Ukraine. Through a meticulous examination of these key events, we seek to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the ongoing hostilities and their far-reaching implications on regional and global stability.

MILITARY

Over the last few months, the Ukrainian military has made significant strides in expanding its own arsenal, particularly with the development and deployment of nautical drones across Ukraine, as exemplified by their use at the Crimea port. The deployment of nautical drones in the Crimea port has proven to be a game-changer for the Ukrainian military. These advanced underwater vehicles equipped with surveillance and weapon systems have allowed Ukraine to strike strategically and precisely against Russian naval assets. The destructive power of these drones has demonstrated the effectiveness of Ukrainian innovation and technology in asymmetric warfare.

However, it is important to acknowledge that Russia still possesses more extensive military resources in terms of conventional weaponry. The Russian Armed Forces boast a formidable array of tanks, artillery, aircraft, and naval assets, giving them a significant advantage in terms of sheer firepower and military might. Despite Ukraine's advancements, the disparity in resources remains a major challenge for the Ukrainian military.

Amidst the ongoing conflict, the prospect of negotiations between Ukraine and Russia is not entirely excluded. Diplomatic efforts have been underway, with talks initiated between Ukraine and the United States. The involvement of the US as a mediator opens up the possibility of finding a peaceful resolution to the crisis. Negotiations could provide a platform for discussing crucial issues, de-escalating tensions, and seeking compromises that may lead to a cessation of hostilities.



PREAMBLE

ECONOMY

The ongoing war in Ukraine prompted various countries to impose sanctions on Russia as a response to its actions in the region. These sanctions have targeted specific sectors of the Russian economy, involving asset freezes and travel bans on Russian officials and oligarchs, as well as imposing trade restrictions. The primary objective has been to apply economic pressure on Russia and address the conflict in Ukraine. However, assessing the effectiveness of sanctions is complex and multifaceted. While the sanctions did put significant pressure on the Russian economy, leading to capital flight and reduced economic growth, their full impact on Russia's behaviour and the conflict's resolution remained subject to ongoing debate. Unintended consequences, such as hardships on innocent civilians and businesses in Russia, also raised concerns. Moreover, Russia's ability to adapt and seek alternative trade partners might have mitigated some of the sanctions' intended effects. Nevertheless, the international community's continued assessment of their impact was essential to gauge their long-term efficacy in influencing Russia's actions and fostering regional stability.

POLITICAL PLAN

The political landscape in Ukraine and Russia has been marked by ongoing tensions and geopolitical complexities. Ukraine has been striving to strengthen its ties with Western nations and align itself more closely with the European Union and NATO. The country has been focused on implementing reforms to enhance its democratic institutions and bolster its position on the international stage. On the other hand, Russia's actions have resulted in increased isolation from the international community due to its annexation of Crimea and its involvement in the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Economic sanctions and political pressure imposed by various countries and international organizations have contributed to Russia's isolation. However, despite this isolation, Russia has maintained a significant presence through its private military contractor, the Wagner Group, which operates in various regions across the globe.

The Wagner Group has been linked to Russia's government and has been involved in military interventions and conflicts in Syria, Libya, and other regions. This covert presence allows Russia to exert influence beyond its borders, often without overtly engaging its own military forces. The Wagner Group's activities raise concerns among Western nations about Russia's efforts to expand its influence and undermine stability in other countries.

UKRAINE: CIVILIAN CASUALTY: JULY 2023

According to the recent report released by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Ukraine experienced a notable surge in civilian casualties this month, with a recorded total of 748 incidents. The report indicated that a significant majority, approximately 96% of these casualties, were attributed to the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects.

MAJOR KEY EVENTS

July 1st 2023: Ukraine's counteroffensive hobbled by a lack of firepower; Belarus president says Russian nuclear weapons in his country will not be used

July 2nd 2023: President Zelenskyy warns of 'serious threat' at Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant

July 3rd 2023: Ukraine claims to be advancing amid 'fierce fighting' on the eastern and southern fronts

July 4th 2023: Moscow briefly closes the airport amid reports of a drone attack

July 5th 2023: Russian strikes target military funeral in Kharkiv; Ukraine accuses Russia of planning 'provocation' at Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant

July 6th 2023: Five people were killed in a Russian missile attack that hit an apartment building in Lviv overnight

July 7th 2023: 10 people killed in Lviv missile strike; US confirms they will be sending cluster munitions to Ukrainians to Ukraine

July 8th 2023: President Zelenskyy secures Turkey's backing for Nato membership

July 9th 2023: President Zelenskyy announces the return of Mariupol commanders from Turkey

July 10th 2023: Ukrainian forces claim to have registered 'a definite advance' on the southern flank of Bakhmut; an investigation suggests Russia has lost 47,000 troops in Ukraine so far

July 11th 2023: Secretary General of NATO Stoltenberg cautions Russia over its nuclear rhetoric

July 12th 2023: G7 members signed a joint declaration outlining long-term security and economic support for Ukraine

July 13th 2023: At least four were injured in an overnight attack on Kyiv

July 14th 2023: Ukraine claims to have shot down 16 drones overnight; Pentagon says Wagner mercenaries no longer participating in Ukraine

July 15th 2023: President Zelenskyy says Russia doing everything it can to stop Ukrainian troop advance

July 16th 2023: Ukraine and Russia accuse each other of shelling civilians

July 17th 2023: 'Fierce battles' in eastern Ukraine as fighting intensifies, Kyiv says; Russia seizes control of shares in Danone and Carlsberg subsidiaries

July 18th 2023: Russia says it carried out 'revenge' strikes on Odesa and Mykolaiv after Crimea bridge was attacked; Kremlin warns it will be a risk for Ukraine to ship grain without Russian security guarantees

July 19th 2023: Russia attacks again the Ukrainian port of Odesa after pulling out of grain deal; fire reported at the military base in Crimea

July 20th 2023: Third night of Russian strikes on port cities of Mykolaiv and Odesa damages property and causes multiple injuries; one person killed in Ukrainian drone-attack on occupied Crimea

July 21st 2023: Agricultural produce destroyed in latest Russian strike on Odesa; US-supplied cluster bombs now confirmed to be in use by Ukraine

MAJOR KEY EVENTS

July 22nd 2023: President Putin says it will use 'all means at its disposal' to defend Belarus after Warsaw moves troops to the east

July 23rd 2023: Ukrainian drone attack on an ammunition depot in Crimea prompts evacuation, bridge closure; Putin and Lukashenko set to meet in St Petersburg

July 24th 2023: Drones damage buildings in Moscow city centre; Russia attacks Odesa again, destroying a grain depot and injuring four port employees

July 25th 2023: Russia says it repelled a drone attack on a patrol boat in the Black Sea; Ukraine claims small advance in the Bakhmut area

July 26th 2023: The EU agreed to ban exports of battlefield equipment and aviation parts to Belarus, expanding sanctions on the Russian ally for its involvement in Russia's war against Ukraine.

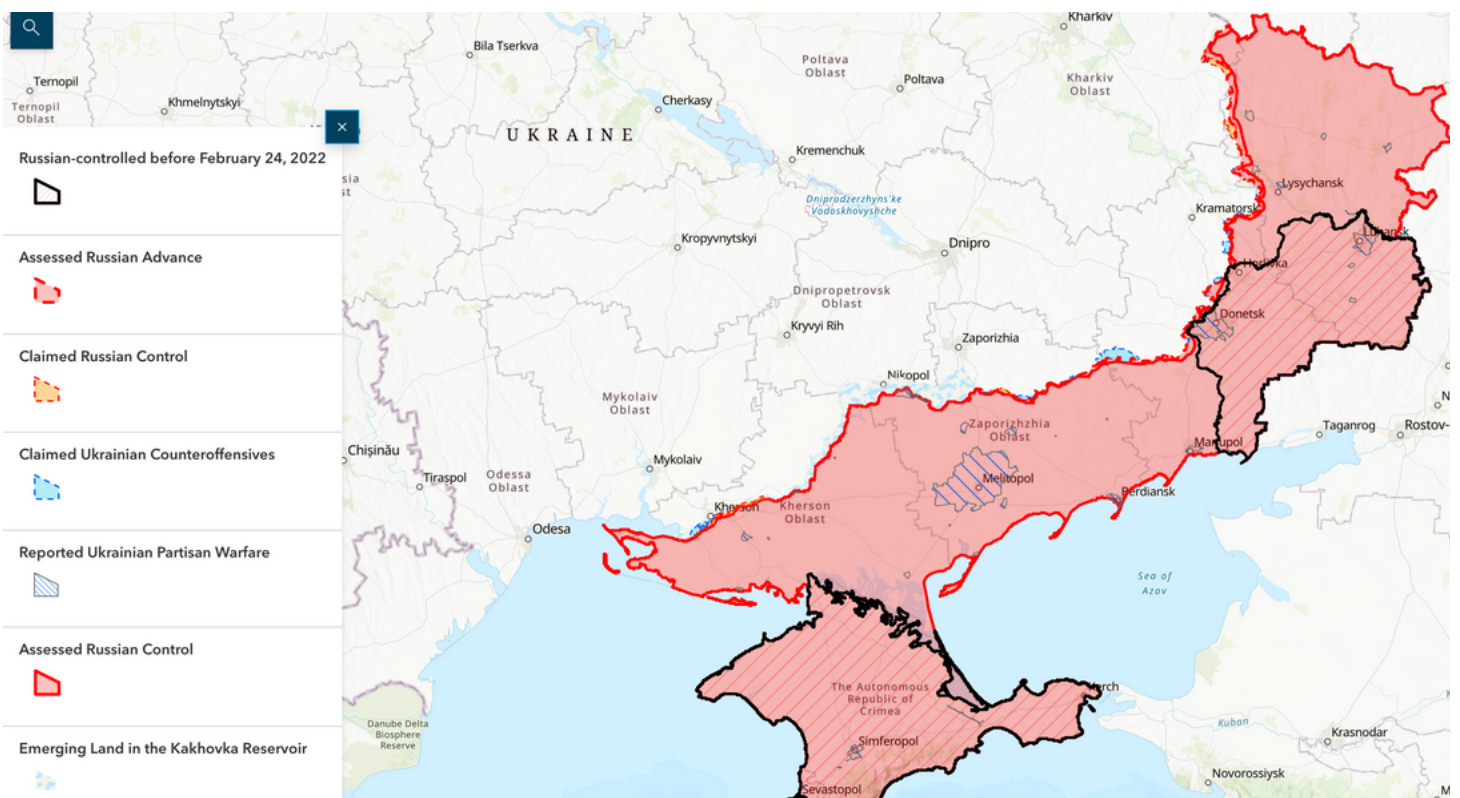
July 27th 2023: A security guard at Odesa port was killed after a Russian strike; President Zelenskyy visits Dnipro in southeastern Ukraine

July 28th 2023: Ukrainian soldiers say they have recaptured the village of Staromaiorske; Yevgeny Prigozhin appeared to attend the Russia-Africa summit in St Petersburg

July 29th 2023: Russian missile strike on Dnipro injures nine and partially destroys apartment block; Moscow says it shot down Ukrainian missiles in southern Russia.

July 30th 2023: Putin says Russia 'building up power' of its navy; drone attack on Moscow damages two office blocks.

July 31st 2023: At least four people have been killed in Kryvyi Rih, and two people killed in occupied Donetsk, after multiple strikes across Ukraine





ARMS TRANSFER TO UKRAINE

July 1st 2023: Slovakia and Ukraine will jointly develop a 155mm self-propelled howitzer.

July 6th 2023: Romania has confirmed that they will create F-16 training hub in Ukraine to train the country's pilots

Finland announced a \$105 million EUR military assistance package to Ukraine, including anti-aircraft weapons and ammunition, and other items

July 7th 2023: The United States announced a \$800 million security assistance package for Ukraine.

The Czech Republic announced that they will be providing additional attack helicopters, additional large-calibre ammunition, and flight simulators for the training of F-16 pilots

The Council of the European Union agreed with the European Parliament on the Ammunition Production Support Act

July 9th 2023: Poland secretly delivered 12 Mi-24 helicopters to Ukraine

July 11th 2023: France pledged 50 SCALP long-range missiles to Ukraine (during NATO Summit)

The United Kingdom proposed a new aid package with 70 combat and logistic vehicles, a \$64.7 million USD support package for equipment repair, and training for Ukrainian pilots on the F-16 platform and more

July 12th 2023: Germany announced its "Vilnius summit package" (\$770 million) which includes rounds of artillery ammunition, two Patriot missile launchers, 40 Marder infantry fighting vehicles, and more

Norway announced the transfer of 1000 Black Hornet small reconnaissance drones and two NASAMS missile systems

Canada contributed an additional \$410 million to support Ukraine in cyber security, personnel training, and in training pilots on the F-16

Australia donated 30 additional Bushmaster armoured personnel carriers

Japan promised drone detection systems for Ukraine as well as \$30 million in more non-lethal aid



ARMS TRANSFER TO UKRAINE

July 13th 2023: **Bulgaria** pledged 100 BTR-60 armored personnel carriers to Ukraine and was promised \$200 million in American air defense systems in return

July 14th 2023: **The United States** bought 23 retired MIM-23 Hawk anti-air systems with missiles from Taiwan and will refurbish them and send them to Ukraine

July 16th 2023: **The United States** officially approved European countries' commitments to train Ukrainian pilots on F-16 fighter jets

July 18th 2023: **Belgium, Luxembourg,** and the **Netherlands** announced they will jointly support an initiative to refurbish and send M113 armoured personnel carriers to Ukraine

July 19th 2023: **The United States** announced a \$1.3 billion aid package for Ukraine - 4 NASAMS missile systems and munitions, 152mm artillery rounds, mine clearing equipment, TOW missiles, Phoenix Ghost & Switchblade Unmanned Aerial Systems, 50 tactical vehicles to recover equipment, and more

July 24th 2023: **Lithuania** has promised €200 million in aid to Ukraine from 2024-26. This includes lethal & non-lethal equipment, military training, financial contributions & aid for the repair of military equipment

July 25th 2023: **The United States** announced a \$400 billion aid package for Ukraine, which includes munitions for Patriot and NASAM systems as well as HIMARS, Stingers, Javelins, 155mm and 105mm artillery, 28 million rounds of small arms ammunition and grenades

NB: WHILE THIS LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE, IT PROVIDES A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW OF ARMS TRANSFERS IN UKRAINE DURING THE MONTH OF JULY



WHAT TO WATCH IN AUGUST

WAGNER GROUP

There are indications that the Wagner Group is gradually replacing the Russian military as the primary training partner for the Belarusian military. The Belarusian Ministry of Defense revealed on July 30 that Wagner personnel conducted company-level training with elements from multiple Belarusian mechanized brigades. This training focused on tactical manoeuvres, concealment from enemy UAVs, and coordination between different military units. Traditionally, Belarusian forces conducted exercises with Russian trainers and planners, but the Wagner Group seems to be taking on a more prominent role in this aspect.

Following the failed rebellion of Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin, it is likely that the Russian Ministry of Defense has succeeded in recruiting some Wagner personnel. Prigozhin himself ordered the remaining Wagner fighters to assemble in Belarus by August 5. He also announced that the Wagner Group has ceased recruitment in Russia, asserting that the organization possesses sufficient reserves and does not require additional personnel.

IRAN & BELARUS

Amidst their mutual support for Russia's war in Ukraine, Iran and Belarus are strengthening their bilateral cooperation. Belarusian Defense Minister Lieutenant General Viktor Khrenin visited Iran on July 31 and met with Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani. They signed a Memorandum of Understanding and a bilateral military cooperation plan for 2023, potentially involving discussions on arms deals and even the production of Shahed drones in Belarus.

KYIV & WASHINGTON

Ukrainian Presidential Administration Chief of Staff Andriy Yermak announced on July 30 that Kyiv and Washington will initiate consultations on providing Ukraine with "security guarantees" during the week of August 6 – 13. These guarantees are aimed at supporting Ukraine's recovery and deterring future Russian aggression. The measures may include financial support for Ukraine and sanctions against Russia.

RUSSIAN WEAPON DEMANDS

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu delivered standard comments emphasizing that the Russian state fully supports long-term force-generation efforts and meets weapons demand through domestic production and international cooperation. Shoigu also mentioned the signing of defense contracts worth over 433 billion rubles (\$4.7 billion) with defense enterprises at the Army-2023 international military-technical forum, signifying ongoing efforts in this area.