
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- A [Chatham House study](#) of Russian nuclear intimidation argues that Western support for Ukraine should be guided by informed assessments of Russia's actual nuclear posture and by the experience of Moscow's reaction to the phases of the conflict to date, rather than by Russia's use of nuclear intimidation as a tool that has shielded it from the consequences of its actions in Ukraine.
- Over the past day, Russian forces attacked 8 Oblasts of Ukraine. 7 people were injured; there are multiple damages to infrastructure and buildings;
- 19,514 Ukrainian children are currently considered illegally deported to the Russian Federation;
- 90% of Ukrainian teenagers want to be helpful during the reconstruction of Ukraine;
- President Zelensky believes continued defense of Bakhmut is needed to avoid pressure to make unacceptable compromises with Russia.

Military:

- A decreased intensity of the Russian offensive in the Bakhmut area may indicate the regrouping of its forces;
- Ukrainian strikes on ammunition depots forced Russian troops to reduce the intensity of shelling in Kherson Oblast;
- The gradual replacement of "Wagner" PMC detachments by regular units of the Russian Armed Forces may revive the activity near Bakhmut.
- "Wagner" PMC is working to consolidate its successes in northern and central Bakhmut in order to advance towards the city center and expand its area of control to western Bakhmut.
- **Possible operation situation developments:** An intensification of hostilities should be expected in the Maryinka direction; the Russian military is preparing for active offensive actions in the Kupyansk direction and will try to surround Avdiyivka.
- **Sea:** US and Turkish military aircraft were seen in the airspace over the Black Sea on March 29, 2023;
- A private military company called "Convoy" was formed in Crimea under the head of the occupation administration Sergey Aksyonov.

International:

- Moscow sends mixed signals of "peaceful" intentions, nuclear forces drills, and unwillingness to share the information on nuclear forces under the New START treaty, that Russia had "suspended" [there's no such an option in the Treaty].
- Putin's mouthpiece Dmitry Peskov is talking about the long-term conflict with the West.
- Germany will provide Ukraine with an additional €12 billion worth of military support. Spain will send the first six Leopard 2A4 MBTs shipment to Ukraine after the Easter holiday.

- The majority of Americans believe Vladimir Putin is a war criminal and think the U.S. is doing about the right amount to help Ukraine. However, thirty-three percent think the U.S. is doing too much.
- Volodymyr Zelensky has invited Xi Jinping to visit Kyiv, which other Chinese "peacemakers" had ignored.

Humanitarian aspect:

According to the latest data from the National Information Bureau, 19,514 Ukrainian children are currently considered illegally deported to the Russian Federation, the Ministry for the Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories said. In addition, about 4,390 Ukrainian orphans and children are deprived of parental care in the temporarily occupied territories and in Russia.

The National Resistance Center of the Ukrainian MOD made an electronic map of the camps in Russia and occupied Crimea, where Russian occupation authorities deported Ukrainian children. There are 45 camps marked on the map. Information comes from open sources. The Center said that the following categories of children end up in the camps:

- orphans, some of whom were orphaned because the Russian invaders killed their parents;
- children from boarding schools who have relatives in Ukraine;
- children of parents who did not pass the filtering and ended up in Russian torture camps;
- certain other cases

90% of teenagers surveyed as part of the all-Ukrainian sociological study "Teenagers and their life during the war: attitudes, values, future" want to be useful during the reconstruction of Ukraine. Young people believe they can become helpful by developing the economy and infrastructure, mainly through volunteering. 43% of those surveyed had already joined volunteering: collecting funds for the Armed Forces of Ukraine, weaving camouflage nets, packing aid or cooking and distributing food.

Russian attacks

Russian forces attacked 8 Oblasts of Ukraine on March 28, as reported by heads of respective Oblast Military Administrations. As a result, 7 people were injured, and there were multiple damages to infrastructure and buildings.

- Russian forces continued to shell **Chernihiv and Sumy Oblasts** in the north of Ukraine, targeting one and four communities, respectively. No victims or injuries were reported.
- The infrastructure of 13 towns and villages came under Russian fire in **Zaporizhzhia Oblast**. 9 reports of damaged property were filed. No victims were reported.
- At least 23 towns and villages in **Kharkiv Oblast** came under Russian shelling. In the afternoon of March 28, the enemy launched a rocket attack on Bohodukhiv, partially damaging at least 13 residential buildings and a kindergarten. A 62-year-old man was hospitalized with light injuries. Residential and commercial buildings were damaged in Dvorichna village, which was hit over 150 times.
- Active hostilities are underway in **Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts**. The situation in Luhansk Oblast is difficult. Avdiivka, Bakhmut, Kurakhove, Chasiv Yar, Velyka Novosilka,

Vovchanka, and Karlivka of Donetsk Oblast, were shelled during the day; 5 civilians were wounded.

- **Mykolaiv Oblast:** in the evening of March 28, the occupiers shelled the water area of the Ochakiv community with artillery. According to preliminary data, there were no victims or injured.
- The Russian forces carried out 34 air and artillery attacks on **Kherson Oblast**. One person was injured. The Russian army fired mortars at the Luchansk hospital in Kherson. Shells damaged the institution's main building, almost all the windows were broken, and the radiators and heating system were severely damaged.

Operational situation

General conclusion:

- The Russian military concentrates its main efforts on offensive actions in the Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Maryinka directions;
- A decreased intensity of the Russian offensive in the Bakhmut area may indicate the regrouping of its forces;
- The gradual replacement of "Wagner" PMC detachments by regular units of the Russian Armed Forces may revive the activity near Bakhmut;
- The strengthening of the Russian 155th separate marines brigade in the Vuhledar area will not lead to the resumption of the offensive and will only ensure the maintenance of tactical activity in this area;
- Russian troops have reduced the intensity of shelling in Kherson Oblast because Ukrainian strikes on Russian ammunition depots and artillery positions combined with adverse weather undermine their logistical support and force Russian troops to reduce their activity on the eastern bank of the Dnipro River;
- "Wagner" PMC is working to consolidate its successes in northern and central Bakhmut in order to advance towards the city center and expand its area of control to western Bakhmut.

Battleline:

- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled over 57 Russian attacks in different directions. Bilohorivka, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, Maryinka and their suburbs remain at the epicenter of hostilities;
- The Russian forces attacked unsuccessfully near Krokmalne, Novoselivske, Stelmakhivka, Bilohorivka, Verkhnyokamianske and Berestovka in Luhansk Oblast; Orikhovo-Vasylivka, Bohdanivka, Ivanivske, Predtechne, Ozeryanivka, Novokalynove, Krasnohorivka, Stepove, Pervomaiske and Maryinka in Donetsk Oblast;
- The Russian troops attempted several unsuccessful attacks near Krokmalne, Kuzminske, Bilohorivka, Verkhnyokamianske, and Berestove. There have been 13 combat engagements, and although Russian forces have concentrated some of their best troops in the area, they are experiencing a significant shortage of armored vehicles. Ukrainian Defense forces advanced in the forest area near Dibrova.
- The Russian forces advanced in southern and central Bakhmut. Russian troops have established a sufficient number of crossings over the Bakhmutka River, and the fighting

in Bakhmut is increasingly moving to the western part of the city. The enemy continued its offensive to the south and east of Ivanivske but could not advance closer to the T0504 highway. The Russian forces carried out an unsuccessful offensive on Bakhmut in the areas of Orikhovo-Vasylivka, Bohdanivka, Ivanivske and Ozeryanivka. There were 19 combat clashes, 14 of them directly in Bakhmut itself. "Wagner" PMC took control of the AZOM plant; the hostilities moved to the industrial zone south of the plant.

- The enemy, employing the forces of the 1st Army corps, particularly the 9th separate motorized rifle brigade, 11th separate motorized rifle regiment, "Sparta" and "Somalia" battalions, conducted unsuccessful offensive actions near Avdiivka, Stepove, Severne, Pervomaiske, Nevelske and Maryinka. The Russian forces are trying to advance further to the west of Kamianka in order to surround Avdiivka.
- Positional battles take place near Vuhledar.

Change in enemy disposition:

- The Russian military command is considering withdrawing the 200th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 14th Army Corps of the Northern Fleet and the 72nd separate motorized rifle brigade of the 3rd Army Corps from the Avdiivka - Maryinka area to restore combat capability due to heavy losses.
- The 10th tank regiment of the 6th motorized rifle division of the 3rd Army Corps lost a significant number of tanks while attempting to encircle Avdiivka from the south in recent days.
- The 155th separate marines brigade of the Pacific Fleet, which was defeated in the Vuhledar area, was reinforced last week by two tank units of unknown origin and a combined unit of the 98th airborne division.
- 12 BARS units, numbering between 400 and 500 people, and eight BARS units, numbering between 150 and 250 people, are fighting on the territory of Ukraine. BARS are subordinate to the "Union of Donbas Volunteers" but legally operates under the overall military command of the Russian Armed Forces.
- Russian and Ukrainian sources speculate that the head of the Department of the Military Academy of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Serhiy Kuzmenko, will replace Colonel General Rustam Muradov as the commander of the Eastern Military District.

Escalation indicators: not indicated

Possible operation situation developments:

- The Russian military is preparing for active offensive actions in the Kupyansk direction;
- The Russian forces will try to surround Avdiivka;
- An intensification of hostilities should be expected in the Maryinka direction.

Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area:

- The number of Russian ships at sea decreased over the past day due to weather conditions. 4 Russian BSF ships patrol the Black Sea off the coast of Crimea. Among them is one *project 636.3* submarine, a Kalibr missile carrier (up to 4 missiles on board), patrolling in the sea areas of firing positions southeast of Sevastopol.

- One patrol ship is in the Sea of Azov.
- Russian aviation continues to fly from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saki, Dzhankoy and Hvardiyske over the northwestern part of the Black Sea. A total of 14 combat sorties were made over the past day. Control of the air situation and operational-tactical aviation over the waters of the Sea of Azov was carried out by the A-50U and Il-22 AEW&C aircraft.
- US and Turkish military aircraft were seen in the airspace over the Black Sea on March 29, 2023. A Turkish patrol plane ATR 72-600 TMPA was circling east of the border between Romania and Bulgaria. The first such aircraft was delivered to the Turkish Navy from the Franco-Italian ATR concern in December 2020. In addition, an American EW aircraft flew into the airspace over the Black Sea. A Lockheed EP-3E Aries II conducted reconnaissance along the Romanian coast north of the port of Constanta (the same aircraft was spotted over the Black Sea yesterday).
- Information that a private military company called "Convoy" was formed in Crimea became available. Its creation is attributed to the head of Crimea's occupation administration, Serhiy Aksyonov. The "Convoy" members sign two contracts simultaneously, namely with the PMC and with the Russian Ministry of Defense, as members of the BARS (combat reserve of the Russian army). The number of "Convoy" initially amounted to about 300 people, but now this number could change. The commander of "Convoy" was identified, turning out to be Konstantin Pikalov with the call sign "Mazai", previously known as the curator of the "Wagner" PMC in Africa. "Convoy" training takes place in Perevalne village near Simferopol in the "165th training center", known during the USSR as a center for special training for foreign military personnel. The salary of "shareholders" may reach from 200,000 to 300,000 rubles per month. Aksyonov extorts money to support these divisions from local entrepreneurs. The creation of the private military company "Convoy" in Russia-occupied Crimea meant a lack of security forces to ensure order on the island. Another reason is the growing distrust of the armed forces of the Russian Federation.

Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 29.03.23

Personnel - almost 172,340 people (+610);

Tanks 3,609 (+7);

Armored combat vehicles – 6,966 (0);

Artillery systems – 2,659 (+6)

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 526 (+1);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 277 (0);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 5,507 (+5);

Aircraft - 306 (+1);

Helicopters – 291 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 2,239 (+4);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 911 (0);

Boats/ships – 18 (0).

Ukraine, general news

In an interview with Associated Press, President Zelensky said it's important for Ukraine to defend Bakhmut because if it fails, the pressure to make unacceptable compromises will increase. Putin will feel that Ukraine is weak and will keep applying pressure. Zelensky said that so far, there is no pressure like this.

International diplomatic aspect

More than 3,000 servicemen and about 300 units of military equipment are engaged in a "comprehensive control inspection" of the Novosibirsk branch of the [Russian] Strategic Missile Forces. "During the exercise, there are plans to practice maneuvering actions of autonomous Yars [intercontinental ballistic] missiles' launchers which will cover the territories of three regions," the Defence Ministry said. At the same time, Nikolai Patrushev, Secretary of the Security Council, played a dove by saying that Russia is "convinced of the need to prevent any military confrontation between countries possessing nuclear weapons" but instantly threatened that "the provocative behavior of the West in the context of the crisis in Ukraine can lead to catastrophic consequences."

After Russia missed a legally abiding deadline on information sharing, the U.S. informed Russia that it would no longer provide Moscow with the information on nuclear forces under the New START treaty, that Russia had "suspended" [there's no such an option in the Treaty]. "We have voluntarily made commitments to adhere to the central quantitative limits set by that Treaty. That's it. Our position does not depend on whether the Americans will or will not hand over their data to us," Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said.

Putin's mouthpiece Dmitry Peskov is talking about the long-term conflict with the West. "If you mean war in a broad context — a confrontation with hostile states and with unfriendly countries, a hybrid war that they unleashed against Russia — this is for long." Peskov called on the Russians to unite around his boss [Vladimir Putin] and show "firmness, self-confidence, and purposefulness."

Germany will provide Ukraine with an additional €12 billion worth of military support. "With the money, Ukraine can directly buy armaments with the support of the German government," the Bundestag's Budget Committee representative said. Spain will send the first shipment of six Leopard 2A4 MBTs to Ukraine after the Easter holiday on April 9.

A vast majority of Americans (80 %) think Russian President Vladimir Putin is a war criminal, while 12 percent think he is not a war criminal, according to a Quinnipiac University National Poll. Thirty-six percent of Americans think the U.S. is doing about the right amount to help Ukraine, while thirty-three percent said it is too much, and twenty-four percent - too little. Sixty-six percent of Americans think that Xi Jinping's voyage to Moscow means Russia will escalate its aggression against Ukraine, while only twelve percent believe it will bring a resolution to the Russia- Ukraine war.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has extended an invitation to Xi Jinping to visit Kyiv. But the Chairman hasn't even called the Ukrainian President yet after mulling over his "peace" plan

with the man who launched a war of aggression. Neither the foreign minister nor his supervisor Wang Yi, who rushed to Moscow after the Munich Security Conference, showed up in Kyiv.

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