H Re: Ukraine

Failing to Take Kyiv, Putin Begins His Brutal Plan B

1. Russia's Failure to Take Kyiv [William Schneider]

> Russia has failed to achieve its primary military objective—to seize and occupy Kyiv, the national capital, and replace the incumbent government with a Moscow-selected government. Mass executions of government officials and military forces were planned as well. Russia has now abandoned its position around Kyiv and withdrawn their forces to Belarus. The region has stabilized to the point where foreign diplomatic missions may soon return to Kyiv. Turkey announced that it would reopen is mission in Kyiv.

2. Russia's Brutal New Commanding General and Deadline for Victory [William Schneider]

> On Saturday April 9, Russia's campaign was placed under the command of General Aleksandr Dvornikov, who is notorious for his brutal and civilian-targeting tactics when he lead Russia's military operations in Syria. Russia's leadership expect him to 'deliver success' by Russia's *Victory Day* celebration on May 9.

3. The Next Stages of Russia's Military

Operations [William Schneider]

> Having failed to take Kyiv, the Russian military is refocusing its efforts on south and southeast Ukraine. It aims to:
>
> - Complete the seizure of Ukraine's entire **Black Sea Coast** by attacking the Port of Odesa, if Ukraine's forces in the region collapse. Otherwise, Russia lacks the combat power to seize the region.
>
> - Seize the **Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts** and destroy Ukrainian forces along the Line of Contact—the previous boundary in the region between Russian- and Ukrainian-controlled parts of the two Oblasts. There appears to be a delay in the full scope of the assault in this region until units are re-equipped, redeployed, and replacements for casualties are trained and integrated into existing units.
>
> - Seize the **Northern Coast of the Sea of Azov** and complete the land-bridge from Russian-held territory in Southeast Ukraine to Crimea.

4. The Forthcoming Assault on Southeast Ukraine [William Schneider]

> Russia has suffered: approximately 10% of its forces have been killed in action, and approximately 16 of its roughly 100 Battalion Tactical Groups have been destroyed. As the Russian Army lacks the end-strength to defeat the Ukraine Armed

forces, they are more likely seek to reduce the Southeast and Southern parts of Ukraine to rubble as they create a 'land bridge' linking Donetsk Oblast to Crimea.

In addition, Russian forces are likely to renew their attack on the city of Slovyansk (the scene of a battle in 2014) as part of an effort to encircle Ukraine forces operating in southeast Ukraine. A 13-km long convoy of armored vehicles, self-propelled artillery, trucks, and support equipment are headed south from the Ukrainian city of Velykyi Burluk toward Donbas.

The Russian military may use zonal fire strikes in southeast Ukraine, a tactic used by the Russian army in its 2000 assault on Grozny, Ukraine. In this operation, the city was divided into sections with simultaneous zonal fire strikes that facilitated the reduction of structures to rubble. Russian forces used a decentralized rather than centralized fire control in support of their zonal fire strike; and fire strikes were conducted against approaches to the zone being targeted which contributed to the reduction in Russian military casualties.

5. Russia's Efforts to Control Occupied and Formerly Occupied Territories [William Schneider]

In Ukraine, Russia is arresting local mayors and replacing them with local officials who support Russian absorption of Ukraine by Russia. By early April, 11 mayors had been apprehended and

replaced, and one has been killed in detention.

In northern Ukraine where Russian forces have withdrawn to Belarus, the military has sought to deter entry or egress by launching remotely emplaceable mines from tube and rocket artillery. Russia's ISDM remote is a 50-tube rocket artillery system that delivers several dozen remotely emplaced mines. The ISDRM has been using the POM-3 "smart" mine that make it particularly dangerous in populated areas. The mine prevents reoccupation or transit through the area until the mines are cleared.

Go Deeper

- In the *Financial Times,* David Asher argues that the U.S. and allies need to implement a financial warfare strategy that goes beyond sanctions, using all the levers of state to put the Russian president's "palace economy" out of business.

- Following two weeks of on-the-ground reporting from western and southern Ukraine, James Barnett joined Hudson Distinguished Fellow Ken Weinstein for a discussion on what he witnessed and the strong sense of Ukrainian unity in the face of Russia's ongoing invasion.

- On the *Making a Killing* podcast, Marshall Billingslea and Nate Sibley discuss the need for American leadership in responding to evidence of Russian war

crimes in Ukraine.

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