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Ukraine Conflict Update, 01-16 Jun 2022

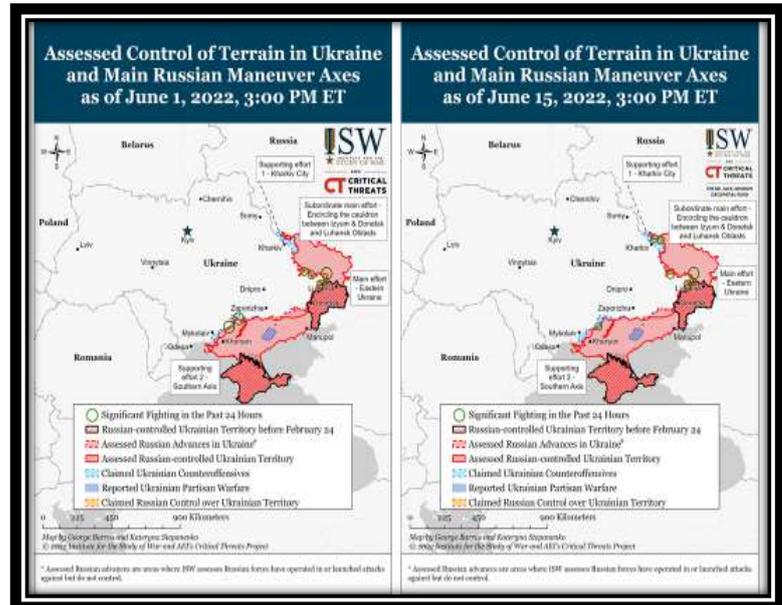
Xi Jinping signs order directing China's 'military operations other than war'

Russia steps up pressure on Japan by halting the fishing agreement

Ukraine Conflict Update, 01-16 Jun

During the last fortnight, there has been little change in the forward edge of the battle area in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. The attritional phase of the conflict has continued with long-range artillery duels and intense positional battles.

The Russian eastern offensive in Ukraine is making slow but measurable progress in the east (Severodonetsk area), in the north (Lyman area) and south (Popasna area). After intense fighting in the last fortnight, Russia appears closer than ever to claiming Severodonetsk. Russian forces are continuing their ground assaults in and around this strategic eastern city but have not yet taken control of it. Russian forces are continuing to fight for control of the Azot industrial plant and have destroyed all bridges between Severodonetsk and Lysychansk, likely to isolate the remaining Ukrainian defenders within the city from critical lines of communication.



Russian forces continue to prepare for offensive operations southeast of Izyum and west of Lyman toward Slovyansk. Even though Russian forces have incrementally improved their position, they have not yet managed to encircle Ukrainian troops in the cauldron between Izyum and Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts. Further to the North, Russian forces continued ground assaults northeast of Kharkiv City to push Ukrainian troops away from occupied frontiers near the Russian border. Around Kherson-Mykolaiv area in the South, Ukrainian Forces have maintained their momentum in counter-attack while Russian forces continued to fortify fallback positions in Zaporizhia and Kherson Oblasts while undertaking defensive measures to strengthen Russian presence in the Black Sea.

Ukraine appealed to western countries for more weapons and faster delivery to fend off Russian advances in the south and the east. Europe and the US have announced new arms packages for Ukraine in the last week. The US pledged \$1 billion worth of new aid on 15 Jun 22, including anti-ship rocket systems, artillery rockets and rounds for howitzers. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said the alliance was "extremely focused on stepping up support" for Ukraine. While Ukraine has welcomed the new pledges, it says deliveries are not coming fast enough.

While European governments appear largely united and resolute in backing Kyiv, a recent poll across 10 European countries suggests public attention may be shifting away from the war to the rising cost of living on the continent. The prospect of a protracted conflict has raised questions about whether war fatigue, coupled with skyrocketing food prices and energy bills, could test countries' political will to keep pressuring Moscow over time.

In the meantime, the Russian economy has shown considerable resilience despite stringent sanctions. Many countries, including Western ones, have continued to buy huge quantities of Russian oil and gas, guaranteeing a steady supply of foreign currency. As per reports, Russia earned a record 93 billion euros in revenue from exports of oil, gas and coal in the first 100 days of the country's invasion of Ukraine.

As per reports, Western intelligence and military officials believe Russia's war in Ukraine is in a critical stage that could determine the long-term outcome of the conflict. President Emmanuel Macron of France, on 15 Jun 22, urged Europe to ramp up support for Kyiv, saying he hoped for a Ukrainian victory over Russia, but emphasized that the conflict would eventually have to end at the negotiating table.

President Emmanuel Macron of France, Chancellor Olaf Scholz of Germany and Prime Minister Mario Draghi of Italy travelled to Kyiv on 16 Jun and will meet President Zelensky to convey a "message of unity" to the Ukrainian people.

Xi Jinping signs order directing China's 'military operations other than war'

Xi Jinping, chairman of the Central Military Commission, approved an order to promulgate a set of trial outlines on military operations other than war (MOOTW) on 13 Jun 2022. Xinhua reported that the outlines aimed to protect people's lives and property, safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interest, and safeguard world peace and regional stability. MOOTW refers to the use of military capabilities across a range of contingencies that fall short of war including humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and peacekeeping. As per reports, the outlines, comprising 59 articles in six chapters, would serve as a legal base for MOOTW and will take effect on June 15, 2022.



While the actual contents of the trial outline have not yet been made public, an article in the Communist Party's media Global Times has argued that the outline set a legal basis within China for the People's Liberation Army to "safeguard China's national sovereignty, security and development interests". These provisions will enable the Chinese military to prevent spillover effects of regional instabilities from affecting China, secure vital transport routes for strategic materials like oil, or safeguard China's overseas investments, projects and personnel. The outlines summarize experiences accumulated from past missions and practices, draw results from both military and civilian research, and standardize the basic principles, organization and command, and types of activities, providing the legal basis for the troops to carry out military operations other than war, according to Xinhua.

It would be pertinent to highlight that, The securitization of non-traditional security issues overseas brought about the emergence of a new term—"development

interests”—to describe the new threats, even beyond its national boundary, that the Chinese leadership saw on the horizon. By the mid-2000s, terms like “development interest” and “new historic missions” had begun to figure prominently in the white papers and other policy documents. The real catalyst behind the securitization of China’s response to non-traditional security threats was the evacuation of almost 36,000 Chinese nationals from Libya in 2011.

Following the killing of three Chinese railway company executives in Mali by Maghreb terrorists in 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping said, “China will strengthen cooperation with the international community” to tackle terrorism. In July 2015, China passed a new National Security Law explicitly allowing the PLA to operate overseas for the protection of China’s overseas interests. China shed its long aversion to overseas bases opening its first large military outpost in Djibouti in 2017. The PLA has been actively contemplating strategies to prepare for combat-oriented tasks far away from China. In this regard, the 2020 edition of the Science of Military Strategy, published by China’s National Defence University, advocated preparing for combat in faraway “strategically important areas,” including a new class of “maritime mobile operations.”

The imperative of protection of Chinese overseas interests has led to the securitization of Chinese foreign policy. The creeping effects of securitization could be evidenced in increasing overseas deployments of the Chinese military. PLA and PAP have increased their presence in Africa through participation in UN peacekeeping, anti-piracy missions and anti-terror cooperation. In addition, as many as 20 to 40 Chinese private security companies are estimated to be present in more than 40 countries. China has also expanded its security footprints in Central Asia. In South Pacific, China has presented itself as an active security provider by enabling Honiara to request Chinese police or military forces to assist in maintaining domestic stability and security. The latest trial outline on MOOTW is likely to strengthen these trends.

Russia steps up pressure on Japan by halting the fishing agreement

On 07 Jun 2022, Russia announced the suspension of a fishing agreement with Japan that allowed Japanese fishermen to fish near the disputed Southern Kuril islands, citing Japan's payment freeze for a development project in Sakhalin. “In the current situation, we are forced to suspend the implementation of the 1998 Agreement until the Japanese side fulfils all its financial obligations,” Russian foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said in a statement.

The territorial dispute between Japan and Russia has its origins in the closing days of World War II when the Soviet Union seized the islands of Etorofu, Habomai, Kunashiri, and Shikotan—off the northern tip of Hokkaidō and at the southern end of Russia’s Kuril Islands. Russia has controlled them ever since, calling them the Southern Kuril Islands. For its part, Japan has argued that the



islands are part of its Hokkaidō prefecture and refers to them as the Northern Territories. That dispute has kept the two countries at odds for almost eighty years.

The pact is one of four governing fishing in the waters around Russian-administered islands off of northern Japan's Hokkaido. The agreement was concluded in 1998 following a series of captures and shootings on fishing vessels by Russian authorities. The agreement permits Japanese fishermen to fish Atka mackerel and octopus, among others, in exchange for paying "cooperation money" to the Russian side. Catch and operating conditions are determined by annual negotiations. Japan has provided development funds for Sakhalin for years as part of its effort to improve ties with Russia.

The fishing safety pact is one of four fisheries agreements near the disputed waters. Negotiations on two others — one involving Russian salmon and another seaweed — were settled earlier this year, while a fourth deal to decide catch quotas in each other's economic waters is scheduled to be held in December.

In aftermath of the Ukraine conflict, Japan quickly joined the United States and Europe in imposing sanctions against Russia and providing support for Ukraine. Tokyo also revoked Russia's 'most favoured nation' (MFN) status. The suspension of the fishing agreement, apparently in response to Japan's sanctions against Moscow, raises concern about the safety of Japanese fishing boats in the area.

Russia's decision to suspend a fishing agreement with Japan has added to the strain on bilateral ties, with Tokyo seeing the move as retaliation for sanctions following the invasion of Ukraine. Japan's Foreign Ministry on 08 Jun 2022 called the move "unacceptable" and urged Moscow to abide by the agreement.

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said it was "regrettable that Russia one-sidedly announced it is suspending the cooperation in this manner." He criticized Moscow for blaming Japan's failure to fund unrelated development projects on Sakhalin. He admitted that Japan had not made the latest payment for the project in the Russian Far East. But he also argued that the project is not a condition for continuing the agreement. He criticized Moscow for blaming Japan's failure to fund unrelated development projects on Sakhalin. Matsuno said Tokyo will pursue negotiations to ensure safe operations of Japanese boats under the pact.

On 08 Jun 2022, Japan's Defence Ministry said four suspected Russian fighter jets flew over the Sea of Japan toward Japanese airspace west of the island of Hokkaido on Tuesday night, causing Japan's Air Self-Defence Force to scramble its fighter jets. Just a fortnight ago, Russia and China had conducted a joint patrol for 13 hours close to Japanese airspace. The strained bilateral ties between Japan and Russia seem to be at a new low.