Russian forces continue attacks against Pokrovsk, other cities in east

As Friday's British Defence Intelligence map of the battlefield situation in Ukraine, above, indicates, last week the Russian forces continued to attack, as they have for the past several months, toward Kupiansk in Kharkiv region, toward the area around Chasiv Yar, west of Bakhmut which they took in 2023 after a prolonged siege, and toward Pokrovsk, west of Avdiivka which they took last February. But as the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces reported in its daily updates last week, the Russian forces also continued to attack toward Kharkiv from territory they hold north of the city, toward Lyman about 30 kilometers southeast of Izium, toward Kramatorsk about 25 kilometers northwest of Chasiv Yar, toward Toretsk about 20 kilometers south of Chasiv Yar, toward Vremivka about 50 kilometers south of Pokrovsk as well as in the Orikhiv area southeast of Zaporizhzhia and toward the area in Kherson region in southern Ukraine where the Ukrainian forces hold territory on the east bank of the Dnipro River. They also continued, with the assistance of North Korean troops, to attack the Ukrainian forces that, since their August incursion, hold a portion of Russia's Kursk region just to the north of Sumy.

The General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces reported a total of 729 Russian attacks at various points along the contact line between the forces in eastern Ukraine in the seven days last week from Sunday, Feb. 2, through Saturday, Feb. 8. The total number of Russian attacks each day last week ranged from 80 to 133. As in previous weeks, the Russian attacks were focused especially on the Ukrainian forces defending Pokrovsk, a city that had a pre-war population of about 60,000 and is an important transit hub on the E50 highway that links Donetsk city, about 60 kilometers to the southeast, with Pavlohrad and Dnipro to the west. If taken, Pokrovsk would open a

pathway northward in Donetsk region toward Kostyantynivka, Kramatorsk, and Sloviansk.

Over the seven days last week, the Russian forces conducted a total of 252 attacks, more than one-third of all their attacks in eastern Ukraine last week, against the Ukrainian forces defending Pokrovsk and the surrounding area. But Pokrovsk and its surrounding area weren't the only targets of repeated attacks by the Russian forces last week. Those forces also conducted 101 attacks last week against the Ukrainian forces holding a portion of Russia's Kursk region, 71 attacks against the forces defending Toretsk, 68 attacks against the forces defending Kupiansk, and 65 attacks against the forces defending Lyman.

On Friday, the Russian defense ministry claimed its forces had taken Toretsk, which had a pre-war population of 31,000 and is located about 40 kilometers northeast of Pokrovsk. Ukraine disputed the claim but the Russian ministry subsequently said Toretsk had become a "powerful, fortified area" and that control of the city had opened the way for the Russian forces to move toward Kostyantynivka, which had a pre-war population of about 60,000 and is about 15 kilometers northwest of Toretsk and 10 kilometers southwest of Chasiv Yar. Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the Ukrainian forces said yesterday the Russian forces were preparing for new assaults on and within Chasiv Yar, which has been partially under Russian control since the Ukrainian forces withdrew from the eastern Kanal area of the city last July.

Taking both Toretsk and Chasiv Yar would open a pathway for the Russian forces toward Kostyantynivka. Taking Kostyantynivka would in turn open a pathway for the Russian forces toward Kramatorsk, a city with a pre-war population of about 150,000 that is roughly 20 kilometers to the north. And taking Kramatorsk would in turn open a pathway to Slovyansk, a city with a pre-war population of 100,000 that is only 10 kilometers north of Kramatorsk. Perhaps the Russian forces will try to take Kostyantynivka, Kramatorsk, and Slovyansk in the near future. But their overarching priority this week clearly remains Pokrovsk, against which they have already conducted 100 attacks thus far this week.

As the war continues in Ukraine, government officials around the world are preparing for the 61st Munich Security Conference which will take place this weekend. The Trump administration will be represented by Vice President Vance, Secretary of State Rubio, and retired Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, President Trump's special envoy to Ukraine and Russia. Ukrainian President Zelenskyy's office said he will meet with Vance Friday on the sidelines of the Munich meeting and that Kellogg, who reportedly has been directed by Trump to prepare a proposal to end the conflict, will visit Ukraine on Feb. 20. Yesterday, Trump said he would probably speak with Zelenskyy. Also yesterday, Zelenskyy called for "real peace and effective security guarantees" for Ukraine.

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