As Russia's war continues with no end in sight,
leaders of the EU and the EPC meet in Copenhagen.

UK Defense Intelligence map of the battlefield situation in Ukraine as of September 26.

As the most recent British Defence Intelligence map of the battlefield situation in Ukraine, above, indicated was the situation in late September, last week the Russian forces continued to attack the Ukrainian forces at a number of locations in Ukraine, extending from the area south of Sudzha in the Russian region of Kursk toward the Ukrainian city of Sumy to the area along the border north of Kharkiv, toward the city of Kupiansk and the area around it, toward the area around the city of Chasiv Yar which the Russians took two months ago, toward the city of Pokrovsk and the area to the north and south of that city, along the front line near Orikhiv in Zaporizhzhia region, and in Kherson region adjacent to the Dnipro River in southeastern Ukraine.

The General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces reported that over the seven days last week from Sunday through Saturday, the Russian forces conducted a total of 1,134 attacks against the Ukrainian forces defending the cities and towns in northeastern, eastern, and southeastern Ukraine. In the previous week, the Russian forces had conducted a total of 1,200 attacks against the Ukrainian forces defending those cities and towns. As in previous weeks, the largest number of Russian attacks last week were directed against the Ukrainian forces defending Pokrovsk, which, if taken would open a pathway toward the cities and towns in Donetsk region that are still held by Ukraine. Over the seven days last week, the Russian forces conducted a total of 369 attacks against the forces defending Pokrovsk and the area around it. In the previous week, those forces had conducted a total of 380 attacks against the forces defending Pokrovsk and the area around it. The Russian forces also continued to attack last week, as they

had the week before and in recent weeks, the Ukrainian forces defending the cities of Lyman, Slovyansk, Kramatorsk, Kostyantynivka, and Toretsk in Donetsk region, as well as those defending the cities and towns along the front line in Zaporizhzhia region.

While Russia's war against Ukraine continued on the ground in northeastern, eastern, and southeastern Ukraine, Russia also continued to attack the cities and towns of Ukraine with drones and missiles. Last Thursday night and early Friday morning, Russia attacked the natural gas facilities of Naftogaz in Kharkiv and Poltava with 35 missiles and 60 drones. And on Saturday night and early Sunday, Russia attacked nine regions, including the cities of Lviv, Sumy, Kharkiv, Odesa, and Zaporizhzhia, with 496 drones and 53 ballistic missiles. And several neighboring countries experienced intrusions into their airspace of drones and in at least one instance of Russian jets in addition to drones. On Sept. 10, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk reported that 19 drones had entered Polish airspace and that Poland had invoked Article 4 of the NATO Treaty, which calls for consultation whenever a member believes its territorial integrity, political independence, or security is threatened. The NATO Council subsequently created Eastern Sentry, modeled on its earlier Baltic Sentry initiative, and arranged for it to have available for use if needed two F-16 fighter jets, an anti-air warfare frigate from Denmark, three Rafale jets from France, and four Eurofighters from Germany to deal with violations of the air space of NATO members. Since then, there have been intrusions of drones into Danish airspace over the Copenhagen airport and four other airports, including the Karup Air Base, Denmark's largest, as well as Norwegian airspace over the Oslo airport and German airspace over the Munich airport and Kiel, where an important maritime defense plant is located.

As Russia's war against Ukraine continued both on the ground and in the air last week, the leaders of the 27 member states met in Copenhagen in an informal meeting of the European Council on Wednesday and then with the leaders of the 20 European states that are, like the 27 member states of the EU, members of the European Political Community on Thursday. The Wednesday meeting, which was chaired by António Costa, the President of the European Council, focused on two key issues – how to strengthen Europe's common defense, including issues relating to defense capacities, support for the eastern flank, and governance. In view of Russia's recent intrusions with drones or jets, or both, into the airspace of several EU member states, Costa underlined the need to build "the Europe of defense" by ramping up its defense readiness by 2030. Toward that goal, the leaders noted the EU has taken decisive action recently, including through the creation in May of a new financial instrument, Security Action for Europe (SAFE), which can mobilize up to €150 billion in loans and other means to channel joint investments that will strengthen Europe's security. The EU leaders also discussed progress in the high priority areas in defense they had identified in March, specifically air and missile defense, artillery, drones and anti-drone systems, military mobility, and cyber resilience. In that regard, the leaders broadly supported proposals put forward by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Kaja Kallas, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, that identified several priority projects that

would strengthen European security, including creation of a European Drone Wall and an Eastern Flank Watch, both of which would address the obvious and acute threat Europe faces on its eastern flank and are regarded as important steps in achieving common defense readiness by 2030. President Costa did, however, highlight the need for efficient political oversight and coordination to keep track of progress in the various proposals and, in that regard, emphasized that the defense ministers need to play a greater role in pushing the work forward in the periods between the European Council meetings and also in tracking important developments as they occur.

In regard to Ukraine, the EU leaders noted that the EU and its member states have contributed more than €177.5 billion in assistance to Ukraine and made it clear the EU is ready to continue supporting Ukraine with military and financial support. The leaders also noted that the EU has imposed massive and unprecedented sanctions against Russia, and President Costa noted that the leaders will soon be considering the 19th package of sanctions that will target Russian oil revenues, banks, and the shadow fleet. He also underscored that, even in the midst of the war, Ukraine has been delivering on the accession reforms the EU has mandated and expressed the view that it is time for the EU to deliver in terms of membership, both because it is merited based on what Ukraine has done in terms of reforms and also because it will help make Europe stronger. The leaders also had a first discussion on how to mobilize more financial support for Ukraine, clearly alluding to the controversial proposal that the EU provide Ukraine with a large loan backed by the assets of Russia's central bank and financial institutions that are currently frozen in European banks.

Thursday's meeting of the European Political Community dealt with many of the same issues. The EPC, which consists of the EU 27 and 20 other European states, is obviously much less developed institutionally, and much less influential globally, than the EU. But it can nevertheless foster political dialogue and cooperation to address issues of common interest among its 47 member states and in that way can contribute to the security, stability, and prosperity of the European continent. In Thursday's meeting, the EPC leaders discussed how to strengthen Ukraine, one of its members; and how to make the members of the EPC stronger and more secure in light of the current geopolitical situation in Europe. The opening plenary session was followed by a series of roundtable discussions that focused on several aspects of the current security situation in Europe, including traditional and hybrid security threats, economic security, and migration. The EPC leaders also discussed how to continue supporting the Ukrainian armed forces while increasing pressure on Russia, including by stepping up sanctions. And they discussed Ukraine's path toward EU membership, including its reform efforts and steps toward accession.

The meetings last Wednesday and Thursday were important, both in underscoring the need for the member states of the EU and the EPC to act collectively to strengthen Ukraine as it defends itself against Russia and, in so doing, to strengthen themselves as well against Russia. The EU leaders will come back to these issues when they meet in

Brussels on Oct. 24-25 for their regular semi-annual European Council meeting. In the meantime, Russia's war against Ukraine continues with no end in sight. But although the war continues with no end in sight, there was a bit of good news yesterday about the looming threat of a possible meltdown at the large nuclear plant in Zaporizhzhia. The plant, which consists of six reactors, is the largest in Europe. The reactor core and the used nuclear fuel must be cooled to prevent them from overheating and possibly causing a meltdown such as the one that occurred in April 1986 at the nuclear plant in Chernobyl after a reactor exploded. The cooling and safety systems in the Zaporizhzhia plant depend on a power transmission line from the Ukrainian energy system. The line was damaged Tuesday evening, with each side blaming the other side for damaging it. The plant has been using emergency diesel generators to run its cooling and safety systems since the line was damaged and was reported to have sufficient diesel fuel reserves on-site to fuel the generators for 20 days. But emergency diesel generators are regarded as a last line of defense and in any event would eventually run out of fuel. The threat of a meltdown was sufficient to cause Rafael Grossi, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to travel to Russia and meet with President Putin on Thursday. Further complicating an already-complicated situation, Russia was reportedly in the process of integrating the plant into *its* power network. Indeed, as Grossi was meeting with Putin, the Russian-appointed head of the plant announced that its integration into the Russian network was "in its final stage." Nuclear experts urged Grossi and the IAEA to insist that Russia abandon its plan to integrate the plant into its network and focus instead on ensuring that a catastrophic meltdown is avoided.

Yesterday, the head of the Zaporizhzhia Region military administration reported that electricity has been restored to all consumers who had lost power on the night of Oct. 4-5. But the question remains whether all of the power lines that were damaged have been repaired. And so, with the threat of a nuclear catastrophe still looming over Ukraine and Europe nearly a week after the loss of power to the plant, Russia's war against Ukraine continues on the land and in the air.

David R. Cameron
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