Russian attacks against Ukraine continue, especially around Pokrovsk

UK Defense Intelligence map of the battlefield situation in Ukraine as of October 31.

As Friday's British Defence Intelligence map of the battlefield situation in Ukraine indicates, last week the Russian forces continued to attack the Ukrainian forces at a number of locations from the area south of Sudzha in the Russian region of Kursk toward the city of Sumy to the area on the border north of Kharkiv and along the long contact line in eastern and southeastern Ukraine that extends from the area east of Kupiansk to the area in the northwestern portion of Donetsk region that includes the cities of Lyman, Slovyansk, Kramatorsk, Kostyantynivka and Toretsk, toward the city of Pokrovsk and the area around it, and toward Orikhiv and the other cities and towns along the contact line in Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions in southeastern Ukraine.

The General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces reported that over the seven days last week from Sunday, Oct. 26 through Saturday, Nov. 1, the Russian forces conducted a total of 1,082 attacks against the Ukrainian forces defending the cities and towns in northeastern, eastern, and southeastern Ukraine. 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 northward 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 358 attacks against the forces defending Pokrovsk and the area around it. Importantly, the daily reports indicated that some Russian forces had moved into the eastern portion of Pokrovsk. If and when the Russian forces take the city, it would be regarded by both sides as a major victory for the Russians, comparable to their victory after a prolonged siege at Bakhmut in May 2023. Bakhmut is a few miles east of Chasiv Yar.

On Saturday, Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, reported on Telegram that he was "back on the front line. I worked with corps and military units in the Pokrovsk sector, where the situation is currently the most difficult. I listened to reports from field commanders about the current situation and their operational needs…The enemy is intensifying its activity in the Pokrovsk–Myrnohrad area. That's why I visited this critical sector again. I met with the commanders of army corps, military units, and subunits that are resisting the numerically superior enemy forces. I heard reports on the current situation, urgent needs, and their proposals. The situation is difficult, but Russian propaganda claims about the so-called 'blockade' of Ukraine's Defense Forces in Pokrovsk — as well as in Kupiansk — do not correspond to reality." He said that in Pokrovsk "the enemy infantry is avoiding direct clashes, taking cover in urban areas and frequently changing positions. Therefore, the top priority is to detect and destroy them. Under such conditions, the effective work of reconnaissance and strike drones is crucial. Alongside the unmanned systems, assault and search operations are being conducted in the town by Air Assault Forces, assault regiments, Special Operations Forces, Military Law Enforcement Center units, Security Service of Ukraine, National Guard, National Police, and others." He noted that work continues to strengthen the resilience of defenses on the Pokrovsk front, emphasizing the importance of coordination between units, logistical support, and precise execution of orders: "Every commander, regardless of rank, must ensure high-quality execution of tasks. I strictly warned commanders against irresponsibility — I will take tough measures, up to dismissal, if necessary. I issued specific orders. In terms of logistics, I also assigned tasks to strengthen the protection of supply and evacuation routes. A number of other decisions were made as well." He said that all decisions are made promptly and are based on maintaining a reasonable balance between goals and capabilities, with the top priority being the preservation of Ukrainian soldiers' lives.

Today the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces reported that yesterday the Russian forces conducted 168 attacks against the forces defending the cities and towns of northeastern and eastern Ukraine and that 62 of those attacks were against the forces defending Pokrovsk and the area around it. Also today, President Zelenskyy announced that Ukraine had received the two Patriot missile defense systems from Germany that Chancellor Merz had promised some time ago. Ukraine's continuing need for more Patriots was made apparent once again last night, when Russia, continuing its war against the people of Ukraine, launched 138 drones and 3 Kinzhal air-launched hypersonic ballistic missiles at a number of cities that resulted in substantial damage to apartment buildings and other structures and killed at least six civilians.

And today Russia's war against Ukraine continues on the ground and in the air, and with no end in sight.

David R. Cameron
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