Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 8 Karolina Hird, Grace Mappes, Madison Williams, Yekaterina Klepanchuk, and Mason Clark November 8, 7:45 pm ET

Click <u>here</u> to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Iranian state-run outlet Nour News Agency reported that Russian National Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev arrived in Tehran on November 8, likely to discuss the potential sale of Iranian ballistic missiles to Russia.¹ Nour News Agency announced Patrushev's arrival in an English-language tweet, stating that Iranian Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Secretary Ali Shamkhani invited Patrushev and noted that Patrushev will also meet with other highranking Iranian political and economic officials to discuss Russo-Iranian cooperation.² *Nour News Agency* is affiliated with the SNSC. The SNSC likely announced Patrushev's arrival in Iran to highlight the deepening cooperation between Moscow and Tehran to an international audience (rather than domestically), as well as to implicitly highlight that a high-ranking Russian official turned to Iran for help in Ukraine. Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force Commander Qassem Soleimani notably traveled to Moscow in 2015 to appeal to Russia to intervene in the Syrian Civil War. Tehran is likely eager to publicly signal this rebalancing of its strategic partnership with Moscow, especially to regional Iranian adversaries with which the Kremlin occasionally cooperates, such as Israel and Saudi Arabia.³ Patrushev's visit to Iran notably comes amid reports that the Iranian regime is seeking Russian help with protest suppression, although it is unclear if this will be discussed by Patrushev and his Iranian counterpart.4

The Kremlin is continuing efforts to covertly acquire munitions for use in Ukraine to mitigate the effects of international sanctions and backfill Russia's ongoing depletion of domestic munitions stockpiles. British outlet Sky News reported on November 8 that the Kremlin flew 140 million euros in cash and a selection of captured British-made NLAW anti-tank missiles, US-made Javelin anti-tank missiles, and a Stinger anti-aircraft missile to Tehran on August 20 in exchange for 160 additional Shahed-136 drones for use in Ukraine.5 The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on November 8 that Tehran continues to supply Moscow with Mohajer, Arash, and Shahed-type drones by air and sea via both Iranian state-owned and privately-owned entities. 6 The Ukrainian Resistance Center additionally reported that due to failures of the Russian military-industrial complex, Russian military leaders are continuing their efforts to procure dual-use (military and non-military use) goods such as computer chips, quadcopters, night vision devices, and bulletproof vests from Turkey and are using cryptocurrency transactions to avoid purchase tracking. Taken in tandem, these reports indicate that the Kremlin seeks to circumvent sanctions by engaging in quid-pro-quo and under-the-table negotiations with foreign actors.

Wagner Group forces are continuing to exaggerate their claimed territorial gains in Donbas to further distinguish themselves from proxy and

conventional Russian forces. Russian sources began reporting on November 7 that a detachment of Wagner forces and troops of the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) 6th Cossack Regiment broke through Ukrainian defensive lines in Bilohorivka, Luhansk Oblast.⁸ On November 8, however, Russian coverage largely shifted and Russian milbloggers began claiming that reports of the 6th Cossack Regiment's involvement in operations near Bilohorivka are false and that Wagner troops were solely responsible for purported gains.⁹ As ISW has previously observed, Wagner has taken sole credit for Russian gains around Bakhmut in order to bolster their own reputation as the Kremlin's favored strike force, despite not being the only force deployed in the area.¹⁰ Wagner will likely use Bilohorivka to accomplish a similar effect.

Key Takeaways

- Iranian sources announced—without Russian confirmation—that Russian National Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev arrived in Tehran on November 8, likely to discuss the potential sale of Iranian ballistic missiles to Russia. Iran likely announced Patrushev's arrival to highlight the deepening cooperation between Moscow and Tehran to an international audience, as well as to implicitly highlight that a high-ranking Russian official turned to Iran for help in Ukraine.
- Wagner Group forces are continuing to exaggerate their claimed territorial gains in Donbas to further distinguish themselves from proxy and conventional Russian forces.
- Ukrainian forces likely made marginal gains northwest of Svatove, Luhansk Oblast, and Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces intensified offensive operations toward Kreminna.
- Russian forces continued offensive operations around Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and in western Donetsk Oblast.
- Ukrainian authorities attempted to counteract Russian authorities' continued efforts to strengthen control of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP).
- The disproportionate financial burden of Russian force generation efforts continues to fall primarily on Russian regional governments' budgets, prompting public backlash.
- Financial and bureaucratic issues are continuing to hinder Russian efforts to replenish formerly elite units defending critical areas of the front line, potentially threatening the integrity of Russian defenses in occupied parts of Ukraine.
- Russian occupation authorities in Kherson Oblast may be trying to force residents out of the western part of the oblast by cutting communications on the west bank of the Dnipro River.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 8, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because those activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Ukrainian Counteroffensives—Southern and Eastern Ukraine
- Russian Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine (comprised of one subordinate and two supporting efforts);
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort—Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort—Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied Areas

<u>Ukrainian Counteroffensives</u> (Ukrainian efforts to liberate Russianoccupied territories)

Eastern Ukraine: (Eastern Kharkiv Oblast-Western Luhansk Oblast)

Ukrainian forces likely made marginal gains northwest of Svatove, Luhansk Oblast on November 8. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian army aviation (helicopters) struck a Ukrainian formation in Novoselivske (14km northwest of Svatove), indicating that Ukrainian troops have advanced at least as far as that point.¹¹ Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian troops attacked Novoselivske on November 7, and the Russian MoD seemingly confirmed that Ukrainian forces advanced into the settlement between November 7 and 8.¹² A Russian milblogger also claimed that Ukrainian troops attempted to attack Kuzemivka, 13km northwest of Svatove.¹³

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces intensified counteroffensive operations in the Kreminna direction on November 8. Several Russian milbloggers indicated that Ukrainian troops resumed attacks towards Kreminna, Luhansk Oblast after a brief pause in operations and that Ukrainian troops are attacking Kreminna from concentration areas around Chervonopopivka, about 5km northwest of Kreminna.¹⁴ A Russian source indicated that elements of the Russian 20th Combined Arms Army are responsible for the defense of the Kreminna area and that Russian troops are launching counterattacks in this area to complicate attempted Ukrainian advances towards Kreminna.¹⁵ Russian forces additionally conducted a limited ground attack 10km south of Kreminna to regain lost positions around Bilohorivka.¹⁶ Russian sources claimed that Wagner Group fighters broke through Ukrainian defensive lines in Bilohorivka, but ISW has not observed independent confirmation that Russian troops have entered or taken control of Bilohorivka.¹⁷

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of November 8, 2022, 3:00 PM ET **Belgorod** Udy Oblast **THREATS** Ruski Tyshky /oi∕chansk THE DR. JACK LONDON Valuysky GEOSPATIAL FUND Ternova Raion kilometers Velykyi around Kharkiv Burluk (geodesic Kharkiv distance measurement) Kupiansk Chuhuiv Ukrainian officials reported on Svatove November 8 that Ukrainian Starobilsk forces liberated Stelmakhivka. Ukrainian forces struck Russian positions in Dementiivka Dibrova on November 8, indicating Russian Vesele control over the settlement. Spirne Russian sources claimed that Russian forces captured Pokrovske Bilohorivka on November 7. Geolocated footage posted on November 6 showed that Russian forces captured Ivanhrad **Donetsk** Russian forces likely **Oblast** captured the Donetsk Airport on November 8 100 Kilometers Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Hikkelsev, Daniel N © 2022 Institute for the Study of War and AET's Critical Directs Profess Russian-controlled Ukrainian Significant Fighting in the Claimed Russian Control over Territory before February 24 past 24 Hours Ukrainian Territory Assessed Russian Advances in Key Ukrainian Roads Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives Russian Ground Lines of Communication Assessed Russian-controlled Reported Ukrainian Partisan **Ukrainian Territory** * Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Southern Ukraine: (Kherson Oblast)

Russian forces continued defensive preparations in Kherson Oblast on November 8. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported that Russian troops are conducting active defense and trying to hold occupied positions throughout Kherson Oblast. 18 Geolocated footage and images posted to Twitter on November 8 show Russian pillboxes (concrete defensive structures) in Hola Prystan, about 8km south of Kherson City on the east bank of the Dnipro River. 19 A Russian milblogger reiterated that Russian forces maintain positions in Kherson Oblast and claimed that there are no indicators that Russian troops intend to withdraw. 20

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian troops conducted limited and unsuccessful ground attacks throughout Kherson Oblast on November 8. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces attempted to attack near Pravdyne (25km northwest of Kherson City), in western Kherson Oblast near the Kherson-Mykolaiv Oblast border around Sukhyi Stavok and Davydiv Brid, and in northern Kherson Oblast towards Sukhanove (35km north of Beryslav).²¹ A Russian source indicated that elements of the Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) continue defensive operations in these areas.²²

Ukrainian forces continued their interdiction campaign against Russian concentration areas in Kherson Oblast on November 7 and 8. Ukrainian military sources confirmed that Ukrainian strikes destroyed Russian equipment concentrations and significant fuel reserves in Hola Prystan and other Russian concentration areas in the Kherson and Beryslav raions.²³ A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian troops launched a missile attack on Oleshky, 5km south of Kherson City.²⁴ Social media users posted imagery of Russian air defense activating over Kalanchak (65km southeast of Kherson City).²⁵

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 8, 2022, 3:00 PM ET Multiple Russian and Ukrainian sources reported that Ukrainian forces captured Kryvyi Rih Davydiv Brid, Mala Oleksandrivka, Velyka Oleksandrivka, Novodmytrivka, Starosillya, Dnipropetrovsk Novomykhailivka, Dudchany Chereshneve, Oblast Novovoskresenske, Maiske, Petropavlivka, CRITICAL Geolocated footage Trifonivka, Novovasilievka, Chervone, **THREATS** posted on November 8 Novohryhorivka, Nova Kamyanka, showed Russian forces Pyatykhatky, Sablukivka, and Kachkarivka THE DR. JACK LONDON operating south of after Russian forces abandoned them to GEOSPATIAL FUND Dudchany. avoid encirclement on October 4. Bashtanka Vysokopill**y**a Mykolaiv **Oblast** Davydiv Ukrainian sources reported Dudchan Russian shelling on Pravdyne on Brid November 7, which may indicate Kachkarivka that Russian forces are not Zasillia operating in the settlement. Mykolaiv Beryslav Chornobaivka Posad-Pokrovs'ke Nova Kakhovka Oleksandrivka Kherson Kherson Antonivsky Bridge **Oblast** Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24 Sessed Russian Advances in Ukraine* Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare 80 Kilometers 20 40 Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, and Will Kielm © 2022 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project * Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

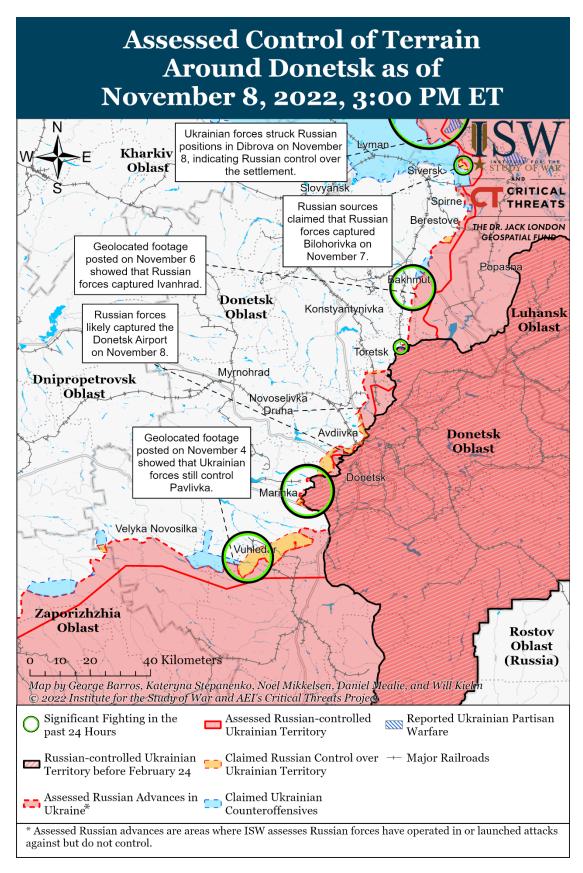
Russian Main Effort-Eastern Ukraine

<u>Russian Subordinate Main Effort—Donetsk Oblast</u> (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia's proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued offensive operations around Bakhmut on November 8. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks on Bakhmut itself and south of Bakhmut near Ivanhrad (4km south), Klishchiivka (7km southwest), Mayorsk (20km south), and Opytne (4km south).²⁶ Spokesperson for Ukraine's Eastern Group of Forces, Colonel Serhiy Cherevaty, stated on November 8 that the Bakhmut-Avdiivka-Vuhledar line is the hottest area of the front, and that Wagner Group troops comprise the majority of Russian strike groups in the Bakhmut direction.²⁷ A Russian source reported that Russian forces have made little to no progress on the Donetsk Oblast front line, specifically near Soledar, due to Ukrainian resistance.²⁸ Russian forces continued routine shelling along the line of contact in the Bakhmut area.²⁹

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Avdiivka-Donetsk City area on November 8. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults in Krasnohorivka (on the northwestern outskirts of Donetsk City) and Marinka (on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City). A Russian source published video footage on November 8 of the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) "Sparta" Battalion flag raised in the vicinity of the Donetsk City Airport and claimed that DNR forces took the area on November 7.31 Russian milbloggers additionally claimed that Russian troops conducted assaults on Ukrainian positions in Krasnohorivka and Marinka and broke through Ukrainian defenses in Vodyane (on the northwestern outskirts of Donetsk City). Russian forces conducted routine shelling in the Avdiivka-Donetsk City area.

Russian forces continued offensive operations in western Donetsk Oblast on November 8. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults in the areas of Pavlivka and Vodyane (both about 50km southwest of Donetsk City).³⁴ The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked twice toward Novomykhailivka and Pavlivka, and Russian sources amplified reports of fighting in these areas, with further claims that Ukrainian forces are deploying additional units to the area to hold the line.³⁵ A Russian source claimed that Russian losses in the Pavlivka area are much more severe than figures reported by the Russian MoD and stated that soon there will be no more Russian tanks left. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces continued routine shelling along the line of contact in Donetsk Oblast and eastern Zaporizhia Oblast.³⁶



<u>Supporting Effort—Southern Axis</u> (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian forces continued routine air, missile, and artillery strikes in Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia, and Mykolaiv oblasts on November 8.37 The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces continued to strike Nikopol, Hulyaipole, and other settlements along the contact line in Mykolaiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and Zaporizhia oblasts over the past day.38 Ukraine's Southern Operational Command notably reported that a Russian Su-35 fired a Kh-31 missile (a high-end and scarce precision munition) at a Ukrainian air defense system the Bashtansky Raion of Mykolaiv Oblast on November 8 but missed.39 Ukraine's Southern Operational Command also reported that Ukrainian forces safely destroyed the remnants of a Russian anchor mine that exploded on the coast of Odesa due to a storm.40 The presence of a Russian anchor mine off the coast of Odesa indicates that Russian forces are continuing efforts to limit Ukrainian movement along the Southern Axis and in the Black Sea. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces destroyed a Ukrainian rocket and artillery ammunition depot near Kushhove, Zaporizhzhia Oblast (northwest of Orikhiv).41 A Russian source also claimed that Russian air defense systems in Sevastopol shot down a Ukrainian drone over the Black Sea on November 8.42

Ukrainian authorities attempted to counteract Russian authorities' continued efforts to consolidate control of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) on November 7.43 Ukrainian nuclear power company Energoatom reported on November 7 that it will increase the salary bonus from 20% to 50% for Ukrainian ZNPP employees who remain loyal to Ukraine.44 A Russian milblogger called Energoatom's move to increase salaries "bribery" and an "act of sabotage against the restoration of peaceful life."45 Meanwhile, the Zaporizhzhia Oblast Military Administration reported on November 8 that Russian occupation authorities continued to collect personal data, check private smartphones, enter private residences, and illegally detain Ukrainians in Enerhodar, likely to continue expanding social control over the economically vital ZNPP and its surroundings.46

<u>Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts</u> (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)

The disproportionate financial burden of Russian force generation efforts continues to fall primarily on Russian regional governments' budgets rather than the federal budget, prompting public backlash. Russian-language outlet *Important Stories* reported on November 7 that Russian federal subjects have spent 12.8 billion rubles (roughly 210 million USD) to pay mobilized personnel, but that most federal subjects did not allocate enough money to distribute promised one-time enlistment bonus payments.⁴⁷ The lack of payments has sparked protests in the Chuvash Republic and Chelyabinsk Oblast, as ISW has previously reported.⁴⁸ Public backlash and local protests prompted Russian officials from Perm Krai, the Chuvashia Republic, Omsk Oblast, and Russian-occupied Sevastopol to announce that they will distribute payments. Regional heads blamed incomplete records of mobilized personnel and implied that they always intended to provide the payments, which will likely strain local budgets.⁴⁹

Financial and bureaucratic issues are continuing to hinder Russian efforts to replenish formerly elite units defending critical areas of the front line, potentially threatening the integrity of Russian defenses in occupied parts of Ukraine. A Russian source claimed that a St. Petersburg volunteer for the 76th Guards Airborne Assault Division, a formerly elite unit, was registered as a mobilized soldier rather than a volunteer, thereby only entitling him to a 50,000-ruble payment rather than the 100,000-ruble payment for volunteers. The source also claimed that nine other volunteers of the division were similarly mislabeled. The 76th Airborne Division is currently defending the front line in Kherson Oblast, where Russian forces desperately need more bodies who are willing to fight or provide cover during a controlled withdrawal.

<u>Activity in Russian-occupied Areas</u> (Russian objective: consolidate administrative control of occupied and annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian civilians into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

Russian occupation authorities in Kherson Oblast may be trying to force residents out of the oblast by cutting communications on the west bank of the Dnipro River following the end of mass public evacuations to the east bank. A Russian military correspondent in Kherson City claimed on November 8 that there is no internet in Kherson City and that phone lines work only intermittently.53 Russian occupation authorities may intend a prolonged communications blackout to further coerce residents to leave Kherson City and to prevent residents from informing Ukrainian forces of the military situation if they choose to stay. An advisor to the Ukrainian Kherson Oblast Military Administration head, Serhiy Khlan, stated that occupation authorities in Kherson City, Kakhovka, and Nova Kakhovka collect the personal information of residents who did not evacuate, including their addresses and reasons for not evacuating.⁵⁴ Occupation authorities will likely use this data to further coerce cooperation with the occupation administration as long as Russian forces continue to hold those areas. The Russian deputy head of the Kherson Oblast occupation administration, Kirill Stremousov, claimed that residents can still evacuate "privately" and that evacuation is not mandatory, contradicting the head of the Kherson occupation administration, Vladimir Saldo, who stated on November 1 that evacuation of residents within 15km of the Dnipro River was mandatory.55

Russian authorities are continuing to import Russian citizens to serve in occupation administrations, replacing possibly ineffective Ukrainian collaborators and personnel from the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics (DNR and LNR) in occupied parts of Ukraine. DNR Head Denis Pushilin announced on November 5 that First Deputy Chairperson of Yakutia and former Mayor of Irkutsk, Dmitry Berdnikov, became the deputy occupation head of Mariupol.⁵⁶ Pushilin stated that Mariupol "needs more intensive actions" to provide the city with necessary provisions, which suggests that Russian authorities may believe existing Ukrainian collaborators are not trustworthy or effective enough to accomplish the Kremlin's objectives in occupied parts of Ukraine.⁵⁷ Ukrainian Mariupol Mayoral Advisor Petro Andryushchenko claimed that Berdnikov will effectively replace the occupation head of Mariupol, Kostyantyn Ivashchenko—a Ukrainian collaborator appointed directly by the DNR—as part of ongoing tensions between Pushilin and the Russian government.⁵⁸ The Kremlin is likely asserting

increasingly direct control of occupied Ukrainian territory, removing local collaborators or DNR- and LNR-appointed officials.

The Ukrainian Prosecutor General's Office reported on November 8 that Russian documents left behind in Izyum, Kharkiv Oblast, show that Russian authorities in occupied Ukraine plan to send high-performing Ukrainian students to an educational camp in Crimea and higher institutions in Belgorod Oblast under the guise of "care and recreation." ⁵⁹ ISW has previously assessed that the deportation of Ukrainian children likely amounts to a deliberate ethnic cleansing campaign, in addition to an apparent violation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Russian occupation authorities may also be attempting to "brain drain" Ukraine by deporting promising Ukrainian students to Russian-run institutions further from the frontlines.

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.

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¹⁰ https://isw.pub/RusCampaignOct13

¹¹ https://t.me/mod russia/21595; https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/6721

¹² https://t.me/rybar/40945; https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/34879

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¹⁵ https://t.me/vysokygovorit/9912; https://t.me/kommunist/12953

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²⁴ https://t.me/wargonzo/9117

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²⁰ https://t.me/boris rozhin/69673

²¹ https://t.me/boris rozhin/69673; https://t.me/wargonzo/9131; https://t.me/sashakots/37058

²² https://t.me/rusich army/6204; https://t.me/kommunist/12939

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