



Based on analysis by Trent Telenko 20th June 2023

A strike against an ammunition depot was widely reported. Less so were the size and duration (6 hours plus) of the secondary explosions at the Rykove (Partyzany) ammunition depot which argues the PSU Storm Shadow strike hit a Russian Army (RuAF) theatre level ammunition storage depot.

This has significance for RuAF artillery logistics because Ukraine had already destroyed two of the rail bridges feeding the depot. This means replacing this ammunition reserve is a logistical disaster of the first order.

Arguably it will take about a week to 10 days for the Russians in the South to run out of artillery ammunition firing at last week's rates. We can expect Russian artillery fire, per gun or rocket launcher, per day for RuAF units in south and southwestern Ukraine to drop like a stone. Think something like down by half immediately and to 1/4 in a week as the scale of the disaster sinks in with Russian logisticians.

RuAF has poor administrative controls for everything. In disaster situations, Russian Army lying is epidemic until a guy with stars on his shoulders, and a squad of executioners behind him, shows up. This is exactly what happened when the 40 mile/64 km Russian Army column north of Kyiv ran out of fuel in early March 2022.

Major General Andrei Sukhovetsky, second in command of the Russian 41st Combined Arms Army came forward to resolve the logistical mess and the Ukraine Armed Forces (AFU) promptly assassinated him.

It wasn't until the Russians evacuated back to Belarus that the Russian administrative controls actually got an accurate count of the survivors of the column. The Russians never had a clue as to who or what really went into Ukraine because of all the accumulated lies built into pre-war unit reports.

The Russians are actually in a worse situation with the Rykove (Partyzany) ammunition depot than the Kyiv column. All the theatre level administrative records of what shell or rocket ammunition lots went to which artillery units are gone. They were kept in storage buildings whose foundations no longer exist.

The artillery shells and rockets that RuAF units in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia have right now are all they are going to have for the next couple of weeks. It is going to take that long to rebuild the rail lines and refill the supply chain to those units with munitions.

And there will be fewer shells because RuAF will have to keep far more dispersed theatre depots, requiring more trucks & mobiles inside of Ukraine, because of the Storm Shadow threat.

What RuAF tightening daily artillery firing rates to 1/4 or less of last week means is losing lots of Southern Ukrainian ground, armoured equipment, and even more lives trying to hold the 1st & 2nd defence lines until the RuAF artillery supply lines are reestablished.

Then it falls apart in about three weeks. The RuAF defence of the 3rd line had counted on that now destroyed artillery ammunition. It planned on killing and destroying AFU troops and equipment which will now survive lines one and two. And a lot of the RuAF troops that would have survived to fill 3rd line defences won't, simply because the total artillery ammunition reserves are so depleted. All of this is to plan, the plan of Ukraine's General Staff.

On the subject of reporting, lot of Western reporters are asking ignorant questions about

whether Ukraine's counter offensive has failed. They don't understand in their gut that the Ukrainians are not time constrained politically like a Western democracy.

Ukraine is in an existential war with 8 years warning to plan. AFU are fighting in a way that maximizes Russian losses while minimizing their own with the kit they have right now.

We are seeing a ground forces 'suppression of enemy artillery defences' operation using drones and precision munitions to savage the entire RuAF artillery C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) & logistical supply chain. This is in keeping with Ukraine's "Death of a Thousand Cuts" attritional strategy – smart attrition. They not only want to win. They want to disembowel the Russian military for a generation. And it is a strategy that is working.

The Russian officer corps has lost over half of it's at start strength through full colonel, including its mid-grade instructors, plus it has had 300% attrition in junior officers including cadets, technical specialists and R&D cadre. Details aren't admitted nationally, but observers of Russian regional and local media are spotting the death notices.

My read of the current fighting is Ukraine is attacking with just enough to drive the Russians reserves into the open for AFU artillery & drones to kill them. Claims that Russia has already lost 4000 tanks must surely be wide of the mark – mislabelling, misidentification, double counting and repairable vehicles are all likely, but we just don't know.

Russia has no active manufacturing base for spare parts needed for Cold War surplus gear. Russian lost two AFV's (armoured fighting vehicles) to cannibalisation for spare parts for every AFV the Chechens destroyed. The error bar is so large either way (1,500 vehicles for tanks alone) we won't know how many were lost until we count wrecks inside Ukraine.

The so-called Surovikin line doesn't have the basics of a WW1 or WW2 fortified line. It is said to be a line of fortifications roughly 2,000 kilometres long, running from Russia's border with Belarus to the Dnipro Delta. with about half of these defences being located in Ukraine itself,

It isn't deep enough with firing steps or shelters to really protect from drone directed 152/155mm shells. Nor is it wide enough to stop a tank. There is no barbed wire or sound generators. It isn't equipped with enough crew served weapons, & bunkers for same, for the frontages. Nor is it manned with enough infantry to be continually occupied, let alone be mutually supporting. As far as I can tell, no communication wire has been laid, so Ukraine is controlling Russian radio communication access with jamming at will, as it has been doing throughout the campaign.

Russia's first defence line seemed to have relied on minelayer MLRS batteries. Drone flights seem to have replaced infantry patrolling totally for the Russians on the Surovikin lines, compared to 2022. Ukraine still does some, but only as preparation for an attack looking for obstacles and camouflaged artillery observation posts that radio intercepts say are in the area.

The lack of both trained RuAF junior officers or any NCO's to exercise discipline in order to force local improvements (like, hide trash from drones!) in the fortifications of the Surovikin lines are glaringly obvious. The so-called Sorvorkin line is a "Potemkin Village defence" designed to convince Russian propaganda, media audiences, clueless Western journalists, politicians, and other susceptible suckers.

Until now, it has worked admirably. Minus shells? Not so much.

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*With additional material by Robin Ashby*