

FRANKLIN HOLCOMB

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RUSSIA AND UKRAINE SECURITY REPORT 3

THE KREMLIN'S IRREGULAR ARMY:

UKRAINIAN SEPARATIST ORDER OF BATTLE



Cover: A Pro-Russian separatist sits at his position at Savur-Mohyla, a hill east of the city of Donetsk, August 28, 2014. REUTERS/Maxim Shemetov. Reproduced with permission.

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Franklin Holcomb

The Kremlin's Irregular Army:
Ukrainian Separatist Order of Battle

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Franklin Holcomb is a Russia and Ukraine Research Analyst at the Institute for the Study of War where he focuses on the war in Ukraine, Ukrainian politics, and Russian foreign policy in Eastern Europe. His current research focuses on studying the development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Russian-backed separatist formations operating in Eastern Ukraine, as well as analyzing Russian political and military activity in Moldova, the Baltic, and the Balkans. Mr. Holcomb is the author of “The Order of Battle of the Ukrainian Armed Forces: A Key Component in European Security,” “Moldova Update: Kremlin Will Likely Seek to Realign Chisinau”, “Ukraine Update: Russia’s Aggressive Subversion of Ukraine,” as well as ISW’s other monthly updates on the political and military situation in Ukraine. He received his B.A. from Texas A&M University.

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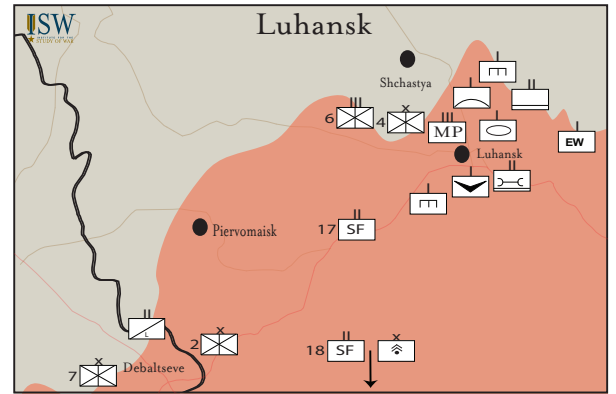
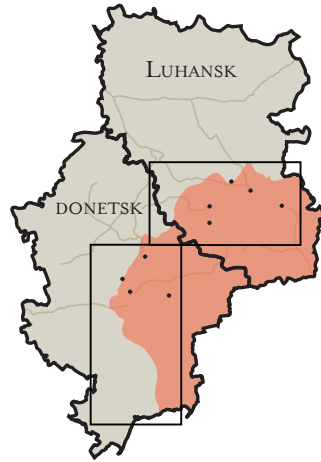
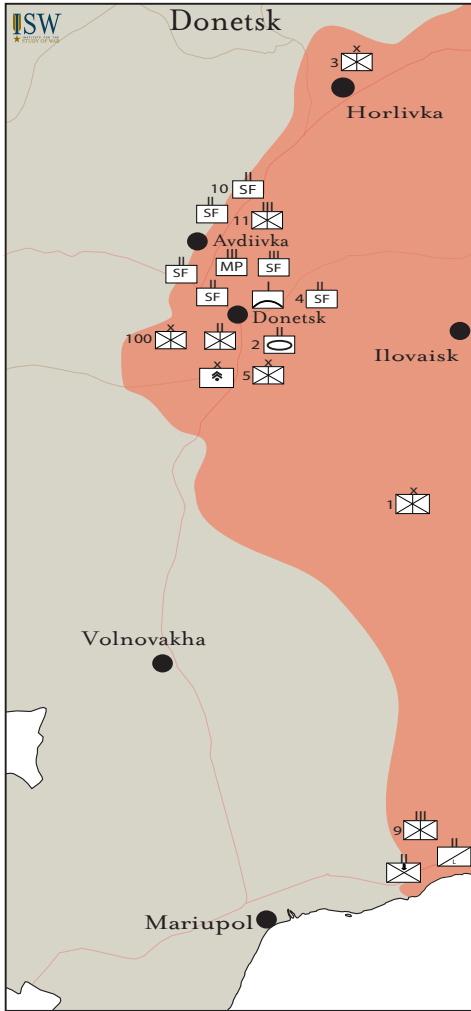
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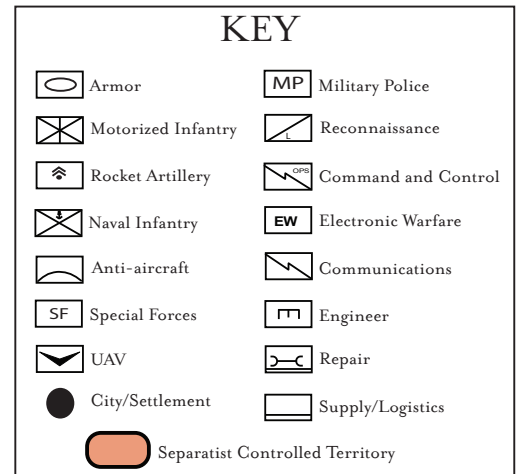
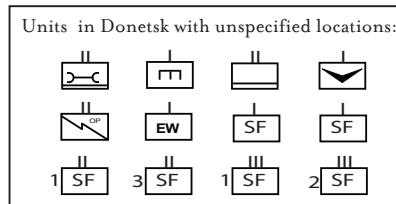
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The Armed Forces of the Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples' Republics



This graphic represents the deployments of separatist units in Russian-occupied Donbas as of roughly spring 2017. This graphic does not display Russian formations operating behind the frontlines. Many of these units have mobile components which have been, at times, redeployed from their primary area of operation.



Research and Graphics by Franklin Holcomb and the ISW Russia-Ukraine Team



THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

By: Franklin Holcomb

The Kremlin's political-military campaign in Eastern Ukraine threatens both Kyiv and the rest of Europe three years after Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. The Kremlin – in violation of its obligations under the 'Minsk II' ceasefire agreements – has fueled the conflict in pursuit of its grand strategic objective to assert dominance over the former Soviet Union. Russian President Vladimir Putin has shown no desire to withdraw his forces despite his failure to develop proxy forces capable of independently extending his campaign of subversion across Ukraine. Putin will continue to extend and exploit the war to destabilize Ukraine and prevent its further integration with the West until faced with costs that change his calculus.

This paper demonstrates that Russia's proxy forces operating in Eastern Ukraine - the Donetsk (DNR) and Luhansk (LNR) Peoples' Republics - continue to pose a threat to the security of Ukraine and Europe. These proxies only retain the capability to fight the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) with the sustained backing of the Kremlin. Russia continues to push its false narrative of a 'civil war' in Ukraine when the conflict is - and always has been - a product of its own intervention. The war is driven by Russia's proxy forces, facilitated by its nationwide subversion campaign, and actively supported by its troops. This paper also outlines the lessons learned from the invasion of Ukraine for both the West and the Kremlin.

Ukraine ousted pro-Russian Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich in the pro-Western 2014 Euromaidan Revolution, removing itself from the control of Moscow.¹ This development threatened Putin's long-held plans to dominate the states of the former Soviet Union via an economically viable and politically subordinate Eurasian Economic Union.² The Kremlin perceived the Euromaidan Revolution as the latest "coup d'état" in a string of revolutions backed by the West against Moscow rather than as what it was: a popular protest movement driven by Ukrainians' increasing frustration with a corrupt, inefficient, and abusive government.³ Putin assessed the need for immediate action to topple the pro-Western Government of Ukraine and restore his control over the country after his forces invaded and illegally occupied the Crimean Peninsula. Russia began military operations in spring 2014 in Eastern Ukraine that aimed to spread chaos via armed militants in pursuit of this objective.

THE FAILURE OF THE KREMLIN'S NOVOROSSIYA PROJECT

Russia's proxy forces failed in their objective to collapse the Government of Ukraine through an insurgency across Eastern Ukraine. The Kremlin's campaign to spread political instability achieved some initial gains but ultimately failed to gain enough momentum or local support to overcome resistance Ukrainian resistance. The Novorossiya Project – an artificial and largely unappealing initiative spread by the Kremlin into Southern and Eastern Ukraine – quickly collapsed in face of determined resistance from the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which contained the separatist movement to a small region in the eastern industrial region of Donbas.

The Kremlin attempted to conceal its military and intelligence infiltration by creating a local force in Eastern Ukraine. Russia conducted a targeted propaganda campaign aimed at exploiting economic discontent and driving social fissures among Ukrainians.⁴ This campaign successfully spread discontent but did not create a cohesive political bloc that could be transformed into a unified separatist movement without additional support from Russia. The Kremlin also deployed its intelligence and military assets to strengthen its weak separatist structures in Eastern Ukraine.⁵ Early leaders of the separatist movement were from Russia, with many involved in the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula.⁶ Former DNR 'Prime Minister' Alexander Borodai was a citizen of Russia with alleged intelligence connections while former DNR Defense Minister Igor 'Strelkov' Girkin was reportedly a former officer in the Russian Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU). Both men reportedly served with Russia in the 1992 Transnistria War against Moldova.⁷ Many alleged local protestors also came from Russia.⁸ Russian intelligence services organized and coordinated the recruitment and operations of fighters from Russia to fill the ranks of its separatist formations in Ukraine. The Kremlin used different tools to recruit fighters in Russia, including private military organizations such as PMC Wagner, nationalist or extreme leftist groups, and public and online recruiting campaigns.¹⁰ Many separatist fighters recruited from across Russia in the early stages of the conflict received only limited training in camps along the Russian-Ukrainian Border before being deployed and integrated into poorly-organized armed groups on

the ground in Ukraine.¹¹ These fighters, alongside local radicals, eventually formed the nucleus of the Armed Forces of the Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples' Republics.

The Kremlin channeled its fighters' diverse political agendas into its Novorossiia Project - mirroring a Tsarist-era regional designation for Eastern and Southern Ukraine. This movement deliberately avoided taking concrete political positions in favor of channeling nostalgia for the Soviet Union and Tsarist Russia as well as general anti-Western sentiment. The lack of a coherent ideology allowed both local and foreign fighters to project their values onto the separatist republics, creating space for a potent propaganda campaign. Putin publicly endorsed the project on April 17, 2014, claiming that Russia needed to protect the rights of "ethnic Russians and Russian speakers" in "Novorossiia" - a signature narrative used by the Kremlin during its campaigns against its neighbors.¹² The Kremlin's political manipulation nonetheless created a campaign that lacked the ideological cohesion commonly found in grassroots movements. The Novorossiia Project thus failed to create a compelling or consistent narrative that could sway the public in favor of the separatist movement in the long-term. Instead, the movement quickly demonstrated that its artificial ideology had nothing other than conflict and occupation to offer citizens of Eastern Ukraine. The lack of a concrete agenda or governing philosophy also undermined separatist forces, which began to show signs of disunity as ideologically-opposed groups began to clash over power and resources.¹³

Russia's early destabilization campaign both overestimated local sentiment in favor of Russia and underestimated Ukraine's determination to resist. The Kremlin misjudged its ability to create a network of proxy factions in Eastern Ukraine. The ethnic Russian and Russian-speaking population of Eastern Ukraine proved less eager than anticipated to actively support subversive groups and the wider Novorossiia Project backed by the Kremlin.¹⁴ Pro-Ukrainian groups rapidly emerged to confront separatist militants in Eastern Ukraine. These groups - often acting in coordination with official security services - destroyed a number of fledgling 'People's Republics' across Eastern and Southern Ukraine, including in the cities of Kharkiv, Odessa, and Dnipro (formerly Dnipropetrovsk).¹⁵ Several key Ukrainian oligarchs also acted decisively to check the spread of separatism in their spheres of influence, hamstringing the Novorossiia Project.¹⁶ The separatists remained poorly-organized, generally disunited, and unable to effectively resist pro-Ukrainian security forces. Ukraine exploited these failures and contained the growing insurgency to the industrial region of Donbas in Eastern

Ukraine, where the Kremlin's Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples' Republics controlled narrow strips of land along the Russian-Ukrainian Border.

Ukraine's lack of reliable security infrastructure and forces in Eastern Ukraine facilitated Russia's invasion at the outset of the war. The AFU and Ukrainian security services were poorly prepared and ill-positioned to confront the Kremlin's irregular forces in the spring of 2014.¹⁷ Early separatist groups managed to exploit the limited troop presence in the majority of Eastern Ukraine to achieve initial successes.¹⁸ Ukraine only brought sufficient combat-ready troops to bear against separatist formations after Ukrainian Transitional President Oleksandr Turchynov launched the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) on April 15, 2014.¹⁹ The AFU began to regain critical separatist positions in Donbas, including the separatist stronghold of Sloviansk and the key port city of Mariupol, in June - July 2014.²⁰ The AFU gained momentum and proved capable - when effectively deployed - of dispersing Russia's proxy formations. Separatist forces could not contend with the AFU, despite early levels of support from Russia. The Kremlin ultimately assessed that its proxy forces would be denied the ability to use direct military force to subvert the sovereignty of Ukraine, and that the Kremlin must act in order to prevent Ukraine from ending the conflict.

RUSSIA ADAPTS ITS CAMPAIGN

The Kremlin shifted its main effort from expanding its proxy insurgency to consolidating its positions in Donbas and leveraging them against the Government of Ukraine. The Kremlin was unwilling to abandon its campaign to undermine Kyiv but assessed that it could not hope to defeat the Armed Forces of Ukraine and spread instability across Ukraine without a full-scale invasion. The Kremlin thus began a campaign with two distinct phases: first, it launched major military operations to defeat the Armed Forces of Ukraine in Eastern Ukraine and thereby preserve its proxy forces; second, it shifted its war aims from immediately collapsing the government of Ukraine to gradually destabilizing Ukraine over the long term in order to create political or military vulnerabilities which it might exploit.

The Kremlin abandoned its initial Novorossiia Project and refocused on preserving its remaining proxy forces in Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts as a future lever against Kyiv. Russian forces shot down Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 over Ukraine on July 17, 2014, killing 298 passengers and crew.²¹ Russian forces mistook the international airliner for a military aircraft and shot it down as part of a wider effort

to slow advances against their collapsing proxy forces in Eastern Ukraine. These efforts failed. The Kremlin then launched a series of large-scale military operations from August 2014 to February 2015 to roll back the AFU before they could defeat its proxy forces and end the conflict. Large formations of Russian regular forces invaded Ukraine and encircled an AFU spearhead seeking to cut separatist formations off from the Russian-Ukrainian Border at the Battle of Ilovaik in August 2014.²² Russian and separatist troops later opened fire on the withdrawing forces despite assurances that they would be allowed to evacuate safely through a “humanitarian corridor.” The battle resulted in the death, injury, or capture of approximately 1,000 Ukrainian soldiers and threw the Ukrainian Armed Forces into chaos.²³ Russian forces exploited their victory at Ilovaik by launching a major offensive against Ukrainian positions outside the city of Donetsk at the Donetsk Airport (28 September, 2014 - 21 January, 2015) and at the strategic rail hub of Debaltseve (14 January - 20 February, 2015).²⁴ The Russian Armed Forces sustained heavy casualties as its direct involvement increased in the conflict.²⁵ Many Russian soldiers became disenchanted with the conflict and some resigned from their positions or deserted in face of pressure from their commanders to volunteer to fight in Ukraine.²⁶ The Kremlin assessed that the increasing military cost to the Russian Armed Forces - and the corresponding increase in public inquiry into the conflict - posed a danger to its control of the country. The Kremlin thus outlawed the discussion of military fatalities during ‘peacetime’ in early 2015 to lessen the political cost of its intervention.²⁷

The Kremlin moved to deescalate the conflict after the heavy fighting in late 2015, protecting itself from increasing costs to its military and economy while preserving its fragile proxies to use as an offensive tool. Russia’s invasion came with significant costs – both in maintaining day-to-day operations as well as from international sanctions punishing its flagrant intervention into Ukraine.²⁸ The Kremlin likely assessed that the cost of continued high-profile military involvement in Ukraine had proven too high. It also assessed that it could pursue its objective to destabilize and restore control over Ukraine through other means. Russia signed the Minsk II ceasefire agreement, which allowed it to diminish the intensity of the conflict and thus decrease both the danger to its regular forces and international standing. The Minsk Agreement nonetheless established no reliable enforcement mechanism, enabling Russia and its proxies to escalate the conflict at will.²⁹

THE EVOLUTION AND CURRENT STATE OF SEPARATIST FORCES

The Kremlin is the guarantor of the survival of its separatist proxies operating in parts of Donbas. Russia’s proxy forces suffer from wide-ranging systemic issues that render them incapable of defeating the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The separatist proxies are weak and seriously undermined by paranoid and fractious commanders. The AFU have increased their own capabilities as separatist forces stagnated, dramatically expanding the existing capabilities gap. The Kremlin likely does not intend for its proxies to win a major military victory. Instead, Russia uses its proxies to degrade the AFU and politically destabilize Ukraine.

Russia’s proxy forces could not continue to fight without the support of the Kremlin. Separatist structures are armed with its equipment, supplemented by its soldiers and volunteers, trained by its instructors, and are often managed by its officers on the ground.³⁰ Russian soldiers, particularly special operators, often supplement frontline separatist formations and conduct combat, sabotage, and reconnaissance missions against Ukrainian troops while larger formations of Russian troops are held in reserve behind separatist front lines.³¹ The Ukrainian government estimates that at least 6,000 Russian soldiers operate in Donbas, with tens of thousands more stationed along the Russian-Ukrainian Border as of June 2017.³² The deployments of the Russian Armed Forces in and around Ukraine provide separatist structures with security guarantees against superior formations of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, allowing them to deploy combat-ready troops forward and conduct tactical offensive operations without engaging in serious efforts to develop defensive depth. Separatist forces are thus an artificially capable force designed to damage the AFU without needing to plan against major counter-offensive operations.³³ Russia also supplies and replenishes these forces.³⁴ Ukraine does not control its border with Russia, which has funneled troops and supplies to separatist formations at will since the conflict began. The Russian Armed Forces in and around Ukraine retain the ability to integrate themselves rapidly into separatist structures should Russia decide to escalate the conflict. Russia will be retain unfettered access to supply its proxy forces with ammunition and manpower until Ukraine regains complete control of the Russian-Ukrainian Border.³⁵

Russia’s irregular proxy forces have not formed capable structures independent of the direct support of the Kremlin

for a wide range of institutional reasons. Separatist units are primarily comprised of:

- Russian mercenaries, intelligence, and military personnel³⁶
- Marginalized locals from economically-distressed areas³⁷
- Radical groups from Russia and the former Soviet Union, including Cossack bands, Russian Orthodox Christian radicals, Russian nationalists, and communists³⁸
- Sports hooligans³⁹
- Defectors from Ukrainian security forces⁴⁰

The Kremlin's proxies are at their weakest point in the conflict compared to the AFU. Separatist fighters continue to rely upon support and training from Russia.⁴¹ Many separatist units are disorganized and rarely work effectively with each other on the battlefield. Separatist formations engage in rampant criminality, particularly theft, smuggling, extortion, and violent assault.⁴² Their fighters also suffer from pervasive substance abuse.⁴³ The grim reality of daily life in separatists' territory and the weak military position of the Kremlin's proxy forces are steadily eroding their morale.⁴⁴ These issues measurably worsened as the conflict progressed, resistance from Ukraine increased, and separatist forces found themselves constrained to a small geographic area. These issues are pervasive across separatist forces but particularly affect the Armed Forces of the Luhansk People's Republic, which is generally inferior to its counterpart in the Donetsk People's Republic. The proxy formations serve as a tactical buffer force, separating regular Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine and along the Russian-Ukrainian Border from the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The Kremlin's proxy forces also act as de-facto skirmishers on a tactical level for these regular units, attacking and probing Ukrainian positions and degrading their combat readiness.

The command-and-control structures of separatist forces exacerbate their weakness and codependency on support from Russia. The Kremlin's current warlords - Igor Plotnitskiy (LNR) and Alexander Zakharchenko (DNR) - hail from Luhansk and Donetsk and replaced the earlier generation of separatist leaders from Russia such as Igor Girkin and Alexander Borodai to obfuscate the separatists' deep ties to the Kremlin.⁴⁵ Separatist field commanders answer to the heads of the DNR and LNR

and their representatives as part of command structures overseen on both tactical and strategic levels by Russian military staff.⁴⁶ These nominally-independent proxy formations thinly mask the involvement of Russia in destabilizing Ukraine, granting deniability as the Kremlin pursues its grand strategic objective to assert control over its neighbors. The Kremlin has used force to maintain order amongst its proxies and has overseen or allowed a thorough purge of separatist leaders since it ended its large-scale operations. The purges have targeted disloyal or independent-minded separatist leaders, particularly Cossack chiefs.⁴⁷ These purges have consolidated power in separatist territory around the two Kremlin-approved warlords but have also further decreased the capabilities of the separatist military leadership structure by eliminating popular or effective commanders. The purge increased the short-term stability of the volatile proxies but failed to address the fundamental causes of their instability, which ultimately stem from their lack of political unity or purpose. Separatist leaders remain bitterly divided and factional. Their oppressive and paranoid commanders use force to maintain stability within their fractious units.⁴⁸ The DNR and LNR cannot reliably coordinate military campaigns or political messaging, indicating a serious disconnect between them at a strategic level.⁴⁹

The Armed Forces of Ukraine has dramatically improved while separatist forces have stagnated or degraded throughout the War in Ukraine. The AFU were poorly prepared for conflict at the start of the conflict, suffering from decades of neglect and from the legacy of rigid Soviet military structures. Ukraine has since begun an ambitious reform effort designed to modernize the AFU and meet NATO standards by 2020.⁵⁰ Western advisors have played an important role in this ongoing process, which has marked improved Ukraine's command-and-control structures.⁵¹ These reforms, and the experience gained through three years of combat, have transformed the Armed Forces of Ukraine into a combat-ready force capable of success against the Kremlin's irregular proxy forces.⁵²

Ukrainian victories in the conflict have revealed many vulnerabilities in the separatists' military posture. Separatist formations lack large-scale offensive capabilities. The AFU has repulsed every significant separatist assault on its positions since major units of the Russian Armed Forces withdrew from frontlines in early 2015 to occupy defensive positions behind separatist formations.⁵³ Separatist forces struggled to gain ground and were unable to exploit limited successes achieved during

these engagements without major support from Russia. Ukrainian forces made tactical advances in 2016 - 2017 against several positions that separatist forces previously seized in violation of Minsk II, including areas near the rail hub of Debaltseve, the port city of Mariupol, and the separatist stronghold of Donetsk.⁵⁴ Separatist forces have been unable to reverse the incremental advances in these regions. They lack combat-ready troops to fill gaps in their line or resist the AFU. Former DNR Defense Minister Igor Girkin described separatist formations in February 2017 as more “mercenary than militia” and claimed that they would collapse within forty-eight hours without the support of the Russian Armed Forces.⁵⁵ Russia has nonetheless shown no indication that it intends to withdraw from the conflict. The Kremlin is likely confident that Ukraine will not take decisive action to end the war due to fear of a new offensive by Russia. The Kremlin has neither taken serious steps to improve the capabilities of its proxies to match the AFU nor renewed major offensive operations against Ukraine, probably because it can sustain the conflict and pursue its long-term objectives without the additional resources.

The Kremlin has redirected its efforts towards bleeding the AFU in Eastern Ukraine while seeking the political legitimization of its separatist forces to end the conflict on its own terms. The Kremlin’s proxy forces can maintain the current level of conflict for the foreseeable future, allowing Russia to keep Ukraine perpetually in a destabilizing state of war without needing to commit large numbers of troops to active combat operations. Moscow will seek to force Kyiv to re-integrate its proxy structures into the state on its terms, with high levels of autonomy and political influence, in order to have a permanent lever of influence in Ukraine. The Kremlin continues to demand that Ukraine treat its proxy forces as “equals” in order to raise their status to that of a legitimate state actor and thereby obfuscate the ongoing involvement of the Russian Armed Forces.⁵⁶ The Kremlin has also taken other steps to increase the legitimacy of its proxy forces’ political structures, including recognizing passports and other legal documents issued by separatist authorities, attempting to establish ‘embassies’ for its proxy forces across Europe, switching the currency of separatist regions from the Ukrainian hryvnia to the Russian rouble, and allowing its proxies to ‘nationalize’ industries in their territory by forcibly seizing control of them.⁵⁷ The Kremlin’s objective to force Ukraine to legitimize its proxies would not necessarily require Ukraine to legitimize the current separatist authorities, who are disposable to the Kremlin. The Kremlin would likely accept other, less politically-toxic pro-Russian figures from these regions as legitimate

actors. The Kremlin would also likely require that its proxies retain official or de-facto control of the Russian-Ukrainian Border in order to facilitate future subversive or military operations against Ukraine.⁵⁸ The Kremlin has not taken decisive steps to force Ukraine to comply with its demands or made any effort to meet the demands of Ukraine because continuing the conflict at its current level also moves Russia closer to its goal to remove the pro-Western Government of Ukraine.

DANGERS POSED BY THE WAR IN UKRAINE

The Russian campaign in Ukraine destabilizes Ukraine and undermines the wider security of Europe. The intensity of violence in Ukraine has decreased from its peak in mid-2014 to late 2015, but the continued conflict sets conditions for future instability, chaos, and conflict on NATO’s eastern flank.

Russia’s proxy conflict weakens the Government of Ukraine and inflicts significant overall costs on Ukraine. The Kremlin has not achieved its objectives yet continues to fuel the war in pursuit of them. The vast majority of Ukraine (including Eastern Ukraine) remains at peace. Ukraine continues to pursue the goals of the Euromaidan Revolution and is moving towards integration with the West. It is advancing efforts to strengthen its political and economic foundations, including anti-corruption measures.⁵⁹ Russia still seeks to inflict major human, political, and economic costs on Ukraine, bucking the current level of international pressure against the Kremlin. Russia shows no serious desire to end the conflict on terms acceptable to Ukraine and has rejected efforts to deploy international peacekeepers to Ukraine, a step which would limit the ability of separatist forces to provoke conflict.⁶⁰ The Kremlin uses the conflict as a political lever to influence the strategic calculus of Kyiv. Fighting continues on a daily basis, particularly near the key port city of Mariupol and the separatist stronghold of Donetsk.⁶¹ The heavy fighting threatens to spark a humanitarian disaster and regularly results in fatalities among civilians and international observers, including an American citizen who was killed on April 23, 2017.⁶² The war has claimed at least 10,000 lives so far, including at least 2,600 Ukrainian soldiers, approximately 1,500 Russian soldiers (though estimates for total Russian casualties vary widely), thousands of Russia’s proxy fighters, and numerous civilians.⁶³ The war has also created at least 1.7 million refugees and internally-displaced persons who are now scattered across Ukraine, Europe, and Russia.⁶⁴ The war impedes critical political and economic reforms in Ukraine by diverting manpower,

resources, and attention from reformist leaders. The political opponents of the post-Euromaidan Government of Ukraine have exploited growing public frustration with the cumulative human and economic costs of the war, endangering political stability.

Russia's proxy forces are bolstered by fighters from other countries across Europe that pose a threat to their home nations and spread criminality, including weapons smuggling. The Kremlin fuels nationalism across the former Soviet Union, creating a cadre of violent veterans and mercenaries that could be mobilized for future destabilization campaigns just as many early separatist leaders in Ukraine were veterans of previous conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Balkans.⁶⁵ Separatists' ranks are bolstered by fighters from Moldova, Belarus, Russia, the Baltics, and the Balkans, amongst other countries.⁶⁶ The governments of those states are rightly concerned by the potential return of these fighters to their countries of origin. Belarus and Moldova are particularly vulnerable to destabilization campaigns similar to the one targeting Ukraine.⁶⁷ The conflict has also increased the influence of criminal groups across the region, including in Southwestern Russia, and fueled a dangerous proliferation of arms smuggling and criminality across Europe.⁶⁸

The Kremlin will learn from its campaign in Ukraine to refine its methods for intervening in other countries. The Kremlin can apply certain elements of its "Ukraine playbook" elsewhere, particularly against states that lack appropriate military and security infrastructure. This playbook includes the manipulation of economically- or politically-alienated groups, the demonization of the West and Western political structures via targeted propaganda campaigns, the sponsorship of radical political parties to exploit seams and fractures in political landscapes, the utilization of porous borders with Russia to facilitate rapid infiltration by military and security forces, and the manipulation of international law and peace agreements. These strategies threaten states across the former Soviet Union and beyond. The Kremlin's ongoing interventions in active conflicts in Ukraine and Syria as well as frozen conflicts in Georgia and Moldova demonstrate that the Russian Armed Forces remain capable of conducting operations against multiple targets simultaneously. The Kremlin will apply and adjust this toolkit depending on its specific strategic goals.

THE WAY AHEAD

The U.S. and its allies hold strong security, economic, and moral interests in preserving a Europe that is whole,

free, and at peace. The West must view an acceptable end to the War in Ukraine as a core element of this objective. The Kremlin's ongoing invasion of Ukraine destabilizes Ukraine and Eastern Europe, and is part of a wider trend of aggression against its neighbors that has escalated in intensity over time. The U.S. must establish a clear policy to support the sovereignty of Russia's neighbors and confront the Kremlin's unprovoked aggression towards these states. The Kremlin must be deterred from conducting destabilizing interventions against other states similar to its wars against Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova. The failure to check Russia's aggression against its neighbors could embroil Europe in civil unrest, instability, and conflict over the coming years.

The U.S. and its partners must pursue a concrete endstate acceptable to both Kyiv and the West in their policy towards the War in Ukraine. The U.S. and its partners have maintained appropriate focus on the need to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict.⁶⁹ Policy-makers must nonetheless view diplomacy as a tool to pursue an appropriate endstate to the war rather than an endstate in and of itself. The necessary endstate to the War in Ukraine for the U.S. includes a Ukraine that is at peace, able to exercise its independence and sovereignty, and capable of deterring the threat of military aggression and subversion; an end to the invasion and illegal occupation of Ukraine by Russia, including the Crimean Peninsula; the withdrawal of Russian Armed Forces illegally operating in Ukraine; and the surrender of Russian proxies to the Government of Ukraine.

U.S. support has been, and will be, critical to achieve this endstate.

The U.S. under the Obama Administration pursued an endstate for the War in Ukraine in which Ukraine regained control of its territory and the Russian Armed Forces withdrew from Eastern Ukraine and the Crimean Peninsula. It pursued two distinct yet complementary lines of effort to achieve this endstate. The Obama Administration intended to apply economic and political pressure on the Kremlin to end its invasion without provoking further escalation by Russia.⁷⁰ Former U.S. President Barack Obama announced several sets of economic sanctions, created in coordination with the EU and other partners, at the outset of the War in Ukraine which were later updated and expanded. President Obama also emphasized that the U.S. would "look at the range of ways we can help our Ukrainian friends achieve their universal rights and the security, prosperity and dignity that they deserve." The Obama Administration took steps

to help improve the professionalism of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and support the reform of the Government of Ukraine, while taking steps to help Ukraine conduct other critical civilian sector reforms.⁷¹ The Trump Administration has adopted a similar view, expressing support for Ukraine while insisting that the Kremlin withdraw from the Crimean Peninsula and de-escalate hostilities in Eastern Ukraine.⁷² The Kremlin has shown no indication that it intends to meet these demands.

The U.S. and its partners have taken steps to increase the cost of aggression for the Kremlin. Western sanctions have proven an effective tool against Russia.⁷³ The current sanctions on the Kremlin have - in combination with existing structural issues in the Russian economy - severely reduced its purchasing power and access to financial capital. This economic crisis has forced the Kremlin to cut its budget significantly. These cuts particularly affected healthcare and education but also impacted military spending, which shrank by roughly 7% in 2017.⁷⁴ Russia continues its intervention despite the current economic costs because it is willing to prioritize its aggressive policy to reassert control over Ukraine despite the current level of political and economic cost to the Kremlin and Russians. The Kremlin may also hope that it can undermine or bypass the international sanctions regime, as evidenced by their efforts to drive wedges on the issue between the EU and U.S.⁷⁵

The U.S. and Europe may inadvertently encourage this belief by sending an inconsistent message to Moscow. The U.S. has accepted Russia's military buildup in Syria and taken steps to expand cooperation with the Kremlin in the Syrian Civil War.⁷⁶ European states such as Italy and Hungary have expressed concerns about continuing sanctions against Russia, despite condemning the continued aggression of Russia in Ukraine.⁷⁷ Other European states such as Germany and Austria have advocated for the Kremlin's Nordstream 2 Pipeline, which aligns with the Kremlin's objective to increase the dependence of Europe on its natural gas and thereby secure a critical source of income.⁷⁸ This inconsistent messaging undermines Western efforts to check the Kremlin's aggression in Ukraine and likely encourages the Kremlin to continue its campaign at the current level.

The U.S. and its partners have nonetheless helped Ukraine take critical steps towards extricating itself from the economic and political sphere of influence of the Kremlin. The EU approved visa-free travel with Ukraine on June 11, 2017, and approved an important trade association agreement with Ukraine on July 11, 2017.⁷⁹ Both of these

steps will help integrate Ukraine with economic structures in the West and decrease its long-term reliance on Russia. The U.S. and its partners have taken important steps to help Ukraine distance itself from the Russian energy network, which the Kremlin uses as a lever of influence over Kyiv. Poland and Ukraine announced plans in June 2017 to develop a regional gas hub designed to decrease the regional energy dominance of Russia.⁸⁰ The U.S. announced that it would begin supplying anthracite coal - which Ukraine lost access to during its conflict with Russia - to Ukraine in 2017.⁸¹ These efforts should continue, and the U.S. should take steps to expand its bilateral economic and energy ties with Kyiv over the coming years.

Kyiv has also made some progress in fighting corruption and reforming the Government of Ukraine in order to address core governance issues with support from the West. This progress is unprecedented in the history of Ukraine.⁸² U.S. and Western financial assistance has played a key role in stabilizing the Ukrainian economy while simultaneously incentivizing reform, promoting economic growth, and supporting a strong civil society in recent years.⁸³ Ukraine nonetheless faces serious systemic civil issues which threaten this progress. The war on corruption is beginning to lose momentum and stagnate in face of entrenched bureaucracy. The economy, while gradually improving, is still weak.⁸⁴ These issues will be exploited by pro-Russia and populist parties during upcoming elections in 2019 unless properly addressed.

These forces aim to undo years of civil progress reform and ultimately halt Ukraine's progress towards the West.⁸⁵

The Armed Forces of Ukraine, with the support of the U.S. and its Western partners, has also made remarkable progress towards reforming into a capable modern force. The U.S. and its partners have played key roles in this effort through training programs aimed at increasing the professionalism of the AFU on subjects as diverse as weapons systems, marksmanship, logistics, explosive threat recognition, first aid, junior leadership, and interoperability with NATO.⁸⁶ Ukrainian forces have increased their involvement in training exercises with NATO such as Sea Breeze and Rapid Trident, demonstrating the expanded capabilities of the AFU.⁸⁷ These efforts also demonstrate the AFU's commitment to transforming itself into a force capable of playing a positive role in maintaining security in Europe. The AFU remains vulnerable to Russia in a number of key aspects despite this progress. The Armed Forces of Ukraine have made significant progress a long-overdue process of restructuring, but the new systems of command-and-control are not yet firmly in place. The Ukrainian Navy

is unprepared to defend its coastline after having been devastated by the loss of nearly its entire fleet and basing facilities during the occupation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia.⁸⁸ The Ukrainian Army has demonstrated itself to be superior to the irregular forces facing them in Eastern Ukraine but remains vulnerable to the massed armored units and heavy artillery of the Russian Armed Forces. Russia will be able to exploit these vulnerabilities if the Kremlin chooses to escalate the conflict in Ukraine.

U.S. policies have achieved important successes but ultimately failed to halt Russia's ongoing intervention in Ukraine. The U.S. and its partners thus must reevaluate existing policies towards Ukraine and Russia to identify and fill policy gaps in their policy which the Kremlin might hope to exploit to achieve its objectives. U.S. Special Envoy for Ukraine Kurt Volker observed the necessity for increased U.S. involvement in efforts to resolve the war "as quickly as possible."⁸⁹ The U.S. and its partners must pursue the two lines of effort adopted under the Obama Administration with increased intensity to halt and reverse further aggression by Russia. They must help Ukraine harden its military defenses in order to disincentivize further action by the Russian Armed Forces while simultaneously supporting meaningful civil reform to decrease the dangers of subversion and political destabilization by the Kremlin.

The U.S. and Europe must continue to support initiatives to address core governance concerns in Ukraine by reinvigorating the efforts of genuine reformers in Kyiv. The U.S. should make efforts to expand inter-government cooperation with the goal to help Ukraine professionalize its civil service. The U.S. should empower reformers by providing economic and political incentives in exchange for concrete steps to decrease corruption and improve transparency. The U.S. must also encourage the government of Ukraine to pass a number of key reforms such as judicial reform, land reform, and privatization of state-owned assets in order to expedite the wider reform process. The U.S. should avoid unnecessarily risking this progress by decreasing aid and other forms of assistance to the Government of Ukraine while it remains in the process of conducting important reforms.

The U.S. and its Western partners must expand their assistance to reform and restructure the Armed Forces of Ukraine with a key focus on identifying key vulnerabilities that could be exploited by Russia. The U.S. must aim to help develop the AFU into a more flexible force capable of rapidly responding to emergent threats. The U.S. should begin to supply the AFU - particularly the high-quality

marines and paratroopers - with anti-tank weapons systems to counter the threat posed by the armored forces of Russia. These weapons would not be intended to halt a major assault but rather to increase the cost of such an operation in order to deter the Kremlin from repeating its aggressive military operations of 2014 - 2015. The U.S. must expand its support to the Ukrainian Navy in order to help Ukraine develop a force capable of protecting its coastline. The U.S. has pledged \$30 million to support reform of the Ukrainian Navy as part of a larger military support package, but must expand its assistance to help Ukraine develop naval basing elsewhere while it is denied its basing in Crimea.⁹⁰ The U.S. should also help Ukraine develop meaningful counters to hostile naval forces, including the provision of more effective anti-ship systems. The U.S. should expand its joint-training exercises with Ukraine and other security contributors on the Black Sea such as Georgia to grant a clear demonstration of its support for these states. The U.S. should strongly support initiatives by Europe to found joint units with Ukraine, such as the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade. These units provide partnered states with the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences and develop an important security network in the region in face of concrete external threats. Ukraine, Romania, and Bulgaria have previously discussed creating such a unit, and the U.S. should support such efforts.⁹¹

The West should put more pressure on the Kremlin in order to shift its economic, political, and military calculus towards its invasion of Ukraine. The U.S. must work with its partners in Europe to maintain and increase economic pressure on the Kremlin. The U.S. must be prepared to lead efforts to expand this sanctions regime over time against individuals, organizations, and industries in Russia that fuel the invasion of Ukraine. The U.S. should sanction companies that cooperate in major economic projects with the Kremlin such as Nordstream 2, which will inevitably help fund and continue Russia's aggression. The U.S. and its partners must take firm political stands to signal to the Kremlin that its invasion of Ukraine is unacceptable and stands in the way of any meaningful trust-building activities or cooperation between Russia and the West. The U.S. must never recognize Russia's illegal occupation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, or any other territory illegally seized by Russia in other countries such as Transnistria, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia. The U.S. should reject outright any attempts to divert attention from the aggressive and illegal activities of Russia in Ukraine or exchange enhanced cooperation and compliance in other theaters for relief from the consequences of its illegal

invasion of Ukraine. The U.S. should utilize its growing relationship with the AFU to help Ukraine increase the cost of Russia's illegal invasion on the Kremlin. The U.S. should use the deployment of lethal defensive weapons systems to the AFU as a tool to both help Ukraine and raise the cost of continued invasion on Russia.

The U.S. and partners should adopt a regional posture aimed at deterring future Russian invasion of its neighbors. The U.S. should lead this effort by supporting Ukraine, where Russia is actively engaged, but match these efforts with support to other Eastern European states that request assistance. The U.S. should increase support to states where the Russian Armed Forces are operating illegally, including Georgia and Moldova, in their efforts to reform and integrate with the West. The U.S. should also be prepared to support other vulnerable European states, including in the Balkans and the Baltics.

The Order of Battle of the Armed Forces of the Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples' Republics

Notes for the Reader

Unit Name: This Order of Battle identifies the different names by which each separatist unit is known. Separatist units are often known by different names due to incomplete reform processes enacted by separatist leadership. Names adopted earlier in the conflict have typically remained the de-facto titles of the unit.

Commander: This Order of Battle identifies the separatist commanders involved in this conflict. These commanders all nominally answer to their respective Ministries of Defense. Separatist commanders enjoy varying levels of tactical autonomy and Russian backing.

Location: This Order of Battle identifies the overall disposition of separatist forces. Most of these units have maintained their present positions at least since the signing of the Minsk II ceasefire on 11 February, 2015. Some units have mobile detachments which have rotated or been temporarily redeployed.

Estimated Size: Estimates from Ukrainian sources regarding the size of some separatist units have been provided. **These estimates cannot be independently verified.**

Structure: Most separatist brigade level units consist of at least between one and three motor rifle battalions, supported by artillery, reconnaissance, command, and logistics companies. Many company and battalion level units in separatist brigades, particularly in the Luhansk People's republic, were formerly independent commands. This report identifies notable subunits, which are typically engaged in combat operations.

Donetsk People's Republic (DNR)

Leader: Alexander Zakharchenko³

Minister of Defense: Vladimir Kononov⁴

Deputy Minister of Defense and Spokesman: Eduard Alexandrovich Basurin⁵

Interior Ministry (DNR)

Special Police Regiment "Bastion"⁶

Commander: "Czech"

Location: Donetsk (highly mobile)

Reported Size: 1,300

Secondary Units:⁷

1st Regiment of Interior Troops

Commander: Unknown

Location: Donetsk Unknown

Reported Size: Unknown

2nd Regiment of Interior Troops

Commander: Unknown

Location: Donetsk Unknown

Reported Size: Unknown

1st Training Battalion

Commander: Unknown

Location: Donetsk Unknown

Reported Size: Unknown

Special Operations Company

Commander: Unknown

Location: Donetsk Unknown

Reported Size: Unknown

State Security Service (DNR)⁸

Battalion "Patriot (08832)⁹

Commander: Alexey Klotchkov "Chekist"

Location: Donetsk Oblast: Pisky (as of July 2016)

Battalion "Legion" (08830)¹⁰

Commander: Sergey Zavdoveev

Location: Donetsk Oblast: Makiivka (As of August 2016)

Ministry of Transportation (DNR)

Battalion "Vityaz" (08831)¹¹

Commander: Roman Kornienko

Location: Donetsk Oblast: Yasinovataya (As of September 2016)

Operational-Tactical Command "Donetsk"/1st Army Corps (00100)¹²

1st Separate Motor Rifle Brigade "Slavyanskaya"/ Guard Tactical Group "Komsomolskoe"
(08801)¹³

Commander: (First Name Unknown) Diygalov

Location: Donetsk Oblast: Komsomolskoe (as of May 2016)

Estimated Size: 4,500

Notable Subunits:

1st Motor Rifle Battalion, Commander Alexey Sosonny "Viking"

2nd Motor Rifle Battalion Semenovskiy

Recon Company "Dikson" Commander "Pecheneg"

2nd Separate Tank Battalion "Dizel" (08810)¹⁴

Commander: Major Pyotr Ruch'ev "Dizel"

Location: Donetsk Oblast: Donetsk City (As of March 2016)

3rd Separate Motor Rifle Brigade "Berkut"/Guard Tactical Group "Gorlovka" (08803)¹⁵

Commander: Unknown

Location: Donetsk Oblast: Svitlodarsk Arc, Horlivka, Zaetseve (as of August 2017)

Estimated Size: 1000

Notable Subunits:

1st Motor Rifle Battalion "Gorlovskii"

2nd Motor Rifle Battalion "Enakievskii," Commander "Vizir"

3rd Motor Rifle Battalion "Lavina"

8th International Battalion "Pyatnashka," Commander Oleg Mamiev

3rd Separate Special Operations Battalion (08827)¹⁶

Commander: Unknown

Location: Unknown

4th Special Operations Battalion¹⁷Commander: Sergey “Fomich” FomchenkovLocation: Donetsk Oblast: Donetsk City (as of April 2017)5th Separate Motor Rifle Brigade “Oplot”/Tactical Group “Oplot”/ (08805)¹⁸¹⁹Commander: Mikhail G. Tikhonov, Nikolay YurashLocation: Donetsk Oblast: IVO Donetsk City Dokuchaevsk (as of June 2016)Estimated Size: 4,0009th Separate Motor Rifle Regiment “Saint George the Victorious”/Tactical Group “Novazovsk” (08819)²⁰Commander: Andrey Viktorovich Oprishenko “Utyos”Location: Donetsk Oblast: Mariupol Region, Oktyabr, Kominternove (Likely partly mobile) (As of June 2017)Notable Subunits:1st Motor Rifle Battalion “Semenovskiy”10th Separate Special Operations Battalion “Xan” (08808)²¹Commander: Yegor GorshkovLocation: Donetsk Oblast, Avdiivka (as of April 2016)Notable Subunits:1st Special Operations Company (Sut’Vremeni), Commander: “Volga”11th Separate “Enakievo-Dunaiskiy” Motor Rifle Regiment “Vostok (08818)²²Commander: Andrey Vladimirovich Lixatskiy “Mayor”Location: Donetsk Oblast: Makiivka. Avdiivka, Piisky, Yasinovatya, Zhabunki, Spartak (as of May 2017)100th Separate Motor Rifle Brigade “Republican Guards”/Tactical Group “Kupol” (08826)²³Commander: Ivan “Vanya Ruskiy” KondrashovLocation: Donetsk Oblast: Donetsk City, Marinka, Oleksandrivka (As of October 2016)Estimated Size: 4500-5000Separate Artillery Brigade “Kalmius”/ Tactical Group “Kalchug” (08802)²⁴Commander: Alexander Sergeevich NemogaiLocation: Donetsk Oblast: Donetsk City (As of May 2017)Reported Size: 4,500Separate Commandant’s Regiment “Kramatorskiy” (08816)²⁵Commander: Colonel Victor Yurevich Anosov “Nos”Location: Donetsk Oblast: Donetsk City (As of May 2017)

Separate Reconnaissance Battalion "Sparta" (08806)²⁶

Commander: Vladimir Zhoga "Voha"

Location: Donetsk Oblast: Donetsk City and Novoazovsk (As of June 2016)

Estimated Size: 300

Separate "Ilovayskiy" Guard Motor Rifle Assault Battalion "Somali" (08828)²⁷

Commander: Yegor Volchkov "Maloy"

Location: Donetsk Oblast: Donetsk City, Avdiivka (As of September 2016)

Separate Repair/Construction Battalion "Kongo" (08813)²⁸

Commander: Alexander Anatolevich

Location: Unknown

Separate Battalion of Command and Security (08804)²⁹

Commander: I. G. Morgun

Location: Unknown

Separate Logistics Battalion (08812)³⁰

Commander: Unknown

Location: Unknown

Separate Engineer/Sapper Company (08810)³¹

Commander: Unknown

Location: Unknown

Separate Electric Warfare Company (08817)³²

Commander: Unknown

Location: Unknown

Separate UAV Company³³

Commander: Unknown

Location: Unknown

Separate Anti-Aircraft Battery (08817)³⁴

Commander: Possibly Major Kobko "Desant"

Location: Donetsk Oblast: Donetsk City (As of 2016)

Separate Reconnaissance Battalion "Taifun"³⁵

Commander: Unknown

Location: Unknown, likely IVO Shyrokyne

Luhansk People's Republic (LNR)

Head of the Luhansk People's Republic: Igor Plotnitskiy

“Operational Command Luhansk”/2nd Army Corps (77077)³⁶

2nd Separate Guards Motor Rifle Brigade (L-73438)³⁷

Commander: Colonel Yan Vitalevich Leshenko

Location: Luhansk Oblast: Novoaidar, Pionersk, Svitlodarsk Arc (as of February 2017)

Reported Size: 4,500

Notable Subunits:

1st Motor Rifle Battalion “Zarya,” Commander Andrey Patrushev (possibly dead)

2nd Motor Rifle Battalion “Don”

3rd Motor Rifle Battalion “Huligan”

12th Separate Special Battalion “Rim,” Commander P. P. Gutsko

4th Separate Motor Rifle Brigade (L-74347)³⁸

Commander: Guard-Colonel Yuri Shevchenko

Location: Luhansk Oblast: Alchevsk (possibly relocated to Krasniy Luch) (as of August 2017)

Notable Subunits:

1st Motor Rifle Battalion “Leshevo”

2nd Motor Rifle Battalion “Betmen”

3rd Motor Rifle Battalion “Vityaz”

13th Separate Special Battalion “Egor”

14th Separate Special Battalion “Prizrak”

16th Separate Special Battalion “Cossack Regiment Yarga,” Commander Rashid Sharkizyanov,
(Luhansk Oblast: Antrastye)

6th Separate Guard Motor Rifle Regiment “Kazachiy” (L-69647)³⁹

Commander: Unknown

Location: Luhansk Oblast: Kalinovo Stakhanov Kadiyivka (as of August 2017)

7th Separate “Chistyakovskaya” Motor Rifle Brigade (08807)⁴⁰

Commander: A. Kolocov

Location: Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts: Debaltsevo, Svitlodarsk Arc (as of December 2016)
Bryanka (As of July 2017)

Reported Size: 3,000

Notable Subunits:

1st Motor Rifle Battalion “Slavyanskiy”

2nd Motor Rifle Battalion “Semenovskiy”

3rd Motor Rifle Battalion “Machete”

15th Separate Special Battalion “USSR Bryanka”

Separate Artillery Brigade (L-23213)⁴¹

Commander: Igor Sidorenko

Location: Luhansk Oblast: Xrustalniy (As of January 2017)

Separate Commandant's Regiment (44444)⁴²

Commander: Colonel Sergey V Grachyov "Grach"

Location: Luhansk Oblast: Luhansk City (As of February, 2017)

Special Mechanized Squad "Pantsir (former 4th Separate Tank Battalion Avgust) (L-64064)⁴³

Commander: Possibly Alexander Kostin "Avgust"

Location: Luhansk Oblast: Luhansk City (As of February, 2017)

Separate Anti-Aircraft Battery (L-23023)⁴⁴

Commander: Lt. Colonel Vitaliy Ivanovich Ugyromov (possibly Captain Ruslan Ragulun)

Location: Luhansk Oblast, Luhansk City (As of October 2016)

Separate Reconnaissance Battalion "Greka" (L-55055)⁴⁵

Commander: Captain Oleg Grekov

Location: Luhansk Oblast: Luhansk City, Svitlodarsk Arc, near Debaltseve (as of January, 2017)

Separate Repair/Construction Battalion (L 13931)⁴⁶

Commander: Sergey Liysenko

Location: Luhansk Oblast, (Likely Mobile)

Separate Logistics Battalion (L-14941)⁴⁷

Commander: Major Vladimir Ryauza

Location: Luhansk Oblast: Possibly Luhansk City (as of 2016)

Separate Command-Security Battalion (73604)⁴⁸

Commander: Major Stichenko

Location: Luhansk Oblast: Luhansk City (as of 2016)

Separate Engineer-Sapper Company (L-11011)⁴⁹

Commander:

Location: Luhansk Oblast, Luhansk City

Separate Electric Warfare Company (L-05776)⁵⁰

Commander: Unknown

Location: Luhansk Oblast (Possibly Luhansk City As of September 2017)

Task Force “Falkon” (UAV Unit)⁵¹

Commander: Unknown

Location: Luhansk Oblast (As of February, 2017)

Territorial Defense Battalions⁵²

17th Separate Special Forces Battalion “Bolshoi”⁵³

Commander: Sergey Krochmal

Location: Luhansk Oblast: Slavyanserbsk (as of February 2017)

18th Separate Special Forces Battalion “Poxodniy”⁵⁴

Commander: Unknown

Location: Luhansk Oblast: Krasniy Luch (As of 2016)

The Armed Forces of the Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples' Republics

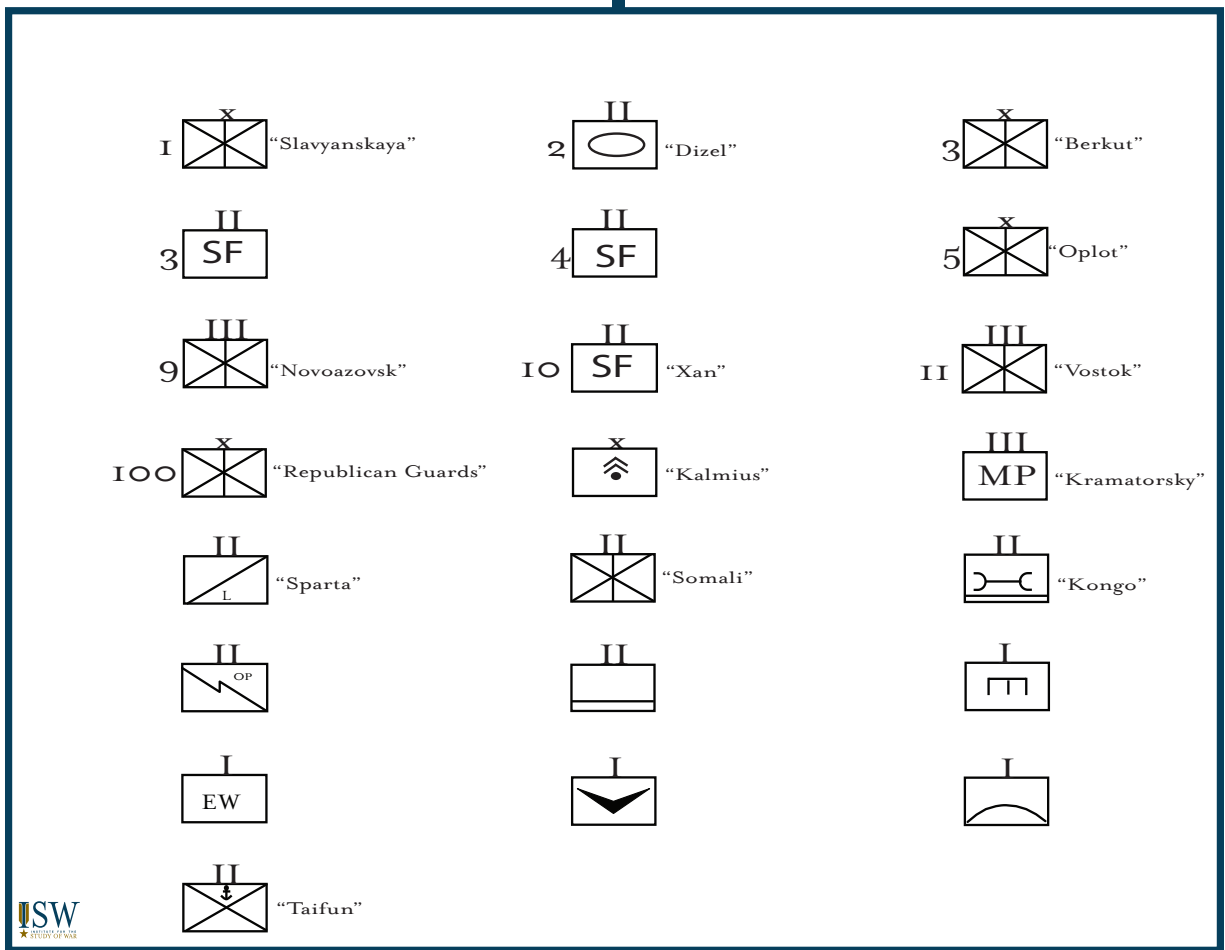
Key

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	Motorized Infantry		UAV
	Rocket Artillery		Military Police
	Naval Infantry		Reconnaissance
	Anti-aircraft		Command and Control
	Electronic Warfare		Engineer
	Communications		Repair
	Supply/Logistics		



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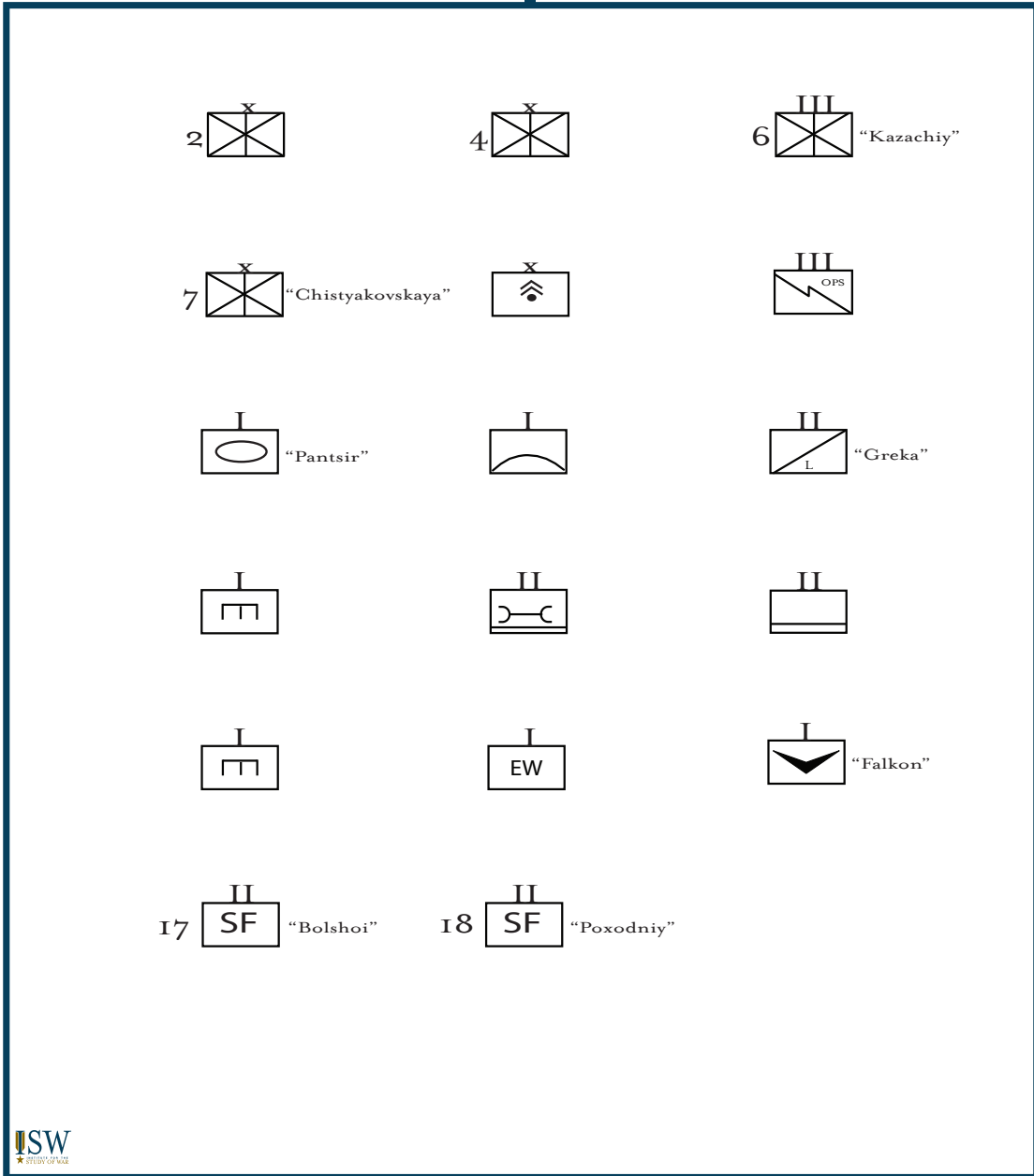
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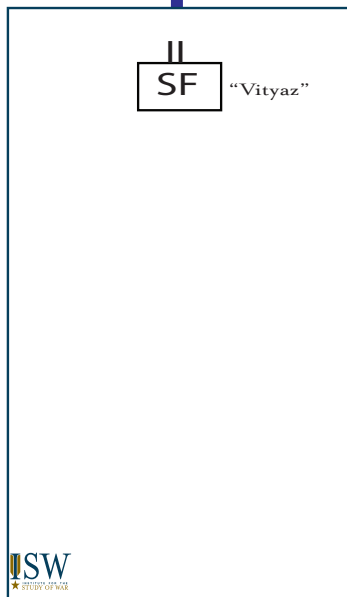
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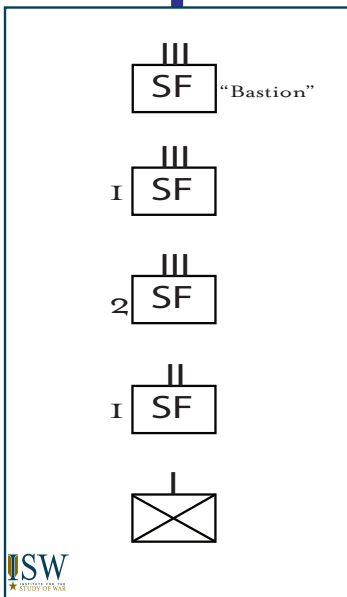


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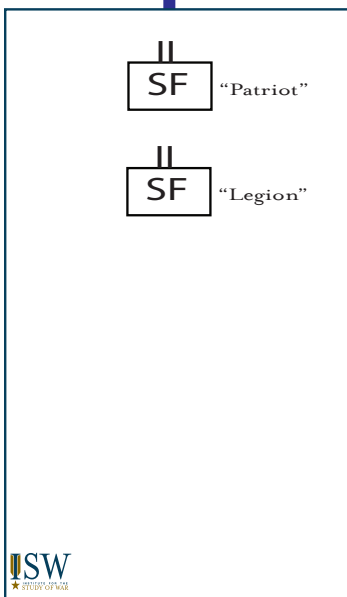
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DNR Interior Ministry



DNR State Security Service



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SEPARATIST ORDER OF BATTLE NOTES

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