



ALEXEI KONOVALOV/TASS Sipa USA/USA TODAY NETWORK

In the Russia-occupied portion of the Kherson region in Ukraine on Sunday, a Russian serviceman of a army drone unit launches a Supercam S350 unmanned aircraft system.

Russian forces advance swiftly, seeking edge in Trump talks

BY CONSTANT MÉHEUT
NYT News Service

KYIV, UKRAINE

Russian forces are striving to shape the battlefield to their advantage before a high-stakes summit between President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, making a swift advance in eastern Ukraine after months of grinding battle. In recent days, Russia’s troops broke through a segment of Ukraine’s defensive line near the city of Pokrovsk, a long-time stronghold. They have advanced several miles into Ukrainian-held

territory, threatening to outflank Ukraine’s positions. “The situation is quite chaotic, as the enemy, having found gaps in the defense, is infiltrating deep inside, trying to quickly establish a foothold and accumulate forces for further advancement,” said DeepState, a Ukrainian group with ties to the military that maps the battlefield. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine said in his evening address Monday that the Russians “are redeploying their troops and forces in ways that suggest preparations for new offensive oper-

ations” and that they are “not preparing for a ceasefire or an end to the war.” Ukraine, too, is seeking an edge before the Russian-American peace talks Friday in Alaska. Ukraine has ramped up attacks on Russian oil refineries, doubling down on its strategy of pressuring Russia into making concessions during negotiations by targeting the Kremlin’s main revenue source to fund the war. Pressing their advantage as peace talks gather pace has been a recurring tactic of both sides throughout the current war and the one that preceded it starting in 2014. Ukraine’s

bold June drone attacks deep inside Russia, which destroyed many strategic bombers, came just a day before negotiations in Istanbul. In 2015, Russia intensified fighting during ceasefire talks, surrounding the eastern town of Debaltseve, to force political concessions from Ukraine. Russia’s recent push near Pokrovsk, in the Donetsk region, sends a stark warning that Moscow’s forces remain capable of making rapid gains on the battlefield. It comes as Putin is expected to present Trump with major demands during Friday’s talks, which could

include an insistence that Ukraine cede the part of the Donetsk region that Ukraine still holds. Pokrovsk, which was once a critical logistical hub for Ukrainian forces in the east, is now semi-encircled from the northeast to the southwest. Ukrainian troops must pass through a narrow 10-mile corridor to enter the city, leaving them vulnerable to drone attacks. Russian forces are likely to try to tighten their noose around the city to force Ukrainian troops to withdraw, a tactic they have successfully used to capture other cities. Pasi Paroinen, an analyst for the Finland-based Black Bird Group, which tracks battlefield movements, said Russian forces had quickly infiltrated Ukrainian lines at a depth of roughly 10 miles in the

past three days, a contrast to Russia’s usual slow grind. The “next 24-48 hours will likely be crucial” in whether the Ukrainian army can contain the push, Paroinen wrote on the social platform X. Even as both sides keep fighting, they have tried to show Trump, who has long condemned the war as a costly waste of lives and resources, that they remain committed to pursuing peace. After Russia increased drone attacks on Ukrainian cities during talks last month between Moscow and Washington, Trump’s typically lenient tone toward Putin soured noticeably. “He talks nice and then he bombs everybody in the evening,” Trump said of Putin. “So there’s a little bit of a problem there. I don’t like it.” Since the beginning of August, however, Russia has significantly scaled back its drone attacks in what analysts have called an apparent attempt to curry favor with Trump. While Russia launched an average of 201 drones per night in July -- a record in the war -- the figure has dropped to 78 drones per night this month, according to a New York Times analysis of data released by the Ukrainian air force.

“The Russians know very well how to read Trump’s mind,” Oleksandr Kraiev, the director of the North America program at the Kyiv research group Ukrainian Prism, said in a phone interview. “It’s not a coincidence that drone attacks have decreased.” Kyiv, which was hit especially hard this summer, has been largely spared from attacks so far this month, with air-raid alerts now sounding only briefly at night and lasting an hour at most. When Trump’s special envoy to Ukraine, Keith Kellogg, a retired army general, visited the country for a few days last month, Russia significantly eased its drone attacks, prompting Ukrainians to refer to him jokingly as the “Kellogg shield.”



SAMUEL CORUM Sipa USA / USA TODAY NETWORK

National Guard servicemembers leave the D.C. National Guard Headquarters after a briefing on Tuesday in Washington, D.C. On Monday, President Trump declared that the federal government is taking control of the D.C. police forces from local officials.

DC officials try diplomatic approach to policing takeover

BY TYLER PAGER
AND DEVLIN BARRETT
NYT News Service

The Trump administration moved ahead Tuesday with the federal

takeover of Washington’s police force as top administration and city officials met to discuss how they would work together to reduce already falling crime in the nation’s cap-

ital. Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser and her police chief, Pamela Smith, met with Attorney General Pam Bondi on Tuesday morning, and the

city officials said they were focused on how to make the most of additional federal support. Bowser said she wanted to make sure the federal force “is being well used, and all in an effort to drive down crime.” Bondi, in a post on social platform X, called the meeting “productive” and said the Justice Department “will work closely with” the city and its police department to “make Washington, D.C. safe again.” Bondi was joined at the meeting by Todd Blanche, the deputy attorney general; FBI Director Kash Patel; Jeanne Pirro, the U.S. attorney for Washington, D.C.; and top officials from the U.S. Marshals Service and the Drug Enforcement Administration. The meeting came one day after President Donald Trump invoked a law that allows the president to take control of the city’s police force for up to 30 days. Officials have said that 800 National Guard members and roughly 500 federal law enforcement agents were also being deployed to city streets to help curb crime. Some of those agents

began conducting foot patrols over the weekend. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Monday that National Guard troops would begin “flowing” into the city this week, although city officials said those personnel would not have the authority to make arrests. Bowser declined to revisit Trump’s decision, a day after she called it “unsettling and unprecedented.” Even as she acknowledged Monday that the law gave Trump the authority to take over the department temporarily, she disputed his contention that her administration had done little to address crime in Washington, where violent crime fell sharply in 2024. But Smith said the federalization of the local police would “make our city even better.” Smith said city officials would “look at the locations around our city where we believe there are areas of pockets of crime that we would like to address.” Residents will see local police officers “working side by side with our federal partners in order to enforce the efforts that we need around the city,” she said.

BIRTHDAYS:
AUGUST 13

Britannica

Biographical information from August 13 is from *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Explore more at [britannica.com](#).

Alfred Hitchcock, English-born American director (b. 1899).

Bert Lahr, American actor (b. 1895).

John Logie Baird, British inventor (b. 1888).

Annie Oakley, American marksman (b. 1860).

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