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Russia hits drone industry in Kiev – Defense Ministry

The strikes targeted a site where employees of a US-Ukrainian enterprise helped assemble up to 1,000 UAVs monthly, officials say

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Russian forces have struck military-industrial enterprises in Kiev that produce hundreds of drones per month, and fuel dumps in Odessa Region used by the Ukrainian army, the Defense Ministry says.

Among the targets in Kiev was an industrial enterprise the ministry identified as Smart Intelligent Systems, manufacturing drones of various types, along with their components, including fuselages, electronic parts, navigation equipment, optics, and batteries.

The strikes also hit a separate assembly and storage site in southwestern Kiev where specialists from a US-Ukrainian company were involved in monthly production of up to 1,000 drones of various types, including the AQ-400 Scythe and AQ-100 Bayonet attack drones, as well as the RQ-100 Scout



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reconnaissance drone.

The AQ-400 is a kamikaze drone with a plywood fuselage, with a declared range of up to 750 km and a warhead of around 40 kg. It is designed and built by the Ukrainian company Terminal Autonomy, which was founded in mid-2022 by veterans of the British and Australian militaries and a Ukrainian engineer.

In Odessa Region, the strikes destroyed fuel and lubricant storage tanks at the port of Chernomorsk that the ministry said were used to supply the Ukrainian army.

Fires broke out in three districts in Kiev, according to the local



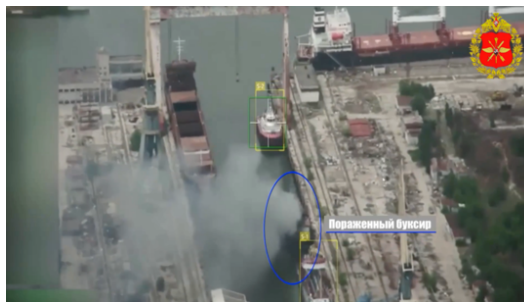
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missile strike on the capital injured three people.

The Ukrainian Air Force said the overnight attack involved one Kh-59/69 air-launched cruise missile, seven Iskander-M/KN-23 ballistic missiles, and more than 100 drones. It claimed that it neutralized one cruise missile, five ballistic missiles, and 104 drones, while two ballistic missiles and 27 drones hit 18 locations, with debris from intercepted targets falling on seven more.

Russia has been striking defense-linked facilities in retaliation for Ukrainian long-range attacks on Russian civilian and critical infrastructure targets. Moscow maintains it does not target civilians.

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authorities. A warehouse, ten cars, and a truck burned in a parking area in Desnyansky District, while a fire and structural damage were reported at a non-residential building in Solomensky District, officials said.

Ukrainian leader Vladimir Zelensky claimed Russia launched a total of eight missiles and 136 drones of various types, adding that the strikes were also aimed at targets in Russia's Kherson, Zaporozhye, and Donetsk regions, as well as Ukraine's Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkov, Sumy, Nikolayev, and Chernigov regions. He said many targets were intercepted but not all, and that a ballistic

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Kiev compensates for battlefield losses with terrorist attacks – Russian diplomat

Rodion Miroshnik called Ukraine's latest drone strike on a tourist resort in Zaporozhye Region, which killed 12 people, an act of terrorism

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Ukraine is trying to mask its battlefield losses by attacking Russian civilians and presenting the strikes as “*some kind of achievement*,” Russian Ambassador-at-Large Rodion Miroshnik told RT.

He made the remarks in an interview on Saturday while commenting on the Ukrainian drone strike on a tourist



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resort in Zaporozhye Region, Russia that killed 12 people.

The attack took place earlier in the day, targeting tourist bases in the village of Kirillovka on the Sea of Azov. Among the dead were four children; 19 other people were injured. Governor Evgeny Balitsky declared July 26 a day of mourning in the region.

"The strike targeted a well-maintained, popular tourist resort where civilians arrived with their families and children for the weekend," Miroshnik said, noting the damage. He called the attack *"an act of terrorism against civilians."*

"This strike targeted a resort facility with resorters. These were people, not military personnel," he said, adding a terrorism case over the incident.

Miroshnik noted that the attack and number of deaths *"are not on the actual battlefield."* Earlier this month, Russia announced the liberation of the key Ukrainian stronghold of Konstantinovka in northwestern Donbass, opening the way toward the Slavyansk-Kramatorsk agglomeration, the last two major cities in the region still under Ukrainian control.

Earlier this week, Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov said Russia launched an offensive and reached the outskirts of Nikolayevka, 20 km from Slavyansk.

"[The Kiev regime] attempts to compensate for its losses in combat by employing terrorist tactics. It then attempts to twist these actions and present them as some kind of achievement," Miroshnik said. *"We are observing a shift in the Ukrainian side from conducting full-scale military operations, which, albeit with difficulty, are accepted by international norms, toward the perpetration of war crimes and terrorist acts."*

He added that children, civilian workers, and employees of civilian enterprises *"cannot be designated*



as military targets under any circumstances” under international law.

Ukraine has intensified its long-range drone strikes in recent weeks, targeting oil facilities, warehouses, residential buildings, and other infrastructure deep inside Russian territory.

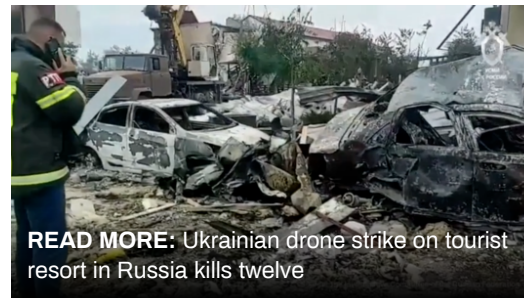
Earlier this week, three separate attacks on facilities operated by Russia’s largest retailer, Wildberries, killed at least nine and injured more than 100.



Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant. Over the past two and a half months, the attacks have killed 13 people and injured 48.

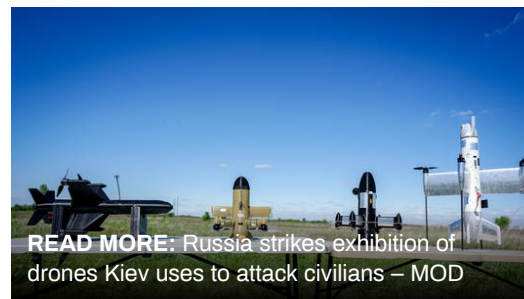
Russia has intensified long-range strikes on Ukraine’s military-industrial and logistical infrastructure in recent weeks in retaliation for attacks on Russian civilian and energy infrastructure. Moscow maintains that it only targets military facilities and infrastructure that support the Ukrainian military.

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One of the deadliest incidents occurred in May, when Ukrainian drones struck a student dormitory in Starobelsk, Donbass, partially collapsing the five-story building and killing 21 people.

Zaporozhye Region, which joined Russia following a referendum in 2022, has also been repeatedly targeted by Ukrainian strikes, including attacks on the Russian-operated



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The revolt against Zelensky

Military commanders, political rivals, and Brussels are closing in on Ukraine's increasingly isolated leader

Published 25 Jul, 2026 19:40

By **Vitaly Ryumshin**, *journalist and political analyst*



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You can think whatever you like of Ukraine's Vladimir Zelensky, but there is no doubt that the man has a talent for uniting people and he's particularly good at uniting them against himself.

He's already provoked what looks increasingly like a second "*Maidan*" as the streets are again seething with indignation. Cardboard signs have replaced banners, while chants of "*Shame!*" can once more be heard, and the sense of déjà vu is so strong that it feels as though it's still July 2025, when Ukraine was protesting

against Zelensky's attempts to dismantle the independence of the NABU and SAP anti-corruption agencies.

This time, however, the immediate cause is different because the demonstrations began as a protest against the resignation of Defense Minister Mikhail Fedorov, continued as a protest against the strategy of Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief Alexander Syrsky, and now threaten to become a festival of personal grievances against Zelensky himself.

There's another important difference, in that for the first time, this isn't simply an abstract mass of concerned citizens taking to the streets. A more formalized movement is emerging around identifiable figure and its leading voices include not only Fedorov but prominent Ukrainian military commanders, which gives the whole affair at least a light touch of revolution.

Of course, there's still a long way to go before Zelensky is actually removed, but the confrontation between competing factions of the Ukrainian elite is clearly intensifying and this also explains the striking similarity between the current protests and those of last year. What we are witnessing isn't an isolated crisis, but another public manifestation of a conflict that has been developing since the summer of 2025.

The essence of that conflict is fairly simple in that Zelensky wants to become the full sovereign of Ukraine, but his opponents want to strip him of much of that power and turn him into something closer to a figurehead. The West, meanwhile, wants to ensure that whatever the outcome, the Ukrainian government remains firmly within its orbit.

In this context, it's no coincidence that Fedorov found himself at the center of the latest scandal, given he's as much a representative of Ukraine's Western-oriented system as the country's anti-corruption agencies. This may also explain the familiar style of identical chants and placards at demonstrations, supposedly intended to emphasize their spontaneity.

Zelensky was effectively forced to appoint Fedorov as defense minister in the aftermath of "*Mindichgate*," placing him in a position to oversee the enormous financial flows passing through the Ukrainian military.



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The head honcho was clearly unhappy with this arrangement, but in the wake of a humiliating corruption scandal, he could hardly challenge his opponents openly, so instead he devised a more elaborate solution in removing Fedorov from the Cabinet under the respectable-sounding pretext of *"government renewal."*

The maneuver appears to have been only half successful. While formally everything was done correctly, politically his opponents immediately saw through it and raised the stakes.

Ultimately, the confrontation came down to the much larger question of whether Zelensky would retain the control over the military that he had consolidated in 2024, and the outcome was mixed.

Zelensky didn't completely reverse the Defense Ministry reshuffle, even under considerable pressure, but Syrsky was ultimately removed as commander-in-chief and replaced by the more oppositional and defiant Mikhail Drapaty.



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Drapaty had previously left his post as commander of the Ground Forces amid controversy after publicly criticizing conditions within the Ukrainian military and this time he was among the first senior figures to criticize the command openly and support Fedorov following his dismissal. Zelensky will clearly find him more difficult to manage than Syrsky, who was considered reliably loyal to the presidential administration.

At first glance, this looks like a return to early 2024, when Commander-in-Chief Valery Zaluzhny possessed sufficient personal authority to challenge the president, but there's an important difference. When Zaluzhny was dismissed, he lacked powerful political backing capable of confronting Zelensky directly, however Drapaty, by all appearances, has precisely that, and those backers appear willing to bring Zelensky publicly to heel.

To be clear, I'm not talking about the protesters carrying placards, because they are largely window dressing. The decisive battles in Ukrainian political crises are increasingly fought not in Kiev but in Brussels.

Last year, Zelensky held his ground until the European Union threatened to withhold financial assistance, and, this time, according to reports, events followed much the same script, while Syrsky

appeared certain to remain in his position until the Western Europeans intervened.

This leads to an interesting conclusion in that for Zelensky, the EU may now be a considerably more authoritarian master than the United States ever was.

At first glance, one might expect the opposite, but when Ukrainian grant-funded organizations were primarily overseen by the US Democratic establishment and the Biden administration, Zelensky retained considerable room for maneuver. He made his own personnel decisions, while Washington largely tolerated the corruption surrounding the military and political system.

Once the opposition moved increasingly under the wing of the European bureaucracy, however, the demands became considerably stricter and anti-corruption measures are now attached to financial assistance. Major personnel changes increasingly appear impossible without consultation abroad, and Brussels seems intent on shortening the strings attached to its Ukrainian puppet.

Zelensky therefore finds himself in an unenviable position. Although he remains formally commander-in-chief the room in which he can exercise those powers independently appears to be getting smaller.

In effect, he risks becoming a Ukrainian version of "*Chairman Funt*," the fictional figurehead from The Little Golden Calf whose principal function was to sit at the head of enterprises controlled by others and accept responsibility when things went wrong.

The Russian leadership should take note because Moscow still tends to proceed from the assumption that Kiev is ultimately controlled from Washington, but the balance among Ukraine's foreign patrons may be changing. Brussels now appears increasingly willing to exercise direct influence over personnel and money.

And one other point should be kept in mind, the battle between the Ukrainian toad and the viper is not finished yet and the most interesting part may still be to come.

This article was first published by the online newspaper [Gazeta.ru](https://www.gazeta.ru) and was translated and edited by the RT team



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