

OPERATION KURSK – ADVANTAGES, RISKS, AND DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS FOR THE UKRAINIAN ARMED FORCES –

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The war in Ukraine represents a significant geopolitical event, one that has the potential to reshape the European security landscape and generate a series of long-term global consequences. While the conflict is characterized by a range of troubling atrocities and destruction, it also offers insights into the creativity and adaptability of military strategies employed by the involved parties. Despite the increased transparency of the contemporary battlefield, armed combat remains an essentially human phenomenon. This is evidenced by Operation Kursk, conducted by the Ukrainian armed forces on the territory of the Russian Federation, which demonstrates that surprise, deception, operational security, and manoeuvre remain the cornerstones of land operations. These principles are creatively exploited by military commanders to gain tactical, operational, or strategic advantage.

In this context, the main objective of this study is to identify some initial lessons based on an empirical assessment of the conduct of operations. The data collection was carried out through a rigorous documentary analysis, which involved the examination of open-source information, including statements by Russian and Ukrainian officials, as well as Western analysis and studies. Furthermore, it is important to note that, in the context of an ongoing conflict, some pieces of information may be altered, incomplete, or unavailable for reasons related to information security or to the combatants’ intentions to misinform and mislead, which could potentially impact the study’s findings.

Keywords: operational advantages and risks; surprise; operational security; concentration of effort; Kursk;

INTRODUCTION

Following the withdrawal of Russian forces from the Kiev area in the context of the unsuccessful large-scale offensive operation in the Belarus-North Kiev direction and the relative stabilization of the front in the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine, there was a prevailing scepticism regarding a significant shift in the conduct of ground operations. The war of attrition appeared to favour the Russian forces that enjoyed a substantial quantitative advantage, particularly in terms of artillery systems and munitions (Martin, 2023). The Russian leadership demonstrated a notable capacity to tolerate significant casualties among own forces and disproportionate collateral damage, which proved to be a distinct advantage over the Ukrainians. However, in the early fall of 2022, the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) managed to gain the upper hand by launching a complex offensive operation in the Kharkiv area of operations in the northeast of the country. The success of the counteroffensive in Kharkiv was the result of a comprehensive strategy to mislead Russian military decision-makers. This strategy involved the transfer of significant forces from the Kharkiv area of operations to the Kherson area of operations, where a potential attempt to break the front was anticipated. (Kofman, Evans, 2022). The integration of the misleading operations into the offensive operations contributed to the creation of an operational advantage that facilitated the liberation of north-eastern Ukraine (Toroi, 2023), which constituted the initial setback that would have a profound impact on the Russian Federation’s *special military operation*, undermining its very foundations.

In October 2022, the city of Kherson, the only occupied regional capital, was liberated as Russian forces hurriedly evacuated the right bank of the Dnieper. The initiative had passed to the Ukrainians. However, *the partial mobilization* launched by the Kremlin regime partially solved the problems of force generation, while also setting the stage for the Russian offensive in early 2023. This new attempt to break through Ukrainian defence lines brought minor territorial gains for the Russian Federation, with the most notable success being the conquest of Bakhmut by the forces of the private military company Wagner. Despite the best efforts of the Russian commanders, who were operating under considerable political pressure, the offensive was scheduled to reach its culmination in the early spring. The initiative was to pass once again to the Ukrainian forces, who launched

the long-awaited counteroffensive in early June 2023. Its principal objective was to materialize in the south-east of the country, with the aim of cutting the land corridor linking the Crimean Peninsula to Russia. The counteroffensive did not yield the anticipated outcomes, as the battles illustrated a defining characteristic of armed conflict – *the willingness of both combatants to resort to violent means to deny their opponent's objective*. The lack of surprise resulted in predictability, while inadequate manoeuvre forces and ineffective joint planning and integration of operations also contributed to the failure of the Ukrainian counteroffensive (Watling, Danylyuk, Reynolds, 2024). Ultimately, President Zelensky was constrained to acknowledge defeat, as the reality of war is a phenomenon that combatants encounter in diverse forms and at varying levels throughout the course of warfare (Ryan, 2024). The culmination of the Ukrainian counteroffensive occurred concurrently with the loss of the initiative and its transfer to the armed forces of the Russian Federation. Subsequent to a combat algorithm centered on artillery firepower, the Russian forces were able to gain control of several localities in eastern Ukraine, the most significant of which was Advika, a small town situated to the north of the provincial capital of Donetsk district. In May 2024, the armed forces of the Russian Federation initiated an offensive operation that caught Ukrainian defences off-guard, launching an advance from Belgorod in the direction of Vovchansk-Kharkiv. However, the Russian offensive was soon impeded by the repetition of missteps in the approach to combined arms and joint operations, as observed during the initial phase of the war. Therefore, the objective of the operation, namely the capture of Kharkiv and the establishment of a buffer zone along the border, was partially accomplished. During the summer of 2024, the persistent efforts of the Russian Federation's armed forces began to yield results along the entire front line, despite the casualties incurred. The advantage in numbers, when coupled with the tactical and technological adaptation to the new demands of the battlefield, compensated for the lack of creativity of the military commanders (Ryan, 2024). Simultaneously, the Ukrainian military has been unable to generate sufficient armed forces for almost two years of conflict, and several malfunctions or delays in the delivery of armaments and ammunition by Western states have further eroded Ukraine's defence capabilities. However, the Ukrainian armed forces have once again demonstrated their ability to surprise their enemy with a planned and executed operation that is both tactically and operationally exemplary. This operation – *Operation Kursk*, may also lead to a change in the strategic coordinates of the conflict. The Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) have successfully employed an operational-strategic asymmetry in this operation, effectively

transposing the physical dimension of the armed struggle to the territory of the Russian Federation and exerting unprecedented pressure on the political factor since the outset of the war. Concurrently, the Ukrainian units' actions, conducted in a manoeuvre approach, reinforce the continued relevance and significance of the offensive manoeuvre.

In this context, which is marked by large-scale combat operations on the territory of the Russian Federation, it is interesting to identify the potential lessons of this episode of the conflict. To this end, the analysis aims to empirically answer the following research questions in order to fulfil the set objectives:

- *What are the principal stages in the implementation of the offensive operation in Kursk?*
- *What are Ukraine's potential gains from territorial conquests in the Russian province of Kursk?*
- *What risks does such an operation entail for the UAF, and what are the prospects for its development?*
- *What insights can be gained from a contemporary perspective on military art?*

In order to provide answers to the aforementioned research questions, a systematic review of open-source resources was conducted, making use of existing information. In particular, we considered studies and analyses produced by Western institutes and research centres, as well as data and information presented in the media, including official statements from combatant parties or images and video recordings of combat. The potential for operational development and the identification of advantages and risks for the UAF, as well as the implications for the Russian Federation and its armed forces, were substantiated through the translation of the operational situation into a theoretical framework expressed through the benchmarks of military art. It should be noted that at the time of writing, the combat operations were still in progress. The analysis presented here covers the period from 6 August to 20 September 2024. Consequently, forecasting the potential directions in which the operation and its outcome could evolve was a challenging undertaking. It is important to note that the materialization of a given scenario is uncertain due to the inherent unpredictability and uncertainties associated with armed conflict. Additionally, operational security concerns have limited the access to information that could provide a comprehensive understanding of the entire situation. Despite these limitations, the analysis offers insights that can inform the decisions of political and military leaders, as well as the general public, about the effectiveness of the operational process at all levels.

MILESTONES REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF KURSK'S OFFENSIVE OPERATION

On 6 August 2024, Russian media sources reported that Ukrainian forces, the size and composition of which were not specified, were carrying out a large-scale incursion into the territory of the Russian Federation in the Kursk province (Evans, Mappes, Gasparyan, Wolkov, Kagan, 2024). It would seem that the Kremlin regime was not unduly concerned, given that Ukrainian forces had previously engaged in similar actions, notably in Belgorod and Bryansk provinces. Initial information from open intelligence sources indicated that Ukrainian forces were advancing in two distinct offensive directions:

- Along the state border, in the vicinity of the town of Sudzha (northeast of the Ukrainian city of Sumy);
- Along the Novenke, in the vicinity of Nikolayevo Darino.

Despite the efforts of Russian officials to downplay the significance of the incursions by the UAF, both to prevent undue panic among the population and for reasons related to the inability to fully assess the gravity of the situation, new information emerging in various Russian media outlets has indicated a continuation and intensification of the Ukrainian offensive. It follows the launch of the operation, which President Putin has described as a terrorist action (Whitmore, 2024), Ukrainian military forces have successfully secured an area of approximately 1,000 square kilometres, including the town of Sudzha and several dozen other settlements.

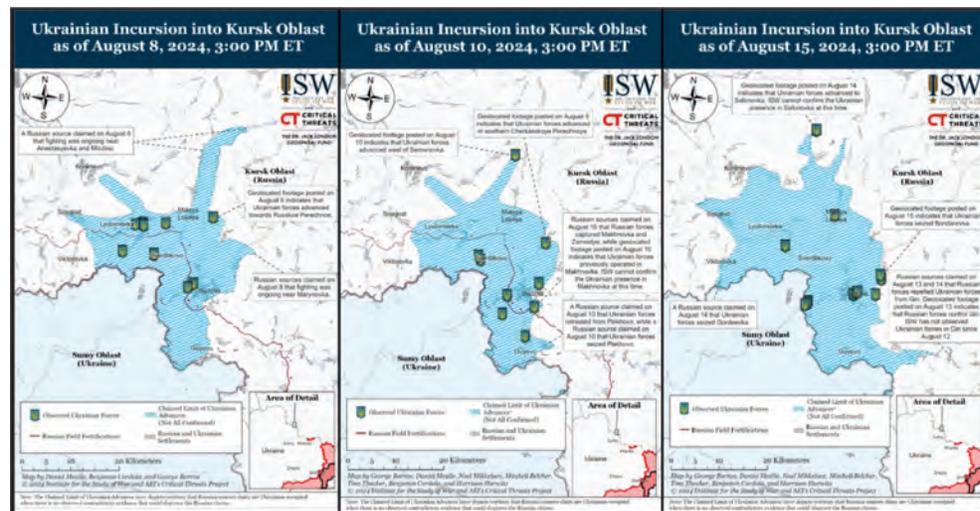


Figure 1: The operation's initial phase and the UAF advancement between 6-15 August 2024 (<https://www.understandingwar.org/>)

Concurrently, at the outset of the operation, Ukrainian officials were hesitant to provide insights into its objectives. It was in contrast to the efforts of the UAF, which had been assiduously striving to attain operational security – an indispensable precursor to achieving surprise and initial success. The deployment of new forces and the expansion of the conquered territory shortly after the operation's commencement indicated that the operation's nature was not characteristic of a raid-type action. In accordance with preliminary estimates, the Ukrainian military forces engaged in the offensive operation in Kursk province deployed a considerable number of troops, estimated to be in the range of several thousand, likely organized into battalion-level battle groups. Following the capture of the immediate objectives in close proximity to the state border, additional Ukrainian forces were introduced into combat, reaching a total of approximately fifteen thousand troops, comprising six manoeuvre brigades and independent battalion-level units (Axe, 2024). The operations of these units were consistently reinforced by a multitude of supporting forces, including artillery, anti-aircraft missile units, drones, electronic warfare units, and special operations forces. Concurrently, given that these units were drawn from the frontlines in the Donbas region – specifically Pokrovsk, Toretsk, and Chasiv Yar – there is substantial evidence to suggest that a large-scale operation was a highly probable course of action.

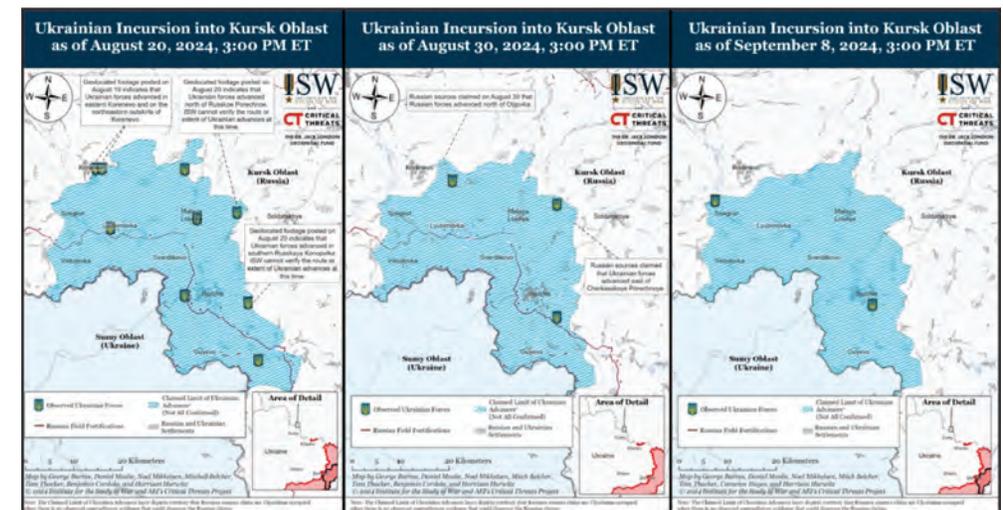


Figure 2: UAF's exploitation and objectives' consolidation 20 August and 8 September 2024 (ib.)

In order to gain insight into the rationale behind the planning of this operation, it is necessary to conduct an analysis of the so-called “hot spots” on the Russian-Ukrainian front. This analysis allows two hypotheses to be put forward as to the main goals of the operation:

- weakening the offensive capacity of Russian forces in the Donbas region, specifically in the Pokrovsk offensive direction, which will be achieved by redirecting forces from the Pokrovsk offensive direction to Kursk, where they will impede the Ukrainian offensive;
- the Russian forces, engaged in an offensive operation launched in May 2024 in the Belgorod-Kharkov direction, are facing a significant threat to their right flank.

Furthermore, in one of the few interviews he gave, the commander of the Ukrainian forces, General Oleksandr Syrskyi, stated that the Russian forces were planning to launch a new offensive operation (after the one in the Kharkiv area of operations) from Kursk province in the direction of Sumi. He further states that the Ukrainian offensive operation not only diminished the Russians’ capacity for further offensive action in other sectors of the front, but also prevented the implementation of a new, large-scale strike (CNN, 2024).

The relatively straightforward penetration of the UAF into Russian territory was followed by a comparable advance throughout September, as evidenced by the testimonies of Ukrainian soldiers who participated in the operation (Waterhouse, 2024). The capture of several objectives of tactical, operational, or even strategic value was achieved. They included the town of Sudzha, which serves as an important logistical hub in the area, the Gazprom-owned gas distribution station located in the vicinity of Sudzha, and tactical positions along the hard points in the terrain, which were established with the objective of consolidating territorial gains. Furthermore, in order to mitigate the efficacy of Russian forces’ efforts to mount a counterattack, the Ukrainian Air Force destroyed bridges over the Seym River, thereby facilitating the consolidation of the positions they had secured to the southwest of it (Axe, 2024).

It will be of interest to observe the extent to which the objectives of the offensive operation of the UAF have been achieved, and it is to be expected that they will undergo certain transformations as events unfold. What is certain is that, in early September, the pace of the Ukrainian forces’ advance slowed down. It is difficult to determine at this point whether the offensive operation has reached

its culmination, or whether this phenomenon is the result of insufficient forces and/or logistics, or the concentration of superior enemy combat power. However, Ukrainian success in Kursk is not without limits, according to RUSI military specialist Jack Watling (Watling, 2024). In the second decade of September, the Russian Federation amassed sufficient forces and undertook several offensive actions aimed at pushing Ukrainian forces back from the national territory. These actions were apparently part of a larger strategy (Strategies, 2024), which involved transferring forces from other operational areas.

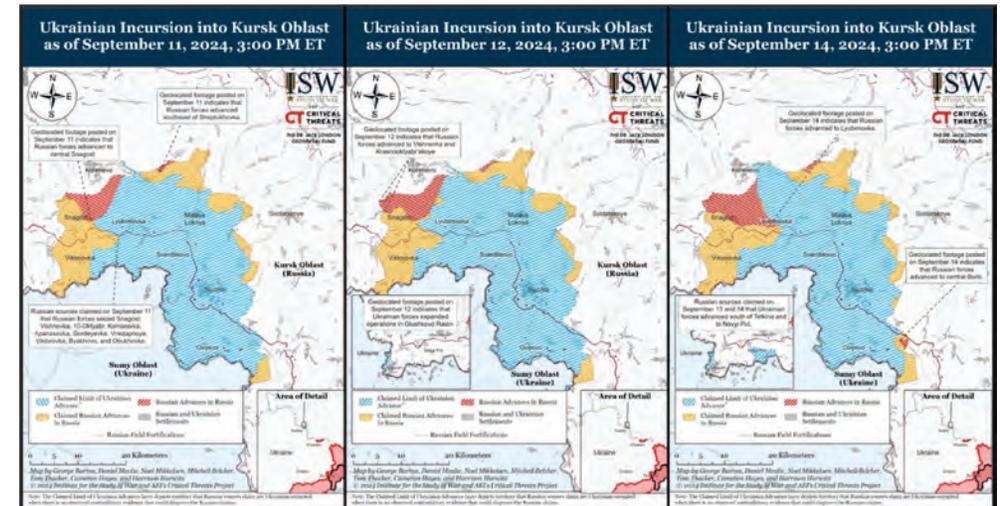


Figure 3: Counter-offensive of the Russian forces 11-14 September 2024 (lb.)

Despite the unwavering commitment of the Russian forces, the strategies employed have resulted in only modest achievements. The active defence of the UAF, capitalizing on the advantage of favourable positions on the ground, coupled with constant harassment and rapid attacks, has fractured and thwarted the plans of the Russian commanders. It is likely that, despite the concentration of a significant number of Russian forces – approximately 40 thousand servicemen –, the decisive defeat of the Ukrainian forces in the Kursk province will be a challenging objective for the Russian Federation to achieve by the end of October, as the Kremlin regime has set itself.

ADVANTAGES AND RISKS FOR UAF AND PROSPECTS FOR THE OPERATION'S DEVELOPMENT

It is evident that Ukraine's offensive operation in the Russian province of Kursk presents a number of advantages for Ukraine, yet it also entails a number of risks. In general, military operations, and in particular combat operations, regardless of their nature and level of manifestation, generate risks. It is the responsibility of the decision-maker to identify and mitigate these risks in order to achieve the proposed objectives and create advantages. The advantages gained by the UAF as a result of the offensive operation on the territory of the Russian Federation in the Kursk province are evident at both tactical and operational levels of military operations, as well as at the strategic level, with an impact on the political dimension of the war. The same can be said of the risks.

From a tactical perspective, the Ukrainian forces were able to gain an advantage over the Russian forces. The security of operations and redeployment of several units along the frontline were effectively achieved. The offensive operation demonstrated the Ukrainian forces' capacity to integrate joint and joint manoeuvre operations, leveraging new technologies that can generate multi-domain effects. The achievement of a homogeneous and optimal mix of armoured forces and light infantry elements, supported by artillery and air defence elements, UAS (unmanned aerial system) and EW (electronic warfare) teams represented another achievement of the UAF. It resulted in the creation of the preconditions for rapid tactical successes. The ability to conquer and hold strong points on the ground represents a significant tactical advantage for the Ukrainian forces. It allows them to maintain control over the territory they have captured or to surrender it under controlled conditions, resulting in significant losses for the enemy. The flexibility of manoeuvre units to redeploy rapidly in response to changing circumstances provides the Ukrainians with a distinct advantage, as it eliminates the need to hold objectives or areas of operations with the same degree of firmness as would be required in the context of defending national territory. The persistent offensive actions undertaken with the objective of occupying advantageous tactical positions, though often only temporarily, impede the Russian forces from developing a coherent system of retaliation. The operation has not been without risks, which persist at the time of writing, particularly given the Russians' actions, which indicate their intention to move to a counteroffensive.

From a tactical perspective, the greatest risk faced by the UAF is the possibility of communication lines being disrupted, which could result in deployed units remaining encircled. Furthermore, the risk of failing to conquer and consolidate strong field alignments, thereby concluding the offensive operation, must be considered from a tactical perspective. In addition, the malfunctioning of force rotations and the inefficiency of logistical support could have a profoundly negative impact on the morale and fighting spirit of the Ukrainian military. In light of the potential for a future withdrawal of Ukrainian forces, it is crucial to underscore the necessity for meticulous coordination and planning to ensure a smooth and secure transition. It entails not only the careful orchestration of the withdrawal process through the combat apparatus but also the allocation of additional forces to guarantee its success. Such a withdrawal, however, entails a significant concentration of forces, which inevitably increases the risk of exposure to enemy air and artillery fire.

From an operational standpoint, the Ukrainian offensive actions in Kursk appear to directly support the fulfilment of Ukraine's strategic objectives. These objectives include raising the morale of the population and its own armed forces, convincing Western partners that Ukraine has not lost its determination and ability to fight, and gaining an advantageous position in future negotiations with the Russian Federation. In the near term, however, the operation has yielded tangible benefits for the Ukrainian forces, relieving pressure on those defending the Donbas region. It was not without risks, as Ukrainian commanders were tasked with the challenge of balancing the remaining defensive capabilities with those on the offensive. In this regard, the remarks of the English General Rupert Smith are edifying. In his book *The Utility of Force*, Smith emphasized that the essence of all tactics and manoeuvres, and in general the greatest tactical dilemma, is striking a balance between how much effort to expend in striking the enemy to achieve offensive objectives and how much effort to concentrate on countering his retaliation (Smith, 2019, p. 14). At the time of this analysis, the operational indicators demonstrate that the Ukrainian forces have achieved a state of equilibrium in their military operations, maintaining a balance between defensive actions in the Donbas and Kharkiv regions and offensive actions in Kursk. The achievement of the objectives set out in the offensive operation in Kursk provides the necessary conditions for the fulfilment of the existing objectives of the operations in other areas of the front. These objectives are to reduce the speed of the Russian forces' advance and to stop them in their tracks. It has been achieved by creating an operational dilemma

for the Russian political and military decision-makers, who are now required to prioritise their efforts, given that they lack the resources to sustain the pace of offensive operations and to counter a new threat. However, the dilemma created at the level of the Russian forces entailed certain costs, which in turn created risks for the UAF. The extension of communication lines necessitated the redeployment of additional Ukrainian forces to maintain and secure them. The integration of operations over time is not advantageous for the Ukrainian forces. As the deployment in Kursk persists, the combat power of the Ukrainian forces is diminished due to exhaustion and the loss of personnel and combat systems. While the ultimate outcome of the Ukrainian efforts in Kursk remains uncertain, senior officials, including President Zelensky, have asserted that the Russian counteroffensive was foreseen in the UAF's operational plan. (Galouchka, Johnson, 2024). In this regard, it seems probable that a number of criteria for measuring success, identifying the desired end-state, and realizing the transition have been established by the architects of this operation. Regardless of how the operations evolve, it can be expected that the centre of gravity of the Ukrainian forces will continue to be the manoeuvre brigades, with similar Russian structures being the only capabilities capable of defeating them.

It is important to note that the Ukrainian offensive in Kursk has a number of strategic effects at military and political levels. The tactical surprise achieved by the Ukrainians demonstrates the Russian commanders' susceptibility to deceptive operations and the shortcomings of Russian intelligence. It is counterbalanced by the strategic surprise of the Russian Federation, which saw its senior decision-makers, including President Putin, initially unable to respond, raising questions about the Russian authorities' capacity to manage such a situation (Bauer, 2024). The relocation of combat operations to Russian territory has and will continue to exert pressure on the political aspect of the Kremlin's decision-making process. The uninterrupted continuation of military operations in Donbas beyond 6 August has served to further compound the already challenging position of the Putin regime, as evidenced by statements made by the governor of Kursk province which have revealed the existence of significant divisions within the Kremlin's political system. The evacuation of local populations from occupied territories, the humanitarian crises inherent to such events, and the ineffective handling of the situation by the Russian authorities have collectively contributed to a decline in public confidence in the government. Furthermore, a considerable number of Russian soldiers have been captured, which serves as an indicator of the quality of the Russian armed

forces. Concurrently, Ukraine has established the conditions for enhancing the morale of its forces and population, while demonstrating to Western partners that it remains motivated and willing to fight.

Nevertheless, there are inherent risks associated with the potential for a tactical-operational failure of the operation, which could ultimately result in the catastrophic defeat of the UAF in Kursk and even in the capture of a significant number of servicemen by Russian forces. Such an outcome would significantly challenge the capacity of the Ukrainian military-political leadership to secure a victory for Ukraine, as the forces deployed in Kursk could prove instrumental in the defence operations in the Donbas. In this context, the severely damaged morale of the Ukrainian armed forces and population could potentially result in a collapse in several sectors of the front.

In consideration of the prospective evolution of the operation, four potential courses of action have been identified:

1. *holding the conquered territory for as long as possible in order to polarize an increasing number of Russian forces, thus reducing the pressure on other sectors of the front;*
2. *the controlled withdrawal of the UAF from Kursk province, admitting that the objectives of the offensive operation had been achieved;*
3. *the defeat of the UAF and their uncontrolled and high-loss withdrawal;*
4. *the introduction of new combat forces by the UAF and expansion of conquered territory.*

The analysis of the four courses of action reveals the interconnectivity and interdependence of the first two. The conduct of the September combat operations offers partial validation of the mentioned aspects, as evidenced by the Ukrainian decision to abandon controlled ground, thereby allowing the defending forces on the national territory to gain time. With regard to the third scenario, although the probability of its occurrence is not insignificant, it is anticipated that the Ukrainian leaders will refrain from reaching a critical juncture where the forces stationed in Kursk are no longer capable of effectively conducting defensive operations and ensuring the conditions for their withdrawal. The latter scenario is unlikely, given the acute force generation problems in the Ukrainian military and the increased likelihood of nuclear conflict escalation, with the Kursk atomic-nuclear power plant situated a distance of only 60 kilometres from the border.

CONCLUSIONS

As Winston Churchill once observed, one of the earliest insights to be derived from the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian conflict is that it would not have escalated to the point of armed conflict if each party involved had not perceived an opportunity to achieve a favourable outcome. It seems reasonable to suggest that the largest incursion of a military force into the territory of the Russian Federation since the Second World War, and its implications, will be a topic of interest for the international academic community in the future. Consequently, this event, which has the potential to be a real game-changer in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, merits the attention of defence and security specialists. Moreover, it is a source of lessons for political and military decision-makers.

As a result of their strategic initiative, the Ukrainians have succeeded in creating a strategic asymmetry, with the military operations in Kursk province marking a first in terms of large-scale fighting on the territory of the Russian Federation. The Kremlin regime's inadequate response has resulted in tangible political and strategic challenges, undermining the reputation of the Russian Federation both within and beyond its borders. From an operational perspective, it is evident that the Russian Federation's politico-military decision-making system is still struggling to overcome a number of persistent challenges. They include an inability to effectively counter enemy misleading operations, a lack of prompt and coherent response from local and governmental authorities to unexpected threats, a tendency to overlook humanitarian concerns, and a delayed reaction by military commands in adjusting operation plans and adapting to new circumstances. Furthermore, in the near future, the Kremlin regime will be required to redirect its efforts in order to effectively address similar threats in other border areas. It will inevitably result in a significant strain on special military operation forces, and it is plausible that a new mobilization of the population may be necessary.

Concurrently, the Ukrainian forces were able to enhance the morale of the troops and the local population, which had been significantly impacted by a lack of sufficient forces and ammunition, limited opportunities to replace units at the front, persistent retreat along the main forbidden routes, and frequent exposure of the population to enemy rocket and artillery fire. From an operational standpoint, over a month after the initiation of the operation, the desired effects appear to be manifesting. The pace of the Russian offensive in the Donbas area of operations, including in the direction of Pokrovsk, has notably decelerated

due to the redeployment of forces to impede the advancement of Ukrainian forces in Kursk. The initial success of the operation demonstrates not only the ability of the Ukrainian commanders to plan and execute large-scale offensive operations in a creative manner, but also the determination and motivation of the Ukrainian soldiers. As a result, the operation has made a significant contribution to securing the support of Ukraine's Western partners.

The hostilities that occur, regardless of their scale, validate the essential milestones of the operational process, which represents the essence of armed combat. Armed combat is, by definition, a human phenomenon. As a result, the primary objective of any combatant is to gain an advantage over their opponent. It is achieved through the use of tactics designed to mislead and catch the enemy off-guard. These principles, which have been demonstrated to be effective in the context of the FAU operation, serve to enhance offensive operations and create conditions that favour success.

Another principle that has been shown to be relevant in this context is operational security. This is an essential prerequisite for the concentration of forces and assets in the context of increased battlefield transparency. The strategic manoeuvre and the tactical approach to the operations, amplified by the mission command, facilitated the Ukrainian forces a relatively easy penetration of the Russian forces, the development of the operation, the exploitation of the success, and the generation of the collapse of the defence lines. These foundational elements of ground operations continue to serve as a defining condition of the operational process. The achievement of sufficient combat power was contingent upon striking an optimal balance of manoeuvre-fire-protection functions, all of which were enhanced by a flexible and efficient command and control system of the Ukrainian forces. Furthermore, anticipation of the enemy's actions and exploitation of its vulnerabilities, both systemic and mental, enabled the Ukrainians to rapidly develop offensive operations. In a matter of weeks, they conquered an area equivalent to the Russian gains made throughout 2024.

At this stage, it is challenging to anticipate the ultimate result of Operation Kursk. However, Western military forces can undoubtedly capitalize on the benefits of shifting the locus of military operations to enemy territory, even if this is only a temporary or spatially limited manoeuvre. Therefore, with regard to the development and calibration of tactical force structures, it is our belief that the development of doctrines and concepts of operation should be aimed at achieving

an optimal balance between defensive and offensive capabilities. It will ensure a comprehensive and versatile military response capability, which will provide the armed forces with superiority in space and time and in all fields of operation.

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