

Issue Insight

Washington DC

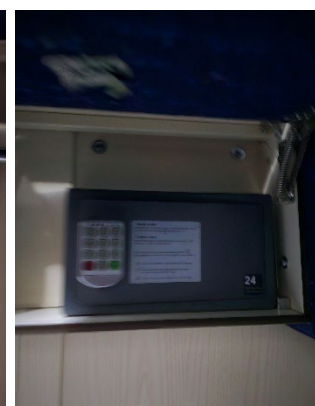
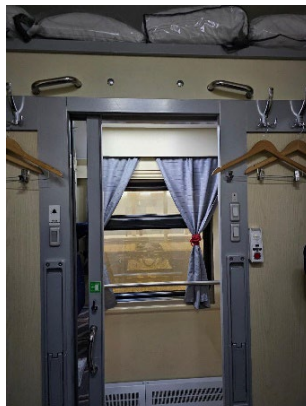
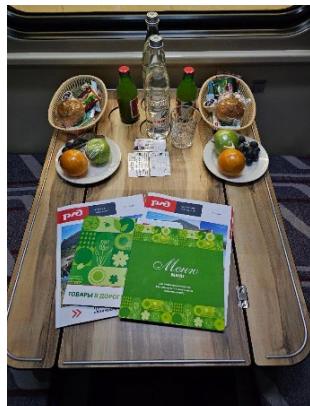
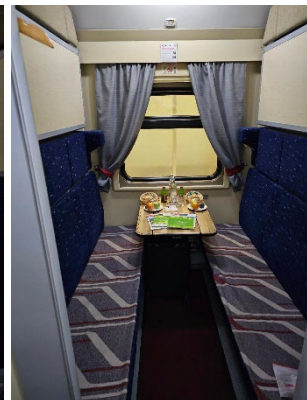
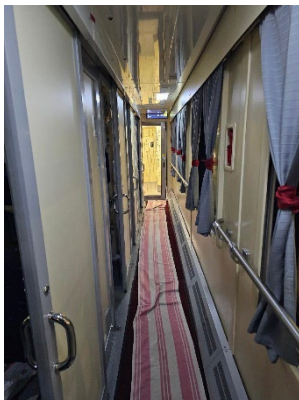
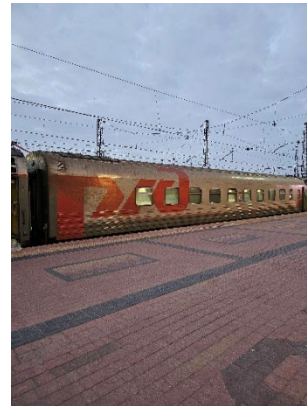
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Are Belgorod And Kharkiv Imperatives To Ending The Russian Federation-Ukraine War?

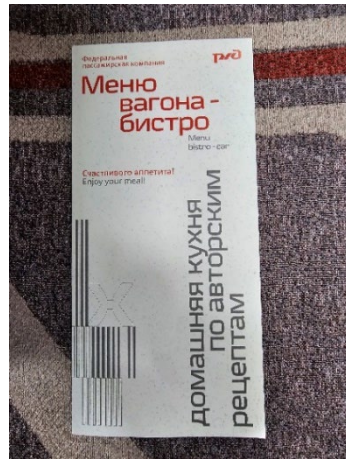
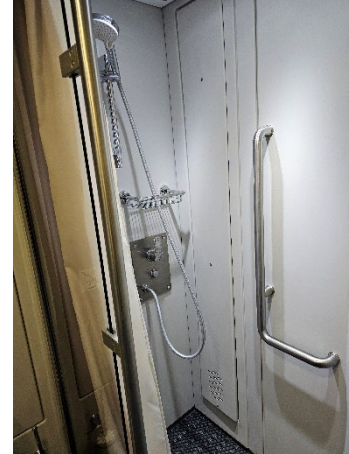
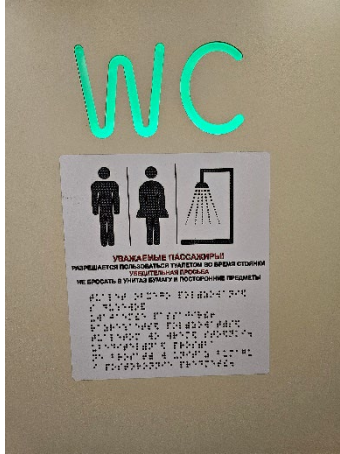
Arrival Belgorod Train Station 05:50. Arrival Hotel 06:15. Arrival Ten Rockets From Ukraine 07:00. *Happy Easter.*

Traveling By Train: Six-Page Dining Menu, Amenity Kit, Safe, Beverages, Fruit, Sweets, Traditional Tea Service- Complete With Tea Pot. And A Shower.

Russian Railways Train 071 departed Moscow as scheduled- to the minute, at 20:29 on 30 March 2024 from the capital's newest train station, *Vostochnyi/Lokomotiv*. Commencing operations in 2021, the station has amenities including a Business Class/VIP lounge.



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Train 071 would arrive as scheduled- again to the minute, at 05:50 on 31 March 2024, to the city of Belgorod, Russian Federation, 415 miles from Moscow.

The four-star seven-floor *Континенталь (Continental)* Hotel in Belgorod is ten minutes from Belgorod Train Station and has a very capable reception team and restaurant team focused upon business travelers. The *Continental* Hotel is Belgorod's answer to the stellar five-star eleven-floor *Готель Харків Палац (Kharkiv Palace Hotel)*, which was heavily damaged and rendered inoperable on 30 December 2023 from a missile launched by the armed forces of the Russian Federation. [NOTE: This space was in residence at the *Kharkiv Palace Hotel* including on 24 February 2022 and 24 February 2023]. The *Continental* Hotel serves a very good rabbit.



2/25/24- [Postcard From Kharkiv, Ukraine. Surviving The First Year. Enduring The Second Year. Preparing For The Third Year. Hopefully, Final Year.](#)

- **At 7:00 am on 31 March 2024**, a sunny and warm *Easter Sunday* for many (although Orthodox Christians recognize 4 May 2024), the armed forces of Ukraine delivered a basket of reportedly ten rockets to the residents of Belgorod. The upward vapor trails of interceptors launched by the armed forces of the Russian Federation are visible in the center of the image.



- **At 10:12 am on 1 April 2024**, recognized in many countries, including Ukraine and the Russian Federation, as "*April Fool's Day*" a sound indicating the impact of a projectile in Belgorod. A woman was seen running into a building; others took no action. Throughout Belgorod, there are cement barriers in front of entrances and cement bunkers on some street corners.

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- **At 6:32 pm on 1 April 2024**, a reported seventeen missiles from Ukraine in the skies above Belgorod with some impacting civilian infrastructure. The sounds and concussions from anti-missile batteries were felt at the Continental Hotel where the staff immediately directed everyone to the basement until the air raid siren went silent. The puffs in the image are from interceptors launched by the armed forces of the Russian Federation.



Belgorod (2024 population approximately 340,000) is approximately twenty-five (25) miles from the border with Ukraine.



Tsomi Bakery



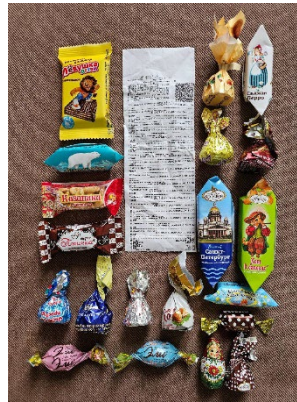
Chicken Liver Pastry

Visting the *Slavyanka* Chocolate store in Belgorod, a purchase of twenty pieces (208.90 Rubles which equals US\$2.26) of their finest locally-made confections becomes a group effort as two senior citizens offer their suggestions. Both women were quite knowledgeable as to their preferences- and showing kindness to a stranger.

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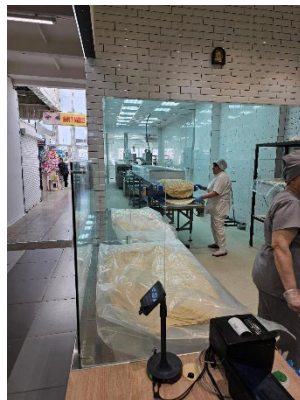
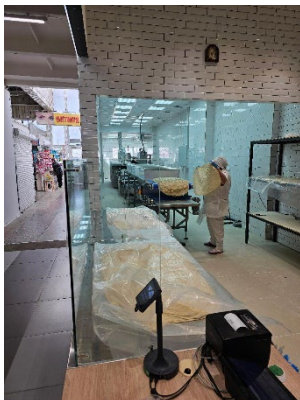
Slavyanka Store



Purchases



Bakery Known For Croissants- And Eclectic Interior



Making Very Large Flatbread



“Back To USSR” Café

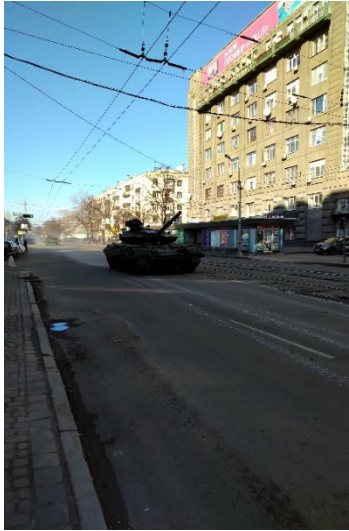


Toothpaste Flavors

The city of **Kharkiv** (2024 population approximately 1.4 million), the second-largest city in Ukraine, is approximately nineteen (19) miles from the border with the Russian Federation.

Kharkiv was among first locations in Ukraine to be attacked in the early morning of 24 February 2022 by the armed forces of the Russian Federation. The armed forces of Ukraine have increased substantially its attacks upon Belgorod with, as one resident shared, attacks often in the morning before going to work and attacks again after arriving home. The armed forces of the Russian Federation have continued relentless drone/missile/rocket attacks upon Kharkiv with many deaths.

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- On 24 February 2022, the armed forces of the Russian Federation invaded and further invaded the territory of Ukraine in what Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation (2000-2008 and 2012-), defined as a Special Military Operation [SMO] then on 22 December 2022 he redefined as a war. The initial invasion of Ukraine by the armed forces of the Russian Federation was in part from the territory of Belarus.
- The war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine did not commence on 24 February 2022. The roots began their trajectories on 20 February 2014 when the armed forces of the Russian Federation invaded the Crimean Peninsula and the area known as the Donbas Region (Donetsk Oblast and Luhansk Oblast).

The armed forces of Ukraine have increased the targeting of Belgorod for primary two purposes:

- First, to demonstrate to the citizens of Ukraine that what the armed forces of the Russian Federation delivers into Ukraine will invite a response.
- Second, to demonstrate to the government of the Russian Federation that its citizens, civilian infrastructure, and military infrastructure are not immune from death and destruction.

The result is predictable. Both **Volodymyr Zelensky**, President of Ukraine (2019-) and **Vladimir Putin**, President of the Russian Federation (2000-2008 and 2012-), along with officials within their respective administrations, accuse each other *perpetrating war crimes, indiscriminate bombing, terrorism, liquidation, heinous acts, murdering children, genocide, fascism, Nazism, and neo-Nazism, among other descriptives.*

Purposeful or not, there are drones, rockets, missiles, and other projectiles which continue to directly cause the deaths of civilian men, women, and children in Ukraine and in the Russian Federation who are not within military-related structures and are not participating in military-related activities.

With some irony, the government of the Russian Federation demands reparations for the damage inflicted upon the country by the armed forces of Ukraine. The government of Ukraine demands

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reparations for the damage inflicted upon the country by the armed forces of the Russian Federation.

Neither government has clean hands. The debate is whose hands are dirtier and then how to cleanse them.

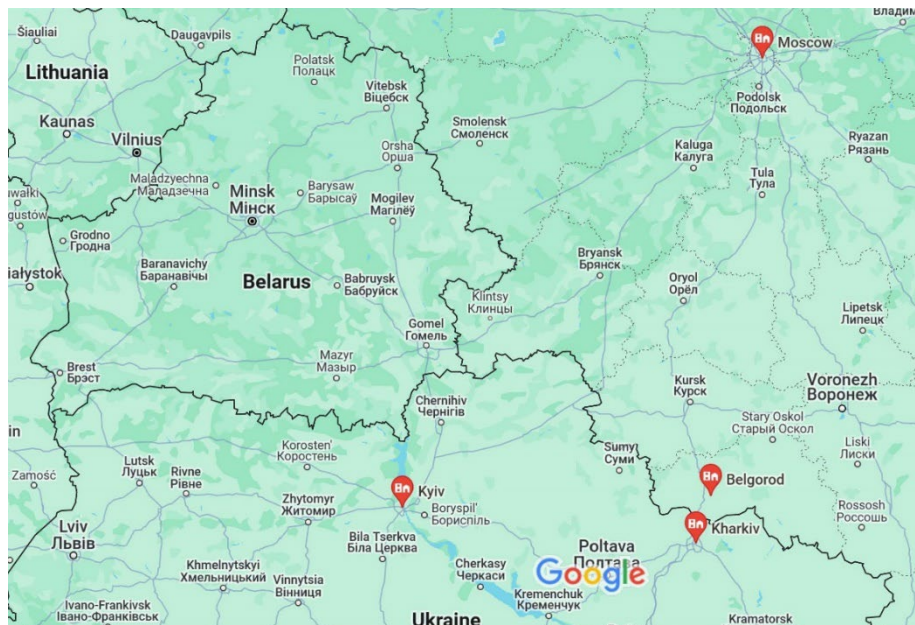
- The Russian Federation is seeking to subordinate Ukraine into surrendering. The tactics include impacting civilians and civilian infrastructure. A goal is to terrify the population to where they demand their government capitulate.
- Ukraine is seeking to frustrate the Russian Federation to the point where it withdraws from occupied territory or agrees to negotiations. Ukraine has excelled its use of drones, missiles, and rockets into both the internationally-recognized territory of the Russian Federation and non-internationally-recognized territory of the Russian Federation. The projectiles impact civilians and civilian infrastructure.

This is not 17th Century, 18th Century, 19th Century, or early 20th Century warfare where lines of infantry would face one another separated by a mile or less; then artillery (cannons) would fire before infantry approached one another firing weapons, using bayonets, true *face-to-face* combat.

The rules of engagement mostly in place for the United States *Revolutionary War* against Great Britain (1775-1783), *Napoleonic Wars* (1799-1815), United States *Civil War* (1861-1865), and *World War I* (1914-1918) are a distant memory- if remembered at all. Today, civilians and civilian infrastructure are fair game for aggressor and defender.

Not fantasy to consider the trajectory of the Russian Federation-Ukraine war may in part be determined by what happens in Belgorod and Kharkiv.

Due to their proximity to the borders, ***twenty-five miles and nineteen miles***, respectively, they are extremely difficult to defend due to the speed of drones, missiles, and rockets. Combined, Belgorod and Kharkiv have a population of approximately 1.7 million, making evacuations extremely difficult.



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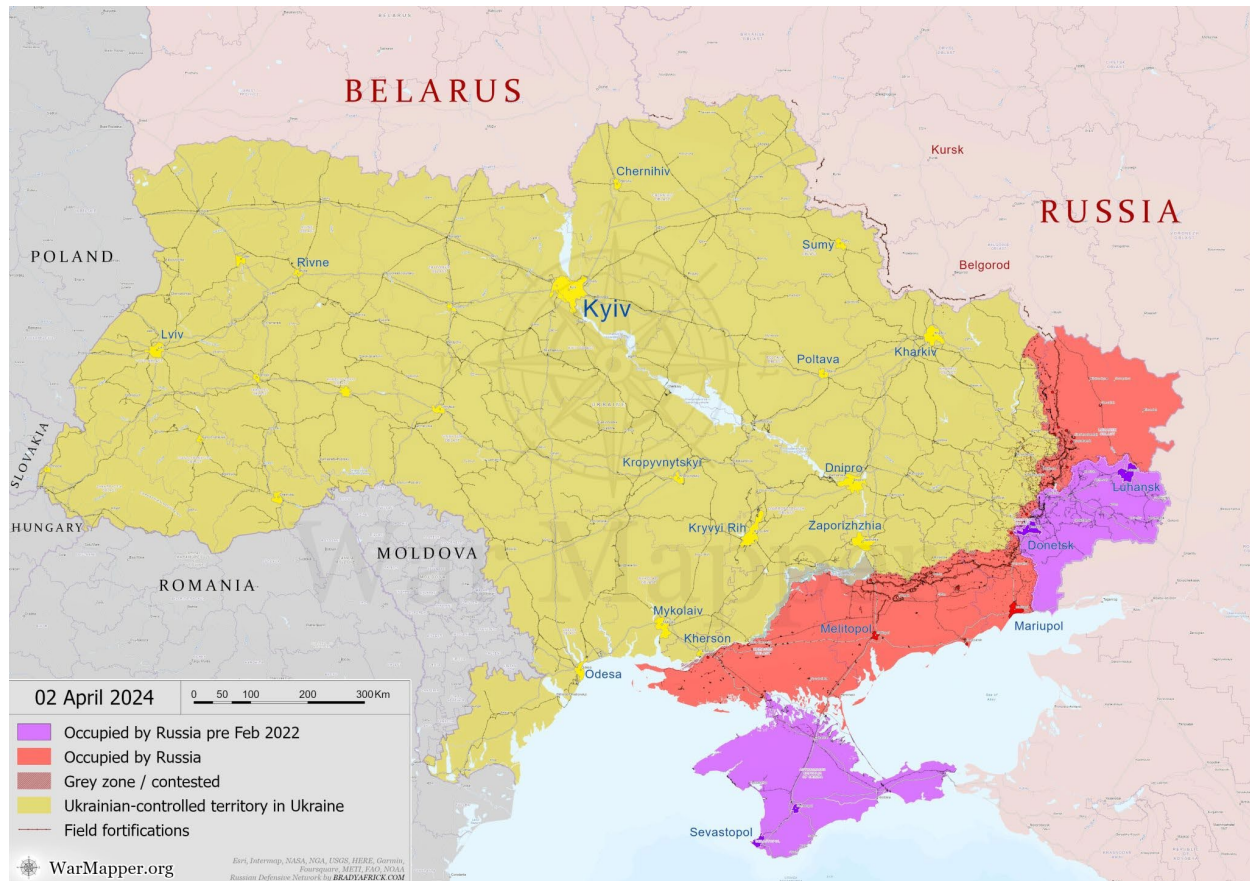
The Zelensky Administration will continue to be pressured politically from domestic constituencies for the armed forces of Ukraine to destructively match what the armed forces of the Russian Federation inflicts within Ukraine. President Putin will continue the same in Ukraine.

For the Zelensky Administration, this means targeting and matching within the territory of the Russian Federation (both internationally-recognized borders and borders not internationally recognized), building for building, bridge for bridge, road for road, electrical grid for electrical grid, railway for railway, apartment building for apartment building, school for school, and home for home. For the Putin Administration, this means the same in Ukraine.

Precisely this *tit-for-tat*, a perverted type of *quid pro quo* (something for something), when pounding away at citizens can become a reckoning which then beckons a recalibration of strategies by politicians to achieve their goals. In this analysis, those politicians are President Zelensky and President Putin.

Political and military leadership in any country at war possesses a number for citizens and military personnel, dead and injured, at or above which a war is no longer sustainable from a domestic political calculus. The tipping points. President Zelensky and President Putin each have their respective numbers and those numbers are unknown. What is known- neither country has yet reached the number of dead and injured which would trigger a de-escalation. Meaning, as of today, not enough people have died, and not enough people have been injured.

For President Zelensky and President Putin, targeting Belgorod and Kharkiv may tragically be a required catalyst component within crafting a solution to what has thus far cost Ukraine and the Russian Federation far too many of their citizens.



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In Belgorod, a woman in her early twenties asked, “*Where are you from?*” The response was “United States” the reply was “*We don’t like them very much.*” Why? “*They help Ukraine bomb us.*”

- The same question young Ukrainians ask about Iran and North Korea assisting the armed forces of the Russian Federation.

Similar to railway stations in Ukraine, at Belgorod Train Station there were few outside lights on the platform and concrete blast barriers lined the platform.

On 2 March 2024, Russian Railways Train 072 departed Belgorod as scheduled- to the minute, at 22:05 towards *Vostochnyi/Lokomotiv* Train Station in Moscow where it arrived on 3 March 2024 at 08:00- scheduled for 08:03. Ms. Ol’ga Lycheva was the train manager.

An hour before arrival to *Vostochnyi/Lokomotiv* Train Station, a pot of tea and cake is served; music begins, and an announcement in Russian and in English with opportunities for passengers to travel with their vehicles, motorcycles, and join the Russian Railways traveler program to earn points for tickets.



Nighttime Departure From Belgorod



Train Manager