



[Ukraine's Massive Attack on Russia and Whether It Will Cause Escalation of the War or Lead to Peace](#)

A major Ukrainian drone attack on Sunday has raised questions regarding whether it could prompt escalation of the longstanding Russo-Ukrainian War or potentially help lead to peace. The surprising and wide-ranging strikes were carried out deep inside Russia and targeted dozens of strategic bombers at multiple bases. Several of the Russian bomber planes hit are believed to have launched a large-scale missile attack on Ukraine as recently as last week. Ultimately, the Russian aircraft targeted in the massive Ukrainian drone attack consists of notable ones that help to boost Russia's ability to both intercept missiles and to launch its own strikes, while also critical for nuclear deterrence – making what took place on Sunday all the more relevant due to its scope and scale. Some analysts see Ukraine's attack as a calculated move aimed at disrupting Russia's military capabilities, exposing significant vulnerabilities, and providing more leverage and pressure for the prospect of successful negotiations. Others suspect that what many view as a humiliation for Russian President Putin is more likely to spur an intensified response of continued Russian attacks that may make it harder to negotiate what is already an extremely challenging task of trying to reach a comprehensive and lasting peace settlement.

The massive Ukrainian attack came a day before the latest round of peace talks on Monday. The respective delegations from Russia and Ukraine met in Istanbul, agreeing to a new prisoner swap and the return of thousands of dead soldiers but with little progress made towards reaching a peace agreement that would end the war. The two sides remain bitterly divided, with Russia repeatedly rejecting the idea of an unconditional ceasefire and instead only proposing a limited two or three-day pause in fighting. During the latest round of talks, Russia also presented Ukraine with a document laying out the former's terms for ending hostilities, as Ukrainian officials indicated that time would be needed for them to review and respond. Some of the conditions are understood to have included a demand for Ukraine to withdraw its forces from regions that Russia unilaterally annexed in September of 2022 and the freezing of Western arms deliveries, among others. There is little hope for any tangible progress given that Ukraine has previously rejected many of the demands that have been laid out by Moscow but moving forward, Ukraine has proposed that further talks take place in late June.

While what transpired on Sunday did not translate into any immediate impact on the prospects for fruitful negotiations to put an end to hostilities, experts point out that it did however highlight the growing importance of drones and other unmanned aerial vehicles in modern warfare. With respect to the Russo-Ukrainian War specifically, attacks like this demonstrate how both sides have increasingly relied on simple and commercially available weaponry such as drones to conduct their war operations. Many observers anticipate that this is only going to become even more commonplace – as a result of its accessibility and capacity for effectiveness. In fact, of the at least 45 Russian attacks on civilian infrastructure in Ukraine between June and December of last year documented by Human Rights Watch, the majority of these have been carried out using modified commercial drones. This is largely the result of their easiness to alter combined with the ability to operate them at great distances in a very strategic but inexpensive manner.

If some of the most recent developments this week are any indication, it appears as though the massive Ukrainian drone attack has a higher probability of resulting in further escalations than it does leading to imminent peace. In addition to the latest round of talks failing to amount to anything other than a new prisoner swap, a reported talk

between U.S. President Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin saw the latter suggest that Russia “will have to respond to recent attacks on its airfields.” Trump himself summed up his conversation with Putin by expressing that it was not one that will “lead to immediate peace.” Earlier today, Russia did launch large-scale drone and missile strikes on the Ukrainian capital and other parts of the country – confirming what was anticipated to unfold following news of the Trump-Putin conversation.