

Kerch Strait Bridge sabotage

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Overnight, another major escalation took place in the Russia-Ukraine War. A blast cut two lanes of the roadway portion of the Kerch Strait Bridge between Crimea and the rest of Russia. The blast also set fire to at least five railroad fuel tank cars on the railroad span, charring the span. This was a desperate measure by the Ukrainians, who in fact seem to have boasted of the blast. Now Vladimir Putin must feel that he must retaliate with greater force, or lose face in a critical way.

Damage to the Kerch Strait Bridge

The most reliable source of footage and pictures from the Kerch Strait Bridge comes from the Telegram channel [Intel Slava Z](#). Message traffic about this incident begins at [this link](#). All images and video come from that channel. In addition, Twitter user Nick Waters put together a thread with his own pictures, footage, and insights.

I've been looking at the Kerch Strait bridge explosion and thought I'd make a thread of things I've noticed.

Firstly: the explosion affected the Ukraine-bound lane of the bridge at approximately 45.300105, 36.513240. pic.twitter.com/AgkUvfP4Kr

— Nick Waters (@N_Waters89) [October 8, 2022](#)

It seems at least three spans of the bridge have collapsed. Two at the location where a train is burning (location 1), and another further to the east (location 2).

pic.twitter.com/alz0rl48kf

— Nick Waters (@N_Waters89) [October 8, 2022](#)

The most significant damage took place at Location 1.

Many have noted that at the moment of detonation, a large truck had just driven onto this span, which may or may not be an important point. pic.twitter.com/VdRWnHV3GX

— Nick Waters (@N_Waters89) [October 8, 2022](#)

Some have claimed a boat is visible in this still.

If there is, I can't see it. I can see some waves, which might or might not be indicative of something, but I can't see a boat. pic.twitter.com/GPsDc8iPWR

— Nick Waters (@N_Waters89) [October 8, 2022](#)

As well as the damage to the spans, a train including containers containing something flammable was heavily damaged on the rail bridge immediately next to the road bridge.

pic.twitter.com/5kSaY77VMK

— Nick Waters (@N_Waters89) [October 8, 2022](#)

That's the factual stuff.

Next I wanted to highlight a couple things that I found interesting.

I want to caveat this: I've done a bit of demolitions training and I've watched a lot of things blow up. That doesn't make me an explosives expert.

— Nick Waters (@N_Waters89) [October 8, 2022](#)

Firstly, the guard rails on the bridge appear to have experienced significant lateral force. On the southern side of the road bridge they have been completely ripped off, with the pillars, and CCTV indicating the direction they went.

pic.twitter.com/Q6lvikMG3q

— Nick Waters (@N_Waters89) [October 8, 2022](#)

At location 2, the guard rails do not seem to have experienced any similar forces and appear to be entirely intact – it's just the span that has collapsed.

pic.twitter.com/Fa1tpXF4xN

— Nick Waters (@N_Waters89) [October 8, 2022](#)

Finally, CCTV footage of this detonation seems to show the explosion immediately expanding upwards and outwards. If this explosion was under the bridge span, which is quite a chunky bit of concrete, I'd expect to see at least some delay here as the span blocked the explosion.... pic.twitter.com/JOUVy9sPag

— Nick Waters (@N_Waters89) [October 8, 2022](#)

...if only momentarily.

But it may also just be that the CCTV camera has a low frame rate so we don't see that delay.

Anyway, thought this could be useful for those interested in this event.

— Nick Waters (@N_Waters89) [October 8, 2022](#)

Images and videos which I used can all be found in [@RALee85's](#) thread below.

If you don't already follow him, you should.

END. <https://t.co/Ovwx22HTjG>

— Nick Waters (@N_Waters89) [October 8, 2022](#)

CNAV has inferred what follows from the message traffic on Intel Slava Z, including the message timestamps.

The Kerch Strait Bridge, twelve miles long, spans the Kerch Strait between Crimea and the rest of Russia. The explosion seems to have occurred at midnight Eastern Daylight Savings Time. That would make it six o'clock a.m. Eastern European Summer Time – Kyiv Time. (It would also be six o'clock a.m. Moscow Time, because Russia has already reverted to its standard time.)

A truck, apparently carrying high explosives, detonated on the Crimea-bound lane of the roadway. Mr. Waters gives latitude and longitude at 45.300105 North, 36.513240 East. The force of the explosion is the equivalent of anywhere from several hundred kilograms to several tons of TNT.

At the same time, a train carrying fuel was passing on the railroad trestle overhead and to the left of the road. The explosion collapsed two lanes of the roadway, which fell into the Kerch Strait. It also set fire to a railroad tank car on the trestle, and that fire set at least four other tankers on fire.









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Further effects

Road traffic came to an immediate stop. Authorities immediately organized ferries to handle the road traffic, and a parking lot with water supplies and sanitation facilities, presumably on the Russian side.

The blast caused no casualties among the train crew. But later, Intel Slava Z reported three fatalities on the bridge.

Two hours after the first footage came from the blast site, Mr. Mykhailo Podoloyak, a ranking official in the office of the President of Ukraine, brazenly tweeted a picture of the collapsed roadway. The English text of the tweet reads,

| Crimea, the bridge, the beginning.

After that comes a demand for a restoration of the *status quo ante* the annexation of Crimea.

| Crimea, the bridge, the beginning. Everything illegal must be destroyed, everything stolen must be returned to Ukraine, everything occupied by Russia must be expelled.

pic.twitter.com/yUiSwOLIDP

— Михайло Подоляк (@Podolyak_M) [October 8, 2022](#)

This is as close to a boast as it gets, other than a text saying, “We did it” or words to similar effect.

Three hours after the blast, emergency crews extinguished the fire. The Russian Ministry of Transport announced very rapid restoration of at least *some* traffic. Two-way road traffic resumed at 4:00 p.m. Moscow (and Kyiv) Time, by reversing travel direction in one intact lane. (Anyone who has driven the Delaware Memorial Bridge, or the Chesapeake Bay Bridge in Maryland, will know how bridge authorities can do this.)



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Rail traffic is due to resume at 8:00 p.m. Moscow Time.



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Russia uses the Kerch Strait Bridge as part of their supply and reinforcement route to support their Special Military Operation. The quick repairs mean the interruption of supply and reinforcement will be minimal.

What happens next?

The appointment – today – of General Sergei Surovkin as commander-in-chief of the Special Military Operation might or might not be significant. According to the timestamp, this appointment came six and one-half hours *after* the Kerch Strait Bridge blast. More to the

point, General Surovkin has a reputation for “not playing games.” He commanded anti-ISIS operations in Syria and allegedly said that one should fight all-out or “go home.” And he doesn’t go home. The even larger point is that the Special Military Operation has never had a unified command – until today.

Already someone at Intel Slava Z calls for massive retaliation. His point is that Putin *built* the Kerch Strait Bridge. Therefore:

If, after today’s terrorist attack on the Crimean bridge organized by Ukrainian terrorists, no measures and decisive responses are taken, then this will be taken as weakness of the President himself. The Crimean bridge is a symbol of the Putin era. The attempt on the Crimean bridge is an attempt on Putin himself. In response to this terrorist attack, not a single bridge should remain in Ukraine.

Thus far the White House has said nothing about the blast. But this White House has said many provocative things before today. This included proposing a new special U.S. military command for the Ukraine region. (That, in turn, prompted contributor Darrell Castle to wonder whether the inmates had taken over the insane asylum. He has wondered at something like this before.)

Ukrainians threatened to blow up the Kerch Strait Bridge before

Nor is Ukrainian responsibility for the blast very far-fetched. Major General Dmytro Marchenko of the Ukrainian Army threatened last June to “destroy” the bridge, according to *The Daily Mail*. This would in fact be part of a campaign Ukraine has always waged, to starve out ethnic Russians in Crimea, the Donbas, Zaporozhye, and Kerson. Ethnic Russians in the latter three regions voted in plebiscites to join Russia formally, and Russia has obliged.

For now, traffic moves again on the bridge, though less of it by necessity. Perhaps the ferries will continue to supplement the bridge; the Ministry of Transport has already let out contracts to repair the roadway span. But more to the point, Russia *will* escalate, if only to prevent any further attacks on the bridge.

This attack could have been worse. The truck could have blown up during rush hour, with cars falling into the water and even more people dying. That anyone should boast of an attack like this, goes to show the brutal standards of warfare that have always prevailed in the region. In that light, the appointment of General Surovkin looks less like a coincidence and more like a message. And that message can only be:

| You asked for it; you’ve got it. Prepare to die.