Demonstrate their "commitment to the Minsk agreements" by withdrawing armor from the front lines. Negotiations between Ukrainian Petro Poroshenko and his Russian, German and French counterparts, the separatists will likely remain poised to re-escalate their offensive operations even as they.

Separatist leaders have criticized the proposed autonomy legislation, however, because of its temporary nature and because it was drafted without the consultation of the separatists. Amid ongoing granting temporary partial autonomy to separatist-held territory may have contributed to the separatists' willingness to agree an expanded withdrawal agreement at this time. Both Russian and

It is likely that the separatists will only comply with a broader weapons withdrawal agreement when it suits their military and political objectives. A recent U.S.-backed initiative by Kyiv to consider

Shelling across the front. This tactical shift would allow the separatists to retain an offensive posture around strategically significant areas while reducing their level of offensive activity across the front. Around the key cities of Donetsk and Debaltseve suggests that the Russian-backed forces may concentrate heavy fire around a few isolated flashpoints rather than coordinate fire along the eastern side of the strategic Donetsk-Mariupol highway with heavy indirect fire. The highway likely represents a priority target for the separatists as a means to outflank Ukrainian forces in Mariupol.

Separatists reported indirect fire in Donetsk city center, the first such instance since February 2015 when the "Minsk II" ceasefire was signed. The OSCE deputy chief monitor reported that the separatists had launched attacks from the city center on Ukrainian positions west of Donetsk and that Ukrainian forces had returned fire. Ukrainian military officials accused the separatists of firing on the city in order to implicate Ukrainian forces in the attacks, which killed up to four civilians and damaged a hospital.

Separatists continued to shell Ukrainian positions west of Donetsk city, including Marinka and Krasnohorivka, the targets of a June 3 separatist assault.

Separatists renewed attacks on Ukrainian forces near the village of Shyrokyne near the Azov Sea, 15 kilometers east of Mariupol. Ukrainian forces reported coming under fire near the northeastern outskirts of Mariupol and driving out a separatist sabotage and reconnaissance group around the village of Lebedynske, northwest of Shyrokyne. The resumption of attacks around Shyrokyne adds further evidence to suggest that separatist forces remain in an offensive posture in the area despite withdrawing from the village and calling for the creation of a demilitarized zone on July 2.

Separatists targeted Ukrainian positions along the eastern side of the strategic Donetsk-Mariupol highway with heavy indirect fire. The highway likely represents a priority target for the separatists as a means to outflank Ukrainian forces in Mariupol.

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