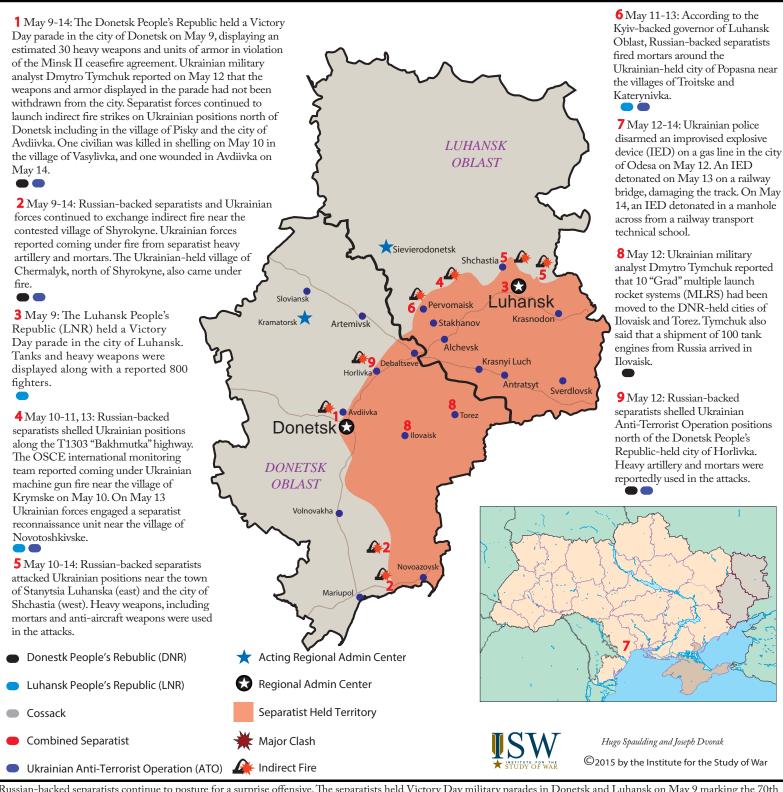
Ukraine Crisis Update: May 14, 2015



Russian-backed separatists continue to posture for a surprise offensive. The separatists held Victory Day military parades in Donetsk and Luhansk on May 9 marking the 70th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany. Both parades included heavy weapons, which the February 12 ceasefire agreement required both Ukrainian and separatist forces to withdraw. Reports suggest that the weapons and armor deployed near the front line for Victory Day have not been withdrawn in accordance with the ceasefire agreement. On May 12 and 13, the unrecognized separatist Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics (DNR and LNR) issued their proposals for local elections and regional autonomy to the trilateral Ukraine-Russia-OSCE ceasefire working group. The separatists may launch an offensive to force Ukraine to concede to these terms, which would ban pro-Ukrainian parties from the elections and would give the separatists the right to form locally commanded militias.