Ukrainian Forces Reportedly Blow Up Fuel Depot on Russian Territory in "Daring Cross-Border Attack"

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Ukraine forces pulled off a rare attack on Russian soil Friday when two military helicopters destroyed a fuel depot in the city of Belgorod, situated roughly 40 miles north of the border with Ukraine.

The attack was purportedly carried out by two Ukrainian helicopters that crossed into Ukrainian territory. Videos circulating online purported to show Ukrainian Air Force Mi-24 helicopters flying low over Belgorod just before the strike.

The strike will certainly create an interesting backdrop to talks between the Russian and Ukrainian negotiators, which are set to resume via video-conference on Friday.

Meanwhile, the UN said Friday that its relief convoys had failed to reach Mariupol, the southern port city devastated by weeks of shelling, after Russia said it had opened up a "humanitarian corridor" to allow the evacuation of civilians.

Video images of the purported attack posted online showed what looked like several missiles being fired from low altitude, followed by an explosion. Reuters has not yet been able to verify the images.

While Russian authorities have confirmed the attack, some Ukrainian defense analysts insisted that the strike may have been a "false flag" planned by Moscow to further turn the tide of public opinion in favor of the war (although at least one recently released independent poll showed that the majority of Russians have rallied around the flag in support of the war, per the NYT).

> Day 37 of Ukraine resistance. Ukraine kicked Russians out of some Kyiv suburbs. They are withdrawing, likely to regroup, but for now Kyiv is safe. Russia said Ukrainian helicopters hit an oil depot on its territory, in Belgorod. Ukrainian analysts believe it's likely a false flag

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— Olga Tokariuk (@olgatokariuk) [April 1, 2022](#)

The Ukrainian Foreign Minister said early Friday morning that he "could not confirm nor deny" Ukrainian involvement in the strike.

He's not the first Ukrainian official to neither "confirm nor deny" the attack.

> [#BREAKING](#)
> The Ukrainian General Staff tells my colleague [@fpiatov](#), it does "not have this information" that Ukrainian forces attacked an oil depot in Belgorod oblast, hinting that the attack could have been a Russian false flag operation to justify further brutal attacks on 🇺🇦.
>
> — Julian Röpcke🇩🇪🇺🇦 (@JulianRoepcke) [April 1, 2022](#)

Still, video of the strike has circulated on Western social media.

> Insane. The fire at the oil facility in Belgorod was reportedly a result of an attack by two Ukrainian helicopters apparently firing S-8 rockets. [https://t.co/kx5wDfJ88C](#) [pic.twitter.com/HhHkirNJWk](#)
>
> — Rob Lee (@RALee85) [April 1, 2022](#)

Given the number of videos of the attack circulating online, many believe some sort of attack did occur.

> Another video of that apparent Ukrainian helicopter strike on the oil facility in Belgorod with rockets. I was very skeptical when I first heard reports of this but there are multiple videos showing some sort of air strike. [https://t.co/a8QViXymRG](#) [pic.twitter.com/IvgVxTIFWB](#)
>
> — Rob Lee (@RALee85) [April 1, 2022](#)

A WSJ reporter described it as "the most daring known Ukrainian cross-border attack" since the start of the conflict.

> Video of what the governor of Belgorod, Russia, says was a Ukrainian helicopter raid on the fuel storage depot in the city, a logistical hub for the invasion. The most daring known Ukrainian cross-border attack. Russia has been setting Ukrainians fuel depots ablaze for weeks. [pic.twitter.com/KXNCkWISs8](#)
>
> — Yaroslav Trofimov (@yarotrof) [April 1, 2022](#)

A fire at the facility was raging uncontrolled up until a few hours ago.

Fuel depot in Belgorod, Russia is on fire a result of a Ukrainian air strike according to local officials pic.twitter.com/8QycPuAzC5

— Igor Schatz (@Copernicus2013) April 1, 2022

Here's video of the fire from another angle.

Oil depot caught fire in Belgorod, Russia pic.twitter.com/R9S6SYJ2pN

— OSINTtechnical (@Osinttechnical) April 1, 2022

Video taken later in the morning showed the fire had been almost extinguished.

The fire at the oil depot in Belgorod continues to be extinguished from helicopters. #ukraine #poland #russia #breakingnews #breaking #war #ukrainewar #Krieg #polska #ukraina #putin pic.twitter.com/hUXhGtIEyG

— Mateusz Sobieraj (@MateuszSobiera3) April 1, 2022

Dmitry Peskov, the spokesman for President Vladimir Putin, said the strike wouldn't help the cause of peace talks.

Russia's Peskov says the attack on the oil depot in Belgorod doesn't help peace talks.

Apparently, the destruction of Ukrainian cities and the murder of Ukrainians does.

Peskov also says "Russian air superiority is an absolute fact."

— Oleksiy Sorokin (@mrsorokaa) April 1, 2022

According to one media report, 8 tanks with fuel volume of 2,000 cubic meters each are burning. The Russian Defense Ministry hasn't officially commented on the incident.

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