As Kiev war summit ends:

Russian drone hits Ukrainian train, missing by minutes Boris Johnson and Western government officials

Robert Stevens
14 September 2026

On Sunday at approximately 5 a.m., a drone strike destroyed a passenger train locomotive at Ukraine's Yahodyn station, 5 km from the Polish border. The strike was part of a mass overnight barrage by Russia's military, involving hundreds of drones and missiles targeting Ukrainian sites.

London's *Times* reported that the strike hit a stationary locomotive that had already detached from the passenger train. Fortunately, 206 passengers were evacuated from the train shortly before the drone impact, and no casualties were reported. A near-simultaneous Russian drone strike also hit a truck near a petrol station close to the Yahodyn–Dorohusk crossing, with debris setting the station and several trucks ablaze.

The Yahodyn train station strike occurred just over an hour after a separate diplomatic train departed the station, carrying senior Western officials who had attended the Yalta European Strategy (YES) war summit in Kyiv. Passengers included former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson; UK national security adviser Jonathan Powell; former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt; Günter Sautter, a senior adviser to German Chancellor Friedrich Merz; and Fabrizio Saggio, a diplomatic adviser and national security adviser to Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. Also on board was Robin Wagener, a Green Party deputy in Germany's Bundestag.

Another attendee, however, former CIA director David Petraeus came even closer to death—being evacuated from a third train at the station roughly 15 minutes before the drone struck the locomotive adjacent to his. According to reports, Petraeus was still in Yahodyn station taking shelter when the passenger train was hit. The *New York Times* reported, "the former C.I.A. director could hear the Russian drones above his train, which had just passed through Ukrainian customs on its way to Poland on Sunday morning. He and other passengers were quickly evacuated. Not long after, he heard a huge explosion." Petraeus later reboarded and crossed into Poland.

The bombardment was the latest retaliation for months of Ukrainian attacks deep inside Russian territory, which have inflicted severe damage on Moscow's oil refineries and energy infrastructure. In response to Kyiv's Western-backed strikes, Moscow has targeted Ukraine's railway infrastructure, border crossings and fuel depots.

Russia did not deny responsibility. A Kremlin spokesperson said on Monday that its armed forces would continue operating across Ukrainian territory, while the defence ministry claimed it had struck "railway infrastructure" used to transport military cargo from Europe.

According to the *Guardian*, at least six people were killed in Ukraine and more than 40 were injured in overnight strikes, with Ukraine's air force claiming to have intercepted 405 drones and four missiles. The *Financial Times* reported that Russia fired 863 drones and missiles at Ukrainian targets on Saturday.

Tensions across Europe were immediately ratcheted up. Hours later, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk held an emergency meeting with government representatives and personnel from the military and intelligence services. The British, French and German governments condemned the attack, with French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot saying the train strike was intended "to intimidate Europeans, discourage them and above all to divide them."

An escalation of Russia's attacks on Ukraine was inevitable following Ukraine's use of advanced UK-French missile technology in recent months, allowing it to strike deep into Russian territory.

With civilian air travel suspended since 2022, foreign government representatives regularly use the Warsaw-Kyiv rail line. Although exact departure times have not been made public, it was reported that the diplomatic train's departure from Yahodyn was brought forward due to the increased threat of drone strikes. The previous day, a train was hit by a drone strike at Lutsk rail station in Volyn oblast, about 80 miles away.

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Moreover, the Yahodyn drone attack closely follows an incident on September 8, when two Russian drones reportedly entered Moldovan airspace as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's aircraft was preparing to depart Chi?in?u for Oslo to attend the funeral of King Harald V. His departure was delayed while Moldovan authorities closed the airspace.

The Yalta European Strategy summit

Moscow would have been well aware that the train carrying Johnson and other Western officials was chartered by the YES conference, with AP News reporting it was a "diplomatic train". Dubbed the "Ukrainian Davos," the Yalta European Strategy summit, established by Ukrainian oligarch and former member of parliament Victor Pinchuk, is an invitation-only gathering where imperialist powers and the Ukrainian oligarchy coordinate strategy behind closed doors. Pinchuk convened the first event in 2004 at the Livadia Palace in Yalta, Crimea—the site of the 1945 conference that carved up post-war Europe. After Russia's annexation of Crimea, the conference moved to Kyiv in September 2014.

This year's 22nd Annual Meeting, held September 11-12 under the motto "Peace Through Strength NOW!", drew more than 700 politicians, diplomats, business leaders, military representatives and conflict experts from 28 countries. Alongside Johnson, Powell, Bildt, Sautter and Wagener were Poland's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Rados?aw Sikorski, who travelled to Kyiv by train on September 11; former Polish President Aleksander Kwa?niewski—a YES board chairman—who delivered the closing remarks; Munich Security Conference chairman Wolfgang Ischinger; former Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid; and former Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin. Along with Petraeus, Trump's personal envoy Jared Kushner attended and CNN's Fareed Zakaria moderated. Zelensky addressed the conference via videolink.

Befitting the agenda of the European powers, who are doing all they can to prolong the conflict, one session was titled "Can Europe with Ukraine Deter Russia?" Another session, chaired by Zakaria and titled "Is There a Window for Negotiations Now?", featured Kyrylo Budanov in his role as Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine. While acknowledging a window exists, Budanov insisted it depended on escalation. "Everything depends on the situation on the battlefield," he said, according to GlobalSecurity. "And everything beyond that—long-range sanctions and various other measures—is about pushing the Russian Federation towards serious negotiations."

Johnson's attendance was no surprise given his reactionary role on behalf of British imperialism in prolonging the deadliest conflict on European soil since World War II. The *World Socialist Web Site* reported on his role in scuppering a negotiated end to the war in April 2022, when he "flew to Kiev and urged Ukraine to 'just continue fighting' in exchange for indefinite support from Western imperialism against Russia."

The train strike prompted Johnson to up the ante, with an op-ed in the *Daily Mail* published just hours after the attack, headlined: "The Kremlin's 'terroristic' attacks on Ukraine will not work... now we must give Kyiv better air defences— and fast." Johnson summarised the demands of the most rapacious sections of the European imperialist powers, calling for the war against Russia to be intensified at any cost. The major NATO powers, he wrote, had to do "much more to help the Ukrainians."

As well as attending the conference, Johnson wrote about visiting over the weekend "the astonishing Ukrainian drone and missile start-up, Firepoint. They are now world leaders. They make the world's best cruise missile–the Flamingo, which has been so devastating against Putin's oil and gas industry."

But he warned that cruise missiles were not a defense against "Putin's ballistic missiles, and against the new jet-powered Shaheeds. The Ukrainians desperately need better air defences, and with so many US Patriots being used up in the Gulf region, they have to be helped to make their own."

This meant giving Kyiv "the 'seeker' tracking systems to help them to take out Putin's fast drones and neutralise his intercontinental ballistic missiles. It can be done, but it needs to be done fast."

To combat Russia, "a new seriousness from the West" was needed, declared the former prime minister. He advised helping Kyiv "to open the Black Sea ports and get Ukrainian grain and other produce moving again", giving "them Starlink access to the skies above Russia, so they can take out the missile sites and bases that are being used to attack their populations" and unfreezing "the hundreds of billions of Russian cash–in Brussels and other Western capitals–and allow the Ukrainians to use it to fund their effort."

The Yahodyn attack, which could have killed a former UK prime minister, a leading figure in the US state and top advisers to the governments of Britain, Germany and Italy, expresses the logic of a war whose escalation can draw the major powers into direct military conflict within hours. Yet such is the war fervour in European circles that Johnson responds with more strident demands, each a step toward direct war between nuclear-armed NATO powers and Russia—advanced as European governments push through a historic rearmament programme to be funded by savage austerity on the working class at home.

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