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Speech of the Head of the Main Operational Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation Colonel General Sergei Rudskoy

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In accordance with the decision of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief since February 24 this year. The Armed Forces of the Russian Federation are conducting a special military operation.

Its main goal is to provide assistance to the people of the Lugansk and Donetsk people's republics, who have been subjected to genocide by the Kiev regime for 8 years.

It was impossible to achieve this goal by political means. Kiev has publicly refused to implement the Minsk agreements. The Ukrainian leadership twice in 2014 and 2015 tried to solve the so-called Donbass problem by military means, was defeated, but did not change its plans on resolving conflict by force in the East of the country. According to reliable data, the Armed Forces of Ukraine were completing the preparation of a military operation to take control of the territory of the people's republics.

In these conditions, it was possible to help the Donetsk and Lugansk republics only by providing them with military assistance. Which Russia has done.

There were two possible courses of action.

The first is to limit the territory to only the DPR and the LPR within the administrative borders of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions, which is enshrined in the constitutions of the republics. But then we would be faced with constant feeding by the Ukrainian authorities of the grouping involved in the so-called joint force operation.

Therefore, the second option was chosen, which provides for actions throughout the territory of Ukraine with the implementation of measures for its demilitarization and denazification.

The course of the operation confirmed the validity of this decision.

It is conducted by the General Staff in strict accordance with the approved plan.

The tasks are carried out taking into account minimizing losses among personnel and minimizing damage to civilians.

With the beginning of a special military operation, air supremacy was won during the first two days.

Offensive actions of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation are carried out in various directions.

As a result, Russian troops blocked Kiev, Kharkov, Chernigov, Sumy and Nikolaev. Kherson and most of the Zaporozhye region are under full control.

The public and individual experts are wondering what we are doing in the area of blocked Ukrainian cities.

These actions are carried out with the aim of causing such damage to military infrastructure, equipment, personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the results of which allow not only to shackle their forces and do not give them the opportunity to strengthen their grouping in the Donbass, but also will not allow them to do so until the Russian army completely liberates the territories of the DPR and LPR.

Initially, we did not plan to storm them in order to prevent destruction and minimize losses among personnel and civilians.

And although we do not rule out such a possibility, however, as individual groups complete their tasks, and they are being solved successfully, our forces and means will concentrate on the main thing ♦ the complete liberation of Donbass.

Significant territories of the Lugansk and Donetsk people's republics have also been liberated. The people's militia has taken control of 276 settlements that were previously under the control of the Ukrainian army and the national battalions.

Demilitarization of Ukraine is achieved both by high-precision strikes on military infrastructure facilities, locations of formations and military units, airfields, control points, arsenals and warehouses of weapons and military equipment, and by the actions of troops to defeat opposing enemy groupings.

Currently, the Ukrainian air forces and the air defence system have been almost completely destroyed. The naval forces of the country ceased to exist.

16 main military airfields were defeated, from which combat sorties of the AFU aviation were carried out. 39 storage bases and arsenals were destroyed, which contained up to 70% of all stocks of military equipment, materiel and fuel, as well as more than 1 million 54 thousand tons of ammunition.

All 24 formations of the Land Forces that existed before the start of the operation suffered significant losses. Ukraine has no organized reserves left.

Losses are replenished at the expense of mobilized persons and personnel of the territorial defence forces who do not have the necessary training, which increases the risk of large losses.

At the time of the start of the special military operation, the Armed Forces of Ukraine, together with the National Guard, numbered 260 thousand 200 servicemen. During the month of hostilities, their losses amounted to about 30 thousand people, including more than 14 thousand - irretrievable and about 16 thousand - sanitary.

Of the 2,416 tanks and other armored fighting vehicles that were in combat on February 24, 1,587 units were destroyed; 636 units out of 1,509 field artillery guns and mortars; 163 out of 535 MLRS; 112 out of 152 aircraft, 75 out of 149 helicopters; 36 Bayraktar TB2 UAVs - 35;

180 out of 148 S-300 and Buk M1 air defence systems; 300 out of 117 radars for various purposes.

The AFU continue to use high-powered weapons indiscriminately against towns in Donbass. An example of this is the strikes by the Tochka-U missile system on the civilian population of Donetsk and Makeyevka.

In this regard, they are the primary targets.

As of today, 7 Tochka-U launchers have been destroyed, and 85% of missiles are in arsenals and in the air. This significantly limited Ukraine's capabilities for their combat use.

Since the beginning of hostilities, the Western countries have supplied the Kiev regime with 109 field artillery guns, 3,800 anti-tank weapons, including Javelin, Milan, Konkurs, NLAW ATGM, M-72, Panzerfaust-3, 897 Stinger and Iгла MANPADS.

We consider it a vast mistake for Western countries to supply weapons to Kiev. This delays the conflict, increases the number of victims and will not be able to influence the outcome of the operation.

The real purpose of such supplies is not to support Ukraine, but to drag it into a long-term military conflict "to the last Ukrainian."

We are closely monitoring the statements of the military and political leadership of individual countries about their intention to supply aircraft and air defence systems to Ukraine. In case of implementation we will not leave it without attention.

We also hear assurances from NATO leaders about non-interference in the conflict. At the same time, some member states of the North Atlantic Alliance propose to close the airspace over Ukraine. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation will immediately respond accordingly to such attempts.

In order to prevent the restoration of weapons and military equipment of the AFU that have received combat damage, the Russian Armed Forces are disabling repair enterprises, arsenals, storage bases, logistics warehouses with high-precision weapons.

At the moment, 30 key enterprises of the military-industrial complex have been hit by cruise missiles X-101, Kalibr, Iskander, and the Kinzhal aviation complex, which carried out repairs of 68% of weapons and equipment disabled during combat operations.

Russian modern weaponry has proven to be highly accurate, reliable and capable of operational use.

I would like to emphasize that the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation do not strike at civilian infrastructure facilities, including the destruction of bridges across rivers.

127 bridges were destroyed in the area of military operations. All of them were blown up by Ukrainian nationalists in order to deter the advance of our troops.

Another example of recklessness is the mining of approaches to the ports of Odessa, Ochakov, Chernomorsk and Yuzhny, where over 400 anchor mines of obsolete types are installed.

At least 10 mines have broken anchor and are drifting in the western part of the Black Sea, which poses a real threat to warships and civilian vessels.

The rampant crime, looting and marauding and civilian deaths have been caused by the Ukrainian regime's massive uncontrolled distribution of tens of thousands of small arms to the civilian population, including to criminals released from prisons. The situation will only get worse in the future.

The course of hostilities, the testimonies of civilians who left the blockaded settlements and captured Ukrainian servicemen show that today the AFU's ability to resist is based on fear of reprisals by neo-Nazis. Their representatives are embedded in all military units.

The mainstay of the Kiev regime are nationalist formations such as Azov, Aidar, Right Sector and others recognized in Russia as terrorist organizations. In Mariupol alone, they include more than 7 thousand militants who are fighting under the guise of civilians, using them as a "human shield".

The militants of the Azov battalion drive women and children out of the basements, threatening them with weapons, and send them towards the advancing units of the DPR in order to hinder the advance of the people's militia. This has become a common practice for them.

The Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, on the contrary, seek to avoid unnecessary losses. Before the start of the offensive, the AFU units are invited to leave the combat area and move along with equipment and weapons to the point of permanent deployment. Not to resist when the offensive begins and those who lay down their arms are guaranteed safety.

Civilians caught in a war zone are always advised to stay in their homes.

Humanitarian corridors are being organized in all cities to get the population out of the area of hostilities, and their security is also maintained.

Humanitarian corridors are being created in all towns to allow people to leave the area where the fighting is taking place, and their security is being maintained.

In addition, at the initiative of the Ukrainian leadership, the country has become a home to 6,595 foreign mercenaries and terrorists from 62 states.

They are not subject to the rules of war and will be ruthlessly destroyed.

Today, the number of foreign mercenaries is declining. This was facilitated by high-precision strikes on their bases and training camps. On March 13, more than 200 militants were killed and more than 400 wounded in Starichi and at the Yavorovskii training ground alone.

I note that not a single foreign mercenary has arrived in Ukraine in the last seven days. On the contrary, there has been an outflow. Within a week, 285 fighters escaped into Poland, Hungary and Romania, I hope without Stingers and Javelins.

Previous experience has shown that man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and ATGMs are spreading out fairly quickly, along with the mercenaries who return home.

In general, the main objectives of the first phase of the operation have been achieved. The combat capabilities of Ukraine's Armed Forces have been significantly reduced, which allows us, once again, to concentrate our main efforts on achieving the main goal - the liberation of Donbass.

In eight years, in the area of the so-called "joint forces operation", a defence belt has been prepared that is deeply echeloned and well-fortified in engineering terms, consisting of a system of monolithic, long-term concrete structures.

In this regard, in order to minimise casualties among the troops of the Armed Forces of the

Russian Federation, Lugansk and Donetsk people's republics, the conduct of offensive operations is preceded by a heavy fire attack on the enemy's strongholds and their reserves.

At the beginning of the special military operation, the LPR and DPR people's militias were confronted by a group of 59,300 people comprising the most combat-ready units of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the National Guard and nationalist formations.

As a result, Ukraine's security forces in the OOS zone lost about 16,000 people, or 26% of their total strength as of 24 February this year.

More than 7,000 of them were irrecoverable losses.

Replacing losses is prevented by isolating the Ukrainian grouping of troops in Donbass, taking control of railway stations and key road routes with firepower.

The supply of missiles and ammunition, fuel and food to Ukrainian forces has been almost completely halted.

The field depots of missile and artillery weapons and ammunition, as well as fuel located directly in the area of the Joint Forces Operation are being hit. To date, 32 facilities have been destroyed, or 61% of the total.

All weapons and military equipment, including foreign-made, seized by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation during the special military operation are handed over to the People's Republics. Already 113 tanks and other armoured combat vehicles, 138 Javelin and 67 NLAW grenade launchers and other trophy weapons have been handed over.

Units of the People's Militia of the Lugansk People's Republic have liberated 93% of the republic's territory.

Fighting is currently taking place on the outskirts of Severodonetsk and Lysychansk.

The People's Militia of the Donetsk People's Republic controls 54% of the territory. The liberation of Mariupol continues.

Units of the Russian Armed Forces together with the People's Militia of the Donetsk People's Republic are conducting an offensive to liberate settlements to the west of Donetsk.

Unfortunately, there are casualties among our comrades-in-arms during the special military operation. As of today, 1,351 servicemen have been killed and 3,825 wounded.

All family support solutions will be taken over by the state, raising children up to higher education, full repayment of loans, housing solutions.

We receive a large number of appeals from Russian citizens wishing to take part in the special military operation to liberate Ukraine from Nazism.

In addition, more than 23,000 foreigners from 37 countries have expressed their willingness to fight on the side of the people's republics. We offered the leadership of the LPR and DPR to accept this assistance, but they said they would defend their land themselves.

They have enough power and resources.

The Armed Forces of the Russian Federation will continue to conduct a planned special military operation until the tasks set by the Supreme Commander-in-Chief have been completed.