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MESSAGE:

Gonzalo Lira – “Why The Western Elites Are Foolish and Amoral”

## Sitrep: Operation Z

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📅 March 29, 2022

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### By Nightvision for the Saker Blog

Several big developments are giving us an idea of a shifting picture on the ground today. First let's start with the fronts where the largest changes took place, and then give a broader strategic analysis.

-Many reports today confirm our previous determination that Russia is in fact conducting a major regrouping of its forces following what Shoigu today has called the successful conclusion of the main objectives of the first phase of operations:

*“Shoigu: In general, the main objectives of the first phase of the operation have been achieved. The combat capabilities of the VSU have been significantly reduced, which allows us to focus our main attention and main efforts on achieving the main goal – the liberation of Donbass.”*

This is in conjunction with the announcement from RF that some VDV units will be withdrawn from the Kiev region as a sign of good faith for the negotiations.

Of course the Western press/analysts have predictably spun this news as, ‘Attritioned Russian forces are pulling out and downscaling their operation in order to concentrate on more realistic objectives in the east’.

There is a very informative thread by Scott Ritter today who explains the simple concept of a military ‘feint’ (misdirection, deception, diversionary tactics etc) we’ve often mentioned before in the discussion of Russia’s opening maneuvers which seemed to many of us who actually follow military matters, to be a ‘pinning strategy’ that keeps Ukrainian forces from redistributing and relieving their primary forces in Donbass and elsewhere.

<https://twitter.com/RealScottRitter/status/1508813631311466496>

“1/ Big Arrow War—a primer. For all those scratching their heads in confusion, or dusting off their dress uniforms for the Ukrainian victory parade in Kiev, over the news about Russia’s “strategic shift”, you might want to re-familiarize yourself with basic military concepts.

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2/ Maneuver warfare is a good place to start. Understand Russia started its “special military operation” with a severe manpower deficit—200,000 attackers to some 600,000 defenders (or more). Classic attritional conflict was never an option. Russian victory required maneuver.

3/ Maneuver war is more psychological than physical and focuses more on the operational than on the tactical level. Maneuver is relational movement—how you deploy and move your forces in relation to your opponent. Russian maneuver in the first phase of its operation support this.

4/ The Russians needed to shape the battlefield to their advantage. In order to do this, they needed to control how Ukraine employed its numerically superior forces, while distributing their own smaller combat power to best accomplish this objective.

5/ Strategically, to facilitate the ability to maneuver between the southern, central, and northern fronts, Russia needed to secure a land bridge between Crimea and Russia. The seizure of the coastal city of Mariupol was critical to this effort. Russia has accomplished this task.

6/ While this complex operation unfolded, Russia needed to keep Ukraine from maneuvering its numerically superior forces in a manner that disrupted the Mariupol operation. This entailed the use of several strategic supporting operations—feints, fixing operations, and deep attack.

7/ The concept of a feint is simple—a military force either is seen as preparing to attack a given location, or actually conducts an attack, for the purpose of deceiving an opponent into committing resources in response to the perceived or actual actions.

8/ The use of the feint played a major role in Desert Storm, where Marine Amphibious forces threatened the Kuwaiti coast, forcing Iraq to defend against an attack that never came, and where the 1st Cavalry Division actually attacked Wadi Al Batin to pin down the Republican Guard.

9/ The Russians made extensive use of the feint in Ukraine, with Amphibious forces off Odessa freezing Ukrainian forces there, and a major feint attack toward Kiev compelling Ukraine to reinforce their forces there. Ukraine was never able to reinforce their forces in the east.

10/ Fixing operations were also critical. Ukraine had assembled some 60,000-100,000 troops in the east, opposite Donbas. Russia carried out a broad fixing attack designed to keep these forces fully engaged and unable to maneuver in respect to other Russian operations.

11/ During Desert Storm, two Marine Divisions were ordered to carry out similar fixing attacks against Iraqi forces deployed along the Kuwaiti-Saudi border, tying down significant numbers of men and material that could not be used to counter the main US attack out west.”

By the way, von Manstein, considered one of the greatest German WW2 generals famously employed such tactics, particularly in the same Donbass region against the Soviet forces, where he utilized feints and strategic retreats in order to capture a much larger encroaching force by way of misdirection and diversions). You can watch videos such as this one to see how an extremely agile mechanized force can employ diversionary tactics and misdirection to bait a much larger force

<https://youtu.be/vL1BiYvG-38>

A source from Kiev further has reported that “Russia now has MORE armor units accumulated on the border than it did prior to the war...” This is extremely telling, and if true, a clear sign that a major phase 2 operation is in the preparatory stages. And there's many sightings/videos of new forces coming in such as this one:

<https://twitter.com/MotolkoHelp/status/1508794997184897024>

[https://twitter.com/hochu\\_dodomu/status/1508730518564753409](https://twitter.com/hochu_dodomu/status/1508730518564753409)




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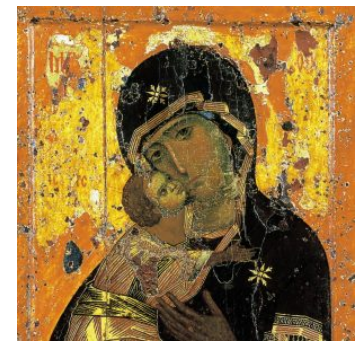




The full statement: ***“Russia has pulled more equipment to the border than it was before the invasion – according to Ukrainian resources affiliated with the intelligence of the Armed Forces of Ukraine***

The intelligence community “Informnapalm” specifies that specifically in the Kursk region a huge amount of military equipment is recorded – more than it was on February 24<sup>th</sup>.”

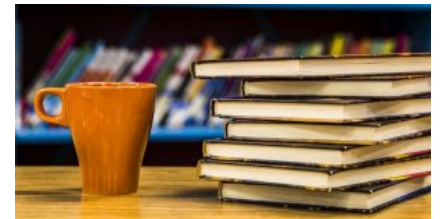
(photo of earlier build up for reference)




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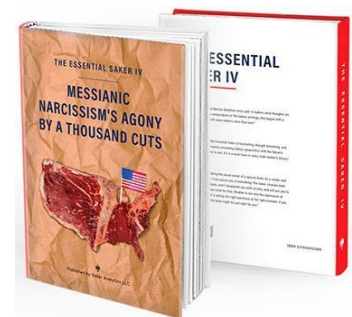
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-Now onto a few actual tactical updates:

By far the most actively successful theatre for RF forces has been Izyum. Kamyanka was mostly captured and there are now reports that fighting has been recorded as far south / down the road as Krestyshche (likely just advance/scout forces), which is right on the outskirts of Slovyansk. Similarly in the SW direction from Izyum, fighting continues around Barinkove and more and more forces continue to pour into this area via pontoon bridge crossings on the Donets river. This will become a bigger and bigger focus in the coming days as the “regrouping” pivots towards full Phase 2, as this area will become the main pincer of the north to enclose the ‘Great Cauldron’.

-In Mariupol, cleansing continues and Ramzan Kadyrov has flown in to help oversee the final stages of the Mariupol liberation and continue giving his troops morale on the frontlines. The city is divided into small pockets which are strategically being pushed by RF aligned forces *towards* the Azovstal factory so that they can concentrate and bottleneck all the remaining Azov forces there. The verdict is still out whether, as some have expressed, Russia will choose to “sacrifice the factory” once all of Azov is in there (via massive bombing), to get rid of them all in one shot, or instead cleanse it piece by piece so as to salvage it intact. The factory is an important industrial center that was once amongst the largest in the world for steel, so likely Russia is hesitant to completely destroy this heritage to Soviet industry.

And by the way, though we don't know the exact force distribution in Mariupol, it has become clear that there are at least 3 distinct groups operating in several directions which have finally ‘linked’ at central points and are now often operating together. These are 1. the DPR forces from the north, the Chechen forces from the East, and now a special Russian Marine force from the West – what appears to be ‘Naval Infantry’. Several videos can be seen of these forces now operating in conjunction, though how the command is distributed between them is uncertain as of yet:



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<https://www.bitchute.com/video/bHfSya228Qfk/>

<https://www.bitchute.com/video/SuYgc42MxSqU/>

Also, this might be **graphic** but a must-see. This is what Azov battalion has become in Mariupol: <https://www.bitchute.com/video/IVf6xGHKXEBx/>

A Ukrainian transport helicopter was also shotdown yesterday in a desperate last ditch attempt to save some of the Azov leadership. It tried to come in stealthily, flying low over the Azov Sea, bypassing Russian land corridor / radar coverage, but once it got in close it was nevertheless detected and obliterated.



-The administrative center building in Nikolayev was hit by Kaliber missile this morning. Official Ukrainian estimates claimed only 20-30 casualties (wounded plus killed), but chatrooms of Nikolayev have apparently begun to leak actual lists of casualties of confirmed casualty names on Telegram, and reports indicate there's 200+ so far and possibly will be higher than the barracks of the 79<sup>th</sup> Brigade which was struck last week. Rumors after that hit last week stated that Ukraine command issued an immediate decree to no longer allow publishing of any 'aftermath' photos like the ones on the 79<sup>th</sup> which showed gruesome dead of the UAF. This means we likely won't see much photo confirmation but the sheets with casualty names can be seen on the Telegrams of Colonel Cassad and others.

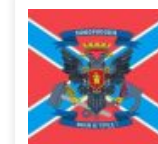
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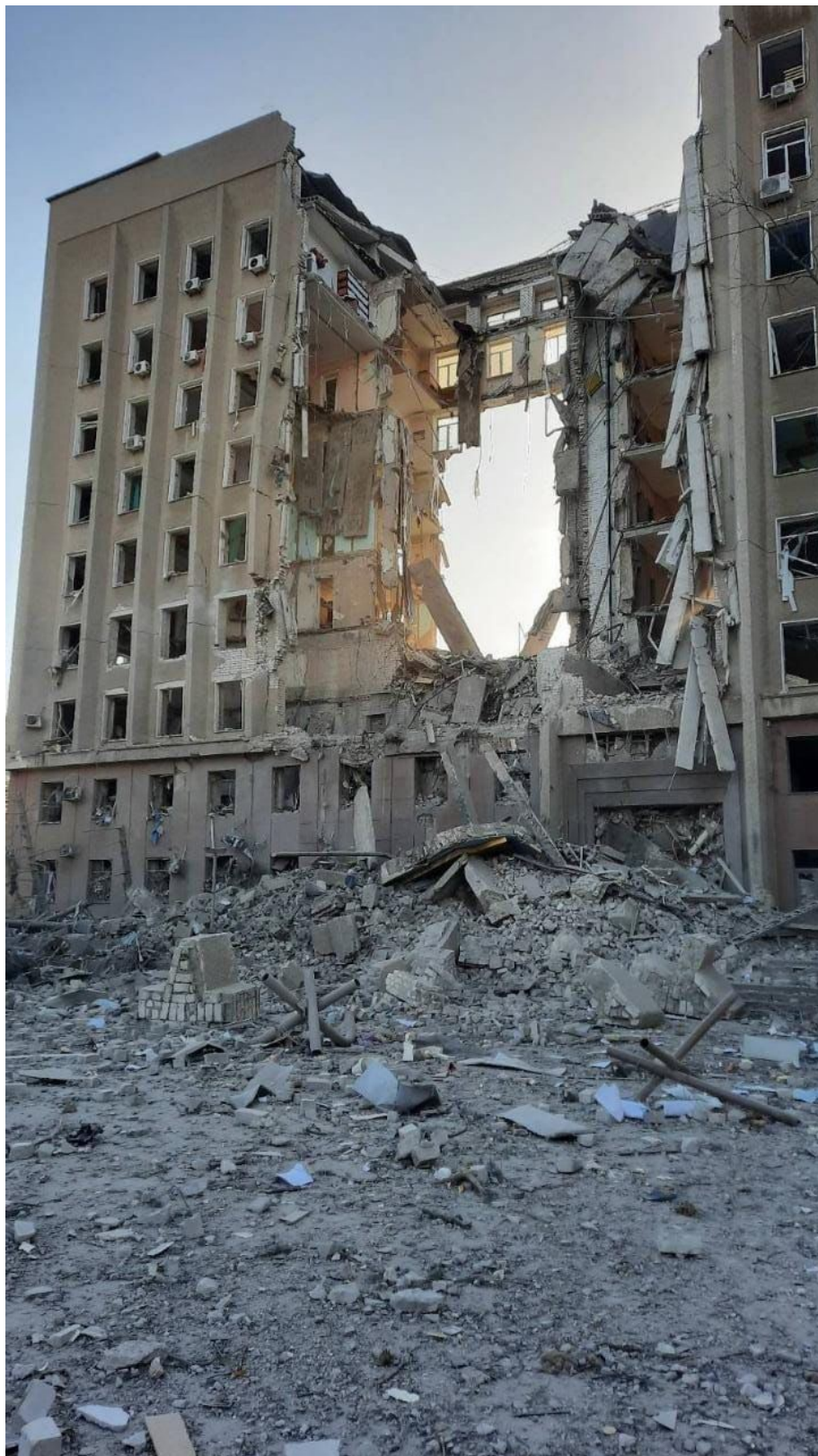
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-In other news, Deputy Head of the State Duma Committee Vladimir Shamanov today has announced that 'Russian Spetsnaz' have caught some of the perpetrators of the horrific torture / war crimes done to our artillery troops on the eastern outskirts of Kharkov the other day. Here is his statement:

<https://youtu.be/imVFwgXNijw>

"Today they are lying at their feet, asking for mercy" – Deputy Head of the State Duma Committee Vladimir Shamanov claims that those who mocked Russian servicemen in Ukraine were captured by Russian special forces.

"Those who bullied our servicemen did not rejoice for long, after three days our special forces captured these bastards. Today they roll at their feet, begging for mercy. I will call their names. One bastard was called Sergei Velichko, nicknamed Chile. The



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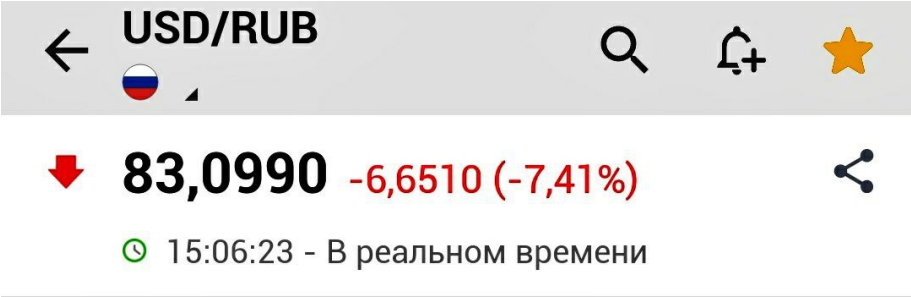
Драган Р. Млађеновић:  
СВЕДОЧАНСТВО УЖАСА ИЛИ



second – Konstantin Nemechev. Both bastards grew up as Nazis from a fan group of the local Metalist football club. This is what they themselves told during the first interrogations. And so it will be with everyone who is unworthy, violating the Geneva Convention, to act with our prisoners of war.”

Some however are skeptical of these claims until Russian leadership produces photos/videos proving these people are captured.

-In economic news, the Ruble has now almost fully, miraculously recovered to its pre-war exchange rate against the USD.



Let's recall that the West claimed the Ruble would catastrophically drop to 200 against 1 USD. Instead it spiked to a high of 130-150 and has been steadily rebounding, now almost completely back to normal, which was in the 75-80 range prior to February 24 and the onset of the special operation. This is a massive economic shock and humiliation to the entire West, to say the least.

On top of that, Russian stocks have opened back up and they are gaining positively as well:

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-One last thing to note. I've said numerous times now that U.S. and Western equipment in general has been a catastrophic failure in the Ukraine. But there's some additional important news that continues to reveal the veracity of these claims.

Firstly, this Pentagon reporter has stated that the Pentagon plans to buy hundreds of FEWER Javelin missiles this year than it did last year, DESPITE giving away thousands of them to Ukraine.

<https://twitter.com/JackDetsch/status/1508517753413636096>

It is now clear that the Pentagon leadership has seen the utterly dismal performance of the Javelin and now wants to phase it out from U.S. forces. Remember, out of thousands of Javelins supplied, thousands of videos published by Ukraine, not a single successful usage of the system has ever been recorded. In fact the vast majority of successful Ukrainian defeats of Russian armor happens at the ends of legacy Soviet/Russian systems and mostly artillery. Russian forces continue to find Javelin units completely unused because Ukr troops have found them to be unwieldy and impractical in combat – too long to set up and use, too heavy to carry around, and not effective even when used. For urban combat where troops have to be as light, mobile, and agile as possible, the Javelin is absolutely worthless with its large CLU interface and overly-bulky design. The Pentagon has clearly seen the failure of the over-hyped system.

-In another sudden and unexpected report, the Pentagon now wants to scrap DOZENS of F-22's.

<https://www.rt.com/news/552870-pentagon-budget-f-22-jets-boneyard/>

They have suddenly decided they want to 'divert funding' to the next generation platform. There is clearly connection here to something the Pentagon has witnessed in Ukraine that has left it scrambling to rethink its approach to modern warfare. You see all proxy wars are laboratories for Great Powers to test and assess their equipment. The F-22 was the flagship of the U.S. airforce, the ONLY plane forbidden by Congress to sell to any ally even in 'export version'. The F-35 was meant for the export market while F-22 was supposed to be solely the unique and unmatched great hope and pinnacle of American engineering that would lead to victories in future wars. But it seems now that the Pentagon has had a taste of what modern Russian air defenses / radars are capable in Ukraine and is no longer confident of the F-22's chances. It has suddenly scrambled to desperately dump the F-22 and prepare for the "next generation" platform titled the 'Next Generation Air Dominance' project, which would consist of heavily utilizing integrated drone warfare and possible drone swarms controlled by the pilot. This appears to indicate the U.S. sees no other way to defeat Russian air defenses and airpower in general apart from massive over-utilization of



integrated drone saturation – it can no longer count on F-22’s after seeing how Russia has completely nullified the Ukrainian air and anti-air capabilities, which by the way were orders of magnitude greater than the capabilities of the Serbians in the 90’s who humiliated the U.S. air force several times.

-Also, following Lugansk Head Paschenik’s statements earlier, that a referendum would be conducted for Lugansk to officially join the RF, the head of DPR Pushilin today has also issued statements saying that the DPR will hold a referendum to officially join the Russian Federation but only after the conflict has ended. Either way, it is big news for LPR/DPR to look forward to after cessation of hostilities. If successful, this would add another massive 3.8 million population injection into the RF which, added to Crimea, would bring RF’s total population in the range of 148,000,000. Keep in mind, prior to the events of 2014, RF’s population was 143 million.

-Lastly, many people have been asking why Russia isn’t crippling Ukrainian internet capabilities. Today’s report claims massive Russian cyber attack has brought Ukraine internet connectivity to a mere 13% nationwide.

<https://www.zerohedge.com/technology/internet-provider-ukraines-military-hit-most-severe-cyberattack-invasion>

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