

Is President Zelensky right?

The reality on the ground says no



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Last week, Ukrainian president Zelensky assured us that Russia has a “strategic defeat” on his hands. Corporate Western media keeps hammering upon Russian efforts in Ukraine, saying that they are desperate and losing ground and hope. Western commentators often say that this conflict in Ukraine revealed the impotence of the Russian military in its ability to deliver victory to the Russian state. Yet are these assumptions true? Let’s look at three theaters in Ukraine to answer this question.

First, insofar as the territory of Kherson and Zaporozhye, the regions Russia captured above Crimea, goes, we can see the level of confidence Russia has in keeping those territories. Russia is already turning them into de facto Russian territories by the introduction of Russian goods, services, and utilities, while making haste in formalizing their legal integration into the Russian federal state. The Ruble is also becoming the official currency in those territories, and they are depending upon supplies from Russia to advance their lives.

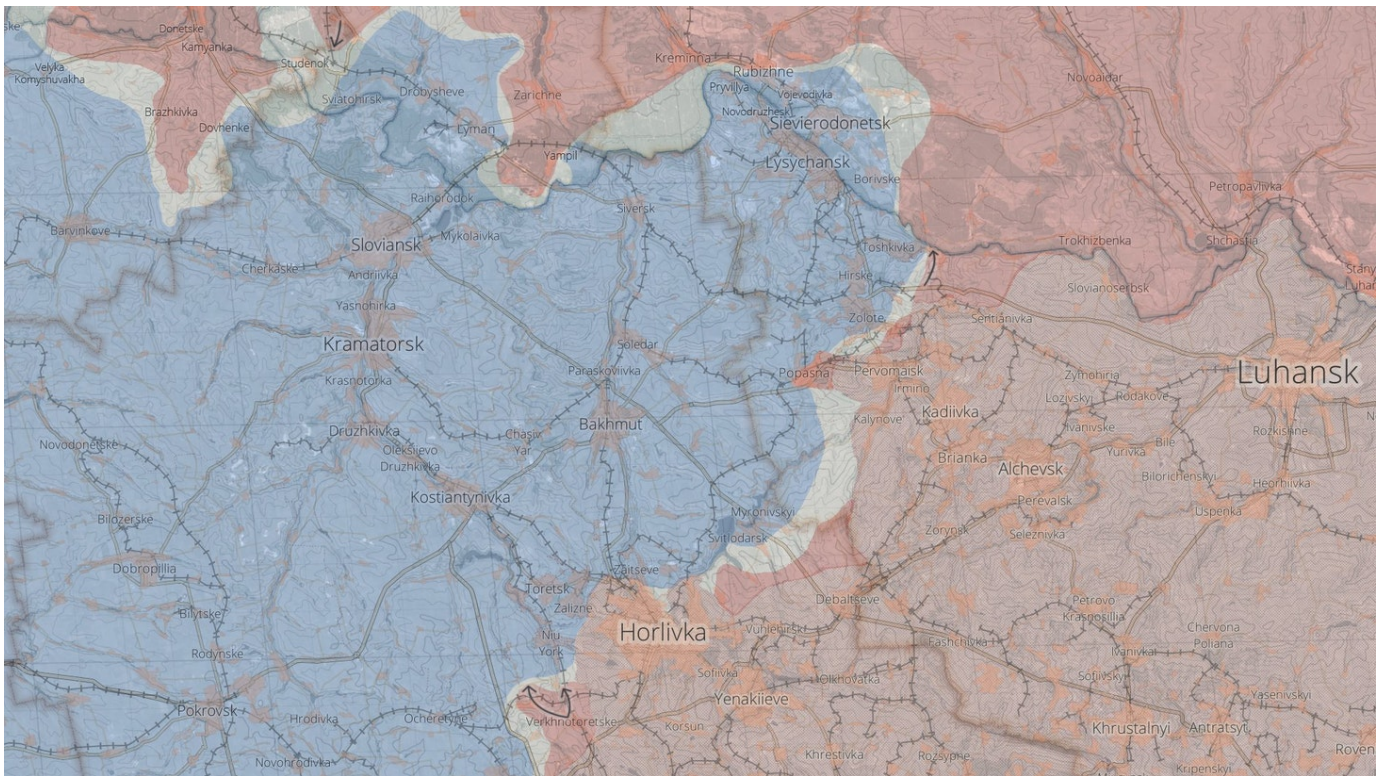
On the battlefield, on the border areas of these territories between the frontlines of Russia and Ukraine, we can also see that those lines haven’t changed for a relatively long time. The Ukrainian brigades available for attack have also been heavily degraded, having lost significant firepower from Russian bombardment and attack, while depending upon unprepared conscripts to fill their depleted ranks. In the relatively open and flat area, advancing Ukrainian troops would face sure destruction after being detected and targeted by Russian artillery.

In Kharkov, corporate Western commentators announced that Russia suffered defeats in the rural areas north of the city. What kind of defeats do they mean? Do they mean lost troops? Do they mean that this prevents a Russian advance in the future? Do they mean that Ukrainian troops are threatening Russian objectives there?

First of all, Russian troops had withdrawn from the territory at least a day or two before Ukrainian troops ever got to that territory, so it's impossible that Russia suffered any losses from fighting there that never occurred. Another aspect is that as Ukrainian troops are extended past the urban areas of the city, they become vulnerable to Russian bombardment, and attack, so the position of Ukraine becomes more precarious there. If Ukrainian troops attack territory within the Russian federation, furthermore, the Russian public will be more likely to clamor for mobilization of conscripts and trained reservists, which would subject the Ukrainian armies to the full overwhelming blunt of the Russian people at war. Thus Ukraine would lose the only advantage they have now, which is their advantage in numbers.

When we look at the significance of the Donbass, the picture also becomes much clearer. With full support and direction of NATO, Ukraine has had some of the strongest veterans and fortifications in all of Europe dedicated to battle with Russians there. If they lose those areas, therefore, that would represent an enormous defeat not only to the regime in Kyiv, but also to the preparations of NATO as well. When we consider the activities around the collection of NATO-Kyiv strongpoints in the region, we can see how even in this most heavily militarized and fortified area that Russia is making sure advances, threatening the strongest point in Ukrainian strategy.

Russian troops are already on the northern border of urban agglomerations there, and they are also having success in breaking through hard points and encircling Ukrainian troops on the fortified southern frontlines in the Donbass. Russian troops are seizing hills and road junctions and are opening the territory up for penetration from many Russian reinforcement units. They are able to cut off lines of retreat, bombard enemies from the rear, turn more areas into fire zones, as well as close the nooses upon the Ukrainian frontlines.

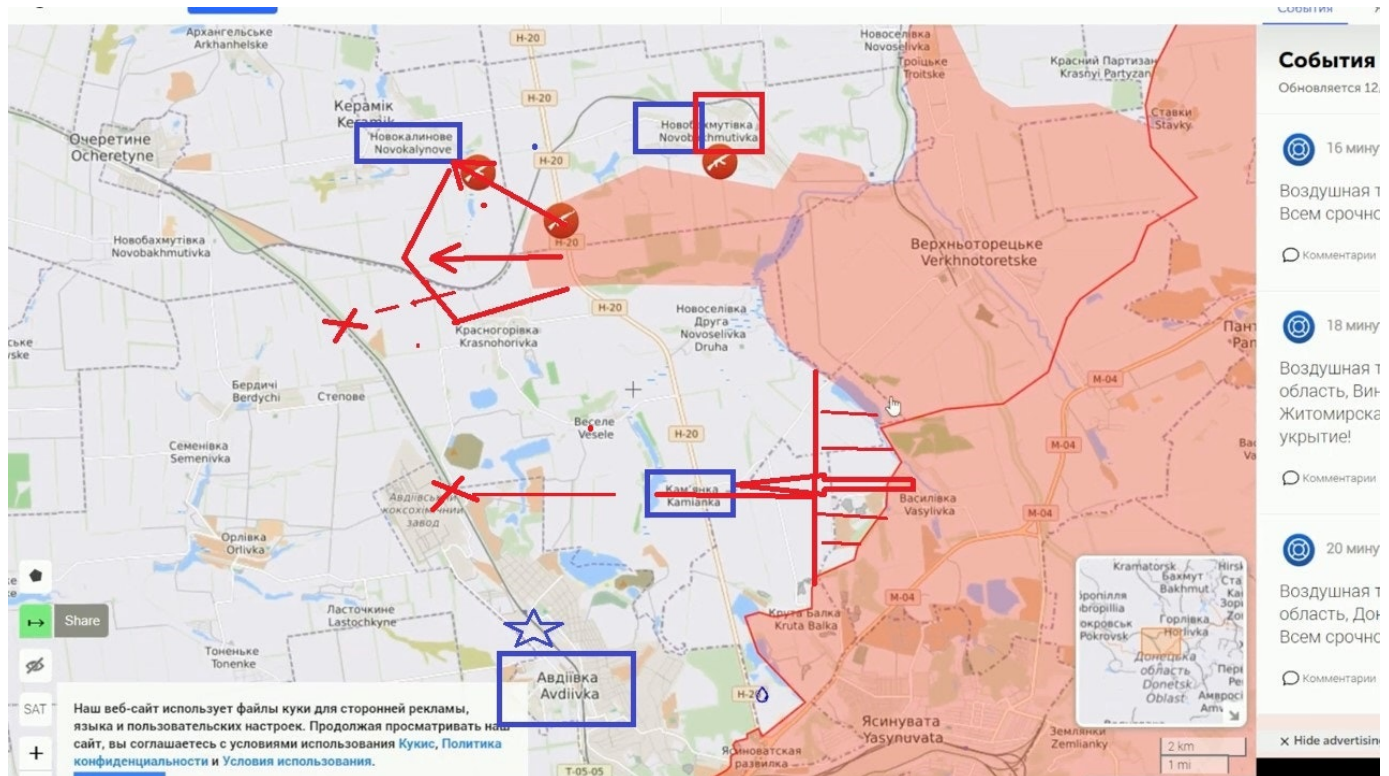


The map above shows the frontlines as of last week. You can see how Russia is right next to urban areas in the north. Russia is also starting to penetrate the southern fortified frontline, as can be seen in maps below. Capture of Siversk, Soledar, and Bakhmut would significantly slice Ukraine.

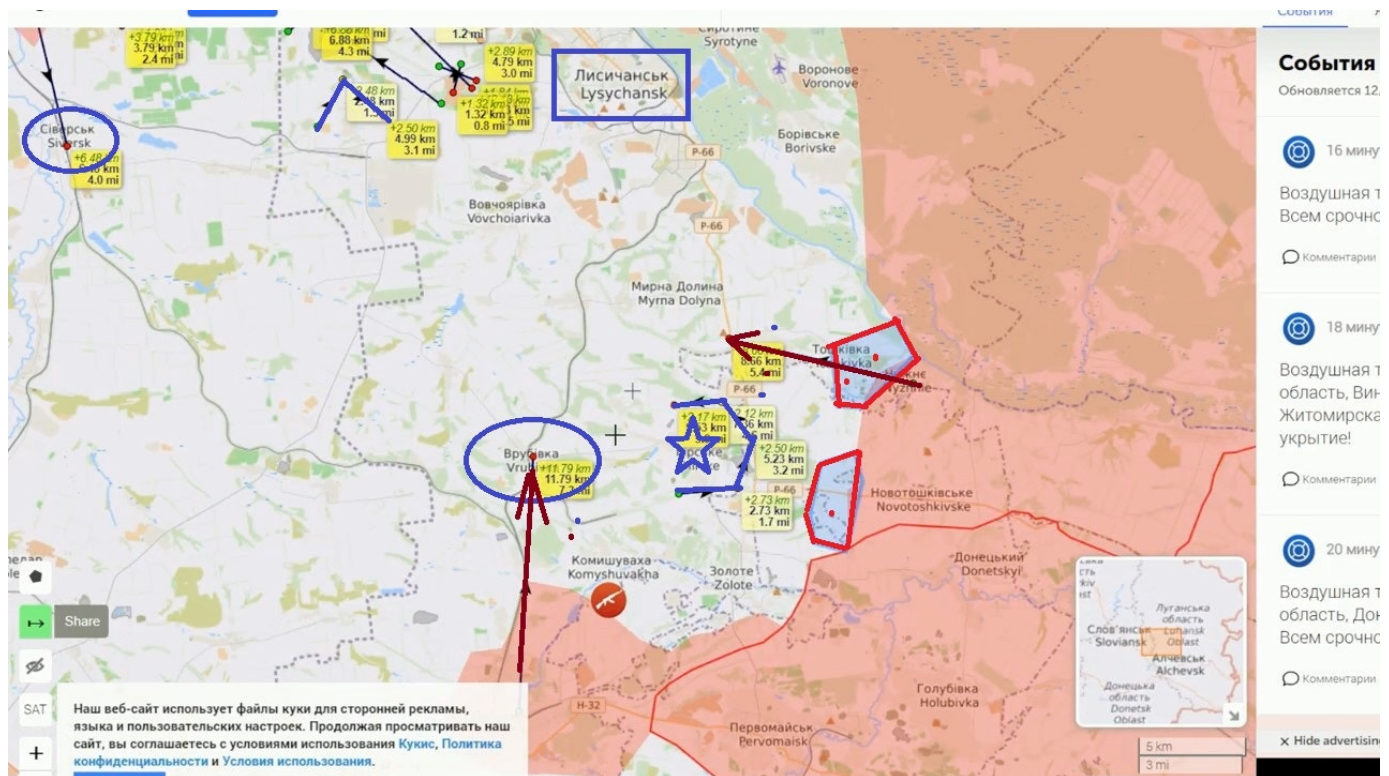
Not to mention on a general matter of principle, as Ukraine loses more and more territory and troops, that frees up more Russian units to assist other Russian units elsewhere and takes Ukrainian territory and troops away from their workload and focus. As Ukraine is defeated in the Donbass, Russian troops on the Donbass frontlines will be able to support their brother units in Kharkov, Zaporozhye, and Nikolayev, or start an invasion of Dnipro. Thus success for Russia in the Donbass creates opportunities for Russia all over Ukrainian held territory.



Russia gains about a village a day in their operations in the Donbass. This map shows how, as Russian gains accelerate with Ukrainian losses, how the noose will tighten.



The above graphics show how Russia is cutting off Ukrainian hard points from supplies and reinforcements, also bypassing the frontlines to allow penetration into Ukrainian held territory.



Russia is already starting to make the Ukrainian position in the Severodonetsk metroplex untenable.

As we can see, if we evaluate Zelensky's statement that Russia has suffered a strategic defeat in Ukraine, that when we look at the realities on the ground, we can see something significantly otherwise. We can see how Ukrainian troops didn't destroy anyone around Kharkov and in fact made themselves more vulnerable to Russian attack. We can see how Ukraine can't make any significant stands in southern Ukraine. And we can see how Russia is pushing towards a likely defeat of the Ukrainian hard point in the Donbass, creating whole new fronts of vulnerability for Ukraine. How could these represent anything other than a strategic defeat for Ukraine instead?

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