



And must have whiskey
Oh, you know why

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December 05, 2023

The War In Ukraine Is Done

The *Washington Post* has produced a long, two part piece, about the failed 'counter-offensive' in Ukraine. It dispenses equal blame on the U.S. and British planning of the whole mess and the Ukrainian execution of it.

The bullet points from the first part:

[Miscalculations, divisions marked offensive planning by U.S., Ukraine \(archived\)](#)

Key elements that shaped the counteroffensive and the initial outcome include:

- Ukrainian, U.S. and British military officers held eight major tabletop war games to build a campaign plan. But Washington miscalculated the extent to which Ukraine's forces could be transformed into a Western-style fighting force in a short period — especially without giving Kyiv air power integral to modern militaries.
- U.S. and Ukrainian officials sharply disagreed at times over strategy, tactics and timing. The Pentagon wanted the assault to begin in mid-April to prevent Russia from continuing to strengthen its lines. The Ukrainians hesitated, insisting they weren't ready without additional weapons and training.
- U.S. military officials were confident that a mechanized frontal attack on Russian lines was feasible with the troops and weapons that Ukraine had. The simulations concluded that Kyiv's forces, in the best case, could reach the Sea of Azov and cut off Russian troops in the south in 60 to 90 days.
- The United States advocated a focused assault along that southern axis, but Ukraine's leadership believed its forces had to attack at three distinct points along the 600-mile front, southward toward both Melitopol and Berdyansk on the Sea of Azov and east toward the embattled city of Bakhmut.
- The U.S. intelligence community had a more downbeat view than the U.S. military, assessing that the offensive had only a 50-50 chance of success given the stout, multilayered defenses Russia had built up over the winter and spring.

- Many in Ukraine and the West underestimated Russia's ability to rebound from battlefield disasters and exploit its perennial strengths: manpower, mines and a willingness to sacrifice lives on a scale that few other countries can countenance.
- As the expected launch of the offensive approached, Ukrainian military officials feared they would suffer catastrophic losses — while American officials believed the toll would ultimately be higher without a decisive assault.

And from the second part:

[In Ukraine, a war of incremental gains as counteroffensive stalls \(archived\)](#)

Key findings from reporting on the campaign include:

- Seventy percent of troops in one of the brigades leading the counteroffensive, and equipped with the newest Western weapons, entered battle with no combat experience.
- Ukraine's setbacks on the battlefield led to rifts with the United States over how best to cut through deep Russian defenses.
- The commander of U.S. forces in Europe couldn't get in touch with Ukraine's top commander for weeks in the early part of the campaign amid tension over the American's second-guessing of battlefield decisions.
- Each side blamed the other for mistakes or miscalculations. U.S. military officials concluded that Ukraine had fallen short in basic military tactics, including the use of ground reconnaissance to understand the density of minefields. Ukrainian officials said the Americans didn't seem to comprehend how attack drones and other technology had transformed the battlefield.
- In all, Ukraine has retaken only about 200 square miles of territory, at a cost of thousands of dead and wounded and billions in Western military aid in 2023 alone.

All those points played a role.

My personal ones:

- Both, the Ukraine and its supporters, systematically underestimated Russian capabilities. (And still do.)
- Satellite reconnaissance showed Russian defense preparations on the level of the [Battle of Kursk](#). There the German Wehrmacht, after way too long preparations, failed to break the Russian lines. The unlearned lesson from 1943: When you see defense lines like these, try something else.
- Battle simulations and table top war games have a 'moral factor' input for each side. Setting your sides' factor to 10 and the enemy's factor to 0, as the U.S. and UK obviously did, will let you win every time - but has no relation to reality.
- Air support would not have helped. Russian air defenses are too strong to counter it.
- The decision to use barely trained, 'green' brigades without any fighting experience was a serious error.
- Not to use smoke grenades and, in general, means of deception, was not reasonable at all.
- To have half of the new troops, the more experienced part, fight Zelenski's already lost battle for Bakhmut, was a major political mistake.

All together made sure that the so called 'counter-offensive' never had a chance to take off. The bickering now is just an attempt to put the blame for the failure onto the other side of the table.

The Ukrainian General Zaluzny has learned from the battle. He now puts up somewhat realistic numbers to let the U.S. understand how small its chances to win really are:

[Commander-in-Chief Zaluzhnyi asked Pentagon chief for 17 million rounds of ammunition](#)

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin was informed during a visit to Kyiv that Ukraine needed 17 million rounds of ammunition and that US\$ 350-400 billion worth of assets and personnel would be required to liberate the country.

...

Quote from a senior Defence Forces official: "Austin was told 17 million rounds of ammunition were needed. He was stunned, to put it mildly, because you wouldn't be able to collect that many rounds in the whole world."

The Ukrainian army does not have the ten thousands of barrels required to fire 17 million rounds. Nor has it the men to feed those imaginary guns.

Zaluzny obviously thinks that the war is lost and done with. And that it is time for politics that pursue peace:

In addition, according to a source, Austin also said Zaluzhnyi had complained privately to American generals about interference from the President's Office [...]: "Austin told us privately that Zaluzhnyi was always complaining to his generals about the President's Office and how it obstructed him. Well, obviously the president learned about those conversations too. And that isn't conducive to trust."

However, the President's Office is inclined to believe that Zaluzhnyi's dismissal would facilitate his political career.

It is high time for the Biden administration to wrap this whole thing up. Do the usual thing: declare victory, leave and forget-about-it.

Gilbert Doctorow muse about ways to do that:

[Seymour Hersh, Anatol Lieven and the desperate DC gambit to end hostilities in Ukraine while claiming 'victory'](#)

Whatever happens thereafter will be left for the footnotes.

Posted by b on December 5, 2023 at 7:09 UTC | [Permalink](#)

Comments

It figures... "their fault!"

Posted by: Newbie | Dec 5 2023 7:15 utc | [1](#)

Just 76 days ago Zelenski was meeting Wall Street's biggest shots to divide up the spoils.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met Wednesday evening in Manhattan with Wall Street CEOs and business power players to discuss efforts to rebuild his war-torn

country and its economy, a person familiar with the matter tells CNN.

The roundtable, convened by JPMorgan Chase, included former Google CEO Eric Schmidt, billionaire Mike Bloomberg, New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft, hedge fund billionaire Bill Ackman, former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and billionaire Barry Sternlicht, the source said.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2023/09/20/business/zelen-sky-wall-street-ukraine-discussion/index.html>

The bagholder search begins.

Posted by: too scents | Dec 5 2023 7:24 utc | [2](#)

I wonder what the Russians have in mind.

Posted by: Keith | Dec 5 2023 7:27 utc | [3](#)

What kind of moron would let an imbecile like Joe Biden lead them into war? And seeing the results, allow generations of your un- or at the very least under-trained citizens to be slaughtered by an obviously superior fighting force?

Posted by: jefe_sd | Dec 5 2023 7:30 utc | [4](#)

Imo Both sides started with mostly inexperienced troops. However, Russia had institutional memory of soviet tactics. Russia did a far better job of quickly bringing in new recruits, training them and rotating them into battle. Plus while they didn't start with much drone tech, they incorporated them into the battlefield in record time. I once worked on a program for the army, to design and build a contraption that would clean contaminated equipment of deadly toxins on the battlefield. What a boondoggle. We've got far too many generals to get anything done.

Posted by: John k | Dec 5 2023 7:33 utc | [5](#)

Regretfully the river of bodies and blood will keep flowing. Simply put the west is perceived as <<недоговорноспособный эгоист>> and as such only a full scale victory will be an acceptable outcome.

One can see this is only a deception to regroup and rearm, there is no sincere wish to sit down and talk.

If I can see this, so can much smarter and better informed people.

Until Ukraine capitulates there will be no seizure of hostilities.

On the Russian side there is no need for an offensive, to grab land or anything for that matter.

They have Europe in a headlock and are just waiting for the tap.

And it seems they can wait.

For how long?

The war of attrition will continue maybe even 2 years from now.

Someone needs to pay for all the dead and damage...I wonder what will the EU say when Russia gives them the bill.

Posted by: ForWhomTheBellTolls | Dec 5 2023 7:39 utc | [6](#)

This offensive was publicly discussed and trumpeted months in advance. Weird.

Drole de guerre.