

# SITREP 4/3/24: Zelensky Steps Closer to Mobilization Plunge Amid Dire Warnings



SIMPLICIUS THE THINKER

APR 04, 2024



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Things continue to feel like a calm before the approaching storm. There is not too much overt activity in the battle space, but various rumblings of a large looming escalation continue to trickle through the grape vine.

In a recent article I had mentioned how the Western press and elite commentariat for the first time began using the taboo 'C' word, i.e. "Collapse", for Ukraine. Now this has opened up the floodgates, causing more and more worried publications to begin turning off their previous holding-the-line narrative filter and actually start describing the Ukrainian situation with truthful urgency.

E.g.:

# POLITICO

ine Israel-Hamas war Farmers' protests Newsletters Podcasts Poll of Polls Policy news Events

## Ukraine is at great risk of its front lines collapsing

According to high-ranking Ukrainian officers, the military picture is grim and Russian generals could find success wherever they decide to focus their upcoming offensive.

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<https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-great-risk-front-line-collapse-war-russia/>

With grating teeth, the article opens by admitting that Musk may be onto something when he recently said that Ukraine would eventually lose everything east of the Dnieper River and even Odessa too, if it continued to fight.

But here's one of the key points of the article to enlarge on:

*Obviously, Zelenskyy's warnings are part of a broad diplomatic effort to free up the military aid his forces so desperately need and have been short of for months — everything from 155-millimeter artillery shells to Patriot air-defense systems and drones. But the sad truth is that even if the package is approved by the U.S. Congress, a massive resupply may not be enough to prevent a major battlefield upset.*

This is a central issue that the pro-UA pundits deliberately paper over. They keen and rage about the off-and-on funding attempts, mesmerically focusing on the big \$60B number as if to throw us off any inconvenient questions. But what, exactly, is that \$60B supposed to buy for Ukraine?

The U.S. has already emptied almost its entire store of usable surplus mainline weaponry for Ukraine, i.e. tanks, artillery, light armor—not counting things like ammo. As proof, even Ukraine's most ardent American supporters have admitted this in the past few days:

**david D.** ✓

@secretsqrl123

...

someone ask me if the aid bill passes in the US how long will it take to get the new weapons...

what new weapons???, here is what is in the bill.

the 2 nuclear subs hidden in it???

the aircraft???

the CH47s???

the US soldiers???

the 155mm ammo that is still being paid for with last years money???

the PSRMs???, blocked

the M1A2sep3s ??? they take 9 months to build

more bradleys???, we are out

US F-16s???, blocked

155mm guns???, we scrapped many

ukraine is getting NONE of that,

they may get some HMMWVs, some rifle ammo, more 155 ammo...

the US is not serious about helping ukraine, dont expect any more systems. just some ammo from the US. as it has been stated that the US is using this money for jobs before the election.. thats it.

8:11 AM · Mar 27, 2024 · 108.3K Views

**david D.** ✓

@secretsqrl123

6000 bradleys were built... in the 1980s...

they have been sold, scrapped, and used over the years...

we have whats left in active units, and being converted to the new AMVP... other than that we have 0 extra right now

8:32 AM · Mar 27, 2024 · 1,155 Views





david D.  @secretsqrl123 · Mar 27

they stopped producing them in 1991...  
the factory and company that made them are gone...

it would take billions to start production



What he's saying is that, even if the \$60B were to pass, U.S. has little of actual value to send to Ukraine beyond small arms munitions and things of that nature. There are no more surplus Bradleys left, and none can be built as the factory closed down decades ago.

Yet Ukraine hinges their entire future on this mythologized support as if it's some kind of instant videogame-like upgrade, a "power-up" that will immediately re-energize and supercharge the AFU—this is simply not the case.

It appears, instead, that Zelensky merely wants this aid package as a morale boost to continue buying more time for himself and his army, staving off collapse. The aid would obviously signal U.S. support being back on the table, rather than totally sloughing off as has been the case, optically.

The Politico piece goes on:

*And according to high-ranking Ukrainian military officers who served under General Valery Zaluzhny — the commander-in-chief of Ukraine's armed forces until he was replaced in February — **the military picture is grim.***

***The officers said there's a great risk of the front lines collapsing wherever Russian generals decide to focus their offensive.** Moreover, thanks to a much greater weight in numbers and the guided aerial bombs that have been smashing Ukrainian positions for weeks now, **Russia will likely be able to "penetrate the front line and to crash it in some parts," they said.***

*They spoke on the condition of anonymity to speak freely.*

*“There’s nothing that can help Ukraine now because there are no serious technologies able to compensate Ukraine for the large mass of troops Russia is likely to hurl at us. We don’t have those technologies, and the West doesn’t have them as well in sufficient numbers,” one of the top-ranking military sources told POLITICO.*

Read the highlighted parts very carefully, particularly the last paragraph. High-ranking military officers secretly told Politico under anonymity that: “There’s nothing that can help Ukraine...the West doesn’t have the technologies in sufficient numbers.”

This comes back precisely to my point above about the big glamorized \$60B “salvation” fund.

Read my lips, it’s quite simple: Ukraine has literally no chance whatsoever to do anything militarily in this war anymore. Ukraine and Zelensky’s only shot at survival is to push Russia into a confrontation with NATO. They are desperately *attempting* to do this each day by launching mass terror attacks all over Russia.

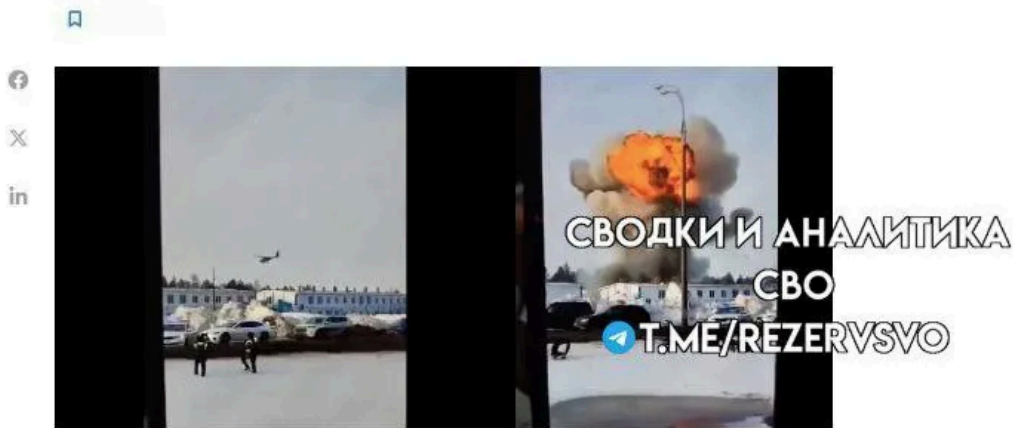
The latest occurred yesterday on Yelabuga, where Ukraine literally crashed a giant Cessna-like plane into a dormitory full of students that they claimed was a drone factory:



David Axe Forbes Staff

I write about ships, planes, tanks, drones, missiles and satellites.

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The problem is, not only is it obvious from the videos and photos that this is a dormitory:

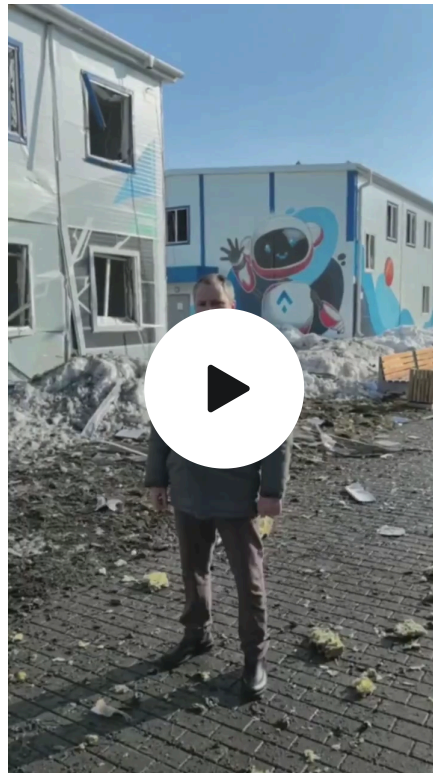


But it was in fact a dormitory for exchange students, one of which can even be seen speaking out on the incident here:

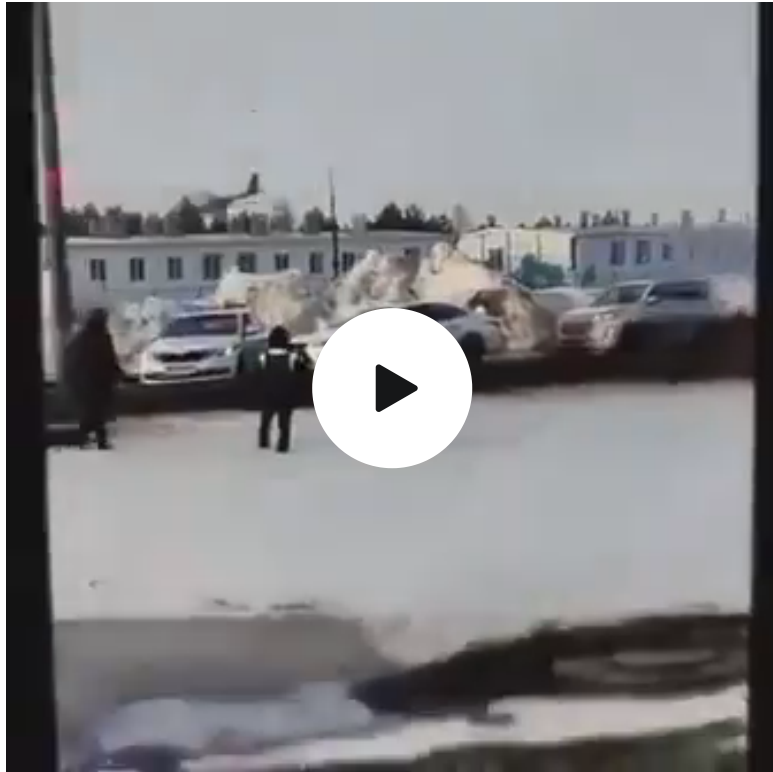




Does this look like a drone factory?



While Russia is crushing the Ukrainian Armed Forces' combat potential on the actual battlefield, desperate Zelensky is hiring "ISIS" to massacre Russian civilians, attacking Belgorod highrises with drones and artillery, and is literally loading up Cessnas with bombs and flying them into buildings with African exchange students—that's the stage his putrid terrorist regime is now at.



Here's a recent overt and clearly deliberate hit on a Belgorod apartment complex:



As I said before, he knows he can't even put a dent in Russia's military so he has to go "all in" on hybrid terror warfare in order to cause Russia to lose its footing, over-react in some uncharacteristic way that can draw NATO into the conflict. This is why it's best for Russia to continue ignoring these attacks while methodically prosecuting the

battlefield operation. And by the way, in his new address, Shoigu stated that since the Crocus Mall massacre, 16,000 new Russian recruits signed up the very next day to enlist in the army. That's on *top* of the normal 30k now enlisting monthly, making a total of over 100k so far for 2024.

As a side note, remember when that 30k monthly figure was widely sneered at and jeered by the West? Now they openly admit it, as per usual:

**BUSINESS INSIDER**

MILITARY &amp; DEFENSE

## Russia is recruiting 30,000 new soldiers a month, enough to replace the ones thrown into the meat grinder in Ukraine, war analysts say

[Sonam Sheth](#) Jan 16, 2024, 6:42 PM UTC+1[Share](#)[Save](#)

Russians conscripted as part of the mobilization in Rostov on October 31, 2022.

Arkady Budnitsky/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images

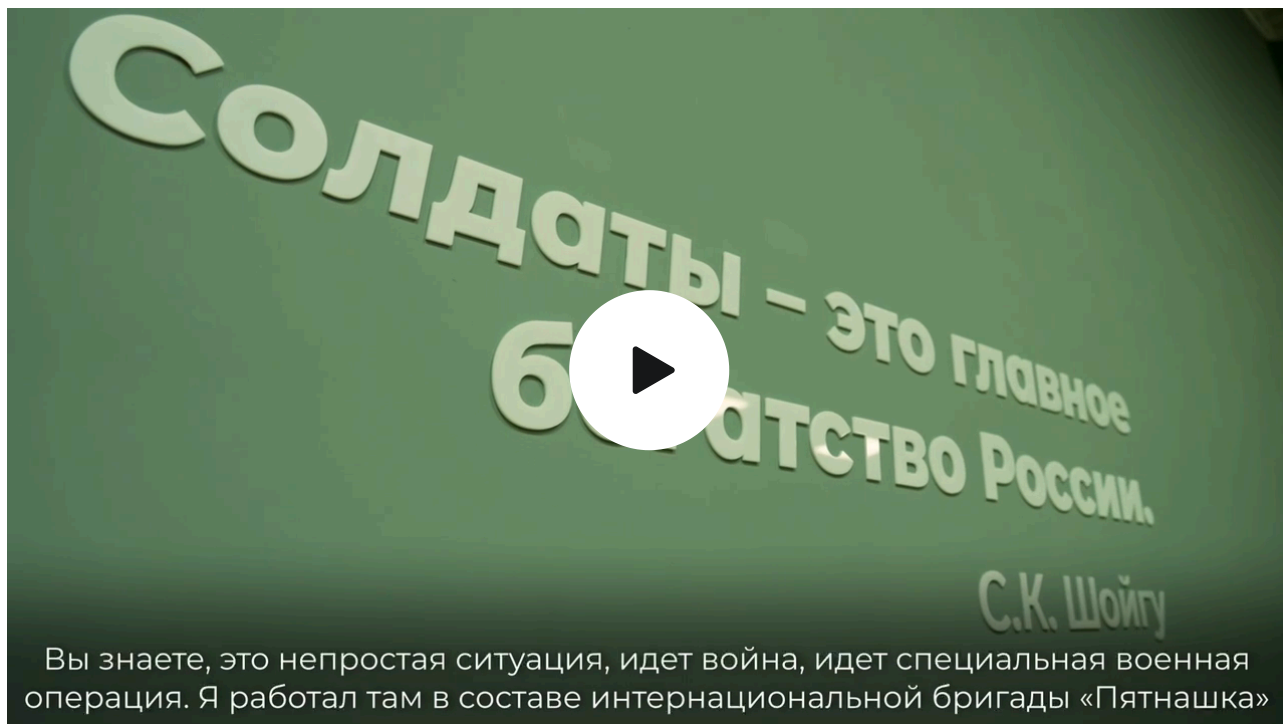


## INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

- Russian forces have maintained a gradual advance west of Avdiivka. In late March 2024 they almost certainly took control of two villages – Tonenke and Orlivka – and are continuing to contest others in the area. Russia has continued attacks along several other points on the frontline but has made little progress in recent weeks.
- Russia maintains a significant quantitative advantage in the conflict, overmatching Ukraine in munitions and equipment numbers. It is likely recruiting approximately 30,000 additional personnel a month and can highly likely continue to absorb losses and continue attacks aimed at wearing down Ukrainian forces.

Russian MOD [even released a video](#) showing the recruits lining up in offices across the country. In fact, an American was amongst them:





*"We must support Russia": an American signed a military service contract at the Patriot Center in Khanty-Mansiysk.*

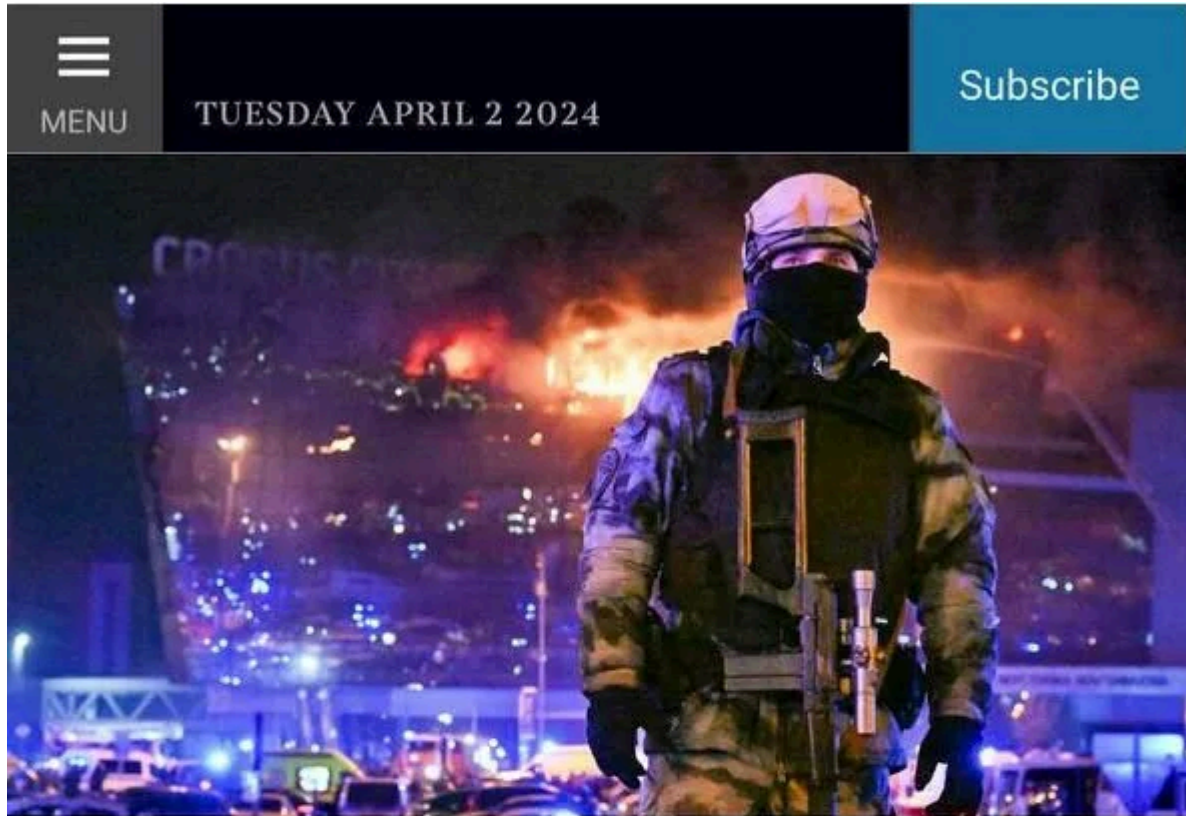
*The man with call sign "Will" served in the US Armed Forces, but, having realized what was really going on in Ukraine, he came to the special military operation as a volunteer several months ago. Together with Russian guys, shoulder to shoulder, he participated in the liberation of Avdeevka.*

*Will's comrades - military personnel from Pyt-Yakh (Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Region) and a volunteer from Serbia, who also went to the special military operation through Yugra - convinced the man that it was better to sign a contract for service in the RF Armed Forces in Khanty-Mansiysk by their own personal examples.*

*Their logic was as follows: a payment of 745k rubles on the spot and of 150k rubles bimonthly, full equipment provided on the spot, and a supply of everything necessary while in service.*

*In this video, Will the American signs a contract at the Center of Russian Patriots in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Region.*

Ukraine is doing everything in its power to destabilize Russia by stirring discontent within it—even Western rags now admit to the recent rash of ethnic tension being provoked by Ukrainian services:



WAR IN UKRAINE

## Ukraine stokes anti-immigrant tensions in Russia

Agents are conducting 'psyops' after the Crocus City Hall terrorist attack to destabilise Russian society

But back to the Politico article, it has one last meaningful observation:

*"Zaluzhny used to call it 'the War of One Chance,'" one of the officers said. "By that, he meant weapons systems become redundant very quickly because they're quickly countered by the Russians. For example, we used Storm Shadow and SCALP cruise missiles [supplied by Britain and France] successfully — but just for a short time. The Russians are always studying. They don't give us a second chance. And they're successful in this."*

*"Don't believe the hype about them just throwing troops into the meat grinder to be slaughtered," he added. "They do that too, of course — maximizing even more the impact of their superior numbers — but they also learn and refine."*

How's that for a hell of an admission?

“We don't only have a military crisis — we have a political one,” one of the officers said. While Ukraine shies away from a big draft, “Russia is now gathering resources and will be ready to launch a big attack around August, and maybe sooner.”

So, Musk may not be too wide of the mark after all.

On that note, the extreme urgency continues to be dialed up in the West. It truly feels like they ‘know’ something we don't about Ukraine's real condition: everyone seems to expect Ukraine to collapse at the slightest next Russian push:



The above article starts off with an even grimmer portrait:

*There is a growing understanding across the Western allies that Ukraine is losing the ground war against Russia, and by summer could face defeat.*

*Russia is pounding front lines with artillery, rocket and drone fire — and at over five times the rate the Ukrainian army can reply. Volodymyr Zelensky's troops are exhausted — after sustaining in some sectors a heavier concentration of incoming artillery than at the Somme in 1916, or the Normandy Bocage after D-Day in 1944.*

It goes on to sketch the dire situation of the West's own armaments:

*The Western response has been patchy to the prospect of a Russian breakthrough within weeks. Artillery stocks, even for their own arsenals in the cases of Britain, Germany and the US, will not be replenished fully for another two years. Germany has increased defence spending but refuses to send game-changing weapons like the Taurus missile.*

Interestingly, ignoring their laughably fake Russian numbers, they appear to make quite an admission on Ukraine's losses:

*Already he (Putin) has lost 405,000 in two years of combat, and with 1.3 million committed to the war — with the prospect of calling up a further 1.5 million by 2027. **Ukraine has lost about 385,000.***

It ends on a fatalistic note:

Sadly, the omens from Ukraine suggest that may be too late. We must realise now that the fate of Ukraine now governs the security of the Western world.

*Robert Fox is the Evening Standard's Defence Editor*

If that wasn't enough doom-and-gloom for you, and if you're still thinking: "Well, those are flukes, maybe the rest of the commentariat isn't quite so pessimistic..." I present you the veritable magnum opus of this week's panicked squalls:





IAIN MARTIN

# It's time we talked about the fall of Kyiv

• NEW

Far from this being a frozen conflict, a nightmare scenario is edging into view because the West is failing to send arms

Iain Martin | Wednesday March 27 2024, 9.00pm GMT, The Times

<https://archive.is/uVjQr>

***“A nightmare scenario is edging into view.”*** Interesting!

The article begins with a dress rehearsal for what the author envisions happening:

*It is July and the Russian army is at the gates of Kyiv. President Zelensky delivers an emergency broadcast to repeat his defiant words, first uttered in February 2022, that he does not need a ride out of Ukraine. No, he needs ammunition to stay and fight the Russians.*

*If only the West had listened and done more when the brave Ukrainians were pleading for help, that might have made the difference. While the allies squabbled and the United States eventually provided another \$60 billion in aid, **as spring turned to summer, Putin's troops broke through the lines in the south and east. Retreating Ukrainian forces were able only to slow the advance. When the Russians closed in on the capital, a new wave of refugees fled Ukraine seeking safety from incessant bombardment.***

My, my, how times have changed. We went from “Russia is doomed” to “It’s a stalemate” to ...*this*, in only a matter of months.

But this isn’t some far-flung crisis vision of the author’s, no he claims this is what serious Western policymakers are now discussing:

*This is the nightmare scenario now being contemplated by western policymakers. **Events are forcing military and civilian leaders in London, Washington, Paris and Brussels to map out the catastrophic collapse of Ukrainian forces denied the weapons and munitions they need.***

Woah.

Macron’s desperate bid to jumpstart NATO members out of their stupor into cautioning Putin from advancing now makes *much* more sense, in light of these new revelations of what the West is secretly discussing behind closed doors vis-a-vis Ukraine’s chances.



WSJ



French President Emmanuel Macron last week in São Paulo, Brazil. ALOISIO MAURICIO/ZUMA PRESS

## France's Macron Tries to Jolt Europe Into Taking Tougher Approach With Putin

## Politics

# Macron Wants to Run Europe's Foreign Policy. Not Everyone Agrees

- The French president has become a leading voice on Ukraine
- His hawkish approach has riled some allies who pledge more aid

The author even echoes my words, writing that 'contrary to the predominant view that this is a perpetual frozen conflict' Ukraine, in actuality, faces a real risk of being driven back. He goes on to absurdly mention there could still be a slight glimmer of hope, that perhaps Putin might be 'overthrown' by a coup. Do these midwits even follow Russian news or know anything of Russian society? Both Russia's elite, political class, and citizenry have never before been as united as they are now. There is zero chance of any hoped-for "coup"—this is children's talk.

Zelensky corroborates all of the above:



## Opinion | Zelensky: ‘We are trying to find some way not to retreat’



By David Ignatius  
Columnist | + Follow

March 29, 2024 at 1:53 p.m. EDT



<https://archive.is/2mrea>

In the above WaPo piece, he admits that Russian forces could soon break through to “the big cities”:

To describe the military situation, Zelensky took a sheet of paper and drew a simple diagram of the combat zone. “If you need 8,000 rounds a day to defend the front line, but you only have, for example, 2,000 rounds, you have to do less,” he explained. “How? Of course, to go back. Make the front line shorter. If it breaks, the Russians could go to the big cities.”

Zelensky offers this curious gem in describing Putin:

*Zelensky offered a chilling characterization of his adversary. “Putin is cunning, but he’s not smart,” he said. “When you fight with a smart person, it’s a fight with rules. But when you fight with a cunning person, it’s always dangerous.”*

So what is it, in particular, that’s got them so terrified lately? Mostly it seems twofold: Russia’s increasingly heavy hand in attacking Ukraine’s power grid, as well as the rumors of a mass spring-summer assault:



David Axe Forbes Staff

*I write about ships, planes, tanks, drones, missiles and satellites.*

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Mar 25, 2024, 07:04pm EDT



A Russian air force Sukhoi Su-34 drops a bomb. RUSSIAN AIR FORCE CAPTURE

**Michael McFaul** ✓

@McFaul

**Follow**

This is shocking. If Russia attacks Ukrainian energy targets, then Ukraine must attack Russian energy targets.

**K The Kyiv Independent** ✓ @KyivIndep... · 4h

⚡ 80% of DTEK's energy capacity damaged, destroyed after Russian March attacks.

In March, Russian attacks damaged or completely destroyed 80% of the thermal gene...

## POLITICO

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# ‘Give us the damn Patriots’ — Ukraine needs air defenses now, minister says

In a POLITICO interview, Ukraine's chief diplomat Dmytro Kuleba delivers some blunt messages to Kyiv's allies.

# Russia is gearing up for a big new push along a long front line

Ukraine must prepare



<https://archive.is/XWOzX>

I remember in the early days of this blog, one of the most common and constant questions was: “Do you think time is on Russia or the West’s side?” The sentiment from many of the doubters, doomers, or concern-trolls was that time was against Russia, as NATO would only grow stronger, produce more, Ukraine would gather far more men because these commenters didn’t believe Russia’s claims of Ukrainian casualties.

I ask you: What do you think now? Still believe time is on NATO and Ukraine’s side?

It sure doesn’t seem like it these days. I say this as preface to the fact that Russia is slowly taking its time, continuing to build its armaments and potential, and very gradually closing the constrictor squeeze on Ukraine from all sides. Recent rumblings indicate that Ukraine is unable to determine where Russia could choose to strike a more major line-breaking assault due to the nature of Russia’s air strikes not



being limited to one particular theater, but destroying Ukraine's infrastructure in a widespread fashion.

Rezident UA:

*MI6 transmitted information to the Presidential Office and the General Staff that the Russian Army had accumulated a large number of Missiles/Lancets/Shaheds and Aerial Bombs for the summer counteroffensive. British intelligence assumes that the Kremlin wants to organize a demonstrative mass attack on several sectors of the front in order to destroy as many Ukrainian military personnel as possible. The main goal of such an attack will be a psychological factor in order to demonstrate the full potential of the Russian army and break the comparison with the Armed Forces of Ukraine.*

This plays into new rumors of the Russian Svatovo-Kremennaya front being re-activated to other rumors about Chasov Yar being next for major assault. My point is to highlight the fact that Russia is playing with Ukraine's sense of uncertainty, and can choose to strike either in Kupyansk or Bakhmut or Zaporozhye, and Ukraine will not be prepared.

We've outlined in previous reports how Russia uses its far superior logistical mobility means to constantly hit Ukraine on different axes via the 'death by a thousand cuts' strategy, and Ukraine is unable to shift its defenses and reserves fast enough. New reports underline this, for instance:



**Big Serge** 🇺🇸🇷🇺🇧🇪 @witte\_sergei · 2h

Ukraine is reclassifying mechanized brigades as infantry formations due to the lack of vehicles.



**Fennec\_Radar** @RadarFennec · 2h

Not enough BMPs, Bradleys, Marders, or CV90s left to equip the orbat.

As @witte\_sergei noted. Armies tend to break due to equipment shortages well before manpower shortages.

## News 153rd Mechanized Brigade is no longer mechanized

Jerome – April 3, 2024



The lack of vehicles forced Ukrainian command to back down from the original plans.

The leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine has reorganized the 153rd Mechanized Brigade into an infantry brigade. This change was announced through the official social media channels of the brigade.

While the official reason behind the change remains undisclosed, it is presumably linked to the shortage of infantry fighting vehicles. The problem arose already prior to the formation of 150ish mechanized brigades, it's not new. Western partners are no longer supplying an adequate quantity of equipment to replenish existing mechanized brigades and form new ones. The remaining "free" mechanized equipment is now being allocated to motivated units, who proved themselves in the fight. One such example is the recently formed 100th Mechanized Brigade we wrote about a few days ago.

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MAPS |



Deployment map

- Today

Ukraine's "mechanized" brigades are literally being downgraded to foot soldier meat hordes due to lack of vehicles.

Russia made recent progress in the areas west of Bakhmut and are now preparing to launch the assault on Chasov Yar.

From a Russian army affiliated channel:

*Russian forces ready to begin seminal Chasov Yar assault: "Our maps for Chasov Yar have already been drawn, roles have been assigned, executors have been appointed. Everything is ready, as soon as the bridgehead on the Canal is ready - we will start."*

Sputnik covers why this town is critical:

# Why Chasov Yar's Liberation is Critical to Oust Ukrainian Military From Donbass

Yesterday

<https://sputnikglobe.com/20240402/why-chasov-yars-liberation-is-critical-to-oust-ukrainian-military-from-donbass-1117702808.html>

”

"The one who controls Chasov Yar receives a very serious advantage in the entire surrounding area," Poletaev told Sputnik. "And, accordingly, it's quite difficult to take it. It is a defense hub. Whoever controls it actually controls everything – the entire defense in the northern part of the DPR."

In short, they explain that Chasov Yar is a key railway hub and sits on a hill overlooking the entire AFU defense agglomeration of the region, which previously included Bakhmut, but now is centered on Kramatorsk-Slavyansk-Konstantinovka.

In the meantime, there are increasing 'whispers' of the eventual total evacuation of Kharkov city. Not only due to the electricity problems after Russia's hits on the region's power plant, but in anticipation of a new potential front being opened from the north.

Road leaving Kharkov:



*Exodus of the population from Kharkov. After statements by the local administration that the entire infrastructure in the city was destroyed, constant problems with electricity the exodus of the population began from the city. The regular bombings by the Russian Air Force and rumors that fighting is about to begin here certainly added to the situation.*

And here top Ukrainian accounts mention the unthinkable, with city officials claiming there's no need to evacuate....yet:





OSINT (Uri)        
@UKikaski

...

### Is Ukrainian-controlled #Kharkiv in danger of changing hands?

Ukrainian media is reporting that as a result of relentless missile and FAB attacks over the past week or so, "All of the electrical infrastructure in Kharkiv is destroyed." They noted that 1.3 million people live in the city for which over 100,000 are homeless. Officials stated they see no reason to evacuate the city at this time.

"Russia started hitting the city with new ammunition - they travel a distance of up to 90 km. There have already been two such strikes in the last week. The Russians are also attacking with the S-300. Most often, as everyone knows, he flies from the Belgorod region," Mayor Ihor Terekhov said.

#OSINT #UkraineRussiaWar #UkraineWar #UkraineKrieg #Ukraine

And even as of this writing, there is a large ongoing attack on Kharkov, with videos pouring out of strikes landing in the already de-powered city.

—

With the situation as dire as it looks, there are reports that Zelensky has finally swallowed the bitter pill and pulled the trigger on the first main step of the long-feared mobilization bill to lower the age from 27 to 25:

CNN confirms:

## Zelensky signs law expanding draft age as Ukraine struggles to beef up its military

By Xiaofei Xu and Yulia Kesaieva, CNN

🕒 2 minute read · Published 4:06 PM EDT, Tue April 2, 2024

<https://edition.cnn.com/2024/04/02/europe/zelensky-signs-conscription-law-intl/index.html>

CNN —

*Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has signed a law that will lower the country's minimum conscription age from 27 to 25, potentially boosting the number of men available to fight Russia's invasion.*

However, it's not quite what it seems just yet:

*The law signed by Zelensky on Tuesday lowers the age they can be drafted to 25, but leaves the mobilization age at 27. However, the Ukrainian Parliament is also considering a bill that would reduce the mobilization age to 25.*

You see, this allows them to be drafted at 25, but not yet *mobilized* onto the actual frontline. The Rada will supposedly vote in April to lower the full mobilization age to 25 as well. Hence, this still means nothing quite yet.

It's unclear what if anything this will accomplish. Recall I had just posted a video of a top Ukrainian official stating that a reduction to 25 will do nothing, such is the depletion of Ukraine's forces; he said it needs to be lowered straight down to 19.

Zelensky himself refuses to divulge how many will be mobilized, blaming Russia for the need on the fake claim that Russia itself intends a huge new call-up in June:



Top Russian senators Kartapolov and Gurulev's responses to the above? "Cocaine's a helluva drug."



In one of the earlier articles, Zelensky said that he intends to mobilize more men in order to prepare another offensive for later this year. His reason was revealing: that if Ukraine doesn't attack first, Russia will do so.

His explanation gives away Ukraine's strategy. In 2023 Russia sat back and defended against Ukraine's large 'offensive', so here Zelensky appears to believe that if Ukraine can launch some semblance of another attack, it will delay or negate Russia's own mass offensive which everyone seems to be expecting for this year. This would be Ukraine's ploy to continue buying time for themselves: launch another futile, fruitless meat attack with massive losses, exchanging tens of thousands of lives for a few more borrowed months for Zelensky's illegitimate regime from going to the gallows.

—

One interesting take from 'American Spectator' is that Ukraine is planning for a big October surprise:

[Home](#) » [Hot off the Press](#) » [An 'October Surprise' From 'New' Ukraine Is Possible](#)

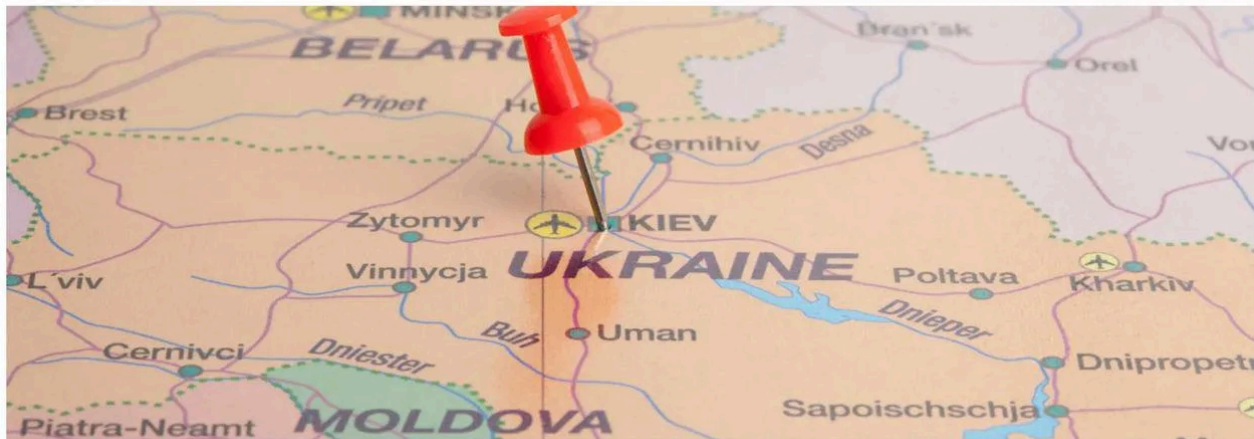
UKRAINE UNDER ASSAULT

# An 'October Surprise' From 'New' Ukraine Is Possible

*Ukraine could formally recognize the defacto partition of its eastern flank.*

by SAMIR TATA

March 3, 2024, 10:52 PM



<https://spectator.org/new-an-october-surprise-from-ukraine-is-possible/>

Their entire thesis is as follows:

*How does the Ukraine-Russia war end? In an October surprise. Ukraine, which became independent on 24 August 1991, will be dissolved and a New Ukraine will come into being by virtue of a unilateral declaration by the present Government of Ukraine, with the support of the military high command. The de jure boundaries of New Ukraine will reflect and be co-terminus with the territory currently under the de facto administrative control of the present Government of Ukraine. New Ukraine will be compact; cohesive and well-integrated politically, economically, and socially (i.e., ethnically, linguistically, and culturally); and will have demonstrably defensible borders. Accordingly, New Ukraine will have the strategic autonomy to decouple from Russia's sphere of influence without joining economic and military blocs such as the EU and NATO.*

It's certainly an interesting direction, supported by some evidence, like recent Western statements that point to Ukraine not being able to retake previous territories, and even the beginnings of discussions justifying or selling the idea that Donbass is really not Ukrainian after all.



Such a thing could be a last-ditch desperate offer from the West to Ukraine: give up all Russian-held territories, declare a new unified Ukraine, and we will dangle that NATO/EU carrot over you closer than ever.

Meanwhile, France's Le Figaro supports our own reporting here with Russia's ongoing death by a thousand cuts strategy:

March 17, 2024

LE FIGARO

The original

## Le Figaro: Russia drains Ukraine with a "bite" strategy

*The material is presented in the retelling of InoTV*

<https://russian.rt.com/inotv/2024-03-17/Le-Figaro-Rossiya-istoshhaet-Ukrainu>

*The Russian army has adopted a "bite" or "prick" strategy: it makes small attacks on several segments at once. Ukraine cannot hold on to the entire length of the front line, so such attacks exhaust it and bring Russia, albeit small, but results, writes Le Figaro.*

Further elaboration:

*"The Russians have regained the initiative. They are able to "torment" the opponent on the field. This is the technique of a thousand notches. The goal is to bleed the Ukrainians dry in order to weaken their reserves," the French military expert explains in an interview with a journalist. According to him, the Ukrainians can fight off breakout attempts in several places, but they will not be able to stay on a dozen fronts. At the same time, Russia is accumulating potential in order to take advantage of the opportunities that have opened up.*

They further admit what we've said all along, Ukraine's actions on the border are meant as nothing more than distractions:

*Ukraine does not have enough people and ammunition. Therefore, Kiev has to switch to "elastic defense". As a result, he makes symbolic actions, for example, invading Russian territory in the Kursk and Belgorod regions or launching Western-supplied missiles, but is unable to get a real strategic effect from this.*

And finally, their conclusion brings us full circle:

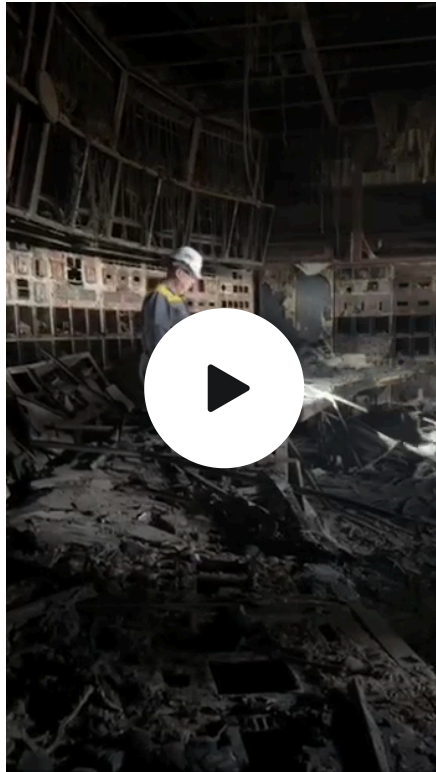
*The next few months still promise to be critical, the author of the article writes. "We cannot rule out a Russian offensive in the spring to force the Ukrainians to negotiate in a difficult position," warns expert Jerome Pellistrandi. **According to him, the Russians have learned their lessons, become more maneuverable and intensively use electronic warfare. Therefore, some of the equipment delivered last year from the West is now being neutralized by electronic interference.***



A couple last items:

Here's a quick before and after look at the Ladyzhenskaya thermal power plant control room, to give an idea the type of damage Russian attacks have done:





The first photo may be a stock one for illustrative purposes, but you get the idea; I don't think that's being repaired any time soon.

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As a last topic, I've been made aware that Andrei Martyanov has written [an entire piece](#) presumably 'debunking' my recent report which featured Colonel Falichev writing for the official Russian Army Digest. Martyanov's main gripe appears to revolve around the fact that he cannot locate any major credentials for Falichev, as Martyanov is a big stickler for proper military pedigree, as many of you know.

While I certainly don't begrudge him such thoroughness and demanding standards, I will simply note that nothing Falichev said was debunked but rather his military standing was merely called into question. This is not a response directly to Martyanov, of whom I am a fan though he appears to be less so one of me, but rather an answer to the few requests of my own audience I've gotten to make a response on the matter. I like for people to have their own minds and agency in making determinations, so the only things I'll say is that firstly, Falichev's piece was obviously published in the official Russian Army journal, hosted on their own official site:



And its editorial board is filled with a lot of top brass, which includes commander-in-chiefs of the entire Russian Ground Forces:

## EDITORIAL BOARD

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I would find it extremely puzzling that such a storied magazine edited by the literal **current ground forces commander** of the entire Russian Army would be so unprofessional as to host the rantings of some totally incompetent or uninformed person. One would think that would reflect quite badly on them if that was the case, no?

Secondly, though I don't hold Martyanov accountable for not seeing this as I doubt he's a paying subscriber here, but the previous issue of my own paywalled series



included a breakdown of a different Russian thinktank, wherein **General Baluyevsky** echoed much of the same concerns as Falichev, in his preface called *Algorithms of Fire and Steel*.

I don't think anyone can question Baluyevsky's credentials considering he was the literal Chief of the General Staff of the entire Russian armed forces, you know, the position Gerasimov currently holds:

5		Army General <b>Yuri Baluyevsky</b> (born 1947)	19 July 2004	3 June 2008	3 years, 320 days	 Russian Ground Forces
6		Army General <b>Nikolai Makarov</b> (born 1949)	3 June 2008	9 November 2012	4 years, 159 days	 Russian Ground Forces
7		Army General <b>Valery Gerasimov</b> (born 1955)	9 November 2012	<i>Incumbent</i>	11 years, 146 days	 Russian Ground Forces

In that **second report** of mine, I highlighted Baluyevsky's revelations of some critical deficiencies in the Russian forces, for instance:

Back to Baluyevsky: next he admits the critical weakness revealed by the SMO:

*According to him, Russian developers of artillery systems, unfortunately, remain in the role of catching up. There is a clear qualitative superiority of NATO artillery due to the transition to 155-mm guns with a barrel length of 52-caliber, and in the future, 58-60-caliber and the development of 155-mm shells of ultra-long range. The former Chief of the General Staff summarizes: the SVO has revealed a significant lag in domestic artillery and missile systems and requires a priority cardinal re-equipment in the coming years.*

Some people seem to believe the Russian Army is infallible and cannot possibly have weaknesses. But I doubt anyone can gainsay the Chief of General Staff himself, who has had a storied career and has attended every notable command school.

Baluyevsky goes on to make many more indictments, including one that directly clashes with Martyanov's claims of Russian omniscient ISR capabilities:

Getting back, Baluyevsky also complains about Russia's inability to suppress enemy air defenses systematically:

*According to Baluyevsky, the solution of the problem of countering the enemy's air defense forces and suppressing them should be systemic in nature. Key elements — systems of reconnaissance, opening and detection of air defense systems; special means of jamming and radio suppression of air defense; means of fire destruction; special aviation complexes of jamming and radio suppression; false targets; complexes of airborne defense of combat aircraft; special combat aircraft of suppression and destruction of air defense systems.*

*"All these elements," Baluyevsky notes, " must be built into a complex of a single control system and must undergo joint training and combat training in advance to implement the planned tasks."*

“Must be built into a complex of a single control system...”—this clearly implies Russia does not yet have such a system despite this being precisely what Martyanov champions as Russia's strongest suit, in his article. No offense to Martyanov, whom I do respect, but I think I'll take the Russian Chief of General Staff's word for it on this matter.

I just wanted to make that brief defense not only to honor requests of curious followers, but also to make sure my own research did not suffer any tarnish. I know Martyanov was not bashing me, but given his large following, sometimes critiques like those can paint an incomplete or even damaging picture. In this case, for instance, the takedown of Falichev could imply that I don't use good sources in my research—but you can clearly see the contrary is the case. Not only is the Russian Army journal I used a top source, its own Editor-in-Chief has an unassailably storied career, having graduated from three different top command schools:

**VLADLEN PRILUTSKY**

He was born on December 10, 1937 in the village of Khutorok in the Armavir district of the Krasnodar Territory in a family of employees.

In 1961 he graduated from the Higher Combined Arms Command School named after K. E. Voroshilov (Odessa). In 1970 he graduated from the Frunze Military Academy, and in 1980 from the Higher Academic Courses at the Military Academy of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces.

He served in the USSR Armed Forces in various command and staff positions. In 1991, he was dismissed from active military service with the rank of colonel upon reaching the age limit.

Since 1991, he continued to work in the Armed Forces of the USSR, and then in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation as a civil servant in the positions of senior researcher at the Center for Operational and Tactical Research of the Ground Forces, and then – Chief Engineer of the Military Scientific Committee of the Ground Forces. He was

engaged in the development of the theory of construction, improvement of the Ground Forces and their preparation for performing tasks for their intended purpose.

And even was an executive on the editorial board of another of Russia's most famous military journals, [Military Thought](#).

Lastly, the episode did open my eyes to one important fact: that I truly have the best possible audience here. Perusing the 'comments section' of Martyanov's article I was amused to find that many of my detractors fault me for being critical of Russia, or at best "neutral". That tells me one important thing: that many in this field unfortunately cultivate quite an echo-chamber in refusing to find any fault, limitations, or weaknesses in the Russian Army or its approach to war.

It made me quite pleased to realize that I've cultivated a large following of open-minded people who want the real truth 'with all its warts', and are not simply here to be coddled or massaged with feel-good bias confirmations. It merely reinforced my belief that this blog is truly the best place where you can get the real lowdown without skewed blindspots, wishful thinking, and the like.

So, I thank my audience for being what they are because it seems I had slightly taken that for granted in my assumption that other parallel audiences were similarly discerning of truth and accurate information rather than merely seeking belief reinforcement.

That being said, if you appreciate the impartially incisive work here, don't forget to become a paid subscriber or throw a few coins into my [Tip Jar](#) as it has been woefully neglected of late—though I heartily thank those who *have* been donating there, you know who you are.

*Your support is invaluable. If you enjoyed the read, I would greatly appreciate if you subscribed to a **monthly/yearly pledge** to support my work, so that I may continue providing you with detailed, incisive reports like this one.*

*Alternatively, you can tip here: [Tip Jar](#)*



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## 147 Comments



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Gerrard White 5 hrs ago

4 April 2024 Escalation? The F-16 in Ukraine : Pro and Con

NYT Still Trying The Brave Happy Face -<https://archive.ph/05FDd>

'Ukraine could deploy F-16s as soon as July, but only a few'

Of a total 45 promised some 6 may arrive in July, from Denmark, 13 this year, the remainder in 2025

But – Ukraine's runways need to be repaired 'this could further delay their entry into war'

"I don't think F-16s, to themselves, will be a game changer, due to the technical characteristics and number of F-16 teams that are coming," said Yevgeniya Gaber, a former Ukrainian diplomat and foreign policy adviser.

"But I think together with other ammo, and long-range missiles, they will be," said Ms. Gaber, now a professor at the George C. Marshall Center, a national security academy backed by the German and American governments.

The Realistic : Will Schryver -

<https://nitter.poast.org/imetatronink/status/1661059852897259521#m>

« Can F-16s Fly Combat Sorties Over Ukraine? »



— A discussion of some of the most relevant considerations —

It is effectively impossible to base F-16s in Ukraine. The available runways are woefully deficient, and any aircraft remaining at one base for more than a single sortie are going to become a target of Russian strikes, along with the base infrastructure.

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8 replies



Sam 5 hrs ago

You gotta wonder why the media doesn't point out that Zelensky has been begging for more equipment and weapons for 2 years, but never asks why he desperately needs it or what happened to all the other stuff he was given. Reading between the lines he needs it because Russia has destroyed all the previous stuff. Same thing with why they desperately need more troops and why Zelensky just lowered the fighting age. I guess those '31,000' deaths left a big hole in troop strength.

How can the pro Ukraine folks not be able to read between the lines?

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1 reply

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