

Ukraine's Promised Counter Offensive Destined for Abject Failure

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With each passing day, the Ukrainian Army is being carved up and decimated in Bakhmut. To use a cinematic metaphor, this is a preview of the coming attraction, with Ukraine facing intense pressure to launch a counter-offensive that will push the Russians out of Ukraine. Ain't going to happen.

Take a look at the following video. Yes, it is but one isolated anecdotal account of the slaughter in Bakhmut, but it rings true and provides a chilling picture of the desperate state of Ukrainian forces in that battle.

Even If Ukraine is able to scrounge up troops and vehicles that surpass anything the Russians have in place on the front-lines in the Donbass (a dubious assumption), it still lacks the artillery, air support, logistics and ammunition to sustain such an attack.

How do I know? Very simple. Just look at how Ukraine currently is performing in Bakhmut, Ugledar, and Avdevka. In every case, Ukrainian forces are retreating, albeit slowly, rather than blunting the Russian offensive. The following image (taken from liveuamap.com, a pro-Ukrainian site) shows the harrowing situation the Ukrainian troops confront.



Ukraine, which in theory should have an advantage by fighting from defensive positions, has failed to stop the slow but steady advance of Russian troops all along the line of contact. Instead of attacking and destroying Russian lines of communications that supply the Russian forces, Ukraine is launching artillery and HIMARS missile strikes on civilian targets. Those attacks do nothing to weaken Russia's tactical and strategic situation.

The seven blue circles visible on the map signify locations where air raid warnings are sounding on April 25. This means the Russians hitting these sites with fixed wing aircraft to deliver 500 kg glide bombs and explosive laden drones. The effect is devastating for the Ukrainians on the receiving end.

These strikes also confirm the assessment contained in one of the leaked pieces of U.S. intelligence that Ukraine's air defense system (ADS) has been destroyed and Ukraine lacks a layered ADS to fend off Russian attacks. Russian military sources claim they are inflicting an average of 500 fatalities on the Ukrainian troops. In other words, in the last 60 days the Ukrainians have suffered at least 30,000 KIA across the 950 km front. Ukraine does not have a limitless supply of manpower.

No amount of happy talk in Washington or the capitals of other NATO countries alters the dire tactical situation confronting Ukraine. If you look at the changes on the liveuamap during the last six months, it is Russia, not Ukraine, that is relentlessly attacking all along the line of contact. Russia is conducting a brutal war of attrition and Ukraine is willingly sending irreplaceable forces into the maw of destruction. How is Ukraine going to mount a credible counter offensive without adequate air support, an exhausted air defense system, a weakened tank force, shortages of artillery and missiles that cannot be readily replaced and a chaotic logistics system that is failing to keep front-line troops fully supplied with ammunition, fuel and food?

Ukraine's prospects are made more grim by the realization that Russia, during the last six months, has built layered defense systems along likely avenues of attack, stepped up its use of fixed wing aerial attacks on Ukrainian mobilization positions and kept massive trained reserves off the front lines. Russia is not behaving like an overly confident number 1 seed in the NCAA Basketball tournament. The Russian General Staff realize they are in an existential fight with NATO and are not engaging in premature victory celebrations. Russia is prepared for the long haul. However, Ukraine is not.

The leaders in Kiev are behaving like depraved junkies, totally dependent on the willingness of the West to keep sending money and weapons. But there is a problem. The United States and NATO have exhausted their stocks of weapons and ammunition and do not have the industrial base in place to quickly produce replacements. Ukrainian confidence in victory is no substitute for a fully supplied and trained army. Lack of supplies and raw recruits with minimal basic training is a recipe for catastrophe.

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