

Kiev's Counterattack Unlikely to be Successful Due to Big Casualties

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*Ukrainian plans to launch a counteroffensive look rather difficult to implement. At a meeting of Russian top military officials held on May 2nd, Russian **Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu** reported the official assessments on Ukrainian casualties during the last month. The government estimates that more than 15,000 Ukrainian soldiers were neutralized – killed or seriously wounded – in April. According to Shoigu, Kiev is unable to prevent its troops from suffering serious damage on the frontlines, “despite unprecedented military assistance by Western powers”.*

The Russian data comes amid a scenario of collective skepticism about the possibility of Kiev reversing the military scenario of the conflict. More and more Western public opinion seems skeptical about a Ukrainian victory, considering that the territorial losses of Kiev's troops are notorious and that the Russians are increasingly advancing towards the complete liberation of the territories reintegrated to the Federation. Now, with the release of this data about the number of casualties, the tendency is for this skepticism to increase, which complicates the Western war plans.

The big Western media outlets have been reacting to this situation through a kind of damage control – partially admitting that things are not going well in Ukraine, but suggesting that if more weapons are sent, the scenario could change. Some journalists use the rhetoric that there is a supposed counteroffensive plan to be implemented sometime this season, which would allegedly allow Ukrainian troops to achieve a major territorial advance, expelling the Russians even from pacified territories such as Crimea. But the existence of data like this one revealed by the Russian Ministry makes it difficult to believe in the possibility of such a move.

Although the mainstream media tends to prevent the spread of information about Ukrainian problems, it will be difficult to stop the collective skepticism, as this is not the first time that

numbers informing about the catastrophic situation of the Ukrainian forces have been revealed. On several occasions in recent months, reports on this subject have appeared. In the recent wave of leaked documents, it was published a Pentagon assessment that between 124,000 and 131,000 Ukrainian soldiers were killed by Russian forces. In estimates made by other intelligence agencies, there are even higher figures, with some reports giving statistics as high as 200,000 to 300,000 Ukrainian casualties. These reports circulate freely on the internet, so, as much as there are attempts by mainstream media to censor the data, the multiplicity of sources makes this work really difficult.

As expected, the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev continues to deny all these reports and claim its ability to carry on the fight. In February, Ukrainian Defense Minister Aleksey Reznikov stated that the number of deaths among the regime's troops was lower than the number of deaths in the earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria. According to official sources, the catastrophe in these two countries led to the death of 55,000 people, which shows how Reznikov is evidently lying, since even among the most openly pro-Ukrainian sources there is no belief in such a low number of casualties.

Similar declarations are also expected for the near future, especially responding to Shoigu's statements. Kiev's officials will try in every way to show that they have control over the situation of their troops and that their soldiers are in sufficient numbers for a counteroffensive - depending only on more Western weapons, thus justifying the "beggar" behavior for which Zelensky has already become known. At the same time, in Western countries governments will somehow have to convince their citizens that it is indeed prudent and necessary to continue sending arms to Kiev.

The wisest thing to do would be to admit the alarming numbers of Ukrainian casualties and stop the war machine behind the regime. Considering that it is an unwinnable conflict, negotiating peace is the best alternative for all sides. But neither Ukraine has the sovereignty to make such a decision, nor NATO has an interest in any possibility of peace. So, most likely, Ukrainian citizens will continue to die on the frontlines' "meatgrinder".

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