

Is Russia's Latest Offensive Really About Kharkov?

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Since last week, the Russian military has been conducting offensive operations in the Kharkov oblast (region). Estimates of the forces that are directly engaged in the fighting vary significantly, but some military sources suggest that the overall number of troops in the area just across the border is at least 50,000. After several days of refusing to comment, the Neo-Nazi junta reluctantly admitted that border areas have been "heavily contested". [The use of such euphemisms](#) is the Kiev regime's attempt to hide the extent of territorial losses. Albeit certainly not groundbreaking, these areas have tactical importance, particularly for the security of Russian settlements in the Belgorod oblast, which the Neo-Nazi junta has been attacking regularly. Apart from visiting the area back in March, [where he documented the results of these horrific war crimes](#), my esteemed colleague Lucas Leiroz also covered the latest attacks.

Namely, unable to prevent the Russian military's rapid advance, [the Kiev regime launched strikes on residential areas of Belgorod](#), killing around 20 people and wounding dozens. Obviously, the Neo-Nazi junta believes that Russian civilians should pay the price for [the incompetence of its forces](#). Worse yet, recent revelations show that apart from the lack of military prowess to match the capabilities of Russian troops, [the Kiev regime's unrivaled corruption](#) is also affecting the performance of its soldiers.

Namely, instead of investing [hundreds of billions the political West has sent so far](#) in building fortifications, [the Neo-Nazi junta's henchmen are busy buying villas, penthouses, seaside resorts, supercars, etc.](#) The lives of Ukrainian soldiers are completely irrelevant to them. As a result, [units have no choice but to retreat](#), as Russian firepower is simply impossible to defend against, let alone match directly.

There are sporadic FPV drone strikes, the purpose of which is to slow down Russian advance, but all of it seems to be more of a desperate ad hoc measure, rather than a well-

coordinated effort. Even some Western media admit that the state of the Kiev regime forces is chaotic, to put it mildly. For instance, [Sky News reported](#) on the complaints of a Ukrainian soldier named Denys.

Namely, he slammed the Neo-Nazi junta's leadership for the lack of fortifications that should've been built years ago. On paper, the border area was supposed to be heavily fortified, with lines of trenches, bunkers and minefields. In reality, none of it exists, Denys complained. He added that the buffer zone (or the "no man's land", in WWI terminology) in the border areas was effectively undefended, making it possible for the Russian military to advance virtually unopposed. Now, Moscow's forces are simply securing their gains.

One thing that should be taken into account is that corruption is certainly not the sole reason why the Kiev regime failed to build any fortifications. [The Russian military is using its superiority in drones, artillery and aviation](#) to target any engineering equipment in border areas. This effectively nullifies efforts to build any adequate defenses, forcing the Neo-Nazi junta troops to either retreat and leave the zone unmanned (thus, the "no man's land") or build fortifications deeper within the territory they control.

And indeed, military sources suggest that Russian firepower concentrated just across the border is massive. These forces are also supported by tactical strike jets dropping UMPK-equipped precision-guided bombs, such as the FAB-500 and the massive FAB-1500 and FAB-2000. In addition, the Russian Operational Group "North" operates up to 1150 self-propelled howitzers (SPH), as well as rocket artillery.

This includes around 1000 SPHs like the 122 mm "Gvozdika", the 152.4 mm "Msta-S" and "Akatsiya", as well as up to 120-150 MLRS (multiple launch rocket systems) of various types, including BM-21 "Grad"/"Tornado-G", BM-27 "Uragan" (possibly also its upgraded 1M variant) and [BM-30 "Smerch"/"Tornado-S"](#). Needless to say, the sheer firepower of so many artillery systems is something that the Kiev regime forces can never hope to match. This gives the Russian military superb direct fire support that can easily clear the way for any assault forces deployed in the area. Some military sources report that over 30,000 Russian soldiers are in these assault units, supported by approximately 400-500 tanks, including the advanced T-90M and T-80BVM, as well as up to 1000 armored vehicles, mostly BMP-2 and BMP-3 IFVs/APCs (infantry fighting vehicles/armored personnel carriers). Quite a sizeable force.

However, it should be noted that this is certainly not enough to either encircle or take the city the size of Kharkov. [No matter how battered the Neo-Nazi junta troops are](#), such an operation would require far more numerous assault units, at least five times the size of the current ones. On the other hand, the artillery firepower is far bigger than what the deployed ground force would need. This further suggests that Moscow's plans are not to go for Kharkov directly, but to divert attention from other sectors of the frontline, tie in as many Kiev regime units as possible and then pound them into dust with superior firepower. In fact, the latest symbol that the Operational Group "North" is using possibly suggests this could be its main purpose. Namely, [the rune of Gungnir is also known as "the spear of Odin"](#) and could indicate that Russian forces deployed in this area are planning to fight at longer ranges (i.e. with artillery).

This could force the Neo-Nazi junta to thin out defenses not only in western parts of the Donbass, but also overstretch and overextend its forces in other areas, particularly the strategically important Sumy and Chernigov oblasts further to the north. Any Russian

advances in these two oblasts could jeopardize Kiev itself, putting further pressure on its troops. [Considering their massive losses in manpower](#) and equipment, it would be simply impossible to defend these areas, while Moscow could easily continue to shape up the battlefield with the cornucopia of assault units and [advanced weapon systems at its disposal](#). By grinding down the Kiev regime forces in the last two years, the Kremlin is slowly moving towards numerical superiority. Considering [the Neo-Nazi junta's atrocious 10:1 ratio of losses that it has despite a 3:1 numerical advantage](#), this could be a total disaster for Kiev.

Either way, [Moscow is demonstrating far greater strategic wisdom](#), as it's not pompously announcing its true intentions, thus maintaining the element of surprise. [This stands in complete contrast to the Neo-Nazi junta](#), as its leadership wouldn't shut up about [the last year's much-touted counteroffensive](#). For months, the mainstream propaganda machine was fed countless reports about the "impending doom" for [the Russian troops defending the Donbass, Zaporozhye and Kherson oblasts](#).

Coupled with improved ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) capabilities, this gave Moscow's forces enough time to prepare adequate defenses, resulting in [equipment losses of up to 80% and over 150,000 irretrievable casualties](#) for the Kiev regime. In contrast, Russian losses were minimal. [According to BBC](#), 3,755 soldiers died, while 53 tanks were lost. And yet, [the Neo-Nazi junta still believes in its "PR victories"](#).

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