

The Ukrainian Army Is Run Not by the Generals But by the PR Department

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What can you expect from a government headed by a comic actor named Zelensky? We see the answer to that question day by day in the way the Ukrainian armed forces are carrying out their much-anticipated spring counter-offensive: it is being stage managed by the Public Relations team with scant regard for their cannon fodder army.

Why do I say this? Because each of the latest military setbacks if not outright fiascos of military operations is being covered up by sensational side-shows intended to divert public attention at home and especially abroad from what is going on in the battlefield.

In the past couple of weeks, Zelensky was under enormous pressure from Washington to finally launch the much heralded counter-offensive. Notwithstanding his complaints that insufficient new military hardware had arrived to date and his demands on NATO countries to step up deliveries of tanks and F16 fighter jets, the Pentagon was insisting that the Ukrainians were now well equipped and should prove on the battlefield that this investment by the Americans and Europeans was justified, to prove that they can indeed push back the Russians and free all the occupied territory.

Yet, on the battlefield all that we saw was positional fighting and probing for weak spots in the Russian defense lines. There was no sign of a massive counter offensive until a day ago. What we saw instead were incursions of Ukrainian special forces, mostly said to be mercenaries from Poland and elsewhere, across the border from the Ukrainian held Kharkov oblast into the neighboring RF oblast of Belgorod. And then, about four days ago, we saw the start of a destructive artillery and rocket attack on the border town of Shebekino, where 400 or 600 strikes on residential neighborhoods have been recorded in 24 hour periods. As we now see daily on Russian television, the whole population on the Russian side of the border across from Kharkov city is being evacuated and media there are discussing why their government has not done more to protect the frontier and to hit back.

Of course, if the Kremlin were to do so it would fall into the trap of withdrawing forces from the front lines and weakening preparedness for whatever mass counter offensive may yet lie ahead. But it would be more appropriate to see in the border attacks on Belgorod not a military tactical purpose but a PR dimension, to capture the airwaves and divert attention from the still delayed massive offensive by providing some highly photogenic developments for the news crews.

Today's number one item on Euronews is the destruction of part of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant in the southern region of Kherson to one side of the Dnepr river, with the consequence that water from the reservoir to feed the plant now is pouring out in uncontrolled fashion into the Dnepr. Let us remember that here the right (western) bank of the Dnepr, with the homonymous former capital town of the Kherson oblast, is held by the Ukrainians and the left (eastern) bank is held by the Russians.

Threats to the large Kakhovka reservoir were discussed widely in local and global media more than eight months ago when the Russians abandoned Kherson city and withdrew all forces to the left bank of the Dnepr. At that time already, the Russians anticipated a possible breach of the dam with the consequence of dangerous, life threatening flooding downstream. They pulled back the local population from areas deemed to be most at danger. Moreover, as CNN reminds us, the shutdown of the hydroelectric power plant which ran on water from the reservoir might put at risk the not too distant Zaporozhie nuclear power plant, where critical equipment for its operation run on electricity generated by the Kakhovka plant. So the nuclear danger once again raises its ugly head.

Why was the functioning of the reservoir crippled now and who was responsible, the Russians or the Ukrainians? CNN this morning puts on a mien of objective journalism by saying that both sides are pointing the finger at the other, and perhaps we will never know who is the guilty party. However, that feigned objectivity is phony from the get-go.

To understand unfailingly who unleashed the Kakhovka reservoir to flood the nearby region you have to look further afield to other news of the day coming from the battlefield and that, in turn, directs us to the PR Department of the Ukrainian armed forces. The Kakhovka blow-out was surely meant to divert attention from the results of yesterday's first Ukrainian attempt at massive attack on the battlefield in southern Donetsk. According to Russian reports, their own Vostok units with assistance from air cover and artillery "destroyed" (the current euphemism for "slaughtered") 1500 Ukrainian "live personnel" (current euphemism for "troops") and destroyed 17 tanks, including 7 German Leopards, as well as armored personnel carriers and other vehicles and field weapons. This was a scandalous defeat and loss of human life in a hopeless offensive being waged only for the purpose of shaking out more money and arms from the Western sponsors of the Kiev regime. As the stories of flooding near Kakhovka and further downstream are amplified by our media, there is the hope that no one will notice the military defeat.

And what are the practical consequences of a military campaign run by the PR Department? The answer is the shocking loss of Ukrainian men at arms. Yesterday Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. who is campaigning against Joe Biden for the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party in the 2024 U.S. elections publicly announced that approximately 350,000 Ukrainian combatants have died in the area of Russia's Special Military Operation so far. Judging by yesterday's massacre during the first big attack by the Ukrainians in the southern Donetsk oblast, the death toll will accelerate in the days ahead. Are any people of conscience listening in Europe or the USA?

Postscript, 7 June:

Today the Russian military report that the Ukrainians resumed their “counter-offensive” in the very same south Donetsk area, losing another 750 soldiers killed.

The virtual world of PR and propaganda can only carry you so far. Finally there is a real world and it is in the battlefield of Donbas where the Ukrainian army is getting massacred like herrings being shot in a barrel. This is unsustainable however much Zelensky & Co. sing and dance to the Western press and NATO leaders. The Russians opened the SMO expecting the military command to overthrow the Nazi controlled government. The Russians misjudged: the radical nationalist control: the Azov battalion and other cutthroats integrated into the army were too strong. However, many of those radicals have been killed, starting in Mariupol and continually up to present. Meanwhile the professional military is being destroyed. I expect that one day soon we will awake to the news that they have settled scores with Zelensky who will be carried away feet first, and the military will negotiate a capitulation.

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