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Jason Melanovski

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## ***Ukrainian forces on defensive as “counteroffensive” ends in failure, mass casualties***

As the Biden administration is backing the Israeli genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza and preparing for a much wider war in the Middle East, the Ukrainian government’s much publicized four-month-long “counteroffensive” has effectively ended with minimal gains in territory. Ukrainian forces are now on the defensive against advancing Russian forces in Eastern Ukraine.

In recent weeks, fighting has centered on the city of Avdiivka, currently held by Ukraine and located north of the major city of Donetsk.

Over 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers are currently stationed in Avdiivka, a strategically important city due to its proximity to Donetsk. Over 31,000 civilians resided in the city prior to the war, while just 2,000 now remain. Control by Kiev grants Ukrainian forces the ability to hit the heavily populated Donetsk with artillery and potentially attempt to “retake” the city, which had been under Russian-backed separatist control following the NATO-backed coup of elected President Viktor Yanukovich in 2014.

Ukraine’s General Staff of the Armed Forces previously warned of at least 15 or more daily Russian attacks on Avdiivka in their attempts to encircle the city but reported a weakening of attacks on Tuesday and Wednesday this week.

However, Avdiivka’s military administration chief Vitaly Barbash acknowledged the precarious situation on the front, stating, “Shelling and small arms fire continue around the clock, so the situation remains very hot.”

According to Barbash, “I can say for sure that this is the largest offensive that has ever been launched against Avdiivka since the war began in 2014.”

Whatever the outcome of the battle for Avdiivka, it is clear that the Ukrainian military is now quickly moving its forces into defensive positions to prevent further Russian gains before winter.

With billions spent and reported casualties of over 400,000 Ukrainian soldiers, even the *New York Times* was recently forced to acknowledge that the “counteroffensive” was a debacle, stating that while “Ukraine made small gains in the south, Russia took slightly more land overall, mostly in the northeast.”

Amid severe manpower shortages, the potential loss of Avdiivka would further consolidate Russian control of the Donbas region and end even the most delusional hopes of the right-wing government of President Volodymyr Zelensky of ever retaking the territory it has lost since the start of the disastrous imperialist-backed war in February 2022.

With the end of the counteroffensive now obvious, officials within the Zelensky government are attempting to cast blame for their own massive failures.

In an interview last week with news outlet *Ukrainska Pravda*, the head of the Main Intelligence Directorate of Ukraine, Kyrylo Budanov, admitted the counteroffensive was “out of schedule.”

When pressed for details, Budanov stated, “There are objective and subjective reasons—everything is complex. But, sorry, most of the explanations for this are state secrets, and it’s just not for public discussion. Over time, all of this will become clear.”

Presidential Adviser Mykhailo Podolyak responded to Budanov’s comments in an interview with Channel 24 by admitting the counteroffensive was over and blamed Western failures to provide even faster military aid.

“If Ukraine had received weapons faster, we could have defended ourselves better and launched a counterattack. Only after all these events did the weapons finally arrive,” Podolyak said.

“We are 6-9 months behind. Everything is very stretched in time. Budanov is right here. If we had received everything we needed in a month, it would be one story. But getting it in 8 months is a different story,” he stated.

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Oleksiy Arestovych, a former Zelensky adviser, further underlined the massive failure of the counteroffensive on his Telegram channel and called for the end of the Zelensky government as he attempts to build his own political brand within the country. After previously predicting that Kiev's forces would quickly be in Crimea, Arestovych now called the counteroffensive a "disaster" and admitted, "They are not telling the truth. There will be no return to the borders of 1991, and there will be no Crimea in the near future."

Despite the counteroffensive's obvious failure, both the Zelensky government and the Biden administration have signaled they will continue the war with the proposal of sending a massive \$100 billion in military aid to Ukraine. Following the declaration of war by Israel against Gaza, aid to Israel may be included as well in order to gain support from Republicans opposed to further funding of the proxy war against Russia.

Unfortunately for both the United States and the corrupt, right-wing oligarchic Zelensky regime, Ukrainians are not so eager to die in a fratricidal war for minimal exchanges of land.

As the Deputy Minister of Defense Natalia Kalmykova recently admitted in a television interview, "hundreds of thousands of citizens are currently trying to avoid mobilization."

As the Zelensky regime attempts to restock its forces following the mass slaughter of the counteroffensive, Kalmykova warned the Ukrainian government was preparing to deal with so-called "refuseniks."

"Proposals have already been prepared for changes to the draft law regarding the registration of conscripts who later become military personnel in order for people to be able to pass the VLK, as well as all procedures related to mobilization at the place of residence. Final agreements on conceptual issues are currently underway, in order to be able to introduce amendments to the Law of Ukraine and normalize the issue of military servicemen's records," she said.

"Unfortunately, we see a lot of situations, and this is also not news, when people do not want to, they try to avoid mobilization in any way. Let's not say mobilization, but avoid the need to defend our country. Here [we face] such a complex ethical dilemma, because the state really needs protection. Protection of the state is the responsibility of every citizen. Unfortunately, there are many, measured in hundreds of thousands, who create conditions for themselves to avoid mobilization," Kalmykova added.

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