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The “Exceptional” U.S. Suffers Crushing Defeat in Debaltsevo

The Battle Behind the Fog of Propaganda

by MIKE WHITNEY

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“There’s no city left. It’s destroyed.”

— Anonymous Ukrainian soldier following the battle of Debaltsevo

In less than a year, the United States has toppled the democratically-elected government of Ukraine, installed a Washington-backed stooge in Kiev, launched a bloody and costly war of annihilation on Russian-speaking people in the East, thrust the economy into a downward death spiral, and reduced the nation to an anarchic, failed state destined to endure a vicious fratricidal civil war for as far as the eye can see.

Last week, Washington suffered its greatest military defeat in more than a decade when Ukraine’s US-backed army was soundly routed in the major railway hub of Debaltsevo. Roughly, 8,000 Ukrainian regulars along with untold numbers of tanks and armored units were surrounded in what-came-to-be-known-as “the cauldron.” The army of the Donetsk Peoples Republic led by DPR commander Alexander Zakharchenko, encircled the invading army and gradually tightened the cordon, eventually killing or capturing most of the troops within the

pocket. The Ukrainian Armed Forces suffered major casualties ranging between 3,000 to 3,500 while a vast amount of lethal military hardware was left behind.

According to Zakharchenko, “The amount of equipment Ukrainian units have lost here is beyond description.”

Additionally, the US-backed proxy-army saw many of its crack troops and top-notch units destroyed in the fighting leaving Kiev unable to continue the war without assistance from allies in the US or Europe. The full impact of the defeat will not be known until angry troops returning from the front amass on the streets of the Capital and demand Petro Poroshenko’s resignation. The Ukrainian President is responsible for the massacre at Debaltsevo. He was fully aware that his army faced encirclement but ordered them to remain in order to satisfy powerful right-wing elements in his government. The disaster is even more terrible due to the fact that it was entirely avoidable and achieved no strategic purpose at all. Extreme hubris frequently impacts outcomes on the battlefield. This was the case at Debaltsevo.

The debacle ensures that the bumbling president’s days are numbered. It’s nearly certain that he will either be replaced or hanged sometime in weeks ahead. He has already flown his family to safety out of the country, and there’s growing speculation that both Washington and the far-right nationalists who occupy the Security Services will insist on his removal. That paves the way for a second Ukrainian coup in less than a year, a grim reminder of the tragic failings of US policy in Ukraine. Check out this blurb from a post at the Vineyard of the Saker:

“Looks like the Nazi death squads are on the march again, this time they are looking at Kiev. Thirteen death-squad (aka “volunteer battalion”) leaders have now declared that they are forming their own military command under the command of the notorious Semen Semenchenko. Officially, they are not in any way opposed to the current regime, so said Semenchenko, but in reality their rank and file members are pretty clear about what they want to do: organize a third Maidan and toss out Poroshenko.

What makes these 21st century version of the SA so dangerous for Poroshenko it that he, unlike Hitler, does not have a 21st century version of the SS to eliminate them all overnight. In fact, according to many reports the entire southern part of the rump-Ukraine is now “Kolomoiskiland” fully under the control of the oligarch who finances these death-squads. Add to this the fact that most of the Rada is composed of the very same battalion commanders and assorted Nazi freaks, and you will why Poroshenko is now very much in danger.....

The sad reality is that there is simply nobody in the Ukraine capable of disarming these so-called “volunteer battalions”. There are now thousands of uniformed Nazi freaks roaming around with guns who can now impose their law of the jungle on everybody. It sure looks like the future of Banderastan will be something like a mix of Somalia and Mad Max – a failed state, a comprehensively destroyed economy, a collapsed social order and the law of armed gangs of thugs.” (The Vineyard of the Saker)

If Poroshenko is doomed to be the scapegoat in the Debaltsevo cock-up, it’s only because he followed the foolhardy advice of his Washington paymasters. Had he listened to his military

advisors instead, he probably would have withdrawn his troops earlier and spared himself a Gadhafi-like demise. Now, that's probably no longer possible.

Poroshenko's desperation has led to an appeal to western allies and the United Nations for the deployment of a peacekeeping mission in Ukraine. The request is an admission of defeat and has no chance of being implemented, mainly because it violates the terms of the recent peace agreement (Minsk 2.0), but, also, because voting members on the Security Council (Russia and China) are certain to veto the idea. Clearly, Poroshenko, who is increasingly embattled and reviled, is grasping at straws hoping to avoid the same violent end he ruthlessly inflicted on so many of his countrymen. Here is a brief summary of recent events from the World Socialist Web Site:

“The debacle suffered by the Kiev regime exposes the utterly reckless and frankly stupid character of the policy pursued by Washington and its EU allies in Ukraine....

The initial attempts of the Kiev regime and its CIA backers to subjugate east Ukraine by sheer military terror, relying on fascist militias and select units of the Ukraine army that it considered to be reliable, have failed....

Nevertheless, Washington is pressing Kiev to prepare for a renewed offensive and is still discussing directly arming the Ukrainian army against Russia with US weapons....

In west Ukraine, the population is evading or resisting draft orders to obtain more cannon fodder for the east Ukraine war. At the same time, Ukraine's economy, cut off from its main industrial base in east Ukraine and its export markets in Russia, is collapsing.

“The country is at war that they cannot afford to fight. There is no economy any longer...Gerald Celente of Trends Journal told Russia Today. “That \$160 billion loss of trade with Russia has destroyed the economy, when it was already in a severe recession. It went from very bad to worse than depression levels.”

Washington has largely won the information war, having persuaded Congress and the American people that US policy in Ukraine is “just”, but on the ground, where it counts, Washington has encountered one catastrophic failure after another. This process will undoubtedly persist until the costs are too exorbitant to bear.