

THE DEFEATED UKRAINIAN ARMY GOES ON THE 'STRATEGIC DEFENSIVE' IN ORDER TO DRAG OUT THE WAR TO ENSNARE RUSSIA.

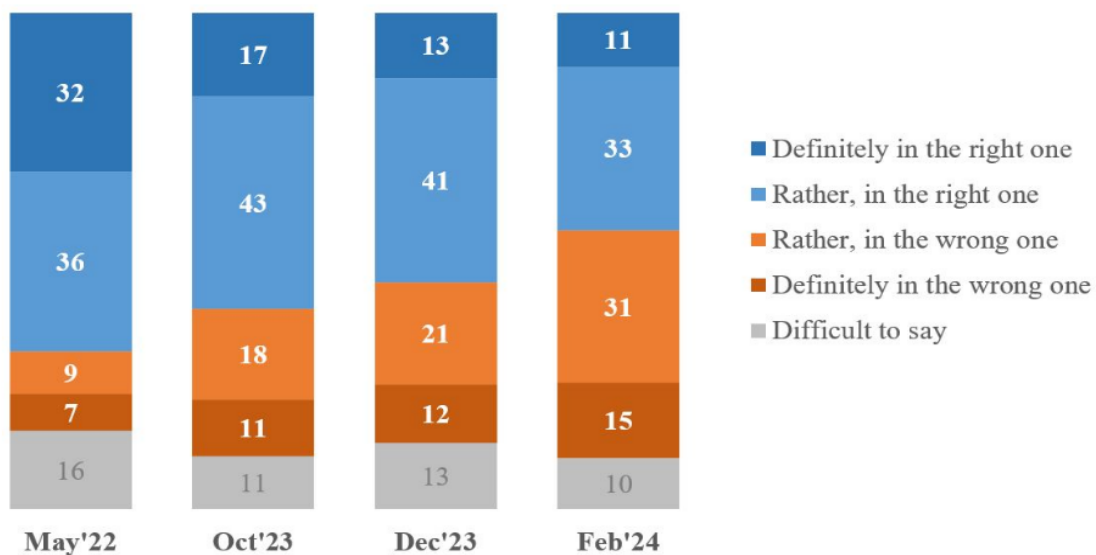
Despite Zelensky's orders to hold the town, the battle of Advika is over following the rout of the Ukrainian Army. It underscores how far the balance of forces has tilted in favour of Russia. After this wake up call, NATO has given the Ukrainians new battle instructions: go on the defensive, drag out this war and tie up the Russians for as long as there are Ukrainian soldiers left to fight.

How cruel. I will never tire of repeating this. When a war is provoked, organised, and financed from without, it progresses far further and with more tragic results, than when the war is led by politicians at home, because the external politicians and warmongers driving the war are not accountable to those bearing the burden and consequences of the war. The loss of life in the Ukrainian army per soldier in two years has already exceeded the loss of life in the Wehrmacht during five years of war in the 1940s.

But this epic bloodshed is not enough, the USA keeps demanding more. Already the casualty rate exceeds 600,000 [including over 370,000 dead](#), which is why the Ukraine is scrambling to recruit more cannon fodder, fodder that would rather beat up or even shoot those trying to recruit them to avoid appearing on the front line and facing certain death. This is why the Ukrainian Parliament is so tentative about passing a new law broadening recruitment.

The Zelensky government is now too weak to push it through. Zelensky and his government are increasingly unpopular as all the lies and promises blow up in their faces. As the graph below shows, taken from the [Kyiv Institute of Sociology](#), support for the direction Ukraine is going has fallen from 54 in favour to 33 against in December to 44 for and 46 against In February.

Graph 1. In your opinion, affairs in Ukraine are developing in the wrong or right direction?



What is interesting is how quickly the shift has occurred and how it is accelerating. Within the space of three months, aka December to February 24, support has fallen from a majority broadly favouring the

direction Ukraine is going in, to a majority opposing the direction it is going in. However, the survey still shows majority support for Zelensky though this is falling rapidly too. The most popular public figure remains the sacked commander-in-chief V. Zaluzhnyi, which explains the torturous process Zelensky went through when sacking him a few weeks ago.

Many of us in the know, those analysts who were not befuddled or beguiled by the infantile and duplicitous reports circulated by the western media, recognised that the failure of the summer offensive last year represented a strategic defeat for the Ukrainian army, a Kursk moment, and therefore that it represented the turning point in the war. The offensive had been flagged so far in advance that it did not need an intelligence service to discover its goals, its location and start date. The Russian army had ample time to prepare a defensive anvil on which to hammer the Ukrainian army to pieces.

Of course the failure of the offensive did not result in an immediate pivot by the Ukrainian army. The ongoing tactics did not adapt to this defeat, rather they were designed to appeal to NATO fund holders by demonstrating the army remained viable. The Ukrainian high command under the tutelage of Zelensky continued to throw Ukrainian soldiers at the robust Russian lines further depleting their reserves. This is exemplified by that propaganda epic, the crossing of the Dnieper river, and the temporary capture of Krynky on the Russian bank; in sum an unnecessary military fiasco costing the lives of thousands of Ukrainians who were treated like Hollywood extras.

This is what happens when an army is led by a clown seeking to please his master while duping his population with seeming advances. In fact the tactics deployed by the Ukrainian high command and their NATO advisers have been appalling. They failed to acknowledge the reason the Russian army retreated in good order around Kharkiv and Kherson as a tactic aimed at buying time to strengthen and build up their war machine. They assumed it was a defeat. And of course NATO assumed, that if they could defeat the Russians once, they could defeat them twice during the summer offensive by providing overwhelming firepower, which is why they took the risk of emptying out all of their own NATO arsenals.

It is clear that with such a high casualty rate, Ukraine has run out of soldiers. And those soldiers are [more poorly armed as the Ukraine runs out of shells and air defense missiles](#). On the other side, the Russian war economy has revved up production with armaments pouring into the Ukraine. Not only armaments but more advanced armaments, better adapted to the Ukrainian battlefield, particularly in the field of electronic warfare. Not only is Russia outproducing the West, even without North Korean help, but it is introducing artillery that outranges western guns, uprated tanks, helicopters, and jets, and especially drone warfare countermeasures. It is claimed that in two months, Russian industry was capable of replacing all the airplanes lost in 2024, and on top of this, it has also introduced its formidable and stealthy SU 57 to the air war.

This makes a mockery of the doctrine of strategic defense by the Ukrainians. Russia has overwhelming air superiority. It has unparalleled advantages in deep strike missiles. It has a decisive superiority in artillery, in tanks and especially in flamethrowers. These shorter range rockets with thermobaric explosives are designed to take out trenches, and now that the Russians can use them in close combat, they will make short work of trenches and other defenses.

The early evidence since Putin met his defense minister Sergei Kuzhugetovich Shoigu on the 20th of February after the fall of Advika, is a change in tactics by the Russian army. It is moving from offensive attrition to offensive advances. All across the combat lines the Russian army is moving forward in force.

For example having liberated Advika the Russian army is advancing west rolling back the retreating Ukrainian army which finds it difficult to make a stand due to the countryside now being flat with little defensive terrain. This is true for many parts of the front. The belt of defenses has been concentrated in the industrial towns, favourable terrain, rivers, and communication hubs, and once they are pierced as they are now, the terrain becomes more farmland than mountainous, therefore more suited to armoured offensives.

The Russians would be fools not to take advantage of current conditions. Firstly, the weather will become more difficult when the spring rains hit. Secondly, there is a window of opportunity caused by the delays in military funding from the USA which is exacerbating the shortage of ordnance reducing Ukrainian firepower. Thus currently, the Ukrainian military is at its most vulnerable and the Russians are exploiting this. The next two weeks will reveal whether or not the Russians will have delivered a decisive blow to the Ukrainian military, marking the beginning of the end of the war.

And of course there is another urgency. Russia holds its next Presidential election on March the 15th. While it is highly likely that Putin will win this election, success on the battlefield will not hurt. Bearing this in mind it is likely that the Russian Generals will press home the current offensive.

The disorderly retreat from Advika where Ukrainian troops were prematurely abandoning their positions without orders to that effect speaks of a demoralized army. An army that has been outfought and outgunned, that was frantic to escape. In all the episodes of war, the loss of soldiers is at its highest during a retreat, even when well organised, which the retreat from Advika was not. There is also the question about how many Ukrainian soldiers surrendered, 200 is the latest figure. It is likely to have been uncomfortably high given the lengths to which the Ukrainian media and military went accusing the Russians of summarily executing Ukrainian soldiers who voluntarily surrendered.

It is likely that the focus of the Russian assaults will be in the central region. Their targets, Kramatorsk, Slovyansk, Severodonetsk and Vuhledar. Once these citadels are taken, the front will be split in two with most of Donetsk captured. This does not mean that opportunist targets will not be taken. As Ukraine runs out of troops and shifts them around, vulnerable targets will present themselves such as the symbolic village of Robotyne captured by the Ukrainians during the summer offensive in the Zaporizhzhia region, and largely recaptured by a Russian assault to mark the anniversary of the war. Only later, in the absence of peace talks, will the Russians progress the much larger assaults towards Kharkiv and in the Kherson region towards Mykolaiv. It is highly unlikely that Russia has set its sights on Kyiv and Western Ukraine, though it is discussing setting up larger buffer zones in light of NATO's commitment to providing Ukraine with longer range weapons.

On the other side, NATO talks about a ten-year campaign of defense, as they seek to embroil the Russian army in a new 100-year European war, so that the US can concentrate on China. In their more optimistic moments NATO talks of a regenerated Ukrainian army by the end of 2024. But it is via off-the-cuff remarks by the likes of Stoltenberg that shows NATO's desperation, where he has now, for the first time, given permission to the Ukraine to strike deep into Russian territory. [*Ukraine has the right to strike*](#) *"Russian military targets outside Ukraine" in line with international law, the NATO secretary-general has said for the first time since the start of the full-scale war two years ago.*

This is not an idle threat because it is already common practice on the part of the Ukrainians, except that it is mainly civilian targets being struck. The fall of Advika has meant that the Ukrainian army, which was

only 12 km from Donetsk City, the most heavily shelled city in the Russian part of Ukraine, has now been pushed 25 km away to the edge of artillery range. However, this has not ended the attacks on the capital of Donetsk. [In revenge the Ukrainians](#) turned to longer range missiles such as Himars to target public places such as libraries and hospitals and even a wedding this weekend. The purpose, to keep terrorizing the citizens of Donetsk City and to spoil their celebrations over the fall of Advika. Of course the constant shelling of Donetsk City is ignored by the West despite it clearly being a war crime.

Social unrest.

Getting news out of Ukraine is not easy as it is under martial law and subject to ferocious censorship and counter-information. But what articles there are, [such as this one](#), reveals a growing war weariness and fear of conscription. *"The optimism, the "united front," of the war's early days has worn off, she says, replaced by the brutal realities of a prolonged conflict: funerals, injuries, missile strikes. Slupova says she knows a lot of people — men and women — who have toughed out the first two years of war but are now thinking about finding a way to leave the country."*

It is important to bear in mind that Ukrainian conscription is open ended, literally a life sentence. There is no time limit, soldiers are not enlisted for say two years or three years, but they are demobbed or discharged at the discretion of the Ukrainian military. This is one of the biggest objections to the expansion of conscription which has torn the Ukrainian parliament apart and driven a wedge between the politicians and the military. At first this was not an issue because in the early heady days, it was assumed the Russian invaders would be driven out in months not years. Now however, it is widely recognised the war could drag on and on, so the open ended conscription is viewed with dread.

There is another issue to consider as well. Much of the original batch of soldiers were drawn from rural parts in western Ukraine. That source has been more or less exhausted and there are many reports of villages actively blocking recruiters in the region. This has forced the Ukrainian army to focus on those parts of the country less touched by recruitment such as the Odessa region. These regions are heavily populated by Russian speaking Ukrainians making these recruits at best unreliable

But this passive opposition, this hiding away from the recruiters, will not overthrow the Ukrainian government, nor lead to a workers' uprising. Only the recognition by Ukrainians that they have been duped into fighting a proxy war for others, not for their own country, and that the price has now grown too high, will transition Ukrainians from passive individual resistance to active mass resistance, the kind that ends wars, even proxy wars, even under conditions where foreign secret services are shoring up and running the government, and if not actually running it then intimidating it. On this point, the very high casualties suffered recently by the Azov regiments, expertly targeted by the Russians, suggests the fascist backbone of the Ukrainian government has been significantly weakened.

There is also evidence to suggest that partisan activity, that is tacit support for the Russian war effort has been increasing. Notable has been the derailment of trains carrying military equipment and stores to the front.

And in the next few months there could be a sea change in public opinion as the scale of impending defeats starts getting past the censors. Zelensky knows the reputational damage this will inflict. He has been adamant. [Ukraine can win this war](#) he insisted while claiming that Russian gains have been negligible. This inflexible mantra is very brittle, it can shatter within weeks and when it does, so too will Zelensky's

reputation and hold on power. With more and more Ukrainians recognizing the war has been lost, they will come to see Zelensky's dogmatic insistence on Russian troops leaving the Ukraine as the pre-condition for peace talks, to be a liability, to be an obstacle to peace talks. And with that Zelensky's purpose for being will have ended.

Conclusion.

Saturday was the second anniversary of the war, a war which has decisively turned in Russia's favour despite NATO's best efforts and machinations. The anniversary has been marked by events up and down Britain sponsored by the imperialists crying crocodile tears over the loss of Ukrainian lives. Another of their Cenotaph moments. And it has created a platform for the war mongers to roar that the 'Russians are coming to a neighborhood near you' as they deflect from the defeats in the Ukraine.

It has also been marked by a *Stop the War* international meeting to discuss how to end the war. I originally intended to devote this article to critiquing the proposals coming out of this meeting but unfortunately when I tried to book a spot, the site told me that bookings were closed. No doubt the main two main demands will be; no further NATO expansions and for Russian to withdraw to its pre-war borders.

The two conditions which the USA needed to accomplish before making war on China, was to implement regime-change in Russia and to make the US less reliant on foreign industrial producers including China but not limited to China. This was the purpose behind the Biden's administration *CHIPS Act* and *Inflation Reduction Act*, which mimicked China's state intervention into the economy to drive industrial investment in strategic areas. The US has failed miserably in the first imperative and has only partially succeeded in the second as the increase in [US chip production](#) has suffered numerous delays and cost overruns due to the inherent weakness of US manufacturing and the shortage of skilled workers.

Both of these events have put the US at a disadvantage as it prepares for war. It could be argued that perhaps war is now no longer needed due to the emergence of A.I. re-establishing US dominance. Did the founder and CEO of *Nvidia*, Jensen Huang, not proclaim the birth of a brand new industry which will make the US economically unassailable once more. Alas, the State Department is not Wall Street. They are not duped nor mesmerized by LLM whose primitiveness is obscured by scale. They do not require prompts nor algorithms to see that in the end China will supplant the USA as the dominant economic power imperiling the Dollar. And as long as they hold this view, war is imminent

In turn we do not need algorithms to tell us what is at stake - the safety of our people and our planet - and therefore our obligation to pursue every means with which to build a revolutionary international anti-war movement based around the slogan; '*the only way to end war is to wage war on capitalism*'.

Brian Green, 25th February 2024.

