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## Ukraine War Analysis. Phase 1 & 2

### Description

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# Russian Objectives

## Introduction

This article is a direct continuation of the article “The Path to War in Ukraine,” so it makes sense to read the former article first. The goal of this article is to give you an overview of how the war started and what the first actions and results were. Moreover, I want to highlight some high-level procedures of military planning. This article does not intend to go into details, since one could write whole books on that topic. It only aims to give a brief overview.

There is another thing that I want to highlight here. I do not have a military education. Basic training, yes, but that’s all. Given that I have been analysing military conflicts since approx. 2010, having read a lot of military history and being a strategic planner and executive, professionally, I assume that I’m capable of predicting military results based on given facts. If you have any doubt, or if you want to listen to a true and very capable military expert, I recommend listening to Scott Ritter’s interviews and articles or read his book.

## Objectives Set by the Russian Leadership

On February 21, 2022, Putin addressed the nation with a set of decisions. I highly recommend to re-listen to his address [or read the transcript here](#). Since it is not my goal to analyse his speech, I will break it, and the decisions that were announced, over the following several days into three main objectives:

- **Denazification:**
- The Soviet Union sacrificed over 26 million people in the second world war, to defeat Nazism. Every family in Russia has some family members that died in that war. It is a big wound in the Russian soul. And the best attack vector against Russia. Unfortunately, Ukraine had huge cells of Nazi collaborators during the world war. [They were] Led by Stepan Bandera. The Western “services” knew about the Russian wound and cultivated followers of Bandera, especially in western Ukraine, even during Soviet times. This trend exploded exponentially since the Western services took control of Ukraine during the events in 2014. Basically, an Anti-Russia was created and armed to the teeth, right on Russia’s border. And not far from Moscow, at that. Especially difficult is the fact that there is a huge Russian-speaking part of the population in Ukraine, which is being discriminated against, if not worse, by the Bandera followers. Russia’s goal is to roll back this development and to remove the whole Nazi and Bandera ideology from Ukraine. Thoroughly,

this time, since it wasn't done properly after WW2. How? I'm not an expert in such questions, so I honestly don't know what the approach will be. It remains to be seen.

- **Demilitarization:**

- Ukraine, if it remains as a nation state, which I doubt, by the way, would be allowed to have only a small self-defence force. Which implies that its whole military has to be destroyed, or handed over to Russia, beforehand. Moreover, it means that no foreign military, that is hostile to Russia, would be allowed to station its personnel or equipment on Ukrainian soil.
- Ukraine could have surrendered. In this case it would have handed over its military equipment to Russia. It could have kept what was necessary for basic self-defence as Russia would define it.
- Absent surrender/negotiation, demilitarization is being implemented by force. This means that all military equipment and troops on Ukrainian soil that are not Russian or allied with Russia, will be destroyed. This includes both Ukrainian and NATO equipment and troops.
- Since the West is committed to defeating Russia on the battlefield, through Ukrainian proxies, we can assume the following: Russia will demilitarize Ukraine AND the West, as long as the West is committed to sending its equipment and as long as there are Ukrainians still alive who can use that equipment. This would lead to the total demilitarization of both the West and Ukraine, unless the West surrenders (Ukraine) or Russia is defeated on the battlefield.
- **Bringing to justice all Ukrainians who have committed crimes against the Russian-speaking population:**
- Over eight years, Ukraine has committed all kinds of crimes against its Russian-speaking population. There were three main incidents
- The Ukrainian-held Donbass in general: The Russian-speaking population has suffered different atrocities, which I won't explain here.
- In Mariupol, which is part of Donbass, in particular: The most fanatic Nazi formation, called the Azov Regiment, had its headquarters in Mariupol. There are endless reports of atrocities.
- Odessa: A city founded by the Russian zarina Catherine the Great, Odessa is considered by most Russians, and as far as I am informed, by the city's inhabitants as well, to be a Russian city. Nazi formations conducted a massacre there, in 2014, against Russian-speaking inhabitants. Putin specifically mentioned this massacre, and its perpetrators, in his speech. He said all the perpetrators are known and will be brought to justice.
- Putin wasn't aiming at Donbass alone with these goals, but at the whole of Ukraine. This brings us by logical deduction to the conclusion that the whole of Ukraine will need to be captured in order to be able to fulfill the stated goals. There is no other logical way.

## Strategic Planning: Basics

First of all, there is no red line that a professional military would adhere to, no matter what.

Hence, there is no "Russia planned X and didn't achieve it".

The only thing that is constant in military planning is the political goal, given by the political leadership of the country. Those objectives are the three mentioned above. The way one sets out to achieve those goals can change, depending on the development of circumstances in the field. Ultimately, the political objectives can change as well, if the military force is too less or too big or the political circumstances change.

If the military force is too weak, then the objectives might be adjusted to more achievable smaller ones — if the political leadership agrees. There are unfortunately examples in human history where such adjustments did not take place. If the military might is strong enough, and the political leadership agrees, then the goals could be expanded.

For the time being, and as is constantly reiterated by Russia's leadership, all the goals will be achieved and there has been no change.

The military is planning a strategy for how to achieve the political goals. The most crucial thing in military planning is that you have options to cover all potential deviations from the original plan. As many people know, the best plan is only valid until the first bullet starts to fly.

Every military campaign is planned with many options, in case things do not go the way initially planned for. And every campaign can consist of x military operations.

If a country plans its military strategy thoroughly as well as the derived campaigns and operations, and if it takes into consideration the realistic worst-case scenarios, then it will have as a result all the resources and time that will be needed to sustain the project. This means that it is highly likely that Russia had several scenarios of outcomes, including a best case, middle case and worst case. To start this war, Russia would have needed to be prepared for the worst-case scenario. I personally assume that this is the reason that Russia waited for eight years to conduct this Special Military Operation (SMO) — to prepare its economy and military to be able to sustain the worst (realistic) military scenario.

## Strategic Planning: Options A, B and C

I will present three scenarios/options that I assume Russia has planned for in Phase 1.

Again, these are assumptions and of course they can be wrong:

- **Best-case scenario (A):**
  - Conducting a massive penetration on a broad frontline to cause a shock and quick collapse of the enemy. In this case Ukraine would have fully surrendered within days or weeks after the invasion. Having analysed the facts, which are available, I assume that it was one of Russia's realistic goals which were not, in the end, achieved. The result would have been the handing over of Ukraine to the Russian military.
- **Middle-case scenario (B):**
  - Fighting with Ukraine, gradually increasing the intensity, and thereby the Ukrainian military and infrastructural casualties, until Ukraine is ready to negotiate a favorable post war agreement.
  - This was almost achieved at the end of phase 1. Unfortunately, the West intervened and held back Ukraine from concluding a negotiated agreement.
  - In theory such a scenario could still be concluded if Ukraine were a sole actor. However, since it is not Ukrainians who control their own country but foreign powers, the timeframe for scenario B obviously is closed.
- **Worst-case scenario (C):**
  - This scenario foresees that Ukraine will not surrender under any circumstances, as long it is physically able to resist. This means that it would fight until the last soldier is killed and the last

piece of equipment destroyed, so that the Russian army can drive through to the Polish border. Moreover, it implies that NATO will assist and supply Ukraine with most resources, except those that are “red-lined,” to prevent Ukraine from collapsing too fast. As far as I understand, this is the scenario that is currently being implemented. Of course, everyone involved is hoping that the collapse takes place before too much damage has been done.

- I have just presented three of what, at least in my opinion or assumptions, are possible scenarios.
- Scenario A and B would have been possible to achieve within Phase 1. Both scenarios became impossible after Phase 1 was concluded. Now, unfortunately, only scenario C is left. I will go deeper into it, in the articles covering Phase 2 and 3.

## Deception and Cover Up

As mentioned above, Russia needed to plan for three scenarios. Considering scenario B and C, we can conclude that Russia would need massive amounts of mobilized and trained troops, properly equipment and hardware, and all the intelligence capacity in place for target acquisition and many more purposes.

We can recall the beginning of phase 1. Very few details, troops and equipment were in place and the troops, except of some staff and general ranked officers, did not have any idea whether it was serious or only a bluff. This means that the troops were not properly prepared and informed for the invasion. We can also recall that 12 hours before the invasion, Russia did alert and started to mobilise its intelligence services. Of course, there are some top-secret parts of the intelligence community, which helped to plan everything. But most parts were not involved and started being mobilised for war intelligence duty just 12 hours in advance.

One could argue that what I just described amounts to poor preparation on the part of the Russian side. This is not the case. My opinion is that the Russian General Staff and the departments of the Russian Intelligence Services that were involved in planning, created a multi-level mixed military-political campaign taking into consideration the three (or however many there are) scenarios mentioned above as well as what escalation steps would be activated, if Ukraine didn't surrender after this or that event on the battlefield.

The first step was made in total secrecy, to confuse Western intelligence services about the scale and objectives of the first push into Ukraine. If we take into consideration the public communication of the United States days before the invasion, we can understand the deception that was in effect. The Americans were absolutely sure that Russia would invade Ukraine and conquer it within days. Russia could have done that. The Americans know that. That's why maximum confusion was created .

Only after scenario A failed did Russia activate the next pre-planned steps that led to phase 2, which I will discuss in the next article.

What I simply want to highlight is that all escalatory steps by the Russians are pre-planned and the resources are already allocated. They are only released if needed. That means that, unless Ukraine should surrender, more and more Russian resources will be released, resources that were already earmarked before the invasion for exactly this escalatory step.

The last thing to say is that, as described initially, the Russian troops were not informed about the war and their objectives, to keep everyone in total secrecy. The second the war started, everything was set in motion, to set aside and train the troops allocated for various purposes that are assigned to them in later escalatory steps. Unfortunately, the Donbass militia took the brunt of the greatest part of the fighting and casualties, especially within Donbass. The reason is to keep Ukrainian troops at bay, grind them down and buy time until the main Russian troops are prepared and trained for their designated purposes.

## Preconditions

Depending on the source you consult, Ukraine did have approx. 300,000 – 500,000 troops at the beginning of the conflict. And the number of troops in Donbass were (also depending on the source), between 100,000 – and 200,000 troops. These were the most experienced and elite troops, assembled for an attack on the militia-held territories in Donbass.

Since the Americans knew for sure that there would be an invasion, they prepared with the Ukrainians, especially with most of their special forces, ambushes and traps on all the roads that would likely be used in the event of an attack. All means of guerrilla warfare were prepared. In this case, we mean high-tech guerrilla warfare, with drones and satellite reconnaissance and communication.

All other regions were thinly defended.

My estimation is that the American services calculated there would be a push on Kiev and on Donbass, and they established the defences accordingly. In Donbass — the regular professional army. In northern Ukraine, Kiev included — with mixed components of the regular army, popular defence and most importantly, almost all the special forces units of Ukraine, training for the mentioned guerrilla warfare.

Russia prepared North and South strike groups, Special Forces (airborne VDV), Donbass militia brigades and Wagner mercenaries. Of course, there were more sub formations, but those were the most important.

## Penetration

As announced before, I don't intend to go into detail. However, I want to call attention to some highlights.

1. Russia's airborne special forces, called VDV, were responsible for pinning down the Ukrainian elite Special Forces troops in and around Kiev. Moreover, to apply maximum pressure on Kiev and the Ukrainian government, to either assist the negotiations or to bring a collapse of the government and achieve a quick total surrender by Ukraine. These troops did the most heroic fighting under the worst possible conditions. They also suffered huge casualties. The formations involved were awarded special decorations by President Putin.
2. The southern strike group was quite successful. As far as I can judge it, they achieved most, but not all the goals set for the first phase. They captured the whole of Kherson, a huge part of

Zaporozhe and fought in the battle for Mariupol. Moreover, they expanded buffer zones around Kherson, Mariupol and Kakhovka. This was in anticipation of future defensive battles, to have space for maneuvering, regrouping and tactical retreats.

3. The northern group was tasked with pinning down troops across northern Ukraine from Donbass up to Kiev. As far as one can judge the reports (I could be wrong here), these group were not that successful and suffered heavy losses. This could be explained either by bad leadership, or because, as mentioned above, my assumption is, that the Americans expected this would be a main attack vector and accordingly prepared all guerrilla warfare elements in this direction.

There were several purposes, apart from the already mentioned scenarios A, B and C:

- Ukraine prepared a large-scale attack on the Donbass, which was ready to kick off any time. By attacking on a large front, Russia cut off most of the logistics and reinforcements for the frontline troops in Donbass. A large-scale attack on Donbass was no longer possible. Instead, the Donbass militia utilized the situation and went on the offensive on their own.
- Creating a permanent land bridge to Crimea. The bridge is good, but in wartime useless. Ukraine maybe isn't capable, apart from terrorist attacks, of attacking the bridge, but NATO is. It would be one of the first targets that couldn't be defended.
- Securing the permanent water supply to Crimea, out of the Kakhovka reservoir.

## Ambushes

As initially stated, NATO did prepare Ukraine very well for the likely Russian attack vectors. Several tens of thousands special forces units were trained by NATO in Ukraine and on foreign soil, over eight years, to conduct this kind of guerrilla and stay-behind warfare. Taking this into account, one can understand one of the reasons why Russia has chosen the approach of invading entirely with uniformed soldiers — to avoid having offensive plans trickle through to NATO, and that thereby even more successful ambushes could have been planned.

Having invaded in winter, Russia had even more problems with ambushes. Snow gives good opportunities for preparing ambushes. Especially because columns are forced to drive in an array on roads. Next, I will explain, why this is a problem:

- Ukraine pre-registered by artillery most of the road sections where Russian columns likely would need to pass. And they did. And many columns have been destroyed. It was a very successful approach. Nevertheless, it was far from enough to hurt the Russians substantially.
- The Ukrainian military applied the strategy of hiding in civilian buildings on all the roads where the Russian columns had to pass. So, either the Russian shot at civilian houses or they tried to rush through and sustained heavy damage, due to NLAW fire out of windows of civilian buildings. The worst of this approach is that most civilians there are Russian-speaking. This forced the Russian army to shoot at people that they wanted to protect. Rightfully, Amnesty International recognized this approach as a war crime by the Ukrainians.
- Of course, it absolutely makes sense, to mine the roads where Russians would have been forced to pass. And that's what Ukrainians did. Many tanks and other vehicles that weren't equipped properly to detect or remote-detect mines were blown up.
- A part of the propaganda warfare of Ukraine was to demoralize the Russian public, to trigger it to

overthrow President Putin. To achieve that, many ambush kills were filmed by drones and broadcasted immediately. The idea was to make the Russian public demand an end of the war; by refusing it, Putin would lose the confidence of the population and would be eventually overthrown. The broadcasting was very successful. But not the idea that Russians would lose their morale and demand an end of the war. That failed badly.

- To achieve the exact same goal, to trigger the Russian public to overthrow Putin, Ukraine staged many videos where they tortured captured Russian soldiers horribly. I won't describe it here in detail. This attempt failed as well. There were no calls for overthrowing Putin. Instead, the Russian public and soldiers got angry and demanded a far more resolute approach against Ukraine. Soldiers didn't surrender that quickly. Instead, many fought to the death, because they knew what awaited them.

## Negotiations

I described the main strike directions of the first phase. As mentioned in the possible scenarios, those strikes were intended to achieve scenario A or B. Unfortunately, A was never an option. Ukrainians were remote controlled, down to the unit level. There was never the possibility that orders could be issued from a central command to the various units, to surrender. This still applies today.

Nevertheless, there were some pre-negotiations during phase 1 in Minsk. They led to a meeting on March 29, 2022, in Istanbul. These negotiations officially had the potential to end the conflict. Ukrainian neutrality should be declared and the recognition of Donbass and Crimea as Russian. The parties were close to a conclusion. In the following days, the proposals should have been discussed in the capitols and then an agreement should have been reached at the top level. As a sign of goodwill, Russia withdrew all troops from northern Ukraine, including Kiev.

Unfortunately, the West had other plans for Ukraine. Boris Johnson flew immediately to Kiev and after a meeting between him and Zelensky, Ukraine completely withdrew from negotiations.

This event triggered the activation and announcement of phase 2 by the Russian leadership at the end of March 2022.

## Further thoughts

- Russia decided to apply a special military operation in Ukraine. Not a doctrinal war. The big question is, why? Many people, including Western intelligence services, thought there would be a doctrinal push. It would have many advantages, but some disadvantages as well. This is a topic for another article. But I will go a little bit into it here. By applying a special military operation, Russia had the following opportunities:
  - Proceeding slowly (if we exclude phase 1), so the West has all time it needs to deplete itself militarily and economically. Thus, Russia would be able to force the West down on its knees and implement the new draft security framework for Europe, without getting into an actual military conflict with NATO.
  - Drawing all Ukrainian troops and (NATO) equipment out of the big cities and western regions, and to destroy it in a place with short supply lines, a friendly population and total air domination. This is the Donbass and Kherson. Thereby a collapse of Ukraine can be

triggered, slowly but surely, without the need to fight devastating battles in Ukraine's large cities. Thereby further scenarios like Mariupol are avoided.

- **I want to emphasize that I'm by 100% convinced that the Russian leadership calculated and still is calculating with confidence, on a full Ukrainian surrender. And the handing over of Ukraine as a whole by its military to Russia's military. This is what eventually will happen.** Unfortunately, we can assume that many people still will have to die before this happens. I wrote that I think that this was planned from the beginning. This is to be explained by what I wrote in the "Strategic planning" section of this article. Russia is following a predefined but flexible escalation process:
  - It was clear from the beginning that Ukraine as a whole needs to be captured, to reach all the geopolitical and security goals set by the political leadership of Russia. Nevertheless, Russia needs always to show the whole world, and first and foremost its BRICS allies, that it is always ready to negotiate. Even though all parties are fully clear that this is an existential war between the West and Russia. The party that loses vanishes into geopolitical insignificance. There will be either a strong Russia with BRICS afterwards and NO West (geopolitically) or there will be the West, and the BRICS project would be over. Therefore, all parties involved will always find a reason not to negotiate or why negotiations failed. As many say, "until the last Ukrainian." I personally think that Russia proceeds carefully and will execute a quick final blow, when the time comes that suits Russia, to preserve as many Ukrainians and their infrastructure as possible. Why? Because it will inherit it and will need to either incorporate it and rebuild it or find another solution.
  - Why was I sure, from the beginning, that the whole of Ukraine is on the plate? Because the leaders of Hungary and Serbia started to be very bold in their communication with the West. They did and said things that would have been a no-go before. Things for which they would be sanctioned into oblivion. Hungary, for example, blocked many EU sanctions against Russia. This is huge. This tells me that Hungary and Serbia had information in advance as to what the Russian plans are and how the future landscape between Russia, Hungary and Serbia will look: without Ukraine. Since I believe that there will be a land-bridge between Russia (with the whole of Ukraine as federal subject) and Hungary, I think that finally military ground and air support will be possible, as well as trade by land and the Black Sea. So, Hungary and Serbia are no longer afraid of a military attack by NATO and by Western sanctions, that will be obsolete after the implementation of the multipolar world order. I have further thoughts about this, which I will explain in detail in another article.

## Results of phase 1

Here I want to give a quick overview of the achieved objectives of phase 1:

- Denazification was not completed yet.
- Demilitarization was not completed yet.
- Bringing war criminals to justice was not completed yet.
- Huge territorial gains were made, and deep buffer zones around big cities were created for maneuvering in defence. Both sides suffered huge casualties, which are normal under such circumstances.

## Part 2

# Introduction

This article is a continuation of the article about Phase 1. Therefore, I highly recommend to first read the first article, before continuing here. [Here is the link.](#)

The second phase of this war still was carried out as a special military operation. Nevertheless, one step higher on the escalation ladder. The second phase still was carried out in an offensive way. Many strategic villages and towns were captured by the Russians. Buffer zones were expanded around strategic spots.

Phase 2 has been conducted, roughly, between April and July 2022. Officially Phase 2 never was concluded. That's why the conclusion of Phase 2 at the end of July 2022 is according to my own definition.

The qualities of Russian officers were tested and some passed the test and others didn't. Which reminds me of the Winter War between the Soviets and Finland. Moreover, first problems with the contracts of the Russian soldiers occurred, that were direct consequences of secretive planning.

The most interesting event, apart from the capturing of important cities, of phase 2, were the occurrence of HIMARS in Ukraine.

Most of the able-bodied men of Ukraine, that didn't flee, were mobilized and underwent training abroad. Most of these men haven't been committed to the fight during phase 2.

Last but not least, one major Russian political objective was achieved.

I will NOT cover the economic aspects of the war here. [For economics look at my separate article here.](#)

Well, this was a short introduction to my article. Now we will go into the details.

## Objectives

### Russian Objectives

Russia still followed the same objectives as in Phase 1. Nevertheless, now without the possibility of a shock and awe victory. It was now absolutely clear, that Russia will need to defeat the Ukrainian army, to be able to implement the stated objectives. I will reiterate the most important:

- Denazification of Ukraine
- Demilitarization of Ukraine
- Bring to justice those Ukrainians, that have committed (war)crimes against its own population from 2014 onwards

- Free the Donbass to ensure its independence and security

Of course, Russia had a sufficient force assembled at this time, to achieve all of this goals. But what does that mean exactly? I will deepen this later in another chapter (deception), but we need to consider the following:

- Russia planned through the whole ladder of escalations and prepared and provided (even today and going forward) exactly the resources on the battlefield, that are needed for the current configuration of the battlefield and the enemy.
- Russia was planning to fight the UKRAINIAN army and has been provided forces accordingly.
- Ukrainians are Russian brothers and relatives. In Phase 2, Russia still planned to destroy only the Ukrainian army. Not civilians and not civilian infrastructure. If the army falls, the rest of the country would fall quickly as a whole.
- Conclusion: Russia had provided enough troops, resources and equipment to Phase 2, to destroy the Ukrainian troops and the UKRAINIAN equipment. I will deepen this later.

## Ukrainian Objectives

Since Ukraine absorbed the first shock without collapsing, it started to plan with its allies (Western countries) how it can win the war. Now we need to remember. To win a war doesn't mean to defeat the enemy army on the battlefield. That is an impossible task for Ukraine. To win a war means, to achieve its political objectives.

We need to consider, that "Ukraine" as a state didn't have any objectives, since it lost the whole of its control and independence to US/UK services in 2014. That's why it is a little hard, to write about Ukrainian objectives here. I will rather refer to Western objectives IN Ukraine:

- Keeping as much territory under control near big Russian cities, to keep a leverage over Russia. Which included the Donbass, Kharkov, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia and Kiev.
- Inflicting such heavy casualties on the Russian military, to influence the political situation in Russia.
- Collecting as much intelligence over Russian tactics and strategies, as well as military equipment as possible.
- Test as much own (NATO) tactics, strategies and military equipment under real conditions as possible to improve them.
- Activate Europe as much as possible to sever all ties with Russia.
- Not losing an inch of territory, to keep the Western public activated to keep on suffering (economically) to support Ukraine further on.
- Concealing all own casualties, to keep its own population motivated. Moreover, the Westerners activated. The Western population would have struggled more, to support the war, when they would have known, for how many deaths they are responsible, by supporting and prolonging the war.
- Collapsing Russia and especially activating the Russian population to stage a coup against Putin.

One might think that these objectives are totally unrealistic. But there were not. More about that in the next chapters.