

“Spring offensive” produces bloodbath for Ukraine

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When the Ukrainian “counteroffensive” began last week, it was hailed in the American media as a decisive turning point in the US-NATO war against Russia.

“An Endgame for Ukraine,” proclaimed Bret Stephens in the *New York Times*, which would produce a “crushing and unmistakable defeat” for Russia. *Washington Post* columnist Max Boot quoted General David Petraeus as stating that he expects “the Ukrainians to achieve significant breakthroughs and accomplish much more than most analysts are predicting.”

All of these statements have proven both delusional and self-deluded.

Ten days in, the offensive has turned into a bloodbath for Ukrainian soldiers, many of them new recruits with little or no training. The Ukrainian government claims to have captured a mere 40 square miles of territory over the past week, at the cost of thousands of lives. It has gotten to the point where the US media describes as a massive triumph the ability of Ukrainian forces to capture, and hold for a few hours, a tiny nondescript village.

The current state of the war recalls the slaughter of World War I in horrendous bloodbaths such as the battle of the Somme, the first day of which produced as many as 60,000 casualties. While the death toll in Ukraine has not reached this level, there is no doubt that Ukrainian soldiers are being killed in great numbers in the modern-day equivalent of the slaughter of trench warfare.

In figures that have not been contradicted by Ukraine, Russian officials state that over 1,000 Ukrainians are dying per day during the offensive, which would put the total Ukrainian death toll at a minimum of 10,000 so far.

While the horror of the war is generally covered up in

the media, some acknowledgement of the reality has emerged. The *Guardian* quoted a US official as saying there will be “grinding costly warfare likely for many months to come.” The officials said that the casualties inflicted on Russian forces “are not significant,” adding, “The idea that the Russians were just going to melt away and the Ukrainians were going to drive straight through their defensive line was in people’s wildest dreams.”

An article in the *New York Times*, written by Helene Cooper, asks coldly, “Will Ukraine suffer a lot of casualties in the counteroffensive?” The answer: “That is already happening. US officials have confirmed that Ukrainian troops have suffered casualties and equipment losses in the early fighting. Little information is available on Russian losses, but the officials pointed out that attackers typically suffer heavier initial casualties than dug-in defenders, for the reasons outlined earlier.”

The *Times* then asks, “Does that mean the counteroffensive is failing?” The answer: “No. Two US officials said on Monday that the main thrust of the counteroffensive had probably not begun.”

In other words, the death toll is only a down payment. With complete indifference, the US and NATO powers, along with their media spokespeople, treat the lives of Ukrainians as so much cannon fodder. The fascist slogan “Slava Ukraini” has morphed into the reality of “Slaughter Ukrainians.”

And for what end? From the start, the real aim of the Ukrainian offensive was to create the political conditions for further involvement in the war by NATO.

As the *New York Times* wrote on Saturday:

Some battlefield success, whether by decimating Russia's army, claiming some territory, or both... would build more support in Europe for some sort of long-term security guarantee for Kyiv.

Both Ukraine and Western allies have invested in the counteroffensive because, regardless of the specific outcome, it will set the stage for the next phase of the war. The American and British plan to help secure Ukraine involves building support for robust security guarantees from the United States and NATO countries...

On Thursday, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Mark Milley will host a meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group at Ramstein Air Base. This will be followed by a summit of NATO defense ministers on June 16.

These meetings will set the stage for the July 11-12 NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, in which the NATO powers are expected to announce some form of formal military alliance with Ukraine, which would set the stage for the direct involvement of NATO troops in the conflict.

The Vilnius meeting was conceived as a victors' summit. Against the backdrop of a victorious offensive, the intention was to issue ultimatums to a Russia on its back foot. But an altogether different scenario is emerging. Faced with a military debacle, the United States is escalating its involvement in the war.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported on Tuesday that the Biden administration has decided to send Ukraine depleted uranium weapons, which are known to cause cancer, and is actively discussing the deployment of cluster munitions.

On Friday, the American Enterprise Institute published an op-ed by one of its senior fellows, Michael Rubin, advocating the deployment of US nuclear weapons to Ukraine. The op-ed is titled "Can Biden Deter a Russia Nuclear Attack on Ukraine? Yes, If He Gives Ukraine Tactical Nukes."

Rubin called on the White House to threaten to provide Ukraine with nuclear weapons "without any controls on where and how Ukraine might use them." Finally, the NATO powers are moving rapidly toward

the admission of Ukraine to NATO or some form of formal military alliance, which would set the stage for direct NATO involvement in the conflict.

The war in Ukraine has become an existential issue for the Biden administration and NATO. Having bled Ukraine white, the imperialists will need to find more bodies to throw at the Russian cannons.

The Biden administration is repeating the United States' long pattern of responding to military debacles with escalation. Unless this war is stopped, it will spiral into a catastrophe for all of humanity.

On June 5, following the first day of the counter-offensive, the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote:

The urgent need is to connect the developing movement of the working class with the fight against imperialism, which is dragging mankind toward the apocalypse of nuclear war. It is necessary to combine opposition to militarism and war with opposition to inequality, exploitation, and the capitalist system that is the root of all the crises confronting mankind.

Now that the Ukraine's counteroffensive has produced a bloody debacle, the building of such a movement is all the more urgent.



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