As Ukrainian offensive collapses, US demands more frontal assaults

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Over the past two months, it has become clear that Ukraine's offensive, promoted relentlessly by the US media as a turning point in the war, has produced a bloody disaster.

Russian officials claim tens of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers have been killed in the offensive, while Kiev does not even keep a public count. Ukraine's armed forces have not achieved any meaningful breakthrough, and their territorial gains are almost impossible to see when viewed on a map of the entire country.

In response to this obvious debacle, the Biden administration and the Pentagon have publicly claimed—in the form of anonymous statements to the US media—that the failure of the offensive has been due to the Ukrainian military's unwillingness to carry out suicide charges.

In an article titled "Ukraine's Forces and Firepower Are Misallocated, U.S. Officials Say," the *New York Times* reports complaints by the White House and Pentagon that Ukraine is "returning to its old ways of wearing down Russian forces with artillery and long-range missiles instead of plunging into minefields under fire."

It adds, "American planners have advised Ukraine to concentrate on the front driving toward Melitopol, Kyiv's top priority, and on punching through Russian minefields and other defenses, even if the Ukrainians lose more soldiers and equipment in the process."

In other words, US officials cited by the *Times* accuse Ukraine of reluctance to sacrifice the lives of its soldiers, under conditions in which hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian troops have already been killed.

In the *Times*' account, the US is urging Ukraine to focus all its forces on a massive charge against the heavily mined Russian lines, similar to the early weeks of the counteroffensive when such tactics resulted in catastrophic losses.

The *Times*' description of the dangers Ukrainian forces face is harrowing. "The fighting is taking place on mostly flat, unforgiving terrain, which favors the defenders. The Russians are battling from concealed positions that Ukrainian soldiers often only notice when very close. Hours after Ukrainians clear a field of mines, the Russians sometimes fire another rocket, scattering more mines in the same location."

The report concludes, "Only with a change of tactics and a decisive move can the counteroffensive's pace change, said one U.S. official."

Reflecting on the *Times* article, chairman of the WSWS international editorial board David North remarked on Twitter, "A clear indicator of the Ukrainian counter-offensive's disastrous failure is the blame game. The emerging narrative is that the Ukrainian regime didn't heed US advice. In truth, Ukraine's misfortune stems from adhering strictly to US recommendations."

The statements by US officials to the *New York Times* were reiterated in a *Wall Street Journal* article entitled "U.S., Ukraine Clash Over Counteroffensive Strategy," which alleges that "Washington has expressed 'serious frustration' with Ukraine's strategy."

One official lamented, "We built up this mountain of steel for the counteroffensive. We can't recreate it... It's gone."

The *Wall Street Journal* reiterates the primary US grievance that the Ukrainian military is too cautious with its troops' lives.

"Keeping casualties low is necessary to maintain their long-term combat ability, the Ukrainians argue. However, U.S. officials believe the Ukrainians' limited attacks on small fronts hamper the offensive,"

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the *Journal* writes.

In an earlier article titled “Ukrainian Troops Trained by the West Falter in Battle” published on August 2, the *Times* elucidated the US’s motivations in calling for extensive rushes against fortified defensive positions.

The article reads, “The Americans advocated ‘combined arms tactics—coordinated attacks by infantry, armor, and artillery forces.’ Western officials praised this method as more efficient than the expensive strategy of wearing down Russian forces through attrition, which could drain Ukraine’s ammunition supplies.”

In a perspective earlier this month, the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote,

> Given the ammunition shortage, US officials have advocated frequent attacks on Russian trenches, leading to countless casualties. Evidently, American generals view Ukrainian lives as more expendable than ammunition.

Even as the US and NATO increasingly acknowledge the Ukrainian counteroffensive’s futility, they are ramping up weapons deliveries to the country. On Thursday, the Pentagon confirmed it would commence F-16 fighter jet training for Ukrainian pilots in October.

Simultaneously, Norway announced Thursday its intention to dispatch its own F-16 fighters to Ukraine, joining the Netherlands and Denmark.

As the scale of the carnage becomes evident, the US media insists on an endless war in Ukraine. Earlier this week, the *Washington Post* published an editorial titled “War in Ukraine has raged for 18 months. Prepare for more.”

Noting “Nearly half a million casualties, including almost 200,000 dead,” the *Post* dismisses any peaceful settlement of the war. “No end to the slaughter is foreseeable,” it declares.

The editorial ends, “The conflict could persist for years—intensifying, subsiding, or stalling.”

In an op-ed in the same newspaper, General David Petraeus, who before the offensive asserted that a decisive breakthrough would occur within days, contends that the right response to the debacle is to intensify the conflict. “The US’s provision of over $44 billion in arms, ammunition, and support has been commendable. But we must do more and with greater urgency. The time to act is now.”

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