



Kharkov Battles: On the Fall of Novomikhailovka

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Updated Month Day, Year.



1. On February 16th, 2024, the *Wall Street Journal* reported in its Saturday morning newspaper that “[outgunned] Ukrainian forces have withdrawn from the beleaguered eastern city of Avdiivka.” [4] The former eastern Ukrainian city, Avdiivka, suddenly became Avdeevka, a Russian controlled territory in a wide belt of contested areas spanning the width of a series of battles for ultimate control over the geopolitically significant Kharkov direction.
2. It signified the single most important advance for Russia, since the fall of Bakhmut-Artemovsk in May, 2023. It also signified the single most important development for the overall war, since Russia’s expansion of its initial invasion on February 24th, 2022.
3. In the month following the fall of Avdiivka, Russian forces advanced well beyond the lines existing before the fall of Avdiivka. The Russian news agency, *Телеканал 360*, published an article summarizing March’s losses for the Ukrainian armed forces. In the article the authors state: “Российская армия в марте

освободила пять населенных пунктов в зоне проведения специальной военной операции: Невельске, Орловку, Тоненькое, и Красное в ДНР, а также поселок Мирное в Запорожье.” The English translates as follows: “During the month of March the Russian military liberated five villages: Nevelskoye, Gorlovka, Tonen’koye, and Krasnoye in the People’s Republic of Donetsk and Mirnoye in the Zaporizhzia region.” These are all in the Kharkov direction.[1]

4. The Kharkov direction, whose history as a centre for the manufacture of Soviet tanks pre-dates the outbreak of World War II, stands as a gateway for advancing in either direction in Ukraine. In the east the road to

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Russian army stronger than before Ukraine conflict – EU state

Moscow’s military has more soldiers now and can quickly replenish equipment losses, a Lithuanian official believes

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Moscow is paved through
Kharkov, in the west to Kiev.

The Six Month Long Battle for Novomikhailovka

5. On Saturday April 20th, 2024 Russian news agencies began to publish article declaring the village Novomikhailovka to be under Russian control. The Russian news agency *News.ru*, for instance, reported that “in the most severe storming of Novomikhailovka” Russia’s 155th Brigade took part in an operation with 1472th regiment of the 68th Guards’ Army Corpus, the 39th Brigade, the 57th Regiment and other parts of the 20th division, Russia’s spetsnaz the Russian air force and the ‘Operational Battle Tactical Formation’ from the Donetsk People’s Republic called ‘Kaskad.’
6. The 79th Separate Marine Brigade countered the announcement with its own, stating: “Somewhere around 15-20% is still controlled by the 79th brigade,” as the commander Smataluk stated to *Yhuan*. Since the portion still under Ukrainian control is far less than a majority, the 79th Brigade’s

control is therefore only marginal. The report published on *Yhuan* did not contain details regarding the features of its magical control. It is unclear whether the 15-20% still under Ukrainian control contains a line of communication, a hill for fire control, or anything in the way of a military object worth mentioning.

The Drone Threat

7. Russia’s siege of Novomikhailovka cast light on the remarks that Army General Christopher G Cavoli, commander, U.S. European Command, and NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander Europe, provided in recent testimony to senators. On April 12th, 2024, the general, whose testimony contrasts sharply with members of the Department of Defense testifying before him last year in congressional hearings, stated that the “Russian military replaced Ukraine battlefield losses ‘far faster than expected.’”
8. According to the 79th Air Assault Brigade, whose compilation of verified Russian losses is one of the few well

produced depictions of Ukraine's ability to exploit FPV drone warfare, accumulated more than 314 documented units of destroyed Russian armors. Needless to say, 79th Air Assault Brigade's compilation is a case in point that confirms Cavoli's analysis that Russia replaced its battlefield losses in Novomikhailovka faster than Ukraine. The confirmation of Cavoli's understanding of current developments in Ukraine signals a significant shift in the military high command in charge of directing Ukrainian forces. In the preceding years, Ukraine's high command had no choice but to listen to disinterested American military commanders such as Mark Miley. It is considered to be 'impolitely vulgar' to criticize a general with four stars but Miley's comments, however, cannot escape criticism. Miley's remote comments, for instance, conveyed distinctively false characterizations of Russian gains, whose effect could not but confuse Ukrainian commanders close to the battlefield, preventing them from believing a word he said. Miley, for instance, claimed at one point that 'Ukraine cannot win the

war' before saying that Russia is 'defeated strategically, tactically and operationally'. The Ukrainian response to these comments likely elicited the common response: 'дурниця.' Can you imagine being a frontline Ukrainian commander listening to Miley speak 'дурниця' on television? It is likely for this reason that the *New Yorker's* treatment of insubordination in a long article entitled "The Assault" becomes an attempt at damage control. How better to restore faith in Ukrainian commanders than to celebrate healthy resistance to American 'дурниця.' Now that NATO has somebody in charge who appears to know what he is doing, the game may actually change.

9. Cavoli's truthful depiction of the current developments is not only a 180 degree turnaround. It leads the way for a more coherent command structure from NATO to Ukraine. Together with the 60 advisers, who answer directly to Cavoli in real-time, the situation for direct command now appears to be proceeding in accordance with a truthful depiction of current developments. It is a dangerous development for

Russia, for there is nothing more dangerous than for an opposing commander to tell the truth. It is safer for Russia to hear commanders like Miley convey false characterizations of battlefield developments.

10. The 79th Air Assault Brigade's video demonstrates "How the Drone War in Ukraine Is Transforming Conflict." The Council on Foreign Relations, one of the hundreds of bureaus, departments, research centers, or think tanks in the United States that ruminates on the most politically sensitive minutiae in service of the State, explains that the conflict demonstrated "the battlefield advantages" of drones, which have become "smaller, more lethal, easier to operate." One of the advantages is the compression of the "kill chain," shortening "the time from when a target is detected to when it is destroyed." Another advantage is "a military's ability to reconnoiter the forward edge of the battlefield." These advantages draw into sharp relief challenges of warfare in the 21st century.

Tanks in the 21st Century

11. The idea of a tank in a war has almost little to nothing to do with the actual tank itself. The tank is a unit of warfare. Its role on a battlefield is determined less by the tank's actual characteristics than by its ability to be replaced in quick succession. In a book written by William Stephenson called *Intrepid*, the author quotes one of the Nazis as describing tanks as a disposable element of Nazi *Blitzkrieg*. It is a tank's disposability that is far more significant than the actual tank itself. A tank's disposability has more to do with a country's willingness to maintain supply from factory to field. Russia's willingness in that regard far exceeds any of Kyiv's European allies many times over.
12. It also extends beyond the United States. In contrast to the amount of information published on American artillery such as the article in the *Times* with the famous title, "Arsenal of Democracy," there is almost no information at all on American tank production.

13. *Forbes*, the business magazine responsible for ratings on billionaires, published in article on May 31st, 2023 describing how “Ukraine’s Challenge 2 Tanks Can Plow Right Through Russian Fortifications.” After the failed Ukrainian counteroffensive, *Forbes* published an article on March 27th this year, describing how “The British Challenge 2 is the Wrong Tank for Ukraine.” It is not so much that the Challenger 2 witnessed its relevancy for the Ukraine war change over time. It is that NATO is a not a center for the production of ‘Main Battle Tanks,’ anymore than Great Britain. It is the productive forces of a factory that is decisive. It is not necessarily the individual tank or commander. The supply line for the British Challenger, for instance, is dead. The recent decision to upgrade the Challenger II to a Challenger III does not solve this problem for the Ukraine war anymore than it does for Great Britain. None of the stunning upgrades the coalition seeks to introduce for the remodel transform Great Britain into a center for tank production, no matter how silver the new bullets may be.[] - [Aide à L’Ukraine: “C’est une guerre de capacité industrielle de défense. On est en économie de guerre,” *LCI*, April 21st, 2024]
14. “Do Tanks Have a Place in 21st-Century Warfare” is one of the most recent questions raised in an article published in the *New York Times* this Friday. The article addresses the threat that cheap drones pose to expensive German, British or American tanks in Ukraine’s hands. It describes how “as explosive drones gain battlefield prominence, even the mighty U.S. Abrams tank is increasingly vulnerable.”
15. The fact that the *NYT* choses to focus on Ukrainian rather than Russian losses for understanding a tank’s role in the 21st century contrasts with recent developments on the battlefield. Ukraine’s general Syrsky, for instance, stated: “Despite significant losses, the enemy is increasing his efforts by using new units on armored vehicles, thanks to which he periodically achieves tactical gains.” [] - [“Ukraine’s Big Vulnerabilities: Ammunition, Soldiers, and Air Defense,” *NYT*, April 16th, 2024] With Russia increasing the number of new units of armor in

the face of heavy losses, the determining factor for a tank's role in the 21st century becomes less about 'explosive drones' than the ability to replace losses. Ukraine's reliance upon the United States, Great Britain, or Germany is a chokepoint in its ability to replace tanks. It has nothing to do with Russia's 'explosive drones,' as Ukraine like side have these with Ukraine demonstrating a clear advantage over Russia. The 79th Air Assault Brigade's documentary on the losses Russia suffered demonstrates just how effective the brigade's use of drones is.

16. It is unclear why Victoria Nuland, whose policy of regime change focused on the precipitation of a US led NATO proxy war with Russia, failed to encourage Ukraine's military industrial base to build one or more of the more common Ukrainian Soviet-era tanks immediately after the *coup d'état*. These tanks, which the article in the *NYT* hardly mentions, are most suitable for warfare on the eastern front. It is clear from the lack of foresight on the part of those who

executed the *coup d'état* just how ill prepared they truly were.

On the Way to the Dnipro

17. The fall of Novomikhailovka hastens Russia's advance on the Dnipro. Russia's advance on Novomikhailovka is a Coordinated Mass Sector just like the one in the south on Netailove. Together these two villages open up roads whose capture allows the Russians to foreclose on Ukraine's entire defensive line in the Avdiivka direction from the Karlivka reservoir to the north behind Novoselivka Persha. The roads in the north and south respectively for Novomikhailovka and Netailove continue beyond the natural barrier the water line behind the Karlivka reservoir presents, making any attempt to defend the water line a new opportunity for a larger, second encirclement. It could be that within the Avdiivka direction the Russians reach a position at one or both of those two points that allows for a major breakthrough.
18. With the collapse of Ukraine's defensive lines in the Avdiivka direction, Russia edges closer

to the Dnipro, the point around which Russian forces are expected to coalesce for a major assault from multiple directions on the Kharkiv direction. Mine clearing vehicles in the north are already preparing the way for one or more of its points of entry.

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[1] - ["Российские войска за март освободили в зоне СВО пять населенных пунктов," Телеканал 360, 04.02.2024]

[2] - [צבא רוסייה נכנס למרכז העיר חרקוב, העיר השנייה בגודלה באוקראינה. רוסייה: הצלחנו לכתר שתי ערים בדרום אוקראינה – חרסון וברדיאנסק, תיק דבקה, 02.27.2022]

[3] - [אם הצבא האוקראיני יצליח לשים מצור - על הכוחות הרוסיים ליד חארקיב זו תהייה המפלה הגדולה ביותר של צבא רוסייה מאז מלחמת העולם השנייה, תיק דבקה 09.10.2022,]

[4] - [Russia Tightens Grip on East Ukraine City, *Wall Street Journal*, February 17th, 2024]

[] - ["Ukraine is heading for defeat," *Politico*, April 17th, 2024]
"The West's failure to send weapons to Kyiv is helping Putin win his war."

[] - ["How the Drone War in Ukraine Is Transforming Conflict,"]

[] - ["El regimiento estrella de Ucrania queda bajo mínimos por la falta de armamento y los errores propios," *El País*, April 22nd, 2024]

[] - ["*El País* сообщила о нулевой полезности танков Leopard для ВСУ," *РБК*, April 22nd, 2024]

[] - ["Прозрачное поле боя ослабило танки," *Взгляд*, November 30th, 2023]

[] - ["Танки начали терять свою роль на поле боя, заявил эксперт," *Взгляд*, 8 июля, 2022]

[] - ["Ukraine's Big Vulnerabilities: Ammunition, Soldiers, and Air Defense," *NYT*, April 16th, 2024]