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It's difficult for me right now to answer questions of 'What's new on the frontlines?'. Almost everywhere on the frontlines there are battles. Somewhere positional, elsewhere - offensive, and more often than not - defensive. In general, everywhere except for Donetsk and Kharkiv the frontline is stable. Both us and Ukrainians are entrenching. And... THIS IS VERY BAD! Why? Because, if a month or month and half ago the enemy only had mobile defence in Mykolaiv and Kryvyi Rih directions, now they are actively building fortified positions at the frontlines and in their near rears, which we will then need to be capturing FOR A LONG TIME AND WITH HUGE LOSSES. Just like Mariupol, Popasna, Izyum, Rubizhne and Severodonetsk. We will again need to wage fierce bloody fights for each village, every grove and every high-rise... pay with Russian blood for every few hundred meters conquered. And there will be no one to 'question' about it - 'this all happened naturally, as it was meant', which is certainly not true.

At the start of the operation the RF AF actually demonstrated highly manoeuvrable actions, deep strategic breakthroughs for tens and even hundreds of kilometers. They ended with 'nothing' for reasons I've already described and called out many times. (Initially, a completely inaccurate evaluation of operational situation, which was used as a basis for combat planning, and linked to this evaluation a severe lack of resources and means to hold on and control the conquered territory). Nevertheless, despite the resulting shocking 'half-failure' (in the South, no 'run to the border' has happened) of the first stage of the operation - it appeared much more lively (compared to the 'Second Concrete') than the bloody 'push-pull' which the hostilities have become since end of April and until now. Simply because in the first stage, there was no conscious purposeful and even 'famed in advance' by 'near-military' 'experts' sticking of the army into a STRATEGIC DEADLOCK. The military decisions were courageous and aimed at achieving a decisive victory.

Now however, even the TOTAL success (which is not expected in the near future) of the second stage, at best, will lead to costly (in terms of personnel and vehicle losses), fairly small territorial gains, achieved by PUSHING OUT the enemy from Donbas territory.

Let's imagine for a second, that in the next few weeks the enemy will be after all defeated through continuous frontal and flank attacks, and completely pushed out of LDPR borders. And? What will this achieve? Will this end the war? No, not at all. At best - it will reduce the frontline, not more. Let's say the enemy suffers heavy losses (they do now). But in those weeks they will be able (thanks to continuing mobilisation) to prepare new fresh reserves. Moreover, they already have these reserves! The enemy is so confident in the strategic stability of their frontline (abandoning 1-2 localities in 2-3 days has no effect on this) that they continue keeping a relatively large group at the border of Transnistria, and even created a new (several army BTGs) at the border with Belarus. And they continue forming new units and detachments both in deep rear, and also in Sumy and Chernihiv Oblasts given up by Russian forces during the 'run to the border'.

Thus, when the weakened in heavy fights and bloody assaults troops reach the borders of LDPR, they will be met by fresh and well-equipped UAF units at frontiers prepared for defence in advance. And even if those fresh units for whatever reason decide not to take over the initiative and begin a counter-offensive (one or more) - still the Russian Federation will face a perspective of a long positional war, which is nearly fatal (in current conditions) to our economy, social and socio-political situation.

But I'll be honest - receiving quite a lot of messages 'from the field' from soldiers, junior and middle commanders, enough to create an approximate 'mosaic' of the general situation on the frontlines, I personally have no significant hopes that the objective of fully clearing the Donbas will be complete by at least mid-June. Moreover, I presume (with high level of probability) that it will not be completed until the very point when UAF will try to overtake the strategic initiative by beginning the planned (right this moment) offensive operations. And yes - the most dangerous direction I believe is Kherson, since that's exactly where (and the enemy KNOWS IT VERY WELL) defending are the same in terms of equipment and training elements of DPR reservists, which (just those were from Luhansk) the enemy has ALREADY pushed out to the Russian border in Kharkiv Oblast. At the same time, the Donetsk militia will undoubtedly put up a fight. And the fight will be fierce. But their weaponry and equipment 'leave much to be desired' just like their leadership, if not less (although, I've probably said 'too much').

But, let's say the enemy for whatever reason decided to not attack, and will limit to sitting on the newly created defensive positions (offering our generals to continue 'smashing their soldier's foreheads against numerous fortresses'). What will the High Command do in this case?

After all, without breaking through the newly created and occupied by large enemy forces positions there will be no defeat of UAF. And without defeating UAF there will be no final victory - regardless of how many 'Kalibr's you launch at rear facilities, they still won't be

enough to fully paralyse the Ukrainian transport network and destroy the economy 'to the ground'. Especially it's meaningless to hope for victory through attrition taking into account that almost all of Europe and North America are acting as a rear for UAF. Thus, it will be necessary to try and defeat the enemy in field battles. And, excuse me, with whom, and with what?! If so far not even the partial mobilisation has been carried out?!

No one is giving clear answers to these questions. Simply because there aren't any. While the pests in the president's entourage will be assuring him that:

"Everything is fine, beautiful marquise

A little more and our triumph

Don't stress, don't look for surprises

Our love and honours are waiting!"

- nothing will change. And when it does change (unfortunately, the 'surprises' are likely to be no less discouraging than before the 'run to the border') it will be too late to do anything...

In the meantime ... In the meantime - in general terms:

- South of Izyum, units of the RF Armed Forces and LDPR are still "bashing head-on" against the Ukrainian defences on the approaches to the Sloviansk-Barvenkovo highway and to Sloviansk itself (in the last couple of days there is no information about progress);

- Heavy battles with a slow advance are taking place north of Popasna and south of Lisichansk (there is no discussion of any "cauldron" for the enemy in this area yet - so far only a possible "bag" with a very wide "neck" is appearing, which our fighters will still need to "tie up", and the enemy is well aware of this - the UAF are not led by morons, but by specialists from NATO);

- Also slowly, our troops are "encircling" the city of Lyman (Krasnyi Lyman) and trying to break through to Svyatogorsk;

- Near Donetsk, fierce attacks continue northeast of Avdiivka and southwest of Horlivka, in the area south of Maryinka, I have no information about the progress in the last 24 hours (so far, at least).

In Maruipol, the final surrender of Azovstal by the enemy and the capture of the group defending it is a major propaganda success, but - in the overall picture - it is a delayed consequence of the relative success of the FIRST stage of the operation, and not the "Second Concrete" one. In real time and from a military point of view, this is also, unfortunately, a purely

tactical success. No more.

As a general conclusion: our successes are still exclusively tactical in nature. The enemy is trying to keep ALL large settlements important in military and informational-propagandist sense. And - apparently - has enough strength and reserves to hope for success in this. If not complete success, then at least partial. The "attrition battle" (as I have repeatedly noted - as a military decision, I rate it no higher than "idiotic") in the Donbas continues and the "strategic impasse" (for the RF Armed Forces, but not for the UAF, who are gaining time) is getting deeper.

P.S. Those wishing to 'put something' to the author (ie myself) for the above conclusions - I refer to the text pinned at the top of the page.