



Turning point in the Ukraine war

The West is desperate for Russia to lose. But there are indications that Moscow is winning.

Peter Hanseler

Mon 25 Apr 2022

The Russian army is portrayed by Western politicians, media and masses as a bunch of idiots who have been running into the knife of the Ukrainians practically since day one without any comprehensible strategy and are being roughed up by the heroes. Possibly out of frustration, the Russians are slaughtering civilians. Every second-grader can follow this on his mobile phone, accompanied by cool videos, but you only watch "James Bond" when you're sixteen.

I have been following war history for forty years and have learned that what is reported during the fighting has very little to do with what is actually going on. I have therefore never commented on the current course of the war - in contrast to

the experts in the West, who all seem to have a direct line to the respective headquarters - impressive! In the following, I base my thoughts on facts in the past, on the military doctrine of the Russians and on statements of experts, among others Scott Ritter, an American who participated in the first Gulf War as a soldier and was a UN weapons inspector before the second Gulf War. All sources used here are freely accessible. I do not know whether all of the following is true. But it should be enough to make you think.

Twenty years of victory reports

During the Vietnam War, the American public was first informed daily about the victories on TV, sometimes with the most gruesome pictures, and then one day they saw the famous pictures of the evacuation of Americans from Saigon by helicopter. A few decades later, the images were repeated in Afghanistan. History shows that it is quite possible to proclaim victory for twenty years and still lose a war.

The Russians differ mentally from the West in many respects, but in times of war there are striking differences: some inform and cheer to keep the masses happy - others disinform.

The Russians see no advantage in blurting out what they really want to achieve.

The Russians see no advantage in blabbing about what they really want to achieve and exactly where they are. The Russian military doctrine - maskirovka, borrowed from the word mask - already characterised the Soviet Union's warfare in the Second World War

to keep the enemy in the dark about its own plans, progress and capabilities. The doctrine fits the Russian mentality very well. A Russian always thinks to himself: What is the point of me revealing this information?

Possibly the greatest success of this doctrine was shown in the past in June 1944, before the Bagration summer offensive, when the Soviets managed to make the Wehrmacht believe that the Soviets would not attack Heeresgruppe Mitte in White Russia. 2.3 million soldiers were deployed and the Germans were taken completely by surprise, losing an area as large as Germany in six weeks.

The main difference between the Russian strategy in Ukraine and what we have seen in Iraq, for example, is that the Russians did not aim to destroy the entire infrastructure of Ukraine before the ground troops went in. That is probably why the Russians call this a special military operation and not a war.

The US strategy is regularly different. For example, the US bombed Iraq for 44 days, resulting in the total destruction of infrastructure and thousands of civilian casualties. Only then did the ground forces move in, mainly to save their own personnel at the expense of civilians.

The difference in the outcome of the destruction is striking. The infrastructure, internet and mobile phones in Ukraine are still working. The aim of this operation, according to Russian statements, was to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine, not to destroy it. The Russians accepted to have more casualties by this tactic. According to Scott Ritter, a civilian usually dies for every soldier. Although civilians are killed, that number now stands at seven soldiers for every civilian.

Wherever the Russians went in Ukraine, they made an effort to have a good relationship with the civilian population. Military rations were distributed and bartering developed. The Ukrainian government, however, calls every Ukrainian who cooperates with the Russians an enemy and declares him an outlaw, whereby the receipt of or trade in goods with the Russians is already considered treason. The Russians also claim that the Butcha massacre was not committed by the Russians, but by Ukrainian security forces who took revenge on the collaborators. This version of the truth is not even discussed in the West because it does not correspond to the West's wishful thinking.

Land route to Crimea

In the intervention around Kiev, the Russians did not want to take Kiev, but to fix the 100,000 Ukrainian soldiers around the capital - this was achieved with 40,000 soldiers marching in from Belarus. This prevented the 100,000 Ukrainian troops from being moved to the east. The Russians used the same tactics in Odessa. The 80,000 Ukrainian soldiers around Odessa were pinned down by 30,000 Russian soldiers from the Crimea. At the same time, the Russians destroyed the Ukrainians' weapons arsenals and fuel depots in the west. The result was that the Russians could reach their military objectives in the east without being disturbed by Ukrainians displaced from the west.

The only city taken by the Russians is Mariupol, the most strategically important city for the Russians. Whoever controls Mariupol controls the land route from Russia to Crimea. I doubt that the Russians will surrender Mariupol.

Whether it will all play out that way is not certain. But the West, especially Western Europe, should come to terms with the idea that Russia may win and can and will impose its military objectives. Then it is up to Europe to possibly change its policy from escalation to deescalation.

ARTICLE TAGS:

Analysis Ritter, Scott Russia Ukraine NATO Afghanistan Irak Belarus Vietnam War
Gulf War Collective West