

## SITREP 7/24/24: General Syrsky Shocks With News of Russian Armour and Troop Surges

### By Simplicius

After a brief hiatus marking a period of attempted deflection, where Ukraine and its Western sponsors tried desperately to misdirect our gaze to Russia's putative 'high losses', this week has seen a spate of new articles again proclaiming Ukraine's dire frontline straits. The first comes from Kiev Independent which describes the grim conditions on the Toretsk front:

There's nothing noteworthy to quote—just the same old talk of high casualties, battered and beaten old soldiers hanging on by a thread—though it does give some insights into the ongoing Russian breakthroughs in that direction. A **new piece from The Economist** gives another very interesting tidbit. The article deals with Vadym Sukharevsky, Ukraine's head of the Unmanned Systems Forces, i.e. the drone czar of all Ukraine. The article notes this is the first position of its kind in the entire world, which does show how ahead of the curve Ukraine is when it comes to drones; as I've always said, it's a consequence of *necessity* for Ukraine. Russia can afford to be slightly more lax because they have a plethora of offensive options, whereas Ukraine has virtually nothing but drones to lean on. But if you think that means Russia is behind on drones, as the common narrative goes, think again: Ukraine's drone czar puts the final, decisive stamp on this much-debated fine-point:

Russia's full-scale invasion marked a step change in drone warfare. "February 2022 was the start of school for everyone," says Colonel Sukharevsky. Initially it was Ukraine that got ahead, developing an army of cheap, small drones to counter Russia's overwhelming artillery and missile advantage. That has since changed. Now, enemy drones outnumber Ukrainian ones six to one. But superior tactics and innovation still keep Ukraine competitive. Ukraine tends to be first in developing and adopting new technologies, driven by a policy of diversification. Russia's advantage in mass production means it can adapt and scale up much faster. The pace of change is frenetic, with feedback loops meaning that some software is updated every few hours. By the time Russian drones reach the front lines, Ukraine has sometimes already developed counter-measures, Colonel Sukharevsky claims. "Quantitatively Russia is ahead, but qualitatively we are keeping them at parity."

So, according to the literal head of the entire Ukrainian drone program, Russia at *worst* is at *qualitative* parity with Ukraine, but is ahead of them quantitatively six to one. Pro-UA propagandists have no further ground to stand on on this issue. But what's even *more* interesting is the following revelation. Read the snippet in its entirety, as it pertains to a lot of issues centrally covered here for the past few months:

Colonel Sukharevsky says drones will not overturn the fundamental principles of warfare. The primary role of artillery or infantry are undiminished, he says: "Military operations still depend on combined arms, and other kinds of troops will continue to be just as important." Drones will serve as a complement to traditional forces, offering better reconnaissance and more precise strike capability at a reduced risk to soldiers. The commander dismisses headlines promising "killer drone swarms" operating independent of human control. Yes, Ukraine already employs AI to optimise functionality—for example if the link between drone and pilot is lost. But the use, he says, is specialised and limited. "As a commander I will never relinquish the bulk of decision making to artificial intelligence... in the distant future we need such a decision, we'll look at it carefully. But you don't need AI to create swarms."

So firstly, the drone czar makes another huge revelation, which totally refutes claims that Ukraine can possibly be inflicting more casualties on Russia. He states clearly that drones have *not* superseded artillery on the battlefield—so how can Ukraine possibly be suffering less casualties when Russia has by far its largest advantage in artillery? A moot point anyway, we now know, since according to him Russia has the *drone* advantage as well.

But then he goes on to dismiss all the far-flung talks of AI drone swarms and the like, perhaps refuting all the highly ambitious DARPA and Eric Schmidt (“Project White Stork”) initiatives that were said to be on the cusp of turning the tide of the war against Russia. The article ends with this foreboding clincher from the drone czar:

*He jokes that he has two predictions for the direction of drone warfare: one bad and the other fairly bad. “We are the ones already in the trenches. You can’t scare us. But the rest of the world? They might be in for a rude awakening.”*

Next we have the Guardian with this beauty: It starts off from the get-go with a bit of unintentional humor, exposing its journalists as not being much acquainted with the concept of OPSEC:

**S**itting on a stack of ammunition crates at a **secret military base**, Col Gen Oleksandr Syrskyi was tight-lipped about when Ukraine will receive a long-awaited delivery of F-16 fighter jets. The Dutch and other allies **have said they will arrive soon**. This week? Or maybe August? “I know. But I can’t tell you about it, unfortunately,” he said, with an apologetic grin, as **gulls squawked nearby**.

But the next series of admissions is so shocking, you might need to take a seat for this—and no, I’m not being hyperbolic or clickbaity. Read the following, then read it again:

Syrskyi is Ukraine’s new commander-in-chief. His unenviable task is to defeat a bigger Russian army. Two and half years into Vladimir Putin’s full-scale onslaught, he acknowledges the Russians are much better resourced. They have more of everything: tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, soldiers. Their original 100,000-strong invasion force has grown to 520,000, he said, with a goal by the end of 2024 of 690,000 men. The figures for Ukraine have not been made public.

“When it comes to equipment, there is a ratio of 1:2 or 1:3 in their favour,” he said. Since 2022 the number of Russian tanks has “doubled” - from 1,700 to 3,500. Artillery systems have tripled, and armoured personnel carriers gone up from 4,500 to 8,900. “The enemy has a significant advantage in force and resources,” Syrskyi said. “Therefore, for us, the issue of supply, the issue of quality, is really at the forefront.”

There’s so much to unpack there, I have to do it in sequence. Firstly, to this day, I’m the only analyst in the world that has maintained the true total force numbers of the Russian invasion were below 100k, while everyone else had their head in the clouds with the CNN numbers of 250k and up. Here, for the first time, it appears the commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces himself confirms Russia’s opening force was only 100k strong. Many will recall I

estimated it at various times to have been 80-120k or less, versus a Ukrainian Army that was already 250k+ itself at the time, prior to emergency mobilizing hundreds of thousands more. Mark that as another feather in the ol' cap.

The next shocker: the Russian Army is on pace to hit nearly 700,000 troops by the end of 2024? How in the world is that possible? You've just been telling us they suffer something like 100k deaths per month and are being absolutely slaughtered by the mighty AFU. This simply doesn't make sense. Could it be that, perhaps, I was right again, particularly about how MediaZona numbers were desperately covered up as they began to hit historic lows, and Ukraine began to overcompensate for its own ongoing collapse by drumming up fake Russian losses?

The next one is related, which we just discussed at length in one of the last reports. Russian tanks not only outnumber Ukrainian ones by several orders of magnitude but have *grown* from 1700 to 3500? Artillery has **tripled** while Russian armored personnel carriers went from 4500 to 8900? Weren't they just gaslighting us that Russia is running out of tanks and IFVs, producing only 50 barrels a year, etc.? What is this sudden revolutionary about-face? Interestingly, Syrsky acknowledges recent rumors of a new Russian Zaporozhye offensive, which went as follows:

*Ukrainian channels with reference to the command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine write about the **concentration of up to 90 thousand Russian military personnel in the Zaporozhye direction. Forces are accumulating and are almost ready to strike in the direction of Orekhov and Gulyai-pole.***

Of course, Syrsky had to throw at least one obligatory bone to the company line *somewhere*, lest all hope seem lost, thus he trotted out the old losses canard, despite it totally contradicting earlier manpower figures:

*Russia's successes, meanwhile, came at a staggering human cost. The Kremlin's casualties were "three times" higher than Ukraine's, and "even more" in certain directions, Syrskyi said. "Their number of killed is much bigger," he emphasised. **In February Volodymyr Zelenskiy said 31,000 Ukrainian service personnel had died since 2022. Could Syrskyi update this figure? He declined, saying losses were "sensitive" and a topic Moscow could exploit.***

Quite convenient though how Ukraine's own losses, however, remain too "sensitive" for publication. In fact, Zelensky himself recently has been making odd hints at growing Ukrainian losses, coupled with calls for the war to end. As a final confirmation of my own analysis, Syrsky admits that Ukrainian F-16s would likely be relegated to playing air defense roles and says Russian air defenses and airpower is too great for F-16s to be allowed anywhere near the frontline. Syrsky also finishes the article by hinting at Ukraine's own mobilization woes, and how troop numbers are difficult. He was likely not at great liberty to give a genuine accounting of the matter, but for that we have other adjacent sources, like Major General Riho Yukhtegi of the Estonian Armed Forces:

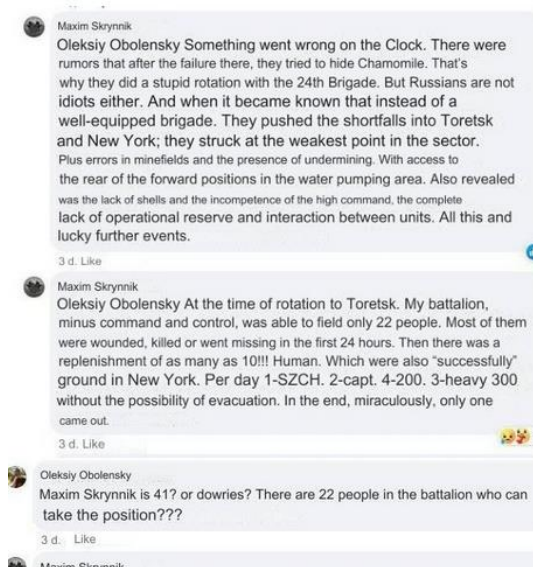
**Ukraine continues to experience a shortage of fighters, despite mobilization efforts - Major General of the Estonian Army Riho Yukhtegi noted that plans to form 10 new brigades turned out to be ineffective. Instead, mobilization is mainly aimed at closing gaps at the front.**

*“Today, many units claim to be fully staffed, but in fact face a shortage of personnel,” he said. “Inadequate training and the static nature of trench warfare make it costly and dangerous. Another problem is the lack of time to train new soldiers. “Weekly training is not enough to effectively fight in the trenches,” the expert added. Insufficient training of new fighters creates risks at the front, which the Russian side is actively using. The situation at the front may remain unstable for a long time, since both sides cannot concentrate large forces for a decisive blow. “The solution to the conflict will most likely be political rather than military,” the expert concluded.*

Note specifically what he says how many Ukrainian brigades claim to be staffed, when in actuality they're not. Here's another new confirmation of the fact from a real Ukrainian officer:

***Ukrainian militant Maxim Skrynnik reports that in some Ukrainian battalions there are no more than 20-30 people left in the ranks and in some companies-no more than five.***

In his opinion, it was the transfer of bloodless units to Toretsk and New York that was the reason for such a rapid collapse of Ukrainian defense. Otherwise all is well. Ukraine is winning on the whole front.



This was reportedly confirmed by Ukraine's former Deputy Chief of General Staff:

*There is an acute shortage of military personnel in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. In some sections of the front, soldiers are not enough even for defensive actions. Such a statement was made by the former Deputy Chief*

*of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Lieutenant General Igor Romanenko.*

*At the front, units are staffed by a third in certain areas, difficult, say, in such areas. (...) It is not necessary to count on serious ones not so that on offensive actions, but also on defensive —, "— the Ukrainian general stated. In this regard, Romanenko emphasized that the appeal to the Ukrainian army is not carried out as decisively as the situation requires. "Mobilization does not meet current needs," — summarized the former chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces.*

*Indeed, the shortage of middle and junior commanders in the Ukrainian army leads to an increase in losses, especially among yesterday's mobilized, who have no experience in warfare. The authorities, having arranged an unlimited "rehabilitation", only strengthened the shortage of high-quality branch commanders, platoon commanders, company commanders, battalion commanders who would correctly make decisions and correctly use force and means, who are subordinate to them. As a result, desertion and the refusal of soldiers to go into "clear" storms that the government arranges for political purposes are growing in the Ukrainian army. Largely because of this, serious fortifications in the Donetsk region will pour out, many of which have been preparing for 8-10 years.*

In fact, there have been so many large-scale strikes on Ukrainian deployment points just this week alone, that it seems at least 500-1000 soldiers or more have perished in only 3-4 different Iskander attacks. I've nearly lost count of them all, but here's a few reported ones just from the past several days:

*Colonel of the Spanish Army Reserve Pedro Baños:*

*I just received information that I cannot confirm, I asked for confirmation and they told me that it is accurate. These are sources that I have known for many, many years, 30 years, and they are usually very reliable. **So, the Russians carried out an attack on Odessa, which killed 18 members of the British Special Air Service and injured 25 more. And they tell me that French soldiers died.** These are not mercenaries who are French, no, these are soldiers of the French army. **They were killed in large numbers, I was told that the number was greater than in Algeria.** These are scary numbers because we are talking about NATO countries. And, obviously, special operations forces are always the first to act in such scenarios. And it has also long been known that there are special operations forces, which, among other things, are used to guide, for example, missiles, to illuminate targets, and not only missiles, but also drones. Because it is part of their mission, in addition to advising and conducting all sorts of disruption operations, to train special operations forces on the ground.*

This Iskander attack was said to have wiped out 50 mercenaries in the Kharkov region:

*A deployment point for instructors and advisers from NATO countries (including the USA) was discovered near the settlement of Dergachi in the Kharkiv region. An Iskander-M missile system team decided to visit the foreign specialists to send them back to their homeland as soon as possible (in zinc coffins). As a result, the Ukrainian Armed Forces lost up to 50 of their foreign comrades.*

His one reportedly wiped out even many times more:

*"Yesterday, Iskander-M missile systems delivered powerful strikes on two echelons of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the DPR. Up to 240 armed personnel of the 41st mechanized brigade were destroyed, and 60 pieces of equipment were destroyed and damaged. The strike was in the area of the settlement of Barvenkovo."*

Today's Iskander attack even wiped out a Ukrainian tank repair facility in the Kharkov region—check out the drone's new AI detection capable of isolating every tank in the picture:

***Iskander strike on the control point of the 63rd mechanized brigade of the Armed Forces of Ukraine***

Now a Ukrainian economist has reportedly claimed on video that internal budgetary figures confirm at least 400k casualties:

*Economist Danil Monin dismantled the expenditures of the military budget for 6 months of 2024, the conclusions are striking, and most importantly confirm the figure of 400 thousand dead and wounded military personnel. It turns out we spent twice as much money on payments to the dead than on providing the living military! It will now be difficult for the Office of the President and the General Staff to prove the opposite, because no one will tell where hundreds of billions have gone in 2024.*

Resident UA channel corroborated with the following slice:

**#Inside**

*Our source in the OP said that now payments for the dead military at the front account for 15% of the budget of Ukraine, the figure constantly melts and makes Kabmin increase spending. To eliminate the budget deficit, the Government urgently raises taxes and military training.*

It may say dead and wounded, but in reality we know Ukraine pays nearly nothing to actual wounded, so any budgetary constraints would likely stem from dead or severely wounded only. Here's a recent video of a crippled AFU veteran who literally shows his government pay outs to his account on his phone—it comes out to \$36 per month:

*If you're thinking maybe 1,500 UAH is a lot, the average Ukrainian monthly salary, a cursory web search shows me, is nearly 25,000 UAH; so you decide how charitable that 1,500 from Zelensky really is.*

Rob Lee reports:

Yuriy Butusov says the situation on the Pokrovsk front is "critical" after Russia advanced 6km over the past seven days. **He says Russia deliberately focuses its assaults on the most vulnerable brigades with poor command and control.** He also notes a lack of coordination of UAVs and EW, which leads to UAV losses from EW fratricide.

Deepstate UA reports:

*The operational-tactical situation (on the Pokrovsk front) became critical over the weekend after the Ukrainian infantry brigade holding Prohres conducted a chaotic retreat (the post suggests they were not trained properly). The 47th Mechanized Brigade responded but could not hold the town due to a lack of infantry. Now a pocket has been created north of the town and the 1st and 3rd battalions from Ukraine's 31st Mechanized Brigade are at risk of an encirclement, but they say there is no withdrawal order.*

Here's one of the above-named retreats, where a whole conga-line of AFU was covered with artillery:

*Deepstate UA channel had even more to share about the collapsing AFU lines around Prohres/Progress. Note what they say about Ukrainian units of the 31st Brigade being surrounded in the kettle, with "company management absent because the commanders have been wounded or killed."*

And might I mention that in that region a Ukrainian Abrams got stuck in a rut and was finished off by Russian Krasnopol shells:

*Fighting on the northern flank of Avdeevka.*

*A Ukrainian Armed Forces Abrams tank that was stuck and abandoned in a strong point west of Volchye was hit by Krasnopol guided ammunition. The disastrous weight gain in Western tanks has been a major contributing factor to their failure in Ukraine despite all the ceremony with which their arrivals were announced. Recall that in the case of the [#Abrams](#) the disastrous blow to their 'corporate image' meant that the stupid Ukrainian Slavs were not allowed to upgrade the tank in field conditions, and it was not until the loss of at least 10% of the units that the manufacturers allowed the implementation of cope-cages against drones.*

But going on.

North of Progress, the area to the flank of Niu York is being enveloped in a cauldron as well:

*Lastly, Russia launched what is claimed by Ukrainian sources as one of the largest armored assaults thus far, perhaps as prelude to the rumored Zaporozhye build up. The assault was reportedly in the Kurakhove direction, west of Marinka-*

*Ukraine's 79th Air Assault Brigade says it countered a large-scale Russian armored assault this morning that involved 11 tanks (including turtle tanks), 45 armored vehicles, a BMPT tank support combat vehicle, 12 motorcycles, and 200 assault troops. The assault began from multiple directions at once at dawn, and it was countered with UAVs, artillery, FPVs, and mines.*

As per usual, a highly edited video was released showing totally de-contextualized explosions, with commentary claiming dozens of tanks lost, 40 infantry killed, etc. But in reality, no such thing is shown and the deliberately schizo editing is a testament to deceptive concealing of Russian advances:

*For all we know, half the randomly shown explosions in the video are Ukrainian units blowing up. Same goes for the destroyed tank husks littering the battlefield, most of which are from past battles, many of which likely belonging to the AFU. A longer graphic version does show a few soldiers dead, but hardly even a fraction of the 40 they claim. Either way, it demonstrates the scale of armored assaults Russia is still pouring out despite being close to "running out of tanks."*