

Deploying “Elite Brigade” Will Not Revitalise Kiev’s Failed Counteroffensive

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The Ukrainian 82nd Air Assault Brigade, one of the last reserves of the Ukrainian Army but described as its “most powerful unit,” has entered the battlefield and is combating Russian forces. However, their entry will not revitalise an already failed and exhausted counteroffensive.

The Russian Army confirmed on August 15 that it repelled three attacks from this elite Ukrainian unit near Robotyne, Zaporozhye. In the battle, 200 Ukrainian soldiers were killed, and five tanks, eight armoured and infantry fighting vehicles and two Msta-B howitzers were destroyed.

Forbes reported that the brigade — which had spent most of the last two and a half months in reserve as the Ukrainian army tried to mount its counteroffensive — had finally been deployed, calling it “good and bad news” for Kiev.

Equipped with Challenger 2 tanks armed with depleted uranium shells, the Ukrainian 82nd Air Assault Brigade is also armed with Marder and Stryker armoured vehicles, among the most modern NATO equipment delivered to Kiev.

The 82nd Brigade is said to be among “the last major units” at the disposal of the Ukrainian command. Their deployment “could significantly boost” the firepower of the Ukrainian forces in the near term. Still, when the 82nd and its sister, the 46th Air Assault Brigade, withdraw, “there might not be any equally powerful fresh brigades to fill in for them,” meaning “the counteroffensive could lose momentum,” Forbes [warned](#).

“If the Russians in Robotyne can hold their ground, and endure what is likely to be a major but temporary surge in Ukrainian combat power, they might eventually find

themselves in a position to strike back at the Ukrainians—once the surge brigades rotate off the front line without replacement,” the article concluded.

Nonetheless, the author exaggerates the capabilities of the 82nd Air Assault Brigade, which is not even a division. To date, Ukrainian troops have been unable to break through the first line of Russian defences. Therefore, throwing an elite reserve into battle already demonstrates Ukraine’s desperate situation of being unable to break the meatgrinder.

The fact that the 82nd Air Assault Brigade is armed with British tanks and modern Western combat vehicles does not mean it can change the situation. This is because Ukrainian forces cannot overcome minefields and break through the opposition posed by Russian reconnaissance and strike forces operating along the entire line of contact.

Deploying the 82nd Air Assault Brigade also points to Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu correctly assessing that Ukraine’s military resources are almost exhausted.

“The preliminary results of the fighting show that Ukraine’s military potential is practically exhausted,” Shoigu said when speaking at the 11th International Security Conference in Moscow on August 15.

While the counteroffensive has failed, Kiev and Western leaders have started pointing the finger. Ukrainian officials blame Western governments and media for the overoptimism surrounding the counteroffensive. However, this is gaslighting by the Kiev regime as they were the source of much hype and propaganda surrounding the offensive, which Western governments and media were more than happy to disseminate.

It is recalled that in the preparation stages of the counteroffensive in 2022, Chief of Ukraine’s Main Directorate of Intelligence Kyrylo Budanov predicted that the capture of Crimea would happen “not in summer [of 2023], but by the end of spring – perhaps, even a little earlier.”

Budanov said he was not afraid of making such predictions because “it’s not even the beginning of the end [of the war]; it’s a process, and it’s in the making.” He even refused to backtrack from his audacious predictions when given an opportunity in April, saying he had “no reason” to reassess his prediction.

As it turned out, the much-lauded offensive did not even begin in the spring, but in the first week of summer, humiliating Budanov’s predictions that led to NATO ridiculously planning parties and events in Crimea in the expectation the peninsula would be captured by Ukrainian forces.

For his part, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky tried to control expectations while also building Western confidence to maintain the flow of equipment, weapons, and, of course, money. Zelensky only attempted to temper expectations when it was evident that the highly promoted spring offensive would become a summer one.

It can be said that deploying the elite 82nd Air Assault Brigade into the Russian meatgrinder is the last throw of the dice for Ukraine with only weeks of summer left, which marks a symbolic and literal reminder of how the “spring” offensive was an utter failure. Ukraine has reportedly committed over 90% of its troops in recent days, and in the likelihood that they fail in their objectives, the country will be left with no serious fighting forces, leaving it at the mercy of the Russian military.

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