

# Russian large-scale combat actions in Ukraine expected in February. The Role of Belarus

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*A new wave of activity is expected for the Russian special military operation during February. The recent changes in the command of the operation appear to have been carefully planned in order to elevate the combat to a new level and several of Moscow's strategic objectives may soon be achieved, radically changing the course of the conflict.*

According to information provided by Russian military, a major offensive is being prepared for the period between February and early March. The informants say that the objectives will be:

1. Reaching the borders of the regions recently reintegrated into the Russian Federation, pacifying the new oblasts;
2. capturing Nikolaev, Odessa, as well as the entire Black Sea coast, reaching Transnistria;
3. seizing Kiev, forcing a political capitulation of the neo-Nazi regime until early March.

The territory of Belarus will become the main springboard for the upcoming strike. Mobilized Russian servicemen are being trained in training camps in Belarus, where heavy military equipment and combat aircraft are concentrated. A large bombardment force is in readiness for action. Also, Russian forces in Belarus have been collecting strategic information on the location of Ukrainian units, mainly about Kiev's air defense, gathering intelligence data that will be used to plan the attacks.

In parallel to Belarus, Zaporozhye and Lugansk are also key zones for the Russian strategy. It is expected that massive attacks will come from these regions during the offensive, destroying enemy units in a short period of time which will allow a rapid Russian advance on the battlefield, reaching the zones listed in the above-mentioned objectives.

Sources also report that for the offensive to be successful Russian forces will focus on blocking all enemy's supply lines. The main route of arrival of supplies to Ukraine is the border with Poland, where there is the transit of NATO's ammunition and military equipment.

In fact, the battlefield conditions seem favorable for these objectives to be achieved. The Ukrainian forces are currently exhausted and weak. On the other hand, the mobilized Russian soldiers are fully prepared to engage in high-intensity combats. In addition, Russian

artillery positions in Belarus and in the liberated territories have a privileged location, which significantly increases the chances of victory in the coming offensive.

Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, was promoted to the position of Commander of the Joint Forces of the Russian Federation in the Special Military Operation Zone. Gerasimov's arrival to power seems to have been a move towards the final stage of the special military operation.

His predecessor, General Surovikin played an important role while in command. A veteran of Chechnya and Syria and having extensive experience in counterterrorism, Surovikin was appointed to the post at a time when Ukrainian terrorist actions were on the rise. He fulfilled the goal of neutralizing the enemy's offensive potential with his strong actions on the Ukrainian critical infrastructure, at the same time that he saved thousands of Russian lives with his policy of avoiding trench warfare and prioritizing long-distance bombing. Now, however, the special military operation needs a new direction.

And this was the main reason for the appointment of Valery Gerasimov. As Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, he is undoubtedly the most prestigious Russian officer and therefore the right man to lead the operation's most decisive moves. The objective now is no longer to break the enemy's offensive potential, but to force Kiev's neo-Nazi regime into capitulation through a huge offensive.

After so many Russian attempts to negotiate a peaceful resolution, with the Ukrainian government ignoring them and insisting on an irresponsible military campaign, now there seems to be no other possible end to the conflict than a Russia's offensive strong enough to liberate the entire Ukrainian coastline and capture Kiev.

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