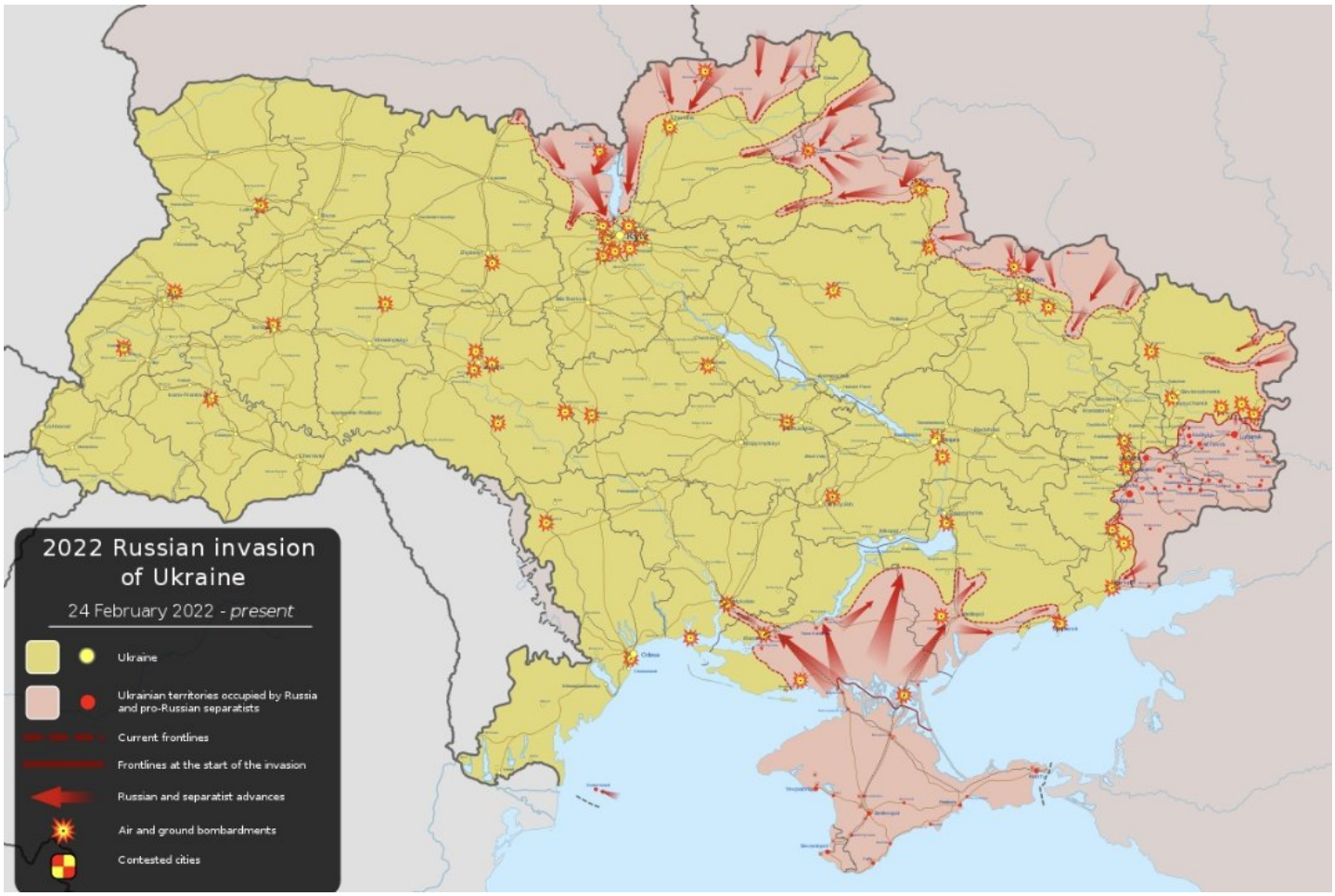
Twitter Thread by Kamil Galeev

Kamil Galeev
@kamilkazani

Why Russia will lose this war?

Much of the "realist" discourse is about accepting Putin's victory, cuz it's *guaranteed*. But how do we know it is?

I'll argue that analysts 1) overrate Russian army 2) underrate Ukrainian one 3) misunderstand Russian strategy & political goals■



Consider a timely paper on Russian army by Bismarck Analysis. It's good & informative. It's correct on its land-based and artillery-centric character. It's also correct that Minister of Defence Serdyukov greatly increased army's efficiency in 2007-2012. But it's still misleading

Modern Russia Can Fight And Win Land Wars

Technological advances strengthen Russia's artillery-centric army and shrink the threat of a rout from the air by NATO. Russia is poised to change political outcomes with military means for decades.



Samo Burja

Feb 23

4



Yes, Minister Serdyukov indeed reformed the army. He increased its efficiency, fought with corrupt and crony armament producers improving the army supplies. As a result he became extremely unpopular, made tons of powerful enemies and was ousted in 2012 losing his power and status



His successor Shoygu knew better than that. Now who's Shoygu? Shoygu is the *only* single Russian minister who uninterruptedly worked in government since 1991, since the very beginning of Russian Federation. He worked for all presidents, all prime ministers avoided all purges



What does it mean? It means he's a cunning political entrepreneur, great in court politics, publicity, image. You survive every single administration by maxing your political survival. And to max it you need to minimise animosity. So you never object to powerful interest groups



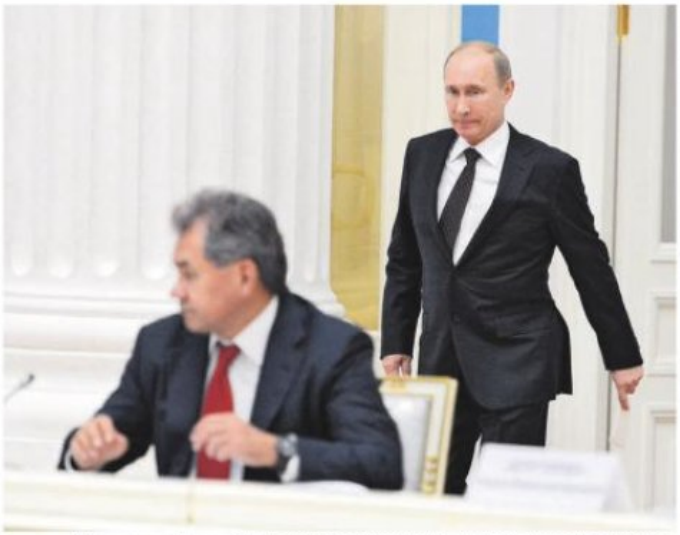
Serdyukov fought with interest groups and was destroyed. Shoygu was smarter than that. He launched a PR campaign presenting himself as the "saviour" from the Serdyukov's legacy. Whatever his predecessor did, was dismantled. Media cheered, people cheered, interest groups cheered

итоги года / политика

Генерал и пока не его армия

Сергей Шойгу спасает Минобороны от наследия Анатолия Сердюкова

6 ноября 2012 года Владимир Путин отправил в отставку министра обороны Анатолия Сердюкова. Его место в тот же день занял Сергей Шойгу, который возглавлял Министерство по чрезвычайным ситуациям рекордные 18 лет и пробыл губернатором Московской области не менее рекордные 6 месяцев. С первых же дней в Минобороны господин Шойгу приступил к ревизии полученного наследия.



Министерство обороны президент Владимир Путин доверил самому проверенному кадру — спасателю Сергею Шойгу

ФОТО ДМИТРИЯ АЗАРОВА

Отставку Анатолия Сердюкова господин Путин мотивировал тем, что необходимы условия для создания «условий объективного расследования всех вопросов, возникших вокруг Минобороны» (см. стр. 4). По сведениям „Ъ", господин Шойгу узнал о новом назначении за полчаса до официального заявления господина Путина.

Изначально позиции нового министра были почти идеальны: его предшественник поссорился со всеми, с кем можно. Это и гендиректор госкорпорации «Ростехнологии» Сергей Чемезов (экс-министр пытался забрать себе активы дочерней структуры госкорпорации «Рособоронэкспорт»), и вице-премьер Дмитрий Рогозин (при Анатолии Сердюкове Минобороны с боями закупало продукцию российского ОПК), и глава президентской администрации Сергей Иванов. Элитные конфликты подкреплялись ощущением того, что бывшего министра обороны не любят в армии. У нового министра таких отягощений не было.

7 ноября господин Шойгу указом президента был восстановлен на воинской службе в звании генерала армии. Этот штрих должен был показать офицерскому корпусу, что в ведомство пришел свой человек.

На первых порах господин Шойгу отменял непопулярные решения Анатолия Сердюкова. Спустя сутки после назначения он поручил включить кадетов Суворовского и Нахимовского училищ в Парад Победы. Через несколько дней заново было воссоздано управление боевой подготовки, ликвидированное в ходе реформы в 2009 году. Спустя несколько недель были возрождены медицинские и спортивные роты. Все это вызывало одобрение у военной и околовоенной общественности. Но с каждым днем в Минобороны становится все меньше того, что господин Шойгу сможет исправить за своим предшественником. В скором времени ему придется принимать свои решения, которые могут быть восприняты уже не так одобрительно.

Генералу Шойгу предстоит лично следить за состоянием гособоронзаказа, а ведь он ни разу при Анатолии Сердюкове, как, впрочем, и при всех остальных министрах, полностью не выполнялся. При экс-министре это связывалось с внедренной им практикой максимального снижения суммы контрактов с оборонными предприятиями. Сергей Шойгу дал указание скорректировать оборонзаказ. По данным „Ъ", в декабре были заключены контракты на приобретение снарядов и боеприпасов российского производства на 5 млрд руб., хотя вопрос их утилизации остается в числе первых. Также новый министр принял решение о закупке боевой машины десанта БМД-4М, которую на протяжении года просил приобрести командующий ВДВ Владимир Шаманов и которую не хотел брать Анатолий Сердюков.

Новому министру придется уделить внимание комплектации вооруженных сил контрактниками — до 2017 года их численность должна составить порядка 425 тыс. человек (планируемый ежегодный прирост по 50 тыс. человек в предыдущие годы достигался с трудом). Ему надо понять, что именно нужно сделать с системой военного образования — «болонская система» обучения Сергеем Шойгу уже была отменена, на очереди вопрос о систематизации 71 вуза в 10 учебных учреждений. Новому министру придется определиться не только со структурой самих войск, но и с системой их управления (при Анатолии Сердюкове было три звена: объединенное стратегическое командование—оперативное командование—бригада). Надо будет понять, насколько реально оказались боеспособны войска воздушно-космической обороны, созданные в декабре 2011 года, определить роль главкоматов ВВС, ВМФ и сухопутных войск, поскольку начиная с 2008 года их роль в системе Минобороны только снижалась: от первоначальных 20 функций осталось лишь пять.

В данный момент Сергей Шойгу уделяет наибольшее внимание вопросу имущества, находящегося и находившегося в распоряжении ведомства. Новому главе департамента имущественных отношений Дмитрию Куракину, пришедшему из администрации Мособласти, дано задание провести не только аудит состояния объектов Минобороны, но и доложить, какие здания и земли продавались раньше. И при необходимости отправлять результаты собственной проверки в следственные органы. Кроме того, Сергей Шойгу предложил часть полномочий по управлению активами Минобороны доверить Росимуществу. Здесь его ждала неудача. Глава Минэкономразвития Андрей Белоусов назвал это решение нецелесообразным. Тем не менее министр обороны отстаивает свою идею.

Следующий на очереди спор — с министром финансов Антоном Силуановым, поскольку военный бюджет постоянно требует дополнительных вливаний, а Минфин доказывает, что лишних денег нет. Например, в июне 2012 года Анатолий Сердюков безуспешно просил Минфин увеличить бюджетные расходы на обеспечение жильем военных в четыре раза — до 366 млрд руб. Теперь деньги просить придется Сергею Шойгу.

Иван Сафронов

That's a very, very typical problem. Efficiency-maxing requires ruthlessness in dealing with established elites and interest groups. Meanwhile court-politics-maxing requires pondering to them and not making enemies. Serdyukov was maxing efficiency, Shoygu - court politics



There was another issue. Shoygu is ethnic Tuvan. In such a country as Russia minority member can hardly become the supreme leader. People don't perceive him as ethnic Russian (see his palace) which means he's not dangerous for the leader and you can safely delegate him the army



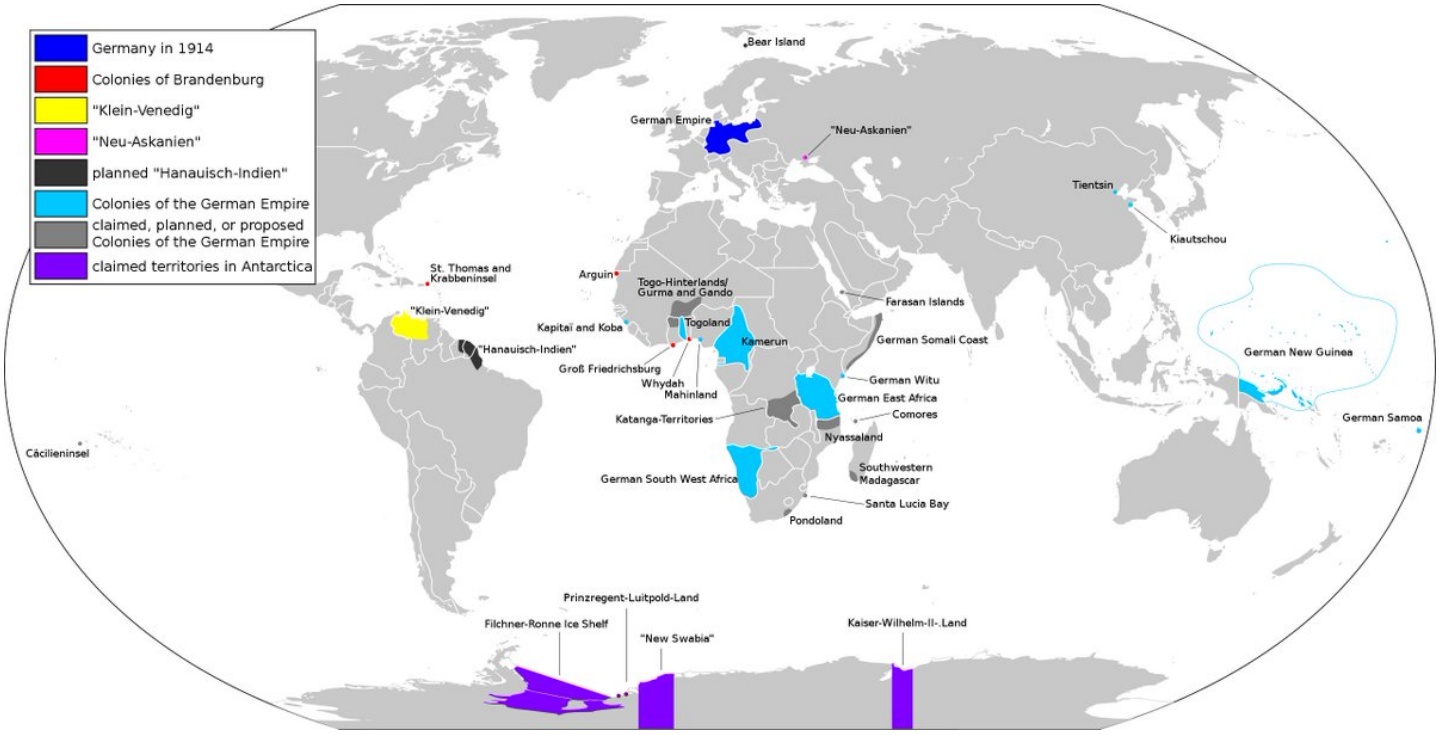
Shoygy not only purged Serdyukov's appointees, pondered to old military establishment, stopped arguing with army suppliers about the equipment cost and quality. He also pondered to numerous feel-good-lies regarding the Russian big strategy. Let's consider the army vs navy problem



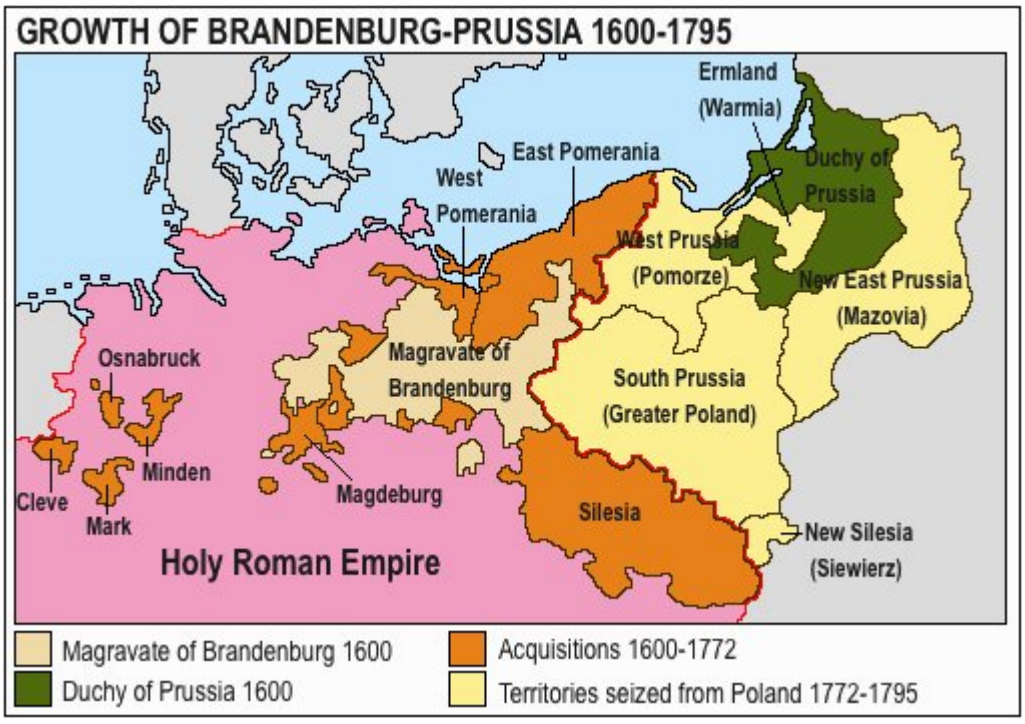
Army vs navy had been a traditional dilemma of European powers for centuries. As a rule, you couldn't support both first class army and first class navy, you had to choose. Some powers ignored this to their demise - like 17-18th cc France. Others were more rational, like Prussia



We kinda forgot it but in the 17th c principality of Brandenburg centered in Berlin tried to play into a "global maritime power". They built a navy, established colonies in Caribbean and Africa (red). Super costly, super hubris, super stupid. Consumed tons of resources in vain



In 18th c. they reconsidered. They sold their colonies, dismantled the navy and started land-maxing. They correctly realised that if they suppress their hubris and minimise the navy (to zero), they can land-max and build the first class army. Which would then unify Germany



So. Land-maxing requires minimising the naval ambition. Does Russia minimise its naval ambition? No. It feels obliged to maintain as much Soviet naval legacy as possible. Keep old ships afloat, build new ones, maintain and expand infrastructure for the ocean navy



Here is another dilemma. Regional fleets can be effectively used in land wars. For example, Russia declared "navy manoeuvres" and then attacked Ukraine from the sea. That's cheap and effective. But keeping a regional fleet doesn't sound sexy. It's efficiency-maxing, not PR-maxing



And Russia is PR-maxing. Putin declared that the share of new ships should reach 70% by 2027. Old Soviet ships are becoming obsolete, Russia's building new ones. BUT. Major Soviet shipyards are located in Ukraine. So now Russia expands shipyard infrastructure to reach this goal



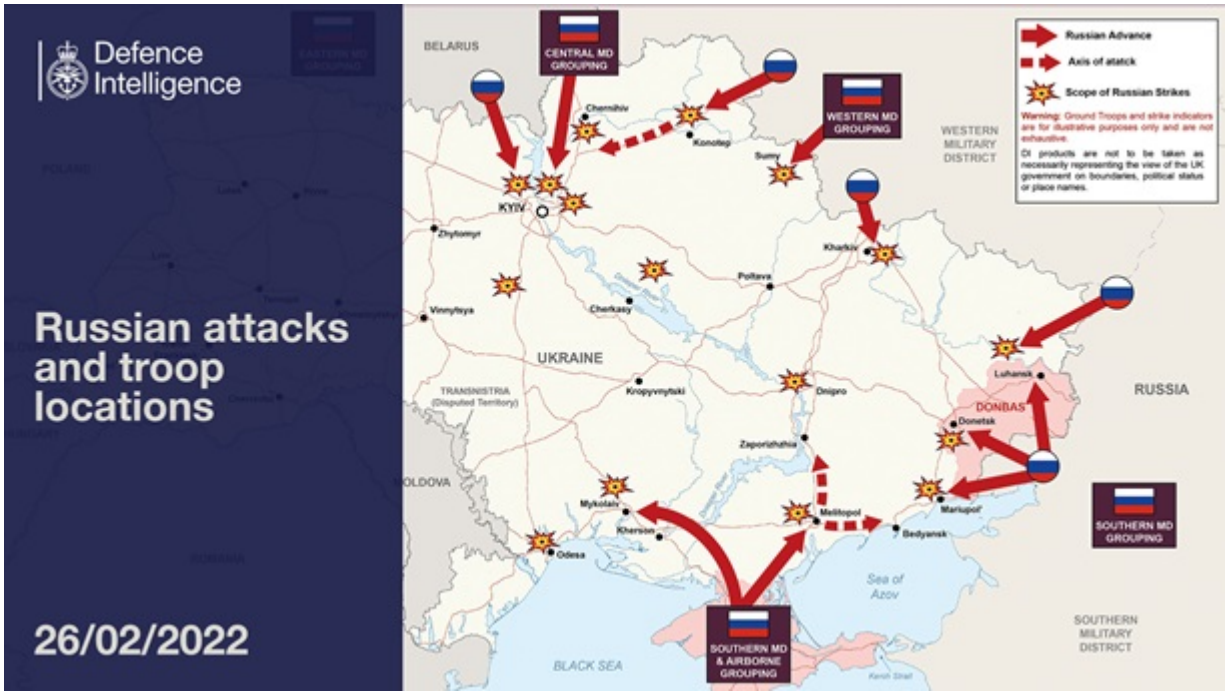
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России нужен мощный, сбалансированный военно-морской флот, заявил на форуме «Армия-2021» президент России Владимир Путин. По словам главы государства, к 2027 году доля современных кораблей должна достигнуть 70%. «Газета.Ru» разбиралась, какие корабли сейчас строятся для ВМФ и какие пополнят его состав в 2022 году.

Soviet naval legacy is a curse of Russian military. USSR could afford ocean fleets with carrier strike group. Russia can't. But abandoning Soviet ambitions would require suppressing their own hubris (impossible). So they strive to maintain it. Ergo: they can't and won't land-max



How does it reflect on this war? First, Russian invading force is small. It has LOTS of artillery ofc. But it's not numerous enough to win. Pro-Russian analysts compare their advance with Barbarossa. But unlike Wehrmacht in 1941 Russian invaders have only *ONE ECHELON OF TROUPS*



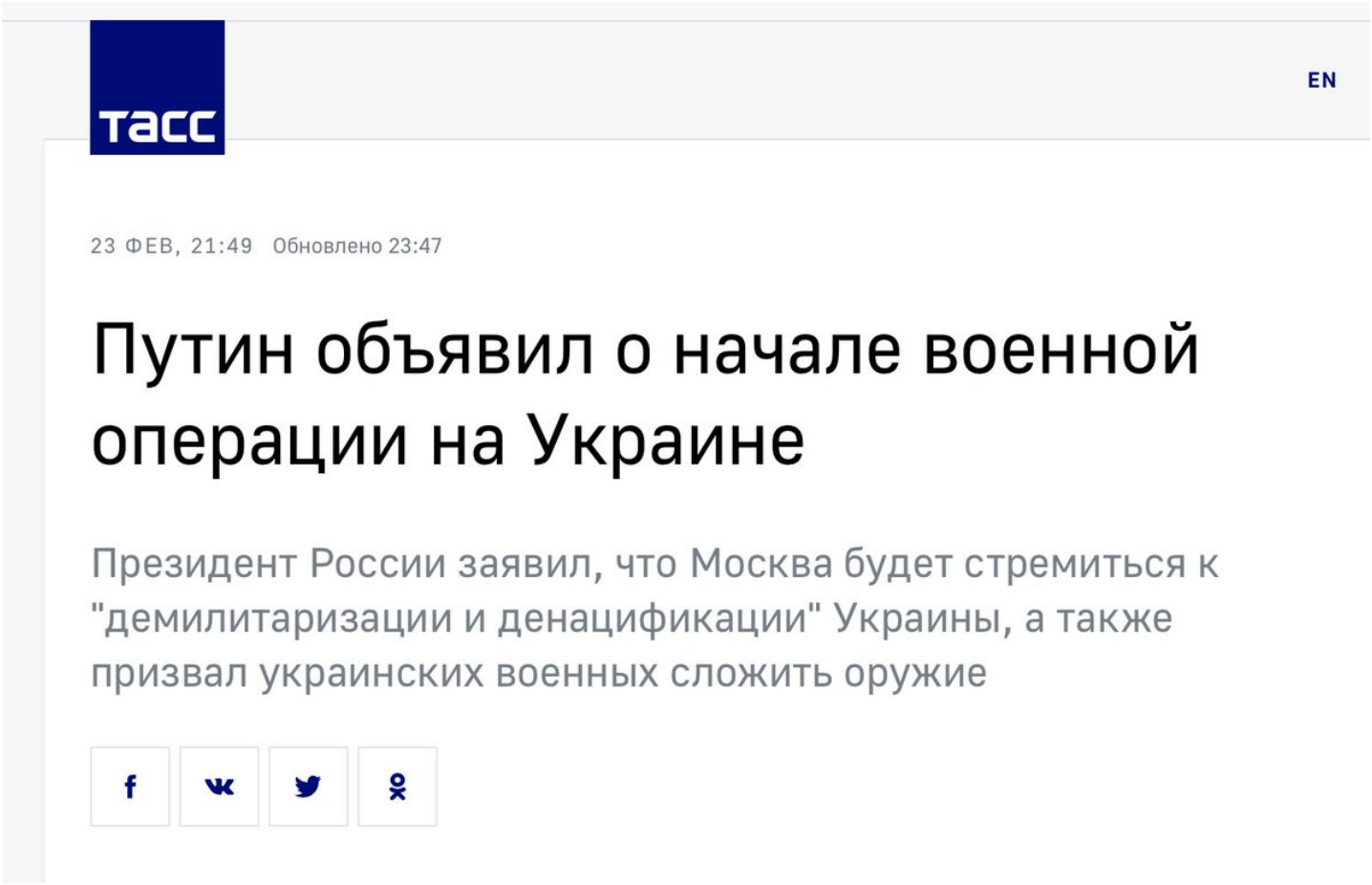
How is a Blitzkrieg organised? By echelons. First echelon is moving forward as fast as they can. Ofc this means that lots of defenders will be left in their rear. But then the second echelon comes, then third, etc. They finish defenders, occupy territory, control the supply lines



If Russia launched a proper Barbarossa-style Blitzkrieg that would happen now - first, second, third echelons. But the second echelon didn't come. It never existed. Why? First, Russia's *not* landmaxing and thus doesn't have so much resources and infrastructure for the land war

Secondly, launching several echelons would require long arduous preparation. You need to mobilise them, move to the borders, quarter, maintain and supply. It's not that easy. It's a hard job that should have been done well in advance to wage a Blitzkrieg. And it hadn't been done

Why Russia didn't prepare a proper Blitzkrieg? And now we come for the third and main reason. Blitzkrieg is a war strategy. Blitzkrieg is how you break & suppress the enemy who's actually fighting. Russia didn't plan it because it didn't plan a war. It planned a Special Operation



Ofc partially that's just modern discourse. After WWII traditional understanding of sovereignty as of legal right of sovereign rulers to wage offensive war died. As a result modern states never admit they're waging wars. They're waging "pacifications", "counterterrorism", etc

Consider how all the War Departments and Ministries over the world were renamed into "Defence" in late 1940s. Everyone's defending, nobody's attacking. Why does the fighting happen then? Well, because of criminals - "bandits", "terrorists", "jihadees" or as now in Ukraine "Nazis"

Modern world abolished the distinction between the enemy and the criminal, a key idea of the Roman Law. Powers do wage wars, but to do so they need to criminalise and dehumanise their enemies. Hence, all the "terrorist" discourse. In a sense Putin is going with the flow

But on a deeper level Putin is absolutely correct. His declaration of "special operation" in Ukraine is sincere, because he didn't expect the war. He doesn't know how to do wars. For all of his life he's been organising and launching the special operations

First, as a KGB officer. Then, as St Petersburg city councillor for foreign affairs (= illegally selling Soviet warehouse stuff to the West). In 1990s he closely worked with the criminal world and he did it successfully. Here you see him with a thief-in-law, Grandpa Hassan



Btw that's how Putin's pal Grandpa Hassan is celebrating with his close circle. It gives some idea of Putin's business partners and associates https://t.co/JREAPo0wTO

Putin worked with violent entrepreneurs used to killing. But. He had always had the upper hand. Federal and regional governments were very much stronger than these criminal bosses who were very much replaceable. Everyone of them had dozens of henchmen who wanted to take his place

Putin waged special operations when he had much stronger position than these criminals. And he got used to that. Later Yeltsin chose him as a successor and in this capacity Putin launched a bunch of special operations to consolidate power. Again with full support of higher ups



Yeah, Putin played badass even before becoming a President. But it was easy to play a badass when he was backed up by then President and the entire apparatus of Kremlin. Huge power, no risk, no accountability



Later he initiated conflicts each time his had to boost his popularity and tough image. Chechnya, Georgia, Syria. But neither of this was a war. Every conflict was a Special operation waged:

1) for political goals
2) against small force which had no chance to win against Russia



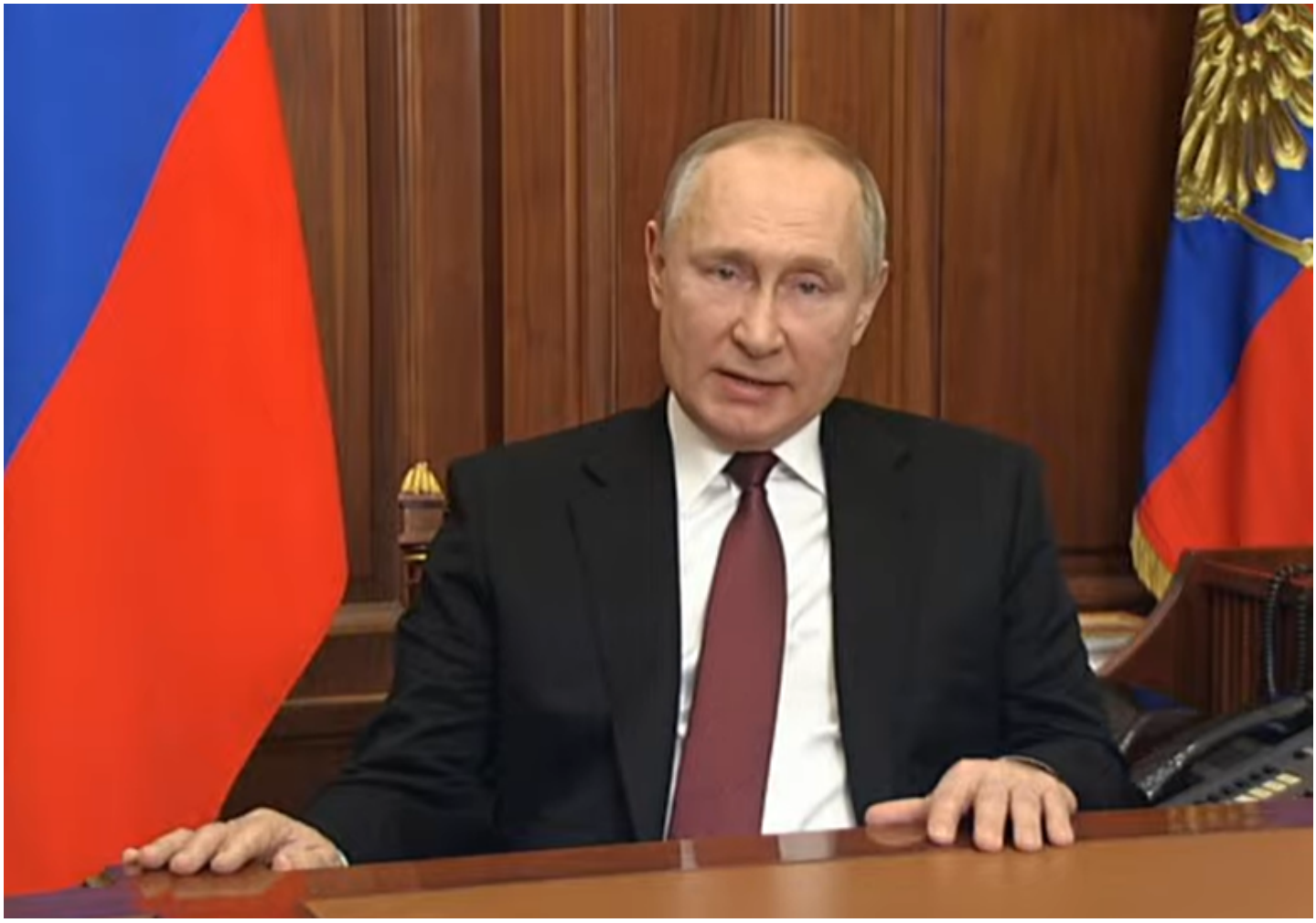
Putin fought only with small countries. Chechnya - 1 million people, Georgia - 4. Syria had more, but he fought with rebels, with no proper training or armaments. Also "counterterrorist" discourse allowed Russians to simply level entire cities to the ground with no consequences



Every time Putin needed to confirm his alpha status he would devastate some little country with a Special Operation. They didn't require proper preparation because they bore no existential risk to Russia or to him. Like, the fuck they're gonna do? No risk = no need to bother



Putin decided to repeat this little trick again. Hence, not that numerous army of invasion, only one echelon of advance, etc. But Ukraine is much bigger - it has 44 million people. What was Putin thinking? Apparently he was expecting zero resistance from the Ukrainian army



Putin had a good reason to believe so. Indeed, in 2014 Russian regulars ("[redacted]" = "there aren't any of them there") easily destroyed Ukrainian forces in Debaltsevo and Ilovaysk. He saw that Ukrainian army is weak and he can easily route them simply sending Russian regulars



Strategically speaking Putin fucked up. He defeated Ukraine, inflicted pain and humiliation. Anyone with an IQ above the room temperature knew the war is not over and Russians would strike again. But - Putin didn't finish Ukraine back then. He thought he'd always have a chance



What happened next was quite predictable. Inflicting a painful but not critical defeat on your enemy is risky. Yeah, they kinda became weaker. But the balance of power within them changed. Court politics maxing interest groups lost and efficiency maxing upstarts get a chance



Formula of institutional evolution = scare + don't finish them. Napoleon smashed Prussians at Jena-Auerstedt, didn't finish them. Prussia evolved. Commodore Perry scared Japanese in 1853, but the US spiralled into Civil War and left them alone. Japan evolved



Nothing motivates as hard as an existential threat. First, Ukrainians admitted the truth:

«I'll be frank. Today we have no army. Now we can assemble a group of 5 thousand capable soldiers max [out of 125 on paper]"

- reported minister of defence in 2014

I'll make a pause, gonna resume in an hour or so. To be continued soon

In 2014 Ukrainian equipment was awful. Almost 100% vehicle and ammunition were 25+ year old Soviet stocks. Moreover, most of it just expired. Like vehicles existed on paper but were never checked or used since 1991. Their radiators, accumulators all rotten and unrepairable

FSB colonel who led pro-Russian insurgency in 2014 admitted it created problem for him, too. He wanted to restock from the Ukrainian military warehouses, but that stuff just didn't work. Like they took 28 anti-tank missiles and fired them all during Nikolaevka battle. None worked



Judging by the interviews with insurgents who were disappointed to find that rockets, shells, grenades taken from Ukrainian warehouses were 99% dysfunctional (ofc, they were 25+ years old) it's not surprising Ukraine lost to Russia in 2014. It's surprising they could fight at all

Even the ancient soviet radio machines didn't work. Ukrainian soldiers had to communicate with SMS and since network was often awful they had to throw their mobile phones up in air in a hope may be it will catch radio signal few meters over the ground

That's how Ukrainian army looked back then. No wonder it was immediately crushed by Russian regulars in Debaltsevo and Ilovaysk and Putin had every reason to believe that resistance will be broken the moment he launches his regular army en masse

A lot has changed. First, Ukraine has had six drafts. Men were drafted and sent to Donbass. Then most demobilised and returned to civilian life. This Donbass contingent was around 60 thousand soldiers and constantly rotated. So now Ukraine has 400 000+ veterans of Donbass war

Many of them were in combat. Thus Ukraine has huge number of veterans with combat experience. Probably more than Russia. Yes, Russia has been fighting in Syria. It never published the size of its force but it's estimated to be 2-3 thousand. Most Russian soldiers have not seen war

Furthermore, combat they've seen is different. Russian soldiers are used to fighting only when they total superiority. In Syria they would just level cities to the ground with bombers. Meanwhile, Ukrainian soldiers have fought only against far stronger and better equipped enemy

Equipment-wise this war took Ukrainian army half-resupplied. It developed many innovative weaponry of its own, but almost none of it was produced on large scale. In most cases soldiers have only few prototypes of new, Ukrainian-produced weaponry

Ukraine ordered 48 Turkish Bayraktars TB2 drones. That's not bad - more than twice what Azerbaijan had in Karabakh. But only 12 of them got to the troops by now. Ukraine is also developing new, stronger drone Bayraktar Akinci together with Turks, but it's too late for this war



However, Ukrainians got a number (unpublished) of American-produced Javelins and M141 Bunker Defeat Munition, & British-Swedish produced MBT LAWs. Together with Ukrainian produced anti-tank weaponry such as «Stugna-P», RK-3 "Corsar" and «Barrier» it helps to fight Russian tanks



Ukrainian troops hadn't received many new tanks by the time Putin attacked. But they got new armoured vehicles, such as domestic-produced Cossack-2 with Turkish produced Aselsan fighting modules and a number of American armoured

vehicles, humvees, etc



Finally, Ukraine created a new type of troops - the troops of territorial defence, whose number is estimated in 60 000. It's a copy of the Polish troop type. These are civilians who get military training and can be mobilised in a day to fight only in their own town and region



Why? Well, that's pretty obvious. If Russia made a proper Blitzkrieg with several echelons of attack, Ukraine would lose anyway. But Russia didn't. And Ukrainians bet that they wouldn't. First - it's costly and difficult for a state security regime which isn't landmaxing

Second, Putin expected Ukrainian army to run away or surrender in the first day. Like most of foreign observers expected. Now they're of course changing the narrative, but if you look at their posts few days ago they didn't believe that Ukrainians would make any real resistance

So Putin attacked with only one echelon. Troops pushed forward leaving many non-destroyed Ukrainian regulars and levy behind. In a proper Blitzkrieg a second and third echelon would have come to finish Ukrainian defenders. But they didn't. These additional echelons didn't exist



Which immediately created the supply and replenishment problem. The first echelon pushed forward. It needs a supply in ammo, in fuel and well, in people. But these supply convoys are being attacked by the regulars and territorial defence troops left behind



By those few Bayraktars Ukraine got

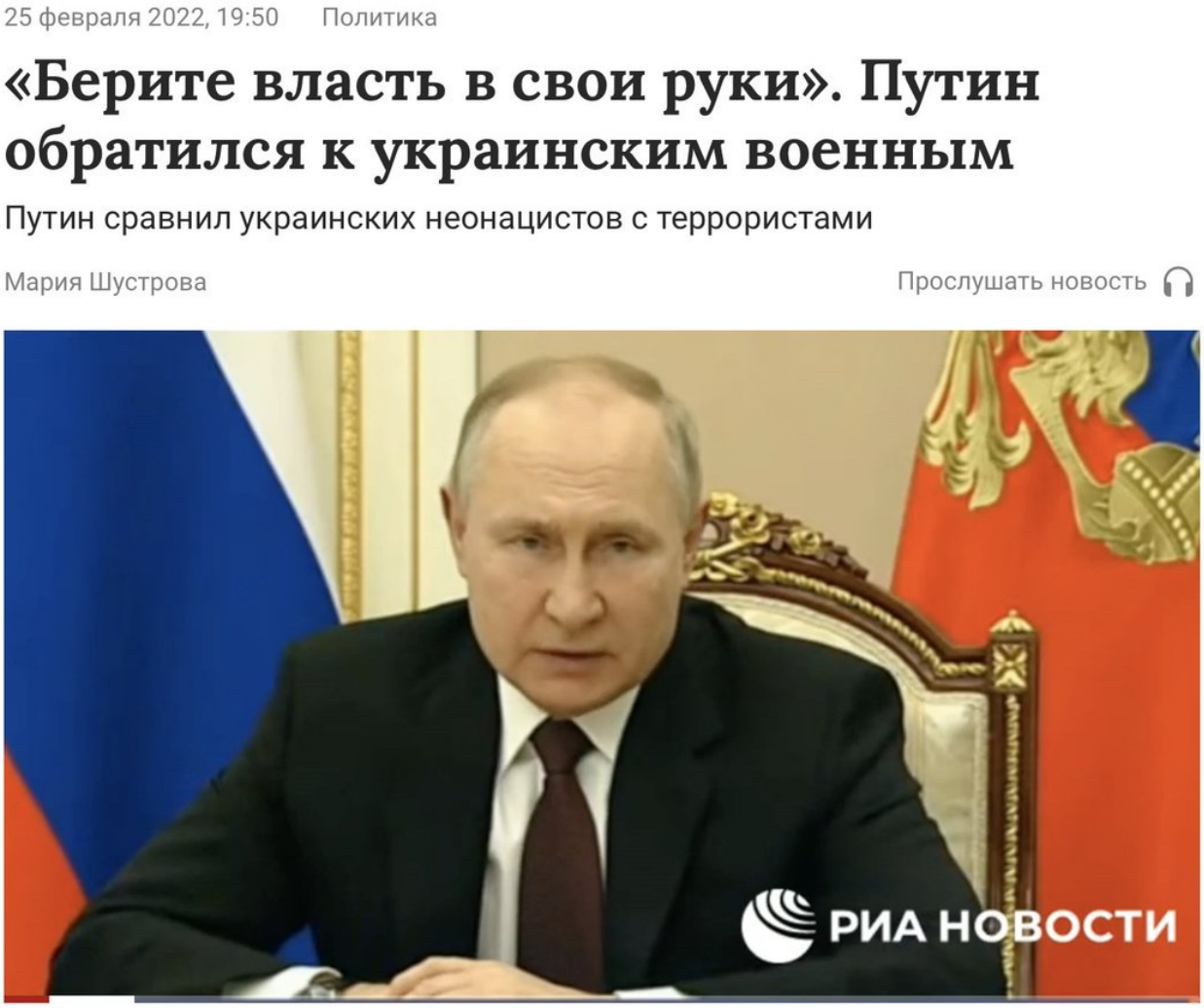


And reportedly by the levy whom the government just distributed guns. These people would be unable to stand against the Russian columns but they can attack convoys. Consider that Ukraine has many veterans with combat experience among civilians

Strelkov, who led pro-Russian insurgency in 2014 confirms this version in his telegram. Supply columns are being destroyed because there's no second echelon



Putin is apparently concerned. In the video of 25 Feb he called for Ukrainian military to do a coup d'erat. He wouldn't need it if his plan worked in the first place



What does it mean? Putin's plan didn't work. Cuz he didn't plan for war. He never fought a war and has no idea how to fight them. He has been always doing Special Operations and this is a Special Operation, too. They should have just run away or surrender, but they keep fighting



The defeat in this operation will inflict enormous consequences for Putin and his regime. They are unlikely to survive this defeat. Meanwhile, it's unlikely that Putin wins by the same methods

It's not that Russian morale is low, it's rather that it depends on how hard the war is.Most Russian troops would be enthusiastic or wouldn't mind against a small foreign vacation with fun and adventures. Fighting a hard long war with real possibility of death is another matter

Now my laptop died and wouldn't turn on again, so typing from phone

Morale of Russian troops is widely overestimated. According to sociological studies the main motivation to enlist is usually to get an apartment. They are usually young men from underprivileged background with no real prospects in life. That's a chance to get a housing from state

Now if you are dead, you can't get a housing. Perhaps those already in Ukraine have little choice but the very fact that resistance continues, war is bloody and casualties are real would hugely demotivate those back at home. Expect no enthusiasm to go there on Russian side

What Putin can do?

1. Start destroying infrastructure (done)
2. Blockade cities (done)
3. Simply level cities with bombers and artillery like in Chechnya or Syria (may be)

The first two would inflict humanitarian catastrophe and as he hopes break the will

Third one is more problematic. Unlike Chechnya or Syria where you could easily justify the open genocide with "fighting jihadees" which is a fair play in the "war on terror", here it would be more difficult and actually might draw the NATO response. Still, I can't exclude this

So my prognosis is: if the fight continues and victory is not achieved Russian ability and willingness to fight will be disappearing quickly. Putin doesn't have a choice but many of his subordinates do

Even in case when Russia doesn't technically lose and some source of armistice/agreement is achieved, Ukraine already won. Why? Many describe this conflict as kinetic. Bullshit. Human conflicts or interactions are not kinetic. They are mythological and run by myths

Money is a myth. It exists only because we believe so. Power is a myth. Nation is a myth. Institutions are purely mythological. Consider the story of the burning of Moscow in 1572. Ivan the Terrible divided his country to Zemschina (land) and Oprichnina (taken apart)

Oprichnina was under his personal rule. Oprichniks - his forces - launched terror campaign against Zemschina. They slaughtered entire noble houses, massacred cities, killed enormous number of commoners facing no resistance. Why? Were they strong and brave? No. Because if the myth

Russian people existed within a myth of Orthodox monarchy. Ofc there would be individuals who would go against the Orthodox Tsar. But it was impossible to organise a resistance against him. Thus resistance would be individuals and easily crushed by organised Oprichnik forces

Oprichniks became very brave and badass. Because mythology of the Russian people prohibited 99% of them to resist these security forces. So with the time they decided they are really cool. In 1572 when Crimean Khan attacked Moscow Oprichnik forces went to face him

Kinetically speaking they had overwhelming superiority. Guns, cannons, much heavier armor or weaponry. Their defense and firepower was very much stronger. But they were routed in one day simply by arrows. Because they were used to fight people whose myth prohibited to resist them

Within the Muscovite mythology Oprichniks were invincible untouchable demigods, as hands of Orthodox Tsar, who's kinda living God. But when facing foreign enemy they left this mythological space. And entered a new space where they are just people and can get arrow in the face

They were not used to getting arrows in the face. The very realisation they are not demigods but mortals shocked them. They ran away dropping their armor, guns and cannons. Moscow was burnt to the ground despite having total "kinetic" and technological superiority

So. Power is mythological. Russian state security are gods within their own mythological space where they represent the god like state. But what they found that Ukrainians left this mythological space. Thus Russian state security has no power there. They are just mortals

And finally. The very fact of resistance against so much superior enemy very much empowers the Ukrainian mythology. It's enormous mythos building we are witnessing. The very phenomenon of war is inconceivable without taking into account mythological dimension

Consider Venice. When Napoleon came they surrendered without a shot. Very smart, saved lives, saved the city. It's just killed the mythos of Venice. People lived but the Republic died. It was never restored and is unlikely to be restored again

Theorists of war of the bygone age understood it. Clausewitz pointed out that it's important not only if you lost independence but *how* you lost it. If you submitted without a fight, you saved lives. But you killed your mythos. You'll be digested by the conqueror

But if you lost after the brutal and bloody fight your mythos is alive. The memory of the last battle will live through the ages. It will shape the mythological space your descendants live in and they'll attempt to restore independence at the first opportunity. End of thread