



By: Sergei Stepancev, TA Moscow

If Russia loses in Ukraine, who will bear the blame?



Vladimir Putin does not understand how it is possible that the "marvellous and great" Russian army he had been building for a quarter of a century is suffering significant losses and setbacks against a much smaller country.

Furthermore, the Russian imperial mindset views this country as an isolated and underdeveloped province within "glorious and great" Russia.

Vladimir Putin began purges in the Russian army as a result of his cognitive dissonance.

General Vadim Shamarin, the deputy chief of the Russian military general staff, is the fourth high-ranking military officer to face corruption-related **arrests** in recent months.

Vladimir Putin's only explanation is that corruption among top military officials prevented a swift victory over Ukraine.

Corruption has never been a problem

Putin never had a problem with the corruption of the Russian upper and ruling classes. Corruption is one of his regime's pillars. Corruption puts much-needed strain on Vladimir Putin's government officials and upper-class establishments.

He has now started massive **purges** in the Russian army because he is convinced that this time corruption by top Russian military officials has stolen from him a quick and easy victory over Ukraine.

Due to corruption, Vladimir Putin received servile reports that confirmed and intensified his utterly delusional views

The fact that everyone around him was corrupt facilitated an artificial blockade, which prevented Vladimir Putin from receiving adequate feedback and reporting on Russia's

true state of affairs.

But instead, due to corruption, Vladimir Putin received servile reports that confirmed and intensified his utterly delusional views.

Vladimir Putin sincerely believed that his army should have taken Kyiv in three days. He is convinced that his military machine could march across Europe all the way to London if he wanted to.

Wealth - the image of generals

The original plan for seizing Ukraine did not work out. Vladimir Putin believes this is because corrupt generals have stolen more than allowed.

Russian generals are corrupt, without any doubt. Most of them have living standards somewhat similar to those of Hollywood movie actors or New York stock traders.

A corrupt net worth of \$50 million or more is not something extraordinary in the Russian top military (and intelligence) hierarchy.

Some time ago, Putin prosecuted a dozen scientists and engineers who worked on Russian hypersonic missiles

However, this did not account for the Russian army's failure to meet Vladimir Putin's expectations. Ironically, Vladimir Putin was so confident that he had been leading a super powerful and capable army that he was able to sell this delusion to Western leaders.

Now he is going after top Russian military commanders and generals. Some time ago, he prosecuted a dozen scientists and engineers who worked on Russian hypersonic missiles.

Are veterans next in line to be arrested?

If his army suffered a loss in Ukraine instead of flooding Russian streets with hundreds of thousands of people with real combat backgrounds and other war-related experience, in some cases war crime-related, he will most probably prefer to imprison or at least isolate most of those Russian veterans returning from Ukraine.

He, or someone close to him from the government, could easily accuse those Russian soldiers of not being Russian enough, given their lack of victory.

Putin has initiated purges in the Russian army because he remains convinced that he can win in Ukraine

Vladimir Putin could win a war in Ukraine only if the West permits him to do so by abandoning Ukraine. Alternatively, after some time of suffering in Ukraine, he will be searching for those to blame for that loss.

He has now initiated purges in the Russian army because he remains convinced that he can win in Ukraine, and the only reason he has not yet succeeded is due to excessive corruption among top military officials, even by his own standards.

Stuck in the 20th century

In Vladimir Putin's current worldview, things are about to improve. The Russian army's corruption and expenditures are now under control.

Therefore, he believes that the Russian army will soon seize all the territories it abandoned during the first month of the war, when the Russian offensive began to falter and ultimately failed. According to Vladimir Putin's true plan, the Russian army should have advanced to Odessa and other territories.



The Russian army lags significantly in terms of technology and remains stuck in the twentieth century, which coincidentally aligns with Vladimir Putin's mindset - Military mobilization in Tomsk region

Vladimir Putin is convinced he has built the best army in Russian history, which could easily conquer just about any country and is powerful enough to divide the world, just as Joseph Stalin did after the end of World War II.

There is nothing in this world that could dissuade Vladimir Putin from his delusional views.

In reality, the Russian army lags significantly in terms of technology and remains stuck in the twentieth century, which coincidentally aligns with Vladimir Putin's mindset.

He will be searching for other domestic targets to blame for the losses he has suffered.

Vladimir Putin will continue to identify and purge individuals one after another for the failure of his fantasy of an undefeated and unbeatable army he has designed to restore Russian greatness. Similarly, Vladimir Putin remains trapped in his outdated mindset from the twentieth or even earlier century.