



Dara Massicot @MassDara Wed Jan 11 19:00:50 +0000 2023

Today Shoygu and Gerasimov demoted Surovikin, and put Gerasimov in charge of the operation in Ukraine, demoting their most competent senior commander and replacing him with an incompetent one. This is a story that has it all: infighting, power struggles, jealousy /1 <https://t.co/yrhLN6qUwN>



It's hard to argue that Surovikin was demoted for cause. As commander, a "fixer" - he consolidated positions, used resources better, had Putin's ear, is popular among the troops, milbloggers, Kadryov, Wagner/mercenaries, got a lot of attention./2

Surovikin has not made strategy blunders on the battlefield like so many other Russian generals have. I do not believe MOD's rationale that it is to generate greater resources. They may need more resources, but such a step is unnecessary. On what grounds was he demoted? /3 <https://t.co/im9LkSA2bN>

English

⚡ On January 11, 2023, the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, General of the Army Sergei Shoigu, made new appointments to lead the Special Military Operation.

- Army General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the RF Armed Forces, has been appointed Commander of the Joint Group of Troops (Forces).

- His deputies: Commander-in-Chief of the Aerospace Forces, General of the Army Sergei Surovikin, Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces, General of the Army Oleg Salyukov, and Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the RF Armed Forces, Colonel General Alexei Kim.

- Raising the level of leadership of the Special Military Operation is associated with the expansion of the scale of tasks solved in the course of its implementation, the need to organize closer interaction between the branches and branches of the Armed Forces, as well as improving the quality of all types of support and the effectiveness of command and

Putin appeared to be getting more realistic assessments from Surovikin, a change from when he was getting some other version of events from Shoygu-Gerasimov early on. /4

<https://www.ft.com/content/fb611530-d9b9-4338-addb-7ca6b914f959>

Contrast with Gerasimov and Shoygu's command record for this war: it's a flunk. They flunked it. They signed off on a secret plan, multiple bad assumptions, didn't tell the majority of their troops. led to big casualties and a partially broken force /5 <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/12/16/world/europe/russia-putin-war-failures-ukraine.html>

Under Shoygu and Gerasimov's command, a large percentage of the Ground Forces and Airborne forces (equipment and personnel) were destroyed. Thousands of both are gone. This leadership is so negligent that it should have been grounds for dismissal in any normal system.. /6

..But they are loyal to Putin and the system so they were kept on. Gerasimov and Shoygu for months now have been sidelined from the main command of the operation. As criticism of them mounted from some quarters. /7

<https://t.co/eUna11Xoh>



Who can claim their leadership is competent after one year of this war? But, they are experienced players in Moscow. With this change, I view this as a power struggle that has resolved in favor of Shoygu/Gerasimov. So, where does this go from here? /8

With Gerasimov in charge, if this is indeed permanent, I think the possibly of the Russians asking their tired force to do something that it cannot handle rises exponentially. Gerasimov didn't push back in Feb 2022 and won't do it now. IDK if that is good or bad for Ukraine. /9

This move also puts pressure on Prigozhin and others who don't trust the MOD leaders anymore. Or they get in line quickly. Wagner has been hurling major insults at the MOD leadership lately. /10.
<https://www.businessinsider.com/wagner-group-prigozhin-backs-video-cursing-russia-top-general-gerasimov-2022-12>

I view this news like Shoygu's speech announcing the return of more divisions. Seniors in Moscow are clingingly fiercely to the status quo and also soviet past. Important to keep in mind that they default to looking inwards and backwards even when it leds them to poor outcomes/11

[@WarintheFuture](#) has an interesting look at Russian forces under Surovikin here. Let's see what Russian forces retain of these strategies, or if they try something else. /12
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/russias-new-theory-victory>

(And, as it turns out, the MOD Telegram was being shady a few weeks ago.) 12/
https://twitter.com/massdara/status/1609278029767016448?s=46&t=_MQrxtDGzIIS3K00Rt12g

TL:DR: Russians demoted their "fixer" commander in favor of Gerasimov, who last year agreed to and oversaw a debacle invasion plan that resulted in the partial destruction of their army. What? /END <https://t.co/AvQ5QY9Jwo>



And here's a good thread from [@MarkGaleotti](#) <https://twitter.com/markgaleotti/status/1613225252900966401>