

# Newsweek

## Ukraine's 'Complex' Counteroffensive is Already Underway: Defense Minister

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The strategies behind Ukraine's likely looming spring counteroffensive are reportedly being heavily deliberated in a "complex" manner behind the scenes, according to a high-ranking defense official.

Both Ukraine and Russia were predicted by military strategists to exude additional aggression in the aftermath of the war's first long winter, pending ground conditions and available personnel. Russia reportedly has already begun [fortifying its defense network](#) in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region in preparation for attacks.

Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Maliar reportedly said Wednesday on national Ukrainian television that the planned counteroffensive "involves a vast and complex set of actions and measures carried out by the Armed Forces, which includes preparing people for a range of defensive and offensive actions."

She added that planning is "already underway" and involved various strategies related to the preparation of equipment and reserves, training and tactical formation "chosen in such a way that the enemy cannot react," according to the *Kyiv Independent*.

That includes going beyond a typical "Plan A" or "Plan B" to dissuade Russian forces from being able to quickly reorganize and defend themselves against attacks, Maliar wrote on [Facebook](#) and [Telegram](#).

"It is not necessary to publicly counterattack only to some active offensive actions, because it is a strategic goal of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to release all temporarily occupied territories. ...You have to understand that such decisions are made in a very

short time, not in a month or two," she wrote, according to a translation. "The plan is ultimately chosen in such a way that the enemy cannot react."

Ukraine's Deputy of Defence Minister Hanna Maliar addresses a press conference in Kyiv on December 15, 2022. She said Wednesday regarding a Ukrainian counteroffensive that plans are "already underway" but are "complex" as to not offer Russia any indication of planned strategies.

It remains unclear how Ukraine's strategies have adjusted, if at all, in the wake of classified document leaks that have been [attributed to Jack Teixeira](#), a 21-year-old member of the Massachusetts Air National Guard.

Oleksiy Danilov, head of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, told The Associated Press Monday that it is "only a matter of time" before Kyiv's counteroffensive, adding that the [task comes with a "very high price."](#)

"If we aren't ready, then nobody will start unprepared," Danilov said.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov said in late March that the timing depends on factors like additional tank availability, due to [traversing a soggy battlefield](#) mired by changing weather conditions.

On Tuesday, Reznikov [flaunted French AMX-10RC tanks](#) that have been delivered to Ukrainian forces following a delay. He referred to the tank as a "sniper rifle on fast wheels."

*Newsweek* reached out via email to Ukraine's Ministry of Defense for comment, and via social media to Maliar.

Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#) recently [made an impromptu trip](#) to the southern Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine, which Russia annexed as part of four total territories in the fall of 2022.

Yan Gagin, adviser to the Donetsk People's Republic, told Russian state-owned media outlet Tass that the [Wagner Group](#), helmed by [Yevgeny Prigozhin](#), has [helped reclaim about 90 percent](#) of the eastern city of Bakhmut.

General Colonel Mikhail Teplinsky, who in January was relieved of his duties as commander of Russia's VDV, the airborne forces branch of the [Russian military](#), has also [reportedly returned to a "major role"](#) as the camaraderie between Russia's highest military officials is said to be strengthening in advance of new combat.

*Newsweek* reached out via email to Russia's Ministry of Defense for comment.

Jordan Cohen, a policy analyst at the Cato Institute, told *Newsweek* via email that he believes this calendar year will bring about changes in how each country's military fights.

"I think that Ukraine needs and likely will not receive the weapons it requires and will not effectively take back all of the land that it wants," Cohen said. "Ultimately, this was always the problem with weapons transfers: they take much longer to train and deliver than they do to announce.

"The Biden administration can announce as many future weapons transfers as they want, but ultimately, these weapons still need to be produced and go through the [U.S. military](#) transfer bureaucracy."