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Mobilisation in Ukraine, achievements and challenges

Resume. The article examines the main aspects of the activities of public authorities, military authorities and the experience of mobilisation measures since the beginning of the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The main trends in the development and improvement of mobilisation are identified, taking into account changes in the military-political situation. The author groups and identifies current areas of activity that require further research in the field of mobilisation.

Keywords: mobilisation; military aggression; mobilisation training.

Problem statement. In the context of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, both structural and systemic changes in the organisation of approaches to the activities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other components of the defence forces are of particular relevance to ensure their readiness to perform the tasks of defence of Ukraine, protection of its sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability.

Since the beginning of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, the state has faced the urgent need to replenish the Defence Forces with military-trained personnel to wartime levels.

In view of the above, there is an urgent need to analyse and summarise the practical experience of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in implementing mobilisation measures, in particular, conscription of citizens for military service during mobilisation.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Much attention is paid to the issue of mobilisation in Ukraine today. The study of conceptual approaches to improving mobilisation in the state was carried out [6]. The authors analysed and identified shortcomings in the functions, tasks of the objects and subjects of the current system of management of mobilisation training and mobilisation of the national economy. In [7], the authors analyse the legal acts that determine the procedure for mobilisation; in [8] the author analyse the measures of mobilisation in the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 2014. Works [9-13], based on the results of studying the combat experience of troops and the experience of general mobilisation in Ukraine in 2022-2023, identified a number of problematic issues of mobilisation training and mobilisation itself, which in turn served to develop and

provide proposals for ways to solve them. However, it is worth noting that these works partially cover research on the analysis of the organisation and implementation of mobilisation activities, and most of the important issues in this area remain open.

The purpose of the article is to investigate the mobilisation practices used in Ukraine, in particular since the beginning of the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, and to determine which mobilisation strategies were most effective, taking into account both legislative changes and managerial decisions.

Presenyation of the main material. In order to prepare the state for the protection of national interests from external and internal threats, a number of laws and other regulatory acts have been adopted. Thus, the Laws of Ukraine: [1-4]; and other regulatory legal acts, consider and regulate a wide range of issues of mobilisation training, mobilisation, and preparation of the state for defence.

Analysing the state of mobilisation preparations of the state before the outbreak of war, it should be noted that since 2014, the state authorities and other bodies, military authorities (hereinafter – MA), have made relevant conclusions and performed a large amount of work to prepare for the organised repulsion of military aggression.

Options for the development of the military-political situation regarding the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation were provided by the intelligence of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine and partner countries. As a result, the political and military leadership of the state correctly assessed this information and, accordingly, made adequate decisions to take urgent measures to cover the state border in key

strategic areas and prepare for general mobilisation in the state.

Fulfilling the requirements of the Laws of Ukraine "On Defence of Ukraine" and "On Mobilisation Preparation and Mobilisation", the leadership of the State and the Armed Forces during the 8 pre-war years paid special attention to the following components of the state's mobilisation preparation:

determining the conditions of operation and preparing public authorities, other state bodies, local self-government bodies, enterprises, institutions and organisations for work in a special period;

preparing for the mobilisation deployment of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other military formations;

preparing the national economy and its sectors for the transition and operation in the special period;

training and accumulation of military-trained human resources liable for military service and reservists to fill positions provided for in wartime staffing levels;

preparation of the management of state authorities, other state bodies, local self-government bodies, the unified state civil protection system, enterprises, institutions and organisations for actions in case of mobilisation;

advanced training on mobilisation training and mobilisation of heads of state authorities, other state bodies, local self-government bodies, enterprises, institutions and organisations, employees of relevant mobilisation units and employees on mobilisation work (*in the summer of 2021, by the decision of the President of Ukraine – Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, week-long advanced training courses were organised and held at the National Defence University of Ukraine for heads of state authorities*);

conducting military and economic mobilisation exercises and training;

checking and assessing the state of mobilisation readiness of the national economy, state authorities, other state bodies, local self-government bodies, the Armed Forces of Ukraine, other military formations, the Civil Protection Operational and Rescue Service, enterprises, institutions and organisations, as well as administrative and territorial units of Ukraine;

information support.

The state's preparations for mobilisation in Ukraine were most effective during the threatening period, when the enemy began to concentrate and deploy groups of troops near the borders of Ukraine (December 2021 – January

2022), allegedly to conduct exercises, including in Belarus.

General mobilisation was declared openly by the President of Ukraine on the first day of the war, 24 February 2022. At the same time, the legal regime of martial law was introduced and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief's Office was formed. In accordance with the Presidential Decree, general mobilisation was carried out within 90 days in three stages.

First of all, it was decided to call up the operational reserve in combat military units that had already performed tasks in the JFO and in the ATO.

Secondly, conscripts with combat experience and military service should be called up.

Thirdly, those who did not serve in the military.

From that moment on, the President of Ukraine – the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine assumed full responsibility, i.e. the basic principle of mobilisation preparation and mobilisation – centralised management of mobilisation – was implemented in the country. Thanks to the skilful leadership of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief and the Commander-in-Chief and General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the tasks of the first three stages of general mobilisation were largely completed.

At the same time, it is necessary to note a number of factors that influenced the results of the general mobilisation. The main one, of course, was the enemy's seizure of parts of the territory of the eastern, southern and northern regions of Ukraine, which led to a significant migration of the population from these regions and a significant decrease in the supply of human mobilisation resources in the initial period of the war. Thus, according to official data, during the first month of the war, 3.6 million people left Ukraine: 3.6 million people outside Ukraine, 6.5 million people within Ukraine. Among those who left their homes were a large number of men of conscription age.

In such a difficult situation and in the face of the enemy's absolute superiority in the air, at sea and on land, the military leadership managed to take a set of measures to ensure timely and high-quality manning of troops (forces), especially military units of the Territorial Defence Forces and reserve military units. They were prepared to repel the armed aggression in a timely manner, which ultimately significantly reduced the destruction of civilian infrastructure and civilian casualties in the initial period of the war.

It was important that, thanks to the information received from the intelligence agencies of Ukraine and partner countries, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine managed to unravel the enemy's overall plan and the directions of its main and other strikes. Based on the results of the assessment of the operational and strategic situation, having unravelled the probable nature of the enemy's actions, the leadership of the defence forces, together with state authorities and local self-government bodies, responded in a timely manner and made adequate decisions to counter the enemy's aggressive actions.

The experience of the war prompted the military leadership to make changes to the readiness of combat military units (immediate response forces), especially territorial defence units, and their manning in peacetime and wartime. It was concluded that the training of TDF units should be carried out and improved in peacetime, and that not only the heads of the components of the defence forces, but also the heads of local executive authorities and local self-government should be responsible for the quality of their manning and training.

It should be noted that, in extremely difficult conditions, the leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, before the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation and in the first days of the war, managed to carry out a number of measures that had a positive impact on the course of general mobilisation, namely:

- the General Staff timely determined (clarified) the timing and order of manning the military organisational structures of all components of the defence forces;

- timely notification and conscription of reservists to combat military units;

- in a short time, the staffs of military units were re-established, taking into account the available weapons and military equipment (hereinafter – WME) stored at bases, warehouses, arsenals, as well as WME provided by partners;

The Land Forces Command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, together with state authorities and local self-government bodies, managed to ensure the effective operation of territorial recruitment and social support centres (hereinafter referred to as TRSSC) under the legal regime of martial law, which allowed for the timely and high-quality manning of combat units with mobilisation resources (reservists and contractors) with combat experience.

It should also be noted that most regional military administrations took a responsible approach to the tasks of general mobilisation and,

together with the regional TRSSCs, ensured the implementation of mobilisation plans.

Analysing the course of general mobilisation at the initial stage of the war, it can be stated that the high morale and patriotism of Ukrainians contributed to the fulfilment of the tasks of general mobilisation. Persons liable for military service who were willing to join the Armed Forces and defend their homeland arrived at the TRSSC or directly to military units (operational reserve), where they were immediately appointed to positions and began to perform their duties. In other words, there were no problems with the arrival of personnel to man the troops (forces). It should be noted that there were queues of reservists and volunteers at the TRSSC. Those who were not included in the teams for manning combat military units were asked to join the TDF units. The number of people wishing to enlist in the TDF units in some district TRSSC reached 250-300%.

The activity and patriotism of persons liable for military service was observed throughout the first stage of mobilisation. The highest degree of activity during this period was shown by persons liable for military service in territorial communities, where the notification, collection and dispatch of such persons to the collection points of the TRSSC and the points of reception of military units' personnel were organised directly by the leaders and members of the community councils.

Thus, the positive factors that prevented the enemy from achieving its strategic goal and capturing the capital of our country in a short time were:

- patriotism and active position of the entire Ukrainian people, and especially volunteers, to provide the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other components of the defence forces with all the necessary material and technical means;

- highly motivated staff;

- prompt response to the situation in Ukraine and the provision of material and technical (especially weapons and military equipment) and financial assistance by partner countries;

- combat experience of personnel, including mobilised personnel, officers and especially combat-experienced generals (Commander-in-Chief and all commanders of troop groups).

According to military experts, it is necessary to improve the state of combat and mobilisation readiness and combat capabilities of troops (forces) in the course of further armed struggle:

- review the organisational and staff structures of military units and bring them in line

with the tasks they can actually perform, given the weapons and military equipment they are equipped with;

when forming new military units, the main attention should be paid to the quality of their staffing, especially of officer positions, and, under any circumstances, to conduct combat coordination with them for at least 12-15 days (up to and including a company (battery));

determine the need of the troops (forces) for equipment of the national economy and immediately organise its withdrawal for the needs of the defence forces;

formation of new military units should be done scattered across subdivisions, under cover and outside inhabited areas;

categorically prohibit the deployment of personnel after the formation of units for combat coordination in the barracks of military camps (only in tent camps and in areas designated by the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine);

resume training of officers and NCOs in full, at advanced training courses and in higher military educational institutions (training centres), in accordance with wartime training programmes;

organise short-term training courses for personnel to acquire skills in the management and use of new weapons and military equipment supplied by partner countries.

In the course of the administrative reform in Ukraine in 2019-2020, districts were consolidated and, accordingly, the number of TRSSC was significantly reduced, which, in turn, affected their effectiveness in mobilising human and transport resources. Thus, as of 2020, 136 districts out of 490 were formed (including 17 in the occupied territories), and only 178 out of 522 district TRSSC were formed.

The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine [5] was approved on the eve of the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, namely on 23 February 2022. It was the transformation of military recruiting centres into territorial recruitment and social support centres, changes in their structure, tasks and functions that created the preconditions for a decrease in the effectiveness of their mobilisation activities, but despite everything, this did not happen. The new structure and management of the TRSSC successfully coped with the tasks assigned, and the task of manning the military organisational structures of the defence forces with mobilisation resources at the initial stage of the war was completed.

At the same time, the main problem in manning the troops (forces) in the initial period of the war was the violation of the requirements for

keeping military records of persons liable for military service and reservists, and especially the rules for registering the place of residence of individuals, as well as the failure of heads of state authorities, local self-government bodies and heads of enterprises and institutions to comply with the requirements of the resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the reservation of persons liable for military service.

It should be noted that the failure to notify persons liable for military service in certain districts due to the improper maintenance of personal and primary records of persons liable for military service was the main reason for the incomplete implementation of mobilisation plans by certain military administrations in the first months of the war.

The beginning of the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine provoked mass migration of the population both within the country and abroad, which in turn opened up a number of problems that are closely related to this process, namely:

legal acts do not define the procedure for registering Ukrainian citizens who arrived from other places (changed their place of residence, from the temporarily occupied territories) under the legal regime of martial law, and most of them do not have military registration documents;

when changing the place of registration of persons liable for military service through the web portal, the mobile application "Diia", the TRSSC did not have information on the place of registration of the place of residence in paper form until the registration department received a notification of registration or de-registration. The guiding documents stipulated that a person liable for military service should personally come to register and de-register, during which it is possible to clarify all the necessary data for military registration.

All of the above issues have been consistently addressed by amending the legislative and regulatory documents on these issues, and this process continues to this day in view of the challenges facing our country.

In 2023, at the initiative of the President of Ukraine – Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, an inspection of the activities of all TRSSC was conducted to ensure the implementation of mobilisation measures. The inspection resulted in a number of organisational decisions, including personnel decisions. At the end of 2023, the National Defence University of Ukraine held a two-week advanced training course for the heads

of TRSSC, where they received both theoretical and practical training on the performance of their functional duties. All of this should help improve the work of the TRSSC in terms of manning the newly formed military organisational structures and covering the losses of personnel in combat military units.

An extremely important task for the military authorities and the TRSSC at the first stage of mobilisation deployment was to form reserve and newly formed military units. The most optimal ways of manning them during this period were:

relocation of servicemen from other military units, including reserve military units (subunits), in accordance with the relocation plan approved by the senior leadership;

manning up with officers – graduates of training courses and privates, sergeants (NCOs) who have undergone appropriate training in educational military units, in accordance with applications submitted by the forming unit to the General Staff (J1) of the Armed Forces of Ukraine;

call-up for military service of officers liable for military service with experience of military service in a direct or related military speciality, and of persons liable for military service as privates and sergeants (NCOs) regardless of their level of military training and experience of service, followed by their basic general military and professional training (under separate orders of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine).

During this period, the units (subdivisions) of the TDF were manned:

servicemen who have completed training at training courses in educational military units, by appointing them directly to regular positions in the military units of the TDF in accordance with the acquired military qualifications;

members of the volunteer formations of territorial communities (hereinafter referred to as VCTC) who performed the tasks of the TDF under the contract, previously performed military service and participated in hostilities, by calling them up by the TRSSC during mobilisation and sending them directly to military units;

members of the VCTC who performed the tasks of the TDF under a contract but had not previously served in the military, by calling them up for military service during mobilisation (enrolment for military service under a contract) and sending them for appropriate training in training centres, military training units, etc. In addition, in order to prevent failures in manning troops (forces) with human mobilisation

resources during mobilisation and based on the experience of performing these tasks, a number of management decisions were made, the main ones being:

manning was carried out according to the following scheme: conscripted TRSSC – advanced training courses (TCs, MTS) – reserve battalion (reserve company (battery) - military unit (subdivision);

the possibilities of training at the advanced training courses (TCs, MTS) for persons who have not served in the military, as well as professional training in the required military specialities for persons liable for military service, have been increased, so that upon completion of the training, a trained serviceman with the required military speciality would graduate;

advertising and campaigning work has improved: through Internet providers, television, press announcements, campaigning in chat rooms, at enterprises, institutions, and higher education institutions by representatives of military units (primarily combat units);

task of the military unit commander was to select and accept candidates for military service under the contract as the main source of manning the military unit;

procedure for using reserve officers aged 50-60 who have not previously served as officers was defined (legalised);

increased liability of persons liable for military service and heads of enterprises (institutions, organisations) for evading conscription during mobilisation;

increased liability (including criminal liability) for medical professionals who assist persons liable for military service in obtaining unlawful deferments.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. Thus, the experience of conducting general mobilization measures in the context of countering the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has shown that the manning of military units included in the groupings of troops (forces), considering the coverage of losses during their deployment, as well as the manning of reserve military units and units that were formed anew, was generally carried out in accordance with the requirements of current regulations and guidelines of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Improvement of existing and emergence of new forms and methods of combat use of troops (forces), use of the latest weapons and military

equipment by the enemy causes changes in the procedure and measures of mobilisation.

In this regard, in the current conditions, the prospects for further research may include studying, analysing and implementing the experience of the work of the military authorities during the general mobilisation in Ukraine, manning troops (forces) with trained personnel, training the Armed Forces of Ukraine on its territory and training military units (subunits) on the territory of partner countries, organising military administrative activities and security of daily activities in military organisational structures in the context of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

Studying, analysing, implementing and improving this experience in the daily activities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine brings Ukraine closer to victory.

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Мобілізація в Україні, досягнення та виклики

Анотація

З початком вторгнення РФ на територію України перед державою гостро постало питання доукомплектування Сил оборони особовим складом до штатів воєнного часу навченими людськими ресурсами. Виходячи із зазначеного, виникла нагальна потреба проаналізувати та узагальнити практичний досвід діяльності Збройних Сил України пов'язаних з виконанням мобілізаційних заходів, зокрема призову громадян на військову службу під час мобілізації.

Мета статті - дослідити практики мобілізації, що застосовувались в Україні, зокрема з початком військової агресії РФ проти України, визначити які стратегії мобілізації були найбільш ефективними, враховуючи як законодавчі зміни, так і управлінські рішення.

Основною проблемою в комплектуванні військ (сил) особовим складом в початковий період війни стало порушення вимог до ведення військового обліку військовозобов'язаних та резервістів і особливо, правил реєстрації місця проживання фізичних осіб, а також не виконання керівниками органів державної влади, органів місцевого самоврядування та керівниками

підприємств і установ вимог постанов Кабінету Міністрів України щодо бронювання військовозобов'язаних.

Початок повномасштабної агресії російської федерації проти України спровокував масову міграцію населення як всередині країни так і за її межі що свою чергу відкрило ряд проблем які тісно пов'язані з цим процесом.

Удосконалення існуючих і поява нових форм і способів бойового застосування військ (сил), використання противником новітнього озброєння і військової техніки обумовлює зміни в порядку і заходах мобілізації. Визначено основні тенденції розвитку та удосконалення заходів мобілізації з урахуванням змін воєнно-політичної обстановки. Згруповано та визначено актуальні напрями діяльності, що потребують подальшого дослідження в сфері мобілізації.

Ключові слова: мобілізація; військова агресія; мобілізаційна підготовка.