



## Russian ground forces 'bigger today' than at start of the war in Ukraine, US general says

### Description

While Russia has suffered thousands of losses in its war against Ukraine, a senior US military commander in Europe told lawmakers Wednesday that they have plenty more firepower left in their arsenal.

"[T]he Russian ground force has been degenerated somewhat by this conflict, although it is bigger today than it was at the beginning of the conflict," Gen. Christopher Cavoli, the commander of US European Command, told the House Armed Services Committee.

"The Air Force has lost very little, they've lost 80 planes. They have another 1,000 fighters and fighter bombers," he said. "The Navy has lost one ship."

Classified military documents allegedly leaked by a junior enlisted National Guard airman for months gave a snapshot of where Russia's ground forces were committed in the war. One document, dated February and March, said that 527 of 544 of available Russian battalions have been committed to the war against Ukraine; 474 of them are already in the country, the intelligence said.

One document also estimated that between 35,000 and 43,000 Russian forces have been killed in action during the conflict.

Those losses have recently been particularly heavy in the fight around Bakhmut. On Tuesday, a spokesman for the eastern grouping of the Armed Forces of Ukraine [said](#) that Russia is concentrating "all its forces on Bakhmut, and in fact is not conducting such powerful combat operations anywhere else in our operational area of responsibility."

In March, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley told lawmakers that Russian troops are "getting slaughtered" in their fight for Bakhmut.



## 'It's a slaughter-fest for the Russians': Top US general on Bakhmut battle

"For about the last 20, 21 days, the Russians have not made any progress whatsoever in and around Bakhmut. So it's a slaughter fest for the Russians," Milley said. "They're getting hammered in the vicinity of Bakhmut and the Ukrainians have fought very, very well."

Still, those losses appear to be only a fraction of Russia's total military force. Asked about Russia's submarine patrols in the Atlantic, Cavoli said that "much of the Russian military has not been affected negatively" by its invasion of Ukraine.

"[T]he Russians are more active than we've seen them in years, and their patrols into the Atlantic, and throughout the Atlantic, are at a high level, most of the time at a higher level than we've seen in years," he said. "And this is, as you pointed out, despite all of the efforts that they're undertaking inside Ukraine."

All of this comes as the US and its partner nations prepare for a spring counteroffensive by Ukrainian forces. The leaked documents painted a pessimistic view of the US' confidence, saying Russia could soon have air superiority and that Ukraine's medium-range air defenses will be "completely reduced by May 23."

The documents which were dated February and March this year detailed a number of shortfalls among the Ukrainian military, predicting that the conflict would ultimately result in a stalemate between the two sides.

But on Wednesday, Cavoli seemed to offer a different assessment.

"[A]ccording to the modeling that we've very carefully done with them, the Ukrainians are in a good position," he said. "They have some weaknesses that I prefer not to talk about in public ... But we are confident — in terms of their surprise and things like that. of course, we've worked on all that with them."

By Haley Britzky

### Category

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