



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 28, 2022

Ukrainian Resistance to Putin's Invasion Is "Remarkable" as They Remember Holodomor

Ukrainian resistance to Putin's invasion is "remarkable," according to retired U.S. Army General Jack Keane. Speaking at Fox News Digital over the weekend, [Keane said](#): "It is nothing short of remarkable what the Ukrainian military has accomplished ... it is significant that not a single population center had been captured after five nights and four days [of fighting]."

Keane added that Putin has greatly overreached: "I believe Putin has strategically overreached and will suffer long-term consequences for this."



Anna Koberska/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Retired U.S. Army Lt. Col. Anthony Shaffer agreed: "[Putin] miscalculated the amount of resistance [Ukrainians would put up] ... he was going for a decapitation of the Ukrainian leadership. If you cut off the head, you don't need to invade everywhere else."

Putin was counting on the president, Volodymyr Zelensky, to fold, pack his bags, and disappear into the night at the first show of force. Instead, not only did Zelensky encourage his countrymen to fight back, he ordered his staff to provide weapons to citizens requesting them. In addition, he visited the front lines of the developing conflict to encourage the resistance to Putin's aggression. Finally, he turned down Biden's offer to help him evacuate the country, firing back that what he needed was ammunition and "not a ride."

There are times when numbers don't matter, and this is one of them. Putin mobilized an estimated 250,000 soldiers to decapitate the Ukrainian government, but they met a Ukrainian force of about 110,000 soldiers and citizens. Putin's army of invaders is not nearly enough to take over the entire country.

Putin's advantage over Ukraine is staggering in the number of additional troops — active and reserve — he has at the ready, along with huge advantages in tanks, heavy artillery, and air power.

But it doesn't matter, because Ukrainians remember Holodomor.

Holodomor, in Ukrainian, means to "inflict death by hunger." Historians call it genocide. An estimated 10 million Ukrainians were deliberately starved in the early 1930s as a result of the Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin's intention to "teach [them] a lesson through famine."

In 1928 Stalin mandated an agricultural "collectivization" of Ukraine, ordering farmers to leave their farms, give up their livestock and equipment, and join collective farms. Ukrainian farmers resisted, and Stalin starved them in retaliation.

From the Holodomor Resource Library:

1.5 million Ukrainians in the countryside fall victim to Stalin's "dekulakization" [removing



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private farmers — kulaks — from their farms] policies. Over the extended period of collectivization, armed dekulakization brigades forcibly confiscate land, livestock, and other property, and evict entire families.

Close to half a million individuals in Ukraine are dragged from their homes, packed into freight trains, and shipped to remote, uninhabited areas such as Siberia where they are left, often without food or shelter.

A great many, especially children, die in transit or soon thereafter.

The remaining farmers are hounded to give up their land, livestock, and equipment and join the collective farms.

As the traditional structures of rural livelihood disintegrate, the religious clergy are demonized and arrested or deported, and their churches destroyed or repurposed for grain storage or other secular use.

Stalin used nearly incomprehensible draconian measures, including the arrest and execution of anyone — even children — found taking as little as a few stalks of wheat from the fields where they worked. Stalin's brigades swept through villages, confiscating hidden grain and any other food items from their homes.

At the bottom of the collectivization and forced starvation period (from 1930 to 1932), 28,000 Ukrainians *every day* were dying from starvation.

Ukrainians remember. In November 2006, the Ukrainian Parliament passed a decree declaring that Holodomor was a deliberate "Act of Genocide," keeping the horror in the front of the minds of the country's citizens.

When Ukraine was released from the yoke of Soviet imperialism in the early 1990s, Putin felt betrayed, as Keith Lowe noted in [HistoryExtra.com](#):

Russian-Ukrainian relations have never been the same since. Russian nationalists, including President Vladimir Putin, have always felt betrayed by Ukraine, which they still regard as "Little Russia." Putin has often claimed that Russians and Ukrainians are "one people" and accused Ukrainian leaders of being little more than foreign puppets.

To Putin's mind, all he is doing is restoring Russian control over territory Russia lost after the end of the Cold War.

All Ukrainians are doing is fighting back, remembering the days of the Holodomor under Putin's predecessor, Joseph Stalin.



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