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# THE MILITARIZATION OF CRIMEA AS A PAN-EUROPEAN THREAT



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## The Reality of the Crimea Militarization

Since the first days of the Crimea occupation, the authors of this report who happened to be not just witnesses to that special operation by the RF, but also the resistance participants, have had no doubt that the only goal of that Putin's brazen venture was to build-up the peninsula as a military base, which is turn, intended to radically change the geopolitical and military-strategic balance in Europe and the Mediterranean.

However, in the first year of the occupation -- roughly before mid-2015 -- Russia tried to "sell" to the shocked world and its own population a shiny array of ideas as to the non-military, but rather, tourism, investment and technological development of its new booty. According to those, Crimea was to become the new Russia showcase that would surpass even the Olympic Sochi and unfortunately, many not only in Russia, but around the world fell for that.

In truth though, since the very beginning of the Crimean occupation, Russia has been consistently implementing its single targeted program -- that of the peninsula's military buildup.

A telling marker was that the Ministry of the Russian Federation for Crimea created two weeks after the illegal annexation, on March 31, 2014, was already abolished as early as July 15, 2015.

On July 28, 2016, the status of the occupied Crimea and Sevastopol within Russia was lowered -- Putin's decree eliminated the Crimean Federal District created immediately after the annexation, on March 21, 2014.

The so-called "subjects of the federation" -- the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol -- are now included in the Southern Federal District with the center in Rostov-on-Don.

That act joined the political and administrative system of command with the military one, since from the outset of the occupation, all Russian military detachments in Crimea were part of the Southern Military District with the headquarters in Rostov-on-Don.

Militarization of Crimea became not only the main content of Russia's Crimean policy, but also, the main driver of the occupied peninsula's economy.

As a result, over the five years of occupation, it was precisely the "military development" of that territory that has become the most striking "success story" of the Russian Federation in Crimea:

- a speedy build-up of the largest in Europe combined-arms grouping (RF) is underway
- since the first days of occupation, Crimea has been receiving only the newest and cutting edge arms and military equipment in the priority order
- all Soviet-time infrastructure in Crimea, such as numerous military airfields, launch rocket pads, air defense facilities, radar systems and nuclear weapons storage facilities, is currently being restored
- a new fortified area in the north of Crimea has been created and is being developed
- construction of new and reconstruction of old military bases, as well as of housing for military personnel is underway



*The Bastion coastal defense missile system at a shooting practice in Crimea, photo: BlackSeaNews archive*

- the number of military servicemen, as well as of various special services personnel, grows
- due to the military orders, the work of the military-industrial enterprises – military instrument-making, shipbuilding and ship repair – has been restored in priority order. These enterprises are now included in the structure of the relevant state concerns of the Russian Federation.

All other areas of life in Crimea – economy, social services, human rights, information space and national politics – are now subject to the ideology of a military springboard.

## The Chronicle of the Crimea Occupation and the Beginning of its Militarization

The military development of Crimea began in the first days of the occupation.

The special operation of the Russian Federation on the seizure of Crimea started three days before the end of the Winter Olympics in Sochi that lasted from the 7th to the 23rd of February 2014.

On February 20, 2014, a column of armored vehicles left the base of the 810th marine brigade of the Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) in the Cossack Bay of Sevastopol, heading out of the city.

The official explanation was that the BSF in Crimea put its regiments on a heightened alert in view of the difficult political situation in Ukraine, meaning that the marines would enhance security of the BSF units throughout the peninsula – in addition to Sevastopol, it had a naval aviation airfield in the village of Gvardeiskoye near Simferopol and a base in Feodosia.

On February 20-23, 2014, a Special Forces brigade of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (GRU) –

was sent from Togliatti, Russia, to Crimea to "protect a strategic object".

On February 23, 2014, Sevastopol has de-facto got under Russian control – the city rally elected a "people's mayor" and created the "detachments of self-defense". The "self-defense" was aided by the Russian soldiers who wore a uniform without insignia, promptly nicknamed "the green men".

On February 23, 2014, the Winter Olympics in Sochi ended and Russian BSF ships that ensured the safety of the games, headed straight from the sea to Novorossiysk.

On February 24, 2014, Russian armored personnel carriers (BTR) completely blocked the entrance to Sevastopol. The city became the starting point for the occupation of Crimea, because in accordance with the Ukraine-Russia treaty, it was here that Russia's BSF headquarters, its main shipbuilding warehouse and naval infantry were based.

On that very day, in Novorossiysk, the "Olympic" fleet of the BSF took on board the Airborne Special Forces units and Marines with military equipment for the occupation of Crimea, and set sail for Sevastopol.

Below is the list of vessels stationed in the Sochi-Novorossiysk region of the Black Sea during the Winter Olympics:

1. Rocket cruiser Moscow – left Sevastopol on February 3, 2014.
2. SCR (patrol boat, frigate) Smetlivy – left Sevastopol on February 3, 2014.
3. IPC (small antisubmarine ship, corvette) Alexandrovets – left Sevastopol on February 4, 2014.
4. IPC (small antisubmarine ship, corvette) Murovets – left Sevastopol on February 4, 2014.
5. MTSCH (marine minesweeper) Kovrovets – left Sevastopol on February 4, 2014.



March 2, 2014. Perevalnoye, Simferopol region. Russian troops are blocking the 36th Separate Coastal Defense Brigade of the Naval Forces of Ukraine, photo by Anton Goloborodko, Photos from the BlackSeaNews archive.



6. MTSCH (marine minesweeper) Turbinist – left Sevastopol on February 4, 2014.
7. SRSK (reconnaissance ship) Priazovye – left Sevastopol on February 4, 2014.

In addition, the Russian Navy fleet in the Black Sea included large landing ships (BDK) of the Black Sea, Northern and Baltic fleets that regularly provided for the military contingent of the Russian Naval Base in Tartous, Syria, and delivered military equipment to the Syrian Assad regime from the Russian BSF naval base in Novorossiysk.

During the special operation of the Crimea occupation – from February 20 to March 25, 2014 – there were 9 large landing ships in the Black Sea:

- 5 large landing ships of the Black Sea Fleet: Saratov (#150), Nikolai Filchenkov (#152), Novochoerkassk (#142), Yamal (#156) and Azov (#151).
- 2 large landing ships of the Baltic Fleet of the Russian Federation: Kaliningrad (#102) and Minsk (#127).
- 2 large landing ships of the Northern Fleet of the Russian Federation: Olenegorskiy Gorniyak (#112) and Georgy Pobedonosets (#016).

Also, at least nine other ships of the Black Sea Fleet that were based at the Novorossiysk naval base and eight ships of the Coast Guard of the FSB Border Guard were present in the Black Sea at the time of the annexation.

On February 25, 2014, after the Olympics, the squadron of the Russian Black Sea Fleet returned to the already seized Sevastopol delivering several thousand paratroopers and weapons from Novorossiysk.

## The main logistical role in the occupation and further militarization of the Crimean peninsula belonged to the large landing ships of Russia's Black Sea and other fleets and the Kerch Ferry Terminal.

Incidentally, the seriousness of the situation could be evidenced by the fact that in those days, in Sevastopol, the BSF compiled the lists of the servicemen family members for the event of evacuation, while marine units were put on heightened alert.

On February 25, 2014, a Special Forces unit of the GRU of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia arrived from Ulyanovsk to Crimea.

On February 27, 2014, the reconnaissance and sabotage group of the Airborne Special Forces of the Russian Federation that arrived from Sevastopol in uniforms without insignia, seized the Verkhovna Rada and the Council of Ministers of Crimea in Simferopol.

On February 28, 2014 the exit from the Balaklava Bay (Sevastopol) where Ukraine's Coast Guard ships were stationed, was blocked by the BSF missile boat Ivanovets (#954), while the base of the military maritime border of Ukraine in Balaklava was surrounded by the special forces of the Russian Federation.

On that same day, a column of armored vehicles, including armored Tigers and other weapons previously not in service, of the RF military units in Crimea headed from Sevastopol and the Gvardeiskoye BSF airfield near Simferopol towards the Crimean capital, while the Special Forces of the Russian Federation seized the Simferopol and Belbek airports (Sevastopol).



*Loading of military equipment to be transported for Crimea across the Kerch Strait, the Kavkaz port.  
Photo: zloy-odessit.livejournal.com*

The mobile coastal anti-ship missile systems Bastion and Ball, operational-tactical Iskanders, anti-aircraft C-400 and Pantsirs, together with cruise missile bombers, arrived in Crimea right in the first weeks of occupation.

On March 1, 2014, the Russian President asked the Federation Council to authorize the use of Russian troops in Ukraine "until the socio-political situation stabilizes" with the request granted. On the same day, two large landing ships of the Baltic Fleet of the Russian Federation Kaliningrad (#102) and Minsk (#127) with paratroopers and technicians from Novorossiysk entered Sevastopol.

Also on March 1, 2014, both Feodosia Bay and Port were blocked by one of the two missile hovercrafts of the BSF – Bora and Samum.

On March 2, 2014 two large landing ships Olenegorsky Gornyak (#112) and Georgy Pobedonosets (#016) of the Russian Northern Fleet arrived to Sevastopol carrying on board paratroopers and equipment from Novorossiysk. On the same day, the Marine battalions of the Navy of Ukraine in Feodosia and Kerch and the coastal defense brigade of the Naval Forces of Ukraine in the Perevalnoye village were blocked and the building of the President of Ukraine in Crimea, as well as the headquarters of the Azov-Black Sea regional management and the

Simferopol border unit of the Border Service of Ukraine, were seized.

On March 3, 2014, the ships and auxiliary vessels of the BSF blocked the exit from the Sevastopol Bay to prevent the possible exit of the Ukrainian Navy ships or the entrance of the Ukrainian Navy flagship frigate Hetman Sahaidachny (U130).

That day marked the start of the RF military blockade of all Ukrainian military units in Crimea that lasted until March 25, 2014.

The commander of the Black Sea Fleet of the RF Admiral Alexander Vitko declared an ultimatum to the Ukrainian serviceman: if they did not surrender by 5 a.m. on March 4, 2014, Russian troops would begin the attack on all units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine throughout Crimea.

The ultimatum to the Ukrainian military units was delivered by the Russian servicemen.

On the same day, the Russian Special Forces captured the border crossing point at the Kerch Ferry Terminal and the Kerch Sea Border Guard.

On March 5, 2014 five large landing ships of the Russian Navy – the Baltic Fleet landing ships Minsk (#127) and Kaliningrad (#102), the Northern Fleet ships Olenegorsky Gornyak (#112) and George Pobedonosets (#016) and the Black Sea Fleet ship Azov (#151) – arrived to Sevastopol with troops and equipment from yet another trip to Novorossiysk. At least 300 people and 20 vehicles were unloaded from each ship. Seven BTR-80s and a number of the antitank missile systems Shturm were unloaded from the landing ship Azov. In the meantime, on the west



The Ball coastal defense ballistic missile system at a shooting practice in Crimea, photo by V. Pasyakin, Russian newspaper, November 2016



In 2018, two new Buyan-M class, project 21631 missile corvettes arrived to the RF Black Sea Fleet replacing those transferred to the Baltic. Photos from the BlackSeaNews archive.



## The Build-Up of the Crimea Missile Potential

coast of the Crimean peninsula, at the entrance to Lake Donuzlav where the Ukrainian Navy base was located, Russian BSF flagship missile cruiser Moskva, the physical fields control vessel CFP-183, a small rocket ship (corvette) Shtil and a Molniya-type rocket boat controlled the exit from the lake in the Black Sea.

On March 6, 2014, at the entrance to the Donuzlav lake near Yevpatoria where the Ukrainian Navy ships were based, the Russian Black Sea Fleet blew up and sunk its own old discharged cruiser (BOD) Ochakov and a rescue tug Shakhtar to block the fairway in order to prevent the Ukrainian ships from leaving for Odesa.

As of March 7, 2014, Russian troops in Crimea had taken all the administrative buildings, blocked all the access ways to the peninsula and surrounded all the bases and military units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Russian warships had delivered to the peninsula about 10 thousand soldiers and ammunition, including mobile anti-ship coastal defense systems.

On March 14, 2014, a train with 14 anti-aircraft missile systems (SAMs) S-300 PMU travelled via the Kerch ferry crossing to the Crimean interior.

That is, as early as mid-March 2014, the Russian Federation started building the missile potential of the occupied Crimea.

The redeployment of mobile coastal anti-ship missile systems Bastion and Ball, Iskander operational-tactical missile systems, bombers, C-400 air defense and mobile missile systems and Pantsyrs marked the first stage of the peninsula militarization.

In March-April of 2014, the Bastion Coastal Missile Complexes (BRCs) capable of shooting down not just ships, but also land targets, had been already stationed on the Crimean coast. Each Bastion with Onyx cruise missiles can provide coastal protection of more than 600 km in length.

In addition, in March-April 2014, Russia transferred to Crimea DBK Ball, formerly stationed in the Caspian Sea. The squadron of these DBK was relocated to Sevastopol and included into the 15th newly formed separate coastal missile brigade. The DBK Ball is intended for control of territorial waters and is a mobile system that carries two types of anti-ship missiles (PKR) in launch vehicles (TPK). The Kh-35E missile range of damage is 120 km, while the Kh-35B missile - 260 km.

The DBK Ball and Bastion-P are deployed in the Reservne village area between Sevastopol and Balaklava. The Bastion-P (K300P), a mobile variant of the MZKT-7930 complex on chassis, can be equipped with nuclear warhead missiles.

On May 9, 2014, the mobile ballistic missile Ball and Bastion-P took part in the Victory Day military parade in Sevastopol.

In May-June 2014, according to the sources of our monitoring group, an echeloned air defense system that included the mobile systems of the airborne and anti-missile defense systems S-400 (long-range) and Pantsir-C1 (short-range), was deployed near Feodosia. The information was also confirmed by the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (NSDCU).



Missile frigates Admiral Grigorovich and Admiral Essen by a berth of the Sevastopol's main bay. Both have fired Caliber missiles in Syria. For now, the RF Black Sea Fleet already has three such frigates capable of carrying eight missiles each. Photos from the BlackSeaNews archive.



Without the occupation of Crimea, the upgrade of the RF Black Sea Fleet with new frigates, corvettes, and cruise missile submarines would not have been possible.

In November 2014, according to our sources, the first operational-tactical missile complexes (OTRK) Iskander-M appeared in the occupied Crimea.

On May 20, 2015, the secretary of the NSDCU Oleksandr Turchynov stated that "10 Iskander-Ms have been delivered to the occupied peninsula" and placed in the vicinity of Shcholkine and Krasnoperkopsk, and that Russia was also preparing to place similar complexes in the Dzhankoy and Chornomorske areas.

In addition, according to the secretary of the NSDCU, the grouping would have three OTRK Iskander-K squadrons, including those equipped with the nuclear warhead missiles.

The secretary of the National Security and Defense Council also said that the Russian Federation was planning to deploy in Crimea a regiment of the Tu-22M3 bombers equipped with the new modification of the controlled aerial bombs and the Kh-15 (in the future – Kh-102) air-ground hypersonic missiles.

As for the infrastructural support of the nuclear forces, the Russian command pays special attention to the runway repair and modernization at the airbases Gvardeiskoye (Simferopol), Belbek (Sevastopol) and Dzhankoy for receiving and deploying the Tu-22MZ bombers.

In order to test the new models of aviation weapons, including the air-ground missiles Kh-15 and Kh-102- based, the Russian military has already restored the airfield in the village of Kirovske (near Feodosia).

At the end of 2015 and in 2016 there was a significant increase in the number of the Russian BSF ships and their combat power capacity.

- In 2015, the Black Sea Fleet got two new 06363 missile submarines and two new 21631 small rocket ships (corvettes). All four new combat ships are equipped with the C-1 cruise missiles with a range of up to 2,500 km capable of carrying a nuclear warhead.
- On September 28, 2015, the first of the six new 06363 submarines – submarine B-261 Novorossiysk with the Caliber cruise missiles arrived to Sevastopol.
- On November 18, 2015, two new missile ships equipped with the Caliber cruise missiles – small missile boats (corvettes) Zelyonyi Dol and Serpukhov – followed.



Loading of the Caliber cruise missiles into the torpedo-launching device of the new project 636 submarine of the RF Black Sea Fleet. Sevastopol, September 2, Yuzhnaya Bay, photo from social media



- On December 25, 2015, the second of the six new 06363 submarines – submarine B-237 Rostov-on-Don with the Caliber cruise missiles arrived to Sevastopol. On November 17, 2015, en route from the Baltic to the Black Sea, it fired cruise missiles from the eastern Mediterranean at the targets in Syria.
- In 2016, two more missile ships – frigate and a submarine – were added to the RF Black Sea Fleet.
- On June 9, 2016, Admiral Grygorovich, the main frigate in a series of six new 11356 ships, equipped with the Caliber cruise missiles, entered Sevastopol.
- On June 29, 2016, the third of the six new rocket submarines, Stary Oskol, entered the Black Sea.

All in all, as of January 1, 2017, the Russian Black Sea Fleet had 7 warships (including 3 submarines) equipped with cruise missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Before the occupation of Crimea, only one ship – the Soviet era flagship of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, missile cruiser Moskva – had such capability.

In 2017, the Russian Black Sea Fleet has received two more missile frigates and three submarines armed with the Caliber cruise missiles. At the same time, two small BSF missile boats, Green Dol and Serpukhov got transferred to the Baltic Fleet.

In 2018, another Russian missile frigate and three small missile ships armed with the Caliber cruise missiles have been added to the Russian Black Sea Fleet.

As of January 1, 2019, the cruise missile fleet of the Russian BSF included:

1. Moscow, missile cruiser, Russian BSF flagship, since 1983.
2. Novorossiysk rocket submarine, since September 21, 2015.
3. Rostov-on-Don missile submarine, since December 25, 2015.
4. Admiral Grigorovich missile frigate, since June 9, 2016.
5. Stary Oskol rocket submarine, since June 29, 2016.
6. Admiral Essen missile frigate, since July 5, 2017.
7. Krasnodar missile submarine, since August 9, 2017.

8. Veliky Novgorod, a missile submarine, arrived to the Mediterranean Sea on August 28, 2017; as of March 1, 2018, has not entered the Black Sea; is part of the Mediterranean squadron based on Tartus.
9. Kolpino missile submarine, arrived to the Mediterranean Sea on August 28, 2017, as of March 1, 2018, has not entered the Black Sea; is part of the Mediterranean squadron based on Tartus.
10. Buyan-M class, project 21631 missile corvette/small missile boat Vyshny Volochok, since May 25, 2018.
11. Missile frigate Admiral Makarov arrived in the Mediterranean at the end of August 2018 and on October 5 - to its permanent base in Sevastopol.
12. Buyan-M class, project 21631 missile corvette/small missile boat Orekhovo-Zuevo, since December 10, 2018.
13. Project 22160 main modular missile corvette/patrol ship Vasily Bykov, since December 20, 2018.

In addition, in 2019 - 2020, the following vessels are expected to arrive to the RF Black Sea Fleet:

- 2 Buyan-M class, project 21631 littoral missile corvettes Ingushetia and Grayvoron
- 3 project 22160 blue-water missile corvettes Dmitry Rogachev (undergoing tests), Pavel Derzhavin and Sergey Kotov (both currently being built at the Zaliv shipyard in Kerch)
- 6 Karakurth class, project 22800 littoral missile corvettes

All of the above carry Caliber missiles on board.

Thus, in 2019-2020, the total number of the RF Black Sea Fleet ships carrying cruise missiles will increase to 24.

In November 2016, the Soviet-time anti-ship coastal missile division Utes was restored and reactivated. The object is located in the Balaklava district of Sevastopol, in the Cape Aya area. At the end of 2016, it test-fired the 1982 anti-ship Progress missiles, an upgraded version of the Soviet P-35 anti-ship missile with the range of shooting of up to 460 km. The missile is equipped with a 560-kilogram explosive warhead or a nuclear warhead of up to 20 kilotons.



*CDMS Utes at a shooting practice on April 26, 2017, photo: BlackSeaNews archive*

On April 25, 2017 Utes fired a cruise missile at a maritime target. The P-35 missile successfully hit the ship's shield that drifted in the sea at a distance of about 170 km. In 2017, Utes conducted several dozen missile launches.

By 2020, the Utes complex will be replaced with the first stationary silo-based coastal missile complex Bastion-C with up to 36 Onyx missiles.

## The Occupied Crimea and the Change of the Region's Military Balance

The combat missile and delivery potential concentrated in the territory of the occupied Crimea in 2014-2016 has led to a major change in the military strategic balance in the Black Sea region, as well as in the Black Sea-Mediterranean and Black Sea-Caspian regions, in favor of the Russian Federation.

Prior to the first military use of the sea cruise missiles Caliber on October 7, 2015, their range was believed to be around 300 km. But in the first combat operation in Syria the missiles struck targets at distances of over 1500 km. Some data suggests, however, that the true range of these missiles can be up to 2600 km.

On October 22, 2016, the head of the combat training department of the Russian Navy's Main Staff, Rear Admiral V. Kochemazov, said that the sea-based

cruise missiles Caliber had a shooting range of up to 2 thousand kilometers. "Depending on the targets – whether they are ground or sea ones – and on the route, taking into account the need to bypass obstacles on the ground, the total shooting range of these missiles is up to 2 thousand kilometers", – said Kochemazov. The specialized sites already state the range of these missiles as 2600 km.

Thus, from the Sevastopol area, the Caliber missiles of the RF Black Sea Fleet at a minimum, are capable of reaching targets located in all European countries, except Norway, Great Britain and Spain, as well as in North Africa and the Middle East.

The mobile coastal missile complex Bastion with an Onyx cruise missile, same as Caliber, is capable of shooting not only ships, but also small land targets within a likely range of 600 kilometers.

When fired from the Sevastopol area, Bastion can also strike land targets in the coastal areas of all Black Sea countries. It can also be used with a nuclear warhead.

Officially, the mobile short-range ballistic missile system Iskander has approximately the same range of 500 kilometers and can carry a nuclear warhead up to 50 kilotons.

However, many experts believe that the declared number is purposely underestimated to conceal the violation of the INF Treaty and that the real range of this cruise missile is 2000-2600 km.



The Tu-22 M3 missile bomber regiment scheduled for deployment in Crimea includes 16 aircrafts each able to carry 10 Kh-101 (H-102) cruise missiles with a range of about 5 000 km, including a nuclear warhead of 250 kilotonnes.

The Kh-101 – or Kh-102 with a nuclear warhead – is a strategic air-to-surface cruise missile with the radar-evading stealth features. The test results have demonstrated a circular error probable (CEP) of 5 m at a range of 5500 km. It is capable of destroying mobile targets with up to 10 meters accuracy.

Overall, coupled with the plans to deploy the Tu-22M3 missile bombers, the coastal land missile systems Iskander and Bastion and the Black Sea Fleet sea missiles Caliber stationed in the occupied Crimean peninsula, threaten now not only the entire Black Sea coast, as previously believed, but also, all of Europe, especially from its southern flank.

So, in 2014-2018, the military-strategic significance of the Crimean peninsula for Russia has increased considerably, and the process continues. It will accelerate even more after the completion of the Kerch Bridge due to the radical improvement of the logistics. As a result, the military potential of the Crimean peninsula, including the offensive one, will represent a new and unique phenomenon.

As a result of the militarization of the occupied Crimea, the Russian Federation now has an absolute military-strategic superiority in the Black Sea region projected to the South Caucasus and the Middle East.

That is further exacerbated by the fact that in 2017-2018, Turkey's relations with NATO, the EU and the US have worsened, while with the RF – improved to the point that Turkey has purchased the S-400 air defense systems in Russia and began construction of the first section of the Turkish Stream gas pipeline.

All of the above leads us to the conclusion that: In 2017, as a result of the militarization of the occupied Crimea, Russia has accomplished an absolute military-strategic superiority in the Black Sea region that radiates into the South Caucasus and the Middle East.

Also, in 2017, the unrecognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia began the actual process of joining the RF military structures.



The shooting range of the RF sea-based and coastal missile complexes from the occupied Crimea and the naval base of the Russian Federation in Tartus, Syria



The Feodosiya-13 nuclear arms storage facility in May 2013. Photos: samnamos.livejournal.com.

## The Restoration of the Crimean Nuclear Infrastructure

The monitoring group believes there is a high probability that there are already nuclear warheads for marine and coastal missile systems in Crimea.

In March-April 2014, in the early days of the Crimean occupation, Russian troops took control of the nuclear weapons storage and service bases on the territory of the Crimean peninsula left there from the Soviet times.

In May 2014, the Russian command inspected the Feodosia-13 facility, the main nuclear weapons storage and service base.

On January 26, 2015, Russian media reported that as part of the Russian military grouping in Crimea deployment and build-up, the 12th General Directorate of the General Staff of the Ministry of Defense of the RF got a new body whose mission would be the provision of storage, transportation and disposal of nuclear blocks for tactical and ballistic missiles.

On April 25, 2015, the Information and Analytical Center of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (IAC NSDCU) announced that on April 23, 2015, the Consulate General of Ukraine in Rostov-on-Don had received a notification that several railroad cars with the "Nuclear danger" sign on board traveled via the Rostov railway station, presumably towards the Crimean peninsula.

According to the peninsula residents, however, such cargo had been seen on the territory of the occupied Autonomous Republic on numerous occasions.

Currently, Russia is restoring the main Crimean nuclear weapon maintenance facility, previously one of the central USSR nuclear weapons storage bases – military object # 62047, also known as Feodosia-13 in Kiziltash (Krasnokamenka), in the mountain tract between Sudak and Koktebel.

Note: The Feodosia-13 facility became operational in 1955 and was used to store nuclear munitions for aviation, artillery and missiles, including for the warships of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet. The atomic bombs used in the September 1956 tests at the Semipalatinsk range had been assembled at that site. In 1959, the first nuclear warheads to the GDR (Furstenberg) were sent from Kiziltash. In September 1962, during the Caribbean crisis, six aircraft bombs assembled in Kiziltash were sent to Cuba as part of the Operation Anadyr. Prior to the occupation of Crimea in 2014, the complex of buildings and structures was used as a permanent deployment base of the 47th special purpose regiment "Tiger" of the internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine that consisted of two special-purpose battalions. Stationed there were also the military commandant's office of the guard of the 51st joint AFU warehouse and a patrol battalion.

## The Size and Composition of the Military Grouping in Crimea

In the Soviet era, about 100 thousand troops and 60 thousand personnel were stationed on the Crimean peninsula. Before the occupation of Crimea, under the agreement with Ukraine, there had been 12.5 thousand servicemen of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation with an authorized number of up to 25 thousand people.

By the beginning of 2017, the monitoring group estimates the size of the Russian armed forces grouping in the occupied Crimea at close to 60 thousand people with the prospect of building it up to 100 thousand people.

By comparison, according to the US Department of Defense, all American bases in Japan have a total of about 50 thousand servicemen stationed there.

On March 6, 2015, at the Atlantic Council and Freedom House in Washington, D.C., the Maidan of



Foreign Affairs presented a report "Human Rights Abuses in Russian- Occupied Crimea". In particular, the report said: "Putin is turning the entire territory of Crimea into an enormous military base at an incredible pace. According to our estimates, it will be staffed by about 100,000 people".

The forecast was based on the official press release of the Southern Military District of the RF Ministry of Defense from September 17, 2014 entitled "The Newly Formed Army Detachments of the SMD in Crimea Will Receive New Combat Banners". The report said: "By the end of this year, more than 40 units and military detachments of the Southern Military District (SMD) will be granted the newly designed military banners. Most of the military units of the SMD where the solemn rituals of the combat banner award will take place, are the recently formed in Crimea aviation, anti-aircraft missile, engineering, artillery and RCBP regiments, separate brigades of coastal troops, material and technical support, and so on".

In the armed forces of the RF, combat banners are awarded to regiments and separate battalions, as well as to brigades, divisions and armies. The staffing of the

regiment is between 2000 and 3000 servicemen – soldiers, sergeants, ensigns and officers – and civilians, while of brigades – up to 3000-4000 personnel.

On June 8, 2015, during a speech at the meeting of the Ukraine-NATO Interparliamentary Council in Kyiv, the Ukraine Defense Minister Stepan Poltorak said: "The Russian Federation increases the size of the military grouping in Crimea. Now it numbers about 24 thousand servicemen ... There is a high probability of the deployment of the strategic nuclear weapons carriers in the peninsula. In fact, Russia forms a powerful group in Crimea for guaranteeing its grip on the occupied territory and defending its interests against Ukraine and other states". According to him, if such build-up of force continues, it is possible that by 2017, Russia can double the number of its troops and create a powerful contingent of 43 thousand troops.

On June 30, 2016, while on a visit to Bulgaria, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said in an interview to Bulgarian television: "More than 60,000 Russian military personnel are located on the Crimean peninsula and there is a great threat of the deployment of nuclear weapons there".

At the end of February 2018, Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Petrenko said that if in 2013, the number of Russian military personnel in Crimea was about 12 thousand, now it exceeded 31 thousand.

That is, the actual number of Russian troops in the occupied Crimea remains the subject of discussion.

The number of these crews and coastal personnel will add yet another thousand people to the number of the RF Black Sea Fleet personnel in the occupied Crimea.

Russian troops in Crimea include surface and submarine forces of the Black Sea Fleet. The surface forces include assault warships, large and small landing ships and coastal defense ships – anti-submarine and minesweepers.

The base of the Russian Navy troops in Crimea is comprised of:

- 30th surface ship division
- 197th landing ship brigade
- 41st missile boat brigade
- 68th coastal defense ship brigade
- 4th submarine brigades
- 519th separate reconnaissance ship division



On January 14, 2017, Metropolitan Platon of Kerch and Feodosia blessed the S-400 Triumph, the new anti-aircraft missile system of the Russian Federation Armed Forces. Photo: black-drago.livejournal.com

The UN General Assembly:  
“...expresses its grave concern over the progressive militarization of Crimea by the Russian Federation as the occupying Power...”

- 176th separate oceanographic research vessel division
- 205th auxiliary fleet detachment
- 145th rescue boat unit
- 58th supply vessel group (Feodosia).

In addition, the Black Sea Fleet includes:

- the 115th security and service Commandant
- 184th experimental research base
- the mine and countermine base
- the artillery rocket repair facility
- the 13th ship repair factory
- the 91st ship repair plant
- the 17th Naval School of Junior Specialists
- the Black Sea Naval College
- and the Sevastopol Presidential Cadet School.

In 2018, Russian BSF obtained the Admiral Makarov missile frigate, 2 missile corvettes of the project 21631 (codename "Buyan-M") and 3 rocket corvettes project 22160.

In addition, in 2018, the Fleet got two new minesweepers of the project 12700 (codename Alexandrite) and the reconnaissance project 18280 ship Ivan Khurs.

The basis of the Russian land troops in Crimea is comprised of:

- 810th separate Marine Corps brigade (Sevastopol)
- 126th separate coastal defense brigade of (Perevalne, Simferopol area)

- 15th separate coastal missile brigade (Sevastopol)
- 127th separate intelligence brigade (Simferopol)
- 1096th anti-aircraft missile regiment (Sevastopol)
- 8th artillery regiment (Simferopol)
- 68th separate marine engineering regiment (Yevpatoria)
- 4th radiation, chemical and bacteriological protection regiment (Sevastopol)
- Airborne assault battalion of the Airborne Forces (Dzhankoy)
- 171st separate assault Battalion (Feodosia).

The units' munitions are continuously upgraded. For example, in the spring of 2016, the 810th separate marine brigade of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation received 40 new amphibious armored personnel carriers BTR-82A. That model has a combat module with a coaxial machine gun and dual-feed automatic cannon, a more powerful engine, reinforced protection against improvised explosive devices and mine blasts, the fifth-generation communications and a topographic orientation system, as well as an air-conditioning system.

According to the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, the technical rearmament of the Russian troops over the four years of occupation looks as follows: In 2013 there were no 0 tanks in Crimea and as of January 1, 2018, there were 40; the number of armored personnel carriers increased from 92 to 583, artillery systems – from 24 to 162 and airplanes – from 22 to 113.

At the end of 2016, in order to manage the coastal units, a special 22nd Army Corps of the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea was formed.

Major General AV Kolotovkin, who previously served as commander of the 58th Army in the North Caucasus, was appointed the Corps Commander.

The 22nd Army Corps now includes the Black Sea Fleet's Coastal Troops that previously reported to the BSF Deputy Commander for Coastal Troops.

*Note:* An Army Corps is a ground force composite unit of the Russian Army formed for solving specific operational-tactical tasks that may include two, four or more divisions. Since a division has upward of seven thousand servicemen, an army corps can have tens of thousands troops.



The air defense of the occupied Crimea is provided by the 31st Air Defense Division of the 4th Air and Air Defense Forces Army, whose units are stationed in Sevastopol (the 12th Artillery Regiment), Feodosia (the 18th Artillery Regiment) and Yalta (an artillery regiment) and since 2018 in Dzhankoy (the Northern Crimea).

In 2017, the anti-aircraft missile regiments in Sevastopol and Feodosia have been rearmed with the latest S-400 systems that had replaced the S-300 ones.

A similar rearmament of the anti-missile regiment in Yevpatoria is in the works for the near future.

One of the objectives of the Crimean land units of the Russian Army grouping in Crimea is covering the Crimean isthmus, as well as maintaining readiness for the possible invasion of mainland Ukraine from Crimea, including amphibious landing on the Ukrainian coast of the Black and Azov Seas.

The Air Force component of the Crimean Russian Military Force includes the units of the bomber, fighter and defense aviation that comprise the 4th Air and Air Defense Forces Army and the BSF Naval Aviation.

In addition to the latter consisting of:

- the 43rd separate naval assault regiment (Saki)
- the 318th separate mixed regiment (Kacha).

A new aviation grouping – the 27th Mixed Aviation Division – composed of three different types of regiments has been formed:

- the 37th mixed air regiment (Gvardeiskoye)
- the 38th fighter jet regiment (Belbek)
- the 39th helicopter regiment (Dzhankoy).

The aviation grouping is capable of performing combat missions throughout the entire depth of the Black Sea region. It received new Su-30CM destroyers, modernized Su-27CMs and Su-24M attack aircrafts and Su-25CM. In addition, the 39th helicopter regiment is equipped with the type Ka-52, Mi-28N and Mi-8 AMTSh helicopters.

In 2016, the build-up of the already-largest Southern Military District of Russia in the regions of Russia bordering Ukraine continued. At the end of 2016, the 150th Motorized Infantry Division in the Rostov Region, the 42nd Motorized Infantry Division in Chechnya, the squadron of the Ka-52 shock helicopters in the Krasnodar Territory and several others were formed and started combat training.

The UN General Assembly:  
“...expresses concern over reports of the continuing destabilization of Crimea owing to transfers by the Russian Federation of weapon systems, including nuclear-capable aircraft and missiles...”

On July 1, 2016, Colonel General Alexander Dvornikov who earlier was in charge of the Russian army grouping in Syria and was awarded the title of Hero of the Russian Federation was appointed the commander of the Southern Military District that included the occupied Crimea.

In 2017, in connection with the approaching Kerch Bridge construction deadline, the formation of the bridge naval guard brigade has begun. The brigade is being formed within Russia's National Guard on the new Grachonok-class anti-saboteur ships (project 21980). It will consist of a group of combat divers, whose tasks will include deflecting sabotage attacks and search for explosives, special reconnaissance submarines and high resolution hydro sonar systems.

In 2017, assault battalions of airborne troops were formed in Dzhankoy and Feodosia. In 2018, the 97th Paratrooper Regiment will be also permanently deployed there on the base of the 7th Mountain Airborne Assault Division.

Another 2017 decision was to deploy to Crimea a stationary early-warning radar Voronezh-SM with the detection range of up to 6 thousand km, that will be located in the Sevastopol's Chersonese cape. Also in 2017, Russia started a technical makeover of the captured Ukrainian Space Flight Control Center in Yevpatoria was started. The center has one of the world's largest full-fledged radio telescopes, 70 meters in diameter, and is now included in the Russian Space Forces under the name "The 40th Separate Command and Measuring Complex (Deep Space Communications Center) of the Titov Main Test and Space Systems Control Centre".

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## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly Problem of the militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov

5 December 2018. / English / Seventy-third session / Agenda item 34 (a)

### *Prevention of armed conflict:*

*Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America: draft resolution*

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Charter of the United Nations, which states, inter alia, that all Members of the United Nations shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations,

Recalling also its resolution 68/262 of 27 March 2014 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine, in which it affirmed its commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders,

Recalling further its resolutions 71/205 and 72/190 on the situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, of 19 December 2016 and 19 December 2017, respectively,

Condemning the ongoing temporary occupation of part of the territory of Ukraine, namely, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (hereinafter referred to as "Crimea"), by the Russian Federation, and reaffirming the non-recognition of its annexation,

Recalling that the temporary occupation of Crimea and the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine by the Russian Federation is in contravention of commitments made under the Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Budapest Memorandum) of 5 December A/73/L.47 2/2 18-21037 1994, 1 in which, inter alia, the commitment to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine was reaffirmed,

Supporting the commitment by Ukraine to adhere to international law in its efforts to put an end to the temporary Russian occupation of Crimea,

1. Stresses that the presence of Russian troops in Crimea is contrary to the national sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine and undermines the security and stability of neighbouring countries and the European region;

2. Expresses its grave concern over the progressive militarization of Crimea by the Russian Federation as the occupying Power, and also expresses concern over reports of the continuing destabilization of Crimea owing to transfers by the Russian Federation of weapon systems, including nuclear-capable aircraft and missiles, weapons, ammunition and military personnel to the territory of Ukraine, and urges the Russian Federation to stop such activity;

3. Expresses its concern regarding multiple military exercises of Russian armed forces held in Crimea, which can undermine regional security and entail considerable long-term negative environmental consequences in the region;

4. Also expresses its concern over the Russian Federation's ongoing actions in parts of the Black Sea surrounding Crimea and the Sea of Azov, including the ir militarization, which pose further threats to Ukraine and undermine the stability of the broader region;

5. Expresses its utmost concern about the dangerous increase in tensions and the unjustified use of force by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, including against three vessels of the naval forces of Ukraine, namely, the *Berdiansk*, the *Nikopol* and the tugboat *Yana Kapu*, on 25 November 2018 in the Black Sea, as well as the serious wounding of some of their crew members, calls upon the Russian Federation to release the vessels and their crews and equipment unconditionally and without delay, and also calls for the utmost restraint to de-escalate the situation immediately;

6. Calls upon the Russian Federation to refrain from impeding the lawful exercise of navigational rights and freedoms in the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait in accordance with applicable international law, in particular provisions of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; 2

7. Condemns the Russian Federation's construction and opening of the Kerch Strait bridge between the Russian Federation and temporarily occupied Crimea, which facilitates the further militarization of Crimea, and also condemns the increasing military presence of the Russian Federation in parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, including the Kerch Strait, and the Russian Federation's harassment of commercial vessels and restriction of international shipping there;

8. Urges the Russian Federation, as the occupying Power, to withdraw its military forces from Crimea and to end its temporary occupation of Ukraine 's territory without delay;

9. Decides to continue its consideration of the matter at its seventy-fourth session.



**Andriy Klymenko** is a Crimean expert and journalist, co-founder and editor-in-chief of the online Black Sea News portal [www.blackseanews.net](http://www.blackseanews.net). Before the occupation of Crimea, he lived and worked in Yalta. Klymenko is the author of many development strategies of the Crimean cities, economy sectors and peninsula as a whole. Economist Emeritus of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea

A. Klymenko is currently being persecuted by the FSB for resisting the Crimean occupation and is on the official Russian Federation list of terrorists and extremists. Since 2014, together with the rest of the news portal staff, he has been working in Kyiv as the Chairman of the Supervisory Board and the Crimean Department of the Maidan of Foreign Affairs and Head of the joint Monitoring Group with the Black Sea Institute of Strategic Studies that focuses on the issues of compliance with international sanctions against the RF imposed due to the occupation and illegal annexation of Crimea.



**Tetyana Guchakova** is a Crimean economic expert and journalist, co-founder and chief executive of the Black Sea News online portal [www.blackseanews.net](http://www.blackseanews.net). Before the occupation of Crimea, she lived and worked in Yalta. Guchakova is a business consultant, author of many Crimea development strategies, including those of the peninsula's main cities and industries, who is currently being persecuted by the FSB for resisting the Crimean occupation. Since 2015, together with the rest of the BSN staff, Tetyana Guchakova has been working in Kyiv. She is the lead expert of the Maidan of Foreign Affairs' Crimean Department and its joint Monitoring Group with the Black Sea Institute of Strategic Studies that focuses on the issues of compliance with international sanctions against the RF imposed due to the occupation and illegal annexation of Crimea.