

SYNERGING



ENERGIES

BLACK SEA SECURITY

ANALYTICAL JOURNAL No. 2 (34) 2019

FOCUS ON:

NATO-UKRAINE COOPERATION

UNDERESTIMATED THREATS

WORLD BEYOND THE BLACK SEA



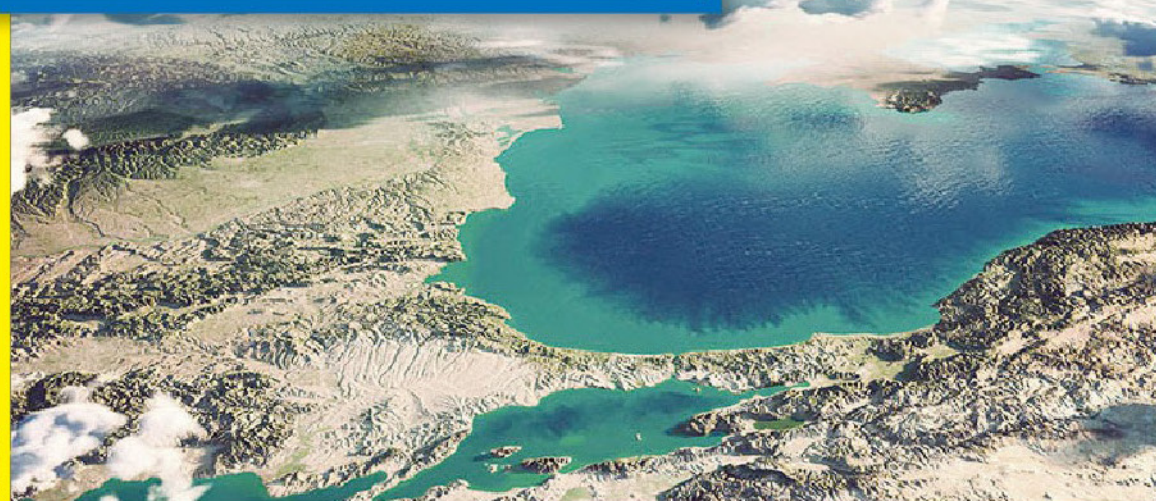
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Oleksii Bessarabov and Dmytro Shtybylov
are political prisoners of the Kremlin. Since 2016
they have been kept in prison by the FSB
on the fabricated charges.

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CONGRATULATIONS ON THE 65TH BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY!

Editorial board of the Black Sea Security Journal and the team of the Centre for Global Studies Strategy XXI extend their heartfelt congratulations to Serhiy KULYK, the first editor-in-chief of the Sevastopol-based Nomos Center, on the occasion of his 65th birthday!



Serhiy was born on May 28, 1954 in a family of educators in a Cossack village in Sumy Region. The boy from the north of Ukraine who grew up on the banks of the picturesque Vorskla River was dreaming about the sea from an early age. In 1971, he entered the Sevastopol Higher Naval Engineering School. Upon graduation, he received the rank of lieutenant and became a nuclear propulsion system engineer and served in the Navy. Being a member of a missile-carrying nuclear submarine crew, Serhiy travelled for thousands of miles across the ocean on autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) missions lasting many months. In the late 1980s, upon graduation from the Academy, he was transferred from the Northern Fleet to the Black Sea, to Sevastopol, with which Serhiy cast in his lot for the rest of his life. And again – distant seas, but this time on naval surface ships. Serhiy Kulyk took part in numerous cruises to the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean.

After naval discharge in 1993 Serhiy received civil education, graduating from the National Academy for Public Administration under the President of Ukraine. He worked as a member of the Sevastopol City State Administration, at first in the posi-

tion of the deputy and then the head of a department, a directorate. In 2004, Serhiy realized his long-nurtured dream – he founded and became the head of Ukraine's Center for assistance to the geopolitical problems and euroatlantic cooperation of the Black Sea region studies "Nomos". Many of us were among those who, together with the birthday Kulyk, contributed to creating Nomos. As the chief and organizer, Serhiy was an inexhaustible source of inspiration for his colleagues and partners. Nomos became a platform for dialog and discussions between of the expert community members and the politicians on the current situation and prospects of development in the Black Sea region.



In the photograph (pictured left to right) are Serhiy Kulyk, Mykhailo Honchar, James Sherr (Great Britain) and Keith Smith (USA) in a panel discussion during the International Economic Forum in Krynica (Poland), 2008

Appearance of his another "child" - the Black Sea Security Journal – has become a natural and logical continuation of Nomos' activities. As envisioned by Serhiy Kulyk, the journal's mission was to consolidate intellectual efforts of scientific, expert and professional communities, to integrate Ukrainian and foreign elites in order to solve the problems of the Black Sea region and the Black Sea-Caspian basin, to support the Ukrainian statesmen, scientists, civil society and to provide them with unbiased comprehensive information about the situation and trends in the regional development.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE 65TH BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY!



Serhiy Kulyk (on the right) with Mr. Thomas Melia, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State (on the left) during his visit to Ukraine. Nomos Center office in Sevastopol, July 9, 2011.

In 2014, after occupation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia and annexation of Sevastopol and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea by Moscow, operation of the independent analytical center on the occupied territory has become impossible. Nomos

terminated its activities. The Black Sea Security Journal discontinued publishing, too.

Nevertheless, we could not leave it just like. In 2017 Kyiv-based partner of Nomos, the Centre for Global Studies Strategy XXI resumed publication of the Black Sea Security Journal. In our activities, we try to preserve traditions of independent, unbiased expert thinking established in the editorial policy by Serhiy Kulyk.

Using this opportunity, we would like to greet our friend and brother with the fresh issue of the journal and congratulate him on his birthday anniversary. We wish him and his family good health and happiness, creative inspiration, victory, peaceful sky and speediest return home to the free Ukrainian city of Sevastopol.

#We shall return! #Crimea is Ukraine!

**Editorial board
of the Black Sea Security Journal**

EDITOR'S PREFACE

Dear readers,

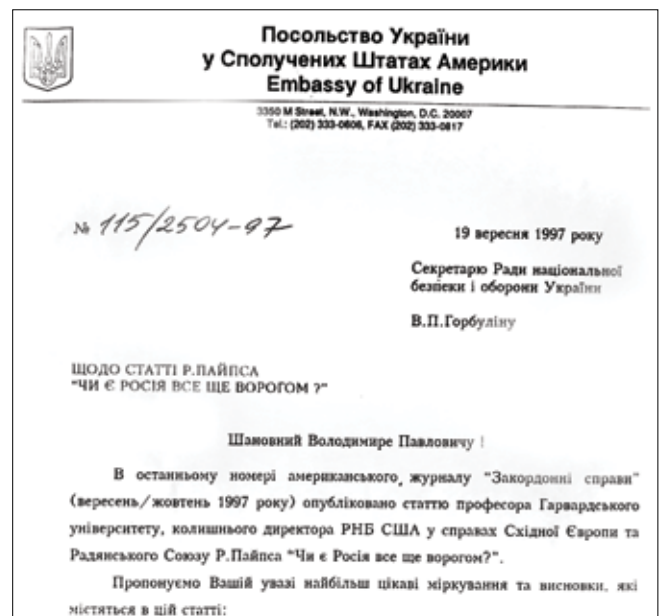
Russian aggression against Ukraine is going on for six years now. The Crimean Peninsula, Sevastopol, parts of Lugansk and Donetsk Regions – 7% of the country's territory – are still under occupation. Putin's Novorossiia project has failed, but the technology of hybrid war masterminded by Surkov, is still being used by the Russian Federation. The Kremlin continues to use the bogus argument “we-will-deny-they-are-there” both domestically and abroad. “Civil war in Ukraine” – another Russian propaganda cliché – is still in use, despite thousands of material proofs of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The Kremlin is playing with the idea that change of power in Kyiv gives Russia a possibility to revive its plans to annex Ukraine.

5 years ago, in the spring and summer of 2014, fierce fighting was going on in Donbass – Luhansk, Mariupol, Kramatorsk, Slovyansk, Donetsk airport... “Russia's space” was marching through the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine. In Odessa, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Zaporizhia, Mykolaiv this march was stopped. In July, Russia's General Staff realized that the armed units of local separatists headed by the Russian “renovators”, such as Strelkov-Girkin and his commandos, are doomed. Russia began to use Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) and artillery from its territory to provide separatists and its own units, which intruded into Ukraine with fire support. However, it helped only to a limited extent. Ukraine's resistance to Russia's aggression was growing - volunteer battalions and voluntary movement in support of the Ukrainian Armed forces did their work. The Russians and their proxies and henchmen were thrown out of Mariupol already in June. Eventually Slovyansk was liberated, Kramatorsk remained under Ukraine, but Donetsk and Luhansk were placed under Russian occupation.

The war between Russia and Ukraine has become a reality... Could it be avoided? Of course, in Russia they claim that Maidan was the source of all problems, that the Maidan protest movement is to blame for the “coup” and establishment of “illegal Kyiv government” that began pulling Ukraine towards NATO and EU against the wishes of “the people of Donbas” which sent “miners” and “tractor drivers” to protect its native land and asked “the brotherly Russian people” for help. Of course, Moscow could not stay on the sidelines,

just as it could not in the case with “the people of Crimea”. This version of events can only evoke a smile, but in the post-truth era there are a lot of people who are receptive to such interpretations, especially in Europe which for many years now – since the Munich speech of Vladimir Putin in 2007 – remains under systemic and massive influence of the Russian propaganda.

My answer to the question whether it was possible to avoid the war is unambiguous – no. Russia wanted to go to war and was preparing for it. After collapse of the USSR, revenge has become one of the reasons for the Russian regime to exist. In addition, it is not only Putin who is to blame. His appearance is the logical result of Russia's evolution in the post-Soviet period. Not long ago, while burrowing among archives, I came across a copy of an interesting document. It was a letter of Yuri Scherbak, the Ambassador of Ukraine to the United States, addressed to Volodymyr Horbulin, the Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine. The Ambassador draws attention to the article called “Is Russia still an enemy?” by a Harvard University professor Richard Pipes in Foreign Affairs Magazine. I will quote only a small part of the article, which can be called a masterful insight into behavior of Russia and the international players.



“...Moscow's encroachments on the sovereignty of the former Soviet republics pose a serious potential threat to relations between East and West. The situation is rather complicated, as on

EDITOR'S PREFACE

the one hand, the West silently recognizes the former Soviet republics as the sphere of Russia's legitimate influence, but on the other hand, it insists that Russia must respect their sovereignty. As the experience shows, in the event of an open conflict between Russia and any other former Soviet republic, the U.S. allies in Europe are unlikely to do anything beyond expressing their dissatisfaction. However, the United States will almost certainly react more strongly, especially if Ukraine or one of the Caspian countries falls victim to intimidation: the first because of its geopolitical significance, and others because of their rich oil reserves and potential contribution to the world economy".

Someone may say that Pipes was a visionary, and someone would say that he just knew Russia, its history and its usual strategy. It is obvious that the conclusion made by the American expert 22 years ago in the pre-Putin period confirms Russia's congenital inclination to expansion through aggression. "Having fallen from the level of the USSR to the level of the Russian Federation, Russia stopped falling ... and returned to its natural and the only possible state of a great, expanding commonality of peoples keen on gathering territories," – this is a very eloquent fragment from this year's article by Vladislav Surkov, "Putin's Long State," which is the latest confirmation of Pipes' conclusion.

In this issue of the journal, the appearance of which coincides with the 70th anniversary of formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), we have prepared a wide variety of analytical materials dedicated to the Black Sea region and other parts of the world. Against the backdrop of a dangerous tendency towards a dysfunction of the collective West, actual surrender of Europe to Russian expansion, NATO remains the only organization of the Western civilization, which confronts Russia's hybrid aggression. That is Russia constantly looks at the Alliance and all those who promotes expansion of NATO in various countries, which strive to join the Alliance through the gun sight. The case of our colleagues from the Black Sea Security Journal's Sevastopol editorial staff, Oleksiy Bessarabov and Dmytro Shtyblikov, who are imprisoned in Russia's detention facilities, is yet another example of that.

It is possible to stop Europe from slipping into war only by collective action aimed at pacification

of the aggressor by force. It is yet possible to do implementing non-military measures. However, we cannot afford to lose time. Peace enforcement or defeatism can only whet Putin's appetite and make him still more aggressive. In 2015, after the Russian intervention in Syria, many believed that Russia would not be able to conduct two wars simultaneously - against Ukraine and Syria. However, Russia demonstrated that it has no intentions to stop the wars and that it is prepared to escalate the situation. Today it is plain to see that Russia builds up its military presence in Libya, Venezuela, and Central Africa. The result of the Russian propaganda efforts in the EU countries was an increased number of mandates loyal to the Kremlin in the newly elected European Parliament. Russia enhances its influence spreading its tentacles first in the countries of Old Europe. If we rephrase the famous words of Prince Gorchakov, the foreign minister of tsarist Russia during the time after the Crimean War, we can say that "Russia is in the state of dispersion", that is, it moves simultaneously in several directions in different regions of the planet. It became concentrated, or focused, in 2007, and Putin let it be known to the world from Munich. However, the Western world perceived it as the antics of an "impeccable democrat". Then, in 2008, it was Georgia, a Black Sea country, and after Georgia, it was Ukraine, another country in the Black Sea region. We call the phenomenon of modern Russian expansion *polygrebrasia* – a multidimensional hybrid aggression carried out on many fronts, which is disguised under slogans for peace and stability. In this issue of the Black Sea Security Journal's, we continue to reveal its features and peculiarities.

However, these are not all features covered in the journal's 34th issue. With the assistance of the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation (BST) which is part of the German Marshall Fund (GMF) as well as the Embassy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Ukraine, we focus particular attention on Ukraine's cooperation with NATO on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Alliance and the 25th anniversary of Ukraine's joining the Partnership for Peace program.

With peace on our minds, let us keep the powder dry...

Mykhailo Gonchar,
Editor-in-Chief

Pavlo LAKIYCHUK

*Head of Security Programs of
the Centre for Global Studies Strategy XXI
Kyiv, Ukraine*

The "Ukrainian saboteurs": Case revisited

For some reason or another many people, believe that Putin's "little green men" seized Crimea from Ukraine in a bloodless occupation. That is not true. At first, they killed Serhiy Kokorin, warrant officer of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. After that, they shot Major Stanislav Karachevsky. Just like that, simply because they did not like the look on his face. In mid-May 2014, there came news of film director Oleh Sentsov and three more residents of Crimea – Oleksandr Kolchenko, Gennady Afanasyev and Oleksiy Chyorny – detained by the Federal Security Service of Russia in Simferopol. According to the FSS, Sentsov formed a Right Sector terrorist sabotage group which allegedly planned to organize bomb attacks near the Eternal flame and Lenin Monument in Simferopol, and which set fire to the buildings of the newly constructed office of the United Russia party and civil organization Russian Community of Crimea.

Sevastopol-based Center for assistance to the geopolitical problems and Euro-Atlantic cooperation of the Black Sea region studies "Nomos", which marked the tenth anniversary of its founding in 2013, terminated its activities. We were unanimous in that the re-registration of the Center under the legislation of the occupant country was impossible for us as a matter of principle: Sevastopol and Crimea are Ukraine!

We all faced the choice between remaining to live under occupation and leaving for the "mainland". In early June 2014, I have made my choice and headed for the "mainland", as it was impossible for me to stay in the occupied Crimea. For native Sevastopol residents, however, there was no such choice, since they were locals. That is why Dmytro Shtybylikov and Oleksiy Bessarabov who were friends and co-workers at Nomos and the Black Sea Security Journal stayed behind in Sevastopol. Some of the former Ukrainian Navy officers, one of whom was Volodymyr Dudka, stayed behind, too.

Nomos think tank was founded in Sevastopol in 2003 by a group of enthusiasts - former civil servants and officers of the Ukrainian Naval Forces – with an aim to assist experts, scientists, journalists and politicians in studying geopolitical and security problems of the Black Sea region. Later, in the wake of the Black Sea countries joining the EU and NATO, Nomos focused on the issues of European and Euro-Atlantic cooperation; geography of research was extended to the Caspian region after the Eastern Partnership Program was launched by Brussels. For eight years the Black Sea Security Journal, which the Center printed since 2005, published articles by the Ukrainian and foreign experts from Estonia, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey, France, Great Britain, as well as Russia. It was the only publication in the Black Sea region that systematically monitored and analyzed the security environment not only in the Black Sea area, but also in the Southern Caucasus, Caspian Sea and Eastern Mediterranean areas and in the Middle East. The Center's experts not only monitored violations of the Ukrainian-Russian agreements on the status and conditions of Russia's Black Sea Fleet presence on the territory of Ukraine on the part of Moscow but also analyzed the Russian military and political trends, made forecasts as to development of the military and political situation in the region.

The verdict in the trial of the first four "Crimean saboteurs" was announced a year later, in 2015. Gennady Afanasyev and Oleksiy Chyorny were sentenced to seven years in prison; Oleksandr Kolchenko was sentenced to ten, and Oleh Sentsov – to twenty years of hard labor. Abundant evidence proving that the four had nothing to do with the accusations, appeals of the world public and international organizations had no effect. Russia's legal system operating on the occupied territories clearly demonstrated that it looks after the interests of its Kremlin masters, and that their purpose is to terrorize and coerce the Crimean population... When in August 2016 the Russians detained an-

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other four "Ukrainian saboteurs" - Yevhen Panov, Andriy Zakhtey, Volodymyr Prisich and Redvan Suleymanov, it became clear that the "witch hunt" on the occupied territories was not just a one-off operation of the Russian special services, but a meaningful long-term strategy. This dirty strategy targets civically minded Crimeans, patriots who did not accept the annexation, public figures, journalists, former officers of the Naval Force, who were singled out by the Russian intelligence services long before the war began. The strategy was put into action. In 2008, Dmytro Shtyblikov carried out the analysis of Russia's political agenda after the Russian military invasion of Georgia in August. He published his article "Conflict between Russia and Georgia. Is Ukraine next?" in the Black Sea Security Journal. In his article written for Razumkov Center in 2011, Oleksiy Bessarabov wrote: "Today Russia does not exert military or political pressure on Ukraine, preferring to seize its strategic assets and enslave it economically... Such a course of events does not exclude the probability of the situation becoming a conflict one, which might lead even to an armed conflict. One of the undesirable hypothetical tension escalation scenarios may be the sequence of the following actions:

- increase in the number of supporters of the idea of "Russia's space" in the regions of Ukraine, in particular in Crimea, facilitating acquisition of Russian citizenship, direct support for pro-Russian political forces, movements, radical and extremist organizations, aggressive information campaigns;
- use of political, economic, religious levers of influence in order to coerce Ukraine into transferring Ukrainian assets to Russia, including strategically important defense companies and enterprises – "voluntarily" or as an action necessitated by artificially created crises in certain sectors;
- provoking escalation of situation in certain regions, initiating appeals to the Russian authorities to protect Russian nationals, to declare independence or accession to Russia – in case the resistance against Russia's plans on the part of the

Ukrainian authorities or political opposition becomes systemic, and in case the legal or semi-legal access to Ukrainian assets becomes too complicated or impossible;

- initiating creation (or assisting in creation) of unofficial local paramilitary units, involvement of the Russian Armed Forces in operations aimed at protecting Russian nationals, creation of "independent territories", granting them guarantees of inviolability through Russia's military presence – in case the efforts to separate certain regions by peaceful means fail".

In fact, Oleksiy predicted the scenario of the Russian aggression against Ukraine three years before it began, in the circumstances when Moscow was implementing the Anschluss scenario, forcing the pro-Russian Yanukovych's regime in Kyiv to play along.

In addition, in 2012 Dmytro Shtyblikov's fundamental analytical article "Do the Russians Want War?" he concluded that the Russian military machine was aimed at waging war against Russia's neighbors. Moreover, Ukraine was likely to become its target soon. The Russian special services do not forgive such things...

Even when you expect it, trouble takes you by surprise. Before the war, I perceived November 9 only as "Shtyblikov's birthday, day two". Dmytro Shtyblikov is my friend and co-worker at Nomos, head of the Center's international programs, deputy chief editor of the Black Sea Security Journal. However, on November 9, 2016 the FSS informed "a terrorist sabotage group sent by the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense which was planning acts of sabotage at the Crimean military facilities was arrested in Sevastopol". The members of this group were Dmytro Shtyblikov, Oleksiy Bessarabov, another deputy chief editor of the Black Sea Security Journal, and Volodymyr Dudka – our common friend, retired captain 2nd rank, in his time commander of Simferopol command and control ship of the Ukrainian Navy. As usual, on that day the boys were going to celebrate Dmytro's birthday. That was not to be... I watched the so-called "operational footage" many times. It was uploaded by

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the Russian propaganda machine; in it my friends “confessed” to acting on behalf of the Ukrainian intelligence service, organizing “acts of sabotage”, and I could not recognize them. Methods of “handling the material” used by Cheka, GPU (State Political Directorate), NKVD (secret police), KGB (Committee for State Security) in the Russian FSS remained the same. Cruel and ruthless.

Therefore, it's worth telling about my friends and colleagues living their lives before the war in Sevastopol. Dima Shtyblikov was born on November 8, 1970 in Russia, near Chita. Later, the Shtyblikovs moved to Crimea, which has become Dmytro's native city. He lived with his mother in the city of Evpatoria, went to school No 8 together with his would-be wife, Elena. Upon graduation from school he chose the military career for himself – he graduated from Kyiv Military Training Academy and was assigned to the newly formed 32nd Army Corps in Crimea. He was in the military service only briefly. In 2004 he was released from the Armed Forces for health reasons - Dmytro was seriously injured when a rookie soldier failed to fire his grenade launcher properly... Dmytro, as a commander, had to unload the weapon. It exploded in his hands. Miraculously, Dmytro survived but became an invalid with a perforated skull, a fragment of the grenade in close vicinity to his heart and maimed hand. So he had to decide what to do next, how to arrange his civilian life? The same question was faced by other Sevastopol friends who retired from military or civil service and who were looking for something meaningful and worth living for. Thus Nomos Center appeared on their horizon.

Analytical research was what Shtyblikov was very good at. He began to work as a military analyst and later as the head of international programs. He published his articles in numerous Ukrainian, Russian and western magazines and newspapers. Dmytro did scientific research on legal aspects of the fight against international terrorism, took part in conferences in Ukraine, Russia, countries of the Southern Caucasus. Dmytro and his colleagues contributed greatly to efficient operation of Nomos, published the first issues of the Black Sea Security Journal, looked for talented authors, wrote and edited articles...

I remember Oleksiy Bessarabov from the time when he was a cadet of Nakhimov Naval Insti-

tute in Sevastopol. He graduated in 1999. Oleksiy did military service in Odesa and later in Sevastopol, in the Ukrainian Navy's Staff. During his Odesa sojourn he began to publish his articles in the Shipping Industry Magazine. Journalism was his hobby, but eventually it became his profession. In 2008 he was discharged from military service due to health issues. The military carrier he dreamt about was cut short, but he did not give up. Oleksiy graduated from the Institute of Journalism of Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv. We invited him to join Nomos, and he agreed to work as a deputy chief editor of the Black Sea Security Journal. He was happy to contribute to the journal. A native resident of Sevastopol whose origins can be traced back to Novgorod, he grew up in the independent Ukraine, his dearly beloved Motherland. When the occupants came, he had no choice – family, mother... Just like many others who had to stay behind in the occupied peninsula, who saw clearly what was happening in the spring of 2014. And where could they find any work, how were they to provide for the family? «Any work is good for a decent person to be respected: if need be, I will work as a street cleaner or a stoker”, - Dmytro Shtyblikov used to say.

I can not but mention another person, the third person named in the "Crimean saboteurs" case - Volodymyr Dudko. Volodymyr has never been a member of Nomos or a contributor to the Black Sea Security Journal, but he gave the journal's publications a thorough critique. Volodymyr Mykhailovych Dudka originally hails from Sumy. He graduated from the Kaliningrad Higher Naval School a few years before me, served in the Black Sea Fleet of the USSR. After division of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet he joined the ranks of the Ukrainian Naval Forces - switched to the ranks of

the Navy of Ukraine - was the commanding officer of a ship. Later, when his ship was laid up at the ship-repair yard, Volodymyr worked for the Navy's Staff. Upon retirement in 2009, he worked as a health and safety engineer in a mobile unit of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Ukraine which was involved in mine clearance work inside Inkerman tunnels and on MacKenzie Heights where there was fierce fighting during the World War II. “I am going to save my beloved city”, - Volodymyr used to say heading for work inside the dangerous tunnels. After annexation of Crimea the mine clearance program was scrambled by the oc-

FOCUS ON: POLITICAL PRISONERS OF THE KREMLIN

cupational authorities. Volodymyr did not go to his native city of Sumy, since in Sevastopol he had to take care of the family of his only son whom he raised as a single father. He dedicated all his free time to his only granddaughter...

Detention and arrest of the well-known Nomos Center analysts on preposterous charges is nothing else than Moscow's revenge for their journalistic and analytical activities in Sevastopol and Crimea before the occupation. Besides, after the FSS embarrassed itself with false "August saboteurs" who, as it turned out, were not even acquainted with each other, the Crimean secret police, seeking to satisfy their Kremlin masters, generated another wave in the form of an organized group which was composed of the former military personnel who, in opinion of the FSS, were trying to "drag" Ukraine into NATO and NATO into Ukraine.

Scenario under the title "Uncovering and arrest of the Ukrainian saboteurs in Sevastopol" was implemented by traitors-collaborators from among the local SSU personnel. Their names are known now... Dmytro Shtyblikov incriminated himself under torture in order to save his wife, who was also detained, and agreed to cooperate with the "investigation"; in November 2017 he was sentenced by the occupant "court" to 5 years in maximum security labor camp and a fine amounting to 20 thousand rubles. He was sent to the labor camp in Omsk by prisoner transport, and he was kept in a solitary confinement cell for six months there.

Oleksiy Bessarabov and Volodymyr Dudka, despite moral pressure and physical torture, refused to confess the "crimes" they did not commit. The investigation and court proceedings lasted for almost two and a half years: the case was falling apart because of the fake proofs and false testimonies. But you couldn't expect the occupants to accept innocence of the wrongly accused: on April 4, on the day of the 70th anniversary of NATO, Sevastopol City Court sentenced Oleksiy and Volodymyr to 14 years of imprisonment for allegedly organizing acts of sabotage on the territory of the peninsula, on accusations trumped up by the FSS. No miracle happened.

Speaking about the "saboteurs of the third wave", it should be mentioned that two former Ukrainian military sailors, Hlib Shabliiy and Oleksiy Stohniy,

were "detained", or kidnapped, to be exact, one week after the first three persons were arrested, on November 15. A week later, Hlib and Oleksiy, for the FSS camera, "confessed" to spying in favor of Ukraine and preparing acts of sabotage. We did not know anything about these persons, but with the help of the Naval Veterans Association we found out that Hlib Shabliiy graduated from the Sevastopol Naval Institute in 1997, served in the Navy and was involved in scientific research. After his discharge from the military service, he completed bachelor degree course in hydrography and meteorology at the Odesa University, worked at the Sevastopol branch of the State Committee for Hydrography. Hlib Shabliiy is a close relative of Volodymyr Kolpakov, Ukrainian admiral, chairman of the Club of the Generals and Admirals of the Ukrainian Naval Forces. It is possible that the FSS targeted the admiral in the first place. Oleksiy Stohniy also graduated from the Sevastopol Naval Institute; it was in 1997. He served on the Ukrainian Navy's flagship, frigate Hetman Sahaydachniy. After his discharge from the military service he became an entrepreneur. Oleksiy is a nephew of Dmytro Stohniy, a well-known Sevastopol historian who specialized in the research into the history of the city covering the period of the Second World War and who never concealed his interest not only in the past of the Black Sea Fleet, but also its current state.

Despite loud declarations of the FSS during the arrest of former Ukrainian military personnel, the court verdicts never mention any "espionage" or "terrorism". In the end, Hlib Shabliiy was sentenced to five years of hard labor "for manufacture and possession of an explosive device"; Oleksiy was sentenced to three and a half years "for modification and handling of firearms". Something must have gone wrong with the accusations... However, the Kremlin's prisoners are none the better for it.

Repressions against the population of the peninsula continue. According to the Crimean human rights group, the number of the Kremlin's prisoners in the occupied peninsula and those serving sentences in Russia is 98. Most of them represent indigenous people of Crimea - the Crimean Tatars. They are accused of "extremism" and "calls to violate territorial integrity of the Russian Federation", "creation of terrorist organizations". How-

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ever, the prisoners' lawyers are sure that Russian law-enforcement officers have no evidence whatsoever to prove their "crimes". The investigation is conducted with numerous violations of the rights of the accused. Human rights advocates consider these cases politically motivated, claiming that they are based on fabricated allegations. Shortly after the verdict of the occupant court, Harry Kammian, Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. of the U.S. Mission to the OSCE, expressed his concern about imprisonment of Oleksiy Bessarabov and Volodymyr Dudka. There are a lot other Ukrainian citizens who were falsely accused of "sabotage" and "espionage" activities. According to the Crimean Human Rights Group, as of March 2019 13 persons were imprisoned on accusations in "preparation of acts of sabotage and espionage": Yevhen Panov, Andriy Zakhtey, Redvan Suleymanov, Volodymyr Prysyk, Volodymyr Dudka, Dmitry Shtyblukov, Oleksiy Bessarabov, Hlib Shablii, Oleksiy Stohniy, Gennady Limeshko, Anna Sukhonosova,

Dmytro Dovgoplov, Kostiantyn Davydenko, Yunus Masharipov. More names can be added to the list: entrepreneur Valentyn Vyhivsky and journalist Roman Sushchenko were sentenced to 11 and 12 years in prison respectively on accusations in espionage.

Today, when we witness a new wave of persecution of dissidents in Crimea, it becomes clear that the release of the Ukrainian captives of the Kremlin, as well as imprisoned military sailors and hostages in ORDLO (temporarily occupied and uncontrolled territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions), can be possible only by means of increasing international pressure on Putin's regime, stepping up sanctions for the brutal violation of human rights, repressions and falsification of evidence. These sanctions should be as tough as possible. They must be a prerequisite to consider re-establishing Russia's status quo in the Council of Europe.

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70 Years of NATO Testifies to Importance of Strong Alliance¹

When NATO turned 60 in 2009, many commentators made jokes about NATO reaching its “retirement age.”

Ten years later, NATO celebrates its 70th anniversary, facing the most complex security challenges in a generation. These include a more assertive Russia, cyber and hybrid threats, terrorism, and instability across the Middle East and North Africa. In response, NATO has stepped up again, responding to many challenges at the same time.

At no time in its history has NATO had the luxury of resting – for forty years, NATO successfully deterred the Soviet Union from aggression against Western Europe. In the 1990s, NATO undertook its first out of area operations and crisis management function helping to end conflicts in the Western Balkans. It oversaw a successful enlargement from 16 to nearly 30 members of the Alliance in the span of 20 years.

NATO stays committed to its Open Door Policy and assists with reforms to those who expressed their aspiration to join the Alliance, including Ukraine.

After 9/11, NATO took a lead role in the international response in Afghanistan and continues in its fight against terrorism, for example by training Afghan and Iraqi security forces and contributing to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS.

NATO has expanded its network of partnerships around the world including with international and regional organizations such as the United Nations, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, and the African Union.

Over more than 25 years, the Alliance has developed a network of partnerships with non-member countries from the Euro-Atlantic area, the Mediterranean and the Gulf region, and other partners across the

globe. NATO pursues dialogue and practical cooperation with over forty nations on a wide range of political and security-related issues. NATO’s partnerships are beneficial to all involved and contribute to improved security for the broader international community.

This author was recently asked to name a political figure that has most contributed to NATO’s history and place in the world. Every era has its hero: from General Eisenhower who became the first Supreme Commander Allied Forces Europe in 1950 to Secretary General Manfred Wörner who oversaw the end of the Cold War and fall of Berlin Wall. At the occasion of the NATO’s 40th anniversary in 1989 he said: “NATO remains the backbone and the lighthouse of mankind’s future in freedom and peace.”

The current Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg just received an extension of his mandate to lead the organization until Sept. 30, 2022. This will make him one of the longest-serving secretary generals with a total of eight years.

To this date, 13 secretary generals have led the organization since its creation, navigating it through difficult periods, adapting and modernizing it to the needs of its time whilst preserving its key values and principles. NATO is a collective defense organization built around political consultations and consensus with a goal of preserving peace and stability of its members. And for 70 years, NATO has accomplished just that – an unprecedented period of peace and security for the citizens of North America and Europe.

As NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg says: “Our world is changing and NATO is changing with it. But our commitment to one another endures. For seventy years, we have worked together to prevent conflict and preserve peace. And standing with unity and resolve, NATO will remain a pillar of stability for generations to come.”

¹ Published March 31, 2019 in KyivPost - <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/opinion/op-ed/barbora-maronkova-70-years-of-nato-testifies-to-importance-of-strong-alliance.html>

NATO's Support to Ukraine

At their meeting in Warsaw on 9 July 2016, the Heads of State and Government of the NATO-Ukraine Commission endorsed a Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP) for Ukraine. The CAP supports Ukraine so that it can better provide for its own security, and carry out essential reforms in the security and defence sector. This includes objectives set out in the 2016 Strategic Defence Bulletin (SDB) towards adopting NATO standards and achieving interoperability with NATO forces by 2020.

In July 2018, Ministers of Defence of the NATO-Ukraine Commission noted the second review of the CAP, aligning it further to Ukraine's reform objectives under the Annual National Programme (ANP). This fact sheet reflects the current state of NATO's support to Ukraine under the CAP.



NATO advisory effort

Allied experts, based at the NATO Representation to Ukraine (NRU), advise Ukraine on key issues related to the implementation of the SDB. They support the reform of Ukraine's logistics system, the development of a non-commissioned officers' corps and other issues. Advisers also provide support to Ukraine in developing national legislation reflecting key Euro-Atlantic principles and norms. Recently, advisory efforts have focused on the implementation of Ukraine's Law on National Security (notably, effective command and control arrangements, ensuring civilian control and democratic oversight of the security and defence sector and reform of the Security Service of Ukraine).

Command, Control, Communications and Computers (C4) Trust Fund

Through the C4 Trust Fund, led by Canada, Germany and the UK, and executed by the NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCIA), NATO assists Ukraine in re-organising and modernising its C4 structures and capabilities, as well as increasing interoperability with NATO. Under the C4 Trust Fund:

- The Regional Airspace Security Programme (RASP) aims to increase civil/ military air traffic coordination and enable real-time connectivity with neighbouring countries to provide early notification and coordination on airspace threats, security incidents and suspicious aircrafts. The implementation of the project is expected to start by the end 2018.
- The Secure Communications project will provide secure satellite communications and Blue Force Tracking Capabilities to the Ukrainian Armed Forces by the end of 2018.
- The Knowledge Sharing project provides Ukraine with information on NATO C4 standards and procedures. Various activities have already taken place, including workshops, expert visits and a hackathon. The project will be completed by the beginning of 2019.

Logistics and Standardisation Trust Fund

The Trust Fund, led by the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Poland, supports the ongoing reform of Ukraine's logistics and standardisation systems. The project will be achieved through the implementation of three initiatives:

- National Codification Capability Enhancement: This project supports the transition to a NATO Codification System (NCS) by the end of 2018.
- Supply Chain Management Capability Improvement: This project enhances logistics performance by testing

improvements on a small scale, focusing on an improved Supply Chain Command and Control System (C2S), warehouse management, and materiel distribution and (re)supply, to be completed by summer 2019.

- **Standardisation Management Capability Improvement:** This project supports the implementation of a centralised standardisation management system, which is expected to become operational in Ukraine by summer 2019.

Cyber Defence Trust Fund

The Cyber Defence Trust Fund, led by Romania, and implemented by Rasirom, a Romanian state-owned company, supports Ukraine in developing defensive capabilities in the area of cyber security incident response. Assistance includes establishing two Incident Management Centres to monitor cyber security events, as well as laboratories to investigate and handle cyber security incidents. Ukraine also receives training in employing this technology and equipment. In June 2017, the equipment was successfully delivered at the Ukrainian beneficiary institutions.

Medical Rehabilitation Trust Fund

Through the Medical Rehabilitation Trust Fund, NATO is assisting Ukraine in raising the standards and long-term sustainability of its medical rehabilitation services for wounded servicemen and women. With Bulgaria as lead nation, and executed by the NATO Support Agency (NSPA), the Medical Rehabilitation Trust Fund focuses on direct medical support for servicemen and women to facilitate their rapid access to medical and psychological rehabilitation services, as well as capability development for Ukraine's medical rehabilitation institutions.

To date, support has been provided to 1,500 medical rehabilitation experts, 500 servicemen, 90 families, 4 medical rehabilitation units, and to the Invictus Games Team Ukraine. In addition, the Trust Fund has provided capacity-building support to the Presidential Administration, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Policy, Ministry of Education, and established long-term educational programs for different categories of care providers.



Military Career Transition Trust Fund

The MCT Trust Fund supports Ukraine in developing a sustainable and effective military career transition system for military personnel returning to civilian careers. The Trust Fund, led by Norway and executed by NATO's Political Affairs and Security Policy Division, also supports specific psychological rehabilitation activities. From 2014 to 2018, the programme delivered 187 three-day seminars dedicated to the psychological rehabilitation of 7,486 military servicemen from the Armed Forces, the National Guard and State Border Guard Service, previously deployed in active operations in eastern Ukraine.

Resettlement Programme

This programme aims to facilitate the reintegration process from military to civilian careers for military personnel. Through vocational training, beneficiaries are provided with opportunities to obtain additional qualifications relevant to the civilian labour market. As of mid-2018, more than 10,000 former military servicemen benefited from the programme in 65 locations all across Ukraine, with overall re-employment rate at 75%. The total number of beneficiaries in 2018 is expected to be 850.

“Demilitarisation” Trust Fund

Initiatives under the Trust Fund on the Destruction of Conventional Ammunition, Small Arms and Light Weapons and Anti-personnel Mines of PfM-1 type in Ukraine, led by the United States and executed by NSPA, have resulted in:

- Destruction of 27,853 tons of conventional ammunition (of a 44,231 tons target)
- Destruction of 2,128,068 PfM-1 anti-personnel land mines (of a 5,766,768 units target).
- Destruction of 130,100 pieces of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Following a request from Ukraine, the Trust Fund is currently working on a proposal to enhance Ammunition Storage Safety Management in the country.

Radioactive Waste Disposal Trust Fund

This Trust Fund, led by Germany and executed by the NSPA, aims to tackle radioactive waste buried by the former Soviet Army and currently under the control of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine. The remediation of a site in Tsybuleve, Kirovohrad region follows the successful completion in 2017 of a first project at the site of Vakulenchuk, Zhytomyr region.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices (EOD/ C-IED) Trust Fund

The project assists the transformation of EOD and development of C-IED capabilities through three initiatives:

- Doctrine: Development of common EOD and C-IED terminology, the publication of a Ukrainian C-IED doctrine, and the identification of capability requirements for the future.
- Interoperability: Training to foster interoperability between national actors.
- Civil support: Search training for use in urban areas.

NATO-Ukraine Platform on Countering Hybrid Warfare

NATO and Ukraine established a joint Platform on Countering Hybrid Warfare to facilitate cooperation in identifying hybrid threats, to build capacity and to strengthen resilience against hybrid threats. High-level seminars were held on crisis management in Warsaw, Poland, in October 2017, and strategic communications in Vilnius, Lithuania, in April 2018 and in Kyiv, Ukraine, in November 2018. Further projects are being prepared.

Roadmap on NATO-Ukraine Defence Technical Cooperation

In September 2015, the Chairman of the Interagency Commission for Policy on Military-Technical Cooperation and Exports Control and NATO's Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Defence Investment signed a Joint Declaration on strengthening defence-technical cooperation between Ukraine and NATO. A Roadmap supports a number of activities including those related to C4, ammunition safety, codification, life cycle management and assurance, as well as defence industry reform.

Strategic Communications Partnership Roadmap

The Strategic Communications Partnership Roadmap was signed by the NATO Secretary General and the Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine in September 2015. It advises the Ukrainian authorities in developing, managing and responding to security challenges by placing strategic communications at the core of a national strategy. It helps civilian and military staff to be effective strategic communicators. In 2017/18 the NATO Information and Documentation Centre organised 19 training activities, and advised national academies in Ukraine in the area of strategic communications.

Planning and Review Process (PARP)

In 2018, forty-two PARP Partnership Goals were agreed between NATO and Ukraine that aim to help Ukraine modernise and reform its defence forces. Twenty-six Partnership Goals are addressed to the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of Ukraine, with an emphasis on reforming current structures towards western defence principles and practices. A total of 15 Partnership Goals are also addressed to the Ministry of Interior and its security organisations (State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, National Guard of Ukraine, State Emergency Service of Ukraine), and one to the SSU.

Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP)

DEEP assists Ukraine in improving and restructuring its military education and professional training systems. It focuses on eight defence education institutions and five training centres for Non-Commissioned Officers. Since 2017, DEEP focuses on curriculum development in the areas of civilian and democratic control, personnel management, strategic communication, leadership, quality management and operational planning. The programme has been extended until 2020.

Building Integrity (BI)

NATO BI provides institutional and individual tailored assistance to strengthen integrity and reduce corruption in the defence and security institutions. Ukraine joined NATO BI in 2007. Since 2014, Ukraine is the biggest recipient of NATO BI assistance. The Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Internal Affairs, State Border Guards Service, National Guards, Security Service, National Police as well as National Anti-Corruption Bureau, National Agency for Corruption Prevention and NGOs are benefiting from NATO BI expertise. BI support mainly focuses on the management of personnel and financial resources. Specific educational programmes are also offered to military and security academies. This tailored assistance is supported through contributions to the BI Trust Fund.

Professional Development Programme (PDP)

Launched in 2005, NATO's Professional Development Programme (a Trust Fund led by the UK) trains key civilian security and defence officials on effective democratic management and building local capacity. In 2011-2016 alone, the PDP delivered various forms of training to some 9,000 civil servants in Ukraine. In 2016-2017, the Programme underwent a major transformation to better align it to the strategic situation in Ukraine. Key activities in 2018 aim to provide training to Euro-Atlantic integration specialists, support defence and security sector reform efforts, and focus on management and leadership skills.

Science for Peace and Security Programme (SPS)

Ukraine has been the largest beneficiary of the NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme since 2014. There are currently 42 ongoing SPS activities with Ukraine. Leading areas of cooperation include defence against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) agents, security-related advanced technology, and unexploded ordnance and mine detection and clearance. Flagship SPS projects in Ukraine include building capacity in the field of telemedicine, support to humanitarian demining in Ukraine, and the development of a 3D landmine detection radar. Ukraine is actively involved in cutting-edge research to develop a system capable of detecting explosives and weapons, in real time, in a mass transit environment. Looking ahead, the SPS is supporting the hybrid platform through a new project on early warning signals for hybrid attacks.

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Dispelling the Russian Myths About NATO



Since Russia began its aggressive actions against Ukraine, Russian officials have accused NATO of a series of threats and hostile actions in the post-Soviet territories. The official NATO webpage debunked Russian myths and the facts about Alliance activities. Here we tried to depict the most interesting points from our point of view.

MYTH 1. NATO refuses real dialogue with Russia

FACT: NATO suspended practical cooperation with Russia due to its aggressive actions in Ukraine. However, we continue to keep channels for political dialogue open. The NATO-Russia Council, an important platform for dialogue, has never been suspended. Seven meetings were held since April 2016. NATO and Russia also maintain open military-to-military lines of communication, which aim to promote predictability and transparency in military activities. NATO welcomed the recent contacts between the Chairman of the Military Committee, General Petr Pavel; the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Curtis Scaparrotti, and the Russian Chief of Defence, General Valery Gerasimov.

MYTH 2. By suspending practical cooperation with Russia, NATO undermines security

FACT: In 2014, NATO suspended all practical cooperation with Russia, in response to its aggressive actions in Ukraine. This cooperation included projects in Afghanistan, on counter-terrorism and scientific cooperation. These projects did deliver results over time, but their suspension has not undermined the security of the Alliance or our abil-

ity to counter challenges such as terrorism. NATO have made it clear that it is ready continue to seek a constructive relationship with Russia. But an improvement in the Alliance's relations with Russia will be contingent on a clear and constructive change in Russia's actions – one that demonstrates compliance with international law and Russia's international commitments.

MYTH 3. NATO enlargement threatens Russia

FACT: Every country that joins NATO undertakes to uphold its principles and policies. This includes the commitment that "the Alliance does not seek confrontation and poses no threat to Russia," as reaffirmed at the Warsaw Summit. NATO enlargement is not directed against Russia.

Every sovereign nation has the right to choose its own security arrangements. This is a fundamental principle of European security, one that Russia has also subscribed to and should respect. NATO's Open Door policy has been a historic success. Together with EU enlargement, it has spread stability and prosperity in Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

MYTH 4. NATO's Open Door policy creates new dividing lines in Europe and deepens existing ones

NATO's Open Door policy has helped close Cold War-era divisions in Europe. NATO enlargement has contributed to spreading democracy, security and stability further across Europe.

By choosing to adopt the standards and principles of NATO, aspirant countries gave their democracies the strongest possible anchor. And by taking

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the pledge to defend NATO, they received the pledge that NATO would protect them.

NATO membership is not imposed on countries. Each sovereign country has the right to choose for itself whether it joins any treaty or alliance.

This fundamental principle is enshrined in international agreements including the Helsinki Final Act which says that every state has the right "to belong or not to belong to international organizations, to be or not to be a party to bilateral or multilateral treaties including the right to be or not to be a party to treaties of alliance." And by signing the NATO-Russia Founding Act, Russia agreed to respect states' "inherent right to choose the means to ensure their own security."

MYTH 5. NATO enlargement in the Balkans is destabilizing

FACT: All the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which have joined NATO over the past decade have enjoyed peace, security and cooperation with their neighbours since then.

The countries in the region which aspire to membership are conducting reforms to bring themselves closer to NATO standards. These reforms enhance democracy and security in each country.

The countries in the region have played a significant role in NATO's operations in Afghanistan and Kosovo, providing training to the Afghan forces and helping to provide a safe and secure environment for all people in Kosovo. This is a direct contribution to stability in the broader Euro-Atlantic area.

MYTH 6. NATO tried to "drag" Ukraine into the Alliance

FACT: When the administrations of President Kuchma and President Yushchenko made clear their aspiration to NATO membership, the Alliance worked with them to encourage the reforms which would be needed to make that aspiration a reality.

When the administration of President Yanukovich opted for a non-bloc status, NATO respected that

decision and continued to work with Ukraine on reforms, at the government's request.

NATO respects the right of every country to choose its own security arrangements. In fact, Article 13 of the Washington Treaty specifically gives Allies the right to leave.

Over the past 65 years, 29 countries have chosen freely, and in accordance with their domestic democratic processes, to join NATO. Not one has asked to leave. This is their sovereign choice.

MYTH 7. Russia has the right to demand a "100% guarantee" that Ukraine will not join NATO

FACT: According to Article I of the Helsinki Final Act which established the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 1975, every country has the right "to belong or not to belong to international organizations, to be or not to be a party to bilateral or multilateral treaties including the right to be or not to be a party to treaties of alliance." All the OSCE member states, including Russia, have sworn to uphold those principles.

In line with those principles, Ukraine has the right to choose for itself whether it joins any treaty of alliance, including NATO's founding treaty.

Moreover, when Russia signed the Founding Act, it pledged to uphold "respect for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all states and their inherent right to choose the means to ensure their own security".

Thus Ukraine has the right to choose its own alliances, and Russia has, by its own repeated agreement, no right to dictate that choice.

MYTH 8. NATO provoked the "Maidan" protests in Ukraine

FACT: The demonstrations which began in Kyiv in November 2013 were born out of Ukrainians' desire for a closer relationship with the European Union, and their frustration when former President Yanukovich halted progress toward that goal as a result of Russian pressure.

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The protesters' demands included constitutional reform, a stronger role for the parliament, the formation of a government of national unity, an end to the pervasive and endemic corruption, early presidential elections and an end to violence. There was no mention of NATO.

Ukraine began discussing the idea of abandoning its non-bloc status in September 2014, six months after the illegal and illegitimate Russian "annexation" of Crimea and the start of Russia's aggressive actions in Eastern Ukraine. The final decision by Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada to abandon the non bloc status was taken in December 2014, over a year after the pro-EU demonstrations began.

MYTH 9. NATO was planning to base ships and missiles in Crimea

FACT: This is fiction. The idea has never been proposed, suggested or discussed within NATO.

MYTH 10. NATO set up a military base in Georgia

FACT: NATO agreed at the Wales Summit to offer Georgia a substantial package of assistance to strengthen Georgia's defence and interoperability capabilities with the Alliance. In August 2015, a NATO-Georgian Joint Training and Evaluation Centre was inaugurated in Krtsanisi to contribute to the training and interoperability of Georgian and Alliance personnel.

This is a training centre, not a military base.

It contributes to stability by making Georgia's armed forces more professional, and by reinforcing the democratic controls over them.

MYTH 11. NATO has bases all around the world

FACT: NATO's military infrastructure outside the territory of Allies is limited to those areas in which the Alliance is conducting operations.

Thus the Alliance has military facilities in Afghanistan for the support of the Resolute Support mission, and in Kosovo for the KFOR mission.

NATO has civilian liaison offices in partner countries such as Georgia, Ukraine and Russia. These cannot be considered as "military bases".

Individual Allies have overseas bases on the basis of bilateral agreements and the principle of host-nation consent, in contrast with Russian bases on the territory of Moldova (Transnistria), Ukraine (the Autonomous Republic of Crimea) and Georgia (the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia).

MYTH 12. NATO's enhanced forward presence violates the NATO-Russia Founding Act?

FACT: Moscow accuses NATO of violating an important part of the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act related to new permanent stationing of forces. It's called the "Substantial Combat Forces" pledge. That pledge stated that in the "current and foreseeable security environment" NATO would "carry out its collective defence...by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces."

NATO has fully abided by this pledge. The four multinational battlegroups deploying to the eastern part of our Alliance are rotational, defensive and well below any reasonable definition of "substantial combat forces." There has been no permanent stationing of substantial combat forces on the territory of eastern allies; and total force levels across the Alliance have, in fact, been substantially reduced since the end of the Cold War.

Russia, which pledged to exercise "similar restraint" has increased the numbers of its troops along Allied borders, and breached agreements which allow for verification and military transparency, in particular on military exercises.

By signing the NATO-Russia Founding Act, Russia also pledged not to threaten or use force against NATO Allies and any other state. It has broken this commitment, with the illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea, the territory of a sovereign state. Russia also continues to support militants in eastern Ukraine.

MYTH 13. The cases of Kosovo and Crimea are identical

FACT: The Kosovo operation was conducted following exhaustive discussion involving the whole international community dealing with a long-running crisis that was recognized by the UN Security Council as a threat to international peace and security.

IN FOCUS: NATO-UKRAINE COOPERATION

Following the operation, the international community engaged in nearly ten years of diplomacy, under UN authority, to find a political solution and to settle Kosovo's final status, as prescribed by UNSCR 1244.

In Crimea, there was no pre-existing crisis, no attempt to discuss the situation with the Ukrainian government, no involvement of the United Nations, and no attempt at a negotiated solution.

In Kosovo, international attempts to find a solution took over 3,000 days. In Crimea, Russia annexed part of Ukraine's territory in less than 30 days. It has sought to justify its illegal and illegitimate annexation, in part, by pointing to a "referendum" that was inconsistent with Ukrainian law, held

under conditions of illegal armed occupation with no freedom of expression or media access for the opposition, and without any credible international monitoring.

MYTH 14. Russia's annexation of Crimea was justified by the opinion of the International Court of Justice on the independence of Kosovo

FACT: The court stated that their opinion was not a precedent. The court said they had been given a "narrow and specific" question about Kosovo's independence which would not cover the broader legal consequences of that decision.

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Black Sea Region Security: Russian and NATO Approaches²

Following occupation and annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia continued to expand its presence in the Black Sea region, creating new challenges and threats to regional security. Having captured Crimea and its infrastructure, as well as building new infrastructure facilities (power bridge, bridge across the Kerch Strait, TurkStream, etc.), the Russian Federation expands areas controlled by it with the ultimate goal of turning the Black Sea into the area of Russian influence. According to the Kremlin's plan, this will make it possible for Russia to advance into the West as far as possible.

For Russia the Black Sea region is not a final goal – it is only a bridge that can be used to expand Russia's presence in the Mediterranean. Russian interference in the Syrian conflict and creation of Russian military bases on the Syrian territory are indicative of this development. However, Russia cannot move further into the Mediterranean without gaining a foothold in the Black Sea. Thus, in his speech at the international conference “Putin's wars; post-Crimean reality”³ the President of the Ukrainian Advanced Research Project Agency Admiral Igor Kabanenko noted that Russia considered the region the center of gravity and tried to achieve dominance using military force. Such policy of the Russian Federation creates a threat to the European Union and NATO, three member states of which – Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania – are located on the Black Sea.

Together with the temporary loss of Crimea, Ukraine has also lost a part of its Navy, so today it

is not strong enough to confront the Russian military power at sea. For Turkey, which is the most powerful Black Sea country in military terms, the priority is still the Mediterranean region, where it protects Northern Cyprus, tries to resolve the Syrian problem and opposes Greece and the Republic of Cyprus. Other Black Sea countries have much smaller naval forces than Russia's Black Sea Fleet, which prevents them from repelling Russian aggression on their own. That is why the only force capable of repulsing the creeping occupation of the Black Sea region by Russia is NATO.

The Kremlin's goal is to make the Black Sea a “Russian lake”

Russia's views on the Black Sea region are reflected in a number of documents, namely: Moscow's 2015 Naval doctrine [1], Fundamentals of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the field of naval activities for the period until 2030 [2], Military doctrine of the Russian Federation, National security strategy of the Russian Federation [3], the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation. The Naval doctrine states: “*The basis of the national naval policy in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov is fast restoration and strengthening of strategic positions of the RF concerning the Black Sea*”. Actually, it is a roadmap for Russia – increasing the role and influence of the RF in the region, and not developing cooperation and partnership. The document also states that NATO infrastructure build-up is the key challenge for the RF. Much attention is dedicated to Crimea, which at the time of the approval of the doctrine has already been annexed by Russia, because the Kremlin is worried about the fact that the international community did not recognize annexation of the peninsula. According to the Naval doctrine and the National security strategy, Russia wants to secure its permanent presence in the Mediterranean and integrate the occupied Crimea into a system of regional maritime connections, and the captured Crimean resorts into the international recreation network. However, international non-recognition

² The publication was prepared in the framework of the project "Promoting Security in the Black Sea Region through Greater Engagement of Non-Governmental Organizations" with the support from the Black Sea Trust Fund, a project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Black Sea Trust Fund or its partners.

³ On March 19, 2019 the Centre for Global Studies Strategy XXI and the Taurida National University, in partnership and with the support from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, held an international conference "Putin's Wars in Eastern Europe: Post-Crimean Reality", <https://geostrategy.org.ua/ua/component/k2/item/1564-putinski-viyni-u-shidniy-evropi-post-krimskarealnist>

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and the corresponding sanctions create impassable barriers on the way to achieving this goal.

In other documents of the Russian Federation, less attention is paid to the Black Sea region. The Military doctrine of the Russian Federation speaks about intensification of military cooperation with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the territories of Georgia de facto occupied by Russia and used by it to hinder Georgia's further European and Euro-Atlantic integration and to destabilize the situation in the Black Sea region. Russia's foreign policy concept is in conflict with reality. De jure Russia declares that it would welcome achievement of settlement of conflicts in the region by political and diplomatic means, and de facto it fuels the conflicts.

The Russian occupation of Crimea was a dangerous act in the process of implementing Russia's policy in the Black Sea region. This threat posed challenges for both the Black Sea countries and Russia itself. Russia associates challenges for its own security with non-recognition of annexation of the peninsula, since the RF made its own borders "vague"; it concerns not only borders with Ukraine with its occupied Crimea and Donbass, but also borders with Georgia because of the conflict territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Neither Bulgaria, which openly flirts with Russia in hope to get cheap energy and economic support, nor Turkey, which maintains stable relations with Russia, will not muster enough courage to recognize annexation of Crimea. Besides, Ankara took a pro-Ukrainian stance on this issue and is prepared to increase its military and technical cooperation with Ukraine.

The alleged threat of NATO moving to the East, closer to the Russian borders is bogus, since Russia already has borders with the Alliance – Norway, Baltic States, Poland. Naval forces of the Alliance are deployed in the Black Sea – in Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria. And there never was any threat to the national security of Russia arising from this.

Unresolved conflicts are used by the Kremlin to exert pressure on independent countries. However, they pose a challenge to Russia, too, because the regions occupied by it place an additional burden on the Russian budget and are a source of corruption and organized crime that penetrate Russia.

Russia's tactics of using regional conflicts failed. Moreover, now the victims of the Russian aggression are making big progress through internal reforms, development of economy and democratization of society. From the Kremlin's point of view, independent, developed, democratic Ukraine is a major challenge to Russia, because the Russian people get to wonder more and more why citizens of Ukraine live better and have more freedom than the citizens of the "great power".

Russia continues to use non-military means against the Black Sea countries, namely: information warfare, cyberattacks, economic pressure (including energy supplies), diplomatic activity, export of corruption, humanitarian action (historical and cultural links, provision of support to radical factions of national minorities, religious connections, etc.). However, they are to be considered in combination with military means, which are vital for the Russian presence in the Black Sea region.

From the beginning of its aggression against Ukraine in 2014, Russia tried to avoid direct use of military force in the Black Sea region, which did not apply to Ukraine. For example, when Turkey shot down Russian Su-24 attack in November 2015, Russia did not respond symmetrically, which would imply the use of military means but instead resorted to restrictive anti-Turkish measures in the areas of trade, tourism, transportation, employment of Turkish workers in the Russian Federation. This "hybrid response" of the RF made it possible to avoid a sharp escalation of tension in relations between Russia and Turkey, and, consequently, to prevent deterioration of the situation in the Black Sea region.

Russia acts differently in its relations with Ukraine. Three years after the Turkish incident Russia openly used its military power against three Ukrainian ships which were attacked near the Kerch Strait. This clearly showed that Russia was prepared to use its ever increasing armed forces deployed in the Black Sea region. Therefore, although there was a precedent, the reaction to it did not make the Kremlin renege on its aggressive policy in the region.

Russia's military aggression is stepped up not only in relation to Ukraine. During the international conference "Putin's wars: post-Crimean reality",

Rosian Vasiloi, security analyst of the Moldavian Institute for Development and Social Initiatives Viitorul, informed its participants that the Russian military illegally deployed in Transnistria continue to build up their presence - in 2016 they conducted 48 military exercises, in 2017 – 150, in 2018 – around 250, and only in the first quarter of 2019 – 37 military exercises and 56 preparatory operations [4]. The surge in military activity in Transnistria in early 2019 could be associated with parliamentary elections in Moldova, but the increase in the Russian military activity was observed in the last several years. Also, we should not forget about Russia's military base in Armenia with about 5 thousand Russian soldiers and its military contingents in Abkhazia and South Ossetia - 7 and 4 military bases respectively with more than 8 thousand military personnel in total.

This proves that Russia is increasingly resorting to military means, since its hybrid methods are steadily losing their efficiency. Militarist rhetoric prevails in the official documents of the Russian Federation, and in the statements by V. Surkov, Putin's assistant, and V. Gerasimov, head of the General Staff of Russia's Armed Forces, as compared with their statements made in 2013-2014, a bias towards using military force is quite noticeable. In relation to the EU and NATO countries, the Russian Federation uses only hybrid instruments, but in relation to the post-Soviet countries Russia uses military means, too. The EU and NATO must consider this trend, since transition to military actions can happen very quickly.

NATO in the Black Sea – deterring Russia

NATO always dedicated its attention to the Black Sea region, since three of its member states – Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria – are located on the Black Sea. However, the attitude of the Alliance to the region's security changed significantly after the occupation of Crimea by Russia, which NATO condemned at its Wales Summit in 2014. Later, at the 2016 Warsaw Summit the allies noted deterioration of security situation in the region: *"In recent years the security situation also deteriorated. We are going to continue our efforts to overcome problems for NATO caused by the events in the region; we will take them into account in the policy of the Alliance"* [5]. The Black Sea policy of the Alliance was implemented by means of deployment of En-

hanced forward presence in the Black Sea, with Romania as a main player, as it was stated in the 2018 Brussels Summit Declaration [6].

NATO sees the following challenges in the Black Sea region [8]:

- destabilizing activities and policy of Russia, in particular continuous unlawful and illegal annexation of Crimea, violations of sovereign borders using military force and deliberate destabilization of situation in the east of Ukraine;
- Russia's increasing military power and creation of Anti Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) zones - since 2010 the Black Sea Fleet is high on the list of priorities for rearmament of the Russian Armed Forces; Russia deployed its long-range antiship missile systems in Crimea;
- short-notice large-scale military exercises conducted in defiance of the spirit of the Vienna document, provocative military actions close to NATO borders in the Black Sea region;
- use of its military presence in the Black Sea by Russia with the purpose of demonstrating its power in the East Mediterranean, which creates additional risks and threats to security of NATO member states and other countries;
- destructive influence of Russia aimed at undermining unity of NATO and the EU, destruction of democratic institutions in the member states, creation of parallel reality making use of information technologies, support of political forces with anti-NATO and anti-EU agenda, polarization of societies;
- frozen and ongoing conflicts – zones of military actions are used by the RF for political intimidation of the independent countries on the territory of the former Soviet Union, and "grey zones" are used by the organized crime, smugglers and radical movements;
- plans and intentions which are detrimental to the security of energy supply to the countries of the Black Sea region and to Europe as a whole;
- challenges to security of communication lines which pass across the region and which are important for trade and development of economic cooperation.

NATO views response to these challenges in two dimensions: increase in its forward presence in the region for deterrence and defense; keeping open possibilities of conducting dialogue with the RF in order to avoid direct confrontation. The Alliance

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pays special attention to monitoring of situation in the Black Sea region. Thus, during the meeting of the foreign ministers of the NATO member states on April 4, 2019 a package of measures to improve information awareness of the Alliance concerning situation in the Black Sea region and to step up support for its partners – Georgia and Ukraine.

In accordance with NATO's decision concerning its forward presence in the Black Sea region, the Alliance deployed in Romania a multinational brigade subordinated to the headquarters of the multinational South East Division in Bucharest, which gained operational capability in the summer of 2017. The brigade includes the Romanian Red Scorpions battalion and the troops of nine more NATO members. The Alliance conducts air patrol missions in the Black Sea area with participation of Romanian, Bulgarian, Canadian and Italian air forces.

Concerning the maritime dimension, which is the most important one for the security in the Black Sea region, enhancement of the Alliance's forward presence was hindered by Bulgaria, which in 2016 refused to join the united front of other member states on the issue the united NATO fleet in the Black Sea. At that time, the Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov strongly opposed the initiative, although Turkey and Romania supported it and called on the Alliance to increase its military presence in the region. Therefore, the only opportunity for NATO to counterbalance Russia's military power in the Black Sea region is to increase nonpermanent presence of the military ships of the non-Black Sea NATO member states, to conduct regular military exercises and to create the Black Sea Functional Center for coordination of activities of the member states.

NATO cooperates with the European Union to ensure security of the Black Sea region in the context of countering hybrid threats. It is based on the Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation, which was signed in July 2016. The areas of NATO-EU collaboration include improvement in sustaining power, cyber defense, countering terrorism and illegal migration, maritime security and conducting military exercises.

NATO stressed the importance of improving cooperation with the Black Sea countries, first of

all with Georgia and Ukraine. If during the 2016 Warsaw Summit the message sounded as an intention to deepen the dialogue, at the meeting of the Alliance in April 2019 the ministers spoke about "increasing support to partners – Georgia and Ukraine". *"We also discussed what else we can do to enhance our security in the Black Sea region. We approved a package of measures aimed at improving our information awareness concerning the situation. Moreover, we are increasing our support for Georgia and Ukraine in the fields of training naval forces and coast guards, visiting ports, educational activities and exchange of information. All this will be based upon our already close cooperation"*, said Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General after the above mentioned meeting [9]. In this way the Alliance not only supports and protects its member states but also unites the partners.

Black Sea region security – focus on key aspects

Consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which is going on for more than 5 years now, for European security are still not fully understood. In the post-Crimean period, that is after the occupation of Crimea by Russia, it is necessary to continuously monitor the current situation in the Black Sea region countries and identify new hybrid threats, to define possible ways to counter Russia's hybrid aggression. Russia has become a source of hybrid threats not only for Ukraine but also for Europe as a whole. It is not surprising that today the Alliance pays great attention to the information awareness concerning the security situation in the region, in order not to overlook the signs of its deterioration. This process should involve not only NATO forces, member states, but also nongovernmental players from the member states and NATO partner countries which monitor the security situation in the region. Obviously, only the Alliance can respond to Russia's military aggression in the Black Sea region in a befitting way and ensure the necessary balance of power which will not allow the Kremlin to turn the Black Sea into a "Russian lake."

The Alliance's policy concerning the Black Sea region is efficient, but NATO has to pay more attention to ensuring unity within the organization. The key countries here are Bulgaria and Turkey. The Kremlin is trying to split the unity of the Al-

liance flirting with these countries. Brussels have to find the right words to convince the Bulgarian leadership that "sailboats, yachts and ships full of tourists" will not be able to prevent the war in the region, and that the permanent presence of NATO naval forces will not turn the Black Sea into an arena of hostilities, as the Bulgarian Prime Minister Borisov claimed in 2016 [10].

Although for Russia the military aspect of the situation in the Black Sea region is more important than elsewhere, the Kremlin knows very well that cannot afford direct military confrontation with NATO and therefore actively uses non-military means. One of them is the construction of the Turk-Stream gas pipeline, which the Russian Federation is trying to "sell" to Turkey (the first string), but also to other EU and NATO member states - Bulgaria and Hungary, as well as Serbia, which is a candidate for the EU membership. The Alliance and its member states have to take into account how Russia is using and can be using its energy infrastructure for military purposes [11]. Since it already uses civilian Black Sea offshore gas platforms stolen from Ukraine with the purpose of installing reconnaissance facilities on them to control the Black Sea area, it will surely be able to use civilian service vessels of the TurkStream Project for the same purpose.

Besides, Russia is interested in the Turkish idea concerning ambitious Istanbul Canal project (there are plans to construct a channel, that, in parallel with the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, which are under the jurisdiction of the Montreux Convention, are to connect the Black Sea with the Medi-

terranean Sea). The Kremlin would like to join this project as a partner, so that in future it could control the sea routes between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. This would allow the RF to strengthen its positions in both regions. That is why NATO, the EU and the international community in general must monitor the situation and prevent Russia from exploiting the project.

Taking into account restrictions on permanent presence of NATO naval forces in the Black Sea, the Alliance should dedicate more attention to supporting the development of the navies of its Black Sea member states, first Romania, and partner countries – Georgia and Ukraine. Development of combat potential of the naval forces of Romania, Ukraine and Georgia and enhancement of cooperation and interaction between them must become an effective lever in countering Russia's military aggression in the Black Sea.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that Russia's actions aimed at concealing and camouflaging its involvement in the war in the east of Ukraine, as well as diverting attention of the international community from the real process of settlement of the conflict and occupation of Crimea, become more and more counterproductive, since the fact that the RF is guilty of initiating the conflict and destabilizing the Black Sea region is widely recognized throughout the world. This awareness must be transformed into practical measures aimed at consolidation of the efforts of the Black Sea countries, the EU and NATO to collectively counter Russia's aggression in the Black Sea and to prevent its expansion to the Mediterranean region.

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Challenges Posed by Presence of the Russian Black Sea Fleet on the Territory of Ukraine: Historical and Political Background

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Soviet Black Sea Fleet Heritage

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the newly founded independent states faced the issue of partition of the USSR Armed Forces, including the land and naval military bases. On 30 December 1991, in Minsk, the leaders of the post-Soviet independent countries agreed that they would establish their own military forces on the basis of units of the former USSR Armed Forces that were stationed on the territory of the respective countries, with the exception of “strategic” (nuclear) forces that should have remained under the unified command of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) – a regional intergovernmental organisation founded by the former USSR republics.

In accordance with this logic, Ukraine should have inherited those units of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet that were deployed on the territory of Ukraine, including in the Crimean Peninsula with the major naval basis in the city of Sevastopol. On 5 April 1992, the president of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, issued the *Decree On the transfer of the Black Sea Fleet under administrative subordination of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine*. But Moscow strived to preserve control over the Black

Sea Fleet, and just in two days after Kravchuk’s Decree, on 7 April 1992, Russian president Boris Yeltsin, issued the *Decree On the transition of the Black Sea Fleet under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation* [1].

Some of the Black Sea Fleet officers and warships’ crews began to take an oath of allegiance to Ukraine, while some others – to Russia; the general atmosphere of relations in the fleet deteriorated. To avoid possible confrontation, Ukrainian and Russian presidents cancelled the above-mentioned decrees, and at the meeting on 23 June 1992, they agreed to avoid unilateral steps and to hold negotiations on the issue of the post-Soviet Black Sea Fleet heritage [2]. On 3 August 1992, the presidents signed *Agreement between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on the principles of formation of the Naval Forces of Ukraine and the Naval Fleet of Russia on the basis of the Black Sea Fleet of the former USSR*. It was agreed that the former USSR Black Sea Fleet to be divided between Ukraine and Russia (Article 1); during the following three years of “transitional period”, the Fleet to be governed by Joint Command “appointed upon a consensus” of Ukrainian and Russian presidents (Articles 2, 3 and 4), the Fleet personnel to consist of Ukrainian and Russian conscripts in equal proportions (50% by 50%) who take oath to the state of their respective citizenship (Articles 5 and 6); during the transition period, Ukraine and Russia to jointly use the existing system of naval basing and logistical support (Article 8) [3].

On 17 June 1993, presidents of Ukraine and Russia signed the *Agreement on urgent measures for the formation of the Naval Forces of Ukraine and the Naval Fleet of Russia on the basis of the Black Sea Fleet*. It was envisaged that the Fleet to be divided in equal proportions (50% by 50%) between Ukraine

and Russia (Article 2); the bilateral Interstate Commission to be established for negotiating the practical issues of partition of the Fleet and conditions for basing of the Naval Forces of Ukraine and the Naval Fleet of Russia (Article 4) [4].

In practice, the “Joint Command” of the Black Sea Fleet followed instructions only from Moscow. Without consultations with Kyiv, some modern warships and equipment were redeployed to the other fleets that were under the sole Moscow control (e.g., one of the most modern and valuable Soviet warships, the aircraft carrier *Admiral Kuznetsov* was redeployed from the Black Sea Fleet to the Russian Northern Fleet). Warships with Ukrainian crews were often deprived of possibility to use the navigation and hydrographic equipment of the Black Sea Fleet [5; 6], the conscripts of Ukrainian citizenship were put under moral pressure by Russian officers and often unjustly dismissed from service [7; 8].

Negotiations Amid Moscow’s Pressure

Ukraine-Russia negotiations on fleet took place against the backdrop of constant Moscow’s political and economic pressure on Kyiv, Russia’s attempts to gain full control over the whole post-Soviet Black Sea Fleet and simultaneous support of the pro-Russian separatist in the Crimea aiming at separation this Autonomous Republic from Ukraine and its unification with Russia. Thus, on 21 May 1992, the Russian parliament (Supreme Council) passed *Resolution on the legal assessment of decisions of the highest state authorities of the RSFSR to change the status of the Crimea adopted in 1954*. The decisions of 1954 on transferring the Crimea from the Russian SFSR to the Ukrainian SSR was declared as legally invalid [9]. On 9 July 1993, the Russian parliament also passed *Resolution on the status of the city of Sevastopol*, declaring the “Russian federal status of the city of Sevastopol” [10]. On 5 December 1996, the upper house of the Russian parliament (Federation Council) adopted *Statement on the status of the city of Sevastopol*, calling Ukraine to negotiate on the “Russian status of the city of Sevastopol” [11]. There were also many other similar declarations and statements of the Russian state bodies and officials. Russian officers of the Black Sea Fleet participated in separatist activities in the Crimea, especially in the city of Sevastopol, e.g. the premises of the Black Sea Fleet headquarters were pro-

vided for separatist meetings; Russian fleet officers openly supported separatist “president” of the Crimea Yuriy Meshkov [6; 12].

Russia linked negotiations on fleet to the issues of oil and gas supplies to Ukraine and often threatened to cut off such supplies [6; 13]. Moscow also linked settlement of the fleet issues to the signing of the bilateral *Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation, and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation*. (This treaty, finally signed on 31 May 1997, three days after signing the agreements on partition of the Black Sea Fleet and conditions for Russian Fleet staying on the territory of Ukraine, was important for Kyiv because it provided that both countries “respect the territorial integrity of each other and confirm the inviolability of the existing borders between them”, and build their bilateral relations on principles of “non-use of force or threat of force, including economic and other means of pressure, the right of peoples to freely dispose of their destiny, non-interference in internal affairs” [14].)

Agreements on Division of the Fleet

Long and difficult negotiations resulted in Ukraine-Russia *Agreement on the Black Sea Fleet*, signed on 9 June 1995, in Sochi, by presidents Leonid Kuchma and Boris Yeltsin. According to this agreement, the property of the Black Sea Fleet to be divided in equal proportions 50% by 50% (Article 3), but Ukraine to receive only 18.3% of all ships and vessels of the post-Soviet Black Sea Fleet while Russia to receive 81.7% (Article 4); the main base of the Russian Black Sea Fleet with its headquarters to remain in the city of Sevastopol (Article 2); the Mixed Ukrainian-Russian State Commission had to develop the specific parameters of partition of the Fleet’s objects (Article 11) [15].

The terms of the abovementioned Sochi agreement shaped the basis for three major Ukraine-Russia agreements, finally signed on 28 May 1997, in Kyiv, namely: 1) *Agreement on the status and conditions of presence of the Russian Federation Black Sea Fleet on the territory of Ukraine* [16], 2) *Agreement on the parameters of partition of the Black Sea Fleet* [17; 18], 3) *Agreement on the mutual payments related to partition of the Black Sea Fleet and presence of the Russian Federation Black Sea Fleet on the territory of Ukraine* [19]. In particular, the agreements set the strength of the

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Russian Black Sea Fleet deployed in the Crimea, specified the places, land plots and objects of infrastructure to be used by Russian Fleet, as well as basic conditions for such deployment and usage. The agreements also outlined the contours for settlement of legal issues related to the presence of the Russian naval base in Ukraine, issues related to human rights, social security, environmental protection, etc. Agreements were concluded for 20 years, with possibility of further prolongation for the further five-year periods.

In order to guarantee the temporal status of the Russian Fleet's deploying in the Crimea, the Constitution of Ukraine, adopted on 28 June 1996, stated that "location of foreign military bases shall not be permitted on the territory of Ukraine" (Article 17). Transitional Provisions of the Constitutions envisaged that "the use of existing military bases on the territory of Ukraine for the temporary stationing of foreign military formations is possible on the terms of lease, by the procedure determined by the international treaties of Ukraine ratified by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine" (Paragraph 14 of the Transitional Provisions) [20].

It should be noted that the assessment of value of the Black Sea Fleet warships and infrastructure objects was carried out in 1995-1996 by the Ukrainian-Russian commission under the conditions of constant pressure of Moscow that was threatening to cut off oil and gas supplies to Ukraine. Due to that pressure, Kyiv had nothing but to abandon its initial intention to calculate the costs of lease of 18,232.62 hectares of land and 4,591 buildings in accordance with the international practice [21; 22], and to agree on dozens of times less lease cost of \$97.75 million annually (counted as repayment of a part of the Ukrainian state debt before Russia) [19].

In 2007-2009, Kyiv attempted to address the issues of proper inventory of the land plots and infrastructure objects in the Crimea leased by the Russian Black Sea Fleet, but Moscow disagreed to negotiate on these issues. Moscow also ignored Kyiv's protests against usage of the Russian Black Sea Fleet warships in the Russian-Georgian war of 2008, as well as Kyiv's demands to withdraw the Russian FSB agents from the Crimea [23]. During the presidency of Victor Yushchenko, the Ukrainian government declared that the agreements of 1997 would not be extended and the Russian

Black Sea Fleet would have to withdraw from the territory of Ukraine after 2017 [24].

Just in two months after Viktor Yanukovich became president of Ukraine, he signed with his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev the *Agreement on the issues of the Black Sea Fleet's presence on the territory of Ukraine*. The agreement, signed on 21 April 2010, in Kharkiv, extended three Ukraine-Russia agreements on fleet of 1997 for the next 25 years beyond 2017 (until 2042) with possibility of further renewals for the five-year periods (Article 1). The annual rent for the Russian Black Sea Fleet staying on the territory of Ukraine was defined as \$100 million plus a gas price discount at \$100 per each thousand cubic meters when gas price is \$333 and higher, or 30% discount when gas price is lower than \$333 (Article 2) [25].

Unsolved Legal and Practical Issues

Many legal and practical issues of the presence of the Russian Black Sea Fleet and related militaries and equipment on the territory of Ukraine (such as movements of the Russian military units outside their deployment sites, taxation and customs clearance of the imported materials and technical equipment, registration of residence places of the Russian military personnel and civilians etc.) have never been clearly settled due to Moscow's constant delaying and blocking of the corresponding negotiations. Ukraine's attempts to settle these issues failed both during the Viktor Yushchenko presidency (2005-2010) as well as during the rule of his pro-Russian successor Viktor Yanukovich (2010-2014).

Only on 17 December 2013, in the midst of Euro-maidan protests in Ukraine, the Russian-Ukrainian Interstate Commission headed by Viktor Yanukovich and Vladimir Putin decided to instruct the Governments of both countries "to accelerate the inventory work on the land plots and real estate objects located on them, used by the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation on the territory Ukraine" (Point 21), "to complete the preparation for signing of the draft intergovernmental agreements: on the coordination of movements related to the activities of the military units of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine, outside their deployment sites; on the procedure for crossing the state border of Ukraine by warships, support vessels, aircraft, and military

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personnel of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation; on registration at the place of residence (stay) of military personnel and civilians of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation and their family members in the migration authorities of Ukraine” (Point 22); “to regulate the taxation of the structural units of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation and the customs clearance of materials and technical equipment imported in the interests of the Fleet into the territory of Ukraine” (Point 23), etc. [26]. But this work has never been implemented.

In February-March 2014, taking advantage of the temporal vacuum of power in Ukraine due to escape from the country of then-president Viktor Yanukovich, Russian militaries, mainly from the Black Sea Fleet forces, occupied the Crimea and the city of Sevastopol and captured all the Ukrainian naval infrastructure in the peninsular and 54 out of 67 Ukrainian naval ships [27]. On 18-21 March 2014, the Russian Federation annexed the Crimea. On 31 March 2014, upon the proposal of president Vladimir Putin, the Russian parliament (State Duma) denounced all treaties and agreements with Ukraine on the Black Sea Fleet [28]. On 22 November 2018, the Ukrainian parliament amended the Constitution of Ukraine deleting the Paragraph 14 of the Transitional Provisions which envisaged the possibility for the stationing of foreign military bases on the territory of Ukraine [29].

Conclusions

As the post-Soviet leaders agreed to establish military forces of their respective countries on the basis of units of the former USSR Armed Forces stationed on their territories, Ukraine should have inherited the units of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet that were deployed on its territory, including in the Crimean Peninsula and the city of Sevastopol, – the same way as Russia inherited units of the Soviet Fleets deployed on the territory of the Russian Federation.

Despite the disproportionately large contribution of the Ukrainian SSR to building of the all Soviet Navy, Kyiv has not claimed the parts of the Soviet Northern Fleet, the Pacific Fleet, the Baltic Fleet and the Caspian Flotilla. In contrast, Moscow not only claimed the parts of the Black Sea Fleet deployed on the territory of Ukraine, but also used the time of negotiations to redeploy the most modern and valuable warships and equipment from the Black Sea Fleet to the other fleets deployed outside of the Ukrainian territory.

Ukraine-Russia negotiations on fleet took place against the backdrop of Moscow’s political and economic pressure on Kyiv, including blackmails to cut off oil and gas supplies to Ukraine, attempts to gain full control over the whole post-Soviet Black Sea Fleet and support of the pro-Russian separatist in the Crimea.

Agreements on division of the Black Sea Fleet, finally signed in 1997, left unsolved a lot of legal and practical issues of the presence of the Russian Black Sea Fleet and related militaries and equipment on the territory of Ukraine. Due to Moscow’s constant delaying and blocking of the corresponding negotiations, these issues have never been settled, causing a number of incidents of a legal nature and violations of the Ukrainian legislation including the human rights violations.

The illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Federation in March 2014, followed by the denunciation of all Russia-Ukraine treaties and agreements on the Black Sea Fleet, led to the disappearance of legal ground for deployment of the Russian fleet on the territory of Ukraine. Besides, after the annexation of the Crimea in 2014, Russia began the intensified militarisation of the peninsular actually turning it into the enormous military fortress. These actions disrupt the military balance in the whole Black Sea region increasing security threats to the countries of the region and challenging free navigation and shipping.

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Russia's GPS-spoofing as a Threat to Safety of Navigation⁴

It is impossible to imagine today's world without the widespread use of navigation instruments which allow determining location of a vessel anywhere on the planet. Generally, it is done in 3D reference coordinate system WGS84 (*World Geodetic System 1984*). Operation of this system relies on efficient hardware and software, in particular when somebody tries blocking it.

The most popular and frequently global positioning system is NAVSTAR GPS (*NAVigation Satellites providing Time And Range; Global Positioning System*) which was developed on order from the US Department of Defense. Nowadays other global positioning systems exist or are being developed – Russian GLONASS [1], European Galileo [2], French DORIS, Japanese QZSS, Chinese BeiDou, Indian GAGAN [3], etc. The majority of experts consider GPS the only full-scale global navigation system, taking into account poor state of the Russian GLONASS satellite fleet.

The GPS Operation Center (GPSOC) is located at the US Schriever Air Force base in Colorado; it functions as the coordinating center of the US Department of Defense for operational issues and issues connected with the military use of GPS. The GPSOC which is a part the Air Force Space Command) (AFSPC) delivers reports on the identified abnormalities and provides various information to the US Department of Defense and other GPS users around the world on a continuous basis.

For civil GPS users the main control and coordination center is the US Coast Guard Navigation Center. The United States Coast Guard is responsible for compliance with the maritime rules and regulations; at the same time, it is one of seven American responders (departments or ministries dealing with military issues).

The fact that GPS was created and used by the US military caused and continues to cause multiple attempts to seize control over this system by third parties. With a high degree of probability, one of the first attacks on GPS, with a high degree of probability, was the seizure of the American Lockheed RQ 170 unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) in the north east of Iran in December 2011.

Among the main threats facing the users of navigation instruments and tools are jamming, i.e. suppressing of GPS signal by more powerful signals, and spoofing - broadcasting of incorrect GPS signals, structured to resemble a set of normal GPS signals. Taking into account the fact that spoofing not only interferes with the operation of navigation systems, but also gives users misleading information, it poses the biggest threat.

A spoofing attack, or simply spoofing, is falsification of data about real location coordinates. The spoofing attack tries to deceive the GPS receiver by transmitting a slightly more powerful signal than the one received by the system from its satellites, structuring it to resemble normal GPS signals. These falsified signals are modified in such a way as to make the receiving party to determine its location incorrectly (Fig.1).

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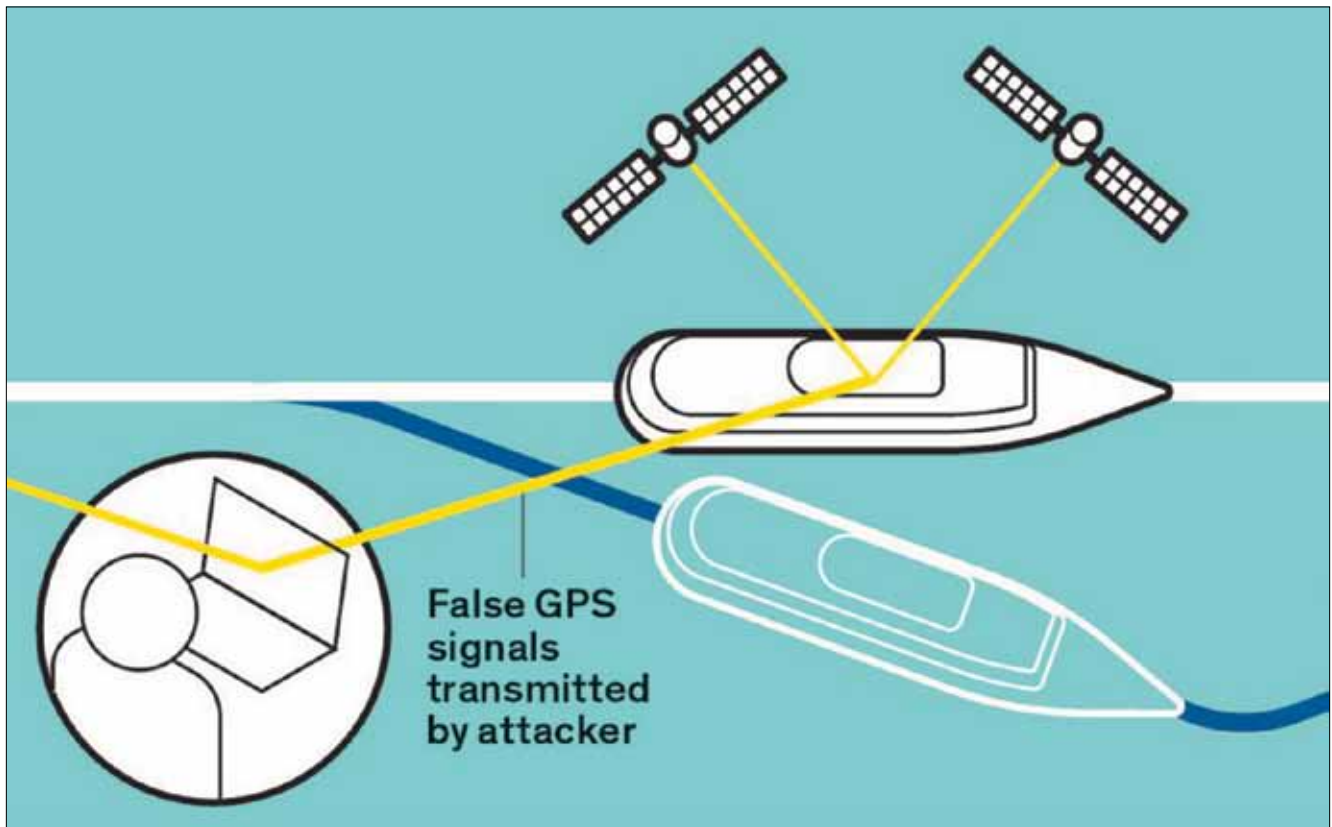


Fig.1. Spoofing attack against ships.

Source: <https://boingboing.net/2016/08/04/spoofing-gps-is-surprisingly-e.html>

From the legal point of view, the use of equipment which can interfere with operation of GPS is permissible only in the time of war and military actions. However, its use against civilians objects in the time of peace is absolutely unacceptable and unlawful. In particular, Article 3 of the 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation stipulates, inter alia, that a person commits a criminal offense if he illegally and intentionally destroys or damages maritime navigation devices, or seriously hinders its operation, or knowingly provides falsified information, thus creating a threat to safe navigation of the vessels, as well as if he only tries to perform the acts described above.

The International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) issued IALA NAVGUIDE — AIDS TO NAVIGATION MANUAL, which includes Chapter 4, Electronic Navigation Systems. Paragraph 4.8.1 of this document stipulates that operation of electronic navigation systems

are based upon the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS). GNSS is a general term for a satellite system capable of determining location, time and speed of an object anywhere around the world for multimodal use. If GNSS complies with Resolution A1046 (27) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) concerning the World-Wide Radio Navigation System (WWRNS), the receivers of such GNSS comply with the IMO requirements as to availability of equipment for determination of location; the list of equipment is given in Chapter V of the SOLAS Convention (the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea).

NAVGUIDE informs that since 1996 WWRNS works with the American NAVSTAR Global Positioning System and the Russian GLONASS Global Navigation Satellite System. In future GNSS will include other systems, which were mentioned earlier – the European Galileo and the Chinese BeiDou. Besides, in the next few years it is planned to put into operation regional components of such GNSS as the Japanese QZSS and the Indian IRNSS.

Thus, GPS devices are navigation equipment, proper operation of which is protected by the 1988 Convention for the suppression of unlawful acts against the safety of maritime navigation.

Signals transmitted by GPS satellites are extremely complex. The GPS system is designed to work unidirectional (reception only), providing services to an unlimited number of military and civilian users, supplying accurate, unambiguous results of real time distance measurements, Doppler shift, phases of carrier frequency, ensuring message transmission, correction of ionospheric delay, simultaneous measurements using data from a number of satellites, protection from interference and use of multiple paths. An official specification of the signals is given in the ICD-GPS-200 Interface Control Document.

In practice, there are many who want to interfere in operation of GPS. On July 29, 2013, students from the University of Austin (Texas) made the 213-foot yacht deflect from its course using GPS spoofing. In 2015 at a hacker forum a Chinese researcher was giving step-by-step instructions for assembling a spoofing device and selling assembly sets for \$300. Factory-made “GPS signal generators” are available online. They are very popular with the enthusiasts of the Pokemon Go game; they are used to deceive cell phones when collecting prizes from remote locations without the need to be there in person.

At the same time, the greatest damage is inflicted by professional, thoroughly prepared, large area interference in operation of navigation systems, which is almost openly demonstrated by the Russian Federation. In June 2016, the participants in the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum encountered with a problem of distorted GPS signal. The information was made known by Oleksandr Baklanov, correspondent of Snob Media. On the day when Russia’s President Volodymyr Putin visited the Forum the mobile devices were shown to be located not at the Forum venue but somewhere in a remote part of the city [4]. During 2016, various devices - from navigators to fitness bracelets - used in areas adjacent to the

Kremlin showed that the user was not in downtown Moscow but far away at Vnukovo, Sheremetyevo or Zhukovsky Airports. In October 2016, a Russian IT specialist and Yandex employee Grigory Bakunov said that in the Kremlin area there was a powerful transmitter that falsifies the GPS signal; that is why mobile devices positioned themselves incorrectly. “Here’s what I found out: somewhere in the Kremlin a powerful transmitter is installed (and possibly moved around). It imitates operation of GPS and GLONASS at L1 frequencies and produces noise at L2 and L5 frequencies. The L1 frequency is a citizens band for GPS, and it is used by most household devices for high accuracy geolocation”, said the IT specialist. According to one of Bakunov’s versions, the GPS signal works abnormally due to the use of default values: “Hardware and software sets for GPS spoofing demand to be given the coordinates which would be demonstrated instead of the real ones. Such coordinates may be entered directly or selected from the list provided by the manufacturer of the device. It so happens that in these lists for Russia there are only downtown areas of major cities and airports... Vnukovo is the first airport in the Moscow region alphabetically”[5].

Since January 6, 2018, users of Yandex, Google, Apple, as well as taxi and car sharing services encountered with interference in the GPS system in downtown Moscow again, when their location was demonstrated to be in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Several people have posted screenshots of the Yandex.Taxi bills to the tune of hundreds of thousands of rubles for trips around Moscow, which they received due to faulty operation of navigation devices. Yandex.Taxi claimed that such situation occurred due to a new large-scale problem, and the company handled it in manual mode. Location of the users in downtown Moscow was demonstrated as 0°0'0" N, 0°0'0" E; these coordinates correspond to a place at the equator, in the Gulf of Guinea of the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of West Africa [6].

In March 2018, a Cyprus-based ANT1 Media reported problems encountered in the electronic positioning systems in the Eastern Mediterranean

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which were passenger aircraft. For 3 days they received reports about the problems from the pilots of commercial airlines and private planes about interruption of the GPS signal or incorrect indication of the position of the aircraft. The Cypriot Civil Aviation Administration had to issue a NOTAM to alert aircraft pilots of the potential hazard. The same warning was issued by the Turkish aviation authorities. “We recommended that all

aircraft use other navigation methods. We are watching the situation closely”, explained Persephone Papadopoulou, a Cyprus Air Force officer. Such problems may be the result of increased intensity of hostilities in Syria and arrival of the US and Russian special purpose aircraft in Syria and the neighboring areas [7].

Let us dwell on maritime users of navigation systems in more detail. On June 22, 2017 22 boats in the Black Sea registered disruptions in operation of maritime navigation systems. The US Maritime Administration issued a relatively mild message that read: “On June 22, 2017 at 7:10 GMT a report was received about a marine incident in the Black Sea, coordinates 44-15.7 N, 037-32.9 E. This incident has not been confirmed. The incident is described as GPS interference. While in the area, proceed with caution”. However, the story had continuation.

Just as the incident began to unfold, the captain of one of the merchant ships sent a message to the US Coast Guard Navigation Center informing them that GPS equipment was working incorrectly off Novorossiysk, Russia. The Navigation Center checked the situation and found that there were no abnormalities in the operation of the satellites, space weather; there were no tests or tests being performed. They recommended to check the vessel’s equipment and update its software. The captain was persistent and continued to correspond with the Center: “Thank you for your reply, but I insist that my GPS equipment is in good working order. We tested it several times and everything worked fine. Please be advised that all vessels in this area (more than 20 ships) have the same

problem. I personally contacted three of them on VHF, they confirmed having the same problem. Sometimes the system shows the location correctly, sometimes it does not. GPS sometimes loses location or displays inaccurate coordinates (high HDOP). In the last few days GPS showed that we were somewhere on the shore (near the Gelendzhik airport), though in reality we drifted at sea more than 25 nautical miles from it. Important note: the GPS system considered this position to be “Safe within a radius of 100 m”. Last night, the positioning was correct, despite several warning signals “lost GPS fixing position” (the system lost the location of the ship) that appeared a couple of times for a few seconds; then the signal was back to normal. Now the positioning is again completely wrong. Note: You can also check websites such as MarineTraffic, and you will probably notice that from time to time all ships in the area “move inland” and are located next to each other. I hope this information helps. See the attached screenshots I made on June 24 at 5:45 UTC (30 minutes ago)”.

To confirm this information, the captain sent in screenshots of his navigation displays, paper chart showing his actual location, GPS positioning data and radar display with numerous Automated Identification System (AIS) contacts without reflected radar signals.

President of the Resilient Navigation and Timing Foundation Mr. Dunn A. Howard said that the analysis of global ship traffic data performed for two years has identified several incidents when a group of vessels reported that according to GPS they were on dry land, at airports, far from the places at sea where they actually were. “We began to be interested in this issue in June, when a captain of a Black Sea vessel reported that his GPS shows that he was at the Gelendzhik Airport, about 25 miles from his actual location... He provided screenshots and other information which convinced the experts an intentionally erroneous signal was sent to his GPS receiver (spoofing)”, Howard said. One of the photos sent in by the captain was a screenshot of the GPS Information Screen, which allowed navigation experts to conclude that this was a fairly a clear-cut, although somewhat camouflaged, case

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of spoofing or broadcasting false signals to make the receiver provide inaccurate information. The experts pointed out that the navigation system receiver shows the user that his aerial is 39 meters under water, that the signal strength of all satellites using GPS is the same and that WER, or Word Error Rate (probability of error in the code), is 97% (normal value is below 10%).

Problems with GPS in Russian waters occurred repeatedly, but this documented case is the first, which became known to the general public. This made careful evaluations necessary. "In July we continued to work on the June report and found enough evidence that in some cases the GPS signals in the Black Sea were periodically distorted. Then we approached Windward Ltd., a leading company in the field of collecting and analyzing shipping data, to undertake further investigation", said Howard.

Windward Ltd. confirmed the information. "Since many vessels experienced the same distortion in certain areas of the sea, it seems that the problem lies with GPS and not the Automated Identification System (AIS). Therefore, it can be expected that the problem affects everything in the region, and not just ships", said Matan Peled, co-founder of Windward Ltd. "The most interesting thing is that all three areas (where signal distortion was detected) have airports, such as Gelendzhik Airport, Sochi International Airport and St. Petersburg Airport. Windward Ltd. also found that some ships that were mistakenly "located" at Sochi Airport were sailing near Gelendzhik, some 200 kilometers (124 miles) from Sochi; it was only yesterday, on September 25, that two ships "appeared" at Sochi airport, 20 kilometers (12 miles) from their actual location near the port of Sochi", added Peled [8].

Later, in the US Coast Guard Navigation Center expert opinion it was stated that **Russia had quite strong opportunities for jamming GPS; over 250 thousand cell phone tower in the Russian Federation were equipped with the devices ensuring protection against American missile attacks.**

Subsequently, a report authored by Director of National Intelligence was published where it was stated that Russia attached great importance to the possibility of suppressing American satellite systems. Military experts have expressed their opinion that Russia has carried out a spoofing attack on vessels off the coast of Russia, and this was done to promote Russia's GLONASS system or Chayka land-based non-autonomous radio navigation system in their competition with GPS. It could be that there were other reasons, but they were known only to the Russians [9].

It should be noted that land-based electronic navigation systems are very powerful. It is almost impossible to jam them or hinder their operation. Russia, China, South Korea, Saudi Arabia and India have such systems. The United States have plans to build eLORAN (Enhanced Long-Range Navigation system), and the United Kingdom and others will use it. The combined GPS / eLORAN / Chayka receivers are available from a limited number of suppliers.

The new report of the American non-governmental C4ADS organization shows that Russia is using technologies which are capable of disorienting the GPS satellite navigation system, in particular in the occupied Crimea, which poses a significant threat to civilian GPS users. The signal distortion can degrade GPS positioning accuracy; a vessel or an aircraft will not be able to determine its location correctly or lose access to the positioning system.

Accusations that Russia distorts the signal of the satellite navigation system are nothing new, but duration of such actions is longer, they are much wider in scope and more geographically diversified than it was thought before - according to the research involving 9883 cases of Russia's interference in GNSS work in 10 areas that influenced operation of navigation systems of 1311 civilian vessels. Data obtained from the scientific instruments of the International Space Station was used for the purpose.

The analysts gave some examples of activities aimed at obstructing the Global Navigation

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Satellite System (GNSS) on the territory of the Russian Federation, on the occupied territories of Ukraine and in Syria. It was established that the transmitter which distorts GNSS signals in the Black Sea region was located on the territory of the so-called Putin's Palace at Cape Idokopas in the Krasnodar Krai of the Russian Federation [10].

Numerous vessels and planes which operate near the coast of Syria, in the eastern Mediterranean and in the Red Sea report significant interference in GPS operation. The reports indicate that the sources of interference were concentrated in the vicinity of the Egyptian city of Port Said, the Suez Canal and Cyprus. Based upon this information, the United States Maritime Administration has prepared another report on the existing threats. But the situation is dangerous for the military, too, since the extremely intensive traffic in the Canal can be blocked.

The Ukrainian and foreign users of GPS navigation devices repeatedly experienced Russia's interference in their work in the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. For example, in February-March 2019 in the Sea of Azov there were 3 instances of GPS and AIS failure. Information about disturbance in the operation of these systems was reported by the crews of merchant ships that were sailing to the Azov Sea ports. One of these instances was reported on March 7 west of the Belosaraj Spit, when captains of civilian vessels radioed information about failure in GPS operation, although Russia's GLONASS navigation system worked without a hitch. Similar complaints from seamen were reported on March 5 and February 20, 2019. It is worth noting that two Russian Navy ships using the call signs Bugel 66 and Bugel 029 respectively were on a mission in the area at that time [11]. A spoofing attack was experienced by Ukrainian military vessels during their first passage through the Kerch Strait in September 2018.

The problem is not local and it concerns not only Ukraine. In March 2019, the official statement was made by the Norwegian defense minister Frank Bakke-Jensen: "Norway has an electronic confirmation of the fact that the RF was jamming signals of the GPS system during the last NATO military exercises and demands an explanation from its eastern neighbor". It is well known that in November 2018 Norway and Finland already accused Russia of deliberately causing disturbances in GPS operation during military exercises, which also affected commercial aircraft navigation in the Arctic. Moscow denied this and asked for evidence. The Norwegian Defense Minister said that "the evidence has been provided". The Russian side deridingly promised that its experts would thoroughly examine them. So Frank Bakke-Jensen added: "If you want to be Russia's neighbor, you've got to be patient" [12].

Although not openly, NATO admits that Finland and Norway have in fact become Russia's proving ground for testing new hybrid intervention tools using unconventional methods of warfare in the Arctic region, similar to use of cluster bombs in Syria or Novichok nerve agent in Salisbury. All this happens in the areas where Russia does not conduct any military operations or participate in any conflicts; therefore, there is no legal ground for Russia to act the way it does. By doing this Russia demonstrates that it is prepared to transgress the norms of international law by using new types of electronic weapons.

The question is how quickly the Alliance will be able to quickly and adequately respond to the new threat and take appropriate measures aimed at enhancing security of the navigation system. Ukraine also has to address important and pressing legal issues regarding its attitude towards interference into operation of ships, vessels and aircraft, as well as the way it should respond to the navigation security threats in the area after such incidents are reported.

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Cyber Threats and Challenges in the Black Sea Region⁵

Russian activities in cyberspace are a major challenge for cybersecurity in the Black Sea region. Russia uses cyberspace as a space for new opportunities to carry out not only intelligence activities, but also to perform special operations for the covert penetration into cybersecurity networks of public authorities and the establishment of remote control over critical infrastructure objects in order to obtain benefits and secure their interests in information, military-political, financial-economic, and energy spheres.

Modern threats in the Black Sea region that emerged after the beginning of Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014 cover the cyberspace and are relevant not only for Ukraine, but also for other countries of the Black Sea region. This is evidenced by the final declarations of NATO summits, starting from Wales in 2014, when the Alliance approved an enhanced cyber defence policy and an appropriate action plan for its implementation. At that time, the counteraction to cyber threats was introduced under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty [1], which is a very important decision, since a cyberattack on one country has an impact on the whole NATO.

At the Warsaw Summit in 2016, the Alliance focused on strengthening the cyber defence of national networks and industries. At the same time, NATO mandate for operations in cyberspace, which equated to other areas of operations - land, air and seas, was confirmed. At the Brussels Summit in 2018, cyberattacks are among the main hybrid threats [2]. NATO agreed on the need to bring

the operations of the cyber defence to the level of operations in the other three areas.

Russian activities in cyberspace are a major challenge for Ukraine and other Black Sea states in the field of cybersecurity. Russia uses cyberspace as a space for new opportunities to carry out not only intelligence activities against Ukraine, but also to perform special operations for the covert penetration into cybersecurity networks of public authorities and the establishment of remote control over critical infrastructure objects in order to obtain benefits and secure their interests in information, military-political, financial-economic, and energy spheres.

The American company FireEye, specializing in international cybersecurity issues, identified a group of hackers from a number of groups of Advanced Persistent Threats, which for a long time conducted information operations under orders of the Russian Government. It received the code name ART 28 (also known as Fancy Bear, Pawnstorm, CyberCaliphate, Cyber Berkut, Tsar Team, etc.), it is identified as a cyber unit of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces. Since 2007, the specific feature of ART 28 was the specialization in obtaining information on defence, military-political and geopolitical subjects. The objects of attacks were computer networks of a number of state institutions and organizations from Central and Eastern Europe, in particular Poland, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Georgia, as well as NATO and the OSCE.

Since 2014, Ukraine has been used as a testing ground for new cyberattacks by Russian special services and groups of hackers controlled by them. There were recorded several types of attacks aimed at informational and psychological impact on the population, illegal gathering of information, shutdown of activities of central authorities, and also causing material damage to the state and

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citizens due to the disruption of information and telecommunication systems on critical infrastructure objects.

A sharp shift in 2013 in the direction of increasing activity in cyberspace can be noted after President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin signed the adopted Law No. 31c dated January 15, 2013, according to which the FSB of the Russian Federation became responsible for creating a system of cyber defence and counteracting cyber-attacks against Russian critical infrastructure. Soon, on February 13, under the auspices of the military department, an informational warfare unit in the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation was announced. Only 4 years later, on February 22, 2017, at a special meeting in the State Duma, the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation S. Shoigu recognized the creation of information operations forces. The Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in 2004-2008 Army General Yuriy Baluyevsky, commenting on the statement of S. Shoigu, said that victory in the information warfare was often more important than in the classical war: *"Victory over the enemy in this war can be much more important than victory in the classical military confrontation, since it is bloodless, and the effect is spectacular – it depletes and paralyzes all the authorities of the enemy state."* [3] Despite the activity of the Russian Ministry of Defence in the cyber sphere, the FSB, FSO and FSTEC have similar opportunities.

The confession of S. Shoigu in 2017 is a confirmation that Russia was purposefully preparing for aggressive actions not only in traditional warfare, in the information propagandistic dimension, but also in cyberspace. This coincides with the beginning of the hybrid-type aggression against Ukraine, and now it can be stated that with the cyber-penetration in the US, the EU and NATO countries, which began to acquire revealed forms during the presidential election campaign in 2016 in the United States. The main cyber forces of Russia are concentrated on the United States. The Black Sea region and Europe as a whole are not neglected, but here the main front is the informational and propagandistic. However, as election campaigns are held in a number of Western European countries in 2017-2019, the Russian cyber offense to Europe is intensifying.

As for the Ukrainian cyber battlefield of the Russian hybrid aggression, in 2014 the Cyber Berkut group (ART 28) assumed responsibility for attacks on sites of state bodies and civil society organizations of Ukraine and a number of western countries. The first attacks were carried out in March 2014 during the occupation of Crimea when a number of Ukrainian web resources were temporarily blocked and an attack on the three Internet resources of NATO was announced. Significant actions of Cyber Berkut in the informational and cyber space are: creating obstacles in the work of the CEC of Ukraine on the eve of the presidential elections of Ukraine on May 23, 2014; blocking the work of the sites of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and the General Prosecutor Office of Ukraine dated April 4, 2014; DDoS attacks on the website of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on April 10 and April 14, 2014; blocking of cellular telephones belonging to members of the Government of Ukraine; blocking of leading news portals of UNIAN and LIGABusinessInform; blocking the site of the President of Ukraine P. Poroshenko on July 29, 2014. Thus, these actions are synchronized in time with the diffuse phase of the Russian invasion into Ukraine in Donbas. Thus, the cyber front against Ukraine was opened simultaneously with the military component of the hybrid aggression of Russia.

In February 2015, with the support of Russian law enforcement agencies, an identical hacking organization called SPRUT (the so-called "System of counteraction to Ukrainian terrorism") was created. This organization attacks official sites of the governing bodies of regional administrations, the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine.

At the end of 2015, in order to increase the effectiveness of the information war against Ukraine, the executive management of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation created a Centre for Information Warfare (CIW) in Novocherkassk as part of the Centre for Terri-

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torial Forces of the Southern Military District of the Russian Federation. A powerful software and hardware complex were delivered to Donetsk to distribute cyber-attacks (DDoS-attacks).

On December 29, 2016, for the first time officially and publicly, in a Joint Statement of the US Department of Homeland Security, the Office of National Intelligence and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Russia was accused of hacking attacks on the United States. [4] The activity of the Russian Federation are reflected in the Joint Analysis Report of the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI. It is noted that within ten years, Russian intelligence services have conducted cyber-operations targeting the US government organizations, critical infrastructure, think tanks, universities, political organizations, and corporations.

Thus, it took almost a decade for the United States and Europe to come to an official conclusion about Russia's unfriendly actions in the cyberspace against the West. Such lethargy and slowness only play on the Russian script of cybernetic *Pearl Harbour*. Russia is working to create a state of disinformation, chaos, and disorganization of the public administration system in D-Day, ideally to manage strategic nuclear forces in the United States, and to get a window of opportunity for nuclear blackmailing the West.

In 2013-2017, cyber assaults against Ukraine were carried out with the use of ART attacks (Snake, Uroboros, Sofacy / APT28, Epic Turla, Black Energy 2 and 3, Armageddon and others), which are typical for Ukraine. [5] In June 2017, Ukraine suffered a major attack by PetyaA computer virus. The virus-encryptor has penetrated a number of networks of Ukrainian public and private institutions, in particular, the site of the Cabinet of Ministers and a number of ministries, the Pension Fund, Kyiv municipality, a number of banks, large public and private enterprises. [6] Cyber Police of Ukraine managed to stop the next wave of cyber-attacks and establish that it was preceded by a collection of data on Ukrainian enterprises. According to experts, this information was the true purpose of this cyberattack for further cyber intelligence and subversive actions. [7] Due to pre-

ventive measures, in October 2017 Ukrainian law enforcement officers managed to avoid losses and mass spread of cyber-attacks to certain objects, in particular, Odesa airport, Kyiv subway, Ministry of Infrastructure. [8]

Another threat in the context of Russian aggression is the work of hired Chinese cyber groups in favour of Russia. Some Ukrainian experts concluded that Russian cyber groups are carrying out their operations using the technical capabilities of Chinese hacker organizations. [9] This became possible after the international legal validation of the joint Russian-Chinese activity in cyber space. An agreement on cooperation in the field of international information security was signed between Russia and the PRC at the intergovernmental level in 2015. The agreement is a legal framework for cooperation between Russian and Chinese cyber groups, which are supported at the state level in both countries and are the units of the respective intelligence organizations of both countries. Thus, by attracting Chinese outsourcing, the Russian Federation is capable of concentrating powerful cyber resources for cyber warfare.

The saturation of markets of the Black Sea countries with Chinese mobile communication equipment with the corresponding software also arouses concern. Against the backdrop of resonant investigations in Europe and the United States regarding the hidden possibilities of Chinese products for information gathering, it is important for the Black Sea countries to prevent the possible negative consequences of their massive use and prevent the emergence of such equipment and software in the system of state governance and military command.

An analysis of Russian sources indicates that, at the conceptual level, cyber weapons are determined more broadly than commonly accepted in the West. That is, it is not just a certain software product for interference with the work of computers and networks, but a complex of remote hidden effects on the machine or human-machine system, which leads to loss of its functionality or hidden reprogramming of its functions, which does not allow to fulfil the target task. [10] Examples could be: the failure of an on-board computer control

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system for the fire of a warship, the miss off the target of a missile, or its sudden self-destruction on an approach to the target, the spoofing of the GPS system, which leads to critical deviations in determining the coordinates of targets for fire, etc. A qualitatively different effect can be given by the complex application of electronic intelligence, electronic warfare and cyber weapons.

In Russia, prototypes of cyber weapons have been developed to neutralize the critical infrastructure of an enemy in order to increase the effectiveness of the subsequent first strike or to maximize the weakening of its ability to withstand. It is also specific that the action of this type of cyber weapon equates to a disarming nuclear strike. Moreover, such a cyber weapon cannot have any deterrent potential.

In his speech at the annual meeting of the Academy of Military Sciences on March 2, 2019, Valeriy Gerasimov, the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, pointed to a significant increase of the importance of the information sphere in the modern warfare: *"At the same time, information technologies constitute, in fact, one of the most promising weapons. The information sphere, without clearly defined national boundaries, provides the possibility of remote, covert influence on critical information infrastructure, as well as on the population of a country, directly affecting the condition of national security of the state. That is why the elaboration of the issues of preparation and conducting of information actions is an important task of military science. Digital technology, robots, unmanned systems, electronic warfare - all this should be on the agenda for the development of military science, including military strategy"*. [11] As we see, the emphasis is on the complex application of the latest means of conducting a modern war of hybrid type, but with a focus on critical information infrastructure. It is obvious that, according to the plan of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, this should lead to a dysfunction or at least a paralysis of the system of state and military control over an enemy, with its subsequent chaotization.

Black Sea countries are forced to constantly expand their directions and means to counter cyber threats, and they can and have to cooperate under the auspices of NATO and the EU, working more

closely with the industry and the private sector. For this, in particular, the NATO Industry Cyber Partnership program was developed and implemented. At the same time, NATO is developing close cooperation with the EU and partner countries, including Ukraine and Georgia, helping them achieve their two goals - protecting their own networks and strengthening their capabilities to counter cyber threats.

In an interview to the BBC in June 2018, Former director of the US National Security Agency and 1st Commander of USCYBERCOM Keith Alexander stated: *"Obviously, after some time Ukraine, its energy and financial systems, and government structures are undergoing cyberattacks. Russia will try to represent Ukraine as a territory where the state exists only on paper and cannot function."* [12] After strong cyber-attacks in Ukraine in 2015, 2016 and 2017, 2018 was the year of relative calm on the cyber frontline. This is probably due to the fact that Russian cyber structures, having "reconnaissance by an attack" to the Ukrainian information and communication networks, are preparing for a cyber-strike, which can be synchronized with the escalation of the Russian military actions against Ukraine, when the Putin regime decides that the West has been finally overloaded with its own problems and it has more important things than Ukraine to think about. The calm is also explained by the period of two electoral campaigns in Ukraine, when Russian propaganda and cyber efforts focus on producing chaotic situation in the country through provoking and fuelling conflicts between rival political forces on the principle of "war of all against all".

It is important for the Black Sea countries to continue interacting in the cyber field, especially with the use of the EU and NATO mechanisms and programs of their cooperation with the partners. Taken into account the importance of the Black Sea region for Russia, cyber threats to the Black Sea countries will continue to be of particular relevance and require their enhanced interaction in this field.

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Energy Sector in the Occupied Crimea and its Impact on the Black Sea Region⁶

In March 2014, Russia occupied and annexed the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (the ARC) and Sevastopol. The aggressor seized energy infrastructure facilities not only on the Crimean Peninsula, but also offshore gas field facilities in the exclusive maritime zone of Ukraine. This produces new challenges and threats to security in the Black Sea region.

The occupation and annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea by Russia is an unprecedented violation of the international law. Adoption of international sanctions and the refusal of Ukraine to supply energy and water to the occupied territory, in accordance with the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in time of War of 1949, urged the occupation authorities to implement urgent measures to provide the peninsula with gas and, in particular, electricity. Crimea is becoming one of the most subsidized and energy-deficit regions, despite the presence of significant reserves of hydrocarbons around the peninsula and favourable weather conditions for the development of distributed generation based on wind and solar power stations.

The Russian Federation was forced to spend huge funds from the budget on the development of power grids and generation facilities both on the peninsula and in the Southern zone of the Russian UES to provide power to Crimea, as well as to build a cable transition bridge through the Kerch Strait. The Russian Federal Target Program "So-

cio-Economic Development of the RC and the city of Sevastopol by 2020" also envisages budgetary funds for the development of the gas sector, in particular the modernization of the gas pipelines and the Glibovske UGS, as well as the construction of the main gas pipeline (135 km) from Krasnodar region, which has already been done. [1]

It is worth noting that Russia has seized not only the objects of energy infrastructure on the peninsula. Technical facilities and platforms in the gas fields of the exclusive maritime economic zone of Ukraine got under the control of Russian troops.

Crimea's problem of electricity supplies

After Ukraine, pressed by the social pressure, stopped supplying electricity to the occupied peninsula in October 2015, Russia tried to get out of the catastrophic situation by using mobile gas turbine power stations (MGTPS). For those purposes, the capacities of the special enterprise JSC "Mobilni GTES", which were established in 2006 for maintaining the reliable functioning of the power system of the Moscow region during peak loadings, were used. In the spring of 2014 in Crimea, 13 mobile power plants (9 - from the Olympic Sochi, 4 - from Moscow) were installed. In 2017, the number of mobile GTPP in Crimea increased to 18 installations with the total capacity of 405 MW. [2] They were located near the substations of PS 330/220/110kV of "Simferopilska" (Denysivka village), "Sevastopolska" (Shturmove village), "Zahidno Krymska" (Karierne village of Saky region). The mobile blocks of the production of the American company PW Power System, which were bought before the occupation of Crimea, were used (Picture 1, 2). [3]

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Picture 1, 2. Mobile GTPP Gas Turbine MOBILEPAC Package, produced of the American PW Power Systems LLC.

Note: Mobile complex of MOBILEPAC includes two trailers. The first one contains a gas turbine, an electric generator, an exhaust manifold, a diffuser, and an engine oil system. The second trailer has a distribution system, control devices, safety relays, batteries and a charger. After delivery of the equipment, energy production can be started within no more than nine days.

In order to compensate the deficit of electricity in the occupied Crimea, 4 power cables with a total capacity of 800 MW from the Taman Peninsula of the Russian Federation to the peninsula were laid with the help of the Chinese company. However, that did not allow to significantly improve the situation with energy supply because of the low transmission capacity of the transmission lines connecting the Kerch Peninsula with the central part of Crimea.

Only in March 2019, new power units at the Balaklava TPP and the Tavriyska TPP, with a capacity

of 470 MW each, were put into operation. There are installed two turbines of 235 MW each on every of both plants. Prior to this, a special operation was carried out with the purchase of turbines from the German concern Siemens through a joint Russian-German company, followed by their hidden relocation to Crimea. At the same time, the highest authorities of the Russian Federation assured the German government that the turbines of Siemens production would not be transported to Crimea. After that, the Siemens company applied to the court in Moscow, and consequently the result was predictable. The situation occurred to be that the leading German company assisted the occupation authorities of the Russian Federation. Which is a violator of international law.

In December 2018, the detailed Scheme and Program of development of electric power industry of the "Republic of Crimea" for 2019-2023 were approved. [4] They marked again restrictions on the technological connection of consumers to the electricity grid, limited capacities of the 110 kV

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electricity grids to ensure the transfer of power in the required volumes, and the impossibility of providing acceptable levels of voltage. In order to cover the projected capacities, taking into account the energy bridge Kuban - Crimea, it is proposed to increase the local generation by another 350 MW by 2022. Consequently, certain electricity problems will continue to be sustained.

Stolen gas on the shelf

In the occupied Crimea, there remain core assets of the Ukrainian State-owned Chornomornaftogaz Company, local gas transmission infrastructure of Ukrtransgaz Company and Hlibovske underground gas storage facility, assets of the State Enterprise “Feodosiia Petroleum Products Supply Company”. [5] The gas transport system of Crimea consists of 1,800 km of gas pipelines, including 950 km of magistral pipelines and 410 km of under-water pipelines. The main pipelines are Black Sea shelf – Hlibovske UGS – Simferopol – Sevastopol; Perekop – Dzhankoi – Simferopol – Sevastopol (Yalta, Alushta); Dzhankoi – Feodosia – Kerch; Perekop - Hlibovske UGS. In December 2016, a new gas pipeline (250 km) with interconnectors to Simferopol TPP and Sevastopol TPP was put into operation.

The State-owned Chornomornaftogaz JSC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Naftogaz of Ukraine NJSC, and until March 2014, it was involved in production of gas, oil and gas condensate from on-shore hydrocarbons fields in the ARC and offshore fields in the exclusive maritime economic zone of the Black Sea and the adjacent areas of the Azov Sea. On the company's books there were 17 fields, including 11 gas fields, 4 gas condensate fields and 2 oil fields, with total reserves of 58.56 billion cubic meters of natural gas, 1231 thousand tons of gas condensate and 2530 thousand tons of oil. [6]

After the occupation of the ARC, the Russian forces illegally seized not only facilities of Chornomornaftogaz on the territory of the peninsula, in particular technical fleet vessels in Chornomorske, but also production platforms jack-up drilling rigs on the Black Sea shelf in the exclusive maritime economic zone of Ukraine (Picture 3).



*Picture 3. Seized by Russia JUDR “Ukraine”
(re-named to “Crimea-1”)
(Picture of Chornomornaftogaz)*

The company Chornomornaftogaz underwent re-registration on the territory of mainland Ukraine in order to be able to continue operation and to claim back its assets **through international lawsuits**. In May 2017, the special Law “On introduction of changes into legislative acts of Ukraine in regard to stabilization of the state-owned Chornomornaftogaz JSC in connection with temporary occupation of the territory of Ukraine” was passed in order to ensure the company's operation and to guard it against bankruptcy. Prymorskyi District Court of Odesa City ruled to put a lien on 27 vessels, 4 jack-up drilling rigs and 33 non-residential premises of Chornomornaftogaz [7], which were illegally seized on the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea.

In September 2017, representatives of the law-enforcement bodies of Ukraine and Chornomornaftogaz JSC sailed on a Ukrainian Coast Guard motorboat to the area where Odeske, Golitsynske, Shtormove and Arkhangelske offshore gas fields were located. They conducted visual inspection of 4 jack-up drilling rigs “Petro Hodovanets”, “Ukraine” (“Independence”), “Sivash”, “Tavrida”, 6 stationary offshore platforms “Shtormova-17”, “MSP-2”, “MSP-4”, “MSP-5”, “MSP-7”, “MSP-18”, 5 well-head platforms No. 1, 10, 11, 13, 23 and tugboat “Centaur”. All assets and facilities were controlled by armed persons; on some of the facilities the flag of the Russian Federation was hoisted (Picture 4).

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Picture 4. Soldiers of the Russian special operations forces guard the seized sea platform (Picture of Chornomornaftogaz)

In November 2018, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine passed the Law of Ukraine No 8338 “On introduction of changes into legislative acts of Ukraine in regard to resumption of operation of the state-owned Chornomornaftogaz JSC” [8]. It regulates the procedure aimed at resumption of the company’s activities, opening and servicing of bank accounts, repayment of debts and establishing business relations with service providers.

After imposition of sanctions against the Russian Federation for annexation of the ARC, Russia’s Gazprom refused to officially incorporate State Unitary Enterprise of the Republic of Crimea “Chernomorneftegaz” into its asset composition; this prevented large-scale development of hydrocarbon reserves in the deposits seized by the occupants. [9]

The State Enterprise “Feodosiia Petroleum Products Supply Company” owned a submerged technical complex, a land plot close to Feodosiia Bay, oil reservoirs and oil transfer units. The company’s assets were seized by the occupation authorities by means of the so-called “nationalization” in March 2014; the enterprise was re-registered on the territory of mainland Ukraine as a State oil products supply company under control of the Ministry of Energy and Coal Industry of Ukraine. [10]

In February 2019, it became known that the interests of the State Enterprise “NEC “Ukrenergo” in

a lawsuit against Russia regarding the assets lost by the company as a result of the occupation and annexation of the ARC (commenced in 2016) [11] will be represented by the Swiss law firm Lalive, which has a successful experience in supporting lawsuits of the Ukrainian companies against Russia because of the expropriation of assets. Thus, in October 2018, the Swiss Supreme Court took decision in favor of Ukrnafta (represented by Lalive) on compensation of 50 million USD for 16 gas stations of the company.

In September 2016, Ukraine initiated an arbitration proceeding against the Russian Federation to protect its rights as a coastal state in the waters adjacent to Crimea in the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. The process of presenting explanations and memorandums is underway. Russia will have the opportunity to submit their repeated objections by September 19, 2019.

International sanctions have become an obstacle to the direct transfer of seized assets of the energy companies to the subordination of the Russian companies, including Gazprom. At the same time, Russia fulfilled its strategic goal – it blocked research and development of hydrocarbons by international energy companies in the Black Sea shelf of Ukraine.

The rupture of energy connections of Ukraine with the occupied peninsula has greatly increased the cost of occupation for the Kremlin. Russia uses the energy of the occupied Crimea as a basis, on which its dependence on Russian infrastructure and resources increases. At the same time, delivery by Russia of foreign energy equipment, which is subject to international sanctions (for example, the Siemens case), is used by the Kremlin to try to solve the energy problems of the occupied Crimea and to test the international sanction regime for firmness, as it challenges its monitoring system.

The objects of energy infrastructure, as well as transport one (Kerch Bridge), are presented by Russia as strategic objects, which require comprehensive protection, that serves as justification for the Kremlin for further militarization of the occupied Crimea and strengthening the control over the Black Sea. Thus, the aggressor uses the development of the energy complex of the occupied peninsula to exacerbate the negative impact that affects the security of the Black Sea region.

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Chornomornaftogaz: 5 Years of Struggle for Lost Assets

In 2014, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea was occupied and annexed by Russia. Along with the territory, the northern neighbor took Ukrainian enterprises, among them the only Ukrainian oil and gas company that produced natural gas in the Black Sea shelf area – Chornomornaftogaz. Today the occupant country uses modern equipment and production infrastructure of the Ukrainian enterprise for illegal production of hydrocarbons. Chornomornaftogaz is fighting a battle against the occupant increasing pressure on several fronts simultaneously.

History of the crime

Russian occupant authorities grabbed Crimea in the spring of 2014 having definite plans and appropriate legislative support. On February 27, 2014 the Supreme Council of Crimea adopted a resolution concerning holding a referendum on the status of Crimea. On March 11, 2014, the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea passed the Declaration of Independence of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which declared Crimea, including the city of Sevastopol, an independent state – the so called “Republic of Crimea”. On March 16, 2014, a referendum on joining the Russian Federation as a constituent region was held on the territory of the peninsula (the referendum was never recognized by the world community). Just next day, on March 17, 2014, illegitimate Supreme Council of the “Republic of Crimea” passed illegal resolution “On independence of Crimea” which terminated application of the Ukrainian legislation on the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea occupied by Russia and decrees of Verkhovna Rada (the Supreme Council of Ukraine) and other State bodies of Ukraine that were passed after February 21, 2014. On March 18, 2014, the Russian Fed-

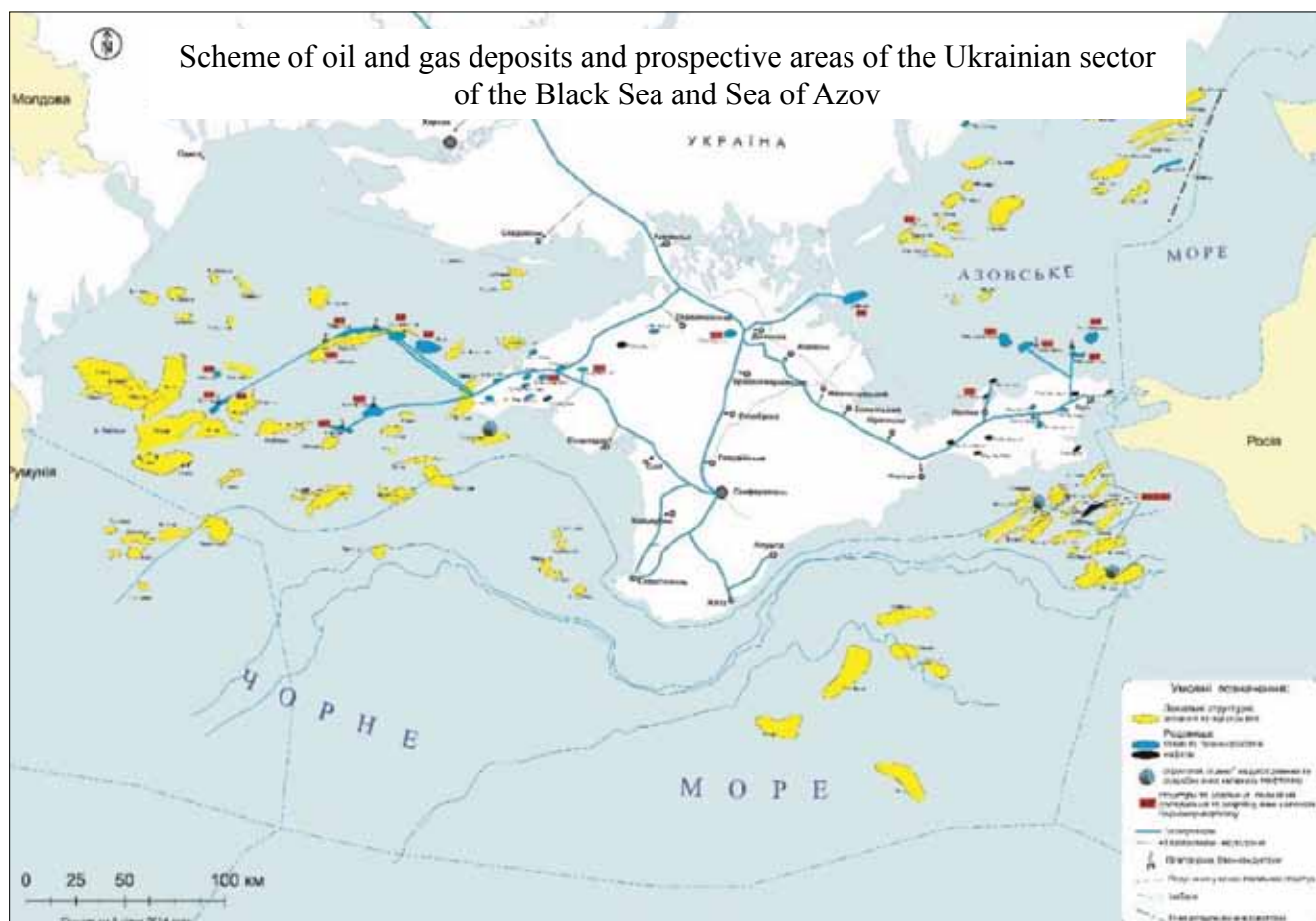
eration and the “Republic of Crimea” signed the agreement on Crimea joining the Russian Federation and creation of new constituent regions of Russia; it is known as the Agreement on annexation of Crimea.

The Occupant authorities of the peninsula understood the importance of supplying energy to the Crimea, including natural gas. Therefore, on March 17, 2014, by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Crimea and the order of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Crimea, Chornomornaftogaz’s movable and immovable assets were transferred to the newly established “Crimean republican enterprise “Chornomornaftogaz””. Thus, the created clone received the property that is on balance and off-balance sheets of the Ukrainian company. Besides, the occupant management received accounting, statistical and other documentation of the Ukrainian enterprise.

What happened to the seized assets?

In August of the same year the Ukrainian Chornomornaftogaz was re-registered on the territory of the mainland Ukraine. In the occupied Crimea, there remained drilling rigs, gas transportation network, floating facilities and automotive equipment. Now of the seizure the company owned 31 floating facilities, including two state-of-the-art drilling rigs purchased in 2010-2012 for development of deposits in the shelf area of the Black Sea. It is difficult to assess the state in which Chornomornaftogaz’s assets are now because of lack of physical access. However, it is known that these assets are being exploited, the fake enterprise produces Ukrainian at the sites the permits for which gas were granted to the Ukrainian Chornomornaftogaz.».

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As of today, Russia illegally extracted about 9.3 billion cubic meters of natural gas and 280 thousand tons of liquid hydrocarbons, which accounts for approximately 16% of explored reserves of industrial hydrocarbons. The fake enterprise extracts hydrocarbons from oil and gas from the oil and gas fields explored and developed by Chornomornaftogaz. Many of them are located in the Black Sea shelf area (Odesa, Arkhangelskoye, Shtormovoye and Golitsynskoye fields) and in the Sea of Azov (East Kazantip and North Bulganak deposits), as well as on land in Crimea (Semenivske oil field, Zadornenskoye and Dzhankoyskoye natural gas deposits). Drilling of the new well is performed at the already existing objects of subsoil use is being carried out. Thus, 9 wells have been drilled in the Odesa gas field. The above-mentioned enterprise conducts no exploration or survey works in the new fields.

Battles in courts

Obviously, seizure of the company's assets is illegal. That is why Chornomornaftogaz began its battle against Russia in the international courts. The

results are rather satisfactory. Currently two cases are being considered by in the international courts. The investment arbitration claim lodged by Naftogaz Group against the Russian Federation in accordance with the Agreement concluded between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Russian Federation on promotion and mutual protection of investments. The RF has no intentions to participate in the proceedings. On February 22, 2019, the arbitration tribunal ruled on jurisdiction and liability issues. On the issue of jurisdiction, the arbitration tribunal ruled in favor of Naftogaz based on the terms of the Ukrainian-Russian investment agreement and decided that Russia had to fulfill its obligations before the Ukrainian investors in Crimea. On the issue of liability, the tribunal concluded that the Russian Federation illegally expropriated the assets of Naftogaz in Crimea and failed to deliver on its commitment to ensure full and unconditional legal protection of investments. This year, on March 1 we received an unsurprising response from the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation to the effect that the Russian Federation did not recognize the decision of the Arbitration Court in The Hague concerning

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the loss of assets by the National Joint Stock Company "Naftogaz of Ukraine" caused by annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia. Now the proceedings continue and they focus on the issue of compensation for lost assets. The arbiters are calculating the losses of the company. The decision about the amount of losses incurred is expected in the first quarter of 2020.

The second arbitration was initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea adopted in 1982. Resorting to arbitration, Ukraine tries to stop violation of provisions of the above-mentioned Convention by Russia, as well as to protect its rights in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, the Kerch Strait, including Ukraine's rights for natural resources in the continental shelf of the Crimean Peninsula. Chornomornaftogaz provided all the necessary evidence. Its claims are based upon the facts of violations of the rules of gas production in the shelf area of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, inobservance of special permits granted to the Ukrainian Chornomornaftogaz company and illegal seizure and use of property and infrastructure of the enterprise. The RF takes part in these proceedings: it filed preliminary objections. An introductory statement of the Russian Federation will be considered on June 10, 2019, and the one prepared by Ukraine on June 11, 2019.

Of course, the question remains whether Russia will be prepared to comply with the international courts' decisions in favor of Ukraine in the future. I don't think the RF will do it voluntarily. However, there exist international mechanisms for the enforcement of arbitration awards. The Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards, also known as the "New York Arbitration Convention" has been demonstrating its efficiency for decades. Russia risks that its assets around the world are forfeited.

In the context of international arbitration, it should be mentioned that in the autumn of 2014 the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine opened an investigation into illegal seizure of Chornomornaftogaz's property. The PGO has entered information on unlawful seizure of the property of Chornomornaftogaz and illegal production of natural gas by officials of the Crimean Republican Enterprise "Chornomornaftogaz" into the Unified Register of

Pre-trial Investigations. The PGO also informed the enterprise that the pre-trial investigation has been initiated. The case did not reach the court. Nevertheless, maybe these investigations will be of help when the cases are considered in the international courts.

Sanctions

Since 2014, besides the battles waged in the international courts, the Ukrainian Chornomornaftogaz persistently works to ensure that the fake Chornomornaftogaz company, its top managers, Russian organizations and enterprises that were involved in construction of Krasnodar Krai – Crimea gas trunk line that was not approved by Ukraine appear on the sanctions list.

Initially, with the help of the law enforcement agencies and journalists, the facts and information concerning the above-mentioned individuals and legal entities and their involvement in Russia's illegal actions in the occupied territory have been thoroughly checked. Then there were numerous appeals to the Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, the Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, the Chairman of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Executive Office of the President of Ukraine, and certain people's deputies of Ukraine to impose sanctions on individuals and legal entities in accordance with the Law of Ukraine "On Sanctions".

This activity has yielded some results. In 2014, the so-called State Unitary Enterprise of the Republic of Crimea "Chornomornaftogaz" in 2014 was added to the sanction lists of the EU countries, the United States of America, Canada, Norway, Switzerland, Australia, Japan and Liechtenstein. The fake company appeared on the domestic sanction list only in June 2018. 8 persons directed activities of the seized Chornomornaftogaz during the occupation (including 5 citizens of the RF who worked the oil and gas industry of that country). Only one of them – I. O. Shabanov - was put on the sanctions lists in June 2018.

Besides, the Federal Autonomous Institution "Russian Maritime Register of Shipping" has

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been added to the domestic sanctions lists. In December 2014, the Russian Federation registered seized vessels and floating facilities in the National Shipping Register of the Russian Federation. Later, wishing to avoid sanctions, the vessels were removed from the maritime shipping register and re-registered in the Russian river register. However, there are legal documents proving that all vessels are registered in the Ukrainian Shipping Register, with Odessa specified as their registry port.

While monitoring situation in the Black Sea shelf area together with the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, it was established that the occupant authorities use drilling rigs and vessels of the Ukrainian Chornomornaftogaz. Moreover, they illegally changed the names of the assets. Thus, jack-up drilling rig "Petro Hodovanets" was renamed to "Krym-2", and jack-up drilling rig "Ukraine" was renamed to "Krym-1". Now these drilling rigs fly Russian flags, and the watch is kept by the Russian military.

Chornomornaftogaz used all available means to reclaim as many assets as possible. The company appealed to the International Police Cooperation Division of the National Police of Ukraine to issue an international arrest warrant for floating facilities owned by Chornomornaftogaz. As a result, in May 2018 the above-mentioned Division sent inquiries to Interpol offices in Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, Greece, the Republic of Cyprus, the United Kingdom, Syria, Israel, OAU in order to get law enforcement and customs authorities of these countries involved in the search for stolen floating craft. The inquiries specify that in case the location of the floating facilities is identified they are to be seized and transferred to their lawful owner.

On the initiative of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry, information about ownership rights of Chornomornaftogaz's floating jack-up drilling rigs and 18 auxiliary vessels was provided to the IHS Maritime Company which assigns unique IMO ship identification numbers. These assets belong to Ukraine.

Domestic front

Besides the battles waged in the international arbitration courts and the sanctions campaign,

Chornomornaftogaz has to deal with some issues in the Ukrainian courts, in particular the issue of accounts payable. Judicial institutions continue to consider the claims brought against the company; collectively, today these claims amount to approximately 550 million UAH. In most cases the court decisions were not in favor of Chornomornaftogaz. The main creditors of the company whose claims were sustained by the courts are PJSC "All-Ukrainian Development Bank", PJSC "State Export-Import Bank", Naftoservis Ltd., Ukratomenergo Ltd., Stand-Komplekt LLC. It is important that these accounts payable were formed before the temporary occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Most credit contracts included a definition of force majeure circumstances, which might occur (military actions, social unrest, acts of God, etc.). Chornomornaftogaz provided documents of the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which certified existence of force majeure circumstances to the court institutions. Despite this, for the most part the decisions of the courts were in favor of creditors.

The management of lenders should have considered the situation calmly and logically: there is a debtor - the Ukrainian Chornomornaftogaz, which lost almost all its assets as a result of occupation, and which by March 2017 had no production (during this period the Strilkove gas field in the Sea of Azov has re-appeared on the scene). Only 25 employees worked for the company in March 2017. It is obvious that the chance of getting funds in places where there are none is zero. At the same time, it is very easy to ruin a company which needs to be kept alive to lodge claims against the RF by means of court enforcement actions, seizure of the company's accounts, etc. Then any compensation for the losses will be out of question. In 2016, one of the creditors has even initiated bankruptcy procedures against Chornomornaftogaz. Fortunately, this attack was stopped at the very last moment in the court.

It should be noted that the company that initiated bankruptcy procedures against Chornomornaftogaz was the Ukrainian-Russian Joint Venture Stan-Komplekt LLC. 60% of its registered capital belong to Oleh Kravchenko, former member of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Re-

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public of Crimea, member of Soyuz Party. He was one of those Crimean parliamentarians who voted for Crimea to join the Russian Federation. Now of writing all documents which pertain to Chornomornaftogaz's accounts payable to the above-mentioned enterprise are being thoroughly checked. A case concerning one of the services contracts being invalid has been brought to the economic court for consideration. By the way, now the judge who opened the bankruptcy proceedings faces charges of perverting the course of justice.

It would take a long time to recount detective stories involving creditors who tried to ruin Chornomornaftogaz, but today it can be stated that the company operates and is able to continue filing suits against the Russian Federation with international courts, as well as to unblock its economic activity due to two legislative acts of Ukraine adopted in 2018.

Today Chornomornaftogaz gradually recovers from its trials and tribulations. The number of employees of the company has doubled as compared with August 2014. The current activities of the company are funded using the proceeds from sales of natural gas to residents of the city of Henichesk and the Henichesk district. Of course, the volumes are rather small, but it is planned to produce ca 9 million cubic meters of gas at the Strilkove gas field (Arabatskaya Sanspit, Kherson Region) in 2019. Before that time, it is not possible for the company to do more without boosting up its gas production. However, we are working very hard to recover what we have lost and to expand the company's operations!

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Turkmen Gas Transit Gives Ukraine New Opportunities for Energy Security

This article discusses opportunities related to the White Stream pipeline project to transport gas from Turkmenistan to main markets in Central and Western Europe. This would maximize the use of existing infrastructure including Ukraine's, in the light of bypassing gas project, initiated by Russia.

Attention to Ukraine's energy security has lately focused on fighting against Nord Stream 2 or its potential consequences for Ukraine; however, there are other prospects for enhancing Ukraine's energy security that deserve more attention than they have gotten. The White Stream pipeline project would maximize the use of existing infrastructure including Ukraine's, so that gas from Turkmenistan will reach main markets in Central and Western Europe. The Ukrainian gas transmission system (GTS) can serve perfectly to minimize costs after such gas lands in Romania, from where it can be directed to Ukraine through reverse flow of the Trans-Balkan Pipeline (TBP). Implementation of the White Stream project is closely integrated with the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline (TCGP, also called TCP) project as an important component of the expanded Southern Gas Corridor (SGC).

1. HISTORY OF THE TRANS-CASPIAN GAS PIPELINE AND WHITE STREAM PROJECTS

The first attempt to develop the TCGP foundered in the late 1990s when Russia's Blue Stream project under the Black Sea crowded it out. Although significant corruption between the Russian and Turkish energy ministries was widely reported at the time, U.S. negotiators are still partly the blame. First, they did not believe Russian president Boris Yeltsin would do anything without his American counterpart Bill Clinton knowing. Second, they did not believe technology existed to lay the infrastructure on the Black Sea's deep sea-bed. In the mid-1980s, however, Italians had laid the

TransMed pipeline from Tunisia to Sicily in waters several hundred meters deep. Russia contracted with them to develop the technology required for laying the Blue Stream pipeline in depths over 2000 meters.

The Italians delivered. Yet American negotiators did not exert any pressure for the TCGP, even after Turkey refused a take-or-pay agreement with Turkmenistan for 30 billion cubic meters per year (bcm/y). The U.S. was focused instead on the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil export pipeline—significant at the time for circumventing OPEC and Russia—and did not want to alienate Turkey, whose cooperation was essential for implementing the BTC.

After natural gas was discovered in Azerbaijan's offshore Shah Deniz deposit instead of the expected crude oil, Azerbaijan could export its own gas to Turkey without needing Turkmenistan's gas to make a pipeline project commercially viable. Difficulties in their bilateral talks had already arisen from Turkmenistani president Saparmurat Niyazov's insistence on leading his side's initiatives, while lacking either industrial expertise or negotiating experience.

The first incarnation of the White Stream project, the Georgia-Ukraine-EU (GUEU) pipeline, was intended to complement the planned 30 bcm/y Nabucco pipeline. The latter project needed 10 bcm/y of Turkmen gas via the planned TCGP to be economically justified. Gas from both Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan would have transited Azerbaijan and Georgia via the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP) to Vale, near the Georgian-Turkish border, splitting there into two branches to reach Europe via two independent routes: the so-called "two entry-point system" for Caspian gas.

The GUEU pipeline would have continued to Georgia's coast and then 650 kilometers (km) under the Black Sea to Feodosiya, in the eastern

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part of Crimea (See Figure 1). There it would have re-surfaced and run through the existing, expandable pipeline for another 200 km before joining Ukraine's main GTS, via which it would have reached further markets onward (Slovakia, Poland, and beyond). GUEU would have carried 8 bcm/y of Turkmen natural gas in its first stage.

GUEU's plan in 2005 foresaw a second phase that would have added another 8 bcm/y, from either Azerbaijan's Shah Deniz or Kazakhstan by a trans-Caspian pipeline. GUEU's projected third phase would have doubled capacity again with another 16 bcm/y from Turkmenistan, for a total throughput of 32 bcm/y (Socor 2007).



Figure 1. Original Strategic GUEU map of 2007. (Source: [GUEU–]White Stream.)

After Romania joined the EU at the beginning of 2007, another version came under consideration, in which the pipeline would be laid 1,100 km directly across the Black Sea, from the Georgian coast near Supsa to the Romanian coast near Constanța. The capacity of a single string was limited to 8 bcm/y, because the technology of the time would have otherwise required a floating compressor station in open sea; subsequent technological advances have made it possible to double that volume in a single string. From Constanța, the gas would have followed the route of the planned Pan-European Oil Pipeline to Trieste.

The second attempt to develop the TCGP occurred in conjunction with the direct Georgia-Romania concept of the GUEU and came to be called White Stream. After comprehensive feasibility studies were concluded with co-financing from the European Commission (EC), the White Stream project was integrated into the EU's SGC program an-

nounced in 2009. Despite the real synergy between White Stream and Nabucco, some EU member-states preferred combining the latter with Gazprom's South Stream project instead.

When the TCGP project failed the second time, however, this was not, in contrast to the first time, merely or even principally due to Russian machinations. This second attempt failed for three main reasons. First was the poor institutional design of the Caspian Development Corporation (CDC), which the EU tried to set up as sole purchaser of Turkmenistan's gas, bundling European orders together. Second was the inability of Nabucco's promoters to persuade Turkmenistan to supply 10 bcm/y without any guarantee about Turkmen gas through White Stream, whereas Turkmenistan has always aimed at strategically significant sales in the range of 30 bcm/y or more. Third was the Shah Deniz consortium's final choice against Nabucco.

2. THE NEW TCGP PROJECT AND WHITE STREAM'S ROLE

Between 2012 and 2015 Turkmenistan constructed, at its own cost, its East-West Pipeline (EWP), running from gasfields in the country's southeast to the Caspian Sea coast. The EWP's capacity is 32 bcm/y, equivalent of to the projected capacity of the TCGP's two strings. Gas arriving at the coast is intended to enter the TCGP after the latter is in place, bifurcating in Georgia, where half will proceed through the SCP-TANAP-TAP system to southern Europe, while the other half transits to Georgia's coast for transmission under the Black Sea to Romania. (See Figure 2)

Thus it is planned to organize Turkmenistan's gas flow through the Caspian Sea in two stages. The first will follow the opening of the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) and Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP), taking the gas to Greece, Albania, Italy, and perhaps beyond. The second will be directed through the expanded Sangachal networks in Azerbaijan and the SCP, then through new infrastructure across the Black Sea, arriving in Romania, where it would strengthen the market. This gas will be further conducted into the Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary-Austria (BRUA) pipeline and into the TBP (by reverse flow) to Ukraine. Via Ukraine it would reach Baumgarten by the Bratisvo pipeline, the usual route through Ukraine and Slovakia.

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Figure 2. Current map of TCGP–White Stream pipeline project synergy. (Source: White Stream)

Such a two-stage approach will allow volumes of up to 32 bcm/y to cross the Caspian Sea. Of these 32 bcm/y, 15 bcm/y will arrive at Baumgarten (Austria). The first stage requires only the construction of the TCGP's first string, costing about EUR 800 million. The second stage will require a second string costing only about EUR 700 million. The process of executing the preliminary front-end engineering design (pre-FEED) studies is to start in May 2019. The EC has contributed 50 percent of their cost through a Connecting Europe Facility grant (European Commission 2019), and the Government of Georgia is covering the other half. Once data are available in a "convincing format", institutions such as the European Investment Bank are expected to step in.

The projected White Stream pipeline runs from the Georgian Black Sea coast to Constanța (Romania), costing approximately EUR 4 billion, with a capacity of 16 bcm/y. Investments would be needed to increase capacity at Azerbaijan's Sangachal terminal and through the SCP, as well as for connections with the TBP. Nevertheless, this total should not exceed EUR 1.3 billion. Totaling all costs, investments to transmit 32 bcm/y will be in the range of EUR 7 billion. Also they will encourage new investment in more expensive Azerbaijani gas while providing it a less expensive route to Central Europe.

3. HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED

3.1. TECHNICAL ASPECTS

The Caspian Convention sets out principles for sea-bed division and ownership of sub-sea resources. Its Protocols set out rules to implement

those principles. Sea-bed division was the greatest sticking-point. Iran had consistently refused to accept less than 20 percent of the Caspian sea-bed, although it was entitled to only 13–14 percent under any of three possible delimitation methods under international law. Moreover, the pairs of countries Azerbaijan/Russia, Azerbaijan/Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan/Russia, and Kazakhstan/Turkmenistan (as well as Azerbaijan/Kazakhstan/Russia trilaterally) have for many years agreed to use the "modified median line" method for delimiting their respective national sectors. The Caspian Convention makes clear that delimitations will be made "according to generally recognized principles of international law", representing a denial of Iran's greatest claims.

Under international law, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan never needed the Convention to have the right to lay the TCGP on the Caspian Sea floor. The Convention now enshrines that right. Specifically, its Article 14(3) affirms the rights of littoral states to lay pipelines on the sea-bed across their contiguous sectors, without reference to third-party approval. Also, Article 8(1) of the Convention affirms their right to delimit their contiguous sectors of the sea-bed, on a bilateral basis not requiring five-way approval, according to "generally recognized principles" of international law.

Article 14(2) states that pipeline projects will need to comply with international environmental arrangements; however, this does not mean that Russia or Iran could delay the TCGP. In fact, Article 14(2) refers to the 2018 Moscow Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Trans-

boundary Context to the Tehran Convention (full name, “Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea”). The Moscow Protocol (Articles 10 and 1(a)) to the Tehran Convention provides that the decision on implementing any project shall be taken by the “Party(ies) under whose jurisdiction the proposed activity ... is planned to be implemented.”

That is to say, this decision is also not subject to five-way approval. Therefore it is impossible for any littoral state to block any project with a simple veto, even in the theoretical case of multiple vetoes. Further, Article 15 of the Moscow Protocol to the Tehran Convention states that “[a]ny dispute between the Contracting Parties concerning the application or interpretation of the provisions of this Protocol shall be settled in accordance with Article 30 of the [Tehran] Convention”. The latter, in turn, states that “the Contracting Parties will settle [disputes] by consultations, negotiations or by any other peaceful means of their own choice”. There is no judicial proceeding or appeal possible.

A World Bank/EC-funded scoping study of TCGP’s ecological and environmental impact gave the pipeline a green-light several years ago. The 2011 Aktau Protocol (“Protocol Concerning Regional Preparedness, Response and Co-operation in Combating Oil Pollution Incidents”) to the Tehran Convention, which entered into force in July 2016—as the Caspian Convention itself was in the final stages of preparation—puts the pipeline also into conformance with the Tehran Convention’s own conditions. The best-practices-based authoritative study by the World Bank and the EC has already addressed every possible objection and consideration.

3.2. GEOPOLITICAL ASPECTS

The geopolitical situation around the Caspian Sea has changed significantly over the last two to four years. It is very different from the static situation of the first quarter-century of the post-Soviet period. However, in the last decade Chinese influence has significantly grown in Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, and Iran has made inroads in the region as well. The death of Uzbekistan’s President Islam Karimov in September 2016 has also made the geopolitical environment more fluid.

Consequently, Russia’s perspective and priorities have also changed. Blocking the TCGP has become less important than setting into order a general security regime for the Caspian Sea basin, counterbalancing those new influences in Central Asia and around the sea’s littoral. Russia became the diplomatic motor behind the drive to finalize the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea (“Caspian Convention”), signed in Aktau, Kazakhstan, in August 2018 after more than 20 years of absence of movement. The Convention provides the basis for such a security regime, for example by excluding military vessels of non-littoral states from the sea’s waters.

To counterbalance Iranian and especially Chinese influences, Russia is arguably preparing to welcome a European presence in Turkmenistan’s energy sector. At the same time, Moscow seems to be offering to act as a guarantor of Ashgabat’s geo-strategic security. This is a sensitive matter, due to Turkmenistan’s official policy doctrine of nonalignment. It would probably be very expensive for Russia to purchase Turkmenistan’s loyalty in any formal way.

Diplomatic momentum is gaining on all fronts in favor of the TCGP. Both Russian and American diplomats tacitly agree that this is a positive development. As George Kent, Deputy Assistant Secretary in the European and Eurasian Bureau at the U.S. Department of State, put it, “We have many opportunities to deepen our relations in the economic side, [including our long-term] focus ... on the strategic issues in the energy sector.” In Kent’s view, “The Southern Gas Corridor is a fantastic multi-country huge infrastructure development that brings not only Azerbaijani gas but potentially [gas] from Central Asia to the markets in Europe [and] that increases the energy security of the entire continent, not only Azerbaijan and Georgia.” The SGC is a particular example of projects that “help energy security in Europe and also help connect Central Asia with Azerbaijan” (Ibrahimzade 2019).

Adding to the momentum, Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has positively evaluated and fully supported Turkmenistan’s initiative for an all-Caspian economic co-operation summit, now scheduled for August 2019 in the port of Turkmenbashi. Turkmenistan’s President Berdimuhamedov

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had suggested such a meeting already at the August 2018 Aktau summit where the Caspian Convention was signed.

The TANAP and TAP pipelines have space for gas from Turkmenistan. That gas is ready for transmission from Turkmenistan's Caspian Sea coast, where the East-West Pipeline (EWP) will bring it from deposits from the southeast of the country. Turkmenistan constructed the EWP and capped it, awaiting the arrival of the TCGP, now a Project of Common Interest (PCI) identified by the EC, and for which its Connecting Europe Facility is providing grant funding to the promoter company W-Stream Caspian Pipeline Company OÜ [Ltd], with co-financing from the Georgian Oil and Gas Corporation, which is owned by the Government of Georgia, for the preliminary engineering and other studies for the pipeline.

4. CONCLUSION

On nearly the same day when Trump sent a Nowruz (New Year's) message to Berdimuhamedov saying he looked forward to the construction of the TCGP (Government of Turkmenistan 2019, the Democrat-controlled U.S. House of Representatives approved the "European Energy Security and Diversification Act of 2019" (U.S. Congress 2019) by the overwhelming bipartisan majority of 391-24. This bill would "prioritize and expedite the efforts of the Department of State and [its] agencies in supporting the efforts [for energy infrastructure projects] of the European Commission and European and Eurasian countries". After years of disinterest, the U.S. is back in the Eurasian energy game; moreover, it is working together with the EU.

The EU seeks diversification of energy supply sources. EU gas imports will continue to increase, it needs competitive-priced new sources, and it

needs them now. Turkmen gas is available now; moreover, it is the only source for EU gas imports that is not only competitive in price but also advantageous in terms of quantities available. What is lacking is the transportation of the gas to Europe; however, an effective road-map of sequential steps implementing such transit means has been designed. In addition, a financial model exists (Cutler 2019).

Yet Ukraine is no longer the only possible route. In particular, Italy is interested to import gas from new sources, including volumes from Turkmenistan, for transshipment to Germany and northern Europe. For this purpose, it is implementing new storage capacities and possibilities for south-to-north reverse flow. These developments would make gas supply to the north via Italy more economically advantageous. They would also not exclude gas from Turkish Stream and the EastMed Pipeline, as well as from TCGP.

It is difficult to underestimate the significance of the TCGP for the medium term and even for the long term. Like the BTC oil export and SCP gas export pipelines of 20 years ago, it is a demonstration project. The BTC, besides proving to be of great commercial benefit, established and strengthened the independence of its participating countries. More than that, it demonstrated and thus opened the possibility of implementing the fully-fledged SGC.

The TCGP is likewise a unique opportunity to ensure Europe's economic benefit and political influence in Eurasia. Its construction will indicate to international financial institutions and investors that other trans-Caspian energy projects for the exploration, development, and export of energy resources are possible. This is an opportunity in which Ukraine should be involved, and which it must not miss.

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Editorial note: The Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline (TCGP) project is of key importance for ensuring gas supply from Central Asia, first of all Turkmenistan, to the EU countries. The project's failure story covers over 20 years now. The main problems of the project are not limited only to Russia's covert opposition or a problem concerning the status of the Caspian Sea. One way or another, the route of Turkmen gas to Europe goes through Azerbaijan, which is keen to supply its own natural gas from the Caspian Sea shelf to the EU market. What are the prospects of implementation of the TCGP now? Our editorial staff put this question to Mr. Ilham Shaban, Director of the Caspian Barrel Center in Baku. Here is his comment on the subject.

Ilham SHABAN

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Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline: View From the Western Shores of the Caspian Sea⁷

Big politics. Lately the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline project began to receive more attention. In the last year the West's interest in the Central Asian issues has significantly increased, especially in view of balanced policy of Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the new leader of Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan invigorated its investment policy across the board, establishing business contacts with the members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the USA and the European countries. Experts of the international financial institutions began to draw attention to the competition in the field of foreign investments in power engineering, construction and financing in the Central Asia between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. It can also influence the situation in Turkmenistan – the most “closed” country in the region.

The Brussels factor. The EU has proposed Turkmenistan to join the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) project. At the Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the SGC Advisory Board which was held on February 20, 2019 in Baku the EU Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources Günther Ettinger said: “Today a very high representative of the Turkmen government participated in the meeting of the Advisory Board dedicated to the Southern Gas Cor-

ridor (SGC) project; this attests to the fact that Ashgabat is interested”. In the Commissioner's opinion this strategic project will enhance security of energy supply to Europe.

The Trump factor. In his greetings sent to President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov on the occasion of Novruz holiday in March 2019, US President Donald Trump expressed his hope that Turkmenistan would begin to use the possibility to export its gas to the West in the wake of the recent settlement of the issue concerning the legal status of the Caspian Sea. “I hope that Turkmenistan is going to use the new gas export possibilities now that the legal status of the Caspian Sea has been defined”, said Trump.

All these statements heightened media interest in the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline project. Besides, the media attention peaks when, for example, another delegation from Europe arrives in Ashgabat and there is no Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline issue on the agenda; however, when the negotiations concern cooperation between the parties, Turkmenistan's resources and the possibility of cooperation in the energy sector come to the fore. Media sources immediately recall the gas pipeline across the Caspian Sea. Alternatively, when Turkmenistan negotiates economic issues with China or Russia, the journalists start to describe the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline as a route to Europe. That

⁷ The publication was prepared in the framework of the project "Promoting Security in the Black Sea Region through Greater Engagement of Non-Governmental Organizations" with the support from the Black Sea Trust Fund, a project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Black Sea Trust Fund or its partners.

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goes to say that this project has become a double-edged sword: you can use it any way you like, it is acceptable for everybody. However, few people really want to know why the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline project is the back burner for so long? Let us analyze it in more detail.

Status of the Caspian Sea

The issue of the legal status of the Caspian Sea has been put on the agenda in 1996. Discussions were held annually at deputy prime minister level,

periodically at head of state level, but the views of the five nations sharing the Caspian coastline were never close enough to sign a final document and begin to act in the legal field, and not just in accordance with the agreements between individual countries. Time was running out, and in 2018 two more countries - Russia and Kazakhstan – started production of hydrocarbons in the shelf area of the Caspian Sea. Russia decided not to wait anymore - the status of the Caspian Sea was decided by the Russians unilaterally.



Fig. The Caspian Sea facts

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-45156199>

In December 2017 in Moscow Russia's Foreign Minister Serhiy Lavrov announced that the agreement had been achieved, but details were not disclosed. On August 12, 2018 at the summit meeting of the heads of the Caspian Sea countries in Aktau the historical Convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea was signed. Interestingly, this document was never published in full, only the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation published some parts of the document on its official site. It is indicative that only representatives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs took trouble to clarify the provisions of the document, while in other countries the official media used general phrases to describe the

progress made and the benefits which the Caspian Sea countries would gain from the settlement of the Caspian Sea legal status issue.

2017 was marked by an aggravation of confrontation between Russia and the West as a whole. The Kremlin understood that in the near future mitigation of sanctions could not be expected and that the pressure exerted by the international community on the Russian Federation would increase, so Russia decided to intensify its activities and not to play its "Caspian card." So the Convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea was adopted.

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The question arises why the Convention was adopted according to Russia's scenario? After the collapse of the USSR Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan called for division of the Caspian into national sectors, which would then be declared their territory. It meant that they considered not only the seabed, but also the surface of the sea their national resources. Such approach did not suit Moscow, since the military flotillas of the Russian Federation needed unimpeded access to these sectors. Events in Syria (when the ships of the Caspian Flotilla of the RF entered the area between the Azerbaijani and Turkmen sectors and launched missiles in the direction of Syria through the territory of Iran) demonstrated Russia's power to the Caspian Sea countries, too. Therefore, the Convention stipulated the following:

- each party establishes its territorial waters which must be not more than 15 nautical miles wide calculated in accordance with the Convention;
- each country establishes a fishing zone 10 nautical miles wide adjacent to the territorial waters.

In addition, the discussion always concerned the issue of a body of water, which has no connection with other seas and oceans – is it a lake or a sea? If it is a lake, then its bottom should be equally divided between the five Caspian states. If it is a sea, then it is necessary to draw assumed lines from the extreme points of the shelf of each country to the center of the body of water to determine the sectors. If this body of water is a sea, then all countries may have recourse to international law and use the Volga-Don Canal without Russia's permission. In addition, ships belonging to other countries would have the right to enter the Caspian Sea.

In the end a hybrid version was adopted: the Caspian Sea was defined as neither a sea nor a lake. As a result, Iran found itself in the most difficult situation – no decisions on the issues, which have been discussed in Iran for two decades, were taken. Today Iran is the only country in the Caspian Sea region, which does not produce hydrocarbons or carry out exploration in the shelf area, since Iran controls the deepest and saltiest section of the Caspian Sea, and the country has

neither technologies nor equipment for geological exploration of the area.

Russia has deliberately left a few “black holes” in this legal document in order to be able to hold talks with the interested parties – the Caspian Sea countries or the Western states - in the future.

First, the document contains no compulsory provisions as to ownership of hydrocarbon deposits, which are the source of disputes and conflicts between the Caspian Sea countries.

Second, the document stipulates that trunk line underwater pipelines may be built. At the same time, there is an Addendum to the Convention in accordance with which implementation of such projects a consensus of all countries of the region is necessary.

Part 2 of Article 14 of the Convention stipulates: “The Parties can lay pipelines on the Caspian Sea bed”, while Part 3 of the same Article explains that it may be done on the basis of the agreements with the Parties in whose sectors it is planned to lay the cables or pipelines. This stipulation seems to be an attempt to deter implementation of the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline project.

It has to be noted that immediately after adoption of the Convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea in the Western media there appeared several articles, which said that the new document gives the green light to construction of the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline from Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan. It did not take Moscow a long time to respond; on August 17, 2018 in an interview given to the Russian TASS news agency Igor Bratchikov, ambassador-at-large of the Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, spoke in detail about the legal aspects of the Convention with regard to construction of trunk pipelines.

“Construction of Trans-Caspian pipelines must be agreed upon by all countries of the Caspian Sea region”, said Mr. Bratchikov. According to him, “...Article 14 of the Convention stipulates that the parties can build them [trans-Caspian pipelines], however, provided that the construction projects

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comply with “the environmental requirements and standards specified in the international agreements to which they are parties, including the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea the seas and the corresponding annexes to it”.

Mr. Bratchikov pointed out that on June 20, 2018 in Moscow environmental ministers of the five Caspian states signed a Protocol to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (2003 Tehran Convention) referred to in Article 14 of the Convention. “This Protocol establishes a right of each of the five states that share the Caspian coastline to participate in a multilateral environmental expert analysis of maritime activities that which can potentially affect Caspian Sea environment, having a transboundary nature”, he said. It means that in addition to the expert analysis at the national level, an additional and very thorough analysis of the activities by the parties which can be potentially affected is needed”. “Thus, if and when realistic plans concerning construction of trans-Caspian pipelines emerge, any of the Caspian states, if necessary, will be able to participate in the assessment of the potential impact on the environment of the Caspian Sea in the design phase”, concluded Igor Bratchikov. In other words, using the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea, Russia actually obtained a legal leverage to control the Trans-Caspian Pipeline. By this the Kremlin brazenly stated that construction of the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline IS NOT a sovereign right of the two countries.

In addition, don't you forget that by that time Russia has already constructed the Blue Stream underwater gas pipeline across the Black Sea and continued to build two strings within the framework of the TurkStream project. To implement these projects, Russia did not bother to obtain environmental permits from Georgia, Ukraine and Romania. If you look at the Bosphorus and compare its width with the Volga, what's the difference? The Black Sea is another closed body of water body, just like the Caspian Sea.

However, the views on the problem vary. For example, take Kashagan Field in the Kazakh sector of the Caspian Sea, the prospected resources of which are still unknown (but they are huge). It is believed that in the last 40 years no deposits of the same magnitude have been discovered in the world. The development of this field has already been marred by the incidents which involved the pipelines. Two of them (one oil pipeline and one gas pipeline) oil and gas) leading from the Kashagan field, were damaged shortly after their launching in September 2013, which led to leakage of hydrocarbons. It's worth noting that Kashagan oil does not only have high sulphur content – the experts consider it toxic. After the incident, neither Russia nor any other coastal states bring measures to the floor. They did not even criticize Kazakhstan after the incident.

Commerce

It is interesting to look at the commercial side of the Trans-Caspian Pipeline project. Of course, formally all interested parties will agree that they understand this aspect of the project. Let us recall the White Stream project implemented to enable deliveries of Turkmen gas from the Black Sea coast of Georgia across the Black Sea to Ukraine. Why was the project not implemented? Because it was not commercially viable. The same applies to Nabucco Project and its Nabucco West Light version – there was simply no profit. Let us take a closer look at the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline project, because you don't have to believe the project's success story colorfully described by journalists and environmentalists.

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Fig. 2. Map of the proposed Trans-Caspian Pipeline.

Source: <http://interfaxenergy.com/gasdaily/article/6708/ec-predicts-trans-caspian-pipeline-decision-by-june>

However, for the project to move from the stage of negotiations to the stage of implementation it needs to be commercially attractive, i.e. economically viable. In other words, companies, which have decided to invest in this project, must convince their shareholders that these billions of dollars, if invested, will ensure them the same level of dividends as similar projects in Africa or Australia. Why an investor should be interested in investing money in a Caspian Sea project? If the profit figures do not impress, we propose that Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan cooperate more actively in the implementation of the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline project. In other words - invest state funds into this not commercially feasible project. Then our companies will receive Turkmen gas at a competitive price.

Despite the fact that the Convention on the status of the Caspian Sea was adopted more than 9 months ago, not a single European company has come to Ashgabat expressing its desire to purchase at least 1 billion cubic meters of Turkmen gas. That goes to say that now the project is not even a subject of negotiations. There are no bidders for Turkmen gas. In addition, this is not due to the lack of infrastructure. The reason is this: the Turkmen deposits, which can fill the Trans-Caspian Pipeline,

are located too far from the Caspian Sea, closer to Afghanistan (the latter is about 700 km away). That is why Turkmenistan has built the East-West trunk gas pipeline to the Caspian coast.



Fig. 3. Turkmengaz's East-West pipeline route (Belek – Shatlyk)

Source: <http://www.gasprocessingnews.com/columns/201602/boxscore-construction-analysis.aspx>

However, for the pipeline to run at full capacity it is necessary to build powerful compressor stations worth about \$1 billion each; their number is unknown - it will depend on the volumes of contracted gas. It should also be taken into account that the Turkmen gas quality leaves much to be

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desired. Before being pumped into the pipeline, it needs to be cleaned of chemical impurities - such cleaning requires additional investment.

There is another important aspect. It is commonly believed that it is enough to build a Trans-Caspian gas pipeline and Turkmen gas will find a market

in Europe. In this case, the logical question arises, what about the Azerbaijani gas? All quantities of gas to fill the pipeline of the Southern Gas Corridor project after its expansion are contracted 10 years ahead. Western politicians seem to be unaware of the Azerbaijani deposits worth billion and billions of dollars waiting for their finest hour.



Fig. 4. Infrastructure of the Shah Deniz-2 gas-condensate field in Azerbaijan

Source: <https://aea-al.org/natural-gas-from-shah-deniz-2-has-already-been-distributed-among-8-countries/>

To introduce their gas into the European market, Azerbaijan and its partners have spent 40 billion dollars in investment costs. Are the foreign investors involved in these projects prepared to

suffer losses just to make others Westerners to get more expensive Turkmen gas? This is the main reason why there are still no negotiations with Ashgabat authorities.

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Madagascar: 2018 Presidential Election in Russia's Crosshairs

Russian interference in elections in the Republic of Madagascar pursued two main tasks: to strengthen geopolitical influence of Russia and to promote business interests of Russian oligarchs, which are, camouflaged as strategic interests of the Russian Federation. Russia targets mineral resources and territory needed to establish naval bases. To this end, Russia relies on the ties the Soviet Union had in the past. It attempts to drive a wedge between the Western countries in a geostrategic confrontation, in particular between France and the United States. Russia has no scruples about giving bribes to politicians, capitalizing on unresolved social and political problems of the country.

In order to implement its strategy, Russia uses military mercenaries and private armies, services of political technologists, a wide network of its international relations and agents around the world, official military and diplomatic channels; it combines state and business interests, religious, cultural and historical issues, as well as institutional and socio-political weakness of the country as a place of conducting the operation.

Prehistory of Russia's expansion

For Russia, the idea of an expansion to Africa is nothing new. Today it works there using the Soviet heritage that remains in the region. As compared with its communist predecessor, nowadays Russia has favorable opportunities:

- Russia is no longer restricted by rigid ideological borders, and thus it can enter situational alliances with various movements – from the extreme right to the extreme left political forces, from traditionalist to modern-day religious organizations.
- The RF is no longer restricted by cultural and technological capabilities of the communist camp; it can use achievements of globalization. Unlike the USSR, Russia can offer international currencies (dollar, euro, etc.) and non-marketable “inconvertible” ruble or barter

deals. It can use opportunities provided by the modern-day global market to fight against its Western competitors.

- If earlier in Africa the Soviet Union had to face the consolidated West and the competing communist China, now the situation has turned around – the broken front of the Western countries faces Russia, which moved closer to China.

- If earlier the USSR could afford to use only 100 per cent loyal State bodies, today's Russia can use services of both formal and unconventional institutions and channels of influence, State-employed, private or unidentified agents.

Thus, relative improvement in Russia's capabilities allows it to carry out its politics in Africa more efficiently, as compared with the past, despite diminished scale of operations.

Republic of Madagascar is one of the countries where the Soviet Union managed to take root in the 1970s. Before that on the island, there was a French naval base and an American space tracking station. The island country is located at the crossroads of sea routes to Asia and the Middle East. Its strategic importance increased still more after the recent ruling of the international court, which placed in doubt lawfulness of the main US naval base in the region, on the island of Diego Garcia against the backdrop of escalation of conflicts along the entire northern perimeter of the Indian Ocean. This area includes the most conflict-ridden places of the planet today – Iran, Pakistan, India, the South China Sea, the sea gates to the Arabian Peninsula, Middle East, Northern Africa, as well as to the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The Strategic importance of the island as the main “satellite” of the African continent also increases due to resumed geopolitical struggle for the Black Continent and recent encroachments on the former colonies of the Western empires by Russia and China.

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It's no coincidence that the presidential elections in the country held in late 2018 and the parliamentary elections in early 2019 became the objects of unconcealed interest for Russia and the main geopolitical players. They did not become an exception from the geography of Russia's interference in elections held in various countries of the world.

Leaders in the 2018 election race

Practically all main geopolitical players placed their stakes and had their allies in this election. The 2018 election in Madagascar was won by the 44 year old media tycoon Andriy Rajoelina who got support of 55% of voters in the runoff election. His opponent Marc Ravalomanana, "dairy millionaire, won 44% of votes. 36 candidates ran for president, including 4 of 5 former presidents of the country, namely:

- Didier Ratsiraka, captain I rank, graduate of the French military academy, who was leading the country along the socialist road under the banners of Juche (*ideology of North Korea, a political thesis authored by Kim Il-sung in 1955*), the Green Book and Marxist-Leninist doctrine.
- Marc Ravalomanana, businessman, natural genius in the field of agriculture, who orients towards liberal economy, protestant church and rapprochement with the USA and the British Commonwealth. His "orange revolution" did away with Ratsiraka's regime and forced the latter to flee from the country in 2002. Ravalomanana is considered to be the favorite politician of the USA on the island.
- Andriy Rajoelina, businessman from the industry of entertainment. He promotes French interests. His "youthquake" brought down Ravalomanana (the latter fled the country in 2009). At that time, however, he was not able to become the head of the state due to constitutional restrictions and condemnation of his coup by the international community and became the leader of the interim government.
- Hery Rajaonarimampianina, who was elected president of the country from Andriy Rajoelina's fraction in 2014 promoting policy of national reconciliation in compliance with the demands of the

international community. At that time the two main opponents – Rajoelina and Ravalomanana – were excluded from participation in the presidential election in accordance with conditions of reconciliation.

The bone of contention between France and the USA

In the last twenty years Madagascar saw two popular uprisings and one civil war. France's single-handed domination of its former colony came to an end, when in 1975 the power on the island was seized by Didier Ratsiraka, captain I rank. In general, Ratsiraka suited both France and the USSR. He graduated from the French military academy, and in order to keep the power in his hands he maintained close political relations with the pro-Soviet forces. In one of his early interviews Ratsiraka did not conceal the fact that he wanted the USSR to support him in his presidential election campaign in 1975. At that time the would-be president worked at Madagascar's diplomatic mission in France. Through the Soviet embassy in France he requested the Soviet authorities to support him to take power on the Red Island. It should be noted that Ratsiraka and his political party were not the main partner of the USSR on the island, since in Madagascar there was a pro-Soviet, pro-communist party which had many years of experience in the struggle against France and the West as a whole. However, after Ratsiraka's party took power, it managed to get into graces of the Soviet leaders.

This politician was trying to implement inauspicious concept of socialist orientation of Madagascar in the period of time between 1975 and 2001. The "socialist road" was in fact a series of anti-imperialist experiments – first of all dissemination of Juche Idea authored by the North Korean leader Kim Il-sung and the Green Book authored by Moammar el-Gadhafi, which in the country competed with the ideas of Volodymyr Lenin and Mao Tse-tung. Ratsiraka's rule has brought chaos in 2002.

Dramatic events of 2002 were accompanied by conflicts of geopolitical interests. Relations between France and the USA with regard to Madagascar exacerbated before 2002 due to

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the US interference in the political processes on the island. The fact that the main presidential candidate Marc Ravalomanana was favored for election by America was considered interference in the affairs of the former French colony. American political strategist, former mayor of Baltimore Kurt Schmoke, who is associated with former US president Bill Clinton, became a member of Mr. Ravalomanana's election campaign team. Besides, after taking office Marc Ravalomanana called for leaving the French zone of influence in order to join the British Commonwealth of Nations. During his time in the office, in 2007, English became the third official language of Madagascar along with Malgache and French.

The 2002 presidential elections were similar to the 2004 elections in Ukraine which led to the Orange Revolution. Marc Ravalomanana ran his election campaign under orange flags. Just like in Ukraine in 2004, legitimacy of the election results was placed in doubt. While in Ukraine the third round of voting was held, in Madagascar Marc Ravalomanana announced himself the winner. Dethroned president Ratsiraka fled the country. Thus, "orange revolution" decided the outcome of the race for power. But unlike Ukraine after its Orange Revolution, Madagascar plunged into civil war. The country suffered retaliation at the hands of the supporters of France. Didier Ratsiraka became one of the most experienced presidential candidates during the elections held in November 2018 [1].

Marc Ravalomanana's time in office also ended in chaos and civil unrest in 2009, in the result of which he became the second president in the history of Madagascar who had to seek asylum abroad. This time the uprising against the pro-American president strongly resembled a revenge of the pro-French forces. However, the rebels did not get recognition from the international community which considered overthrowing of government and Ravalomanana's flight a state coup.

Stabilization of the situation in Madagascar was taking place under the aegis of the international community. The two main opponents - Ravalomanana and Rajoelina - were called not to participate in the presidential election, political forces were promised financial support, including help from the International Monetary Fund, if they agree to sit at the table for peace talks. As the result of the process, in 2014 a moderate pro-French

candidate from Rajoelina's camp was elected the president of the country. In fact, the 2018 elections ended the cycle of open power struggle between various pro-Western movements in Madagascar - first and foremost the ones who orient towards the USA and France.

Looming Russian threat

The 2018 election results practically formalized final restoration of legitimacy of the pro-French government in the country. Geopolitical and religious threat became a more efficient catalyst for the election than the grudge match between candidates, especially candidates representing pro-Western factions. On the one hand, nowadays Madagascar faces the threat of peaceful seizure of power by pro-Islamist forces, the financial capabilities of which are significantly higher than the capabilities of other movements in one of the poorest countries in the world. On the other hand, pro-Western candidates face the threat of the island going under Russia's influence.

The point is that at the end of his time in office the country's president made overtures to Russia and tried to convince it to support him in the upcoming elections. Accordingly, in late 2017 diplomatic relations between the two countries went into overdrive. The process included appointment of the former Madagascar ambassador to Moscow the Minister of Foreign Affairs; visit of parliamentarian delegation of Madagascar to Moscow in October 2017; visit of a special representative of the Russian president on the Middle East and Africa Mykhailo Bohdanov to Antananarivo in early 2018; visit of the president of the country to Moscow in March 2018. In October 2018, just before the presidential election the head of the General Organization and Mobilization Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, Lieutenant-General Yevhen Burdinsky visited the Republic of Madagascar [2].

As the result of the visit, an agreement on military cooperation between Russia and Madagascar was signed; several weeks after the event the Russian anti-submarine ship Severomorsk visited the port of Antsiranana in the north of the country which used to be a French naval base in Madagascar. Besides the strategic location at the crossroads of the sea routes across the Indian Ocean, Russia is interested in mineral resources of the island - oil, diamonds, gold, etc.

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*Deputy head of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Yevhen Burdinsky during the meeting in Madagascar.
Source: website of the Ministry of Defense of the RF*

In 2018 Ravalomanana and Rajoelina took part in the presidential election once again. Marc Ravalomanana represented protestant (not catholic) churches. However, this time it was a peaceful confrontation. Moreover, during the election campaign the two candidates concluded a “non-aggression pact” and presented a common front against the sitting president.

According to media reports, the Madagascar project was coordinated in Russia by Yevhen Prigozhin, known as Putin's Chef. Russia's Pro-Kremlin political technologists and journalists working for the oligarch were seen on the island disguised as tourists. Russia's role in the election campaign was to provide funding and to render organizational and technical assistance. Russia focused on religious and anti-Western, first of all anti-American, agenda. It used such instruments as, for example, unauthorized public demonstrations staged under anti-colonial slogans in the capital of the country.

Some media outlets are attempting to present the participation of the Russian political strategists in the elections on the island as a test case, claiming that Yevhen Prigozhin sent in political

technologists without fieldwork experience in major Russian or African campaigns; before that, they allegedly worked only in Russia's periphery. According to the Russian publication

Proekt, more than twenty political strategists, including Messrs Maksim Shugaley, Valery Porubov, Volodymyr Frolov, Georgi Belikov [3], worked in Madagascar during the presidential election.

However, the interest in these elections was revealed at the highest level of state power in Russia. The fact that the Russian president Volodymyr Putin showed unconcealed interest in the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections in Madagascar became known to the public when there appeared information about his informal meeting with former president Didier Ratsiraka during the World Cup Finals in July 2018, a few months before the presidential election [4]. According to the Kremlin press service, the Russian president spoke to Ratsiraka while attending a gala concert at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow. In July 2018, the Russian Foreign Minister Serhiy Lavrov met with the former president of Madagascar [5]. The meeting with the opposition politician took place

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only after the visit of the President of Madagascar Hery Rajaonarimampianina to Moscow in March 2018.

Russia's campaign had strong military and political support at the highest level. Safety of the political strategists was ensured by the Wagner Group in coordination with a group of military aides from the FSS and the General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate. They were accompanied by a group of military interpreters. Federal news agency RIA FAN, associated with the above-mentioned entrepreneur, launched an information campaign against the candidate who, in the opinion of Russian politicians, was supported by the USA.

In order to conduct this campaign, the Russian strategists have engaged services of numerous international resources. In particular, in order to nurture anti-French sentiments a visit of a well-known Benin-based anti-French activist visit to Madagascar was arranged. This bespeaks a well-thought strategy that included Madagascar in Russia's general expansion in Africa. The BBC investigation reveals the fact that Putin's Chef is the connecting link between all Russia's African projects. His business on the island is supervised by Ferrum Mining Company which is specialized in production of chrome iron ore. The company considers entering Madagascar's gold mining industry. Small twin-engine Hawker 800 business jet with tail number M-VITO belonging to Prigozhin's affiliated offshore Beratex Group has been seen in Madagascar at the height of the election campaign [6, 7].

Peculiarity of Russia's participation in the election was the fact that the main Russian favorite, ally or protégé has not been announced until the end of the election. According to the British Broadcasting Corporation, Russia has offered to give financial support to at least 6 Madagascar presidential candidates out of 36. Among those who have admitted to be approached by the Russians were former Prime Minister of Madagascar Jean Bereziki, founder of the Church of the Apocalypse pastor André Christian Mailhol. Rumors about the connections of the latter with Russia existed long before the election was called. Interestingly, this religious movement is very similar to a like-minded organization in Ukraine. Agreements were reached with all candidates to the effect that they

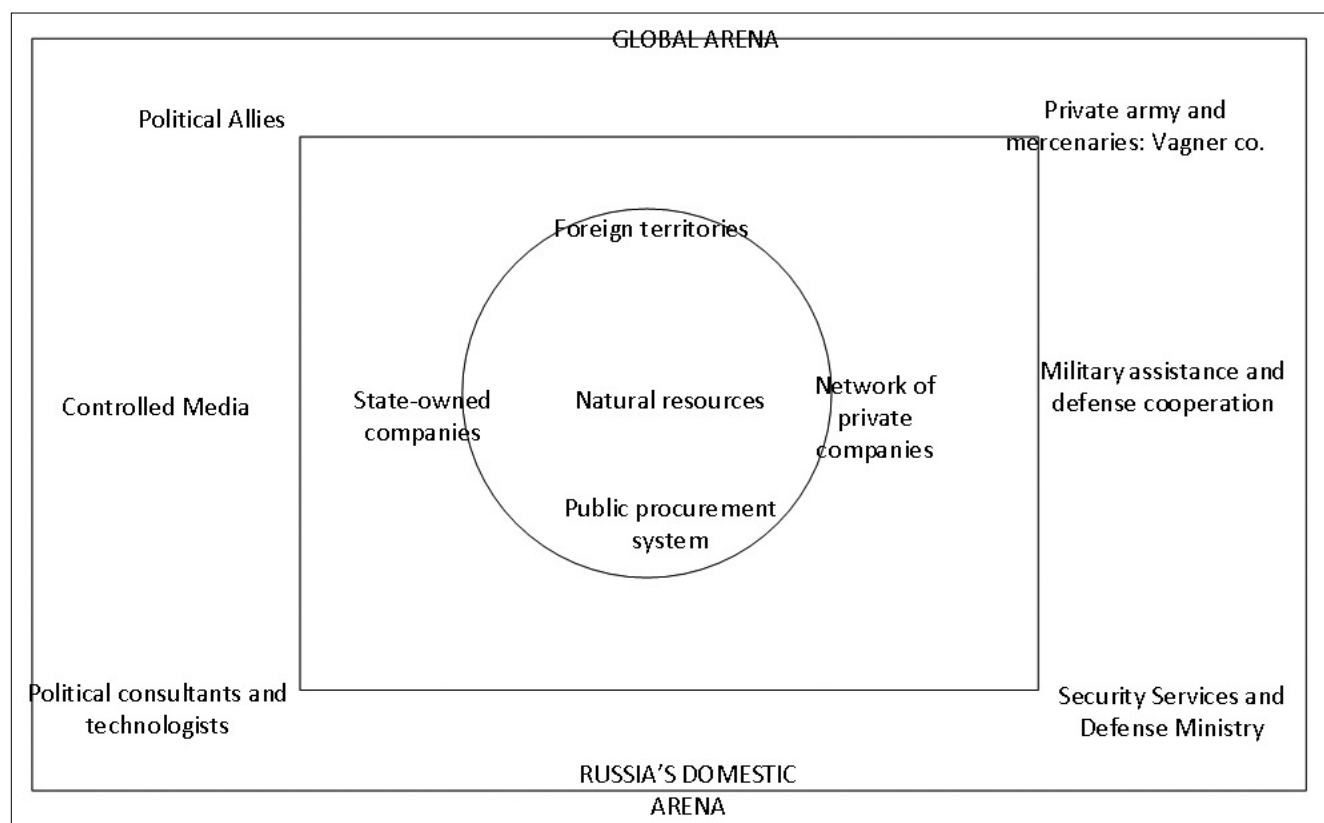
would withdraw from the candidate pool in favor of the candidate whom the Kremlin was going to appoint later on. Thus, it was possible for Russia to keep the name of its political appointee secret. Such secretiveness probably was dictated by Russia's unwillingness to lay its cards on the table and to reveal its candidate in an attempt to keep him away from the opponents' fire early on.

In general, the available information reveals that at first the Russians oriented towards the camp of the upcoming president Rajoelina which also includes the former president Hery Rajaonarimampianina. Candidates who lost in the race speak today about the Russians switching their support to the future election winner Andriy Rajoelina in the last stages of the election campaign. They point out a number of indirect indications, including employment of the hired Russian security guard by the future president. Another indirect indication of the fact that Russia's sympathy were with today's president is the above mentioned campaign launched against his main opponent Mr. Rajoelina in the Russian media. Information campaign of the Russian Federal news agency RIA FAN associated with Prigozhin was aimed at supporting Rajoelina. The main card used was alleged links between Ravalomanana and the Americans.

Thus, it can be concluded that Russia's interference in the Madagascar election campaign was conducted in the form of a secret service operation. Details of the operation were kept secret; diversion and distraction were widely used. Both military and diplomatic means were made use of. Significant effort has been exerted to obtain certain international support. Russia used the lack of unity in the ranks of the local elite and the main geostrategic partners of the island nation. Interference in Madagascar election became a part of the general Russian expansion in Africa which lately was gaining momentum and which in fact was a process of implementation of the strategy of using Russian state's resources to further mutual interests of the corrupted bureaucracy and financial oligarchy.

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Russia's special operations implementation sheet



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Russia Eyes Joining BTK Railway Across South Caucasus

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By: Azad Garibov

May 16, 2019

<https://jamestown.org/program/russia-eyes-joining-btk-railway-across-south-caucasus/>

Representatives of Turkish, Azerbaijani and Russian railways inked a cooperation memorandum on May 6, 2019, in Ankara, to leverage the potential of the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars (BTK) railway and increase the volume of freight carried along the route. “The tripartite cooperation will boost the operation of the BTK railway and will ensure that cargo from Russia passes through the Caucasus and Anatolia on the way to its destination,” a statement published on the Azerbaijan Railway’s official website noted. According to Russian Railways, the deal will closely knit the Trans-Siberian Railroad to the BTK, and the latter railway will gain access to Russia’s eastern ports. This is an important development for trans-Eurasian transportation, where several corridor projects are simultaneously being developed by regional states, frequently in competition with each other. In fact, the BTK was initially meant to facilitate bypassing the Russian Trans-Siberian route for east-west cargo shipments.

Before signing the memorandum in Ankara, Oleg Belozеров, the director general of Russian Railways, visited Baku and met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Azerbaijani Railway’s chairperson, Javid Gurbanov. The two sides discussed implementation of the ongoing International North-South Transport Corridor (which also involves Iran) and the perspective of Russia joining the BTK project. Belozеров noted in Baku that, in the first quarter of 2019, the volume of freight traffic between Azerbaijani and Russian railways increased by 25 percent and that the Russian side is ready to provide relevant transport loads for the BTK to utilize the project’s full capacity. He also proposed creating a regular container service from China to Azerbaijan via the Trans-Siberian route and developing a distribution hub in Baku. The Russian and Azerbaijani officials signed a memorandum on cooperation to increase freight traffic along the North-South Corridor and “the Russia–Azerbaijan–Turkey route using the infrastructure of the BTK railway”.

The same day, on May 6, Belozеров and Gurbanov flew to Ankara, where they were joined by their Turkish counterpart, Ali İhsan Uygun, to sign the above-mentioned tripartite memorandum. Along with the memorandum, Russian Railways Logistics and Turkey’s Pacific Eurasia Logistics agreed to establish a joint venture to develop logistical capacities for transportation along the BTK route. In the trilateral meeting, the Russian side also offered to construct a new 76-kilometer-long Russian-standard broad gauge (1,520 millimeter) rail line from the Georgian border to the city of Kars, in Turkey. Presently, the transition from the broad gauge to the standard European gauge (1,435 mm), which is used in Turkey, is done in Ahalkalaki, a Georgian town on the border with Turkey. If realized, the Russian-proposed rail extension would mean that trains would be able to cross the Georgian-Turkish border without stopping and not have to switch out their bogies until reaching the Turkish city of Kars.

Initially, the BTK project, dubbed a “middle corridor,” was developed to receive goods from China via Central Asia and the Caspian Sea and thus rival the Russian-championed Trans-Siberian route. Nevertheless, Russia was quick to use the services of this railway for its own exports to gain access to the Turkish market and the country’s Mediterranean ports. For example, in early 2018, a few months after the BTK’s inauguration, Javid Gurbanov noted that around 70,000 tons of Russian metallurgical products were being shipped from Russia to Turkey, via the BTK, every month. “Russia is also interested in transporting timber using the BTK, as well as shipping food products in the opposite direction,” he stated. And that summer, Russian Magnitogorsk plant, one of the world’s largest steel producers, sent a trial batch of rolled coils from Magnitogorsk, Russia, to Iskenderun port, Turkey, via the BTK railway, aiming to establish a new 500,000-ton capacity freight route for delivering its goods.

Turkey is by far the largest market for Russia’s steel products, with an annual import volume of 5–6 million tons. Millions of tons of other goods, particularly Russian coal, cereals and fertilizers, are annually exported to Turkey. **So far, the shipment of these goods as well as Russian trade with some other Southeastern European countries passes through the territory of Ukraine. Complicated relations between Ukraine and**

Russia hampered this traffic flow to a certain extent. Thus, Russia is searching for new routes to bypass Ukraine. Another option involves ferries traveling straight to Novorossiysk; but this route is not popular due to infrequent trips and low capacity. Therefore, the BTK might offer new opportunities for Russia to access Turkey and South-eastern European markets.

Yet, not everyone in the region welcomed the recently signed memorandum. Mamuka Bakhtadze, the prime minister of Georgia, one of the three key BTK project partners, criticized the Russian-Azerbaijani-Turkish deal. The Georgian reaction does not imply an outright rejection of allowing the transport of Russian goods across its territory. Indeed, the country is already a key transit route for Russia's trade with Armenia, Moscow's key ally in the South Caucasus. Tbilisi seems to mainly object to being sidelined in the important decisions regarding the project.

Russia Tries to Bog Down the Anaklia Deep Sea Port Project

The Jamestown Foundation

Giorgi Menabde

May 20, 2019

<https://jamestown.org/program/russia-tries-to-bog-down-the-anaklia-deep-sea-port-project/>

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Yet, not everyone in the region welcomed the recently signed memorandum. Mamuka Bakhtadze, the prime minister of Georgia, one of the three key BTK project partners, criticized the Russian-Azerbaijani-Turkish deal. Based on an intergovernmental agreement between Baku, Tbilisi and Ankara, he argued, the consent of all parties is required before involving any other party in the BTK railway. He also denounced the Russian offer to build a new rail line inside Turkey to the city of Kars, noting that the connecting station to link the standard European gauge to the wide gauge is currently operating on Georgian territory—"No other option is being discussed". Georgia's Economy Minister Natia Turnava sounded the same position: "No single party has the right to change something in this project," adding that the BTK is presently "being carried out in the way we es-

tablished and agreed on, and it is in line with our sovereign interests".

The Georgian reaction does not imply an outright rejection of allowing the transport of Russian goods across its territory. Indeed, the country is already a key transit route for Russia's trade with Armenia, Moscow's key ally in the South Caucasus. Tbilisi seems to mainly object to being sidelined in the important decisions regarding the project. It is particularly concerned about discussions over the new gauge connecting station—Tbilisi does not want to give up such an important facility in its territory. In general, Russian freight can help to utilize the maximum capacity of the BTK, which is yet to reach the envisioned 5–6 million tons of annual cargo shipments in the first development phase. It will also allow using BTK and Trans-Siberian routes in a complementary mode for delivering Russian and other transit goods to Turkey and Southeastern Europe.

Black Sea Natural Gas Games: A Fork in the Road for the BRUA Pipeline Project

March 29, 2019

By Nolan Theisen and John Szabo

Atlantic Council

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/energy-source/black-sea-natural-gas-games-a-fork-in-the-road-for-the-brua-pipeline-project>

Hopes were riding high on the discovery of Romania's Black Sea natural gas deposits in 2012, which were expected to provide a cheap and local source of the fuel for Central and South Eastern Europe (CSEE). ExxonMobil and OMV Petrom would carry out the offshore production, and the Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary-Austria (BRUA) pipeline project, formally conceived in 2016, would deliver 4.4 billion cubic meters per year to the preeminent regional hub located in Baumgarten, Austria. The European Commission prioritized BRUA and made European Union (EU) funding available for it, given its contribution to regional energy security, market integration, and competition. Furthermore, the project had also been meant to incentivize Romania and Bulgaria to speed up market liberalization efforts.

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Stakeholders of BRUA were optimistic, but, like other failed proposals attempting to open this natural gas route before it, BRUA has found itself in the geopolitical crosshairs between the interests of a US oil major, an Austrian oil and gas major, and a Hungarian prime minister who has negotiated backroom gas deals directly with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The unfolding tug of war has led to the suspension of the pipeline's initial route and it is unclear whether the parties involved will be able to find a common denominator.

No common vision from within

ExxonMobil's plans to deliver natural gas from the Black Sea to Central and Western European markets were first impeded by Romania's piecemeal approach and inability to push through comprehensive energy law reform, but the company has persevered nonetheless. What is forcing ExxonMobil to reevaluate its options at this advanced stage is the sudden withdrawal of Hungarian transmission system operator (TSO) FGSZ Földgázszállító—on the order of the energy regulator Hungarian Energy & Utilities Regulatory Agency (MEKH)—from the Hungarian-Austrian bidirectional capacity upgrade (HUAT). MEKH halted the project on the heels of a successful 2017 open season by unilaterally rejecting FGSZ's economic project assessment.

MEKH defended its decision to pressure FGSZ to scrap HUAT on the grounds that investment costs were too high compared to its counterproposal, which would transit volumes through the underutilized Slovak-Hungarian (SK-HU) pipeline through Slovakia to Baumgarten—the HUSKAT route. Not coincidentally, this route would prove quite beneficial for Hungarian stakeholders. FGSZ's proposal avoids investment risk and utilizes the SK-HU pipeline that it is in the process of purchasing, while the Hungarian government moves closer to its ambition of becoming a gas hub. Together, this would carve out a greater role for incumbent energy (trading) champions, which generally have close ties to the government. Since HUSKAT capacity would be less than what was bid for HUAT, Hungarian traders would be granted the opportunity to re-route excess Black Sea gas to neighbors like Ukraine, Serbia, and Slovenia at higher prices.

Gas Connect Austria (GCA)—the Austrian TSO—has been pushing for the HUAT connection, arguing that it would provide the cheapest gas for customers. GCA responded to MEKH's decision to suspend HUAT by referring the matter to the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER)—the EU's energy regulatory watchdog—which would have the power to force Hungary to hold another open season. This decision will be handed down on April 6th. Echoing this sentiment, Austrian oil and gas major OMV responded in an open letter that the HUSKAT route would entail higher transport costs. It has been speculated that pressure from OMV alone could weigh on ACER to request FGSZ to hold a new capacity auction. Meanwhile, Eustream held a successful open season for HUSKAT with its Hungarian and Austrian counterparts in late-2017, at the urging of ExxonMobil. This established that the Slovak transmission system could be upgraded with relatively small investment for the demanded level of transit.

ExxonMobil could decide to back down and settle for HUSKAT as a quick and stable guaranteed solution by not putting forth a subsequent HUAT bid and effectively killing the route. Alternatively, if the major prefers HUAT, it can cancel HUSKAT and press the Orbán government in Hungary, potentially leading to considerable risks and delays. Hungary, meanwhile, will likely hope that ExxonMobil remains committed to HUSKAT past the binding deadline at the end of March. If ACER's decision just days later is unfavorable, then it remains to be seen whether Hungary will cave to mounting pressure.

Broader geopolitical implications

HUSKAT has granted Hungary an opportunity to expand its regional influence; however, if Budapest pushes too hard against the will of other stakeholders and thereby risks the full cancellation of the project, it would undermine any strategic gains. In Hungary's act of resistance, we also need to consider the elephant in the room, Russia. Currently, Gazprom's clear European priority is to secure the completion of North Stream 2. Romanian natural gas also poses competition to Gazprom's volumes that may eventually flow to Europe through Turkstream and the Southern Gas Corridor. The sheer economic incentive may push Moscow to pressure projects that pose com-

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petition to their market share. President Putin's cozy relationship with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán provides a channel to sabotage alternative import routes, including BRUA. Moreover, Moscow's ambitions to maintain its natural gas monopoly and wield significant political influence in Central and Southern Europe should not be discounted.

ExxonMobil's direct involvement in BRUA provides an opportunity for the US to influence the course of actions. Taking a stance and facilitating diplomacy for the project's development would convey US commitment to the region's energy security. US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo's and US Secretary of Energy Rick Perry's recent visits to the region underscore this commitment, but strong engagement has to continue to move the project forward. The US can look out for its economic interests, pave the way for enhanced energy security, and facilitate intra-NATO cooperation by maintaining a presence in the region.

Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) Cepa remembers Crimea. Five Years Since Russia's "Little Green Men" Invaded Ukraine

<https://www.cepa.org/remembering-crimea>
27 February 2019

Today, the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) marks the fifth anniversary of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in memory of the victims from the Russian-Ukraine war and in solidarity with Ukraine's struggle to establish a European future that is peaceful and prosperous.

CEPA recalls how, on February 27, 2014, masked Russian troops without insignia—"little green men"—illegally seized the parliament of Crimea, an integral part of Ukraine, and other strategic sites on the peninsula. Within a month, Moscow installed a pro-Russian government, conducted an illegitimate referendum on Crimea's status, and formally incorporated the territory as two new units of the Russian Federation. These actions ruptured the framework of historic agreements that have guaranteed peace in Europe for two decades and affirmed Russia's pledge to never invade Ukraine's territory, alter its borders, or

challenge its independence through force of arms. These agreements included the Budapest Memorandum (1994), U.N. Document A/49/765 (1994), the NATO-Russia Founding Act (1997), and the Russo-Ukrainian Treaty (1997). Collectively, these promises facilitated Ukraine's surrender of its nuclear arsenal, NATO's eventual expansion eastward, and one of the longest stretches of tranquility in Europe since the French Revolution. Putin's seizure of Crimea marked the second time in half a decade that Russia has redrawn the map of Europe, the first being the brief but bloody invasion of Georgia in 2008.

Since then, the Kremlin has gone much further. It began a war in eastern Ukraine using paid proxy fighters and backed by regular Russian military forces. It has further militarized Crimea and the Black Sea, threatened the free navigation of Ukrainian vessels in international waters around the Sea of Azov and Kerch Straits, attacked Ukrainian vessels, and imprisoned 24 Ukrainian sailors. Peace initiatives—combined with Western sanctions—have met little success.

Since the events of February 2014, Ukraine has suffered grievously. Approximately 13,000 people have been killed on all sides, including 3,300 civilians. About 30,000 have been wounded and 1.5 million have been displaced. The war has tested the unity and resolve of Ukraine. The West has maintained a sanctions regime on Russia and pressured the Kremlin to reach a settlement that would respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, but the war goes on.

On this solemn anniversary, CEPA renews its call to raise the costs on Russian aggression. CEPA also marks positive developments. The crisis has galvanized Ukraine's sense of statehood, despite persistent corruption and weak rule of law. Ukraine's economy is growing slightly. Its military, though still not a match for Russia's, has proven to be a brave and effective fighting force. Ukrainian society, more vigorously than ever before, is firmly in favor of deeper integration with the West. The war, meanwhile, has revitalized NATO and dispelled misplaced illusions about Russia's benign strategic intentions.

Finally, CEPA looks forward. As Ukrainians go to the polls on March 31 to pick their next presi-

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dent, the West should celebrate their democratic commitment in the face of internal challenges and Russian revanchism.

CEPA remembers.

CEPA stands with the people of Ukraine.

The United States will guarantee freedom of navigation in the Arctic and the Black Sea Mil.In.Ua

https://mil.in.ua/ssha-garantuvatyme-svobodusudnoplavstva-v-arktyczy-ta-chornomu-mori/amp/?fbclid=IwAR0jniGxRz3OWJOMGWy2nJ0cIqh mGPdleVUKIxWR0SvZXos5i4gCTM_tCCw

US Navy Commander in Europe and Africa, Admiral James G. Foggo commented on Russia's efforts to militarize the Arctic, and compared it with the freedom of navigation in the Black Sea. The ability of Russia to carry out military operations in the North Atlantic has increased, and the United States will closely monitor its actions. Also, the U. S. Navy will act as a guarantor of the peaceful navigation of naval vessels by the Northern Sea Route in the same way as it is already the guarantor of the peaceful passage of vessels in the Black Sea and South China Sea. "The trend to warming has attracted interest - not only from the Arctic states - in the lavish natural resources of the Arctic and possible waterways," said the Admiral. According to the military, Russia has already restored the operation of the seven former Soviet military bases in the Arctic Circle and built new bases, including the Northern Clover base on the Kotelny Island, and the Arctic Trifolium on the Alexandra Land, which is in the Franz Josef Land Archipelago. "The improved ability of Russia to carry out military operations in the region from the Northern Sea Route to the [Northwest] Passage between Greenland and Iceland, Iceland and the British Isles (GIUK Gap) requires our special attention." According to

the admiral, the need to closely monitor the military build-up of Russia in the North is based on the previous "aggressive actions of Russia in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean." Mr Foggo reminded that Russia has resorted to suppressing the GPS signal while conducting NATO Trident Juncture exercises in Norway at the end of last year. The US Navy commander in Europe and Africa said that the US Navy would act as a guarantor of peace and stability in the Arctic region, having recently taken Russia's statements. "Recently, the government of Russia announced a change of policy with the intention of requiring foreign governments 45 days in advance to report on the passage of sovereign ships along the Northern Sea Route, which connects the Kola Peninsula with the Bering Strait. The new law requires the presence of Russian pilots in foreign warships and the provision of information on ships, which is apparently a violation of sovereign immunity. Russia also noted that it could deny the right to a peaceful passage for any reason, and threatened to sink any ship that would not meet Russian requirements during the Northern Sea Route", - said Foggio, who called these claims to be incompatible with international law. According to Foggo, the US Navy will act as a guarantor for compliance with international shipping agreements.

"We guarantee the freedom of navigation of all nations, regardless of which sea basin is considered: the South China Sea, the Black Sea, the Arctic Ocean, or elsewhere. If Russia tries to insist on taking action beyond the limits permitted by the International Maritime Law, it can create a dangerous precedent for the entire international community: the powerful coastal states could any time make changes to the international maritime law in their own best interests, based on weapons that allows you to implement such a policy, relying on weapons that allows them to implement such a policy" – said US Navy Admiral. The US Admiral also drew attention to the fact that China officially declares its interest in developing the northern maritime routes.

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China's Silk Road in Space

On March 26, 2019 during the meeting of the National Space Council Mike Pence, vice president of the United States, announced that the USA were going to send their astronauts to the Moon by 2024, four years earlier than it was planned previously. According to Pence, the idea behind the project is not only economic and security considerations, but, first and foremost, rules and values which would be established by the country that would be the first to conquer circumterrestrial space. Prior to this announcement, Pence named China and Russia America's main competitors in the new space race, citing the report of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) of the United States Department of Defense. Meanwhile, China is implementing its own program of space exploration.

In 2015 the government of China called polar regions, seabed and circumterrestrial space its "new strategic borders". These are strategically important spheres, which China is going to use in order to become a global power. In 2021, the Communist Party of China will be celebrating its 100th anniversary. Before that time China plans to become a "moderately prosperous society" and to increase its gross domestic product (GDP) to over 10 thousand dollars per capita. Before the 100th anniversary of the People's Republic of China in 2049 the government is planning to turn China into a "fully developed, prosperous and powerful nation" that will lead the world in space exploration, in the field of artificial intelligence and innovation. President Xi Jinping said that China's space program is playing an important role in achieving these goals. Chinese media call the "space dream" a step on the way to "restoration of the country".

Meanwhile NASA works on space exploration and scientific space missions, China's long-term space program aims at ensuring prosperity of the coun-

try by means of creating the space industry. . As of today, the world's space economy amounts to 350 billion US dollars, and by 2040, it will amount to 2.7 trillion US dollars. Besides, significant economic potential of the mineral resources production in space must be taken into consideration. Scientists assume that a small asteroid (200 meters in size) rich in platinum can cost 30 billion US dollars.

According to China's White Book which deals with development of the space industry and which was published in 2016, China's space program is an important part of the strategy of development and national economic revival of the PR of China. During his conversation with the Chinese taikonauts who were onboard Tiangong-1 space station, Xi Jinping noted that "the space dream is a part of the dream of making China more powerful". China is the second nation in the world after the USA as far as financing of development of space technologies is concerned.

Generally, countries, which invest into development of the space industry, do it with three reasons in mind: to satisfy the requirements of the military, to demonstrate their power and to search for undeveloped natural resources. China's space program is largely oriented towards enhancing military power of the PR of China. If China will be able to launch heavy rockets into space, it will be possible for it to place in orbit heavy satellites and orbital stations. Similarly, development of satellite technologies will enable China to "win local information wars" – regional conflicts in which long-range, high-precision unmanned weapons and equipment; the decisive battles are going to be fought in space and cyberspace making use of information technologies. Besides, due to BeiDou satellite navigation system the Chinese rocket attacks will be more accurate.

Moreover, anti-space defense systems give China an important asymmetric advantage over the US in the event of a military conflict in the Asia-Pacific region. The Chinese remember the "hundred years of national humiliation", which in their opinion was caused by the reluctance of the Qing government to borrow and adopt new western technologies. Accordingly, China sees technological achievements as important symbols of the power of their nation. The manned space flight, construction of the orbital station, the Moon exploration program of the study of the Moon show the status of China as a great power both domestically and abroad.

By 2050, China is expected to become the world's biggest economy. Scientists predict that oil and gas fields will be depleted by 2060. That is why, besides the search for new deposits on the continents, in particular in Antarctica, China invests in space exploration. Successful landing of Chang'e-4 lunar rover on the dark side of the Moon announced the beginning of the fourth phase of China's program of lunar explorations, which includes landing of lunar reconnaissance probes on both poles of the Moon and creation of a lunar base by 2036. By the end of 2019, Chang'e-5 is going to the Moon to collect soil samples, later Chang'e-6 and Chang'e-7 will explore the South Pole of the Moon, Chang'e-8 will test key technologies, in particular 3D-printing and prepare the grounds for construction of a scientific base. Scientist Ouyang Ziyuan who heads China's Moon program stated in 2002: "The Moon may become a new colossal source of energy and mineral resources for all mankind... He who conquers the Moon first will profit the most".

It is estimated that the surface of the Moon contains such valuable materials as thorium, magnesium, platinum, silicon, water (ice), aluminum and iron ore. China plans to build there a base for production of minerals on asteroids, deep space exploration and utilization of the Moon's resources.

An important part of China's space program is the development of the Space-based solar power system (SBSPS). It is expected that the Chinese Academy of Space Technology (CAST) completes its industrial testing (building a satellite in the orbit and) in 2020. In 2025, CAST is going to car-

ry out the first demonstration of the space-based power system having capacity of 100 kW in a low circumterrestrial orbit (LCO), and in 2035 SBSPS having capacity of 100 MW will be generating electric power. Finally, in 2050 the first industrial scale SBSPS will be launched into operation in a geosynchronous orbit (GSO). 2009 Annual Report on development of China's energy sector states that by 2050 the country is going to lack around 10,5% of the energy needed; therefore, the government has to look for new power sources, such as nuclear fusion and space-based power systems. That is why in early 2019 China began construction of an experimental SBSPS manufacturing plant in Chongqing. There they are going to test such technologies as SBSPS construction in a geosynchronous orbit using robots, wireless power transmission, etc. Van Sidzi, head designer of the first Chinese rocket, believes that "When fuel becomes scarce, it will trigger panic around the world. Before that happens we need to find the way to retransmit solar energy from the outer space... The country, which is the first to develop this technology, is going to take over the future market. That is why the issue is of vital strategic importance."

Scientists at the National Space Science Center of the Chinese Academy of Sciences are working on a plan to intercept an asteroid and guide it to Earth in order to explore it and extract useful materials from it. The most difficult task will be to reduce its speed from 12500 m/s to 140 m/s in order to be able to land it safely. The researchers led by Li Mintao plan to start the interception operation in 2029 and land an asteroid in 2034. Such asteroid as, for example, No.3554 Amun, is about two kilometers in diameter, contains 8 trillion dollars worth of nickel and iron, 6 trillion dollars worth of cobalt, 6 trillion dollars worth of other valuable metals and gold; all told, it is worth 20 trillion dollars. In 2017, the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation announced its plans to design a spacecraft with a nuclear power plant to extract resources in outer space by 2040. the Chinese Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation said in 2017. By 2025 China is going to have reusable suborbital launchers to become the leading space power by 2045.

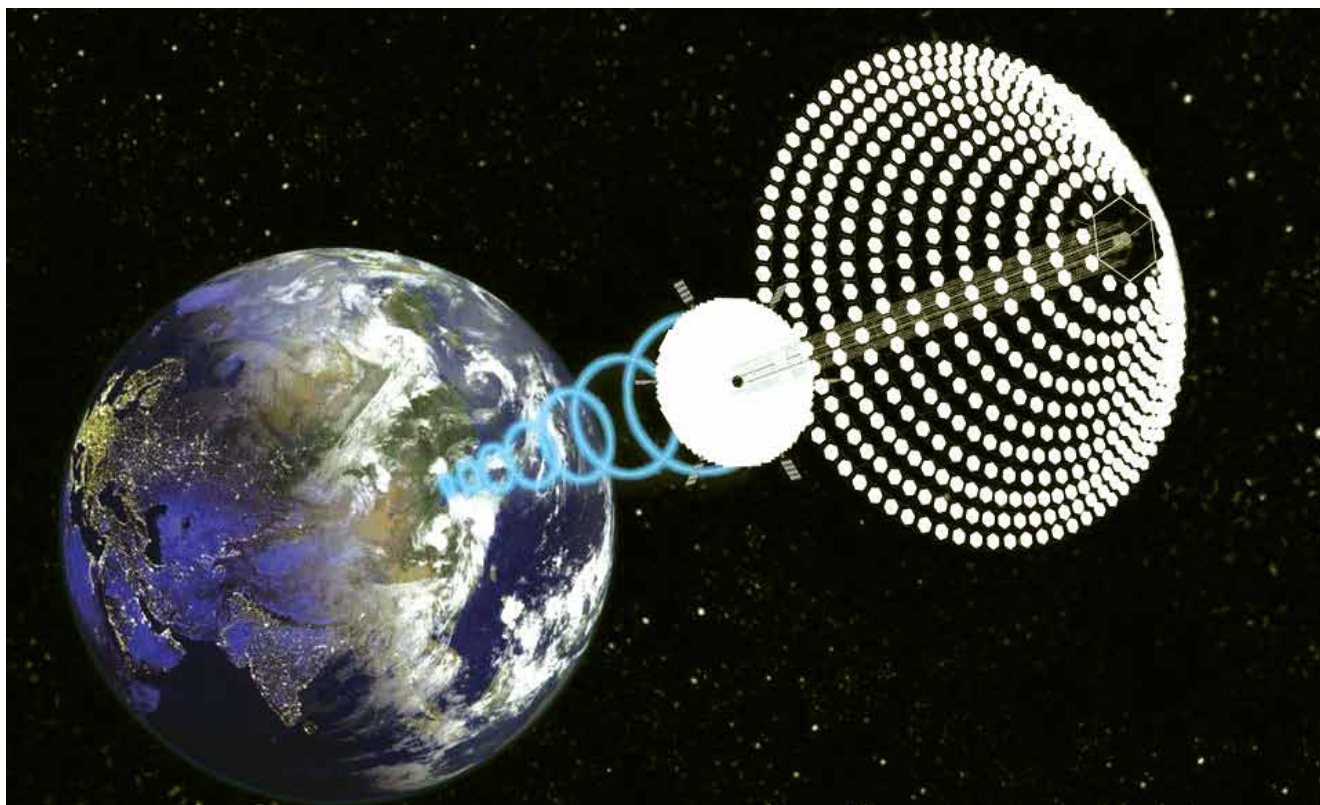


Fig. 1. A concept of SPS-ALPHA (Solar Power Satellite via Arbitrarily Large Phased Array)

authored by John C. Mankins

Source: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/scottsnowden/2019/03/05/china-plans-to-build-the-worlds-first-solar-power-station-in-space/#17184acc5c94>

There is one question that worries many people outside China, which non-Chinese organizations will have access to the Moon when China will control the near-Earth space? Here is what Peiyazan, an aerospace engineer and head of the Chinese Lunar Exploration Program, said in 2017: “The Universe is an ocean, the Moon is the Diaoyu Islands, Mars is Huangyan Island. If we do not go there today, when we are able to do this, our descendants will never forgive us. If other countries will be the first to reach them and start to rule there, we will not be able to get there, even if we want to. This is the reason [why China went to the Moon]”. Comparing the Moon and Mars to the disputed East China Sea and South China Sea islands the high Chinese official sends a clear message to the rest of the world as to the future policy of China in regard to outer space. It is quite possible that after China establishes its dominance in space it will also establish “special zones” and special courts dominated by the Chinese to consider disputable issues. The PR of China is already applying a similar policy for its projects on the ground.

In 2018, the Supreme Court of the People's Republic of China established two international courts to consider issues related to the One Belt One Road initiative (OBOR). The court in Shenzhen will consider disputes related to the maritime part of the OBOR project, while the court in Xi'an will consider claims related the inland part of the OBOR. Analysts say that by observing the actions of China in the South China Sea and Antarctica one can easily predict its behavior in outer space. Just like in space, in Antarctica the PR of China pursues three goals: to utilize oil reserves (energy), to search for and extract minerals (resources), and to build and expand research bases (human presence). Creating new maps, giving Chinese names to geographical features, gradual expansion of its military presence are all, which is the same for the South China Sea and Antarctica. The spacefaring nations must realize that without introducing general rules and establishing a dialogue concerning the problems of the near-Earth space the process can lead to actual implementation of the principle “he that comes first to the hill, may sit where he will”.

FOCUS ON: WORLD BEYOND THE BLACK SEA

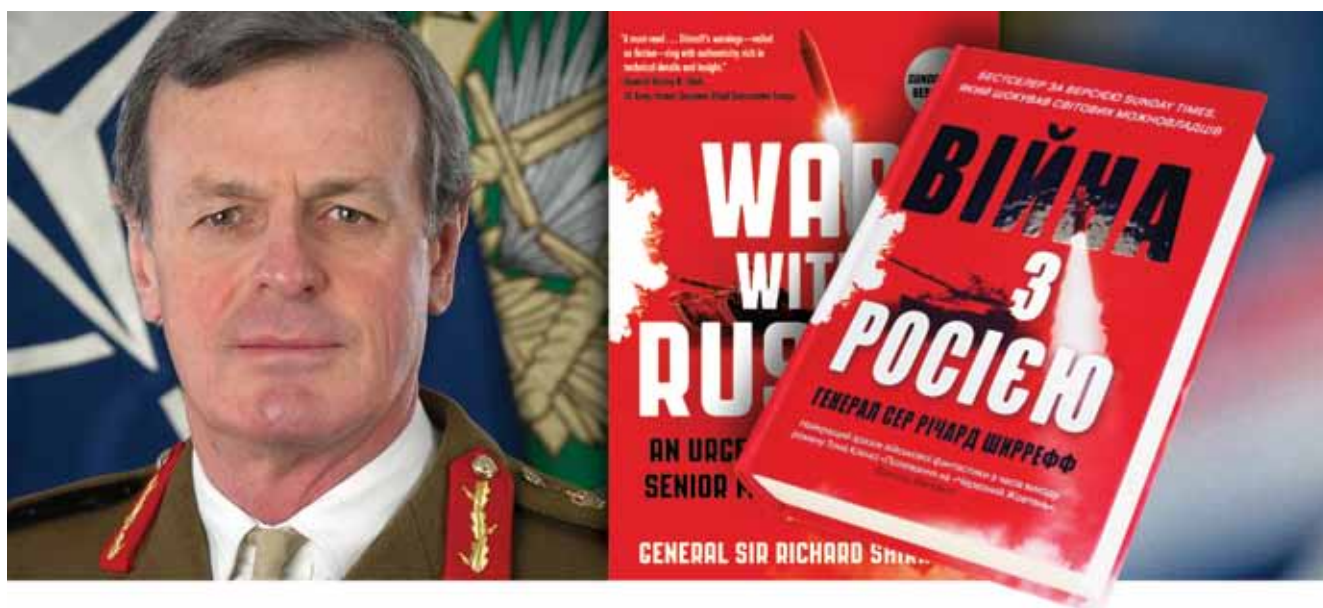
China has already expressed its intentions to set norms and rules of activities in space. In 2008 and 2014, the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation, acting together, came out with a draft of an international legal document pertaining to prevention of weaponization of outer space; however, it does not impose prohibition on direct-ascent anti-satellite weapons or land-based outer space weapons. It seems China wants to create alternative institutions, investment vehicles and industrial facilities in order to take the lead in the race. So far, the conquest of space takes place in legal void.

Meanwhile, Ukraine willingly helps the PR of China develop space technology, which fact has already raised concern in the United States. In late 2017 Ukraine and China approved an updated version of the bilateral program of cooperation in 2016-2019, which includes implementation of more than 80 projects related to China's Lunar Program, remote sensor systems for exploration of the Earth, creation of new materials, space debris monitoring and removal and deep space exploration. In September 2018 an employee of the US Department of Defense told the Kyiv Post that

Pentagon had talks with members of the Ukrainian government, the Presidential Administration and the Parliament, officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economic Development, the Security Service of Ukraine, the Armed Forces and Ukroboronprom Concern on possible long-term adverse consequences of the Chinese investments for the Ukrainian industry and warned against transfer of the Ukrainian technologies to China. The above-mentioned employee of the DoD added that in order to attract investments from the USA and not China first it is necessary to eliminate corruption.

It is obvious that while creating its Outer Space Silk Road, China will act in its own self-interest, just as it does implementing its One Belt One Road project on the ground. In pursuit of rapid gains from participation in the new space race, Ukraine should not jeopardize its long-term relations with its major strategic partner, the United States of America, which, unlike China, provides Ukraine with diplomatic, political and military support in rebuffing Russian aggression in general and in the Azov-Black Sea region in particular.

THE BLACK SEA SECURITY JOURNAL RECOMMENDS:
RICHARD SHIRREFF'S BOOK "WAR WITH RUSSIA"



Have you ever think about this: how can it be that in the 21st century Europe, stronghold of stability in the world, Russian tanks cross the borders of an independent country and arrogantly occupy Crimea right under the all-seeing eye of video surveillance and satellite monitoring? How can it be in the world where the international community guarantees territorial integrity of any peaceful country that an economically important region with almost two million inhabitants is brazenly annexed? How can it be that the USA, with the country's biggest military budget, choose to forget the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances and swallow its own helplessness? How can it be that Russian troops cross the borders of another country in an undeclared war and turn a densely populated industrial region of Ukraine into the scene of fighting? How can it be that a passenger plane of the country, which is a member of NATO, arguably the most powerful military force in the world, is shot down by the terrorists from the territory controlled by the Russian military, and... nothing? Economic sanctions. What was considered a legitimate reason for war in the past is now a pretext for crushing the European geese under tractor wheels.

How could the all-powerful West let it happen that the most influent European politician is a sleazy "Fantomas" from the Kremlin who, just like a conductor of an orchestra, directs the play in the Euro-

pean opera using his gas baton, who channels the righteous wrath of opposition and the ever-growing appetites of oligarchs?

How, oh Lord, the hugely advertised most powerful (on paper) military alliance in the world shuts its eyes when Russia laughs aloud and spits in their eyes, using chemical weapons and bombers against civilian population whose bad luck was not to reside on the territory of the enemies of its ally!? In addition, all that just to fill it with refugees who destabilize situation in the EU still more, forcing every political party to reckon with the big Russian Bear. It happens, while frightened burghers watch hordes of "poor" migrants celebrating near Cologne Central Station.

However, NATO is the most powerful military alliance in the world, pride of the West, with over 3 million best soldiers, state-of-the-art weapons and equipment. There are professionals who execute their duties properly and take into consideration all possible scenarios. Ukraine is not a member of NATO, but the Baltic states are NATO members in good standing since 2004. This means that if any of these states is attacked, that would mean an attack on the Alliance. That is why these professionals thoroughly consider all possible developments, including a military scenario. In 2015, when Russia concentrated troops near its borders with the Baltic countries, they stated that it would take Rus-

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sia only 60 minutes to defeat Western forces and occupy 3 NATO member states.

One of those high-class professionals who made known this disappointing prediction was a four-star general Sir Richard Shirreff, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe, retired after 37 years of service. He went from a soldier to a general and gained invaluable experience, both as a field commander and a staff general.

Written by a professional military, "The War with Russia" is well structured and coherent. The events unfold in the spring and summer of 2017.

There are several storylines and venues where the plot unfolds: Ukraine, Latvia, Russia, Brussels. Everything starts with the invasion of Ukraine, then Latvia suffers the blow when Russia attacks it. In Moscow Volodymyr Putin and his henchmen nurture plans of further aggression. At the NATO headquarters in Brussels senior officials of the Alliance decide what to do in order to avoid a nuclear war with the Kremlin. Just as in real life, there are errors, miscalculations and force majeure circumstances. Politics, diplomacy, strategy and tactics are all intertwined in the novel. While reading it, you can trace the events and actions from the top level decision-making to battlefield missions.

Information about the author, General Richard Shirreff:

Richard Shirreff was born in 1955 in Kenya where he spent his early years. Educated at Oxford – he studied history there. Upon graduation, he joined the British Army and eventually attained the rank of lieutenant with the Royal Armored Corps.

During his 37 years of service Richard Shirreff took part in numerous missions and commanded various units, from soldiers to high-ranking officers. He participated in the first Gulf War as a commander of a tank brigade. He contributed to three difficult operations in the Northern Ireland. Richard Shirreff has first-hand knowledge of how peace was created in the Balkans – in Kosovo and Bosnia.

In 2006-2007, he served in Iraq as a commander of the multinational brigade. When he did not participate in combat, he mastered the art of war at the courses organized by the higher command, as well as developed principles of military politics and implemented them working for the Ministry of Defense and the Defense Staff.

For seven years he held two high command posts in NATO command structure - he was the commander of the Rapid Reaction Corps and Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe. The latter is one of the most important functions in the Allied Strategic Command; this is the highest position ever achieved by British generals.

This information courtesy of "The Reader's Friend" https://vsiknygy.net.ua/shcho_pochytaty/50257/ and "Espresso" https://espresso.tv/article/2017/05/15/viyna_z_rosiyeyu

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Ukraine – EU – NATO Cooperation for Countering Hybrid Threats in the Cyber Sphere





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