



The enemy is fighting
like a coward, vilely,
pretending he has
nothing to do with it.
No one believes him now
but that doesn't stop
him.

Oleg Sentsov



Learning from Ukraine



PHOTO: MAKES LEVIN

Dear Reader,

» The war in Donbass, Russia's war against Ukraine that we know from television screens, is just part of the war that Russia has launched against all of us. After four years of Russian aggression, there is no point in reassuring yourself that there are no formal signs of war in our homeland. In this war, it is not tanks that play a major role. Even in Ukraine.

The aggressor has long been among us. It is well-aware of our weaknesses in home and foreign policy. It engages in skilful contemporary and historical battles. It is deeply rooted in our economy, in large business, in the media and nonprofit organizations where it finds loyal people who, in their own mercantile interests, are keen to serve it even better than those still active networks of Cold War agents.

After the presidential elections in the United States and France, and last but not least in the Czech Republic, after the referendums in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, the West must understand that the war is already on its streets. The erosion of democracy in Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic is no longer just a signal and poses a real problem for Europe. Belarus is already occupied by Russia although the occupation is hybrid, hidden.

Ukraine already went through this and eventually faced armed aggression, full-on occupation, sabotage, cyberattacks, gas wars, as well as economic and political pressure. We should learn from Ukraine's experience and understand that in its case, the destruction of the state preceded an armed offensive. Namely, a weakening of state institutions, fueling of internal and external conflicts, support for marginal radical movements and separatistic trends, economic pressure, and creation of an alternative reality through state controlled media. Hybrid war against the Ukrainian cultural code also extends to a deceptive 'affinity' of cultural interests, manipulation with such words as 'our own' music, cinema, etc.

Russia's goal is a war of all against all. This way, when it weakens the state, Russia will reign in Europe. At least it has such plans. Our common task is to understand this and not let that happen.

Editors of The Ukrainian Journal

Learning from Ukraine

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Editor: Lenka Víchová

Translation: Rita Chubarova

Proofreading: Christine Thompson

Photos: Piotr Andrusieczko, Vladyslav Musiienko,

Ivo Dokoupil, Maks Levin, Lenyara Abibulayeva,

Anton Naumlyuk

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PHOTO: IVO DOKOUPIL

Russian perspectives on the future

MYKHAILO HONCHAR

► One of Russia's main goals is the destruction of the transatlantic partnership and solidarity system, thus repositioning Europe towards Eurasia to create a so-called common security and trade area from Lisbon to Vladivostok, from St. Petersburg to Colombo.

'Russia is much stronger, and the West is much weaker than many can imagine. ... Our country is retrieving its place in the world. Compare the clumsy and expensive Soviet armed forces with the mobile and flexible armed forces of modern Russia', explains

Sergey Karaganov, one of the leading Russian political experts and architects of Putin's contemporary policy.

Two and a half years after Russia started the hybrid war, in an interview with Der Spiegel magazine, Karaganov clearly stated: '... we want the status



of a great nation. Unfortunately, we cannot abandon this goal: for the past 300 years this status has become part of our genome. We want to become the center of a great Eurasia, an area of peace and cooperation. This Eurasia will also include a European subcontinent’.

“The analysis of long cycles of economic and political dynamics shows that the most probable period of major regional military conflict with U. S. and its satellite’s participation against Russia, could be in 2015-2018’, believes Sergey Glazyev, one of the masterminds of Putin’s policy. According

to the above-mentioned approaches, Russia is the object of Western aggression. The West exerts expansion and aggression, not Russia. Russia is only defending itself. Accordingly, ‘if intellectual, economic and military mobilization is conducted in Russia, there is no chance to lose in the conflicts of 2015-2018, because the United States and their satellites will not be ready for open aggression’. The Kremlin’s logic dictates that offense is the best defense. According to Glazyev’s logic, the United States supplies gas to Europe because it wants to replace Russian gas with its own, as well as

to take over the traditionally Russian market of nuclear fuel thus via imposing an obligatory diversification of suppliers upon the EU. Russia considers competition, which is the basis of the market economy, to be a way in which the West conducts war against Russia. Therefore, Russia will act preventively and aggressively.

The energy context of Russian politics should not be underestimated. Glazyev’s statement is not just his opinion, but the reflection of a certain Kremlin position.

As a result of the shale gas revolution in the United States which Russia >



PHOTO: IVO DOKOUPIL

» considered a temporary phenomenon and an inevitably bursting ‘gas bubble’ to be ignored, the U.S. has not only become self-sufficient in gas, but has subsequently turned into its exporter. In other words, the U.S. became Russia’s rival, which Moscow did not expect under any conditions. The Gazprom scenarios, on the contrary, predicted that the U.S. would become an importer of Russian gas. In the mid-2000s, during the trend of increasing oil and gas prices, Gazprom expected to export 54 billion cubic meters of Russian LNG to the United States by 2015.

Unlike Turkmenistan gas, which Russia managed to prevent from getting into Europe, and gas from Iran, which is successfully blocked by Russia in Armenia and Syria, it does not seem possible to fence off American gas. Therefore, Russia is working on options for countering American gas expansion and is trying to impose its

alternatives on Europe, in particular North Stream 2, and to neutralize non-Russian options for gas supplies to the EU. Thus, polyhybression becomes necessary - subversive actions by the Russian Federation in those regions from which gas can flow to Europe, and which play an important transit role in promising gas streams. Russia will be able to act preventively.

The beginning of the hybrid war was unnoticeable. It became visible only after bringing the military component into action in either an explicit, or disguised form. All this indicates that the Kremlin is ready for a new, wider wave of geopolitical expansion, based on Russia’s power (including the military) and the weakness of the West. Actually, for the first time this expansion was tested in August, 2008 during the 5-day war against Georgia. In 2014, tests continued. It was determined that Russia has a unique window

of opportunity while U.S. President Barack Obama, and Washington are overwhelmed with Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria. In 2013, one Russian think tank specializing in the U.S. and Canada prepared a secret report for the Kremlin. Its idea: the U.S. foreign policy during the presidency of Barack Obama is weaker than ever before. It is likely that the next president of the United States will be on a par with Ronald Reagan and would make the country a global actor again. Taking into account the U.S. and Europe’s problems, NATO will prove to be an impotent instrument of the West. Therefore, Russia has a unique chance to take advantage of the weakness of the United States, the EU and NATO.

Russia had been preparing and continues to prepare, for a confrontation with the West, in a word, ‘heedless’ and thus incapable of efficient deterrence and neutralization policies



toward violators of international law, which have manifested in both Syrian and Ukrainian issues. The Syrian battlefield is a logical continuation of the 'cold' European battlefield of Moscow, where the information war dominates, as well as the 'hot' Ukrainian front. All this fits into the EU multi-crisis scenario and hybrid warfare technology, where the military component is absent from the initial stage.

Russia's multi-frontal war against the West will not bring it victory, just as the energy resources that Russia has have not made this country rich and prosperous. However, Russia will stubbornly move towards the goal of global geopolitical revenge until it is stopped in Ukraine, Syria and within the EU or until the international community creates a Russia-specific scenario of 'plurality of crises' through non-military means.



➤ Worldwide, the number of countries grow that perceive the following events as interconnected components of dangerous implementation of the new global policy by Putin's regime: Russian aggression against Georgia, de facto annexation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, establishing an enclave in Transnistria that is also controlled by the armed forces of the Russian Federation, occupation and annexation of Crimea, an attempt to separate from Ukraine its Southern and Eastern regions according to the Crimean script (Novorossia project), the Russian meddling in the Syrian conflict and democratic processes of the developed countries. However, there are countries where a track towards "normalization" of relations with Russia has emerged, in particular at the expense of recognizing the annexation of Crimea de facto and even de jure.

Based on its dramatic experience, Ukraine can be an example that Putin's regime seeks a global revenge for the historic failure of the Soviet empire. That he plots his own Anti-Western world with alternative basic values. In this capacity the modern Russia has become, along with such entities as ISIS, a new global threat in the 21st century.

Putin's Russia has emerged as a global leader of scientific research and practical application of the principles of the modern hybrid or diffused warfare.

Bohdan Yaremenko, Tetyana Guchakova, Andrii Klymenko,
Olga Korbut, Yuri Smelyanski

Learning from Ukraine

GLEN GRANT

Putin must destroy Ukraine as it exists now. To leave it intact is to destroy himself and his ambitions. He must win because of his war crimes: the mass graves, the torture in Donbas and Crimea, and the MH17 shootdown. All will put him firmly into The Hague as a war criminal. He must win because Ukraine is flourishing as a nation and it shows him as a failure. He must win because the truth will destroy him and Russia.

➤ Putin must invade or subdue Ukraine. He is not yet ready, but the evidence of his preparation is stark. He continues to reinforce, fight and kill in the Donbas. He continues to test new equipment, people and methods in Syria. He reinforces Crimea. He reinforces Kaliningrad to block Western reinforcement. He stockpiles equipment in Belarus. He continues to reequip the army, especially with tanks and modern technological systems. All this is far beyond any peacetime needs. He spends precious national money on the military he needs elsewhere. He continues to train for a strategic war in the west – which means Ukraine cannot escape this and will be a prime target. The Russian MOD says openly in the media that they need three more years to reequip the army in western Russia with tanks and to train troops. This time must not be wasted by Ukraine.

What is Putin doing now strategically with Ukraine? Firstly, he has tied the Ukrainian army down, and is slowly bleeding it of morale and ammunition. He wants to breed a feeling of helplessness. He is playing political games with the West around Minsk and peacekeepers that blinds other nations to the real game. Other countries probably do understand, but they are too frightened of the political and financial consequences of rearming. The United States, Poland and the Baltic states alone are taking this threat seriously. The rest wait and hope it will all go away. Even NATO is only half-engaged as it fails to politically address

the military weaknesses of countries like Bulgaria.

But hope, sadly, is not a valid military doctrine. Putin also tries to break up the West further as a political grouping, reducing the chances of political support and reinforcement when he does act. He is having success in this.

The current thinking of national leadership, shown by word and action, is that the “war is in the Donbas and will only ever be in the Donbas”. This is the most dangerous political and military problem for Ukraine. Putin wants and needs it to be like this. Europe and the United States want and need this. Putin is quite happy to waste Ukrainian human capital in the Donbas on both sides whilst he prepares his forces for a bigger game. The recent exercise of aircraft landing on main roads in Russia shows a level of seriousness few NATO countries match.

The separatists are just cannon fodder. Their task is to be “buyers of time” whilst Russia prepares. They are also part of the Russian stratagem. Ukraine’s senior military act as if they believe they are winning because they are fixated on their successes in this very limited tactical war. They and the Defense Ministry are missing the point, because they are not preparing fast enough for a strategic and operational war that would likely be outside the Donbas and would give no time to mobilize large reserve forces. The country is losing the bigger game because of this, and whilst becoming stronger tactically at static war, over-



all Russia is moving faster and gaining a strategic advantage.

For soldiers to be forced to stay in one defensive position like Minsk demands is always militarily wrong, because it gives the enemy the strategic advantage. Russia is taking advantage of this fact daily. Losing the strategic advantage is the greatest failure of any national or military leadership (read any military strategist – they all say the same – to hold a fixed defense is to break time-honored military rules).

Russia can identify where the troops are weak and go through or around. Ukraine’s military position in the Donbas is at a critical risk of encirclement, which is a common Russian strategic



PHOTO: WLADYSLAW MUSIIENKO

act. Russian troops practice this tactic regularly during exercises. Trench warfare also breeds an entrenched mentality among soldiers and staff, which is against all rules of war if you want to win. There may be no alternative politically to accepting Minsk, but it must be seen for what it is; a stratagem to keep the Ukraine army tied down and focused on one point. Russia is succeeding all too well in this.

The Ukrainian Army gets better every day, but overall it is not one of the best in Europe because it has some critical organizational flaws. Giving the army Javelin anti-tank missiles will not remove those flaws, and may even make them worse. People are confusing amazing bravery and minor tactics

with operational and strategic ability.

Operational ability is the ability to deliver force anywhere and win battles. Ukraine does not yet have this ability. Strategic ability is having a clear national goal and then creating the means to conduct operations where they are needed to achieve that goal. Ukraine's government does not have this thinking logic, either nationally or within the Defense Ministry and the staff. The military cannot do active operations at the operational level because they are not structured for this, and they are certainly not practicing it.

However, today Russia is practicing mobile battalion group operations hard. For Ukraine's forces to stay as they are physically and mentally in the

current military posture is to risk certain defeat if the battle becomes mobile – which it likely will. There must be strategic, operational and structural changes to the army.

The army is very good at what it does now. But it has not practiced changing to another style of warfare, as U.S. forces are doing now. This is because there is no doctrine, equipping and training for doing this. The vision of a mobile army is lacking at all levels. The army is weak in terms of quality of senior commanders and headquarters staff and critically weak in communications, logistics and medical. They would struggle if there were two or more fronts to support.



PHOTO: WLADYSLAW MUSIIENKO

Hybrid occupation of Belarus

MYKHAILO SAMUS

Belarus is under full military, economic, informational, and energy control. Its political leadership can be eliminated by Russian generals as soon as the need arises. The transformation of Belarus into a territory where Russia can implement its military and strategic goals, poses a direct threat to Ukraine and other nations.



➤ The process of hybrid occupation and complete surrender of Belarus has already begun. The arrest of a Ukrainian journalist on the count of 'espionage', Lukashenka's refusal to go to the Eastern Partnership summit and regular statements by the KGB, which accuse Ukraine of 'hostile actions' against Belarus, all testify that the next phase of the hybrid war against Minsk and Kyiv is well underway.

The Zapad (meaning West) military maneuvers started in 1977 as a strategic exercise for coalition troops (initially the USSR and Warsaw Pact countries, later the Union State of Russia and Belarus), during which they practiced innovative approaches to strategic operations in the Western Direction and the use of tactical nuclear weapons on the European battleground. Soviet strategists considered nuclear weapons an

instrument for de-escalating conflict, and the primary reason why Western politicians would agree to negotiations with Moscow had, in fact, these weapons been used. Of course, the modern Kremlin leader's understanding of "escalation-de-escalation of the conflict", in fact, bears a strong resemblance to the Politburo approaches of the former USSR's Communist Party Central Committee. They sincerely believe that nuclear weapons (especially tactical) can stop conflict and force the enemy to enter into peace talks.

The Zapad-1999 exercise became the first strategic maneuvers in the Western Direction staged after the collapse of the USSR. The Armed Forces of Belarus participated in the drill under the umbrella of united troops from the Union State of Russia and Belarus. These maneuvers were generally less ambitious than their Soviet counterparts from the point of view of moving toward the West. Their goal was to develop strategic operations for preventing NATO expansion to the East in the background of the first wave of Alliance enlargement (Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary). As a result of a significant decline in the combat capability of the Russian Armed Forces, the Kremlin declared a fundamental change in the role of nuclear weapons. Now, if conventional means failed to achieve a strategic advantage, Russia would agree to use tactical nuclear weapons. The Kremlin relied specifically on its nuclear weapons as a means of conflict de-escalation with NATO and completing its tasks for a strategic operation. In 2013, Zapad maneuvers became the latest test before the onset of aggression against Ukraine. Predictably, the operational structure of Russian and Belarusian Armed Forces during Zapad-2013 resembled the structure of the Russian army at the time of the aggression against Ukraine in 2014. In these exercises, among other things, the Russian generals examined the operational level integration of the Belarusian Armed Forces as well as the Western Military District of Russian Federation Armed Forces without any involvement of Belarusian command at strategic levels. Interestingly, the Russian General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate perfected the organization and use of 'terrorist' and 'illegal armed groups', while Russian special forces brigades honed their 'separatist' action tactics to achieve the operation objectives. In ➤

fact, throughout the course of Zapad-2013 irregular guerrilla tactics were practiced, which were later applied in Ukraine in 2014.

After the war against Ukraine began, Russia decided to stop their pretenses and complete the incorporation of the Belarusian army into the Russian Armed Forces. In this regard, the Shield of the Union-2015 exercise was decisive; it was intended to improve the conclusive subordination of the Belarus military to Russian command. The perfect description of the Kremlin's idea was delivered in a speech by the commander of the Western Military District, Anatoly Sidorov, on the results of the exercise. In particular, he stressed that one of the features of the Union Shield-2015 was the re-subordination of the Armed Forces of another state (obviously, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus) and their command in joint training and combat missions. 'An evaluation of the authorities' activities during the training, proved the feasibility of including regional groups of troops from the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation into a group of troops for strategic Western Direction, Sidorov said.

Thus, the Russian general had openly stated that the Belarusian army had conformed to the Russian command during the exercises, and all the groups of the Union State would become part of the strategic Western Direction which is directly overseen by Russian Federation Armed Forces General Staff. Meanwhile, any 'national filters', such as the president of Belarus, the Minister of Defense or the General Staff of the Belarus Armed Forces, were removed from the command and control system. Essentially, it would make sense – in a modern war, that a unit should receive decisions from its commander within a few seconds and therefore, inclusion of Belarusian politicians or military would only interfere with this system.

The main goal of Zapad-2017 maneuvers was to practice the operation in the strategic Western Direction with a group of said Union State troops according to a unified plan, and under a single command. This was carried out by the Russian Armed Forces General Staff, taking into account the creation of the Russian Federation Armed Forces 1st Guards Tank Army. In the meantime, the Republic of Be-

larus' Armed Forces, reinforced with intelligence, special operations forces, missile units, and Russian airpower, were the first echelon of the joint force, while Russian Armed Forces' Western Military District troops were the second echelon.

During the Zapad-2017 exercise, units from the Republic of Belarus' Armed Forces were assessed in regards to compliance with Russian army standards to ensure better compatibility in joint operations. The Belarusian army units trained for the first time as part of a battalion-sized

The next step of the Kremlin in the Belarusian direction will be forcing the political leadership of Belarus to capitulate completely, including the announcement of an official agreement on the deployment of Russian military bases in Belarusian territory.

task force based on Russian army experience gained in wars against Ukraine and in Syria. This confirms the assumption that steps have been made towards complete integration, including the tactical level of Russian and Belarusian army units.

During Zapad-2017 deployment of Russian troops to Belarus was practiced; in particular to areas in the direction of Poland (Warsaw) and the Suwalki gap and according to offensive scenarios in three main directions - the Baltic States, Warsaw, and the Suwalki gap.

The Russian command conducted practical exercises on how to use both strategic and tactical nuclear weapons.

The official scenario of the exercises (with incorporation of artificial territorial entities such as Veyshnoria) had nothing to do with the real Zapad-2017 plan, during which a strategic

offensive operation against NATO was rehearsed. In particular, according to the Russian command's official plan, Russia should, as a result of offensive actions, achieve the neutrality of the Baltic States and prevent the deployment of NATO troops to their territory; 'return historically Russian territories' of Latvia and Estonia; create a transport corridor to the Kaliningrad enclave. To this end, Russia would occupy Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, pass through the Suwalki gap, and conduct offensive actions in the direction of Warsaw. In case of an active counter-offensive by NATO (including attempts to liberate the Baltic States through Kaliningrad), the planned exercises provided for the use of tactical nuclear weapons that should 'de-escalate' the conflict and make NATO sit down at the negotiating table on Moscow's terms. Actual launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles from strategic missile submarines and tactical launches of semi-strategic Iskander missiles, testify to the credibility of the Russian generals' plans.

According to the results of Zapad-2017, deployment of groups of regional Union State troops as part of existing Russian Army strategic Western Direction troops was practiced within the scope of the strategic operation against NATO.

In this regard, the next step of the Kremlin in the Belarusian direction will be forcing the political leadership of Belarus to capitulate completely, including the announcement of an official agreement on the deployment of Russian military bases in Belarusian territory. After all, according to the results of Zapad-2017, the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces may declare that the exercise demonstrated the lack of strategic Belarusian reserves sufficient to conduct an operation against NATO, taking into account the strengthening of the Alliance's troops in Poland and the Baltic States. The main intrigue of relations between the two 'allies' in the near future will be how quickly and on what conditions, the 'surrender' of the Belarusian leadership will occur.



The militarization of Crimea

BOHDAN YAREMENKO, TETYANA GUCHAROVA, ANDRII KLYMENKO, OLGA KORBUT, YURII SMELYANSKI

During the first year – year and a half after the occupation of Crimea, Russia hoped for and accomplished certain steps towards investment-driven development of the peninsula, in particular in tourism.

➤ However, already by mid-2015, the Russian government began to understand futility of the initially ambitious plans of the economic development in Crimea. It was a direct result of international sanctions and economic blockade of Crimea by mainland Ukraine.

In 2016 the Russian Federation ultimately abandoned plans to create “a new storefront of Russia” in Crimea. On 28th of July 2016 it downgraded the occupied Crimea and Sevastopol. So-called “constituent territories of the Federation”, the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol are now a part of the Southern Federal District with Rostov-on-Don as an administrative centre.

Besides, political and administrative government was merged with the military one, because from the very beginning all units of the Russian armed forces in Crimea belonged to the Southern Military District with headquarters in Rostov-on-Don.

«Reverse» structural reorganization of Crimean economy

- As a matter of priority, efforts were launched to restore enterprises and facilities of the military-industrial complex that still remained from the USSR.
- Russian joint force grouping on the peninsula has been rapidly created. It is the largest in Europe and continues to grow.
- Since the first days of the occupation, only the newest military equipment and armament are sent to Crimea on a priority basis.
- All existing and numerous military airports that date back to the USSR, soft-site launchers, aerial defence facilities, Soviet nuclear weapon storages are being reconstructed.
- New reinforced region in the north

of Crimea was set up and is being developed.

- New garrison towns, residences for the military, and infrastructure are built and the old facilities are reconstructed to ensure dislocation of new military units.
 - Number of the military and various secret services personnel increases.
 - As a result of target military orders, enterprises of military industry (military machinery manufacturing, ship building and repairing) renewed their operations above all else. These facilities are merged with respective state conglomerates of the Russian Federation.
 - All other spheres of life in Crimea – economy, social aspects, human rights, information space, and national politics – comply with ideology of the military beachhead.
- More likely, nuclear warheads for naval and coastal missile systems are already in Crimea.



PHOTO: PIOTR ANDRUSIECZKO

» War in Syria and changes in the regional military balance

Since end of 2015, occupied Crimea became, together with Novorossiysk, one of the main bases of Russian operations in the war in Syria and remains as such until today. Armed forces of the Russian Federation in Crimea – surface ships, undersurface vessels, and naval infantry – actively participate in the military activities by the Russian Federation in Syria. In particular, small-size missile ship Serpukhov took part in combat firing at ground targets near Aleppo on the 19th of August 2016. On the 15th of November 2016, frigate Admiral Grygorovych launched 3 cruise missiles.

These practices continue in 2017 as well.

Large landing ships of the Russian Navy transported missile launchers, armoured vehicles, combat vehicles etc.

Ballistic attack potential and its delivery systems that were accumulated in the territory of occupied Crimea in 2014-2016 caused a significant shift in military and strategic balance in the Black Sea region, as well as in the situation in the Black Sea – Mediterranean and the Black Sea – Caspian regions in favour of the Russian Federation.

Naval cruise missiles Kalibr of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation are able to reach, when launched from Sevastopol, at the very least the Baltic states, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Romania,

Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Greece including the island of Crete, all Balkan states, Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Iran and Iraq, coast of Egypt and south of Italy.

Similarly to Kalibr, mobile coastal missile system Bastion with cruise missile Oniks can target not only ships but also small ground targets and has potential range ability of 600 km.

Bastion, when launched from Sevastopol, can hit ground targets in coast regions of all the Black Sea countries. It can also carry a nuclear warhead.

Operational-tactical ground mobile missile system Iskander has approximately the same range of 500 km and can carry a nuclear warhead up to 50 kilotons.



PHOTO: PIOTR ANDRUSIECZKO



PHOTO: PIOTR ANDRUSIECZKO

«Cold war» off the Crimean coast

Along with the drastic increase in numbers of anti-naval missile and air defence systems in occupied Crimea in 2014-2016, the Russian Federation began to apply methods of psychological pressure and demonstration of power against naval ships of non-Black Sea countries.

On the 12th of April 2014 the Russian bomber SU-124 without externally loaded missile and bombing munitions imitated attack on the

United States missile destroyer USS Donald Cook (DDG-75) on low altitude at least 12 times.

Besides, in April 2014 the Russian media undertook a massive information special attack. According to a fake message in hundreds of publications, SU-124 had used electronic counter-measures system Khibiny against the U.S. destroyer and managed to shut down electronic management complex of the Aegis combat system.

This became a usual practice that continues up to now.

However, already in 2016 results of Ukrainian and international sanc-

tions on military-industrial complex became obvious. They were remarkably painful for Russia and impacted modernization of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation.

Essentially, the program of building new surface ships for the Black Sea Fleet has failed midway. Bans of delivering Ukrainian and German engines to Russian factories were the main reason. The Russian government decided to replace import of Ukrainian engines with those manufactured by national enterprises, however this attempt was unsuccessful.



» Crimean «trophy economy»

Massive expropriation of all Ukrainian government-owned property in Crimea took place under a cynical title of “nationalization”.

A list of expropriated Ukrainian property comprises about 200 spas, all seaports, airports, facilities of water and power supply, railroad, wineries, grain elevators, and agricultural businesses. Such famous sites as Nikitsky

Botanical Garden, the well-known children camp Artek, Chornomornaftogaz, More shipyard and others were expropriated as well.

After the occupation of the Crimean peninsula the aggressor also received 13 Ukrainian facilities of the national enterprise Ukroboronprom as “war spoils”.

Not only Ukrainian public property was expropriated. Among those “nationalized” are assets that belong to

trade unions, other non-governmental organizations, colleges, the Academy of Sciences etc.

In 2015, “nationalization” of assets that belonged to Ukrainian business was executed. Experts of Maidan of Foreign Affairs believe that the assessment by Ukrainian lawyer Georgy-Logvinsky is the most credible – about 4,000 nationalized public, private and non-governmental organizations.

The military base and replacement of population on the peninsula

2,4 million residents in Crimea is economically excessive for a military base. Besides, they lived in conditions of Ukrainian democracy and freedom of speech almost for a quarter of century. Existence of the Crimean Tatar people on the peninsula was especially “aggravating” for the occupiers with regards to all complex aspects of its history, problems, and prospective national goals and tasks.

The Russian Federation choose a course of pushing “excessive” population out of Crimea and its par-

tial replacement through controlled migration from regions of the Russian Federation.

In 9 months of 2014 the number of population of the occupied Crimea decreased by 77,800 people.

During all period of occupation “excessive” population was forced out by means of exemplary, demonstrative persecutions. In 2016 they were directed not only towards the Crimean Tatars, but also towards “Ukrainian terrorists and infiltrators”. Moreover, persecutions of journalists continued.

At the same time, the colonization of Crimea by residents of different regions of the Russian Federation is encouraged.

The number of members of the military and their families is increasing. To this end, “military mortgage”

program was extended to occupied Crimea.

Officials from different regions of the Russian Federation systematically and massively replace Crimean public and municipal officials primarily insuch areas as education and health caredespite the fact that they had demonstrated loyalty regarding the annexation.

Resettlement to Crimea along with the purchase of housing for pensioners from remote northern regions of Russia, Siberia, and the Far East is also evident.

According to prognosis, a significant number of Russian workers from the construction of the Kerch Bridge and other large infrastructure objects will settle down permanently in Crimea.



Networks in conditions of war

MYKHAILO HONCHAR

Non-military components are preferred in winter because conducting large-scale military campaigns is difficult at this time of year. In 2014, a bet was placed on creating a shortage of anthracite coal and electricity.

On December 23, 2015 and December 17, 2016, cyber attacks on the Unified Power System of Ukraine were launched.

They failed but dealt some damage to a number of regional power distribution companies.

Two main energy networks of Ukraine, the Gas Transmission System (GTS) and the Integrated Power System (IPS), which are among the largest in Europe, are periodically exposed to cyber attacks from the aggressor's territory.

Gas hybressions

In May and June 2014, Ukraine's GTS became the object of sabotage. The sabotage on the objects of Ukrainian GTS was disguised as technical incidents and reinforced the propaganda rhetoric of Gazprom aimed at discrediting Ukraine as a transit country. Reasoning looked like a chain of associations: Ukraine's GTS is in critical condition, radicals from the Right Sector movement are responsible for the explosion, unstable Ukraine is a threat to Russia's transit to Europe, Russia and Europe should build bypass pipelines. However, gas supply to the EU did not stop even for a second because of the subversive

acts on the main Urengoy-Pomary-Uzhgorod gas pipeline.

After Russia seized deposits of the Black Sea shelf between Crimea and Odesa region, the gas balance of Ukraine has decreased by almost 1.7 billion cubic meters of annual production. Moreover, PJSC 'Naftogaz of Ukraine' lost control over assets in the ATO area to an extent of 185 million cubic meters. Thanks to the good interconnection of the Ukrainian GTS, it is very difficult to disrupt it rapidly, even by targeted physical intervention. For complete interruption of gas supply to the EU from the territory of Ukraine it would be necessary to conduct simultaneous explosions at 29 sites of the GTS facilities, which is a virtually impossible.



The GTS of Ukraine comprises 38550 km of high and medium pressure pipelines, 72 gas compressor stations, 1455 gas distribution stations, 13 underground storage facilities, 6 regional management departments for main gaslines, including 41 linear production offices for pipelines and 9 underground gas storage departments. The underground gas storage facilities are an integral part of Ukraine's gas transportation system. Their active storage capacity is 30.95 billion m3.

Source: PJSC «Ukrtransgaz»



PHOTO: WLADYSLAW MUSIIENKO

The coal factor

Anthracite dependence of Ukraine prior to the heating season of 2014/2015 was created by military efforts.

Ukraine was always independent on coal and not on gas, producing enough of the former, and even partially exporting it. Ukraine imported only a certain amount of coking coal for metallurgy.

The separatist groups of LNR and DNR, which were controlled by Russia, and Russian troops failed to capture the whole territory of Donbas (Donetsk and Luhansk regions). How-

ever they retained control over areas where anthracite is mainly mined and which supply the needs of 7 out of 14 thermal power plants in Ukraine.

With the onset of Russian intervention in Donbas, 69 out of 150 Ukrainian mines were forced to stop coal mining. 7 mines were destroyed during hostilities. In the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions there are 85 mines of all forms of ownership, which is 57% of the total number of Ukrainian mines of the pre-war period. About 60 of them were mining power-generating coal – anthracite. Only 35 state-owned mines

out of 90 that were subordinated to the Ministry of Energy and Coal Industry are located in the territory controlled by Ukraine.

Anthracite dependence automatically caused the electrical energy one, because shortage of coal in power plants means shortage of electricity.

However, Ukraine broke free of its temporary electricity dependency in 2015. Russia, in its turn, faced the energy blockade of Crimea from Ukraine that increased the price of the peninsula's occupation and caused the first costly steps aimed at the energy reorientation of the peninsula to Russia. ➤



» Attacks from cyber space on power grids

On December 23, 2015, the cyberattack on the management system of regional power distribution companies Prykarpattiaoblenergo, Chernivtsioblenergo, and Kyivoblenergo occurred in Ukraine. Because of that 220 000 consumers (about 1% of the total) in Prykarpattia, as well as in the Kyiv and Chernivtsi regions were left without power. The outage lasted from 1 to 6 hours.

The consequent investigation showed that the attack on the energy systems of Ukraine began in May 2014. Obviously, this coincides with diffuse invasion by Russia in Ukraine as part of the Novorossiia project. On May 13, 2014, a targeted mailing campaign was launched which installed the Backdoor.Fonten.Win32.4 trojan program (Black Energy Virus) after activation.

The employees of the attacked ob-

lenergos quickly resolved the situation and after turning off the disabled systems transferred control of the electricity distribution into manual mode and restored the power supply.

On January 20, 2016, once again infected files were mailed to energy enterprises of Ukraine. The Excel file was distributed on behalf of the IPS operator, National Power Company Ukrenergo and contained an open-source Trojan program.

At the end of December 2015, cyber attacks were also carried out on transport infrastructure, in particular on Ukrainian Railways and Boryspil International Airport. For example, the Black Energy Trojan contained a letter from Ukrainian Railways with safety recommendations allegedly sent by the Ministry of Industrial Policy. Also, 3 leading TV channels have become objects of cyber attacks.

The scale of the attack suggests that exposure to viruses could affect the information systems of a number of important objects, the attack on

which is postponed until more convenient time. Sandworm, a Russian group of hackers, is suspected. Based on the work of the U.S. experts in Ukraine, Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall said on February 12, 2016 that Russia is behind the cyberattack on Ukraine's energy grid. The team of experts included representatives of the U.S. Department of Energy, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of State and the FBI. The well-known international cyber security company ESET reported that the accident at Prykarpattiaoblenergo was the result of an external hacker attack. An official statement citing its own investigation indicates that the attack was a part of a more global hacking of Ukrainian and Polish companies. This information was confirmed by CERT-UA, a specialized structural subdivision of the State Center for Cyber Defense and Countering Cyber Threats.

PHOTO: TOM VICH



‘Victory over an adversary in this kind of war can be much more important than victory in the classical military confrontation, since it is bloodless, and the effect is striking, it bleeds out and shuts down all the authorities of the enemy state’.

General Yuriy Baluyevsky, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in 2004-2008

as non-lethal weapons of mass destruction. The first powerful offensive cyberoperation by Russia abroad was directed against Estonia, a member state of the NATO and the EU in April 2007. Systematic hacking attacks on state and private sites during 3 weeks were revenge for intentions of the authorities of Tallinn to transfer Soviet-era monuments that caused the Kremlin's negative reaction. Georgia was the next polygon for the mastering cyberattacks, this time in a military setting, during the Five-Day war of 2008.

Late 2009, by order of President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev, a Center for training specialists in the information confrontation was created.

On October 17, 2012, the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation in cooperation with the Agency of Strategic Initiatives, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and the Bauman Moscow State Technical University announced the national research competition, one of the topics of which was ‘Methods and means of circumventing antivirus systems, network security tools, protection systems of the operating systems’.

Founding new secret structures under the auspices of the military proves the fundamental swing in 2013 in favour of offensive activity in cyberspace. On February 13, it was declared that the information confrontation unit under the auspices of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation would be created. On February 22, 2017, Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation Sergey Shoygu at a special meeting in the State Duma admitted that ‘four years ago’ troops of information operations had

been put together. Army General Yuriy Baluyevsky, who was the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in 2004-2008, commented on Serhiy Shoigu's statement that victory in information confrontation is often more important than in the classical war: ‘Victory over an adversary in this kind of war can be much more important than victory in the classical military confrontation, since it is bloodless, and the effect is striking, it bleeds out and shuts down all the authorities of the enemy state’.

On December 29, 2016, for the first time officially and publicly in a joint statement by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Russia was accused of cyber attacks on the United States. Russia's actions 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 would conduct cyber operations against the U.S. government structures, critical infrastructure, think tanks, universities, political organizations, and corporations.

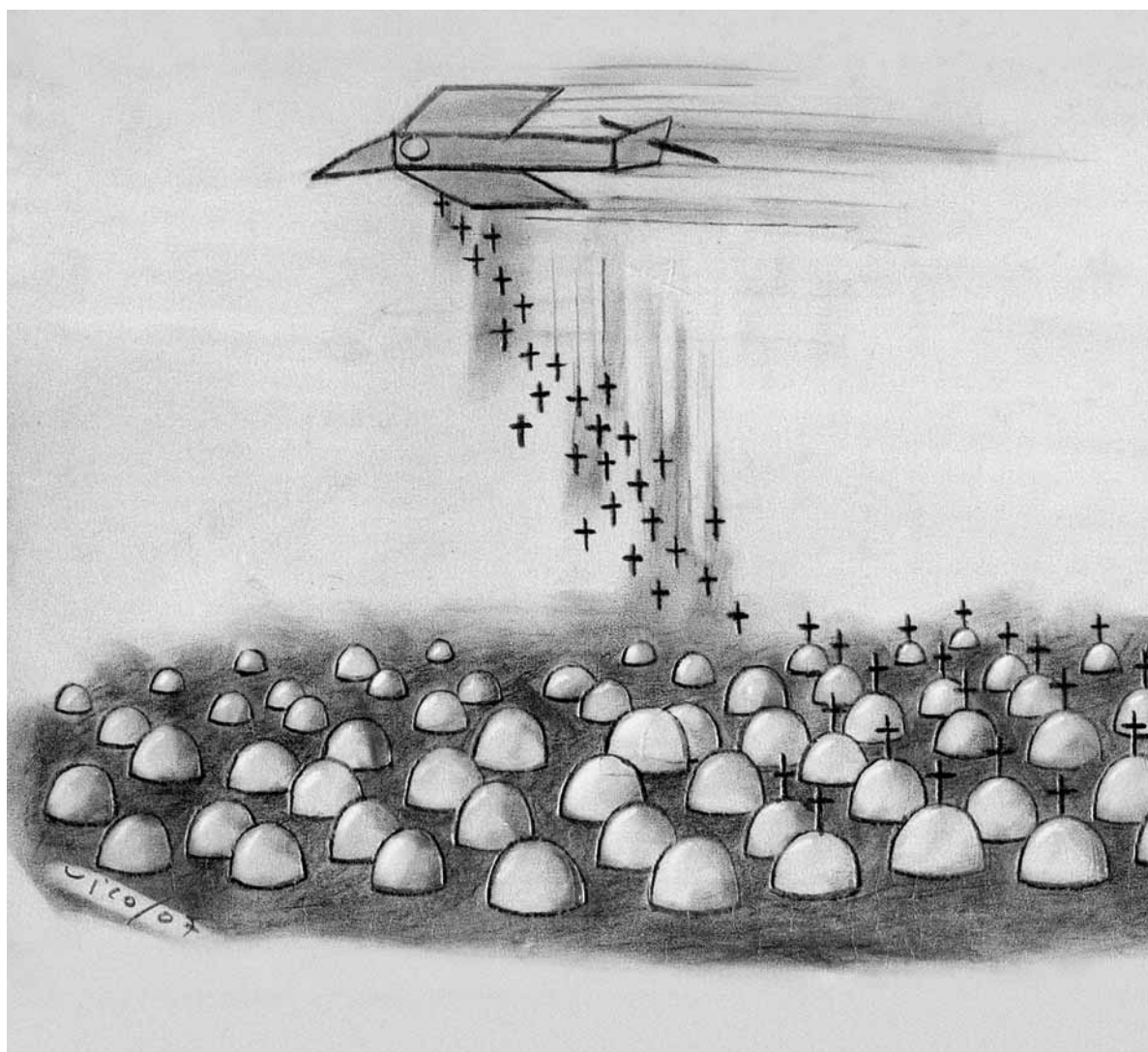
Thus, the United States and Europe took almost a decade to come to an official conclusion about Russia's unfriendly actions in the cyber space regarding the West. Such sluggishness and slowness only play into the Russian scenario of cyber Pearl Harbor. By zero hour, Russia strives to create a state of disinformation, chaos, and disorganization in the public administration, ideally in the operation center of the U.S. strategic nuclear forces and get a window of opportunity for nuclear blackmail of the West under certain scenarios.

The GTS of Ukraine encountered 3 powerful but unsuccessful cyber attacks. These attacks were aimed at the operations control center and the industrial communications of the gas transmission company Ukrtransgaz.

Cyber front against the West

2005 is the year when Vladimir Putin named the collapse of the USSR as the largest geopolitical catastrophe. The same year was defined by creation of a state-run, multilingual Russia Today television network, aimed at foreign audiences. Simultaneously with overt information-propaganda strategy of countering the West, another strategy – that of a cyberwar – was implemented. According to our estimates, it began in the mid-2000s at the same time when propaganda projects were launched.

Russia began to view information-psychological and cyber-operations



› **Cyber front against Ukraine** **Cyber front against Ukraine was opened simultaneously with the military component of the hybrid aggression by Russia.**

In 2014, the CyberBerkut group was created. It became notorious after taking responsibility for attacks on sites of government authorities and non-profits in Ukraine and western countries. The first attacks were carried out in March 2014 during the occupation of Crimea when several Ukrainian web resources were temporarily blocked and three web-pages of NATO were attacked. Critical campaigns by CyberBerkut in the information and cyber space include:

- obstructing the work of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine on the eve of the presidential elections on May 23, 2014;
- blocking the work of webpages of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and the General Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine beginning April 4, 2014;
- DDoS attacks on the website of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on April 10 and April 14, 2014;
- blocking cellular phone service of members of the Government of Ukraine;
- blocking leading news portals UNIAN and LIGABusinessInform;
- blocking the site of the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko on July 29, 2014.

In February 2015, with the support of Russian law enforcement agencies, a similar hacker organization called SPRUT (the so-called 'System of coun-

teracting Ukrainian terrorism') was created. This organization attacks official webpages of chiefs of regional state administrations, the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and the Chief Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine.

In late 2015, the senior management of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation created a Center for Information Confrontation (CIP) in Novochoerkassk as part of the Center for Territorial Command of the Southern Military District of the Russian Federation. A powerful software and hardware complex was delivered to Donetsk, designed for separate cyber attacks (DDoS-attacks).

The war in the enemy territory

KRISTINA ZELENYUK

Events of the last year clearly showed that the war in Ukraine is underway not only in Donbas, but also in the rear.

► In the past year alone, six high-profile assassinations were committed in Ukraine, and Ukrainian law enforcement agencies classified them as terrorist attacks. According to the law enforcement, a Russian footprint is visible in all of them.

Intimidate or Eliminate?

'Enemy uses calm in the ATO zone for sabotage in Ukraine's other regions. Investigators and police officers are doing a lot of work in order to get closer step by step to those who are organizing these terrorist and sabotage acts. We have identified almost 1,000 members of subversive groups, of whom 114 were detained and 54 were convicted. Each of these detainees or each terrorist act that we have managed to prevent means

saved lives', Vasil Hrytsak, the head of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), says.

In 2016, the whole country was shaken by the tragedy of Pavel Sheremet, a well-known journalist. His car was blown up early July 20, 2016 in the heart of the capital.

In the spring of 2017, the country was rattled by another murder, once again in the heart of the capital. In the middle of the day on March 23 former deputy of the State Duma Denis Voronenkov was shot, he had received Ukrainian citizenship a month earlier. The killer opened fire in plain view of dozens of passers-by near Premier Palace hotel in Kyiv, where Voronenkov was to meet with former deputy of the State Duma of Russia Ilya Ponomarev.

Voronenkov was one of the main witnesses of Russian aggression against Ukraine and the role of the

fugitive president Viktor Yanukovich in orchestrating invasion of Russian troops into Ukraine.

Early October 2017, the General Prosecutor's Office announced that it had solved the murder. The investigation concluded that the hit on Voronenkov had been ordered by Volodymyr Tyurin – a Russian mob kingpin and the former common-law husband of widow Maria Maksakov – as ordered by Russian Federal Security Bureau. The criminal group that organized Voronenkov's murder was comprised of seven people: Russian citizens Tyurin, his son Dmitrii, the intermediary between the client and organizers, organizers and perpetrators – Ukrainians Yurii Vasilenko, Oleksandr Los, Yaroslav Levenets, Yaroslav Tarasenko and Pavlo Parshov. Tarasenko and Los are detained, Levenets and Vasilenko are wanted. ►



PHOTO: PIOTR ANDRUSIECZKO



PHOTO: WWW.UNIAN.NET

Strike on intelligence and military

In March 2017, Oleksandr Kharaberyush, deputy head of the main counter-intelligence department of Security Service of Ukraine in Donetsk, died in explosion of the car in Mariupol. A couple of weeks ago, the Security Service detained in Odessa a woman suspected of explosion. According to Vasyl Hrytsak, she received \$15,000 for committing this terrorist act. 'The

woman was a member of so-called Special Operations Center, which operates under the auspices of 'the Ministry of State Security of the Donetsk People's Republic'. It is led by Yevdokimov Vasiliy Viktorovich under alias 'Lenin'. The center's activities are coordinated and funded by the special services of the Russian Federation', head of the SBU Hrytsak says.

Three months later, in Kyiv, a car of Maxim Shapoval, the chief of the Special Reserve of the General Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defense, was blown up in broad day-

light. Nobody doubts that in his murder, as was the case of Kharaberyush, Russia is to blame. It was Shapoval's subordinates who conducted reconnaissance operations in the ATO area and in the uncontrolled areas of Donbas. The case is being investigated by the General Military Prosecutor's Office. According to the investigation, the same 'Special Operations Center of the MSS of the DPR' is responsible; not only it is coordinated and funded by the Russian special services, the Center also prepared and executed the murder of Kharaberyush.

The Chechen footprint

In early September 2017, a citizen of Georgia, Timur Mahawi, was killed in the heart of the capital. The car was blown up. Mahauri fought as a volunteer in the Chechen battalion of Sheikh Mansur in Donbas and, as stated by the SBU, was a personal enemy of Ramzan Kadyrov. Besides, the Russian special services have been chasing Mahauri for a long time. He was quite well-known in criminal circles. He was detained and brought to justice in Ukraine, but entered into an agreement with the investigation, found guilty and received a conditional term.

Late in the evening of October 25, Ihor Mosiychuk, Ukrainian political expert Vitalii Bala and the local resident Nadiya Tarasenko were injured as a result of the explosion with a kilogram force in TNT equivalent when leaving the Espresso TV channel. The bodyguard of the People's Deputy, 31-year-old senior lieutenant of police Ruslan Kushnir and a casual passer-by who happened to be a retired Lieutenant Colonel of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Mykhaylo Mormil died of injuries.

On October 30, someone fired at the car of Chechen volunteers Amina Okueva, who died on the spot, and her husband Adam Osmaev. Since 2014, they have fought in Donbas on the Ukrainian side with battalion Kyiv-1 as part of the Battalion named after Dzhokhar Dudayev. Okueva was also a freelance assistant to Mosiychuk. It was not the first assault on them. In summer, in downtown Kyiv a killer shot in Osmaev's chest.



AMINA OKUEVA



Regime's war on the dissidents

BOHDAN YAREMENKO, TETYANA GUCHAKOVA, ANDRII KLYMENKO,
OLGA KORBUT, YURII SMELYANSKI

Criminal prosecution of fabricated cases, searches at homes of the community leaders, assassinations and torture of dissenters – those are the methods that Russia uses in Crimea.

» The victims of the occupation regime include human rights activists, journalists, those who supported the Ukrainian military units and protested against the referendum organized by Russia; these victims belong to different nations. Thus, persecution of history teacher Oleksiy Chyrnyy, photographer Hennadii Afanasiev, activist Oleksandr Kolchenko and film director Oleg Sentsov became public. They were charged with terrorism for alleged arson attack on the office of the United Russia party, as well as for plans to blow up the monument to Lenin and the Eternal Flame memorial in Simferopol.

The detained gave testimonies under torture, the court process itself was mishandled.

As predicted, the Russian court order was inadequate. Oleg Sentsov was sentenced for 20 years, Oleksandr

Kolchenko for 10 years, and Oleksiy Chyrnyy for 7 years in a maximum security colony.

Ukraine managed to arrange the release of Hennadii Afanasiev via exchange by the Kremlin in 2016.

Terror against a single nation

However, the Crimean Tatars as the largest and most organized community with a distinct pro-Ukrainian stance experience one of a kind cruelty on the part of the Russian system. In the first days of occupation, the Kremlin tried to win the Crimean Tatars over by promising them numerous political dividends, but after unsuccessful attempts to find a common ground, it quickly went down the road of arbitrariness and terror.

On the one hand, the blow is inflicted on the national movement in its political dimension. In particular, in September 2016, activities of the Mejlis, the representative body of the Crimean Tatars, were banned. Its Chairman Refat Chubarov and the Leader of the Crimean Tatars Mustafa Dzhemilev (both are deputies of the Ukrainian parliament) are barred from entering their homeland. Other leaders of the Mejlis, Akhtem Chiygoz and Ilmi Umerov were also prosecuted. Luckily, they were freed in October 2017 as brokered by Turkey.

In order to further disunite the nation and frighten people, the occupation authorities resort to punitive and demonstrative actions against certain individuals. Usual practice is to carry out searches and detentions, in particular simultaneously at numerous locations.



PHOTO: LENYARA ABIBULAYEVA

Among other things, some Crimean Tatars are accused in the so-called “Muslim case” regarding the activities of the Islamic movement Hizb ut-Tahrir. In Ukraine and in Europe, it is not banned and is not considered a terrorist organization. However, in the Russian Federation, the movement is outlawed, which has allowed to persecute more than ten Crimean Muslims. These political prisoners have been or will be sentenced to 5 – 15 years in prison.

Muslims or terrorists

Ruslan Zeytullaev is among the victims of persecuting Hizb ut-Tahrir. Russia treated him in a really cynical way and charged him for the organization of terrorist activities. In May 2016, the North Caucasus District Military Court in Rostov-on-Don sentenced Zeytullaev to seven years in the colony. Then in July 2017 the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation increased the prison term to 15 years after a new trial. Zeytullaev himself says that he suffered because of his active civic stance and human rights activism. His case is an example of how Muslims became an “undesirable element” in the new Crimean realities.

What’s worse, that people in Crimea are still disappearing. According to the non-governmental organization Crimea SOS, in the first months of the annexation 23 people were abducted in the Crimea. Some of them were found dead, and nothing else is known about others. The UNHCR report states that as of September 2017, 10 people remain missing, and six of them are Crimean Tatars, one is Ukrainian, one is of Russian-Crimean Tatar descent.

Disappearances are not investigated at all or the investigation is inefficient, as was the case of the first victim of the occupation Reshat Ametov. He went on a one-man protest against occupation of Crimea by the Russian army in the center of Simferopol, where he was kidnapped by unknown people in a camouflage uniform. The incident was recorded by the surveillance camera. Two weeks later Ametov’s body was found with the traces of brutal death. The offenders still are not punished.

If we turned a blind eye on international law and morality and agree to reconcile with the Kremlin, then the Crimean Tatars and all political prisoners would remain alone with the aggressor.



Oleg Sentsov's letter

To all whom it interests,

For three years I've been sitting in a Russian prison. For those three years a war has been conducted against my country. The enemy is fighting like a coward, vilely, pretending he has nothing to do with it. No one believes him now but that doesn't stop him.

War is never pretty but truth is on our side. We attacked no one and are just defending ourselves. However, there are other enemies besides the known, outside ones. They are smaller and on the inside, here, under our skin, almost native. But they aren't supporting us. They are supporting themselves.

Some of them are leftovers from old times, times of poverty and fear. Some desire just to live in the old ways but in a new guise: newly rich and empowered. But it's not going to work out. Each enemy, the larger and the smaller one, has different goals but we are on paths different from the ones they're taking. I'm not going to state: "we'll see who wins". I know who will win. The desire for freedom and progress is unstoppable.

There are many of us in captivity in Russia and even more in Donbass. Some have been freed. Others wait and hope. Everyone has their story and their experiences of conditions of detention. Some do PR on behalf of the captives. Some really get down to work. Becoming a better-known prisoner – to get exchanged for Russian captives in Ukraine – faster than others isn't, however, the way I'd choose.

I don't want to pull a blanket over me. I want to remain just a surname on the list. I doubt I'll be given an offer to leave prison last – but that would've been a good choice all the same. Here, in captivity, we are limited: and not even by freedom – this can no longer be taken – but by being of little help to our country while we're in here. To be more precise, we can do one thing: hold on.

There is no need to pull us out of here at all costs. This wouldn't bring victory any closer. Yet using us as a weapon against the enemy will. You must know: we are not your weak point. If we're supposed to become the nails in the coffin of a tyrant, I'd like to become one of those nails. Just know that this particular one will not bend.

Glory to Ukraine!

Oleg Sentsov
August, 2016





Disappearance, kidnapping, murder. Repressions against the Crimean Tatars.

PIOTR ANDRUSIECZKO

According to a report from the organization CrimeaSOS, between the beginning of the annexation in late winter 2014, and late December 2016, 43 abductions have been recorded. Of the total number of people kidnapped, 7 people were released after some time in captivity, 6 were found dead, 2 were subsequently sentenced by the Russian court and are currently incarcerated, and 18 are still missing.



PHOTO: IVO DOKOUPIL

➤ The authors of the report break down the known abductions into two periods. The first period lasts from March to May 2014. The second - from summer 2014 to December 2016.

During the first period, most of the kidnapped were released (often after having been tortured). Five have not

yet been found, and one person was found dead.

At that point, Ukrainian activists and journalists made up the majority of the missing persons. The Russian special services and members of so the called Crimean 'self-defense' units were behind the detention. Of-

ten, kidnappings take place in broad daylight and in the presence of witnesses.

From the summer of 2014, the situation has changed. Most of the victims are Crimean Tatars, and of the 11 abducted Crimean Tatars, 5 were found dead.

► Political cases

On the 26th of February 2014, several thousand people held a protest before the Verkhovna Rada of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in support of the territorial integrity of Ukraine; Crimean Tatars were among the protesters. On this day, a brush with pro-Russian counter-demonstrators occurred which then turned into mass clashes.

Even from the point of view of Russian legislation, Crimea was at that moment under Ukrainian jurisdiction. Nevertheless, the Russian authorities along with Crimean prosecutor, Natalia Poklonskaya, then decided to initiate an investigation of the organizers of the pro-Ukrainian rally under the criminal charge of inciting mass disorder.

In January 2015, Mejlis deputy chairman Ahtem Chygoz and others were detained. As a result, seven Crimean Tatars were charged in the so-called case of February 26th.

On September 11, 2017, after a trial in which the prosecution party presented statements given by anonymous witnesses in a Russian court in Simferopol, Ahtem Chygoz was sentenced to 8 years in a high-security prison. He was accused of "organizing and participating in mass disorder" during the rally for the integrity of Ukraine on February the 26th in Simferopol.

On October 25th, Chygoz was handed over to the Turkish side; the media believe Turkey's president Recep Erdogan, facilitated Chygoz's case.

In addition to Chygoz, Turkey accepted another Mejlis deputy chairman, Ilmi Umerov who in September 2017, was sentenced to two years in a high security prison for the crime of violating the integrity of Russia.

In 2016, Federal Security Service investigators filed a criminal case against Umerov. He was indicted according to Article 201.1 of the Criminal Code under which he is charged with calling for public action aimed at undermining the integrity of Russia as a result of Umerov's appearance on the Crimean-Tatar TV channel, ATR, in Kiev.

Umerov explained, 'On the contrary, I advocate the reinstatement of the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation since Russia itself, violated it's own integrity by annexing part of another state's region'.

During the trial, the defendants

were forced to undergo involuntary psychiatric examination, reminiscent of the practices of the USSR.

Today, a similar case is underway against the Crimean Tatar activist Suleyman Kadyrov. On October 5th, Russian services conducted a search of his house on the basis of a ruling by Judge Rodionov on the suspicion of his calling for the non-recognition of the borders of Russia and the support of the civil group Asker.

On October 11, 2016, Suleyman Kadyrov was charged with 'separatism'. In April 2017, the Federal Financial Monitoring Service put him on a list of extremists and terrorists.

Kadyrov is a well-regarded retired officer of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. He became one of the first Crimean Tatars sent to Crimea as an officer of the Soviet militia when Crimean Tatars began to resettle there.

After the annexation, Kadyrov did not withhold his pro-Ukrainian views. On November 30, 2015, FSB officers along with 12 masked officers armed with assault rifles broke into his house in Feodosia.

'How have we reached this point? Throughout the search, they stood with rifles aimed at us. Even so, I am not afraid of guns,' said Kadyrov's 76-year-old mother in June 2016.

Kadyrov's trial continues, but he does not intend to abandon his stance.

Hizb ut-Tahrir or Muslims on the dock

The Russian authorities in Crimea are pursuing criminal cases regarding terrorism and extremism. Crimean Tatars are accused of belonging to the organization Hizb ut-Tahrir, which Russia considers a terrorist group although the party legally operates in the United States and until 2014, was also legal in Ukraine and Crimea. Hizb ut-Tahrir is a Pan-Islamic party that spreads the ideas of the Caliphate, while rejecting the use of force.

Fifteen people have already been detained for their connections to Hizb ut-Tahrir. Three were sentenced to 5 years in prison, and one - Ruslan Zeytullaev - received up to 15 years. They were all sent to different regions in Russia.

Families of the arrested Crimean Tatars talk about the persecution of those who adhere to the fundamen-

tals of their religion. Representatives of Crimean Solidarity, the organization which provides legal and financial support for the families of the accused, state that the authorities categorize Muslims into two groups; those loyal to Russia and its opponents. The first group is represented by the Russia-controlled Mufti, the other group unites activists who object to the Russian presence.

'Our religion does not allow us to be aloof if someone is in misfortune,' the representatives of Crimean Solidarity emphasize.

"Administrative cases", or quickly and on a large scale

The widespread persecution of Crimean Tatars by Russian authorities on the peninsula is delivered in the form of administrative punishments. The first large-scale wave of administrative cases took place in May 2014, when Crimean Tatars came out to protest against the banning of Mustafa Dzhemilev's entry into Crimea.

Recently, this method has been employed most actively as courts imposed several hundred administrative punishments on Crimean Tatars in 2017.

This is a simple and expedient method of punishing and intimidating the disobedient en masse.

If several people gather in a public place at the same time and thus obstruct the movement of pedestrians or vehicles, it can be used as a reason for detainment.

When searches and arrests began among Crimean Tatars, neighbors stopped by their homes and stood outside court houses to express their support. Local activists filmed searches and shared them on the Internet.

'After the annexation of Crimea, many journalists and activists left the peninsula, then the arrests and inspections began. The authorities wanted to do this with minimal publicity. We decided to inform the public about these cases so that knew what was happening. On February 21, 2017, we once again heard about a search in the house of Marlen Mustafayev and we came to support him. We recorded what happened on our phones. Eventually, one of the officers said, 'Let us now explain.' A few sentences were spoken through a megaphone. In the



PHOTO: LENYARA ABIBULAYEVA



PHOTO: PIOTR ANDRUSIECZKO

‘On the contrary, I advocate the reinstatement of the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation since Russia itself, violated it’s own integrity by annexing part of another state’s region’.

Ilmi Umerov

› end, our hands were twisted and we were dragged to the car,’ activists from Simferopol anonymously recall in March 2017.

That time 10 people were detained. They were arrested and held for 5 days for violating public order (allegedly they were going to block the road).

Another cause for administrative punishment can be the publishing and distribution of extremist materials via social networks.

‘My husband, Seyran, was charged with leading an illegal rally just because he stated in a mosque that the Crimean Tatars’ homes were being searched. But this is our tradition: if a Muslim happens to be in trouble, they will announce this in the mosque’, says his wife, Mumine Salieva. ‘In January, employees of the Center for the Prevention of Extremism came to our house. They didn’t find anything illegal, but her

husband, Seyran, was accused of organizing an illegal rally and spreading extremist materials within the social network. He was also charged with listening to Chechen songs by Timur Mutsuraev, some of whose songs are prohibited in the Russian Federation. He was detained for 12 days,’ Mumine Salieva says.

One can also be subject to administrative punishment for attending illegal rallies. In Crimea, there have been no major protests for a long time, however, Crimean Tatars sometimes go out to protest; demanding that they to stop being treated as terrorists, for example.

Consequently, the court imposes fines or arrest. On the 18th of December alone, Crimean courts imposed fines on dozens of Crimean Tatars.

‘I do not do politics, but as a woman, wife and mother, I would like to ask people in Europe not to forget about the Crimean Tatars! With what can you compare the pain of a mother whose son is missing? How can we describe the fear of mothers who are waiting in the evenings for their children to come home? And we are only guilty of wanting to live on our land and feel free. Europe should not be indifferent to what is happening in Crimea,’ says Elmira Ablyalimova, wife of Ahtem Chiygoz.

Not only Crimean Tatars

It is not only Crimean Tatars who were under the special supervision by Russian authorities. Crimean-born Oleg Sentsov is serving a 20-year prison term in the Russian colony.

On August 4, 2017, 46-year-old Ukrainian farmer Volodymyr Balukh was sentenced by the district court in Crimea for 3 years and 7 months for the storage of explosives and ammunition. His story began at the end of 2013, when Balukh, a resident of the Serebryanka village (in northwestern Crimea), displayed a Ukrainian flag on his home in solidarity with the Maidan in Kiev. International organizations have recognized Balukh and Oleg Sentsov as political prisoners.

There are a lot of similar cases.



Nikolai Polozov says, 'There is a house, there are people in togas, there is a prosecutor, but there is no court'

INTERVIEWED BY
PIOTR ANDRUSIECZKO

Nikolai Polozov defended Nadiya Savchenko and Pussy Riot. In Crimea, he represented the interests of Ahtem Chiygoz (the deputy chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, an institution that is banned in Russia). He was accused of organizing mass unrest during the pro-Ukrainian demonstration of Crimean Tatars on February 26, 2014. As a result of Turkish intervention, Chiygoz and Ilmi Umerov were released in the fall of 2017. We talked with Polozov in March 2017 in front of the Russian Supreme Courthouse in Simferopol.

In a lawsuit against former deputy chairman of Mejlis Chiygoz, the testimony of an anonymous witness was used, it is virtually impossible to identify this person. Is this how it's usually done?

The law provides for the possibility of hearing witnesses whose personal information is classified. For that matter, not only in Russia but also in other states. In Russia, however, this provision is abused. Initially, the provision was created to ensure, for example, that a member of a criminal group could testify against other criminals, in such cases data is withheld for the safety of that person and their family.

In Russian political cases, often police investigators are witnesses. It is impossible to control it. However, there are provisions that allow the defense to protect all data regarding witnesses, but the court denies us access. Therefore, in this particular process and other political processes in Russia, the authorities abuse the use of anonymous witnesses in the interests of prosecution. Sentences are often pronounced on the basis of anonymous testimony. Unfortunately, the European Court of Human Rights does not pay much attention to the abuse of this rule in Russia.

What is the prognosis in a broader context, given retaliations against Crimean Tatars?

In Russia, there has been no acquittal in any political process in modern history; with Putin's regime it is impossible. At best, if the accused were innocent and they had to somehow solve this problem, this person was first sentenced and then pardoned. This was the case, for example, with Nadiya Savchenko and Hennadii Afanasiev. The second option is that the convicted person is released after sentencing: time in detention is counted as time served toward the sentence. The authorities may also apply amnesty, which also changes the situation of a particular person. In other cases, the result is

the same – a guilty verdict, regardless of evidence, and time in prison. Why is this happening? Russia has no independent judiciary. Courts in Russia are completely dependent on the executive, the same is true with the legislature. It's no secret that the State Duma of the Russian Federation is a structure that is fully governed by the president's office. Courts are in a similar situation. In other words, there is a house, there are people in togas, there is a prosecutor, but there is no court. At most, judges will try, depending on their level of obedience, to comply with court procedures. They know in advance what the verdict will be but not its strictness.

In this case, is there any chance of a case going through all authorities in the Russian Federation and then on to appeal to the European Court?

If it goes about the legal component then yes. My colleagues, including Mark Feygin, and I have been controlling (overseeing as well as participating in) the defense in political trials in Russia for several years. We have certain tested techniques that we call political advocacy. This implies a kind of hybrid symbiosis in various areas: legal, where we do what lawyers usually do, as well as the media, where we communicate with the public, form opinions, inform on a particular case.

There is also the political side of the case which involves a lot of institutions in order to establish a dialogue with the Russian authorities and pressure them. The best example is the case of Nadiya Savchenko. Why was she released? First of all, we undertook a series of steps that resulted in electing her to the Verkhovna Rada and appointing her a delegation member of the PACE. For the first time in post-Soviet history, in connection with a criminal case, the U.S. president called the president of Russia to demand her release. The last time a similar situation occurred was in the case of the Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov. These actions pretty much led to the release of Savchenko.



PHOTO: ANTON NAUMLYUK

» **Are you not afraid that you will be pressured by the authorities, as was the case with Emil Kurbedinov's lawyer?**

This is already happening. During the last six months in Crimea, there were two attempts to charge me in a criminal case. Moreover, the first attempt still continues from September. Investigative actions are being conducted. This is a series of actions where investigators gather evidence as to whether there were components of a crime in the actions of a suspect. In the first case, I am accused under three articles: lack of respect for trial participants, assault of an official, and perverting the course of justice. In the second more recent case, they are conducting investiga-

tion regarding me under Article 308 of the Criminal Code for refusing to testify as a witness. This is due to the case against Ilmi Umerov, the second vice-speaker of the Mejlis. I was his lawyer but the FSB decided to exclude me from the Umerov's defense group. The investigator decided to interrogate me and the court agreed. In fact, I was kidnapped by FSB officers in Simferopol. They brought me to the local administration. I refused to testify because of attorney-client privilege. Now there is an pre-investigative check in the case of my refusal to testify. This is strong pressure that I have not encountered in Russia before, the last attempts to open a case against me were five years ago. In fact, only the investigator's signature separates

me from a criminal case. I am a bone in their throat. Unlike the Crimean lawyers who live and have families here and are in one way or another forced to balance the interests of the client and their own, I am a person from the outside - I work and live in Moscow, and that's the reason I am even more irritating to the local government. It wants to force me to refuse to handle cases on the peninsula by any means necessary.

What else can you expect from the Crimean authorities regarding Crimean Tatars? At the moment, quite a few new administrative cases have been initiated...

Without a doubt, all-out persecutions have intensified. I see several



areas here. The first one concerns the political persecution of the Mejlis members; I mean those who actively opposed the occupation in 2014. This is primarily the case of Chygoz and Umerov, but also of Ali Asanov, Mustafa Degermenci and other detainees in the so-called case of February 26th. The second area is the detention and trials regarding membership in the Hizb ut-Tahrir organization. In Ukraine it is legal. In Russia, it is forbidden, and with the onset of occupation, its members were outlawed. I follow these cases, there is no evidence that all these people have a real connection with Hizb ut-Tahrir. There is no legitimization of the members. The FSB itself decides and appoints them - you, you and you. The third

area which is now slightly less prominent, includes cases against spies and saboteurs. Several people are accused, in particular Evgeniy Panov, Dmytro Shtiblikov and others. In these cases, investigation is underway. The fourth area is not a matter of Crimean Tatars but of Ukrainian activists who are civic-minded, loyal to Ukraine and are persecuted for this.

You live and work in Moscow. In which Russian circles is there an understanding of what is happening in the Crimea?

Unfortunately, the problem with Crimea lies in the fact that the Russian authorities organize an information blockade around it. Any negative information from Crimea is blocked

by state-controlled media. Essentially, there is no free media in Russia. There are several web pages, but they are not the primary opinion makers. An embargo is imposed on all official information channels that prevents them for publishing any information relating to the repression of Crimean Tatars.

When it comes to other journalists, Ukrainian media are afraid to come here, and their fears are well-grounded. Roman Sushchenko, the detained journalist from the Ukrinform agency and who is being defended by my colleague Mark Feygin in Moscow, was careless. He came to Moscow and was accused of espionage. Therefore, there is no guarantee that if a crew from a Ukrainian TV channel or publication arrives in Crimea they will not be detained.

When it comes to foreign journalists, it is very difficult to get into Crimea. First of all, this is due to the position of the Ukrainian authorities. Kiev considers Crimea an occupied territory and has introduced a special entry procedure. It is impossible to travel via Moscow and the administrative border is difficult to cross. Thus, information from Crimea is meager and attained primarily through social networks.

If we are talking about Russia's attitude towards Crimea, de facto a lot of people are indifferent to events on the peninsula. Many see the cause of the economic crisis in the incorporation of the Crimea. They actually accuse people on the peninsula of the problems they are suddenly facing. With regards to flag-waving on television, to a large extent it is not real. On the anniversary of the assassination of Boris Nemtsov in Moscow there was a march in his memory. We also had our column; several Crimean Tatars came. We marched with a big banner which said, 'Stop repressions in Crimea'. Many participants expressed solidarity and sympathy with those people who were with us. Therefore, a minority in Russia openly expresses its dissatisfaction with annexation and repression in Crimea. However, most prefer not to notice this, as well as the Crimea itself.





Trojan Horse of the 'people's councils'

EDUARD ANDRIUSHCHENKO

Since spring 2014, Russia has repeatedly changed the tactics of subversion. Simultaneously with the armed aggression in Donbas, Putin's regime initially relied on taking administrative structures by force and creating so called 'republics' in other regions. Then, for some time, sabotage in Ukraine's domestic front was a priority. Eventually, Moscow 'invented' some kind of 'light version of separatism'. The idea was that now the agents of influence should not persuade people directly for the withdrawal from Ukraine, but within the scope of the law, they should push people towards the ideas of federalization.

At the beginning of 2015, in two large cities in the south of Ukraine, Odesa and Zaporizhia, new advocacy groups simultaneously emerged. In Odesa, they offer to revive the sta-

tus of 'porto-franco' (free port), in existence there in the 19th century. They believed that the cancellation of customs duties on the import-export of goods in the port of Odesa and 'tax

holidays' for local businesses, would turn the seaside city into a 'second Singapore'. Zaporizhia also advocated for special environmental status. They said that the industrial city was suf-



PHOTO: 1-NEWS.NET

autonomists' were promptly stopped by the SBU. Three active members of the 'council', pro-Russian journalists Artem Buzila, Olena Glischynska, and Vitalii Didenko from Odesa were detained and arrested on suspicion of separatism. Nevertheless, over the course of several months, other members of the 'council' announced plans to create 'Bessarabian Republic 'Budzhak'' (which, in addition to Ukrainian territories, would have incorporated Gagauzia of Moldova), however this declaration was of no consequence.

The investigation confirmed what was obvious earlier, namely that the new separatist projects have ties with Russia. The names of the Kremlin curators of the projects were also known – Putin's aide Vladislav Surkov and his deputy Inal Ardzinba.

Lviv region (as well as attempts to fuel interethnic conflict).

But, as it turned out, Russians also were 'working' within more 'quiet' areas. At their request deputies of local councils of the Zhytomyr, Rivne and Ivano-Frankivsk regions requested that the Cabinet of Ministers and the Verkhovna Rada grant more power to the regions. The names of intermediaries who received money in Moscow and bribed local deputies were disclosed. Among them were the infamous Zaporizhzhya ex-journalist and political technologist, Pavel Zolotarev. The SBU released records of his conversations with other subjects of the case.

It is important to understand that the majority of those who executed the Russian orders were not ideological separatists, but 'Gastarbeit-

In Odesa, they offer to revive the status of 'port-franco' (free port), in existence there in the 19th century. They believed that the cancellation of customs duties on the import-export of goods in the port of Odesa and 'tax holidays' for local businesses, would turn the seaside city into a 'second Singapore'.

fering from polluted air, and therefore they expected a law that would allocate the city more money from the state budget.

In both cities, rallies and roundtables are held to support these ideas; relevant requests addressed to Kiev and signed by various deputies are voiced. However, the events in Donbas have produced persistent opposition to demands for regional 'isolation' in the country. The media and active members of society therefore had reservations about 'environmentalists' and 'free-port supporters', especially because leaders of these projects were affiliated with pro-Russian movements.

Meanwhile, in the Odesa region in the spring of 2015, another similar structure appears – the 'People's Council of Bessarabia'. Its representatives support a 'national-cultural autonomy' for the polyethnic southern region. Such claims bore a larger resemblance to separatism, therefore, the activities of the 'Bessarabian

Later head of the SBU Vasyl Hrytsak revealed interesting details of the case. He said that simultaneously with the proclamation in the southern Bessarabia of a new 'republic', there was a plan to blow up two bridges connecting the region with the rest of Ukraine, as well as an invasion of Russian 'green men' from neighboring Transnistria.

In February 2017, Hrytsak and the Attorney General Yuriy Lutsenko, held a special briefing about the 'federalists'. Representatives of law enforcement mentioned titles of other projects which, together with the three mentioned above, Moscow planned to implement. They were the 'Transcarpathian Region', 'Slobozhanshchina', the 'Public Council of Dnipropetrovsk region' and 'Galichina'. The choice of these regions is understandable – they were pushing buttons. In addition to the areas that were to be included in 'Novorossiya', separatist calls can also sometimes be heard in Transcarpathia and the

ers' - political consultants, seasoned protesters and crowd organizers. They acted accordingly as their curators had ordered and not of their own volition.

After the briefing by Hrytsak and Lutsenko, 'separatists light' seem to have ended their activities. There has not been any similar new movement in Ukraine since. It is possible that the instigators simply decided to take a break while waiting for the attention to their activities to die down and to look for new foot soldiers. However, it is more likely that they count on slightly different subversive activity, in particular the instigation of artificial interethnic conflicts that, apart from causing internal destabilization, would worsen the image of Ukraine abroad.



International recognition: mission failed

BY MILAN LELICH

Despite all its efforts, Russia is not able to secure international legitimization of its occupied territories of Georgia and Ukraine.

The Donbas-Ossetian friendship

In the Pacific lies the dwarf state of Nauru – one island with an area of just over 21 square kilometers and more than 10 thousand inhabitants. Despite its size, Nauru is an independent country, the smallest republic in the world, and, most importantly, a member of the United Nations.

It is unlikely that someone would have ever mentioned Nauru in the post-Soviet era nor in the world in general, if not for a specific kind of business mastered by the authorities of that country – trade in the international legal recognition of other states. Shortly after the Russia-Georgia war, at the end of 2009, Nauru's foreign minister went to the other end of the world, to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, currently occupied by Russia, and signed diplomatic relations with these entities thus recognizing their independence. Obviously, there are no real economic connections nor any other ties between the people of Nauru and Abkhazia or Ossetia, and there will never be such ties. Therefore, Russia's direct interest is visible. Previously, it was only able to 'convince' Nicaragua and Venezuela that Abkhazia and South Ossetia are independent, but Nauru has become the fourth state in the world (after the abovementioned two and Russia) to recognize the independence of the North Caucasian republic. Nauru received a generous gratuity from Moscow for services rendered – \$ 50 million 'in social programs'. The small nation is not ashamed of trading in state status. For instance, in 2002 it refused to recognize Taiwan, in exchange for money from mainland China. However, three years later the Taiwanese succeeded in outbidding for the loyalty of the dwarf state.

The Ukrainian context is different

Of course, the Caucasian history is more relevant in the Ukrainian context. First of all, because South Ossetia is the only territorial entity that 'recognized the independence' of the so-called 'Donetsk People's Republic' ('DNR') and 'Luhansk People's Republic' ('LNR'), not without orders from Moscow, of course. Even Abkhazia did not follow this path, let alone other international satellites or those friendly with Moscow, e.g. Venezuela. Obviously, the Russian Federation does not see any sense in 'buying' the recognition of 'LDNR' from Nauru as well. Besides, official recognition by the Kremlin itself would be equivalent to Russia's exit from the Minsk process, and would compromise the logic of its hybrid war against Ukraine and ultimately, would lead to a total stonewalling of the Russian Federation by the civilized world.

Therefore, in its policy of 'recognition' of the occupied Ukrainian territories, Russia is guided purely by pragmatic considerations. On the one hand, Russian companies can not deal directly with businesses located in the certain areas of Donetsk and the Luhansk regions for fear of falling under international sanctions. Conversely, nothing hinders their contacts with South Ossetia while the Kremlin officially recognizes the independence of the latter. Western sanctions are unlikely to do any harm to the people of the Ossetians who remain unrecognized by anyone other than the four named states due to their republic's status.

For their part, enterprises that remained in the occupied territories have long sought to gain access to world markets, especially after Ukraine officially started the blockade.

Russia remains the only possible option, but, as mentioned above, direct contact with the certain areas of Donetsk and the Luhansk regions are extremely risky for Russian business. Therefore, a proxy variant was found in the form of South Ossetia – a dwarf formation without its own economy, totally dependent and controlled, in other words, a formation that is occupied by Russia.

After the so-called 'nationalization' of all Ukrainian enterprises that still remained in the territory of the certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, management was then transferred to the Vneshtorgservis company which as luck would have it, was registered in South Ossetia. Since no normal bank would risk operating in the certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, the financial life of the self-proclaimed republics is also closely connected with South Ossetia, which has become a real window onto the world for 'LDNR'.

Fake 'diplomatic offices'

As is the case with this kind of fake formation, 'DNR' and 'LNR' are struggling to recreate for themselves the attributes of genuine statehood: symbols, a parliament, a government, various state institutions, etc. International contacts and relations are some of the indispensable attributes of a full-fledged state, as are its international contacts and connections. The militants have ill-disguised problems regarding this situation with the exception of their contact with Russia or South Ossetia. So Donetsk, and to a lesser extent Luhansk, strive to open their 'diplomatic missions' in civilized, European countries. Of course, none such country recognizes 'LDNR' as states. They consider the certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions



**2 НОЯБРЯ – ВЫБОРЫ ГЛАВЫ И ДЕПУТАТОВ
НАРОДНОГО СОВЕТА ДОНЕЦКОЙ НАРОДНОЙ
РЕСПУБЛИКИ**

**УЧАСТКИ ДЛЯ ГОЛОСОВАНИЯ
ДОНЕЦК, ВОРОШИЛОВСКИЙ РАЙОН**

№ участка	Адрес
119	ул. Трамвайная, 36А
120	ул. 50-летия СССР, 104
121	буль. Школьный, 5
122	ул. Челюскинцев, 184А
123	ул. Щорса, 27, ОШ№14
124	пл. Конституции, 1
125	бульв. Пушкина, 6
126	просп. Гурова, 6
127	ул. Щорса, 64
128	ул. Артема, 17
129	ул. Горького, 163
130	ул. Трамвайная, 36

**ВЫ МОЖЕТЕ ПРОГОЛОСОВАТЬ НА ЛЮБОМ УДОБНОМ ДЛЯ СЕБЯ УЧАСТКЕ
ПРИХОДИТЕ НА ВЫБОРЫ
ВЫБИРАЙТЕ**



PHOTO: PIOTR ANDRUSIECZKO

as an integral part of Ukraine, but this has not stopped the separatists. Every announcement of this kind is treated as evidence of the steady international advancement of the 'young republics'.

In particular, the establishment of 'DNR' "diplomatic missions" or 'consulates', in the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, France, and Finland has been announced. At the moment, plans are voiced regarding Germany and Norway. The scheme is typical – a non-governmental organization with the title 'Representation Center of the Donetsk People's Republic in Italy' is registered in a resident country and is heralded as some kind of a full-fledged mission of the 'DNR'. In fact, the whole 'mission' is, as a rule, one single room with a corresponding plaque.

Chiefs of such 'diplomatic missions' are either people from the Russian Federation, or local politicians from parties that are friendly to the Kremlin, usually far-right or far-left, or frankly, just plain political freaks. The fate of such structures is identical. The official authority of a European country states that there can be no 'missions' of unrecognized republics within their territory, they may declare it a private initiative and sometimes even initiate a liquidation procedure. However, the 'mission' may also somehow disappear all by itself. Like many things in

The Russians have reached comparatively greater success in their attempts to legitimize the annexation of Crimea. Since the Russian Federation is outspoken about its rights to this territory, there was no need to resort to any tricks like those with Nauru or South Ossetia.

the hybrid aggression of the Russian Federation, these initiatives are purely media exercises and are designed to maximize the public's reaction; not real activities as such.

Dictator friends

The Russians have reached comparatively greater success in their attempts to legitimize the annexation of Crimea. Since the Russian Federation is outspoken about its rights to this

territory, there was no need to resort to any tricks like those with Nauru or South Ossetia. Of course, there were attempts to be slick with regard to the legitimacy of the appearance of 'green men', 'referendum', the announcement of 'independence' and subsequently the 'reunification' of Crimea and the Russian Federation, especially shortly after the annexation as early as 2014. Moreover, no one in the West wants to cancel the 'Crimean package of sanctions'.

The vote on the United Nations resolution on the territorial integrity of Ukraine of March 27, 2014 defined the disposition of power globally regarding the Crimean issue, which has since then remained almost the same. Only slightly more than a dozen of the almost two hundred UN members took Russia's side, namely friends from the 'club of dictators' such as North Korea, Syria, Venezuela, Cuba, Belarus, Zimbabwe and 'old geopolitical friends' like Armenia. Meanwhile, exactly 100 states clearly expressed support for the Ukrainian affiliation of Crimea during the vote. In this instance, Russia's attempts to effectively split the international community and justify its aggressive actions against its neighbors failed.



