

# **Disintegration and Integration in East-Central Europe**

**The current relevance  
of regional cooperation**

**Nicolae Păun**  
(editor)

**Presa Universitară Clujeană**

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**DISINTEGRATION AND INTEGRATION  
IN EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE**

**The current relevance of regional cooperation**

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## Romanian Political Proposals for Regional Development. An Overview on the Projects from 2011<sup>1</sup>

ELENA GRAD-RUSU

**ABSTRACT.** In the last decades important economic and social transformations in the European Union have made regional development a more meaningful topic and state actors have had to adapt their strategies in order to grow and become more competitive. The regional climate at national level has changed in most of the countries and attempted to adapt to the European standards. This paper seeks to address the Romanian case, with an extended analysis of the regionalization ideas proposed by the political parties in 2011. The main objective is to identify the strengths and the weaknesses of these proposals, whether there are similarities and differences, as well as how original they are or if they are influenced by any model in their formulation. The qualitative analysis relies on official documents, reports and interviews with representatives of political parties from that period.

**KEYWORDS:** regionalization, political parties and alliances, regions, regional development

### Introduction

The concept of regional development, frequently mentioned in the context of the Lisbon Treaty, derives from that

<sup>1</sup> This work was supported by the project "Quality, innovative and relevant doctoral and postdoctoral research for the labor market": POCU/380/6/13/124146, project co-financed by the European Social Fund through the Romanian Operational Programme "Human Capital" 2014-2020".



# The 2014 Annexation of Crimea – An Example of Disintegration of the State's Territories

OLEKSANDR RUSNAK  
(CHERNIVTSI, UKRAINE)

**ABSTRACT:** One of the complex burning issues that arose in modern international relations is the annexation of Crimea in 2014, which became the consequence of priority task of the Russian Federation – to establish its control over the peninsula. This fact is confirmed not only by analytical materials or the evidence of the use of the Russian Black Sea Fleet from the Crimean bases in some military operations, but also by several attempts to capture it during the 1990s and 2000s. Russia got another chance to achieve its goal with the coming to power in Ukraine of pro-Russian President V. Yanukovich. After all, it was at the apogee of the Revolution of Dignity that the event under study took place. As it already has serious consequences for the peninsula and Ukraine as a whole, and may significantly affect the states of the entire Black Sea region, in our opinion, it is extremely important in this article to analyze in details not only the reasons and way of the annexation of Crimea, but also to try to assess this event as far as possible now. The use of a certain layer of specialized scientific literature, as well as numerous testimonies of participants in the studied processes allow to characterise more deeply and more clearly to show the prehistory and the course of the Russian invasion of the peninsula in 2014, to determine the key consequences of disintegration that took place.

**KEYWORDS:** annexation, Crimean peninsula, Black Sea Fleet, Ukrainian-Russian relations.



## From the Euromaidan and the Dignity Revolution in Ukraine to the Annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation

Six years have passed since the beginning of the Euromaidan and the Dignity Revolution in Ukraine. Many of the events they caused became the history, others are still ongoing, and therefore there is a need to rethink them, especially in the context of integration / disintegration processes in Europe. Of course, modern analysts have very reasonable doubts about the qualification of those processes. In particular, can they be considered a revolution? Because a fundamental change in the system of basic relations in the society, of the ruling regime and of the elites has not taken place. Obviously, this question still needs serious scientific research. However, it can be rightly argued that the revolutionary changes have taken place in the sphere of mass consciousness and the moral and ethical foundations of the life of the Ukrainian community.

On the one hand, the Euromaidan and the Dignity Revolution have left a deep, decisive and unforgettable footprint in history. Their ideals, hopes and decisions have dramatically changed the Ukrainian mentality, have begun and continue to form a new Ukrainian political identity. Since the fall of 2013, significant changes have taken place in Ukraine. According to the researchers, "they move towards the parting of the country with its Soviet and post-colonial past", "the ambiguity of the two-vector development of the country has finally been overcome, the European identity of Ukrainians as the basic has been attested and, the most importantly, the movement is actively going towards a common Europe"<sup>1</sup>. After all, "every

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Iryna Hrabovska, *Yevrorevoliutsiia yak revoliutsiia hidnosti v konteksti tsyvilizatsiinoi problematyky* [Eurorevolution as a Revolution of Dignity in the Context of Civilizational Problematics], in "Filosofska dumka", 2014, no. 6, p. 39.



national model assumes an identity, a place in world processes and its own civilization mission"<sup>2</sup>. The people of Ukraine defended human rights and democratic freedoms, and made real steps towards European integration.

However, Ukraine has become the target of Russian aggression. Temporarily occupied Crimea, servicemen and mercenaries from the Russian Federation (RF) invaded Donbas. At the same time, Moscow tried to return Ukraine "under its wing".

During the past 30 years, "Crimean issues" in the context of Ukrainian-Russian relations have repeatedly become a subject of study for scientists. In particular, O. Zadorozhnii<sup>3</sup>, S. Adamovych<sup>4</sup>, A. Mal'gin<sup>5</sup>, O. Volianiuk, Kh. Dobrovolska, M. Maiorov<sup>6</sup>, and others explored this topic in their works. However, there is a lot of new evidence from participants in those processes (especially about the 2014 events) that are not fully taken into account by scientists. The aim of our study is an

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<sup>2</sup> Olena Yurchuk, *U tini imperii: Ukrainska literatura u svitli postkolonialnoi teorii* [In the Shadow of the Empire: Ukrainian Literature in the Light of Postcolonial Theory], Kyiv, VTs "Akademiia", 2013, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> Oleksandr Zadorozhnii (uporiad.), *Ukrainska Revoliutsiia hidnosti, ahresiia RF i mizhnarodne pravo* [Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity, Russian Aggression and International Law], Kyiv, K.I.S., 2014; Oleksandr Zadorozhnii, *Aneksiia Krymu – mizhnarodnyi zlochyn* [The Annexation of Crimea – an International Crime], Kyiv, K.I.S., 2015.

Serhii Adamovych, *Faktor Chornomorskoho flotu Rosiiskoi Federatsii v suspilno-politychnomu zhytti Ukrainy (1991-2012 rr.)* [Factor of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation in the Socio-Political Life of Ukraine (1991-2012) ], in "Visnyk Prykarpatskoho universytetu. Istoriiia", 2012, Vyp. 22, pp. 65-75

Serhii Adamovych, *Sobornist ta rehionalnyi rozvytok u suspilno-politychnomu zhytti nezalezhnoi Ukrainy* [Unity and Regional Development in the Political Life of Independent Ukraine], Ivano-Frankivsk, Misto NV, 2009.

Andrei Mal'gin, *Krymskij uzel: ocherki politicheskoi istorii Krymskogo poluostrova 1989-1999* [Crimean Knot: Essays on the Political History of the Crimean Peninsula 1989-1999], Simferopol', Novyj Krym, 2000.

Olha Volianiuk, Khrystyna Dobrovolska, Maksym Maiorov, *Krym za zaviso Putivnyk zonoiu okupatsii* [Crimea Behind the Veil. Guide to the Occupat Zone], Kyiv, 2019.



attempt to summarize previous materials, taking into consideration the latest available data, to determine the place of Crimea in the policy of the Russian Federation during last decennaries, to analyze the course and consequences of the annexation of the peninsula in 2014.

Let us briefly remember how it all started. With the coming to power of V. Yanukovych, the concentration of power in the hands of the Party of Regions began. At the same time, the persecution of oppositionists has been. Many of them moved outside the country. The oppression of freedom of expression and the harassment of journalists took place. The coming to power of V. Yanukovych was marked by a return to pro-Russian foreign policy. On April 21, 2010, President of the RF D. Medvedev visited Kharkiv, where an agreement was signed under which the Ukrainian side agreed to extend the deployment of the Russian Black Sea Fleet (RBSF) to 2042. On April 2, President V. Yanukovych abolished the commission on preparation of Ukraine's accession to NATO. According to V. Denysenko, a researcher of V. Yanukovych's board and an ex-People's Deputy, a representative of the Verkhovna Rada in the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, "if we talk about geopolitical ideas of Yanukovych and his environment, they are characterized by one word - "primitivism". V. Yanukovych sincerely believed that when he signed the Kharkiv Agreements, the Russians would consider him an equal partner and cease to pressure him. He thought with one-way operations without any combinations"<sup>7</sup>.

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Taras Klochko, *Vadym Denysenko: navit bez rozghonu studentiv lohika pravlinnia Yanukovycha vse odno pryzvela b do zavorushen* [Vadym Denysenko: Even Without Overclocking of Students the Logic of Yanukovych's Board Would Still Lead to Unrest], <https://www.dsnews.ua/politics/vadim-denisenko-navit-bez-rozgonu-studentiv-logika-pravlinnya-21112018220000>, consulted in March, 12, 2020.



The usurpation of power by the Party of Regions, the reluctance of the authorities to engage in dialogue with the opposition and society, and the deterioration of Ukraine's economic situation have led to a deep socio-political crisis. "Add corruption here and we will get a whole bunch of problems that could not but have led to the rapid fall of the regime"<sup>8</sup>.

On November 21, 2013, in an unconstitutional way, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine decided to suspend the preparation for signing the Association Agreement with the European Union. This sensational news has upset the Ukrainian society. Then the protests began in Kyiv and on the following day in Donetsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lutsk, Uzhgorod, Lviv and Chernivtsi<sup>9</sup>.

On November 24, the largest manifestation during the presidency of V. Yanukovich (150,000 participants) took place in Kyiv. On December 1, on the anniversary of the 1991 referendum, which declared Ukraine's independence, to the squares and streets of Kyiv came from 500,000 to 1 million citizens took<sup>10</sup>.

On January 22, 2014, on the Ukrainian Unification Day, "Berkut" snipers shot five Euromaidan activists in Hrushevsky Street. The countdown of V. Yanukovich's victims, later named the Heavenly Hundred, began. At the same time, the seizure of

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>9</sup> Svitlana Karaban, Yevhen Yakunov, *Revoliutsiia Hidnosti. Zghadaimo holovne* [The Dignity Revolution. Let's Remember the Main], <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-polytics/2122489-revolucia-gidnosti-zgadajmo-golovne.html>, consulted on March, 21, 2020.

Tetiana Yarmoshchuk, Myhailo Aheiev, *Yevromaidan. Revoliutsiia vid pochatku i do kintsia* [Euromaidan. The Revolution from Beginning to End], <https://ua.krymr.com/a/ukraina-ce-evropa-euromaidan-timeline/29615328.html>, consulted on March, 20, 2020.



administration buildings started in Kyiv and other cities. Confrontation with security forces went into a critical phase<sup>11</sup>.

Bloody Thursday, on February 20 in Instytutska Street added more than fifty protesters to V. Yanukovych's victims. This horrific action has caused shock all over the world. On February 22, militia guard of the President Administration of Ukraine put its shields on the ground and started boarding buses<sup>12</sup>. Having seen this, V. Yanukovych left the administration building and went to his residence in Mezhyhirya. On the night of February 23, he left Kyiv. At 3 p.m. of this day, the Verkhovna Rada stated that V. Yanukovych had resigned himself from the fulfilment of his presidential duties and with the votes of 328 deputies decided to hold an out of turn elections of the President of Ukraine<sup>13</sup>.

Russian President V. Putin closely monitored the events on Independence Square in early 2014. On Bloody Thursday on February 20, he made sure that the V. Yanukovych's regime was agonizing and ordered to introduce an annexation plan of Crimea. It is this date that figures on the Russian medal "For the Return of Crimea"<sup>14</sup>.

The peninsula was flooded with "green men" without distinguishing marks. The Russian agency created alternative authorities and organized on March 16 a referendum on the status of Crimea with in advance-known results. On March 18,

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> Oleksandr Zadorozhnii (uporiad.), *Ukrainska ... cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>13</sup> Svitlana Karaban, Yevhen Yakunov, *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> Birzhevoi Lider, *Eksperty nazvali 12 faktov, kak medal' "Za vozvrashcheniye Kryma" postavila RF* [Experts Named 12 Facts, as the medal "For the Return of Crimea" Framed the Russian Federation], <http://www.profi-forex.org/novosti-rossii/entry1008208512>, consulted on March, 25, 2020.



in the Kremlin was signed an agreement to accept Crimea and Sevastopol as a part of the RF. The whole operation took less than a month. Immediately after the annexation of Crimea, V. Putin launched a hybrid war in eastern Ukraine<sup>15</sup>.

### **Russian-Ukrainian Relations after the Downfall of the USSR: Attempts of Understanding and New Exacerbations**

For the period since 1991, this is not the first attempt of the RF to take Crimea. According to V. Skibitskyi, a representative of General Intelligence Directorate of Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, "after the downfall of the USSR, Russia never gave up its hope to return Crimea, despite basic agreements with Ukraine dated May 1997, Moscow continued to declare its rights to Crimea and Sevastopol<sup>16</sup>.

Serious contradictions between Ukraine and Russia over Crimea began in early 1992, when President L. Kravchuk announced the beginning of construction of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. On January 5, 1992, the Ukrainian government started to swear in allegiance the troops, which stationed in Crimea<sup>17</sup>. On the same day, Russian President B. Yeltsin signed an oath of allegiance to Russia for troops stationed in Ukraine. Having been in the Volga region, he stated: "The Black Sea Fleet was, is and will be Russian ... no one will take it away from Russia, including

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<sup>15</sup> Oleksandr Rusnak, *Ukraine at the Turning Point: from the Revolution of Dignity to the Aggression of Russian Federation*, in "GeoPolitica. Revistă de Geografie Politică, Geopolitică și Geostrategie", Anul XVII, no. 78-79 (2/2019). Marea Neagră – strategii 2020, București, 2019, pp. 280-281.

<sup>16</sup> Oksana Kovalenko, *Yak my vtrachaly Krym. Svidchennia pershykh osib Ukrainy* [How We Were Losing Crimea. Testimonies of the First Persons of Ukraine], [https://www.pravda.com.ua/cdn/graphics/2017/04/jak\\_my\\_vtrachaly\\_krym\\_svidchennja\\_pershyh\\_osib\\_ukrainy/](https://www.pravda.com.ua/cdn/graphics/2017/04/jak_my_vtrachaly_krym_svidchennja_pershyh_osib_ukrainy/), consulted on March, 23, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Serhii Adamovych, *Faktor ... cit.*, p. 66.



Kravchuk". However, on January 28, 1992, in Novorossiysk, B. Yeltsin expressed another opinion: "There will be the negotiations on military issues with Ukraine; it has the right to have its own fleet. But we are against the division of the Black Sea Fleet; it must be the only one to ensure the security of the CIS borders"<sup>18</sup>. Despite B. Yeltsin's different statements, one thing is clearly understood of them: Russia did not want to give the Navy to Ukraine. Its military men began to impede actively the process of the Black Sea Fleet's transition under the control of Ukrainian, using both counterintelligence (communications interference, radio interception) and even local force measures. However, a part of the BSF never the less moved to the side of Ukraine.

The most painful for Russia was the acceptance of the Ukrainian oath by military commanders of the Sevastopol garrison, which took place on July 9, 1992. This provoked Russia to take appropriate actions: the next day the commandants' office was seized by a Russian landing assault group. The status of Sevastopol and everything related to the city was a specific problem for Ukraine in the Crimea, because the issue of the BSF's share was not so much the ships as the fleet's infrastructure and, accordingly, Sevastopol itself<sup>19</sup>.

In September 1993, another incident occurred – Ukrainian infantrymen collided with the Russian Coast Guard, injuring three Russians. Accusing Ukraine of trying to appropriate the BSF, Russia has launched a process of separating Crimea from Ukraine, handing out Russian passports to employees of BSF objects and conducting anti-Ukrainian information campaign throughout the peninsula.

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<sup>18</sup> Serhii Adamovych, *Sobornist ... cit.*, p. 384.

<sup>19</sup> Serhii Adamovych, *Faktor ... cit.*, p. 67.



As a result of the economic downturn in 1993, among the Crimeans, the frustration with the idea of independence of Ukraine increased, which resulted in the victory in the 1994 elections to the Verkhovna Rada of the Autonomous bloc "Russia" and the election of the pro-Russian disposed Y. Meshkov as a "President" of Crimea. The latter tried to separate the authorities of autonomy from the Ukrainian state structures and hoped for Russian support. He urged Russia to include Crimea in its structure.

According to the ex-People's Deputy M. Porovskyi, the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces at this time launched a large-scale intelligence campaign in Crimea, relying on the intelligence structures of the BSF. In particular, during the intensification of Y. Meshkov's confrontation actions, the GRU organized a total surveillance of all objects of the Armed Forces, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Guard of Ukraine on the peninsula<sup>20</sup>. By that time, the BSF by the Secret Service Forces of the RBSF had already organized a prototype of the "Crimean army" – the detachment "Scorpion" in Simferopol. In addition, the preparation work started for the seizure of key objects of Ukrainian troops in Sevastopol. In the end, the situation on the peninsula was stabilized by the deployment to Crimea of nearly 60,000 border guards and the National Guard of Ukraine<sup>21</sup>. In its turn, the RF on the wave of separatist movements within its own

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<sup>20</sup> Mykola Porovskyi, *Shpyhunstvo proty suverennoi Ukrainy* [Espionage against Sovereign Ukraine], in "Derzhavnist", 1996, Cherven, no. 2, p. 33-34.

<sup>21</sup> Yaroslav Mezentsev, *Kholodna viina za Krym* [Cold War for Crimea], <https://tyzhden.ua/Publication/3799>, consulted on March, 27, 2020.



country and economic crisis distanced itself from the official support of Y. Meshkov<sup>22</sup>.

With the end of the fighting in Chechnya in 1996, the problem of Crimea, Sevastopol and the fleet again became relevant for Russia. During the visit of the Ukrainian President L. Kuchma to Moscow in late October 1996, the State Duma of RF accepted an appeal, which Kyiv regarded as territorial claims against Ukraine. In addition, the State Duma voted for a law on banning the division of the BSF (not ratified by the Federation Council)<sup>23</sup>.

On December 5, 1996, the Federation Council of the RF qualified Sevastopol as a part of Russian territory and requested President B. Yeltsin to declare a moratorium on the signing by the state authorities of any international acts concerning the BSF, the status of Crimea, and the city of Sevastopol before the end of the work of the special commission of the Federation Council<sup>24</sup>.

However, with the approach of NATO to Russia's borders, Russian politicians, according to A. Malgin, began to search for reliable allies, and political confrontation with Ukraine became unconstructive. On May 28, 1997, Prime Minister of the RF V. Chernomyrdin signed in Kyiv three documents on the BSF: "On Mutual Settlements, Related to the Division of the Black Sea Fleet and the Stay of the Russian Black Sea Fleet on the Territory of Ukraine", "On the Status and Conditions of Stay of the Russian Black Sea Fleet on the Territory of Ukraine", "On the Parameters of the Division of the Black Sea Fleet"<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Serhii Adamovych, *Faktor ... cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>23</sup> Oleksandr Zadorozhnii, *Aneksiia ... cit.*, p. 80.

<sup>24</sup> Andrei Mal'gin, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 45.



However, despite these basic agreements with Ukraine, Moscow continued to declare its rights to Crimea and Sevastopol. On September 30, 2003, a conflict broke out between Ukraine and the RF, the reason of which was the erection of a levee by Russia in the Kerch Strait; it had to connect the station Taman (Krasnodar Krai, the RF) with the island of Tuzla, which since January 1941 is administratively a part of Crimea. Thus, Russia intended to extend its sovereignty to the island of Tuzla, by having violated the territorial integrity of Ukraine. In November 2003, the conflict was resolved, though both sides have already begun to prepare for an armed confrontation<sup>26</sup>.

The 2004 Orange Revolution radicalized political relations on the peninsula, but the Crimean elite refused to initiate disintegration ideas because of the negative experience of the early 1990s. In 2005-2009 the socio-political situation in the region was exacerbated by the approach of the lease term end of Ukrainian territories by the RF for the BSF and the conflict situations over the Crimean Tatar issue.

After the Orange Revolution, Foreign Minister of Ukraine B. Tarasiuk stated that the Russian side violations of the BSF agreements were “systemic” because of the unauthorized use of the territory of Sevastopol, the subletting of fleet premises, the work of the prosecutor’s office and courts of the neighboring state, the use of navigation equipment and radiofrequencies of Ukraine<sup>27</sup>. In April 2005, Deputy Head of the Press Service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine D. Svystkov even stated

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<sup>26</sup> Vasyl Denysiuk, *Istoriia rosiisko-ukrainskykh konfliktiv na mori: vid Tuzly do NEYMA* [History of Russian-Ukrainian Conflicts at Sea: from Tuzla to NEYMA], [https://24tv.ua/istoriya\\_rosiysko\\_ukrayinskih\\_konfliktiv\\_na\\_mori\\_vid\\_tuzli\\_do\\_neyma\\_n1184226](https://24tv.ua/istoriya_rosiysko_ukrayinskih_konfliktiv_na_mori_vid_tuzli_do_neyma_n1184226), consulted on March, 28, 2020.

<sup>27</sup> Borys Tarasyuk, *Ot nas ozhidayut real'nyh dejstvij* [Real Actions Expect from Us], in “Zerkalo nedeli”, 2005, 23 aprelya, p. 3.



that Ukraine allows for the early withdrawal of the RBSF from the Crimea, but at the initiative of the Russian side. The diplomat said that "the establishment of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in the Crimea after 2017 ... we are not talking about"<sup>28</sup>.

At the same time, the youth of Sevastopol continued to be educated on Russian history and patriotism. The activity of the RBSF played an important role in this process, performing functions that went beyond the responsibilities of the military structure. Thus, the RBSF often interfered with the activities of schools and higher education institutions in Crimea, imposing on them their educational programs; Ukrainian youth was recruited to the Black Sea Branch of Moscow University<sup>29</sup>.

In 2006, in violation of the agreements, Russia established control over the objects of the navigation and hydrographic support system of seafaring in Ukrainian territorial waters. In particular, when on January 13, 2006, representatives of the state enterprise "State Hydrography" took control of the lighthouse at the Yalta port, which was occupied before by the RBSF, then the command of the Russian fleet went on escalation of the conflict and decided to strengthen the protection of 35 objects of navigation and hydrographic purpose in Crimea<sup>30</sup>.

On May 20, 2008, the President of Ukraine V. Yushchenko signed a decree "On Measures to Ensure the Development of Ukraine as a Maritime State". In this document, the Head of State instructed the Cabinet of Ministers to prepare a bill on the

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<sup>28</sup> Serhii Solodkyi, *Problemy po-flotsky* [Problems in the Navy], in "Den", 2006, 21 aprelya, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> Ihor Losiev, *Ukrainskyi Sevastopol: mynule, suchasne, maibutnie* [Ukrainian Sevastopol: Past, Present, Future], in "Suchasnist", 2008, no. 10, p. 27.

<sup>30</sup> Valerii Kravchenko, *Nu i namaiachyly* [Well, They Have Loomed], "Dzerkalo tyzhnia", 2006, 21-27 sichnia, pp. 1, 3.



termination since 2017 of international treaties on temporary stay on the territory of Ukraine of the RBSF. Afterwards, Russian diplomats first publicly stated that Russia's continued goal is to extend the RBSF's stay in Ukraine. Russian politicians, exerting pressure on Ukraine, stated that in case of Ukraine's adoption of the law on termination of the basic treaties on the RBSF since 2017, Russia has the right to raise the issue of Crimea's affiliation and the status of Sevastopol<sup>31</sup>.

The Ukrainian side also made radical statements. The first commander of the Navy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine Vice Admiral B. Kozhyn said that in case of non-compliance the terms of the agreement by the RF, Ukraine may confiscate Russian military equipment after 2017<sup>32</sup>.

A new exacerbation of the situation around the RBSF occurred after the beginning of the Russo-Georgian war on August 8, 2008. The impetus to complicate relations was the withdrawal of Russian warships from Sevastopol without warning the Ukrainian authorities and their involvement in the armed conflict. In response, on August 13, 2008, V. Yushchenko signed decrees that changed the procedure for crossing the border of Ukraine by military personnel and warships from reporting to a permissible. The servicemen were pledged to fill in the migration cards and report about the cargo<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Valerii Kravchenko, *Pidkhid do snariadu i Kyiv hotuietsia do vyvedennia Chornomorskoho flotu Rosii z Ukrainy* [Approach to the Projectile and Kyiv is Preparing to Withdraw the Black Sea Fleet of Russia from Ukraine], in "Dzerkalo tyzhnia", 2008, 31 travnia, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> Serhii Adamovych, *Faktor ... cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>33</sup> Valentina Samar, *Vyhodim iz kil'vatera?* [Getting Out of the Wake?], in "Zerkalo nedeli", 2008, 16 avgusta, p. 2.



In late 2008, V. Yushchenko signed a decree "On Additional Measures for Socio-Economic Development of the City of Sevastopol". The document instructed the task for a working group to develop bills on attraction of investments for development of the economy in Sevastopol and to prepare proposals for the use, after 2017, of Sevastopol Bay infrastructure for non-military purposes, the redevelopment and modernization of port infrastructure.

According to the survey, 70% of Sevastopol citizens advocated for the implementation of the project, which would improve their living standards and minimize the loss of the city after a decrease in naval presence. On what the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RF A. Denisov stated that the publication of the decree – "is a line of psychological pressure on the Russian Federation ... the line of displacement of our Black Sea Fleet from Sevastopol"<sup>34</sup>.

On April 21, 2010 in Kharkiv V. Yanukovych and the Russian President D. Medvedev signed the "Agreement Between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on the Stay of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation on the Territory of Ukraine", according to which the stay of the RBSF in Sevastopol was extended since 2017 to 2042 with the possibility of automatic extension for 5 years. However, according to V. Skibitskyi, "even if in 2010 Yanukovych did not sign "Kharkiv Agreements" with Russia ... the Russians would certainly take steps to continue the Russian Black Sea Fleet's stay in Crimea"<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> Sergei Kunicyn, *Sevastopol' mozhet stat' CHernomorskim ekonomicheskim tigrom* [Sevastopol Could Become the Black Sea Economic Tiger], in "Zerkalo nedeli", 2009, 24-30 yanvary, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Oksana Kovalenko, *op. cit.*



According to a representative of the Ukrainian special services, published in 2017, the information which is available for them, confirms that "the peninsula is needed for Russia only as a powerful military base. They are building up troops in Crimea, using it as an advanced base to secure Russian military presence in Syria, primarily at the expense of the RBSF. Another factor: according to the basic agreements on the temporary stay of the RBSF on the territory of Ukraine, Russia was not entitled to re-equip and modernize the fleet independently without agreement with Ukraine. Now, Russia is delivering modern weapons into Crimea"<sup>36</sup>.

### **Some Important Facts about the Annexation of Crimean Peninsula in 2014**

Comprehensive preparations of Moscow concerning the annexation of Crimea Russia began in 2013, when the RF, in its Foreign Policy Concept, determined the preservation of its influence on Ukraine. With the beginning of the Dignity Revolution, Russia, in the guise of conducting training and securing the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi (January-February 2014), formed a powerful grouping of troops near the eastern borders of Ukraine, with a total number of 37,000 servicemen, which was then used to invade Crimea and conducting a military operation in the south-eastern regions of Ukraine.

Since February 22, 2014, there has been an increase in Russian forces in the south of the RF and in Crimea. They began to transfer secretly troops to the peninsula by large landing ships

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem.*



from the territory of the RF in the violation of the Russian-Ukrainian agreements<sup>37</sup>.

The Ukrainian Intelligence recorded the movement of the military, an increase of patrols, and the RBSF headquarters switched to round-the-clock duty. These are all intelligence signs of preparations. At that moment, Ukraine had a very difficult situation. The president left the country, the Minister of Defense fled, the reformation of power was continuing and stabilization processes in Kyiv did not end. It was difficult to make a decision but in many cases almost impossible. In turn, V. Putin's actions were swift and coordinated.

"The Military Intelligence recorded how in the last week of February there was a transfer of units of airborne troops from different regions of Russia by air to Anapa. It was until February 27. Large amphibious ships carried the transfer of Marines from Novorossiysk to Sevastopol"<sup>38</sup>. About the military units of the RF, which were involved in the seizure of the peninsula comprehensive information was provided by O. Volianiuk, H. Dobrovolska, and M. Maiorov in their work<sup>39</sup>.

According to V. Skibitskyi, the capture of the Crimean Verkhovna Rada became the second phase of the operation. "Even though we had information that Russian troops were pushed forward to the building, there was no one to defend them. The MIA and SSU divisions in the majority moved to the side of the enemy"<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> *Ukrainska Pravda*, *Putin hriukaie zbroieiu na kordoni z Ukrainoiu* [Putin Bars His Weapon on the Border with Ukraine], <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/02/26/7016367/>, consulted on March, 26, 2020.

<sup>38</sup> Oksana Kovalenko, *op. cit.*

<sup>39</sup> Olha Volianiuk, Khrystyna Dobrovolska, Maksym Maiorov, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>40</sup> Oksana Kovalenko, *op. cit.*



Moscow was preparing for that we should carry out the operation to liberate Crimea. Russia has transferred the entire Crimean group to a higher level of combat readiness. All warships went out on an external raid in Sevastopol, further – blocking of all Ukrainian military units. Assault and reconnaissance aircraft were prepared for immediate combat use. Divisions of the coastal troops of the RBSF moved to the cover areas of the land border of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the Crimean isthmuses was blocked and the equipment of company support posts was carried out in the areas of Perekop, Armiansk and Chongar.

The third phase is the deployment of additional troops and the completion of a unified grouping of Russian troops in Crimea. Its number increased and in March 2014 amounted to about 30,000 servicemen. The third stage included and the disarmament of Ukrainian troops<sup>41</sup>.

Formally, the annexation of Crimea ended on March 18, 2014. And already on March 27, the United Nations General Assembly supported a resolution, which recognizes the inviolability of Ukraine's territorial integrity. 100 UN member states voted in favour of the resolution<sup>42</sup>. This session of the UN General Assembly was convened specially to consider the issue of Russia's armed occupation of Ukraine's, namely the Crimean peninsula.

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<sup>41</sup> *Ukrainska Pravda, V Krymu perebuvaiut vzhe 30 tysiach rosiiskykh viiskovykh – prykordonnyky* [In Crimea There Are Already 30,000 Russian Militaries – Border Guards], <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/03/7/7018027/>, consulted on March, 22, 2020.

<sup>42</sup> *United Nations, Voting Record on Draft Resolution A/68/L.39 Territorial Integrity of Ukraine*, <https://papersmart.unmeetings.org/en/ga/68th-session/plenary-meetings/documents/voting-record/resolution-68262/>, consulted on March, 21, 2020.



## Crimea Nowadays: Disintegration and Reintegration of Peninsula

The occupation has serious economic consequences for Ukraine, Russia and Crimea itself. The most serious consequences for Crimea became the problems with water and electricity supply.

Since then, reports have come from Crimea about repressions against indigenous population, Crimean Tatars and intimidation of those who opposed against Russian annexation. Despite repeated calls from UN General Assembly, Russia refused to allow international human rights missions to the peninsula.

On the basis of reports and monitoring of international organizations, the National Institute for Strategic Studies has prepared an analytical note "On the Respect for the Rights of the Crimean Tatar People in the Annexed Crimea". The experts pointed out that the violation of the rights of the Crimean Tatar people is revealed in: the persecution of the Crimean Tatars, the cases of violence and cruel treatment directed against the Crimean Tatars; the coercion to "voluntary" deportation; the restrictions on the rights to the freedom of religion; the destruction of collective forms of self-organization of the Crimean Tatars, the suppression of their political identity; the restrictions on the right to freedom of peaceful meetings; the persecution of media and journalists; the compulsion to renounce the citizenship of Ukraine<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> Natsionalnyi Instytut Stratehichnykh Doslidzhen, "Shchodo dotrymannya prav krymskotatarskoho narodu v aneksovanomu Krymu". Analytichna zapyska [“Concerning the Observance of the Rights of the Crimean Tatar people in the Annexed Crimea”. Analytical Note], <https://niss.gov.ua/doslidzhennya-politika/schodo-dotrimannya-prav-krymskotatarskogo-narodu-v-aneksovanomu-krymu>, consulted on March, 28, 2020.



The Crimean Tatar people have consistently argued for the preservation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine and against the annexation of Crimea by Russia. In the areas of residence of the Crimean Tatars, the so-called referendum did not take place at all. The Crimean Tatar Diaspora as well as the Crimean Tatars has declared that the Russian occupation of Crimea is not recognized by them. In response, Russia banned the entry to Crimean Tatar leaders M. Dzhemilev and R. Chubarov.

Hundreds of activists are being prosecuted by the occupying authorities. To the most recent examples can be enlisted arrests on March 11 in the occupied Crimea. After seven searches in Bakhchysarai and Bakhchysarai district, four Crimean Tatars were detained: Amet Suleimanov, Seitumer Seitumerov, Osman Seitumerov and Rustem Seitmemetov, who are suspected allegedly by the Federal Security Service in the activity of organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir, which is forbidden in Russia. Moreover, as the head and organizer of this non-existent cell "was appointed" the former activist of Crimean Solidarity Seitumer Seitumerov, who in 2018 left Crimea for Kyiv (nowadays he works as an announcer on the Crimean Tatar channel ATR). On March 12, as Crimean activist Server Bariev notified, Russian security officers had searched the home of Crimean Tartar Zera Bezazieva in the village of Rozdolne, whose husband had been in a hospital for several months. At the same time, security officers claimed that they were looking for a weapon, but they did not find anything<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> Mykola Semena, *Hibrydna deportatsiia yak sposib zaminy naseleennia na pivostrovi* [Hybrid Deportation as a Way of Replacing the Population on the Peninsula], <https://m.day.kyiv.ua/uk/article/podrobyci/gibrydna-deportaciya-yak-sposib-zaminy-naselennya-na-pivostrovi>, consulted on March, 22, 2020.



According to M. Semena, the purpose of such actions is to intimidate the local population, to encourage more and more unreliable for Russia Crimeans, namely Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians, to leave the peninsula. This is the latest form of ethnic cleansing of the population of the annexed territories. In the current political situation in the world, Russia can not resort to forced deportation of people, as it did in 1944, so to weaken the resistance and increase the number of loyal population, RF in Crimea triggered a hybrid deportation, during which it squeezed dissenters from the peninsula and instead brings inhabitants from continental part of the country<sup>45</sup>.

In particular, according to various materials (Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, public organizations), in the first months of occupation Crimea left from 20,000 to 78,000 people. According to unofficial data, which is operated by the Deputy Representative of the President of Ukraine in Crimea Tamila Tasheva, approximately 100,000 people together with the military have left for the mainland Ukraine since the beginning of the occupation. Instead, under various programs from Russia about 500,000 people have come to Crimea, without taking into account the number of military men, which is, of course, kept in secret, but according to unofficial estimates, they also make up about half a million people.

According to the Chairman of the Majlis of the Crimean Tatar People, R. Chubarov, to promote the colonization of the peninsula by RF, should also and V. Putin's decree on land ownership in the occupied Crimea: "They create for themselves an alleged legal mechanism, which in their view, should create

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>46</sup> Olha Volianiuk, Khrystyna Dobrovolska, Maksym Maiorov, *op. cit.*, p. 103.



conditions for the resettlement of Russian citizens to Crimea". Namely, "those against whom this decree is directed may include those people, who have been formally forced to obtain Russian passports. They can be declared at any time the citizens of Ukraine and from them will take away the land plots"<sup>47</sup>.

Three languages (Russian, Ukrainian, and Crimean Tatar) have been proclaimed officially in Crimea. Formal bans on the activities of the Ukrainian school or book publishing are one can not find, but the realities are quite opposite. In bookstores there are no editions in Ukrainian, Ukrainian theater studios are being closed, even radio stations refuse from high-quality Ukrainian music. Today, Russian officials report that there is only one school with Ukrainian language in the peninsula (school no. 20 in Feodosia), where 146 children study in 9 forms. There are 13 Ukrainian forms more in seven schools. In 2017/2018 academic year, 318 children (0.2% of the total number of pupils) studied in the Ukrainian language in Crimea, which is in 35 times less than before the occupation. However, this Russian statistics is also conditional, because remain questions about the quality of the Ukrainian-language educational process. It is known that parents are forced to reject from the Ukrainian language teaching of children at schools, and those who want are persecuted for disloyalty to the current authorities<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> Espresso, "Pryskorennia kolonizatsii Krymu": Chubarov pro rishennia Putina pozbavyty krymchan bez pasporta RF pryberezhnoi zemli ["Accelerating of Colonization of Crimea": Chubarov about Putin's Decision to Deprive Crimeans without Passport of RF Coastal Land], [https://espresso.tv/news/2020/03/25/podibne\\_bulo\\_zachasiv\\_pershoyi\\_aneksiyi\\_krymu\\_koly\\_u\\_krymskykh\\_tatar\\_masovo\\_vyluchaly\\_zemlyu\\_chubarov\\_pro\\_ukaz\\_putina](https://espresso.tv/news/2020/03/25/podibne_bulo_zachasiv_pershoyi_aneksiyi_krymu_koly_u_krymskykh_tatar_masovo_vyluchaly_zemlyu_chubarov_pro_ukaz_putina), consulted on March, 27, 2020.

<sup>48</sup> Olha Volianiuk, Khrystyna Dobrovolska, Maksym Maiorov, *op. cit.*, p. 110.



In fact, Ukrainian cultural centers, museums, libraries and educational organizations were liquidated in Crimea. There are facts that during searches were removed Ukrainian portraits of Ukrainian figures of the past, books by contemporary Ukrainian authors (in particular, from the Ivan Franko Library in Simferopol).

In 2015 the Museum of Ukrainian Embroidery was closed. The Ukrainian Cultural Center is the only non-political organization openly engaged in preserving of the Ukrainian language and culture on the peninsula, joining to the Ukrainian traditions, and creativity of the Ukrainian people, publishes the newspaper Crimean Blackthorn. Today, the organization has only a few activists; they are systematically summoned for questioning, warned about the inadmissibility of extremism, threatened. This organization is forbidden to hold public events and searches are carried out in the homes of activists, technical devices are confiscated, etc. Ukrainians are also persecuted in religious matters. For example, on January 28, 2019, the so-called "Arbitration Court of the Republic of Crimea" approved the removal in the Crimean Diocese of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate the premises of St. Volodymyr and Olga Cathedral in Simferopol<sup>49</sup>.

Experts say that the events that took place in the spring of 2014 in Crimea led to the polarization of society on the peninsula, disturbed the balance in interfaith and inter-ethnic relations. Today there is a high probability of breaking out of a serious inter-ethnic conflict in Crimea<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 111.

<sup>50</sup> Krym.Realii, *Okupatsiia porushyla balans u mizhkonfesiinykh vidnosynakh Krymu – eksperty* [The Occupation Has Broken the Balance in Interfaith Relations in Crimea – Experts], <https://ua.krymr.com/a/26703944.htm>, consulted on March, 24, 2020.



Recently, more and more information is being circulated that a powerful military grouping has been formed on the Crimean territory, which allows the RF to conduct operations on the whole throughout the Black Sea region. "It is also an air component that covers the entire Black Sea area, it is also a surface and submarine fleet, a land component that today has been strengthened by means of air defense, reaching ... almost to Kyiv. In addition, the coastal missile complexes are being expanded, which will allow destroying surface targets almost throughout the Black Sea. The disposal of weapons of other types including nuclear weapons is not excluded on the territory of occupied Crimea".

In addition, if we talk about the hybrid threats used by Russia, then we should also talk about challenges in the information field. Moscow is conducting a powerful information campaign. "We are now increasingly dealing with fake messages that are on the verge between breaking news and misinformation. Not only Russian civilian structures are engaged in such issues, but also the structures of the Ministry of Defense of RF. Directly in the Southern District of the Armed Forces of the RF a whole department was created, which works in this direction. The divisions of this department are entrusted with such tasks as information isolation of the occupied districts, conducting of active propaganda, other issues, which are controlled not only at the level of the Southern District, but also at the level of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the RF"<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> Ukrinform, *Zasoby PPO Rosiiskoi Federatsii siahaiut nashoi terytorii maizhe do Kyieva* [Air Defense Facilities of the Russian Federation Reach Our Territory Almost to Kyiv], <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/2773273-vadimskibickij-predstavnik-golovnogo-upravlinna-rozvidki-minoboroni.html>, consulted on March, 27, 2020.



## International Consequences of Crimea's Annexation by the RF. Challenges and Threats

Russia's occupation of Crimea was the first case of the force annexation in Europe and the first attempt to reshape forcefully European borders since 1945. According to B. Johnson, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, have done so, Russia has breached so many international agreements that it is even difficult to list them. Here are some examples: V. Putin trampled on Article 2 of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Ukraine and the RF. He also violated Russia's commitment, which was taken in the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, namely the promise to "respect Ukraine's borders" and "to refrain from threatening or using force against Ukraine's territorial integrity or political independence"<sup>52</sup>.

According to the diplomat's words, it is important to observe the principle that states can not change the borders or to acquire territory by force. Whether the world adheres to this principle, the security of each nation will depend. That is why the fate of Crimea matters to us all. No country, no matter its size is, can not dismember its neighbour and violate international law without consequences for itself.

The hybrid aggression of the RF against Ukraine (the direct annexation of Crimea and a separate part of Donbas) has

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<sup>52</sup> Borys Dzhonson, *My znaiemo, yak Rosiia vkrala Krym, i znaiemo, yak diiaty dalsi stattia hlavy MZS Brytanii* [We Know How Russia Stole Crimea, and We Know How to Proceed: Article by the Foreign Minister of Britain] <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/articles/2018/02/23/7077929/>, consulted on March, 27, 2020.

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shown problems in the international security system. In particular, the violation of one of the basic points of the UN Charter that a state or a group of states has no right to intervene directly or indirectly in domestic affairs which are within the competence of another state. No state can not apply any act of military, political or other coercion to subjugate itself any other state. It is forbidden to organize or promote subversive, terrorist activity aimed at forcibly changing the structure of another state<sup>53</sup>.

The annexation of the Ukrainian peninsula testified that V. Putin is trying to expand the hybrid war and spread Russian influence in the countries of Central-Eastern and Western Europe. According to some researchers, the Russian side supports "frozen conflicts" such as in Transnistria, Abkhazia, etc., with the aim of informal pressure on the post-Soviet republics, as well as by the informal methods helps to spread separatist movements within the EU.

According to experts, the level of the Russian threat in the Black Sea area remains high. "This is the region with the highest density of protracted conflicts". Considering that in 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and started the war in Donbas, it was already trying to get to the largest port city of Odesa, "a new separatist movement in Odessa can occur at any time"<sup>54</sup>.

It is also a threat of large-scale hostilities from the side of RF, which maintains a high level of formation of its troops near Ukraine. According to the Ukrainian intelligence, "for today,

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<sup>53</sup> Orhanizatsiia Obiednanykh Natsii, *Statut Orhanizatsii Obiednanykh Natsii* [The Charter of the United Nations], [https://uk.wikisource.org/wiki/Статут\\_Організації\\_Об'єднаних\\_Націй](https://uk.wikisource.org/wiki/Статут_Організації_Об'єднаних_Націй), consulted on March, 25, 2020.

<sup>54</sup> Iulia-Sabina Joja, *Three Conflict Scenarios for the Black Sea in 2020*, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2020/01/three-conflict-scenarios-for-the-black-sea-in-2020/>, consulted on March, 28, 2020.



since 2015, the formation of three Russian divisions near our border is already completed – the 3rd, 144th and 150th rifle divisions. In addition, the formation of the 8th Army in the Southern Military District, which will directly act in our direction, continues. And according to the plans that exist in the RF, the main activities are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2019 – early 2020. In other words, these are the measures that will allow having combat connections capable of acting in our direction. The Caucasus 2020 training is planned ..., where plans for the use of new formations against our state will be practically trained at landfills, in training centers of the Southern military district, including on the territory of Crimea”<sup>55</sup>.

In such circumstances, it is necessary to continue taking of all possible measures to stop the Russian aggression against Ukraine, in particular, not to cease the pressure on Russia's leadership, including continuing sanctions, as the most effective mechanism for forcing to renewal of peace and compliance of the norms of the international law. And world politicians must define the priority of the Black Sea as the region of the security.

## Conclusions

Thus, on the one hand, the Euromaidan and the Dignity Revolution in Ukraine have catalyzed positive changes in the country, and on the other, intensified Russia's imperial ambitions to spread influence and control on its territory. The failure of V. Yanukovich's regime coincided in time with the beginning of the annexation of the Crimean peninsula. And on February 21

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<sup>55</sup> Ukrinform, *op. cit.*



2014, the bloodiest day in the confrontation between protesters and "Berkut's" sub-units, was decisive for Crimea as well.

The Russian Federation has borne similar plans since the downfall of the USSR and has repeatedly attempted to capture Crimea during the 1990s-2000s. However, the well-coordinated actions of the Ukrainian authorities and law enforcement structures allowed repelling the most dangerous attacks in 1993-1994, 2003.

New aggravation on the peninsula and in Russian-Ukrainian relations generally occurred in 2005-2009. The main reason was the change in Ukraine's foreign policy (deepening cooperation with the European Union, NATO), as well as the strengthening of ties between the official Kyiv and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. The result of this policy had to be the gradual reduce of the military presence in the region and the final withdrawal of the RBSF from the naval bases on the peninsula after 2017.

For an aggressive in general foreign policy of the RF, the loss of naval bases in Crimea would lead to significant restrictions in the possibility of the military using in the Black Sea region. After all, in recent decades, the ships of the RBSF have been involved in the Russo-Georgian war, to ensure Russian military presence in Syria. The Russian leadership could not allow the loss of Crimea. Thus, the 2010 Kharkiv Agreements became a turning point in Russian-Ukrainian relations and allowed the RF on the contrary to strengthen its influence on the peninsula.

The deployment of the naval forces of the RBSF in Ukraine exacerbated the disintegration tendencies in Crimea and Russia's geopolitical role in the Black Sea region. The



preservation of the Russian military contingent on the peninsula contributed to the preparation of the annexation of Crimea, the preparation for which began in 2013. The post-reformatting of the power in the capital of Ukraine (the President and the Minister of Defense fled) made it difficult to counteract the Russian aggression in Crimea. Despite the pressure from international organizations and foreign politicians, V. Putin has closed the started case.

The annexation of the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea by Russia has negative political, economic, social, cultural, ecological consequences for the peninsula and Ukraine. It also brings new geopolitical challenges and threats to the states of the entire Black Sea region.

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