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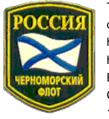- Congress
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Black Sea Fleet (BSF)

The Russian-controlled Black Sea Fleet is based on Ukraine's Crimean peninsula. It is headquartered at Sevastopol', with an additional home port in Odessa. Russian interest in the Black Sea extends over more than two centuries. Catherine the Great annexed the Crimea in 1783, and subsequently established a Russian naval base at Sevastopol.

At the disintegration of the Soviet Union, estimates of the number of ships counted in the Black Sea Fleet varied widely, from as many as 635 to as few as 300 warships and submarines. The number of Russian personnel associated with the fleet was variously estimated at between 47,000 to 70,000. In 1995, the fleet reportedly had approximately 48,000 naval and marine personnel, 14 submarines, 31 surface ships, 43 patrol and coastal ships, 125 combat aircraft, and 85 helicopters.

The Black Sea Fleet became an object of contention between Russia and Ukraine when the latter republic achieved independence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Ukraine, a nation of 52 million people, borders the Black Sea and rents facilities in its port of Sevastopol to the 250-ship Russian Black Sea fleet. Ukrainian naval forces, with about 160 vessels, are based to the south in the port of Donuzlav. Although Ukraine had no use for a blue-water navy and cannot afford to maintain one, it was reluctant to surrender its share of the fleet, both of whose home ports are in Ukraine, to a larger neighbor with a tradition of domination.

Acrimonious relations over--and within--the fleet itself were fostered by naval leaders and nationalistic politicians within the legislative branches of the two governments. A long period of wrangling over the allegiances of military personnel and how to divide the ships of the Black Sea Fleet followed. The presidents of Russia and Ukraine reached agreement in August 1992 under which the fleet and ports would be under joint command of Russia and Ukraine for 3 years. At the Tashkent summit, Russia agreed to cede to Ukraine a certain portion of the former Soviet Union's weapons, units, and sites. Since these weapons fell under the numerical and zone restrictions of the CFE Treaty, Ukraine agreed in its articles of ratification to reduce any excess TLE within 40 months of entry into force.

The 126th Coastal Defense Division, stationed in Simferopol, was once a motorized rifle division belonging to the Ground Forces. During the negotiations for the CFE treaty, the division was transferred to the navy and transformed into a coastal defense division. The CFE treaty does not apply to naval forces, but NATO objected so strongly to the

Further Reading

Black Sea Fleet Bases
- **Sevastopol**
- **Odesa**

Resources
- Black Sea Fleet
- Ukraine, Russia, and the Black Sea Fleet Accords Tyler Felgenhauer *WWS Case Study* 2/99
- Black Sea Fleet
- Oil, Guns, and Empire: Russia, Turkey, Caspian "New Oil" and the Montreaux Convention by John Daly

move that the Soviet Union finally agreed to count the weapons in the division against its treaty allowances. In August 1995 it was announced that the division would be disbanded, and the equipment and property of the division turned over to Ukraine.

Partitioning the fleet proved to be to difficult at Tashkent; consequently, the issue was left to bilateral Russian-Ukrainian negotiations. In June 1993, Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk and Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed an agreement that essentially split the fleet in half, beginning in September 1993 and reaching completion in 1996. No sooner had this agreement been announced than it fell apart. Russian naval officers objected to any transfer, and Ukrainian military leaders objected to any loss of territory from the naval bases slated for transfer. The Black Sea Fleet agreement was renegotiated in September 1993 and again in April 1994.

By 1995, the fleet had approximately 48,000 naval and marine personnel, 14 submarines, 31 surface ships, 43 patrol and coastal ships, 125 combat aircraft, and 85 helicopters. Equipment covered by the CFE Treaty included one coastal defense division with 175 tanks, 450 armored infantry fighting vehicles, and 72 artillery pieces. The fleet also contained a naval infantry brigade with 50 tanks, 218 ACVs, and 45 artillery pieces. Based in the Odessa Military District in the Crimea, this fleet was manned predominantly by Russian sailors and officers. The fleet's Russian commander and its senior officers resisted any partition and transfer to Ukraine.

On 25 November 1995 Russia and Ukraine reached an agreement on division of the Black Sea Fleet, under which Ukraine would receive 150 naval installations of the fleet. Another agreement in February 1996 fell apart two months later, when Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev stopped the division because of controversy over where the Russian fleet would be based.

After nearly five years of controversy, on 28 May 1997 Moscow and Kiev finally settled their dispute over the Black Sea Fleet, when Prime Ministers Chernomyrdin and Lazarenko signed three intergovernmental agreements. The two sides agreed to divide the fleet's assets and to lease port facilities in Sevastopol to the Russian Navy. Under the agreement the two nations split the fleet's ships evenly, though Russia agreed to buy back some of the more modern ships with cash. Thus Russia ultimately received four-fifths of the Black Sea Fleet's warships, while Ukraine received about half of the facilities.

The two leaders agreed that Russia would rent three harbors for warships and two airfields for a twenty-year period, for a payment of about $100 million annually. Sevastopol, which had been partly under Russian control, was given to Ukraine. Russia will keep its portion of the former Soviet fleet for 20 years in several bays at Sevastopol, and the Ukrainian navy will also be stationed at a bay there. Russians leased the Saki shore carrier flight training facility on the Crimean Peninsula prior to the re-deployment of the *Kuznetsov* to the Northern Fleet. Russia agreed to station no more than 25,000 military personnel at the bases, and that it would place no nuclear weapons at the leased facilities. A result of the division of the Black Sea Fleet between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, armaments and equipment of the Coastal Defence Forces and Naval Infantry assigned to the Russian Federation were subject to withdrawal from the territory of Ukraine.

As of July 1997 Ukraine was implementing the agreement concerning the division of the Black Sea Fleet, and had taken the allocated fifteen vessels from the Russian fleet. On 24 March 1999, the Ukrainian Rada finally ratified the three intergovernmental agreements signed in May 1997. The Ukrainian Navy consists of 44 fighting ships and 80 auxiliary vessels. The Ukrainian Navy has about 100 ships off different types. Ukrainian naval bases are : Odessa; Ochakov; Chernomorskoe; Novoozernii and Feodosiya. The main base of the Ukrainian Navy is Sevastopol.

When Ukraine demanded the division of the Black Sea Fleet, Russia was forced to begin construction of a new naval base near Novorossiisk, since some 80 to 90 percent of the Black Sea Fleet of the former USSR was deployed in Sevastopol.

In late 1997 a three-day common exercises of Ukrainian and Russian fleets "Peace Fairway - 97" took place. The exercise involved 50 ships, 14 planes, 2 helicopters and more than 15 thousand servicemen. The share of Russian staff was about twice that of the Ukrainian one. The exercise did not constitute a beginning of military cooperation between Ukraine and Russia, since Ukraine is a non-aligned and neutral state.

As of 1999 the Russian Black Sea Fleet remained, in spite of cuts, an imposing force with 20,000 servicemen,

numerous warships, over 100 armored vehicles, and aircraft and artillery.

Talks on confidence-building measures between Black Sea states -- Turkey, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia and Russia -- were initiated in two separate processes in late 1998. One is the implementation of confidence-building measures in the Black Sea, which include arms talks, and the other is the establishment of the on-call forces in the spirit of PfP known as Black Sea Force (Blackseafor), involving all countries in the region. The goal of Blackseafor is to enhance cooperation and inter-operability between the naval forces of member states. Initiatives will include joint port and naval exercises for humanitarian and search and rescue operations, as well as peacekeeping operations for humanitarian purposes such as demining and environmental protection. Blackseafor members will establish the Black Sea Naval Commanders' Committee and a the planning group, with the commander of the force changing each year.

On 30 October 2002, the State Duma ratified the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (Blackseafor) Agreement. A year and a half earlier the six Black Sea states - Russia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine - signed the Blackseafor Agreement, which as of now has been ratified by five of its participants and for two navigation seasons has been operating in a temporary use mode (two training cruises took place). The importance of the Blackseafor project is in that a group of states of one basin has devised a fundamentally new model of multinational naval cooperation, and formalized it in an interstate agreement, thus giving this initiative high political status. The recent tragic events on the seas, which, unfortunately, are a part of sea navigation, have convincingly shown how far-sighted the Black Sea countries had been by creating the Blackseafor. Of no small importance, again, is the fact that the activities of the Blackseafor will be conducive to improving the naval skills of crews and the qualification of the command echelon, and developing the standards of cooperation between officers in the conditions of a multinational structure of command for a detachment of ships.

The Black Sea, like the Baltic, represented a major shipbuilding and trading region of the former Soviet Union. With the breakup of the old Soviet Union, however, the major port and naval facilities of Sevastopol, Odessa, and Nikolayev passed to the jurisdiction of the newly created nation of Ukraine. To operate their fleet effectively Russia must now lease such facilities from the Ukraine or perhaps build new centers along its eastern shore of the Black Sea. Three major nations now dominate the Black Sea, namely Ukraine, Russia, and Turkey, the latter of which is a member of NATO.

Russia has substanial commitment in the area with its former headquarters at Sevastopol and major construction yards at Nikolayev which produced four Kiev class carriers and the more recent conventional carrier Admiral Kuznetsov. Moreover, the Black Sea has been a research and development ground for numerous ships, aircraft, hydrofoils, hovercraft, wing-in-ground effect platforms, and weapons systems.

While the Black Sea has perhaps the most pleasant climate and conditions in all of Russia, it has possibly the worst strategic location of all the four fleets. The only exit from the Black Sea is through the 180 mile long Turkish-controlled Turkish Straits. The straits are composed, from NE to SW, of the Bosporus, the Sea of Marmara and the Dardanelles. In the Bosporus, at the northern end of the straits, ships must navigate a passage that narrows to as little as 800 yards before the Sea of Marmara is reached. After the Sea of Marmara, ships transit the final 40 miles of the straits, the Dardanelles, which are from one to four miles wide.

In addition to the great geographic restrictions on transit, there are legal restrictions as well. Under the 1936 Montreux Convention, Turkey must be notified eight days before a transit through the straits. Aircraft carriers are not allowed to transit and submarines must transit the straits on the surface. Such a restriction, however, did not prevent illegal transit of the first Kiev carrier in 1976.

Once through the straits, ships must pass through the Aegean Sea. It is dotted with approximately 2500 small islands and is controlled/patrolled by the Greek and Turkish Navies, which are equipped with specially designed ships and boats to operate in such areas at great speeds. Sovereignty over the islands is one of the causes of on-going tensions between the Greeks and Turks. Further, one should note that both states are members of NATO.

Black Sea Fleet access to the open waters of the Atlantic from the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean Sea is dependent upon transiting westerly through two more choke points, the Strait of Sicily and the Strait of Gibraltar. The Strait of Gibraltar is about 35 miles long and 8 miles wide at its narrowest point. Because of restricted Black

Sea access and the importance of the Mediterranean as a theatre of operations, the former Soviet Union maintained a number of ports-of-call and anchorages in the Mediterranean, most significantly off the coasts of Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia. Today, however, Russian presence in the region is severly limited due to internal economic constraints.

To the south, access to and egress from the Mediterranean are via the Suez Canal (controlled by Port Said), the Red Sea, and past the Bab el Mandeb Strait.

Early History

In the second-half the 18th century Russia achieved the great successes in the fight for the access to the sea and was affirmed on the coasts of Azov and Black seas. As a result of the Russo-Turkish War 1768-1774, according to The kyuchuk-Kaynardzhiyskomu peace treaty, Russia obtained the part of the earth between the Dnepr and the bug, Kuban, Azov, Taganrog, Kerch', To enikale, Kinburn. Crimean khanate declared by independent variable from Turkey.

In 1773 in the Black sea the Black Sea squadron created on the basis of Azov flotilla successfully acted. It rested in Kerch' and by two forces it performed the cruising duty between The the balaklavoy, Feodosiya and Sudjuk- Calais (Novorossisk). After the end of war on to the Don continued the building of warships. Were constructed, mainly, sail-rowing vessels, 32- X cannon frigates and Cossack boats. In 1775 Russia began to determine the place, where it was possible to construct the glubokosidyashchiye seagoing vessels and to derive them directly into the Black sea. In 1778 on the instruction of Novorossisk governor general prince g.A.Potemkina was based g.Kherson "and to the construction with it of port" was assigned General i.A.Gannibal.

In spite of the signing of peace treaty, between Russia and Turkey unrolled complex diplomatic fight for the Crimea by the result of this fight it appeared the connection of the Crimea to Russia. By rescript of Ekaterinas P of 8 April, 1783. "peninsula Crimean, Taman' and entire Kuban side" were included in the composition of Russia. The Crimean khan forewent the throne. The connection of the Crimea to Russia had the progressive value: the threat of ruinous raids from the south to the Russian earth was forever removed with the liquidation of Crimean khanate, Turkey was deprived of the fundamental base of its aggression in the North Black Sea area. For the protection of the age-old Russian earth recaptured in Turkey and guarantee of navigation in the Black sea Russia needed strong fleet.

Long time dispatch the searches for convenient places for the basing of the main bodies of fleet. One of such bunches proved to be Akhtiarskaya, located on the southwestern shore of Crimean peninsula, in the ruins of ancient Khersonesa.

On 2 May, 1783, in The akhtiarskeye bunch arrived squadron of five frigates and eight of others was ship Azov flotilla under the command Vice Admiral f.A.Klokacheva. On 7 May into the bay entered 11 it was ship Dneprovsk flotilla. From this time sea forces in the south of Russia began to be named by Black Sea fleet. In the honor of its base in the same year was poured the medal "glory of Russia".

The akhtiarskaya bunch became the main point of the basing of the ships of fleet. On 3 June, 1783, in the solemn situation were placed the first four buildings of future city and port. Initially it was called Akhtiar (white rock), and then in accordance with the edict of Ekaterinas II of 10 February, 1784, it was named Sevastopol ("worthy city").

In 1785 was affirmed the first state of the Black Sea fleet, on which it had to have 12 battleships, 20 large frigates, 5 combat schooners, 18 transport and auxiliary ship. Fleet rapidly grew. Already to May 1787 it counted in its composition of 46 messages: 3 battleships, 12 frigates, 3 bombardirskikh ships, 28 other servicemen are ship.

However, Turkey could not be subdued to the loss of the Crimea and the appearance in the Black sea of Russian fleet. This led to the new war, in which Russia came out in the union with Austria. However, Turkey supported and helped it England, France and Prussia. During August 1787 Istanbul produced ultimatum with the requirement to return the Crimea, to recognize Georgia as the vassal possession of sultan and to agree to the establishment of Turkish control over Russian vessels with their passage through the straits for Russia. Russia answered by refusal. This served as occasion for the new war.

Such combat and battles at sea entered from the experience of this war into the history: on on island Fidonisi g.), in the Kerch strait (8.7.1790 g.), in Tendry (28.8.1790 g.) and in and in cape Kaliakra). The victories Of f.F.Ushakova

foiled all plans of Turkey to attack the Crimea from the sea. They contributed, together with the successes of Russian army, to the acceleration of negotiations and to the conclusion Of yasskogo peace treaty, according to which Turkey forever transferred to Russia the Crimea, Ochakov, Kinburn and Azov.

In connection with further development of Black Sea fleet, arose the need for the building of more convenient and safer shipyard. Such dockyard was placed in the mouth Of ingula during June 1788 in yr, on 27 August, 1789, new city was named by Nikolayev, who became the center of shipbuilding in the south of the country. Simultaneously with the declaration of Sevastopol in 1804 with the main port of Black Sea fleet, in it so began ship building.

In 1826 in Sevastopol was built with 18- TI cannon brig "mercury", whose crew under the command the lieutenant commander Of a.I.Kazarskogo 14 May of 1829 gained the landslide above two Turkish battleships, which had tenfold superiority in the people and the armament. "mercury" by the first of the ships of Black Sea fleet is rewarded by stern Georgievskiy by flag.

Following the traditional Russian policy of resolving the "Eastern Question" by seeking to partition the Ottoman Empire and establish a protectorate over the Orthodox population of the Balkans, Russia fought a successful war with the Ottomans in 1828 and 1829.

In 1833 Russia negotiated the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi with the Ottoman Empire. Western statesmen believed mistakenly that the treaty contained a secret clause granting Russia the right to send warships through the Bosporus and Dardanelles straits. As a result, the major European powers intervened and by the London Straits Convention of 1841 affirmed Ottoman control over the straits and forbade any power, including Russia, to send warships through the straits.

In the middle OF THE XIX century by the efforts of the outstanding Admirals Of a.S.Greyga, M.P.Lazareva, P.S.Nakhimova and V.A.Kornilova Black Sea fleet became one of the best sailing fleets of Europe.

The Crimean War flared up in 1853 as result of long standing economic and political contradictions between England, France, Turkey and Russia. Each of these countries aspired to strengthen its influence on the Near East and to win markets and new territories. The Crimean War was one of the most bloody wars of the 19th century. The United Kingdom, France and Turkey formed a united front against Russia. The war was fought in the Baltic and White seas, on the Danube and in the Caucasus, and even on remote Kamchatka. But the main theater of military actions was the Crimea. The Russian Black Sea Fleet ships were sunk in Sevastopol, and the European allies landed in Crimea, laying siege to a well-fortified base at Sevastopol'. After a year's siege the base fell, exposing Russia's inability to defend a major fortification on its own soil.

During the Crimean War (1853-1856 yr.) the squadron of the Black Sea fleet under the command of Vice Admiral p.S.Nakhimov on 18 November, 1853, gained the landslide above the Turkish fleet in The sinopskeye bunch. Of 16 ships the enemy lost 15. This was the last large battle of the epoch of sailing fleet.

The defense of Sevastopol 1854-1855 was the main event of the Crimean War. 349 days lasted the Sevastopol epic, during which valiantly battled on the bastions of Sevastopol the seaman- Black Sea sailors under the command of the Admirals Of v.A.Kornilova, V.I.Istomina, P.S.Nakhimova.

On 18 March 1856 the war ended with the "humiliating" Treaty of Paris. Russia lost the right to have by the Black sea fleet, to build fortresses and naval bases. The 1856 Treaty of Paris demilitarized the Black Sea and deprived Russia of southern Bessarabia and a narrow strip of land at the mouth of the Danube River. It was only in 1870 that Russia denounced the treaty clauses barring her from having a naval presence on the Black Sea and began to rebuild a naval presence there.

At the beginning 20th century Black Sea fleet became serious military force in the south of Russia. In its composition there were 7 squadron Battleships, 2 "popovki" (artillery floating batteries), 1 cruiser, 3 mine cruisers, 22 torpedo boats, 6 gunboats, 9 minonosok, 2 steamships, 8 transports. To the autumn of 1917 Black Sea fleet counted narrower than 177 warships, it had transport flotilla.

In the beginning of 1918 the revolutionary seamen of Black Sea fleet together with the population of the Crimea conducted militant struggle for the establishment of new authority, and then, from the spring, they participated in the

fight with the advancing forces of German troops. In order not to allow the seizure of the ships of fleet by Germans, part of them was transferred into Novorossisk, where on the order of Bolsheviks, they were flooded. More than 130 ships left Sevastopol and left into the Tunisian port Bizerte and some others. Chances to the restoration of fleet appeared only after the final release of Sevastopol on 15 November, 1920, their first significant floating through the Black sea, in which participated more than 20 ships, the revived fleet completed in the fall of 1923.

In 1928 the restoration of fleet was in essence final and it began its technical reconstruction. In 1929 -1937 yr. Black Sea fleet obtained more than 500 warships of different classes, hundred of combat aircraft. Were created WITH VVS, coast defense and air defense system CHF.

At the beginning of World War II into composition CHF entered battleship "Commune of Paris" (later it it was renamed into "Sevastopol"), cruisers the "red Crimea", "Voroshilov", "Molotov", 3 leaders, 14 destroyers, 47 submarines, 15 trawlers, 4 gunboats, 2 destroyer escorts, mine layer, 34 PT boats, 10 launch- hunters, auxiliary ships; VVS of fleet counted 625 aircraft. In full combat readiness the fleet met the attack of Fascist Germany. Before the Black Sea fleet was set the task to cover and to support the seaside Front of ground forces with the fire of artillery and by air strikes. Ships CHF during the first days of war already completed audacious raids to the fundamental sea bases of enemy. Special position in the war shooting of fleet occupy the defense of Odessa, Sevastopol, Kerch -Feodosika4 landing operation, defense of the Caucasus, release of Novorossisk.

In the years of war the fleet conducted 24 landing operations, were heated 835 ships and it was ship enemy, 539 are damaged. 18 ships and to parts appropriated the title of guard, 228 people became Heroes of the Soviet Union, 54766 - were rewarded with orders and medals.

In the subsequent time, after restoring the infrastructure, destroyed by war, Black Sea fleet accomplished tasks in the protection of the southern boundaries of the country. Ships, submarines and aviation CHF accomplished tasks in the bearing of combat service in different regions of world ocean.

The Montreaux Convention was signed on 20 July 1936 by Turkey, Great Britain, France, Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece, Yugoslavia, Australia and Japan to resolve the issue of warship passage of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles (the Straits) by warships. The conference had been called by Turkey in order to clarify the 1923 Lausanne Treaty. Turkey cannot prevent the international use of the straits because navigation through both the Bosporus and Dardanelles is unrestricted under the 1936 Montreaux convention which provides safe passage for commercial traffic at all times except during the war. In practice the Convention did not hinder Soviet naval forces from traversing the Bosphorus/Dardenelles into the Mediterranean, nor did it prevent NATO naval contingents from entering the Black Sea.

US Navy ships regularly steamed into the Black Sea, to demonstrate freedom of navigation and exercise the provisions of the Montreaux Convention which govern passage through the Dardanelles and Bosporus Straits. On 13 March 1986, two American warships, the guided missile cruiser USS Yorktown and the destroyer USS Caron cruised through Soviet Crimean territorial waters, provoking a formal protest from the USSR five days later.

After the collapse of the USSR, after passing the complex and unhealthy period of the reduction of the zone of basing, division between Russia and Ukraine, reformation, fleet it withstood, preserved its combat efficiency and it is as before the reliable advance post, which protects the interests of the fraternal peoples of Russia and Ukraine in the Black sea.

Black Sea Fleet (BSF) Morskoyo Flota (Naval Force)