

Russia's Black Sea Fleet - Where will it be based - Syria?

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It is unlikely that the Russians will leave the Black Sea with its fleet - both because a departure from the Black Sea in itself is unlikely (moving it to Abkhazia is more likely) and the movement to Syria will significantly change the Balance of Power in the Mid East and this is something the Russians continue to say they do not want to do.

The Syrian Port of Tartus is thus more likely to act as a forward base for joint exercises. CRNews Military Analyst.

Russia's Mirazh corvette returns to Sevastopol naval base
13:34 | 22/ 08/ 2008

SEVASTOPOL, August 22 (RIA Novosti) - Russia's Mirazh guided missile corvette returned Friday to its Black Sea Fleet base at Sevastopol, which Russia rents from Ukraine, after patrolling waters off the Georgian coast.

The Mirazh, part of the country's Black Sea Fleet, was recently involved in Russia's "peace enforcement" operation which began after Georgia launched an offensive in breakaway South Ossetia on August 8.

Reportedly, it was the Mirazh, which sank a Georgian vessel during an attempted attack on Russian ships near Abkhazia's coast last week.

The vessel was greeted by crowds of people waving Russian flags and fireworks, while a group of students from western Ukraine held banners, which read "Shame" and "Out of here!"

Meanwhile, a high ranking source in the Turkish Naval Forces said that two NATO frigates carrying humanitarian aid for Georgia had entered Black Sea waters.

Ukraine's President Viktor Yushchenko signed a decree last Wednesday requiring prior notification from Russia of all movements by naval vessels and aircraft from the country's Black Sea Fleet base in Ukraine's Crimea.

Ukraine even threatened to refuse Russian vessels entry to the Sevastopol naval base. Russia's Black Sea Fleet uses the Sevastopol base under agreements signed in 1997. Yushchenko announced earlier this year that Ukraine would not extend the lease beyond 2017.

<http://www.en.rian.ru/world/20080822/116212623.html>

Ukraine says Russia should prepare to leave Crimea naval base
10:09 | 21/ 08/ 2008

MOSCOW, August 21 (RIA Novosti) - Ukraine's foreign minister has said Russia should start preparing to withdraw its Black Sea Fleet from the Sevastopol base, which it rents in Ukraine's Crimea.

Volodymyr Ohryzko said in an interview with the Russian daily Izvestia published on Thursday that Ukraine has no plans to push for an early pullout of the Black Sea Fleet.

"Ukraine is a reliable business partner. We will honor all obligations under the existing treaties." However, "Russia should start without delay making preparations for the withdrawal of its fleet in 2017."

He said Kiev had asked Moscow to agree on a withdrawal procedure, but that no response has yet been received.

"We do not understand the position of Russia, which simply refuses to discuss the issue... But let me assure you that in any event, after 2017, there will be no Russian fleet on our soil," he said.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said on Monday that Russia is ready to negotiate with Ukraine on the use of the

Black Sea Fleet in the Crimea, but will not let Kiev dictate terms.

Last Friday Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko said he had presented Russia with "an urgent proposition to launch talks and draw up an agreement to regulate bilateral relations during military operations" such as those in Georgia over the past week.

Ships from Russia's Black Sea Fleet patrolled the waters off the Georgian coast during Russia's "peace enforcement" operation that began after Georgia launched an offensive in breakaway South Ossetia on August 8.

Yushchenko signed a decree last Wednesday stating that Russia was required to notify the Ukrainian authorities of all movements by naval vessels and aircraft from its Crimea-based Black Sea Fleet.

Ukraine even threatened to refuse to allow the Russian vessels to return to the Sevastopol naval base. Russia's Black Sea Fleet uses the Sevastopol base under agreements signed in 1997. Yushchenko announced earlier this year that Ukraine would not extend the lease beyond 2017.

<http://www.en.rian.ru/world/20080821/116178588.html>

Ukraine moves to enforce new rules for Russia's Black Sea Fleet
21:12 | 21/ 08/ 2008

KIEV, August 21 (RIA Novosti) - Ukraine's Defense Minister Yuriy Yekhanurov signed instructions Thursday to implement an earlier presidential decree complicating the rules of deployment for Russia's Black Sea fleet.

President Viktor Yushchenko signed a decree last week requiring Russia to notify the Ukrainian authorities of all movements by naval vessels and aircraft from its Crimea-based Black Sea Fleet.

Under the Defense Ministry instructions, the first deputy chief of Ukraine's General Staff will be made responsible for the coordination of moves of the Black Sea fleet's units outside of places of their deployment.

The instructions will come into effect once they are registered with Ukraine's Justice Ministry.

Ships from Russia's Black Sea Fleet patrolled the waters off the Georgian coast during Russia's "peace enforcement" operation that began after Georgia launched an offensive in breakaway South Ossetia on August 8.

<http://www.en.rian.ru/world/20080821/116200697.html>

Ukraine's Actions Violate Black Sea Fleet Agreements - Lavrov
By: iStockAnalyst Thursday, August 21, 2008 9:53 PM

(Source: Daily News Bulletin; Moscow - English)SOCHI. Aug 21 (Interfax) - Attempts by Ukraine to restrict the movement of Russian Black Sea Fleet ships violates existing treaties and arouses dismay in Moscow, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told reporters in Sochi on Thursday.

"These actions by Ukraine are a violation of basic agreements and, using diplomatic language, arouse dismay," he said.

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http://www.istockanalyst.com/article/viewarticle+articleid_2537173.html

Ukraine will observe international Treaty on disposition of the Black Sea Fleet of Russia in Crimea till 2017

Prime Minister of Ukraine Yulia Tymoshenko announces Ukraine will observe an international Treaty on disposition of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine. She declared today on answering the journalists's questions in the course of a press conference. Yulia Tymoshenko reminded the validity term of the mentioned Treaty is up to 2017.

"Concerning the Black Sea Fleet international agreements must be observed and it is unambiguous," the Head of Government underlined, Cabinet's press office reported.

In addition Yulia Tymoshenko announced she strongly objects any escalation of tension between Ukrainian authorities and the Black Sea Fleet. "I consider today Ukrainian authorities should act with great responsibility and have no right to engage Ukraine into any military conflict," Yulia Tymoshenko.
ForUm

<http://en.for-ua.com/news/2008/08/20/180027.html>

Black Sea Fleet: a factor of stability or instability?
16:01 | 20/ 08/ 2008

MOSCOW. (Alexander Khramchikhin for RIA Novosti) - Tensions over Sevastopol in the Crimea have flared time and again since the breakup of the Soviet Union. The latest occasion has been provided by the recent conflict in South Ossetia.

The Ukrainian president aligned himself with his Georgian counterpart during the confrontation, and now wants to control Russia's Black Sea Fleet, which could render it useless as a military force. The rule is that a host country exerts ultimate control over foreign military bases on its territory. Such is global practice. In 2003, Turkey banned the United States from using Incirlik Air Base in the invasion of Iraq. Accordingly, if Ukraine does not allow Russia to use Sevastopol, Russia will not be able to use it.

The Black Sea Fleet's only aim in the foreseeable future could be to protect the short Russian coastline in the North Caucasus and Russia's Black Sea economic zone. More ambitious tasks look out of place. The fleet's Soviet-built ships are only getting older, and, as more vessels are being retired than come into service, its strength is slowly waning. From a military point of view, Sevastopol is becoming unnecessary and even a burden.

In the future, the fleet could consist of three to five diesel submarines and two or three dozen patrol ships and minesweepers to protect the economic zone in peacetime and fight the enemy in wartime. And it must be based in Russia.

In 1997, when the Sevastopol lease agreement was signed, Russia could not give up Sevastopol because its own Black Sea port at Novorossiisk was unable to receive all the fleet's ships and men. Now that problem is going away by itself, with ship numbers dwindling and missions curtailed. But although Novorossiisk currently hosts most of the fleet's light forces, it is not well suited to be a naval base, if only because of the strong northerly winds blowing in wintertime. Perhaps a new base should be built. It would be an expensive undertaking, of course, but no more so than leasing Sevastopol, which actually fuels Kiev's anti-Russian ambitions (which were already apparent before Yushchenko came into office).

So militarily the issue of Sevastopol is largely an illusory one for Russia; it does not match with present-day realities.

But there are also strong emotional factors involved. Sevastopol is called "a city of Russian military glory" and is known for its defenders' heroism during the Crimean and Great Patriotic wars. These emotions are backed with politics. Before 1954, the Crimea was part of the Russian Federation, and its handover to Ukraine was legally dubious even by the standards of Soviet law. Most of the Slav population of the Crimea and Sevastopol have a Russian (even a Soviet) identity, rather than a Ukrainian one, while the Crimea's Tatars look mostly to Turkey.

In general, the Soviet-era borders of Ukraine do not meet the historical, ethnic and political realities of today. The Ukrainian state is largely an artificial product. Since 1992, it has been denying any fraternal feelings for Russia and a political, especially a military, union with Russia is out of the question for the foreseeable future. By hanging on to the Sevastopol base, Moscow has made itself hostage to Kiev.

On the other hand, the presence of the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol is a strong political and emotional irritant to the Ukrainian authorities and a bolster to the Russian-Soviet identity of most of the Crimea's population. Moscow also believes its fleet in Sevastopol is preventing Ukraine from joining NATO (a strategy that seems to be a Russian reincarnation of the Anglo-Saxon doctrine of a "fleet in being").

A host of factors will determine the future of the fleet, Sevastopol and the Crimea. It is unlikely that the fleet will stay in Sevastopol after the lease expires in 2017. Logic suggests that either it will move base to Russia (before the final date) or the Crimea and Ukraine will see major political changes.

Owing to its artificial origins, Ukraine is at constant risk of splitting up into western-central and south-eastern parts. Any swing by Ukraine's central authorities toward either Russia or the West only makes this risk more likely. Kiev's stirrings about the Black Sea Fleet could deal no less devastating a blow to its domestic stability than to Russia's defense capabilities in the south.

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The opinions expressed in this article are the author's and do not necessarily represent those of RIA Novosti.

<http://www.en.rian.ru/analysis/20080820/116159992.html>

Ukraine proposes drafting Black Sea fleet deal with Russia
22:11 | 15/ 08/ 2008

KIEV, August 15 (RIA Novosti) - Ukraine's President Viktor Yushchenko sent an urgent proposal to Russia on Friday to draft a bilateral agreement on the Russian Black Sea fleet deployed in Ukraine.

Yushchenko said he had presented Russia with "an urgent proposition to launch talks and draw up an agreement to regulate bilateral relations during military operations" such as those in Georgia over the past week.

Ships from Russia's Black Sea Fleet patrolled the waters off the Georgian coast during Russia's "peace enforcement" operation that began after Georgia launched an offensive in breakaway South Ossetia on August 8.

Yushchenko signed a decree Wednesday stating that Russia was required to notify the Ukrainian authorities of all movements by naval vessels and aircraft from its Crimea-based Black Sea Fleet.

He signed the document after returning from Tbilisi, where he took part in a mass rally in support of Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili amid fighting with Russia. Both leaders have pursued pro-Western policies, seeking to join NATO and the European Union and reduce Russian influence.

Ukraine even threatened last weekend to refuse to allow the Russian vessels to return to the Sevastopol naval base. Russia's Defense Ministry said Sunday that the Russian Navy had sunk a Georgian vessel transporting missile launchers.

Russia's Black Sea Fleet uses the Sevastopol base under agreements signed in 1997. Yushchenko announced earlier this year that Ukraine would not extend the lease beyond 2017.

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20080815/116074246.html>

Russia's Black Sea Fleet Enters the Fray
Posted by David Eshel at 8/13/2008 2:58 PM CDT

Photo above: The Georgian missile boat Tbilisi, a former Soviet 206MR class vessel, believed to be sunk by the Russians during the recent conflict.

During the recent conflict with Georgia, Russia has mobilized part of its fleet toward the East Black Sea region. There have been reports that Russia has plans to move elements of its Black Sea fleet to Ochamchira, Abkhazia, ostensibly to protect Russian civilians, said a person inside the Russian navy who asked to remain anonymous.

However, the Russian Ministry of Defense claimed that a Georgian missile boat was sunk in a short skirmish between Russian and Georgian vessels. The other Georgian boats disengaged and withdrew. Russian Navy officials later confirmed sinking the Tbilisi, the former Soviet 206MR project missile boat (named Konotop then) obtained in 1999 from the Ukraine.

The Tbilisi was equipped with two Termite missile launchers, a 76 mm AK-176 dual purpose gun and a six barrel 39mm AK-630M revolving gun. On August 9, Tbilisi was reportedly hit by Russian gunfire, probably from a warship coming out of the Black Sea ports to enforce a blockade on the Georgian coast off it's main port of Poti.

A second missile boat operated by the Georgian Navy is the Dioskuria a former French-built La Combattante II (built in 1971) and transferred from the Greek Navy in 2004. The ship is equipped with four MM38 Exocet anti-ship missile systems, two Oerlikon 35mm twin cannon and two 533mm torpedo-launchers.

Also available are four Yevgenya-class concerted Mine Countermeasure Vessel (MCMV) patrol boats.

However, none of these ships have even the slightest chance of successfully engaging the massive Russian Black Sea Fleet, within striking distance at any moment with its huge firepower. Take, for example, just the flagship, the Guided Missile Cruiser Moskva, first of a new class of major Soviet combatants displacing 9,380 tons (11,490 tons full load). Overpowering all else are the sixteen P-500 Bazalt Surface to Surface Missile (SSM) canisters with their 4K80 missiles, NATO Code name SS-N-12 Sandbox, designed as aircraft carrier killers.

In all, at the Sevastopol naval base (leased from the Ukraine) the Russians are still massing no less than three missile destroyers, two guided missile frigates, five missile corvettes and scores of heavily armed missile boats.

Meanwhile the Kremlin is already under considerable political pressures from its former ally - Ukraine, which would very much like to terminate the embarrassing 1997 agreement over the fate of Russia's premier Black Sea Naval port at Sevastopol. The hurried construction of a new base for the Russian Black Sea Fleet in the port of Novorossiisk will be completed by 2012, President Vladimir Putin having signed a decree in 2003 setting up an alternative naval base for the Black Sea Fleet in Novorossiisk after Ukraine demanded the base in Sevastopol be withdrawn by 2017. Russia has allocated 12.3 billion rubles (about \$480 million) for the construction of the new base between 2007 and 2012 under a targeted federal program.

<http://www.aviationweek.com/aw/blogs/defense/index.jsp?>

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 Black Sea Fleet May Move to Syria
 from the July 11, 2006 eNews issue
<http://www.khouse.org> (visit our website for a FREE subscription)

Russia may be planning to move its Black Sea Fleet to the Syrian port of Tartus.

Russia's Black Sea Fleet currently uses a range of naval facilities in the Ukrainian region of Crimea. They operate in the region under a 1997 agreement that allowed Russia to continue its presence in the former Soviet republic for rent of \$93 million per year.

The fleet is not scheduled to withdraw until 2017. However the Ukraine has recently voiced concerns that Russia is not paying enough for the facilities and has demanded that a new agreement be signed. Russia says that it will not make any concessions and negotiations between Russia and the Ukraine have stalled.

On June 23, 2006, Ukrainian officials attempted to seize a building and equipment belonging to the Black Sea Fleet, further aggravating the disagreement.

Recently a respected Russian newspaper quoted multiple sources in Russia's diplomatic service and the Defense Ministry, indicating that Russia may be planning to move its Black Sea Fleet to Syria. Russia has started dredging at the Syrian port of Tartus where it maintains a logistical supply point and it may have plans to turn it into a full-fledged naval base. Russia has also launched a modernization project at the port of Latakia, located about 60 miles to the north of Tartus.

A Defense Ministry source said that Moscow was planning to form a squadron led by the Moskva, the Black Sea Fleet's flagship missile cruiser, within the next three years. The squadron would operate in the Mediterranean Sea on a permanent basis.

Over the past two years, partly as a consequence of the war in Iraq, Russia has been carefully cultivating ties with Turkey, Iran and Syria. After losing the Mid-East foothold provided by Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the Russians have been building a new axis of power based on those three key countries. Russia is now Turkey's second-largest trading partner, with a volume of \$10 billion in trade per year; Russia strengthened ties with Iran by supplying it with nuclear-related technologies; and last year Russia and Syria made plans to increase diplomatic and military cooperation. Russia wrote-off approximately 10 billion dollars of Syria's Soviet-era debt and has supplied Syria with Russian made SA-18 surface-to-air missiles.

Russia's arms exports in 2005 totalled a record breaking 6.1 billion dollars. Despite the ongoing controversy about Iran's nuclear program, Russia intends to sell Iran up to 30 Tor M-1 surface-to-air missiles in a deal estimated to be worth up to

700 million dollars. Russia claims to be our ally and partner in the war against terrorism. However despite US objections, Russia is all too willing to sell advanced weaponry to countries (like Syria and Iran) which support the insurgency in Iraq. Russia has also made overtures to the Hamas-controlled Palestinian government. Russia does not consider Hamas to be a terrorist organization, even though Hamas has claimed responsibility for the murder of more than 500 people in at least 350 separate terrorist attacks since 1993.

Russia is a co-sponsor of the Road Map Peace Plan, but that does not mean they are a friend to Israel. Prior to the elections in January, Russian military experts were sent to the Gaza Strip to train Palestinian security forces. In addition to training, Russia is prepared to provide the Palestinians with armored vehicles, ammunition, and helicopters. In past speeches Putin has called on Israel to make concessions and withdraw "from all the occupied Arab lands back to the June 4, 1967 border."

Tensions in the Middle East continue to increase and recent events indicate that the famed battle prophesied in Ezekiel 38 and 39 could be on our near horizon. It is during this battle, that God will directly intercede to protect Israel from Magog and its allies. For more information on this topic see the links below.

 Russians to Base Major Forces in Syria?

The Russian Mediterranean Fleet

Sevastopol; may be traded for the Syrian port of Tartus

The Commander in Chief of the Russian Navy, Vladimir Vysotskiy is planning to increase the number of combat ships in Sevastopol;. Also, without waiting for a political decision about the fate of the Black Sea Fleet (BSF), he is already thinking about re-basing the BSF in the Mediterranean basin after 2017. Military experts consider the idea of rebasing the fleet to be rational, but consider the announcement to increase the number of vessels to be nothing more than populism. Since Russia doesn't have any ships to spare the only way to increase the numbers in the BSF would be to take ships from other fleets.

After the publication of Mayor Yuri Luzhkov's doubts about Ukraine's claim to Crimea, the dispute over basing the BSF in Sevastopol; has broken out with new force. The President of Ukraine, Victor Yushenko quickly signed an order to end the fleet's lease in 2017 and Russian officials have for the first time quietly raised the idea of paying more rent. At the end of the week the CinC Russian Navy Vladimir Vysotskiy announced that Russia would raise the number of ships in the BSF to one hundred. This number is predicated on a Russian-Ukrainian basing agreement since there are 35 ships in the BSF now. True, the CinC hasn't said how this increase would come about. Experts think the CinC's loud announcements are baseless. The President of the Academy of Geopolitical Problems Leonid Ivashov considers that Russia won't be able to put 100 ships into the Black Sea for another 20 years at the earliest, "since we simply don't have them. But, by this time, we may already have lost the main base in Sevastopol;. Therefore similar pronouncements must be considered adventurism." Aleksandr Khranchikhin, the chief of the information-analytical department of the Institute of Political and Military Analysis agrees that to do this obviously involves a transfer of ships from the Baltic and Northern Fleets. "But why we would do this is not completely clear," says the expert.

So with regards to possible new addresses for a renovated BSF, among the most probable appears to be the Mediterranean basin. "A Russian Naval Base can be built there," Vladimir Vysotskiy announced, noting that "Russia has strategic interests in the world ocean and we will pursue them." Experts welcome the stationing of ships in the Mediterranean Sea. "But today we hardly have a toehold in that basin," Leonid Ivashov says. "Really only the Syrian port of Tartus, where we can agree with the Syrians to use it. But it's not as simple as to just pick up and move there since we only have a tender based there now. Redeploying to the Mediterranean partly makes sense, but even then there has to be some sort of presence in the Black Sea since we have to guard our own shores. Therefore light forces will probably stay in Novorossiysk and the heavier forces, which admittedly aren't very numerous, will transfer to Tartus, where a Russian base will be constructed," Aleksandr Khranchikhin says.

Since Soviet times there has been a navy repair base in the Syrian port of Tartus. Right now it is a temporary deployment base for the BSF (for about a dozen warships) and there are three floating docks and the repair tender PM-61. Russian specialists are also working on expansion of the port and the construction of a pier in the neighboring port of Al-Latakia. The repair base could potentially receive the designation of basing point and then Navy Base.

Ivan Petrov

02 June 2008

Posted by Russian Navy Blog

<http://redbannernorthernfleet.blogspot.com/2008/06/russians-to-base-major-forces-in-syria.html>

Too many views on the destiny of Russian Black Sea fleet in Crimea

28.07.2008

There is a certain probability of political conflict between Kyiv and Moscow regarding the negotiations about moving the Russian Black Sea military fleet from the Crimean peninsula by 2017.

Halyna Pastushuk reports

Russian politologists say that in real dimension the question of dislocating Russian Black-sea fleet into another place has not been even touched in any official level. Meanwhile, President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko has stated this week again that there is urgency to start negotiations today citing the Constitution that forbids presence of foreign military bases on the territory of Ukraine and the treaty signed in 1997. Mr Yushchenko has warned that making preparatory steps beforehand does not mean they are premature. He underlined that the decision to leave Russian fleet in Crimea for twenty years was just a sign of good will from the side of Kyiv:

'Taking into account that these relations are regulated by a separate bilateral document according to which Russian Black Sea Fleet stays till 2017, the topic of withdrawing Russian Black-sea fleet from the territory of Ukraine must appear on the agenda of our relations. This question has to be discussed if we want to remain polite, sincere in relations with each other. This concerns both Ukrainian politicians and their colleagues in the Russian Federation.'

Viktor Yushchenko believes that negotiations must begin already today because the whole procedure means withdrawal of hundreds of vessels, huge infrastructure, naval infantry and air bases. Not long ago, Foreign Minister of Ukraine Volodymyr Ohryzko said a necessary bill is already prepared to terminate the existing agreement about the presence of Russian fleet in Crimea. According to the Minister, the bill will be submitted to Verkhovna Rada. But already now the bulk of political analysts are saying that in Verkhovna Rada which, actually, does not have proper majority, this bill may be blocked during voting. Meanwhile Moscow has sharply criticised the bill warning that such actions are premature and hamper constructive negotiations between the two sides in this and other questions. Sergey Markov, Director of Moscow-based Institute for Politics, in his interview for Radio BBC said there can be no talking about fleet withdrawal:

'The talk is not about the commencing negotiations about withdrawal, the talk is about the prolongation of the term for presence of Russian fleet in Crimea. We are basing our position on the fact that the majority of Ukrainians are for Russian fleet remaining in Crimea, while Ukrainian politicians that do not reflect the will of the nation but are controlled by outer influences, have to leave the political arena.'

Russian military expert Pavel Kergenghauer believes that Russia does not even raise the question of fleet withdrawal in a real plane:

'Russian is not willing to leave Sevastopol. Frankly speaking, this is not even considered seriously in Moscow. So far, there is a lot of time ahead and there does not seem to be a serious discussion in future. Closer to the end of the term, the contradiction may grow into a serious crisis. In Moscow they anticipate a change of power and thus, attitude to this problem will change too. If Russia wanted, preparations should have begun long ago. Something is being constructed in Novorossiysk but this city won't be able to accept the whole fleet with naval infantry and aviation. Novorossiysk base can only be an auxiliary point. Plus it has its own problem with strong winter winds.'

Some time ago Ukrainian diplomats had in their minds a perspective of dislocating a part of Black Sea Russian fleet to Syrian shores where Russia currently has something like a military naval reshipment base even though not properly equipped. Mykola Sanhurovsky, director of Kyiv-based Centre for Military Programmes in his interview for radio BBC denied such perspective. He also gave a rather unexpected idea of creating in Sevastopol united naval military forces of Ukraine, Russia and NATO. About current possibilities of Moscow he said:

'It is possible to move fleet to Novorossiysk although for Russia it is not the best option because it will dwindle the potential of Novorossiysk port itself. There was information that this could be done to Sochi. Regarding Syria, it is rather hypothetical because it's not a Russian port, it's just a place where vessels are charged, serviced and filled with cargo. But the question is not even about this. It's right that Ukraine is raising the question of demilitarisation of Black sea zone. If any military forces should remain, it may be seashore guard to fight against terrorism. There is a better idea. Why not to create in Sevastopol a united base for Russia, Ukraine and NATO. It would be a base for fleet to take part in Mediterranean military drills.'

In this case, according to Mr Sanhurovsky, there is no necessity to withdraw the whole Black-sea fleet but only the fighting department.

<http://www.polskieradio.pl/zagranica/news/>

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