

# Russian ‘separatism’ in Crimea and NATO: Ukraine’s big hope, Russia’s grand gamble

*By Elena Mizrokhi*

Research assistant for the *Chaire de recherche du Canada sur les conflits identitaires et le terrorisme* and for the *Programme Paix et sécurité internationales*,  
*Institut québécois des hautes études internationales (HEI)*  
MA student in International Studies at Laval University, Quebec city  
August 2009



**Chaire de recherche du Canada**  
sur les conflits identitaires et le terrorisme



Paix et sécurité internationales



**UNIVERSITÉ  
LAVAL**

Institut québécois  
des hautes études internationales



## Table of contents

---

	Page
INTRODUCTION.....	1
<b>1. Brief history of Crimea.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. “Crimean Identities” .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. The beginning of demands for Crimean autonomy.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Involvement of Russia in this first phase of “Russian separatism” in Crimea.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5. Why was there no war in Crimea?.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6. Moscow’s entanglement round one: lessons learned.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>7. Ukraine and NATO.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>8. Russian separatists 2000 –.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>9. The significance of the August Crisis in Georgia.....</b>	<b>18</b>
CONCLUSION.....	19
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	21



## Introduction

The Russian incursion into Georgia in August 2008 provoked the fear among Western political circles and the media that similar Russian military intervention was possible in other irredentist regions in the Commonwealth of Independent States with large Russian minorities like Crimea. Crimea, part of Imperial Russia since the late 18th century, was handed to Soviet Ukraine by the General Secretary of the Communist Party and the leader of the Soviet Union Nikita Khrushchev in 1954. It became part of independent Ukraine in 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the Crimean question is often labelled as a “Russian problem.”<sup>2</sup> The tensions concerning Crimea are as much a result of Ukrainian national politics and external ambitions as the Russian ones. In other words, the political situation in Crimea is inextricable linked to the state of Russo-Ukrainian relations.

A key element in the polemics between Ukraine and Russia is the 11.3 million-strong Russian minority in Ukraine.<sup>3</sup> While the overwhelming share of the Russian speaking population resides in the Eastern part of the country, only in one region does this minority represent a majority – the Crimean peninsula. According to the 1989 census, 67.04 percent of the population of Crimea of 2.43 million were Russian and 25.7 percent Ukrainian. Moreover, nearly half of the ethnic Ukrainians on the peninsula considered Russian their native tongue.<sup>4</sup> While self-

identification with Russia in the region does not follow clear ethnic lines, the vote for Ukrainian independence in 1991 only got 54.19 percent of support in Crimea in line with the ethnic divisions further highlighting the cleavage between the two ethnic groups.<sup>5</sup> This schism is representative of the political landscape not just in Crimea but in Ukraine as a whole. Crimea was from the outset the region most hostile to Ukrainian independence. The support for the country’s sovereignty was by far the lowest in Crimea with the majority of Ukrainian regions generating a support in the ninety percentile. While it would be too reductionist and primordial to assume that the Russian population of Ukraine is always and exclusively antagonistic to Ukrainian national interests, there is some truth in arguing that the minority envisions the country’s national goals differently. The fact that Crimea is the only region in modern Ukraine to enjoy the status of an Autonomous Republic speaks volumes about the idiosyncrasy of its political climate.

Ukraine’s decision to become member of the North American Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance formed in 1947 to counter the Soviet threat, has been the determinant factor in the evolution of the

---

*search for National identity*, ed. Sharon L. Wochik and Volodymyr Zvizlaynich (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2000), p. 173.

<sup>5</sup> Solchanyk, “The Politics of State Building,” p. 49. (Percentage of voters supporting Ukrainian independence from December 1 1991: Eastern Ukraine 83.86 Western Ukraine Donetsk 83.90 L'viv 97.46 Luhans'k 83.86 Ivano-Frankovsk 98.42 Zaporizhzhya 90.66 Ternopil' 98.67 Dnipropetrovs'k 90.36 Volyn' 96.32 Kharkiv 86.33 Rivno 95.96 Zakarpattia 92.59 Southern Ukraine Chernivtsi 92.78 Crimean ASSR 54.19 Odessa 85.38 Cities Kherson 90.13 Kyiv 92.88 Mykolaiv 89.45 Sevastopol' (Crimea) 57.07 Central Ukraine Kyiv 95.52 Poltava 94.93 Chernihiv 93.74 Sumy 92.61 Cherkasy 96.03 Kirovohrad 93.88 Zhytomyr 95.06 Khmel'nyts'kyi 96.30 Vinnytsya 95.43)

---

<sup>1</sup> Thomson Reuters, “Ukraine dismisses fears of Crimea Separatist Crisis,” <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSL6374528>.

<sup>2</sup> Roman Solchanyk, “The Politics of State Building: Centre-Periphery Relations in Post-Soviet Ukraine,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, 46/ 1 (1994), p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Janusz Bugajski, “Ethnic Relations and Regional Problems in Independent Ukraine,” in *Ukraine: A*



political status quo in the region, in particular with respect to the increase in pro-Russian groups. This resolve on behalf of the Eastern European nation formerly part of the Warsaw Pact is responsible for Ukraine being set on a collision course with Russia who views NATO's Eastern enlargement as a direct threat to its security and foreign policy. The rise of pro-Russian political parties and civil society organisations in Crimea must therefore be viewed in the context of the changing nature of Russo-Ukrainian relations, in particular with respect to the former's geopolitical resurgence and the latter's policy towards NATO.

This article contends that there is no viable separatist or irredentist threat in Crimea. Instead the small groups that do argue for Crimean independence or political union with the Slavic Peoples of Belarus and Russia are marginal specks on the Crimean political radar and do not represent a serious threat to Ukraine's territorial integrity. However Russia has attempted to exaggerate the danger and potency of these political and cultural associations in order to hinder or just plainly sabotage Ukraine's admission to NATO and to extend the lease of the military base located in Sevastopol (Crimea) where the Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) is anchored. In order to understand the complexities of the political situation in Crimea that has drawn, at least temporarily, the watchful gaze of the West a careful examination of the region's past and the more recent political developments is paramount.

## **1. Brief history of Crimea**

Ukraine occupies the strategically important space between the newly enlarged European Union, the Russian Federation and the Black Sea region of Turkey. Throughout history Ukraine was a 'battle ground' over

which the major powers in the region,<sup>6</sup> such as the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Ottoman Empire, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Crimean Tatar Khanate and Muscovy.<sup>7</sup> In modern times this region was the crossroads of the Russian, Habsburg, and Ottoman empires belonging intermittently to each kingdom.<sup>8</sup> Within its contemporary boundaries Ukraine exists for the first time in its history as an independent state.<sup>9</sup> The Crimean peninsula in the Southern most part of Ukraine separates the Azov from Black seas making it the envy of any power vying for the control of the maritime bodies. Its critical location was chiefly disputed between the Ottoman and Russian Empires that have both left their distinct marks on the region.

The two centuries that the peninsula spent under Imperial and then Communist Russian rule, probably because this was the last 'foreign' power to be present in Crimea, altered the region's ethnic and political makeup. Crimea was conquered by Russia after numerous military campaigns against the Ottoman Empire in 1783.<sup>10</sup> The tsarist and Soviet historiography never presented Crimea as the territory of one national group. Interestingly enough, it was the Crimean Tatar National Assembly (Kurultay) that revived the name 'Crimea' (Qirim) following the October Revolution. Under the slogan "Crimea for the Crimeans," the Kurultay and the National Party (Milli Firqa) proposed a multiethnic Crimea as an autonomous unit

<sup>6</sup> Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: identity, transition and conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Kasia Woscuk, "Catching up with 'Europe'?' constitutional debates on the territorial-administrative model in independent Ukraine," (Working Paper, University of Birmingham, 2001), p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Sasse, *The Crimea Question*, op. cit., p. 1

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Jacob Hedeskog, "Crimea after the Georgia Crisis," *FOI*, (Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency, 2008), p. 10.



within the Russian Federation.<sup>11</sup> This demand was not well received by the Central Soviet government that instead proceeded to silence the Tatar intelligentsia. The 1930s - a period of repression and forced collectivization in the USSR, resulted in 35 to 40 thousand Crimean Tatars, out of a population of over 200 thousand, being deported to Siberia. The large majority of the Tatars that were untouched by the purges unfortunately did not escape mass deportations following the end of the Second World War that sent the remaining members of the ethnic group to the Soviet Central Asian Republics of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan as well as various other locations in the Soviet Union. A large Slavic population influx occurred in the 1930s as a result of the Soviet policy of regional development.<sup>12</sup> These demographic changes permanently altered the ethnic balance in the region. After WWII even more emphasis was placed on the 'Russian' or 'Slavic' character of Crimea. In this new historical conception the Crimean Tatars appeared as the foreign occupiers thereby being denied their historical attachment to the territory. This fed perfectly into the revisionist approach to the region's history, part of the Stalinist policy to eradicate the vestiges of Crimean Tatar lengthy and rich presence on the peninsula in the aftermath of the 1944 deportation.<sup>13</sup> Existing scholarship tells us very little about the motivations surrounding Nikita Khrushchev's 1954 decision to transfer Crimea to the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic aside from the fact that the transfer of Crimea occurred during a period defined by de-Stalinization after the leader's death.<sup>14</sup> All that is certain is that by the time that Crimea was given to Ukraine its ethnic and linguistic constitution has been transformed

as a result of the above mentioned Soviet policies.

The period during which Crimea belonged to the Russian Soviet Federative Social Republic added a layer of Russian history to the region with otherwise deep non-Russian roots. The multiethnic character of Crimea is further reinforced by deeply rooted symbolic, literary, and historical memories that provide ample material for ethno political mobilization and exclusive claims to the territory.<sup>15</sup> Three competing views of the region's history emerging from the main ethnic groups of the region exist. The Tatar view perceives the groups' statehood between the fifteenth-eighteenth centuries significant as evidence of the fact that they are the only indigenous Crimean people and Crimea is thus their only homeland. According to the Russian view Crimea is naturally part of the Russian world, while the Tatars were part of the Mongol invasion and collaborators. The Crimea is regarded as an important remnant of the glory of Catherine the Great and the Tsarist Russian Empire. For Ukrainians Crimea was always linked to Ukraine through geography, culture and ethnicity prior to, and including the medieval Kyiv Rus state.<sup>16</sup> These three competing narratives constitute the bone of contention in the Crimean question. They explain why there have been continued ethnic tensions in Crimea and why the question continues to illicit such a heated response from the three ethnic communities on the peninsula, the central Ukrainian government as well as the major third party to the contested area – the Russian Federation.

---

<sup>11</sup> Sasse, *The Crimea Question*, op. cit, p. 44.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

---

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6

<sup>16</sup> Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine – Crimea – Russia: triangle of Conflict*, (Stuttgart: Ibidem – Verlag, 2007), 96.



## 2. “Crimean Identities”

Nonetheless, the competition between the historical narratives has not yet and in all likelihood will not translate into a full fledged civil war, or in fact anything remotely close to such scenario. The multiethnicity of Crimea’s population has prevented clear-cut ethno political mobilization and consequent polarization. Pro-Russian orientation of Crimea is a result of the well preserved national consciousness of the Russian population on the peninsula and thus has greatly undermined the risk of any separatism in Crimea.<sup>17</sup> However, this nationalist driven movement proved unsustainable because of a blurred Soviet and Russian identities.<sup>18</sup> In fact, Crimeans hold very much conflicting attitude towards the region’s future. Firstly, most residents of the peninsula do not share the view that Crimea should secede from Ukraine. All the while, the overwhelming majority of the same Crimeans, of nearly all ethnic groups, speak out in favour of Crimea to become part of Russia.<sup>19</sup> The apparent widespread support for dual Russian-Ukrainian citizenship provides a sharp illustration of the extent to which East and South Ukrainians have been seeking to find a new status which accommodates the Russian component of the regional identity.<sup>20</sup> The region’s attitude towards Ukrainian statehood may be best described as ambivalent: the population is attracted by both Ukraine and Russia, but never fully content in its relations with either. It is important to note that although ethnic Russians constitute the majority of the Crimean population, they are not the only

<sup>17</sup> Paul S. Pirie, “National Identity and Politics in Southern and Eastern Ukraine,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, 48/7 (Nov. 1996), p. 1090.

<sup>18</sup> Sasse, *The Crimea Question*, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> Pirie, “National Identity and Politics in Southern and Eastern Ukraine,” op. cit., p. 1097.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

community arguing for a more Russia centric policy for the region and for Ukraine as whole. Hence the political climate of the region is very much a mirror image of the ethnic climate: neither fully pro-Ukrainian nor fully pro-Russian, but hovering between the two.<sup>21</sup> The absence of rigid ethnic cleavages in Crimea, in theory, diminishes the support base for either group in case of an ethnically driven conflict or a nationalistic political agenda. In practice, political groups with several conflicting agendas did blossom in the mid 90s but were not able to sustain their political support base. The Russian political parties and associations that emerged after Ukrainian independence quickly fragmented and the ones that were created in the wake of Vladimir Putin’s presidency (and the Orange Revolution) have only survived due to Russian external assistance to these movements that seek to portray Crimea as the battleground for an ethnic conflict, a condition that would hinder Ukraine’s accession to NATO. The multiple political identifications present in Crimea, in theory and in practice, greatly diminish the risks of a violent ethnic confrontation on the peninsula. The region, whose Russian majority has not as in the cases of Abkhazia and South Ossetia aligned itself with Russia, nonetheless symbolizes a playground for Russia’s power ambitions in the region.

## 3. The beginning of demands for Crimean autonomy

The so called ‘Russian separatism’ in Crimea sprang up in the fertile political climate of the early 90s during which a kaleidoscope group of actors produced various political demands. The potential for conflict in Crimea existed in the first half of the 1990s because of the presence of two factors. First, the Tatar minority who had and

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 1098.



has historical grievance of ethnic cleansing as well as contemporary grievances over racial, socio-economic and political discrimination. The second factor that threatened to undo the delicate balance on the peninsula is the presence of a large Russian minority that after the collapse of the Soviet Union found itself 'abroad' in independent Ukraine.<sup>22</sup> In fact, Crimean 'separatism' was not spearheaded by the Crimean Russians. Instead, it were the Tatars and the Communists that were most active on the political scene. The 'Russian' coalition per se was not formed until 1993.

During the Gorbachev era of reforms (1984 – 1991) various political movements (pro-Ukrainian, communist, and pro-Russian) arose in Crimea and later transformed into political parties. These parties began by demanding the restoration of Crimean autonomy, pointing to the special status of the Crimea in 1989, and later demanding a regional referendum on the peninsula's status to co-inside with the nationwide referendum on Ukraine's future on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1991.<sup>23</sup> It was first and foremost the Communist Party of Crimea that began to mobilize public opinion in support of Crimean self-determination. The local elections in March 1990 confirmed the Communist Party's grip on regional government, and the debate about autonomy intensified thereafter.<sup>24</sup> The first concrete step to restore autonomy was taken by the Crimean Oblast' Soviet in September 1990, when it adopted a statement addressed to the USSR and RSFSR Supreme Soviets regarding the need to nullify the 1945-46 decision regarding the change in the autonomous status of the Socialist Soviet Republic to an oblast, an administrative unit

<sup>22</sup> Kuzio, *Ukraine – Crimea – Russia: triangle of Conflict*, op. cit., p. 109.

<sup>23</sup> Tkachuk, *The Crimea: Chronicle of separatism, 1992-1995*, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Sasse, *The Crimea Question: identity, transition and conflict*, op. cit., p. 135.

hierarchically inferior to a Republic.<sup>25</sup> The movement was led by Nikolai Bagrov, the chairman of Crimean parliament, and his associate Leonid Grach who were the principal figures responsible for advancing and framing the debate on the region's autonomy. The demands concerning the status of Crimea gained momentum after Ukraine's declaration of state sovereignty in July 1990.<sup>26</sup> The separatist movement of the early 90s, of which Russian groups represented the last and final wave, should be viewed in the context of and as a reaction to Ukrainian nationalism.<sup>27</sup>

The drive for the region's sovereignty accelerated swiftly. The Supreme Soviet of Crimea issued a declaration on the state and legal status of the peninsula declaring the abolition of Crimea's autonomy unconstitutional and maintaining that the Crimeans were entitled to the restoration of their statehood in the form of the Crimean Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic (ASSR). At the same time, the deputies decided to hold a referendum on 20 January 1991 on the question of peninsula's independence. The referendum, in which 81.4% of eligible voters cast their ballots, resulted in a 93.3% show of support for the restoration of the Crimean ASSR. The majority of Crimean Tatars, however, boycotted the vote, maintaining that they alone were entitled to decide Crimea's fate.<sup>28</sup> The establishment of the Crimean ASSR in 1991 made it the last soviet ASSR, but also the first and only one to have been established by a popular vote.<sup>29</sup> The local

<sup>25</sup> Solchanyk, "The Politics of State Building," op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Sasse, *The Crimea Question: identity, transition and conflict*, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> Solchanyk, "The Politics of State Building," op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>29</sup> Sasse, *The Crimea Question: identity, transition and conflict*, op. cit., p. 138.



sovereignist parties tried to gain momentum following the success of the first referendum. Another local referendum was underway on the independence of the Republic of Crimea in union with other states?<sup>30</sup> The campaign went into full swing at the beginning of 1992, and within a matter of months the Republican Movement for Crimea (RDK), a pro-Russian party, was able to secure well over the 180 000 signatures required by law to hold a vote, thereby setting the stage for a direct confrontation with Kyiv.<sup>31</sup> Shortly before a decision on the referendum was scheduled to be taken by the Crimean parliament Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk issued a strongly worded statement condemning the referendum campaign, which he maintained was being organized by separatists determined to destabilize the situation, sow discord among the peoples of Crimea and between Crimea and Ukraine, and exacerbate Ukrainian-Russian relations.<sup>32</sup> However at this stage in the game neither the Ukrainian nor the Crimean authorities were ready to negotiate compromise.

While regional leaders in Crimea were focused on pursuing their separatist ambitions; national Ukrainian government initiated the first steps towards a federalist solution to the tensions on the peninsula. Notably, the Ukrainian parliament adopted a draft law 'On the Delineation of Power between Ukraine and the Republic of Crimea'. The document, which had been agreed upon by both sides, defined Crimea as an autonomous part of Ukraine bestowing upon it jurisdiction over "all questions within its competence." But the final version of the agreement was a lot different i.e. more detrimental to Crimea from the originally

convened upon draft.<sup>33</sup> The agreement was perceived by Crimean authorities and the Tatars as an act of betrayal. The Mejlis condemned the so-called Agreement on division of powers between Ukraine and the Crimea that was concluded without the consent of the Crimean-Tatar people.<sup>34</sup> Kyiv's mismanagement of the power-sharing agreement was a catalyst to Crimea's calls for autonomy that soon after this incident took on a more separatist character.

Tensions worsened on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1992 when the Crimean Verkhovna Rada (the Crimean Parliament), in a move initiated by Yuri Meshkov, the leader of the RDK, adopted the Act on State Independence of Crimea and a new constitution. It also decided to hold the referendum on independence (and union with other states) on August 2, 1992.<sup>35</sup> The new Crimean constitution was highly ambiguous as it referred to the Republic as a state and yet it reaffirmed its place within Ukraine.<sup>36</sup> By adopting the constitution and threatening a referendum on independence, Nikolai Bagrov wanted Kyiv to make concessions and negotiate a better deal.<sup>37</sup> The Ukrainian parliament did indeed intervene. On May 13, 1992 the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine condemned the Act as anti-constitutional and proposed that the Crimean Verkhovna Rada cancel it within two weeks.<sup>38</sup> President Kravchuk and Crimean leader Bagrov worked out a compromise that included the demand that within two weeks the Crimean parliament rescind its declaration and referendum, a requirement which it

<sup>30</sup> Solchanyk, "The Politics of State Building," op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Tkachuk, *The Crimea: Chronicle of separatism, 1992-1995*, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., op. cit., p. 15

<sup>36</sup> Sasse, *The Crimea Question: identity, transition and conflict*, op. cit., p. 146.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Tkachuk, *The Crimea: Chronicle of separatism, 1992-1995*, op. cit., p. 25.



eventually fulfilled.<sup>39</sup> The two parties agreed upon the status of Crimea as a constituent part of Ukraine that would have the necessary political and legal possibilities to realise its unique potential, including the right to independent ties with other countries in the social, economic and cultural spheres.<sup>40</sup> This declaration was adopted as a law by the Crimean Parliament shortly after the June meeting. This political setting in the region became the perfect fertile ground for the political ascendancy of more radical movements.

It was in this context of political disillusionment with Kyiv, and what seemed to be, a general support for some sort of separation of powers with Ukraine's national government that Russian separatists came to power in Crimea. The victory in Presidential elections held in Crimea in January of 1993 was claimed by Yuri Meshkov.<sup>41</sup> Meshkov ran on the ticket of the recently established Russia Bloc and promised to give new life to a referendum on Crimea's status. Meshkov's campaign appealed more to the amorphous pro-Russian sentiment of the ethnic Russian majority of Crimea and many Russian-speaking Ukrainians.<sup>42</sup> It should be emphasized that Meshkov's election platform was not separatist or even uniquely pro-Russian. In fact, the party was always deliberately vague as to whether they were in favour of an independent Crimea or a union with Russia. Moreover, the electoral victory could be partially attributed to the pro-

Russian politician's populist stance. The campaign of the Russia Bloc was based on simple catch-all slogans emphasizing the need for the further development of Crimea's statehood, stabilization of the economic crisis, the improvement of living standards, protection of Crimean citizens' political and economic interests, and the establishment of an independent foreign policy.<sup>43</sup> Meshkov, however, did not wait long to reveal his real political goals. Despite the lack of a clear program, the first moves after his electoral victory put him on a collision course with Kyiv. The newly elected Crimean President proceeded with plans to hold a regional referendum, though he claimed that it would be non-binding. He also appointed Evgenii Saburov, a Russian citizen and Moscow economist, to the post of Crimean deputy Prime Minister in charge of economic affairs and called for a regional boycott of the elections to the Ukrainian parliament. In addition, Meshkov literally put Crimea into a new time zone by switching the clocks to Moscow time.<sup>44</sup> However, the leader's decision to boycott the parliamentary elections had backfired. This action had in fact limited Meshkov's capacity to influence decisions in Kyiv. Taking advantage of a series of strategic mistakes made by Meshkov and the economic crash in the region, Kyiv gradually regained control over all of the region's power structures.<sup>45</sup> Thus the expeditious rise to power of Russian separatists on the wave of public discontent with Kyiv's policies can also explain the movement's quick swift falling out of favour with the Crimean population. The former realised that the Russia Bloc was unable to markedly improve the peninsula's socio-economic situation, which was at the root of the region's discontent with Ukraine's national government.

---

<sup>39</sup> Sasse, *The Crimea Question: identity, transition and conflict*, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>40</sup> Solchanyk, "The Politics of State Building," op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>41</sup> Tkachuk, *The Crimea: Chronicle of separatism, 1992-1995*, op. cit., p. 73 (According to the Central electoral commission data, more than a million Crimean residents that make up 72.9 per of the population voted for him).

<sup>42</sup> Sasse, *The Crimea Question: identity, transition and conflict*, op. cit., p. 158.

---

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.



#### 4. Involvement of Russia in this first phase of “Russian separatism” in Crimea

Russian involvement in Crimean politics, particularly in questions regarding the region’s independence, is a result of a residual feeling among certain Russian politicians that Crimea is a historic and integral part of Russia. For the Federation, the difficulty in accepting Ukraine’s independence after the break-up of the Soviet Union has been accompanied by a fairly strong conviction that Ukrainian independence is a temporary phenomenon. This perception was most pronounced among Russian communists and radical nationalists. Communist Duma deputy and deputy chairman of the Duma committee for geopolitics Yuri Nikiforenko gave a passionate explanation for the inevitability of the reunification of Russia and Ukraine during the March 1998 debate about whether or not to ratify the Russian-Ukrainian Friendship Treaty: ‘We do not need just a part of Ukraine. We need all of Ukraine the yearning of the peoples is for this to happen’.<sup>46</sup> Inflammatory rhetoric by Supreme Soviet deputies like Alexander Rutskoi and Oleg Rumiantsev while visiting Crimea and declarations of support for Crimean separatists from the extremist National Salvation Front, Pravda, and others generated pressure against Kyiv. Anatoly Sobchak, Mayor of St. Petersburg, and a leading member of the Movement for Democratic Reforms argued that ‘Crimea has never belonged to Ukraine and that there are no legal or moral grounds for Ukraine to lay claim to the Crimea.’<sup>47</sup> Public opinion also

seemed to agree with this heavily nationalistic stance. In a poll administered in 1992 51% of respondents thought Russia and Ukraine should reunite into one state, and 31% thought they should remain separate countries but with open borders. Only 8% thought the two countries should develop the same kind of relations that they had with other countries (border control, visa regulations, and customs etc).<sup>48</sup> While Russia’s official position did not scrupulously follow this view, it was nonetheless an opinion shared by more than just a marginal group of politicians.

The strong nationalist rhetoric emanating from certain Russian political milieus was accompanied by legislative resolutions and debates that further enflamed the question. In mid-January 1992 the Committee on Foreign Affairs and External Economic Ties headed by Vladimir Lukin, one of the founders of Russian liberal-democratic party Yabloko, distributed to Russian law makers its motion proposing that the Russian Supreme Soviet declare the 1954 decision invalid and without legal force.<sup>49</sup> Consequently, the Russian parliament voted overwhelmingly to adopt the resolution instructing two of its committees to examine the constitutionality of the 1954 decision.<sup>50</sup> Throughout 1992-1993 the Russian parliament escalated its demands towards Crimea and Sevastopol. The Duma and Ministry of Foreign Affairs finally condemned the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine on 23 January 1992, eliciting a strong protest from Ukraine.<sup>51</sup> Russo-Ukrainian relations continued to worsen progressively after this declaration. Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi visited

<sup>46</sup> Tor Bukkvoll, “Off the Cuff Politics: Explaining Russia’s Lack of a Ukraine Strategy,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, 53/ 8 (Dec. 2001), p. 1142.

<sup>47</sup> Sasse, *The Crimea Question: identity, transition and conflict*, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>48</sup> Bukkvoll, “Off the Cuff Politics,” op. cit., p. 1143.

<sup>49</sup> Solchanyk, “The Politics of State Building,” op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Taras Kuzio, *Russia – Crimea – Ukraine: Triangle of Conflict* (London: Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, 1994), p. 15.



Crimea in April 1992 where he called for its secession from Ukraine and a month later the Russian parliament passed a resolution declaring the 1954 transfer of the Crimea illegal.<sup>52</sup> The active calls of the Duma for Crimean independence and/or reunification with Russia appeared only after Meschkov, at the head of the Russian coalition came to power in Crimea. The developments in Crimea and Russia worked together hand in hand thereby putting double pressure on Kyiv. However, the mainstream Russian politicians were not so keen to address the question of Crimean status within Ukraine as to determine the status of the Russia's Black Sea Fleet stationed in Sevastopol.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin, for the most part, distanced himself from these parliamentary resolutions. In fact the members of the Russian political elite who eagerly supported the Russian separatist movement in Crimea were avid critics of the Yeltsin government.<sup>53</sup> While the government itself pursued a moderate approach towards the peninsula he continued to argue through the Russian ambassador to Ukraine that Sevastopol, the home of the BSF should be leased to Russia.<sup>54</sup> Yeltsin on several occasions has maintained that the Crimean question is an internal Ukrainian matter and has attempted to distance himself from the patriots.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, Kremlin's actual policies often contradicted the government's official position on the Crimean question. For instance, in May 1992 a power-sharing agreement was finally reached by parliamentary delegations from Crimea and Kyiv.<sup>56</sup> At this juncture Yeltsin dispatched

none other than Rutskoi to Crimea (and to the breakaway Dniester Republic on Moldova's left bank) at the head of a delegation. In Sevastopol' Rutskoi restated Russia's claim to Crimea, arguing that 'common sense' dictated that the peninsula should be part of Russia.<sup>57</sup> Through political appointments Yeltsin's claim of neutrality on the issue was effectively undermined by the declarations of his appointees to the region.

1993 marked a turning point in the official Russian foreign policy away from Andrei Kozyrev's pro-western so-called atlanticist orientation, to a more nationalistic 'Russia first' approach that mirrored the position of supporters of Crimean separatists. In mid July 1993 when the Russian parliament gave instruction to prepare a draft law on "enshrining the federal status of the town of Sevastopol in the Constitution of the Russian Federation" the vote was passed with 166 for and 1 against.<sup>58</sup> This shift accelerated after the victory of Communist and extreme nationalist parties in December 1993 Russian Duma elections. Certainly, much of the rhetoric by Russian politicians on the Crimea issue was for domestic 'consumption' in Russia, principally for electoral gain.<sup>59</sup> The degree to which the Russian patriots viewed the Black Sea Fleet and Crimean questions as interrelated became fully apparent with the publication of excerpts from a letter sent by Lukin to Ruslan Khasbulatov, Chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet, recommending, among other things, that Crimea be used as a bargaining chip in the dispute over the fleet.<sup>60</sup> In essence, the highest echelons of Russian post-Soviet power wanted to put pressure on Ukraine via the threat of a civil conflict in Crimea (and Russia's direct military

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Astrid S. Tuminez, *Russian Nationalism since 1856: Ideology and the Making of Foreign Policy* (Boston: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), p. 240.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Solchanyk, "The Politics of State Building," op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Kuzio, *Russia – Crimea – Ukraine: Triangle of Conflict*, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>59</sup> Sasse, *The Crimea Question*, op. cit., p. 232.

<sup>60</sup> Solchanyk, "The Politics of State Building," op. cit., p. 52.



interference in it) in order to secure its access to Sevastopol – the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet.

## 5. Why was there no war in Crimea?

In the early 1990s Crimea stood on the brink of conflict and nearly became a hotspot analogous to the explosive Caucasus region.<sup>61</sup> Similar to the state policies in the countries of the Caucasus cauldron, under the presidency of Leonid Kravchuk, the Ukrainian government found it difficult to promote a unified nationwide political ideology to encourage integration and loyalty to the new state.<sup>62</sup> Two peaks of crises occurred in relations between Ukraine and Crimea. The first one in May 1992, when the peninsula declared sovereignty and adopted a secessionist constitution, and the second one during the mandate of Yuri Meshkov, a Russian nationalist leader, who was elected Crimean President.<sup>63</sup> In general post-independence, Kyiv has proven both hesitant and hamstrung in imposing its authority in the more Russophone Eastern and Southern regions of Ukraine, which have pressed for far reaching autonomy.<sup>64</sup> Some scholars argue that the latency of the government to respond to the political happenings in Crimea contributed to the absence of ethnic violence in Crimea. In contrast to the Caucasus, it was the reluctance of the Ukrainian authorities to use force when suppressing the separatist movement in Crimea in the mid-1990s that contributed to the blood-shed free resolution of the conflict in the 90s.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Hedeskog, "Crimea after the Georgia Crisis," op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>62</sup> Bugajski, "Ethnic Relations and Regional Problems in Independent Ukraine," op. cit., p. 167.

<sup>63</sup> Hedeskog, "Crimea after the Georgia Crisis," op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>64</sup> Bugajski, "Ethnic Relations and Regional Problems in Independent Ukraine," op. cit., p. 167.

<sup>65</sup> Hedeskog, "Crimea after the Georgia Crisis," op. cit., p. 13.

In its quest to regain control of its territory, Kyiv, was undoubtedly aided by the fragility and instability of the pro-Russian separatist coalition. The secessionist movement in Crimea collapsed in 94-95 due to internal quarrels, lack of substantial Russian support and Ukrainian economic, political and military pressure.<sup>66</sup> Support for the Russia Bloc disintegrated by the end of 1994 due to infighting between the Crimean Supreme Soviet and the Crimean president. The Russian nationalists were also unable to deal with the economic crisis or attract foreign investment and tourists.<sup>67</sup> The Russia Bloc had always been a compromise of two tendencies. One of these had stood for a sovereign, democratic Crimean state in union with Ukraine, Belarus and Russia within the CIS. The second more radical strand called for unification of Crimea with Russia. This last movement was too radical for most Crimeans and never received support from Russia, unlike covert Russian support for Abkhaz and Trans-Dniester separatism.<sup>68</sup> By mid- to late 1994, the Russian movement's failure to deliver effective socioeconomic policies discredited it in the voters' eyes.<sup>69</sup> Russian nationalists were also at a distinct disadvantage in two areas compared to other CIS conflicts. First, Russia provided little support beyond rhetoric. Second, the Ukrainian authorities controlled the security forces stationed in the Crimea, with the exception of the BSF, which proved to be an important deterrent against violent political acts.<sup>70</sup> All in all, the pro-Russian movement in Crimea was neither sufficiently unified nor considered important enough by Russia to support these separatist - the two

<sup>66</sup> Ibid..

<sup>67</sup> Kuzio, *Ukraine – Crimea – Russia: triangle of Conflict*, op. cit., p. 163.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p.162.

<sup>69</sup> Sasse, *The Crimea Question: identity, transition and conflict*, op. cit., p. 172.

<sup>70</sup> Kuzio, *Ukraine – Crimea – Russia: triangle of Conflict*, op. cit., p. 110.



element that have led to the downfall of Russian ‘separatism in the 90s.

The steady institutionalization of the new Ukrainian state through elections, party development, and center-regional interactions helped to contain the conflict potential inherent in the Crimean issue. Admittedly, even through the turbulent period from 1991-1994 politics was conducted within the confines of institutions, and all but small-scale and episodic street violence was avoided. Even the more radical Russian nationalists operated through regional political institutions and organizations, and competed in the regional and sometimes even in national elections.<sup>71</sup> By October 1994 the Russia Bloc fractured into three factions. Moreover, some former Russian movement deputies and some belonging to the Crimean Tatar faction began to work together on an agreement with Kyiv. This realignment reduced the ethnic political polarization and shifted Crimean politics back towards the center.<sup>72</sup> It also helped to reinforce Crimea’s relationship with the centre government. The abolition of Crimean presidency by Kuchma also undoubtedly played a role. More importantly, Crimea’s political landscape was reshaped by the 1996 Ukrainian constitution, which was designed to constrain regionalist party development specifying that every party has to be registered as an all-Ukrainian party in a number of oblasts (regions). The ban on regional parties tied Crimean politics more closely to the centre, although regional specificities survived in non-party organizations or electoral blocs that aligned themselves loosely with parties at the national level.<sup>73</sup> The 1998 Crimean election was the final confirmation of the failure of separatism, following which the idea of union

with Russia had been transformed into vague calls for a Slavic one. The Crimean branch of the Communist Party of Ukraine took over the reins of the Crimean Supreme Soviet making both main seats of power in the Crimea out of reach for the Russian separatist parties.<sup>74</sup> Finally, on October 21, 1998, the Crimean Supreme Soviet adopted by a wide margin the fifth Crimean constitution since 1991. Unlike previous drafts, in this one there was no mention of Crimean ‘statehood’ or citizenship rights. Moreover, this new draft accepted the Ukrainian as the state language of Crimea.<sup>75</sup> Russia’s economic crash in early 1998 undermined the belief that it could be an attractive alternative option for Crimea’s electorate serving the final blow to the pro-Russian groups.<sup>76</sup> Despite the successful resolution of the institutional conflict of the 90s Crimean separatism remained a potential threat due to Moscow’s continued fuelling of the tensions through the distribution of Russian passports to Ukrainian citizens in Crimea.<sup>77</sup>

## 6. Moscow’s entanglement round one: lessons learned

The separatist pressures that emerged in Crimea immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union largely subsided after 1995. External developments in Russia played a defining role in the limited success and longevity of the Russian separatist forces in Crimea. The Chechen conflict provided Ukraine with a window of opportunity to

<sup>71</sup> Sasse, *The Crimea Question: identity, transition and conflict*, op. cit., p. 172.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 197.

<sup>74</sup> Paul D’Anieri, Robert Kravchuk, and Taras Kuzio, *Politics and Society in Ukraine* (Bolder: Westview Press, 1999), p. 67.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>76</sup> Sasse, *The Crimea Question: identity, transition and conflict*, op. cit., p. 199.

<sup>77</sup> Taras Kuzio, “BSU Stops Terrorism in Its Tracks,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 5/237, December 12, 2008. [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=34266](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=34266).



peacefully deal with its own separatist challenge as Moscow showed little inclination in supporting the Russian movement in Crimea in its own time of troubles. Additionally, the re-election of Yeltsin as Russian President was the second blow to Russian separatists in Crimea who had pinned their hopes on Russian Communist leader Gennadiy Zyuganov winning the election.<sup>78</sup> Finally, Meshkov's brief term as president of Crimea probably taught the Russian leadership the lesson that a strong separatist movement in Ukraine would be difficult to control from Moscow - the high emotional content in Meshkov's political messages that made quite a political stir in Moscow.<sup>79</sup> The 'Big Treaty', the two agreements between Ukraine and Russia - one on the division of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet and one on Friendship, Co-operation and Partnership was signed in May 1997.<sup>80</sup> The signature of the treaty and the 1998 Ukrainian election brought an end to the politically turbulent 90s in Crimea. This stage of the political instability was officially brought to a close on December 25 1998, when the Russian State Duma ratified, with the support of the Communists who once championed Meshkov's cause, the Ukrainian-Russian treaty, signifying Russian recognition that Crimea is part of Ukraine.<sup>81</sup> At the time, the Federation was preoccupied with its own domestic politics and had little political capital, or time, to dedicate to the Crimean question. However, the presence of the Federation's Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol has tied, at least until 2017 when the lease of the base is set to expire, Russia even more firmly to the region. Of course, the

---

<sup>78</sup> Kuzio, *Ukraine - Crimea - Russia: triangle of Conflict*, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>79</sup> Bukkvoll, "Off the Cuff Politics," op. cit., p. 1145.

<sup>80</sup> Hedeskog, "Crimea after the Georgia Crisis," op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>81</sup> Paul D'Anieri, Robert Kravchuk, and Taras Kuzio, *Politics and Society in Ukraine*, op. cit., p. 67.

fleet will eventually have to relocate if Ukraine ever hopes to accede to NATO.

## 7. Ukraine and NATO

Ukraine's political ambitions to join its one time ideological and military rival - NATO - has set off alarm bells in Russia. The country's institutionalization of its relations with the alliance began in 1997 with the signing of the NATO-Ukraine Special Partnership Charter. In 2002, Kuchma announced that Ukraine would apply for NATO membership. However, the President's increasingly repressive domestic policies and reports that he had authorized the sale of radar tracking systems to Iraq compelled NATO to put relations with Ukraine on hold for the latter half of Kuchma's mandate.<sup>82</sup> Viktor Yushchenko, Ukraine's president since 2005, being highly suspicious of Russia has his political compass set firmly on NATO accession. His rise following the success of Orange Revolution of 2004 gave new impetus to Ukrainian ambitions to join the military organization. In 2005, NATO granted Ukraine Intensified Dialogue status, which is generally regarded as an important preparatory step toward obtaining a Membership Action Plan - the initiative that prepares countries for NATO membership.<sup>83</sup> Political differences within the Orange camp between the two leaders of the popular uprising Yushchenko and Yulia Tymoshenko have inhibited the consolidation of democratic reforms and created uncertainties about Ukraine's future political evolution and foreign policy orientation.<sup>84</sup> Tymoshenko, Ukraine's Prime Minister and Yushchenko's ally turned bitter rival, is ambivalent on the issue of NATO membership, while the former adversary of

---

<sup>82</sup> F. Stephen Larrabee, "Ukraine at the Crossroads," *The Washington Quarterly*, August 2007, p. 48.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.



both during the Orange Revolution, the leader of the Regions Party whose political base lies in Eastern more pro-Russian Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, is firmly against.<sup>85</sup> The string of political crises in the country following the ‘democratic breakthrough’ of 2004 has left Ukraine in political limbo without a clear direction in its domestic or foreign policy putting its NATO accession bid on hold.

The country’s attitude towards NATO follows Ukraine’s habitual political cleavage of East-West. Ukraine’s presidential elections are thus invariably perceived by international observers deciding the country’s geopolitical future as either lying with Russia or the West.<sup>86</sup> However, one of the key problems in Ukraine is that support for NATO membership in general is much lower than it was in other Eastern European countries. The poll in 2006 indicated that only 17 percent of Ukrainians supported this goal and 50 percent would apparently vote against Ukraine’s accession to the alliance in a referendum.<sup>87</sup> This low support can be attributed to Soviet propaganda against NATO throughout the Cold War and is particularly strong in Eastern and Southern areas of Ukraine that have a strong history of Russian control.

Nowhere else in Ukraine is the question of NATO membership so controversial as in Crimea and Sevastopol. In a disputed unofficial referendum held in Crimea in December 2006 98 percent voted against Ukraine’s possible accession to the organization, while according to an opinion poll in March 2007, 99 percent of the inhabitants of Sevastopol declared

themselves against Ukraine entering the alliance.<sup>88</sup> These reached a crescendo in June and led to the first ever cancellation of joint military exercises with the US and other NATO countries through its Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme. These exercises have been regularly held in Crimea and in military bases in western Ukraine since 1997.<sup>89</sup> Following an anti-NATO protest in Feodosiia in 2006, several towns and cities around Crimea declared themselves ‘NATO-free territories,’ an action later proclaimed illegal by Ukrainian authorities.<sup>90</sup> While agitations continue in Crimea and other parts of Ukraine with respect to the prospects of the country eventually joining the alliance, Ukraine’s path to NATO is now de facto on hold until after the January 2010 presidential elections.<sup>91</sup>

Another issue that plays a defining role in Ukraine’s hopes of NATO membership as well as Russian policy towards Ukraine is the question of Russian Black Sea Fleet. The Black Sea region is one of the most strategically important regions in Europe, providing, in particular, a major trade link and transit routes for Caspian energy supplies.<sup>92</sup> Russia’s Black Sea Fleet is based in the port of Sevastopol under a leasing agreement due to expire in 2017. Yushchenko has announced that the lease will not be renewed and talks should focus on overseeing the fleet’s orderly departure. In fact, Ukrainian constitution bans the stationing of foreign troops on its soil, making a temporary exception for the current accord with Russia. Thus, an extension of the accord of the lease would require a change in the constitution, which makes it unlikely

---

<sup>85</sup> Dmitry Trenin, “Thinking Strategically About Russia” (Carnegie Endowment International Centre, December 2008).

<sup>86</sup> Taras Kuzio, “Ukrainian-Russian Cultural Conflict” (Jamestown Foundation Eurasia Daily Monitor, Volume 6 Issue 87, May 6, 2009).

<sup>87</sup> Larrabee, “Ukraine at the Crossroads,” p. 49.

---

<sup>88</sup> Hedeskog, “Crimea after the Georgia Crisis,” p. 44.

<sup>89</sup> Taras Kuzio, “Russian Subversion in the Crimea,” *Jane’s Intelligence Digest*, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006.

<sup>90</sup> Hedeskog, “Crimea after the Georgia Crisis,” op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.



because that would require a two-thirds majority in the Ukrainian Rada, an advantage that none of the current Ukrainian parties, especially the Party of Regions that is in favour of extending the lease to Russia, have. As a perspective NATO member, the escalating demands of the Ukrainian Orange government for Russian withdrawal of the BSF was also driven by NATO's ban on non-NATO member states having bases on NATO territory.<sup>93</sup> The Ukrainian president has recently decreed that the Fleet must notify Kyiv of its movements in and out of Ukraine's waters and disclose its armaments, personnel, and precise mission.<sup>94</sup> So far, Moscow has declined to comply, saying it will only be bound by bilateral agreements. However, the question of the Fleet is of paramount importance to Russia for whom Sevastopol provides a year round maritime access. It is the overall fear of NATO advancing into space that Russia has traditionally viewed as part of its core zone of influence that will make Ukraine's NATO membership a matter of discord between Russia and the West for years to come.

## 8. Russian separatists 2000 –

Russia has sought to instrumentalize the political fragility in Ukraine by increasing its financial and moral support for the pro-Russian, and thus almost without exception anti-NATO, groups in Crimea in hopes of further destabilizing the country's domestic political situation in favour of the anti-NATO political parties. As stated earlier, the separatist pressures, while diminished, continued to exist in Crimea. Russian support for its compatriots abroad increased during Vladimir Putin's presidency. Kyiv's policy towards Crimea also took a sharp turn, partly due to the more aggressive Russian stance on

the issue but also as a result of a more pro-Western government that came to power with the Orange Revolution and that sought among other things entry into NATO. Russia has made no secret of its displeasure regarding NATO's Eastern Enlargement. Ukraine's accession to the military organization would be viewed by Russia as a great encroachment into its Near Abroad space. That is precisely why the Federation with the arrival of Putin has begun to fund various Russian separatist organisations and political movements in Crimea that would jeopardize Ukraine's admission to the alliance. State officials, political parties, civic organisations, youth movements, Cossacks, the Orthodox Church and the universities – all these pro-Russian entities have become instruments in Russia's propaganda campaign.<sup>95</sup> Russian-language media totally controls the information space in Crimea. One of the themes regularly raised in the Russian and Crimean media and by certain Russian politicians centres on the continued questioning of the status of Crimea. The purpose of this appears to be to question Ukraine's sovereignty in Sevastopol and Crimea in order to create a bilateral or international debate about the issue, probably in hopes that Ukrainian territorial integrity can again form part of a deal on the extension of the lease on the Black Sea Fleet station in Sevastopol.<sup>96</sup>

This situation is now significantly different from that of the early 90s, with numerous signs that Russia is taking an increasingly active role in Crimea. The growth of Russian nationalism and rise of nationalist youth groups within Russia, such as Nashi and the Eurasian Youth Movement, have led to the spread of their activities into Crimea. These associations have taken part in

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>94</sup> Trenin, "Thinking Strategically About Russia."

<sup>95</sup> Hedskog, "Crimea after the Georgia Crisis," op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 16.



numerous anti-NATO and anti-US rallies there.<sup>97</sup> Through the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Russian Military Intelligence Service (GRU), Russia has supplied intelligence on the location and plans for military exercises, and has provided personnel to increase attendance at rallies and demonstrations to pro-Russian NGOs and youth groups.<sup>98</sup> During the June 2006 rallies in Crimea against the 'Sea Breeze' military exercise, many of the leading organizers were spouses of serving BSF officers. These demonstrations, which led to the cancellation of the military exercise envisioned as part of the Membership Action Plan, a NATO initiative, were largely covered in the Russian-speaking media, both of Ukrainian and Russian origin.<sup>99</sup> The Crimean branch of the Pan-Slavic extremist organisation Eurasian Youth Union is a subdivision of the international Eurasian movement founded by Alexander Dugin, a Moscow State University professor and a Russian nationalist, with close ties to the Kremlin.<sup>100</sup> Another pro-Russian youth organisation Breakthrough (Proryv), which also has branches in the unrecognised republics of Trans-Dniester, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia, is active in Crimea and other regions of the Ukraine.<sup>101</sup> A criminal investigation by the Ukrainian Special Service (SBU) was opened on the leaders of the youth organisation following the group's short film in which they attempted to dig a ditch that would separate the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine.

In addition, there has been a noticeable proliferation of political parties and organization formed with religious and cultural agendas in tow. All of the groups

espouse hopes of some form of Slavic Union. Firstly, there is the Union of Orthodox Citizens of Crimea, an organization created in 2001 that seeks to protect the Russian Orthodox Church in the lands of the triad: Ukraine, Russia and Crimea.<sup>102</sup> According to the party, Crimea is the cradle of the Orthodox Church. They advocate that Russian people have the same heritage and the same Orthodox faith. The Russian Movement of Crimea is another organization created in 2001 in Simferopol. Its official goal is to protect the rights of the Russian population in Crimea, or other people who identify themselves as Russian.<sup>103</sup> It is not clear what role Russia plays in sponsoring these organizations, but regardless of the links between the two, these civil society groups play a quite minimal function in Crimean politics. What is important to note is their remarkable proliferation since the arrival of Putin in the Kremlin.

By far the most influential of the pro-Russian organisations in Crimea is the Russian Community of Crimea (Russkaia Obshina Kryma). It has 25 regional organisations operating in all cities and regions in Crimea and a membership of approximately 15,000 people. The leader, Sergei Tsekov is the First Deputy Speaker of the Crimean Verkhovna Rada. Since the mid-1990s, ROK has been financed by Moscow Mayor Luzhkov and his then advisor and now member of the Russian Duma Konstantin Zatulin and by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Presidential Administration.<sup>104</sup> The Russian Community, the Russian Youth Centre of Crimea, and the Russian Block are all grouped under the same organizational

<sup>97</sup> Taras Kuzio, "Russian Subversion in the Crimea," *Jane's Intelligence Digest*, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006.

<sup>98</sup> Hedeskog, "Crimea after the Georgia Crisis," op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Sevastopol – Krim – Rossija, <http://www.kro-krim.narod.ru/>.

<sup>103</sup> Rysskoe Dvijenie Krimea, <http://www.rdk.wallst.ru/>.

<sup>104</sup> Hedeskog, "Crimea after the Georgia Crisis," op. cit., p. 26.



umbrella whose main platform maintains that Russian Orthodox culture that is found in Crimea is the native culture of Ukraine as a whole.<sup>105</sup> The organization seeks to regroup the Crimeans that identify themselves as Russians; increase cultural and other cooperation with Russia; nurture of a Russian consciousness and identity; promote of Russian language, literature, culture. The group proclaims itself as a solid force of political authority in Crimea that can withstand the expansionist tendencies of Ukrainian nationalists.<sup>106</sup> In reality the organization, the largest pro-Russian of its kind, is a speck on Crimea's political scene.

The Russian Block is a Ukrainian political party created in 2002 through the merger with the Russian Ukrainian Union party, whose goal was to unite the Slavic Peoples. While its leaders insist that the party was not created on a nationalist basis, its slogans call for an integration of Ukraine with Russia and Belorussia to form a union with other Slavic people, and for according Russian language an official status. The Russian Block together with the Russian Society staged a demonstration in front of the Crimean Parliament to commemorate the referendum of 1991.<sup>107</sup> This was accompanied by the crowd shouting: "Ukrainians, Russians, Belorussians – together we will revive our holy union!" Ironically one of the party's platforms seeks to elimination nationalist ideology from state building.<sup>108</sup> The Block as a member of the

ruling coalition in Crimea, officially at least, does not look favourably upon Crimean separatism. However, experts insist that is financed by Moscow Mayor Luzhkov through the Moskva - Krym Foundation and various expatriate funds.<sup>109</sup> It does argue for the need of Ukrainian regions to have control of their individual budgets as well as importance of introducing a program that would seek to achieve equal levels of social and economic development in the various regions of the country. The Block insists that Crimean autonomous status within Ukraine should be preserved in order to respect the particularity of the composition of the Crimean population, a large part of which, according to the Block, found itself unwillingly part of Ukraine. The Block is vehemently against Ukraine's NATO membership. It sees the BSF as a result of a joint struggle of Ukrainians and Russians, and thus the fleet should be protected as a symbol of stability in the Black Sea region.<sup>110</sup>

Two other pro-Russian organisations the People's Front 'Sevastopol-Crimea-Russia' and the National Front 'Sevastopol-Crimea-Russia' were both founded in 2005-6. The People's Front brought together 12 pro-Russian organisations. The radical character of the methods used by this political party led the SBU, the Ukrainian special service, in 2008 to open criminal charges against the People's Front regarding threats against the territorial integrity of Ukraine.<sup>111</sup> The Front was consequently banned and two of its leaders have been charged with threats to Ukraine's territorial integrity. The National Front along with numerous other pro-Russian

---

<sup>105</sup> Portal Russkogo Naroda Krimea, Ukraine in the Context of Russian Civilization, <http://www.ruscrimea.ru/cms/?go=mon&in=view&id=12>.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ryski Block, "The Anniversary of the 1991 Constitutional Referendum,"

[http://www.rblok.org.ua/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=169&Itemid=1](http://www.rblok.org.ua/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=169&Itemid=1), Симферополь, 18 марта 2009

<sup>108</sup> Russkii Block,

---

[http://www.rblok.org.ua/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=12&Itemid=26](http://www.rblok.org.ua/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=12&Itemid=26)

<sup>109</sup> Hedeskog, "Crimea after the Georgia Crisis," 25.

<sup>110</sup> Russkii Block,

[http://www.rblok.org.ua/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=26](http://www.rblok.org.ua/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=26)

<sup>111</sup> Hedeskog, "Crimea after the Georgia Crisis," op. cit., p. 26.



groups in Crimea have been organizing regular protests over the past years. The catalyst to these actions appears to be the success, or what it was perceived as at the time, of the Orange Revolution. For instance, during a Sevastopol town council protest action on 19 January 2009, the groups denounced ‘the unconstitutional’ actions of Victor Yushchenko and Yulia Timoshenko of overtaking the offices of the president and vice-president, respectfully, of Ukraine thereby ‘robbing’ the lawful victor of the election, Victor Yanukovitch of his rightful position. Along with this claim, the groups advanced demands for the return of Sevastopol and Crimea to Russia and double Russian-Ukrainian citizenship.<sup>112</sup> In March 2007 the group organized a “Museum of Occupation of Crimea” (by Ukraine). According to the representatives of the movements, this action was a response to President Yushchenko’s comments regarding plans to open a Museum of Russian Occupation of Ukraine in Kyiv during his recent trip to Georgia.<sup>113</sup> On March 21, 2006 the National Front declared the beginning of the action “Ukraine without Crimea” whose goal is to stop the annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Ukraine and to return Crimea and Sevastopol to the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation.<sup>114</sup> The movement claims that there is no judicial substance as to why Crimea and Sevastopol are currently under Ukraine’s control. On April 23, 2009 the National Front lost its case in the court of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea on the constitutional status of the peninsula. The Front argued that the present Crimean constitution did not respect the wishes of the population that voted for the creation of the Autonomous Crimean Socialist Republic in

1991 and it thus sought to overturn the current constitution.<sup>115</sup> According to experts, the purpose of these two organisations, the National and the People’s Fronts, is to create a radical background for some more serious pro-Russian organisations in Crimea in order to help them to maintain the status of respective politicians.<sup>116</sup>

Of course, none of these organisations would have been able to survive and develop without financial support and political clout of a powerful sympathiser. The Russian politician who over the years has most persistently questioned Ukraine’s sovereign control over Crimea and Sevastopol is Moscow’s Mayor Yuri Luzhkov. Luzhkov’s rise as the protector of Russian speakers in the near abroad is intimately tied to his political ambitions. Since becoming mayor in 1992 he had acquired a reputation of a very successful administrator and was seen as a contender for the 1996 presidential elections. However, Luzhkov needed a patriotic image in addition to the good administrator image. He therefore wanted to promote himself on an issue where he could appeal to a Russian self-image of pride and glory - Crimea. Luzhkov started his crusade to “save Crimea,” and especially the city of Sevastopol, from the Ukrainians in early 1995. The mayor visited the region on regular basis to flex his ‘rhetorical muscles’ and make political capital for his image as a Russian patriot in the run-up to the presidential elections. He launched a number of initiatives to assist socio-economic development, including Moscow-subsidized housing and schools for the fleet personnel.<sup>117</sup> One of which, an agreement on

---

<sup>112</sup> Rossiiskoe Narodnoe Veche,  
<http://sevrus.narod.ru/#v29>

<sup>113</sup> Ukraina Novosti,  
<http://www.ukraine.ru/news/308024.html>

<sup>114</sup> *Российское народное вече Севастополя*.  
<http://sevrus.narod.ru/#v29>

---

<sup>115</sup> Krimskii Portal,  
[http://kport.info/news/crimean.php?ELEMENT\\_ID=5787](http://kport.info/news/crimean.php?ELEMENT_ID=5787)

<sup>116</sup> Hedskog, “Crimea after the Georgia Crisis,” op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>117</sup> Sasse, *The Crimea Question: identity, transition and conflict*, op. cit., p. 235.



cooperation between Moscow and Sevastopol of January 1995, gave Sevastopol the symbolic status of the 11th prefecture district of Moscow. Luzhkov even managed to persuade the Russian Federation Council to pass a declaration stating that the city was Russian and not Ukrainian territory in December 1996.<sup>118</sup> While no official figures are available for obvious reasons, the estimates of the Mayor's contribution to projects in Crimea transferred directly through the Moscow City Council totalled nearly \$20 million in 2006-8.<sup>119</sup> The steady increase in Russian interference in Ukraine's domestic affairs by way of pro-Russian organizations, cultural centres and inflammatory speeches of Russian nationalists has rightfully sent off alarm bells in Ukraine.

While such Russian political chauvinism was never much appreciated in Ukraine, the leaders that came to power following the Orange Revolution have taken a more active stance on the issue. Under Leonid Kuchma a number of officials from Russia were declared *persona non grata* for short periods in retaliation for inciting separatism in Ukraine. Under Yushchenko, Kyiv's official policy has hardened, especially following the June 2006 protests in Crimea during which Russian politicians gave inflammatory speeches.<sup>120</sup> In October 2006, President Viktor Yushchenko ordered the Security Service of Ukraine to upgrade its operational activities in the Crimea. The SBU was given two months to 'look into the efficiency of intelligence, counterintelligence and operative measures in order to identify, prevent and halt intelligence, subversive and

other illegal activities in the Crimea by foreign secret services and NGOs'.<sup>121</sup> The SBU was also ordered to develop a plan of action to, 'neutralize' activities in the Crimea, 'which are harmful to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and pose security threats and incite ethnic, racial and religious tension'.<sup>122</sup> The security services have thus far foiled three 'terrorist organizations' operating in Ukraine. First, the Sevastopol Branch of the CIS Institute was closed down. The Moscow headquarters of the institute is headed by Konstantin Zatulin who has been banned from entering Ukraine for their pro-separatist views.<sup>123</sup> The second target of the SBU was the People's Front 'Sevastopol-Crimea-Russia'.<sup>124</sup> Finally, in May 2008, Luzhkov was declared *perona non grata* in Ukraine in the wake his statements calling for the return of Sevastopol to Russia and questioned whether Sevastopol had ever been handed over to Ukraine.<sup>125</sup> Despite the political stalemate in Ukraine after the Orange Revolution, the new political leadership has nonetheless stayed the course on tougher measures against Russian agitation and meddling in Crimea.

## 9. The significance of the August Crisis in Georgia

The August Crisis in Georgia had a great impact on how we envision the CIS space. Russia's war in Georgia was a lesson for those who might have forgotten that military

<sup>118</sup> Bukkvoll, "Off the Cuff Politics," op. cit., p. 1153.

<sup>119</sup> Taras Kuzio, <http://www.ucipr.kiev.ua/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=6032746&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>

<sup>120</sup> Kuzio, Russian Subversion in the Crimea, *Jane's Intelligence Digest*, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Taras Kuzio, <http://www.ucipr.kiev.ua/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=6032746&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>

<sup>124</sup> Taras Kuzio, "BSU Stops Terrorism in Its Tracks," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 5/237, [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=34266](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=34266)

<sup>125</sup> Hedeskog, "Crimea after the Georgia Crisis", op. cit., p. 16.



means still exist as a tool in Russian foreign policy. It is not useful to make the comparison between the situation in Georgia and Crimea that do not inhibit the same ambitions. There are nonetheless parallels to be drawn between Russia's behaviour with regards to the two regions. While a similar military confrontation appears to be unlikely in the case of Crimea, the August conflict raised several serious questions regarding Russia's foreign policy objectives with respect to the CIS space. Russia's influence in Crimea is very high due to the presence of the Black Sea Fleet, the dominance of the Russian media, and the general support for Russian policy from the ethnic Russian majority in Crimea. Kyiv continues to lack appropriate leverage to get its policies implemented in Crimea and to resist the growing Russian influence there.<sup>126</sup> Moscow's tactics in Abkhazia and South Ossetia provide cause for concern in this regard. Russia encouraged and supported separatist movements in both entities, then used the separatist tensions to justify sending "Russian peacekeepers" into the regions. Moreover, it granted Russian citizenship to Abkhaz and South Ossetia residents, and then justified its recent invasion of Georgia on the grounds that it had an obligation to protect Russian citizens.<sup>127</sup> After the Georgian crisis, Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Volodymyr Ohryzko accused Russia of organising mass distribution of Russian passports in Crimea. This led to a protest from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which assessed these accusations as a provocation since dual citizenship is banned under Ukrainian law.<sup>128</sup> Estimates of the current number of Russian passport-holders in Crimea range from as low as 6000 to

100000.<sup>129</sup> This is alarming because Russia justified its invasion of Georgia by claiming it was defending "Russian citizens" after it had distributed passports to South Ossetians over the last two decades. Moreover, the issuing of passports is an infringement of Ukrainian law that does not permit dual citizenship.<sup>130</sup> Some scholars argue that Russia's strategy is twofold. First, it aims to foment instability in the Crimea to halt Ukraine's driven to join NATO. Second, Moscow seems to want to make use of increased political volatility in the Crimea as a way to pressure Kyiv to seek its assistance which would enhance its leverage over its weaker and anxious neighbour. Such protection would be reminiscent of similar tactics in Georgia's two separatist enclaves where Russia first incited inter-ethnic tension and then offered 'CIS' (in reality Russian) 'peacekeeping troops' who have frozen the conflict in Moscow's favour. As Putin said, 'Russia cannot be indifferent to what happens in Ukraine and the Crimea'.<sup>131</sup>

## Conclusion

The Soviet nationality policy and Russian historiography have influenced to a great degree contemporary Ukrainian-Russian relations. The 'elder-younger' brother syndrome and propagation of Russian mission civilisatrice have produced a paternalistic Russian view of other peoples in the former USSR, in particular towards Ukraine and Belarus.<sup>132</sup> While aggressive

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>127</sup> Larrabee, "Ukraine: The Next Crisis?" RAND, September 7, 2008.

<sup>128</sup> Hedskog, "Crimea after the Georgia Crisis", op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Kuzio, "BSU Stops Terrorism in Its Tracks," Eurasia Daily Monitor 5/237, [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=34266](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=34266).

<sup>131</sup> Kuzio, "Russian Subversion in the Crimea", *Jane's Intelligence Digest*, 3 November 2006, [http://www.taraskuzio.net/media22\\_files/Russian\\_Subversion\\_Crimea.pdf](http://www.taraskuzio.net/media22_files/Russian_Subversion_Crimea.pdf)

<sup>132</sup> Taras Kuzio, *Russia- Crimea-Ukraine: Triangle of Conflict*, op. cit., p. 2.



factions among Moscow's post-Soviet imperialists would like to annex Crimea, if not all of South-Eastern Ukraine, they do not play a dominant role in Russian foreign policy.<sup>133</sup> The customary take on Ukraine's relations with Russia regards the country's bid for NATO membership as a betrayal.

This research points to the conclusion that the actions of pro-Russian political parties, youth groups, and cultural centres in Crimea in fact hold hopes of sabotaging Ukraine's accession to NATO all the while securing its fleet's access to Sevastopol. The so called 'separatists' in Crimea were never a viable political force. In the 90s this movement was simply an outgrowth of the general discontent among the various parties on the peninsula with Kyiv's policies after the fall of the Soviet Union. During this period Crimean separatists failed to receive mass support in Crimea because of the lack of an ethnic Russian base upon which to mobilize. Although Crimea has a slim 58 per cent ethnic Russian majority (declining from 65 per cent in the 1989 Soviet census), the Crimean population is divided between local territorial, ethnic Russian and Soviet-Pan Slavic identities.<sup>134</sup> Crimea is therefore not a Russian enclave and the real threat of separatism is minimal. The majority of the political groups in Crimea are not pursuing separatist goals. The few groups that do espouse this agenda, which is better described as irredentist and not separatist, are not powerful enough to form a government on their own in order to advance their cause. The only real danger lies in the Russian continued sponsorship of pro-Russian organizations on the peninsula. Currently, there is a rise of more potent and vocal groups in Crimea advocating some form of separatism or union with other Slavic nations.

These organizations have been able to bloom almost exclusively with the material support and rhetorical assistance from the Russian Federation. There is therefore a possibility that these movements could be instrumentalized by Russia in the future, probably as the Black Sea Fleet's lease draws to a close. However, in light of the current economic crisis that has been particularly painful for the exporters of raw materials like Russia, without the financial support from Moscow the survival of these groups is questionable. Regardless of what will transpire in Crimea, the Black Sea Region will remain as it was in the ancient times a zone of acute international economic and political competition between Russia, the countries belong to NATO and the EU (Greece, Bulgaria, Romania) and the ones looking to join either of the institutions (Turkey, Ukraine, Georgia).

---

<sup>133</sup> Andreas Umland, "Will There be a Second Crimean War?" *Open Democracy*, April 25, 2009.

<sup>134</sup> Kuzio, *Jane's Intelligence Review*, February 2009.



## Bibliography

---

- BUGAJSKI, Janusz. "Ethnic Relations and Regional Problems in Independent Ukraine," in *Ukraine: A search for National identity*, ed. Sharon L. Wochik and Volodymyr Zviglaynich, 165 - 182. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2000.
- BUKKVOLL, Tor. "Off the Cuff Politics: Explaining Russia's Lack of a Ukraine Strategy." *Europe-Asia Studies*, 53/ 8 (Dec. 2001): 1141- 1157.
- D'ANIERI, Paul, KRAVCHUK, Robert and Taras KUZIO. *Politics and Society in Ukraine*. Bolder: Westview Press, 1999.
- HEDESKOG, Jacob. "Crimea after the Georgia Crisis." *FOI*. Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency, 2008.
- KUZIO, Taras. "BSU Stops Terrorism in Its Tracks," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 5/237, December 12, 2008. [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=34266](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=34266).
- KUZIO, Taras. *Russia – Crimea – Ukraine: Triangle of Conflict*. London: Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, 2004.
- KUZIO, Taras. "Russian Subversion in the Crimea." *Jane's Intelligence Digest*, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006.
- KUZIO, Taras. "Ukrainian-Russian Cultural Conflict." *Jamestown Foundation Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 6, Issue 87, May 6, 2009.
- KUZIO, Taras. *Ukraine – Crimea – Russia: triangle of Conflict*. Stuttgart: Ibidem – Verlag, 2007.
- LARRABEE, Stephen F. "Ukraine at the Crossroads." *The Washington Quarterly*, August 2007.
- LARRABEE, Stephen F. "Ukraine: The Next Crisis?" *RAND*, September 7, 2008.
- PIRIE, Paul S. "National Identity and Politics in Southern and Eastern Ukraine." *Europe-Asia Studies*, 48/7 (Nov. 1996): 1079 -1104.
- SASSE, Gwendolyn. *The Crimea Question: identity, transition and conflict*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- SOLCHANYK, Roman. "The Politics of State Building: Centre-Periphery Relations in Post-Soviet Ukraine." *Europe-Asia Studies*, 46/ 1 (1994): 47-68.
- TKACHUK, Victor. *The Crimea: Chronicle of separatism, 1992-1995*. Kyiv: Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research, 1996.



TRENIN, Dmitry. “Thinking Strategically About Russia,” Carnegie Endowment International Centre, December 2008.

TUMINEZ, Astrid S. *Russian Nationalism since 1856: Ideology and the Making of Foreign Policy*. Boston: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000.

UMLAND, Andreas. “Will There be a Second Crimean War?” *Open Democracy*, April 25, 2009.

WOSCUK, Kasia. “Catching up with ‘Europe’? constitutional debates on the territorial-administrative model in independent Ukraine.” Working Paper, University of Birmingham, 2001.

### *Internet Sources*

Portal Russkogo Naroda Krimea, « Ukraine in the Context of Russian Civilization », <http://www.ruscrimea.ru/cms/?go=mon&in=view&id=12>.

Rossiiskoe Narodnoe Veche, <http://sevrus.narod.ru/#v29>.

Russkii Blok, [http://www.rblok.org.ua/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=169&Itemid=1](http://www.rblok.org.ua/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=169&Itemid=1)

Rysskoe Dvijenie Crima, <http://www.rdk.wallst.ru/>.

Sevastopol – Crim – Rossija, <http://www.kro-krim.narod.ru/>.

Thomson Reuters, “Ukraine dismisses fears of Crimea Separatist Crisis,” <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSLG374528>.

Ukraina Novosti, <http://www.ukraine.ru/news/308024.html>.