

## INTO WHAT WILL UKRAINE FESTER ?

### The Russian Federation Takes The High Ground

One should not underestimate the delicate political situation in Ukraine as it stands today: It is critical in the extreme.

Yesterday's actions by Mr Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, the President of The Russian Federation, took Russia's level of concern in respect of Ukraine to a recent, new political high, from yellow to red.

**TARGET** () may be accused of stating the obvious as one reads reports, emanating from the Capital City of Ukraine – Kiev – but what may not be as obvious as one would have thought is what part The Russian Federation will play – and is already, clearly, playing – in the west of the country.

Yesterday, President Putin ordered Russia's Sukhoputnyye Voyskia, SV, its ground troops, and Russia's Voenno-Vozdushniye Sily, VVS, its air force, to stand by in an alert that has been officially labelled as being an '*exercise*'. This exercise is to last from 2 p.m., Thursday, until at least March 3.

A total of some 150,000 Russian troops will be taking part in this exercise, according to Russia's Defence Minister Anatoly I. Antonov.

It will involve hundreds of tanks, artillery batteries, dozens of aircraft and military vessels of all kinds.

The Russian Federation does not spend its money without very careful deliberation.

Analysts believe that this so-called '*exercise*' is, in fact, a general mobilisation of Russia's military should the situation in Ukraine fester into a conflict of one sort or another.

That the announcement of the exercise will increase tension in Ukraine and The Crimea is not even open to debate: It, already, has done, exactly that.

Last Monday, Russia's Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev went on record as stating, *inter alia*:

*'If you consider Kalashnikov-toting people in black balaclava helmets, who are roaming Kiev, to be a government, then it will be hard for us to work with that government.'*

As far as The Russian Federation is concerned, it maintains that the present political situation in Ukraine is akin to an armed mutiny in a power-grabbing attempt from the democratically elected Government of President Viktor F. Yanukovich.

The Russian Federation has, already, recalled its Ambassador to Ukraine.

President Putin, for 16 years, was an officer in the **Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti (KGB)**, the foreign intelligence and domestic security agency at the time of The **Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)**. He rose to the position of Lieutenant Colonel before retiring to enter Russian politics.

He is no slouch when it comes to being a player in the most complex of political games – or even more in

deadly games.

### **The Crimea**

The Crimea is a peninsula of Ukraine that is located on the Northern Coast of The Black Sea. Its official name is The Autonomous Republic of Crimea. It measures about 26,200 square kilometres (about 10,100 square miles).

The human population of The Crimea is about two million people, excluding the City of Sevastopol because this has an administration that is separate from that of The Autonomous Republic.

About 60 percent of The Crimea's population, that is about 1.20 million people, is Russian; 25 percent is ethnic Ukrainian.

The Russian population of The Crimea represents about 2.69 percent of the entire population of Ukraine, but the total Russian population of Ukraine, at about 7.58 million people, represents about 17 percent.

The Capital City of The Crimea is Simferopol and it has a population of about 362,366 people.

The importance of The Crimea to The Russian Federation is that, since the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, it has housed its Black Sea Fleet, most of the time at The Port of Sevastopol.

Under the Administration of President Viktor F. Yanukovych, Ukraine's Parliament, in 2010, leased this port to The Russian Federation until 2042.

The Black Sea Fleet is a large, strategic unit of Voenno-Morskoy Flot, VMF, Russia's Navy, operating in The Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

Its ships are anchored at various harbours of The Black Sea and The Sea of Azov that is located in the west of The Crimean Peninsula.

The Crimea, also, is part home of the aviation structure of Russia's air force.

### **The Russians Flex Their Muscles**

Last Thursday's action by The Russian Federation, an action that, in essence, put tens of thousands of Russian soldiers, sailors and air-force personnel on a high-alert status, followed thousands of ethnic Russians, living in The Crimea, protesting at Simferopol about that which is taking place in Kiev.

The protests, for the most part, are hoped to spur Russia into taking definitive and decisive action in order to protect Russian citizens from the unknown and untried, new '*government*' of Ukraine.

Screams of '*Crimea is Russian!*' rang out by large numbers of the ethnic Russian protestors.

Fights broke out between Crimea's ethnic Tatar population of The Crimea, numbering about 242,000 strong, representing about 12 percent of The Crimea's entire population. The Tatars seem to be supporting the new Interim Authority in Kiev even though they have little or no knowledge of that Authority.

(The Crimea, historically, was part of the USSR until it ceded it to Ukraine in 1954.)

### **Russia's Military Might**

According to very reliable sources, Russia has about 70 million men and women, available for military service. The percentage of males to females is about 50-50.

Of that number, those fit for military service number about 26 million males and 23 million females.

The Russian Federation spends nearly five percent of its Gross Domestic Product on its military.

Military service is compulsory by law for all citizens from the ages of 18 years to 27 years for a period of not less than one year.

The total population of the country is about 143 million men and women.

The following statistics cannot be independently verified, but are thought to be reasonably accurate:

**In The Air**

Total Number of Aircraft of all types	3,082
Total Number of Helicopters of all types	973

**On The Water**

Aircraft Carriers	One
Frigates	Four
Destroyers	13
Corvettes	74
Submarines	63
Coastal Craft	65
Mine Warfare Craft	34

**On The Land**

Tanks	15,500
Armoured Fighting Vehicles	27,607
Self-Propelled Guns	5,990
Artillery Pieces	4,625
Rocket Projectors	3,781

Lastly, The Russian Federation is one of the most-powerful, nuclear-armed countries in the world.

It is known to have about 1,500 deployed strategic warheads and a further 1,100 non-deployed strategic warheads. It, also, is known to have some 2,000 tactical nuclear warheads.

The country's nuclear warheads are deployed:

- In land-based immobile silos
- In land-based, mobile vehicles
- In submarines
- In air-launched warheads of the Russian air force

If Russia's military move on Ukraine's border is to be considered an 'exercise', one might like to ask the definition of an incursion.

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