

Did Ukraine Coordinate Its Provocation in Black Sea with ‘Western Partners’?

By [South Front](#)

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Region: [Europe](#), [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [UKRAINE REPORT](#)

It appears that Western experts and Ukrainian diplomats successfully “forecasted” the November 25 escalation in the Black Sea in middle November.

On November 21st, the Atlantic Council “an American think tank in the field of international affairs,” which can also be described as NATO and the US’s public relations office published a report called “[Beyond Borderlands Ensuring the Sovereignty of All Nations of Eastern Europe.](#)”

As expected, the report primarily focuses on Russian influence, since other influence from the EU and the US cannot be considered any sort of influence, especially not bad. It also primarily focuses on Ukraine.

In the section dubbed “Security Assistance in the Short and Medium Terms,” the situation in the Sea of Azov is highlighted.

“Russia is currently occupying and militarizing Ukrainian Crimea, conducting a simmering, hybrid war in the Donbas, and obstructing Ukrainian shipping in the Sea of Azov.”

Furthermore, the section looked at the conflict between Russia and Georgia in 2008, claiming that Russian “peacekeeper in South Ossetia periodically move the line of demarcation farther into Georgia.”

The US and NATO provided training to both Ukraine and Georgia. And under the Donald Trump administration, the US, “at long last” provided Javelin missiles to both countries.

Furthermore, the US may and should also consult with Georgia and Ukraine for further military assistance, according to the report.

“It would also be useful for the United States and the EU to consider a proactive use of sanctions to deter further Kremlin aggression. To date, sanctions have been used to punish the Kremlin for past sins, but they also can be used to discourage further aggression.” Giving as an example, that the Kremlin “keeps taking more territory in the Donbass,” despite the ceasefire. Also, [despite that even the OSCE doubts that there are signs of Russian participation in the region.](#)

Furthermore, the report also presents a suggestion on fighting “Russian aggression and provocations” in the Sea of Azov.

“The United States and the EU should also look closely at Kremlin provocations in the Sea of Azov, and consider an appropriate response. Perhaps it should not permit Russian ships sailing from ports in the Sea of Azov to call at European and US ports, so long as Moscow is obstructing Ukrainian shipping there.”

[After the Black Sea incident between Russia and Ukraine happened on November 25th](#), Anders Aslund, a Swedish economist who is a fellow in the Atlantic Council urged the US to send warships to the Azov Sea, in another country’s maritime territory after the Ukraine-Russian standoff in the Kerch Strait.

What is the EU going to do about the illegal Russian blockade of the international Sea of Azov? Instant action is called for! [@FedericaMog](#)
[@JunckerEU](#) [@eucopresident](#)

— Anders Åslund (@anders_aslund) [November 25, 2018](#)

Everything suggests that Russia slowly takes one step after the other to block the Azov Sea off from Ukraine & international shipping. The West & NATO should react sharply before it is too late. <https://t.co/kZMn2XTEls>

— Anders Åslund (@anders_aslund) [November 25, 2018](#)

Chief foreign affairs correspondent for The Wall Street Journal, Yaroslav Trofimov tweeted that aside from the “practical risks” which might arise from US ships rushing into the kerfuffle, it would also be “illegal without Russian permission.”

Practical risks aside, it would be illegal without Russian permission according to the 2003 treaty between Russia and Ukraine that declared Azov to be “internal waters” and only guaranteed freedom of navigation for RUS and UKR military vessels. <https://t.co/CjTOyfcmet> <https://t.co/VKxbcACZOc>

— Yaroslav Trofimov (@yarotrof) [November 26, 2018](#)

Aslund in a sudden urge to increase absurdity also compared the incident to Adolf Hitler’s invasion of Poland.

Great idea to put more oil into the ☐

— DieterK (@21dieterk) [November 25, 2018](#)

By the end of the day, not one single US official has said a word against Russia's aggression in Ukraine. That can only mean that they were strictly ordered by POTUS not to do so. Why is POTUS supporting Russian aggression in Ukraine?!

— Anders Åslund (@anders_aslund) [November 26, 2018](#)

Leonid Ragozin, formerly of Lonely Planet and BBC also pitched in his opinion on the matter and the Atlantic Council's support of "democratic values."

Side show? I thought Western support of Ukraine was about democratic values, not geopolitical machinations. I very genuinely did. <https://t.co/eQXHNNskS5>

— Leonid Ragozin (@leonidragozin) [November 26, 2018](#)

In addition to that, [on November 17th, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin met in Washington D.C.](#)

"Secretary Pompeo and Foreign Minister Klimkin reiterated that cooperation between the United States and Ukraine is based on common interests and shared values, including support for democracy, economic freedom and prosperity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, energy security, and respect for human rights and the rule of law."

Furthermore, it appears that a "provocation by Russia" was expected in one way or another, as it becomes somewhat apparent from the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry's press release.

"The United States condemned Russia's aggressive actions against international shipping transiting the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait to Ukrainian ports. Both sides underscored that Russia's aggressive activities in the Sea of Azov have brought new security, economic, social, and environmental threats to the entire Azov-Black Sea region."

With all of these preemptive reports and warnings against "Russian provocations" it appears that it would not be surprising if there was an attempt at a coordinated effort to cause an incident by Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko. However, judging by US, NATO and EU reactions so far, Poroshenko may have listened to a wrong adviser from his wing, as the play appeared to be botched.

Luckily, no Ukrainian or Russian ships were sunk, and nobody lost their life. Barring some injuries, the incident failed to lead to a very large scandal, despite hyper-measures undertaken by Ukraine in the face of martial law.

It would make sense that Poroshenko expected the ships would likely be destroyed, [judging by the Su-30 claims of November 27th](#). However, it appeared that the Russians decided to surprisingly not be as "aggressive" as expected.

To create some perspective - imagine if a Syrian warship somehow entered "Israeli

territorial waters” – unsurprisingly that ship would more than likely be immediately destroyed, no questions asked. And the whirlwind in mainstream media and the rhetoric from the US, NATO and EU would most likely be much calmer than in the Ukraine-Russia scenario.

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