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**THE INTERALLIED CONFEDERATION OF RESERVE OFFICERS-
CIOR, AND PERSPECTIVE OF RELATION WITH EX-SOVIET UNION
(E-SU) STATES IN THE CONTEXT OF CRIMEA CRISIS.
ROLES OF THE PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATIONS AND MILITIA
OF ETHNIC MINORITIES IN THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY
TURBULENCE THEATRE**

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Abstract: *The Interallied Confederation of Reserve Officers commonly referred to by its French acronym CIOR, represents the interests of over 1.3 million reservists across 36 participating nations within and beyond NATO, making it the world's largest military reserve officer organization. Founded in 1948 by the reserve officer associations of Belgium, France and the Netherlands, CIOR is now a NATO-affiliated, non-political and non-profit umbrella organization of member nations' national reserve officer associations.*

This presentation will deal possible future relations between NATO/CIOR on the one hand, and Ukraine, Moldova, or the South Caucasus States on the other hand, in conditions when Russia tending to recreate the „Soviet” old territory, in the context of events and of the recent evolution from Crimea. The reservist's role from paramilitary or militia organizations based on Ethnic Minorities, was used very efficient in Crimea by Russian forces, in order to reach their objectives in operations in an efficient and quickly manner.

This abstract intend to present the implication of paramilitary or militia organizations, based on Ethnic Minorities, in conflicts between states, like an asymmetrical option that could lead to civil war and to the terrorist acts, out of any control of the states.

Keywords: *CIOR, Crimea, paramilitary, militia, civil war, reservists.*

1. Roles of CIOR

The CIOR has two main roles: to provide advice on Reserve issues and support to the NATO Alliance, and to foster the professional development of reserve officers.

2. Before of february's Crimea events

According to a pact from 2010 between Ukraine and Russia, Russia had a lease for their naval facilities in Crimea until 2042, and maintained the right to use some small areas of Crimea, up to 25.000 troops, 24 artillery

systems, 132 armored vehicles, and 22 military planes on the Crimean peninsula.

3. The pact – „The Kharkiv Agreement”

Russia's use of their warm water port in Sevastapol was due to end in 2017 with Ukraine saying they would be no extension (as per their constitution prohibiting foreign military use of their lands) and Russia would have to leave.

But now, after Crimea episode, Russia have Ukraine as an enemy over "a barrel" of gas theft.

In 2010 Russia and Ukraine "negotiated" an treaty called "*The Russian Ukrainian Naval Base for Gas treaty*" which is also known by the name of "*The Kharkiv Pact*".

The bottom line of the deal is this, Russia gives Ukraine a "*special price*" on gas - a supposed 30% discount - (which in turn will help them purchase gas to return into the system for the gas they supposedly took, or if they chose they can use the discount to pay Russia back faster for the gas they didn't pay for and in return Ukraine leases the Naval base in Sevastapol until **at least 2042** (Russia wrote a clause into the treaty giving them the option of extending to 2047).

Russia gets its money (or gas) back AND gets to keep its port in *Sevastapol* under the auspices of "saving" Ukraine.

The treaty had a rough ride through the Ukrainian parliament with fights and demonstrations breaking out, it was finally ratified under dubious circumstances (several assenting votes were registered by people known not to even be in the building when the votes took place). In Russia the treaty was passed through their parliament in one vote with 96% assenting.

Apparently we could say: „this is fair”. Russia get's paid for gas, Ukraine gets cheap gas and Russia doesn't have to build a new base for their ships. All Win, right?

But here's the Russian triky!

On February 24, 2014, additional soldiers arrived, on the Crimean Peninsula, but the total number remained well below 25,000. Western Governments accused the Russian military of seizing control of the Crimea region, and threatened sanctions against

Russian individuals claiming "*Russia's clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity*". These threats were subsequently carried out and Russia retaliated.

The Crimean Peninsula is seen by Russia as its strategic link to the Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, and the Balkans with Azov Sea area, as well as a land of historic cultural and religious significance. The Russian government maintains that its preparedness to enter the Ukraine militarily in Crimea is to protect ethnic Russians in the region.

Russia does not recognize the newly installed interim government in Ukraine, instead considering now-ousted-President Viktor Yanukovich Ukraine's legitimate leader.

Yanukovich formally asked Russia to intervene in Ukraine militarily to maintain peace and order. Russia claims that its armed forces were not involved in the stand-off prior to the referendum and reunification of Crimea to Russia, and also asserts that use of force for the purposes of humanitarian intervention in Ukraine has not yet occurred.

Vladimir Tyunin, used to be the director of a humanitarian institute in the Ukrainian city of Sevastapol. He now commands 100 trained men at the heart of the standoff between **Russia** and the **West**.

“I have a group of people that can do any kind of task” Tyunin, 57, said at the end of February, in the port on the Crimean peninsula.

“These are special forces. They can assault buildings, they can block buildings. We are ready to protect ourselves.”

As diplomats around the world seek to defuse the crisis, Crimea is preparing for a March 16 referendum on splitting from Ukraine and joining Russia. Pro-Moscow supporters like Tyunin's unit, which he says participated in the siege of the Ukraine Navy's headquarters, are on the front line of a conflict that so far has been fought more with words than weapons.

The militias gave President Vladimir Putin the upper hand in the autonomous republic of about 2 million people, home to his **Black Sea Fleet**. Their numbers rose to about 15,000 on March 7, when a local hunting club joined



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with 4,500 members, guns and ammunition, according to Alexander Bochkarev, a retired colonel from the Ukrainian Interior Ministry and now the commander of the militia in the Crimean capital, Simferopol.

4. Rival Groups

For now, militia officials say the main task of the paramilitaries is to keep order in Crimea after the protests in Kiev left more than 100 people dead last month. There has been no bloodshed since the standoff began on the peninsula, where ethnic Russians make up 59 percent of the population, while Ukrainians account for 24 percent and ethnic Tatars for 12 percent, according to the 2001 census.

"The danger is that the people of Crimea who are pro-Kiev may now form their own militia," said Ben Barry, senior fellow for land warfare at the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies.

"This may also be the case with Tatars." Militia organizers including Bochkarev say the groups mirror those formed in Lviv in western Ukraine and Kiev, where they kept the peace in the immediate aftermath of the revolt that toppled Kremlin-backed President Viktor Yanukovich.

The militias were organized at the call of Crimean Prime Minister Sergei Aksenov, installed after the regional parliament had been seized by armed Russia supporters. The groups supplement the official Russian troops in the region, estimated by the Ukraine government at more than 19,000.

5. Troop Buildup

Russian troops continue to be deployed and to "increase their presence" along Ukraine's eastern border, First Deputy Premier Vitaliy

Yarema said in Kiev today. Meanwhile, the militias in Crimea keep Ukrainian forces confined to their bases, patrol streets and control the road network with checkpoints.

The units are armed with bludgeons, iron crowbars and hunting rifles, with more substantial weapons also at their disposal, Bochkarev said by telephone.

"We have several arsenals in reserve that are guarded by our Crimean guys," said Bochkarev, who has 2,800 people under his command. Many of them may join the regular Crimea army that is being formed now, he said.

Crimean authorities started recruiting last week and 186 soldiers have already taken an oath, the Interfax news service reported, citing premier Aksenov. There will be a 1,500-strong army with guns guarding polling stations at the March 16 referendum, he said.

Bochkarev, whose regiment has fast-response troops, a logistics unit and a security service to do background checks on would-be members, said he recommends the best people to the recruiters. New soldiers get a contract and a Kalashnikov assault rifle.

6. No Aggression

Ukrainian Army Colonel Yuli Mamchur, acting commander of a besieged airbase near Sevastopol, said he is in touch with militia and didn't see any aggression from them.

"We are calling each other when we see something strange near the base," Mamchur said by phone. "Drunken crowds, for example, or some non-sanctioned rallies. There was absolutely no threat to anyone here till Russians came here to protect us."

Putin said it's not his troops who are surrounding Ukrainian army installations.

Yet Bochkarev, the Simferopol commander, said Russian involvement is key. “The fact that our Russian brothers are here gives us 100 percent confidence,” Bochkarev said.

Between Sevastopol and Simferopol, cars stop at a militia checkpoint. Men in camouflage gear open trunks and scrutinize documents.

People are taking part to protect Crimea from Ukrainian radicals, said Grigory, a traffic controller who declined to give his last name. “I won’t leave this position until I know we are all safe,” he said.

Russia succeeded to take over Crimea, but several factors make it harder to believe that Russia will be able to establish control and to effectively annex Crimea as it did with South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Transnistria. For one, the Ukrainian side so far has not made any moves that Russia can credibly present as a provocation that necessitates armed response by the Russian side to “protect” its military or its citizens, as was the case in Georgia in 2008.

The new Ukrainian government leaders have called for calm, the far right Right Sector said it will not be sending its men to Crimea, and in a conciliatory gesture to Russian-speakers, acting president Turchynov recently vetoed the law the Ukrainian parliament adopted several weeks earlier repealing the 2012 law elevating the status of the Russian language.

With the Security Council in session to discuss events in Crimea and Western leaders urging restraint and warning Russia that violations of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity are unacceptable, there is hope that a diplomatic solution to the crisis could be found quickly.

But even if diplomacy fails and the Russian military annexed Crimean territory with the intention of controlling it permanently, it will be much harder for Russia to establish control of Crimea than it was in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Transnistria.

The main reason for this is the Crimean Tatars.

7. Tatar Response

The militia’s structure is already similar to a regular army, according to Leonid Lebedev, a spokesman. Funding comes from donations, he said. Younger members are often barred because of their pro-Ukrainian position, Andrei Kratko, an activist from Yalta, a city in the south of Crimea where around 100 vigilantes patrol streets, said by phone.

The build-up of Crimea militias was boosted after February 26 clashes between pro-Russia activists and Crimea Tatars near the regional parliament in Simferopol, Lebedev said.

The Tatars see the role played by the militias differently and have called for a United Nations peacekeeping mission.

“They come, try to provoke a conflict and then armed gentlemen appear,” Refat Chubarov, who leads the Tatar minority’s executive, told reporters last week.

The Tatars — a Muslim group that was deported en masse from Crimea by Stalin in 1944 and that for decades has waged a peaceful struggle for the right to return — have been coming back in droves since 1989. According to the latest Ukrainian census from 2001, 243,433 Crimean Tatars account for 12.1 percent of the Crimean population of 2,033,700.

They represent a highly mobilized and unified constituency that has consistently been pro-Ukrainian and opposed to pro-Russian separatism on the peninsula. Going back to the 1991 independence referendum, the narrow vote in favor of Ukrainian state independence in Crimea may have been thanks to the vote of the Crimean Tatars.

Since then, the Crimean Tatars and their representative organ, the Mejlis, have cooperated with the pro-Ukrainian political parties. Leaders of the Mejlis such as Mustafa Dzhemilev and Refat Chubarov have been members of the Ukrainian parliament elected on the party list of Ukrainian nationalist parties such as Rukh in the 1990s and later from Our Ukraine party.

On February 26, the day before the Crimean parliament was taken over by the armed men, Crimean Tatars held a large rally



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near the parliament that was larger than a simultaneous pro-Russian rally. There has been no comparable local mobilized group opposed to Russian takeover in any other of the breakaway regions.

Although the group has been a staunch ally of the Ukrainian government against pro-Russian separatism on the peninsula, the Ukrainian central authorities, while benefiting from this support, have also been suspicious of the Crimean Tatars, who consider Crimea their historical homeland and have advocated measures such as changing the status of Crimean autonomy to make it the national-territorial autonomy of the Crimean Tatars as opposed to simply territorial (and de facto ethnic Russian autonomy given that ethnic Russians constitute more than 50 percent of the population in Crimea).

The law on the status of the Crimean Tatars as indigenous peoples of Ukraine that the Tatar leaders have been pushing for many years remains unadopted.

Whatever the Tatar grievances against the Ukrainian state may be, when faced with the choice of being under either Russian or Ukrainian control, the Crimean Tatar leadership has consistently and unequivocally chosen Ukraine.

Since the Soviet period, attempts to split the Crimean Tatar movement and persuade some of the Tatars to support a pro-Soviet, and later pro-Russian, agenda has not borne fruit. In an interview with this author in the 1990s, Mustafa Dzhemilev said that in 1991 Boris Yeltsin's government made an offer to the Crimean Tatars to back Russian control of Crimea in return for giving the peninsula the status of Crimean Tatar national autonomy. Dzhemilev refused the offer then, and, recently he said that he has received a similar offer from a highly placed Russian official now,

noting that the Crimean Tatars will not entertain such offers now, either, and that they do not trust Russia and want Crimea to remain within Ukraine.

The Chairman of the Mejlis already issued a statement refusing to recognize the new local government in Crimea that was voted for by the local parliament after the invasion, with armed men in the building and reportedly without a quorum.

Recently, news media reported Dzhemilev's statement that the Crimean Tatars are organizing self-defense units and that if diplomacy fails, the units would come under Ukrainian command and would fight the "aggressor" if necessary.

8. NATO Contents of cooperation

In general cooperation has remained relatively limited. The pattern and the context of cooperation have evolved over the years. Initially it was more about establishing political ties with countries that were completely new on the world map and in the process of building up defense and security sectors of their own from scratch. It appeared all the more necessary to establish political and security dialogue with these states that the situation in the whole area was very unpredictable and many security challenges needed to be tackled there.

By that time, there was also strong hope to use the Partnership for Peace as an instrument for encouraging the expansion of liberal, democratic values. Later on, a phase of consolidation came – the partnership policy has grown more specific, focused on meeting the needs of a more global NATO, increasingly oriented towards fighting threats outside the Euro-Atlantic area are but undermining its security.

For their part, the partner states have consolidated their foreign and security policies and know better what they want and do not want to do in their cooperation with NATO.

Another problem is that NATO has a credibility problem. It has made clear it does not want a role in solving the frozen conflicts in the region, which is undermining its authority in the eyes of the countries, for which these conflicts are at the core of their security interests. The absence of a strong reaction on NATO's part during the Georgia war has only strengthened this vision. Partners see that NATO is in Afghanistan, far from its traditional zone of responsibility, and has not been able or willing to play a part in post-Soviet unresolved conflicts. For them, it is clear that it means that NATO does not want to take responsibility for the security of the region.

9. Constraints and limitations

We have to admitted once, that cooperation between NATO and former Soviet Union countries has remained quite limited. A first limitation is tied to the fact that NATO/ex-SU countries relations have been overshadowed by the "Russia factor". Russia itself has quite a comprehensive cooperation agenda with NATO. It is often forgotten that Russia was involved in NATO's peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and in Kosovo; it has also participated to the transit of NATO freight through Russian territory for the ISAF mission and to the training of Afghan security forces; counter-terrorism cooperation, anti-piracy, air trafficking security, Afghanistan, search and rescue at sea are all parts of the Russia-NATO cooperation agenda under the auspices of the NATO-Russian Council Cooperation with Russia is seen as useful by a number of NATO members. But this relationship is highly politicized and one of the major contention bones has been, precisely, NATO's role in the ex-SU countries.

This area indeed has become a field of competition between Russia and NATO (and the EU, as the current Ukrainian crisis has revealed). The Georgia war came as a very painful symptom of such competition. The US

is now paying less attention but under the Bush administration, the US government advised some of these countries (not only Georgia and Ukraine) to declare an interest in joining NATOi (despite the opposition of some NATO members). This has contributed to make Russia even more anxious about NATO's open doors policy. Georgia has paid a high price for it in 2008: with what the EU called a disproportionate military reaction and its subsequent decision to recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states,

Russia clearly demonstrated that there are limits in acceptance to NATO's enlargement in the ex-Soviet space.

NATO feels that, with countries that are ex-SP members, such as Armenia and Kazakhstan, membership complicates their cooperation with NATO and constrains their political integration with the Alliance.

Besides, one reason why NATO does not want to establish formal cooperation with ex-SC, which, in addition, it sees as non-democratic and ineffective, but also is that it sees it as a tool for Russia to assert its sphere of influence in the post-Soviet space.

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Another important limitation is the "values gap" between NATO members and most of these countries. Of course, pragmatism and the need to work with partners to tackle urgent security challenges have often made this stake secondary. For example, focused as it has been on the logistical and other needs related to its Afghanistan operation, NATO has reduced the insistence on its normative agenda in recent



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years. Azerbaijan is not the most democratic state on the world stage but a number of NATO members see this country's energy resources as potentially helpful in Europe's effort to become less dependent on Russian energy. It seems it has made the Alliance more patient with this player.

However, the authoritarian character of most of these states is an invisible barrier to more serious cooperation – if only because their leaders will always be cautious in developing ties with an organization which they tend to see as a tool of Western regime change policy (this is typically the case for Azerbaijan). NATO, in addition, will always be distrustful because of the opportunistic nature of such regimes, which can make them unreliable in their foreign policy priorities (and their cooperation – unstable).

To conclude, the most pressing question is certainly about the possible evolution of ex – SU countries preferences, for a set of values (NATO), or for another (Russian values).

Obviously, a pertinent de question remain:

Still be in the future, in the most of ex-SU space, o „*Russian business*”, blackmail based on the natural resources?

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