



Sudden Surge In Russian Navy Ships And Submarines In Black Sea

Description

UKRAINE/RUSSIA: Ukrainian forces will be monitoring a sudden movement of Russian warships and submarines out of their base of Novorossiysk. The naval base, near the Kerch Bridge, is further from Ukrainian controlled coast than the famous base at Sevastopol. Yet the unusual movement may be important.

This morning Russian Navy ships and submarines left their base at Novorossiysk, in the Black Sea, en-masse. This is highly unusual and may indicate ongoing operations.

Sources seen by Naval News confirm the exodus. The group included the Project 11711 Ivan Gren class landing ship, Pyotr Morgunov, the largest amphibious ship in the Black Sea.

It also contained all three Project 636.3 Improved-Kilo class submarines which were present at the base. Analysis suggests that other warships were also sailing, leaving only a few warships and support vessels in the port. It is likely the most empty that Novorossiysk has been in many months.

Recently Pyotr Morgunov has been to carry supplies from Russia to Sevastopol following the October 8 2022 **Ukrainian attack on the Kerch Bridge**. Although Russia has managed some repairs, the bridge remains at limited capacity. So the Russian Navy's landing ships have been pressed into service as transports. However the simultaneous sailing of the submarines suggests that this may be more than a resupply mission.

Possible Reaction To Ukrainian Threat

One explanation might be that the mass exit may be a drill to test the crews' readiness. Or possibly a precaution against an incoming threat.

The base has not, so far, been within range of Ukrainian aerial drones. On the other hand, despite its distance from Ukrainian controlled coast, it is within range of Ukraine's maritime drones.

These are small uncrewed boats loaded with explosives. They are best known for their dramatic attack on Sevastopol on October 29. One of the drones hit **Novorossiysk on November 18**. It caused limited damage but sent the message that the base is within reach.

Russia was already implementing enhanced defenses at its naval bases and the warships and submarines are now protected by multiple floating booms. The booms should provide protection against the maritime drone attacks. So this explanation seems less convincing.

Offensive Operations

The remaining explanation is that the Russian Navy assets are involved in an operation. The last time we reported an unusual **spike in Russian Navy activity** it preceded extensive missile strikes on Ukraine.

The Improved-Kilo class submarines have been used to launch Kalibr cruise missile attacks on Ukraine. They were largely withdrawn from Sevastopol on Crimea in September 2022 following Ukrainian drone attacks on the port city. They still return to Sevastopol to load Kalibr missiles. But three of the five (four improved-Kilo and one original kilo class) had been in Novorossiysk for weeks.

This does not explain the mass exodus because it would be unique for all three to be involved in a single attack. And their sailing to Sevastopol to arm would not likely be conducted in such a manner. what is more, the combination of amphibious ships and submarines also suggests that it is not missile strikes.

The Boldest Move: Amphibious Landings

One explanation which will be on analysis minds is some form of amphibious landing. This may target southwestern Ukraine to establish a land bridge to Transnistria. This Russian-supported unrecognized state is part of Moldova and borders Ukraine. It has always been understood that it is [within Russia's wider war aims](#) to join up with it.

The submarines would be involved in broader intelligence or covering missions surrounding the amphibious ships.

Landings seem unrealistic given the fate of Russian advances at the beginning of the war. Although frequently threatened, the landings never came. At the same time the naval infantry, similar to marines, were deployed inland. They have been much depleted and plans to expand the naval infantry force will take months or years to complete. Despite all this, we cannot rule out some form of amphibious operation.

Analysts and commanders in Ukraine will no doubt be watching this development closely. In peacetime such an exodus, without a back story, would hardly be newsworthy. But in the ongoing war it takes on an added dimension.

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