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Interim Govt Wants Russia Out of Crimea, Many Crimeans Want Out of Ukraine

By Jason Ditz

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Top officials in the new “interim” government of the Ukraine are calling for the immediate expulsion of Russia’s Navy from the country, while officials accuse them of a “military invasion” of the Crimean peninsula.



Russia initially annexed Crimea in the late 18th century, and by 1804 had built a major naval base in Sevastopol. The base remains the home of Russia’s navy, and they have rights to the port until 2042.

Crimea has an ethnic Russian majority to this day, and many locals in Sevastopol say that if Russia's Navy has no place in the Ukraine, neither do they. They want secession from the Ukraine and possibly a return to Russian control.

The Russian Duma is mulling the question of what to do if that happens now, and a bill has been proposed that would allow Russia to annex any neighboring territories that hold a referendum expressing support for joining the Russian federation.

Crimea already has the status of an autonomous region in the Ukraine, and its parliament has approved the idea of a referendum on secession. The interim government which took over the Ukraine after protests last week insists Crimea cannot be allowed to secede, and NATO nations have demanded the peninsula remain part of Ukraine.