Ukraine gives Britain intel about Russian 'hybrid war' tactics in Crimea

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Russian 'volunteers' in Ukraine, which Kiev contends are Russian special forces
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BY IAN ALLEN | EDITOR | IntelNews.org

Ukrainian intelligence and defense officials are sharing intelligence with Britain about cutting-edge Russian military tactics in the Crimea and parts of eastern Ukraine. Since the 2014 Russian military intervention in Ukraine, observers have noted the sophisticated tactics used by Moscow. The Russian forces seem to be combining their advanced conventional arsenal with electronic warfare and information operations. The latter include the use of deception, spreading propaganda through social media, and computer hacking. Some experts have described Russia's tactics in the Crimean Peninsula and the Donbass region of Ukraine as a form of "hybrid warfare", which has its roots in Soviet times. The difference in the contemporary operational landscape is the prominence of electronic resources, which the Russians are simultaneously employing as disinformation channels and tools of sabotage. Following the Ukrainian crisis of 2014, the former Soviet republic is today seen as being at the forefront of Russia's experimentation with "hybrid warfare".

According to British newspaper *The Times*, a delegation of Ukrainian military officials, with considerable experience in studying Russia's war tactics in Donbass and Crimea, secretly visited the United Kingdom in July for consultations. The paper quoted an anonymous British military source saying that the visit was part of a series of meetings between Ukrainian and British officials. The goal of the meetings, it said, is to understand Russia's military tactics in the 21st century. The agenda of the secret meetings includes discussion on topics such as the use of radio-electric weapons that disrupt GPS and drone signals, the deployment of sabotage and covert action, or the use of social media to spread disinformation. Russian tactics that have been discussed include the use of acoustics to locate snipers in an urban battlefield, tactical coordination of drones in fleets, and the widespread use of cellular telephone messages to target civilian populations.

A representative of the UK's Ministry of Defense, who was contacted by *The Times*, admitted that "a small delegation from Ukraine was hosted" in Britain "as part of a think-tank sponsored visit", but refused to provide further details. The paper said the meetings will probably continue and may even widen in scope to include staff from North Atlantic Treaty Organization member states.