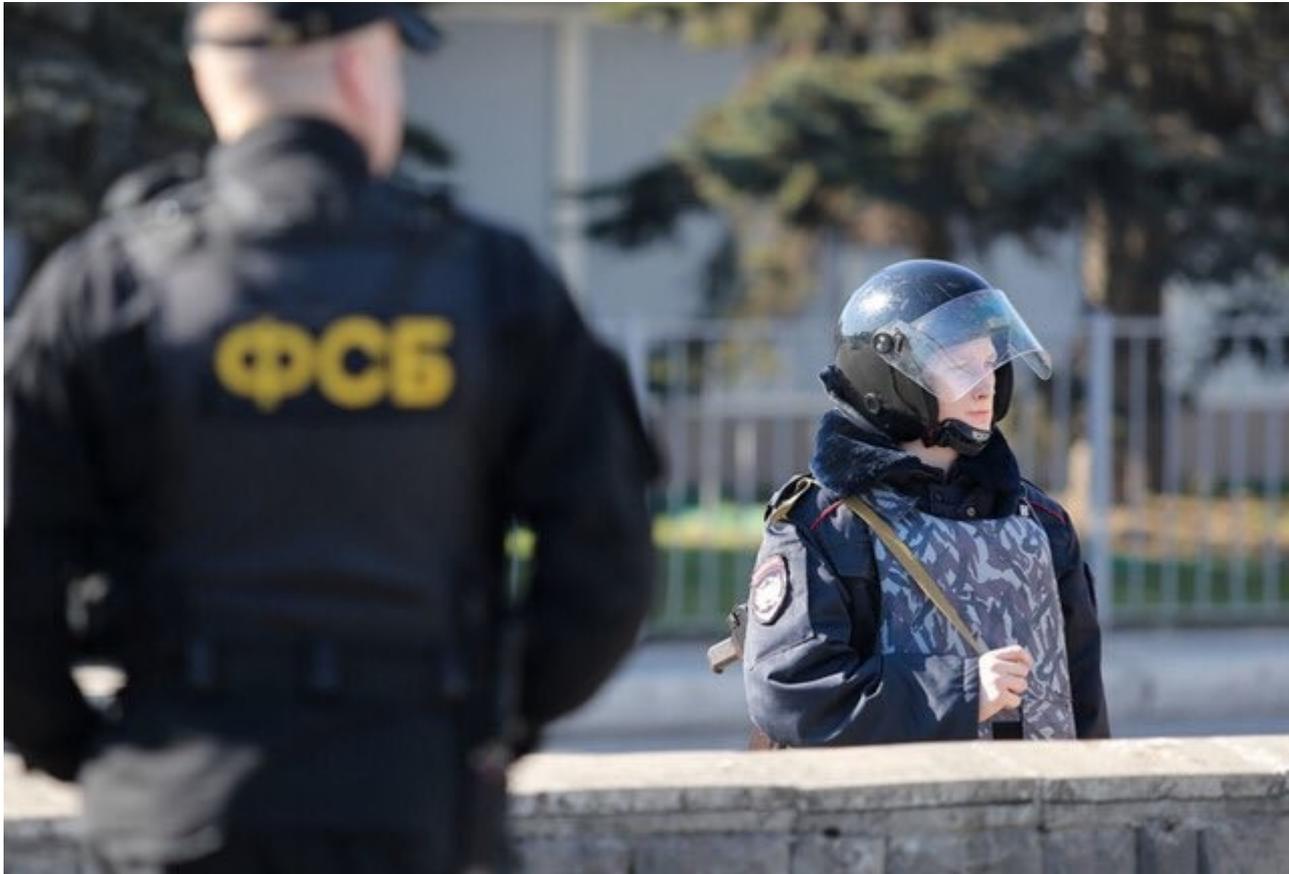


## Provocations in Crimea, its organizers and purposes

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Seemingly the undeclared “provocation game” is far from coming to its end.



The last week has been marked with a range of notorious cases on the Crimean peninsula. Therefore local authorities have stated that at night on the 7<sup>th</sup> August in the neighborhood of Armiansk city the FSB officers managed to thwart an act of sabotage allegedly organized by the Main Department of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine. Ukrainian General Staff in its turn proclaimed such statements to be groundless and the whole situation to be nothing but provocation organized by the Russian Federation. Certainly it is hard to restrain the temptation to find out “whom to blame” especially bearing in mind that such mutual charges between Russia and Ukraine has become more than just ordinary.

In the beginning it should be determined who would reap most benefit from this situation. We may immediately remark that Ukrainian government is the last to be interested in the exacerbation of the regional situation on the peninsula which very easy to explain. Ukraine within the framework of the current political situation in Europe is doing its best to strictly meet the Minsk agreements regarding that its reputation in the EU is much more important than a tiny intrigue in Crimea. If it once will be established that the sabotage was really designed by the Ukrainian Main Department of Intelligence the credibility of the Ukrainian government within European leaders will be gravely undermined.

If we take the Russian side its benefit is absolutely obvious. Frankly speaking it is even a little bit difficult to outline the whole list of benefits Kremlin’s politicians may gain from military tensions in Crimea. First of all we should mention that similar actions provide positive effects on the ever degrading rating of the acting government as they allow it to demonstrate power and find another pretext divert peoples’ attention from the stagnant economy, delinquent laws like “Yarovaya bill” and idiotic statements of Medvedev compromising the whole State machinery.

Soiling the image of Ukraine on the international level is probably the chief goal of the Crimean provocations as it is an obligatory condition for Russia to quit the Normandy format without troubles. Apparently inefficiency of the aforementioned format should be approved by the violations of the Minsk agreements committed by Ukraine since otherwise Putin will not manage to clear out of the Normandy format unstained. And despicable tricks and provocations like those having been organized on August 7 will remain on the conscious of their designer.

The last but not the least, the provocations in Crimea may be exploited by Russian officials as a pretext for further escalation of conflict with Ukraine and potential full-scale invasion on its territory. It is attested by the redeployment of assault units to the northern Crimea and personnel reinforcements dispatched to the frontier zone.

At this moment it is possible to affirm that these provocations are no way occasional and there are more to come. It may have been the probing of the reaction of the international community on such "performances". Unfortunately it is meanwhile too difficult to make any assessments in view of unpredictable behavior of the agonizing Russian authorities. In any case we should always be ready for the worst.

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