

The Independent.- 13.09.2023

Chris Stevenson, Arpan Rai

UK Storm Shadow missiles used in Ukraine's largest strike so far on Putin's Black Sea Fleet in Crimea

Удар британських ракет Storm Shadow був найбільший за всю історію України по путінському чорноморському флоту в Криму

Як інформує «The Independent», українські війська успішно атакували доки Севастопольського суднобудівного заводу, які, як припускають аналітики, ймовірно, зайняті російським підводним човном класу "Кіло" і десантним кораблем класу "Ропуха".

Україна також заявила, що відбила стратегічні платформи для видобутку газу та нафти у Чорному морі біля Криму, які росія захопила у 2015 році. Екскомандувач військ США в Європі Бен Годжес пов'язав напад на нафтові вежі з нападом на Севастополь, припустивши, що рейд українського спецназу на морські платформи допоміг би ліквідувати радар, який дозволив би завдати наступного ракетного удару. На його думку, це дуже витончений підхід до того, щоб зробити Крим непридатним для росіян.

Український генеральний штаб обходить російський генеральний штаб.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-russia-sevastopol-black-sea-attack-crimea-b2410412.html>

The strike hit a submarine – the first successful attack on a Russian sub of the 18-month war – and a large landing vessel

UK Storm Shadow cruise missiles have been used in what is believed to be the largest Ukrainian attack on the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea fleet since the start of Vladimir Putin's invasion.

Kyiv said that the attack base in the city of Sevastopol in Russian-occupied Crimea struck a submarine – which analysts suggested was likely a Kilo-class attack submarine that can launch cruise missiles of its own – and a landing vessel. It is thought that this is the first documented successful attack against a Russian submarine during Moscow's 18-month war.

While Ukrainian officials have not confirmed the means of the strike, military sources said that the attack used Storm Shadow missiles, which were delivered to Kyiv by the UK earlier this year. With a range of more than 150 miles, the missiles can be fired by Ukrainian aircraft. The head of the Ukrainian Air Force, Lieutenant General Mykola Oleschuk, posted an image of the burning shipyard, with the caption: "While the occupants are having a bad time in Sevastopol, let's thank the Air Force of Ukraine for their brilliant job." Sevastopol sits about 180 miles from Ukraine's Black Sea port of Odesa.

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Russia's Defence Ministry said that Ukraine had attacked a Black Sea shipyard with 10 cruise missiles and three uncrewed speedboats in the early hours of Wednesday. The ministry said that seven of the missiles had been knocked out of the sky and that the attack boats had been destroyed by a Russian patrol ship. However, Moscow did acknowledge damage to two military vessels via cruise missiles. It claimed that they would undergo repair before being returned to service.

"It really is the biggest attack on Sevastopol since the beginning of the war," retired Ukrainian navy captain Andriy Ryzhenko told Reuters. The Black Sea Fleet has launched numerous missile attacks on Ukraine throughout the war.

"Unfortunately, three Storm Shadow missiles reached their target. The landing ship Minsk and the submarine Rostov-on-Don, which were in dry dock, received varying degrees of damage," the war-blogging Russian Rybar Telegram channel said.

It is not the first time that UK Storm Shadows have been used in the war, with France also providing Ukraine with long-range cruise missiles. In June, the then-defence secretary, Ben Wallace, told parliament that the missiles were having a "significant impact".

"It is my understanding its accuracy, and ability to deliver successfully the payload as sent and designed by the Ukrainians has been almost without fault," he said, "That is an extraordinary achievement in terms of both the engineering that went into it, and the Ukrainians deploying it and using it as it needs to. It has had an effect on the Russian army, mainly around its logistics and command and control. That shows the importance of deep fires [long-range missiles]."

Britain's Ministry of Defence has made no comment on the strike, but the Ukrainian military took the unusual step of publicly claiming responsibility for the strike on Sevastopol, something it does not typically do for attacks inside Russia or the Crimea peninsula.

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"On the morning of Sept. 13 the Ukrainian armed forces conducted successful strikes on naval assets and port infrastructure of the occupiers at the docks of temporarily occupied Sevastopol," it said on Telegram.

Mikhail Razvozhayev, the Moscow-installed governor of Sevastopol, the largest city in Crimea, said on Telegram that at least 24 people had been injured. He posted a night photo of flames engulfing what appeared to be port infrastructure. Russian Telegram channels posted videos and more photos of flames at a facility by the water.

The West has poured weapons worth billions of pounds into Ukraine to help it fend off Russian forces, with President Volodymyr Zelensky and Ukraine pushing for more weaponry to be delivered faster. Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Mr Zelensky, tweeted in the wake of the Sevastopol attack that the "demilitarisation" of Russia's Black Sea Fleet can only come about by "[Building] up the capacity of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, including by expanding the range of weapons."

He added that the "results" of such a strategy can be seen in Crimea and that the assault on Sevastopol marks a "professional and meaningful 'statement'".

Ukraine has been upping its attacks on Crimea and its drone strikes inside Russia for months – aiming at disrupting Moscow as much as possible while Kyiv's forces undertake a counteroffensive to retake territory from Russia on the frontline. Airfields are among the targets

that have been struck, taking out a number of Russian planes and forcing Moscow into moving such assets around.

Last month, Mr Zelensky vowed to do all he could to bring Crimea – illegally annexed by Russia in 2014 – back under Ukrainian control. He has urged international allies to support the effort.

On Monday, Ukraine claimed it had recaptured strategic gas and oil drilling platforms in the Black Sea off Crimea that Russia seized in 2015. Russia had used the platforms to stage weapons and launch helicopters during their invasion, and Ukraine said that the move would help it regain Crimea.

Retired US general Ben Hodges, linked the attack on the oil rigs and the attack on Sevastopol, suggesting that the raid by Ukrainian special forces on the sea platforms would have helped eliminate radar that would allow the follow-up missile attack. “This is a very sophisticated approach to making Crimea untenable for the Russians,” he tweeted.

“The Ukrainian general staff is running rings around the Russian general staff,” he added.

The Sevastopol attack took place as missiles and drones fired by Russia killed at least three civilians and injured 14 across Ukraine, the president's office said.

A pre-dawn onslaught in southern Ukraine's Odesa region damaged port and civilian infrastructure in the region's Izmail district – not far from the Crimean city – and wounded seven people, three seriously, said governor Oleh Kiper.

Russian attacks on residential areas in 10 cities and villages in the Donetsk region killed three people and wounded three. Fighting in the Zaporizhzhia region injured one resident in Orikhiv, while shelling in southern Kherson damaged homes and a nursery school, the government said.

The fighting occurred as Mr Putin hosted North Korean leader Kim Jong-un during a summit that the US has warned could lead to a deal to supply arms for Moscow's war machine.