PROSPECTS FOR BUILDING UP CAPACITIES OF MARITIME COMPONENTS OF THE NAVAL FORCES OF THE ARMED FORCES OF UKRAINE

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Summary. The purpose of the study is to reveal the ways of developing the capabilities of the naval staff of the Naval Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in modern conditions. The research methodology is based on the principles of historicism, systematicity, scientificity, authorial objectivity, as well as the use of general scientific (analysis, synthesis, generalization) and special-historical (historical-genetic, historical-typological, historical-systemic) methods. The scientific novelty is that the authors of the article on the basis of open sources consider ways to increase the ship's composition through the purchase of combat units from partner countries and their joint production.

Keywords: Naval Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, combat operations, navy, capabilities, ship composition.
First and foremost, the urgency of the research topic is determined by the dynamics of the development of combat operations in eastern Ukraine, which require proper study. This topic is widely discussed among researchers and practitioners. However, from our point of view, today the immediacy of the problem associated with the development of an effective mechanism for counteracting the aggressive policy of the Russian military and political leadership, including at sea, is being studied fragmentarily. Hence, there is a vital need for a comprehensive and in-depth study of the processes that facilitate the strengthening of the dominance of the Russian Federation (hereinafter referred to as Russia) in the Azov-Black Sea region and the development of effective measures to combat the aggressor.

Today, it is very difficult for international security organizations to influence Russia's aggressive policy with the application of norms of international law. The main reason for this is that Russia, being a permanent member of the UN Security Council, blocks all initiatives that conflict with its intentions.

It should be reminded that according to the Montreux Convention of 1936, the access to the Black Sea by war ships of non-Black Sea states is significantly limited. For instance, the total tonnage of war ships of these countries should not exceed 30,000 tons with a period of stay in the Black Sea not exceeding 21 days [1, p. 409]. Therefore, a long-term presence of a strong contingent of Ukraine’s partner countries in the Black Sea is unlikely. Most probably, in the near term, we should rely on international assistance only in terms of policy and economy. Moreover, (either Using this or Considering this), today the military and political leadership of the Russian Federation proceeds with an aggressive policy against our country at sea and ignores internationally recognized legal instruments concerning the Sea of Azov and the Black Seas [2, 3]. Having constructed the Kerch Strait Bridge, the aggressor nation has significantly restricted the passage of ships and continues to interfere with maritime traffic in the Sea of Azov in an attempt to destroy the Ukrainian economy and cause social tension in the region [4].

Against this background, the military and political leadership of Ukraine urgently needs to build-up the capacity of the maritime component of its own Naval Forces (hereinafter referred to as Navy). The experience of the Navy of the Armed Forces (hereinafter referred to as the Armed Forces) of Ukraine in protecting national interests at sea during the military aggression of the Russian Federation in 2014-2018 demonstrated that they were used to: protect and defend military units of the Navy in the course of occupation of Crimea; carry out combat operations by separate subdivisions and military units of the Navy in the zone of the anti-terrorist operation (hereinafter referred to as ATO); carry out stabilization actions of forces (troops) of the Navy and deter enemy actions at sea (outside the zone of the anti-terrorist operation, in certain sea areas and adjacent areas of the coast). The Navy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine was crucial for stabilizing the situation in certain districts of Odesa and Mykolaiv regions in 2014-2015; it prevented occupation with the use of hybrid methods and deter the expanding military aggression against Ukraine at sea [5]. Thus, in accordance with the ‘Strategy of the Naval Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine 2035’ (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy), the primary missions of the Ukrainian Navy of today and afterward are to deter aggression at sea and protect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial
integrity along the sea borders. Therefore, to ensure strong defense of our country at sea, the main objectives of the Navy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine should be sea denial and sea control. Definitely, these objectives will be achieved only if Ukraine has a sufficient number of combat units [4].

According to the open-source information, currently, the Ukrainian Navy holds 21 units, namely: the frigate Hetman Sahaidachnyi (floated in 1992), the mid-size landing ship Yurii Olefirenko (floated in 1970), the missile (and after dismantling the missile launcher, the patrol) boat Pryluky (floated in 1980), the gun boat Rivne (floated in 1972), the gun boat AK-03 (floated in 1972), the gun boat AK-02 (floated in 1973), the gun boat Skadovsk (floated in 1990), the anti-sabotage boat Hola Prystan (floated in 1975), the gun boats Akkerman and Berdiansk (floated in 2015), the gun boats Vyshhorod, Lubny, Kremenchuk (floated in 2017), the gun boats Nikopol and Kostopil (floated in 2018 and 2019, respectively), the patrol boats Sloviansk and Starobilsk (floated in 1988), the assault landing boats Malyn and Stanislav (floated in 2018), landing boat Svatove (floated in 1979), harbor minesweeper Henichesk (floated in 1985) [6].

At the same time, according to the Commander of the Navy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine Rear Admiral O. Neizhpapa, in the first half of 2021 the Navy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine will receive the mid-size landing ship Simferopol, gradual arrival of assault landing boats such as Kentavr and three patrol boats Island supplied by the USA. It should be reminded that the first two patrol boats Island (Sloviansk and Starobilsk) were solemnly supplied to Ukraine in September 2018. [7] Obviously, these ships were used before, but thanks to their characteristics the Navy are able to perform its tasks in the internal waters and territorial sea of Ukraine. Moreover, they are more up-to-date compared to many ships and boats that are part of the Ukrainian Navy. Ukraine and the United States also signed a contract for the construction of Mark VI boats for the Navy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Negotiations with the United Kingdom on the construction of 8 more missile boats are in progress. The capacity of the Navy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is being built-up through the integration of multifunctional, high-speed, and well-armed boats within the concept of protection of Ukraine’s coastline.

Further, it is expected to restore and develop capabilities for the defense of Ukraine’s national interests at sea within Ukraine’s maritime economic zone. And, consequently, building up the capacity of the Navy to defend Ukraine’s national interests in the World Ocean [8]. To implement these intentions, on December 14, 2020, Ukraine and Turkey signed an agreement on the construction of anti-submarine corvettes such as ADA. It is expected that the body of the first ship will be constructed in Turkey, but its equipping and bringing to readiness will be ensured by a domestic shipbuilding company with the engagement of Turkish specialists. In the future, all corvettes provided for in the agreement will be constructed with the use of Ukrainian facilities [9].

Hence, in accordance with the Strategy, the Navy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine will gradually and step-by-step build-up its maritime potential with an up-to-date fleet.

Concluding what has been said above, we can sum up that today the Navy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is equipped with outmoded ships. Thus, considering
the military aggression it is necessary to build up the fleet as soon as possible. This problem may be overcome through the purchase of combat units from partner countries, including the United States, Britain, Turkey, as well as a joint production.

References:


