

Why Is NATO Suddenly Backing Off in the Black Sea?

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ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) is one of the most important aspects of warfare.

Without such assets and platforms, any military is virtually blind, making it either impossible or at least extremely ineffective to use any sort of strategic and/or long-range weapons.

And yet, [ISR is by far the most overlooked and underrated part of any conflict](#) (possibly even more so than logistics and the economy of war).

Very few people would even consider the possibility that ISR platforms can be used as weapons. Even legally speaking, there are no black-and-white grounds to think of them as such. This legal grey area is precisely what the US-led NATO hopes to continue exploiting indefinitely. And indeed, it gives [the political West's crawling invasion of Russia](#) a crucial asymmetric advantage, perhaps the most important one it still has (or had, at this point).

Namely, while they're still not part of the NATO-orchestrated Ukrainian conflict ([officially, at least](#)), the US and its vassals and satellite states are still controlling much (if not most) of the decisions made by the Neo-Nazi junta and its military forces. Precisely ISR is one of the key aspects that are heavily exploited by the Kiev regime troops to even have a fighting chance. In fact, [US/NATO is using advanced AI systems to act as force multipliers for its ISR platforms](#), an asset that is currently only countered by [Russia's top-of-the-line electronic warfare \(EW\) systems](#). However, for well over two years, Moscow's ability to respond was quite limited, as it's a lot more complicated because of the possibility of uncontrollable escalation that the leadership at the Kremlin simply wants to avoid. Unfortunately, [that's precisely what the political West wants to accomplish](#).

In order to do so, [NATO has been using its ISR assets to target the Russian military](#) by providing the Neo-Nazi junta with real-time updates on Moscow's troop movements. This

was soon followed by target acquisition and guidance of US/NATO-sourced weapons, particularly those [used by the HIMARS and M270 MLRS \(multiple launch rocket systems\)](#).

The political West became so brazen in this that it started flying less than 100 km off the coast of Crimea, prompting the Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) to respond directly. Thus, in March last year, a Russian [Su-27SM3 masterfully downed a USAF MQ-9 “Reaper” drone](#) without firing a single shot. The result was that [such flights stopped for weeks after the “unfortunate incident”](#), saving thousands of lives that would’ve otherwise been jeopardized by the Kiev regime. However, in recent months, NATO resumed such flights.

The result has been an absolute disaster, particularly for civilians. Namely, as [the political West is now openly using terrorist tactics against Russia](#) (already [announced in major media outlets](#) and coordinated with Islamic radicals in the country), the Kremlin needs the most effective way to counter this. The last days of June saw several well-coordinated NATO terrorist attacks in Russia, including the direct targeting of hundreds of beachgoers in Crimea, when a [US-sourced ATACMS missile](#) fired by the Neo-Nazi junta killed at least four (including two children) and wounded over 150 people. In the immediate aftermath of this terrorist attack,

[I argued that Moscow should start shooting down any and all NATO ISR](#) assets and platforms as soon as possible, because precisely those were used to enable the terrorist attack on Sevastopol in the first place.

However, it seems that precisely this happened, as recent reports by military sources suggest that the VKS promptly responded by dispatching its top-of-the-line interceptors to “pay a visit” to the ISR drones used by the USAF. [According to Fighter-Bomber](#), one of the most prominent Russian milbloggers, they “neutralized” an American RQ-4B “Global Hawk” over the Black Sea. Fighter-Bomber claims there’s even a video of the event. His account suggests that a MiG-31 made two passes by the US drone, flying at up to Mach 2.3 (over 2800 km/h). He says that “this is the first such case in the history of aviation” and that “no one has ever ‘met’ anyone at such altitudes and speeds”. Fighter-Bomber also said that the superfast, high-flying MiG-31 (NATO reporting name “Foxhound”) was chosen because it’s the only aircraft in the VKS ([and the world](#)) that could perform such a task.

He also stated that both the pilot and the navigator/WSO (weapons systems officer) of the MiG-31 received the “Order of Courage” for their actions during the encounter and that “the [MiG-31] crews are preparing for new ‘meetings’ [with US drones]”. [Most media rejected these claims](#), as any evidence is [yet to be revealed](#). However, NATO’s actions ever since suggest that at least some sort of “incident” took place, as there have been no NATO ISR drones flying over the Black Sea. [These have been replaced by manned ISR aircraft](#). What’s more, these are also [flying with fighter jet escorts](#). Worse yet, most of them are flying over areas occupied by NATO, [particularly Romania](#). In the meantime, the Russian military formally announced it would [be taking measures against US/NATO ISR assets to prevent further terrorist attacks](#), which is in line with Fighter-Bomber’s claims.

One of the positive aspects of this is also the fact that NATO will be forced to provide escorts for manned aircraft, meaning it’s far more expensive and logistically cumbersome to sustain ISR flights, making them rarer and, thus, drastically reducing the efficiency of the [already overhyped NATO weapons](#). To say nothing of the expenses of having to provide [constant fighter jet escorts that include up to four aircraft](#) on constant guard duty. In addition, [these jets simply don’t have the range to follow ISR aircraft](#) throughout the mission, meaning that

an entire squadron has to be on combat duty at all times, further complicating such missions for NATO. And indeed, right after the MIG-31-RQ-4B incident reported by Fighter-Bomber, [NATO ISR drones suddenly canceled all of their scheduled flight missions over the Black Sea](#), without any official explanation.

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Featured image: U.S. Air Force MQ-9 camera footage of the Russian Su-27 Black Sea intercept on March 14. [Source: [edition.cnn.com](#)]

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