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UK intel behind Ukraine's disastrous Krynky invasion, leaked documents reveal



Leaked documents reviewed by The Grayzone reveal that a blueprint for Ukraine's **failed effort** to capture the village of Krynky was assembled by **Project Alchemy**, a secret military-intelligence cell created by the British Ministry of Defence which sought "at all costs" to "keep Ukraine fighting." The Krynky plot led to a **bloodbath** that remains one of the war's biggest disasters.

On the morning of October 30 2023, dozens of Ukrainian commandos on small boats glided across the Dnieper River to control of Krynky, a village in Russian-occupied Kherson. They had spent the prior two months in remote areas of the British isles with similar terrain,

running drills under the watchful gaze of UK generals. Now, they believed their hard work was about to pay off. Both British and Ukrainian officials were convinced the operation would turn the tide of the war, creating a beachhead allowing Kiev's forces to march on Crimea and all-out victory.

Instead, the British-trained Ukrainian marines were led like lambs to the slaughter. The catastrophically planned effort saw a seemingly endless stream of heavily overloaded Ukrainian boats attempt to reach Krynky without air cover, under relentless fire by Russian artillery, drones, flamethrowers and mortars. Marines that made the journey were ill-equipped, resupplying those troops proved virtually impossible, and evacuating them was out of the question.

As the promised missile cover failed to materialize in the ensuing weeks, it became clear the effort had amounted to a disaster. Yet for the next nine months, wave after wave of British-trained Ukrainian marines were dispatched to almost certain death to Krynky. The decision to let the costly quagmire drag on, at a human and material cost no NATO military would ever allow, has come to be seen as one of the worst tactical mistakes of the war — and it appears top British generals are to blame.

Leaked documents reviewed by The Grayzone expose how the British not only presided over the training of the Marines involved, but built from scratch the “Maritime Raiding Force” which would ultimately be sacrificed over the course of the Krynky suicide mission.

British spooks convince Kiev to invade Sevastopol

The origins of the stillborn amphibious landing operation in Krynky can be traced back to a leaked file produced just months after the Russia-Ukraine proxy war erupted by a secret British Ministry of Defence-created military-intelligence cell called Project Alchemy. The Grayzone [previously exposed](#) Project Alchemy as a hybrid public-private military partnership between top British academics and military strategists with the stated goal of working “at all costs to keep Ukraine fighting.”

In a June 2022 document titled “Building a Ukrainian Maritime Raiding Capability,” the Alchemy planners proposed a “new Maritime Raiding Force” to “be trained specifically to the operational area of the southern coastal area of [Ukraine] to the Kerch strait.”

Alchemy forecast the Ukrainians being given “high-speed RIBs,” [rigid inflatable boats] along with “autonomous vessels and aerial drones and Swimmer Delivery Vehicles [SDVs]... specially designed for attacks against the ports, submarines and surface warships.” After their training in the UK, Ukrainian marine commandos would “target radar stations and air defence assets on Crimea and support regular units fighting in Kherson through attacks

from the Dnipro River,” with certain units being “specially trained in mountain warfare and cliff assault.” The end goal, they stated, was “to grind down [Sevastopol’s] defences... with a view to conducting a large-scale commando assault of the missile complex.”

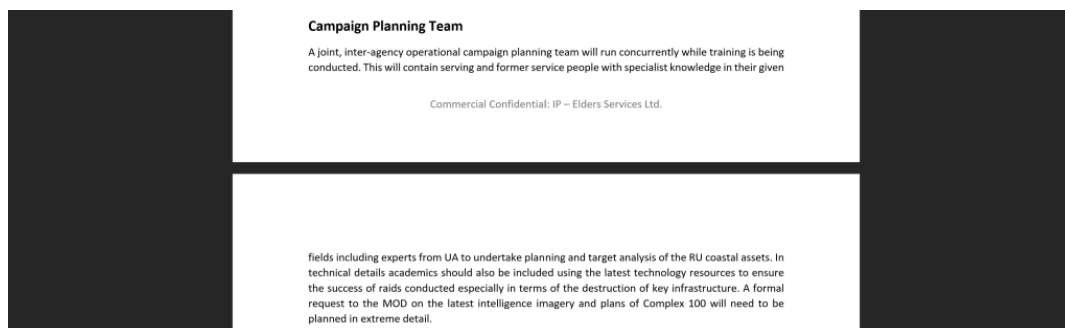
“The hostile environment dictates a highly mobile raiding force at its core operating at night conducting hit and run operations to avoid detection,” Alchemy declared. The cell determined that in the area spanning “from the Romanian border to the Kerch Strait,” Ukraine’s “coastal areas” had yet to be sufficiently “exploited.”



In addition, Russian forces “don’t see a risk of an attack from the sea or riverine areas along the coast,” claimed Alchemy. Internally, the group lamented that Sevastopol’s ports, upon which the Russian navy was “totally reliant,” had suffered “very little direct action” since the proxy war’s inception.

Due to Ukraine’s “lack of capability and/or resources... to conduct such missions,” it fell upon British military and intelligence veterans to provide them with what they needed. Accordingly, “a joint, inter-agency operational campaign planning team will run concurrently while training is being conducted,” Alchemy explained. The group “will contain serving and former service people with specialist knowledge in their given fields including experts from UA [Ukraine] to undertake planning and target analysis of the RU [Russian] coastal assets,” they noted.

For the technical details, they decided that “academics should also be included, using the latest technology resources to ensure the success of raids conducted especially in terms of the destruction of key infrastructure.” Therefore, “a formal request” to the British Ministry of Defence “on the latest intelligence imagery and plans” regarding Crimea’s heavily-fortified underground complex “will need to be planned in extreme detail.”



Britain's obsession with **wresting Sevastopol** from Moscow's grasp dates back to the Crimean War of 1853-1856, but the leaked documents clearly show the city's seizure is still considered a vital, and achievable, objective from London's perspective. Though Project Alchemy described the military port as home to the world's "largest concentration of anti-ship missiles" and a bunker complex "immune to air or missile strike," the group's operatives still believed the area to be "vulnerable to commando forces."

An investigation by **Ukrainska Pravda** confirmed that Britain – "perhaps Ukraine's most active and determined ally" – had been pressuring Kiev to use marines "for waterborne operations and deceptive manoeuvres" since the proxy conflict began. However, these proposals reportedly "did not resonate" with then-Commander-in-Chief Valerii Zaluzhnyi or President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

This changed in early 2023, when Britain dispatched a senior delegation to meet with Zaluzhnyi in Kiev, where London's contingent promised to provide the Ukrainians with anything and everything they needed to conduct the "waterborne operations" the UK had so far avoided. According to **Ukrainska Pravda**, this came to pass in May 2023, when "the British team persuaded Zaluzhnyi, and he said: that's it, we're creating the Marine Corps."

What followed was precisely foreshadowed in the leaked Project Alchemy files. In the leaked documents, the British cell foresaw Ukrainian marine commandos being "ready to deploy on operations" in just three months. Accompanying tables laid out how many Ukrainian marines would be trained, where, in what field of warfare, and for how long. "If our training program is approved," the British Defence Ministry "must give us priority on Otterburn and other training areas outlined."

Continuation Training

A further 4 weeks of continuation training conducted for candidates chosen for specific branches.

Branch	Duration	Location	Numbers Required
Mountain Leaders	4 weeks	Strone Camp	60
Snipers/ spotters	4 Weeks	Strone Camp	20

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Mortar Sqn	4 Weeks	Otterburn	40
Anti-Tank Sqn	4 Weeks	Otterburn	20
Air Defence Sqn	4 Weeks	Otterburn	20
Gunners SQN	4 Weeks	Otterburn	20
Engineers dems	4 Weeks	Otterburn	70
Combat Signals	4 Weeks	Otterburn	36
SOV Pilots/navigationers	4 Weeks	Scottish Coast	16
Combat Swimmers	4 Weeks	Scottish Coast	124
Coxswain Raiding Sqn	4 Weeks	Strone Camp	10
CB90 Navigators	4 Weeks	Scottish Coast	10
CB90 Gunners	4 Weeks	Scottish Coast	10
SOE	4 Weeks	South Coast UK	20
Combat Medics	4 Weeks	Otterburn	40

We should be able to complete the entire training program from approval to having the Commando force ready to deploy on operations in 33 Weeks.

“Candidates chosen for specific branches” would receive “a further 4 weeks of continuation training,” Alchemy wrote. These forces would consist of 60 “Mountain Leaders,” 20 ‘snipers/ spotters,’ a 40-member mortar squadron, 20-member air defense, anti-tank, and gunner squadrons, 70 demolition engineers, 36 combat signallers, 16 pilots for the submersible crafts needed to deliver divers, 124 combat swimmers, 10 members of a coxswain raiding squadron, 10 gunners and 10 navigators to pilot Swedish-built CB90-class fast assault boats, 40 combat medics, and 20 clandestine special operations executives.

Infantry Training

- On the successful recruitment of 1000 UKN Nationals, the recruits will be organised into Squadrons for training.

SQN 1	50 Recruits	Otterburn Battle Camp	12 Weeks
SQN 2	50 Recruits	Otterburn Battle Camp	12 Weeks
SQN 3	50 Recruits	Otterburn Battle Camp	12 Weeks
SQN 4	50 Recruits	Otterburn Battle Camp	12 Weeks

- Four Sqs trained at 1-week intervals the focus will be initial military fitness, fieldcraft and extensive range work. Otterburn is remote and offers an extensive area for dry drills and live firing. On completion of 12-week infantry training it will be decided if certain recruits are suitable for Commando training due to injuries or other factors. These recruits will remain at Otterburn for training as signallers, marine engineers, drone operators and other supporting branches to maintain the Sqs in theatre. If our training program is approved the MOD must give us priority on Otterburn and other training areas outlined.

Commando Training

- On starting the Commando phase Sqs will move to Garelochhead Training Camp on the west coast of Scotland. The commando training has been extended by 1 week from the initial plan to 4 weeks.

Sqn	Location	Activity	Duration
1 & 2	Garelochhead and Loch Long	Raiding craft and cliff assault, Diving.	1 week
3 & 4	Garelochhead	DEMs, Heavy weapons, Advanced Patrolling.	1 week
3 & 4	Garelochhead and Loch Long	Raiding craft and cliff assault, Diving.	1 Week
1 & 2	Garelochhead	DEMs, Heavy weapons, Advanced Patrolling.	1 Week

- On completion of first phase of Commando training the commando force will receive orders for a series of commando raids on the west coast of Scotland all raids and movements will be carried at night. The exercise will conclude in a final assault on a Radar and bunker complex located on Cape Wrath. This will include a 400 nautical mile RIB navigation in between raids this reflects the transit distance and challenges in the UA coastal operational area.

The Brits noted that “UA currently bans men of fighting age leaving UA,” so “it is likely that we will need the Kiev authorities to relax this rule for our program to assist us [in] recruiting the target number of 1,000 recruits to start training.” In addition, “the recruitment of UA nationals will have to be cleared through [the] UK Home Office,” they explained.

Recruitment

1. The recruitment of trainers will be conducted selecting from former members across the All Arms Commando community with the correct qualifications in platoon weapons, raiding craft, heavy weapons, signals, engineer demolitions, underwater demolitions, Climbing/cliff assault, autonomous vehicle specialists, SDV pilots/navigators, dive masters, combat swimmers. Trainers will need time to convert to new weapons and prepare lectures.
 - a. **Total 8 weeks lead in time.** If serving instructors are available this could also be an option but the purpose of using former members of the armed forces was to not impact current training programs being conducted with UA forces.
2. The recruitment of UA nationals will be undertaken by UKN recruitment companies based in UKN and Poland recruiting direct so that all legal requirements are met under UA law of employment. UA currently bans men of fighting age leaving UA. It is likely that we will need the Kiev authorities to relax this rule for our program to assist us recruiting the target number of 1000 recruits to start training. Total 8-10 weeks.
3. A formal request to UA to supply 21 senior NCOs and Young Officers to join each training team and a UA Naval Commander or Marine Colonel to act as the UA CO in partnership with a selected UK Colonel as the training will be conducted in the UK.
4. The recruitment of UA nationals will have to be cleared through UK Home Office.

The Ukrainians were to be trained at a variety of sites in Britain including remote battle camps dotted across the Scottish wilds, including **Otterburn**, **Garelochhead**, **Loch Long**, and **Cape Wrath**, Britain's most north-westerly point. All practice raids were to be "carried out at night", and once the program was complete, "it will be decided if certain recruits are suitable for commando training due to injuries or other factors."

Alchemy's training scheme appeared to be confirmed by Ukrainian fighters dispatched to Krynyky, who told Ukrainska Pravda that "the British gave us the same kind of area to train in as the one where we actually ended up performing the tasks." There, they "realised they were being prepared for something big and different from their previous tasks." In **August 2023**, British and Ukrainian officials announced almost 1,000 marines had "completed training...to conduct small boat amphibious operations, including beach raids."

Project Alchemy declared that the effort "could be the tip of the spear to a larger offensive with an aim of retaking Crimea... something deemed impossible by many including [the] Kremlin, that may be their undoing."

Summary

The current strategy of assisting the UA has been to supply weapons and specific training on the weapon systems supplied this has been built on the back of the successful training program of OP Orbital.

The maritime space has however been overlooked as the land war has raged the maritime void needs to be exploited. The grain issue now at the forefront of international discussions has demonstrated that RU Black Sea Fleet are in control dictating terms holding the international community ransomed to RU demands.

A highly motivated Maritime Raiding Force will prove itself to be very effective against poorly training RU conscripts who will struggle to adapt to high paced hit and run operations rendering their conventional response of conventional weapons such as artillery futile and ineffective. Linking up with partisan fighters on the ground will further put the occupying RU forces under extreme pressure.

The Port of Sevastopol could well be the soft under belly of the RU Black Sea Fleet if Commando operations are successful could demand the redeployment of RU forces in the east to back up the port giving relief to UA forces to conduct a counter offensive. The key thing to remember RU can not afford to lose Sevastopol in any circumstances and if Complex 100 is destroyed will take the Navy out of the land war with no long missiles available to attack targets inside UA. This could be the tip of the spear to a larger offensive with an aim of retaking Crimea in the long term something deemed impossible by many including Kremlin that may be their undoing.

Confidential Document

Previous reports by The Grayzone on Project Alchemy's clandestine activities have revealed how much of the cell's plotting was informed by deluded conceptions of perceived historic British military glories, such as the World War II-era Special Operations Executive, a forebearer of CIA/MI6-run Operation Gladio. Given the belligerent bravado with which Project Alchemy approached its Ministry of Defence-endorsed projects, it is all too easy to envisage its members filling the heads of London's Ukrainian trainees with fantasies of recreating D-Day through the Krynyky operation.

British bunglers create Krynky killzone

Beginning in October 2023, poorly-trained and ill-equipped Ukrainian marines began to be ferried *en masse* to Krynky. Per Ukrainska Pravda, “almost immediately, the operation’s biggest flaw – its planning – began to work against” the invasion force. Two months later, a participating commando described the **nightmare situation** that awaited Kiev’s forces there to the BBC. They spoke of “constant fire” throughout river crossings, with boats carrying their “comrades” sunk and “lost forever to the Dnipro river”:

“We must carry everything with us – generators, fuel and food. When you’re setting up a bridgehead you need a lot of everything, but supplies weren’t planned for this area. We thought after we made it there the enemy would flee and then we could calmly transport everything we needed, but it didn’t turn out that way. When we arrived...the enemy were waiting. Russians...were tipped off about our landing so when we got there, they knew exactly where to find us.”

Elsewhere, Ukrainska Pravda documented vital supplies and life jackets being airdropped by hexacopter to heavily wounded Ukrainian marines. Other injured commandos were forced to float back to Ukrainian territory using “car tires” due to a lack of available boats, “drinking water directly from the Dnieper due to a lack of logistics.” Some even resorted to “committing suicide because there was no evacuation.”

Among the “seriously injured”, one soldier in his early 40s “sustained an injury to his arm in December 2023,” and “attempted to leave Krynky by boat twice,” with Russian FPV drones blocking his path. He managed to escape “swimming with just one arm,” then spent “then spent six hours walking back and forth on the shore” of a nearby island, “soaking wet...to avoid freezing to death.” While ultimately escaping to safety, “he lost his arm.”

Meanwhile, another British-trained marine reported: “Each time our battalion entered [Krynky], the situation got worse and worse. People got there, only to die. We had no idea what was going on. Everyone I knew who was deployed to Krynky are dead.”

The onset of winter was “when the situation [in Krynky] started to really deteriorate,” a Ukrainian source stated. The Russians, they said, transferred significant assault forces to the area, used glide bombs “to destroy a large part of the village,” and “figured out how best to target Ukrainian forces’ river routes, especially at the turns, where the boats had to slow down, and landing points.” The resulting artillery onslaught left Krynky “cratered like the moon.”

So it was, “some” Ukrainian marines “intentionally got lost” to avoid landing in the Krynky killzone. At least two survivors of the operation consulted by Ukrainska Pravda “received

orders to set up positions...closer to the Russians,” but “refused to act...as doing so would have been suicidal.” Come winter, Kiev’s forces began “to gradually withdraw.” By May 2024, the situation “was a disaster,” although the last surviving marines were withdrawn two months later:

“Most people we spoke to...are convinced that the operation dragged on for at least several months longer than it should have. ‘We had to withdraw in spring at the latest, during the foggy season. We could have got all of our soldiers out at that point. It would’ve saved people’s lives. But instead we waited until nothing could be done any longer. Until the very last moment,’” one marine officer lamented.

As major legacy media outlets now **dissect** Kiev’s military failures in forensic detail, the reporting consistently underlines the British Ministry of Defense’s pivotal role in planning some of the war’s biggest disasters. Each of these setbacks left many thousands of Ukrainians dead or wounded, yet no one in London appears to have faced any professional consequences. To the foreign officers who sent them into the kill zone, those who lost their lives were nothing more than proxies.

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