



Former Donbas Hero

OE Watch Commentary: As the armed conflict between Ukrainian and pro-Russian forces in Ukraine's Donbas region drags on into its fifth year, there are few signs of resolution. Some Russian analysts now refer to the situation as a "suitcase without handles," suggesting that determining the region's future political status appears intractable, and that progress toward resolving the conflict will be difficult. The pro-Kremlin, major Russian media continue to enflame tensions by portraying the authorities in Kiev as the sole aggressor. Nevertheless, as the brief excerpt from the liberal daily, *Novaya Gazeta* indicates, the incessant Russian propaganda to support the separatists in the Donbas region may be losing its appeal.

The article describes how an early Russian "hero" from this conflict (Igor Strelkov née Girkin) has decided to "put up for sale a medal that he was awarded for annexing Crimea to Russia." Strelkov gained notoriety back in early 2014 as one of the Russian ringleaders in both Crimea's annexation and in sparking the armed separatist movement in the Donbas region, where he went on to serve as "Defense Minister of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DPR)." After returning to Moscow in late summer 2014, Strelkov helped to coordinate volunteers and donations for the pro-Russian forces in Donbas. However, as the article points out, Strelkov is now "out of cash and out of favor with the Kremlin, leading him to sell a gold medal he was awarded in 2014 for his role in the occupation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula."

Overall, the article suggests how this one time "hero" of Russia's armed intervention against Ukraine should now be reduced to selling his awards to make ends meet serves as an apt metaphor. The Kremlin and its pliant media encouraged people like Strelkov to volunteer their efforts to defend Russian interests in Ukraine. Having helped to create an intractable situation in the Donbas region, the Kremlin now appears to ignore true believers like Strelkov. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**



Igor Girkin (Strelkov).
Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Igor_Ivanovich_Strelkov_Yekaterinburg3.JPG, CC 4.0.

“The Russian former commander of militants in eastern Ukraine is out of cash and out of favor with the Kremlin, leading him to sell a gold medal he was awarded in 2014 for his role in the occupation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.”

Source: “Игорь Стрелков решил продать медаль за присоединение Крыма к России за 1 миллион рублей из-за ‘материальных проблем’ (Igor Strelkov decided to sell his medal for the annexation of Crimea to Russia for 1 million rubles due to ‘material problems’),” *Novaya Gazeta*, 9 March 2019. <https://www.novayagazeta.ru/news/2019/03/09/149853-glava-dvizheniya-novorossiya-igor-strelkov-reshil-prodat-medal-za-prisoedinenie-kryma-k-rossii>

Former Defense Minister of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), head of the Novorossia public movement Igor Strelkov (Girkin) put up for sale a medal that he was awarded for annexing Crimea to Russia.... The starting price of the medal is 1 million rubles, the auction will be held on April 13.

...The Russian former commander of militants in eastern Ukraine is out of cash and out of favor with the Kremlin, leading him to sell a gold medal he was awarded in 2014 for his role in the occupation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.

...Igor Girkin, a 48-year-old self-described Russian nationalist who goes by the nom de guerre Strelkov, says he is selling the medal because he needs the money and has no respect for Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is depicted on the medal triumphantly wearing a laurel wreath.

For additional background on Strelkov, see:

“RUSSIA’S MAN IN NEW TYPE WAR-IGOR GIRKIN.”

BY RAY FINCH

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/216622>