



Chechen Special Troops Retake Nuclear-Powered Icebreaker in Exercise

OE Watch Commentary: Chechen strongman Ramzan Kadyrov continues to support President Putin's military programs and has sent Chechen troops to Syria and the Arctic. The accompanying excerpted article from *The Independent Barents Observer* reports that Chechen troops are back and, once again, Kadyrov's special unit "The Flying Squad" (aka "Terek," a major river in Chechnya and the name of its leading soccer team) is involved. In the past, they parachuted into the Arctic snow near the North Pole and in this exercise they worked to "rescue" a Russian nuclear-powered icebreaker from the grasp of "terrorists". They are joined by a Chechen contingent of the Russian National Guard. The Russian National Guard is nothing like the US National Guard. It is a full-time professional force designed for internal control of the Russian population. Estimated at some 300,000 strong, the National Guard prevents riots, civil unrest and "color revolutions." Russian military, border guards and National Guard have all participated in Arctic deployments and training. The Chechen regime, as part of Russia, continues to be a reliable supporter of the Russian government. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

Source: Thomas Nilsen, "Chechen Special Forces Drills Anti-Terror on Nuclear Icebreaker," *The Independent Barents Observer*, 9 April 2018. <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2018/04/chechen-special-forces-anti-terror-drill-nuclear-icebreaker>

...In April 2016, The Barents Observer reported that the same paramilitary group ["The Flying Squad"] trained at the North Pole, then parachuting onto the ice from an aircraft taking off from Murmansk. Cargo and other personnel were brought into Murmansk via Norway's Longyearbyen airport on Svalbard...

[Chechen leader] Ramzan Kadyrov's own aide on law enforcement, Daniil Martynov, headed the group loading equipment into the Russian An-74 aircraft at Longyearbyen airport. Exercising anti-terror operation on board a nuclear powered icebreaker is only one of several tasks to be practiced in the Arctic over a period of several weeks. The Chechen TV report says nothing about where in the Arctic other parts of the exercises will take place.

The first part of the Rosgvardia's exercise started in late March when several helicopters were observed in the skies above Murmansk...Exercise Barneo 2018 is currently underway in the high Arctic. On Saturday, head of the ice base, Irina Orlova, wrote on her Facebook profile that helicopters are currently flying around from 89 degrees north in search for suitable ice on which to establish the runway for aircrafts to bring in more equipment currently waiting for take-off from the airport in Murmansk.

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Russian nuclear icebreaker "Arktika".

Source: By Abarinov [Public domain], from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Russian_Nuclear_Icebreaker_Arktika.jpg.