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Transcript released of purported German discussion on attacking Crimean Bridge

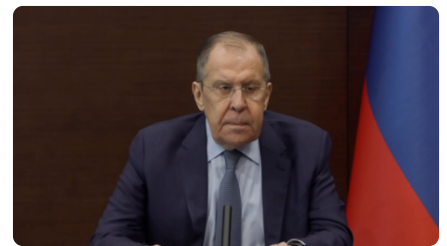
The text in Russian has been published by RT editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan, hours after she reported receiving the recording



FILE PHOTO: Crimean Bridge. © Sputnik / Konstantin Mikhachevsky

The full text of what is claimed to be a discussion by senior German military officers on how to attack the Crimean Bridge in Russia was published by RT editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan on Friday. She reported that Russian security officials had leaked the recording hours earlier and has pledged to release the original audio shortly.

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Simonyan identified the officers as General Ingo Gerhartz, the German Air Force commander, and senior leaders responsible for mission planning. The alleged conversation took place on February 19, according to the source of the leak.

The transcript reveals the officials discussed the efficiency of the Franco-British cruise missile called Storm Shadow by the UK and SCALP by France. Both nations donated some of their stockpile to Ukraine.

Kiev has called on Germany to provide some of its Taurus missiles. The officers in the leaked recording debate whether the weapon system was adequate for hitting the Crimean Bridge in Russia, which connects eastern Crimea to Krasnodar Region across the Kerch Strait.

According to the transcript, the officers discussed how a successful attack on a key piece of Russian infrastructure would require additional satellite data,



possible deployment of missiles from French Dassault Rafale fighter jets, and at least a month of preparation. **Read more:** German army discussed strike on Crimean Bridge, leaked audio purportedly indicates

One participant observed that due to the size of the bridge, which is the longest in Europe, even 20 missiles may not be enough to cause significant damage. It is comparable to a runway in that regard, he noted.

"They want to destroy the bridge... because it has not only military strategic importance, but also political significance," Gerhartz is quoted as saying, apparently referring to officials in Kiev. *"It would be concerning if we have direct connection with the Ukrainian armed forces."*

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The officers went on to discuss how close the German military should be working on the proposed operation so as not to cross the 'red line' of being involved directly. Secretly training Ukrainians in the use of German weapons and helping them plan the operation were deemed acceptable. Concerns about the press learning about such cooperation were also raised, the transcript reveals.



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Senior officials in Berlin have repeatedly made public statements explaining their reservations about sending Taurus missiles to Ukraine. Chancellor Olaf Scholz said this week that the Germany's military cannot do for Ukraine what "was

done on the part of the British and French in terms of target-control and target-control assistance." The remark was rebuked by London and Paris, for allegedly distracting public attention from German unwillingness to donate arms to Kiev.

According to the released text, a large segment of the conversation was about practical aspects of preparing Kiev's forces for deploying Taurus missiles, from training its military personnel, to adapting hardpoints of Ukrainian military jets for Berlin's weapons, to providing technical support remotely via a safe link. The officers were concerned that speeding up the proposed handover may result in civilians being killed "again" in a weapons mishap.

When assessing the intelligence necessary for targeting the missiles, Gerhartz allegedly mused that, to provide such information, there are plenty of "people in civilian clothes with American accents" in Kiev that would cover up for the Germans.



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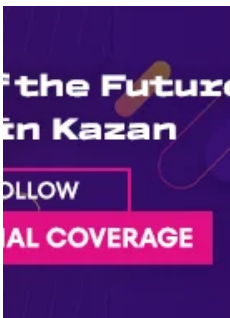
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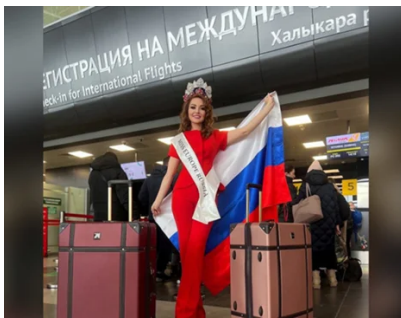
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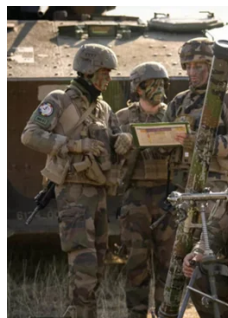
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