

Russian Navy Escorts NATO Ships in Black Sea on Way to Ukraine

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Two Russian naval vessels are closely escorting NATO warships in the Black Sea that are headed toward Ukraine, the Russian Defense Ministry said Thursday.

The commander of a NATO maritime group [said](#) Dutch, Spanish, Canadian, Turkish, Romanian and Bulgarian frigates entered the Black Sea on Thursday. The warships are part of the alliance's defense cooperation exercises taking place on April 8-12. Two of the frigates are [scheduled](#) to make a port call in the Ukrainian city of Odessa on April 1.

Turkish media [published](#) a video of the frigates crossing the Bosphorus en route to the Black Sea.

Embed:

NATO'ya baęlı 3 savař gemisi İstanbul Boęazından peř peře geęiř yaptı. Boęaz geęiřini tamamlayan gemiler Karadeniz'e aęıldı. Gemilerin geęiřine sahil g¼venlik botları da eřlik etti. pic.twitter.com/gujkqnSquf

— Demir¼ren Haber Ajansı (@dhainternet) [28 mart 2019 r.](#)

An intelligence-gathering ship and a patrol ship of the Russian Navy began to escort the NATO group when it entered the Black Sea, the Russian defense operations center [told](#) the RBC news website.

Russia issued a statement [criticizing](#) “frequent visitors” to the Black Sea in January, when the U.S. Navy-guided missile destroyer Donald Cook entered the region. The Russian Black Sea fleet began monitoring the warship at the time as well.

According to international law, vessels belonging to states that do not border the Black Sea path are allowed to stay there for no more than 21 days.

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