

The Russian navy can detect any enemy and launch an “unpreventable strike” if needed, President Vladimir Putin said on Sunday, weeks after a UK warship angered Moscow by passing the Crimea peninsula.

“We are capable of detecting any underwater, above-water, airborne enemy and, if required, carry out an unpreventable strike against it,” Putin said speaking at a navy day parade in St Petersburg.

Putin’s words follow an incident in the Black Sea in June when Russia said it had fired warning shots and dropped bombs in the path of a British warship to chase it out of Crimea waters.

Britain rejected Russia’s account of the incident, saying it believed any shots fired were a pre-announced Russian “gunnery exercise”, and that no bombs had been dropped.

Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 but Britain and most of the world recognise the Black Sea peninsula as part of Ukraine, not Russia.

Putin said last month Russia could have sunk the British warship HMS Defender, that it accused of illegally entering its territorial waters, without starting World War Three and said the United States played a role in the “provocation”.

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