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NATO Defense College
Collège de Défense de l'OTAN

NDC OCCASIONAL PAPER

The Role of the Wider Black Sea Area in a Future European Security Space

Volume 1

NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE

NATO Defense College Cataloguing-in-Publication-Data:
The Role of the Wider Black Sea Area in a Future European Security Space (Volume 1).

Editors: Jean Dufourcq & Lionel Ponsard.
Publications Assistant: Laurence Ammour
p. cm. (NATO Defense College "NDC Occasional Papers Series")

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Web site: <http://www.ndc.nato.int>

Printing: 600 copies

Printed and bound by
CSC. GRAFICA s.r.l. – Via Meucci, 28 - 00012 Guidonia, Roma
Zona industriale S.Sinforosa
Tel 0774 353308 - 0774 354410 Fax 0774 578014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Jean Dufourcq 5

Opening Remarks

Vasile Secăreş 13

Remarks on a Security Concept for the Wider Black Sea Area

Ravzan Ungureanu 17

The Greater Black Sea Region Cooperation: A Historical Survey

Mihail E. Ionescu 21

Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea Area and its Integration into Euro-Atlantic Structures

Mustafa Aydin 31

The Problem of Frozen Conflicts in the Wider Black Sea Area. Transdnierstra, A Frozen Conflict?

Jos U. Boonstra 43

Conclusions

Lionel Ponsard 47

Previous Issues/Déjà parus 50

INTRODUCTION

Jean DUFOURCQ¹

The Black Sea is at the forefront of the strategic agenda for 2005, though its ordinary geographical name tends to conceal the dynamic geopolitical realities of an area where a transformation is in full swing.

Exactly 60 years have gone by since the agreement in the Crimean town of Yalta redrew Eastern and Western boundaries and created the Cold War fault line in the heart of Europe; a barrier that has now been erased but has not been forgotten. The old continent has gradually been unified through successive enlargements of its institutions. The wave of integration has swept as far as the Black Sea, as is clear from recent media interest in the Turkish question and the emerging prospect of Ukrainian candidacy.

At the same time, political modernization processes, in some cases triggered by the ‘flower revolutions’ in the countries of the region, have ensured a relatively smooth transition to a new political order, particularly in the South Caucasus. Moreover, the Black Sea littoral states have initiated intensive consultations with a view to maximizing the area’s special potential and role as a strategic crossroads where numerous geographical, political, economic, cultural and institutional forces come into play.

¹ Rear Admiral (ret) (French Navy), Chief of Academic Research Branch at NATO Defense College, Rome, Italy.

These complex issues have been the subject of preliminary studies by the NATO Defense College research team². To further and deepen understanding of developments in a region of vital concern to many Atlantic Alliance member and partner nations, a meeting of researchers and regional experts, sponsored by the NSC³, was held on 6 and June 2005⁴ in Constanta (Romania) to discuss 'The Role of the Wider Black Sea Area in a Future European Security Space'.

The discussions at the meeting gave rise to a series of communications that have been published in two booklets. The first of these (OP10), discussed in this introduction, is a collection of essays on the concept of the "Wider Black Sea"⁵; it addresses regional cooperation issues and unresolved local conflicts. The second one (OP11), which extends the field of inquiry to other major actors such as the European Union and Russia, provides more searching analyses of the Black Sea's role and key position on the new Euro-Asian chessboard.

To complete this introduction to the first booklet, I would like to emphasize three contrasting points arising from the Constanta talks.

- Historically, the Black Sea, the Latin *Pontus Euxinus*, has always been a crossroads and an area of transition. It was in turn a Roman lake, a Russo-Ottoman condominium, a bridge and a corridor, but also a barrier and a buffer zone. This interchange where continents and empires converged was sealed off during the Cold War but is now wide open to multiple activities, ranging from sensitive energy transportation to very lucrative trading by illegal, indeed even criminal, enterprises.
- A kind of balance between Europe and Asia is being sought in this region by providing a contractual framework for common interests: "the East provides energy, the West provides security". Between clients and providers of energy and security a virtuous circle of

² See Lionel Ponsard, "La Géorgie à la croisée des intérêts russes et américains", *Research Paper* No. 3, April 2004 and "A Road Map for Ukraine", *Research Paper* No. 17, April 2005; Vasile Secăreș, "The New Strategic & Security Landscape of SEE: The Case of Wider Black Sea Area", *Research Paper* No. 15, December 2005; Sule Nişancı, "Turkey's Role in NATO in the Post-Cold War Security Environment", *Research Paper* No. 16, March 2005.

³ NATO Studies Center, centre of strategic research in Bucarest (Romania) headed by Professor Vasile Secăreș.

⁴ 14th Partnership for Peace International Research Seminar.

⁵ Or Wider Black Sea Area (WBSA), by analogy with the concept of the Greater Middle East (GME).

development should be set in motion, and the Black Sea littoral states will benefit from the exchange.

- Notwithstanding the utilitarian viewpoint, the usefulness of the “Wider Black Sea” concept remains to be seen. It is clear that the development of this geopolitical space is hampered at present by the absence of any real regional leadership and littoral state solidarity, as well as by lack of determined commitment by external actors, both states and institutions.
- No model for regional integration is yet discernible on the political horizon of the littoral states. Yet it is they who will have to define the most suitable political process for states in political and economic transition. This will be achieved by implementing a set of practical programmes and initiatives - the “one small step at a time” approach, and also by capitalizing now on the regional advantages of integration in a wider space, such as those offered by the Atlantic Alliance and the European Union. The concept of the “Wider Black Sea” is therefore a useful starting point for opening up these perspectives and aiming for their structured development.

Rome, October 2005

INTRODUCTION

Jean DUFOURCQ¹

La mer Noire est à l'ordre du jour stratégique en 2005; et la dénomination banalement géographique qui la définit tend à masquer la réalité géopolitique vivante d'une zone en pleine évolution stratégique.

L'année 2005, c'est précisément 60 ans après qu'à Yalta, en Crimée, aient été dessinés les contours de l'Est et de l'Ouest qui ont établi au cœur de l'Europe la ligne de fracture de la guerre froide; cette barrière est désormais effacée, effacée mais pas oubliée. Le vieux continent s'est en effet progressivement unifié par élargissements successifs des institutions qui le structurent et la vague d'intégration atteint désormais la mer Noire avec la question turque qui a fait l'actualité récente et l'hypothèse ukrainienne qui commence à se profiler.

Dans le même temps, les processus de modernisation politique, déclenchés ou non par les révolutions «de couleur», engagés par les pays de la région ont permis une transition relativement bien maîtrisée vers une nouvelle donne politique, notamment au Sud-Caucase. De surcroît, les riverains de la mer Noire ont commencé de se consulter intensivement et cherchent à valoriser ce qui fait la spécificité de cette région, sa fonction de nœud stratégique, au carrefour de nombreuses logiques géographiques, politiques, économiques, culturelles, et institutionnelles qui y interfèrent.

¹ CA (2^{ème} S.), Chef de la branche recherche du Collège de Défense de l'OTAN, Rome, Italie.

Ces questions complexes ont fait l'objet de plusieurs approches préliminaires de la part de l'équipe de recherche du Collège de défense de l'OTAN². C'est pour aller plus loin et réfléchir en profondeur au devenir de cette région clé pour de nombreuses nations, membres et partenaires de l'Alliance atlantique, qu'avec le concours du NSC³ ont été rassemblés plusieurs chercheurs et experts de cette région à Constanta (Roumanie) les 6 et 7 juin 2005⁴ pour traiter du «rôle d'une zone de la mer Noire élargie dans le futur espace de sécurité européen».

Les travaux de cette rencontre ont donné lieu à de nombreuses communications qui font l'objet de deux livrets de publications. Le premier de celui-ci (OP10), objet de cette introduction, rassemble les contributions qui traitent du concept de «mer Noire élargie»⁵; il évoque les questions de coopération régionale et les conflits locaux encore en suspens. Le second (OP11) qui s'attache à élargir l'angle d'approche vers d'autres acteurs essentiels comme l'Union européenne et la Russie, présente des réflexions approfondies sur le rôle et la place de la mer Noire comme maillon nécessaire dans le nouvel échiquier eurasiatique.

En complément des présentations de ce premier livret, je voudrais souligner trois éléments de réflexion contrastés que je retiens des débats de Constanta.

- La tradition de carrefour de la mer noire, le «Pont Euxin» latin, est bien celle d'une zone de transition, qui fut tour à tour un lac romain, un condominium russo-ottoman, un pont et un couloir mais aussi une barrière et une zone tampon. Ce carrefour des continents et des empires, cadencé par la guerre froide, est aujourd'hui largement ouvert à de multiples activités, celles très sensibles du transport d'énergie comme celles très lucratives des entreprises illégales voire criminelles.

² Voir Lionel Ponsard, «La Géorgie à la croisée des intérêts russes et américains», *Research Paper* No. 3, avril 2004 et «A Road Map for Ukraine», *Research Paper* No. 17, avril 2005; Vasile Secăreș, «The New Strategic & Security Landscape of SEE: The Case of Wider Black Sea Area», *Research Paper* No. 15, décembre 2005; Sule Nișanci, «Turkey's Role in NATO in the Post-Cold War Security Environment», *Research Paper* No. 16, mars 2005.

³ Nato Studies Center, centre de recherche stratégique basé à Bucarest (Roumanie) et placé sous la direction du Professeur Vasile Secăreș.

⁴ 14^{ème} séminaire international de recherche du Partenariat pour la Paix.

⁵ Ou WBSA pour *Wider Black Sea Area* par analogie avec le concept de Grand Moyen-Orient (GME).

- Il y a dans cette région une sorte d'équilibre entre Europe et Asie qui cherche à s'établir sur une base contractuelle d'intérêts communs, «l'Est fournit l'énergie et l'Ouest, la sécurité». Entre clients et fournisseurs d'énergie et de sécurité un cercle vertueux de développement doit s'instaurer et les pays riverains de la zone profiteront de cet échange.
- Malgré cette perspective utilitaire, l'utilité du concept de «mer Noire élargie» reste encore à démontrer. On a pu noter que la valorisation de cet espace géopolitique est aujourd'hui limitée par l'absence de réel leadership régional et de solidarité entre riverains tout comme par le manque d'engagement résolu d'acteurs extérieurs, qu'il s'agisse d'Etats ou d'institutions.
- Aucun modèle d'intégration régionale ne semble encore se profiler à l'horizon politique des pays riverains de la zone. Mais c'est à eux de définir le processus qui sera le plus adapté à des Etats en transition politique et économique; cela se fera soit en mettant en place une multitude de programmes et d'initiatives fonctionnelles, une sorte de démarche des «petits pas», soit en escomptant des effets régionaux positifs d'une intégration dans un espace plus vaste, comme ceux qu'offrent l'Alliance atlantique et l'Union européenne. C'est pour ouvrir ces perspectives et tenter d'en structurer le développement que le concept de «mer Noire élargie» est un utile point de départ.

Rome, octobre 2005

OPENING REMARKS

Vasile SECĂREȘ¹

It is a real privilege to welcome you this morning, on behalf of the co-organizer of this conference, the NATO Studies Centre in Bucharest, and to wish you all not only a very good session of this 14th PFP Research Seminar but also a very pleasant stay in Eforie Nord.

This conference is a common project sponsored by the NATO Defence College of Rome and the NATO Studies Center of Bucharest. I was more than happy last year when my colleagues from Rome mentioned the possibility of organizing the 14th PFP Research Seminar in Romania and addressing this new and very important topic on the NATO and EU agenda: ‘The role of the Black Sea Area in a future European Security Space’.

Our common efforts have made this conference possible and we are about to start what I would call *the most important meeting of this year on the strategic and security agenda of the Wider Black Sea Area*.

As far as the NATO Studies Centre is concerned, this conference comes after almost two years of Black Sea regional presence and regional outreach activities. In January 2004, our main programme, NATO Senior Executive Master, started to include students from the Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova and South Caucasus. In April this year the NATO Studies Centre was in Georgia with a training programme in the context of the PAP- DIB Initiative; and in May, we were in Baku for a conference on the security of the South Caucasus. We intend to continue this regional

¹ President of the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, and President of the NATO Studies Centre, Bucharest, Romania.

effort in the Black Sea Area, and the conference in Eforie Nord represents an essential moment in our regional strategy.

Let me also mention how important it is, in my view, that Minister Ungureanu is delivering a keynote address at our our conference. This is an important signal from the Romanian Government of its interest not only in this reunion but also in supporting the real necessity to explore the new geopolitical map of this region, and to develop new visions, new ideas and new instruments for action.

Let me underline once more the strategic importance of this region for NATO and EU. Both are 'going global' and therefore they should accept the responsibilities of this posture and should develop the necessary policies, especially from a security perspective. The new frontiers of the Euro-Atlantic community (2004-2007) demand new answers and new steps in the Wider Black Sea area. In this context, the Black Sea Area could be considered the centre of the Euro-Atlantic system and a new frontier!

But discussing concepts and definitions connected to the new geopolitical map of this region is not the most important thing! Some months ago, at a conference held by the NATO Studies Centre in Brussels, Jamie Shea, NATO's Deputy Assistant Secretary General for External Relations, mentioned the real need for action in this region. Let me say that we have a list of very important questions for our conference, in different panels, and we should develop an action-orientated approach to this agenda in the context of a very pragmatic perspective.

REMARKS ON A SECURITY CONCEPT FOR THE WIDER BLACK SEA AREA

Răzvan UNGUREANU¹

The relevance of the Wider Black Sea Area

Geographically and historically, the Wider Black Sea Area, including Southern Caucasus, is part of Europe. A cradle of civilizations and crossroads of cultures, the region has already entered a new historical phase, that of a new frontier of democracy. The end of the Cold War has been followed by a process of erasing divisions and building a peaceful, united and democratic Europe. The extension of the Euro-Atlantic community, through NATO and EU enlargement, has changed the map of Europe, with a positive stabilizing and democratizing effect.

A security concept for the Wider Black Sea region should take into account the following aspects:

- First, the relevance of the Black Sea area to Euro-Atlantic security. The security of the Black Sea region is indivisible and part of Euro-Atlantic security. The main challenges that confront the region are frozen conflicts and trans-border crime. The trafficking of human being, drugs, arms and counterfeit goods affects not only the region, but reaches the streets of Western European countries.
- Second, its ethnic and cultural diversity, which makes it difficult at the present moment to speak of a Black Sea region identity. Nevertheless, a commonality, arising from the past, still exists: the hospitality of the countries around the Black Sea, or Pontus Euxinus, to use its Latin

¹ Minister of Foreign Affairs, Romania.

name. More recently, democratic values and European aspirations have been gradually spreading through this region.

- Third, the economic importance of the Black Sea as a bridge for energy and transportation corridors from Central Asia to Europe.
- Fourth, the opportunities for regional cooperation and democratic consolidation. Regional cooperation instruments such as BSEC, GUAM, BLACKSEAFOR, and cooperation among border police, as well as in the area of civil emergency and the fight against non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction prove *that there are common challenges and needs that the countries in this region want to address together.*

The principles of developing a security concept for the Wider Black Sea Area

A security concept for the Wider Black Sea Area requires regional approaches and multilateral solutions based upon the democratic participation of regional countries, as well as NATO, EU, Council of Europe, UN and OSCE synergetic engagement. Win-win approaches, responding to the needs of all countries in the region, democratic security and full observance of international law are key factors in the security of the Wider Black Sea Area.

The ingredients of a ‘democratic security’ concept for the Wider Black Sea Area

Lasting stability in the region can only be achieved through a multifaceted approach and a variety of instruments, including soft security ones. These should include consolidation of democracy and support for internal reforms. Empowering civil society and developing a European mindset in the general public, through education, people-to-people ties and mass media engagement should be part of the effort to enhance security in the region. A Black Sea Forum engaging NGOs, political analysts and interested governments could help develop common understanding of regional challenges, needs and cooperation opportunities.

Making full use of the economic potential of the Wider Black Sea Area would be a strong enabler of its democratic and stable development. Further developing regional cooperation against organized crime, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism is also essential.

Building a Wider Black Sea Area that is stable, democratic and prosperous could become a new Transatlantic cooperation project. This would be in the common interest of the regional countries, as well as of Europe and the larger Euro-Atlantic community.

WIDER BLACK SEA REGION COOPERATION: A HISTORICAL SURVEY

Mihail E. IONESCU¹

Historical background

The fate of the Black Sea region all along the centuries has been shaped by the successive cycles of hegemony exerted by different empires and great powers. We can summarize its history in a brief geopolitical analysis. The Black Sea was first a Greek lake (8th – 1st centuries BC). Next came a period of Roman rule, extending over most of the Black Sea coast, followed by the Byzantine Empire, and then by the Ottomans, who conquered the Straits and Constantinople (1451-1453) and consequently the whole of the Black Sea area (1453-1484). From the second part of the 18th century onwards, and especially after the Congress of Vienna (1815), Russia began to extend its dominion over the region, while the Ottomans regressed.

After the Crimean War (1853-1856), a commission of delegates from France, Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, Russia, Sardinia and Turkey was authorized (initially for a period of two years, but in fact the commission functioned for nearly a century) to plan and execute the works needed on the Lower Danube from Isaccea, or Braila, as far as the mouth of the river and the neighbouring sea areas, in order to provide the best navigation conditions. It was the first successful attempt to establish European cooperation in an area adjacent to the Black Sea and connecting it to Western Europe. An Anglo-French convention (1915) gave Russia control over the Straits and Constantinople in order to boost the Entente's Russian ally. Later, under the Lausanne Treaty (1923) the Black Sea

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became a *mare apertum* and the Straits were internationalized. Following revision of the Lausanne Treaty at the Montreux Convention (1936), Turkey obtained control of the Straits and Soviet Russia was allowed to become the pre-eminent naval power in the Black Sea. After WWII the 'containment policy' triggered by the Truman doctrine, together with Turkey's accession to NATO, checked USSR ambitions to control the Mediterranean Sea up to the end of the cold war.

Post-Cold War Cooperation

After the dismantling of the empire, the overthrow of Soviet military monopoly of the Black Sea led to the re-emergence of the old coastal nations and nation-states and a drastic reduction of the Russian coastline, bringing it back nearly to the 1774 situation. The way was thus opened for new security partnerships in the Black Sea area, as well as multilateral frameworks for political, military, economic and environmental cooperation. Instead of one or two great powers, or, as up to the end of the Cold War, four riparian states, two new states emerged – Georgia and Ukraine. Three new actors connected to the Black Sea area emerged: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova. Most of the Black Sea states had poor economic situations, regimes of transition to democracy and huge economic and security needs. Instinctively, they knew that, when dealing with sensitive issues, choosing cooperation and multilateralism was better than opting for a competitive, isolationist stance.

Economic cooperation was the easiest way to set up closer ties between states that had a rational interest in creating domestic welfare and being recognized as valuable partners in dialogue by Western states and organizations. Above all, most of them, especially the new states, realized that it was vital for their regained independence and sovereignty to avoid Black Sea region domination by a single power. The initiative to create an economic area was launched by Turkey. On 25 June 1992, eleven heads of state and government (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine) signed the BSEC Summit Declaration in Istanbul. The creation of the BSEC should be seen in the light of the tendency in the early 1990s to forge greater interdependence among states in the western and eastern

parts of the Old Continent and set up new regional cooperation schemes. Turkey's initiative in setting up this organization should be seen in the context of its efforts to reassert itself as a major player in its former regional space.

One of the most powerful incentives to cooperation in the Black Sea Region was offered by the presence - or great expectations of - huge hydrocarbon reserves in the Caspian Sea basin. To transport these large oil and gas quantities (mainly to the West) security and cooperation in the Black Sea area were essential to counter Russian attempts to acquire monopoly. Consequently, various pipeline projects forming a complex network were conceived to transport the Caspian basin's energy resources across the Black Sea. The TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe – Caucasus – Asia) programme, launched by the European Union in May 1993, aims to develop a transport corridor on an East-West axis from Europe across the Black Sea and through the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea to Central Asia, to improve trade and transport systems. Up to now the TRACECA programme has financed 39 Technical Assistance projects (57,705,000 EURO) and 14 investment projects for infrastructure rehabilitation (52,300,000 EURO).

INOGATE (Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe), which is funded mainly under the EU's Tacis Regional Cooperation Programme, aims to enhance regional cooperation for inter-state oil and gas transport projects, reducing investment risks and promoting environmental and safety concerns. INOGATE plays an important role in promoting the regional integration of the pipeline systems and facilitating the transport of oil and gas from the former Soviet states to Europe, while acting as a catalyst to attract private investors and international financial institutions to these pipeline projects².

² <http://www.inogate.org/html/brief/brief3.htm>. These projects include: the Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline (linking Greece, Bulgaria and Russia), and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, commissioned by a consortium of energy companies led by British Petroleum, the pipeline operator. The other members of the consortium are: State Oil Company-Azerbaijan, Unocal (USA), Statoil (Norway), and Turkiye Petrolleri Anonim Ortakligi. Of its total length of 1,760 km (1,073 miles), 440 km (226 miles) pass through Azerbaijan, 244.5 km (152 miles) through Georgia, and 1,070 km (665 miles) through Turkey. The first part was inaugurated in May 2005; the pipeline from Odessa to Brody was initially planned by Ukraine and Poland. Kiev accepted an offer by United States oil company ChevronTexaco, which promised to pump Caspian crude through it to Europe. The Odessa-Brody project was conceived in 1992, and offers an innovative way to transport oil to the north-west,

It is a well-known fact that the members of the European Union are greatly dependent on external energy supplies. If we add to this the risk of non-conventional threats spilling over, it is easy to understand why the EU is increasingly becoming the focus of most BSEC countries' aspirations. To fulfil these aspirations, and in search of an identity, the EU has already extended the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) to its Eastern -and also its Southern - neighbours and agreed the four 'common spaces' with Russia. Before the ENP, which tries to consolidate democracy, good governance and economic prosperity, and to enhance trans-border security, the EU had signed Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) with the former Soviet states. The ENP stimulates cooperation agreements in key sectors such as energy, trade and development.

Security Cooperation. Post-cold war Russia began its efforts to maintain control over the former Soviet space by vigorous action in its neighbourhood (near abroad policy). In the military realm, two successive steps were taken. Initially, in May 15, 1992 the Tashkent Treaty (Collective Security Treaty) - Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, then Azerbaijan, Georgia and Belarus – was conceived for the purpose of collective defence. In 1999 Azerbaijan, Georgia and Uzbekistan withdrew from the treaty. In May 2001 a decision was taken to establish collective rapid deployment forces within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty for maintaining peace and stability in Central Asia. Then in May 2002 six member states (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Armenia) decided to transform this organization into the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), a more robust form of military cooperation. The highest political authority of the CSTO is the Collective Security Council.

to the giant Russian Druzhba pipeline that supplies oil to Western Europe. Today, the Druzhba pipeline can handle 14.5 million tons of crude a year, and with the addition of pumping stations, it will be able to pump up to 45 million tons. The Blue Stream pipeline goes under the Black Sea from Russia to Turkey. The owners are the Russian Gazprom and Italian Snam (ENI) through the Blue Stream Pipeline Company B.V.; the Nabucco Pipeline Project will connect Turkey to Austria and pass through Romania. The project is part of the European Union programme, Trans-European Network, the pipeline being designed to supply the European market with natural gas from the Caspian Sea region, Iraq, Iran and Egypt (3,400 kilometers long). Nabucco would have an initial transporting capacity of 4.5 billion cubic meters of natural gas per annum and would eventually reach the capacity of 30 billion cubic meters a year. The cost of the project is 4.5 billion euros and construction is expected to be completed by 2011. Each country is supposed to build the section going through its own territory.

The CSTO summit in Moscow from June 22 to 23, 2005 illustrated Russian geopolitical tendencies. For the first time in the CSTO's history, the Russian military planned to hold joint ground force exercises in the "western region" and "southern region", in Belarus and Armenia (at command and staff level, in 2006). Kazakhstan rejected Moscow's proposal to create a joint standing conventional military force for Central Asia within the CSTO framework. So far, the CSTO has only held joint ground force and combined exercises in its Central Asian region.

Opposition to Russian attempts to authoritatively control the former Soviet area initially took shape in the GUAM. Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova were supported by the USA at the request of Ukraine, which was seeking political independence from Moscow. Cooperation among the four countries started in 1996 in Vienna, at the CFE Treaty Conference, where joint statements were issued and common initiatives proposed. In 1999 Uzbekistan joined, but pulled out in 2002. GUAM is geopolitically relevant because it groups together countries from the Black Sea area (historically, Moldova also belongs to this space), the Caucasus and Central Asia, which are linked by common security and economic interests, and want to preserve their sovereignty and territorial integrity and develop functional market economies.

GUAM's main principles are respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of state frontiers, mutual respect, cooperation, democracy, supremacy of law and respect for human rights. Because of the geopolitical decline of Russian influence in the Black Sea region (the 'orange' revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine, and the Western-oriented policy of communist Moldova) and NATO-US-EU interest in dealing with asymmetric threats and maintaining full access to energy transportation routes, the GUAM attracted wider interest in the region. Among the participants in the Chisinau summit (April 22, 2005) Romania and Poland were present as observers. On that occasion, the participants signed the joint declaration "Building Democracy from the Baltic to the Black Sea", asserting that democratic gains in this region meant strengthening democracy in Europe. They urged the EU to draw up and promulgate Action Plans for the South Caucasus countries and enhance its Neighbourhood Policy.

In April 2001, in Istanbul, an agreement to create a partnership was signed by Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria and Georgia. By promoting military cooperation, transparency in defence planning, and confidence-building measures, this agreement contributes to the establishment of a peaceful and predictable geostrategic environment in the Wider Black Sea Area³, enhancing stability and security. The same six Black Sea countries signed the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (BLACKSEAFOR) on April 2, 2001 in Istanbul. BLACKSEAFOR activities are not directed against any state or aimed at forming a military alliance against any state or group of states. BLACKSEAFOR goals are humanitarian search and rescue operations, joint sea-mine clearance to protect the Black Sea environment, and organizing good will visits among Black Sea countries. The BLACKSEAFOR has developed as a form of military cooperation solely among the riparian states, ensuring that any outside actors interested in the region are kept out of the Black Sea.

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks have called for enlarged military cooperation in the Black Sea as part of the international fight against terrorism. It is well known that NATO states proposed to extend Operation *Active Endeavour*, which began on 26 October 2001, into the Black Sea. The Alliance has sought to attract Russian participation in this operation, mainly as a way to consolidate NATO-Russia cooperation against terrorism and related threats, and possibly (as a secondary rationale) to facilitate Russian consent to Active Endeavour's extension into the Black Sea. At the NATO-Russia Council's annual informal meeting of Defence Ministers in October 2002, Russia seemed prepared to join the operation within two weeks, for a period that would extend into 2005. Three Russian vessels from the Black Sea Fleet sailed to the Mediterranean on November 5, 2002 to participate in a NATO operation for the first time in history. Later, Moscow stipulated a number of rather unacceptable conditions for its participation: its ships had to be exempted from the mutual inspection procedures that apply to all participant ships, and NATO had to defray all the costs of Russia's participation in the

³ Ronald Asmus, 'Developing a New Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region', *Istanbul Papers*, no. 2, Turkey, June 25 – 27, 2004. Also Ronald Asmus, Bruce P. Jackson, 'The Black Sea and the Frontiers of Freedom', <http://www.policyreview.org/jun04/asmus.html>. The Wider Black Sea Area is a geopolitical concept and it comprises the riparian states and also those that are connected within the same security complex: Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Moldova.

operation. Additionally, Moscow asked for Active Endeavour to be partially conducted by the NATO-Russia Council, thereby including Russia in a decision-making mechanism. This clearly created obstacles to the extension of Active Endeavour to the Black Sea.

Turkey has one of the longest coasts to the Mediterranean and Black Sea; it is a longstanding NATO ally and one of the strongest naval powers in the eastern Mediterranean. Unexpectedly, Turkey also opposed the extension of Active Endeavour into the Black Sea. Ankara suggested that the passage of a NATO naval task force through the Straits might symbolize the end of the Montreux Convention on the legal regime of the Straits⁴. Turkey seems to be in favour of maintaining the status quo in the Black Sea, and hence the validity of the Montreux Convention (1936). On the other hand, certain connivance between Turkey and Russia appears as certain, and is synonymous with the exclusion of other major players from the Black Sea: in other words, keeping it as a closed sea.

The need to jointly combat asymmetric non-conventional risks like organized crime, traffic of human beings, and narcotics and weapons smuggling prompted South East European and Black Sea riparian states to agree to set up or participate in cooperative security agreements in this respect. The SECI (South East European Cooperative Initiative) Centre for fighting cross-border crime is one of such agreements. The SECI member states are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Serbia-Montenegro. The SECI Centre is located in Bucharest and has been operational since November 2000. A number of task forces - specialized in controlling illegal human and drug trafficking, commercial fraud and vehicle theft – support the current work of the SECI Centre. In the aftermath of the 9-11 terrorist attacks on the USA, Romania proposed to increase the role of the SECI Centre within the anti-terrorism campaign. As a result, a specialized working group coordinated by Turkey was created in 2003.

⁴ See the text of the Montreux Convention in N. Dascovici, *Marea noastra sau regimul stramtorilor (Our Sea or the Status of the Straits)*, publicatiile Institutului de Drept International Public al Universitatii Mihailene din Iasi, vol. No. 9-10, 1937, pp.267-284.

The 'Border Defence Initiative' (BDI), known also as the 'Black Sea Border Security Initiative', was launched in Bucharest in 2004. Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine are the participants but other countries in the region could also join this initiative, which is aimed at strengthening export control regimes and fighting proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction and terrorism in the Black Sea region. Close to the region of the Black Sea and comprising some of the riparian states are other cooperation initiatives with the aim of tackling non-conventional threats. They include the NATO Initiative for South Eastern Europe (SEEI) and the South East Europe Cooperation Process (SEECF).

Preliminary conclusions

The Black Sea's past is one of domination by a single great power - Ottoman or Russian - which transformed it into a 'lake', and of lack of cooperation among the riparian states. The only example of cooperation was between the great powers Russia and Turkey in the 19th and 20th centuries (intermittently), for the purpose of excluding other major international players from this region.

In the post-cold war era many different initiatives were promoted to consolidate cooperation (in the economic, political, military and security fields). They resulted from the new geopolitical imperatives and the problem of overcoming the shortfalls of the transition to democracy and a market economy. Within the Black Sea cooperation process there are two divergent points of view. The first considers the region as a military asset belonging to the local players, and therefore the countries supporting this view plead to keep the Black Sea as a 'closed' sea as regards naval access by the other world players. Access is allowed, but with the legal limitations set by the Montreux Convention in 1936. This view was held in the past by Russia and Turkey, though for different reasons, and nowadays takes the form of widespread resistance to change. The second view is that the Black Sea should be an internationalized 'open sea'. The main driving factors behind this are the impact of current globalization and the need for riparian states to develop their potential by taking advantage of the economic and security benefits offered by the new international environment. Furthermore, by including some Black

Sea riparian states, the recent NATO and EU enlargements inevitably accelerate the process of 'opening' the Black Sea. This is demonstrated by the PfP's Individual Partnership Plan (IPAP) for all the countries bordering on the Black Sea (with the exception of Russia and, of course, NATO members) and the EU's Neighbourhood Policy and previous Partnership and Cooperation Agreements.

At present, an analysis of the cooperation initiatives already in place in the Black Sea area shows the preponderance of the first point of view (BSEC, BLACKSEAFOR). But the other vision has a powerful persuasive force. The clash of these two perspectives could raise obstacles in the short and medium term, thus hindering the enhancement of cooperation and the 'opening' of the Black Sea.

REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE BLACK SEA AND INTEGRATION INTO EURO-ATLANTIC STRUCTURES

Mustafa AYDIN¹

Imagining a Region?

In today's global world, regionalization is seen as a useful instrument for regional and global security and stability. In addition to building a sense of common interest and a shared identity, regionalization, through regional groupings, facilitates collaborative action against contemporary problems (i.e., organized crime, terrorism, illicit drug and arms trafficking), as well as responding to traditional conflicts with localized confidence building measures.²

These groupings induce their members to develop non-coercive attitudes, reducing the 'tendency to resort to non-peaceful means in pursuit of national interests'. They can enhance security by fostering dialogue, personal contacts and mutual understanding, and play a complementary role to broader structures like the EU by preparing their members for future accession to the larger organization through pre-adoption of certain norms and standards.³

To benefit from the positive aspects of regionalization, there should emerge some sort of common recognition among the countries

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² For alternative views on regionalization and security in the post-Cold War world, see, David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan, *Regional Orders; Building Security in a New World*, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.

³ Ercan Ozer, 'The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Regional Security', *Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. II, No. 3, September-November 1997, pp. 78-80.

within a geographical area that they form a political entity, as distinct from a mere geographical area, with sufficient internal cohesion and external differences from the 'others' to set them apart. Some analysts have questioned whether the Black Sea (BS) area is a region, arguing that it is not seen as such either from inside or outside. It is even argued that the BS is an 'intellectually constructed region' with a weak regional identity.⁴ There is some truth in this statement, since for most of the countries in the area the 'BS identity' was until very recently of secondary importance to their wider international agendas. Moreover, there clearly are wide economic, political, social and cultural discrepancies among the BS countries. From this perspective, the BS area has neither internal nor external potential for region building.

All the various regions and regional identities, however, are first and foremost the result of region-wide intellectual endeavours. All regions are initially constructed in the minds of people, be they intellectual, political and governmental elites or business communities. Whether or not 'the region' exists geographically in the first place is not a priority; it is the political will of the interested countries and their intellectual engagement that turn a geographical area into a region. Thus, although the creation of the term 'BS' to refer to a distinct geopolitical region as opposed to a geographical area is a fairly recent phenomenon, it has no doubt generated its own momentum since the early 1990s. Viewed from this perspective, the BS constitutes a region: the will of the governments to develop it as a region was demonstrated by the creation of the BSEC in 1992. This does not mean that the area has always been a region. Because of its history of partitioning and the fragmentation of the region in modern times, regional cooperation among BS countries has in the past been difficult and tentative. Since the end of the Cold War, however, the countries of the region have shown their willingness to work together within regional cooperative initiatives. As a result, the BS area is more of a region today than it was ten years ago.

My use of the term 'BS Region/Area' transcends the simple political-geographic delimitations employed by the nation-states, as well

⁴ Discussions with experts on Black Sea affairs during the International Conference in *The New European Architecture in the 21st Century; Promoting Regional Cooperation in the Wider Black Sea Area*, 3-7 September 2002, Milos Island, Greece.

as defying the conventional way of handling the strategic implications and security threats of various regions separately. Foregoing the simplistic method of classification, I refer to a vast region stretching from south-eastern Europe to the western shores of the Caspian Sea. In this sense, as a political construct rather than a simple geographical space, the BS region includes riparian states (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine) as well as adjacent states (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Greece, Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia and Montenegro), that are affected by and affect developments across this broad area. As such, it is to be distinguished from the BS basin, which covers two million square kilometres and includes parts of 19 countries: Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Macedonia, Germany, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine, and Serbia and Montenegro.

Black Sea and the West

Although some experts would argue to the contrary, for years, since the end of the Cold War, the West in general has treated the Black Sea (BS) as simply a black hole: an area that you pass through in order to get to Russia, the Caucasus, the Caspian basin, Central Asia, etc., but not as a region in itself. Suddenly, however, various intricate developments (chief among them the recent US forces relocation project) are now pushing the BS on to the West's agenda. There are various problematic issues (i.e. territorial changes, ethno-nationalistic conflicts, religious differences, external competition) that underscore the BS's importance to the Western security system. The region was an area of conflict and confrontation for centuries. During the Cold War, when it was on the fault lines of East-West rivalry, the overwhelming presence of the superpowers provided a forced stability for more than forty years. The demise of the Soviet Union, however, unleashed the tensions suppressed by the Cold War. Although most of the open conflicts have ebbed since then, none of them has been solved satisfactorily. Contested borders, mixed ethnic groups, enforced migration, economic deprivation, widespread unemployment, authoritarian regimes and bad governance still pose risks. Poverty, corruption, organized crime and territorial claims

threaten to undermine existing regimes, leading to consequences that would be felt throughout Eurasia.

These problems, both new and old, contrast with the positive trends emerging in the region. For the first time, there is now a truly pluralist international presence in the BS, which has always been a backyard of one power or the other, or witnessed their competition to dominate it. Dominance by the Byzantine, Ottoman and Russian empires closed it to the outside world. During the Cold War, the whole of the BS with the exception of Turkey was surrounded by the Soviet Union and its satellites. Geopolitical changes since the end of the Cold War, however, have led to an entirely new scenario in the wider BS area, which for the first time has created a chance for multidimensional regional cooperation. Together with emerging regional organizations, it provides a useful platform for issue-based cooperation in areas such as energy security, environmental protection, economic development, democratization, etc.

These positive and negative issues attract Western attention to the region and this, in contrast to earlier regional enthusiasm to link the BS to Europe, leads to second thoughts, doubts and uneasiness about the ways to proceed. Nevertheless, there is now increasing agreement that the BS has become a region in itself, separate or separable from the rest of Eurasia, with its own internal dynamics and developing cohesion. Yet the strategies of the two Western institutions likely to play an increasing role in the region (the EU and the NATO) are still in need of refinement and clarity.

The European Union and the Black Sea

There is no doubt that the BS and the surrounding area have historically been part of Europe. The BS has played a major role in European history, and *vice versa*. The power(s) that ruled in eastern and south-eastern Europe, such as the Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, and Russian empires, also ruled in the (wider) BS region. Traditionally, they considered the BS as their backyard and closed it to outside influence. As the regions surrounding the Black Sea rapidly become part of the EU, it is now time for the EU to further engage itself in the affairs of the BS area.

With its mosaic of problems, which could have major consequences for the EU and Europe, the wider BS region is one of the more important challenges that the enlarged EU will face. At the moment Europe and the BS are linked together by a full member (Greece) and accession countries (Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania), as well as by special relations with Ukraine and Russia. Once Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey become EU members, the EU will border directly on the BS, accounting for half of its coastline. Even before this happens, EU presence in the BS will shortly become a reality as accession countries (and to a lesser extent Partnership and Cooperation Agreement countries) increasingly adopt EU legislation and policies. Moreover, Europe is already connected with the wider BS region through a number of projects and programmes. Thus, the EU will have to develop policies on regional issues and deal with threats to regional stability.

Europe and the BS are already connected via the energy dimension. As European dependency on Middle Eastern oil and Russian natural gas increases, and North Sea production declines, the safe and uninterrupted supply of new sources of energy from the Caspian basin through the BS assumes the utmost importance. The security of European energy supply inevitably brings a number of related issues to Europe's doorstep: disagreement over the status of the Caspian Sea; competition among the regional countries to host pipelines to Europe; and threats to the secure and steady supply of energy sources arising from regional rivalry or domestic instability.

Environmental concerns emanating from the BS region or Europe would also link the two regions, which are already recognized by the Commission's *Danube-BS Basin Communication*.⁵ If Romania and Bulgaria join the European Union, EU norms regarding environmental protection will have to apply to the BS. This will not only mean an increase in EU investment in environmental projects, but will also affect tanker transportation in the BS, where current safety requirements are lower than EU standards. The increased risk of tanker collisions,

⁵ EU Commission: *Communication from the Commission on Environmental Cooperation in the Danube-Black Sea Region*, Brussels, 30.10.2001, COM (2001) 615 final. It concludes that; 'The environmental degradation of the Danube and Black Sea region requires urgent attention and can only be tackled through a joint effort of environmental rehabilitation, conducted at regional level.'

particularly in the Turkish Straits, poses an additional threat not only to Turkey or the BS *per se*, but also to the Aegean and Mediterranean seas, and clearly calls for Europe-wide regional cooperation and solutions.

From the financial perspective, since a number of European companies operate in the wider BS, the national interests of European states are affected by the structural problems of the region. Integration of the BS markets with Europe would be a significant addition from a purely economic standpoint. But beyond that, threats to the stability of the region, an obvious gateway between the energy-rich Caspian and Europe, would eventually affect European economies. Consequently the EU is naturally interested in the resolution of the various conflicts in the region and in changing the code of conduct in regional countries. The multilateral cooperation schemes in the BS are already creating the possibilities for such a change: countries that do not have bilateral relations (for example Turkey and Armenia, and Armenia and Azerbaijan) are talking to each other and cooperating under the BSEC umbrella. The EU needs to give more support to such formats to help transform the region from a conflict-prone area on the European borders to a stable neighbourhood.

Europe might also be affected by the increasing threat of radicalized Islam, emerging chiefly in the northern Caucasus. Apart from the fact that the perceived threat of Islam and related concerns about instability in the region might cause further postponement of democratization, thus constraining the relationship between European countries and the regional states, there is an even more salient threat to European stability: some of the groups, whether or not they have Islamic connections, fighting for their rights, autonomy, national consolidation or independence, might find it more convenient to stage terrorist activities in the wider Europe, particularly to attract Western media attention.

Moreover, illegal immigration, drug trafficking and growing criminal activities in general cause concern in Europe. With the independence of the former Soviet republics, international borders emerged that were not well guarded. The border control agencies in the newly independent countries have often been inefficient and open to corruption. Low incomes, decreasing social security and erosion of public

institutions have created conditions conducive to crime and corruption. As a result, organized crime networks in the region have become well established, highly violent and increasingly international. The region also acts as a staging post for much of the heroin seized in the EU.⁶ Increasing violence throughout the region linked to drugs and other illegal activities is still a challenge that the EU will have to deal with.

Finally, border regions also pose security risks because of the concentration of minority populations nearby and kin-states across the borders. Since many of the countries in the region have a history of inter-ethnic conflict, discrimination is practised against the minorities, some of which have already opted for armed conflict and secessionism, resulting in more wars and millions of refugees. None of the separatist conflicts in Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transdnistria or Chechnya has yet been solved satisfactorily. The continuing instability due to these frozen conflicts continues to feed profitable criminal activities and terrorism and cause further migration. Hence, political stability in the region cannot be guaranteed while these conflicts remain unsolved.

Demographic changes, migration pressures and refugee flows are also major concerns for Europe. It is clear that the migration and population displacements emerging as a result of various conflicts, decreasing standards of living and environmental catastrophes can create insecurity, heighten ethnic tensions, undermine regional social order and consequently affect the nearby EU countries.

Regional cooperation provides a general framework within which innovative solutions to these problems could be found more easily than through bilateral connections. Since none of the member states of the BSEC countries (except Russia) misses an opportunity to reiterate that regional cooperation in the BS is complementary to their ultimate goal of EU membership,⁷ the EU has a unique opportunity, with willing collaborators in the region, to become influential and effective.

⁶ Council of the EU: *Action Plan on Drugs between the EU and Central Asian Republics*, Brussels, 25 September 2002, 12353/02 CORDROGUE 78 CODRO 1 NIS 107.

⁷ See for example, statements by Romanian President Ion Illiescu to the BSEC Bucharest Summit Conference (30 June 1995), Bulgarian Foreign Minister Nadejda Mihailova (*RFE/RL Newslines*, 23 October 1998), former Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller (*OMRI Daily Digest*, 11 February 1997), and Moldovan Foreign Minister Tabacaru (*FBIS-EEU*, 27 April 2000).

Nevertheless, the EU's involvement still lacks political decisiveness and strategic dimension. The European Neighbourhood Policy is not adequate to deal with the region as a whole. The EU, clearly preferring an individual country approach to institutional arrangements, still treats the regional countries differentially. As far as the EU is concerned, the BS region includes a number of different group of states and has signed different forms of agreements with them: Member State (Greece); Accession Countries (Bulgaria and Romania with Europe Agreements, and Turkey with Association Agreement and Customs Union); Non-EU countries with Partnership Cooperation Agreements but no membership prospects for the foreseeable future (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia); Non-EU countries in the Stabilization and Association Process, with eventual EU membership prospects (Albania, Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro); and Stability Pact countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Turkey, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro).

These different types of status in relations with the EU 'mean different operating policies and programmes, legal bases and financial instruments'. Moreover, individual BS countries tend to guard carefully their relative advantages vis-à-vis one other in their relations with the EU. Not only do they differ in the amounts per capita aid they receive from the EU, but also the types and cycles of the support programmes would differ greatly, leading to different administrative processes and difficulties of coordination on issues of multilateral importance, and giving rise to the accusation that 'the EU approach poses problems for regional cooperation'.⁸

NATO in the Wider Black Sea

Although NATO's open door policy and PfP programme are more engaging attempts than the EU's Neighbourhood Policy, NATO involvement, too, lacks a clear and shared political will among its

⁸ Michael Emerson and Marius Vahl, 'Europe's Black Sea Dimension - Model European Regionalism, Prêt-à-Porter', in Terry Adams & all, *Europe's Black Sea Dimension*, Brussels, CEPS, 2002, pp. 19-20.

members. Even the decisions taken at the Istanbul Summit were not very clear in their offers towards BS countries.

Discouraged by persistent conflicts in the region, ill-suited to help resolve these conflicts, and focused on its political and operational commitments in the Balkans and Afghanistan, NATO has yet to develop a comprehensive regional strategy for its engagement. Nonetheless, it today either includes or has institutionalized relations with all of the countries in the BS region: Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Turkey are members; Russia and Ukraine are strategic partners; and all of them, along with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova, are members of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace. Furthermore, Georgia has been a declared aspirant since 2000, Ukraine since May 2002, and Azerbaijan since April 2003. NATO today, however, much like the EU, deals with different parts of the region through a varied set of bilateral relationships. While a regional approach has long been discussed within NATO circles in the context of partnership programmes, there are currently no projects or cooperation programmes that have focused exclusively on the BS region. As a result, the Alliance's role and activities in the region have remained limited.

Since the very concept of a 'BS' region, distinct from the areas to its east and west, is new to NATO, the first step in creating the required regional approach should be to solidify understanding of the borders of the region. Taking into account the declared intention of most of the regional countries to integrate into the Euro-Atlantic structures, the Alliance needs to acknowledge the separate development of the South Caucasus from Central Asia in the post-Cold War period, and consider it as part of the wider BS. Although it will be facing many challenges in the region, NATO's outreach programmes and 'open door' policy, more flexible than the EU's enlargement policy, allow differential strategies to be designed to suit the requirements of individual countries. It excludes no Euro-Atlantic country *a priori*. It is also easier to qualify for NATO membership than EU membership. The IPAP and PAP strategies, too, 'enable NATO to provide both a bilateral and a regional forum for political dialogue; an instrument to help generate pressure for necessary

domestic reforms; and a vehicle for advice and assistance on defence and security issues'.⁹

Many BS countries have already worked together within NATO's South Eastern Europe Initiative, which provided valuable experience for the BS region, where similar efforts could be emulated with regional countries. In this context, BlackSeafor, a purely regional initiative, if supported by the Alliance, might lead to a system of regional security cooperation within Euro-Atlantic structures. Leaving aside full integration for the time being, placing regional countries in a larger BS context could naturally create a broad network of regional, political and security-related cooperation. This might also help overcome some of the 'frozen conflicts' in the region, which have so far paralyzed most of regional cooperation efforts.

Although NATO's open door policy encourages regional countries to undertake further reforms in order to comply with NATO standards, militarily as well as politically, a new set of measures would also be necessary to change the domestic realities in the region. A democracy deficit and lack of good governance will always be a hindrance to Western efforts to bring these states closer to Euro-Atlantic structures. With the enlargement towards Central and Eastern Europe, NATO has clearly evolved from a simple military bloc towards a political security system for the Euro-Atlantic space. A substantial part of this new role is to promote, secure and guarantee the institutional prerequisites for democracy, respect for human rights and freedom in its nearby regions, including the BS.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The most important aspect of BS integration into Western structures is to decide how to link the efforts of the EU and NATO with regional cooperation schemes, and how to integrate regional demands into the agenda. Success in extending security and stability throughout this region and integrating it into the Western structures can be achieved

⁹ Ronald D. Asmus (Rapporteur), 'Developing a New Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region', *Istanbul Paper* No 2, German Marshall Fund of the US and Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation, 25-27 June 2004, pp. 9-13.

only if the programmes developed respond to regional needs. In order to be able to do this:

- Regional integration and cooperation should be encouraged. This was a successful tool in SEE.
- A larger Eurasian space should be created by linking the wider BS area to the wider Europe through energy cooperation, infrastructure building and enhanced cooperation with the regional organizations, and by defining priority areas for cooperation that respond to regional needs.
- Help should be extended to solve regional conflicts. This is the absolute minimum requirement for greater coherence in the region.
- A dynamic regional core, to sustain momentum, provide political leadership and gently push other countries towards further integration into Western structures should be created.
- Existing regional structures and mechanisms for cooperation should not be ignored but used for further integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. The special role that the BSEC organization and GUUAM, BlackSeafor and BS Harmony initiatives could play should be mentioned.
- Outreach programmes for regional cooperation, through which further reforms could be encouraged, should be expanded.
- Overcrowding should be avoided. There are already too many regional and outside players with varying intentions and abilities. Without regional willingness, cooperation and integration can not be imposed from outside.
- Both NATO and the EU should make better use of their leverage to achieve sustainable results within the foreseeable future. The EU should adopt more flexible approaches and NATO should also concern itself with the non-military aspects of security, especially democratization and related issues, which would enhance their role and influence in the region.

THE PROBLEM OF FROZEN CONFLICTS IN THE WIDER BLACK SEA AREA. TRANSDNIESTRIA - A FROZEN CONFLICT?

Jos U. BOONSTRA¹

Is ‘Transdnistria a frozen conflict?’ Yes, it is a frozen conflict because hostilities have been absent for almost 13 years. No, it is not a frozen conflict, because there are now improved prospects for settling the conflict. Several developments have changed relations between Moldova and Transdnistria, and there is reason to believe that it would be good to do away with the term ‘frozen conflicts’. It is time to de-link these conflicts and judge each on their own complexity and progress made. Separate approaches might defuse Russian anxieties about losing influence in their ‘near abroad’ and might also help break up the links between the leaders of the separatist entities who regularly meet and have created a ‘them and us’ scenario in which they see themselves pitted against the ‘bad outside world’.

Changed Circumstances

Several changes in the last few years have made the Transdnistrians more vigilant and the Moldovans a little more hopeful.

The *European Union* is stepping up cooperation with Moldova and involvement in conflict settlement. The Union acknowledges, mainly through the ENP, that these two issues are inseparable. The EU Commission will finally open a long awaited Delegation Office in Chisinau, and the EU Council decided last March to appoint a Special

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Representative to Moldova to contribute to conflict settlement. In view of the EU's growing potential through the ESDP, the experience it is acquiring in South East European peace missions, the need to address security issues in the European neighbourhood, and the new Eastern members, who will probably be more critical towards Russia, it will be extremely difficult for Brussels to abstain from being directly involved.

Ukraine underwent a landslide change at the turn of the year. The Ukrainians are essential for conflict resolution because they share a border with Transdnistria. Total closure of the border, though not desirable, would bring the Transdnistrian 'criminal' economy to its knees. Earlier Kyiv refused to set up joint Moldovan-Ukrainian border posts on Ukrainian territory to control the flow of goods passing through the border and counter smuggling. With the pro-Western Yushchenko in charge, Moldova might get its way, at least partially, and increase its leverage over the border. And indeed, in the 'Yushchenko-Poroshenko' plan for conflict settlement presented last May Ukraine consents to short-term monitoring by the OSCE. Unfortunately this three-stage 'road map' for Moldova's reintegration was unilaterally proposed and poorly coordinated, and thus received widespread criticism, especially since it was felt that organizing monitored elections in Transdnistria would legitimize the Smirnov regime.

Another change affecting the Transdnistrian conflict is indicative not of progress but of a decline: many have lost faith in the *OSCE*. The OSCE has often been criticized for its inability to solve the conflict and hold Russia to the 'Istanbul Commitments' by forcing Moscow to withdraw its troops and equipment from Transdnistria. Still, this agreement should be enforced not only by the OSCE – an organization that depends on consensus decision-making and lacks powerful instruments – but also through the EU and NATO.

Russia has given up on the OSCE and is looking for other channels of communication and influence in European and Transatlantic forums. The quality of Russian diplomacy has declined, affecting the Transdnistrian conflict. First the Russians were embarrassed at the 2003 OSCE Maastricht gathering when they hoped to solve the conflict through a unilateral memorandum; then one year later Moscow again

blocked consensus under Bulgarian OSCE chairmanship. At the same time Russia failed very badly in Ukraine by openly supporting Yanukovich in an election that was deemed unfair, and finally Russian spin doctors were expelled from Moldova in the weeks leading up to the Moldovan parliamentary elections. Russia's attempts to defend its interests in the 'near abroad' are not succeeding. A change of policy might be expected from the Kremlin, for better or worse.

By giving EU integration top priority in 2004 Moldova made *a 180-degree strategic turn*. Until that time Voronin's Communists had hoped that the Transdnistrian conflict could be solved through good relations with Russia. Out of disappointment with Russian support of Transdnistria and postponement of the withdrawal process, Voronin made a rather sudden choice for the West instead of the East. But does Moldova understand the kind of journey it has embarked on? The country is dependent on Russian energy deliveries and on exports to Russia. Moreover, it is questionable whether Moldova's leaders and bureaucrats are able to grasp the idea of integration. Most politicians regard EU integration more as a strategic choice and less as a choice for radical reform to enter a community of norms and values. Declaratory pro-European statements have to be turned into a choice carried forward by Moldovan society as a whole.

Issues and the way ahead

A *new negotiation and mediation format* would be a good start. The Ukrainian proposal suggests EU and US participation (ignoring Romania). Consultations need to take place between Brussels, Washington and Moscow to convince the Russians that the new mediators are in fact added value and that it is not meant to decrease Russia's influence in the region. With a new format in place, clear guidelines should be drafted that define on what issues mediation will take place. The mediators should not impose a new state structure on Moldova. No new unilateral Russian 'Kozak Memorandum', therefore. Nor would an EU-driven Serbia-Montenegro type of solution be helpful. *Border Control* is a measure that could at least be initiated in the short term. Here Ukraine would be the main player and could make a start together with Moldova, while the EU and the OSCE would have a

monitoring mission. Moldova also has a role to play and should not wait for the EU-OSCE cavalry to arrive. Moldova and Ukraine should take steps to increase their border control capability by reforming structures through integrated border management.

Russian troop withdrawal should be furthered by acknowledging the Russian peacekeeping skills and replacing current peacekeeping with an EU-Russia effort. Withdrawal of Russian weapon stockpiles and of the remnants of the 14th Army guarding the arsenal should take place simultaneously. It is important not to put all the blame for lack of progress on Russia. There should be due recognition that the conflict was frozen and did not ignite.

Democratization of Moldova as a whole will be a lengthy process and needs to be carefully co-ordinated by all the players involved: the US, the EU through the ENP, and NATO through the PfP. Most likely the conflict will not be fully resolved until serious headway is made with this process. The most important players in this innovative way of solving the conflict are the Moldavians themselves. Moldova's decision makers should understand that they will have to pull most of the weight.

CONCLUSIONS and PERSPECTIVES

Lionel PONSARD¹

Lying at the crossroads of European, Eurasian, and Middle Eastern security spaces, the Wider Black Sea Region includes the littoral states of the Black Sea and Moldova as well as the Southern Caucasus countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. It offers direct strategic access to bases and theatres of operations in the Middle East and Central Asia, but also connects Caspian Sea resources with Europe and therefore contributes to energy security and the future stability of oil and gas markets. In this respect, the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline on 25 May 2005 is likely to have a huge impact on the economic development of the entire region. At the same time, the Wider Black Sea Region is a vulnerable area because of ethnic conflicts and separatist attitudes (Transdnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Nagorno-Karabakh).

Obviously, the international community has a compelling interest in the emergence of strong democratic fundamentals in that part of the world. Although frozen conflicts and the lack of reforms have greatly complicated the transition towards market-oriented structures, some countries have served as examples for the whole region. In particular, Romania and Bulgaria became providers of security and contributors to coalition operations even before accession to NATO. Other countries have also progressively graduated from the role of pure consumers of security to that of incipient providers of security to the region and beyond. The success of pro-democracy movements, known as the Rose and Orange Revolutions, in Georgia and Ukraine, is even perceived by some scholars as likely to be duplicated in Azerbaijan. Democratization,

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however, will probably follow an evolutionary path and cannot possibly happen overnight.

Transnational threats remain a challenge to the region and insecurity has led to the emergence of safe havens for criminalized activities. Indeed, the Black Sea is not immune from today's security challenges such as terrorism, human trafficking, drugs, weapons proliferation, etc. Countries in the region should therefore pledge to support the initiatives aimed at promoting regional cooperation and work closely with one other to face together common challenges. They should increase efforts in drafting and implementing regional and transborder projects related to such fields as energy cooperation, communications and technologies. Use and development of the existing regional structures, as well as the creation of new ones, should help coordinate national policies and increase the efficiency of regional efforts. In this regard, only very few efficient structures currently reflect this desire for regional cooperation.

The Black Sea Economic Cooperation established in 1992, although meant as a very ambitious initiative, remains nonetheless a weak organization. As for the GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova), an organization of likeminded states eager to join the Euro-Atlantic structures, and established in 1996, it has long been deprived of any real efficiency. And yet, after the democratic changes in Georgia, Ukraine, and the withdrawal of Uzbekistan, more and more experts tend to believe that GUAM could transform itself into a real factor of regional stability and security.

Regional cooperation should be used in order to find common solutions to transnational risks and threats, but also to frozen conflicts. It could be very productive to start with small, manageable steps such as cooperation in the field of education. A common security culture could be developed through educational projects and civil-military projects. By the same token, the national capacities in the various defence colleges should also be strengthened. Reforms should be coordinated among the different facets of the security spectrum and should be viewed in the framework of the global democratization process. Economic development as well as broad political consensus among all political forces should support

security reforms. Priorities include the necessary changes in the training/education system, the adoption and implementation of a modified legal framework, and the need to be interoperable in common peacekeeping operations. By the same token, the efficiency of all force structures should be raised, and a common assessment of threats as well as a real workable national security concept should be developed.

Rome, November 2005

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