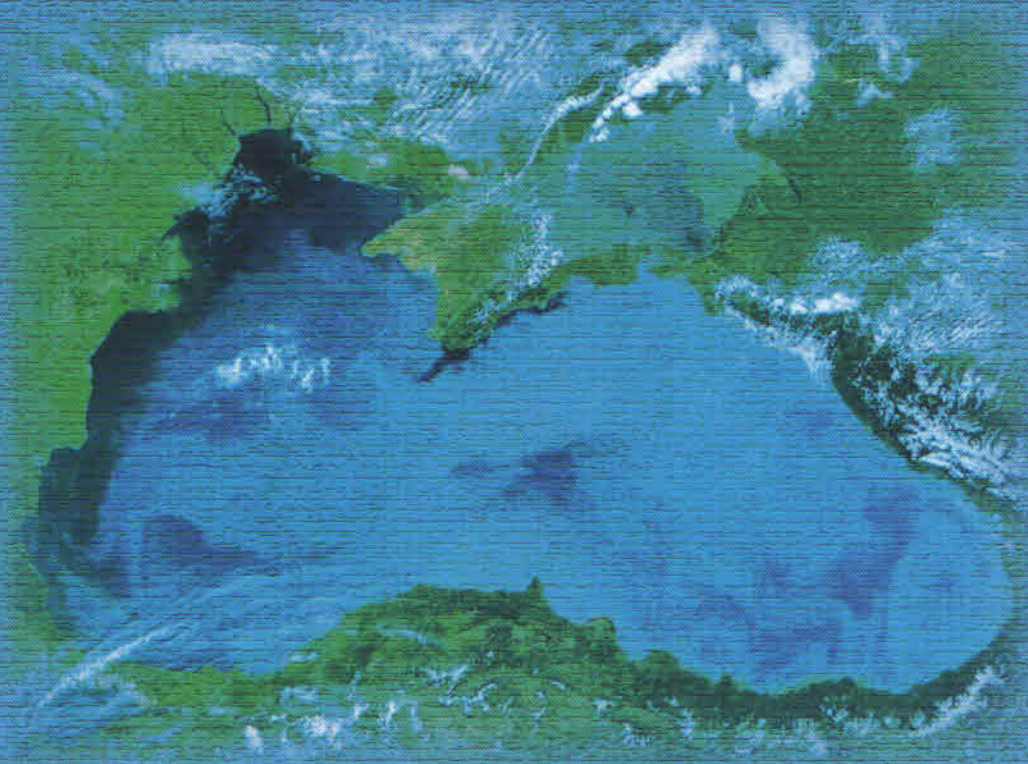


Editörler

Prof. Dr. Hasret ÇOMAK / Doç. Dr. Caner SANCAKTAR

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Volkan TATAR / Dr. Burak Şakir ŞEKER

KARADENİZ JEOPOLİTİĞİ



BETA 

Yayın No: 3654

İşletme-Ekonomi Dizisi: 922

Karadeniz Jeopolitiği

Editörler:

Prof. Dr. Hasret Çomak

Doç. Dr. Caner Sancaktar

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Volkan Tatar

Dr. Burak Şakir Şeker

Birinci Baskı: Ocak 2018

ISBN: 978 - 605 - 242 - 082 - 9

Tasarım Uygulama: Gökhan Ayrancı

Kapak Tasarım: Gökhan Ayrancı

Baskı ve Cilt: Ertem Basım Yayın Dağıtım San. Tic. Ltd. Şti.

Eskişehir Yolu 40. Km. Başkent Organize

Sanayi Bölgesi 22. Cadde No: 6,

Malıköy / Sincan / Ankara

(Sertifika No. 26886) (0312) 640 16 23

© 2018 Beta Basım Yayım Dağıtım A.Ş.

Tüm hakları saklıdır. Tamamının ya da herhangi bir bölümünün yayıncının yazılı izni olmadan çoğaltılması yasaktır.

Beta Basım Yayım Dağıtım A.Ş.

Sertifika No: 16136

Narlıbahçe Sok. No: 11 Cağaloğlu-İstanbul

Tel: (0212) 511 54 32 - 519 01 77 Fax: (0212) 513 87 05 - 511 36 50

www.betayayincilik.com

İ Ç İ N D E K İ L E R

Önsöz

Hasret ÇOMAK iii

1. BÖLÜM KARADENİZ'İN KISA TARİHİ

Tarih Öncesi Çağlarda Dünya Ticaretinin Merkezindeki Karadeniz

R. Haldun Aydıngün, Şengül Aydıngün..... 3

Medeniyetler Tarihi İçinden Doğu-Batı Perspektifinde Karadeniz'e Bakmak

Eyyub Kandemir 9

2. BÖLÜM KARADENİZ'İN JEOPOLİTİK VE JEOSTRATEJİK ÖNEMİ

Jeopolitik ve Jeostrateji Kavramları

Ahmet Keser 27

20. Yüzyılda Jeopolitik Düşünce Oluşumu

Metin Aksoy, İsmail Köse 37

Karadeniz Güvenlik ve İstikrar Sürecine Bakışta Realist Yaklaşımın Hâkim Görünümü

Cengiz Okman 43

Klasik ve Eleştirel Jeopolitik Çerçevesinden Karadeniz Coğrafyası

Göknil Erbaş Doğan 73

Karadeniz'in Değişen Jeopolitiği

Eyyub Kandemir 81

Genişletilmiş Karadeniz Bölgesi Kavramının Türkiye'nin Jeopolitiğine Etkileri	
Murat Koray	91
2050'li Yıllarda Kuzey Kutbundaki Alternatif Deniz Ticaret Yollarının Karadeniz'in Jeopolitiğine Etkisi	
Murat Koray	113

3. BÖLÜM KARADENİZ'E KIYIDAŞ ÜLKELER VE YENİ JEOPOLİTİK DENGELER

Karadeniz'e Kıyıdaş Ülkeler ve Yeni Jeopolitik Dengeler	
Halil Erdemir	125
Rusya Federasyonu'nun Karadeniz Bölge Politikası ve Yeni Güç Dengeleri	
Giray Saynur Derman	147
Rusya Federasyonu'nun Avrasya Birliği Politikaları Çerçevesinde Ukrayna Politikalarını Anlamak	
Sina Kısacık, Şeniz Denizelli	163

4. BÖLÜM KARADENİZ'E KIYIDAŞ ÜLKELERİN ULUSAL GÜVENLİK STRATEJİLERİ

Karadeniz'e Kıyıdaş Ülkelerin Ulusal Güvenlik Stratejileri	
Hüsmen Akdeniz	189
Putin Doktrini ve Rus Savaş Stratejisinin Değerlendirilmesi	
Hasret Çomak, Burak Şakir Şeker	231

5. BÖLÜM KARADENİZ'İN GÜVENLİĞİNE YÖNELİK YENİ GELİŞMELER

Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Karadeniz'e Kıyıdaş Ülkelerin Siyasal Sistemleri ve Bu Sistemlerin Karadeniz Güvenliğine Etkileri	
Adem Bağış Alçıçek	241

Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemde Avrasya Jeopolitiğinde Yaşanan Değişimlerin Karadeniz Güvenliğine Etkileri	
Ufuk Cerrah	249
Gürcistan'ın Devam Eden Etnik Sorunları: Abhazya, Güney Osetya ve Cavaheya	
Hasan Oktay, Keisuke Wakizaka	271
Karadeniz'de Rusya'nın Askeri Müdahalelerinin Uluslararası Hukuk Açısından Değerlendirilmesi: Abhazya ve Güney Osetya Örnekleri	
Murat Güneylioğlu, Cem Savaş.....	281
Kırım'ın Ruslar İçin Anlamı, İşgali ve İlhakı	
Halil Erdemir	297
Rusya'nın Kırım'ı İlhakı ve Kırım Referandumunun Uluslararası Hukuka Aykırılığı	
Gökçe Hubar	305
Kırım Sorunu ve Soruna Müdahil Olan Devletlerin Savundukları Tezler	
Mesut Şöhret.....	319
Ukrayna Krizi ve Birleşmiş Milletler	
Ömer Ertuğrul Meral	335
Ukrayna Krizi ve Avrupa Birliği	
Dilek Yiğit.....	341
Doğu Ukrayna ve Kırım'ın Uluslararası İnsancıl Hukuk Bağlamında Değerlendirilmesi	
Şahin Keskin.....	355
NATO ve Rusya Federasyonu'nun Karadeniz Politikaları	
Doğan Şafak Polat	365
Black Sea Security in the Context of NATO-Russia Relations since March 2014	
Adnan Seyaz.....	391

BLACK SEA SECURITY IN THE CONTEXT OF NATO-RUSSIA RELATIONS SINCE MARCH 2014

Adnan SEYAZ*

Introduction

The annexation of Crimea in March 2014 alarmed mostly Eastern European Members of the Alliance as well as USA and three large Europeans in NATO (Germany, France and Britain). Similar processes had been experienced between Georgia and Russia both between 1990 and 1992 and in summer 2008. These clashes are not a coincidence since Russia's Black Sea Fleet (BSF) has stationed in Crimea for almost two centuries. Considering coastal countries of the Black Sea the inclusion of Turkey into the Alliance in 1952 was the first setback for Russia's dream of controlling the Straits and thus Black Sea in total. Possible Georgian and Ukrainian inclusion in NATO, following Bulgarian and Romanian inclusion in 2004, would most probably be the end of the Russian dream of controlling Black Sea.

However, Russian Federation under Putin responded these developments by eliminating Georgia through a military intervention, Ukraine through both invading Crimea and intervening Eastern Ukraine. Thus it became clear that Black Sea Region would continue to be a space of maneuver for both NATO and Russian Federation, proving those who claimed that a New Cold War is underway. One might not forget that Russia is a huge country with huge abilities and NATO is a security block which needs to stay together and strong in order to deter such a rival. That is why the Warsaw Summit's decision to allocate more armed forces to NATO's eastern front is a significant step to respond Russia, but building alliance members' consensus is much more important. I believe that if NATO members achieve coming together around a certain policy it will work in deterring Russia rather than antagonizing.

Within this framework, I will try to explain how tense relations among the NATO and Russia affected the Black Sea Security after the annexation of Crimea. I will include alliance interests as well as the bases of Russia's offensive foreign policy. The regional consequences of both the annexation and the escalation in the aftermath will also be included. Thus, this study is going to shed light on possible actions of these actors after the Warsaw Summit in July 2016.

Black Sea Security: Before and After the Fall of the USSR

Black Sea Region was one of the areas that witnessed harsh struggle between East and West

* Kırklareli University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of International Relations, Research Assistant.

during the Cold War. Although main atrocities experienced on distant territories such as in Vietnam, Black Sea Region represented the most eastern point of the Western Block through Turkish coasts in the south. Apart from that the remaining countries were either under the USSR or within the Eastern Block which paved the way for naming the area as a Soviet Lake depending on the strategic superiority of the USSR.¹ This was a significant point to address since the area gained its importance from becoming a passageway to Mediterranean Sea through the Turkish Straits.² The end of the World War II witnessed the Soviet request of controlling the Straits which showed the motivation behind Soviet strategic thinking. The control of the Straits would realize a dream and prove the claim that Black Sea has become a Soviet Lake. The inclusion of Turkey into the NATO happened in such an atmosphere and represented the alliance's interest in the region till the end of the Cold War in 1990. It was only after the fall of the USSR that both regional powers and the West began thinking about transforming the region into something else.

The end of the Cold War also ended the strategic superiority of the Soviets in the Black Sea Region by opening a new door to the West through the enlargement initiatives of the EU and NATO. Ukraine that is home to the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Crimea, and Georgia became independent countries in parallel to Bulgaria and Romania having opportunity to follow their own foreign policy independent from the Russian Federation. Thus new power vacuums came into existence in the region. Sub regions of Eurasia such as the Eastern Europe, Balkans, Black Sea Region and Caucasus were released from Soviet dominance. Furthermore, this new conjuncture necessitated new initiatives in order to keep stability and peace in the region. The Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), The Black Sea Naval Force (Blackseafor) and Operation Black Sea Harmony (OBH) were these initiatives mainly led by Turkey.³ The poor situation of Russian Federation in 1990s enabled regional powers to transform the region easily. The European Union and NATO enlargement went hand in hand in Eastern Europe, representing the transformation of the region from closed economies into free market, from autocracy to democracy.

On the one hand, Russian Federation was busy with internal affairs such as Yeltsin's political endeavor to stay in power and the War in Chechnya at that time. On the other hand, Russia was again interested in her close region and opposed the West involving in the Eastern Europe and Caucasus. Furthermore, ethnic Russians outside the country were used as a tool to interfere in the region as it has recently been experienced in Crimea. More than thirty million ethnically Russian or Russian speaking people live outside RF (Almost 9 million in Ukraine, 4 million in Kazakhstan, 1,5 million in Belorussia and high numbers in Baltic countries etc.)⁴ and Russia's foreign security

¹ Hasret Çomak and Ufuk Cerrah, "Karadeniz Jeopolitiğinde Ukrayna ve Kırım'ın Güvenliği ve Bu Güvenliğin Avrasya Enerji Güvenliğine Etkileri", *Bilgesam*, 23-24 September 2014, p. 726. http://www.bilgesam.org/Images/Dokumanlar/0-381-201412291guvenlik_kongresi_bildirileri-43.pdf (Accessed 29.10.2016)

² Bahadır B. Özarslan, Turco-Russian Relations and Security Policies in the Black Sea After the Cold War *Journal of Turkish World Studies*, XII/1, Summer 2012, p. 136.

³ BSEC came into existence after Istanbul Summit in 1992 and gained international legal status of organization in 1999 by transforming itself into a full-fledged regional economic organization. *Blackseafor* was created in 2001 as a Turkish initiative with the participation of Russia, Georgia, Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria. The main purpose of this force was to provide security and stability in the Black Sea maritime area. *OBH* is a similar task in the Black Sea to the NATO-led Operation Active Endeavour in Mediterranean. The main aim of the operation is to ensure the security of the Straits and deter terrorist and other asymmetric threats in accordance with the UNSC Resolutions 1373, 1540, 1566.

⁴ Numbers taken from the website of CIA: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/> (Accessed 29.09.2016).

understanding is constructed in parallel to this fact.⁵ RF has already taken a step by establishing the CIS to bring ex-Soviet countries together, but some of them has already turned their face to the West. Russian Federation herself cooperated with NATO enjoying a special status and created a large mission in NATO headquarters. However, Russian elites' suspicious treatment of NATO had never ended and reached top level with Eastern enlargement.

According to the 2015 report of "gazeta.ru", Russian military facilities abroad are located overwhelmingly on the territory of the former USSR and they are airbases, air defense and missile systems and space monitoring systems. Putting aside the bases of Syria's Latakia and Vietnam, military objects in Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia's South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and Moldova's Transnistria symbolizes Russia's effectiveness in the region.⁶ Russia's interference in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, also her recognition of their independence when it is thought with the annexation of Crimea, created an insecure atmosphere for the Black Sea Region. The same report lists the Russian objects close to the region as the following:⁷

- *South Osetia*: 4th Russian Military Airbase in Tskhinvali, a military encampment and airbase in Java, an airbase in Kurt and a training ground in Dzartsemi (4000 men)
- *Gudauta and Ochamchira Districts of Abkhazia*: training ground, military airfield (4000 men)
- *Transnistria which broke of Moldova in early 1990s*: 1500 peacekeepers
- *Gyumri, Armenia (in Georgian border)*: 102nd Russian military base of the Joint CIS Air Defense System, a unified network of air defense units with elements across the former Soviet Union (3200 men)
- *Baronovichi, Belarus*: Missile Warning System operating under the CIS Joint Air Defense System
- *Vileyka, Belarus*: 43rd Communications Center of the Russian Navy (1500 men, both bases)

RF under Putin succeeded creating stability both in economy and politics in the country thanks to the rising oil and natural gas prices. Putin's success in creating a vertical power structure in domestic politics empowered his hands in foreign policy. He achieved to make necessary legislation through eliminating effective opposition parties and forcing oligarchs to cooperate with him. With the military existence stated above RF was able to discover her ability to act as a global power. The creation of Eurasian Economic Union⁸ and Collective Security Treaty Organization⁹ should be

⁵ Olesya Aldushenko, "Russia Interested in the Russian Diaspora Living Abroad", **RBTH**, http://rbth.com/articles/2012/10/01/russia_interested_in_the_russian_diaspora_living_abroad_18739.html (Accessed 28.09.2016).

⁶ "Russian Military Bases Abroad: How Many and Where?", **Sputnik News**, <https://sputniknews.com/military/201512191032030941-russian-bases-abroad/> (Accessed 24.09.2016).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The EAEU, established by the Treaty on EAEU in 2014², is an international organization for regional economic cooperation. Consisted of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russian Federation, the EAEU provides for free movement of goods, services, capital and labor, pursues coordinated, harmonized and single policy in the sectors determined by the Treaty and international agreements within the Union. **Source: "About the Union"**, The EAEU, <http://www.eaeunion.org/?lang=en#about> (Accessed 22.08.2017).

⁹ The CSTO was signed as a treaty on May 1992 for a five year term. The CSTO which started to be renewed automatically in 1999, gained the legal status of Organization in October 2002 in accordance with the Rus-

analyzed as strengthening Russia's hands in her endeavor to oppose enlargement of NATO and the EU in the region.¹⁰

In addition to Turkish initiatives in the region there were significant steps taken by NATO since 1990. NATO's enlargement to the East was not welcomed by Russia at any time, but the inclusion of Bulgaria and Romania in 2004 extended NATO coasts in Black Sea. *Partnership for Peace Program* and *Membership Action Plan* aimed at first cooperating and later including countries into the Alliance changed littoral countries into NATO aspirants and partners. Especially after Georgian and Ukrainian applications for NATO MAPs created a perception of Black Sea as a NATO lake in the eyes of Russian authorities.¹¹

Furthermore, the security understanding of regional powers may differ from that of the Alliance. Turkey, with her long lasting membership in NATO since 1952, showed with her initiatives that she may provide security in the region in cooperation with other regional powers such as RF. Especially after 9/11 the USA's intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 caused the US focus on Middle East by providing power vacuum in Black Sea region to be filled by regional powers. Turkey, with ambitions to be a regional player depending on her strong economy in 2000s, wanted to create strong links with Turkic states in the region and spent substantial effort with BECO, Blackseafor and OBH.¹² However, this special effort is not enough to compensate for the security provision by NATO depending on few reasons. Firstly, although Turkey is stronger with her economy and military, she is not the only power in the region since Bulgaria and Romania can be used to make NATO's presence felt as became clear in Warsaw Summit in August 2016. Second, as jet crisis with Russia showed in November 2015 that Turkish-Russian relations, known with experience of centuries of tense relations, taught us nobody might trust in recent optimist weather depending on few years of cooperation on energy and economic ties.

Post March 2014 Process

The annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation meant the end of the status quo since the end of the Cold War. Besides, this action of Russian forces had many consequences both in state level (for Ukraine, Russia and other states in the region) and regional level.

sia's rising power in international arena. According to the Treaty the member states maintain their security on collective basis. Article 2 of the Treaty claims: "In case a threat to security, territorial integrity and sovereignty of one or several Member States or a threat to international peace and security Member States will immediately put into action the mechanism of joined consultations with the aim to coordinate their positions and take measures to eliminate the threat that has emerged." Simultaneously Article 4 stipulates the following: "In case an act of aggression is committed against any of the Member States all the others Member States will provide it with necessary assistance, including military one, as well as provide support with the means at their disposal in exercise of the right to collective defense in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter." **Source:** The EAEU, http://www.odkb.gov.ru/start/index_aengl.htm (Accessed 22.08.2017).

¹⁰ Çomak and Cerrah, p. 728.

¹¹ Volodymyr Dubovyk, "NATO's Role in the Wider Black Sea Area", **PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo** No. 11, August 2008, p. 1.

¹² Dubovyk thinks that Turkey as militarily regional superpower is angry to US intervention in the region providing a better environment to Kurdish terrorists in Northern Iraq, feels humiliated as at the doorstep of the EU for decades. Under the JDP (Justice and Development Party), she is revising relations with NATO and the US; thus is not putting her membership in NATO at risk, but having a close relationship and cooperation with Russia in the region. These factors strengthen Turkey's hand to claim herself a special position within the Alliance.

In state level, the loss of Ukraine is multidimensional as the economic, political, strategic and military consequences of the action are such heavy. According to Andrzej Wilk, fifty cities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine were located in Crimea and 57 vessels of the Ukrainian Navy were based in the peninsula while the annexation was being carried on and the transfer of them to Russian authorities is only a matter of time.¹³ The loss of these vessels means the loss of almost an entire navy, leaving only frigate *Hetman Sahaidachny* in Ukrainian authorities.¹⁴ Russian Federation gained full freedom to define the size and distribution of the BSF in Crimea as another concrete result of the annexation. The 1997 Treaty between Ukraine and Russia over the BSF had forced Russia to pay for the military base and restricted Russian forces to 2000 in the peninsula, but just after the annexation the number Russian soldiers rose to 22,000. Considering the littoral states of the Black Sea, it seems that Russia is supposed to become undisputed military power in Black Sea region.¹⁵

These concrete results should not leave the reality hidden behind the numbers. Ukraine forces were not able to respond Russian annexation of the peninsula due to the weakness of armed forces, insufficient support from the Western world and Ukraine's despair to fight against Russia. In addition, the annexation meant too much for the tension between the West and Russia, which is named by many¹⁶ as the footsteps of a possible Third World War.

First of all, the annexation of Crimea became a unique case that one part of a state has been taken in peace time by breaching all existing international agreements, especially by violating 1994 Budapest Memorandum.¹⁷ Thus, this move was indispensably understood by Georgia, Moldova and the Baltic States as a signal of foreseeable danger for their own territory. As Anna Dolya stated, Russia has demonstrated that it is capable of acting quickly and efficiently, whilst the international community has offered no other response than the imposition of sanctions on Russia.¹⁸

¹³ Andrzej Wilk, "The Military Consequences of the annexation of Crimea", *OSW*, 19 March 2014, p. 1.

¹⁴ Ukraine also lost 20% of her potential air forces and air defense that was located in the peninsula. In addition to that a small number of 15,000 Ukrainian soldiers who were Rapid Response Allied Forces went to the Russian side. **Source:** Andrzej Wilk, "The Military Consequences of the annexation of Crimea", *OSW*, 19 March 2014, p. 2.

¹⁵ Boris Toucas, "Russia's Design in The Black Sea: Extending the Buffer Zone", *Center for Strategic International Studies*, 28.06.2017, pp. 1-4.

¹⁶ Jonathan Vankin, "World War III: Vladimir Putin plotted Ukraine Invasion early as February 2014, New Report Says", *Inquisitr*, 22.02.2015.

¹⁷ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Budapest Memorandums on Security Assurances. 1994.

¹⁸ Anna Dolya, "The Annexation of Crimea: Lessons for European Security", *Foundation Robert Schuman*, European Issues Policy Paper, No. 382, p. 7.



Map 1: Updated Map of Black Sea Region¹⁹

NATO's Position after March 2014

Status quo change in Black Sea Region reinforced NATO to make a move in response to Russia's continuing efforts to use the peninsula vigorously. Russia was using Sevastopol for sending her vessels and aircrafts to Syria thanks to the modernization of her Black Sea Fleet since the annexation.

On this respect, NATO decided at Warsaw Summit in July 2016 to develop a "tailored forward presence (TFP) in the southeast part of the alliance territory", which means Bulgaria and Romania as both member and littoral states on the Black sea is going to assume this duty.²⁰ According to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg A Bulgarian-Romanian brigade is going to lead a multinational force in the region, which will pave way to an integrated response to deter Russia. Stoltenberg's visit to Bucharest and his encouragement of the south eastern allies for increasing their spending of the budget for the defense to 2%, necessary percentage according to NATO expectations, signaled the significance of the possession of the essential equipment by the Alliance members.²¹ However, Bulgaria is lagging behind with a 1.35 percent of spending in contrast to Romania with 1.5 percent in 2016.²²

In addition to these measures, NATO Defense Ministerial Meeting in February 2016 approved a maritime coordination and bolster NATO's presence in the Black Sea region "on land, at sea and

¹⁹ Boris Toucas, "NATO and Russia in the Black Sea: A New Confrontation?", *CSIS* <https://www.csis.org/analysis/nato-and-russia-black-sea-new-confrontation> Accessed on: 22 August 2017

²⁰ Kaitlin Lavinder, "NATO Zeros In on Black Sea Security", *The Cipher Brief*, 8 March 2017, p. 1.

²¹ "Secretary General in Bucharest: NATO is committed to Romania's Security", *NATO Web site*, 12 May 2016 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_130677.htm (Accessed 17.08.2017).

²² Lavinder, "NATO Zeros In on Black Sea Security", p. 2.

in the air".²³ In accordance with this goal the USA declared additional 500 forces to the Romanian Mihail Kogalniceanu forward operating base to demonstrate transatlantic unity. The UK's commitment to Alliance, although she is moving out of the EU, was certified by deployment of four typhoon aircrafts to MK base in 2017.²⁴ Thus, it became clear that NATO achieved to create a common vision in the region, but only to a certain extent.

Since NATO members that are also littoral states in Black Sea have their own visions it becomes a harsh job to organize single policy. Especially Bulgaria's reluctant stance in increasing her defense spending to 2% of the GDP and political elites' close relations with Russians create discussions during the decision-making process. Besides, although Turkey had difficulties in her relations with Russia due to the fighter jet crisis, she recently regenerated good relations. Both countries signed an air defense system contract despite NATO's warnings that the system is not compatible with Alliance's defense systems.²⁵ However, such problems do not prevent the Alliance to raise her voice against clear violation of international law. Despite problems among the members of the alliance, there are those who claim that NATO should expand its membership to Sweden and Finland as a response to Russian aggression in Eastern Europe. According to Kirk Wolf:

*"Consequently, the international system is now witnessing the single most important moment in NATO's history since the collective response to the 9/11 attacks. It is clear that continued sanctions in the vein of visa bans and asset freezes are no longer adequate responses to Putin's actions. In order to stave off further illegal expansion by an emboldened Russia, NATO must swiftly expand to include Finland and Sweden. Deciding not to expand NATO to include these Nordic States would represent a complete failure to learn the lessons of the last decade, which occurred as a result of the rejection of Ukraine and Georgia's attempts to join NATO. ... There is no better way to contain Russia than through expanding the alliance, the most effective collective defense organization in history and the historical counterbalance to Russo-Soviet expansionism."*²⁶

It seems that Russia's aggressive movements caused uneasiness in Nordic countries as well as Eastern European ones. Sweden and Finland began seeking close cooperation and defense agreements with Western counterparts.²⁷ Since Ukraine and Georgia have problems with territorial integrity, this action may be a factor clarifying NATO's determination to stand against Russia. However, NATO has already taken steps in Black Sea Region to show her determination to keep stability and counter Russia. In this regard:

- a) Maritime patrols were intensified in the Black Sea and surveillance AWACS flights arranged over eastern members' airspace,
- b) Distinctive Partnership Framework were used to adopt measures boosting Ukraine's ability to provide its own security,²⁸

²³ Boris Toucas, "NATO and Russia in the Black Sea: A New Confrontation?", CSIS <https://www.csis.org/analysis/nato-and-russia-black-sea-new-confrontation> Accessed on: 22 August 2017, pp. 1-3.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Selcan Hacaoğlu, "Turkey Chooses Russia Over NATO for Missile Defense", **Bloomberg**, 13 July 2017.

²⁶ Kirk Wolff, "Lessons From Crimea: The Way Forward for NATO", **Center for International Maritime Security**, 25.07.2017 <http://cimsec.org/lessons-crimea-way-forward-nato/33173> (Accessed 01.09.2017).

²⁷ Julian Borger, "Finland says it is nearing security deal with US amid concerns over Russia," **The Guardian**, 22.08. 2016.

²⁸ "Statement by NATO Foreign Ministers", **North Atlantic Treaty Organization**, 1 April 2014 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_108501.htm (Accessed 10.10. 2016)

- c) Training programs and joint exercises with UAF (Ukraine Armed Forces), provision of technical equipment to UAF, support for defense reforms strengthened Ukraine's hand,²⁹

Besides, similar cooperation has been held with Moldova and Georgia by providing funds to their defense projects. Thus, NATO withstands Russia's recent aggression that brought military dimension to the understanding of threat.³⁰

Russia's Position

Footsteps of Russia's annexation of Crimea can be found in Putin's recent years in presidency. Putin's *power vertical*³¹ which gave the president the power to define both domestic and foreign policy priorities paved the way for a more authoritarian and aggressive government.³² Especially after 2011-12 protests Russian ruling elite understood the domestic threat of unrest and turned their face a more comprehensive policy which has the capacity to bring Russians together. In this sense, "Russia embraced nationalism and positioned herself as the protector of the so-called 'Russian world' beyond its borders (including ethnic Russians and Russian-speakers in the former Soviet Union territories) and of the Orthodox faith."³³ Even after the annexation of the peninsula, Russia continued both strengthening her military forces and challenge the Western sanctions and other steps taken to protest Russia. In 2015, approximately 300,000 troops, 1,100 aircrafts and 280 ships took part in major snap exercises organized throughout Russian territory.³⁴

Since the only ports of Russia that does not freeze in the winter took place in Black Sea coasts, Russia increased usage of these ports for an easier trade and strengthened her Black Sea Fleet stationed in Crimea.³⁵ Despite all the sanctions by the West and the reports stating the deteriorating conditions for Crimean Tatars in the peninsula,³⁶ Russian modernization of the Black Sea Fleet was carried into effect in accordance with the Russian geopolitical thinking.³⁷

²⁹ "NATO flexes its muscle in response to Crimea crisis", *EurActiv*, 2 April 2014, last modified 8 January 2015, <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/global-europe/nato-flexes-its-muscle-response-crimea-crisis-301302> (Accessed 12.09.2016)

³⁰ Dimitrios Dagdeverenis, "NATO Response to Russia After Crimea: Consequences and Challenges for the European and International Security", Working Paper, *Bridging Europe*, No. 38, pp. 5-6.

³¹ The concept "Power Vertical" coined by Vladimir Putin to express re-centralization of the power in Russian politics. Empowering Russian president and federal center, vindicating the meaning of the concept "governing from the top", combined with the appointment of the loyal figures to the important state positions are key elements. Thus, regime moves away from democracy, all state institutions use its power to maintain Putin in power and overcome threats to his government. **Source:** Andrew Monaghan, "The Vertikal: Power and Authority in Russia", *International Affairs*, 88:1, 2012, pp. 1-16.

³² Ill-prepared Russian army tested in Chechnya War and intervention to Georgia in 2008 had given signal to Putin. 2011-2020 State armament program (SAP) and almost % 100 increases in Russian defense budget between 2005-2014 paved the way for a stronger Russian Armed Forces used in 2014 annexation.

³³ Lukasz Kulesa, "Russia and the West: Russia's Recent Assertiveness, Western Response, and What the Future May Hold", *Harvard International Review*, 03.01.2017, pp. 4-5.

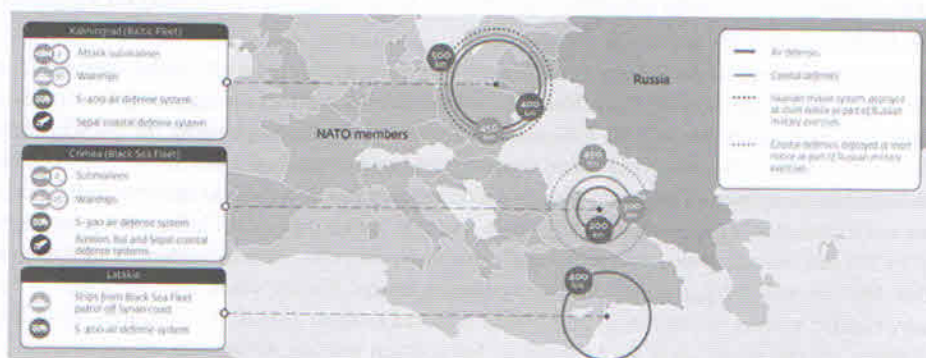
³⁴ Lukasz Kulesa, "Russia and the West: Russia's Recent Assertiveness, Western Response, and What the Future May Hold", p. 6.

³⁵ Janusz Bugajski and Peter B. Doran, "Black Sea Rising: Russia's Strategy in Southeast Europe", Black Sea Strategic Report No. 1, *Center for European Policy Analysis*, February 2016, p. 7-8.

³⁶ "Crimean Tatars: Society for Threatened Peoples Releases Report on Human Rights Violations in 2016", *Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization*, 28.02.2017 <http://unpo.org/article/19898> (Accessed 26.08.2017).

³⁷ For a detailed list of weapons stationed in Crimea after the annexation, please see: Nikolai Litovkin, "What Weapons Has Crimea Received After Reunification with Russia", *RBTH*, 21.03.2017 <https://www>.

Russia wiped out the possibility of removal of BSF from the peninsula through the annexation. Moreover, Moscow did not waste time to make Sevastopol a major hub of Russian military and geopolitical power projection. Matthew Bodner claims that whoever controls Crimea can easily assert a dominant position across the entire Black Sea region, which is home to several NATO member states and former Soviet republics that Moscow hopes to keep in its orbit.³⁸ Thanks to the capabilities of BSF Russia have the power to dominate the Black Sea Region vis-a-vis Turkey.



Map II: Russian Capabilities in the Region³⁹

In accordance with the SAP-2020 initiative the BSF has been allocated much of the funding, equivalent of 112.4 billion euros of the Russian defense budget, to upgrade old vessels and to commission 18 new warships⁴⁰ into the fleet.⁴¹ The SAP-2025 provisions foresee a stronger Russian navy, but it is a must to keep in mind that these projections depend on Russia's defense budget. Since the defense budget is tied to the prosperity of the country's oil and gas exports, a continuation of the projects necessitate a stable and rising oil and gas exports that cannot be guaranteed. However, it is certain that in case Russia reaches SAP-2020 and SAP-2025 targets, the BSF will have the power to maintain military dominance against perceived US and NATO threats in the region.

Consequences for the Regional Security

March 2014 became a milestone for the Black Sea Security through its effects on the region ranging from energy security, maritime security to unresolved territorial conflicts. Energy security remains on the top of the agenda because of the Europe's energy dependency on Russia, just like Turkey and Ukraine.

rbth.com/defence/2017/03/21/what-weapons-has-crimea-received-after-reunification-with-russia_724036 (Accessed 30.08.2017).

³⁸ Matthew Bodner, "Black Sea Rising: Rebirth of a Russian Fleet", *The Moscow Times*, 17.03.2016.

³⁹ IISS, *Russianships.info*, Center of the Analysis of Strategies and Technologies.

⁴⁰ These vessels are supposed to be as the following: 6 multi-purpose Admiral Grigorovich-class frigates, 1 or 2 high-sea multi-purpose Admiral Gorshkov-class frigates, 1 or 2 Yastreb-class frigates, 6 Kilo-class submarines, 1 or 2 Ivan Gren-class amphibious landing ships, and up to 4 missile corvettes for near-shore operations.

⁴¹ Alex Schneider, "Russia's Black Sea Fleet Buildup and Modernization", *Center for International Maritime Security*, 28.03.2017 <http://cimsec.org/russias-black-sea-fleet-buildup-modernization/31632> (Accessed 29.08.2017).

Ukraine had decreased gas imports from Russia from 45 bcm in 2011 to 28 bcm in 2013. The target was to end energy dependency in 2020 and become self-sufficient in 2035 with the help of the natural gas reserves⁴² offshore in the Black Sea.⁴³ Besides, political instability in Eastern Ukraine causes a continuing disorder which both alarms neighboring states and regional powers, and also pulls attention to Europe's third shale gas reserve of Yuzivska field in Donetsk and Kharkiv. Furthermore, this instability in the region beyond the annexation prevents regional countries to cooperate in energy. That is why, European countries look for alternative routes to carry oil and natural gas from Caspian Basin to Europe.⁴⁴

Second consequence of the annexation can be named as the threat of Russian aggression in the region, especially in the Baltics. Nobody can persuade us that these precautions are enough to deter Russia although the US, the UK and Canada provided valuable training for the Ukrainian Armed Forces to increase her self-defense capacity and first operational land-based NATO missile defense site completed in Romania. Russia's any possible attack on NATO-member Baltic states are not expected, but the annexation of Crimea was also unexpected in 2013. For this reason, NATO's Warsaw Summit ended with the radical decisions to empower eastern borders of the Alliance. But, Mueller and Shlapak claims that strengthening eastern frontier could ultimately lead to the very conflict it seeks to prevent, in case NATO is forced to apply Article V procedures. According to them "the real challenge is not an invasion, but political warfare, subversion, covert operations, salami-slicing tactics."⁴⁵ Thus, the annexation of Crimea has been commented as that Russia gained a southern Kaliningrad, very important launching pad facing both West and the South: the Balkans, Transnistria and the Danube Mouths; The Eastern Mediterranean.⁴⁶

Finally, timing of the annexation forced regional countries to cooperate on the one hand and on the other hand left them in turmoil. The EU is in crisis of identity and security because of the issues such as Brexit, refugee flow, need for a response to Russia. Besides, conditions in Syria and Iraq deteriorated with the ISIS expansion at that period. All these elements made the relations reorganized around the Black Sea.⁴⁷ Unresolved conflicts among Armenia&Azerbaijan, Georgia&Russia and Ukraine&Russia are already existent waiting for a spark for ignition. Thinking all these together with the democratic recession⁴⁸ across the globe will take us to the conclusion that any possible response to Russian aggression will pave the way for persistent militarization of the Black Sea. Russia, through her modernization of the BSF has already contributed to this process.

⁴² Natural gas reserves offshore in the Black Sea estimated as 4 to 11 trillion cm.

⁴³ <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2014/nato%ADenergy%ADsecurity%ADrunning%ADon%ADempty/Ukraine%ADenergy%ADindependence%ADgas%ADdependence%ADon%ADRussia/EN/index.htm> (Accessed 09.11.2016).

⁴⁴ Chi-Kong Chyong, Louisa Slavkova and Vessela Tcherneva, "Europe's Alternatives to Russian Gas", **European Council on Foreign Relations** http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_europes_alternatives_to_russian_gas311666 (Accessed 07.09.2017).

⁴⁵ Karl Mueller, David A. Shlapak et al., "In Defense of a Wargame: Bolstering Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank", **The RAND Commentary** 14.06.2016 <https://www.rand.org/blog/2016/06/in-defense-of-a-wargame-bolstering-deterrence-on-natos.html> (Accessed 25.10.2016).

⁴⁶ European Parliament Report, 21.05.2015 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A8-2015-0171+0+DOC+PDF+V0/EN> (Accessed 02.09.2017).

⁴⁷ Mitat Çelikpala and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, "The Changing Face of Black Sea Security", **PONARS Eurasia**, 31.05.2016.

⁴⁸ For a better understanding of democratic recession in Russia, in relation with the annexation of Crimea, please see: Andrei Kolesnikov, "Russian Ideology After Crimea", **Carnegie Moscow Center**, September 2015.

Conclusion

The rise of the Russian Federation to superpower status in 2000s did not ruin Post-Cold War Western concept of a Europe "one, whole and free" until 2014. However, the annexation of Crimea created a setback to the Western projections for Eurasian relations in the Post-Cold War process.

Once more since 1990 Russia emerged as a threat and this time the meaning of threat included military dimension, too. Regardless of what will happen in the close future especially eastern members of the Alliance have to live together with the threat of a Russian military aggression. Thus, the Black Sea Region emerges as a maneuver area for the confrontation between the West and Russian Federation. Three littoral states are members of NATO and other two as aspirants guarantee that NATO remains the cornerstone of both European and Black Sea Security. The annexation through violating all international norms excluded Russia from the formation of European Security Architecture. There is no doubt that frozen disagreements such as Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Transnistria problem and others now have much potential to escalate into hot war compared to pre-annexation period.