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‘THREE SEAS’ AREA PAN-REGIONAL SECURITY PROVISIONS AND ITS GEOPOLITICAL CONSEQUENCES – SECURITY DILEMMA VS. SECURITY DEADLOCK

Abstract:

The geostrategic area that generally could be labelled as the ‘Three Seas’ (TSI) pan-region (Baltic Sea-Adriatic Sea-Black Sea geostrategic space) has already been described as a hotspot and as an unstable zone caused by interference of not only global but also regional hegemon powers. The main cause of instability by the global power actors is defined as being described as a ‘New Cold War’ game where Eastern and Central Europe as well as the Black Sea zone are becoming a new geostrategic ‘Rimland’ for the game. The area is the primary sphere of major interests for political regional organizations, including the EU and NATO, with increasing importance of the area from a geostrategic standpoint. The instability clause is being inspired by new challenges – violent non-state actors (like DAESH, Al-Qaida, etc.), black transit transactions (drug and arms smuggling), all types of terrorist entities, separatism war-gamers, low intensified conflicts, violent human rights violations, etc. All of these factors lead toward the emergence of a hybrid warfare concept r in regional security stability. Asymmetric challenges imposed by hybrid warfare initiators caused more. Unfortunately all these new challenges cause the development of new types of security infringement with involvement of non-state actors in regional geopolitics can be newly identified as ‘National Security Deadlock’ – political ruleship of the country and special conditions of political condition when any decision taken by the political leadership more increases risks occasion from internal as well as external

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origins. The jargon introduced and invented by the author of the abstract, namely linked with the situation in the geostrategic area, including the Caucasus region. even actors of international security systems also inflame the situation in the region and reach up to a level of security dilemma. Hence, two security challenges are competing at the area and causing the most dangerous situation on the spot.

Keywords:

National Security Deadlock, New Cold War, Three Seas Concept, hybrid warfare, Maritime Dominance, 'Fourth generation war', Rimland, violent non-state actors, Al-Qaida.

Introduction

Launched in 2015 by Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović and Polish President Andrzej Duda, the initiative creates a political platform to promote connectivity among nations in Central and Eastern Europe by supporting infrastructure, energy, and digital interconnectivity projects. The initiative gets its name from the three seas that border the region: the Baltic, Black, and Adriatic Seas. The twelve states that are part of the initiative are Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The Three Seas Initiative aims at stimulating more rapid development of the region stretching between the Baltic, Black and Adriatic Seas³. This is to be achieved through both high level and multi-stakeholder commitment to boosting connectivity among Member States, with special focus on infrastructure, energy and digital interconnectivity. In addition to that, an initiative in July 2017 was created as a Business Forum with the objective of bringing together economic entities interested in economic cooperation, aimed at enhancing economic bonds within the region⁴. this approach is setting a new dynamic of cooperation among the countries lying at the Eastern border of the EU on the North – South Axis that will advance economic growth and help to bridge the East – West economic gap, within the EU. The four main features of the cooperation are outlined here:

1. The Initiative seeks to contribute to the economic development of Central and Eastern Europe through infrastructure connectivity, mainly but not exclusively on the North-South axis, in three main fields — transport, energy and digital;
2. The second objective is to increase real convergence among EU Member States, thereby contributing to enhanced unity and cohesion

³ D. A. Wemer, *The Three Seas Initiative Explained*, <<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/the-three-seas-initiative-explained-2/>> (31.12.2019).

⁴ *Three Seas Initiative Summit*, Bucharest 17-18.09.2018, <<http://three-seas.eu/>> (31.12.2019).

within the EU. This approach avoids artificial East-West divides and further stimulate EU integration;

3. The Initiative is intended to contribute to the strengthening of transatlantic ties. The US economic presence in the region provides a catalyst for an enhanced transatlantic partnership;
4. The initiative is being supported by the USA entirely and concluded as a key instrument to promote Trans-Atlantic solidarity with the European allies. The enormous financial aid would be invested into concrete project realization, probably LNG delivery and other ones. Moreover, the USA overwhelmingly provides support to the 'Three Seas Initiative' in order to curb the Russian sponsored 'International North-South Transport Corridor' propounded in the aegis of informal cooperation Russia-Azerbaijan-Iran involving the official national railway transport network. Informally the corridor labels as Estonian-Azerbaijani corridor as Estonia joined the North-South transport corridor in November 2016⁵ and subsequently the joint Estonian-Azerbaijani parliamentary group has been formed in the Estonian Parliament together with joint Intergovernmental Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation⁶.

Three Sea Initiatives Project in the context of the 'Fourth Generation War': A New Era of Warfare for Maritime Dominance

Confrontation between states has happened through various strategies and tactics over the years. The form and character of the confrontation gradually changes and becomes more flexible. Consequently, a significant challenge to determining real threats is the study of the new forms of conflict, tactics and instruments to ensure the correct response to it and the improvement of a defence policy concept.

One of the foremost national interests of the hegemonic players in the international arena has always been to maintain or increase power at the regional or pan-regional level. To achieve this, as William S. Lind⁷, author of *The Fourth Generation War*, explains, humanity has waged three different generations of wars, and now, with the convention war, more sophisticated tactics have been added. "...[The fourth generation war] – an evolved form of insurgency that employs all available networks – political, economic, social,

⁵ *Estonia Joining North-South International Transport Corridor*, <https://azertag.az/en/xeber/Estonia_joining_North_South_international_transport_corridor-1013829> (31.12.2019).

⁶ L. Mamedova, *Estonia, Azerbaijan May Expand Ports Cooperation*, <<https://menafn.com/1098560512/Estonia-Azerbaijan-may-expand-ports-cooperation>> (31.12.2019).

⁷ W. S. Lind, K. Nightengale, J. F. Schmitt, J. W. Sutton, G. I. Wilson, *The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation*, "Marine Corps Gazette", October 1989, pp. 22-26.

military – to convince an opponent’s decision makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly.”

Although there is a dispute between military analysts over the term, what is mentioned as a fourth-generation war and conventional war combined with asymmetric threats can be defined as a unified/hybrid warfare⁸.

According to NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, the hybrid threat is not a new one, ”Hybrid is the dark reflection of our comprehensive approach. We use a combination of military and non-military means to stabilize countries. Others use it to destabilize them”⁹.

However, it is the fact that the international security system is exactly threatened by the novelty of using these new combinations and tactics, which aimed at destabilization, in such a way that it is difficult to prove its culpability. The reality is not unambiguous and the margin declines.

Nowadays, when we are dealing with the protection of national interests, and defending it from the dangers of hybrid warfare, one of the main challenges of the countries is Russia's foreign policy and the campaign to establish regional revisionism and international influence.

It is no doubt that in the post-Cold War era, the struggle for influence certainly continues. During this period, there was a clear manifestation of Russia's soft (non-military) power and the disintegration of state institutions through groups loyal to the Kremlin on the territory concerned, which in turn weakened the country's economic, political and social system overall.

Experts think that the future threat from Russia is that it has several sectorial dominances, giving it the power to manipulate. Russia’s strategy is based on this principle, to be inconsistent in some particular aspects. For example, Russia's foreign policy, which is considered to be formed according to the so-called ‘Gerasimov Doctrine’, includes a classic example of hybrid warfare tactics and actions.

According to this doctrine, open military action can only be taken at a stage when certain political goals are achieved through non-military action and the ultimate success of the conflict is required. Therefore, it is interesting to study why Russia needed to use this fourth-generation war tactic first in Georgia in 2008 and then in Ukraine in 2014? what final plan did Russia have for these conflicts? We suppose, that one of the determinants of this may be maritime dominance. Maritime dominance is an excellent scenery for hybrid warfare, mixing psychological warfare with kinetic covert operations.

⁸ W. S. Lind, J. F. Schmitt, G. I. Wilson, *Fourth Generation Warfare: Another Look*, “Marine Corps Gazette”, December 1994, p. 35.

⁹ J. Stoltenberg, *Keynote speech by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the opening of the NATO Transformation Seminar*, <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_118435.htm> (31.12.2019).

As mentioned above, a hybrid threat is not only a threat to one country, but also a global one. It is a clear confirmation that Russia continues to build military bases on annexed or occupied territories, which is a real threat not only to the region, but also to the entire Black Sea region.

After the war between Russia and Georgia in 2008, the 7th Abkhazian military base was formed in the town of Gudauta, as a result of the reform of the 58th Army and 131st Brigade. In addition, the military bases of the Southern Military District are located in Transcaucasia – on the Occupied Territories of Georgia – 4th base Tskhinvali region – in Tskhinvali and Java. The military units and units of the Southern Military District are located in three administrative units of the Russian Federation – the South, the North Caucasus and on the annexed territory of Ukrainian Crimea – since 2014.

Map 1: The 'Three Seas Initiative' concept.



Source: Own work.

As a political counsellor, Boris Toucas has analyzed Russia's behaviour in the Black Sea Region, the purpose of its hybrid warfare for the Russia Crimea is a military source, on the other side he doubted, that Turkey is a stronghold for Russia, and the Turkish Strait is a strategic outpost. On this basis, the ultimate goal for Russia is to gain access and military presence in the eastern

Mediterranean, as to balance the U.S. and NATO expansion eastward, and its presence in the Aegean and central Mediterranean¹⁰.

Before we start thinking about this scenario, given the nature of hybrid war itself, it is necessary to focus not on the ways in which Russia achieves its results, but on the consequences. Political actions are often dictated by economic factors.

Whenever there were security issues with Russia in the region, one of the solutions was energy independence and the elimination of manipulation leverage.

Eastern Europe and partly Central Europe have always been a direct target of the Russian empire, a space where the Kremlin has always wanted to keep its feet firm. For the last 300 years this space has always been vulnerable to Russian political and economic influences. During the Soviet period, the region was governed directly by Moscow directives.

The source of Russia's manipulation is gas, economics and propaganda, there is a big difference between Central Europe and Eastern Europe, and they are on different planes.

The severity of the issue lies in the fact that the agenda of the new threat to its core include components, which require a response on a global scale. However, until now the majority of the measures taken were on the local level and were not mistaken from international security policy.

During the report we will focus on developing an international uniform approach for the 'Three Seas Initiatives' member countries as well as for Eastern and western European countries for effective response to threats due to hybrid warfare. For security purposes, we will consider efforts to elaborate a coordinated strategy and unite public opinion.

As we have seen, the idea of TSI emerged soon after Russia's annexation of Crimea, which indicates that member states not only want to overcome communist-era legacies but also that a good number of them are motivated by the desire to create an alternate trading block that would mitigate reliance on Russia.

Poland's former first Minister for European Integration, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski¹¹ acknowledged that regional strategic cooperation is beneficial for all parties involved and for Europe as a whole – but he rejected the idea of a military alliance. He argued that such an alliance would provoke Russia to test the TSI's seriousness and also, it would erode the deterrent effect of the Atlantic alliance.

¹⁰ B. Toucas, *The Geostrategic Importance of the Black Sea Region: A Brief History*, <<https://www.csis.org/analysis/geostrategic-importance-black-sea-region-brief-history>> (31.12.2019).

¹¹ J. Saryusz-Wolski, *In between security arrangements: the Trojan horse of military Intermarium*, <<https://warontherocks.com/2017/10/in-between-security-arrangements-the-trojan-horse-of-military-intermarium/>> (31.12.2019).

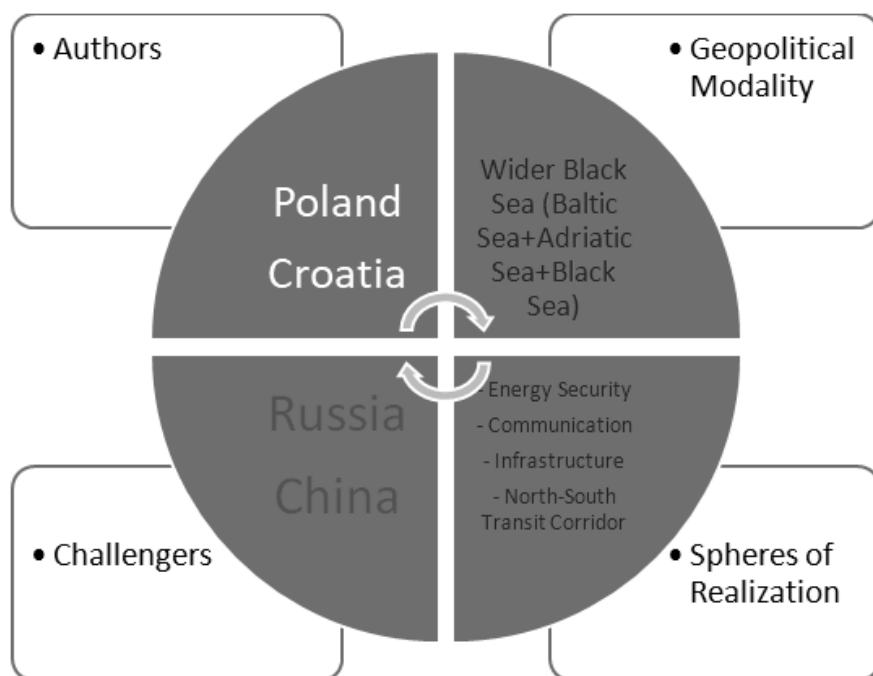
On the other side, Russia wants to portray itself as an unpredictable power capable of an all-out attack, in reality, as we have mentioned before it has preferred hybrid methods and avoided open military confrontation. Even in the turmoil of early 2014, Russia used 'little green men' without insignia to occupy Crimea, it still does not admit its military presence in Donbas and continues to claim that soldiers spotted there are more volunteers. It behaves in this way as the covert operation would likely view an open military attack as a red line, making business as usual with Russia impossible. Based on this, the primary goal of TSI members must be to deal jointly with hybrid threats. The majority of TSI states are, to varying extents, dependent on energy supplies from single supplier: Russia. Consequently, the objective is to reduce reliance on hydrocarbon imports from the Russian Federation and bolster the energy security of members by diversifying the regional market's energy supply and facilitating new gas-related initiatives.

The initiative has been proposed in order to promote a whole spectrum of security provisions including political, economic, military, social and information, in the three sea area but also in real cases for the promotion of geopolitical stability in the so-called 'Wider Black Sea' region, encompasses namely these three seas: Black Sea (itself), Adriatic Sea and Baltic Sea. Moreover, the initiative has a very solid historic background and the one has not been introduced accidentally but with configuration and due to concrete geopolitical reality. The initiative has three main pre-historic background that are to be identified as follow:

1. the Prometheus Project launched in 1934 in Poland, aimed at creating an anti-Bolshevik coalition among the nations of the Caucasus, Balkans and East European regions;
2. The EU sponsored special geoeconomic project TRACECA and launched in 1992 promoting West-East transport corridor and enhancement global trade and economic development;
3. The regional security initiative, GUAM endorsed by the Georgian side (one of the authors of the initiative was Professor Vakhtang Maisaia, by that time he used to be President Shevardnadze's Chief State Advisor on Caucasus Regional Security Affairs in 1997-1999) and promoted four states: Georgia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Moldova.

It is possible to create a special matrix of the 'Three Seas Initiative' geopolitical identification as shown below:

Figure 1: 'Three Seas Initiative' matrix.



Source: Own work.

The Black Sea Region is one of the main factors in the make-up of security and stability in Europe and Asia. In addition to the numerous other issues in the region, ethnic conflicts, ongoing state-building processes, the presence of vast natural resources, and strategic transport and energy corridors means that the region is an extremely important and sensitive area.

In geographical terms it is difficult to specify the boundaries of the Black Sea Region, since there are numerous regional and sub-regional structures. In the post-Cold War period, there has been a large measure of openness to several neighbouring areas, such as the Mediterranean, the Balkans, and the Caspian region. This kind of openness makes it difficult to define both the nature of the region and its borders. It is reflected in terms such as Black-Caspian Seas Region and Black-Mediterranean Seas Region. Some analysts have even argued that the Black Sea Region is simply an intellectual invention. In order to avoid confusion, this policy report is based on the definition adopted by the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC).

At the end of the Cold War, the states around the Black Sea regained their freedom and escaped from a bipolar conceptual straitjacket. This historical event not only marked the start of a move towards independence, democracy and market economy, but also unleashed hitherto suppressed ethnic, national and territorial conflicts, and even terrorism. From the early 1990s onwards the region witnessed armed conflicts and an increase in political tension. Political and territorial disagreements such as border disputes and clashes between both peoples and states are the main reason why the prospects for regional security cooperation are rather bleak. The Black Sea basin was of secondary importance for the Euro-Atlantic community during the 1990s as it focused on stabilizing and integrating central and eastern European countries from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

However, in the 21st century the changing global and regional balances created new political and security dilemmas for the Black Sea Region. The global and regional powers increasingly supported competing political and security agendas which, although they occasionally contradicted each other, were clearly interlinked.

After 11 September 2001, the US increased its involvement in the region, for example with new programs in Georgia and Ukraine. This went hand in hand with the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) enlargement processes and global political developments. The differing approaches to the creation of security and stability in the region led to tension and rivalry between the regional actors.

In the post-Cold War period, the Black Sea Region failed to develop a cooperative security vision or structure in which the regional actors would have been the principal stakeholders. The Russian-Georgian War in August 2008 showed quite clearly that the initiatives designed to pacify the region had not produced a security system capable of preventing or containing internal and interstate conflicts. One lesson that can be learned from the August 2008 crisis is that the interplay of regional and global forces will continue to dominate future political and military issues in the region. It remains to be seen whether the war in August 2008 will lead to a new cooperative security environment in the Black Sea Region. Finally, all kinds of security issues ranging from energy security to environmental degradation and from terrorism to illegal trafficking in arms, human beings and drugs continue to be unresolved as a result of international rivalry.

Another important issue is energy security. The need to achieve energy supply diversity on the one hand and the risks associated with energy dependency on Russia on the other show the importance of gas and oil from other sources being piped to the European markets through the region. The energy dispute between Russia and Ukraine in late 2008 and early 2009 clearly illustrated the importance of energy security for the region and the EU. In addition to exploration, production and transport-related problems, oil and

natural gas have become one of the main security issues in the Black Sea Region, which as the principal energy transit route, is also a testing ground for the interaction between producer, consumer and transit countries. This means that the region is not only a potential hub. There are also numerous rivalries.

Finally, a number of problems associated with soft security issues which range from environmental concerns to the potential for social unrest and economic collapse need to be analyzed, especially if there is a likelihood that they will disrupt political stability and security in the region. Potential destabilizing threats such as the global financial crisis also need to be kept under review, as does the impact of the crisis on the countries in the region or on the redefinition of the roles of the regional powers, and the opportunities arising from a redefinition of the global economic environment.

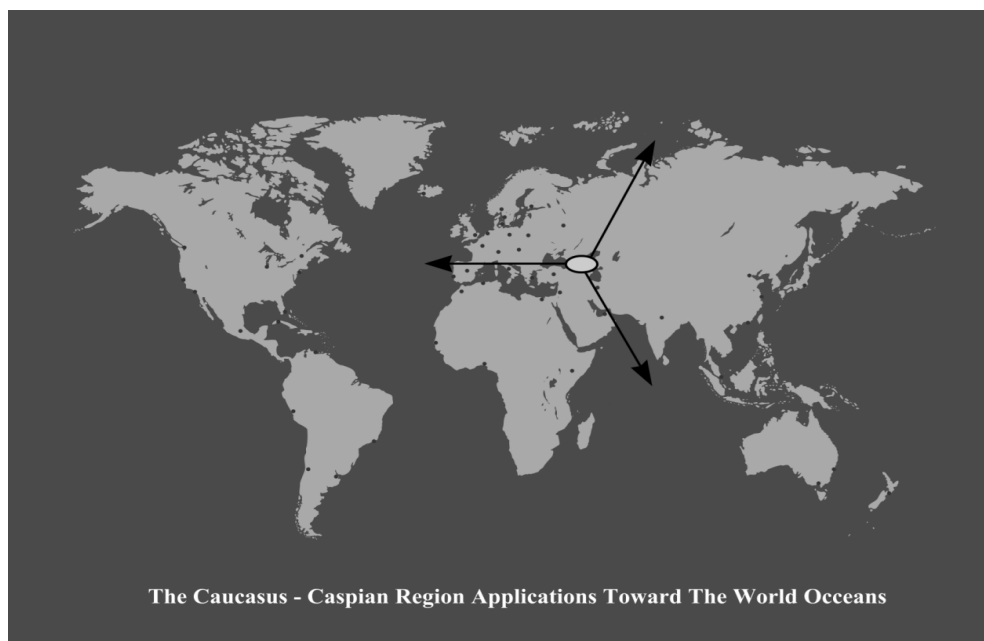
By and large, the Black Sea region is also increasing of geoeconomic importance especially with regard to developing energy security provisions in aegis of the European Union via the import and providing transit opportunities from the Caspian Basin, Middle East and Central Asia and becoming some kind of energy gateway that is so important for providing and fostering security and stability implications in the Pan-European Area. It is interesting to underpin that energy security in the Wider Black Sea region is defined by the concrete scientific and academic analytical school approaches reflected in international relations, like interdependence theory¹².

Geopolitical Classification of the Black Sea Region – Wider Black Sea Implication for the World Politics

The above mentioned passage depicted geographical implications for the Black Sea region, but due to the geopolitical transmission and transformation after bipolar system demolition in contemporary international relations, regional security has increased steadily. There are several indications why the region has become so important and unique in the post Cold War period; first of all, the very unique geopolitical implication of the region. The region is primarily accessible to the 'Three Oceans' line (Nord, Atlantic and Indian Oceans – see Map 2) via the gateways of the Black Sea Basin, the Persian Gulf and Central Eurasia. Moreover, concrete geopolitical determinants of importance within the region are considered with three main criteria having pure geopolitical meaning.

¹² I. Chifu, A. Sauliuc, B. Nedea, *Energy Security Strategies in the Wider Black Sea Region*, Bucharest 2010, p. 9.

Map 2: The Black Sea Region applicability toward 'Three Oceans' line.



Source: Own work.

These unique geopolitical indications are sought to be as following:

1. Combination of three concepts: Talasokratia + Telurokratia + Montekratia;
2. 'Eurasian Balkan' acronym for spurring new asymmetric challenges;
3. Key international energy gateway providing unlimited delivery of energy resources to international markets.

Nevertheless the geopolitical implication is only at the so-called 'macro' level of analysis and is fitted to Pan-regional classification and global political relevance of the region. In order to provide a so-called 'micro' level of analysis and importance of the region in aegis of the regional and local implications there are some approaches to make classification of the Black Sea region. The classification is based on classical geopolitical identification, similar to that of British geopolitical school founder, Professor Halford Mackinder's 'Heartland Theory'. According to his theory Mackinder divided the global geopolitical system into three main territorial areas: 'Pivot Area' (or another way 'Heartland'), 'Inner or Marginal Crescent' and 'Lands of the Outer or Insular Crescent'¹³. Even Mackinder endorsed simplistic dictum based on which he identified the then world order: "Who rules East Europe commands the

¹³ G. O'Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: the Politics of Writing Global Space*, London 1996, p. 33.

Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island commands the World”¹⁴.

In this respect, based on classical geopolitical methodology it is possible to define geopolitical identification of the Black Sea region. Having considered the above-mentioned passage, it is necessary to figure out the following possible configuration. The configuration is clearly identified regional geopolitical architecture in three concrete circles, similar to that of the British classical geopolitical school approach:

- Black Sea Basin – ‘Inner Core Ring’ – namely six littoral states of the Black Sea itself (Bulgaria, Turkey, Ukraine, Georgia, Russian Federation);
- Black Sea Region – ‘Outer Core Ring’ – the land and seascape from the Balkans to the Caucasus and from Ukrainian and Russian steppe to Anatolia;
- Wider Black Sea Region (Area) – ‘Close Outer Ring’ – the territory encompasses the following geopolitical spaces MENA, Caspian Basin, South and Eastern Europe.

Considering the geopolitical classification is important to clarify the dispositional characteristics of the regional ‘circles’. The scheme means demonstrating true geopolitical content each of the ‘circles’ – for instance, Black Sea Basin associated with ‘Talassokratia’¹⁵ geopolitics, Black Sea Region – associated with ‘Montecracy’¹⁶ geopolitics and Wider Black Sea Area (Region) – associated with ‘Telurokratia’¹⁷ geopolitics. Roughly, this is the geopolitical modality of the Black Sea region and following the British geopolitical school founder Mackinder’s dictum is very possible to create the same version for the regional dimension and if the dictum exists, the one is to be as follow: “Who rules Black Sea Basin commands the Eurasia (Post-Soviet Space); who rules Black Sea Region commands the Pan-Europe; who rules Wider Black Sea Region commands the World Politics”.

This interesting approach contains historical provisions detrimentally influencing the regional geopolitics. The most important and critical challenge is the fact that there are a large number of actors and clashing interests within the Black Sea Region. In security terms the region suffers from several historical legacies. The Black Sea Region used to be treated as a ‘passive area’ and analyzed as the periphery of more significant geographical units. Thus the Black Sea basin has been variously described as the backyard of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, as an extension of Soviet zone of influence, as the frontier of Europe, and, finally, as the extension of the Mediterranean world.

¹⁴ R. D. Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography*, New York 2013, p. 74.

¹⁵ Talassokratia – geopolitical means sea power domain in politics.

¹⁶ Montecracy – geopolitical jargon implies influence of mountainous geographic terrain on foreign political and military strategic decisions.

¹⁷ Telurokratia – geopolitical jargon means land power domain in politics.

Moreover, the existence of several distinct sub-regions within the Black Sea Region, i.e. the Caucasus, the Balkans and to a certain extent the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, is another factor that destabilizes the area. Time and again sub-regional identities have prevented the emergence of a Black Sea identity, created instability, and impeded the establishment of a comprehensive regional security framework. There are both regional and non-regional actors in the Black Sea Region, and three principal actors exert varying degrees of influence on the available security policy options (reflection of the passage is below). At present time, The Black Sea region is becoming very important to world markets because it has large oil and gas reserves that are only now beginning to be fully developed (taking into consideration the energy resources of Azerbaijan, the Ukraine, Romania, Russia, transit potency of Georgia, Bulgaria, Turkey and a very closed disposition toward the Caspian Basin). Developing these resources has resulted in competition both between companies to get the contracts to develop this potential, and between nations to determine the final export routes.

According to experts of the RAND Corporation the Caspian oil potential today is 2% of the world's total (Venezuela has one-fourth of such reserves; Iraq, one-seventh; and Saudi Arabia, one-seventeenth). Therefore, the Caspian Sea region's oil and gas potential and the Black Sea region's transition ability have attracted much attention since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Due to the unique geopolitical location, the Black Sea region interlines four very important areas: the Middle East, the Central Europe, the Central Asia and Western Europe thus more raising political status of the region for the international society. The nations in the Black Sea region and nearby "gateways" (term used by the American scientist Saul B. Cohen¹⁸ and in this context means geographical one for key passages of the Black Sea for shipping of oil and gas)-the Caucasus – Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Turkey, Romania, Russia, Bulgaria are already major energy producers and exporters, and production will increase with additional investment, technology, and the development of new export outlets. The Caspian Sea is 700 miles long and contains 6 separate hydrocarbon basins. However, the importance of the Caspian Sea strategic reserves is difficult to consider by exclusion of the South-East Europe and the South Caucasus regions. The South Caucasus' strategic importance cannot be overestimated: it is a link between the North and the South (Russia and the Persian Gulf), it is a source of oil and gas for the European and Pacific markets¹⁹. Besides one should perceive the regional geopolitical perspective. The Caucasus has an important geopolitical role to play as a link between the North and the South (Central Eurasia, which is Russia, and the Middle East) and the West and the East (Western Europe-the Balkans-the Caucasus-Central Asia-Southeast Asia-the Far East). The true

¹⁸ D. Minix, S. Hawley, *Global Politics*, New York 1998, pp. 50-51.

¹⁹ V. Maisaia, *The Caucasus-Caspian Regional and Energy Security Agendas – Past, Contemporary and Future Geopolitics: View from Georgia*, Brussels 2007, pp. 15-17.

mechanism of managing resources distribution requires stable and cohesive political stability. It drives all nations to engage into a new relationship mechanism and by joint effort to build democratic, free-minded societies and rigid statehood. Otherwise to say the broader Black Sea-Caspian-Central Asian dimension, bringing in all countries of the Black Sea and Caspian Sea, would be based on the existing mechanism of the Organization for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) of which the countries of the Caucasus and the South-East Europe are members. The BSEC organization itself would be upgraded operationally, with full membership now appropriate for the EU in view of the status of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey as accession candidates, and possible association links with the South Caucasus as well as their membership in NATO. institutionalization might lay the foundation for further development of the Black Sea reserves in order to benefit all participating nations and societies. This is a real chance for the the success of regionalization, achieving integrative negotiation ends.

Conclusion

The hybrid challenge is of great concern to most Wider Black Sea nations. A comprehensive coordinated strategy is needed, involving both NATO and EU countries as well as the institutions themselves. The structural and functional recommendations described here could form the building blocks of such a strategy and provide a framework for stopping hybrid action in the future.

The main option is that, if you can achieve maritime dominance by the contemporary, fourth generation war tactics, you can have influence in many dimensions.

Due to the revisionist policies of hegemons in the international arena, it is difficult to prevent events, however it is possible. The main thing is to get ready. Although the Three Seas Initiative is more economic in nature, if it succeeds, it can be one of the strongest leverage points in terms of security and a dignified response to the hybrid threats.

To summarize, the biggest challenges in opening-up the Black Sea Regional frontier today are still remaining and these are the resolution of offshore maritime boundaries, petroleum legislation and economics (getting oil and gas to the market). The region has a highly complex geographical and political landscape, as is so often the case where individually one country's political leadership's decisions and activities is not enough and results in a National Security Deadlock.

Only by addressing these issues the countries can seriously come together and reap the benefits of political partnerships, trade balance, security of supply and revenue/taxation/fiscal balance.

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