
Analysis : Black Sea Rivalry.

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Taken in their totality, security dynamics in and around the Black Sea littoral exhibit a stark dualism. To the south and west, we see a picture of progressive advance, despite substantial (if gradually eroding) impediments to both democracy and security. Romania and Bulgaria entered the EU in 2007 and NATO in 2004, thereby accepting those organizations' recommendations for democratic governance in politics, economics, and defense. Further east and south, Turkey has made significant political and economic progress since the AKP (Party of Justice and Development) government took over in 2002, again despite substantial obstacles to economic, civil-military, and legal reforms.

Nonetheless, Turkey's democratic odyssey remains incomplete. Its application for EU membership evidently has stalled, due mainly to a growing mutual disaffection of the parties. Turkey's differences with the EU over Cyprus, along with its refusal to confront the "Armenian genocide" of 1915, or to recognize current Armenia, also impede its full European integration. (1) These policies hold Turkey back in European eyes and cast doubts upon the depth of Turkey 's democratization because of its refusal to confront its own history.

Similarly, Russia's refusal to confront its past adds greatly to the general suspicion in which Russian objectives are held, and not only in the Baltics.

Turkey's inability to deal with Armenia both reflects and contributes to the continuing instability of the South Caucasus on the Black Sea's eastern littoral. Indeed, throughout the South Caucasus we see internal struggles among and within states, notably the ongoing Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and Georgia's internal conflicts with separatist, Russian-supported South Ossetia and Abkhazia that are integral to its tense relations with Moscow. Russo-Georgian relations are so bad that an actual armed clash is neither inconceivable nor a remote possibility, even though there has been a recent improvement in relations. (2) In the last six months alone we have seen armed Georgian actions against the Russian-supported insurgents; Georgian arrests of Russian agents who were planning a coup; Russian economic sanctions against Georgia; Moscow's deportation of Georgians from Russia; Russian-backed talk of invoking a Kosovo precedent to detach Abkhazia and South Ossetia from Georgia; and Russian-backed referenda in those two provinces that came out in favor of independence.

Moving north and west, we see Ukraine's government torn apart by incessant political warfare between Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, President Viktor Yushchenko, their supporters, and the third party maneuverings of Yulia Tymoshenko. Despite progress in democratization, the conflict in Moldova with Russian-supported secessionists in Transnistria has made almost no progress toward resolution. (3) Finally, Russo-NATO tensions over energy, NATO exercises in the Black Sea, the "frozen" conflicts in Moldova and the Caucasus, Russia's use of energy as a weapon of political intimidation, rising American and NATO interest in the Black Sea, and Western military bases in Bulgaria and Romania all contribute to the overall deterioration of East-West relations.

Geostrategic and Geopolitical Rivalry Thus, we can see two or more security paradigms in the Black Sea. But, only one of them offers a positive prospect of enhanced security, democracy, and prosperity. Moreover, Bulgaria and Romania confirm that democratization with the incentive of membership in NATO and the EU and integration into Europe is, in fact, the best kind of security policy. (4) These paradigms of Black Sea security duly comprise both hard security and issues of governance and ideology, the stuff of political and economic organization of states. Not surprisingly, "It is notable that the EU and Russia are trying to create multiple, common European policy spaces for almost everything except the most fundamental of all - democracy and human rights. It is not hard to guess at the reason."

(5) Russia's paradigm of unilateralist opposition to any multilateral or Westernizing (and Moscow equates the two) democratization and security processes consigns the Black Sea's northern and eastern littoral to unending suspended conflicts, backward and anti-democratic regimes, and numerous hard and soft security challenges. Apart from the so called "frozen conflicts," Moscow's refusal to cooperate with the investigation into the recent case where a Russian man was caught smuggling weapons-grade uranium from Russia into Georgia exemplifies all the hard and soft security risks facing the littoral states: proliferation; smuggling of all kinds of contraband (including prostitutes), drugs and weapons; illegal immigration; and general criminality. (6) It is well known that the port of Odesa and the Transnistrian rump state protected by Russia are havens of smuggling. (7)

Moscow's concurrent efforts to dominate the energy trade in the CIS and southeastern Europe and to use the gas weapon against states resisting Russian pressure (such as Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, and Azerbaijan), while excluding rival producers (like Turkmenistan) from the Turkish market, as well as its previous opposition to the recently opened Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, further highlight the centrality of energy security in this inter-civilizational zone and international energy thoroughfare. Russia's efforts at blackmail and intimidation by using the energy card, along with its energy firms' government connections and known association with intelligence and criminal organizations raise the specter of an orchestrated campaign to corrupt and undermine the foundations of democratic government in Eastern Europe more generally, not just in the Caucasus and the Balkans. (8) It is no coincidence that American analysts like Bruce Jackson repeatedly proclaim the existence of a so-called "soft war" by Russia against western influence in Eastern Europe, including in the Black Sea zone. (9) Increasingly, we also encounter not just a soft war, but a more classical geopolitical rivalry between Washington and the West on the one hand, and Moscow on the other. Moscow's renewed attacks on American bases in the region and its opposition to Bulgaria's and Romania's overall pro-western foreign policy orientation are a major part of this rivalry. Russian military spokesmen describe these new bases and potential new missions, including missile defense and power projection into the Caucasus or Central Asia, as threats directed against Russian interests, especially as NATO now has made clear that it takes issues like pipeline security in the Caucasus very seriously. (10) Russian resistance likely will grow geometrically if stated US intentions of collaborating with Ukraine on missile defense materialize. (11)

Similarly, despite talk of Russo-NATO cooperation, Moscow decided to block NATO participation in Operation Active Endeavor, the naval exercises in the Black Sea. Those exercises were directed against precisely the kinds of soft security threats that plague the Black Sea littoral, as enumerated above. Here Moscow supported Ankara's insistence that the Montreux Treaty forbade the use of naval ships in moving through the straits for such exercises even in peacetime, although the Russian military was surprisingly enthusiastic about participating in Operation Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean. (12)

Nonetheless, Russia displayed this enthusiasm only after attempting to impose special conditions on its participation in this exercise, which has been a highly successful centerpiece of NATO members' anti-terrorist naval cooperation since 2001: "Russia had wanted to exempt its own commercial vessels from mutual inspection procedures - the lynchpin of the operation. Then it demanded that 'Active Endeavor' be governed by the NATO-Russia Council, even as it asked the alliance to pay for Russian participation. NATO rejected all these, but finally elaborated an awkward arrangement whereby the Russian Navy operates in conjunction with NATO, but not under its command." (13) Russia also reserved the right to use weapons during the exercise, as it would be operating jointly with, but not as part of, the NATO AFSouth (Armed Forces South) forces. (14)

But, when all of the other littoral states except Turkey proposed conducting this exercise in the Black Sea, Moscow flatly refused to support it. (15) While these states' request made sense, given the centrality of security issues to the Black Sea region as a whole, Moscow's attitude is not surprising.

When NATO conducted exercises with Ukraine along the Black Sea Coast in 2003, the Russian press reported Russia's opposition to those exercises on the grounds that Russian military men could not accept "alien" NATO naval vessels in what they considered to be their lake. Worse, since the scenarios of those operations postulated an anti-separatist operation, Russian officials saw this as an intimation of future NATO assistance to Georgia or Ukraine against Moscow-backed separatists in Abkhazia or Crimea. (16)

Subsequent operations planned for the coast of Ukraine, involving an amphibious landing against terrorists, (Operation Sea Breeze), were aborted after Russian-instigated popular demonstrations made it impossible for the Ukrainian government and NATO to conduct the operation. Once Operation Active Endeavor raised the issue of the Black Sea, the same concerns came to the fore: the potential for internationalization of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, in which Russian-protected maritime gun running, smuggling, and other crimes are rife, as well as tensions with Ukraine over the future disposition of the Black Sea Fleet and boundaries along the Sea of Azov. (17)

Indeed, the struggle over the Montreux Treaty's provisions brings Russia and Turkey together against Washington, as both of them resist further American presence in the Black Sea. In Turkey's case, this opposition has grown due to the war in Iraq, but it has its roots in the deep-seated Turkish "Sèvres syndrome" (after the location where the treaties dismembering the Ottoman empire were signed after World War I). American diplomats confirm that Turkey regards the provisions of the subsequent Lausanne Treaty (reversing Sèvres) and of Montreux as sacrosanct, and Turkey will not yield because it believes its sovereignty could be at stake if warships were allowed to enter the Black Sea in peacetime. (18) For its part, Russia describes the potential presence of NATO and of the US military in the Black Sea not just as a military threat, but also as an opportunity for America and/or NATO to meddle further in CIS affairs. (19) Indeed, the US claims that it, or at least NATO, has rights in the Black Sea based on the Montreux agreement. Moreover, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia, Kurt Volker, has said that "a broader perspective on the Black Sea - is to look at it not just as a security issue, but as a regional issue of strengthening democratic changes in political systems [and] market economies." (20)

Consequently, Moscow portrays US policy vis a vis the Black Sea region as a threat to Russia's vital foreign policy goal of establishing a neo-imperial condominium over the CIS, and even further as purposely targeted at fostering regime change throughout the CIS, including in Russia itself. Indeed, any

sign of a CIS state cooperating with NATO triggers an immediate response, which indicates that the Russian political elite still sees NATO and the EU as being, at the core, enemies of Russia. Yuri Boroko writes, "It is widely believed among Russia's political, business, and intellectual circles that a policy toward integration with other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is incompatible with a policy toward a strategic partnership with the EU, toward integration into the Common European Economic Space and close coordination of foreign-policy and security activities. These circles will hardly cause the Russian president to give up his European policy, yet their efforts may prove enough for sinking the idea of concluding a new PCA (Partnership and Cooperation Agreement)." (21)

For this reason, it makes sense to interpret the many Russian calls for NATO cooperation with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and its military alliance in Central Asia as a Russian attempt to forestall NATO's direct cooperation with the Central Asian governments and to control that interaction, thereby curtailing the CIS states' full sovereignty in matters of defense. (22) For example, in April 2004 the Kuchma government of Ukraine signed a memorandum of understanding with NATO. This MoU mentioned the movement of alliance vessels through Ukrainian territorial waters, including the Sea of Azov and Kerch Straits. It also stated that Ukraine promised "to supply NATO with all required technical, informational, medical, and other assistance for the conduct of training exercises, as well as full-fledged military or peacekeeping operations under the Partnership for Peace program." (23)

The Russian response was predictable. Russia charged that the accord violated the 2003 Russo-Ukrainian agreement on those waters, which states that no third party vessels may navigate them without both parties' specific agreement, a statement missing from the MoU. (24) Furthermore, unnamed sources in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that, "Ukraine's readiness to allow its territory to be used for unspecified NATO operations without Russian permission does not accord with Article 6 of [our treaty] - that stipulates, specifically, that neither side may allow its territory to be used in any way that jeopardizes the security of the other." (25)

Subsequently, Russian writers cast this issue in the light of a potential Russo-Ukrainian armed conflict. "The document gives NATO forces so called "rapid access" to the territory of Ukraine not only during military exercises, but also when conducting military operations. This means that Ukraine could become a beachhead for waging any NATO operations, including those not sanctioned by the UN Security Council. Under these circumstances rapid reaction forces of the North Atlantic alliance could be activated across the entire expanse of the European portion of Russia, and even blockade the RF Black Sea Fleet based in the Crimea until the basing term there expires [in 2017 - author]." (26)

This analysis goes on to cite Russian concerns about future Ukrainian pressure on the Black Sea Fleet and the eventual transformation of the Black Sea into a NATO lake, greatly enhancing NATO's aerial and naval reconnaissance capabilities, undermining the entire concept of a strategic rear for Russia, as well as any meaningful Russian capability in the Sea of Azov or Black Sea. (27) As Ukraine now has made clear that it wants the Russian Black Sea Fleet out of its current bases in Sevastopol when the Russo-Ukrainian treaty expires in 2017, Russo-Ukrainian tensions, already strained over energy and other issues, almost certainly will grow over the future disposition of that fleet and its assets and infrastructure. Thus, this analysis of Russian fear of any NATO military presence in the Black Sea area of the CIS or of Ukraine's membership in NATO is clearly predicated on the assumption of continuing Russo-NATO military-strategic rivalry,

especially concerning the CIS borderlands. Under the present circumstances, it remains to be seen how NATO exercises in Ukraine jeopardize Russian security, when Russia has proclaimed its partnership with NATO, nor is it clear how Ukraine could be viewed as a potential base for hostile activity against Russia; but this shows the ruling outlook in Russia's Foreign and Defense Ministries and in the Russian government. Thus, any sign of Ukrainian adherence to, or cooperation with, NATO or the EU is likely to meet with a storm in Moscow.

Ukraine is not an isolated case. Indeed, Moscow essentially contends that no state can be allies with Russia and with NATO simultaneously. Moreover, in its "sphere of influence," Russia claims that it alone ultimately has full authority over the members' defense policies. Thus, Defense Minister Ivanov openly updated the Brezhnev doctrine's concept of diminished sovereignty to cover the Central Asian states, specifically in regard to NATO or American bases.

"The countries of the region are members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). And [if the countries of the region are] making a decision about hosting new bases on their territory, they should take into account the interests of Russia and coordinate this decision with our country." (28) Echoing this view of the CIS members' inability to stand as fully sovereign independent states, Russian diplomats still will not fully accept former Soviet republics as genuine states, as illustrated when participants at an OSCE meeting referred to Georgia as "some province." (29) This was no accident, but, rather, represents a deeply held attitude in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (30)

These contrasting trends on the two sides of the Black Sea suggest that the struggles for democracy and security across its littoral are parallel, if not linked, and are even inextricable from each other. As Tesmur Basilia, the Special Assistant on economic issues to former Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze wrote, in many CIS countries, such as Georgia and Ukraine, "the acute issue of choosing between alignment with Russia and the West is associated with the choice between two models of social development." (31) Indeed, even some Russian analysts acknowledge the accuracy of this insight. Dmitry Furman writes that, "The Russia-West struggle in the CIS is a struggle between two irreconcilable systems." (32) Furman even accepts the regressiveness of the current Russian regime, saying, "Managed democracies are actually a soft variant of the Soviet system." (33)

Whereas in 2005 much more progress seemed possible, particularly with regard to Ukraine's and Turkey's ultimate entry into the EU and to resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, at present those processes have not moved forward.

(34) Nor have other hopes for progressive tendencies in and around the Black Sea worked out as anticipated. (35) Nevertheless, those governments and political actors who wish to extend the zone of security along the Black Sea's western littoral should not despair. One of the major causes for the previous failure was the distraction and loss of will among America, NATO, and the EU that manifested itself in the absence of sustained action to effectuate a deeper integration of all the Black Sea littoral states as the only way towards resolving their security dilemmas.

What Is to Be Done?

There is no way around the conundrum that democratization in Europe and Eurasia is the most desirable security policy, but at the same time is described by Moscow and all those who hide behind its cloak of "managed democracy" as a mortal threat. This ideological-political struggle over the

nature of governance in the region is intensified by the involvement of such military juggernauts as NATO or America, which are projecting their power ever further toward the CIS and Russia. Therefore, achieving progress in bringing about this greater security becomes a much more complicated affair.

However, this divisive conundrum is now an established fact of life in regional and world politics. If peace, progress, prosperity, genuine democracy, and security are to come to the troubled shores of the northern, southern, and eastern Black Sea littoral, regional governments will need to advance the European values that they already have indicated that they profess. And this advance can ultimately only come to fruition as a result of membership in both NATO and the EU, institutions that socialize their members to democratic norms and behaviors in politics, economics, and defense.

Furman's and Basilia's remarks above show that Russia has nothing to offer its satrapies except the opportunity to gratify its own rent-seeking and power hunger. But, Moscow has neither the means nor the vision to create a legitimate security order here or elsewhere and ultimately, due to the intrinsic pathologies of those managed democracies, violence will ensue. The absence of legitimate succession procedures, the lack of democratic control over armed forces and of rule of law are all open temptations or invitations to the kind of adventurism we see all too starkly in Chechnya, Transnistria, and the Caucasus. Those cases exemplify the visible pathologies in one of the Black Sea's security paradigms. But the vision and momentum of the other paradigm have not stopped moving forward, in spite of all the difficulties its supporters have encountered. As Jean Guehenno, Deputy Secretary of the UN for Peacekeeping wrote, "However, democracy is not necessary just to control the policy-making process. It is part and parcel of the substance of foreign policy. In the absence of a clearly defined European polity and of self-evident 'European interests,' which could be deciphered by an enlightened elite, the policy-making process which would create a European foreign policy becomes an essential component of a European foreign policy, and an integral part of its substance."

(36) Even though there are competing security paradigms along the Black Sea's littoral, it is clear that only one offers any hope of resolving the unfinished business of European integration and security building.

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