

NAVAL SECURITY IN THE BLACK SEA:
DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT AND COOPERATION

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DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT AND COOPERATION**

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ABSTRACT

NAVAL SECURITY IN THE BLACK SEA: DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT AND COOPERATION

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This study aims to analyze the dynamics of conflict and cooperation in the Black Sea region by considering the naval security in the aftermath of 9/11 terror attack. In the line with this, the concept about naval security and naval strategy, historical evolution of the region with the geopolitical importance, current conflicts, and organizations for cooperation among littoral states have been analyzed. It is argued that even though the conflict has always existed throughout the history, cooperation is the strongest alternative for the region.

It is observed that, as having a strategic position, Turkey plays significant role in balancing both the regional and global dynamics by strongly supporting cooperation in the region.

Keywords: Black Sea, Naval Security, Cooperation, Conflict, Turkey

ÖZ

KARADENİZ’DE DENİZ GÜVENLİĞİ: ÇATIŞMA VE İŞBİRLİĞİ DİNAMİKLERİ

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Bu çalışma, 11 Eylül Terör saldırısı sonrası dönemde Karadeniz bölgesinde deniz güvenliğini de dikkate alarak çatışma ve iş birliği dinamiklerini incelemeyi amaçlar. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, deniz güvenliği ve deniz stratejileri, bölgenin jeopolitik önemi ile tarihsel evinimi, son zamanlarda meydana gelen çatışmalar, ve kıyı devletleri arasında işbirliğini sağlamaya yönelik kurulan örgütler incelenmiştir. Tarih boyunca bölgede çatışmanın hep var olmasına rağmen, iş birliği bölge için en güçlü alternatiftir.

Sahip olduğu stratejik konumu dolayısıyla, Türkiye’nin bölgede iş birliğini sıkı bir şekilde destekleyerek küresel ve bölgesel dinamikleri dengelemede çok önemli bir rol oynadığı gözlemlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Karadeniz, Deniz Güvenliği, İş Birliği, Çatışma, Türkiye



To my father

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I sincerely wish peace and stability to prevail in the Black Sea region.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EU	European Union
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
A2/AD	Anti-Access/Area Denial
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
BLACKSEAFOR	Black Sea Naval Co-Operation Task Group
GUUAM	Georgia Ukraine Uzbekistan Azerbaijan and Moldova
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication
US	United States (of America)
PfP	Partnership for Peace
EAPC	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
EurAsEc	Eurasian Economic Community
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
R2P	Right to Protect
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
MAP	Membership Action Plan
IDPs	Internally Displaced People
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ASW	Anti-Submarine Warfare

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to analyze the state of naval security in the Black Sea region after the case of 9/11 terror attack. With the dissolution of USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and the enlargement of Western institutions towards the Black Sea, the regional balances have gradually changed. Revival of Russia, increasing tension with the conflicts, gaining importance of control of the sea, and the hope for cooperation for peace and prosperity in the region lead to analyze the naval security in the region.

1.1. Scope and Objectives

The Black Sea, the region between the Asian and European mainland, gained more strategic and economic importance with the dissolution of USSR, enlargement of Western institutions toward East, and opening of Rhein-Danube Canal that links to North Sea in 1992 and Volga-Don Canal (1952) that links to Caspian Sea. Thus, the region became both the area of struggle of sphere of influence with the gap that emerged after the dissolution of USSR, and the area of opportunities with the increasing cooperation among newly independent states and accelerated economic facilities with the opening of canals.

With the 9/11 terror attack and increasing terror activities in the global context, Black Sea gained more importance in terms of accessing to the Middle East and Asia. Emerging power gap after USSR, involvement of West into the region, willingness of newly independent states to be member of Western Institutions and national interests of regional powers brought the issue of including externals to conflicts and regional problems.

The intends of littoral states in the Black Sea like Georgia, Ukraine, Romania, and Bulgaria to be member of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and EU (European Union), disturbed old dominant power, Russia. Not only Russia, but also Turkey concerned about the involvement of West to the Black Sea region in case of increasing conflicts and upsetting the regional balances. In this context, the main purpose and historical understanding of both Russia and Turkey is keeping external powers out of the Black Sea region. On this purpose, Turkey has made and effort to increase possibility of cooperation among internal powers.

Turkey, as a NATO member, EU member candidate, having longest coastline to Black Sea and powerful naval force in the region, owner of the most strategic access point to the region, plays one of the most significant roles in the region. Turkey well knows that he must maintain balance between the East and the West for both his own interests and regional security. Thus, despite its NATO membership, Ankara has always looked after the balances among Russia and US. On this purpose, Turkey has always supported to build cooperation against conflict in the region.

There are two significant initiatives to provide balance, enhance cooperation and maintain peace, security, and stability in the region. The first one is the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation, and the second one is BLACKSEAFOR which is a multinational naval task force established to maintain naval security, increase the naval co-operation among littoral states of the Black Sea.

These two organizations and many other projects contributes to the regional peace, stability, and prosperity. However, with the memberships of Bulgaria and Romania to NATO and EU in the first decade of 2000, the involvement of West into the policies of regional states against Russian interests, increased the tension and small ethnic problems became big conflicts and war in the region, such as in Georgia. Moreover, the impact of Western involvement to politics of Ukraine and the close relations among them clashed with the Russian interests and this turmoil

ended with the annexation of Crimea. While the annexation of Crimea changed the regional and global balances, Russia showed that if anyone impinge its interests, she shows that she is still a global power and take back what she owns.

This study aims to answer the question of whether cooperation is possible as an alternative to conflicts in the Black Sea, which has turned into conflicts of interest area after 9/11, and what is Turkey's role in ensuring the naval security in the region. The answers to these questions will be tried to be given by analyzing the geopolitics of the Black Sea by historical background, naval strategy and naval power of each littoral states, and current political situation. On the purpose of making appropriate analysis, Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea will be associated in the relevant sections, because the strategies applied in these two regions cannot be considered separately from each other.

1.2. Literature Review

The increasing significance and use of maritime power in growing world and the emergence of maritime security problems revealed the need to naval security and naval strategy. According to highly respected naval strategist Rear Admiral Alfred T. Mahan, *“sea power was central strategic asset for any great military power and that controlling the sea was in the long run more important than land warfare”*. For him, if liberal market economies want to secure their access to overseas market, they firstly had to enhance their sea power.¹ Thus, naval security has been an inseparable part of world economy and trade throughout the history.

A country, with long seacoasts, gulfs, coves, and ports, is on more advantageous position than a country without suitable ports, coves, and gulfs even if he has long coast to ocean or narrow seas in terms of naval power. Vego stated that

¹ Krause, Joachim & Bruns, Sebastian “Routledge Handbook of Naval Strategy and Security,” New York: Routledge, 2016, p.3

*the factor of space requires proper consideration of many elements, such as the country's maritime position and its shape, the sea area, its distances, shape, and configuration; the physical characteristics of the coastline and the coastal area in general, and its hydrography/oceanography.*²

Having all these elements and other physical factors in mind, the position of a country is directly related with the development of sea power. Thus, the possibility of having powerful navy and sea power is relatively much higher for a country in narrow seas with proper physical conditions than a country which only has coasts to open ocean.

Black Sea is a region which has geopolitical and geostrategic importance in all periods of time in the history. Besides the strategic importance, Black Sea region is quite related with nearby regions. According to Tsantoulis, “*in terms of geopolitics, the Black Sea looks rather like a complicated geopolitical jigsaw puzzle*”³ because all developments are so integrated with each other, and one can easily influence others in the region. It is also needed to say that Black Sea region is so vital that whoever controls the region can project power toward Europe, Balkans, Eastern Mediterranean, Caucasus, and the Northern Middle East.⁴

Some European scholars support the idea that Both Russia and Turkey do not want to share the influence on the region with external powers. One of them, Dov Lynch argues that

when the focus of the regional heavyweights such as Russia and Turkey have been toward the region, their objective has been traditionally how

² Vego, Milan, “Naval Strategy and Operations in Narrow Seas”, London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, Frank Cass Publishers, 1999, p.16

³ Tsantoulis, Yannis. Geopolitics, (sub)regionalism, discourse and a troubled ‘power triangle’ in the Black Sea. The Security Context in the Black Sea Region. (New York: Taylor&Francis, 2010, p.23

⁴ CEPA report. Black Sea Rising, (2016)

*this region could potentially become part of their respective spheres of influence.*⁵

From the perspective of the theory of regional security communities, while the EU is a good example, economic cooperation is the perfect step on building security and prosperity for the region. In this ‘security community’, the states may be rival, but they cooperate with each other and avoid conflict or war. As Weaver argued,

*given that there has been a recent war in the Black Sea region but there are elements of cooperation via organizations such as BSEC, BLACKSEAFOR and GUAM we could conclude that the region is currently neither a security community nor in a condition of total chaos, but it is somewhere in between these extremes.*⁶

1.3. Argument

This thesis argues that although the regional interests of major powers clash each other and the tension has been quite high since 2000s, cooperation is still possible and most profitable alternative to conflict to provide naval security, economic prosperity, peace, and stability in the Black Sea region. Despite the existence of many ethnic, diplomatic, and international problems in the region, the solution should be found without the involvement of external powers. It is also aimed to argue that there is still high potential to cooperate, create dialogue among conflicted states, and maintain regional stability, security, and prosperity just between the regional states.

On the other hand, it is not rejected to cooperate with external powers. All states in the Black Sea can cooperate with the West and can be integrated into Western institutions. However, from the security perspective, the cooperation and integration should consider the regional balances. Any policy that made in and

⁵ Lynch, Dov. “A Regional Insecurity Dynamic.” In *The South Caucasus: A Challenge for the EU*. Paris: EUISS (2003)

⁶ Weaver, Carol. ‘Black Sea regional security: present multipolarity and future possibilities’, *European Security*, (2011) 20:1, p. 1-19

may affect the Black Sea, should not upset the balances, and should not threaten the security and stability in the region.

1.4. Research Method

To analyze Black Sea naval security, naval strategies of internal powers and possibilities of multinational cooperation in the region need to be examined with the historical and current security, economic and diplomatic profiles of each Black Sea country and their perspective.

In this regard, the reports of international institutions, academic studies, articles, international newspapers, websites of organizations and governmental institutions, books and journals have been used to reflect both historical and recent situation of the Black Sea and littoral states in the region.

1.5. Organization of the Thesis

This study is composed of six chapters. In the first chapter, the scope and objective of the thesis, literature review, argument, research method and the organization of the thesis is explained.

In the second chapter, the basic terms for the topic of this thesis have been identified. Thus, this chapter includes definitions, major naval strategies, and tactics that applied by naval powers to provide naval security both historically and today.

The third chapter analyzes the historical evolution and geopolitics of the Black Sea. To make proper analysis, Eastern Mediterranean region is also analyzed because, these two regions are both historically and geopolitically are related and combined in some cases, especially from the naval security perspective. In other words, naval strategy of a country or a major power toward Black Sea also include the strategy toward Eastern Mediterranean because these two Seas are united and

difficult to separate policies from each other, especially from the Black Sea aspect. Thus, these two regions should not be separated from each other while analyzing the naval security. However, in the fact that the subject of this thesis is about the naval security, although this chapter would include related regional countries, the focus will be on the littoral states of Black Sea. To provide proper analysis, the historical evolution will be examined in four parts as ancient era, Roman period, Ottoman period and twentieth century. Before that, the geographical features of the region will be mentioned first.

The fourth chapter will include the analysis of each littoral states in the Black Sea except Turkey, in terms of both bilateral relations, historically and currently, and naval power, strategy and the impact on the naval security of the Black Sea. In this chapter, Russia may have quite big part in terms of its naval strategies both in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean.

In the fifth chapter, the most strategic player, both politically and militarily, Turkey and his role in the Black Sea Security have been analyzed. Turkey's arguments, initiatives toward the region and historical applications by agreements were included.

Finally, sixth chapter will include concluding remarks regarding each countries perception, regional policies, potential to cooperation as an alternative to conflicts and multinational solutions to contribute naval security in the region.

CHAPTER 2

NAVAL SECURITY, STRATEGY, AND COMMAND OF THE SEA

2.1. Introduction

Since the thesis bases upon the Naval Strategy, this chapter will start with the definitions and the discussions of the literature on naval security and naval strategy, the importance of the sea power, command of the sea, control of communication lines and sea denial.

2.2. The Naval Security and the Naval Strategy

Sea power has always protected its importance throughout the history with the advantages of cargo handling convenience; cost effectivity; easy accessibility to far-off locales; defensive and offensive operational capability in terms of security. Historically, sea has been used for political purposes as military use for power projection and sea control; as diplomatic use like gunboat diplomacy; and as constabulary use for maritime security.⁷ However, with the intensely use of waterways, the power competitions, and the transition of political conflicts from land to the sea, new security problems had emerged in maritime affairs. According to Spykman, the Industrial Revolution and the development of aviation have created new problems in naval warfare.⁸ Especially, with the impact of globalization and the development of sea power, the world became borderless as Brendan Nelson, former Australia's Minister for Defense pointed out. According to him, the cases occur in both Middle East like other part of the world and in their

⁷ Krause, et al., *Routledge Handbook of Naval Strategy and Security*, p. 3

⁸ Spykman, Nicholas J. "America's Strategy in World Politics", New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, INC., 1942. p.31

borders are equally important in terms of security and their national interests.⁹ On the other hand, the range of transported products by sea ways is quite wide.

Especially transportation of military tools and vehicles which are used on modern warfare on air, sea, and land, gave vital importance to security of sea ways.¹⁰ Thus, lines of passages and maritime communications became the main object of security policies of naval powers. For Corbett, controlling these lines and communications, the objects of naval warfare, gives the supremacy on the sea.¹¹ Supremacy on the sea became one of the main purposes of great powers in terms of their commerce and national security.

Sea power refers not only military meaning, but also economic and political meanings, because seas are the most important part of commerce and international trade. Sea power is a precondition of overseas trade which is main developer of economic prosperity and naval strategy and security play vital role in guarding this system and economic prosperity.¹² In every ages of the history, maritime commerce has been the most optimum way for prosperity and prosperity is the concrete expression of society's moral and material energy of life.¹³ States in the seaside have more advantageous position for economic prosperity because of the easy and cheaper trade of massive production by sea. Economic prosperity plays significant role not only in social life, but also in science and technological developments. Thus, the power which secure these significant sea ways for

⁹ Till, Geoffrey. "Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century", New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2004, p.3

¹⁰ Brodie, Bernard. "Yaratılan Deniz Gücünün Stratejisi", İstanbul: Doruk Yayıncılık, 2011. p.15

¹¹ Corbett, Julian S. "Some Principles of Maritime Strategy", New York: AMS Press INC, 1911. p. 116

¹² Krause, et al., *Routledge Handbook of Naval Strategy and Security*, p.3

¹³ Mahan, Alfred Thayer. "Deniz Harbi Üzerine", İstanbul: Doruk Yayıncılık, 2013, p.84

economic activities and hinder the use of these ways by enemy, influence the energy of life of its own society, technology, production, developments positively. In other words, to secure economic activities, prosperity and borders of a state, sea power and naval strategy are vital needs for that state.

There are some major elements which affect the sea power such as geographical location, physical structure, climate, acreage of the country, population, characteristic of nation and government.¹⁴ Firstly, geographical location has great impact on the sea power, because being an island state has been always more advantageous than being a land state. While a land state is trying to enlarge its land by its military land power, an island state must empower its sea power to enlarge its influence. For instance, Britain had more advantageous position as against France or Netherlands.

Secondly, physical structure is as important as geographical location because being an island state is not enough to have great power on sea without available ports, coves, and shallow coast lines. On the other hand, if physical structure of inner side of the country is not available for agriculture and any other economic activities, that country would look at for a new available additional land as Britain did. Britain is not lucky with the physical structure of land and the climate to have basic economic activities like agricultural production unlike France. Hence, although France has many available ports on La Manche and Mediterranean, France did not need to focus on developing sea power by contrast with Netherlands and Britain, because France has more than enough production for his needs and has nice climate with nice physical structure.¹⁵

Thirdly, acreage is about the natural sizes such as the length of the coastline and the width of ports. Fourth, the population refers not the total population of that

¹⁴ Mahan, p.41

¹⁵ Mahan, p.50

country but the people who can work in the sea-related jobs or sea related production. The importance of sea-related population can be seen in the example of France and Britain again. During the second half of the eighteenth century, French total population was more than Britain's. When the war started between France and Britain in 1778, France could appoint enough soldiers for 50 battleships while Britain could barely appoint soldiers for 40 battleships because of the outspread fleets and seamen all over the world. However, in 1782, France had around 70 ships come into use while Britain had 120 ships.¹⁶ It is highly important to regard the population not only for appointment of soldiers to ships but also for technical stuffs and services such as the shipbuilding, repair, and maintenance of ships. Thus, the sea-related population is non-negligible factor of sea power.

The fifth element of sea power, the characteristic of the nation (or the national character), is little bit about colonialism and the attitude towards colonies of a sea power. It would be better to compare nations and their attitudes toward their colonies. For instance, the British firstly saw their colonies as the new part of their state to readily live there with the same enthusiasm in homeland and secondly developed the resources and economic potential of new place. However, the French and the Spanish had tendency to apply despotism to their new colonies unlike the British. The French saw themselves and their land superior to their colonies and waited to turn back to their homeland; the Spanish had no enthusiasm and interest to truly develop resources of colonies.

Characteristic of state/ government is as important as the national one. This term refers the stability to seek being sea power and the strength to their national sea power as in the example of British enlargement and empower of his sea power especially during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁷ All these elements of

¹⁶ Mahan, p.58

¹⁷ Mahan, p.61

sea power are necessary at an equal rate. The lack of one of them would lead to the failure or fall behind of those states on the sea. Besides all these elements, the sea power needs proper strategy to operate on the sea.

Strategy, in general meaning, can be defined as “*the art and science of applying all sources of power in peacetime and in war to accomplish strategic objectives*”.¹⁸ It is relatively easy to describe all kinds of strategy by focusing on the kind of sources. For example, if national strategy at issue, it includes all sources and elements of national power from financial to social, from military to diplomatic.¹⁹ Also, all kinds of strategies are differentiated from each other although they unite under general strategies. For example, military strategy is differentiated from national strategy although it focuses to achieve national strategy objectives.

Military strategy is the operational art and science of applying all armed forces, military power, and military technologies to support and accomplish national strategy.²⁰ On the other hand, Jomini defined strategy as “*the art of making war upon the map and comprehends the whole theater of operations*”.²¹ Thus, before conducting any military operation, it is compulsory to plan it on the map before. This planning process called as strategy according to Jomini. In addition, strategies would bring decisive concentration on the theater of operations and this concentration should be on one or maximum two places to operate. If a state had to fight against two enemies at the same time, he should focus on one of them first, as Lord Nelson recommended. This state should not attack to both enemies. After

¹⁸ Vego, p.1

¹⁹ Vego, p.1

²⁰ Vego, p.1

²¹ Jomini, Baron Antonie Henri. “The Art of War: Restored Edition”, Kingston: Legacy Books Press, 2008, p.46

defeating one of them, he should turn into other one.²² Otherwise, this state may lose his all power at that conflict.

Military strategic objectives operate in different theaters and these theaters require their own specific strategy, too. In other words, depending on the theater where sources of military power are operated and applied, naval, airspace and land aspects are differentiated from each other, and they are encompassed by military strategy. Although military strategy is mostly used for referring to land warfare, maritime/naval theater is one of the most important theaters in military strategy for many centuries because of many strategic offensive or defensive advantages and disadvantages. Thus, naval strategy can be basically defined as the art and science of using military sources at the sea and ocean to achieve and accomplish naval goals of military strategy.²³ Although naval strategy has been practiced for many centuries, it has been examined for not more than two centuries by historians, political scientist, and theoreticians.²⁴ On the other hand, most common definitions confine strategy to military combinations in the war. However, it is different for naval strategies because naval strategies are necessary in peace times as in war times.²⁵

Naval strategies in peace times and war times differ from each other. In peacetime, it is more about the development of operational and tactical objectives, determining fleet's current and future power, conducting naval construction projects, determining strategic objectives, finding naval alliances, strengthening

²² Mahan, p.71

²³ Vego, p.2

²⁴ Hattendorf, John B. "What is a Maritime Strategy?" Soundings, October 2013, No.1, Sea Power Center

²⁵ Mahan, Alfred Thayer. *"The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783."* New York: Hill and Wang, INC., 1890, p.19

relations with current alliances, distributing naval forces among different operation areas and providing a naval vision.²⁶ On the other hand, in the time of open hostility and war, the focus shifts from preparation phase in peacetime to naval operations and tactical actions. Strategies and policies can be modified or changed in accordance with the changes during the war. For instance, a weaker side of the conflict can start with defensive strategy and can shift to the offensive naval strategy or vice versa. Offensive and defensive naval strategies will also be examined deeply in the following pages.

Typically, ‘strategy’ and ‘policy’ are confused with each other, although they have considerable differences in the meaning.²⁷ The same mistake takes effect on naval strategy and naval policy terms. According to Vego, naval policy “*constitutes the sum of all political, diplomatic, financial, social, and purely military decisions taken by the country’s highest political and naval leadership*”.²⁸ Also, it is heavily influenced by domestic politics and foreign policy. Foreign policy draws a frame for determining who (country or group based) is potentially friend, neutral or hostile. In general, naval policy affects the general naval situation from size to number of personnel, from composition to organization of naval forces.

Another common terminological confusion is between naval strategy and operational art/warfare. The differentiation was not made clearly even by Rear Admiral Alfred T. Mahan²⁹ in his masterwork, *Naval Strategy* (firstly published

²⁶ Vego, p.4

²⁷ Vego, p.2

²⁸ Vego, p.2

²⁹ Rear Admiral Alfred T. Mahan, writer of many masterworks about naval strategy, is regarded as the first and most respectable naval strategist. His thoughts which reflect the Anglo-Saxon understanding of naval strategy and security, have shaped the thinking about naval strategy, naval security, and U.S. naval strategy in the twentieth century.

in 1911).³⁰ Operational art is all about the employment of combat forces to achieve operational and strategic objectives. In other words, it is a component of military art which is about “*planning, preparing, conducting, and sustaining major operations and campaigns*”.³¹ However, naval strategy determines the objectives, allocates the forces, imposes the conditions, and guides operational warfare/art.³² Operational art convert conditions and targets into the plan to gain victory or defeat forces of enemy. Also, operational art determines the force, time, space on the realistic bases. It is vital to “*achieve tactical victories in support of strategic or operational objectives*”.³³ Operational art always require being coherent, synchronized, and consistent in the actions. In the application of operational art, desirable actions should also be strategically possible. Even if a country conducts magnificent operational art, defeat is unpredictable with a defective/ problematic naval strategy. It is also same for brilliant naval strategy cannot secure the victory without operational competence and employing combat forces.³⁴ Thus, operational art is complementary element of naval strategy and vice versa.

Naval strategy is kind of a framework which determines the employment of naval forces, and it is permanently conducted in both peace and wartime. With this significant duty, it also assists grand and military strategies.³⁵ Although naval strategy and maritime strategy are generally used like the same meaning, they

³⁰ Vego, p.2

³¹ Vego, p.3

³² Vego, p.4

³³ Vego, p.4

³⁴ Vego, p.4

³⁵ Vego, Milan. “Maritime Strategy and Sea Denial: Theory and Practice.” London; New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2019. Series: Cass series: Naval policy and history. p.1

differentiated from each other at some points according to a group of scholars. According to Corbett,

By maritime strategy we mean the principles which govern a war in which the sea is a substantial factor. Naval Strategy is but that part of it which determines the movements of the fleet when maritime strategy has determined what part the fleet must play in relation to the action of the land forces; for it scarcely needs saying that almost impossible that a war can be decided by naval action alone.³⁶

It is possible to say, as Corbett mentioned, maritime strategy determines the mutual relations between army and navy in peacetime, and after this planning process was done, naval strategy is started to be conducted.³⁷ Thus, a modern maritime strategy should involve air, sea, and land forces. Sea denial, sea control and power projection are key elements of maritime strategy and it's not only about naval forces or naval strategy.³⁸ It is more about the jointly operating of all kinds of forces to affect maritime events.

As being operated in open oceans, navies operate in narrow seas which encompass enclosed and semi-enclosed seas such as Black Sea, Eastern Mediterranean, Caribbean Sea, The North Sea large also inland bodies of water such as the Caspian Sea. In the military meaning of the narrow sea is “*a body of water that can be controlled from both of its sides and some sea areas*”³⁹ such as English Channel and Turkish Straits. Narrow seas are also significant on the purpose of controlling the choke points like the straits and channels.

³⁶ Corbett, p.13

³⁷ Corbett, p.14

³⁸ Parliament of Australia, 2004. The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade. Report on the Inquiry into Australia's Maritime Strategy, Chapter 2: Maritime Strategy Concept, p.8.

³⁹ Vego, p.7

Choke points are at the centers of maritime security, transportations, and international trade because they are like gates which unite or divide different seas and regions on the important sea ways. According to Alfred Mahan, the military importance of choke points and defiles depends “*not only upon the geographical position, but also their width, length and difficulty*”.⁴⁰ He had also seen a strait as a ‘strategic point’ which should be protected and controlled. Thus, controlling these gates gives great opportunity to states to gain or maintain their power, especially during wartimes rather than peace times. For example, Britain started to increase its naval power with the sixteenth century and Royal Navy was controlling only the Strait of Dover⁴¹ at those times.

Britain’s main competitors were Spain, Dutch Republic and France and they waged many wars against each other until the nineteenth century. However, with the beginning of the twentieth century, British Royal Navy was controlling numbers of significant waterways and strategic choke points, such as Strait of Gibraltar⁴², Malta, Suez Canal⁴³ and Aden⁴⁴. Moreover, Britain targeted for control of the Turkish Straits in the first quarter of twentieth century. Thus, Royal Navy held the key choke points to main seas (English Channel, the North Sea,

⁴⁰ Krause, et al., *Routledge Handbook of Naval Strategy and Security*, p.79

⁴¹ Strait of Dover is the narrowest point between English Channel and North Sea and it separates the continental Europe from Britain.

⁴² Strait of Gibraltar connects the Atlantic Ocean to Mediterranean Sea and it separates the continental Europe from Africa.

⁴³ Suez Canal is an artificial waterway and was officially opened in 1869. It places on Egypt and separates Asia from Africa and connects Red Sea to (Eastern) Mediterranean Sea.

⁴⁴ Aden had been governed by British India until 1937. Aden connects with the Red Sea and Somali Sea/ Indian Ocean and control the Bab-el-Mandep Strait. This region is strategically vital choke point in World trade with Suez Canal.

Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea and Somali Sea) on the significant waterways in the twentieth century and this shows the superiority over his previous competitors.⁴⁵

Narrow seas also became the war theater throughout the history. All narrow seas around the Europe, Caribbean Sea and Southern Pacific Sea, most of the narrow seas of world, became the scenes of many naval battles during both World War I and World War II. Control of the narrow seas became the main priority of naval powers during these major world wars because controlling these critically significant points would be more advantageous than controlling piece of land after a land battle with high rate of casualty.

Narrow seas, on the other hand, became the scene of not only global wars but also regional conflicts. These conflicts can be differentiated from each other according to their strategic objectives such as local conflict between regional or minor powers; naval conflict between major powers; harassing in the straits or narrow seas; naval conflict over Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)⁴⁶; and a limited war of intervention.⁴⁷

Although major powers do not seem like they do not intervene to the local conflicts in narrow seas, they may assist their clients or proxies politically, diplomatically, and logistically. Thus, naval strategies in narrow seas are necessary at least as much as in the ocean. Moreover, naval strategies in narrow seas are much more complex than in the open oceans because naval strategies in narrow seas in peacetime and wartime may be differentiated from each other and they are more

⁴⁵ Vego, p.7

⁴⁶ EEZ is “a concept adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (1982), whereby a coastal State assumes jurisdiction over the exploration and exploitation of marine resources in its adjacent section of the continental shelf, taken to be a band extending 200 miles from the shore” (OECD Glossary, 2001).

⁴⁷ Vego, p.11

strategically significant than that in the oceans in terms of the control of the access and passages. In addition, it is impossible to ignore the essential factor of space to conduct successful operation and employ the naval forces at this point.

There is no doubt that a country has more advantageous position in terms of naval power if he has coasts to both narrow sea and ocean with favorable conditions. Moreover, a country, situated to control partially or wholly a sea's entrance / exit or guarding one or both shores of that sea, is on the most favorable position in a narrow sea, as Vego pointed out.⁴⁸ For example, whoever controls the Strait of Gibraltar also controls the trade to and from the Mediterranean and gain the great advantage. Also, the only ways of exit from and entrance to Black Sea are Turkish Straits, under the control of Turkey. Likewise, the control of Strait of Dover, English Channel, Skaggerak and Kattegat gives great opportunity to develop their sea powers and get the edge over seaways of potential adversary's use. England, for instance, has favorable position at the center of sea routes of its potential opponents between Northern Europe, Atlantic and Mediterranean, and this position led to its rise as the foremost sea power.⁴⁹

Being at the center of Mediterranean, Italy has the similar position and advantage especially with the owning of Sicily. Sicily has excellent position in center Mediterranean to dominate the sea passages between east and west Mediterranean. This kind of strategic positions have great advantage during both peace and war time to control and hinder the passage of merchant and war ships of potential hostiles. Thus, space is significant factor for all naval strategies in terms of employing naval forces during especially wartime and the maritime position of a country, shape of its coasts, distances, and sea area are all key units of space factor. In terms of employment area, narrow seas have some great advantages because of the relatively shorter distances to the land. Air and maritime dominations in

⁴⁸ Vego, p.18

⁴⁹ Vego, p.19

narrow seas are greater than on the open oceans; so, the distance to the employment area is crucial during operation times. The importance and advantages of shorter distance to the employment area revealed the needs and significance of naval bases in far fields.

2.3. The Importance of Naval Bases

Obtaining sufficient space for the employment and operation of naval forces is crucial in a naval strategy. However, in far fields, it depends on the naval bases to operate properly because of the long distance to mainland of a country. Thus, building and acquiring naval or air bases in necessary areas in sufficient numbers can be seen as one of the primary tasks of naval strategies. The acquisition of naval bases is generally directed by the foreign policy and naval strategy of states.⁵⁰ A naval force is much closer to achieve its naval, military, and national strategies if that country has sufficient naval bases in necessary areas. Vego argues that a fleet needs to possess an adequate basing area to sustain its strength.⁵¹ Naval bases provide some technical and psychological advantages such as providing shelter, repair, and necessary technical supply for the ships and the rest, recreation, and moral support for the crews. In detail, crews need the gain psychological relaxation during the maritime tasks and operations on far fields especially under threat or conflict. During these times knowing the presence of a naval base in close may provide them moral support. With the development of technology in recent history, crews have had the chance to communicate with their families. On the other hand, naval bases provide better communication with headquarter; redeploy the naval forces; better strategic planning and necessary changing according to the latest situations on the conflicts.

⁵⁰ Spykman, p.17

⁵¹ Vego, p.61

Naval bases can be built either permanent or temporary according to the needs and territory. Permanent bases are usually built on a country's own territory while temporary bases are usually built on another riparian state's territory to improve its offensive operation ability and capability. However, the situation mostly depends on the relation, ties, needs and alliance between these two states. Naval bases have the deterrence power, and they serve for both defense and offense against potential enemy/ enemies. They would be built to warn any potential threat by potential hostiles.

According to Vego, *“their main purpose is to extend the effective radius of one's fleet or to neutralize the enemy's major base in the area.”*⁵² Thus, potential area/ theater of operations and actions determine the location of naval bases. For instance, Germany built a naval base at Kiel to protect Kiel Canal and observe the hostile actions in the western Baltic region. Also, a naval base should be selected carefully during the war to operate and conduct practically. For instance, Britain selected bases along its east coast to control whole passage to and from the North Sea during World War I.⁵³ Besides these, naval bases can be built on the purpose of controlling maritime trade and traffic, especially near to some key choke points. For instance, Britain had built naval bases at Gibraltar, Malta, Alexandria, Suez, and Aden on the purpose of controlling key choke points⁵⁴ on the most important shipping routes of the world trade. Controlling these important shipping routes with the support of naval bases gives great advantages in defense and offense against enemy's fleet and commerce ships in a war, as happened in both World War I in Dover and World War II in Malta. Thus, location of a naval base ranks on the top priority in maritime strategy and it must lie along strategic lines.⁵⁵

⁵² Vego, p.62

⁵³ Vego, p.66

⁵⁴ Vego, p.63

⁵⁵ Krause, et al., p.78

A naval base should be considered equally worthy and valuable with the mainland although it situated at great distance. Geoffrey Till has mentioned that countries usually seek to reduce or hinder their enemies' naval power by attacking their bases. According to his words on his book about sea power, countries attack to potential enemies' bases by means of amphibious assaults or sea bombardments.⁵⁶ On the other hand, attacking a naval base is one of the common naval responds to deal with a raider at sea.⁵⁷ Hence, it should be protected from any kinds of attacks same with the mainland. Keeping its value, practicability, and function and protecting all personnel with all equipment depend on the defense against any attack from land side, the sea and most importantly from the air.

Since the end of the World War I, threat from the air became most serious problem, because the destruction capacity of airstrike is so high while the defense power of a base against this kind of attack is so low. This problem, unfortunately, is still unresolved even in twenty first century. Thus, air defense is vitally important for a naval base both in homeland and in distant waters. This situation warns the states to establish naval bases as far as possible from the range of potential enemy's aircraft and air bases that can pose a threat.⁵⁸ Even in the far distance, an airstrike has always been a great threat to a naval base as in the case of attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Pearl Harbor is a U.S. naval base in Hawaii, in the center of Pacific Ocean. By the devastating attack of hundreds of Japanese fighter planes, submarines, and battleships, U.S. naval base was destroyed and damaged in large extend. By this attack, 12 US warships and more than 200 US fighter aircrafts were destroyed; and more than 2400 American military members and many civilians were killed.

⁵⁶ Till, p.188

⁵⁷ Till, p.218

⁵⁸ Vego, p.63

Defensibility is still quite complex and difficult in the age of air launched / air-to-surface missile warfare and continuous development of warfare technology. The potentiality of high damage and destructiveness has been continuing to develop in military technology, especially in the twenty first century. On the other hand, state's budgets for military defense have been gradually increasing. In addition, according to Krause & Bruns, strengthening infrastructure and providing protection against missile strikes, demand expensive and labor-intensive measures.⁵⁹ Thus the development of aviation and other military technologies have created new security problems.⁶⁰

According to Spykman, “*naval bases within the bombing radius of land-based enemy aircraft have lost much of their effectiveness*”.⁶¹ According to him, a naval base should be supported and supplemented by an air base in order to be more effective in wide zone.⁶² In other words, Spykman suggested that the fleet should “*be supported by land-based aircraft*”.⁶³ This air base near the naval base would be also more effective in defense and counter attack in the case of an air strike or maritime warfare. Beside the air defense by land-based aircraft, there are some ways for protection from an attack such as withdrawal of fleet and “*anchorage behind the fortifications of the naval base*”.⁶⁴ Basically, to prevent from the destruction of all part of a fleet in a naval base, all part of the fleet should not anchor at the base at the same time. Some part of the fleet should be behind the

⁵⁹ Krause, et al., p.79

⁶⁰ Spykman, p.32

⁶¹ Spykman, p.32

⁶² Spykman, p.433

⁶³ Spykman, p.436

⁶⁴ Spykman, p.395

base, either on the move or anchored situation. For example, during the Pearl Harbor attack, some units of Pacific fleet such as three aircraft carriers, important tank ships, submarines and some different kinds of ships were not at the base at that time and these units of fleet were luckily protected from being damaged. Thus, it is essential to prevent from keeping all units of fleet at a naval base at the same time. It would be more logical to make few groups from different units of a fleet and keeping them alternately in the base and sea.

In short, naval bases have given great opportunity to states in their strategic goals and interests. Regarding the importance of naval bases, it is vital to protect them with minimum destruction from any kind of attack. They are also crucial elements of command of the sea and controlling the sea routes. Thus, they are vitally necessary objects of naval strategies.

2.4. Command of the Sea & Control of Communications

Naval strategies have always been operated on the purpose of command of the sea and secure the sea throughout the naval history. According to Spykman, control of the seas implies the “*control of maritime communications, freedom to use sea routes and ability to deny them to the enemy*”.⁶⁵ Corbett highlights this point in his book by arguing, “*the object of naval warfare must always be directly or indirectly either to secure the command of the sea or to prevent the enemy from securing it*”.⁶⁶ States have always sought to increase and strength their sea power in order to secure and enlarge their command of the sea. Both Corbett and Mahan deeply explained, in their books, that the reason of the dominating power of British Royal Navy for centuries was his power on sea. According to Corbett, “*if England were to lose command of the sea, it would be all over with her.*”⁶⁷ England places

⁶⁵ Spykman, p.31

⁶⁶ Corbett, p.87

⁶⁷ Corbett, p.87

on unique place as an island state with great advantage of compulsory development in sea power and pursuit of additional resource rich lands for its production.

The industrial revolution and geographical conditions paved the way for the development of its sea power and looking for colonies. With the impact of colonialism and the massive resource transportation by shipping forced Britain to strength its navy and be the biggest sea power to secure its sea routes and dominate the seas. According to Mahan, Britain became the global military and economic power under the favor of its sea power. He suggested the same strategy for America to become the most powerful state on the sea to dominate overseas market economies and regions in accordance with his favor. Thus, control of maritime communication has both military and commercial / economical purposes.

Command of the sea and control of communication can be seen as the conquest of territory in the land warfare. However, it bases not on physical conquest or possession, but on the use of the commanding sea. If a state dominates a sea line, his potential enemy's ships cannot freely pass on that region and operates its naval forces there, because dominant state can easily deny the passage or prevent the operation, as in the land. Hence, exercising "*effective command and control*" of the sea consolidates the dominance of a sea power of a state in that region. Without these kinds of exercise or command and control, "*disputes are inevitable*".⁶⁸

Controlling significant world trade routes gives great economic opportunity to gain more power by hindering passage of merchant ships and harming potential enemies' ships. Corbett called this situation as "*commerce prevention*".⁶⁹ Thus,

⁶⁸ Krause, et al., p.157

⁶⁹ Corbett, p.91

it is possible to say that “*maritime strategy is about the use of the sea*”⁷⁰ and one of the purposes of maritime strategy is using it to prevent the enemy for both military and economic purposes.

Major sea powers have disputed over the control of the sea throughout the history. Different regions were controlled different powers in different times and the commander power changed in accordance with the changeable global politics, after major wars both on land and sea, as in the case of conflicts and sea war between British and Spanish Kingdoms in the sixteenth century. Spanish Armada, biggest and most powerful sea power at that time, and British Royal Navy disputed over the control of the English Channel (La Manche) and waged war on the sea.

After the long period of conflict, Spanish Navy lost its power and started to decline in world politics. The change of the controlling power does not happen directly; this process has different stages. Firstly, current sea power, called as enemy, has the absolute control and it starts to lose power and control on the sea. Secondly, competitor power and current controlling power disputes in control. Finally, competitor power works for absolute control while enemy is operating with high risk and competitor hold the absolute control at the end. If a sea power controls the sea, it can operate freely, without any interruption. However, it's not the same for an enemy of that power.⁷¹

The passage of enemy's ships has always risky in terms of any attack or denial of using that region. Thus, the control of these lines of communication has vital importance for a sea power. To keep control on these areas, sea power might build some naval bases on necessary and strategic points. Protecting these bases is vitally significant for a sea power as deeply analyzed before.

⁷⁰ Till, p.146

⁷¹ Till, p.152

Protecting 'sea lane' or 'sea lines of communication' (SLOC) is as important as protecting naval bases or any trade routes on the land. 'Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC)' refer the maritime routes between ports. These ports can be used on the purpose of trade and logistic and they can be used also by naval forces. In the peace times, a navy operate for the openness of SLOCs, but in war time a navy seek to close this line. Defending sea highways and focal areas means that controlling state gains the superiority without a battle on that line and cut the communication of enemy between its ports and bases. For instance, in both World War I and II, Germany and Britain declared blockade mutually. While German Navy tried to close the SLOC of Britain between North America and Britain especially with the use of submarines, British Navy also tried to blockade Germany. However, Germany failed to keep British SLOC closed, and Britain succeeded to keep it open by breaking the German blockade, either by itself or by Allies. Closing the SLOCs tactic was also used by the United States against Japan during World War II. Japan is a resource-poor island state, so they are heavily dependent on outside resources and in the case of any cut off this trade line, Japan would be restricted. The US Navy successfully closed the SLOCs to Japan and this blockade led Japanese people to suffer.

Controlling sea lines of communication dominates the war, because communication is the most important factor of political and military strategy in a broad sense.⁷² All kinds of operations on the sea depend on open communication lines with the land or supplier of any needs. These lines of communication provide supplies freedom and secure withdrawal when necessary. A navy in open sea needs oil for ships, munition for defense and offense and foods for seamen and the supplies of these needs depend on open and secure lines of communication. For instance, Germany tried to control central and western Baltic Sea during World War I. The control of sea lines on this region was essential because Germany

⁷² Mahan, p.83

received iron for war industry from Sweden and sent ‘*the supplies for the army fighting in Russia*’⁷³ by sea.

Navies play significant role on denying enemy's trade and transfer of raw materials for his war industries besides of foodstuffs and other basic needs for the population.⁷⁴ These raw materials might be not only for the war industry but also for the significant industrial production. Industries make the major contribution to states economies and if a state became economically powerful, it is easy to become powerful on the sea. Starting from this point, it is easy to say that states are in obvious competition on both sea power and economy. Sometimes, political, and economic developments would affect maritime strategies as in the case of British naval and political strategy before the World War I.

Towards the end of nineteenth century, Germany focused to develop its sea power and applied policies on the favor of this aim after secured his land border with France. During these times, France and Russia had an alliance against Austrian, Italian and German unity. On the other hand, Britain had animosity toward France on Africa and toward Russia on India.⁷⁵ However, Britain had any problem with Germany, Italy, or Austria. With the increasing disputes over Morocco between France and Germany and the strengthening of German sea power, Britain perceived a sea threat from Germany. This sense prompted Britain to join the alliance with France and Russia with ignoring previous hostility.⁷⁶ This case showed that the sea power has the decisive factor on world politics and vice versa.

⁷³ Vego, p.10

⁷⁴ Spykman, p.32

⁷⁵ Mahan, p.256

⁷⁶ Mahan, p.257

2.5. Offensive vs. Defensive

The political theory of war makes significant classification depends on the positive and negative political object of war. If the political object of a state for war is positive, the war would be offensive. On the contrary, if it is negative, the general direction of war would be defensive.⁷⁷ However, military object can also be a combination of offensive and defensive.⁷⁸ For instance, German Navy conducted the combination of strategic offensive and defensive strategy towards the end of World War I. Also, positive methods can be used to secure negative objectives. Thus, it would be problematic to use positive or negative object to define offensive or defensive. To examine these strategies, it is necessary to define them first. Defense at sea refers the actions and measures on the purpose of “*denying to the enemy control of an area, position, or place*”⁷⁹ There are lots of different views on offensive and defensive strategies in a war at sea. According to Clausewitz, “*attack is the weaker and defense is the strongest form of war*”⁸⁰ but defense is disadvantageous side in terms of morale. However, Mahan did not agree with the statement of Clausewitz because he thought that such statement would be misleading. Mahan argued that

*in a particular operation, the party on the defense, since he makes no further movement for the time, can strengthen his preparations, makes deliberate and permanent disposition.*⁸¹

⁷⁷ Corbett, p.28-29

⁷⁸ Vego, p.98

⁷⁹ Vego, p.55

⁸⁰ Vego, p.59

⁸¹ Vego, p.57

On the contrary, the offensive side has the tendency to make easily mistake and this mistake would give advantage to defensive party. On the other hand, a defensive would not be able to determine the correct method on the contrary to an offensive because in an offensive strategy, it is easy to determine objective and select a correct method for it.

While offensive strategy is mostly preferred by stronger side, weaker side is on the defensive position. However, as U.S. rear admiral and theorist B. Fiske stated, naval defense also contains some elements of offense and if it contains offense largely, it would be called as offensive-defensive strategy. According to Fiske, naval defense was composed of defense of the coast, defense of trade routes and defense of national policy.⁸² In order to defend these elements, naval strategy of weaker side can sometimes shift from defense to offense.

On the other hand, according to Vego, stronger navy must be on offense to obtain and maintain sea control, destroy, or naturalized the enemy's fleet and obtain the control of the sea. However, sometimes stronger side may prefer to be defensive such as Soviet Russia in the Baltic Sea before the war with Nazi Germany in 1941 despite Russian superiority in naval strength. Bay of Riga where they focused to defend it was vitally strategic place for Soviets. In addition, sometimes the superior powers might lack offensive spirit and stay on defensive strategic military objectives as in this case.⁸³ Although Spykman indicate that offensive actions are compulsory for victory, defending strategic points and maintaining its control with defensive strategy would be regarded as victory.

Far distance offense or defense actions need naval bases or at least friendly seaports. Having proximity to possible enemy's naval stations, strategic lines of

⁸² Vego, p.58

⁸³ Vego, p.100

communications gave great advantage to watch or interfere.⁸⁴ Although these major naval bases are used for both defense and offense, they usually serve for offensive actions. For instance, the German main naval base located at Wilhemshaven in North Sea coast was primarily used for offense during World War I.⁸⁵

Major defeats and major victories cause usually shift of the conducted strategies from offensive to defensive or vice versa. For instance, Japanese Navy shifted its strategy from offensive to defensive after the defeat in the battle of Midway in 1942.⁸⁶ With the defeat of the Russian Navy, Japanese Navy obtained the control of the Yellow Sea. However, Japanese Admiral Togo decided to shift onto defensive to take more strength its control over the Sea of Japan.⁸⁷ On the other hand, decisive successes can also shift the strategies of navies from defensive to offensive as in the case of Soviet Black Sea Fleet's offensive strategy conducting after Stalingrad victory against Germany in 1943.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the importance of naval security, naval strategy, and sea power with necessary definitions. To analyze these subjects, historical cases and examples were used to make comprehensive and proper discussion. In the following chapter, geopolitical importance and the historical evolution of the Black Sea will be discussed.

⁸⁴ Krause, et al., p. 78

⁸⁵ Vego, p.62

⁸⁶ Vego, p.65

⁸⁷ Vego, p.67

CHAPTER 3

GEOPOLITICS OF THE BLACK SEA: HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

3.1. Introduction

Some countries and regions have globally vital importance for world politics, security, and economy. Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean regions are two of them both together as a unit and separately. Geographically and historically, these two regions, as northern and southern coasts of Anatolia have been the area of dominance of the same power with the Anatolia. In other words, Anatolia is a bridge between these two regions, so it is possible to indicate that the hegemon power in Anatolia can also control both Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean at the same time. Indeed, Anatolia has the longest coasts to these two seas beside of having the only connection between these two. Thus, it has the biggest advantage to control both.

On the other hand, these two regions have the feature of semi-enclosed sea according to international maritime law. In addition, they are also seen as international seas because they are enclosed by more than two littoral states and have narrow straits or canals to reach open seas or other seas. More strategically, Black Sea is integrated with Eastern Mediterranean via the Turkish Straits which are the only access point to and from the Black Sea.

The Black Sea stretches away the northern coasts of Anatolia while the Eastern Mediterranean stretches away the southern and western coasts, so they have served as bridge on the center of East - West and South- North corridor between Asia and Europe throughout history. Indeed, these two seas are more than a sea with their littoral states and connected regions. Because of their strategic position with

access to the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Central Europe, they obviously represent much more than a zone of local importance.

According to Konstantin, ‘*the Black Sea region is a geopolitical axis, the strategic importance of which is constantly growing*’⁸⁸. This claim should be also valid for Eastern Mediterranean as the complement of the Black Sea. Hence, it would be better to see these two regions as ‘wider Black Sea region’ when Black Sea is said and ‘wider Eastern Mediterranean region’ when the Eastern Mediterranean is said.

Today, Black Sea region includes six riparian states, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine as well as nearby states, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Greece, North Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia, and Montenegro. However, when it is talked about the Black Sea Basin or Wider Black Sea, it should include the parts of almost 20 countries from Germany to Iran, from whole Balkan countries to Caucasus. Similarly, Eastern Mediterranean Sea is enclosed by seven riparian states, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Gaza Strip, Egypt, and Libya along with containing the island of Cyprus⁸⁹, today.

As a region, Eastern Mediterranean region contains much bigger area of influence from North to South and East to West. When the map is opened, the first thing about the Eastern Mediterranean that leaps to the eye will be the center location between Middle East, Anatolia, South Eastern Europe, Gulf and North Africa.

⁸⁸ Kurylev, Konstantin. “The Black Sea Region as a Zone of Geopolitical Confrontation”. Expert Opinion for Valdai Club, 2020.

⁸⁹ In this thesis, the word “Cyprus” refers to the name of the Island. The constitution of The Republic of Cyprus (RoC) which is established in 1960, was changed in 1963 and the rights of Turkish Cypriots has been violated since that time. Thus, RoC, which is not recognized by Turkey, is usually mentioned by Turkish officials as the Greek-Cypriot Administration. Turkish Cypriots’ state, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which is established in 1983, is officially recognized only by Turkey.

Both Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea are geopolitically such significant regions that they have always influenced the world history and international politics. According to Braudel, Mediterranean means the seas and sea-roads which are connected to each other, collaborated cities, traffic, and a transition system.⁹⁰ According to Alfred T. Mahan's 'Sea Power Theory', the power that controls the Black Sea can hold the geographical power to control the region.⁹¹ Moreover, geopolitician Halford Mackinder's Theory of Heartland had been influenced by Bolshevik Revolution and the Black Sea's geopolitical condition. Mackinder thought over the prevention of international help for Russian Tsar via the Turkish Straits and he included the Black Sea to his Theory of Heartland which emphasizes the advantage and significance of geography.⁹² About Eastern Mediterranean, Hadjipavlis argued that “*the control of this area determines the dominant power of Eurasia thereby governing the whole World*”.⁹³ Thus, commanding these seas means commanding the region and big part of the world.

3.2. Geographical Features of the Black Sea

Anatolia, as a bridge between Asia and Europe, East and West, South and North, places among the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean. The central position of Anatolia is transmitted to these two neighbor seas. Indeed, these two integrated seas emerged together with the same process. These two places were geologically taken shaped by the tectonic movements which are still active today. Caspian Sea, Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea are the three fragments of former Tethys

⁹⁰ Braudel, Fernand. *Akdeniz*. İstanbul: Metis Publishing, 2007, p.52

⁹¹ Erdil, Bülent. “Yeni Güç Savaşlarının Yeni Karadeniz Stratejileri.” *Black Sea Research Center*, XV/59 – Fall 2018 p.116

⁹² Doğan, Göknil. “Klasik ve Eleştirel Jeopolitik Çerçevesinden Karadeniz Coğrafyası”. *Karadeniz Jeopolitiği*. İstanbul: Beta Yayıncılık, 2018, p.74

⁹³ Hadjipavlis, Panayiotis. “The geopolitical importance of the Eastern Mediterranean airspace.” *Eastern Mediterranean Geopolitical Review* Vol. 1 (Fall 2015), 44-60.

Sea. With the strong tectonic movements of the continental plates of Europe, Asia and Africa, Tethys Sea was divided, and many mountains emerged around the region by the presses of plates. Thus, the geological structure of the region explains the reason of mountainous structure of the northern Mediterranean⁹⁴ and the southern and eastern Black Sea. According to geologic data, these tectonic movements have resulted in active volcanism, mountain building and land submergence in the region since the millions of years.⁹⁵ Anatolia became the most obvious theater of these tectonic movements with the earthquakes, thermal springs, and passive volcanoes.

Both Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean Sea are parts of Mediterranean as it was millions of years ago, during Tethys Sea time. Today, Mediterranean Sea is divided into two parts by island of Sicily, as East and West part. Gibraltar, the strait between Southern Europe and Northern Africa, connect Western Mediterranean and Atlantic Ocean. On the other hand, the east side of the line which is drawn between the Cape Bon of Tunisia and Cape Lilibeo of the island of Sicily⁹⁶ is Eastern Mediterranean which is connected to Black Sea via Turkish Straits, to Indian Ocean and Red Sea via Suez Canal. Eastern Mediterranean is also separated into two major basins as Ionian and Levantine Basins by a submarine ridge between Libya and the island of Crete.

Ionian Basin, which is also known as Ionian Sea locates between the Italy, Balkan region, and Greece. On the other hand, Levantine Basin is surrounded by Anatolia and Middle East (included Libya). Island of Crete divided the Eastern Mediterranean into two, Aegean Sea in the north and the Levantine Sea in the

⁹⁴ Braudel, p.18

⁹⁵ Boxer, Baruch & Salah, Mostafa (2019), Mediterranean Sea. Encyclopedia Britannica. Website URL: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mediterranean-Sea>

⁹⁶ Cem Gürdeniz, “Hedefteki Donanma”, Kırmızı Kedi Publishing, fifth edition, 2013, p.333

south-east. Aegean Sea is surrounded by Greek and Turkish coasts by containing numerous islands today and constitutes the important part of the way of passage between Black Sea, Marmara Sea and Mediterranean. This thesis primarily examines the Levantine Basin of the Eastern Mediterranean, so the term ‘Eastern Mediterranean’ mainly refers the Levantine Basin.

Black Sea constitutes the world’s largest inland sea with its approximately 430.000 km² extent without Sea of Azov, 4869 km coastline length⁹⁷ and more than 2,000 m maximum deepness. Maintaining this large amount of water is provided by major rivers. Principally, the Danube, Dnieper, Don (via the Sea of Azov), Rioni, Southern Bug, Dniester, Kızılırmak, Yeşilırmak, Sakarya, Kotori and Inguri flow into Black Sea⁹⁸; and it drains into the Mediterranean Sea via the Turkish Straits and Marmara Sea which is Turkish inland sea between two straits. The Danube River carries approximately 200 km³ sweet water every year to Black Sea. This amount is bigger than total water which is carried to North Sea.⁹⁹ To the North, the Black Sea is connected to the Sea of Azov via the Kerch Strait; and to the South, connected to Marmara Sea via the Bosphorus Strait and to Mediterranean via the Strait of the Dardanelles. However, unlike the Black Sea, Eastern Mediterranean region is not lucky enough in terms of water resources and rivers. The main body of water flows constantly from Atlantic Ocean via the Strait of Gibraltar, because of the high rate of evaporation. It also receives from the rivers, but this amount of water constitutes about one-third of the amount that evaporates. In addition, a small amount of water also comes from the Black Sea via the Turkish

⁹⁷Stanchev, H., Palazov, A., Stancheva, M., & Apostolov, A. (2011). Determination of the Black Sea area and coastline length using GIS methods and Landsat 7 satellite images. *Geo-eco-marina*, No 17/2011, 27–31. Website URL: <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.56890>

⁹⁸Black Sea Commission (2019). Website URL: http://www.blacksea-commission.org/_geography.asp

⁹⁹ Ascherson, Neal. Karadeniz. ISBN 975-458-258-0, *Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları*, 2001, p.16

Straits.¹⁰⁰ While the water resource is quite limited in the Eastern Mediterranean Basin, especially the south-eastern part, the same region abounds in oil and gas.

According to recent developments and research in the last few decades, not only around of the Eastern Mediterranean, but also under the sea is hydrocarbon resource-rich, like Black Sea. The resource richness in and around the Caspian has been well known for many decades but the new discoveries in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean put additional importance to these regions and this subject will be also examined in detail in the following chapters. On the contrary to the fertile soil and hydrocarbon richness in and around the seas, marine life of Black Sea is almost death because of the excessive organic elements which are carried by rivers to the deep of the Black Sea. Black Sea has the richest hydrogen sulfide gas reserve on the world. Because of this lethal concentration, it is also biggest body of water where there is no life.¹⁰¹ However this feature is just for deep water under 100-200 meters. Above this oxyline, same sea has been seen as the sea of plentifulness in terms of fishing. Moreover, abundance of anchovy and acorn has led to the intense fish trade from the region since the ancient times. Anchovy, for instance, has been always so important that Byzantine Empire coined with the picture of this fish. In addition, the plenitude of fish was so much that the caviar was seen as the food of poor and peasants.¹⁰²

In terms of climate, while the steppe climate with cold winters and hot and dry summers dominates the northern part of the Black Sea, humid subtropical climate with warm winters and humid summers dominates the southern part of the Black Sea. From the geographical formations side, while the southern and southeastern parts sheltered by high mountains, vast plains places on the northern part of the

¹⁰⁰ Boxer & Salah (2019). Website URL: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mediterranean-Sea>

¹⁰¹ Ascherson, p.17

¹⁰² Ascherson, p.18

region. Thus, the northern part lacks deep coastal line and inappropriate to build naval ports because of the coastal formations.

Diversity of geographical formations, climates, and nature has reflected on the economies, policies, cultures, and societies in both regions throughout the history. Also, characterizing by two of the world's most significant choke points (Turkish Straits and Suez Canal) increased its geostrategic importance with the gained momentum of shipping way of trade and transitions, especially in the recent times. Before looking at the recent times, it is necessary to look historical background of the region from the ancient times briefly.

3.3. Ancient Period

Eastern Mediterranean, which is the cradle of civilizations for thousands of years, has been the most important junction point on the earth since the early human history. Black Sea has also similar features and it has always played significant role for economic, social, cultural, and political interaction between different nations, political entities, and countries throughout the history. Because of their unique geographical location on the important crossroads, they have been always on the target of different Powers since the ancient times. Indeed, the common point of these two regions is to be the indispensable part of Anatolia which is the center of continents. Thus, as it is said before, the power that dominates the Anatolia could control these seas and regions. Therefore, these two seas and Anatolia became the center of power struggles since the ancient times.

In the ancient times, there were many kingdoms and states rather than single dominant power or political unity in the region. Mostly Hellenic culture, beside of Persian, Armenian, influenced the region for a long time. The ancient Greek names of the Black Sea would best demonstrate the political and social conditions of the region because it was firstly named as 'inhospitable sea' and later named as

‘hospitable sea’.¹⁰³ Geography of Black Sea has always provided both hospitable and friendly environment since the ancient times. In the early ancient times, many different tribes and colonists migrated to the region especially from the Middle Asia, Middle East, and Europe. On the other hand, Eastern Mediterranean region became the melting pot of many cultures since the ancient times. Besides of many civilizations, “*it is the cradle of three worldwide monotheistic creeds*”.¹⁰⁴ The Mediterranean Sea has gone by many names and these names are the sign of the history of the region with its multicultural structure and background. In English, Mediterranean means between lands. It has been called as

*Our Sea’ for the Romans, the ‘White Sea’ (Akdeniz) for the Turks, the ‘Great Sea’ (Yam gadol) for the Jews, the ‘Middle Sea’ (Mittelmeer) for the Germans, and more doubtfully the ‘Great Green’ of the ancient Egyptians.*¹⁰⁵

It has been also called as the ‘Inner Sea’, the ‘Encircled Sea’, the ‘Friendly Sea’, the ‘Faithful Sea’ of several religions, the ‘Bitter Sea’ of the Second World War, by many scholars in accordance with the cultural, geographical, social, and historical structure of the region.

Anatolia, as the center of these regions hosted many different tribes and states. Both Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean coasts witnessed many conflicts and cooperations. Greeks, Scythians, Cimmerians, Sarmatians, Huns, Avars, Bulgarians, Caspians, Pechenegs, Kumanos, Argonauts, Mongols, Russians, and many other tribes struggled to penetrate the Black Sea in the ancient times. Not

¹⁰³ Aybak, Tunç. “Politics of the Black Sea: Dynamics of Cooperation and Conflict”, London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2001, p.1

¹⁰⁴ Hadjipavlis, 2015

¹⁰⁵ Abulafia, David. The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean, New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2011, p. xxiii.

only tribes, but also states and empires attempted to dominate the region. Besides of these powers, Black Sea was also on the target and use of some merchant states, such as Genoa and Venice although they even did not have any port.¹⁰⁶ With the expansion of sea trade from the 4th century B.C. onwards, maritime nations set their eyes on the region. Their aim was not only plying trade, but also controlling this significant region and gaining profit.

Eastern Mediterranean Sea constitutes the sea part of ‘fertile crescent’ that was home to some of the earliest human civilizations. Mesopotamia, Nile Basin, and Anatolia were the places that the biggest civilizations emerged in the region thousands of years ago and human history has continued to be written in the same regions since that time. In around 10.000 B.C., permanent agricultural society began in this region with the cultivation of grains and cereals, so the hunter-gatherer lifestyle was abandoned. Also, the first tools for agriculture were created in this region. However, the agricultural production has primarily based on watering system because of the arid climate. Thus, the production was not stable in the region. This situation led ancient people and cities to keep their production or buy from other regions. Accordingly, the first trade and economic activities started in this region. Moreover, the first transportation ships and primitive ferries were created in Mesopotamia. These ships could be just used in rivers, not the sea. The sea was not used for a long time and the first Mediterranean civilizations developed away from the sea. Almost in the middle of 3.000 B.C., the first merchant fleet was established by Egyptian style ships in the Nile River. Few centuries later, the first voyages in the Eastern Mediterranean started between Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria.¹⁰⁷ Ugarit port in Syria connected the Mesopotamia, Anatolia and Caucasus with the Egypt and other regions in the Mediterranean; and it had been one of the oldest ports in the region. These voyages were the first step

¹⁰⁶ Bilgin, Mehmet. “A Glance at the History of the Black Sea Region” Blue Black Sea, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013, p.10

¹⁰⁷ Braudel, p.59

of the international trade, diplomatic relations, social and cultural interactions in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, these ships were not ready for distant voyages from the coasts. New ships were created by maritime nations Phoenicians' ancestor Canaanites and adapted them to the Mediterranean conditions. These ships accelerated the history of Mediterranean. Civilizations, empires, states had reigned over the different parts of the region throughout history, from east to west, from north to south, from Mesopotamia to Egypt, from Anatolia to Alexandria, from Phoenician civilization to Baghdad and all these civilizations have formed a sound base for world civilizations.¹⁰⁸ Briefly stated the political entities and civilizations from time immemorial, in the classical antiquity, the most notable civilizations in the region were Egyptian, Greeks and Phoenicians. Later, Greeks expanded towards north, the Black Sea and south, the Red Sea while Phoenicians went towards the west, Iberian Peninsula. In the 6th century B.C., Persian rule started in some part of the region.

In the ancient times, piracy was the biggest threat to the cities, so people used to prefer to live in mountains, not in the coastal areas, to protect themselves from the attacks which came from the sea. Thus, it is possible to indicate that in and around the Anatolia was open to attacks because there was no political unity, regional stability, and hegemon power in the region. The lack of dominant power created the area of invasions until the first hegemon in the whole Anatolia, Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean.

3.4. Roman Period (129 B.C.-1453 A.D.)

The political and economic relations between Anatolian states and Roman Empire started before 200 B.C. Close relations brought the Roman rule to the Anatolia because the last emperor of Pergamon Empire died without heir and the region was bequeathed to Roman Empire. Anatolia became the Roman province of Asia

¹⁰⁸ Sağlamer, Gülsün. The Mediterranean Sea: Cradle of Civilization. United Nations Articles, Website URL: <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/mediterranean-sea-cradle-civilization>

with the capital of Ephesus and the Romanization of Anatolia started with the first rule of Roman Empire. Roman Empire was the biggest power at that time. Moreover, for the first time in the history, Romans guaranteed the safety of the Mediterranean from the Straits of Gibraltar to Levantine basin. Thus, Mediterranean became the 'Roman Lake' at the end of a running battle for 116 years.¹⁰⁹ However, with the sack of Rome by Visigoths in 410, the capital was moved from Rome to Constantinople and the Roman Empire continued as Byzantine Empire (East Roman Empire) to rule in Anatolia, Black Sea, and Eastern Mediterranean Sea. On the other hand, continuation of piracy and insecurity in the Black Sea region brought the need for hegemon power to prevent such harmful actions to trade. After the Roman rule in Anatolia, Black Sea's Romanization started, and it became the Roman Lake for the first time in the history. The Roman hegemony brought the stability and prosperity to the region.

Later, Byzantine Empire became the representative of Orthodox Christianity in the region with the spread of Christianity. Driven by the religious motivation and desire to expand its sovereignty, Byzantium attacked to tribes and "*peoples of other beliefs, including local creeds of Christianity*"¹¹⁰ such as Christian Armenians, Muslims. With the rise of Muslim Seljuks in Anatolia, Armenians were able to breathe freely again under the Seljuks' protection until the Mongol invasion which led to the collapse of Muslim Seljuks.

All powers that rose in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean regions influenced others either through invasion or commercial relations during peace times. According to Manoli, "*ports of the Black Sea created a network of economic activities linking the people around and beyond the sea*".¹¹¹ Thus, trade

¹⁰⁹ Abulafia, p.199

¹¹⁰ Bilgin, p.13

¹¹¹ Manoli, Panagioti. "The Dynamics of Black Sea Subregionalism", Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012, p.4

was one of the primary ways of influence among the cultures and tribes in the region. The wide range of commercial goods was one of the signs of cultural diversity in the region which led to mutual interaction and influence. Foodstuff, bows, clothes, military materials, gemstones, fur, moreover slaves were the primary commercial objects. Not only had the diversity of the goods, but also the easy access to and from the region, the center location between east and west, north, and south played significant role to be the trade center. As well as the commercial center, Black Sea region was the zone of diffusion and collision of major faiths in the history.¹¹² Religious symbols, belief systems, and rituals influenced the different regions and religions via the Black Sea. Monotheistic religions, rooted in Middle East, reached Anatolia and the Northern Black Sea first before spreading to entire Europe. Similarly, Orthodox Christianity spread from Byzantine Empire to the Slavic and Russian region via the Black Sea.

On the other hand, the joy of ‘mare nostrum’ (*our sea*) in Eastern Mediterranean could just last until the Sasanians gained territory. In the 7th century, the new monotheistic religion, Islam was born. Although Islam was not born in the Mediterranean, it spread into the region and interacted with the other monotheistic religions, Judaism and Christianity which are born in the Mediterranean.¹¹³ When the Roman and Sasanians weakened, Islam was spread by the religious motivation, not only in Arabian Peninsula, but also in Eastern Mediterranean and Anatolia. Power struggle in Anatolia, among Roman Empire, Persian and Arabian and finally Turkish forces, led to the power loss of Roman Empire. Small states emerged in Anatolia and the most powerful one was Muslim Seljuks. Byzantine Empire lost its power in time and squashed into the Constantinople. With the rise of new Turkish state, Ottoman state gained the territory around the Byzantine Empire in time and Constantinople was surrounded by Ottoman in both Balkan side and Anatolian side of the region.

¹¹² Bilgin, p.12

¹¹³ Abulafia, p.244

During that time, the power struggle in Anatolia, Mediterranean and Black Sea was going on. Ottomans provided advantage from the instability in the regions and gained power in short time.

3.5. Ottoman Period (1453-1920)

In the late Middle Ages, the Black Death, which was the deadliest pandemic in human history, reduced the manpower for the wars and economic production. During that time, the rise of Ottoman was accelerated by one of the biggest cases in the history. In 1453, Istanbul (*Constantinople in old name*) was conquered by Ottomans, and Byzantine Empire was collapsed. The conquest of Istanbul by Ottomans is seen as one of the most important turning points in the world history,

The rise of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and Anatolia, especially after the collapse of Byzantium and conquest of the Istanbul opened a new era in the Black Sea and in the Eastern Mediterranean region. During that time, Black Sea was greatly under the control of Genoese and Venetians. With the conquest of Trabzon in 1461 and the Crimea in 1475 by Ottoman Empire, the Black Sea turned into an inland sea, in other words, Turkish Lake. This was second time for Black Sea to be a lake or inland sea, because it was once turned into Roman Lake to protect sea trade in the ancient times. Until 1550, peace was dominant to the Black Sea region under the Ottoman rule. However, attacks from the Don Kazakhs and Russians to the northern coast led to the permanent settlement of Russians to the region. With the end of the 1768-1774 war among Ottomans and Russians, Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardji was signed in 1774.¹¹⁴ This treaty is seen as the first step of the loss of Ottoman dominance on the Black Sea. Since that date, Black Sea has been always shared with more than two states and became the target of Russians.

The treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardji lead the Russian enlargement toward the Black Sea. During that time, Tsarina Catherine, originally a German Princess before

¹¹⁴ Bilgin, p.13

her marriage with Russian Peter III, was ruling Russia. Tsarina Catherine aimed to enlarge Russian Empire toward south, opposite to I. Petro who aimed to enlarge toward the west and northern west. With many strategic successes for Russia, Tsarina Catherine is also called as Catherine the Great, like Petro the Great, for Russian history. Tsarina, succeed to settlement of Russia to the Black Sea region by the control of all around the Sea of Azov and the autonomy of Crimea. Along with the gain of territories, the eleventh article of Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardji gave to Tsarina Catherine the right of free movement for Russian merchant ships in the Black Sea, right of passage to Mediterranean by the Turkish Straits and the opening of Russian consulate in wherever Russia wants.¹¹⁵

Autonomous Crimean Khanate was ruled by pro-Russian Shahin Giray and Ottoman Empire officially recognized his khanate by the Treaty of Aynalıkavak in March 10, 1779. However, just after four years, Russia annexed Crimea in 1783. The annexation of Crimea was the absolute settlement of Russia to the northern Black Sea.¹¹⁶ This settlement of Russia in the Black Sea opened the way to create Black Sea Fleet, many castles in strategic points and military backyards. According to Armaoğlu, these preparations like the creation of a fleet, annexation of Crimea and the enlargement in the Black Sea are the part of the Greek Plan which is shaped by Russia and Austria. Greek Plan is a kind of the plan for the portion of the Ottoman territory in case of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. According to this plan, if Ottoman Empire collapsed, or at least excluded from the European continent, Istanbul centered Greek state which is under Russian control would be established. That's why the grandson of Tsarina Catherine is named as Constantin in 1779 with the intend of being ruler to this planned Greek State. On this purpose, many Greek nannies were employed in the palace to teach Greek culture to grandson Constantin.

¹¹⁵ Armaoğlu, Fahir. 19. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi 1789-1914. *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, 1997. p.15

¹¹⁶ Armaoğlu, p.16

Moreover, Tsarina Catherine founded a military school in Petersburg for Greek youths to educate Greek military officer in the planned Greek state.¹¹⁷

18th century witnessed many Russian-Ottoman conflicts, war, and Russian enlargement toward the Black Sea, but ended with the Ottoman- Russian alliance against French (Napoleon) threat to Egypt. On the purpose of repelling Napoleon and French forces from Egypt, Ottoman Empire signed the treaties of defensive alliance with Russian Empire on December 23, 1798, and with Britain on January 5, 1799. According to the treaty of alliance among Russia and Ottoman Empire, the free movement of Russian warships or fleet on the Turkish Straits is valid just for this war time. On the other hand, according to secret clauses of the agreement, Black Sea is accepted as an enclosed sea and is closed to any warship of other states to the region. Even this article is a great gain for Russia in terms of her naval security. By this agreement, Russian fleet passed throughout the Turkish Straits and reached Mediterranean Sea, warm seas in other words, at first time.¹¹⁸

The second Russian-Ottoman treaty of defensive alliance came after 6 years later with the Russian pressure. The second treaty of alliance among Russia and Ottoman was signed on September 24, 1805. According to non-secret clauses, if Russia or Ottoman became under attack, ally would help. The main importance of this treaty was in the secret clauses which gave lot of advantage to Russia to pass through Turkish Straits even in the peace time. However, this treaty of alliance remained in force for one year till the Russo-Ottoman war broke up in 1806.

19th century witnessed many conflicts and wars among Russia and Ottoman as the previous century. However, Russia gained power both militarily and

¹¹⁷ Armaoğlu, p.17

¹¹⁸ Armaoğlu, p. 84-85

politically in time and this century witnessed harsher and unforgettable conflicts. Battle of Navarino was one of the significant turning points of the history. Russia, Britain, and France attacked against Ottoman fleet in Navarino on October 20, 1827, and whole fleet was destroyed. Contrary to France and Britain, Russia wages war against Ottoman on April 26, 1828. At the end of the war, peace deal was signed in Edirne on September 14, 1829. With Edirne Peace Deal, Russia gained the free movement and passage through the Turkish Straits for Russian merchant ships.¹¹⁹

All these wars, conflicts and agreements showed that Russia aimed to increase its power in the Black Sea and reached to Mediterranean by Turkish straits. On this purpose, Russia aimed to keep Ottoman weak rather than European powers control; and aimed to control the Straits if Ottoman collapsed, as Tsar Nicola I claimed while explaining their policy towards Ottoman Empire, in 1828.¹²⁰

The presence of Ottoman Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean was more complicated than the Black Sea in terms of historical developments. The rise of the Ottoman Empire after the conquest of Istanbul opened a new era in Eastern Mediterranean region although reshaping it had to take time after Black Death. During the first half of the sixteenth century, Eastern Mediterranean became the Ottoman / Turkish Lake with the conquest of Syria, Jerusalem (The Holy Lands), Egypt and Libya, except one at the center, the island of Cyprus. Henceforward, the naval power of Ottoman Empire was improved. In 1538, Ottoman fleet won the victory against Christian Holy League on the Battle of Preveza, which was the one of the biggest naval wars at that century. However, Ottoman fleet was destroyed in 1571 by the fleet of Holy League which was arranged by the Pope in the purpose of taking revenge of Preveza, stopping Ottoman expansion. Although this Battle of Lepanto slowed down Ottoman expansion in the Mediterranean, it

¹¹⁹ Armaoğlu, p. 184

¹²⁰ Armaoğlu, p.227

could not stop. The island of Cyprus was under the rule of Venetians and Ottoman started to attack them from 1570 to 1573. At the end of the battle, Cyprus came under the rule of Ottoman Empire in 1573. Thus, the Eastern Mediterranean became an Ottoman/Turkish Lake in the sixteenth century.¹²¹ Indeed, Ottoman Empire gain the whole coasts of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean until the Atlantic Ocean, with the conquest of Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Morocco. The dominance over the Mashreq (Eastern Mediterranean) and Maghreb (Western Mediterranean) continued until the nineteenth century.

With the accumulation of wealth, European rise started in the art, science, and industry. Industrial revolution led to seek human and material resources. By the nineteenth century, European powers started to colonize in Africa and all over the world. Ottoman Empire could not reach the developments in the west and started to lose its power, not only economically, but also militarily. Ottoman naval presence in the region was diminished and Western powers (British, French, and Italian) spread their powers to Ottoman's territory in North Africa and Middle East. Ottoman gradually lost its territories either by Imperialist powers or by independence of minor nations. The control of Algeria and Tunisia were gained by France while Britain took Egypt in 1882 and de facto control the Cyprus in 1878. Finally, the last territory of Ottoman in the northern Africa was gained by Italy in 1911.

One of the most important milestones of Eastern Mediterranean history emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. With the Ottoman initiatives and the control of Governor Ismail Pasha, construction of Suez Canal was completed in 10 years and opened to passages in 1869. During its opening ceremony, "*the empress's father-confessor proclaimed that 'today two worlds are made one'; 'today is a great festival for all of humanity'*".¹²² These words expressed the

¹²¹ Abulafia, p.414

¹²² Abulafia, p.552

importance of this Canal and the region. With the opening of Suez Canal, Eastern Mediterranean became one of the most strategic parts of the world. However, the control of the Egypt and Suez Canal came under the de facto British rule with the invasion of Britain. Ottoman Empire was not enough powerful to take it back. Although Egypt remained technically an Ottoman province until World War I, British established their indirect colonial rule.¹²³

Weakening Ottoman Empire in the 19th and 20th century created a playground in both Eastern Mediterranean for Western Powers and Black Sea for Russians who wants to spread its power to the Balkans in the west and Caucasus in the east. Russians import and export trade with Europe was their major economic activity and almost 60 percent of Russian export was floating via the ports of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov before the World War I.¹²⁴ In order to extend its power in the region, Russians had some driving forces like Orthodox Christianity, and Slavism along with the army and fleet. By using ethnic elements against Muslim Ottoman rule, Russia accelerated its expansion in the region without any international resistance. Moreover, Russian Tsar dealt with imperialist Western Powers to destroy Ottoman rule especially in the south-eastern Black Sea and the First World War broke out. This war brought the major political change to the region with the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the Turkish Revolution in Anatolia.

With the broke out of the First World War, Eastern Mediterranean also became one of the bloodiest trouble spots. Britain and France invaded the Middle East and Anatolia. During the war, Egypt and Cyprus served as a military base for Britain. At the end of the war, the political structure of the region was completely changed, especially with the collapse of Ottoman Empire, invasion of the Anatolia and the

¹²³ Haktanır, Korkmaz. “Egypt”. *Eastern Mediterranean: Ankara, A Quarterly of the Foreign Policy Institute*, 2009, p.95

¹²⁴ Manoli, p.5

nationalist uprising in the Middle East. The First World War ended in 1918 but the conflicts in the region had continued.

3.6. Post- First World War Period (1920-2001)

Black Sea and Turkish straits predestinated the First World War and Russia, because the help from Western alliances could not reach to Tsarist Russia and Bolsheviks took the rule of Russia. Although the regime was changed by Bolshevik Russians and Russian Tsardom was collapsed during the war, Russian expansion, and desire of influence in the region had continued. The political situation after the World War I changed for both Russians and Turks, but they have continued to share the coasts of the Black Sea up until now.

In 1919, the new Turkish state was established and in 1922 Egypt declared its independence. However, many other regional states could not gain their independence yet, at least until the end of World War II.¹²⁵ On the other hand, during the war, Britain cooperated with the Arabs against Ottoman in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. However, the political environment of Palestine was much more different than other places. Jewish demands for a homeland increased the tension between Arabs and Jews. By the initiatives of British Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour and diplomat T.E. Lawrence, Balfour Declaration which was opened the way for Jewish state in the region, was issued by British government in 1917.¹²⁶ This was the first step of the Palestine Issue.

The new sovereign Turkish state, which established in Anatolia created balanced relations with Russians. Black Sea also played the most important role in Turkish Independence War as being the arterial and supply road for military logistic

¹²⁵ Sinkaya, Bayram. Geçmişten Günümüze Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu Politikası ve Batı Etkisi. *Adam Akademi*, 2011/1, p.90

¹²⁶ Abulafia, p.592

from USSR.¹²⁷ The new north-south axes of Turkish and Russian relations were considered as the backbone of balance of power in the region.¹²⁸ However, Bolshevik Russia had already controlled Balkan and Caucasus region after the collapse of the Ottoman rule and Russians controlled the region until the collapse of Soviet Union.

Black Sea became a theater of war with the broke out of the Second World War and three of the littoral states took their part in the war. While Russians fought against Germany, Bulgaria and Romania were on Germany's side. Although Germany could not access the region via Turkish Straits, he has two alliances in the Black Sea. Germany was decisive to apply Barbarossa Plan which aimed to gain new living territories in the east. For this purpose, it was vital to access Black Sea and keep the German navy in the region. However, this was impossible via the conventional route. Hitler's Admiral Reader planned to carry out the navy in three stages via both Elbe and Danube rivers and land connection between these two rivers. Thus, transition from the North Sea to the Black Sea became possible. This transition plan was performed perfectly, and Germany set a naval base in K stence, in Romania. As a result, Germany had many operations against Russian fleet and resulted in sinking of total shipping of 45.426 BRT.¹²⁹ However, with the defeat of the Axis powers, Bulgaria and Romania were brought under control of Soviet Russia, at the end of the war. Black Sea also witnessed both the end of the WWI and the beginning of Cold War with the Yalta Conference, a.k.a Crimea Conference. The post-war reorganization was decided in this conference and the area of hegemony was shared among Soviet Russia and US. Thus, the Cold War period started. According to

¹²⁷ G rdeniz, p.293

¹²⁸ Manoli, p.5

¹²⁹ Kolay, Sel uk (2008), "WW II U-Boats Off the Turkish Black Sea Coast", Turkish Institute of Nautical Archeology

Aybak, “*much of the second half of the twentieth century was, for the Black Sea, a period of freeze and division under Cold War circumstances.*”¹³⁰ Although Turkey kept its neutrality until the beginning of 1950s, rising Soviet expansionism around the Black Sea forced Turkey to become a NATO member against Soviet threat. Thus, Black Sea became colder sea among opposite shores of Turkey and Soviet Russia, under the Cold War circumstances. During Cold War, Black Sea was divided into two blocks with two economic and political systems. This situation created no communication among Soviet Russia and Turkey in the region. Moreover, Black Sea was called as “*NATO-controlled lake*”¹³¹ by some American or West-centric scholars and analysts because of the controlling power of US over the access to and from Black Sea routes on Mediterranean and of course Turkey as a NATO member whose straits are the only gate of the region on the water. Entrance regime to Black Sea via these Turkish Straits was determined by the Montreux Convention of 1936 and the details will be contextualized in the following chapters. In short, with the NATO membership, Turkey became the key country in the West’s defense against the Soviet Union during Cold War period.

During the first half of the twentieth century, Eastern Mediterranean also became the theater of wars with the expansionist behaviors of imperialist states. With the broke out of the World War II, Mediterranean was at the center of especially Italian expansion. However, the major issues of the Eastern Mediterranean part emerged after the World War II and the most important agenda became the Arab - Israeli conflict and Cyprus issue in the Cold War period. With the establishment of independent Israeli state in 1948 right after the Arab - Israeli war, opened a new dispute in the region. According to Köni (1999) “*the existence of the Israel is perpetuated with the moral and financial*

¹³⁰ Aybak, p.3

¹³¹ Weaver, Carol. “The Politics of the Black Sea Region: EU Neighbourhood, Conflict Zone or Future Security Community”. Ashgate Publishing: London, 2013, p.2

support of the US’’.¹³² Thus, Israel was the strategic partner of US during and after the Cold War period. Arab-Israeli relations, Cyprus Issue and related cases will be examined in detail in the following chapters.

With the end of the World War II and the emergence of the unilateral world system, the world entered the Cold War period. The influence of this new situation between two major power and system was notoriously felt in the Eastern Mediterranean region. United States had seen the Mediterranean as “*an advance position in the new struggle*”¹³³ against USSR. On the purpose of keeping Russians away from the Mediterranean and enclose her in the Black Sea, both Greece and Turkey were let into NATO in 1952. Although US pulled them toward western alliance, Eastern Mediterranean has been already splinted into pro- American and pro-Soviet camps. Syria, after gaining its independence from France in 1946, became pro-socialist state and aimed to establish a United Socialist Arab State. Since that time, Syria has established strong ties and indispensable relations with Russia. Lebanon, on the other hand, gained its independence from France in 1943 and its political structure differs from other states in the region. During the Cold War period, both Western countries and USSR maintained their military presence in the Eastern Mediterranean on the purpose of containing the influence of the other along with the competing in the search for new allies in the region.¹³⁴

The political atmosphere of Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean regions have completely changed with the end of the Cold War period and the dissolution

¹³² Köni, Hasan. The Security of Eastern Mediterranean and Turkey. Security and Cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean. Istanbul: Friedrich Nauman Foundation, 1999, p.11

¹³³ Abulafia, p.613

¹³⁴ Derek Lutterbeck & Georgij Engelbrecht. “The West and Russia in the Mediterranean: Towards a Renewed Rivalry?” Mediterranean Politics, 14:3, (2009) 385-406, DOI: 10.1080/13629390903346905

of Soviet Union. Although it is seeming like the economic power of the west overthrew the Russian power in the region, Russia started to rise its power in the region again especially in the last two decades. While during the Cold War, the main objectives of the competition were ideological and military, the current objectives seem like more economic at least as far as it is observed till today. During the Bush and Putin era, the tension increased to its greatest extent with the EU enlargement which encompassed much of Eastern Europe. According to some, this was the shift of new 'iron curtain' eastwards.¹³⁵ NATO and Western powers tried to fulfill the gap which emerged after Russian withdrawal. As Bilgin Stated,

*this time, the United States emerged as the new global power in a unipolar world order and forced an economically ruined Soviet Union out of some of the former Soviet republics.*¹³⁶

Although Russia had poor economic condition and difficulties, she insisted to keep its military presence especially in the Caucasus.

9/11 attack was one of the most important turning points in the history and world politics. US involvement into the Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea started and accelerated after the 9/11. This case opened a new era in both Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean. Apart from the emergence of regional organizations, NATO and EU conducted new enlargement strategies toward the region. With the membership of Bulgaria and Romania to NATO in 2004 and European Union in 2007 along with the ongoing close relations with other littoral states, Black Sea region entered the new Cold Peace era. Nevertheless, the Black Sea states got a chance to integrate into the global political economy,¹³⁷ international communities and more. According to Aydin

¹³⁵ Weaver, p.63

¹³⁶ Bilgin, p.14

¹³⁷ Aybak, p.3

“the Black Sea countries have, since the end of the Cold War, created multitude of the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and cooperation schemes”.¹³⁸ Related international institutions, political situations, economic, military, political relations will be examined in detail in the following chapters.

3.7. Conclusion

To sum, Black Sea has always geopolitically and politically great importance in world affairs both regionally and globally. This chapter analyzed the geopolitical importance of the Black Sea with its historical evolution. This chapter will be followed by the analyzing naval strategies of Black Sea littoral states and the regional naval security.

¹³⁸ Aydın, Mustafa. “Europe’s Next Shore: The Black Sea Region After EU Enlargement”, IIS Occasional Papers, Paris, 2004. No. 53

CHAPTER 4

NAVAL STRATEGIES OF LITTORAL STATES

4.1. Introduction

Black Sea, which is the safe port of USSR during Cold War period, has been witnessed obvious transformation with the dissolution of Warsaw Pact in 1991. Emergence of new littoral states that gain their independence after the collapse of USSR, gave new security dimension to the region. The change of Eurasian geopolitics with the end of Cold War has had significant impact on Black Sea security. However, Black Sea has been subject to a major transformation and global security issue with the 9/11 case in 2001. Involvement of NATO and the EU to the region changed the dynamics of regional security and politics. In this chapter, the Black Sea littoral states' security perceptions, and their naval strategies especially in the aftermath of 9/11 will be examined on state-by-state basis.

4.2. Georgia

Georgia, situated in the eastern coast of the Black Sea, is a strategically important actor in the Caucasus region by connecting Caspian region with the Black Sea. After a long Soviet domination, Georgia gained its independence in 1991. The political administration of Georgia bases on parliamentary representative democratic republic. However, achieving independence could not solve the domestic issues of Georgia, because Georgia has multinational structure especially in Abkhazia and South Ossetia region which are the main issues with Russian Federation since 2008. At the first years after the establishment of the independent Georgian Republic, the first elected President Zviad Gamsuhurdia's nationalist claims that the territory of Georgia belongs only to Georgians, disquieted

primarily Abkhazians, Ossets and Maskhetians, then Russians. The following President Eduard Shevardnadze ruled Georgia by more balanced policies among Russia and the West from 1992 to 2003.¹³⁹ However, the following President Saakashvili, who came to the power with the Rose Revolution protests in 2003¹⁴⁰, targeted to become a part of West by following pro-Western policies. Obvious efforts of Georgia to become a part of Western institutions and to strengthen relations with them prompted Russia to keep its power in the region against Western influence. In accordance with this aim, Russia supported Ossets and Abkhazians to gain their independence from Georgia. Armed provocations started against Georgian villages by Russian supported Ossetian separatists and finally Russia attained what she wants: Georgia responded by opening fire on Tskhinvali in August 2008.¹⁴¹ On the other hand, the attempt of NATO to enlarge towards Russian borders by creating ties with Georgia was perceived as a security threat by Russia. Although NATO rejected Georgia's application for membership in April 2008 Bucharest Summit, Russia intervened militarily to Georgia to warn other countries for their Western policies and create a new area of influence in the region through Ossets and Abkhazians.¹⁴² As a result, the intervention of Georgia by showing power to these problematic regions gave a pretext to Russia to intervene and it caused a five-days-long war between Georgia and Russia. At the end of the war, Russia occupied the region. Soon after, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, where Russia set up five military bases on these occupied territories of Georgia, declared their independence and Russia recognized their independence in August 2008.

¹³⁹ Erdemir, Halil. Karadeniz'e Kıyıdaş Ülkeler ve Yeni Jeopolitik Dengeler. Ed. Hasret Çomak, Karadeniz Jeopolitiği, 2018, p.143

¹⁴⁰ Fairbanks, Charles. "Georgia's Rose Revolution". Journal of Democracy 15, no. 2 (April 2004)

¹⁴¹ Davitashvili, Zurab. The Preconditions of Ethnic-Political Conflicts in Georgia (A Georgian Perspective). Ed. Giray Saynur Bozkurt, Blue Black Sea: New Dimensions of History, Security, Politics, Strategy, Energy and Economy. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013, p.52

¹⁴² Erdemir, p.143

At the beginning, Ossets's aim was the unification with North Ossetia under Russian Federation. South Ossetia places on the northern Georgia near to Russian border without any maritime connection. However, the situation of Abkhazia was different in both politically and geographically. Abkhazia has an independent background first in 1921 as Abkhazia Soviet Socialist Republic and then in 1994 as de facto independent state but not de jure. Although Georgia did not recognize its independence and tried to reintegrate Abkhazia into Georgia, Abkhazia has never accepted to stay under Georgian rule and continued its de facto independent structure.¹⁴³ According to Georgian Professor David Darchiashvili,

*there exists no working and trusted formula that might allow for coexistence between Georgians and the separatist Abkhaz or Ossetians. Georgian society seems unready to understand that their separatism was not the result of a Russian plot but rather that of a process of 'awakening' in these ethnic groups, which was distinct from the Georgian rebirth.*¹⁴⁴

On the other hand, in terms of the geographical positions of Abkhazia has special importance because of its coastal length and geographical advantages. Abkhazian coasts were used as the opening gate of historical Silk Road to the Black Sea and to the West in the history. These coasts have been still important for the regional economy and politics. Abkhazian coastline is approximately 210 km which constitutes longer coastline than Georgian total coastline.¹⁴⁵ Thus, it is obvious to

¹⁴³ Georgian government and most of the UN states legally recognize Abkhazia as part of Georgia. However, the polity is recognized as an independent state by Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Nauru and Syria.

¹⁴⁴ Darchiashvili, David. "Georgian security problems and policies" in Dov Lynch (ed.), "The South Caucasus: a challenge for the EU," Chaillot Papers No 65, December 2003 (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, 2003), p.115.

¹⁴⁵ Georgian coastline is approximately 310 km with Abkhazian coasts. Thus, Georgian coastline is approximately 100 km, according to Nations Encyclopedia: <https://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/geography/Congo-Democratic-Republic-of-the-to-India/Georgia.html>

say that Abkhazia has maritime importance along with the political importance for Russia and Georgia.

Georgian relatively weak military capability was also damaged due to the war with Russia in 2008. Thus, it is difficult to talk about strong Georgian Navy today. After losing majority of its maritime capability in the war, Georgia decided to integrate its coast guard and navy into a border-policing role in 2009.¹⁴⁶ However, this combined force consist of 21 patrol and coastal combatants and one amphibious landing craft.¹⁴⁷ On the other hand, despite its long coastline, Georgia does not have deep-sea-port and this physical condition pose an obstacle for developing maritime power. As a result of this problem, Georgia can enjoy very limited maritime capacity.¹⁴⁸

Georgian-Russian relations entered the worse period with South Ossetia war and Georgia decided to withdraw from Commonwealth of Independent States. Georgia showed its reaction against Russian dominance by cutting off all connections but became an open target in the region. Thence, Georgia had to find an alliance both against Russian threat and for the development of its own military capability. For this reason, Georgia gives special importance to cooperate with the West especially for the security purposes. As it is noted in the National Security Concept of Georgia¹⁴⁹, maintaining close relations with the world's leading democratic

¹⁴⁶ Binnendijk, Anika. "Understanding Russian Black Sea Dynamics Through National Security Gaming." Published by Rand Corporation, 2020.

¹⁴⁷ Binnendijk, p.20

¹⁴⁸ Hess, Maximilian & Otarashvili, Maia. "Georgia's Doomed Deep-Sea Port Ambitions: Geopolitics of the Cancelled Anaklia Project." Foreign Policy Research Institute, Black Sea Strategy Papers, 2020.

¹⁴⁹"*The National Security Concept*" (NSC) of Georgia is the fundamental document that puts forward core national values and interests, sets forth the vision and main directions of the nation's security policy and identifies existing or future threats, risks and challenges. The NSC is developed by the Government of Georgia and the ratified by the Parliament of Georgia." (Ministry of Defense of Georgia)

states and their support to Georgia play significant role in the development of democratic Georgia and Georgian national security.¹⁵⁰ Although Georgia could not be a member of NATO, it is obvious that NATO attaches importance to strengthen relations with Georgia for the NATO's eastward expansion policy especially with the 9/11 process. On this purpose, Georgia and NATO run their relations and cooperation based on the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Program since 1994 and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC).¹⁵¹ NATO has three main reasons to cooperate with Georgia. Firstly, Georgia contributed to the mission of NATO in Afghanistan by sending hundreds of troops. Secondly, Georgia located on a crucial geographical and cultural crossroads on the Black Sea, so it offers significant territory, infrastructure, and logistic capabilities for NATO forces for transition to and from the region especially to Afghanistan. Thirdly and finally, in terms of promotion of democracy by head of US, Georgia's development, liberalization and democratization process are excellent example for the other countries in the region.¹⁵² US showed its support to Georgia for South Ossetia and Abkhazia on the level of speeches. For example,

*during his visit to the country in May 2005, US President George W. Bush called for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity to be respected and lent his support to Saakashvili's plans for South Ossetia and Abkhazia to become autonomous and self-governing, but not independent.*¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰National Security Concept of Georgia, Website URL: <https://mod.gov.ge/en/page/70/national-security-concept-of-georgia>

¹⁵¹ NATO-Georgia Relations, 2014, Media Backgrounder Document of NATO, Website URL: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2014_04/20140331_140401-media-backgrounder-georg.pdf

¹⁵² Coffey, Luke. "While the US is not a Black Sea Country, it needs to be a Black Sea power." Middle East Institute, 2020. Website URL: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/while-us-not-black-sea-country-it-needs-be-black-sea-power>

¹⁵³ German, Tracey. "Abkhazia and South Ossetia: Collision of Georgian and Russian Interests." IFRI Research Programme Russia, 2006, p.14

Thus, it is obvious to say that NATO and Georgia must cooperate on the win-win basis in the Black Sea and Caucasus regions.

From a naval perspective, Georgia has insufficient naval assets to defense itself, but just have coast guard forces to protect in maximum its shores. Despite its weak naval power, Georgia's geographical position which provides easy access especially to Afghanistan and Caucasus, gives the powerful card to use it against Russian threat. Although Russia is seen at the first look, Georgia is such a country that play significant role for China's security and economy with its indispensable position.

In addition to all these, Georgia would find a peaceful common way which provide dialogue and cooperation for all. For instance, The Sochi Olympic Games was seen as a unique opportunity to repair relations among Russian and Georgian authorities. As Delanoe mentioned,

*despite ongoing dispute over Russian military protectorates in Abkhazia and South-Ossetia, the accession of the Georgian Dream Coalition in October 2012 has paved the way for Moscow and Tbilisi to resume their dialogue. The threat of terrorism commonly faced by the two stake- holders and the necessity to provide security for the Olympic Games laid the ground for a better understanding.*¹⁵⁴

In this regard, Tbilisi would follow moderate foreign policy between Moscow and the West for its own security.

¹⁵⁴ Delanoe, Igor. "After the Crimean crisis: towards a greater Russian maritime power in the Black Sea." *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, (2014)

4.3. Russian Federation

Russia, with its wide territory and strong military capability, has always played significant role in World politics for centuries. The geopolitical significance of Russia on the world island, richness in vital natural resources and its nuclear power also give ability to control regional and global political dynamics to Russia. Even after the collapse of Soviet Union and losing significant part of the region of influence especially in the Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, Russia never gives up controlling some regions and turned back quickly to the power struggle in world politics. Despite the great power struggle of Russia, geography has been maintaining its tyranny over Russia and keeping her as a continental power. Russian Federation, with her long coastline, has fleets in the Black Sea, Baltic, North Sea and in the Pacific. In comparison to the great powers as United Kingdom and United States, Russia has geographically great constraint and disadvantage on the deployment of the naval forces to distant waters because of the great distances among Russia's Black Sea, Baltic, Northern and Pacific fleets. In any situation of crisis, achieving unity of mass is quite difficult for Russian naval forces.¹⁵⁵

One of the most significant regions under the Russian influence and watch is the Black Sea. The Black Sea perception for Russia is quite special because Russia who defines itself as natural leader and superpower of Eurasia since the Tsarist era, defines Black Sea as a part of Russia and its sovereign region. Black Sea, is seen as the backyard of Russia, has vital importance for Russian economy and defense because Russia has two main exits to world; one is in the north which is unavailable to use in winter because it freezes; and other one is the Black Sea in the south-western Russia which is whole year open to firstly Mediterranean, then world and oceans. Thus, it is easy to say that Black Sea is the best gate for Russia to reach to the world.

¹⁵⁵ Goldstein, L. & Zhukov, Y. A Tale of Two Fleets: A Russian Perspective on the 1973 Naval Standoff in the Mediterranean, *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (Spring 2004)

Keeping Black Sea under the area of influence at first and reach Mediterranean by passing through Turkish Straits to protect its maritime route against the west is the only way for Russia to maintain effective national and security strategy; so, Mediterranean Strategy of Russia cannot be separated from Black Sea strategy. Indeed, in some points, Mediterranean strategy and long-term goals also shape Russian Black Sea strategy. As well as its economic advantages, Black Sea is extremely essential for Russian military capability because Black Sea is available to use both for military exercises in whole year and improvement of physical capacity in naval yard in the region. That's why any development occurs in the Black Sea except Russian will and control is perceived as a threat to Russian presence, and it must be stopped by Russia.¹⁵⁶ Obviously, it is vital for Russia to keep Black Sea under Russian control and area of influence. This area constitutes the priority in Russian national interests and any threat to those interests shall be eliminated by Russia. On this purpose, Russia defined its fundamental task as to preserve its presence in the near abroad.¹⁵⁷ On the other hand, as successor of a global superpower USSR, Russia has geopolitical ambitions both in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean is keen to secure its power in the regional and global level.¹⁵⁸

Historically, Russia perceived the lands that belonged to Ottoman as its expansion zone to reach south and the warm waters. The Black Sea is the first and vital step of policy of descending southwards because the Black Sea is significant access to

¹⁵⁶ Derman (Bozkurt), Giray Saynur. Rusya Federasyonu'nun Karadeniz Bölge Politikası ve Yeni Güç Dengeleri. Karadeniz Jeopolitiği: *Beta Yayıncılık*. İstanbul, 2018, p.156

¹⁵⁷ Litera, Bohuslav. "The Kozyrev Doctrine - a Russian Variation on the Monroe Doctrine." *Perspectives*, no. 4 (1994)

¹⁵⁸ Perepelytsya, H. (2004) "Military and Naval Balance in the Black Sea Region" *The Black Sea Region: cooperation and security building* / Ed. by O. Pavliuk, I. Klympush-Tsintsadze. – New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2004. p.192

warm waters, in other words, Mediterranean and open seas; so, this region has always kept its great importance in Russian foreign policy since Tsarist era. This region should be regarded from not only transportation but also geopolitical, geostrategic, and economic aspects.¹⁵⁹

Black Sea strategy of Russia has been shaped differently especially after 9/11 in 2001. Until that date, Russia mostly followed more balanced policies toward region. Moreover, Russia and Turkey, only powers who maintain capable fleets in the Black Sea, have always supported the stability in the region after the end of Cold War period. Although Turkey is leading NATO member, Ankara remains the most important Black Sea naval partner for Moscow. The most prominent reason of this partnership is that both Ankara and Moscow have sought to maintain the status-quo in the region.¹⁶⁰ Turkey has guaranteed this aim with the Montreux Convention, which will be mentioned in detail below.

In terms of power of influence, Russia had lost its previous economic, political, and military power after 1990. On the other hand, the coastline of Russian Federation after the dissolution of USSR is equal to 30% of Soviet Russia had in the Black Sea and “*only three of twenty major Soviet coastal cities and only one technologically advanced port, Novorossiysk, are now on Russian territory*”, as Moshes argued.¹⁶¹ Along with the territory loss, Black Sea fleet of Soviet Union was divided between Ukraine. This fleet had already begun to decay and lost its modernity. Thus, Russia sought to continuity of stability in the Black Sea because she was aware of her loss of influence in all aspects in the region. However, US

¹⁵⁹ Saynur Bozkurt, Giray. Black Sea Regional Policies of Russia and the US after September 11. *Blue Black Sea*, 2013, p.249

¹⁶⁰ Delanoe (2014)

¹⁶¹ Moshes, Arkady. “Littoral States and Region Building Around the Black Sea”, *The Black Sea Region: cooperation and security building* / Ed. by O. Pavliuk, I. Klympush-Tsintsadze. – New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2004, p. 66.

strategy broke the balances in both Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea after 9/11 attack. Although Russia showed its full support to US for the struggle against terrorism in the post-9/11 period, US used Russian goodwill for its own interests and tried to involve into Black Sea and Russian area of influence. On the other hand, in May 2002, NATO and RF came together in Rome and established NATO-Russia Council. This Council aimed to provide a platform to cooperate for common interests and struggle against common threats.¹⁶²

Russia showed relatively weak position during 1990s but with the presidency of Vladimir Putin who elected in March 2000 and with the recovery of economy especially with the increase of oil & gas exportation, resurgence of Russia has begun. Putin, former KGB employee, showed its leadership firstly in Chechnya issue and gained public support. On the other hand, Russia has restricted EU and Turkey in political sphere by making significant amount of oil and gas agreements with them. Through these agreements, Russia hooked them on Russian energy supply and gained both economic and political advantages in case of his any action in the region. In this atmosphere, US intervention on Iraq and Afghanistan forced Russia to take action to gain its influence back. Russia has also followed making trouble policies more cautiously on the purpose of establishing her own influence in the region. The clearest examples of this policy would be South Ossetia and Abkhazia issues in Georgia; Dniester issue in Moldova, Nagorno-Karabakh issue between Azerbaijan and Armenia; and Crimea and Donbass issue in Ukraine. Russia gained power by supporting and provoking these conflicts to deploy in these regions¹⁶³ against external powers who try to get into the region and threaten regional states who seek close relations with the West against Russia.

¹⁶² NATO Rome Summit Declaration (2002). Official Text. Website URL: <https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/2002/0205-rome/rome-eng.pdf>

¹⁶³ Erdil, Bülent. "Yeni Güç Savaşlarının Yeni Karadeniz Stratejileri." *Black Sea Research Center*, Fall 2018.

Russia has always sought to keep its presence in the Black Sea to access to Mediterranean and other open seas. On this purpose, Russia had to take urgent action in the Black Sea against Western affinity of previous Soviet states such as Georgia, Ukraine especially after the NATO membership of Bulgaria and Romania in the region. NATO entered the Black Sea with these memberships on the pretext of fighting against terrorism and human trafficking but Russia's worries about the security and stability in the region because she felt like the previous enemy entered her own house. Thus, Russia tried to hinder the spread of Western influence in the region and keep her own power that she has during the powerful Soviet period. Russia's all actions such as in the Georgian war in 2008, war in Donbass and annexation of Crimean in 2014 also emerged in accordance with this purpose. On the other hand, Russia has always tried to involve in the Eastern Mediterranean thanks to her previous ties with Syria, Egypt, Cyprus, and Libya. These ties rooted from either opposition to the west or being balancing alternative for the region but has a long historical background. Although the Russian Strategy in these two regions is seen as separated from each other, Russia's policies have seen them as a whole and Russia managed to apply successful policies to reach her national strategic goals which targeted centuries ago. Thus, Russian strategy in the Black Sea should also be regarded as the supportive policies to achieve the goals in Eastern Mediterranean.

Abkhazia and South Ossetia issues came into world political and military agenda with the hot conflicts in the region among Russia and Georgia. These two autonomous states declared their independence from Georgia with the provocation of Russia, as mentioned in above. Although the West supported the territorial integrity of Georgia, Russia recognized their independence in 2008 in response to both Georgian western affinity and Kosovo's recognition by the West and independence from Serbia who is under Russian influence. With these developments in Georgian territory, Russia has strengthened its military power in the region by the border defense agreements between Abkhazia and South Ossetia. These agreements open a way for Russia to deploy in Abkhazia and South Ossetia

along with the use of Abkhazian coasts by Russian fleet.¹⁶⁴ Thus, it would be said that Russia hit many birds with one stone in Georgia.

The second and the most significant issue in the Black Sea for Russia emerged in Ukraine. Indeed, this issue has a long historical background. Ukraine, after gaining its independence in 1991, showed both pro-Russian and pro-Western tendencies in accordance with the ideas of Ukrainian leaders. Ukraine's special location between Russia and the West brought complex political situation and put Ukraine as buffer zone among these two regions. The political situation, foreign policy and naval strategy of Ukraine will be examined in detail in the following part. However, from the Russian perspective to Ukraine, the major issue has been about the Crimea's statue. To understand the conflict with Russia, it is necessary to look at the Black Sea map and turn back to history. Before start, it should be known that Crime has the most strategic position after Turkish Straits in the Black Sea. Not only Crimea, but Ukraine is also highly valuable for Russia and Ukraine must be kept on the Russian side rather than the West or neutral. Thus, Russia has always sought to find a way to involve into the politics of the country in case of any unwelcomed political situation in Ukraine on the purpose of protecting its national security and interests. In other words, after the loss of Bulgaria and Romania to the West, Russia has seen Ukraine as a buffer zone among herself and the West especially in the Black Sea context. In addition, Russia is aiming to create Eurasian Economic Union; to make it as a proper institution; Ukraine must be included into the Union¹⁶⁵. Thus, presence of Ukraine on the Russian side and in the Union is compulsory to be successful.

¹⁶⁴ Erdil, p.118

¹⁶⁵ Kısacık, Sina & Denizelli, Şeniz. "Rusya Federasyonu'nun Avrasya Birliği Politikaları Çerçevesinde Ukrayna Politikalarını Anlamak" Karadeniz Jeopolitiği, *Beta Yayıncılık*, 2018, p.185

Crimea, with its long coastline to both Sea of Azov and the Black Sea, has many advantages especially in terms of naval purposes because the main ports and naval base place on the Crimean coastline. When the map is opened it is also seen clearly that who control this place can also control the Black Sea. Historically, Crimea, with its Turkish/Ottoman background, had Tatar majority until Russian era. With the transition of Crimea from Ottoman to Russian Empire at the end of 18th century, demographic changes begun and has continued. The deportation accelerated especially in 1944 during the Stalin leadership. This strategic peninsula was given as a gift to Ukraine under Soviet Union by Khrushchev in 1954 without clear reason/explanation neither in the official documents nor in Khrushchev memoirs but it was said that “*he did so to celebrate the 300th anniversary of its unification with the Russian Empire*”.¹⁶⁶ The transition of Crimea case was also reviewed by Supreme Council of Russia in 1992 and it was considered as illegitimate act. For whatever reason it is, Crimea stayed under the Ukrainian rule with an autonomous statue, which was gained in 1991, until the annexation by Russia. However, in terms of changed demographic structure with the russification policies of Russia, Crimea has Russian majority both in 1954 (%75) and in 2014. Ethnic structure of the region has always played significant role in this process because it directly reflected to the elections on the favor of pro-Russian politicians in the Ukraine and Crimea. Indeed, the conflicts rooted from the ethnic structure and political atmosphere of the Ukraine.

With the dissolution of USSR, the Black Sea fleet of Soviet Union became to the center of disputes between Russia and Ukraine. Black Sea fleet of Soviet Union was deployed at the Sevastopol Base in Crimea and Crimea was under the sovereignty of Ukraine. Russian nationalists put the issue of Crimean sovereignty on the agenda as happened after Khrushchev’s decision that gave the peninsula to Ukraine as gift. Both countries declared the ownership of the fleet and the dispute started among two countries. The issue had continued to tense the relations from

¹⁶⁶ Moniz Bandeira L.A. Crimea Back to Russia and Economic Sanctions Against Russia. In: The World Disorder. Springer, 2019, p.166

1992 to 1997. According to current situation, Russia lost its strong position that had during the Soviet era because the two major naval bases in the Black Sea locate in the Ukrainian territory: Sevastopol and Odessa bases. One of these bases has a vital importance for Russian both Black Sea and Mediterranean strategies. To compensate the loss, Russia created an opportunity to maintain its power in the Black Sea by making an agreement with Ukraine about the use of Sevastopol Base in Crimean Peninsula. Along with the economic interests of Russia in Ukraine, “one of Russia’s main interests was maintaining its Black Sea fleet in Crimea”.¹⁶⁷ On the other hand, Ukrainian President realized that being on the Russian side rather than being pro-Western is better for Ukrainian survival both in security and economy.

In 1997, Russian president Boris Yeltsin and Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma signed the friendship, cooperation, and partnership treaty. This treaty includes three major issues. One of them was about the presence of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in the Sevastopol. The treaty is called as “*Agreement between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on the Status and Conditions of the Russian Federation Black Sea Fleet’s Stay on Ukrainian Territory*”.¹⁶⁸ Naturally, this treaty does not give any authority to conquer Crime or freedom of movements of Russian troops around the Crimea. This treaty gives Russia “*the authority to locate troops on its bases in the Crimea and to move them between those bases and Russian territory*”¹⁶⁹ on condition that the Russian troops must abide Ukrainian law and sovereignty. Naturally, this agreement was not unreturned for Ukraine. Russia and Ukraine agreed on the leasing of Sevastopol Base to Russia in return of the \$97

¹⁶⁷ Weaver, Carol. “The Politics of the Black Sea Region: EU Neighbourhood, Conflict Zone or Future Security Community”. Ashgate Publishing: London, 2013, p.7

¹⁶⁸ Posner, Eric. The 1997 “Black Sea Fleet Agreement between Russia and Ukraine”, 2014.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*

million per year and for 20 years.¹⁷⁰ Thus, Russian Black Sea Fleet shall deploy to the Sevastopol Base until 2017 with the chance to extend the time by an agreement between the parties. Also, by means of this treaty, parties officially recognized their territories. In other words, Ukraine received both financial compensation and official recognition of its territorial sovereignty by Russia.¹⁷¹ Thus, the reasons behind the agreement were both economic and political for Ukraine. Ukraine, as one of the poorest countries of Soviet Union, had suffered from the economic decline and became unproductive after the collapse of Soviet Union because the production chain was collapsed at first. With the Ukrainian broke off from the Soviet Union, Russia also “*withdrew two-thirds of defense industry installed there*” and Ukraine’s exports declined dramatically.¹⁷² Obviously, Ukraine had become unproductive.¹⁷³ Besides the political turmoil, some economic troubles had continued. In addition, along with the crucial ties, Ukraine had depended on Russia, especially in economy and energy in a great extent. Russia was aware of this weakness of Ukraine and gave the carrot in return what she wants in the Black Sea. Ukraine obtained significant amount of discount for the oil and gas import from Russia in return of the use of Sevastopol base by this treaty.

The second issue of the friendship treaty between Russia and Ukraine was about the sharing Black Sea fleet of Soviet Union. The Black Sea fleet was divided as the 81,7% parts to Russian Federation and the 18,3% parts to Ukraine.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ Akman, Halil. “Kırım-Sevastopol Üssü ve Karadeniz Rus Filosunun Paylaşım Sorunu” *Turkish Studies- International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic* Volume 9/1 Winter 2014, p. 1-20,

¹⁷¹ Nilson, Rasmus. “Russian Policy Concerning the Black Sea Fleet and Its Being Based in Ukraine, 2008–2010: Three Interpretations.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 6 (2013)

¹⁷² Bandeira, p.170

¹⁷³ Bandeira, p.171

¹⁷⁴ Akman, p.4

According to the decision, Sevastopol base was determined as the major naval base of Russian Fleet in the Black Sea, but the situation of the fleet was underwhelming. Modernization of the fleet was necessary to protect Russian EEZ, secure navigation and sea lines of communication and maintain military dominance and security in the Black Sea region. Not only for the Black Sea region, the build-up of the Russian Black Sea Fleet would also enhance ability to carry out naval deployment in Mediterranean and in the other regions by supporting units coming from other Russian fleets and promote and protect Russia's economic interests beside security in the Mediterranean.¹⁷⁵ However, Russia kept the ownership of just two naval yards out of ten that the Soviet era had in the Black Sea.¹⁷⁶ The rest was under the Ukrainian sovereignty. This was also one of the biggest obstacles to Russian naval strategy along with the economic difficulties.

Russian military and strategic interests in Ukrainian territory are not limited with Crimean Peninsula. Eastern Ukraine, with Russian origin population in a great extent, has also importance for Russian security strategy and military goals. The Donbass region (the area of Don River basin¹⁷⁷) where is the most developed industrial area of Ukraine especially in mining, is also at the center of the conflicts among Russia and Ukraine. Donbas is seen as “*the heart of Ukraine*” especially for the Ukrainian economy with its fourth largest mining basin of Europe¹⁷⁸ but Russia has also both historical ties and strategic industrial aims in the region. Donbass region is the center of defense industry and this region was the source of most of the components for the significant armaments such as gears for warships,

¹⁷⁵ Delanoe (2014)

¹⁷⁶ Alkan, Akın. 21. Yüzyılın İlk Çeyreğinde Karadeniz Güvenliği. Nobel Yayınları (2006), p.106

¹⁷⁷ Wilson, Andrew. “The Donbas between Ukraine and Russia: The Use of History in Political Disputes.” Journal of Contemporary History 30, no. 2 (1995)

¹⁷⁸ Seiffert, J. & Tunçay, Y. “Donbas neden önemli?” DW Türkçe, 2014.

satellite-based attack warning system and other nuclear weapons.¹⁷⁹ Indeed, the Donbas issue that will emerge later on is also a part of Russian naval strategy with its production for the defense industry because improvement of naval equipment is also part of a strategy and Donbass region is crucial for it. Without modernization of the fleet, Russian navy would be quite weak to defense region.

Russian foreign policy and regional dimensions in the Black Sea has changed visibly. Ukraine is the most obvious example of it. Ukraine has been in a tight situation between Russia and the West, especially after 1991. However, with the domestic political turmoil in 2004 presidential election in Ukraine, it became more obvious. This election was noted to the history as the breaking point for both Ukraine and world politics. Pro-Russian leader Yanukovich won the election by taking 49,4% of the votes against pro-Western leader Yushchenko with the rate of 46,6%.¹⁸⁰ However, international observers asserted that there was serious gerrymander in the election and Yushchenko called his supporters to come to streets. Subsequently, mass protests erupted in whole country. These protests were called as Orange Revolution because of Yushchenko's use orange in his campaign. As a result of the expansion of the demonstrations, it was decided to make re-election. The second election resulted with the victory of both the west and Yushchenko by 51,9%.¹⁸¹ At the first years of the Yushchenko government, gas crisis broke out with Russia who showed its teeth with the cut the flow of gas to Ukraine. After long negotiations, Ukraine accepted to double up the gas price.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Bandeira, p.168

¹⁸⁰ Kerem, Sonat (2018) Rusya-Ukrayna: İki Dost Nasıl Düşman Oldu? BBC News.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

4.3.1. Annexation of Crimea

Following elections in Ukraine, in 2010, changed the dynamics on the favor of Russia with the victory of Victor Yanukovych against pro-Western ‘Orange Princes’ Yulia Tymoshenko. Presidency of Yanukovych enhanced the possibility of Ukrainian adherence to Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEc) because of the pro-Russian stance. Moreover, few weeks after taking the office, he signed the gas treaty of Kharkov with Russia and he obtained noteworthy discount in return for “the extension to 2042 of the Sevastopol naval base lease in the Black Sea” with additional five years optionally.¹⁸³ Along with these points, the scope of the treaty includes cooperation in many areas especially in the industry and economy. Immediately after signing, this treaty got public reactions especially from the nationalist and anti-Russian supporters. However, the major demonstrations and tension broke out in November 2013 when pro-Russian President Yanukovych rejected to sign Ukraine- European Union Association Agreement and Free Trade Agreement. This case lighted the touchpaper that affects previous years and decades. Mass demonstrations broke out with the public demand to resign of Yanukovych and turned into political turmoil and civil war in Ukraine. Many people lost their lives during the conflicts. On the other hand, after Yanukovych left the country, opposition party leader and pro-Western Turchynov came to the power. Russia did not recognize the new president officially and described this attempt as coup. By taking the advantage of political turmoil in the Ukraine, Russia provoked the demonstrations in the Donbass region and the Crimean Peninsula. Demonstrations turned into armed conflicts and pro-Russian armed militias captured the administration buildings and fly the Russian flag.

After the military support of Russia, conflicts ended up with the annexation of Crimean Peninsula 2014 and the declaration of independence of Donetsk and Lugansk in the Donbass region. As a result of hot conflicts and the pressure of

¹⁸³ Bandeira, p. 184

Russian armed militias, many civilians left the regions and the changing demographical structure of the region for decades, gave great advantages to Russia to go to the referendum. The administration of Crimea decided to hold a referendum in 2014. However, it did neither meet any legal criteria of a national referendum nor meet the procedural requirements.¹⁸⁴ The result of the referendum with the 97% supported joining Russia was unsurprising because of the lack of legitimate way of conducting referendum and the military pressure of Russia. On the other hand, Crimean authority was not able to conduct a referendum about the independence as required by the law and sovereignty of Ukraine. By law, whole Ukrainian citizens must vote in the referendum about the independence of any part of the country. Thus, according to international law and the Ukrainian constitution, this referendum was considered invalid. Notwithstanding, Russia annexed Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and the Black Sea Fleet become the most significant element of Russian naval power with the Crimean annexation.¹⁸⁵

The issues among Kiev and Moscow are not limited with the issues that mentioned above. Indeed, the first try of Russian occupation to Ukrainian territory emerged with the Tuzla Island crisis at the first years of the 2000s. Russia brought up the sovereignty issue of Tuzla Island where was historically belonged to Crimea. Although Ukraine asserted that the sovereignty of the island obtained with the transition of Crimea to Ukraine in 1954, Russia contradicted because there was no claim about the statue of the island in the transition agreement. Thus, Russia put in a claim for the island. The main reason of this artificial problem is the strategic plans of Russia about the Tuzla Island.

Tuzla Island places in highly strategic position between Sea of Azov and the Black Sea, at the center of the Kerch Strait. Despite its smallness of the area, Tuzla Island

¹⁸⁴ Podolian, Olena. “The 2014 Referendum in Crimea” *East European Quarterly*, 2015.Vol. 43, No. 1, pp. 111-128

¹⁸⁵ Hubar, Gökçe. “Rusya’nın Kırım’ı İlhakı ve Kırım Referandumunun Uluslararası Hukuka Aykırılığı” *Karadeniz Jeopolitiği*, Beta Yayıncılık, 2018, p. 309

provides great advantages to its owner. Along with its economic profitability by the transition in the strait, Tuzla Island could be used as the connecting land point between two peninsulas. The tension between two countries increased with the Russian attempt to construct a rail-road bridge which is also called as Crimean Bridge from Taman peninsula side to Tuzla Island and to Crimean Peninsula without any declaration to Ukraine. Constructing this bridge was planned during the WW2 and was constructed during Soviet era but got washed due to ice floes; so, it was not a new idea. Close to hot conflict between the two, Ukraine and Russia signed cooperation agreement about the use of the island in 2003. The transition was applied in accordance with this agreement until 2014. After 2014, all agreements and international law were put on ice by unilateral actions and claims of Russia.¹⁸⁶ Thereafter, the reconstruction of Kerch Strait Bridge started in 2015 and completed in 2018 by Russia.¹⁸⁷

Besides all these disputes among Kiev and Moscow, maritime disputes have been incrementally added to the agenda. Indeed, by seizing Crimea, Russia solved unilaterally many of ex-bilateral problems that occurred among Ukraine. Moreover, with the expansion of its continental shelf in the Azov and the Black seas, Russia gained the control over the Pallas gas and oil field nears Kerch straight. However, Crimea with a broader and better coastline besides continental shelf, raised the issue of demarcation of new maritime borders between Russia and Ukraine, on behalf of the Russian new adjacent, Romania and NATO by extension.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Koyuncu, Hüseyin. “Rusya ile Ukrayna'yı savaşın eşiğine getiren 'Kerç Boğazı krizi' nedir, nasıl başladı?” Euronews, 2018.

¹⁸⁷ Bhat, Viyanak. “The rising Russia-Ukraine tensions at Kerch Strait, and how US overflight affects them”. The Print, 2018.

¹⁸⁸ Delanoe (2014)

The Ukrainian crisis created a great opportunity for Russia to gain power in the Black Sea especially in terms of naval power through Crimean Peninsula and naval bases there. The seizure of Crimea provided significant increase in Russia's naval power in terms of ability to use maritime domain, maneuverability capability, naval assets, and infrastructure. Along with the significant control power of Crimea over the Black Sea and Sea of Azov, Russia took the ownership of 12 out of 17 warships, two most modern corvettes and Staff College of Ukrainian Navy.¹⁸⁹ The center of the Black Sea Fleet of Russia became Sevastopol. Besides Sevastopol, Russia took control over minor stations such as Sevastopolskaya, Yuzhnaya, Karantinnaya and Kazachya in Crimea. Novorossiysk and Ochamchira (Abkhazia) are other naval base facilities that Russia planned to construct in the Black Sea.¹⁹⁰

The presence of Black Sea Fleet permanently and consolidation of Russian power in the region gave great advantage to Russia to access to Mediterranean where Russia has sought to exist for centuries. In a general framework, Russian naval strategy in Mediterranean has some indispensable goals. Improving Russia's security by using the advantage of Mediterranean's geostrategic position is the first goal of Russia. Secondly, Russia seeks to use its position and existence in the region to increase and regain its global power as rival to U.S.

Russia currently seeks to strengthen its position in Middle East's Mediterranean coasts. Supporting and enhancing close ties with Syria, as in the Cold War years, would pave the path to settle into the region. Thus, the continuity of the Syrian regime despite Arab Spring turmoil and strong ties among them constitute the third goal of Russia. For the strategy to be successful, there are three major elements. First, Russia must deploy her military forces into the Mediterranean region. The

¹⁸⁹ Atasoy, Erhan. "Russian Naval Strategy in the Black Sea and Mediterranean" 2014.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. p.12

permanent military positioning in the region would afford Russia strategic flexibility and capability against Western activities; reduce the risks, vulnerability, and the time to shuttle of forces in a conflict; and spread Russian influence in the surrounding countries.¹⁹¹ On the other hand, Russia aims to have port access in the region for its naval squadron. On this purpose, secondly, Russia seeks to secure its regional allies or the countries that have historical and political ties with. In other words, enhancing relations and cooperation with Syria, Egypt, Cyprus, and other littorals in the region is quite important element for Russian Naval strategy. The last one is partly about the second one. The third element is about establishing naval base in the central or eastern Mediterranean. At this point, Libya could be very good option with its central position in the region. On the other hand, it seems that the Island of Cyprus and Syria followed the list as the second and third best options for Russia, especially Syria with its historical alliance and political weaknesses after 2011.

With the dissolution of USSR, Russian Federation started to lose its power of influence in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) as other regions where Russia strengthened its power during Cold War. Especially Syria became Russia's closest ally and most important foothold in the Middle East since Syria gained independence in 1946. Moscow built close ties not only with Syria, but also with Egypt and Libya at that time. However, Russian power of influence in the region felt away in 90s, the years between the dissolution of USSR and the presidency of Putin. When Putin came to the power in 2000, he worked to regain Russia's previous position in the region, especially in Syria because Syria's geostrategic position could provide both an entry to the Middle East and access to Mediterranean or warm waters. Not only in terms of geostrategic position, but Syria also has close ties with Russia since Cold War years against Israel and the West.

¹⁹¹ Gorenburg, Dmitry (2019) "Russia's Naval Strategy in the Mediterranean" Marshall Center, July 2019.

During Cold War, the Soviet Navy had permanent presence in the Mediterranean by Syrian port of Tartus. Tartus has been the significant supply point for Russian Navy in the region. Moscow has always kept its close relations with Syria because Syria has constituted very strategic regional ally. On this purpose, Moscow always supported the Syrian administration both politically and militarily. The outbreak of the Syrian crisis and ongoing situation lead up the deployments of Russian naval forces into the Mediterranean as a tool of the Kremlin's foreign policy. Russian intervention in Syria started in 2015 right after that Syrian President al-Assad's request. The decision of Putin with the intention to prevent the fall of al-Assad regime reinforced the military deployment that enabled Russia to take advantage to control over the Syrian conflict and Eastern Mediterranean. The West couldn't react this deployment because another threat, Islamic State in Iraq, and the Levant (ISIL)¹⁹², has already emerged in the region and showed itself in the heart of Europe by several terrorist attacks. Russia started to assistance Syria to counter radical groups and rebel threats, including ISIL forces. As some scholars argue, this assistance and intervention thereafter the Syrian request fits the objectives and the major pillars of the Right to Protect (R2P) which is defined as

*the responsibility to prevent atrocities by tackling the root causes, which were seen by Russia as the threat posed by the anti-regime forces; responding to humanitarian concerns and providing humanitarian assistance to the population; and rebuilding the country through infrastructural development and support to post-conflict reconciliation*¹⁹³

Moscow, by the end of the intervention to Syria, became a party not only in the area as militarily but also on the negotiation table politically.

¹⁹² The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/ISIS/Islamic State/Daesh

¹⁹³ Lutta, Joseph. "How russian intervention in syria redefined the right to protect in armed conflict." Russian Law Journal; (2018)

The support of Moscow to the Syrian regime has catalyzed Russian naval activity in the region. On the other hand, Syrian crisis threw reliability of Russian naval assets in Syria into question and Moscow has initiated to create an alternative bases in the Mediterranean.¹⁹⁴ On this point, it is apparent that NATO's Mediterranean members and Israel are ruled out.

Beyond Syria, Russian political, economic, and military ties have extended throughout the North African countries on the southern Mediterranean. With the Putin administration, Russia started to reinforce its relations with Libya, Egypt, and Cyprus in the Eastern Mediterranean to both attain its previous great power status and rebalance its foreign relations against the West in the region. On these geopolitical perspectives Russia sought partnerships within the region. Longstanding economic ties and growing trades with many Mediterranean states, including Greece, Libya, Cyprus, Algeria, and Egypt bring to the fore the task of sea lines' protection.¹⁹⁵ Market for Russian nuclear weapons, nuclear power, and military technology along with the foreign direct investments and oil trade constitutes significant instrument of these relations within the region. Especially after 9/11 case, Middle Eastern countries have experienced rapid militarization process with the increased number of conflicts and threats by terrorist organizations. USA, as the world's leading exporter of major arms has been followed by Russia as the second arms supplier to the region.¹⁹⁶ Military market created great opportunity for Russia to re-establish and consolidate its influence in the region. On the other hand, Russia increased its share by decreasing Western (especially US and France) dependency of the region.

¹⁹⁴ Dalanoe (2014)

¹⁹⁵ Korzun, Peter. "Russia's Navy Establishes Permanent Presence in Mediterranean Sea", Strategic Culture, 2018.

¹⁹⁶ Kuimova, Alexandra. "Russia's Arms Exports to the MENA Region: Trends and Drivers." Euromesco, 2019.

The relations among Moscow and littoral countries in the Eastern Mediterranean have reshaped all the strategies and the position of the West. While Egypt with its highly significant location in the region, has always sought to balance its position and relations among West and Russia; Libya, after a long isolation period until 2003, has experienced foreign investment rush and had taken place near to Russia on the purpose of counterbalancing West. The position of Libya was implied during Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi's first visit to the post-Soviet Moscow by his offer a naval base in the Libyan port of Benghazi. According to Gaddafi, Russia's military presence in the region could be a guarantee of non-aggression from the West and US.¹⁹⁷ During Gaddafi's visit to Moscow, along with the naval base offer, Russian arms purchases and cooperation in energy are at the focus of the meetings.¹⁹⁸ The promise of naval base in Libya was highly important for Russia, but it neither agreed on officially nor was built during and after Gaddafi administration. Nevertheless, Moscow has tried to ensure its presence in Libya by taking position behind one of the new powers in the country.

Republic of Cyprus (RoC)¹⁹⁹, locating in the center of Eastern Mediterranean, provides second best option to Russia. Moscow has always sought naval and air bases in RoC to project her power throughout the region.²⁰⁰ Using naval facilities in Limasol port of Cyprus by Russia's fleet was rumored topic for years. Taking in the consideration that organic ties among Greece and RoC, despite the NATO membership of Greece, the relations with Greek administrations in Nicosia and Athens among Moscow is quite close for decades. Besides military and political

¹⁹⁷ "Gaddafi offers to host Russian naval base" France24, 2008.

¹⁹⁸ Pfeiffer, Tom. "Gaddafi visits Russia on arms, energy drive" Reuters, 2008.

¹⁹⁹ So called except Republic of Turkey and TRNC. Greek Administration of Cyprus, on the other hand.

²⁰⁰ Blank, Stephen J. "Imperial Ambitions: Russia's Military Buildup." *World Affairs* 178, no. 1 (2015).

sides, there is also crucial economic side of the relations. RoC has been seen as the paradise of money laundering by Russia in the region. This dark side of the relations and win-win situation enhance the political and military ties among them. In 2014, Nicosia allowed Russia to use the Paphos Airbase in case of emergency. Afterward, Cyprus signed another agreement to give Russian navy ships access to Cyprus ports. As President Putin said that the main use of the port's would be for counterterrorism and anti-piracy in the region.²⁰¹ Despite Putin's words of purpose, the way to use Cyprus ports in other military purposes as Russia may want was paved away by this agreement.

4.3.2. Russian A2/AD Bubbles in the Black Sea (Crimea)

The annexation of Crimea gave a powerful hand to Russia to take great control over the Black Sea region by deploying at the center of the region through the combination of long-range sea-, air-, and ground- launched missiles; updated, and enhanced naval fleet. On the other hand, the deployment of Russia into Syria has another side other than the support to Syrian regime as an ally. Moscow has begun laying the seeds for the installation of Anti-Access Area-Denial (A2AD) system in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean against the United States and its allies'. To make a proper analyze of this strategy, it would be better to understand the concept. At first, Anti-Access (A2) is a strategy that aim to prevent rival forces entry into a theater of operations. In the second place, Area-Denial (AD) operations aim to prevent rival forces' freedom of action in the area. *"AD operations thus include actions by an adversary in the air, on land, and on and under the sea to contest and prevent US joint operations within their defended battlespace."*²⁰² This definition fits Russian A2AD strategy that includes both

²⁰¹ "Cyprus Signs Deal to Allow Russian Navy to Use Ports," BBC News, 26 February 2015.

²⁰² Andrew F. Krepinevich and Barry Watts, "Meeting the Anti-Access and Area-Denial Challenge," Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 20 May 2003.

offensive capabilities and defensive assets.²⁰³ Russian A2AD strategy in the Black Sea would keep secure Moscow's backyard and gate to warm seas; in the Mediterranean would obstruct the Western access to the Suez Canal, the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean. Thus, Moscow is quite decisive to create A2/AD zone in these two regions, especially with the cover of support to Syrian government and fight against terrorism. On this purpose, Russian military capacity was extended and strengthened through deployment of air, naval and ground assets into Syria. With the creation of A2/AD bubbles, in other words a set of layered defenses and multiple vectors of attack in the naval and space domains, Russia became a major factor in the region at all levels.²⁰⁴

To sum, Russia has always sought to keep under control the Black Sea and to reach Mediterranean. On this purpose, she always perceives US naval presence in the Black Sea as a threat and direct challenge to its interests. There was the same perception behind the relations among Moscow and the Black Sea littoral states and aggressiveness in Georgian and Ukrainian crisis. NATO membership of Romania ratcheted up the level of aggressiveness in the region and threat that Moscow felt. Thus, Russia, seeing the Black Sea as her backyard, has always sought to control the region or at least keep the region away from to be Western domain.

On the other hand, Syrian crisis paved the way to consolidate Russian presence and the great power feelings in the Eastern Mediterranean by the leverage of Crimean advantage to Russia. Despite many other reasons, Russia went to Syria to fight against terrorism right after the Syrian request. However, according to Thornton, *"the dominant reason for Russia's involvement in Syria may be seen to*

²⁰³ Altman, Jonathan. "Russian A2/AD in the Eastern Mediterranean- A Growing Risk," Naval War College Review 69, no. 1, (Winter 2016), p.74.

²⁰⁴ Carl, Michael. Russian A2AD Strategy in Syria- Breaking Diplomatic Isolation. Canadian forces Colege, 2019.

be the desire to display the traditional Russian concept of derzhavnost” which means greatpowerness.²⁰⁵ Thus, Russia also had to demonstrate strong support to al-Assad to show its commitment and maintain its prestige and credentials as a great power.²⁰⁶ Apart from Syrian advantage, Russia has looked for permanent bases to enhance its hand in the Mediterranean as an alternative to the Tartus Base in Syria. On this purpose, Russian forces have still been in every conflictual area and possible locations for military bases in the region. In the consideration of whole these circumstances and developments, a question may come to minds; is Russia turning the Mediterranean into a Russian Lake, after the Black Sea with the annexation of Crimea? To answer this question is not easy but in the light of the Russian ambitions and enhancing military capability, it seems like Putin is trying to do that. At least, with the A2/AD bubbles, Russia emerging as both global and regional power.

4.4. Ukraine

With the dissolution of USSR, Ukraine, Russia’s cultural “*younger brother*”, announced its independence in 1991. Despite independence, Russia has seen Ukraine as a province, a client state, and buffer zone against the West.²⁰⁷ Although economic structure of Ukraine is quite fragile and undeveloped, Ukrainian army is the third big army in the Europe after France and Russia. In addition, quite big part of Soviet Union’s fleet in the Black Sea and the military production infrastructure became under the control of Ukraine after the dissolution of USSR, as mentioned detailed above. However, as a previous member of Soviet Union and the brotherhood with Russia, Ukrainian society has not fully cut national and

²⁰⁵ Thornton, Rot. “The Russian Military Commitment in Syria and the Eastern Mediterranean.” The RUSI Journal, (2018) 163:4, 30-38

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Cohen, Ariel & Irwin, Conway. “U.S. Strategy in the Black Sea region”, Backgrounder. Published by The Heritage Foundation, 2006.

political ties with Russia, despite the aim to integrate into the West. This situation has reflected to Ukrainian politics and society. Emerging identity problem in the society and the feeling of “*piggy in the middle*” of Russia and the West, have kept Ukraine under struggle with economic, political, and social problems. Being a client state politically or economically to the West or Russia, made Ukraine zone of conflicts since 1991, but especially since 2005, Ukraine’s Orange Revolution. Every government, at the beginning or later, have carried out either pro-Western or pro-Russian policies and this circumstance paved the way for turmoil or protests instigated by either Russia or the West.

The fall of USSR and gaining independence open a new door to Ukraine. Kiev, set its goal as being integrated to Euro-Atlantic society and turned its face to the West. In June 1994, Kiev and EU signed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, and it entered into force in March 1998. In the same year, in 1994, official relations among Ukraine and NATO began with the NATO’s Partnership for Peace Program. Ukraine became the first Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) member who enter this program. Establishment of NATO-Ukraine Commission followed the closing relations in 1997. In pursuit of its goal of closer Euro-Atlantic integration, Ukraine-NATO Action Plan was adopted in 2002 during the NATO enlargement summit.²⁰⁸ Following these developments, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma publicly declared Ukrainian desire to join NATO in 2002 and the sending of Ukrainian Armed Forces to Iraq to support U.S. military forces, in 2003. However, despite Washington support the membership, it was highlighted that Ukraine needs to adopt kinds of democratic, economic, and military reforms as response to Ukrainian wants.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ NATO- Ukraine Action Plan.

²⁰⁹ Pifer, Steven. “Order from Chaos: NATO’s Ukraine Challenge.” Brookings, 2019.

Ukrainian presidential election in 2004 is one of the milestones of country's history because it turned into a political turmoil and revolution, Orange Revolution. With the Orange Revolution, Kuchma was replaced by President Viktor Yushchenko. New President was supporter of his country's NATO membership, and he followed the pro-Western policies against Russia. However, Kremlin-backed Viktor Yanukovich's Party of Region won the plurality of the parliament in 2006 elections. The new cabinet and the Prime Minister Yanukovich are more pro-Russian and less favor with the West. Moreover, at the same year, in June 2006, planned NATO Sea Breeze and Tight Knot exercises in the Crimea was cancelled because of the instigated anti-Western protests in Ukraine.²¹⁰ While Kremlin-backed Prime Minister had instigated anti-Western tendencies and damaged Ukraine relations with US, President Yushchenko had desired to the membership.

In 2008, Ukraine called for consideration to Ukrainian join to the Membership Action Plan (MAP) at NATO's Bucharest summit. NATO neither rejected the request of Ukraine to join NATO nor accepted. NATO did not offer membership to Ukraine yet but stated that Ukraine would eventually become member. On this purpose, Annual National Programme was put in place in December 2008, to assist Ukraine to implement needed reforms. In the 2010 Ukrainian Presidential election, Viktor Yanukovich, former prime minister, elected as the new President of the country and reflected his pro-Russian tendencies by handing more power on his hands.

Yanukovich supported the partnership with NATO but not membership and he publicly implied this idea many times. Moreover, Ukrainian national security strategy was amended by Yanukovich proposed bill that excludes the goal of "*integration into Euro-Atlantic security and NATO membership*".²¹¹ This

²¹⁰ Cohen, et al., *U.S. Strategy in the Black Sea region*, 2006

²¹¹ Pop, Valentina. "Ukraine drops Nato membership bid." EU Observer, 2010.

amendment was just about the membership of any military bloc, so European integration is still part of the strategy. However, main developments begin after President Yanukovich “*chose not to sign an agreement that would have integrated the country more closely with the European Union*”²¹². Putting aside of the agreement divided Ukrainian into two as pro-Russian and pro-Western. This fact lights the touch paper; ‘Maidan protests’ a.k.a Euromaidan uprising began in late November 2013 and continued into 2014. With the Yanukovich had fled the country on 22 February, Petro Poroshenko was elected as new president of the Ukraine. At the same times, late February 2014, pro-Russian gunmen took the control of Crimean Peninsula and Crimean population which has an ethnic Russian majority chose to secede from Ukraine with a disputed referendum. Right after the referendum, “*Russian and Crimean leaders signed a deal in Moscow to join the region to Russia*”.²¹³ A serial pro-Russian separatist activities happened not only in Crimea, but also in the other cities in East of Ukraine such as Donetsk and Lugansk in Donbass region where is important for Ukrainian economy and industry. Donbass region with the immense industry especially in military industry, richness in raw materials and geopolitical location has been always significant for both Ukraine and USSR. During Soviet era, a Soviet propaganda declared that “Donbas is the heart of Russia”.²¹⁴ These separatist activities escalated into an armed conflict between Ukrainian armed forces and pro-Russian separatist forces. According to UN estimates, at least 5,244 people were killed, 11,862 wounded, 640,000 Ukrainians have fled, and more than 940,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) emerged in Ukraine.²¹⁵ Whole these developments were

²¹² Kozyrev, Yuri. “Understanding Ukraine’s Euromaidan Protests.” Open Society Foundations, 2019.

²¹³ Kozyrev, 2019

²¹⁴ Chalupa, Irena. “Direct Translation: Donbas, the Hearth of Russia”. Atlantic Council, June 13, 2014. Website URL: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/direct-translation-donbas-the-heart-of-russia/>

²¹⁵ Kozyrev, 2019

resulted with the self-declaration of Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics in 2014, and ceasefire agreement in 2015.

Since the conflicts began and the pro-Western President came to power in Ukraine in 2014, NATO increased the military aids to Ukraine to enhance its capability and security. While the relations between Ukraine and Russia have become more aggressive, western relations have become closer. Ukrainian Parliament made required changes on constitution to join NATO and EU. In 2020, NATO included Ukraine to Enhanced Opportunity Partner Interoperability Program. Although Ukraine is quite eager to join Western security alliance, NATO seems like walking on eggshells against Russian aggressiveness in consideration with Georgian, Crimean, and Donetsk cases. On the other hand, Russia, on the grounds of NATO enlargement towards Russia, stored up military equipment to Ukrainian border. Russian military deployment to Ukrainian border increased the tension in the region. Moscow has felt the threat from the enlargement of NATO toward herself and reacted by military deployment to borders. Putin quoted recently,

*We are extremely concerned about the deployment of elements of the US global missile defense system near Russia. The Mk 41 launchers located in Romania and planned for deployment in Poland have been adapted to the use of the Tomahawk strike systems. If this infrastructure moves on, if the US and NATO missile systems appear in Ukraine, then their flight time to Moscow will be reduced to seven to ten minutes, and with the deployment of hypersonic weapons – to five. For us, this is the most serious challenge – a challenge to our security.*²¹⁶

In addition, Putin wanted a guarantee from US President Joe Biden that Ukraine will never be the member of NATO, during their bilateral online meeting to reduce the tension in the region.

²¹⁶ Gotev, Georgi. "Putin vows tough response over US buildup in Ukraine, Eastern Europe. EURACTIV, 2021.

From the maritime perspective on Ukraine, it is obvious as mentioned before that the country lost its naval fleet in 75 percent with the bulk of the ship repair capacity and 70 percent of naval personnel, with Sevastapol Naval Base gone during the Crimean annexation by Russia.²¹⁷ Thus, Ukrainian Navy has not had enough capability to fend off Russia or any other average navy in the case of any conflict. Due to this reason, US, UK, and other NATO members started to guide Ukraine and other littoral states in the region to enhance and rebuild their fleet and naval forces technically and operationally. On this purpose, Ukraine was included into the Naval operations and projects such as Black Sea Maritime Domain Awareness project, which is led by the US.²¹⁸ On the other hand, Turkey, one of the biggest supporters of Ukrainian membership to NATO, has increased bilateral relations on economic, political, and military level between two countries, especially in recent years.

4.5. Bulgaria & Romania

Bulgaria and Romania were two Soviet satellites, communist, and Warsaw Treaty Organization members during the Cold War. Their security dynamics and international relations followed similar way throughout the West. They became NATO member in 2004 and EU member in 2007. Thus, separating these two would fall into repetition.

Membership of Bulgaria and Romania to NATO in 2004 was one of the milestones in both Balkan and the Black Sea security. Both country with their Black Sea coastlines and willingness to integrate into Euro-Atlantic security system gave a great advantage to NATO presence in the Black Sea against Russian dominance. Not only in the region, NATO, especially the US, has used these two bases during

²¹⁷ Eckstein, Megan. "After 2014 decimation, Ukrainian Navy rebuilds to fend off Russia." Defense News, 2021.

²¹⁸ Eckstein, 2021

operations in Afghanistan and Middle East. However, their membership also took Russian attention to NATO enlargement and deployment towards Russia.

After their long Socialist governance, both Romania and Bulgaria have pro-Russian population in society and parliament, especially in Bulgaria. For instance, as Francis and Manea mentioned,

President Rosen Plevneliev was highly critical of Russia's actions while he was in office from January 2012 to January 2017, seeing them as a direct threat to the EU. He therefore supported a stronger NATO role in the Black Sea region. His successor, President Rumen Radev, who is a former commander of the air force, seeks to maintain close ties with Russia while having a good relationship with the EU and NATO partners.

Prime Minister Boyko Borisov (2017-2021) is more supportive of EU and NATO while President Rumen Radev is pro-Russian Socialist.²¹⁹

On the other hand, both Bulgaria and Romania have been two active members of NATO who also cooperate with, and they participate in many NATO exercises and projects. Despite close relations with NATO as a security alliance, according to a survey in 2016, 20% of Bulgarian saw NATO as a threat while 28 percent saw it as a protection for their country, which is the worst score for NATO support.²²⁰

The difference between Bulgaria and Romania is about the level of threat and skepticism of Russian invasion and parallelly the rate of their defense spending rates. Bulgaria has maintained much better relations with Russia for years. Unlike others, Bulgaria also does not perceive major threats to its security from any neighbors or Black Sea littoral states.²²¹ Not to perceive any threat idea reflects on

²¹⁹ Francis, Taylor & Manea, Octavian. "The Black Sea and NATO in the Age of Access-Denial." *Studia Politica: Romanian Political Science Review*, 18:3, (2018)

²²⁰ Wezeman, Siemon T., & Alexandra Kuimova. "Bulgaria and Black Sea Security." Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2018.

²²¹ Wezeman, et al., *Bulgaria and the Black Sea Security*, 2018

the determination of defense budget and public opinion. According to surveys, majority of the population indicates that they do not fight in the case of any attack to Bulgaria. Thus, Bulgarians does not want to spend on defense systems. However, all NATO members, including Bulgaria, has agreed to spend minimum 2% of their GDP to enhance NATO defense capability. In the light of the public opinion, Bulgarian parliament is limited to increase their defense budget. That's why Bulgaria could not increase its spending on defense more that 1.6 of its GDP although Bulgarian government wants substantial and urgent increases in military spending and modernization of military equipment.²²² On the other hand, Romania is quite skeptical of Russian invasion, especially after the Crimean Crisis. The crisis also triggered that almost all the Central and Eastern European countries, primarily Romania, decided to increase in their defense spending. Moreover, despite fiscal and economic problems in the country, Romania announced to meet the NATO's decision to spend 2% of its GDP on national defense and has maintained this policy.²²³

In 2014, Romania offered its territory to host NATO, primarily the U.S., to create viable and effective A2/AD bubble against Russia.²²⁴ Unlike Bulgaria, Romania is more worried about the threat from Russia after Crimean annexation. While Bulgaria is more skeptical about the risk of increasing deployment of NATO to its territory and the Black Sea that may increase the tension between Russia; Romania has actively wanted to increase both NATO deployment to the region and its own military power along with the being costumer of US defense and military systems. The procurement of the Patriot air and missile defense system from the U.S. would enhance both Romanian and NATO defense capability in the region against

²²² Wezeman, et al., *Bulgaria and the Black Sea Security*, 2018

²²³ Francis, et al., *The Black Sea and NATO in the Age of Access-Denial*, 2018

²²⁴ Francis, et al., *The Black Sea and NATO in the Age of Access-Denial*, 2018

Russia, along with the meeting Romania's commitment of spending %2 of its GDP on defense.²²⁵

Romania is aware of the importance of US military presence as part of A2/AD campaign in the Black Sea; that's why Romanian government expresses the willingness to improve its infrastructure to strengthen its A2/AD presence to tun effective operation. Although Romania does not have expansionist military mindset or capability, some military projects like submarine building are for offensive operations rather than defense purposes. This shows that U.S.-backed Romania aims to create effective A2/AD bubble that could deter Russian revisionism in the region.²²⁶

NATO and Romania have started to invest in Romanian shipyards and naval capability. By enhancing naval capability along the Romanian coasts, Romania provides more effective and cheaper deterrent to Russian attempts by mining and other anti-submarine warfare (ASW) measures, and quick mobility of troop and equipment opportunity.

Both countries provide an anchor for Euro-Atlantic security alliance in the Black Sea by their membership and geographical advantages against Russia in the region. Bulgaria is more favor to reduce tension by keeping stable the NATO deployment against Russian aggression while Romania desires to increase the military power by the support of U.S. and create effective A2/AD bubble on its territory against Russian actions. Although the level of threat perception of Romania and Bulgaria differ from each other, they have actively participated joint exercises of NATO in the region like Sea Breeze 2018 and offered an opportunity to US presence in the region against Russia. However, despite their NATO-back

²²⁵ Judson, Jen. "It's Official: Romania Signs Deal to Buy US Missile Defense System", Defense News, 30 November 2017.

²²⁶ Francis, et al., *The Black Sea and NATO in the Age of Access-Denial*, 2018

situation and advantage, these two countries do not have enough capability to exert a dominating influence in the region counter to Russia and Turkey.²²⁷

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the naval strategies of each littoral states in the Black Sea and regional naval security dimensions. This chapter will be followed by the analysis of the regional mediating role of Turkey in the next chapter.



²²⁷ Cohen, et al., *U.S. Strategy in the Black Sea region*, 2006

CHAPTER 5

TURKEY AS A REGIONAL MEDIATOR

5.1. Introduction

Turkey, with the longest coastline to the Black Sea, strong military capability, and controlling access points, plays one of the most strategic roles in the region. Especially, with the advantage of exclusive control over the Turkish Straits, a.k.a. Bosphorus and Dardanelles, by the grants of 1936 Montreux Convention, Turkey enhanced its crucial role as a gatekeeper. Turkish Straits are strategically vital link between the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea, so Turkey sees this convention is an essential element in the context of regional security and stability.

Right after the dissolution of the USSR, with the emerging power gap in the region, Turkey became the leading power in the Black Sea and tried to fulfill this power gap by uniting other newly independent states to create Black Sea as a cooperation zone rather than confliction in the region. On this purpose, Turkey has initiated some projects to bring the regional states together to increase the economic, commercial, scientific, technological, cultural cooperation and maintain regional peace and security. Multilateral economic and security building efforts of Turkey bring the initiative of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in 1992. Because long term interests of Turkey require to promote multilateral cooperation in the region, rather than conflicts. The other project, BLACKSEAFOR, to promote peace, stability and security in the region is initiated by Turkey again. BSEC constitute the economic side and BLACKSEAFOR constitute the military/naval side of the regional security and peace of the Black Sea. Along with the Turkey's initiatives to maintain good relations in the region, there is also historical dimensions and frameworks to keep Black Sea as a region

of peace by Montreux Convention which is signed in 1936, before the Second World War.

Turkey, as the leading NATO member in the Black Sea operates countless naval action on the seas. During these operations, there is always high risk to encounter with Russian forces and occur accident on sea. To prevent this kind of accident, Russia and Turkey signed Agreement Between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of Turkey Concerning the Prevention of Incidents at Sea (*incsea*) outside Territorial Waters, in 2004 but it was entered into force in 2008.²²⁸

5.2. The Montreux Convention (1936)

Regime of the Straits has always become the topic to the international affairs and naval security. With the start of the weakening process of Ottoman Empire, both Russia and other European power focused on the regime of the Straits. The Treaty of Lausanne which was signed after the independence war of Turkey is quite important for the determination of the regime of the Straits by including a convention related to the Straits. As it was indicated in the convention, straits should be demilitarized, and they are open to the unrestricted civilian and military traffic. In addition, Turkish Straits became under the supervision of the International Straits Commission of the League of Nation rather than the Republic of Turkey. Thus, according to the Convention Relating to the Regime of the Straits, there were many restrictions for Turkish authority on the Straits.

In 1935, Turkey requested to propose a conference on the agreement of the new regime of the Straits against the existence of the threat under the greatly changed international situation. The request was favorably responded by almost all big powers, and they agreed to attend negotiations except Italy and United States. The debates and negotiations started on 22 June 1936 at Montreux in Switzerland. At

²²⁸ The European Leadership Network.

the end of the negotiations, Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits, which consists of 29 Article, was signed on 20 July 1936, by deciding to give the control to Turkey. Thus, the restrictions which was brought by the Treaty of Lausanne were eliminated on the favor of Turkey. The Montreux Convention, which established the successful balance in the region, has been properly and impartially implemented by Turkey since that date.

With the changes and developments in maritime technology, increase in the maritime traffic especially in the number of oil tankers and the danger of large-scale incidents with the risk of huge environmental damages and destruction, the need for maritime traffic regulations for the Turkish Straits came to the agenda. On the purpose taking safety measures, Turkey introduced the Maritime Traffic Regulations for the Turkish Straits on July 1, 1994. In addition to the maritime traffic regulations, “*traffic separation schemes (TSS) were introduced in 1994 in accordance with the “International Regulations for the Prevention of Collision at Sea” (COLREG) in the Straits and were approved by IMO in 1995.*”²²⁹ However, with the strong opposition of Russian Federation, and debates on International Maritime Organization (IMO), 1994 regulations were revised, and the new regulation has been brought into force on November 6, 1998. On the other hand, to increase the level of safety of passage, Turkey installed a modern vessel traffic services (VTS) system in the Straits which costs almost 45 billion dollars.²³⁰

According to the Convention and Maritime Traffic Regulations for the Turkish Straits dated 1998, merchant ships/vessels can freely enjoy the passage through the Turkish Straits. However, naval forces are restricted on the favor of riparian states to provide regional security. While only riparian states’ submarines can

²²⁹ Note on the Turkish Straits, Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Website URL: <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-turkish-straits.en.mfa>

²³⁰ Özersay, Kudret. “Boğazlar Konusu”. Baskın Oran (ed.), Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, cilt II, 15. Baskı, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2002, p.587-599

pass, any aircraft carriers cannot pass through the Turkish Straits. However, *“besides some general restrictions applicable to all, vessels of war belonging to non-riparian States are subject to specific restrictions such as those regarding maximum aggregate tonnage and duration of stay in the Black Sea”*.²³¹ For instance, according to the convention, the maximum aggregate tonnage of vessels of war belonging to non-riparian states may have in the Black Sea is 45.000 tons and they cannot stay more than 21 days in the Black Sea. In addition to the limits of aggregate tonnage, all passages of vessels of war must be notified to Turkey by the diplomatic channels, 8 days before for the riparian States and 15 days before for the non-riparian States. By this way, Turkey, and other riparian States in the Black Sea are informed about all the passages of vessels of war.

To sum, this balance that Montreux Convention established, has provided security and stability to the region, and kept out of the conflict. Even in the Cold War era, the implementation of the rules had maintained the regional security. The Convention also gave a powerful hand to Turkey to control the link points between the two seas and it turned the straits of Dardanelles and Bosphorus to Turkish Straits by full of authority.

5.3. Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)

Dissolution of the USSR brought huge changes into the Black Sea in 1990s. Being economically depending on each other, complementary features of economies, and geographical proximity of riparian states, revealed the need of an organization to keep both these states together, the region secure and increase the cooperation. On this purpose, Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) was established in February 1992 at Istanbul Summit, as an initiative of Turkey, RF, Romania, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Bulgaria at first. In June 1992, Greece, and Albania also joined to the Organization as founding

²³¹ Implementation of the Montreux Convention. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkey.

members. Today, North Macedonia and Serbia are also the members of BSEC in addition to all founders. Along with the members, US, Germany, France, and many countries are observer to BSEC.

The Headquarter, the Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS) of BSEC is in Istanbul where the decision to establish the organization were taken. The sole decision-making body of the organization is the Council of Foreign ministers. Besides this, other related bodies are Parliamentary Assembly of Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB), International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) and Business Council (BC). Along with the BSEC main bodies, there are also 19 working groups within the Organization, and they operate as auxiliary bodies on various subjects. The main subjects of these groups are trade and economy, but they also operate on transportation, energy, communication, science, and technology.

The organization aims to diversify and develop both bilateral and multilateral relations in many areas from economy to society. In this context, the main goal of the organization is to make the Black Sea basin a region of stability, cooperation, peace, prosperity, and solidarity. One of the best tools to achieve and maintain this is economic cooperation by regional win-win situation. Turkey has been the most proactive member since its establishment. Besides the active role in its establishment and hosting its Secretariat in İstanbul, Turkey strives for the implementation of cooperation project within the Organization framework.

9/11 terror attack reshaped many policies and situation worldwide. Right after the attack, US strived to involve to the Middle East. On this purpose, Black Sea countries like Bulgaria, Romania, and Georgia provided best option for both locating into the Black Sea region and easy access to the Middle East and Central Asia. EU also followed the similar path with the US and started to its enlargement policy toward Black Sea basin. The enlargement of EU and the US overshadowed BSEC by the willingness of riparian states to engage with the West rather than cooperating with Russia, successor of USSR. Regarding the underdeveloped status

of economies and frozen conflicts among the members, gaining importance and function would take long time.

Turkey and Russia support new regulations and initiatives for revival of the Organization while states which have frozen conflicts like Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, and Azerbaijan support that security issues should be debated among the members.

Russia and Turkey indicate that these kinds of conflictual subjects should be handled on the OSCE and Council of Europe if these issues may bottleneck the working of BSEC.²³² They have avoided from these kinds of conflictual debates on the BSEC Platforms as far as possible to maintain dialogue and cooperation among members rather than involvement of external powers by these conflicts.

During the İstanbul Summit on 25 June 2007, it was decided to revitalize the organization by focusing on the subjects about environment, transportation, energy, telecommunication, and fight against organized crimes. On this purpose, all members of BSEC signed the agreement on the development of Black Sea ring highway among Black Sea countries and motorways of the sea in the region, in 2007. This step has made Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation more like Organization of Black Sea Cooperation.

5.4. The Black Sea Naval Co-operation Task Group (BLACKSEAFOR)

The security gap that emerged after the dissolution of USSR in the Black Sea basin brought the idea of creating a multinational task force. By this idea, “Black Sea Naval Co-Operation Task Group- BLACKSEAFOR” has been initiated by Turkey during the Chiefs of the Black Sea Navies meeting in Bulgaria, in 1998. The main reason to establish this multinational naval on call peace task force is to increase

²³² Sait Yılmaz, “Karadeniz’de Değişen Dengeler ve Türkiye”, Karadeniz Araştırmaları, Sayı: 15, Güz 2007.

regional co-operation, improve good relations and maintain regional peace and stability. The establishment agreement of the naval task force was signed by all littoral states in the Black Sea on 2 April 2001 in İstanbul. “First Political Consultations” meeting of the BLACKSEAFOR at the level Foreign Ministers, was organized in Ankara by the invitation of Turkey on 19 January 2004. Besides underlying the importance of Black Sea, it was highlighted that security in the region constitutes highest importance for the littoral states. The task force requires to take the responsibility for the maintenance of regional peace and stability by the engagement of littoral states’ common assets and capabilities. During this meeting in Ankara, it was also shared by the representatives that “*the Black Sea should be protected against threats and challenges such as terrorism, organized crime, illegal trafficking and proliferation of weapon of mass destruction*”.²³³ With this understanding and on this purpose, during the BLACKSEAFOR meeting in Moscow, Ad-Hoc Senior Level Experts Group was established.

BLACKSEAFOR provides co-operation among naval forces of littoral states on the one hand, helps regional states to cope with the threats that emerged globally after the 9/11 case on the other hand. Not only regional operations and co-operation among littorals, BLACKSEAFOR can also join to the operations of UN and OSCE. Moreover, by the NATO membership of Bulgaria and Romania, NATO became the part of BLACKSEAFOR. In this context, BLACKSEAFOR is also important for the Russia-NATO relations.

BLACKSEAFOR has been activated since 2001 regularly. Each activation is operated by the command of a country. The command of the activation is shared among six littoral states and followed the alphabetic order. One of the most significant activations was operated during the Georgian-Russian conflict in 2008. After a couple of days of starting the eighth operation of BLACKSEAFOR, under the Ukrainian command, Russian-Georgian war started on 8 August 2008.

²³³ BLACKSEAFOR. Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Website url: <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/blackseafor.en.mfa>

However, BLACKSEAFOR did not affected from that war and the eighth activation was operated by all six country forces, including Russia and Georgia. Two countries that fight against each other on the land could peacefully co-operated in a multinational naval force on the sea.²³⁴ Along with being quite unique in the history, this case is foremost proof of the success of BLACKSEAFOR and the possibility of cooperation among Black Sea countries even in the conflict times.

5.5. Operation Black Sea Harmony

9/11 terror attack increased the awareness against the threat of terrorism and illegal activities in the region. On the purpose of contributing the efforts to prevent these illegal activities such as proliferation of terrorism and contribute to the maritime security in the Black Sea, Operation Black Sea Harmony was launched nationally by Turkey on March 1, 2004.²³⁵ It is a naval operation that aims to deter terrorism and asymmetric threats in the Black Sea.

To deter all possible threats in the whole Black Sea, and fight against them, Turkey invited all littoral states to participate in the operation. Russia, Romania, and Ukraine have officially responded by joining. The Permanent Coordination Center of the Black Sea Harmony Operation locates in the Karadeniz Ereğli, in Zonguldak Province of Turkey, on the Black Sea shore. Russia and Romania have assigned Liaison Officers to the headquarter in the Ereğli to actively participate and all other littoral states are able to send.

Operation Black Sea Harmony is similar with the Operation Active Endeavour, operated by NATO to fight against terrorism and provide naval security in the

²³⁴ Gürdeniz, p.309.

²³⁵ Operation Black Sea Harmony, Turkish Naval Forces, Website URL: <https://www.dzkk.tsk.tr/en-US/Harekat/Content/operation-black-sea-harmony>

Mediterranean Sea. On the purpose of enhance its military capability and flexibility in the Black Sea, US has aimed to increase its naval power in the Black Sea and enlarge Operation Active Endeavour towards the region. However, primarily Turkey, by the provisions of the Montreux Convention, and Russia, are against the increase NATO existence and power in the Black Sea on the grounds that upsetting the regional balances. Indeed, Operation Black Sea Harmony was launched to substitute the Operation Active Endeavour rather than enlargement of it into the Black Sea region.

Turkey showed decisiveness about the external power existence and involvement of them into regional problem's rather than solution among the regional states in the Black Sea by veto the decision on enlargement of NATO Operation Active Endeavour into the Black Sea on March 25, 2005, in Brussels.²³⁶ After a couple of months, on the other hand, the cooperation meeting among Operation Black Sea Harmony and Operation Active Endeavour was a diplomatic success by Turkey. Thereby, the function of Operation Active Endeavour has been operated by Operation Black Sea Harmony and the naval security has been provided in the Black Sea by littoral states.

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the mediatory and stabilizer role of Turkey in the Black Sea region in terms of naval security. Analyze part of the thesis is over here. This part will be followed by concluding remarks for the thesis.

²³⁶ Gurdeniz, p.317

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

To summarize, this thesis examined the possibility of cooperation as an alternative to conflicts in the Black Sea region by considering the role of Turkey in ensuring the naval security in the region.

Naval security is the first step of national and regional security for littoral states and semi-enclosed seas. To provide naval security, each naval power should have a naval strategy. Naval strategies are precondition of conducting successful maritime operations and being sea power. Sea power has had vital importance in global power competition and defeating enemy throughout the history. On the other hand, command of the sea and control of lines of communication are two of the main aim of naval powers because command of the sea gave superiority to states and control of communication brings advantage by hindering passages of potential enemy's military or commerce ships. Shipping is the most feasible transportation way. In addition to the advantages of command of the sea, naval bases play significant role in far distance operational capability, control of significant sea ways and choke points. Thus, naval strategy is compulsory for a sea power to command and control the sea, strengthen its naval power, operate successfully, gain economic profit and welfare and most significantly to provide naval security. It is obvious that successful naval strategy is one of the major elements to achieve national and regional security. Especially, with the increasing of globalization and naval technologies, it plays the major role in world politics and international security.

Black Sea region has always protected its geopolitical importance in the history, especially with its magnificent location. While Black Sea was intensely used for commerce as a significant part of Silk Road and the Spice Route during ancient

times and Middle Ages, it has been using more intensely for military purposes, modern oil pipelines, transportation, and migration in recent times. This increasingly uses of the region with additional purposes cause the turning eyes to the region more than ever before.

In the aftermath of 9/11 period, peace, security, and stability of Black Sea started to be questioned. With the gradual increase in Eastern – Western network, traffic in maritime transition and the use of this region revealed its significance and geopolitical importance more than ever before. Black Sea region has always been a “*testing ground for the deployability and mobility of military forces in both deterrent and expansionist policies*”²³⁷ along with the significant trading area. Thus, Black Sea is the region of both huge potential on cooperation and high risk on conflict, as it was throughout the history. This region, especially as an integral part of the Eastern Mediterranean, will always keep its increasing importance both geopolitically and geostrategically.

After the collapse of USSR, increase of newly independent states and the involvement of Western institutions into the Black Sea by the membership of Romania and Bulgaria to the Western Institutions and meetings with Ukraine and Georgia with close relations, caused the increase of the tension in the region. The conflict firstly broke out in Georgia, with the signals of the intention to integrate into the West. The process has started with the Rose Revolution in 2004 and continued with the Russo-Georgian conflict. Russian-Georgian war in 2008 was one of the turning points in the Black Sea security. It was the first symbol of conflict that rooted from the influence of the West.

Ukraine followed the colorful revolution series and the Orange Revolution light the touchpaper that start the conflicts among Kiev and Moscow. With the integration idea of Ukraine into the West, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has

²³⁷ Maior, George Cristian, and Mihaela Matei. "The Black Sea Region in an Enlarged Europe: Changing Patterns, Changing Politics." *Mediterranean Quarterly* 16, no. 1, 2005, p.36

started the situation that has been still lasting since that date. The political turmoil in Ukraine, intentions to build partnership with the West and the conflict with Moscow resulted with the Russian annexation of Crimea where the major naval base of Ukrainian navy located.

Annexation of Crimea reshaped both the regional and global balances in the favor of Russia. With the creation of A2/AD bubble at the center of the Black Sea, Moscow enhanced its power in both Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean.

Turkey, as a powerful member of NATO and having Straits which are internationally waterways that connect Black Sea to Mediterranean, has played strategic role in the region. Turkey, besides the projects and initiatives, has the main contribution to the Black Sea naval security by properly and impartially implementing Montreux Convention. By the force of provisions of Montreux Convention, Black Sea has been already closed to the state of conflict and insecurity by limiting and controlling all naval passages.

The initiatives of Turkey to make Black Sea as a sea of cooperation, peace and prosperity constitute the important part of the argument of this thesis by showing the possibility of cooperation even in the war times. Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation, BLACKSEAFOR, and Operation Black Sea Harmony are quite valuable initiatives that were established on the purpose of providing Black Sea peace, prosperity, and security. These institutions showed and underlined that the cooperation has been always the best alternative to conflict for the black Sea. Even in the Georgian-Russo war time, these two nations' forces could operate together during the activation of BLACKSEAFOR.

To conclude, this study showed that the conflict always exists in the Black Sea, throughout the history. However, the policies of Turkey underlines that the high necessity for the cooperation. Conflict is not compulsory for the region; cooperation is quite strong alternative to conflict. The countries of the region will decide for themselves which direction they will go, whether they will choose

cooperation or conflict. Regional conflicts and problems can be solved by these regional states without the intervention of external powers. As this thesis argued, there is high potential and possibility for the cooperation in the Black Sea and Turkey supports this remark.



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APPENDICES

A. CURRICULUM VITAE

1. Family Name: ASAR

2. First Name: HATİCE

3. Date of Birth:

4. Place of Birth:

5. Education:

Date From- Date to	Degree(s) or Diploma(s) obtained
2018 - Present	Master of Science /M.S. International Relations Middle East Technical University
2013 – 2018	Bachelor's Degree /B.S. International Relations Middle East Technical University
2009 - 2013	High School Diploma Bileydi Anatolian High School Antalya/ Turkey

Present Position: Trade Assistant Specialist / Ministry of Trade of Turkey

B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

Tarih boyunca farklı medeniyetlere ev sahiplięi yapmıř olmasının yanı sıra pek çok atıřmaya da sahne olan Karadeniz havzası, artan ticari faaliyetler ve farklı blgeleri birbirine baęlayan bir su yolu olması sebebiyle kresel önemini her geen yıl daha ok hissettirmiřtir. Osmanlı İmparatorluęunun blgeyi hakimiyeti altına alması sonrası bir sre istikrara kavuřan Karadeniz, Rusya gibi kresel hedefleri ve stratejileri olan bir devletin varlıęını saęlamlařtırmasıyla gnmze kadar devam eden politik ekiřme ve atıřmalara řahit olmuřtur. Tarihte Rus-Osmanlı savařlarına sahne olan bu blge gnmz Trk-Rus iliřkilerinin řekillenmesinde en nemli role sahiptir. řekillendirdięi milletler arası iliřkilerin yanı sıra, jeopolitik teorilerde ykselen bir eksen ifade eden Karadeniz, dnya kalpgahında merkez konumda olup kresel politikalara da yn vermektedir.

Bir i deniz olan Karadeniz, 20. yzyıl ortalarına kadar tek ıkıř yolu olan İstanbul Boęazıyla Marmara Denizine oradan da anakkale Boęazıyla Akdeniz'e baęlanırken 1952 yılında aılan Don-Volga Kanalı ile yine bir i deniz olan Hazar Deniziyle baęlanmış; 1992 yılında ise Ren-Tuna Kanalı ile Kuzey Denizine kadar uzanmıřtır. Aılan bu kanallar Karadeniz jeopolitięini kresel alanda daha nemli bir noktaya tařırken aynı zamanda blgeyi de bir g mcadelesi ve etki yayma alanına evirmeye katkıda bulunmuřlardır. Karadeniz, Asya ile Avrupa arasında bir kpr olmasının yanı sıra Avrasya ile Anadolu ve Orta Doęu arasında da bir geiř denizi olması dolayısıyla olduka stratejik bir konuma sahiptir.

Karadeniz gvenlięi, Don-Volga Kanalı ile baęlı olduęu Hazar Denizi, aık denizlere ıkıř kapısı olan Boęazlar, Marmara Denizi ve Akdeniz gvenlięiyle beraber deęerlendirilmesi gerekmektedir. yledir ki bazı alıřmalarda Karadeniz-Akdeniz Blgesi (Black-Mediterranean Seas Region) olarak ele alınmaktadır. nk Karadeniz bu blgelerde yařanan geliřmelerden doęrudan ya da dolaylı olarak da etkilenmektedir.

Karadeniz'in bugün bu denli öneminden bahsedilebiliyor olunmasında ve devletlerin güçlenmesinde deniz gücünün, deniz güvenliğinin, deniz stratejilerinin ve deniz ticaretinin önem kazanmasının rolü büyüktür. Deniz gücü ve deniz güvenliği sadece kıyısı olan devletler açısından değil deniz aşırı ticaret yapan ve küresel bir güç olmayı amaçlayan tüm devletler için hayati öneme sahiptir.

Dünyada nüfusun, gıda talebinin ve üretimin artması, yeni pazarların keşfi, uluslararası ticaret sisteminin gelişmesi, ekonomik zenginlik ve milletlerarası rekabetle birlikte ticari faaliyetlerin ekonomik ve askeri gücü beslemesi dolayısıyla birim maliyeti en düşük, en hızlı, uzak noktalara en güvenli transferi sağlayan deniz taşımacılığı ve deniz yolları deniz ticareti yapan tüm devletler için büyük önem kazanmıştır. Bu deniz yollarını ve ticari faaliyetleri olası risklerden koruma ihtiyacı, devletleri deniz güçlerini artırmaya ve deniz güvenliğini sağlamaya yöneltmiştir.

Ticari ya da ekonomik öneminin yanı sıra, deniz taşımacılığı tüm askeri araçlar, personel ve mühimmatın taşınması konusunda milli güvenlik açısından da hayati öneme haizdir. Herhangi bir denize kıyısı olan bir devlet deniz güçlerine sahip olmalıdır ki denizden gelecek bir tehlikeyi karaya yaklaşmadan denizde püskürtsün. Dolayısıyla ilk savunma denizde başlamakla birlikte devlet güvenliği önce deniz güvenliğinin sağlanmasıyla mümkün olur.

Pek çok düşünürün de belirttiği gibi deniz gücü ekonomik refahın perçinleyicisi olan deniz aşırı ticaret başta olmak üzere milli güvenlik ve deniz yolu güvenliğinin sağlanması için bir ön şarttır. Deniz gücünün sağlanması ve güçlenmesi her zaman her devlet için eşit koşullarda olmamakla birlikte deniz gücünü etkileyen jeopolitik konum, fiziki yapı, iklim, nüfus, millet ve devlet karakteristiği gibi farklı elementler mevcuttur. Deniz gücünün etkili bir şekilde kullanılarak güvenliğin sağlanması ve stratejik amaçlara ulaşılabilmesi için deniz stratejisine ihtiyaç vardır. Strateji, hedefe ulaşmak için savaş ve barış zamanında tüm güç kaynaklarını bütün operasyon alanında etkin bir şekilde uygulama bilimi ve sanatıdır. Bir devlet ancak bütün deniz gücü kaynaklarını kapsamlı bir deniz

stratejisi uygulayarak etkin bir şekilde kullanabilirse deniz güvenliğini sağlayabilir. Gemiler, denizaltılar ve silah teçhizatları gibi materyal kaynakların yanı sıra ana karadan uzak noktalarda edinilen deniz üsleri önemli bir deniz gücü kaynağı olup deniz aşırı operasyonlara sağladığı ikmal desteği, deniz yollarının kontrolü ve hızlı hareket etme yetisi sağlama özelliği ile oldukça önemlidir.

Deniz gücünün yanı sıra boğazlar gibi coğrafik üstünlüklere sahip olmak da deniz güvenliğini sağlamaya destek olabilmektedir. Boğazlar dünya üzerinde az sayıda bulunan oldukça stratejik geçiş noktalarıdır. Bu stratejik geçiş noktalarını kontrol eden devletler, geniş manevra alanı ve geniş kontrol avantajıyla deniz güvenliğini sağlamaya bir adım önde başlamaktadırlar. Bu yüzdendir ki Boğazları kontrol etme arzusu tarih boyu savaşlara sebep olmuştur.

II. Dünya Savaşı sonrası yaşanan iki kutuplu dünyada özellikle Sovyet etkisinin yoğun olarak yaşandığı Karadeniz coğrafyası Türkiye'nin NATO üyeliği ile gerginleşirken farklı denge dinamiklerinin de gözlendiği bir bölge haline gelmiştir. Şüphesiz ki bu dengenin sağlanmasında en büyük rolü Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün öngörüsü ve girişimleriyle 1936 yılında imzalanan Montrö Boğazlar Sözleşmesinin imzalanması ve Türkiye'nin bu sözleşmeyi harfiyen uygulaması oynamaktadır. Montrö Boğazlar Sözleşmesi Türk Boğazlarından geçiş rejimi kontrolünü Türkiye'ye verirken geçiş yapacak olan gemilere bölge barışını sağlamak amacıyla birtakım kısıtlamalar getirmektedir. Getirilen bu kısıtlamalar ve sözleşme hükümlerinin bağlılıkla uygulanması bölgesel barışın idamesinde hayati öneme sahiptir. Öyle ki bu sözleşme Karadeniz'in savaş gibi durumlarda dış devletlerin savaş gemilerine kapatılarak bölge güvenliğini içerde bölge devletleriyle sağlamayı hükmeder. Bu sözleşme başta Türkiye ve tüm kıyı devletlerinin güvenliği olmak üzere, kanallarla bağlantı kurulan Hazar Denizi ve kıyı devletlerinin de güvenliğini doğrudan ve dolaylı olarak sağlamaktadır.

Karadeniz'in güvenliğini dışardan gelecek tehditlere karşı sağlayan Montrö Boğazlar Sözleşmesinin yanı sıra Boğazların güvenliğinin sağlanması da önemli bir konudur. Artan deniz trafiği, gelişen teknolojinin de etkisiyle gün geçtikçe

daha büyük kapasiteli gemilerin sefer yapması ve boğazlarda yaşanan kazaların ve etkilerinin artması dolayısıyla Boğazlardan geçiş trafiğinin düzenlenmesi ihtiyacı doğmuştur. 1994 yılında Türkiye tarafından uygulamaya koyulan ve Türk Boğazlarında can, mal, çevre ve seyir güvenliğini sağlamayı amaçlayan Türk Boğazları Deniz Trafik Düzeni Tüzüğü Rusya ve Bulgaristan'ın uzun süren itirazları sonrasında güncellenerek 1998'de yürürlüğe girmiş ve uygulamasıyla boğazların güvenliğini sağlamaya devam etmektedir.

1991 yılında Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılması ve Karadeniz havzasında bağımsızlığını yeni elde etmiş devletlerin kurulmasıyla bölge uluslararası örgütler ve batıyla iş birliğinin arttığı bir döneme geçiş yapmıştır. Soğuk Savaş döneminde Sovyetler Birliği ve Türkiye arasında kalan gergin bölge 1991 yılında bağımsızlığını yeni kazanan devletlerle beraber altı ülkenin kıyıdaş olduğu bir iç deniz haline gelmiştir. Yeni kurulan devletlerin ekonomik kalkınması ve yeni kurulan düzende bölgesel güvenliğin sağlanması amacıyla Türkiye'nin girişimleriyle kurulan Karadeniz Ekonomik İş Birliği Örgütü gibi pek çok yeni ve eski kuruluş bölgede varlığını hissettirmeye başlamıştır. Bu dönemde eski hâkim güç olan ancak tarihsel bir çöküş yaşayan Rusya ise bir yandan batı ile iş birliğine başlarken bir yandan da kendini ekonomik olarak toparlamaya çalışmaktadır.

Karadeniz'i en az Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılması kadar etkileyen bir diğer olay 11 Eylül terör saldırısı olmuş ve tüm dünyada olduğu gibi bu bölgenin güvenlik dinamiklerinde de ciddi değişikliklere sebep olmuştur. Tarihin seyrini değiştiren bu terör saldırısı Afganistan'dan Balkanlara, Avrasya'dan Orta Doğu'ya kadar olan coğrafyayı da dahil ederek genişletilmiş Karadeniz bölgesinde terör, kaçakçılık ve organize suçlar gibi tehditlere karşı bölge güvenliğini sağlamak adına iş birliği ortamı inşa ederek bu tehditlere karşı hep beraber mücadele edilmesinin yolunu açmıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda Türkiye'nin yanı sıra, Ukrayna'nın da bölgesel iş birliğinin artırılmasına yönelik bulunduğu girişimler neticesinde "Karadeniz'de Deniz Kuvvetleri Alanında Güven Artırıcı Önlemler Belgesi" Karadeniz'e kıyıdaş altı ülke tarafından 25 Nisan 2002 tarihinde Kiev'de kabul edilmiştir. Bu belge, Karadeniz'de deniz güvenliğinin sağlamaya yönelik kıyı devletleri arasında deniz

kuvvetleri alanında iş birliği, çeşitli temaslar, bilgi değişimi ve paylaşımı, deniz üslerine ziyaret ve yıllık deniz kuvvetleri tatbikatlarıyla güven tesisini amaçlamaktadır.

11 Eylül terör saldırısı bölge devletlerinin güvenlik alarmı durumuna geçmesinin yanında Batılı devletlerin ve kurumların bölgenin bir geçiş güzergahı ve doğuya tampon olma potansiyelini de göz önüne alarak Karadeniz’e yayılma politikalarını hızlandırmıştır. Eski Sovyetler Birliği üyesi olan pek çok doğu Avrupa ve Balkan devleti NATO ve AB’ye dahil edilmiştir. Eski Sovyetler Birliği üyesi olan Bulgaristan ve Romanya gibi iki önemli Karadeniz kıyı devletinin 2004 yılında NATO’ya üye olması NATO’nun Karadeniz’e girmesine ve Rusya ile deniz yetki alanları ile de olsa Türkiye’den sonra ikinci kez sınır komşusu olmasına sebep olmuştur. Batı ile entegrasyonunu hızlandıran bu iki devletin Avrupa Birliğine üyelikleriyle Karadeniz coğrafyasına yeni bir dış aktörün daha dahil olmasına yol açmıştır.

Sovyetler Birliği’nin dağılmasıyla eski gücünü kaybeden ve tek kutuplu dünya sisteminde yerini alan Rusya, Bağımsız Devletler Topluluğu (BDT)’na üye ülkeleri Batı’ya karşı kendine yakın tutmak adına Yakın Çevre Doktrinini uygulamaya koyulmuştur. Bu politika başta ekonomik olmak üzere askeri ve kültürel temellere dayansa da Rusya BDT ülkeleriyle olan ilişkilerini daha çok ekonomik alanda yoğunlaştırmıştır.

Bulgaristan ve Romanya’nın üyeliklerinin yanı sıra, Ukrayna ve Gürcistan gibi Rusya’ya coğrafik olarak da yakın ülkelerin özellikle NATO ile yakın ilişkiler geliştirmesi dikkat çekmiştir. NATO’nun bu ülkelere atfettiği önem bu devletlerin NATO’ya üyeliğini getirmese de bu devletlerin iş birliği ve partnerlik programları çerçevesinde Batı’ya yakın durmalarını sağlamıştır. Gürcistan her ne kadar deniz gücü oldukça küçük olan bir devlet olsa da bulunduğu konum itibarıyla Batının ilgisini çekmiştir.

NATO ve AB'nin yayılmacı politikaları Moskova'da güvenlik tehdidi algısı yaratmış ve 80li yılların sonunda Rusya'ya verilen genişlememe sözünün çiğnenmesi Putin yönetimindeki Rusya'nın bölgede tekrar askeri gücünü hissettirmesine yol açmıştır.

NATO ve AB gibi batılı kurumların Gürcistan ve Ukrayna gibi Rusya'nın hem coğrafik hem de kültürel yakınlığı olan devletlerle yakınlaşması, iş birliğini artırması ve üyelik için yeşil ışık yakması Rusya için kabul edilmez bir tehdit haline gelmiş ve Güney Osetya ve Abhazya'daki ayrılıkçıları da ayaklandırarak 2008 yılında Gürcistan'a müdahalesiyle Rusya'nın güçlü varlığını hissettirmiştir. Batı ve batıyla yakınlaşma niyeti olan diğer devletler için uyarı niteliğinde olan bu müdahale Putin yönetimiyle Rusya'nın da eski gücüne dönme niyetini göstermiştir.

2000li yıllarda her ne kadar ekonomik ve askerî açıdan yeterli gücü olmasa da uyguladığı politikalar, zengin enerji kaynakları ve Sovyetler Birliğinden kalma teknoloji birikimi sayesinde hızlı bir gelişme gösteren Rusya, 2010 ve sonrasında donanmasını modernize etmeye ve envanterini geliştirmeye başlamıştır. Putin Rusya'sı, Çarlık döneminde temelleri atılan ve yüzyıllardır uğrunda savaşılan sıcak denizlere inme politikasına yeniden sarılmış bu hedefi gerçekleştirme yolunda pro-aktif adımlar atmıştır. Suriye'de meydana gelen iç savaş nedeniyle Esad rejiminin tarihi bağları bulunan ve stratejik ortağı olan Rusya'dan yardım istemesi Putin için bir fırsat yaratmış ve Rusya Suriye'ye konuşlanarak uzun vadede artık Akdeniz'de olduğunu tüm dünyaya göstermiştir. Böylece Rusya'nın yüzyıllardır takip ettiği sıcak denizlere inme politikası Putin yönetimiyle amacına ulaşmıştır.

Rusya'nın Karadeniz kıyıları liman, tersane, askeri üs gibi yapılara coğrafik yapısı elverişsiz olduğundan bu amaçlar için Kırım yarımadasındaki Sivastopol üssünü kullanmaktaydı. Kırım yarımadası uzun yıllar Osmanlı hakimiyetinde kaldıktan sonra Çariçe Katerina döneminde önce özerklik verilerek Kırım Hanlığına bırakılmış daha sonra da 1783 yılında Rusya tarafından ilhak edilmiştir. 1954

yılında Ukrayna'nın Rusya'ya katılmasının 300 yılı anısına aslen Ukraynalı olan Kruşçev tarafından Ukrayna'ya hediye edilen Kırım, Sovyetler Birliği döneminde Karadeniz Filosunun ana deniz üssü olmuştur.

Sovyetler Birliği döneminde Kırım'ın Ukrayna'ya ait olması bir sorun teşkil etmezken 1991 yılında Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasıyla Rusya ve Ukrayna arasında Karadeniz filosunun paylaşımı ve Kırımdaki ana deniz üssünün kullanımı tartışmalara yol açmıştır. Önce her iki ülke de Karadeniz filosunun kendisine ait olduğu kararını parlamentolarında onaylarken 1997 yılında Sivastopol üssünü 20 yıllığına iki ülkenin ortak kullanımına açan ve iki ülke arasında dostluk-iş birliği içeren anlaşmanın imzalanmasıyla sorun bir süreliğine rafa kaldırılmış oldu. Bu anlaşma aynı zamanda Karadeniz Filosunun iki ülke arasında yaklaşık %82 oranında Rusya'ya ve %18 oranında Ukrayna'ya paylaşımını da içermekte olup zaten yeterince eski ve hantal durumda olan Rus donanmasının nicelik bakımından da azalması bölgede önde gelen deniz gücü olan Rusya'nın gücünü daha da azaltmış ve Karadeniz'de bir deniz gücü boşluğu meydana gelmiştir.

Batı ile Rusya arasına sıkışıp kalmış Ukrayna, bir yarısı Sovyet kardeşliği dolayısıyla Rusya yanlısı politikaları destekleyen diğer yarısı batı ile entegrasyonu savunarak Rusya'dan kopuşu ve tam bağımsızlığı destekleyen nüfusunun yansımaları olarak bir dönem Rus yanlısı politikalar izleyen politikacılar tarafından diğer dönem Batı yanlısı politikalar izleyen politikacılar tarafından yönetilmiştir. Birbirine çok yakın oy oranına sahip olunmasından dolayı seçimlerin güvenilirliği sorgulanmış ve ülkede sık sık protestolar düzenlenmiştir. 2004 yılı sonunda tarihe Turuncu Devrim adıyla geçen protestolar bunun en belirgin yansımasıdır. Öte yandan 2010 yılında iktidara gelen Rus yanlısı Yanukoviç yönetiminin Avrupa Birliği Ortaklık Anlaşmasını askıya almasının ardından batı yanlısı halk iktidarın bu kararını protesto etmiş ve yine tarihe geçen ve “Meydan Olayları” olarak adlandırılan protestolar sivil halk ile güvenlik kuvvetlerinin çatışmasına dönüşmüştür. Bu çatışmalar sonrası başkent Kiev'de iktidar değişmiş ancak Rus nüfusun çoğunlukta olduğu Kırım yarımadasında silahlanmış sivil güçler devlet binalarını ele geçirerek Kırım'ın Ukrayna'dan ayrılıp bağımsızlığını

kazanmasının yolunu açmışlardır. Bu olayların hemen akabinde ise Kırımlı liderlerle Moskova arasında imzalanan bir anlaşma ile Kırım Rusya Federasyonu'na dahil edilmiştir. Uluslararası hukuka aykırı bulunan bu olay Batı tarafından ilhak olarak tanımlanmıştır. Rusya ise Kırım'ın ilhakı ile Karadeniz'in kalbine yerleşmiş deniz gücünü artırarak jeopolitik hedefleri doğrultusunda ilerlemeye devam etmiştir.

Kırım sorunu esasında Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılması ile gündeme gelmiştir. Ruslar tarafından uzun yıllardır uygulanan nüfus politikaları sonucunda Kırım yarımadasının demografik yapısı Rusya lehinde değişmiştir. Kırım'ın Khuruschev tarafından Ukrayna'ya hediye edilişinin hemen ardından itirazlar gelmiş olmakla beraber 1992 yılında Kırım'ın Ukrayna'dan ayrılıp Rusya Federasyonu'na bağlanması fikri sıklıkla dile getirilmeye başlanmıştır. Ancak Temmuz 1992 yılında Rusya ve Ukrayna parlamentolarında Kırım'ın ekonomik ve kültürel özerklikle Ukrayna'ya bağlı kalmasına karar verilmiştir. Öte yandan Kırım'da bulunan Tatar nüfus, uygulanan politikalarla ve son olarak Rusya tarafından ilhakıyla beraber göçe zorlanmış ve sayıları gün be gün azaltılmıştır.

Rusya, Karadeniz filosunu modernize programını da hızla uygulamaya koyulmuş, Suriye kriziyle yerleştiği Akdeniz'de Kırım sayesinde daha hızlı ve etkin harekât gücüne sahip olmuştur. Bunun yanında, Rusya hem Suriye'deki deniz üssü hem de Kırım'daki üssünde A2/AD denilen “Geçiş Kapatma/Alan Hakimiyeti” stratejisiyle deniz güvenliğini ve bulunduğu bölgedeki hakimiyetini sağlamaya çalışmaktadır.

Başkent Kiev'de Meydan Olaylarının yaşandığı sırada Donbass bölgesindeki Rus yanlısı ayrılıkçı güçler Ukrayna silahlı güçlerine saldırdılar ve tıpkı Kırım'da olduğu gibi sözde halk oylaması yaparak bağımsızlıklarını ilan ettiler. Bu olaylar sonunda Donetsk Halk Cumhuriyeti ve Lugansk Halk Cumhuriyeti adında iki ayrı yönetim oluştu. Donbass bölgesi gerek yer altı kaynakları gerekse yoğun endüstrisi bakımından Ukrayna'nın ekonomik gücü olan bölgedir. Sovyetler Birliği döneminde yapılan “Donbass Rusya'nın Kalbidir” propagandaları da

bölgenin bütün Sovyet coğrafyası içinde bile ne kadar önemli olduğu daha iyi anlatmaktadır. Ukrayna'nın demografik yapısının yanı sıra bir dezavantajı da ekonomisi için hayati öneme sahip böylesine gelişmiş bir endüstri bölgesinin Rusya sınırında bulunmasıdır.

2014 yılında yaşanan bu olayların ardından Ukrayna Batıya bir adım daha yaklaşmış gerek güvenlik gerek ekonomik açıdan Ukrayna için seçilecek tek yolun Batı yolu olduğunu %70'leri geçen Batı yanlısı politikacıların seçimleri kazanmasıyla göstermiştir. Rusya ise Ukrayna'nın Batı ile yaklaşmasını kendi güvenliğine bir tehdit olarak görmekte, Ukrayna'nın toprak bütünlüğüne saldırarak hem cezalandırmakta hem kendisi için stratejik bölgeleri kontrol altına alarak gücünü artırmakta hem de Ukrayna ve Gürcistan gibi diğer ülkelere kendi ekseninden uzaklaşıp Batıyla yaklaşmalarına karşı bir çeşit göz dağı vermektedir.

Eski SSCB ülkesi olan Romanya ve Bulgaristan hem NATO hem de AB üyesi olarak Karadeniz bölgesinde NATO'nun hareket kabiliyeti artırmakta ancak yasal kısıtlamalar nedeniyle Rusya kadar hâkim olmasını mümkün kılamamaktadırlar. Kırım'ın Rusya tarafından ilhakı ve Rusya'nın Kırım'daki askeri varlığını artırıp bölgede "Geçiş Kapatma/Alan Hakimiyeti" stratejisiyle Karadeniz egemenliği kurma planına karşılık Romanya da kendi ülkesi ve Karadeniz kıyılarında benzer hava ve deniz savunma sistemleri kurulmasını teklif etmişse de bu öneri gerçekçi ve uygulanabilir bulunmamıştır.

Diğer yandan, uzun yıllardır bölgenin tek NATO üyesi olan Türkiye, Karadeniz'i bir barış, istikrar, güvenlik, refah ve iş birliği gölüne dönüştürmeyi kendine görev edinmişçesine bölgesel iş birliği ve güvenlik organizasyonlarının kurulmasına öncülük etmekte ve bölge sorunlarını ancak bölge devletlerinin çözebileceği inancıyla bölge dışı aktörleri mümkün olduğunca dışarda tutma politikası uygulamaktadır.

Sovyetler Birliğinin dağılması sonrasında Karadeniz'de oluşan deniz gücü boşluğunu doldurmaya çalışan Türkiye pek çok girişimde bulunarak bölgede

çatışmaları ve bölge dışı aktörlerin güvenlik bahanesiyle bölgeye girmesini önlemeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda bir yandan Montrö Boğazlar Sözleşmesini başarılı bir şekilde uygularken diğer yandan bölgede hem askeri hem ekonomik iş birliğinin tahsisine yönelik adımlar atmaktadır. 1992 yılında Türkiye'nin girişimleriyle bölge ülkelerinin ekonomik iş birliğini, kalkınmalarını ve refahını sağlamaya yönelik kurulan Karadeniz Ekonomik İş Birliği Örgütü ve 2001 yılında bölgesel barışı ve güvenliği sağlamak amacıyla kurulan çok uluslu bir görev grubu olan BLACKSEAFOR yani Karadeniz Donanma İş Birliği Görev Gurubu bu adımların en somut örnekleridir. Karadeniz Ekonomik İş Birliği Örgütü üyeler arasında yaşanmakta olan sorunlara rağmen amacı doğrultusunda çalışmalarına devam etse de Avrupa Birliğinin bölgeye dahil olması ve Batı ile entegrasyonun bölge devletlerinin ilgisini daha çok çekmesi nedeniyle popülerliğini yitirmiştir. Diğer taraftan, Gürcistan savaşı gibi bölgede sıcak çatışmaların yaşandığı bir dönemde bile BLACKSEAFOR görev grubunun tatbikatlarını Rusya ve Gürcistan dahil tüm üyeleri kapsayacak şekilde gerçekleştirmesi bölgede iş birliği potansiyelinin de yüksek olduğunun somut göstergesidir.

Türkiye'nin bölge güvenliği sağlamaya yönelik attığı adımların arka planında bölge dışı küresel aktörleri bölgeden uzak tutma ve Karadeniz'i bu küresel güçlerin etkilerini yaymaktan koruyarak Rusya ile çıkabilecek olası çatışmaları önleme fikri açıkça anlaşılmaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, 2004 yılında, yine Türkiye'nin öncülüğünde gerçekleştirilen bir diğer girişim ise Karadeniz Uyum Harekatıdır. Karadeniz Uyum Harekâtı Karadeniz'de terörizmi ve asimetrik tehditleri engellemeyi amaçlayan bir deniz operasyonudur. Türkiye Bölgesel güvenliğin ve sorunların çözümünün bölge devletleri tarafından sağlanması gerektiği konusundaki kararlılığının bir ürünü olan Karadeniz Uyum Harekâtı, NATO'nun Akdeniz'de terörizme karşı mücadele etmek ve deniz güvenliğini sağlamak amacıyla başlattığı Etkin Çaba Harekatı'nın Karadeniz'e genişleme kararını veto etmesiyle doğmuştur. Türkiye'nin bu kararı veto etmesi ve Karadeniz Uyum Harekatı'nı başlatması diplomatik ve askeri bir başarı olarak kaydedilmiştir.

Deniz güvenliğinin sağlanması konusu özellikle 11 Eylül 2001 sonrası terör tehdidine karşı farkındalığın artması ve NATO'nun bölgeye daha çok dahil olma isteği üzerine Karadeniz'de titizlikle ele alınmıştır. Bölgede gerek Sovyetler Birliğinin dağılmasıyla bir güç boşluğunun oluşması gerekse 11 Eylül terör saldırısı sonrasında güvenliğin sağlanmasının devletlerin birinci önceliği haline gelmesi Karadeniz'de deniz güvenliği sorununu gündeme getirmişse de Türkiye bu konuyu bölgesel iş birliğin gelişmesi açısından öncülük ettiği girişimlerle bir fırsata çevirmeyi amaçlamıştır. Bölge güvenliğinin bölgesel iş birliğini teşvik edip artırarak bölge devletlerince sağlanması en sürdürülebilir yol olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bunun sağlanabilmesi için de bölge devletlerinin iş birliği içinde bölgenin deniz güvenliğini sağlamaları gerekmektedir. Çünkü kıyı devletleri için asıl güvenlik denizde başlar. Bir tehdit anakaraya ulaşmadan önce denizde püskürtülmelidir.

Karadeniz'in askeri ve jeopolitik açıdan deniz güvenliğinden bahsederken ekonomik açıdan da enerji güvenliği üzerindeki rolünden bahsetmek gerekmektedir. Enerji arzı ve pazara transferi açısından kilit bir noktada bulunan bu bölge gerek boru hatları gerek tankerli taşıma olmak üzere denizin altından ve üstünden bir enerji koridoru durumundadır. Deniz yolu taşımacılığı, enerjiyi boru hattı ile taşımaktan daha düşük maliyetlerle gerçekleştirilebilmesine rağmen Boğazlardan geçiş kısıtlaması nedeniyle boru hatlarına olan talep artmıştır. Zengin enerji kaynaklarına sahip Hazar havzası ve Rusya, yine zengin bir taleple önemli bir pazar olan Avrupa kıtasına Karadeniz üzerinden ulaştırmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, enerji ticareti açısından da Karadeniz'in deniz güvenliğinin sağlanması büyük önem taşımaktadır. 11 Eylül terör saldırısı sonrası gerek bölge devletleri gerekse pazar ülkeleri Karadeniz üzerindeki enerji koridoru güvenliğine de odaklanmışlardır.

Bu tez çalışması, 11 Eylül sonrası büyük güçlerin ve etnik grupların çıkar çatışması alanına dönen Karadeniz bölgesinde çatışma ihtimaline alternatif olarak iş birliğinin mümkün olup olmadığı ve Türkiye'nin bölgenin deniz güvenliğini

sağlamadaki rolünün ne olduğu sorularından yola çıkarak yapılan bir araştırma sonucunda ortaya çıkmıştır.

Bu tez dönemi boyunca yapılan araştırmalar göstermiştir ki NATO’nun ve AB’nin Rusya’yı çevreleme politikası, Rusya’nın sıcak denizlere inme ve bunu sürdürülebilir kılma gayesi, etnik grupların bağımsızlık mücadelesi ve bölge üzerine çeşitli çıkarları olan küresel güçlerin müdahaleleri olduğu sürece, tarih boyu olduğu gibi, bölgede çatışma ihtimali hep var olacaktır. Ancak, Türkiye’nin de desteklediği üzere, bölge devletlerinin iş birliği içinde sürdürülebilir güvenliği sağlama potansiyeli hala mevcuttur ve çatışma durumuna en iyi alternatiftir. “*Bölgesel Mülkiyet*” (*Regional Ownership*) teorisine göre bulunulan bölgede etki kurmak ve o bölgede hâkim olmak için atılacak ilk adım bölgesel iş birliğinin desteklenmesidir. Karadeniz’de bölge devletlerinin hâkim olabilmesi ve bölge güvenliğinin sağlanabilmesi için de uygulanacak yegâne strateji bölgesel iş birliğinin artması ve artırılmasıdır.

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