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<http://www.springer.com>
<http://www.iospress.nl>



Sub-Series E: Human and Societal Dynamics – Vol. 74
ISSN 1874-6276 (print)
ISSN 1879-8268 (online)

Black Sea Security

International Cooperation and Counter-Trafficking
in the Black Sea Region

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IOS
Press

Amsterdam • Berlin • Tokyo • Washington, DC

Published in cooperation with NATO Public Diplomacy Division

Proceedings of the NATO Advanced Research Workshop on
Security Challenges in the Black Sea Region
Oxford, UK
12-14 June 2006

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ISBN 978-1-60750-636-2 (print)
ISBN 978-1-60750-637-9 (online)
Library of Congress Control Number: 2010936425

Publisher

IOS Press BV
Nieuwe Hemweg 6B
1013 BG Amsterdam
Netherlands
fax: +31 20 687 0019
e-mail: order@iospress.nl

Distributor in the USA and Canada

IOS Press, Inc.
4502 Rachael Manor Drive
Fairfax, VA 22032
USA
fax: +1 703 323 3668
e-mail: iosbooks@iospress.com

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

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Black Sea Security Cooperation

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Preface: Crime and Confrontation in the Black Sea

Dr. W. Duncan WOOD

NATO Workshop Co-Director, and Research Director, Institute for Applied Science

Abstract. This paper gives historical context to the Black Sea security concerns discussed elsewhere in the book. It also explains how this publication fits into a broader public diplomacy effort to restructure international security architecture in response to new post Cold-War and post 9/11 challenges. In particular, it calls for the development of a cohesive thinking capability on international security cooperation issues, as well as more effective cross-cutting working relationships between countries, government agencies and the public and private sectors.

Keywords. byzantines, czars, strategic corridor, energy, trafficking, International Approaches to Nuclear and Radiological Security (IANRS)

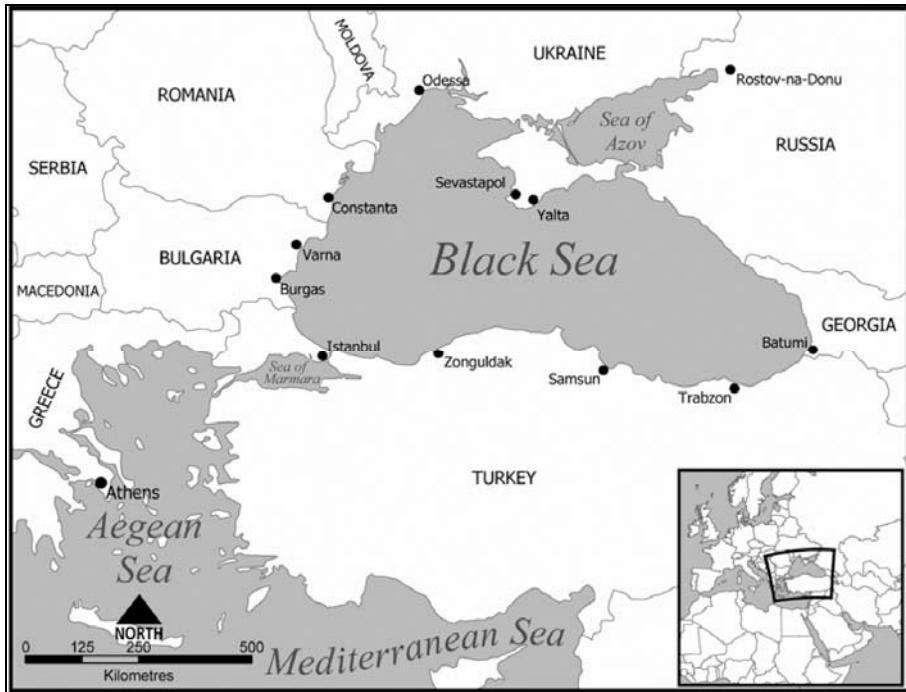
The 2010 decision by Ukraine to extend the Russian fleet's access to the Black Sea port of Sevastopol for 25 years after the lease expires in 2017, in exchange for a 30 percent discount on the price of gas imported from Russia, would not have surprised many of the speakers at this NATO conference on Black Sea security. Similarly, the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia in South Ossetia was no surprise to seasoned Black Sea observers. The conflict came about because of an unfortunate combination of local and international strategic factors that are discussed in detail here.

Georgia sits in the middle of a vital and vulnerable Black Sea strategic corridor between East and West. The Black Sea Region lies at the crossroads of Europe, Eurasia and the Middle East, and as such forms a nexus of different strategic interests that are reflected in the varying geographical and cultural influences that lap the waters of the inland sea.

The complexities that this throws up are enduring, and would have been familiar to those great Black Sea diplomatists, the Byzantines, as they would have been in the Sublime Porte of the Sultans or the kremlins of the Russian czars. Trade mixes with diplomacy, religion, crime and the movement of goods and peoples to create a potentially volatile mix. All contributed to the flare-up in 2008.

Until recently, these problems were masked by the rigidities of the Cold War. With the end of that great stand-off came flux and a new level of insecurity. Or, as Wilfrid Knapp says (Section I) 'a change in the definition of insecurity'. In Chris Donnelly's phrase (Section I) we have moved from a Cold War to a Hot Peace.

How hot this can get was of course demonstrated in 2008. Unfortunately the dispute over South Ossetia is only one of a number of 'frozen conflicts' in the region that are prone to flare up at any time, and as such was foreshadowed here by contributors such as Tedo Japaridze (Section I), Sergei Konoplyov and Adrian Parlog (both Section II).



Map 1: The Black Sea Region

The geopolitical complexities of the Black Sea are enhanced by both trade and smuggling, with all the economic rivalries introduced by the former and the security challenges by the latter. Vast amounts of legal and illegal commodities pass through this strategic corridor. These commodities are the economic and strategic drivers for the entire region and are also the key to Russian and Western considerations.

Oil and Gas produced in Russia, the Caspian Basin and the Middle East transit through the Black Sea states on the way to Europe and the USA (see Map 2, Section II). Approximately 80% of Russian gas supplied to Europe goes by pipeline across nearby Ukraine, and Moldova. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline carries approximately one million barrels per day, (roughly 2.5% of all oil shipments in the world) from the Caspian through Azerbaijan and Georgia to the Mediterranean. Although Georgia earns significant revenue from the pipeline, being a transit state also creates massive external pressures due to disputes between producer and consumer states – as Ukraine learned when Gazprom switched off the gas to Ukraine in 2006, and as Georgia just experienced with Russia seizing control of the Black Sea port of Poti and launching air attacks near the pipeline.

Ilicit trade is a major problem in the region, as is discussed here by Michael McKay, Vladimir Fenopetov, Snejana Nenova and Ivan Gorinov among others. The Black Sea region sits astride the two major drug smuggling routes to Europe from Afghanistan, which produces 89% of the world's heroin supply of 400 tons per annum: the southern route carries 170 tons per year and the northern route carries 80 tons per year. In addition to the East-West drugs traffic, there is also significant West to East trafficking through the Black Sea of the chemicals needed to manufacture heroin on a large scale.

As well as drugs, the Black Sea corridor is also a major channel for arms and nuclear material smuggling. In nearby Moldova, the breakaway region of Transnistria funds itself through smuggling former Soviet munitions stockpiles left behind in the region. Another legacy of the Former Soviet Union is the large amount of unsecured radioactive material in the Black Sea states. Besides nuclear material at bases and research reactors, over 1,000 Radio-Isotope Thermoelectric Generators were deployed by the Soviet Union as tracking beacons for aircraft. Although the IAEA is working to recover these 'orphan sources' many are still unaccounted for, and illicit radioactive trafficking poses a big problem for the region; witness the unsolved theft of two highly dangerous cesium chloride sources from Bulgaria in 2002 referred to by Ivan Gorinov (Section IV), and the fact that Russia reported over 1,000 radiological border alarms in 2004.

So what's the solution? Well, there are some grounds for optimism. The ending of the Cold War may have thrown up new problems, but it also creates scope for co-operation between the states of the region and their neighbors. Illegal trade, especially when used to finance terrorism, benefits nobody in the long run, and the economic fruits of legal trade can best be harvested within a framework of peace and stability.

This points to the value of formal structures to facilitate regional co-operation, and indeed some of these exist already, for example the Organization for Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) described by Ambassador Tedo Japaridze (Section I), the Black Sea Forum (which is a Romanian initiative to enable annual presidential-level summits and cooperation meetings on a rotating basis) identified by Dr. Sergei Konoplyov (Section II), and the South East European Cooperation Initiative (SECI) described by Snejana Nenova (Section III).

Adrian Parlog (Section II), Vladimir Fenopetov, Lyubomir Tokar (both Section III), Ivan Gorinov, John Hnatio and Andre Hollis (Section IV) all discuss how regional co-operation can be improved and built upon, with input from all the states in the region via entities like BSEC and SECI, as well as outside international bodies such as the European Union, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and NATO.

Section V provides a political perspective on the 2008 South Ossetian conflict. The Appendix contains the BSEC Charter in full.

Purpose and Outcome

This book expands on the proceedings and subsequent contributions resulting from a workshop on Black Sea Security cooperation held by NATO at Oxford University in 2006. The book and the workshop form part of an ongoing international cooperation initiative which was launched in 2002 at the International Approaches to Nuclear and Radiological Security (IANRS) talks sponsored by the US and Russian governments and the Kurchatov Institute in Moscow.

What we seek from this workshop, and more generally from the international cooperation initiative, is the development of a cohesive thinking capability on international security cooperation issues, as well as more effective cross-cutting working relationships between countries, government agencies and the public and private sectors.

With these objectives in mind, the workshop brought together key government and private sector stakeholders in the region in order to:

1. Highlight the principal political, economic and security challenges facing the Black Sea with regard to energy supply, unresolved regional conflicts and illicit trafficking;
2. Focus on the steps needed to enhance international cooperation to counter illicit trafficking in the region, including trafficking in WMD materials.

At a public diplomacy level, the workshop provided a high-level forum in a neutral academic setting for ongoing cross-cutting discussions about Black Sea Security between representatives from fourteen NATO, Partner and other countries, as well as key international and regional organizations including the UN, the Organization for Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), and the South-East European Cooperative Initiative – the SECI Regional Center for Combating Trans-Border Crime. The interdisciplinary approach of the event was also reflected in the range of entities represented at the Oxford conference, including academia, defense, finance, intelligence, law-enforcement, nuclear regulatory authorities and the private sector.

The workshop resulted in significant funds being made available for Black Sea counter-trafficking cooperation activities.

As mentioned above this NATO Science for Peace Black Sea Security workshop is part of an ongoing program of international security cooperation activities coordinated by the Trilateral Group and the Institute for Applied Science. The program began with the 2002 International Approaches to Nuclear and Radiological Security talks (IANRS) in London which was co-hosted by the US Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and the Russian Federation's Ministry of Atomic Energy (MinAtom) and the Kurchatov Institute¹.

The IANRS working groups have subsequently convened under NATO auspices, holding Advanced Research Workshops on: Emerging Challenges to Energy Security; Illicit Trafficking; Radiological Security; and Improvised Explosive Devices. At the NATO workshops on Energy Security and on Illicit Trafficking, the working group specifically recommended holding a follow-on regional workshop on enhancing security and counter trafficking cooperation in the Black Sea.

The Co-Directors for the Black Sea Security Cooperation Workshop are from Georgia – Ambassador Tedo Japaridze, Secretary General of the Organization for Black Sea Economic Cooperation (2005-2006), and from the USA – John Wood, Chairman, Trilateral Group and Dr. W. Duncan Wood, Research Director for the Institute for Applied Science².

Trilateral Group organized the conference, with additional assistance from the Harvard University Black Sea Security Program³ and the Oxford University South East European Studies Program⁴, and also from Tetra Tech EC, Inc., a leading provider of radiological monitoring and border control solutions⁵.

¹ http://www.iapscience.com/about_IANRS.php.

² <http://www.iapscience.com>

³ <http://harvard-bssp.org/about/>

⁴ <http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/esc/southeasteur.shtml>

⁵ <http://www.tteci.com/programsframes.html>

Goals of the Workshop

The NATO Black Sea Security Cooperation workshop sought to review the challenges to security, political stability and economic prosperity in the Black Sea Region. This was in order to highlight potential flashpoints, and to identify effective responses and encourage international cooperation between Black Sea states.

The discussions covered a wide-range of Black Sea security issues:

- Cooperation in the Black Sea region;
- The balance of power: Euro-Atlantic and Russian security issues;
- Energy security;
- The role of regional organizations;
- Counter trafficking requirements and shortfalls;
- The impact of Afghan opium smuggling on the Black Sea region;
- Prospects for improving international strategic and technical cooperation in the region.