



THE MILITARY INSTRUMENT OF POWER IN THE 21ST CENTURY – THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE MILITARY STRATEGY OF THE STATES IN THE WIDER BLACK SEA REGION –

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A nation's power to impose its will and to achieve its national objectives emanates from its instruments of national power. Today, the instruments of national power include diplomacy, information, military, and economy, collectively identified by the acronym DIME. A nation does not necessarily have to be superior in each element of the DIME to achieve its national goals and interests. However, it has to be adept in managing each element of national power synergistically in order to achieve its desired results. The military element of national power represents the military might of a nation. Referred to as a "hard power" due to its kinetic nature, the military component of DIME might appear to be a measure of last resort. This is not always the case, however, as the credible threat of hard power alone in combination with other elements of DIME (sometimes known as "smart power") can often allow a nation to achieve its interests.

The armed conflict in Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea, the changes in the relations between major global and regional actors, the persistence of frozen conflicts in the Republic of Moldova and Georgia and the difficult path of state consolidation and economic development in some of the Black Sea states – all require a much greater attention of the international community to the region, which changes almost everything about using the instruments of power and of course the strategy regarding the Black Sea region.

Keywords: strategy; power; diplomacy; information; Black Sea;



INTRODUCTION

Taking into account the role it plays in the social life, power is that component without which there can be no orderly human activity, because power is what establishes the goals of human activity, how and by what means they will be achieved, and the strategy according to which action is taken to meet them. In this regard, power is what contributes to the manifestation of each member of society by organising all social actions, while it also imposes the social order, which, in turn, generates power.

The best known and simplest definition of the concept of power is the relational definition, which belongs to the American political scientist Robert Dahl. According to him, “*power is an asymmetrical relationship between two subjects, where power is the ability of A (the holder of power) to determine B (the subject of power) to do what B would not do if there were no intervention by A*” (Chițu, 2018).

The national security of a European state is in close interdependence with regional and global security, and, under such circumstances, any approach to this issue can only be taken in the context in which it is seen as part of the European and Euro-Atlantic security systems.

Today, more than ever, security is perceived as a dynamic process that requires constant consideration of various types of external threats: terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organised crime, illegal migration, border insecurity, state entities or unconsolidated or democratically deficient states, ethnic and religious conflicts, and more. The security strategy responds to the need and obligation of legitimate protection against risks and threats that endanger human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the foundations of the existence of states, and focuses, with priority, on areas and activities dedicated to the rule of law, public safety and security, and national defence.

Military power, in the context of the new zonal, regional and global security environment as well as of the diversification of security

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threats, must be mainly focused on fulfilling its fundamental mission of defending interests, according to constitutional democracy and civil democratic control over the armed forces. At the same time, it must be doctrinally, structurally, operationally and from the point of view of combat instruments adapted to the new requirements specific to modern armies, in order to be able to meet the commitments deriving from treaties and alliances.

THE WIDER BLACK SEA REGION GEOSTRATEGIC PROFILE

The *Wider Black Sea Region (WBSR)* represents, according to the definition provided by the European Commission, a distinct area composed of 10 states (*figure no. 1*): six coastal states – Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Georgia and Turkey – and four states – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Republic of Moldova and Greece –, whose history, proximity and close relations with the Black Sea Basin recommend them as important actors in the region.

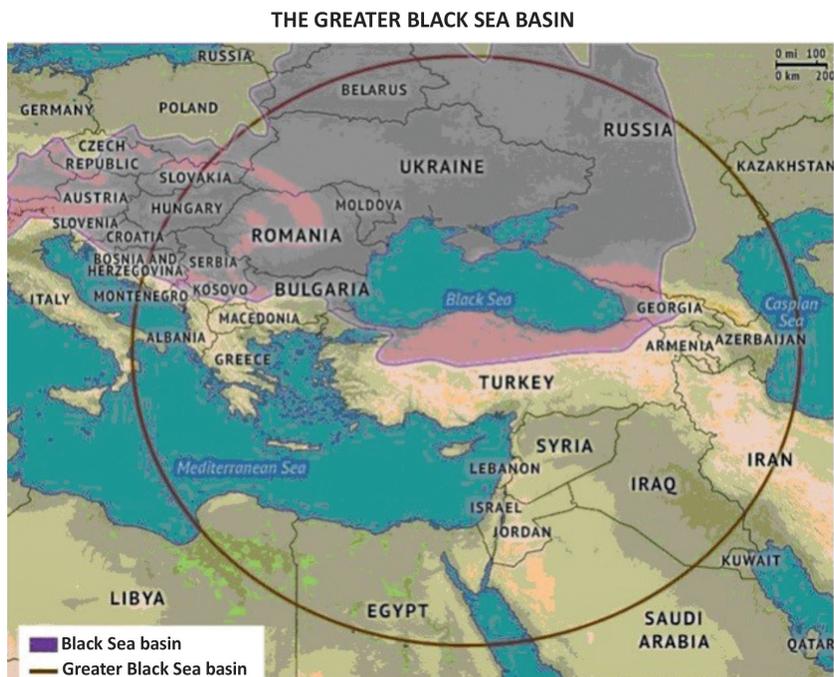


Figure no 1: Wider Black Sea Area (Pop, Manoleli, 2007, p. 9)

In this context, the European definition of the region overlaps, to a large extent, the concept of Wider Black Sea Region promoted by NATO in its relations with the allies and partners in the area (Pop, Manoleli, Ib.).

Security in the Wider Black Sea Region cannot be analysed without studying the influence of military power, the economic aspects and mainly the use of power to dominate energy resources, power projection, alliances formed to impose their own interests.

In the presented material, we intend to analyse the military instrument of power, its importance in the study of the geopolitical implications of the Black Sea Area, a sensitive area in terms of latent or apparently frozen conflicts. We used as a method the historical research of certain conflicts and how the military instrument of power decisively influenced the rise of the great nations representing the important geostrategical players in the region.

THE MILITARY INSTRUMENT OF POWER IN THE 21st CENTURY

Instruments of national power usually consist of concrete sources of power or a set of sources of power that can be used to promote and defend the national interests of a state. Their main feature is that they are malleable and have a high degree of adaptability to the changes that may occur in the international security environment or even in the internal environment of a particular state. Moreover, their structure and operationalisation depend on the form of leadership of the respective state, as well as on the general political line adopted at a certain moment. Basically, *the instruments of national power are “tangible sources that can be shaped, modified, depending on the strategic situation of the domestic and international environment, the national interests and objectives of the state at a given time and the general policy imposed by the national leadership on the state”* (Frunzeti, 2009, p. 51). At the same time, we should not omit that they are also determined by the level of power of the respective state. Their degree of flexibility, the possibilities of operationalisation depend on the main factors that must be taken into account when we intend to analyse the power of a state in a regional and international context (quantitative and qualitative factors). Similar to national interests, perceptions of power instruments may vary, but in general



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The military instrument of power can be considered not only the most effective of them but also the most expensive. It usually fulfils the role of deterring a possible military attack as well as that of carrying out armed combat actions to promote the vital national interests of a state. The military power of a state is difficult to assess because we have to take into account both quantitative factors (number of soldiers, equipment) and qualitative factors (level of training, degree of applicability of modern technologies).

most authors agree that states have four major instruments of power: *diplomatic, informational, military, and economic.*

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Military interventions are not conducted on the basis of the desire to conquer, but on the basis of the desire to promote and defend

national interests. Moreover, given the global nature of security risks and threats, such as international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, illegal migration or organised crime, they need an integrated approach that is the sine qua non of promoting and defending vital national interests. On the other hand, the deterrent potential of the military instrument for the purpose mentioned above should not be disregarded. Military exercises, forward presence or patrol missions have a clear contribution to the pursuit of national interests. Along with the military instrument, the diplomatic, informational and economic instruments of power are not used independently of each other, but in parallel or even in conjunction, supporting each other, in a unitary conception of the international environment, of the position of the state in the international arena, the level of power that it owns, and the national interests it pursues. Moreover, the proportion in which these instruments are used may differ depending on the power sources of the state or depending on the strategic objectives it sets because this is the essence of power instruments: they are flexible, adaptable power sources to the international context and to national interests. In addition, another feature of them is that they are used not only by states, but also by other non-state international actors that have developed on the international stage. In this case, we are talking primarily about intergovernmental organisations, but also about transnational corporations (they can use the economic instrument in particular). At the same time, we consider useful for our analysis another perspective on the concept of instrument of power, seen as a means by which power is exercised by the government representatives. Parliament, the government, the military, the church, civil society organisations and the media become, from this point of view, instruments of the power of a state. We can consider this vision as an institutional one, which emphasises how each institution that can exercise power contributes to the pursuit and promotion of national interests.

Humanity mainly works on land, but everything that happens in the air or at sea is a supporting element in shaping military actions, which is why we will analyse the *theory of maritime power* (Alfred T. Mahan) and the *theory of air power* (Alexander de Seversky) in order to highlight the importance of the military instrument of power in imposing the will of a state.



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MARITIME POWER THEORY

Admiral Alfred Mahan (1840-1914) and President F.D. Roosevelt (1882-1945) are among the greatest figures in American geopolitics. Alfred Mahan was an author who developed his work in the strategic terms that the United States of America so desperately needed at the time, and President Roosevelt ensured that many of the American thinker's ideas were put into practice. The purchase of the Panama Canal in 1903 and its actual opening in 1914, an action initiated by the American President, began with Mahan's assessment (Davies, 2013).

Mahan's work could be characterised as a plea for the construction of a strong naval fleet, indispensable to the new US power status. President Roosevelt was one of those who put this idea into practice and, between 1907 and 1909, he sent the new American fleet around the world as a symbol of the power of the United States of America.

Alfred Mahan was also a professor at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, where he wrote his major work, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, published in 1890. The volume is a monographic look at the role played by the naval force, between 1660-1783, in the rise of Great Britain. Three years later, Mahan published another monograph, entitled *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire*, which traced the evolution of the French fleet between 1793-1812.

The American author pointed out that the influence of maritime power in the history of various countries and in their prosperity had been acknowledged, but it had been invoked in such a general way that it made no effective contribution to clarifying the influence of its manifestation. *"It is easy to say in a general way that the use and control of the sea are and have always been an important factor in human history. It is much more difficult to look for and show precisely and exactly its importance in a given situation"* (Century Magazine, 1911).

Mahan noticed that the events in which maritime power played a decisive role were treated and interpreted without taking into account this very influence. The author quotes two famous military confrontations: that between Hannibal and Scipio the African, which was to determine the fate of Rome, as well as another historical route to Carthage, and that between Napoleon Bonaparte and the European

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anti-Napoleonic coalition led by the Duke of Wellington, in Waterloo. Both events are strikingly similar, overlooked by historians. In both cases, “*victory was decided by control of the sea*”. Roman control of the sea forced Hannibal to resort to the long march through Gaul, during which more than half of his troops were scattered.

The Carthaginian General could not bring the troops stationed in Spain directly to Italy – as the Romans did, because the roads were controlled by the Romans. The final battle of Metaurus was decided both by the internal positions occupied by the Roman army in relation to the Carthaginian forces and, above all, by the delay with which Hannibal’s brother arrived with reinforcements. The same cause – the lack of control over the sea – twice disadvantaged the Carthaginians: first, Hannibal’s troops were halved at the gates of Rome; second, the reinforcements arrived late. Thus, the two Carthaginian armies were at the decisive moment separated throughout Italy.

From another perspective, it is important to point out Mahan’s idea that power, in order to be effective, must be accompanied by the ability to project it. Even if the American author limits this capacity only to the naval instrument, the idea as such is an essential element of any modern geopolitical approach. Later, other authors, also from the American space, will talk about the air power and even about the capacity of the United States of America to control the cosmic space, a kind of “*maritime space of the 21st century*”. The instruments employed by a country to project its power are and must be different from age to age. However, the ability to project power with the right means for one stage or another remains constant. Mahan’s contribution is that he noticed, earlier than others, the potential of power that the maritime fleet represented for America and that he stated the requirement of its construction in clear, even imperative words.

*In 1942,
Alexander
de Seversky
published A
Victory through
Air Power,
in which he
criticised
the Allied
underestimation
of aviation as an
indispensable
tool in modern
warfare and
without which
no decisive
victory could
be achieved.
Modern
strategy cannot
be conceived
without modern
aviation.*

AIR POWER THEORY

Born in Russia, Alexander de Seversky (1894-1974) served in the Russian Navy in the First World War. He had a mission in the United States of America in 1918 and sought asylum in that country, where he settled permanently. He received American citizenship in 1927.

In 1942, Alexander de Seversky published *A Victory through Air Power*, in which he criticised the Allied underestimation of aviation



Currently, the security situation in the Black Sea basin and the Caucasus area is characterised, on the one hand, by a process of reaffirming the regional security architecture, as part of the Euro-Atlantic one and, on the other hand, by the existence of a potential for conflict, determined by the maintenance of “frozen conflicts” between or within the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as by the amplification of asymmetric threats, illegal drug and human trafficking, the phenomenon of migration and terrorism.

as an indispensable tool in modern warfare and without which no decisive victory could be achieved. Modern strategy cannot be conceived without modern aviation. In 1950 he published *Air Power: Key to Survival*, in which he tried to show that air power had a clear superiority over land and sea power and in which he suggested that the United States of America should develop its air capabilities and give up its overseas naval bases, very expensive, or reduce their number. Alexander de Seversky uses the notion of *air domination area* and considers that the air domination areas of the two superpowers of the moment overlapped the northern polar zone; this area was seen by the author as the “*decision area*” (Silsbee, 1942). Experts consider that the efforts made by the USA and former Soviet Union for the air control of this area also started from Seversky’s studies and conclusions. Several analysts believe that Seversky’s assessments of the development of a strong air force are all the more current as, due to the development and diversification of communications, the USA can no longer benefit from the once important advantage of natural semi-isolation. In this context, the air force is an indispensable means of self-protection and the projection of power in the world.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE MILITARY STRATEGY OF THE STATES IN THE WIDER BLACK SEA REGION

The Black Sea, under the influence of political and military events, has become an intersection of geopolitical and geo-economic borders. Global geopolitical developments have been driven by the advance of the Euro-Atlantic border into Central Asia. Currently, the security situation in the Black Sea basin and the Caucasus area is characterised, on the one hand, by a process of reaffirming the regional security architecture, as part of the Euro-Atlantic one and, on the other hand, by the existence of a potential for conflict, determined by the maintenance of “*frozen conflicts*” between or within the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as by the amplification of asymmetric threats, illegal drug and human trafficking, the phenomenon of migration and terrorism.

The interest of the countries bordering the Black Sea that are part of NATO or that have aspirations of membership in ensuring security in this region coincides with the objectives of the Alliance.

One of the main mechanisms for guaranteeing peace in this area is the internationalisation of the security process in the region. It entails the political and military presence of NATO and allied states, for an efficient management of the asymmetric threats that manifest in the Black Sea area. By establishing US or Alliance bases on the territories of the new member states, partnership actions such as NATO-Russia and NATO-Ukraine councils, as well as by the direct involvement of the European Union and other security organisations and bodies, it is expected to defuse or alleviate these pressures and create conditions for strengthening a stable and long-lasting security environment.

The propulsion of the Black Sea basin and its adjacent area in terms of strategic concerns is not only a requirement of current global interest but also a condition for the positive evolution of the political situation, a guarantee of regional and global stability and security.

After 1991, six states have direct access to the Black Sea: Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Georgia. For four of them – Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria and Georgia – it is the only maritime access. There are also European countries – Austria, Slovakia and Hungary, which are especially interested in the basin as they have maritime access through the Danube. The Republic of Moldova, through the maritime Danube, which borders on a length of 1.8 km, is also considered a country bordering the Black Sea. Through the Danube, which has the status of an international waterway, Germany, Serbia and Croatia also have access to the Black Sea. Belarus has access to the Black Sea through the Dnieper.

Today, the political map of the Black Sea area is influenced by a former superpower, Russia, and two regional powers, Ukraine and Turkey. As the successor to the USSR, Russia is still a major factor in the Black Sea region. The Black Sea is a region of convergence of the interests of the great actors on the international scene, and the positions of smaller actors must be permanently related to these interests. The Black Sea region is very important for both Europe and the United States of America, being a bridge in the supply of energy between west and east, but also a barrier against transnational threats (Rumer et al., 2016, p. 1).

The Montreux Convention, concluded in 1936, restored Turkey's full sovereignty over the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits and allowed



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The Black Sea unites and separates two major religions, two major cultures and two major mentalities: the Orthodox North (Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, partly Georgia) and the Islamic South (Turkey and part of the Caucasus).

their remilitarisation. This act was signed by Turkey, Great Britain, France, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Yugoslavia, Australia and Japan. The Convention regulates the access of military and commercial vessels, in times of peace and war, to the Black Sea. Beyond the apparent significance of the Montreux Convention for Turkey's security, the Soviet benefit was absolutely obvious. The new convention ensured, with Turkish goodwill, the naval domination of the Soviet Union in the Black Sea and the almost unrestricted possibility of this power to operate with its fleet in the Mediterranean.

The Black Sea is a real strategic link in the Eurasian space. In addition to the three major strategic corridors that, in a way, are also related to the Black Sea, there are also corridors in the Asian area, such as: the strategic energy corridor (Caucasus, Caspian Sea, Central Asia); the strategic corridor (space) of Southwest Asia (Black Sea, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Persian Gulf, through the Mesopotamian Plain); the strategic corridor (space) Don, Volga, Western Siberia; the Ukrainian-Polish strategic corridor (Văduva, 2015, p. 16). Moreover, the Black Sea unites and separates two major religions, two major cultures and two major mentalities: the Orthodox North (Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, partly Georgia) and the Islamic South (Turkey and part of the Caucasus). The most important of the geostrategic determinations that will reconfigure the Black Sea area, as an area of strategic synergy, are the following:

- the area east of the Black Sea – Caucasus, Caspian Sea, Central Asia – is very active and corresponds to a significant section of the old silk road, which expresses a historical continuity;
- the Black Sea region is located in an area of delineation, confluence and confrontation, which results in the special importance of the evolution of the Eurasian security system, in an area of ambiguity and bifurcation;
- it is adjacent to the Islamic corridor;
- it is located in the immediate vicinity of the old disturbing foyer (from Antiquity and the Middle Ages), currently activated by drug trafficking, illegal migration and the battle for Caspian resources and their transport;
- it is in the vicinity of chronic conflict areas, with many problems.

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Romania, a NATO member country, has a major advantage considering the presence, on its territory, of some elements of the missile defence system, some bases where NATO forces are deployed, and the benefits given by the Danube River, the control of the mouths of the river, one of the key elements of the Black Sea. Romania's strategy for ensuring security in this quite volatile area is represented by the strategic partnerships.

The Russian Federation is the largest state bordering the Black Sea and possessing an appreciable conventional and nuclear arsenal. The Black Sea Fleet, deployed mainly in the Crimean Peninsula, in the Sevastopol naval base as well as in the east, in the Novorossiysk naval base, is the main vector of military influence. This state has made special efforts to attract other states, especially China and India, to create an anti-NATO bloc. Simultaneously with these measures, it has taken action to impose “*energy diplomacy*”, which aims to provide cheap energy to allied states and expensive energy to opponents, and to control the energy sources and its transport routes to Europe. It has also encouraged and even actively supported separatist groups operating in the region. The primary geostrategic interest is the connection and the projection of power on the Arctic Ocean-Baltic Sea-Black Sea-Mediterranean Sea axis.

Bulgaria, although a NATO member country, oscillates between the mirage of opportunities provided by EU and NATO membership and the tradition of historical relations with Russia. Even if it has military bases where NATO troops, especially US ones, are stationed, and has encouraged the actions of GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova), it has also provided advantageous facilities to the Russian companies Gazprom and Lukoil, as well as other Russian companies operating in the energy field, including nuclear. Together with Romania, it constitutes the eastern border of the EU.

Turkey, a geopolitical pivotal NATO member state, controls the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits, which manage the access from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea and the world's seas.



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Ukraine is another geopolitical pivotal state in the Wider Black Sea Region, which is under obvious aggression by Russia after 2014 by annexing Crimea. Ukraine is a torn territory between the Russophile East and the nationalist West. By annexing Crimea, Russia gained a true strategic checkpoint of the entire WBSR. The country is in permanent redefinition, it is crushed by civil conflicts, so we cannot say that it has a coherent strategy related to belonging to European values or to continuing its existence under the Russian umbrella.

It is increasingly influential in the Middle East and the South Caucasus. It is increasingly cooperating with Russia both in the military field through the acquisition of missile systems and in the energy field, through the construction of the Russian *Turkish Stream* and *Blue Stream* gas pipelines by Gazprom and the Akkuyuk nuclear power plant by the Russian company Rosatom.

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Georgia and Moldova are states that are geopolitically similar in some respects. The size of the two states is relatively small, with a population of five to seven million, and, on their territory, there are "frozen conflicts" – sources of continuing insecurity. Also, both states have complex relations with Russia, have no control over part of their territory and are dependent on Russian energy resources, primarily gas and partly energy (Ib., pp. 70-71).

Armenia is one of the actors in the WBSR, and a strategic partner of Russia. Despite it, Armenia has been abused by its strategic partner, as it has agreed to sell the economy for a low price for oil and gas. For Russia, Armenia is a strategic stake in the fact that it has bought its energy production and transportation infrastructure.

Azerbaijan, the most important energy player in the South Caucasus, is subject, like the others in the region, to the actions of Russia, which has turned its energy policy into an instrument of domestic policy. Through these actions, Azerbaijan is being blackmailed into accepting the price of natural gas and oil imposed by Russia.

There is no unanimously accepted definition of the Black Sea area either in the political or in the scientific environment. The term *wider* is, we can say, recently introduced, and it is used especially related to the area geopolitical and geostrategic projections. Thus, we can say that the Wider Black Sea Region is influenced by other major actors such as the United States of America, the European Union and last but not least China.



CONCLUSIONS

Military power can be considered as a resource of political power or as an instrument that can be latter used in extreme circumstances (there have been many situations in the history of nations when the establishment and continuation of political power was based on the intervention of the military factor).

It should also be mentioned, however, that political power has sometimes become the prerogative of military power, becoming totally subordinated to military strategies.

Although the practice of national and international relations gives us sufficient arguments so that the military power could not be considered the absolute resource of the political one, we find it appropriate to point out that this is the normal trajectory of relations between the two forms of social power, with emphasis on the contribution of military power defending the democratic characteristics of political power.

The Black Sea region is an important area for both Europe and the United States of America, being a bridge between East and West in energy supply, but also a barrier against transnational threats. One of the main mechanisms for guaranteeing peace in this area is the internationalisation of the security process in the region.

It entails the use of the military instrument, of course in close cooperation with the efficient use of the diplomatic one, the political and military presence of NATO and allied states, for an efficient management of the asymmetric threats that manifest in the Black Sea area.

Because of the fact that the Caucasus and Central Asia represent the strategic energy corridor of Eurasia, the Black Sea plays and will continue to play a very important role in the strategy of reconfiguring the Eurasian space, in European and Euro-Atlantic vision.

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In the context of NATO's growing involvement in crisis management beyond the area of responsibility, the Black Sea basin and its adjacent area represent the Alliance's necessary and useful outpost in projecting stability and security throughout the region.

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It is obvious that the strategic value of the WBSA will continue to increase with the awareness of its real importance by all major geopolitical actors with interests in the area, determining the definition and application of policies specific to this area.

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