

REGIONALISM AND SECURITY IN THE WIDER BLACK SEA REGION

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Abstract: *The geopolitical aspect of Europe was radically changed by the end of the “cold war”, the collapse of the global geostrategic balance - because of the end of the bipolar phenomenon, the metamorphosis and the expanding phenomenon of NATO and EU. Therefore, the Black Sea, that used to be a regional area of interests, became a highly strategic space concerning the interests of the global actors: Russia, USA, NATO and EU. The solution to reinforcement security and stability is the cooperation policy, so that each state can have an opinion and in the same time doesn't feel threatened. As a NATO and EU member, Romania is permanently involved in all missions of both organizations, having an important contribution to their fulfillment.*

Key words: *Security, National Security, Regional Security, the Wider Black Sea Region, the Co-operation Policy, BSEC, GUAM, CSI.*

1. REGIONAL SECURITY - A NECESSITY REQUIRED BY MULTIPLE DETERMINATIONS

The concept of “regional security” comes out as a subject of research in the international relations after the Second World War. It is described almost completely by the logic of the Cold War. The accent lays on the military and political issues.

At the beginning of the 90's, the regionalism phenomenon became an important issue, due to the necessity to explain the appearance of a number of organizations, regional agreements and arrangements, immediately after the end of the Cold War [1]. Unlike previous moments, scientific investigations did not generate significant innovations, as the general tendency was to describe in a more substantial and more accurate manner all processes that refer to the term of “region”.

Perhaps nothing could have been done better under the circumstances of the end of the past century and the beginning of the 21st century, a period that allowed simultaneous progress of some events, phenomena or historical processes that will mark for a long time the society becoming, in its regional or

global form [2]. Since the security options and the foreign affairs are not two similar notions, and the security challenges of the main powers can not be transferred on to other regional areas, first we can observe that most states act internationally on the regional level, then second we can observe that if a state is less powerful, militarily or economically, its security options are limited at actions and strategies of a regional level.

At the same time, so far the experience proves that a series of political, economical, security and cultural matters can be better approached and solved in a relatively homogeneous environment, where there is certain cohesion and a common development background. So, the regions can offer the propitious environment to establish some cooperation mechanisms in order to contribute to an international security climate.

Four of the most important global actors (The Federation of the Russian States, USA, NATO and EU) focused their political attention on the wider Black Sea region. The security is mainly dictated by the interests for the energetic resources of the regions (USA, EU), the solution for the “freezing conflicts” (NATO and EU) or the application of the “neighbourhood proximity” strategy by the

view of the global actor role (The Federation of Russia).

The international terrorism is structured in transfrontalier and inefficient network forms with wide operational impact and at the same time it is impossible to apply specific monitoring. This represents a serious threat against security especially in the European side of the euro-atlantic space.

The transborder risks represent at the same time one of the most serious threats against security, especially regarding the European security. The active policies face the new dynamism threats. The absence of permanence in the economic globalization process and in the government, reduces the contribution of the same states to the regional security and also global security, and endangers their own security also.

Therefore, is not only legitimate to study the regions and the regional security situations, but it is essential to understand the character and the dynamics of the security problems in order to reduce the risk of failure in the decisional real process [1].

2. THE OFFICIAL CO-OPERATION AT THE BLACK SEA

The end of the past century and the beginning of the 21th century marked in the Black Sea region the appearance of many international co-operations initiatives, some of these including the whole region, others involving just certain states that were intergovernmental or with non-governmental actors.

For a long time, the Black Sea region was one of the regions for whom the great powers confronted upon; the Black Sea has become the border for the competition between the interest spheres. In the context of the new geopolitical configuration, at least one of the great actors tends to encourage the regional cooperation: the European Union.

From the global security point of view EU wants to include the Russian Federation in the building process of regional stability structures.

The EU, working on the principle that a security area at the new proper borders

provides a “continental safety”¹ initiated a number of projects regarding regional cooperation. This type of cooperation provides stability and progress both nationally and regionally.

NATO can represent another important institution that guarantees the cooperation in this area. Initially, after the end of the confrontation East-West, NATO didn't identify an exact regional role, using the Black Sea region as a logistic space for intervention in Central Asia, South East Europe and Middle Orient; afterwards by the development of the security concept on the long term, the potential development of the regional cooperation under the NATO's umbrella grew up considerably. Alone, it is unlikely or inefficiently in the North Atlantic Alliance to elaborate a policy engagement of the states from the region in the reform process that places the accent upon democracy and good government.

The attraction for the extension process of NATO, including the Membership Action Plan (MAP); it has demonstrated its powers as an internal changing instrument for east european states. This experience can be easily reproduced for the states for the wider Black Sea region.

2.1. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). The Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)² has turned up like a unique and promising model of political and economic multilateral initiatives that have as a purpose the acceleration of economic and social development for the member states (Fig. 1). In this way can be achieved an upper level of integration in the european and global economy, by using the advantages that result from the geographical proximity and from the national economics similarities. Considered

¹ Solana Strategy “A Secure Europe in a Better World” was adopted by the European Council in december 2003 and it represents the first european security strategy.

² BSEC was founded in June 1992 by governments of 11 states: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldavia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. In 2004, the first extension took place and the organization has included another two states: Serbia and Montenegro.

The source: <http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/OCEMN>

unfit for that moment, political or security objectives were not included in this program.

From the point of view of the economic co-operation evolution in the Black Sea region, we can identify many stages, but an important moment in the evolution of the organization was the adoption of the common statement in 2004, regarding the contribution at security and stability in the Black Sea region. In this way, the organization follows the political co-operation direction.

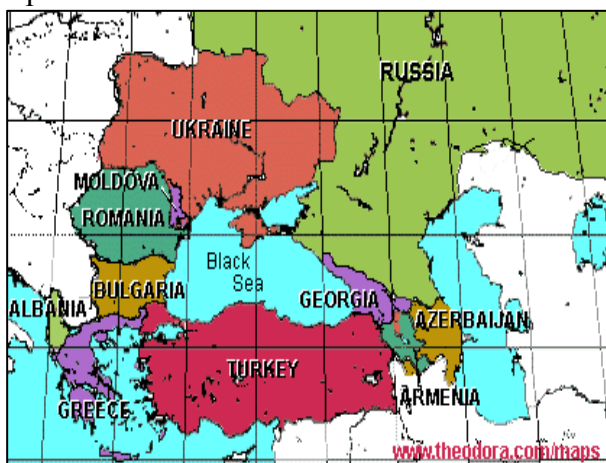


Fig. 1 The BSEC map

In the course of time, the organization's activities included domains that haven't been stipulated in the original concept like: government, institutional reforms and economic reconstruction. These preoccupations are signs of permanent adaptive capacity to the new evolution plan, regionally and internationally. Some regions from the Black Sea area have still serious problems in the security domain, especially in what concerns the dreying conflicts and non-conventional threats.

The reform process of the organization is a necessary condition in order to obtain a pragmatic, flexible and transparent character. In the spirit of there principles, as well as to intesify the co-operation in interest domains for all the states from the Black Sea region BSEC assigned the next direction of action: the reorganization and the reorientation of the activities so that these will be able to responde to the new evolutions from the regional and the international plan; he identification od the priorities of action, the revitalization of some work groups as part of BSEC: the

increasement of actions in order to establish ones parterschip relations with the EU in the favourable context created by the new neighbourhood european policy; the support of the effort od the states from the East Europe and the Caucasians to strenghten the democratic processes and the required reforms to realise the transition to the market economy; the development of BSEC's contribution to the improvement of the security and stability in the Black Sea region, including by attracting the USA, EU and NATO in this actions; the extension of the BSEC's cooperation upon another regional organizations and structures.

Even if the general impression is that that the co-operation in the Black Sea region has extended but not strenghtened, the the wide spectrum of BSEC activities, the mentioned area is approaching gradually to the european criteria of regional co-operation, as a support and precondition to security and prosperity.

2.2. The Organization for Democracy and Economical Development (GUAM). The Organization for Democracy and Economical Development (GUAM)³, was initially created to counterbalance the influence of Russia in the region; after that the activities of the organization served to the development of the reciprocal co-operation in order to fortify the stability and security in Europe. GUAM is used as a support for the following principles: respect of the sovereignty; teritorial integration; nonviolation of the state borders; democracy; sovereignty of the law; protection of the human rights.

The most important event in formation and certification of this group in it's capacity as a regional organization took place in June 2001 when⁴ there were established the co-operation priorities as part of GUAM: to intensify and to extend the comercial-economic relations; to develop the infrastructure of the transport corridor by harmonizing the legislative support

³ GUAM was founded in October 1997 by Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaidjan and Moldavia. The organization included Uzbekistan in 1999, but this state decided to retire 6 years leter. The source: <http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/GUAM>

⁴ The Yalta Chapter was signed by chiefs of GUAM states and established the purposes, the principles and the co-operation domains of the member states.

in this area and the connection of the taxes and custom terms; the fight against international terrorism, organized crime, illegal migration and drugs traffic. Although the organization seems to stagnate for the moment, the last years marked some revitalization signs: The Common Declaration “in the name of democracy, stability and development” that decided that each state member should contribute to the peace and stability support, using the political and military arguments and peace operations; it changed its structure, being created three specific committees (regarding political and judicial matters, economic and commercial issues and scientific, cultural and educational matters); it announced its intention to create the proper peacekeeping forces. In 2006 took place the reaffirmation of the organization on the international level.

The new mission really meant the transformation of the organization in an waiting-room for NATO and EU, all member states admitting that the main objective is the euro-atlantic integration. Even in these conditions, no one of the member states don't want that the organization substitutes the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CSI) and neither to be straightened against this, especially because all four are members of CSI⁵.

The survivor capacity of GUAM is directly proportional with the interest of the USA and EU in the region. GUAM's success is conditioned also by the changing of Russia's negative attitude regarding this regional organization. The Federation of Russia still looks at GUAM as to a threat to its political, economical, and security interests in ex-sovietic area.

The possible creation of a security community system in GUAM region awakened the most anxiety. Russia first has to understand that the organization has a strategic importance for the security of the transport of natural gas and crude oil from the Caspian Sea and Central Asia to the West, as for the

transformation the Black Sea into a stability area: the key to the the future of the organization can be the correlation between this objectives and also a coherent strategy with the purpose to strengthen his international statute.

2.3. The Commonwealth of the Independent States (CSI). The Commonwealth of the Independent States (CSI)⁶ was created in December 1991 on the ruin of the ex-sovietic empire, including 12 from 15 sovietic republics. The confederation wanted to be an instrument of the “civilized divorce” of the ex-sovietic republics, a structure for a free market and unique currency, beside a military co-operation. CSI started under the improvisation sign and afterwards the failure of the alliance was determined by: the absence of any progress in the solution of regional conflicts; the failure of member states in creating a free market area; Kremlin's preoccupation regarding the attempt of the West to counterbalance russian influence in the ex-sovietic area (the extension process of NATO and EU).

The organization made recovery efforts, and any attempt was a real success: the Common Economic Space (Ukraine refused to sign the joined agreements and the final term to begin working was established from 2005 to 2012); the treaty for Collective Security (from a military alliance able to guarantee the peaceful finish of regional conflicts, was limited at some military exercises).

In terms of the new characteristics concerning the security environment from the beginning of the 21st century, we can notice that the tendency of the member states is to orientate to a European and euro-atlantic future. In this way, the ability of Russia to maintain a high cohesion degree in the region raises important question marks. Also this situation is prejudicial to the CSI [3]. Therefore the future of the Community remains uncertain.

⁵ Popa, V., Sarcinchi, A., *The view in the evolution of the international security organizations*, Ed. U.N.Ap., Bucharest, 2007, p. 42

⁶ 11 states signed the establishment agreement at 21 october 1991: Armenia, Azerbaidjan, Belarus, Kazahstan, Kyrgystan, Russia, Tadjikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Georgia, two years later. After 14 years, Turkmenistan, and 1 year later, Georgia, withdraw. The source: <http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/CSI>

3. A REGIONAL SECURITY MODEL

Nowadays, the Black Sea region, due to its position and the extraordinary potential of development, has the chance to play a new role in the European system. There isn't only one organization or one political actor that can solve all the problems in this area. The co-operation policy is the solution to the security and stability so that each state can have an opinion and at the same time not feel threatened.

In the present international context, the region presents a considerable political and academic interest. On one hand this situation can solve the security interdependence from the Black Sea region, and on the other hand can outline the security complex in this area.

Concerning the first aspect, specialists identified some important security characteristics of the region: the foreign politics of Russia in this area, the tensions from Caucasians, the proximity to the Middle East, the oil transportation problem from the Caspian Sea, the new neighbourhood of the EU.

Regarding the official co-operation at the Black Sea, there are many solutions: the increase of the BSEC actions, the development of GUAM's influence or a new structure to improve the connection between the states from this area. But any option that is chosen to confer a common identity for this region should be adopted considering the next 10 priorities set:

1. *The strategic reconsideration of all initiatives not only at the proper area, but taking into account the evolutions from a larger area.* Once the immobility and the inactivity of the institutions reuniting exclusively the states situated next to the Black Sea was observed the solution can not come only from the internationalization of the region.

2. *The specified institutions on the restricted domains of activity must identify, in order to articulate and promote the common interests of states from the wider Black Sea region.* The targets that can't be achieved at dead line must be replaced. Punctual measures like the functional integration of the main

railroad system, the development of the Black Sea ring-shaped highway, building some pipelines to transport the natural gas and oil, the interconnection of the electrical network and communication system or the development of the maritime highways should constitute a good starting point.

3. *The realization of a "precise division of labour" among the regional organizations.* No matter when, the attempt to identify and later to solve the specific and the common interests problems should represent a necessary condition to the positive evolution in the Black Sea region of the political, social and economic aspects.

4. *The preparation of a solution against new threats and natural disasters or disasters produced by man.* The introduction of a solidarity clause for these cases and at the same time the necessity of assistance from western states realised by training first intervention units, can constitute valid methods for an efficient answer.

5. *The reconsideration of negotiation method in all freezing conflicts.* The mistaken principle in keeping that these conflicts are of artificial creation, is not in the interest of a solution to them. A new analysis is necessary, starting with the level of democracy of the local administration, and then with the capitalization of local communities - that can form the base of the civil society. In this way we can obtain the free and qualified expression of options of this population.

6. *The development of a constructive and structural relation between the regional and international actors.* It is vital for the Black Sea regionalism that BSEC and GUAM (which are the most advanced forms of regional co-operation from this area) to develop a constructive relation between them, and international actors such as the EU, that owns the resources and the experience in order to involve in regional projects. Transforming BSEC and GUAM into trustworthy partners will supply a new understanding to the regional concept of the Black Sea in a united and democratic Europe.

7. *The creation of a co-operation process based on the affair interests including the private sector.*

8. *The re-movement of “security dilemma”.* The situation in the wider Black Sea Region is this: Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey are NATO members; Ukraine and Moldavia remain captive of fault between Russia and euro-atlantic community; the whole caucasian area is a fault area between Russia and the Middle East; Georgia, although is economically dependent by Russia, chose to approach NATO; Armenia and Azerbaidjan remaine captive between the economic dependency towards Russia and the negative influence of the islam in the region.

9. *The integration of Russia in the building process of the regional stability structures.* Russia had at the beginning a negative attitude especially regarding GUAM (the only regional organiyation it doesn't belong to), that was percieved as a threat to it's political, economical and security interests from the ex-sovietic area.

10. *Ukraine has to play a significant role in the organization of a new regional order system.* Ukraine used an unjust manner in order to obtain a leading role among regional conveyers of oil. Even Russia developed actively the transport corridors round Ukraine, Kiev owns the control on the energetic European transport route for the West Europe, Unkraine becomes a regularity center of the geo-economic problems.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- From the theoretical point of view, the analysis instrument regarding security problems at the regional level are still insufficiently developed.. However, the theorteical debates like this one should generate working instruments especially fot the decision factors.

- The Wider Black Sea region is space where a regional identity conscience manifests. At a closer look, the region appears more like a homogenous area: almost identical socio-economical structure (corruption, weak democratic institutions, and fragile market economy), same challenges but at different intensity.

- In “the Black Sea equation” two of the aspects are vitall: the energy (the strengthen of the energetic east-west link and the security of this, the ensurance of free acces to the energetic resources of the region, the oppening of the alternative energetic routes).

- Although the interest and the involvement of the important international actors is isgnificant, the Black Sea region is far from solving its problems. The prolonged conflicts and the political tensions apply a supplimentary tension upon the security enviroement.

- It will be very difficult to build a governmental space up the EU's standards without the intesification of the regional cooperation and without the involvement of all parties.

- Regarding the institutionalization of the co-operation al the Black Sea, there are many possibilities: either the increasement of the OCEMN's actions, either an enhacement of of GUAM's influence, or the building of some new structure in order to improve the conections between the states from this area.

- The wider Black Sea region could be a regional complex of security, if, after the identification of the priorities, these will be approaced in an efficient and long termed manner.

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