

The consequences of European strategy on the ongoing processes in the Black Sea region

One of the main strategic priorities of global politics has long been the consolidation of influence over the Eurasian landmass. Control over Europe's intellectual and technological capacity combined with Asia's vast natural resources provides a foundation for global hegemony. In this context, the Black Sea basin and the Caucasus have acquired exceptional significance: influence over these regions serves as one of the shortest and most effective routes toward projecting power across the entire Eurasian continent.

Historically, the Black Sea-Caucasus area has functioned as an interconnected geopolitical space, shaped by dense political, cultural and military interactions. Its multiethnic and multicultural landscape fostered not only conflict but also long-standing traditions of peaceful coexistence an experience that continues to serve as a basis for regional stability today.

This paper examines the key challenges, opportunities and geopolitical processes currently shaping the Black Sea-Caucasus region within the broader dynamics of global and regional transformation.

Keywords: Strategically priority, Regional Stability, Situational alliance, Military-Political aggression, Ideological profile.

Historical Parallels and the Modern context of the Black-Sea Caucasus Region

The region's complex ethnic composition has historically produced both confrontation and cooperation. Georgia and Turkey, for instance transformed centuries of military-political rivalry into a strategic partnership within just a few decades. Their cooperation in the defense sphere, Turkey's economic support for Georgia during the 2008 Russia-Georgia war and Georgia's humanitarian assistance to Turkey after the 2023 earthquake all demonstrate the potential for meaningful regional cooperation. Such interactions help build durable humanitarian, social, cultural and economic foundations for peace.

Turkey-Georgia relations represent a classic case of regional transformation. In 2023, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan described Georgia as a, strategic and irreplaceable partner" (TR Presidency, 2023). Similarly, strong ties between Ukraine and Moldova – despite Russia's persistent divide and rule policies highlight the region's capacity for resilience.

There are also cautious signs of improvement in Armenia-Azerbaijan relations. Yet it must be emphasized that any irreversible movement toward peace requires a firm commitment to the principles of territorial integrity and inviolability of borders.

Despite these positive trends, two major forces currently shape the regional security environment.

- **Russia's aggressive and unprovoked military policy**
- **Turkey's soft-power-driven cultural and geopolitical expansion.**

Both states rely heavily on selective interpretations of historical narratives to legitimize contemporary interests. Moreover, the prospect of a **Russia-Turkey**

Situational alliance introduces a highly unpredictable element into the future of regional and global security. Erdogan's 2022 statement that, regional problems cannot be resolved without Russia," and Putin's remark that, turkey is one of the few states capable of maintaining stable relations with Russia," illustrate the strategic implications of such cooperation. (Joins press Conference, Sochi, 2022)

Strategic Miscalculations in European geopolitics and their Consequences

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the West believed Russia was on a path toward democratic transformation. Former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder captured this sentiment in 2004 when he called Russia „a reliable partner that deserves greater trust.” This widespread optimism significantly reduced Europe's strategic vigilance and contributed to the push for deep political and economic integration with the EU. Since Russia was not viewed as an ideological or military threat and even expressed interest in cooperation with NATO, defense spending declined across Europe.

However, by the late 1990s rising energy prices and the consolidation of former KGB elites drastically reshaped Russia's foreign policy. With Vladimir Putin's rise to power in 2000, restoring soviet-era spheres of influence became a priority. The 2008 war with Georgia and the subsequent loss of Georgian territories were the first tangible manifestation of this shift.

The EU underestimated the geopolitical cost of the war, responding with political statements and the formal Tagliavini Commission report, which assigned responsibility to both sides. For the Kremlin, this signaled that military

aggression would not trigger a strong Western reaction. This miscalculation paved the way for the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

These developments evoke painful historical parallels – particularly the 1938 Munich Agreement, which emboldened aggressors by demonstrating the consequences of appeasement. Although Russia's ability to launch new large-scale wars is currently constrained, a frozen conflict in Ukraine would allow Moscow to rebuild its capabilities and plan future provocations. Meanwhile, pressure on the Baltic States is increasing and Russia continues attempting to expand its influence in the Black Sea region.

Regional security now depends heavily on the outcome of the Russia-Ukraine war and on European unity. That unity, in turn, requires a coherent strategic vision among the United States, NATO and the EU something currently complicated by uncertainties in US policy. The credibility of Western security guarantees has already been weakened by the de facto failure of the Budapest Memorandum.

Given that Eurasia is one of the most contested spaces in global geopolitics, the EU has recognized the stakes. As European commission President Ursula von der Leyen stated in 2022, stability in Eurasia's is the foundation of Europe's stability." The black Sea and the Caucasus thus remain central to the future of geopolitical competition.

Today, the west's key priorities include:

- Strengthening Ukraine's military capabilities.
- Deterring Russian aggression.
- Building a new security architecture for the Black Sea region.

As NATO secretary General Jens Stoltenberg declared at the 2023 Vilnius summit, NATO will not allow the loss of strategic control over the Black Sea region.” Whether EU will act with sufficient unity and resolve remains an open question.

China’s Role and the Nuclear Factor

Despite Russia’s periodic nuclear rhetoric, actual nuclear escalation remains unlikely largely because China-Moscow’s most important strategic partner has a deep interest in preserving global stability. China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated unambiguously in 2023. „ Any use or threat of nuclear weapons in unacceptable. Escalation would severely damage the global economy.

China’s economic model depends on global supply chains and predictable international environments. Russian nuclear escalation would undermine Beijing’s strategic interests, explaining China’s consistently moderate stance. In essence, **China will not permit Russia to destabilize the global system to the point of nuclear confrontation**, as such instability directly threatens China’s long-term economic and geopolitical objectives.

Conclusion

The Black Sea-Caucasus region will remain a center of confrontation, cooperation and strategic transformation for the next 30-50 years.

Developments in this space will shape not only regional stability but also the architecture of the emerging global order.

Given the region's growing strategic importance, the West must adopt faster, more consistent and value driven policies toward partner countries. Develop effective mechanisms for deterring Russian aggression and reinforce both political and military support for democratic states. Only through such commitments can durable peace be ensured and a new international security system be successfully constructed.

Literature review

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