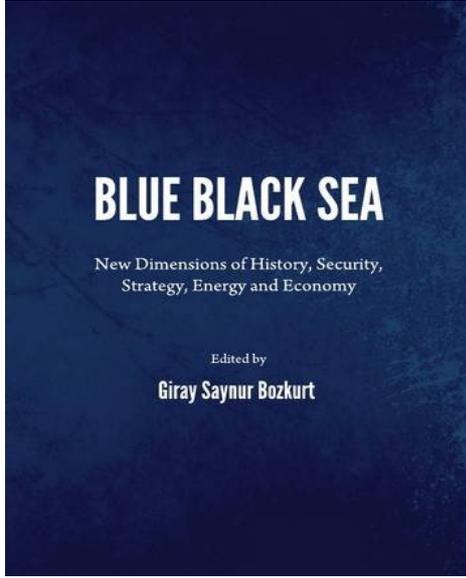


Blue Black Sea: New Dimensions of History, Security, Politics, Strategy, Energy and Economy, ed. by Giray Saynur Bozkurt, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 528 pages, ISBN (10): 1-4438-4244-3, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-4244-0



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On the Black Sea region there is no so many studies. As one of exceptional studies this collection is comprise of papers of an international congress entitled “Blue Black Sea: New Dimensions of Security, Politics, Strategy, Energy, History and Economy” held at the International Relations Department of Sakarya University on 14–17 October 2008 and 10–13 October 2010. The papers were later revised and updated by the authors and edited by Giray Saynur Bozkurt in 2013 to be included here.

In the presented papers, the participants from the Black Sea states and other parts of the world expressed with respect to the political, economic, social, and cultural relations in the region, and explained various dimensions of the present relations and problem areas from both theoretical and conceptual perspectives. While some chapters of the collection study existing and newly emerging institutions, others examine areas of disagreement and suggest peaceful resolutions for conflicts. The added word “Blue” in the title indicates our shared aspirations for a clean and peaceful future, overall this book is intended to provide valuable academic assessments and share them with the wider world community.

At the beginning of 1990’s with the end of the Cold War, the USSR collapsed and left the United States as the only superpower. Though the Russian Federation is still a great regional power that is trying to regain its former global status, it so far has insufficient weight to counterbalance US power. Meanwhile, this geopolitical power gap creates new opportunities

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for other regional and global actors. The fifteen former Soviet republics have been faced with radical movements linked to ethnic and religious fanaticism. While the whole world has been affected by these events, they have intensified at the Black Sea regions.

This collection consists of five chapters: *History, Security, International Relations, Strategy, Energy, and Economy*.

In the “history chapter” there are three articles: “A Glance at the History of the Black Sea Region” by M. Bilgin, summarizes the major events of the Black Sea region from the VIII. BC to XX. Century. N. Çelik, in “The Black Sea and Balkans under Ottoman Rule” explains Ottoman era’s Balkans and Black Sea region. Especially in the XVIII. and XIX. Centuries Ottoman-Russian rivalry and formation of Slavic states are important cases. The last article of this chapter is “The Preconditions of Ethnic–Political Conflicts in Georgia” by Z. Davitashvili. This study examines of historical backgrounds of the ethnical conflict of the Georgian region.

As the second chapter, “Security” has nine articles: “The Security Policy of the Caucasus Nations in the New Security Environment”, by E. Mehtiyev, emphasizes the importance of the Black Sea area in the European security system. According to Mehtiyev, as part of the wider Black Sea region, the Caucasus has direct access to Central Asia and Middle East. The next article “Background to the Hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan: From the Prague Process to the Madrid Principles” is also by E. Meytiyev. He says a military action to recover Nogorno-Karabagh from occupation has not offered any solution. N. Nechayeva’s paper, “The Georgia–Russia Conflict as an Example of Interdependence in World Politics” examines the evolution of Georgian–Russian relations based on the ever-changing interests of both sides. “The Roles of the Ukraine and the EU in settling the Russian–Georgian Conflict in the Caucasus” by G. Perepelytsia examines the main events in that conflict and describes the valuable contributions provided by Ukraine and EU in pursuit of resolution. “The Security Policies of Turkey and Russia towards Abkhazia and the Internal Georgian Conflict” by G. S. Bozkurt points out that the South Caucasus’ problem forms a serious obstacle in the establishment of a regional security system. “Black Sea regional security after 9/11” by Y. Gaber, stresses the increasing importance of the Black Sea region after the notorious events of 9/11 and analyzes the regional security strategies of the United States, the main “outside actor,” and Turkey, which has recently positioned itself as a regional power. M. Alam’s work “Turkey’s Security Strategies in the Extended Black Sea Region after September 11, 2001” examines the challenges which Turkey faces, such as terrorism, human and narco-trafficking, and illegal trade, most of which emanate from the Middle East. “The US Military Bases in Romania and Bulgaria and their Possible Implications for Regional Security”, by S. Akkaya, focuses on US approach to the Black Sea region from a broader security perspective and in

consideration of a possible vital role for the United States and accordingly NATO in the region. "Security in the Black Sea Region from a Neorealist Perspective," by A. Anlar, uses neorealist theory to examine how the state of security has changed in the Black Sea region, attempting to explore changes in the characteristics of the structure of the Black Sea region and focusing mainly on the ordering principle, which is one of the three defining principles of neorealist theory.

"International Relations & Strategy" chapter has nine articles: "The Black Sea Region: Challenges and Opportunities" by M.H. Khani, indicates the value of regional cooperation in the international system, regarding this as a good way to achieve peace, security, and economic prosperity across the globe. Ç. Üstün's study, "Regional Cooperation Efforts in the Black Sea Region: Black Sea Synergy" explains that conditions of the Black Sea region have dramatically changed since the end of the Cold War. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation may be seen as the prominent regional cooperation. "U.S. Interests in Wider Black Sea Region" by S. Konopylov, asserts that the Black Sea Region has begun to play an important part in world politics in the last two decades. İ. Bal's article, "US Policies towards the Black Sea Region" assesses the importance of the Black Sea region, the position of United States in the post-Cold War era, and the potential benefits that can be gained from this region. "The EU's Black Sea Policy" by E. Efeğil and N. Musaoğlu indicates that, primarily for security reasons, the EU has developed new policies in order to create amore peaceful international environment based on mutual cooperation, sympathy, peace, and stability. A. Sotnichenko's article, "Relations between Russia and Turkey under the New Conditions in the Black Sea and Caucasus Region" draws attention to the years of hostility and mutual distrust between Russia and Turkey. He then emphasizes their growing common interests in a multi-polar world, alongside Eurasian cooperation and international problems like international terrorism. By means of cooperation and political partnership, good opportunities may emerge for both Turkey and Russia, and an analysis is given of the possible ways this might unfold in several different regions of Eurasia, with particular attention to the Black Sea regional partnership. In G.S. Bozkurt's next work, "Black Sea Regional Policies of Russia and USA after September11", the growing significance of the Black Sea region is underlined, alongside an understanding of the altered aspects of security. "International Organizational Initiatives in the Black Sea Region" by A. Yalçinkaya claims that some international organizations which are supposed to function to create peaceful and steady international conditions, are actually manipulating the international system according to the interests of "Great Powers." The discrepancy between the intended and declared goals of the organizations creates mistrust amongst their members, and their continuity and legitimacy becomes debatable. "The Role of the Mediators in Settling

Conflicts in the Black Sea Region,” by H. Shelest shows the potential of the Black Sea region to become an area of prosperity and stability.

In the “Energy” chapter there are eight works: N. Iordan-Constantinescu’s study, “The Geopolitics of Energy in the Black Sea Context” explains how energy, politics, and power are linked to each other as a force in international security. “Energy Politics in the Black Sea Region: The Superpowers’ Race for Fuel” by J. Khanna, describes the geopolitical significance of the Black Sea region and then examines the interests of the United States, Russia, and China, this region having become a playground for these major powers. S. Salgın’s work “Energy as a Foreign Policy in the Wider Black Sea Region,” seeks to identify to what extent the Caspian and Black Sea states have effectively used energy as a foreign policy tool to promote their interests in regional and global affairs. “The Role of Azerbaijan in EU Energy Security” by A. Umudov, presents information on the energy policy of the European Union and sets out the importance of Caspian basin energy resources within this policy. G. Özkan’s article “The Nexus between the Energy Pipeline Contest and Security in the Black Sea Region: Russia versus the Rest” illustrates that if the regional states of the wider Black Sea region can exercise strong control over energy resources and pipelines, they will reap economic, strategic, geopolitical, and security benefits and become much more powerful. “Policies around the BTC Pipeline” by H. Erdemir, delves into how the growing significance of energy security has contributed to the Blue Black Sea formation of strategic alliances and policies of states involved, in and around the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline. “Gazprom: A Leading Actor in the Post-Soviet Gas Policy-Making Process in the Black Sea Region” by E. Eken exposes the factors and forces that drive Gazprom, currently the biggest natural gas company in the world, to be an influential actor in the region and globally. İ. Demir’s work “Domestic Supply of Natural Gas and Oil in Relation to Total Energy Demand in Turkey: How Can Its Energy Needs be Secured?” demonstrates that Turkey as a growing country is in need of more energy as there is a gap between its insufficient domestic energy resources and its energy consumption.

The last chapter “Economy” consists of three articles. “Enhancing Security and Stability in the Black Sea Region through Economic Co-operation” by A. Nedelchev, explains the bridges that facilitate trade and cooperation, signifying the consequence of Black Sea Economic Co-operation, founded primarily as a regional economic organization, which now also serves to strengthen security and stability in the region by its unique method of “security through economic cooperation.” B. Şakar’s article, “Analyses of the Banking Sector in Black Sea Region Countries and Turkey,” examines the economic situation and financial system in Turkey in the last decade. “A Handicap to Regional Economic Cooperation: Poverty (The Example of Turkey)” by O. Kaymakçı, Ö. Canbeyoğlu, and D.E. Türkgenç, says that Turkey,

despite being an advanced country in terms of corporate identity and economy, still suffers from low income levels and absolute poverty.

I would definitely recommend this collection, "Blue Black Sea: New Dimensions of History, Security, Politics, Strategy, Energy and Economy" to any researcher or scholar of Black Sea region. Black Sea region should be noted that around "the heartland of the World" of Mackinder. For more information on "Blue Black Sea Congresses" please visit <http://www.blueblacksea.sakarya.edu.tr/>