

Black Sea region / Hariri report

The first part of this month's special issue newsletter focuses on the Black Sea region. The second part compiles information on the UN Hariri report and subsequent measures taken by the Security Council against Syria.

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ISN Editor

1.1 Black Sea region

The deployment of US troops to Bulgaria and Romania next year and NATO's intensified cooperation with Ukraine, are evidence that this region, formerly part of the Warsaw Pact, now entertains intimate ties with Western Europe and the US. This development is further illustrated by the planned accessions of Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey to the EU. Nonetheless, the Russian Federation is still pursuing its interests in this region as well. Besides these two opposing forces, there is evidence of attempts at regional integration with such institutions as the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

1.1.1 Research / academic reports

Roundtable Report: Does Europe Need A Black Sea Security Policy?

This roundtable report summarizes the proceedings of the New Defense Agenda's September 2004 conference on the merits of a European Black Sea security policy. The panelists attempt to define Europe's eastward security, political, and economic interests from the Balkans to the Black Sea and beyond. They also discuss the new EU and NATO member states and the influence their security concerns should have on the formulation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

The Black Sea as Epicenter of the Aftershocks of the EU's Earthquake

This paper addresses the question of whether the EU's political conditionality can continue to be effective in the Balkans and Black Sea region in light of the French and Dutch rejections of the proposed European Constitution in 2005. Creating a taxonomy of different groups of states, the author poses four strategic questions, notably whether the EU's neighborhood policy could be "upgraded" in light of receding EU accession prospects, and the possibility of a role for renewed Black Sea regionalism. He concludes with a five-point list of concerns and policy prescriptions.

The EU and Black Sea Regional Cooperation: Some Challenges for BSEC

This April 2005 commentary by the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels, Belgium

explains that the EU only entertains bilateral relations with the countries of the Black Sea region and makes suggestions on how to change this.

Harvard Black Sea Security Program, by John F. Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, US
The goal of the Black Sea Regional Security Program is to encourage a regional security system based on cooperation and integration. This website provides information on the program's activities, publications, and conference reports. The site is also available in Russian.

Advancing Euro-Atlantic Security and Democracy in the Black Sea Region
This March 2005 paper by the Jamestown Foundation in Washington, DC, US identifies the interests of the US in the Black Sea region, threats to those interests, and steps the US could take to promote its security together with its allies in the region.

British Academy Black Sea Initiative, London, UK
The British Academy Black Sea Initiative supports academic studies on the Black Sea region within British universities, and initiates interaction between British academics and scholars from the countries bordering on the Black Sea.

Black Sea Environmental Internet Node, by the Hydrophysical Institute, Sevastopol, Ukraine
This website provides information on organizations and scientists studying the Black Sea, international research programs, a Black Sea bibliography, acronyms and abbreviations, meta-level information on environmental data for the Black Sea region, and satellite images.

Black Sea Regional Security Cooperation
The 2004 Black Sea Regional Security Conference, hosted by the US George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Germany, brings together military and political leaders responsible for security issues from the Black Sea states and Caucasus countries.

1.1.2 International and non-governmental organizations

Black Sea NGO Network (BSNN), Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine
BSNN is an association of NGOs from all Black Sea countries. The BSNN's objective is to preserve the environmental quality of the Black Sea and to foster the adoption of democratic practices in the Black Sea countries that follow the ideals of sustainability.

Black Sea, by the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, New York, US
This website provides the legal documents governing the use of the Black Sea by its littoral states (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine, and the Russian Federation).

Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), Istanbul, Turkey
The aim of BSEC is to establish security and stability in the Black Sea region through regional economic cooperation. The group includes Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine. This website provides news, publications, and information on BSEC's activities.

Black Sea and Danube Basin, by the World Bank
The Global Environment Facility Strategic Partnership on the Black Sea and Danube Basin has been

established with the cooperation of the World Bank, the UN, and other multilateral and bilateral financiers and basin countries. The partnership promotes investments and capacity-building to return the Black Sea/Danube Basin environment to its 1960s condition.

1.2 Hariri report

The second part of this month's newsletter compiles information on the UN Hariri report and subsequent measures taken by the Security Council against Syria.

1.2.3 Research / academic reports

Report of the International Independent Investigation Commission Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1595 (Hariri Report)

This report presents the initial findings and conclusions of the UN investigation into the circumstances surrounding the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri. The report states that the assassins had considerable resources and capabilities at their disposal, and that al-Hariri's movements and itineraries were closely monitored. The author concludes that it is unlikely that Syrian or Lebanese intelligence services were not aware of the assassination plot, and says that various leads suggest an involvement of Syrian and Lebanese officials.

Left to its Domestic Devices: How the Syrian Regime Boxed Itself In

Seasoned observers of Syria's political economy have learned not to make much of apparent political changes there. This lesson holds true today, but with a twist. Five years after the death of al-Assad senior, hopes, proclamations, and a series of promised "springs" have gone unrealized. Economically, Syria's growth has been lagging, with opportunities diminishing due to its dwindling (known) oil reserves and the dearth of higher skills within the labor market. While stable, Syria's political institutions are stagnant, and its regional sphere of influence is diminished by the loss of hitherto powerful foreign policy tools.

1.2.4 International and non-governmental organizations

Security Council Unanimously Endorses Findings of Investigation Into Murder of Rafik Hariri, Calls for Syria's Full, Unconditional Cooperation

This official UN website provides the full text of the 2005 UN Security Council Resolution 1636. The council decided that all individuals suspected of involvement in the murder be subject to travel restrictions and freezing of assets.

1.2.5 Media

UN Security Council passes Syria resolution, by ISN Security Watch

News article of 1 November 2005 on the UN Security Council's vote threatening Syria with economic sanctions if it continues its non-cooperation with the international inquiry into the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri.

US seeks a Syrian change-of-ways, by the BBC

News article of 31 November 2005 on the UN vote demanding that Syria cooperate with the UN inquiry into the death of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri and on its implications for the region.

Syria denies hindering UN inquiry, by the BBC

News article of 1 November 2005 on Syria 's denial of accusations that it failed to cooperate fully with a UN investigation into the killing of the former Lebanese PM Rafik Hariri.

UN investigator returns to Beirut, by the BBC

This news article of 1 November 2005 reports that Detlev Mehlis, head of the UN inquiry into the killing of the former Lebanese PM Rafik al-Hariri, has returned to Lebanon to continue his investigations.