

Monday, 20 September 2004  
Bibliothèque Solvay, Brussels

## DOES EUROPE NEED A BLACK SEA SECURITY POLICY?



Moderated by **Giles Merritt**,  
Director, New Defence Agenda,  
**Bogdan Mazuru**, Permanent Representative  
of Romania to NATO  
and  
**Mustafa Oguz Demiralp**, Ambassador,  
Mission of Turkey to the EU

Rapporteur: **John Chapman**



Programme for the day:

### Session 1

## DEFINING EUROPE'S EASTWARD SECURITY INTERESTS

The Iraq crisis has arguably done more than any other post-Cold War event to convince Europeans that their security is no longer a reflection of intra-European issues. But where are the potential flashpoints, and what range of responses may be required of European military or civilian capabilities?

From the Balkans to the Black Sea and perhaps beyond the Caspian region, what are Europe's economic and political interests, and how can protecting them be reconciled with the concerns of the US, Russia and regional powers like Turkey?

**Moderators:** **Giles Merritt**, Director, New Defence Agenda and **Bogdan Mazuru**, Permanent Representative of Romania to NATO

Introductory Speakers

- **Oksana Antonenko**, Programme Director (Russia and Eurasia), International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)
- **Sergei Konoplyov**, Director, Harvard Black Sea Security Program
- **Mykhailo Osnach**, Deputy Head, Mission of Ukraine to NATO
- **Michael Swann**, Administrator, Council of the European Union

### VIP LUNCH HOSTED BY THE TURKISH MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Guest Speaker: **Ambassador Turan Morali**, Director General for International Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey

### Session 2

## WHAT ROLE FOR REGIONAL SECURITY GROUPS?

The EU and NATO enlargements have brought into much sharper focus potential trouble spots like Moldova and the Caucasus region. What are the chief security concerns of EU candidates like Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, and what influence should they have on the formulation of the CFSP? To what degree will Europe's rising imports of oil and gas determine its interest in the stability of Central Asia? How can regional organisations like the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the Turkish-inspired Blackseafor naval initiative enhance security co-operation? What role should NATO play in building new security structures?

**Moderators:** **Giles Merritt**, Director, New Defence Agenda & **Mustafa Oguz Demiralp**, Ambassador, Mission of Turkey to the EU

Introductory Speakers

- **Mustafa Aydin**, Associate Professor, International Relations, Ankara University
- **Ovidiu Dranga**, Director General, Department for Defence Policy and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Ministry of National Defence, Romania
- **Rear Admiral Serdar Dülger**, Chief of Plans and Policy Department, Ministry of National Defence, Turkey
- **Yannis N. Papanicolaou**, Director General, International Center for Black Sea Studies, Greece

## KEY POINTS OF THE DEBATES: AND THE ANSWER IS, “YES ... BUT!”

“Does Europe need a Black Sea security policy? That was the question posed at the latest New Defence Agenda round table. A lively debate ensued but a precise answer was hard to find. Perhaps the most representative response was the ISS’s **Oksana Antonenko’s** “Yes... but!”, as it accurately reflected the lack of clarity in the region’s future.

At the end of the proceedings, it was apparent that the topic – perhaps in a different form – would be returning to the Bibliothèque Solvay. Interesting questions were raised:

- Does the Black Sea region have a clear identity?
- Who should be the key players in the region?
- Should the so-called *frozen conflicts* receive a little heat, and from where?
- Is the EU doing enough to facilitate the situation east of its current borders?

There was general agreement that it was unwise to look at the Black Sea region strictly from a security viewpoint. Underlying tensions and their causes had to be addressed and the approaching expansion of the EU’s borders was seen as a vital element of any future dialogue. Speakers acknowledged that the countries of the region, with the exception of Russia, were attracted by the prospect of closer ties with the EU, but the way forward was unclear.

Kicking-off, Antonenko made a telling point by insisting that as the Black Sea region had no real identity, it was hard to define a policy. The International Center for Black Sea Studies’ **Yiannis N. Papanicolaou** disagreed, arguing that cultural and historical similarities had been suppressed in the twentieth century due to geopolitical factors. With the change in the geopolitical scene following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the expression of these similarities once again became possible, as seen in the creation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Organisation in 1992.. **Mykhailo Osnach**, Ukraine’s Mission to NATO, awakened the participants to the problems of the Black Sea region being an illegal “transit area”, and called for root problems to be addressed. The Mission of Azerbaijan to the EU’s **Javanshir Mammadov** picked up the transit question and highlighted the importance to world security of the energy and transportation corridors. This point was also made by Turkey’s Ambassador **Turan Morali**, Director General for International Security, who described the region as a “juicy target” for anyone wishing to disrupt the flow of oil from the Caspian basin.

As for solutions to the problems of the - ill-defined - region, ideas were plentiful. Antonenko suggested putting the focus on confidence-building, so that any lasting solution came from within the region itself. Papanicolaou argued that this was impossible without external assistance and funding. To that end, the Romanian Ministry of Defence’s **Ovidiu Dranga** called for the EU and NATO to act as facilitators. The role of such international institutions was deemed to be important and the expansion of BSEC’s brief was seen as a possible way forward.



The EU did come in for criticism and Dranga pointed to the lack of urgency and a leadership vacuum. Ambassador Morali argued the EU had a moral obligation to look further east as being “western-European centric” was no longer an option. Looking even further east, Defense News’ **Brooks Tigner** was of the opinion that any Black Sea policy was of little value if it came without the EU clarifying its own stance towards Russia. Unfortunately, that country’s official voice was hardly heard at the round table but the Russian Federation’s Mission to NATO’s **Mikhail Ivanovich Shurgalin**, did intervene to state that the situation in the Black Sea region was not being accurately depicted. As **Giles Merritt** said in his summing up, there is room for more debate.

## SESSION 1: DEFINING EUROPE'S EASTWARD SECURITY INTERESTS

Introducing the topic, the NDA's **Giles Merritt** referred to the Black Sea region as the area of "greatest concern" to European defence and security policy-makers. The timing of the NDA's focus on the Black Sea was spot on, as NATO had recently appointed a Special Representative for Caucasus and Central Asia<sup>1</sup>.

Moderating the first session, **Bogdan Mazuru**, Romania's Ambassador to NATO, kicked off the debate by explaining that there was a renewed focus on the Black Sea due to the EU and NATO enlargements, the "frozen conflicts", terrorist activities in the region and the economic opportunities due, primarily, to the resources of the Caspian basin.

**First speaker: Oksana Antonenko**, Programme Director (Russia and Eurasia), International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).

Antonenko answered the question – Does Europe need a Black Sea policy? with a qualified "Yes ... but". Explaining her position, Antonenko asked if the Black Sea region actually had an identity (as there were so many areas being debated – South Caucasus, the Caspian basin, Central Asia, Turkey, Russia, Eurasia, etc.). She added that the people of the countries surrounding the Black Sea did not see that as their primary identity. However, she did acknowledge that there were common issues in the Black Sea region<sup>2</sup> and that there were many security concerns due to the history of inter-state tensions (e.g. Turkey & Greece, Azerbaijan and Armenia, Ukraine and Russia – the Tuzla dispute, etc.).



Antonenko argued that a security dialogue in the context of a broad multi-lateral framework would be useful in such cases. However, as for separatist conflicts, e.g. in Transnistria, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, she thought them to be too complex to be tackled within the usual Black Sea agenda. In her opinion, the involvement of political heavyweights, such as Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), was required.

Antonenko also called for the main focus to be placed on extending the experience and benefits of enlargement (initially NATO's and then that of the EU), to neighbouring countries such as Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan and Armenia. This "confidence-building exercise should, she argued, be extended to include engagement with Russia. In conclusion, Antonenko stated that it too early to develop a Black Sea regional policy and asked for efforts to be placed in important confidence-building exercises, to include the involvement of the Black Sea Force (Blackseafor)<sup>3</sup>.

**Second speaker: Sergei Konoplyov**, Director, Harvard Black Sea Security Program

Sergei Konoplyov kept his opening remarks brief. He explained that a conference, hosted by The Harvard Black Sea Security Program, had recently taken place in Batumi, Georgia<sup>4</sup>. The agenda had included a review of security issues for all the players in the Black Sea region. As a result of that conference, Konoplyov agreed that the EU and NATO were certainly paying more attention to the region, especially due to the forthcoming entry of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU in 2007.

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<sup>1</sup> NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, announced the appointment of Mr. Robert F. Simmons Jr. to the position of Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia. Mr. Simmons currently serves as NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy, a position which he will retain along with his duties as Special Representative, [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int)

<sup>2</sup> Defined by Antonenko as not including in Central Asia, but covering the countries bordering the sea plus Azerbaijan and Armenia.

<sup>3</sup> A cooperative arrangement of the coastal states called the Black Sea Force.

<sup>4</sup> A follow-up to the 4th annual Black Sea Security Program, it dealt with shared concerns and common approaches to Black Sea security and Caspian Sea threats.

Sergei Konoplyov mentioned that many of Black Sea countries look at EU membership as their ultimate goal. If they don't get a clear signal from Brussels about accession they might lose interest and drift to other directions. An example of that is Ukraine. EU should design a more flexible strategy for such countries since they have different level of development but equal security problems. An alternative to full accession should be tailored for non-accession Black Sea countries to keep them in close cooperation with EU.



**Third speaker: Mykhailo Osnach**, Deputy Head, Mission of Ukraine to NATO

Referring to US security analysts Ronald Asmus' recent article "*EU, Nato do well to reach out to Black Sea region*", written in the aftermath of the hostage crisis in North Ossetia, Mykhailo Osnach was of the firm opinion that the Black Sea region does need a security policy.

He bemoaned the growth of the Black Sea as a "transit area" with its trans-national illegal networks (arms, drugs, people), due to the current security vacuum and inter-state conflicts. Osnach argued for a multi-faceted approach (external and internal players, including economic development) aimed at eliminating the root causes of the problems. This solution, added Osnach, should encourage the growth of a healthy civil society so that problems of drug abuse and trafficking could be reduced.

**Fourth speaker: Michael Swann**, Administrator, Council of the European Union



Michael Swann took Europe as meaning the EU, and admitted that formulating any EU policy was never straightforward. Swann reminded his audience of CFSP High Representative Javier Solana's document entitled - "*A Secure Europe in a Better World*", much of which was relevant to the Black Sea region. This implicitly supported the security of the EU's energy supplies and "effective multilateralism".

Swann argued that the EU believed in comprehensive security (including environmental, economic and human dimensions) and that in this sense the question on the table was a "no-brainer" - the Black Sea region (however it could be defined) was certainly in need of a security policy. With the clock ticking towards 2007, it was increasingly important to develop a more comprehensive policy.

Summing up the speakers' introductory remarks, Ambassador Mazuru said that although the countries of the Black Sea region had no common denominator - and, therefore, perhaps the region lacks an identity - there were certainly serious security issues to be addressed. Noting that several international organisations (NATO, the EU and its neighbourhood policy, OSCE, etc.) were active in the region, and the fact that three NATO countries - Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey - neighbour the Black Sea, the Ambassador concluded that a clearer focus was necessary, given that - as already mentioned - organized crime and corruption were increasing throughout the region. It is NATO's and EU's interest to have stability at their borders and that is why the Black Sea should be on their agenda.

## FIRST SESSION – Q&A

### A matter of identity

**Yannis N. Papanicolaou**, The International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), took exception to Antonenko's assertion that the Black Sea region had no identity. Citing the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)<sup>5</sup> organisation, he said that this body, expressing the common interests of its country-members — was one example of the identity of the region and that "there was no need to challenge it". Papanicolaou added that discussions as to how BSEC's activities might be extended to include security were ongoing. In response, Antonenko acknowledged that BSEC's activities gave the Black Sea region an identity in regard to economic issues, but added that BSEC had no responsibility for discussing common interests in security matters.

**Mustafa Aydin**, Ankara University, also disagreed with Antonenko, saying that the identity issue was a red herring. For Aydin, the real question to be addressed was: "Do the EU and NATO need to deal with the Black Sea as a region, rather than on an individual country basis?". He added that the need for the day's debate showed that all was not well in the region.

### International co-operation

**Antje Herrberg**, East West Institute, said that a Black Sea security & regional policy would only be a second-best solution for the region's people and for the EU. She argued that with 2007 approaching, the region's people were focussed more on EU entry than on the region itself – and that this was problematic. Calling for the EU to clarify its neighbourhood policy, Herrberg argued that there were too many international organisations involved (e.g. EU, UN, OSCE, US troops) and that inter-operability was difficult. She also thought that NATO's involvement may not be entirely helpful.

Highlighting the Black Sea as a region where the EU, the US and Russia were meeting head-on, she called for a carefully thought-out security approach there and in the South Caucasus in general. Swann intervened to insist that the EU's policy in regard to Russia was clear and that it was an important partner – engagement with Russia in the Black Sea region and in the South Caucasus was vital.

Konoplyov commented that all the countries of the Black Sea region wanted to be part of the EU and called for "a good and sustainable alternative to full EU membership", otherwise the region's support would be lost. Turning to Russia, Konoplyov argued that its position in the region was fundamental to stability and cited the "frozen conflicts"<sup>6</sup> as examples of this. In response to Herrberg, Ambassador Mazuru intervened that there were many options for NATO to interact (to build and extend co-operation) with the actors of the Black Sea region.

After **George Vlad Niculescu**, Officer PFP & Cooperation Programmes Section, NATO, intervened to explain the Alliance's current and forthcoming initiatives in the region. **Giles Merritt** felt the necessity to remind the attendees that European Commission President Prodi had stated that the EU had no direct interest in crisis management of the region. So what were the elements that should be fed into an EU policy? What were the EU's concerns in the region?

The Mission of Azerbaijan to NATO's **Javanshir Mammadov** said there was a need to develop broad co-operation and integration, as a way of adopting European values and breaking down the legacy of the Cold War. He highlighted the importance of the transportation and energy corridors, as they were vital to strengthening security – not only of the EU and Russia, but also of the Mediterranean and the Middle East.



<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.bsec.gov.tr/> for full details of the existing membership and objectives.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.policyreview.org/jun04/asmus.html> for a discussion on the "frozen conflicts".

Georgia's Ambassador to NATO, **David Dondua**, warned that the discussion about security policy in the Greater Black Sea region will be a fruitless exercise unless interests are not fully prioritised in eastern part of this region of the South Caucasus. Explaining that the South Caucasus had been ignored until 9/11, he pointed to the NATO initiatives addressing security, terrorism and drug-trafficking. However, these initiatives do not address the traditional-type threats for South Caucasus and notably regional conflicts. The unresolved conflicts are hampering the stability and development of democracy in the countries of the region. For the Ambassador, conflict management was the key.



Papanicolaou returned to the debate to give reasons why both the EU and NATO must engage with all the countries of the Black Sea region, as increased uncertainty arrived with each round of the enlargement processes.

Stressing the importance of energy and the need for access to the Caspian basin, he listed a raft of reasons why the region should be near the top of the EU's priority list: environmental concerns after 2007 – tanker traffic, pollution, the danger of collisions in the waters around the Black Sea, crime & corruption and threats spilling over to the Middle East (and the EU) from the South Caucasus.

Romania's Ministry of National Defence's **Ovidiu Dranga** wanted the EU and NATO to plant the seeds for sustainable democracy and development in the Black Sea region, thereby acting as facilitators. Although in total agreement with that view, Antonenko wanted the Black Sea countries themselves to set their own priorities (and build their own institutions) as they could not be defined from outside. Papanicolaou replied that the countries themselves – although having plenty of ideas - could do nothing without funding from outside.

It was time for an official Russian voice to be heard, and the Russian Mission to NATO's **Mikhail Ivanovich Shurgalin** did not disappoint. He questioned the need for the EU to intervene, especially if the region had no identity. Denying that countries such as Russia and Ukraine were in conflict, Shurgalin asked if the EU had to intervene in the "frozen conflicts" in order for "the blood to start flowing again". Finding an ally in Swann's comments, Shurgalin said it must be "co-operation not confrontation" as "everyone lives in Europe and Eurasia".

Returning to the fray, although Herrberg was impressed by the EU's "rule of law" mission and other activities, the Union seemed to be "without muscle" in regard to the South Caucasus conflict. She wanted to know why the EU was not working closer with the OSCE and the UN, there was a need for a strategy – involving more co-operation, more money and more capability.

### **CLOSING REMARKS FROM THE PANEL**

Swann applauded the innovative work of BSEC and repeated his view that the Black Sea region needed a comprehensive policy, given the prospect of Romania and Bulgaria joining the EU in 2007. Rejecting Herrberg's criticisms, Swann insisted that the EU had a good record in "conflict transformation", i.e. building confidence with neighbouring states.

Konoplyov insisted that the US and the OSCE, unfortunately not represented, were doing an acceptable job in the Black Sea region. However, he added that the EU's policy needed to be clarified and communicated to interested parties.

Antonenko insisted that tensions certainly existed between Ukraine and Russia, i.e. in Tuzla, and added that such matters were certainly of interest to the EU. She concluded that it was too early to produce a policy for the region, adding that BSEC's initiatives had to be supported by everyone. However, adding a few words of warning, Antonenko said that BSEC should not be too ambitious and any eventual policies (including OSCE's



involvement) must be flexible – with the objectives being to bring prosperity and security to the countries of the Black Sea.

Osnach was another speaker to call for more support for regional bodies and for BSEC's brief to be expanded to include security. In closing, Ambassador Mazuru said the EU definitely needed a stable neighbourhood and that meant tackling migration, drug-trafficking, organised crime, terrorism, transportation and energy. A potential strategy could then emerge from the individual actions in those areas – the opportunities for a stable neighbourhood were there for all to see.

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**LUNCH SESSION: GUEST SPEAKER: AMBASSADOR TURAN MORALI,**  
DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TURKEY

HOSTED BY THE TURKISH MINISTRY OF DEFENCE



Ambassador Morali initially addressed the question of the day – does the EU need a security strategy for the Black Sea? For the Ambassador, a Western strategy was already in place and had been since 1991. That strategy had allowed the region to manage the demise of the Warsaw Pact, the USSR, and of Yugoslavia. Enlargements of NATO and EU had had the effect of conflict prevention at a grand scale, as well as providing an effective incentive for democratization.

However, the Ambassador acknowledged that the initial focus on Central and Eastern Europe had detracted from the conflicts inherent in Southern Caucasus and elsewhere.

The Ambassador referred to new thinking in Washington whereby a strategic shift was under way. According to this, European agenda was considered to be largely fulfilled or had reached an irreversible stage. Time had come to focus attention and efforts further East. To this end, Ambassador Morali said that the international community had a moral obligation to continue to



look – and assist – this wider geography. Since 1991 NATO and EU had developed useful instruments and experience to facilitate the process. Reciprocally, countries of the region were bent on reform and were proving to be responsive. He suggested that membership of NATO (and perhaps of the EU, or other organisations) could go some way towards addressing the region's problems, many of which were caused by the fall-out from globalisation.

Moving to the definition of Europe, or perhaps the EU in the future, the Ambassador asked if it legitimately included Ukraine. He was of the opinion that anyone who had visited Kiev would answer in the affirmative. Ambassador Morali insisted that it was no longer feasible to see things from a strictly western-European viewpoint. Horizons must be broadened – especially in the vital area of energy security. The Ambassador argued that this was a big issue for the Black Sea region, as it was a transportation hub for energy resources and was therefore a “juicy target” for those wishing to destabilise society. Ambassador Morali also considered the impact that airborne suicide bombers against vessels with explosive cargo could have in the region.

The Ambassador underlined the necessity to distinguish between the Black Sea and its immediate surrounding consisting of littoral states on the one hand, and the notion of “Wider Black Sea”. He claimed that the security of the Black Sea was a manageable one, perfectly within the capabilities of the surrounding countries. The threat was not to be exaggerated. The Sea itself was surrounded by well-established countries with motivated people and well-governed regional institutions. He added that the countries were in the process of confidence-building – remarkable in itself given the adversarial relations of the past, such as between Turkey and Russia, Turkey and Ukraine, etc. – and were models of regional co-operation, which Turkey would continue to promote and was not prepared to sacrifice.

As for the Wider Black Sea region, Ambassador Morali was quick to insist that wider outside involvement was indispensable. He insisted that the parochial outlook of individual countries had to be put aside so that latent

conflicts could be resolved. If they were, the Ambassador was sure that there would be bright prospects for Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and the South Caucasus, and “immense possibilities” for Turkey.

The Ambassador therefore looked for the EU and NATO to broaden their agendas. Calling for a broad-based synergy between the different actors, Ambassador Morali said that the requirements of the Black Sea region surpassed the capabilities of the regional actors, the US and other outside actors. A focusing and orchestration of efforts was called for.

From Turkey's viewpoint, the Ambassador looked at the international landscape and identified Iraq, Cyprus and the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan as “burdens” on everybody's shoulders, including EU. He advocated patience about Iraq. After all, international community had put up with Saddam Hussein for 40 years, so resolution in Iraq could not be expected, or achieved, in a matter of months. As for the conflicts between Azerbaijan and Armenia, he urged a revitalization of international efforts. In this regard, Ambassador Morali was critical that the Minsk process had been reduced to the initiatives of the three co-chairman. Given the pivotal role of Armenian votes in domestic politics, he doubted that France could be an honest broker. Azerbaijan wanted among others Germany to be involved. He saw much merit in an EU role.

He concluded by looking at Russia which could either be a cause for concern in the Black Sea region or a major contributor. The Ambassador hoped for the latter, as exemplified by Turkey and Russia collaborating as partners in BLACKSEAFOR. He said that, in some quarters, there was a perception that Russia had an interest in keeping the “frozen conflicts” on ice. However, Ambassador Morali preferred to think that President Putin was currently distracted by the conflict with Chechnya and that Russia would eventually be a positive force in the Black Sea region.



## SESSION 2: WHAT ROLE FOR REGIONAL SECURITY GROUPS?

Moderating the second session, **Mustafa Oguz Demiralp**, Turkey's Ambassador to the EU, said that the NDA meeting showed that "the Black Sea was not a black hole". Acknowledging the increased interest in the region following the fall of the Iron Curtain, Ambassador Demiralp said there still appeared to be a vacuum in the EU's neighbourhood policy. Looking forward to the afternoon's debate, he said that Ambassador Morali's speech could prove the basis for a lively session.

**First speaker: Mustafa Aydin**, Associate Professor, International Relations, Ankara University

To the question – do we need more international organisations involved in the region? – Professor Aydin said he preferred a more regional approach. He argued that a coherent strategy was lacking and that the EU's approach (and that of other international organisations) was not flexible enough. Professor Aydin also bemoaned the general lack of interest in the efforts of groups such as BSEC.

Adding that countries like Russia and Georgia were sceptical about the increasing interest of international organisations and the US, Professor Aydin argued that the OSCE had been ineffective in solving the region's problems. Backing the concept of regionalisation, he argued that it could help integration, create a flow of ideas (via forums) and improve the potential for co-operation in non-military and non-threatening areas.



**Second speaker: Ovidiu Dranga**, Director General, Department for Defence Policy and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Ministry of National Defence, Romania

Ovidiu Dranga wanted to discuss what had to happen to get the Black Sea countries on the international agenda. After explaining why the region was important (a cultural bridge between continents, at the energy supply crossroads, a hub between the east and the west, a launching pad for security projects in Central Asia and beyond) he said there was a lack of urgency – as there was no "open conflict". Dranga called for action to be taken as the timing was right – it would be cheaper now - before the US's attention shifted away from the region.

Arguing for the Blackseafor's and BSEC's roles to be clarified from a security perspective, Dranga called for better dialogue – along with common understanding – among the Black Sea countries. Furthermore, he defined their needs:

- To anchor the region in the Euro-Atlantic area, based on its values
- To produce a common threat assessment for the Black Sea region
- To develop a network of security experts and a framework for dialogue
- To develop regional awareness and a stronger regional "voice"
- To define defence deliverables, such as joint military training, civil emergency planning, etc.
- To find sponsors and facilitators, (e.g. NATO, the EU, etc.)
- To focus on institution building
- To develop the right type of leadership to bring policies forward

**Third speaker: Yannis N. Papanicolaou**, Director General, International Center for Black Sea Studies, Greece

Yannis N. Papanicolaou called for an EU policy that went beyond security issues. He reasoned that the region could enrich the EU in many ways. Expanding on his ideas, Papanicolaou said that the region should not be perceived as being limited to those six countries that border the Black Sea itself, but should be seen in a wider sense as also encompassing the Balkan states and the Southern Caucasus, reaching as far as the Caspian Sea. He

explained that the membership of the BSEC expresses this philosophy including a number of Balkan states such as, Serbia and Montenegro, Albania, and Greece Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia from the other side, current and future EU members, and observers such as Austria, Israel, Germany and Poland, while having applications



for membership from countries such as Iran and Uzbekistan. ), He suggested that the EU should look towards granting membership even with very long time horizons, to all the countries in the Black Sea region, with the exception of Russia which does not have such a desire, expanding membership to , say, 30 or 32 countries.

As for BSEC itself, Papanicolaou said that it was ready to expand its scope of activities to enhance security and stability in the area. However, it lacked encouragement and funding – it was an opportunity that the EU should not let go.

**Fourth speaker: Rear Admiral Serdar Dülger**, Chief of Plans and Policy Department, Ministry of National Defence, Turkey

Rear Admiral Serdar Dülger stressed the importance of the region<sup>7</sup> as one of the main arteries in the flow of Caspian oil. Forecasting that sea-borne trade could double by 2010, Rear Admiral Dülger reminded everyone that NATO would soon, by 2007, have the Black Sea lapping on its shores. Speaking positively about the work of Blackseafor – the first example of co-operation between NATO member states and Russia - the Rear Admiral emphasised the growing potential for terrorism and crime, if unchecked. Applauding NATO's active role in actions such as operation *Active Endeavour*, he said that Turkey fully supported the Alliance in the fight against illegal maritime activities. To this end, Rear Admiral Dülger called for improvements in joint intelligence. In conclusion, Dülger said that Turkey believed in the development of an EU security policy – one that would help to guarantee peace and stability in the region.

Summing up, Ambassador Demiralp argued that the discussion has shown that the Black Sea region needed urgent attention from all the players, so that a coherent policy could be developed. He particularly noted Papanicolaou's call for further enlargement of the EU (to become Europe minus Russia, according to Ambassador Demiralp) and Dülger's suggestion for any Black Sea regional policy to address the issues of drug-trafficking, illegal immigration and even illegal fishing.

## SECOND SESSION – Q&A

*Defense News'* **Brooks Tigner** kicked off the second session debate by throwing the panel a curveball<sup>8</sup>. "What", Tigner wanted to know, "was the EU's position on Russia in regard to security issues?" When the panel did not sufficiently clarify the situation, Tigner suggested that no Black Sea policy could be developed without the EU first elaborating a clear policy towards Russia.

**Giles Merritt** agreed that the Russia question was fundamental, but added that while the EU lacked a policy on Russia, it was also true that Russia seemed to be missing a policy on the EU. Merritt also wanted to know more about the possible framework for Black Sea policy-making, the process for crisis-management in the region and how NATO and the EU could interact in the Black Sea region.

<sup>7</sup> A population of 300 million, 30,000 merchant ships from 85 nations carrying 400 million tons of cargo.

<sup>8</sup> The curveball is a type of pitch in baseball thrown with a motion that induces extra rotation on the ball causing it to "break," to fly in a more exaggerated curve than expected.

The International Crisis Group's (ICG's) **Alba Lamberti** wanted to know why Papanicolaou thought that enlarging the EU, to include the countries of the Black Sea region, would automatically solve the problems of the aforesaid region.

**Antje Herrberg** then returned with three more points for panellists to consider:

- *Black Sea co-operation*: More institutionalisation was needed for economic and security issues, a revolving leadership would help and aid the development of a common threat assessment
- *Russia*: Now that the South Caucasus becomes part of the EU-Russia political dialogue, and that might cause friction, similar EU reaction could incur in terms of Black Sea Cooperation (ie. a Russian Georgian conflict on its maritime borders as of 2007)
- *NATO*: Might the Alliance intervene in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh, given that NATO and the EU would soon share borders with these "conflicts". In other words, even if there could be no Article 5 in the short term, could Article 4 be applied ?



### CLOSING REMARKS FROM THE PANEL

**Ovidiu Dranga** concluded that whatever the shape and scope of any Black Sea policy, it must be preventive. That would influence its framework. Dranga stressed the need for the involvement of the major players, and noted that it would be an unprecedented opportunity for the EU, NATO, Russia and the US to pool resources and develop a solution that met common interests and objectives. He also acknowledged the "bottom-up" approaches of BSEC and Blackseafor, but called for a strategic "chapeau" that would consolidate the actions.

**Yannis N. Papanicolaou** responded to the ICG representative's point by saying that EU membership for the Black Sea countries could act as a catalyst in the region. He also expressed his disappointment that the potential of the BSEC initiative has not been adequately valued and supported. Papanicolaou criticised the level of interest shown by the EU and NATO, referring to the attitudes shown as "offensive and embarrassing". Thanking the NDA for putting the focus on the Black Sea region, he noted that the BSEC initiative had brought together some strange bedfellows, with positive results.

**Mustafa Aydin** looked at the necessary framework for progress in the region. He said it should be non-threatening, non-binding and multi-dimensional. Aydin added that this was the formula applied by BSEC, and it was working! Looking at the EU, he said this was seen in the South Caucasus as an "honest broker". Giving his reasoning, Aydin said the OSCE had lost credibility, the Russians did not trust the Americans or NATO, and the Armenians did not trust Turkey. However, the EU was gaining credibility, and, in Aydin's opinion, this was perhaps because it did not have forces in the region. Like others, he insisted that the EU clarify its policy on Russia. In conclusion, he said that any policy had to be inclusive – BSEC was an "inclusive" organisation, while, at the moment, the EU was not. As for NATO's possible interventions, anything was possible in the coming years – nobody could be sure.

From the floor, **Javanshir Mammadov** called for the EU to renew its interest in the South Caucasus region. Noting the failure of the OSCE, he regretted that the EU and NATO had not shown much interest in the last five years. Although Mammadov saw Russia as a potential problem, he regarded EU involvement as a win-win situation. Mammadov added that the EU's new interest in foreign affairs would make its voice louder and looked forward to the development of crisis management tools. In short, he wanted the EU and NATO to collaborate in resolving conflicts in the region.

Picking up a point made by Ambassador Demiralp, *NATO's Nations* journalist **Frederick Bonnart** insisted that NATO and the EU were not rivals. He stated that they had similar objectives – stability on their borders and a secure energy supply. Bonnart saw no problem in co-ordinating policy in the Black Sea region.

Closing down the debate, **Giles Merritt** concluded that a policy was certainly needed. However, he was unclear as to if one actually existed. The debate had re-enforced the view that the situation in the Black Sea was complex and that security in the area could worsen, especially as the “frozen conflicts” were unresolved.

As for the NDA, Merritt foresaw the debate continuing, almost certainly with an expanded scope to include the Caspian basin and Central Asia. He finally identified potential topics for future debate as being:

- The development of a common threat assessment in the region
- Clarification on the involvement and co-ordination of the institutions - EU, NATO, OSCE, etc.
- The potential roles of the US and Russia, the former in its guise as super power rather than as a NATO member.

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### Next NDA meetings

The next roundtable will be held on October 18 - *Is Maritime Security Europe's Achilles Heel?*

There will be a one-day conference on November 4 – *Towards an EU Strategy for Collective Security.*

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## NEW DEFENCE AGENDA

*Does Europe need a Black Sea Security Policy? 20 September 2004*