

Contents

Editorial	1
<i>Jean DUFOURCQ</i>	
The Role of the Wider Black Sea Area (WBSA) in a Future European Security Space	2
<i>Cees COOPS</i>	
Peace in the Middle East after Israeli Disengagement	3
<i>Laure BORGOMANO-LOUP</i>	
NDC Research Activities	4



Research Paper

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Editorial

Le raccordement du continent européen au continent asiatique a toujours fait couler beaucoup d'encre en raison de son importance stratégique. Cette question est revenue récemment sur le devant de la scène internationale depuis qu'est débattue la candidature turque à l'Union européenne.

La série des Research Papers, lancée en février 2004, a déjà fait une large place à ce dossier important pour l'Alliance et ses partenaires. Le numéro 2 évoquait "L'intelligence de la Méditerranée", le numéro 3 présentait "La Géorgie à la croisée des chemins", le numéro 7 traitait des "Géométries variables du Moyen-Orient élargi" et le numéro 15 "New Strategic and Security Landscape of Southeast Europe"; puis il s'agissait avec le numéro 16 de "Turkey's Role in NATO in the Post-Cold War Security Environment", et d'une "Road Map for Ukraine" dans le numéro 17. L'ensemble de ces réflexions a permis d'aborder sous des angles variés les différentes possibilités d'organiser une région charnière à la stabilité vitale pour le continent européen et à laquelle l'Alliance atlantique a proposé des partenariats de plus en plus appropriés et ambitieux, notamment depuis le sommet d'Istanbul de juin 2004.

Les deux contributions de ce présent numéro reviennent sur des questions régionales clés, celle de l'organisation de l'espace de la mer Noire et celle de l'impact sur la paix du désengagement israélien de la bande de Gaza. Ces deux questions stratégiques adjacentes ont fait l'objet de récents travaux de la part des chercheurs du Collège de défense de l'OTAN, la première avant l'été lors d'un séminaire international tenu dans le cadre du PpP à Constanta en Roumanie, et la deuxième au début de l'automne, lors de la visite à Rome d'un chercheur du Collège National de défense israélien. Chacun de ces épisodes a permis d'aborder la stabilité de la zone de raccordement euro-asiatique sous l'angle de leurs problématiques respectives. Ils sont rapportés ici de façon succincte, à la façon de points de situation.

Examiner la mer Noire comme une zone tampon ou un pont entre les continents, c'est se poser les questions de "l'Est de l'Ouest", c'est étudier les liens potentiellement fructueux entre fourniture de sécurité et de prospérité dans un sens et délivrance d'énergie sécurisée dans l'autre. C'est chercher à caractériser les intérêts communs à des riverains de la mer Noire rassemblés par un concept de "mer Noire élargie" dont la pertinence reste à consolider.

Penser l'après-Gaza, c'est tenter d'approfondir les raisons de l'évolution des positions des différents acteurs impliqués dans la recherche d'un processus de paix encore introuvable. C'est évaluer, comme l'a fait un intervenant, le rôle potentiel de l'Alliance et les tâches qui pourraient être dévolues à des forces de l'OTAN pour garantir la viabilité de la sécurité d'un Etat d'Israël à arrêter et celle d'un futur Etat palestinien à constituer.

Jean DUFOURCQ, Chef de la branche Recherche

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Les opinions exprimées dans cette publication sont celles de l'auteur et ne peuvent être attribuées au Collège de Défense de l'OTAN ni à l'Organisation du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord.

The Role of the Wider Black Sea Area (WBSA) in a Future European Security Space

Cees COOPS¹

Such was the title of the NATO Defense College's 14th Partnership for Peace International Research Seminar, held Constanta, Romania, in close cooperation with the NATO Studies Center of Bucharest, Romania, earlier in June this year. As the contributions to the proceedings of the seminar and its conclusions will be published separately, this brief article aims to provide a brief synthesis of the recommendations and observations of about 80 participants from more than 30 NATO member states and partner countries. They recognized competition among major powers as the area's dominant historical feature from a security point of view, and subsequently set out to analyze the current situation, as well as the potential for future cooperation and possible integration of the countries of the WBSA into Euro-Atlantic security structures.

Underlying the question "what is the WBSA today?" simmers a definitional concern that remains unresolved for the time being. There are regional commonalities, but the area lacks a clear regional identity. A functional approach (WBSA: bridge or buffer zone?) is unhelpful in the sense that the area is not merely an instrument, but constitutes a dynamic system. Describing and understanding its present features is a necessary first step towards exploring possible options and approaches for the future.

1. The Wider Black Sea Area today

The main features of the WBSA from a security point of view can be described or characterized as follows:

- The area is a collision point for different security complexes: NATO, Russia, and potentially the EU, none of which have cogent grand strategies for the area. NATO, in recognition of the area's strategic importance, is still the main security provider. Contributing to stability by its operational approach and its support to individual countries by cooperative programs, NATO has nevertheless not developed a comprehensive strategy for the WBSA as a whole. Access to the Black Sea is a strategic priority for Russia, but Russian policy of preserving its imperial past is considered outdated at a time when newly independent states are trying to get out of its control. Geopolitical thinking at a global scale in the EU has still to be developed, and a coherent policy towards the WBSA is lacking. Member states follow different approaches, often reflecting their perception of Russian sentiments. For the EU, the WBSA is presently considered to be in its periphery.
- The area faces a full array of threats, and regional as well as non-regional actors are well aware of them. First, old threats, from conventional military power, have not fully disappeared. Second, post 9/11 asymmetric threats have emerged with their strong destabilizing potential. And third,

the young democratic states in the area should realize that consolidation takes time, and that their democratic and electoral processes are not yet ingrained, and remain extremely vulnerable.

- In the absence of a predominant strategic player exerting his influence, the regional security situation is dominated by national governments, whose old habits tend to survive. Their dealing with post 9/11 asymmetric threats may be less than adequate, and in some cases they may be tempted to become a new threat to stability by themselves.
- The WBSA is further characterized by an elaborate latticework of linkages: what happens in one country often reverberates in others. What is lacking, however, are more formal regional structures that support the development of a clear identity of the WBSA.
- Frozen conflicts abound in the area, all needing democratic solutions instead of nationalistic and xenophobic approaches.
- The area's geographic location on the map in relation to the production and transport of energy implies that energy politics play a prominent role in the area.

2. Given these features, what are the possible fixes or approaches?

Given these characteristics, and also given the need to transform regional commonalities into a regional politico-economic identity, what is the diagnosis, and what are the options?

- Most importantly, the WBSA must leave the exclusive space of power politics. It should join a regulated space, covered by strong trans-national and local institutions.
- The countries of the WBSA need to develop the political will for self-transformation.
- The area further needs a dynamic and supportive regional leadership core, able to develop and expand initiatives in areas of cooperation between sectors into general cooperation between regional states. Any kind of initiative has to be inclusive, however, in order to further integrating policies.
- An early solution to the frozen conflicts in the area is imperative. As the present problems are not solved by isolating non-recognized entities, ways and means have to be found to engage them in a dialogue. Furthermore, scenarios have to be developed towards solutions with the involvement of all stakeholders.
- An open question, to be answered by the countries of the region, is whether they will rely on functional, manageable, non-threatening programs or initiatives. Ultimately, it is up to them to make the choice between grand statements and assertions, and smaller, quieter initiatives in their approach to regional integration.

¹ Research Adviser, Academic Research Branch, NATO Defense College, Rome, Italy. With thanks to Col. Peter Faber (USAF) for his advice.

- The EU and NATO types of integration may not provide the ideal role models for further integration in the WBSA, and the area appears to be in need of a more flexible approach to regional synergies. The right approach has still to be developed, and whether it should be top-down, bottom-up, or middle-out still has to be determined.
- By a large majority the countries of the WBSA have indicated that they need the help of outside actors. It is not yet clear, however, whether they are already in a position to coordinate and support a self-help system. The required synergies in the area may dictate a more intrusive role for outside actors, but this question has to be explored further.

3. Possible next steps ahead

Since the WBSA has an indivisible relationship with the Euro-Atlantic structures, members of the broader Euro-Atlantic community have and should have an undeniable strategic interest in the area. It implies that ample opportunity exists for the development of initiatives towards further integration of the WBSA in these structures, the area becoming a new focal point of Trans-Atlantic cooperation. More emphasis should therefore be placed on the possible greater role for programs like the Partnership for Peace, the Stability Pact and the Greater Black Sea Initiative, focusing in particular on concrete projects and initiatives.

In this regard, the Alliance could step its present cooperation programs and induce its partners to step up their defense and other reform processes. Moreover, the potential for further cooperation with other international organizations like the EU and the OSCE could be explored. A matter that warrants further attention in this respect is Russia's strategic interest in the region. Recognizing that Russia is a key player in the WBSA implies that solutions to persistent problems, such as frozen conflicts, cannot be found without engaging Russia. How to give Russia a voice in the region, and more importantly, a constructive voice, is still to be explored further, especially since two rounds of NATO enlargement have apparently made the Russian leadership wary of further NATO involvement in the WBSA.

The question of outsider impact should be further explored for other reasons as well. The US is rather active in the area, and the question can be posed whether its involvement should be reduced and replaced by a multilateral approach. On the other hand, one could argue that as the EU is turning more inward, the US on the contrary should step up its presence. Whatever approach will be followed, outsider impact is felt in the region, as representatives from especially civil society organizations emphasized, when they argued against acceptance of human rights abuses and autocratic regimes for the sake of higher strategic interests.

Peace in the Middle East After Israeli Disengagement

Laure BORGOMANO-LOUP¹

On 24 October at NDC, Dan Schueftan, Professor at the University of Haifa, and one of the major initiators of disengagement, gave a presentation on the current situation in Israel after the successful withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and North of the West Bank. Giorgio Gomel, from the Roman group "Ebrei per la Pace" (Jews for Peace), was the guest discussant. The audience consisted of governmental and academic experts from institutions in Rome and from the embassies of a number of Mediterranean countries.

1. The posture of the main actors (USA, EU, Arab World and Palestinians) is changing dramatically according to Professor Schueftan

- Everything in the region is now subordinated to the US feeling that American domestic security is strictly related to the situation in the Middle East. Zero tolerance of terrorism is now replacing geopolitical and geo-economic considerations. Regime change policy is the new US security paradigm, with two clear alternatives: to be domesticated, as Khadafi was, or to be deposed, as Saddam Hussein and Arafat were.
- The EU (as collective actor) is now out of the game on account of its reluctance to accept the military occupation of Iraq by the US-led coalition. The EU's repudiation, at the International Court of Justice, of Israel's right to self-defense against Palestinians is problematic. The only partners in the peace process are the USA and Israel. As a Quartet member, the EU is a non-actor in the region.

- The Arab world is a non-existent actor, since it provides no solidarity or real support for the Palestinians. According to the UNDP Human Development Reports, major Arab structural problems prevent the Arab world from thinking to the future or playing any role in the peace process. Even Egypt no longer wields any influence.
- Palestinians lost their legitimate excuse 4 years ago in refusing both the Camp David and the Taba proposals. The major mistakes were their insistence on the "right of refugees to return to Israel" (a demographic aggression) and their support for resistance/terrorism as a strategic option.
- As a consequence of these 4 key factors, Israel had to abandon 2 central security paradigms: the Greater Israel option and the "land for peace" deal. For the majority of Israelis, the peace option totally collapsed.
- A new paradigm emerged: "unilateralism". Its objective is to limit the devastating effects of unavoidable terrorism by a combination of different initiatives: a dedicated use of force (offensive measures such as targeted assassinations), proactive neutralization of possible "suicide bombers" (the Palestinian "precision guided munitions" – responsible for 90% of Israeli victims), establishment of a security barrier (the wall), and partial disengagements from occupied territory. Leaving Gaza is reinforcing Israel.
- Later (in 2008?) another disengagement will take place in the West Bank (dismantling of more than 100 settlements) and will be followed by the partitioning of Jerusalem.

¹ Research Adviser, Academic Research Branch, NATO Defense College, Rome, Italy.

– In conclusion, Schueftan clearly explained that it was Israel alone who would always define its own future and national borders.

2. The real question is, according to the debate, to accommodate in the long term two main objectives: viable Israeli security and a viable Palestinian state. In this respect

- A physical separation such as a wall is a realistic solution but only temporary.
- Unilateralism isn't an option in the long run, because Israel needs a Palestinian partner.
- A future Palestinian state without territorial continuity is a recipe for continuing violence.
- What is the real US long-term policy in the region? Is the Quartet/road map still relevant?
- EU is a core partner, firstly for Israel, both economically (more than 50% of export) and politically.
- Right of return for refugees is principally a moral right, not a demographic strategy.
- Only Palestinians will be able to curb terrorism definitively.
- There is an enormous desire for peace in both societies.

3. Following key points

- The only way to peace is to define a balanced peace, not an imposed peace.

- The asymmetrical situation of the parties (Israel and the Palestinian authority) is not taken sufficiently into account in the negotiations (right of return is automatic for Israelis and denied to Palestinians)
- The issue of the presence of Israeli-Arab citizens in Israel (today 20 % of the total population) has to be clarified: for the majority of Israelis, a Jewish state cannot accommodate any Arab community.
- Relations between Israel and EU are a key issue for the future.

4. A possible role for NATO? A three-step approach could be envisaged

- Firstly in Gaza airport with a small team of NATO monitors;
- Secondly an operation to secure a future road/corridor between Gaza and the West bank;
- Lastly, a deployment to monitor the border between Jordan and the Palestinian West Bank state.

Conclusion

The current reshaping of the Israeli and Palestinian political landscape may change the pace of the peace process. In both cases, the political situation has become clearer. The forthcoming Israeli and Palestinian elections in spring 2006 may provide new momentum and a new chance for peace.

NDC RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

INTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Internship

Ms Rosheen LORATO, Italy
(November 2005-March 2006)

3-4 November 2005

NATO-EU Seminar on Post-Conflict Reconstruction, NDC, Rome, Italy: organized by the NATO Defense College, co-sponsored by the Ministry of Defense of Finland. The seminar objectives included promoting more effective EU-NATO cooperation in such operations, evaluating the main problems and achievements of such operations to date, and assessing lessons from operations in Afghanistan in particular. The participants included officials from NATO and the EU, as well as experts and officials from NATO, EU, and Partnership for Peace nations.

Jean DUFOURCQ

Lecture on "*Les contraintes politiques et militaires qui affectent les opérations de reconstruction*", NATO-EU Seminar on Post-Conflict Operations, 3 November 2005, NDC, Rome, Italy.

Carlo MASALA

Panel Chair, NATO-EU Seminar on "*Post-Conflict Reconstruction*", NDC, 3-4 November 2005, Rome, Italy.

Lecture on "*Barcelona Process, NATO Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative*", for the Modular Short Course on Global Security Challenges, NDC, 9 November 2005, Rome, Italy.

Mehdi TAJE and Ferdaous BENSASSI

Lecture on "*Regionalism in the Arab World*", for the Modular Short Course on Global Security Challenges, NDC, 10 November 2005, Rome, Italy.

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Laure BORGOMANO-LOUP

Lecture on "*L'avenir de l'OTAN, entre transformations politico-militaires et incertitudes sur les missions*", Research Talks with Morocco, Ministère marocain des affaires étrangères, 16 November 2005, Rabat, Morocco.

Jean DUFOURCQ

Lecture on "*La Méditerranée stratégique*", Faculté des sciences juridiques, économiques et sociales de Salé, 15 November 2005, Rabat-Salé, Morocco.

Two lectures on "*La nouvelle oscillation stratégique, l'Europe stratégique et l'OTAN*", université de Paris 11, 28 November 2005, Paris, France.

Carlo MASALA

Commentator on Panel: "*Transatlantic Security and the Broader Middle East*", German Council on Foreign Relations, 11 November 2005, Berlin, Germany.

Annual Meeting of the German Political Science Society, 25-26 November 2005, Munich, Germany.

Lionel PONSARD

Lecture on "*NATO-Russia Relations*", NATO European Security Co-operation Course, NATO School, 3 November 2005, Oberammergau, Germany.

Lecture on "*Russian Security Perspectives*", NATO Senior Officer Policy Course, NATO School, 3 November 2005, Oberammergau, Germany.

Lecture on "*Military and Civilian Cooperation in Education*", Third ATA Conference on Education for Security and Defense, National Defense University, 4-5 November 2005, Bucharest, Romania.