Wider Black Sea: NATO, EU, SCO, and Russia

Competition and Cooperation

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Introduction

With the collapse of the bipolar international system, new regional arrangements have become a prominent feature of world politics. Besides the economic factor, they involve both political, social and cultural aspects. As a reaction to globalization, regionalization has spread in many areas of the world in order to fight against social and cultural homogeneization deriving from globalization [1].

Regionalization based on high speed transportation and communication and globalization are two complementary processes. The emergence of global governance is accompanied by local integration experiences, not just at the economic level to create stronger economic blocks, but also to find common solutions to new security threats and challenges [2].

The post-Cold War world characterized by complexity, fragmentation and uncertainty. It requires common strategies. In this context, multilateral institutions are created to help states to manage common problems. Strong interdependence due to geographical proximity and geopolitical constraints impose a common approach to deal with sources of instability such as national and religious extremism, arms and drug trafficking, migration flows.

New regional arrangements within the EU are more effective than the nation-state and potentially offering more legitimacy and collective identity than globalization. They conceived as a cooperative initiative to cope with non-military challenges such as the increasing development gap, political and societal instability.

Regionalization may thus also be understood as a rational strategy for governments in order to compensate their loss of authority and power under European integration and globalization [3].

Horizontal regional and subregional segmentations within the EU are ripening for formulating a constructive platform of regional cooperation in strengthening stability despite the lack of common approach towards understanding of security.

The close geographical proximity to potential conflicts makes regional and subregional organizations more likely to learn of threats before they have reached crisis proportions and more likely to respond before they have affected the interests of the organization's member states. Regional organizations may be able to respond to a problem situation more quickly than the UN and global organizations. They can bring to bear on the parties to a conflict the pressure of neighboring states. The preventive methods often based on traditional regional customs and practices which are often more acceptable to the parties in dispute than methods and norms imposed by external forces. However, regional organizations often find themselves constrained by their member states' determination to maintain their individual sovereign national prerogatives.

Regional organizations may not be impartial in a given conflict, because they often reflect in their own politics the very disputes and clashes of interests that the organizations are supposed to settle.

Regional security would make more deliberate and coordinated use of the respective political, moral, and material advantages of the several types of third parties already involved in conflict regions around the world.

The growing structural complexity and opacity of the regions multiple objectives over extended spatial and temporal horizons involves the design of regional institutions and generation of visions which can facilitate not only self-organization in different fields but also the relative coherence of the diverse objectives, actions, and outcomes of various self-organizing arrangements.

Regional cooperation bodies have a major role here as the primary organizers of the dialogue among all subsystems, as the source of a regulatory order in and through which they can pursue their common aims, and as the regional integration power

responsible for compensatory and preventive action where other subsystems (nation-states) fail. This involves almost permanent institutional and organizational innovation in order to maintain the very possibility of sustained stability. In this paper we consider the apparent contradictions between the EU's New Neighbourhood scheme, Russia's post-Soviet space, Wider Black Sea concept and "traditional" foreign policy towards the Black Sea Region. In particular, it will discuss the potential impact of Wider Black Sea Region, on EU-Black Sea and Russia-Black Sea relations by paying attention to EU-Russia competing interests and the Russia's approach towards the conflict resolution process Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Transdniestria. In spite of various shortcomings in practice, the Wider Black Sea Region concept reflects a relatively coherent line of security thinking, which is motivated by 'rational' security interests. It is derived from identity-driven dynamics in view of EU enlargement. The paper permits to highlight and compare three aspects of security thinking, identity dynamics, and foreign policy-in-making: First, change within the EU's foreign policy can be explained in terms of competing logics, while the logic of 'identity dynamics' currently seems to override previous approaches. Second, politics of inclusion/exclusion do not follow clear-cut lines. Rather, in line with the findings of social psychology, there is a third category, which could be termed 'simultaneously other and like'. Third, Wider Black Sea accommodates and translates the EU's needs to redefine itself and its borders in view of enlargement.

Forces of globalization, regionalization, and democratization are challenging the Black Sea area as other geopolitical entities. An interlocking of regional organizations in the Black Sea region provides a new multi-polar check and balance to a world system.

Multi-layered regionalization process in Europe's peripheries is affected by the Russian Federation in all matters pertaining to Eastern enlargement. The focus on Russian factor within the framework of the prospective European comprehensive dimensions would define the limits and constraints of a wider Europe if its border areas would be organized along sharp division between insiders and outsiders.

THE WIDER BLACK SEA FROM THE RUSSIAN PERSPECTIVE

Debate about security and stability in the Wider Black Sea has intensified over the past few years. This is the result of the growing realization that security in Europe is closely linked with security and stability in the neighbouring territories, especially vulnerable zones of existing and potential conflicts. A fundamental secular shift in nation-state – region - global relations in the Wider Black Sea has

occurred. Principal new economic and social conditions and attendant problems have emerged with the EU enlargement which cannot be managed or resolved readily, if at all, through top-down region planning or market-mediated anarchy. This secular shift reflects the dramatic intensification of societal complexity which flows from growing functional differentiation of institutional orders in an increasingly global and regional society – which leads in turn to greater systemic interdependencies across various social, spatial and temporal horizons of action.

The Wider Black Sea is the region of the origin and disappearance, clashes and cooperation, unification and dissolution of many civilizations. As a crossroads of civilizations, peoples, and regions, the Wider Black Sea appears to elude comprehensive definition.

A range of factors are often equally important in determining the position of states on various issues. Geographical proximity to problem areas can lead states to argue for attention to be given to their particular fears of approaching dangers. The Caucasus is one example of a region containing a host of problems, the solutions to which are likely to be costly, and which serves to underline the competition between regional and outside powers: Russia, Turkey, Iran, EU and the USA.

Significant decisions have been taken and solutions are emerging in key processes constituting a multi-institutional security order for Europe and affecting the situation in the Wider Black Sea region.

Furthermore, the Wider Black Sea is currently facing a multitude of problems and challenges. Socio-economic disparities, migration, refugees, conflicts, arms proliferation – these are perhaps the most commonly cited. The nature of the issues which characterize the Wider Black Sea region security environment is by no means exclusive to the region. The specific geo-political and socio-cultural context, however, give the Wider Black Sea a particularly complex security identity.

Within this degree of diversity and challenges, there is a clear interrelation among the countries and regions insisting on the Wider Black Sea, which derives mainly from their growing interdependence. This interrelation suggests the need for a cooperative approach to security, one that privileges dialogue and cooperation.

The Wider Black Sea is an unstable mix of cooperation and competition. One horn of the resulting dilemma is how to maintain interstate trust, secure generalized compliance with negotiated understandings, reduce mistrust through open communication, and engage in negative co-ordination in the face of the many and varied opportunities that exist for short-term self-interested competitive behaviour of

regional actors – behaviour which could soon destroy the basis for continuing partnership. The other horn is that an excessive commitment to cooperation and consensus could block the emergence of creative tensions, conflicts, or efforts at crisis-resolution which could promote learning and/or learning capacities and thereby enhance adaptability. This horn is especially acute when the environment is turbulent, speedy action is required, incrementalism is inappropriate, and it would take time to build consensus.

As the prevailing problems of the region are mainly of security and socio-economic nature, it is only logical that in promoting a Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice across the Black Sea plays a most prominent role.

It is logical, then, that the evolution of the Wider Black Sea as a stable and prosperous region requires the involvement of both regional and outside actors.

In this context Russian involvement in the region is of great importance. Russia is also struggling to develop a distinct European and NATO policy based on Founding Act with NATO and the Partnership with EU and to get more involved in conflict and crisis management.

Today, Russia as the Caucasus power looks to the Wider Black Sea as a region where it has its own specific interests dealing with threats and challenges to security from the zone of turbulence and instability.

Inclusion of Russia into the process of EU/Russia strategic partnership with its still largely untapped potential for cooperation in security matters and experience of different models of diverse level and speed integration with CIS countries, as well as dynamic cooperation in security issues within the Black Sea Economic Cooperation could reinforce and complement other international efforts to establish and enhance cooperation with the Wider Black Sea countries.

Security and stability in the Wider Black Sea area is a combined outcome of regional and Wider European cooperation, unification and integration.

The concept for strategic partnership and the Road Map for the Common Space on External Security approved at the EU/Russia summit in May 2005 creates directions for the basic internal and external security functions of actors in the Black Sea Region such as effective governance, law enforcement and border controls as well as national defence.

Another direction is to create a joint regional capability for participation in regional peacekeeping and crisis management and developing a multilateral defence related infrastructure as well as establishing an institution for military education.

Russia is ready for constructive cooperation with the European Union in solving the problems of the Wider Black Sea. A closer relationship with the Union will be an essential element in overcoming residual divisions and in the unification of the Wider Black Sea as a common security space. Co-operation arrangement will consolidate security and stability and promote domestic changes and reforms required for the sustainable transformation of the region. Growing partnership cooperation between the nations of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea basins, between the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the EU has a considerable potential [4].

The Wider Black Sea is bound to remain a grey area in terms of its relationship to the EU. This strategic uncertainty in relation to the EU in many cases has its counterpart in uncertainty concerning relations with Russia. The numerous "freezed conflicts" in the Black Sea region and the intensity of conflictual bilateral relations are rather high in the region.

The security problems facing the Wider Black Sea today are multifaceted. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) with 6 full members (China, Russia, four of the former Central Asia republics) and 3 observers (India, Pakistan and Iran) is now the biggest alliance with about 50% of humanity. The Project for the New American Century in point number 7 envisages to change regime in China. So the major conflict confrontation of the world today is between NATO/AMPO and SCO. The many talked Shield against Iran has to neutralize missiles from Russia and China. Anti-missiles capacities in the Czech Republic and Poland come on top of the US and NATO breaking the promises made to Gorbachev at the end of the Cold War: that the Soviet Union would withdraw from Eastern Europe, including Eastern Germany, and the United States would not follow suit. [5].

Many of these problems are not of a military nature. Some belong to the level of states, involving issues which can be contained within one state or solved on a state level. Other issues extend across borders. Environmental issues are extreme in this respect, often involving several states and frequently needing the framework of an organization for their solution.

Today's problems are also likely to interact with each other, thereby escalating the process of hostilities and obstructing their resolution without recourse to the comprehensive solutions available only through international organizations.

One example of this complexity is the above-mentioned situation in the Caucasus, a conflict complex region which is seen as highly vulnerable for the European security. The Wider Black Sea region contains problems of a demographic, social, environmental

and economic nature which the EU/Russia cooperation regime seeks to address through the regional organization arrangement, involving a range of measures intended to result, inter alia, in the completion of a free trade agreement.

The complexity of the problems themselves explains the complicated nature of the problem-solving process. The problems of today are often of a civilian nature. They are therefore thought to be most easily solved on the civilian level, before an escalation to military means takes place. This does not mean that military forces are not used at all: they are well suited to a number of tasks such as, for example, rescue operations and other humanitarian actions for which a military organization is necessary. In addition to the coordination of civilian and military tasks, there are other factors which may lead to complexity in problem solving. These may occur on the organizational level where conflicts related to security belong to the second, inter-governmental, pillar. The economic and other means available for solving the problem are, however, often found in the first pillar, which is largely supranational.

In addition, even when seeking to create stability in the long run, and thus acting within the civilian sphere only, there is a complexity in the means used. This is related to the two sectors of society – the governmental and the private sectors. It is widely recognized that without trade contacts and investments by private companies there is little chance to create stable societies in which people can rely on a future with a reasonable standard of living. Stability thus depends on a well-functioning private sector, whose mechanisms governments should ideally leave well alone. At the same time, governments must be involved in the creation of possibilities for private companies to establish themselves in formerly non-market economies.

The factors which create diversity in the Black Sea region counterbalance by a number of factors which unite states at the same time as they serve to improve cooperation within organizations.

The primary unifying factor is the similarity of culture and values which now exists in the region. Second, the need for states to cooperate in order to solve problems. Third, states share the understanding that organizations have to work with some efficiency.

The states bordering the Wider Black Sea present examples of most of the forms of associations that exist in NATO, the EU, CIS and SCO. In addition there is an important division between states which are applying for membership of NATO and the EU, and Russia, a state which does not accept the consequences of the process of the enlargement of NATO, in particular when this concerns the border states.

Heterarchies operate in complex, often turbulent, environments. They face problems in remaining open to the environment at the same time as securing the closure needed for effective co-ordination among a limited number of partners. One horn of the resulting dilemma is that closure may lock in members whose exit would be beneficial (e.g., failed states, weak economies). The other horn is that openness may discourage partners from entering into long-term commitments and sharing long-term time horizons. This may promt opportunism in (the potentially self-fulfilling) case that partnerships dissolve or involve high turnover. It is reflected in the choice of maximizing the range of possible actions by expanding relevant bases of membership or favouring the "small is beautiful" principle for the purpose of focused and timely action; and the choice of variable geometries of action versus fixed spatial boundaries for membership of a governance arrangement. An interesting variant of this latter version of the dilemma is whether to permit transnational regional partnerships or to insist on sovereignty of states.

Heterarchy is said to permit longer-term strategic guidance whilst retaining flexibility (lacking in hierarchies with their rule-governed procedures). But this is also the site of a dilemma: that between governability (the capacity for guidance) and flexibility (the capacity to adapt to changed circumstances). This assumes several forms. Reducing complexity through operational rules as a precondition for governing a complex world needs to be balanced against the recognition of complexity to mobilize the "requisite variety" of actors and resources. Avoiding duplication to limit resource costs needs to be balanced against maintaining an adequate repertoire of actions and strategic capacities. A third variant is posed in the choice between exploiting past organizational and inter-organizational learning to standardize around "best practice" and maintaining adaptability in the face of a turbulent environment by avoiding "lock-in" to outmoded routines. This last problem is particularly associated with efforts to impose "best practice" from above rather than encourage diversity and allow for horizontal communication and learning among partnerships.

Some state-region partnerships are expected to serve the region interest as well as to deliver regional powers benefits. But this blurs the state-region distinction and poses a familiar dilemma in terms of accountability versus efficiency. On the one hand, there are problems about attributing responsibility for decisions and non-decisions (acts of commission or omission) in interdependent networks. These problems are especially acute when partnerships are inter-state rather than intra-state. On the other hand, attempts to establish clear lines of accountability can interfere with the efficient,

cooperative pursuit of joint goals. A related dilemma is that region-state arrangements run the risk of allowing the exploitative capture of weak state resources for purposes of more strong regional powers and/or extending their reach into the regional and world economy and other weak states to serve the interests of the regional actors or governing elites.

These dilemmas can be managed collectively in several ways. Among these are the developments of different regional institutions, apparatuses, or agencies specialized primarily in one or other horn of a dilemma and changing balance between them through differential allocation of resources, continuing competition for legitimacy in changing circumstances, etc. Likewise, different horns can be handled at different scales. Different governance arrangements may also be instituted to deal with different temporal horizons. Thus one partnership may have an open structure and long-term horizon, another may be relatively closed and pursue specific tasks or development activities with short-term time horizons.

The new types of cross-border problems are represented here too. Above all, problems related to minorities and environmental issues are potentially dangerous ones and need to be dealt with.

Regarding the difficult issue of Russia's non-acceptance of FSU NATO-membership, the discrepancies between the views of Russia and other countries are still wide. The position and policy adopted by Russia is of equal importance to the Wider Black Sea Region. The complexity of organizational structures, with several forms of association and with overlapping memberships and tasks, has given the Wider Black Sea region countries the scope and freedom to participate in initiatives proposed by various organizations TRACEKA, GUAM, BSEC. The challenge is to create a zone of increased security and economic integration in the Wider Black Sea region of a character which overarches the organizational affiliations that separate the various countries. In this endeavour economic cooperation is likely to be the dominant form of cooperation: as the necessary basis for stable societies and as the area in which interests converge.

Generally, the size of Russia also tends to accentuate the dominance of cooperation among states rather than organizational co-operation and integration. Russia's importance is such that bilateral co-operation with the United States as well as the larger European states is likely to continue as a vital pattern in its policy.

The second trend is that of flexibility or flexible integration. The enlargement EU faces some fundamental problems, above all the problem of effective governance and

flexibility. With the unanimity as the dominant principle of decision-making in security the enlarged body of the EU may be less effective. Flexibility in the economic field is likely to become a reality with the introduction of the third stage of EMU. As some members of the EU become part of the EMU, and others are left, or prefer to stay, outside, the differences between them might become substantial.

The logic of governance favours a joint solving of common problems. It transforms, as an approach, the meaning of security by moving away from conceptions of narrow self-interests and zero-sum type of calculations regarding gains and losses.

The stronger the impact of the logic of governance, the smaller the danger of a relapse into exclusionary politics and a return to binary divisions into friends and enemies.

Regional governance does not amount to the installation of a certain monolithic mode of governance. Rather, it involves the management of complexity and plurality. Thus markets, hierarchies, and heterarchies still exist; but they operate in a context of "negotiated decision-making". Thus, on the one hand, market competition will be balanced by co-operation. On the other hand, the state is no longer the sovereign authority. It becomes but one participant among others in the pluralistic guidance system and contributes its own distinctive resources to negotiation process. As the range of networks, partnerships, and other models of economic and political governance expand, official apparatuses remain at best *primus inter pares.* The nation-state's involvement would become less hierarchical, less centralized, and less *dirigiste* in character. The exchange of information and moral suasion become key sources of legitimation and the nation-states' influence depends as much on their role as a prime source and mediator of collective intelligence as on its command over economic resources or legitimate coercion.

In exercising this meta-governance role, the nation-state provides the ground rules for governance, ensures the compatibility of different governance mechanisms and regimes, deploys a relative monopoly of organizational intelligence and information with which to shape cognitive expectations, acts as a "court of appeal" for disputes arising within and over governance, serves to rebalance power differentials by strenthening weaker parties or systems in the interests of system integration and/or social cohesion, etc. This emerging meta-governance role means that networking, negotiation, noise reduction, and negative co-ordination take place (Scharpf, 1944, p.40) The need for such a role is especially acute in the light of the wide dispersion of governance mechanisms and the corresponding need to build appropriate macro-organizational

capacities to address far-reaching inter-organizational changes without undermining the basic coherence and integrity of the national state.

The presence of competitive and nervous energies that exist in the region can be directed and channelled away from exclusionary and confrontational politics. This is done by introducing separate regional measures and processes, but above all by integrating the Black Sea basin into the positive tendencies that have been underway in Europe at large, and by implementing a variety of changes in order to overcome the region's past. The core issues consist of dynamisation, integration, free flows and a pooling of the strengths of the region in order to bolster its position in a Europe-wide competition for influence and centrality.

Security, to the extent that it enters the discourse, also turns into a unifying theme, as there is a joint interest in downgrading and settling problems in order to be eligible for European politics. Even outside powers have an interest in ensuring that they are not too automatically brought into the picture once local tensions flare.

Security, in its "soft" form, generates a fairly cooperative political scenery. Security turns into the promotion of increased communality and joint endeavours to counteract the negative trends.

The Euro-Russian Partnership of the 1990s and 2005 and the Road Map for the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice are the results of a long and crisis ridden relationship between EU and Russia. Initiatives over time have equally revealed great hopes for rapprochament and cooperation between the two parties. Europe's focus has changed and varied in degree of intensity and explicit interests in the Wider Black Sea region over time.

The Road Map approved by EU and Russia on 10 May 2005, is a document mirroring the need to replace the currently unregulated regional space with some kind or security and stability order and is, at the same time, a reflection of the need to intensify cooperation between Russian policy and the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) with world regions in terms structure and procedure. The cooperation seeks to promote dialogue and partnership in the field of politics and security, in the financial and economic area and in matters concerning civil society and culture.

EU-Russia cooperation would be channeled into an institutionalization process and structured through several levels of interaction, including the strengthening of institutional and administrative framework and consider the possibility of a Memorandum of Understanding on the fight against terrorism between EU and Russia.

Political and security cooperation within the framework of the EU/Russia is based upon typology of initiatives ranging from existing mechanisms, notably Permanent Partnership Council or meetings at ministerial, junior diplomat or senior official level, to networks of practitioners or experts.

As the political and security partnership embraces also a wide range of actions dealing with hot issues such as terrorism, some problems among the partner countries can arise even at the very beginning of cooperation. To avoid complete stalemate, a pragmatic approach would be adopted and action is taken on a step-by-step basis whenever there is a common perception of a specific threat.

Russia's interests in the Wider Black Sea are based on the age-old trade, political, cultural and humanitarian relations with the region. These traditional ties have been enriched with new forms including growing tourism. Russia's national interests in the Wider Black Sea stem also from the new geopolitical situation resulted from the end of the Cold War period. New actors like Ukraine, Georgia, and others entered the Black Sea – Caspian basin scene after the break-up of the former USSR. Thus, the emergence of the Ukraine as an independent regional player has drastically changed the balance of power in the Wider Black Sea, which is characterized by the relationship in the triangle Russia-Ukraine-Turkey. The emergence of Azerbaijan with its richest oil fields on the Caspian Sea and its special relationship with Turkey has bridged the Caspian and the Black Sea areas. Thus, the interlacing and conflicting interests of the traditional and new actors have significantly reinforced the regional interdependence. Russia's major concern and goal became to maintain its political stability and to contain conflicts across the post-Soviet space, and to extend the possible to the areas adjacent to it. Russia has strong national interests all over the Black Sea-Caspian Sea regions.

The Russia –Turkey cooperation is essential for stability in the Black Sea-Balkan region. It should be also recognized that Russia and Turkey may be partners, though their regional strategies are guided by the opposite goals. Turkey is still interested to undercut Russia's position in the Black Sea-Caspian region and to expand its influence to the Muslim republics and communities in the South Caucasus region and the Northern Caucasus area and Tatarstan in the Russian Federation.

The growing importance of Turkey for Russia confronted Russian leadership with the necessity to work out a well-thought-out policy vis-à-vis Turkey that would differ from either primitive anti-Turkish stance or from unrealistic wish to be friends with all nations of the Black Sea region.

The emergence of a new factor – an official opening of the Jaikhan oil transportation route and a problem of security of oil transportation - could change the geopolitical sense.

The problem of Caspian and Central Asian oil transportation is also complicated by the fact that all routs pass through regions of the intractable and freezing conflicts – Karabakh, South Ossetian, Chechen, Abkhazian, Kurdish. Cooperation between the EU and Russia in the area of conflict prevention can become a key component in developing a proactive preventive security in the Wider Black Sea.

CONCLUSIONS

Different projects of region-building offer a unique opportunity to strengthen political, economic and cultural ties across the regional areas. Regional solutions are more suitable in stability promotion, and military stability is linked with the broader strategic context. In all sectors of security policy national and regional efforts can complement and reinforce wider European and Russian policies.

The comprehensive approach approved on May 10, 2005 in Moscow by President of Russia Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister of Luxembourg Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Durao Barroso and EU High Representative for Foreign Policy and Security Javier Solana [6] is based upon the assumption that political stability and economic prosperity are interdependent and require social and cultural development according to a mutually reinforcing logic. But due to the relantissement of achieving political stability in the area and the delay of economic development to taking off, a restructuring of the Black Sea space is now required by paying serious attention to the degeneration of interrelations such as increasing intolerance. Political, economic and cultural contradictions might threaten the process, and necessary measures have to be adopted. To raise the visibility of the process, initiatives are essential to deal not only with the elites such as politicians, civil servants, NGOs representatives or academics, but with a broader public as well.

The most important Russian priority in the Wider Black Sea region is security, which can be achieved by the establishment of the all-region preventive security system with the participation of Russia. Another objective is complex and sustainable economic development and integration of the Southern Russia into regional markets. The evaluation of the Southern Dimension in the Wider Black Sea Region indicates that it brings "added values" to the policies of the European Union. The evolution of the Wider Black Sea Region into the area of prosperity, deep cooperation and safety is also a

method of strengthening EU-Russian bilateral relations. On the other hand, the original and ambitious model of a Road Map on the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice, aimed at providing a counterweight to the pattern of concentric circles and the problems this causes for those in the outer circles, appears to be appropriate for the vulnerable Caucasus and the Wider Black Sea region.

The evaluation of new regional arrangements has demonstrated that a regional approach could play an important role for the relations between the EU and its Neighbourhood and Russia and its neighbours.

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