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Daria Isachenko

Turkey in the Black Sea Region

Ankara's Reactions to the War in Ukraine against the Background of Regional Dynamics and Global Confrontation

Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
German Institute for
International and Security Affairs

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- Turkey's policy in the Black Sea region is the result of not only a complex relationship with Russia but also of a difficult relationship with the West. In particular, US policy in the Middle East has a major impact on how Ankara positions itself in the Black Sea region.
- An important feature of the Black Sea region has been and continues to be the shared Turkish and Russian vision of a regional order that excludes external actors. This can be seen in the way Turkey interpreted the Montreux Convention after the outbreak of war in Ukraine and in the way the Black Sea Grain Initiative came about.
- Under the Montreux Convention, Ankara has a decisive role in the limitation of extra-regional fleets in the Black Sea. This is partly due to Turkish control of the straits. On the other hand, there are also treaty-based tonnage restrictions for warships of non-littoral states that are allowed to stay in the Black Sea temporarily.
- Ankara's manoeuvres are contributing significantly to the West's uncertainty about Turkey's foreign policy orientation. However, Ankara is not questioning its security anchorage in NATO.
- As well as securing its leadership role in the Black Sea region, Ankara is also keen to assert its economic interests.

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Turkey in the Black Sea Region Ankara's Reactions to the War in Ukraine against the Background of Regional Dynamics and Global Confrontation

In June 2022, NATO adopted a new Strategic Concept at its summit in Madrid. It identifies Russia as "the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area." All NATO members, including Turkey, agreed to this. However, in its relations with Russia, Ankara has taken a special path. Since Russia launched its war against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, Turkey has continued to pursue a parallel approach of deterrence and dialogue in relation to Russia. Turkey's positioning is often compared to that of states in the Global South that do not want to choose sides. But this comparison may be misleading, partly because there are two levels of conflict for Ankara: The NATO-Russia confrontation and the competitive relationship between Russia and itself. This is one of the reasons why Ankara strives to expand its military cooperation with Ukraine.

Turkey's Bayraktar TB2 attack drones are particularly well known. At the start of the war, they became a symbol of Ukrainian resistance to Russia's invasion. Following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Turkey and Ukraine have already stepped up their defence cooperation. Ankara's willingness to contribute to Kyiv's military build-up is not limited to the supply and joint production of combat drones. Under the October 2020 agreement, Turkey has agreed to build two ADA-class corvettes for Ukraine. According to media reports, these were supposed to be equipped with Harpoon anti-ship missiles.

Turkey also condemned Russia's annexation of Crimea as illegal in 2014. With regard to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, Ankara is clearly on Kyiv's side. It continuously votes in favour of Ukraine in the relevant United Nations (UN) General Assembly resolutions. However, Turkey abstained in the vote on Russia's suspension from the Council of Europe. And, as in 2014, it did not join the Western sanctions against Moscow after 24 February 2022.

Staying in dialogue with Russia has allowed Turkey to make a name for itself as a mediator between Moscow and Kyiv. A significant result of this is the Black

Sea Grain Initiative, which came about in July 2022. It was not a perfect solution, but it has made it possible to export Ukrainian grain, albeit on a limited scale. However, what is worrying for Ankara's Western allies is that Turkey is not only helping the Kremlin to circumvent the sanctions but also profiting from them.

Thus, Turkey's policy in the Ukraine war once again raises questions about Ankara's foreign policy course, which is not fully in line with that of its allies. In order to understand Ankara's current positioning in the Ukraine war, it is helpful to look back at Turkey's policy in the Black Sea region since the end of the Cold War. This shows that even then, Turkey and its Western allies had significant differences in their perception of the geopolitical situation. For Turkey, the collapse of the Soviet Union initially called into question its own importance as a strategic anchor on the southern flank of the Western alliance. In addition, American policy in the Middle East created new security problems for Turkey. As the gap between Ankara's regional interests and threat perceptions and those of the West widened, Turkey's cooperation with Russia increased. This is not limited to joint natural gas projects. Rather, the two countries share a common vision of the regional order in the Black Sea region, which aims to keep external actors at bay. For Turkey, this means it can secure its own leadership role in the region and pursue its economic interests.

One of Ankara's main concerns in the Black Sea region remains maintaining the double balance of power between the littoral and non-littoral states on the one hand and between Russia and itself on the other. This is not only due to Turkey's historical and current vulnerability to Russia. Another reason is Ankara's mistrust of Washington, which is increasingly establishing itself as a power in the Black Sea region after the end of the Cold War. The war in Ukraine has brought these two interrelated dynamics into sharp relief.

Turkey's special approach to Russia in the Black Sea region within NATO is unlikely to change. Nevertheless, no general conclusions should be drawn from Ankara's regional strategy. This applies in particular to Ankara's security anchorage in NATO.

Competing for Regional Leadership

The end of the Cold War was both a challenge and an opportunity for Turkey. On the one hand, its role on NATO's southern flank became less important after the collapse of the Soviet Union.[1] In addition, the European Economic Community rejected Turkey's application for membership in 1989, creating uncertainty in Turkey about the future of its relations with the West.[2] On the other hand, Ankara seized the opportunity to create its own "unipolar moment" in the Black Sea region by taking the lead in an integration project. The idea was that regional political stability could be achieved through economic cooperation. At the same time, Turkey's then president, Turgut Özal, saw it as a "Plan B" if his country's European Union (EU) membership remained a distant prospect.[3]

After the end of the Cold War, Ankara sought economic cooperation in the Black Sea region.

A summit initiated by Özal took place in Istanbul in 1992, paving the way for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). The BSEC was based on the principle of inclusiveness, which is why its charter, adopted in 1999, provides only for voluntary withdrawal from the organisation.[4] In addition to the countries bordering the Black Sea — Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, and Georgia — the founding members include Greece, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova. Together with Serbia and North Macedonia, the BSEC currently has 13 members.

Despite the armed conflicts that erupted in the Black Sea region in the early 1990s (Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria), the BSEC organisation sought to expand economic development. Above all, cooperation on energy issues was to serve as a driver for integration, drawing inspiration from the role of coal and steel in the creation of the EU.[5] In its self-presentation, the BSEC emphasises two important factors for the development of cooperation: The region's rich energy resources and its advantageous location as a transport corridor for Europe.[6]

However, the assumption that the Black Sea is a significant node connecting several regions and, therefore, could act as a catalyst for regional cooperation proved to be a fallacy.[7] The integration potential of the Organisation of BSEC remained limited due to the different foreign policy orientations of the partici-

1 A new role for Turkey has been described as "a strategic link between Europe and the turbulent Middle East." Dankwart A. Rustow, *Turkey. America's Forgotten Ally* (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations, 1989), 109.

2 Mustafa Aydın, "Geographical Blessing versus Geopolitical Curse: Great Power Security Agendas for the Black Sea Region and a Turkish Alternative," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 9, no. 3 (2009), 271—85.

3 Ibid., 278.

4 Organization of the BSEC, *Charter of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation*, http://www.bsec-organization.org/UploadedDocuments/StatutoryDocumentsAgreements/CHARTERFourthEdition7July.pdf (accessed 5 May 2023).

5 Sergiu Celac, "The Regional Ownership Conundrum: The Case of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation," in *Next Steps in Forging a Euroatlantic Strategy for the Wider Black Sea*, ed. Ronald D. Asmus (Washington, D.C.: German Marshall Fund [GMF], 2006), 215—26 (222). See also Remziye Yılmaz-Bozkuş, "Turkey's Relations and Energy Cooperation with the BSEC," *Insight Turkey* 21, no. 3 (2019), 177—94.

6 Organisation of the BSEC, http://www.bsec-organization.org/bsec-at-glance (accessed 21 November 2022).

7 The following priorities have developed in the organisation of the BSEC: Environmental protection, climate change, trade, agriculture, culture, science, education, tourism, and pandemic health security. Paul Taylor, *Murky Waters. The Black Sea Region and European Security* (Brussels: Friends of Europe, January 2022), 61, https://www.friendsofeurope.org/insights/murky-waters-the-black-sea-region-and-european-security/ (accessed 21 November 2022).

pating states.[8] This ultimately led to the emergence of various institutional frameworks in the region (see Map 1, page 9).

The geopolitically induced discord among the BSEC participating states became apparent as early as the mid-1990s. The meeting of delegations from Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova in Vienna at the first review conference of the CFE Treaty (Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe) in 1996 led to the creation of the GUAM Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development.[9] The aim was to establish a "political, economic, and strategic alliance," to seek cooperation with the EU and NATO, and to create the Transport Corridor Europe—Caucasus—Asia (TRACECA).[10]

Ukraine and Georgia sought greater support from the West on issues of democracy and conflict resolution by establishing the Community of Democratic Choice (CDC) together with Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, and North Macedonia in December 2005. However, regarding question of how to stabilise the security situation in the region, the logic of the CDC was at odds with that of the BSEC. According to the CDC, conflicts should first be resolved to promote economic development, while the BSEC saw economic cooperation as a step towards political stability.[11]

In June 2006, Romania initiated another entity — the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership (BSF). Romania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine have decided to become members, while Turkey and Bulgaria have opted for observer status.[12] For Ankara, Bucharest's competing intention to "create coherence between the activities of the different formations in the region," including the BSEC, through a new forum was particularly problematic.[13]

With the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU in January 2007, the EU finally took an active interest in the Black Sea region and published a corresponding guideline in April 2007: *Black Sea Synergy – A New Regional Cooperation Initiative*. The geographical version of the region contained therein largely coincided with that of the BSEC.[14] In view of the gas crisis between Russia and Ukraine in 2005—2006, energy security was an important issue for the EU. Cooperation between the EU and the BSEC has been sought but has proved difficult. On the one hand, the EU's priorities, such as democracy promotion, were not at the top of the BSEC's agenda, and on the other hand, the BSEC was concerned that its regional leadership could be challenged.[15]

From the US perspective, the accumulation of institutions — BSEC, GUAM, CDC, and BSF — prevented Washington from developing a Black Sea strategy.[16] For the United States, as for the EU, energy security,

8 Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, "The 'Security Paradoxes' of the Black Sea Region," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 9, no. 3 (2009), 225—41.

9 Named after the initials of the participating countries: Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova (GUAM). Known as GUUAM between 1999 and 2005, as Uzbekistan also participated during this period.

10 Jennifer D. P. Moroney and Sergei Konoplyov, "Ukraine, GUUAM, and Western Support for Sub-Regional Cooperation in Europe's Security Gray Zone," in *Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy. Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Jennifer D. P. Moroney et al. (Westport, CT, and London: Praeger, 2002), 179—95 (180).

11 Jean-Christophe Peuch, "Ukraine: Regional Leaders Set Up Community of Democratic Choice," *Radio Free Europe* (online), 2 December 2005, https://www.rferl.org/a/1063461.html (accessed 5 January 2023).

12 Caterina Preda, "A Comparison of Caribbean and Black Sea Regionalisms," in *New Regionalism or No Regionalism? Emerging Regionalism in the Black Sea Area*, ed. Ruxandra Ivan, The International Political Economy of New Regionalisms Series (Abingdon and New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 205—22 (219).

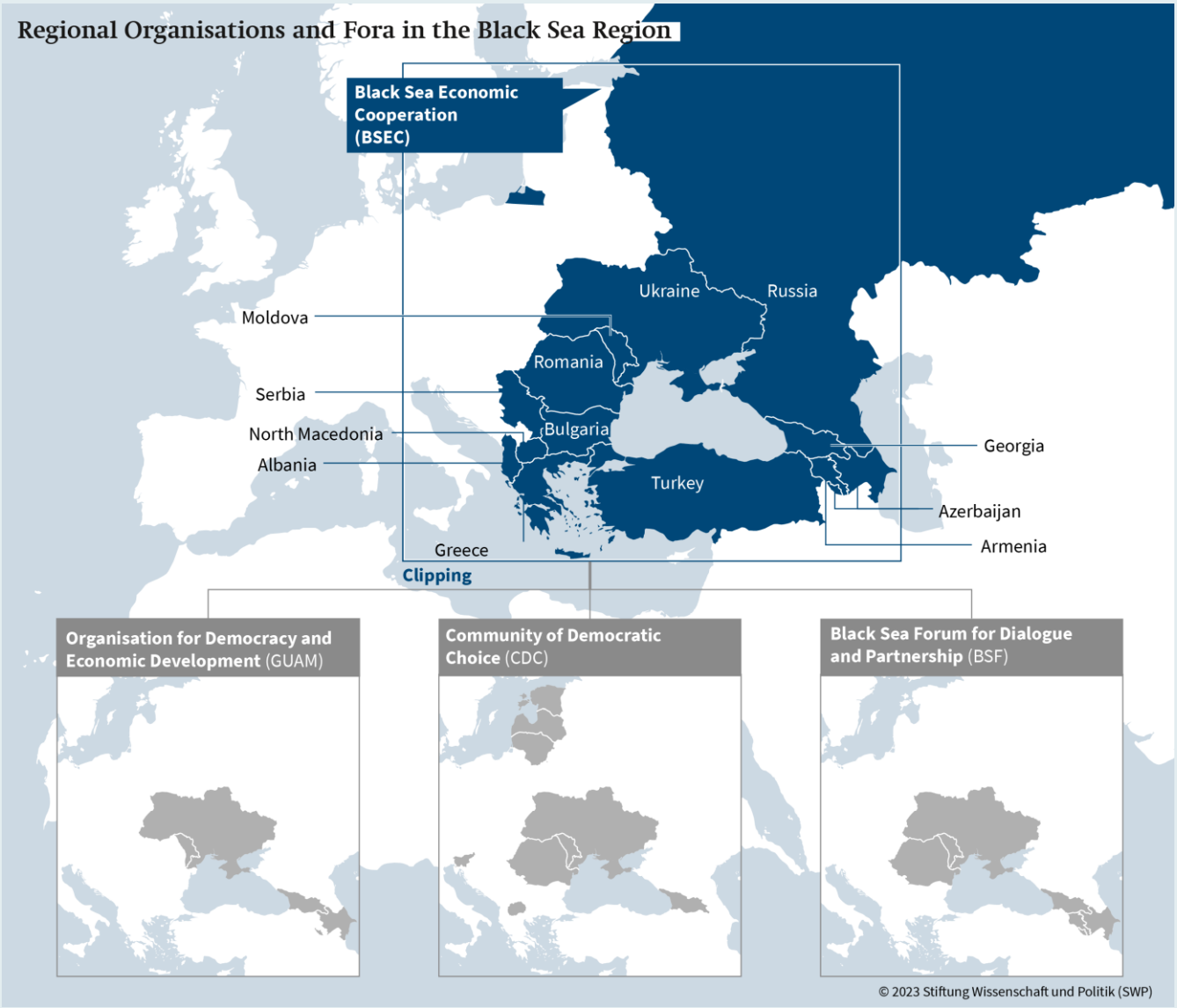
13 Bülent Karadeniz, "Security and Stability Architecture in the Black Sea," *Perceptions. Journal of International Affairs* 12, no. 2 (2007), 95—117 (115).

14 From the EU's perspective, the Black Sea region consists of "Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, and Moldova to the west, Ukraine and Russia to the north, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan to the east and Turkey to the south. Although Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Greece are not littoral states, their history, proximity, and close relations make them natural regional players." European Commission, *Black Sea Synergy – A New Regional Cooperation Initiative* (Brussels, 11 April 2007), 2, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52007DC0160&from=EN (accessed 21 November 2022). The BSEC members Albania, Northern Macedonia, and Serbia are not included in the Black Sea region in this document.

15 Michael Emerson, "The EU's New Black Sea Policy," in *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century. Strategic, Economic, and Energy Perspectives*, ed. Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (Washington, D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008), 253—76 (272).

16 Ronald D. Asmus and Bruce P. Jackson, "The Black Sea and the Frontiers of Freedom. Towards a New Euro-Atlantic Strategy," *Policy Review* 125 (2004), 17—26.

Map 1



Sources: Organisation of the BSEC, "Member States" (online, accessed 1 September 2023); Jennifer D. P. Moroney and Sergei Konoplyov, "Ukraine, GUUAM, and Western Support for Sub-Regional Cooperation in Europe's Security Gray Zone," in *Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy. Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Jennifer D. P. Moroney et al. (Westport, CT, and London: Praeger, 2002), 179—95; Jean-Christophe Peuch, "Ukraine: Regional Leaders Set Up Community of Democratic Choice," *Radio Free Europe*, 2 December 2005 (online, accessed 5 January 2023); Caterina Preda, "A Comparison of Caribbean and Black Sea Regionalisms," in *New Regionalism or No Regionalism? Emerging Regionalism in the Black Sea Area*, ed. Ruxandra Ivan, The International Political Economy of New Regionalisms Series (Abingdon and New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 205—22.

conflict resolution, and democracy promotion have been the three central themes guiding their engagement in the Black Sea region.[17]

17 Ronald D. Asmus, ed., *Next Steps in Forging a Euroatlantic Strategy for the Wider Black Sea* (see note 5); Sergei Konoplyov, "US Interests in the Wider Black Sea Region," in *Blue Black Sea. New Dimensions of History, Security, Strategy, Energy and Economy*, ed. Giray Saynur Bozkurt (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 197—206; Zeyno Baran and Robert A. Smith, "The Energy Dimension in American Policy towards the Black Sea Region," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 7, no. 2 (2007), 265—74.

Today, the challenges posed by Russia, China, and the Middle East dominate Washington's view of the Black Sea. In the words of the former commander-in-chief of US forces in Europe, Ben Hodges, "The region is at the centre of four great forces: Democracy on its western edge, Russian military aggression to its north, Chinese financial aggression to its east, instability in the Middle East to its south."[18] In July 2022, a bill reflecting these interests was introduced in the US Senate, the *Black Sea Security Act of 2022*, which seeks to counter the West's double challenge from Russia and China by strengthening NATO-EU cooperation, promoting democracy in the region, and developing economic ties with the region. Turkey is given the role of "a key ally in the Black Sea region and a bulwark against Iran."[19] In addition, the American *Black Sea Security Act of 2022* provides for support of the Three Seas Initiative (3SI).

The 3SI, launched in August 2016, includes Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Austria, Croatia, Romania, and Bulgaria as members (see Map 2, page 11).[20] The initiative sees itself as "a politically inspired, commercially driven platform to improve connectivity between twelve EU Member States located between the Baltic Sea, the Adriatic Sea, and the Black Sea."[21] Its main purpose is to cooperate in the fields of transport, energy, and digital interconnectivity.[22] Particularly important in the founding of the 3SI was the intent to reduce energy dependence on Russian gas. In this respect, the interests of the Central European EU members converge with those of the United States, which is involved in the 3SI both politically and financially.[23]

Moreover, Central European security cohesion was also strengthened shortly before the establishment of the 3SI — on the initiative of Poland and Romania: in November 2015, the two countries organised a "mini-summit of NATO members representing the Alliance's eastern flank."[24] The resulting Bucharest Nine (B9), which also includes the Baltic States, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria, shaped the outcome of the NATO Summit in Warsaw in July 2016 by successfully advocating an enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in the region.[25]

Turkey has been conducting a trilateral dialogue with the B9 initiators, Poland and Romania, at the foreign minister level since 2016.[26] Ankara's participation in the 3SI is questionable.[27] On the one hand, Turkish experts see the 3SI as an opportunity to straighten out relations with the United States.[28] On

18 Ben Hodges, *The Black Sea ... or a Black Hole?* CEPA Strategy Paper (Washington, D.C.: Center for European Policy Analysis [CEPA], January 2021), 2, https://cepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/CEPA-SP-Black-Sea-Strategy-v2-1.19.21.pdf (accessed 21 November 2022).

19 US Congress, *Black Sea Security Act of 2022*, 12 July 2022, https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congresssenate-bill/4509/text (accessed 21 November 2022).

20 The impetus for the initiative was the report "*Completing Europe*" *(From the North-South Corridor to Energy, Transportation, and Telecommunications Union)* published in 2014 by the American think tank Atlantic Council. The report's references to infrastructural disparities in Europe were eventually taken up by the leaders of Croatia and Poland for the creation of the Three Seas Initiative. 3SI, "Three Seas Story," https://3seas.eu/about/threeseasstory?lang=en (accessed 6 February 2023).

21 3SI, "Three Seas Summit and Business Forum," https://3seas.eu/?lang=en (accessed 6 February 2023).

22 Rafał Riedel, "Das 'Intermarium' und die 'Drei-Meere-Initiative' als Elemente des euroskeptischen Diskurses in Polen," Polen-Analysen (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 23 January 2020), https://www.bpb.de/themen/europa/polen-analysen/303999/analyse-das-intermarium-und-die-drei-meere-initiative-als-elemente-des-euroskeptischen-diskurses-in-polen/ (accessed 6 February 2023).

23 Łukasz Lewkowicz, "The Three Seas Initiative in the Context of International Challenges," *Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe* 17, no. 3 (2019), 7—12; Kai-Olaf Lang, *Die Drei-Meere-Initiative: wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit in geostrategischem Kontext. Deutschland sollte sein Engagement auch aus außenpolitischen Gründen verstärken*, SWP-Aktuell 16/2021 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, February 2021).

24 George Soroka and Tomasz Stępniewski, "The Three Seas Initiative: Geopolitical Determinants and Polish Interests," *Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe* 17, no. 3 (2019), 15—29 (24).

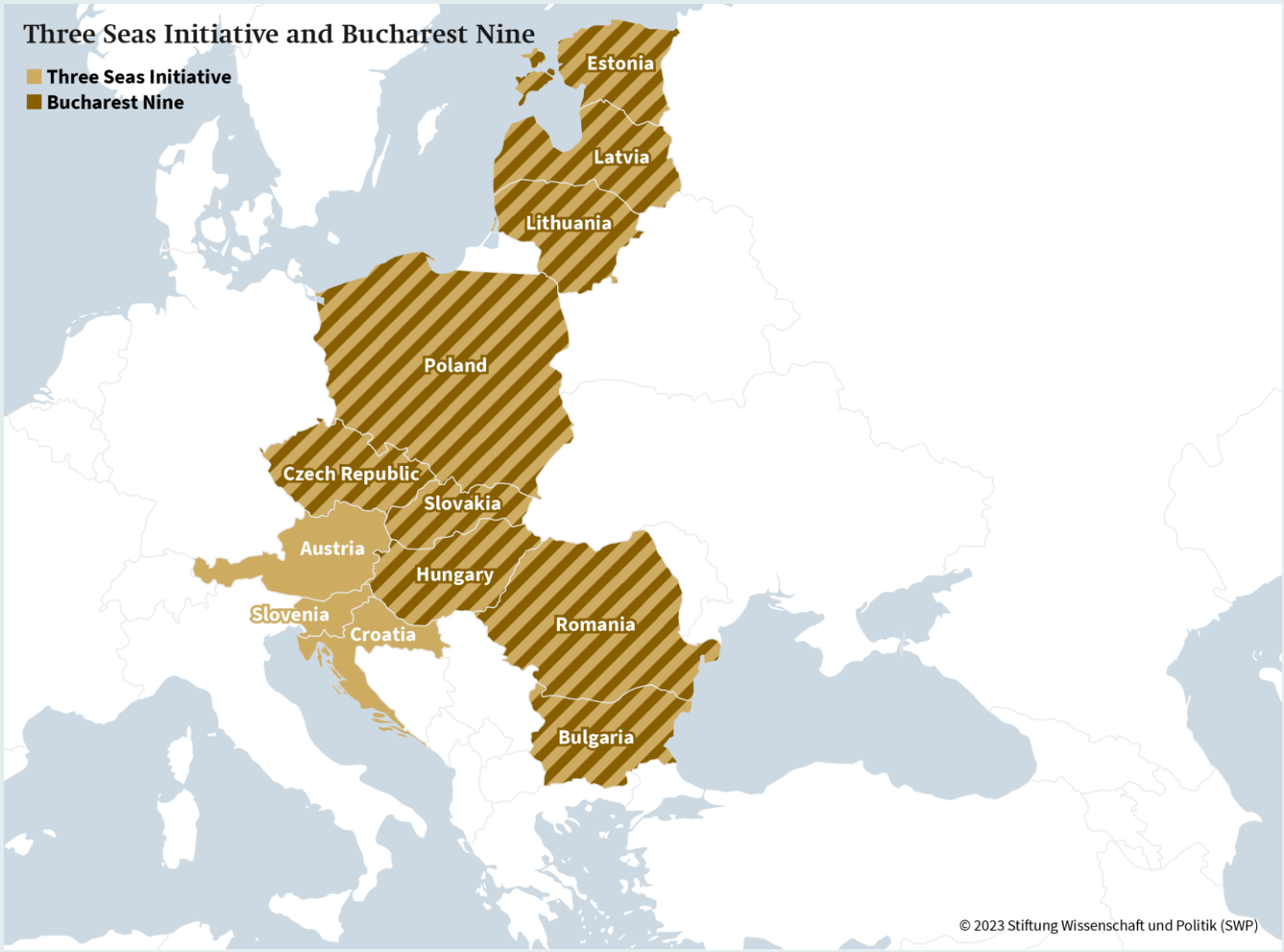
25 Ibid.

26 Kai-Olaf Lang, *Regionale Kooperationsinitiativen im östlichen Teil von EU und Nato. Verbindungen schaffen, Einfluss gewinnen, Sicherheit verbessern,* SWP-Aktuell 32/2022 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, April 2022).

27 Article by Karol Wasilewski in *How Will Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Impact Turkey's Foreign Policy?,* CATS Network Perspectives (Berlin: Centre for Applied Turkey Studies [CATS] of Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 31 March 2022), https://www.cats-network.eu/publication/russias-invasion-of-ukraine (accessed 7 February 2023).

28 Fatih Yurtsever, "Could Turkey's Participation in 3SI Be a Turning Point in Turkish-US Relations?" *Turkish Minute* (online), 10 December 2021, https://turkishminute.com/2021/12/10/sis-could-turkeys-participation-in-3si-be-a-turning-point-in-turkish-us-relations/ (accessed 7 February 2023).

Map 2



Sources: 3SI, "Three Seas Story" (online, accessed 6 February 2023); George Soroka and Tomasz Stępniewski, "The Three Seas Initiative: Geopolitical Determinants and Polish Interests," *Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe* 17, no. 3 (2019), 15—29.

the other hand, even before Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin established their close partnership in 2016, American experts expressed the view that Turkey was "not an ideal ally." The reason for such an assessment was the disagreement between Washington and Ankara over the Syria strategy and Ankara's interest in Russian gas.[29]

29 Robert D. Kaplan, "Pilsudski's Europe," *RANE Worldview* (online), 6 August 2014, https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/pilsudskis-europe (accessed 7 February 2023); "Turkey: The Weak Link in the Intermarium," *RANE Worldview* (online), 8 June 2015, https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/turkey-weak-link-intermarium (accessed 7 February 2023).

Ankara's Positioning in Natural Gas Projects

Ankara's institutional leadership in the Black Sea region through the Organisation of the BSEC was ultimately prevented by the effects of the geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the West. Therefore, Turkey tried (and still tries) to use its geographical position in the Black Sea region to establish itself as an indispensable partner for both Russia and the West in the energy sector.

Ankara is no longer interested in acting as a bridge between East and West.

Turkey's position on natural gas pipelines reflects some of the fundamentals of its foreign policy that have become increasingly apparent since the end of the Cold War. First, Ankara is no longer interested in acting as a bridge between East and West but in achieving the status of an equidistant middle power. Second, despite the confrontation between Russia and the West, it considers cooperation with both sides possible. Third, the driving force behind this balancing act is the country's own economic priorities. Ankara's energy policy shows that while Turkey cannot escape the influence of other actors, it can use its geographical position to set its own rules.

In parallel with Ankara's ambitions to gain greater weight in energy issues, its geopolitical self-perception also changed in the 2000s.[30] Previously, Turkey had seen itself as a transit state for natural gas pipelines, consolidating its geopolitical position as a bridge. However, for the then foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, who developed a foreign policy doctrine of "strategic depth" for Turkey, the term "bridge" was too narrow, as it limited Ankara's role as an independent actor.[31] Instead, Davutoğlu promoted for Turkey the role of a geopolitically "central country" *(merkez ülke)*. The starting point of this conception is its favourable geographical location: "As a major country in the midst of the Afro-Eurasia landmass, Turkey is a central country with multiple regional identities that cannot be reduced to one unified category. In terms of its sphere of influence, Turkey is a Middle Eastern, Balkan, Caucasian, Central Asian, Caspian, Mediterranean, Gulf, and Black Sea country all at the same time."[32] In line with this, the aim was formulated for the energy sector to move from being a transit country to a gas hub.[33]

The fact that both Russia and the EU rely on Turkey as a transit country can be seen in the network of natural gas pipelines that run through Turkey (see Map 3, page 13). Ankara has been purchasing Russian natural gas for its own needs via the Blue Stream pipeline since 2003 and via TurkStream since 2020. The latter is also used for transit and supplies southern and south-eastern Europe. Moreover, as part of the Southern Gas Corridor, which connects the Caspian region with Southern Europe, Turkey is a key partner for the EU's energy diversification.[34] The

30 Emre Erşen and Mitat Çelikpala, "Turkey and the Changing Energy Geopolitics of Eurasia," *Energy Policy* 128 (2019), 584–92.

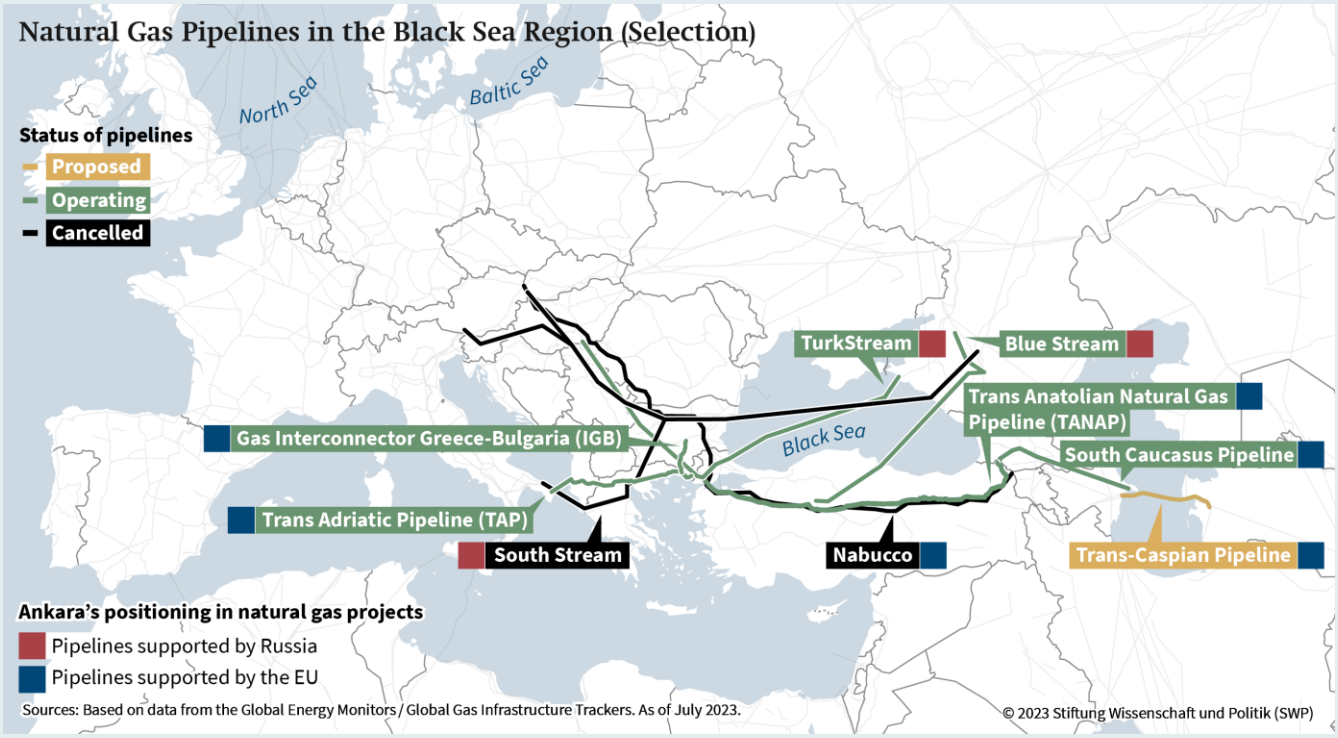
31 Ibid.

32 Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007," *Insight Turkey* 10, no. 1 (2008), 77–96 (77).

33 Heinz Kramer, *Die Türkei als Energiedrehscheibe. Wunschtraum und Wirklichkeit*, SWP-Studie 9/2010 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, April 2010).

34 Akhmed Gumbatov, "Completing the Southern Gas Corridor. SGC in a Post-pandemic World," *Baku Dialogues* 4, no. 1 (2020), 116–27, https://bakudialogues.ada.edu.az/articles/completing-the-southern-gas-corridor (accessed 15 April 2023); Dimitar Bechev, *Sailing through the Storm. Türkiye's Black Sea Strategy amidst the Russian-Ukrainian War*, Brief 1 (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies [EUISS], February 2023), https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief_1_Turkey%20in%20the%20Black%20Sea%20%282%29.pdf (accessed 15 April 2023).

Map 3



Sources: Data basis: Global Energy Monitor/Global Gas Infrastructure Tracker data (online, accessed 31 May 2023); Akhmed Gumbatov, "Completing the Southern Gas Corridor. SGC in a Post-pandemic World," *Baku Dialogues* 4, no. 1 (2020), 116—27 (online, accessed 15 April 2023); Filippo Maria Margheritini, "The Future of the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline," *Global Risk Insights*, 15 July 2022 (online, accessed 1 September 2023); IGI Poseidon, "The IGB Pipeline (Greece-Bulgaria Interconnection) Enters Operation," press release, Athens, 1 October 2022 (online, accessed 1 September 2023); The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), "Russia and Turkey Enhance Natural Gas Co-operation," *EIU Viewpoint*, 9 November 2022 (online, accessed 15 March 2023).

Southern Gas Corridor currently consists of the South Caucasus Pipeline (also known as the Baku—Tbilisi—Erzurum Pipeline, BTE), the Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) in Turkey, and the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) in Greece, Albania, and Italy. The TAP and TurkStream are the results of two competing projects between the EU and Russia, namely Nabucco and South Stream, which were not implemented as planned and were eventually cancelled.

The EU declared the Nabucco pipeline a "priority project" in 2004.[35] As a transit country, Turkey was to deliver Caspian gas to Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary and up to the Austrian gas storage facility in Baumgarten. Iran, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan were originally planned as suppliers, but in the end, only Azerbaijan came into question. In response to Nabucco, the Russian Gazprom and the Italian energy group Eni proposed the alternative project, South Stream, in 2007. Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary were also interested in South Stream, although Bulgaria and Hungary were already involved in Nabucco.[36] Turkey also did not see Nabucco and South Stream as competing projects, but as an opportunity to play a greater role on both the East-West

35 Zeyno Baran, *Security Aspects of the South Stream Project*, Briefing Paper (European Parliament, October 2008), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EXPO-AFET_NT(2008)388962 (accessed 15 March 2023).

36 Gerhard Mangott and Kirsten Westphal, "The Relevance of the Wider Black Sea Region to EU and Russian Energy Issues," in *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century*, ed. Hamilton and Mangott (see note 15), 147—76.

and North-South energy routes.[37] In August 2009, Erdoğan and Putin signed an agreement in which Turkey granted Russia the right to use its territorial waters to construct South Stream.

When positioning itself on natural gas projects, Ankara logically looks after its own interests. For example, in the talks with the EU on the Nabucco pipeline, it linked European gas needs and its own geographical location to the negotiation process on EU accession.[38] Turkey insisted on a 15 per cent discount on gas supplies from Azerbaijan, leading to a dispute between the otherwise close partners.[39] Some experts point out that it was the protracted negotiations between Ankara and Baku over the price of gas and transit fees that reduced the chances of the Nabucco project coming to fruition rather than the planned cooperation between Turkey and Russia on the South Stream project.[40] However, Nabucco had to struggle more with fundamental problems such as a lack of financing and of suppliers.[41]

In December 2014, Russia stopped the South Stream project and decided to build TurkStream instead.[42] Turkey thus became Russia's indispensable transit partner. In the 1990s, the only transit route for natural gas from Gazprom to Europe was through Ukraine. With the completion of the Yamal pipeline via Belarus and Poland to Germany in 1999, Gazprom acquired an alternative transit route.[43] Russia's goal of reducing its dependence on transit countries was also at the heart of the construction of Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 through the Baltic Sea. At present, only Ukraine and Turkey remain as transit corridors for Russian gas.[44]

An important cornerstone of Turkish-Russian energy cooperation was laid as early as the late 1990s with the Blue Stream pipeline. This natural gas project was initially strongly criticised in Turkey. However, from the point of view of the then Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, as well as influential construction companies, it offered a solution to meet the growing energy demand within the country.[45] At the time, the only alternative to Russian gas was gas deliveries via the Trans-Caspian Pipeline. However, the initiative lacked sufficient funding. It was also hampered by unresolved disputes in the Caspian Sea between Iran, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan.

On the one hand, Blue Stream has considerably improved the bilateral relationship; on the other hand, from Ankara's perspective, it has contributed to Turkey's dependence on Russia.[46] Conversely, Russia also needs Turkey, and the war in Ukraine has further intensified this need. Putin's proposal to Erdoğan in

37 "Davutoğlu: 'Turkey Has Made Strides towards Becoming a Global Energy Hub'," *Dünya*, 10 August 2009, https://www.dunya.com/gundem/davutoglu-quotturkey-has-made-strides-towards-becoming-a-global-energy-haberi-86279 (accessed 15 March 3023).

38 Şaban Kardaş, "Geo-strategic Position as Leverage in EU Accession: The Case of Turkish-EU Negotiations on the Nabucco Pipeline," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 11, no. 1 (2011), 35—52.

39 Şaban Kardaş, "Turkish-Azerbaijani Energy Cooperation and Nabucco: Testing the Limits of the New Turkish Foreign Policy Rhetoric," *Turkish Studies* 12, no. 1 (2011), 55—77.

40 Cenk Sidar and Gareth Winrow, "Turkey and South Stream: Turco-Russian Rapprochement and the Future of the Southern Corridor," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (2011), 51—61.

41 Katinka Barysch, *Should the Nabucco Pipeline Project Be Shelved?* Policy Brief (London: Centre for European Reform, May 2010), https://www.cer.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/pdf/2011/pb_nabucco_5may10-221.pdf (accessed 15 March 2023).

42 On the failure of South Stream see, e.g., Jonathan Stern et al., *Does the Cancellation of South Stream Signal a Fundamental Reorientation of Russian Gas Export Policy?* (Oxford: The Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, January 2015), https://www.oxfordenergy.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Does-cancellation-of-South-Stream-signal-a-fundamental-reorientation-of-Russian-gas-export-policy-GPC-5.pdf (accessed 1 September 2023); Kostis Geropoulos, "EU-US Bulgaria Squeeze Freezes South Stream" (Athens: Institute of Energy for South-East Europe, 13 June 2014), https://www.iene.eu/eu-us-bulgaria-squeeze-freezes-south-stream-p697.html (accessed 1 September 2023).

43 Mangott and Westphal, "The Relevance of the Wider Black Sea Region to EU and Russian Energy Issues" (see note 36).

44 Stuart Elliott, "Russian Pipeline Gas Flows to Europe Slip Further in November," *S&P Global*, 6 December 2022, https://www.spglobal.com/commodityinsights/en/market-insights/latest-news/natural-gas/120622-russian-pipeline-gas-flows-to-europe-slip-further-in-november (accessed 15 March 2023).

45 Gökhan Bacik, "The Blue Stream Project, Energy Cooperation and Conflicting Interests," *Turkish Studies* 2, no. 2 (2001), 85—93.

46 Pyotr Stegny, "Two in the 'Heartland'," *Russia in Global Affairs*, no. 1 (2015), https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/two-in-the-heartland/ (accessed 15 March 2023); Şaban Kardaş, "Turkey-Russia Energy Relations. The Limits of Forging Cooperation through Economic Interdependence," *International Journal. Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis* 67, no. 1 (2012), 81—100.

October 2022 to build a gas hub in Turkey can also be seen in this context, as it addresses a long-held intention of Ankara. However, the prospects remain uncertain. Among other things, there are doubts about the expansion possibilities of TurkStream and the demand for Russian gas in Europe.[47]

Turkey not only wants to play a role as a major transit corridor and energy hub but is also pursuing the core objective of diversifying its natural gas imports. The share of Russian gas in Turkey's gas imports has fallen from 44.9 per cent in 2021 to 39.5 per cent in 2022, but Gazprom remains the leading supplier.[48] In addition, Turkey imports natural gas from Azerbaijan and Iran via pipelines, and from the United States, Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, and Qatar in liquefied form (LNG).

On 21 August 2020, President Erdoğan announced the discovery of the Sakarya gas field in the Black Sea. The discovery was celebrated as a "historic day" in line with Davutoğlu's idea of the "central country" — or as the then Minister of Treasury and Finance, Berat Albayrak, put it: Turkey is "neither East nor West" but "the new axis."[49] It is estimated that the use of the field can cover 25 per cent of Turkey's domestic needs for 25 to 28 years.[50]

47 The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), "Russia and Turkey Enhance Natural Gas Co-operation," *EIU Viewpoint* (online), 9 November 2022, https://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1672557550&Country=Turkey&topic=Economy&subtopic=Forecast&subsubtopic=External+sector (accessed 15 March 2023).

48 Megan Byrne and James Cockayne, "Turkey Gas Imports: Russia Still Dominant," *MEES*, 3 March 2023, https://www.mees.com/2023/3/3/power-water/turkey-gas-imports-russia-still-dominant/f05d2dd0-b9c5-11ed-b549-01302ad8e3d6 (accessed 22 March 2023).

49 "Minister Albayrak Spoke on This Historic Day: Neither East Nor West, New Axis Turkey" (Turkish), *Hurriyet* (online), 21 August 2020, https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/son-dakika-haberler-bakan-albayrak-tarihi-gunde-konustu-ne-dogu-ne-bati-yeni-eksen-turkiye-41592818 (accessed 22 March 2023).

50 Hasan Selim Özertem, *Turkey's New Gas Discovery in the Black Sea and Its Potential Implications* (Paris: Institut Français des Relations Internationales [IFRI], 1 October 2020), https://www.ifri.org/en/publications/editoriaux-de-lifri/turkeys-new-gas-discovery-black-sea-and-its-potential-implications (accessed 22 March 2023).

The Turkish-Russian View of the Regional Order

Ankara and Moscow are linked in the Black Sea region not only by natural gas pipelines but also by a shared understanding of the regional order. The cornerstone of this understanding is the conviction that both can best protect their interests without the involvement of Western actors. The issue is not the presence of the West as such but the impact of the West's intended promotion of democracy, or more precisely, the perceived spread of Western values. In this context, a central line of conflict can be observed between Russia and Turkey on the one hand and the West and other Black Sea littoral states on the other.

At the heart of the dispute in the Black Sea region is the question of how best to achieve stability.

At the heart of the dispute is the question of how best to achieve stability. The influence of democracy promotion on regional order and security is particularly controversial. Both Moscow and Ankara see democracy promotion by Western actors in the Black Sea region as a source of instability. However, the motives for resisting Western influence are different. For Russia, it is a question of countering the expansion of transatlantic and European institutions into its immediate geographical neighbourhood. For Turkey, it is a matter of securing a leadership role in the region without the West, but, from Ankara's perspective, not against the West.

Moscow's Perspective

Russia's opposition to the NATO membership of post-Soviet states is well known, but Ukraine stands out in particular. The Euromaidan revolution in Ukraine in 2013—2014 was associated in Moscow with the prospective expansion of a US military presence in the Black Sea.[51] For Putin, this would mean a challenge to Russia as a maritime power, its status as a great power, and to the preservation of the Russian state, as all three aspects are closely linked in the Kremlin's thinking.[52]

From Moscow's perspective, the Black Sea is directly related to the North Caucasus, that is, to Russia's territorial integrity. As the country's first president, Boris Yeltsin, stated in 1996: "Russia will not be Russia without the Black Sea ... This is not only a question of history, not only of national feelings and prestige. Russia needs a fleet in the Black Sea to reliably protect its Black Sea lands and the North Caucasus."[53] In this context, the Caspian, Azov, and Black Seas form a unified space in Russia's strategic thinking, serving not only to project power in the Mediterranean, the Balkans, and the Middle East but also to protect its southern borders.[54] The strategic connection that the Kremlin sees between Crimea, the Black

51 Yevgeny M. Primakov, "Ukraine: A Difficult Today and a Difficult Tomorrow" (Russian), *Russia in Global Affairs* (online), 9 September 2014, https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/ukraina-tyazheloe-segodnya-i-slozhnoe-zavtra/ (accessed 7 February 2023).

52 Stefanie Ortmann, *Re-imagining Westphalia: Identity in IR and the Discursive Construction of the Russian State*, PhD Thesis (London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 2008); David G. Lewis, *Russia's New Authoritarianism. Putin and the Politics of Order* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

53 Quoted in Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, "Ukraine, Turkey, and the Black Sea Region," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 20 (1996), 79—101 (86).

54 David Lewis, *Strategic Culture and Geography: Russia's Southern Seas after Crimea*, Security Insights no. 36 (Garmisch-Partenkirchen: George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, July 2019), https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/security-insights/strategic-culture-and-geography-russias-southern-seas-after-crimea-0 (accessed 7 February 2023).

Sea, and the North Caucasus is reflected not least in Russian military exercises.[55]

Ankara's Perspective

The increasing involvement of the United States in the Black Sea region in the 2000s, which found expression in its democratic agenda, was also viewed critically in Turkey.[56] The effects of the US intervention in Iraq in 2003 played a decisive role in Turkey's perception. Ankara projected the instability in the Middle East, which emerged as a result of US policy, onto the post-Soviet space and ultimately viewed the war in Iraq as well as the colour revolutions in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004), and Kyrgyzstan (2005) as interrelated outcomes of the US policy under the umbrella of democracy promotion.[57]

This reading also underlaid the Turkish leadership's reaction to the war between Georgia and Russia in August 2008. The US intention to send the USNS Mercy and USNS Comfort hospital ships to support Georgia met with resistance in Turkey. In Ankara's view, this would have led to regional destabilisation similar to that in the Middle East.[58] After the August 2008 war, Ankara initiated a "Platform for Stability and Cooperation in the Caucasus" because, as Turkey's then Foreign Minister Ali Babacan stated, "The Caucasus countries need to develop a working method to find solutions to their problems from within."[59] This approach, according to the logic of "regional solutions for regional problems," is also shared by Russia.[60]

Ankara's goal was not only to consider Russia's privileged role in the region.[61] Stability in the South Caucasus is equally important for Turkey's economic interests and its presence in Central Asia.[62] The economic aspect, as well as the link between the South Caucasus and Central Asia, is also reflected in Turkey's support for the Middle Corridor, a trade route initiated by Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Kazakhstan, which, since the war in Ukraine, has gained importance not only for Turkey itself but equally for the EU.[63]

In addition to ensuring stability in the Black Sea region, Ankara is also concerned with its own leadership.

In addition to ensuring stability in the Black Sea region, Ankara is also concerned with its own leadership. This relates, above all, to questions of maritime security. In doing so, Ankara acts in the sense of maintaining the status quo in the Black Sea region. In 2001, Turkey initiated a maritime cooperation programme with all littoral states, the BlackSeaFor (Black Sea Naval Force). This was followed in 2004 by another maritime operation, Black Sea Harmony. Turkey was always keen to emphasise that its initiatives did not require a further NATO presence.[64] After all, the transatlantic alliance was already represented in

55 "General Staff Names Focus Area for Russian Troops" (Russian), *RIA Novosti* (online), 14 September 2016, https://ria.ru/20160914/1476927704.html (accessed 24 March 2023); Aleksandr Khrolenko, "Russia's 'Caucasus 2016' Strategic Manoeuvres Are Bigger Than the Caucasus" (Russian), *RIA Novosti* (online), 6 September 2016, https://ria.ru/20160906/14762219 19.html (accessed 24 February 2023).

56 Suat Kınıklıoğlu, "Turkey's Black Sea Policy: Strategic Interplay at a Critical Junction," in *Next Steps in Forging a Euro-atlantic Strategy for the Wider Black Sea*, ed. Asmus (see note 5), 55–64 (60).

57 Ibid.

58 Zeyno Baran, "Will Turkey Abandon NATO?" *The Wall Street Journal* (online), 29 August 2008, https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121997087258381935 (accessed 12 February 2023).

59 Quoted in Yevgeniya Gaber, "Security Triangle in the Black Sea Region: Turkey, Russia, United States," in *Panorama of Global Security Environment. The Central European Perspective 2017–2018*, ed. Róbert Ondrejcsák et al. (Bratislava, 2018), 199–221 (210).

60 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Interview of Russian Foreign Minister S. V. Lavrov, published in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta,* 7 October 2008" (Russian), press release, Moscow, 7 October 2008, https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/international_safety/1638011/ (accessed 12 February 2023).

61 Eleni Fotiou, *Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform: What Is at Stake for Regional Cooperation?* ICBSS Policy Brief no. 16 (Athens: International Centre for Black Sea Studies [ICBSS], June 2009), https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/104737/PB_16.pdf (accessed 15 April 2023).

62 As emphasised in official Turkish discourse: "Türkiye has deep-rooted historical and cultural ties with Southern Caucasus, which serves as a bridge linking Türkiye to the Central Asia." Republic of Türkiye, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Türkiye's Relations with Southern Caucasus Countries," https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye_s-relations-with-southern-caucasus.en.mfa (accessed 15 April 2023).

63 Middle Corridor: Trans-Caspian International Route, "Route," https://middlecorridor.com/en/route (accessed 12 September 2023).

64 Kınıklıoğlu, "Turkey's Black Sea Policy" (see note 56), 61.

the Black Sea region with Turkey as well as Romania and Bulgaria, which have been NATO members since 2004.

In Ankara's approach to the Black Sea region, collective defence, according to NATO logic, can be observed, but it is mixed with the concept of collective security with Russia. The desire not to provoke Moscow is a recurrent theme in Turkey's Black Sea policy.[65] This has to do not only with its past experiences with Russia but also with its complicated relationship with the West.[66] As Ankara sees it, its balancing policy after Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 is connected with the West's lack of decisive action at the time and Ankara's anxiety of being abandoned by the West vis-à-vis Russia.[67]

65 Balkan Devlen, *"Don't Poke the Russian Bear": Turkish Policy in the Ukrainian Crisis*, Policy Brief (Oslo: Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, May 2014), https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/180832/a5fa13f65a0a0fcece44339be2957279.pdf (accessed 12 February 2023); Mitat Çelikpala and Emre Erşen, "Turkey's Black Sea Predicament: Challenging or Accommodating Russia?" *Perceptions. Journal of International Affairs* 23, no. 2 (2018), 72—92.

66 Selim Koru, *Turkey's Black Sea Policy: Navigating between Russia and the West*, Black Sea Strategy Papers (Philadelphia, PA: Foreign Policy Research Institute [FPRI], 18 July 2017), https://www.fpri.org/article/2017/07/turkeys-black-sea-policy-navigating-russia-west/ (accessed 23 March 2023).

67 Şaban Kardaş, "The War in Ukraine and Turkey's Cautious Counter-Balancing against Russia" (Washington, D.C.: GMF, 3 March 2022), https://www.gmfus.org/news/war-ukraine-and-turkeys-cautious-counter-balancing-against-russia (accessed 12 February 2023).

Keeping the Double Balance in the Black Sea

"Ukraine is like a dam that stops further Russian influence and pressure in the region. If Ukraine falls, it will have direct implications on Turkey," said a Turkish official in January 2022, as tensions between Russia and the West increased with the deployment of Russian troops on the border with Ukraine.[68] Thus, after the start of the war in Ukraine on 24 February 2022, one might have expected Ankara to take a less ambivalent position. It was hoped that the war would offer an opportunity for a rapprochement between Turkey and its Western allies.[69]

However, when Ankara implemented the provisions of the Montreux Convention on 28 February 2022, it signalled that it was continuing its balancing act. Invoking Article 19 on the warships of belligerent parties, Ankara has blocked the passage through the straits for warships of both littoral and non-littoral states.[70] While this was Ankara's response to Ukraine's demand that the straits be closed to Russian warships, the decision also has a significant impact on the access of warships from its Western allies.

Ankara's moves show that its core interest in the Black Sea is still to maintain the balance of power.[71] Two aspects must be distinguished here: First, Turkey is concerned with avoiding the adverse effects of the confrontation between Russia and the West on its security. The Montreux Convention, which Ankara interprets in terms of collective security, serves as a central instrument for this. In Ankara's view, Turkey thereby preserves stability, benefitting itself and the other riparian and non-riparian states.[72] Second, it is equally about the balance of power between Russia and Turkey itself. The strategic partnership with Kyiv plays an important role here, which Ankara built up following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The Montreux Convention

In its strategic thinking towards the Black Sea region, Ankara prioritises the maritime domain over all other security issues.[73] Turkey places particular emphasis on control of the straits, which it gained through the

68 Quoted in Ragip Soylu, "Ukraine Conflict: Why It Really Matters to Turkey," *Middle East Eye* (online), 27 January 2022, https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/ukraine-turkey-why-conflict-matters (accessed 20 March 2023).

69 Selim Yenel, "Can Russia's War on Ukraine Drive Turkey and the West to Reconcile?" (Washington, D.C.: GMF, 15 March 2022), https://www.gmfus.org/news/can-russias-war-ukraine-drive-turkey-and-west-reconcile (accessed 20 March 2023).

70 For further discussion see, e.g., Tayfun Ozberk, "Turkey Closes the Dardanelles and Bosphorus to Warships," *Naval News* (online), 28 February 2022, https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/02/turkey-closes-the-dardanelles-and-bosphorus-to-warships/ (accessed 20 March 2023); Nick Childs, "The Black Sea in the Shadow of War," *Survival* 65, no. 3 (2023), 25—36 (29).

71 Mitat Çelikpala, "Escalating Rivalries and Diverging Interests: Prospects for Stability and Security in the Black Sea Region," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 10, no. 3 (2010), 287—302; Galip Dalay and Daria Isachenko, *Turkey's Stakes in the Russia-NATO Rivalry: The Ukraine Crisis and Beyond*, Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, February 2022 (SWP Comment 9/2022); Kardaş, "The War in Ukraine and Turkey's Cautious Counter-Balancing against Russia" (see note 67).

72 Ahmed Sükrü Esmer, "The Straits: Crux of World Politics," *Foreign Affairs*, (January 1947), https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/1947-01-01/straits-crux-world-politics (accessed 20 March 2023).

73 Kınıklıoğlu, "Turkey's Black Sea Policy" (see note 56); Karadeniz, "Security and Stability Architecture in the Black Sea" (see note 13).

Montreux Convention.[74] Ankara links this treaty to both the regional security situation as well as its sovereignty, as it is one of the founding documents of the Turkish Republic.[75]

Until 1774, when the Ottomans lost control of Crimea, the Black Sea was Ottoman for three hundred years. The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne defined the new borders of the Turkish state but without giving it control over the straits. According to this treaty, an international commission supervised the passage of ships, and the area around the straits was to be demilitarised. It was not until the Montreux Convention of 1936 that Turkey was able to reassert its sovereignty over the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles.

Ankara's efforts to change the Lausanne Straits regime met with understanding in Moscow.[76] Even during the negotiations on the Treaty of Lausanne, Moscow's proposals regarding the issue of demilitarisation were "more pro-Turkish" than those of the Turkish delegation, as Moscow supported Ankara's defence rights.[77] During the negotiations on the Treaty of Lausanne and the Montreux Convention, it was a fundamental concern of the Soviet Union to keep the non-littoral states out so that the Black Sea would become a *mare clausum*.

The fact that Turkey gained control over the straits through the Montreux Convention was unfavourable for the Soviet Union. Kemal Atatürk, however, assured the Soviet side that cooperation in the Black Sea, or more precisely, "Soviet-Turkish friendship," was more significant than the Montreux Convention.[78] Stalin, for his part, believed that joint Soviet-Turkish control was more desirable. Soviet demands in 1945 towards Turkey to change the Montreux Straits regime as well as to return the provinces of Kars and Ardahan to the Soviet Union are considered nowadays as the decisive event that brought about a turning point in Turkish foreign policy — for it was not least because of this that Turkey became a NATO member in 1952.[79]

The Montreux Convention not only regulates the passage of warships through the straits but also the security situation in the Black Sea.

Today, Ankara and Moscow agree that the Montreux Convention must be preserved, as its importance lies in regulating not only the passage of warships through the straits but also the security situation in the Black Sea. As the preamble states, it is about the security of Turkey and that of the other littoral states of the Black Sea. Therefore, the littoral states enjoy preferential rights, while there are special regulations for warships of non-littoral states.[80]

In peacetime, for example, non-littoral states must inform Ankara in advance of the passage of warships, and warships from non-littoral states are allowed to stay in the Black Sea for a maximum of 21 days and the tonnage is limited.[81] This benefits Russia in particular, as it enables it to secure its maritime dominance over NATO. Demands from Romania, Bulgaria, and the United States for a stronger NATO presence in the Black Sea regularly meet with resistance from Turkey. From Ankara's point of view, the Montreux Convention is an indispensable instrument to avoid escalation between great powers in the Black Sea.[82]

74 For example, "Turkish Straits" is listed as a separate main topic on the website of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The category "Maritime Issues" mentions the Aegean Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Turkish Straits, but not the Black Sea. Republic of Türkiye, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, https://www.mfa.gov.tr/tuerkische-meerengen.de.mfa (accessed 20 March 2023).

75 Kınıklıoğlu, "Turkey's Black Sea Policy" (see note 56), 57.

76 Onur Işçi, "Yardstick of Friendship. Soviet-Turkish Relations and the Montreux Convention of 1936," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 21, no. 4 (2020), 733—62.

77 Harry N. Howard, *The Partition of Turkey: A Diplomatic History 1913–1923* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1931).

78 Işçi, "Yardstick of Friendship" (see note 76), 740.

79 For different views on the connection between Stalin's demands and Ankara's decision, see Behlül Özkan, "The 1945 Turkish-Soviet Crisis. Devising a Foundational Myth for Turkish Foreign Policy," *Russia in Global Affairs* 18, no. 2 (2020), 156—87, and Onur Işçi, "Turkey at a Crossroads: The Soviet Threat and Postwar Realignment, 1945—1946," *Diplomatic History* (forthcoming).

80 The (Montreux) Convention regarding the Regime of the Straits, 20 July 1936, 215, https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/LON/Volume%20173/v173.pdf (accessed 20 March 2023).

81 The following restrictions apply: 15,000 tonnes for up to 9 warships for one passage through the straits; 45,000 for the total tonnage of all warships of the non-littoral states that may be in the Black Sea at the same time, with a maximum of 30,000 tonnes per non-littoral state.

82 Kemal Kirişci and Serhat Güvenç, "Montreux Convention, at 85, Needs Tending for US-NATO-Russia Security and Stability," *Just Security* (online), 20 July 2021, https://www.justsecurity.org/77524/montreux-convention-at-85-needs-

Turkey's Strategic Partnership with Ukraine

From 1—9 September 2016, NATO conducted the "Agile Spirit" military exercise in Georgia, with 1,200 participants from Georgia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania, Ukraine, and the United States.[83] At the same time, Russia held the "Kavkaz 2016" military exercise with 12,500 soldiers in its southern regions and in the Black and Caspian Seas from 5-10 September 2016. The exercises of both sides took place in close proximity to each other.

After conducting the military exercise, the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, Army General Valery Gerasimov, said that the Russian Black Sea Fleet was capable of "destroying a potential enemy as soon as it leaves its bases."[84] Russia has the following capabilities for this: "Reconnaissance equipment that can detect targets at a distance of up to 500 kilometres, weapons of destruction. The Bastion-P alone has a range of 350 kilometres. All the way to the Bosphorus." Gerasimov further added: "A few years ago, the fleet's combat capabilities were in stark contrast to those of the Turkish navy when it was said that Turkey almost completely dominated the Black Sea. Now everything is different."[85] In the West and in Turkey, Gerasimov's message was overwhelmingly interpreted as being directed at Ankara.[86] Indeed, Gerasimov's statements of September 2016 are still remembered very clearly in Turkey today.[87]

Ankara started to provide military support to Ukraine after the Crimean annexation.

Accordingly, Ankara attaches great importance to a strategic partnership with Kyiv and started to provide military support to Ukraine after the Crimean annexation to counter its dialogue with Russia.

A look into the past reveals a special bond in Turkish-Ukrainian relations, such as Ankara's connection with the Crimean Tatars due to their cultural and historical affinity. This was also one reason why the then Turkish President Süleyman Demirel visited Ukraine in 1994 and 1998.[88] Already after the end of the Soviet Union, Turkey supported the Crimean Tatars in Ukraine. They had been deported by Stalin in 1944 and returned to Ukraine in the early 1990s, and the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA) financed housing and cultural projects for them.

Looking at the present, Ankara's and Kyiv's common interest is equally directed towards cooperation in the military and arms industry, as they show a high degree of convergence. Nevertheless, it is, above all, the confrontation between Russia and the West that has the greatest impact on relations between Turkey and Ukraine. On the one hand, it has intensified the partnership between Ankara and Kyiv, but on the other hand, it also sets limits to it.[89]

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ankara took the first steps to establish relations with Ukraine. However, Kyiv's priorities changed from 1994 onwards under the then president Leonid Kuchma. Integration with the West was strategically upgraded, while cooperation with Turkey took a back seat.[90] Until the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, a strict West-East paradigm prevailed in Ukrainian

tending-for-us-nato-russia-security-and-stability/ (accessed 12 February 2023).

83 Inna Kukudzhanova, "In Georgia, Military Exercises Involve American Howitzers for the First Time," *Caucasian Knot* (online), 10 September 2016, https://eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/36849/ (accessed 24 March 2023).

84 "General Staff: The Russian Black Sea Fleet Can Destroy the Enemy on the Way Out of Bases" (Russian), *RIA Novosti,* 14 September 2016, https://ria.ru/20160914/1476907926.html (accessed 24 March 2023).

85 Quoted in ibid.

86 Joshua Kucera, "Russia Claims 'Mastery' over Turkey in Black Sea, *Eurasianet* (online), 25 September 2016, https://eurasianet.org/russia-claims-mastery-over-turkey-black-sea (accessed 24 March 2023); Anika Binnendijk, "The Russian-Turkish Bilateral Relationship: Managing Differences in an Uneasy Partnership," in *Turkey's Nationalist Course. Implications for the U.S.-Turkish Strategic Partnership and the U.S. Army*, ed. Stephen J. Flanagan et al. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020), 107—31 (125).

87 Turkey expert in conversation with the author, Ankara, 20 June 2022.

88 Koru, "Turkey's Black Sea Policy" (see note 66).

89 Burak Çalışkan, *Two Allies in the Black Sea: Turkey-Ukraine Defense Industry Relations*, Analysis INSAMER (Istanbul: Humanitarian and Social Research Center [INSAMER], 30 August 2019, https://en.insamer.com/uploads/pdf/ commentary-two-allies-in-the-black-sea-turkey-ukraine-defense-industry-relations.pdf (accessed 23 March 2023); Iliya Kusa, "Ukraine's Uncertain Foreign Strategy amid Turkey's Growing Regional Power," Blog Post (Washington, D.C.: The Wilson Center, 13 February 2020), https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/ukraines-uncertain-foreign-strategy-amid-turkeys-growing-regional-power (accessed 23 March 2023).

90 Sezer, "Ukraine, Turkey, and the Black Sea Region" (see note 53), 90.

foreign policy. As a result, the potential of cooperation with Ankara was not fully exploited.[91]

In March 2014, Turkey was among the 100 countries that voted in favour of UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262 on the invalidity of the Crimean referendum. Unlike its Western allies, however, Turkey did not join the sanctions against Russia at that time either. Yet in 2015, Ankara began supplying military equipment to Ukraine and sought military cooperation with Kyiv.[92] In May 2016, Erdoğan complained that the Black Sea had become "almost a Russian lake."[93] That same month, Ankara and Kyiv signed a military cooperation plan to improve the operational capabilities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU). As the AFU reports show, the planning of practical measures was aimed at intensifying cooperation with Turkey; it was also intended to ensure that the AFU would be ready to join NATO in 2020.[94]

In 2019, under the then Ukrainian Head of State Petro Poroshenko, an agreement was concluded on the delivery of Turkish drones to Ukraine. In September 2020, in the new National Security Strategy, the current Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy designated Turkey as Kyiv's "strategic partner" alongside Azerbaijan, Georgia, Lithuania, and Poland.

In 2021, Ukraine's policy towards the Russian-occupied territories changed: The approach "First Donbas, then Crimea" was revised to "First Crimea, then Donbas."[95] Accordingly, Kyiv established the Crimea Platform in August 2021 to attract international attention and end Russia's occupation of Crimea in the long term.[96] This was to be achieved, among other things, by developing a non-recognition strategy for Crimea and effectively enforcing sanctions against Russia. In addition, Ukraine wanted to strengthen its maritime capabilities. In cooperation with the United Kingdom, it planned to build two naval bases in 2021 — in Ochakiv on the Black Sea and in Berdyansk on the Sea of Azov.[97] It also negotiated with the United States and the United Kingdom on the delivery of anti-ship missiles. But only Turkey agreed to provide them to Ukraine.[98]

Prior to the outbreak of war in February 2022, US experts viewed the Turkish-Ukrainian defence relationship with the concern that it might provide Russia with a pretext for military action rather than strengthening Ukraine's defence capability.[99] In April 2021, the Russian foreign minister openly warned Turkey against "feeding militarist sentiments in Ukraine." He was referring to the Turkish Bayraktar TB2 combat drones.[100] In October 2021, Ukrainian forces reported using a Turkish drone in Donbas.[101]

91 Maryna Vorotnyuk, *Foreign Policy Audit: Ukraine-Turkey*, Discussion Paper (Kyiv: Institute of World Policy et al., 2016), http://prismua.org/wp-content/uplo-ads/2016/04/Aud_Ukr_Turk_01_32_eng-2.pdf (accessed 24 March 2023).

92 Çalışkan, *Two Allies in the Black Sea* (see note 89), 1.

93 Quoted in Joshua Kucera, "Erdoğan, in Plea to NATO, Says Black Sea Has Become 'Russian Lake'," *Eurasianet* (online), 12 May 2016, https://eurasianet.org/erdogan-plea-nato-says-black-sea-has-become-russian-lake (accessed 23 March 2023).

94 "Black Sea Union: Ukraine and Turkey Sign Ambitious Military Cooperation Plan" (Russian), *Obozrevatel* (online), 16 May 2016, https://news.obozrevatel.com/politics/53802-chernomorskij-soyuz-ukraina-i-turtsiya-podpisali-ambitsioznyij-plan-voennogo-sotrudnichestva.htm (accessed 23 March 2023).

95 Borys Kormych and Tetyana Malyarenko, "From Gray Zone to Conventional Warfare: The Russia-Ukraine Conflict in the Black Sea," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* (2022), 1—36 (23).

96 Krzysztof Nieczypor, "Inauguration of the Crimea Platform: A Successful Start to a Difficult Process," Analyses (Warsaw: Centre for Eastern Studies, 24 August 2021), https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2021-08-24/inauguration-crimea-platform-a-successful-start-to-a-difficult (accessed 23 May 2023).

97 Maryna Vorotnyuk, *Security Cooperation between Ukraine and the UK*, Commentary (London: The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies [RUSI], 10 November 2021), https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/uk-ukraine-security-cooperation (accessed 23 May 2023).

98 Kormych and Malyarenko, "From Gray Zone to Conventional Warfare" (see note 95); Tayfun Ozberk, "Turkish Shipyard Lays Keel First Ada-class Corvette for Ukraine," *Naval News* (online), 8 September 2021, https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2021/09/turkish-shipyard-lays-keel-first-ada-class-corvette-for-ukraine/ (accessed 23 March 2023).

99 Aaron Stein, *Turkey's Response to the Russia-Ukraine Crisis* (Philadelphia, PA: FPRI, January 2022), https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/01/turkeys-response-to-the-russia-ukraine-crisis/ (accessed 23 March 2023).

100 "Lavrov Warns Turkey Not to 'Feed Militarist Sentiments in Ukraine'" (Russian), *Kommersant* (online), 12 April 2021, https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4770979 (accessed 23 March 2023).

101 Natalia Zinets and Matthias Williams, "Ukraine Using Turkish Drones in Donbass Conflict in Self-defence, Zelenskiy Says," *Reuters* (online), 29 October 2021, https://www.reuters.com/world/ukraine-using-turkish-drones-donbass-

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov spoke of "destabilisation," while Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov first questioned the drone deployment, stating: "We are in the process of verifying this information ... It is very difficult to distinguish between truth and fiction."[102]

At the expanded meeting of the Russian Foreign Ministry on 18 November 2021, Putin made it clear that he saw only the United States as the main counterparty and called on the Russian Foreign Ministry to "press for serious long-term guarantees that will ensure Russia's security."[103] From Moscow's point of view, a treaty with the United States would have to consolidate these guarantees.[104]

For Ukraine, the strategic partnership with Turkey before the war represented "the key to security in the Black Sea." As Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba wrote in October 2021: "As NATO mulls over its strategy in the Black Sea region and seeks to ensure stability and security in what is an increasingly turbulent environment, Ukraine and Turkey are providing a model worth emulating by actively strengthening their strategic partnership via deepening political, military, and technical cooperation."[105] However, the Turkish side wanted to share the "key to security in the Black Sea" with Russia. As early as November 2021, Erdoğan announced his willingness to organise a meeting between Zelenskyy and Putin.

conflict-self-defence-zelenskiy-says-2021-10-29/ (accessed 23 March 2023).

102 "Lavrov: Russia verifies information about Turkish drones in Donbass" (Russian), *Interfax* (online), 27 October 2021, https://www.interfax.ru/russia/799852 (accessed 23 March 2023).

103 President of Russia, "Expanded Meeting of the Foreign Ministry Board," Moscow, 18 November 2021, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67123 (accessed 23 March 2023).

104 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Treaty between The United States of America and the Russian Federation on Security Guarantees," press release, 17 December 2021, https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/rso/nato/1790818/?lang=en (accessed 23 March 2023).

105 Dmytro Kuleba, "Strong Ukraine-Turkey Partnership Holds the Key to Black Sea Security" (Washington, D.C.: Atlantic Council, 28 October 2021), https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/strong-ukraine-turkey-partnership-holds-the-key-to-black-sea-security/ (accessed 23 March 2023).

The War in Ukraine and Ankara's Geostrategic Multitasking

Turkey's geographical location, its NATO membership, and President Erdoğan's activism have allowed Ankara to position itself as a key player in the Ukraine war. Thanks to its relations with Russia and Ukraine, Turkey has taken the lead in organising the Black Sea Grain Initiative to facilitate the export of Ukrainian grain. Moreover, Ankara's Western allies cannot complete NATO's northern enlargement without Turkey. However, Ankara's indispensable role comes at a price for all parties.

For Russia and Ukraine, the benefits of a partnership with Turkey outweigh the costs.

For Russia and Ukraine, the benefits of a partnership with Turkey outweigh the costs. In its relations with its Western partners, Ankara also seems to be working on the basis of the same expectation.

Ankara's positioning in the Ukraine war is not only determined by its bilateral relations with Russia, Ukraine, and its Western partners but also by the fact that the Black Sea region is not its only and main security concern.

Ankara as Mediator between Russia and Ukraine

In the first months after the outbreak of the war in February 2022, Turkey successfully established itself as a mediator between Russia and Ukraine against competitors such as Israel and France.[106] Ankara has continuously assisted in the exchange of prisoners of war between the parties. On 10 March 2022, it organised the first high-level trilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, which brought together the foreign ministers of Ukraine and Russia. On 29 March 2022, talks between the Ukrainian and the Russian negotiating delegations on a peace settlement took place in Istanbul, representing a significant momentum at the time. The change of venue from Belarus to Turkey has undoubtedly strengthened Turkey's role. Ankara has familiarised itself with the positions of Ukraine and Russia and increased its visibility at the international level.

At the peace talks in Istanbul at the end of March 2022, the Ukrainian side made proposals for security guarantees, outlining the conditions under which Ukraine would be a non-aligned and nuclear-weapon-free state. Kyiv also expressed readiness for separate negotiations on Crimea and Sevastopol on a bilateral basis within 15 years.[107] There are differing views on why the peace talks broke off after March 2022.[108]

106 David Ignatius, "Israel Offers to Host Peace Talks between Russia and Ukraine," *The Washington Post* (online), 10 March 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/03/10/israel-bennett-putin-zelensky-russia-ukraine-mediate/ (accessed 27 February 2023); Patrick Wintour, "France and Turkey Propose Rival Plans to Get Grain out of Ukraine," *The Guardian* (online), 17 June 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/17/france-and-turkey-propose-rival-plans-to-get-grain-out-of-ukraine (accessed 27 February 2023).

107 President of Ukraine, "During the Negotiations with Russia, the Ukrainian Delegation Officially Outlined Its Proposals for a New System of Security Guarantees for Our Country," press release, 29 March 2022, https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/na-peregovorah-iz-rosiyeyu-ukrayinska-delegaciya-oficijno-pr-73933 (accessed 31 May 2023).

108 Ukraine expert in conversation with the author, online, 24 April 2023. For more on the context of the negotiations, see Sabine Fischer, *Peace Talks Between Russia and*

One important reason was the killing of civilians in Ukrainian towns, particularly in Butsha and Irpin, which was reported in the media in early April 2022. According to another interpretation, it was the visit of the then British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to Kyiv on 9 April 2022, who promised Zelenskyy further military support for Ukraine in the fight against Russia. This is linked to a third interpretation, namely the strong belief of Ukrainians in their ability to defeat Russia.[109]

Ankara had hoped to bring about a ceasefire with the talks in Istanbul. It responded to Butsha by calling for an investigation.[110] After the NATO foreign ministers' meeting on 4—5 April 2022, then Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu shared his impression that "there are those within the NATO member states that want the war to continue … They want Russia to become weaker."[111]

The Black Sea Grain Initiative

One tangible result of Ankara's mediation efforts is undoubtedly the grain agreement of 22 July 2022, which illustrates the potential of Turkey's regional leadership in the Black Sea region. As the emergence of the Black Sea Grain Initiative indicates, the agreement is also a result of the Turkish-Russian partnership and their regional conflict management, which can be observed in neighbouring conflict zones in the Middle East and the South Caucasus.[112]

As early as May 2022, Ankara had begun negotiations with Moscow and Kyiv on the export of grain.[113] The EU was also considering a naval operation in the Black Sea to escort freighters carrying Ukrainian grain.[114] Meanwhile, Russia held talks with the United Nations on resolving problems that had arisen in connection with the sanctions imposed on the country. Although the West had not imposed embargoes on Russian fertilisers and grain, the sanctions had (and still have) an impact on logistics, insurance, and bank transfers, preventing the export of these products.

On 4 June 2022, the then advisor to the Turkish president, Ibrahim Kalın, announced that grain export by sea would be possible "at least 3—5 weeks later."[115] According to media reports, Turkey and Russia had worked out a plan for securing the transport routes, not including Ukraine.[116] It foresaw that the Turkish side would help clear the mines around the port of Odesa and accompany the grain ships, which would have to be controlled according to Russia's demand. A centre was to be set up in Istanbul for coordination.[117]

However, the Turkish-Russian plan was problematic for Ukraine. Kyiv's main concern was that Russia would attack the port of Odesa after the demining. The clarification of the security situation was a prerequisite for Kyiv to export the grain. Moreover, Kyiv had expected NATO to get involved. Specifically, in the view of one Ukrainian expert, the following conditions had to be met for Ukraine: "The presence of

Ukraine: Mission Impossible, SWP Comment 65/2022 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, November 2022).

109 Ukraine expert in conversation with the author, online, 24 April 2023.

110 "Russia-Ukraine War: Turkey Calls for Probe into 'Massacre' of Civilians in Bucha," *Middle East Eye* (online), 6 April 2022, https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/russia-ukraine-turkey-calls-probe-civilian-deaths-bucha (accessed 31 May 2023).

111 "'Some NATO Allies Want Longer War for Weaker Russia': FM Çavuşoğlu," *Daily Sabah* (online), 21 April 2022, https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/some-nato-allies-want-longer-war-for-weaker-russia-fm-cavusoglu (accessed 31 May 2023).

112 Güney Yildiz, *Turkish-Russian Adversarial Collaboration in Syria, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh*, SWP Comment 22/2021 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, March 2021); Galip Dalay, *Turkish-Russian Relations in Light of Recent Conflicts. Syria, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh*, SWP Research Paper 5/2021 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, August 2021); Daria Isachenko, *Turkey and Russia: The Logic of Conflictual Cooperation*, SWP Research Paper 7/2021 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, October 2021).

113 Orhan Coskun, "Turkey in Talks with Russia, Ukraine over Grain-export Corridor," *Reuters* (online), 26 May 2022, https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/turkey-talks-with-russia-ukraine-over-grain-export-corridor-senior-official-2022-05-26/ (accessed 27 February 2023).

114 Gerardo Fortuna and Natasha Foote, "EU Leaders to Consider 'All Available Ways' to Bypass Russian Food Export Blockade," *Euractiv* (online), 30 May 2022, https://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/news/eu-leaders-to-consider-all-available-ways-to-bypass-russian-food-export-blockade/ (accessed 27 February 2023).

115 "Deliveries of Ukrainian Grain by Sea May Start Soon — Erdogan's Representative," *TASS* (online), 4 June 2022, https://tass.com/world/1460695 (accessed 27 February 2023).

116 Firat Kozok and Selcan Hacaoglu, "Ukraine Cautious As Turkey, Russia Push Black Sea Grain Deal," *Bloomberg* (online), 6 June 2022, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-06/ukraine-cautious-as-turkey-russia-push-black-sea-grain-deal (accessed 27 February 2023).

117 Ibid.

sufficient anti-ship missiles in Ukraine; the presence of warships not only from Turkey but also from other NATO countries that Ukraine can trust (Romania, Bulgaria); the demilitarisation of Snake Island; the withdrawal of Russian ships to their bases, and the cessation of hostilities."[118]

Meanwhile, Ukraine used two alternative transport routes for grain exports via Poland and Romania, respectively (EU-Ukraine solidarity lanes); it was also planned to create a third route via the Baltic States.[119] However, in terms of volume, duration, and cost the sea route via the Black Sea is the most efficient. Before the war, 90 per cent of Ukrainian grain went through Black Sea ports.

On 22 July 2022, delegations from Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, and the United Nations met in Istanbul to finalise the deal, which consists of two parts: The first is the Black Sea Grain Initiative *(Initiative for the Safe Transport of Grains and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports)*, which names Turkey, Russia, and Ukraine as parties. It was signed by Ukraine's Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov and Turkey's then Defence Minister Hulusi Akar, with UN Secretary-General António Guterres as a witness. The Black Sea Grain Initiative was valid for 120 days at a time, with automatic renewal if there is no objection. A Joint Coordination Centre (JCC) in Istanbul, consisting of representatives from the UN, Turkey, Russia, and Ukraine, had the oversight and coordination function. Joint inspection teams inspected the Ukrainian vessels. The initiative covered three Ukrainian ports — Odesa, Chornomorsk, and Yuzhne.

The second part is the *Memorandum of Understanding between the Russian Federation and the United Nations Secretariat to promote access to world markets for Russian food and fertiliser products*. It is valid for a period of three years and was signed by UN Secretary-General Guterres and the First Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Government, Andrei Beloussov.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative was recognised internationally as a major contribution to alleviating the global food crisis.[120] Turkey hoped this initiative could also be a step towards a ceasefire. Moreover, it was important for the country's image in the Middle East and Africa to present Ankara as a leading player in the Global South, which was severely affected by the food crisis.[121] But there are also economic reasons for Ankara's actions: 70 per cent of Turkey's wheat imports come from Russia, and 17 per cent from Ukraine. At the same time, Turkey ranks as the world's second-largest pasta exporter.[122] According to media reports, Ukraine has granted Turkey a 25 per cent discount on Ukrainian grain in the context of the agreement.[123]

From Moscow's point of view, participation in the grain agreement was, on the one hand, disadvantageous for Russia.[124] On the other hand, it was linked to the expectation of a direct quid pro quo from Ankara with regard to its positioning in the Ukraine war. This mainly concerns the economic sphere, such as possibilities for parallel trade and Ankara's stance on secondary sanctions.[125] The war in Ukraine has undoubtedly increased Turkey's value for Russia, especially in terms of trade and energy relations. The reverse is similar: Since Russia suspended its partici-

118 Andreĭ Klimenko (editor-in-chief of *Black Sea News*) in "The Struggle for the Road of Life" (Russian), *Strana UA* (online), 8 June 2022, https://strana.today/news/394535-vojna-v-ukraine-8-ijunja-itohi-dnja.html (accessed 27 February 2023).

119 Kanupriya Kapoor, "Ukraine Grain Exports via Poland, Romania Face Bottlenecks, Deputy Foreign Minister Says," *Reuters* (online), 12 June 2022, https://www.reuters.com/world/ukraine-grain-exports-via-poland-romania-face-bottlenecks-deputy-foreign-2022-06-12/ (accessed 27 February 2023).

120 "Black Sea Grain Exports Deal 'a Beacon of Hope' amid Ukraine War — Guterres," *UN News* (online), 22 July 2022, https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/07/1123062 (accessed 27 February 2023).

121 Bechev, *Sailing through the Storm* (see note 34).

122 Yashar Niyazbaev, "Moscow Returns to 'Grain Deal'" (Russian), *Telegram "Povestka dnya Turtsii"* (online), 2 November 2022, https://t.me/turkeyabout/9080 (accessed 27 February 2023).

123 Ibid.; Ragip Soylu, "Russia-Ukraine War: Turkey Seeks 25 Percent Discount from Kyiv over Grain Deal," *Middle East Eye* (online), 7 June 2022, https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/russia-ukraine-war-turkey-seeks-grain-discount-kyiv (accessed 27 February 2023).

124 Russia's demands include the following: Reconnection of the Russian Agricultural Bank to the SWIFT international payment system; the supply of spare parts for agricultural machinery; the lifting of restrictions on insurance; the restart of the Togliatti-Odesa ammonia pipeline; the release of assets of Russian companies involved in the production and transport of food and fertilisers. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Press Release on Istanbul Agreements," 20 March 2023, https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1858720/?lang=en (accessed 23 March 2023).

125 Boris Mezhuev (Russian expert), interview with RBC TV channel, "Den'" (Russian), *RBC*, 13 March 2023, https://tv.rbc.ru/archive/den/640ed9372ae596f 118ec7f3c (accessed 13 March 2023).

pation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative in July 2023, the Turkish side has been trying to get it to rejoin. Ankara thus also needs Moscow. Instead of receiving the Russian president in Turkey, as previously announced, Erdoğan travelled to Sochi to meet Putin on 4 September 2023. Turkey still has a lot at stake in this deal. Ankara needs the revival of the deal for its own economy, for its positioning in the Middle East and Africa, for the stability in the Black Sea, and for its mediation role between Russia and Ukraine.

For Ukraine, Ankara's cooperation with Moscow and, thus, the lack of exclusivity in its relations with Turkey is a problem politically. Officially and namely at the presidential level, Turkey is not criticised in Ukraine; however, in the Ukrainian expert community, there are some issues of contention and reservations about Ankara. For example, its efforts to achieve a ceasefire are considered "counterproductive" for Ukraine and it is postulated that a defeat of Russia on the battlefield is a precondition for negotiations with Moscow.[126] Moreover, Turkey's ambivalent relationship with Russia casts a large shadow over Ukraine's perception of Ankara. As a result of Ankara's balancing acts, Turkey's importance as a "strategic ally" for Ukraine is increasingly questioned. Nevertheless, it remains an "indispensable mediator" for Ukraine.[127]

Ankara's Security Priorities

For Ankara's Western allies, the Ukraine war has brought to mind an image of Turkey that characterises it as an "indispensable even when unreliable" partner.[128] The expectation that 24 February 2022 would mean a new Cold War and thus leave no room for particular interests did not materialise. Instead, NATO had to deal with Turkey's (and Hungary's) lack of consent to the Alliance's northern enlargement.

This is not the first time that Turkey has drawn the Alliance's attention to its own threat perceptions.[129] Ankara had already tried to block NATO's defence plan for Poland and the Baltic states by demanding that the Kurdish YPG militia in northern Syria be classified as a terrorist organisation beforehand.[130] In addition, as early as March 2022, the then Turkish Defence Minister Akar formulated the expectation at a meeting with his NATO counterparts that the Allies would have to work together to "combat terrorist organisations such as PKK/YPG, ISIS, and FETÖ."[131]

It was to be expected that the Turkish side would use its geostrategic indispensability as a power-political lever in NATO's northern enlargement. In his first telephone conversation with US President Joe Biden after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, Erdoğan stated on 10 March 2022 that the restrictions against the Turkish arms industry should be lifted.[132] At issue are the sanctions imposed on Turkey by the United States in 2020 after Ankara bought the Russian S-400 air defence system in 2017. From Ankara's perspective, the acquisition of the S-400 is a consequence of the close cooperation between the United States and the Kurdish militia YPG in Syria.[133] The dispute between Washington and Ankara over the causal link between the S-400 purchase and the YPG issue, which has been going on for several years, remains a "dialogue of the deaf."[134]

126 Yevgeniya Gaber, "How Turkey Can Play a More Constructive Role in Russia's War on Ukraine" (Washington, D.C.: Atlantic Council, 2 September 2022), https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/turkeysource/how-turkey-can-play-a-more-constructive-role-in-russias-war-on-ukraine/ (accessed 27 February 2023).

127 Iliya Kusa, "From Ally to Mediator: How Russia's Invasion Has Changed Ukraine-Turkey Relations" (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 7 October 2022), https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/88097 (accessed 27 February 2023).

128 Soli Özel, "Indispensable Even When Unreliable. An Anatomy of Turkish-American Relations," *International Journal. Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis* 67, no. 1 (2012), 53–64.

129 Patrick Wintour, "Turkey Denies Blackmailing NATO over Baltics Defence Plan," *The Guardian* (online), 3 December 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/02/turkey-denies-blackmailing-nato-over-baltics-defence-plan (accessed 1 September 2023).

130 The YPG are the military units of the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), which Turkey sees as linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

131 Quoted in Sinem Adar, *Perceptions in Turkey about the War in Ukraine. Implications for the Future of EU-Turkey Relations*, SWP Comment 25/2022 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, April 2022).

132 Ibid.

133 Sinan Ülgen, "It's Not Too Late to Stop Turkey from Realigning with Russia," *Foreign Policy* (online), 11 April 2019, https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/04/11/its-not-too-late-to-stop-turkey-from-realigning-with-russia-s400-patriot-missile-putin-erdogan-trump/ (accessed 26 March 2023).

134 Matthew Bryza, "How to End the US-Turkey Dialogue of the Deaf" (Washington, D.C.: Atlantic Council, 18 March 2021), https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/turkeysource/

The purchase of 40 new F16 fighter jets and 79 modernisation packages for existing systems is also on Ankara's agenda vis-à-vis the United States. According to media reports, the sale of F16 fighter jets to Turkey is related to its approval of NATO's northern enlargement.[135] For the Biden administration, such a sale would be in line with both US and NATO security interests.[136] However, the now former chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Bob Menendez, was strictly against it.[137] The reasons for his opposition were manifold: Erdoğan's authoritarian turn and his close relations with Putin; Turkish military operations in northern Syria; Ankara's support for Baku in the 2020 war between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Karabakh and seven regions surrounding it that Armenia occupied since the First Karabakh War of the 1990s; disputes in the Aegean with Greece; and Turkey's policy towards Cyprus.[138] Following felony bribery charges, Menendez had to step down in September 2023. The question at this stage (October 2023) is to what extent his stance on Turkey is a widely held view in Washington, DC. On the one hand, his departure does provide a convenient moment for the F16 deal; on the other hand, the sale is still tied to issues such as Turkey-Greece relations, Turkey's policy in Syria, and Sweden's accession to NATO.[139]

For Turkey, the Black Sea is currently less important in terms of security than other conflict zones in its neighbourhood.

The war in Ukraine has not only underlined Turkey's geostrategic indispensability but also revealed the gap between Ankara's threat perceptions and those of its allies. On the one hand, the Turkish definition of terrorism differs from that of the West.[140] On the other hand, the Ukraine war is also weighted differently: For Turkey, the Black Sea is currently less important in terms of security than other conflict zones in its neighbourhood.

Ankara's first concern is in Syria and Iraq, where it sees its own security threatened. Syria remains Ankara's top priority, where it is fighting against Kurdish autonomy; in addition, there are about 4 million refugees from Syria living in Turkey.[141] Importantly, regarding Syria, Turkey remains dependent on cooperation with Russia.[142]

Secondly, the Eastern Mediterranean takes precedence over the Black Sea for Ankara. Complex aspects of the unresolved Cyprus issue, the Turkish-Greek dispute over the islands, and the Libyan conflict all conflate in the Eastern Mediterranean. Although the Cyprus problem and the disputes between Turkey and Greece in the Aegean have a long history, the situation has recently become much more problematic, not least because the EU has lost influence in

how-to-end-the-us-turkey-dialogue-of-the-deaf/ (accessed 26 March 2023).

135 Jared Malsin and Vivian Salama, "Biden Administration to Ask Congress to Approve F16-Sale to Turkey," *The Wall Street Journal* (online), 13 January 2023, https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-administration-to-ask-congress-to-approve-f-16-sale-to-turkey-11673630059 (accessed 26 March 2023).

136 Humeyra Pamuk, "U.S. Says Potential F16-Sale to Turkey Would Serve U.S. Interests, NATO — Letter," *Reuters* (online), 8 April 2022, https://www.reuters.com/world/us-says-potential-f-16-sale-turkey-would-serve-us-interests-nato-letter-2022-04-06/ (accessed 26 March 2023).

137 Alexander Ward, Connor O'Brien and Paul McLeary, "Menendez Vows to Block Plan to Sell Fighter Jets to Turkey," *Politico* (online), 13 January 2023, https://www.politico.com/news/2023/01/13/menendez-fighter-jet-deal-turkey-00077928 (accessed 26 March 2023).

138 US Senate, Foreign Relations Committee, "Chairman Menendez Delivers Floor Speech Condemning Erdogan's Threat to Attack Athens with Ballistic Missiles," press release, 19 December 2022, https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/dem/release/chairman-menendez-delivers-floor-speech-condemning-erdogans-threat-to-attack-athens-with-ballistic-missiles (accessed 26 March 2023).

139 Joe Gould and Connor O'Brien, "Menendez Ouster Improves Odds for F-16 Sale to Turkey, Top Republican Says", *Politico* (online), 27 September 2023, https://www.politico.com/news/2023/09/27/menendez-turkey-erdogan-republican-defense-00118421 (accessed 2 October 2023); Patricia Zengerle, "Rights advocate Cardin replaces Menendez as US Senate Foreign Relations chair", *Reuters* (online), 28 September 2023, https://www.reuters.com/world/us/rights-advocate-cardin-replaces-menendez-us-senate-foreign-relations-chair-2023-09-27/ (accessed 2 October 2023).

140 Salim Çevik, *The EU and NATO Have to Counter Turkey's Accusations Regarding Sweden and Finland*, Point of View (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 30 May 2022), https://www.swp-berlin.org/publikation/the-eu-and-nato-have-to-counter-turkeys-accusations-regarding-sweden-and-finland (accessed 26 March 2023).

141 Suat Kınıklıoğlu, *Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Changing Attitudes and Fortunes*, SWP Comment 5/2020 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, February 2020).

142 Sam Heller, "Turkey's Russian Red Light in Syria," *War on the Rocks* (online), 30 December 2022, https://warontherocks.com/2022/12/turkeys-russian-red-light-in-syria/ (accessed 26 March 2023).

shaping Turkish foreign policy.[143] Moreover, the existing conflicts are related to natural gas deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean, which is also reflected in Turkey's "Blue Homeland" doctrine.[144]

The war in Ukraine is Turkey's third security priority after Syria and the Eastern Mediterranean. For Ankara, it falls into the category of "a regional conflict."[145]

143 Galip Dalay, *Turkey, Europe, and the Eastern Mediterranean: Charting a Way out of the Current Deadlock*, Policy Brief (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, January 2021), https://www.brookings.edu/research/turkey-europe-and-the-eastern-mediterranean-charting-a-way-out-of-the-current-deadlock/ (accessed 26 March 2023).

144 Ryan Gingeras, "Blue Homeland: The Heated Politics behind Turkey's New Maritime Strategy," *War on the Rocks* (online), 2 June 2020, https://warontherocks.com/2020/06/blue-homeland-the-heated-politics-behind-turkeys-new-maritime-strategy/ (accessed 31 May 2023).

145 Workshop under Chatham House Rules, November 2022.

Conclusions and Recommendations

For over a decade, Turkey's political leadership has perceived the global political situation as multipolar.[146] This perception is also reflected in public opinion in Turkey. In a survey published by the European Council on Foreign Relations in February 2023, respondents were asked which country they think is a necessary strategic partner with whom Turkey needs to cooperate strategically, and 55 per cent of respondents stated Russia, 53 per cent the EU, 51 per cent the United States and 47 per cent China.[147] However, Turkey is not necessarily accorded the same strategic importance in the perception of its partners. For example, only 31 per cent of respondents in nine EU countries and 29 per cent in the United States consider Turkey a necessary partner. At the same time, 44 per cent in the United States and 41 per cent in the nine EU countries have no answer to the question of how their relations with Turkey should be classified.[148]

Erdoğan's rhetoric has certainly contributed much to the confusion in the West about Turkey's strategic goals. Ankara's growing interest in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a prime example.[149] Since 2012, Turkey has been a dialogue partner of the SCO, which is below observer status. In September 2022, after the SCO summit in Uzbekistan, Erdoğan said Turkey might want to become a member. Erdoğan presents his interest in the SCO as an alternative to the EU, as he already made clear in 2013 when he declared: "If we join the SCO, we will say goodbye to the EU."[150] In the West, however, the SCO is also seen as a "NATO competitor," and Ankara's sought-after rapprochement with it is consequently interpreted as a "break with the West."[151]

However, this portrayal of the SCO in Western discourse as an alliance directed against the West is misleading. On the one hand, such an understanding of the SCO overlooks the diversity of its members and their interests, which do not fit into the bloc paradigm.[152] On the other hand, the SCO can hardly be

146 Ibrahim Kalin, "Turkish Foreign Policy. Framework, Values, and Mechanisms," *International Journal. Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis* 67, no. 1 (2012), 7—21.

147 Timothy Garton Ash, Ivan Krastev and Mark Leonard, *United West, Divided from the Rest: Global Public Opinion One Year into Russia's War on Ukraine*, Policy Brief (London: European Council on Foreign Relations [ECFR], February 2023), 14, https://ecfr.eu/publication/united-west-divided-from-the-rest-global-public-opinion-one-year-into-russias-war-on-ukraine/ (accessed 26 March 2023). The nine EU countries where the survey on Turkey's perceptions was conducted are: Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and Estonia.

148 Ibid.

149 The SCO was founded in 2001. It emerged from the "Shanghai Five" group, which had existed since 1996 and comprised China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Currently, the SCO also includes Uzbekistan, Pakistan, India, and Iran as members, Mongolia, Afghanistan, and Belarus as observers, and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Egypt, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia as dialogue partners.

150 Quoted in Raffaello Pantucci and Alexandros Petersen, "Turkey: Abandoning the EU for the SCO?" *The Diplomat* (online), 17 February 2013, https://thediplomat.com/2013/02/turkey-abandoning-the-eu-for-the-sco/ (accessed 27 March 2023).

151 Ozan Demircan, "Möglicher Türkei-Beitritt zu NATO-Konkurrent: Erdogan gibt sich unbeeindruckt von Kritik," *Handelsblatt*, 20 September 2022; Rainer Hermann, "Wo sich Erdogan wohl fühlt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 September 2022; Umut Uras, "Can the SCO Be Turkey's Alternative to the West?" *Aljazeera* (online), 21 September 2022, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/21/turkey-shanghai-cooperation-organisation-membership-nato-west-alternative (accessed 27 March 2023); Aslı Aydıntaşbaş et al., "Rogue NATO: The New Face of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation" (London: ECFR, 16 September 2022), https://ecfr.eu/article/rogue-nato-the-new-face-of-the-shanghai-cooperation-organisation/ (accessed 27 March 2023).

152 Andrea Schmitz, *SCO Summit in Samarkand: Alliance Politics in the Eurasian Region*, Point of View (Berlin: Stiftung

compared to NATO because it is not a military alliance with collective defence responsibilities. Thirdly, the debate about Turkey's interest in the SCO as an "alternative to the West" is problematic insofar as it links the EU and NATO. The relationship between Turkey and the West is undoubtedly ambivalent, not least because of this, a special role has developed in Turkey's self-perception of being "neither West nor East."[153]

Still, this does not apply to Ankara's security anchoring. For Turkey, NATO is difficult to replace. Conversely, Turkey's membership is also important for NATO. Ankara's withdrawal would not only have grave symbolic and operational consequences for the Alliance but would equally complicate nuclear deterrence.[154] As in Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, and Germany, nuclear weapons of the United States are also stationed in Turkey. Ankara does not have nuclear weapons of its own. According to security expert Sinan Ülgen, this will remain the case as long as Ankara's security relations with the United States and NATO do not collapse.[155]

The Turkish-American relationship is thus central to Turkey's security anchoring in NATO.[156] The problem, however, is that both Ankara and Washington see each other's regional policies as a challenge to their own interests, whether in the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean, or the Black Sea region.[157] These tensions are likely to continue but should be manageable. If there is one lesson to be learned from the geopolitical divergences between Ankara and its Western partners, it is that Turkey, unlike Russia, does not seek a fundamental confrontation with the West.[158] Accordingly, there are considerable differences between anti-Western discourse in Turkey and in Russia, the latter being systemic and the former regionally specific.[159] Especially in the field of security policy, Turkey's strategic orientation remains limited to NATO.

With regard to the Black Sea region, Ankara's Western partners should recognise Turkey's special role resulting from its NATO membership and its relations with Russia. There are at least two reasons for this: First, bilateral relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union already existed during the Cold War. And regardless of the further course of the war in Ukraine, Turkey is not likely to change its relations with Russia.[160] Secondly, Ankara's dialogue with Moscow is not without its benefits for the West. It was not only Turkey's geographical location that gave Ankara the lead in the Black Sea Grain Initiative — its relationship with Moscow was not unimportant either. Moreover, it is not only about the grain deal. In addition to the negotiations between Russia and Ukraine in March 2022, Turkey also hosted talks

Wissenschaft und Politik, 20 September 2023), https://www.swp-berlin.org/publikation/sco-summit-in-samarkand-alliance-politics-in-the-eurasian-region (accessed 27 March 2023).

153 Lerna K. Yanık, "The Making of Turkish Exceptionalism: The West, the Rest and Unreconciled Issues from the Past," *Turkish Studies* 24, no. 3—4 (2023), 640—57.

154 Rayk Hähnlein, Markus Kaim and Günter Seufert, "Turkey Leaves NATO," in *While We Were Planning. Unexpected Developments in International Politics. Foresight Contributions 2018*, SWP Reserach Paper 5/2018, ed. Lars Brozus (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, September 2018), 10—15.

155 Sinan Ülgen, *Turkey and the Bomb*, The Carnegie Papers (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 2012), https://carnegieendowment.org/files/turkey_bomb.pdf (accessed 27 March 2023).

156 Şaban Kardaş and Özgür Ünlühisarcıklı, *A Dual Framework for the Turkey-U.S. Security Relationship*, Policy Paper (Washington, D.C.: GMF, March 2021), https://www.gmfus.org/news/dual-framework-turkey-us-security-relationship (accessed 26 March 2023).

157 Kardaş, "The War in Ukraine and Turkey's Cautious Counter-Balancing against Russia" (see note 67); Aaron Stein and Nicholas Danforth, *Turkey's New Foreign Policy. Ankara's Ambitions, Regional Responses, and Implications for the United States* (Philadelphia, PA: FPRI, February 2023), https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/02/turkeys-new-foreign-policy-ankaras-ambitions-regional-responses-and-implications-for-the-united-states/ (accessed 12 February 2023).

158 Igor Torbakov, *Making Sense of the Current Phase of Turkish-Russian Relations*, Occasional Paper (Washington, D.C.: The Jamestown Foundation, October 2007), 11, https://jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/10/Torbakov-OP.pdf (accessed 27 March 2023).

159 Galip Dalay, *Deciphering Turkey's Geopolitical Balancing and Anti-Westernism in Its Relations with Russia*, SWP Comment 35/2022 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, May 2022).

160 In the event of Russia's use of a nuclear weapon in Ukraine, Turkey would be likely to reconsider its position. Hanna Notte and Chen Kane, *Russian-Turkish Relations and Implications for U.S. Strategy and Operations*, CNS Occasional Paper no. 56 (Monterey, CA: James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies [CNS], November 2022), https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/op56-web-version.pdf (accessed 27 March 2023).

between the intelligence chiefs of Russia and the United States in November 2022.[161]

Recognising Turkey's special role in the Black Sea region would mean thinking beyond the NATO and EU frameworks. With regard to maritime security, it could be helpful to explore the potential of Ankara-led initiatives such as BlackSeaFor and Black Sea Harmony and to consider them as a framework in which issues such as sea rescue, the fight against organised crime, the consequences of pollution, and the protection of fisheries can be addressed.[162]

Since the war in Ukraine also has supra-regional implications, Germany should consider establishing a dialogue platform with Turkey that is not overlaid by Turkey's EU accession process. There are various models that could be considered, for example, the format of the High Level Cooperation Councils that Turkey has with more than 20 countries or the Strategic Mechanism launched by Ankara and Washington in April 2022.[163] Such a platform would give Turkey and Germany the possibility to address bilateral issues and explore cooperation opportunities in regions of common interest.

161 "US, Russian Spy Chiefs Meet in Turkey over Ukraine War," *Al-Monitor* (online), 14 November 2022, https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/11/us-russian-spy-chiefs-meet-turkey-over-ukraine-war (accessed 27 March 2023).

162 Daria Isachenko and Göran Swistek, *The Black Sea as Mare Clausum. Turkey's Special Role in the Regional Security Architecture*, SWP Comment 33/2023 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, June 2023).

163 Kenan Aslanli and Birol Akgün, "Institutional Mechanisms of the Turkish Foreign Policy: The Case of Russia-Turkey High-Level Cooperation Council," *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations* 20, no. 4 (2020): 791—804; Alper Coşkun, "Making the New U.S.-Turkey Strategic Mechanism Meaningful" (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 12 May 2022), https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/05/12/making-new-u.s.-turkey-strategic-mechanism-meaningful-pub-87117 (accessed 27 March 2023).

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Abbreviations

3SI	Three Seas Initiative
AFU	Armed Forces of Ukraine
B9	Bucharest Nine
BlackSeaFor	Black Sea Naval Force
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
BSF	Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership
BTE	Baku—Tbilisi—Erzurum Pipeline
CDC	Community of Democratic Choice
CFE	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
ECFR	European Council on Foreign Relations (London)
eFP	Enhanced Forward Presence
EU	European Union
FETÖ	"Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü" ("Fethullahist Terrorist Organisation")
FPRI	Foreign Policy Research Institute (Philadelphia, PA)
GMF	German Marshall Fund (Washington, D.C.)
GUAM	Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova)
ISIS	"Islamic State in Iraq and in Syria"
JCC	Joint Coordination Centre
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (Kurdistan Workers' Party)
PYD	Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat (Democratic Union Party)
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
TANAP	Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline
TAP	Trans Adriatic Pipeline
TİKA	Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency
TRACECA	Transport Corridor Europe—Caucasus—Asia
UN	United Nations
YPG	Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (People's Defence Units)

Further Reading

Galip Dalay and Daria Isachenko
Turkey's Stakes in the Russia-NATO Rivalry: The Ukraine Crisis and Beyond
SWP Comment 9/2022 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, February 2022)

Daria Isachenko and Göran Swistek
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