

REGIONAL POLITICS

**THE GREATER BLACK SEA REGION—
A GATEWAY TO EURASIA****Boris ZAZHIGAEV**

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Introduction

At all times the Black Sea Region has played an important role in the life of the Eurasian people; it was on the shores of the Black Sea that great empires flourished and disappeared.

Today, it is the source of the worst threats of the 21st century that still linger in the larger part of the post-Soviet expanse; it is also a seat of “frozen conflicts” largely associated with instability in the Greater Middle East. The present political and ideological contradictions in the region interfere with the eastward progress of liberal and democratic values.

Despite all sorts of external and internal threats, the Greater Black Sea Region (a triangle formed by Russia, Europe, and the Islamic world) so far remains a relatively calm area, most of the states of which are distinguished by a European foreign policy vector.

When looking at part of the Black Sea Region and the Caucasus (together with Central and part of

South Asia) as a geopolitical segment of the Persian Gulf states and the Middle East, Brzezinski called it the “Eurasian Balkans” and believed that the term “power vacuum” described the situation to a tee.¹

The Black Sea Region and its unique natural and man-made strategic facilities occupy a highly advantageous geopolitical place on the globe. The Crimean Peninsula, which in the late 1980s and early 1990s was a target of fierce contention, should be mentioned in particular. The region’s geopolitical potential and the dynamics of global evolution have turned it into a subject for scientific scrutiny, largely prompted by the novelty of the problems created by the processes unfolding before our eyes.

The region’s specifics and importance have made it a regional and global phenomenon, three

¹ Z. Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard. American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Basic Books, New York, 1997, p. 123.

aspects of which can be described as especially interesting:

- I. The regional and global changes in the Black Sea Region in the post-bipolar world.
- II. The new geopolitical landscape of the Greater Black Sea Region.
- III. Clash of civilizations in the context of the global evolutionary confrontation.

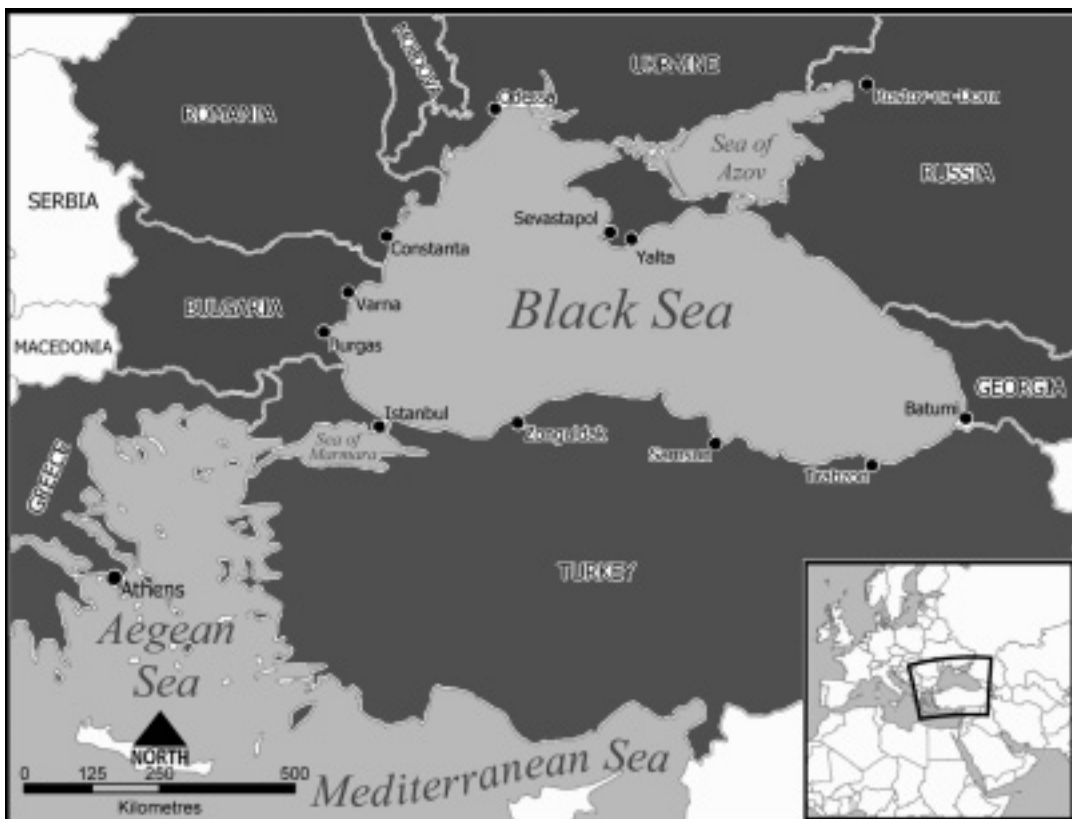
I. The Regional and Global Changes in the Black Sea Region in the Post-Bipolar World

In the post-bipolar period, the area has been living through consequential tectonic changes caused by the emergence of a great number of independent states and enclaves fighting for their independence.

During the Cold War, the region was a target of confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization (see Fig. 1); today it is a regional enclave.

Figure 1

NATO-Soviet Bloc Confrontation in the Bipolar World



In the wider sense, the region is a patchwork of political interests of the various states belonging to it and their economic spheres of influence. Turkey, Rumania, and Bulgaria are NATO members (the latter two are part of the European Union). Ukraine serves as a buffer between the West and Russia, while Georgia, which has opted for the Western development vector, lives under Russia's pressure and lightens it for Azerbaijan and Armenia. The latter has no diplomatic relations with Turkey, the region's leader.

Bulgaria, Rumania, Ukraine, and Georgia are actively looking for their national and regional identities. Russia, which has outlived its "post-empire syndrome," is trying to defend its interests in the global geopolitical game. The Soviet Union's disintegration deprived it of control not only over a large stretch of the Black Sea coast and its aquatic area, but also over the strategically important Crimean Peninsula. The situation in the Black Sea theater of operations has changed beyond recognition; today the Black Sea Fleet (BSF) is 2-3-fold smaller than the Turkish Navy²; in the past it competed with the NATO United Mediterranean Force.

In 1991, the Soviet BSF, with a Navy Department staff of around 10 thousand, hired 60 thousand civilians (office and manual workers). It consisted of 835 ships of practically all classes, including 28 submarines; 2 antisubmarine cruisers; 6 GM cruisers and first-rate ASW; 20 second-rate large antisubmarine vessels, destroyers and second-rate patrol vessels; about 40 patrol vessels; 30 small missile ships and missile boats; about 70 minesweepers; 50 landing ships and craft; and over 400 naval aircraft. The fleet also included 2 divisions of antisubmarine vessels and destroyers; 1 division of submarines; 2 divisions of fighter aviation and missile-carrying naval aircraft; 1 division of coastal defense; and scores of separate brigades, regiments, battalions, divisions, companies, and batteries.³

By 2011, the BSF retained about 50 warships and boats, as well as several scores of auxiliary vessels; the numerical strength of naval aircraft and coastal defense had decreased manifold. In the next 10 to 15 years, most the BSF ships will become physically unfit for service.⁴

Some experts think that Russia's BSF is declining: only 30 percent of its ships are battle-worthy.

Today, it has no aviation to speak of and no ship-repair yard; the accident that befell *Alrosa* deprived Russia of what was believed to be its only battle-worthy submarine.⁵ The BSF's only GM cruiser looks more like a floating target than a battle-worthy warship.⁶

With no open access to the Mediterranean (or the World Ocean), the Black Sea Fleet is doomed during war time: it has no chance of getting out of the Black Sea trap sealed by NATO forces which are 30-40-fold stronger, thus making its strategic importance negligible. Russian sailors regard the BSF as a comfortable place with good wages and good retirement prospects.

Today, the BSF in Sevastopol is nothing more than a potential threat to the city's Ukrainian population.

According to U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine John Tefft's secret cable, former president of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma "downplayed the strategic importance of the Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF), saying it could dispatch a ship to scare Georgia, but it would be no match for the Turkish fleet."⁷ The talk took place on 2 February, 2010, on the eve of the second round of the presidential elections in Ukraine.

² See: V.V. Zaborskiy, "Kuda plyvet VMF Rossii?," available at [http://zpolk.ucoz.org/news/kuda_plyvet_vmf_rossii/2009-11-03-23], 20 March, 2011.

³ See: I. Kramnik, "Chernomorskiy flot. Tsena sily," *Korrespondent.net*, 12 May, 2010, available at [<http://korrespondent.net/worldabus/1075441-ria-novosti-chernomorskij-flot-cena-sily>], 19 March, 2011.

⁴ See: *Ibidem*.

⁵ See: K. Zheleznov, R. Korsovetskiy, "Podvodnaya lodka 'Alrosa' vernulas v Sevastopol," *Komsomolskaya pravda (v Ukraine)*, 2 November, 2009, available at [<http://kp.ua/daily/211109/203234/>], 21 March, 2011.

⁶ See: V. Voronov, "Kak umiraet Chernomorskiy flot," Part 1, available at [<http://flot.com/nowadays/structure/black/bsfisdying.htm>], 12 March, 2011.

⁷ [<http://turkishnavy.blogspot.com/2010/12/wikileaks-and-turkish-navy.html>].

II. The New Geopolitical Landscape of the Greater Black Sea Region

No matter how varied and no matter how vague, the Black Sea Region is a definite and stable geographical unit which divides the North from the South and the East from the West, that is, the rich countries from the poor countries; being found within the strategic triangle (see a scheme in the right-hand lower corner of Fig. 1) formed by the Islamic world, Asia, and Europe the region faces numerous external and internal threats.

NATO, the United States, and their EU partners are showing a lot of geopolitical interest in the region. The hearings in the U.S. Congress testify to the fact that America needs the region to diversify energy fuel supplies from non-OPEC members which serve an alternative to the Persian Gulf countries. It is suggested that America should establish contacts with countries with predominantly Muslim populations (as opposed to radical Islamism), support independence of the South Caucasian and Black Sea coastal states, and encourage their advance toward democracy.

The recommendations of 2001 stressed the following: "Increase diplomatic efforts and encourage financial investment to promote the flow of Caspian energy resources along an East-West corridor (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan)" which "will ensure that a large portion of Caspian oil flows through non-OPEC countries and countries that do not have competing interests (Russia and Iran both have extensive oil and gas supplies)."⁸

The United States regards the "viability and stability of global energy supplies and diversification of supply" as one of the most important geopolitical tasks. "As President Bush has noted, 'Diversity is important, not only for energy security but also for national security.'"⁹ "Caspian discoveries are at least equal to and may prove larger than those in the North Sea. The Caspian's resources are located in countries possessing predominately pro-Western orientations that are not currently members of OPEC. The addition of Caspian oil could weaken the OPEC monopoly, providing greater leverage over the pricing policies of Saudi Arabia and other OPEC countries, ultimately contributing to lower world oil prices."¹⁰ All the more so as the recent natural calamities in Japan suggest that in the absence of a safe and effective alternative to traditional energy resources, mankind will continue using them (at least in the near future), which explains why access to the energy resources of the Middle East and Siberia determines the vectors of world politics.

The twenty years that have passed since the Soviet Union's disintegration have pushed the Black Sea Region back into the 18th century when Russia and the Ottoman Empire were locked in a struggle for the Black Sea. Today, however, the strategic statuses of the region's states are very different from the geopolitical landscape of the latter half of the 18th century: Russia no longer controls the important stretches of the Black Sea coast (Ukraine and Georgia have gained their independence, while Bulgaria and Rumania, former members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, have joined NATO) and the Crimea. The Crimean Tatars (exiled under Soviet power) returned to the Peninsula, a fact that breeds a negative attitude among the local people toward what remains of the morally obsolete BSF still stationed in Sevastopol.

⁸ *The Caucasus and Caspian Region: Understanding U.S. Interests and Policy*, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Europe of the Committee on International Relations House of Representatives, One Hundred Seventh Congress, First Session, 10 October, 2001, p. 1, available at [http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intrel/hfa75632.000/hfa75632_of.htm], 22 March, 2011.

⁹ *Remarks of President George Bush to the Capital City Partnership*, St. Paul, Minnesota, 17 May, 2001, available at [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/05/20010517-2.html>], 18 March, 2011.

¹⁰ B. Shaffer, *U.S. Policy toward the Caspian Region: Recommendations for the Bush Administration*, available at [http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/brenda_shaffer_policy_recommendations.doc], 27 March, 2011.

Ukraine's position on the Peninsula is greatly weakened by the well-organized Crimean Tatars who aspire to set up an autonomy and who are supported by Turkey (its claims to the Crimea going back into the past), which is building up its military might. With each passing day, the possibility of the Crimean Tatars setting up their own state looks more and more realistic, which is breeding concern among the Slavic population.

"The Turks are pouring money into the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatars, training clergy, and building new houses in the Crimea. In short, they are creating a large group of people oriented primarily toward Turkey."¹¹

Russia, on the other hand, has lost the support of the Peninsula's Slavic population (particularly the Russians and Ukrainians). The last elections to the Supreme Soviet of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea brought the pro-Russian political forces a meager 3 seats out of 100.¹² In 2011, Russia stopped funding and later closed down the Russian Cultural Center in Simferopol and its branches in Alushta, Bakhchisaray, Dzhankoy, Armyansk, Yevpatoria, Feodosia, Kerch, and the villages of Krasnogvardeyskoe and Zuya.¹³

With the strategically important Crimea and its military infrastructure, as well as practically the entire stretch of the northern coast and its transport infrastructure (extremely important for the economies of all regional states), Ukraine occupies the key position in the Black Sea Region. However, it has not yet identified its foreign policy interests or its domestic priorities. So far this is a classical depraved state, about which Machiavelli said: "For the corruption I speak of, is wholly incompatible with a free government... That its original institutions are no longer adapted to a city that has become corrupted, is plainly seen in two matters of great moment, I mean in the appointment of magistrates and in the passing of laws."¹⁴ This is a "[universal] state in its last agonies" (A. Toynbee),¹⁵ in which the nomenclature (which passes itself for the elite) is fighting for survival.

The oligarchs who rule the country by criminal methods with the help of the special services and defense and security structures use power to line their pockets.

The political processes underway in Ukraine pushed it into the corner the great Italian politician described in his *Discourses*: "All the great emigrations of nations have been and continue to be from the cold and barren region of Scythia, because from the population there being excessive, and the soil ill able to support them, they are forced to quit their home, many causes operating to drive them forth and none to keep them back."¹⁶

According to the poll conducted in 2010 by the International Institute of Education, Culture and Ties with the Diaspora at Lviv Polytechnic National University, 49 percent of the young men (under 30) polled were prepared to emigrate from Ukraine... Whole families were prepared to emigrate.¹⁷ The country's future is threatened by the state of its economy, army, and navy, as well as by the growing demographic crisis and increasingly obvious fragmentation.

¹¹ T. Flint, "Karmanny tigr Chernogo moriya," available at [<http://www.from-ua.com/politics/415036e46b590/>], 29 March, 2011.

¹² See: "Deputatskie fraktsii Verkhovnogo Soveta ARK," available at [<http://www.rada.crimea.ua/structure/factions/>], 22 March, 2011.

¹³ See: D. Smirnov, "Ruka Moskvyy' usokhla. Russkiy kulturny tsentr v Simferopole zakryvaetsya," *Sobytiya*, No. 4 (254), 2011, available at [<http://www.sobytiya.com.ua/public/9075/>], 27 March, 2011.

¹⁴ N. Machiavelli, *Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius*, Transl. from the Italian by Ninian Hill Thomson, M.A., Public Domain Books, 1883, Book I, Chapters 17 and 18.

¹⁵ A. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Abridgement of Volumes VII-X by D.C. Somervell, Oxford University Press, New York, 1957, p. 4.

¹⁶ N. Machiavelli, op. cit., Book II, Chapter 8.

¹⁷ See: "Forty-nine Percent of Young People in Western Ukraine Want to Emigrate," Ternopol Internet-newspaper *Poglyad*, 11 March, 2011, available at [<http://poglyad.te.ua/2011/03/49-molodi-zahidnoji-ukrajiny-hochut-vyjihaty-z-krajiny-na-postijno/>], 22 March, 2011 (in Ukrainian).

The regional balance of power is best illustrated by the changed correlation of forces between the Turkish and Russian navies; the two countries have limited themselves to a “regional arms race” in which Turkey, which modernized its fleet comprehensively and on time, has scored several points.

It should be said that throughout its history Turkey has attached great importance to the Black Sea Region; the Ottoman Empire looked at the Black Sea as “its inland reservoir” which no foreign power could enter and waged incessant wars with Russia to preserve and/or establish its control over the sea and the Crimea.

Control over the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, which connect the Black Sea with the World Ocean, remains as important a foreign policy task as ever for Turkey and NATO (of which Turkey has been one of the most reliable members since 1952).

The situation in the Northern Caucasus (which belongs to Russia) can be described as a historical atavism: the central and local governments are no longer coping with the developments there. Russia relies on force and methods that have nothing to do with international and domestic law to remain in the region. Most of the democratic states do not recognize the Russian power structures in the Northern Caucasus as legitimate.

There is the opinion that the civil guerilla war in the Russian part of the Caucasus can be described as a national-liberation war with potentially far-reaching geopolitical repercussions for Eurasia and the rest of the world. I am convinced that the Russian Caucasian republics are bringing Russia’s inevitable disintegration closer; this will inevitably diminish its world political role.

The United States has included the Black Sea Region in the sphere of its political interests. The American Administration specified the basic trends of its policy in the Black Sea and the Caspian Region in November 1999 at the Istanbul OSCE Summit. A special statement spoke about America’s and Turkey’s stronger regional positions as opposed to Russia’s interests. The Bush Administration brought together all the actions undertaken within the Big Program for regional unity along the U.S.-Turkey-Greater Caucasus line. Washington intended to promote America’s national interests in the form of America’s presence in the strategically important areas.¹⁸

Turkey, the EU membership of which is nowhere in sight, vacillates between the East and the West and between the need to look after its national interests and its sense of national pride.

Ariel Cohen, a prominent American analyst and senior research fellow in Russian and European Studies and International Energy Security at the Heritage Foundation, wrote in his *U.S. Strategy in the Black Sea Region*: “Compounding Turkish acrimony toward the West and its involvement in regional matters is the reluctance by EU leaders to support Turkish accession. Their hesitation is breeding resentment among the Turks... EU indecisiveness also strengthens Turkish ties with other nations, including Russia, that are convinced that the West will never accept Muslims into their ‘clubs’.”¹⁹

In recent years Turkey has been clearly demonstrating that it intends to move away from the United States and NATO (of which it is a member); it is believed in some quarters that it is one of the most anti-American countries in the region and, probably, in the world. Ankara wants a much more important regional role than that assigned to it by the U.S. and EU. In an interview with *Kavkazskiy uzel*, Director of the Harvard Black Sea Security Program Sergey Konoplev said: “As a NATO member Turkey guarded the southeastern flank and stood opposed to the Warsaw Treaty Organization. Today, it can hardly be described as a NATO member. It tries to keep the Alliance out of the region to deal with regional security problems either single-handedly or together with Russia.”²⁰

¹⁸ See: *The Caucasus and Caspian Region: Understanding U.S. Interests and Policy*.

¹⁹ A. Cohen, I. Conway, “U.S. Strategy in the Black Sea Region,” Backgrounder, No. 1990, 13 December, 2006. Published by The Heritage Foundation, available at [www.heritage.org/research/RussiaandEurasia/bg1990.cfm], 14 March, 2011.

²⁰ S. Konoplev, “Dlya Prichernomorskogo regiona glavnym yavlyaetsya sokhranenie mira, reshenie sushchestvuyushchikh konfliktov i ukreplenie ekonomicheskikh svyazey. Interview Kavkazskomu uzlu,” 26 January, 2011, available at [http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/180157/], 26 March, 2011

Turkey is trying to pursue a dual foreign policy; Ankara would like to capitalize on contradictions between America, the EU, and Russia in the energy security sphere and their desire to gain the upper hand in the European energy market.

On the other hand, it owes its economic advance to Russian hydrocarbons; Russia supplies more than 70 percent of Turkey's natural gas.²¹

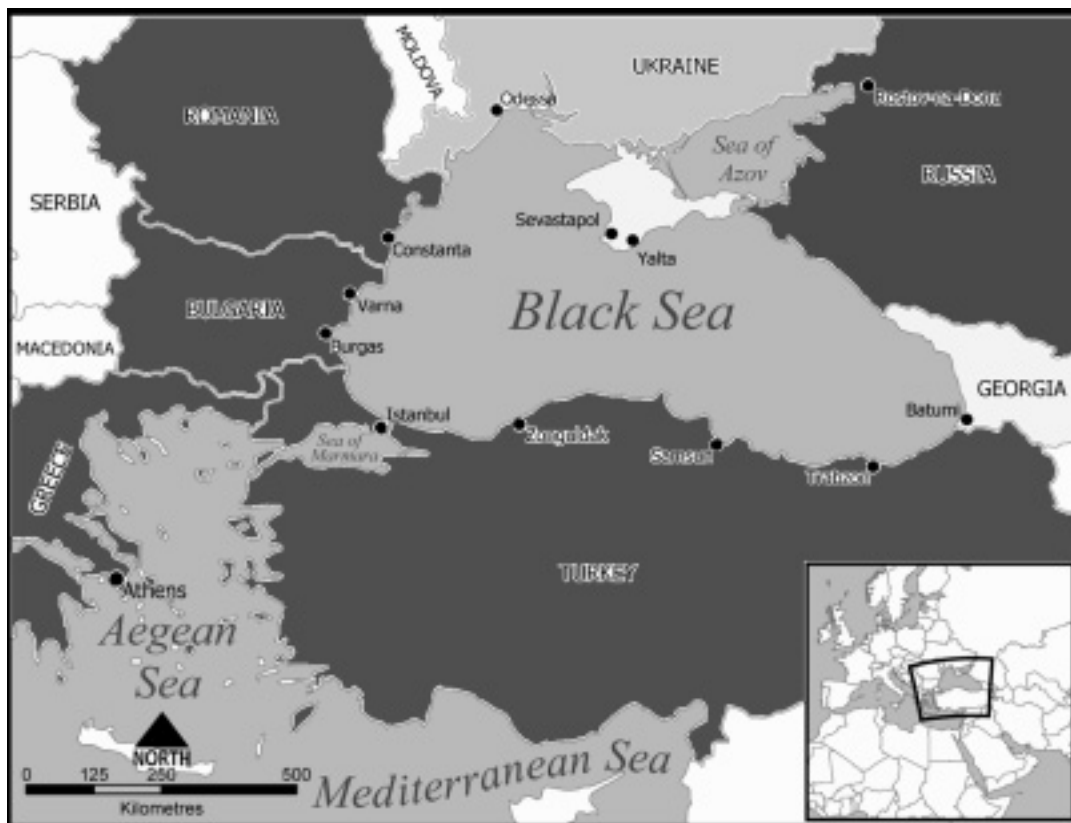
Recently (especially after the Russian-Georgian war of 2008), Iran became more active in the Black Sea Region and the Caucasus: it established closer relations with Georgia (which irritates Russia) and is paying much more attention to Azerbaijan and Armenia.

In fact, "much of the instability that has plagued the region has resulted from the actions of rival powers: among them, the U.S., Russia, Iran and Turkey. In the early 1990s, Moscow's activities contributed to the escalation of many local disputes in the region to all-out wars."²²

According to American analysts, "the Caucasus, particularly the mountain areas that straddle the North and South Caucasus, are a potential Afghanistan, with all its consequences for us (the U.S.—B.Z.)."

Figure 2

**The New Landscape of
the Greater Black Sea Region**



²¹ See: H. Fiona, T. Omer, "Turkey and Russia: Axis of the Excluded?" *Survival*, Vol. 48, No. 1, Spring 2006, available at [www.brookings.edu/views/articles/fhill/2006_survival.pdf], 20 March, 2011.

²² *The Caucasus and Caspian Region: Understanding U.S. Interests and Policy*.

There are many weak states, which do not control their entire territory. International terrorism directed against the United States has never appeared there, but there are many ruthless and lawless acts against local governments and private citizens that show its potential.”²³

The Black Sea Region is a geopolitical *mêlée* of cultures; it is involved in international (legal and illegal) trade and is open to all sorts of ideological and religious impacts and attempts by external forces to gain firmer positions in it. This is particularly true of the United States, which is consistently promoting its national interests in the region.

Disintegration of the bipolar system caused tectonic shifts; today, Turkey, still the outpost of NATO’s global policies, has to diversify not only its economic goals, but also its foreign policy aims to the detriment, in some cases, of Atlantic solidarity.

The region’s policy is determined by the relations between Turkey and Russia; two opposing and cooperating regional poles with diametrically opposite economic and political interests rooted in their objective civilizational trends: upsurge and economic growth, on the one hand, and disintegration and universalization²⁴ of states (Russia and Ukraine), on the other. This process explains the consolidation of the political antipodes (Russia and Turkey) determined to limit the political and economic (energy) influence of the third countries (the U.S. and EU in particular) in the region.

Iran and the South Caucasian states, as well as the North Caucasian republics, will play a much greater role in the Black Sea Region. This will help the world actors to promote their geopolitical interests in the area. Russia and Turkey will be gradually squeezed out: “velvet” expansion of Western civilization is inevitable.

III. Clash of Civilizations in the Context of the Global Evolutionary Confrontation

The clash of civilizations is one of the two key development trends in the world today. It seems that in the Black Sea Region it should be regarded as a clash between two worlds: the world of liberal democracy (the EU, U.S., and NATO) and the world of tyranny—from the North African totalitarian despotic regimes of various kinds to “universal” post-Soviet autocracies and kleptocracies.²⁵ This is not a conflict of civilizations (in line with the theories of Huntington and Danilevskiy), but rather a clash between the good forms of government and the “three utterly bad” ones (N. Machiavelli).²⁶

The future of the world and the vector of its development, as well as the global and regional repercussions, depend on who will win in the coming clash over the Greater Black Sea Region. Because of its patchiness, vagueness, and instability, the region will become a main instrument of global world politics, which will change the political map of Eurasia (from Turkey and Iran to the APR).

The academic community on the whole agrees with the above. O. Vorkunova, a fellow at the RAS Institute of World Economy and International Relations and the head of the Peace and Develop-

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ A “universal state” is perceived here, according to Toynbee, roughly as an empire that has outlived itself and lost its ability to develop. Such states “arise after, and not before, the breakdown of civilizations... They are not summers but ‘Indian summers,’ masking autumn and presaging winter” (A. Toynbee, *op. cit.*, p. 2).

²⁵ See: Kleptocracy from ancient Greek κλέπτειν—steal and κράτος—power; literally, power of thieves—an ideological tag attached to a rogue-controlled government.

²⁶ See: N. Machiavelli, *op. cit.*, Book I, Chapter 2.

ment Research Center, has written that “the key to the future of Eurasia is found in the Black Sea-Caspian Region. Today, it is associated with the breathtaking geopolitical ‘Big Oil’ and communication scenarios and with the so-far virtual idea of an alliance with the European Union and the region’s future. They all will be affected, to different degrees, by the strategic choice of the South Caucasian and Balkan states.”²⁷

There are two obvious, and antagonistic, vectors in world politics clearly seen in the Black Sea Region: on the one hand, Russia is trying to keep the other actors (the EU, U.S., and NATO) away and to control the largest share of fuel flows to the EU and Turkey. The Kremlin is determined to regain Soviet influence in the Middle East and North Africa to interfere, in one way or another, in policy of the oil- and gas-producers. Its dual position in relation to the North African democratic revolutions of 2011 and criticism of the U.N. and NATO (Putin described the attack on Libya as a “crusade” and the U.N. SC resolution as “incomplete and flawed”).²⁸ This is veiled support of the kleptocratic regimes of Northern Africa (Libya in particular) and the Middle East.

Russian experts write about the lost weapon trade profits (“...the profits lost by the Russian military-industrial complex because of the Libyan crisis is about \$4 billion”) and warn that “practically any country which does not fit the liberal matrix and has any amount of mineral riches might find itself on the list. Should we expect the same or...?”²⁹

According to analysts, the North African and Middle Eastern regimes are identical to the political systems in Russia and Ukraine (with the advent of Viktor Yanukovich to power, Ukraine has been sliding toward a regime of a nomenklatura kleptocracy).

On the other hand, America, the European Union, and NATO stand opposed to Russia’s expansion to the Mediterranean and the Middle East where it is seeking greater influence on the local states. Its intentions were obvious back in the early 2000s: in his *Renewing the Atlantic Partnership* (a review of the Report of an Independent Task Force chaired by Henry A. Kissinger and Lawrence H. Summers), Charles A. Kupchan, senior research fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote: “A wider Europe could ensure that peace, democracy, and prosperity continue to spread eastward, thereby converging with what could be similar trends in Russia.”³⁰

In the foreseeable future, the United States, NATO, and the European Union (each with its own and common interests of promoting the liberal-democratic values) will play roles equal to that of Russia in the Black Sea Region. The United States and NATO look at it as a springboard from which they will move on to the Greater Middle East, an alternative source of energy resources, and a buffer zone to cushion the threats coming from the South. The EU is more concerned about economic issues and is prepared to forget, for a while, its geopolitical and geostrategic interests (with its NATO partnership).

In the 21st century the region has become a point of bifurcation of the civilizations where the antagonisms of the regimes are clearly seen.

On the one hand, the region attracts the “universal” (Toynbee) post-Soviet (in fact “medieval”) states and the already exhausted “people’s democracies” of North Africa and the Middle East (born and developed in the latter half of the 20th century under Soviet patronage).

²⁷ O.A. Vorkunova, “Sredizemnomorye-Chernomorye-Kaspiy—‘pogranichie’ v mirovoy politike,” in: *Sredizemnomorye-Chernomorye-Kaspiy: mezhdru Bolshoy Evropoy i Bolshim Blizhnim Vostokom*, Institute of European Studies, RAS; Grantitsa Publishing House, Moscow, 2006, p. 46.

²⁸ “Putin snova raskritikoval voennuyu operatsiyu v Livii,” *Segodnya.Ua*, 24 March, 2011, available at [<http://www.segodnya.ua/news/14235042.html>], 29 March, 2011.

²⁹ E. Ponomareva, “Strategiya unichtozheniya Livii,” available at [<http://www.mgimo.ru/news/experts/document183886.phtml>], 4 April, 2011.

³⁰ Ch.A. Kupchan, *Renewing the Atlantic Partnership*, Report of an Independent Task Force sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations, U.S.A., 2004.

On the other hand, the “open society” led by the United States is trying to control the world’s energy resources and manage the global economy (including the EU and such fast-growing emerging economies as China and India), as well as to contain Iran’s nuclear ambitions. Coordinated policies will allow the United States to rally even more support to deal with the recent most acute problems (Iran’s nuclear file and WMD proliferation), wage a global war on terror, and ensure energy security.

The rule of the cliques in the Arab countries which grew rich on natural resources has ended. Unlike what happened in the former Soviet republics, the wave of democratization in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Jordan, Algeria, Libya, and Syria is rising from below. We can say that this is the first result of the so-called Mediterranean Union, a project launched three years ago by President Sarkozy. It speeded up democratic changes on the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

In the near future, the democratic changes of 2011, which have already caused dramatic changes in the Mediterranean, will greatly affect the strategic balance of power in the Black Sea Region. Russia’s strategic claims to domination, not only in the Mediterranean, but also in any other part of the World Ocean, will be trimmed to a great extent.

The unipolar world headed by the United States and NATO (as the guarantor of global security) is the only option for the West: its failure will bury the “open society.”

As an agonizing universal state with obvious signs of approaching disintegration, Russia might degenerate into a semi-colony up to and including loss of statehood.

“The huge country might collapse in the near future... The system is unlikely to survive for more than five years... Brzezinski predicted its collapse in 2012... According to the RAS Institute of Socioeconomic Studies, in 2011 in Russia there were 4 million homeless, 3 million beggars, about 5 million waifs, and about 3 million prostitutes roaming the streets and railway stations registered by the district police departments. About 1.5 million Russian women are engaged in the same business in Europe and Asia. Over 1 million are kept in prisons that have room for no more than 700 thousand. In the notorious 1937 there were 200 thousand fewer prison inmates in the country (the Soviet Union) with a much larger population. In 2006, the WB rated Russia 96 (out of 175 countries) in terms of this index. On a ten-point scale, Russia has a score of 3.8 in terms of the efficiency of its state governance and 1.9 in terms of rule of law. This better suits the destitute African countries and the already dead Latin American dictatorships... Today there are more orphans than in May 1945: 750 thousand today compared to 678 thousand children who lost their fathers in the war and whose mothers died of hunger and illnesses... According to the WHO, there are 37-42 million alcoholics in the country. In 20 years, Russia has lost 23 thousand settlements.

“Russia is the 7th country in the world in terms of number of billionaires... They pay the world’s lowest taxes: 13% against 57% in France and Sweden; 61% in Denmark; and 66% in Italy. Half of Russia’s national riches belong to 1.5% of its population.”³¹

Leader of the State Duma CPRF faction Gennady Zyuganov confirmed these figures, collated and summarized by Ukrainian journalist G. Bursov, at a meeting between President Medvedev and the leaders of both chambers of the Federal Assembly on 17 January, 2011. He said in particular: “Whole regions of Russia are losing their Russian population... According to international criteria, this can be described as nothing short of genocide.”³²

The unipolar world model, EU expansion, and NATO’s eastward movement are the instruments used by the “open society” to stand opposed to the agonizing “universal” kleptocracies (armed with

³¹ G. Bursov, “Krakh ‘russkogo mira’: krizis, gnienie, raspad,” *UNIAN Ukraina*, available at [<http://www.inosmi.ru/politic/20110207/166314712.html>], 25 March, 2011.

³² *Vystuplenie G.A. Zyuganova na vstreche s Prezidentom RF D.A. Medvedevym, 17 yanvarya 2011*, available at [<http://www.kprf.org/showthread.php?t=9757>], 27 March, 2011.

cynicism and militant populism) of the post-Soviet model. George W. Bush put this in a nutshell when he said, we are living in “an era of barbarism emboldened by technology.” In his Farewell Parade, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld amplified by saying: “We live at a time when our enemies mix an extremist ideology with modern weaponry and have the ability to kill thousands—indeed even hundreds of thousands—of our people in a single, swift, deadly stroke.”³³

By Way of a Conclusion

The Black Sea Region is an area of clashing interests between two political antagonists; I have in mind forms of governance. Niccolò Machiavelli wrote, “There are altogether six forms of government, three of them utterly bad, the other three good in themselves, but so readily corrupted that they too are apt to become hurtful... It is easy to pass imperceptibly from the one to the other. For a Monarchy readily becomes a Tyranny, an Aristocracy an Oligarchy, while a Democracy tends to degenerate into Anarchy. ...And in this way grew the recognition of Justice.”³⁴

The Black Sea Region, a meeting place of Europe, Africa, and Asia (this is a geostrategically unique location), has become an arena of clashes between the global political and economic (energy) interests of the “open society” with the “good forms of government” and the universal kleptocracies governed by the “utterly bad” regimes.³⁵

Russia regards the Black Sea Region as the last bastion of totalitarianism (Arnold Toynbee described this as determination of the founders and masters of the universal state to remain in power no matter what³⁶), which allows it to keep the West and the onslaught of liberal-democratic values in check. The United States, EU, and NATO are prepared to use the region as a springboard from which democracy (the only instrument which makes it possible to preserve the values of the “open society”) can be pushed eastward, thus opening the doors to the energy resources of the Caspian, Central Asia, and Russia’s Asian part.

The Black Sea Region might play the central role in re-orientating the energy interests of the global world actors (China, Japan, and the APR countries in particular) from North Africa and the Middle East to Russia’s depopulated Asian part and create conditions in which the liberal world will spread its control to the global economy.

There is every reason to believe that the Black Sea Region will serve as the starting point for the West’s “soft” expansion and reorganization of the “dying remnants of the Soviet empire,” Russia and Ukraine in particular.

³³ *Farewell Parade*, As Delivered by Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, The Pentagon, Washington, DC, Friday, 15 December, 2006, U.S. Department of Defense, available at [<http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1073>].

³⁴ N. Machiavelli, op. cit., Book I, Chapter 2.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ See: A. Toynbee, *Postizhenie istorii*, Moscow: Airis-Press, 2006, p. 513.