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Importance of Turkey in the NATO Black Sea Security

After the Annexation of Crimea in 2014

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Abstract

Nowadays, NATO-Russia Relationship, NATO security in the Black Sea and the case of Turkey is an actual topic and current developing history. After the annexation of Crimea by Russia, the situation became clearer to the Western World. Russia is trying to destabilize the region and spread its power around. Evidently, Turkey is the key country, which plays the most important role in the Black Sea region. Lately, democratic regression in Turkey doesn't seem very promising towards the relations with the Western community. Turkey's position and its foreign policy towards the West, Russia and regional countries seem crucial for the regional politics.

This paper tries to analyze main political security concerns in the Black Sea region. How the annexation of Crimea influenced on increasing the role of Turkey in the NATO Black Sea security and what is NATO's new strategy regarding the 'balancing of power' with Russia.

List of Abbreviations

A2/AD Anti-Access/Area Denial

ASCMs Anti-Ship Cruise Missiles

CEPA Center for European Policy Analysis

CIS Commonwealth of Independent states

CSTO Collective Security Treaty Organization

EAPC Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council

EU European Union

ISAF International Security Assistance Force

KFOR Kosovo Force

MAP Membership Action Plan

NACC North Atlantic Cooperation Council

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

NRC NATO-Russia Council

NRF NATO Response Force

PfP Partnership for Peace

RSM Resolute Support Mission

SAMs Surface-to-Air Missiles

TSK Turkish Armed Forces

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1. Introduction

The Black Sea region became more important and actual issue to the world politics due to its tensed geopolitical location, as crossroad of Eastern Europe, Asia, Middle East, Balkan counties and South Caucasus. Apparently, the Black Sea region is an area, which reflects the intensity of relations between the NATO and Russia. In this case, they are revealing the differences of positions in which is also shown their approach towards prosperity and development of the region.

Today, the NATO Black Sea Security is an ongoing matter. It came as part of the NATO agenda especially after the annexation of Crimea. Since that violating action done by Russia, the Western world realized emerging threat coming from Russia. Russia's attempts to increase its power and destabilize the region went closer to the border of NATO. Hence, with these ensuring consequences, the importance of Turkey has emerged even more in the NATO Black Sea security. Therefore, Turkey's political position and its foreign policy towards the West became crucial for the regional security.

There are three NATO member countries, which border the Black Sea: Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria; Two are aspirant countries, which are trying to join the Alliance: Georgia and Ukraine; and, there is Russia, which is opposing the NATO principles and is seeking to size the influence on its "privileged territories" of post-Soviet Union sphere. The political tensions between NATO and Russia in the Black Sea region has risen, at first after Russia's invasion in Georgia 2008 and later on Easter Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Russia's action taking over the Crimea contravened territorial integrity of European States and hindered the democratization process in Ukraine. In addition, Russia's direct involvement in the Middle East, Syrian conflict in October 2015, infraction of the Baltic airspace and Russian cyber-attacks to the US presidential election campaigns threatened the Western World. The US and the EU have put trade sanctions against Russia, but have been ineffective. Moreover, after putting down the Russian warplane by Turkey, it triggered sanctions from Russia and probably gave to Turkey sort of 'usefulness' of being a member of NATO. The annexation of Crimea and violation of territorial integrity of Ukraine and Georgia reminded Turkish officials the danger of getting closer to the Russian border.

Apart from strained relations between NATO and Russia, many things have changed in the foreign policy of Turkey. Since the failed coup in July 2016, Turkey's relations with the West had been

seriously damaged, with reduced interest of official Ankara in the European Union. Before, Turkey was taking under the consideration accountability of democratic values, human and minority rights. It was promoting transparent government and strengthening democratic institutions. Turkey is deeply integrated in transatlantic community, a member of NATO and the Council of Europe, it also participates in economic organizations of World Bank and World Trade Organization. Chaotic atmosphere in the Middle East and sanctions from Russia made it conspicuous to Turkey the importance of US and European markets for exporting its products. Also, implementing the EU standards for Turkish industrial goods increased its competitive possibilities to export to the United States, which gave to Turkey double export volume of valued goods, rather exporting vegetables to Russia or across the Black Sea region.

Nevertheless, Turkey tries to impose its independent policy. Past years, Turkey could be considered as a good example of emerging western democracy in the Muslim world, by strengthening democratic institutions, human rights and the rule of law. Under the leadership of President Erdogan and its political 'Justice and Development Party' (AKP), despite of 'great start', Turkey turned away from the democratic principles and the 'international liberal order'. After the coup attempt, the government attacked on judiciary, human rights, rule of law, arrested numerous people and journalists. Erdogan's 'New Turkey' seems to be differing from the West. This had been evident by several factors: Turkey's closer partnerships with the countries which are not sharing western democratic values; the "Eurasianists" in Turkey, who are trying to have closer relationships with Russia and China are merging with 'Erdogan's authoritarianism and Islamization'.

Turkey is the most important member of NATO in the Black Sea region. It has the gate to the Black Sea, by controlling both straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles. It also has the largest coastline in the Black Sea, where is presented part of its naval capabilities. Turkey is a second biggest contributor to the NATO Alliance. Today, Turkey is facing many challenges internally or externally. Since the end of World War II, Turkey has been part of the international liberal order. However, rising 'Anti-Westernism' is putting Turkey's stance towards NATO and aspiration to the European Union under the question as well as imposing the independent domestic and foreign policy. This is part of a main concern for NATO in the Black Sea security.

1.1. Research Question and Hypothesis

This research paper will attempt to analyze the consequences of the annexation of Crimea in terms of the importance of Turkey in the NATO Black Sea security. According to the term of 'Balance of Power', the NATO needs Turkey to 'balance' Russia. Turkey is the key country geopolitically for NATO and the most important actor in the Black Sea region. It has the gate to the Black Sea, by controlling both of straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles and is the second largest contributor to the NATO Alliance.

Hence, this paper will attempt to answer the following question:

How the annexation of Crimea influenced Turkey's role in the NATO Black Sea security?

In order to find the answer to this question there are several inquiries to be made:

1. How the annexation of Crimea influenced the 'Balance of Power' in the Black Sea?
2. How the main actors responded to the annexation of Crimea? (NATO; Russia)
3. How Turkey responded to the annexation of Crimea?

In view of this, the research will attempt to verify the following statement:

The annexation of Crimea enhanced Turkey's power with regard to NATO's Black Sea security.

The hypothesis shows, that the **Annexation of Crimea** is an **independent variable** and rapprochement of Russia closer to the NATO borders is a main concern of the regional politics. In order to better test this hypothesis, it should be underscored that the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, yielded concrete results for NATO, urging for increased involvement in the Black Sea region to secure its security. Therefore, the **dependent variable** will be **Turkey's role in the NATO Black Sea security**. The rising role of Turkey, which is also going to be proved according to the study, gave official Ankara possibility of imposing independent policy. This will be verified through the analysis data, sources, literature etc.

Several reasons give importance to this research. At first, evaluating the impacts of Russian annexation of Crimean Peninsula, to identify the means of rising importance of Turkey in the NATO Black Sea Security. Especially, describing the matters, which uttered these results. On the other hand, by increasing the role of Turkey, to explain particular actions ‘against NATO’. Finally, as an additional value of the study, it is to describe critical reality of the region in accordance with this period of time.

1.2. Research Design and Methodology

The study focuses on the developments within the Black Sea security following the annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation in 2014. Specifically, we will analyze how this event has shifted the balance of power in the region between Russian and NATO and to what extent it has influenced the importance of Turkey, as one of the major actors within this interplay. To this end, the study will overview historic context, capabilities of interacting powers and their positions in the post-annexation period.

In this regard, the research utilizes well-crafted set of methods in order to address the objectives of the study. Given the nature of the research topic, **case study** will be used as the major research strategy. According to Yin, „case study research excels at bringing us to an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research. Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships extensive descriptions and analysis of that instance taken as a whole and in its context “. (Yin, 1984, p. 23). In our research, this methodology will enable us to conduct an in-depth analysis of particular events, which were demonstrated within the particular context. In other words, the annexation of Crimea will be analyzed from the perspective of Black Sea security developments, with an emphasis on its effects on Turkey. The case study is considered as an overarching method, which guides the entire research process.

Our study is primarily quantitative and it strongly relies on analysis of secondary sources. Particularly, existing literature, academic articles, books and other relevant information available were closely examined and analyzed in order to draw out the conclusions and test proposed hypothesis. In addition, the information was retrieved from the official web sites of NATO, the Government of Turkey, Russia and other reliable Internet resources.

In order to double-check the secondary sources and provide rather in-depth enquiry into the issue, we have utilized the method of qualitative interviewing, “*as an acknowledged and systematic approach to knowledge creation*” (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p.11). In view of this, in-depth interviews were conducted with the Head of NATO Liaison Office in Georgia, William Lahue, Ambassador of Turkey in Georgia, Fatma Ceren Yazgan, and analyst and founder of Georgian Strategic Analysis Center, Nodar Kharshiladze. The information provided in these interviews has further strengthened the quality of the study.

1.3. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework of the study derives from the theory of **neorealism** of international relations developed by Kenneth Waltz. Neorealism as a theory reformulates classical realism and underscores the importance of structural elements of the international system. According to Waltz, international structure is defined by the ordering principles, which are materialized in anarchy. In that anarchic world, the behavior of the actors depends on the distribution of capabilities, in other words, on distribution of power (Waltz, 2003).

Neorealists believe that major interest of states is to survive. In doing so, they are inclined to increase their power, as it increases their chances of survival. However, unlike realists, neorealists think, that conflicts are rather social, than natural. In other words, neorealists have disregarded human nature as the only determinant of conflict and extended this assumption to the structure and the principles of anarchic international system (Weber, 2005).

In the theory of neorealism huge importance is ascribed to the theoretical proposition of **balance of power**. This proposition argues that states will definitely take an advantage of their power if they are not counterbalanced. In the systems like this the concept of equilibrium becomes absolutely crucial for securing stability and peace. According to Wohlforth (2008, p. 40), “states check dangerous concentrations of power by building up their own capabilities or aggregating their capabilities with other states in alliances”.

Such conditions of anarchy and mistrust among states create something that is called **security dilemma**. Specifically, it maintains that while one state starts to increase its military or other types of capabilities for the sake of security, other states are also compelled to respond with the same actions. It

is due to perception that increase in power by one state is the threat to the security of others. This perception leads states to find themselves in constant rivalry, thereby creating source for tension, conflict and even war.

Taking these theoretical propositions into our research, we argue that through the annexation of Crimea, Russia has brought structural misbalance in the Black Sea security. Specifically, it has increased its strength and presence to the level, which has put the security of other regional actors under threat. Most notable, NATO was concerned by the actions of Russia on the one hand due to strategic importance of the Black Sea region and on the other hand, due to created challenges vis-a-vis overall security architecture.

It is no secret, that Russia pursues Cold-War type “power games” in relation with NATO, which is being perceived as a strategic enemy. According to the Russian National Security Strategy (2015) “a determining factor in relations with NATO is still the unacceptability for the Russian Federation of the alliance's increased military activity and the approach of its military infrastructure toward Russia's borders, the building of a missile-defense system, and attempts to endow the bloc with global functions executed in violation of the provisions of international law”.

Taking this into account, build-up of Russian Federation in the Black Sea creates security dilemma, further challenging NATO to take relevant measures. Against this backdrop, Turkey's role, as most influential NATO member in the Black Sea area becomes crucial for balancing Russia's aggressive moves and restoring balance of power. Specifically, we have witnessed the increased importance of Turkey upon the perception of its vital role in maintaining equilibrium between Russian Federation and NATO. Turkey, controlling strategic straits in this area and has strongest military capabilities among other NATO Members (Romania, Bulgaria) appears to be strategically most important player for the alliance to contain Russian aggression.

1.4. Literature Review

There are several literature and sources relevant to the subject of analyzing the emerged security issues in the Black Sea after the Annexation of Crimea in 2014. Balance of power Between NATO and Russia and the case of Crimea in the Black Sea, is multi-complex issue. There is Turkish analyst and professor

at Brookings Institute, Kemal Kirisci, who actively analyzed the relations between Turkey and the West and wrote a book called “Turkey and the West – Fault lines in a troubled alliance”. In his book, he largely explains current domestic and foreign politics of Turkey. He describes, the past history between Turkey, U.S. Soviet Union, NATO and Russia; what kind of benefits Turkey received by associating with the West, what are ‘gains and losses from Turkey’s integration in the transatlantic community’. Also, Mr. Kirisci express his visionary and describes how the ‘lack of western involvement’ caused Turkey’s skepticism and turning his back to the West.

Another, great work done by Nasuh Uslu, named ‘The Turkish-American Relationship Between 1947 and 2003; The History of a Distinctive Alliance’, published in New York, is a source of key findings regarding the military capabilities of Turkey, Turkey and U.S. relations as well as Turkey’s joining to the NATO alliance. He describes the periods during Cold War and after collapse of Soviet Union. How Turkey played an important role in balancing power with Soviet Union and then later after geopolitical changes, Russia in the Black Sea region. Also, Mr. Uslu talks about an impact of Turkey’s traditional westernization policy on its relations with the US.

Dr. Deborah Sanders from King’s College, London, UK, created a study about Black Sea naval forces. She is an author of the book ‘Maritime Power in the Black Sea’. She describes naval capabilities of all Black Sea littoral countries: Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Romania, Bulgaria and Russia. She expresses interest about growing importance as a maritime area of the Black Sea, that it has great strategic importance and is vital source and transit point for future energy reserves. Also, she assumes, that Russia and Turkey are two important international actors in the Black Sea, which are directly affecting international security and stability.

There are remarkable researches and articles written by international experts and researchers, who are focusing on this current issue, the annexation of Crimea. Russia – NATO counter balance is global security issue and isn’t a regional conflict, because several major powers are involved, which affects geopolitics and security in the World. Mr. Boris Toucas in his work called “The Geostrategic Importance of the Black Sea region: A Brief History”, he acknowledges the great geographical importance of the Black Sea, why big actors can be interested in this area and the Crimean peninsula in terms of geographical locations, seas and accesses to the Oceans and ‘short routes’, values of the region for economy, trade and particularly as an energy hub. According to him, the Black Sea region is going to be future route for the EU energy diversification by transporting Caspian Oil and Gas to Europe.

Findings in the literature is supportive to identify major issues of the geopolitics in the Black Sea and what are the impacts of ‘great powers’ on the regional countries. At the pages below, the Chapter 2 also serves as a full informative link in accordance with the study and the literature review.

1.5. Outline of the Study

The study is structured into three major chapters, which provide for a consistency into the research. The first chapter is the introductory part of the research and it introduces major topic and issues to be analyzed throughout the thesis. This section sets out research question and hypothesis and describes independent and dependent variables. In addition, **Chapter 1** discusses theoretical background, as well as strategy and methods addressing the research goal and objectives.

Chapter 2 describes the important developments prior to the annexation of Crimea and overviews the facts and milestones, which are of crucial significance for understanding the content of the thesis. Specifically, Chapter 2 discusses the geographical value of the Black Sea area and the NATO approach towards the security in this region. In addition, it emphasizes on NATO’s positioning in the Black Sea before and after the Collapse of Soviet Union, which also serves as Literature Review.

Chapter 3 could be regarded as the central section of the study, where the hypothesis is unfolded and independent and dependent variables tested against each other. Particularly, this section analyzes the change in balance of power after the annexation of Crimea and its impact on increasing perception of Turkey as most important actor for the NATO Black Sea Security. Chapter 3 scrutinizes how regional actors have positioned themselves following the seizure of Crimea by the Russian Federation and what role has Turkey undertaken in this regard.

Finally, within the conclusion, entire research is overviewed and its findings are summarized. The conclusion revisits hypothesis, research question and objectives and shortly discusses the accomplishments of the thesis.

2. Informational Background

2.1 The Black Sea Geographical value

The Black Sea geographical location is on a crossroad of Eastern Europe, Balkan countries, South Caucasus, Asia and Middle East. Throughout the history, this area had strategic importance economically and militarily between countering of Christian and Muslim worlds. The Black Sea region mostly had been considered as a "locked Sea", but this 'status' has been changed after giving the commercial importance and finding of Caspian Oil resources. In recent years, the Black Sea region is shown as a transit area between Caucasus, Western Europe, Central Asia and Middle East.

The Black Sea region represents one of the most strategic areas for the European energy, trade and military security as well. However, until the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the region had been neglected from the transatlantic partners. Since the end of the Cold War, for the Western World the Russian threat had been 'eliminated'. Particularly it was the annexation of Crimea, a geographically strategic peninsula, which brought Russia's border closer to NATO. This action done by Russia intimidated members of alliance and gave the feeling of rising Russian influence, including witnessing the use of peninsula's geographic advantage to present hybrid war techniques.

Geopolitically, the Black Sea region is very dynamic area. These are following littoral countries: Turkey, Georgia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria and Russia. Describing the complexity of the dynamic relations, the Black Sea region has political, economic and strategic interests for international players. Regarding the security issues there are key positions in the area, which contributes to the geographic value and importance of the Black Sea region. These are:

- **The straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles**, which are linked to the Marmara Sea. Through these straits, the Black Sea is connected to the Mediterranean Sea and the ocean. This is considered as a door of the Black Sea, whereas the Turkey has the privileged position, controlling both of straits according to the Montreux Convention.
- **The Crimean Peninsula** is one of the most geographically strategic areas of the region according to its shape and location. It has multiple facilities for the naval and aircraft forces.

- **Georgian Seaside**, which has important meaning for Azerbaijan oil and Silk Road route, for transporting goods from Asia to Europe, with the future project of Anaklia deep-water port. For the Euro-energy diversification, the energy security is on the agenda of European Union and NATO. Stability in the South Caucasus region is vital requirement to replace the EU dependence on the Russian energy by transporting uninterruptedly Caspian oil and gas.
- **Danube's sea exits** give power to Romania, for the reason of ship entries and exits through Sulina, the territory of Romania. Also, the continental shield of Romania for economic ties between Romania and Ukraine.
- **Serpent Island** is an important component for the security system of Ukraine. It is located between political and military alliances, which are NATO and Euro-Asian alliance, made by Russia (Gerald, 2010).

Among the Black Sea littoral states, Turkey has a unique geographic location. This relates Turkey to several strategic regions: Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean, Caucasus, Balkans and North Africa. Furthermore, the opportunity of having a control on the straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles, the Black Sea has significant role for Turkey. On the one hand, balancing and countering Russia has always been a national security issue for Turkey's territorial integrity and on the other hand, Turkey has deep economic relations with the Black Sea regional countries.

2.2. North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

While talking about the NATO Black Sea security, according to Mr. William Lahue, the head of NATO liaison office in Tbilisi, Georgia, “we have to rethink again about what NATO is”. (Source: Interview with Mr. William Lahue).

North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a political and military alliance, whose purpose is to “guarantee the freedom and security of its members” (Source – nato.int). Regarding the political means, ‘NATO promotes democratic values and enables members to consult and cooperate on defense and security-related issues to solve problems’ (What is NATO? www.nato.int) and military means are about ‘if diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military power to undertake crisis-management operations’

(What is NATO? www.nato.int). NATO had been created on its basic assumption of ‘collective defense’ founded in 1949 and as of today has 29 allies, mainly from Europe and North America. NATO is committed to the principle – ‘An attack against one or several of its members is considered as an attack against all’ (What is NATO? www.nato.int). It has an ‘Open Door’ policy, which gives an opportunity to any country in Euro-Atlantic area to join the alliance after accommodating the standards and obligations of NATO membership requirements, which is called ‘Membership Action Plan’. ‘NATO membership is open to any other European state in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area’ (What is NATO? www.nato.int).

NATO is represented in the Black Sea with three countries: Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. As Mr. William Lahue indicates in his interview: “when we talk about NATO in the Black Sea, we are talking about Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. NATO’s issue is to provide necessary defense for them”. (Source: Interview with Mr. William Lahue). Turkey had joined NATO in 1952, Romania and Bulgaria in 2004. Turkey has great importance to the NATO as an ally, in terms of geographical location and military capabilities.

A NATO member country, joining of Montenegro is the last enlargement in 2017.



(NATO on the map, www.nato.int)

2.3. NATO in the Black Sea: before and after the collapse of Soviet Union

The North-Atlantic Treaty Organization wasn’t only created to respond the threats from the Soviet Union. According to NATO official representatives, the Alliance’s creation was to serve three purposes: ”detering Soviet expansionism, forbidding the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe

through a strong North American presence on the continent, and encouraging European political integration” (A Short History of NATO, www.NATO.int).

During the times of Soviet Union, Turkey represented NATO on the Black Sea. After the end of the World War II, Turkey improved the relations with US, having a common enemy the Soviet Union. From the beginning of NATO creation, Turkey didn't have any provisions for the membership, but situation changed after the invasion of South Korea by North Korea in June 1950. Turkey provided 4500-man unit to join the US troops in Korea, which was the key to NATO membership (Isiklar, 2008, p. 21). After the World War II, Soviets had its influence on a wide part of Europe. Therefore, Europe should respond from its flank, which required the involvement of Turkey, located to the south of the Soviet Union. Turkey had crucial geographic location for Europe to counterbalance the threats coming from the Soviet Union. Then in February 1952, Turkey was accepted as a full member of NATO. Right from the beginning of membership, Turkey improved military cooperation with the US. An important number of “US-cum-NATO facilities were constructed in Turkey, including, most notably, an air base at Incirlik, near Adana, with other bases at Karamursel, Cigli, and Diyarbakir, and radar stations at Karamursel, Sinop, Samsun, Trabzon, Belbasi, and Diyarbakir, and some naval facilities at Iskenderun.” (Hale, 2012, p.123.)

Furthermore, Turkey became closer and strategic partner to the US and the West. In 1955, Turkey was involved in the project of Baghdad Pact, where it was essential actor with Iran because of having a border with Soviet Union. And via the ‘Eisenhower Doctrine’, which was for to give support to ‘Middle East countries that contained Communism’, as a result, in 1957 Turkey received around 200 million dollars in military aid. (Salmoni, 2012, p. 13.) Also, by the ‘Eisenhower Doctrine’, Turkey has recognized Israel and “proved to be significant partner” (Isyar, 2005, p 24.)

Due to having different geographical locations and different perspectives, Turkey and US foreign policies weren't merging to each other. Nevertheless, both of them benefited from the alliance and Turkey proved to be viable partner to the NATO in the Black Sea region (Isiklar, 2008, p. 21). Regarding the transatlantic partners, Turkey followed two goals in terms of initiatives and policies in the Black Sea region. At first, Turkey established ‘military superiority’ in the Black Sea in post-Cold War era. And second, Turkey supported wider Black Sea cooperation for the regional countries to get a

membership in the NATO. This initiative was to create peaceful region for better economic cooperation and integration in the region.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the Black Sea region have emerged independent states as individual entities. The NATO started creating cooperative initiatives towards newly independent states of Eastern Europe of former allies of Soviet Union included Russia. Thus, the Atlantic alliance launched several cooperative initiatives to promote peaceful organization rather than an aggressive one. In 1991, NATO created New Alliance's Strategic Concept, which would identify the threats for the security in Europe and therefore the role of NATO in the changed political arena. After, that NATO launched North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and the Partnership for Peace (PfP) in 1994. In 1997, the NACC was replaced, but built on its achievements the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). The EAPC is the multilateral forum, which also serves as the political framework for the PFP. Later on, since 1999, for partner countries of future membership of NATO was established the Membership Action Plan (MAP) to successfully meeting the requirements of NATO enlargement.

The *Partnership for Peace* program is “Based on a commitment to democratic principles, the purpose of the Partnership for Peace is to increase stability, diminish threats to peace and build strengthened security relationships between NATO and non-member countries in the Euro-Atlantic area” (Partnership for Peace Programme, www.nato.int). There are 21 countries currently members of the PfP program, which supports its participants to enhance the compatibility of the Partners' and Allies military forces in undertaking peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

During the time of developing partnerships between NATO and post-Soviet Countries, Russia wasn't openly recognized as a threat to NATO or Eastern European states. Even more, Russia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1991 and then the Partnership for Peace program in 1994, as well as it participated to deploy Russian soldiers as part of the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1996 and in Kosovo 1999. After the 9/11 terroristic attacks in September 2001, “Russia opened its airspace to the international coalition's campaign in Afghanistan and shares relevant intelligence” (Relations with Russia, www.nato.int).

Regardless the cooperative developments of NATO and Russia after the collapse of Soviet Union, the relationships between them had been strained since Russia's military invasion in Georgia, in 2008. “Russia's disproportionate military action in Georgia in August 2008 led to the suspension of formal

meetings of the NRC and cooperation in some areas, until spring 2009. The Allies continue to call on Russia to reverse its recognition of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states” (Relations with Russia, www.nato.int). The relationships had been even more damaged after the Russia’s invasion in Ukraine and annexation of Crimea in 2014. Since that action done by Russia, the Western world realized direct threats coming from Russia and bringing its border closer to the NATO. This caused raising more importance of Turkey in the NATO Black Sea security as itself of Turkey as well, because of its military capabilities and geographical location.

3. NATO Black Sea Security and importance of Turkey

3.1 Geopolitical Value of Crimea and Interests of Regional Actors

Crimea has the second most important key positions in the Black Sea after the straits. It is a peninsula and owing to its shape of having three sides pierced into the Sea, has strategic military means. Crimea, the southern part of Ukraine, since 2014 occupied by Russia has several geopolitical values:

- It confluences three geopolitical regions, which are: Eastern Europe, Asia side and Middle East.
- There is defensive and offensive Russian naval outpost, which are ‘closest’ to the NATO.
- Crimea is included on the proposed route for Caspian oil and gas transport to the Western countries.
- For Russia, the Sebastopol port is only way to the “warm waters” and it connects Russia to the South, Mediterranean Sea, to the Ocean and through the Suez Canal to the East.
- Crimea provides trade and tourism facilities.
- Crimea has global political scene and interest for not only the regional players but the world geopolitics (Gerald, 2010).

Ukraine is an aspirant country of NATO, willing to join the Alliance. From the point of view of Russian analysts, in case of Ukraine’s NATO acceptance, Russia has to review and project national security interests. According to them, Ukraine should be divided into two, due to its geopolitical and ethno-cultural realities, because Eastern Ukraine is largely populated by Russians and should be presented as autonomy in close ties with Russia. From the Russian overview, if they would leave Crimea to the hand of ‘Sovereign Ukraine’, that would create direct threat to Russia’s security, which can even cause ethnic tensions in Crimea (Ukraine crisis: an essential guide to everything that's happened so far, www.theguardian.com).

In the Black Sea region, Crimea is unique region of Ukraine in geographic, historic, ethnic and religious terms. It became the crossroads of interests and influences of the Black Sea actors: former empires (Russian and Ottoman), state entities and as centers of power. The interests of the regional countries are shaped in a wider, than regional geopolitical space, where different players play their roles. On a one hand, CIS and CSTO, dominated by Russia are trying to keep states within the sphere of their influence. On the other hand, the EU, the USA and NATO seriously influence the region with

their own interests. The Black Sea region as it is an important geopolitical area, can be used by its actors as ‘bridgehead’ or ‘expanding’ their influence. As mentioned above the key actors seeking for the domination are Russia, EU, the USA, NATO and Turkey, who is actively trying to get the status of a regional leader, with its growing economy and military potential. The main interests of the leading actors in the Black Sea region are (Razumkov Center, 2011):

Russia aims to:

- § Establish a buffer security zone in its southern border;
- § Keeping post-Soviet countries under its exclusive influence, by preventing them from the integration in NATO and the EU and use their resources to strengthen its economy;
- § Leadership in the Black Sea region to influence its neighbor regions to spread the power for achieving the world leadership;
- § Containment of the EU and NATO eastern expansion;
- § Forming a monopoly in supplying of energy resources to the European markets and use this opportunity as a foreign policy instrument;

EU, USA and **NATO** aim to:

- § Enhance the security and stability in its south-eastern flank;
- § For the energy diversification, strengthening control of the Black Sea energy transformation corridor to supply energy resources from the Caspian and Central Asian region to the European and world markets;
- § Protection and promotion of interests of the national and transnational companies in the regional markets;
- § For transportation of troops and cargo across the region to support political and military operations in Asia and Middle East, need to create reliable corridor;
- § Use of the region as a ‘bridgehead’ to spread the influence in neighboring regions of Middle East and Central Asia;

Turkey aims to:

- § Creation of secure environment;
- § Strengthen the position and spread its influence in the Muslim world, including the countries of former Ottoman Empire;

§ Promotion of cooperation, achieving leadership in formation of the regional developments and security strategy;

From the Russian perspective, the post-Soviet sphere is its 'privileged interests', but for NATO the Black Sea region is to interact with other countries and use bilateral partnerships mechanisms, whereas Turkey is taking its independent political initiatives by implementing social programs and providing social infrastructure for Crimean Tatars in the Crimea.

3.2 Annexation of Crimea in 2014 and NATO-Russia Power Balance

A new government in Ukraine, who has come after Yanukovych, was 'pro-Western' and 'anti-Russian' in their principles. Ukraine, having a clear statement of joining Western family gave Putin feeling of uncertainty. For Russia, it seemed like, that time had arrived to act against Ukraine and the West. Putin ordered Russian forces to be sent to take Crimea from Ukraine, which they did so and in March 2014, they took over Crimea and incorporate into Russia. Overtaking process seemed easier in Crimean case, because, thousands of Russian troops had already been stationed at a naval base in the Crimean port of Sebastopol.

The illegal annexation of Crimea of March 2014 caused serious damage of human rights and regional politics of the Peninsula. The Crimean population was largely participating in the Ukrainian political life, but following the annexation, the political rights of Crimean people were strongly diminished and pro-Ukrainian parties proscribed. Only two political parties were represented in Crimea's autonomous parliament 'United Russia' and ultranationalist 'Liberal Democratic Party of Russia'. The political parties of minority groups of Crimean Tatars aren't represented in the regional parliament anymore. The legal, social and political systems have been all weakened. Free media have been suppressed, Russia closed all independent media sources including Crimean Tatar news channel. Independent research agencies and many NGOs, including of those receiving foreign funds left Crimea, therefore only stayed pro-Russian media, sponsored by Russia. Additionally, the peninsula suffers from unemployment and reduced tourism. Crimean citizens' income after the annexation, remain lower. (Source – Abalkin 2016)

The annexation of Crimea destabilized the region and caused situational damage for the local population. European Union and USA subjected sanctions against Russia, due to the Crimea illegal

annexation, but for Russian leadership, the annexation of Crimea is strategic gain and restitution of ‘historic part of Russia’. However, Russia failed, the annexation to be internationally recognized. Regardless of that, the situation for the Russian officials is considered as ‘closed issue’.

The annexation of Crimea is multilayered issue. The Black Sea regional security and case of Crimea is where the power balance between NATO and Russia is displayed. Russia by taking Crimea tried to destabilize Ukraine to abandon its efforts joining the NATO. Russia ‘blames’ NATO for getting closer to the Russian border, but for NATO it is Russia who went closer to the border of NATO through the Crimea annexation. “As a result of Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea and ongoing destabilization of eastern Ukraine increased challenges to our security” (NATO-Russia relations: the facts, www.nato.int). The ambassador of Turkey in Georgia, her Excellency Fatma Ceren Yazgan in her interview stated, that “Political military security is not Black Sea, it is beyond on that”. (Source: interview with Fatma Ceren Yazgan).

Since the period of Cold War, Soviet leaders preferred that NATO stays intact with countries of European Union, and today the situation is same with their Russian successors, they disagree with NATO expansion in the post-Soviet sphere. After the mid-1990s, the Clinton administration supported for NATO enlargement in Eastern Europe and joining of Romania and Bulgaria to the Alliance in 2006 brought NATO to the Black Sea along with Turkey. In April 2008, at the Bucharest summit, NATO considered admitting Ukraine and Georgia (two Black Sea littoral countries having direct border with Russia) into the Alliance, which was supported through the George W. Bush administration. The idea was opposed through France and Germany with having a fear to antagonize Russia. Thereafter, Putin stated that admitting its border countries Ukraine and Georgia in the Alliance would represent ‘direct threat’ to Russia (Mearsheimer, 2014). Russia’s invasion in Georgia 2008 left country weak and divided. Then few years later, they did the same in Ukraine by invading eastern part of Ukraine and annexing Crimean Peninsula. Through these actions, Moscow made its point to destabilize the Black Sea region and NATO aspirant countries.

By annexing Crimea, Russia gained:

- Strategic territory in control;
- Weakened Ukraine and challenged NATO;
- An opportunity to enlarge its military presence in the Black Sea;
- In the Black Sea Russia increased its “de facto exclusive offshore economic zone”;

- Russia ‘confiscated’ Ukrainian Navy vessels based in Sebastopol, Crimea;
- Hindered process of integration of Ukraine in NATO alliance;

In September 2016, Russia declared, that it had achieved ‘military superiority’ in the Black Sea. As a result, In September 2016, Russia declared, that it had achieved ‘military superiority’ in line with ‘recent developments’. General Gerasimov stated, “Russia’s Black Sea fleet is now stronger, than the Turkish navy, and even openly declared, that Russia is now capable of targeting the Bosphorus straits”. (Kucera, 2015).

With regard to these changes mentioned above, the balance of power in the Black Sea region assisted Russia. NATO is an important factor in the Black Sea security, but evidently its activities and influence is limited, under consideration of maintenance of the power balance with Russia. This is why the Alliance pursues its policy by deepening military cooperation with Black Sea regional countries through the program of Partnership for Peace (PfP).

3.3 Russia’s presence and Military Capabilities in the Black Sea

In general, having a maritime power is ability for the State to achieve objectives of its specific policy. NATO has ‘limited access’ in the Black Sea because of provisions of the 1936’s Montreux Convention, which limits the naval presence for non-littoral countries of the Black Sea. In contrast, Russia uses relatively ‘small area’ for its forces to gain advantage. The annexation of Crimea and having a control on the peninsula, gave the opportunity to Russia to increase its presence on the Black Sea, which is very strategic chance for it. Before the annexation, Russia already had military units deployed in Crimea, but with one difference. In 2010, Russia and Ukraine signed an agreement on the Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine, known as Kharkiv Pact. This was a treaty between Russia and Ukraine about Russian lease on naval base in Crimea, and instead Ukraine would receive natural gas from Russia. This agreement was a continuation of the previous treaty signed in 1997 about division of the Black Sea fleet between two nations, named ‘Partition Treaty on the Status and Conditions of the Black Sea Fleet’ (Felgenhauer, 1999) According to the agreement, the Kharkiv Pact 2010, which was extended until the year of 2042, Russia was leasing the Sebastopol base from Ukraine, but terms of the agreement were preventing expansion or modernization of fleet (Watson & Tkachenko, 2010, www.cnn.com). Nonetheless, by annexing the Crimea, Russia gained ‘de facto’ full control on the port of Sebastopol.

In addition, as soon as Putin took over of Crimea, he submitted proposals on “denouncing some Russian-Ukraine agreements on Black Sea Fleet”, which meant to terminate ‘some number’ of these agreements (Putin submits proposals on denouncing some Russia-Ukraine agreements on Black Sea Fleet www.tass.com). Then, it was approved through the State Duma and Russia terminated the treaty unilaterally few days later of the annexation on 31 March 2014 (State Duma approves denunciation of Russian-Ukrainian agreements on Black Sea Fleet <http://tass.com/russia/725964>). Coming next, Russia started increasing its military presence on the Black Sea. Significant raise of military capabilities shifted the balance in favor of Russia and challenged the security of NATO in the Black Sea. This caused rising importance of Turkey in the NATO Black Sea security, owing to its military and naval force capabilities. Russia based the Black Sea fleet new frigates and submarines in Sebastopol, which serves as part of the “Russian Mediterranean Task Force” and is more flexible in response capacity compared to the Arctic Ocean one. (Russia’s naval task force: Power play or just theatre?” 2016, www.bbc.com).

On the Crimean Peninsula, Russia relocated advanced surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs) in Sebastopol, where earlier had been Russia’s Black Sea fleet according to the treaty agreement with Ukraine mentioned above. The SAMs and ASCMs increase Russia’s Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capability throughout the entire region. Russia installed several A2/AD systems like: S-300PM, S-400 Triumf and Pancyr missile systems and Iskander. A2/AD systems include aircraft, surface ships, submarines and ‘air superiority/sea control’ capabilities. The definition of the systems, according to the Atlantic Council is follow, “the concept of the A2/AD describes a potential adversary’s deployment of weapons systems, most frequently one with long-range capabilities, in order to deny US and allied forces freedom of maneuver in the battle space” (Horrell, 2016).

Figure 1: Russian military presence in the Crimean Peninsula and the Black Sea before and after the Annexation of Crimea

January 2014 (before the annexation)	Soldiers	12.5
	Armored Vehicles	116
	Artillery Pieces	24
	Fighter Jets	22
	Helicopters	37
	Warships	26
	Submarines	2
May 2016 (about two years after the annexation)	Soldiers	23.9
	Armored Vehicles and Tanks	613
	Artillery Pieces	162
	Fighters Jets	101
	Helicopters	56
	Warships	34 from Ukrainian sources 49 from Russian sources
	Submarines	4
	Missile launchers	16 missile system 3K60 BAL, K-300 Bastion, S-300 PMU 8 missile systems S-400 Triumph

Source: Costea, Catalin Alin. "The Russian Federation and the Implementation of the A2/AD System in the Black Sea: Risks and Threats to Romania." *The Market for Ideas*, January-February 2017. <http://www.the-marketforideas.com/the-russian-federation-and-the-implementation-of-the-a2-ad-system-in-the-black-sea-risks-and-threats-to-romania-a122/>.

(Bayraklı, 2017, p.123).

Through the actions mentioned above, Russia demonstrated its readiness for strengthening the ability to challenge NATO and threatened littoral states of the Black Sea. As a result, it blocks large part of the Black Sea and prevents NATO allied forces operations. Despite the Western sanctions for annexing the Crimea, Moscow aims to replace Soviet-era ships with contemporary, fast vessels, such as the 'French Mistral's' (Bugajski & Doran, 2016).

On base of the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) February 2016, Russian government 'designed a program' to strengthen its 'multiregional naval power', which includes building "eight new strategic missile submarines, six nuclear attack submarines, nine conventional submarines, 15 frigates

and up to 20 corvettes” (Bugajski & Doran, 2016). However, according to the CEPA, this type of aims are “far from clear whether”, because of weak economic environment in Russia and “collapse of global oil prices”. Nuclear systems had already been transferred into the Black Sea and it creates major threat to the NATO and Black Sea States. Furthermore, Crimea annexation gave Russia an opportunity to act ‘freely’ and deploy ‘upgraded military hardware’ in Sebastopol. “The modernization of the Black Sea Fleet is one of the ambitious elements of the Russian State Arms Procurement program of 2011-2020” (Bugajski & Doran, 2016). This program can threaten NATO and USA not only in the Black Sea, but Mediterranean and Middle East as well. According to CEPA, “by 2020, Moscow plans to spend \$151 billion to modernize its entire navy including the Black Sea Fleet. The purpose of this modernization is to build a combined arms forces, that can deny access by NATO to the Black Sea”.

Overall, as CEPA outright, “Moscow reserves for itself the right and obligation to defend governments, that are amenable to Russian influence, even against the democratic choices of their own populations”.

3.4 NATO’s response to the Annexation of Crimea

NATO supports integration of Black Sea regional countries to the Alliance. Ukraine is an NATO aspirant country and part of Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Following the Russian-Ukraine conflict and the annexation of Crimea, NATO had immediate firm position and fully supported Ukraine within its allied countries. The annexation hasn’t been recognized internationally, NATO member countries didn’t support it, included Turkey and other Black Sea Littoral States. “The North Atlantic Council states that it considers the so-called referendum held on 16 March in Ukraine’s Autonomous Republic of Crimea to be both illegal and illegitimate, urging Russian to de-escalate the situation, including by ceasing all military activities against Ukraine (Relations with Ukraine, www.nato.int) Switzerland, Norway, Canada, Japan and Australia joined the sanctions against Russia, but not Turkey. Furthermore, Turkey stated, that it would play a ‘mediating role’ between Russia and Ukraine since it considers both of them as strategic partners. On account of the Crimean annexation, NATO detained military relations with Russia: “All practical civilian and military cooperation under the NRC with Russia was suspended in April 2014 in response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. But channels of political dialogue and military communication were kept open” (Relations with Russia, www.nato.int).

In September 2014, at the NATO Wales summit, the alliance condemned Russia for declination from the international law and demanded to “end its illegal and illegitimate occupation and ‘annexation’ of Crimea; refrain from aggressive actions against Ukraine; withdraw its troops; halt the flow of weapons, equipment, people and money across the border to the separatists; and stop fomenting tension along and across the Ukrainian border” (Relations with Russia, www.nato.int).

NATO alliance expressed their support not only diplomatic and political level, but also they had significant practical assistance to Ukraine. “NATO foreign ministers agreed on measures to enhance Ukraine’s ability to provide for its own security” (Relations with Ukraine, www.nato.int). In addition, through the Trust Funds, which allows individual allies help partner countries with financial aid supported concrete projects. At the NATO Summit held in Wales in September 2014, they decided to “strengthen existing programs on defense education, professional development, security sector governance and security-related scientific cooperation, to reinforce the advisory presence at the NATO offices in Kyiv and to launch substantial new programs” (Relations with Ukraine, www.nato.int).

Despite of many disagreements between NATO and Russia, the alliance members believe, that “a partnership between NATO and Russia, based on respect for international law, would be of strategic value”. The allies support the idea, the Russian-Ukraine conflict to be solved peacefully and with diplomatic means. The ambassador of Turkey in Georgia H.E. Fatma Ceren Yazgan in her interview said, that “If you go in war, deterrence fails and diplomacy fails”. (Source: interview with Fatma Ceren Yazgan). According to the NATO statement, “the alliance doesn’t seek confrontation and poses no threat to Russia, but it will not compromise on the principles on which the Alliance and security in Europe and North America rest” (Relations with Russia, www.nato.int).

3.5 Importance of Turkey in the NATO Black Sea security

Turkey had been an important NATO member since joining the alliance in 1952, the early Cold War period. During the time of Cold War, only Turkey and Norway were sharing the border with Soviet Union, therefore Turkey was first in line to defend Europe from its southeast flank. Overall, Turkey always had been and is continuing to be one of the most important partner and member of NATO. Despite the challenges, under presidential leadership of Erdogan Turkey remains contentious and active partner of the West. Turkey promoted itself with large contribution to NATO not only in the Black Sea,

in different parts of the World as well. For example, under ‘International Security Assistance Force’ (ISAF), Turkey deployed thousands of troops in Afghanistan and still remains 500 troops as a NATO ally for its ‘Resolute Support mission (RSM)’. According to the NATO framework “Every member country makes both direct and indirect contributions to the costs of running NATO and implementing its decisions”. Turkey’s cost-share is 4,3866%. Additionally, to the contribution to Afghanistan, Turkey also contributes to the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and to NATO’s deployment in the Aegean Sea. Other Black Sea NATO member countries: Romania’s cost-share is 1.0723% and also contributing to the NATO activities to the KFOR in Kosovo and RSM in Afghanistan; Bulgaria’s cost-share is 0.3262% and also contributes for KFOR in Kosovo and for RSM in Afghanistan (NATO in action, www.nato.int). Comparing their contribution to the one of Turkey is matchless. This is why the importance of Turkey has been raised in the NATO Black Sea security after the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Turkey has the largest coastline on the Black Sea and controls the ‘entrance’ in it, by the Straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles. Depended on Montreux Convention, Straits control makes Turkey the most important player in the Black Sea region. Therefore, defending these Straits is Turkey’s maritime strategy. Furthermore, between the Black Sea littoral states, Turkey has the most powerful navy, which still undergoes the military transformation, containing evolvement of forces, weapons and sensors for better operations. Turkey has ambitious plans for its military development, if this is going to be realized, then Turkish navy will be close to develop ‘blue water force’ for operating in strategic distance on high seas. After the collapse of Soviet Union, the Black Sea environment had been notably changed, whereas Turkey played a crucial role in the regional security, supported founding the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Force and for the Black Sea littoral states maritime cooperation named BLACKSEAFOR and Black Sea Harmony.

Additionally, for the energy security and diversification, Turkey plays a prominent role. Due to its geographical location, Turkey is about to change from Energy Bridge to energy hub. For the EU Energy diversification, connecting Europe to Asia, Turkey is going to connect Caspian gas and oil to the European states, by crossing the territory of Turkey. Turkey is supportive for the new energy routes passing over its territory and the Black Sea region.

3.5.1 Turkey's Geopolitical Importance

Turkey has unique geographic location. It is on the crossroads of Europe and Asia. Turkey is located on Anatolian peninsula and has access to the three seas: Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Aegean Sea. It neighbors Balkans, Middle East, Gulf and Caucasus. Due to the several reasons like globalization or military actions of US in the Middle East countries and especially distance of these regions, gives the strategic importance of Turkey and reveals its role as a regional power. In addition, Turkey has region's most important role in energy supply. Turkey is connecting Caspian Sea oil and gas to European continent, which makes the region significant for global political economy.

For the political reasons, the most important factor is, that Turkey represents only secular democratic Islamic country. With its development and characteristic, Turkey is a great model for the Islamic world. Notably, secular and democratic model is not only important for the region but for the world politics as well. Observing Turkey's successful developments and transitions, it seems 'possible' for the Islamic world to existing with secularism and democracy.

In the NATO Black Sea security, Turkey has the most important and strategic role. Being a NATO ally, Turkey holds the key position on the Black Sea, controlling both of Straits Bosphorus and Dardanelles and most of its Northern territory occupies the large part of the Black Sea. Turkey plays a vital role to the security of the alliance for the eastern flank along the NATO countries borders. "The Turkish Straits connecting the Black Sea with Aegean and Mediterranean Seas constitute a potential source of power as well as threat for Turkey because they are key points for the main sea powers for their presence in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean." (Uslu, 2003, P. 37). Potentially, Turkey can play two roles different from each other: owing to its geopolitical position, Turkey can act as a bridge and barrier between Western countries and Russia or Middle East. Therefore, all these increase the role of Turkey in the NATO Black Sea security and in World politics as well.

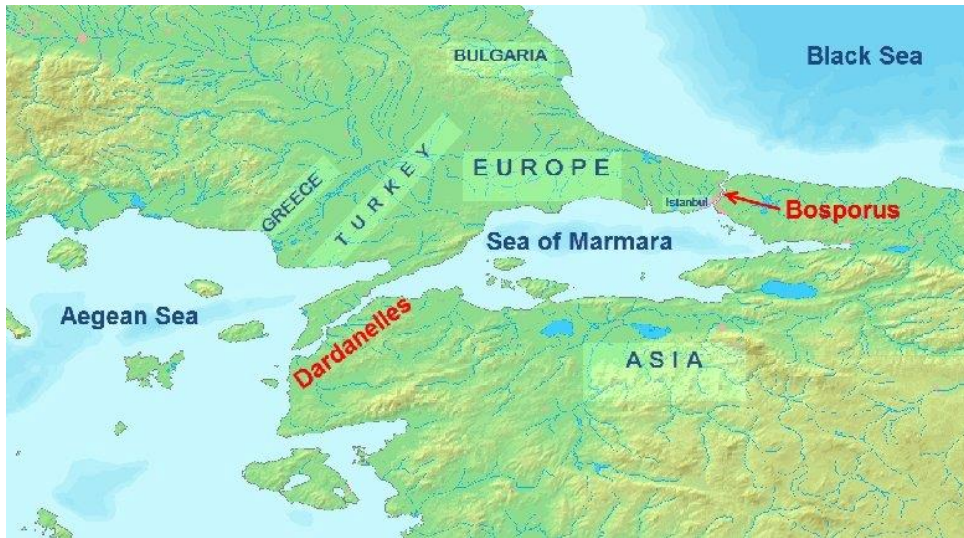
Controlling both of Straits the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, under the Montreux Convention, Turkey was able to deny the access of Soviet Fleets from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, which is the same situation for Russia today. These two Straits potentially are the doors for the Black Sea route to the Mediterranean Sea and to Atlantic Ocean, and to the Suez Canal and to Indian Ocean. And, these Straits always had been under interest of Russia.

3.5.2 Montreux Convention

Montreux Convention is an agreement regarding the Straits regime of Bosphorus and Dardanelles. The convention was signed on 20 July 1936, at the Montreux Palace in Switzerland. It allows Turkey to take full control on these Straits and regulates naval warships transit. Notably, the Montreux Convention had been signed in 1936 and Turkey joined the NATO alliance in 1952. This means, that the convention places the restrictions for NATO today, for its permanent maritime presence and patrolling in the Black Sea. According to the Montreux Convention, Article 18, the war vessels are able to stay only for 21 days in the Black Sea: “Vessels of war belonging to non-Black Sea Powers shall not remain in the Black Sea more than twenty-one days, whatever be the object of their presence there”. (Montreux Convention, 1936). Regarding the convention, large ships or destroyers are also prevented to enter in the Black Sea. The established tonnage restrictions on vessels of war are 15,000 tons. The Article 14 notes, that: “The maximum aggregate tonnage of all foreign naval forces which may be in course of transit through the Straits shall not exceed 15.000 tons”.

The littoral countries of the Black Sea included Russia are free from almost all restrictions except the conditions in time of war. According to the established regulations, NATO non-Black Sea ally's maritime capabilities should be smaller than the Russian Sea Fleet; also it should follow other restriction about the duration of stay. In comparison, a NATO ally, Turkey's Black Sea Fleet has same strength that of Russia.

The Montreux Convention entails, that NATO's activities in the Black Sea region are largely depended on its allies' contributions, meant Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania, included with their cooperation of NATO aspirant countries Georgia and Ukraine.



(www.globalresearch.ca)

3.5.3 Military Capabilities

From the early stages of the US-NATO-Turkey relations, Turkey strengthened its security capabilities independently from NATO for being reliable partner. After the American ‘arms embargo’, Turkish authorities became ‘aware’ of Turkey’s dependence on the USA in terms of military equipment and decided to measure its security needs. For doing so, Turkey maintained its “freedom of decision and action”, independent from NATO. In the 1970s, all Turkish parties represented in the parliament, all supported the idea. Afterwards, had been developed a ‘new national security concept’, which was aiming to develop ‘domestic defense industry’. According to ‘REMO’ plan, Turkey would manufacture weapons on its ‘land’ and also modernize its armed forces. Turkey started modernizing defense structure, without NATO’s assistance. “Turkey’s contribution to NATO should be equal to NATO’s contribution to Turkey’s security and its position in NATO should not provoke its neighbors” (Uslu,

2003, p.102). On the table below is show Turkish Military Expansion through the years:

Table 2: Turkish Military Expenditure and GNP
(Billion TL)

Years	Total Military Expenditure	Military Assistance Import	GNP
1948	0.733	0.203	10.1
1949	0.712	0.156	9.3
1950	0.730	0.131	10.4
1951	0.817	0.165	12.3
1952	1.134	0.409	14.3
1953	1.318	0.491	16.8
1954	1.556	0.620	17.1
1955	1.542	0.465	21.1
1956	1.641	0.482	24.3
1957	2.090	0.824	30.5
1958	3.734	2.264	38.5
1959	3.281	1.128	47.7
1960	3.196	0.786	51.0
1961	3.468	0.750	53.7
1962	4.389	1.419	60.7

Source: F. C. Shorter, "Military Expenditures and the Allocation of Resources" in F. C. Shorter (ed.), *Four Studies on the Economic Development of Turkey*, London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1967, pp. 38-43.

Today, Turkey after the United States is the second largest military contributor to NATO with 510,000 members of army. After providing troops in Afghanistan, between 39 nations Turkey became the sixth-largest troop contributor. It also had contributed to number of important peacekeeping missions, for example in Balkans; almost 400 troops in Kosovo; and deployed planes, submarines and frigates in Libya, for the NATO-led operations.

As a dominant maritime power in the Black Sea, Turkish navy serves 'four command': "*Fleet Command*, which controls the operations of the fighting fleet, the *fast patrol boats*, the *submarines*, mine fleet and *naval air*. Particularly, Turkish navy includes "55,000 personnel, 3,000 marines, and 900 naval aviation troops. Regarding the navy operations: 23 frigates, 14 submarines, 25 fast attack craft, 32 mine warfare vessels, 47 landing ships/crafts and 25 patrol craft" (Sanders, 2014)). Responsible for the Black Sea, Bosphorus, Dardanelles and Marmara Sea is 'Northern Sea Area Command'. The Turkish Naval Command has a role to defend the country from the threats coming

from the Seaside. Therefore, it is the same in the NATO case. Turkish navy is committed to participate in regional and global maritime security initiatives as well as develop its capabilities. In NATO maritime missions, Turkey is involved in NATO Response Force (NRF) Maritime Group and Operation Active Endeavour, which are in its 'first group' of the maritime missions (Sanders, 2014, p. 48).

In Turkey's future plans are to enlarge its armed forces. According to Herschelman (2018), after the failed coup in July 2016, Turkish leaders dismissed 8,000 staff and it has an urgent need to fill the gaps: "The Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) will recruit more than 43,000 new military personnel. The TSK will recruit more than 9,700 military personnel: 3,761 officers and 5,992 non-commissioned officers (NCOs)".

Turkey's Air defense systems are widespread throughout its territory.

- **Incirlik Air Base** is major tactical fighter base located close to the city of Adana. There also serves rotational basis of U.S. and Europe.
- **Karamursel Air Base** is for protecting the Straits, located near of the city Izmit.
- **Ankara Air Station** for the central logistics.
- **Izmir Air Station and Cigli Air Base** - At the Izmir Air Station was placed the headquarters of NATO's allied Land Forces and the Six Allied Tactical Air Force (SIXATAF). And, USAFE tactical Airbase was in Cigli.

(Uslu, p.103.)

In different cities of Turkey are also located ACE High communications sites, number of 12 and Storage facilities, which is the storage center for the U.S. military forces. (Uslu, p.104.)



(Source: US Military Bases Military Personnel Deployment: <http://meridianintl.co>)

Prior to the Crimea annexation by Russia in March 2014, Turkey had unconditional superiority on the Black Sea with its naval forces. The annexation of Crimea emerged Russia's desire of becoming hegemonic power in the region. Its increased offensive capabilities completely changed the strategic balance in the Black Sea, which threatens all other littoral countries included NATO allies Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria. Deploying Russia's naval and anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities around the Crimean Peninsula altered the balance of power in the Black Sea region. NATO faces escalated threat closer to its border. The relation between Turkey and Russia can be defined as a "struggle for regional primacy" (Mankoff, 2016). Today, the NATO alliance needs Turkey, for the same reasons like during the Cold War. NATO needs to get engaged with Turkey in the NATO framework. On 23 February 2018, the deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller visited Istanbul, Turkey. At the National Defense University, she emphasized the 'vital role' of Turkey in the NATO and she called NATO membership "a mutually beneficial relationship" (Deputy Secretary General in Istanbul: Turkey is a vital member of NATO, www.nato.int).

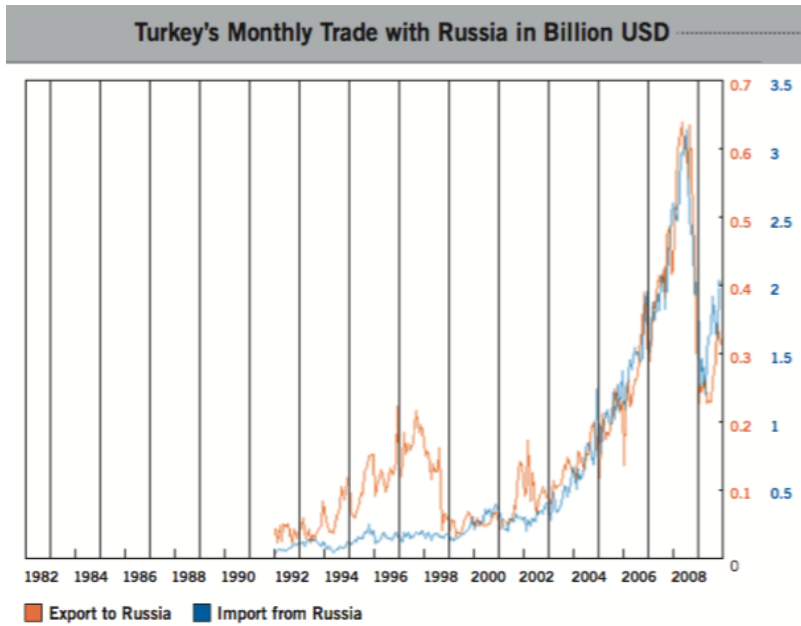
3.6. Turkish-Russian Relations after the annexation of Crimea in 2014

Coming up Turkish-Russian relations brought Turkey some “risks and opportunities”. (Evin & Kirisci & Linden, 2009). Relations between Turkey and Russia should be described in three different spheres: History, geopolitics and economics. In general, on the Ukraine-Russia crisis, Turkey supports position of the ‘West’, however, despite of that, Turkey didn’t participated setting the sanctions against Russia by the Western countries and describes it as strategic partner. Furthermore, according to Turkish foreign policy, both Ukraine and Russia are strategic partners, and Ankara even stated, that it would play ‘a mediating role’ between them. Turkey estimates the case of Crimea as only a regional conflict.

Nowadays, this is a case of Crimea, but Turkish-Russian relations should be outlined through the past of their relationships, which tends to be ‘changing’ especially after the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Throughout the history, Turkey and Russia mainly had very tensed relationships. Since the times of Soviet Union, Turkey was always in counterbalance with Soviet and later Russian leaders. Turkish-Russian relations have improved last decade; this had been based on realization of permanent conflict disadvantages. In addition, Turkey’s ‘disappointment’ with the EU and its integration process with the West also benefited improvement relations with Russia.

Geographically, as mentioned above Turkey has very strategic location, open seas and shortest way to the Middle East, which is particularly under Russia’s interest. And in Russia’s case, Turkey is interested in post-Soviet countries, where it ‘tries to achieve the ‘status of major stakeholder’ with other states in the area’. Turkey doesn’t openly challenge Russia, but at the same time, it doesn’t give its geopolitical ambitions, which in fact are not compatible with Russia.

In the last several years, Turkey’s economic relations with Russia have been significantly raised. The collapse of Soviet Union ‘allowed’ Turkey to expand its economic ties with Russia. This table shows the situation in past several years, before the descent of economy in 2009:



(Source: Evin & Kirisci & Linden, 2009)

The energy became one of the most important ‘tools of connection’ between two states. “Turkey, which has little in the way of hydrocarbons, imported more than 40 percent of its oil from Russia in 2009. Russia still supplies the country with about 57 percent of its natural gas” (Mankoff, 2016).

Nevertheless, there are several positions, which are contrasting Turkish-Russian interests: the political problems of some Eastern European countries and the gas transit from Iran or Central Asia through Turkey to Europe. Also, Turkey supports EU’s Eastern Partnership in post-Soviet countries included Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, as well as NATO expansion in the Black Sea region. The Russian annexation of Crimea emerged immediate threat on Turkey and Russia’s increased military presence on the Black Sea challenged Turkish military capabilities. Moreover, the tensions between Russia and Turkey blustered after ‘downing Russian jet’ by Turkey, named ‘Sukhoi Su-24M attack aircraft’ on the Syrian-Turkey border on 24 November 2015. This action caused anger in Russian officials and Putin responded that it would have “serious consequences for Russian-Turkish relations.” (NATO-Russia Tensions Rise After Turkey Downs Jet, www.nytimes.com). Russia immediately started providing ‘sanctions’ against Turkey. Russia decided to suspend ‘reciprocal visa-free regime’, stopped touristic travels to Turkey, which was top destination for Russian people. “Russia has banned charter flights to and from Turkey, and Russian travel firms have been told to stop selling Turkish holidays” (Turkey's downing of Russian warplane - what we know, www.bbc.com). On 28th November, president Putin

signed a decree, which would restrict imports from Turkey. This was a big hit to Turkish economy; especially fruits and vegetables are one of major imports from Turkey and Russia. “Banning or limitation of imports from Turkey, the work of Turkish companies in Russia and any Turkish nationals working for Russian companies. The government is drawing up a list of the sectors affected” (Turkey's downing of Russian warplane - what we know, www.bbc.com). After the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, the secretary general of NATO alliance Jens Stoltenberg called for “calm and de-escalation” and expressed following statement: "We stand in solidarity with Turkey and support the territorial integrity of our NATO ally" (Turkey's downing of Russian warplane - what we know, www.bbc.com). Since the year of 1950, it was the first time, that a NATO ally country has “shot down’ a Russian plane.

Few months later, Turkish President Erdogan tried to improve relations with Russia. He sent two letters to Putin and then traveled to Russia in June 2016. According to Kremlin statement, president Erdogan ‘apologized’ to president Putin for downing the Russian jet and expressed his regret for the death of Russian pilot. He stated, that Turkey “never had the desire or deliberate intention of shooting down the Russian federation’s plane” and he was ready ‘to do everything possible to restore friendly ties (Erdogan has apologized for downing of Russian jet, Kremlin says, www.theguardians.com). Later on, Turkey’s Anadolu state news agency reported, that Turkey’s presidential spokesman Kalin said “We are pleased to announce that Turkey and Russia have agreed to take necessary steps without delay to improve bilateral relations” (Erdogan has apologized for downing of Russian jet, Kremlin says, www.theguardians.com).

Notably, after the coup attempt in Turkey, 15 July 2015, President of Russia, Putin called Erdogan to express its solidarity “earlier, than any NATO ally countries”.

In 2017, Turkey signed a deal with Russia for purchasing “Russian surface-to-air missile system S-400”. The deal worth is \$2.5 billion, which can’t be compatible with “NATO’s military architecture”. (Turkey, Russia sign deal on supply of S-400 missiles, www.reuters.com). The idea caused uncertainty in Western countries and it wasn’t supported from Washington and Bruxelles, since the western leaders are trying to “keep Turkey from entering Russia’s sphere of influence”. At the NATO headquarter in Bruxelles, officials said, that “no NATO member currently operates the Russian missile system and that the alliance had not been informed about the details of the purchase by Turkey”. Following that, Turkish president Erdogan stated: “Nobody has the right to discuss the Turkish republic’s

independence principles or independent decisions about its defense industry”. In addition, he said: “We make the decisions about our own independence ourselves, we are obliged to take safety and security measures in order to defend our country” (Turkey Signs Russian Missile Deal, Pivoting from NATO, www.nytimes.com).

3.7. Turkey under AKP Leadership

From the 2000s Turkey showed signs of quickly developing and absorbing values of the international liberalism and government democracy, including economics and foreign policy. Continuing this type policy was under the “Justice and the Development Party “(AKP) governance, which proved that Islam could be compatible with democracy and that Turkey could be an example to the rest Islamic world how to be Muslim and tolerant country at the same time. “AKP was actually transforming the country towards a tolerant liberal Turkey” (p.23). This kind of imagination about the party (AKP), firstly was caused from its first program focused on human rights, civil liberties and the role of civil society. Erdogan’s government was different from his predecessors who were guiding with the principles of “assertive secularism” or has the classic National Outlook movement. Secularism had been one of the main pillars of Turkish successful democratic achievements since the period of Ataturk. Despite of that, notably President Erdogan is surrounded with an idea of Islamism, depended on the Davutoglu doctrine. AKP made changes in economy policy too - it openly supported a free market economy, including its rules and institutions. Beside the domestic policy, the ‘sharpest break’ from the last governance was the wish of close relations with the EU. Erdogan was clearly pointing out in his party program, that he would continue efforts toward joining the EU. To be based on these facts, first decade of AKP governments was the most prosper period for Turkish people in their history. For Muslim at large (not only to conservative Turks), meant a great deal the strong faith that Islam and democracy could actually coexist, which was proved by Turkish ascending democratic policy during the past years.

3.7.1 Turkey within Transatlantic Community

From being part of the transatlantic community Turkey gained firstly in political sphere- we may call it “regional stability”. During and after the Cold War NATO served to deter the Soviet and later Russian threats against Turkey. Thereafter, NATO continued to be a ‘security umbrella’ for Turkey had a

strategic location, but surrounded by the neighbors such as Iran, Iraq and Syria, who owned weapons of mass destruction. Being a member of the NATO alliance and having close ties with the U.S., Turkey largely developed its military capabilities. The ‘Zero problems policy’ promoted deepening integration with the EU. Strategically, EU membership negotiation in 2005 boosted Turkey’s influence and prestige in the region, as long as Turkey was taking a role as a mediator on issues connected to other countries, including Arab-Israel conflict. Also, Turkey was an organizer of indirect talks between Israel and Syria in 2006-2008. Therefore, Turkey became more significant state in the neighborhood and was participating in many important and international issues. Besides this, being part of the transatlantic community and integration with the world economy helped increasing income levels on Turkey. World Bank’s report emphasizes the role of the EU- Turkey Customs Union in upgrading Turkey’s productivity and export capacity.

3.7.2 Democratic regression under AKP, failed coup in 15 July 2016.

Despite range of benefits from the West and its successful political-economic reality, Turkey occurred to be ‘moving from the West’. Following the AKP’s rise to power, “the fault lines between Turkey and its transatlantic allies seemed to be narrowing”. According to Kirisci, (2017) “The U.S. intervention in Iraq in 2003 became a source of major conflict and instability, that has since adversely affected Turkey’s interest. Growing chaos in the aftermath of the Arab Spring was one reason. Another was the domestic situation in Turkey as part of its “self”. Europe’s sense of its own identity may well have constituted the most significant fault line, that destined the relationship to become the troubled alliance it has”.

In 15 July 2016, the failure of the coup attempt was followed with massive peoples’ jailing, killing and evident democratic regression in Turkey. The CNN issued the information in numbers: “Turkey's attempted coup: By the numbers:

- At least **161** civilians killed
- **1,140** people wounded
- **6,000** people arrested
- **2,839** military officers detained
- Nearly **200** top Turkish court officials in custody, including:

- **140** members of the Supreme Court, **48** members of the Council of State
- **11** years: Erdogan's reign as Prime Minister
- **2014**: Year that Erdogan ran for President -- and won”

(Source: Failed coup in Turkey: What you need to know, www.cnn.com).

According to the newspaper ‘The Guardian’, after the ‘one year of traumatic coup attempt on 15 July, “50,000 people have been remanded in custody and 170,000 suspects investigated for links to the shadowy group believed to have masterminded the coup. It is a nation more divided than ever, its newspapers silenced, its opposition intimidated, and Erdoğan’s power now rivals that of the republic’s founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk” (one year after the failed coup in Turkey, www.theguardian.com).

Turkey’ western allies expressed their concerns about decreasing democratic values in the country: the rule of law, human rights, addressing authoritarian approaches and actions. “The government has fired tens of thousands of public employees, Thousands of people have been incarcerated in the months after the coup without formal indictments, including hundreds of judges”. (One year after the failed coup in Turkey, www.theguardian.com). NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg had immediately reacted and warned President Erdogan. "Being part of a unique community of values, it is essential for Turkey, like all other allies, to ensure full respect for democracy and its institutions, the constitutional order, the rule of law and fundamental freedoms” (Turkey coup attempt, www.telegraph.com). According to Salil Shetty, the organization’s secretary general wrote in the Guardian “there is to be no civil society, no criticism and no accountability in Erdoğan’s Turkey”. (one year after the failed coup in Turkey, www.theguardian.com). Mr. Kerry in Brussels stated, “NATO had a requirement when it came to democracy and “will measure very carefully what is happening” (Turkey coup attempt, www.telegraph.com). European Union officials also alerted, that “talks on Turkey's bid to join the bloc would end if the country restored the death penalty, as Mr. Erdogan has proposed to do to deal with the plotters” (Turkey coup attempt, www.telegraph.com).

The Guardian notes “Internationally, relations have soured with the EU, with the accession negotiations frozen, and the western bloc’s lack of overt support for Ankara after the coup attempt has left a sour taste. The president has repeatedly expressed his readiness to reinstate the death penalty, which would spell the end of talks” (one year after the failed coup in Turkey, www.theguardian.com).

3.7.3 “Davutoglu Doctrine”

The years of 2009 – 2016 are regarded as of pursuing Davutoglu foreign policy with “rise and fall”, so called “Davutoglu Doctrine”. Fundamentally, the doctrine is about Davutoğlu’s ‘innovative approach on geopolitics’ based on “these principles:

- a) Security for all;
- b) Dialogue as the primary way to resolve the crisis;
- c) Economic (inter)dependence;
- d) Cultural coexistence and pluralism” (Pajaziti, 2012, p.48).

Despite that, the doctrine stands out with its neo-Ottomanism and Islamizm ideologies. Davutoğlu’s policies had been based on “assertive position in the region, guided by a pan-Islamist ideology that predicted the Muslim Brotherhood coming to power across the region” (Kirisci, p.50). According to the Davutoğlu’s statement: “Turkey should act as a central country and break away from static and single-parameter policy (Baudner, 2014). The multi-dimensionality or multi-track foreign policy corresponds with the ability to operate on different levels and on different fronts; from ‘official’ diplomatic relations, mainly within international and regional organizations, to ‘people to people’ relations mainly developed by non-state actors” (Turkish ‘Zero Problems’ Between Failure and Success, www.researchturkey.org).

According to Davutoglu, ‘investment and trade with neighbors are important’, and like an European Union’s ‘settings’ in his doctrine he is promoting:

1. The balance between security and freedom;
 2. Dialogue as a mean to resolving crisis;
 3. Economic interdependence, because order cannot be achieved in a context of an isolated economy and last of all;
 4. Co-existence of cultural diversity;
- (Turkish ‘Zero Problems’ Between Failure and Success, www.researchturkey.org)

Davutoglu in his Doctrine, “Strategic Depth” – “Zero Problems with Neighbor” doesn’t question the Turkey’s membership in NATO, but he was trying to implement “some conditions” within being a NATO ally.

Davutoglu stated in his article, that: “During the Cold War, Turkey was a "wing country" under NATO’s strategic framework, resting on the geographic perimeter of the Western alliance. NATO’s strategic concept, however, has evolved in the post-Cold War era — and so has Turkey’s calculation of its strategic environment. Turkey’s presence in Afghanistan is a clear indication of this change. We are a wing country no longer” (Turkey’s Zero-Problems Foreign Policy, www.foreignpolicy.com). He addressed, that “The European Union and NATO are the main fixtures and the main elements of continuity in Turkish foreign policy. Turkey has achieved more within these alliances during the past seven years under the AK Party government than it did in the previous 40 years”. But, what the most significant part of it is, that despite Turkey’s success within the cooperation with western community according to Davutoglu “five operational principles of guiding Turkey’s foreign policy-making process”, his fourth principle adherences to a “multi-dimensional foreign policy”, which he explains, that “Turkey’s relations with other global actors aim to be complementary, not in competition. Such a policy views Turkey’s strategic relationship with the United States through the two countries’ bilateral strategic ties and through NATO”. But notably, he underlines, that he considers its EU membership process, however with improving “its good neighborhood policy with Russia, and its synchronization policy in Eurasia as integral parts of a consistent policy that serves to complement each other” (Turkey’s Zero-Problems Foreign Policy, www.foreignpolicy.com).

This type of foreign policy caused some insecurity in the western community. Turkey as a great example of Islamic country keeps ‘assertive face’ in its relations with western strategic partner countries. Regardless behavior of Erdogan’s leadership, Turkey remains in NATO as strategic partner and great contributor to the alliance. The annexation of Crimea by Russia, gave an ‘opportunity’ and ‘chance’ as well to Turkish leadership to impose its independent policy and try to become more influential in the Black Sea region. The ambassador of Turkey in Georgia, H.E. Fatma Ceren Yazgan notes: “NATO is going under revolutionary era after collapse of Soviet Union” (Source: interview with H.E. Fatma Ceren Yazgan).

3.8. NATO’s New Strategy

Regarding the created situation by Russia, on the southern flank NATO, the alliance should neglect domestic and foreign political problems under Erdogan’s leadership and focus on ensuring security in the Black Sea region through recognizing ‘vital role’ of Turkey. The case of geopolitical environment

in the Black Sea and increased confrontation of Russia and NATO, involve all the members of alliance and partner countries in the region as well. Russia's increased military capabilities on the Crimean Peninsula challenged the security in the region. There are two different actions on account for NATO to improve security and stability in the Black Sea: First, the Black Sea states needs NATO's influence represented 'on place in the region'; The second, addressing Alliance's interests in the region.

At the NATO Summit in Warsaw, July 2016 had been defined security issues in the Black Sea. "We will continue to address the implications for NATO of developments in the region and take them into account in the Alliance's approaches and policies. We will continue to support, as appropriate, regional efforts by the Black Sea littoral states aimed at ensuring security and stability". The leaders have decided to "contribute to the Alliance's strengthened deterrence and defense posture, situational awareness, and peacetime demonstration" in order to develop 'forward presence' in the Black Sea. For doing so, it is decided to "provide a strong signal of support to regional security and options for a strengthened NATO air and maritime presence to be assessed" (Warsaw Summit Communiqué, 2016, www.nato.int).

According to development plans, NATO's developed maritime and air presence in the Black Sea reinforce the alliance, by involving of allies' contributing forces and capabilities. The new strategy of forward presence forces are being implementing by "NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, the broader NATO Response Force, Allies' additional high readiness forces and NATO's heavier follow-on forces, if necessary".

NATO member allies agreed on new strategy to remain security in the Black Sea. After the Warsaw Summit, the Atlantic Council issued "A NATO Strategy for Security in the Black Sea Region" in October 2016. The new strategy is addressed to developments of security strategy for the Black Sea in order of supporting the 'end states' Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria of the alliance in the region. According to the new strategy, there are three major objectives:

- "Effective deterrence and credible collective defense;
- Stability and security in non-NATO regional partner nations;
- Regional economic security, such that no state has the leverage to use energy economics to coerce other states;" (A NATO Strategy for Security in the Black Sea Region, 2016, www.atlanticcouncil.com).

According to the NATO's New Black Sea Security Strategy (2016), there are following activities to be implemented depended on resources and implications:

- **The Alliance must increase its naval presence in the Black Sea.**

“Any increase in naval presence absolutely requires the commitment of ships and Aircraft by non-littoral state allies as well, which is complex due to Montreux Convention restrictions”. Romania proposed naval framework and training, but Bulgaria opposed the initiative, by indicating, that the idea had ‘provocative nature’ and insisted more economic and touristic developments in the region.

- **The Alliance must increase NATO air missions in the region.**

The alliance is willing to increase NATO presence in the air over the waters of the Black Sea, without “encountering any of the restrictions the Montreux Convention places on naval forces.

- **NATO ground forces should provide a persistent rotational presence in the Black Sea region.**

NATO multinational Division headquarters established in Romania should “provide a structure to command and control rotational ground forces, which can conduct exercises and training in the three NATO Black Sea littoral states”. In addition, NATO ground forces should also participate with non-ally partners in trainings.

- **Increase exercised and combined training events in the Black Sea region.**

This means, that non-ally partner country should adapt their trainings to the NATO standards with “NATO gaining training objectives of interoperability, command and control, and NATO standardization”.

- **Focus on building Defense Capacity (BDC) for regional partners.**

It concentrates about “continuing building capacities” in partner countries: Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova.

- **Enhance strategic communications on NATO Black Sea efforts.**

This part explains, that NATO's undergoing operations and exercises should be “accompanied by a common voice in diplomatic and informational efforts”.

- **Support economic and energy security with infrastructure protection tasks and missions.**

Economic security is an important issue, but especially energy security. It is explained that, energy security to be supported by NATO “by infrastructure protection missions”.

- **Clarify and enhance the comprehensive approach in the Black Sea region.**

Identifying NATO interest in the Black Sea can provide finding “common ground with the EU and others and undertake a comprehensive approach to issues”.

According to the New Strategy, there is “potential friction between Russia and the West in the Black Sea region. Therefore, NATO should increase its presence in the Black Sea with air, maritime and land force capabilities, “while furthering its own diplomacy and a comprehensive approach with partner nations and international organizations” (Horrell, 2016).

Furthermore, interestingly, at the Warsaw Summit in July 2016, the role of Georgia had been identified, in a sense of joining Georgia into the NATO alliance. This would provide another ‘source’ to balancing the Russia’s aggression, and NATO expansion in the Black Sea would serve improving the strength of NATO and regional countries. Georgia is a neighbor country of Turkey and littoral state of the Black Sea. Georgia’s desire becoming the member of the NATO alliance starts from several years ago.

In the NATO Warsaw Summit ‘communiqué’ is said: “We welcome the important progress made in implementing the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package, which we initiated at the Wales Summit”. (Warsaw Summit Communiqué, 2016, www.nato.int). During last several years, “Since the war, Georgia has transformed its military. It meets the NATO standard for defense spending. Georgia has contributed thousands of troops to Iraq and Afghanistan, and hundreds of peacekeepers to the Balkans and Africa (Coffey, 2018). According to the Warsaw Summit communiqué, Georgia’s preparations for membership in the Alliance: “We have agreed additional practical ways to intensify efforts. Allies will provide support to the development of Georgia's air defense and air surveillance. We will also deepen our focus on security in the Black Sea region” (Warsaw Summit Communiqué, 2016, www.nato.int).

Georgia has a strategic location in the South Caucasus for several reasons: “economic, trade-related, concerning the transit of energy to Western Europe, military and security”. Despite of many challenges and threats coming from Russia, in addition Russo-Georgian war, where Georgia lost its 20% of internationally recognized territories, Georgia fulfilled all requirements to join the NATO. Georgia, with its sacrifice and contribution to the NATO is the “largest non-North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troop contributor and has suffered the most troops killed in action on a per capita basis”.

According to Mr. Luke Coffey, researcher and director of Douglas & Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy, in his latest report of 29th January 2018, he affirms that, the year of 2018, brings chances for deepening relationships between NATO, USA and Georgia. He acknowledges, that “NATO’s commitment to Georgian membership, strengthen the NATO–Georgian relationship, boost Georgia’s NATO integration process, and enhance Georgia’s defensive capabilities. In the long run, this would bring more stability to the South Caucasus and Black Sea regions”. In additions he says, that, “Nevertheless, Georgia has been able to implement serious defense reforms and continues to participate in security operations at a rate much higher than that of many NATO members”. (Coffey, 2018). Later on the Warsaw Summit, in December 2016, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said: “Georgia has all the practical tools to become a member of NATO.”

The Annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, its increased military capabilities of air, sea and land forces challenged the West. According to the geopolitical security environment developed in the Black Sea region, NATO started measuring and boosting NATO’s presence in its east and southeast flank. For strengthening NATO’s ‘deterrence and defense posture’, NATO enhanced ‘forward presence’ in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland, also in the Black Sea region “contributed forces and capabilities on land, at sea and in the air”. According to NATO statement “NATO’s enhanced forward presence is defensive, proportionate, and in line with international commitments. It represents a significant commitment by Allies and is a tangible reminder that an attack on one is an attack on all” (Boosting NATO’s presence in the east and southeast, www.nato.int).



Conclusion

The illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 brought Russian border closer to the NATO, which challenged regional security issues. This action done by Russia intimidated members of alliance and gave the feeling of rising Russian influence, including witnessing the use of peninsula's geographic advantage to present hybrid war techniques. Today, the importance of Turkey in the NATO Black Sea security after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 is multilayered issue, and current developing history.

The Black Sea region, due to its strategic geopolitical location is very dynamic area, on the crossroad of Europe and Asia, connecting to each other Eastern Europe, Balkan countries, South Caucasus, Asian countries and Middle East. It also has commercial importance for transporting Caspian Oil and Gas to Europe. Crimea, which is internationally recognized territory of NATO aspirant country Ukraine is peninsula, which means that it has strategic shape pierced in the Black Sea and has strategic means for military air of naval security capabilities. In addition, Crimean Peninsula provides trade and tourism facilities, besides that it has a great value for transforming Caspian oil and Gas to Europe but for Russians it is a 'way' to the 'warm waters'. Hence, for Russia it has crucial importance because, the port of Sebastopol with its facilities connects Russia with 'short route' to the Mediterranean Sea and then to Oceans.

The Black Sea security is a region, where the power balance of Russia and NATO is occurred. As analyzed, right after the annexation, Russia used the capacity of the peninsula and increased its presence in the Black Sea. Although Russia and Ukraine had an agreement known as Kharkov Pact, and according to the Pact, Russia was leasing the Sebastopol base from Ukraine, by increasing its presence we maintain that after the annexation, Russia gained unconditional control of peninsula and 'increased' its military capabilities. Russia relocated advanced surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs) in Sebastopol. The SAMs and ASCMs increased Russia's Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capability throughout the entire region. Russia installed several A2/AD systems like: S-300PM, S-400 Triumf and Pancyr missile systems and Iskander. A2/AD systems include aircraft, surface ships, submarines and 'air superiority/sea control' capabilities. Nuclear systems had already been transferred into the Black Sea and it creates major threat to the NATO and Black Sea States. The changes caused by the annexation favored Russia. NATO has 'limited access' to the Black Sea due to the restrictions by the 1936's Montreux Convention, which limits the naval

presence for non-littoral countries of the Black Sea. Notably, the Montreux Convention had been signed in 1936, and Turkey became NATO member in 1952, which means, that even if Turkey decide to let NATO naval presence for permanents patrolling in the Black Sea, the convention rules doesn't allow Turkey. The Montreux Convention has two sides different from each other for Turkey: First is, that Turkey avoids Russian military passages through the Straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles, which was the same earlier for Soviet Union; The second is that due to the restrictions, warships of non-littoral states aren't allowed to stay more than 21 days, which could strengthen Turkey's and in general security of NATO allied and aspirant countries in the Black Sea region.

In response, NATO immediately expressed its concerns towards the Crimea annexation, officially stood up for Ukraine and didn't recognize Russia's intervention and occupation of the territory of Ukraine. NATO increased presence in its east and southeast flank for strengthening NATO's 'deterrence and defense posture'. NATO enhanced so called 'forward presence' in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland by contributing forces and capabilities on land, at sea and in the air. In addition, joining Georgia into the NATO alliance, had been reviewed at the NATO Warsaw Summit, because adding one more Black Sea littoral country in the NATO, would strengthen its role in the Black Sea region and support Turkey as well for balancing emerged threat. Georgia is a NATO aspirant country, which successfully fulfilled all NATO join requirements and has largest non-ally contribution to the Alliance.

Significant raise of military capabilities shifted the balance in favor of Russia and challenged the security of NATO in the Black Sea. This caused rising importance of Turkey in the NATO Black Sea security, owing to its military and naval force capabilities. Turkey always had been an important ally for NATO, but the annexation of Crimea, enhanced Turkey's power with regard to NATO's Black Sea security. There are three NATO member countries on the Black Sea, Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria. In the case of Crimea, we concentrate more on Turkey, because Romania and Bulgaria comparing to Turkey have much less strength and military resources. Turkey's military capabilities always had been primer on the Black Sea. Since the Cold War era and period of Soviet Union, Turkey was the one who could balance threats coming from north. Turkey promoted itself with large contribution to NATO, not only in the Black Sea, but also in different parts of the World. Turkey is the second largest troop contributor to the NATO alliance, ranked after the Unites States.

Turkey carries two major importance: geopolitical location and military capabilities. Turkey has unique geographic location on the crossroad of Europe and Asia, surrounded with several Seas and has possibility of 'short roads' to Europe, Asia, Middle East or Oceans. Turkey has the largest coastline on the Black Sea and according to the Montreux Convention, controls the both of Straits Bosphorus and Dardanelles, which are the 'door' of the Black Sea. This makes Turkey the most important player in the Black Sea region. Large part of weapons Turkey manufactures at 'home'. Its modernized defense structure is equal to NATO's contribution to Turkey's security. As the most important Black Sea maritime power, Turkish navy serves "four command": 1.Fleet Command; 2.Fast patrol boats; 3.Submarines, mine fleet and 4.Naval air. Turkish navy is committed to participate in regional and global maritime security initiatives as well as develop its capabilities. In addition, Turkey has region's most important role in energy supply and energy security, for prospects of passing Caspian Oil and Gas to Europe throughout its territory. Also it has been great example of Islamic democracy in the Islamic World.

Today, we 'call' again on Turkey, because the Crimea annexation raised the perception of Turkey. There is difference between the perception and reality. Now it was an aggressive political actions came from Russia, which caused enhancing importance of Turkey. Turkey plays a vital role to the security of the alliance for the eastern flank along the NATO countries borders. Potentially, Turkey can play two roles different from each other: owing to its geopolitical position, Turkey can act as a bridge and barrier between Western countries and Russia or Middle East. Therefore, all these increase the role of Turkey in the NATO Black Sea security and in World politics as well.

Notably, despite the successful achievements associated with the West, under the leadership of Turkey's current president Erdogan and its AKP political party, Turkey had been occurred 'turning its back' to the West. After the failed coup in 15 July 2015, Turkish the repressive actions done by the permanent government, revealed regression in democratic values, rule of law and human rights. The political party of Erdogan with its accordance of the 'Davutoglu Doctrine' raised the sense of Islamism, neo-Ottomanism and attempts of becoming hegemonic power in the region. It confused the West, and warned Turkey to respect democracy and its institutions, included constitutional order and fundamental freedoms. Also, the type of Turkey's "multi-dimensional foreign policy" caused some insecurity in the western community, especially, Turkey's association with unintelligible states and organizations.

Particularly, ‘warming’ the relations with Russia and for proposals future creating joint security organization to be included Russia, China and Turkey.

Despite the challenges, under presidential leadership of Erdogan Turkey remains contentious and active partner of the West and the NATO. Before the Crimea annexation by Russia in March 2014, Turkey had unconditional superiority on the Black Sea with its naval forces. The annexation of Crimea emerged Russia’s desire of becoming hegemonic power in the region. Its increased offensive capabilities completely changed the strategic balance in the Black Sea, which threatens all other littoral countries included NATO allies Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria. Deploying Russia’s naval and anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities around the Crimean Peninsula altered the balance of power in the Black Sea region. NATO faces escalated threat closer to its border. The relation between Turkey and Russia can be defined as a “struggle for regional primacy” (Mankoff, 2016). Today, the NATO alliance needs Turkey, for the same reasons like during the Cold War.

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