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## Russia's Militarization of the Black Sea: Challenges for NATO and Regional Security

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### ABSTRACT

Naval power has become a significant part of geopolitics. Since no supranational organization could control the international system, states were always under pressure and concerned for their security in a Darwinian struggle for survival, and should prioritize maintaining their national security. States can accomplish this by strengthening their naval, land, and air power. The existing study tries to evaluate the strategies of the Russian naval force in light of Alfred Thayer Mahan's theory of "sea power" and Russian activities in the Black Sea. Russia's militarization of the Black Sea, notably the increase of its anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities, undermines NATO's capacity to provide effective defense on its eastern flank. In the meantime, NATO has strengthened its presence and policy in the Black Sea by stepping up military operations and collaborating with regional allies. The necessity of a robust and coordinated response to Russia's assertiveness in the Black Sea region has been underlined by the US and NATO. The Black Sea tends to be very important in Russian decision-making and policy-making processes, particularly following the 2008 Georgian War and the 2014 annexation of Crimea. The study's findings have significant implications for the future strategic importance of the Black Sea on the Eurasian continent, particularly for Russia and its naval forces.

**Keywords:** Sea power, Black Sea, Eurasia, Foreign Policy, Trade and Commerce.

### INTRODUCTION

While guaranteeing the sustainability of the oceans and the preservation of biodiversity, the maritime security policy also advances global peace and security and adherence to international norms and values. Defend the state's interests at sea, including its borders, infrastructure, economy, and population, safeguard the marine environment and its natural resources; respect international law, especially the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; respond quickly and efficiently to emerging threats (such as cyber and hybrid threats); and make sure that appropriate training and education are provided to counter threats (such as cyber skills). States can accomplish this by strengthening their naval activities, establishing more coast

guards in sea basins, organizing an annual naval exercise at the state level, and extending the Coordinated Maritime Presence to new maritime areas of interest (Flynn, 2016).

Russia's entryway to the world, the Black Sea is a geopolitical fulcrum with great strategic and economic significance. Moscow, which has long seen this area as essential to its geopolitical and economic value, aims to protect its Black Sea financial resources while expanding its way in the Mediterranean and maintaining vital trade connections with international markets. (Roşca, 2024) In recent years, the Kremlin has aggressively pursued hegemony in the Black Sea region by starting regional wars and acts. Russian influence returned in 2008 with the invasion of Georgia and the subsequent bolstering of the military presence in Abkhazia. But the turning point was the annexation of Crimea in 2014 after the Euro-maidan demonstrations in Ukraine, which was strategically significant as a base for the Russian navy in the Black Sea (Putin, 2014).

Existing research indicates that Russia has a significant impact on the Black Sea, particularly since the invasion of Crimea in 2014. Despite possessing only 10% of the Black Sea coastline under international law, Russia now controls nearly one-third, consolidating its grip over the region. Russia's invasion aims to strengthen its physical position and control over the Black Sea. Russia's invasion of Crimea aims to gain access to the Black Sea and limit Ukraine's trade and geostrategic access, particularly to the warm water port of Sevastopol (Roşca, 2024).

Even though there is an extensive literature on existing topic, there is still a gap in the literature, which this study attempts to fill by describing Russia's involvement in the Black Sea and its marine Pacific activities. The study will look at the significance of the Black Sea in Russian foreign policy, the historical context of its naval power. The basic aim of this study is to fill the knowledge gap by examining the importance of national maritime strategies, particularly in Eurasia.

It gives readers an understanding of Russian maritime strategy based on Alfred Mahen's theory on Naval Power. Though there have been numerous studies on the significance of the Black Sea in the context of the Russian annexation of Georgia and its 2014 invasion of the Crimean Peninsula, there is still a literature gap in explaining the economic, trade, and geopolitical importance of the ocean, which this study attempts to fill by explaining the above factors in light of the significance of the Black Sea.

### **Research Questions**

Some of the main research questions on which this study is based on is as such:

1. How does Russia's maritime strategy influence its foreign policy?
2. What implications does Russia's maritime strategy hold on geopolitics?
3. Why does Russia view its maritime policy as a national security issue?

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Using a Content Analysis Technique (CAT), this study by using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, to investigate the significance of sea

power and naval power in Eurasia, particularly Russia, to explain the maintenance of power equilibrium in the oceans and to describe the changing geopolitical landscape, particularly in the context of sea power. Data was obtained by using secondary data collecting method tools, such as academic articles and research papers, to gain comprehensive knowledge on the topic.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Main objectives of the study are:

- To describe Russia's maritime strategy, particularly in the Black Sea region.
- To explain the significance of the Black Sea for Russia in a changing geopolitical arena in considering the roles played by other regional and global actors.
- To analyze the role of numerous parties in the region and the impact of their actions, particularly on Russia.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In recent years, there has been a growing connection between Maritime Strategy and state security. An increasing amount of research indicates that any country's maritime strategy can have a variety of consequences on its economic, military, and naval security, including sea power and trade via sea routes, similar to how Catherine the Great historically let Russia to develop its naval power by establishing year-round ports on the Black Sea (Crăciun, 2022).

This study seeks to consolidate existing research on this topic, focusing on major findings, techniques, and study constraints. One of the earliest studies to evaluate this association was carried out during the 19th century, by Alfred T. Mahan, in his famous book *“The Influence of Sea Power on History”* (1660–1783), where he argued that possession or control over the ocean and its use is now and has always been a great factor in world history (Dergachev, 2011; Gudev, 2016).

Monaghan et al (2023) discovered that Russia's navy is becoming more capable of fighting wars. The navy provided carrier operations, missile attacks, and logistical support for Russia's 2015 participation in the Syrian civil war. Alongside, Moscow's campaign against Ukraine since 2014 is a clear example of this potential. Three Ukrainian warships were fired upon and taken prisoner by Russian authorities in November 2018, after they blocked the Kerch Strait.

Even though the majority of the battle is being carried out by ground forces, the navy has been heavily involved from the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. It swiftly took control of the Azov Sea and has aided ground forces by undertaking amphibious assaults, military operations, and strikes from the Black Sea. The Russian Federation occupies more than 1/8 of the earth's land area, making it the largest nation in terms of geography. Nevertheless, compared to this vast region, Russia only has 142 million people, mostly concentrated in the western side of the country, with the remaining area being sparsely inhabited (CIA, 2016).

With over 50% of the Arctic coastline under its control, Russia enjoys a strategic advantage in the area and has been updating its Soviet-era military facilities for over ten years. Moscow has resumed operations in some 50 bases, considering the

Arctic to be its northern backyard. This gives it a considerable advantage over other regional actors who are now trying to build their presence. (Anees Fatima Sherazi, 2023) The Arctic has gained geostrategic significance in recent decades and has the potential to serve as a battlefield for strategic rivalry between Russia, NATO countries, and other outside actors (Brewer et al., 2021).

Non-Arctic states are also interested in the competition because of the quantity of energy resources and oil deposits that lie beneath their seabed. Both China and India have long had an interest in getting involved in Arctic matters; they are both Arctic Council observers, and the former is currently working on building its Polar Silk Road along the Arctic coast (Sharma A, 2021).

The history of maritime strategy while addressing the increasing geopolitical significance of the world ocean inherent in the first decades of the 21st century and are determined by the factors such as: (1) the world scale Commerce, combined with global transport and logistics centers, limited marine areas (around 90% of international freight transport occurs according to sea ties) (2) the potential of mineral and first of the sea shelf, including hydrocarbon resources and the availability of oil and gas production infrastructure (6000 petroleum and offshore gas platforms operate in the world, providing 25 to 30% of global energy consumption), as well as growing sea demands and Biological resources (3) an increase in the world's leading and regional military presence in the context of increasing geopolitical uncertainty and turbulence; (4) The concentration of coastal cities as centers in the world economy (Druzhinin & Lachininskii, 2021).

The post-Soviet Russian maritime orientation that emerged after 1994 was mainly compensatory, in nature. However, in the early 2000s, the restoration issues were largely resolved and maritime activity itself was resumed. The most important factors in Russia's integration were the world economy and key factors that have positioned Russia as one of the most important (geo-economic and geo-political) maritime nations in Eurasia. Russia currently has a total of 67 seaports (with a total capacity of about 1,003.6 million tons per year and a berthing distance of about 1,481,000 linear meters) (Baklanov & Moshkov, 2015).

The importance of the Black Sea and NATO's role in restraining the Kremlin surge in Black Sea is significant for Russia because it is the only way for the country to maintain a military presence in warm waters. Russia's geostrategic factors in the Black Sea region have remained unchanged since 1853, with only the main geopolitical competitors replaced by NATO, the EU, and the USA. Crimea remains a source of military conflict, Turkey remains a strategic pivot, and control of the straits remains a strategic objective for Russia's access and military presence in the eastern Mediterranean (Crăciun, 2022).

Consequently, academicians believe that controlling or dominating the Black Sea has the potential to project dominance across Europe, including the Balkans, Central Europe, Eastern Mediterranean, South Caucasus, and northern Middle East regions. Besides that, Russia also has Western-driven interests in the Black Sea. The Black and Caspian Seas, the Sea of Azov, and the Baltic were the obstacles to Russian

expansion in the sixteenth century. (Antczak, Anna 2018) The states in the area have placed all forms of collective economic, political, and military cooperation on hold, leaving only bilateral collaboration (Anastasov, 2018). They also lack a shared history, identity, and cultural foundation; but the only thing that distinguishes this perception is their shared hatred for the common enemy, which is Russia; Peter the Great once said,

"A ruler with a navy has both hands, but one with ground troops has only one."

Nonetheless, the length of Russia's coastline is 2.5 times that of its land (Washington United States, 2025). The foundation of Russian naval organization was established in the 18th century by Peter the Great. Peter the Great was interested in enhancing Russia's naval might even though it was a land empire rather than a marine one. Thus; despite anything else, he focused on establishing a naval power, which encompasses the economy, security, culture, and other elements of sea power. The establishment of a naval force was intended to advance strategic policy which is important for national interests. The Russian navy was centralized and organized along regional lines under Peter the Great. The Caspian Flotilla, the Pacific Fleet, the Black Sea Fleet, the Baltic Fleet, and the Northern Fleet are a few examples of Russian naval fleets (Anees Fatima Sherazi, 2023).

Russia has always struggled to defend its borders from potential threat of enemies; consequently, its leaders have determined that the only viable solution is to expand the boundaries to establish a buffer zone that serves as a defensible barrier against the adversaries. Empress Catherine the Great once stated,

"I can only defend my borders in one way, which is to expand them"

Following its annexation of the Baltic region, territories from Poland and Ukraine, and the Carpathian Mountains to the west, Russia began its expansion to the west and south during Peter the Great's era. By the end of the 19th century, it had conquered Crimea, the Caucasus nation, and Central Asia. The Black Sea is bordered by Russia, Moldova, Bulgaria, Turkey, Ukraine, and Romania (Talbot, 2009).

For Russia, this area is significant for historical, geopolitical, strategic, and economic reasons. For ages, the Black Sea served as a direct trade route to Constantinople (Istanbul). However, following the Mongol invasion of Kyivan Rus in the 12th century, direct access to the Black Sea was no longer possible. Additionally, under Catherine rule in the late 18th century, Russia was able to gain access to the Black Sea. In 1783, the city of Sevastopol and the Russian Black Sea Fleet were established. The Black Sea Fleet was employed against the Turks in the 19th century to obtain access to the Mediterranean Sea. Russia is using its maritime strategy in the Black Sea as an effective means of achieving its foreign policy goals. Due to this President V. Putin underlines the multifaceted nature of Russia's maritime power by asserting that Russia is not just a great naval power, but a maritime power, one of the "leading maritime nations of the world" (Monaghan & Connolly, 2023).

Another obvious example of maritime orientation is the development of new

underwater engineering infrastructure, such as fiber-optic internet connections, power cables, and pipelines, which were not there during the Soviet era. For the export of Russian hydrocarbons to the European Union, Gazprom has been implementing the most ambitious (and expensive) plan for building underwater gas pipelines since 2000 with the help of foreign partners (Monaghan & Connolly, 2023).

The Russian-Japanese Cable Network (RJCN) (Naoetsu Japan)–Nakhodka (Primorsky Krai), Hokkaido–Sakhalin Cable System (HSCS), etc., are just a few of the projects that Russia has undertaken to build underwater cable networks over the past 25 years (Druzhinin & Lachininskii, 2021). During the Cold War, Soviet strategy relied heavily on the sea, particularly the development of advanced nuclear-powered submarines. This was a key aspect of competition among superpowers. Therefore, the sea is seen by Moscow as a source of opportunity as well as a threat to its security and a limitation on its options (Manchester University Press, 2023).

Russia's navy is becoming more capable of fighting wars. The navy provided carrier operations, missile attacks, and logistical support for Russia's 2015 participation in the Syrian civil war and Moscow's campaign against Ukraine since 2014 is a clear example of this potential. Three Ukrainian warships were fired upon and taken by Russian authorities in November 2018, after they blocked the Kerch Strait. Even though the majority of the battle is being carried out by ground forces, the navy has been heavily involved from the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. It swiftly took control of the Azov Sea and has aided ground forces by undertaking amphibious assaults, resupply operations, and strikes from the Black Sea and Caspian Sea (Monaghan et al., 2023).

The Federal Customs Service reports that nearly 65% of Russian exports are currently fossil fuel and other non-renewable products, which contributes to Gazprom's and other specialized large business structures' interests in oil and gas fields in Russia's shelf and coastal zones. This global energy and raw materials specialization is another aspect of Russia's maritime orientation (Kant, 2019).

Due to its national interests, that is outlined in the Russian Federation's Maritime Doctrine, Russia has a vast presence in the World Oceans that is poly-subjective, multidimensional, and non-equilibrium for some marine (and oceanic) waters. The interests of the Russian state, including military-strategic ones, are combined with a focus on the efficient use of the maritime factor by the largest Russian companies. These companies are also focused on the daily lives of people from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds: over 21 million people live in coastal cities and municipal districts, i.e., 14.4% of the country's population; up to 22.5 mln annually travel to the most popular Russian seaside resorts (up to 15 mln in Krasnodar Krai and 7.5 mln in Crimea) (PMC, 2016).

Russia needs to boost its positive image as a leading maritime power by increasing and mobilizing its financial and human resources in maritime economic activity. It also needs to balance military activities in the Black Sea and other Russian seas to achieve maritime aims. (Druzhinin and Lachininskii, 2021). The war in Ukraine has elevated the Black Sea region to a critical geostrategic position for global

security. The Western world largely disregarded these indications, failing to give them the amount of attention they deserved, even though Russia had been using the anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) and hybrid warfare strategies in this region long before the invasion of Ukraine and even before the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 (Crăciun, 2022).

The Black Sea region takes on new strategic significance for the West, becoming one of the major geopolitical arenas for the conflict with Russia, which ultimately determines Europe's very future. The Black Sea region, which has always been viewed as a less significant territory by the West, thereby gains new strategic significance and becomes more militarized, unstable, and contentious. It urgently needs a new regional status quo to stabilize; while the Kremlin aims to maintain its influence in the region by destabilizing the region through military operations against Ukraine, illegal annexation of new territories, and military threats to states in the region. This strategy aims to limit their Euro-Atlantic accession.

This study addresses a gap in the literature by addressing the growing relevance of the Black Sea region, not only in the eyes of Russia but also for NATO members and for many other regional players as well. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has transformed the Black Sea region into one of Europe's most significant security concerns since World War II. When Russia invaded a sovereign nation and deprived it of its significant territories, the West saw a *fait accompli* and realized that Russia was openly undermining not only the Black Sea region's regional order but also the post-Cold War world order. The risks to Russian interests are not limited to these locations and circumstances. In terms of the Black Sea, Russian policy is assertive, to counteract other players' aggression and to enhance sea power, which is eventually necessary for securing naval frontiers.

The existing research fills the gap by implying that Russia has turned its attention to the World Ocean in the past 20 years as it attempts to establish a multi-vector nature in its foreign policy and becomes more actively involved in transnational economic interdependencies. Its growing maritime economy (building seaports and industrial port complexes, coastal energy projects, reviving domestic shipbuilding industries, building underwater gas transport systems, etc.) and bolstering Russia's geostrategic (including military force) presence in both nearby and farther-flung regions of the World Ocean are the main ways in which this could be demonstrated.

### **Theoretical Framework**

American scholar and naval officer Alfred Thayer Mahan was a significant proponent of sea power in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He made his argument in his book that sea power is crucial to a country's historical dominance. Mahan emphasized the interdependence of military and commercial control of the sea during the French Revolution and in French Empire era, 1793–1812, and he claimed that control of seaborne commerce might decide the fate of conflicts. (Mahan, 1890) He famously once said:

"The one who owns the sea possesses all,"

Mahan concluded, citing sea power as the primary element in the establishment of global dominance. A key element in the formation of the maritime and marine national character is the inclination of the people to trade. By defeating the sea routes, the country gains military traits, which is a commitment to the immediate field of marine strategic operations. Mahan recognized some of the primary aspects that impact the state's naval power:

#### **Geographic location**

is advantageous not only when a country has access to major ocean highways or a lengthy coastline, but also when it has harbors for developing dependable ports. Russia is aware that its national security is closely tied to the Black Sea, and it is vital to safeguard its integrity in the ocean from its adversaries, particularly "*the NATO allies*". Failure to act in this manner could jeopardize Russia's national security.

#### **Physical conformation**

includes climate and natural productivity. The coastline is the primary factor that defines how well the nation's physical structure works. Another important component of a successful physical structure is the availability of resources. The availability of resources is also an important component in determining a successful physical structure. However, this does not imply that a country with insufficient resources is bound to play a passive role in foreign affairs. If the state preserves financial resources, these territories will likely be lost in the future owing to a lack of established lasting connections.

Through tankers, Russia transfers substantial amounts of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) across the Kerch Strait, which separates the Azov Sea from the Black Sea. Around 7.5% of Russia's total LPG exports come from the Black Sea port of Taman, according to one Reuters report. Alongside, Russia is the world's largest wheat exporter, primarily to Africa and the Middle East. It is also a significant exporter of barley and maize (corn). About 70 percent of Russia's grain exports are handled via its Black Sea grain terminals. They consist of the ports of Taman and Novorossiisk. The loss of the Black Sea would ultimately prove catastrophic for Russia's commercial sector, which will undoubtedly harm its economy (Devitt & Vladimir Soldatkin, 2023).

#### **Size of the territory**

The country's safety is determined by the length of its coastline and the nature of its harbor, not by the amount of square kilometers. Russia exports its oil at the Sheskhari Black Sea terminal near Novo-rossik, while the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), which handles around 1% of the world's oil, ships its oil from the Yuzhnaya Ozereevka terminal nearby. Since Russia has a better understanding of the importance of sea power and navigation authority in the context of a shifting geopolitical landscape, the Black Sea has thus become a subject of relevance (Devitt & Vladimir Soldatkin, 2023).

#### **Population size**

Mahan stated that the population's impact should be factored into the navy's population ratio to the general population. The population of France, for instance,

was substantially bigger than that of England during the wars following the French Revolution, but at the same time, the percentage of the population that could be ascribed to naval strength was lower than that of England. Russia has the world's third-most powerful fleet. It possesses a well-balanced fleet of modern ships, including one aircraft carrier, destroyers, frigates, and submarines. According to Wisevoter's 2023 poll, Russia has over 598 vessels, more than the USA, and the vast bulk of the former Soviet naval forces, which increases its naval strength.

The annexation of Crimea immediately increased the Black Sea's importance for Russia, and as a result, the region's military balance is shifting. Russia's extensive military presence in the Black Sea region contributes significantly to regional security concerns. Russia views the eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a danger to national security. Russia has increased its military presence, notably in the Black Sea region, to maintain strategic balance with NATO. Russia sees the Black Sea as an access point to the Mediterranean region, where its influence has increased in recent years (Kuimova & Wezeman, 2018).

Russia has obtained a base for a previously planned expansion of its Black Sea Fleet, from which it can dominate the majority of the Black Sea in response to what Russia perceives as anti-Russian activities by NATO and the latter's development in the region. More importantly, to maintain regional power and deal with greater security threats following the events of 2014, Russia has concentrated on upgrading its military forces surrounding the Black Sea, including modernizing the Black Sea Fleet and bolstering its armed forces in Crimea (John Melvin, 2018).

Since Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, the Black Sea region has faced security difficulties that have significantly altered the defense strategies of all participating nations. Russia reassessed its security and defense policies to improve its presence in the region and combat perceived foreign threats (Kuimova & Wezeman, 2018). Russia always questions territorial claims against it, as well as military deployments by its adversaries near its area, as a critical threat to its national security. Territorial claims against Russia and its allies, as well as foreign military deployments in neighboring countries and oceans next to Russia, have been recognized as external threats to Russian security (President, 2014).

According to Kuimova & Wiseman, 2018 Russia's substantial military presence near the Black Sea contributes significantly to regional security. Russia sees the Black Sea as a vital transit corridor for trading and energy resources, as well as an entry point to the Mediterranean region, where Russia's influence has grown dramatically in recent years. For example, without the "*Syrian Express*" logistic supply network that operates from Russia's Black Sea facilities, Russian military operations in Syria would be all but impossible. This backdrop allows us to assess the importance of the Black Sea for Russia, as it not only enhances Russia's economy by offering a vital transit route but also aids in maintaining and safeguarding its national security amid the evolving geopolitical landscape.

## CONCLUSION

The Black Sea, which was once insignificant, has become one of the most important regions in shaping the maritime security of Russia, many NATO countries, and other regional players because it serves as the best trade and transit route, as well as a significant source of naval power for several countries. Russia must maintain its main Black Sea Fleet base, the "*Sevastopol Naval Base*," on the globally contested Crimean Peninsula, which is used by the Russian Navy. The Black Sea Fleet is the same Imperial Russian Navy that the Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (SFSR) inherited in 1918 and partitioned between Russia and Ukraine in 1997.

The significance of the Black Sea was nevertheless further enhanced by the Special Military operation in Ukraine in 2022. In February and March of that year, Russia assigned its military forces, including the Black Sea Fleet, the mission of blocking Ukraine's maritime communications in the northwest of the Black Sea. This was followed by a naval landing operation in the southern portions of the Odesa and Mykolaiv regions' coasts. The operation's objective was to occupy the Odesa region, which would provide access to the Moldovan border in the unstable areas of Gagauzia and Transnistria. It was also hoped that this would lead to the eventual conquest of Moldova.

To this goal, six extra big amphibious ships from the Northern and Baltic Fleets were sent to the Black Sea on February 8-9, 2022. About 80 warships, boats, and up to 200 support vessels were spread across seven locations in February 2022 as part of Russia's Black Sea Fleet. Russia also sent artillery and amphibious vessels from the Caspian Flotilla to the Black Sea. That naval formation was reinforced by several dozen FSB Border Service ships and boats (News, 2025).

Although the losses caused by Ukrainian forces' missile attacks over the Russian Black Sea fleet represented a significant setback for Russia, it did not allow it to sit idly by. Instead, Russia is actively seeking new strategies to counter Ukrainian USV and missile threats and is currently developing its own USV fleet. Russia's objective was to either block Ukraine's maritime communication in the northwest Black Sea or seize the coast of the Odesa region. Regional order, geopolitical identity, and interactions between states in the broader region are all being reshaped by geopolitical struggle in the Black Sea.

The Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean have gradually become one geopolitical arena, with regional and major power rivalry playing out. Russia's view of itself as a major power depends on the Black Sea. Its regional policy aims to develop and exploit vulnerabilities by attacking coastal states' territorial integrity, weaponizing energy and commercial linkages, disrupting connectivity, and boosting military presence. Given that many coastal states, including Bulgaria and Romania, are not only members of NATO but also of the European Union, and many more, like Georgia and Ukraine, are aspiring to join NATO specifically, the actions of NATO and even the European Union force nations like Russia to consider bolstering their naval military capabilities.

These are some of the factors that further strengthen Russia's will to

demonstrate its capabilities to oppose these coalitions and their activities on land and in the sea. Russia feels the necessity to win a war of Ukraine to reclaim its advantage in the Black Sea in its conflict with the West. Its immediate goals are to seize control of Odesa, secure the land connection with Crimea, and set off Ukraine from the Black Sea coast. Russia would be able to control the oil and marine trade routes.

After Finland and Sweden joined NATO, Russia felt pressured in the Baltic Sea and is probably going to step up its efforts in the Black Sea to make up for the losses in the Baltic. The West has to rethink its place and function in Europe's broader eastern and southern neighborhoods because containing Russia would not only be difficult, but almost impossible (Dalay & Sabanadze, 2024). Russia's concerns over the Black Sea cannot be dismissed as pointless because history demonstrates that the more powerful a nation's naval forces are, the more they may increase their control. Take the Ottoman, Roman, and other historical empires as examples. They had the capacity to become the most powerful military because they possessed sufficient naval power.

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