



After the Crimean crisis: towards a greater Russian maritime power in the Black Sea

Igor Delanoe

To cite this article: Igor Delanoe (2014) After the Crimean crisis: towards a greater Russian maritime power in the Black Sea, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 14:3, 367-382, DOI: [10.1080/14683857.2014.944386](https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2014.944386)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2014.944386>



Published online: 16 Sep 2014.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



Article views: 2822



[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)



Citing articles: 7 [View citing articles](#)

After the Crimean crisis: towards a greater Russian maritime power in the Black Sea

Igor Delanoë*

Center for International and European Studies, Kadir Has University, Istanbul, Turkey

(Received 25 April 2014; accepted 21 May 2014)

The modernization of the Black Sea Fleet currently underway is believed to be one of the most ambitious parts of the Russian State Arms Procurement programme 2011–2020. Up to 18 units are being built and are expected to be commissioned in the Russian Black Sea Fleet by 2020, while new infrastructures are being developed. However, Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 has overturned the Black Sea maritime context. It is likely to give substantial impetus to Russian naval plans in the Black Sea and, by extension, to sustain Moscow's resumption of naval activity in the Mediterranean. Yet, whereas Russia's maritime power has been dramatically enhanced due to the takeover of Crimea, Moscow's naval power in the Black Sea and in the Mediterranean remains challenged by a set of qualitative factors. Beyond, the Ukrainian crisis has demonstrated the inability of the European Union to manage its Black Sea environment as well as it has highlighted the United States waning influence and interests in the region.

Keywords: Black Sea; Russia; Ukraine; Crimea; Sevastopol; Russian Black Sea Fleet; security; naval cooperation; Mediterranean

Whereas during the 1990s, the Black Sea region did not attract much interest, in the past decade, it has faced several developments directly linked to the changing global context.¹ The Black Sea region is one of the world's critical crossroads, a strategic intersection of east-west and south-north corridors, a geographic situation that enhances its strategic interest for regional and foreign actors (Lawlor 2011). Since the collapse of the Soviet security system in 1991, the ongoing globalization process in economic and security fields has led to a new environment with new opportunities for cooperation, but has also increased the risk of confrontation and conflicts.

The heterogeneity of the Black Sea region and the absence of effective regional security mechanisms have so far precluded the stakeholders from preventing, diffusing or settling any security issues. Today, the Black Sea region appears as a competition field between regional actors with conflicting interests. For the past two decades, Russia, Turkey, the European Union (EU), the USA and NATO have turned the region into a 'zero sum game' area. Rising tensions and security challenges have subsequently led to permanent growth in military spending among Black Sea states during the past decade, rising from an average of 2.4% of GDP in

*Email: igor.delanoë@gmail.com

2000 to 2.9% of GDP in 2010.² With an unsettled balance of power, an uncontrolled accumulation of military forces in the Black Sea region, and disputes among the neighbouring countries, the risk of conflict remains permanent and quite high. The globalization process has, furthermore, particularly highlighted the Black Sea maritime dimension, putting an emphasis on maritime security and shedding light on ties between the region's security and economic prosperity, and has thus prompted the need for littoral states to maintain a capable navy (Japaridze and Lawlor 2009 301).

In order to address the coming security challenges, Russia has started a wide modernization programme of its military forces – the State Armament Programme (SAP) 2010–2011 – and the upgrading of the Russian Black Sea Fleet is believed to be one of the most ambitious parts of it, with the expected commissioning of 15–18 new units (Boltenkov 2011, 82).³ The implementation of the SAP 2011–2020 provides also modernization and development of Black Sea and Mediterranean naval facilities, reminding the strategic interests of the region for Moscow, as a nexus between Russia and the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and beyond, the world ocean.⁴ Until March 2014, the implementation of these plans and the subsequent development of Russia's maritime power had been nevertheless fundamentally hampered by restrictions imposed by the Ukrainian government under the 1997 and 2010 bilateral agreements on the use of military assets leased by Russia in Crimea. In March 2014, the annexation of the Crimean peninsula into the Russian Federation has consequently totally overthrown the maritime and security context in the Black Sea.⁵ Moscow has now free hands to deploy new platforms in Sevastopol, to upgrade Crimean infrastructures and to dispatch new military hardware on the peninsula. Russia has furthermore solved at nearly no cost several issues that prevented her to enhance its maritime power in the Black Sea, and by extension, in the Mediterranean.

This paper discusses to what extent the annexation of Crimea to the Russian Federation in March 2014 will affect Russian maritime power in the Black Sea. After having set the theoretical framework and defined maritime power, this article explores Russian naval plans in the Black Sea and in the Mediterranean. The last part focuses on the consequences of Russia's takeover of Crimea for Black Sea maritime context, and considers qualitative factors that could still jeopardize Moscow's naval build up in the *pontus euxinus*.

Defining maritime power

Before addressing Russian plans for its Black Sea Fleet, it is necessary to introduce some maritime characteristics of the Black Sea that condition local naval activity, and to define maritime power.

The almost closed aspect of the Black Sea enhances considerably the strategic dimensions of the coasts and shallow waters. Closed seas are usually concerned by tactical operations with high strategically impacts. There has not been any large-scale naval battle in the Black Sea since the destruction of the Ottoman Fleet in Sinope by the Russian Black Sea Fleet on 30 November 1853. Yet, the fall of Sevastopol in 1855, besieged by the French, the British, the Sardinians and the Turks, put an end to the Crimean War. The strategist Milan Vego describes the Black Sea as a narrow sea, militarily meaning that it can be controlled from both of its sides (Vego 2003). Littoral states should pay particular attention to second and third rank naval units expected to operate in these areas such as submarines, frigates or

corvettes, and landing forces and capacities are especially strategic to support the operations of ground troops along the coasts. It should be furthermore recalled that the Montreux Convention (1936) regulates access to the Black Sea, and distinguishes between Black Sea countries and foreign countries. The Convention limits the tonnage and the time spent by ships from non-Black Sea Countries in Black Sea waters (with a maximum of 45,000 tons, or 30,000 tons for an individual country, in peace time, with a maximum of 21 day journey allowed). Submarines of non-littoral navy and aircraft carriers are banned from the Black Sea.

The Convention provides Turkey with enhanced control of the Straights, and since Stalin, no regional leaders have attempted to renegotiate the Convention. The USA, which is not part of the Montreux Convention, has regularly asserted that they will respect it despite the fact this text considerably limits their naval power in the Black Sea Region. In 2006, Turkey thus ruled out Washington's attempt to extend the NATO anti-terrorist naval operation Active Endeavour from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea, with the support of Russia (Torbakov 2006). Ankara saw this proposition as a potential threat to the Convention, and opposed it arguing that Black Sea countries already carry out BlackSeaFor task force and Black Sea Harmony operation. Consequently, the particular importance of the coastlines as well as the limitation of foreign actors' naval power in the Black Sea must be taken into consideration to appreciate local maritime context.

While *power* is the ability of an actor of the international relations to impose its will to other actors, *maritime power*, as a component of the *power*, is the ability of an actor to use the maritime domain to achieve political goals (Sanders 2012a, 47). The British military emphasizes the means, and defines *maritime power* as the ability to project power at sea and from the sea to influence the behaviour of people or the course of events.⁶ If this latest definition dwells on the naval and military aspect of *maritime power*, it should nonetheless include non-military means such as political and economic power exerted by an actor using the sea. Maritime power relies on both objective factors, such as material maritime capacities, and subjective factors, such as the determination of an actor to use these capacities at sea. Today, maritime power appears as the combined action an actor carries out by its navy, its diplomacy, and its merchant fleet. The American strategist and historian Alfred T. Mahan, the main naval commentator of the late nineteenth century, tended to emphasize the role of the navy as the primary vector of influence at sea (Mahan 1889). A British historian, Sir Julian Corbett, further discussed in the early twentieth-century maritime strategy, and widened Mahan's studies (Corbett 1911).

Today, the definition of maritime power must be broadened to include the ability of an actor to carry out a wide range of non-military tasks related to maritime security: securing maritime traffic, protecting maritime resources, enforcing state sovereignty in the Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ), etc. Therefore, *maritime power* appears to be a multidimensional concept going far beyond the strict military aspects. If the overall strength, quality and performance of sea-based forces and platforms and of land-based assets and forces must be considered, other factors have to be taken into account. The length of the coastline, especially in a narrow sea, the number and the quality of the naval infrastructures available to build, dock and maintain the platforms, as well as the motivation and the training of the service personnel all weigh into *maritime power*. Finally, as pointed out by Deborah Sanders (2012a) the maritime context in which an actor interacts does matter in the assessment of its maritime power. In the Black Sea, Russia's relations with Turkey, the

main other local naval stakeholder, remains a key element. However, Moscow's relations with other littoral states – Georgia, Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine – as well as the USA, shape its political goals in the region.

The buildup of the Russian Black Sea Fleet

Considering deep geopolitics changing in the Black Sea region, Russia, who has recovered from the 1990s, decided during the second half of 2000s, to reconstruct its Black Sea Fleet. However, until the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, complicated relations with Kiev about its military presence in Crimea seriously hampered Moscow's naval plans.

Russia's interests in the Black Sea

The Black Sea belongs to Russia's southern flank, spanning from the Caspian Sea to Ukraine. It provides Russia, since the end of the eighteenth century, with a 'window' on the warm Mediterranean waters, and beyond, it is the closest access to the world ocean for the Russian Navy and Russia's merchant fleet. Of the five Russian maritime theatres – namely the Northern, the Baltic, the Black Sea, the Caspian and the Pacific theatre – the Black Sea is the one that has undergone the deepest geopolitical changes during the two past decades. Whereas the Black Sea was a 'Soviet lake' during the Cold War, Moscow's influence in the region has been challenged and rolled back by Western influence during the 2000s. The loss of a major part of its coastlines through the independence of Ukraine has been an additional source of geopolitical frustration for Russia after 1991, which saw its 'window' on the Black Sea cut down from the whole northern shore of the basin before the collapse of the USSR to a short portion of the Caucasian coasts.

Since the southern flank has been one of the most unstable ones during the past two decades, Russia's interests in the Black Sea are today mainly security related. Moscow focuses on preserving the territorial integrity of the Federation, which is mainly challenged in the Caucasus, and preventing the expansion of the Euro-Atlantic influence to its claimed 'sphere of privileged interest.' The former objective is particularly relevant in the case of Ukraine and Georgia, where Russia had to draw a red line during the 2008 Russian-Georgian conflict. Moreover, not only is the region plagued by protracted conflicts in Moldova (Transnistria), and Caucasus (South-Ossetia, Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh), but it has also witnessed a growing militarization as mentioned previously. Besides, Moscow, which claims the status of a great power, has sought to expand its presence and activity in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, and to protect and promote its interests in the wider Mediterranean area, as demonstrated by its role in the ongoing Syrian conflict.

The Black Sea, as the main maritime corridor to the Mediterranean basin, provides Russia with an outlet to the Middle East where the Kremlin has revived and developed military and energy partnerships with several countries. Finally, Moscow also has major economic interests in the Black Sea: in 2013, 117 million tons of freight transited through Novorossiysk, which is the first commercial port of Russia, far from Saint Petersburg figures (58 million tons) or even Primorsk (75 million tons).⁷ The Black Sea remains an area thus characterized by intense maritime traffic where nearly three-quarters of the tankers sailing through the Turkish Straights are heading to or from Russia.⁸

Russian naval buildup: toward a fortress fleet to lock Russia's South-Western flank

Since the 2008–2010 military reform, the Black Sea Fleet has been incorporated into Russia's Southern military district, which is made up of the former North Caucasus military district, the Caspian flotilla, the 4th Air Force and Air Defence Command, and the Black Sea Fleet.⁹ Today, Russia's Black Sea Fleet remains mainly a 'green water fleet' with limited high seas capabilities. It operates one guided missile cruiser, the *Moskva* (Project 1164), which is also the flagship of the fleet, one classic submarine (Project 877 V), three frigates (Projects 61M, 1135 and 1135M), seven large landing ships (Projects 775 and 1171), and several small antisubmarine warfare boats and small missile or artillery boats. Around 90% of the tonnage of the fleet is located in Crimean ports, mainly in Sevastopol (80%), but also in Feodosia (9%) (Delanoë 2012, 762). In 2014, while the average age of the main combat units is around 27 years, the overall average age of the nearly 40 combat units reaches 36 years. Depending on the sources taken into consideration, the Black Sea Fleet is served by 12,000–16,000 service men dispatched primarily in Crimea, but in other naval and air bases such as Temryuk (Russia's only naval base in the Sea of Azov), Novorossiysk, and Otchamchira and Gudauta in Abkhazia as well. In addition, the fleet suffers from a lack of air-defence and air-strike capabilities, and therefore relies on land-based assets to compensate for this gap (Sanders 2012a, 50).

Today, the main mission of the Black Sea Fleet is to protect Russia's southern maritime flank. In order to carry out this mission, the fleet fulfils the following tasks:

- Protecting Russian EEZ
- Securing navigation and sea lines of communication in the Black Sea
- Exercising military and political control over the Caucasus and taking part in potential local conflicts (August 2008 type conflicts)
- Maintaining military dominance in the Black Sea with a view to exerting absolute control over Black Sea communications and countering the presence of naval groups of non-Black Sea states, primarily NATO forces, in the Black Sea (anti-access/area denial, or A2/AD) (Perepelytsya 2004, 198)
- Supporting units coming from other Russian fleets which operate in the Mediterranean
- Promoting and protecting Russian economic and security interests in the Mediterranean

However, Russia's Black Sea Fleet remains today one of the most obsolete Russian fleets. The need to urgently beef up and modernize the fleet has been acknowledged by the Kremlin which initiated an ambitious and wide ranging plan of military modernization. The Russian SAP 2011–2020 provides a general framework for the buildup of the Russian Fleet in the Black Sea. Moscow plans to spend €500 billion for the modernization of its army, and the Navy should benefit from €112,4 billion that will turn it from an ageing Soviet fleet into a modern one by 2020 (Delanoë 2012, 785). The buildup of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea is one of the highest priorities of the Kremlin: up to 18 new units are expected to be commissioned by 2020 (Boltenkov 2011, 82). Russia also plans to enhance its military presence in the Black Sea region by setting up new military facilities in Abkhazia

and South-Ossetia, and deploying additional mobile missile coastal forces. New surface ships and submarines expected to be commissioned in the Black Sea Fleet by 2020 should be deployed in Sevastopol and Novorossiysk, where Russia is actively upgrading its naval base.¹⁰

New platforms should consist of six multi-purpose frigates from Project 11356M, currently under construction at Yantar Shipyard (Kaliningrad). The lead ship unit, the *Admiral Grigorovitch*, was launched in mid-March 2014, and should be commissioned in late 2014 or early 2015. Derived from the Soviet *Krivak* type frigates, the new Project 11356M frigates will feature anti-ship capabilities (P-800 Onyx missile), anti-surface capabilities (cruise missile Klub) and anti-air capabilities (Shtil SAM missile system). Six new classic submarines from Project 0636.3, *Kilo* class, built at the Admiralty shipyard (Saint Petersburg), should also be commissioned. The first unit, the B-261 *Novorossiysk*, was launched in November 2013 and is expected to be commissioned in the Black Sea Fleet by the end of 2014. However, it is not impossible that Russia decides to commission only some of the six units, and to complete its submarine capacities in the Black Sea with one of the fourth-generation classic submarines from the Project 677 *Lada*. The first unit, the B-585 *Saint-Petersburg*, has been undergoing sea trials since 2010. The new frigates and the new submarines will seriously enhance Russian A2/AD capabilities in the Black Sea, and contribute securing Russia's southern flank. Concerning the amphibious capabilities, despite critics from Russian Navy officials, one or two large landing ships from *Ivan Gren* class (Project 11711) are expected to join the Black Sea Fleet. The lead unit, the *Ivan Gren*, has been under construction at Yantar Shipyard for nine years, and is expected to be commissioned not earlier than 2015, at best. Moreover, the Black Sea Fleet should be reinforced by one or two high sea multi-purpose frigates from Project 22350 *Admiral Gorshkov* class. The lead ship, *Admiral Gorshkov*, launched in October 2010, is still under completion at the Northern Shipyard plant (Saint Petersburg). The Russian fleet in the Black Sea should finally be strengthened with up to four near-shore units like missile corvettes from the Project 21631, and with one or two frigates from the Project 11540 *Yastreb*, currently dispatched in the Baltic Fleet.

The modernization of the Black Sea Fleet appears as a feasible programme for the Russian shipyards and military-industrial complex. It features mainly modernized versions of Soviet third-generation projects (Project 0636.3, Project 11356) widely exported to foreign customers (India for the frigates, Algeria and Vietnam for the submarines). The new projects (Project 22350, but mainly Project 11711 and Project 677) appear on the other hand as a challenge for the Russian defence industry. It is highly possible that Russian amphibious capabilities will suffer from a gap by 2020. Russia is thus likely to upgrade some of the current Soviet large landing ships which are fairly easy and cheap units to maintain, pending the commissioning of the *Ivan Gren* in 2016–2017. Besides, it is not impossible that the second *Mistral* Russia has ordered to France, the *Sevastopol*, could be assigned to the Black Sea Fleet while spending most of its duty in the Mediterranean and in the Indian Ocean. As for the land-based capabilities, Russia plans to induct Su-24M and Su-30SM for air strike capacities and Il-38 N for patrolling and anti-submarine capabilities. The annexation of Crimea has also opened the path to the deployment on the peninsula of new missile systems such as the Bastion-P coastal battery and S-300 PMU anti-aircraft missiles near Sevastopol, effective since March 2014.

The resurrection of the Russian Mediterranean squadron

The buildup of the Black Sea fleet will enhance Russia's ability to carry out naval deployment in the Mediterranean and in the Indian Ocean. The ongoing Syrian crisis has furthermore seen the reemergence of the Russian fleet as a tool of the Kremlin's foreign policy, and has demonstrated the consequent need for Russia to dispatch naval forces in the Mediterranean. The support Moscow has provided to the Syrian regime has catalysed Russia's naval activity in the Eastern Mediterranean, however, the deployment of vessels coming from the Northern, Baltic, Black Sea and Pacific Fleets, has started on a regular basis since 2008.

After holding large-scale naval drills in the Eastern Mediterranean at the end of January 2013, Moscow announced in March 2013 its intention to deploy by 2015 a permanent naval task force in the Mediterranean.¹¹ The ships of the Black Sea Fleet should form the backbone of the task force which would be strengthened with units coming from the Baltic, the Pacific and the Northern Fleet in order to form a squadron up to 10 combat and auxiliary vessels. The Black Sea Fleet Chief of Staff would operate the command of the task force.¹² However, high-ranking Russian officials admitted that the current poor state of the Black Sea Fleet must be overcome in order to support the Mediterranean squadron.¹³ These developments display Russian commitment to reinvest in the Mediterranean naval stage, and underscore Russian future needs in extended naval assets in the Black Sea. Moscow's increasing naval activity will also stress the necessity of maintaining a support point in the Mediterranean to sustain Russian influence over the Middle East and beyond, in the world ocean (Delanoë 2013b).¹⁴

The only Russian Mediterranean naval asset is the Tartus support point located in Syria. Although it could not be properly called a naval base, it has been slated for an upgrade in the framework of the SAP 2011–2020. However, the Syrian crisis has cast the doubt over the reliability of this asset, and Moscow has initiated prospects for an alternative solution elsewhere in the Mediterranean. Given the fact that NATO Mediterranean members and Israel are ruled out for obvious reasons, four main possibilities could be raised for Russia: Cyprus, Montenegro, Egypt and Algeria.

Moscow and Nicosia are rumoured to be discussing the possibility for Russia's fleet to use naval facilities in Limassol. In January 2014, Cyprus allowed Russian military planes to use the Paphos Airbase in case of emergency.¹⁵ It should be also added that most of the Russian tankers which have supported the deployment of the Russian fleet off Syria, as well as some warships, have been mainly refuelling and resupplying in Limassol.¹⁶ Although Greece is a NATO country, it might also be involved to a certain extent in supporting Russian naval deployment in Eastern Mediterranean. Russian Minister of Defence, Sergei Shoigu, visited Greece in December and reportedly discussed the possibility of Russian vessels entering Greek ports to undergo dockside repairs and quick maintenance (Nikolsky 2014). Montenegro is rumoured to have refused a late 2013 request from Moscow concerning the possibility of setting up a military base in the port of Bar.¹⁷ While this assertion was later denied by both Russian and Montenegrin sources, it has nevertheless pointed out Russian influence in Montenegro, a country which aims to enter both the EU and NATO.

Russia might also consider possibilities offered by Egypt. The ouster of the Muslim Brothers in summer 2013 by the Egyptian military led by Field Marshal

Abdel Fattah Saeed Hussein Khalil El-Sisi has opened the path to a broadened military-technical cooperation with Moscow. Russian-Egyptian partnership has been since then bolstered: in November 2013, Cairo hosted the visit of Sergei Lavrov and Sergei Shoigu, a few days after the deputy chief of staff of the GRU, Russia's military intelligence service, had visited Egypt.¹⁸ Besides discussions around a possible arms deal, Moscow and Cairo reportedly raised the question of the possibility of Moscow using Egyptian ports. This assertion was later strengthened by the visit of the Russian cruiser *Variag* to Alexandria: it was the first visit of a Russian warship to Egypt for decades (Nikolsky 2014). In February 2014, Field Marshal El-Sisi chose Moscow for his first visit to a foreign country. Finally, Algiers might positively answer a request coming from the Kremlin to open a naval facility. Such an agreement could be tied to an arms deal Russia and Algeria are reportedly negotiating in early 2014 on the supply of two *Kilo* class submarines to Algiers.¹⁹ The long-standing military-technical partnership between Algiers and Moscow – \$6,1 billion of arms deal from 1991 to 2011 – could help to close the deal.²⁰

Crimea's annexation: a game changer for Black Sea security

Russia's takeover of the Crimean peninsula following the March 16 referendum, and the subsequent unilateral cancellation of the 1997 and 2010 bilateral agreements with Ukraine, has overthrown the Black Sea maritime context.²¹ Before, despite being a regional *hegemon*, Russian maritime power in the *pontus euxinus* was nevertheless mainly impeded by difficult relations with Kiev.

An overthrown maritime context

On 21 April 2010, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev and Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovitch signed the Kharkov Agreement. According to the text, the lease for the Russian Black Sea Fleet was extended from 2017 to 2042, with a further five years option. In return, Ukraine benefited from discounts on gas imports worth up to \$40 billion under a contract that was due to expire in 2019.²² After this agreement had been signed, the issue of renewing and rebasing Russian ships in Sevastopol was one of the most difficult both governments had to face. Russian officials regularly complained about the fact that Kiev hampered Russia's modernization of its fleet, then worsening bilateral relations. However, Kiev argues that the renovation of the Russian fleet had to be solved on a 'type by type, class by class' basis (Lakiychuk 2010, 38). Then Ukrainian Minister of Defence Pavlo Lebedev stated in February 2013 that

Russia's desire is understandable – technology is moving ahead, and the desire to rearm its fleet is fair. That is why it is necessary to solve all the issues at the legislative level, taking the interests of Ukraine as a non-aligned country into account.²³

Negotiations concerned also taxable supply and the usage of Sevastopol's docks: today, Sevastopol still hosts 80% of the tonnage of the Russian Black Sea Fleet (Delanoë 2012, 763).

Among the main maritime disputes that Kiev and Moscow had to deal with were:

- Maritime border dispute over the Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov.
- Absence of an inventory of the property and land used by the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Crimea.
- Dispute over moorings and quays used by Russia in Sevastopol, about the legal framework concerning the modernization of Russian warships, and taxation of Russian supplies for the fleet.²⁴
- Russian ownership and control of hydrographic and navigational facilities (lighthouses and communication stations) in the Black Sea. (Sanders 2007, 151)

All these issues, added to Russia's poor maritime infrastructures in the Black Sea, had prevented Moscow from stepping up its influence in the region and beyond, in the Mediterranean. By seizing Crimea, Russia solved unilaterally all these ex-bilateral problems, and Russian maritime power is likely to increase in the short term. Crimea provides Russia with an enhanced ability to protect its southern flank, especially against potential sea and air incursions. Yet, beyond the commissioning of new platforms, the regional balance of power has been significantly changed after Russia's takeover of the peninsula.

First, the annexation of Crimea has provided Russia with a broader and a better coastline on the Azov and the Black seas. Before March 2014, Russia had approximately 570 km of coast in the shallow Sea of Azov, and nearly 400 km of hostile shore on the Black Sea between the Kerch straight and the Georgian border, with no deep ports to dock a fleet. After the 2008 Russian-Georgian conflict, Moscow has gained an additional 300 km which correspond to the Abkhazian coastline under Russia's de facto military control. Crimea provides Russia not only with a greater coastline and the best Black Sea port, Sevastopol, but other assets such as Yevpatoria, Feodosia and Kerch, which are better and safer than Russian Black Sea ports located on the Caucasian shore, and are now under Russian sovereignty.

Second, in the context of the ambitious modernization of the Black Sea Fleet, the accession to full sovereignty in Sevastopol opens Russian possibilities for further developments. Moscow is now fully able to commission new vessels and dispatch new military hardware, including coastal artillery and land-based forces and aircraft. Russia has been upgrading the port of Novorossiysk to turn it into a naval base, but it cannot be compared in quality to Sevastopol and its eight deep-water bays. Moscow was prevented from upgrading or increasing its military presence in Crimea by both the 1997 and 2010 Russian-Ukrainian agreements on the Black Sea fleet. Today, Moscow is no more constrained by the conditions imposed by Kiev on its Black Sea fleet deployment, and does not have to share Sevastopol with the Ukrainian Navy anymore. Due to the revocation of the bilateral agreements with Ukraine and the subsequent recovery of full sovereignty over Crimea, the Kremlin and the Ministry of Defence have started working out a plan to reconsider the development of Russia's Black Sea Fleet.²⁵ Whereas Moscow is unlikely to give up the upgrading of the Novorossiysk naval base, this plan may outline a greater strategic role for Sevastopol.

Third, the takeover of Crimea solved a second strategic issue for Russia related to the demarcation of the maritime borders in the Kerch straight and the Sea of Azov. Kiev advocated in favour of the internationalization of the Sea of Azov and controlled the channel in the Kerch straight defined by the Soviet demarcation line.

On the other hand, Russia argued to turn the Sea of Azov into shared domestic waters, and called for joint use of the Kerch straight.²⁶ For Russia, the possibility of foreign vessels sailing just a few miles away from the mouth of the Don was indeed a matter of national security. Today, the Kerch straight is Russian, and the Sea of Azov has virtually been turned into a Russian sea despite the fact that Ukraine still owns less than 350 km of shores located between Dzankoi and Novoazovsk. However, Kiev does not have the ability to protect this shore, and will have to rely on Russia's naval forces based in Temryuk to carry out routine maritime security tasks.

Finally, Russia has expanded its continental shelf in the Azov and the Black seas, and has noticeably gained sovereignty over the Pallas gas and oil field located not far from the Kerch straight. This field is believed to hold an estimated 75 billion cubic metres (bcm) of natural gas and 490 million tons of oil.²⁷ In early February 2014, and according to the 17 December Putin-Yanukovitch agreement, Russia and Ukraine were holding talks through Gazprom and Naftogaz to jointly develop the Pallas field. Whereas it cannot be excluded that Ukraine would still be involved in that project, on the other hand, the agreement signed in August 2013 between Kiev and Exxon Mobil and Shell about prospecting off the Western coasts of Crimea is now jeopardized. The takeover of Crimea furthermore raises the question of the demarcation of new maritime borders between Russia and Ukraine, while Russian and Romanian EEZ are now adjacent. By extension, Russia now shares a maritime border with NATO in the Black Sea.

Qualitative factors still shaping Russian naval power in the Black Sea

Having solved most of the external challenges through the annexation of the Crimean peninsula, one could nevertheless still point out the Black Sea maritime context Russia is facing. While enhancing its maritime power through the annexation of Crimea, Russian naval power remains however challenged by its poor relations with some of its Black Sea neighbours as well as the USA, by the critical lack of proper naval infrastructures to maintain and repair the fleet, and by issues concerning 'human factors.'

If Russia and Georgia have slowly enhanced their bilateral ties since Mikhaïl Saakashvili left office in 2013, Moscow's Black Sea maritime environment still suffers from poor relations with Romania, Ukraine and the USA, while the Kremlin maintains the status quo with Turkey and has good relations with Bulgaria. First, it should be noted that only Turkey and Russia maintain capable fleets in the Black Sea, no matter how different they are in terms of qualitative and quantitative factors. Even before Russian and pro-Russian (Ukrainian) forces seized 70 units of the Ukrainian fleet, Kiev's naval capacity had been fairly limited. Only the ex-Soviet frigate *Hetman Sahaydachniy* which remained under Kiev's control, has the ability to carry out operations in the Black Sea and, to a certain extent, in blue waters. Given the poor condition of the Ukrainian vessels, Moscow started in early April 2014 to return most of the seized ships to Ukraine.²⁸ The loss of most of its maritime assets through Russia's annexation of Crimea has furthermore cut down Ukraine's already declining maritime power in the Black Sea (Sanders 2012). Russian-Romanian relations have been strained for the two past decades, with very rare high-level contacts. Bucharest's close ties with Washington as well as its key role in the deployment of the NATO anti-missile shield have furthermore

complicated bilateral relations with Moscow. After Moscow's takeover of Crimea, Russia and Romania share an adjacent EEZ. Yet, Romanian maritime potential remains highly underexploited in the Black Sea. Although Romania controls the mouth of the Danube, one of the longest European rivers, it does not compensate for its only 240 km of coastline with Constanta as the only main deep-water port. Besides, with only two frigates and one corvette all commissioned during the 1980s, the Romanian navy's weight in the Black Sea naval balance remains very weak.²⁹

In order to offset Russia's greater influence in the region, Romania has thus called for increased US military involvement.³⁰ In that regard, Washington could use the naval vector in order to strengthen its military assistance to Black Sea NATO countries. The USA has dispatched vessels to the Black Sea basin from the very beginning of the Crimean episode, and since March 2014, there has always been at least one US warship sailing in the Black Sea, with the US Navy carrying out joint naval exercises together with the Bulgarian and the Romanian navies.³¹ For Washington, the objective is to reassure Black Sea NATO countries, and to demonstrate its commitment to protect them. It should be emphasized that US naval presence in the Black Sea has always been perceived as a challenge to its influence by Moscow. In that regard, US-Russia relations in the Black Sea naval realm are strongly characterized by 'zero sum game' and highly competitive.

The Sochi Olympic Games provided a unique opportunity for Moscow and Tbilisi to mend their bilateral relations.³² Despite ongoing dispute over Russian military protectorates in Abkhazia and South-Ossetia, the accession of the Georgian Dream Coalition in October 2012 has paved the way for Moscow and Tbilisi to resume their dialogue. The threat of terrorism commonly faced by the two stakeholders and the necessity to provide security for the Olympic Games laid the ground for a better understanding. From a naval perspective, Georgia does not maintain any capabilities, but has coast guard forces to secure its shores. In spite of the fact that Bulgaria joined NATO in 2004, Moscow and Sofia have been able to maintain constructive relations. Bulgaria appears today as a key partner in the Russia-led Southstream pipeline project. Bulgarian shipyards have furthermore regularly modernized or refitted medium Russian vessels from the Black Sea and Baltic fleets, slightly offsetting Russia's critical lack of naval infrastructures in the *pontus euxinus*. In 2013, the Baltic Fleet instruction ship *Perekop* arrived at the Arsenal of the Fleet shipyard (Varna) and underwent repairs. The large landing ship *Cesar Kunikov* (Black Sea Fleet) has also been refitted in Varna and should be handed over to Russia in 2014.³³

However, the most important Black Sea naval partner for Moscow remains Turkey. Ankara controls not only the Straights, but today it also has the most capable and modern navy in the Black Sea. Both stakeholders have sought to maintain the status quo in the Black Sea and not to openly challenge each other's interests on the Black Sea stage. Beyond deep economic relations – \$32,7 billion in bilateral trade in 2013 – both stakeholders share common security interests.³⁴ Since 1991, Turkey has reinvested in the Black Sea strategic stage to play a proactive role in the maritime realm. Ankara has been very cautious in involving all the littoral states in any maritime security arrangement. In order to build up regional confidence and increase security cooperation, Turkey launched the BlackSeaFor naval taskforce in 2001. The task force gathers ships from all the Black Sea states and performs twice a year a wide array of exercises: search and rescue, environment protection, anti-mines warfare... This first initiative was further extended in 2004

when Ankara launched Black Sea Harmony the purpose of which is to prevent and fight piracy and terrorism.³⁵ When Washington suggested in 2006 to extend NATO Operation Active Endeavour to the Black Sea, both Moscow and Ankara strongly opposed. Whereas the former argued that littoral states were fully able to enforce maritime security on the Black Sea stage, the latter raised serious concerns about the implementation of the Montreux Convention in the context of increasing naval activity.

Despite a growing cooperative competition between Russia and Turkey in the realm of security in the Black Sea, both stakeholders continue to consider the Black Sea as their shared backyard. Although it has not signed the Montreux Convention, Washington has regularly stated it would comply with the text. The US involvement on the Black Sea naval stage relies on a naval diplomacy which has mainly focused on Ukraine during the 2000s. The main vector of naval influence remains the annual multinational Sea Breeze exercise. Since 1997, the Sea Breeze exercise is held to improve maritime safety and security in the Black Sea and to enhance the interoperability and maritime capabilities of Black Sea states. Yet, Sea Breeze 2006 and 2009 had to be cancelled due to tensions in Ukraine and anti-NATO and anti-US demonstrations in Sevastopol. Russia always perceives US naval presence in the Black Sea as a threat and is uneasy with Washington's presence in the *pontus euxinus* which is seen by the Kremlin as a direct challenge to its influence in its zone of strategic interests (Sanders 2007a, 67).

The deployment of Black Sea Fleet units has increased over the past years, directly contributing to enhancing the experience and the combat readiness of the crews. Russian involvement in international exercises (BlackSeaFor, Black Sea Harmony, NATO Bold Monarch 2011, Ionnex with the Italian Navy, or more recently Russian-Chinese naval exercises in the Mediterranean in January 2014) and in the Syrian crisis has enhanced combat training, the experience and the morale of the service personnel while exhausting some ageing amphibious platforms. Since the outbreak of the Syrian crisis in 2011, vessels coming from the four Russian fleets have established a permanent naval presence in Eastern Mediterranean, and have continuously commuted from Novorossiysk to Syrian ports in order to provide material support to Damascus bringing the overall 2012 deployment of Black Sea Fleet units in remote sea zones (mainly the Gulf of Aden and Mediterranean Sea) at 15 months.³⁶ Longer deployments as well as regular exercises contribute to the quality of the service personnel and to its morale. In 2011, a programme to build 20,000 housing units for personnel and their dependents was launched in Sevastopol (Socor 2011).

The average monthly wage has increased from 4500 rubles in 2007 to 10,705 rubles in 2010. This still remains lower than the average Russian salary which was 18,543 rubles in 2010.³⁷ Yet, social packages, housing, various bonuses, such as danger pay, hardship pay, additional pay for working with classified materials, must be added to the salary. If adequate housing, length of service and total monthly income seems not to be the top priorities they were a decade ago for service men, on the other hand, respectful relations between commanders and subordinates have become growing enquiries since the end of the 2000s.³⁸

Finally, Russia's Black Sea Fleet still suffers from a lack of infrastructure to maintain and repair the vessels. Sevastopol and its existing limited repair facilities will not be able to absorb the maintenance of the anticipated new surface units and submarines. Acknowledging this gap, OSK, the Russian holding for shipbuilding,

created the Southern Centre for shipbuilding and ship repair in early 2013. This new subunit of OSK includes the shipyards of Novorossiysk, Tuapse, Kryushinsky and Astrakhan.³⁹ However, the efficiency of this effort of centralization has yet to be demonstrated. The development of Russian Black Sea ship repair capacities should furthermore benefit from \$10 billion investment ordered by Moscow in summer 2013 to speed up the modernization of Russian shipyards.⁴⁰ Moreover, three main Crimean shipbuilding plants should be modernized in order to fill the capacity gap in term of maintenance. Under the auspices of the Russian Ministry for Industry and Commerce, the shipyards Zaliv (Kerch), More (Feodosia) and Sevastopol Naval Plant (Sevastopol) should see their capacities modernized and expanded.⁴¹ Finally, soon after the annexation of Crimea, President Vladimir Putin stated that Russia intends to spend up to \$6,9 billion, including \$140 million orders placed at Crimean shipyards.⁴² These developments testify to Russia's commitment to sustain its maritime policy, but their effects should not be expected to be seen before the end of the decade.

Conclusion

The Ukrainian crisis and its Crimean episode have once again stressed the maritime dimension of Black Sea security as well as emphasized the still-predominant pattern of the use of hard power in the region. The analysis of quantitative and qualitative factors in the light of Russia's recent takeover of Crimea suggests that Moscow's maritime power is likely to increase in the Black Sea in the short term, whereas Ukraine's already declining maritime power has been dramatically, not to say definitively, severed. The full sovereignty over Crimea will give an impetus to Russian naval plans to beef up its Black Sea Fleet and subsequently, to renew its naval capabilities in the *pontus euxinus*. In the Black Sea, Moscow seeks to regenerate its naval capabilities in order to preserve and modernize its current naval potential. Far from seeking to build wide blue water capabilities, the Kremlin's objectives in the Black Sea are twofold. First, by 2020 the Black Sea Fleet must be a 'fortress fleet' able to carry out anti-access and area-denial operations in case of a crisis in the Black Sea basin. Second, the Black Sea Fleet must be able to support the permanent deployment of the Russian Mediterranean Squadron. Crimea's annexation by Russia has not only overthrown the Black Sea maritime context, but it has reshaped Russia's Mediterranean ambitions as well. However, Russian naval power remains challenged by a strained maritime context in the Black Sea with some of its neighbours and the USA.

Beyond, the latest developments in Ukraine have highlighted the failure of the EU Eastern Partnership on the one hand, while also demonstrating the impossibility to further expand NATO eastward, by integrating neither Ukraine, nor Georgia, for the foreseeable future. However, NATO's role as a protector of its members in Eastern Europe and in the Black Sea is likely to increase. In that regard, Romania appears as a growing emerging driver for the US and NATO involvement in the Black Sea region. Furthermore, beyond the so-called 'Pivot to Asia', Washington still needs Moscow's active cooperation on international issues such as arms control, Syria, Iran or Afghanistan. Washington is thus unlikely to challenge Russia in its 'sphere of privileged interests', but could on the other hand strengthen NATO's position in the region by deploying permanent bases in Poland and Baltic States in addition to those in Romania. Finally, recent changes occurring on the Black Sea

maritime stage might lead to an enhanced duopolistic Russian-Turkish security condominium in the region. Russia and Turkey share a common interest in maintaining the status quo in the region, and have sought to not openly challenge each other's interests in what they consider as their shared neighbourhood. However, Russia's naval build up in the Black Sea as well as the potential for an enhanced NATO presence in the region is likely to reshape bilateral naval cooperation between Ankara and Moscow in the years to come.

Notes

1. According to the European Commission, the Black Sea Region includes Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova. However, one should also note the 'wider Black Sea area' which refers to the framework of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and includes the ten countries above plus Albania and Serbia. See Dimitrios Tryantaphyllou, 'The Security "Paradoxes" of the Black Sea Region', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, vol. 9, n° 3, September 2009, 226, note 4.
2. SIPRI Military Expenditures database. Military expenditures concern Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine and Russia through 2000–2010.
3. D. Boltentsov (Ed.), *Russia's New Army*, Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, Moscow, 2011, 82. 9–12 surface ships and 6 classic submarines. Voted in 2010, the SAP 2010–2020 should be provided by 2020 with a €500 billion budget, from which €112,4 billion should be allocated to Navy's upgrading. See Igor Delanoë, *La flotte de la mer Noire, de Catherine II à Vladimir Poutine: un outil de puissance au service des ambitions méditerranéennes de la Russie (1783–2012)* 785.
4. The road map and financing of the development of naval bases and facilities on the Russian Black Sea coasts and in the Mediterranean have been framed by the following document: 'Создание системы базирования Черноморского флота на территории Российской Федерации в 2005–2020 годах' ('Creation of a Basing System for the Black Sea Fleet on the Territory of the Russian Federation in 2005–2020 years'). See official website: <http://fcp.economy.gov.ru/cgi-bin/cis/fcp.cgi/Fcp/ViewFcp/View/2006/179/>.
5. 'Ukraine: Putin signs Crimea annexation', BBC News, 21 March 2014.
6. Joint Doctrine Publication 0–10. British Maritime Doctrine, 2011, V.
7. 'Secteur naval en Russie', *Publication des Services économiques*, Direction générale du Trésor, June 2013, 1.
8. Valeri Ratchev, 'Black Sea: a New Analytical Framework is Needed', in 'Crimea's Problems in the Context of Regional Security', special issues, *National Security and Defense*, n° 4–5, 2001, 47, quoted by Deborah Sanders, 'Between Rhetoric and Reality: the decline of Russian Maritime Power in the Black Sea', *art. cit.*, 45.
9. 'New command system for the Russian military', Ria Novosti, 15 July 2010.
10. Christian Le Miere, 'Evaluating Russia's Black Sea Fleet', IISS Voices, 26 February 2014.
11. Russian Navy conducted the largest for last ten years inter-fleet exercises in Eastern Mediterranean from 19 to 29 January 2013. Around 20 vessels were involved as well as three submarines, including one nuclear. See 'Четыре флота водной Средиземке' ('Four Fleets in one Mediterranean'), *Nezavissimaïa Gazeta*, 14 January 2013.
12. 'Russian Navy Starts Forming Mediterranean Task Force', *RIA Novosti*, 11 March 2013.
13. *Ibid.* See also 'Russian naval task force to be deployed in Mediterranean', *Interfax*, 25 February 2013.
14. See Igor Delanoë, 'Le partenariat stratégique russo-syrien: la clef du dispositif naval russe en Méditerranée' ('The Russian-Syrian Strategic Partnership: the Key of Russian Naval Plans in the Mediterranean'), *Note de la FRS* n° 6, February 2013, 9 pages.

15. «Кабмин Кипра одобрил использование российскими самолетами базы под Пафосом», *Voice of Russia*, 10 January 2014.
16. 'Russian warships stop in Cyprus, destination thought to be Syria', *Famagusta Gazette*, 16 July 2012.
17. 'Government refuses Russia's request to set up a military base in Montenegro', *Balkan Independent News Agency*, 20 December 2013.
18. 'Egypt's Sisi sees new defense cooperation with Russia', *Reuters*, 14 November 2013.
19. «Россия поставит Алжиру две подлодки типа Варшавянку» ('Russia Will Supply Algeria with two Submarine from Varshavianka type'), *Itar-tass*, 21 February 2014.
20. SIPRI Arms Transfers Database.
21. 'Russia terminates Black Sea Fleet agreements with Ukraine', *Ria Novosti*, 2 April 2014.
22. 'Kharkiv sellout', *Kyiv Post*, 22 April 2010.
23. 'Russia Plans Black Sea Fleet Rearmament', *RIA Novosti*, 23 February 2013.
24. 'Киев и Москва обновят состав рабочих групп по базированию ЧФ в Крыму', *Ria Novosti*, 23 February 2013.
25. 'Russia to Draft Black Sea Fleet Development Program by June', *Ria Novosti*, 25 April 2014.
26. 'Ukraine-Russia dispute over Kerch Strait unresolved', *Ria Novosti*, 11 November 2010.
27. 'Gazprom to set up 2 joint ventures with Ukraine's Naftogaz', *Ria Novosti*, 1 December 2010.
28. 'Russia Returns 13 out of 70 Navy Ships in Crimea to Ukraine', *Ria Novosti*, 21 April 2014.
29. Romanian Navy official website: <http://www.navy.ro/en/index.html>.
30. 'Romania calls for greater US military presence in Black Sea', *Reuters*, 1 May 2014.
31. 'Exercice conjoint des marines américaine, bulgare et roumaine en mer Noire' ('Joint Exercise of US, Bulgarian and Romanian navies in the Black Sea'), *French-China.org*, 8 March 2014.
32. Georgia sent athletes in Sochi, which has been seen as a major conciliatory gesture toward Russia. Giorgi Menabde, 'The Olympic Truce between Russia and Georgia', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 11, Issue 74, 2014.
33. 'Перекоп' отремонтируют под наблюдением РС' ('Perekop to be Repaired under the Supervision of RS'), *Flotprom*, 19 July 2013.
34. Russian Federal Service of Statistics.
35. See Turkish Naval Forces official website: <http://www.dzkk.tsk.tr/denizweb/english/uluslararasi/KUH.php>.
36. 'Black Sea Fleet Ships Deployed Longer in Mediterranean in 2012', *Rusnavy*, 15 November 2012.
37. Dmitry Gorenburg, 'New Pay Structure Approved', *Russian Military Reform*, 13 December 2011.
38. Dmitry Gorenburg, 'Job satisfaction among Russian officers', *Russian Military Reform*, 5 June 2012.
39. «Завершено формирование Южного Центра Судостроения и Судоремонта ОСК», OSK official website, 25 January 2013.
40. 'Russie :10 Mds dans les chantiers navals' ('Russia: \$10 bln in shipyards'), *Le Figaro*, 1 June 2013.
41. 'Минпромторг РФ считает перспективным развитие трех верфей Крыма' ('Russian Ministry for Commerce to Develop three Shipyards in Crimea'), *Flotprom*, 20 May 2014.
42. 'Russian Defense Ministry Placed \$140 Million Order at Crimean Shipyard', *Ria Novosti*, 17 April 2014.

Notes on contributor

Igor Delanoë holds a PhD in modern and contemporary history from the University of Nice Sophia Antipolis in Nice (France). His primary areas of research interests concern Russian defense and security issues, Russian interests in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East,

and the geopolitics of Russia and post-Soviet space. During his post-doctoral fellowship at the Harvard University (JFK School of Government and Ukrainian Research Institute), he expanded his field of study to include US interests and security issues in the wider Black Sea area. He is a Research Affiliate at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, and at the Center for International and European Studies, Kadir Has University (Istanbul). He is a regular contributor to Russian International Affairs Council's blog. His latest article is 'Continuities and Ruptures, Tracking the US Interests in the Black Sea Area In the Context of 'Pivot to Asia'' in *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*.

References

- Boltenkov, Dmitry, ed. 2011. *Russia's new army*. Moscow: Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies.
- Corbett, Julian. 1911. *Some principles of maritime strategy*. London: Longmans, Green.
- Delanoë, Igor. 2012. *La flotte de la mer Noire, de Catherine II à Vladimir Poutine: un outil de puissance au service des ambitions méditerranéennes de la Russie (1783–2012)* [The Russian Black Sea Fleet from Catherine II to Vladimir Putin: A tool to serve the Russian ambitions in the Mediterranean (1783–2012)]. Nice: PhD diss., University of Nice-Sophia Antipolis.
- Delanoë, Igor. 2013a. *Le partenariat stratégique russo-syrien: la clef du dispositif naval russe en Méditerranée* [The Russian-Syrian strategic partnership: The key of Russian naval plans in the Mediterranean]. Paris: Note de la FRS, no. 6.
- Delanoë, Igor. 2013b. The Syrian crisis: A challenge to the Black Sea stability. *CIES Policy Brief* 8, no. 2.
- Japaridze, Tedo, and Bruce Lawlor. 2009. The Black Sea: A special geography-an explosive region. *American Foreign Policy Interests*, no. 5: 299–312.
- Lakiychuk, Pavlo. 2010. The Black Sea Fleet of Russia and the naval forces of Ukraine: Reasons, state, tendencies. *Harvard Black Sea Journal*: 34–44.
- Lawlor, M.G.B. 2011. The Black Sea: Center of the nuclear black market. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, no. 6: 73–80.
- Mahan, Alfred T. 1889. *The influence of sea power upon history, 1660–1783*. Cambridge: John Wilson and Son.
- Nikolsky, Aleksey. 2014. Russian naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean and the problem of projected naval basing. *Moscow Defence Brief* 2, no. 40: 14–21.
- Sanders, Deborah. 2007. Rhetoric and reality: Can Ukraine create an effective navy to protect its interests in the Black Sea? *European Security* 16, no. 2: 143–61.
- Sanders, Deborah. 2007a. US naval diplomacy in the Black Sea: Sending mixed messages. *Naval War College Review* 16, no. 3: 61–72.
- Sanders, Deborah. 2012. Ukraine's maritime power in the Black Sea – A terminal decline? *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 25, no. 1: 17–34.
- Sanders, Deborah. 2012a. Between rhetoric and reality: The decline of Russian maritime power in the Black Sea. *Mediterranean Quarterly* 23, no. 4: 43–68.
- Socor, Vladimir. 2011. Russian Black Sea Fleet strengthens presence in Ukraine. *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, no. 15.
- Torbakov, Igor. 2006. Turkey sides with Moscow against Washington on Black Sea force. *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, no. 3.
- Vego, Milan. 2003. *Naval strategy and operations in narrow seas*. Oxford: Routledge.