

# The Geopolitical Black Sea Encyclopaedia



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Edited by

Dan Dungaciu

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# INTRODUCTORY NOTE

DAN DUNGACIU

## **The Black Sea – the unknown next to us**

*“A fight for the Black Sea between Russia and Europe ...”* (Gheorghe Brătianu, 1941)

Despite the fact that the Black Sea region is the only one where there have been, or still are, ongoing explicit military conflicts (Georgia, 2008), “hybrid” ones (Ukraine, 2014), territorial divisions (Georgia, Ukraine) and “frozen conflicts” (Republic of Moldova) the Black Sea is the least known strategic region. And the best indicator for this is the extremely low number of works (encyclopaedias, volumes, etc.) that deal with the region.

This volume is the first Encyclopaedia explicitly dedicated to the geopolitics of the Black Sea.

## **The Communist occupation also “arrested” the Black Sea**

The Black Sea has never, in fact, been the subject of academic conversation. There was no consecrated Fernand Braudel to impose the subject of the Black Sea on the European agenda, as the Mediterranean Sea was imposed by the great representative of the *Annales* School (Braudel, 1966).

During WWII, Romanian historian Gheorghe Brătianu was the first in the region to summarize the issue of the Black Sea, in an as yet unpublished discourse, in 1941-1942 (Brătianu, 1942). But the times were not right for European academic debates. After the end of the war and the Soviet occupation, the great historian is arrested by the Communist authorities and dies in prison, along with hundreds of other Romanian intellectuals from all fields of activity. Post-mortem, a work explicitly dedicated to the Black Sea was published in 1969, in Munich, in French, but without contemporary references to the Black Sea (Brătianu, 1969). In Romania, Gheorghe Brătianu's book would be published only in 1988. This is not, however, the

Course from 1941-1942 that we mentioned above, which remains still unpublished to the present day.

Gheorghe Brătianu's end is also emblematic for the bookish destiny of the Black Sea: he was also “arrested”, he never became the subject of academic discussions, and the Black Sea became, in the post-war period, practically a Soviet lake.

The work of historian Gheorghe Brătianu is of a challenging actuality: the main thesis of his conceptual vision stated that the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the next inaugurated a stage which was extended in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, namely “a fight for the Black Sea between Russia and Europe” (Brătianu, 1942: 27).

We are still there today.

## Two visions of the Black Sea

This Encyclopaedia is written for Western audiences, for whom the Black Sea is not a familiar subject, neither in history nor in the present.

How should they understand the Black Sea?

In essence, there are two visions of the Black Sea that were, and still are, in competition today. On the one hand, there is the view which believes that *the Black Sea must belong to the riparians*. They have to manage it, they have to decide on its destiny, including its strategical problems. This approach gained an important victory in Montreux, when the famous 1936 Convention (Montreux Convention, 1936) gave the keys of entry *to* and exit *from* the Black Sea to Turkey. The great Romanian diplomat, Nicolae Titulescu, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania and twice elected President of the League of Nations (1930 and 1931), led this camp in Montreux and pleaded (Titulescu, 1994) for this approach (with many criticisms from opponents of this position, not only British, but also from Bucharest!).

This view of the Black Sea for the riparian was to be reiterated when, after the collapse of the Communist system in 1989, it was again possible to address the issue of the Black Sea. The first institutionalized initiative devoted to the Black Sea is recorded in the early '90s. Through the signing, on 25 June 1992, of the Summit Declaration and the Declaration of the Bosphorus by the Heads of State and Government of eleven countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) was founded. Six years later, the eleven States signed a Charter that upgraded BSEC to the status of an international

organization and created a permanent Secretariat, located in an impressive villa just up the Bosphorus from central Istanbul.

The initiative targeted the riparian space – it was not necessarily a Western platform – and became, subsequently, an organization through which Turkey and the Russian Federation were watching and controlling any developments in the region. Its efficiency, however, is almost null in the region, failing to prevent or settle any frozen or hybrid conflict or to become a credible platform for negotiations. Strategically, BSEC does not really exist.

A second vision is that the Black Sea must be *an open sea*, not only for trade, but also strategically; that it must be admitted that other strategic actors can influence strategic developments in the region. This vision – defeated at Montreux in 1936, where it had been supported by the British, reappeared relatively late, when the Black Sea entered the sphere of Western interest. The West's explicit interest for the Black Sea appeared just after the Euro-Atlantic border reached the Black Sea, respectively after 2004, when the integration of Romania and Bulgaria in NATO and the EU was decided.

The Black Sea was to become *open*, “Euro-Atlantic” or at least open to such influences. 2004 is the year of formalized interest in the Black Sea, from all points of view. This year, the American historian Charles King publishes a work explicitly dedicated to this subject (King, 2004), a rare occurrence in the landscape, where works on the Black Sea practically did not exist (Ascherson, 1995). Almost simultaneously, Number 125 of the June/July issue of *Policy Review* publishes the famous Manifesto for the Black Sea written by Ronald D. Asmus and Bruce P. Jackson: “The Black Sea and the Frontiers of Freedom” (2004), which presents, extensively, all kinds of arguments for substantial Western involvement in the region. Also, in 2004, the strategy endorsed by the GMF – A New Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region appears, edited by Ronald D. Asmus, Konstantin Dimitrov and Joerg Forbrig (2004), a document of reference in the economy of Western concerns about the Black Sea.

Europe also reacts. In May 2004 a more extensive strategy document is published regarding the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), a document which defines in concrete terms the way in which the EU proposes co-operation with countries in the Extended Black Sea Region.

In 2007, as a result of the efforts of Romania, flanked by Bulgaria and Greece during the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union, a new initiative is launched for an EU regional policy, called the Black Sea Synergy.

And things can go on. We must say that the projection of the Black Sea as open sea from a strategic point of view included at one point even a debate on the expiration of the Montreux Convention (1936) and there were many voices advocating its amendment (Dungaci, 2015).

Things stopped, formally speaking, in 2008, when the NATO Summit in Bucharest did not give Ukraine and Georgia the *road map* for access to NATO, and later the Russian-Georgian war – *A Little War That Shook the World* (Asmus, 2010) clearly showed the lack of

appetite the West felt for an explicit confrontation with Russia on the Black Sea. This was followed by the annexation of Crimea (2016), the hybrid war in Ukraine and the outbreak of separatism in this country.

### **The Black Sea: a *limes* for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?**

For a long time, the extension of the NATO-EU border to the East was out of the question. The Black Sea was therefore not assumed in the Western project; it is meant to remain *a border area*, a *limes* between East and West, an ambiguous strategic area: it is not (only) “a Russian lake” – Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria are NATO Members, but not an “open sea” either – the strategic presence of America, the EU or NATO is low.

Today we know what the Black Sea *is not* from a strategic perspective: but we do not know *what it is*. This strategic indecision is the explanation for all the conflicts, frozen or not, explicit or tacit, for all the political and geopolitical tensions that are now taking place in this space and that are becoming endemic.

The story of the Black Sea continues.

\*

This book was written for Western audiences. Hence the strategy we adopted: we tried to bring to the reader the main landmarks needed to understand developments on the Black Sea, without making it very difficult to approach. We did not exaggerate with the bibliography, reducing it to a minimum. The space allocated to this volume also forced us to operate a selection of entries in the Encyclopaedia that was not easy at all.

My thanks go to the researchers from the “Ion I. C. Brătianu” Institute of Political Science and International Relations of the Romanian Academy, who managed, through a remarkable collective effort, to produce an Encyclopaedia that was missing from the academic market.

Special thanks to Viorella Manolache, who competently and promptly provided the secretariat for this volume.



We also extend our gratitude and thanks to our favourite translator, Ian Browne.

Also, thanks to the Cambridge Scholars Publishing, who promptly committed to the publication of this manuscript. It is a fruitful partnership that reached, through the *Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea*, our fourth common success.

Bucharest:  
May 8, 2020

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## NOTES TO THE READER

VIORELLA MANOLACHE

The recent volume of *The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* mounts the pivots of exegesis in the area of localization, description and interpretation from various perspectives (political, historiographic, sociological, economic, military, cultural, geographical, etc.) dedicated to effects and (geopolitical) challenges from the South-eastern perimeter of Europe. The present volume contains “points of view” of the researchers from the “Ion I. C. Brătianu” Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy regarding the uplifting role that the Black Sea has assumed in the context of European geopolitics and a climate apt for generating “Eastern”, Balkan, “Euro-Asian” partnerships, etc.

Thus, *The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* offers, thanks to its generous Summary, fundamental information and multilateral perspectives within the scope of geopolitics accepted as both *phenomenon* and *fact*. Therefore, the theme of studies, articles, expositions will focus on the fundamental areas of this construct whose irradiation areas are biaxially re-systematized: depending on the coordinating relationship between fixing the “location” of resources (natural and economic) and, as a subsidiary, re-configuring the binder between “communication lines” and ordering capacity, ensured by/through “political power”. The geopolitical perspective will be interested, in particular, in the management of the political, diplomatic, military, economic “efforts” of States in the *contact* and *impact* zones of the Black Sea (Russia, the European Union, NATO, the Balkan Peninsula and Turkey) in mitigating conflicting effects, specific to the “disturbing focal point” of “Eurasia”.

Obviously, the “development” of such an emergent construct does not focus solely on decoding concepts, revealing theories and fructifying “debates” (political, historical, cultural, sociological, military, economic, diplomatic) on the Black Sea. Integration into a project in accordance with the values of the “geopolitical society” in which we live and in which differences between political and geopolitical risks are increasingly evident, are folded upon initiatives, old or new, for the reconsideration of “power asymmetry” phenomena.

Signalling the *security coordinates* of the Eurasian imaginary, in tandem with the taxonomy of the “geo-” variants (historical, political, military, economic, cultural, etc.), has the objective of creating specific phenomena in the geographical area of the South-eastern European perimeter, accepted as agonistic by definition and considered conflictual, by tradition. By involvement of “reagents” capable of highlighting the energy, political, military, cultural or mental “resources” that the Black Sea has, it intends to offer a *trans-political* perspective on today's world and the decision to re-outline possible agreements/disagreements regarding the “prefiguration” of geopolitics in the founding version of Fr. Ratzel, K. Haushofer, R. Kjellen, H. Hence, A., Mahan, *et al.* Or, on the Romanian spiral, the phenomenon will be reconsidered in the option of Simion Mehedinți, Gheorghe Brătianu, Ion Conea, Dan David, Anton Golopenția, M. Popa-Vereș, Mircea Malița, Dan Dungaciu etc.

Corroborated by the two volumes of *The Encyclopaedia of International Relations* (coordinated by Dan Dungaciu and published in 2017, at RAO Publishing House), to which are added the works *The Encyclopaedia of Romanians Everywhere* (vol. I and II, coordinator Dan Dungaciu, George Grigoriță, published in 2018 and 2019 by RAO Publishing House, respectively by the “Carol I” Brăila Museum Publishing House; and, more recently, *The Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy* (coordinator Dan Dungaciu, published in 2019 by RAO Publishing House), the recent *colligatum* of *The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* (coordinator Dan Dungaciu, 2020) supports the presentation of unusual possibilities for developing a world resurrected in the “post-” paradigm (modernist, humanist, *historical*, geographical, industrial, colonial). Located under the shield of globalization, the option is doubled by/through highlighting accents and effects from the new territorial delimitations and the new geography, against the background of modification and even disappearance of historical borders, or the relocation of natural resources, paired with the distribution of exploitation and political and military reorientation at the interstate level.

Therefore, *The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* is currently bringing back a theoretical and pragmatic model that has been adrift until recently. The general observation of “historical phenomena” from their “geographical side” and the Herder-ian redefinition of history as “geography in motion” is combined with the perspective of “global power games” and the establishment of a specific difference between the static of “political geography” and the dynamism of “geopolitics”, on a background of subtle relationships between *diagnosis* and *prognosis*.

Because, beyond any inherent panoramas, the recent *Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* aims to provide eloquent “answers” about

the possibility of the “semi-closed” geography of the Black Sea to become the engine of a large geopolitical construct. Of course, the *Encyclopaedia* resonates with the canonical option, recognizing the coordinates necessary for identifying the “historical permanence” of natural, organic evolution *between* geographical factors (the “Carpathian Pole” – “the Danuban-Pontic Pole”) and upstream policies in the mechanisms of geopolitical evolution and functioning of the Romanian organic, unitary, national State.

But, more than that, the *Encyclopaedia* responds to the imperative issued by Gheorghe Brătianu, “not to remain indifferent to what is happening in the key positions of a sea so closely related to our existence”, on the grounds that its problematics and Pontic reality reaffirm (even today!) those valences of “turntable” which both recent events and “the provision of the circumstances to come” accept. As, on the other hand, it reinforces what Mircea Malița saw by the commitment to “assume a clear vision of the Black Sea”, materialized in the configuration of a re-contextualised area and assumed as “a space for advancing the Euro-Atlantic border”.

*The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* represents, in this sense, the (academic) product of the “geopolitical school”, fructified as a result of a *matrix construction* of investigative summation of the political-historical and geopolitical strategies articulated according to changes in the scope of action and reaction of external relations and/or the multi-polar reconfiguration of areas of local, regional and international interest.

Formally, *The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* is recommended as an “ensemble” focused on the documentation, taxonomy and geopolitical evaluation of relations, correlations and pressures between States in conjunction with the Carpathian - Danuban - Pontic political geography and the geopolitics of the South-eastern European area. In the light provided by the “science of the planetary political environment” and its derived atmosphere, or the “planetary political state”, Romania's geopolitical position confirms its role of “geopolitical buffer” between the “Great Powers”, of “historical and geopolitical bridge” between Central and Southeast Europe (Ion Conea).

Bringing together researchers from the “Ion I. C. Brătianu” Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy – mostly from the Department of International Relations, coordinated by University Professor Dan Dungăciu, Director of the Institute and President of the Black Sea University Foundation – together with valuable collaborators and “external” experts – the project of *The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* resonates with/at the primacy issued by Gheorghe Brătianu, that of not “separating” the area of the Black Sea from

the dry-land world (of the Carpathians), as “the clay should not be detached from the hands of the potter who shapes it”.

Structurally, *encyclopaedic entries* intend, non-chronologically and non-exhaustively, to “model” a set of theoretical information, concepts and operational constructs indispensable to any approach interested in analysis, synthesis, definition, comment or systematization. The approach is doubled by the particularization of “actors”, doctrines, institutions, communities and organizations, access/transport corridors, centres, commissions, forums, memoranda, meetings, conventions and summits relevant to the generous problematic targeted through the synthetic and concise approach of placing, quantifying, taxonomizing and locating essential aspects for the regionality, zoning, security and strategies suggested, geopolitically, by the Black Sea.

Methodologically, the framework model used agrees the presence of analytical “knots”, concerned with identifying and conceptualizing the appropriate terms for an encyclopaedic perspective and, equally, the relevant presentation of extensive “developments” that such an institutional, strategic, operational, *socio-* and *geo-* political construct implies.

Technically, following the model used in the previous projects (as a unit of structural arrangement) in the encyclopaedic approaches published by the “Ion I. C. Brătianu” Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy, the essential data mentioned are properly specified at the *beginning* of the entry, the text proposing (where the situation allows) the use of appropriate initial(s), noted in capital letters and marked in bold. The names of the text authors are mentioned by initials, in square brackets, at the end of each insert. The texts are accompanied by a general essentialized bibliography.

The volume opens with a group of “Introductory Texts”, with a list of “details” and the mention of the authors (in the volume) and closes with the presentation, in alphabetical order, of their essentialized “bio notes”.

In the series and in the tradition of the *Encyclopaedias* published under the aegis of the “Ion I. C. Brătianu” Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy, the present research is individualized through a comprehensive methodological and analytical development.

The first direction advocates the option of revising, updating and reconfiguring *the inserts* published in the above-mentioned encyclopaedic approaches, managing the object and subject under consideration, with a direct target on the “geopolitical issue of the Black Sea”. By integrating them into the *body/corpus* of the *Encyclopaedia*, the primacy of unencumbered research, with full unity of meaning and significance, is thus reaffirmed. In the spirit of the new acceptances of geopolitics, the authors are convinced

of the impossibility of disassociating the *geopolitical* meaning of the Black Sea from the dynamics of strategies and realities of *international relations*, of assertion of *Romania's position* in the region or of its landmarks – in *local, regional and international geopolitical management*.

The second perspective concerns the necessary appeal to the individualization of a set of *events* with strategic repercussions on the Black Sea – from “frozen conflicts” to air disasters, “coups”, revolutions, security and/or energy insecurity, cyber security, nuclear, electronic (hybrid) warfare issues, military exercises, etc. In this perspective, the *Encyclopaedia* individualizes the profile of the riparian state, through *entries* dedicated to Bulgaria, Georgia, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Romania and Ukraine; an analysis that does not lose sight of the *internationalization* of the Black Sea and its integration in European Union or NATO policies and strategies.

The third track is positioned in the direction of opting for *indexing concepts/entries* contained in the composition of the *Encyclopaedia*, thus marking their disposition in the equation of (extended) relevance for any considered issue.

Thus, the intention of the “Ion I. C. Brătianu” Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy of putting into operation this approach, both innovative and necessary, in connection with the highlighting of “geopolitical transformations on the Black Sea”, within which Mircea Malița placed double valence mutations: of *sensitive* and *significant space*, stands reconfirmed.

By the proposed version, *The Geopolitical Encyclopaedia of the Black Sea* supports the presentation of new possibilities of seeing the world and the effects of mutations arising as a result of changes in the political horizon, in crisis management and the prevention of “extreme situations”, resulting from action and reaction at geopolitical level: locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.





## CONCEPTS

### **2020 VISION FOR THE BLACK SEA REGION.**

The *Report* is a prospective project, a study with location specifications placed within a ten-year waiting period (dated and published in May 2010, in Istanbul and Athens, with Mustafa Aydın and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou as Rapporteurs) and focused on increasing knowledge, evaluating local reality and drawing some theoretically imprinted directions of action dedicated to the Black Sea area.

Written by the Black Sea Commission, the *Report* reaffirms the importance of the named area, focusing on reviewing characteristic data and geographical coordinates, but also on emphasizing interest for this region, formulating significant perspectives regarding the change of dynamics at the level of riparian states, and also the demands imposed by a complex reality through implemented policies, unresolved conflicts, types of economy and existing social organization.

The findings and indications formulate an alert direction, accelerated by extra-rhythmicity, for specific events and realities including the mentioned region: the transformations felt by the ex-Communist states under the impact and effects of globalization; increased US interest in this region post-September 11; NATO and EU enlargement; successive Russian-Ukrainian crises; the Russian-Georgian war; the impact and consequences of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on Turkish-Armenian relations; the Transnistrian conflict; the uncertain physiognomy and unstable nature of relations between Turkey and Russia; pressure and threats of the economic-financial crisis. The *Report* reiterates the “unique position” of the Black Sea, pointing to its strategic role and valence: *supply* oil reserves of the Caspian basin and the need/*European* demand for energy resources seem to be indicative of a constant regional-economic development, regarding the extension of the political and economic influence at the zonal and global level, the potential for increasing the bilateral cooperation by diminishing and eroding the regional cooperation, increasing the risks of the continuation/triggering of possible conflicts and possible confrontations (2010: 4).

The decisive imperative of a *new vision* resides in three key milestones, identified in the structure of a negative statement (correcting *the lack of real knowledge* by quantifying and remedying the real needs of the still ignored

region, deprived of jointly solving the requests of the area, to the detriment of a competition for power and influence, by blurring any conflicting agendas – *Ibidem*: 5), in formulating a perspective with positive accents (implementing immediate action through a type of inclusive strategy, through mutual respect of territorial integrity, by inviolability of borders, by ensuring good governance, by encouraging cooperation efforts, by observing international treaties and the rule of law, by peaceful settlement of disputes, by creating interdependence relations and by regionalization policies for the Black Sea economy – *Ibidem*: 6) and in creating a fair context that would ensure zonal collaboration: *because only a regional perspective would work!*

Terminologically, the *Report* proposes a strictly conceptual clarification: the conceptual structures “the Black Sea region”, “the Black Sea area” and “Black Sea” define interchangeable semantic units, the Commission bringing together the integrated states of the area as “regional stakeholders” (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine), to which are added *the elite partners* – the European Union, NATO and the United States (*Ibidem*: 23).

The elaboration of the 2020 vision is based on a type of analysis in two stages: on the one hand, the display of a set of *paradoxes* and, on the other, the formulation of punctual *recommendations*.

If the area operates in the obstacle-incentive logic, the mentioned *paradoxes* target: decreeing the Black Sea as a “new strategic arena” for Europe, Russia and the United States in terms of energy security, conflict resolution, trade and migration; the perpetuation of economic discrepancies, although the socio-economic indicators placed the region in an area of full economic growth, considering it one of the regions with “the fastest economic growth”; increased prosperity for some countries with potential for increased military spending; the importance of solving energy problems in the equation of centers of influence and power (*Ibidem*: 24). Punctually, the notion of “neighborhood”, far from encouraging cooperation, divides and restricts; the implementation of regional cooperation becomes a difficult process to achieve, precisely through the perpetuation of bilateral agreements; the agreement between global and national experiences increased tensions, and the specific policies of the European Union regarding regional cooperation lack the clear tools and indications capable of developing a comprehensive strategic project (see, in this regard, the European Neighborhood Policy, Black Sea Synergy and the Eastern Partnership – *Ibidem*: 25).

*Recommendations* issued envisage the establishment and implementation of “consensus objectives” through a new type of concept and a new form of

policy, folded on the decision to extend the Black Sea (through the accession of the Western Balkans and Turkey to the European Union), through a reassessment of regional cooperation and by updating a regionally functional concept, related to the post-August 2008 reality and to the new European security framework. The *Report* insists on the need to “improve the regional profile of the Black Sea”, proposing to broaden the framework for conflict approach and resolution, by establishing and consolidating a credible foundation, by focusing on economic problems and managing the relationship between “common challenges – real needs”, by promoting intercultural dialogue and vocational training orientation, by ensuring good governance, (including) social dialogue and civil society involvement (*Ibidem*: 40).

Considered as a document which presents a vision with strategic potential, the *Report* is to be read as a powerful framework designed in the spirit and frame of texts jointly focused on affirming values, promoting dialogue and improving policies dedicated to the region; but also, as a manifesto of anticipation, through a reconfiguration of the projective - visionary dimension of the Black Sea region.

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[V.M.]

# A

**A2/AD – ANTI-ACCESS AND AREA DENIAL** or *Anti-Access/Area Denial* is a relatively new concept given that military experts have not reached an unanimously accepted definition. In the specialized vocabulary, **A2/AD** would represent a complex defence system used in several spaces (air, land, sea and cybernetic) to prevent the enemy occupying or infiltrating an area considered to be strategic. Other authors define it as “a fighting tactic focused on preventing any military movements of the adversary in nearby or contested regions” (Tangredi, 2013: 1). Often, the methods implemented in establishing **A2/AD** in an area are not entirely effective as long as the purpose of the system is to obtain a strategic advantage over the adversary by deterring, slowing down and even weakening the enemy – be it a State or non-State actor. In addition, the implementation of an **A2/AD** sector requires the use of considerable military resources, which means that only States seem to be able to incorporate such a tactic into their global strategy so as to ensure “the prevention of the infiltration of forces [...] which could disrupt the consolidation and maintenance of internal control” over a region (*Ibidem*: 3).

The term **A2/AD** has been used relatively recently by military specialists, especially after China developed its own anti-access and regional prohibition umbrella (submarines and attack aircraft equipped with anti-ship missiles, dense layers of ground missiles, electronic, cyber and anti-satellite systems meant to paralyze the command and control systems of the competition) to keep the US away from what it considers its own “close foreignness” in the South China Sea. Since the early 1990s, American researchers have anticipated that, in the coming decades, the systems and operations of military units will be replaced by means and methods of combat capable of combining various levels: information, air, land, maritime, space and even cybernetic. The hypothesis of the “technical-military revolution” (*military-technical revolution*) was developed by Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr. (2002) and inspired by Soviet military research in the 1980s. According to it, the military powers of the era will sooner or later exploit available or developing military technologies, which would mean the emergence of new forms, methods or strategies of war that are

more efficient and less expensive (Krepinevich Jr., 2002: 1). In 2003, the Centre for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) defined *anti-access* as “actions of the enemy capable of deterring adverse military movements from a theatre of operations”, and *area denial* as “activities to block the enemy's action in regions under their own control” (Krepinevich et al., 2003: ii).

Military experts believe that the first forms of anti-access systems date back to the Middle Ages, when iron spikes disposed around defence trenches were used against enemy cavalry and infantry. The correct layout of these defence zones, the shape and character of the field were essential components of the defence tactics, as was the case with the Great Chinese Wall. Some of these tactics have also been adopted in modern confrontations, obviously on a much larger scale, due to technological development. During the First and Second World Wars, a series of concrete fortifications and anti-tank obstacles equipped with heavy artillery, casemates, machine guns and other defence elements were used for the establishment of **A2/AD** areas such as: Maginot Line, Siegfried Line, Atlantic Wall, Singapore Strategy etc. The maritime regions of the **A2/AD** represent a new form of the concept and refer to reduction in the ability of the enemy to use access to the sea, without the imposition of a total control of shipping in the region. This can also represent a strategy of asymmetrical warfare, by maintaining a defensive fleet that can jeopardize potential offensive actions of the enemy. After the French fleet was destroyed in the Battle of Trafalgar by English ships, Napoleon tried to establish a blockade of British trade by the Decree issued on November 21, 1806 in Berlin. The purpose of the blockade was to isolate the United Kingdom from Europe, from a political and economic point of view; but this Continental System never fully succeeded, especially after the Russian Tsar Alexander I increasingly ignored the blockade. In the First and Second World War, Germany used **A2/AD** using U-boat military submarine fleets (*Unterseeboot*). Due to the unmistakable superiority of the British Royal Navy, the German Imperial Navy (World War I) and then the Kriegsmarine (World War II) had little chance of securing an area of **A2/AD** and blocking the access of the United Kingdom to trade and military supplies. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union pursued a similar strategy against NATO, but the most notable example of maritime **A2/AD** region of that period is the blockade of the Persian Gulf established during the war between Iran and Iraq, which was the longest 20<sup>th</sup> century conventional war (September 1980 - August 1988). In 2011, based on UN Security Council Resolution 1973, an **A2/AD** air zone was established over Libya in response to events in

Libya and the attack on rebel civilians by forces loyal to Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi.

Following the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, the Russian Federation immediately resorted to the strong militarization of the Peninsula to establish the first **A2/AD** curtain on the Black Sea, by dislocating naval defence missiles (with a range of 600 km), S-300PMU ground-to-air missiles (with a range of 200 km and a Big Bird surveillance radar), Su-27 and Su-30M2 fighter aircraft, as well as increasing the number of deployed military (currently reaching about 23,000), submarines and electronic warfare. Experts believe that Russia is tempted to use both the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea a combination of “**A2/AD** with sub-conventional formulas for designing power; and that aggression, especially that of a sub-conventional, hybrid, insidious nature, in slow motion, on the border between civilian and military, becomes more likely” (Manea, 2015). This annexation profoundly changed the strategic landscape of the Black Sea Basin, a fact also confirmed by a European Parliament Report on the strategic military situation in the Black Sea (2015): “[...] by occupying the entire peninsula, Russia has gained a very important launching platform both towards the West (the Balkans, Transnistria and the mouths of the Danube) and towards the South (the Eastern Mediterranean region), where Russia has established a permanent naval task force, and that the illegal annexation of Crimea offers Russia a 'South Kaliningrad', another outpost in the immediate vicinity of NATO”. However, the strategic ambitions of the Russian Federation are not limited to the Black Sea. The new Russian Maritime Doctrine by 2020 (adopted in July 2015) sets out an ambitious course for the Russian fleet, which intends to regain a place in the “elite maritime club” and explore alternative solutions to modernize the Sevastopol fleet and project its force both in the Black Sea and in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The adoption of “asymmetrical means of combat” as well as the “art of maritime prohibition” can be read through the grid of implementing a maritime “steel arch” between the Arctic and the Mediterranean, via the Baltic Sea, similar to the **A2/AD** Chinese umbrella of the South China Sea (Sagar Reddy, 2015). Expert Kathleen Weinberger (2016) from the Centre for Strategic and International Studies’ International Security Program managed to identify a chain of **A2/AD** “bubbles” implemented by Russia to establish air supremacy in areas considered strategic. Within the range of these anti-aircraft defence systems (S-400 and S-300) fall a number of states such as Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, the Eastern and Southern regions of Ukraine, the Black Sea, Northern Poland, the coast of Syria and regions from Turkey. Russia is currently operating with such defence systems not