

PREREQUISITES FOR THE FORMATION OF A REGIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM IN THE BALTIC-BLACK SEA UNION

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Abstract. *The purpose* of the paper is to summarise and present various aspects of forming a security group within BBS. *The method* allows to reveal features of evolutionary process of formation of security group. *Methodology.* The study is based on an evolutionary study of the formation of a security group within the Baltic-Black Sea Union. The content of this study, scientific findings, conclusion and recommendations are based on the broad application of the systematic approach to the study of the phenomena. The proposed work is based on a synthesis of existing approaches to understanding the essence of security group BBS. *Results* research has shown that the idea of forming a regional grouping to form a security system has a long historical retrospective. The idea of forming a regional group that implements the concept of protection of democratic freedoms and rights became relevant in the early 90's and is especially actively implemented with the intensification of hostilities in Ukraine. All this raises the issue of forming the Baltic-Black Sea Union, which could become an outpost of Europe's defense. *Practical implications.* The formation of a security group is an important task in modern conditions, given the presence of external threats, there is a need for its quality justification and identification of key players and their capabilities. *Value/originality.* Analysis of the historical retrospective of the formation of regional security education provides a better understanding of the prospects for its operation.

Key words: a regional security, Baltic-Black Sea Union, security system, prerequisites for the formation.

JEL Classification: F01, F15, F42

1. Introduction

The current geopolitical situation is developing under the decisive influence of such processes as globalization, regionalization, digitalization, virtualization and networkization of most of the interconnections and relations between national and global actors of different levels. In addition, a distinctive feature is extreme turbulence: the situation and the balance of power in the world are changing very rapidly. What we knew or believed a year ago may change significantly or even lose its meaning in new circumstances. The deployment of a hotbed of instability in the Middle East (Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Syria), the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, regional military conflicts in the Balkans, and, finally, Russia's unjustified aggression in Ukraine. Undoubtedly, all these events are milestones in the formation of not only a new world order, but in general – global civilizational shifts.

Therefore, speaking of some modern process, we mean the main trend, which, at the same time, is constantly acquiring new aspects and meanings.

Randomness and uncertainty are becoming integral features of today. Predicting events is becoming increasingly difficult, even based on the most serious analytical studies. This is evidenced by the appearance of the most polar forecasts regarding the future scenario of human development: on the one hand, the deployment of a protracted global war, on the other, the triumph of democracy and economic progress as a result of the resolution of modern conflicts.

The all-encompassing process of modernity is globalization, which not only does not exclude, but is also successfully accompanied by regionalization, localization, as well as the development of national identity and identity. Many countries are trying to preserve their national characteristics, culture, language, etc.

Despite the successes achieved since the Second World War in achieving stable peace and order, we can state a constant increase in the number of new threats to the security of countries and peoples. Singling out such a phenomenon as terrorism as a separate threat. Aggravation of painful imperial ambitions of the

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Russian Federation. Islamic fundamentalism and interethnic conflicts in Arab countries. All these and many other processes exacerbate the need to create military alliances and alliances for security purposes.

2. Research review

The study of the formation of defense economics is the basis of a significant number of works by the following scientists: Brömmelhörster D.J., Paes W. (Brömmelhörster D.J., Paes W., 2003), James Black, Richard Flint, Ruth Harris, Katerina Galai, Pauline Paille, Fiona Quimbre, Jess Plumridge (James Black and all, 2021), Arthur Cecil Pigou (Arthur Cecil Pigou, 1920), Charles J. Hitch, Roland McKean (Roland McKean, 1960), G. Kennedy (G. Kennedy, 1975), Todd Sandler, Keith Hartley (Todd Sandler, 1995) and others. Research is devoted to the problems of financing of defense economic: Rafael Calduch Cervera (Rafael Calduch Cervera, 2012), Buffotot P. (Buffotot P., 2010), Crotty J. (Crotty J., 2008), Kagan R. (Kagan R., 2011), Rose A.K., Spiegel M.M. (Rose A. K., 2009), Taylor J.B. (Taylor J.B., 2008), Watts B. (Watts B., 2008). The impact of military spending on the economy is explored in many more works: The Political Economy of War by Arthur Cecil Pigou (1920), Charles J. Hitch and Roland McKean The Economics of Defense in the Nuclear Age (1960), G. Kennedy published his book The Economics of Defence (1975), Todd Sandler and Keith Hartley The Handbook of Defense Economics (1995). Features of the formation of regional alliances to ensure security are studied in the works Aydin M. (1995). Studies of the regional security system are found in the works Aydin M., Fabrizio Tassinari.

3. Historical prerequisites for the formation of the Baltic-Black Sea Union

The creation of any alliance is always conditioned by the presence of external threats. Naturally, the increase in the number of threats creates preconditions for the development of new forms of cooperation within existing military alliances. The history of the Black Sea region shows that it has always been the subject of conflicts. Since the Black Sea connects Europe and Asia, the struggle for transport routes (sea and land) has been going on for many centuries. Periods of relative calm were accompanied by new wars and conflicts, which confirms the great strategic importance of this region. The Black Sea region is multicultural and multinational, encompassing the peoples of Slavic, Turkic, Caucasian cultures. Despite the mixed ethnic composition and a long history of border disputes in the region, at the moment these problems do not pose a risk of violating regional security and there is no reason to talk about the threat

of igniting any inter-ethnic conflicts. Of course, there are problems of stable economic development, overcoming corruption, the formation of an effective management system and entry into the single European space. The main threat remains the aggressive policy of the Russian Federation, which requires a rethinking of the entire system of collective security in Europe.

After the end of the Cold War, a period of establishing multilateral cooperation in this and other regions began, when the foundations for its institutionalization were laid (Aydin, 2005).

In 1992, the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) was established. BSEC includes 6 countries (Russian Federation, Georgia, Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine) with direct access to the sea and 6 neighboring countries (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Greece, Moldova and Serbia). A significant part of the coastline is represented by the Russian Federation. Since 2004, Serbia and Montenegro have become full members, while Poland, Slovakia, Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Egypt, Israel, Tunisia, the BSEC Business Council and the International Black Sea Club have observer status. Half of the coastline is made up of EU countries (Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania), NATO members – Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania.

Over the past time, within the framework of the Black Sea of the region, serious foundations have been laid for the development of comprehensive cooperation (economic, trade, cultural, scientific, etc.). And although it cannot be characterized as dynamically developing, nevertheless, such a vector of development would certainly contribute to further strengthening the potential of the region. The Russian aggression of 2014 and 2022 is fundamentally changing the configuration of the region, its aspirations, directions and forms of cooperation, in general, the strategic vector of development.

In addition to the BSEC, the GUAM organization was established in this region in 1997, including Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova. This association went through different stages in its development: both rise and oblivion. But from the very beginning, it had the goal of confronting the Russian Federation in the aspects of security, the movement of energy resources, transport communications.

The Baltic region is part of the security system in northwestern Europe. This basin includes 9 coastal countries (Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany and Denmark), as well as neighboring countries – Belarus, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Norway and Ukraine. By the way, the composition of the Baltic region in different sources is called differently. There is a widespread position to consider only coastal countries as the Baltic region. Quite often, under the Baltic countries they mean only Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. At the same time,

Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden are classified as Nordic countries. Collectively, they are often referred to as the North-Baltic countries.

There is a certain logic in the position of Fabrizio Tassinari, a scientist from the University of Copenhagen, who divides all the countries of the Baltic region into three groups. The first group includes Germany and the Nordic countries, the second – Poland and the three Baltic countries, the third group – the Russian Federation (Tassinari, 2005).

A distinctive feature of the Baltic region in comparison with the Black Sea is the lower level of conflict. In the latter, there are long-term conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan (over Nagorny Karabakh), between Russia and Georgia, and Transnistria. In addition to these sluggish stories, the conflict brought about by Russian aggression in Crimea, Donbass and Ukraine as a whole is of a completely different urgency. However, although unlike the Black Sea region, the history of the Baltic Sea has not been as bitter, the significance of the northern sea routes is no less important in the global transport and economic space.

In the modern context, there is a need to build a radically new system of regional, collective, pan-European and even global security. The starting point for this new configuration of international security will be Ukraine and the agreements that will be adopted after the end of hostilities. In any case, regardless of this, it is necessary to clearly understand the potential of the Black Sea and Baltic regions in terms of both developing cooperation and building the North-South vertical, the Baltic-Black Sea axis. It is quite obvious that all previously created institutions will definitely be reviewed in a new context, since they will either have to disappear, or be transformed, or acquire a radically new purpose and mission.

Until 2022, the Russian Federation was considered primarily as a partner and, somewhere hypothetically, as a threat. In many documents, analytical and political, it was emphasized that the Russian Federation is an important partner, that cooperation with it is diverse and strategically important, and not only in the field of energy supplies. But the February events of 2022 radically changed the perception of this country, the scale of this threat became clear. For any country, any alliance or international organization, this is now primarily a threat. And the primary task is a real assessment of this threat in all aspects: military, political, economic, etc. Accordingly, this task is extremely relevant in the context of the development of small alliances in the Baltic and Black Sea regions.

Analysts, military and political experts from all over the world are trying to assess and predict the scale of this threat, which will undoubtedly be decisively

determined by the results of the war with Ukraine. The most optimistic forecast is if the Putin regime will be broken in the bud. Such an outcome gives hope for a decrease in the aggressiveness of this country, the creation of conditions for predictability and controllability of the situation with its aggressive aspirations.

The fact remains that the existence of the Russian Federation in any form is a great threat to peace and security. Moreover, the greater the defeat, the more dangerous this threat seems. A wounded beast with painful ambitions and a lack of pity even for its citizens is a colossal threat to peace, not only in Europe, but throughout the world.

In modern history, the idea of creating a single axis was voiced at the beginning of the 20th century. In August 1919, at a conference near Riga, a confederation of states was created – the Baltic-Black Sea Union (BCS) with the aim of developing cooperation in the fields of defense, the economy, a common banking and monetary system, a political convention on mutual support and joint foreign policy, and ensuring a free way from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. Signed a program document on the creation of such countries as Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Belarus and Ukraine. The BBS program was developed by the Latvian diplomat Siegfried Meierovits. Unfortunately, this project did not receive practical implementation, since Poland refused to participate. In the period between the first and second world wars, the borders of states changed, and other problems became of paramount importance.

The idea of a union of countries between the Baltic, Black, Aegean and Adriatic seas was also voiced after the Second World War by the Polish government in exile under the leadership of Vladislav Sikorsky. In 1942, negotiations began between the Greek, Yugoslav, Czechoslovak and Polish governments in exile, which discussed the creation of the Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation and the Greco-Yugoslav Confederation. These ideas also received an extremely negative assessment and resistance from the Soviet Union and other allies.

The revival of the BBS project took place at the end of the 20th century, when this idea was raised by the politicians of Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine. During this period, the idea of the "Intermarium" was also revived, which assumed at the first stage the integration of Ukraine, Poland, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. At the next stage – a possible expansion of the alliance to the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Union with the involvement of such countries as Moldova, Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Azerbaijan and Turkey. In addition to the mentioned states, Romania, Bulgaria, Belarus (after the liquidation of the Lukashenka regime), as well as Finland, which also waited in vain for help from

the Western allies in the winter of 1939–1940, could theoretically join it in the future. Non-bloc Austria and Sweden were also considered as potential partners (Stepanenko, 2016).

Back in the early 1990s, Polish President Lech Walesa expressed the idea of creating a NATO bis. In 1997, Lithuanian President A. Brazauskas at the summit in Vilnius expressed the need to intensify the Baltic-Black Sea cooperation. In 1999, at a conference in Klaipėda, the leaders of Lithuania, Ukraine and Poland not only supported the idea of cooperation, but also discussed specific projects to create transit routes between the Baltic and Black Seas.

In 1994, the League of Parties of the Intermarium countries was created in Kyiv, which was supposed to generate the idea of the Baltic-Black Sea Alliance as a zone of stability and security. In September 1999, a summit was held in Yalta entitled "Baltic-Black Sea Cooperation: Toward an Integrated Europe of the 21st Century without Distribution Lines", where issues of intensifying multilateral cooperation in the expanses between the two seas were discussed. The significance of this project was confirmed by the words of President L. Kuchma at the summit: "The Baltic-Black Sea axis can and should become one of the consolidating and stabilizing pillars of the new Europe, and, therefore, its integral component". However, the formalization and institutionalization of the Baltic-Black Sea cooperation did not take place during the summit in Yalta (Volovich, 2017).

In Belarus, certain forces also supported the idea of creating a Baltic-Black Sea Union. Thus, Zenon Poznyak, as a representative of the Belarusian Popular Front, expressed the idea of creating such an alliance as a buffer international entity without the military bases of NATO and Russia. However, the Russian Federation managed to preempt all these ideas through the creation of a puppet regime and the virtual suppression of the national sovereignty of the state of Belarus (Volovich, 2017).

At the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries, there were attempts to institutionalize relations between the countries of this region. It has already been mentioned above that such organizations as the BSEC, the Visegrad Group (1991), the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), GUAM (1997), the Communities for Democratic Choice (2005), the Alliance of the Baltic-Black Sea Nations (2014), Eastern Partnership, etc.

Of particular note is the idea of the Eastern Partnership, which has been actively developed by the European Union since 2004. This concept was presented by Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski at the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council on May 26, 2008. The purpose of this project is the development of integration ties between the European Union and six post-Soviet

countries: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The main priorities were defined: democracy, economic integration with the EU countries, energy security and the development of contacts between people. At the moment, this project has been stalled to a certain extent due to a number of circumstances: the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, relations with Belarus, financial difficulties associated with the pandemic and, of course, Russian aggression in Ukraine. It should be noted that from the very beginning, the Russian Federation perceived the idea of the Eastern Partnership as a challenge to its interests.

In the 21st century, and especially after the Russian aggression in 2014, the idea of BChS takes on a radically new meaning. This union is presented rather than as a full-fledged alliance or bloc, but as an alliance for expanding cooperation. And it is obvious that its main goal is to deter Russian aggression, create conditions for joint defense.

In determining the contours of the BBS, it seems logical to single out several waves or stages. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, Turkey should be referred to the first wave or, in fact, the core of the union. Of course, the presence of Belarus is also logical, but this is possible only after the change of the dictatorial regime. On the second wave, Georgia, Greece, Slovakia, Hungary, Finland, Sweden and other neighboring countries can join the BBS.

In 2015, Polish President Andrzej Duda expressed the idea of creating a partner bloc of countries – the Baltic-Black Sea Alliance of States consisting of Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Moldova, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and six countries of the former Yugoslavia, 12 of them are members of the European Union. The same initiative was supported by the President of Croatia, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović (Georgievska, 2020). It should be noted that the initiative to create such an alliance does not contradict or compete with such an integration association as the European Union. Its goal is to unite countries that have a common history and development that is different from other European countries. In 2016, Ukraine also showed interest in this project, and contacts between certain forces in Ukraine and Croatia intensified. Also, this idea was voiced during the signing of a contract between Ukraine, Poland and the United States regarding the supply of reduced gas through the Polish terminal (Georgievska, 2020).

Thus, the idea of creating a Baltic-Black Sea Union obviously has a long history. In different configurations and on different scales, this idea has been expressed for quite a long time by representatives of different countries: Latvia, Belarus, Poland, Ukraine, Croatia, etc. The presence of a long history confirms that this idea,

of course, has certain prerequisites for its implementation: historical, geographical, political and economic. At the same time, the question of the place and role of this union, its relationship with such heavyweights as the European Union and NATO, which are the main subjects of international relations in Europe, is very important.

Undoubtedly, the activation of the idea of the Baltic-Black Sea Union in 2015 was a reaction to the Minsk agreements, which were rightly perceived as a compromise between the Russian Federation and the EU countries Germany and France at the expense of the interests of Ukraine. Therefore, the statement of this idea from the most developed and politically influential country in Eastern Europe – Poland – cannot but mean a gradual strengthening of the subjectivity of both the countries included in the association and the BBS itself.

Another reason for the revival of the idea of BBS is the presence of obvious problems in the modern system of European and global security. The blatant act of open Russian aggression has not received a proper response from organizations such as the OSCE, UN, EU and NATO. The leading world countries – the leaders of the United States and Great Britain – have not fulfilled their obligations to protect the sovereignty of Ukraine in accordance with the Budapest Memorandum, which they signed together with the Russian Federation in 1994. The issue of Ukraine's entry into NATO is also being dragged out, which clearly provokes the aggressor to further actions.

The sluggish position of the West is forcing Ukraine to look for other allies in confronting the aggressor. Potentially, such allies can be those countries that also suffered from Russian aggression – Georgia and Moldova. Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are also likely allies. This is practically the main backbone of the countries included in the BES. Together they (even without neighboring countries) form a single transport and energy corridor from the Baltic to the Black Sea. The economies of these countries have been successfully cooperating and complementing each other for a long time. The mentality and cultural traditions of the population of these countries are very close, based on European and civilizational values.

Activation of economic cooperation is quite possible. A whole system of measures can contribute to this: the creation of a free trade zone, support and simplification of business in joint projects, the development of large infrastructure, transport and energy projects, etc. As part of the restoration of the destroyed economy of Ukraine, there are real grounds for creating qualitatively new infrastructure facilities and enterprises, taking into account modern technological and environmental requirements and, of course, taking into account considerations of

collective security. In general, the strengthening of the economic potential of the BBS countries, both individually and this association itself, is already becoming an important prerequisite for strengthening the system of collective security in the region.

The formation of a transport corridor within the framework of the BBS is a particularly important area, since it will ensure the supply of energy resources from the countries of the Caucasus, the Middle East, and Central Asia. In fact, BBS is a crossroads between East and West, North and South. The strengthening of this union (both economic and political) will allow it to perform very important functions as a powerful transit corridor between the Black, Mediterranean, Caspian and Baltic Seas. A strategically important consequence of this will be to reduce (if not eliminate) dependence on Russian energy resources. Equally important is the creation of reliable logistics corridors for the transportation of various goods. Thus, Latvia expressed interest in creating the shortest waterway "Daugava – Dnieper". Rail transportation has been established along the international transport route Ilyichevsk-Klaipeda, which, provided it is connected to the ferry-railway line operating between Ukraine and Turkey, gets access to the Middle East.

Back in the early 1990s, the idea of creating the Euro-Asian Oil Transport Corridor (EAOTC) on the basis of the Ukrainian Odessa-Brody pipeline arose. Poland showed interest and was ready to complete it to Gdansk. According to experts, the main reason for the failure of this project was the active opposition of the Russian Federation, which perceived it as a competitor in the European market.

4. Conclusions

At this stage, the search for new sources and ways of supplying energy resources is extremely topical for Europe. It is obvious that the existing supply channels (mainly Russian) will be gradually closed. Strengthening the BBS as a transport corridor is an important prerequisite for the development of the European economy and, of course, strengthening its defense capability and security.

It is also important that the BBS should be considered not so much as a separate integration association, but rather as an integral part of the European Union, but with broad powers and opportunities for subregional cooperation. Accordingly, in relation to NATO, the BBS can be considered as a sub-alliance, a small alliance. Goals can be set to strengthen collective security within the framework of such a small alliance, which, on the one hand, provide for its local strengthening, and on the other hand, will undoubtedly help strengthen the power of the entire alliance and ensure collective European security.

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