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Analyzing the Gaps in The Black Sea Security

Master's thesis

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Conclusions of the tutor of the Master's thesis (concerning the public defense)

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Reviewer of the thesis

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Evaluation of the Commission of Defence

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Head of the commission

Members of the commission

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ENTRY

Summary: This thesis examines security challenges in the Black Sea region, focusing on the August war and the annexation of Crimea, as well as ongoing Russian intervention in Ukraine. Deterrence theory and defensive realism serve as theoretical frameworks. The research identifies key challenges and failures of the deterrence policy that contributed to the present conflict.

Confirmation

I confirm that I am the author of the submitted thesis: **Analyzing the Gaps in The Black Sea Security** which has been prepared independently and has never been presented for any other course or used in another educational institution, neither in Lithuania nor abroad. I also provide a full bibliographical list that indicates all the sources that were used to prepare this assignment and contains no unused sources.

Name, Surname   Signature:

Vakhtang Shoshiashvili

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Introduction

The recent full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia[1] has highlighted the importance of the Black Sea region for global security. In response, the Western world has made concerted efforts to restrain Russia's aggression through economic sanctions and isolation, the transfer of humanitarian and military equipment to Ukraine, the retraining of Ukraine's military personnel, and the expansion of alliances[2]. It is worth noting that the Black Sea region has been the site of several military conflicts over the past two decades, including frozen conflicts, and the annexation of the Crimean peninsula, as well as the Russia-Georgia[3] war in 2008, in which Russia instigated an air-military attack on the territory of Georgia, occupying 20% of its territories and declaring the occupied territories as independent states.

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[1] CNN, "Russian Invasion of Ukraine: A Time line for key events, 2023
https://edition.cnn.com/world/europe/ukraine

[2] BBC News, "What are sanctions on Russia and are they hurting it's economy?", 2022
https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60125659

[3] CNN, "Georgia Russia conflict fast facts", 2023.
https://edition.cnn.com/2014/03/13/world/europe/2008-georgia-russia-conflict/index.html

In Western academic circles[4], the Russo-Georgian conflict is viewed as a green light for geopolitical change through the use of force. The mentioned war allowed Russia to regain its status as a great power in the region as well as enable it to "punish" Georgia for its independent political course. Russian foreign policy concepts declare[5] that Russia should deter and prevent Western influence in the Near Abroad area (Ukraine and Georgia). It also harmed the prestige and reputation of the West, demonstrating the inaccessibility of American military power in the region.

The annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014[6] resulted in a significant shift in the power dynamics within the Black Sea region and reignited conflict in Europe for the first time since the end of the Cold War. This event marked a turning point in the relationship between Russia and the West, leading to heightened tensions and distancing between the two. In the aftermath of the annexation, Russia not only solidified its position as a regional great power but also emerged as a major military force, bolstering its presence in the Black Sea region and deploying the A2AD[7] system. Through this system, Russia not only deters potential Western resistance but also utilizes it as a tool to divert attention away from its activities in the Middle East.

The above events bring up the **research problem.** The absence of a common regional security policy in the region, and the avoidance of the development of adequate deterrence actions by the West led to the emergence of the current full-scale war in Ukraine, which is attracting the attention of the entire international community. It is self-evident that the main **research problem is the Black Sea security architecture itself,** which represents endless wars and conflicts throughout history as well as in the contemporary era.

The events mentioned above give rise to the **research Question – What was missing in the Black Sea security architecture that led to the invasion of Ukraine in 2022**? It is

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[4] Atlantic Council, "The 2008 Russo-Georgian War: Putin's Green Light," Peter Dickinson, August 2021. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/the-2008-russo-georgian-war-putins-green-light/

[5] The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, V

[6] Johan Norberg, "The use of Russia's Military in the Crimean crisis Carnegie Endowment for international peace, 2014. https://carnegieendowment.org/2014/03/13/use-of-russia-s-military-in-crimean-crisis-pub-54949

[7] Aziz Erdogan, "Russian A2AD Strategy and it's implications for NATO" Beyond The Horizon, 2018 https://behorizon.org/russian-a2ad-strategy-and-its-implications-for-nato/

necessary to clarify what is meant by "security architecture." Security architecture can be defined in many different ways, but this thesis discusses security architecture in its classical definition "a system of norms, practices, alliances, and institutions constructed or developed by nations to address, enhance, or ensure international and/or regional security"[8]. The thesis will evaluate security architecture in terms of describing the role of existing organizations in the region, the reforms carried out in the field of defense and security policy by the Black Sea countries, and their adequacy in relation to the given events will be discussed.

Research Aim: This study aims to investigate the causes of conflicts in the Black Sea region, analyze the impact of the August war on the annexation of Crimea, assess the consequences of Russia's aggression between 2008 and 2022, and identify security challenges in diplomatic, military, and political domains. Furthermore, the research aims to evaluate these developments in the context of deterrence theory.

Research Objectives:

1) Examine the reasons behind the August war and its regional implications.

2) Analyze the influence of Crimea's annexation on regional security.

3) Assess the military expenditures of countries in the Black Sea region, highlighting regional imbalances.

4) Evaluate successful deterrence policies employed by Western nations and identify shortcomings through data analysis.

5) Investigate the impact of ongoing tensions within the alliance on the security of the Black Sea region.

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[8] Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, "Some Terms and Organizations", USA, Christopher Snedden.

Literature Review

In order to conduct a more in-depth analysis and gain a better understanding of the security architecture of the Black Sea region, it is necessary to examine the works of authoritative organizations and prominent researchers. This will enable to identify knowledge gaps, and areas requiring further study and acquire a more detailed understanding of the subject matter.

The authors of the first publication, entitled "Russia and the Black Sea Security,"[9] aims to investigate the factors that have driven Russia's aggressive actions in the Black Sea region. The study begins by exploring the impact of the Euro-Atlantic agenda on Russia's foreign policy in the early 2000s. It is argued that the policy of NATO expansion was perceived as a threat by Russia, and was the subject of dispute and a pretext for conflict between the West and Russia. Following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia consolidated its position in the region and demonstrated its assertive stance.

The subsequent section of the paper is dedicated to the analysis of Russian defense policy, which primarily focuses on the adaptation of security documents and their underlying factors. The content of Russian security documents from the 2000s is highlighted, revealing that Russia has identified the West, specifically NATO and its expansion policy, as the primary external threat. The 2009 national security document, re-adapted in December 2015, and the military doctrine of 2010, updated in December 2014, both prioritize responding to NATO and its threats. The 2016 security concept mentions the desire to arrange relations with Georgia while simultaneously highlighting foreign policy priorities to strengthen close ties with South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

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[9] Alexandra Kuimova and Siemon T.Wezeman "Russia and Black Sea Security", Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2018
https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-background-papers/russia-and-black-sea-security

This paper provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics of Russia's foreign policy, military capabilities, and actions in the Black Sea region. The analysis of Russian defense policy offers a useful framework for understanding the underlying motives and priorities of Russian security strategies.

In the work "Georgia and Black Sea Security"[10], the same authors discuss Georgia's foreign policy, its active participation in NATO missions, the dynamics of national security documents and their changes, military expenditures, and the deployment of external forces on the territory of Georgia.

The beginning of the paper reviews the consequences of the South Ossetian conflict on military defense policy, although the content, historical origin, and context of the conflict are not discussed in this paper. The authors review the 2011 Defense New Security Document (2011), which will be shaped by post-2008 influences. As researchers say, in this document, the occupied territories are the most defining factor in the security architecture of Georgia. This document also mentions that it is possible to establish good-neighborly relations with Russia, taking into account mutual respect and the recognition of sovereignty between the two countries. The next part of the paper deals with Georgia-NATO relations, where it is mentioned that Georgia was one of the active participants in NATO missions, the importance of the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package (SNGP), which meant the deepening of relations between Georgia and NATO and the strengthening of Georgia's defense capabilities.

The last part of the paper reviews the main military operations and military exercises, it talks about such important programs as Agile Spirit, discusses the dynamics of this program in 2011-2018, as well as the program that was developed in 2018 and was named Noble Partner.. As for military expenses, the dynamics of military expenses are discussed and compared at the end of the paper, where it is emphasized that military expenses have been dramatically reduced.

In the work "Romania and Black Sea Security",[11] the authors consider Romania and its

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[10] Alexandra Kuimova and Siemon T.Wezeman "Georgia and Black Sea Security", Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2018
 https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-background-papers/georgia-and-black-sea-security

[11] Alexandra Kuimova and Siemon T.Wezeman "Romania and Black Sea Security", Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2018

importance in the security of the Black Sea with the same structure. The first part of the paper is a historical background that includes Romania's past in the Warsaw Pact Organization (WTO), Romania's accession to NATO (2004), and the European Union. (2007).

The next chapter deals with the dynamics of Romania's security policy, which is discussed at the beginning of NATO membership (2004), Romania's military capabilities, and the extent to which the country was equipped with non-modern military technologies. The authors review what factors and military reforms led to Romania's military modernization. after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Romania increased its national budget and set a goal of technological integration in relation to NATO standards. The authors also emphasize the political structure of Romania (a semi-presidential republic), which in turn greatly influences security policy. The President of Romania is also the Commander-in-Chief of the Defense Forces. The paper reviews the 2015-2019 strategy, which was adopted after the annexation of Crimea. The main task was to restore Romania's military capabilities to those of the state during the Cold War.

In the same chapter, the main principles and directions of the Romanian National Defense Document (white paper, approved in April 2016) are discussed, which will be reviewed in more detail in the analysis section.

The final part of the paper covers Romania's military activity and the influence of external powers (meaning the North Atlantic Organization, USA) on its security. In the chapter "Operations and major exercises - all military exercises, that have been conducted with the rotational military assistance of the United States since 2013, are discussed. The US Black Sea Rotational Force - conducts a variety of military/security cooperation activities, including military courses, operations, and multinational military exercises.

The subsequent work, entitled "Turkey and The Black Sea"[12] provides a comprehensive analysis of Turkey's foreign policy, security, and historical vicissitudes. However, the authors note a limitation in their knowledge of security documents from a particular perspective due

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https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-background-papers/romania-and-black-sea-security

[12] Alexandra Kuimova and Siemon T.Wezeman "Turkey and Black Sea Security", Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2018.
https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-background-papers/turkey-and-black-sea-security

to Turkey's lack of transparency and infrequent adaptation of national documents. The impact of ongoing conflicts on Turkey's foreign policy is also discussed in a narrative manner.

 The paper begins by providing an overview of Turkey's geopolitics, with an emphasis on its role in the Black Sea region since the end of the Cold War. The authors delve into Turkey's complex relationship with Russia and other states in the region, which has political implications. The authors highlight that cooperation between Turkey and Russia in the military sphere affected Turkey's relations with the United States. Additionally, the authors analyze the involvement of both states in the Syrian conflict, where they find themselves on opposing sides.

 As previously mentioned, analyzing Turkey's security policy is challenging due to lack of official documents. The authors rely on the White Paper published in 2000, which emphasizes the strategic importance of the Black Sea region and the need for environmental care to ensure economic stability. The paper also provides an overview of Turkish-Russian relations and their competition in the Black Sea region. However, the analysis of this document is not entirely comparable to the present study. The authors highlight that during their research, they encountered specific documents received in certain years, and the resulting reforms and actions taken.

 In summary, the subsequent work "Turkey and the Black Sea" provides a comprehensive analysis of Turkey's foreign policy and security, taking into account historical events and ongoing conflicts. Despite the authors' limitations in accessing security documents, they provide a valuable analysis of Turkey's relationship with Russia and its role in the Black Sea region.

 The present paper undertakes an analysis of Bulgaria's[13] security policies, with a specific focus on the country's role in the Black Sea region. The authors provide an overview of Bulgaria's historical trajectory from its membership in the Warsaw Pact to its transition to NATO, highlighting its active participation in NATO military exercises. While Bulgaria seeks to maintain cordial relations with Russia, it is notable that it does not share Romania's more confrontational stance towards Moscow.

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[13] Alexandra Kuimova and Siemon T.Wezeman "Bulgaria and Black Sea Security", Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2018.
 https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-background-papers/bulgaria-and-black-sea-security

The paper reviews key policy documents such as the "New Defense Policy" (2009) and the 2010-11 Defense White Papers, which outline Bulgaria's foreign policy objectives and its stance towards neighboring countries. Of particular significance is the fact that Bulgaria does not view any state in the Black Sea region as a potential enemy or threat.

Drawing upon post-Crimea annexation documents, the authors examine NATO's response to the geopolitical challenges facing the region. They highlight Bulgaria's role in the "Readiness Action Plan" project and its commitment to strengthening collective security and cooperation with other NATO members such as Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania, and Poland.

The paper also examines Bulgaria's military capabilities and budget, charting the country's trajectory after joining NATO. Through a comprehensive analysis of Bulgaria's security policy, the authors provide valuable insights into the country's evolving role in the Black Sea region and its contribution to collective security efforts in Europe.

"Ukraine and Black Sea Security"[14] is a scholarly publication that explores the topic of Ukraine and its relationship with Russia in the context of Black Sea security. The introduction of the publication focuses on the independence of Ukraine and its evolving relationship with Russia, which has rapidly shifted from friendly to hostile. The authors provide a comprehensive overview of Ukraine's political course since independence, particularly with regard to its diplomatic and economic relations with Russia, as well as its efforts to forge closer ties with the European Union and the North Atlantic Organization.

The authors identify three main historical problems that have contributed to the deterioration of relations between Russia and Ukraine, namely: 1) gas prices imposed by Russia on Ukraine, 2) Ukraine's pro-Western orientation and pursuit of membership in the European Union and NATO, and 3) the status of the Russian Navy in Crimea, where Russia has maintained its military presence since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

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[14] Alexandra Kuimova and Siemon T.Wezeman "Ukraine and Black Sea Security", Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2018
https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-background-papers/ukraine-and-black-sea-security

The second part of the publication delves into Ukraine's defense and security policies, with a particular focus on the impact of the conflict in Crimea on Ukraine's foreign policy priorities. The authors argue that the annexation of Crimea represented a key turning point in Ukraine's defense policy, with Russia and civil war being defined as the main threats to Ukraine's security. The conflict also further strengthened Ukraine's aspiration to join NATO, as a means of enhancing its defense capabilities and aligning itself with the West.

In the latter section of the aforementioned document, entitled "II Defense Policy," the authors undertake a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between Ukraine and NATO, spanning back to its inception in 2003. A brief divergence from this trajectory is explored during the presidency of Yanukovych, during which time the President asserted that "relations with NATO will continue, although membership in the North Atlantic Organization is not the main goal." However, this course was soon altered, and following the annexation of Crimea, Ukraine returned to prioritizing its relationship with NATO, as evidenced by the adoption of a law on foreign policy in 2017.

During this period, Poroshenko made efforts to achieve the Membership Action Plan, the formal procedure required for entry into the North Atlantic Organization, which was officially submitted in 2018. It is noteworthy that during the year 2014, following a survey conducted in Ukraine, it was discovered that more Ukrainians perceived NATO as a threat than as a means of defense[15].

In summary, the work concludes that Ukraine intentionally chose its political trajectory after 2014, which involved seeking membership in NATO. Despite the clear impediments to maintaining friendly relations with Russia, such as gas tariffs imposed by Russia, the use of Crimea by Russia, and Russia's rejection of Ukraine's foreign exchange rate, the authors contend that Ukraine has remained steadfast in its political aspirations. Additionally, the authors note that although Ukraine aspires to join NATO, there is still a significant journey ahead for the country to achieve full membership in the organization. Finally, the authors highlight the support of Eastern Europe and the United States in the military reinforcement of Ukraine, in order to regain control over the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

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[15] GALLUP "Before Crisis, Ukrainians More Likely to See NATO as a Threat", Julie Ray, Neli Esipova, 2014.
https://news.gallup.com/poll/167927/crisis-ukrainians-likely-nato-threat.aspx

Critical Engagement for the first part of the Literature Review

The initial segment of the literature review was deliberately chosen from the SIPRI organization. This is due to the fact that the research paper examines the security architecture in the Black Sea region, which includes multiple states and external actors, such as the European Union, NATO, and the United States. These six studies policy views help to provide an overarching view of the region's security situation.

It is worth noting that these six works are highly practical and valuable for research purposes, as they provide access to and guidance on various security-related reforms and documents. These may include white papers, the adoption of laws following specific political events, and security concepts, among others.

However, it should be emphasized that historical, geopolitical, and theoretical analyses are rarely present in these works, which is a significant limitation for the Black Sea region. For instance, in the study of "Russia and the Black Sea region", the first part of the paper, "Background," discusses the Russian invasion of Crimea and the ensuing tensions between Russia and the West. However, there is a dearth of analysis regarding the factors that led to the Russian invasion in 2014, such as the political ideology, military doctrine, and strategic relations that played a critical role in the annexation of Crimea. Moreover, there is a lack of examination into how the annexation of Crimea was prepared in terms of information. Addressing these gaps would be instrumental in advancing research on the topic.

In the case of the study on Georgia and the Black Sea region, the authors make a factual error when they assert that Georgia's political orientation towards the West changed in 2003. This is both politically and academically incorrect, as Georgia's pro-European course was reflected in its security documents, and it actively participated in the Kosovo operations after President Eduard Shevardnadze assumed office in 1995. It is critical to avoid such factual inaccuracies in academic research.

Regarding security information, while each document provides comprehensive information about laws and security documents, it is problematic that there is no discussion of the results obtained from reviewing the implementation of a specific reform. For example, if Ukraine adopts any specific reforms after the annexation of Crimea, there is no information on the

outcomes. The authors dedicate specific chapters to Georgia and Ukraine's relations with NATO, only positive events are discussed, and there is no analysis of the results obtained from specific reforms and chosen courses. In the case of Ukraine, it is stated that "it still has a long way to go" for its accession, but there is no information on why it is difficult for these states to join NATO. Addressing these gaps in academic research would be beneficial for future studies on the Black Sea region's security architecture.

Literature Review Part Two – Motives.

The literature cited above serves a practical purpose for this thesis by offering valuable insights into the security dynamics of the Black Sea region. It provides a comprehensive overview of the region, including the location of states and their military capabilities, access to state security documents, and statistical data on military capabilities and costs. However, it is worth noting that this literature lacks crucial information on key aspects such as military doctrines, values, geopolitics, and historical vicissitudes, which are essential for understanding the motivations behind the actions of states.

To address this gap, the present book, "Russia, NATO, and Black Sea Security"[16] prepared by the renowned Rand Organization and authored by Stephen J. Flanagan, Anika Binnedij, Irina A. Chindea, Katherine Costello, Geoffrey Kirkwood, Dara Massicot, and Clint Reach, presents an in-depth analysis of the geopolitics, political specificity, and player interests in the Black Sea region. The work spans 200 pages and is organized into eight sub-chapters, each delving into critical aspects of the region's security dynamics.

The document highlights the critical role of Russia's military doctrines in shaping the region's security architecture and delves into the political and security directions of each state in the region. The authors provide a detailed analysis of the security dynamics in the region, focusing on the competing interests of various players and their impact on regional security.

In the second chapter of this research document, the authors delve into Russia's perception of the Black Sea region. Drawing on various sources, including security documents, official

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[16] Stephen J. Flanagan, Anika Binnedij, Irina A. Chindea, Katherine Costello, Geoffrey Kirkwood, Dara Massicot, and Clint Reach, Russia, NATO and Black Sea Security, Rand Corporation, 2020.
 https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA357-1.html

statements, and secondary sources, the authors examine Russia's attitude towards the region from both a theoretical and security standpoint., The research paper analyzes Primakov's doctrine, which emphasizes the importance of a multipolar and/or polycentric international order. This doctrine is further examined in the analytical section of the paper, providing a more detailed exploration of its implications.

In the present study, the authors conduct a thorough examination of Russia's political ambitions and strategic approach in the Black Sea region. The authors draw on relevant security documents to argue that while the Black Sea may not be the most significant element for Russia's geopolitical interests, gaining control over nearby states, such as Ukraine and Georgia, remains a significant priority for the country. Furthermore, the authors explore Russia's attitudes towards the Black Sea states, highlighting the importance of maintaining close ties with Turkey, which has unpredictability and the potential to hinder NATO's joint actions in the region. Additionally, the authors emphasize Russia's utilization of cultural and economic resources in relation to Bulgaria in order to prevent political unity within the West. The overarching theme that emerges from this analysis is the fracturing and ineffectiveness of NATO in the face of Russian resistance.

The academic article titled "Black Sea Imperatives Ensuring NATO Security and American Interests for the Incoming U.S. Administration,"[17] authored by Janusz Bugajski and Peter B. Doran, offers a comprehensive analysis of the current balance of power in the Black Sea region, with a focus on NATO and American interests and their vulnerabilities in the region. The article highlights the significance of deterrence theory and why NATO and the Black Sea states have been unable to collaborate effectively. The authors emphasize the lack of a joint policy and the weaknesses of NATO's eastern flank, which lacks the necessary resources to counteract the A2AD system. The paper provides valuable insights into the challenges of regional cooperation, individual state interests, and the specificities of military budgets.

A key section of the paper is the analysis of the Warsaw Summit, which was convened in the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea. This chapter, titled "Alliance Initiatives," is particularly relevant to this thesis since deterrence theory is one of the theoretical frameworks used.

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[17] Center for European Policy Analysis, "Black Sea Imperatives," No. 3, Janusz Bugajski, Peter B. Doran, 2016. https://cepa.org/article/black-sea-imperatives/

Overall, the article presents a comprehensive overview of American and NATO interests in the Black Sea region. However, the authors sometimes present opinions without providing specific arguments to support them. For instance, authors suggest that Russia uses all possible tools to establish dominance in the region (including soft power, the economy, and information), whereas the West lacks joint actions (in what sense?) The following information can be true, but information about these specific arguments in the paper is not available.

The following publication belongs to Eugene Rumer, who is the head of Russia and Eurasia research at the Carnegie Center and was a former US intelligence officer. The publication "The Primakov (Not Gerasimov) Doctrine In Action"[18] discusses the analysis of the ongoing conflicts in the Black Sea region, and in this theoretical case, based on the principles of the Primakov Doctrine, the publication makes an in-depth analysis of the confrontation between Russia and America, and which specific steps have given Russia the dominant status in the given region, and in which security aspects has Russia demonstrated its strengths.

If we consider it in more detail, the introduction to the work will discuss the importance of Crimea as the cause of the confrontation between the West and Russia. The publication discusses Russian security architecture and its specific features since the time of the Soviet Union. The author claims that unlike modern Russia, where military doctrines have a great influence on foreign policy, the situation in the Soviet Union was different. In the period of the Soviet Union, military personnel were not influential, but simply executors/implementers. The author also adds that there are clearly exceptional cases when military personnel possessed political power, such as Marshal Zhukov (1946) and Nikolai Ogarkov (1984). This kind of pattern (when a military person tries to gain influence on domestic politics) in Russian security policy first appeared in weakened Russia under Boris Yeltsin in the form of Alexander Lebed. The article emphasizes the specificity of Gerasimov's doctrine, that the doctrine proposed by him had no influence on foreign policy, and that it was more of an operational concept for confrontation with the West than a doctrine. The author claims that the only doctrine influencing Russian foreign and security policy in the next two decades is the Primakov Doctrine.

The author reviews the three main directions of Primakov's doctrine:

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[18] Eugene Rumer, The Primakov Not Gerasimov Doctrine In Action", Carnegie Endowment For International Peace , 2019.
  https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Rumer_PrimakovDoctrine_final1.pdf

1) integration of the former Soviet republics into Russia (meaning bringing them into the sphere of influence);

2) Restraint of NATO expansion and, more broadly, a constant attempt to weaken transatlantic institutions and replace American hegemony with polycentric poles

3) The policy of rapprochement with China is a fundamental component of this doctrine.

The subsequent section of the publication concerns the political examination of the events surrounding the attacks on Georgia and Ukraine, in which the author outlines two main theories: deterrence theory and Primakov's doctrine.

The Primakov doctrine emphasizes the need to prevent former Soviet republics from joining NATO. According to the author, the integration of Georgia into NATO, mentioned by President Putin in his famous Munich speech of 2007, was unacceptable to the Kremlin. Given that Georgia shares a border with Russia (via the North Caucasus), the situation provided Russia with an opportunity to exploit its access to Georgia, thus demonstrating that the United States would not defend its "favorite" in the region. This action allowed Russia to regain its lost confidence while simultaneously challenging American hegemony and demonstrating that America has no reach in the current region.

The current successful military occupation of Georgia was facilitated by its small army and underdeveloped security sector, and the guarantee given at the 2008 Bucharest summit that Georgia would become a NATO member was merely a verbal condition without any written agreement or guarantee. Therefore, the author concludes that the Russian military attack on Georgia presented low risks and high rewards. Additionally, Georgia's cybersecurity infrastructure was weak and had been attacked by Russia several times.

The war with Georgia exposed Russia's military technology weaknesses, and it subsequently adopted a new military doctrine in 2010, referring to the so-called privileged spheres of influence, which included Ukraine and Georgia.

Regarding Crimea, the author concludes that the occupation of Crimea in 2014 was successful at low risk and high cost. Russia quite strategically used the threat of full occupation before the Crimea annexation, which helped deter defensive actions from Ukraine. The occupation of Crimea is assessed by the author as a cold, pragmatic operation

with a low risk of creating an existential threat to Russia. In addition to being pragmatic, Russia's current move serves to avoid NATO's security guarantee for Ukraine (as in the case of Georgia). The author concludes that the statements leading up to the annexation of Crimea (by NATO country members) were a sort of signal to Moscow that the Western world would not intervene in the war with Ukraine.

   In the security section, the author concludes: 1) Despite the fact that Ukraine's military capabilities are much greater than Georgia's, Ukraine faced exactly the same problems as Russia during the Russo-Georgian war. It means that Ukraine, like Russia, has the same problem in relation to corruption and state institutions. 2) The mobilization problem was a crucial factor. 3) Lacking readiness to face hybrid challenges, Russia managed to indoctrinate every segment, including active and retired military personnel (specifically in Eastern Ukraine).

   The next source is the book "The Kremlin Strikes Back Russia and the West after Crimea's Annexation" by Steven Rosefield[19]. Rossfield discusses the phase of confrontation between the West and Russia following the annexation of Crimea. This book by Rossfield provides an in-depth analysis of the functioning of the Russian state apparatus in general. It informs us about Russian perceptions in general, how the Kremlin perceives the West, what methods were used to annex Crimea and how it was prepared, and what Russia's information strategy was in terms of concocting historical pretexts. Rossfield highlights Russia's historical argument regarding the annexation of Crimea, The author argues that one of the main arguments of the Russians regarding Crimea is that Crimea has always belonged to Russia, and in particular, Crimea was conquered during the reign of Catherine II and annexed to Taurida Oblast. The book describes in detail the procedure for the annexation of Crimea, the taking of strategic objects by Russia on February 26 by pro-Russian groups (which were assisted by Russian security services). In Chapter 2 Rossfield's book examines the mistakes of Europe's slow, ineffective action (incoherent decisions, ineffective sanctions, etc.) after the Crimea annexation.

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[19] Steven Rosefielde, "The Kremlin Strikes Back Russia and The West after Crimea's Annexation" Cambridge University Press, United States, 2017.

In conclusion - Rossfield provides detailed information regarding the annexation of Crimea. His information regarding Western containment/deterrence is somewhat vague, however, the bibliography of the book itself provides access to various sources from which conclusions can be drawn regarding Western deterrence policy in general. The author's heavy focus is on Putin; any event, or analysis, is based on the figure of Putin. Therefore, a heavy focus on one figure creates limitations in terms of analysis. for instance, if the aim of the thesis is to determine the specifics of Russia's foreign policy and therefore to discuss what mistakes the West made in relation to deterrence, the work is quite limited, since everything is analyzed from Putin's perspective and his calculations.

The next source is the article "From Eurasia With Love: Russian Security Threats and Western Challenges" by Stephen J. Blank[20]. The author criticizes the West and the United States for their ineffective deterrence policies towards Russia. This academic article provides in-depth information about the military, economic, and informational problems in the West, that were revealed during the annexation of Crimea and the Russian-Georgian war.

As mentioned above, the academic article reviews the security policy problems in the West. - the author identifies five main priorities for what the West should change in relation to Russia. 1) European security is not guaranteed, and the West takes it for granted. The first example of a changing balance of power is the war of August 2008. 2) Russia did not want any integration with the West. 3) Due to the fact that Russia does not integrate with the West, it should be deterred. 4) Any civil agreement with Russia is a simple "scrap of paper" from 5) The development of a common Western-North Atlantic deterrence policy is needed.

In conclusion - the academic article provides an in-depth analysis of the threats coming from Russia, the author critically analyzes the security policy pursued by Europe and America in the last 10 years, and the author offers specific steps for the audience regarding deterrence policy. It should be noted that the work is limited in several directions: 1) Lack of Alternative Perspectives - it is written only from a Western perspective (does not discuss what rational actions Russia takes and why); 2) Limited Scope - the author tries to see Russia's actions only from a military, economic, and informational perspective; therefore, there is no space left for the analysis of the conflict between Russia and the West due to the

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[20] Stephen J.Blank "From Eurasia With Love: Russian Security Threats and Western Challenges" Strategic Studies Quarterly, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2014
https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26270803.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A6da81e583d8fab2845d78ac5f5a083f1&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=&initiator=

incompatibility of ideology, doctrines, and values. 3) Lack of nuance - article lacks detailed information about the wars it discusses.

Theoretical Framework

This paper employs a theoretical framework consisting of two main theories: structural realism (offensive as well as defensive realism) and deterrence theory. The purpose of this framework is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of the Black Sea security architecture. The renowned professor of international relations John Mearsheimer's seminal work, "Tragedy of Great Power Politics,"[21] is used as a guidebook to explore several pertinent questions related to the nature of power and competition among states.

The main aim of the thesis is to identify the lack of security indicators that led to Russian intervention in Ukraine in 2022. Given that the Black Sea region has historically been a battleground for great powers such as Russia and Turkey, Mearsheimer's book offers insights that help analyze the security architecture of countries. Three essential questions Mearsheimer brings up are relevant to this thesis: 1) Why do big states pursue power? 2) Why do states engage in power competition? 3) How much power is sufficient for states? By answering these questions, the paper seeks to elucidate the underlying factors that prompted Russia to intervene in Ukraine in 2022.

Furthermore, the book also provides a framework for measuring and counting power, which is essential for analyzing the power dynamics in the Black Sea region. As Mearsheimer

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[21] John Mearsheimer, "Tragedy of Great Power Politics", London, 2001

argues, it is possible to determine the power levels of individual states, which, in turn, enables us to describe the architecture of the international system; in this case, we use it to describe the regional system. To achieve this, as the author argues, the first step is to calculate the military capabilities of each state, and the second step is to define what sort of system a given region has: unipolar, bipolar, or multipolar.

The first theory is defensive realism. Scholars of defensive realism believe that it asserts that the anarchy of the international system forces states to pursue defensive, moderate, and restricted strategies. Defensive realists contend that conflict is periodically essential, particularly when the security of great powers is at risk or under attack[22].

A fundamental principle of defensive realism is that nations ought to attempt to maintain the current balance of power while maximizing their own security. As the prominent academic Kenneth Waltz noted, "In anarchy, security is the highest end." "Only if survival is assured can states safely seek such other goals as tranquility, profit, and power."[23] According to defensive realists, any alteration in the balance of power will lead to opposition states coming together to oppose the aggressor.

Defensive realism also holds that conquest is not advantageous because the costs of expansion typically outweigh the advantages. As a result, defensive realism views all aggression and expansion as pathologies at the unit level. Any kind of expansion is viewed as irrational in modern nationalism due to the fact that it is possible to rally the captured state and enhance nationalism through the use of contemporary technology and informational resources.

Last but not least, defensive realism promotes a historical viewpoint that holds that hegemonic ambitions and state expansion are often wrong since they frequently lead to counterbalancing activities rather than bandwagoning. According to defensive realists, history will lead to opposing states coming together to oppose the aggressor. As Snyder

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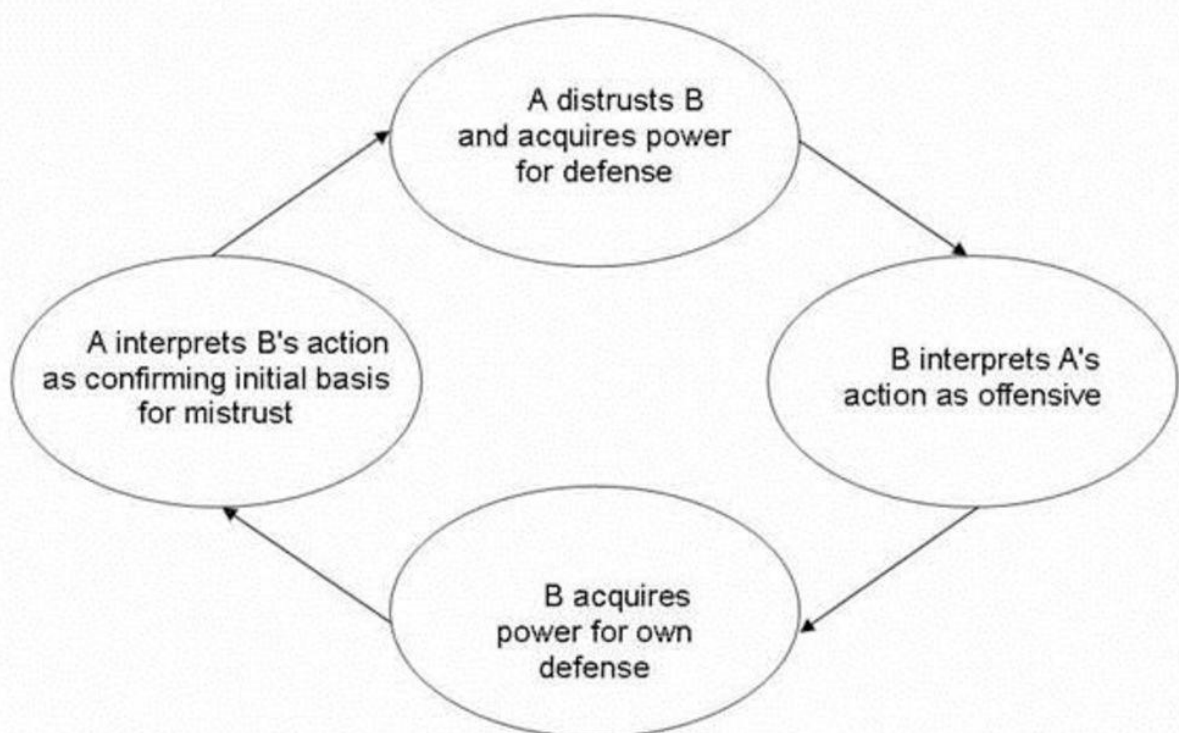[22] Keneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism After the Cold War", International Security, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2000, 4-41 page.
http://www.columbia.edu/itc/sipa/U6800/readings-sm/Waltz_Structural%20Realism.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1ricn8TMgm8zLloeNun-BNrcbfqgcRU6tJeW0hYfxVz6TsukIKtP_49tk

[23] Keneth N. Waltz, "Theory of International Politics," London, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979, page-126

pointed out, "The balance of power that arises out of international anarchy punishes aggressors; it does not reward them."[24]

The approach of defensive realism towards security found in Stephan Walt's academic article brings up Hertz's argument about root cause problems in security (1950). Hertz claims that the root cause of conflicts in an anarchic international system itself is mistrust; in other words, Hertz's theory is based on the "security dilemma theory"[25] (Figure 1), where one state tries to strengthen itself at the expense of weakening another state. Hertz thought that states try to strengthen themselves by forming alliances and strengthening their internal military.

Security Dilemma Spiral

- A distrusts B and acquires power for defense
- B interprets A's action as offensive
- B acquires power for own defense
- A interprets B's action as confirming initial basis for mistrust

[24] Jack Snyder, "Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambitions," Cornel University Press, page - 15
https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-political-science-review/article/abs/myths-of-empire-domestic-politics-and-international-ambition-by-jack-snyder-ithaca-cornell-university-press-1991-330p-3500/2DE6F8FBFD6CE103FBC015A0063D4D81
[25] Stephen M. Walt, "Realism and Security," 2017, Harvard University, Oxfodre, https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-286?print=pdf

Defensive realism is a useful tool in order to analyze the Black Sea region's security problems. As stated in the introduction, the Black Sea region is extremely shifting, with states contesting each other's territory. At the same time, state actions are consistent with the aforementioned core principles of defensive realism. The ambitions of Ukraine and Georgia to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization are a clear and real example of how states strive to maximize their security.

The thesis also applies deterrence theory, which is explained in the written work "Understanding Deterrence"[26] by Michal J. Mazarr. Deterrence theory has two main definitions: 1) deterrence by denial, and 2) deterrence by punishment. The basic philosophy of the first theory derives from the threat of a potential aggressor's confidence, meaning that a state must deploy defensive military means so strong that a potential aggressor does not have the confidence to defeat a potential victim if attacked. In other words, a potential aggressor must fear that he will face catastrophic failure if he attacks. The philosophy of the second definition, i.e. deterrence by punishment, unlike the first one, where the state does not go to aggression because it is afraid of possible consequences, Deterrence by punishment covers a wider area of threats, such as nuclear deterrence, as the author notes. "The focus of deterrence by punishment is not the direct defense of the contested commitment but rather threats of wider punishment that would raise the cost of an attack."[27]

The opening article mentions two main directions of deterrence policy: direct deterrence and extended deterrence. The first direction refers to when a specific state carries out defense in its own territory, while the second refers to deterrence or discouragement of third parties by friendly states. Extended deterrence is, of course, much more difficult in practice for obvious reasons. Deterrence policy is primarily difficult for military operational reasons and also for the reason that it is difficult to protect an ally and/or alliance member state when it is geographically far from the home state. As the second problem, the author also places the credibility of the potential aggressor, that the defender will be involved in the war because of another state, "An aggressor can almost always be certain that a state will fight to defend

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[26] Rand Organization, "Understanding Deterrence," United States, PE-295-RC, 2018.
  https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE295.html

[27] Mazzar, *Understanding Detterance, p. 2*

itself, but it may doubt that a defender will fulfill a pledge to defend a third party."[28]

Paul Khuth's "Deterrence and International Conflict"[29] is another academic publication on the identical theory, The author introduces one of the dominant theories regarding deterrence policy, Rational Deterrence Theory, which focuses on how a potential attacker can avoid a possible military attack, "Rational deterrence theory focuses on how military threats can reduce an   attacker's expected utility for using force by persuading the attacker that the outcome of a military campaign will be both costly and unsuccessful." [30]

While applying theory in research, deterrence theory is useful since its idea is based on the principle that states can prevent conflict by threatening to use force in response to an adversary's actions. especially when the focus of the thesis is to analyze the strategic calculations between the state players and find the flaws that led to the current conflict.

Methodology

The thesis uses **qualitative research** methods as a research methodology, more specifically **Content Analysis[31]** and **Case Studies[32].**

The aim of content analysis is to study the content of numerous documents, media, or other forms of communication in order to uncover patterns, themes, and trends. In the context of Black Sea security, content analysis can provide insights into the perspectives, interests, and policies of various actors participating in the region's security architecture. The mentioned research methodology allows the researcher, based on various sources, to identify and

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[28] The Same, 3.

[29] Paul K. Huth, "Detterence and International Conflict," *Annual Reviews, 48106,* 1999.

[30] Huth, *"Deterrence and International Conflict," p. 29*

[31] Klaus Krippendorff, "Content Analysis An Introduction to Its Methodology," United States of America, University of Pensilvanya, 2013
https://web.stanford.edu/class/comm1a/readings/krippendorf-ch1and4.pdf

[32] Brian Kennett, "Planning and managing Scientific Research," Anu Press, 2014,
https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/j.ctt6wp816.9.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A0981a23988c5e4e84fdd29784c7b7c5d&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=&initiator=search-results

analyze the problems that existed in the Black Sea region in connection with the containment and deterrence policy. Furthermore, content analysis can assist researchers in determining the role of various actors in shaping the Black Sea security architecture. For example, this tool can be used to examine Russia's, NATO's, the European Union's, and other regional powers comments and actions to better understand their objectives and policies in the region. It is also helpful to investigate the thoughts and preferences of civil society organizations, think tanks, and academic specialists in order to uncover alternative perspectives and potential solutions to the region's security concerns.

Case studies will be used specifically because of the chosen theoretical framework, which is deterrence theory. The theory of deterrence holds that nations can avoid conflict by threatening to use force in reaction to an adversary's actions. Deterrence methods are used by numerous entities in the Black Sea region, including Russia, NATO member states, and other regional forces and Case studies can be a significant source of data for researching deterrence dynamics in the Black Sea region. For example, a case study could help explore Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and how Russia's use of force affected the situation. deterrent strategies of other actors in the region To analyze the effectiveness of these deterrent tactics, the case study could also examine NATO and other regional powers' responses, such as the deployment of military assets and the implementation of sanctions.

The time frame chosen for this research spans from the 2008 Russo-Georgian war through the 2014 annexation of Crimea and culminates in a Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The research objectives include using various research techniques to obtain and analyze national security documents in order to discover prevalent security issues in the specified region. The thesis intends to use a theoretical framework to determine the weaknesses of the deterrent policy and the problems that persisted, eventually leading to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

August War The First Alert for the West

The 2008 war between Russia and Georgia was a complex event that was motivated by a number of underlying elements. One important motivator was Russia's determination to prevent a small, nearby country from developing an autonomous security policy, as a pro-Western Georgia presented a challenge to Russia's regional strength and influence. This sentiment was echoed by Russian President Vladimir Putin's remarks at the Munich Security Conference in 2007, which acted as a warning to the West to avoid incorporating former Soviet republics into NATO.

The "Primakov Doctrine," created by Russian politician Yevgeny Primakov, also played an integral role in Russia's activities toward Georgia. This doctrine holds that former Soviet states in Russia's immediate neighborhood, known as the "Near Abroad," should not be permitted to join Western alliances such as NATO, and the EU, which Russia regards as a threat to national security. In accordance with this viewpoint, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov indicated in April 2008 that Russia would do everything in its power to prevent Ukraine and Georgia from joining NATO[33].

Russia's military edge over Georgia played an important role in the 2008 conflict. Russia maintained its position/argument that Georgia had been promised to become a NATO member state in the future during the 2008 Bucharest Summit[34] and that Russia was therefore justified in its efforts to prevent this from happening. At the mentioned summit, the parties had to decide whether to grant MAP to Ukraine and Georgia. which ended in the end, only with the promise that in the future Ukraine and Georgia will be given a chance to become NATO members. In the end, all of this made Russia feel that the West was somewhat afraid to go ahead with Russian interests. Arguments presented by the West, that the countries do not have enough reforms to become members can be considered not as a technical, procedural problem, but as an avoidance of the open door policy and a policy of giving in to Russia in a certain sense. Any move is, in a certain sense, a policy of deterrence, as it automatically

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[33] Zofia Studzinska "How Russia, Step by Step, Wants to Regain an Imperial Role in the Global and European Security System" *Connections,* Vol. 14, No. 4
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26326416.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3Ae627c9ff3bf0d02095dd43e89a200d76&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=&initiator=search-results >

[34] NATO, "Bucharest Summit Declaration, Article 23, 2008.
<https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm>

increases the confidence of the opponent. As Ronald D. Asmus noted, "Map In Bucharest was not only a debate about Georgia's and Ukraine's technical performance and whether they met the loose standards laid down in NATO doctrine. It was really a debate about the future of NATO enlargement and the alliance more generally, as well as about relations with Russia"[35]. The author also emphasizes the case of evasion of open policy, and this step by the West is assessed as evasion and/or unpreparedness. "When they said that Ukraine or Georgia were not ready, they were also saying that they were not ready either, and that was what worried the Georgians and Ukrainians most of all"[36].

The 2008 war had far-reaching consequences for the region and Russia's global standing. Russia was able to reassert itself as a regional force and send a message to other neighboring countries about the potential repercussions of embracing pro-Western policies by exerting its military authority over Georgia. The battle also fostered the impression that the United States, Georgia's traditional ally, had limited access to and influence in the region. It should be noted that the August war was only accompanied by a policy of non-recognition from the international community, which meant the non-recognition of the occupied territories of Abkhazia and Ossetia in the international arena. Russia was not subjected to any sanctions from the West because the Western community thought that isolating Russia would bring worse results. As Bugajski noted, "most Western governments concluded that Russia was too important a country to be isolated, that sanctions would be ineffective, and that Moscow's estrangement would be counterproductive and fuel further hostility." [37]

Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 might be seen as a continuation of the country's assertive and revisionist stance towards its neighbors. The August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia illustrated this tendency, as Russia utilized military action to maintain its supremacy in the region and gain de facto control over two separatist provinces. The Kremlin interpreted the West's perceived inaction in responding to this event as a green light to continue pursuing its geopolitical aims.

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[35] Ronald D. Asmus "*A Little War That Shook the World,"*, Macmilan, 2010, p. 129,

[36] Asmus ""*A Little War That Shook the World,"* p. 129

[37] Center for Strategic and International Studies, "Georgian Lessons Conflicting Russian and Western Interests in the Wider Euorpe," Washington, Janusz Bugajaski, November 2010, p. 3

Putin's attitude toward Ukraine's sovereignty in general is quite variable. During the 2002 Prague summit, when Vladimir Putin was asked what he thought about Ukraine's aspirations to membership in NATO, he answered that Ukraine is a sovereign, independent state, and it can decide its security policy independently[38]. This attitude changed after the Euromaidan, when the current pro-Russian government in the form of Yanukovych had to leave the country, and Petro Poroshenko of Western sentiments came to the government, which was perceived by Russia as a fascist government.

In conclusion.

 1) The August war was not only an echo of Russian aggression taken separately; it was also, to a certain extent, caused by the restraint of the West at the Bucharest Summit. From the point of view of deterrence policy, it increases the confidence of the adversary.

2) The influence of Primakov's doctrine in the war of August 2008 is quite large, since the said doctrine calls for the Near Abroad countries to remain in the sphere of influence of Russia.

3) The August war is not only an isolated aggressive act by Russia in the Black Sea region, but it is a message to other countries in the region that if Russia wants to change the geopolitical picture through the use of force, it will remain unpunished.

5) The war demonstrated the limited access of the West, specifically the US, to the region, as well as the avoidance of an open door policy.

6) The rejection of the Bucharest Summit, the action plan of readiness for Georgia and Ukraine, was not a technical procedural process, but it was a failed policy of containment, and a rejection of the open door policy. NATO's open-door policy is one of its most important principles. It is a commitment to the spread of democracy and security in Europe. By denying MAP to Georgia and Ukraine, NATO leaders effectively told these countries that they were not welcome in the alliance. This was a major blow to the morale of the people of Georgia

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[38] Zofia, *Connections,* p. 29

and Ukraine, who had been working hard to reform their countries and meet NATO standards.

The decision also emboldened Russia. Russia had long opposed NATO expansion, and it saw the decision not to offer MAP to Georgia and Ukraine as a green light to invade these countries. In August 2008, Russia launched a military campaign against Georgia, seizing the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions. This was a direct violation of international law, and it set a dangerous precedent.

A Strategic Shift

After annexing the Crimean peninsula, Russia has taken major steps to strengthen its military capabilities in the Black Sea region. The deployment of an anti-access/area denial (A2AD) system in Crimea has significant consequences for the regional power balance. Russia, with its possession of the Crimean Peninsula, holds the second most significant geostrategic location in the Black Sea region after the Turkish Straits.

Russia's A2AD system in Crimea is made up of an intricate network of surface-to-air missile systems, anti-ship missile systems, radar systems, and electronic warfare capabilities that allow for the detection and tracking of targets at long distances, as well as the engagement of targets with precision-guided weaponry. The deployment of this system has effectively prevented other countries naval troops and aircraft from accessing the Black Sea, limiting NATO and other Western governments' capacity to operate in the region[39].

Additionally, the deployment of the A2AD system gives Russia a substantial advantage in any prospective battle with surrounding countries, as it improves both defensive and offensive capabilities. Russia has successfully transformed Crimea into a military fortress, allowing it to project influence throughout the area and assert control over the Black Sea.

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[39] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute "The Post-2014 Black Sea Security Environment", Neil J. Melvin,Stockholm, 2018.

The annexation of Crimea had a profound impact on the military balance in the Black Sea region. With its possession of the Crimean Peninsula, Russia holds the second most significant geostrategic location in the Black Sea region after the Turkish Straits. After annexing an important geostrategic position, Russia successfully manages to demonstrate the already mentioned A2/AD tactics quite innovatively[40], which in simple language means gaining an advantage over stronger opponents in a critically important geographic region by concentrating the best forces in limited time and space. As the official document of the US Department of Defense explains, "The A2/AD threat exceeds any single specific theater of operations, and creates problematic consequences for international security. For example, an aggressor can slow the deployment of U.S. and allied forces to a theater, prevent coalition operations from desired theater locations, or force friendly forces to operate from disadvantageously longer distances." [41]

The Russian military buildup in Crimea is accompanied by a deterrence strategy aimed at enhancing Russia's position in the region while restraining Ukraine and the West's reaction.

It is vital to note that Russia deploys a variety of deterrence strategies in the region. Deterrence theory takes numerous forms, including deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment. Deterrence by denial is a methodology in which a potential attacker believes that any military attack will result in catastrophic losses, whereas deterrence by punishment is a strategy in which major losses, such as economic penalties and nuclear weapons, are threatened.

A practical example of deterrence by punishment is Putin's threat, after the annexation of Crimea, that he is ready to go to nuclear confrontation in order to preserve the peninsula - "Moscow was ready to put its nuclear forces on alert to ensure Russia's annexation of Crimea"[42].

Russia has created a permanent deepwater fleet support port, which represents a substantial advancement in its naval capabilities. This has been made possible by Russia's acquisition of

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[40] Patryk Reskievicz "*Russian Anti-Access Potential (A2AD) On The Crimean Peninsula*" Warszawa, 2020.
[41] US. Naval War College, Air-Sea Battle: Service Collaboration to Address Anti-Access & Area Denial Challenges, 2013. P.3
https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=csf
[42] Reuters, "Putin says Russia was ready for nuclear confrontation over Crimea" 2015
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-putin-yanukovich-idUSKBN0MB0GV20150315

Crimea, which has resulted in a 400-kilometer increase in Russia's coastline. Furthermore, Russia has acquired control of historically Ukrainian waters as well as a significant chunk of neutral waterways, cementing its naval dominance[43].

Furthermore, Russia's naval, ground, and air capabilities have experienced significant upgrades, making them more powerful than in the past. It is worth noting that Russia has made major investments in medium-range missile systems such as the Iskander, which have the capability of employing nuclear bombs in addition to conventional ones. As a result, the annexation of Crimea, combined with Russia's possession of all three categories of conventional forces, has created an unevenness in nuclear weapons, worsening the regional balance of power[44].

Following Russia's takeover of Crimea in 2014, the Russian government built the Crimean Bridge, a land bridge connecting Crimea to mainland Russia. This land connection virtually cut Crimea off from the rest of Ukraine, which had traditionally ruled over the region. The acquisition and construction of the land bridge have significant political and strategic ramifications, notably for Ukraine-Russia ties. This link has had a number of effects. For starters, it has given Russia greater control over the territory by enabling the passage of people, commerce, and military equipment between Crimea and Russia's mainland. Second, it has allowed Russia to develop two significant military bases in Crimea, Theodosia, and Sevastopol. These ports are strategically significant for Russia since they provide direct access to the Black Sea and allow the country to project military force in the region[45].

The geostrategic importance of the Crimean port has already been mentioned above, which is one of the reasons for the annexation of the peninsula. As Yuriy Lypa was arguing, "The state that ruled the Crimean Peninsula commandeered the whole Black Sea Region; Crimea was nothing but the command post of the Black Sea." However, since the purpose of

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[43]Atlantic Council, "Memo to NATO: Wake Up Before Putin Turns the Black Sea into a Russian Lake" Stephen Blank, 2016.

[44] European Council On Foreign Relations "Waves of Ambition: Russia's Military Build-up in Crimea and the Black Sea" Gustav Gresse, 2021.l

[45]The Guardian "Putin opens a 12-mile bridge between Crimea and the Russian mainland" 2018.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/15/putin-opens-bridge-between-crimea-and-russian-mai

the analysis is to find the so-called "security gaps" as a result of data analysis, we can cite further circumstances. 1) Ukraine was a young democracy, and problems had occurred in corruption and intelligence. 2) Russia believed that the use of force in the Black Sea Region has low-risk and high benefits, considering the fact that after the August War, Russia did not receive sanctions from the West. 3) There is no common security strategy in the region, despite the fact that three of the six Black Sea states are NATO member states and the other two, Ukraine and Georgia, are NATO aspirant states.

In conclusion,

The introduction of Russia's advanced Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2AD) system has significantly altered regional power dynamics, granting Russia access and influence over all states in the Black Sea region.

2) Russia's implementation of deterrence strategies, encompassing both deterrence by punishment and deterrence by denial, resulted in Western passivity. By demonstrating its readiness to engage in military and nuclear confrontation to safeguard Crimea, Russia effectively deterred potential intervention.

3) The pre-annexation period witnessed a transformation in Russia's military modernization efforts, profoundly shifting the prevailing balance of power in the region. Notably, the deployment of the aforementioned A2AD systems bolstered Russia's self-assurance and assertiveness.

4) Before and after the August war, Russia carried out strong military armaments. After the war, the region observed a practice where the state changed the geopolitical situation by using force, and at the same time, it did not receive any international pressure. The event can be called a failure of deterrence. Defensive realism is the underlying principle that the aggressor in the international arena should not be rewarded, but should have the feeling of being isolated in any violent conflict. And for Russia, the implementation of the mentioned policy was a completely successful type of deterrence, since the August war was successful for

Russia, both from a military and political point of view. A successful policy of deterrence must be understood in both political and military terms

Asymmetry in the Black Sea Security.

Russia's military strengthening in the Black Sea is the result of numerous complex events, implying a comprehensive process with associated material and non-material developments. This process includes advancements in ground, air, and missile capabilities, as well as echelon deployment and structural and strategic/operational tactical methods. The Russian Federation began implementing the measures in 2008, which are considered the most significant military reform since the Red Army. Anatoly Serdyukov (2008-2012), Minister of Defense, launched the famed "New Look" military in 2008[46]. The reform sought to upgrade equipment and systems, reorganize the entire command and control chain, and turn the Russian military into a mobilization-based, mobile, flexible, combat-ready army.

As a result of the reform, Russian Navy increased it's presence responsibility for the southern and southwest directions. It unified its military and aviation forces, as well as the Black Sea Fleet and the Caspian Flotilla, stationed on its territory. As a result, the Black Sea Fleet began to receive new ships and submarines in a short period of time, significantly increasing the fleet's capabilities.

Army General Shoigu informed President Putin in June 2013, i.e., at the beginning of March, about the establishment of the operational leadership of the Russian naval force in the Mediterranean Sea. The tactical purpose of this move was to assist the Assad regime in Syria, and the strategic goal was for Russia to return as a global player[47].

In order to evaluate the current situation in the region in terms of the balance of power more properly, it is necessary to analyze specific facts that will provide us with a more accurate

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[46] The International Affairs Review, Russia's "New Look" Military Reforms and Their Impact on Russian Foreign Policy, Joseph Kyle, US, 2023.
<https://www.iar-gwu.org/blog/2018/02/22/russias-new-look-military-reforms-and-their-impact-on-russian-foreign-policy>
[47] Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, Russian Buildup on the Black Sea, and The Alternative for NATO Counter-Strategy, Georgia, Kahkha Esebua, 2017.
< https://gfsis.org.ge/files/library/opinion-papers/92-expert-opinion-eng.pdf>

image of the countries' military capabilities. In this regard, the thesis will analyze both defense spending and statistics on specific military forces and equipment.

Based on the data of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), a table was compiled (see Table 1) that compares the military expenditures of the main actors in the region in 2010-2019. In the mentioned years, a general increase in the expenses of each given country can be observed.

Table 1. Military expenditure by country, in constant prices (2018), billion US dollars, 2010-2019. *SIPRI, "Russia and Black Sea Security", Alexandra Kuimova and Siemon T. Wezeman, SIPRI, 2018*

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Russia	49.1	52.5	60.8	63.8	73.6	79.0	63.6	61.6	61.3	64.1
Turkey	11.1	11.2	11.5	11.8	11.9	12.3	14.4	15.4	19.6	20.7
Romania	2.0	2.07	2.01	2.17	2.37	2.73	2.88	3.91	4.35	5.09
Bulgaria	0.824	0.685	0.686	0.740	0.692	0.701	0.751	0.779	0.961	2.18
NATO (Turkey, Romania, and Bulgaria in total)	13.92	13.95	14.19	14.71	14.96	15.73	18.03	20.08	24.91	27.97

The following graph depicts military personnel data from the region's two largest players, Turkey and Russia. (see Table 2).

The sudden increase in all three categories of armed troops can be attributed to Russia's activation of not only maritime bases but also land and air forces in Crimea. Turkish military personnel numbers are visibly declining. However, it should be noted that this reduction was caused by Erdogan's response to the 2016 coup attempt, which resulted in the dismissal of

about one-third of the military personnel[48].

Table 2. Military personnel, 2013-2017.

SIPRI, "Turkey and Black Sea Security", Alexandra Kuimova and Siemon T. Wezeman, SIPRI, 2018

Military power	Country	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Active personnel in total	Russia	845 000	791 000	818 000	851 000	900 000
	Turkey	510 000	510 000	510 000	355 800	355 800
Ground Forces	Russia	250 000	230 000	240 000	270 000	280 000
	Turkey	402 000	402 000	402 000	260 000	260 000
Air Forces	Russia	150 000	148 000	145 000	165 000	165 000
	Turkey	60 000	60 000	60 000	50 000	50 000
Sea Forces	Russia	130 000	130 000	148 00	150 00	150 000
	Turkey	48 600	48 600	48 600	45 600	45 600

In terms of military equipment (see Table 3), Russia clearly has an advantage over Turkey.

Table 3 - *"Turkey and Black Sea Security", Alexandra Kuimova and Siemon T. Wezeman, SIPRI, 2018*

Equipment	Country	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Tanks	Russia	20 759	20 309	20 459	20 450	13 290
	Turkey	4 504	4 504	4 504	4 494	4 485

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[48] Reuters, "Turkey's purge cuts military by a third: Council of Europe" Robbyn Emmot, 2016.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-rights-idUSKBN1481H2>

Artilery	Russia	29 445	37 761	29 779	27 287	29 783
	Turkey	4 030	4 045	4 060	4 003	4 003
Combat Aircraft	Russia	1 493	1 415	1 114	1 327	1 387
	Turkey	352	335	433	364	465
Helicopter	Russia	1 324	1 357	1 114	1207	1269
	Turkey	416	427	433	422	465
Battleship	Russia	179	174	165	167	165
	Turkey	66	63	58	58	57

The data shown above depicts the balance of power in numbers, a brief comparative analysis of the region's most powerful military players is provided, and the significance of technology and military systems that have fundamentally altered the balance of power in the Black Sea is clarified.

Overall The Russian Federation's reforms, as previously noted, paved the way for the annexation of Crimea. The military reforms implemented in 2008 enabled Russia to critically examine its military capabilities and, as a result, to begin upgrading. In accordance with modernization, Russia increased its military spending on an annual basis, in contrast to other Black Sea regional countries. According to military budget figures from 2010 to 2014, Russia's military expenditures increased by over two dozen, from 49 million to around 73.6 million. NATO governments' military expenditures, on the other hand, remained unchanged, owing to the region's lack of a common regional security policy until 2014. NATO was more focused on reinforcing its eastern flank, avoiding the Black Sea region as a result.

As a result, Russia, as a potential aggressor, felt confident and lacked fear, which is an important part of deterrence policy. Fear, as is widely understood, is an important component of deterrence policy. In the context of international affairs, fear and deterrence are two notions that are closely associated. Fear is the emotional response that develops when one state senses a threat from another, whereas deterrence is the use of threats to dissuade an enemy from acting aggressively.

The concept of deterrence is founded on the premise that the possibility of punishment can deter an adversary from engaging in violent behavior. Military threats, economic sanctions, or diplomatic pressure can all be used. The legitimacy of the threat and the perceived possibility of its implementation determine the effectiveness of deterrence. The adversary is more likely to be deterred if they believe the threat is credible and will be carried out[49].

The Crimea Annexation and the Role of Deterrence in the West's Response

The fact that, with the annexation of Crimea, Russia has become much stronger and has the opportunity to project its own power, including in the Atlantic Ocean through the Mediterranean Sea, naturally represents a serious threat to NATO. Thus, it was very important for NATO to change the disturbed balance of power in the Black Sea.

NATO's response to the annexation of Crimea can be explained by the security dilemma. After the annexation of Crimea, Russia began increasing militarization in the region, which NATO perceived as a threat and mobilized to deter Moscow. The mistrust lies in the fact that NATO does not rule out further Russian aggression against Ukraine or another Black Sea state, and Moscow has feared that NATO may accept Ukraine and Georgia into the alliance or help Ukraine regain control of the Donbass region.[50]

Thus, after the Crimean annexation, NATO began active actions in the Black Sea region to deter Russia. The Wales Summit can be considered the starting point for action. In the very first paragraph of the Wales summit declaration, the government leaders condemn the annexation of Crimea. "We, the Heads of State and Government of the member countries of the North Atlantic Alliance, have gathered in Wales at a pivotal moment in Euro-Atlantic security." Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine have fundamentally challenged our vision of a Europe "whole, free, and at peace." In the declaration of the Wales summit, the importance of the stability of the Black Sea is also emphasized, as is the fact that NATO will

[49] Rand Organization, "Understanding Detterence", Michael J. Mazzar, 2018.

[50] Foreign Policy Magazine, "Does Anyone Still Understand the 'Security Dilemma'?", Stephen M. Walt, 2022

support the countries of the Black Sea region. "We will continue to support, as appropriate, regional efforts by Black Sea littoral states aimed at ensuring security and stability."[51]

One of the important components of the Wales Summit is the Readines Action Plan (RAP)[52], which aims to: strengthen NATO's deterrence and defense posture. The RAP, implemented in 2014, sought to increase NATO's readiness, responsiveness, and reinforcement capabilities. The plan involved a range of measures, including increasing the size of the NATO Response Force (NRF)[53] and the establishment of a new Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). The VJTF would be able to deploy in hours, whereas the NRF was intended to be a rapid-reaction force that could address crises in days.[54]

Additionally, the RAP involved a stronger military presence on NATO's eastern flank. This involved the construction of a multinational brigade in Romania as well as the deployment of multinational battlegroups to Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The objective was to bolster the alliance's defense and deterrence posture and reassure the allies in the region.

The Readiness Action Plan (RAP), showed NATO's commitment to improving its preparedness and response capacity in the face of growing security concerns, provided optimism in terms of deterrence. NATO sent a clear message to Russia that it was prepared and able to defend its member states and allies from a future assault by taking serious measures to increase its military presence in the Black Sea region.

After the Wales summit, NATO representatives gathered in Warsaw (2016), where a number of important decisions were signed. At the Warsaw Summit (2016), the West resolved several important initiatives. At the Warsaw summit, Georgia was referenced 29 times, and the strategic significance of the Black Sea region for Europe was also stressed, in contrast to the previous summit, where Georgia was only mentioned once and the Black Sea region was

[51] NATO, Wales Summit Declaration, Article One, 2014.
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/sede/dv/sede240914walessummit_/sede240914walessummit_en.pdf>

[52] NATO, Readiness Action Plan, 2022.
<https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_119353.htm>

[53] NATO, Response Force, 2022.
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[54] NATO, Response Force. 2014
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cited three times. The declaration made it clear that NATO will unquestionably take the necessary steps to aid Georgia and Ukraine: "In the Black Sea region, the security situation has also deteriorated in recent years. We will continue to address the implications for NATO of developments in the region and take them into account in the Alliance's approaches and policies. We will continue to support, as appropriate, regional efforts by the Black Sea littoral states aimed at ensuring security and stability. We will also strengthen our dialogue and cooperation with Georgia and Ukraine in this regard."[55]

After the Warsaw Summit, NATO's one of the important initiation initiatives in terms of successful deterrence policy, was Enhanced Forward Presence

eFP-The initiative involved deploying multinational battlegroups in four eastern member countries of NATO, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, on a rotational basis. The success of NATO's eFP initiative as a deterrence policy is reflected in several key areas. Firstly, the eFP has sent a robust and unambiguous signal of NATO's commitment to its collective defense principle, as enshrined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. The multinational nature of the battlegroups underlines the unity and solidarity of NATO member states, providing a strong deterrent posture to potential aggressors. Secondly, the initiative has significantly enhanced the defense capabilities and readiness of the eastern NATO members, where the battlegroups are deployed.[56]

These battlegroups, composed of troops from multiple NATO countries, have been conducting regular exercises to improve their interoperability and readiness, reinforcing the eastern flank of NATO against potential threats. Thirdly, the eFP initiative has contributed to maintaining stability in the Black Sea region by deterring potential aggression. The constant presence of these battlegroups has played a crucial role in preventing the escalation of tensions in the region, thereby preserving peace and stability.

Lastly, the eFP initiative has fostered greater cooperation and trust among NATO members. The collaboration required for the successful implementation of the initiative has strengthened intra-alliance ties, thereby enhancing NATO's unity and cohesion, which are

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[55] NATO, Warsaw Summit Communiqué, Article, 23, 2016.
<https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm >

[56] The Strategy Bridge, "The Positive Impact of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence" Steven Maguire, 2019
 < https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2019/9/3/the-positive-impact-of-natos-enhanced-forward-presence>

vital elements for the success of a deterrence strategy.

The above-mentioned events show that the West's reaction to the annexation of Crimea was quite effective. On the one hand, NATO has significantly strengthened the countries of the eastern flank, and on the other hand, it has increased its spending in the given region, especially in the direction of Romania. Conducted numerous military exercises, and with these programs, Russia paid an increased price for future potential aggression.

In the academic literature of deterrence policy, after the annexation of Crimea, there was an opinion that the next potential victims are the Baltic states[57], the mentioned programs are an example of a successful deterrence policy, since on the one hand NATO programs showed readiness for military confrontation in the event that the eastern flank was threatened by any threat, and on the other hand, the eastern flank Detention was successful

On the one hand, the aforementioned programs conducted in the Black Sea region are of a positive nature in the sense that effective steps were taken against aggression, and it was also a certain type of message for Russia that aggression is not encouraged, unlike the August war. Based on the above tables, we can conclude that in terms of expenses, even the unified budget of NATO's Black Sea countries cannot equal that of Russia. However, to a certain extent, this is accompanied by a number of restrictions that exist in the region. An example of this is the aforementioned Montreux Convention, which was created by the reality of 1936 and does not adapt to the security challenges of today's reality. There is even a restriction on the exercises conducted under the Montreux Convention.[58]

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[57] Darrell Driver, "Deterrence in Eastern Europe in Theory and Practice," *Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes,* Vol. 18. No.½ 2019 11-24. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26948846.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A5f91e65f4e7fb04f6a3d872a91671778&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=>
[58] Center For Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), "The 1936 Montreux Convention", Nilufer Oral, 2016.

Conclussion

Examining the region around the Black Sea's current security gaps was the thesis's main goal. The study made use of deterrence theory's theoretical framework to answer the research question about the circumstances that led to the invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Several research objectives were developed in order to offer an extensive response to the study topic. These goals included quantifying the balance of power and conducting more theoretical discussions on the potential effects of regional shifts. They also included examining the overall impact of the August war on regional security. The thesis also examined the causes for the failure of particular containment measures and analyzed effective examples of containment policies carried out by Western actors in the region between 2008 and 2022.

The August War is commonly presented in the academic literature that has already been written about it as an exceptional incident defined by Russian aggressiveness. Recent studies, however, have shown different results, emphasizing the effect of the Bucharest Summit on the August War in particular. The August 2008 fighting can be linked to the "failure" of the Bucharest summit and the subsequent rejection of the Membership Action Plan (MAP) by Ukraine and Georgia.

The annexation of Crimea was made easier once the August conflict was left without strong attention. Due to this circumstance, the use of force to change the geopolitical landscape was allowed, setting a dangerous precedent that violated both international law and the core idea of defensive realism, which is the idea that every war should be "punished".

Increased self-confidence, according to deterrence theory, allows the aggressor to project even more aggression. Russia's growing militarization and use of both methods of deterrence by punishment and deterrence by denial have brought it success in the region. The broken

asymmetry and the growing military armament ultimately gave Russia the ambition to launch a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

In the end, it is possible to say that the failed deterrence at the Bucharest summit was the reason why the annexation of Crimea took place, the failed, or, to be more precise, the immoderate security policy, the result of the annexation of Crimea, was the reason for the conflict in the Donbass region. All this created a perception for Russia that the West is not ready to go to confrontation, From the point of view of deterrence theory, perception is assigned a significant role, Deterrence works when it gives potential enemies the perception that the drawbacks of aggression or hostile action exceed the advantages. The above-mentioned gaps are the reason for the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

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