

## **THE BATTLEGROUND OF THE BLACK SEA: A GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The Black Sea has emerged as a new battleground in the Heart of Europe. It has become the site of frozen conflicts and open wars. Thus, it has acquired great geopolitical significance, as it has remained throughout the history.*

*For a long period of time, the region around the Black Sea has remained a single(undivided) geopolitical space due to the geographical proximity and political affinity of the countries of the region. Despite these facts, the political change in the geopolitical landscape has created many fissures in the region. Subsequently, it has developed into an area of multiple conflicts. Several of these conflicts have challenged the geopolitical stability of not only this region but the world at a large.*

*Shortly after the disintegration of the USSR, the US and the European Union accepted almost every country in the Black Sea region into their reach. It increased their sphere of influence. Russia was also aspiring for strategic dominance in the Black Sea and the region surrounding it. The concern for Moscow over the expansion of NATO up to its borders has led to a new tension in the region. The conflict in the sphere of influence turned into open war, aggression and occupation of the land of sovereign countries.*

*The Black Sea has critical geostrategic importance for the countries of the region and for the other countries of Asia and Europe. For US and the European Union, the Black Sea is mainly a source of natural resources and a space for trade and transit but for Russia, it is a geopolitical space of its security. The critical geostrategic importance of the Black Sea has converted it and the region surrounding it into a region of conflict. Any provocation from western countries may lead to a major geopolitical crisis in the sea and the surrounding region. The present research is an attempt to interpret the changes in the security and stability of the Black Sea since the disintegration of the USSR.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Black Sea, Geopolitics, Russia, NATO, EU.*

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