

Securing the Black Sea Region: Iulia-Sabina Joja, Ph.D.

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“Securing the Black Sea Region,” a lecture by Iulia-Sabina Joja, analyzes the complex state of European security regarding the Black Sea and the significance of Ukraine’s reliance on international aid.

Dr. Joja was born in Romania and has extensive experience in international politics, having worked with both the United Nations and the European Union on international issues regarding European security. Currently, she is an adjunct professor at both Georgetown and George Washington University and a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute.

One overarching topic of Iulia's lecture was Ukraine's reliance on international aid, specifically from the United States. She noted that Ukraine is currently in a stalemate with Russian troops, and the country's continued military success relies on economic support. If countries were to withdraw aid, she emphasized that Ukraine would likely be unable to hold its ground as Russian troops greatly outnumbered Ukrainians. With the United States leading international political influence, it is clear that if the United States begins to withdraw aid, European countries would follow suit. For example, Germany originally donated only minimal supplies, including helmets, to the war, but as the United States increased its support, many European countries began to do so as well.

Along with the need for more military aid, she indirectly mentioned the importance of foreign aid through continued trade with Ukraine. When she visited Kyiv three months into the war, she noted rubble from bombing within the city and emphasized the heartbreak and overall costly damage that the city withstood. Yet, she also explained the resilience Ukraine showed because less than two years later Kyiv was completely rebuilt. This indirectly shows the continued importance of trade and economic support to Ukraine, as Ukraine's resilience and development are highly reliant on foreign investment.

Dr. Joja also emphasized the importance of Ukraine's success for European security in the Black Sea region. With the Black Sea being a key outlet to the Mediterranean Sea, Europe’s economic stability is highly reliant on being able to travel through the Black Sea. With all of this in mind, it's clear that in order to ensure economic prosperity within Europe there needs to be an increased flow of foreign aid into Ukraine, and that the Western world needs to direct their focus onto the Black Sea. For example, she mentioned the United States is currently drafting a solution to deter Russia in the Black Sea region. If this solution were to pass there would be an increased integration of U.S. defense strategies into the Ukrainian military, specifically regarding military training. Moreover, many nations have noted NATO’s lack of action regarding the Black Sea as the organization has seemed to take a back seat to U.S. defense strategy.

While the future of the war is unclear, one thing is certain: more must be done to protect the security of the Black Sea. While Ukraine’s current stalemate with Russia is heavily reliant on foreign aid, more must be done to protect the national security of European nations. The European Union and United States must increase their foreign investment into Ukraine to

remove Russia from the occupied regions. With the Black Sea being essential to European economies, the success of the Ukrainian military has broad impacts over the entire Western world. Overall, the international community must support the bravery and resilience of Ukraine in a time of conflict, as Ukraine's military is vital in protecting the security of European nations.