

The Coming Storm: the Great Powers and the Clash over the Balkans and the Black Sea (1944-1946)

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Abstract

Borrowing the expression of H. A. Gibbons „for so long as there is water in the Black Sea and wheat on the steppes of Russia there will always be the issue of the Straits”, the Romanian historian, Gheorghe Brătianu, considered, in 1943, that the future of the Balkans and the Black Sea depended on the way in which the Great Powers succeeded, in the light of post-war agreements, to harmonise their interests. The change in the course of the war influenced Soviet plans for taking control of the Balkans and the Black Sea regions. Tensions between the Allies grew in the course of 1946. The Balkans and the Black Sea found itself the objects of a conflict whose causes were to be found in the reopening of competition for control of the region. The end of the war brought an important change in the balance of forces in the Balkan region. The launch of the Truman Plan (March 1947), but especially its military component, placed the USA in the coordinates of the peripheral security strategy. The outbreak of the Cold War and Turkey’s adherence to the Marshall Plan left the Straits out of Soviet control and announced the beginning of new stages in the shaping of centres of power and domination in the Balkans and the Black Sea region.

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