

# Why Turkey and Russia's Competition in the Black Sea Extends to Circassia

When it comes to geopolitics and regional power struggles, the Black Sea region has always been a hotbed of activity. Situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, this body of water has witnessed numerous conflicts and rivalries throughout history. Currently, one of the most interesting dynamics in the Black Sea involves the competition between Turkey and Russia and its extension to the region of Circassia. In this article, we will delve into the geopolitical factors at play, exploring the historical context, present-day relations between Turkey and Russia, and the ramifications for the Circassian community.

## The Historical Context: Russia's Expansion

Russia's thirst for imperial expansion can be traced back centuries, and the Black Sea region has always been a significant area of interest for Russian leaders. In the late 18th century, the Russian Empire expanded into the North Caucasus, which included the territory known as Circassia. This expansion was met with fierce resistance from the Circassians, who fought against Russian forces for decades.

Eventually, in the 19th century, Russia managed to suppress the Circassian resistance and annexed the region, leading to the forced migration of many Circassians. This traumatic event, known as the Circassian Genocide, has continued to shape the identity and aspirations of the Circassian people to this day.

## Turkey, Russia, the Black Sea, and Circassia

by Edmund Spencer (Hardcover – August 22, 2015)

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## Turkey's Rising Influence

Turkey, with its proximity to the Black Sea and historical ties to the region, has increasingly asserted itself as a major player in the Black Sea's geopolitical landscape. Under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey has pursued an assertive foreign policy, aiming to regain the influence it once had during the days of the Ottoman Empire.

Additionally, Turkey has historically maintained strong cultural and trade links with the Circassian community. Many Circassians have resettled in Turkey over the years, and their diaspora has played a vital role in preserving Circassian culture and fostering ties with their ancestral homeland in the Black Sea region.

## Russia-Turkey Relations in the Black Sea

Tensions between Russia and Turkey in the Black Sea region have intensified in recent years. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 brought the conflict to the forefront. This move by Russia was met with international condemnation, and Turkey, like many other nations, opposed the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty.

Furthermore, the ongoing conflict in Syria has become another battleground for Russia and Turkey. Their competing interests in the region have fueled tensions and led to several incidents, including the downing of a Russian military aircraft by Turkish forces in 2015.

## **The Implications for Circassia**

As Turkey and Russia vie for influence in the Black Sea, the ramifications are felt by the Circassian community. Turkey's growing involvement in the region poses an opportunity for Circassians to leverage their diaspora's ties and gain support for their aspiration of self-determination.

Russia, on the other hand, fears that increased Turkish influence in the Black Sea and Circassia could undermine its geopolitical goals. The Russian government has been wary of the Circassian diaspora's activities, viewing them as a potential threat to its control over the region.

However, the Circassian people see the geopolitical competition between Turkey and Russia as a chance to raise awareness about their history and struggle for recognition. By aligning with Turkey, the Circassian diaspora hopes to amplify their voices and bring attention to the Circassian Genocide, as well as their desire for autonomy.

The Black Sea region has always been a contentious zone, with major powers vying for influence. The competition between Turkey and Russia in this region has extended to Circassia, where historical grievances and geopolitical aspirations intersect. As Turkey asserts itself and Russia seeks to maintain control, the Circassian community finds itself caught in the midst of a power struggle. Nonetheless, this competition also presents an opportunity for the Circassians to draw attention to their history and strive for self-determination. By

understanding the complexities of this competition, we can shed light on the ongoing struggle faced by the Circassian people and support their fight for recognition and autonomy.



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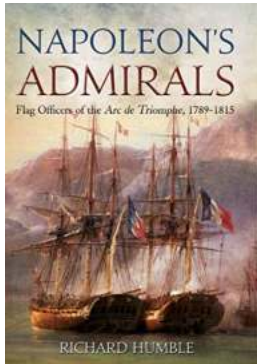
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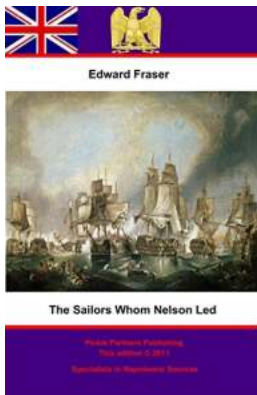
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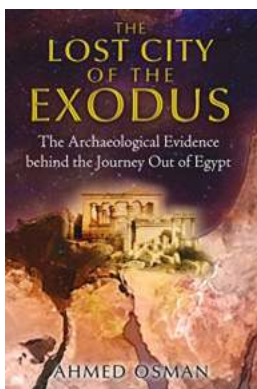
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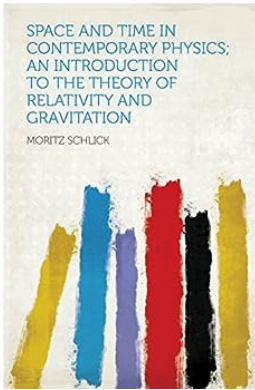
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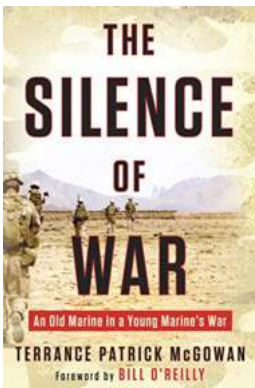
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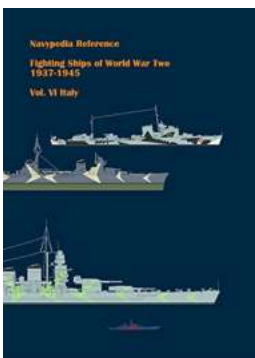
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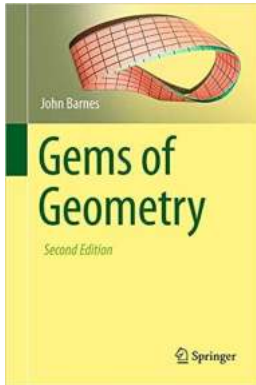
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