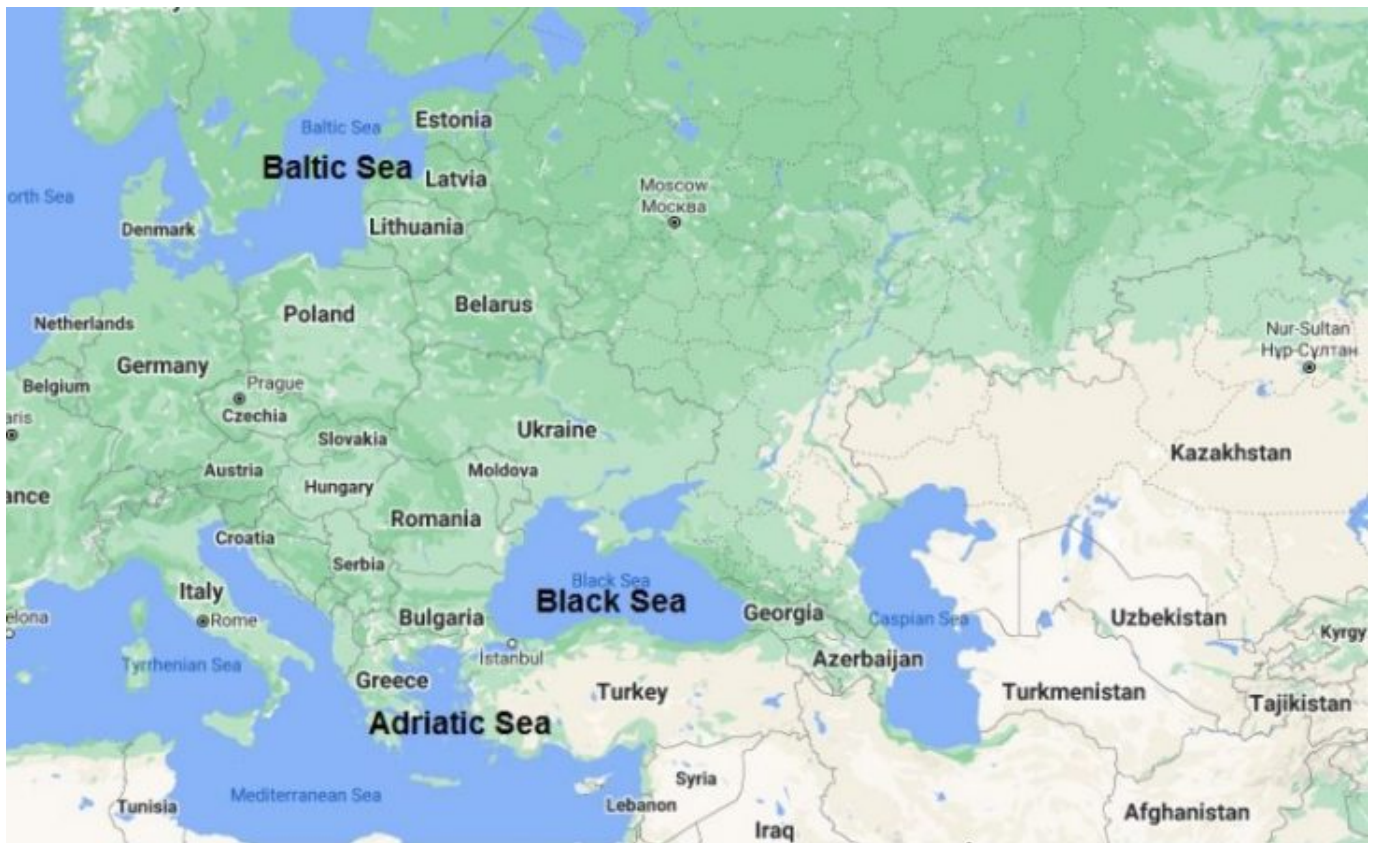


Russia has regained much of its ability to project power abroad. But 12 European Nations have churned out a plan of deterrence, an initiative known as the Three Seas Initiative. It would create a containment belt that stretches along the Baltic Sea, the Adriatic Sea and the Black Sea. The ultimate objective is to prevent Russia from further encroaching on Eastern Europe.



Launched in 2015 by Croatian and Polish policymakers the Three Seas Initiative seeks to create a political platform by interconnectivity on energy, infrastructure, and digitalization projects in Central and Eastern Europe. The initiative gets its name from the three seas that surround the region and the participating countries being Poland, Romania, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Czech Republic.

The project technically is an economic one. It aims to facilitate a commercial corridor from the North to South since the 1950s most infrastructural interconnections in East Europe formed along the east west axis. During the cold war the east west axis pipelines, highways, railways served as Soviet tools of submission and control. Even today a large amount of infrastructural flow is primarily from East to West which is a telling sign that Eastern

Europe still relies on Russia for much of its needs.

The United States have always benefited from the initiative's rhetoric, sentiments and objective. Recently the Secretary of State in his visit to Germany have been vocal about their relationship with this Initiative and the latest contribution they have made to the 12 countries and their organisation. "The United States intends to provide up to USD 1 billion in financing to the Central and Eastern European countries of the Three Seas Initiative," said Mike Pompeo.

In Munich, Germany, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made it clear that Washington pledged "up to USD 1 billion" to boost energy projects in eastern Europe as part of efforts to reduce reliance on Russian natural gas.

"The United States - through our International Development Finance Corporation, and with the support of the US Congress - intends to provide up to USD 1 billion in financing to the Central and Eastern European countries of the Three Seas Initiative," Pompeo told the Munich Security Conference.

"Our aim is to galvanise private sector investment in their energy sectors."

Though the group haven't gathered enough popularity but the Three Seas Initiative (3SI) is the most significant political and economic policy initiative to emerge in Central and Eastern Europe since the enlargements of the EU and NATO.

The key idea of the Initiative is to break the decades-long legacy of the Soviet infrastructure with which the post-World War II era in Central and Eastern Europe tied, ensuring the entire region's energy and transportation dependency on Kremlin.

The US have been paying attention to this initiative and have reaffirmed support for the efforts of North-South energy, transportation and digital infrastructure. It is believed that such a secure and resilient group is not only key to binding the countries of Central and Eastern Europe more closely with the rest of the European Union but also to the United States.



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

## The American Plan

The United States hints that more can be achieved by closely collaborating with the Eastern Partnership and also by promoting the idea of non-EU states in joining the initiative.

- Ensuring that all countries in Eastern Europe are interconnected. It is also important to maximize previous American and Western investments in energy and infrastructure development, connecting the resource-rich Caspian Sea and with the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean, with the aim of successfully implementing the objectives of the Three Seas Initiative.
- To improve the economic sovereignty of all the countries involved and to enable them to withstand Russian efforts to manipulate its smaller neighbours and also, limiting China's growing economic influence in Central and Eastern Europe. These countries have the potential to play a significant role in the upcoming diversification of the global supply chain, including the medical supply chain as well. According to the American strategic interests integrating these countries can be of significant benefit for its own Economic Prosperity Network.
- Facilitating these practical steps to improve infrastructure development and the formation of the Crescent of Economic Cooperation may be the most cost-effective way

for the U.S. to strengthen the security and sovereignty of a large number of allied countries stretched from Central and Eastern Europe all the way to Central Asia.

The attempt of Chinese entry in Europe and a few nations with the help of their democratic turned authoritarian regimes became rogue that the East European theatre has become a much messier place than before. The close proximity to the Middle East, Central Asia and Russia makes it prone to Refugee related difficulties, Terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters, and Russian influence (or the prolonged Soviet-style influence)

*The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Kootneeti Team*

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