

**East Mediterranean Chronicles**

# **A Decade of Change 2009–2019**

**Volume 3  
2015–2016**

**Editors:**

**Chr. G. Pelaghias**

**Marta Murzanska**

**George Chr. Pelaghias**



**ERPIC**

**European Rim Policy and Investment Council**



**East Mediterranean Chronicles**

**A Decade of Change**  
**2009-2019**

**Volume 3**  
**2015-2016**



**East Mediterranean Chronicles**

**A Decade of Change  
2009-2019**

**Volume 3  
2015-2016**

Edited by  
Chr. G. Pelagias  
Marta Murzanska  
George Chr. Pelagias



ERPIC  
European Rim Policy and Investment Council  
Larnaca  
2020

# East Mediterranean Chronicles

## A Decade of Change

2009-2019

Published in Cyprus by the European Rim Policy and Investment Council  
27 Gregory Afxentiou Avenue, 6021 Larnaca, Cyprus

Copyright © 2020 by European Rim Policy and Investment Council  
All rights reserved.

ISBN: 9798518889668

---

**Editor:** Chr. G. Pelagias. **Assistant Editors:** Marta Murzanska, George Chr. Pelagias

### Editorial & Advisory Board

David Altman - *Senior Vice-President, Netanya Academic College; Vice-Chair, S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue;*

Ahmet Djavit An - *Political Commentator; Senior Fellow, ERPIC*

Fanoulla Argyrou - *Journalist, Researcher and Author*

Carol E. Bailey - *Energy Consultant; Former Country Manager, Shell; Co-Director of the Energy Program, ERPIC*

Jorgen Berg - *Upstream Energy Advisor; Former Managing Director, Eastern Mediterranean, Schlumberger*

Joan Brenton Connelly - *Professor of Classics, New York University*

Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak - *Researcher, Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security; Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University*

Antonia Dimou - *Middle East and Persian Gulf Unit, Institute for Security and Defense Analyses, Athens*

Avishai Ehrlich - *Professor of Political Sociology, Tel Aviv University*

Ehud Eiran - *Senior Lecturer of International Relations, University of Haifa*

Marios L. Evriviades - *Associate Professor, Neapolis University Paphos*

Elie Friedman - *Senior Lecturer, Department of Multi-Disciplinary Studies, Ashkelon Academic College*

Laury Haytayan - *Middle East and North Africa Director, Natural Resource Governance Institute, Beirut*

Yair Hirschfeld - *Vice-Chair, S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue; Academic Director, Centre for Middle East Studies at Galilee International Management Institute; Lecturer, Department of Middle Eastern History, University of Haifa*

Abdulla Ibrahim - *Senior Advisor, Diplomatic Dialogue, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Egypt*

Andreas Jacovides - *Ambassador a.h., Cyprus*

Klearchos A. Kyriakides - *Deputy Head and Assistant Professor, School of Law, University of Central Lancashire, UCLan Cyprus; Director of the Democracy and Rule of Law Program, ERPIC*

Glen Labhart - *Energy Industry Risk Specialist*

Gary Lakes - *Journalist; Co-Director of the Energy Program, ERPIC*

Andrew Lambert - *Air Commodore, RAF (Retired); Former Director of Defense Studies, RAF; Director of the Regional Security Program and Honorary Chairman, ERPIC*

Eran Lerman - *Vice-President, Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security; Former Deputy National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of Israel*

Habib C. Malik - *Associate Professor of History (Retired), Lebanese American University; Senior Fellow on Lebanon, Philos Project; Senior Fellow, ERPIC*

Costas Melakopides - *Associate Professor of International Relations (Retired), University of Cyprus*

Amit Mor - *Energy Industry Financial & Strategic Consultant; Senior Lecturer for Energy Economics & Geopolitics, Herzliya Interdisciplinary Center*

Roderick Pace - *Jean Monnet Professor, Institute for European Studies, University of Malta*

Andrestinos N. Papadopoulos - *Ambassador a.h., Cyprus; Author; Honorary President, ERPIC*

Gerasimos Rodotheatos - *Teaching Scholar of Public International Law, Panteion University, Athens*

Ephraim Sneh - *Author; Brigadier General, IDF (Retired); Former Minister, Health, Transportation; Former Deputy Minister, Defense; Chairman, S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, Netanya Academic College; President, Board of Trustees, ERPIC*

Michalis Stavrinos - *Ambassador a.h., Cyprus; Lecturer of International Law, European University Cyprus*

Lars Wedin - *Author; Captain, Swedish Navy (Retired); Visiting Fellow, Swedish National Defense College; Research Fellow, Institut Français d'Analyse Stratégique, Paris*

Jens Wilhelmsen - *Fund Manager; Investment Advisor on Energy Industry*

*In memory of*  
*S. R. Schwenninger*  
*1951 - 2020*





*In memory of*  
*R. P. Collins*  
*1949 - 2017*



# Contents

<i>Abbreviations and Acronyms</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>List of Plates</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>v</i>
Introduction to Volume 3	1
Timeline	3
Contributions	17
1. Islam and Islamism: Can History Suggest How the Strategic Future May Unravel? <i>Andrew Lambert – 21 January 2015</i>	19
2. The Eastern Mediterranean: French Foreign Policy <i>Jean-Lec Florent - 21 April 2015</i>	35
3. Evolving Global Terrorism Threat in and around the Mediterranean <i>Fernando Reinares - 27 May 2015</i>	41
4. Current Geopolitical Issues in the Eastern Mediterranean: Energy Issues <i>Aftab Kamal Pasha - 27 May 2015</i>	45
5. The East Mediterranean Cooperation Council Proposal (EMCC) <i>Chr. G. Pelaghias – 27 May 2015</i>	49
6. The Future Cyprus Settlement: Lessons from Lebanon <i>Habib C. Malik - 24 September 2015</i>	51
7. Long-Term Turkish Strategy on Cyprus as Recorded in the British National Archives <i>Fanoulla Argyrou - 6 October 2015</i>	63
8. The Meaning of ‘Bi-Communalism and its Consequences for Cyprus and the European Union <i>Klearchos A. Kyriakides - 19 January 2016</i>	77

9. The Economic Dimensions of a Cyprus Settlement <i>Aris Petasis - 26 January 2016</i>	91
10. East Mediterranean Energy: A Discussion of Possibilities <i>Gary Lakes - 2 February 2016</i>	105
11. The Islamist Challenge to the Eastern Mediterranean and Europe <i>Shmuel Bar - 9 February 2016</i>	119
12. Recasting the Security of the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Marios Evriviades - 16 February 2016</i>	135
13. Challenges Facing Christian Communities in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East <i>Hrayr Jebejian - 23 February 2016</i>	147
14. Syrian Peace Talks: Prospects of a Great Power Regional Concert? <i>Marios Evriviades and Farid Mirbagheri - 1 March 2016</i>	163
15. The Many-Faced Ideology of Political Islam and Its Challenge to Liberal Democracy <i>Marta Murzanska - August 2016</i>	177
16. Turkish Islamic Organizations in Europe <i>Marta Murzanska – November 2016</i>	195
17. Iran and the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Reza Zabib - 24 November 2016</i>	201
18. Security in the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Kathleen Ann Doherty - 1 December 2016</i>	213
19. Changes in the Balance of Power - Putin, Brexit and Trump <i>Andrew Lambert - 5-7 December 2016</i>	219
20. New Developments in Air Power in Syria and the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Asaf Agmon - 5-7 December 2016</i>	245
21. South-East Mediterranean Air Power Projection <i>Ioannis E. Anastasakis - 5-7 December 2016</i>	255
22. Maritime Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean <i>David Ben-Bashat - 5-7 December 2016</i>	259
23. Russian Policy in the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Irina Zvyagelskaya - 5-7 December 2016</i>	267
24. The Role of Iran in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Greater Middle East <i>Ephraim Sneh - 5-7 December 2016</i>	279

25. What Would Be Necessary to Rethink the Iran P5+1 Agreement? <i>Yair Hirschfeld - 5-7 December 2016</i>	287
26. Political Islam in the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Farid Mirbagheri - 5-7 December 2016</i>	297
27. The Latest Developments in Turkey <i>Christos Minagias - 5-7 December 2016</i>	305
28. Turkey's Struggle for World Hegemony of the Islamic People <i>David Altman - 5-7 December 2016</i>	313
29. The Strategic Culture of Turkey <i>Marcus Templar - 5-7 December 2016</i>	325
30. The Strategic Role of Cyprus: Some Salient Lessons of History <i>Klearchos A. Kyriakides - 5-7 December 2016</i>	337
31. Hydrocarbons Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Gary Lakes - 5-7 December 2016</i>	355
32. Closing Remarks <i>Andrew Lambert - 5-7 December 2016</i>	361
Concluding remarks to Volume 3	367
<i>Index</i>	369
<i>Contributors</i>	375



## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi ( <i>Turkish</i> ) - Justice and Development Party
BCM	Billion Cubic Meters
BPD	Barrels Per Day
BTC	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi ( <i>Turkish</i> ) – Republican People’s Party
DITIB	Diyanet İşleri Türk-İslam Birliği ( <i>Turkish</i> ) – Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EMCC	Eastern Mediterranean Cooperation Council
ENI	Eni S.p.A
EU	European Union
GNA	Government of National Accord
HAF	Hellenic Air Force
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
IGI	Interconnector Greece-Italy
IMF	International Monetary Found
INF	Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty
IS/ISIS/ISIL	Islamic State/Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/Levant
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MHP	Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi ( <i>Turkish</i> ) – Nationalist Movement Party

MIT	Millî İstihbarat Teşkilatı ( <i>Turkish</i> ) – National Intelligence Organization
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Organization
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NHS	National Health Service
NOBLE	Noble Energy, Inc.
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê ( <i>Kurdish</i> ) – Kurdistan Worker’s Party
SBA	Sovereign Base Area
SDF	Syrian Defense Forces
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SFA	Syrian Armed Forces
SHELL	Royal Dutch Shell
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
SYRIZA	Συνασπισμός Ριζοσπαστικής Αριστεράς – Προοδευτική Συμμαχία ( <i>Greek</i> ) – The Coalition of the Radical Left – Progressive Alliance
TAP	Trans-Adriatic Pipeline
TCF	Trillion Cubic Feet
TPAO	Türkiye Petrolleri Anonim Ortaklığı ( <i>Turkish</i> ) – Turkish Petroleum Corporation
‘TRNC’	‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus’
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
WTO	World Trade Organization
YPG	Yekîneyên Parastina Gel ( <i>Kurdish</i> ) – People’s Protection Units



## LIST OF PLATES

- Plate 1:** Cyprus third licensing round
- Plate 2:** Locations of Flash Royal research vessel harassment by Turkish warship – 25-26 August 2016
- Plate 3:** A proposed prototype of the logo of the East Mediterranean Cooperation Council
- Plate 4:** South China Sea dispute
- Plate 5:** United States vs Russia defense expenditure as a % of GDP
- Plate 6:** Conquests of Russian lands
- Plate 7:** Russia's buffer zones
- Plate 8:** Alexander III of Russia
- Plate 9:** Russia's expansion and collapse
- Plate 10:** Estimated nuclear warhead inventory
- Plate 11:** Summary of new START limits
- Plate 12:** Russian diaspora in Ukraine and Baltic States
- Plate 13:** Russia's reliance on hydrocarbons
- Plate 14:** Russian GDP and defense spending
- Plate 15:** Iskander deployment in the Kaliningrad Oblast
- Plate 16:** Armata tank and Severodvinsk nuclear-power attack submarine
- Plate 17:** New Russian fighters
- Plate 18:** Ukraine crisis: the situation in Crimea
- Plate 19:** Dmitry Kiselyov's statement

- Plate 20:** ‘Let’s take back control’ Brexit slogan
- Plate 21:** Brexit newspaper covers
- Plate 22:** Britain’s net migration and EU referendum results
- Plate 23:** Brexit referendum results by demographics
- Plate 24:** Media reaction to the High Court’s Brexit ruling
- Plate 25:** British Pound’s decrease in reaction of Brexit
- Plate 26:** Media report of Sir Richard Barrons’ warning regarding Britain’s military capability
- Plate 27:** UK military spending as of % of GDP
- Plate 28:** Donald Trump
- Plate 29:** Selected NATO countries’ military expenditure as a % of GDP
- Plate 30:** Balance of power – future scenarios
- Plate 31:** Cyprus as an ‘extension’ of the Anatolian peninsula
- Plate 32:** The essence of post-1956 Turkish thinking towards Cyprus, as expressed on 26 June 1958
- Plate 33:** Minutes of meeting on Cyprus between Henry Kissinger and Sir John Killick, 27 August 1974
- Plate 34:** Letter dated 25 March 1975 from W. H. Fullerton to M. C. S. Weston regarding Turkish Cyprus demands
- Plate 35:** British presence in Cyprus
- Plate 36:** Members of the Baghdad Pact (CENTO)
- Plate 37:** British overseas operations with the use of military bases located in Cyprus
- Plate 38:** A photograph of RAF Akrotiri from the sky showing parts of its infrastructure
- Plate 39:** Royal Air Force’s role in operations against the Islamic State

## PREFACE

The Eastern Mediterranean region, often referred to as the 'Levant', occupies a unique place in the world. Geographically, it is situated at the crossroads of three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe. It is the cradle of several ancient civilizations: Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Phoenician, Greek and Roman, as well as the root of European and Western cultures. It is the birthplace of three of the world's great religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. At present, the Eastern Mediterranean forms a part of the wider Arab and predominantly Sunni Muslim world. But due to its rich heritage and history spanning over millennia the region is very diverse, consisting of a colorful mosaic of cultures, ethnicities, religions and sects. A place of strategic importance, it has a long history of civilizational clashes, imperial conquests and inter-state conflicts. It is, without doubt, one of the most volatile and conflict-prone regions in the world. Nevertheless, the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean have over centuries developed a distinct and recognizable culture.

For most of the Common Era, the Eastern Mediterranean formed a part of the Roman and Byzantine Empires and several Islamic caliphates. The abolition of the last caliphate in 1924 following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire was a watershed moment in the modern history of the Eastern Mediterranean and the wider Middle East. The French and the British divided the Ottoman regions into their spheres of influence. The artificial borders of new protectorates were drawn arbitrarily with little regard to demographic realities. Modern nation-states of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan born out of those arrangements have to this day not managed to fully develop a sense of national identity able to bridge ethnic, tribal and sectarian loyalties. This unresolved identity crisis when pitted against a drive for state nationalism has been one of the main causes of the repeating cycles of conflict over the last century.

One of the most important issues in the attempt to fashion a new regional order has been the role of religion in the political sphere. Disillusionment and frustration equated Western secularism with injustice and oppression. The emergence of a potent movement of Islamic revival was driven by the nostalgia for Islam's past glory and a contempt for Western values. The Iranian revolution of 1979 and the establishment of the Islamic Republic has been one of the most important examples of such 'Islamic awakening'. After consolidating power internally, Iran's religious establishment found fertile ground for the export of Shia Islamism in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

In the Sunni Muslim context, the 'Islamic awakening' was best advocated by the Muslim Brotherhood whose influence and presence spread throughout the region and far beyond. The

Brotherhood came to power by a popular vote in the Gaza Strip in 2006 and briefly in Egypt on the initial wave of the Arab Spring. In Syria, although brutally suppressed in the early 1980s by Hafez al-Assad following a rebellion against the Baathist regime, the Brotherhood played a key role in the 2011 uprising against Hafez's son Bashar. The subsequent Syrian civil war forged close ties with Turkish Islamists and the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) whose ideology has been greatly influenced by the Muslim Brothers. The Brotherhood's ideologues, in particular Sayyed Qutb – 'the architect of worldwide jihad'\* - inspired a variety of Islamist currents, including al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS). In Turkey, the rise to power of the AKP under the leadership of Erdogan led to Ottoman nostalgia and legitimized the ideology of political Islam. The new regime began challenging Turkey's secular and pro-Western orientation. This change of direction has been manifested in irredentist, expansionist and pan-Islamic tendencies often described as 'neo-Ottomanist'. But, despite its Islamist character, the ruling party has not rejected nationalism but rather emphasized the religious component of Turkish national identity, leading to a blend of nationalism and Islamism.

The struggle for the hearts and minds of the Middle East has been complicated by Western involvement. The United States in particular has a long history of prioritizing economic and strategic interests over democratic and liberal values. The West's apparent failure therefore to practice what it preaches has reinforced the sense of disillusionment with Western values, adding to the appeal of religious fundamentalism. The murderous Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88 was followed two years later by a massive US-led Western intervention against Iraq's genocidal treatment of its Kurdish populations and its invasion of Kuwait. Just over a decade later, the US and its allies invaded Iraq a second time to dispose of the Hussein regime. The subsequent occupation of Iraq led to a long and bloody insurgency with a staggering human death toll. It created a favorable environment for sectarianism, radicalization and the emergence of an al-Qaeda branch in Iraq - a precursor of IS. Similarly the nearly nine-year-long Syrian civil war has brought a death-toll of around half a million and a humanitarian crisis on a scale unseen since World War II. The influx of Syrian refugees put an enormous economic and social burden on neighboring countries of Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. The conflict triggered the migration crisis in Europe which undermined Schengen, bitterly polarized Europeans and many believe contributed to Brexit. The chaos caused by the war enabled ISIS to wreak havoc in lands that fell under its control. IS-organized or inspired terrorist attacks swept across Europe and the West, undermining a sense of security, deepening the rift between indigenous and Muslim populations and leading to erosion of civil liberties.

Over the next few years, the Syrian civil war became a regional quagmire. In 2015, Russia launched a military intervention in Syria to aid Bashar al-Assad's regime. The intervention turned the tables of the war to the regime's favor. It enabled Russia to secure its presence in the Eastern Mediterranean marking its resurgence in the Middle East, thereby challenging the US

---

\* Jonathan Raban, 'My Holy War,' The New Yorker, 4 February 2002, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/02/04/my-holy-war>

regional supremacy. Following the withdrawal of the US forces from Iraq and capitalizing on the rise of the IS, Iran through several Shia militias including Hezbollah established a strong political and military presence in Iraq. Therefore, it has moved closer to completing the so-called 'Shia crescent' – the sphere of Iranian influence stretching from the Persian Gulf through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon. This 'axis of resistance', as Iran calls it, seeks to challenge the West's and Israel's presence in the region.

The decades-long Arab-Israeli conflict continued to have grave regional and global repercussions. At the outset, it led to the flight of Palestinians and Jews from Palestine and many Arab countries. Palestinian refugees triggered internal strife in Jordan and Lebanon. The fifteen year-long Lebanese civil war led to the Iranian Hezbollah permanently establishing itself in the country leading to continuing terrorism and intermittent conflict on the Lebanese-Israeli border. The outbreak of the Arab Spring was initially interpreted as a long overdue wave of democratization. Except for Tunisia, however, the results of the uprisings fell below expectations. When President Mubarak stepped down after thirty years in power, Egyptians were full of hope for a better future. However, after a brief experience with the democratically elected Muslim Brotherhood in power, Egypt returned to traditional politics. Following the NATO-supported ousting of Muammar Gaddafi, Libya descended into civil war which allowed al-Qaeda, IS and other jihadi groups to establish strategic footholds. As in Syria, the involvement of external actors complicated the situation even further. Similarly, since the AKP came to power, Turkey saw a gradual unraveling of democratic norms and institutions. Crackdowns on freedom of expression, purges and mass arrests of military and state employees and constitutional changes concentrating power in Erdogan hands, all testify to Turkey's slide to autocracy. Secularism – the country's official policy since the time of Atatürk – has also come under attack in the foreign policy sphere. As a result, Turkey has been drifting away from the West. Its relationship with Israel has become strained, while ties with Russia were strengthened. Its neo-Ottomanism found expression in the Aegean, the Eastern Mediterranean, Iraq, Syria and Libya.

The last decade also saw promising hydrocarbons discoveries in the Levantine Basin that could potentially remold the region economically. At the same time, due to the region's complicated political and strategic environments, such discoveries could turn into flashpoints for new conflicts. Without question the modern history of the Eastern Mediterranean has been turbulent. The region has suffered from interstate wars, civil strifes and unresolved conflicts. Sectarianism, radicalization and religious extremism have bred intolerance and widespread persecution of religious minorities. Ancient communities living in the Levant for centuries have been systematically wiped out. At the same time, rampant corruption and limited political accountability have led to widespread unemployment, poverty and growing sense of injustice.

\* \* \*

The last decade bore witness to several important events that have and will continue to affect the historical development of the Eastern Mediterranean and the broader Middle East. These volumes are a record of such events as they took place. Adopting a three-pronged approach, we

tracked evolving security challenges, the rising promise of the region's energy potential, and grassroots bid for political reform. The changing security landscape, the new hydrocarbon discoveries, the so-called "Arab Spring" and its aftermath have given birth to new dynamics and challenged the validity of old paradigms. The complexity of such developments was compounded by the ebb and flow of superpower involvement. The return of Russia, the softly treading but growing Chinese presence and an uncertain US response risked a new round of superpower competition in the region. Fallout from the Second Gulf War and the frustrating process of Iraqi regime-change added to the effects of Syrian destabilization and fanned the flames of political Islam and the dream of a new caliphate. International and regional efforts to confront the Islamic State triggered dynamics that promised to further change the face of the region. The specter of the creation of a Kurdish corridor along the southern Turkish border, as well as the prospect of an Iranian arc from Tehran to the Mediterranean fanned the flames of long-standing disputes, such as the Turkish-Syrian territorial feud, the Israel-Iran confrontation, and the ageless Israeli-Palestinian struggle.

To this volatile mix one must add the challenges to Western hegemony. During the last decade, the East Mediterranean has witnessed a growing disillusionment with Westernism, liberalism and Western-style democracy as the basis for good governance, economic prosperity and social and political stability. The last decade has also revealed the political impact of demography when combined with the latest products of the electronic age. Populations of key states in the region have not only increased, but so has the ratio of young to old. Moreover, these larger, younger populations are now interconnected and their voices amplified by electronic social media. Social and political mobilization has found new tools used with considerable effect in Egypt and elsewhere in the region. This new interconnectivity, however, has not worked in favor of Western political and social concepts. On the contrary, disillusionment with Westernism by ever larger and younger populations of the region has made it easier for both regional and global actors of non-Western powers to challenge American regional hegemony. Targeting liberalism as the driving concept behind globalism, Russian, Chinese and Turkish Eurasianists seek to legitimize illiberalism and even authoritarianism as a better organizing principle for states seeking political reform and economic prosperity. Eurasianism has been offered as the foundation of a revised concept of communalism, representing the sacred link between 'peoples' and their homelands, the link that gives rise to national and cultural characteristics to be savored and protected against the leveling effects of Western globalism. Rejection of the West has given new impetus to competing paradigms, paving the way to hegemony and dominance by powerful regional actors. In this context, new concepts of autocratic democracy resonate among advocates of political Islam, both Shia and Sunni. A Russian-Turkish-Iranian coalition has held up surprisingly well over their common Syrian undertaking despite some developing rifts, especially between Russia and Turkey over Ukraine and the Libyan internecine conflict. Turkish neo-Ottomanism based upon and fueled by intense nationalism and Islamism is another point of concern. Without doubt, efforts to re-legitimize the idea of empire, if allowed to bear fruit, will have a profound effect on the future of the region and beyond.

When seen from the perspective, the need to deal with the consequences of the region's energy potential takes on a new element of urgency. Energy discoveries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Republic of Cyprus (ROC) have triggered a confrontation between the ROC on one hand, and the Republic of Turkey and its internationally unrecognized proxy, the "Turkish Republic of North Cyprus". Turkish claims against Greek maritime and insular territories, as well as involvement in other low and high intensity conflicts, including Syria and Libya, further threaten the stability of the region. On the other hand, the regional character of the nascent energy industry has contributed to a new East Mediterranean dynamic for regional co-operation. Israel, Egypt, Greece, and Cyprus, with the apparent approval of the United States, slowly moved multilateral institutional cooperation that could help develop and ultimately defend the energy resources of the Eastern Mediterranean. Such cooperation, although explicitly non-exclusive of Turkey, aims nevertheless to avoid regional dominance by any single power.

\*       \*       \*

Volumes 1 through 4 of the East Mediterranean Chronicles contain the product of ERPIC's activities over the last ten years. During this period, the Council organized and hosted international conferences, roundtable presentations and discussions, formal interviews, as well as online interviews and presentations. These volumes contain timelines and transcripts of such conferences, discussions and interviews, as well as reports and analyses by people that bore witness to the underlying events. The timelines mentioned, although not exhaustive, are meant to mark the significant events of the period being covered. All material originally recorded in electronic form have been transcribed, translated and edited where necessary by the Council's permanent staff. Such editing, however, especially of material transcribed verbatim, has sought to ensure continuity and clarity while preserving the stylistic, grammatical and syntactical characteristics of the original material. We are deeply grateful to all who have so kindly, graciously and diligently contributed their valuable time to complete these volumes and compile the materials they contain. The Editors wish to thank all the literary contributors whose names appear in the List of Contributors at the end of each volume. In particular, the Editors wish to thank Andrew Lambert, Andrestinos N. Papadopoulos, Klearchos A. Kyriakides, Gary Lakes, Fanoulla Argyrou, Habib C. Malik and Marios L. Evriviades for their contributions, as well as Jacqueline Booth for her organizing skills. Our thanks are due to Ephraim Sneh, David Ben-Bashat, Eran Lerman, Yair Hirschfeld, David Altman, Baruch Spiegel and Elie Friedman, for their invaluable help.

The Editors  
December 2020





## Introduction to Volume 3

This third Volume of our series covers the years 2015 – 2016. It includes material presented over the course of a virtual conference that took place in December 2016. The volume begins with an historical review by Andrew Lambert (see Contents, Contributions: Item 1) on Islam and Islamism and their projected effect on the future developments in the region. The Islamist challenge to the region and its connection to global terrorism is also examined by Shmuel Bar (Item 11), Marta Murzanska (Items 15 and 16), and Farid Mirbagheri (Item 26). The role of Iran in the region is presented by Iranian Ambassador Reza Zabib (Item 17), and critically tackled by General Ephraim Sneh (Item 24), while Professor Yair Hirschfeld (Item 25), offers some important thoughts on the Iran P5+1 agreement and the day after its cancellation by the US.

The Cyprus problem is reviewed by Fanoulla Argyrou (Item 7) through new material released by the British National Archives, while the effect of bi-communalism upon the domestic stability and Cyprus's strategic role in the Eastern Mediterranean is examined in historical perspective by Klearchos Kyriakides (Items 8 and 30). Cyprus's uncertain economic future is discussed by Aris Petasis (Item 9), while Professor Habib Malik (Item 5) talks about the important lessons that Cyprus should draw from the Lebanese experience in ethnic and religious conflict resolution.

Regarding the geopolitical challenges in the region, French Ambassador Jean-Lec Florent (Item 2), and US Ambassador Kathleen Ann Doherty each give their countries' perspective on the security challenges in the East Mediterranean. In a similar vein, Professor Irina Zvyagelskaya discusses Russian policy in the region (Item 23), while Andrew Lambert (Items 19 and 32) and Marios Evriviades (Items 12 and 14) review the broader regional geopolitical trends. Turning to Turkey, Christos Minagias (Item 27), Marcus Templar (Item 29), and David Altman (Item 28) provide insights into Turkish capabilities, motivations and behavior. Finally, hydrocarbon developments in the region are reviewed by Gary Lakes (Items 10 and 31).



# East Mediterranean Chronicles

## Timeline 2015-2016

### 2015

1. *January 2015* - Eni/Kogas consortium began exploratory drilling in Block 9 at the Amathusa well.<sup>1</sup>
2. *7 January 2015* – Charlie Hebdo attack took place in France. 12 people were killed in the offices of the magazine by two brothers, French citizens of Algerian origin, identifying themselves as members of al-Qaeda branch in Yemen. Several related attacks followed including the kosher supermarket siege where 4 Jewish people are killed.<sup>2</sup>
3. *16 January 2015* – Erdogan welcomed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas accompanied by soldiers dressed in historic Ottoman military attires. Widely ridiculed at home and abroad, the event illustrated Erdogan's regime's inclination to use and refer to Ottoman symbolism.<sup>3</sup>
4. *25 January 2015* – The left-wing party Syriza won general election in Greece, pledging to tear up bailout-linked austerity deals.<sup>4</sup>
5. *26 January 2015* – Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) recaptured the city of Kobane in northern Syria from the Islamic State (ISIS). By late April 2015, almost all villages in the Kobane canton were recaptured. The battle for Kobane was considered a turning point in the war against IS.<sup>5</sup>
6. *3 February 2015* – ISIS released a video showing Jordanian military pilot Moaz al Kasasbeh being burnt alive, sparking wide scale protests across the country. In retaliation, King Abdullah ordered Operation Martyr Muath, a series of airstrikes that kill a number of

---

<sup>1</sup> Elias Hazou, 'Saipem 10000 Drillship Relocating to Amathusa Site,' Cyprus Mail, 31 December 2014, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2014/12/31/saipem-10000-drillship-relocating-to-amathusa-site/>.

<sup>2</sup> 'Charlie Hebdo Attack: Three Days of Terror,' BBC, 14 January 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30708237>.

<sup>3</sup> Tulay Karadeniz, Johnny Hogg, 'Chainmailed Turkic Warriors to Welcome More Foreign Leaders to Turkey,' 16 January 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-politics-warriors-idUSKBN0KN16A20150116>.

<sup>4</sup> 'Greece Election: Anti-Austerity Syriza Wins Election,' BBC, 26 January 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30975437>.

<sup>5</sup> Constanze Letsch, Fazel Hawramy, 'Kurdish Forces Take Control of Syrian Town of Kobani,' The Guardian, 26 June 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/26/kurdish-forces-take-control-kobani-syria>.

ISIS militants over the course of three days.<sup>6</sup>

7. *12 February 2015* – 25 defendants convicted in the so-called “Sledgehammer” coup probe were acquitted in a retrial. The event was interpreted as Erdogan’s move to repair his government’s relationship with the army amidst his conflict with a former ally Fethullah Gulen whom he later accused of plotting to overthrow him.<sup>7</sup>
8. *15 February 2015* - ISIS in Libya released a video showing the beheading of 21 Coptic Christians from Egypt. The Egyptian Air Force responded with airstrikes against IS training locations and weapons stockpiles.<sup>8</sup>
9. *15 February 2015* - ISIS seized control of key buildings in the Libyan town of Sirte, Gaddafi’s hometown. It established a stronghold in the district of Sirte.<sup>9</sup>
10. *26 February 2015* – Cyprus and Russia signed a deal allowing Russian navy ships to use Cypriot ports.<sup>10</sup>
11. *14 March 2015* – Cyprus and Egypt signed a memorandum of understanding to examine the possibility of building an underwater pipeline from Cyprus’s Block 12 to Egypt.<sup>11</sup>
12. *19 March 2015* – Israel’s Delek Group and Egypt’s Dolphinus Holdings signed a seven-year deal to export natural gas from Israel’s Tamar field to private customers in Egypt. The gas would be transported from Ashkelon to Egypt via the existing pipeline operated by the East Mediterranean Gas Company.<sup>12</sup>
13. *31 March 2015* - A Turkish court cleared 236 military officers accused in the “Sledgehammer” probe of plotting to overthrow Erdogan’s government in 2003.
14. *26 March 2015* - Eni/Kogas consortium announced unsuccessful drilling at the Amathusa well in Block 9.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> ‘Jordan Pilot Hostage Moaz Al-Kasasbeh ‘Burned Alive’,’ BBC, 3 February 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31121160>.

<sup>7</sup> ‘25 Acquitted in Turkish ‘Sledgehammer’ Coup Trial,’ Middle East Eye, 12 February 2015, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/25-acquitted-turkish-sledgehammer-coup-trial>.

<sup>8</sup> Jared Malsin, ‘Beheading of Coptic Christians in Libya Shows ISIS Branching Out,’ Times, 15 February 2015, <https://time.com/3710610/libya-coptic-christians-isis-egypt/>.

<sup>9</sup> Egypt Airstrikes Target ISIS Camps in Libya After Mass Beheadings,’ CBS News, 16 February 2015, <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/egypt-airstrikes-target-isis-camps-in-libya-after-mass-beheadings/>.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Cyprus Signs Deal to Allow Russian Navy to Use Ports,’ BBC, 26 February 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31632259>.

<sup>11</sup> Katy Turner, ‘MoU for Transport of Gas to Egypt,’ Cyprus Mail, 14 March 2015, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2015/03/14/mou-for-transport-of-gas-to-egypt/>.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Delek Locks LNG Deal with Egypt,’ Cyprus Mail, 19 March 2015, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2015/03/19/delek-locks-lng-deal-with-egypt/>.

<sup>13</sup> Κύπρος: απογοήτευση από γεώτρηση σε ΑΟΖ, Η Καθημερινή, 27 March 2015, <http://www.kathimerini.gr/808863/article/epikairothta/kosmos/kypros-apogohteysh-apo-gewtrhsh-se-aoz>;

Eni/Kogas drill dry well offshore Cyprus, Offshore Energy Today, 27 March 2015, <https://www.offshoreenergytoday.com/enikogas-drill-dry-well-offshore-cyprus/>.

15. 26 April 2015 – Mustafa Akinci won the ‘presidential elections’ in occupied Cyprus.<sup>14</sup>
16. 15 May 2015 - Peace talks were resumed between the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) President Nicos Anastasiades and the ‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (‘TRNC’) ‘President’ Mustafa Akinci.<sup>15</sup>
17. 20 May 2015 – ISIS captured the ancient city of Palmyra.<sup>16</sup>
18. 31 May 2015 – Turkey organized a huge anniversary of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople. The event began with Erdogan reading verses from the ‘Conquest’ sura of the Quran and included numerous references to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>17</sup>
19. 7 June 2015 – General elections took place in Turkey. The AKP won 41% of the votes and lost majority in the parliament. It was considered to be the biggest setback for Erdogan since his party got into power in 2002.<sup>18</sup>
20. 26 June 2015 – Turkey was accused of allowing ISIS jihadists to cross its border with Syria and get to the Kurdish city of Kobane.<sup>19</sup>
21. 17 June 2015 – The Palestinian Unity Government was dissolved after the Palestinian Authority President Abbas claimed that it is unable to operate in the Gaza Strip.<sup>20</sup>
22. 26 June 2015 – 38 people were killed in a terrorist attack in the Tunisian resort of Sousse. ISIS took responsibility for the attack.<sup>21</sup>
23. 28 June 2015 - Amid concerns that Greece would fall out of the eurozone, the Greek

---

<sup>14</sup> ‘Mustafa Akinci Wins Northern Cyprus Presidential Election,’ BBC, 26 April 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32476509>.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Statement on Behalf of the Greek Cypriot Leader Nicos Anastasiades and the Turkish Cypriot Leader Mustafa Akinci, as Delivered by Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Cyprus Espen Barth Eide,’ United Nations, 15 May 2014, <http://www.un.org/undpa/en/node/183418>.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Islamic State Seizes Syria’s Ancient Palmyra,’ BBC, 21 May 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32820857>.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Turkey Marks 562<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of Istanbul’s Conquest by the Ottoman Empire in Massive Ceremony,’ 30 May 2015, <https://www.dailysabah.com/istanbul/2015/05/30/turkey-marks-562nd-anniversary-of-istanbuls-conquest-by-the-ottoman-empire-in-massive-ceremony>; Adnan R. Khan, ‘Resurrecting the Ottoman Empire,’ Maclean’s, 5 June 2015, <https://www.macleans.ca/news/world/resurrecting-the-ottoman-empire/>.

<sup>18</sup> Constanze Letsch, ‘Turkey Election: Ruling Party Loses Majority as Pro-Kurdish HDP Gains Seats,’ The Guardian, 7 June 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/07/turkey-election-preliminary-results-erdogan-akp-party>.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Spencer, ‘Turkey Accused of Allowing Islamic State Fighters to Cross Its Border in Kobane Attack,’ The Telegraph, 25 June 2015, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/11699969/Turkey-accused-of-allowing-Islamic-State-fighters-to-cross-its-border-in-Kobane-attack.html>.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Palestinian Unity Government Resigns,’ Al Jazeera, 17 June 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/06/palestinian-unity-government-resigns-150617125314649.html>

<sup>21</sup> Jessica Elgot, ‘Deadly Attack on Tunisia Tourist Hotel in Sousse Resort,’ The Guardian, 26 June 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/26/tunisia-tourist-hotel-reportedly-attacked>.

government limited money flows and bank withdrawals to avoid financial collapse.<sup>22</sup>

24. 5 July 2015 – The Greeks rejected proposed bailout deal in a national referendum. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras nonetheless accepted the deal.<sup>23</sup>
25. 13 July 2015 – Greece signed up to a third bailout program of 86 billion euros.<sup>24</sup>
26. 14 July 2015 – The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between Iran, the P5+1 and the EU was announced. According to the framework, Iran would redesign, convert, and reduce its nuclear facilities. In exchange, nuclear-related economic sanctions on Iran would be lifted, freeing up tens of billions of dollars in oil revenues and frozen assets.<sup>25</sup>
27. 22 July 2015 – Two Turkish police officers were killed in the southeastern town of Ceylanpınar on the border with Syria. Initially the PKK's armed wing claimed responsibility for the killing, saying it is a retaliation for their collaboration with ISIS in the recent suicide attack in the Kurdish town of Suruc that killed 32 people.<sup>26</sup> However, the PKK authorities later denied their responsibility for the attack.<sup>27</sup> The killing was followed by nationwide protests against the Turkish government's policies on Syria. The event marked the end of the Turkish-Kurdish peace process initiated in 2013.
28. 24 July 2015 – Turkey launched Operation Martyr Yalçın against ISIS and Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) targets in northern Syria and Iraqi Kurdistan. PKK withdrew from peace talks and announced a full scale rebellion against the government. The conflict escalated, with PKK and its affiliated militias staged attacks across the country followed by Turkish forces attacks in the east of the country.<sup>28</sup>
29. 5 September 2015 – German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced an open border policy for asylum seekers in Germany, declaring there is no limit for the number of refugees the country can accept. Thousands of migrants began their travel from the Mediterranean across Europe in an attempt to reach Germany.<sup>29</sup>
30. 30 September 2015 – Russia joined the Syrian civil war on Assad's side and began air strikes

---

<sup>22</sup> Graeme Wearden, 'Greek Crisis: Banks Shut for a Week as Capital Controls Imposed – As It Happened,' The Guardian, 29 June 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/live/2015/jun/28/greek-crisis-ecb-emergency-liquidity-referendum-bailout-live>.

<sup>23</sup> 'Greece Debt Crisis: Greek Voters Reject Bailout Offer,' BBC, 6 July 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33403665>.

<sup>24</sup> Graeme Wearden, 'Greece Bailout Agreement: Key Points,' The Guardian, 13 July 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/jul/13/greece-bailout-agreement-key-points-grexit>.

<sup>25</sup> 'Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action,' European Parliament, 14 July 2015, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/122460/full-text-of-the-iran-nuclear-deal.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> 'Suruc Massacre: 'Turkish Student' Was Suicide Bomber,' BBC, 22 July 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33619043>.

<sup>27</sup> 'PKK Says Not Responsible for Murders of Two Turkish Policemen,' Ekurd Daily, 30 July 2015, <https://ekurd.net/pkk-says-not-responsible-for-police-killing-2015-07-30>.

<sup>28</sup> 'Country Reports on Terrorism 2015 – Turkey,' United States Department of State, 2 June 2016, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/57518d7da.html>.

<sup>29</sup> 'Germany: 'No Limit' to Refugees We'll Take In,' Sky News, 5 September 2015, <https://news.sky.com/story/germany-no-limit-to-refugees-well-take-in-10347281>.

that turned the course of conflict decisively against the rebels.<sup>30</sup>

31. 8 August 2015 – Turkey completed the pipeline project to supply water to occupied Cyprus.<sup>31</sup>
32. 30 August 2015 – Eni announced discovery of the Zohr field in Egypt's EEZ. Zohr was the largest gas discovery ever made in Egypt and in the Mediterranean Sea, and was estimated to hold 30 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of natural gas.<sup>32</sup>
33. 4 September 2015 – As violent clashes between Turkish forces and Kurdish militants intensified following the July collapse of the ceasefire, Turkey imposed a week-long curfew and launched a military operation in the Kurdish southeastern town of Cizre. The residents of the besieged city were cut off from food and water supplies. Access to medical care, electricity and other essential amenities was limited. Turkey was accused of human rights violations and disproportionate use of force that has left 21 civilians dead.<sup>33</sup>
34. 10 October 2015 – The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) were established - an alliance composed of Kurdish, Arab, and Assyrian/Syriac militias. The SDF was militarily led by the Kurdish YPG. The SDF stated its mission is to create a secular, democratic, and decentralized Syria.<sup>34</sup>
35. 19 October 2015 – During a double ceremony held in Turkey and in occupied Cyprus and attended by President Erdogan and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci, Turkey's water supply project to northern Cyprus was inaugurated. The project's final cost was 1 billion 600 million Turkish Liras and it consisted of a total 106 km-long pipeline of which 80 km is laid in the sea.<sup>35</sup>
36. 30 October 2015 – Vienna peace talks for Syria began, known as International Syria Support Group (ISSG). The participants (ISSG) included 20 governments as well as the Arab League, the European Union, and the United Nations.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Raziye Akkoc, Roland Oliphant, Harriet Alexander, Barney Henderson, Andrew Marszal, 'Russia Launches Airstrikes in Syria – As It Happened on Wednesday 30 September,' The Telegraph, 30 September 2015, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/11903681/Russia-launches-airstrikes-in-Syria-as-it-happened-on-Wednesday-30-September.html>.

<sup>31</sup> 'Turkey Wraps Up Landmark Project for Cyprus Water Pipeline,' Daily Sabah, 8 August 2015,

<https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2015/08/08/turkey-wraps-up-landmark-project-for-cyprus-water-pipeline>.

<sup>32</sup> 'Eni discovers a supergiant gas field in the Egyptian offshore, the largest ever found in the Mediterranean Sea,' ENI, 30 August 2015.

<sup>33</sup> 'Turkey Lifts Week-Long Curfew on Kurdish City of Cizre,' BBC, 12 September 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34227067>.

<sup>34</sup> 'EU Human Rights Body Urges Turkey to Allow Access to Cizre,' The Guardian, 12 September 2015,

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/12/eu-human-rights-body-urges-turkey-to-allow-access-to-cizre>.

<sup>35</sup> Suleiman Al-Khalidi, Tom Perry, 'New Syrian Rebel Alliance Formed, Says Weapons on the Way,' Reuters, 12 October 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-kurds/new-syrian-rebel-alliance-formed-says-weapons-on-the-way-idUSKCN0S60BD20151012>.

<sup>36</sup> 'The Project of the Century Inaugurated,' 'Deputy Prime Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs,' 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus,' 19 October 2, <https://mfa.gov.ct.tr/the-project-of-the-century-inaugurated/>.

<sup>37</sup> Martin Chulov, 'Syria Peace Talks Pin Hopes for End to War on Iran and Saudi Arabia,' The Guardian, 30 October 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/30/syria-peace-talks-vienna-iran-saudi-arabia>.

37. *31 October 2015* – Russian plane crashed in Sinai brought down by a bomb. ISIS claimed responsibility for the incident.<sup>37</sup>
38. *1 November* – Snap general election was held in Turkey after coalition negotiations break down. AKP regained parliamentary majority.<sup>38</sup>
39. *13-14 November 2015* – ISIS carried out a number of attacks across Paris, killing 130 people. In retaliation, France began to ramp up the number of airstrikes against ISIS in Syria. It emerged that some of the perpetrators entered Europe among the flow of migrants and refugees. The attacks prompted European officials to re-evaluate their stance toward migrants and border controls, insisting that greater scrutiny was needed in vetting migrants.<sup>39</sup>
40. *24 November 2015* – Turkey shot down Russian military aircraft near the Syrian-Turkish border. Turkey said the aircraft entered Turkish airspace and was warned several times to leave, while Russia insisted it remained within the Syrian airspace at all times. It was the first time since 1952 that a NATO country shot down a Russian warplane.<sup>40</sup>
41. *14 November 2015* – The ISSG Vienna talks resulted in a peace plan for Syria. The group agreed, inter alia, to ensure a Syrian-led political transition, to implement a nation-wide ceasefire, to bring the Syrian government and opposition together in formal negotiations under UN auspices. Russia and the US remained in disagreement about Assad's role in any political transition.<sup>41</sup>
42. *24 November 2015* – The EU set up the Facility for Refugees in Turkey under which Ankara would receive financial assistance of €3 billion to help it manage the Syrian refugee crisis.<sup>42</sup>
43. *27 November 2015* – It was announced that Israel was to open its first diplomatic mission in the UAE, despite lack of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The mission would be accredited to the International Renewable Energy Agency.<sup>43</sup>
44. *28 November 2015* – In response to the downing of its military aircraft, Russia imposed sanctions on Turkey which included, among others, banning of some Turkish food

---

<sup>37</sup> Jessican Elgot, Chris Johnson, 'Egypt Says No Survivors from the Russian Plane Crash,' The Guardian, 31 October 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/31/russian-plane-crashes-in-sinai-egyptian-pm-says>.

<sup>38</sup> Umut Uras, 'Turkey's AK Party Wins Back Majority in Snap Election,' Al Jazeera, 2 November 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/11/turkey-ruling-akp-leads-crucial-snap-elections-151101160104190.html>.

<sup>39</sup> '2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts,' CNN, 13 November 2019, <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/08/europe/2015-paris-terror-attacks-fast-facts/index.html>.

<sup>40</sup> 'turkey's Downing of Russian Warplane – What We Know,' BBC, 1 December 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34912581>.

<sup>41</sup> '14 November 2015, Statement of the International Syria Support Group Vienna,' United Nations, Department of Political Affairs, <https://www.un.org/undpa/en/Speeches-statements/14112015/syria>.

<sup>42</sup> 'EU-Turkey Cooperation: A €3 Billion Refugee Facility for Turkey,' European Commission, 24 November 2015, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_15\\_6162](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_15_6162).

<sup>43</sup> 'Israel 'To Open UAE Diplomatic Mission,' BBC, 27 November 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31763589>.



products, halting Turkish construction projects in Russia, and suspending of charter holiday flights and visa-free travel between the two countries.<sup>44</sup>

45. 29 November 2015 – The US demanded that Turkey close its border with Syria used as a crossing point for ISIS fighters. The move came during an increased international criticism of Turkey for its tolerance of and complicity with extremist Islamist organizations, including ISIS.<sup>45</sup>
46. 3 December 2015 – In a further escalation after the November warplane incident, Russia suspended the Turkish Stream gas pipeline project.<sup>46</sup>
47. 14 December 2015 – Turkey imposed the second military curfew in Cizre and several other towns in the south east of the country.
48. 16 December 2015 – Turkish and Israeli officials held secret talks in Switzerland to restore diplomatic ties between the two countries.<sup>47</sup>
49. 17 December 2015 – Members of the House of Representatives (HoR) and the General National Congress (GNC) in Libya signed a United Nations-supported Libyan Political Agreement. An interim Government of National Accord (GNA) was formed tasked holding new general elections within two years. The GNA was recognized by the international community as Libya's legitimate government.<sup>48</sup>
50. 17 December 2015 – Turkish navy harassed the vessel *MV Flying Enterprise*, belonging to the company EDT Offshore, conducting a geophysical survey for the purpose of cable laying in the RoC waters. The warship ordered the captain of the vessel to stop all survey by reason of entering a “Turkish maritime area” (see *Plate 1*).<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> ‘Turkey-Russia Jet Downing: Moscow Announces Sanctions,’ BBC, 28 November 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34954575>.

<sup>45</sup> Patrick Cockburn, ‘War with Isis: Obama Demands Turkey Closes Stretch of Border with Syria,’ Independent, 29 November 2015, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/war-isis-president-obama-demands-turkey-close-stretch-frontier-syria-a6753836.html>.

<sup>46</sup> ‘Russia Halts Turkey Gas Project Talks amid Syria Row,’ BBC, 3 December 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34995472>.

<sup>47</sup> Laura Pitel, ‘Turkey and Israel Poised to Restore Diplomatic Ties after Secret Talks,’ Independent, 18 December 2015, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/turkey-and-israel-poised-to-restore-diplomatic-ties-after-secret-talks-a6779031.html>.

<sup>48</sup> ‘UN Welcomes ‘Historic’ Signing of Libyan Political Agreement,’ UN News, 17 December 2015, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2015/12/518412-un-welcomes-historic-signing-libyan-political-agreement>.

<sup>49</sup> Letter dated 29 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General, Nr. A/70/767–S/2016/201, General Assembly Security Council, 1 March 2016, <http://undocs.org/A/70/767>.

## 2016

1. *7 February 2016* – The Cyprus government rejected the natural gas import offer of the preferred bidder Dutch Vitol and cancelled the tender issued in January 2014. The deal fell through due to disagreement over the larger than required quantity of gas deliveries to Cyprus proposed by the company.<sup>50</sup>
2. *7 February 2016* – Turkish security forces massacred at least 100 wounded civilians sheltering in three basements in the besieged city of Cizre.<sup>51</sup> The bodies were then burned to cover up the evidence. In total, more than 200 civilians were killed during the two-month-long curfew and more than 10,000 homes were destroyed. Turkish security forces were accused of numerous human rights violations in the city that has witnessed widespread destruction due to heavy artillery shelling.<sup>52</sup>
3. *29 February 2016* – Pentagon awarded a \$682.9 million contract to sell smart bombs to Turkey. The bombs were used against PKK's positions in Iraqi Kurdistan.<sup>53</sup>
4. *28 January 2016* – Cyprus, Greece, and Israel held first trilateral meeting in Nicosia. The three countries agreed to form a trilateral committee to study plans to build a gas pipeline between Israel, Cyprus, and Greece for gas exports to Europe. The leaders also discussed plans for an underwater cable to connect the electricity grids of the three countries.<sup>54</sup>
5. *17 March 2016* – The Democratic Federation of 'Rojava – Northern Syria' was declared – an autonomous region in northeastern Syria, consisting of self-governing areas of Afrin, Jazira, Euphrates, Raqqa, Tabqa, Manbij, and Deir Ez-Zor.<sup>55</sup>
6. *18 March 2016* – The EU and Turkey reached an agreement to stop the flow of irregular migration via Turkey to Europe. Turkey was to be given €3 billion in aid to help Syrian refugees, in addition to the €3 billion already granted to the Facility for Refugees in Turkey set up in 2015.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Charles Ellinas, 'Cyprus Drops Interim Gas Import Plan, Natural Gas World, 10 February 2016, <https://www.naturalgasworld.com/cyprus-drops-interim-gas-import-plan>.

<sup>51</sup> Jeremy Bowen, 'Inside Cizre: Where Turkish Forces Stand Accused of Kurdish Killings,' BBC, 23 May 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36354742>.

<sup>52</sup> Tom Stevenson, "'Unprecedented Destruction' of Kurdish City of Cizre," Deutsche Welle, 18 May 2016, <https://www.dw.com/en/unprecedented-destruction-of-kurdish-city-of-cizre/a-19265927>.

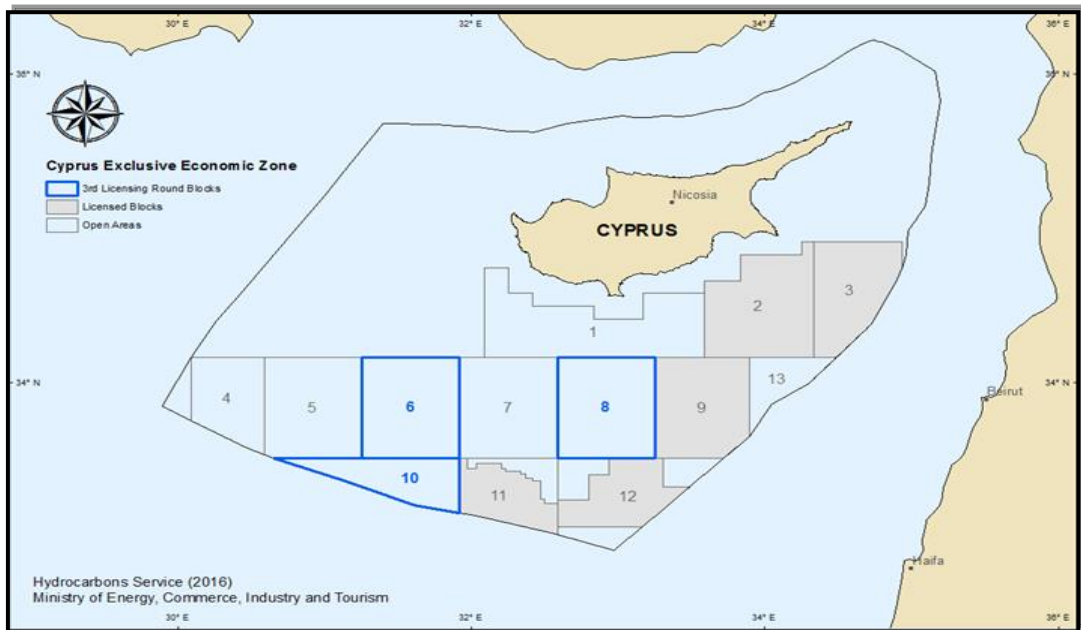
<sup>53</sup> Burak Ege Bekdil, 'Defense News,' 29 February 2016, <https://www.defensenews.com/industry/2016/03/01/pentagon-awards-contract-to-sell-smart-bombs-to-turkey/>.

<sup>54</sup> 'In Unprecedented Meet, Netanyahu, Greek and Cypriot Leaders Push Gas Pipeline as Peace Catalyst,' The Times of Israel, 28 January 2016, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-unprecedented-meet-netanyahu-greek-and-cypriot-leaders-push-gas-pipeline-as-peace-catalyst/>.

<sup>55</sup> 'Syria Conflict: Kurds Declare Federal System,' BBC, 17 March 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35830375>.

<sup>56</sup> 'EU-Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016,' European Council, 18 March 2016, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/>.

7. 22 March 2016 – Three coordinated suicide bombings took place in Belgium, two at Brussels Airport in Zaventem, and one at Maalbeek metro station in central Brussels. Thirty-two civilians and three perpetrators were killed, and more than 300 people were injured. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attacks.<sup>57</sup>



*Plate 1: Cyprus 3<sup>rd</sup> licensing round*

8. 24 March 2016 – Cyprus held the third licensing round for hydrocarbons exploration in Blocks 6, 8 and 10 (see Image 2)<sup>58</sup>
9. 1 April 2016 – The so-called ‘Four Day War’ erupts in Nagorno-Karabakh. The clashes led to dozens of Azerbaijani and Armenian soldiers killed and were described as the worst since the 1994 ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan in their conflict over the region.<sup>59</sup> After four days of fighting, a ceasefire was reached in Moscow with Russian mediation.<sup>60</sup>
10. 21 April 2016 – Turkey’s Supreme Court of Appeals overturned convictions in the Ergenekon trial ruling that the Ergenekon organization deemed to be responsible for the

<sup>57</sup> Tim Hume, Tiffany Ap, Ray Sanchez, ‘Here’s What We Know About the Brussels Terror Attacks,’ CNN, 25 March 2016, <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/03/23/europe/brussels-belgium-attacks-what-we-know/index.html>.

<sup>58</sup> ‘Notice from the Government of the Republic of Cyprus concerning Directive 94/22/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Conditions for Granting and Using Authorisations for the Prospection, Exploration and Production of Hydrocarbons,’ Official Journal of the European Union, 24 March 2016, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016XG0324\(01\)&from=LV](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016XG0324(01)&from=LV).

<sup>59</sup> ‘Nagorno-Karabakh Violence: Worst Clashes in Decades Kill Dozens,’ BBC, 3 April 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35949991>.

<sup>60</sup> ‘Diplomatic Shuffle Seeks to Calm Armenia-Azerbaijan Hostilities,’ Deutsche Welle, 6 April 2016, <https://www.dw.com/en/diplomatic-shuffle-seeks-to-calm-armenia-azerbaijan-hostilities/a-19167910>.

coup plot against the government did not exist at all.<sup>61</sup>

11. 28 April 2016 – Turkey opened its military base in Qatar, indicating strengthening of relations between the two countries. It was the first Turkish military base in the Middle East.<sup>62</sup>
12. 30 April 2016 – Construction of Turkey's first aircraft carrier TCG Anadolu began in Istanbul. The project was carried out by the Spanish Sedef-Navantia consortium and is expected to be completed by 2021. All of the ship's weapons systems would be procured by Turkish firms Aselsan and Havelsan.<sup>63</sup>
13. 5 May 2016 - Ahmet Davutoglu announced his resignation from the position of prime minister and AKP leader. The move was allegedly a result of his disapproval of Erdogan's political agenda. His resignation paved the way for Erdogan to further consolidate his power.<sup>64</sup>
14. 31 May 2016 – Turkish regime designated the Gulen movement as a terrorist organization and accused it of attempts to overthrow the government.<sup>65</sup>
15. 27 June 2016 – Erdogan issued an apology to Vladimir Putin over the shooting down of the Russian warplane in November 2015. The move started a process of normalization of relations between the two countries.<sup>66</sup>
16. 27 June 2016 – Turkey and Israel announced a reconciliation agreement. As part of the reconciliation, Israel agreed to pay 21 million dollars to the Mavi Marmara incident victims.<sup>67</sup>
17. 28 June 2016 – 47 people were killed in a triple suicide bombing carried out by the Islamic State at the Istanbul airport.
18. 14 July 2016 – A truck was deliberately driven into crowds of people celebrating Bastille Day in Nice killing 86 people and injuring 458. The driver was a Tunisian resident of France. ISIS took responsibility for the attack.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> 'Turkey's Ergenekon Plot Case Overturned by Top Court of Appeals,' Hurriyet Daily News, 21 April 2016, <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkeys-ergenekon-plot-case-overturned-by-top-court-of-appeals--98113>.

<sup>62</sup> Seeing Shared Threats, Turkey Sets Up Military Base in Qatar,' Reuters, 28 April 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-qatar-turkey-military-idUSKCN0XP2IT>.

<sup>63</sup> 'Turkey's Indigenously-Built LHD 'TCG Anadolu' to Start Harbour Trials,' 3 February 2020, <http://www.turkishmaritime.com.tr/turkeys-indigenously-built-lhd-tcg-anadolu-to-start-harbour-trials-36998h.htm>

<sup>64</sup> 'Turkey PM Ahmet Davutoglu to Quit amid Reports of Erdogan Rift,' 5 May 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36213401>.

<sup>65</sup> 'Turkey Officially Designates Gulen Religious Group as Terrorists,' Reuters, 31 May 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-gulen/turkey-officially-designates-gulen-religious-group-as-terrorists-idUSKCN0YMI67>.

<sup>66</sup> Jack Stubbs, Dmitry Solovyov, 'Kremlin Says Turkey Apologized for Shooting Down Russian Jet,' Reuters, 27 June 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-turkey-jet-idUSKCN0ZD1PR>.

<sup>67</sup> Barak Ravid, 'Israel and Turkey Officially Announce Rapprochement Deal, Ending Diplomatic Crisis,' Haaretz, 27 June 2016, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/israel-and-turkey-officially-announce-rapprochement-deal-1.5401944>.

19. 15 July 2016 – A coup d'état attempt took place in Turkey. Over 300 people are killed during the coup and more than 2100 are injured. <sup>69</sup> Erdogan regime accused cleric Fethullah Gulen of orchestrating the coup.<sup>70</sup>
20. 20 July 2016 – Following the coup attempt, Erdogan announced a state of emergency allowing him to rule by decree and suspend rights and freedoms. Hundreds of schools were closed and thousands of public workers sacked. Mass detentions, arrests, imprisonments and persecutions of people suspected to have links with the Gulen movement began.<sup>71</sup>
21. 22 July 2016 – Greek daily Kathimerini reported that during the recent coup in Turkey Putin offered support to Erdogan in the form of two navy vessels anchored in the Aegean.<sup>72</sup>
22. 22 July 2016 – Cyprus closed its 3<sup>rd</sup> offshore licensing round. A total of six applications was received from eight companies for all three available Blocks.<sup>73</sup>
23. 23 July 2016 – Erdogan ordered closure of more than 1000 schools and other institutions associated with the Gulen movement.<sup>74</sup>
24. 9 August 2016 – In a sign of full normalization of relations following the November 2015 crisis, Erdogan and Putin held a meeting in Saint Petersburg. It was Erdogan's first visit abroad in the aftermath of the failed coup.<sup>75</sup>
25. 22 August 2016 – The HoR in Tobruk withdrew its recognition for the UN-backed GNA effectively becoming its rival for governing Libya.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> 'Nice Attack: At Least 84 Killed by Lorry at Bastille Day Celebrations,' BBC, 15 July 2016,

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36800730>;

<sup>69</sup> 'Turkey's Coup Attempt: What You Need to Know,' BBC, 17 July 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36816045>.

<sup>70</sup> Robert Siegel, 'Cleric Accused of Plotting Turkish Coup Attempt: 'I Have Stood Against All Coups,' NPR, 11 July 2017, <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2017/07/11/536011222/cleric-accused-of-plotting-turkish-coup-attempt-i-have-stood-against-all-coups>.

<sup>71</sup> 'Turkey Coup Attempt: State of Emergency Announced,' BBC, 21 July 2016,

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36852080>.

<sup>72</sup> Vassilis Nedos, 'The Russian Assistance to Turkey During the Attempted Coup,' Kathimerini, 22 July 2019, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/242846/article/ekathimerini/news/the-russian-assistance-to-turkey-during-the-attempted-coup>.

<sup>73</sup> Applications submitted for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Licensing Round for hydrocarbon exploration, Hydrocarbons Service, Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry, 27 July 2016,

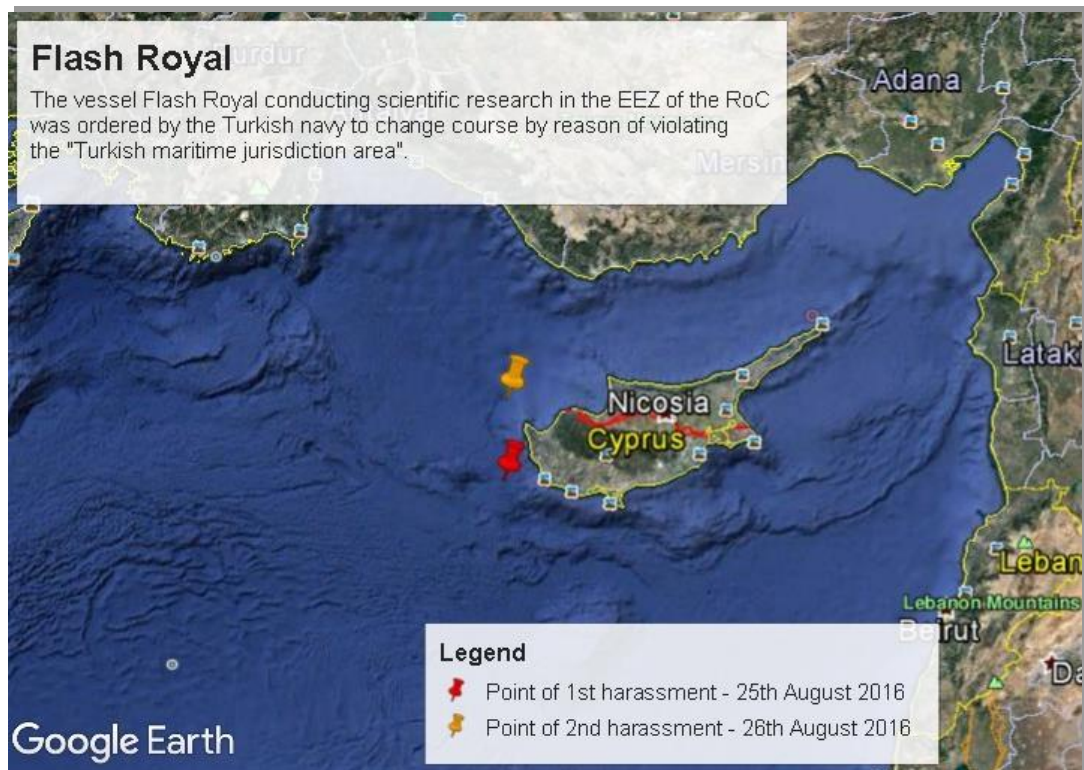
<http://www.mcit.gov.cy/mcit/hydrocarbon.nsf/All/924537E084535829C2257FFD003D11A5?OpenDocument>

<sup>74</sup> Constanze Letsch, 'Turkey's President Orders Closure of 1,000 Private Schools Linked to Gulen,' The Guardian, 23 July 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/23/turkey-erdogan-closure-of-1000-private-schools-gulen>.

<sup>75</sup> Shaun Walker, Jennifer Rankin, 'Erdogan and Putin Discuss Closer Ties in First Meeting Since Jet Downing,' The Guardian, 9 August 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/09/erdogan-meets-putin-leaders-seek-mend-ties-jet-downing-russia-turkey>.

<sup>76</sup> Ayman al-Warfalli, 'Libya's Eastern Parliament Votes Against U.N.-Backed Government in Tripoli,' Reuters, 22 August 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-un-idUSKCN10X1DY>.

26. 24-29 August 2016 – Turkey carried out Operation Euphrates Shield – a cross-border direct military intervention in Syria triggered by Kurdish advances against the Islamic State along much of the border. The operation led to Turkish occupation of northern Syria west of the Euphrates, driving a wedge between Kurdish-controlled cantons of Afrin and Kobane.<sup>77</sup>
27. 25-26 August 2016 - *The Flash Royal* vessel, flying the flag of the Republic of Cyprus, carrying out marine scientific research with respect to cetacean species, was harassed twice by the Turkish frigate *TCG Gelibolu* in the RoC's EEZ. The vessel was ordered to change course as it had "entered the Turkish maritime jurisdiction area" (see Plate 2).<sup>78</sup>



**Plate 2:** Locations of *Flash Royal* research vessel harassment by Turkish warship – 25-26 August 2016

28. 31 August 2016 – Egypt and Cyprus signed a deal for the transfer of natural gas via a subsea pipeline from the EEZ of the RoC to Egypt, either for domestic consumption or re-export.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Samuel Osborne, 'Turkey Ends 'Euphrates Shield' Military Operation in Syria, PM Says,' Independent, 29 March 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/turkey-syria-ends-euphrates-shield-military-operation-binali-yildirim-jarablus-isis-islamic-state-a7657156.html>.

<sup>78</sup> Letter dated 6 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General, Nr. A/70/1032, General Assembly, 6 September 2016, <http://undocs.org/A/70/1032>.

<sup>79</sup> Joint Written Statement of the Ministry of Energy of Cyprus and the Ministry of Petroleum of Egypt, Portal of the Republic of Cyprus, Press and Information Office, 31 August 2016,



29. *12 September 2016* – Turkey’s Science, Industry and Technology Minister Faruk Özlü said that Turkey had become one of the world’s leading drone producers. Turkish drones have been used in its operations in Syria, among others.<sup>80</sup>
30. *22 September 2016* – The Syrian Army launched Aleppo offensive accompanied by Russian airstrikes aiming to capture all of the remaining rebel-held parts of the city of Aleppo. The bombardments were described by the media as particularly indiscriminate, with hundreds of civilians killed. Human rights activists accused Russia and Syria of committing war crimes during the offensive.<sup>81</sup>
31. *27 September 2016* – Erdogan questioned the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, saying it was a defeat for Ankara as it was forced to accept a rump Turkish state and gave away Aegean islands to Greece.<sup>82</sup>
32. *10 October 2016* – Putin and Erdogan signed an agreement on the Turkish Stream gas pipeline project that would supply Russian gas to Turkey through the Black Sea, and further on to Southern Europe.<sup>83</sup>
33. *17 October 2016* – Amidst the conflict with the Iraqi government over the anti-ISIS Mosul operation, Erdogan justified Turkey’s demand to participate in the operation by invoking the so-called National Oath (Misak-i Milli), a document adopted during the last session of the Ottoman Parliament in 1920 identifying the lost territories of the Ottoman Empire which it vowed to reclaim. They included parts of today’s Syria, Iraq, Greece, Georgia and Armenia.<sup>84</sup>
34. *31 October 2016* – Michel Aoun was elected president of Lebanon ending a political paralysis which left the office empty for two years.<sup>85</sup>
35. *6 November 2016* – The German news outlet Zeit Online reported that many of the EU pre-accession assistance funds allocated to Turkey were flowing into Turkey’s infrastructure projects, some linked to the AKP.<sup>86</sup>

---

<http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/moi/pio/pio2013.nsf/All/05C868511994162FC225802000241E64?OpenDocument&L=E>

<sup>80</sup> ‘Turkey Becomes One of World’s Drone Makers: Minister,’ Hurriyet Daily, 12 September 2016,

<https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-becomes-one-of-worlds-top-drone-makers-minister-103827>.

<sup>81</sup> Julian Borger, Kareem Shaheen, ‘Aleppo Enters Second Day of Bombing in New Syrian Army Offensive,’ The Guardian, 23 September 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/22/syria-army-new-aleppo-offensive-ceasefire>; ‘Russia/Syria: War Crimes in Month of Bombing Aleppo,’ Human Rights Watch, 1 December 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/12/01/russia/syria-war-crimes-month-bombing-aleppo>.

<sup>82</sup> ‘Greek Anger at Turkey Border Treaty Remarks,’ BBC, 30 September 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37525650>.

<sup>83</sup> Murat Temizer, Dilara Zengin, Sengul, ‘Russia, Turkey sign Turkish Stream Agreement,’ Anadolu Agency, 10 October 2016, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/economy/russia-turkey-sign-turkish-stream-agreement/662298>.

<sup>84</sup> Ari Khalidi, ‘Erdogan Invokes Document that Claims Mosul as Turkish Soil,’ Kurdistan 24, 17 October 2016, <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/1e9e370c-0585-4aaf-b6dd-ebccb92ca93f/erdogan-invokes-document-that-claims-mosul-as-turkish-soil>.

<sup>85</sup> Martin Chulov, ‘Iran Ally Michel Aoun Elected as President of Lebanon,’ The Guardian, 31 October 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/31/michel-aoun-elected-president-lebanon-iran-tehran-saudi-arabia>.

<sup>86</sup> Lenz Jacobsen, ‘Sehr, Sehr, Sehr Besorgt,’ Zeit Online, 6 November 2016,

36. 20 November 2016 – Erdogan said that Turkey did not need EU membership ‘at all cost’ and could join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization instead.<sup>87</sup>
37. 5 December 2015 - The GNA’s Libyan Army backed by US airstrikes recaptured Sirte from ISIS and declared victory over the group.<sup>88</sup>
38. 8 December 2016 – Cyprus, Israel, and Greece held second trilateral meeting in Jerusalem. A regional emergency force was announced to be created to tackle emergency situations such as fires, earthquakes, flooding. The leaders announced their full support for the construction of the EurAsia Interconnector.<sup>89</sup>
39. 11 December 2016 – 25 people were killed and 35 injured in a bombing near the Coptic cathedral in Cairo. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>90</sup>
40. 13 December 2016 – During Netanyahu’s visit to Azerbaijan, President Ilham Aliyev said that Baku had signed a \$5 billion military deal with Israel.<sup>91</sup>
41. 19 December 2016 – Russian Ambassador to Turkey Andrei Karlov was assassinated at the opening of an art exhibition. He was shot by a Turkish policeman in protest against Russia’s intervention in Syria. In the follow up phone conversation, Erdogan and Putin agreed that it was an act of provocation aimed at harming relations between the two countries.<sup>92</sup>
42. 19 December 2016 – Attack on a Berlin Christmas market took place, where a truck was deliberately driven into a crowd, leaving 12 people dead and 56 injured. The perpetrator was a Tunisian failed asylum seeker who before the attack had pledged allegiance to ISIS.<sup>93</sup>
43. 22 December 2016 – Syria’s government forces took control of Aleppo, ending more than four years of rebel rule there.<sup>94</sup>

---

<https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2016-11/eu-tuerkei-recep-tayyip-erdogan-kritik-bruessel>.

<sup>87</sup> ‘Fed Up with EU, Erdogan Says Turkey Could Join Shanghai Bloc,’ Reuters, 20 November 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-europe-erdogan-idUSKBN13F0CY>.

<sup>88</sup> Patrick Wintour, ‘Isis Loses Control of Libyan City of Sirte,’ The Guardian, 5 December 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/05/isis-loses-control-of-libyan-city-of-sirte>.

<sup>89</sup> ‘Trilateral Meeting Between Israel, Greece and Cyprus,’ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 28 January 2016, <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2016/Pages/Trilateral-meeting-between-Israel-Greece-and-Cyprus-28-Jan-2016.aspx>.

<sup>90</sup> ‘ISIS Claims Deadly Cairo Church Bombing,’ Al Arabiya, 13 December 2016, <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/north-africa/2016/12/13/ISIS-claims-deadly-Cairo-church-bombing.html>.

<sup>91</sup> Yossi Melman, ‘Iranian Adversary Reveals It Bought \$5 Billion of Weapons from Israel,’ The Jerusalem Times, 13 December 2016, <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/politics-and-diplomacy/israel-looking-to-sell-missile-defense-systems-to-azerbaijan-475242>.

<sup>92</sup> ‘Russian Ambassador to Turkey Andrei Karlov Shot Dead in Ankara,’ BBC, 20 December 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38369962>.

<sup>93</sup> ‘Berlin Lorry Attack: What We Know,’ BBC, 24 December 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38377428>.

<sup>94</sup> ‘Aleppo Battle: Syrian City ‘Back Under Government Control,’ BBC, 22 December 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38408548>.



## **CONTRIBUTIONS**



---

## ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATION\*

---

Andrew Lambert\*\*

21 January 2015

### **Islam and Islamism: Can History Suggest How the Strategic Future May Unravel?**

*Andrew Lambert traces the rise of Islam, its challenge to the Christian world and the response of the latter throughout the centuries, as well as the nature and resurgent challenge of Islamism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*

Ladies and gentlemen, I stand up before you today, and you probably think I'm a little bit of a fraud. Why is a fighter guy standing talking to you about history? Well, I hope that I will give you a flavor of why we are where we are now, and manage to give you some of an idea of why it is that Islamism has developed in the way that it has.

Let me start by asking whether or not Islamism is a religion, or is it an ideology. Does it comprise far more than just the religious aspects, that we, most of us here Christians, understand? Is it probably about culture, or about politics?

Let me just think for a second about culture. People have said in the past that culture could be characterized as an iceberg: you can see 10% above the surface, you can see the actions of people, but the 90% remains hidden from view, and you don't know what the intentions are. So, it brings you on to a point whether it's a historical precedent or whether we are facing a purely modern phenomenon.

Now, I hope that what I say today will not just be a history lesson. I'm going to canter through history and you'll think it's a very broad brush view, but I hope by bringing out the particular points of interest it'll show you that what is happening today has antecedents in what happened in the past, and there is a rationality in what has happened today from the past. I think it will help us to understand the assumptions under which many of the young Muslims in the world operate, it'll show their beliefs and, I hope as well, it will improve our understanding of what is going on.

I should say from the start that I have some slides in here which I should give a health warning to, and if you are a particularly sensitive nature, I will tell you when to look down, and then I

\* Transcript of oral presentation.

\*\* Air Commodore, Royal Air Force, (Retired); Director of the Regional Security Program, ERPIC

will tell you when to look up, so you're not offended by them.

I have to go at a fairly high pace and, forgive me for that, much of it you should probably already know, and so we'll just refresh your memories. But that said, I will try and get completed within the time without going too quickly.

Let me start by saying that following on from what happened in Paris just recently, this is Monday's Financial Times, and one of the headlines inside says: "Young Muslims lag behind white middle class in a two-speed France." It points out, behind bars half of all inmates in French jails are believed to be Muslims, even though they only comprise less than 10% of the population. Interesting statistics and something perhaps to come back to. This was talking about France. I would suggest you that the same is equally true in most of the Western countries, and it certainly is true in my country.

Let me talk a little bit about Islam. What is Islam, and what did it have as its principal tenets? Well, the first thing is this: Allah, God is indescribable, and of course he's also incomprehensible. And probably I think we would all agree that that is the nature of the deity. But of course they go on and they say, Allah's will revealed through the prophets - and you can see the prophets up there - is of course frequently misinterpreted. And what they mean by that, of course, is the Torah and the Bible, although, of course, more recent publications fall into that sort of category. The Quran is verbatim - the final word of God delivered to his final prophet. There will be no more prophets. There will be no more final words. There is no more interpretation that is necessary. It is written down, it is unchanging and that is what it is. You will not get a subsequent amplification. Islam itself - as defined in the Quran - is perfection. There is no higher state. Communism, fascism, monetarism - whatever you like - is not a higher state, and modernism certainly is not a higher state. This is perfection. The purpose of man - I include women, of course, here - is to worship God, to do God's will. It is not to do good things. It is to do what God requires. And history, of course, is the progress of mankind towards the ultimate state, which is, of course, ummah - pan-national Arabism and Islam. So, that is where we find ourselves as the original starting principle.

Well, given that this started in the mid-600s, in the middle of the Arabian Peninsula, the first question we had to ask is: how in God's name did it actually succeed, why wasn't it just wiped aside as yet another sect? Of course, the view in Islam would be it was God's decision that this would happen. We may take a more sanguine particular view, and let me just think through for a second, the context of how this actually occurred.

You probably recall from your recollection of history that, of course, there had been conflicts between the Byzantine Empire and the Persian Empire for some time. Well, the mid 600s, the early 600s, there was just such a conflict, and both empires were absolutely exhausted. At the same time, within Christianity there was a complete debate about what the nature of God was. We think of him as a Trinity. Does that mean there are three Gods? Or was he actually one God - the monophysite? Or is he one God with three natures? These things became really quite critical to the various sects in Christianity and gave rise to all sorts of debates.

While all this was taking place, many of the Semitic populations found themselves pushed to one side, and therefore they became progressively disaffected. At the same time, the emperor - Emperor Heraclius - was becoming old, and demented, and tired, and so there started to arise a popular support for Islam's version of pan-Arabism: pan-Semitism. They didn't agree

necessarily on everything that was taking place in Byzantium, the Christian West, so their chances now were to change horses.

Well, you'll know, of course, Islam spread very, very quickly across the Arabian Peninsula. I won't go through all this in too much detail. But where the strategic change occurred was at Yarmouk in 636, when the forces of the caliph - now the successor of Muhammad - had taken Damascus. Taking Damascus, interesting enough, because a monophysite bishop had actually opened the back door to the Muslim forces, and so for the first time we had a confrontation between the forces of Byzantium and the forces of Islam. It was not a well fought fight, certainly as far as the Christians were concerned. They tarried, they differed, they didn't manage to get their act together, and the result was that the Muslims very convincingly won, it is sometimes said, helped by a sandstorm that came out of the east and gave them impetus to wipe the Christians away. But be that as it may, it is certain that the forces of Christianity were utterly defeated.

The implication of this was that the Byzantine army was on its last legs, and there was nothing left. There were only small garrisons left across the whole of the empire. The Byzantines had to regroup in Anatolia. They withdrew completely out of Syria, and by 640 the Arabs had occupied Israel, Syria, Lebanon, and by 641 even taken Alexandria itself. A very rapid rise to power. And if we look also on a slightly more global scale, let's have a look at what that looks like. Well, most people will know that in 711 they moved into Spain and took virtually the whole of Spain. What people may not be so sure of is that they got to the gates of Paris in 732, and they were only stopped there by Charles Martel of the Battle of Tours - first Battle of Poitiers. And of course, had this not gone in the way of Charles Martel's forces, maybe they would have continued even further. So, a very, very rapid expansion indeed.

Let's have a look at the Islamic empire then in 750, which is a period we're talking about. Occupying now the Persian Empire and the whole of the Maghreb up into Spain, and indeed along the southern part of France as well. If we move forward to 1100, they've expanded still further, now southwards, almost down, well, to the top end of Nigeria, right across the area of sub-Saharan Africa. And also, interesting enough, right down the east coast of Africa, as far as Madagascar, and almost getting around the Cape. The only reason they didn't manage to go around the Cape was because their ships - these sort of dhows - found themselves if they set off southwards, there is a very strong current, the Agulhas current that runs southwards. And if you put a dhow like that into the Agulhas current, you will next be seeing north Antarctica. So because of that, they got as far as they could and established themselves an empire in that area there.

We should mention briefly the schisms that occurred in Islam and I'm going to talk about that in just a little bit more. The various sects that one knows of... Now, we all know about the Sunni and Shia sects, and I'm not going to spend too long on this, but you can of course see country-by-country where the Shia are in majority. But probably a better way to look at it is this patchwork that you can see dotted around. Interesting group there in India, obviously in Yemen there is quite an interesting group, the Alawites of course occupying the west of Syria, and quite a big presence up there in north-eastern Pakistan.

But let's talk a little bit more about sects, because I want to talk about motivation. And the ones that I do want to talk about are these people: the Assassins. I was at Wellington College and my house master was a chap called Peter Willie. He was the second man to go, a second European

to go down the Valley of the Assassins in the period of 1960 or something. And he found the castles of Alamut - and you can see Alamut depicted there just off the Caspian - and he started doing excavations in that area. These are essentially great monolithic bits of rocks that come out of the valley floor, but they do have a water supply and they have means of capturing water and storing it in large systems. At the time of the First Crusade, Hassan, who was the leader of the sect, decided it would be a good idea to extend his power. So, he established not a great power base and a great army, but a Garden of Earthly Delights. And he would fill a young lad from the local village full of hashish, and while he was unconscious or semi-conscious, bring him up into the Garden of Earthly Delights, where everything a man could wish for, was provided. While he was there, Hassan would visit him and say: "My son, we are together in Paradise". He would then be filled full of hashish again, taken to the bottom of the mountain and be told: "My son, if you wish to return with me to Paradise, this is what you must do: you must go to Baghdad and stab the Nizam through the heart and, although you will die, I guarantee to you, you will return to Paradise." And this is a picture, it's not a particularly good one, of somebody's stabbing the Nizam al-Mulk through the heart, and of course then destroying the power base of the local caliph. Well, by using this technique he gradually extended his power and it lasted for a considerable number of years, went on and on, and eventually he became a sort of power broker in the area of the north and west of Islam. Sorry, north and east of Islam, I should more accurately say.

However, there were now about to be two major setbacks for Islam. And the first of these really destroyed the Assassins there, destroyed them in their castles. And the first of them was of course the Mongol expansion that took place under Genghis Khan. I'll let that run just once more so you can see it yet again. Over degrees of longitude rather than miles, the Mongols, of course, spread their terror right across. Let me just tell you about two particular expeditions that were of interest.

In 1223, 1222, I should say, what happened was Genghis Khan asked his chief lieutenant Subutai Baghatur to take Batu Khan and to carry out a reconnaissance in strength around the Caspian. They went up through Georgia and Armenia, and ended up positioning themselves just off Crimea. They overwintered in Crimea 1222-1223, before fighting the Russians at the Battle of the Kalka River 1223, and then returning eastwards to the Great Khan, who at the time was besieging or just about to go into India. It was pretty clear that there were rich pickings to be had and so in 1236 Batu Khan returned westwards and took out the various cities and towns you can see there, culminating in Christmas and New Year 1241 in taking Kiev. From there the decision was taken they would invade into Europe. And so the Mongols advanced on three main axes: the bottom one through Hungary, where they defeated the knights of King Bela IV at the Battle of Mohi; the middle one, which came along through the Carpathian plain, basically to provide fodder for the horses; and the northern expedition which went and fought at what is known as the famous battle of Legnica, which destroyed King Wenceslaus and all the Teutonic Knights and the Polish chivalry.

As a result of these successes, the Mongols then turned south and went down into the Balkans taking the town of Kotor, which is now well favored by cruise ships. This established a power base across the whole of the area shown there. The only reason they did not continue westwards was because the Great Khan died and Batu Khan went eastwards to try and see if he could become the new Great Khan. So it stopped events from taking place, but nevertheless they established themselves as huge power base in this area here, destroying at that time the

Seljuks and their power base where they were. Establishing themselves at Sarai which is pretty much close to Volgograd, the Golden Horde - as it became known - became the power brokers in that area. In 1346 they took the town of Kaffa - which is in Crimea - which was a slave trading place, and they used dead bodies of plague victims being catapulted into the town, thereby starting what is known in Europe, of course, as the Black Death.

As a result of that the whole of Europe changed. The feudal system fell apart, urbanization began in great quantities. The power of the guilds was established, and so the way in which Europe as a whole changed its culture is quite remarkable. Now we started to get new motivations, new changes, new modernization.

But at the same time, we find the Ottomans rising up. The Seljuks have been killed, and as the Golden Horde starts to reduce the Ottoman power base, which originated just to the east of Constantinople, they took over and occupied the vacuum left by the declining Seljuks. Well, as we know, the Ottomans then fought the Battle of the Blackbirds in Kosovo in 1389 and defeated the Fourth Crusade in 1396, establishing quite a power base in this area here, and of course further south.

But I've set up here setbacks to the Mongols. Well, of course nothing could be allowed to stand idle for very long and this man suddenly appeared on the picture. Timur i-Lenk, known to most of us as Tamerlane. "Timur" means steel, but he had a limp, so he was "Timur the Limping Man". We call him Tamerlane. He fell out with his adopted son Tokhtamysh, who was the khan of the Golden Horde, and he decided he would then attack him. And so in 1395 he moved up into the Golden Horde areas, got hold of Tokhtamysh, before deciding on a war of conquest in the Far East. He, I have to tell you, was a converted Muslim, but it was Islam of a particular flavor - an Islam that suited him, rather than him doing what suited Islam. Having taken out Tokhtamysh in 1395, he moved east to take out Delhi in 1398. He destroyed Delhi so utterly that there were - well, it is said - there were no living things at Delhi after his army had withdrawn, even the birds left the site. Before returning west again, because he saw a power struggle would occur between himself and the rising power of the Ottomans, he defeated the Ottoman sultan, Sultan Bayezid II, in 1402 at the Battle of Ankara and took him captive and kept him in a cage. Fortunately for him he then moved southwards, took Damascus, moved into the Levant. Fortunately for history Timur i-Lenk then suddenly promptly died. He was by now a very old man. He was on his way, interesting enough, to attack China, if you please.

But once he died, of course the power base of the Mongols declined, which allowed the Ottomans to re-establish power. Mehmed II, as we all know, took Constantinople in 1453.

At the same time, they established a presence in the Khanate of Crimea and the Khans in Crimea were allowed to go raiding up into the Christian areas to the north. Well, this gave Europe a bit of a problem because Europe at this time wanted to get across to the spices of the Far East. But of course in their way was the Ottoman Empire and the Mongol Empire. And so the Christians, as you know, developed a maritime strategy. One thought was that the Nile, which obviously rises somewhere in the middle of Africa, had a tributary that would come out here. And maybe if they could sail around and get into that tributary, they could get up the Nile, perhaps go across to the Red Sea and get out to the spices. And so the Portuguese started their great progress southwards to try and find a way of getting to the east perhaps up the course of the Nile. Interestingly enough, Christopher Columbus spent four years in Lagos and

realized that there was no way of getting around the Cape. But how little did he know, because Bartholomeu Dias in 1487 rounded the Cape and found the first Hottentots.

Meanwhile, of course, there was pressure to try a different route and, as we know, Christopher Columbus managed to go across in a carrack like this - or four carracks like this - across to the New World. At the same time, Vasco da Gama had rounded the Cape moving around south of the Cape, moved up and eventually arrived in Calicut on the western side of the Indian Ocean.

Meanwhile, events in the north of India were taking another turn. Now, for the first time there had been certain number of Muslims in India before, but this man, Babur the Tiger, he was a great great grandson of Tamerlane. He was given power in Fergana, he took Kabul and then moved himself into Delhi - which by this stage was starting to recover - and established the Mogul, or Mughal, Empire. He was, say, a Muslim and he insisted on a very pure form of the religion. He established himself at the first instance at the Red Fort of Agra and, interestingly enough, he found monuments and carvings like this, and he said those are far too rude, and had all the private parts cut off.

Meanwhile, of course, in Europe events were moving on. The Muslims had probably extended as far as they were going to and in fact the tide was starting to turn. In 1492, Isabella and Ferdinand evicted the Moors at the final time from Granada, and the Moors then found themselves out of Spain. Where were they going to go? And so many of them decided the only course of action was to become pirates, and you'll find the Moors that came out of Spain establish themselves in Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, wherever, across the Ottoman Empire, and resorted to widespread piracy.

What sort of piracy was it? Well, unlike Rome which of course was very much a slave economy, where indeed you had large mines that depended on slaves. You also had large estates, large villas that had their slaves to work there. In this particular world they needed slaves for the great galleys that they had, and they also needed slaves to work on all the plantations and various agricultural facilities around the Maghreb. And so slaves became the name of the game. And the Muslim pirates started to go and collect slaves. Now, all of you here will know of the Mary Celeste. If I tell you that around 3,000 ships were depopulated of their crews and left just to float off, then it puts the Mary Celeste possibilities in context.

One of the most famous attacks to get slaves was the attack on Giulia Gonzaga in 1534. She was deemed to be the most beautiful woman in the world. She was widowed at the age of 22 and in her castle at Fondi, just south of Rome, she was attacked by the Corsairs, by the slavers. They came, tried to get into the castle. She was warned at the last minute by one of her maid servants, and she made a hasty retreat. The result of the hasty retreat was her maid servants were then captured and disappeared, and the population of Fondi were then put to the sword. The man who carried out the attack was this chap, Hayreddin Barbarossa, and we will all know the name Barbarossa from various other activities. He was of course originally a Christian who converted.

What was the fate of the female slaves? Well, obviously what was going to happen to Giulia Gonzaga is pretty clear and indeed that was pretty much the fate that was presumed for most of the women who were taken as slaves. Don't forget, of course, that most of the ships that were actually captured by the pirates had very few women on board. If there was a woman on a ship, she was probably a high-ranking lady. So very few women were taken off the ships. But those



that were taken and those that were taken from the land were normally taken obviously to be an odalisque, as shown here. But actually, their fate is rather more mundane. This is a lady who is pretending to be a slave and next to her are two children. The fate of virtually all women that were taken was they were impregnated almost immediately. Because as soon as they were impregnated and had children, they had divided loyalties: should they stay here as a slave with their Muslim children or should they return somewhere else back home? Maybe their family was there, maybe they weren't. So many of them chose to stay and many of them chose to convert to Islam.

The most famous of the ladies who were the most successful was this lady here, Rokselana, who became, well, she was captured up north near Poland. She was brought down to the Crimea, she was sold, she became a concubine of the sultan, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, and she eventually persuaded the sultan to marry her. And it was her children then that became the future sultans. One of the few successful women.

What are the male slaves, what happened to them? Well, most of them are going to go to the galleys, which gives them a dichotomy - a dilemma, I should say - because of course they hated being on the ship, but on the other hand, if their ship was sunk and the Christians won, they were going to pay for it. So, the big dilemma. But these things required a vast number of slaves, and if I show you this picture, you'll see some of them - I mean, not all the galleys were like that - but some of them had up to eight oarsmen per oar. The requirement that the Ottoman Empire had was for at least ten thousand new slaves every year, just men at the galleys. So a huge requirement.

How did naval warfare take place in that period? Well, it's something like this. If a galley was taking on another galley, they would come into an arrow range and then the archers on board would fire volleys of arrows. And you can imagine the effect that would have had on the slaves - the rowers - who were staying by their stalls with absolutely no cover whatsoever. Well, this technique certainly worked at the Battle of Preveza against the Christians under Andrea Doria in 1538, and indeed under Suleiman the Magnificent things were going particularly well. Now, why am I telling you all this? I'm telling you all this because it establishes the sort of mindset of what is going on. Here we have the Muslim Empire, the Ottoman Empire reaching its pinnacle under Suleiman the Magnificent, achieving all these great things: Belgrade - taken, Rhodes - taken, Battle of Mohács and Hungary taken, Vienna attacked in 1529 and 1532. So a huge, great expansion, just as was predicted.

But then what happened? Well, at Vienna things started to go a little bit pear-shaped. Although sultan Suleiman had a lot of troops, his main armament was still his archers. And they came up for the first time against two groups of Christians: the Landsknecht men shown there, whose vestments there could largely absorb many of the arrows, and secondly, for the first time you see these people: arquebuses. And now for the first time we start seeing not just archers firing at each other, but we start seeing riflemen - I know, there weren't rifles, but let's call them riflemen - firing at each other. And the interesting thing is we start seeing the development now of volley fire, sequential volley fire: front rank fire, middle rank fire, rear rank fire, front rank fire, and of course that was enough by and large to stop the Muslim advance and the capture of Vienna.

Well, in Malta in 1565 again things didn't go quite as expected. But of course in Cyprus in 1570, we all know - I'm sure you know - Nicosia was taken summer of 1570, and then the siege of

Famagusta took place in 1570 into 1571. A considerable number of Muslim soldiers were killed in the battles that followed, as a result of which it re-motivated the Christians and in the battle that took place just to the west of Greece in the autumn of 1571 - Battle of Lepanto - we start to see some different dynamics at work. And the first one I draw to your attention is this. We have cannons on the broad side of ships, not where the rowers were, but now they are weapons pointing out to the side. And although there are still cannons in the front of the various galleys, now we're starting to see the arrival of big men of war. About a third of the Ottoman fleet was blown up before it closed into range to destroy the Christians. So now we're starting to see technology substituting.

Well, let's just have a look at the sort of setbacks that occurred and the successes that occurred. And I'll run through this, because I've already covered most of it. Yarmouk 636 - success. The Mongols go around the Caspian - bit of a failure. Batu Khan takes out the Seljuks. But there on the other hand the Ottoman state is established and they move on to take out Kosovo and move on from there. Then Timur turns up, defeats them at the Battle of Ankara and captures Bayezid II. Constantinople is taken - things seem to be back on track. But - oh my God! - in Spain Ferdinand and Isabella - the Reconquista. Babur then takes Delhi - things are OK again. Vienna - failure by Suleiman. Preveza - success. Malta - failure. Cyprus - success. And suddenly in 1571 - Battle of Lepanto. And it could be said that was probably the turning point. That was the decisive point. From that moment on they were still going to be failures, of course, for the Christians and still going to be successes for Islam. But the great expansion, the great improvement, the great perfection that was sought now seems to be unachievable.

Well, as a result of what happened at Lepanto, lot of the archers were killed because of the cannon fire, and new rowers are going to be required. Where were they going to come from? Well, let me talk to you a little bit more about slavery. And this is the number of slaves that were taken from the coasts of the Mediterranean in the period after 1535 - around Lepanto. And these are the numbers that were actually captured. So we're not talking in tens, we're not talking in hundreds - we're talking in thousands. And if that wasn't bad enough, if we look out into the Atlantic - these are years now, not numbers of people taken. This is the British fishing fleet that was attacked in 1617. Even as far as Iceland. Baltimore - the town of Baltimore - was emptied of people in 1632, and Lundy Island was finally invaded by Cromwell in 1645. And reports - and I don't know whether these are believable or not - are that there were 20,000 slaves on Lundy Island. I suspect that's probably a decimal point wrong, but even if it's only 2,000, it's an awful lot of slaves on Lundy Island.

Now, if that wasn't bad enough, let's look at what was happening. I mentioned, of course, the Crimean Khanate was entitled to go on raids up into southern Poland and along the Don Basin. Well, let's just have a look at what happened in these areas. These were known as the Tartar raids by the Russians, but for as far as the Tartars were concerned, it was known as harvesting the steppe. Harvesting the steppe. There were no geopolitical reasons to take this area, there was no mines to be had, no resources to be had. They weren't after food, they were after slaves. They were looking for entire villages that could be taken. Thousands of slaves - fit men and girls - they were all taken to Kaffa in Crimea, which is the slave market, and then sold on to Istanbul. And Rokselana whom I mentioned was one of these girls. In 1662, the town of Putivl was emptied and 20,000 were taken. In 1668 they moved up into the Ukraine, went from Poltava up to Kiev and took - it said - 60,000. 60,000 people. The old and the infirm were of no use, and

they were generally left in the churches and just burnt, or some of them were given to the soldiers to act as playthings.

If that wasn't bad enough, they were also looking to bring people up from the south, from sub-Saharan Africa. Islam had penetrated a certain way down into Africa, but it hadn't penetrated right through up the whole area. And this, as you can see, is a picture of slaves that were taken until quite recently - I mean this one probably dates about a hundred years ago.

I asked the question - when was the last African state to give up slavery? And I'm not going to tell you the answer, but I would suggest you go and find out. Because you will be amazed and alarmed which year it was.

Let's talk a little bit about African slavery. Generally, the Africans were not so good on the galleys and so most of the people that were taken northwards from this area were for the farms of the Maghreb. On the eastern side they had no need of fit young black men. What they were after were young boys who were castrated - most of whom died I had to say - and girls who were going to be exported and sold into India. Estimates vary at the bottom end between maybe eleven million black slaves were taken - and we're not talking about the transatlantic trade; we're talking about the north-south trade - at the bottom end 11 million, and some people have estimated as many as 25 million were taken during this particular period. When I say Islam was a slave economy, you can start to see the size of the way in which it operated.

Many of the girls were taken across to the Mughal Empire, and I mentioned to you the fact that of course under Tamerlane there was a rather different regime in power at the time. Tamerlane saw Islam as being the servant of Tamerlane. And so indeed it is true that many of the Mughals had a similar idea. This man, perhaps, Akbar was the greatest of the Mughal emperors and he found himself at one stage or another having to fight the people who did all the work for him, which were of course the Hindus. And if the Hindus ever rebelled, then there were all sorts of recriminations, and it was not unusual for them to take a number of the Hindu population, to massacre them and then to build on - as you can see - a pillar of heads. I have to tell that pillars of heads still exist in Bosnia and many of the Balkan countries, not of course inflicted by Akbar but by others. So this is again not a new situation.

Akbar's view of Islam, like Tamerlane's, was rather different. He was criticized on one occasion for having three hundred wives, because he was entitled to have four, of course. But the man who criticized him was given a one-way passport to eternity. He also - Akbar - was very interested in Christianity and he invited some Christian missionaries to come and persuade him how good Christianity was. And they talked to him about what happened to Jesus, and what essentially happened with Orthodoxy and the Roman Church. And he said, of course, "Christianity is a weak religion. Had I been Jesus, I would have got down off the cross, got an army together, and defeated the Romans." That was his method of dealing with pretty much everything.

Well, I mentioned that the tide had turned and I'm not going to spend too much time. Siege of Vienna - 1683. Battle of Mohacs - 1687. Peter the Great, who after having all the ravages, the attacks down into the Donbass decided to move down to take Azov and establish a naval base at Taganrog, moved down with two armies in 1695, and again in 1696, and established himself in a great powerful position along the northern part of the Black Sea.

Meanwhile, in the Far East we're starting to see European penetration, and you can see British, Portuguese, French flags, and Dutch flags as well. Interesting enough, the British were given Bombay as the wedding gift of Catherine of Braganza for Charles II. That's how we acquired Bombay. But the main presence of the British was over in this area here. And you can see considerable Christian penetration of the Indian subcontinent. Of course, the whole thing changed then in 1757, when in the Battle of Plassey Clive defeated the local Nawab and the French forces. From that moment, on Britain was going to move into the hinterland and take the rest of India.

But then we need to move back, perhaps to the Black Sea. And this lady comes to the fore: Catherine the Great. Catherine's plan very simply was to establish a new sort of empire. She wanted to divide the empire that she had and gain some more. In the north would be the Empire of Russia, and in the South would be the Empire of Constantinople. The reason was, she had two grandsons - one was going to have the northern bit, and the other one was going to have the southern bit. The unfortunate thing is, she didn't really tell the Ottomans too much, though that was what was planned. Well, I'm not going to go through the various evolution of Russian raids, but I'll show you just some of them. In 1769, she engineered an attack by the Turks into Russia, she sent two large armies that moved in, one from the east and then a further one from the west. In the Battles of Larga and Kagul in 1770 she managed to defeat the Ottoman Empire. At the same time the brother of her lover - you remember Gregory Olof was her lover at the time - well, the brother Alexander Olof took the Baltic Fleet, came all the way round through the Mediterranean, and beat the Turks at the Battle of Chesme in June of 1775 and utterly destroyed Turkish sea power for good.

Well, as a result of this there was a Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji which we won't deal with in too much detail. But I will just show the provisions. The Sea of Azov was given to the Russians, the Crimean Khanate was given to Catherine, and so she now essentially controlled the whole of this area. Kinburn and Dnieper Estuary was given to Catherine. The Black Sea was now opened and of course she now received also four and a half million rubles, how very conveniently.

Well, in repeat of this in several other wars that took place it was clear that the Ottoman Empire was in decline. And this picture is from Gillray, the great satirist who depicted... There we have the Ottoman Sultan holding on to the back of an English horse with William Pitt the Younger. There's the Emperor of Prussia - the Kaiser, Dutchman on the back, there's the Emperor of Austria, there's Katherine of course, and there's a Frenchman standing there, who sang "Sacré bleu!", but it's clear now the way the power lies. It's a preview of balance of power between the Brits, and the Germans, and the Dutch on the one hand, and the French, and the Austrians, and of course Catherine on the other. Notice the Sultan is left there hanging on to the back. That was the new sentiment.

And if it needed ramming home, it was rammed home in great graphic detail when Napoleon took Egypt at the Battle of the Pyramids and beat the Mamluks. And again, if it needed ramming home just one stage further, at the Battle of Aboukir Bay in 1798 Nelson defeated the French, although the Ottomans weren't involved. If anything, the Ottomans were on Nelson's side, nevertheless there was nothing that the Ottomans could do against these magnificent weapons of war. They were the B-2s of their day.

In the West there was then this sentiment. The West needs to do something to help the poor people of the Ottoman Empire in Bulgaria, in Hungary, in the Balkans in to Greece, they must

do something about it. And romantics like, of course, George Byron decided they would do something, and as we all know he died in Lepanto, Missolonghi, in 1824.

Well, of course, we then move on through the Crimea escapade. But even in 1873, while the Ottoman Empire was almost completely destroyed, we were still getting Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria. And in fact at that stage it was not Disraeli but Gladstone who said as a result of these atrocities, "the one great anti-human specimen of humanity." And when the British prime minister says that, you can bet your bottom dollar – there's a lot behind.

Well, the wars continued and indeed in - as you can see - in the Treaty of San Stefano which occurred following of the 1878 war. The Russians actually got within spitting distance of Constantinople. And they were only pulled back by the combined efforts of the Germans and indeed the Brits. Nikopol was taken. But if you look at the way in which the victories occurred, well, to begin with a few Turkish victories, but then it goes: Russian victory, Russian victory Russian victory, Russian victory, Crimean War - Russian victory. So suddenly we're starting to see the whole change.

And indeed, by 1914 it's quite remarkable that you look at the state of Islam. The whole of the Maghreb has been taken by the West, by the colonial powers. India has been taken. The Far East, of course Indonesia has been taken by colonial powers. The only bit that's left independent for Islam is the Ottoman Empire itself. So you can see now the sense of the West imposing upon the Ottoman Empire and Islam in general. And indeed, in 1914, of course, the Ottoman Empire decided to join in. Unfortunately, they joined the wrong side.

Well, let's come to 1914, and the last 10 minutes I want to just talk about where we stand. And I want to just give you some idea. Not only is this a physical constraint that the West has imposed upon Islam, it's also an intellectual constraint.

Let's just look at some of the things that occurred by 1914. Well, in 1914 there was pretty much universal suffrage for every man in the West. Women were still yet to get the vote, but it wasn't far off to establish an equivalence in entitlement between men and women. Industrialization. The greatest industrial revolution that has ever taken place. Things like electricity being used which fuels and powers virtually everything else. Railways. Railways not just to move people to go to the seaside. Railways to move whole armies from one side of Germany to another side of Germany. The internal combustion engine that was going to power everything we do. Flight. Flight could probably never have come from the Muslim countries. Armaments. The machine gun, the tank, the dreadnaughts. Telecommunications, which we of course still enjoy today. Medicine. And it goes on.

But then as far as the Islamic countries are concerned – what? Well, of course they will argue looking for Islam and the state of perfection, this is not necessary. What we are interested in is the state of our religion, the wisdom that we've generated, the logic that we understand, the work in mathematics and so forth upon which much of what the West has done has been based. And of course the purity of the religion.

So how should Islam then cope with what the West was offering? Hegemony on the one hand, and this modernization on the other. Well, how were they going to tackle all of this?

There was a man called Sir Hamilton Gibb writing in 1945, who said that you can divide Islam up into three main categories. You have the liberal secularists. I suppose the classic example of

that is Atatürk: the division between religions on the one hand and the state on the other. Then you can enjoy all the modernity that is being offered by the West while still keeping Islam pure. You have the modernizers, the reformers, the people who say, well, of course you can enjoy what the West has, but still maintain the ultimate end point, which of course is global Islam. So you can use the West as you see fit. And then, of course, what he called the Mahdists. You remember the Mahdi in Khartoum, General Gordon (inaudible). Well, of course these are the people who say that this is all rubbish, we don't want any of this, we don't want to get rid of all this. We need to impose Islam at the point of the spear down the barrel of a gun by force of arms. That is the only way that you can actually impose it. Well, at the time he was writing that probably the population of Islam was sort of divided something like this: most people were secularists or modernizers and relatively few Mahdists. But arguably, in the last few years we've seen that start to move something like that. And this of course is the challenge that we need to look at.

For what is the West's view then of Islam? How do we look at Islam itself and try and work it out? Is it actually a spectrum? You know, we have the secularists at this end, and may be the Mahdists, the extremists at the other end, you know, with the bulk of Islam somewhere in the middle. Or perhaps it's better looked at as a sort of body politic with the occasional bits of cancer in there that need to be removed? Or should we look at Islam really as a tree, and although we have all these different sects, we have sects like the Sufis over here, we have most of the people that are going to be Sunni, the occasional Shia, and maybe one or two of the extremists. How should we envisage Islam? Because if we don't have a model in which we can categorize it, it's going to be very difficult to understand it.

So what is this this “-ism”? Is it just fascism, communism, just a modern-day “-ism”, or is it something else? Well, this is what people are saying. Islamism is an ideology that demands man's complete adherence to the sacred law of the Prophet and rejects outside influence. It's characterized by a deep antagonism. So we are now in the levels of the Mahdism: the extremism. And we still need to ask ourselves: is it ephemeral, or is it enduring?

So why is it happening now? Well, we - I'm sure you all know about this - we can talk about Samuel Huntington and the “clash of civilizations”. Is it because of the pretext - Zionism, Western hegemony? Even now, when everybody has independence, we still have forces in Afghanistan, we have forces in Iraq, you know, we intervened in Libya just recently. When will the West ever stop? Is it because of globalization, because now the message can get out to little pockets of Islamists everywhere? The people in the middle of the north of England know about what's happening in Afghanistan and get on an airplane and fly there and participate. Much more difficult when they were just galleys around. Now they can do these sort of things. Is that one of the reasons why it's happening now? Or is it maybe because of population growth and we have lots of people with unfulfilled aspirations?

Well, my maintain and the studies I've done, most of it, or a lot of it is because this is a strategic driver - population. (*Picture of overcrowded trains preparing to leave Dhaka*). This picture was taken - as you can see - just over a year ago and it's taken in Dhaka, Bangladesh. And the question I would ask is how many women can you see? One thing is for sure. Even the United Nations mentions this, that whenever there is a surplus population, one that cannot be supported from the resources available, then expect problems. And it was Edward Luttwak who started to espouse this idea. He said, either you will get a conflict, or you may have disease, or you may have mass migration. But something has to happen. You can't just have a surplus

population that sits there and dies. Well, you can, but if that's all they're going to do, they're just going to die.

Let's have a look at surplus populations, and I'll go through this in a fairly short order. (*Pictures of population pyramids in Peru, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Qatar, Oman, Chad, and Nigeria*). In I put Peru out there just because of the shape of this particular diagram. It's pretty much in balance. And if we put a plot across that and then apply it to something else...Let's have a look at that plot, the Peru plot, and put it in Saudi Arabia. Well, that's very interesting, isn't it? So where're all the girls gone then? Hmm, okay. What happened over here? Well, '67-'75? Remember the oil shocks? Price of oil doubled and doubled again? And what happened? Population rose. What's happened if we take Iraq and look at the same sort of thing? Interestingly enough, from 1990 in round turns population has started to rise and probably this will be unsustainable. What about these things here? I mean, these are mostly Western friends. What's happening in Qatar, let's go back to Qatar. I mean, that population graph that we're shown here, where're all the girls gone? And who are all these people? Well, some of them I have to tell you are expatriates. But that doesn't account for all of them. And what's happening in Oman as well? So you have this population burgeoning up and one wonders quite how that would be tolerated. Some basket cases for a second for you to look at. Let's just have a look at Nigeria, for example. We did a study which I'm not going to go into now, which we were worried about the effect of AIDS on the population of Nigeria. At the time it was 85 million. And it's now a 183 million. It's gone up by a hundred million in the period, due to go up to 350 million, i.e. the same size as Europe, by the turn of the century. Chad - I'm not going to go through the picture here, but you can see the (inaudible) for Chad is even worse. So you can see they're going to have a problem in the future.

Well, if you look at fertility per woman - and these are UN statistics - you can see that really sort of south of the Mediterranean and actually down almost to South Africa, that's where the population growth is really going to take place. And many of those areas are of course Islamic. So how will these people view the world? One of the assumption these boys, these girls are going to make, well, I suggest based on their culture, they're going to make the assumption, indeed, they'll make it a belief that Western laws are not those of the Prophet, and actually they don't, therefore, apply. Although the West is superior, things like Nobel Prizes and technology - use the West's technology and turn it against it, reject materialism, promiscuity. Let's return to the purity that was envisaged by the Quran. God's purpose in all this is being thwarted, particularly by the West, but actually it feels like they're being thwarted by anyone. But Sharia is the law and Sharia does not require that you have to do exactly as the law of the land requires, and therefore there is nothing necessarily wrong in massacring or enslavement. The end, after all, does justify the means, because it is given to you by God. So what does this mean in terms of slavery?

Well, you'll be surprised by this. There are actually more slaves in the world today than at any other time. Debt bondage is common across areas in Turkey and Pakistan. Captured infidels are treated as slaves. I did some of the work for the deployment of British forces out to Saudi Arabia at the time of Gulf War I. And at the time of the deployment the question was what would the status be of British forces in Saudi Arabia. The status was to be that legally of slaves. And we had to then have that changed. Surplus children sold as child brides happen in Afghanistan, to considerable extent in Pakistan. Rotherham girls: we find a phenomenon in the West right now where girls, Christian British girls are given drugs, given alcohol, when they're

fourteen or fifteen, and turned into sex slaves, and then become the slaves of Pakistani masters. And this has hit the headlines in a number of areas. We all know about Boko Haram. And I would bet you that this group here, virtually all have either had children or are pregnant for the reasons that I gave. What are the Yazidi girls who've just been taken by ISIL? Well, I suspect the same fate has either occurred to them or awaits them. It may be illegal, but if you are a young Muslim, is it wrong?

Now, for those of a sensitive disposition, turn away now, look down, because I will show you some more pictures when I can get you to guess what they are. Let's just think of other things that are illegal, yes, but maybe not wrong. There's Islamism. (*Pictures of jihadists' victims*). This is a young girl reporter in Chechnya - that's what happens to her. That isn't contrary to the Koran, she shouldn't have been there. Is this wrong? Is this wrong? Is this wrong? Is that wrong? Okay, you can start to think about looking up now. This is the sort of group that we are dealing with who do not see anything wrong with this sort of situation.

Let's talk about them a little bit more. I've looked at events that've taken place. Glasgow, when the bombers took out the airport. Look at Greenwich murder of Pte. Lee Rigby. What happened in Ottawa? What happened in Sydney? Remember? They took over a café. What happened, of course, in France just recently? And let's look at the people who did it and see if there're any sort of common denominators. I'm not going to go through this in detail. So what do these people find? Well, they watch television. They're brutalized. They see nothing wrong with these sort of things. They see that happening on television almost every day. They also see the propaganda: Oh my God, they're bombing again, they're bombing our people, they're bombing members of this sacred group of Islam! Day after day they see it. They want to belong to something because they don't seem to have anything they can belong to. And they're offered certainty in uncertain world. And if they do join one of these sects, of course they achieve prestige and respect. They're told that they do God's will and they're told that it's their duty to go and do it.

But the problem is, of course, they live in a sort of world that doesn't necessarily cater for that. They live in a male-dominated society, it's true. Boys are held in higher esteem than girls. Well, we've seen the statistics, we've seen the shape of the graphs - they're liabilities. Boys, I have to tell you, in the West get everything almost on a plate. They all want to be doctors, lawyers and teachers. But I make no apology for saying a lot of them are very idle and some of them are not very bright. Not everybody in this world can be a doctor or a teacher. Most of them are going to do something else than that. And so we start to get a sense of frustration amongst these young boys. Why are their qualities not being recognized? What is it they have we have not done - we, the West - have not done? And so they become susceptible to this sort of suggestion or suggestionism. What are their inalienable rights? Why are their achievements frustrated by these sorts of things? Western society, imperialism, persecution, and the inability by the West to recognize talent. So, of course, their duty to Islam becomes an obvious way out. And if they can't achieve their aims in this world, well, maybe they should think about other methods of doing it.

The international laws, the customs, the culture do not apply. It overrules the loyalty to the state, to the crown, or to the citizens, and in creating a state within a state then all these things start to become possible. Polygamy, slavery, murder, colonial justice, because Sharia is the only course to true Islam. And so when you find these young men and (inaudible) the ones (inaudible) that we're talking about, when they start climbing the ladder of success, they find



the first time they reach an obstacle, it becomes a little bit difficult for them to go up on it. And so the physical aspects, their physical ambitions are frustrated. And these are people who perhaps were slightly culturally arrogant, probably had poor academics, bit of a purposeless life, quite often they enjoy rap and gangsta music, unemployed, because they haven't got any academics, and they resort to petty crime. And suddenly these sort of people find it very, very attractive to swap ladders halfway across. Because now you can go up a ladder of the spirituality and you can go quickly onto that ladder and eventually achieve what is your aim: the seventy two virgins in paradise.

Well, what is the West's response about that? Well, sadly we don't do very much. We have a president in the United States who has utopianist ideas. He hasn't been very good at trying to decide what to do in Cairo. Indeed, he had, as you know, Mubarak virtually kicked out and encouraged the riots, and one can say that he's pretty much like Jimmy Carter with the Shah of Iran, and the same is true with Obama. Couldn't decide whether to intervene or not intervene in Syria and in Ukraine. Well, he sits on the fence a little bit and can't decide what to do. Bomb ISIS? Yeah, but don't do too much bombing, just do enough to stop the offensives. Indeed, last night he said in Syria we are degrading and ultimately stopping the fight. Well, that doesn't sound like a man who's committed to decisive action.

I'll just show you these pictures here. This is the bombing sorties that have occurred recently. In the months since August until just now we've launched, well, the West has launched 880 in Iraq and 666 in Syria. 1,500 sorties in the round. Let me just tell you, on the day of D-Day when we invaded northern Europe, we've launched 14,000 sorties across the beaches. 14,000. They haven't done 1,400 in six months. On the opening night of Gulf War I we launched 2,000 missions on that one opening night. And they hadn't done that in six months. Is this somebody who is decisively engaged?

Well, the question that I will put to you is this: what do we collectively and individually really know about Islam? Do we really understand? Because if we don't, we really should start understanding what motivates the youth. Is it going to just fizzle out? We do nothing, we do what Obama is doing now, will it just gradually disappear? What's going to happen to the oil price? What sort of effect will that have? How do we break this chain? Can we do this? How quickly can we do it? Is there something else that's going to bring up a new casus belli? Because at present we seem to be doing pretty much nothing: fecklessness. And we're becoming tolerant, certainly as regards the press.

Military responses, of course, have the unfortunate side effects of just creating more martyrs, more people than who go off to fight the West. Maybe we should try psychological factors: undermine the leaders, undermine the beliefs, give a sense of purpose to these young men and remove the rabid. Or maybe we should also think about the legal principles, see if there is a law that we could enact.

And the final thing I will suggest to you is maybe we need to think about the law a little bit more. The freedom of speech, as you know, Charlie Hebdo, the fights that went on in Paris, the massacres that took place, can easily be turned against us. If we're entitled to produce a picture of Muhammad weeping or doing whatever it is and that is considered unsavory, well, how much more do we find it unsavory if I said, right, we must go forth from hence and massacre Christians? Your freedom of speech and my freedom of speech are both the same principle and both must be upheld. How about thinking along these lines though? What can we do to get

curb the incitement, the coercion, and the brainwashing that is happening to these young people? And I'd suggest you, maybe the sort of law that we now need to adduce is a "freedom of choice" principle. We have freedom of speech, now we need to give a "freedom of choice" principle, so that they will not be incited, they will not be coerced, and they will not be brainwashed. And I suggest I just throw it out as a line of an argument. Any person acting on his own behalf or as an agent, perhaps even a priest, for another, perhaps even a religion, who offers an inducement, tangible or intangible, i.e. money or a place in heaven, or creates an obligation, "it is your duty to do X, Y and Z, to carry out an act contrary to the law of the land, i.e. commit a crime," should, I suggest, be considered guilty of the crime of equal gravity to the law that has just been crossed. Maybe that is a line that we should take and maybe we should make sure that people who are giving advice, priests in particular, but politicians perhaps as well, are required to record what it is they are saying so that we can hold them to account.

Ladies and gentlemen, I apologize for being so fast and furious. I will now give the floor across to Klearchos Kyriakides, who will now take us through the more pragmatic things. I hope you find that what I have said in terms of history resonates down into what we find today.

Thank you very much.

---

## ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATION\*

---

Jean-Lec Florent\*\*  
21 April 2015

### **The Eastern Mediterranean: French Foreign Policy**

*French Ambassador to Cyprus describes French foreign policy for the East Mediterranean and discusses the nature of the various regional conflicts, especially the Turkish-Cyprus conflict over Cyprus EEZ and the Turkish-Greek conflict over Greek EEZ.*

The subject of this roundtable which is “French Foreign Policy in Eastern Mediterranean” is, in a way, a real challenge, taking into consideration, first of all, the number of countries involved, but also on mainly the current situation, which is prevailing in most of these countries.

So, as you can imagine, the first priority of the French foreign policy in the region is, of course, to further improve its bilateral relations with all the countries in the region. But I think that what is more important for the subject of this meeting is what are the two main transversal, let's say, priorities of the French foreign policy in the region, for the time being.

The first of this priority is to help and contribute, to try to put an end to so many conflicts in the region, and to stabilize as far as possible countries which are affected, not only by terrorism, but by domestic conflicts too. And, of course, not only France by definition, but all countries are also touched by what we call “Daesh”, it's to say the terrorism, which is currently damaging - not to say the least - in several countries of the region. So these are the two main priorities of the French foreign policy for the time being. First of all, to try to stabilize and contribute to the peace in the region, and the second one is to fight against terrorism, in particular Daesh.

Of course, we do appreciate the role of Cyprus in the region. Because for the time being, I would say that Cyprus is the more stable state in the region, and as an EU member state, we think it is very important for all EU members having Cyprus in the region, and taking into account the good relationship Cyprus enjoys with quite all the countries of the region. And we think maybe the EU, we'd love to use - maybe more than we currently do - the fact that Cyprus could help in the process of fighting terrorism and conflicts in the region.

As far as France is concerned, we are acting not only on a national basis, but also taking into account the fact that we are a member of the EU, and also a member of the United Nations, and

\* Transcript of oral presentation.

\*\* Ambassador of the French Republic to the Republic of Cyprus

in particular the Security Council of the United Nations. Because most of the conflicts and the problems which are prevailing (inaudible), as I said initially, are not concerning only the countries in the region, but more than that. I think that many other countries are affected in a way or another, and it is important for the international community as a whole to get together in order to strengthen the fight against the scourge of terrorism in particular.

Of course, we think that as far as Cyprus is concerned, I say it's a pole of stability which we must use even more than we do for the time being. But we think also that the discovery of hydrocarbons in the Eastern Mediterranean region must not be another factor of conflicts or divisions, but on the contrary, must be a factor of more cooperation between the countries in the region. And I think that the tripartite consultations which are taking place between Greece, Cyprus, and Israel on one side, and Greece, Cyprus, and Egypt on the other side, is an interesting process, which hopefully will contribute for the stabilization, and also for the peaceful cooperation, as far as exploitation or exploration of hydrocarbons are concerned in the region.

Of course, my understanding of that, this is not something which is against Turkey, but it is up to Turkey to enter into the game. My understanding is that there is no willingness to exclude totally Turkey, but it is mainly for Turkey to do what we are expecting Turkey to do in order to join the club. But once again hydrocarbons must not be a new subject of division, but much more, and a subject for more cooperation.

Of course, we are all affected by what is happening in Syria since now more than three years. We think that the situation, unfortunately, is not improving at all, because, first of all, the regime of Bashar al-Assad is, from the right beginning, following a policy which is in our view contrary to the interest of its own country and its own people. The way Bashar al-Assad is conducting operations against civilians, against cities, children, women, this is something which is unacceptable. And, as we know, more than two hundred thousand people were killed, and mainly civilians. So we think that Bashar al-Assad must enter into the game of a political transition in accordance with the Geneva process which was launched two years ago, but which failed until now. We think it is important that the moderate opposition must be first of all unified and helped in order to play a real role in this political transition in Syria. Unfortunately, for the time being there is a lot of work to be done, but we still think that it is very important to unify even more, and to help even more the moderate opposition. For us it is clear that Bashar al-Assad is not the key man for the transition. We think that what he did against his people discredited him for being still president in a transitional political period. It doesn't mean that we cannot play with some of the Assad regime, but not include Assad as such. Because what is important is, first of all, to preserve the unity of Syria, and the democracy, and the plurality in this country after what is happening currently.

Of course, we know that there is the factor of terrorism, which is also playing bad game in this country. But we think that Russia, in a way, is responsible for the expansion of Daesh in Syria, and we are of the opinion that for the time being is not fighting against Daesh as much as we think it would have to. Of course, we know that is not always in a position to fight against Daesh, because it is facing domestic problems with its army, with its equipment and everything. But nevertheless, we think that what is important is to re-launch the process, the Geneva process for a political transition in Syria, including mainly the moderate opposition in order to find a solution to this domestic conflict.

We think that it is also very important to preserve the stability and the independence of Lebanon. And we are insisting for Lebanon parties to reach an agreement in order to elect a president, because for the time being most of the decisions in Lebanon are not being taken because of the lack of president, and the lack of an agreement within the parliament. But we also think that it is important to strengthen the armed forces from Lebanon. And this is why France, in conjunction with Saudi Arabia, is now furnishing a lot of military equipment to the armed forces in Lebanon, because we think it is important these armed forces being in a better position to maintain peace and stability in this region, mainly taking into account the volatile, not to say the least, in the region, in the neighboring countries.

As far as the Israel-Palestinian conflict, we think that it is important - now that the elections took place in Israel and that new government will be formed within the two weeks or three weeks to come - that it is important for the peace process to resume. But we must be realistic. Taking into account what Benjamin Netanyahu said during the electoral campaign before his reelection as prime minister, we think that the two parties themselves, only themselves, will not be in a position to reach any agreement for the time being. So we think it is very important for the international community to enter into the game and to be very active in order to facilitate not only the resumption of the negotiating process, but an agreement. So France has in mind to take an initiative within the Security Council in the coming weeks, in order to see if it is possible to reach an agreement on a draft resolution which would fix the parameters of the possible settlement of the conflict between Palestine and Israel, and giving a timetable, in order to reach an agreement on the basis of these parameters. These parameters are well known and they are mainly the recognition of two states, the security of Israel, the right for the Palestinians to have a state, the borders, a question of the borders of 1967, the refugees. And we think that it is important for the Security Council and for the international community, as I say, to establish the parameters on which the negotiations will be based. And we are ready to organize a conference in France at the later stage, if such a resolution is adopted by the Security Council, to make a first assessment of the implementation of the resolution. But we think that it is urgent now to really resume the negotiating process and try to find an agreement. Because the more time is elapsing, the more difficult the solution will be, and the viability of the Palestinian state will totally disappear if colonization - illegal colonization, for instance - is going on, which unfortunately might be the case, taking into account decisions which are taken by Israeli government recently.

We think Egypt has a very important role to play in the Middle East and in Africa, and it is important that the political transition in Egypt be implemented according to the roadmap which was adopted. For the time being we think this roadmap is globally implemented, of course, with some difficulties in certain areas, and with some delays in some other areas. But globally we think that there is a bit more stability in Egypt for the time being. Of course we are helping, not only France, but the EU, and others are helping Egypt, because the situation in Egypt financially and economically speaking is difficult. But we think it is very important having a stable Egypt and an influential Egypt in the Middle East and in Africa, because they can contribute to the stabilization of this region and to fight against terrorism also.

As far as Turkey is concerned, you know we had a difficult relationship with Turkey at the time Nicolas Sarkozy was a French president. Now, with the election of Francois Hollande, we are trying to improve our relationship with Turkey. Of course, it is not an easy process, we know that it will take time. And of course, we think that it is important to restore confidence between

the two countries. I think that the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, which will take place in Yerevan next Friday, could be an occasion for other troubles between the bilateral relations between France and Turkey. But from the right beginning we informed Turkey that we will participate and the French president will be in Yerevan on next Friday. We know that it is a very sensitive issue for Turkey, but on the other hand we think that it is important for Turkey to recognize the existence of this genocide. So, I suppose we will have some difficult aspects between France and Turkey in the coming days or weeks, but nevertheless, we think it is important to improve our relationship with Turkey and, of course, on the understanding that Turkey must also play the game. Not only in order to become a member of the EU, but also in order to play the role we're expecting from Turkey in the region, and of course, also on the domestic front, as far as liberties and freedoms are concerned. But you know, we are not blocking any more chapters as far as Turkey's accession of the EU is concerned. This is an important move from the French state since the election of President Francois Hollande. But as I said, it is a process which is a long one, and we hope that Turkey will stick to what its (inaudible) are saying for the time being.

So having this very, very quick look at most of the countries in the region, we see that there are many domestic problems, international problems to be solved. That all these problems are aggravated with the activities of terrorists, and in particular Daesh, mainly in Syria and Iraq, but not only in Syria and Iraq. And we think, it is important for the international community to fight in a common way against terrorism in general, and Daesh in particular. France, from the right beginning, took its responsibilities, because as you know, we participate, from the right beginning, to the international coalition against Daesh, and France is actively and militarily participating with the coalition to the airstrikes against Daesh in Iraq. But we all know that airstrikes in any way will not solve themselves the situation, and it is important for the countries involved, I mean Iraq and Syria, also to fight on the ground against Daesh. Progresses are made in Iraq. As I said, in Syria we are not convinced that Bashar Assad is doing his best in order to fight Daesh, but we think it is important that the countries on the sole of which terrorism is expanding must also take their responsibilities. And the international community can help, of course, but mainly the responsibility if there is to combat on the ground the terrorists.

We are also very concerned with the increase of the foreign fighters, and mainly European and French fighters, going to fight with Daesh in Iraq and Syria. And we are taking measures, not only at the national level, but also at the EU level, in order to try to restrain the number of French or foreign fighters going to Iraq and Syria. But we think it is important that all the countries involved are also playing the game. And I have in mind Turkey, because we all know that most of the foreign fighters coming from continental Europe are going to Iraq or Syria mainly through Turkey. And we think it is important Turkey being very vigilant in order to impede access through its territory by these foreign fighters to Iraq or Syria. Progresses were made in cooperation with the intelligence services of the countries involved, but we think that maybe there is still margin for an improvement of the cooperation with Turkey. And of course we think it is also important that the international community takes the measures in order to cut as much as possible the financing of the terrorist groups, and in particular Daesh, even if we know that Daesh is mainly financed by robberies, by illegal utilization of hydrocarbons refineries, for instance. But we think, nevertheless, that it is important to have a clear monitoring of the financing aspect of the terrorism.

And, of course, what is happening in Iraq and Syria has clear - and mainly because of the action of Daesh - has a direct repercussion on the Christian community in these two countries. And we think that the international community has to act in order to help these Christians not to be killed, but to avoid that they all will have to leave their countries, in which they are living since many centuries. So, we think it is important for the international community, and the Security Council in particular, to act. So the French Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development Laurent Fabius convened on the 27th of March a ministerial meeting of the Security Council, which was chaired during the months of March by France in order to assess the situation with the Christians in the region, and to take action in order to safeguard, not only the rights, but the lives of the Christians in this region. So, the proposal was to adopt charter of action in order to take measures to protect the Christians in the region, but with the main idea of not only helping them if they are fleeing their countries, but mainly to try to create other good conditions for them to stay in their country, or to return to their country, once the situation will improve. Because we think it is important to maintain in the region the Christian community, and we know that it's a difficult task for the time being, but we think it is important too for the international community to act.

So, these are all the challenges, not only France, but all the countries, and in particular the countries in the region are facing. And we think that it is very important that we act all in the same way in order to restore peace in the region and to combat terrorism in the region.

Thank you very much.





---

## ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATION\*

---

Fernando Reinares\*\*

27 May 2015

### **Evolving Global Terrorism Threat in and around the Mediterranean**

*Brief but probing discussion of the growing Jihadist threat in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, and the radicalization of regional and European Muslims that is feeding this phenomenon.*

What is going on today, and in particular, since 2013 in the Eastern Mediterranean, in Syria and Iraq, is the manifestation of what we can consider to be the third period in the evolution, in the recent evolution of global jihadism. The first period started in 1988, when al-Qaeda was founded, and ended in 2001 with the 9/11 attacks. And from that moment on, during the second period al-Qaeda decentralized, among other things, creating territorial, regional branches such as al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula, or al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, forged relationships with a number of organizations all across the globe. The phenomenon evolved from virtually centralized organizational one to polymorphous phenomenon, involving a number of individual and collective actors. And that period was finished with the starting of the so-called Arab Spring, the upheavals which shaped power in a number of Arab countries in North Africa and the Middle East.

In those days you might remember that a large number of commentators, and analysts and scholars supported the idea that the Arab Spring was a major blow to al-Qaeda and jihadist phenomenon as a whole. It was that al-Qaeda was virtually defeated because of that. Fact is that al-Qaeda, including its territorial branches was waiting for the right opportunity for them to become actors. When Osama Bin Laden was killed in Abbottabad, he had this assessment about the Arab Spring. He was just strategic about it but wanted to wait for the right occasion. At the same time, he was eager to re-centralize al-Qaeda, because he thought that many groups, including, in particular, one of al-Qaeda's branches, was acting all too much against the main directions of al-Qaeda center. And that was al-Qaeda in Iraq. That was 2006, Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). And precisely it was out of the Islamic State of Iraq that the traditional dispute between ISI leadership and al-Qaeda central leadership became finally a rupture in the spin of 2003, which became the more evident with the June 2014 proclamation of the caliphate and the

\* Transcript of oral presentation.

\*\* Senior Analyst, Elcano Royal Institute, Spain

renaming of the Islamic State of Iraq as finally the Islamic State. Before, you may well remember the group was presented as the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham - and Levant - for a period.

So over the past years global jihadism has evolved from a polymorphous phenomenon to a deeply divided one, the division due to now the existence of two main jihadist groups: al-Qaeda on the one hand, and the Islamic State on the other hand. But the phenomenon has also evolved concerning its center of gravity, moving from South Asia to precisely the Eastern Mediterranean, and from there on expanding to other areas around the Mediterranean, south and north.

Al-Qaeda and Islamic State basically share the same ideology commonly known as jihadist Salafism, although it will be a mistake to consider that both organizations share exactly the same view of Salafi-jihadism. Because al-Qaeda applies a rational, calculated understanding of jihadi insurgency, jihadist subversion, whereas the Islamic State, although benefiting from individuals with a very strong strategic military capabilities within its leadership, has adopted a version, an apocalyptic, prophetic version of Salafi-jihadism.

Recently, we had some new documents released from the Abbottabad compound. Among them a very interesting document written by the man Saleh al-Somali, who used to be al-Qaeda's chief of external operations, explaining the reasons why US should be considered the main target and attacks in the US are those who have a real impact over the population and political elites. And neither killing US military outside the US nor attacking US allies has the effect that al-Qaida wants ultimately. So it's quite thinking in terms of ends and means all the time. This is not exactly the way the Islamic State is proceeding nowadays with this different apocalyptic prophetic version of Salafi-jihadism they are hanging to.

I don't want to go into detail now, maybe if over the questions and answers time you want to, we may reflect a little more on the meaning of this. But I used to mention that the very, very denomination of the so-called Islamic State's propaganda magazine Dabiq says it all. That is the place where the unstoppable final battle between Islam and Christianity will take place, and Jesus will descend to tell Christians that they were all wrong and Islam will dominate over the human race. Which is kind of what the Islamic state is emphasizing as the ultimate goal: to reconstitute fully the caliphate. They already started.

When Osama bin Laden was about to be killed, he was thinking about changing al-Qaeda's name. As he thought al-Qaeda was suffering from a crisis of popular image among Muslims. Mainly because al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda's affiliated entities were killing mostly Muslims, Shia or other kind, but mostly Muslims were the main target for al-Qaeda. Among the names that he was thinking about there was this one whose translation will be something like those who will be refunded, those who will be reconstituting the caliphate. Well, now the caliphate is there, not the real one, but something is there which is understood as the real one by many people. A minority, a very small minority, but a significant one when it comes to security threats in general, and the terrorist threat in particular. It was the case, it is the case nowadays in Syria and Iraq, as it was the case three years ago in northern Mali, when a coalition of jihadist organizations led by al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb took over the territory.

True, al-Qaeda and Islamic State have important differences in strategies and tactics. And it is often now stressed the competition between the two for hegemony within global jihadism as a

whole. I will be more than cautious now to stress this idea of competition and rivalry, because we have already a number of indications suggesting that what looks like competition may be evolving into a natural cooperation. We saw this for instance concerning the attacks in Paris early this year. Four individuals coordinated, two of them linked to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and two of them sided with the so-called Islamic State. Nevertheless, they never took for granted the division between the two organizations and cooperated, coordinated among themselves in order to carry out the deadly attacks earlier this year. We also have evidence on al-Qaeda's Jabhat al-Nusra, Syria's official branch, and so-called Islamic State cooperating in the takeover of the Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp. We have indications of overlapping between al-Qaeda individuals and Islamic State-oriented individuals in Northern Africa. And one should not forget the fact that Jabhat al-Nusra, or al-Nusra Front, and the Islamic State are cooperating nowadays in Lebanon.

The Islamic State is nowadays proving to be more resilient than expected. It's losing some ground here but gaining some ground there, and expending as well, not just maintaining the territory under its control in Syria and Iraq, but expending towards some colonies in Libya, towards northeastern Nigeria, the Sinai Peninsula, still here in the Eastern Mediterranean region and so on. And is having a tremendous impact on entities and organizations until now, aligned or oriented or associated with al-Qaeda. For instance, factions of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb decided to openly break away with organization and found new entities along with the Islamic State, for instance the Soldiers of the Caliphate in Algeria.

The Islamic State, if there is any battle between Islamic State and al-Qaeda for human and material resources, one could easily conclude that the so-called Islamic State is winning this war for the time being, is winning this battle. Never ever has a jihadist, insurgent or terrorist organization accumulated such a vast amount of resources, and exerted control of such a vast amount of territory and such numbers of people.

But this is also affecting other Muslim countries, if we consider that Islamic State now has something in between 26,000 and 30,000-31,000 armed militants, a figure which might be extended up to perhaps 150,000, considering those who join on a partial basis. No less than 20,000 of those individuals, those who play a more permanent function within the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq come from abroad, are the so-called foreign fighters – 'foreign terrorist fighters' is the formula now used by the United Nations, the European Union, and so on. And there are number of countries severely affected by the jihadist mobilization. Just remember that those who become foreign fighters are just one indicator of the extent of such mobilization. Then you have to add all those who become radicalized but don't move for one or the other reason, because they can't or because they don't want to. There are number of countries, such as in particular Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Tunisia - how interesting, Tunisia advancing democratically, at the same time providing the largest contingent of foreign fighters to the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

And this jihadist mobilization is also affecting – and this is my very last point just to bring it over the table - it's also affecting Western Europe. I already had the opportunity to discuss this point with a couple of you this morning, very interestingly so, how important it is to mention that within Western Europe it is an accurate estimate to say at this point that no less than 5,000 individuals have left the European Union territory to join Jabhat al-Nusra and mostly the Islamic State. 80% of them or more than 80% of them actually joined the Islamic State. They think the Islamic State is delivering, is successful, that al-Qaeda was fine but now the

organization and the leader who is calling the shots is Baghdadi. And in addition to that the mobilization requested by the Islamic State is not totally different from that of al-Qaeda, because the call is not just to join an organization. Facing difficulties in Pakistan, facing difficulties in the Sahel in spite some opportunities, facing difficulties in Yemen and so on. The call made by the Islamic State is for young Muslims in whatever country to come and join the new society, strengthen the organization, the new society. That means the call is not just to become a fighter. And maybe in that sense the expression 'foreign fighters' is somewhat misleading. Because not all those who mobilize, who radicalize and go to Syria and Iraq have the intention to become fighters. In particular women - women are not foreign terrorist fighters *stricto sensu*, have other roles to be assigned and actually to perform.

The very interesting thing with respect to Western Europe, something not to be applied to countries with predominantly Muslim populations, is that jihadist mobilization is reaching unprecedented levels nowadays, if compared with previous mobilizations in the '90s and early 21st century, is affecting above all countries where the overwhelming majority of Muslims are second generations. Not so much Spain, not so much Italy, not so much Greece, neither taking to account absolute figures, nor taking into account proportion with respect to the total population, nor taking into account the proportion with respect to the Muslim population. Nine countries badly affected by this phenomenon - I hope I don't miss any - are France, Belgium, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Denmark, Norway and Finland. I say that correctly. So taking this fact into account on the one hand - I will end with this - and on the other hand considering that following the empirical evidence that we have until now, the diversity of socio-economic profiles is huge. Not all those who go are individuals extracted from the banlieues and drop outs from high schools. You have, mainly in the UK case, individuals with a middle-class background and university education - not a surprise, not a surprise. The vast majority of individuals convicted in the UK for jihadist terrorism offenses are college educated people. And taking to account those two things, the suggestion is that within second generations - that is young people living in a diaspora situation - there are important segments, minority but important segments suffering from a severe identity crisis, identity problems. They do not identify with the nation they were born or raised in. They don't identify with the nation their parents came from. And under specific personal and situational conditions, chiefly among them to become exposed to a radicalizing agent other than internet - because internet is not usually enough to fulfill the process of radicalization - the face-to-face interaction is still critical, not to mention recruitment *per se*. So they become vulnerable to this idea promoted by al-Qaeda and nowadays in particular by the Islamic State, that the nation they really belong to is the nation of Islam. And the true carrier for this identity is to be found not in any particular concrete Islamic state, is not to be found in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, is not to be found in the Arab League - is to be found in the Islamic State, in the Caliphate, and to a lesser extent in al-Qaeda.

That was my very last point. I'm slightly over my 20 minutes, I do apologize for that, chairman.

Thank you very much.

---

## ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATION\*

---

Aftab Kamal Pasha\*\*  
27 May 2015

### **Current Geopolitical Issues in the Eastern Mediterranean: Energy Issues**

*Professor Pasha alludes to earlier historical periods of peace and cooperation in the region of the Eastern Mediterranean and looks forward to energy becoming the new catalyst for East Mediterranean regional cooperation and peaceful development.*

Good evening Chairman of the ERPIC, fellow panelist and distinguished participants. Today's topic is on the current geopolitical issues in the Eastern Mediterranean region with focus on energy. And in the twenty five minutes I have, I'll try to focus on four issues. First, giving a very brief historical background of this region, although most of you are familiar. Then, going into the current geopolitical issues. Thirdly, what are the energy issues we are talking about. And finally, see what the possible scenarios in this region are.

Being a student of maritime history and also contemporary political and diplomatic events, I have been teaching my students about the importance, the centrality of Mediterranean Sea throughout the known historical period, or the recorded period. It has been a theatre of great activities: maritime trade, military activity and movement of people, whether it is the Greeks, or the Romans, or the Phoenicians, Jews, Persians, so on, so forth. This Eastern part of the Mediterranean has been the hub for the famous Silk Road all the way from China, Korea, Japan, present-day Taiwan, India, Afghanistan, Central Asia, the Ottoman Empire, present day Iraq, Syria, terminating at Byblos, Izmir, Gaza, Alexandria, Tripoli, and of course Cyprus being a very important component of this trade route.

The second point we have to remember is the two conflicting events, that is conflict and cooperation. Much of this trade activity, which involved people around this Eastern Mediterranean region, involved periods of conflict, although short, but bulk of it was peaceful cooperation for trade, commerce, exchange of culture, so on and so forth.

Coming to the current geopolitical issues, three-four points. One is, of course, the current geopolitical issues. Cyprus, unfortunately, being a divided country over the last forty years,

\* Transcript of oral presentation.

\*\* Professor, Centre for West Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

although some modest attempts have been made for reconciliation, but nothing concrete has been achieved, only prolonging the agony, suffering and the pain the two communities have been facing. I believe confidence-building measures are possible, sustainable, and necessary to improve the present climate which could be for reunification, renewing cooperation, but very essential for improving the standard of living of the people which has seen deterioration, not only here, but also in the neighboring areas.

Related to this is the need for continuing the process of reconciliation between Turkey and Greece, which was started in late '90s, but halted around 2003, or so.

It is also essential to have peace between Syria and Turkey, Israel and Turkey, Palestine and Israel, Israel and Syria, Lebanon and Cyprus, Israel and Lebanon. In fact, like what existed thousands of years ago, the zone of peace and cooperation, the discovery or the potential availability of gas is an opportunity for the entire region for reviving what existed thousands of years ago. That is peaceful cooperation between the peoples in the Eastern Mediterranean region with Cyprus as the hub. This is what I feel, and to be reinforced by the interest shown by the European Union, the United States, and to a certain extent Russia also, which is going to be an important player.

Now, what are the main challenges for this cooperation which I envisage in this region? Obviously, different actors have conflicting foreign policy goals, and it is very difficult to reconcile these conflicting aims and objectives. But what can be initiated is the common minimum program. In most conflict situations we have the most achievable objective being taken up first and gradually to reduce tension, work for rapprochement, and eventually to make, or strive to make energy as a pillar, the discovery of gas as a pillar for cooperation, peace, and stability. This is a unique and unprecedented opportunity in this region, that is the availability of gas which can initiate this process.

Now, what is this energy we are talking about? Of course, the Cyprus conflict has been on and off the agenda of the international community for decades, as I mentioned, with nothing worthwhile having been achieved, although there are positive signals from the Turkish Cypriot community. But in recent times the spotlight has been on Cyprus due to the gas discovery explorations. As I said, this presents significant challenges and add further complexities to the Cyprus dispute. And all of these revolve around the sovereignty of this island state, and the balance between the two antagonistic Cypriot communities. And gas exploration rights and benefits from gas income and revenue could be the first concrete step to bridge this growing gap between the two communities. And later on go to the second step and see how this will impact the Greek and Turkish foreign policies, because cooperation between these two supporters of the two rival communities is extremely important. Because both these actors can sustain an enduring peace and bring stability to the Eastern Mediterranean region, and also undermine these two aspects.

I believe that energy, or the gas, can of course fortify one player at the cost of the other. There is this option for the Greek Cypriots to tie with Greece and with Israel, to completely ignore the Turkish Cypriot community, Turkey, and so on. But in my perception this will only aggravate traditional hostilities in an already perilous geopolitical environment. But what is interesting is it has now ample space for cooperation that can bring absolute gain to all the parties: to Greece, to the Cypriot communities, to Turkey, to Israel and other parties involved. And in fact, energy unites the prosperity of different political communities while ensuring interdependence which

can become a major factor for stabilization. So, here the keyword is interdependence. Because Cyprus cannot on its own explore and export gas, either it needs the cooperation of Greece, or Turkey, or even Israel. And this could become a factor of stabilization. So, politics instead of reproducing, aggravating past rivalries can be conceptualized on the basis of yielding emphasis on higher goals of peace, stability and order that are beneficial for all the parties. And I believe energy which has been discovered can be a game changer which can boost the reconciliation process, rapprochement between the parties.

I also believe that, despite current disagreements, mechanisms can and should be created and established to carry forward interdependent networks and enhance energy security in the region, and eventually it may lead to permanent solutions to traditional rivalries in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

What is the amount or quantum of gas we are looking at? In fact, Block 12 of the Aphrodite well alone is estimated to have 142 to 227 billion cubic meters (bcm). Of course, there are other wells being explored. And if you consider what is needed for Cyprus, the surplus is something like 30 to 100 billion euros expected alone from Block 12's well. So in that way the benefit is not only for Cyprus, which is now using oil to generate electricity at high cost, especially after 2011, when the main power plant was destroyed. The conversion to gas would reduce prices, overall prices, and help the economy, especially under the strenuous financial crisis and the subsequent rounds of debt downgrading by rating agency for this country.

Of course, licensing processes for other promising blocks have been launched, but because of the political uncertainty the gas export has become a big question mark. In that way, gas exports may enhance security of Cyprus, and also of the European Union and the larger international community, and also defend Cyprus and avoid any conflict which may prevent the flow of gas supplies to the European Union.

Now, from the two communities' point of view, exploration gas by Cyprus: Turkey and Turkish Cypriots see this as illegal and unacceptable. The response flowing from this denies to accept the sovereignty of Cyprus. That is at the root of the problem. Turkey is critical of the initiative taken by the Greek Cypriots. And, I feel that to win over the Turkish Cypriot community, a sympathetic consideration from Cyprus to earmark gas income to them compared to their population could be a beginning. And most viable option, I feel, is to start the reconciliation process between the two communities and take Turkey as the hub for export of gas to EU and beyond. Which will also be appreciated by not only the EU dependent on Russian gas, but also by the United States, which wants to cut down the EU dependence on Russian gas.

There are other places, as I mentioned: you have Egypt, you have Israel, you have Lebanon, you have Syria - the continuing turmoil in Syria - and also eventually Palestine, which would be interested. And once this becomes operational between the two and Turkey, I think the other parties would see the benefit from this determination of Cyprus or the Cypriots and Turkey to carry forward this process.

In this connection it also needs some attention to establish energy-rich bi-zonal state solution between the two parties. I have other ideas about how this can be operationalized with other countries.

But coming to the last section of my presentation, what are the future scenarios we are talking about? As I mentioned, the Greek Cypriots-the Turkish Cypriots-Turkey option offers the most

feasible one. Number one, it will initiate the reconciliation process, given the optimism shown by the Turkish side here. Number two, sharing of gas income between the two Cypriot communities would compel both the parties to see the cost-benefit analysis of this prolonging the agony and division which the international community wants both the communities to put an end to. Third one, Cyprus agrees to integrate or coordinate with Turkey, as far as gas supply chain is concerned. Fourth, direct gas linked to Turkey and to the EU linking to and boosting the Nabucco project, which has been in the hibernation.

In other words, traditional hostilities, tension, suspicions, although they do not evaporate, conciliatory and cooperative framework could be put in place once the leadership here puts on table the option. And I also feel that this is the most competitive option. Because laying a pipeline through Greece and through Israel and other parties would cost Cyprus heavily, whereas it will take 10% of the cost of the LNG. Of course, in this scenario Israel and Greece may feel they are the losers, but Cyprus has a unique opportunity to use its diplomacy, and to also bring EU and the US influence to maintain stability in the Eastern Mediterranean region, which these two major powers would be looking into.

And of course, the final point I would like to make is the ideal solution is new arrangement on the political status of Cyprus, namely reunification on strict legal, political and judicial guarantees, demarcation of exclusive economic zones among Cyprus, Greece and Turkey, and a progressive understanding between Greece and Turkey on the Aegean Sea.

Thus gas can become the game changer and a crucial factor in managing conflicts and contributing to security and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean region, especially in an interdependent world where cooperation is essential. And that's how I see gas becoming a tool to unleash forces of cooperation to the rising challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Thank you for your attention.



---

## POLICY RECOMMENDATION\*

---

Chr. G. Pelaghias\*\*  
27 May 2015

### **The East Mediterranean Cooperation Council Proposal (EMCC)**

*This is a recommendation for the creation of a formalised structure for regional cooperation, common security, stability, and economic prosperity among the littoral states of the Eastern Mediterranean.*

The Eastern Mediterranean faces numerous challenges, including security threats that, many of which are interrelated, spread across national borders and involve serious regional implications. Considering the current level of interstate cooperation in the region, there are fewer chances of solving regional problems without decisive collective action.

So far, Eastern Mediterranean stability has been maintained by the US. The countries of the region have been therefore relying on external protectors whose actions are motivated by their own self interest rather than a genuine concern about the region. The states of the region should therefore join in closer cooperation and therefore increase their common capabilities to respond to common security and other challenges.

Recent hydrocarbon discoveries offshore Cyprus and Israel, when added to the sizable Egyptian offshore energy resources have the potential to significantly reshape the region economic and political dynamic. The energy finds have created a major opportunity for the power-hungry Eastern Mediterranean and its adjacent markets.

They have also, however, added to strained relations between neighbouring countries, such as Israel and Lebanon over their maritime border, and Turkey and Cyprus over the latter's exclusive economic zone. It is estimated according to a 2010 US geological survey, that the Levantine Basin could hold as much as 120 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, in other words yet more reserves than those that have been discovered so far. Acknowledging this potential, Egypt, Israel, Cyprus and Greece have already begun strengthening relations in a number of areas, such as joint exploration of hydrocarbons, search and rescue naval operations, the sharing of

\* First presented at Eastern Mediterranean Gas Conference, 17-18 March 2015, Nicosia

\*\* Chairman, ERPIC

technology, and trade of goods and services.

It is within this new found spirit of a common future that ERPIC promotes the *East Mediterranean Cooperation Council* (“EMCC”) concept, the purpose of which is to provide an institutional structure that will help develop a broader long-term regional cooperation.

The main premise behind this concept is that multifaceted, multilevel and institutional inter-state dialogue and cooperation based on a reinvented common Eastern Mediterranean identity, are the keys to peace, stability and growth. By identifying common interests, as well as regional cross-border security challenges, and by joining forces to take collective action, regional stakeholders could strengthen their position on the international scene, and ultimately take responsibility for influencing their environment and shaping their own future.

The EMCC initiative could begin by providing an organizational platform for the building of such intraregional cooperation. Initially, the activities of this platform would include the organization of annual conferences, bringing together regional stakeholders from the political, business and academic world, as well as intellectuals, experts, journalists, civil society representatives, and religious leaders. It would serve the exchange of information and ideas, facilitate cross-industry, cross-country and cross-cultural dialogue and create a framework for the building of trust with the ultimate goal of promoting common security, stability, and economic prosperity in the region. Such a framework could essentially become the foundation of a new regional security and economic architecture in the Eastern Mediterranean.



*Plate 3: A proposed maquette of the logo of the East Mediterranean Cooperation Council*

---

## INTERVIEW\*

---

Habib C. Malik\*\*

24 September 2015

### The Future Cyprus Settlement: Lessons from Lebanon

*Professor Malik presents his views on the effectiveness of consociationalism in resolving ethnic, religious and/or sectarian conflict. He describes the developments in Lebanon over the years and what they could teach the Cypriot people in their own quest for a settlement of their ethno-religious problems.*

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** This afternoon we have with us Dr Habib Malik, Associate Professor of History at the American Lebanese University, Byblos Campus. We also have Dr. Klearchos Kyriakides, head of our own Democracy and Ukra Program. Before we start, I must stress that the opinions of the discussants are their own and in no way reflect upon any other institution which they may be affiliated with. So, Dr. Malik: we keep witnessing political crises one after the other in Lebanon. It appears from the outside that your country is in a perpetual state of failure. Yet Lebanon is not a failed state. What is causing this chronic political instability?

**Habib Malik (H.M.):** Yes, it's interesting the way you've put it. I even have a mathematical analogy for it. And that is: if on the x/y axis the asymptote is constantly tending towards the x-axis, let's assume the x-axis is failure, it only meets the x-axis at infinity. So in that sense you have a country which is perpetually failing, but never quite seems to attain the failed state status. That said, the problems of failure, of perpetual failure, are exponentially mounting, and placing a tremendous burden on a country like Lebanon. So much so, that until recently this summer the big news was that the government couldn't put away the garbage, and we still have that problem. You know, something as basic as garbage collection or as basic as providing 24/7 electric power in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, for a very small country like Lebanon, suggests that very deep issues and problems of both corruption and the inability to agree internally on anything that would require various groups - which is what Lebanon is, it's a heterogeneous society - require everybody to be on the same page. That's very difficult to achieve.

**C.P.:** Is it part of the constitutional framework, or part of the historical remnants of the Ottoman Empire? What is the determining factor of the political culture in Lebanon? And is

\* Transcript

\*\* Associate Professor, History and Cultural Studies, Lebanese American University

this a part of the problem, or a part of the solution?

**H.M.:** Well, yes, there are remnants, if you will, of the Ottoman era. The Ottomans in the 19th century devised what was known as the *millet* system, which sort of gave local autonomy to various portions. It was probably most successful in Mount Lebanon for a period of decades in the second half of the 19th century. Lebanon in this sense is the continuation of a kind of *neo-millet* arrangement. And the basic unit there is the religious community.

**C.P.:** I was going to suggest – let’s mention more on the *millet* system.

**H.M.:** One thing that the Ottomans recognized is that they were presiding over a very multi-ethnic, multi-religious kind of empire, and at times they saw fit to provide some local autonomy to some groups, very often at the heavy price in terms of taxation and other things, precisely in order to accommodate the given, which is this heterogeneity. And this was, I mean the word “millet” comes from an Arabic word which is “millah”, and it means “the community”, such and such community: the *millet* of the Orthodox, the *millet* of the Armenians, the *millet* of the Druze and so on. So the *millet* system is basically the one that accepts the given and works with it, rather than trying in a sense to homogenize from the top everybody below. It’s very different, for instance, from what the Russians did in Central Asia, which was a sustained and often brutal campaign of Russification.

**C.P.:** Doesn’t the *millet* system in some ways contradict *dhimmism* in Islam? On one hand, *millet* is an acceptance of the situation as it is, whereas there is another element in Islam, which is to Islamize and dominate – adversarial relationship.

**H.M.:** The *millet* system is essentially a kind of procedural or operational arrangement, but it is premised on the assumption that non-Muslim communities are by definition *dhimmi* communities, meaning they are relegated to the second class status at best. They have to exist under a series of imposed conditions which, if taken collectively, become a kind of a recipe for gradual liquidation. And this is not even talking about the adverse psychological residues of prolonged existence in *dhimmitude*. The Christians of the Arab world are essentially, historically speaking, of two types, when it comes to this particular classification. The vast majority at some point or another fell under Islamic domination and were relegated to *dhimmi* status. The few who experienced less of this and managed to retain a certain amount of freedom, at great cost in terms of property and blood, were essentially the Maronite community of Lebanon, and I guess in pre-technological times the rugged topography helped and created the kind of sanctuary for these communities there. And then everyone else who threw in their lot throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the freer Maronites, freer than other Christians in the region, pretty much benefited from this sort of freedom and avoided to a large extent *dhimmitude*, but at great cost.

**Klearchos Kyriakides (K.K.):** First of all, I would like to welcome Professor Malik and I would like to express my gratitude for his contribution to our discussion. I’m struck by your reference to the *neo-millet* concept, which may help us to understand the history of the Republic of Cyprus, which was established as a so called bi-communal state, with the Greek community defined constitutionally with reference to a Greek origin of the people here and the Greek Orthodox Church, and on the other hand the Turkish community which was constitutionally defined with reference to people of Turkish origin and Islam. The question I have for you is:

why is there no simple distinction drawn in Lebanon between Muslims on the one hand, and Christians on the other?

**H.M.:** Well again, Lebanon is a heterogeneous society, and initially when Lebanon experienced or attained independence in 1943, the model which was adopted was a kind of peculiarly tailored consociational arrangement for this communal heterogeneity. Now, this quickly went beyond the sort of, the purely Christian and Muslim divisions that are more or less clear cut in the Cypriot case, and entered into the minutia of various distinctions among the sects and denominations within each of the larger group. So that right now Lebanon's constitution officially recognizes eighteen distinct religious communities, one of which is the Jewish community, which is dwindled to very small numbers, but is still recognized as the community, and the other seventeen largely fall under the broad headings of Christian and Muslim. The reason this happened was because it was felt that the only way you can accommodate heterogeneity is to create some sort of balance among these various groups. And initially, the balance was not written in the constitution, but became a kind of an oral custom, which is that the three top posts in the Lebanese political arrangement would go to: the president would be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister would be a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of parliament would be a Shiite. This would represent, if you will, the three main components. And then there are other breakdowns that would include the Druze, and for instance, the deputy speaker of parliament has to be Greek Orthodox, and so on. That has actually now been enshrined in writing, in the latest version of the constitution. The problem, of course, is that that latest version came on the heels of fifteen years of warfare inside Lebanon, from 1975 to 1990, during which, to put it bluntly, the Christians lost the war. And when that happened, you look at the Lebanese constitution today, you see that it says that between Christians and Muslims there is a 50-50 division on everything. But that's what it says on paper. But it actually ends up denuding the presidency, which was for the Maronites, of any of its real powers and prerogatives. So that's sort of the price that has had to be paid in order for the constitution to state very bluntly that things will be equally apportioned among Christians and Muslims, keeping in mind also that the demography doesn't any longer reflect the kind of equality the constitution talks about. So it's a very complicated balancing out, that doesn't always work.

**C.P.:** Is that the problem? That the demographics do not reflect the constitutional arrangements? Otherwise, my question would have been: why it is so difficult for Lebanon to get over its political problems? And a follow up: what are the similarities between Cyprus and Lebanon, if any?

**H.M.:** Well, I mentioned consociationalism. What happened in Lebanon is that the consociational model or formula metamorphosed over time to become consensual - in other words, everything needs to be agreed upon by everybody. Which is almost impossible in real life, as you know. And so this has bred a political culture of open-ended paralysis, which means that every time an intractable problem is faced, the preferred approach is to kick the can down the road, to sweep the problem under the proverbial carpet and not deal with it. And so Lebanon lives in perpetual paralysis, political paralysis, which is not something that I would wish for other societies who face, you know, similar internal breakdowns in terms of religious and other entities.

**C.P.:** Just because it happened in Lebanon doesn't mean it will happen in Cyprus. Or do we have certain things in common that might lead to that?

**H.M.:** Lebanon and Cyprus are very interesting cases: they are both, in a sense, meeting points civilizationaly, of Islam and Christianity, each in its own way. They both, in a sense, harbor relatively freer Christian communities than other Christians in the broader Islamic world, but they also both have strong neighbors right next door, that have had agendas, and views, and visions of how Lebanon and Cyprus should be, that are not always in the interest of these two smaller neighbors: Syria in the case of Lebanon, and Turkey in the case of Cyprus. Now, in Lebanon's case the strong neighbor that has often prevented Lebanon from fulfilling many of its aspirations is today weakened and in a state of disintegration and fragmentation, and there is no telling where that is going to go. And this may present Lebanon with some opportunities in the future. I don't see Cyprus's strong neighbor in a similar situation at all. In fact, if anything, Turkey is getting stronger.

**K.K.:** Yes Professor, you put your finger on two things of Lebanese history which cut across into Cyprus' history: the first is the subdivision of people on a constitutional basis into Christians and Muslims, and secondly, the role of neighboring powers with their own agendas. The question is: going back to the concept of political paralysis which you mentioned earlier, is it unavoidable in the 50-50 bi-communal settlement that there will be paralysis, or is there any way of overcoming paralysis?

**H.M.:** See, if it was just a question of 50-50, one can perhaps tweak it in ways to overcome the paralysis. You have to accommodate eighteen different micro divisions of the 50-50, if you like, and, as I said, this latest version of our constitution came on the heels of much internal turmoil and fighting, so that on the one hand you see that, on the other hand you see systematic weakening or denuding, as I said, of the powers and prerogatives of the presidency, for example in favor of the prime ministership. So paralysis has been found by the Lebanese to be the safest option. And when you reach the point like that, in my opinion you cease to become a meaningful model for anyone.

**K.K.:** Let's return to practicalities: does Lebanon have a coherent national security strategy, and if so, is it being implemented effectively?

**H.M.:** Now, in terms of national security, the dominant discourse in Lebanon is one that focuses on our neighbor to the south, Israel, as the principal enemy, and that talks about the army and the resistance movement, which is essentially a Shiite militia Hezbollah, as being the bulwarks to face that enemy. Beyond this very ideological, very narrow, very propagandistic view of national security, there is very little on which anyone can agree. And actually on this there is hardly any agreement, but very often, you know, the *fait accompli* on the ground pretty much dictates certain things. For example: you have a huge influx of refugees from Syria, because of turmoil in Syria, into Lebanon, yet Lebanon's population is about four million. You have right now about 1,500,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon, plus about 400,000 Palestinian refugees already there. That's close to 2,000,000 – that's like almost half the number of the Lebanese population of outsiders. Add to that, the vast majority of these outsiders happened to be of one particular, sectarian color: they are Sunnis. And if there is a balancing act going on in Lebanon, it's the question of the demographics among the various sects. And to have such an inordinate number of Sunnis in the country, which would then, you know, trigger desires among some to try and naturalize them, or to try and keep them somehow versus the other – it's a very polarizing issue. That's not conducive to stability or to moving forward.

**K.K.:** Thank you. That's a third parallel with Cyprus, because what we've seen in the occupied north of Cyprus is an influx of colonists from Turkey, who've been brought over contrary to the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions. The circumstances in Cyprus are different, but the effect has been the same. So that's been very helpful. Chris do you have any follow-up questions?

**C.P.:** You've mentioned Syria. Is Lebanon going towards Syria? Is there a chance that it will end up like Syria?

**H.M.:** Actually, Syria has ended up like Lebanon. In the sense that Lebanon between 1975 and 1990 had its own implosion of internal conflict, while everybody else around was pretty much sitting around, watching, sometimes stoking the flames. Now it's sort of like, I mean, I'm not saying that in a gloating way, because Lebanon has enormous problems, but right now the whole region is in turmoil and is imploding in various places, including Syria, while Lebanon is relatively quiet. The reason for that, Chris, is that the Lebanese have had a sense of "been there, done that". In other words, what they see in neighboring Syria is something they have experienced in the recent past. And there is very little desire among many Lebanese to revisit the horrors of the recent past. That's one reason why we in Lebanon, we always walk right up to the brink, stare at the abyss, but somehow restrain ourselves from taking the leap.

**K.K.:** I have a follow-up question to that. Since the beginning of the World War I, at the earliest I suppose, we've seen the gradual decimation of Christians from the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. We saw, for instance, the expulsion of the Greeks from Asia Minor, we saw the expulsion of the Greeks from Egypt, the expulsion of the Greeks from northern Cyprus. And the more recent signs: we've seen the expulsion of Christians from various parts of Syria and Iraq, with the emergence of the so called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and other similar organizations. To what extent, if at all, are Christians secure in the Eastern Mediterranean region, and to what extent are Christians secure in Lebanon?

**H.M.:** The short answer to this question is: no, they are not secure. And, look, the Middle East is constantly hemorrhaging Christians, and Lebanon is no exception. There are times when less of that happens, and times when floods of that occur. And it's not always the result of direct persecution on religious terms, although that is definitely a feature that is recurring throughout the history of Lebanon and the region. But sometimes it's the result of endemic corruption that deprives the young people of jobs and employment opportunities, so they go abroad and they don't come back. It's a function of very often Christian communities - I know that from Lebanon - having fewer children than other communities, and therefore falling behind in terms of the demographic balance and numbers. You know, there is also an element of what, I would say, is general world neglect of this issue, and you know, you ask yourself why doesn't the world care that much? And one of the reasons might be that it is a bit irritating to some of the big powers to have to factor into their calculations, you know, free Christian communities battling to preserve their freedom in a predominantly Islamic environment, when, you know, there are all sorts of interests with other, perhaps even more important or influential powers, regional ones, that happen to be Muslim. So it's a very complex picture, the result of which is that there is a constant attrition taking place at the expense of native Christian communities throughout the region, and very little is being done to either address that, or to halt it, or even to identify it as an issue. The Copts in Egypt, by and large, have succumbed to the *dhimmitude* throughout history. But because of their numbers, and they are numbered in the millions, the demographic danger there is far less than in other communities. But in Lebanon there was a time when the

Christians were the freest perhaps among Arab Christians, and were over 50%. Now they are down to a third.

**C.P.:** We keep talking about religion, that is a dominant issue, but isn't Lebanon a secular state? I mean, comparing it to Cyprus, Cyprus is supposed to be a secular state. And yet, how is Lebanon dealing with political Islam, especially the rise of radicalized Sunni Islam? What's the interface between it and a secular state, where the majority is Muslim? Is such a state really secular, or can it be?

**H.M.:** Lebanon, I think, is a kind of a country ever aspiring to reach a secular status. It's even found in our constitution that the endgame is de-confessionalization, but we never get there, we never seem to get there. You can come up with another mathematical, perhaps, analogy there. Because, for instance, when you divide things up based on the confession or the sect, then definitely on the level of personal circumstances things like marriage, inheritance laws and so on, you have to accommodate each sect and its own requirements. So right there already you can't move beyond that to full-fledged secularism. Now the suggestion has been made: alright, if you have eighteen religious communities, why not having "category nineteen", which would be the secular one? And anybody reaching the age of eighteen and becomes legally an adult can then decide to opt out of their sociological slot and go to category nineteen. There's been a tremendous resistance against that by the religious clergy and scholars on both sides of the fence, both Christians and Muslims. Simply because they are afraid that the youth will just abandon various sects in droves.

**C.P.:** You have raised repeatedly this issue that in Cyprus the two communities were actually religious communities to begin with. This was from the Ottoman period, but then also under the British, and then gradually turned into an ethnic community. Is that not the case?

**K.K.:** I prefer to use the phrase ethno-religious communities - that describes the two communities here in Cyprus. In the Ottoman era there was a clear demarcation between Muslims and Christians, and in the British era there was perpetuation of that two-fold distinction, and from the 1920s onwards, with the growth of Greek nationalism there started to be a reference to the term "Greek Cypriots" and the related term "Turkish Cypriots".

**C.P.:** Because the difference between Cyprus and Lebanon is that in Lebanon there is more clearly a religious conflict, and in Cyprus at least the terms suggest that it's an ethnic conflict - ethnicity is at the basis of this conflict, and not religion.

**K.K.:** We are both lawyers by background, and we are taught to strip away the label and look at the substance. The label says: "Greek Cypriot", but if you strip it away, there is a reference to Greek ethnicity and the Greek Orthodox Church, so there you have ethnicity mixing with religion. And if you strip away the label that says "Turkish Cypriot", you see reference to Turkishness and Islam. So the two go hand in hand. Would you like to comment on perhaps why there is this distinction and labels?

**H.M.:** Well, I was going to speak of, because Chris asked the question I did not answer, and that is how Lebanon deals with radical Sunni Islam as an example, and so on. Just two points on that. First, getting back to secularism, you know, given an area where for centuries your fundamental existential identity, either as a person, or as a community has been defined in religious terms, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to parachute secularism onto that region, and expect that to take root over night. That's not going to work. So lots of people who



advocate this are somewhat starry-eyed in their expectations, and romantic. The other point is, Lebanon is very complicated, it so happens that the current threat is from Sunni Islamic radicalism, let's say ISIS, and they have tried in the recent past to penetrate into Lebanon. They have not been successful. What they have in Lebanon are pockets of sympathizers in certain Sunni communities, but these pockets are isolated pockets. Our army intelligence, and one has to also acknowledge Hezbollah's intelligence, have been very good at preempting many of their attacks. And so there is no cradling environment for this sort of radicalism, even among Lebanon's Sunnis. The problem is, there is no guarantee this will not happen down the road, this can happen anytime. People have said, you know, Lebanon's Sunnis are very secularized and much more advanced and modern than perhaps in other places, so they will not buy into this. Well, there is no guarantee that they won't. And so there is a lurking danger. So far, Lebanon has been able to avoid something like mass infiltration of ISIS types or that ideology, and having it take root in the country. But given the fragility, and given the influx of all of these refugees, and given the fact that there is political paralysis and very little can be agreed upon, there is no guarantee that this won't happen at some point down the road.

**C.P.:** Also, do you have the phenomenon in Lebanon of Islamic madrasas, religious schools, funded by outside money?

**H.M.:** There is some of that.

**C.P.:** Is that a factor, or is that just a part of the background?

**H.M.:** Well, look, there are sort of two competing types of Islamic radicalization: the Shiite and the Sunni. And given the emergent, the high posture of Hezbollah in the country and the connections they have with Iran and the Iranian Revolution and so on, there is a clear manifestation of Khomeinism in some Shiite quarters in Lebanon. And in the Sunni areas, in, for instance, certain parts of north Lebanon, and in the inner neighborhoods of Tripoli, on the Syrian border where certain skirmishes are taking place now in the northeast, and the large Palestinian camp of Ein-el-Helweh – you have isolated pockets of precisely this kind of fundamentalist radical Islam being propagated in terms of ideology, the madrasas, if you will, the Friday mosque preachers and so on. And there is funding, whether it's on the Shiite or on the Sunni side, for these things. But they have not, so far, succeeded, certainly the Sunni ones, which to my mind are the more dangerous ones, because historically we know very well that the Shiites are a minority in the larger scheme of things in the Islamic world, and they've always been a persecuted minority. Whereas the kind of ideology that ISIS brings in is very much in line with the most radical of the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence – Hanbalism. You look at ISIS – they haven't invented anything. It's all there in black and white in the writings of someone like Ibn Taymiyyah and others, you know, the beheadings and all of that. So that is the danger there. And how long will the Sunni community of Lebanon remain largely immune to this kind of radicalization is an open question.

**C.P.:** I was going to ask: how inspiring is the caliphate, at least among the Sunnis in Lebanon?

**H.M.:** Very little. Running jokes about Baghdadi and others as being anything but someone to take seriously. But you always have those little isolated pockets of sympathy that can mushroom into something more lethal down the road. And this is where one has to be very careful. I don't know what the situation is like in Cyprus, or in the northern part, but I would tend to guess that this is a danger that exists everywhere.

**C.P.:** At least in Cyprus mostly the level of radicalization is unclear, because there is no official release of data on either demography, demographical changes, settlers from Turkey, or influx of people from other parts of the Middle East. The authorities in the north do not release that sort of information. And they also guard very closely to what extent there is or there isn't a radicalization potential...

**H.M.:** ...Saudi funding...

**C.P.:** ...Funding from the outside and so on. So, Cypriots are in the dark, as far as some of these potentially important issues that should be on the table.

**K.K.:** You've actually led me neatly to my next question, which has to do with darkness and secrecy. Lebanese constitution is a formal consociational constitutionalism that chose much from the theorists of that particular school of constitutionalism. There is an argument that's being advanced by people such as Arend Lijphart, who is one of the greatest academic writers in this field, that consociational government requires, what he calls, government by elite cartel.

**C.P.:** Just to explain consociationalism, that the heart of it is in fact an accommodation of more than one political interest. And it's institutionalized in a constitutional way of accommodating that.

**K.K.:** Yes, the philosophy of it is that it's an attempt to take various groups within society and create a constitutional model that will function in the interest of democracy. There are many case studies, including Cyprus, that demonstrate that the consociational government is a recipe for gridlock, paralysis, and in some circumstances conflict.

**H.M.:** Lebanon has demonstrated that as well.

**C.P.:** And Belgium, incidentally, which was also another example of consociationalism.

**K.K.:** The question I have, though, is to do with that concept of governments by elite cartel: governments in secret, deal-making behind the closed doors, and politicians at the top of the society taking decisions which affect people at the bottom, with little or no impact or input by people from the bottom. To what extent has this secretive, elite governance model operated in Lebanon?

**H.M.:** You are describing Lebanon. I mean, this is exactly what we have. In fact, it's not just opaque elites deciding in secret. It's actually become a kind of self-perpetuating political mafia, whose main reason for existence is to apportion the spoils among eight or nine individuals and their cronies, with no regard for anything that can be labeled the common good, or, you know, the good of society. That's what we have in Lebanon. And that's exactly why, to use the term Lijphardt used, governments by elite cartels is a slippery slope, or can be a slippery slope, absent the rule of law, and unfortunately Lebanon is lacking very severely when it comes to the application of the rule of law. Absent the rule of law, rule by elite cartels, can easily devolve into rule by self-perpetuating mafias. When we started, I gave the example of the garbage crisis. It turns out that some vested interests of a few people are to perpetuate the old system of simply just burying garbage that has not been sorted out and prepared for recycling, and they've set it up in ways to make personal profits. Once the tenure of the company doing that came to an end, we had a terrible crisis because they didn't want to change.

**K.K.:** This leads me to my follow-up question: if you are going to have such a system, it requires proper checks and balances and forms of accountability. Are there forms of accountability in Lebanon, and if so, do they work?

**H.M.:** We now have a civil society informal group of young people who call themselves “We want to hold accountable”, because there is no accountability. I think the starkest example from Lebanon’s recent history of how this has come about, how behind-the-scenes deals have implicated Lebanon and its people in all sorts of misery... I’m talking about the 1969 Cairo Agreement, which was an agreement imposed by the other Arab states on Lebanon, and the Lebanese signed off on that agreement, which basically says Lebanon’s borders are open to armed Palestinians fighting against Israel. Practically every problem we’ve had in Lebanon since 1969 has been a direct result of having signed off on that kind of agreement. Again, back to the opaque elites doing things in the dark - this is something, unfortunately, that Lebanon has suffered from and continues to suffer from very much. And so if other societies are looking at Lebanon to see if there is anything - this is one of the things they should definitely guard against, which is implicating future generations, in Cyprus or anywhere, in some sort of unclear, opaque deal, that would have open-ended severe consequences for the future. We in Lebanon are living it right now.

**K.K.:** We had here in Cyprus the United Nations-sponsored so-called peace plan back in 2004, but it was rejected. It included provisions in there, which weren’t implemented of course, but it included provisions which would have granted a huge dose of immunity to politicians in the executive and legislative, as well as judicial branches of government, which cannot and should not be replicated in any future settlement in Cyprus. Are politicians held to account in the courts for any criminal activity on the one hand, or breaches of civil law on the other?

**H.M.:** One wishes. Unfortunately, the judicial system in Lebanon is preempted by the political deals and the machinations that take place among the corrupt political class of the country. So that our judiciary, I mean that’s what I said when I mentioned that we don’t have really the rule of law. If you don’t have the rule of law, if the mechanisms of justice cannot go all the way to the end, then what you end up having is open-ended mafia-style impunity.

**C.P.:** What troubles me is that we are talking about a conflict of philosophies here. The rule of law and these sorts of concepts are Western concepts. But in pure religious terms, there is only one law, and that’s God’s law. And perhaps there are enough advocates and adherents to that principle, certainly next door to you. It’s almost inevitable that there will be a questioning of both secularism and concepts like transparency, democracy, and open discussion, honest discussion, accountability, and all of that. If you are coming from a radical Islamist position, where it’s God’s word, and whoever does not agree...

**H.M.:** ...should be beheaded.

**C.P.:** ...should be put in the sidelines, let’s put it that way. Isn’t that the real problem in our part of the world? It’s that there is an unresolved, what Huntington said, and I think he was absolutely right despite his critics, a clash of civilizations. There is a clash of civilizations which has not been resolved, and by white-washing constitutional provisions and patching up things you can’t get to the heart of this issue.

**H.M.:** Huntington has been criticized on that, but actually the more controversial, but to my mind a very astute observation is what he said about “Islam’s bloody borders”. Wherever Islam

meets non-Islam, there is blood. And the question is – why is that? Is it because the whole world is against the world of Islam? That would be a kind of conspiratorial view. Or is it because there is something incompatible on the demarcation lines between those areas that advocate rule of law, etc., the list you have mentioned, and perhaps a more rigid Islamic view of these things? In our part of the world the way this has been resolved, you know, absent rule of law, is you've either had the military dictatorships that imposed a certain order, so that you have law, but hardly any freedoms, or you've had certain entities where there has been an attempt to maintain some degree of civil law. Take the country of Jordan, which is a majority Islamic country. It is much better off in terms of applying the rule of law, without being itself a kind of dictatorship, than Lebanon, for instance. So part of the failure has to do also with endemic corruption.

**C.P.:** Yes, but also the understanding of the concept. In Europe we are concerned about the rights of minorities, and among these minorities are the Muslim minorities. Perhaps it's a chance to do a little footnote about... We've mentioned dhimmism, but we didn't define it. It seems that in certain parts of the Muslim mental construct there are no minorities, or the minorities have an expiration date. I mean, isn't that a part of the problem?

**H.M.:** Very much so, and I think Europe, if Europeans believe that all incoming immigrants from the Islamic world are automatically coming to embrace and buy into what the French call laicism, and assimilate easily, they're in for a rather rude awakening. Many of these people are coming in, you know, under the pretext of persecution back home and so on, and all of these may be very real issues, but they are coming in with the idea of settling in Europe, but not necessarily embracing any of Europe's values. And some of them are even coming in to use Europe, and derive benefits from it without giving anything in return. I didn't invent this; this is an objective feature of what's over there. Need I mention the city of Marseille, for example, in France, as one glaring example of entire neighborhoods that have not assimilated?

**K.K.:** I have to interject here. We are here, at the crossroads between two, three great religions, crossroads of three continents; we are at the edge, the south-east edge of Europe. The whole international community from the United Nations in New York, to European Commission in Brussels have embraced the concept of two communities here in Cyprus. They've embraced the concept of the two communities being subdivided into two zones in accordance with the bi-communal, bi-zonal federation, so that Christians are by large congregated and segregated in the south, and Muslims are by large congregated and segregated in the north. What sort of message are we sending from Cyprus, from Brussels and New York, to the rest of Europe with this sort of constitutional carve-up?

**H.M.:** I look at Cyprus as a Lebanese and I in a sense envy what the Cypriots have right now. Which, well, let's see what they have: they have control over a significant amount of their territory. They have, to a large extent, in that area, demographic security. Because of these two things they have...

**C.P.:** You are talking about the Greek Cypriots in the Republic of Cyprus.

**H.M.:** Yes, I am talking specifically about Christian Greek Cypriots, and when I say I look at Cyprus as a Lebanese, as a Christian Lebanese, so: territory, demography, and a certain control over future destiny. Add to that, that from a legal perspective the United Nations acknowledges

Greek Cypriot sovereignty over the entire island. Now, if that is the given of what exists today, why change it? In other words, you know, we've gone...

**C.P.:** We'd need something better to change to.

**H.M.:** Well, you need something better to change to. I come from a country that has gone two, or three, or four steps in the wrong direction from that, and so now in Lebanon's case federalism may actually look good, and may actually be a better solution than what we have right now, and especially if our hitherto strong neighbor to the east and north is no longer as strong and as predatory on us as used to be the case. But in Cyprus's case you haven't reached, it seems to me, that level of deterioration that we had, and your neighbor next door who has different views of where you should be going is still quite strong and influential. I mean, I don't know what the answer is, but I don't... To put it very simply, I think Lebanon offers a cautionary tale of how not to proceed with endless compromises, and down this slippery slope, to the point of no return, and to the point where almost anything would appear to be a kind of saving straw in a storm in an ocean compared to the slide, to the relentless slide.

**K.K.:** I would first of all like to thank Professor Malik for his contribution to this discussion. I have a final question: if you could single out one particular lesson of Lebanese history which you would like to pass on to the citizens of the Republic of Cyprus and of the European Union, of which Republic forms part, what would that lesson of history be?

**H.M.:** Many lessons to the European Union. Frankly, this blind faith in secularism, or in ideology in general, as being a convenient substitute for fifteen hundred years of Judeo-Christian heritage, I think is a mirage. The only thing that will replace a religion in the long run is not an ideology, it's not secularism. At the end of the day the only thing that replaces religion – is another religion. This is what I would tell the European Union. To Cyprus, I mean again, I will repeat what I just said. Looking at the situation in Cyprus from where I stand, Cyprus is much better off than where Lebanon has reached on the number of indicators, and I would really hope that the Cypriots will not sign on the dotted line as it were, and end up in a kind of Lebanon-style scenario: open-ended paralysis.

**C.P.:** And yet a lot of people say there is so much upside to the cooperation in the region: the hydrocarbons, the prospect of Israel cooperating with Cyprus and Egypt and, potentially, Turkey coming in, and so on. And in many respects, I feel, perhaps the argument could stand, that under some positive circumstances accommodation on the ethnic issue or the religious issue in Cyprus is part of this price of buying into a very rosy future. How do you see the future of the Eastern Mediterranean? Are you an optimist? Are you a pessimist? And why?

**H.M.:** Let me tell you. I think the two extremes of a sudden emergence of regional integration on the one hand, which is, as you said, rosy and positive, or the cataclysmic implosion of the region into utter chaos, I think both these extremes are unlikely. I think we are more likely to see a situation of just limping along, as we have been. And limping along has its own dangers of gradual erosion at the edges, and then eventually beyond the edges. So if limping along is, you know, more likely than the two other extremes, it pays to be very careful the steps one takes in that kind of environment. Anticipating that wonderful days are ahead and therefore let's accept anything now that accommodates the situation in order to... I'll give you an example. Lebanon, for a variety of very basic reasons, hasn't been able to do something very preliminary on the issue of the gas findings in the Eastern Mediterranean with Israel. Which is to basically bring in

a third party to conduct arbitration in order to decide where the demarcation line really is for Israel. And they haven't been able to do that, because they are constrained by a variety of political paralysis parameters. And if that first step hasn't been taken, how can I buy into a rosy picture that sees, you know, integration around the corner and so on? One has to be very careful about it.

**K.K.:** It's not integration that they are pushing here in Cyprus, it's segregation...

**C.P.:** But we are talking about the region.

**K.K.:** Oh, forgive me.

**H.M.:** We're talking about the Eastern Mediterranean, you know, Chris asked the question about, if certain steps are taken that will facilitate and prop Cyprus up to be more able to take advantage of this coming integration... My answer is: I'm not so sure it's coming that easily. I just gave an example of something very simple, it seems to be very simple, but it's laden with all sorts of political implications as far as Lebanon is concerned. And, you know, again it's part of the slot of paralysis issues that is piling up there.

**C.P.:** Habib thank you very much.

**H.M.:** Thank you. Let me just say one last point. In 1878 the British essentially, as part of a general settlement resolving a major crisis involving the Ottomans and other European powers of the time, Britain got Cyprus. And famously Britain's Prime Minister at the time, Disraeli, said: Cyprus is really the key to Asia, or the gateway to Asia. Well, I mean I would hope Cyprus doesn't now become Asia's gateway to Europe or the West, in a sense. Thank you.

**C.P.:** Well, thank you very much for being with us and hopefully you will join us next time.

---

## INTERVIEW\*

---

Fanoulla Argyrou\*\*  
6 October 2015

### **Long-Term Turkish Strategy on Cyprus as Recorded in the British National Archives**

*The British archives reveal that partition and federation were concepts developed jointly by the British and the Turks and that the latter considered federation as more useful in ultimately controlling all of Cyprus.*

**Christodoulos Pelaghias (C.P.):** Good afternoon, and welcome again to an afternoon interview. This is part of our ongoing program on Democracy and the Rule of Law. This afternoon we are very happy to have with us Mrs. Fanoulla Argyrou, a journalist and researcher based in London. We also have Dr. Klearchos Kyriakides, who heads up our Democracy and Rule of Law Program. The topic tonight is “Turkish Long-Term Strategy on Cyprus as Recorded in the British National Archives”, as researched by Mrs Fanoulla Argyrou. Before we start, I need to remind you that the views expressed tonight are personal views of the discussants. Mrs Argyrou, people in Cyprus know you from the interesting revelations you bring from studying the British archives. Aren’t such archives ever censored, at least as far as the really interesting parts? Is there a chance of being misled by the material?

**Fanoulla Argyrou (F.A.):** First of all, thank you for the invitation, and I will answer your question. The National Archives, the British National Archives have uniqueness. They have a continuation... They do not mislead, unless you want to be misled yourself. I’ll explain why. If you do not research the documents, say, if you go to the archives today and you pull out a file of 1985, and you haven’t read what was written in 1984, you will probably be misled. In that you have to be very careful into researching and knowing the continuation of the documents, because the British foreign policy is consistent, has a continuation, is a state policy, and is based on safeguarding the British interests. We are talking about different departments: Foreign Office, Ministry of Defense, Cabinet files, Prime Minister’s files, Home Office, Intelligence, and every aspect of political, military, and whatever is involved in every day governance in Britain. So I don’t believe they mislead, if you know how to research.

**C.P.:** But after all, you are identifying the views of several individuals in the British Foreign

\* Transcript

\*\* Journalist, Researcher and Author

Office. How confident are you that, first of all, their valuations are correct, and secondly, that you have a full picture of the evaluations?

**F.A.:** In answering this I should say that the documents that are censored are estimated to be roughly 1%, so the rest of the documents are there. And as I said before, if your research and you study the documents carefully, they give you the very right picture. As far as the Turkish policies are concerned, I believe Turkish track record speaks for itself. And the documents that are there are confirmed by everyday, year-by-year, everyday actions of Turkey, and the documents are 100% correct in their description of Turkish policy.

**C.P.:** And what is the description of Turkish policy as far as Cyprus is concerned?

**F.A.:** A lot. For instance, we can start from 1955, when Britain with the Tripartite Conference brought in Turkey. Turkey decided, embarked on a policy of recapturing Cyprus, and that was the title of the constitutionalist Dr. Nihat Erim, who was commissioned by Prime Minister Menderes, the Turkish prime minister at the time, to prepare a plan how to re-capture Cyprus. Ever since that policy has been carried to the letter, to this very day. And to this I will confirm this opinion of mine, which is also held by many others. In 2014 there was a study by Turkish Hihmet Zeki Kapci, in the Journal of Modern Turkish History Studies, titled: "The Nihat Erim Report for the Solution of Cyprus Problem". The result of this study, according to the Turkish writer said: after the Tripartite Conference in London in 1955, Turkey changed policy and asked for the partition of Cyprus. That report was given to the Turkish Prime Minister of the 24th November 1956 and it is estimated that Turkey has been following that report of Nihat Erim to this very day. Now, we go back to 1955 and following that, to 1956. There had been a lot of exchanges between the British and Turkish governments. And in November '56 a delegation headed by the Prime Minister Menderes came to London and they had talks with the British government. At the same time, the British government had appointed Lord Radcliffe to prepare constitutional proposals for Cyprus. On the 16th of December 1956, the then Colonial Secretary went to Turkey and had a very secret and historically important meeting with Turkish Prime Minister in Constantinople, where it was agreed that the whole policy of Turkey was in fact concentrated in one statement, which was read by the British Colonial Secretary three days later on the 19th of December 1956, and I will read it.

**Klearchos Kyriakides (K.K.):** This is the statement read by the Colonial Secretary of United Kingdom in the House of Commons on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 1956.

**F.A.:** It was when they officiated the Radcliffe Proposals, and at the same time this was a promise given to the Turkish Prime Minister, and in fact the most important element is that Menderes actually dictated that statement to the British Colonial Office Secretary. And it read:

"When the international and strategic situation permits, and when self-government is working satisfactorily, Her Majesty's Government would be ready to review the question of the application of self-determination. When the time comes for this review, that is when the conditions have been fulfilled, it will be that purpose of Her Majesty's Government to ensure that any exercise of self-determination will be effected in such a manner, that the Turkish Cypriot community, no less than the Greek Cypriot community shall have freedom to decide for themselves their future status. This would mean that in the event of the exercise of self-determination resulting in a choice in favor of a change



of the international status of the island, then the Turkish Cypriots will be given the option of electing for partition.”

That was the promise for self-determination to a minority of 18% and the Turks after that they put, you know, forward their full demands on Cyprus.

**K.K.:** Just a jump in if I may. So what you're saying Fanoulla is that the statement delivered by the Colonial Secretary on the floor of the House of Commons was primarily based upon guidance given to him by the Turkish Government in talks prior to the delivery of that statement.

**F.A.:** Yes.

**C.P.:** A lot of people in Cyprus have a feeling the British were behind stirring up Turkish interest for Cyprus. Is that true? I can't envision that a country as large as Turkey would not have a latent policy on Cyprus. Now, whether they brought it to the surface and when they brought it to the surface is a different question. But I think the impression here is that Turkey had written Cyprus off, but for British pressure sometime after the '55, '56, in that period, and that was what brought Turkey back into the picture. Is that correct, or is that a misunderstanding?

**F.A.:** It's roughly correct. It's roughly correct, because we have evidence that in 1955, for instance, the British were asking or advising the Turks to start bringing up the rights of the Turkish Cypriots. And we have one reference for this that says: "This hasn't happened yet. Now you have to wake up and do it". And even so it goes on to say that: "If you don't know how to do it, you should employ public relations companies to do it for you". That's one reference that is there. But the Turks always had Cyprus in mind and they didn't want it to go to Greek hands if the British left, but it was with the help of the British Foreign Office and Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, one of the officials, who actually admitted that he was the first one to air the idea of partition...

**K.K.:** Which was in '56...

**F.A.:** ...'56. And he was the person who initiated the tripartite conference to bring in Turkey. And from there on the Turks carried on, you know, they carried on their plans. That's how they had Nihat Erim's report, and after the 19th of December '56 statement, when they secured the promise and the pledge for partition, early 1957, they moved on, and they said: you know, we don't want partition now, we want federation. And they explained that they wanted two zones, and that's how the bi-zonal, bi-communal federation was evolved. It was in 1957, having had the partition pledge they moved on to federation, and they said: no, we want federation. And not even the British could believe that they could achieve it.

**K.K.:** I just want to reinforce the point here. What the British documents reveal, and I had the privilege of looking at some of them as well, in my studies in the past... What the British documents reveal is that in this critical period from 1955 to 1966 the Turks in tandem with the British developed the idea that the people of Cyprus should be subdivided strictly into Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. And on the other hand, the territory of Cyprus could in certain circumstances be partitioned into Greek and Turkish zones. So when one talks about partition, it's important to bear in mind that there are two types of partition at play here: there is the constitutional and demographic partition between Greek Cypriots in one camp, and Turkish Cypriots in the other camp, and the territorial partition, with the Greek zone on one side of the

island and the Turkish zone on the other side, with two British zones in further the south. So that's the importance of '55 – '56 origins of the idea of two communities and two zones.

**C.P.:** What is presented is that federation, or the move towards federation is a compromise on the part of Turkey that originally wanted partition, and now is settling for a constitutional arrangement, or settlement, if you will, that has elements of bizonality, etc. Is this what it is, or am I hearing something else, is that in fact federation is an advance on the Turkish demands, it's more a progression rather than a regression.

**F.A.:** Originally in 1955 at the tripartite conference the then Foreign Secretary Fatin Zorlu said that partition was a sacrifice for Turkey because they wanted the whole of Cyprus. But it was sacrificing: they would have had half of it. Now after having that pledge, as I said, and they moved on and decided to go for two zones and federation, the British said: but this is not federation, this is confederation. And if one decides to abandon the federation, then the federation breaks. Anyway, they carried on, and gradually they sold it. In the meantime there were a lot of plans, partition plans prepared by the British and different lines, and this and that. But the Turks carried on insisting on federation. And they knew, because with federation they could control both sides of Cyprus, with partition they would only have one. So they were very clever in progressing step by step, and gaining step in holding on to that game to this very day. And we find in 1957 studies that federation started being prepared in the Foreign Office.

**K.K.:** As well as studies for partition.

**F.A.:** As well as studies for partition. And we come to January '58 when they started really talking about federation with Nihat Erim in London demanding a lot of things, but because at the time the Americans and NATO, and the world public opinion wouldn't accept partition of Cyprus, at the time when the colonies were being liberated and having independence and everything, the British stirred the Turks into accepting the independence of Cyprus eventually, but consenting to evolving constitutional devices. And Nihat Erim was a clever man, so not being able to achieve in full what they wanted, he consented to that, and that's why he imposed a lot of the articles, and a lot of elements in the Zurich Constitution are based on Nihat Erim's demands. And thus they accepted the London and Zurich Agreements with knowledge - both the British and the Turks - that it wouldn't last, it would soon break. And they were estimating three to four years.

**K.K.:** Just to recap: as the 1950s unfolded, or the early 1950s unfolded, Turkish strategy was based on either preserving the British rule on the island, all recovering the island, and it was in that context that we had "Cyprus is Turkish" movement evolve.

**F.A.:** Yes.

**K.K.:** They Turks then from 1955 onwards came into the picture diplomatically with the tripartite conference, which the British and Greece effectively acknowledged that Turkey had a stake in the future of Cyprus, in spite of the Treaty of Lausanne. And then in 1956 we have the emergence of the idea of partition and the carve-up of the island into two communities and two zones.

**C.P.:** So partition was a compromise to total control, which in fact the federation... Is this what you are saying? That federation has more to do with total control...

**K.K.:** Yes.

**C.P.:** ...than as a retreat from partition?

**K.K.:** Well, I'm going to refer to Fanoulla's expertise on the emergence of federation. But what I will say at this point, is it's terribly important to understand the essence of Turkish strategy. Fanoulla put a finger on it earlier. Turkey's strategy originally sought to recapture the whole of Cyprus. I have in front of me here a statement given by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan on the floor of the House of Commons, on the 26th of June 1958 in which he said - Mr McMillan:

"The Turks—I am putting their view—regard Cyprus as an extension of the Anatolian Plain, a kind of offshore island with vital significance for their defence and their security. They say—this has been their argument up to now—that the Turkish-Cypriot community must not be ruled by a Greek-Cypriot community and they have advocated the physical separation of the two communities by means of a territorial partition".

So the importance of this period - and this is why we're dwelling on the importance of this period from '54, '55, '56, '57, '58 - is that it gives us the historical foundation for what we are seeing today, which is the attempt to cement, and to purportedly legitimize the constitutional division of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, and the territorial division of Cyprus into Greek zone and the Turkish zone.

**F.A.:** And in addition to this, in order to separate and segregate the communities, and to advance the federation idea, we find that on 15th of March 1957 it was recorded in the Foreign Office, from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office, that the Turks demanded that the word "minority" covering the Turkish Cypriots be replaced by the word "community". So that is most important, because they actually separated the population of Cyprus into two communities, and we find that they insist on two communities. I just make a little parenthesis here: on the 10th of August 1974 at the Geneva Conference the Turkish Foreign Minister of the time, Güneş, he was asking for two autonomous federal states, and he was underlining the fact: only two communities. I close the parenthesis here and I can give you some more examples. For instance, in January and February 1958 exchanges between the British and the Turks on the Federation and constitutional equality in Cyprus, it's written that the Prime Minister Menderes said that in his view the following was the main point which needed clarification, was that the federal basis of that regime in Cyprus, it should be in a form which gave equal rights to the Turkish and Greek communities. And ironically, there is another reference on the 1st of January 1956, six months after the tripartite conference, the Department of the Foreign Office was quoting that if the British come to the point and the Turks press them, they should tell them that in a democratic constitution it is impossible to give equal rights of voting to two communities with such a big difference in numbers.

**K.K.:** And what were those numbers?

**F.A.:** 18% and 82%. But still, it was the same British government that consented to every single demand the Turks made.

**K.K.:** I have to make again the connection with the present. If we read the joint declaration that was issued by Mr. Anastasiades wearing his hat in the House of Commons as the Greek Cypriot leader, and Dr. Eroglu, the then Turkish Cypriot leader, on the 11th of February 2014, one sees

the following phrase: the objective of the settlement processes is the formation of a bi-communal bi-zonal federation, consisting of two politically equal communities. So what Fanoulla has effectively told us is that the origins of that phrase “two politically equal communities” go back to this period in the late 1950s. It's an integral part of Turkish strategy, its objective is to undermine the principle of majoritarian democracy, to elevate the status of a minority into a community, and thereby set the scene for constitutional partition. There is of course a problem here, because the Armenians, the Latins, the Maronites, and others who live on the island are compelled to be swept up into one of the two communities. Because the Turkish strategy rests on what I call the Turkish “two people in one island” thesis. They keep on saying there are “two communities”, only two communities, and they sometimes vary by saying there are “two peoples”. So you are compressed, irrespective of your background - you can be Jewish, you can be Buddhist, you can be Hindu - you are compressed, compelled to go into one of those two communities.

**C.P.:** Which is not what happened in Lebanon, where they have at the end of the day constitutionally recognized seventeen or eighteen communities.

**K.K.:** Eighteen I think it was.

**C.P.:** So, theoretically it could have been done. But there was a political reason, I guess, in Cyprus not to do it.

**K.K.:** Yes. Fanoulla, take us to the Zurich-London Agreements – how did they come about, and what was their significance to the evolution of the concept of the two communities and two zones.

**F.A.:** Well, they put the foundation, actually, for Turkey to continue its policy and gradually, because of the veto of the Turkish Cypriots, that veto, you know, safeguarded the unworkability of the constitution. And a lot of elements were unworkable, for instance 70%-30% in the civil service. The Turkish community or minority, they didn't have so many people...

**C.P.:** ... it was too small.

**F.A.:** It was too small to fill up all these places. And Nihat Erim was the instigator of the separate municipalities - that didn't work. And at the end we find that Archbishop Makarios was compelled to draft that 13-point report to try and make some changes and make it workable – well, that didn't work either. And we see that the Turks continued their policy of demanding federation. They got prepared, they armed the Turkish Cypriots, the TMT, and in December 1963 they attacked us and that's how we have at the end the United Nations Security Council Resolution 186 in March, which established peacekeeping force in Cyprus. The Turks moved into their enclaves and they stayed there until 1974, and that was according to the Turkish plan of establishing a foothold in Cyprus with federation, which they did in 1974 with the invasion. But I go back to 1960s. In 1963, after the events on the 16th of January 1964, Britain convened a conference in London and Rauf Denktas, the then Turkish Cypriot leader, demanded geographical separation, geographical federation with the population exchanges, with compensation, with people moving from one side to the other and being compensated for their properties, and they wanted a whole area, the northern area of Cyprus for themselves. That was in line with the Turkish policy of federation, of two zones. Then in April, May, or June of 1964, again, the Turkish Cypriots continued to demand this, and they issued documents for a federal Cyprus with Greek Cypriot government and the Turkish Cypriot government. And that

was again a continuation of the Turkish policy. And these are quite explicit in the British documents.

**K.K.:** Can I just make a couple of observations here? So in this period from 1960-64 we see the emergence, or the re-emergence, or the evolution of the concept of two communities and two zones: first of all, with the Zurich-London Agreements and the 1960 constitution, that was constitutional partition. Greek Cypriots were herded into the Greek community, which was defined with reference to Greek culture and the Greek Orthodox Church. On the other side, the Turkish community was defined with reference to Turkish culture and Islam. So you had an ethno-religious constitutional partition in 1960. We always hear from some people in Cyprus, understandably, that the Cyprus question is purely a matter of invasion and occupation, and the partition is a product of the invasion and occupation. In my view the partition of Cyprus began in 1960, with the constitutional partition, and what happened in 1963-64 and in '74 was the staged territorial partition of Cyprus. I do want the viewers to appreciate this distinction between the constitutional partition on the one hand, and a territorial partition on the other.

**C.P.:** Also, if Fanoulla will allow me, I think there was a certain degree of blame on our part. Because I think - I know that was not your intention from what you said before - the suggestion is that the Turkish side really initiated the problem and started this unfortunate series of events. But there was a tendency, and I remember - I was a young person in those days - but I do remember it, that it was with a sense of relief that the Greek side saw the Turkish Cypriots leave the institutions that were part of the 1960 Constitution. So you know, I think there was, if not complicity, than certainly a certain degree of synergy from our part into what led to the situation in 1964.

**F.A.:** Well, I believe it wasn't that much, but I have something else I want to say, and it is that in a document found in the office of the Turkish Cypriot "Ministry of Agriculture," if I'm not wrong, Mr. Fazil Plumer, you know when events took place in December '63, all the Turkish Cypriots in the civil service were ordered to abandon their places and concentrate in the Turkish Cypriot enclaves. Mr. Fazil Plumer apparently left, or forgot that document for whatever reason in his office and the authorities of the Republic found it. And that was signed 14 September 1963, and was signed by the Vice-President Dr. Fazıl Kucuk, and the then President of the Communal Chamber Rauf Denktas. Now, that document is quite a revelation in detailing all the plans for a takeover, say, to topple the Republic of Cyprus and create two federal states in its place. Mr. Christodoulos Veniamin the ex -minister of interior, if you remember, he wrote a book and published the whole of that document as an annex in this book. And I go back to 1964, and to a report from Major General W. H. A. Bishop, who was in the Common Relations Office, and he was appointed as an acting High Commissioner here at the time for a few months.

**K.K.:** (inaudible)

**F.A.:** Yes, only for a few months, in putting aside Arthur Clarke, they said he was ill or something... Anyway. He, W. H. A. Bishop, said that the Communal Chamber, the Turkish Communal Chamber published a pamphlet entitled "Federation and the Cyprus Economy", which set out a stake to a claim in north Cyprus, bounded by a line from Yialia to Famagusta - Yialia is in Paphos - covering 37 % of total area of Cyprus and purported to prove that it would be feasible economically. Pamphlet was in fact full of the usual polemics and muddled thinking and contained few, if any valid economic arguments in favour of federation. And that was

written by a man who was supporting, in actual fact, the Turkish positions, because back in the Foreign Office following December '63 events we find that the Foreign Office on the 3rd of January 1964 had already started memorandums and plans for a federal Cyprus.

**K.K.:** This is very interesting, and I have to go for a comment here with reference to democracy and the rule of law. In the liberal democratic tradition we have the principle of equality under the law: everybody is equal and treated equally under the law, irrespective of their race, religion or other background. In Cyprus in 1960 we didn't have a problem with liberal democracy established, we had what was called a "bi-communal partnership state", to use the jargon Turkey enjoys using, with communal chambers! And the allocation of places in the government not according to ability, or qualifications, or credibility, but according to whether one was a Greek or Turk, or whether the quota of 70:30 needed to be reached, and in some cases it was a 60:40 ratio. So the whole system was built around the opposite of meritocracy, and the opposite of equality. That's the first thing that people need to realize. We are going to have a perpetuation of that if we have a bi-communal bi-zonal federation, because people will be appointed to positions in government, or in Parliament, or the judiciary not necessarily because they're the best or because they're qualified, but because they happen to be a Greek Cypriot or a Turkish Cypriot.

**F.A.:** They have to fill the place.

**K.K.:** They have to fill the place. The second thing that I wanted to comment on is the importance of 1960, is that it established the bi-communal state. In other words, it was a constitution that was a product of bi-communalism. I'm a law lecturer by profession and I was taught, and I now teach my students, to search for the origins and the meaning of a particular word that is significant to us. And I've gone in search for the meaning of the word "bi-communalism." And "bi-communalism" is a variation of "communalism". What is "communalism"? The Oxford English Dictionary gives us the answer: communalism refers to the organization of society at the level of the community rather than the individual. Western liberal democracy rests on the individual! Communalism rests on the community. And the Oxford Dictionary goes on to tell us that communalism has a tendency to engender strong allegiance to one's own ethnic or religious group rather than to a society or nation as a whole. It is also likely to engender religious factionalism, and ethno-centrism. So the bloodshed, and the destruction, and the murders that took place in Cyprus in 1963-64 and afterwards, which I condemn unreservedly irrespective of who committed those murders and that bloodshed, and that inter-communal turmoil was a product, and a reflection of communalism.

**C.P.:** Which dates back to the previous concept of millet of the Ottoman period. It's interesting that you identified that it's not a Western concept. Communalism is more an Oriental concept; it's an Oriental, imperial method of keeping peace among ethnic groups who are part of the empire, or part of the millet system. The British didn't use that, or did they? They used an adaptation of that in Cyprus, but hid it under Western concept. I think there is communalism masquerading as "group rights", where "group rights" are accepted under Western concept. Especially in the United States you have an affirmative action. What is it: you find a group of citizens that are in a weaker economic or other position, and you try to improve their lot. So you could sell that on a Western conceptual basis, but hide the real essence of communalism, which is based on a perpetuation of racial, ethnic and religious differences. This is what happened in Cyprus.

**K.K.:** And this is what distinguishes Cyprus, and Belgium, and Switzerland and other consociational models that are often portrayed as if Cyprus was similar to them. The difference is Cyprus has been constitutionally partitioned into Christians and Muslims, which is in my view unacceptable, because I believe in integration and in equality and non-discrimination. And in Cyprus bi-communalism serves the Turkish strategy. It doesn't serve the interests of democracy; it serves the interests of Turkey.

**F.A.:** That was initially a Turkish idea.

**K.K.:** Can we go back to Fanoulla and ask her to explain the development of the idea of the bi-communal bi-zonal federation in this period from 1964 to '74. So what happened in that period to enable us to understand how this idea of a bi-communal bi-zonal federation evolved?

**F.A.:** It's very simple, because after '74, when the Turkish Cypriots concentrated in their enclaves...

**K.K.:** ...'64, you mean after '64.

**F.A.:** '64, yes. They concentrated in their enclaves, and they insisted in demanding federation. They never changed their policy. And we find year-by-year in the British documents that they refer to the Turkish demand. For instance we go to 12<sup>th</sup> of January 1965, Prime Minister Inonu sent a four-page letter to the British prime minister and the same time he applies to the American president and he's asking: help to establish a federation in Cyprus, in very clear terms. It's an official letter, with the prime minister's signature and everything. And we find that in 1967 the Turks in the occupied areas, in their enclaves, say, they even issue "national" lottery tickets. They have their own satte lottery. Here is the signature of Prime Minister Inonu. And this carries, and in January 1974 the Turks hardened their line. They started demanding, actually demanding federation, and this carries on through '74, until July, when the events happen, the coup happens and the invasion takes place. And before the invasion, however, there is a very significant point there, there is a historical point, which is that on the 17th of July 1974, when Prime Minister Ecevit arrived in London and had talks, and actually he came with an entourage of officials, with military and political officials, and they had a meeting, a very lengthy meeting with Prime Minister Wilson and James Callaghan and a lot of other government officials. It went up to midnight, and with lunch and everything, and they agreed to proceed with the Turkish invasion. The British gave them their consent as long as they didn't touch the bases. And from documents I discovered later, Ecevit that night also told them the extent of plans for Attila. He told them exactly up to where the Attila line would go. Perhaps they didn't take him that seriously at that time, but he did. And the next day on the 18th of July the American official Joseph Sisco arrived in London. He was sent by Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger and the documents are very explicit in detailing everything Ecevit told Sisco. In fact, they are more explicit in detailing what he told Sisco, than what he told the British. And they say that he asked for two autonomous regions and separation of the communities, Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot...

**K.K.:** ...under one "federal" umbrella, federal in inverted commas of course.

**F.A.:** Yes, under "federal" umbrella.

**C.P.:** You've described when the Turks adopted the idea. When did the Greeks adopt it? When did we adopt it?

**F.A.:** Well, I'm very sorry to say but the documents say that our side had accepted, consented to a federal system before Geneva, before the second invasion.

**C.P.:** '74.

**F.A.:** Yes, '74. Because, although they didn't accept, they didn't sign anything, the evidence say that they had accepted some sort... But they were reluctant to accept or sign any geographical separation as such, because James Callaghan was really pushing the Greek Cypriot representation and the Greek representation to accept geographical federation – separation - saying that if you don't, you know, the Turks will carry on with the second invasion.

**C.P.:** But federation or just separation?

**F.A.:** It is a federation.

**C.P.:** It could have been a confederation.

**F.A.:** No, it wasn't a confederation at the time. It was a geographical separation – two regions.

**K.K.:** Segregated regions, or zones.

**F.A.:** But very soon after on the 12th of August 1974 the Turkish Foreign Secretary Güneş proposed a plan of six cantons covering roughly between 34 to 37% of the area under Turkish rule. And at the same time Rauf Denktas proposed and delivered his plan which covered the same area but under the bi-zonal bi-communal federation.

**K.K.:** This is important, because Turkey in 1974 was pressing for a cantonal arrangement, so you have pockets of Turkish Cypriots segregated from Greek Cypriots and others. But Mr. Denktas was pressing for two zones, and for two Communities.

**F.A.:** He was very clear.

**K.K.:** He was very clear. And in the end it was Mr. Denktas who won the day.

**C.P.:** Most people point to the so-called Summit Agreements between Makarios and Denktas as the foundation of the idea federation. Is that accurate?

**F.A.:** No. British documents are very explicit and very clear, and actually topple everything that people knew so far. The 12<sup>th</sup> February 1977 was not an agreement, was not even a press release. They were minutes taken by Dr Waldheim's people, secretary, whoever. Because Dr. Waldheim had come to Cyprus in 1977 and had a meeting with Archbishop Makarios and Rauf Denktas, trying to bring them together to start negotiations and discussions. And during that meeting minutes were taken. And during that meeting it was agreed with the small "a" - and when we say "agreed" it doesn't say an agreement with capital "A" - it was agreed that 4 guidelines, instructions would be given to the negotiators to start discussions. And those four guidelines, unfortunately, some time later for some unknown reasons, and we don't know who first started this, were metamorphosed, elevated into the High Level Agreements.

**C.P.:** Ok, but these guidelines, don't they suggest there was a meeting of the minds, that there was an understanding, that indeed federation was the way to go forward?

**F.A.:** It was agreed, one of the guidelines agreed for a bi-communal federation. The word "bi-zonal" was not included.



**C.P.:** They were exploratory instructions?

**F.A.:** Yes, they had no binding effect.

**K.K.:** Was there any consultation with the citizens of the Republic of Cyprus?

**F.A.:** No.

**K.K.:** So it was a top-down, secretive...

**F.A.:** It was a meeting. It was a meeting between Waldheim, Archbishop Makarios and Rauf Denktas, and probably a couple of the United Nations' people who took the minutes.

**K.K.:** Did Dr Waldheim, the then Secretary General of the United Nations, disclose that he had served in the German Wehrmacht during the World War II?

**F.A.:** At that time no.

**C.P.:** Why would he?

**K.K.:** Did he make a declaration of interest that he'd served in German zones of occupation in war-time Greece and war-time Yugoslavia?

**F.A.:** No, he didn't.

**C.P.:** Moving on a little bit, because time is catching up with us. So, just to follow the thread. Federation was an idea that the Turks had, that served their interests, and in fact served their interests more than partition would do. And therefore they continued and systematically promoted it. Do you see anything that has changed today? We are in the phase of, hopefully, negotiations that will be fruitful and that will bring a negotiated settlement and honorable peace, we are told. And we all hope that it will be the case. Still, federation is on the table. But is it a federation that brings with it the Turkish objectives? The original objectives? Or is it a federation that has been watered down in the minds of the Turks that they view in a different way now? They view it as a way of compromise? Is today's federation a compromise, or is it a throw-back to the original intentions, the hard-line intentions of Turkey? I think a lot of people in Cyprus are wondering about it. Does this represent an honorable compromise, or not?

**F.A.:** No, I don't think it's an honorable compromise. In fact, it brings together the whole of the Turkish policy, which has been consistent. I am not optimistic with things as they are going. I don't believe it will be an honorable one. Turkey will achieve everything, almost everything, because their objective is to take over Cyprus, and they haven't got much left. I believe, if Turkey wants to have an honorable settlement, she has to do few things. First of all, she has to remove and take back her army of occupation, take back all the settlers she brought in on purpose to fill in the vacuum of the space the Greek Cypriot refugees left, who were forcibly removed and uprooted from their homes because of Turkey, and allow the Greek Cypriot refugees to go back to their homes, and the Turkish Cypriots, they can come back to theirs. Because the only way to safeguard... I hear a lot of people stress the fact that we have to secure, we have to respect and safeguard the Republic of Cyprus – I agree absolutely. But you can't do that, you will not do that with the bi-zonal bi-communal federation. The only way to safeguard and safe the Republic of Cyprus is by a unitary state. And we need leaders to have the courage to stand up, and put forward a different policy, and not be afraid of other foreign countries being against us or not taking us seriously, as they say. That I do not believe.

**C.P.:** The counter-argument is that the Turks don't want that. The Turkish Cypriots will never agree to that, and that federation is the only way to patch things up. In fact, the constructive ambiguities are all we are left with. At the end of the day we were always criticizing that, but in some ways, at least in one mind frame, I'm not saying that I agree or disagree with it, but that's all you have left. If the two sides are irreconcilable, and their positions are irreconcilable, the only way you get a settlement is by papering it over.

**K. K.:** This is what we need to dismantle: the concept that there are two sides. Both of you, though I have respect for you, have fallen into this Turkish trap of using the terminology of division and partition. You referred earlier to the "Turkish side." Christodoulos has referred to "our side". In liberal democracy the "other side" that exists is between the citizens and the states.

**C.P.:** But nevertheless, we're in a negotiating posture, and there is one side against the other side.

**K.K.:** And that's the essence of what's wrong.

**C.P.:** Yeah, but I think that what both sides are asked to do, is a leap of faith and trust. They need to fall back on as much trust as they can master one for the other and go forward with faith for the future. Now, what troubles me is the hidden agendas. And if there is a very strong hidden agenda on one of the sides, and I'm not saying which side, it's very difficult to suggest to the other side to have faith. Now, it seems to me that what you are saying is that the hidden agenda of Turkey, in fact it's not even hidden; it's a clear agenda, it's a continuous agenda. But is that true? In the evidence that you've seen, have you seen any evidence of change? In this new government, with Erdogan, Davutoglu, with this new sort of air going through, blowing through Turkey – is there any evidence that the Turks have compromised, as far as we are concerned?

**F.A.:** I can only say with only few words: no, I haven't. I haven't, and I believe the Turkish policy continues as it was, they haven't changed, in fact they may have hardened their line. And we don't know what will happen in a few months in Turkey. Politics is, again... You can never say "no" in politics, of course. I hope they've changed, but it's something it would take a lot to persuade me that Turkey has changed their policy, once they reached this point. I know there is a difficult dilemma, especially for the Greeks, I will use the "Greek Cypriot side." But it's difficult. I believe, if we insist in establishing a bi-zonal bi-communal federation, it will not last very long, it will collapse, and I believe, unfortunately, that will be the end of the Greek people in Cyprus.

**C. P.:** Is there any optimistic point that we could end?

**K.K.:** Yes! We have to go back to the liberal democracy and the rule of law: everybody, irrespective of race or religion should be treated equally. Everybody should be treated with respect, and democracy should be built from the bottom-up. The secrecy and the procedural unfairness that is on display in Nicosia has to come to an end. We need to have a bottom-up, transparent process, which involves consultation with the citizens and other residents of the Republic of Cyprus. We need to dismantle bi-communalism, and have the principle of equality under the law as the founding principle of the constitution. We must dismantle the concept of two zones, and have a unitary state in which everybody is permitted to live wherever they wish, providing they are citizens of the Republic of Cyprus, or the European Union. The settlers and

colonists must be returned humanly and according to the principle of due process, so there would be exceptions to the general principle. And the Turkish troops must leave. And the murderers of the past, the criminals of the past must be brought to justice, in accordance with the principle of due process. That's my view. And it doesn't matter if alleged perpetrators were Greeks, Greek Cypriots, Turks, or Turkish Cypriots or others. They should be brought to justice. And a war-crime tribunal, an ad hoc war crimes tribunal should be established, or if Turkey ratifies the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, perhaps the ICC might be used, or an ad hoc version of it. So we need to be optimistic here. Changes happen when there is political leadership, when there is drive, and when we learned the lessons of history. And the lessons of history have been played out.

**C.P.:** Fanoulla, the last word?

**F.A.:** The last word. I hear people saying that "but Turkey will not accept this, but Turkey will not do this." Why should we continue accepting what Turks say? I mean, haven't we got a voice of our own to insist? Go to Europe, go to the United Nations. Like the other day – I will say this. The other day the President of the Republic of Cyprus at the UN, a president of the occupied Cyprus, instead of saying all those things he said, he should have said three clear things: I came in front of you today, in front of the world, and I ask you to do three things: My country is occupied. Help me liberate my country, Turkey to take her troops out, take the settlers out, and allow my people to go back to their homes. What better, clearer message could the president of the occupied country give to the world, if he had said these three things, and said thank you, and sit down.

**C.P.:** I hope he is watching.

**F.A.:** I hope he does.

**C. P.:** Thank you dear Fanoulla, thank you for your time.

**F.A.:** Thank you for inviting me.

**C.P.:** And all of you, thank you for being with us, I hope to see you next time.



---

## DISCUSSION\*

---

Klearchos Kyriakides\*\*

19 January 2016

### **The Meaning of ‘Bi-Communalism and its Consequences for Cyprus and the European Union**

*The discussion raises the problem that communalism in general and bi-communalism, in particular, creates a series of problems for liberal democracy, and especially for a federal constitution. Moreover, in Cyprus it creates opportunities for external actors with objectives that threaten the stability of the Cypriot state.*

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** Welcome to another ERPIC discussion. As many of you know, the two communities in Cyprus are in negotiations trying to reach a settlement of their inter-ethnic problem, and the settlement has been referred to as a bi-zonal bi-communal federation. This afternoon we will try to examine the meaning of bi-communalism, and its consequences for Cyprus, and more broadly the European Union. I have with me Dr. Klearchos Kyriakides, Head of ERPIC’s Law and Democracy Program. Klearchos, what do you mean by bi-communalism?

**Klearchos Kyriakides (K.K.):** First of all, thank you for the invitation to speak today. I just want to make clear at the outset that the views that I’m going to express today are my personal ones, and they should not be interpreted as those of any organization that I am or have been associated with. You’ve asked me what is meant by the term “bi-communalism”. I would respond by saying that “bi-communalism” is a variation of “communalism”, and that requires us to investigate the meaning of the word “communalism”. “Communalism”, if you open a dictionary and look at the definition of the word, means the organization of society at the level of the community. Applied to Cyprus, this means that over the last half century the country has been organized as a republic. And before the establishment of the Republic, the colony was organized on the basis of two separate communities. Power was vested in the imperial power during imperial days. But power was then partly disseminated down to the community level, and to the leadership of the two communities. When the Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960, there was one material change. The British colonial rulers went up to a point, of course.

\* Transcript

\*\* Assistant Professor and Deputy Head, School of Law, Cyprus Campus, University of Central Lancashire, UCLan Cyprus; Director, Democracy and Rule of Law Program, ERPIC

But power then slipped down into these two constitutionally established communities, and by extension to the two leaders of the two constitutionally established communities.

**C.P:** What is the essential characteristic of the two Cyprus communities?

**K.K.:** Well, first of all the term “bi-communism” is misleading, because if one traces the origins of the so-called two communities going back into the Ottoman imperial era, and then after the British imperial era, one sees that the so-called two communities were defined primarily with reference to two separate faiths: Islam and Christianity. And in the British imperial era, the two communities were defined with reference to Islam and non-Islam, the Muslims and non-Muslims. So there is very much a religious foundation to bi-communalism. As far as the 1960-definition of the two communities is concerned, one finds a blend of ethnicity and religion. So if I can just read you the definitions one finds in the 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus: the Greek community comprises all citizens of the Republic who are of Greek origin, and whose mother tongue is Greek, or who share the Greek cultural traditions, or who are members of the Greek Orthodox Church. On the other hand, one finds that the Turkish community comprises all citizens of the Republic who are of Turkish origin, and whose mother tongue is Turkish, or who share the Turkish cultural traditions, or who are Muslims. So there is a blending of ethnicity, language and religion in the 1960 definitions of the two communities. And interestingly enough, there is no reference to the Turkish Cypriot community or the Greek Cypriot community; there's a reference to the Greek community and the Turkish community.

**C.P.:** So what's wrong with having two communities as part of the constitutional structure?

**K.K.:** If you believe in liberal democracy, you believe in the empowerment of the citizen, and the principle of equality under the law. The fundamental problem with bi-communalism is that it doesn't involve primarily the empowerment of the citizen – it involves the empowerment of two separate communities. In line with that division, any constitution that's built on bi-communalism ends up dividing citizens along ethno-religious lines and constitutionally coerces every single citizen into one of those two separate communities. So the end product is a state of affairs, which I define with reference to the four “Ds”. The first “D” is “Division” - society is divided into these two communities, and everything flows from that division in terms of governance, in terms of culture, in terms of economics and so on. Secondly, second “D” is “Dysfunctionality”. The structures of governance are inherently divided, power is spread out to these two communities, a zero sum game sometimes and often does come into existence, the two communities are locked in disagreement at times, and therefore you end up with dysfunctional government. The third “D” is “Danger”: the society is at constant risk of discord, and as we've seen unfortunately in the case of Cyprus, violence. And the fourth “D” is “Discrimination”. Because what bi-communalism does, is that it discriminates in favor of the two communities and the members of the two communities, it creates a culture which is built around Greekness and Christianity on the one hand, and Turkishness and Islam on the other hand. And if you're not ethnically Greek and Greek Orthodox, and not ethnically Turkish or Muslim, you're excluded. And therefore you are coerced into joining one of the two communities, and you are subjected therefore to a form of institutional discrimination.

**C.P:** Most societies have divisions. And I refer back to your suggestion that disfunctionality is inherent... There are pluralist societies where disfunctionality is not inherent. Why would it be inherent in the Cyprus case?

**K.K.:** First of all, we do not have proper pluralism in Cyprus. The constitution is not pluralist, the Constitution is dualist.

**C.P.:** Let me back off from Cyprus. Why is bi-communism different than ethnic differences in other societies, pluralist societies? Is it the acceptance, the institutionalization? What is it that makes this different?

**K.K.:** In a liberal democracy diversity is cherished, diversity is embraced, and the multi-ethnic, multi-faith character of the population is recognized. Under a bi-communalist system you have a strict division - the society is strictly divided. And you are coerced, I use that phrase again, you are constitutionally coerced, if you wish to be a citizen, to belong to one of these two communities. So there is a division at the very essence of the bi-communal sovereign state.

**C.P.:** So it's not just about group rights, it's not about guaranteeing the rights of a particular ethnic community against abuse. You're saying it's something more.

**K.K.:** Well, if we take the 1960 constitutional system as an example, the religious groups as it were, the Armenians, the Maronites, and the Latins were relegated to this sort of subservient, subordinate category of religious groups, and the individual members, as I understand the constitution, had to join one of the two main communities. There was a peculiar system put into place there. Funnily enough, when you read the transcripts of the parliamentary proceedings in Westminster, when the Cyprus Bill, as it then was, was passing through the Parliament, one or two members of the British Parliament were puzzled by this sort of strict bi-communal categorization of citizens. And one of those was Lord Harding, the former Governor of Cyprus. He raised a very good point on the floor of the House of Lords, of which he was by then a member. He asked: why on earth are we splitting people up into two communities, when there are more than two communities in Cyprus? There is an institutionalized division and institutionalized discrimination that is built into bi-communalism.

**C.P.:** But does that preclude pluralism? Why can't this situation be turned into a pluralist democracy, based on bi-communalism or tri-communalism?

**K.K.:** History has to be our guide here, and if we have a look at...

**C.P.:** But is there something essential about it, or is it just that it never happened before?

**K.K.:** Well, let's just take the most successful sovereign states - they do not have bi-communal structures. If you have a look at unsuccessful states, they tend to have bi-communal structures or divisions, constitutional divisions along ethnic or religious lines. In the piece of work that I'm on the verge of completing, I look at some interesting case studies. I look at, in alphabetical order: Bosnia, Iraq, Lebanon, Nigeria, Sudan. In all of those case studies the ethno-religious divisions built into the constitutional structures have resulted in the production of not necessarily failed states, but what might be called perpetually failing states. And that's because of the essential dangers associated with communalism. Communalism contains the seeds of discord, division and possibly even the destruction of a sovereign state. I have to read to you at this point very briefly the Oxford English Dictionary definition of "communalism". It is very important that the people in Cyprus understand the essence of the concept that is being paraded as the key to their constitutional future. The Oxford English Dictionary defines "communalism" as "the organization of society at the level of the community rather than the individual". So straight away we see that there is a clash with liberal democracy, which entails

the organization of society based on the individual citizen and the empowerment of individual citizens. But the Oxford English Dictionary goes on to observe that “communalism” appears to engender, and I’m quoting here, “strong allegiance to one’s own ethnic or religious group, rather than to a society or nation as a whole”. So what communalism and by extension bi-communism all have a tendency to give rise to are closed communities, which look to the empowerment, the welfare and the prosperity of the individual community, rather than the prosperity, the welfare, the safety and security of the sovereign state, of which the two communities form part. So there is a disfunctionality that flows from that essential defect in communalism. I have to add this footnote. The Oxford English Dictionary suggests, not surprisingly, that “communalism is bound up with concepts of religious factionalism and ethno- centrism”. And that’s really the nub of the problem.

**C.P.:** Bi-communalism is being packaged in a federal package, and federalism is hailed as the cure of the ills, or at least some of the ills that you are referring to. You are not convinced that’s the case, or that it would work in that way?

**K.K.:** The problem is that federalism has a pretty unfortunate track record, particularly when federalism functions within an ethno-religious framework. I call this the folly of federalism.

**C.P.:** Do you need integration for federalism to work?

**K.K.:** We’ll come to integration in a moment or two. If you look at the successful federations around the world, the ones who haven’t at least in the last hundred and fifty years or so had civil wars, - I’m thinking of Australia and the United States of America, for example, although the United States of course did have a civil war - what you find in those two case studies is a common allegiance to the flag, a common allegiance to the president, a common allegiance to the constitution, and a common allegiance to the values of the country concerned.

**C.P.:** So it’s a state-building in those cases. In both cases you’ve had conscious state-building and nation-building. Therefore, is that what is missing? Is that an element that has to be there?

**K.K.:** Both Australia and the United States...

**C. P:** Does that cut against bi-communalism?

**K.K.:** Absolutely, because what Australia and the United States both have in common is that their populations are multi-ethnic and multi-faith, but there is this inner core that has kept those two federations together, and there has been a concerted effort on the part of the organs of government, and by the citizens themselves, and by the schools at the base of society, to create a common culture. What that means is that you can be a Greek Orthodox American and go to church on Sunday, you can belong to any faith that you wish, but you have to relegate your religious affiliation to your common adherence to the flag, to the constitution, and to the constitutional values of society. With bi-communalism we see the opposite: there is the promotion of religion, the promotion of ethnicity, and they have primacy over a common allegiance to the sovereign state.

**C.P.:** But again to make it clear, in the United States, Australia, or whatever, in the earlier stages of their existence there was less tolerance of differentness. Won’t things develop in a similar way in a bi-communal... I’m trying to sort of touch the essence of the difference and, perhaps, your point of departure. What is it that makes it different from the early United States?



There, there was no tolerance of color, no tolerance of difference in religion, there was no tolerance of a lot of things.

**K.K.:** Well, it is an interesting observation. I have reached the conclusion that the Republic of Cyprus today is rather like the United States of America before the civil rights revolution of the 1950s and the 1960s. The Republic of Cyprus has become a deeply segregated society. In different circumstances to the United States, granted, but nonetheless it's a deeply segregated society, in which citizens are divided according to race, and fundamental rights are not upheld.

**C.P.:** Certainly, that one difference is that in the United States you have affirmative action in order to help minorities and certain groups and so on, and that's a temporary measure. Whereas one would imagine that the bi-communality and these constitutional divisions in a federation like the one that is proposed for Cyprus are permanent. Is that a difference?

**K.K.:** Let's come to the point. The point is that what is being constructed in this constitutional building-site in Nicosia is not a democratic system which is informed by democratic values and the spirit of liberal democracy. What is being constructed in Nicosia, is something in line with the requirements of Ankara going back to the 1950s. Since 1956 onwards, Turkey has demanded the implementation of bi-communalism, from at least 1964 onwards Turkey has demanded the implementation of zonality, side-by-side with bi-communalism, and what we're seeing in Nicosia is really an attempt to rustle up a settlement or an instrument of surrender, which is on all fours with the strategic requirements, and indeed with the strategic demands of Turkey. So we're having a very interesting discussion about federalism, about democracy and democratic values. But ultimately what they're doing in Nicosia, is rustling up a settlement, which is in line with the undemocratic requirements and needs of Ankara.

**C.P.:** Let me be devil's advocate for a second. You have the UN involved in the process, you have the Greek Cypriots, their leadership elected by democratic processes, the Turkish Cypriot leadership also allegedly properly elected. Are all these people deluded? Even Ankara would suggest it's a democratic, albeit illiberal democracy, but it holds democratic principles quite high on its philosophical agenda. Should we not give credence to these allegations?

**K.K.:** I'm the director of ERPIC Democracy and Rule of Law Program, so I have to uphold democracy. But there is a dangerous side to democracy. Plato recognized in antiquity - he was no fan of democracy the way I'm a fan of democracy - Plato recognized that democracy can lead to tyranny. Our own great English lawyer Lord Hailsham once pointed out that in the United Kingdom at least there was a risk of an elective dictatorship. And Plato and Lord Hailsham together warned us that we need to be on our guard, because democracy can be subverted by democrats. There's a third inspirational figure here, a judge Damon Keith from the United States Court of Appeals. He warned us that democracies die behind closed doors.

**C.P.:** Is it the negotiating process that's happening now suggestive of anything? In your mind, is it democratic enough, let's say?

**K.K.:** I would describe what we're seeing in Nicosia is a surrender process taking place amid the smoke of secrecy. What do I mean by that? We are observing, from a distance, the war aims of Turkey being implemented by means of a process being conducted in complete secrecy, by the two leaders of the two communities.

**C.P.:** I beg to differ there because on the Turkish Cypriot side it seems that there is a quite

extensive presentation of positions, and discussion of positions, and so on. You may be referring to the Greek side. On the Greek side, there is certainly a tendency not to let on to the extent of the things that are being discussed, or the real nature of the discussions. At least that's the feeling that people are getting.

**K.K.:** Two points there. First of all, these expressions that have tripped off your tongue are very dangerous and they're part of this doctrine of division associated with bi-communalism. You refer to "the Greek side" and "the Turkish side". These are expressions that have nothing to do with liberal democracy. In the liberal democracy the two sides are, if they exist, the citizens and the organs of government. Whereas here in Cyprus, because of bi-communalism, these phrases have entered the day-to-day lexicon, and they are deeply divisive, and they engender a form of separation which is the essence of bi-communalism. But in answer to your question, I will put it in the form of a series of questions. Has there been a transparent consultation exercise carried out by anybody in Nicosia?

**C.P.:** There has been a constitutional process in most countries when they're either changing the constitution, or creating a constitution and so on, there is in democratic states a process by which most of the parties and most of the stakeholders, to use a modern, favorite term, are consulted. There seems to be that happening from the point of view of the Turkish Cypriot leadership, but there doesn't seem to be....

**K.K.:** I'm questioning you there. Have documents been placed in the public domain? Consultation papers? This is what we're proposing: a, b, c, d, e, g, f, g. Or is it all talk? Let me just explore this point a little bit further. Democracies die behind closed doors. What is being discussed in secret, as I understand it, bearing in mind the history of the Annan Plan, is the composition of three constitutions: one for the proposed federation, one for the proposed Greek Cypriot constituent state, and one for the proposed Turkish Cypriot constituent state. So what we're seeing is the drafting of three constitutions together with multiple acts of parliament, to use an English expression, multiple legislative instruments. I ask some questions. In each of the three constitutions, how is the separation of powers going to be structured? Is there going to be a system of parliamentary supremacy? Is there going to be the same as in the United States of America, a Marbury v. Madison power built into the Supreme Court to strike down legislation? What is going to be the nature of the system of checks and balances? Who is going to appoint judges? Who is going to hold the executive branch to account? Is the head of the executive branch of government going to be kept away from the legislature, or is it going to be like a prime minister, and be accountable to the legislature on a weekly basis? Do we know the answers to those questions?

**C.P.:** There's a suggestion that in the communiqué of February 2014, there is a suggestion that a lot of concepts, European concepts, of democracy and so on, are subject to the concept of bi-communality. Is that hitting the nail on the head? Is that what's bad about bi-communality, that it institutionalizes a criterion, or a measure of democratic principles?

**K.K.:** The answer to the question is: we don't know the answer this question because no documents have been presented with the exception of the joint declaration of the 11 February 2014. A few other bits and pieces have emerged, but not a single draft constitution has been put forward. I would step away from big constitutional instruments and ask a number of other questions. Is there going to be a charter of fundamental rights, or three separate charters of fundamental rights? The Annan Plan suggested there would be three charters of fundamental

rights. What are those charters of fundamental rights going to contain? Will the relatively new right to dignity be built into any of those three charters of fundamental rights? Will there be a constitutional guarantee of freedom of information, will there be a freedom of information act? Take the bread-and-butter issues for example. How is the health service going to function? How are the doctors, and the nurses, and healthcare professionals being consulted about how the key health care legislation is going to function? Tax accountants - have the tax accountants been consulted about how the tax code is going to function?

**C.P.:** Turning this around. One of the concerns of the parties in the discussions is to come up with something that there will be an easy transition period, or an easy transition, from what people are used to today, to the new status quo, in fact a seamless transition, or better, they wouldn't be able to tell the difference. In other words, this new settlement wouldn't mark a change in their lives.

**K.K.:** Well, can we see the draft legislation to justify that?

**C.P.:** On a theoretical basis, what does that suggest? Either you are integrating the two communities in some way, or you are keeping them apart. You can't do both. If you're trying not to change people's lives, that means that you are on the side of keeping the situation as close to what it is, in terms of separation, in terms of all these things. If you're going to break the eggs into an omelet, that's going to affect people's lives.

**K.K.:** I can't answer your question, because I haven't seen any draft legislation.

**C.P.:** Sure, I'm just repeating some of the suggestions, some of the spins, some of the narrative, where....

**K.K.:** Where do these spins come from?

**C.P.:** Certainly the media, the discussions that to some point are happening on the Greek side among the political leaders and the government. There is a suggestion that we are trying to keep things as smooth as possible. This is a concern of the negotiators.

**K.K.:** Well, one of the problems with bi-communalism, as I see it, is that it gives rise to what Lijphart called "the government by elite cartel". And what you're seeing in Nicosia are the two cartels, or the leaders of two cartels, meeting together, cooking up something in complete secrecy. We don't know what on earth is being discussed. And there are exceptional dangers here for citizens. Let me just raise three very quick questions to highlight the dangers associated with drafting legislation in secret, in the absence of any consultation exercises, in the absence of any proper mechanisms of accountability, and in the absence of proper transparency. Number one: what are going to be the powers of the police, the law enforcement agencies, and the intelligence services of the three proposed entities? Number two: what are going to be the rights of anybody arrested by any of those police forces, law enforcement agencies, and intelligence services? And number three: what mechanisms of judicial review will exist to enable anybody who has been arrested or subject to a potentially unlawful decision? These are questions of enormous importance. We need to know as citizens - I'm not a citizen the Republic of Cyprus, but I'm a citizen of the European Union - we as citizens of the European Union are entitled to know the nature of the proposed powers of the law enforcement agencies.

**C.P.:** Which brings us to the question: what are the consequences of bi-communality, in the adoption of the concept in Cyprus, to the European Union?

**K.K.:** Well, you have raised an interesting question. The European Union and its member states need to ask themselves some really crucial questions. Bearing in mind the principle of solidarity that is a founding principal of the European Union, and bearing in mind the impact that what happens in one part of the European Union can have adverse consequences elsewhere. I'll put it in the form of two questions. Firstly, should the citizens of a member state of the European Union be divided strictly into two separate ethno-religious communities? Second question is: should those two communities be constitutionally endowed with two separate zones, one of which was established as a consequence of an unlawful and unethical invasion, occupation, and series of acts of ethnic cleansing, which was followed by enforced segregation? Is the future of the European Union to be built upon the principles of two communities and two zones, and coexistence?

**C.P.:** Or more than two communities, in that matter...

**K.K.:** Or, is the future of the European Union and its member states going to be built upon integration, pluralism, security, the empowerment of the individual, but the curtailment of unacceptable and unlawful conduct? What we're seeing here in Cyprus, I fear, is something that we may very well be seeing in France, and Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, and Denmark, and Sweden, and in other parts of the European Union. What we are seeing here is the division of people according to their ethnicity or religion, the encroachment of Turkey...

**C.P.:** Well they are divided already. The acceptance of that division, the institutionalization of that division...

**K.K.:** The difference between Cyprus... I can't speak for France, or Germany, because I never lived there, but I was born and brought up in the United Kingdom, so let's use the United Kingdom as an example. Here in Cyprus we have the constitutional acceptance of bi-communalism. My ambition in life is to see bi-communalism brought to an end. What we have here in Cyprus is the constitutional acceptance and enforcement of two communities being kept apart by bi-communalism. And what they're trying to rustle up in Nicosia is the supplement of the combination of bi-communalism with bi-zonality, the constitutional acceptance of two zones.

**C.P.:** Bi-zonality is the geographical expression.

**K.K.:** Exactly. All bi-zonality is, is the geographical expression of bi-communalism, although in the case of Cyprus it's of course also a product of an invasion, and occupation, and ethnic cleansing. But as far as Europe is concerned – let's take the United Kingdom. There is no constitutional bi-communalism in the United Kingdom, because we have a parliamentary democracy, but what we're seeing in the United Kingdom is the creeping bi-communalization of the country. We're seeing self-segregation in various forms. We are seeing the emergence of what the (inaudible) report back in 2001 described as people inhabiting parallel lives. So what we're seeing the United Kingdom, which is really deeply troubling, is on the one hand a de facto form of bi-communalism coming into existence, and the de facto bi-communalism is being supplemented with a de facto form of bi-zonality. Now, only time will tell whether there are moves afoot to try and constitutionalize. We don't have a single codified constitution, but only time will tell whether we'll have further steps taken in the direction of legalized bi-

communalism, and legalized bi-zonality. I hope that they will never come. But what I can say is that for all of his many faults, and he has many faults, the Prime Minister David Cameron seems to have woken up to the dangers of bi-communalism and bi-zonality, although he hasn't shown any interest in bi-communalism and bi-zonality over here other than to support it. But if you read the strategy papers that are published by the United Kingdom government, and I'm referring here to the integration strategy paper, and the counter-extremism strategy paper, there is not a single reference to coexistence. There are multiple references to integration. What the Prime Minister has realized is that we need to step away from division, step away from self segregation, and try and build an integrated society under the rule of law, in which everybody is equal, but everybody adheres to a common set of values, which are rooted in the democratic ethos, and are rooted in the rule of law. And I am hoping, in the fullness of time Mr. Cameron and other British politicians will wake up and realize that if bi-communalism and bi-zonality can be killed off and consigned to history here in the Republic of Cyprus, then the chances of bi-communalism and bi-zonality seeping into the culture and into the law of the United Kingdom will be diminished. So my message really to our fellow Europeans, and the British are still just about fellow Europeans...

**C.P.:** Still...

**K.K.:** Still – this is really the key word. My message to fellow Europeans, including the British, is this: help Cyprus dismantle bi-communalism, help Cyprus release itself from the grip of de-facto bi-zonality, help Cyprus remove the Turkish troops, help Cyprus remove the unlawful colonists, help Cyprus become a liberal democracy. Because if you can help Cyprus become a liberal democracy under the rule of law, you'll be able to shore up liberal democracy and the rule of law in France, in Germany, in the United Kingdom, in Denmark, in Sweden, in Belgium, and all of the other member states of the European Union.

**C.P.:** Surely, the response to that is: this is what the parties want. This is self-segregation. They want to be different. Otherwise, the two parties, or at least one party would object to it. From the official point of view, the officialdom is not objecting to this. So should one make the case for them? That's a question that one needs to answer eventually. Why is this not an official debate here? It's in the debate, in the societal debate, at least on the Greek side.

**K.K.:** You use that phrase "Greek side", which is naughty...

**C.P.:** I am sorry to do that, but it expresses the reality. You see, this is it – it's the reality of the situation in Cyprus. It's gone beyond just a theory. It's become the reality. So can you back-paddle history and integrate these two communities?

**K.K.:** The political elites in Nicosia are rather like drug addicts who are addicted to heroin and need to inject themselves every week or every day with things they shouldn't. And they are addicted to bi-communalism, they have got so used to injecting themselves with bi-communism, and they can't release themselves from its grip. And what they don't realize is that the bi-communalism that they are injecting themselves on a daily basis is given to them, has been given to them by Ankara, and this is what Ankara wants to see. And every time you hear a Cypriot politician referring to the two sides, the two communities, the two leaders, they are talking in the lexicon of division that Ankara has seeped into the Cypriot society. And if I can draw another analogy. Bi-communalism emits the stench of segregation, and the problem is that if you live next to a cesspit, your nostrils, and your nose becomes used to the stench, and

this is what's happened here in Cyprus. People have been living with the cesspit of segregation for so long, that the stench has become part of their day-to-day lives. And they don't realize that what they need is a blast of fresh air.

**C.P.:** But the segregation, and I guess this is what you're saying, that it goes back beyond the colonial period, goes back into the Ottoman period, so people have gotten used to the idea. But it's not only Cyprus, because in other parts of the Middle East, that is the state of affairs. In Syria you have these little communities of Christian communities that are now in the process of being eliminated. So this is what I'm leading to. It is perhaps one of the most insidious aspects of this ethno-religious division, this institutionalized, accepted division, that it marks the victims in the long term. Sooner or later these self-segregated individuals or communities will be subject to attack. Or is this too deterministic?

**K.K.:** I've just made a number of notes here. You've mention the Ottoman Empire. The Republic of Cyprus has never really been truly independent sovereign state. And as long as bi-communalism is locked into the system here, Cyprus will never be independent. It will be under the shadow of Ankara, if not chained to Ankara. And what I want people here in Cyprus to realize is that to be independent, to be truly independent you need to throw off the chains of bi-communalism. Everybody here in Cyprus, irrespective of race , ethnicity or religion, should rally around democracy and the rule of law, and rally round the Republic of Cyprus as a sovereign state, and throw off these chains of imperialism which are still holding Cyprus back from becoming a liberal democracy.

**C.P.:** But even if they do, you'll need to amend the Constitution of Cyprus, and surely some argue that that's what's happening now – they're just amending the 1960 Constitution of Cyprus. And they're introducing the group rights, or the group guarantees that particular section of the population needs in order to feel comfortable.

**K.K.:** What they're doing is, if I can use another analogy, is they're taking off chains that have rusted, and they're trying to come up with fresh chains. The principle is the same: bi-communalism. You need to remove bi-communalism. And in order to do that, there needs to be a new constitutional agenda. In this publication I'll be releasing shortly I try and come up with some ideas for doing that. But you need to change the procedure - the procedure has to be transparent, and it has to be democratic, and it has to be citizen-led, not leader-led, to use the phrase of Mr. Eide, the United Nations representative here. So there needs to be a change in procedure, and there needs to be a change of substance. So the objective of the process of constitutional renewal, to use another British phrase, should be to truly decolonize the Republic of Cyprus, to de-bi-communalise the Republic of Cyprus, and to de-zonalize the Republic of Cyprus. Simple principles. You cannot have the taking off of the rusted chains and the putting on of new chains, because you'll end up with the same rotten results, if I can use that phrase. There's a second point I want to really emphasize. You've mentioned the Middle East, and you commented that this is what goes on in this part of the world. This is why the European Union needs to wake up. Instead of the Eastern Mediterranean becoming liberal and democratic what we're seeing is that the European Union is gradually becoming Middle Eastern. What do I mean by that? I mean by that that the European Union is accepting, here in the Republic of Cyprus, the values of the Ottoman Empire: bi-communalism, and of course the bi-zonality that comes with it. So really what's happening here in Cyprus is going to really determine the future of Europe, and the future of the Middle East. If this part of the world, if this island of Cyprus can become a true liberal democracy under the rule of law, which respects

the rights of every citizen, irrespective of ethnicity or religion, if this part of the world can embrace liberal democracy, then we can protect liberal democracy in the remaining of the European Union. But if this part of the world becomes bi-communalised and bi-zonalized, what that means is that the European Union is effectively creating a suicide pill, which is potentially going to kill the rest of the European Union. Because, mark my words, and I hope I'm wrong, and I'm praying that I am wrong. But if we bi-communalize and bi-zonalize the Republic of Cyprus, the enemies of liberal democracy will want to bi-communalize and bi-zonalize Italy, and France, and Germany, and Sweden, and Denmark, and Belgium, and the United Kingdom, and Ireland, and everywhere else. So this is why the Europeans need to wake up. I go back to those two questions I put earlier. Should the citizens of a sovereign state be divided constitutionally into two communities? My answer is: no. Should the citizens of a sovereign state have their territory carved up into two separate zones? My answer to that question is an unmistakable: no. Where does that leave us? It leaves us with the alternative. And the alternative, I go back to it once again, is the rule of law, liberal democracy, and the principles embodied within them.

**C.P.:** Practically, though, how do you see that happening? We're at the last stages, supposedly, of a negotiated process. Do people say, okay, we were barking up the wrong tree, let's change the tree? How is it practical to do something like that?

**K.K.:** The late great British politician Dennis Healey once said that if you find yourself digging a hole, first thing you should do is stop digging. They have dug themselves into these two bi-communal trenches, and the first thing they need to do is down tools. The second thing they need to do is to lay the documents in front of the public, so that the citizens can draw their own conclusions.

**C.P.:** That sounds more like a practical thing. If, supposedly, the sovereignty belongs to the people, let the people speak. But then, what if they speak: "We like what's going on"? Is it too late for liberal democracy?

**K.K.:** That's the question for the advocates of bi-communalism and bi-zonality to answer. I don't want to go into details on what's happened in Paris, and in Cologne, and in other European cities in recent months, but there is a serious danger that communalism is seeping into European society. I venture no comments on what Donald Trump has been saying in the United States, but his references to a temporary ban on Muslims entering the United States is a manifestation of communalism and indeed, Cypriot bi-communalism. He is drawing a distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims. Now, Mr. Trump is a symptom of a problem. I'm not American and I don't want to get involved in the debate in America. But what you see with communalism - and this is very important, because it's a lesson of history that the Europeans need to note - is that when you communalize society, you see the emergence of extremes. So the extreme right, and the extreme right provokes the reaction from the extreme left. So you have actually two forms of discord flowing from bi-communalism. You have the discord between the so-called two communities, who end up at loggerheads, and sadly clashing with one another in what the British used to call "the communal disturbances". So you've got the inter-communal disturbances, which are a product of the inter-communal division, but then within each of the two communities you see the emergence of two extremes: extreme left and extreme right. I mean, look at the history of Cyprus...

**C.P.:** And federalism is not the answer?

**K.K.:** Federalism is certainly not the answer. Federalism just freezes division. That's all it does it. It freezes the divisions and it tries to produce the system where you muddle through from crisis to crisis and hope for the best. And the best never happens. Well, look at Lebanon. Lebanon is not a federation, but has a consociational model. They can't come up with a president. Belgium has a consociational system, it's a federation of some sort as well, they didn't have a government for the best part of two years. Why has federalism come to Cyprus? It has come to Cyprus because Turkey wants federalism. And that begs the question: why does Turkey want federalism? Well, the declassified American, British, and United Nations documents I've seen give us the answer. Turkey wants a bi-zonal bi-communal federation because it does not want double enosis. It does not want the southern part of Cyprus becoming part of Greece, and it doesn't want the northern part of Cyprus becoming, constitutionally at least, becoming part of Turkey.

**C.P.:** Historically though it did.

**K.K.:** Historically it did, and maybe in the longer term it does, but as an interim measure what Turkey thinks in the long term - for forty years this has been within this Turkish interim mindset - what Turkey wanted back in 1974 was the formation of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, so that Turkey could in effect control the north. But also through the federalism of the governmental arrangements it could have control over the south. And also through the Treaty of Guarantee and the Treaty of Alliance they could have a military presence in Cyprus.

**C.P.:** So that explains why Turkey wouldn't want the settlement to look more like a confederation, where you have two people, essentially. Because are we talking about a single people or two peoples in Cyprus? That's part of the debate, part of the conflict here. But presumably, a confederation is where you have essentially two states agreeing to cooperate with each other. And yet we're not talking about that. People don't think that's a legitimate way forward. It leads to partition, it leads to... You hear all these arguments. And partition is bad. Partition is bad, but bi-communism is good. It's a little bit schizophrenic, if you ask me, because the way you explain it, bi-communalism is partition.

**K.K.:** Of course it is. It's a different form of a...

**C.P.:** So why not bite the bullet and have two states amicably cooperating.

**K.K.:** Christodoule, first of all, Turkey has been pumping out an ideology for the last sixty years, which I describe as the two peoples in one island thesis. The argument of Turkey is that there are two peoples on the island of Cyprus: the Greeks, who are Greek Orthodox, and the Turks, who are Muslims. And that means that you have a divided society at its very, very foundation. What that means is... Leave aside democracy, and equality, and non-discrimination, and all those principles associated with democracy. Division is a device for Turkey to meddle. Division is a device for the sovereignty of the Republic to be undermined. And division is a device in an excuse for Turkey to seek, to assert presence here in Cyprus. I want people to listen to this carefully. There is a massive amount of discussion about the Treaty of Guarantee. I haven't yet encountered, and I may be wrong, I haven't yet encountered much discussion about the Treaty of Alliance, which of course is arguably discredited and is a dead letter. But that's the treaty that gives, under 1960 version of the treaty, Greece the right to station 950 troops, and Turkey the right to station 650 troops. And what these two treaties do is they internationalize bi-communalism. So you have the internationalization of bi-



communalism. And also, this is crucial, the imposition of external actors on the landscape of the Republic.

**C.P.:** In the Cyprus case it's the negation of the nation-state. It is the invention or the process of inventing a bi-national state. Would you agree that that's accurate?

**K.K.:** Well, bi-national and bi-faith.

**C.P.:** Fine. But bi-national, where the nationhood is defined in certain conditions, in this case it has a religious element in it, sure, because the churches both in the north and in the south are established churches. In the end of the day that's the point of the argument: is it two peoples, or is it two communities of a single society? And that's a leap of faith in some ways. I hate to end on that note, I'll give you a chance, I have still the stench of segregation in my nostrils, I want to get away from it.

**K.K.:** I've been influenced by reading the works of Thurgood Marshall and Martin Luther King, who were the two leading civil rights advocates in the United States of America. Thurgood Marshall made a simple but telling point: the only way you can attack segregation, is to attack segregation. Now, I'm not in favor of violence, but what we do require in the Republic of Cyprus is a non-violent campaign against the segregation, that flows from the principle of bi-communalism, and the principle of bi-zonality. Everybody in this island needs to read their history to understand what these two concepts are, what these two concepts entail, why they are so dangerous, and why they need to be dismantled. And, what is also needed is a campaign, an equivalent to the denazification campaign that was introduced in Germany after 1945. Instead of funding bi-communal projects, which is what the Americans and the Europeans have been doing now for many, many years, instead of funding bi-communal projects that freeze and perpetuate the bi-communal division of citizens, what the Americans and the Europeans should start doing is introducing de-bi-communalization programs, so that we can introduce the principles of liberal democracy, so we can educate the public and explain to them: What is the rule of law? Why does it help you? Why does it help a cohesive society? And we also need to instill the principles of ethics, and humanity, and the Enlightenment in this part of the world. Remember, history is really important here. When the Enlightenment was gathering pace in Europe and in North America, Cyprus was under the boot of the Ottoman Empire. When the processes of democratization were gradually unfolding in the United Kingdom in late 19th century and the 20th century, Cyprus was under the boot of the British. And all of the sudden in the 1960s there was this sudden emergence of a Republic of Cyprus that was called democratic. But if you look behind the label, it wasn't democratic, it was deeply divided and the citizens hadn't really understood or cherished the meaning of democracy, and the meaning of the rule of law. We didn't even have a university in the Republic of Cyprus until the early 1990s. And therefore, what we've ended up with is an intellectually impoverished society. Now, we have lots of educated people in Cyprus, but I'm talking about the society as a whole. This is an intellectually impoverished society. The impoverishment is a product of imperialism, and the impoverishment has given rise to an unacceptable consequence, which is a lack of affinity with the principles of democracy and the rule of law. And as a result of that it's so much easier for the leader-led process at the top to try and manipulate people into accepting bi-communalism and bi-zonality. Because the people don't have centuries of Enlightenment, and centuries of democratization to tap into, to say to themselves: this is wrong, this is unacceptable, both in terms of its secretive procedure, and in terms of its prospective substantive outcome.

**C.P.:** We don't have democratic anti-bodies to resist. So would be fair to say that people who live on this island and at the crossroads now, they have to choose between a bi-national state, which is in most historical experiences such a thing that doesn't work, because you can't reconcile the essence, the demands of different nations within a single state. Although the multinational empires did work, but Cyprus is not a multinational empire. But at any rate, the very critical point that they have to choose is between individual rights and human rights, and their dignity, and perhaps something else, something darker.

**K.K.:** Christodoule, you've said, or you've claimed that Cyprus is at crossroads. Well, it certainly is at the crossroads geographically, but I would rather put it in these terms: the citizens of the Republic of Cyprus are standing on the edge of a cliff. And when you stand on the edge of a cliff, you should remember Aesop's fables. And there's a reason why we were taught Aesop's fables at school, and that's because Aesop's fables contain a number of morals and principles that should guide us throughout life. Aesop told us: look before you leap.

**C.P.:** On that note, thank you very much for joining us. Klearche, thank you very much, and we hope you can join us next time. Thank you.

---

## DISCUSSION\*

---

Aris Petasis\*\*

26 January 2016

### The Economic Dimensions of a Cyprus Settlement

*Dr. Petasis questions the reasonableness of the optimistic economic predictions put forth as a likely result of the bi-communal bi-zonal federal Cyprus settlement and raises the fears that the instability inherent in such a settlement will result in serious economic and other problems for Cyprus and its people.*

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** Good afternoon and welcome to our discussion on the economic dimensions of the Cyprus settlement. This evening we have with us, once again, Dr. Klearchos Kyriakides, Head of our own institute's Law and Democracy Program, and Dr. Aris Petasis, an expert in international business management. Just before I start, I have to say that all parties here speak at their own individual capacity, and not on behalf of any organization which they belong to. Gentlemen, we hear that a peace-dividend is at hand, if only we can solve the Cyprus problem. What's your response?

**Aris Petasis (A.P.):** First of all, let me thank ERPIC for inviting me to the program. I hope we can give some valuable information to our viewers. Now, the peace-dividend. I read the reports in which an attempt is made to basically beautify the bi-communal bi-zonal solution as being to the economic benefit of the people, but I do have these major observations on the whole exercise. In my capacity as a consultant I know one thing, that if I go to my clients and I give them anything which does not rest on logical and sound assumptions, they will not take my work seriously. So I'm afraid this exercise on the peace-dividend sits on some airy fairy assumptions that don't make any sense, basically.

**C.P.:** Let me ask you specifically. We are not going to refer to any particular report per se, but there have been a number of reports, and they all are done by reputable people, they're done by economists and so on, and the end result is, as far as they're calculating, that there are certain benefits flowing out of a settlement. And I'll give you some examples, and you can comment on them. First of all, there will be a compensation for the refugees, a compensation either of return to their properties, or cash compensation. So there will be a cash infusion, let's say, into the economy. That's one thing. Then, because of the peace, there will be, as predicted, large foreign

\* Transcript

\*\* Founder and CEO, Aris Petasis & Associates Ltd

investments, both institutional investments, but also from the general public. A third one is a foreign debt reduction, because there are suggestions and promises by both the European Community and other parties, including Turkey, suggesting that they will give the new federal government a stipend in the form of a reduction of debts. More than that, they have suggested that there will be an equalization of the two communities, an economic equalization. In addition, there's going to be a huge trade boom. The huge market of Turkey will open for the Cypriot businesses, both in the north and in the south. And also on the horizon is the hydrocarbon bonanza. So all of these things will happen faster, more efficiently, because of the settlement.

**A. P.:** Well I don't know where to start, because you have put forward plenty of hay on our fork. I'll start with the compensation. All the reports that have been written, have been challenged by me through articles in the press. I asked them to give me the assumptions under which they're working. Because any study in our area rests on assumptions. If you assume for example that the government is going to be run by vetoes, that's one assumption. If you assume that the government's going to run freely based on democratic principles like all the countries in the European Union, especially the Western European countries, it is another story altogether.

**C.P.:** So basically you're raising the question of whether the political system is going to be efficient and run efficiently or not, and that's one of the qualifications that you put down, right?

**A.P.:** You either have democracy and you've got a good economy, or you have partition called "bi-zonal" and you don't have an economy, that's my understanding of things. Now, compensations. The reports usually avoid the issue of compensations, and they say that this is not part of the scope of the study. Why do they avoid it? They avoid it because the numbers don't tally. If you take the occupied areas in where the Turkish state - because there is not going to be a Turkish Cypriot state, there is going to be a Turkish state - so what the Turkish state will have, it will have roughly 3,000 square kilometers of land under its own jurisdiction. Just think of 3,000 square kilometers of land, and starting the compensation of the owners. The moment you get into that, we are talking about 40, or maybe even 50 billion euros of compensation.

**C.P.:** But doesn't it depend on the value that's going to be ascribed to the exchange of properties and so on? It's not just compensation; if you remember, there are twenty two categories of ownership that we are discussing.

**A.P.:** Let's not confuse ourselves with categories. The issues are very simple. In the occupied area 90% of the properties belong to the Greek Cypriots. That's end of it.

**C.P.:** I didn't know it was that high.

**A.P.:** Absolutely. 70% of private property, but 90% of property including church property belongs to the Greek Cypriots. So we are talking about 90% of 3,000 square kilometers to be compensated. I don't think anyone can compensate this. Now, if we come to the free areas, controlled by the government, roughly 80% of the property belongs to Greek Cypriots, and 20% belongs to Turkish Cypriots. So even if you have an exchange, figures don't tally. That's why all these studies avoid this issue, they don't make these assumptions that I told you, of how they are going to be the compensations, and how they're going to value the land. So if we take the median value of land in the free territories, versus the median value of the new Turkish

territory, then you will see that any sensible calculation will not be less than 40 billion, which is roughly 200% of the combined GDP of the free areas plus the occupied areas.

**C.P.:** But the one suggestion is that there is going to be grants from international organizations, there are going to be grants from the United States, and so people are going to give us money in order to implement the settlement. Will that not be enough to cover the difference? You are suggesting that it won't.

**A.P.:** When we start talking about countries coming and giving us money free, I think we live in a Cloud Cuckoo Land, because last time we needed 8 billion euros to keep our banking system on its feet...

**Dr Klearchos Kyriakides (K.K.):** This is back in 2013 you are talking about.

**A.P.:** Yes, back in 2013. And we didn't get the single penny. When the (*unclear*) was here, and he was trying to promote, with all sorts of propaganda, the Annan Plan, he went to the donor's conference, and he managed to get I think 67 million or 65 million euros as pledges. So the moment you hear that somebody pledges 67, assume 7, because the other 60 will never come. So in other words, if somebody is saying that the American government will go to Congress - because you need congressional approval - and will tell them that Cyprus wishes to have an anomaly, and they are asking us to pay for the anomaly, and the American Congress will come and give money to the American government to compensate us... At this moment as we talk now, there are 80,000 veterans from Iraq that are homeless and living under bridges.

**C.P.:** What about the International Monetary Fund?

**A.P.:** The IMF is business; it is not to give money. Their business is to lend money to countries that are in distress.

**C.P.:** So let it lend us money.

**A. P.:** And who's going to pay it back? Let's go back to the lending, let's get our sums right. At this particular moment the free areas of Cyprus have debts to the tune of 18 billion euros. 7.5 billion euros were taken from the social security fund, they are not going to be repaid. So that's debt also. So we owe now...

**C.P.:** Who is "we"? The Republic of Cyprus?

**A.P.:** The Republic of Cyprus owes 18 billion. That amounts to about 110% of GDP, because our GDP is roughly 17 billion. I've got a note here that I can read for you. The "minister of finance" of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" ("TRNC") - because they have budgets there also, which are subsidized by Turkey - says that in his calculation the occupied areas owe Turkey 7.5 billion dollars from loans. But we know for a fact that Turkey subsidizes 30% of the operational costs of the Turkish occupied areas, for the last forty one years. In my calculation that's 12 billion.

**C.P.:** But that's in the shape of a loan, or was it just hand outs?

**A.P.:** The "TRNC" receives two types of money from Turkey. It receives what they call aid, which Turkey does not want back, and they receive loans to sustain the civil service. So as long as you have loans to sustain the civil service for forty one, forty two nearly years, it amounts to 12 billion. So if you're going to add now 18 billion that we owe, and let's just discount it to 10

billion, it makes 28 billion. The gross domestic product of the two areas now is 20, so we're talking about roughly 180% of GDP, which is an amount no country can repay. Greece owes now 175% of GDP. Now, I've got to add something else. Turkey has built all the infrastructure of the occupied areas. That means they built the roads, they built the hospitals, they built schools, administration buildings and so on. Now, we did the same here. How did we build it in the free areas? We went to the Kuwait Development Fund, they lent the money to us, and we repaid it. Now, instead of going to Kuwait, they went to Turkey. So I'm just asking a legitimate question. Will Turkey donate all the infrastructure work that they have done?

**K.K.:** Can we just go back to basics. Turkey invaded Cyprus contrary to international law, it ethnically cleansed the northern parts of Cyprus contrary to international law, it has occupied Northern Cyprus for forty one years contrary to international law, and it has segregated Cyprus for forty one years contrary to international law. Is Turkey going to pay any reparations for breaking international law for forty one years?

**A.P.:** No one from the Greek Cyprus government's side has ever raised the question of reparations.

**K.K.:** Why not?

**A.P.:** They have not raised it, because they're scared to raise it.

**K.K.:** And why are they scared to raise it?

**A.P.:** Because they have so many other issues to deal with, that they don't want to "complicate" the issue even more. But that tells you of the whole situation, of the whole ambience of the negotiations: that we are scared to ask for reparations, the moment we know that every single aggressor has to pay the victims reparations in any arrangement. It has never been brought up.

**C.P.:** But the settlement doesn't indicate they are aggressors. It goes beyond that. It's a goodwill settlement for the future, it's not looking back. At least that's the philosophy of the settlement that was given to me to understand. And therefore, that is why the reparations and other things are not part of this: it's the euphoria of the future, not to destroy that.

**A.P.:** Yes, but we have victims here, and the aggressors. We have 200,000 people that for the last forty years are not getting anything from their properties.

**C.P.:** Do you think it's realistic to look forward to such an euphoria without dealing with some of the problems of the past, and some of the baggage that will be carried into the future with unresolved issues?

**A.P.:** I think that the current numbers are more than enough to scatter any attempt for a bi-zonal solution in the way they're trying to get it. Because simply numbers do not add up. And if the numbers do not add up, it means that the whole exercise is not viable.

**K.K.:** You have mentioned number of statistics. I'm not an economist, and I'm always skeptical when I hear statistics. But I have to ask a very important question: how much transparency is there in the so-called leader-led process in Nicosia? How much documentation has been brought into the public domain? How many sets of accounts have been produced? How much information is there to enable simply with your expertise, as an ordinary citizen, to inspect what is going on, so that we can ascertain the economic picture that could unfold in the event

of a settlement?

**A.P.:** As regards our figures here in the free Cyprus, there is no doubt that they are correct. As regards the occupied areas, we have to do triangulation and look into different sources: the sources that are coming out of the budget of the Turkish occupied regime, figures that come out of independent, so to speak, statistical agencies, and figures that come from reports, such as the latest report from Agence France-Presse. If you do a triangulation, you can see whether the figures tally. I am happy that the figures they are issuing are more or less in the same direction, including in the peace dividend report, they give the records that we were able to secure via the internet and other sources.

**K.K.:** Have the “two leaders” in Nicosia produced any sets of accounts, or any documents from the peace process to enable citizens to assess the prospective picture?

**C.P.:** We don’t even know how many people live in the north

**K.K.:** Do we know how many people live in the north? Do we know the assets or liabilities of the illegal regime?

**A.P.:** The number of people - I have to check that because of the per capita income issues and the equalizing the two economies, and rationalizing them and so on and so forth. I saw in the official Turkish-occupied government report that the census which they carried out in 2012, in what they call the major towns, I tallied the numbers, and they said that they had in 2012 200,000 residents in these six towns. They’ve got dozens and dozens of villages also. So, when the current negotiators came up with the number the other day saying that they will assume that only 200,000 live in the Turkish areas, occupied areas, how do they compare with the official figures of 200,000 in only six towns?

**C.P.:** The negotiators mentioned the figure?

**A.P.:** Yes, it was public. But I counted 200,000 in only seven towns. So what about the rest?

**C.P.:** But part of the negotiation is that number of settlers will be accepted... I’m not familiar with what you are talking about.

**A.P.:** I am familiar with that. These are residents, official residents of the occupied areas, “legal residents”. Also in the statistical analysis that some of the independent studies issue, they mention the figure of 300,000. I have not seen any other figure in terms of total being less than 300,000. Our negotiators keep talking about 200,000. I think it is all part of the exercise not to frighten people.

**K.K.:** This is important, because in Davos the other day Mr. Akinci spoke about the formation of a “new partnership” - this is one of their favorite phrases: partnership. A partnership of two communities. In business, or in law, before you enter into any partnership, you need to conduct proper due diligence measures, in accordance with the Latin Maxim *caveat emptor* - let the buyer beware. So it’s very important in my view that there needs to be full transparency, so that the citizens of the Republic of Cyprus know exactly what sort of entity they’re going to enter into partnership with. So I come back to the question of transparency. How much draft legislation has been published? Do we know what draft legislation is being drafted on matters such as for example: banking law, financial services law, the structures of economic governance, the regulation of banks and the financial services industry, the regulation of the insurance

industry? How are these massive parts of the economy going to be regulated? And has the draft legislation been published?

**A.P.:** Certainly it has not been published. Clearly, we live in darkness. I understand that the counterpart in the occupied areas spent seven hours presenting and explaining to the so-called parliament what's going on, and then he went into civil societies and explained the thing. Nothing has been done here on our side.

**C.P.:** So they are more transparent in the north than they are in the south?

**A.P.:** Significantly more transparent, because they have something good to tell them. But we don't have anything good to say.

**K.K.:** So we are seeing a secret process taking place with a view to the dissolution of the Republic of Cyprus and its replacement with three states: a federal state, a Greek Cypriot constituent state and a Turkish Cypriot constituent state. And there is no transparency as regards the legislation that is being drafted on matters as important as banking, tax, financial services...

**C.P.:** I think it's a little bit too soon though, because in all fairness, they are not talking about legislation at the moment, they are discussing the general parameters. They haven't even begun the process of constitutional drafting. This is haggling at the moment, and making a deal. They're still in the process of making a deal. We need to be fair. They haven't come up with any specific legislation, or constitutional provisions. I would expect that once the haggling is over, and once the deal is cut, then they will move into the process of committing the agreement to paper in terms of constitutional provisions, legislation and so on. And that process then, if that will be done democratically - that's an open question. I'll tell you why - because properly you would have all of that done before you have a referendum, or at least a lot of it done, at least the skeleton part, so that people understand what it's all about, so that they understand the fine print. If you jump it and you do it the opposite way, you haggle over an agreement which is secret for the most part, or some of its provisions are secret. And then you go to a referendum on the climate. Again, to be fair, referenda weren't invented in Cyprus. Wherever they do it, again, they create a climate. And it's usually the climate of "yes" or "no", the positive or negative climate that carries the day.

**A.P.:** So what does that mean?

**C.P.:** I'm saying it's important to have these things, but unfortunately the suggestion is that it's not going to happen.

**K.K.:** Can I just ask a naive question? We're talking about the peace dividend and all of this money that's going to be pumped into Cyprus in the event of a settlement. Will any foreign investor who want to know for example what is going to be the tax code in this entity that I'm being invited to pump money into? What is going to be financial services regulatory framework? These matters should be in the public domain.

**C.P.:** Just to take a page out of the European process. If you remember the whole process of the constitutional restructuring of Europe, and the European unification, there was a constitutional conference, there was a draft etc., and then people either said yes or no, in terms of referenda, in terms of parliamentary processes, and so on. I agree with you, I'm just saying that the



suggestion that the referendum is going to happen real fast, and very fast after the haggling is over, and the secret haggling, is a bad news.

**A.P.:** I have never seen any person that has good news to hide it. I've seen plenty of people that have terrible news, that live in darkness and keep everybody in darkness. So all these hidden negotiations, all this absence of sunlight on this process doesn't augur well.

**K.K.:** Can I just ask you a question? Let's just take tax legislation, or financial services legislation for these three states that are going to come into existence. Is this legislation going to be drafted before the referendum, and presented to the public as a *fait accompli*, or there will be a referendum that creates these three new states, and then hope for the best, and then draft the three sets of legislation.

**A.P.:** I don't know. But if the Annan Plan is any guide, which was nine thousand pages, and it was thrown at us, and we were given a couple of weeks to read nine thousand pages, if you give these to any independent fair-minded person and tell him that somebody threw at the common man of Cyprus nine thousand pages that was done in secrecy, and ask him to vote, he will tell you that this is... But I must answer the question on the investment.

**C.P.:** Let's stay one minute on the Annan Plan. A lot of the material that was agreed on, or drafted for the Annan Plan, my understanding is that it's going to be grafted onto this new settlement, if the settlement goes through. A lot of the nine thousand pages, again to be fair, was technical stuff that you're going to have anyway.

**K.K.:** It still needs to be in the public domain and subject to line-by-line scrutiny.

**C.P.:** I agree. But what is sometimes that we bring forward, and I think that's an important thing to think about, is the intentions. If there are good intentions in our politicians and our leaders, you have to credit them with good intentions – they are trying to do the good thing, or the right thing. The question is, if they are trying to do the right thing, why so much secrecy?

**K.K.:** I have a very important question which deals with the secrecy. I don't know what's going on in secret, all I know is that there is a secrecy. If there's a settlement, the likelihood is, I may be wrong and I hope I'm wrong, but if there is a settlement, the likelihood is that this secrecy we're seeing at present is going to spill over into the new state of affairs. We know from history that when you have secrecy, you have corruption, or the increased risk of corruption. Can you comment on the inter-linkage between secretive governance and corruption, and allied to that, the degree to which this new state of affairs will be exposed to the risk of corruption?

**A.P.:** First, let me go back to the investment. Christodoulos raised the question at the very beginning of the exercise, saying that plenty of investments will be pouring into Cyprus. I presume we're talking about international investments. The only system that looks like the one that they are trying to market in this country, is the Bosnian constitution. Bosnia can be a fantastic reference as regards what we call foreign direct investment (FDI), which is a figure of money coming in, but not including deposits in financial things because that's what the investment, is just depositing the bank. Bosnia in the last ten years on average had FDI of 200 million - that's a cost of an expensive building, and nothing more, nothing less. Cyprus that is still operating as a republic, had half a billion in the last year. There are 195 countries in the world now that the businessman can invest in. So I am asking the question: this shrewd businessman that relies on statistics, and data, and political risk assessment - will he go to a

country that will be run with vetoes, that will be partitioned, that will have two ministers deciding...

**K.K.:** ...three ministers.

**A. P.:** Three ministers, precisely. It will have three internal affairs ministers, and so on and so forth. We have forty five municipalities, they have twenty nine, so if you add them, we are talking about eighty municipalities for a population of one million, roughly. Greater Chicago, which is about eight million, has one municipality. So, who is going to come in his right mind to invest money in a deadlocked economy, where you will have vetoes? If somebody tells me that the vetoes are there, but they will not be exercised, I say: if they are not to be exercised, let's not put them into the agreement. The vetoes are there because they are intended to be exercised.

**K.K.:** Just to clarify for everyone to understand. Again, if the Annan Plan is any guide, we will have, depending on how you calculate it, four or five levels of government in an island with a population of no more than one million or so. You'll have the three branches of government in the Greek Cypriot constituent state, the three branches of government in the Turkish Cypriot constituent state, the three branches of government in the federal state, you'll have the three sets of public sectors across the three states, you'll have the organs of government in the two British sovereign base areas, and underneath all of this you'll have municipal government. I'll come back to corruption later, but this is a bloated state of affairs in the making. Who's going to pay for it and how much is it going to cost? How much is it going to cost to pay for these structures, to operate three public sectors, and who is going to pay for it?

**A.P.:** I think that more important than the cost is the dysfunctionality which is more than the cost, because now Cyprus rates 110 out of 164 countries in terms of ease to do business and to get through things. Let me give you an example. The other day a foreign investor came and said: if you give me state land to the tune of 450 acres, I'm going to invest 2 billion in Cyprus. Let's assume now that we have a bi-zonal solution, and this same foreign investor comes to invest 2 billion dollars, and he wants the government to give him 450 acres. Let me tell you what's going to happen. The first thing that will happen is that the occupied area which will then become the Turkish state, will say: no, we're not going to allow you to get land as long as you're going to get it there, in the Greek sector; we won't allow you, we will veto it. If you want to build a project of two billion, you come to our side, otherwise we will not give you a permit, because we are competing.

**C.P.:** I think we are overstepping it a little bit, because decisions of this type, from what I understand, will be able to be made by the two separate states, and therefore in answer to your question, in terms of investment, let's say, or building property on private land...

**A. P.:** This is not a private land, this is a state land. 460 acres of state land. I am giving you a practical case from yesterday.

**C.P.:** But I'm not talking about this case, I don't know about this case. I am suggesting to you, that one of the countries that will invest, and people will invest, will be Turkey. Turkey has proven that it wants to invest, and has invested very heavily in the north. It will continue to do so. Now, another side to the three governments and how many other municipalities, the EU regulations will still be accepted by the federal government and defined the activities of the federal government, but also of the two state governments. So that's another positive issue.

Again, why would somebody come to invest? Because with the peaceful resolution of the disputes in the region Cyprus can have good relations with Turkey, you know, doors will be open.

**A. P.:** Whose doors will be open? Our doors or Turkey's doors?

**C.P.:** Well, that's for you to tell us, because I'm just repeating some of the suggestions that are put forward, that should be convincing, and are convincing a lot of people. Are they wrong, are they misled? This is part of what we should be trying to do today.

**C.P.:** I have written an article on this issue of Turkey versus Cyprus investment in case of a solution and so forth. Assuming that everything goes well, which is not going to go well, that's an a priori statement. Turkey's minimum wage now stands at 424 euros. Cyprus' minimum wage stands at 942 euros. So there is a difference of 500 euros. I give you the minimum wage, because it is indicative of many things. So I'm asking: who is going to export to whom? Is the country of a minimum wage of 424 euros going to be more expensive than the country with 924 euros, or the opposite? What I'm assuming is that Turkey will either invade the market here, and will knock out anyone that has to do with clothing, with shoes, with whatever it is, that can be produced mass production of consumer goods. Now, let's go to agriculture. Turkey has piped in water which they are not sharing yet cause of many considerations, and Turkey's export in agricultural products, if I remember well, is roughly 50 billion of agricultural products. Turkey is a powerhouse in agriculture. So are we going to be able to compete with Turkish agricultural products the moment our cost of production is twice or three times the cost of production of Turkey? The answer is: no. We would become net importers. Agriculture requires three things: cheap water, which Turkey has and we don't have; cheap labor which Turkey has and we don't have; any lots of cheap land which Turkey has and we don't have. So, two industries, manufacturing and agriculture will be wiped out the next morning. So all these stories about opening up the Turkish market is all propaganda. When China opened up about twenty five years ago, somebody who is manufacturing clothes in Cyprus came to me and said: "We have good news for Cyprus: China's market is being opened - he said - and I expect one of every hundred Chinese to be wearing a Cypriot shirt". So I told him that I suspect that every other Cypriot will be wearing a "made in China" shirt. So twenty five years later we don't have a single shirt exported to China, because it's cheaper there to produce, and we are all wearing made in China shirts, except the aristocrats.

**K.K.:** Are you suggesting that if there is a "peace dividend", that Turkey will be the primary beneficiary?

**A. P.:** Of course. Another argument that they throw out, which is really laughable, is saying that we are going to get an exchange of tourism from Turkey. I think that's ludicrous. Because if a tourist were to decide between Cyprus and Turkey, and then spend one day between his holidays visiting the other country, he is going to go to the big country, and spend fifteen days, and maybe take a boat to come and have lunch in Cyprus for a day. So therefore, even the tourists that we are getting are more likely to go to Turkey, because they don't have to spend fifteen days to see Cyprus, they can see Cyprus over couple of days. But if they go to Turkey, they need months before they can see Turkey. So they have a better product, they have cheaper services, they have better packages. So I'm just saying, if its open as they say, the tourism flow, will be in the direction of Turkey or our?

**K.K.:** As we are discussing Turkey. I mentioned corruption earlier, maybe we will come back to this. I have in front of me here the transparency international overview of corruption and anti-corruption in Turkey, published in the year 2014. And among other things transparency international report says, that: "Turkey faces high levels of corruption. Accordingly the government has taken steps to reduce corruption in the country. However, despite limited progress, the country continues to be confronted with challenges of rampant corruption and existing antique corruption measures are still in question." Interestingly, the report adds: "One of the main criticisms is the lack of a coordinated and strategic approach to anti-corruption. There is also an absence of transparency and accountability in the political system, as embodied in the immunity regulations for high-ranking officials." The question therefore is: if there is a settlement, and if a post-settlement Cyprus is integrated economically with Turkey to a far greater extent than the Republic of Cyprus is at present. Is the post-settlement Cyprus going to be exposed to the contamination that will flow from the corruption that is rampant in Turkey?

**A.P.:** My quick answer is: yes. Because when we have one supposedly unitary state, all these assessments done by central banks and by all sorts of bodies, they take the country as a whole, they don't take parts or towns of the country. In other words they are not going to say that there is corruption in Nicosia, but not in Limassol. So when the Global Competitive Index comes here to study, they are going to study Cyprus. When the transparency international comes, they are going to study Cyprus; they are not going to study a unit of Cyprus. Therefore, if one of the two units is corrupt, it is going to carry in the corruption processes to the other unit, whether we like it or not. Today there are absolutely no rules as regards the banking of the Turkish-occupied areas. Ours is collapsed. So who's going to control the banks? Is it going to be one central bank that will take directions from the...

**C.P.:** Well, surely, that's what's supposed to happen.

**A.P.:** It is supposed to happen. You know what they say? If there is one central bank - first of all they don't want one central bank, they want two - but if there is one central bank, there should be two governors of the banks.

**K.K.:** Deadlock.

**A.P.:** Deadlock. And in deadlock the powerful side, which will be Turkey basically, calls the shots.

**C.P.:** But if it's under euro, and the euro will be on both sides, then it is the European Central Bank which essentially rules, because at the end of the day the countries' central banks are just executing, more or less...

**A.P.:** So can you please get somebody explain to me the moment we were under the European Central Bank, how come we ended up bankrupting the whole financial system without the Central Bank of Europe getting an idea before that happened?

**C.P.:** Well supposedly they are learning from their mistakes.

**A.P.:** I can guarantee you that the banks in the occupied areas, when they become Turkey proper, they're going to link up with Turkish banks. They are not going to have anything to do with us. They will either become subsidiaries, or outlets of Turkish banks.

**K.K.:** This underlines my point of a few moments ago. We need to have the draft constitutional and legislative instruments in the public domain, so we can see how the banks are going to be regulated, how they're going to be overseen, how the financial services authorities are going to function, how the ombudsman is going to function. For me this is extremely serious, and it's an illustration of why Cyprus is really not a proper democracy, because we are operating, from what I can see, this secrecy is deeply troubling. And if they're operating in secret before a settlement, is this giving us an insight into the secrecy that may flourish after a settlement? And if so, to take it one step further, is secrecy a friend or enemy of corruption?

**A.P.:** Secrecy is the greatest friend of corruption. Because whenever you have a crime, you try to control it by not letting out any information, and the cover-up and so on and so forth. Because of the various secretcies that were happening in this country, we got our economic system into such a great trouble, because nobody was telling anything to anyone about what was happening.

**K.K.:** I will repeat a question I had before: in the secret negotiations in Nicosia, are they composing freedom of information legislation? Will there be a constitutional guarantee of freedom of information? Will there be a freedom of information act built into the settlement?

**A.P.:** My quick answer would be that how can a body that is as secretive as the Masons, be open later?

**K.K.:** We don't know because we are kept in the dark.

**C.P.:** In all fairness to the Masons, the secrecy is in the negotiating process. I don't think you can guarantee that there will be secrecy built into the political system. That's a bridge too far I think for us to come to that conclusion.

**A.P.:** But only one side is secretive; the other side is not secretive. The other side shares with its constituents everything that is happening here.

**K.K.:** If you just have a look at the transparency international list of corrupt, or perceived corrupt regimes, right at the bottom is North Korea, which is the most secretive society on earth. Towards the top I think is Sweden. Sweden has, if I am not mistaken, one of the oldest freedom of information legislation in the world. So there is a simple equation: transparency equals less corruption, secrecy equals more corruption. I ask Mr Ryder and Mr Akinci, and Mr Anastasiades to make a statement tomorrow or next week, clarifying whether or not there's going to be a constitutional guarantee of freedom of information built into the constitution, and if not, is there going to be a freedom of information act governing all three states, or to put it another way, will there be three freedom of information acts? That for me is going to be the key to whether or not there's going to be transparency in the new state of affairs.

**C.P.:** But certainly, the Turkish Cypriots will guarantee, since they are more transparent and democratic than the Greek side, they would certainly guarantee that that would happen (I'm just joking).

**A.P.:** They are free with information because they have good news to tell to the people. Our side is not free with information because they have horrible news to tell people.

**C.P.:** Let me switch tag for a second because we are running out of time. Margaret Thatcher said that the only peace dividend is peace. Even if you take away all the possibility and

economic benefits, and all of that, isn't it enough that we have peace? Isn't that good enough to have a settlement?

**A. P.:** You can have peace in many ways. You can be subjugated, and have peace. You can come under the control of a foreign aggressor, and have peace, if you are silent. You can separate the country into two entities and keep quiet about the country that doesn't work, and you can have peace. And you can have peace and the liberal democracy. So if we have peace in the way that Sweden has peace, the way that Norway has a peace, the way that the England has peace, yes. but if we're going to have peace because we're going to sign a surrender instrument, where we deliver lock, stock and barrel of the Republic of Cyprus, and all the rights of the people that have been here for the last three and a half thousand years, than thank you very much, I don't want that kind of peace.

**C.P.:** Yes. And you would agree we shouldn't trade freedoms for economic benefits that are never going to come.

**K.K.:** Can I come in here, there are two important points I want to make. Firstly, you've mentioned freedom. Bi-zonality is the antithesis of freedom, because bi-zonality rests on the formation of two zones, and zone is inextricably associated with restriction. So I just put it in the form of a question: how can you have a free market, how can you have free trade, how can you have free movement of persons with bi-zonality? So straight away bi-zonality negates freedom. But the second point I will make and close my contribution to the discussion with this thought. We mentioned at the beginning the peace dividend. I have a law background and I always like to look at the origins of words that emerged from the lips of politicians and diplomats. And I looked at the origin of the word "dividend". And it has the same root as the word "divide". The root of the word dividend is the Latin verb *divider*, meaning "to divide". And that for me encapsulates what is philosophically wrong with bi-communal, bi-zonal federation: it's an instrument of division, and the peace dividend, if there is one, will result in the division of money. And that will produce deadlock.

**C.P.:** I think it's meant in the sense of share, in my view, as in "share of the dividend". But coming to sharing - we haven't mentioned the hydrocarbon issue, and that's the might in shining armor, that's going to come and rescue us all. What's your quick last comment on this?

**A.P.:** If there is democracy in Cyprus - and I don't see any democracy coming to Cyprus, I see division, and trouble, and all sorts of conflicts coming, with the Greek Cypriots basically leaving the country in due course - if there is democracy, yes, there's going to be a lot of money coming in from the energy resources of the island, eventually, because it's a very competitive area. But as things stand now, if we go forward with the bi-zonal settlement and become dependent on Turkey, we're not going to see any of the energy resources, everything will be controlled by Turkey. And Turkey will give us whatever it feels that we should have. We will not have control over the energy resources because of the vetoes, and that's a central government issue. Central government will be all vetoes.

**K.K.:** They don't call them vetoes. They didn't call them vetoes in the Annan Plan, if I am not mistaken. But in substance they are vetoes.

**A.P.:** With those vetoes that the occupied areas will have, the Turkish country - because it is going to be a Turkish territory from then on - they will never ever allow us to do anything which is sensible, which is meritocratic, or which is sound, unless Turkey approves it, because

they will throw in the vetoes. So let's assume that we're going to sell the energy resources to Egypt, for example. They will say: no, we should have a pipeline going to Turkey, and then from Turkey going to Europe. We say: no, we disagree. So we either have a stalemate and nothing happens, therefore we get nothing out of the energy resources, or we agree with their terms, and we send it to Turkey, and they will control the flow of all these financially rewarding resources that we will never be able to touch. Vetoes are going to paralyze the central government, and deliver us to Turkey, because Turkey will be making all the decisions. So we'll have two choices: either stalemate, meaning that we suffer, because we are not going to benefit from any revenues, or we accept Turkish conditions. I'm afraid, gradually, we will be accepting Turkish conditions, until we leave the island.

**C.P.:** So can we leave on the positive note, that if the peace dividend's components are democracy, freedom and justice, that would be a good thing in itself, and that would perhaps help an economic aspect of peace settlement. But that's not a guarantee.

**A.P.:** I'll give you few figures that will settle the case. Norway, which is a democracy, has per capita GDP of 67,000 euros. Bosnia, that is another Cyprus revisited, has 4,000, because they have bi-zonality. Lebanon that is run on vetoes, has 9,000. And Norway, that is a democracy, and Denmark, and Sweden, and the US, they have around 60,000. So that tells you: we either have a democracy and we have a high economic dividends, or we have a bi-zonal dividend and we get into poverty until we leave this place.

**C.P.:** Gentlemen, thank you very much.

**A.P.:** Thank you for inviting me.





---

## DISCUSSION\*

---

Gary Lakes\*\*

2 February 2016

### East Mediterranean Energy: A Discussion of Possibilities

*Gary Lakes shares his views on East Mediterranean gas developments. He argues that the lines for the energy battles of the Eastern Mediterranean have already been drawn and that East Med hydrocarbons development may not proceed without the resolution of serious problems such as the Turkey-Cyprus conflict over Cyprus EEZ and the Turkey-Greece conflict over Greece's future EEZ.*

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** Good afternoon and thank you again for joining us once again on ERPIC Live. Our discussion tonight focuses on Eastern Mediterranean energy. I have with me Dr. Klearchos Kyriakides, Head of our Rule of Law and Democracy Program, and Mr. Gary Lakes, Co-Director of our Energy Program. As usual, I need to remind everyone that all participants express their personal views. Gary, we've had some news over the weekend that there's a deal that was closed between Turkey and Israel regarding the sale of gas. Is this about the Turkish-Israeli gas pipeline that we've been hearing for so many months?

**Gary Lakes (G.L.):** No, that wasn't an agreement between Israel and Turkey, it was an agreement between Leviathan partners and the Edeltech, an Israeli company, and it was for the supply of gas to Israeli domestic market. The report you've seen that is connecting Turkey with this was erroneous. Edeltech has as a partner the Turkish company, Zorlu, and together they intend to build a power generation stations in Israel. I think this is the first contract that's been agreed for the supply of Leviathan to Israeli domestic market. That gas will be used to supply those facilities. The agreement is for six billion cubic meters over a period of 18 years, and the estimated value is 1.3 billion dollars. So that's what all this was about. It's not part of anything, any of the relationship, or reconciliation or whatever that's going on between Israel and Turkey.

**C.P.:** However, there are some developments on the sale of Israeli gas to Turkey, aren't there?

**G.L.:** Well there may be, I don't think there's anything out in the open. Relations between Israel and Turkey haven't really reached a point of normalcy yet. There may be discussions between the companies, there certainly has been lot of expressions of interest on both sides I believe,

\* Transcript

\*\* Journalist; Director, ERPIC Energy Program

but as far as any sort of agreement, I haven't seen any indication of that. Although there is always speculation and talk amongst those interested.

**C.P.:** Is this part of a developing conceptualization of what the regional energy industry is going to look like? The competing models, I suppose, the direction that the pipelines are going to take, the placement of the LNG facilities, if any, etc. Is there a context where the idea of a Turkish hub competes with the idea of an Egyptian hub, let's say?

**G.L.:** I don't think it's anywhere near that yet. You need a heck of a lot more gas than what has been discovered in the East Med for there to be several hubs. I think the idea that seems to be materializing, that the companies are working towards right now, is that in the region there is a demand for gas and for energy. And I think that the idea essentially is to use East Med gas to serve those regional markets. And so this will materialize in terms, as far as infrastructure is concerned, with more pipelines, like from Leviathan to Israel, to serve that market, also perhaps on to Jordan. I have seen reports that there is a deal very close between Leviathan and Egypt, whereby there would be gas going to the BG plant, which is going to be at Idku, which is going to be turned over to Shell very shortly, because Shell has purchased BG. Of course everybody is interested in the prospect of the possibility of an Israeli gas going to Turkey, and sometimes on the periphery of that there is the question - could Aphrodite gas, Cypriot gas wind up going through Turkey too. You know, there's no real clear indication of any of this yet because of political circumstances that exist within the region.

**C.P.:** But the planning for the Turkish corridor, lack of a better term, has been long in development. There is a number of years where several plans were being kept around, where you would have a number of Middle Eastern pipelines ending up near Ceyhan and then finding their way onto Europe. So it's not a new thing, but obviously the new developments in Eastern Med are new, and are perhaps affecting this. But how are they affecting, are they affecting it? You've got your finger on the pulse better than we do.

**G.L.:** The idea of Turkey being a hub for energy has been around for quite a long time. In the early nineties I remember writing a story about "Rotterdam on the Med", and that was in reference to Ceyhan, where regional oil and gas supplies would be directed towards Ceyhan, and from there it would go out to the markets. That idea's fallen away. Of course, there's the BTC from Azerbaijan which delivers crude oil, and there is, I think, Kurdish oil going now through Ceyhan as well. But if you are referring to the Turkish corridor, the plan of sending a gas pipeline from Leviathan...

**C.P.:** No, it's the general idea that it was going to be this hub receiving a lot of gas actually from Azerbaijan and elsewhere.

**G.L.:** Yeah, the Southern Corridor. That's going to materialize. The contracts are signed, construction should begin in due course.

**C.P.:** But that was scaled down at some point, or is it still going on?

**G.L.:** Oh yes, it's going ahead, it will carry 10 billion cubic meters of gas initially. There are plans ultimately to pump that up. The gas coming from Azerbaijan - Turkey will take 6 billion cubic meters (bcm) and 10 will go on to Europe through the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline. When you here mention of the East Med gas going to Turkey, I guess people are thinking that the East Med gas would hook up into this system and go to Europe. But personally I think that Turkey's

situation is such that any East Mediterranean gas, primarily from Israel, would stay in Turkey, because the market needs that. It's big, it's projected to grow. And also there are complications now with Turkey and Russia, which is its largest gas supplier.

**C.P.:** It's strange that Turkey itself has very few reserves. Kleachos, the other day you were commenting that you came across some material indicating that there was a...

**Klearchos Kyriakides (K.K.):** Yes, it's a very interesting declassified CIA memorandum dated 16th of July 1974 - this is a day after the coup here in Nicosia. The CIA comments: "The Turks have long been frustrated by seeing valuable oil reserves discovered near their borders in lands formerly part of the Ottoman Empire, while Turkey itself has had only minor success in finding oil in commercial quantities within its own boundaries."

**C.P.:** This is way before the East Mediterranean discoveries, so I guess the feeling must run even deeper that Turkey is sort of cut off from this, or will it be?

**K.K.:** What we know for certain is that the Ottoman Empire came crashing down at the end of the World War I, at the time when the oil industry was bubbling to life. And the territories that flaked away from the Ottoman Empire and fell initially into British and French hands and then became independent, were once...

**C.P.:** Did they just fall into the British and French hands, or was it a little bit more calculated?

**K.K.:** It is more complicated than that.

**C.P.:** Not complicated, but calculated.

**K.K.:** The historical point that's worth making is that the lands which used to be part of the Ottoman Empire ended up becoming major players in the oil industry.

**C.P.:** Perhaps one can say that one of the reasons for the breakup of the Ottoman Empire was exactly that - the discovery and exploitation of huge resources.

**K.K.:** And that must rankle with Turkey, as the CIA acknowledged in July 1974.

**G.L.:** Well, certainly now. There was a period when Turkish economy was doing much better than now, and demand was growing, and the Turks signed a lot of contracts, especially with Russia, even Turkmenistan, which has yet to materialize. But it's the circumstance of geology. It is a bit upsetting, I would imagine, if you need this energy...

**C.P.:** What is your view of developing situation between Russia and Turkey? The Russians, surprisingly, or perhaps not surprisingly, didn't cut off any energy supplies to Turkey, they wouldn't do that. Or would they?

**G.L.:** No, but they have put up the price to the Turks. They've refused to give them the discount they usually do. But it's a curious development with Russia and Turkey, and how it seemed that Mr. Putin and Mr. Erdogan were very much on the same tack for quite some time. And then this incident with the jet fighter happens, and it immediately falls away. And you have to wonder - what's behind it? Why has it been such a dramatic falling out?

**C.P.:** So in addition to all the other things that Turkey is taking into consideration, one would think it would push Turkey towards looking at the Eastern Mediterranean gas in addition to the

Iranian gas, oil, and other things. It would perhaps be more keen to enter into contracts for the Eastern Med gas? Or is there not enough, I mean, is the gas find still not sufficient? Everybody's talking about the potential revenue, potential huge industry, but is it...

**G.L.:** I think that Turkey's recently has been having talks with Azerbaijan to secure more supplies in future. They want to get gas supplies from Iraqi Kurdistan, from the Kurdish Regional Government. There were times they were talking about piping gas from Iran and piping gas from Qatar into Turkey.

**C.P.:** Now with Iran coming back, is that a possibility? What's the main export route for the Iranian oil and gas?

**G.L.:** With Iranian oil and gas, I think they send about 10 bcm a year to Turkey, also to Armenia, maybe a little to Azerbaijan.

**C.P.:** Is there a pipeline?

**G.L.:** There are pipelines, but sometimes the Iranians fail to meet those supply targets and because it's got its own domestic demand. Imagine now with the sanctions having been lifted, I think there's going to be a considerable amount of effort going into developing gas resources for domestic use.

**C.P.:** How large is Iran in comparison to Qatar, let's say?

**G.L.:** Iran shares the same reserve. In Qatar it is called the North Field, and Iranians call it South Pars, and that's located in the Persian Gulf. And so the maritime border runs through that and splits that in accordance with their maritime areas. The Iranians have drawn up a huge development plan for South Pars. And now that the sanctions are removed, they will be offering contracts. I've seen reports that they are very anxious to develop them quickly. And one of the things that Iran wants to do is, it's got a three stalled LNG projects, I think in total they are about forty million tons a year - that's quite a lot of LNG to come on. If it works, maybe in the early 2020s, it would be there. Of course the comments you see from the Iranians are a little bit more ambitious, but in practical terms...

**C.P.:** Have you come across any rumor plans of pipelines coming through Syria to the Med?

**G.L.:** I think there were, but all that stuff is put on hold. Prior to 2011 there were talks about oil pipelines to one of the Syrian towns on the Mediterranean. I mean, there's all kinds of ideas about how to ship and send oil and gas, but not all of them materialize.

**K.K.:** The reference to Syria has made me thinking. Can I just make two points? Firstly, unfortunately energy has formed the backdrop to at least three conflicts in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East that I can think of. One is the Suez Crisis of 1956, the second is the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, and the third is the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait. And that should put us on notice that there may be a bonanza flowing from the energy deposits here in the Eastern Mediterranean, but the potential bonanza must be counterbalanced with the ever-present risk of conflict.

**G.L.:** If you want to include the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, if that was all about oil, than you've got that factor too.

**K.K.:** It should make us pause and think carefully about how we deal with energy in this region.

And the second point I wanted to make specifically does concern Syria. This is an exceptionally dangerous part of the world. And energy security requires an energy security strategy. And then the energy security strategy must dovetail with a national security strategy. So the Republic of Cyprus, in my view, must have coherent, effective and transparent national energy and security strategies, which everyone understands and contributes towards.

**C.P.:** One thing that sets the Eastern Mediterranean energy industry apart is that it's an offshore industry rather than land-based. That kind of gives it a little bit of a different dynamic, because how do you control the maritime areas? I mean you control them in a different way, obviously. So it's a different set of geo-political or strategic considerations.

**G.L.:** Well, because it's offshore, defending those facilities is going to be a big concern. The Israelis have expressed this many times already, and I'm sure the Cypriots have given a good thought as well.

**C.P.:** At the beginning, when Noble was first drilling, Turkey was very annoyed, was present with its naval ships. In the view of the development of the last couple of years - do you do think that's dissipated, that's changed in any way, or is it just because there haven't been any other drillings?

**G.L.:** I don't think Turkey's position has changed much on that. I just think it's actually rather convenient that the circumstances aren't conducive for drilling right now. The talks are taking place at this time. You would have to wonder if there would be some sort of impact on the negotiations if drillings were under way.

**C.P.:** You think Turkey wouldn't back down? It does not seem that it would, there is no evidence, or is there?

**G.L.:** I don't know. It hasn't before, so it seems pretty adamant its position regarding the Eastern Med. I don't think that's going to be resolved until the Cyprus issue is resolved as well.

**C.P.:** So why is there no drilling? In view, especially, of the new Zohr discovery, you would expect everybody's would be rushing. Are they rushing?

**G.L.:** It has rekindled the interest of companies - the Zohr discovery.

**C.P.:** But certainly less than what it was supposed to.

**K.K.:** Can you just tell us where the Zohr discovery is?

**G.L.:** Zohr discovery is only just about six kilometers from Cyprus EEZ, from Bloc 11, which has been awarded to Total.

**C.P.:** Which Total wanted to leave, it wanted to abandon it before Zohr, and then it came back, right?

**G.L.:** It did relinquished Block 10, which was awarded in February 2013, and the Cypriot government persuaded Total to continue to look at things. And it was sort of touch-and-go, I don't think it was a great deal of enthusiasm until the Zohr discovery. And now Total has announced that it is planning to drill next September.

**C.P.:** They're talking about looking at a new model...

**G.L.:** All the gas discoveries that have taken place offshore in the Eastern Med so far have been in sandstone, and the Zohr discovery was made in carbonate built-up. So the geology is different. It's Eni that's made the discovery. So I think this may have something to do with Eni's explanation what has been a year and a half now, it was late 2014, when they pulled out of Block 9. They had a drilling plan for four wells. They drilled two dry holes instead. So it could be that that's what's happened. They've used a different economic model on Zohr and they've come up with this discovery. Now mind you, they initially announced 30 trillion cubic feet (tcf), they've since said it's about 16. But it's encouraging when you think that ENI will return to Cypriot waters and perhaps using this model, and try again and actually find something. So that's one thing to maybe look forward to regarding the Cypriot offshore. The point to make here on the Cyprus offshore, and I get the impression at times, you see that in the press and certainly in comments on some of the stories, that people are really rather cynical about Cyprus and its gas potential. But, there's only been four wells drilled here and there's the Aphrodite discovery well, and the appraisal well in Aphrodite, and the two dry holes in Block 9. I attended conferences here in Cyprus where representatives from Norway have said, "Well, listen we've drilled 50 wells or more."

**C.P.:** To put it into perspective - how many Israel has drilled?

**G.L.:** That led to some of the confusion there in Israel, you know, couple of years back when they were just basically giving the licenses away.

**C.P.:** So what's the timeline now for Eni and Total? We hear all sorts of things, but presumably you've got a better sense.

**G.L.:** Total wants to drill in September, they're preparing to try to meet that target. That's contingent on them having the facility here in Larnaca to an operations' base. If they don't have a based operate from, then this will push drilling back.

**C.P.:** What is the municipality's objection? One would think that any municipality would be jumping at the chance of becoming the new Aberdeen.

**G.L.:** It is supposed to be state of the art facilities, I haven't visited them, but there are supposed to be very nice facilities there.

**C.P.:** And people don't want them?

**G. L.:** There seems to be a tourism project.

**C.P.:** Oh, the competing project, yes.

**G.L.:** But Cyprus has got to provide a facility like this if it is really serious about developing its hydrocarbon industry.

**K.K.:** This reinforces my point. There needs to be an energy security strategy. It needs to be sketched out and drafted and published, so everyone can...

**C.P.:** But you can't get away from the population's response. In Israel for example for many years it was the environmental issue that they couldn't find the appropriate spot on the coast for facilities. After that they did.

**G. L.:** But it is going to remain an issue.

**C.P.:** It is going to remain an issue. In Cyprus it was originally felt that there was none of this public reaction, but it's proven wrong. And I think that a number of companies have come to regret their decision to move to Cyprus.

**G.L.:** To develop these reserves, there's got to be an operations space. Cyprus is a good place to have an operational space.

**C.P.:** Provided you get one. Could you see it being developed in the North?

**G. L.:** You mean without a settlement? I don't know. No, I don't see anything happening there without the settlement. You can't operate legally.

**C.P.:** Sure. So what are the plans for Aphrodite?

**G L.:** About a week ago BG finalized its farm-in to Block 12, it is taking 25% from Noble, I think it paid only 165 million for that.

**C.P.:** It was a good price.

**G.L.:** Seems like it.

**C.P.:** Why was Noble in such a hurry to sell it?

**G.L.:** I don't know if they were in a hurry, I think they were looking for a partner.

**C.P.:** Is that a good price for Noble?

**G.L.:** That's the price they sell. I can't understand why the BG would buy into Block 12 if they didn't have some intention of actually using the resource. And, of course, BG operates the LNG plant in Idku. BG will of course be taken over by Shell, but it seems that some reports I've seen say that Shell intends to make use of that facility, and you know, Leviathan gas is there to use, and hopefully Cypriot gas as well. Block 12 is waiting on a commercial agreement and we don't know if that's going to be for the LNG plant, for the Egyptian domestic use. And the government has seen the development plan. Noble has seemed to deliver a development plan to the Israeli government as well for Leviathan. It doesn't seem like there's a great deal happening right now.

**C.P.:** There is also a talk about an interim solution, or interim plan, that the Cypriots were looking at. But I'm not sure if that's going to happen either because of the low oil prices and the rest of it. This was supposed to bridge the gap between the time when Aphrodite was going to come online.

**G.L.:** You haven't heard much about this for quite some time. I mean, they need to discuss things, but I just don't know the status of that. It seems as if they don't divulge anything because they signed confidentiality agreements. But with the price of oil low now, it doesn't seem that electricity should be so difficult to...

**C.P.:** But everything is on hold, doesn't it, at the end of the day? Perhaps the only thing that has some potential is this underwater electrical power line. You saw that, it was part of the agreement that was signed when Mr. Netanyahu visited Cyprus. There is apparently a plan to connect Israel to Cyprus and Greece with an electrical power line, which I guess would be operated by gas, I mean the electricity would be generated by gas at some point, and you could

make better use of transport of energy that way. Isn't that cheaper? Rather than piping gas, you connect the sockets.

**G.L.:** I haven't seen actual estimates of the cost on that.

**C.P.:** But it got to be cheaper than dropping a pipeline, right?

**G.L.:** You mean with reference to the East Med gas pipeline? Yes, I think so.

**C.P.:** Connecting A to B, any A to B – isn't that cheaper to drop a cable, than to drop a pipeline?

**G.L.:** I don't know the exact cost of that but I think it would be. But also that project, it's the EurAsia Interconnector, and that's been around for quite a few years now. And it seems as if there's actually surveying the seabed to see if they can plan a route for that. And it's on the EU list of projects of common interest. So we will see. By 2017 a lot of things could begin to happen. And we won't know until they do, because the authorities are pretty guarded about what they're saying, and also the companies are very guarded too. They I don't want to jinx their...

**C.P.:** The new player, the new kid on the block are the Russians - they've taken some concessions in Syria. Are they the new kid, or the old kid back?

**G.L.:** I don't know if the word "kid" applies in either way. What would be interesting to see is if Lebanon could get itself together and actually finish that licensing round that was launched in February 2013.

**C.P.:** I heard some comments regarding Turkey and the Southern Corridor. There were certainly some understanding at some level between Shell and Gazprom – there had to be. Because Shell was involved in a big way in Turkey with TPAO and the rest of it, and Gazprom was supplying a lot of gas to Turkey and so on. So there had to be some, at least, basic understanding, not a conflictual situation, to avoid any...

**G.L.:** I don't know if anything...

**C.P.:** You certainly know this business, you've been reporting of his business for thirty years. So if anybody can sense things, it would be you.

**G.L.:** Well, right, Shell has been active in Turkey's exploration. I don't know if Gazprom has been active in exploration in Turkey.

**C.P.:** Not the exploration. I mean the marketing, and the transport, and all of that stuff.

**G.L.:** Oh yes, of course. Turkey gets around 60% of its gas supplies from Gazprom.

**C.P.:** The person who suggested it that there was a tacit sort of understanding, a gentlemen's agreement. Because these huge companies don't want to tangle on each other's hair.

**G.L.:** It wouldn't be surprising.

**C.P.:** The extrapolation of that is that these huge companies do have geopolitical views and strategies and so on, which affect the direction that the events take in a deep sort of way.

**G.L.:** And also the Iraq thing, if oil was the motivating factor there. Yes, certainly.



**K. K.:** The conclusion I draw from this discussion is that Cyprus is muddling through, which is a habit they....

**C.P.:** ...and in deeper waters that it knows....

**K.K.:** It's one of the things that the British left here in Cyprus. The legacy of imperialism is the British concept of muddling through, because it doesn't seem to be any, correct me if I'm wrong Gary, but there doesn't seem to be any coordination or strategic planning. It all seems to be....

**C.P.:** And this brings us to the theme we've been getting in a number of our discussions. You need a proper settlement, therefore, between the parties of Cyprus to avoid deadlock in these things and be able to work out some of the details, some of the planning. You need a positive sort of attitude and that's a key element.

**K.K.:** This isn't a discussion about the settlement, but I asked the question: is the proposed bi-communal bi-zonal federation the appropriate model for procuring a coherent energy security strategy, or a coherent national security strategy?

**C.P.:** Some people say that it's better. I think it all comes down to the fact that if the good will is there, and the positive attitude of everybody is there, you can get a positive result. If some people have hidden agendas, the more complicated a structure is, the more some of these things come to the surface and create problems. So it's really an attitudinal kind of approach, if you will. But certainly the more complicated a government structure is, it's more prone to corruption. We've been through this many times. All the various interests are finding their way through and expressing themselves, and so on. There are two sides to the argument.

**K.K.:** There's another dimension that must be mentioned here. Again, if we take the Annan Plan as our precedent that envisaged "demilitarization" of a post-settlement Cyprus, and if "demilitarization", in inverted commas, is on the cards now in a post-settlements scenario, then how is the Republic of Cyprus, or its successor, going to protect its energy infrastructure? These questions really should be the matter of public discussion and debate.

**C.P.:** I think it's all about definitions though, because what do they mean by "demilitarization"? What military are they going to get rid of? Does that include the Coast Guard? Does that include the special police forces? Probably we have no way of knowing, since everything is behind closed doors. But one would expect that they are discussing some of these things. What would hope that they are these things.

**K.K.:** Can I ask Gary a question? Generally speaking, how are energy infrastructures generally protected and to what extent is there a cooperation between the state and the private sector, in the energy industry in particular?

**G.L.:** I guess it would depend on the circumstances of a country you are operating in. In a Gulf, I would imagine, there would be patrol boats and the rest of that. Here, in the East Med, I don't see how you could possibly demilitarize, considering the situation in the area as it is. You would have to rely on someone else to protect you. It's not practical. Certainly, the Israelis are not going to favor anything like that. And if they've got an interest in this area, even to include Block 12, it's going to be a problem. Right now there is a rig out there for Leviathan and Tamar, and there is nothing out there in Block 12, as far as I know. As things begin to develop, we will see.

**C.P.:** But once the Israelis develop Leviathan, they've got to put some facilities out there, right? At the very least the pumping and the storage facilities, if not an fLNG.

**G.L.:** No, it won't be an fLNG. I think there will be a floating storage and production platform of some type, and from there they will run pipelines to the shore, depending on which direction they will go.

**K.K.:** We are less than two hundred miles from the carnage in Syria. That is what people really have to wake up to. This is an exceptionally dangerous part of the world.

**C.P.:** Some of the danger is that if ISIS or anybody else gets to the coast, they might develop a sort of a coastal attack facility, then there is a major problem.

**K.K.:** I'm thinking here of the terrorist attack in Algeria, if I remember correctly, a year or two ago, on the energy infrastructure there, and that highlights that you need not only offshore energy defense, but you need onshore mechanisms in place as well. These are subjects that really ought to be at the forefront of people's concern here in Cyprus.

**G.L.:** We'll see how this develops. I think that Cyprus is going to need its coast guard. Who the members of that are going to be? I would imagine Cypriot citizens would be involved in that. Hopefully that is how it will turn out. Cyprus should take care of their own defense, but certainly as a small place it will need the help of others.

**K.K.:** I would suggest that before a settlement they should come up with an energy security strategy, and a national security strategy, because if they can't work it out before the settlement, they won't be able to do it after it. And that should be a part of the settlement put forward to the population - the citizens in any referendum - so they know what is on the cards. Otherwise, everybody will be walking into a cloud of darkness (is there such thing as a cloud of darkness?).

**C.P.:** There certainly is. Or dark clouds. I mean overall you would see some sort of future positive development, economically and so on in the Eastern Med. There were suggestions that the pieces could be there, that there could be cooperation between Cyprus, Israel and Egypt, or is it too outlandish?

**G.L.:** No, I think it's very possible. A week ago we had Netanyahu and Tsipras, and Anastasiadis meeting here in Nicosia. That was the first of that trilateral meeting.

**C.P.:** But there is another trilateral with Egypt, and another one with Jordan, Cyprus and Greece - apparently it's in the works.

**G.L.:** It would be great to see a meeting here in Nicosia of Egypt, Israel, Greece and Cyprus, if they are eventually energy deals between Israel and Egypt, Cyprus and Egypt...

**C.P.:** .... and Turkey, eventually.

**K.K.:** It has to be a democratic Turkey.

**C.P.:** No preconditions. I don't know. Is being democratic a precondition of economic cooperation?

**K.K.:** Well Egypt is not fully democratic, we have to admit that.

**G.L.:** I think there is a chance for good times ahead for some sort of positive developments. But there are a number of hurdles to get through: the regulatory issues...

**C.P.:** What's happening in Israel with regard to that?

**G.L.:** They seem to have made peace to some extent; I don't think it's entirely resolved. I think we will learn more with time. I think the Netanyahu's government has promised that it will push the development in the gas fields

**C.P.:** But now it's in the Supreme Court, I think, right?

**G.L.:** I don't know, I'm sorry. It seems like there is a lot of issues there. But it does seem they are going to have to make some decisions. NOBLE is keen to move on with that. They've got letters of intent signed not only with Idku, but also with the Damietta LNG plant. There's a private Egyptian firm called Dolphinus Holdings that want to import Israeli gas. There's the prospect of selling it to Jordan State Electricity Company. So it's in their interest to get all that sorted out and to start selling gas, and making some money from it.

**K.K.:** The other day I was reading through some of the declassified emails of Hillary Clinton during her tenure as Secretary of State. They've been released, or some of them have been released on the website of the State Department. Everybody should try and read some, they are very interesting reading. But I caught one email - these are all declassified, so I'm not spelling any secrets here - one of those declassified emails spoke of the possibility of a free trade area springing up in the eastern Mediterranean, which would encompass Greece, Turkey, Cyprus and Israel. These were the ideas, it seems, that were swirling around the state department or Washington in 2011. Is there any mileage in that proposal from the standpoint today?

**G.L.:** I don't know, but what has to happen - peace has to break out in the East Med.

**K.K.:** Since 2011 nothing but war has broken in the Eastern Mediterranean, and Syria in particular.

**C.P.:** As a journalist - is it on an up-turn, or is it on a down-turn?

**G.L.:** That's a tricky question.

**C.P.:** You have presumably traced this before.

**G.L.:** You looked at the things that are going on in the Middle East and you would say, well, you know, one of these days this is just going to blow up. But you never really imagined how it would, but it looks like it's...

**C.P.:** It's blown up?

**G.L.:** Some people say it's going to get worse before it gets worse. So there really is a chance of that - that it could get really very bad. If you are talking about Turkey, the situation with the Kurds is very serious, and the problem in the cities of southeast Turkey, now some of them are almost under siege. It's such a complicated interwoven tangle of alliances and enemies in the region. It's the Kurds who are making advances against ISIS, yet Turkey is opposed to including the Kurds in the Syrian negotiations. You've got all these different interests. You remember how Lebanon was during the civil war. It's like that, only on a massive scale. And who knows how they will ultimately deal with ISIS.

**K.K.:** Is Turkey, as it is being alleged by some, assisting ISIS in relation to the distribution of oil or gas?

**G.L.:** It's been alleged – it's all I can say at this point.

**C.P.:** But can you trust the footage that's being thrown on the media, all those tankers waiting to cross into Turkey? It could be anywhere.

**G.L.:** Yeah, but if reputable news agencies are going to broadcast that, you would think that they would have checked that out. The US coalition, the British and the French are involved in that, aren't they, they are sort of ratcheting things up a bit, and going after tankers and the facilities. The other day I think the Syrians sent a letter to the UN, accusing US coalition of actually hitting infrastructure that was pretty vital to the oil industry there.

**C.P.:** I was looking for a positive note-end. Is there anything like that on the horizon?

**G.L.:** If we can get companies drilling here...

**C.P.:** But certainly with the price of oil being so low, it doesn't really work in that direction.

**G.L.:** Noble's cut back on its own money and wants to put in investment, yet I think the fact that there's a regional market here will (*inaudible*) its interest to develop that market, especially if it has got this large resource. Egypt's desperate for gas, and so it's going to be working to develop its own resources, and hopefully buy those from Israel and Cyprus.

**C.P.:** Is oil and gas still going to be interchangeable?

**G.L.:** I think this whole oil market price flux is going to evolve in time, because I don't think the prices are going stay reasonably low for a while, and because...

**C.P.:** Iran is coming online...

**G.L.:** Yes, they plan to produce quite a lot. Iraq wants to up its production. If Libya should ever come to its senses, they had a capacity of 1.6 million a day, they're down to about 300,000, maybe. Syria was producing about 380,000 BPD before the war began. There is a lot of wars. Wars in Sudan have stopped oil production there, practically. It's politics.

**C.P.:** From an oil-business point of view you want a bunch of wars, or is it too cynical, perhaps?

**G.L.:** Saudi Arabia's producing more than 10 million a day and so it wants market share. This strategy is supposedly working, but I don't really if I understand this strategy. What is the point of this? It's to drive producers with high costs out of the market, but so essentially it was directed towards American Shell producers. But you can drive them out for now, but they can come back as soon as the price goes back up a bit. When it gets to that point where it's profitable to produce, then their back on, so then you've got more oil coming on the market, and so what is that going to do? Is that going to cause the price to go down again? I wouldn't be surprised if you see this sort of rolling line across the price scale.

**K.K.:** What the conflict in Syria has really underlined is that this part of the world, the Eastern Mediterranean, is in the eye of so many great powers: you've got the British, the French, the Americans, the Russians, the Chinese are hovering in the background as well. And Cyprus, I need to emphasize this again, less than 200 miles from Syria. And it's inevitably going to be

affected by developments over there, and that's something that all of us need to be on our guard for.

**G. L.:** And that is why also you need a security system here, definitely.

**C.P.:** We'll end on the note that we are the Time Square of the Eastern Med. Thank you Gary, thank you very much.



---

## DISCUSSION\*

---

Shmuel Bar\*\*

9 February 2016

### **The Islamist Challenge to the Eastern Mediterranean and Europe**

*Dr. Shmuel Bar discusses Islamism, jihadism, political Islam and related concepts. He distinguishes between the religious and secular nature of the conflicts in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East and concludes that each type of conflict must be fought with appropriate weapons.*

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** Good afternoon, and welcome to another ERPIC discussion. With us this afternoon we have Dr. Shmuel Bar, a Middle East expert and Ms. Marta Murzanska, an ERPIC Fellow. Our focus this afternoon will be on regional security, and specifically Islamism and the challenge that it presents to the region and to the West. Shmuel, thank you for being with us. There is so much religious intolerance in this part of the world, and yet traditionally people from different religions were living next to each other as part of the same societies in most of the countries of the Middle East. Isn't this strange? What's your initial comment?

**Shmuel Bar (S.B.):** First of all, we have to be precise historically. There was definitely no ideal world, like Woody Allen said: "The lion will lie down with the lamb, but the lamb won't get much sleep." There were pogroms in the Arab world against Jews and Christians. There were forced conversions in Iraq, in Iran, in Morocco. The difference was that as long as the non-Muslims accepted the status of *dhimmi*, of a second-class citizens... And there was - if we are talking about the nineteenth century, up to the end of the caliphate - there was a relationship between the caliphate and the West, which actually provided Western countries with a sort of patronage over the Jewish and Christian populations. Up to the point where France and Britain actually gave their citizenship individually to Jews and Christians in Jerusalem and made them their citizens, and then got patronage over them. And of course, the sultan couldn't touch them. So basically, we had the *millet* system, or the *dhimmi* system...

**C.P.:** But the Russians did the same.

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Senior Analyst; Founder and CEO, Shmuel Bar - Research and Consultancy Ltd*

**S.B.:** Exactly, so everybody was intervening. There is quite a lot of intolerance inside the basic fabric of many of these cultures. In Shiite Islam, for example, you can't touch a Jew or a Christian, you become impure, and you have to wash yourself. You can't eat from a plate that a Jew or a Christian has touched. There are various things like that. However, the balance existed. The situation changed at certain point at the beginning of the twentieth century. But what we are naturally seeing now, though, is finally the end of post-World War I world. In other words, the World War I ended, there was the Sykes-Picot agreement, there were secular governments which imposed some sort of discipline. It's very similar to Yugoslavia, where Tito kept the lead over everything, and then when Yugoslavia fell apart, everything fell apart. And now we are actually at the end of that period which held all of these pressures in place.

**Marta Murzanska (M.M.):** The topic of our conversation today is the Islamist challenge to the Eastern Mediterranean and Europe. And I believe that before we get into the heart of our discussion, we should maybe try to explain to our audience what Islamism is? How can it be defined? Very often such terms as political Islam, Islamic fundamentalism, radical Islam, jihadism, are used interchangeably. Is this correct?

**S.B.:** What's in the name? First and foremost, I would be very careful about the political correctness of saying that this has nothing to do with Islam. We have to have some respect for our enemies. If someone says that I'm doing this because of Islam, because I believe that this is what Allah and the Prophet want from me, first of all – believe him. Know your enemy, and you will win half of the battles. Secondly, Islam by definition is political.

**M.M.:** So there is no distinction between Islam and Islamism?

**S.B.:** There is no distinction between Islam and state. In Islam, they say *din wa dawla*, which means religion and state. Because in the original Islamic state, Mohammed was the Prophet who gave the religious laws, and the military commander, and the political commander. The caliph was the replacement of the Prophet of Allah, and so he is supposed to be the supreme religious, and political, and military commander. So the ideal of the Islamic state cannot be a state in which there's a separation of church and state. Now, extending from that, the whole question is how political is a person's worldview in context to what you have to do. In other words, it would be nice if Allah would bring the caliphate, but what do you have to do? And this is a development of the twentieth century, beginning with various ideologues of the Islamic movement, and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and an idea which does basically individualization of the duty of jihad. So we have to make this differentiation between various streams. A stream which is a Salafi stream which says we have to be very pious and imitate the forefathers may seem to be very atavistic, but they are not political. So they can be extremely fundamentalist, but not political. They can be very fundamentalist, and they can believe that they have to take things into their hands and create an Islamic state. And there can be those who say: "Even before we create an Islamic state, we want to attack the infidels, and we have to defend ourselves against the infidels." And that's another story. So you have all of these different types.

**M.M.:** Would it be valid to say that Islamism is not on the fringe of the Muslim world, as it is often believed?

**S.B.:** Definitely it is not on the fringe, and you can see that in all the polls, for example. I think that if we say that somewhere around 60% of the population of Pakistan has a positive view of



ISIS, that's not marginal. 25% of the Muslims of France say that they would be favourable or indifferent to a member of the family joining ISIS - that's not marginal at all. If you compare it to the level of just other people in the Western world, or in other countries in the East, like China or Japan... If you ask a Japanese, "If your family member joined an Aum Shinrikyo - which is a terrorist organization - would you be proud?" You wouldn't have 1% of the Japanese agreed to that, right? So that's the big difference.

**M.M.:** Therefore terms such as radicalism or extremism – aren't they misleading?

**S.B.:** Radicalism – I really don't know what that is, because "radical" is with reference to something.

"Extremism" is with reference to something. So let's assume that on the norm 98% of the people in the world want to get up in the morning, to have breakfast, to feed their children, to go to work, and to get out in front of the TV in the evening, if they have a TV. So, very few of them think about, "How many infidels can I kill today?" However, the problem is not that. The problem is: what is the attitude of the majority towards those people who are violent? Do they accept them into the fabric of their consensus or not? This is the main problem. In Islam there is no firewall on the spectrum between what we call mainstream and radical.

**M.M.:** So the line is very blurry.

**S.B.:** Exactly. If we take an example, if I am a radical Muslim and you are mainstream Muslim, and you have a nice job at an institute, and I say to you, "Is it true that jihad is one of the prime duties of Islam?" You can't tell me, "No." Now, "Is it true that military jihad is definitely jihad?" Well, yes. In 98% of the mentions of the jihad in the Quran and the Hadiths, it is military jihad, it doesn't mean anything else. Then I can say, "Is it true that the Prophet Muhammad waged jihad most of his life?" Yes. "Could the Prophet Muhammad do anything wrong?" No, he was infallible. Meanwhile, we are still in the area of pure religious discourse. "Is it true that when a Muslim land is occupied by infidels it becomes the individual duty of every Muslim to wage jihad, individual jihad, and that a woman need not ask her husband, and a child need not ask its parents, and the slave need not ask their master, all should participate in jihad?" Yes, there's a very good Hadith which says that. "So why aren't you coming with me to Iraq to aid the Muslims in Iraq, or in Syria to fight a jihad?" You say, "I've got a good job, and a job security, etc." I would say, "So you prefer to be friends with the infidels, instead." In other words, at no point you can say, "Wait a minute, I'm checking my book of Islam, that's not there!"

**C. P.:** So you're saying that being radical Muslim, or not, is a matter of an attitude of the person, not the ideology. In other words, you cannot classify the ideology itself as radical or non-radical. Islam is Islam, the Quran is the Quran.

**S.B.:** It depends how an individual implements it.

**C.P.:** So you are rather a practicing Muslim or not, or is that going too far?

**S.B.:** No, you can be a practicing Muslim, you can even be a Salafi Muslim, and you can wear strange clothes - in our eyes - and you can do things, and you can be very careful about everything you do, and you can be totally apolitical.

**C.P.:** But can you be? What I mean is the Quran is a political instrument, so can you be an apolitical Muslim? In the center of that – can you be a moderate Muslim? Or what is

moderation?

**S.B.:** Moderation means fudging it.

**C.P.:** Non-practicing.

**S.B.:** Here we have to do a distinction. You can go through the motions of doing everything, you can pray five times a day, and you can do everything, fasting and all of that. The question is whether in the course of your interpretation of Islam you decide that you have to intervene on your own in political, military etc. issues, because this is what Allah wants of you.

**C.P.:** Isn't that selective?

**S.B.:** It's definitely selective, but, you see, most people who were not confronted with that dialogue that I was holding with you are willing to be selective. So until the moment I proved to her that she should come with me on the *jihad*, she was happy to be selective. But when I come to her, and she is in cognitive dissonance.

**C.P.:** But that's where the radicalization comes in. By dialogue, you show you are not being a good Muslim.

**S.B.:** Exactly.

**C.P.:** But it's not radicalizing the person; it's making them a better Muslim.

**S.B.:** It's externalizing elements in the religious outlook which are inherent, which are in Islam, and which can remain dormant, or cannot remain dormant.

**C.P.:** Isn't that a bias of secular thinking? We are almost imposing these categories, because in our mind, if you are basically secular, or tolerant, you become radicalized by becoming less so.

**S.B.:** I don't like the whole idea of radicalization, especially self-radicalization. I was once giving a briefing in the United States to the very senior group, people who deal with Homeland Security, and when I explained to somebody that the Quran says, "You shall not take Jews and Christians as friends, and you shall support your brother, whether he is an oppressor or is oppressed", and then this very senior person says to me, "That's interesting, is that in the moderate Quran as well?" In other words, it's a matter of what you take out of it.

**C.P.:** Just to understand. In the Quranic tradition, or in the Muslim tradition, there is no attempt or process of changing or reforming the message. The message is the message, and you either accept it, or you're an apostate. Am I putting it too harshly?

**S.B.:** First of all, formally in Islam the right to the self-interpretation of the Quran was abolished. It's called "closing the gates of *ijtihad*", and it was finalized somewhere around the 10th or 11th century. In other words, after that you were not allowed to do it in Sunni Islam. In Shiite Islam you are allowed, which is interesting because Shiite Islam is more latitude actually than Sunni Islam.

**C.P.:** It has not been under Shia new interpretations, or reinterpretations?

**S.B.:** Oh yes. Ayatollahs, especially great ayatollahs really do reinterpretation, actually to the extent that Khomeinism is reinterpretation of Shiite Islam. It is revolution. Khomeini's doctrine was not traditional Shiite doctrine, but because of that element in Shiite Islam which allows

interpretation...

**C.P.:** Where does that come from? Is it because there is some sort of infusion of rationalism, almost?

Has that got something to do with the fact that Iranians have a traditional sort of culture that includes other elements?

**S.B.:** No, it's not an Iranian thing. It has to do with the status of the clergy in Shiite Islam. It has to do with that hierarchy which exists in the Shiite Islam. You have a (.....), you have a mullah, you have a Hujjat al-Islam, ayatollah, and Ayatollah Uzma, and it is a clerical hierarchy. You don't have that in Sunni Islam.

**C.P.:** But where does that hierarchy come from again?

**S.B.:** Quite a lot of historical reasons for that.

**C.P.:** But has it got anything to do with the cultural element?

**S.B.:** To a great extent. Just think about it. Why does Protestantism not have that sort of a structure and Catholicism does?

**C.P.:** Well, because simply it was a reaction against Catholicism. It was a negation of the hierarchy, etc. I think Shia was not necessarily a negation of Sunnism.

**S.B.:** Shia Islam was definitely a part of the... Everybody was saying they rebelled against the other, but Shiite Islam was born out of a war between...

**C.P.:** Yes, but it was a claim to orthodoxy.

**S.B.:** I think there was a claim for power: who was going to be a caliph?

**C.P.:** That's right.

**S.B.:** You see, as long as there was a caliph, and the caliph is the supreme religious authority, you don't need a religious hierarchy. But if you don't have a caliph, and the Imam is in hiding, you can't become a caliph and take over the job of the Imam, because the Imam is there, he is hiding.

**C.P.:** This issue about the secret Imam, what is that in Shi'ism?

**S.B.:** That's an old story. Basically, the idea that he is in hiding and that he will emerge...

**C.P.:** Why is he in hiding?

**S.B.:** Well, he disappeared. And he will emerge when his believers need him the most. And traditionally, there was a debate whether he will emerge when his believers are in really deep trouble, or he will emerge and his believers will take action and prove that they are worthy of his emerging. There is the concept of forcing him to come. So the doctrine in Iran is more along the lines of: we will prove that we are worthy of the Imam and he will come. But I think, you see, since radical Shiite Islam is mainly Iranian, it serves Iran, it's a state terrorism, it's very clear. Hezbollah is just an organ of the Iranian state, it's the Lebanese brigades of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. Sunni, whatever you want to call it, radical Islam is an ideological

movement. It's an ideological movement in which there is no firewall between it and mainstream Islam. So at any given point, since most of the Islamic movements, the radical Islamic movements have something what is called *takfir*: declaring another Muslim and non-Muslim. Now, in an Islamic doctrine there's a saying, "Do not say 'you are not a Muslim' to him who says '*assalamu alaikum*' to you, because only God can know what the real intention of the person is." Now, what that means is that mainstream Muslims will not declare a radical, no matter how vicious and terrible he may be, an apostate, but the radicals will. So the weapon of declaring apostasy is not in the hands of the moderates. Except "imam" John Kerry who just recently declared that ISIS are apostates. And the whole Muslim world went on, "Who are you, John Kerry, to say that ISIS is apostates?" I will give you an example. After 9/11 the Iranians said that these people of 9/11 are burning in hell. So it's easy for them to say that because these were Sunnis. The Saudis convened a conference of about a hundred and something imams and sheiks from all over the Muslim world to discuss the question whether these people are burning in hell. They reached the conclusion they were not. Why? Because only Allah knows the intentions; a person is not expected to know the difference between good and evil. He's expected only with good intentions to follow what he believes Allah wants of him. If they believe that Allah wants them to do this, and they believe that with good intention, then Allah will reward them for their intentions, because you can't punish a person for something that he wasn't able to do.

**C.P.:** Can you elaborate on that? I remember hearing you say what the difference between the Judeo-Christian and the Muslim tradition was, as far as the individual's ability or capacity to judge one's actions.

**S.B.:** It has to do with a number of things. One of them is the very concept of knowledge of good and evil. In the Quran, Adam didn't eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, so he never got it. Basically, Islam means submission. And you submit to the will of God. If you don't have the knowledge of good and evil, then how can I expect you to choose good or evil? You must submit, and you must do what you are told is the will of Allah. Now, what that means is that this absolves the person of personal accountability. You just have to obey. If you don't have personal accountability, then the very concept that is inherent in the Judeo-Christian tradition which gave us the Nuremberg trials for example, this very concept cannot be implemented in Islam, because what do you expect of them is to obey.

**C.P.:** As long as they have good intentions...

**S.B.:** The next problem is that as a community... The very concept of democracy is that if we put a lot of people together who normally will choose good, because they all have something in them, because they ate from the fruit of knowledge of good and evil, then we say statistically they will together choose good, and that's what democracy is based on, that's an underlying assumption. But if we do not think that people have this capacity, then why have democracy?

**C.P.:** But again, it's a debate whether have the Hobbesian world, or a Lockean world.

**S.B.:** I think we live in a Hobbesian world. For example, one of the interesting Western philosophers is Heidegger. Why Heidegger? Because Heidegger actually expounded the idea that people cannot know good, and therefore they need a Führer to tell them what to do.

**C.P.:** But certainly Nazism has some elements which are reminiscent of what we are talking about. Because it's this relying, as long as you have good intentions, and you are serving the

motherland, and you listen to what your Führer says, then you are off the hook, or at least you don't have to have sleepless nights.

**S.B.:** There is the structure of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah youth movements, for example. We caught in south Lebanon instructions to the youth movement of Hezbollah. They looked very strange to me. There was a question: "If your father expresses doubts about authority of the Supreme Leader, what do you do? a) Respect him because he's your father, b) Discuss it with him, c) Report on him to your superior in the movement." The right answer is C. I sent this to a friend of mine who's an expert on Nazi Germany, and I asked, "What do you think about this?" He sent me back a questionnaire from the Hitlerjugend, which was almost the same. In other words, authoritarian, totalitarian movements, I don't know whether they borrow from each other, or they very naturally converge on the same ideas. But you can actually see that. Definitely, Hassan al Banna was highly influenced by the fascist movements of the 1930s as he developed his organization. And we see the affection towards Heidegger. I think though that what we're talking about is even broader than that. We are talking about an ideological movement. The penchant of the West is to look for an organization. We killed bin Laden, we militarily attack ISIS. In other words, we have to look at the movement, and we have to say there's a PowerPoint presentation with boxes.... And it doesn't work like that. We're talking about the real ideological movement that for reasons of political correctness we refuse to acknowledge.

**C.P.:** Is that the challenge of Islamism, both in the region and in a broader European sense? Is this a challenge to our concepts, and our way of thinking strategically?

**S.B.:** I think the moment you do not recognize your enemy as what it is, you are tying your hands. When we are talking about wars, probably it won't come as a surprise to anybody that there was not one tank at Midway, and there was not one ship at Kursk. In other words, the land battles are fought with land weapons, and sea battles with sea weapons. A religious battle is a religious battle. Only one side sees it as a religious battle. What we are trying to do is to secularize it, and so we say, "Oh, it's a matter of economy." Or for example there was the statement by the American Secretary of State that actually one of the key causes of the growth of ISIS is unemployment. In other words, there aren't enough McDonald's restaurants in Iraq and Syria, so people don't have jobs chopping hamburgers, so they start chopping heads. But if you look at it that way, then you're not going to get anywhere.

**C.P.:** But still there is a secular element, certainly in the struggle in Syria. I mean, the involvement of some other neighboring countries, particularly Turkey. It has a secular geopolitical agenda.

**S.B.:** Religion doesn't exclude geopolitical interests.

**C.P.:** Surely. But I am saying that there is that element, and perhaps the West focuses on that element, but can you separate it?

**S. B.:** Well, it has to be holistic. The flow of foreign fighters to the Islamic State isn't geopolitical; it is religious, and it's ideological.

**C.P.:** Even certain elements of a Turkish government suggest that this is perhaps time to look at a different paradigm of the region. A different paradigm. The Turkish premier even wrote a book about alternative paradigms.

**S.B.:** Yes. I don't like his paradigm.

**C.P.:** But doesn't that dovetail with this view, I mean the more orientalist, religious aspect? For us it is anachronistic. I think you have made another point about the anachronism that doesn't exist or works the opposite way in Islam.

**S.B.:** First of all, the paradigm of the Middle East has broken. I mean, let's be honest that Sykes-Picot is done, it's not going to revive. We have to accept that what we now see is what I call the Humpty Dumpty states, and just as all the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again, so Syria will not be a state again. And even if the Russians put in as much power as they want, in the end to hold those places that the Syrian Army has to hold, you need ground forces.

**C.P.:** Well, the Balkanization of Syria will happen; it has actually happened already.

**S.B.:** Yes, it's done.

**C.P.:** So the question is where those lines are going to be drawn, and again, are those lines arbitrary? There is an element of arbitration here.

**S.B.:** The lines are tribal.

**C.P.:** The Russians are thinking about this Syrian Kurdish area. That's not entirely tribal.

**S.B.:** The Russians are bringing a worldview into this, and definitely it's a strategic concept. The Russians want to have leverage over NATO, and basically what they're saying now is: you will not fly NATO aircraft....

**C.P.:** It's the no-fly zone that the US had in Iraq. So it's a Russian version of a no-fly zone.

**S.B.:** Exactly. So the no-fly zone that America said that it could not impose in northern Syria, which had it imposed, the situation would have been different, because then you wouldn't have the refugee problem. But the Americans didn't impose it. And now the Russians are imposing a no-fly zone, but actually a no-fly zone against NATO. And what they're saying is that even if NATO aircraft flies inside the NATO territory in Turkey in an offensive deployment, they will shoot it down. And they have the ability to shoot them down. So that's strategic, but dovetails with the Kurdish aspirations of course, where the Kurds would have preferred to be on the side of the West, because they feel more of an affinity with the West. And actually Russia has hijacked the Kurds, and just recently Syrian Kurdistan opened their first diplomatic office in Moscow of all places, and basically what that means is that they can deny Turkey access to Syria, and they can leverage this against Turkey through the PKK, etc. And then they can trade their assistance on that with concessions in the Balkans, in the Baltic States, etc. So that's strategic.

**C.P.:** Are the Russians intending to sort of curtail the Turkish influence in the Middle East? Do you see that as a specific policy? And that's a reaction to what? To this Turkish paradigm?

**S.B.:** To Turkish neo-Ottomanism.

**C.P.:** Is there such a thing?

**S.B.:** Definitely. Erdogan is espousing on the neo-Ottomanism. One of his supporters, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, said that Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi is not worthy of being a caliph. If there is anybody today worth being a caliph, it's Erdogan. The Russians have strategic interests in the Mediterranean. The gas is a strategic interest of Russia; they do not want a level of stability and development of gas alternatives in the Eastern Mediterranean that would make Western Europe less dependent on Russian.

**C.P.:** Or at least that they can keep their finger on it.

**S.B.:** So basically they don't even need all of Syria. The Russians are talking about what they call "useful Syria". "Useful Syria" is Alawistan. They need to make sure that Alawistan...

**C.P.:** ... can stand.

**S.B.:** ... can stand. And therefore, it has to be mainly Alawite, which means that you have to do ethnic cleansing of the non-Alawites, which is what they are doing. Now, there is a convergence of interests of Turkey on one hand, and Syria, where the Syrians want to get rid of the Sunnis in the area of Alawistan...

**C.P.:** Turkey and Syria? Or Russia and Syria?

**S.B.:** Russia and Syria, obviously. But Turkey, because from the point of view of the Turks, once the Syrians are kicking out Sunnis in that area, now what you actually have is a very interesting collusion here. We have to understand that the flow of people to Izmir, through Turkey to Izmir ... Turkey has

a very powerful army. If Turkey wanted to keep people in camps on the border and not allow them to get to the coast, they could do it. I don't think that anybody thinks that Izmir isn't under the control of the Turkish navy. Now, what you see also is that the refugees get through Hezbollah lines to Tripoli, and immediately get on boats to Izmir. They don't get from Tripoli down the land.

**C.P.:** So it's not a land bridge.

**S.B.:** A lot of them go to Tripoli, and from there to Izmir, and immediately...

**C.P.:** By water.

**S.B.:** Yes, by water. And then immediately what you get is these smugglers, who are intimately linked to the Turkish army, and all sorts of the pieces of information indicate that senior people in Turkish army are getting kickbacks from the smugglers. So it's an actual business, a big business, and this big businesses is linked to the Turkish army.

**C.P.:** How can you explain this European attitude of allowing Turkey to shirk its responsibility, and in fact more than that, paying...

**S.B.:** I wouldn't be going into analysis, but into some sort of a social-psychological analysis. The question is...

**C.P.:** Is this a guilt of Mrs. Merkel? The collective guilt?

**S.B.:** I think there's something in the European attitude today which characterizes the European attitude of, first of all, deference towards non-European countries, the post-colonial guilt syndrome...

**C. P.:** But Turkey goes beyond that. It's actually coddling Turkey. It's a conscious desire to please Turkey. It's beyond this sort of complex.

**S.B.:** Yes it is, but it's because Europe is conducive to blackmail. What happened after the Paris attacks was blackmail. Because it isn't a business agreement: we will give you three billion, and you will try to stem the tide, the flow. And they are already not delivering the goods, and they won't deliver it. Let's not forget - Turkey wanted access to the European Union. The European Union did not want Turkey, and after all of the discussions of human rights and structure, etc., the European Union does not want a predominantly Muslim country of seventy million people in the European Union. And Turkey knows that. And then basically what Turkey is saying to Europe, "You didn't want us in the European Union, we are going to bring down Schengen, your pride and joy." And basically this is what they're doing. "And you will pay us to mitigate these effects, as there is nothing in the agreement for the three billion that Turkey will stop importing oil from ISIS." Why? Because Turkey says, "We are not importing oil from ISIS." There is nothing in the agreement that says that Turkey will stop allowing foreign fighters to cross the border, because Turkey says, "We're not doing it." So basically it isn't an agreement, it is charity that Europe is giving money to Turkey without any commitment on the part of Turkey. And so if the European Union doesn't demand something from Turkey and it's willing to give the money without it, then why shouldn't Turkey take it?

**M.M.:** Speaking about Turkey. Its support for various jihadi groups in Syria has become apparent. It used to be an open secret for a time, but now it is pretty obvious what they are doing. What is Turkey's regional game with regard to Syria?

**S.B.:** First of all, there is the neo-Ottoman concept. Turkey definitely sees itself as a regional hegemony. Secondly, Turkey is committed to toppling the Syrian regime.

**C.P.:** That was strange, because for so long they were friends. Assad and Erdogan used to take holidays together. So what went wrong?

**S. B.:** What went wrong was that if you are aiming at projecting yourself as a an Islamic movement, an Islamic paradigm, and you want people to accept your Islamic paradigm - even though it's very difficult for Arabs to accept non-Arab paradigm because of cultural differences - then to align yourself with an Alawite regime which is killing Sunnis... When it was 10,000, 20,000, 30,000, when it's a quarter of a million Sunnis that have been massacred by this regime, if you are not against that regime, you will completely lose your legitimacy. Not only in the Arab world, but you have created an Islamic movement in Turkey, and this Islamic movement is Sunni. And for you to turn your back on Sunnis in the end is tribalism. We have to understand that the Middle East has fallen apart, and it's regrouping along tribal lines, and mainly the Sunni-Shiite schism. And so your position, where you are being judged whether you are Sunni or Shiite... America today is being perceived as pro-Shiite, as supporting Iranian Shiite hegemony. If you are in Saudi Arabia, or in Cairo...

**C.P.:** Because of Iraq.

**S.B.:** No, not because of Iraq. Americans helped topple down secular Sunni president Mubarak,



supported the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood to power.

**C.P.:** But the Muslim Brotherhood was not Shia.

**S.B.:** But the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt was pro-Iranian. It actually expressed very pro-Iranian position. Then the Americans tried to block el-Er who is anti-Iranian and anti-Muslim Brotherhood. The Americans took a position on a red line regarding the use of chemical weapons, backed back from that red line, and actually gave a lifeline to Assad, which allowed him to massacre Sunnis. In Iraq there was the elections in which the Shiite pro-Saudi candidate Alawi could have been elected. The Americans put pressure to choose Maliki who was a pro-Iranian proxy. And then they supported with weapons Maliki who actually provoked an uprising in Anbar in order to get all of the Shiites behind him. So if you look at all of that, America looks actually very pro-Shiite. They've reached an agreement with Iran which is perceived by the Sunnis as enhancing Iran's capabilities, they see how America acts towards Iran, for example allowing the Iranians to take American boats and hold them captive, and then say thank you for releasing them. So all of this looks like pro-Shiite.

**M.M.:** Does it look like it, or is it actually pro-Shiite?

**S.B.:** I think that definitely the current American administration believes that Iran is a great power, Iran is a civilization and must be brought back into the game, into a hegemonic role in the region, which all of the rest are in the eyes of Obama an anachronistic creations of imperialism and colonialism.

**C.P.:** Coming back to Turkey. What is the game plan of Turkey?

**S.B.:** Turkey has first of all a strategic problem and strategic dilemma. Turkey knows, Erdogan knows that demography will not lie. And in twenty years Turkey will be a majority Kurdish country because of the birth rate. The Kurdish threat is the main threat for Turkey. Everything Turkey is doing relates to the Kurdish threat. So Turkey has to block a Kurdish entity, it's more important than blocking ISIS or blocking Assad.

**C.P.:** Is the majority of Kurds in Turkey though pro-Kurdish independence, or is there a mainstream of Kurds in Turkey who feel Turkish?

**S.B.:** I'm sure that there are, but you see, all of this can change very quickly in the Middle East. The Syrian Kurds, up to the breakdown of Syria, were just begging for Syrian citizenship which was denied to them, because they were actually denied Syrian citizenship. Now things have changed and I don't think any of them want to be the citizens of the Alawite Syria. So these things change so rapidly in the region, that if you have a strong Russian-protected PKK-organized Syrian Kurdistan, then you will have an irredentist movement inside Turkey. If the Turkish government continues to act as it does now towards the Kurds...

**C.P.:** .... And deny them their rights, than they might even have a legal standing for self-determination.

**S.B.:** They certainly have a legal standing anyway, but it will exacerbate the sense of the Kurds in Turkey that they don't want to be part of Turkey. Iraqi Kurdistan was willing years ago to be part of the federation. Today they're not, because the federation is no longer relevant, because they don't have a continuity with Shiite Iraq. What they have is ISIS, so what do they need the federation for? So all of these things are in a state of flux.

**M.M.:** I would like to ask a question which might seem to be a little cliché, but I believe that many people do not know the answer to this question, because of what was mentioned before - there is no honest debate about Islamism in Europe and in the West in general because of this paralyzing fear of being called Islamophobic. What do Islamists really want? What do they struggle for? What do they fight for?

**S.B.:** In general, it is widely accepted in Islam that eventually Islam will have to be a religion of the entire world. This is a basic Islamic tenet; there is no concept of ecumenism in Islam. True, Christianity had the proselytizing period where the idea was to bring everyone under the fold of Christianity. At one point with the Catholic Church, and certainly with others, that sort of went down into the dustbin of history. Islamists are at the stage where it is the revealed truth; it has overridden the previous religions. There is only one truth and this truth has to be spread until the word of Allah rules the world.

**M.M.:** So could we actually say that what they struggle for is some sort of a new world order based on sharia?

**S.B.:** The other side of it is that the majority of Muslims in the world do think that sharia should rule. Even in Europe the majority of Muslims say that...

**M.M.:** It should become the law of the land...

**S.B.:** You can't be a believing Muslim and say that sharia is not the way you should live.

**C.P.:** But especially that what is happening is that a lot of European cities are looking like a lot of Middle Eastern cities, with the segregation of different communities...

**S.B.:** Yes, but that is because Europeans don't have enough respect for their own values. In other words, it's a struggle between two parties.

**C.P.:** But what can you do? Walk into those areas and do a pogrom? It's a fait accompli. Once you allow these things to set up, and once you tolerate these ghettos...

**S.B.:** Maybe it's too late for places like Sweden for example...

**C.P.:** But what can you do?

**S.B.:** First of all, there are ways to put pressure on mainstream Islamic leaders, who have assets, or who have interests that they don't want to be harmed, and to impose on them certain behavior. You can say to people, "Listen, in your mosque there are certain things you will not preach, and nobody will preach."

**C.P.:** But can they do that? There are Islamist organizations in Europe that profess or claim that they're fully in line with liberal democracy, but under cover they have a different agenda.

**S.B.:** First of all, you have to look at what they write in Arabic as opposed to what they write in European languages - it is very different.

**C.P.:** There is a little bit of deception here, isn't it?

**S.B.:** There's definitely a lot of deception, because what they say inside in their own language...

**C.P.:** Isn't deception part of the jihadist...

**S.B.:** *Taqiya*, which is dissimulation, is a basic feature in Shia Islam, because Shiite is allowed even to pretend he is not a Shiite in order to survive.

**C.P.:** *Taqiya* is not a Sunni concept?

**S.B.:** It is a Shiite concept, but it is also a Sunni concept for the Muslim Brotherhood, where Hassan al-Banna himself allowed *taqiya*. But that's going into details about something that's basically the idea, that if I am an imam of a big mosque, and there are activities in this mosque, I, as a government, or as the security services, or as the police, I should have the right to say, "True, these people are only quoting verses from the Quran, which say how you should kill all the Jews, etc., but even if it's written in the Quran, you've got a lot of verses in the Quran, that you can read day and day out without reaching that verse, and not preach that verse, and you will not give a sermon about that verse, because if you do, we will close down your mosque, we will create problems for you."

**C.P.:** But no Western government is willing to do that.

**S.B.:** That's the question if you are willing to understand that you are in some sort of civilization clash within Europe. I read a fascinating article, which I mentioned to you before, by Niall Ferguson, in which he compared the situation of Europe today to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, where the Roman Empire actually invited the barbarians in and accepted them, and degraded their own Romanism before the final fall of the Roman Empire. I think Europe has values: freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of religion. When European leaders say, "We think that Charlie Hebdo should refrain from insulting. Why provoke people to do the terrorist attacks by painting pictures of Muhammad? We think they should stop it." So, what they're saying is that in the conflict between our value, our "religious" value of freedom of expression, which should be as strong, as important, as cardinal for us, as the value of the picture of Muhammad to them, what they're saying is that we must give up our value in the face of their value. Once you go down this very slippery road, there's a point where there are no breaks, and you just go down and down. I think this is what is happening in Europe. You even see this in the media, the European media, French, British, and American also, after the Charlie Hebdo attack they blurred out the pictures of the editions with pictures of Muhammad, so that TV stations won't be considered as having broadcasted insulting pictures of Muhammad.

**M.M.:** I think they did it mainly out of fear...

**S.B.:** But the fact is that it's fear because the governments cannot... You know, the government's first job is to give security. It's from the days when our forefathers, the cavemen, appointed the biggest caveman and said, "You keep everybody else out of our cave, and you are a chief." In other words, government has to provide security.

**C.P.:** The concept of cultural clash was not taken seriously until now, when it's there, and it looks the European governments in their faces. Is there any positive way of dealing with this? What we're looking at is perhaps the rise of reaction in the West.

**S.B.:** Which is also dangerous.

**C.P.:** Which is perhaps even more dangerous, because you have the backlash of nationalism and so on. Is there something in between?

**S.B.:** I think it's the weakness of government. Government has to face the situation. Governments in Europe, in the West have to say, "Yes, the Middle East has fallen apart." You cannot cling on to the Chimera of there is a Syrian, go to Geneva, and you know, have discussions, or there is an Iraq, and there is a Yemen, and there is a Libya. Let's put them to rest, and let's see how we preserve our interests in this region, and make sure that there is as little as possible spillover. Within Europe, it's a different problem. There, you have to reconstruct the social contract. The moment you allow the idea of communities, you have to get back and say: there is no such thing as communities in Europe. This isn't a *millet* system. We are not creating the Ottoman Empire of Europe, where everybody belongs to a community. The whole idea of individualism in western civilization is that you are a citizen of the State. In no western system was there a hierarchy. Even if you were the lowest peasant in the Middle Ages, you were the peasant who gave his fealty to the baron, or whatever.

**C.P.:** So it's a debate between individual rights and group rights, which are mutually exclusive. The US Supreme Court tried to find a middle way, and it did with affirmative action. And affirmative action to protect the minorities is temporary. Once you have group rights that are etched in stone, then it's a problem.

**S.B.:** Exactly. But now in Europe you actually are creating a *millet* system like in the Ottoman Empire, and this has to be stopped. In other words, it has to be clear: if you are a Christian, a Muslim, a Jew, a Buddhist, a Hindu, whatever, and you are living in a European country A, or B, or in the United States, you are a citizen of that country. These are the values of that country: free speech, freedom of religion, gender equality, freedom of sexuality - all of that. Now, if you do anything which infringes on any of those principles, those secular principles, then you are out. In other words, if you are not a citizen yet, you are out.

**M.M.:** What about those who are citizens?

**S.B.:** Now, those who are citizens. Europe, because of the trauma of the World War II has laws against Nazism, in other words you can be prosecuted for being a Nazi, you can be prosecuted for idealizing Hitler, because Hitler brought that much of the suffering.

**C.P.:** It's narrowly defined as anti-Semitism. That nationalism, or radical nationalism in Europe was anti-Semitism.

**S.B.:** But you know, anti-Semitism today in Europe, by Muslims...

**C.P.:** ... is rampant, sure. But even there the European governments have gone wrong.

**S.B.:** The problem here is getting back to values and saying very firmly to those various Muslim religious leaders: "You want to live among us, these are the rules." And you're going to have to be very clear that in your mosques you won't be saying these things. It's not a matter of saying, "Oh, we won't call for killing Christians, but it's ok that we can call for killing Jews, or Hindus in Pakistan." No. And that should be the rule. After 9/11 a very high percentage of the Muslims in Holland was supportive of the attacks. The person who was a coordinator of intelligence called in all of the imams of Holland - very typically Dutch - all sitting together and have some sandwiches. So he opened up and he said to them, "What's the problem with you, why this animosity? Look what a nice country we are." So a person got up and he said, "I am the imam of Utrecht, and you see, Allah has said that the whole world will be Muslim, and this country will be Muslim too." Then he said to him, "Sir, what is your profession, what is your education?" He

said, "A graduate of the sharia school." He said, "No, I want to know what your education is in water engineering." He said, "Excuse me? Water engineering?" "Well, you see, this country that you want to take away from us is already under water, so if you want to take it, you better get a good education in water engineering, otherwise why don't you go back to where...." This was an inside discussion that he told me about. Two weeks later they discovered that there was a small mistake in his application for citizenship, a date or something like that. And they sent him back to Libya.

**C.P.:** Well, he is probably studying to be a water engineer.

**S.B.:** This might sound very crude, etc. And Europeans don't like that. But I think that there has to be a new social contract.

**C.P.:** Shmuel, thank you very much, it was a great discussion. We hope to have you back soon.

**S.B.:** My pleasure.



---

## DISCUSSION\*

---

Marios Evriviades\*\*

16 February 2016

### Recasting the Security of the Eastern Mediterranean

*The Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East are in a state of flux and this will likely worsen. Especially with regard to Syria, a lasting settlement will be difficult without a new security architecture for the region.*

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** Good afternoon again and thank you for joining us at ERPIC Live. Our topic today is “Recasting the Security of the Eastern Mediterranean”. We have with us Dr. Klearchos Kyriakides, Director of our Rule of Law and Democracy Program, and Dr. Marios Evriviades, our own international security expert. As always, the participants of our discussion express their own personal views. Gentlemen, welcome. Marios, over the last few weeks the Syrian army and its Kurdish allies are retaking northern Syria. The Turks are threatening to intervene, NATO is poised to support them, and President Medvedev of Russia has cautioned against a set of events that could lead to world war. Is Medvedev right?

**Marios Evriviades (M.E.):** I don't think we are heading towards world war, in the sense that it has been implied. But we are certainly witnessing in Syria a breakdown of the world order, and basically we are seeing sort of Hobbesian world of war against all. It appears, as you have said, that Syria and its allies are gaining the strategic momentum, and that goes well, in the sense that we may be heading even amidst this chaos towards stabilization, but this has to happen to some international conference, so that legitimacy can be given to whatever it is agreed. So despite the fact that things look and are chaotic, we are seeing this new Turkish assertiveness, and I sort of don't agree with the implication that NATO may be poised in to come in and help Turkey. I think ever since the shooting down of the Russian airplane on the 21st of November, NATO has not been very happy with Turkey.

**C.P.:** Can we look forward to a concert of the Middle East, like the concert of Europe, if you remember your history? Is there a historical period that kind of explains the type of dynamics that our region is going through? Are we pre-World War II, pre-World War I? Where are we at?

**M.E.:** This is a loaded question. Let me just say that we may be seeing some sort of agreement

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Professor of International Relations, Neapolis University Paphos*

between Russia and the United States specifically at this period on the Syrian issue. But I think the bigger point that the Syrian crisis manifests, is that we are coming to the end of an era. And the era I am talking about is the post-Cold War era. We have had the bipolar world from 1945 to 1990, in which we had an arrangement of the two superpowers, basically managing peace in the central area which is Europe, and having conflicts in the periphery, but managing those conflicts. This era ended with the Cold War. From 1990, up until the Syrian crisis, and I think the Ukrainian crisis, which is the other side of the Syrian crisis - we can talk about it you want, and see how the two are related - with the Syrian crisis we are seeing an end of an era, and I will explain what I mean by that. Up until the Syrian and Ukrainian crisis the power of the United States was preponderant, and the United States had the ability to shape the strategic environment. I think the crisis in Syria, and the crisis in Ukraine have indicated that for the first time, actually not since the end of the Cold War, but since the World War II, the United States has lost, or is losing the ability to shape the strategic environment. In other words, both in the Ukrainian crisis, which led to the Crimean situation, the Americans try to bring in Ukraine into the so-called Western system or family, and the reaction from the Russians is basically to take over Crimea. And to that move the West had no answer. In the case of Syria, the United States basically tried to play a Libya scenario in Syria, in other words to bring a regime change in Syria, the way they brought the regime change in Libya. How did they bring regime change in Libya? By basically abusing some decisions of the Security Council, which allowed the West to intervene in a humanitarian fashion, and basically overthrowing the regime of Gaddafi. Now, they try to do the same in Syria, and we have seen Russia and China not allowing them to do it through the United Nations, through some sort of legitimacy. Because the important thing that is happening in everything in the world, the bottom line is legitimacy. Is what is happening in Syria legitimate, or not? Let me conclude by saying that in the case of Syria the attempt to bring a forceful regime change, regime change or the change of government, if it happens domestically, through domestic sources, it's acceptable.

**C.P.:** That is exactly what I wanted to mention. At some point, in perhaps the eighties, the US made certain decisions that it could, and that it was legitimate to pursue regime change. During the Cold War there were all these doctrines, the Brezhnev doctrine, etc., which indicated that if it's a communist regime and it goes communist by itself, we will intervene to protect it. But perhaps the Chile situation was the first of a calculated regime change, or at least a preempted communization of the regime. But conscious regime change came into play with Iraq. Because there was a debate, as you know, in the United States with "neocons", etc., that it was correct to change the regime of a state that was a rogue state, or that exhibited certain characteristics that were not acceptable in the international community, and so on. This, it seems, the pendulum has come back the other way, that those experiments of regime change ended up in extreme hardship. And therefore now there's a tendency again for the international community to err on the side of legitimacy as long as the due process is held, the UN and so on, that it is not so easy to just go in and change the regime.

**M.E.:** Let me say, just for the sake of history, that you were correct when you said that it started in the 80s, and we need to tie this down with the regime change that happened in the Philippines with Marcos...

**C.P.:** But also the end of the Cold War...

**M.E.:** I just want to give you the historical perspective. Because actually regime change, if we really want to be very historical about it, began in the fifties, with the regime change in Iran, in



Guatemala, then we have had various attempts of regime change, people don't know this, in Syria from 1949, through fifties. We had actually a crisis in Syria, very similar to the crisis that we are witnessing today, between '57 and '58, with the Turkish army on the border ready to invade Syria. But the regime change that people are familiar with these days is the one that tries to bring in the democratic and the humanitarian aspect. Now, in the sense of the democratic, the precedence is the regime change with Marcos in the Philippines, in 1984, when basically through the work of the Reagan administration and senator Lugar, basically told Marcos: "just step down". That's the precedent that leads us to the nineties with the goal of the collapse of the Cold War, and the idea that democratic governments should be the ones governing the people, and not autocratic or dictatorial governments. But as you have said, in the post-World War period we basically tried, or the West basically tried to put aside the United Nations. They tried to put aside the regime that was established since World War II under the United Nations, and what we are witnessing now in Libya and other places...

**C.P.:** Why? Because it didn't it work?

**M.E.:** Well, yes because they said that...

**C.P.:** Bretton Woods was a US invention...

**M.E.:** Like I said: the US has been shaping the strategic environment since the World War II.

**K.K.:** Can I just step in here. On the question of regime change, we have to make this point that whenever the British and the Americans are engaged in regime change, or a variation of regime change, in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, it's tended to backfire on them. I'm thinking of the Suez Crisis in 1956, which had an ulterior motive to attempt to bring about the downfall of Nasser, which failed spectacularly, the British ended up with egg on their face, and the rest of it happened. We had then Saddam Hussein in 2003. Again, a spectacular failure. And what we're seeing in Iraq and Syria today is in part a consequence of that. Even you mentioned Iran earlier, 1953, the downfall of Mosaddegh eventually led to the Ayatollah's coming to power in 1979. So why have the British and the Americans not learnt the painful lessons of history, and supported regime change in effect in both Syria and Libya, particularly since 2011?

**M.E.:** Well, I guess there is a presumption in the West that their system is the legitimate system, that everybody seeks democratic governance, and that is true in a sense, and it was shown by the fact that socialized, or the authoritarian regimes, most of them have collapsed. But at the same time the point is that it cannot be forced from the outside, and it has to happen through internal processes, and not by force, and by the assumption that you know better than the natives.

**C.P.:** And surely, there is also the Western liberal democratic version, and there is a more Eastern, more authoritarian if you want, democracy that is democratic on the surface, but it's actually not democratic at all.

**M.E.:** The so-called democracies with Asian values.

**C.P.:** And perhaps they are closer than Asia. A lot of the Middle Eastern situations have this characterization. I think it's this oriental vs. occidental divide, where you have the Enlightenment, and where the Enlightenment has not reached. I think that is the challenge, that sometimes the regime changes that aim at bringing across liberal, Western liberal

democratic values, they don't do that. At best, they bring an oriental democracy façade...

**M.E.:** The so-called illiberal democracy.

**C.P.:** The illiberal democracy that is prone to all sorts of abuses, the West comes in to support that, and that's what happened over the last few years culminating with the Arab Spring. Because what is the Arab Spring? The Arab Spring is a disillusionment of people in this part of the world with Western liberal values. Disillusionment – why? Not with the values themselves, but with their application, because they were never applied properly to places like Egypt...

**M. E.:** Or to places like Saudi Arabia...

**C.P.:** Saudi Arabia is a sui generis kind of a situation. It's a little Kingdom with an ability to affect international affairs, because it has the financial clout do this...

**M.E.:** Yes, but when you are having an alliance which wants to bring democratic regime change, and your instruments, or instrumentalities are the regime of Saudi Arabia, or the Kuwaiti regime, what kind of moral standards are you applying?

**C.P.:** Certainly not your own Western moral standards, but I think...

**M.E.:** So maybe we need to scratch down from the surface and see what are the geopolitical imperatives that are at work here, and not this façade of democratic...

**C.P.:** That's the dynamics that I was talking about. You have to deal with certain dynamics. Some of them are demographic, some of them are geopolitical, some of them are ideological. Now you've got the religious fundamentalism thrown in the mix.

**M.E.:** But the point I'm trying to make with regards to the end of an era, in other words the end of the post-Cold War era, and we are going into a new era now, and your question: what kind of system are we getting into? What we are witnessing is going back to the past. In other words, we're either going back to the pre-World War II era, or the pre-World War I era. In other words, we are moving into a multipolar system. And multiple systems are good, in a sense that they prevent hegemonism, and one country dominating other countries. At the same time, they are very much more vulnerable to conflict and imbalances that could lead to a general war. In that sense maybe Medvedev is right: we are moving into a very dangerous world.

**K.K.:** Earlier you mentioned that NATO, to some extent at least, mistrusts Turkey. And you've also mentioned the pre-World War I era. This is quite interesting. If you look at the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the early twentieth century in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, you had the breakdown of the Anglo-Turkish relationship which was part of the Crimean War and post-Crimean War period, and you had the crystallization of a Turkish-German alliance. And what you're seeing in this part of the world today is the re-emergence of a Turkish-German alliance, strains in the Turkish relationship with the United Kingdom...

**C.P.:** Can we go so far as to call it an alliance, though?

**K.K.:** With Germany?

**C.P.:** Yes. Aren't we overstepping the definition?

**M.E.:** Well, they are allies in NATO, both of them.

**C.P.:** Sure. But is there a special relationship?

**K.K.:** Well, there is a special relationship going back to the post-1878 period, when the British and the Turks entered into what was called a convention of defensive alliance that was supposed to help Turkey beat off the Russians with the help of the British. And the British were hoping that that would create the beginning of a new era of Anglo-Turkish friendship, and it ended up producing a new era of Turkish-German friendship, which eventually led to the First World War, and the formation of a Turkish-German alliance against the British, and interestingly enough, against the French and the Russians too. And we're seeing a variation of this today.

**M.E.:** There has been a little understanding, when I said that NATO distrusts Turkey. Turkey is a longstanding member of NATO. What the NATO allies are uncomfortable with is a lot of the Turkish initiatives taking place in the Middle East, climaxing with the shooting down of the Russian plane, which was in terms of NATO potentially confronting Russia, a very provocative act, because it could have led into situations that are uncontrollable. And the first NATO session right after the shooting out of the plane was a very hostile session against Turkey. The people were saying: we have an alliance to support each other, and decisions on such important matters are taken within the alliance. Of course there is a devil theory that this was all organized and planned. But at any rate it was a very risky situation, which of course created the opposite effect from the one planned. It brought the Russians firmly into the area, the Russians established a no-fly zone over Syria instead of what NATO, and especially Turkey wanted, and that of course created the new strategic situation on the ground.

**C.P.:** Klearchos, what you've said is interesting. That period of British-Turkish cooperation leading to German-Turkish, etc. But that period was the period of Ottoman decline. Now is a period of neo-Ottoman ascendance. And the declining power generates different dynamic than an ascending power. Perhaps it's debatable which is more dangerous. It may lead to the same consequences, or it may not. It may not lead to the same reactions of other powers, because they view the declining power as perhaps an opportunity, a fishing opportunity, and an ascending power as a different proposition.

**K.K.:** I have to say here that back in 1914 the Turks, with the help of Germans, ended up bombarding the Russians in the Black Sea, in late October 1914. That resulted in a British declaration of war against Turkey on the 5th of November 1914, and on the same day the British annexed the island of Cyprus, and asserted sovereignty over Cyprus. And a few days later, we mustn't forget this, the Ottoman Empire and Caliphate, and I emphasize the word "Caliphate" here, the Ottoman Empire and the Caliphate declared jihad against the non-German Christian nations of the world.

**C.P.:** Why did they differentiate between the German and non-German?

**K.K.:** Because the Germans were on the side of the Turks, so the jihad had to be limited primarily to the British, French, and the Russians.

**C.P.:** They were presumably just as heathen as the rest of us.

**K.K.:** I am not an expert on jihad. But the point is - this is the point I'm coming to - is the so-called "caliphate", that was declared on the 30th of June 2014 is in a sense an attempt to revive the old caliphate that was dismantled at the end of the World War I by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

So my question to Mario is: to what extent should we in Cyprus and the European Union be concerned by the emergence of this so-called caliphate in Syria and Iraq?

**M.E.:** We should be concerned in terms of the theology, or ideology of Islamic fundamentalism, because in their view of the world everything has been predetermined, everything is in the Quran, we are all Muslims and we don't know it, and that eventually we will die Muslims...

**C.P.:** One way or the other.

**M.E.:** One way or the other. And the extreme version of jihadism says that if you do not voluntarily become a Muslim, then we'll force you to become a Muslim. But in terms of actually what is happening now in the Middle East, in terms of the jihadist fundamentalism, I have always argued that those who were fighting against Islamic fundamentalism try to contain it, even within the areas that it declared caliphate, the areas in Syria and Iraq that have been under its control...

**C.P.:** It is shrinking though.

**M.E.:** It is shrinking; materially they are losing territory under their control. Today in the morning I just checked the internet, the Syrian Army, or the Syrian alliance is moving towards Raqqa. The Turks are desperate because they have a de facto alliance with ISIS, nobody wants to say it publicly, but it's there, everybody knows it, everybody pretends, especially the Turkish Western allies pretend that this is not happening, but the point of fact is that the territorial control of the fundamentalists is shrinking. And I was saying that even if they were allowed without going through this process of the worry, they try to contain them, it would have happened anyway, because the history of the caliphate tells us the same story: they basically kill each other, they eliminate each other. Most of the caliphs were killed by those claiming their throne, so it was a matter of time, I think.

**C.P.:** This is true of most kings though, I think.

**M.E.:** The king is dead, long live the king. I want to make another point, if I may. It's true that we may be moving into a multipolar era, but the difference between the multipolar eras prior to World War II, and after World War II is that as a consequence of World War II, and the United Nations system that has been established, the use of force, and the acquisition of territory by force, is very difficult, impossible to legitimize. So therefore, if we try to look at the day after in our region, because there is a lot of speculation, whether the new countries will emerge, or whether there will be a new Kurdish state, or more than one Kurdish states, and things like that, it would be very difficult, I think, to establish territorial lines, the lines that were set up by imperialists during 1916, the famous Sykes-Picot lines that have established the modern Middle East, in a sense, whether those lines would change. What we will probably see is more autonomy within Syria, within Iraq, more tribalization...

**C.P.:** Tribalization is interesting, because does this mean that we are seeing less tribalization, and more sort of back to an enduring sense of nationalism?

**M.E.:** I think we're going through the phase of tribalization. One who knows the history knows that the Middle East has always been tribalized. An attempt was made after World War II, to build up national states in the Arab world. I think with the exception of Egypt, who has a long tradition and history...

**C.P.:** ... and Iran for that matter...

**M.E.:** Iran is not an Arab state.

**C.P.:** Sure, but it is a player in the region.

**M.E.:** Of course it is a player in the region, but it is not an Arab state. So what we see in Egypt - and Syria in a sense, because Syria is the birthplace of Arab nationalism - so what I think we're witnessing now is we are going to go through this process of intense tribalization, but I think we will be coming back to ethnic nationalism. It's a contradiction in terms if we talk about nationalism in the Middle East, if we're including religion - Islam. But there are indications that in Iraq, for example, the old Bath remnants are re-establishing themselves into a sort of an Iraqi nationalistic core, and the idea is that once this thing settles, an Iraqi nationalism will be emerging. And probably Syrian nationalism. The only problem with this kind of nationalism is that most of the supporters are Sunni Arabs, and the idea now is how to also end this Sunni-Shiite conflict.

**C.P.:** Is there a bias in the international system towards nationalism? So that the reemergence of nationalism is a sort of structural, deterministic effect?

**M.E.:** There is a bias in the international system, because most national states, which are the players of the international system...

**K.K.:** Or nation-states. This leads neatly to the point I was going to make. Here in the Republic of Cyprus we are on the southeast edge of the European Union. And there is an attempt now to create a constitutional settlement which will tribalize, or re-tribalize this part of the European Union with this so-called bi-communal bi-zonal federation. We've mentioned earlier the pre-1914 Concert of Europe era, and the Cold War. The major difference, or one of the major differences between those two eras and today, is that we are having many European nation-states, if I can use this phrase, growing Muslim minorities, which have elements within them which are unfortunately inflicted by this tribalization culture. We've also seen the events in Paris on the 13th of November, the bloodbath, which is a spillover of what we're seeing in Syria and Iraq. So that the question I have is: do you agree with me that a major change with previous eras is that the Middle East is now not only important for Europe, but the Middle East is becoming increasingly a part of Europe, through the changing demographics? And if so, what are the consequences for the security of Europe?

**M.E.:** Well, this is actually the biggest question. We're seeing its consequences in the inability of the European Union, or even individual national states in Europe, but the European Union as a whole, to handle this crisis. A lot of it has been brought on the European Union, of course there is the legacy of imperialism and colonialism, because a lot of the presence of non-Western people is a consequences of European imperialism. And in a sense, one can say that the chickens are coming home to roost. But this recent phase is basically a consequence of the wars in the Middle East, because we are having a massive influx of refugees into Europe. One would say that if these were happening over a period of time, because you are from England, England has had a lot of communities: from India, from Pakistan, from Cyprus, third and fourth generation, which in many ways have been acclimatized into the community. Now this impact is happening very suddenly, and it is happening under these circumstances of Muslims feeling persecuted and attacked. And therefore the reaction is the one that we are seeing, and it takes an extremist form. I am the last to say how this can be handled.

**K.K.:** My response is that the way you handle this is you embrace the values of liberal democracy and the rule of law: equality under the law, non-discrimination, inclusion, integration, respect for human rights.

**C.P.:** That spells assimilation, and it is not happening.

**K.K.:** The great danger is that the European Union is gradually surrendering its values, and here in Cyprus, instead of supporting liberal democracy, and equality, and non-discrimination, and integration, there are supporting the separation of Christians from Muslims under bi-communal bi-zonal settlement and coexistence. In other words, what is Cyprus? I argue that Cyprus is either a bulwark which is going to end up propping up liberal democracy, democratic values, and the rule of law, or it's going to be a domino, that will topple and result in knock-on effect in the rest of Europe. Do you agree with me?

**M.E.:** Klearchos, you're making a very, very important point, in the sense that, as I tried to argue, the previous generations of immigrants, in a place like England, that came in prior to World War II and in the aftermath, these were people that fought in the armies to defeat the Nazis, to defeat the racialism, and they came into a place like England, and I think, correct me please, most of them are assimilated. The problem now is that it's happening suddenly, and it cannot be handled. In the case of Cyprus we have a tradition of co-existence, acculturation and assimilation in Cyprus...

**C.P.:** Acculturation and assimilation are two different things, although they are side by side.

**M.E.:** A culture of tolerance has been established in Cyprus over the years, which was forcefully and suddenly broken up by the events...

**C.P.:** I am not sure if it's fiction or reality, because there is a lot of this idea that everything was hunky-dory in the Ottoman period...

**M.E.:** No, no, I am not saying that. People who are not in love with each other, I'm not saying that.

**K.K.:** And also there was self-segregation in the Turkish quarters.

**M.E.:** They were not on each other's throats. The point is that Cyprus can be used as an example of integration, as example for Europe. It is not happening, and they are reinforcing this segregation, and basically racialism, in the form, or an umbrella, of bi-communalism.

**K.K.:** It is just a footnote to what you were saying Marios. You mentioned my British background. I'm very concerned that in the United Kingdom we actually have a government department called the Department for Communities and Local Government. So the tribalization that we've been talking about in the Middle East has not only been spilled over into the United Kingdom, but it's actually being reflected in the name of a government department. It should really be the Department of Community or Society and Local Government. So this is something I tell my British friends who are listening here. Now, we need to support the principle of integration and assimilation over and above the principles of division.

**C.P.:** Exactly. And you've led me to this comment. The philosophy behind the integration of the European Union is one not of an assimilation, because you don't want to make French people

into Germans. It's respect of the difference and toleration of diversity. Now, if that's your governing philosophy you cannot then say: for the immigrants, wherever they step off, or wherever they end up in Europe, we're going to assimilate them, we're going to force them to assimilate. No. You're practicing the same standard. And therefore, you will allow them to have their group individuality, and their customs, and their culture, and so on. The problem is that in these cases there is an abuse of that, of tolerance, because the immigrants are not part of the original system. And let's face it, what was the original system: Western Enlightened Christianity. I don't mean to be religious here, but if you come from a different tradition - and it could be oriental Christianity, it doesn't have to be Muslim, or something else - then holding onto your culture, and your traditions, is disruptive of the whole European experiment, because all European experience is: hang on to your individuality, as long as it doesn't really upset the total, because the total is more or less the same, and the individuality gives it some spice, let's say. In this case, in the case where the spice is so strong, the spice turns into a poison. And this is what you're having: you are having the spice of diversity turned into to a killing portion, because it is threatening the core. Now, I think that dichotomy has not been resolved in the European mind, and I don't think it's being addressed either. Do you guys agree with this, or is it totally off the wall?

**M.E.:** We've made a terrible mistake in Britain. We allowed the emergence of faith schools. So you can have a Muslim school, a Jewish school, we even have Greek Orthodox schools, scattered around the country. And the tribalization is actually creating a "milletization", to use an Ottoman expression, the "milletization" of the United Kingdom. We have communities scattered all over the place, faith schools scattered all over the place, and this is inimical to the emergence of an integrated society under the rule of law. It's a massive problem that we need to address in Europe.

**M.E.:** I want to shift gears and go to the United States, and see that we have all kinds of immigrants in the United States, from all over the place. We even have an indigenous Muslim people there, a reaction of the black people against their abuse...

**C.P.:** There, the philosophy was always to become American.

**M.E.:** Precisely. There is an American identity, and underneath that very colorful diversity. In fact it's fashionable to be ethnic in the United States. Now, why can't Europe bring that about? The reason why - because Europe is not a political union. It is still a situation in evolution, and it seems the evolution does not seem to be going...

**C.P.:** The idea of being European hasn't been elevated to a national level. You don't feel a national European. You feel European culturally, but you feel British, or German, or whatever. The concept of Europeanism hasn't been elevated to the level of nationalism. It could, eventually, but I am not sure it is going to go that way.

**M.E.:** I don't know if it could. Do you know why? Because there is another issue, and now we are shifting gears a lot here, but there's another issue when it comes to Europe, and the European integration, and the European Union, etc., which has been emerging. And this is the idea of a lack of accountability and democracy within the European Union, and the total condescending attitude of European bureaucrats...

**C.P.:** Or as they call them "Brusselcrats".

**M.E.:** The whole idea that they know better than that the European people, who have a long tradition and history in the democratic struggles, and evolution of human rights. So the reason why the European Union at some point stopped and it is not moving anywhere has a lot to do with the structure and the ideas that are pervasive within the bureaucracy otherwise the idea of Europe is to actually bring out all the differences. Most of the languages, the European languages that had disappeared, are coming back. The other issue with regards to the integration, and the assimilation or whatever, of the Muslim communities, because that's what it boils down to, has to do with how the Muslim faith in the Quran is understood and perceived by people. Because there are those who say that it can allow tolerance and diversity, and there are those who say that that's not the case. And that, therefore, either you do it the Muslim way, or you have to give up. So there is a big issue there, and a big debate which is not being properly discussed, and it is not at all addressed in Cyprus. The importance of religion, everybody puts it under the rag. They think that if we find the domestic solution to the governance, than that's it, and everything will be implemented, and this issue is totally ignored. Nobody is making any issue of the fact that the whole occupied area is being filled up with the mosques and religious schools. What's the future with those?

**C.P.:** Relating this concept of Europe back to the Middle East, would you say that there's a misunderstanding, or a lack of understanding, or lack of comprehension of what's going on in this part of the world, structurally and dynamically? You, Klearchos, are more familiar with Britain. But Britain has always been savvy about the region, has had the sense about the Eastern Med and the Middle East. But even Britain now is out of touch, or out of sync.

**K.K.:** Well, we are slipping into this neo-milletization in the United Kingdom. There are two questions the whole of Europe has to ask itself in this dramatic new era we are in. The first is: how do we integrate everybody, irrespective of ethnicity or religion? Is Cyprus, the model is that it constitutionally separates people into Christians and Muslims, and calls them "two communities". Because this phrase – the "two communities" – is just a fig leaf. If you strip away the fig leaf, it is Christian and Muslim. Is that the way you do it, by separating people constitutionally and "zonally", which is the other side of communalism, or do you do it through integration, through multi-ethnic, multi-faith society? I would prefer a multi-faith, multiethnic society across the European Union. Look at the presidential candidates in the United States of America. You've got Cuban-Americans Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz. You've got a woman: Hillary Clinton. You've got a Jewish-American: Bernie Sanders. And you've got the WASPS represented by Donald Trump. And that's how it should be. We should embrace diversity in the European Union, but we should also enshrine diversity in our constitutional systems.

**C.P.:** Marios, I want to hear your view on the European take about the Middle East and what's happening here. We don't understand what's happening around us, so let alone the Europeans. We're reaching for some sort of system that's going to or could be established by default, or by design in this part of the world. One model would be that the states, which are very nationalistic, like Turkey and Iran and so on, are going to be dominant in this tribal region. And Egypt for that matter, if it gets economic... and Israel. So do these strong nation-states have a built-in advantage in this part of the world? Or can you see something different? Looking over the horizon, what system do you see established in this part of the world?

**M.E.:** Let me say that, first of all, irrespective of some reservations that people may have, the most strategic importance of the developments in the Middle East is the gradual return of Iran into the international system, which means that Iran will be conducting business with Europe,



with Russia, with a lot of countries, which means that the behavior of Iran will be more congruent and more sort of normalized, in a sense. Iran is a critical country in the Middle East. It is, as you said, a nationalistic country. And you mentioned Turkey and its nationalism, and therefore a balancing situation between these two countries. I like balances. Egypt has a very strong identity, and therefore we also have a strong country there; you've mentioned Israel too. If there is a balance, I am all for balances. And where there is a balance, even weaker countries, not smaller countries... And I want to emphasize that point that there are no big and small countries in the international system: there are strong countries and there are weak countries. And what do the weak countries do in order to compensate for their weakness? They create alliances and they create cooperation. And this is what's happening, by the way, to end up with our region, the Eastern Mediterranean region, what we are witnessing here is the establishment, a gradual corporation between Cyprus and Egypt, between Cyprus and Israel, between Cyprus, Greece and Israel. It involves Jordan, Lebanon. So what we are witnessing is the building of a regional system, sub-regional system that will play its role in this bigger system that you talked about in terms of the bigger countries, with their participation and based on this energy situation that is evolving. I think we have a chance to develop a corporation here that can produce both wealth, peace and security.

**C.P.:** So it is a concert of the Eastern Med emerging, in the background of this cacophony

**M.E.:** Correct.

**C.P.:** But what do you need to establish it? It is not just random little meetings...

**M.E.:** Let me say very quickly. There are already in place two very important peace treaties in the region, let's not forget about that. There is a peace treaty between Israel in Egypt of 1979, and there is a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, 1994. I think those are the cornerstones on which to build. You can build it individually, and then eventually bring all the people together. There are a number of developments. A lot of people say energy is a catalyst. But there are also other developments I think in the region that could eventually build this up. And I look forward to the Eastern Mediterranean becoming an autonomous, strategic region that can produce its own policies, and its own security, and its own wealth.

**K.K.:** There is a very important point that needs to be made here about the Republic of Cyprus in this concept of the Eastern Mediterranean concert, if we can use that phrase. Cyprus is unique, for various reasons. It has a membership of the European Union, which Greece has as well, but Israel, and Egypt, and Jordan don't. Cyprus is a member of the Council of Europe, which Turkey is a member of, Greece is a member of, but the rest of the region isn't. But Cyprus has something else: it's a member of the Commonwealth. It has a special relationship with the British, has a special relationship with India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand. So Cyprus has the potential, if things play out sensibly, it has the potential to really be the pivot in these overlapping circles, and bring all of those institutions to the region, for the benefit of the region, for the benefit of democracy, and ultimately for the benefit of the people.

**M.E.:** Which means, Klearchos, that any solution must not take away Cyprus' ability to act as a player, as an autonomous player, within the constraints of the international system. Because any other solution that would place Cyprus under the dominance of any other country is a solution that will create more problems than prospects for peace and security.

**C.P.:** That leads perfectly to the question I wanted to ask you: in this background of fluidity and uncertainty, and so on, is it better for Cypriots to reach boldly for a solution and a supranational settlement, or is it better to wait and see the results of this dynamic situation around them? Is it better to wait on the side of caution and wait for the storm to settle, or is it an opportunity now for us to reach for the settlement?

**M.E.:** Well, the cliché goes that any crisis and opportunity, etc.... I would have no objections provided that certain things are retained and negotiated, and the primary thing, which I implied in my previous answer, is that Cyprus must retain its ability to decide its own future. If that were to happen –yes. But at the same time, we see the whole area is in a total...

**C.P.:** But who is Cyprus? Is it the Greek Cypriots, or the Turkish Cypriots?

**K.K.:** It should be the citizens of the Republic of Cyprus.

**M.E.:** Cyprus is a Cypriot state, and Cyprus, let us say for another time, is the satrapy of no country. Cyprus is an autonomous player in the international system, and it shouldn't be allowed to be made a satrapy of another country. And those who make Cyprus a satrapy to any state will have to live with that legacy.

**C.P.:** Gentlemen, thank you very much.

---

## DISCUSSION\*

---

Hrayr Jebejian\*\*

23 January 2016

### Challenges Facing Christian Communities in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East

*Dr. Jebejian denies the exclusively religious character of the persecution of Christians in the Middle East. He focuses rather on political or secular incentives of intolerance and suggests an acceptance of the fate of Christian minorities beholden to Islam. Internalization of their oppression and acceptance of their dhimmi status is widespread among Christian minorities in the Middle East.*

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** Good afternoon once again, and welcome to ERPIC. My co-host again is Dr. Klearchos Kyriakides, Director of ERPIC's Law and Democracy Program. And we have with us Dr. Hrayr Jebejian, Secretary General of the Bible Society of the Arab Gulf. Our focus this evening will be on the challenges facing Christian communities in the greater Middle East. As always, our speakers expressed their own personal views. Gentlemen, welcome. Dr. Jebejian, I'm sure you've studied the historical developments over the years of the Christian communities in this part of the world. What is the fate of Christianity in the Middle East?

**Hrayr Jebejian (H.J.):** First of all, thank you very much for being here, for this panel discussion. It's so exciting to see that we have the opportunity in order to discuss and do some brainstorming about some of the critical issues that the Middle East is going through, which of course has its impact and its influence on the rest of the world. The Christian communities, and the fate of the Christians, is one of the contemporary issues that we are dealing with these days, and the whole world is talking about, especially with regard to what's happening recently in Iraq and Syria. Before answering your question, may I pause for a minute, and say one important thing. Christianity and the Christian Church were born in Middle East, and this is something which we really need to deal with. The Christian community is not a guest in a way; the Christian community was born in the Middle East. Christ was born in Bethlehem, and Bethlehem is in the Middle East. So Christianity, right from its birth, was part of this land, which is the Middle East. It was part of the culture, it went through all the developments in the Middle East, it contributed a lot to the welfare of the communities in the Middle East, it shared the struggles, its pains, and its joys. So when we talk about the Christian

\* Transcript

\*\* Secretary-General, Bible Society of the Gulf

presence in the Middle East, we have to say that the Christians are part of the community in which they are living today. So when we talk about all these problems, and the issues, and persecution of the Christians, so we need to bear in mind that Christians are not guests, but they are locals living in this part of the world. And of course we are all following, unfortunately, all the tragic events that are happening with the Christian communities. But let me draw to your kind attention to one important fact, which I personally believe that we have to deal with. It is true that the Christians are being persecuted. It is true that the Christians are being expelled from their own homelands, in which they were born and they were raised with all the churches, and all the schools, and all the communities in which they are living in. But I would dare to say that the Christians are not the only minority, or the only community, which is being persecuted, or which is being expelled from their own community. Unfortunately, the situation throughout the Middle East, the greater Middle East, is very complicated these days, it is very confusing, and least to say it is very messy. We are witnessing the so-called new ideology coming up in our region, so-called a new culture, which is the rejection of the "Other". To put it simply: if you're not with us, then you are against us. This whole ideology is called fundamentalism.

**C.P.:** How new is this though? You say that Christians are not guests, but whether you're a guest or a trespasser depends on the one who holds the title deed of the property. And now the title deed of these countries is held by non-Christians. And, therefore, it is their view, it seems, that counts. So it's one thing saying that Christianity belongs here, as far as Christianity and the Christians are concerned, but that doesn't speak of the other side – the side that dictates whether they can live here or not. Because I take this is what you're alluding to with this change of philosophy. It is a decision to dictate others whether they can live here or not, and with the ability to carry it through.

**H.J.:** Of course, first of all Christians were always a minority in the greater Middle East, they were always a minority, they were never a majority.

**C.P.:** Even at the time of the Byzantine Empire?

**H.J.:** No, I am talking about the modern era. If you look into the modern era, they were always a minority, and the majority was Islam. But what we are really witnessing these days is the so-called growing fundamentalism, the religious fundamentalism, which is creating sort of a new ideology, and new culture.

**C.P.:** Is it a fundamentalism, or radicalization, because there are all these terms being thrown around. Is it radical Islam, or is it fundamental Islam, is it just Islam rediscovered?

**H.J.:** Not exactly, because if you look into what's happening in the Middle East these days, it's not only Christians that are being persecuted, and this is what I was trying to emphasize right from the start.

**C.P.:** So is it radicalized Islam? And if so, why did it all of the sudden become radicalized? Is it the result of the Gulf War? Was it something that was growing gradually? You've been witnessing these things first hand.

**H.J.:** It's very interesting the way that the communities and their ideologies are being developed. And recently I was really reviewing one of the sociologist, Robertson, who is an expert in the globalization. In today's globalized world, he says, people are losing their identity,

and they are being threatened. And against that people are in search for the personal story, because they are losing the bigger story. And this personal story is creating some kind of a paradox which we have today, and we are coming with some form of a political identity, which is what we call the radicalism.

**C.P.:** But I have made that point, that what is happening is radicalization, but also tribalization. The region is breaking up into tribalism, but with an overarching radical Islam.

**H.J.:** Yes, but not all Islam is radical. Because if you look into the overall situation as to what's happening in the greater Middle East, we have, yes, on the one side, Christians that are suffering, but there are also other minorities that are equally suffering.

**C.P.:** But that doesn't make it right.

**H.J.:** Of course that does not make it right. But what I'm trying to say is that, yes, Christians are suffering, but also other ethnic groups and minorities are suffering, and among them are also Muslim minorities. For example, the Shias who are suffering. And there are also the Yazidis, for example, who are being persecuted, and they were expelled from their homes. The Kurds are also being persecuted. So what we are witnessing these days, is kind of ethnic conflicts in this region, where the Christians are also a part of this land, and this ethnic cleansing because they are part of the so-called "Other", and they do not belong to that particular group, or that ideology, so they've been persecuted. So in this respect it is not right to see that it's only the Christians who are being targeted.

**C.P.:** Granted. But come back to the question I posed. Was this gradual incoming, or was it a reaction to something? Or is there a controlling mind behind it? Is it a conscious development? Is it a natural development of history?

**H.J.:** No, because as you look into all the events that are happening in the world, and especially in the Middle East, you could see how gradually it developed. It started with al-Qaida and then eventually moved into what we are calling these days ISIS, which is sort of an ideology, religious ideology, religious fundamentalism, which is being taught especially to this young generation.

**C.P.:** It's an unnatural development, or a planned action?

**H.J.:** It all depends on what you mean by saying "planned action".

**C.P.:** Sure, but there are certain things which begin in somebody's mind, or collectively, and it is implemented in politics and geopolitics. It's often the case: somebody wakes up with the great idea, and tries to implement it, and on the other hand there are certain dynamics of history, natural forces, which create certain developments and certain events. Is this the first, or the second, or combination of both?

**H.J.:** I am not a politician, but if you follow the trends that happened over the last, let's say, ten or fifteen years...

**C.P.:** I am not looking for conspiracy here. But it seems that there is an organizational element behind what is happening - a systematic movement, a systematic action.

**H.J.:** They are calling themselves ISIS, it's definitely an organization which is running this all fundamentalist movement, the rejection of the "Other", and the establishment of the Islamic caliphate which they are aiming for...

**C.P.:** And a reasonable question is: if it's "a", and you are dealing with this organizing mind one way or the other, you can perhaps solve the problem. But if it's deeper, systemic, structural, a historical trend, it's more difficult to deal with.

**H.J.:** Of course, and this is what is happening now. It is becoming more and more difficult to deal with because it's no more staying in the Middle East area, and it is spreading, unfortunately. And this is where internationally it is becoming...

**C.P.:** So it is becoming a force of nature.

**H.J.:** It looks as if. Look at what's happening in France, in Paris for example, with all the terrorist attacks which they claimed they were responsible for it. And also in other places, where there is a kind of atmosphere of fear and tension all around the world. So it's started in the Middle East, it's really an important hub for them in the Middle East, but it is also spreading and it is becoming an international threat. So, how to deal with that?

**Klearchos Kyriakides (K.K.):** I have a question for you, Hrayr. Can we view the present-day cruelty, and discrimination, and killing in historical context? And if so, how far back can we look to identify the source of this cruelty?

**H.J.:** There is this famous saying that history always repeats itself, right? So it's only that the perpetrators are different. It's all interrelated, but the culture changes. The way that we do things changes. If you look back into the history, of the early 20th century history, you can see that genocide took place in the beginning of the 20th century, starting with the Armenian Genocide, then the Jewish Holocaust, then today with the Christian persecutions, and the Yazidis' genocide, which they are actually even calling it a genocide. So you could see how the historical events are really taking place. So as I said, history is repeating itself. Maybe in those days, in the earlier days there wasn't this so-called ideology of the religious fundamentalism. Today we have a new kind of entity and ideology which is called religious fundamentalism, or whatever you want to name it, which is doing the murder.

**K.K.:** As a follow up to that. It's dangerous to ask the question "What if?", but I'll ask it nonetheless. What if the Western powers had clamped down on Turkey when it engaged in the unlawful killing and genocide of the Armenians during the World War I? What if the genocide and unlawful killings of the Armenians was followed by a proper war crimes process? Would Hitler and the Nazi regime have embarked upon the Holocaust? Or would they have thought twice? And would today ISIS, or whatever it's called, think twice about committing genocide in the Middle East?

**H.J.:** That's a very good question, because this argument was raised last April in Yerevan, in Armenia, during this international conference on the Armenian Genocide which was organized by the government of Armenia, where all the speakers and all the lectures were foreigners. There wasn't a single Armenian lecturer who would make a presentation. And one of the lecturer, he was from Scotland, Professor Donald Bloxham, he was the one who raised this issue: that because the Armenian Genocide, being the first genocide of the 20th century, because it remained unpunished, it gave way to other genocides to take place throughout the history. So, in a way he tried to make a connection between the crimes, irrespective of where the crime took place.

**K.K.:** I always call it the unlawful killing and genocide of the Armenians, because the genocide

began with the death of a single person, and each individual death collectively constituted the genocide. So we must never forget that the collective destruction of the Armenians is the consequence of the destruction of individual lives, that's why it is important to remember that.

**H.J.:** Exactly.

**K.K.:** But I think this is an interesting discussion, because if we look at the genocide and unlawful killing of the Armenians, they were assisted, directly or indirectly, by the Germans during the First World War, and then at the end of the First World War the allied powers did not launch a Nuremberg-style war crimes process. So what the history teaches us often is that the perpetrator of murder, manslaughter, and genocide is sometimes, but not always, assisted by external actors. And this, I suppose, brings us to the question of Christodoulos. What we're seeing today, individual killings taking place on the ground, they form part of what is arguably a genocide, and that brings us to the key question: are there external actors that are manipulating the situation, or assisting in any way?

**H.J.:** When it comes to the Armenian Genocide, for example, you have the historical verifications for that. Of course the perpetrator was the Ottoman Turkey those days, but Ottoman Turkey was an ally with the Germans and other nations. But of course you have all these foreign diplomatic agencies or offices that were there, who were witnessing what was happening with the Armenian nation. There were all these missionaries, all these diplomats...

**C.P.:** Thanks to one of them, Morgenthau, the world knows what happened. If it wasn't for that testimony, there would have been a dark space in history.

**H.J.:** Yes, exactly.

**C.P.:** But this is interesting. Most countries in the Middle East claimed to be democracies, in some ways liberal. Well, not liberal – illiberal. But, nevertheless, they tried to claim the banner of a democratic regime. They have constitutions. Constitutions indicate what actions are to be taken with human rights, minorities, and so on. Again, historically, was the fate of the Christian communities better under the Baathist regimes, for example? The secular Baathist regimes? Is it that the more religious regimes become, the less tolerant they become? Is there something to say in favor of the secular regimes that became the anathema of the Arab Spring?

**H.J.:** If you are going to look from a purely, let's say, Christian context...

**C.P.:** No, look at the minorities.

**H.J.:** The minorities. During these regimes one should admit that the minorities were protected. For example in Iraq, the Christians under Saddam were well-treated, and respected, and protected.

**C.P.:** For his own political reasons, it was not a matter of the ideology. Or was it? Was it a matter of Baathist ideology?

**H.J.:** It was a Baathist ideology, and the Christian community was a minority there, and they were protected. They were doing well during the Saddam times. And Christian community had freedom during these days in terms of worship, in terms of printing the Bible...

**C.P.:** They printed the Bible in Baghdad? Or you did?

**H.J.:** We did, yes! Let me give you an example. It sounds a bit surprising but during Saddam's times we printed the Bible in Baghdad, and we were free as a Bible society to distribute the Bible within the schools. Even, to your own surprise, we received a request from local government sources to distribute the Bible within the government department.

**C.P.:** Today it has changed?

**H.J.:** Today it has changed. In Baghdad, let's say, because the Baghdad regime is different than in other places, which are under the ISIS occupation, but at least today's Baghdad is protected. But in the Saddam's time they were protected and respected. We have to admit that.

**C.P.:** What about Syria?

**H.J.:** In Syria, again the same thing. The Christian communities were protected, and also the other minorities were protected, and were respected, and I have to say that they had quite a good degree of freedom in terms of worship and in terms of their activities. And of course today, when Syria is divided between the part which has been occupied by the fundamentalists and the other part which is under the government regime, the Christians, needless to say, are all under the government-controlled area. So they still enjoy this protection, they still enjoy the respect of the local authorities.

**C.P.:** But not the Yazidis.

**H.J.:** They are all in the part on the border with Iraq, between Syria and Iraq, they're all concentrated in those areas. Where there were a lot of deportations of the Yazidis, and persecution by the fundamentalist forces.

**C. P.:** But are they Muslim? Are they a particular type of Islam?

**H.J.:** The Yazidis, you mean?

**C.P.:** Yes.

**H.J.:** They are a minority which is not necessarily following Islam.

**K.K.:** Christodoulos made an interesting point that I wanted to pick on here. It's a generalization, but it's worth making. It appears to be that the more religious the regime, the more vulnerable the Christians happen to be. And it takes us back to the Armenians. We should never forget that the unlawful killing and genocide of the Armenians took place at a time when Turkey was a caliphate, as well as an empire. The genocide and unlawful killing took place at a time when Turkey had issued a jihad against the non-Muslim enemies of Turkey, and it was a religious regime. So we've got to be very careful about reintroducing...

**H.J.:** It all depends how you want to define a "religious regime".

**C.P.:** I'll tell you how: in a basic way. I think you must admit that what is coming together in this part of the world today is a feeling of entitlement to persecute, and a feeling of empowerment to do so. So there is the two: an inclination to do it, and the ability to do it. This is what I was probably thinking about on a "fishing expedition" before: is it a trend of history, or is it the effect of a policy by somebody? I think the empowerment element... or maybe there's a combination of both? This combination in both of these dynamics that are converging. Because I think Muslims in this part of the world feel entitled to assert their prominence in some way. Is



it a reaction to the new “crusades”, what they call them? There is something there, but there’s also the empowerment element. Some governments are making it possible for these people to do this. Again, I’m not insinuating that it’s the West or this or that. There has to be some sort of organized support for these things.

**H.J.:** I don’t want to enter into the political analysis, because I’m not a politician. But coming back to what he was referring to the religious governments. For example, most of the Arab countries, or non-Christian countries, with the exception of Lebanon where we have sort of a Christian image in the sense that the president is a Christian Maronite, and that’s because the Lebanese setup is based on religious denominations: we have around nineteen officially recognized religious denominations. And all the government posts are divided according to religious denominations, where the president should be a Christian Maronite. In that sense, we have some kind of a Christian image in Lebanon. But the rest, before the Arab Spring, and so on and so forth, they are all Muslim countries. And we still have Christian communities living in these countries, and they were living in co-existence with the Muslims.

**C.P.:** Give us some numbers.

**H.J.:** For example in Egypt, if you look into the numbers – 10%...

**C.P.:** It’s decreasing.

**H.J.:** Of course it’s decreasing. In Egypt, the Coptic Christian community, which is the biggest one, is around, according to some studies, 10% of the total population, which makes it around 10-12 million. In Syria, there used to be 1.1 million Christians living there. In Iraq, 1.5 million. In Palestine, between 25,000 to 30,000. In Lebanon, unfortunately we do not have any recent statistics for quite a long time, but before the war.

**C.P.:** Why?

**H.J.:** I think the last official recent statistics were done during the French time, unfortunately we don’t have it.

**C.P.:** Is that intentional? Because in Cyprus there is no statistics. Not of the Christians, but certainly of the non-Christians. Was this a policy of not doing this?

**H.J.:** There can be a number of things.

**C.P.:** You don’t want to answer political questions.

**H.J.:** Actually, before 1975, around 35-40% were Christians. Now that statistic has changed, and especially after the 1975 where so many Lebanese emigrated, including the Christians. So my guess is that it is less than 35-40%. But coming back to your question. We had a considerable number of Christians who were living under the so-called religious government, if you want to call them religious, and they were enjoying quite good religious freedom. For example, if you take into consideration the Arabian Gulf countries, definitely the Christians there are expatriate Christians that were coming from different parts of the world: from Asia, Africa, and so on. But the government has given the plot of land to the Christian communities, so they can build their churches...

**C.P.:** But they are not citizens.

**H.J.:** They are not citizens.

**C.P.:** They are second-class, at best...

**H.J.:** Whatever you want to call it, but they are Christians who are living in these countries, and they are enjoying relative freedom. They have their own churches, they have their own set ups, they are free to worship within the church compound. So, what I'm trying to say is even though the governments are non-Christian governments, or Muslim governments, but we have Christian communities who are living there. Now, what has happened with this new ideology coming up in certain areas...

**K.K.:** Particularly the Eastern Mediterranean...

**H.J.:** ...Particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean, and this religious fundamentalism came, where they started rejecting the "Other": those who are not of the same mindset like they are. And the "Other" includes also the Christians.

**C.P.:** But it would be interesting if there was a change, or radicalization in the Arab Gulf. You are saying there hasn't been?

**H.J.:** There hasn't been, in the sense that...

**C.P.:** So there must be a difference between the Muslims of the Gulf vs. the Muslims of the Eastern Med.

**H.J.:** Well, not all the Muslims in the Eastern Med are fundamentalist, that's also what we have to say.

**C.P.:** I understand, but you are suggesting that there are very few, if any, in the Gulf, other than of course, Saudi Arabia. But the other Gulf States are very tolerant – because it is tolerance that we are talking about.

**H.J.:** Exactly.

**C.P.:** So, despite the rise of radicalization in other parts, it hasn't affected it. Is it, perhaps, because the Christians in that part of the world are not politically relevant? Because they are not in the political system?

**H.J.:** Of course they're not in the political system because they are not citizens of these countries. Irrespective of how many years you stay in these countries, if you are a foreigner, you will always remain a foreigner. You will never get a citizenship in these countries. If you are, for example, a Filipino leaving for twenty years in the Gulf with the working visa...

**C.P.:** It's not a challenge to power, whereas...

**K.K.:** I want to step in here, because this is interesting. So what we're learning here is that in the Gulf settlers or temporary workers from overseas cannot acquire citizenship, in other words one day they will be gone, whereas in Europe temporary workers or other migrants, or refugees, can eventually acquire citizenship. So we're seeing demographic changes in Europe which are producing new citizens, within the law, but the similar process is not being played out in the Gulf.

**C.P.:** The important part is that in Europe there is beginning of a competition for power.

Because MPs in England and other countries are taking into consideration the voting power of the new immigrants. Nothing like that is happening in the Gulf.

**H.J.:** Actually, it's not only in the Gulf. If you are in Lebanon, for example, or in other parts of the Arab world, and if you're living in this country as a foreigner, no matter what kind of residency status you have, eventually you cannot become a citizen. It was only in Lebanon, with this special governmental decree several years ago, which they give citizenship to all the Syrians who were actually born in Lebanon, and raised in Lebanon, and they lived all their lives in Lebanon, and they didn't receive any citizenship. They were still with the Syrian citizenship. That was a special decree. Other than that, you as a foreigner, you go to Lebanon, you live there for, let's say, five years, or ten years, you would not become a citizen of the country.

**K.K.:** So the demographics of the citizenry of Europe are changing, but they are not changing in the Gulf.

**H.J.:** Or, indeed, in the Arab World. Now, of course, you will argue about human rights here, but that's how the setup is. You either take it or leave it.

**K.K.:** Can I just turn the discussion back to the fate of the victims of persecution, murder and other forms of improper conduct in the Eastern Mediterranean. I want to zoom in here on the mechanism of destruction. When we talk about the persecution of the Christians, or the Yazidis, or the Shia, or whoever else it is that we're talking about in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, is there a particular process that is followed when a particular group is persecuted or discriminated against, or otherwise treated improperly?

**H.J.:** When you look into all the developments that have happened in Iraq and in Syria, when they were conquering a place, or a particular city, or a particular region was under the threat to be conquered, either the people left...

**K.K.:** You are talking about ISIS now...

**H.J.:** Of course. They are the ones who are actually involved in the persecution.

**K.K.:** So the first step is...

**H.J.:** Whenever a city was under the threat to be conquered, what happened? Either the people who were living there, because they were concerned about their lives, they left once they were conquered. Then there were three things that they told the inhabitants to do. Either you had to convert to Islam, or, if you are not a Muslim, then you have to pay the jizya, which was the tax imposed by the Islamic caliphate throughout the history on the non-Muslims, especially on the Christians and on the Jews. So actually they are bringing back that which was in the Islamic caliphate and imposing taxation. Or, the third one, leave everything, whatever you have in your possession, and leave the country or a city. Which means: your home, your possession, your wealth, you car, everything...

**K.K.:** This is what happened to the Armenians, this is what happened to the Greeks in Asia Minor, this is what happened to the inhabitants of the occupied northern Cyprus.

**H.J.:** That's good, the correlation that you are making. So this is what exactly happened. The Christians and other minorities, whoever they were, left all their possessions from these places in Iraq and Syria, and migrated to places which are safer.

**K.K.:** So this is not only an attack on human beings on the basis on their race or their religion. This is actually an assault on the right to property.

**H.J.:** Of course. People left their property, their wealth. Some people weren't even able to take their money from their banks.

**K.K.:** So what happens to the title deeds of the Christians, or the Yazidis, or the Shia, or Sunnis, whoever that is, who flees these areas?

**H.J.:** Nothing. They just mark that this has been occupied. It is the house of the Christian, a non-Muslim, and it's gone.

**K.K.:** The subject matter is about the Christians, so let's zoom-in on the Christians. We've heard a lot about the refugees and migrants who were leaving Turkey across the Aegean Sea. We've heard a lot about the people who are fleeing Libya into Italy, and other parts of southern Europe. Where are the Christians going to?

**H.J.:** Now, if you are looking into the Syrian situation, we have more than 1.5 million refugees in Lebanon, and it's not that difficult for us to see that the small countries like Lebanon cannot absorb this much of refugees. We have around something like 600,000 – 700,000 refugees in Jordan, and of course in Turkey there are more than 2 million.

**C.P.:** What is the percentage of Christians?

**H.J.:** According to some unofficial statistics, from 1.1 million Christians, 700,000 have left the country. So that's a really big number, right?

**C.P.:** And gone where?

**H.J.:** Well, some of them have gone to Lebanon, as you are aware. There are 1.5 million Christians, so a good number of them are in Lebanon. Some managed to go to Jordan. There are the Christians who have relatives in Europe, in Sweden and all these places, because in Sweden also we have a number of Arabic speaking communities, so they are also there. And we have all those who are fortunate to travel all the way to Canada and to the other places, they have done so. Some also have managed to run away to Turkey. And similar is the Iraqi situation. According to the statistics, we have something like 1.5 million Christians in Iraq and according to some of the recent statistics hardly any - something around 250,000 – 300,000 have remained.

**C.P.:** The Jordanian constitutional regime is more sympathetic to minorities?

**H.J.:** Oh yes. In Jordan, both the Christian and local Christian presence, and also taking on board all those refugees, in Jordan the Christian presence is equally respected, and tolerated, so with all the context that we have, in Jordan the Christian community is very much respected.

**C.P.:** Refugees are eventually able to attain Jordanian citizenship, or is it the same as in the Gulf?

**H.J.:** No, it's the same as in the Gulf. None of these refugees will eventually have a citizenship. For example, Lebanon does accommodate a big number of Palestinian refugees. In Beirut we have camps for the Palestinians. And these Palestinian refugees do not have any Lebanese passports. And that's from the 1948. Now, all they have is some kind of, as we call it, laissez-

passer, which is something that the Lebanese government issues, which gives the status of a refugee.

**C.P.:** I remember having discussions in the past. One of the reasons was that the Arab countries didn't want to diffuse the Palestinian issue. So they wanted the Palestinians to be in limbo, so that there would be a pressure against Israel. So the Palestinians are a little bit different, because they are not a minority, they are Sunni, etc. I think there was another hidden agenda.

**H.J.:** That's another story, yes, we shouldn't mingle the two. But coming back to your initial question, these people, these refugees, the present refugees, will never be in a position to get... Whereas in Europe, one day most likely they will be able to get citizenship.

**K.K.:** That's a theme that emerged from this discussion, which I'll take with me, that there is a difference in approach between the secular liberal democracies of the West, and the non-secular, non-liberal, and non-democracies of most of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. I wanted to just come back to this theme of the mechanisms of destruction, if I may. We've spoken now about the uprooting of human beings from their homes. It doesn't matter whether they are Christian, or Muslim, or Yazidi, or Buddhist, or whatever their religion is. These are human beings, they've not been treated with dignity, they've not been treated with any form of respect, they've either been coerced out of their homes, or they fled from their homes in fear of their lives. We mentioned the takeover of their properties. What about their churches and other places of religious worship? What has happened to those buildings that have been left behind?

**H.J.:** We are witnessing, unfortunately - and this is very sad - we are witnessing destruction of so many churches.

**C.P.:** And not only. Cultural heritage sites, ancient Roman ruins, etc.

**H.J.:** This is where my argument will come: the rejection of the "Other". This is the reason why I said right from the very beginning: we have a new ideology coming out, which is the rejection of the "Other". It is not rejection of the Christian only; it is the rejection of the "Other". The destruction of all the ancient history - Syria, Iraq - these are countries which have...

**C.P.:** ...Steeped in history...

**H.J.:** ...Deep historical and cultural heritage. I am not sure if you have been to these countries, where you can see all these historical sites. Some areas in Syria, which unfortunately fell in the hands of the fundamentalists, they destroy the historical and cultural sites.

**K.K.:** Why?

**H.J.:** Because they just don't want to have anything to do with history.

**K.K.:** We've seen it here in the occupied part of Cyprus. The churches have been destroyed or left abandoned, icons are being ripped out of churches and sold on the black market.

**H.J.:** It's a wish to uproot a culture which is not considered their own culture. And that's the folly about it because it is their culture, at the end of the day.

**K.K.:** It is our culture.

**C.P.:** But what I am saying is that it is their culture too, but they are too fanatical to see it. Can I just come back to that point that in Europe the refugees are entering the power struggle. Whereas in this part of the world, minorities and refugees are completely out of the power struggle, yet they are considered a threat to the degree that they have to be exterminated.

**H.J.:** In some parts, that should be very clearly defined.

**C.P.:** In some parts. Whereas they don't pose any political threat, because they are not citizens. And this is coming back to your point that it is the intolerance of the other. But for the sake of what? There is no practical significance. They are not threatening to take over the power of the government, they are not threatening to change their religion. All they want to do is live. And they deny them that right. So it's a deeper problem, I think.

**H.J.:** But allow me to say that the present situation that we have in the greater Middle East is the concern of everybody, each and every country in the greater Middle East, including Europe and the rest of the world – it's the concern of all. It's not only the concern of Christians, who are suffering, but it's the concern of everybody.

**K.K.:** Is it? What are the British, and the Americans, and the French and the others doing to protect these people from subjugation?

**C.P.:** And some countries in the region, too. Because some countries pay lip service and pretend to do something about it, and I would not point any fingers anywhere, but it's clear, and yet nothing is happening. In fact they are doing the opposite, they are supporting the indirect genocide. It's more than a tragedy. It's a disaster of global proportions.

**H.J.:** What really matters at the end, irrespective of what the political calculations are, human souls are suffering.

**K.K.:** You've made a very important point: human souls are suffering. I really want to press you on this. Quite rightly, we've been focusing on the uprooting of people from their homes, the destruction of churches and other cultural artifacts. But then people are being chucked into refugee camps in Jordan, or Lebanon, or Turkey, or wherever it is. And that must surely have an adverse effect on their soul. So I would suggest that even though many of these Christians or others who have survived the assault upon their homes, and their villages, and their towns, there must be some sort of deep-rooted psychological effect.

**H.J.:** Very good point. One of the major concerns that we have, let's call it a challenge, is small children, young boys and girls, who are now growing in the refugee tents somewhere in the region. What kind of a new generation are we expecting from this?

**K.K.:** This applies of course to the Muslim refugees, it cuts across the religions.

**H.J.:** Of course, I am not talking about the Christians, I'm talking about the refugees in general, especially the children. We have a big generation of young ones, five years, six years, seven years, nine and ten years of age. What kind of a generation are we expecting from this? Definitely, a generation which will grow with hatred and the pain in their own hearts.

**K.K.:** But who will they blame? Will they blame ISIS? Or will they blame the Americans?

**H.J.:** They will blame everybody. We will have a new generation which maybe will eventually grow up to become a fundamentalist.

**C.P.:** It's not the first generation, though, because it's already been 30 years since this generation has been developed, through the Palestinian period, and the Iraqi war period, and so on. So this is the second generation, at least.

**K.K.:** I'm not an expert on the Palestinian question. But correct me if I'm wrong, it took the Palestinians twenty or thirty years to become radicalized, after the first Middle East war at the end of the 1940s. And this point about the childhood. I do fear for the children who are being brought up with the psychological scars of what they've seen in Iraq and Syria. Is religion the answer? And if so – how?

**H.J.:** You want me to answer this from the Christian perspective?

**K.K.:** You can answer this from whichever perspective you wish.

**C.P.:** Let's try to end on a positive note. Where do we go from here? Can we go up, or do we have to go down?

**H.J.:** Let me share some statistics from *The Economist*, a well-known publication, about the Christian presence in the region. In the 20th century, according to the statistics, the number of Christians in the greater Middle East, compared to the rest, was 20%. Now, in the 21st century, it is less than 5%. Now, you can see the decrease in the number of Christians. So this obviously will tell us, or will highlight that we're not very much in a positive trend, if the situation continues. But is this good or bad? Definitely it is bad, not only for the Christian presence, but also equally bad for the community in this part of the world.

**K.K.:** You were saying to me something earlier about how Christian values had an effect on the region. Can you just develop that point?

**H.J.:** If we are going to look from the theological perspective, what is Christian theology all about? It is to understand the other, and to accept and respect the other. Christ came to the world for the other. We're not going to preach now, but that's the whole essence of Christian theology. And now there is what we are going through, especially in our part of the world, is the rejection of the "Other". So we definitely need the Christian theology in this part of the world. Not necessarily for proselytism, don't misunderstand me, but to create a platform, to create a basis, where people can accept one other.

**K.K.:** We can't expect Christianity to make inroads into the Eastern Mediterranean in the view of the circumstances. But we can try to bring liberal democracy into the Eastern Mediterranean. Liberal democracy is in a sense an offshoot of the Greco-Christian tradition, but it's not tainted with religion as such. And indeed, there is a secular foundation to a good deal of liberal democracy. I would suggest that a way we can try and counteract the religious extremism and the misuse of religion is to do our best in the Eastern Mediterranean at least, first of all to shore up liberal democracy and liberal democratic values, and secondly to try, in so far as we can, to spread the values and the principles of liberal democracy into this region.

**C.P.:** And without allowing the exceptions, though, that have become a rationalization: that democracy is something you have to contextualize. And in the context of the Middle East it has to be XYZ. And XYZ makes it illiberal, but it's ok, because it's in the context. We've completed a circle that we've cancelled ourselves. I agree with you, absolutely, that that's the way to go, but the rationalization of the exception is such that we are nullifying the whole argument.

**K.K.:** I've got to mention Cyprus here.

**C.P.:** Cyprus is exactly the point.

**K.K.:** A bi-communal federation means the citizens split into two. A bi-zonal federation means the territory of the state split into two. How is it going to be split into two? On essentially religious as well as ethnic lines. That's contrary to the basic principles of democracy.

**C.P.:** And even more basic: it's a violation of fundamental rights. If you're going to insist on liberal democracy, you have to insist on its underlying principles. Now, is there a hope for that in the Middle East, or are we always going to excuse ourselves, and excuse the violators by saying: you've got to be in the context.

**H.J.:** We, Christians, we are people of hope. We don't look to the glass which is half empty and say it is half empty or half full. We look to the glass and we say that we want to see that the glass is completely full. That's the kind of a person we as Christians are.

**C.P.:** Or should be,

**H.J.:** That's what our theology should be about. I personally believe that the day will come when this will stop, one way or the other. It will stop, and the time will come to rebuild this region. And in this rebuilding process, what you mentioned here is equally important. But I feel that theology is also an equal part in order to bring these values. And this is where I see the importance of the Christian presence, and the Christian church, and Christian theology in rebuilding this region. This is why I always emphasize that the Christian community should stay here. And maybe more than any other time, Christian theology now is needed, in this time of crisis, because people have so many questions.

**C.P.:** Is there any organizational support for these people to stay? Now the organizational support is focused on enabling refugees to leave, no matter what they are. Is there a chance of turning that around? Is there a chance of turning around? But what sort of support can you give them in an alien environment, when their lives are in danger?

**H.J.:** People are fearful. When fear enters into your heart, you know it as a human being...

**C.P.:** Let me just give you a historical allusion. In the 19th century the great powers each had a protected community, Christian community, and therefore some of the powers in the region were afraid of consequences. So they didn't attack the Orthodox, because the tsar would be pissed off, or the British, or the French, etc. I don't see that happening again. In fact, it may bring the opposite effect. But can you see some sort of a guarantee by the UN, or the civilized powers, or something that will affect a change in this thinking? Because I don't think just waiting for them to these guys to get mellow and change their mind, I don't think this is going to happen. They will react to some sort of potential price that they will have to pay.

**H.J.:** So far, there are no guarantors as such.

**C.P.:** The EU is facilitating what is happening. There is no will to fight it on a philosophical level, I think.

**H.J.:** And I'm not sure if maybe we should enter into a completely new field. But I'm not sure if the secular ideology that Europe has embraced, especially some parts of Europe, which is very much becoming secular, I'm not sure to what extent this is also helping the greater Middle East



region, and especially for the Christian presence. If the Christian presence in Europe had been relatively stronger, most likely...

**C.P.:** ...The reaction would have been different.

**H.J.:** Can I just make my last contribution. I want to read you something that the former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, Lord Sacks, said in the British Parliament on the 16th of July 2015. I think this is really a good way of sort of tying the various threads of our discussion together. He said the following:

“Three things have happened to change the religious landscape of the world in recent years. First, the secular nationalist regimes that appeared in many parts of the world in the 20th century have given rise to powerful religious counterrevolutions. Secondly, these counterrevolutions are led by religion in its most extreme, adversarial and anti-Western form. Thirdly, the revolution in information and technology has allowed these groups to form, organize, and communicate to actual and potential followers throughout the world, with astonishing speed. The result has been the politicization of religion, and the religionizing of politics, which throughout history has been a deadly combination. In the long run it will threaten us all, because in a global age no country or culture is an island.”

He concluded:

“We must stand together, the people of all faiths and of none, for we are all at risk. Religious freedom is about our common humanity, and we must fight for it if we are not to lose it. This, I believe, is the issue of our time.”

**C.P.:** In a nutshell: can we appeal to the common humane heart of these two religions in this part of the world?

**H.J.:** It's three religions, let's not forget, it's Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

**C.P.:** But it's the Judeo-Christian tradition and Islam. Is there a common humane heart?

**H.J.:** There should be.

**K.K.:** Can we reach it? Well, this is exactly what the rabbi had to write so well, I mean these three points.

**C.P.:** Inshallah?

**H.J.:** I think we need to do more than “inshallah”, and this is exactly what we are trying to do. As Christians, that's our theology. It's a theology of creating this platform with three monotheistic religions to come together. I was born and raised in the Middle East, and I still cherish its values. The Middle East is such a beautiful place, and one of its beauties is the coming together of the different cultures, of the different ethnic groups, of the different religions together.

**K.K.:** We want to finish on a positive note here. Our concern is to establish the Eastern Mediterranean as a vibrant, ethical, and successful part of the world. That's the spirit of ERPIC, that's the spirit of the people who participate in these discussions. And I think you put your finger on one of the keys to achieving that noble, but difficult objective, and that is to embrace

the diversity of this part of the world, to try and rebuild what has been destroyed, and to try and build a future that is based on, what you said earlier and the Chief Rabbi said, our common humanity. That's the key to the success of this part of the world.

**C.P.:** Thank you very much gentlemen.

---

## DISCUSSION\*

---

Marios Evriviades\*\* and Farid Mirbagheri\*\*\*

1 March 2016

### Syrian Peace Talks: Prospects of a Great Power Regional Concert?

*The future of Syria as is the case with many other problems in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East will depend on the nature of the system that will be established in the region as well as the extent to which Iran and other, especially Sunni revisionist ‘instrumentalities’, such as Turkey, can be induced to turn away from their expansionist agenda and become positive participants of a regional system.*

**Christodoulos Pelaghias (C.P.):** Good afternoon and welcome to another ERPIC Live discussion. With me this afternoon I have my co-host, Dr. Klearchos Kyriakides, Director of ERPIC Law and Democracy Program. I also have Dr. Marios Evriviades, an international affairs professor and a Senior Fellow of ERPIC, and Dr. Farid Mirbagheri, a political science professor and also senior associate of ERPIC. As always, all speakers express their personal opinions. Gentlemen, welcome. Our discussion this evening will continue on where we left off with Dr. Marios Evriviades couple of weeks ago, which was to look at the situation in Syria and begin to explore what the future may look like in five or ten years, depending on how the situation develops. There is a ceasefire in Syria, organized and agreed by the major players. How do you see this? First of all, is it holding?

**Farid Mirbagheri (F.M.):** Difficult to tell. There have been some claims that it has been breached. But this is a very difficult ceasefire to preserve, in a sense that ISIL and forces related to Al-Qaeda have been left out of this ceasefire. And, therefore, forces, including Russian forces, who are targeting them, they can always claim they are hitting those targets. It's very difficult to verify a breach. Will it generally hold in the bigger sense of that word? Difficult. Number one is that, unlike the Concert of Power that we had in Europe in 1815, we don't have a vanquished power here, that has now left the scene, and the victors share the spoils, so to speak. Everybody is very much alive, and involved.

**C.P.:** Actually, there are benefits for each side. When you go into the ceasefire, there are

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Professor of International Relations, Neapolis University Paphos;*

\*\*\* *Professor of International Relations, University of Nicosia*

benefits and there are risks. Let's start by looking at the benefits. What are the benefits for each party to have to observe the ceasefire? Presumably, the Russians and the Assad regime, who have taken territory, want to consolidate that territory. The other side wants to prepare a counter attack. What other things can you think about that are on the table that will make the ceasefire hold, or not hold, in the long run? Who is benefitting?

**F.M.:** Military gains can be translated into political advantages at the negotiating table. Those who are the weaker side usually benefit more from the ceasefire, because they are in danger of being exterminated. So if the Russians were advancing and they were pushing forward, and the other side was losing, in this particular instance they would be benefitting at this particular time. But you know, there is the danger that this ceasefire would freeze the status quo, and everyone would remain sufficiently powerful to always risk another flare up, which looks unfortunately likely in the future to come.

**C.P.:** Assad has declared that he is going ahead with elections. Is that linked to this? Would he do it anyway? Is there some greater incentive now?

**F.M.:** You know, America with the Obama administration which is coming to an end, is very eager to bring this tragedy to some kind of conclusion before he leaves office. It looks very difficult, and it looks unlikely. The Syrian ISIL didn't exist when Obama took office, and despite his claims of foreign policy victories in other spheres, this will be a stain in his record that has come so far. He will try to bring the ceasefire, and I am sure that he has. The Obama administration has realized they have to work with Assad, they have to work with the Russians, they have to work with Iranians, so they can come to an agreement. So, if the elections in Syria can justify the presence of Assad, can justify the US administration coming to some kind of an agreement with Assad, so be it, yes, let's have an election, let's legitimize the presence of Assad, let's legitimize our negotiating and coming to an agreement with him. So that is a chance. But the presence of other forces in the region, countries and non-governmental forces there make it very difficult to stick to this kind of agreement.

**C.P.:** You've mentioned that ISIL is not covered by the agreement. But there is a tendency now to move the conflict into the towns. There is more explosions, more remote devices and so on. Is this going to be another phase of the war?

**F.M.:** I'm afraid there is every danger that this will get more and more violent. Unfortunately, parties involved in this dispute, at least some of the parties, have high degree of tolerance for this violence.

**C.P.:** The populations?

**F.M.:** Yes, even against civilians.

**C.P.:** Do the civilians have high tolerance?

**F.M.:** No, but they have no option. When you go and create panic among the civilian population which is controlled by the other side, you are scoring some kind of a victory, however short-lived it might be. It will get more violent because of the nature of the conflict, because of the sectarian nature of the Syrian regime government and Syrian body politic in general. We have a tribal situation in Libya, we have a tribal situation in Yemen and we have this sectarian, tribal situation in Iraq. This tribalism and sectarianism that we have, makes a

resolution that much more difficult. In Egypt, in Tunisia, where we don't have that, it's been relatively easier.

**C.P.:** But the heart of the issue, Marios, is it sectarianism, or is it something more?

**Marios Evriviades (M.E.):** It's a combination of a lot of things. It's a crisis within a crisis and problem within a problem. If we go back to your basic question, let's ask the fundamental question: why is there a ceasefire at this time? Because basically there seems to be an understanding between the two superpowers that are important in the region: the US and Russia. Now, we all know, and even the worst opponents and adversaries of the Russians... I read an article in Boston Globe the other day with the headline, "Thank you Russia for bringing a ceasefire to Syria". So, there seems to be a fundamental understanding between the two that the time has come for a ceasefire. And it appears that the rest of the players who are important locally but not globally are going along with this, and some of them have no options to disturb or sabotage this. This is the first point I wanted to make. The second point is related to what you have said. And correct me if I am wrong, we are supposedly going to have parliamentary elections in Syria, right? So that would be a good indicator of what kind of feeling we get from the population. Of course it is not going to be an absolute indicator, but it will suggest something. The information that I have is that Assad enjoys support within population centers of Syria. He has not been delegitimized because of all this situation within Syria. So my bottom line is that I am cautiously optimistic about this ceasefire holding. And on an additional ground, we see the huge refugee crisis, ISIL in Europe, which is dominating right now the European politics. And most people agree that the source, the immediate source for this is the wider conflicts, starting from Afghanistan, going to Libya, and Iraq, but the basic fundamental source is Syria. So there is an additional pressure there for this ceasefire to hold.

**Klearchos Kyriakides (K.K.):** Don't forget Marios that the refugees and migrants are leaving Turkey. Turkey is not stopping them.

**M.E.:** Correct. But as things stand now, an additional pressure is being created on Turkey, and we see this bargaining going on for Turkey to draw all sorts of advantages, from the EU and so on, to do what it should be doing in the first place, which is taking care of its borders. There is a burden on Turkey, there is no question about it, but let's not forget that Turkey, for a lot of people, including myself, is the primary source of the crisis. Because Turkey has left its borders open, all these years, in a very provocative manner. There is no one who looks at the Syrian crisis without understanding that it would have developed in a different way, had Turkey not taken this very provocative and aggressive stance against Syria, and facilitating the flow of the terrorists.

**K.K.:** I would suggest that the key year is 2011: that is when the Arab Spring started to gain traction. And we know from disclosures made in the British parliament, that the United Kingdom, at least, actively supported the strategy of the then Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr. Erdogan, which was to bring about the downfall of President Assad of Syria. That was linked of course to what was happening in Libya...

**M.E.:** It started with Libya. And it is very ironic to look at some of the statements that the late Kaddafi has been making, his predictions of what would have been taking place had he been forced out of office. In fact yesterday there was an article, I don't remember where I read it, with Kaddafi's son making a statement about 2011, and making four-five predictions, which all

came true in terms of a total absence of law and order in Libya and the killing that exists in Libya today.

**K.K.:** If I could just refer to that. It is worth reading the memo of James Baker, the Secretary of State. He explains in great detail why the Americans liberated Kuwait, but didn't march up to Baghdad to topple the regime of Saddam Hussein. And the reason they didn't want to march up to Baghdad was that it would have unleashed chaos and the uprising that we saw after the invasion in 2003. Of course that begs the question we asked last time you were here, Marios: why on earth did the British and the Americans engaged in what amounts to the regime change in both Libya and Syria, in the view of the dreadful lessons of Iraq?

**C.P.:** And another question: why did Turkey switch sides? It was pro-Assad, had very friendly relations with Assad and Syria, and suddenly Erdogan decided he wanted to back the opposition, in fact build up the opposition. Is it partly the sectarian situation, where Erdogan felt that the future was with the Sunnis in Syria, and perhaps he should back the Sunnis who eventually would take over Syria?

**M.E.:** Christodoule, the answer goes back to Libya again, because if we recall, initially Turkey was opposed to the overthrow to the Gaddafi regime, and threw a tantrum when NATO, in an indirect fashion, became involved in the overthrow of Gaddafi. He threatened to go against that decision. He shifted very suddenly, and there is an explanation which ties this to his shift in Syria. In Syria, of course, it is more complicated than in Libya. But in both cases there was a very important element involved which has to do, and I will say this publically, with the bribery from the wealthy Arab states. This takes us back to the green money flowing into Turkey from the late 1980s. The process begun during the junta, around 1987, during the Özal government, when the so-called "green money" started flowing into Turkey. What is the "green money"? It is money from Saudi Arabia. It was coming into Turkey helping religious education in Turkey. And basically the "green money" substituted Turkish government money for the religious teachers in the *Imam Hatip* schools in Turkey. Tying this back to Syria and Libya, they threatened Erdogan that if he doesn't go along with the overthrowing of Kaddafi and overthrowing Assad, they shall cut off this "green money". That's the financial aspect of it. And we are talking about the big money, 15-20 billion dollars of black money that is not registered in the Turkish accounts, it is registered as "different sources" of money. And we are talking about 15-20, sometimes 30 billion a year, so that's the financial part of it. And of course the geopolitical part is Erdogan wanting to dominate Assad. In fact, Davutoglu has prized himself that prior to the crisis he has visited Damascus thirty nine times. In other words he was trying to negotiate and to mediate, but Assad did not want to listen to his advice, he didn't want to become their instrumentality. Once Assad realized that they basically wanted to overthrow him and establish sectarian control of Syria, namely the majority Sunni community to assume power, (*inaudible*) the Turks were convinced they would become their instrumentality in order to dominate the Sunni world. And that is when the things shifted. So, there is the geopolitical angle, the Sunni angle, and the financial angle, that not many people know about.

**C.P.:** And also crossing the line of regime change, and making that allowable by the Americans. They did it in Iraq, and it became legitimate to go after unfriendly regime. Or is that not the case?

**M.E.:** As I mentioned the other time, this idea of regime change has two phases. The first phase happened during the Regan administration with the sidelining of Marcos in the Philippines. As

I mentioned the last time, that is known in the academic circles as the Lugard Doctrine. And they became interested in that, and they saw the result of it and sort of adopted it as a strategy that they can lead authoritarian regimes step-by-step into the democratic future.

**C.P.:** But that's a democratization process...

**M.E.:** So once the Cold War ended, they adopted that as a national strategy, to bring about democratization. Let's remember where the fundamental origins of this phase is. The Marcos regime is just a single example going into the Cold War. The so-called colored revolutions in the Balkans, Georgia, Ukraine – that's the origins. And an aim to bring a colored revolution in Iran, and ultimately to bring a colored revolution in Russia. And at some point, that provided a legitimization for bringing a regime that is in line with our own interests, and basically to establish a pro-American equilibrium in those countries, presented as democratic process.

**K.K.:** I have a question for Farid. I found the disclosure made in the House of Common on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011. A Labour MP named Chris Evans asked the then Foreign Secretary William Hague about British policy towards Syria: "This week we have heard Turkey call for President Assad to step down. Will the Foreign Secretary give us update on how secure President Assad's position is in Syria?" The date is important: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011. Mr. Hague responds: "The position of President Assad is not very secure. We absolutely agree with the Turkish government. Indeed, my honorable friend, the Prime Minister, called in August (2011) for President Assad to step aside. We believe that the regime has lost all legitimacy – certainly in the eyes of the world, but clearly in the eyes of millions of its own people as well. So the regime should now understand that it has no future, that the democracy should be introduced in Syria, and the regime should leave office." If that is not the call for a regime change, I don't know what is. My question is to Farid: we've heard about the alleged role of the Saudis in the Eastern Mediterranean. With your background and expertise, Farid, how does Iran view the penetration of Saudi Arabia into the Eastern Mediterranean? What interest does Iran have in Syria, and in the region as a whole?

**F.M.:** I believe there is a degree of political realism in all these countries, but there is also a degree of religious politics. That is, Saudi Arabia believes that its brand of Islam is what should be propagated, promoted and adopted by Muslim countries, Iran believes that Shiism should be promoted, and that is kind of belief system that does contribute to the coming head-to-head and clash. Then you might want to separate perceived national non-religious interest, and then see how they stand vis-a-vis one another. In case of Iran there is - because there is a history before Islam and there is an identity - there is a body politic, a secular body politic that sees itself separate. Yes, even if you go back to the days before the revolution, Iran was the big power of the region. It has somewhat come down from that road, but it very much wishes to reclaim that road. It wants to project power when it needs to against Saudi Arabia, to show for prestige, for instance in Yemen. Against America it is quite happy not to do anything as long as it remains in power. Iran feels slightly more secure than it did since the early days of the revolution. It is now coming to believe that the world has agreed, has accepted its existence as a revolutionary Islamic Shia state, and because it has kind of accepted Iran's role in Syria, Iran has got accepted in the international conference on Syria, Iran plays a huge role in Iraq. And this worries the Saudis very much. Two months ago the burning of the Saudi embassy in Iran and the closure of the embassy by Saudis, of course it was something the Iranians apologized for. But the immediate shutting down of the Embassy reflected that the Saudis wanted to cut off relations and sort of put the West, and particularly the United States, in a position of having

to choose: "It's us, and it's them. Are you siding with us, or are you going with them?" We cannot live with that kind of attitude that Iran has. So they are very weary of each other, they are competing in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and other places.

**K.K.:** So this makes the Eastern Mediterranean some kind of a messy picture in geostrategic terms. We not only have the traditional actors: Turkey, Israel...

**C.P.:** It's becoming more of a system. The further question is: the reason that the US is dealing with Iran, or more willing to deal with Iran, is it because Iran has accepted to become or remain a part of a system? Because the fear originally was that the revolutionary power, Iran would play the role of France during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and so on, I think this has dissipated. Has it been the game plan of Iran to show to the internationally community that it's a good systemic player? And therefore, fine, it's got its views, it's going to compete within the system, but it is not going to overthrow the system. Now, is there a system in the Eastern Med and the greater Middle East, and has Iran convinced the players that it should be part of the game?

**F.M.:** Iran, even though it appears in its rhetoric very polarized and black and white, Iran in practice has been conducting its foreign policy in the gray area, and it's very good at it. And it showed that when it cooperated with the Americans during their attack on the Taliban, in the post Saddam era, Iran played very well in the gray areas, unlike Turkey now which seems to be very unskilled to play in the gray area.

**C.P.:** The way that I understand being part of the system is sometimes pulling your punches, not going for extreme, maximalist positions.

**F.M.:** Compromise.

**C.P.:** Compromise. And in some ways, that begs the next question: is ISIL ever going to convince the system that it can play the game too, and therefore they don't have to take ISIL out? I think the whole impression that ISIL has created up to this moment is that it is not going to play by the system, because it wants to change the whole paradigm, the whole game. That was the impression about Iran originally, and that has changed.

**F.M.:** No, it is different. Iran is a state. ISIL claims this kind of a caliphate.

**C.P.:** Sure. It is a non-state actor, but it is an actor.

**F.M.:** Iran is an accepted actor in international relations. Nobody, not even Muslim countries, accept ISIL as an actor. Regardless who is in government, there isn't an entity called ISIL that is acceptable to them. I think ISIL doesn't have a long term future, but I'm afraid more damage, more killings, and financial ruin will come to the regional countries in the West Asia before ISIL is wiped out. I should say, I find this very difficult to accept that when you want to depose Saddam Hussein, you can mobilize half a million troops and bring them to the Persian Gulf and get rid of him. And we are talking about 30,000-40,000, not even all of them are military men, in a small area of Iraq, and they say, "This will take five years." Why? What is the difference?

**M.E.:** The difference is their instrumentality in the bigger game – ISIL is an instrumentality – if I may interrupt your train of thought. You are very correct. When they decided to overthrow Saddam, they brought one army large enough to conquer Europe and overthrew him. The situation with ISIL - and if I may backtrack to your original question and the systemic situation: yes, there is a system in operation. One paradox with Iran, I think, is that Iran did appear as this



revolutionary state, revisionist state. The irony and the paradox is that most of the terrorist attacks that have taken place since have not had their origin in the revolutionary situation in Iran, but have grown out of Sunni extremism. And the Sunni Islam has served as an instrumentality for imperial powers to implement their plans in the wider South-West Asia geographical region, starting with the Great Game, with the British...

**C.P.:** Because they were the majority...

**M.E.:** Not only they were the majority. The West thought, which has proven wrong, that because the regimes in control would have an interest in cooperating with them to control things. And the idea was that Sunnis could be controlled. And it turned out that they couldn't be controlled.

**C.P.:** Whose impression was that?

**M.E.:** The West's. The Germans, the British, the Americans, in the line of thinking of controlling the Sunni populations. Don't forget that the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928, was basically founded by the British. The British founded the Muslim Brotherhood, it took a life on its own, of course. The same situation with Hamas funded by the Israelis, taking the life of its own. But why did the British encouraged the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood? Because there was an Arab nationalism rising up against the British control which climaxed with Nasser. And it's not an accident that Nasser was an opponent of the Muslim Brotherhood and basically executed their leadership.

**K.K.:** Nasser, that was instrumental in the expulsion of Christians, particularly Greek Orthodox Christians, from Egypt.

**M.E.:** That's correct too, but...

**K.K.:** There was a streak of religious politics to it...

**C.P.:** But not the Copts...

**K.K.:** Not the Copts, but the Greek Orthodox Christians.

**M.E.:** The Copts were thought to be autochthonous Arabs.

**C.P.:** It wasn't maybe so much about the Christians, as the foreign presence.

**K.K.:** But the Greeks had been there for centuries.

**M.E.:** Let's stay with Iran, because Iran is one of the most important regional powers. Iran is the most important, the most influential. And because we are talking about the future of the area, Iran's role is fundamental. The one area that Iran has been castigated, and with some justification, is its role with Hezbollah, and perhaps with Hamas, which brings in the Israeli angle, but that's the only area where those who have been demonizing Iran may have ground to stand. But with everything else Iran has acted as an actor, a state player with systemic constraints. And I think that if Obama leaves any legacy behind, it's probably the reconciliation with Iran. Because with Iran accepted as a legitimate player, we have all kinds of potentials opening ups in the Middle East. And I think that would have also its effect on the Syrian situation. Because if you had a regime in Iran that is cooperating, and it is cooperating on the ceasefire right now, then we build up posts out of which, perhaps, we can have a restructuring

in the Middle East that would strengthen this whole effort at peace-making. Don't forget that the last four or five years we are having people killed every day. And I think the problem with ISIL is that it could have been controlled long time ago. But it is serving different interests: Turkey's, the US' interests. We have American documents of the DIA – Defense Intelligence Agency – predicting and encouraging the rise of the Caliphate as the final instrumentality to overthrow Assad, with the assumption: “We can control them later”. And Christodoulos has mentioned that we have seen the rise of violence in the cities. I think that's an indication that ISIL is not doing well on the front lines, and therefore it is coming back, creating havoc and chaos, and hoping to derail the prospects of some sort of settlement. What don't know what kind of settlement, but at least we don't fight, we talk.

**F.M.:** I quite agree with Marios. It's an increasingly complex situation. There are shifting alliances all the time taking place. ISIL is serving the interests of some, but this is not a constant, this keeps changing. The question of the Kurds - ISIL serves Turkish interests, because it fights the Kurds...

**C.P.:** The Kurds are the wild card, aren't they?

**F.M.:** Yes, and I think that they will keep playing a crucial role. And so far, I'm afraid, Kurdish politicians haven't been able to utilize the confidence that people put on them. I am referring to their economy that despite the money that they had has really gone down. So the Kurds have lost a bit of fate in their leaders in the autonomous part of Iraq. However, it is a very complicated picture vis-a-vis the Kurds, ISIL, Turkey and America. The Americans have made three huge blunders. One of them was George W. Bush going to Iraq – that was maybe worse than Vietnam, policy-wise. Second was Obama pulling out so fast and leaving a vacuum. Third was the same people wanting to get rid of Assad, and the follow up to that: not doing anything about it. The indecision of America... I mean, you say, “If you use chemical weapons, I will do A, B and C,” and then you use chemical weapons, and nothing happens. So you lose credibility.

**C.P.:** Was that business about the chemical weapons perhaps the beginning of this concert that we have talked about before? The initial sort of understanding and cooperation between the US and Russia?

**M.E.:** Correct, I think you can trace it from there.

**F.M.:** However, may I add, this concert has been during the Obama administration. Obama has shown extreme unwillingness to use force, and Putin has shown readiness to use force: in Ukraine, in Syria, in Georgia. Obama has shown unwillingness and this has brought about this convergence. I don't think it will last in the next US administration, whether democrat or republican. That's why I see the future of this ceasefire difficult to hold.

**K.K.:** One of the themes in these discussions has been the impact of the Eastern Mediterranean on Europe and on the individual European states. Marios has mentioned the Saudi funding of Turkey. We are seeing Saudi funding of institutions and bodies in Western Europe with divisive consequences for the cohesion and stability of the European Union member states. How active is Iran in terms of funding Western European organizations? I don't see Iran as active as Saudi Arabia. And I draw the conclusion that Saudi Arabia is far more dangerous to the Western Europe than Iran is.

**F.M.:** The brand of Islam that the Saudis subscribe to – Wahhabism – is far more militant than the brand of Shiism that has lived for centuries, if not longer. That's very true. Iran has been careful. I should say also that political Islam, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood, is Sunni. Al-Qaeda, Jabhat-al-Nusrah, ISIL are all Sunnis. We see the tendency to immediately establish themselves outside the remit of the state. We haven't yet had a Shia fundamentalist group that would come and establish itself as "my own man and I do my own thing"...

**C.P.:** What about Hezbollah? Isn't it doing that?

**F.M.:** Hezbollah is an established part of the system in Lebanon.

**C.P.:** It became so.

**F.M.:** It became so. And it is very much influenced by Iran, and I think they admit it openly. Who really can say they control ISIL, or Al-Qaeda, or Jabhat al-Nusrah? There is nobody who's got control over them. There are some who may have some leverage, but no serious influence. The question about Saudi Arabia and Turkey... Turkey is against el-Sisi in Egypt for Muslim Brotherhood. And here they actually have a clash with Saudi Arabia, because Saudi Arabia supports al-Sisi and gives him 3 billion dollars a year. So despite financial and other considerations, Ankara and Riyadh have a serious difference on the question of Egypt.

**C.P.:** Regarding Riyadh's position on Egypt, I was always wondering about it. Is it a sui generis one? Is it their own, or is it following a US or Western sort of direction?

**K.K.:** As an observation, much of the Gulf oil, including the Saudi oil, will go to Western Europe through the Suez Canal.

**F.M.:** Saudi Arabia, I believe they are holding the position increasingly independent of the United States. We see this in Bahrain. The Saudis sent their troops to Bahrain without even notifying the White House, because they believe the US cannot be relayed on for support.

**C.P.:** But it came after this business with Iran – I think it's a reaction to the US-Iran rapprochement. Or did it predate it?

**F.M.:** It did predate it. We saw what happened to Mubarak. He was a staunch ally of the United States. And then Obama came and said, "Mubarak must go," very openly. So they saw that you can't rely on the United States. I think Egypt, and what al-Sisi has done, is the most remarkable, spectacular defeat of political Islam yet. It started in Egypt and Egyptians have been the first ones to push them out.

**C.P.:** But did they push them out?

**F.M.:** Officially they did. They will not die out completely, but they've lost popularity and they are not in the government.

**K.K.:** Can I go back to the Saudis, because this is interesting. They are very much a player now in the Eastern Mediterranean, but they are a player in Europe. I noticed the other that Donald Trump, the leading republican candidate for the United States presidency affectively alleged that Saudi Arabia was behind 9/11. There seems to be in America a growing recognition, that Saudi Arabia is actually a malevolent force in international relations. It looks like there is a growing awareness regarding what Saudi Arabia is doing in order to destabilize the continent.

**M.E.:** In the official 9/11 commission on the attack on the Twin Towers there are about 30 pages that were never made public. The allegation is that in those 30 pages there is enough evidence of the indirect complicity of Saudi Arabia in the financing of the operation that brought the Twin Towers down.

**K.K.:** And Donald Trump is calling for those pages to be released.

**M.E.:** Correct. And at least one information that leaked out is that money from the Saudi Arabia Embassy in Washington DC went to California to one of the seventeen hijackers. There were nineteen hijackers, and seventeen of them were Saudi Arabians.

**K.K.:** But the leader was Egyptian.

**M.E.:** Correct. But at least partial funding for the operation flew out of the Saudi Arabian embassy. So that's what Trump is referring to. And I don't want to throw something flying in the air, in terms of what I have said about Saudi Arabia, I invite you to Google the Rapid Aid scandal in Turkey. Rapid Aid is a Saudi foundation that is supposed to be founding humanitarian causes. But it is known in Turkey as a Rapid Aid scandal. That is from where the initial "green money" flew in from Saudi Arabia to Turkey. There are some excellent academic journals, one of them, the (*inaudible*) Report which comes from the Washington DC, has dwelled on this issue very much. So people can find a lot of information about the "green money". A lot of work has been done in America about it, precisely because in the aftermath of 9/11, a lot of Americans who were not focusing on Saudi Arabia began to focus on Saudi Arabia. And a lot of emphasis was given by the American Jewish lobby, American Jewish organizations, who began to see Saudi Arabia as basically the fundamental cause of fundamentalism in the Middle East. Yes, they were targeting Iran, but parallel and in my estimation even more so, they were considering Saudi Arabia. And therefore, a lot of research had been kept low, started coming out after 9/11. The so called neo-cons were targeting specifically Saudi Arabia. We have read plans of the partitioning and creating three states in Saudi Arabia: religious state around Mecca and Medina, a state in the region with the Shias, which is close to Iran, and a third one north of Yemen for the rest of Saudi Arabia.

**C.P.:** When was this?

**M.E.:** It's the period right after 9/11 in the decade of the 2000s. An extremely important studies about it citing military scenarios of the Pentagon, the so called contingency plannings, that wanted Turkey partition, Saudi Arabia partition, Iran partition, to make a lot of small states in order to manage them better.

**K.K.:** So this brings us neatly to the subject matter of our discussion. Is there going to be a possibility of constructing a Concert of Europe-style scenario here in the Eastern Mediterranean? And if so, which actors will be involved in this? The actors in our region - Turkey, Israel, Egypt, Cyprus, Greece - but you've also got these actors from slightly further afield. From the West you obviously have the United States, the British, European Union, the Germans. To the north we have Russia. To the east we have Iran, most certainly, and Saudi Arabia. So it's a very convoluted picture.

**M.E.:** It is. And in my view, because of the so much blood-letting that we have seen in the last four or five years, the estimates are between 300,000 and half a million people dead in Syria. We leave aside the wounded and the whole refugee issue and the inhumane treatment that is

taking place in an attempt to reach safe heaven somewhere in Europe - the humanitarian factor. Plus the fact that the two large powers, Russia and the United States, seem to have an understanding that we have to find some other way of handling this crisis instead of subversion and fighting. These two factors stand there. The rest of the regional powers will have to play along, I think. Iran has a lot of interest to be a spoiler in this. So let's put Iran on the positive side. Saudi Arabia on one hand has the ability to create problems. But the other day I had somebody, and I probably agreed with what he said. He said, "Saudi Arabia is not a country; it's a family with a flag." Saudi Arabia has a big problem in terms of its own existence as a state. And they are aware of it. The whole way to see Saudi Arabian policy is to see it in terms of their own existential presence.

**C.P.:** Is Saudi Arabia the ultimate expression of tribalism in the region?

**M.E.:** There is something people don't realize. Try and Google what the population of Saudi Arabia is - it is around 20 million. When I was researching Saudi Arabia in the late 1970s and early 1980s, its population was 1.7 million. The point is that we don't know what exactly its population is, there are tribes which move around. And out of even that 20 million, how many are Sunnis, and how many are Shias? The majority of the population is Shia. Saudi Arabia has a big problem of existence. So, therefore, I leave Saudi Arabia out of this equation for a moment, and come back to the other players: Egypt and Israel. Egypt has an interest, I think. Turkey has tried all kinds of ways to martial (*inaudible*) force in Syria, it's not coming around, so Turkey has to play. Israel will go along as long as it can handle the situation in the Golan. At least for a while this will last. What will come next brings us to the joker in the pack, which is the Kurdish issue. That again will throw in another monkey wrench into the equation. I think the Kurds are wise enough not to push things. They have taken enough territory, and they want consolidation now. I don't think they want to take an extra step and to go for a state. I think they will wait. They have had plenty of patience for the last hundred years not to spoil it right now. I assume rationality on their part.

**F.M.:** On the question of Saudi Arabia I agree very much. Saudi Arabia is epitome of tribalism. The institutions of modern state are completely lacking. It's not that it's their fault, it's just that it was rather irresponsible of western countries to introduce and give that Saudi Arabia as a model - the three executive powers, the separation of powers, and all that. If they want to bring Western-style democracy to countries that are tribal by nature, violence is guaranteed. We have Libya, we have Bahrain, we have Iraq, Syria. That is not because Saudi leaders necessarily are against democracy and they will start fighting people. The very nature of tribalism runs counter to Western-style democracy. It doesn't mean it is worse or better - it is different. Now, that's the local issue. A lot of local countries that are particularly tribal will have problems if you try to bring Western-style democracy, as it was tried in Iraq. But the other point is the international dimension. The former CIA director, I think it was Haydan, two-three days ago he predicted that the continuing tragedy in West Asia - and I say West Asia, because do we call Germany "Middle West"? Do we call America "Far West"? No. That's America, this is Western Europe, or Central Europe, or Poland is Eastern Europe. They are allowed authentic existence for themselves. Why should we call it the "Middle East"? It only exists in reference to the West.

**M.E.:** In reference to imperialism.

**K.K.:** I want to say something here, Farid. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1878 the then British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli sent a letter to Queen Victoria, and he said the following: "If Cyprus

can be conceded to Your Majesty by the Porte, and England at the same time enters into a defensive alliance with Turkey, guaranteeing Asiatic Turkey from Russian invasion, the power of England in the Mediterranean will be absolutely increased in that region and Your Majesty's Indian Empire immensely strengthened. Cyprus is the key of Western Asia."

**C.P.:** It agrees with your interpretation.

**F.M.:** Yes, I like that, thank you very much.

**M.E.:** I like that too.

**F.M.:** Haydan said that this will continue for the next probably five years, and it will deplete the financial resources of the region. Now, because I come originally from the Middle East - from the West Asia - I am allowed to be conspiratorial in my frame of mind. I would like to know what happened to the hundreds of billions of dollars of Libyan reserve money?

**M.E.:** 150 billion. 150 billion disappeared.

**K.K.:** Could you enlighten us, because some of us hear this for the first time.

**M.E.:** My source was the late Prime Minister of Libya, my dear friend and classmate in Boston, Shukri Ghanem, whom I visited in Libya few years before all these things had happened. I also saw him after he left Libya, I saw him in Athens as a refugee, after the overthrow of the regime, and he told me that 150 billion dollars of reserves had disappeared.

**C.P.:** They were held where? Who saw them the last time?

**M.E.:** Not in Libya.

**F.M.:** I don't want to sound too conspiratorial, but Gaddafi in 2009, and I didn't like the guy at all, but he said he wanted to introduce an African currency that would be backed by the Libyan gold...

**M.E.:** I think what you are saying now had sealed Gaddafi's fate.

**F.M.:** What I want to say is that, yes, the West Asian people get carried away in their conspiratorial frame of mind, but there is merit in some of what they believe, I am afraid. Now, Haydan said that the financial resources of the region are going to be depleted. With this, I think the Syrian tragedy will continue. The only thing the Europeans are suffering from is the refugee, ISIL. The fact that half a million have been killed is sad, but it doesn't particularly bother them. If they can contain the problem, have the Qataris, the Saudis, the Iranians... Because who is paying in the end for this carnage? Who paid for the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait? Who paid for the liberation of Kuwait? All this comes from the region. And the financial resources that have built up over the years, hundreds of billions the Saudis have, Qataris have, UAE has, they will go into this conflict killing one another, with weaponry that is bought from outside the region, in order to kill one another, most probably with no result.

**C.P.:** Gentlemen, do you want to make the last comments? Shall I promise that we will be back in order to discuss the missing Libyan money, and the Kurds?

**M.E.:** Well, we have left the joker out of this equation. But I think it is a next time down, it is not immediate.

**K.K.:** I wanted to thank our guests for their vivid insight into what is happening in the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Asia. It's incredible to think that a hundred years ago, in 1916, there was carnage in Europe. The First World War was unfolding as the Concert of Europe came to an end. Seventy years ago we had the Nuremberg tribunal, in 1946, which was supposed to herald a new era in international criminal law and the enforcement of law and order. And here we are in 2016 seeing the recurrent of the brutality and bloodshed and misery that was inflicted during the First World War, and with complete disregard for the basic norms and principles of humanity that were at the heart of the Nuremberg tribunal. In this part of the world one thing we can do to try to build the concert of the region is by encouraging all the member states in this region to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Only three countries in our region are parties to the Rome Statute: Cyprus, Jordan and Greece. All of the others: Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran and others, have not ratified or embraced the Rome Statute. So that's one simple thing that we can do. I will close my thought by encouraging all of our listeners to lobby the various governments of the region to embrace that one instrument. Because that's the instrument that is an attempt to introduce a system of law and order, and enforcement mechanism accompanying the system of law and order. And it is missing in this part of the world.

**C.P.:** Gentlemen, thank you very much.





---

## REPORT

---

Marta Murzanska\*  
August 2016

### **The Many-Faceted Ideology of Political Islam and Its Challenge to Liberal Democracy**

*The paper argues that liberal democracy is under threat from a new and largely unrecognized challenge of religiously-inspired ideology of political Islam. Although jihadism constitutes the most conspicuous aspect of political Islam, it is merely one embodiment of the Islamist ideology, which aims at undermining the current nation-state-based international order and its institutions of popular sovereignty, secularism and individual freedoms.*

Since the spectacular 9/11 attack, Islamic terrorism has become a recurring phenomenon in the Western world. The collapse of the Twin Towers in New York granted Osama bin Laden the status of a public enemy and a pop-culture icon alike. More recently, thousands of European citizens have travelled to Syria to join the so called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and many have returned, raising security alerts in their home countries. The recent jihadist terrorist attacks in Europe and the United States have proven that Islamic terrorism has wormed its way into the Western social fabric.<sup>95</sup> Many disagree over how this has come about. On two opposing sides of the argument are those who see violence as inherent to Islam, and those who believe jihadist terrorism is an entirely separate phenomenon. The debate between apologists and demonizers of Islam shifts the focus from the root of Islamic terrorism: the religious fanaticism

\* Senior Fellow, Publishing Director, ERPIC

---

<sup>95</sup> Islamic violent extremism is by no means the only form of terrorism present in Europe. Traditionally, terrorism in Europe has been associated with various separatist, far right, radical left and anarchist groups. According to the European Law Enforcement Agency (Europol), a total of 211 failed, foiled or completed attacks were reported by the EU Member States in 2015. Out of this number 65 were separatist in nature, 13 were linked to the left-wing and 9 to the right-wing groups, 17 were reported as jihadist, and 107 were not specified. However, the jihadist attacks were the most lethal ones, since civilian population is their main target: out of 151 casualties of terrorist attacks in the EU in 2015, 150 were caused by attacks classified as jihadist. Moreover, jihadist suspects constituted more than half of all terrorism-related arrests in the EU in 2015. European Law Enforcement Agency, 'European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2016,' (The Netherlands: European Police Office, 2016), pp. 10, 44, 45. <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-te-sat-2016>.

which lies at the heart of political Islam or Islamism, as it is more commonly referred to.

Religion-inspired violence is neither a new phenomenon, nor one that's limited exclusively to Islam. It can be found in all major faiths. However, what distinguishes radical Islam is its universal political agenda driven by the concept of *Hakimiyyat Allah*: the establishment of a global divine nomocracy based on the *sharia* of Allah. Not surprisingly, Western policy makers and public opinion alike focus on acts of terrorism. Yet the absolutist ideology which drives such terror escapes attention. In addition to inspiring violence, both directly and indirectly, Islamist ideology hinders integration and severely undermines social cohesion of Western societies. In the face of rapidly growing Muslim presence in Europe, the socially disruptive effects of Islamism need to be urgently addressed.

Islamism can be traced to various Sunni and Shia revivalist movements calling for the purification of Islam from un-Islamic elements and for the emulation of early Muslim communities regarded as the most Islamic, and therefore the best examples to follow. Some of them led to the establishment of modern Islamic regimes, such as Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>96</sup> Many contemporary Islamist movements draw inspiration from the Society of the Muslim Brothers established in Egypt in 1928. Over the following decades it has developed into a transnational religious movement, widely known as the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>97</sup> Rooted in the Brotherhood is the ideology of Qutbism, which today serves as a driving force behind Islamic terrorism, or jihadism, as it is also referred to. It stems from the collection of writings by the Muslim Brothers, but also other Islamic intellectuals, and borrows its name from Sayyid Qutb.<sup>98</sup> Egypt-born Qutb, one of the leading figures of the Muslim Brotherhood, is regarded as the spiritual father of Islamism, Islamism's "most influential ideologue across the globe,"<sup>99</sup> and "the architect of worldwide *jihad*," whose teachings inspired the 9/11 and other terrorist attacks in the West<sup>100</sup>. Of primary importance for Qutb is the concept of *jahiliyyah*: the state of ignorance of the guidance from God.<sup>101</sup> According to this concept, Islam is not simply a belief system limited to theological or spiritual realm; it requires total submission to God, and more precisely to the God-given law, in literally every aspect of human existence, including its public and political realm. Therefore, Allah is regarded as the only and absolute sovereign and law-maker on earth. Political power is a "divine attribute" which has been sinfully usurped by men.<sup>102</sup> Hence, every society and system of governance based on man-made laws is *jahili* – ignorant – and should be abolished. For Qutb, the establishment of the *sharia* rule on earth would amount to "declaration of freedom", as any

---

<sup>96</sup> John Esposito, 'Islamic Fundamentalism,' *SIDIC Periodical* XXXII 3 (1999), [http://www.notredamedesion.org/en/dialogue\\_docs.php?a=3b&id=16](http://www.notredamedesion.org/en/dialogue_docs.php?a=3b&id=16).

<sup>97</sup> Bassam Tibi, 'The Totalitarianism of Jihadist Islamism and its Challenge to Europe and to Islam,' *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* Issue 8, Nr.1, March 2007, p. 39, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14690760601121630>.

<sup>98</sup> Dale C. Eikemeier, 'Qutbism: An Ideology of Islamic-Fascism,' *Strategic Studies Institute*, Spring 2007, p. 86, <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/Articles/07spring/eikmeier.pdf>.

<sup>99</sup> Tibi, 'The Totalitarianism of Jihadist Islamism,' p. 39.

<sup>100</sup> Jonathan Raban, 'Truly, Madly, Deeply Devout,' *The Guardian*, 2 March 2002, <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2002/mar/02/socialsciences.highereducation>.

Simon Ross Valentine, 'Sayyid Qutb: Terrorism and the Origins of Militant Islam,' *Islam Daily*, 14 December 2008, <http://www.islamdaily.org/en/islam/6965.sayyid-qutb-terrorism-and-the-origins-of-militant-.htm>.

<sup>101</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, 1964, p.33,

<http://www.kalamullah.com/Books/Milestones%20Special%20Edition.pdf>.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 67.

government based on the sovereignty of a man, including democracy, is in fact a “slavery of one man over another”.<sup>103</sup>

The end of the Cold War and disintegration of the international bipolar system was one of the main factors contributing to the re-emergence of an Islamic model as the *de facto* competitor to the Western dominance over the Islamic world. One major aspect which distinguishes Islamic nomocracy is its claim to universality, which brings it into conflict with Western-inspired “globalism”.<sup>104</sup> This conflict is not a new phenomenon. The rivalry between what historically has been known as Christendom (and at the time identical with Medieval Europe) and Islam can be traced back to the times when Islam established itself as world’s major religion and civilization. For centuries also *dar al-Islam*, the house of Islam, had the upper hand, conquering vast stretches of historically Christian lands outside the European continent and reaching as far as the European heartland. The turning point for Muslim expansion into the lands of Christendom was the defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the gates of Vienna in 1683 which initiated the demise of the Islamic civilization.<sup>105</sup>

At the same time, Europe itself was undergoing profound changes, which defined its civilizational identity, leading to its own bid for world domination. The process of modernization, rooted in the Italian Renaissance, which became fully fledged during the Age of Enlightenment, was characterized by two parallel phenomena: the demise of the power of the Church, and the rise of reason and scientific thought. The fragmentation of Medieval Christendom and the Thirty Year’s War marked the end of Latin Christian doctrinal unity, encouraging freedom of thought and diversity of belief. Theological warfare gave way to secular learning, which facilitated scientific development.<sup>106</sup> The Westphalian settlement of 1648 was the key moment in the emergence of contemporary European nation-states order and state sovereignty, as well as religious tolerance. Strict division of the divine and the secular resulted in personalization and privatization of faith, and in the decline of political influence of the Church. The industrial revolution and the economic development that followed fueled colonial expansion, and the ascent of modern Western civilization, which steadily overtook a declining *dar al-Islam*.

It should be added that the seeds for the separation of religion and state stem from the nature of Christianity. Unlike Islam, Christianity during the first centuries of existence was a severely persecuted religion of the poor and the downtrodden. Islam on the other hand, rising through proselytism (*dawa*) and military conquest (*jihad*) made no distinction between the worldly and spiritual leadership. As Bernard Lewis points out, despite great literature produced by Islamic scholars on every aspect of state functions and powers,

“What is not discussed to any great extent is the difference between religious and temporal powers. The words for ‘secular’ and ‘secularism’ in modern Islamic languages are either loanwords or neologisms. (...) Conceptually, this dichotomy simply did not

---

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>104</sup> Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism*, Berkeley, Calif London: University of California Press, 1998, p. 15.

<sup>105</sup> Bernard Lewis, ‘The Roots of Muslim Rage,’ *The Atlantic*, September 1990, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1990/09/the-roots-of-muslim-rage/304643/>.

<sup>106</sup> Bertrand Russel, *A History of Western Philosophy*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945, pp. 491-495, 525.

arise.”<sup>107</sup>

The nostalgia for Islam’s past glory and the re-establishment of its lost supremacy over the world are therefore the essential and recurring themes in Islamist teachings.<sup>108</sup> The West, perceived as a single, homogenous political and cultural unit, is identified as the main rival and obstacle to Islam’s world domination. Islamists view Western supremacy as a historical anomaly which needs to be reversed. They feel that “*the West has deprived Islam of its core function, that is, to lead humanity.*”<sup>109</sup> Western imperialism is very often cited as the main grievance behind Muslim hostility, even hatred against the West. Islamists however do not oppose imperialism per se, but rather the current balance of power:

“What is truly evil and unacceptable is the domination of infidels over true believers. For true believers to rule misbelievers is proper and natural, since this provides for the maintenance of the holy law, and gives the misbelievers both the opportunity and the incentive to embrace the true faith.”<sup>110</sup>

What is challenging is that these feelings resonate among mainstream Muslims.

From an Islamic perspective, not only is the Western dominance an anomaly; it entails a deep feeling of injustice reinforced by a particular contempt which in Islamist thought is reserved for the West, regarded as an ideological, philosophical, and physical enemy.<sup>111</sup> Despite all its intellectual, scientific and technological achievements, Western rationalism and humanist philosophical foundations are perceived as materialistic and void of any spirituality, leading to the “state of animalism”. In Qutb’s view, the West’s reliance on reason and pragmatism, and lack of spiritual and moral values are the prime causes of its decadence and degradation, which in the final result will lead either to its self-destruction or conquest by spiritually superior Islamic civilization.<sup>112</sup>

To be more precise, modernism, and in particular its derivative in the form of a secular nation-state and all institutions, norms and values associated with it, is the product of Western civilization most challenged by political Islam. Strict division between religion and state, where the former is regarded as a private matter, is perceived by Islamists as an “evil neo-pagan force”.<sup>113</sup> The concept of the nation-state has acquired universal appeal, and today constitutes the elementary unit which international system rests upon. Such appeal, however, is often not supported by the norms and values that this concept is based on. The historical context, as well as political and cultural processes which led to the emergence of the secular nation-state in the Western world, were absent elsewhere. An alien construct imposed by the Western powers

---

<sup>107</sup> Bernard Lewis, ‘Islam and Liberal Democracy. A Historical Overview,’ *Journal of Democracy*, Issue 7, Nr. 2, April 1996, <https://omarjasim.org/2012/08/12/bernard-lewis-islam-and-liberal-democracy-a-historical-overview-journal-of-democracy-7-2-1996-52-63/>.

<sup>108</sup> Bassam Tibi, ‘Ballot and Bullet. The Politicisation of Islam to Islamism,’ lecture at the Centre for Studies in Islamism and Radicalisation at the Department of Political Science, Aarhus University, Denmark, 9 September 2009, pp. 13-14, [http://cir.au.dk/fileadmin/site\\_files/filer\\_statskundskab/subsites/cir/pdf-filer/H%C3%A6fte\\_5\\_Tibi.pdf](http://cir.au.dk/fileadmin/site_files/filer_statskundskab/subsites/cir/pdf-filer/H%C3%A6fte_5_Tibi.pdf).

<sup>109</sup> Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism*, p. 15.

<sup>110</sup> Lewis, ‘The Roots of Muslim Rage.’

<sup>111</sup> Luke Loboda, ‘The Thought of Sayyid Qutb,’ Ashbrook Statesmanship Thesis, Ashland University, 2004, p. 3, <http://www.ashbrook.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/2004-Loboda-The-Thought-of-Sayyid-Qutb-PDF.pdf>.

<sup>112</sup> Loboda, ‘The Thought of Sayyid Qutb,’ pp. 11-13.

<sup>113</sup> Lewis, ‘The Roots of Muslim Rage.’

after the Ottoman Empire was dissolved, it particularly failed to strike roots in the Middle East, leading to the “crisis of legitimacy”, today articulated by Islamists.<sup>114</sup> As Lewis puts it,

“For vast numbers of Middle Easterners, Western-style economic methods brought poverty, Western-style political institutions brought tyranny, even Western-style warfare brought defeat. It is hardly surprising that so many were willing to listen to voices telling them that the old Islamic ways were best and their only salvation was to throw aside the pagan innovations of the reformers and return to the True Path that God had prescribed for his people.”<sup>115</sup>

The series of failures and crises in the Muslim world, such as for example the humiliating defeats of the Arabs by the infant Israeli state, the Bangladeshi-Pakistani civil war, the Lebanese civil war, or the Iranian Revolution, reinforced the notion of Islamism as an alternative ideology to the Western-exported models of modernization, perceived as a form of neocolonialism.<sup>116</sup> Iran-Iraq War as well as the First and Second Iraq Wars shattered the nation-state model for the Arabs, as did the recent disintegration of Syria and Libya.

Similarly, Ahmet Davutoglu, who recently resigned from Turkey’s Prime Minister office, argued as early as 1994 that Islam and the West represent two contrasting, irreconcilable and competing “Weltanschauungs” (worldviews), stemming from fundamentally different “philosophical, methodological and theoretical background, rather than from mere institutional and historical differences”.<sup>117</sup> These contrasting worldviews are also translated into alternative political cultures, reflected in different justification of socio-political system, legitimacy of political authority, approaches to political power and pluralism, and, lastly, the concept of the universal political system.<sup>118</sup> Davutoglu juxtaposes the nation-state based system with the “Islamic bicompartimentalization”, which describes international order as *dar al-Islam* (“where the divine responsibility of man could be performed according to the rules of *fiqh*,” in other words lands governed by the Islamic law), and *dar al-Harb* (“where Muslims do not have such an opportunity”).<sup>119</sup> Davutoglu also differentiates between *dar al-Islam* and the *ummah*, understood as a global Muslim community. He stresses that it is a religious-spiritual, metaphysical (“in the sense of being beyond ethnic and territorial limitations”), socio-political *ummah al-muslimah* (Muslim community), and not merely *ummah al-muslimin* (community composed of Muslims),

---

<sup>114</sup> Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>115</sup> Lewis, ‘The Roots of Muslim Rage.’

<sup>116</sup> Esposito, ‘Islamic Fundamentalism.’

<sup>117</sup> Ahmet Davutoglu, *Alternative Paradigms. The impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory*, University Press of America, 1994, p. 2. These contrasting backgrounds have their origin in different concepts of relationship between God, man, and nature. With regard to the Western concept, it is reflected in what Davutoglu calls ‘ontological proximity’, and embodied in such Christian dogmas as the Incarnation and Deification of Jesus, the Fatherhood of God, or the Trinity, which led to ‘particularization of divinity’. It stems mainly from adopting pre-Christian, polytheistic and pantheistic concepts which can be found in ancient Greek and Roman mythological and philosophical traditions. This closeness or overlapping between the divine and human was later reflected in Western philosophical tradition, ultimately leading to relativization of religion, rationalization of knowledge, and secularization of life. In contrast, the Islamic paradigm is based on the concept of ‘*tawhid*’, the Oneness of God, and strict separation between God, man, and nature. The absolute ‘unity of God’ is also translated into the ‘unity of truth’ and the ‘unity of life’: since Allah has assigned man with a specific role and mission, it should be recaptured in all aspects of his existence, without dividing it into the sacred and the profane, the religious and the secular.

<sup>118</sup> Davutoglu, *Alternative Paradigms*, p. 196.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 186.

which implies that it is “a totality performing its specific divine responsibility beyond its importance as being composed of individual Muslims.”<sup>120</sup> The “membership” in the *ummah* is based on a self-identification as a Muslim, and requires absolute loyalty to the global Islamic community, which suppresses any other identities or loyalties that could be acquired (tribal, racial, ethnic, national, etc.). Such interpretation of the *ummah* creates a powerful challenge to global nation-state order in general, as well as to the integration of Muslim minorities living within the boundaries of individual nation-states.<sup>121</sup>

Islamism, therefore, can be defined as an ideology which aims to fully subordinate politics to religion. It challenges Western secular order, norms, and values, and wishes to replace them with an Islamic order of Allah’s sovereignty on earth embodied in *sharia*.<sup>122</sup> It is important to underline that the conflict in question is between modernism, and in particular secularism, including institutions and values it is associated with, and the forces within the Islamic world which reject them. Bassam Tibi goes even further, and describes Islamism as totalitarian. Applying Hannah Arendt’s analysis of totalitarianism, he points out that common to all totalitarian systems is complete abolition of separation between the private and the public spheres, and the aim to impose one “norms of belief and behavior on all aspects of life.” In this case the goal is a theocratic system embodied in complete subordination of the society to the divine law – the *sharia*.<sup>123</sup> Tibi also stresses that it is wrong to define Islamism as “Islamic extremism”, since its appeal is not limited to the fringe of politics in the Muslim world, and in the Middle East in particular. In fact, Islamists constitute the main political opposition groups in the Arab world. In 2015 there was more than fifty Islamist and pro-Islamist parties in fourteen Arab states, half of them formed in the past decade alone.<sup>124</sup> Islamist seems to be supported by the majority of Muslims worldwide. According the 2013 survey conducted among Muslims in 39 countries by the Pew Research Center, the support for Islamic law to become the official state law is very large, although varies greatly from country to country (from 8% in Azerbaijan, 10% in Kazakhstan and 12% Turkey, to as much as 83% in Morocco, 89% in the Palestinian territories, 91% in Iraq, and 99% in Afghanistan).<sup>125</sup>

In the attempt to “de-Westernize” Muslim countries and to rid it of non-Islamic impurities, before unifying them into a caliphate, Muslim secular rulers are primary targets of Islamists, who accuse them of adopting non-Islamic models of governance and undermining and dividing the *ummah*.<sup>126</sup> Similarly to Davutoglu, Qutb also underlines the centrality of divine sovereignty: that a truly Islamic society is not the one which consists of even the most observant Muslims, but the one which is regulated in every aspect by Islamic law.<sup>127</sup> Therefore, secular Muslim countries are also *jahili*, and secular Muslim rulers can be regarded as apostates, in line with the

---

<sup>120</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 182-184.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 185.

<sup>122</sup> Bassam Tibi, ‘Religious Extremism or Religionization of Politics?’ in Efraim Inbar and Hillel Frisch (Eds.), *Radical Islam and International Security. Challenges and Responses*, New York, Routledge, 2008, p. 13.

<sup>123</sup> Tibi, ‘The Totalitarianism of Jihadist Islamism,’ p. 37.

<sup>124</sup> Annika Folkesson, ‘Islamist Groups,’ *Wilson Center*, 2015.

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/islamist-groups-parties-and-factions-0>.

<sup>125</sup> Pew Research Center, ‘The World’s Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society,’ 30 April 2013, <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-overview/>.

<sup>126</sup> Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism*, p. 17.

<sup>127</sup> Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 106.

concept of *takfir*.<sup>128</sup> In fact, according to the words of Abul A'la Maududi, the founder of Jamaat-e-Islami, a sister movement of the Muslim Brotherhood in Southeast Asia,

“Islam wishes to destroy all states and governments anywhere on the face of the earth which are opposed to the ideology and programme of Islam regardless of the country or the Nation which rules it. The purpose of Islam is to set up a state on the basis of its own ideology and programme, regardless of which nation assumes the role of the standard-bearer of Islam or the rule of which nation is undermined in the process of the establishment of an ideological Islamic State. Islam requires the earth—not just a portion, but the whole planet—not because the sovereignty over the earth should be wrested from one nation or several nations and vested in one particular nation, but because the entire mankind should benefit from the ideology and welfare programme, or what would be truer to say from ‘Islam’ which is the programme of well-being for all humanity.”<sup>129</sup>

The agenda of abolishing secular regimes explains severe persecution Islamists often face in their home countries, particularly in Egypt.

While the common denominator for all Islamists is the establishment of a *sharia*-based system of governance as the ultimate goal, the movement is very diverse and contains a wide spectrum of brands and organizations applying different tools and tactics. Previously active mainly in the Muslim lands, with the ever-growing Muslim diaspora Islamism has been imported to the Western world. Over the last decades Europe in particular has become a logistical base and operational stage for Islamist activities. Its purpose is to challenge Europe not only in terms of security, but to alter European societies and Europe's civilizational identity.

Lorenzo Vidino distinguished three broad currents within the Islamist movement: violent rejectionists, non-violent rejectionists, and participationists. Violent rejectionists (jihadists) dismiss democratic system in its entirety and promote the use of violence in achieving their goals. Their presence in Europe can be traced back to the early 1990s, when the so called Afghan-Arabs, veterans of the Afghan-Soviet war, settled down in the continent escaping persecution in their Middle Eastern homelands. Exploiting European freedoms, they began and continue supporting militants in their countries of origin through propaganda, fundraising and recruitment. While considering themselves as a part of the “global *jihad*”, they believe that the West as a whole is at war with Islam, therefore every Western country, regardless of its participation in wars in Muslim states, is a legitimate target of attack.<sup>130</sup>

Jihadists can be defined as revolutionary militants, utilizing terror and violence as the main tools in their struggle for the Islamic state. Jihadism attracts the most attention and is probably the most controversial issue in the debate around Islam and its role in the global affairs. This debate often comes down to the question: does jihadism, understood as a “holy war” against unbelievers, constitute a part of the teachings of Islam? The answer is not a straightforward one. *Jihad* defined as an instrument for Islamic expansion is by no means a new concept. It is

---

<sup>128</sup> *Takfir* is a central concept in modern *jihadist* ideology, which is used as justification for the use of violence against everyone declared ‘not devout enough.’ The excessive use of *takfir* against fellow Muslims have become one of the main points of disagreement between Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

<sup>129</sup> Abul A'la Maududi, *Jihad in Islam*, The Holy Koran Publishing House, 2006, p. 6.

<sup>130</sup> Lorenzo Vidino, ‘Islamism in Europe,’ Report commissioned by World Watch Research, April 2014, p. 5, <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/research/3215322>.



rooted in Islamic theology and history, and goes back to the very beginnings of Islam and Mohammed's teachings and conquests. However, in contrast to modern jihadism, classical *jihad* prescribes rules for the conduct of war against non-believers, for instance permissible targets, methods of warfare, and code of honour. Therefore, contemporary jihadist terrorism, a form of irregular warfare without rules, is an innovation and should not be equated with classical *jihad*.<sup>131</sup> It is nevertheless without doubt rooted in the Islamic religion.<sup>132</sup>

Many argue in the aforementioned debate that jihadism is a marginal problem, as only a minimal fraction of Muslims engage in it. While the latter statement is true, the same cannot be said about the former one. According to the latest Global Terrorism Index, the five deadliest terrorist groups in the world, responsible for 74% of all terrorism-related deaths in 2014, were all jihadist.<sup>133</sup> Bassam Tibi suggests the resemblance of Islamist militancy to Leninism: the jihadists regard themselves as the vanguards of the revolution in the pursuit of de-Westernization and liberation of the *ummah* and the establishment of a new international order. Prior to the Russian Revolution of 1917, Bolsheviks also constituted a negligible group, which nevertheless managed to overthrow the tsarist regime. Although they represent a seemingly insignificant minority, their claim should be taken seriously.<sup>134</sup>

Non-violent rejectionists, similarly to their violent counterpart, reject Western democratic and liberal values and call for the establishment of the global caliphate. However, they do not specify how this should be achieved. They are mainly the followers of the non-violent *Salafi* branch of Islam, but there are also other groups operating in Europe which can be included in this category, the major one being Hizb ut-Tahrir. Founded in East Jerusalem in the 1950s, it is now a global movement, with well educated young professionals stemming mainly from the second-generation Muslim immigrants, whose rhetoric is "*sophisticated and skillfully tailored to the ears of Western Muslims*".<sup>135</sup> Its objective is to struggle against all forms of perceived colonialism, whether military, or intellectual, cultural, political or economic, which must be replaced by the Islamic way of life. In the Hizb ut-Tahrir's worldview, any state, Muslim or not, which adopts capitalism and democracy, is a "state of *Kufr*" (unbeliever), since it renders sovereignty to the people, and not to Allah.<sup>136</sup> Despite the fact they do not openly call for the use of violence, they brainwash their adherents with anti-Western, anti-Semitic, homophobic and misogynistic rhetoric, effectively creating an environment in which young Muslims become prone to radicalization.<sup>137</sup>

---

<sup>131</sup> Tibi, *Political Islam*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>132</sup> One of the most significant revivalists of the offensive *jihad* defined as an obligation of Muslims to spread Islam by sword was Sheikh Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah, a medieval theologian and jurist, and a great proponent of Hanbalism, one of four Sunni schools of jurisprudence. His fundamentalist, puritanical interpretation of Islam has provided intellectual inspiration to the Salafi movement, including its Saudi branch known as Wahhabism. The incineration of the Jordanian pilot by the Islamic State in the early 2015 was justified with the ruling based on the teachings of Ibn Taymiyyah.

<sup>133</sup> These groups are: Boko Haram, Islamic State, Taliban, al-Shabaab and Fulani militants. In 2014 they were altogether responsible for 18,444 deaths. Global Terrorism Index 2015, 'Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism,' *Institute for Economics & Peace*, 2015, p. 38,

<http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf>.

<sup>134</sup> Bassam Tibi, *Political Islam, World Politics and Europe*, Routledge, 2014, p. 104.

<sup>135</sup> Vidino, 'Islamism in Europe,' p. 5.

<sup>136</sup> Taqiuddin an-Nabhani, *Concepts of Hizb ut-Tahrir*, Khilafah Publications, pp. 73, 76, [http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/PDF/EN/en\\_books\\_pdf/Concepts.pdf](http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/PDF/EN/en_books_pdf/Concepts.pdf).

<sup>137</sup> Vidino, 'Islamism in Europe,' p. 6.



The activism of the Muslim Brotherhood movement is probably the best example of the participationist variation of Islamism. They use a four-stage *modus operandi*, which includes: preaching (*al-daawa*), participation (*al-musharaka*), consolidation of power while faking legitimacy (*al-tamkeen*), and enforcing *sharia*, once enough power has been accumulated (*al-mughalab*). This strategy was applied in Egypt and led to the victory of the Brotherhood's candidate Mohammed Morsi in 2012 presidential election. Once the Brotherhood took over the government, the process of introducing *sharia* into the Egyptian legal system was initiated, interrupted by mass protests and Morsi's eventual overthrow by the military, followed by a crackdown on the Brotherhood.<sup>138</sup>

In the West, participationists have also adopted a tactic of engagement with the establishment, at the same time fighting a battle for Muslims' minds and souls. They constitute the largest component of Islamism and in Europe are represented mainly by the Muslim Brotherhood, the South Asian Jamaat-e-Islami (mainly in the UK), and the Turkish Milli Gorus (mainly in Germany). These Islamist movements perceive Europe as a great opportunity for development as they are allowed to operate freely, in contrast to their countries of origin, where, as have been mentioned, they are often banned and persecuted. Their *modus operandi* includes support for ghettoisation of Muslim minorities and development of networks of Islamist-controlled mosques, charities, youth organizations, think-tanks, Islamic centers, and magazines, through which they disseminate their ideology.

In particular, Islamists focus their attention on indoctrination of the youth through wide range of activities and educational programs which ultimately serve two primary purposes: to establish new, educated Islamist elite able to infiltrate electorate and bureaucratic structures, and to nurture the notion that religion and politics are inseparable and the former is a primary component of individual identity and exclusive point of reference.<sup>139</sup> In France, for example, Islamist agenda is effectively implemented in Muslim-majority suburban public schools. There have been reported cases of students being forced "to refuse to study the Holocaust, the evolution of species, and European philosophers as well as 'unacceptable writers'", in addition to subjecting girls to a strict dress code, barring them from attempting physical education classes, and the *de facto* gender segregation in the classrooms.<sup>140</sup>

Similarly, the so-called Trojan Horse plot, aiming at gradual Islamization of a group of secular public schools, was revealed in 2014 in the city of Birmingham, UK. The plot was an attempt to replace secular teachers and governors with radical Muslim staff and alter national curriculum and school environment in accordance with conservative Islamic beliefs and behaviors. Investigation conducted by the Department of Education revealed such practices as: restricting learning programs by excluding lessons in the humanities, arts and music in favor of Islamic religious education; restricting modern language teaching to Arabic or Urdu; partially school-sponsored trips to Saudi Arabia for Muslim pupils exclusively; introducing Friday prayers and exerting pressure on pupils and staff members to attend; banning non-Muslim festive activities,

---

<sup>138</sup> Tawfik Hamid, *Inside Jihad: How Radical Islam Works; Why It Should Terrify Us; How To Defeat It*, Mountain Lake Press, 2015, pp. 47-48.

<sup>139</sup> David Vielhaber, 'The Milli Görüş of Germany,' *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 13, Hudson Institute, 2012, p. 57, <http://www.hudson.org/research/9787-current-trends-in-islamist-ideology-volume-13>.

<sup>140</sup> Michael M. Laskier, 'Islamic Radicalization and Terrorism in the European Union. The Maghrebi Factor,' in Efraim Inbar and Hillel Frisch (Eds.), *Radical Islam and International Security. Challenges and Responses*, Routledge, 2008, p. 105.

in particular Christmas and Easter; discriminatory treatment of female pupils and staff members; gender segregation in classrooms; pressure to wear conservative clothing; encouraging attitudes intolerant of other faiths, Judaism in particular; introducing “religious police”, tasked with reporting behavior considered inappropriate by conservative Muslim standards; inviting extremist religious preachers and exposing pupils to hard-line Islamist propaganda, including jihadist materials.<sup>141</sup>

When engaging with the Western audience, participationist Islamists disingenuously use rhetoric of peace, democracy, tolerance, and pluralism. They avoid confrontation and claim to be fully committed to the integration of Muslims into the European societies. This, however, is only a tactic to convince authorities of their moderation in order to be perceived as legitimate partners for cooperation. To go even further, their aim is in fact to be recognized as the official Muslim representation, and to be granted with a task of handling all aspects of Muslim minorities’ lives:

“They would, ideally, become those whom governments task with preparing the curricula and selecting the teachers for Islamic education in public schools, appointing imams in public institutions such as the military, the police or the prison service, and receiving subsidies to administer various social services. This position would also allow them to be de facto official Muslim voice in public debates and in the media, overshadowing competing forces. (...) Making a clever political calculation, the European Brothers are attempting to turn their leadership bid into a self-fulfilling prophecy, seeking to be recognized as representatives of the Muslim community in order to actually become it. Finally, the position of representatives of European Muslims would allow the Brothers to influence European policy-making on all Islamic-related issues.”<sup>142</sup>

Participationist Islamists aim at political mobilization of Muslim minorities in order to create a religiously based, politically homogenous advocacy group which would allow them to influence public opinion and shape governments’ policies in accordance with Islamist agenda on all sorts of domestic and international issues, from veiling to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This goal becomes specifically apparent in the aftermath of every Islamist terrorist attack on the European soil. By promoting the politics of grievance and victimhood, Islamists successfully divert attention from problems within Muslim minorities, instead shifting the blame and pointing at Western domestic and foreign policies as driving forces behind radicalization and demanding their alteration. In fact, politically active Muslim voters mobilized around Islamist anti-American agenda, in alliances with non-Muslim anti-American forces, could in the future severely undermine transatlantic cooperation.<sup>143</sup>

A report published in 2007 by the Dutch intelligence and security service AIVD outlined the challenges posed by the growing influence of Islamism in Europe. Although it noted the non-violent character of Europe-based Islamist groups, it nevertheless pointed out they pose a serious threat to social cohesion, solidarity, as well as fundamental human rights, due to their “tendency towards extreme isolationism coupled with rigid intolerance towards other beliefs

---

<sup>141</sup> Peter Clarke, ‘*Report Into Allegations Concerning Birmingham Schools Arising From the ‘Trojan Horse’ Letter*,’ Department for Education, 22 July 2014,

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/340526/HC\\_576\\_accessible\\_-\\_pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/340526/HC_576_accessible_-_pdf).

<sup>142</sup> Vidino, ‘Islamism in Europe,’ p. 8.

<sup>143</sup> Jonathan S. Paris, ‘Explaining the Causes of Radical Islam in Europe,’ in Efraim Inbar and Hillel Frisch (Eds.), *Radical Islam and International Security. Challenges and Responses*, Routledge, 2008, pp. 126, 129-130.

and opinions, anti-democratic behavior and in some cases even a desire to impose a separate form of justice, with ultra-orthodox Islamic laws taking precedence over Dutch or Western law". Non-violent radicalization constitutes a different sort of risks and threats than its violent equivalent, as it strives for "the creation of parallel community structures with forms of self-defined justice and the propagation of anti-democratic behavior which could result in polarization, inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions and serious social unrest".<sup>144</sup> While the report recognizes the Salafi movement as the main Islamist challenge in the Netherlands, it also points out at the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb ut-Tahrir, and Tablighi Jamaat, the groups which successfully operate in other Western European countries.

Therefore, contrary to their official rhetoric, preventing integration, establishing Muslim enclaves, and turning Muslim minorities into a homogenous pressure group is what institutional Islamists in Europe are attempting to achieve. This would pave the way for their ultimate goal: introducing parallel, *sharia*-based legal framework for the Muslim minority.<sup>145</sup>

These attempts are not unsuccessful. In 2014, The Law Society of England and Wales issued a ground-breaking guidance for solicitors on drawing *sharia*-compliant wills which would be recognized by British courts. Apart from enshrining Islamic law in the British legal system for the very first time, it would also allow to apply gender and non-Muslim discriminatory rules of inheritance, as prescribed by *sharia*. The guidelines were eventually dropped after public outcry, but the encouragement of applying religious law by such prestigious institution as The Law Society was indicative.<sup>146</sup>

Analyzing the findings of a survey on British Muslims' attitudes and beliefs, the former head of Britain's Equality and Human Rights Commission has pointed out the failure of integration and the threat that the British Muslim minority is on the way to becoming a "nation within a nation", physically segregated and normatively separate from the rest of the British people. Apart from significantly different than the mainstream society views on issues such as gender equality, homosexuality, polygamy, or freedom of expression, the survey also showed that close to one quarter of Muslims in Britain would favor some areas of the country to be governed by *sharia* instead of the British law.<sup>147</sup> Similar survey conducted in several Western European countries showed that 65% of European Muslims regards religious rules more important than the laws of the country in which they live.<sup>148</sup>

What is the response to Islamism's increasing presence in the West? The main problem seems to be a rather shallow understanding of the ideology and lack of coherent approach and

---

<sup>144</sup> General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD), 'The Radical Dawa in Transition. The Rise of Islamic Neoradicalism in the Netherlands,' 2007, p. 9,

<file:///C:/Users/Administrator/Downloads/theradicaldawaintransition.pdf>.

<sup>145</sup> Lorenzo Vidino, 'Aims and Methods of Europe's Muslim Brotherhood,' *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Hudson Institute, 1 November 2006,

<http://www.hudson.org/research/9776-aims-and-methods-of-europe-s-muslim-brotherhood>,

Vielhaber, 'The Milli Gorus of Germany,' p. 60.

<sup>146</sup> John Bingham, 'Islamic Law is Adopted by British Legal Chiefs,' *The Telegraph*, 22 March 2014,

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/10716844/Islamic-law-is-adopted-by-British-legal-chiefs.html>.

<sup>147</sup> Trevor Phillips, 'What British Muslims Really Think,' *Channel 4*, 12 April 2016,

<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/what-british-muslims-really-think/articles/all/the-survey>.

<sup>148</sup> Ruud Koopmans, 'Religious Fundamentalism and Hostility Against Out-Groups: A Comparison of Muslims and Christians in Western Europe,' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Issue 41, Nr. 1, 2015, p. 43,

<http://www.npdata.be/BuG/255-Fundamentalisme/Article-Koopman.pdf>.

strategy in dealing with the Islamist challenge. Western governments and public opinion alike tend to be preoccupied with terrorism, and an attitude towards violence is the main, and often the only criterion of evaluation of Islamist groups.<sup>149</sup> As mentioned, they are often taken at face value and regarded as worth engaging with due to their official “moderate” rhetoric, while less attention is given to the fact that their non-violent activism may very well lead to radicalization. Similarly, public opinion does not seem to get a full picture of what drives Islamic terrorism. Every deadly attack in the West is followed by numerous analyses and debates attempting to explain the reasons behind it, but among the whole plethora of potential root causes, the Islamist ideology is downplayed, if not entirely missing.

Muslim terrorists are often regarded as, if not psychopaths, then at least mentally unstable and irrational. In his essay critical of Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” paradigm, Edward Said described the 9/11 attack as “a pathologically motivated suicide attack and mass slaughter by a small group of deranged militants,” “a tiny band of crazed fanatics” who captured “big ideas” for “criminal purposes.”<sup>150</sup> The phenomenon of the so called “lone wolf” attacks conducted by “freelance” jihadists, such as the hostage siege in Sydney, has been explained by the perpetrators having “mental problems,” rather than their susceptibility to and championing of the Islamist ideology.<sup>151</sup> Queen Rania of Jordan called the ISIS militants a “bunch of crazy people” that “have nothing to do with faith and everything to do with fanaticism.”<sup>152</sup>

Along with Islamist-promoted politics of grievance, it is often suggested that Western governments’ foreign policies and their engagement in wars in the Muslim lands as well as support for Israel are the main causes of radicalization and terrorism. For example, in the context of murder of drummer Lee Rigby in 2013, who was hacked in daylight on the street in London by two Islamists of Nigerian origin, the emergence of terrorism in Britain, and in the West in general, was attempted to be explained by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, or the West’s support for Israel’s policies on Palestine.<sup>153</sup> Similar conclusion was made regarding the attack on Charlie Hebdo magazine in Paris, an operation organized by the Yemeni branch of al-Qaeda. The perpetrators were believed to be motivated by the “images of US torture in Iraq in 2004” rather than by perceived offence to Prophet Muhammad, what in line with Islamic doctrine constitutes a crime of blasphemy punishable by death.<sup>154</sup> In fact, not only France did not participate in the war in Iraq, but was one of its main opponents in Europe. The Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström linked ISIS attack in Paris to the Israeli-Palestinian

---

<sup>149</sup> Ian Johnson, ‘Europe’s Underestimated Islamists,’ *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2011, p. 44, <http://www.meforum.org/3059/europe-islamists>.

<sup>150</sup> Edward Said, ‘The Clash of Ignorance,’ *The Nation*, 4 October 2011, <http://www.thenation.com/article/clash-ignorance?page=0.0>.

<sup>151</sup> Malcolm Moore, ‘The Global Rise of Terror ‘Lone Wolf’ Attacks,’ *The Telegraph*, 16 December 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newsvideo/11295423/The-global-rise-of-terror-lone-wolf-attacks.html>.

<sup>152</sup> AFP, ‘Queen Rania: ISIS ‘Bunch of Crazy People’,’ *Al Arabiya News*, 7 March 2015, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/03/07/ISIS-bunch-of-crazy-people-Jordan-s-Queen-Rania.html>.

<sup>153</sup> Mehdi Hasan, ‘Extremists Point to Western Foreign Policy to Explain Their Acts. Why Do We Ignore Them?’ *The Huffington Post*, 30 May 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/mehdi-hasan/woolwich-attack-western-foreign-policy\\_b\\_3357794.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/mehdi-hasan/woolwich-attack-western-foreign-policy_b_3357794.html).

<sup>154</sup> Mehdi Hasan, ‘As a Muslim, I’m Fed Up With the Hypocrisy of the Free Speech Fundamentalists,’ *The Huffington Post*, 13 January 2015, [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/mehdi-hasan/charlie-hebdo-free-speech\\_b\\_6462584.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/mehdi-hasan/charlie-hebdo-free-speech_b_6462584.html).

conflict.<sup>155</sup>

Such factors as poverty, unemployment, general lack of opportunities as well as racism and discrimination, which altogether lead to Muslim youth's sense of disaffection, are also widely used as an explanation for Muslim terrorism. During a three-day conference on "Countering Violent Extremism" in February 2015, President Obama pointed out at economic grievances as one of the major driving forces behind extremism:

"When millions of people - especially youth - are impoverished and have no hope for the future, when corruption inflicts daily humiliations on people, when there are no outlets by which people can express their concerns, resentments fester. The risk of instability and extremism grow. Where young people have no education, they are more vulnerable to conspiracy theories and radical ideas."<sup>156</sup>

While perfectly valid in a narrower sense, this view is discredited as a wider explanation of Islamic terror. At the same time, the UK was struck with consternation following the news that three British Muslim girls travelled to Syria to join ISIS, all three of them were described as "grade A' pupils" from well-off families.<sup>157</sup> Similarly, "Jihadi John", the Islamic State's "poster boy" known from his horrendous beheading videos, was identified as a Westminster University alumnus with a degree in computer programming, who grew up in a middle-class district of London in a "well-to-do family."<sup>158</sup> In fact, Muslims can be radicalized irrespective of their socio-economic background; the most prominent Muslim terrorists most often do not come from the fringes of the society, but from its middle or upper layers.<sup>159</sup>

It is not to say that political and socio-economic factors do not play any role in radicalization. The problem however seems to be much deeper. It is symptomatic that in Europe it is the native-born, second- and third-generation Muslims who constitute the most susceptible to Islamist indoctrination category.<sup>160</sup> These young people suffer from severe identity crisis and become, to use the term coined by Timothy Garton Ash, the "Inbetween People," trapped between tribal, ethnic or national roots of their parents, and European modern secular culture: the former is distant and unfamiliar, the latter often rejected, either voluntarily or under pressure of family or community.<sup>161</sup> Naturally, this does not apply to young Muslims exclusively;

---

<sup>155</sup> Raphael Ahren, 'Sweden's FM Cites Palestinian Despair in Discussing Cause of Paris Attacks,' Times of Israel, 16 November 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/paris-attacks-rooted-in-palestinian-plight-sweden-fm-says/>.

<sup>156</sup> Remarks by the President in Closing of the Summit on Countering Violent Extremism', White House, 18 February 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/18/remarks-president-closing-summit-countering-violent-extremism>.

<sup>157</sup> Patrick, Sawyer, 'Parents of Three Runaway British 'Jihadi' Brides Beg Them to Come Home,' The Telegraph, 21 February 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/11427093/Parents-of-three-runaway-British-jihadi-brides-beg-them-to-come-home.html>.

<sup>158</sup> Souad Mekhennet and Adam Goldman, "'Jihadi John': Islamic State Killer is Identified as Londoner Mohammed Emwazi,' The Washington Post, 26 February 2015, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/jihadi-john-the-islamic-state-killer-behind-the-mask-is-a-young-londoner/2015/02/25/d6dbab16-bc43-11e4-bdfa-b8e8f594e6ee\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/jihadi-john-the-islamic-state-killer-behind-the-mask-is-a-young-londoner/2015/02/25/d6dbab16-bc43-11e4-bdfa-b8e8f594e6ee_story.html).

<sup>159</sup> Peter Bergen, "'Jihadi John': The Bourgeois Terrorist,' CNN, 27 February 2015, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/02/19/opinion/bergen-terrorism-root-causes/index.html>;

Laskier, 'Islamic Radicalization and Terrorism,' p. 110.

<sup>160</sup> Laskier, 'Islamic Radicalization and Terrorism', p. 103.

<sup>161</sup> Timothy Garton Ash, 'Islam in Europe,' *New York Review of Books*, Issue 53, Nr. 15, 5 October 2006.

identity issues can be equally experienced by immigrant-born youth of all kinds of religious or ethnic profiles. However, what distinguishes Muslim minorities in this respect is the existence and activities of well-organized and usually foreign-funded, transnational Islamist networks with explicitly anti-Western, anti-European, anti-integrationist, illiberal political and social agenda, which lure young Muslims into their ranks. The “In-between People” becomes an easy prey for Islamic fundamentalists who offer them what they crave for: an identity and sense of belonging. In the process of indoctrination they accept Islam as their primary and exclusive source of identity. Entering the imagined global Muslim *ummah*, they also adopt the “identity of vicarious grievances,” expressed in solidarity with real or perceived sufferings of their co-religionists in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Chechnya, Bosnia, or Palestine. Since they also accept Islamist-propagated worldview of “Islam under siege,” they turn against their host countries, now identified with the wider “West” and collectively accused for all calamities Muslims around the world suffer from.<sup>162</sup>

In a climate of political correctness, identifying religious ideology as a catalyst for global *jihadism* is a difficult task. Understanding the challenges of Islamist non-violent ideology and choosing a correct approach to address it has proven to be even more difficult. Policy makers often see non-violent Islamists as potentially valuable partners for cooperation in preventing extremism. This is particularly true with regard to the Muslim Brotherhood. Despite the fact that, as has been explained above, intelligence agencies in Europe warn against the Brothers’ activities, pointing out that establishing an ultra-orthodox Muslim enclaves governed by the *sharia* inside Europe is their goal, they are often regarded by local establishments as worth engaging with. This is due to various reasons. As has been pointed out, Islamist organizations are eager to portray themselves as representatives of the European Muslims. Due to being usually very well organized, visible and active, they are often accepted as such, this way “fulfilling the prophecy”. Additionally, although many policy makers lack deeper understanding of Islamist movements and their objectives, there are also those who are aware of their nature, but restrain from criticizing them fearing accusation of Islamophobia, which has become a powerful political weapon used by Islamists against their adversaries.<sup>163</sup>

Finally, some believe that “peaceful Islamists,” the Muslim Brotherhood in particular, have evolved and renounced their founders’ aspirations for the establishment of a global Caliphate. Despite conservatism, they encourage integration of Muslims, therefore should be perceived as a positive force.<sup>164</sup> Ken Livingstone, a former Mayor of London and the Labour Party politician, known for his sympathy for Yusuf al-Qaradawi, serves as an example of this perception. Al-Qaradawi, a prominent Sunni Muslim scholar, and a spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, is a Jew-hater<sup>165</sup> who regards suicide bombings against Israeli civilians as “martyrdom in the name of God,”<sup>166</sup> supports death for apostates,<sup>167</sup> justifies wife beating,<sup>168</sup> and

---

<sup>162</sup> Paris, ‘Explaining the Causes,’ pp. 121-125.

<sup>163</sup> Lorenzo Vidino, ‘The Muslim Brotherhood in the West: Evolution and Western Policies,’ *International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR)*, February 2011, pp. 29-30; Tibi, ‘Ballot and Bullet,’ p. 17.

<sup>164</sup> Vidino, ‘The Muslim Brotherhood.’

<sup>165</sup> Alan Johnson, ‘Ken Livingstone’s Favourite Islamist Spreads Jew-Hatred in Gaza,’ *The Telegraph*, 13 May 2013, <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/alanjohnson/100216030/ken-livingstones-favourite-islamist-spreads-jew-hatred-in-gaza/>.

<sup>166</sup> ‘Al-Qaradawi Full Transcript,’ *BBC*, 8 July 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/3875119.stm>.

<sup>167</sup> ‘Yusuf Al-Qaradawi: Opposing Apostasy is What Keeps Islam Going,’ YouTube video, posted by ‘wff’, April 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDT5YH9bGmI>.



in the past supported female genital mutilation<sup>169</sup> (later however he changed his mind and issued fatwa against it).

Additionally, along with other Islamist leaders, he has repeatedly expressed his desire and belief that Islam will conquer Europe and the West, which he describes as miserable, promiscuous and materialistic, although not through sword, but through *daawa* (proselytism).<sup>170</sup> Nevertheless, he was praised by Livingstone as a “progressive figure who is moving that religion in the correct direction.”<sup>171</sup>

What can be done to prevent the spreading of Islamism? Although every country which faces the problem will need to formulate an individual strategy tailored specifically to its own realities, there are certain general recommendations which can be outlined:

1. There is a need for a deeper understanding of Islamist ideology and what it strives for. In the West in general, and in Europe in particular, there is lack of recognition of the ideological confrontation between the Western rational, liberal, secular outlook, and Islamist spiritual totalitarianism. As it has been mentioned, Islamism-related issues are usually accredited to non-ideological factors, such as foreign policy, lack of education, unemployment, or racism. Western authorities and policy makers should focus upon the ideological background of Muslim organizations which operate in their countries, in particular those they engage with, and avoid taking them at face value as “moderates”, merely by the virtue of their renouncement of violence and willingness to use liberal democracy as a means to an end.
2. There should be a clear distinction made between cultural diversity (which should be welcomed), and the communitarian form of multiculturalism, which seems to be the minority policy most commonly applied in Europe. This model is a serious threat to a liberal democratic model of governance based on the dichotomy between citizens on one hand, and the state on the other. In addition, it is an obstacle to integration: it encourages grouping along racial, ethnic, or religious lines, leading to isolation from the mainstream society and its culture, and to the formation of segregated, parallel communities. This widespread phenomenon poses a great threat to the very social fabric of European societies. Coupled with demand for distinct rights, which often are completely at odds with host societies’ legal and cultural systems, and with Western liberal values more broadly, it is a slippery slope to fragmentation or “balkanization” of European countries with significant minorities. As Francis Fukuyama already noticed years ago,

“Liberalism cannot ultimately be based on group rights, because not all groups uphold liberal values. The civilization of the European Enlightenment, of which contemporary liberal democracy is the heir, cannot be culturally neutral, since liberal societies have their own values regarding the equal worth and dignity of individuals. Cultures that do

---

<sup>168</sup> Madeleine Bunting, ‘Friendly Fire,’ The Guardian, 29 October 2005, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/oct/29/religion.uk1>.

<sup>169</sup> George Readings, ‘Female Genital Mutilation Cannot Be Defended as Part of Islam,’ The Guardian, 15 October 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2010/oct/15/female-genital-mutilation-yusuf-al-qaradawi>.

<sup>170</sup> Lorenzo Vidino, *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West*, Columbia University Press, 2010, p. 92, ‘Islam: Muslims Will Conquer and Rule Europe! - Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi,’ YouTube video, posted by ‘phase33game’, 30 September 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdsQGhiBkSI>.

<sup>171</sup> ‘Mayor Justifies Cleric’s Welcome,’ BBC, 11 January 2005, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/england/london/4165691.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/london/4165691.stm).

not accept these basic premises do not deserve equal protection in a modern liberal democracy.”<sup>172</sup>

Therefore, what is needed is a de-communalization of European societies, which implies:

- an absolute rejection of any forms of parallel legal systems, including the practice of the so called “cultural defence” (diminished responsibility for crime due to cultural differences)<sup>173</sup> – there should be one law for all with no exceptions;
- no tolerance to any form of fundamentally discriminatory, illiberal, and illegal practices such as polygamy,<sup>174</sup> child marriage,<sup>175</sup> or violation of gender equality (for example gender segregation in public spaces such as schools, universities, and other public social gatherings<sup>176</sup>);
- dismantling cultural segregation (through, for example, public housing projects which will prevent, rather than facilitate segregation);
- no concessions with regard to freedom of speech or expression on the grounds of religious or cultural sensitivities<sup>177</sup>.

3. The issue of hate speech and radicalization in the European mosques and madrasas will need to be addressed. Local training and appointment of imams as well as strict control, or even banning of foreign funding to mosques and Islamic organizations could be a step forward. Austria for example has already taken measures in that direction which aim at curtailing foreign and radical influences on Muslim diaspora.<sup>178</sup>

4. Uncontrolled immigration is another sensitive issue which needs to be urgently addressed, particularly in the context of the ongoing migration crisis. The scale and pace of immigration from countries of significantly different cultural backgrounds which Europe is currently

---

<sup>172</sup> Francis Fukuyama, ‘Identity, Immigration & Democracy,’ *Journal of Democracy*, Issue 17, Nr. 2, April 2006, p. 15, <http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles-files/gratis/Fukuyama-17-2.pdf>.

<sup>173</sup> John Alan Cohan, ‘Honor Killings and the Cultural Defence,’ *California Western International Law Journal*, p. 40, Nr. 2, Spring 2010, <http://scholarlycommons.law.cwsl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1086&context=cwilj>.

<sup>174</sup> Veronica Federico, ‘Europe Facing Polygamy: Italy, France and the UK Accept the Challenge of Immigration,’ Workshop 6, ‘The Constitutional Challenges of Immigration,’ IACL IX World Congress, Oslo, 16-20 June 2014, <https://www.jus.uio.no/english/research/news-and-events/events/conferences/2014/wccl-cmdc/wccl/papers/ws6/w6-federico.pdf>.

<sup>175</sup> Maajid Nawaz, ‘There is No Excuse for ‘Child Brides’ in Europe,’ *The Daily Beast*, 1 March 2016, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/03/01/there-s-no-excuse-for-child-brides-in-europe.html>.

<sup>176</sup> Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, ‘It’s Shameful That Our Universities Have Accepted Gender Segregation Under Pressure From the Most Oppressive Religious Fanatics,’ *The Independent*, 8 December 2013, <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/it-s-shameful-that-our-universities-have-accepted-gender-segregation-under-pressure-from-the-most-8991593.html>.

Steerpike, ‘Labour Stays Silent Over Gender Segregation at Party Rally,’ *The Spectator*, 3 May 2015, <http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2015/05/labour-stays-silent-over-gender-segregation-at-party-rally/>.

<sup>177</sup> The controversy over Mohammad’s depictions is a primary example. Brought to the extreme, it took form of removing his paintings from public display in some major British and American museums, including New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Arts.

<sup>178</sup> AFP, ‘Austria passes controversial reforms to Islam law banning foreign funding,’ *The Telegraph*, 25 February 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/austria/11435388/Austria-passes-controversial-reforms-to-Islam-law-banning-foreign-funding.html>.



experiencing may render impossible to successfully integrate large numbers of the newcomers, creating fertile ground for their radicalization. The humanitarian crisis caused by the chaos in the Middle East and other parts of the world needs to be tackled, nevertheless emotional, knee-jerk reactions to isolated, however tragic events, should be replaced by considerate approaches which will take into consideration long-term consequences of immigration policies.

Finally, it is very important not to follow Islamists' projection of Muslims as a uniform, homogenous, exclusively religiously-defined group. Muslims represent great diversity in terms of nationality, ethnicity, race, and Islamic denomination. Every citizen should be treated not as a member of a distinct community, but as an individual on equal footing with the rest of the society. Constant references to the so called "Muslim community" reinforce Islamist premise that religion is Muslims' primary source of self-identification, and the *ummah* is where their primary loyalty lies. There are many secular Muslims who do not subscribe to Islamist ideology. It is precisely this group which policymakers and local authorities should focus on as potential partners on the way to effective integration - an indispensable condition for the preservation of the unity, coherence, and security of European societies.

Religion-driven terrorism has embedded itself in the West, and has become a serious security threat. Violence is the end product of an illiberal, intolerant, anti-democratic and viciously anti-Western religious ideology disseminated through diverse, well-organised and well-funded channels. This ideology's objective is clearly defined: it is to challenge Western liberal norms and values, and to replace them with a religious order embodied in *sharia*. The isolationist, communitarian strategy supported and promoted by Islamist forces leads to fragmentation and "balkanization" of European societies.

It would be untrue to claim that religious ideology is an exclusive driving force behind *jihadism*, and that political or social factors do not play any role in radicalization. Nevertheless, what needs to be understood is that Western concept of secularism is alien to many societies across the world as well as to diaspora communities which originate from them, and religion can be easily utilized as a tool for achieving political goals, with political Islam representing the strongest epitomisation of this phenomenon. Islamism is a many-faced ideology. Although its violent embodiment is naturally the easiest to identify, counter-extremism policies will not be effective if the non-violent but inherently illiberal and undemocratic component is not recognized and tackled.



---

## BRIEFING NOTE

---

Marta Murzanska\*  
December 2016

### **Turkish Islamic Organizations in Europe**

*This briefing note provides an overview of the major Turkish Islamic organizations and movements that are active in Europe, and their relation to the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic and jihadist movements in the Middle East.*

Turkish Islamic landscape in European countries with large Turkish Muslim populations is dominated by major Islamic organizations with roots in Turkey. Although it differs from country to country, they are mainly grouped under five major Islamic movements, representing the spectrum from moderate to violent and radical: “official Islam” (Diyanet), political Islam (Milli Gorus), a mystical Sufi order (Suleymanli), Turkish civil Islam (Gulen) and revolutionary (Kaplan).<sup>1</sup>

#### **Diyanet (Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs)**

The Directorate of Religious Affairs is the department of the Turkish state that regulates the practical aspects of religious life in Turkey, and an instrument of state control over Islam at home and abroad. All imams in Turkey are appointed by the Diyanet, which also prepares their Friday sermons. Under the Justice and Development Party (AKP) rule, the Diyanet has grown exponentially in size and significance, becoming one of Turkey’s largest and increasingly politicized institutions, gradually influenced by the more radical Middle Eastern Salafi religious movement.<sup>2</sup>

The Diyanet has been active in Europe since the late 1970s, providing Turkish mosques with imams in order to meet religious needs of Turkish minorities. In the early 1980s, the Diyanet began to establish its network of DITIBs (Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği - Turkish Islamic

\* Senior Fellow, Publishing Director, ERPIC

---

<sup>1</sup> Ahmet Yükleyen, *Localizing Islam in Europe. Turkish Islamic Communities in Germany and the Netherlands*, Syracuse University Press, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Eric Edelman, Svante Cornell, Aaron Lobel, Halil Karaveli, ‘Turkey Transformed. The Origins and Evolution of Authoritarianism and Islamization Under the AKP,’ Bipartisan Policy Center, October 2015, pp. 62-65, <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/BPC-Turkey-Transformed.pdf>.

Union of the Directorate for Religious Affairs), umbrella organizations and mosque associations. In Germany, the DITIB became the largest umbrella association, with 896 member organizations under its control. The Austrian branch of Diyanet controls about 58 out of the 250 mosques in the country. It also has significant presence in the Netherlands (the largest mosque-organization in the country, with 143 out of 220 Turkish mosques), Belgium (65 mosques) and Denmark (the largest Turkish organization with 27 mosques).<sup>3</sup>

Diyanet is characterized by hierarchical structure: its external relations department in Ankara is responsible for activities outside Turkey, such as selecting, training and sending imams, or organizing funerals and pilgrimages. Usually, the chairman of a DITIB is accredited to the Turkish diplomatic mission in a given country. Imams' work is supervised by the Diyanet officials in the European embassies and consulates. The deployment usually lasts four to five years, a deliberate measure from preventing them to become locally rooted.<sup>4</sup>

Diyanet is focused on strengthening and promoting Islamic identity inextricably linked to the Turkish state. Highly nationalistic rhetoric and celebration of Turkish historical events and national holidays are standard activities of associated organizations. Diyanet organizations are also the largest mosque builders in Europe. Occasionally, the organization raises concern about its influence over Turkish immigrants in Europe.

### **Milli Gorus (ICMG)**

Milli Gorus is an Islamic religious-political movement founded in Turkey by Necmettin Erbakan in 1969. An ideological father of modern Turkish Islamism, including the ruling AKP, Erbakan propagated radically anti-secular and anti-Western ideology, calling for the overthrow of Turkey's secular Kemalist regime and transformation of Turkey into an Islamic state. While officially rejecting violence, Erbakan favored a gradualist Islamization through *dawa* – Islamic preaching and education. Erbakan founded numerous political parties, which were subsequently banned.

Erbakan's supporters established Milli Görüş branch in Germany in 1976, known since 1995 as Islamic Community Milli Gorus (ICMG), with headquarters in Cologne. Several other branches were opened in Europe by the end of 1970s.

Today it is the most influential Islamist organization in Germany, and one of the most important Islamist movements operating within the Turkish Diaspora in Europe (apart from Germany, in the Netherlands and Belgium, also present in Italy and Scandinavian countries). It claims to operate over 514 mosques and cultural centers in eleven European countries, with majority of them located in Germany. ICMG's total European membership is about 87,000, and it estimates about 300,000 participants of its religious services in Europe on a weekly basis.<sup>5</sup>

After establishing foothold in Europe, the main goal of Milli Gorus was to support Erbakan's program of Islamization of Turkey. From the 1999 onwards, the movement claims to have focused on the interests of Turkish Muslims as citizens of Europe. It has become eager to

---

<sup>3</sup> Thijl Sunier, Nico Landman, *Transnational Turkish Islam. Shifting Geographies of Religious Activism and Community Building in Turkey and Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Sumier, Landman *Transnational Turkish Islam*..., p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> David Vielhaber, 'The Milli Görüş of Germany,' *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Hudson Institute, June 2012, <http://www.hudson.org/research/9879-the-milli-g-r-s-of-germany->

present itself as a moderate, exclusively religious organization that has abandoned its political, Islamist past and encourages Muslim integration into the European societies. When addressing Turkish audience, however, the rhetoric used by the ICMG leaders and propaganda tools often reveal anti-Western, anti-capitalists, anti-Semitic overtones, along with their contempt for democracy and liberal values, and support for Islamization of Turkey, as well as European countries. The ICMG focus is placed in particular on the youth through extensive educational programs, such as seminars, summer camps, Quran classes, after-school clubs, sport and artistic activities.<sup>6</sup>

ICMG has long been under German security services' suspicion of pursuing a long-term, gradualist strategy aimed at the eventual introduction of sharia law in Germany. The movement has been accused of contributing to the creation of "parallel societies" which apart from hindering integration constitute a fertile ground for radicalization.<sup>7</sup> ICMG also cooperates with the Muslim Brotherhood (their leaders are linked through marriage), becoming de facto voice of the German Muslim community.<sup>8</sup>

In 2013, Turkish Islamists were represented, for the first time ever, in the German federal elections by the Alliance for Innovation and Justice (BIG) party. The party revealed apparent connections to the Turkish AKP, while one of its powerbrokers was a prominent member of the Milli Gorus in Germany.<sup>9</sup> The party gained support of roughly 7% of Turkish voters.<sup>10</sup>

### **Suleymanli**

The Suleymanli movement was founded by Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan, a 20<sup>th</sup> century Islamic scholar and a master in the Naqshbandi Sufi Order. It was established in Turkey in the 1940s in opposition to the creation of the secular Turkish state and the closing of religious schools.<sup>11</sup>

Tunahan's followers were among the first to organize religious life of Turkish migrants in Europe in the 1970s.<sup>12</sup> The first Turkish-Islamic organization to try to organize local mosques under a nationwide umbrella association was the Association of Islamic Cultural Centers (Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren e.V., VIKZ).<sup>13</sup> Today it represents over 300 mosques in Germany, with around 20,000 registered members. Its Swedish branch is one of the largest Muslim federations in the country, with 14 congregations and more than 10,000 members. It also controls 23 mosques and organizations in Austria, 48 in the Netherlands, and 13 in Belgium. In addition, the movement has branches in other European countries and in the United States.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Vielhaber, 'The Millî Görüş of Germany,' Thijl Sunier, Nico Landman, *Transnational Turkish Islam...*, p. 77.

<sup>7</sup> Vielhaber, 'The Millî Görüş....'

<sup>8</sup> Lorenzo Vidino, 'Aims and Methods of Europe's Muslim Brotherhood', *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Hudson Institute, November 2006, <http://www.hudson.org/research/9776-aims-and-methods-of-europe-s-muslim-brotherhood>.

<sup>9</sup> Veli Sirin, 'New Islamist Approach to Turks in Germany,' Gatestone Institute, 11 October 2013, <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/4014/islamist-turks-germany>.

<sup>10</sup> Von Jane Paulick, 'German-Turkish Voters Turn Away from SPD', *Spiegel Online International*, 16 August 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/turkish-voters-in-germany-turn-away-from-spd-a-916927.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Barry M. Rubin (Ed.), *Guide to Islamist Movements*, M.E. Sharpe, 2010, Vol. 2, p. 436.

<sup>12</sup> Sumier, Landman, *Transnational Turkish Islam...*, p. 58.

<sup>13</sup> David Westerlund, Ingvar Svanberg (Ed.), *Islam Outside the Arab World*, Routledge, 1999, p. 327.

<sup>14</sup> Sumier, Landman *Transnational Turkish Islam...*, p. 61.

The movement's structure is hierarchical, grounded however in religious authority and charisma rather than in formal positions. In Europe, it exercises relative autonomy from Turkey, and the chief imam in Cologne is the highest authority of the movement's European branch.<sup>15</sup>

Suleymanli is a mystical, apolitical movement with activities focused almost exclusively on religious education.<sup>16</sup> In Turkey the movement is primarily organized around educational institutions, in particular dormitories for high school and university students.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, religious education activities at all levels, from elementary to advanced theological training, is the main preoccupation of the movement in Europe.<sup>18</sup> Imams at Suleymanli-run mosques are locally recruited, with emphasis on their familiarity with local community, since they are expected to participate in community activities outside the mosque. In contrast to other Islamic organizations, the movement does not place much importance on maintaining relations with sister organizations in Turkey and Europe, and these relations are maintained on a more personal rather than institutional level.<sup>19</sup>

There has been little study about the movement in Turkey. Similarly, in Europe it receives much less attention than other Islamic movements.<sup>20</sup> In general, the perceptions of the movement in Europe are mixed. In the Netherlands, for example, in the past accused of extremism and support for Turkish neo-fascist organizations, today the Suleymanli adherents are regarded as moderate mainstream Muslims.<sup>21</sup> In Germany, on the other hand, in the 1970s and 1980s the movement was notoriously brought to attention due to its anti-integrationist outlook.<sup>22</sup> More recently, concerns emerged about the VIKZ's anti-Western, anti-democratic, anti-Semitic, anti-Christian and anti-secular hidden political agenda.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Gulen Movement (The Hizmet)**

The Gulen Movement is a religious and educational movement founded and inspired by Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish preacher, scholar, author and speaker, and the movement's spiritual leader, who is currently living in self-imposed exile in the United States. It was founded in Turkey in the 1960s, and expanded internationally, including Western Europe in 1990s. Focused primarily on educational activities, the movement has established a worldwide network of private schools and other educational centers, and claims to be combining modern scientific knowledge with traditional Islamic education. There are more than 1000 Gulen-inspired schools in more than 100 countries around the world.<sup>24</sup> The movement's adherents are estimated at anywhere between 1 and 8 million, with an estimated 2 million students enrolled in its

---

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>16</sup> Rubin, *Guide to Islamist Movements*, p. 436.

<sup>17</sup> Sumier, Landman *Transnational Turkish Islam...*, p. 58.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 64-65.

<sup>19</sup> Frank Peter, Rafael Ortega, *Islamic Movements of Europe*, I.B.Tauris, 2014, pp. 223-224.

<sup>20</sup> Sumier, Landman *Transnational Turkish Islam...*, p. 58.

<sup>21</sup> Peter, Ortega, *Islamic Movements of Europe*, p. 225.

<sup>22</sup> Westerlund, Svanberg, *Islam Outside the Arab World*, Routledge, p. 327.

<sup>23</sup> Sumier, Landman, *Transnational Turkish Islam*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Mandaville (Ed.), 'Muslim Networks and Movements in Western Europe,' Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, September 2010, p. 13, <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2010/09/Muslim-networks-full-report.pdf>.

schools.<sup>25</sup>

Unlike other Turkish Islamic movements, the Hizmet lacks clear organizational structure. It consists of relatively autonomous educational institutions and student houses. Accordingly, Fethullah Gulen has no formal position within the movement; his influence stems mainly from his charisma and the status of the movement's founder.<sup>26</sup> The schools are mainly funded from donations by Gulen supporters.<sup>27</sup> Beyond educational activities, the movement has been active in the media. The recently seized by the Turkish government *Zaman* newspaper was owned by Gulen followers.

Although the movement declares its commitment to integration of Muslims in Western societies and to democracy, peaceful coexistence, tolerance and dialogue, its secretive and mysterious character as well as lack of transparency provoke frequent suspicions and accusations of the movement's unclear intentions as well as its hidden political agenda. These concerns are mainly expressed in the Netherlands and Belgium, while in Germany, on the other hand, it is perceived as much more preferable option than Milli Gorus.<sup>28</sup> In the government and some academic circles in the United States Gulen has been perceived as a radical Islamist, and his movement a threat to the US.<sup>29</sup>

In Turkey, in the last years it has been accused of infiltration of state institutions and fiercely cracked down.

### **The Kaplan Movement (Tebliğ Movement)**

The Tebliğ movement is a radical splinter group of the Millî Görüş which began separate operations in 1983. The group's leader, Cemalettin Kaplan, a spiritual disciple of Necmettin Erbakan, belonged to the branch of Millî Görüş inspired by the Islamic Revolution. It claimed that the establishment of an Islamic state in Turkey needed to be achieved not within the system, but through the use of force. In 1992, Kaplan proclaimed the Islamic state of Anatolia and declared himself a caliph two years later.<sup>30</sup> In 2002, he was convicted in Germany for incitement to murder and served a four-year sentence. He was subsequently extradited to Turkey where he was sentenced to life in prison for planning to overthrow the Turkish government. The group is known to have received money from radical Egyptian cleric Yusuf Qaradawi, the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as other Middle Eastern sources.<sup>31</sup>

Following Kaplan's death in 1995, the organization disintegrated into different factions. It was

---

<sup>25</sup> Scott Beauchamp, '120 American Charter Schools and One Secretive Turkish Cleric,' *The Atlantic*, 12 August 2014,

<http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/08/120-american-charter-schools-and-one-secretive-turkish-cleric/375923/>.

<sup>26</sup> Sumier, Landman, *Transnational Turkish Islam*..., pp. 89-90.

<sup>27</sup> Mandaville, 'Muslim Networks and Movements...', p. 13.

<sup>28</sup> Sumier, Landman, *Transnational Turkish Islam* ..., p. 82.

<sup>29</sup> Abraham Wagner, 'When Moderation Masks a Radical Agenda', *The Washington Times*, 21 January 2016, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/jan/21/abraham-wagner-gulen-movement-a-threat-to-us-turke/>.

<sup>30</sup> Sumier, Landman, *Transnational Turkish Islam* ..., p. 112.

<sup>31</sup> N/A, 'Netherlands', *World Almanac of Islamism*, American Foreign Policy Council, 4 October 2013, <http://almanac.afpc.org/Netherlands#>.

banned in Germany in 2001, but maintains a group of radically-oriented sympathizers.<sup>32</sup> In the Netherlands, there are about two hundred Muslims active within two separate Kaplan factions.<sup>33</sup>

The dynamics between main Islamic organizations worldwide often reflect political situation in Turkey. This is in particular visible in the context of relations between the Diyanet and ICMG. While the Turkish government was for decades hostile to the Erbakan's Islamist movement and its European branches, this hostility began to ease after the Millî Görüş-rooted AKP came to power in 2002. The difference between mosques administered by traditionally moderate Diyanet, and those under the control of more radical ICMG has waned.<sup>34</sup> In the Netherlands, both Diyanet and the Millî Görüş are cooperating in umbrella organizations.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, the internal conflict between the Gulen movement and the Turkish government prompted the closure of some of Gulen schools abroad.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Sumier, Landman, *Transnational Turkish Islam Transnational Turkish Islam...*, p. 112.

<sup>33</sup> *Guide to Islamist Movements*, Vol. 2, p. 481.

<sup>34</sup> Bassam Tibi, B. 'Islamists Approach Europe', *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2009, <http://www.meforum.org/2047/islamists-approach-europe>.

<sup>35</sup> N/A, 'Netherlands.'

<sup>36</sup> Safure Canturk, 'Turkey's Allies Mobilizing Support Against Gulen Movement's Schools Abroad,' *Daily Sabah*, 19 May 2015, <http://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2015/05/19/turkeys-allies-mobilizing-support-against-gulen-movements-schools-abroad>



---

## INTERVIEW\*

---

Reza Zabib\*\*

24 November 2016

### Iran and the Eastern Mediterranean

*Iranian Ambassador to Cyprus Reza Zabib discusses Iran's view of itself and its potential role as a responsible actor in the region and what it has to do if the international community and especially the West is to accept it. He also provides insight into the views of Iran on the nature of the Arab Spring ("Islamic Awakening") and other developments in the Middle East.*

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** Good afternoon and welcome to another Erpic interview. This afternoon we're pleased to have with us his Excellency the Ambassador of Iran Dr. Reza Zabib. Ambassador, welcome. Again, my co-host for this evening is Ms. Marta Murzanska. Welcome. Ambassador, thank you for coming and submitting to our interrogation. Our focus again is on the Eastern Mediterranean and of course the broader region. So we can, if you don't mind, ask a seminal question about Syria. What is the Syrian war about?

**Reza Zabib (R.Z.):** Well, thank you very much. Let me first admire and recognize what Erpic is doing to help and contribute to public opinion awareness about what's going on in the region. Indeed, Cypriot public opinion do deserve understanding better the developments in the region. You personally as well.

Syrian crisis may have different interpretation and readings. One may think about it as a geo-political development, one may think about it as a civil war. But the deepest explanation that I wish to offer is about the general atmosphere in the region. We just appear today, for example, in Syria - perhaps elsewhere as well, partly the situation in Europe could be defined under this understanding as well - we have in our region a huge request for political change. In some way or another, one may define this situation under the concept of political development which is introducing political sociology, let's say. Political development means more democratic, more diversified system of ruling. The historical development in the region has led to such kind of request from the society, seeking their own identity, seeking a better performance from the political system and so on.

On the other hand, all over the region, we may say, we have old traditional, or, let's say, what

\* Transcript

\*\* Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Republic of Cyprus

they call it the 'patrimonial system', who is mainly in favor of status quo. In power nobody would be willing to lose a situation.

**C.P.:** But in the area, in the region, the seminal, again, point was the First World War. After the First World War and the demise of the Ottoman Empire you had these new states, the new nations, the new borders, although one can criticize them. There was a new start. That process seems to have stumbled in a way. And the question is: is it a disillusionment with Westernism? Is it a disillusionment with liberal democracy? Is it a disillusionment with what? What is at the heart of the Arab Spring? Because we thought that the Syrian issue - as was the case with Libya and other places - started with this demand for more democratization. At least this is what we thought in the West. Is that not the case? Is it about Assad in Syria? Is it all about Assad, or are there deeper reasons underlying and deeper causes?

**R.Z.:** As you rightly mentioned, what people wish to call the Arab Spring - and we call it Islamic awakening - swept the whole region. It's not limited to Syria or Iraq. As I mentioned, it's a legitimate request from the society toward the change confronting those argument of a status quo coming from the leadership, okay? Now, starting from Tunisia, moving toward Egypt, the third step was Libya, and the fourth was Syria. Here, the second argument, the status quo argument thought that it's better to stop the wave - the so-called Arab Spring or Islamic awakening - over there before reaching our border. So they started intervention, they started equipping this and that group in Libya...

**C.P.:** 'They is who? The West?

**R.Z.:** I would say the West with certain Arab countries.

**C.P.:** Well, in some ways the first country Islamic ally awakened was Iran...

**R.Z.:** Of course.

**C.P.:** ...'79. So you feel justified that the history is catching up with you, or the historical process is being completed. Because, again, some people in the West see that and they're threatened by that.

**R.Z.:** It's not a threat, you know. Iran as a very big, historical nation and country that has been playing the role of prime mover three times in the contemporary history in the region. Once, early twentieth century during its constitutional revolution. We had an uprising which is called constitutional revolution - early twentieth century. Second time, it was nationalization of oil in the fifties. Iran again was the first. Then in early twentieth century Iranians were the first nation in the region seeking constitutional rule of law, new concept of ruling. In second wave, which was nationalization of oil and energy resources, again Iranians were the prime mover nation to call for nationalization of the national resources. Actually...

**C.P.:** At the time, what was the government of Iran like? I mean, was it more democratic? It was under the Shah.

**R.Z.:** No, it was under the Shah, I mean this nationalization movement led by a coalition of Prime Minister Mosaddegh which was ousted by an American-British coup, and a great Grand Ayatollah called Ayatollah Kashani. The movement was led by the coalition of two leaders.

**C.P.:** But brought forth by the Shah later.

**R.Z.:** Yes, of course. Well, actually derailed by the Shah. The decision and the request of the people was to fully nationalize the oil and national resources, energy resources. But when the Americans and the British succeeded by the coup, they derailed social request and formed a new sort of consortium, you know, to explore these sources, energy sources of Iran. I was arguing that the Islamic Revolution was the third wave of the Iranian nation being the prime mover in the region.

**C.P.:** So in Syria, is there an energy dimension?

**R.Z.:** No, I don't think any energy dimension. In Syria, Syria is a mirror of confrontation between two arguments: the argument for change, the argument for status quo. Internally, it's a bit complicated whether Assad represents...

**C.P.:** The status quo being Assad?

**R.Z.:** No, no, no. The whole story, I'm talking about the whole situation in the region. When it comes to Syria, the story is a bit complicated. Here Assad might be representing the status quo and other parties representing change. But no. Those forces behind the status quo thought to misuse violence, sectarianism, ethnic division...

**C.P.:** Who are these forces?

**R.Z.:** Certain Arab countries, it's clear, needless to name, those Arab countries. They prevented the wave of social request, social revolution reaching their own borders. And they thought that the best venue would be first, of course, Libya, and then Syria, ok? This is what Syrian crisis is all about.

**C.P.:** What about Egypt? Was that a different story?

**R.Z.:** No different story. Again, we have the two camps: change vs. status quo. No difference, we don't see any difference between here and there.

**C.P.:** But change towards what? Towards a more liberal agenda, or a more religious agenda?

**R.Z.:** More toward a popular system. In some way or another people are exhausted by dictations, being talked down to, either to be a patrimonial system, like what happened for half a century in Libya, or other countries ruled according to Western values. Makes no difference. People here in the region, people have their own identity. This is their own understanding that they have a distinct identity and they are seeking this very identity.

**C.P.:** But this is the point. To become popular or else populist, or any other derivative of the word, could suggest two things. One, representative democracy, in other words that the will of the people is taken into consideration. And on the other side you could have populists, exploiting people's weaknesses, and feelings, and emotions in order to establish an autocracy.

**R.Z.:** No, we are talking about the first concept.

**C.P.:** The first concept, okay. Then, then interesting point is, since Western political culture professes to be the champion of the popular will, why hasn't it worked in the Arab countries? And in fact it hasn't, because at the end of the day what you had in most cases was a series of dictatorships.

**R.Z.:** Perhaps here secularism could define the reason. When it comes to Western concept of democracy, it's a secular system. But here in the Middle East people are mainly thinking in the framework of their own religions.

**C.P.:** Not as far as theocracy, though. But yet I think Islam and the Islamist movements are seen by some Westerners as examples of theocracy, examples of a totalitarian regime under God.

**R.Z.:** Well, this is what they have understood from Islam, but it's not necessarily right.

**C.P.:** Sure, I think there are differences in Islam, as you often said, and there are particular instances of Shia philosophy in Iran that differentiates itself, and in fact there's a democratic element in there. Isn't there?

**R.Z.:** Well, if we wish to go to this very argument, then we have to concentrate either only on Iran or Shi'ite Islam, while I would accept that the dominant religion in the region is not Shiite - of course its Sunnite Islam. I wish and I prefer to put it in a different way. We have Westerner style of democracy. Here, because of cultural differences, I would say people are seeking an indigenous style of democracy - a democracy that could reflect elements of their own identity.

**Marta Murzanska (M.M.):** So what sort of a system are we talking about in terms of political systems? What sort of political system would be a perfect alternative to dictatorships in the Middle East?

**R.Z.:** To my understanding, this would go rather to the very atmosphere of real politics in some way or another. When it comes to this question, to our understanding we shall leave it up to the people in each and every country. This nation may decide of a more secular, and the other one may decide and choose a more religious system.

**C.P.:** On that, what is Iran's goal in Syria?

**R.Z.:** What we are looking in Syria is what we may talk about when it comes to our own aim in the whole region. We are against double standard, we are against selective approach to this-that country. One should be able to define certain principles and apply it everywhere.

**C.P.:** But beyond principles. Let's say, you do that. But specifically in Syria, what would you like to see at the end of a day? A federal Syria? A divided Syria? I mean, what would be... Because, again, it's the philosophical principles, the religious principles, but also the geopolitical issues. Iran, if nothing else, over the centuries has been a geopolitical player in the region and beyond. So, from a pragmatic, geopolitical, geostrategic point of view, what is Iran trying to accomplish?

**R.Z.:** Iran is an old country in the Middle East. Middle East is our homeland. Everybody wishes to see his or her own home stable, peaceful. This is one of the main goals we have in the whole region. In Syria...

**C.P.:** By creating a balance in Syria? Because if, for example, the Alawites are destroyed in Syria, Shiism is destroyed in Syria. This would be bad for Iran, of course.

**R.Z.:** Generally speaking, conceptually thinking we are looking in Syria like any other country in the region, we think there are - I mentioned - two confronting arguments. We may put it in another way. There is a process, social political process, versing a political project. We are in favor of a political social process. We have no problem. What we are seeking over there is to

bring about, to maintain a peaceful atmosphere where the Syrian people could choose, could decide about the shape and the quality of their system. Whether this and that politician could be the leader, whether it should be more secular or less secular. Whether it should be federal or not. To our understanding these are not issues that should be decided upon by foreigners.

**M.M.:** We've got three main communities in Syria, right? We've got the Alawites, we've got the Sunnis, and we've got the Kurds. What is the solution which would be the most feasible, the most acceptable to all the three communities, in your own opinion?

**R.Z.:** The solution is what a Syrian dialogue could lead to. Everybody should help Syrians, if they are Kurds, if they are Alawites or Sunnite, it is our aim and it is our mandate to help them sitting side-by-side, talking and reaching a compromise. Nothing beyond that. It's a matter of Syrian decision. Not Iranian, not Arab, not Western – no.

**C.P.:** But truly, what's happening is the opposite of that. Because you have more countries jumping in. Turkey is now involved. Iraq has been involved. Russia is involved. You're involved. Hezbollah from Lebanon is involved, so some Lebanese interests there, obviously. So it's getting more complicated. It's getting more complex, less Syrian, and more the business of everybody else. How can you turn around and then say, okay, it's enough. Would it happen after ISIS is gone? After Raqqa?

**R.Z.:** Could happen. Toppling down ISIS could help the process.

**C.P.:** Would that be the end of ISIS, or would they disappear and come back as something else?

**R.Z.:** No, they're to our understanding... Well, ISIS as an occupational terrorist force could disappear in Raqqa or Aleppo.

**C.P.:** But what is ISIS? ISIS is - its support and its grassroots support and it could go back underground and come back up like the Taliban in Afghanistan, for example. It's difficult to confront. They're a little bit easier in Syria because they took territory and they're defending territory. But as soon as they lose that territory they could go underground and come up whenever they manage to again. How do you deal with that? This is the problem.

**R.Z.:** If you have an organization of 80,000 guerilla, very well equipped, very well financed, being capable of occupying one-third or, for example, Iraq, or a good part of Syria, then this should not be an institution established overnight.

**C.P.:** Sure. But who's financing them? I have a feeling I know the answer. But is it the powers that support traditionalism and the traditional powers that you said before?

**R.Z.:** Yes, indeed.

**C.P.:** So they're on the wrong side of the argument, though. If traditionalism, or conservatism, or whatever is supported by Assad, they're supporting the people that want to overthrow Assad, therefore change.

**R.Z.:** They are for change of Assad, not for the political change. As I mentioned, project versus process. It's a project to change this very system in Syria. But the process...

**C.P.:** The regime, not a system, maybe.

**R.Z.:** Maybe. But the process is to change the whole system in the region. I mean, the patrimonial system in the region. So the status quo argument is trying to stop the process. They're either in Libya or particularly in Syria. How? They will try to show the people that the price for change is very, very high. They are trying by using this kind of extremist element - actually the behavior has proved that they are barbarian people, barbarian forces - the pro-status quo argument is trying to show to the public through instrumental use of this kind of extremism, that the price of change, legitimate change, is very high. Therefore, the public opinion is expected to be convinced choosing security rather than political change.

**C.P.:** Turning to the Kurds. I mean, that surely must be one of the most challenging issues for the whole region. You have Kurds in your country. There are Kurds in Iraq, there are Kurds in Turkey, there are Kurds in Syria. Can you envision, at some point, that they will get the autonomy, self-determination, even independence, someday? Will this be part of the changing system? Of the process? Could that be one of the results of the changing process?

**R.Z.:** We shall distinguish...

**C.P.:** Because they were given the short end of the stick, I think, after the First World War. They were one great nation, let's say, that was left out from self-determination, or the right to self-determination.

**R.Z.:** The Kurdish coin has got two faces. The first face is Kurdish identity. Nobody should ignore Kurdish identity. Kurdish identity is there in the region. We have Kurds in Iran, as you mentioned rightly. There are Kurds in Iraq, in Syria. The majority of them are there in Turkey. Even they are there, some minorities, Kurds minorities in Central Asia, Caucasus. So nobody should ignore Kurdish identity, like any other identities - cultural identity, ethnic identities - in the region. But on the other side of the coin, it doesn't mean that political, geographical borders should be drawn across the ethnic, you know, lines. It would be very, very dangerous.

**C.P.:** Yeah, but, I mean, what we're talking about then is altering or violating territorial integrities of a number of countries. I mean, if you're going to carve out a Kurdish corridor - they've been talking about a Kurdish corridor - it's going to violate the Syrian territorial integrity, Turkish, Iraqi, and eventually maybe Iranian.

**R.Z.:** Indeed.

**C.P.:** So how do you deal with that? Or does this process in the long-term deal with that?

**R.Z.:** We are in favor of recognition of all identities: cultural identities, linguistic, etc., in the region. But when it comes to drawing the borders, at least for... We are, as I've mentioned, we are against drawing the political borders across the linguistic, ethnic lines. Okay, at the end of the day this or that nation in the region may get to a compromise for self-determination, for - I don't know - more power-sharing, a better power-sharing. It could be Syria, it could be Iraq, and it could be Turkey. We have no problem with this. More autonomy, maybe. But generally what we are thinking and we are in favor of that is, first, recognition of identities.

**M.M.:** May I ask more specifically about the Kurds in Iraq? This is the Kurdish community which is the closest to reaching independence. What are the relations between the KRG - Kurdistan Regional Government - and Iran?

**R.Z.:** We have excellent relations with this region. Well, you should realize that there are different forces in Kurdish region of Iraq, different parties – ruling, non-ruling - those who are involved and part of the process over there, those who are outside of the power. We have excellent relations with all. And it's a part of our history, not a new phenomenon. Kurds have been in touch with Iran - I mean Iraqi Kurds - as early as the seventies. Most of the Kurdish politicians either they speak Farsi like me, or have an Iranian passport. They have been living in Iran, in a city very close to the capital Tehran - it's called Karaj, now it's a province. They have their own villas, their own investment over there. So we have been, from the seventies at least, we have been in touch with Iraqi Kurds, we have no problem, we have excellent relation with Kurdish region in Iraq. We have been encouraging them to reach a compromise with central government in Baghdad, helping both sides. Always they are coming, I mean, Kurdish authority are visiting Teheran. I would say, more than 50% of trade volume between Iraq and Iran goes through Kurdish area.

**M.M.:** There were some reports, I think last year, that the pipeline was supposed to be built from Kurdish Iraq to Iran, or via Iran to the Persian Gulf, transporting oil from...

**R.Z.:** It could be a bit far, but from time to time different ideas appear on the scene. This could be one of them. But we have excellent relations.

**C.P.:** One year after the nuclear deal was struck, how big a deal has it been for Iran? Have you seen real benefits?

**R.Z.:** To certain extent, I would say yes. The sanctions were affecting Iran legally, psychologically. For the time being, we may say that there is no psychological atmosphere around that concept of being sanctioned. Legally, most of the sanctions, when it comes to UN sanctions, EU sanctions, unilateral sanctions are removed. The remaining part is only US sanction, the so called primary sanctions.

**C.P.:** Are they supposed to come off as well, or not?

**R.Z.:** No. But they have eased them. I mean, the treasury, US treasury obliged under nuclear deal, they've tried to ease even the primary sanctions. We have started attracting investments, good investments.

**C.P.:** Mostly in the energy industry, or across the board?

**R.Z.:** No, in all infrastructures, in energy, transport, aviation (sic). We have introduced more than two hundred million of projects in energy sector. And there's something like 100 billion in road and transport. The latest agreement signed something like two weeks ago with the Total from France for investment in an oil project.

**C.P.:** President elect Trump though said that it was the worst deal that the United States ever made, and that you're benefiting from it, but the US is not. And that he's going to do something about that. Lately I saw that you had a very quickly exported heavy water after it was suggested that you were hoarding it. Have there been serious discussions or allegations about cheating on the... Because that was a big concern when it was being negotiated. And I think, in fact I was seeing some discussion on how far you really were from a threshold of a nuclear capability, and that it only slowed you down by months and you could do that in very few months, etc. Ok, well, you represent your country, obviously. But what is the Iranian view of this? It seems that

you are gaining benefits from the deal. So it seems that one would think that you're not going to very lightly discard it. Are you concerned that the new administration in the US will do away with the deal?

**R.Z.:** One should realize that after each and every election in US people would face three character: the presidential nominee - people who are running - then the president-elect, and finally the new president and the new administration. The propaganda raised during the campaign is not that important. In the transitional period the president-elect, like today, will start adopting to realities. And as Bush junior said, whoever come and sit beyond this table - presidential table - have to decide based on realities on the table. So the new president and the new administration in us may not ignore everything, we are not worried about it at all. Especially because it's not a bilateral agreement.

**C.P.:** True.

**R.Z.:** It's a multilateral agreement endorsed by UN Security Council. US is one party and has a full-fledged obligation toward that. When it comes to the implementation of the nuclear deal, the main referee here is the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). And the IAEA has repeatedly and clearly said after the implementation that Iran has fully implemented the deal. What we are benefiting, of course, there are some investment benefit, legal benefit, but the main benefit of the deal for Iran was that with the nuclear deal and the negotiation we proved that the Iranian nuclear program has ever been a peaceful program. This is the main benefit right now. We believe that under any circumstances this will remain. And whoever try to ignore the deal will lose around this very concept.

**C.P.:** I hear you, but I think at the bottom of a lot of the thinking that went into this business of trying to prevent your country from acquiring any capability was that you are not a player in the international arena, you are a dangerous country, you're not a moderate country, you're not a country that would underpin international peace and security, and that therefore you're a threat. I think it behooves you to slowly, slowly prove, not to us, but your country to prove to the international community that you can be a systemic player, and I think this is partly what your policy is about. But it means, though, that you're going to have to normalize relations with a lot of countries that you've had problems with, and you are continuing having problems with. That's a big challenge because I think, you know, there are other countries that are having peaceful nuclear programs and nobody's concerned about them. But with your country a lot of people are concerned about it. So I think for them to stop being concerned, they need to not to be concerned about your motivations. So this is I think the biggest question, and the biggest challenge for your diplomacy, for your policy. To show that you are a legitimate player in the region and globally, and you can underpin international peace and security. What are the steps for that? You're faced with relations with Saudi Arabia, bad relations with Israel, other countries. How do you deal with those, or is it too early?

**R.Z.:** Well, presenting a country they figure in the existing world could be subject to do propaganda industry, which is unfortunately, or fortunately, a Western industry. Remember what happened...

**C.P.:** Its fine you say that because I think it's been... There was a propaganda in the Chinese Empire, you know, and then the Russians did that, the Germans, of course, and then the Americans. I think it's a world phenomenon (laughs).



**R.Z.:** Remember what happened with Gaddafi. Gaddafi was demonized for years, then suddenly it became a very interested leader overnight, after the deal with - I don't know - UK, with Americans, with French politicians. So first of all, it's a matter of propaganda and propaganda industry. There are certain terms, as you mentioned and talked about them. Iran being a player or not being a player, normal relation. Iran is a reality on the ground. It's not a political reality, it's a historical, geographical reality. At the end of the day, today a political reality as well. So nobody could say Iran has never been a player, even during the last, for example, three decades. Now, after the nuclear deal it's time for Iran to become... Iran has ever been and will remain a player in the region, whether they wish to realize it or not. Had it not been a major player, why six major powers decided to sit and talk and negotiate nuclear deal for three years? Therefore, forget about such kind of terms at whether Iran is and is going to be a player or not, okay? Answering your particular question. One should not forget, one should realize a technical issue here. You mentioned the United State, you mentioned Saudi Arabia. We were not the sources of problem so that we should normalize relation. Who cut the relation, diplomatic relation between Iran and US? It was President Carter. The same applies for Saudi Arabia.

**C.P.:** Yeah, but maybe Israel is a little different. Israel has been the recipient of a lot of rhetoric from Iran and a lot of very harsh rhetoric.

**R.Z.:** Israel actually is a sources of rhetoric against Iran, not recipient.

**C.P.:** (Laughing).

**R.Z.:** Okay, let me explain a bit more. Very clearly speaking, nothing would change when it comes to Israel, our treatment and approach toward Israel. It's been from the very beginning one of the principal in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran not to recognize apartheid regime. We did it and we applied it 100%, precisely. When it came to South Africa, we had no relation at all, while the previous regime in Iran - the shah regime - very specific relation they had with South Africa. We applied it with...

**C.P.:** And they had relationship with Israel, or didn't they?

**R.Z.:** Yeah, they did. We applied the same policy for South Africa, we are applying that for Israel. To our understanding, it's an apartheid regime. We were doing that from the very beginning of the revolution. But lately it became an argument from a US ex-president. It was Jimmy Carter who titled his book "Peace not Apartheid." So today it's a matter of common sense. Even internally speaking, they used to label themselves - Israel - as a democratic and Jewish state. Now nobody talks about democratic: Israel is a Jewish state. So even they themselves confessed it's an apartheid system. And we are not going to recognize apartheid.

**C.P.:** So you envision that if there is a two-state solution in Israel, or the Palestinian issue is solved, would you have relations with... Or, because some people say this is a rationalization. Really, you know, it's a deeper thing, it's an intolerance towards Jewish people, or what they stand for, etc. I'm not sure that's the case because of the fact that there were always Jewish people living in Iran. Now, under what conditions they are living - I don't know, I'm not a historian to that extent. But was there tolerance? I mean, the average Iranian, when they think of a Jewish person who's living in Iran, what's the first thing they think about?

**R.Z.:** Consider that the biggest Jewish community out of Israel is located in Iran. Consider that we apply positive discrimination towards Jews in Iran like other minorities in Iran.

**C.P.:** Positive discrimination is called affirmative action in the United States, because the word 'discrimination' is bad.

**R.Z.:** What does 'positive discrimination' mean? It means that by law there is one MP for each two hundred thousand Iranian. But when it comes to minorities, including Jewish, we have one MP, even if there are 30,000.

**C.P.:** But this is not only for Jewish people, it's for all minorities.

**R.Z.:** It's for Christian, it's for Assyrian, it's for Armenian as well.

**C.P.:** Is this part of this deeper culture of acceptance in Iran?

**R.Z.:** Of course.

**C.P.:** You're not threatened, it seems, as much with ethnic minorities as other countries. Why?

**R.Z.:** Look, Iran as a nation is a mosaic of cultures, of religions, and of languages. We respect all, and we are living peacefully side by side.

**C.P.:** And everybody thinks of themselves as Iranian.

**R.Z.:** Everybody think of himself or herself first as Iranian, and then Shi'ite Muslim, Sunni Muslim, Baluch, Kurds, Jewish. It's what in the political science they call it a nation-building process. Nation-building concept and process accomplished and finished in Iran long, long ago. If you want me to put it this way, the development, the whole region is about nation-building. The nation-building in other countries who are subject to turmoil is not completed yet. It's an effort toward nation-building. When you have a finished nation-building, people, the citizen would think of himself or herself first as the Iranian, and then...

**C.P.:** Is this part of the process that you alluded to before, sort of that Iran is promoting this sort of historical process of self-determination?

**R.Z.:** Of course. Therefore, yeah, there are chances - and the Supreme Leader in Iran has clearly mentioned that - there is a chance for rapprochement between Iran and US, provided that they could revise their policies. Unfortunately, even during this recent development in relation which was the nuclear deal, they couldn't help very much, you know, the confidence which is very required between two nations. We need a confidence-building process to reach that positive moment. It's up to them. Again, when it comes to Saudi Arabia. It was Saudi Arabia who cut the diplomatic relation. Therefore, they should start. But when it comes to Israel, it's a self-explanatory phenomenon. I mentioned the question of this cultural, political concept 'apartheid'. But simply thinking, according to numerous UN resolution they are occupying Palestine.

**M.M.:** May I ask about it a little bit more because that's very interesting. Provided that there is a settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is just for the Palestinians, would Iran be willing to recognize Israel?

**R.Z.:** As what kind of settlement you are referring to?

**C.P.:** Well, satisfactory to the Palestinians, and to the Israelis.

**R.Z.:** Long ago we have introduced our solution for Palestine and Palestinian issue. We believe

that according to the very first principle of democracy, there should be the right of self-determination for each and every Palestinian citizen who are living as Palestinians, irrespective of being Jewish, Christian or Muslim. One man, one vote. This is the first principle of democracy. If there could be a solution based on this principle, of course, we have no problem with that. But if it's a project...

**C.P.:** But that brings us to the Cyprus issue, Ambassador. And that is the whole issue that's being discussed: its group rights versus individual rights. And in all cases if we talk about self-determination of each person, if a group of people (inaudible) mustn't lose their group rights, you automatically violate individual rights. Because in order to safeguard the group, you have to dilute certain individual rights. And the essence of the Cyprus issue - one of the main key points, because there's security, and there's a regional security, and all of the rest of it that is part of the parcel - but this is it. It is on one side trying to protect the group versus trying to secure individual rights, and human rights, and individual freedoms and so on. And that is the cutting edge. What they're talking about and try to negotiate in Switzerland is that dividing line: how do you ensure that there is a majority of Turkish Cypriots in the north and at the same time not violate the rights of all Cypriots to travel and live freely everywhere where they want, and so on. So there's a problem there. You can either do one or the other. So I'm not asking you to solve the Cyprus problem, nobody has been able to so far. And anyway, you'd put a lot of diplomats out of business (laughing). But, you know, this is part of the process that you're talking about - the nation-building. Cyprus is not a nation, it hasn't completed its nation-building process, if you will. There's still two different ethnic groups that are pulling each other apart. Plus it's all the mother countries and the neighboring countries, and so on. It's a microcosm of all the other problems in the region. This is the issue. And I think Iran has made positive contributions to the Cyprus issue as well. We could close if you just can tell us your views about where you think that the Cyprus issue is going to end up. Are you optimistic there is going to be a settlement, first of all?

**R.Z.:** Well, I have to be. As a diplomat, as the Iranian ambassador I have to, first of all, be optimistic. But very honestly speaking, I guess I'm optimistic. There are general principles that could help everywhere, including in Cyprus, since we're talking generally about Cyprus and non-Cypriot issues. We were talking about Palestine. Yes, there is such kind of possibility and argument that the interest of group could confront the individual interest. But here of course the principle is that right of majority respect of minority, it's quite evident. Beyond that we have principles of international law. In a dispute like Cyprus could help again. The third principle is any compromise that both sides could reach. When it comes to our stand, as you know, which is quite famous, we have been in favor of and supporting reunification of this beautiful island. On each and every occasion and opportunity we expressed and we tried to help in different ways. The latest one was during the visit of his Excellency Syllouris, the President of the House, where my minister Mr. Zarif offered hosting a round of negotiation. We have the background of such kind of events and initiatives. Iran has been helpful and house for negotiation during the Tajikistan civil war. Actually, the civil war in Tajikistan ended, based on Tehran declaration. We did the same effort during the Caucasus crisis between Azerbaijan and Armenia. We did the same recently for Syria. There has been two events, first of Syrian opposition gathered in Tehran, and secondly of a good number of countries gathered in Tehran once again who were in favor of settlement, political settlement of the crisis in Syria. And of course, about when it came to problems in Iraq, politicians, different politicians from Iraq...

**C.P.:** What was his response? There could be some...

**R.Z.:** Well, of course (inaudible) house's speaker President Syllouris, but also other Cypriot officials when I went over there and officially submitted the proposal, everybody welcomed the idea. Even when I met Mr. Akinci, the leader of Turkish community, he welcomed as well. But the technical point that...

**C.P.:** They preferred Switzerland (laughing).

**R.Z.:** Honestly speaking, not preferred. But they said the process is going on, we need the approval of, of course, UN representative here. But very honestly speaking, they were more optimistic to conclude in Switzerland. They thought there could be no more need for another... But as they told me, if all parties, I mean Turkish and Greek Cypriot, and the UN could agree upon that, they were...

**C.P.:** Ambassador, thank you very much for taking the time and being with us.

**R.Z.:** Thank you and thank you to Erpic.

---

## ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATION\*

---

Kathleen Ann Doherty\*\*  
1 December 2016

### Security in the Eastern Mediterranean

*US Ambassador to Cyprus Kathleen Ann Doherty reviews US policy towards several key countries in the Eastern Mediterranean expressing a hegemonic attitude and with a focus on the benefits of potential cooperation, especially in the energy field.*

I want to thank everyone for coming here, especially it is nice to see so many of my fellow ambassadors here. I've treasured the opportunity to work with you over the course of time that I've been here over the past fourteen months. And it's great to see so many other people here that I know and to meet so many new people during the course of the evening.

When I was invited to speak here, I thought, oh great, what an easy topic - security in the Mediterranean. You could have picked a little bit easier topic for me, I was thinking, maybe something like Brexit or something like the price of oil. But you've picked one of the hardest topics and one of the most complex things to comment on tonight.

What I will do tonight is, I will talk about how the current administration has viewed this region, and what we plan to do over the next few weeks. I know many of you are probably expecting or hoping that I would talk about how the new president will look at these issues. But by practice we don't comment on the positions of new administrations before they take place. But I would like to note, nevertheless, that many of our long-standing US foreign policy goals and strategies have bipartisan consensus, including, for example, strong bipartisan support for Cyprus and for a secure Mediterranean. What I'll do is talk about some of our priorities and concerns, and about some particular countries in the Mediterranean. I won't talk about all countries, otherwise I'd be here until tomorrow. So if you bear with, I'll touch upon things briefly, and on some things I'll go more in depth. But I thought, by starting on this fourth week of November, perhaps it is best to start by reflecting upon this year.

Here in the Eastern Mediterranean we saw the civil war in Syria enter its sixth year, several terrorist attacks, and the attempted coup of Turkey, and the unending exodus of hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people, and continued tensions in the Levant countries. But it has

\* Transcript

\*\* Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Cyprus

also been a year when we've seen some encouraging signs, most of all the discussions here in Cyprus to unify the island which we hope will continue despite the apparent recent setback in Switzerland. The increasing collaboration of Cyprus, Egypt and Israel, and the economic prospects of such a partnership also give us hope. I will speak about these developments later.

But first, let me turn to the challenges in the region. I should begin with Syria. There is no way to look at what is happening on the ground in Syria and not feel profound feelings of grief. Now in its sixth year, the conflict in Syria has triggered the worst refugee crisis since the end of World War II. Secretary Kerry has called this the most horrific mass exodus of modern times. More than 6.5 million Syrians have left their homeland. Up to one half million have died in a conflict itself. This weekend brought even greater signs of devastation and horror. Intense airstrikes destroyed the last three hospitals in the rebel-held east Aleppo. The heavy bombardment has killed nearly three hundred civilians. And as the national security adviser at the White House said this weekend, such actions must be condemned. We all wish there was a simple answer that would end the civil war. But there isn't such an answer. The roots of the conflict are many and it will take many years to address them. But the priorities must be to have a sustained end of hostilities, to get humanitarian assistance to civilians who have been tragically trapped between the sides, to degrade ISIL and al-Qaeda, and then to create an environment in which Syrian-led negotiations toward a political transition can take place. We're committed, the International Syria Support Group is committed, and the UN is committed to trying to get the political talks back on track so we can get a transitional process in place. We don't know what the results of that process will be. But from our view in the United States President Assad cannot be part of the long-term future of Syria. The end of Syria's civil war is critical for international efforts to destroy ISIL. There are many groups espousing violent ideologies, but the most violent, most destructive and most dangerous is ISIL, also known as "Daesh". Two years ago, ISIL was expanding its territory, recruiting violent extremists and threatening to overrun even Baghdad and Erbil. It represented the greatest threat to the stability and future of this vital region.

But now that momentum has shifted dramatically against ISIL, and here's why. First, the mobilization of partners to broaden the campaign against ISIL has been very successful. Each of the sixty seven countries in the anti-ISIL coalition plays a vital role, from providing military and humanitarian support to stopping ISIL's financing and funding, to impeding the flow of foreign fighters. The United States has put more American Special Forces into the efforts in Syria itself and expanded training efforts for groups that were effective in fighting ISIL. Coalition members have largely cleared ISIL from Syria-Turkey's border, cut terrorists' supply lines and financing, removed terrorist commanders from the battlefield, and stemmed the flow of foreign fighters. In the last year and a half we have set up a structure working effectively with Iraqi forces on the ground that has put ISIL on the defensive. A 100,000-strong alliance of Iraqi forces with air and ground support from the US-led coalition has nearly surrounded Mosul. But tragically though, in Mosul we're also coming face to face with ISIL's brutality, with the targeted mass killings of civilians. And although we have accomplished much, we've also faced some urgency. We must effectively end ISIL's self-proclaimed geographic caliphate by taking back the last major urban center it holds: Raqqa in Syria. Raqqa is ISIL's central planning node for external operations against Turkey, against Europe, against the United States, against the world. We're in the initial stages of isolating and eventually liberating Raqqa, a significant effort that is going to continue.

But as we see with the ongoing liberation of Mosul, these campaigns will not be easy. But we stand resolute in our efforts to defeat ISIL.

While we face the urgent challenges of the civil war in Syria and of ISIL, we also need to look at what led to such instability in the region. About one-quarter to one-half of the populations in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen are under the age of 25. These young people have limited prospects for work. And as the US Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken said a few months ago, we know that extremism thrives in the shadows of personal, social, political, economic marginalization, capitalizing on the grievances of those who feel cast aside, left behind, ignored or repressed. We look to counter that influence with the bright light of education, inclusion, tolerance, good governance and opportunity. In that context the argument for democratic reform in the Middle East seems even clearer today than when the Arab Spring began. For peace to really happen, citizens' demands for inclusive responsive governance must be addressed. The United States is helping to build resilient democratic societies by working with local partners to improve the transparency and accountability of governments, foster pluralism and respect for human rights, and support expanding participation with civil society, youth, minorities and women. The work of change is ongoing. Look at Tunisia, for example, which democracy is under terrorist attacks and economic stress. We have pressed all partners, including Saudi Arabia, to release political prisoners and open political space. We have urged political reconciliation in Bahrain so that the opposition can run in elections in 2018. The United States also seeks to address the problems that led to hopelessness in the region. When people have access to opportunity, they have hope for the future. So we're investing in the fragile success stories. For example, we boosted our aid to Tunisia by more than a third last year. Through assistance funds the United States is removing basic and higher education, providing job training and offering help to small businesses. The United States supports opportunity and good governance because these policies reflect our values as Americans, but also because, as we tragically see in the past years, their absence leads to violence and extremism.

The refugee crisis facing Europe and the rest of the world is the human face of the violent extremism in the Middle East, the civil war in Syria, and the lack of opportunity. One need look no further than the front pages of any newspaper to see stories of the dangerous passages most refugees face, their pain and their courage. The mass exodus of millions of people also is raising issues of national sovereignty and EU solidarity. The issue of refugees, however, it's not just for the region and for Europe to address. At a leaders' summit on refugees in September, President Obama brought together world leaders to galvanize additional humanitarian support, improve access to education and lawful work for refugees, and expand opportunities for refugee resettlement. The United States accepted 85,000 of the world's most vulnerable refugees so far this year, and plans to accept a 100,000 in 2017. Over 72% of the resettled refugees were women and children.

Beyond accepting refugees, the United States is also doing what it can to help countries in crisis through policy, advocacy and assistance. Inside Syria, despite the evident difficulties, we've increased access to water, provided food, and renovated health facilities for internally displaced peoples. Within Iraq where 2.8 million are displaced, the United States is working with the Iraqi government and civil society to improve the delivery of basic essential services and to increase the protection of vulnerable populations. US funds are also helping support such needs

as food assistance, medical care, shelter, water and sanitation in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. We will provide, for example, 290 million in US development assistance to Jordan and Lebanon for increased access to high-quality education. This educational assistance will reach around 230,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan and 62,000 in Lebanon. Likewise, for the almost three million refugees in Turkey US assistance has supported food, basic assistance, shelter and protection services, among other things. We also have programs to support refugee integration in Europe, including one in Cyprus. We have initiated a project to teach English to refugees living in the camp in Kofinou in order to help them integrate and become productive members of society, wherever their new homes might be.

Now, let me turn to Turkey. Every day the conflict continues in Syria, it has an impact on Turkey. Nearly three million refugees alone have fled to Turkey. And on its borders and from within Turkey faces a direct terrorist threat from ISIL and its supporters, and from the PKK whose attacks only succeed in undermining legitimate aspirations and rights of Turkey's Kurdish citizens. We have called on the PKK to cease such senseless, brutal attacks and we continue to stand by Turkey in this fight. The attempted coup was a direct challenge to the Turkish state and to the Turkish people, and they have a right and responsibility to pursue those who plotted it to protect the government and the people against further attacks and threats to public order.

Nonetheless, the United States is deeply concerned by the Turkish government's detentions of opposition members of parliament and by government's restrictions on internet access and independent media. As Deputy Secretary Blinken has said, we have urged and will continue to urge the Turkish government to respond to the failed coup in ways that reinforce public confidence in the rule of law, and Turkey's traditions of freedom of expression and pluralism - the very principles and institutions that the Turkish people so courageously defended in that time of crisis. The health and vibrancy of Turkish democracy matters and is important to long-term stability of Turkey. Turkey remains an important NATO ally and our partner. We work side-by-side and in partnership with other members of the international community to address the range of challenges, including the fight against ISIL, the Syrian Civil War, the global refugee crisis, and the threat posed by violent extreme groups.

We also have spoken frequently with President Erdogan and his government about playing a constructive role in solving the Cyprus problem. President Erdogan has frequently voiced support for the settlement process and for Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akıncı, and we will continue to urge Turkey to support the Cypriot-led process to reach a unified bi-zonal bi-communal federal Cyprus.

Now, let me speak about Israel. The historically strong and deep US-Israeli friendship is well known and is based on our shared values. We work closely with Israeli government on many regional issues, while seeking to resolve the dispute between Israel and the Palestinians. That's a long-standing US policy that we support a negotiated settlement and a two-state solution that allows for Israelis and Palestinians to live together in peace and security. Israel's security, however, remains a critical goal of US foreign policy.

Now, let me move on to Lebanon. The people of Lebanon recently elected President Michel Aoun in accordance with Lebanon's constitution. We see this as a moment of opportunity as



Lebanon emerges from years of political impasse to restore government functions and build a more stable and prosperous future for all Lebanese citizens. As Lebanon forms a new government, we look to all parties to uphold Lebanon's international obligations, including those contained in various UN Security Council resolutions. The United States will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Lebanese people and support Lebanon's independence, sovereignty, security and stability.

Now on to Egypt. Egypt has always been and is the historical center of the Arab world, as a quarter of the Arab population. We are deeply committed to the stability of Egypt and to helping Egypt with the difficult challenges that it faces: economic challenges, challenges of counterterrorism, challenges in the Sinai, and challenges of the region. Egypt is an extremely important partner in so many different ways because of the critical role it's always played in the Middle East - the role it has played as a leader in the Arab world.

Now, turning to Iran. Iran has remained high in the US foreign policy agenda due to its formerly illicit nuclear program, support for terrorism, and destabilizing activities in the region. One of the Obama administration's most important diplomatic achievements was the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which constrains any Iranian attempt to build a nuclear bomb. As secretary Kerry said a couple weeks ago, it is very important to note that the Iranians have dismantled centrifuges, lowered the stockpile and transported enriched uranium out of the country. As a result, the region is less volatile and the world itself is safer from nuclear proliferation. We remain concerned, however, about Iran's continued support for terrorist groups and will continue to impose sanctions over such behavior.

It can be hard to look out at the landscape that I just surveyed or look back on events in the region in the last few years and not feel a sense of pessimism. But there have also been positive events happening, including the efforts by the leaders here in Cyprus to unify the island as a bi-zonal bi-communal federation that advances the interest of all Cypriots. Of course we're all disappointed that the most recent round of discussions in Switzerland did not have a more positive outcome, but I think we all hope that the two sides find a way forward to continue the great progress they have made on a number of difficult issues in order to overcome the remaining obstacles. I've gotten to know both leaders over my year plus here in Cyprus and I continue to be struck by their dedication, intellect, and sincerity. A just, lasting, comprehensive solution for Cyprus could have a historic and far-reaching impact. It will improve economic opportunity for all the people of Cyprus and enhance energy security in the Mediterranean region and beyond. It would demonstrate to the world today what can be achieved with dialogue, compromise and democracy - a powerful and positive model and inspiration for all.

Another positive development is the discovery of hydrocarbons and what that could mean for this region economically and politically. But before I talk about this region, let me first describe the situation in the United States which has been transferred into a leading energy power. That is true in oil, gas, wind and solar efficiency, and research and development. We've increased oil production from 5.5 million to about 9 million barrels per day and have transitioned from being a significant and increasing importer of gas to importer and exporter. By the end of the decade, it is possible that the United States may match Qatar in export volume of LNG. So when people state that the only reason United States cares about the Eastern Mediterranean is because of our energy needs, you can see why we think this is an odd statement to make. The discoveries

here are important, but for the people in the countries of the region. Discoveries offshore in Cyprus, Israel, Egypt, and potentially Lebanon have already redefined regional relationships, and I believe will continue to be a catalyst for increased economic and political cooperation, to interconnection and integration. As the State Department's envoy for energy Amos Hochstein has stated, we see a future for the region that includes new and old pipelines connecting Israel's offshore resources to Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, and the Palestinian Authority. As he almost recently told the US Congress, this vision includes Cypriot gas exports to Turkey and Egypt, allowing Egypt to satisfy its own power needs and export surpluses to international markets via existing idle LNG terminals. New resources will allow Turkey to diversify its heavy dependence on a small number of suppliers and use its extensive pipeline network to reach Europe as well.

The Eastern Mediterranean can play a role in freeing Central and Southeast Europe from their overwhelming dependence on Russian gas. But the success of all these plans, however, hinges on cooperation.

I've done my best to give you a tour d'horizon of the region, though much more could have been said including a mention of the countries I didn't get a chance to mention. But I want to reiterate the United States will continue to support the people of the broader Eastern Mediterranean as they strive for peace and prosperity and to help build the foundations for inclusive and responsive governments. American initiatives to lead the coalition fighting ISIL, to mitigate the refugee crisis, to encourage good governance and opportunity while containing Iran's nuclear program and defending Israel, are our longstanding priorities for this region. For decades we've been unwavering in our support to the people of Cyprus and we believe that despite the recent setback the prospects for resolutions of Cyprus problem are still the best to have been in decades. The United States offers its full support to the two leaders as they try to bring together the Cypriot people and bring an end to the island's division. And with that I'm happy to take your questions.

---

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION\*

---

Andrew Lambert\*\*  
5-7 December 2016

### Changes in the Balance of Power – Putin, Brexit and Trump

*Air Commodore Andrew Lambert describes the gradual breakdown of the liberal hegemonic paradigm and the rise of nationalism in Russia, Britain, and the US, viewing this, however, as a pendulum-swing and not as a linear historical progression.*

**Christodoulos Pelagias:** Welcome to our Skype conference on the recent developments in the Eastern Mediterranean. We would like to welcome our friends from Netanya University as well as our broader audience on EMF Live. Our first speaker of the morning is Air Commodore Andrew Lambert – Andrew, welcome - who will speak about the changes in the regional balance of power. Andrew, the floor is yours.

**Andrew Lambert:** Thank you very much. Ok, ladies and gentlemen, I suggest you that we are at a strategic crossroads that is almost like the end of World War II. Despite the successes that follow along immediately after the 1991 battle in Iraq and then subsequent activity in the Balkans, we found that the unipolar world that came out of that has actually over the last sixteen-eighteen years progressively disintegrated. We've had plenty of military solutions, for example in Afghanistan, Iraq, also in the Arab Spring, in Libya. But of course then we didn't actually participate in the red line operation, if I can call it that in Syria. We've had some success with Iranian nuclear weapons, though the question is for how long, and we still have the North Korean problem. But for all these situations we do not seem to have any form of political solution. As Sir John Sawers, the ex-head of MI6 said, what we need now is a situation that puts global stability first.

We have looked for too long at the War on Terror and perhaps now we should be thinking again about the "Concert of Europe". If this is the case, then we have to ask ourselves what value is there then in the current situation where we have in the West been putting up this idea of liberal democracy. Unfortunately, that has been pushed to one side by many of the nations of the world. There is doubt about the validity of international institutions such as the United Nations, and worse than that we now see increasing flouting of things like the ICC (the

\* Part of the e-conference "The Latest Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean," held by the East Med Forum between 5 and 7 December 2016.

\*\* Air Commodore, Royal Air Force (Retired); Director, Regional Security Program, ERPIC

International Criminal Court) and the ICJ (the International Court of Justice). And nowhere was this more brought into focus than in July this year when in the South China Sea dispute China decided they would not accept any more the jurisdiction of the tribunal for the UNCLOS.

Which brings us to a question: are we back into a straightforward realist paradigm - the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must?



*Plate 4: South China Sea dispute*

So if we look at the South China Sea dispute (see Plate 4), we can see a situation where indeed South China has decided that it owns all the islands as you can see inside the nine-dash line - the disputed islands - and yet the countries closest to those islands, it seems, have no rights because China has said they have historical rights there.

But there's also another rather insidious factor and that's this "post-truth" concept. According to the Oxford English Dictionary this is the international word of the year and we've seen it brought into sharp focus in places like the Scottish referendum where it didn't matter what the logical arguments were - the Scots still wanted to be free, whatever that meant. We've seen it in Russia to a large extent, mostly because of propaganda, and we see it of course in the Brexit votes that took place very recently where lots of very good arguments were reduced, virtually every single sane organization in the world from the president of United States downwards recommended that Britain stays within the European Union, but at the end of the day the British voted to go. And now, of course, most recently we've seen it with Donald Trump and a populist movement that seems to have propelled him into power.

The post-truth era says this: that facts are secondary to emotion so you can have any argument you like, but if you wanted to be the other side of the argument then that is the one that wins. The assertion of belief trumps reality. Well, this is a problem, because it means you can rewrite history if you wish, not only in the present but in the past as well, and one is back to the idea

that history is the servant of politics. It's quite often manifested now as petty nationalism and it fills me with concern for things like elections in the future, for evidence in law courts, for international treaties and their application, even for such mundane things as going to the shops and buying something. It seems there's no longer such a thing as a lie or an untruth, it's just an expression of what you want or don't want. And so we end up in a situation where we are highly susceptible in the future. Because the Netherlands election is coming up in March and God knows which way that will go. In France, of course, there is a good chance that Marine Le Pen will take power in a populist wave in the first round of elections in April and then finally in May.

And of course, there's the German elections in September. Well, so this is the chaos in which we find ourselves.

So I'm going to talk today about the changes in the balance of power. And I really want to talk about Vladimir Putin, Theresa May and Brexit, and Donald Trump. And just in case you think that Brexit is irrelevant, in this context I should remind you that Britain still has the world's fourth largest economy and still has considerable global responsibilities.

So we are returning to a world where great power rivalry, it seems, is going to be the order of the day. Perhaps for too long we worried about the War on Terror and now it seems we need to think, as I mentioned earlier, about a "Concert of Europe". And this is from the Financial Times of the 19th of October just a month and a half ago: "The first foreign policy priority of the next American president will be to work out how to avoid direct conflict with China or Russia." Because both countries in different ways now challenge US dominance and the wars between the great powers are once again a possibility. For better or for worse, we are returning to great power balance.

At the same time, we can see there has been a change in power. The old powers in Europe, and indeed in America, are losing their sway in the world. At the same time, we are seeing the rise of new, well, old-new powers. Turkey, of course - closest to home from where we're standing - Turkey, as you recall, was the cornerstone of NATO, and still hopefully is, but from 2002 when the Erdogan government came to power the first act they did was to refuse the United States access to their bases for the invasion of Iraq, and then just this year we've seen the *Gulencoup*. And I believe I'm right in saying, and certainly the BBC says this: 105,000 people have been imprisoned in various purges or thrown out of a job. And this is the largest imprisonment or purge, really, since Hitler, Stalin or perhaps even the French Revolution. They're headed towards a one-party state and it looks like a return to the old Ottomanism. That's Turkey.

India. The fastest-growing economy until the latest catastrophe with of course the withdrawal of all the high-denomination banknotes. According to CNN this morning that means that the main method now of carrying out trade is barter. So it's put them straight back into, well, the Middle Ages.

China. Of course, we've mentioned them already with the rise of their assertiveness in the South China Sea.

And it's Russia that I want to talk about first.



**Plate 5:** *United States vs Russia defence expenditure as a % of GDP*

Let me start by having a look at the various defense expenditures. And if you look on the left side of this particular slide (see *Plate 5*) you can see - that shows the defense expenditure of the United States. And I'm not going to go through the figures in too much detail but you can see that during the Clinton era defense went down, and down, and down. When Bush came to power in 2000, defense started to rise, and it rose fairly continuously during the Bush administration, reached a peak, and then since Obama's come to power it has declined. So you can see the swings and roundabouts of administration expenditure. On the right hand side is Russian expenditure and it's no surprise really that during the period under Yeltsin Russian defense expenditure fell down to the (inaudible) that you can see, and then slowly rose during the period that first of all Mr. Putin was in, and then Mr. Medvedev, and then, of course, Mr. Putin again. But you can see the gradient is nevertheless upwards, ever upwards and recently the gradient is increasing at the rate it's actually going.

Which brings me on to a talk about Russia. And I think it's important to understand just where the Russians stand. Russia has been for a long time defensive both in mind and body, and with some justification.

Russia itself is a product of conquests (see *Plate 6*). And the main conquest that took place that really set the history of Russia in the first instance was the movement of the Vikings into Russia under Rurik which occurred in the period just before 1000 AD. Nobody knows exactly whether the Russians are called "Rus" because of their red hair, but nevertheless it is the Vikings that came and established themselves in Russia and took over and took command of the Slavic nation, the indigenous population, thereby creating a group of aristocrats, the Vikings, and serfs, the Slavs. And it's quite interesting that Yulia Tymoshenko who was until recently Prime Minister of the Ukraine used to dress with her blonde hair as if she looked like a girl from somewhere in the Baltic. She had the plats and looked exactly like some sort of a Viking maiden. And so you can see that amongst the people who have the power in that area nevertheless they hark back to their time as part of a Viking greater power.



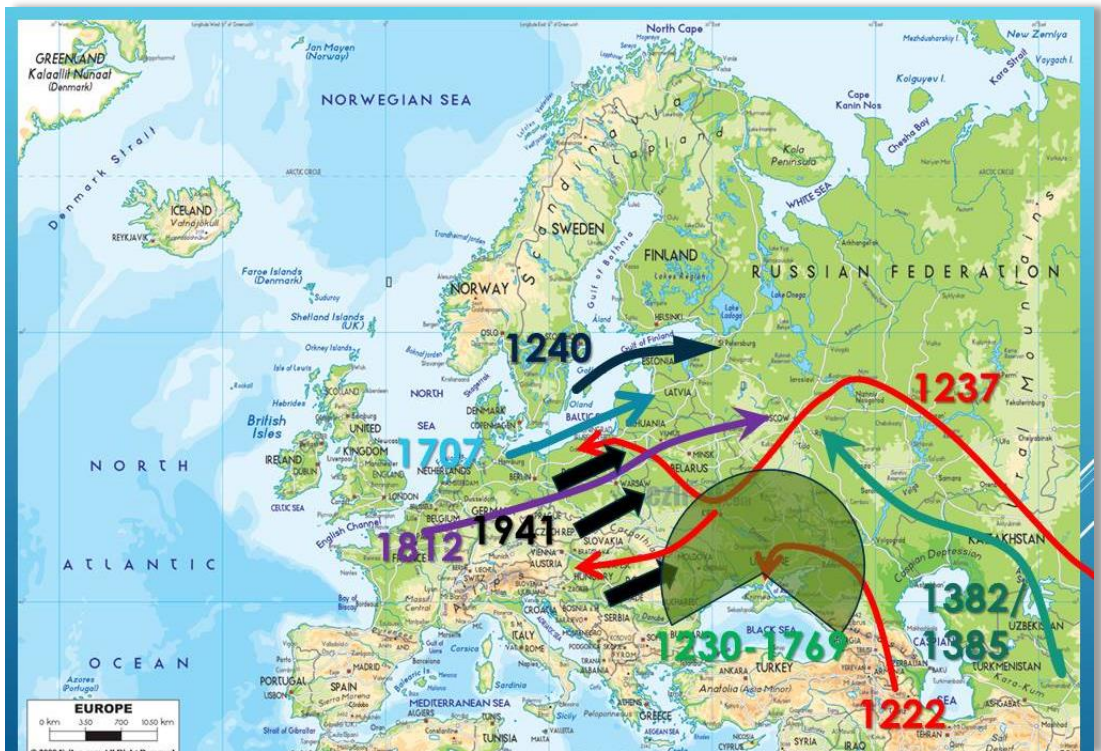


Plate 6: Conquests of Russian lands

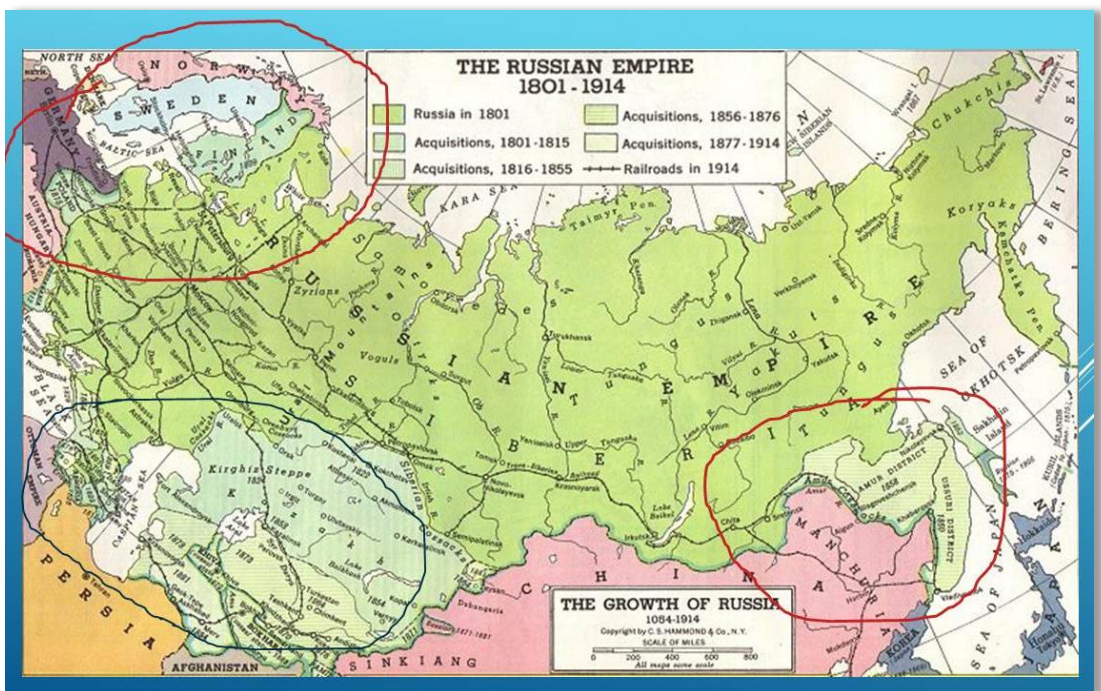


Plate 7: Russia's buffer zones

But what are the other conquests? You'll have to bear with me. I will talk us basically through. From the southeast waves of attacks have come first of all from the Mongols who attacked in 1222, occupied Crimea and beat the Russians in 1223, and then exited back to the Great Khan to tell him about the things that they had seen. They came back in 1237, marched on all the cities of Russia vanquishing Moscow, Ryazan and finally came in 1241 to Kiev. There they divided. The northern group went out and beat the Poles at Legnica and then the southern group went and beat the Hungarians at Mohi. That was the effect of the Mongol armies which then established themselves with the Golden Horde in the middle of Russia.

But if that wasn't bad enough, at the same time that the Golden Horde was establishing themselves in Russia, Russia came under attack from the West. The Teutonic Knights and indeed the Swedish conquerors tried to move in and attack along the line of the Neva and were defeated by a man called Alexander Nevsky and who is very much held in high esteem in Russia at present.

They were then attacked again from the southeast by the forces of Tamerlane who came up in 1382 and 1385, and after that very fortunately, Tamerlane had to go and attack Delhi, conquered Delhi and essentially exterminated all his opponents before defeating the Ottomans. But if that wasn't bad enough, we have to think further forward into the modern era. In 1707, Charles XII of Sweden attacked from the west and would have marched on Moscow but for Peter the Great's scorched earth policy. And literally everything to the west of Moscow was destroyed. There was no food, no shelter and the horses were starting to starve, and so Charles XII had to move south and was eventually beaten by Peter at Poltava.

We, of course, think about Napoleon who invaded 1812 and took Moscow. We then come further forward, of course, into more of the modern era and we think in particular about the Nazi invasion in 1941. If you are a Russian, you find yourself in the center of heartland that people stomp through with very great regularity.

Which means then that the Russian philosophy is to protect that heartland. And the way you do it, of course, is by establishing buffer states. And I've ringed three buffer states: one to the West in the top left-hand corner, the area near the Caspian in the middle, and, of course, the Far East which you can see also ringed (*see Plate 7*).

The Empire came to its greatest extent under Alexander III. And it's quite interesting if you look at this picture by Repin which is I think in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow (*see Plate 8*). Look at Alexander obviously standing in the middle of this group of people, a great bear of a man, but look at the various nationalities that surround him, and it shows the diversity of the Russian population.

So if you then look at what happened in terms of expansion and collapse (*see Plate 9*), you can see that Russia extended itself very much to the west, and to the south, and to the east. But if you look on the right hand side, you can see there the situation for Russia at the end of World War II. Of course, Russia at the time had the Warsaw Pact countries, so looking from the top we look at East Germany, then down through Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, etc. They, of course, also controlled most of what happened in Finland and Russia itself, or the Soviet Socialist Republics included the countries of Latvia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

Well, since the fall of the Berlin Wall, of course the Warsaw Pact has collapsed, so that's the first line of defense gone, and then, since then of course Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have

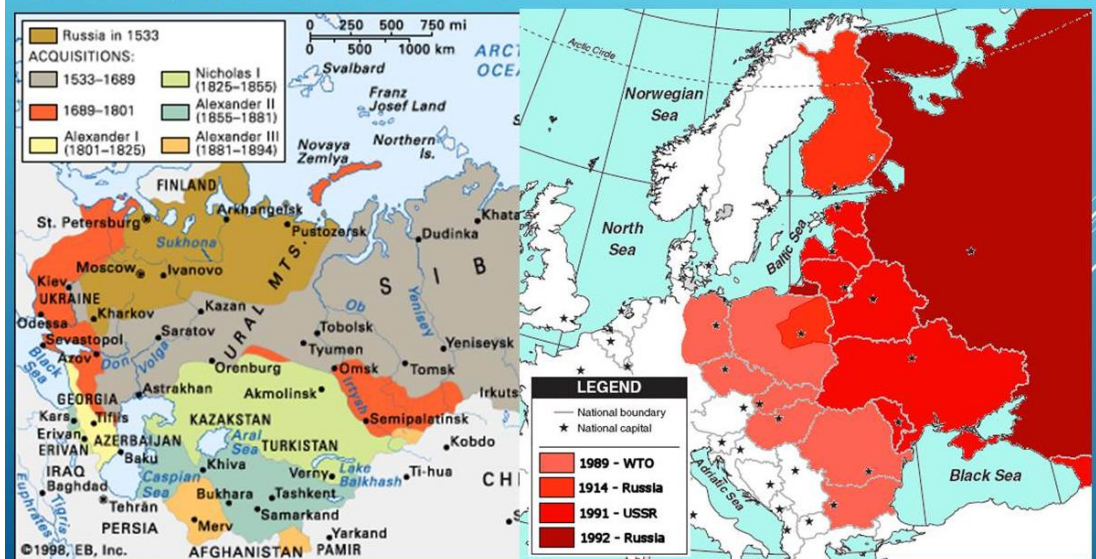




ALEXANDER III

*Plate 8: Alexander III of Russia*

## EXPANSION & COLLAPSE



*Plate 9: Russia's expansion and collapse*

declared independence. Belarus is partially independent, though still sings to a considerable extent to Moscow's tune, and of course we've seen the things in Ukraine going on. Finland meanwhile is now pursuing a very much more European, Scandinavian posture.

So we find ourselves now in a situation where we have Russia concerned that all its buffer states have gone and it looks as though President Putin is trying to reignite the Cold War again and perhaps to try and re-establish the spheres of influence that he used to have. But it's the difference. At the end of the Cold War we had tied the Russians up in spaghetti, and these were the treaties that were there and were very successful.

Let's just go through the treaties. The first one was quite interesting: the conventional forces in Europe treaty. I won't read out all the things on the slide but it limited NATO and the Warsaw Pact to each have the holdings that you can see up there. Well, of course that became irrelevant when the Warsaw Pact collapsed, but the difference was it allowed us to verify force levels in each of the Warsaw Pact and NATO countries. Unfortunately, that treaty has now been derogated from and Russia declared in 2007 that it was suspending all treaty obligations under the conventional forces in Europe treaty.

We then have to look at nuclear weapons (*see Plate 10*). And as you can see there both Russia and the United States have roughly 7,000 nuclear weapons each. You may think that's sort of a fairly irrelevant factor and indeed for any person under the age of 45 who does not remember the Cold War nuclear weapons are seen as arcane and irrelevant. And we end up in a situation when people just ignore nuclear weapons and think there's no reason to worry about them. But I suggest you there is a problem.

Under the new START limits that we have, the new strategic arms reduction treaty limits, these are the limits that are applied between the United States and Russia (*see Plate 11*). So they're limited to 700 deployed missiles and bombers, they're limited to 1550 bombers and re-entry vehicles, but bizarrely each bomber counts as one reentry vehicle. But as we know, each bomber can have several bombs on board, which makes a bit of a nonsense of it. And they're limited as well to the number of launchers of 800. This is all to be achieved by 2018 and will last till 2025.

The next factor that needs to be considered is the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, which required the total elimination of all nuclear and conventional missiles as well as their launchers with ranges of between 500 and 5500 kilometers. That's nuclear and conventional. And this was done because the SS20 shown on the left up there was a rapidly deployable mobile system that could hit anywhere in Europe. In response to that you will recall, under President Reagan – “The Great Communicator” – the ground launch cruise missiles were deployed, some 464 were deployed in Europe. That showed that we could match the Soviets missile for missile and as a result of that people sat down and talked about how to get rid of them and the INF treaty was the result. And so both sorts of weapons have now been outlawed and are not supposed to be deployed.

So this is a situation that we find ourselves in and I want to talk now just a little bit about Vladimir Putin. Let's not forget that he has inherited the situation I've discussed. That is Russia that feels itself vulnerable, a Russia that feels itself likely to be pressurized, one that its borders have retreated and retreated, and it sees itself being threatened from all sides. They also, you will recall, during the period of Yeltsin found themselves in a situation of utter degradation. People begging on the streets. In fact, interesting enough, when I was last in Russia, one of the girls there told me that their grandmother had just died and when they looked inside all her wardrobes and all her cupboards they found bread hoarded in great quantities with jam because she was afraid just such a situation would occur all over again. And so the Russians

have decided, and Putin is the prime example of this: never again will this occur to Holy Mother Russia. And it seems really as though perhaps Vladimir Putin has learnt from Theodore Roosevelt: speak softly, but carry a very big stick.



"The risk of a nuclear conflict may be higher today than at any time since the 1980s,"

warns Andrew Kuchins, a Russia expert at Washington's Georgetown university, in a forthcoming report on us-Russian relations.

"Unfortunately, societies and political establishments ... seem in large part **unaware that this truly existential threat has [returned].**"

**Plate 10:** Estimated nuclear warhead inventory

## Summary of New START limits

Type	Limit
Deployed missiles (ICBM & SLBM) and bombers	700
Deployed warheads (RVs plus bombers)	1,550
Deployed and non-deployed launchers (missile tubes and bombers)	800

But each bomber can carry several weapons!

To Be Achieved By Feb 2018, Till 2025

**Plate 11:** Summary of new START limits

So we come on to Russia's concerns. Well, it must never go through the degradation of the 1990s again nor indeed the various problems that it had during the end of World War II. Russia wants to reassert itself as a great power, and that means having military power first. It needs to have its border security established. That includes places like Chechnya. It needs to have some buffer states established and have spheres of influence that it can control what happens in those buffer states. It needs to make sure that its diaspora which is far and wide is looked after. It wants also to make sure that it's not so dependent on the price of oil and an oil-based economy. And to do all this it's necessary then to control those that would do Russia down: the agitators, the people who are against the freedom that Russia seems to think that it needs. And, of course, this is done very much these days through control of the television. This is a recent change. Businesses are now taken over if they do not do what the party wishes, and one thinks also of people like Boris Nemtsov who died, you remember, in very suspicious circumstances on that bridge just over a year ago. And I foot at the bottom freedom, and freedom, frankly, freedom in the way that we in the West regard it, is very much a low priority.

Well, let's see some of the justifications and some of the concerns that Russia does have. If you look at both the Ukraine and the Baltic States you would have thought, well, maybe Russia does have a point because of course there is a huge Russian diaspora in the Ukraine (*see Plate 12*). But look a little bit more closely and I hope you can see that it's only actually in the Crimea that the Russian population outnumbers the local Ukrainian population. In areas of the Donbas, the Russian population is about a third. So there's some mileage in saying, yes, we have to look after our diaspora, but perhaps invasion is not entirely justified.

And indeed, when we look at the Baltic republics, just have a look: Estonia – 24, let's call it 25%, Latvia – 27%, and Lithuania – about 6%. So they don't really have much of a justification to interfere too much there, except the status of the Russians inside the Baltic republics is somewhat ambiguous. For example, the Russians inside the Baltics can vote in Russian elections and do, and most of them voted for Putin. Interesting. A lot of them do not have voting rights inside the Baltic republics. In Lithuania they were entitled to have full voting rights but then that only amounts to some 6% of the population, and so there are a number of Russians who perceive themselves as disadvantaged.

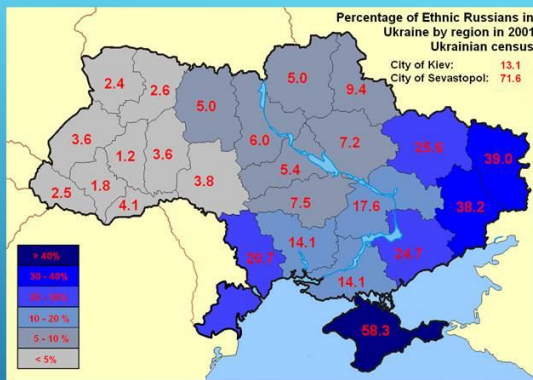
I mentioned the reliance on hydrocarbons and I put this up here to show how it is that when Putin came to power just to the right of that red line on the left slide, of course, the price of oil, and you can see another red line where the price of oil started to rise (*see Plate 13*). And it shows that the oil has been the main driver of Putin's expansion and it's been quite a successful expansion as we saw.

And if we look then at how Russian GDP has increased, and Russian defense spending has increased, you can see they are very much in harmony (*see Plate 14*).

Well, let's talk about some of the possible problem areas.

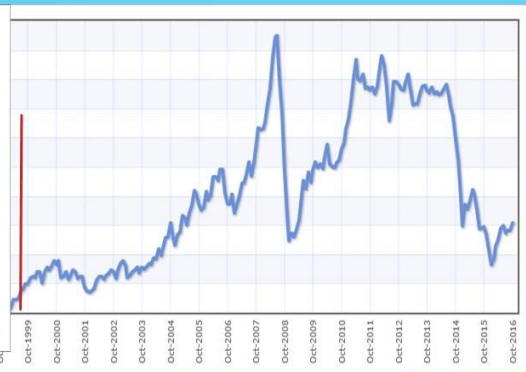
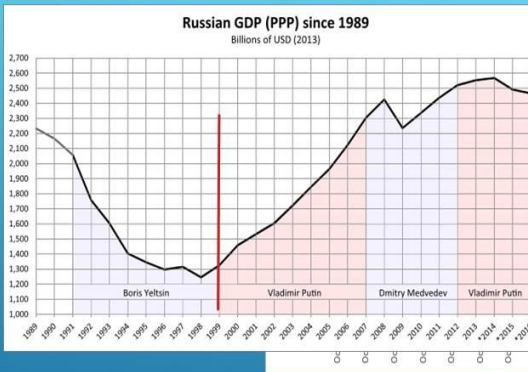
The first one I want to remind you of is the INF treaty which says that every missile system between 500 and 5,000 kilometers is outlawed. We look at this particular missile, the Iskander, which is just being deployed now to the Kaliningrad Oblast right in the middle there between Poland and Lithuania. And you have to wonder why it is that this particular missile has been there. Well, what happened in July 2014? The United States notified Russia that they thought a breach was likely to develop of the INF treaty, that the Russians had had possessed prohibited





## UKRAINE & BALTIC STATES – RUSSIAN DIASPORA

*Plate 12: Russian diaspora in Ukraine and Baltic States*



## RUSSIA'S RELIANCE ON HYDROCARBONS

*Plate 13: Russia's reliance on hydrocarbons*

weapons. The Russians said that the treaty was now unsuitable for Russia and unfair because other countries in Asia already had such weapons. And it's probably likely that what they were referring to as unsuitable was because of the deployment of the Strategic Defense Initiative radars and so forth into Poland and the Eastern European countries (see Plate 15).

Well, so hand in hand with that nuclear missile deployment we should look at other Russian rearmament. And I have to tell you it's proceeding apace. Sputnik magazine has put out a piece



*Plate 14: Russian GDP and defence spending*



*Plate 15: Iskander deployment in the Kaliningrad Oblast*

of paper saying “Russian military exceeds its rearmament plan by seventeen percent,” and that's probably true. Just this month they carried out the first of a series of tests of anti-satellite weapons. Well, that means they'll be able to take out missiles, take out satellites in geostationary orbit, or indeed take out satellites that are (inaudible) for GPS remains to be seen. But it's certain that they see themselves as being very capable and desiring to be able to fight a battle in space.

On the ground we see various other capabilities improving. The armata tank, which is now just being deployed, is one of the most heavily armed tanks and most accurate tanks. It's probably frankly a world-beater compared with all the current systems that are there. It will be extremely difficult to knock out. The vessel on the right is Severodvinsk which is a new nuclear-powered



**Plate 16:** *Armata tank and Severodvinsk nuclear-power attack submarine*



**Plate 17:** *New Russian fighters*

attack submarine which will be capable of carrying cruise missiles, land-attack missiles, anti-ship missiles and various anti-submarine missiles of all varying sorts. It is very quiet and very difficult to detect (*see Plate 16*).

Just in case you thought that Russia was not keeping up with the Americans in terms of stealth, on the left is the new Russian stealth aircraft that is being introduced into service as we speak - it's the Pak FA t-50, and although it may not be quite as stealthy as, say, something like the Raptor or the B2, nevertheless it will be difficult to detect.

The picture I've got on the right is the Su-33. You will recall that the Kuznetsov and the Pyotr Velikiy - Peter the Great - frigates went down through the English Channel just recently and I



*Plate 18: Ukraine crisis: the situation in Crimea*

found it quite interesting that on the Kuznetsov as they progressed along through British territorial waters they had two Su-33s on deck alert all the way along, presumably saying, “We’re ready to take on all (inaudible).” Not exactly the sort of thing you do in friendly territorial waters (see Plate 17).

So we come on then to the Ukraine crisis (see Plate 18). I said to you that 58% of the people in Crimea are natural Russians, and we know that Crimea was taken, and there’s some justification for that. Russia originally took Crimea under Prince Potemkin on the orders, of course, of Catherine the Great. So naturally it was part of Russia. But I ask you this question: is that really the way to take over or take back your original possessions - just to march in and kick the Ukrainians out? One wonders.

And if that isn’t bad enough, there is a nuclear dimension as well and it’s this. Just recently in Moscow and I believe Saint Petersburg as well, civil defense exercises have been carried out where civilians are being sent to their bunkers and told what to do in the case of a chemical or a nuclear attack, thereby creating the mind in the civilian mind that they are possibly under attack already, or likely to come under very soon. And Dmitry Kiselyov, as you can see here, said that any clash of the US and Russian forces in Syria could escalate dangerously, well that’s sure, but then the next line becomes telling: “Impudent behavior by America has a nuclear





Dmitry Kiselyov, Russia's unofficial propaganda chief, warned that any clash of us-Russian forces in Syria could escalate dangerously.

"Impudent behaviour by America," he declared in his current affairs television show, "has a nuclear dimension."

Source: FT - 19 Nov 16

*Plate 19: Dmitry Kiselyov's statement*

dimension" (see Plate 19). Well, that sounds like an official view and is extremely worrying because if we are now moving towards the sort of confrontation that we had in the Cold War, without the treaty obligations and without the treaty effects of the Cold War it becomes very unbounded.

So we come on to this question: is there a risk of miscalculation or are we moving into a compromise?

At the recent meeting, as you recall, of the both houses of parliament in Russia, President Putin on Thursday the 1st December denounced myths about Russian aggression and expressed hope that the incoming US administration would then work with Moscow to fight terrorism. And I wonder if this is an olive branch or this is actually a warning. Well, time alone will tell.

Let me leave that and turn now to Brexit. I've put on here that Brexit is a journey to an unknown destination and you can see, bearing in mind what I said about the post-truth era, some of the messages that were around: "Let's give our NHS the 350 million the EU takes every week." That's absolute baloney. The net cost to the British economy was some 7 billion a year and actually because of Brexit by the next couple of years we will find ourselves 31 billion every year in debt and the overall level of debt will increase in the United Kingdom.

There was a feeling of "let's take back control." This is where it comes back to this idea of freedom. "We don't want any more the people in Europe telling us what to do."

And there's a cartoon you can see on the right there, I think it's Sir David Davis and Boris Johnson on their horses hunting Liam foxes, and I think there's Angela Merkel and Mr. Juncker at the back (see Plate 20).



Plate 20: 'Let's take back control' Brexit slogan

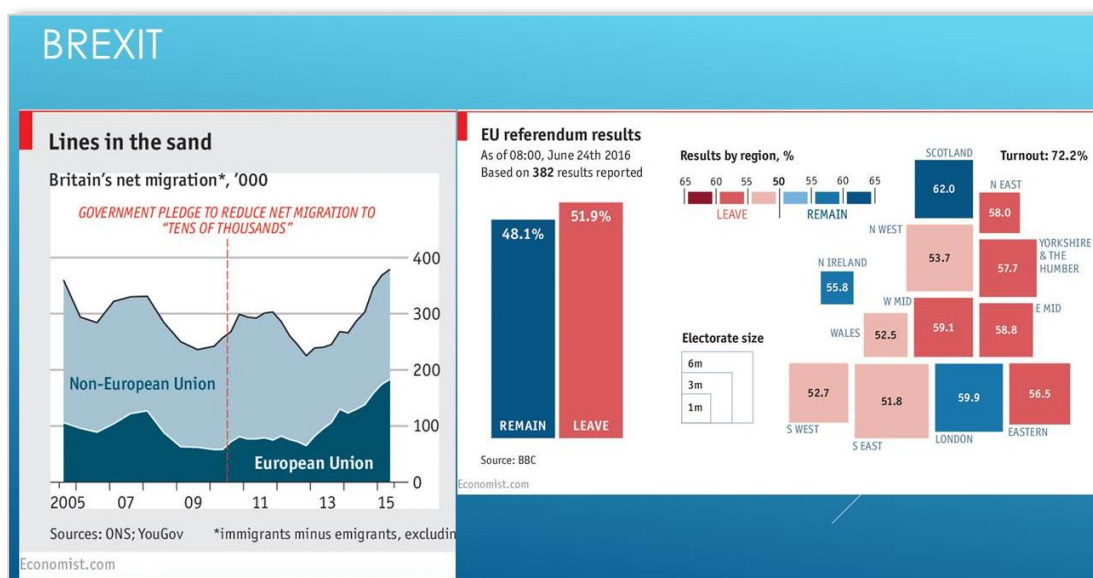


Plate 21: Brexit newspapers' covers

So what do these people, the Brexiters, really want? Well, they seem to divide into three. The utopianists really didn't want Britain to be polluted by foreigners. They wanted British jobs for Brits, the Europeans were getting British benefits and need to be stopped helping themselves to our economy. Britain needed to be great again and we didn't want the ever closer Union. Those were the utopianists. The nationalists on the other hand were somewhere in the middle. They saw that Britain was paying out an awful lot of money (350 million per week it was said), EU law was a burden, we couldn't have our own British sausage anymore, Brussels decides everything we wanted to do, there was a bureaucracy that farmers had to adhere to (they didn't worry

about their crops so much, they had to fill in forms), the euro was supposedly costing the pound its value, and we couldn't form our own separate trade agreements. And then there's the other group, the opportunists, who said that the European Union is probably going to fail. We see what happens with Grexit and how close to the border we came with the Greek economy just recently. There are many more opportunities with China and India, and indeed if you look at the European army, that is going to undermine NATO and we don't want that to happen, we want NATO to remain strong. So there we are, that is what the various Brexiters have said.

And if you look at what the papers (*see Plate 21*) were saying on the day of the actual election, four-fifths of the British press, especially that controlled by Rupert Murdoch, wanted to leave, and look at the headlines: "Vote leave today," "Britain will roar," "Out of the EU," "Your country, your vote," "Independence Day," "Day of reckoning," "Betrayal of Britain." Interestingly, the top left-hand corner, only the Daily Mirror said, "Don't take a leap into the dark." Probably not quite what you would expect.



**Plate 22:** Britain's net migration and EU referendum results

So when we look at the lines in the sand (*see Plate 22*), there is indeed an increase, as you can see, from the left part of the slide in migration. And most of it had come from the newer Eastern European countries, Bulgaria and Hungary. But of course, it has to be pointed out that if that was to reduce because there is still a demand for cheap labor, then obviously the non-European immigrants will have to increase.

I've stopped there, and I'm not going to dwell on it, the way in which Britain voted. Interesting enough, the only real blue vote came from London and Scotland, and so that was the grouping that voted to remain. The rest pretty much overwhelmingly one way or another voted against.

The Economist did a very interesting study and I might look at this in too much detail (*see Plate 23*). Essentially, it runs like this: the more degrees you have the more likely you are to remain; the fewer degrees you have the more likely you are to vote to go. And age became another factor. The older you were the more likely you were to vote to go, and the younger the



## EU referendum results by demographics

Remain vote % by counting area

The image contains two scatter plots side-by-side. Both plots have a y-axis representing the percentage of 'REMAIN' votes, ranging from 20 to 100. The x-axis of the left plot represents the percentage of the population with a degree, ranging from 0 to 60. The x-axis of the right plot represents the percentage of the population aged 65+, ranging from 0 to 40. In both plots, blue dots represent 'REMAIN' votes and red dots represent 'LEAVE' votes. A red regression line is shown in each plot, indicating a negative correlation. A red arrow labeled 'Austerity' points from the left plot to the right plot.

More degree educated →

REMAIN

LEAVE

Austerity

More 65+ year-olds →

Sources: BBC; 2011 Census, UK Data Service

Economist.com

**Free GIANT map of Britain inside tomorrow**

**Daily Mail**

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 4, 2016      65p

**Fury over 'out of touch' judges who defied 17.4m Brexit voters and could trigger constitutional crisis**

**ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE**

By James Mackay, Political Editor

SENES have again been asked to question whether the ruling that outlawed Remain supporters in Parliament should be allowed to frustrate the overwhelming verdict of the British public.

The Lord Chief Justice and six senior judges have been asked to question whether the ruling that outlawed Remain supporters in Parliament should be allowed to frustrate the overwhelming verdict of the British public.

**The Daily Telegraph**

Thursday 17 September 2017      60p

**Best analysis of the Brexit constitutional crisis**

Philip Johnston, Fraser Nelson, Andrew Evans, Pithard, Adet Samuel, Daniel Hannan, Nigel Farage, Ian Duncan Smith and Jacob Rees-Mogg

**The judges versus the people**

By Philip Johnston, Fraser Nelson, Andrew Evans, Pithard, Adet Samuel, Daniel Hannan, Nigel Farage, Ian Duncan Smith and Jacob Rees-Mogg

**Voters aren't going to let this incredible arrogance lie**

By Philip Johnston, Fraser Nelson, Andrew Evans, Pithard, Adet Samuel, Daniel Hannan, Nigel Farage, Ian Duncan Smith and Jacob Rees-Mogg

**Chopard**

236

What was the effect of the Brexit? Well, the first thing is there was a decision over whether or not Brexit could be implemented as it currently stands. And it was put before the law courts, the High Court, and you can see the three judges that were there: there's the Lord Chief Justice of the United Kingdom – the Master of the Rolls – and another very senior legal advocate (see *Plate 24*). They said that actually there were inherent rights in the Treaty of Rome given to individuals that cannot be removed by royal prerogative. And it must go before Parliament, and Parliament must decide. Well, you can see what was branded there on the day this decision was made. The Daily Mail said that the judges were the enemies of the people. Well, if you're saying that the judges are the enemies of the people, one wonders who is not enemy of the people. And it seems to me that is a disgraceful thing to say. Well, if we now look at what immediately happened following the vote, and you can see it's obviously the pound against the dollar, and you can see on the day after the vote the pound fell by some 10% virtually the next day. There's another drop off you can see, about three quarters of the way along, following the speech by Theresa May at the Conservative Party conference saying that probably there would be, or hinting there would be a hard Brexit. The net effect is that the pound has fallen by some 18% over the period and is in a parlous situation.

Well, what has been the economic effect? Well, the pound, as I said, is already 18% down and probably will swing wildly over the next few months – every time a minister says something that is ill-advised the pound will go up or down in reflection (see *Plate 25*). The same time, of course, oil has gone up and you'll know that it was assumed to be about 45 dollars a barrel by 2020 and already this assessment was punched through following the last week's OPEC meeting declaration of 50 dollars a barrel.



*Plate 25: British Pound's decrease in reaction to Brexit*

In addition to that, many of the businesses in Britain have gone to the government and said we need assurances that we will be better placed to stay in Britain rather than move our factories across to somewhere in Europe. And those assurances have been given, and NISSAN has decided to stay, and of course the other businesses will be seeking similar assurances. It is not known quite what those entail. At the same time, many of the farmers will be losing their casual labor from places like Bulgaria and so forth. And if alternative sources are not found for the labor, then of course the crops themselves will not be picked. So we'll be eating, ladies and gentlemen, no strawberries this year.

## Britain's 'withered' forces not fit to repel all-out attack

Former military chief Sir Richard Barrons issues stark warning over 'skinning' budgets



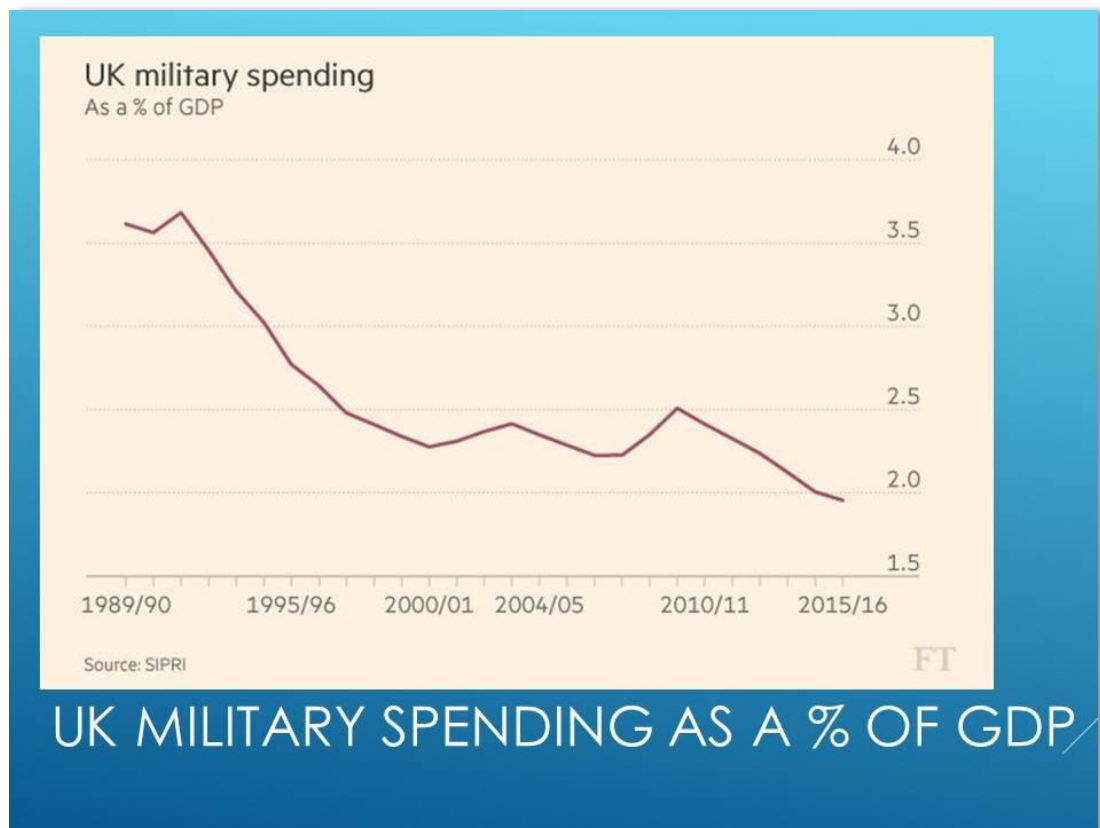
General Sir Richard Barrons, former head of the country's Joint Forces Command, expressed extreme concern about Britain's military capabilities © FT montage; MoD

**Plate 26:** Media report of Sir Richard Barrons's warning regarding Britain's military capability

Well, let me turn now to defense and look at the effect on defense. This chap is General Sir Richard Barrons (see Plate 26), he was the commander-in-chief of the Joint Forces Command and he produced a report which went to the secretary of state, which was then published in the papers completely illegally. And he said that "Although we have a reasonable capability in the War on Terror, should we have to match against a peer competitor, in other words Russia, or to balance it in any way, then the forces will wither to such an extent they could not repel an all-out attack." Now, you'd expect that a British public would say this is outrageous, we are paying

all this money for defense. But actually there was virtually nothing at all - no impact, no concern, and it just went away.

British defense spending, you can see from this graph (see Plate 27), was already a long way down and at 2% there's going to be a considerable pressure on British defense spending to be able to meet up to the commitments that we've already made.



**Plate 27:** UK military spending as a % of GDP

Well, the first impact on British defense is the effect of the falling pound. If the pound falls by 18% then of course the cost of all the things that one buys in the United States go up by 18%. We're committed to buying twenty four of the F-35s, hopefully going to be buying forty eight before too long. We're committed to buying nine P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft - all of them have gone up by 18%. And though there may be some hedging, it's difficult to see just how this can be afforded. In addition to that, Britain is due to have an Apache replacement. It's buying itself a new strategic nuclear ballistic missile defense. Many of the Typhoons are bought on the continent. We are buying predators and we're buying weapons. It is difficult to see how all this can be afforded.

And then we come on to this issue. As Britain pulls out of Europe, we essentially give a free rein to, well, the Germans in particular. And Ursula von der Leyen, the German defense minister, have said, it is about time that Europe now build up a European army. And for Britain this will be disastrous because if a European army is built up, that will give them an excuse perhaps not

to increase their defense expenditure, and also it'll make people realize, well, if there's a European army, what is the value of NATO? So Britain in particular will find itself neither protected by NATO, nor with the seat at the top table to decide what happens with the European army.

Well, this leaves us in Britain a bit of a cleft stick because whatever Theresa May does in the near future we are going to have a problem. If there's a soft Brexit, which of course many people want, certainly all those that voted in terms of remain, then of course EU immigration will continue and UKIP will have a cause to fight against. If we go for a hard Brexit, then, of course, and we may actually just be kicked out, we can't visualize any conditions at all that will require economic austerity for probably 10 years. Whichever way it goes, I confidently predict that when the conditions are put before the British people, there will be a vote of no confidence at some time in 2019.

Now, it was thought until just recently that Theresa May would be well advised to call a snap general election sometime during the early part of next year. But the defeat of Zac Goldsmith at Richmond Park that occurred just last week where his 23,000 majority was turned into a defeat of two thousand and the seat passed to liberal democrats, largely because Zac Goldsmith is a Brexiter, and most of his constituents are not, rather signals such a reason she goes to the country, those that voted "remain" will probably turf her out. So we then end up in a situation that she is in a real cleft stick. Is she going to go to the country early or hope that she can negotiate her way out? And indeed we then come to the problem. Politically, if we do depart and there is no source of labor, where will the immigrants come from? Will they come from the Commonwealth?

So we come to a Brexit. And I have to tell you that right now it is virtually the sole British issue. There is virtually nothing in the British papers apart from Brexit. Brexit for, Brexit against. And this week in particular the Supreme Court from today is ruling whether Parliament is rightful authority to trigger Article 50. Can royal prerogative be used to take away the inherent right of UK citizens under Article 50? Does Article 50 also trigger withdrawal from the exclusive European Economic Area? And that is another question. What will happen over immigration? Will that be stopped or will we accept it? Once the negotiations are complete, who then will say that these negotiations and these conditions are acceptable? Will it be the government? Yes, that's fine. Will it be Parliament, or will there have to be another plebiscite? And then, of course, we come finally to the status of Scotland and indeed Northern Ireland close the plebiscite. A post-Brexit, will there still be a United Kingdom at 2019 and beyond?

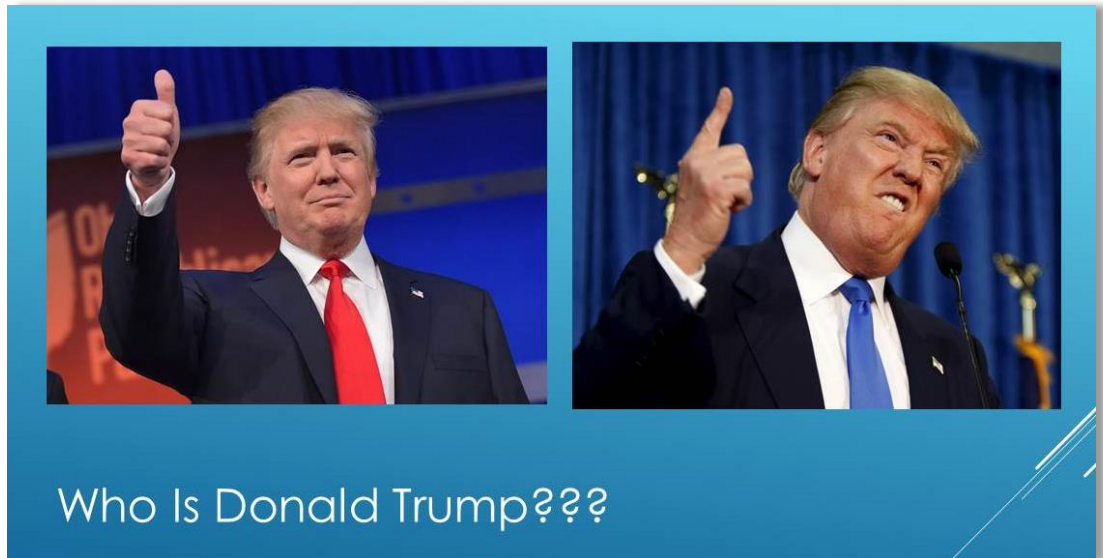
Well, enough of that. Let me turn now to the situation in America.

And the first question I've got for you is this: who really is Mr. Donald Trump? Is he the man on the left, the compromise man, or is he the hard man on the right (*see Plate 28*)? And I should mention to you that the first one of the first people to congratulate him on his victory was Vladimir Putin.

Foreign policy. Well, it's difficult to work out what the foreign policy is. This is culled from what has been said and what is believed. It's believed that Donald Trump sees the world as chaotic and threatening. He has said he will put America first, he'll reduce the US role in the world, he'll stop being the world's policeman. He's happy to use force, provided it's in the United States' interests. That means it's not necessarily in the interests of everybody else, and



where everybody else's interest is concerned, he won't necessarily commit US forces. He wants to diminish the commitment to the alliances. He's not committed to giving a nuclear guarantee to Europe or the Far East and he said, therefore, that he does not see any difficulty with Japan for example having a bomb or Saudi Arabia manufacturing a bomb. He wants to pull out of adverse trade agreements, that's WTO, NAFTA, Trans-Pacific Partnership, and even the Paris Agreement on climate change. Well, we'll see.



*Plate 28: Donald Trump*

On immigration, he's already said that he wants to reduce immigration so he can control the Muslim immigration, and he said that Mexicans will not be allowed to cross, and of course he's committed to building a wall and imposing tariffs.

As far as Russia is concerned, he says his foreign policy is based on mutual respect and he said he is entirely happy over Syria to align with Russia's Syrian ally. Ok, so that obviously indicates a change, but maybe by the time he comes to power that situation will be resolved anyway. On Ukraine and Crimea, is he going to continue with economic sanctions? Well, that he hasn't said anything about. What he has said however is he tends to renegotiate the Iranian bomb treaty. But then I suggest to you that if he does or if he repudiates the Iranian bomb treaty, all that will happen is Iran will just build a bomb all the quicker. Is he likely to agree to the spheres of influence that Vladimir Putin wants, certainly in the eastern part of Europe, or indeed in the Middle East? Is he going to negotiate this by a series of deals?

Let me come on to China. He's already said that he might impose something like a 35% tariff on Mexican stuff, on Mexican imports that come in. Would he propose the same sort of thing on Chinese imports? Because if that happens, then I suggest that Chinese economy will probably collapse, and as a result of that world trade would go into difficulties. Then we come on to the South China Sea issue. Well, as you know he spoke to the president of Taiwan recently and that of course will give him all sorts of grief with China in the near future. And we shouldn't forget of course that his country is heavily in hock to China anyway.

On the F-35, the F-35 future is in some doubt. Not only would the United States find it extremely difficult if the F-35 were not to go ahead, but also all the European nations that have contracted to buy it. And then I've said at the bottom, as I just mentioned, that we have a situation where Iran would just make the bomb if that were the case.

What he has said though as far as Europe is concerned is that everybody must pay more in Europe. And the line I've put vertically down there is the 2% line you can see, just those nations that are paying enough (*see Plate 29*). And United States, it should be said, pays about 70% of the total cost of NATO at present and although the percentage of GDP looks impressive for places like Greece, of course Greece doesn't have much of a GDP, so its actual expenditure is not that high. But then you look at the top and you look at Germany at 1.38%, and you realize that some nations are not frankly pulling their weight.

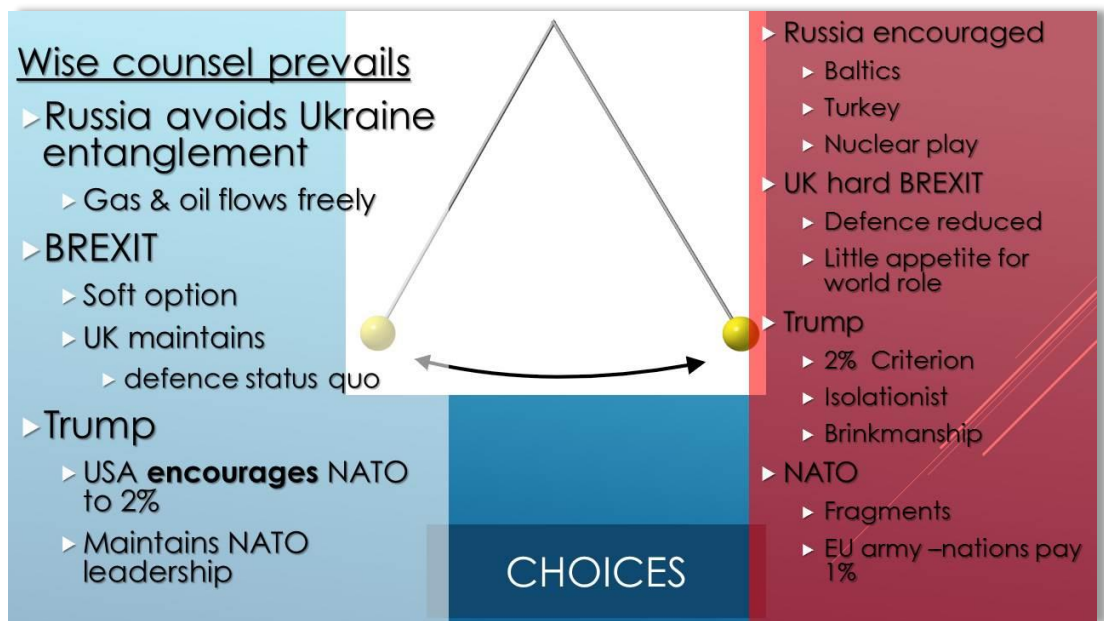


**Plate 29:** *Selected NATO countries' military expenditure as a % of GDP*

What would Mr. Trump do? And one suggestion is, perhaps he would say to places like Hungary, Belgium, Germany, Spain and the places from the top, "We will only guarantee Article 5 to you provided and when you actually achieve the 2% limit." And then, of course, we have the whole issue of the European army and whether that's an alternative to NATO.

So where do we sit? We sit really at a pendulum (*see Plate 30*). You know, on the one hand wise counsel may prevail, Russia could avoid involvement in Ukraine and keep well clear of that, and gas and oil could flow freely, Brexit could go for the soft option, the UK maintains its defense status quo and finds some more money, Mr. Trump encourages NATO to come up to the 2% over a period of time and maintains his interest in the NATO leadership. Of course, at the other end Russia could find that it's encouraged by what's going on and decide to put more pressure on the Baltics. Turkey, already starting to make overtures to Russia, could become less and less of a NATO player. There could be a nuclear play, I don't mean nuclear explosions, but I do

mean nuclear threats and nuclear coercion, the UK could be into a hard Brexit, defense would be cut back still further and I've already said that Britain already has virtually no appetite for anything but Brexit, UK could largely withdraw and retreat back into its little island fortress. Is Trump going to apply a 2% hard criterion, become isolationist and go for brinksmanship? And what will happen to NATO? Will NATO just fragment? Will the European Union just fragment? Will there be a European army, and will it actually be funded at a 1% rather than the 2% percent?



*Plate 30: Balance of power - future scenarios*

But in all this we can't forget that we have cause and effect. Every single effect that takes place will rebound across the world. And it's not just like a pendulum, it's more like these swinging balls - every movement of the red ball will impact on China, India, Turkey in the Middle East and then bounce back onto the red ball.

Ladies and gentlemen, that completes my presentation. Thank you very much.



---

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION\*

---

Asaf Agmon\*\*

5-7 December 2016

### **New Developments in Air Power in Syria and the Eastern Mediterranean**

*General Agmon reviews Russian involvement in Syria and the tactics used in the air war against ISIS and the enemies of the Assad regime. He examines the long-term role of Russia in the Eastern Mediterranean, the effects of the Syrian war on Lebanon, and the response of Israel.*

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** We'd like to welcome our friends from Israel and particularly Brigadier General Asaf Agmon. General, welcome. I understand you'll be talking to us about new developments in air power in Syria and the Eastern Mediterranean. Please go ahead.

**Asaf Agmon (A.A):** Thank you, thank you. It's a great honor for me to be part of this important conference and to share with you some facts about my thoughts regarding the use of air power in the last years in Syria and the lessons and applications we can learn to the future of air power. We can clearly see the role of using a power in the conflict in Syria especially after the intervention of Russia in this conflict. Assad regime was in a very difficult situation when the Russians sent their air force power to Syria almost two years ago. The Russian air strike completely changed the balance of power in Syria and today Assad stayed in the best position military-wise since the beginning of the uprising against him almost five years ago. So let us examine how comes that a limited use of air power have been causing such a huge change in the balance of power in a conflict like this.

We should remember the forces against Assad regime are based on unorganized forces with very limited access to more than very basic weapon systems without any support of air power or air defense capabilities at all. More than that, military power of Assad opponent is separated in a wide variety of different organizations with no joint command coordination structure and many times with even conflict of interests and goals. All of these make using of airpower very, very attractive. No air defense, no problem to gain air superiority, no problem to gain air dominance over any operational area in the battlefield. Actual, an ideal condition for a decisive air operation that will achieve the military goals of the side using it. Still we need to face the

\* Transcript. Part of the EMF conference "The Latest Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean," 5-7 December 2016.

\*\* Brigadier General, Israel Defense Forces (Retired)

problem of the following: use of empire in an urbane area, using massive force in a very populated area, many what we call not involved casualties and few more moral and international law issues. But these issues I will leave for the discussion later as they related to moral aspects and personal value of each of us. So let's see what are the missions the Syrians Air Force is doing.

First of all air-to-ground strikes mainly versus populated areas. Intelligence missions, mainly using visual sensors, ground force movement and close air support to the ground forces. The Syrian air force include the helicopter Mi-8, -17 and -25, the transport airplane albatross and the fighter plane like the mig-21 mainly, the MIG 23 p.m., the Sohoi 22, Sohoi 24 and few mig-29, mainly for patrols. We can see the involving use of drones by the Syrians for attack use by modifying intelligence drones into cruise missile style guided by GPS. The armament that they are using are mainly general air-to-ground bombs, orchids, guns, fuel and (inaudible) bombs, cluster bombs and chemicals bombs. Generally speaking they suffer a great lack of armament. When we look on the way they operate the Air Force we see that they totally neglected the interception capabilities and any other air superiority capabilities. And they are using all the system and any platform that they have for ground attack missions. Actually we can see very few training missions and even no operational missions to protect of airspace by alert or scrambling the air defense airplanes. Most of the armament and missiles were converted for ground attack capabilities.

Looking on their infrastructure we see that many of the air bases were attacked and even captured by the rebels. More than fifty planes lost by enemy ground defense system, mainly guns made portable anti-air missiles, an accident caused by technical problems and due to the fact that they have a lack of spare parts and poor maintenance services. Couple of tens of planes were destroyed on the ground, mainly the helicopters MIG 8 and 17 and the others. A big problem they are facing is the lack of pilots. They have all the Air Force about 120 pilots at all. To summarize the data till now we can see that we have an air power with almost no air superiority capabilities, very low air-to-air capability, and a decent ground attack capabilities to achieve an effective ground support and mainly ineffective infrastructure and environmental damage to the opponent, mainly killing as many as they can without paying too much attention to collateral damage and so on.

When we look on the Russian air power use in this conflict, we can see that they use the same concept, but with more sophisticated platform and better equipment, they cannot allow any unfriendly forces to interrupt the operation, so they brought with them the most advanced air defense ground system like the S300 and S400. So when we conclude all of this, we see that the concept of using air power is limited. Mostly it won't be available to many countries like the Europeans, NATO, USA and Israel of course, as it neglected the public opinion aspects, international law and moral issues. More than that, any intervention by a (inaudible) airpower opponent will stop this operation with the collapsing of all this military concept and will put the side using this concept in a position of decisive defeat.

I will leave the rest to the discussion and will be more than happy to take any questions should you have, and thank you for your attention.

**C.P.:** Thank you very much. Just to start you off though, it appears that the strategy that the Russians together with the Syrians have developed is that of area denial. It's a combination, I understand, that the Syrians don't have the capability for air dominance, but they certainly

together with the Russians and their anti-aircraft missiles, etc., have the ability to create area-denial situations. How do you see that developing? Will that be limited to small areas or can you envision a broader area denial situation like in the Ukraine?

**A.A.:** If we are talking about Syria, actually they can decide where to have dominance. And actually, what they are doing, they are considering with the operation of the area which they have a conflict with their opponent, with the rebels. So if it's (inaudible), they will concentrate in this area, if the area that they would like to keep the corridor to the north part of Syria, they will do it in this area. They can use limited forces to achieve it because they don't have any opponent. So if you take it to Ukraine and you have an opponent of ground defense forces or even another air power, you will not be able to do this kind of operation in the same way. Because, actually, there are the only ones that fly the sky, they don't have any opponent, and according to international sources, what we call, whenever somebody attacks anything in Syria he faces no objection at all. So if you take this concept to an area where there is an opponent with air capability or air defense capability, you won't be able to do such operation. And even if you have a very limited air defense capability, like man-portable ground missile, you won't be able to do all the very effective operations that they are doing with the helicopters, dropping a barrel of fuel and air a kind of bombs that cause a lot of damage on populated area, because you will be shut down immediately. To do this kind of operation you have to fly very low, very slow, is the best target for any ground defense missile they have. So I don't see that this concept of operation can be taken to any other places beside a place that there is no air power existing at all, that they opposed to (inaudible) operations.

**Andrew Lambert (A.L.):** General, if I may, I'd like to ask you from an Israeli perspective what you see the role of the Peter the Great and the Kuznetsov operating in that area?

**A.A.:** Oh, this is a very complicated question. As long as the Russian air power is involved in what is happening in Syria I don't think that beside looking and learning for the operation about Russian air system capabilities we have anything to do. So far, we have a coordination with the Russian air force that is in this area, mainly to prevent any accidents or any unintended collisions between our forces, so we have a cooperation, coordination about where they fly and when and where we are flying.

If you ask my personal view, I'm not very happy with this involvement. I think that we, and I include 'we' as NATO, the Western European countries and the United States, leaving the airspace to the Russians to control, it's not something that supports the Western world interest. Now, we are in a position that the Russians are here and they will protect their interest now, and if you want to prevent them from doing so you are in danger of getting in a very large, or very complicated conflict, which none of us would like to have.

**A.L.:** I think your latter comment is the most telling and it's really this that is inviting people to escalate. If you start attacking the Kuznetsov, or indeed Peter the Great - and let's not forget they are the flagship of the northern fleet - you are inevitably going to escalate the conflict, and no one frankly is going to be prepared to do that, for what after all are very limited aims. So I think it's a bit of a power play. We've got our forces there, we've got S300s, S400s, anybody who gets airborne from your side will be inside our surface to air missile zone, this is our area, you better keep out. Do you think that's the message they're trying to get across?

**A.A.:** I agree with you and you have to take into consideration also all of the (inaudible) aspects

that for a long time Syria is trying to support the Hezbollah with very sophisticated weapon systems and we declared that if anyone tries to do something like this we will try to deny it because then it will change all the balance of power between us and Lebanon, and especially with the great power of the Hezbollah in Lebanon. Bringing in the S300s and S400 and the Russian plane flying in this region make our mission much more complicated. But so far including what is published in the open media, lately last week our prime minister did declare that the presence of the Russians in the area will not prevent us from continuing to stop anyone trying to offer moving or transporting such weapon systems to Hezbollah.

You have also to take into consideration that the Syrian Air Force is using chemical weapons, the Syrian forces are trying to smuggle chemical weapons to Hezbollah and to other extreme organizations. And this is something that all of us should be very worried about. Because if they reach Lebanon, it doesn't mean that they will go from Lebanon to Israel, but they can go to any terrorist activities all over Europe or even further than that.

**Klearchos Kyriakides (K.K.):** First of all general thank you for your presentation. As the Director of ERPIC's Rule of Law and Democracy Program I have a question that flows from what you've just commented about chemical weapons. To what extent, if at all, are the Syrians and the Russians complying with their duties under international law generally, and international humanitarian law in particular?

**A.A.:** I cannot say anything about the Russian involvement. I can say that according to open evidence that all of us could see, I cannot talk about non-open or classified evidence, we know that the Syrians are using in some cases a chemical weapon. And you can see the tragedy of the casualties that suffer from this kind of attacks. And you can imagine that they still have some chemical bombs and weapons in their warehouses, and they will decide when and how to use it. So far, they didn't show any kind of, you know, moral resistant or even obeying the international law to use the chemical weapons and it always goes against civilians which makes it even worse.

**C.P.:** In your view and the Israeli view, with what long-term objectives of the Russians and the Syrians can Israel live with? And I'll be more specific. It seems that, as I was alluding to before, the Russians are helping the Syrians and the Iranians - by the way they have ground forces and proxies, Hezbollah, etc. - in the creation of certain air dominance area denial strongholds. Does that suggest that there will be a more or less permanent Russian presence in Syria and the Eastern Mediterranean? And do you think Israel could live with that?

**A.A.:** First of all, yes, Israel can live with that. Will Israel be happy about it? There is different views. Few people think that the existence of the Russians in the Middle East will stabilize the Middle East, will not allow extreme forces or extreme movement to do unplanned or uncontrolled military, so they will keep under control the Hezbollah and the Syrians, and this will control or stabilize the area. Other people like me, I don't think it's good for Israel, I don't think it's good for the Western world, because we have to remember that the main power in the Middle East and the one that is all the time working to destabilize the Middle East for their purposes is Iran. And Iran is the main supporter of Assad regime. And now, in our case in Israel it was always what we call the root of the evil, what we call a different name, it was Iran, Assad, Hezbollah, and Hamas in Gaza. And this was the "chain of evil", what we call. And it was on the verge of collapsing. If Assad regime collapsed, this chain was destroyed, then Hezbollah would lose the main base of power, the main base of military support and military weapon system and



their situation would be automatically changed. When the Russians get in, this situation completely changed. Now, Assad is in a relatively stable position, Hezbollah's popularity in Lebanon is suffering because their people are being killed in a foreign country. Now, they are in a better position, and the ones that gain the most out of this conflict is Iran, because Iran is now considered in the Arab world and in the other countries of the region as a local super power, original super power, that you can rely upon, and upon their support with weapon system, with soldiers, with money, with all what you need. While other countries like Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and the other moderate countries are battling to get support from the main supporter - the USA. So all these for the long run is not for the good in my point of view. The only question is how long the Russians will stay here and how long this will serve the Russian interest, which I don't have the answer for it. But in not very dramatic changes the position of the Russians in this area can be very similar to what happened to them in Afghanistan and in other countries, because after all, when you look on the demographic and geographic facts about Syria, Assad regime is based on 12% of the Syrian population. So I don't see that before the long run he will survive. And if the Russians will keep backing him till the end, they face a big problem, a big problem. Because you cannot base on something that is so narrow and so unstable. But it can take few or even more than few years that this would happen.

**A.L.:** Can I ask you General about your view of air power against ISIS and why it is that we've been attacking ISIS on and off now for some two years, and yet we seem not to have the end in sight?

**A.A.:** I will go first to my personal view before my view as a general. My view is that we took, I hope, now it's less than before, we took ISIS more seriously than what we should. ISIS got their position in the international media and international public opinion by using all their very cruel and dramatic event, using the Western media and the digital media in the best way that they can. But when you judge it military-wise, how many soldiers they have? What is their weapon system? This is not something that threatens the Western world and that threatens the Mediterranean countries. And it's a terrible organization, and we suffer from terror in the past and we will suffer from terror in the future. It's like other criminal aspects that we have in our modern life, we will have to face it in the future for many years, and we have to do it smart. But ISIS is not... The concept if ISIS will establish the new Islamic country all over the Middle East, I think it's not based on the real facts of what they are capable to do. Also our country, for example, which I see differently from the general view, we were so frightened that ISIS or Jabhat al-Nusra or something similar, or daughter of ISIS will take control of Syria, that we decided we are not intervening by any mean in what's happening in Syria, because we don't know if Assad is not better than the alternative. I don't think so. I don't see any real threat or existential threat by Jabhat al-Nusra or ISIS, even if they will be on the border of Israel. They will be a terrorist threat, there will be some things that we would have to deal with, but it's not something that you compare to what we had before, when our major enemy that threaten our country was Syria, the country led by Assad. In '73, Syrian forces crossed the border and was threatening the security of Israel. Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIS have no capability to do so, and they will not have the capability do so in near future that I can see. So, if you judge things by military effects and by not being frightened by terror activities, then you can come to the conclusions that you have to deal with ISIS as a terror group, and something that you have to take into consideration, but not as something that you will have to take all your military effort just to face this kind of threat.

**K.K.:** If I may have a follow-up question to what you've just said. What we've been seeing in Europe over the last two and a half years or so since the establishment of the so-called Islamic state, ISIS, ISIL, whatever you call it, what we've seen in Europe is a trickle, or an outflow of people who were born and brought up in France, Germany, the United Kingdom and elsewhere towards Syria and Iraq, and other parts of the Middle East. And that's a relatively new phenomenon, we haven't seen it in previous decades, and now we are seeing this outflow of people. And some of them, of course, are staying in Syria or Iraq, and others are coming back into Europe. My question really concerns Israel. Have you in Israel seen a similar outflow of Israeli-born people who are sympathetic to ISIS and have left Israel to go and fight in Syria or Iraq?

**A.A.:** This is a very good question I think, because we have very few incidents - I can count it on two hands - of Arab Israelis that went to ISIS, or Syria, Turkey and Syria, very, very few. And you can imagine that some of our Arab Israelis are in favor of the forces fight against Israel and support it, you know, our enemies, but very, very few of them took this extreme move of trying to join ISIS. You know, although we are in conflict with the Palestinians and the Arab Israelis our consider themselves to be Palestinians, in every survey that you are doing, you find the huge majority, more than 92% of them when they were asked, "If there will be a Palestinian state, would you move to the Palestinian state or stay as an Israeli citizen?" more than 92% of them said that would stay as Israeli citizens. Although they are here a minority, a minority thinks they are deprived of some of their rights, but overall they have full identifications and rights as Israelis. And they made their fight for equal rights and all the other ideas that they would like to have as Israelis. So really there have been very, very few that went to join ISIS. And when something like this happens, in most cases their families notify the authorities about it and they try every way to bring them back to Israel.

**K.K.:** Can you just maybe address one related question. Why have so few people gone to fight for the jihadists from Israel? I don't know enough, but I'd be interested to know. Is there anything to do with the culture, is it anything to do with the Israeli integration policies, is it anything to do with your democratic culture? What is it that has prevented people going in any large numbers?

**A.A.:** I think that they are raised in a society that the values of ISIS is completely unacceptable. It doesn't mean that even if you are a minority, and you are thinking that you don't get the equal rights of the majority and you have many things that you are angry about, still, in our society and the children raised in our society, to take somebody and cut his throat is unacceptable. It's unacceptable even to very religious Muslims, it's not according to the Muslims values, and it's not according to all the other values that they are living by. Many of them are ashamed of what they see is done by ISIS. They think that this degrades their reputation in the general society, they don't want to be identified as somebody that agrees with what ISIS is doing. So when you have some incident that rocket is fired by Gaza, or by Hezbollah, Hamas and Hezbollah, sometimes you see a few Arabs, Israeli Arabs happy about it because it seems that it serves their struggle to have their broader Palestinian independent state. But when they say, when they see an incident made by ISIS, I don't see anybody that is happy about it and identify himself of supporting such things. On the contrary.

**C.P.:** General, can I bring you back to Syria. What would you see the final solution of Syria? A partition perhaps, a federation? What's your sense of where the war in Syria, what it would result in? As the matter of fact, Syria is not existing anymore. It is not a country anymore. It's a

kind of few tribes, if you want to call them, separated and not under one control. I don't see any option that in the near future Syria will come back to something even close to what it was. And the only question is, should Assad and the Alawis survive? There are many options that if the Assad regime will collapse, there will be a disaster, and the Sunnis that are the majority will kill and will massacre the Alawis, which I hope will not happen. And the only other option is that there will be few provinces of separate small countries, but it's very complicated, because the hatred and the conflict of interest between all these groups is not something (inaudible). Ok, let's give the Alawis this area, you will have this area, the Kurds this area. It will not be like what we saw in previous Yugoslavia. It will not happen like this because the conflict of interest and the fight about natural resources, like the oil, like the water, is so strong that the conflict will go on for a long time.

**A.L.:** Can I just follow up on that? And if there is some sort of partition, despite the fact that it's very much a checkered type of arrangement of ethnic minorities and majorities, and the Alawite take the area to the western side under Assad, what will happen in the vacuum then that is to the east of them going towards the Iraqi border? What will actually establish a power basis there? And is there some way in which maybe Saudi Arabia would become involved in that area?

**A.A.:** If Saudi Arabia will try to be involved in this area then they will have problem with Iran. And I don't see that Saudi Arabia is looking for a conflict with Iran beside what they already have. I look about this area that something like what we are seeing now in Libya will happen over there. It will be a huge area with no real central control, an area where every tribe, and every family, and every group can do whatever they would like as long as they can do it by force. And I don't see any interest of the international community to send over there an international force, or to do an international joint coalition. So I believe this area will be unstable for many, many years. We have the example of Libya today.

**A.L.:** If I can widen that slightly and just talk about Saudi Arabia in a little more detail, why is it do you think they're having such lack of success in Yemen, and is there a problem particularly with the Yemenis, as I understand it, having access to a few modified systems?

**A.A.:** I don't think that Saudi put the Yemen conflict as first priority that they will try to do whatever they can in order to achieve their goals. But more than that, I think they are smart enough to understand that in order to achieve a decisive win of victory in Yemen, it's something that is very unlikely to be achievable. In this long areas with so big diversity of the population, it's almost impossible. Look on what happened to the Russians in Afghanistan. Look what happened to the Americans in Afghanistan. This is similar areas. You will be able to destroy the major infrastructure but still you will not control the area, you will not control the ground, you will go into an attrition war that will take long time, you will pay a lot of casualties, and you will not change the situation dramatically like in a normal war that one side is winning and other side is losing, and there is a treaty and agreement, and go to the next phase. It will never happen in such areas. So why to go into deep mud when you understand that you are going to be dragged into a big mud, and it's better to stay away, as long as it's not interrupt or threaten your main interest. And that is the way that I think the Saudis are controlling the conflict in Yemen.

**A.L.:** But what you seem to be suggesting, if I read you correctly, is that not only in the areas to the east of Syria, but also in Yemen, we're going to have lots of ethnic groups under warlords,

and the best thing we can do is just be well clear of them. Is that what you're saying?

**A.A.:** Generally speaking, yes. I agree with this. And the best way or the most efficient way is to try to make sure that the outside intervention will not unbalance the situation. The problem in Yemen the Iranians are involved in it. And when you send a message to Iran "keep out of it" and this I think is what the Saudis are trying to do - similar to what happened in Bahrain a few years ago - then is the situation that you are controlling the fire within its limit. Otherwise if you are outside of it complete, and you are saying it's not my business, then you will suffer an uprising in Bahrain, in Yemen and then in other countries, and this is something that you must try to stop. So the smart move is how or when to intervene. Usually, if you are smart enough and you have a long vision you do it very early, and not late, as in Syria example, I think that if the Western world, and including Israel, would have intervened earlier, Assad would not exist, Russia would not be in the area, Iran would be smaller than it is now, and it would be for the good side of the Western world and the global world I think.

**K.K.:** My last question it's actually a comment. I invite my students to read Aristotle's analysis of tyranny. It's in the "Politics" and in a number of his other works. And in his analysis of tyranny Aristotle teaches us that you can spot a tyranny in the making, when the father - tyrant - is grooming one or more of his sons to take over. And in our discussion we've mentioned Libya and Syria. And in both occasions a tyrant - Colonel Gaddafi in one case, the father Assad in the second case - were grooming their children to take over. The child took over in Syria, he didn't manage to take over in Libya. And all I just comment is that there is value in rereading Aristotle on tyranny, because your point about prevention being better than cure is timeless and most valid.

**C.P:** General, let me bring you back to Lebanon this time. So far, it seems that the war in Syria has not spilled over to a great extent into Lebanon, but what we have is the election of President Aoun with the support of Hezbollah and it seems that there may be the situation that the stage is set, at some point, for another, perhaps, confrontation with Israel through Lebanon. Do you see that? I mean, are you concerned about the developments in Lebanon?

**A.A.:** We're always concerned about the developments in a Lebanon. And I think that one of the lessons that Hezbollah learnt from what we call the Second Lebanese War that they have to be very careful not to go into war that they have not planned and not go into this kind of war by their main patrons, which means the Iranians. And in the past it was the Syrians as well. So even Nasrallah said, he did not imagine that our reaction to what he did in our north borders that caused the Second Lebanese War, he did not imagine that it will cause such a big conflict. If he had imagined, he wouldn't have done what he did. So I don't think, and I don't see any reason or any interest of the Hezbollah to go into a military campaign or military activity, especially today. They are deeply involved in what is happening in Syria, they are far away from being victorious in Syria, so why to open a new front with Israel? And they know that if they open a new front of Israel, this will be something very serious. Because you cannot start, you know, a limited campaign, you know well what you plan to start but you don't know how it will end. And we know that they have about 180,000 missiles aiming on all our religious cities and strategic areas. So something will happen. It will be very massive. It will be very massive. So I don't see any interest of the Hezbollah to gain in such a conflict, but they are building their forces and the infrastructure to the point that they will be directed by Iran, for example, to open a military campaign. Let's imagine a situation that Israel, or even the Western world - the USA or the NATO forces - will attack Iran regarding the conflict of the nuclear plants that they

have, then there will be a possibility that you are with (inaudible) Hezbollah, but okay, this is the time, this is the right moment to start kind of operation, this is something that we have to prepare ourselves and I think the Western world also has to prepare themselves. So it's a very worrying situation, but I don't think any interest of the Hezbollah which is the major power in Lebanon today to do some activity that would bring into a huge conflict in our area.

**A.L.:** Can I just as a final question widen it slightly? You've hinted of position of Iran. I would be grateful for your personal view of the Iran nuclear agreement and also the Israeli view of the Iran nuclear agreement.

**A.A.:** The Israeli official view about the agreements is that we're very unhappy, but we think that we have not denied the capability of Iran to become nuclear and at the most we postpone the days that they will be able to become nuclear. And my personal view is that the only one that can prevent Iran from becoming nuclear is the Iranian people. If the Iranian people will understand that for their best interests they should give up the nuclear capabilities, nuclear military capabilities, this is the only option that they will do so. We see that even in the country much poorer like North Korea they are nuclear, they did not give up becoming nuclear, and superpowers like the USA cannot prevent them from being nuclear. So if we - the Western world - will find a way to show the Iranian people that it's better for them not to have nuclear power, then is the only chance to prevent them from having nuclear power. Otherwise they will keep their attempts to have it. They will do it in steps that will bring the best benefits for them without exposed to a painful sanction. But we see now from the last developments in the Senate and what the elected President Trump is saying about this. This conflict will continue to keep us busy and in a very intense style. We have to take all we can to try to convince them not to have the nuclear capability. I as an Israeli don't think that when Iran or if Iran will have a nuclear capabilities they will attack Israel. But when they will have a nuclear capability, it will be a different ball game in the whole of the region, the stability of countries like Saudi, like the moderate Arab Emirates - all these countries will be very, very unstable, and this is what should be worrying all of us very much. So it is common interest not to make Iran a nuclear regional superpower, because it is against all the interest, the common interest of the Western world, is my point of view.

**AL:** Thank you.

**C.P.:** General, thank you very much for a great presentation and question-and-answer. We need to wrap for a few minutes and return. Thank you very much.

**A.A.:** Thank you very much.



---

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION\*

---

Ioannis E. Anastasakis\*\*

5-7 December 2016

### **South-East Mediterranean Air Power Projection**

*General Anastasakis provides a description of the state of Greek airpower as a result of the economic difficulties that the Greek state has been facing over the last decade, given also the realities of the growing Turkish regional challenge.*

At the beginning, let me thank ERPIC for organizing this three-day conference, dealing with issues of high importance.

Based on my experience as a former air force officer, the topic I'll cover for the next 20 minutes or so, is: "South East Mediterranean, Air Power projection (today and beyond).

Enjoying the view of South Eastern Mediterranean from a height, looks very peaceful and friendly. In reality this is not the case.

Speaking about South Eastern Mediterranean air power, it's of great importance to realize that the airspace of the region is occupied by numerous civilian flights. In accordance with [planefinder.net](http://planefinder.net), which provides real time air traffic details, the average number of civilian flights in the region is about 400 civilian planes, at any time, day or night.

In addition to civilian traffic, the regional airspace is oversaturated by hundredths of military flights. Speaking about airpower projection in the region is clear evidence that there are four regional airpowers, namely: Greece, Turkey, Israel and Egypt. We can imagine these four airpowers to be the corner of a box, with Cyprus as the jewel in the middle.

Just to have an idea of these four airpowers, their inventory of fighter planes includes hundreds of sophisticated 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> generation of airframes. As it is shown on the slide, only regarding fighter planes the regional airpowers invest billions of dollars (\$) in order to improve their military capabilities, with more efficient and stealthy planes. These new planes will be commissioned in the next 5 to 10 years, changing the balance of airpower in the region.

Fighter planes are not the only force to consider. In addition there are also hundreds of military utility planes, trainers, transport, air command & control, electronic warfare, tankers,

\* Transcript. Part of the e-conference "The Latest Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean," 5-7 December 2016.

\*\* Lieutenant General, Hellenic Air Force (Retired)

reconnaissance and also general use and attack helicopters.

All the above inventories, aim to project airpower in support of national strategies.

The establishment of EEZs radically changes the operational context of air power projection. The defense investments of the regional airpowers and the procurement of new 5<sup>th</sup> generation airframes, are guided by “today’s and beyond” needs, as EEZ boundaries should be established and new energy resources discovered in the region.

Major national requirements for airpower projection are is guided by the need to protect the national airspace, the national EEZ limits, including hydrocarbon related installations and resources, and also to control illegal immigration and human trafficking, terrorist activities, piracy, and weapons smuggling.

Speaking about EEZ protection, the airpower is only one axis of projection and naval power is the second. It is also of paramount importance to highlight the reality that the regional airpowers, simultaneously invest also in their Navies. New ship types will be commissioned in the region shortly, like assault platforms by Turkey, new submarines by Israel, helicopter carriers and frigates by Egypt, upgrading the capabilities and naval capacities.

And as regional airpowers upgrade their military capabilities, let’s take a look on late developments of what happens over the neighbor Syrian airspace.

It is well aware that a multinational air power dominates the sky over Syria, attacking ground targets, without a collectively selected “political end state” of the war. US led airstrikes against ISIS with participation of air forces from Australia, Bahrain, the Netherlands, Canada, Denmark, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and United kingdom. On the other hand, Israeli independent and Russian led airstrikes in collaboration with Syrian air force complete the picture of this regional “World War”.

The airpower projection of the above mentioned forces, creating high collateral damage among the local population, is clear that they provide just the air superiority and isolation of enemy forces and will not solve the problem that is to clear and secure the ground, without boots on the ground. Airpower is not a conquering force.

In the vicinity of Syria, Cyprus, the “jewel in the box” of regional airpowers, based on agreements, has not permanently deployed air power with fighter planes on the island. Therefore the protection of Cypriot national interests is based upon airpower of neighbors and allies.

Hellenic Air Force (HAF) as representing the core of national airpower, has the mission to support national and regional security and defense policies. The negative developments of the Greek national economy the last years, has heavily affected defense spending. This happens because in times of depression, society places defense in a lower priority.

Under these constrains, based upon on adverse economic situation, HAF has to survive in times of depression and transformation, retaining the core capabilities and shifting from attrition to adaptation. Investing in procurement of new 5<sup>th</sup> generation planes is out of the question for the moment and only the procurement of spare parts and munitions stands as priority. For the time being, the threat assessment is capabilities-based and not intentions based.



At the national level, HAF has to counter Turkey's offensive behavior as the main threat. Been unable to plan for the procurement of new fighter planes, the recent decision is to upgrade 2 F-16 squadrons to Viper type that is the most advanced fighter in F-16 family.

On other hand, HAF in order to reduce operational and sustaining costs, decided the abolition of some Tactical Groups in forward operating Bases and secondary Air Bases, like 126 TG in Heraklion-Crete, 132 TG in Agrinio-Western Greece, 134 TG in Sandorini, 138 TG in Timpaki-Crete. Also HAF decided the abolition of Air detachments, like in Rhodos, Karpathos and Ioannina. In addition the retirement in 2015, of 45 A-7 corsair planes and the merge of Squadron equipped with same planes has focused on reducing operational costs.

At a regional level, HAF has to increase the operational and functional interoperability with allied forces, planning and execute joint and combined training and exercises.

As already mentioned, Turkey's offensive posture is the major threat for HAF. But this offensive posture is not only against Greece.

As the writer Zeyno Baran describes in his book with title: "Citizen Islam: The future of Muslim Integration in the West":

"Ataturk envisioned his goal as the liberation of his fellow Turks from centuries of religious dogma imposed by the caliphate..."

As a comment to Ataturk's cited vision, we should remember that Ataturk is history, Erdogan is today's reality.

As stated in a study conducted by Professor Dr. Michael Robert Hickok with the title: "Hegemon Rising: The Gap between Turkey's Strategy and Military Modernization":

"The rise of Turkey as an independent security actor in the region has not gone unnoticed by its neighbors. Ankara's experiment with post Kemalist foreign policies comes at a time when Turkish military modernization is on the cusp of giving Turkey capabilities that far outstrip those of any single neighbor."

As a comment on this, how should Turkey's neighbors should react? Is it time for further regional military collaboration?

Let me conclude this presentation with an ancient Greek saying: "οἱ καιροὶ οὐ μέντοι" that means: "The opportunities do not wait". These are the words of Pericles, the great politician of ancient Athens, as recorded by historian Thucydides.

Pericles addressed these words to the Athenians in order to mobilize them in preparation to defend Greece against the Persian Empire's offensive.

At this point, the floor is open for questions or comments.



---

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION\*

---

David Ben-Bashat\*\*  
5-7 December 2016

### Maritime Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean

Admiral Ben-Bashat provides a concise description of the geopolitical challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean and the emphasis that littoral states (with the exception of Greece and Cyprus) are putting into increasing their naval capabilities. He also notes the increasing presence of the US, and hopes for regional cooperation.

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** Welcome to our East Med Forum. This is a Skype conference. My co-host is Air Commodore Andrew Lambert and our speaker this morning is Admiral David Ben-Bashat who will talk to us about maritime developments in the eastern Mediterranean. Admiral good morning.

**David Ben-Bashat (D. B-B):** Good morning, good morning.

**C.P.:** Thank you for joining us.

**D. B-B.:** I said that I'm very happy to be part of the conference and the seminar.

**C.P.:** Thank you very much. David tell us what are the new developments?

**D. B-B.:** First of all, before I start I want to compliment you and with the forum initiation, I think that it's very, very important in those days to discuss what's going on in our region, because a lot happened around us from many directions, and it's very, very wise to sit down once in a while and to discuss it, and to bring the issue to our conscious. Even we are unofficial, I believe that some influence from this type of discussion can go to the right people. And also I believe, and I want, and I hope that also the officials doing the same.

About our issue. You know, 80% of the economics of the world is going through the oceans and the sea and in international waters. And there's no specific government that rules all these routes of communication around the world. And 80%, it's also, let's say, from the size of the globe, and also 80% of the economics is there. That means it's very, very, very important. Therefore, always when there is some threats. There are official and unofficial organization that make cooperation between countries, mainly between navies. We saw during the last decade,

\* Transcript. Part of the e-conference "The Latest Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean," held by the East Med Forum between 5 and 7 December 2016.

\*\* Admiral, Israel Defense Forces (Retired)

after September 11, when the terrorism, the global terrorism start to increase, how a country gathered together and made allies like in Strait of Malacca, in the Indian Ocean, the European Union, South America, forces like NATO and active endeavor work in the Mediterranean, and also a lot of other organizations around the world, because the world is very worried about these routes of communication for the trade of the world.

Our corner of this world is a very important one. One of the important, let's say, areas in the world because we are the gateway between the Far East - Asia - and Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea. all the country around the Black Sea, all the country around the Mediterranean, and for sure the countries in the Pacific they need the Suez Canal, they need this area, and therefore it's become very, very important not only for us as neighbors in this region, also for countries from other parts of the world, their interest is that this gateway will be open and this route will be secure. Like China, for example, like Russia. And lately because of the instability of some countries in the region, mainly because of the Arab Spring, and the new Islamic organizations like ISIS - Daesh - that suddenly rose up in the region. And in, let's say, in a short period we can find a lot of things that we didn't know in the same volume and same magnitude before. We have the Russians in the area after many years when their presence was very weak, suddenly they are strong. The Chinese, as I mentioned, they are in the area. And we have relatively a new regime in Egypt, and we have, as I mentioned, ISIS in the area. We have the hydrocarbons, the gas that suddenly we discovered in the area, and countries started to organize their EEZs, the exclusive economic zones. All these together, and for sure the refugees that came from Libya to Italy, from Turkey to Greece, and in very big numbers. Therefore, many new factors in this relatively small area bring a new situation. And we need to first of all understand and try to predict where we're going and if we can do something to make more stabilized, to help this situation.

I want to go and to mention every one of the factors that I said. Mainly in the country, in the region. Because the first phenomenon is that most of the players increase their power. And the only one maybe the United States that was with a large presence in the Mediterranean in the last decades, in these days they're almost not there, and I can say maybe unfortunately. But the United States, I think, because of China, they need to increase their presence in the Asia Pacific. And also the forces that they send against the pirates. By the way, the pirates have become weaker in these days, but the potential is still there. Then the present of United States in the Mediterranean and in our region is not as used to be in the last decade. We don't know what will happen after the new president will take the position. Maybe the policy will be changed. But right now they are the only one with the player that they're not increase the power - decrease the power.

Then maybe I'll start with Egypt. Egypt - not a rich country, but although they are not a rich country, the President el-Sisi decided to increase his maritime forces. He gets some help from the Saudis, but he is increasing the forces by new submarines, helicopter carriers, new surface boats, and he is investing a lot of effort and money to collect from his people, and we need to salute the people of Egypt for this. In very short time they upgraded the Suez Canal, widened it, deepened it, and now they can use it for bigger ships, and they did it in a relatively short time. That means he gave a lot of importance to the maritime arena. And also I believe that he uses it as a tool to reflect power to his neighbors. No doubt that Egypt was in the past and he want to be also now a dominant a country in the Arab world. One of the tools that he is using for this is to reflect power in the maritime arena - that's what countries normally do and that's what

makes emperor an emperor: the maritime forces. And it looks like Egypt in these days doing a lot of effort to strengthen the navy and the maritime forces. And also, fortunately for them, they detect some gas also in the economic zone. Therefore they need also to protect their gas, they need to protect the Suez Canal, they want to reflect the power.

And they are also under attack of the non-governmental organizations like Daesh that attack even military ships and civilian ships in their territory. That means we are seeing that Egypt has made a lot of efforts to be dominant in the region. This is for Egypt.

Going to Israel. Israel like Egypt also increased its maritime power. In 2013 Israel declared its EEZ, the EEZ doubled, let's say, the area of the country. And because of this, Israel only lately signed contract for four new corvettes that will be built in Germany. But not only these; UAVs, an unmanned platform, and a lot of other tools, to make safe the region that increased by size because of the EEZ and the hydrocarbon that we are detecting in this region. Therefore the power of Israel in the area, in the maritime area became bigger.

Israel continues to deal with Hamas in Gaza, blockades the area not to let Hamas get any weapons by the sea, and therefore requires the intensive presence in this area. And the navy is also watching Hezbollah, although in the Hezbollah's case, there is a NATO maritime force under resolution 1701, but Israel is also watching, because Nasrallah already threatened Israel that if it will be required from him, he will shoot missiles at the gas rigs in the area.

Therefore, for Israel that's a threat, and therefore they need to watch and to maintain power against this threat, if it will happen. This is Israel. Egypt - growing forces. Israel - growing forces.

Then we go to Turkey. Turkey also would like to be very dominant country in the region. And as I said, maritime forces reflect power of the nation, and we are watching, and we see that Turkey is making a lot of effort to increase and use submarines, a new frigate - the MILGEM type - and others, and therefore we identified efforts to be dominant in the maritime arena. No doubt that Turkey also shows a lot of interest about gas that they don't have in their country, and their waters they are looking for. But we believe that the reason for the problem with Israel was because of the gas interest, and no doubt about interest of Turkey in Cyprus. Turkey wants to be the dominant power in the region. We have the NATO forces around, and many many country take part, even Indonesia or Bangladesh - they are there between Cyprus and Lebanon.

And then let's talk about Russia. Russia that was with a nice presence in the Mediterranean, mainly in Syria, when they were Soviet Union, but after they collapsed, they disappeared from the area. But now the crisis in Syria is a big chance for them to bring their forces again, and they are using it. And right now there is more than ten naval ships in the area, and I believe that is going to increase, and they are very, very dominant. And it's a play to their interest that there is no American forces to balance them - only NATO forces. And they did only lately contract with Cyprus that they can stay also with ships there, and they tried to be a part of the play in this region to make exercise with Israel, with Greece, with Cyprus, and so and so.

The next country that I want to mention is China. China in the last few years decided to take very seriously the maritime routes. They like to import from Europe, for sure also to export, but import - it's very important for them. Therefore the Chinese government drew a strategy that they need to take seriously the maritime route from Asia, from Far East Asia, to the Mediterranean. And they are doing it in few ways. One way is they increase, they double the

maritime, military forces, and also they show their presence in the main port along the routes, like they are in Alexandria, they are in Cyprus, they are in Israel in Haifa, in the Horn of Africa. Also there is a small fleet of Chinese frigates and corvettes in the Indian Oceans fighting against the pirates and they even came to this region. Last year they did exercise with the Russians in the Mediterranean and also they visited the Black Sea, and also trained over there.

I'm jumping to Russia again because I didn't mention it. For Russia it's very important to be in this region because of the Black Sea. To be only in the Black Sea with the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits is too risky. Therefore, they need to be out of the Black Sea if they want to be sure that they can maintain a free line of communication from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. I believe that this is the main reason that they want to be present in this area. And as I say, they are cooperating with the Chinese, and they are cooperating with the other nations.

We can see that there are many factors from different interests that are playing in this relatively small corner and there are two issues that can leverage the cooperation in this region, and I hope the countries will know how to use this leverage. One leverage is cooperation against terrorism, Many times terrorism can be very, very dangerous, and as I said, they can cause chaos to the world. Therefore, all the countries that play in this area have to cooperate with intelligence, to be ready to make together search and rescue, if it's needed to exchange information, to exchange doctrines and not to let the maritime terrorism rise. It's a very, very important one and can be leveraged for good cooperation between the countries. The other thing is gas. There is gas in Egypt, there is gas in Cyprus, there is gas in Israel, there is gas in Greece. Maybe there is potential gas in Lebanon. And I believe that the countries need to cooperate, then they can even use the same means, they can exchange information, they can protect it together. There is a pipeline on the bottom of the sea that they need to share together. I think that there is a big room of cooperation around the gas and this is a good opportunity for the neighboring countries to cooperate together.

And there is the issue of the EEZ that has not finished the process of establishment. There are few contracts already established but there are some areas that still there is some debate around it. And I hope that the countries will find the way to establish it in the right way, and not to make it as a leverage for fighting. Last year when I visit you Chris and I mentioned at the very fantastic location of Cyprus in this eastern Mediterranean. And I believe that if I'll take this location, geographic location and start from this to build cooperation, but already start, let's say, with Israel, with Greece, to build the platform, then to bring Egypt inside. Maybe Turkey will join, maybe Russia will be part of this. I think that this region with America or without it - I don't know what will be the policy of President Trump when he will take over - but I think that for the local countries in this region, I hope that we will find a way to build a platform that we can cooperate all of us together around the energy resources, around fighting against terrorism, around search and rescue. And although it looks complicated, although there are many, many partners, I believe that all of them have the same interest in the day is to make is to build security from the line of communication and use the energy in the right way. And this is my hope. And as I said in the beginning, I hope that not only us, let's say, private people discussing. I hope that also the official, the government will find the way to do it.

Thank you very much.

C.P.: Thank you David, thank you very much. Andrew?

**Andrew Lambert (A.L.):** Admiral, thank you very much. May I say so, very lucid exposition of the situation, the geopolitical situation in the Eastern Mediterranean. I've got two or three questions, if I may. I spoke yesterday about the derogation from various international treaties, notably the ICJ, and of course more recently in July this year, when China decided it would not accept the tribunal of UNCLOS do you see there's a bit of a problem with nations who have the power, but are not necessarily prepared to abide by the rules of the game?

**D.B-B.:** I didn't hear what you heard, but I believe, I believe that China has the forces, no doubt. They need them for the region, there's a lot of conflict over there, with India, with Japan, I don't know, Vietnam, America over there. But also they came to our region, and in this region, as I said, they are already involved in Egypt, in Israel, in Greece, cooperating with Russia. I believe that if they want to maintain their power so far away from their country, let's say, in this region, they need to find the way to cooperate in the right way and with the right rules with all of us, and not try to make any violence of the rules. This is what I believe, if I understand you correctly.

**A.L.:** Do you think that can be achieved, though or do you think they will just exercise their power where they can?

**D.B-B.:** I think it can be achieved because I think that in the end of the day it's their interest. I'm not saying it about their territories, economic zone, the island that they are building, I'm not talking about that. About this region far away from their country. If they want to maintain power and influence in this region, like they go inside to the countries. There are many opportunities right now. I think that they need to play, let's say, with our rules, not with different ones.

**A.L.:** If I may, on a slightly separate subject. As you know, NATO maintains a recognized air and surface plot of all maritime and air activity, or tries to. Do you think there is a role here for trying to maintain a recognized air and surface plot of the whole of the Eastern Mediterranean?

**D.B-B.:** I believe that they need to be part. I don't say that this country need to be part of NATO, okay? And I think that it's not an easy task - maybe they want to be - but I don't think for the European countries, they will not bring the other countries to be a part of this. But some type of cooperation they need, I believe, to keep. Because it's very very important, as I said, corner of the world, this gateway between Europe and Far East. Therefore, there is a big interest for the European Union, the European countries. And I think that type of cooperation, the same platform that let's say Egypt, Israel, Greece and Cyprus - and Greece is already part of NATO - together with the presence of UK in Cyprus, and together with NATO, I think it was very important. And also we don't know what will happen with Russia in the region. And therefore, full stability, I think that their presence is very, very important. Why? And there is a way to do it. Even without being the same, let's say, organization.

**A.L.:** How do you think we can achieve that? What would be the initial action that will be taken to establish the sort of coordination you're talking about?

**D.B-B.:** I think that the establishment need to be first of all to let the countries here to establish something between them. And I think that right now to make Cyprus, Israel, Greece and even Egypt, it's not something not achievable - we can do it. And maybe Turkey - Turkey is part of NATO anyway. And then this organization needs to establish some type of cooperation

with NATO, and then decide if the forces need to be present here, or it's just a cheap game and continue like this. But I think that it's very important.

**A.L.:** I was talking about the first steps in order to get regional coordination, and I wonder if one shouldn't approach it in a twin-track way, that is top-down and bottom-up simultaneously. Look for the political dimension, get people together and talk about it, but at the same time coordinate things like search and rescue centers, so that one could actually generate a recognized surface plot, which all nations could then feed into an take out of. Would that seem a sensible, practical first step?

**D.B-B.:** I think and I hope that I understand correctly what you say, I think that we need the work bottom-up right now. If I can think about the type of the coordination, let's say, it's not only military.

**A.L.:** Of course.

**D.B-B.:** There needs to be civilian and military together, that means every country need first of all to coordinate between themselves, between, let's say, the navies, and the civilian that they're controlling search and rescue, like the bodies of the transportation ministry, and then together with the joint body of each country to try to do it with their country. I know that they have already started, it's not that I'm saying something that it's not possible. But I don't think that it's right now in the right volume. And no doubt that Greece, Cyprus and Israel can be the first ones. Maybe Cyprus can bring Egypt also to the picture. And I believe that maybe there are some political... maybe if the leader will be the civilian, not the military, it will be more easy to do it. I think that people need to sit down and make a brainstorming how they can bypass all the political issues, the diplomacy issues, and the military issues. But there is no doubt that there is a demand for this, and it's not, looks to me, impossible to do it.

**A.L.:** And you think that Cyprus would be a good first step, or first position would be here? Not because it's fairly uninvolved politically, and therefore a much more neutral country, where obviously in your own country there will be political difficulties, or there could be it.

**D.B-B.:** Exactly. Also, as I mention, also the location. And there are neutral positions in, let's say, the political arena.

**A.L.:** Exactly

**D.B-B.:** They need it, they can bring to the table all the others. And then we need to find a way to bring Turkey also inside.

**A.L.:** But maybe that's the next stage. If it's suddenly something that's successful and seems to work, and then see if you can interconnect with Turkey, and see if they are willing to join. And then if it was really successful, get the Russians and Chinese to access it on an occasional basis. So sort of a step-by-step approach, you think?

**D.B.-B.:** Exactly. And you say, okay, first of all you build the corporation, you build the rules and everything, and then you can invite others, even not a region country, but they have interest in the area. Okay, come to the table, let's see how you can cooperate with us. But in the end, everyone in this region that has interests in the region need to come and be part of this. This is my vision, let's say.



**A.L.:** That's an excellent vision, Admiral, well done. I wonder if I could change the subject slightly and talk to you a little bit about the immigration - the refugee problem. Do you see that as being something of big concern in the Eastern Mediterranean, or is it merely a bilateral problem Turkey to Greece, or perhaps Libya across up to Italy?

**D.B.-B.:** I think that also this very, very painful issue, but I think that it would be better if not every country will deal it by itself. Let's say, first of all, it starts in international waters, then it finishes in the waters of the country. But I think that this is also a very good chance to cooperate between the countries that live in the area, and together to build the same rules, the same attitude, the same way of treatment, exchange information, and do it together. This is what I believe. You can say it's a private problem, you can say it's a regional problem. I believe that right now it belongs to the region, and the region needs to be, it will be more easy for everyone if the country will cooperate the way it treated... At the end of the day, if you detect it in your national water, therefore the country needs to (inaudible) by itself. But it start out of the initial water. It start from the country that they left. And if you exchange information, you have the same intelligence and then you can share the information together from one center.

**A.L.:** Should it be done internationally or bilaterally? I'm thinking in particular the sort of European aspect...

**D.B.-B.:** I see in the end of the day internationally. Its international problem.

**A.L.:** Absolutely. Excellent.

**C.P.:** David, thank you very much. Thank you very much for taking the time.

**D.B.-B.:** Chris, thank you. It was pleasure talking to you.



---

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION\*

---

Irina Zvyagelskaya\*\*  
5-7 December 2016

### **Russian Policy in the Eastern Mediterranean**

*Professor Zvyagelskaya reviews Russian policy motivations and actions in the Eastern Mediterranean, the greater Middle East. She focuses especially on Syria and the future of the conflict. She expresses Russian concern for regional stability and opposition to instability and revisionism.*

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** Welcome back to the East Med Forum. My co-host is Air Commodore Andrew Lambert, and our speaker is Professor Irina Zvyagelskaya of the Oriental Studies Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, who will talk to us about Russian policy in the Eastern Mediterranean. Professor Zvyagelskaya, welcome.

**Irina Zvyagelskaya (I.Z.):** Thank you. It's my pleasure. I would like to start with thanking you and your institute for giving me a chance of attending the conference from Moscow and to be able to exchange ideas with the participants of the conference. So, you know that my topic is "Russian Interest in the Eastern Mediterranean". I would like to start with a very well-known notion that for us the Middle East is the nearest, actually. So it's very close to our frontiers. And if we start describing the interests in Eastern Mediterranean, we should start with security interest first, because it's absolutely obvious that concentration of foreign armies, all sorts of conflicts which destabilize the situation in the region are of great concern to Russia. Because you know that the violence can easily spill over the borders - it happens all over the world. So this is the first group of interest. They are general interest but I should mention them.

The second group I would say is a geostrategic interest, since Russia wants to demonstrate that she is an important power, she has its own approach to different global issues and regional issues that her approach should be taken into consideration. And this also explains the Russian activity in the region. I will talk about it in detail a bit later.

Then there are interests which are shaped by the idea of protection of Russian business interests, mostly in military sphere, and also in oil sphere, which of course also shape Russia's approaches to the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean.

\* Transcript. Part of the e-conference "The Latest Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean," held by the East Med Forum between 5 and 7 December 2016.

\*\* Professor, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences

But to be absolutely frank, we should say that not long before the Arab transformations, probably, the Middle East was not a high priority for Russia, I mean a high priority for the Russian foreign policy. There were other regions which were much more important, like the relationship with the post-Soviet countries, like relationship with the West, and so on, so forth. So if we can say that the Arab transformation was a certain line which somehow shows that now there are different and new approaches of Russia to the situation in the region. Regime transformations. Well, I wouldn't say that they were perceived negatively in Russia - I mean, first of all, the events in Tunisia, or in Egypt - because it was absolutely obvious that there were sources of rebellions against corrupted elites which actually privatized several countries in the developing world, and so it was absolutely understandable. But the problem was that in the Arab countries, especially in Libya and those which followed the events in Egypt and Tunisia, the institutions are very weak and any rebellions, any demonstrations - especially when they are supported from the outside, I mean from regional powers, global powers - they can really bring the situation to chaos and destroy the statehood. Actually, this happened in Libya, and that is why we say that Libya was a red line for us. You know that Russia abstained when there was a voting on the resolution of the Security Council 1973, which actually started the no-fly zone in Libya. And at first Russia believed that there would be real no-fly zone, because there were concerns that since Gaddafi had aviation, of course he would use it against the rebels. But actually, you know, it ended up with the death of Gaddafi who wasn't even judged, as Mubarak was judged, or even as Saddam Hussein. And it brought forth the collapse of the Libyan state since there were absolutely no institutions and we do understand that Gaddafi had personified the main institutions in this state. Even now we don't know what kind of institutions they have, I mean the institutions of state. There is no much opportunity to carry out field studies right now in Libya. But the fact is that foreign intervention actually resulted in the end of the statehood in Libya right now. Probably the situation will get better, but right now we have what we have. We don't have a proper state in Libya. So as I said for Russia, it was a sort of red line and if we are talking about Syria, because Syria now is the sort of focus of the international relations in the region, we can say that without Libya there probably would never be Syrian crisis in the format which it acquired right now. So I mean that, as you know, Russia introduced its urban forces at the request of Syrian government, and Russia is still actively participating in what's going on in Syria.

So why Syria? Sometimes I can say that there are very primitive explanations: that Assad is our best friend and ally, and that is why for us to save Assad is to save our positions in the region. I would strongly disagree with this point of view. First of all, Assad - I mean Bashar Assad - has never been our ally. His father, it's true, was an ally of the Soviet Union, but then the situation was completely different. And young Assad used to go to Europe rather than visit Russia. He didn't visit Russia until 2005 or 2006 because at the time there was discussed the debt of Syria to Russia. And actually, he used to go to Europe and where he was warmly greeted, as you very well know.

But it's not only the issue where he was greeted or not. The issue is that we do not share his goals in Syria. You know that we do not believe in a military victory. We believe that there should be negotiations, there should be transitional period, there should be a sort of unity government and then elections. But, you know, actually since Russia supported all resolutions, and especially the resolution 2254, we have a lot in common with those countries who also signed this resolution, who also supported it. So it's about unified Syria and it's about the transitional period, which is very important. So we still believe that without political solution

there will be no exit strategy for anyone. From this point of view, we do not share the aims of Bashar Assad.

The second consideration, or probably the main consideration which actually shaped Russian reaction to what was going on in Syria, was the fact that Russia was searching for a platform, for a ground, where we could still cooperate with the West and with other countries against a common enemy, against international terrorism. You remember pretty well that in 2015 the international situation was really very bad, and Russian relations with other countries of the West and with some regional countries were really spoiled because of the Ukrainian issue. So it was not an effort to marginalize the Ukrainian issue, it was not possible. But as I said, it was a search for other ground where we really can cooperate, since we have common a enemy. And there was even idea of a wider coalition in Syria fighting against Daesh and against Jabhat al-Nusra - these two organizations, as you know, are on the list of the United Nations, they are labeled terrorist organizations, so no one denies it. And although, again, we didn't believe that there would be just one coalition, but there could have been parallel efforts to fight Daesh. Because as you remember, in 2015 there was a real danger of Daesh becoming a dominant force, military force and political force in Syria. It is true that at the time there was a sort of dichotomy: either Daesh or Assad. And the fate of Damascus was put under the question at the time. So Russia helped to change the balance of forces and actually it at the time opened the doors for negotiations, which was very important. And you remember they were supported by the United States, there were a lot of negotiations between Mr. Lavrov and Mr. Kerry. I'm not going into detail right now, just to say that there was a certain common ground, where we could support the idea of negotiations, and the idea of political solution of the Syrian crisis. But unfortunately, though a lot has been done...

You know that despite all disagreements we still have cooperation with the United States - military - aimed at deconflicting and preventing any military clashes. And also there is cooperation on humanitarian sphere, and Mr. Kerry proposed once again that we cooperate on it. But still, I wouldn't say that our relationship right now is really very good, as you know, and unfortunately the agreement of the 9<sup>th</sup> September failed. It failed, since the United States could not really divide the so-called moderate opposition from Jabhat al-Nusra. I am not sure it was really possible, though they promised to do that. Because you know, there are about seven organizations affiliated with Jabhat al-Nusra in Aleppo. Well, they are doing things which probably make them no better than terrorists, but still they are not on the list, official list, of the United Nations. Some of them can be called moderate, like the Syrian Free Army, of course, some of them can hardly be called moderate. But still from the formal point of view, of course, they should not be fighting with al-Nusra. Because the main aim in Aleppo is al-Nusra, of course, no matter how it is called right now. And since the agreement of the 9<sup>th</sup> September was not realized, there were suspicions that after all many countries are not interested in the Russian operation against al-Nusra and Syrian operation against al-Nusra, because al-Nusra is sometimes perceived rather as a people's organization, local organization, which is in opposition to the Assad regime, and which is fighting just this regime with the support of the local forces.

If Daesh is a sort of foreign organization which came from Iraq and there are a lot of foreign fighters, but al-Nusra is just a local organization, and that is why the attitude to it should be different. We do not share, as you know, this point of view. We believe that they are terrorists as well. But such an attitude to al-Nusra which we come across very often is of great concern to

us, because if we are going to save al-Nusra it means that we will never proceed with a political solution, because these people they will never talk to the representatives of the regime, and they say it absolutely openly. But everybody understands, though, that the regime should participate in these negotiations no matter how people perceive the role of Bashar Assad - negatively or very negatively. But still, we do understand that negotiations should be conducted between the two sides. Otherwise, it's just impossible to bring peace and stabilization to Syria in the foreseeable future. So Jabhat al-Nusra and those affiliated with it, they are against any negotiations. and this is the problem, this is a real problem. And they are ready to continue the fighting.

When I'm talking about foreign fighters, when I'm talking about a foreign support for the opposition, including, unfortunately al-Nusra sometimes, I would like to say that here we see the rise of the regional powers. Regional powers nowadays are very often overplaying global powers. They have their own goals, they have their own interests, and they are pursuing these interest very often paying no attention to their global allies. And actually the word "ally" and the notion of ally is getting more and more relative our days, more and more arbitrary. Take, for example, Turkey which is the member of NATO, and at the same time we know pretty well that it has a lot of contradictions now with the EU, with the United States even. Or take Israel which is an ally of the United States and still we can find a lot of contradictions. And the very fact that Mr. Netanyahu went to Congress, as you remember, couple of years ago, to speak not to the president, but to the Congress, was something very unusual in such a sort of bilateral relationship.

Then we can also have an example of Saudi Arabia. Though I do understand it doesn't belong to the Mediterranean, but if we are talking of the whole situation, of course it should be mentioned. And Saudi Arabia also has very good relations with the United States, but at the same time there are also very vivid and open controversies.

Now, coming back to Russia. I would like to say that at first the operation in Syria and our attitude to Syria from the very beginning, especially to the Assad regime, that was the cornerstone of contradictions, it gave birth to quite a number of contradictions between us and the regional powers. And if before the Arab transformation and before the Syrian crisis we can say that Russia managed to make friends with everyone - we have very good relations with Iran, with Saudi Arabia, with Hizballah, with Israel, and just you name it. After the beginning of the Syrian crisis the situation of course got much more strained for Russia, because you remember the crisis with Turkey, you remember that our relationship with Persian Gulf countries, was also good, and so forth. But right now I would like to say that though we are not coming back to the situation of being friends with everyone, still our relationships with regional powers have strongly improved.

First, take Turkey. As you remember, and I have already mentioned that there was a very serious crisis in the bilateral relationship. And I wouldn't say that our perceptions of the situation there coincided. No, not very much. But at the same time, probably due to the aborted coup in Turkey, the crisis was overcome right now, and the relations between Turkey and Russia are good, though of course certain contradictions as far as Syrian case is concerned, they still remain. But at the same time, I believe we can find the common ground, because for us it's very important to close the border between Turkey and Syria which was used, as you know, by foreign fighters who used to go through this border to join ISIS. At the same time it's also very important for us that Turkey is fighting ISIS. But, as far as the Kurdish issue is

concerned, of course here we still have a lot of controversies. And also Turkish military operation in Syria can also cause certain questions as you know.

Then, if you take Israel, as I said we have been having a very good relationship with Israel and the Syrian operation even made it more, I would say, open. We do know that Israel has interests of its own. For example, Israel is very much against Iranian activity in Syria, very much against Hezbollah activities there. And Israel told us many times that they would not let Hizballah ever to get new weapons in Syria and get them to Lebanon, and that it would never tolerate any effort of Hezbollah to come to the Golan Heights. But though we do not share these concerns, at the same time, as you know, we have very good relationship, we have coordination in certain parts of our efforts also to de-conflict the situation between us too, and to ensure that there are no clashes. And there is an understanding that though we have different interests, the relationship, again, I would like to stress it, is better than probably it has ever been with Israel.

Then, again, I do understand that Saudi Arabia is not an issue here, but I should mention it just because we have very much improved relations now with the Persian Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, despite the fact that we are cooperating with Iran in Syria. And when I'm searching for the explanation why it happened, I believe that actually in Arab countries it's a sort of tradition to have respect for the military force. And they're very much interested also in Russian weapons, and they are very much interested also in developing cooperation with Russia. And strange as it is, but a Syrian crisis has not become a stumble block to the development of our relationship. So in the beginning, as I said, it was, but now I cannot say that it spoiled the relationship. Probably the contrary now they're better than they were at the beginning.

So I would like also to say some words about the relationship with Iran. You know, for Russia it is natural to support this relationship because for us Iran is not only a Middle East power, but for us it's also a close neighbor. Iran has very active policies in Central Asia, in the Caucasus, and this is important for us. And we should say that Iranian policies in the post-Soviet territory has always been very balanced. And though we would compete there of course - since Iran also is an oil power, gas power - but still we were doomed to cooperate, since, as I said, Iran is very important for us. But there were a lot of accusations actually that since Russia had the boots on the ground in Syria, which were actually composed of Iranians, of Hezbollah, and of the Syrian army, the truth that Russia actually supports Shiites in the Middle East. It's not true. It's not true, since we have at the same time very good relations with Egypt, with Jordan, with other Sunni countries. But there were such accusations, especially if you take into consideration that the Russian Muslim population, which makes some 14% of the total, is all Sunni, practically. There are very few Shiites on the territory of Russia. So for us it's also this factor. But again, I want to say that it was, it didn't become a stumbling block in the development of our relationship with Sunni countries in the region, though probably some of them were not very happy about it. What's more, there was even an idea of Russia being a mediator between Iran and Saudi Arabia because we do understand that not so much Shiite-Sunni contradictions, but geopolitical consideration, they actually shape the relations between the two countries. And unfortunately, they also shape the situation in the region, since these two countries are very active right now. And what we have in the Yemen is a kind of proxy war. It should also be taken into consideration. But actually though everyone understands that to stabilize a situation in the region something should be done about a Saudi-Iranian rivalry, nobody really knows what can

be done about it. So it's also very important issue which all of us are facing.

So to proceed with an analysis of the situation in Syria. And if we are thinking about the future, I would say that actually the situation doesn't look very optimistic. Several years ago my colleagues and I were in the United States and we had a meeting with Mrs. Nuland. At the time, as you know the Democrats were particularly 100% sure that they will remain in power, and there were a Democratic president. But she really said the very right thing when she said that there should not be "Aleppization" of the conflict. We should understand that yes, Aleppo will be taken, like Mosul will be taken, because there are two mirror situations actually right now in Iraq and in Syria. But what shall we do after that? This is important. Whether Aleppo will open the new window of opportunities for resuming of negotiations which should have international support, of course, or whether we will continue fighting for no end, which will prevent all forces who are participating in this conflict from getting a clear-cut exit strategy? So the conflict then will go on and on, and actually I believe this is really very pessimistic scenario. Unfortunately it does exist, we cannot ignore it. But probably with a new administration the situation will become a little bit better. Though you know that there were recommendations of the Congress to sell missiles to the opposition. And it will be really very bad, because as you know they don't have an aviation, but Syrian army does, and Russian aircraft is also flying in Syria. So this will be a real danger, and this might really improve the position of the radicals - not of the modern opposition, but real radicals. Because you know that the modern weapons - they always end up in the hands of the radicals. And this should also be taken into consideration.

There are certain hopes that probably Trump will try to carry out more isolationist policy - he wasn't very much interested in having American troops all over the world. But still the Syrian crisis will remain, and very much will depend not only on coordination between Russia and the United States, but I believe on Russian-European relationship, and on Russian relationship with the regional powers. Because nowadays, as I said, we should recognize that traditional powers are getting more and more influential, and their stance, their interests should be more taken into consideration if we want to reach stability in the region.

Thank you very much and i am looking forward to your questions.

**Andrew Lambert (A.L.):** Professor, I wonder if I could just ask you first what your position is on the Iranian nuclear issue. I know that in theory at least it is resolved for the next ten-fifteen years, but do you think that it is, or can be optimistic about the future thereafter?

**I.Z.:** Well, you know that Russia was among those who were negotiating with Iran on nuclear issue. And actually you know that we're very much against nuclear proliferation - here we have absolutely common ground. Well, the question is whether the situation will get better or worse taken into consideration the situation on the ground. But you know, I believe that very much also will depend on the position of those powers who negotiated this agreement. Because Iran is looking forward to the easing of the sanctions. Some of them have been eased, but not enough. And I believe we should really proceed with this lifting of sanctions because Iran is very much interested now in cooperation. And the lifting of sanctions should show to Iran that actually the signing of agreement was worth for Iran. Because that was the general idea. We signed the agreement, we stopped the project and then the sanctions will be lifted. So some of them should be lifted as soon as possible, I believe, because we need to cooperate with Iran.



**A.L.:** Can I widen the discussion slightly from the Middle East to bring in the threat that Russia sees against its diaspora, not only in the Ukraine, but also of course in the Baltic States? Can we be optimistic about the outcome of both of those situations?

**I.Z.:** Well, as far as the Baltic States are concerned, I believe this is not an issue at all, to be absolutely frank. There is a lot of propaganda right now that sooner or later Russia after Crimea will enter Baltic States and will do same. No, it has nothing to do with reality. I'm not going to discuss Crimea in detail. Though, you know, there were reasons. There were reasons, because Russia was very much really scared of the opportunity of Ukraine becoming a member of NATO, there was a lot of talk about it. And if so, what would have happened to us, to Sevastopol, and to Russian positions in the Black Sea? So it was a very difficult issue. Unfortunately, due to the situation in Ukraine and due to the international situation at the time it could not be solved politically. That's bad. But it was solved how it was solved. There were motives, there were reasons. I am not going just deep into them. But these are very special reasons. And as far as the Baltic States are concerned, I believe this is a pure propaganda. We shouldn't pay attention to that, really.

**A.L.:** That's encouraging. But can I also ask you about international institutions that cause concern? And I'm thinking here not only of what is happening in the South China Sea with the tribunal over UNCLOS, but also Russian derogation from the ICC together with many African countries. Are we not in danger of undermining our international institutions?

**I.Z.:** No, I don't think so. You know, sometimes the danger today is so much over-exaggerated, really. On the contrary, we believe in international institutions. We believe that the United Nations, for example, should be strengthened because it's still the most important institution which was set up after the World War II. But at the same time as, you know, Russia does not believe in a unipolar world. Of course we do understand that the international relationship is very symmetric right now. Of course the United States is playing a very important role and we do recognize why it's playing such a role. But at the same time, we do believe that there are other centers of power which should be taken into consideration: it's China, it's India, it's European Union as a subject of international relations. So I believe that the idea of Russia behind the new world order which is often mentioned, is just to let other international players have their impact on decision making. And Russia also wants to be a player, and also wants to have this impact. Because it's not fair when the decision-making on very important issues and international relations is actually carried out by very few players. By very few players disregarding interests of others.

**A.L.:** But it is important though, is it not, to strengthen these international institutions, and abide fully with one's treaties? And I tested you just now on ICC, but also one thinks about things like INF - Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty. It seems a problem in the West that Russia is almost derogating from the INF Treaty, or certainly ignoring it.

**I.Z.:** I'm sorry, I didn't catch you.

**A.L.:** I'm concerned about things like the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, which seems to be that Russia has decided not to abide by it anymore.

**I.Z.:** Yes, I understand now, excuse me. So you know, yes, it's true that Russia didn't do it. But the fact is that unfortunately our partners didn't care about this agreement for a long time. They actually in practice, they actually didn't support it. So there was a way to show that we

really are not satisfied with a state of affairs in this field. But actually, if the relationship is improved, I believe the talks will be resumed. It's very important to open the channels of mutual communications. Very important. A lot of them are closed right now, including Russian-NATO Commission, including commission on terrorism, unfortunately. I do believe the work of this commission should be resumed and they should be very active.

It seems to me that if we want to improve the credibility of these institutions, it is important to have dialogue and to emphasize to the world when we have a treaty we abide by it in full. And things like the conventional forces in Europe treaty which has been disregarded, INF Treaty, and of course, we're looking now at the new START treaty, which will come into operation very soon. It's important to show to the world that if we have a treaty, and we have institutions, that we give them the due recognition.

You know, you are right absolutely, and I share your point of view 100%. But at the same time, I believe that there should be mutual efforts to strengthen these institutions, to strengthen the agreements, to resume negotiations and so forth. But to be absolutely frank, when we are talking about Russian actions in Ukraine and in Crimea, we should take into consideration the fact that there was a proliferation of NATO to our borders. And it's going on. And when we say that we are very much concerned about it, we're answered, "No, it's not your business, it's NATO, don't worry." You know, so that is why I say we should negotiate, we should understand what the intentions are.

And for example, in the United States we have been partners with the Americans in the so-called Dartmouth Conference, I'm sure you heard about it. So it was of course a second track diplomacy. But it was very useful during the Cold War, when our governments could not find common language very often on very important issues. And you know that we revived the Dartmouth Conference – so-called "Big Dartmouth" – just for the same reasons, because we are looking for the improvement in our relationship, and we are searching for a common language. And we want the other side to understand that we are not trying to be a threat to anyone, and we are looking forward for the same assertive response from our partners.

**A.L.:** Do you see the Valdai conference in the same category?

**I.Z.:** Yes, Valdai is also very close to the Dartmouth conference. The only difference is that the Dartmouth is a kind of sustained dialogue which started in 1960s, so it has really very, very long history, and a lot of very well-known people they contributed, and policy makers they contributed to this conference. And I do believe that it was alive, but it will be just an additional tool, you know, because we need face-to-face negotiations between the main powers.

**A. L.:** Exactly. I'm intrigued by a report that came out on the BBC a couple of days ago. And it said in the aftermath of the Trump election everybody in Moscow was hugely optimistic. But all the Americans in Moscow were hugely pessimistic. Which seems to be a very interesting attitude to take. I wonder, I'm slightly surprised about your pessimism about what is happening in Syria. Because it seems to me that on the face of it you and Bashar Assad are on the offensive and at the momentum, and you are likely to be able to impose the solutions. But you don't seem to be as optimistic as I'd expected.

**I.Z.:** Well, let's start then with Mr. Trump, then about optimism and pessimism. If you want to ask me what was my attitude to the election of Mr. Trump, I would say it was very cautious. Because on the one hand I can say that I was no admirer of Mrs. Clinton, and I personally was

very much afraid that if she were elected as the first lady president, first woman president of the United States, she would be a much more hard-boiled than any man in her place. Just to show that she could be even better, you know. It's psychologically... It's quite... it can be explained, but I didn't want it. So as far as Mr. Trump is concerned, probably it was not also the best choice. But it was not our choice. It was the choice of American people, all of those people who were neglected for a long time and we do understand why it happened.

I believe that he's a new man in the American political elite. And probably from this point of view there can be certain breakthroughs, because new people, they bring new ideas very often for them. I wouldn't say that what he said during his pre-election election campaign would be implemented. Of course there are frameworks for him. American institutions are very strong and he cannot do whatever he pleases. But at the same time I do believe there might be changes. They might be changes which should be used by those who want to improve Russian-American relations. So I wouldn't drink champagne for his elections, let Americans do it. But let's have a cautious optimism, let's see what can be done.

And now as far as pessimistic and optimistic scenarios. You know, as I said, the fact that the regime of Mr. Assad will improve its military positions doesn't mean that it is a solution to the Syrian crisis. As I said, I do believe that the only solution is political negotiations with the participation not only of global, but of regional powers, the participation of them is important. And so it's a long process, and it is very important process. Because if Assad even prevails, you do understand that the main causes of the conflict will remain unresolved. So the conflict will remain, and the idea is to bring those people in opposition who are ready to talk, who are ready to be constructive, and certain people of the regime who can find the common ground there. Later on let there be elections and let the Syrian people decide whom they want to see in power in Syria.

And what's more, if we're talking about unified Syria, and this is the idea - I'm not speaking now about Kurdish issue, it's a special issue - but as far as the future of Syria is concerned, even the Kurds believe that there can be a sort of special status, but at the same time they are talking about unified Syria as well.

So I believe this idea can only be implemented if main political forces in Syria find common ground and find certain compromise. Otherwise, they will go on and on.

**A. L.:** Of course Syria, and indeed Iraq, were all a product of the Sykes-Picot agreement at the end of World War I. So they're not necessarily natural frontiers. But you don't support the idea of partition in Syria, then.

**I.Z.:** No, nobody supports the idea. I mean, formally, since there is resolution 2254 - it's the resolution of the Security Council - nobody supports the partition of Syria. It might happen, it's another question. But formally nobody supports it. And as far as Sykes-Picot is concerned, you know, I wonder why we now accuse both Sykes and Picot for drawing borders in 1916. It's so funny, because otherwise there would be some (inaudible) and when we are talking about so-called natural borders, only island states can say that they have really natural borders. As for the other countries they all have borders which are not very natural, which divide different ethnic groups and different confessional groups. But well, what can you do about it. You know, after all there are modern states in the Middle East right now. Unfortunately, we are watching the crisis of the nation states - it's true - in the Middle East. But the question is whether

there've ever been nation states in Western understanding of this formula, of this format. I believe they have never been. Because the identity, ethnic identity, tribal identity, confessional identity is much more important than the identity with the state – this is first. Second, there are no institutions or very weak institutions. And the third, there is no notion of common interests, values and also common deeds, which unite the nation, you know. And in some countries there is. We can speak about Egypt to a certain extent, we can say that in Tunisia the situation is a bit different. But still, unfortunately this nation state in Western understanding of the notion has never been set up in the region. Probably in the future, but right now we can say there is none.

**A.L.:** If I may, as a final question, before I let you go. You'll know there seems to be a new wave of populism taking place across Europe, and indeed America as well. And we saw it in Britain, first of all with a Scottish referendum, then of course we had Brexit, now we've had Donald Trump elected. And just recently, yesterday, of course the Italians had a referendum which all went wrong. So is this populism regarded with some interest in Moscow, or do you feel that it might overtake Moscow itself?

**I.Z.:** Well, you are right that populism right now is a sort of general trend which we're watching. But just to say it's populism and that's all, I wouldn't agree with. Because if we take the election of Trump, for example. There are certain social groups which were neglected. It's a sort of protest, you know. I believe there are a lot of groups, unfortunately, in Europe whose opinion has never been taken into consideration, who also were neglected. It's not just to please these people, but it's their desire to get certain voice. They're probably not the best and the brightest, but they are there and there are many of them. So now they want their voice be heard. Is this populism? I'm not sure. I'm not sure, because they exist and in certain states they are forming a majority right now. Of course, as I said, probably their demands are not always very balanced and pragmatic, and it should be corrected by those who are elected by their support. But this is what we have now. We should decide how we deal with the situation. We should study nowadays a new sociology because I believe that there is a crisis of the old sociology, really. We should study the society. I have just come from Uzbekistan, I was an observer at the elections of the president of Uzbekistan. And when I discussed the situation with my local colleagues, with Uzbek colleagues, they all say that what we need now is the study of the society, what kind of societies we have. And it pertains not only to Central Asia, but to Europe, and to the United States, and to Russia.

**A.L.:** It seems to be manifested as a form of petty nationalism.

**I.Z.:** Well yes, I agree this is the rise of nationalism. But you know, it is not the first tracks of nationalism, really. There were different waves in the history when the nationalism would come to the forefront. And sometimes it is even positive, because it helps to strengthen the state structure. Sometimes it is absolutely negative because it's ruining the state and ruining the society. But again, it's up to us to decide how to deal with it, and to know who represents really what kind of nationalism. It can be absolutely neutral and it can be at the same time very, very negative as well.

**A.L.:** Professor, thank you very much, that's it from me. I'm very grateful to your fascinating tour.

**C.P.:** Professor, thank you, thank you for your time. We hope we can pick up the discussion at a later time also, so we'll come back to you at some point. Thank you very, very much for your time.

**I.Z.:** Thank you, it was my pleasure. All the best to you both.



---

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION\*

---

Ephraim Sneh\*\*

5-7 December 2016

### **The Role of Iran in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Greater Middle East**

*General Sneh expresses his position that Iran's regional role is essentially negative, as its advocacy of Islamic extremism is not much different from ISIS. He also argues that post-Palestinian solution, Israel could become part of a regional Sunni coalition against Iran.*

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** Welcome to the East Mediterranean Forum. My cohost this morning is Marta Murzanska and with us we have Dr. Ephraim Sneh, retired Brigadier General with the Israel Defense Forces, former member of the Knesset, and former Minister of Health and Transportation. Dr. Sneh, good morning and thank you for being with us.

**Ephraim Sneh (E.S.):** My pleasure as always.

**C.P.:** Dr. Sneh, you were very kind to join our discussion on Iran and its general role in the Eastern Mediterranean. So let me start with a question. It's been more than one year after the nuclear deal with Iran. In your view, how has this affected Iran's behavior and its objectives in the region?

**E.S.:** The deal didn't change the goals of Iran, didn't change the behavior. Because the entire nuclear deal between United States and five so-called powers and Iran ignores the strategy of Iran in general. Ignores what are the real ambitions of the regime in Tehran. They concentrate on one of the tools of this regime to obtain its objectives, and this is the nuclear project. And they succeeded to postpone, fully, to postpone the building of Iranian nuclear bomb, but to remain, to keep all the rest of the policy as they were intact. What I mean by this is the strategic goal of the regime in Tehran is to be an Islamist superpower, the defender of Muslims wherever they are, and to be - not only to be a hegemon in the region - to be a superpower. And the famous quotation is of the previous president: the setting sun is America, the rising sun is Iran. This is the ambition. And since the Iranian leadership are very, very smart and pragmatic in pursuing their imperial ambitions, they decided, since they've suffered from a growing

\* Transcript. Part of the e-conference "The Latest Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean," held by the East Med Forum between 5 and 7 December 2016.

\*\* Brigadier General, Israel Defense Forces (Retired); Chairman, S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, Netanya Academic College

economic pressure called the sanctions, they decided to sacrifice for a while the nuclear project in order to gain more achievements in other domains which all of them serve the final strategic goal. It concentrated in enrichment of uranium and production of what is called heavy water - a fissile material for the bomb. But all the rest - no change, no sanctions, nothing. What they have in mind is to buy time by the nuclear deal and in this time to advance in other domains and territories in order to achieve the final goal. Okay, so they... America - the Obama administration - gave them actually a respectable status around the international and the regional table, for instance regarding Syria, which we should refer to it, but they legitimized a regime that given its human rights record, its terrorist activity, everything, does not deserve legitimacy but the contrary. They have to be a pariah regime. And America gave them legitimacy, and as we know, in a way mitigated what remained from the previous sanctions. For instance, if they had problem now to comply with the new policy of the international banks, the administration facilitated them not fully comply, but to live with it.

Now, let's see what are they doing and how it affects countries in the region, including Cyprus.

And I will start with Lebanon. Iran completed its takeover of Lebanon. The president of Lebanon is a close ally of Hezbollah, the militia which controls actually everything in Lebanon - the government, now also the presidency - and they turned Lebanon to an Iranian province. You cannot take a decision in Lebanon without the consent of Hezbollah, which is obviously a proxy of Iran. Hezbollah has no status if you remove the link with Iran, militarily, as I mention. So just at your doorstep, Cyprus, you have an Iranian province which inside their soul despises Christianity, considers them - the Christians - as infidels, as godless.

Now, Syria. Since Bashar al-Assad, who will remain in power, and this will be almost for sure the outcome of the new Putin-Trump understanding, and of course, because of the heavy, massive Russian involvement, Assad will remain in power. Assad owes a lot to Hezbollah and to Iran. Iran kept him alive. He owes his life to Teheran. He owns his life to Hezbollah. So Syria will not - no matter what somebody will say - Syria will remain in the sphere of Iranian dominance. Not influence; dominance. Because Assad lives at the mercy of Khamenei and Putin. Period. So, Syria, what will remain from Syria, will be an Iranian - Russian base - but also Iranian base at our doorstep, in the shore of the Mediterranean. And that's the way how Iran through continuation of the policy of intervention and subversion succeeded to have a foothold along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean: from the boarder of Turkey to Israel, including Lebanon. And I will speak later even about tiny Gaza.

Now, Iraq. Again, the government in Iraq is more and more under the influence of Iran. This is a Shia government. The Shiite militias trained, supported by Iran, they are playing a major role in all the military operations against Isis, but to expand the rule of Baghdad over the country. You see them in the north, you see them in the west close to Jordan - an ally of the United States, a moderate country - and they threw this militia, they get closer to the border Iraq-Iran. So, actually Iran took over Baghdad, let alone the southern Shiite provinces.

Now, one of the aspirations of Iran since the taking over of Iraq is to couple the oil production of Iran and the oil production of Iraq, and to take the combination of the two above the Saudi oil production, and to take the role of Saudi Arabia as the one who calls the shot in the global oil market. But for all other strategic purposes the taking over of Iraq is a strategic, historic goal of Iran.



Yemen. What they succeeded recently to do is to use the western shore of Yemen which is the eastern shore of Bab el Mandeb and militarily to take the possible control of this critical maritime pass way. They succeeded to hit Emirati ship and to open fire on several American warships, something that was never done before.

Even in Palestine they try to hug the Hamas, to support it and to activate a proxy of their own in Palestine, which is the Islamic Jihad, which is there. Like Hezbollah in Lebanon, this is an Iranian proxy. And this organization becomes more and more active.

They try now to use the distress of the Kurds to mitigate their dependence on Turkey and to open them an oil pipeline to Iran, and by doing so to increase their influence in Kurdistan. So what we see is a policy of subversion and political expansion in all the region, and it is backed by a very, very ambitious conventional military buildup.

In the last fifteen months since the Iran nuclear deal they several times tested their long-range ballistic missiles which are capable to carry the bomb and to be used as a leverage over countries which are 2,000 kilometers away. They gave to the Russians a shopping list of military equipment of ten billion dollars, including anti-aircraft systems – the most advanced - and the most advanced version of the Russian jet fighters and long-range bombers. So to sum it up, Iran continues its military buildup, its support of terrorism and its subversion in any regional country that they are able to penetrate. And the list, as we see, is very long. So what's happened is that Iran has come to the East Mediterranean, they have direct access to East Mediterranean through Syria and Lebanon, and at the moment they want to do so with their long-range missiles, with their coast-sea missiles they can become a military player in the east Mediterranean.

And now I will answer your questions.

**C.P.:** You say these are the objectives of Iran. But what about its proxies? I mean, do they share this worldview of Iran, or are they opportunistically benefiting from Iran's help and maybe at some point will not continue to march with it?

**E.S.:** The only important proxy which is not Shiite and is Sunni, it is Hamas. But when Hamas needs arms and money, they say, "Put aside the Shiite-Sunni divide, let's go with the Iranians." And the Iranians say, "Though they are Sunni, we shall support them because they give us access to the house of Israel." So this is, I think, the only exception. The Houthis are a version of Shiites, let alone the Shiites in Lebanon, but these are the two classical examples how Iran uses Shiite minorities in various countries as a basis to build a strong and powerful militia. Whoever serves their interest, they extend their hand to him. The best example: the Christian general Aoun, which is now president of Lebanon, is their proxy. So generally, the proxies religiously, and of course politically, they are part of the Iranian, let's say, core ideology or religion. But others, in spite of the Sunni-Shiite rivalry, they go with it.

**Marta Murzanska (M.M.):** I wanted to ask you about Hamas. What are the relations between Hamas and Iran at the moment, especially in the context of the conflict in Syria?

**E.S.:** Hamas, since it is politically isolated, on one hand they enjoy a very open support of Turkey - Turkey is the political sponsor of Hamas. But Turkey and Qatar is not enough, and they keep all the time open channel today to Iran, mainly to receive arms and financing, which they badly need. So this is the dependence of Hamas on Iran. Hamas also has other sponsors,

which is Turkey and Qatar.

**C.P.:** Coming back to the previous points that you had made. We were discussing the proxies and how far they would follow Iran. One of the elements of Iranian policy is nationalism. There is a strong Iranian nationalist element. It's not just religious. Does this create a limit to how far Hezbollah, or the Iraqis, or the Syrians, and so on, will march side-by-side with Iran?

**E.S.:** Let's make no mistake. The alliance, the connection of Hezbollah to Iran is very, very profound. It has nothing to do with Lebanese nationalism. They are totally bending the national interest of Lebanon toward what is important for Iran. They are the proxies in the full sense of the word. They don't care about any other interest but the Iranian. And the best example: what destruction, devastation and suffering they brought on Lebanon just because they served the goals of Iran, for example in 2006, in the years before after 1982. So there is no contradiction between the proxies to Iran and any nationalism, Iranian or other. The Houthis want to take over Yemen, so they don't see any contradiction between their aspiration to take over Yemen, or at least big part of Yemen, and the Iranian nationalism. It is nothing to interfere with their ambitions. So Iranian nationalism, which is no doubt an ingredient, a certain ingredient in the Iranian policy and ideology, does not deter other nations to work with it.

**M.M.:** You've mentioned Hezbollah's complete alignment with Iranian interests in the region. But how do the Lebanese people perceive it? For example, has the Hezbollah's involvement in Syria affected its position in Lebanon in any way?

**E.S.:** There is a great deal of resentment in Lebanon, even among the Shiites, about the service which Hezbollah gives to Iran, and the price the Lebanese are paying. By the way, Hezbollah lost hundreds of people in Syria in the war. And people are not satisfied with this. In the beginning they even tried to hide the fact that Lebanese are coming in coffins back to Lebanon. They didn't disclose the names, they made their funerals almost secretly. Why? Because the Lebanese people, including the Shiites, don't like to be the spear of Iran. But through the methods of brutality Hezbollah imposes its will on the Shiite community in Lebanon, and on Lebanon in general. They are stronger. They enjoy the massive support of a regional power, which is Iran. The Sunnis led by Hariri, the Christians, they don't have anyone on whom to lean. The West did not decide to support the Christians, to support the Sunnis. They enjoy some Saudi support. But not the extent and the forceful way the Iranians did it to Hezbollah. So the rest of Lebanon suffers, but Hezbollah imposes its will on the entire country, and they govern the country absolutely.

**M.M.:** You've mentioned that with the recent presidential elections in Lebanon, Lebanon has become even more dominated by Iran. What can that mean for Israel?

**E.S.:** For us it didn't change a lot, because more than 100,000 rockets and missiles were deployed in Lebanon targeted in our towns and villages long ago. The election of Michel Aoun as the president of Lebanon gave an official and symbolic evidence to a reality that we are watching twenty years and more - that Lebanon becomes a province of Iran, and from our point of view a launching pad for missiles and rockets. Thousands of them were aimed at targets in Israel in 2006 and now the number is more than 100,000. The numbers of missiles per capita in Israel is higher - targeted at us - is higher than any other country in the world, even in the days of the Cold War. It's unprecedented.

**C.P.:** Where does Qatar come into this whole picture?

**E.S.:** Qatar plays a policy of its own, and they can afford to do so given the immense wealth they enjoy, but they have put themselves against Saudi Arabia, against the other Sunni members of the GCC. Their major partner is Turkey, and they use their influence to promote a strategic interest that is contradictory to those of the other Sunni countries. And they have, I would say, open channels with Iran. They cooperate in many issues, they are not militarily partners of Iran, but they do not consider themselves as opponents of Iran.

**C.P.:** But this new military base that the Turks are establishing in Qatar - does that affect the relationship with Iran or not?

**E.S.:** The Qataris are playing in all the quarters. They are walking simultaneously on two rocks. And they are walking on more than two rocks. They maintain their contacts with Turkey, they maintain their contacts with Iran, and they are still members of the GCC, which is the alliance of the Sunni Gulf countries. But the bottom line, especially given their support of Al Jazeera which is a tool of instigation in the region, they're playing a very negative role. But remember another ally of Qatar. They host some of the US navy ships in the region. So they're everywhere. They say they have unlimited sources of money, and they play a role whenever and wherever they can, generally a very negative one.

**M.M.:** I wanted to go back to Iran and specifically to Iran and Islamic State (ISIS). Iran has been trying to portray itself as a credible actor in the fight against ISIS. Can it be perceived as such?

**E.S.:** They oppose ISIS because ISIS tried to take from them the representation of the Muslim cause. And since ISIS is a Sunni movement, or Sunni army or entity, and they are Shiites, so there is a contradiction between them. But when you judge them according to their ideology, they are not much different. This is the very extremist interpretation of Islam, a very fanatic one. So of course when in their interest it suits them to say we are fighting ISIS. And America is easily falling in this trap and consider them as their partners, specifically in the current situation. But as far as the global vision of this regime, they are the same as ISIS, no difference: that Islam will dominate the world, that the infidels will either convert to Islam or will vanish, to say it in a gentle way. There is no difference, they have the same ideology.

**C.P.:** How does Israel view the Russian-Iranian cooperation? I mean, you mentioned that Russia is providing Iran with sophisticated weaponry. But more broadly I think in Syria, let's say, would Israel envision a permanent presence of Russia there, with Iranian cooperation or without it?

**E.S.:** The Russians are in Syria for an indefinite future. And the bottom line, as far as Israel is concerned, is that the axis Tehran-Damascus is bolstered dramatically by the Russian presence, and (inaudible) will not change it. They are there in order to help Assad who is a strategic ally of Iran, and this axis is now by far stronger than it was before the Russian presence. It makes for us everything more complicated. But Israel keeps good relations with Russia, Prime Minister Medvedev visited Israel just at the beginning of November, and Israel tries to adopt to the new reality. And according to foreign publications, we acted in the vicinity of Damascus militarily only few days ago, in spite of the Russian presence. So if they threaten Israel, we keep ourselves the right to act in Syria in spite of the Russian presence.

**C.P.:** What do you expect from a Trump administration?

**E.S.:** The Trump administration is unpredictable and all attempts to forecast may disappoint those who have expectations. But there are several components of the next administration foreign policy which are predictable. One of them is accommodation with Russia. I believe that the importance of the Middle East will be diminished for the next administration, mainly because – again, it's a forecast – a new administration will encourage the oil production inside the United States, and it will make the Middle East, as far as oil supply is concerned, far less important. So these are the only possible guidelines of a future policy. But it's too early to predict. We can see surprises of all kinds. At this very moment there is yet no secretary of state. Maybe tomorrow, maybe next week, but it's too early to judge.

**C.P.:** Going back to Saudi Arabia and its rivalry with Iran. How is that affecting Israel, and what is the view from Tel Aviv on that?

**E.S.:** I don't know the view of Tel Aviv because in Israel there is no one view. I can tell you only my view. And I advocate this vision for relatively many years. If we solve the conflict with the Palestinians, we can build a very strong alliance vis-à-vis the Iranians: Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Emirates, Jordan, Israel. We can all work together politically, economically, militarily. You ask about Trump. Just last week I published in (inaudible) in Washington a piece which calls Trump who says that he wants to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that this is his ambition, I offered him a deal: Palestinian state and the creation of the alliance between Israel and the countries that I've mentioned. It gives security to Israel, sovereignty to the Palestinians, and a decreased need of American presence in the region. So maybe he will adopt this policy. But so far, the Arab countries cannot join us substantially in front of the Iranians, because as long as we occupy the West Bank, and there is no Israeli-Palestinian agreement, and there are no two states between Jordan and the Mediterranean, such operation is impossible. And this is the main fault of the Israeli official policy, that the reluctance to reach two-state solution depriving Israel of fantastic regional opportunities.

**C.P.:** But if I hear you correctly, the only problem between Iran and Israel is the Palestinians. If the Palestinian issue goes away, then revolutionary Iran will hug Israel?

**E.S.:** They will not hug and they will not kiss. This is exactly the point. The extremist Islam reject the existence of Israel no matter how friendly we are with the Palestinians. They don't want to see a Jewish state in the Middle East. And this is what makes Iran so damaging to the cause of peace in the region. They don't say, just give this part of the territory to the Palestinians and everything will be fine. No. They advocate – and Khamenei wrote a book about it – how Israel should be eliminated. So it's a mistake to think that if we strike a deal with the Palestinians, Iran or ISIS...

**C.P.:** But you feel that Saudi Arabia thinks differently?

**E.S.:** They discovered that Israel can be a positive member of the regional community, yes. I know for sure that if we solve the conflict with the Palestinians – and this is the essence of the Arab initiative – all those countries that I mentioned will normalize the relations with Israel. In the year 2002, the then late Saudi king, he proposed to the Arabs to accept his peace initiative, and it was adopted by the entire Arab League. All the countries adopted it, no one objected to the Saudis. And they repeat to say the Arab Peace Initiative is still on the table. And the essence of this initiative was, "If you relinquish the territory, we will normalize the relations between you and all the Arab countries. So as far as I know – and I know – it's still the Saudi policy.

**C.P.:** Would you ever envision Iran joining the mainstream of international community, perhaps a post-revolutionary Iran? Or is that too far into fictional thinking?

**E.S.:** It's not far-fetched at all. At the moment that the Iranian people will control Iran – not the ayatollahs – at the moment that Iran will be a democratic and secular state, Iran will be an important member of the international community, no doubt about it. And the friend of Israel. But this regime which is characterized by the most obscurant religious philosophy, the most extreme interpretation of Islam with a very antagonistic and offensive nationalism, they cannot serve as a constructive member of the international community when they want to take over everything. It doesn't go together.

But I emphasize time and again: the Iranian people is our friend. There were good relations historically, since the days of the king Koresh thousands of years ago, there were good relations between Jews and Iranians. And that's what will happen at the moment when the ayatollahs and the Revolutionary Guard will be out of power – it will happen. Unfortunately, the soft policy of the West towards the ayatollahs discourage the Iranian people to stand up and revolt.

**C.P.:** Dr. Sneh, thank you very much for your very interesting thoughts and we hope to continue the discussion.

**E.S.:** Thank you.



---

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION\*

---

Yair Hirschfeld\*\*

5-7 December 2016

### What Would Be Necessary to Rethink the Iran P5+1 Agreement?

*Professor Hirschfeld discusses policy options of how to deal with Iran through containment and confrontation based on regional and global cooperation, and a different methodology of addressing the Israeli-Palestinian problem by reaching for an “agreement” between Israel and the regional Arab states before agreeing with the Palestinians.*

**Christodoulos Pelaghias (C.P.):** We have with us Dr. Yair Hirschfeld of the S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, and my co-host is Air Commodore Andrew Lambert. Dr. Hirschfeld, welcome.

**Yair Hirschfeld (Y.H.):** Welcome, I'm very happy to be with you. It's a wonderful occasion and a great challenge.

**C.P.:** Dr. Hirschfeld, you were going to tell us some more about the Iran P5+1 deal and the state of play, and perhaps share your thoughts with us. Please go ahead.

**Y.H.:** I'll be happy to do so. Actually, I wanted to start with telling you what should be changed. Because the assumption is that President Trump and the entire team that he's assembling now is committed to reopen the discussions with Iran under the assumption and the argument that I personally share most of it, that the agreement was good but far from being good enough. I'll tell you why it was good. It was good that they seriously put the Iranian efforts to develop a military nuclear armament on the slower track. It is postponing the dangerous day when they will have nuclear arms, but it's postponing it maybe not far more than ten or eleven years. Which may be an important success but it still is not good enough.

I'll tell you what was lacking in the agreement. There were three or four things lacking. What was lacking is a far more excessive control system of what is going on, although there are quite serious control matters. What is lacking is control system of the missile system and the capability to deliver, the ballistic missiles armed with nuclear carriers - that is not included. What is probably worst of all is that the terror activities, the hegemonic tendencies of Iran in

\* Transcript. Part of the e-conference “The Latest Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean,” held by the East Med Forum between 5 and 7 December 2016.

\*\* Vice-Chair, S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, Netanya Academic College

the Gulf and beyond, these have been strengthened and reinforced by the agreement instead of weakened.

So if we want to change things, these are the things you would like to change. We would like to change an understanding that there will be no day when they can have the bomb. Not in ten, not in twenty years they will have nuclear arms, and the armament developments will stop, and that other aggressive means they can develop in order to dominate the entire area, and actually Europe and United States also, that this will be strongly limited. And we obviously want Iran to stop its support for terror organizations like Hamas, like Hezbollah and other groups.

Now, the question is not what we want to change, but the real question is how we can achieve this. And I will give you first a theoretical answer, and then I'll look at the theoretical answer if you're okay.

There are three options. The first option, and option that was used actually in the past, is an effective means of coercive policy. For coercive policy you need five conditions. And I would question the fact that I don't believe that these five conditions are all in place.

The first condition is a very clear and very simple demand that has to be brought forward. And actually we have more than a simple demand. We have group of demands that have to be put ahead towards the Iranians. You need, second - and this is more difficult - an all-embracing regional and international coalition to support the demand. And it's not clear we can achieve this. Then third, you would need sanctions to apply in order to make clear that we are serious. Now, forth, you will have to make clear that you are willing to use military power to obtain the outcome you need, not necessarily immediately, but in the process if you are going along. And fifth, you need to give the Iranians a way out, a certain face-saving they can actually go along with the demand, but not lose too much face to their internal political set up. So aggressive, coercive policy would demand all these five points. I'm not sure if we have the capability to put this in power now, but it is an option that we should look at.

The second option that we have is an option of containment. And containment would be that you build a strong international regional coalition to minimize the danger they can do, mainly on the regional affairs, mainly on terror affairs, and mainly making it clear that you can renew, you will take and renew sanctions whatever moment you want, and in any way you can go ahead and make further demands of them.

And the third option is to move to negotiations. Negotiations where they could be part of it. Now, the way it was done in the past, the way it actually happened was that the Obama administration, with Israeli insistence and with the support, strong support of Great Britain, France, went along the logic from coercive policy approach to a containment approach to negotiations. And I would be very happy if this would be pragmatic. If you would ask me, I'm in a quiet room (inaudible) but I will tell you I don't think this is very doable today. And I'll tell you why. We've been gone through this and there are too many players. And the sense is that the agreement that has been signed has been a great achievement. You have Russia who wants to support Iran strongly, at least in some ways, and the American move against Iran in doing it, you have the Chinese who will not probably go along with it, Europeans have also difficulties, and in United States itself there's opposition against the strong state arm coercive policy approach. And it won't be easy at all for Trump to build the necessary coalition that would make it necessary to present a successful coercive policy. So it is clear that this is what is going



to happen.

Now, it is clear, I would say that this is altogether bad news approach. But I'll try to give you good news approach. And basically I'll give you my major conclusion. The major conclusion is that in order to build a successful containment, I believe the key in many ways lies in Israel and Saudi Arabia. And the containment has to be part of a wider concept, and the containment has to be different on different issues. On some issues it may have two different approaches. It may have a different approach to Syria, a different approach on the Gulf, and different approach on the wider regional concert and the international activity.

Now, from an Israeli point of view, the assumption today is that Israel's interest is clearly to build a close security alliance with the Sunni Arab states. And assumption goes actually beyond that. The assumption is not that this is only an Israeli interest, but it is because containing Teheran is a very substantial interest of Saudi Arabia, of Jordan, of Egypt, of the United Arab Emirates, of the Gulf Council countries. That there is a common interest in doing that. And for my understanding, Trump is in this concept. In this field on the Israeli-Sunni Arab theater of action, Trump is in a negotiating position. Trump can actually make a lot of moves to put this action together. You have today serious cooperation between Israel and Jordan, Israel and Egypt and also a little bit less between Israel and Saudi Arabia on the military areas. But it is necessary to upgrade it and to take it several points forward. We've got Prime Minister Netanyahu willing to pay an important price on the Palestinian issue on this matter, and it goes along with President Trump's demand to be in a negotiating position also in Israeli Palestinian arena. Now, I believe it cannot start on Israeli-Palestinian arena directly, it has to go via the regional circle. And we have to start negotiations here, Israel and Saudi Arabia, by the Israeli understandings with the Sunni Arab countries, and then follow up on the Palestinian side. On the Palestinian side there's also a potential negotiating position, and the potential negotiating position on the Palestinian side is actually what our prime minister quietly told the prime minister of the Netherlands. He said he's willing to do serious state building for the Palestinians where they are not allowed to do state-building today against some differentiated understandings on settlement activity, particularly in the settlement blocs. And whatever this deal will be, it would put Trump in a negotiating position with Israel, you have Trump in a negotiating position on Saudi Arabia-Israel, and then Saudi and Israeli-Arab Sunni understanding, on the Palestinian understanding, a possible negotiating position in the Israeli-Palestinian concept as a result of it, as an outcome of it. And I think this is a block that would starkly show Iran that they have to be very careful in causing too much trouble. It probably will cause serious Iranian provocations and it will be necessary to put the arrangements in place, but it will be creating new rules of game, new rules of understanding, it will make it clear that the Iranian aggression with Hamas and Hezbollah and al-Qaeda and all of these other "wonderful people" who are murderers and terrorists, that the Iranian support for these guys will cost a very serious and high price.

It is a different situation in Syria. We know from the Egyptian president, we know from King A that they fear that the devil we know is better than the devil we surely will get if the devil we know will go away. And you have a very clear position in most of the Arab world today that kicking Assad out of power now will create a very serious void which the most militant groups will move into and cause far more damage than it's done.

We also know that Russia must be involved. That in order to take action and contain Iran on one side it will be important to have some understandings with Russia on Syria too, so that you

contain Iran in the Gulf, you contain Iran in all the terror activities, but there may be some joint interests regarding Syria that one has to follow up.

My point of view would be essential and very, very important is to assist the Kurds in Syria to move ahead and strongly establish a de facto autonomy in close cooperation with the Kurdish autonomy in Iraq. And it will open up a new ways for stabilizing also Syria, and also Iraq, in a coordinated matter.

Now, the great question is how this will work together with Turkey? How will Turkey be part of it or will not be part of it? As much as I understand the tendency in Washington will be to reach out to Ankara. The tendency in Washington will be to seek a coordinated Turkish-Saudi-Arab-Israeli containment of Iran in coordination with Russia. I am not sure that this will work. I'm not sure that this would work because Egyptian-Turkish competition, Saudi-Turkish competition, basically the tendency of Erdogan to be all dominant or make it very difficult to force, to create one united position.

Now, the picture that I'm actually trying to paint is that if we want to go from coercive policy to containment to negotiations, I think we are going to fail. But if we are going to take the other way - from negotiations to containment - the negotiations actually build the ways and means of a containment, of effective containment of the Iranian aggressive activity, of effective containment that will make it possible to really revisit also the nuclear issues and the ballistic and missile issues. If we go from negotiations to containment, we can move then from containment to a coercive policy. But it does not work if we don't get the supportive coalition together.

Now, whether this is going to happen or not - I don't know. But by and large I think it is a policy concept that we could work on. You have to tell me how Cyprus comes into that picture. For my point of view there are many issues I didn't speak about. I didn't speak about the energy issue. I didn't speak about the military control of the Eastern Mediterranean, of preventing Iran and Russia to have a strong foothold in the Mediterranean, of strengthening Egypt and the presence of the situation of having a coordination with Israel, Cyprus, Greece and Egypt as a block that can strengthen Western and the regional interest in this area, also in the energy component, also the security component, also in the promotion of trade altogether. This has to be somehow part of it but if the negotiations on the Gulf, on Israeli-Saudi and Israeli-Arab cooperation and have to be different, if this is a different block it will fit in into it. But I am far more to listen to you how you see it, because you have far more knowledge and far greater understanding. I was saying so far my introductory remarks.

**Andrew Lambert (A.L.):** Can I ask you the first question then? You seem to be optimistic, or perhaps not as much as optimistic, but at least you hinted that you thought there was a possibility you could make a change, so that Iran could never have nuclear weapons. Did I understand that you think that is a real possibility, or is that just a utopian ideal?

**Y.H.:** I think, you know, if Iran has nuclear weapons under this regime, this is a very, very dangerous situation. "Never say never" in politics, but if they've postponed it for ten years, you can postpone it for another ten years, and for another ten years, and you definitely have to take an action not to allow Iran to have this toy that can destroy the world. And from a Jewish point of view, an Israeli point of view, it's an existential threat that we take very serious, you know. We live in a very small place and if they drop one nuclear bomb or two nuclear bombs at us, the

disaster is outrageous. Now, we have deterrence capacity and we are serious in using our deterrence capacity. I would not rely totally on actual rationalism of the Iranian regime. The logic of taking irrational steps is often very, very serious.

**A.L.:** Do you think there will be an attitudinal change than between now and, say, ten years from now? Will the current crop of young Iranians now be in a position of power and say, "We don't really want this capability"? Is there some means of inducing a change in the mentality of the young?

**Y.H.:** I think the answer is you have to work on it, in many ways. I'm just reading the book on Kissinger. In 1953, he suggested exactly activities how to do this with the Soviet Union in a policy of containment. That's not only containment but has a psychological warfare component, where you reach into the Iranian society. I'll only give you an example. We have a wonderful singer Rita who sings wonderful Persian songs and they are broadcasted to Iran, and they open up hearts, and they create attitudinal change. Now, this song alone doesn't do it, you have to do far more than that. You need a policy of both containment and confrontation.

You need a policy of what I would call confrontation-dialogue at the same time as containment before a policy can succeed. It's a strong confrontation regarding us and Hamas and Hezbollah and all of the support of the US, and there's a dialogue on other areas. And I think you can pursue this quite effectively and we have a lot of means that have been learned in the last sixty-seventy years that we can apply. The answer is "yes". Yes, there can be an attitudinal change, and I would say more than that. You know, my PhD is on Iran. What has happened in Iran is a tragedy. There was an ideological change. And there's a new regime since 1979, but they've lost the hearts of the people. Iranian society is far more progressive, far more liberal than some of the Arab societies. But they're suppressed by totalitarian, authoritarian regime that keeps itself in power with the means that we do not justify. And I think we have means to deal with it, and we have means to also opening up, to also put them in place. I think it is worth to think of the necessary attitudinal change, yes.

**A.L.:** Can I ask you, do you think the Iranians will actually stop any further development whatsoever over these next ten or eleven years? The reason I ask this question: I was in India in 1997. And it was very interesting to me. They said, of course, "India does not have a nuclear weapon." We said, "What do you mean by that"? The fuse is over there and the bomb is over the other side of the room. Or are we in a situation where genuinely it is a long, long way away, and there's not just a question of joining up the parts, it will actually take them a considerable period of time to manufacture even if, say, Donald Trump withdrew from the Iranian agreement?

**Y.H.:** You know, in 2003 Iranians suggested to stop the nuclear activities. And they suggested to stop the support for Hamas and Hezbollah. And it was out of ignorance rejected by both President Bush and Prime Minister Sharon. It was an opportunity to do it, but it was no coincidence that it happened in 2003. It was in 2003 when the Americans had taken an active military action against Afghanistan and active military action against Iraq, and the Iranians felt themselves in a dire and complicated situation. It means there was a sense of physical containment in a certain sense of encirclement. I don't think that this can simply be repeated, but it means that under certain conditions the Iranian decision-making apparatus will go along with the balance that are coming from a united coalition, and directed to them and against them. And I definitely think that this is essential to take along this way, and show them that we

are not enemies of Iranian people. We have enormous respect of Iranian culture, of Iranian achievements, of Iranian vested interests. And Iran can play a stabilizing role in the area, and on some issues it does it. And against the – what do you call it - the drug traffic from Afghanistan, Iran is playing a positive role. And in the other areas Iran can create a stabilizing role. But there has to be... It cannot be on win-lose position. It has to be in a win-win position. And in negotiations, you don't negotiate only because you're nice to each other, "Please be nice and don't do this." But you negotiate also with hard power. What I'm suggesting is to use substantial hard power in order to have effective soft power dialogue with them to see how to get into the most stabilizing mode of action. And the tendency in Iran is a fertile ground to do that. There's some nationalism, there's a fertile ground to do that. The difficulty is the institutional setup of the Iranian structure. But you have moderating forces in Iran that are getting stronger. And there's no reason not to work on that.

**A.L.:** Is there a role for cyber warfare and monitoring Iranian activity?

**Y.H.:** I have difficulty using my computer, so I belong to the last millennium, not to this. But the answer is "yes", obviously. There is a cyber-activity also influencing people, also Twitter, Facebook, and things like this and in many other ways. There're other cyber activities, Israel has been quite good on it. In cyber protection 20% of the world industry on cyber protection comes from Israel, so we are... Our population is a little bit less than 20% of the world population. So yes, obviously it plays a role. I'm not the person to ask about it.

**C.P.:** To bring you back to those five points so that I understand a little bit better that methodology. The five points you mentioned was to impose amendments on Iran or to entice them to come back to negotiating table?

**Y.H.:** I'm quoting academic theoretical work that is out there, speaking about coercive policy, if you look at the articles and the work done by political scientists. I'm a historian and my enemies are the political scientists, but sometimes I look at what they write. And the political scientists have... There's good work on that saying that any coercive policy needs these five components: a clear demand, supportive coalition, sanctions, a willingness to use military power, and the way out for the other side too. To put these five conditions into place is not easy. What I'm actually saying is that it would be better to have these five points in place and then go to containment negotiations. But we have to go the other way around because we won't get those five conditions. We have allies here who don't want to put these five conditions into place.

**C.P.:** The objective would be to renegotiate the deal or to show a very strong hand? Because it seems to me that the climate may or may not be right for a renegotiation, because for the Iranians the current deal is quite good. So asking them to renegotiate something which already satisfies them, you're right, you need a level of coercion. But on the other hand you don't want to abandon it completely. I mean, it's a practical issue, you're right. This is a little theoretical.

**Y.H.:** You know, diplomacy is the art of the possible. What I actually said is negotiations don't... What you're saying, and I agree with you, I wouldn't say to start the meeting negotiations with Iran to reopen them. You're right, why should they say yes? But if you start negotiate building a containment structure on them, which you have to negotiate with the Russians, with the Saudis, with the Arabs, and then you build one building stone after the other.

**A.L.:** Can I ask you just about the use of Turkey. You've mentioned the Kurds in a number of times. And I was the British commander for the northern no-fly zone for a period and we were charged directly, we were looking after the Kurds and the northern no-fly zone in the northern part of Iraq. But I'm very aware of the absolute hostility of Turkey to anything that involves the Kurds. It seems to me that if we were trying to get Turkey involved, and the Kurds involved, it's going to be clearly quite difficult, isn't it, to get some sort of combined position to go to the Iranians with?

**Y.H.:** No doubt, and the Iranians have difficulty with the Kurds. The truth is that the Kurds... Turkey has managed the Kurdish problem in Iraq in a very intense and a very interesting manner. They have invested heavily in the Kurdish autonomous area and they have turned the Iraqi Kurds into a potential. I don't want to say ally, but they almost created a Finlandization - the Finland-kind of situation between the Soviet Union and Finland - between them and the Kurds in Iraq. Because the economic structure in the Kurdish areas in Iraq is strongly, strongly supported, maintained by Turkey. The difficulties are in Syria. Now, in Syria you have got two different Kurdish groups. You have the basic, the group supported by the PKK who the Turkish will not be very happy to deal with, and you have the Kurdish groups that are supported by Barzani, by the Iraqi side. There is an ongoing effort by people from your country - I don't want to go into details - but there is an ongoing British effort to mediate between the two Kurdish groups in Syria. And this is has to be part of the concept. You know, Iranians will not get what they want, but they will get some things they want. The Turks will not get what they want, but some things they want. The truth is for Israel too. So the game is complicated, but you will need to have a policy of dialogue and confrontation with Turkey too, as much as with Iran and the others. It's easy to think, it's not easy to make. You may need a Kissinger in order to do these things and I'm not sure we have a Kissinger at hand. He's now ninety three years old, so too old to become secretary of state. But conceptually I think we have an idea that could work.

**A.L.:** Do you think the Turks actually have much leverage when it comes to discussions with the Iranians?

**Y.H.:** I think the Turks have an economic interest in relations with Iran. The Turks despise the Iranians, they fear the Iranians. But you know, politics are not always about love, necessity makes for strange bedfellows. I can tell you that in Germany... I was in Germany weeks ago. The Germans are very anti-Turkish and in some ways the situation is outrageous. You're asking Europe to get Turkey part of the European Union and on the other you oppose some of the other things, which is contradiction. In the end I believe that we have to talk more about Turkey. But in the end economic interests will have the upper hand. My sense is that in the United States there will be an outrage to have Turkey and not the opposite. We found more dialogue than containment and confrontation. And I assume that we agree that the more firm policy towards Turkey would be more effective. I don't think it will react in the short term.

**A.L.:** Can I press you as well on the likelihood of there being a Saudi Arabian bomb at some stage?

**Y.H.:** Part of the reason to prevent Iran from a bomb - if Iran has a bomb, Saudi Arabia three months later has also bomb.

**A.L.:** As soon as that?

**Y.H.:** Part of the danger of Iran having the bomb is that there will be a tremendous proliferation there, all the others will come after it. Because now everybody is going to be deadly afraid of them, they're afraid of the military power that it will give to Iran for conventional warfare, and then you'll have immediately reason to stop Iran which is exactly this: that proliferation will be outrageous and the non-proliferation concept will actually totally fail. If the non-proliferation concept will totally fail, it's the most dangerous development for humanity, not only for Israel.

**A.L.:** Of course the problem will be as if somebody does let the bomb off that would just be the first of many.

**Y.H.:** Short answer: yes.

**A.L.:** How far do you think the proliferation would extend? If Iran did get a bomb and then Saudis, how many other nations do you think would be likely to follow suit?

**Y.H.:** Egypt and Turkey.

**A.L.:** You think both of them?

**Y.H.:** And assume if we don't have a bomb, we would follow too.

**C.P.:** Following on the Saudis. You suggested that a Sunni Arab-Israeli-Saudi understanding would help in making Iranian containment more effective. What would be the nature of such an understanding? Would it be diplomatic, economic, military?

**Y.H.:** You know, we have this discussion in Israel. Our prime minister argues for technical reasons that he wants and there's an alliance with the Arab states without the Palestinians. If I am an academic, and not only an academic, with some experience in the region, I can tell my prime minister that without making substantial moves on the Palestinian front this will not happen. But if there's headway on the Israeli-Saudi understanding, it will mean far more security cooperation against incitement, against terror, against smuggling of arms, on economic issues, building up, having a coordinated strategy how to stabilize the region. (Inaudible) the package that has to be discussed. There has to be substantial headway with the two-state solution with the Palestinians. And there has to be resolution of all issues in one phase, you can never take a piece of paper that you could sign tomorrow that will not be worth the ink on it, not even the value of the paper. You need the process of a responsible Palestinian state that has to go along with it. And we can design such a process. We have all the knowledge, the knowledge of how to do it, and there's a lot of thinking going on in terms of how to promote, how to proceed in this direction.

**A.L.:** Can I press you a little bit on the hard power options? Because it seems to me the danger of a hard power threat is that one day you may have to carry it out. And if you do that, will the cause of non-proliferation be set back, I don't know, hundreds of years, if not permanently?

**Y.H.:** You have an Iranian hard power activity going on. You have Iranian hard power activity. They are paying for terror against Israel, they are paying for other activities in Yemen. They're doing a lot of military and proxy terror action which is all hard power. And you definitely need to confront this Iranian hard power with hard power action of your own. If it means an outright war? The answer is "no". Obviously the coercive policy, the aim of coercive policies is to prevent the war. The experience we have is that people who want peace, I come from the peace camp.

People who only want peace and they're not willing to take any action against it will not end up with peace. People are willing to say they're not for peace under every condition and not against military action under any condition will have a chance of succeeding. There's not only one way of power. We remember our former head of Mossad who died almost nine months ago. He was a wonderful man. He had a very limited window of using hard power, different forms of hard power. So the answer is hard power is not off the table. There are different forms and different ways of doing this. I'm a big supporter of Rupert Smith's book on the use of power that you probably will know. But in the end you need some kind of action, you have to make it clear that you are serious about what you say.

**A.L.:** Do you not think oil might be a better weapon - to put sanctions on their oil which they've just recently restarted, to threaten that you would not take their oil?

**Y.H.:** I'm not sure. I have to think about it. I don't think that... I'll tell you what the difficulty is. I don't want to undermine, I don't want to permit... It depends. I don't have a clear answer today. But maybe oil is the way.

**A.L.:** I'm intrigued. Do you think there are enough costs that you could impose on Iran surrogates, on Iran's allies, that your hard power would still be effective, certainly as a threat, or maybe as an actual force if you had to use it?

**Y.H.:** I don't want to shoot immediately and kill everybody immediately - don't misunderstand me. There are ways and means to show our determination is fair enough. Let's test these options one after the other.

**A.L.:** Sure.

**C.P.:** Just as a last question. What are the chances of amending the treaty in a way that it's more in Israel's favor? If you were a betting man, would you bet on it?

**Y.H.:** You know, against my own will, one year ago I made a bet that Trump would win the elections, although it wasn't my wish. But he did. Now I'm in a situation - I have no idea where Trump will take us. Whatever you tell me, I say this is possible. The issue is not betting one way or the other. The issue is try to be proactive for (inaudible) that makes sense, that he could follow it could be successful. So I'm resisting your suggestion to bet, one way or the other.

**C.P.:** Yair, thank you very much.





---

## CONFERENCE DISCUSSION\*

---

Farid Mirbagheri\*\*  
5-7 December 2016

### Political Islam in the Eastern Mediterranean

*Professor Mirbagheri discusses the nature and the reasons for the rise of post-colonial and post-democratic political Islam in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, including the failure of Western hegemony, modernization and democracy.*

**Marta Murzanska (M.M.):** Welcome to the East Mediterranean Forum. I have with me Professor Farid Mirbagheri from the University of Nicosia, an expert in international relations and in the Middle Eastern politics in particular. Professor Mirbagheri will be talking about political Islam in the Eastern Mediterranean. Professor, thank you very much for joining us today.

**Farid Mirbagheri (F.M.):** You're welcome, you're welcome. I'm very glad that you invited me.

**M.M:** Professor, how can we define political Islam and what role does it play in the Eastern Mediterranean?

**F.M.:** How can we define political Islam? It's a very interesting question. Political Islam can be characterized by three very important characteristics. One is, it's monopolistic. Political Islam believes it has a monopoly of the truth and it alone has it, and nobody else can share it. It's very all-consuming. Christianity has the same quality that they have the whole truth. In fact, it's a feature of Abrahamic traditions. Abrahamic religions generally are very monopolistic, unlike Buddhism that you can be a Buddhist and perhaps still have your denomination. But in Abrahamic religions you are either a Christian, and a Muslim or a Jew, and you can't be anything else. That's the first feature. And political Islam is very much that.

Second, it's absolutist. It's not relative to time and place. It's not something for here and now. It's something for everywhere, all of the time or all of the conditions. There is no relativity as such and it doesn't compromise on rules and regulations what they call Sharia. They're very absolutists.

Thirdly, they are universalistic. They think what they say applies to all over the world on this

\* Transcript. Part of the e-conference "The Latest Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean," held by the East Med Forum between 5 and 7 December 2016.

\*\* Professor of International Relations, University of Nicosia

planet. Perhaps if we go further, maybe to other planets, I don't know. These three features: monopolistic, absolutist and universalistic - which is again a trait that Islam shares with Christianity - that they believe they must be adopted by the whole of mankind. These are three important features of political Islam that I will refer to here just now.

What we have in terms of Eastern Mediterranean, we have political Islam, the most important one that we all know is ISIL, Islamic state in Iraq and the Levant, or ISIS, in Iraq and Syria - the names change. That's one and it came about after the untimely withdrawal of US troops from Iraq and it is now engaged in bloody battle with very different factions: with the Kurds, with Shias, with the Syrian government - the Assad government.

There is the al-Qaeda which claimed responsibility for 9/11 and other such terrorist acts, the difference being with ISIL that ISIL now claimed the central command for all Muslims: the *khilāfah*, or as they say in English 'caliphate'. They want to revive that and their leader claimed to be the ruler of all Muslims. Al-Qaeda didn't actually claim that.

ISIL is in Syria and in Libya. Al-Qaeda is in Syria again, in Libya. One of the significant features of ISIS is that despite its very fundamentalist nature, it has not said much about Israel, which has traditionally been perceived and considered as - because of the Arab-Israeli dispute, because of the Palestinian issue - as the enemy of the Arabs and Muslims. But ISIS is rather quiet on that.

Another feature of these Islamists is that they have centralized command, but have a very decentralized execution system. So they have these cells all over the world that are independent, autonomous, even though they are given codes, I suppose, what the nature of their act should be on the actual type and place. And I think they maintain a degree of autonomy and independence, which makes it a lot more difficult for them to be traced.

We have - again, I'm referring to Eastern Mediterranean - the political Islamist group Hezbollah that is a religious Shia Muslim group, is armed militia group. It's supported by Iran, it actually pays homage to Iran and Iranian government, is based in Lebanon and actually is a very powerful political power broker - we saw that lack of agreement with Hezbollah kept Lebanon without a president for two and a half years; recently they chose president Michel Aoun - that is regarded by many in the West, particularly, as an Islamist group, a group that believes in political Islam.

The other one, in Egypt, we have Muslim Brotherhood. 1928 it was established in Egypt by al-Banna and it's very powerful. They were in power for a year and half after the toppling of Mubarak government and now, as you know, the leader is in prison, and now there is a secular government. We will talk more about this later because it's very important.

We have also another Islamist group called Salafists. Salafists basically means people who are very conservative traditionalists. They are all over: they're in Tunisia, they're in Libya, they're in Egypt and Syria. They are perhaps not as flexible as some other fundamentalists, they just believe in very strict application of Sharia in one's social and even private life. But not as vociferous politically as some other Islamist groups.

We have then Hamas in Gaza - a Palestinian group, Sunni.

All these are Sunni fundamentalists, the exception was Hezbollah which is a Shia

fundamentalist group, or militia group. Hamas is in Gaza, it's a Palestinian splinter group that has its own government, its own structure and it's separated itself from Fatah - the mainstream Palestinian Authority which is recognized by the world - and that is regarded by many as fundamentalists.

One thing that I should say in very, very broad terms. I gave these three features of monopolistic, absolutist, and universalist, but I should add one important quality here and that is, in fundamentalist political Islam duties to God overwhelm and are prior, more important than the rights of human beings. A kind of situation that the Western Christian world may have experienced some six hundred, seven hundred years ago, when duties were far superior and more important - duties to the Almighty - than any rights one could have. And then later human rights were discovered and now in the West there are human rights that even God cannot take away. Now, in the Islamic world by and large, particularly with regard to political Islam, our duties to our Creator and maker are far more important than any human rights that we may claim for ourselves - that's extremely, extremely important. And that's, you can say, the conflict and contrast with the West and political Islam.

Allow me to say a few words about Eastern Mediterranean, why I think it's such an important region. It's an important region because it's a kind of buffer zone border between Europe and North Africa, and West Asia which we traditionally call Middle East. If you look at Eastern Mediterranean, there is much that is happening and is important not just in the region, but perhaps the entire world. We have two very urgent crises: we have the Syrian civil war which is, I think, maybe the biggest civil war in human history, after, I think, what happened in Sudan. Six point six million people have been displaced. Some over four, nearly five million now refugees gone to Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan. And I think around a million are seeking asylum in Europe. This is a huge, huge issue.

And we have in Libya also a crisis. Now, the country has de facto been partitioned between government in the east and the west, and again we have people trying to leave the country. Both these issues present first of all a humanitarian crisis. A lot of these people are suffering. And suffering is extremely, extremely sad and tragic. And a lot of them trying to leave their countries and come to Europe, they died on the way to Europe - they drowned or by other calamities. Secondly, they have a political impact, these refugees, on Europe, on European cohesion, European Union cohesion. The question of migration and migrant workers has become an important, a very sensitive issue for the European voters. We saw recent referendum in the UK and people voted to leave the EU. A lot of them put the issue of migrant workers as a reason for voting to leave the European Union. We know that's going to be an issue in France, we know it is issue in other European countries. So this refugee crisis has a huge potential to bring about, to disrupt the European Union cohesion. So in essence, it should be taken very, very seriously as well.

Apart from the refugee crisis, apart from that, there is a battle between statism and tribalism that's taking place in Libya right now, in the sense that a problem in Libya is that people do not feel as Libyan as one expects them to. Tribalism proceeds and it's more important than any loyalty that one may have to the state. That is common between many tribal countries in that region. To a degree it's prevalent in Iraq, to a degree in Yemen. And we see in all these countries there is strife, there is a dispute, there is conflict. And we have that in Syria, but in Syria it's not tribalism but sectarianism. Again, sectarianism versus statehood, part of this problem is that when the Europeans that had colonized much of the region left, they

established new countries, actually, with no regard to the cohesiveness of the people that live within those borders. In Egypt that has a very strong identity, we see that the so-called Arab Spring has been relatively less bloody. Tunisia, which is not tribal, had the most successful transition to democracy. But in countries that are tribal this transition hasn't taken place and is very, very bloody. We have to wait and see the outcome of this pattern, the loyalty to the tribe and loyalty to the state.

Of course, the Eastern Mediterranean is also home to the Arab-Israeli dispute which is the longest lingering dispute in the world. It is home to the Cyprus problem, which has the only divided capital city in the world and has got two NATO members -Turkey and Greece - by extension involved in this dispute. We have Egypt. Egypt is home to a political Islam in a way - Muslim Brotherhood. Yet it is Egypt that has delivered the most devastating blow to political Islam by people actually wanting Morsi to be removed. So that's a huge, huge challenge in itself, and that's Eastern Mediterranean. And we have Tunisia that is home to the most successful transition yet to democracy.

Before I finish, I'd like to say a few words about internal and external players. Political Islam is driven by and large by two factors: internal, as I said, and external. Internally, by this religiosity and sense of devotion to God and eagerness to go to heaven or however one may phrase it. But there is the external element. And the external element refers to the Shia-Sunni divide, which of course is rooted in people's beliefs, the way Protestants and Catholics fought each other in several centuries ago in Europe. But also we have Iran and Saudi Arabia: Iran home to Shias, the main country with a Shia majority and Saudi Arabia competing for power. And this dichotomy, this division between Shia and Sunni has got a *real-politic* dimension embedded in it.

Beyond that, internationally, I'd like to bring the United States and say that United States has rather been guilty of several, I think, wrong policies, beginning in 2003 - the invasion of Iraq. But then by President Obama that evacuated, took the troops out of Iraq in a very speedy fashion - untimely fashion - which created a vacuum that's led to the emergence of ISIL. And generally the unwillingness in the past at least eight years of President Obama's administration to get involved in conflicts in the region. The most poignant, the most, I think, tragic example was when in Syria President Obama has very openly stated that use of chemical weapons would be his red line, and then chemical weapons were used in Syria, and the United States failed to take any measures. That was very, very tragic because it kind of told leaders in the Middle East that everyone is for themselves, that the United States is unwilling to play the role of the hegemon, is unwilling to stand by its own word, and therefore the kind of maxim that realists have 'might is right' came back to actually hold this region. We saw Saudi Arabia sending troops to Bahrain. And even, I would say, the very traditional ally of America - Israel - found a bit of distance between itself and the United States, a lot more than before. So this withdrawal of the United States and of isolationism - I don't want to overemphasize it to give the wrong message - but I'm overstating it in order to make the point that this withdrawal from the region wasn't welcome in the fashion that was executed by President Obama and led to the establishment of Isis, and what you're witnessing sadly in the region.

The other thing, other factor, is the willingness of President Putin to reassert Russia and Russian interests in the region, and in the world. I'd like to refer to one particular example, and that is West of Syria, when President Putin has deployed after the downing of the Russian jet fighter by Turkish army, President Putin deployed S400 anti-aircraft missiles, which are one of the, I understand, very, very sophisticated anti-aircraft weaponry in the world. And this

happened with almost no objection, at least no publicly raised objections by Western leaders. Why is that strange? Because you may remember that around twenty years ago or so late President Clerides of Cyprus was trying to bring S300 missiles to Cyprus and that went terribly badly with the West, and the West applied pressure to make sure they were not delivered. And they did not come to Cyprus, because effectively the presence of such system in this very sensitive region - strategic region - would give a lot of leeway to the Russians. We have sovereign bases here by the British, and generally it would have given them a lot of leeway. Now, we see that Russia in not too far distant land from Cyprus - I don't know, maybe a hundred kilometers or so - to the east of Syria, they actually do not have S300, they have even more advanced S400. And the West is rather quiet about it. That shows the degree to which Russia wants to reassert itself, and to a degree it shows Washington's willingness to allow Russia to play a role in the region.

My last point is to do with a very important element in this region and globally – the question of energy. Russia, if I'm not mistaken, has a monopoly on gas supply to Europe, or a near monopoly. We know that one of the richest areas for gas is in Persian Gulf, and Iran and Qatar have gas fields. And if my information is correct which was given to me by a diplomat, there were plans for gas to be, through pipelines laid from the Persian Gulf - Iraq - Syria - Mediterranean - and then to Europe, for the gas from there to go all the way to Europe. In fact - again my information comes from this diplomat - there was an agreement signed to the amount of billions of dollars for the laying of these pipes, but that was before the Syrian crisis began. Now, for as long as that civil war rages in Syria, there cannot be any pipelines obviously in Syria, and therefore Russia will keep its monopoly of gas supply to Europe. Therefore, there is that element as well which we should take into account. But I haven't gone over my time. I finish on that note.

**M.M.:** Professor, just a few questions regarding your presentation. Islamism has claimed to reject democracy since in their view God can be the only sovereign and the only legislature. However there are Islamist parties which do participate in democratic process. Are Islam and democracy ever compatible?

**F.M.:** Well, depends on your interpretation, like everything else in life. A very dogmatic, rigid, interpretation would not allow compatibility between democracy and Islam. But if we agree that religion is fluid thing that basically lays above politics and temporal affairs and it just provides a code of ethics, and the kind of spirituality for the individual, then the questions of relationship between human beings becomes a matter of reason. You see, relationship between one and one's maker is a realm of religion. My relationship with you and other human beings is the realm of reason. And if people can appreciate that difference and acknowledge that, of course then Islam and democracy can be compatible. And to my view, I mean one very, very famous Muslim of some 1,000 years ago, Ghazali - the Iranian thinker, philosopher - believed that in matters of religion he obeys the Quran, in matters of temporal affairs he follows reason. So yes, I think it is possible. But then we must agree that in relationship between human beings we decide by the command, and by the faculty of reason and not by other codes.

**M.M:** In case when democratic elections are held in the Middle East, Islamist parties either win or get significant popular support. Where does the popularity of political Islam among the Middle Eastern population stem from?

**F.M.:** It comes from a number of factors. One is, I should say, the Arab-Israeli dispute. There was a time in the fifties and sixties when Arabism and pan-Arabism was very popular, and nationalism. But after the defeat of the Arabs by Israel in their military confrontation, then pan-Arabism became rather defunct, bankrupt, and weak. And then Islamism took over as a means by which the Arabs could regain their pride and their honor. And honor is an extremely important thing, in particular in tribal lives that the Arabs - a lot of them even - have maintained since the beginning of Islam and before Islam. So one element is that.

Second element is, I'm afraid, the colonial administrations of Western powers didn't leave much for the local population to grab and be proud of. In other words, the benefits of modernity and modern life that could have enticed the population away from dogmatic views on religion and on Islam, those benefits were far short in coming. And therefore, the population came to believe that the (inaudible) is something against 'us' - the Muslims - and they want to deprive us, and therefore as a kind of reactionary, they went back.

Connected to that is the fact that sometimes in the process of fast urbanization, modernization has somewhat happened in Iran, in the seventies. It could have happened in Turkey, but the army didn't allow it. When you get huge influx of people from the villages to the cities, these villagers come and they get a lot of money by doing semi-skilled or unskilled work. But whilst they get money, they seem to lose identity because they are not villagers, peasants, farmers anymore, and they are not citizens either. And they get caught in this state of limbo that they are neither, and they feel bereft of identity and devoid of meaning. There suddenly religion comes as "I fill the void for you, I give you meaning, I give you back your identity," and "Come with me." And "Your enemy is this West, is this modernity that has tried to rob you away of your identity and your personality." So a combination of these have given rise to this reaction.

**M.M.:** In the recent years the West has experienced a significant growth in Islamist terrorism. However, most of the jihadists carrying out attacks in Europe and in the West in general seem to be Sunni Muslims. They are never Shia. Is the Shiite branch of Islam less prone to radicalization?

**F.M.:** Probably, it could be to a degree that Shia emphasizes the importance of edicts and *ijtihad*, which is basically that religious leaders can decide on new rulings and issue edicts to that effect, whereas by and large in the Sunni world, particularly in Saudi Arabia, this kind of intervention and new rulings by religious leaders is not allowed. In other words, there is a group that believes whatever we need for eternity is already there in the Quran and in the sayings of the Prophet, so we don't need anything else. And there's a group that says new situations arise and we need to use our reason based on religious principles, but we have to come up with new rulings. For instance, cigarettes did not exist, tobacco didn't exist during a time of the Prophet of Islam. So what is the ruling now? Is it allowed? Should it be allowed? So there comes old time situations in which religious leaders... So that element, that interjection of reason to some degree one may think allows Shiism to be flexible and to be able to adapt itself to the requirements of time and place. To a degree I would go along with that, that the kind of rigidity and dogmatism that you see at least in some sects within Sunnism - I mean Hanbalism, or Wahhabism - they're extremely strict in their application of Sharia and in their interpretation of Sharia. In Shiism, no, there is openness. Under it is possible to come up with new rulings that may vary from time to time.

**M.M.:** What role does Shiism play in the Salafi-Jihadi school of thought?

**F.M.:** Salafists are Sunnis by and large. A lot of them we have in North Africa, we have them in Syria. We have Salafism in Shiism as well - people who do not want to allow for any change at all in the fundamentals. I'll give you an example for you to see what I mean. Blood, for instance, is to be washed away immediately. If you're bleeding, you're not supposed to have blood on you and the only way you can cleanse it is by rinsing it in water. This is an old Islam Shia (*inaudible*). But for instance we have now some new non-traditional, if you want to call it like that, non Salafi religious rulers who say, no, if there is blood, as long as it's cleaned and wiped and you do not see blood anymore on it, it is ok. So Salafis in Jihad are those who believe in the beginning of Islam the Prophet used necessary violence in defense, or that to keep... And then we can apply the same principles for here. That is how they would see the world. But in that they wouldn't be much different from Sunnism in the world view that they see. You can use what you need to use in order to implement, execute the Word of God on earth through peaceful diplomacy - sometimes not so peaceful - treaties or otherwise. The aim is to implement the Word of God the way that the Prophet did it 1400 years ago. This analogy that the perfect state - utopia - existed 1400 years ago when Prophet himself was a ruler and governor of Medina, this is a bedrock of all Salafists, Shia or Sunni, that we had perfect government then therefore by emulating the actions of the Prophet we can bring about perfect government here and now, anywhere, anytime. This is a Salafi interpretation. In Shiism this Salafi interpretation can be interjected every now and then with edicts by the religious rulers that we can bring slight variations. In Sunnism this is not so. I mean, this is much less welcome. But by and large Salafis look to what was then, and we can bring about a perfect government by doing exactly the same thing here and now.

**M.M.:** But the Sunni fundamentalists seem to be extremely anti-Shiite. Where does it come from?

**F.M.:** Yes, this comes from... Well, there's a historical background to this. Shias believe that successors to the Prophet, which is what is referred to by all Muslims, by the Sunnis I mean, the Rightly Guided Caliphs, Shias do not accept the four, Shias only accept one of them - the last one, Ali, who was the Prophet's close relative. And they believed the three intervening caliphs between the Prophet and Ali should not have been there. This is the most fundamental difference between Shias and Sunnis, which still causes a lot of bloodshed.

**M.M.:** Sunni extremist groups receive large amount of funding from the Gulf States, and especially from Saudi Arabia and Qatar. But is it individual donors or the governments who sponsor them? What's your view on this?

**F.M.:** Well, recently I heard that some Qatari official on behalf of the government - I cannot document it because I'm not sure where I saw it, so I may stand to be corrected on this - but they said that whatever the President Elect Trump's policy may be in Syria, we shall continue to support forces opposed to the Assad regime. I think the money I would say is both: it comes from official sources - state sources - and from wealthy individuals who are usually connected to the state. So it would be both. But I guess it would be preferable for the states to have their money given to those groups via individuals rather than directly.

**M.M.:** Professor, once again, thank you very much, thank you for your time. Thank you for being with us.

**F.M.:** Thank you for having me.





---

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION\*

---

Christos Minagias\*\*

5-7 December 2016

### **The Latest Developments in Turkey**

*General Minagias provides a snapshot of Turkish foreign policy before the endgame of the Syrian conflict which nevertheless does reveal certain long-term objectives of the Turkish state that predate the Erdogan governments and reveals more deeply held cultural-historical neo-Ottoman, neo-imperial characteristics.*

*(Translation from Greek original text)*

I am Christos Minagias, a retired Brigadier General, writer and geostrategic analyst.

The most important problem of Turkey focuses on who holds power in the country. In the past, the military establishment regulated and controlled all developments leaving little leeway to democratically elected governments. Today, although the militarism was largely defeated by the new political reality, the all-dominant notion of power is still present in the country thus creating the impression that the dictatorship of the Turkish-Islamic generals was replaced by the dictatorship of the Turkish-Islamic politicians. Also, judging from the past behavior of the President of the Republic of Turkey Tayyip Erdogan, we find that they were based on the principle of "win, by exploiting problems, conflicts and encouraging tensions."

In my presentation today, I will analyze the latest developments in Turkey, which are divided into three themes:

- The rise and fall of Turkish foreign policy;
- The geopolitical visions of Turkish foreign policy;
- Findings and conclusions;
- The rise and fall of Turkish foreign policy

After the 2002 elections, Turkey's foreign policy has experienced significant changes and increased dynamism. On the one hand strengthened the sense of unity and harmony within the

\* Translation from original text as submitted by the speaker. Part of the e-conference "The Latest Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean," held by the East Med Forum between 5 and 7 December 2016.

\*\* Brigadier General, Hellenic Armed Forces (Retired)

country and on the other developed rapidly “soft power”.

However, in recent years, Turkey is experiencing a completely different situation. It has been rapidly losing all its achievements as well as its “soft power” and reputation.

For this reason, we began an examination of the policy implemented by the Erdogan regime, which focuses on four main questions: How was it upgraded so quickly? Is Turkey away from the West? Why is it collapsing so fast? What should be done?

Regarding the answer to the first question, the foreign policy adopted by Ahmet Davutoglu was implemented with great success until 2011 and focused on the following: the balance between independence and security; a new way of expression and a new exercise of diplomacy; zero problems with neighbors; a multidimensional foreign policy; rhythmic diplomacy; and finally, preventive strategies. As a result, Turkey was to become a model country in regards to regional peace and stability, promoting itself as a regional power and as a global player simultaneously.

In regard to the question if Turkey is drifting away from the West, the answer is yes. And the first serious signs began to appear three years ago, in 2013. We mention this because then Tayyip Erdogan as prime minister stressed that non-inclusion of his country in the European union will not be the end of the world, given that Europe has greater need of Turkey than Turkey has of Europe. Its message to Russia and China being that if Turkey was accepted as a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Ankara would lose all interest in joining the European Union. It should be borne in mind that Turkey's accession process to the European Union was a powerful incentive to upgrade the political, social and economic situation of the country according to Western standards, unlike most states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization where democratic institutions have less meaning.

Since then, we find that Erdogan follows the same tactics that he threatened to implement in 2013.

Consequently, the utilitarian policies of Erdogan are not bothered by the malfunctioning democratic institutions of the country, but he does not hesitate to threaten to withdraw from the European Union and NATO that helped him to consolidate in the Turkish society.

In what has to do with the third question, the first signs began to appear in May 2009, when Ahmet Davutoglu said Ankara will convert the “relative zero problems with neighbors” to “relationship of greatest benefit from them” even pointing out the historical debt of the country and the obligations it has entrusted to each territory where Turks live and has interface with territories of the past. Of course, it not only was not taken seriously into account by the neighboring countries of Turkey and the Western power centers, but was completely ignored. Then in 2011 with the start of the Arab Spring and the civil war in Syria, the strategy of the Turks with its demonstrated adventurism and religious (Sunni) fundamentalist approach was fully revealed. Meanwhile, this approach both annoyed the countries of the Middle East turning the strategy of “zero problems with neighbors” to strategy of “multiple problems with neighbors,” on the other hand it created a sense of mistrust in Turkey's relations with the United States and the West in general. Iran also took the Sunni foreign policy of Turkey as a threat, so Tehran began to implement policies that created biggest obstacles to increasing Turkish influence in the region. Subsequently, after the murder of diplomats of the US embassy in Libya, the Arab Spring turned into Arabic Autumn and then into Arabic Winter. These have resulted in the gradual isolation of Turkey concerning the actions it had taken in Syria and as

expected these policies have ended in failure. Equally surprising is the fact that, while Turkey declares its support for the territorial integrity and unity of Iraq and Syria, but does the exact opposite, since its foreign policy aims to partition these countries and particularly in their nihilism, turning the strategy of “multiple problems with neighbors” to the strategy of “zero neighbors.”

In addition to the above, continuously upgradeable role of Kurds in Syria and Iraq began to lay the foundations creation Kurdish state entities on the southern border of Turkey while creating serious internal threat to Turkish territory. Moreover, because the Kurds disrupted Turkey's relations with global and regional powers, while the new rhetoric used in Turkish foreign policy, on the one hand significantly reduced the friendly countries Turkey, while Turkey's new foreign policy rhetoric alienated Turkey's old friends and created new enemies.

At the same time, the increase of Russian military presence in Syria strengthened the Assad regime and significantly reduced its Turkish operations within Syrian territory. Moreover, the security environment and international relations became difficult and Turkey's foreign policy began to crumble rapidly. Along with these developments, the situation in the country began to deteriorate with the main characteristics of fear, terror, psychological violence, political polarization, democratic deficit, degradation of the rule of law, violation of individual liberties and an ever worsening state of the Turkish economy.

Finally, Turkey is trying to take on a regional and partly international role, and have a say in the design of the new international scene, Turkey is becoming part of the already impaired national security environment faced by third countries. At the same time, the polarization and hostility within the country significantly affects its external relations.

### **Geopolitical visions of Turkish foreign policy**

Ankara announced a new strategy (the National Oath – Misak-ı Millî) to deal with the external problems and security challenges that threaten the country. These principles of the new strategy include preventive and deterrent actions which have to do with the transfer of Turkish military operations across borders and in particular in the territories of other states. Specifically, we refer to the concept of “bane”, whereby every country that does not limits the threats beyond its borders and does not create defensive strongholds abroad will face division in the future.

As part of this strategy, Turkey implemented or launched an invasive policy across its borders on four fronts.

The first focuses on the West (except Greece) and its main axis multiculturalism, Islamophobia and Tourkophobia. Of course this front includes the adventurist policy of Ankara regarding refugees and immigrants.

The second front refers to the countries of the Middle East (Iraq-Syria) and Cyprus.

The third front has to do with Greece and is based on two main axes. In multiculturalism (Thrace and refugees and immigrants), as well as the strategy to deny Greek sovereign rights in the maritime zones of the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean.

And finally, the fourth front concerns the change the in the Turkish constitution to establish a presidential republic. Also, it is easily understood that, through the first three fronts mentioned

above, Erdogan seeks to activate the nationalist reflexes of the Turkish society and through the vote of the nationalist MHP party MPs to lead the country in a referendum in the spring of 2017 in order to implement his vision to become president of the Turkish Republic that will have the characteristics of an Ottoman Republic.

Therefore, it is clear that the rhetoric regarding Turkish presidential republic constitutes a strategic choice of Erdogan, which is timeless and clearly shows once again that the way the Turks think focuses on three factors: religion (Islam), nationalism, and history. Given therefore that these factors have a common component of the geography, the new vision of Turkish foreign policy, which began to show Erdogan and his circles of supporters focus on five "Ks": Kore (Korea), Keşmir (Kashmir), Kudüs (Jerusalem), Kürtler (Kurds) and Kıbrıs (Cyprus). Besides, according to the Turkish columnist Taskin Yasar Koc, who first mentioned the five "Ks" on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016, "The story is not overturned and geography is not modified."

**Kore (Korea):** South Korea has played an important role in the development of the Turkish defense industry and is regarded as the "key partner", both because of the know-how promotion in Turkey, and partly because of its contribution to the construction (co-production) of weapons in Turkey.

**Keşmir (Kashmir):** While Kashmir is far from Turkey, the interest of Ankara is very intense and increasing over time. Kashmir is a mountainous area, located in the northwestern part of the Himalayas between Pakistan, India and China and approximately 80% of the population are Muslims. The northern and western part of this is under the control of Pakistan, the central portion thereof is under the control of India and the eastern part of it is under the control of China. In conflict that exists between Pakistan and India over Kashmir, Turkey joins the part of Pakistan both at a transnational level and through the support given to it by the Islamic Cooperation Organization.

In fact, the Turkish publication whereby Tayyip Erdogan reportedly said before his visit to Pakistan on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016 that "We will be able to buy nuclear weapons from Pakistan" shows the real reasons that Turkey strongly supports Pakistan and why Kashmir is the second "K" of the Turkish geopolitical vision. Also, more importantly, Turkey resolutely oriented to acquire long-range rocket systems as part of its plan to acquire nuclear weapons. Note that Pakistan has 100-120 nuclear warheads.

**Kudüs (Jerusalem):** For the Turks the "problem of Jerusalem" according to the statements existed, exists and will exist. A typical example of the Turkish understanding of this issue are the following statements of the head of the Turkish Religious Affairs Directorate Mehmet Gkiormez during his visit to Qatar on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016:

"Israel is a country that for many years created great miseries because they hold the lands of our brothers the Palestinians and because they violate the Al Aqsa mosque. This is not acceptable. Israel also presents an ugly picture of Islam so it can create Islamophobia and hostility."

The Al-Aqsa mosque is Islam's third most holy place, located in the old city of Jerusalem.

Analyzing these statements shows that:

a) The initiatives of Ankara before the coup of July 15, 2016 in order to restore the Turkish-Israeli relations were integrated under a new Turkish strategy "more friends and fewer enemies." Of course, for the normalization of these relations requires goodwill, determination and long term (two-three years). Moreover, during this time there should be no economic cooperation, political dialogue, as well as cooperation in strategic and military fields. Also, it is required to put an end to expressions that trigger hostility. This means that Mehmet Gkiormez will not be allowed to make statements against another state, namely without the prior approval of Tayyip Erdogan. It is obvious, however, that Turkey's attempt to repair relations with Israel is superficial and will potentially fail.

b) The Islamophobia report of Gkiormez is part of a broader strategy of Ankara, which in combination with multiculturalism is looking forward to an interventionist policy across borders, mainly to the west. In addition to the above, in the view of eminent Turkish writers, Islamophobia and Islamofascism are twin brothers, one feeding the other. Indeed, these columnists accuse indirectly Erdogan of Islamofascism, since the policies he implemented are fueling Islamophobia in the West. For this reason, Gkiormez' reference of Islamphobia should not go unnoticed, nor ignored.

With the same thought process, strategic studies centers adjacent to the Erdogan regime have gone a step further by seeking to transform Islamophobia to Turkophobia, which ultimately relates to Turkofascism.

**Kürtler (Kurds):** Turkey is faced with a complex security environment, which has to deal with the historical controversy over the management of water resources in the region, the Islamic State, political Shiite, the problem of the PKK and by extension the Kurdish problem, as well as the problem with the Kurdish movement in Syria and the Syrian refugees.

On the other hand, the Kurdish population lives in an area where intersecting, economic and cultural axes connect the Middle East and Islam in general with the West. Indeed, the fact that the Middle East is changing radically and rapidly, gives an opportunity for Kurds to push either for independence in the countries they reside, or to create a confederation format.

However, while the Kurdish factor is dynamically claiming a regional and regulatory role in the area all Turkish governments a brinkmanship approach not perceiving the essence of the Kurdish problem, which over time has become more and more important.

Equally important is that Ankara's efforts of Turkification against the Kurds had no effect. This view is confirmed by the fact that, despite the political religious and ideological attacks, as well as military measures used by all Turkish governments, the Kurdish people have not only retained their national identity, but brought severe blows to the Turkish-Islamic designs. Still, "Turkey's Kurds" and "Turkey's Kurdistan" are two terminologies common to the Kurdish problem. Even if the problem of the Turkish Kurds is solved, Ankara will still face the problem of Turkish Kurditan.

Also, the Erdogan regime in order to maintain the strength of the internal politics of the country and safeguard its strategic interests, uses authoritarian stereotypes of the past thus widening instability and chaos in the country. Furthermore, it should be noted that the new "war doctrine" that was launched in the Kurdish provinces of southeastern Turkey after July 2015, was not only decided by Erdogan and the ruling AKP party. Specifically, it is a doctrine that was decided by the Turkish National Security Council and implemented, with the consent

of the ruling AKP and opposition parties such as the CHP Republican party and the nationalist MHP party. Also, this doctrine has not only to do with the personal ambitions of Erdogan to change the country's constitution into a presidential republic, but is seen as a totalitarian war against all strategic power centers of Turkey (Islamic-nationalist-military) against the Kurds initially and then against other minorities as well as against progressive and democratic forces of the country.

At the same time, it would be wrong not to note that the Kurds a diverse group in Turkey and distinguished both for the different ideological and political beliefs as to their economic and cultural heterogeneity. However, the constant persecution and violations of their human rights on the one hand, as well as the political and socio-cultural requirements on the other, drove the Kurds to rally under the protective umbrella of the Kurdish identity in order to minimize the risk their assimilation.

Therefore, if anything characterizes the issue of the Kurds and the Kurdish problem in general, it is the timelessness and the complexity of its conflict situations.

**Kıbrıs (Cyprus):** The Turkish policy on Cyprus is based on the framework of a strategy that is consistent with the new strategic data. This strategy essentially rests on two main axes: the first axis relates to the human factor and regards the security of the Turkish Cypriots as a result of Turkey's historical responsibility. And the second axis addresses the strategic importance of the island due to its geographical position.

All this is due to the pursuit of Ankara: first, to change the territorial status quo as provided by international treaties that underpin the legal status of the seas and airspace of the island; and secondly, the Greek side to renounce its sovereign rights in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as with respect to the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone.

### **Findings and conclusions**

To realize its aspirations, Turkey first set its political, military, economic-energy, cultural and social objectives, and second, at every opportunity employed psychological operations, and where necessary other elements of national power, specifically political, military, economic, demographic, geographic, scientific, technical, psychosocial and cultural power.

The wars in Iraq and Syria mark the end of a historical period that has seen the fall of regimes that were created more than ninety five years before. Moreover, Turkey is the last link in this period and according to analysts' estimates Turkish wars are expected in the coming years to eventually become domestic conflicts.

Estimates and official declarations of global power centers regarding drawing new borders in the Middle East and the establishment of three or four new states in the territory covered by Iraq and Syria, triggered nationalist reflexes among the Turkish leadership. Therefore, frequent references by Tayyip Erdogan to the Lausanne Treaty and the National Oath has to do with the pursuit of the Turkish president to open a dialogue in Turkey not relying on historical documents but on ideological arguments. And of course this dialogue should answer two main questions: Kemalism or Caliphate, and invasive policy across borders or a policy that will respect international borders?

Meanwhile, in case of dismemberment of Syria and Iraq it is estimated that Turkey will bring a challenge every border demarcation agreement with these countries and will therefore seek, either with the consent of the Great Powers or its favorite tactics of creating faits accomplis, extend directly or indirectly its borders to the south. Indirectly, through control of state entities that will be created in the event of the partition of Iraq and Syria, being entrusting the role of “big brother” and having as modus operandi the creation and control of the puppet regime in Cyprus. And immediately, through the creation of “safe areas” (Güvenli Volgeler) or “areas without problems” (Sorunsuz Volgeler) by the Turkish armed forces beyond Turkish borders, either by claiming as the legal basis of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations regarding the right of self-defense, or relying on the humanitarian dimension of a potential wave of refugees from northern Iraq to Turkey. Indeed, the Operation Euphrates Shield and specifically its military, political and economic objectives should be given special attention because they reveal in the most obvious way the Turkish thinking on the subject.

The question is what will happen to the Kurds of Syria, and especially the PYD Kurdish movement which controls about 700 of the 911 kilometers of the Turkish-Syrian border and has political control over 1.5 to 2 million residents located in those areas . In order to assess the role of the Kurds for the future of Syria, the following four factors must be considered:

- It is possible to bring stability to Syria in the future?
- What will be the form of the New Syria?
- What will be the role of the PYD in the competitive environment of global and regional powers in the reconstruction of Syria?
- What are the political goals of the PYD, its ideological base and morale as well as how will it develop in the future?

Finally, the strategic objective of the Turks against the Greeks is the abandonment by the latter of rights in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean. To achieve its objectives, Ankara focuses its strategy on:

- obtaining a favorable to Turkey solution of the Kurdish problem (not reached);
- the resolution of internal problems and the consolidation of security within Turkey (not reached);
- the avoidance of an economic crisis in Turkey (not reached);
- improving the level of understanding by the international community of the particularities of Turkey;
- not solving the Cyprus problem before finding a solution to the issue of the delimitation of maritime zones;
- persisting with the “casus belli” doctrine for the Aegean against Greece for it be used as an argument for a possible Turkish offensive action;
- ensuring either the agreement or compromise of the international community, which will give the impression of legality of the Turkish claims in the region;

- and finally, preserving the balance of power between Greece and Turkey and creating deep insecurities on the Greek side.

Thank you.



---

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION\*

---

David Altman\*\*

5-7 December 2016

### Turkey's Struggle for World Hegemony of the Islamic People

*In describing the shift from empire to nation-state as a bid by Attaturk to have a non-Islamic, non-threatening secular Turkey acceptable to the European "concert of powers," Dr. Altman identifies Erdogan's bid, with the help of Qatar, for re-Islamization as a bid for establishing Islamic and neo-Ottoman hegemony.*

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** Welcome to the East Mediterranean Forum. My co-host again is Air Commodore Andrew Lambert, and with us is Dr. David Altman of Netanya University. David, hello, welcome.

**David Altman (D.A.):** What a pleasure to be here, and what a pleasure to talk to you about everything.

**C.P.:** Our subject is Turkey's struggle for hegemony, and David, you have some thoughts to share with us.

**D.A.:** Yes, I think it's a great pleasure to speak to you and to speak about the subject who I think is one of the most important things in the whole atmosphere that we are facing. But let me start with something else. When we are speaking in conferences, we have to take into consideration something very important. A lot of times we are speaking from personal experience while the audience are not sharing with us our experience. In 1973, I was the president of the students of Israel, I studied political science and sociology and I used to become a very popular speaker about the war in Israel at that time, on the October War. And usually people used to listen about everything, and after a while, after about ten years of being a speaker which was very popular, I saw that I lost the audience. And I said to myself, what happened? The stories are the same stories, the events are the same events. Why are they not listening to me with the same patience? And then I discovered that most of the people that I'm speaking now didn't share with me the experience. They were born ten years later, and after ten years they don't know what I'm talking about all together. Some of them are listening to stories, some of them are not even listening to the stories, and they are not part of a story. And that created a revolution in the whole my speaking in conferences. Because you have to take into

\* Transcript. Part of the e-conference "The Latest Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean," held by the East Med Forum between 5 and 7 December 2016.

\*\* Senior Vice-President, Netanya Academic College

consideration that most of the people that we are speaking to them about previous experiences, they don't know anything about it, and if they know, they know very little. And what they know, that is what was given to them but far away from the truth.

Our subject is very, very important. When we are speaking about Turkey you have to clarify whether you are speaking about this issue of today, the situation of today. The world of today is facing a complete change in all what we knew before. It is not the same world, it is not the same atmosphere, and it is not the same government. It won't be the same government anywhere in the world. Everything is changing.

But it has to do with something and unfortunately it starts with Turkey. How did it start with Turkey? The changes in the 21st century are essential ones. And it reflects on everything. But exactly hundred years ago changes were created in the Middle East. It was the First World War as we call it, and that changed the world completely. The First World War left the world speechless because up till now we had war in the region, people used to take the horses, went to the battlefield, two hundred people were killed in one side, two hundred people were killed in the other side, and then they all went to drink tea and to speak together, and to play soccer somewhere around. And then there was the First World I that cost the people who attended sixteen and a half million people that were killed. And the war changed the world. The world was not ready for it. And the world started to think, what is happening? If sixteen and a half million people can die, what will happen? What can we do? Why did it happen?

Of the things that they were worried about was Turkey. Turkey was the empire that for seven hundred years threatened the whole world, especially Europe. And during this war big part of the casualties you can really say that Turkey was responsible for. Not only, but more so Europe was afraid of the ability of the Ottoman Empire to take parts of Europe which they took: one country, another country, Bulgaria in the Balkans, all the time one Muslim country, one Muslim country, and the threat of a Muslim country not far away with such power has to do something. And then they are having a war. And for the first time the whole empire is flat. So what is happening to officers? Not high officers, captains, are sitting and dividing the empire among themselves. And what is happening? This is the Sykes-Picot agreement. Captain Sykes and Major Picot are sitting together and starting to make new plans and creating new nations, new countries, which has nothing to do with reality. No natural border, no people who belongs to one sect, or to one religion, or to one minority, but concentrating together. And in a very short while having a new map, a new political map in the whole region of what used to be the Ottoman Empire.

Unfortunately, nothing was kept. One by one, every country that was established at that time beside very few had a change, had a revolution. In Iraq which was a kingdom, it was Qasir and it was Arif, and it was all the generals who took their place. In Syria we had set of one problems, in Lebanon we had other problems. In every place we had minorities, we had people who could not live together. All what is happening today that we are suffering today started at Sykes-Picot and in San Remo agreement that was taking place. That was the leftover of Turkey. At the meantime in Turkey the world was in a shock - what are we doing with Turkey? The new leader of Turkey is a powerful man, a great general, but he comes with a wonderful proposal: let's change the world, we are not a threat to you anymore, we are not a religious country, we are secular, completely secular. All the threat of religion that we carried with us as an empire is lost. Europe was in shock. He became the dearest son of the new world, the man who promises to take away the threat. But they said, prove it to us. How can you prove that that is not going

to happen? And Kemal Ataturk did several very, very important things. First of all, he changed the language, the writings. The Arab letters were taken out from the Turkish language. Numbers and letters. The dressing were changing. You were not allowed to be dressed not with the chador, not with the tarboosh, and not with the Turkish regular things, just to show that I'm serious. But what was more important than anything else, the resting day of the Muslims, which is Friday, was changed to a Sunday. That was a religious revolution. He said, now you can believe me that I am not anymore a religious person, I'm a secular person, you can accept me as one of yours.

In every aspect Europe went out of their way to satisfy Kemal Ataturk. They brought him in, they took a lot of immigration from Turkey, because Turkey is not religious anymore, so it's not a threat. They put them in every institution as NATO and other things which came later on. Turkey became the favorite son to a certain degree. Not completely, because they were still afraid, because religion is religion, and the history is there, and six hundred years of threat are not perishing in one moment.

But in the meantime Turkey had a lot of changes in itself. Kemal Ataturk was not there, the society started to shift. We cannot speak about one Turkey, but still it was a secular country which was well-accepted with a lot of willingness for concessions to Turkey. As such as they were not accused anymore with the Holocaust to the Armenians, they were not accused in other things which usually... For example, the Kurds who wanted always to get the part of independence were refused by the world, because everyone didn't want to aggravate Turkey. And Turkey got whatever they wanted to do.

At the meantime, the world itself changed completely. The big powers of 1916, 1918, the First World War and the Second World War, as England and France were no longer big powers. Now we don't have any more four big powers as England, France, America and Russia. We're having America and Russia, and that's it. And the truth of the matter that England and France are losing more, and more, and more of their international situation. And that created a lot of willingness between new powers to take over. And I'm jumping, because I said it's a very big story and it's a big undertaking to describe the whole situation, but always Turkey is playing a very important role in it.

In 1954, Gamal Abdel Nasser comes into power in Egypt. Gamal Abdel Nasser was a very great leader and he started to speak not only of becoming the leader of big Egypt, but he wanted very much to become the leader of the Arab people. He spoke about three circles. First of all, he spoke about the Arab countries. The Arab countries are twenty two countries in the world of today. And he wanted very much to be the leader of the Arabs. He spoke about the pan-Arabism which is starting now to move, with that he wanted to come to the Islamic nations, which are fifty one Islamic nations in the whole region. And for that he wanted to go to the non-identified countries which is a very big group, which will make him a leader of a third power in the hegemony of the whole world. And as an Arab leader he had more success. He went first of all for the unification with Syria. It was not such a success, with the Islamic country it was even lesser success because he had to fight against very strong leader Sukarno as (inaudible) people who belonged to the other countries. And he passed away in 1970, and all his dreams to become the leader of the Muslim countries, or the Arab countries died with him.

Another leader came in another country. His name was Muammar Gaddafi. 1969 he became the leader of Libya. As a leader of Libya, he had great dreams and great desires. First of all, he tried

to make a unity with Yemen and then he started to do some connections with Africa, with Chad and other countries. He understood immediately, like Nasser, that if I want to become one of the leaders who fights on the leadership of the world, I have to have an access to nuclear power. That is very important for me also. So Nasser tried to do it and Israel stopped him in a very known way, as we know. But then Gaddafi started to have his own plan of having nuclear weapon to start to build his strength with having nuclear reactors and nuclear plan, which was very, very dangerous for everyone. And we'll speak about it later.

Another leader emerged to compete with Qaddafi. He was Saddam Hussein. Saddam Hussein said that he is the leader of the Sunni Arabs, and he is the one who will represent this power. He started with his willingness to buy the nuclear reactor from France, which fortunately enough Israel got rid of it very nicely. And it never stopped him from trying more. But he also said, if I'm going to be the leader, my way to leadership has to have next to me nuclear power. The story with Saddam Hussein, we know what happened and we know how he finished. And after what happened to Saddam Hussein, Qaddafi decided he's ready to get rid of his nuclear plant because he understood that he won't be able to continue with the same. And he really became in a way friendly to the West much more than anybody else.

Another country joined their march to leadership. And this is a relatively small country. We are talking about a country that has no more than 300,000 citizens: its name is Qatar. Very, very rich, very well protected because the biggest air base of America in the region is in Qatar, and very original. They didn't want to have nuclear, because it was too big for them, but they had the new weapon that the world is learning now to appreciate, which is the media. They did everything to control the media, and they reached the stage that every Arab home in the world is having al Jazeera in their private television, even if they live in a tent in the desert. They were so influential everywhere and every leader in the Arab world could not ignore any more Qatar. The leader of Qatar pushed by his second wife finally invested a lot of money in advertising the country and marketing the country, he became the god of the media, he had his station in every language possible, including English, Spanish, Portuguese, and of course Arabic. And he wanted very much to compete on the leadership of the Arab world. He had also a strong relationship with the leaders of the Sunni religion leadership. And he became one of the very, very strong powers who compete to become the leaders of the Islamic world.

At that time Iran, who started in 1979 to be guided by Ayatollah Khomeini, made a big revolution there, and started a Sharia country, and of course went after nuclear power, because if you want to get your recognition as a leading country, you have to put your hand on nuclear reactors. The story with Iran we know, because it was published in the world all the time, including the concessions that were made by the United States. I won't get into it because this is not our subject of today.

The leadership of Qatar changed. The son of the Al Thani became the new leader guided by his mother Sheikha Moza who is really the person behind the throne, and she is pushing Qatar to strong position in all the subjects in the world. But he is a very young leader with a great willingness to be very influential in many places, very well heard. He's buying everything that can advance his country in art, in culture, in sports, just to put them on the map. And while he is very successful, he accepted that maybe we should join forces with some others, therefore he is supporting every terror organization in the world, and he is expecting to find somebody who might be his supporter to become the leading force of the Islamic movements in the new world, which have no leadership today, because of the changes that happened in our world.

And then came another man who is a very unique person. His name is Tayyip Erdogan. Tayyip Erdogan came into power in Turkey and changed everything. First of all, he revolutionized the country. The country became again a religious country. Still, they are resting on a Sunday for now, but dressing, praying, speaking, languages - everything changed to Islam. I must quote to you something very, very important which will show how much it is. The greatest man in the religious world of the Sunnis today is Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who is the leader, the spiritual leader of the Islamic Brotherhood. And he speaks about how important it is to elect a leader of the Islamic world, and he says as follows:

“The unity of the righteous people of Islam decided that we should believe in the caliphate. This has to be the leadership of the Muslims and it has to be established in Istanbul, which will be the capital of the new caliphate. The new Turkey which combines the religious and the state, the new and the old, the Arab and what is not Arab, and united the whole nation in Africa, Asia, Europe and the United States, and everywhere.”

Qaradawi says also that the best-qualified leader to this caliphate is Recep Erdogan:

“This is a leader who knows his God and knows himself, he knows his people, and he knows the nation, and the world. You should stand around him and to swear loyalty to him and tell him, ‘Go ahead, go ahead’.”

That is the publication written by Yusuf Al-Qaradawi. Now, this is not a statement by somebody, not by a little small rabbi, or by a small (inaudible). This is a leadership statement. Why is it made? Because there is now a competition about what is happening in the world.

We should know that Erdogan is a very sophisticated man. Erdogan stands behind everything which happened lately in the whole Middle East. One of the things that he saw all the time that the West is afraid of intruding, of refugees to come. He is responsible personally for the wave of refugees coming from the Middle East and Africa to Europe. And how did he do it? He was in a bad position long time ago with Turkey. Then he made better relationship with Hafez Assad and they quarreled long time ago about some parts that were taken by Turkey and they had dispute, but then they fixed their relationship. And one of the presents given to Assad by Erdogan was - he gave him water from the sources that they had, and the whole territory between the rivers and Damascus, which was really a desert, started to flourish. They had fields of wheat and fields of cotton and millions of people made a living. It was a great success. Then he started to quarrel with Syria. They stopped the water. At the same time it was a big drought in the whole region, all the fields went down. And all the people who lived in this region had nothing to eat, and they started to fill the cities of Damascus and Aleppo with refugees that started the move against the government, and the whole revolution started with the moving inside Damascus.

At the same time, he was one of the best friends of Gaddafi. Five billion dollars every year was given by Turkey to develop the capital of Libya. But he was the one who convinced NATO that they had to put down Gaddafi. And he stood behind NATO supporting the civil war where they killed Gaddafi in the streets. I'm not a friend of Gaddafi, I have no admiration for him. But he was a friend of the West. When he died, the island of Lampedusa who was the buffer between people who used to come from Africa to Europe opened completely. A flow of refugees started to come from Africa and from the Maghreb into Europe. So you have now people who are coming from Libya, people who are coming from Syria, and the man who is in control which

the West is asking to prevent it is Mr. Erdogan who gets money to block the refugees, which he does a very poor job, as every one of us knows.

What is happening today that everyone wants to be, and he is very clever, and he is friendly with every country possible. Even after the dispute that he had with Russia, he found a way to make peace with it because he does not want now to be in a position that he is quarrelling too much with people. Even with Iran he is having a relationship. But one of the things which bothered him today and if he wants to compete on leadership of the world, he has to have nuclear power. And now he is aiming to make relationship with Pakistan who is the only country who has now available nuclear power, and that is going to be one of his aims to make stronger relationship and to become one of the people who are trying to run the world and to change everything.

The truth of the matter that he is playing wonderful politics. He, for example, was against Daesh, and then he became friendly with Daesh. Why? Because Daesh was the enemy of the Kurds, and the Kurds are very important. Today we had some publications about in the WikiLeaks, as much as you can trust the WikiLeaks. You should know that he is very clever, very fishy, and very, very dangerous. Our region will be the first place that he can put his finger, and wherever he touched, grass never grow. We have to know that one of the changes in our region will come from the people who wants to lead the Islamic nation. He is the candidate, he is the man that the religious people are speaking about him, and as long as he will take this position seriously, quiet won't be in our region. I must say that I can see his way of action in every direction, including Turkey. I visited Cyprus in 2004. I visited the Turkish part and the Greek part. I saw at that time that it was terrible even to think about unity with the little part that was taken by the Turks, and it was no willingness even to discuss how to make complete peace between the two. At that time that I visited there, Turkey was present in the island by little minority - less than third of the population. Now when I visited - I had a meeting with my friends of ERPIC in November '15 - they are already fifty percent. Settlers in Israel is a problem, all Europe is raving how can you recognize settlers, settlers are dangerous for peace. But in turn in Cyprus settlers are half of the population today and very welcome, very good, it's very important, let's do something together. I am not going to lecture to Cyprus what to do. But as more as you look around, the future looks very strange, because a willingness of Turkey was all the time to become part of Europe. Of becoming united - half Turkey, half Cyprus together. It is the first step of Turkey to become part of Europe without even having to be elected or voted for. And therefore I expect lot of difficulties for all of us about what is happening. Because if you will see what is happening in the part of the Mediterranean opposite Syria, this is something which is boiling, and boiling, and boiling. And refugees are being sent to the whole region. And that is my estimation about what is happening in our region. Thank you very much for listening to me.

**Andrew Lambert (A.L.):** You've mentioned that Qatar and the Sheikha Muza support every terror organization in the world. I find that quite surprising, particularly with the American presence in Qatar. Do we have firm evidence for that, or is this just following the money?

**D.A.:** Hamas lives because of Qatar, and Hezbollah also. And you cannot ignore what they are doing there. And everyone is consulting even when they are giving it, and nobody prevents them to do it. And the truth of the matter that a lot of recognition in Europe to those two movements were led by Qatar. So I'm saying it very openly: they are supporting terrorism without being ashamed, because when you have the money, you are not ashamed to do

anything.

**A.L.:** Let me just widen it back to Turkey again. You said that Erdogan wants to have a nuclear weapon. Do you think he will press ahead with that, whatever happens in Iran, or do you think he will wait and see what happens in Iran, and then get a nuclear weapon?

**D.A.:** He is aiming now to have special relationship with Pakistan, which lost a lot of touch with the West. They are not as friendly as they used to be before and there is no great control on Pakistan. And Pakistan looks to him as something moving and shaking that he can put a finger there. He is not having to control, it's enough that he will be connected, that people will say I have an influence on nuclear power, I don't have to own it. But they're not far away with one finger to touch, to be accommodated with a nuclear reactor.

**A.L.:** Okay, but it's quite interesting when we look at Pakistan and the Chinese influence, and the reestablishment of, perhaps, a New Silk Road. Do you see that as a new alignment with the Shanghai Cooperation Council? Do you see that as a new way that Turkey will exploit its old historical interest in the Far East?

**D.A.:** Well, this is exactly Erdogan. Erdogan believes very much that the whole Islamic region from what we used to call Russia is still available to influence. And he is as more as he will come stronger, and he will have a finger to nuclear power, he will be stronger. Then he will be able to really build a new area around him as the leader of the Islamic people.

**C.P.:** You think that he's biding his time as far as Russia is concerned? Right now he can perhaps wait a little longer before he tries to make it difficult for them to be in Syria? Or you think that he's going to accept the Russian presence?

**D.A.:** He really suffered very much from the time that Russia hit him on his hands for his behavior. He's very clever and very careful. Now he behaves very nice. But it is only actions outside. It is not his strong belief. He don't want to follow anybody. He wants to lead. He won't become the slave of Russia. He will use his relationship not to aggravate them as long as he can that he will be able to build his power and then they will have to talk to him with respect and not with inferiority.

**A.L.:** And how do his relations develop with Israel, in particular? You didn't mention that in much detail.

**D.A.:** Well, this is a phenomenon also. He knows that Israel plays a very, very important role. And he knows that Israel don't want to touch him, as long as he's not touching Israel. Exactly as he is doing with Russia, he is doing with Israel. He says, let's be friends, we have nothing to fight against each other. But for the time being, as soon as it will be better to have somebody else, he will make his calculation, he is not a friend. The love is not pouring out of him. We had a lot of good relationship with Turkey. We had a lot of people in Turkey who wanted very much relationship because they felt that friendship with Israel is good for them. That's not the case with him, according to my opinion. And I think that for the time being it's good for him and it's good for us.

**C.P.:** David, do you see a post-Erdogan Turkey developing? I mean, we're all human, we all have an expiration date. Do you see the pendulum going back to a more secular, more Ataturk policies after Erdogan?

**D.A.:** The truth of the matter that he is building himself very, very clever. You should see the way he is doing things. Erdogan builds a shrine, thousand and one rooms, billions of dollars to build. Why? Because he wants to create pride among the people. One of the lessons people has to learn, and it affected now America also, that after the fall down of the Soviet Union, people in Russia felt humiliated, they felt that the whole big name that they had before does not exist anymore, and nobody takes them seriously. So, it's right that we don't have too much food, but where is our pride? Putin brought the pride to Russia and got immediately huge support by the people. Erdogan is the same. Erdogan came to the people and said, listen, who counts you? You became nobodies. You are not even able to protect your religion, your religion is not important. Nothing, you are giving away your God for some recognition of cheap people. Follow me. And he builds himself as a prophet. That's what Qaradawi says. That is the meaning of having around him the religious leadership who supports him. This is the danger. Because if that will be the danger, after him will come somebody else of the same opinion, of the same way, of the same power. And I don't see an immediate revolution in the whole of Turkey. Turkey is going down as a democracy. It's not a democracy. It was not a democracy for a long time, now it's even less, and less, and less.

**C.P.:** Is there more support for a Turkish caliphate beyond the Muslim Brotherhood? Is Qatar also... Is the new sheikh in Qatar agreeing with that?

**D.A.:** First of all, Qaradawi sits in Qatar. He would never say something that Qatar wouldn't agree with. So that's first. Second, because of Iran, the Sunnis are believing that the fight is who'll be the leader, and they want to be the leaders, but they are fighting on leadership and not just to maintain. The truth of the matter that Islam of today is fighting for a greater recognition, and the greater part in playing the role in the world. Billion six is the number of Islam, and of China, and of the other world. So this is a struggle of power. Why are they always speaking about that: we the Muslims, we are 1.6? To show that we are having the numbers. You have to take me into consideration, you have to take me serious. The only problem that I have is that I don't have a leader. Give me the leadership, I will show you what I can do. That's all.

**A.L.:** Can I ask you to say a few words about the recent coup that took place. Who do you think principally was supporting it, and what you think a political outcome will be?

**D.A.:** From the very first moment such a coup can only be done by a leader. Because nobody will ever attack an empty place, nobody will attack things which had happened, nobody will make a coup without try to take control on television, on radio, newspapers. It was not a coup. It was a plot. That is my estimation from the very first moment that when I read, when I saw the beginning - this is not a coup. That was a plot, that was planned, and that was a very good plan because that helped to put everyone in order and to organize what has to be organized, according to my opinion.

**A.L.:** So you think it was set up basically, probably by Erdogan and his friends?

**D.A.:** Absolutely. According to my opinion.

**A.L.:** Do you think any other nations were involved in it?

**D.A.:** I don't believe that he did it because he is a very confidential person and he believes in the conspiracy and he always believes that he speaks to somebody, somebody else knows. So it's not like him to share such a plan with somebody.



**A.L.:** And what will be the impact? According to the BBC, there are a 105,000 people that have either been dismissed from their jobs or placed in prison. What will be the effect on Turkey itself (inaudible) secularism and politically?

**D.A.:** Turkey will go back to religion and one of the signs will be that they will change from Sunday to Friday. And that will be the moment that they will say that they are strong enough to declare about their being real Muslims. And it will happen. That's according to my judgment. They cannot continue to play around with this story.

**A.L.:** And that presumably will clearly end their aspirations in Europe.

**D.A.:** Europe has a problem. Europe has a great problem. I must say that for a very long time, Europe started to share their responsibility with others, but not to take care about their own responsibility. The army in Europe is very, very weak. In China, the decision to have one child was a decision that they made politically. But in Europe they made a decision spiritually, and they have one only son in the family. To have an army with one only son is very difficult. You cannot run an army with only one, with a single son of a family. It is not the same army anymore. I don't think that Europe even expressing willingness to protect itself. And therefore every time when they needed something, they went to Turkey. A lot of times when they needed some involvement, even in Syria, they wanted very much Turkey to go. Turkey didn't go according to their will, they went according to their will, they use the forces against the Kurds. But Europe, the only one who fights in Europe is Russia. Who fights in Europe? Who does anything in Europe? The only stupidity was when they went to bombard Libya. What was so urgent to go and kill a man who came across and wanted to live with them in peace and got rid of all his nuclear reactors and all nuclear power that he started to hide? Who was behind it? It was Turkey that convinced them to do it. They never took part in anything, including in Syria.

Listen, we should know. I spoke about the First World War. Sixteen and a half million - the world was in a shock. But then we had the Second World War which we had twenty six million people who were here killed during the war. And now when we are talking about half a million, a million in Syria, who cares about it? Who does anything about... Who lifted a finger to prevent? It's not only to protect the people in Syria. It is themselves, even the world, that I am doing something to convince someone... who believes them? Who in the Middle East believes that somebody of those big nations will lift a finger for somebody else? This is a story.

**A.L.:** And it's happening in Yemen, for example, as you rightly say.

**D.A.:** Exactly, exactly. Hundreds of people are being killed and who lifted a finger?

**A.L.:** Nobody. Can I ask you about the final point, if I may? There is, of course, quite a large Turkish diaspora scattered around the Middle East and the Near East. I'm thinking of Turkmen in places like Kirkuk. Do you see there's a likelihood that we're going to see more Turkish bases around, say, the Gulf and further east and see Turkey gradually building up some sort of neo-colonial empire?

**D.A.:** I think it will try because the truth of the matter that the way of today is to try to build bases outside the centers and to spread. Russia is doing it, others are doing it. So definitely I can see it among those people who are trying to play a role. And I don't see anybody who prevents himself from taking places outside the centers, they want you to spread in many other places. Because having long fingers - that's the new way of making politics today. By the way,

look what is happening in Syria. In Syria, Latakia is going to be a part of Russia. Iran is going to get a port there. Syria wants to get a port in the region. Everyone is ready take a gift to chew it all the time. That's the situation. It's a terrible situation. There is no leadership. Erdogan is right. Erdogan feels that there is a vacuum in leadership. There is no one leader. The only stupid thing that the leadership is acting is about nonsense. About big things, you don't hear them. They are fighting about shall we do a general meeting about... Nothing important is being... Even refugees. Who are speaking about refugees? We have... Thirty eight million people are refugees this year in the region. Who is doing anything about? Who speaks about? Who is trying to give any solution? The world is silent because there is nobody to speak. And every leader is afraid to lose his chair because they are all in their chairs. And the public is not happy with the leadership. So this is the situation. By the way, this is the reason of the change in the United States.

**A.L.:** Just predicting ahead for a little bit, looking into a crystal ball. How do you see relations with Turkey, between Turkey and China, and Turkey and Trump?

**D.A.:** Turkey in China is to be seen. China is playing slowly. China is trying to be careful, because they know that on the edge of doing too much they are planning now with a Chinese Sea, which they are trying to change the history of this region. And they don't want to create too much tension. If they will start building relationships, they don't want to share power. As yet China is a power unto itself. Russia was likely more to make some relationship with Turkey, because Russia is in a weaker position than China. But Russia is clever. Putin will not fall into the trap because he doesn't trust Erdogan. This is the story. Erdogan is disliked by everyone, because nobody trusts him. He betrayed everyone. He was the best friend of Bashar Assad and he betrayed him. He was a friend of Russia then. He was a friend of Qaddafi and he betrayed him. He was a friend of Europe but he pushed the refugees to Europe.

**C.P.:** David, exactly on this issue. This question of a single leader for the Muslim people. Is Erdogan the person that will attract support from everybody? I mean, it doesn't seem that the Arab world is a democratic place so that they will elect a new caliph. I think this idea of a single leader is always going to be a pipe dream.

**D.A.:** I will tell you a story. I visited once in Cuba, I went with the chief rabbi of Israel, and I went to see Fidel Castro. And it was a very interesting conversation. And he said, you know, you are coming to visit the country which never had any anti-Semitism. I like the Jews, I help, I support, I did a lot of things. And then we asked him, if you're so friendly, why won't you recognize Israel and have a relationship with Israel? And he said, I'll tell you the truth. The world was divided to left and right. My left lost and I had to stick to the minorities of the people who can support me. What I can get from them is more than I can get from you. Therefore, I cannot be your friend because I have to give away the relationship with them. That was his honest answer. But that was his philosophy. The people who feel betrayed, the people who feel inferior, the people who feel that they are not getting the right recognition, or the right power, or are not united. This is a new power. North Korea for example. They are all surrounding... Saddam Hussein at that time who was his friend. The truth of the matter that he will appeal to a lot of people who feel that nobody takes them seriously. And he has a charisma, he has power, he has a lot of support, and he creates leadership which should be supported, especially if the religious authorities will stand behind him. I won't see it as an option which is not really in a reality. Definitely not. I see that he can be very influential in his activities and people will follow him.

**A.L.:** How will Trump get on with Erdogan?

**D.A.:** I don't know. The truth of the matter that he is a man who speaks straight and looks less afraid from anybody else. He is attacking the biggest power in the world: he's attacking the media. Nobody up till now of any leader in the world was brave enough to attack them. He is doing it. So it gives you some expectations that the man can be a new kind of a leader. But this is not... We don't have enough evidence. As yet, he is the only one who didn't show any fear from anybody. He stood behind what he says, you can agree with me, you cannot agree with me, I'm going full steam ahead. And he did it. It might be good for the world, but we don't have enough evidence to build the case around it.

**A.L.:** Well, he could volunteer for isolationism of course, couldn't he? "America first."

**D.A.:** Yes, but you see that he's successful there. It is not simple, nobody did it before. They are all hiding. They are all afraid to speak. And he won against every television station in America.

**C.P.:** David, thank you very much.

**D.A.:** Thank you so much. It was such a pleasure to be with you and looking forward to continue to see you.



---

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION\*

---

Marcus Templar\*\*  
5-7 December 2016

### The Strategic Culture of Turkey

*Turkey's internal and foreign policies are a result of national personality shaped by Turkey's strategic culture. This culture is characterized by uncertainty and insecurity. The former is reflected in Turkey's fixation with unity in homogeneity, culture and sameness, while the latter in a conspiratorial mindset, distrust, and militarization. Marcus Templar explores the reasons behind Turkey's strategic culture and explains certain continuity pattern in Turkey's behaviour, which occurs regardless its political system.*

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** Good evening and welcome to the East Mediterranean Forum. Our guest today is Marcus Alexander Templar. He is a writer in Turkish matters and an analyst of Turkish policy. Mr. Templar, welcome.

**Marcus Templar (M.T.):** Thank you very much. I'm honored actually to be here, I enjoy the subject, but also I like your group.

**C.P.:** Mr. Templar, you were very kind to join us in this discussion on Turkey, and particularly on the strategic culture of Turkey. What is strategic culture?

**M.T.:** Strategic culture is a widely shared normative belief, attitudes, policy, preferences as they pertain to a country's foreign relations. It is, I would say, the psychological personality of a country. And simply offers information that one needs to know in order to understand, in this case, why Turkey as a whole behaves in certain ways and to explain its social personality. That's what it is. And we call it strategic because it comes from the top-down. They are the one who determine the education of the people and the policies as they see them, based on what the pressures they get from the outside, the foreign policy of other countries, and so on.

**C.P.:** What does one look at in order to determine the strategic culture? I think your studies indicate that it's part of, at least for secular Turkey, it's part of the nation-building that occurred after the Kemalist take over, but it goes back to the Ottoman period. Please, tell us a

\* Transcript. Part of the e-conference "The Latest Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean," held by the East Med Forum between 5 and 7 December 2016.

\*\* US Army Cryptologic Linguist; All-Source Intelligence Analyst, Defense Intelligence Agency (Retired)

little bit about that, would you?

**M.T.:** It goes back to the Ottoman period where the Western allies, or powers at that time, started interfering with internal affairs of the country. Actually, they were determining in a way the foreign policy of the Ottoman Empire, or the great Ottoman state, as it used to be called. And we go to Kucuk Kaynarca - the victory of the Russians over the Turks, and that's how it started, really, in 1774. And we come to our time, and we have the treaty of San Stefano, for example, which was signed outside of Constantinople. Today I believe it is the airport, Kemal Ataturk Airport in that area. So there we see how the Turks actually negotiate on top of it. The deadline was six o'clock pm, and actually they signed at six o'clock pm, because the Russians had told them, either you do that, or we are getting to your capital. So we go back and then we have the defeat of the... Almost a dismemberment of Turkey after the First World War. All that have contributed to the culture, I would say, xenophobia. And one can say, well they are justified, others say, no they are not justified. But the culture goes there.

**C.P.:** So what lessons can one draw from Turkish behavior over time from the Ottoman, to the Kemalist period, to neo-Islamist? Now we're in the Ottoman period, I guess.

**M.T.:** The Turkish culture is a culture of uncertainty, insecurity. They see enemies everywhere around them. One could call it paranoia, I'm not sure. But all this brings them into homogeneity. The Turks are fixated with unity, uniformity of culture, of sameness, I would say, and we see that in the ethnic side of Turkey, but also the religious side of Turkey, as we see later. And Kemalism, what Kemalism is, because people do misunderstand the whole issue of Kemalism. Then the other thing is... By the way, Turkey is built upon the very qualities and values that define a sustained mutuality, cooperation, stability and interconnectedness. In Turkey, everybody has to be the same. If you're not the same, you're an outcast. And you see that everywhere. I know cases that Greeks have changed the names - even that - just to find a job. And to me that's obvious. Why should I change my name? I'm a minority, so what? But for them that's a danger, you're not one of us. The other thing is insecurity and because the concept of national security... Normal national security is not just military or gendarmerie, internally. It is connected also to economy. Because if we don't have a good economy, you really don't have security, internal security. They reduce that to the physical dimensions only. And that's why they are militarized. That's why they care more about the military they have than they care about anything else. And that could be the downfall of Turkey.

**C.P.:** But it was the same with the Ottoman period, wasn't it? I mean, it was an army with a state, not a state with an army, always, wasn't it?

**M.T.:** Well, yes. We saw that, but this changed with the revolt of the Janissaries and from that point on Turkey changed. I believe it was in 1864, I'm not sure, approximately, when Hamid was the sultan, he tried to modernize Turkey and he started bringing in understanding... The way he understood, the way he could implement everything he saw in the Western world at the time. And that westernization started bringing Turkey down, bringing Turkey in its imperial form down in 1918, and the Sultan was over. And when Kemal took over, brought back the Turkish understanding of things, although on the other hand started to westernize the country in his way, however, within nationalistic fervor.

**C.P.:** But there was also the nation-building of that time, with Gokalp and the poetry, and all of that was based in some ways on fiction as well, not just reality.

**M.T.:** Gokalp was a man who was a Kurd by the way, that's what is alleged. What he did, he took the *Shahnameh*, an epic poem of the Persians... Have in mind that in the Ottoman Turkey Persians had great respect among everyone, especially elite of the Turks, because they took Islam from the Persians. And in the beginning, Turkey was a Shia country and changed to Sunni later on when the sultan saw most of the Muslim subjects of his were Sunni. So it was a political thing for him, and he changed from Shia to Sunni. But they still maintained the admiration for the Persians. So what Gokalp did, he took the *Shahnameh* which was a Persian, clear Persian epic poem, and he applied that to the Turks. And he made the Turks to be descendants of the Turanian race, if I could say it like that. He published this poem, actually, in 1911 in Thessaloniki. And from there everybody thinks that Turks are Turanians. Actually, they are not. Turania is not even in Turkey. It is a central area north of Iran, but not in the Central Asia, as the Turks believe it is. And they took elements from the Mongols also, because the (inaudible) as Gokalp and others have in the myths about the Turks today, the grey wolf, all these things, happened at the east side of Mongolia, which is close to Sakhalin - the island, the peninsula of Russia. So it makes no sense. Anyway, Gokalp actually created a new Turkey.

**C.P.:** To interrupt you for a second, are the Alevis in Turkey remnants of the Shia past of Turkey?

**M.T.:** That's correct. That's correct. And the Alevis, like the swirling dervish clan, if I could call it like, that of a... I believe it is in the (inaudible). They are the ones that have brought the philosophical part of Aristotelian philosophy into Islam. So Alevis and the dervishes actually have some Greek into their understanding of the world. And they are very spiritual, they don't abide by the rules of Islam. They are much more... They see religion as a spiritual part and not as a secular part of life. So whatever they take from the Quran, they take the spirit of it, not a letter. And they differ a lot into how you implement the Quran. The Quran differs from Christianity that in Christianity you have the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the New Testament supersedes the Old Testament in every time there is a conflict. In the Quran you don't have that, because from the beginning the way the Suras were given, the chapters were given, do not exist anymore. (inaudible) that's called first, second and third was overturned by the Abbasids, if I'm not mistaken, or the Umayyads, or the two. And they changed that. They started the Quran with the shortest, which is the Fatihah, to the longest (inaudible) in Quran four-five pages. I have Quran, by the way, I have read it. So that's how it goes, there's no chronological basis.

**C.P.:** Well, I interrupted you. You were saying how the myths of Turkish nationhood affected the strategic culture. I think that's a very interesting issue.

**M.T.:** What Gokalp did, he united the Turks under Islam. What Kemal did, united the Turks under the unity of the Turks based on Islam, but on the secular basis. So both men, Gokalp and Kemal, had in mind the union of the country. The basis is different, however. And in the speech of Kemal Ataturk to the national assembly was clear that to him the Turks and the Kurds were the same thing. There is no ethnicity, individual ethnicity. All of you are the same, you are Turks because you live in Turkey. And there are some ministers at that time who said, actually, that you're either a Turk, or a slave.

**C.P.:** But it's interesting, and you mention it in your article, that a lot of the thinking then was that the important thing was education. It wasn't race or ethnicity, it was education. So if you were educated as a Turk, you became a Turk.

**M.T.:** That started with Kemal, again, when he said - I have it in Turkish here [*reads in Turkish*]. That means, "How happy is one to say that I'm a Turk."

**C.P.:** By the way, that's what's written on the mountain on Cyprus that faces the Greek side.

**M.T.:** Another one says, "A Turk is equal to the world." I don't know if you have seen it. It says... Supposedly, it's a tribute to Kemal. "Peace at home, peace in the world". That's connected to this "A Turk equals to the world." Everything else doesn't count.

**C.P.:** But there's a suggestion, though, that nation-building in Turkey is still incomplete. I mean, if you compare Turkey to Iran, for example, which they both have many minorities, a lot of them submerged minorities, ethnic, religious and so on. The threat, the perceived threat from these minorities seem to be different as far as the state is concerned. In Turkey this threat is magnified. Therefore, in today's Turkey you have this brutality towards the Kurds and other minorities, whereas in Iran on the same Kurdish issue, and I don't know if this is just a diplomatic ploy, but the Iranians don't seem that concerned with the Kurdish issue.

**M.T.:** Turkey was divided in 1919 to many parts. You had the area of Constantinople being an international, you had a Greek...

**C.P.:** The Treaty of Sevres.

**M.T.:** ...so they are afraid of that. And then they had the Treaty of Sevres, and so on, in which Armenia had expanded so far and down, the Kurdistan was almost close to Ankara, all these things. That's how they created it and this will be the downfall of Turkey. I don't know what you have read from, what paper you have read of mine, but I have written one in 2008, and I explained there that the moment Turkey becomes democratic, it is going to disappear, it is going to implode. I'm talking about democratic, really, like a Western country - Greece, Germany, doesn't matter. The reason is they cannot suppress the minorities anymore as a democratic country. Just imagine being democratic Turkey, and the Kurds will take over the national assembly.

**C.P.:** But isn't this the essence of the issue? Because Turkey has an oriental culture. Oriental culture in some ways is incompatible with Western values. It's the old Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations," with lack of another term, where certain things are divided and there's a division and the thinking... it's difficult to bridge that gap. Now, Turkey seems to be the best example of that situation. At least, even Turkey is split between the western part of Turkey and Anatolia, let's say, the more traditionalist, the more conservative and so on. But yet the state is still powerful. And it exhibits, and it acts very strongly on the international arena. Is the reality not what we see? Is there something hollow there?

**M.T.:** It doesn't seem to be. It seems to me, especially now with Erdogan, they want the cake and eat it too. Erdogan, if we take the way it is right now, what he wants to do is he wants to expand Turkey into Europe. And he started actually blackmailing Western Europe. They want to take from Western Europe what they want to take, and reject anything they don't like. At the same time, in order to do that you have to have people, your people in Western Europe, and any time you want something you agitate them. So to Erdogan, all these Muslims in Western Europe are means for future instability, as a tool of doing whatever he wants to do.



**M.M.:** Why is Erdogan's Turkey still pursuing membership in the EU, having in mind Turkey's anti-democratic, anti-European, anti-Western, authoritarian, Islamist character? Why is it... Or is it? Is it still pursuing it?

**M.T.:** I would say megalomania, and also in my view is the fault of the Western European countries. You see, the whole mentality is having Turkey on our side, who helps us against Russia, because of the Straits. They do not realize that the Straits are losing value, because we have different weapons today. The ships are larger and heavier. The Straits in the meantime get shallower and they render... I don't know how I could put it. They don't have the value they used to have a hundred years ago. But the mentality is that Turkey is important to us. To me, if they want to look for an important power over there, it will be Cyprus and Greece, especially with Crete, because they can control the Suez Canal. The other one - the Straits - are losing value, and you see Russia slowly, slowly take away from there the big ships and they transfer them to Baltiysk, which is the old German (inaudible). So it is the Europeans who have made a mistake on that. What they do, they see people from Constantinople or the littoral side of Turkey and they think that's Turkey. It is not. That's like a facade in a way. And don't forget many people who are Turkish citizens, in Germany especially, are actually Kurds. Most of the people in Constantinople are Kurds. A professor did that analysis taking the telephone books of Constantinople and he saw that most of them are Kurds. So the Kurds are the ones who promote Turkey without realizing it. The Turks themselves don't do that.

**C.P.:** There's also an interesting twist to this European relationship, because Erdogan claims the right, in some ways, to speak on behalf of the Muslims in Europe.

**M.T.:** Yes.

**C.P.:** And this is supported by the fact that there's a number of Turkish religious organizations that are becoming and have become increasingly active in a lot of the European countries with Muslim populations. Now, in your estimation, is this consistent with Turkish strategic culture, or is this a different approach to Europe?

**M.T.:** I would say it is part of both. Strategic culture is the one that emanates from this. But also megalomania of Erdogan - it's something more personal, I would say. But Turks like to be the power of the world. If they could be the power, they would be the power. That's why they're expanding everywhere they can. Sometimes through cunning, sometimes through extortion, bullying - that's part of the strategic culture. But the religious organizations in Western Europe - just like we have here, we have Gulen here - are being used for exactly the blackmail, as I said before. In this way, they can blackmail the Western countries with instability. Now, if (inaudible) in the United States was part of the whole scheme, Erdogan will not have any problem. But because it is not part of the scheme for his own reasons, that's why Erdogan has a problem.

**C.P.:** What scheme are you talking about? The overthrow of Erdogan?

**M.T.:** Instability.

**C.P.:** Instability.

**M.T.:** Yeah. And instability is the basis not for Turkey to take over Europe, but to regulate European foreign policy towards Islamic countries or towards whatever Turkey doesn't like,

doesn't matter what. It's like (inaudible) would be the power behind the power. The movers and shakers.

**M.M.:** We know that the ruling party, the Justice and Development Party – the AKP party - is rooted in the Islamist movement called Milli Gorus, and that the Milli Gorus movement used to have a pretty strong relations, or still has pretty strong relations with the Muslim Brotherhood. So how strong is the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood ideology on the party, and on Erdogan in particular?

**M.T.:** The whole Erdogan system, I mean the people in the government today, not the deep state we have from Kemal, but from Erdogan side, started with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. And they have connection with Hamas, and many of the Palestinians. Not all the Palestinians are pro-Hamas, not really. But I do not take Hamas as part of Palestine or the Palestinian Authority. To me Hamas is independent. Because we must have in mind that the area of Gaza was under Egyptian rule, not under Jordanian rule. So the mentality is different. Actually, I still wonder how, what kind of dialect the Hamas, the Gaza people speak today? The Egyptian dialect, or the Palestinian dialect? And believe me, there are great differences. So all these, the Turks follow the Hamas mentality, the Muslim Brotherhood mentality. They are part of them.

**C.P.:** Looking at Syria and Iraq...

**M.T.:** Syria...

**C.P.:** Turkey seems to have irredentist and revisionist intentions not only against Greece, but to the east and to its south. Again, is this a reawakening of Turkish... We call it “neo-Ottoman,” but I'm not sure it's correct term. Is it coming back in touch with the mainstream of, in your terms, Turkish strategic culture? Is Turkish strategic culture pushing the state now more visibly than it was before?

**M.T.:** In a sense, yes they do. Again, to them is not important if the borders change or not, as far as they're concerned. It is important what kind of effective control they can have on other countries. They want to be the movers and shakers of the area. Now, come to Syria. I have written a letter to my representative here in the United States (inaudible), and I told her that time, and that was in 2013, around the time ISIS came about. In 2003, I was talking to a very high ranking officer of the United States Army. And I told him at the time - we were talking about Iraq, because we were ready to invade Iraq - and I told him at that time, I dread the day that Syria is going to be destabilized. Do not destabilize Syria. There are many ways of getting rid of Assad, because Assad is not exactly a regime I love, personally. I don't. Because I have worked on that. But Syria is a microcosm of ethnic and religious groups and to me even Lebanon is part of Syria. And my ancestor grandparents come from Hatay area which was part of Syria. (inaudible) passed it into Turkey. So, I know Syria. Syria should not be destabilized. You want to get rid of Assad, there are many other ways to do it. Do not destabilize Syria, especially when we know Turkey... I would say, we knew that time Turkey was itching to get into Syria, and was threatening Assad. And all this because Syria has a lot of Alawites. Now, Alevis and Alawites are not the same. But they're very close to each other, because they come from the same root: Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Mohammed. So those Alawis are Shia. And the same thing happens in Lebanon with Hezbollah – they are Shia. And the Shia are more, I would say, more spiritual than the Sunnis. The fundamentalist Muslims are the Sunnis,

not the Shias. Never mind what's going on in Iran, that's another story. But Syria should never be destabilized. And that's why Russia came in. Because Russia wants to have the control of the Middle East. And they lost it. The moment Egypt went to the Western side, Russia lost. Not only lost the control, but also lost the client to sell weapons. And the only client they have now is Syria in the area. And they would never lose the client. Also, it gives them a base in Latakia and Tartus.

**C.P.:** It's interesting that you mentioned Russia, because I think Turkey and Russia, from the time of the Ottomans, they always had not a love-hate relationship, mostly a hate relationship, but with slight, you know, shines of love too. Because there was some admiration, let's say, certainly on the part of the Turks towards the Russians. Admiration in terms of their might and their ability, and their military capabilities. We see a little bit of that, I think, with Erdogan and Putin now. But at the end, again, the strategic culture of Turkey and the strategic culture of Russia, in your estimation, do they dove tail, or are they at loggerheads?

**M.T.:** I would say, to a point, to a point they are similar. To a point. Russians are very proud people. I have read a paper - I don't have it available - about the strategic culture of Russia. And I was really surprised of the things I have read. It was written by a group of Russians, academics all of them. But my understanding would be, they come in conflict with each other, because they are the same or similar, to a point. And I believe that the Turks and the Russians (inaudible) in Syria, mostly because Russia on one hand wants to eliminate the strength, the power of Turkey, and they support the Kurds for that. And the Kurds are supported by the Americans too. But also they don't want to lose the client and the base they have in Latakia. It's also a matter of prestige.

**C.P.:** But the Kurds, again, are very, very... It's an interesting issue, because as far as the Turks are concerned, the Kurds are the biggest threat to Turkish territorial integrity and sovereignty, and so on. Now, to what extent the US and the West is supporting the Kurds, again, that the jury is out? Because there seems to be a little bit of double-talk there, or double action, let's say.

**M.T.:** That's Turkey's action.

**C.P.:** The Russians, again, although when they started getting involved in the Syrian issue it was a little bit... There their objective seemed a little bit more clear-cut. Now they're sort of muddling the waters as well. What are they supporting? They're supporting certain Turkish claims or certain Turkish objectives, are they not? What's your sort of take? Here you must have a clearer take than we do.

**M.T.:** Turkey started feeling the danger of dismemberment, of losing territory to the Kurds, after the Kurds declared the area through the constitution of Iraq as an autonomous territory. Autonomy is the first step to independence, the way I see it. Especially that Kurds are not Arabs. The Kurds are Indo-Europeans, like the Iranians - the Persians. So the moment the Turks saw that the Kurds are now autonomous, they know, they understand that this is going to spread into Turkey, because now the Kurds have a state. And because of the territories, in Diyarbakir - that area down there - I would say, not a 100%, but very close to it, Kurdish - there is a homogeneity in that area by the Kurds. And the Turks see that, and they are afraid of that. At the same time, you have Kurds who live in Syria, who until 2010, I believe, they were not recognized they ever existed there. And Kurds from Syria could not get a passport, not even a birth certificate, because the Arabs of Syria, the governments in the fifties said that these

people came from Turkey illegally during the war - passed illegally to Syria - and they are not Syrians, although they were born within Syria. So if I had to redraw the map, I would take all the Kurdish territories into the new state of Kurdistan, plus the area of Syria that is inhabited by the Yazidis, by the Kurds, all these people, I would say east of Euphrates. And I believe that's where the fighting is going on over there. The Kurds are west of Euphrates and the east of Euphrates. That's where the conflict is. But I believe now is different because the Turks feel that the Kurds actually are empowering the area, they fight - even the women fight - and they have the support of the United States, and Russia too. The only thing Russians don't want is for Syria to lose territories because it's a matter of prestige for the Russians, not for the Turks. So that's what's going on in my opinion. It's a conflict over there because of what happened in 2004, with the new constitution of Iraq, and so on.

**C.P.:** But in the maritime area also. I think we mentioned before that over the last twenty years Turkey has built this very large, very strong navy in the Eastern Mediterranean. In some ways more than defensive because it has offensive capabilities. Therefore, again, Turkey hasn't had a large navy - that large - since the 1600s when it got defeated at Lepanto. What is this? It's, again, it's moving towards its destiny, its national destiny in the region?

**M.T.:** It has to do a lot with Erdogan. Don't forget he was prime minister for so long before he became president. And also with the Islamist taking over in a way the government of Turkey, in a slow pace, they want to show that Kemal was good, but we are better. So in a few years, about four years from now - 2020 - they want to have the 100 anniversary of Kemalist Republic of Turkey, with Kemal number one, the one who made Turkey the way it is. So now they want surpass that mentality and push for Islam: we are the ones who did it, we are better than the secularists. At the same time, they want to go back to the Ottoman glory, as they see it. The difference is that today the world is different.

**C.P.:** You mean, if there was not this move towards Islamism in Turkey, you wouldn't have this expansionist dreams, this increasing their regional power? Is that what I'm hearing you say?

**M.T.:** More or less, yes. More or less, yes.

**C.P.:** So if Turkey goes back to secularism, it will stay within its borders?

**M.T.:** Now that I can't tell you because once you see something good, you keep it. It depends how they see it. Never mind what they say. You know, you could be a good politician, and personally I don't trust any politician, but that's my view. This is the issue here. They want to go back to the Ottoman Empire in order to show off their flag, you know. We are here and we are the ones who do everything that we want. And you are still a slave because you are not a Turk. I was talking to an Arab, I have some Arab friends. At the time I was studying Turkish in California. And there's a nice restaurant owned by three brothers, all from the village of (inaudible) in Jordan. And I have a friend from (inaudible), he studied dentistry in Thessaloniki. And that's how we met, I started talking to them. And one of them said, "I hate the Turks." And I said to him, "Why?" These brothers are Christians. But the mentality was the same, "I hate the Turks." Why? "Because when they were our rulers, they did not allow us to study in Arabic". So anywhere and everywhere the Turks went, they were forcing people to study Turkish and to become somebodies within a Turkish milieu. And they want to go back to that. Again, we go to the strategic culture. You see what you did to us one hundred years ago, you wanted to destroy

us and all this. I'll show you now, because now we are united, we are one. And the moment you start understanding this mentality... It's like a revenge in a way.

**M.M.:** I would like to go back to the question of fundamentalism, because you mentioned that religious fundamentalism is much more often to be found within the Sunni Islam, and not the Shia Islam. Is this the reason why Turkey supports ISIS? Or if it doesn't support it overtly, because it has never admitted that it does, it is not fighting it fiercely enough. Is this the reason... Is there's some sort of an ideological similarity between the...

**M.T.:** It seems that the Turks take ISIS as their tool, where they thought they can do is use them to do whatever they're doing, and then, because we are strong now, we could go and subdue them. So they are using ISIS for anything they want, (inaudible) on their minds, anyway, to do whatever they want. Because in reality, I mean, I don't want to go far into the Islamic understanding of mine, because I have read the Quran. There are many things they don't even say from the Quran, they take whatever, they pick and choose what they like. But that's another story. They use the ISIS fundamentalism, if I could call it like that, more as a tool, thinking that let them do whatever they want now, destroy everything Western, show to the world what Islam is all about, and we do it in the name of Allah. But when it comes to... And they supported them. They did support them. The MIT of Turkey were actually shipping equipment to them. And it is recorded by journalists that have left Turkey since because they wouldn't have been alive. Yes, they want to use them as a tool, and they use them, thinking that after the whole thing finishes and they do what they want to, they have their caliphate, then we can take over. Because they depend on us now anyway. We don't give them the equipment, we don't allow the recruits to go to Syria through Turkey, we have them. Let them do whatever they do and then we control them.

**C.P.:** But that means that they don't want to destroy them.

**M.T.:** No.

**C.P.:** Because they're useful.

**M.T.:** Because the ISIS wants to have the caliphate and Erdogan wants to be a caliph. So you do our dirty work.

**C.P.:** But irrespective of the caliphate, ISIS would be useful for Turkey anyways.

**M.T.:** That's correct. Because they destroy the Kurds - the enemies - they destroy the Christians down there, they get rid of Assad, and it's what's on their minds, and we can manipulate them. So it's like a... Something attributed to Lenin, and I don't know if that's true or not because I haven't found anywhere, but at least a Russian wrote that Lenin has said, these are the 'useful idiots' for the Turks.

**M.M.:** So in other words, what you're saying is that once the caliphate is established and Erdogan becomes a caliph, what he counts on is that ISIS is going to pledge allegiance to him? Is this what you are trying to say?

**M.T.:** No, they will force them to. They will force them to pledge allegiance. Because they have the power and with all the ships and the navy what they do is exactly to establish themselves as the power. Not only in Eastern Mediterranean, but also in the whole Mediterranean, and everywhere they used to be, like Yemen.

**C.P.:** What are we to expect from a post-Erdogan Turkish regime?

**M.T.:** A lot of this would depend on a number of factors. Russia, the United States, the EU. For as long as the EU is not doing, is not a unified military power and a unified political power, Turks will do anything they like. Germany has a lot to do with it. The Germans used to be the friends of the Turks, (inaudible) but from what I have read, the Germans, actually, are the ones behind the genocide of the Greeks, and the Armenians, and so on. And then they implemented that on the Jews during 1934 or '35 (inaudible). They have to be unified. And for as long as Germany does not support Cyprus, Greece, all these countries of European Union that are close to Turkey, and they do anything possible on their side to exert, I would say, effective control over these countries, directly or indirectly - like in Greece with the money issue - Turkey sees that as an opportunity to expand. So the European Union who had to start putting the foot down, and anytime Erdogan tries to blackmail them, or direct blackmails them about sending millions of refugees, whatever, they could stop him in the different manner. I remember I was talking to a politician from Greece and he said to me, "It's not that we do not see the refugees coming in, it's not that we cannot stop them coming in. But we have signed so many treaties with the European Union that doesn't allow us to stop them." So again, we go to the European Union and how they understand the whole issue. My parents on both sides were refugees to Greece. But they went to a country that was Orthodox Christian as they were. Or even if they were not Orthodox, they were Christians. Here you have refugees who come from another country, and when they come to your country, they demand that you adopt their culture, instead of them adopting yours. (inaudible) the same religion and again they demand to have not rights, but privileges. You cannot do that.

**C.P.:** But coming back to how Europe can affect a post-Erdogan Turkish regime, or the shape of it. Because I think you were developing a line of thought there, which I think is interesting.

**M.T.:** Well, in the first place they have to be united. They're not. It seems to me the northern countries, like Sweden and Finland, and all these, do not understand the difference.

**C.P.:** But do you mean that they should challenge Erdogan? They should call his bluff? What is the suggested policy?

**M.T.:** The European Union does not, in my view, does not defend the borders of the European Union. On one hand they say they're political union - actually they are not. (inaudible) the standards down of political union - they are not political union. They're just a union of customs, commercial union, I would say. So far they have not shown any unity as a unified Europe, as a country. Because they don't even have constitution. Personally, I don't think European Union is going to stay union for a long time. That's another story. They have conflicts among themselves that go back to centuries, and it's not like the United States, from Mexico... (inaudible). They could defend the borders of Europe...

**C.P.:** But there's an additional factor: post-Brexit Britain. The suggestion is that it will come closer to Turkey, because now they're both on the periphery of Europe, they have more common interests, and that this would at least in the short run encourage Erdogan and encourage Erdogan's policies and enable him to hand on in a post-Erdogan regime, to hand on some of his philosophical, and practical, and other heritage.

**M.T.:** I would say yes and no. I don't think so, but I cannot tell you... That would depend also on the foreign policy of the United States. Because Britain is one of the "four eyes", as we call

them. The “four eyes” meaning United States, UK, Australia and Canada. And British foreign policy and American foreign policy go hand to hand in many cases, especially in Europe. But don't forget also we have Germany there, and the US and Germany are very close.

**C.P.:** Sure, but one thing would be British attitude towards Russia, because the Europeans are a little bit timid towards taking a really hard position towards Russia. Whereas now with Britain outside the European Union, it can go back to its traditional anti-Russian kind of policy. In the Eastern Mediterranean I'm talking about, because that is surely the challenge. Can the West accept a permanent presence of Russia in the Eastern Mediterranean? That question has been plaguing everybody for centuries. And there is where, I don't know if you agree, one of the sources of Erdogan's power.

**M.T.:** At the end I think the West will have to accept the presence of Russia in Syria. You cannot have... I don't believe they want to have a conflict with Russians over Syria. And if the Russians are still in Syria, they could be players in the area. As for Turkey, I doubt... There is a difference between what Turkish elite wants and what Turkey can do. Yes, they can spend all the money they want to have a strong navy, but there's the issue there how good the navy is going to be? They would have to have many friends in the Mediterranean in order to have the ships in. To my knowledge, the only one they have now is Albania in the Adriatic. And if Albania now is part of NATO, yes, okay, they have something in common in the way. However, when Albania gets into the European Union, things change. We saw what happens with Bulgaria. Turkey and Bulgaria kind of were in friendly terms. And today the Turks don't do anything with Bulgaria because they know behind Bulgaria is not just NATO, also Russia. It's like a... I don't have a crystal ball here. But I don't believe Turkey will go and the UK will go that far together. Because there's a conflict of interest. Any time Turkey gets stronger, the UK loses. In Cyprus, for example, they have two bases - Akrotiri and Dhekelia - and I don't believe they are willing to risk that. So we'll see. I don't know how it is going to go.

**C.P.:** Just not to tire you much longer, but a final sort of question. Do you see a powerful, dominant Turkey being a paragon of peace and stability in the region, or something else?

**M.T.:** Well, it depends how you take it. It could be part of stability, as I believe Davutoglu had said that we want to have peace in the region, and all this. Under whose terms? If Turkey is the controlling power in the area and imposes itself on others, is it going to be a part of stability? Is it going to be a stable area? However, the fact would be that under Turkish effective control of the area all the countries would be like slaves in a way. And no country today will accept that. No country would accept anything like that. On the other hand, if you see it from the view of the countries that would be around Turkey, like Greece, Cyprus, Egypt or even Malta, Turkey would be part of instability. And to me they are part of instability, because of the way I see they act with Greece, for example, or Cyprus. They go to the Aegean Sea, they say, oh, that's our sea now, we split it, or half - stuff like that. The problem in international law, I'm sure you know that, is if you allow somebody to do something once, you allow them for the rest of their period. So people in those areas have to understand, you cannot say, well, it's only once, it doesn't matter, that's nothing. No. It is something. Also, in politics the fundamental truth is a perception. You don't want to give a perception to anyone that you are going to accept this reality that Turks want to impose on you. That's how I see it. To me Turkey is instability.

**M.M.:** Just a very last question from my side. Looking at the past and the present, is there any chance that Turkey will ever develop into a Western-style, stable, liberal democracy?

**M.T.:** Liberal? What do you mean by liberal now, because we have a difference in liberalism. European liberal means at the right side - right wing - and American liberals are left-wing. The American or the European liberal?

**M.M.:** ...where the rights of the minorities are respected, where there is equality of genders...

**M.T.:** You are talking about a regular democracy. As I said at the beginning, I believe that the moment Turkey becomes democratic, Turkey is over. It is going to implode from within. It's going to collapse, because all these minorities, now you will see them coming out. And you have religious minorities that today nobody sees. I have heard people saying about crypto-Christians coming out. The Alawis will be free to do whatever they want. Now (inaudible) secluded a little bit. The Kurds, the Armenians, Greeks, whatever you have... (inaudible) It also depends what you consider a Greek. Do you consider a Greek a Greek Orthodox, for example, or even the minorities, the Greek-speaking minority in the Pontus area who are actually Muslims? So all these people are going to come out. And at the end you have Turkey. So personally, my wish is to see a democratic Turkey, a real democratic Turkey. But the moment that happens, I don't see Turkey surviving.

**C.P.:** Thank you very much for your time, and your insights, and sharing them with us. And we hope to continue this discussion.

**M.T.:** I hope some people will listen to them.



---

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION\*

---

Klearchos A. Kyriakides\*\*  
5-7 December 2016

### The Strategic Role of Cyprus: Some Salient Lessons of History

*Dr. Kyriakides offers historical evidence the great strategic importance of the Island of Cyprus to the Ottomans and the British, but also in the context of the current crises in the East Mediterranean and the Middle East.*

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** Good evening and welcome to the East Mediterranean Forum. My co-host again is Marta Murzanska, and our presenter this evening is Dr. Klearchos Kyriakides, the Director of the Law and Democracy Program at the European Rim Policy and Investment Council who will discuss the strategic role of Cyprus. As always, the views expressed are the speaker's own. Dr. Kyriakides, good evening.

**Klearchos Kyriakides (K.K.):** Thank you very much for that kind introduction. Hello everybody. My purpose today is quite straightforward over the next twenty minutes or so. It's to try to assess the strategic role of Cyprus with reference to relatively recent history. I'm going to go back to 1878 and the British acquisition of Cyprus. But I'm going to go even further back and look at the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus in 1571. Those two dates are key, because the strategic role of Cyprus historically has been in essence to serve the interests of two major powers on the world stage: Turkey and the United Kingdom. I'll flesh out that argument over the next few minutes with reference to some images and some other sources, including declassified British and American documents.

By way of introduction, let's just remember where the island of Cyprus is situated. It lies at the crossroads between three great continents: Africa, Asia and Europe. And as a consequence, Cyprus has been influenced by all three. And Cyprus also lies at the crossroads between three faiths: Christianity, Islam and Judaism. And in terms of political ideology, Cyprus lies at the crossroads between on the one hand liberal democracy, and on the other hand Ottomanism and its successor neo-Ottomanism, and what has recently been described as "Erdoganism" - an interesting concept which I'm not really going to explore today other than to note the existence

\* Transcript. Part of the e-conference "The Latest Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean," held by the East Med Forum between 5 and 7 December 2016.

\*\* Assistant Professor and Deputy Head, School of Law, University of Central Lancashire, UCLan Cyprus; Director, Democracy and Rule of Law Program, ERPIC

of.

The Ottoman Empire and Caliphate has overshadowed the history of Cyprus, both in the post-1571 period, when the Ottomans conquered and then occupied Cyprus, but also in more recent times. It's really important to understand that the island of Cyprus was conquered, occupied, ruled and I would argue misruled by Ottoman Turkey from 1571 until the British arrived in 1878. This is important to understand because there was no process of democratization in Cyprus during the Ottoman imperial period. There was no process of the Enlightenment in Cyprus. There was no process of industrialization. There was no university in Cyprus. And as a consequence, the political culture here did not develop in a democratic direction. And we still see echoes of that today with the lack of transparency in Cyprus, the top-down method of governance, and the willingness of the political elites here in Nicosia, or some of the political elites in Nicosia to accommodate the interests of their former imperial rulers - the Turks.


Now, in 1914, it's important to note, the United Kingdom declared war on Turkey. And on the same day, 5<sup>th</sup> November 1914, the United Kingdom annexed the island of Cyprus, which (inaudible) the United Kingdom and occupied with the permission of Turkey from 1878 until 1915. Turkey in turn issued a fatwa declaring jihad against their non-German and non-Austrian enemies, including the British. And there was a temporary rupture in the Anglo-Turkish relationship. So from 1914 onwards the island of Cyprus was to all intents and purposes British, both in terms of English colonial law and in terms of international law. And with the Treaty of Lausanne, in 1923 post-First World War Turkey recognized the British annexation. So from 1923 onwards until 1960 Cyprus was very much British, controlled by the British, dominated by the British, and exploited by the British. And it was in this period, particularly in the late 1940s and 1950s, that the British started to develop their military infrastructure on the island of Cyprus. This, of course, took place as a consequence of the expulsion of the British, or the withdrawal of the British from Egypt, and Palestine, and India, and other parts of the region within the immediate vicinity, or the general vicinity of Cyprus.

Now, I'm going to just focus on Turkey for a moment, then we'll come back to the United Kingdom. It's important to understand that insofar as Turkey is concerned, the island of Cyprus is Turkish. That is the key to understanding Turkish strategy, Turkish thinking, and Turkish adventurism in relation to Cyprus. I'll just offer you two sources of evidence in order to reinforce that point. The first is from the official statement made by Fatin Zorlu, the representative of Turkey at the Tripartite London Conference which was held in late August until early September of 1955. On the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1955, Mr. Zorlu representing Turkey said the following: "By its geographical structure [the island of Cyprus] is a prolongation of the Anatolian Peninsula of which the soil is Anatolian soil, of which the climate is Anatolian climate...," and on, and on, and on he went in a similar vein. It's often been said by Turkish politicians and military officers that Cyprus is a pistol pointing at the heart of Turkey, that Cyprus is Turkish, and that Cyprus belongs to the soul of Turkey, or words to that effect. That's really important to understand. Now, there are various reasons why Turkey has adopted this approach. One reason is that Turkey has not wanted Greeks, ethnic Greeks, or the Greek state to be in a position to encircle Turkey by means of the various islands that are dotted around Turkey to its south. But whatever the reasons may be, the fact remained that all of these decades after Mr. Zorlu made that observation, Turkey still considers Cyprus to be Turkish. Earlier today I went on to the website of the Foreign Ministry of Turkey and I found the following sentence: "The island of Cyprus is geographically an extension of the Anatolian

Peninsula.” 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2016. In other words, the Zorlu thinking of 1955 is still the Erdogan thinking of today (*see Plate 31*).

## As far as Turkey is concerned, the Island of Cyprus is an 'extension' or 'prolongation' of the Anatolian Peninsula

- '[B]y its geographical structure [the Island of ] is a prolongation of the Anatolian Peninsula, of which the soil is Anatolian soil, of which the climate is Anatolian climate.' (*Fatin Zorlu, representative of Turkey, London Conference, 1 September 1955*)\*
- 'The Island of Cyprus ... is geographically an extension of the Anatolian peninsula' (*Website of the Foreign Ministry of Turkey on 3 Dec 2016 at [www.mfa.gov.tr/cyprus-\\_historical-overview\\_.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/cyprus-_historical-overview_.en.mfa)*)
- \* Statement made by M[onsieur] Zorlu at the Fourth Plenary Meeting held on 1 September 1955, The Tripartite Conference on the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus held by the Governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Greece and Turkey, London, August 29 - September 7 1955 (Cmd 9504, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, October 1955), pages 19 to 27 at pages 20, 22, 23.
- Source of image: Ministry of Defence website (2009), Crown Copyright, as archived at: [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/http://www.operations.mod.uk/special/Eastern Mediterranean.jpg](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/http://www.operations.mod.uk/special/Eastern%20Mediterranean.jpg) (last accessed on 27 November 2015)



**Plate 31:** Cyprus as an 'extension' of the Anatolian peninsula.


Now I'm going to focus on the 1950s for a moment or two, because that's my area of expertise. My doctoral thesis was on the British development of the British bases in Cyprus during the 1950s. I've worked in the National Archives in London and the US National Archives, and various other archives, and my focus has been on the fifties. And my view is that this period is key to understanding the present, together with 1914, 1878 and 1571, which I mentioned earlier.

Now, Turkey's strategy towards Cyprus is remarkably consistent. There have been very few changes in terms of its perception of Cyprus, and in terms of its perception of the role of Cyprus. Here is, for example, a wonderfully lucid and clear summary or distillation of Turkish strategy as articulated by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Harold Macmillan on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 1958. Next to nothing has changed since 1958. This, I should emphasize, is a Turkish strategy that predates 1958. Its origins are in 1955, it crystallized in 1956, and here we see it fleshed out in the House of Commons by the British Prime Minister on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 1958: "The Turks, I am putting their view," said Mr. Macmillan, "regard Cyprus as an extension of the Anatolian plain, a kind of offshore island with vital significance for their defense and their security. They say," that is to say the Turks say, "this has been their argument up to now - that the Turkish Cypriot community must not be ruled by a Greek Cypriot community and they," that is to say the Turks, "have advocated the physical separation of the two communities by

means of a territorial partition." Within this parliamentary statement by the British prime Minister one finds the crux of Turkish strategy. Firstly, in the eyes of Turkey Cyprus is Turkish.

## The essence of post-1956 Turkish thinking towards Cyprus, as expressed on 26 June 1958

- "The Turks — I am putting their view — regard Cyprus as an extension of the Anatolian Plain, a kind of offshore island with vital significance for their defence and their security. They say — this has been their argument up to now — that the Turkish-Cypriot community must not be ruled by a Greek-Cypriot community and they have advocated the physical separation of the two communities by means of a territorial partition.' (Prime Minister Harold Macmillan of the UK, Hansard, *House of Commons Debates*, 26 June 1958, Columns 724-725)



A map titled "EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN" showing the region from the Middle East to the Balkans and the Mediterranean Sea. Cyprus is highlighted in yellow, and the surrounding waters are labeled "MEDITERRANEAN SEA". The map includes various geographical features, cities, and borders.

\* Source of image: Ministry of Defence website (2009), Crown Copyright, as archived at <http://web.archive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/> (<http://www.operations.mod.uk/geospatial/mediterranean.jpg> (last accessed on 27 November 2015))

3

**Plate 32:** *The essence of post-1956 Turkish thinking towards Cyprus, as expressed on 26 June 1958*

Secondly, in the eyes of Turkey the population is subdivided into two - and not more than two - “communities”, which of course is a variation of the Ottoman *millet* - the religious community. Thirdly, the “two communities” must be physically separated from one another by means of uprooting, ethnic cleansing, possible transfers, and other crimes, concrete to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and other instruments of international law. And fourthly, this Turkish strategy needs to be reinforced and cemented by a territorial partition, a phrase that has now been eclipsed and replaced by “federation” - the Turkish form of federation. So those, ladies and gentlemen, are the four cornerstones, or the tenets of Turkish strategic thinking in relation to Cyprus, since 1956. And nothing has really changed, notwithstanding the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960.

What we have on the next slide is a remarkably prescient and vivid insight into Turkish strategy in 1964. This of course is shortly after the constitutional collapse of the bi-communal system introduced into the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, shortly after the inter-communal troubles which resulted in the unlawful killing of many people on Cyprus, from both of the constitutionally sanctioned “communities”, to use that phrase. This is what the US ambassador said on the 2nd December 1964. This is Taylor Belcher, he had long experience in Cyprus, he'd

served as the American consul during the last phase of British imperial rule in Cyprus which came to an end in 1960, subject to two sovereign base areas, of course. And this is what the American ambassador said:

“Our analysis of [Turkish proposals]... is based on the following assumptions: federation of Cyprus really means partition of Cyprus and will therefore require force to be imposed... ..Federation as envisaged by Turkish Cypriot leaders and we suppose by GOT [Government for Turkey] is [a] solution which might possibly be imposed temporarily at great cost by force of arms.”

And now we come to the real meat in the sandwich.

“Geographic separation of most of [the] two communities with boundaries cutting Famagusta [on the east coast] and Nicosia [in the center], and running west to Kokkina [on the northwest coast] is Turkish Cypriot meaning [of federation].”

To all intents and purposes this is “federation a la Turquie.” In other words, Turkey imported the word “federation” as a smokescreen to disguise what it really meant, which is partition. And the origins of this are to be found in the late 1950s. But from 1964 onwards Turkey and their colleagues in the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community have been consistently pressing for the federalization of the Republic of Cyprus. They’ve been consistently pressing for the separation and segregation of the “two communities”, and they’ve been consistently pressing for the preservation of the “two communities”. This, I want to emphasize, is something that predates the Turkish invasion. In fact, in so far as I can judge, the primary purpose, or one of the primary purposes of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, was to implement the strategy that Macmillan sketched out in 1958, and which the American ambassador outlined in his memorandum to the State Department in 1964.

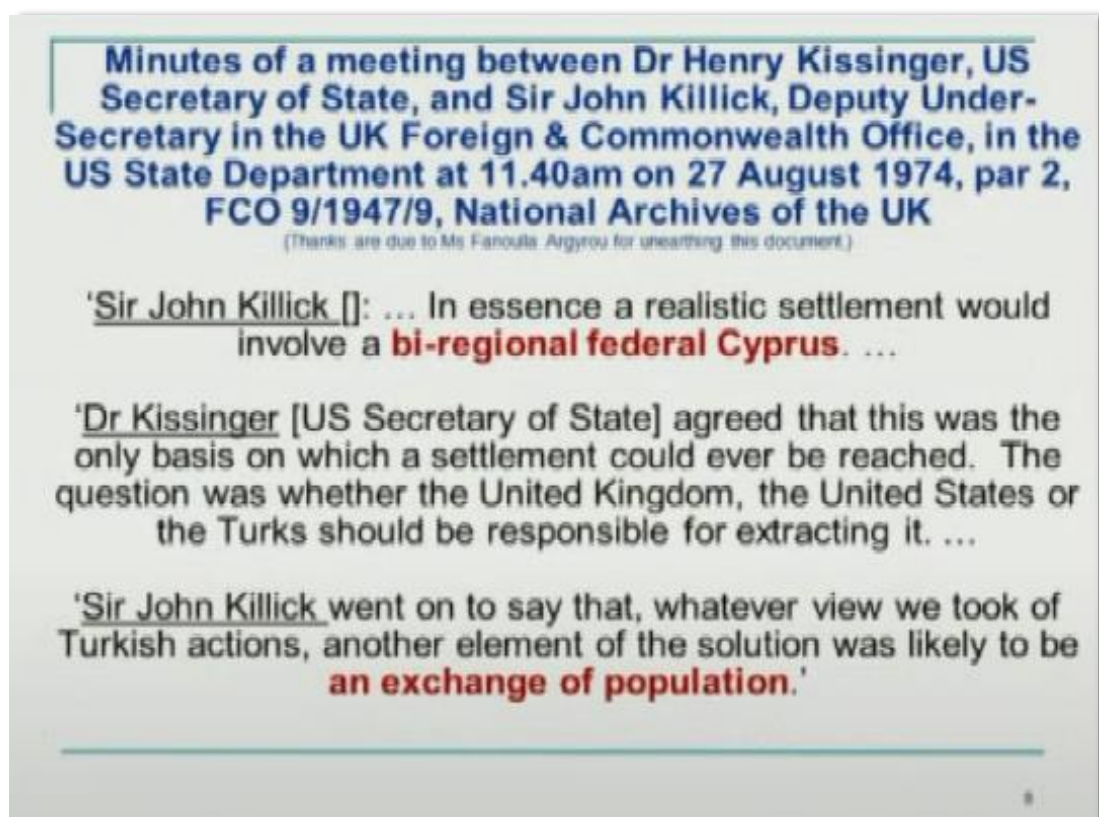
And now we come to 1974. Turkey of course used the pretext that was laid on a plate for them - the coup d’état in Nicosia. Turkey invaded the Republic of Cyprus in two phases, in July and August 1974. But the upshot was the implementation of the Turkish strategy on a de facto basis. Firstly, the “two communities” were retained. Secondly, the “two communities” were separated from one another into two separate segregated zones, the north of which had been ethnically cleansed of Greeks, and the southern zone had been ethnically cleansed of Turks. A territorial, de facto territorial partition arose and Turkey continues to press for federation.

Now, it’s important to note that Turkey occupied not just 36% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus. Turkey ended up occupying 57% of the coastline. So the occupied area, including the occupied coastline of the occupied area, effectively became a Turkish base. The Turks of course built military bases and other military sites in the occupied area. But the north became a Turkish-occupied base. The north enable Turkey to assert to all intents and purposes a supremacy over much of Cyprus. And the Turks were able to control the coastline and thus much of the territorial sea of the Republic of Cyprus. All this of course was unlawful, but the United States, the United Kingdom, and the United Nations, and other great powers around the world turned a blind eye to this and they appeased Turkey. And what we’re seeing today with the growing tyranny of Mr. Erdogan, what we’re seeing with the alleged blackmail of Europe by Mr. Erdogan is really a natural consequence of the appeasement of Turkey going back to the seventies and before. It’s a salient lesson of history. We know it and we’ll say it again: appeasement never pays. Appeasement can bring about short-term gains, but in the



long-term appeasement can backfire on the practitioners of appeasement. And what we're seeing today all these decades later is the bitter fruit of the seeds planted in the 1970s by the appeasement of Turkey.

And here we have on the next slide the Anglo-American agreement of the 27<sup>th</sup> August 1974 to endorse the Turkish objective, and to promote the idea of a bi-regional federal Cyprus. You can read the slide on your own to see that the British diplomat Sir John Killick agreed with Dr. Kissinger, the then American secretary of state, that a bi-regional federal Cyprus was to be the proposed settlement of the de facto partition and the dispute over Cyprus (*see Plate 32*). And as you can see, the British diplomat accepted that there would have to be an exchange of populations as part and parcel of any such arrangement. So there's a lot of misguided speculation as to why the Turkish invasion took place, and who was responsible. I'm really interested in the objective of the Turkish invasion. The objective of the Turkish invasion was to produce a bi-communal bi-zonal federation. And that objective was endorsed by the United Kingdom in the driving seat, and the United States in the passenger seat, immediately after 1974. And as you can see from the slide, this was actually agreed on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 1974. I have to acknowledge here the insistence of Ms. Fanoula Argyrou who unearthed this document in the National Archives of the United Kingdom.




*Plate 33: Minutes of meeting on Cyprus between Henry Kissinger and Sir John Killick, 27 August 1974*

And now we come to the months after the Turkish invasion. And we see here quite clearly the essence of Turkish strategy in the aftermath of the invasion. Turkey wanted the occupied part

of Cyprus to remain under firm Turkish control and therefore to fulfill a role in support of Turkey. And the Turks also wanted a federal settlement, so that they could utilize the treaties of 1960 and the organs of federal government through the Turkish Cypriot leadership as a means of having a say in what was going on in the post-settlement federal Cyprus as a whole. That's why the Turks didn't want what was called at the time "double enosis". They didn't want Greece to assert sovereignty over the south, with Turkey asserting sovereignty in the north. What Turkey wanted was a federation so that the Greeks could be neutralized, so that Turkey could control the north, and so that through the federation Turkey could have a say in what was going on throughout the federal republic, or the proposed federal republic of Cyprus. And here we have it. This is a document I unearthed over the summer when I went into the National Archives of the United Kingdom in London. It says it all. This is what the talks, the secret talks in Nicosia and Switzerland are all about today in 2016. The British embassy in Ankara points out to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London the following, on 25th March 1975:

**Letter dated 25 March 1975 from W.H. Fullerton, British Embassy, Ankara, to M.C.S. Weston, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, London, paras 2 (i) & (iii), FCO 9/2159, National Archives of the UK**

- '[T]he Turks have very largely already attained all they really need in the island [of Cyprus]. What they lack is
  - '(a) the recovery of Greek Cypriots still in the south and
  - '(b) Greek acquiescence in a weak federal system.
- 'In return for these they would at present still be willing to make some territorial concession. ...'



\* Source of image: Ministry of Defence website (2009), Crown Copyright, as archived at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.operations.mod.uk/special/EasternMediterranean.asp> (last accessed on 27 November 2015)

**Plate 34:** Later dated 25 March 1975 from W.H. Fullerton to M.C.S. Weston regarding Turkish Cypriot demands

"The Turks have very largely already attained all they really need in the island [of Cyprus]. What they lack is a) the recovery of Turkish Cypriots still in the south and b) Greek acquiescence in a weak federal system." So it's a) the recovery of Turkish Cypriots still in the south, and that's what the Turks managed to achieve in the aftermath of the invasion with the assistance of the United Kingdom, and b) Greek acquiescence in a weak federal system. That is the primary objective of the so-called United Nations peace process which I interpret as a

surrender process, because its primary objective is to meet the objectives of Turkey as endorsed by the United Kingdom and the United States. And I say that really with a heavy heart, because the United Kingdom and the United States were the architects together with France and the Soviet Union of the post-1945 legal order. They were the architects of the United Nations Charter. They were the architects of the Genocide Convention, the architects of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They were the architects of so many of the treaties which have humanized international law and promoted justice, and promoted the virtues of good governance and fundamental rights, and the dignity of the individual. And yet, these very same countries that have a proud record of supporting democracy, the rule of law and human rights have been the primary supporters of a Turkish strategy, which is the antithesis of all of those values, and norms, and instruments of international law.

And we come to the present. This is the fulfillment, the apotheosis of Turkish strategy. We have the joint declaration - so-called - of the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2014 in which the “two leaders” of the “two communities” - to use those phrases that United Nations enjoys using - in which the “two leaders” of the “two communities” envisage the transformation of the Republic of Cyprus into a bi-communal bi-zonal federation consisting of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots and two proposed states: a proposed Greek Cypriot constituent state and a proposed Turkish Cypriot constituent state, adjacent to two sovereign base areas. In other words, as per the Annan plan - the United Nations ill-fated Annan Plan of 2004.

So Turkish strategy has reached the edge of a cliff. We're on the edge of the cliff now. The negotiations are taking place, Turkey have achieved everything they want de facto, all they now need is a piece of paper with a signature on and with two referenda, the approval of two separate electorates voting separately and simultaneously in line with the requirements of Turkey, as approved by the United States, the United Kingdom, and the United Nations. And this of course begs an interesting legal question as to whether or not the United Nations is acting fairly, reasonably and lawfully. And if not, whether circumstances exist in which legal proceedings may be brought against the United Nations. That is an exceptionally tall order because of diplomatic immunity and because of the UN Charter and all the other impediments. But there is a growing school of thought in certain academic and legal circles that the time is perhaps ripe for the immunity of the United Nation to be somehow challenged. And maybe Cyprus could be the case study. In my view, this process, this attempt to legitimize the illegalities of Turkey are unconscionable, they're unethical, they're certainly, in my view, immoral. Whether they are unlawful or not is not for me to judge. That's ultimately for a court judge in an appropriate case if one was to come into existence.

I'm drifting away somewhat from the strategic role of Cyprus. But if there is a settlement along the lines of the United Nations plan of 2004, and along the lines of the joint declaration, Turkey will have achieved its strategic objectives and the strategic role of Cyprus will be to be a satellite of Turkey, to be an offshoot of Turkey, to be an offshore island of Turkey, and to be closely connected to Turkey, perhaps through an energy pipeline, perhaps through pipelines connecting freshwater from Turkey to Cyprus, and so on.

I'm going to just race through the next few slides because I appreciate I'm running out of time. I'll just make this observation with regard to Turkey. Turkey has invaded Cyprus on three occasions. The first occasion was in 1570, which resulted in the Ottoman conquest of 1571. The second invasion was on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 1974, and the third invasion was on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1974. One of the great judges in England Lord Bingham in a court case, when he was a High Court judge,



referred to the two Turkish invasions of 1974 - even though most judges refer to the Turkish invasion in the singular in their judgments - and that of course is a respectable and appropriate phrase to use. I've been influenced by Mr. Justice Bingham, as he then was, and I've distinguished the second Turkish invasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> July 1974 with the other Turkish invasion on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 1974. So on that basis, if there were three Turkish invasion of Cyprus, could there be a fourth in the future, or a fifth? I raise it as a question, I raise it merely as a question. History teaches us to be wary of countries that invade and occupy other countries. History teaches us to be wary of countries that are governed by tyrants, or tyrants wearing democratic clothes. History teaches us to be wary of bullies, people who abuse their power, people who don't honor their word, people who threaten, who engage in rather unscrupulous conduct.

A few days ago I was rather horrified to read the following in the Cyprus Mail. In the context of the Republic of Cyprus, which of course Turkey doesn't recognize, president Erdogan reportedly used a vivid yet derogatory and rather menacing metaphor to describe the Republic of Cyprus. He said, "A hungry chicken thinks she is in a wheat barn." Well, we know what happens to chickens in barns. I leave it at that and let the listener or viewer of this recording draw their own conclusions. That's rather a worrying thought.

## The British have been part of the landscape of Cyprus since 1878

- **1878:** The arrival of the British in Cyprus, subject to the Anglo-Turkish Convention of Defensive Alliance
- **1914:** The British annexation of Cyprus, upon the British declaration of war on Turkey
- **1950s:** The construction of the HQ at Episkopi, RAF Akrotiri & other sites
- **1960:** The retention of 2 UK SBAs plus multiple retained sites



EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

\* Source of image: Ministry of Defence website (2009). Crown Copyright, as archived at <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.operations.mod.uk/special/EasternMediterranean.jpg> (last accessed on 27 November 2015)

13

*Plate 35: British presence in Cyprus*

Little bit on the British. The British have been part of the landscape of Cyprus since 1878, as I've already noted. The United Kingdom annexed Cyprus in 1914 and it was in the 1950s that they developed their network of bases and sites on the island of Cyprus. This of course includes the

headquarters of Episkopi which was built in the aftermath of the decision to vacate Egypt in the early 1950s, and RAF Akrotiri that was built during the mid-1950s. There are also British installations and sites and other military establishments dotted around the two Sovereign Base Areas, as they're now called, in the south, and of course in various parts of the Republic of Cyprus, including Mount Olympus.

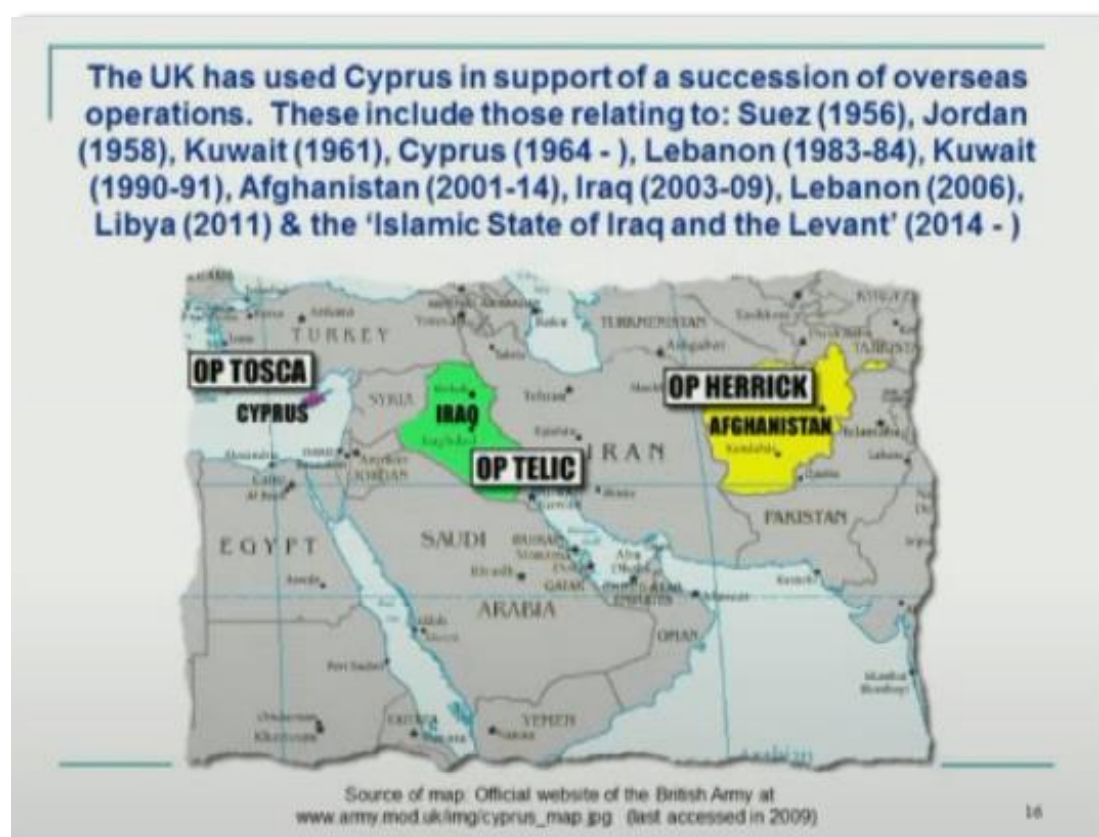
Just a quick point about Russia. It's been a consistent theme of British strategy since 1878, with the partial exception of the First World War and the Second World War, that the United Kingdom has tried to use Cyprus as a means of checking Russia. The original acquisition of Cyprus in 1878 was a product of the Russian-Turkish wars and the Disraeli strategy of trying to prop up Turkey against an increasingly strong Russia. And we see this sort of Anglo-Turkish friendship with a view to checking Russia repeating itself throughout history. We saw it of course during the Cold War - that's a National Archives map of the Cold War Europe that you're seeing on the screen - and we're seeing an echo of that with regard to Syria, for example where the British without any doubt endorsed President, then the Prime Minister Erdogan's strategy of toppling Mr. Assad in Syria back in 2011. So this is a theme of history that the British and the Turks get together with the view to checking Russia.



**Plate 36:** *Members of the Baghdad Pact (CENTO)*

The next slide makes the point as well with regard to the 1950s (see Plate 36). This is a wonderful poster that was published in United States - let me just see - it was published in the United States in the 1950s, late 1950s, to promote the perceived virtues of what was then known

as the Baghdad Pact. The reason I like this poster is that it completely omits Cyprus, even though the British had an aircraft stationed in Cyprus in support of the Baghdad Pact during the late 1950s. Now, why am I showing you this and what relevance does it have today? Well, it demonstrates that from the 1950s onwards, the British and the Americans were trying to knit Turkey to Iran, to Iraq and Pakistan as a means of checking Russia, or as it then was the Soviet Union. And this tapestry gradually came apart. Firstly, with the withdrawal of Iraq from the Baghdad Pact which necessitated its renaming as CENTO, and secondly, of course, with the Iranian Revolution in 1979, if I remember correctly, which resulted in the end in the demise of CENTO, as the Baghdad Pact was later renamed. But this of course is the area that today is the (inaudible) of instability and turmoil in the region. I needn't go any further than that. But Cyprus has always had a role to perform in support of British and to some extent American strategy in support of this sort of a CENTO or Baghdad Pact tier strategy.



**Plate 37:** British overseas operations with the use of military bases located in Cyprus

The other point I want to really emphasize in relation to the United Kingdom and the strategic role of Cyprus is that the British military bases and the British military infrastructure on the island of Cyprus have played a major role in support of a number of expeditionary operations and other military operations throughout the past few decades (see Plate 37). Remember, the British have used the sovereign base areas and the Republic of Cyprus in the post- 1960 era, and before 1960 the British just used the island as a whole because it was a colony of theirs. On the slide I refer to just a sample of operations which have involved the British using Cyprus in

support of overseas operations. The examples include: Suez in 1956, Jordan in 1958, Kuwait – 1961, Cyprus itself from 1964 onwards in relation to the UN peacekeeping mission, Lebanon – 1983-84, Kuwait – 1990-91, Afghanistan – from 2001 shortly after 9/11 until the British wound down their presence to all intents and purposes in 2014, Iraq – 2003-2009, Lebanon when there was an upsurge of trouble there in 2006, Libya in 2011, and in relation to the campaign against the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) from 2014 onwards.

So what this teaches us is that whenever there's trouble in the Eastern Mediterranean or the Middle East, the British tend to use Cyprus as a stepping stone to somewhere else. The big switch that happened, or the exceptions to that, are Egypt 1956, and ISIL – so-called ISIL – from 2014 onwards, where Cyprus has been used as an offensive base rather than as a stepping stone. So that's an interesting development that we've seen in the last couple of years also – the use of the British bases in Cyprus for offensive purposes rather than just as a hopping off a point or a staging post.



*Plate 38: A photograph of RAF Akrotiri from the sky showing parts of its infrastructure*

And here's a ministry of defense photograph published on the Royal Air Force section of the ministry of defense website which illustrates RAF Akrotiri from the sky (see Plate 38). It just shows you what an important military installation, military base this is. And I think the point I want to make here is that the infrastructure that the British have is dependent upon the cooperation of the Republic of Cyprus, both in terms of the citizens and other lawful residents of the Republic of Cyprus who go and work in the Sovereign Base Areas, and also in terms of the cooperation that's extended to the Sovereign Base Areas by the Republic of Cyprus' government, for example in relation to the supply of water, the supply of electricity, supply of services, goods and so on. And I just asked this question if the government of the Republic of Cyprus ever falls into hostile hands, or ever falls into the hands of a post-federal regime that is hostile to the United Kingdom, how reliable will the Republic of Cyprus be as an assistant to the United Kingdom? I pose that as a question because one of my arguments over the years has



been that British policy towards Cyprus has not been serving British interests. And the British are trapped in the mindset of the past, when they should be looking at Turkey and the dangers flowing from Turkey and revisiting their strategy in relation to Cyprus.



*Plate 39: Royal Air Force's role in operations against the Islamic State*

And this is another photograph published by the ministry of defense (*see Plate 39*). It illustrates the role of the Royal Air Force in support of operations against the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. Note the phrase “the Levant”. And that underlines another point that's worth making that the jihadist organizations to the east of Cyprus are not just a threat to the poor people who are suffering in Syria and Iraq and elsewhere. Those organizations are a threat to the Levant as a whole, and that includes the Republic of Cyprus. So the Republic of Cyprus needs to think about what sort of structures of government it needs in order to defend itself and to promote its counterterrorism strategy, to promote its national security, to promote the health and safety of its citizens and other lawful residents. In a post-federal Cyprus - will the counterterrorism strategy function effectively? Will there be a national security strategy? Will the health and safety of the citizens and other lawful residents be in a position to be protected? I raise that as a question and I will go no further.

I'll finish on this thought. The British have been involved in regime change of one sort or another on a number of occasions in recent decades. And on some of those occasions - and here are five examples - on some of those occasions Cyprus has had a direct or indirect part, either in terms of preparing the regime change, de facto or otherwise, or dealing with the aftermath of

the attempt at regime change. Now of course the United Kingdom government would say they didn't engage in regime change in any of these cases or didn't try to engage in regime change. But there is a school of thought that suggests that in each of these instances the objective was regime change. I mean, that's a matter of historians and lawyers to argue over. I just make the following point. The attempted, or the successful regime change procured in Iran in 1953 - which was partly hatched in Nicosia in 1953 - backfired, because it resulted in the Iranian Revolution of 1979. The British invasion of Egypt with the assistance of the French in 1956 was in a way an attempt to bring down the Nasser regime, even though it was dressed up in a different manner. That gave rise to Mr. Morsi a few years later coming to power temporarily in Egypt. 2003, there was the invasion of Iraq and the toppling of Saddam Hussein. Well, I needn't do anything other than refer you to the report of inquiry produced by sir John Chilcot and his team which was published in the summer of 2016. The Chilcot inquiry goes into graphic detail on the inadequate nature of the preparations and the inadequate nature of the post-invasion operations in Iraq in 2003. And what we're seeing today with the devastation that has been wrought in Iraq is a direct consequence of that attempt at regime change, if indeed it was regime change in law. We see further evidence of botched attempts at regime change in Libya in 2011 and the downfall of the Gaddafi regime, and Syria 2011. All of those five case studies serve as a warning.

This is now where I come back to Cyprus. What is being proposed in Cyprus today with the proposed transformation of the Republic of Cyprus into a bi-communal bi-zonal federation in line with the requirements of Turkey is in a way regime change, or proposed regime change. It's an attempt to dismantle the Republic of Cyprus and to replace the Republic of Cyprus with this oddity, this Frankenstein's monster, as Aris Petasis has called it, and bring about the fulfillment of Turkish strategy going back to 1956. And I pose the question. If all of these attempts at regime change produced catastrophic consequences in the short or long term, what will regime change in Cyprus achieve, in either the short term or the long term?

So I've reached the end of this presentation and my objective has really been to try and sketch out the strategic role of Cyprus in support of the United Kingdom and Turkey. I just hopefully managed to achieve that objective in the limited time available. And I'll just leave you with this thought, and it's nothing other than a thought. Cyprus is situated, as we know, at the eastern edge of the West. It's the last front, the last place where we have any semblance of liberal democracy before we reach Syria to the immediate east. It's the bulwark - to use a Cold War term - it's a bulwark in support of liberal democracy. It's a bulwark in support of Europe. It's a bulwark in support of the citizens and lawful residents of Europe. And if Cyprus is sacrificed and handed over to Turkey, by means of a settlement which is on all fours, with the four cornerstones of Turkey's strategy going to 1956, will Cyprus remain a bulwark? Or will it be a domino, to use another Cold War term? And if it's a domino which falls to Turkey, who will be next? Thank you.

**C.P.:** Thank you very much for your presentation. A couple of questions, if you may. One on what you just mentioned. As you pointed out, we're approaching a Cyprus settlement that satisfies Turkish claims and effectively gives Cyprus' strategic advantages over to Turkey and Britain to enjoy. Do you see a closer post-Brexit British regional cooperation with Turkey, especially in view of the renewed Russian challenge in the Eastern Mediterranean?

**K.K.:** Simple answer is yes. Again, we go back to the history. History suggests that there has been consistently for much of the last two hundred years a close Anglo-Turkish relationship

with a view to challenging Russia. I didn't mention the Crimean War of the 1850s, but I could have done. So history suggests that the British and the Turks will cooperate with one another. I have to declare an interest here. I was a supporter and I remain a supporter of Brexit together with 52% of those who bothered to vote in the referendum in the United Kingdom. So I am a supporter of Brexit. But one concern that I do have is that the United Kingdom will continue to build this close relationship with Turkey and at the same time undermine British interests. My view is that the interest of the United Kingdom in the long term, and the values of the United Kingdom are not served by accommodating, or appeasing Turkey in the way that the current foreign secretary Boris Johnson and many of his predecessors have done. I've got no insight into what's going on behind closed doors in Westminster or Whitehall, but there seems to be an effort underway by Mr. Johnson, the new foreign secretary, to build a network of cooperation with Turkey.

**Marta Murzanska:** Why does the United Kingdom endorse this Turkish strategy of partition if it doesn't serve its interest?

**K.K.:** Well, that's a very good question. Well, the British have been trapped by their policy of the 1950s, which was to back Turkey and prevent Greece from establishing itself in Cyprus. And British foreign policy, to use a simple analogy, it's rather like an oil tanker: it's very difficult to change direction. They've been heading in this direction for so many decades that first of all they'll end up with egg on their face if they suddenly wake up and say, we've made a mistake. And secondly, they've managed to persuade the United Nations Security Council to issue a succession of Security Council resolutions, which endorse Turkish strategy. So the British for those reasons are reluctant, no doubt, to change direction. They also don't want to offend Turkey because they are engaged in a decades-long appeasement of Turkey. So the Brits are stuck with their own policy. Of course, if there is a settlement along these lines in Cyprus which entrenches the "two communities" and legalizes the criminality which resulted in the two de facto zones, then of course this will establish an exceptionally dangerous precedent, which could return to haunt other member states of the European Union, including for the time being the United Kingdom. That's a subject for another day. But I think the point I wanted to emphasize is that what the United Kingdom is pushing for is not in the interest of the United Kingdom, and it's not in harmony with the democratic values of the United Kingdom. In short, British policy towards Cyprus is un-British.

**C.P.:** The details of the Cyprus settlement are not yet out, so this discussion may be a little premature. But how will the type of settlement that you envision, or you describe, affect the strategic interests of other states in the region?

**K.K.:** Well, first of all, the reason we don't know what's going on behind closed doors is that there has been a decision taken to conduct secret negotiations behind closed doors well away from the citizens. So the citizens are just being shut out and they will eventually, if the Annan plan of 2004 is a precedent, they will eventually have dumped on their heads thousands of documents and they'll be given a few days to approve them. That, in my view, is deeply unfair, unreasonable, and undemocratic, yet in line with what Turkey wants. And it's also designed to prevent people like me, and other academics, and other lawyers, and others from having a look at whatever is being cooked up in secret. So of course we can't comment on what's going on behind closed doors because we haven't seen any documents that have been drafted behind closed doors.

As far as the second part of your question is concerned, what are the other actors in Cyprus? I didn't have time to explore that matter. But first of all, of course, there's the United States. The United States is directly or indirectly involved in Cyprus. Now, I'm not an expert on American foreign policy. But the question that the new Trump administration has to ask itself is, does the Trump administration want to endorse American values? Does it want to protect British interests? If so, they shouldn't be supporting the settlement that they're pushing for. The same applies for the European Union. The European Union as a bloc have chosen to endorse Turkish strategy, they've chosen to endorse the proposed bi-communal bi-zonal federation. I ask the question: if there's a bi-communal bi-zonal federation in Cyprus, what's to stop Turkey calling for a bi-zonal bi-communal federation in Germany, where there is a "Turkish community" as Turkey describes it, where Turkey is already meddling in the internal affairs of Germany? What's to stop the Turkish government calling for a bi-communal bi-zonal federation in Bulgaria or in other parts of the European Union? I'm speculating here, but my speculation is based on two phrases that I keep on seeing emerging from the lips of Turkish politicians. The first phrase is the 'Turkish community'. That's a phrase you can go onto the website of the Turkish foreign ministry and you'll see repeatedly used in the context of Germany, in the context of other parts of the European Union and other parts of the world. And the second phrase that has been lifted from the terminology of Cyprus and applied elsewhere is the guarantor. Remember, under the 1960 treaties Turkey together with the United Kingdom and Greece became guarantors of the Republic of Cyprus. In January of 2015, if I remember correctly, the then Prime Minister of Turkey Mr. Davutoglu described Turkey as the guarantor of the Turks living in Europe. I'm speculating here, but I wonder why Turkey has decided to proclaim itself the guarantor of the "Turkish community" of Germany, or the "Turkish community" of other parts of the European Union? What is in the mind of Turkey? What could happen in Germany, or in France, or in the Netherlands, or Belgium, or Sweden that could activate the self-proclaimed Turkish guarantee? How could Turkey respond to any - and I hate to see this happen - how would Turkey respond to any "inter-communal" troubles which erupt in Germany or other parts of the European Union? That's another phrase of course lifted from Cyprus.

**C.P.:** The point of my question though was not so much how the settlement would affect the Europeans or others, but how the fact that the strategic advantages of Cyprus in the Eastern Mediterranean, which now would be the beneficiaries, would be essentially Turkey and Britain, and such potential advantages would be denied to other regional states. There is, there was some talk, at least, of cooperation between Israel, Cyprus, and Greece, also Egypt, Cyprus and Greece. That took into a consideration the fact that the Republic of Cyprus would essentially control the advantages of Cyprus seas and provide those advantages to its other parties with whom it cooperated. Under the new settlement this will not be the case. What is your take on that? Is that a valid line of thinking, or will the other countries in the region reconcile themselves to the facts and cooperate with Turkey, essentially?

**K.K.:** Well, you're inviting me to speculate. It's an excellent question. I'm reluctant to speculate in the absence of seeing any of the documents that have been cooked up in secret. What I will say is - if I remember correctly - the ill-fated Annan Plan of 2004 included two rather curious provisions. The first included the constitutional obligation on what would have become the "United Cyprus Republic" to endorse the accession of Turkey to the European Union. That provision, if it's replicated today, will effectively neutralize the post-settlement Cyprus and turn into an agent of Turkey in the European Union. In other words the European Union... Let's just



go back a bit. If there had been a settlement in 2004, the Republic of Cyprus, or whatever it would have been called - the "United Cyprus Republic" - would have been a Turkish agent in the European Union today. And thanks to those who voted against the Annan Plan, the Annan Plan wasn't implemented. And Mr. Blair and the other advocates of the Annan Plan ended up with egg on their face back in 2004.

The second curious provision in the Annan Plan, which is potentially going to reappear in the secret process that's unfolding today, concerns what was described in the Annan Plan as international military operations. If I recall correctly, the Republic of Cyprus, or the "United Cyprus Republic," would have been prohibited from making its territory available to international military operations without the consent of Turkey. In other words, the sovereignty of the post-settlement Cyprus in 2004 would have been completely undermined and Turkey would have had a veto on how the Republic of Cyprus, or the post-settlement Cyprus, would have used its territory. Now the implications of that for what is going on in the region is enormous, because it means that the Republic of Cyprus, to use that phrase I used earlier, would have been back in 2004 a fully-fledged agent of Turkey. Now, if any such provisions are being negotiated in secret today - I don't know. But that reinforces why we need to see the documents. We need to see the drafted legal instruments, we need to... Now, what are those draft legal instruments? If Annan Plan is any guide, there are three constitutions: one for the federation, one for one constituent state, one for the other constituent state. We're talking about federal laws. We're talking about constitutional laws. We're talking about various other supporting documents. The answers to your question Christodoule may be found on page 243 of annex 'E' of document 'X'. That's why it's so important that we see the documents and there is transparency in the process.

To summarize. Whatever is going to happen to Cyprus is inevitably going to have an impact upon Lebanon, upon Egypt, upon Israel, upon Greece, upon Malta, upon the rest of the European Union. And I've said it before and I'll say it again. In my view, the proposed double referendum in Cyprus is not enough. There should be a referendum in each and every one of the twenty eight member states of the European Union for each and every one of the twenty eight member states of the European Union to approve the transformation of the Republic of Cyprus into an agent of Turkey, to approve the implementation of the strategy of Turkey going back to 1956. And to approve the appeasement of Mr. Erdogan, President Erdogan, as he unfolds his de-democratization of Turkey. That's a thought for everyone to think about.

**C.P.:** Klearchos, thank you very much. As always, a very great presentation. Thank you very much.

**K.K.:** You're welcome. Thank you.



---

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION\*

---

Gary Lakes\*\*

5-7 December 2016

### Hydrocarbon Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean

*This review focuses on hydrocarbon developments in Cyprus, Egypt, and Lebanon, and comments on the development of the regional East Mediterranean energy industry.*

**Christodoulos Pelaghias (C.P.):** Good morning and welcome again to the East Mediterranean Forum. My co-host is Marta Murzanska and with us is Mr. Gary Lakes, Director of the Energy Program at the European Rim Policy and Investment Council. Gary, welcome.

**Gary Lakes (G.L.):** Thank you, good morning.

**C.P.:** Gary, we were hoping you could give us an update on the latest regional developments on the energy front.

**G.L.:** All right. I think the thing to do at this point is to talk about what might happen in 2017. There have been some developments in Egypt which are good and, you know, they point towards an improvement in the whole situation in the East Med. The big thing was of courses the discovery in August 2015 which was made by ENI - the Italian - company and they are going full out to develop that field by 2017. I think it will come up with 1 billion cubic feet bcm, and that (inaudible) in the end of this year, hopefully. Also, BP is involved with developing one of the fields there. They'll come on with about the same capacity sometime during 2017. And so there's a lot of work going on in Egypt. That's basically because there've been some changes in the way the Egyptian government's approached its energy problem and so you know things are looking up there.

In Cyprus things are going to take some sort of shape. We don't know what yet. There's been rumors of a commercial agreement to send the Aphrodite gas to Egypt to have it liquefied at the Idku facility which is basically idle right now because the Egyptians simply can't supply the gas it needs for the process of LNG. There's been some recent effort to try to get that back on track but it's like one cargo a month, maybe, from what I've seen and there's also the bidding round which the government is expected to name preferred bidders in the next week. They said early in 2017, I've heard. Maybe it could come a little earlier than that. But that will be for the

\* Transcript. Part of the e-conference "The Latest Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean," held by the East Med Forum between 5 and 7 December 2016.

\*\* Journalist; Director, Energy Program, ERPIC

Blocks 6, 8, and 10. And participating in that is Eni, and Total, and Statoil, and ExxonMobil, and Qatar Petroleum. And that should be quite an interesting outcome to see who they select and how it proceeds from there.

There's of course the pending drilling in Block 11 by Total. They've stalled because they are unable to arrange logistics base in a Cypriot port. Larnaca was used initially in the early days when there was some drilling offshore Cyprus, but that has been, now, it's been shifted to, I think, a tourist development. And so Total was wound up making an agreement with the EDT service company in Limassol and the day after they signed the agreement and were getting ready to take further steps towards the drilling, it was discovered that the privatization of Limassol port, which included the BP sort of excluded all other sorts of operations in the port. And that meant that the contract that EDT and Total had signed was somewhat in question. So now there's an effort underway to resolve that and hopefully it will be resolved soon and Total can start drilling. They had originally planned to start drilling in April 2017. Clearly, that's going to face a delay now. If their original plan had worked, they had plan to work out of Larnaca and they would have started drilling in last September. So it's an unfortunate delay, and it's sometimes difficult, you know, to try to understand why the Cypriot government isn't a little better prepared to deal with something like this, when you consider that there's so much emphasis placed on turning Cyprus into an East Mediterranean gas hub, and these discussions have gone on for years now, really. A thing like not having a logistics base for drilling, you know, leaves a lot of things in question.

There's also Israel. Israel recently announced licensing round for twenty four offshore blocks. And that's due to close in March. They plan to, I think, announce preferred bidders shortly after that during the first half of next year, which will mean that the Israeli offshore should open up considerably. So far it's just been Noble Energy of the US and Delek that's really made any sort of significant, made any significant discoveries there. Other companies have drilled a couple wells but they haven't really come up with anything, and they haven't been really major outfits. So hopefully this Israeli round will bring in some big companies.

Mentioning Noble and Delek, I might go back to the Cyprus offshore and say that Noble and Delek, Noble in particular, discovered the Aphrodite field in December 2011, and that reserve has 4.4-4.5 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of gas. But that's the commercial deal that may happen with Egypt. So, we'll be waiting on that.

In the meantime, let's go to Israeli Leviathan gas field. That's probably going to get a final investment decision early next year. It's been delayed by a number of things going on in Israel, and it's been somewhat frustrating for Noble. But if they're signing contracts with different companies and one particular, the Jordanian Electric Power Company, for the sale of gas. And so based on those things, hopefully the Leviathan will get to go ahead soon for early 2017. We know that Delek has arranged loans. I don't know exactly where Noble is regarding that its financial arrangements with its share of development. But Leviathan's 22 trillion cubic feet, and it's a lot of gas. And I guess Israel's finally pretty keen to get that moving. Of course, the impetus for all of this was the Zohr discovery in 2015 that got everybody excited, that would launch the new Cypriot licensing round. That's the island's third round. And now with the regulatory issues in Israel solved, the government has launched a round there.

So an interesting development has been the fact that Lebanon seems to be getting back on track somewhat. The parliament managed to elect a president about a month ago, Michel

Aoun. He's a former head of the military and I think he was prime minister back in the nineties, at the very closing days of the Lebanese Civil War. He's now in his eighties, I think, and was elected president. Just so happens that his Christian political party has a support of the Shia Muslim Hezbollah. So that's Lebanese politics, so, you know, it's complicated. In the meantime, Saad Hariri - who's the son of the assassinated Rafik Hariri - is in the process of trying to put together a government. Now, Lebanon's situation was complicated by the fact that they started a licensing round in 2013. They started with a pre-qualification round, and then went on to name the companies that pre-qualified, were allowed to bid. But these companies couldn't bid because there were two decrees that the government needed to pass in order for the licensing round actually be able to close. So that means they couldn't place any bids because the round couldn't close. So those (inaudible) rather pertain to the model agreement that would be used to negotiate contracts, and also the demarcation of the blocks, delimitation of the blocks. And there are ten blocks Lebanese petroleum authority's identified offshore Lebanon. And Lebanon has a lot of seismic work done. Most of the area offshore Lebanon has some sort of seismic data available on it. And according to company that's done it, and I think (inaudible) most of it, there's some very attractive and prospective sites there. So the fact that this has been on hold since 2013, I mean it says that Lebanese politics is very, very cumbersome. It's been very difficult. And hopefully they will resolve that soon, they will form a government, they'll pass the decrees and the licensing round in Lebanon will get back on track.

Also, in Lebanon there is a disputed area between Lebanon and Israel - it's 854 square kilometers. It's like a little wedge going down to the sea. I don't know how that's going to play out. The Americans have tried to negotiate some sort of a deal between the two. I don't think either side has been very cooperative, but of course it is Lebanon and Israel, and technically they're still in a state of war. So the other issue, I think, is perhaps about monetizing all these East Med stuff. All this is still rather theoretical but there's a lot of speculation about a pipeline from Leviathan to Turkey. And I guess this is coming because after quite a few years, and it's about five years or so, the Israelis and the Turks have made a regional rapprochement, I guess you could say, and I think they're exchanging ambassadors now. Things are sort of back to normal. But for a while there things got very bad. And just reading in the press today, I mean, there's a lot of statements coming from Turkish President Erdogan that are still rather negative about Israel. So the talk about a pipeline to Turkey - I don't know, I don't think that the companies involved, Noble and Delek, although they're keen to do business, have a great deal of faith in this project. We'll have to see, you know, we'll just have to see on that, like all of them. There are experts who claim that this is the best way to monetize East Med gas, to ship it to Turkey. Personally, I don't really agree with that, and I think that there're, you know, a lot of options. And it seems to me that there are a lot of other people - business people - who don't really agree with that either. I mean, I was at a conference last week where the representative from Eni was speaking, and he was saying, "Well, you know, let's see how much gas we got and then we can look at what options there are to monetize gas in East Med." This was an Eni representative. And some of you may know Eni was drilling in Block 9 in 2014, and it had a four-well drilling program there. It drilled two dry holes and stopped, and said okay, you know, we're going to recalibrate our seismic and take another look at this. And so that was suspended. And then they went off, and in a year later they discovered Zohr, which is like 30 tcf. They found it at a carbonite built-up which is different geology from where they have been finding gas. The other gas has been discovered so far, like Leviathan and Aphrodite, in sandstone, to my understanding. And so Eni is planning to come back and start drilling again in the Cypriot waters in a second half of 2017. And depending on how the bidding round goes, because I think

they've bid on 6 with Total, and on 10 with Total, and I think they've bid on 8 by themselves. So there's a chance they could come back in a big way depending on (inaudible) more blocks.

This is going to be interesting, because ExxonMobil Qatar who runs a big LNG operation in Qatar, it'd be interesting to see if they get Block 10 and how they proceed with that. But again, it's all speculation.

The one thing that's still banging on, and we'll see - I mean, it would be many years from now - is this East Med gas pipeline which is sponsored by Italy and Greece. It's called IGI Poseidon, I believe, is the name of the joint venture they formed. And they want to build an underwater pipeline from Leviathan to Cyprus, then to Crete, and then on to the Greek mainland, and over the Greek mainland, and on into Italy. And so I think they're planning to have a pipeline about 16 bcm a year. And it would require quite a lot of gas.

So the whole situation here in the East Med is that there has to be a lot more drilling. There have been some very exciting discoveries, especially with Leviathan and Zohr. But it is like the gentleman from Eni said: it needs to be a lot more drilling done and then take a look at what the resources are, where they're located, if they're large or small. You can find the synergies to put them all together. So what's going to get to happen here, especially in Cyprus, is more drilling. For you get more drilling, you've got to have a logistics base to work from. It would be beneficial to the island, I mean, it could serve as a service center for the entire region. It's great place to work out of, provided you do have a place to work out of. So that's something the government really has to bear in.

So apart from that, I think that's basically where the East Med is for the time being.

**C.P.:** Gary, on your last point. Apparently Noble has decided to move its place of operations out of Cyprus, and Eni is thinking about it. Total, as you mentioned, for the time being is still able to conduct its business out of one of the Cyprus ports. But, I mean, it seems that things don't look good for Cyprus as an operating base?

**G.L.:** It's kind of ridiculous. I heard that Noble would shift on Haifa and that Eni would operate out of Port Said. And it kind of boggles the mind, really, because here we are. Since 2011 at least Cyprus has been talking about being an East Med energy hub, the service center, the rest of it. And you know, what can you say? They can't provide the facilities for these companies to work out of. I'm lost of words.

**C.P.:** What do you think the problem is? I mean, it's not political, is it? 'Cause technical issues can be bridged and overcome. But if it is a political will, that is...

**G.L.:** It's been political. I mean, this situation with Larnaca was really unfortunate. Essentially the government turned over to the Larnaca municipality a very serious decision about the country's hydrocarbon policy. As simple as that. And why? It seems as if it was strictly political reasons. And you just can't operate like that. The government has to really, really make a decision if it does want a hydrocarbon industry here or not. And I can appreciate the fact that the talks with the Turkish Cypriots are extremely important. There's the other problem of the energy sector that needs to have drilling work. That's the only way that it's ever going to live up to be any sort of an energy center. Whether or not there are gas resources out there, apart from 4.5 tcf in Aphrodite. Now, the thing is, there've only been four wells drilled offshore Cyprus. So there was Aphrodite discovery, there was the Aphrodite appraisal which actually resulted in the

initial volume of gas (inaudible) the discovery actually being taken down to 4.5, and it was 5.8 originally (inaudible). Then there were the two dry holes in Block 9. And there hasn't been any drilling since, I think, was it August 2014? So it's time to get the show on the road here. There are branches of government that can deal with this. There is of course the ministry of energy, and then there's the ministry of, I think, transport that's dealing with this port's issue. And they're just going to have to make a commitment on this and get it rolling. So that's what happens. If you can't provide the facilities, Noble will go someplace else, and then Eni will go someplace else. What if Exil or Statoil... I mean, they get contracts here, you know. Where they're gonna work out of? These are really heavy duty companies. You don't have time to play around with this sort of stuff. It's time to get pretty serious, really serious about this and move it on. Otherwise we just let it drag and drag.

**C.P.:** Gary, another question, unrelated, in some ways. I mean the conspicuous absence of Russia and Russian companies in in the region. What's your take? Are they concentrating on potentially going to Syria, or they're not interested in the Eastern Med?

**G.L.:** I don't know, I don't know about that. Russia has always been very involved with Cyprus, but I don't know what that's all about. It may have something to do with relationship with Turkey. I don't know. I think Syria is a long shot. We'll have to see how things play out with the Israeli drilling around they made in there. I don't know. There may be some indication as to what they plan to do in the future, if Lebanon should... The licensing round should open or...

**C.P.:** Did they show any interest for Lebanon?

**G.L.:** Pardon me?

**C.P.:** Did the Russian companies indicate an interest for Lebanon?

**G.L.:** I don't know, I haven't seen any of it. All things are possible. I mean, it's just such a very early time, you know, for all of these. Everything's been sort of hanging midair for quite a long time. And hopefully 2017 will settle things, things will begin to gel a little.

**Marta Murzanska (M.M.):** Speaking about Russia and Turkey. Have there been any developments regarding the Turkish Stream, maybe?

**G.L.:** Well, I guess it's on the planning board. They seem to be wanting to move forward with that. I think that initially there's going to be one pipeline that would go to, basically supply Turkey. There's the second stream to that pipeline system that will be directed toward the Greek border. I'm not sure how that's going to work. The Russians want the European contractors to shift their connections out of Ukraine and then to this TurkStream thing. Whether the Europeans are going to be crazy about that or not, I'm not sure. So it's always, you know, there's a lot of plans. Some of them work, some of them don't. It's just a matter of time.

**M.M.:** I'd like to ask you about Iran. A year and a half after the Iran deal, Iran is in the process of being accepted back into the international community. What role could it play in the energy market in the future, and what effect could it have on the Eastern Mediterranean, possibly?

**G.L.:** Iran's got three LNG projects that've been stalled because of the sanctions. And I think that if this deal with Iranian (inaudible) holds and foreign investment comes back in, you'll begin to see those things come back. They were very keen to develop the South Pars field,

which is basically their half of the north field that Qatar draws its gas from in its LNG (inaudible). So it's a very real possibility. I don't know, the LNG market... It's interesting, and now if it's going to be complicated by the fact that OPEC has at least agreed to some sort of up-cutting production yesterday, the day before. We'll see. Personally, I don't think the price of oil is going to go way high, because you've got to have producers in North America coming back. And once the price hits a certain level, it's going to be very profitable for them producing again. But I don't know how it... Again, with the East Med, and if there's enough gas there, there could be prospects for more LNG coming out of the East Med. There's the plan to send Aphrodite gas to Idku, and there's also a plan to send Leviathan gas to Idku, and I get the impression that Eni is thinking of... Eni holds a share in the Damietta plant with Spain's Unión Fenosa, and that's idle. I get the impression that Eni is looking at that as a possibility to ship LNG, and I think it's kind of focused on Europe.

**C.P.:** The development will depend on the prices, right? On world prices. So what's a benchmark price that sort of below which there's no development, or limited development? Is there some level?

**G.L.:** Right now, you know, price (inaudible) is down as far as I understand, maybe at five or something. But there's a lot coming on in the US, there's going to be a lot then in Australia, and there's other places around. And I think that what a lot of the producers are doing with the gas resources are looking to sort of create markets by setting up the floating storage and regasification units. I think that Total has been involved in this in one of the African countries recently. It's the plan to sort of set up a regasification unit and (inaudible) system. The idea is to create markets for the LNG, not wait until the market sort of develops on its own, but just sort of to move the energy production and to create markets themselves. The prices - I don't know. I've heard the gas maybe at some point try to establish its own sort of pricing structure that doesn't totally closely, so closely mate with the oil. It's an evolving situation, we'll see. But I think there's going to be a lot of LNG available at some point. I think the next decade - that's going to be the way that a lot of energy (inaudible) are going. It's also dependent upon the agreement, the Paris Agreement about climate change. If they have the taxes on carbon and also demand for energy which people... There's more conservation and more use of renewables. There's a lot to be seen yet. As far as the East Med is concerned, I think there is a good opportunity for it, and especially in Europe. I think Europe is going to be the target market for delivery. And you just got to find out how much gas there is in the Eastern Med. There's a lot of work to be done yet. And it's at the initial stages. It's all really upstream.

**C.P.:** Gary, thank you very much, it was very interesting.

**G.L.:** Thank you.



---

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION\*

---

Andrew Lambert\*\*  
5-7 December 2016

### Overview of East Mediterranean and Middle East Developments

*This is an overview of the developments in the Eastern Mediterranean with regard to regional security, hydrocarbons, the Syrian conflict, Israel-Palestine conflict, Greece-Turkey conflict, Cyprus-Turkey conflict, Turkish irredentism, political Islam and the spreading of Muslim Brotherhood influence in the East Med and the Middle East.*

Ladies and gentlemen, it's a great privilege and an honor to be asked to present the closing remarks on this particular conference that we've just had. As you can see, we were talking about the latest developments in the Eastern Mediterranean over the period in late December 2016.

One of the questions that was asked of us during the course of the conference was: are we in an era of change? Well, of course, we've said this I don't know how many times. But probably more telling is the comment: actually, we're in a change of era. The whole structure of everything we previously have seen and known is likely to change, and we move into a new era entirely.

I'd like to pay tribute, if I may, to all the contributors, and I've listed them all here. They've all in their own way given us a very telling and incisive way of looking at the world in their particular areas of concern. I think we've had a very good cross-section and I would like to thank each and every individual one of them for their contribution. Can I also, at the bottom, thank on behalf of all of you the ERPIC members who've also contributed: Dr. Klearchos Kyriakides, Mr. Gary Lakes and Captain Lars Wedin. But not least I should also ask you to thank on my behalf, on our behalf all the members of ERPIC who've made this particular dialogue possible. And I'm thinking here of course about Chris Pelagias, Christian, and of course Marta. Without their contribution of course none of this would have taken place.

I want to pick out in my closing comments some common themes. So if I don't actually mention your name and your particular topic, it's not because I disregarded or undervalued it, it's because it didn't necessarily resonate with some of the other presentations. But these are

\* Transcript. Part of the e-conference "The Latest Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean," held by the East Med Forum between 5 and 7 December 2016.

\*\* Air Commodore, Royal Air Force (Retired); Director, Regional Security Program, ERPIC

some of the common themes that have actually come up, and I think they're quite interesting.

The first is over the balance of power. And I think we should realize that the balance of power is actually changing as in terms of the change of era. Europe now with relatively small armies, very small commitments financially is less and less interested in anything except those areas covered by article 5, by the NATO countries, or the European countries. Under President Obama the United States seems to have been reluctant to become committed and one thinks particularly about the situation in Syria. The United Kingdom - sadly, because I'm British - after Brexit is fixated only now on withdrawal from the European Union. And it is difficult now to get any sense out of the Brits and it may well continue that way for probably a couple of years. The United States' future of course is very uncertain. Mr. Trump has come to power and given us his foreign policy, and it's going to be an 'America first' foreign policy. He says he will use force if necessary, but it will be force in America's interest only. He is not going to be the world's policeman.

And then we look at international institutions that are slowly losing their authority. The United Nations obviously, the International Criminal Court, and even the UNCLOS tribunal come to mind. The next consideration that we need to have in mind is that given this de facto withdrawal, there seems to be an increasing vacuum in the Eastern Mediterranean. Well, what effect does that have? Well, as we can see, the old powers that used to be there in large numbers, the British in particular, have withdrawn, and the new old powers are now moving into the vacuum. And one thinks here of Russia reasserting itself, China surprisingly looking at its lines of communication to its various economic centers, Turkey of course reasserting itself under Erdogan, and of course we should not forget what is happening in Iran.

So in pursuit of that we are seeing an increasing militarization of the Eastern Mediterranean. Increasing use of air power, for example by Syria, Russia, and United States. We're seeing airpower diplomacy as opposed to gun boat diplomacy, with the big nations, the great nations not prepared to commit themselves with boots on the ground. But there is a problem with all this technological approach and that is spillover. And one has to ask the question: are we empowering the underdog with a proliferation of high technology? But more regionally, of course, we're seeing Saudi, Iran, and Turkey flexing their muscles one by one. Meanwhile, the USA is de facto withdrawing with fewer and fewer ships in theatre and with Vladimir Putin reasserting his power not only economically, but militarily as well. And of course the deployment of the two ships, the Kuznetsov and the Peter the Great really symbolize that.

One of the factors that did come in was the concern over radical Islam. And I remind you just some of the tenets of that. It runs along these lines. It's monopolistic - only Islam has the truth, and it has the monopoly of truth. It's absolutist. It's not relative to a particular time - it doesn't refer back to only the time of Muhammad, it endures forever and encompasses all people, and that is universalistic. And I said it applies to every single person on the planet, and who knows, maybe even Mars as well. And what it says is your duty to God is far more important than your duties or rights, duties to anybody else or rights to anybody else. And we see this manifest in all the organizations I've listed there. ISIS of course operating now in the western part of Iraq and crossing to Syria, and now just recently one hopes thrown out of Libya. Al-Qaeda - of course we've seen what's happened there. Hezbollah now operating in Lebanon, becoming almost a surrogate of Iran. The Muslim Brotherhood, hitherto very powerful in Egypt, but now dispossessed, now turfed out and replaced by a more secular organization. Meanwhile, we have the Salafis who are hardline Muslims, and of course Hamas, who are in Palestine.

So there's a conflict then between loyalty to a state or tribe, and especially a problem with what we've seen as artificial states across the whole area. Let me just remind that Islam has always felt in the light of the Arab-Israeli wars and various other political settlements that Islam itself has become somewhat undermined, if not degraded. Well, after pan-Arabism tended to lose its particular validity, Islamism has replaced it and that is seen as a model to retain honor and to reject any sort of idea of fast Western modernization. But it does mean that those that subscribe to pan-Islamism are of course very susceptible to manipulation by religious and other authorities.

Which brings us then on to Iran. Well, as many commentators have said, Iran effectively is an Islamist superpower. Its main aim is to protect Muslims across the world and as the Iranians have said, "The United States is a setting sun and the rising sun is Iran." But we need to think that one year after the nuclear deal really nothing has changed for Iran in either goals or indeed in their behavior. We have ignored Iran's strategy and ambitions at our peril. All Iran has done is postpone one weapon in their armory and they've postponed it just for a number of years. So while sacrificing their nuclear gains, they are gaining economic and political aspirations. And if at the end of the time of the treaty they decide to produce nuclear weapons, well, of course that will be very dangerous, because it is likely to lead to complete proliferation across the area.

So nothing has changed in Iran's goals or at least its behavior. And we at our peril have ignored its strategy and ambitions. We haven't controlled either the long-range missiles, and Iran has recently fired quite a few of these to demonstrate its capability. Sadly, by having the nuclear deal, it's legitimized the regime in Tehran. And although the ayatollahs are causing a considerable amount of grief elsewhere in the world, to some extent they now have legitimacy across the world. And this has been highlighted by the fact that Russia, who also seeks Iranian support for its activities in the Caucasus, has been selling some 10 billion dollars' worth of armaments to Iran, including upgrades to their fighters, upgrades to their bombers, and perhaps equally as pressing or telling the S300 surface-to-air missile which will enable them to area denial across the whole of the eastern part of the Persian Gulf.

So what it suggested is we need now to have a proper coercive policy in order to influence Iran in the future. It needs to include both hard and soft power, including sanctions, and it needs also now not to just involve the old P5+1. It needs to bring in local powers. And it suggested Saudi Arabia and Egypt, etc., may be invited to join.

Meanwhile, Iran of course is pursuing its political aims right across the piece. Lebanon is now a close ally with Hezbollah, which is a proxy of Iran, controlling virtually everything that goes on. If you like, as one commentator put it, Lebanon is now effectively an Iranian policy under the control of Hezbollah. Meanwhile in Syria, of course Iran has provided considerable forces to go and help Assad remain in power. And indeed, of course, if the competition and the conflict comes to an end, then Assad will actually owe his life - really his life - to Hezbollah and to Tehran. And of course that will put him at the mercy of Iran, and indeed of Putin. Meanwhile, of course when the war does come to an end, we can expect to see Syria as both a Russian and an Iranian base.

Let me look slightly closer to Iran-Iraq. Well, we already know there's a Shiite regime sitting in the middle of Baghdad, but more and more Iraq is controlled by Iran. The militias that we see operating day to day in and around Mosul are trained by Iran and some of them are probably also provided by Iran. Of course, Iran has another angle that it is keen to do, and that is the

bottom point on this slide: it's the way in which Iran and Iraq together will produce about the same amount of oil as Saudi Arabia and thus can balance decisions in OPEC made by Saudi Arabia and make sure they get to their own basic plan.

Well, let me turn now to Turkey. Turkey of course has undergone rapid upgrading under the AKP and Erdogan since 2002, and it is intent on becoming a regional power. Originally it failed to get into the European Union and as a result it then decided to become a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. This latter organization does not require Turkey to improve its democracy and gives it a far freer hand in its treatment of its own people. But this new direction, this emphasis on the Silk Road, China, etc., has created a sense of mistrust in the West. Under Erdogan Turkey aspires to a regional and an international role with bases in Qatar and Somalia. It seeks - although were not sure how genuine this is - a rapprochement with Israel. It has to be said that Turkey in the past has been somewhat ambivalent towards its friends. Indeed, Turkey has been seen in the very recent past using migrants in order to exert pressure on Western powers and to gain control of their attitudes.

So Turkey under Erdogan. What had happened was the Arabs, and particularly the Turks had felt themselves somewhat degraded and disregarded. And there has been concern across the whole of the Middle East that there needs to be a new leader, someone like Gamal Abdel Nasser, or indeed maybe even Saddam Hussein. And it suggested, therefore, that a caliphate under Turkish control would control a population, a Muslim population of 1.6 billion people, with equal power and length to, say, 1.4 billion Chinese, or 1.3 billion Indians. That would make it one of the world's superpowers. Of course, Ataturk established a secular state which was Westernized and supporting Europe. But under Erdogan, the clock to a large extent has been set back towards the era of Ottomanism. It is said by some commentators that he is immoral, he is a manipulator, and therefore there are few that trust him. He uses refugees and other crises to achieve his ends in a very pragmatic use of power. The coup which was supposedly organized by Mr. Gulen in the United States may indeed in reality have actually been a plot against the army. But it is almost certain, as the BBC reported, that some 105,000 people have either been put in prison or been dismissed from their places of work.

Erdogan would like to be a nuclear power although maybe he'll hold fire on that for the time being. But his aim nevertheless is to unify the Middle East under his control, Africa, Europe, and even eventually the USA under some Islamic banner.

We then come on to the maritime developments in the Eastern Mediterranean. And there are three issues that I think we just need to consider before we look at the practical steps, and there are these. First of all, we need to get cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean over things like terrorism - how to control terrorism, report it - and how, indeed, in the more civilian level, how to coordinate search and rescue. How do we coordinate gas exploration, and how do we get agreement over the exact lines of the exclusive economic zones?

Well, as was pointed out, Cyprus is at the geographical center of these activities and it's really for Cyprus to take the lead in coordinating these activities. And maybe to begin with, Cyprus and Egypt, then Israel, then Greece and then invite others to join in, with a bottom-up civilian and military approach. And maybe that way we can start to increase the stability in the Eastern Mediterranean for the mutual benefit of all.

So let me just give you a few final thoughts. We are in a period of a new era. Powers are jostling

for position and that is dangerous. Because that in itself will create frictions which normally end up in hostilities. There are risks and we need to be aware of those risks. We need to consider them and we need to mitigate them wherever we possibly can. But in all that there are uncertainties and we need to be clear in our own minds how it is we're going to address this uncertain and very difficult future.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for your attention, and thank you much for attending the conference.



## Concluding Remarks to Volume 3

The current volume is the third of a four-part series examining the challenges facing the Eastern Mediterranean over the last decade. This Volume 3, by its selective and by no means exhaustive choice of topics provides a first-hand view of events as they happened over the course of the years 2015 and 2016. A more complete picture of events is presented through the timeline included in the volume.

Over this period one can observe the gathering of regional storm clouds. In particular, the continuing vulnerability of the Republic of Cyprus coupled with its promising energy prospects are creating an irresistible target for Turkish expansionism. Dominance of East Mediterranean energy resources, especially those found within the Cyprus EEZ, has become crucial to broader Turkish regional plans. By the end of 2016, Turkey has completed the major part of its twenty-year naval rearmament program and is ready to back its energy claims with military force.

Russian presence in Syria, initially a problem for Turkey both with regard to Cyprus as with regard to the Kurds in Syria, is perceived in a different light in the context of the rising cooperation between Russia and Turkey. This Russian-Turkish rapprochement is a bad omen for the Republic of Cyprus, which in 1974 suffered a Turkish invasion in the wake of a similar thaw in Russian-Turkish relations.

The importance of the escalating war in Syria cannot be underestimated, especially in terms of encouraging revisionist and expansionist ideas in the minds of Turkish political and military leadership. Such ideas create a particularly volatile mix when added to increasing doses of ultra-nationalism whipped up by the Turkish leadership to draw support for their costly foreign adventurism in Syria, Libya, the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean.

These years also marked the beginning of regional collaborative thinking, starting with the energy industry and involving Israel, Egypt, Cyprus, and eventually Greece. Inevitably, this type of regional thinking, ultimately sanctioned by the US, heightens the feeling of isolation in Ankara and raises the stakes in the Cyprus-Turkey dispute over the ownership of East Mediterranean gas reserves.





# Index

---

## A

Abbas, Mahmoud · 3, 5  
Abdullah, King of Jordan · 3  
Aegean Sea · 48, 156, 335  
Air power · 245, 255  
Akinci, Mustafa · 5, 7, 95, 101, 212  
Alawites · 21, 127, 204, 205, 330  
Al-Baghdadi, Abu Bakr · 44, 57, 127  
Aleppo · 15, 16, 205, 214, 269, 272, 317  
Alevis · 327, 330  
Alexander III of Russia · 224  
Aliyev, Ilham · 16  
Al-Assad, Bashar · 6, 8, 36, 38, 128, 129, 203, 205, 214, 245, 248, 251, 252, 268, 269, 270, 274, 275, 280, 283, 289, 298, 303, 307, 317, 322, 330, 333, 346, 362  
Al-Assad, Hafez · 317  
Al-Maliki, Nouri · 129  
Al-Nusra, Jabhat · 43, 249, 269, 270  
Al-Qaeda · 42, 163, 171, 183, 298, 361  
Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf · 127, 190, 191, 199, 317, 320  
Amathusa · 3, 4  
Anastasiades, Nikos · 5, 67, 101  
Annan Plan · 82, 93, 97, 98, 102, 113, 344, 352, 353  
Aoun, Michel · 15, 216, 252, 281, 282, 298, 356  
Aphrodite · 47, 106, 110, 111, 354, 355, 356, 358, 359  
Arab League · 7, 44, 284  
Arab Spring · 1, 41, 138, 151, 153, 165, 201, 202, 215, 219, 260, 300, 306  
Archbishop Makarios · 68, 72, 73, 365  
Armenian Genocide · 38, 150, 151  
Armenians · 52, 68, 79, 150, 151, 152, 155, 315, 334, 336  
Ataturk, Kemal · 30, 139, 257, 315, 319, 326, 327, 328, 330, 332, 363

---

## B

Baathism · 151  
Balance of power · 28, 163-175, 180, 219-243, 245, 248, 312, 361  
Barbarossa, Hareddin · 24  
Barrons, Richard · 238  
Battle of Lepanto · 26, 29, 332  
Battle of Preveza · 25, 26  
Bi-communal bi-zonal federation · 68, 70, 71, 91, 113, 141, 142, 342, 344, 350, 352  
Bi-communalism · 17, 70, 71, 74, 77-89, 142  
Bin Laden, Osama · 42, 125, 177  
Bingham, Thomas Henry · 187, 344, 345  
Bishop, W. H. A. · 69  
Blair, Tony · 353  
Brexit · 213, 219, 220, 221, 233, 237, 240, 242, 276, 334, 350, 351, 361  
British Gas (BP) · 106, 111  
British presence in Cyprus · 245-250  
Bush, George W. · 170, 208, 222, 291  
Byzantine Empire · 20, 148

---

## C

Cameron, David · 85  
Catherine the Great · 28, 232  
Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) · 346, 347  
Charlie Hebdo · 3, 33, 131, 188  
Charter of the United Nations · 311, 344  
China · 23, 45, 99, 121, 136, 220, 221, 235, 241, 243, 260, 261, 263, 273, 306, 308, 320, 321, 322, 361, 363  
Christians in the Middle East · 147-162  
Cizre · 7, 9, 10  
Clerides, Glafcos · 301  
Clinton, Hilary · 115, 144, 222, 274  
Cold War · 136, 137, 138, 141, 167, 179, 226, 233, 274, 282, 346, 350

Commonwealth · 145, 240, 343  
 Concert of Europe · 141, 172, 175, 219, 221  
 Consociationalism · 51, 53, 58  
 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus · 69, 78, 79, 86  
 Coptic Christians · 4, 16, 55, 153, 169  
 Crimea · 22, 23, 25, 26, 29, 136, 224, 228, 232, 241, 273, 274  
 Crimean Crisis · 136, 232  
 Crimean War · 29, 138, 351  
 Cyprus economy · 91-103  
 Cyprus-Egypt gas pipeline · 4, 14  
 Cyprus EEZ · 1, 14, 35, 109-110, 365  
 Cyprus gas · 109-110, 111, 354-355  
 Cyprus problem · 17, 51-61, 63-75, 91-103, 211, 216, 218, 300, 311, 350-351, 338-344  
 Cyprus Treaty of Alliance 1960 · 88  
 Cyprus Treaty of Guarantee 1960 · 88

---

## D

Damietta · 115, 359  
 Davutoglu, Ahmet · 12, 74, 166, 181, 182, 306, 335, 352  
 Delek · 4, 355, 356  
 Dhimmitude · 52, 55, 60, 119, 147  
 DITIB · 195, 196  
 Diyanet · 195, 196, 200  
 Dolphinus Holdings · 4, 115  
 Druze · 52, 53

---

## E

East Mediterranean Cooperation Council (EMCC) · 49, 50  
 Eastern Mediterranean energy · 105, 109  
 Eastern Mediterranean gas pipeline · 10, 112, 357  
 Eastern Mediterranean regional cooperation · 10, 16, 36, 46-48, 49-50, 111, 114, 115, 145, 263, 264, 290  
 Eastern Mediterranean security · 135-146, 213-218, 163, 175  
 EDT · 9, 355  
 El-Sisi, Abdel Fattah · 129, 171, 260  
 Eni · 4, 7, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359  
 Enosis · 88, 343  
 Erbakan, Necmettin · 196, 199, 200  
 Erdogan · 3, 4, 5, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16, 74, 107, 127, 128, 129, 165, 166, 216, 221, 257, 290, 305, 306, 308, 309, 310, 313, 317, 318, 319, 320, 322, 323,

328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 339, 341, 345, 346, 353, 356, 361, 363  
 Ergenekon · 11, 12  
 Erim, Nihat · 64, 65, 66, 68  
 Eroglu, Dervis · 67  
 EU Facility for Refugees · 8, 10  
 EU Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance · 15  
 EU migration crisis · 192  
 EurAsia Interconnector · 16, 112  
 Eurasianism · 2  
 European migration crisis 2015 · 6, 8, 10, 126, 127, 141, 156, 162, 172, 174, 214, 215, 260, 265, 299, 307, 311, 317, 318, 322, 334, 363  
 Eurozone · 5, 344  
 Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) · 1, 7, 14, 35, 105, 109, 256, 260, 261, 262, 265  
 ExxonMobil · 355

---

## F

Freedom of speech · 33, 34, 131, 192  
 French foreign policy in the Eastern Mediterranean · 35-39  
 Fukuyama, Francis · 191, 192

---

## G

Gaddafi, Muammar · 4, 136, 166, 174, 209, 252, 268, 315, 316, 317, 350  
 Gaza · 5, 45, 190, 248, 250, 261, 280, 298, 330  
 Gazprom · 112  
 General National Congress (GNC) · 9  
 Genghis Khan · 22  
 Gokalp, Ziya · 326, 327  
 Government of National Accord (GNA) · 9, 13, 16  
 Greece EEZ · 48, 105  
 Greek air power · 256  
 Greek Cypriots · 46, 47, 56, 60, 65, 67, 69, 72, 75, 81, 92, 102, 146, 344  
 Greek debt crisis · 3, 5, 6  
 Greek-Turkish conflict · 48, 256-257, 311, 330  
 Gulen, Fethullah · 4, 13  
 Gulen movement · 12, 13, 200  
 Gulf War I · 31, 33  
 Gulf War II · 1

---

## H

Hamas · 169, 248, 250, 261, 281, 288, 289, 291, 298, 318, 330, 362  
Hariri, Rafik · 356  
Hariri, Saad · 282, 356  
Hezbollah · 54, 57, 123, 125, 127, 169, 171, 205, 248, 250, 252, 261, 271, 280, 281, 282, 288, 289, 291, 298, 318, 330, 356, 361, 362  
High Level Agreement · 72  
Hochstein, Amos · 218  
Huntington, Samuel · 30, 59, 188, 328  
Hussein, Saddam · 137, 166, 168, 268, 316, 322, 350, 363

---

## I

Idku · 106, 111, 115, 354, 359  
Illiberal democracy · 81, 138  
Imam Hatip schools · 166  
Inonu, Izmet · 71  
Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) · 226, 273, 228  
International Atomic Energy Agency · 208  
International Court of Justice (ICJ) · 220, 263  
International Criminal Court · 75, 219, 273  
Iran nuclear deal · 287-295  
Iranian coup d-etat 1953 · 137, 350  
Iranian policy in the Eastern Mediterranean · 201-212, 279-285  
Iranian Revolution 1979 · 57, 181, 347, 350  
Islamic State (ISIS) · 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16, 32, 42, 44, 120, 163, 164, 165, 168, 170, 171, 174, 183, 188, 189, 196, 199, 205, 214, 215, 216, 218, 245, 249, 250, 256, 260, 270, 279, 283, 284, 298, 300, 333, 348, 361  
Islamism · 1, 2, 17, 19, 30, 32, 56, 119-133, 171, 177-193, 195-200, 261, 297-303, 332, 362  
Israeli gas · 105, 106, 107, 110, 114, 115  
Israeli-Palestinian conflict · 2, 188, 210, 284, 287, 289  
Israeli Navy · 261

---

## J

Jews · 45, 119, 122, 131, 132, 155, 209, 285, 322, 334  
Jihadism · 41, 42, 119, 120, 140, 177, 178, 183, 184, 190, 193

Johnson, Boris · 228, 234, 351  
Justice and Development Party (AKP) · 5, 8, 12, 15, 195, 196, 197, 200, 309, 310, 330, 363

---

## K

Kaplan Movement · 195, 199, 200  
Kashmir · 308  
Kemalism · 310, 326  
Kerry, John · 124, 214, 217, 269  
Khomeini, Ruhollah · 122, 316  
Kiselyov, Dmitry · 232  
Kobane · 3, 5, 14  
Kucuk, Fazil · 69, 326  
Kurds · 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 14, 104, 106, 108, 115, 126, 129, 135, 149, 170, 173, 174, 205, 206, 207, 210, 216, 251, 270, 275, 281, 290, 293, 298, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 315, 318, 321, 327, 328, 329, 331, 332, 333, 336, 365

---

## L

Latakia · 322, 331  
Lebanese politics · 51-62  
Lebanon Gas · 112, 355-356, 358  
Leviathan · 105, 106, 111, 113, 114, 355, 356, 357, 359  
Lewis, Bernard · 179, 180, 181  
Liberal democracy · 2, 70, 74, 77, 78, 79, 81, 82, 85, 86, 87, 89, 102, 130, 142, 159, 160, 191, 192, 202, 219, 335, 337, 350  
Libya House of Representatives (HoR) · 9, 13  
Libyan Civil War · 4, 9, 13, 16, 136, 164, 165-166, 202, 251, 268, 299  
Lijphart, Arend · 58, 83  
Livingstone, Ken · 190, 191  
LNG · 4, 48, 106, 108, 111, 115, 217, 354, 357, 359

---

## M

Maronites · 52, 53, 68, 79  
Mavi Marmara · 12  
May, Theresa · 221, 237, 240  
Medvedev, Dmitry · 135, 138, 222, 283  
Mehmed II · 23  
Menderes, Adnan · 64, 67  
MILGEM · 261  
Millet · 52, 70, 119, 132, 340

Milli Gorus · 185, 187, 195, 196, 197, 199, 330  
MIT · 333  
Mongols · 22, 23, 26, 224, 327  
Morsi, Mohamed · 185, 300, 350  
Mosaddegh, Mohammad · 137, 202  
Mosul · 15, 214, 272, 363  
Mubarak, Hosni · 33, 128, 171, 268, 298  
Muslim Brotherhood · 120, 125, 129, 131, 169, 171,  
178, 183, 185, 187, 190, 191, 195, 197, 199, 298,  
300, 320, 330, 360, 361

---

## N

Nagorno-Karabakh · 11  
Nasrallah, Hassan · 252, 261  
Nasser, Gamel Abdel · 137, 169, 315, 316, 350, 363  
Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) · 308, 310  
NATO · 8, 66, 126, 135, 138, 139, 166, 216, 221,  
226, 235, 240, 242, 246, 247, 252, 260, 261, 263,  
270, 273, 274, 300, 306, 315, 317, 335, 361  
Naval power · 256, 259-265  
Neo-Ottomanism · 126, 127, 337  
Netanyahu, Benjamin · 10, 16, 37, 111, 114, 115,  
270, 289  
Noble Energy · 109, 111, 355, 356, 357, 358  
North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) ·  
241

---

## O

Obama, Barak · 9, 33, 129, 164, 169, 170, 171, 189,  
215, 217, 222, 280, 288, 300, 361  
Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries  
(OPEC) · 237, 359, 363  
Ottoman Empire · 5, 15, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 45, 51,  
86, 89, 107, 132, 139, 179, 181, 202, 314, 326,  
332, 338

---

## P

Pahlavi, Reza · 33, 202, 203, 209  
Palestinian Authority · 5, 218, 299, 330  
Palestinians · 37, 59, 156, 157, 159, 210, 211, 216,  
250, 284, 287, 289, 294, 308, 330  
Paris Agreement · 241, 359  
People's Protection Unit (YPG) · 3, 7  
Post-truth · 220, 233

Putin, Vladimir · 12, 13, 15, 16, 107, 170, 219, 221,  
222, 226, 227, 228, 233, 240, 241, 280, 300, 320,  
322, 331, 361, 362

---

## Q

Qatar · 12, 31, 108, 175, 217, 256, 281, 282, 283,  
301, 303, 308, 313, 316, 318, 320, 355, 357, 359,  
363  
Qutb, Sayyid · 178, 180, 182

---

## R

Radcliffe, Cyril John · 64  
Regime change · 136, 137, 138, 166, 167, 349, 350  
Regional security · 1, 50, 119, 211, 256, 360  
Republican People's Party (CHP) · 310  
Rojava · 10  
Rule of law · 51, 63, 81, 105, 135, 248  
Russian air power · 245, 246-248  
Russian policy in the Eastern Mediterranean · 245,  
249, 246-247, 248, 267-277  
Russian warplane shootdown · 8  
Russo-Ukrainian war 2014 · 136, 232, 241, 242,  
247, 274

---

## S

Salafism · 42, 120, 121, 184, 187, 195, 302, 303  
Sectarianism · 51, 54, 164, 165, 166, 203, 299  
September 11 attacks · 41, 124, 132, 171, 172, 177,  
178, 188, 298, 348  
Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) · 16, 306,  
319, 363  
Shell · 106, 111, 112, 116  
Shiite · 53, 54, 57, 120, 122, 123, 128, 129, 131,  
141, 204, 271, 280, 281, 282, 302, 303, 309, 362  
Siege of Vienna 1683 · 179  
Sinai Peninsula · 8, 43, 217  
Sledgehammer · 4  
South China Sea dispute · 220, 221, 241  
Southern Corridor · 106, 112  
Sovereign Base Areas (SBA) · 98, 341, 344, 347  
START · 226  
Strategic role of Cyprus · 337-353  
Suez Canal · 171, 260, 329  
Suez Crisis · 108, 137  
Suleiman the Magnificent · 7, 25, 26

Sunni · 2, 21, 30, 53, 56, 57, 122, 123, 128, 131, 141, 157, 163, 166, 169, 171, 178, 184, 190, 210, 271, 279, 281, 283, 289, 294, 298, 300, 302, 303, 306, 316, 327, 333  
 Sykes-Picot agreement · 120, 126, 140, 275, 314  
 Syrian Civil War · 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 15, 36, 38, 47, 55, 115, 116, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 135, 136, 137, 140, 155, 157, 163-175, 201-202, 203, 204-206, 213-215, 219, 232, 241, 245-253, 261, 268, 269, 270-271, 272, 275, 280, 281, 282, 283, 299, 300, 306-307, 311, 322, 330-332, 361, 362, 365  
 Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) · 7  
 Syriza · 3

---

## T

Taliban · 168, 184, 205  
 Tamar · 4, 113  
 Tamerlane · 23, 24, 27, 224  
 TCG Anadolu aircraft carrier · 12, 15  
 Thucydides · 257  
 Tibi, Bassam · 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 184, 190, 200  
 Total · 109, 110, 207, 355, 357, 359  
 Trans-Adriatic Pipeline · 106  
 Trans-Pacific Partnership · 241  
 Treaty of Lausanne · 15, 66, 310, 338  
 Treaty of Sevres · 328  
 Tripartite Conference on the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus 1955 · 36, 65, 66, 67  
 Trump, Donald · 87, 144, 171, 172, 207, 219, 220, 221, 240, 242, 243, 253, 262, 272, 274, 275, 276, 280, 283, 284, 287, 288, 289, 291, 295, 303, 322, 323, 352, 361  
 Tsipras, Alexis · 6, 114  
 Turkish coup d'etat attempt 2016 · 13, 213, 216, 221, 270, 309, 320  
 Turkey-Cyprus conflict · 63-75, 338-344  
 Turkish Cypriots · 47, 56, 65, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 92, 101, 146, 211, 310, 343, 344, 357  
 Turkish-Israeli gas pipeline · 105, 356  
 Turkish invasion of Cyprus · 71, 341, 342, 345, 365

Turkish invasion of Syria 2016 · 14, 263, 311  
 Turkish navy · 9, 127  
 Turkish neo-imperialism · 2  
 Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) · 112  
 Turkish Straits · 262, 329  
 Turkish strategic culture · 325-336  
 Turkish Stream · 9, 15, 358  
 Turkish water pipeline to Cyprus · 7  
 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' ('TRNC') · 5, 93

---

## U

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) · 220, 263, 273, 361  
 US invasion of Iraq · 79, 108, 128, 136, 221, 300, 310, 348

---

## V

Vidino, Lorenzo · 183, 184, 186, 187, 190, 191, 197

---

## W

Waldheim, Kurt · 72, 73  
 Warsaw Pact · 224, 226  
 World Trade Organisation (WTO) · 241  
 World War I · 55, 107, 120, 135, 138, 139, 150, 275  
 World War II · 73, 132, 135, 136, 137, 138, 140, 142, 214, 219, 224, 228, 273

---

## Z

Zarif, Javad · 211  
 Zohr · 7, 109, 110, 355, 356, 357  
 Zurich-London Agreements · 66, 68, 69



## Contributors

Agmon, Asaf - *Brygadier General, Israel Defense Forces (Retired)*

Altman, David - *Senior Vice-President, Netanya Academic College*

Anastasakis, Ioannis E. – *Lieutenant General, Hellenic Air Force (Retired)*

Argyrou, Fanoulla – *Journalist, Researcher and Author*

Bar, Shmuel - *Senior Analyst; Founder and CEO, Shmuel Bar - Research and Consultancy Ltd.*

Ben Bashat, David – *Admiral, Israel Defense Forces (Retired)*

Doherty, Kathleen Ann – *Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Cyprus*

Evriviades, Marios L. - *Professor of International Relations, Neapolis University Paphos*

Florent, Jean-Lec – *Ambassador of the French Republic to the Republic of Cyprus*

Hirschfeld, Yair - *Vice-Chair, S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue; Academic Director, Centre for Middle East Studies at Galilee International Management Institute; Lecturer, Department of Middle Eastern History, University of Haifa*

Jebejian, Hrayr - *Secretary-General, Bible Society of the Gulf*

Kamal Pasha, Aftab - *Professor, Centre for West Asian Studies, School of International Studies*

Kyriakides, Klearchos A. - *Assistant Professor and Deputy Head, School of Law, University of Central Lancashire, UCLan Cyprus; Director, Democracy and Rule of Law Program, ERPIC*

Lakes, Gary - *Journalist; Director, Energy Program, ERPIC*

Lambert, Andrew - *Air Commodore, Royal Air Force (Retired); Former Director of Defence Studies, Royal Air Force; Director, Regional Security Program, ERPIC*

Malik, Habib C. - *Associate Professor of History, Lebanese American University (Retired)*

Minagias, Christos - *Brigadier General, Hellenic Armed Forces (Retired)*

Mirbagheri, Farid – *Professor of International Relations, University of Nicosia*

Murzanska, Marta – *Senior Fellow, Publishing Director, ERPIC*

Pelagias, Christodoulos G. – *Chairman, ERPIC*

Petasis, Aris – *Founder and CEO, Aris Petasis & Associates Ltd*

Reinares, Fernando - *Senior Analyst, Elcano Royal Institute, Spain*

Sneh, Ephraim – *Author; Medical Doctor; Brigadier General, Israel Defense Forces (Retired); Former Member of the Knesset; Former Minister of Health; Former Deputy Minister of Defense; Former Minister of Transportation; Chairman, S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, Netanya Academic College; President, Board of Trustees, ERPIC*

Templar, Marcus - *US Army Cryptologic Linguist, All-Source Intelligence Analyst, Defense Intelligence Agency (Retired)*

Zabib, Reza – *Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Republic of Cyprus*

Zvyagelskaya, Irina - *Professor, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences*



**East Mediterranean Chronicles:** The last decade bore witness to several important changes that have and will continue to affect the historical development of the Eastern Mediterranean and the broader Middle East. These volumes are a record of such changes as they took place. The changing security landscape, the new hydrocarbon discoveries and the so-called “Arab Spring” and its aftermath have given birth to new dynamics and challenged the validity of old paradigms. These publications contain transcripts of conferences, round-table discussions, interviews, as well as reports and first-hand analyses, all by people that bore witness to the underlying events.



**The European Rim Policy and Investment Council (ERPIC)** is an independent non-profit think-tank that focuses on regional security, energy developments, and social and political stability. ERPIC offers a resource to all that are interested in promoting mutual understanding and cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

