

**East Mediterranean Chronicles**

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

**Volume 4  
2017-2019**

**Editors:**

**Chr. G. Pelaghias**

**Marta Murzanska**

**George Chr. Pelaghias**



**ERPIC**

**European Rim Policy and Investment Council**



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**2009-2019**

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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

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ISBN: 9798518947658

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*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>v</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>vii</i>
Introduction to Volume 4	1
Timeline	3
Contributions	37
1. Lebanon's East Mediterranean Gas <i>Gary Lakes - January 2017</i>	39
2. Total's Cyprus Offshore Drilling Program <i>Gary Lakes - February 2017</i>	43
3. Russia and Regional Security <i>Stanislav Osadchiy - 28 February 2017</i>	47
4. The Effects of Brexit on International Business <i>Jovita Vassallo - 17 March 2017</i>	59
5. Anti-Money Laundering Principles and the Legal Profession: Some Lessons of History from England <i>Klearchos A. Kyriakides - 17 March 2017</i>	65
6. Cyprus, Israel, Lebanon, Egypt – Energy Developments in the East Mediterranean <i>Gary Lakes - 17 March 2017</i>	73
7. The Judicial System of Cyprus <i>Myron Nicolatos - 17 March 2017</i>	81
8. Cypriot Federalism: A Nonstarter in the Shadow of Erdoğan's Turkey <i>Habib C. Malik – 16 March 2017</i>	87

9. Cyprus in a Challenging Geopolitical Environment <i>Dimitris Konstantakopoulos - 7 April 2017</i>	93
10. Recent Energy Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Gary Lakes - 10 April 2017</i>	107
11. Turkish Constitutional Referendum <i>Marcus Templar - 12 April 2017</i>	109
12. Turkey's Constitutional Referendum <i>David Altman - 25 April 2017</i>	113
13. The Role of France in the Security of the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Rene Troccaz - 24 May 2017</i>	117
14. Cyprus' Response to a Turkish Natural Gas Pipeline to Israel <i>George Pelagias - 14 June 2017</i>	123
15. The Qatar Crisis <i>Ephraim Sneh - 15 June 2017</i>	129
16. Comments on the US-Russia Brokered Ceasefire in South-Western Syria <i>Habib C. Malik - 10 July 2017</i>	133
17. Comments on US-Russia Brokered Ceasefire in Syria <i>Yair Hirschfeld - 14 July 2017</i>	135
18. The Cyprus Negotiations After Crans-Montana <i>Klearchos A. Kyriakides – 14 July 2017</i>	137
19. Comments on the Crans-Montana Conference on Cyprus <i>Fanoulla Argyrou - 14 July 2017</i>	141
20. The “Cyprus File” Handover <i>Fanoulla Argyrou - 14 July 2017</i>	143
21. The Kurdish Referendum for Independence in Northern Iraq <i>Andrew Lambert - 3 October 2017</i>	145
22. Comments on the Hamas-Fatah Reconciliation Deal <i>Ephraim Sneh - 25 October 2017</i>	149
23. Syria, Lebanon and Israel in a Changing Geopolitical Environment <i>Habib C. Malik - 26 October 2017</i>	151
24. 103 <sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the British Annexation of Cyprus <i>Klearchos A. Kyriakides - 7 November 2017</i>	153

25. Saad Hariri's Resignation as Prime Minister of Lebanon <i>Habib C. Malik - 14 November 2017</i>	157
26. Israel's Role in the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Asher Susser - 24 November 2017</i>	159
27. Greece: An Emerging Energy Player in the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Antonia Dimou - 13 December 2017</i>	163
28. Turkish Invasion of Syria <i>Andrew Lambert - 21 January 2018</i>	167
29. Assessing Turkey's Actions against the Republic of Cyprus' Offshore Hydrocarbon Activities <i>George Chr. Pelaghias - 19 February 2018</i>	171
30. Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Greater Middle East <i>Rene Troccaz - 27 March 2018</i>	183
31. Political Islam in the Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond <i>Uriya Shavit - 18 April 2018</i>	189
32. US-Led Strike against the Syrian Regime <i>Andrew Lambert - 20 April 2018</i>	195
33. Parliamentary Elections in Lebanon <i>Habib C. Malik - 14 May 2018</i>	201
34. Political Islam in South-Eastern Europe and Beyond <i>Darko Trifunovic - 8 June 2018</i>	203
35. Turkey's Election 2018 <i>Alan Makovsky - 22 June 2018</i>	207
36. The 2018 Turkish Presidential Elections Results <i>Alan Makovsky - 4 July 2018</i>	213
37. Hydrocarbons Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Charles Ellinas - 10 July 2018</i>	219
38. Aftermath of the 2018 Turkish Elections <i>Marcus Templar - 16 July 2018</i>	225
39. Israeli Perception of the Iranian Threat <i>Ehud Eiran - 17 July 2018</i>	229
40. A Strategic Vision for the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Eran Lerman - 27 July 2018</i>	233

41. Turkey's Political and Economic Future Under Erdogan <i>Marcus Templar - 30 July 2018</i>	237
42. Israeli Counterintelligence Discipline: Theory and Practice <i>Avner Barnea - 2 August 2018</i>	241
43. A 2018 Summer Tour d'Horizon <i>Andrew Lambert - 8 August 2018</i>	247
44. Offshore Hydrocarbon Developments in Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Harry Theocharis - 30 October 2018</i>	251
45. Challenges to Liberal Democracy in the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Marta Murzanska and George Pelagias - November 2018</i>	255
46. Cypriot Liberal Democracy and its Challenges <i>Christodoulos G. Pelagias- November 2018</i>	271
47. Recent Hydrocarbon Developments in Cyprus <i>Gary Lakes - 28 November 2018</i>	283
48. The Possible Effects of Brexit <i>Klearchos A. Kyriakides - 7 December 2018</i>	285
49. Syria, Iran and the Future of the Middle East <i>Uzi Rabi - 15 January 2019</i>	289
50. Cyprus and the Future of East Mediterranean Security and Co-Operation <i>Nikos Christodoulides - 23 January 2019</i>	291
51. Turkey at the Eastern Mediterranean Crossroads <i>Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak - 12 February 2019</i>	297
52. 2019 Turkish Municipality Elections <i>Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak - 12 February 2019</i>	299
53. Recent Hydrocarbon Developments in Lebanon <i>Laury Haytayan - 2 March 2019</i>	301
54. Israeli Elections 2019 <i>Elie Friedman - 5 March 2019</i>	305
55. What to Expect from the 2019 Israeli Elections <i>Ehud Eiran - 14 March 2019</i>	309
56. Αντιμετωπίζοντας τον Τουρκικό επεκτατισμό <i>Christos Minagias - 17 March 2019</i>	313
57. Comments on the 2019 Turkish Municipal Elections	

<i>Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak - 4 April 2019</i>	319
58. Lebanon Following the State Visit by the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo <i>Habib C. Malik - 15 April 2019</i>	321
59. Key Issues of National Security Facing Israel <i>Eran Lerman - 31 May 2019</i>	325
60. Offshore Hydrocarbons Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean <i>George Chr. Pelaghias - 13 September 2019</i>	329
61. Results of the September 2019 Israeli Legislative Elections <i>Elie Friedman - 24 September 2019</i>	331
62. Turkey's Invasion of Northern Syria and the Kurds <i>Keya Izol - 13 October 2019</i>	335
63. Offshore Natural Gas Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean <i>George Pelaghias - December 2019</i>	337
64. A Look at Egypt's Domestic Challenges <i>Ashraf Mohamed Naguib - 19 December 2019</i>	343
65. 2019 UK Election Results <i>Andrew Lambert - 20 December 2019</i>	349
Concluding Remarks to Volume 4	353
<i>Index</i>	357
<i>Contributors</i>	363





## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACAMS	Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi ( <i>Turkish</i> ) - Justice and Development Party
BCM	Billion Cubic Meters
BTC	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline
BTU	British Thermal Units
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi ( <i>Turkish</i> ) – Republican People’s Party
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas
CS	Continental Shelf
DEFA	Δημόσια Επιχείρηση Φυσικού Αερίου ( <i>Greek</i> ) – Natural Gas Public Company
DITIB	Diyanet İşleri Türk-İslam Birliği ( <i>Turkish</i> ) – Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs
ECB	European Central Bank
ECT	Energy Charter Treaty
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
EMCC	Eastern Mediterranean Cooperation Council
ENI	Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi ( <i>Italian</i> ) - National Hydrocarbons Authority
FSRU	Floating Storage and Regasification Unit
GNA	Government of National Accord (Libya)
HAF	Hellenic Air Force
HDP	Halkların Demokratik Partisi ( <i>Turkish</i> ) - People’s Democratic Party

HSE	Health, Safety and Environment Requirements
HTS	Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham ( <i>Arabic</i> ) – The Organization for the Liberation of the Levant
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
ISA	Israeli Security Agency
IS/ISIS/ISIL	Islamic State/Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/Levant
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MHP	Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi ( <i>Turkish</i> ) – Nationalist Movement Party
MIT	Millî İstihbarat Teşkilatı ( <i>Turkish</i> ) – National Intelligence Organisation
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NAVTEX	Navigational Telex
NHS	National Health Service
NOBLE	Noble Energy
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê ( <i>Kurdish</i> ) – Kurdistan Worker's Party
SBA	Sovereign Base Area
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SDF	Syrian Defense Forces
SHELL	Royal Dutch Shell

SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
SYRIZA	Συνασπισμός Ριζοσπαστικής Αριστεράς – Προοδευτική Συμμαχία ( <i>Greek</i> ) – The Coalition of the Radical Left – Progressive Alliance
TANAP	Trans-Anatolian Pipeline
TCF	Trillion Cubic Feet
TPAO	Türkiye Petrolleri Anonim Ortaklığı ( <i>Turkish</i> ) – Turkish Petroleum Corporation
‘TRNC’	‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus’
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
WTO	World Trade Organization
YPG	Yekîneyên Parastina Gel ( <i>Kurdish</i> ) - People’s Protection Units



## LIST OF PLATES

- Plate 1:** Cyprus offshore exploration licenses
- Plate 2:** Turkish seismic survey in the Cyprus EEZ – 21 April – 30 June 2017
- Plate 3:** Turkish seismic survey in the Cyprus EEZ – 17 July - 20 November 2017
- Plate 4:** Turkish seismic survey in Cyprus EEZ – 19-21 September
- Plate 5:** Turkish seismic survey in Cyprus EEZ – 23-26 October 2017
- Plate 6:** Turkish seismic survey in the Cyprus EEZ – 29 December 2017 – 30 March 2018
- Plate 7:** Location of Soupia drilling site in Block 3 of Cyprus EEZ
- Plate 8:** Locations of Calypso, Onisiforos, Amathusa, Onasagoras and Aphrodite sites in Cyprus EEZ
- Plate 9:** Area where SAIPEM 1200 was blocked by Turkish warships
- Plate 10:** Existing and potential pipelines in the Eastern Mediterranean
- Plate 11:** Turkish seismic survey in Cyprus EEZ – 18 October 2018-1 February 2019
- Plate 12:** Turkish seismic survey in Cyprus EEZ – 26 January - 26 May 2019
- Plate 13:** Turkish seismic survey in Cyprus EEZ – 1 May – 31 July 2019
- Plate 14:** Area of Turkish illegal drilling in Cyprus EEZ – 3 May - 3 September 2019
- Plate 15:** Area of Turkish illegal drilling in Cyprus EEZ – 7 July 2019 – 30 September 2019
- Plate 16:** Areas of Turkish illegal drillings by Fatih and Yavuz drillships in Cyprus EEZ

**Plate 17:** Exploration licenses in Cyprus EEZ

**Plate 18:** Turkish illegal drilling in Cyprus EEZ – 6 October 2019 – 10 January 2020

## 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

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\* 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 4

The material of this Volume 4 (years 2018 – 2019) begins with two reports by Gary Lakes (see Contents, Contributions' Items 1 and 2) that provide an update of the energy developments in the Lebanon and Cyprus exclusive economic zones (EEZ). Additional coverage on the regional hydrocarbons industry is also provided by Gary Lakes (Items 6, 10 and 47), Antonia Dimou (Item 27), Charles Ellinas (Item 37), Harry Theocharis (Item 44), Laury Haytayan (Item 53) and George Pelaghiias (Items 14 and 63). What emerges from these analyses is the promise of the new regional industry, but also its vulnerability to regional and global economic and political developments. Conversely, the success of this industry is shown to depend on the willingness and ability of regional states to co-operate.

This Volume also deals with many security issues, including the role of Russia discussed by Russian Ambassador Stanislav Osadchiy (Item 3), the Cyprus geopolitical environment by Dimitris Konstantakopoulos (Item 9), and the French role in the region discussed by French Ambassador Rene Troccaz (Items 13 and 30). The evolving situation in Syria and the geopolitics of the region are discussed by Professor Habib C. Malik (Items 16 and 23). More about Syria is provided by Professor Yair Hirschfield (Item 17), while the Kurdish bid for independence, and Turkish and US actions in Syria are reviewed by Andrew Lambert (Items 21, 28 and 32), and by Keya Izol (Item 62).

Israel's domestic politics, its relation with the Palestinians, as well as Iran's role in the region and the Qatar crisis are commented on by General Ephraim Sneh (Item 22), Habib C. Malik (Item 33) Asher Susser (Item 26), Dr. Avner Barnea (Item 42) and Eli Friedman (Items 54 and 61). Iranian involvement in the region and Israeli uneasiness with it, is covered by Dr. Ehud Eiran (Items 39 and 55), while the rise of political Islam in the Eastern Mediterranean, Southeastern Europe and beyond is address by Uria Sharit (Item 31) and Darko Trifunovic (Item 34).

Turkish domestic politics are covered by Markus Templar (Items 11, 38 and 41), David Altman (Item 12), Alan Makovsky (Items 35 and 36) and Hay Eytan Cohen Yaanaracak (Items 52 and 57). Turkish objectives in the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus are addressed by Cyprus Foreign Minister Nikos Christodoulides (Item 50), Klearchos Kyriakides (Item 18), Hay Eytan Cohen Yaanaracak (Item 51) and Christos Miniayias (Item 56 – Greek text).

The threat of corruption to liberal democracy and the rule of law is covered in this volume by Klearchos Kyriakides (Item 5), Cyprus's Supreme Court President Myron Nicolatos (Item 7), and Chr. G. Pelaghiias (Item 46). Finally, Egypt's domestic challenges are addressed by Ashraf

Mohammad Naguib (Item 64), while Andrew Lambert (Item 43) and Eran Lerman (Item 40) each give their assessment of the current state-of-play, and future potential of the Eastern Mediterranean.

# East Mediterranean Chronicles

## Timeline

2017-2019

### 2017

1. *1 January 2017* – 39 people celebrating New Year's Eve in Istanbul's Reina nightclub were shot dead in a terrorist attack. The Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>1</sup>
2. *12 January 2017* – A conference on Cyprus began in Geneva. The two sides exchanged maps presenting proposals for boundaries of the two 'constituent states' of the proposed bi-communal bi-zonal federation. The talks were attended by the foreign ministers of Greece, Turkey, and the UK – the Republic of Cyprus's guarantor powers – as well as the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security policy and the European Commission's President as observers.<sup>2</sup>
3. *26 January 2017* – Lebanon launched its first licensing round for hydrocarbons exploration after a three-year delay caused by political paralysis. Five offshore blocks were offered for bidding.<sup>3</sup>
4. *23 January 2017* – The East Med pipeline was declared commercially viable and technically feasible, according to the study conducted by an Italian energy company Edison and presented in Brussels to the EU Directorate-General for Energy along with the Energy Ministries of Greece, Cyprus, Israel, and Italy. The estimated cost of the pipeline is 6 billion dollars.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Istanbul New Year Reina Nightclub Attack 'Leaves 39 Dead', BBC, 1 January 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38481521>.

<sup>2</sup> 'Historic Cyprus Conference Begins in Geneva,' Ekathimerini, 13 January 2017, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/215235/article/ekathimerini/news/historic-cyprus-conference-begins-in-geneva>  
'Cyprus Peace Deal Close, Says UN Chief after Geneva Talks,' BBC, 12 January 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38591590>.

<sup>3</sup> 'Lebanon Relaunches First Oil and Gas Licensing Round,' Reuters, 26 January 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-economy-oil/lebanon-relaunches-first-oil-and-gas-licensing-round-idUSKBN15A1L8>.

<sup>4</sup> 'Study Finds EastMed Pipeline Viable and Technically Feasible,' Signalive, 24 January 2016, <http://www.signalive.com/en/news/energy/152036/study-finds-eastmed-pipeline-viable-and-technically-feasible>.

5. *23-24 January 2017* – The first round of Astana peace talks for Syria took place between Russia, Iran and Turkey. The talks resulted in an agreement to form a monitoring body to enforce the ceasefire. Russia offered a draft for a future constitution of Syria.<sup>5</sup>
6. *28 January 2017* – Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) was formed out of the merger of Al-Nusra Front with several other jihadi organizations operating in Syria. HTS became the strongest military force in the Idlib province.<sup>6</sup>
7. *15 February 2017* – German police raided the apartments of four Turkish imams suspected of spying on behalf of the Turkish government against followers of Fetullah Gulen. The imams were members of DITIB, Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs, an umbrella organization of mosques and Islamic associations in Germany established in 1984 as a branch of Turkey's Diyanet (Directorate of Religious Affairs).<sup>7</sup>
8. *16 February 2017* – German Deutsche Welle published a report on an investigation into Turkish imams collecting intelligence on members and supporters of the Gulen movement in Germany and Europe, indicating there may be a "global spying network" operating from Turkish diplomatic missions.<sup>8</sup>
9. *7 March 2017* – Eni and Total finalized a farm-in agreement by which Eni acquired 50% interest in Block 11 of the Cyprus EEZ.<sup>9</sup>
10. *22 March 2017* – Following the row with Germany and the Netherlands over Turkish political campaigning in these countries, Erdogan said 'no European in any part of the world can walk safely on the streets' if Europe did not change its attitude towards Turkey.<sup>10</sup>
11. *March 2017* – Erdogan called the Dutch and the German governments 'Nazi remnants' and threatened sanctions after they banned political rallies for Turkish diaspora where Turkish officials were expected to speak in support of Turkish constitutional referendum.<sup>11</sup>
12. *3 April 2017* – Energy Ministers of Israel, Cyprus, Greece, and Italy made a joint

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<sup>5</sup> Patrick Wintour, 'Sponsors of Syria Talks in Astana Strike Deal to Protect Fragile Ceasefire,' The Guardian, 24 June 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/24/syria-talks-astana-russia-turkey-iran-ceasefire>.

<sup>6</sup> 'Tahrir al-Sham: Al-Qaeda's Latest Incarnation in Syria,' BBC, 28 February 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38934206>.

<sup>7</sup> 'Germany Raids Apartments of Four Turkish Imams Suspected of Spying,' Reuters, 17 February 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-germany-turkey-spying-idUSKBN15U0XF>.

<sup>8</sup> Chase Winter, 'Turkish Imam Spy Affair in Germany Extends Across Europe,' Deutsche Welle, 16 February 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/turkish-imam-spy-affair-in-germany-extends-across-europe/a-37590672>.

<sup>9</sup> 'Eni finalizes farm-in agreement with Total, acquiring interest offshore Cyprus,' World Oil, 7 March 2017, <http://www.worldoil.com/news/2017/3/7/eni-finalizes-farm-in-agreement-with-total-acquiring-interest-offshore-cyprus>.

<sup>10</sup> Ece Toksabay, Tuvan Gumrukcu, 'Erdogan Warns Europeans 'Will Not Walk Safely' if Attitude Persists, as Row Carries on,' 22 March 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-referendum-europe-idUSKBN16T13E>.

<sup>11</sup> 'Turkey's Erdogan Calls Dutch Authorities 'Nazi Remnants,' BBC, 11 March 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39242707>.



declaration expressing support for the East Med pipeline as a strategic priority for exporting into Europe part of the current gas reserves of the Eastern Mediterranean region (while not excluding other export options under assessment).<sup>12</sup>

13. 4 April 2017 - Dozens of civilians were reportedly killed in a suspected chemical attack in the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun. The Russian Defense Ministry claimed that gas was released when Syrian forces bombed a chemical munitions depot operated by terrorists. Activists, however, said that the Syrian regime carried out a targeted chemical attack.<sup>13</sup>
14. 5 April 2017 - Following the 3<sup>rd</sup> licensing round, an Exploration and Production Sharing Contract and a Hydrocarbons Exploration License for Block 10 were signed between the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) and the consortium of ExxonMobil Corporation and Qatar Petroleum (see *Plate 1*).<sup>14</sup>
15. 6 April 2017 - Following the 3<sup>rd</sup> licensing round, Exploration and Production Sharing Contracts and Hydrocarbons Exploration Licenses were signed between the RoC and Eni/Total consortium for Block 6, and the RoC and Eni for Block 8 of the Cyprus EEZ.<sup>15</sup>
16. 6 April 2017 - The United States launched a military strike on a Syrian government airbase near Homs in response to the alleged chemical weapons attack of April 4. It was the first time the US undertook a direct military action against the Assad government.<sup>16</sup>
17. 9 April 2017 - Twin suicide bombings took place on Palm Sunday in two Christian Churches in Egypt, killing at least 45 people. ISIS was believed to be responsible for the massacre.<sup>17</sup>
18. 16 April 2017 - Constitutional referendum was held in Turkey. The amendments accepted

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<sup>12</sup> 'Joint Declaration of the EastMed Pipeline Ministerial Summit, in Tel Aviv,' Portal of the Republic of Cyprus, Press and Information Office, 3 April 2017, <http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/moi/pio/pio2013.nsf/All/3E481E83C28B5163C22580F7004DD29C?OpenDocument&L=E>.

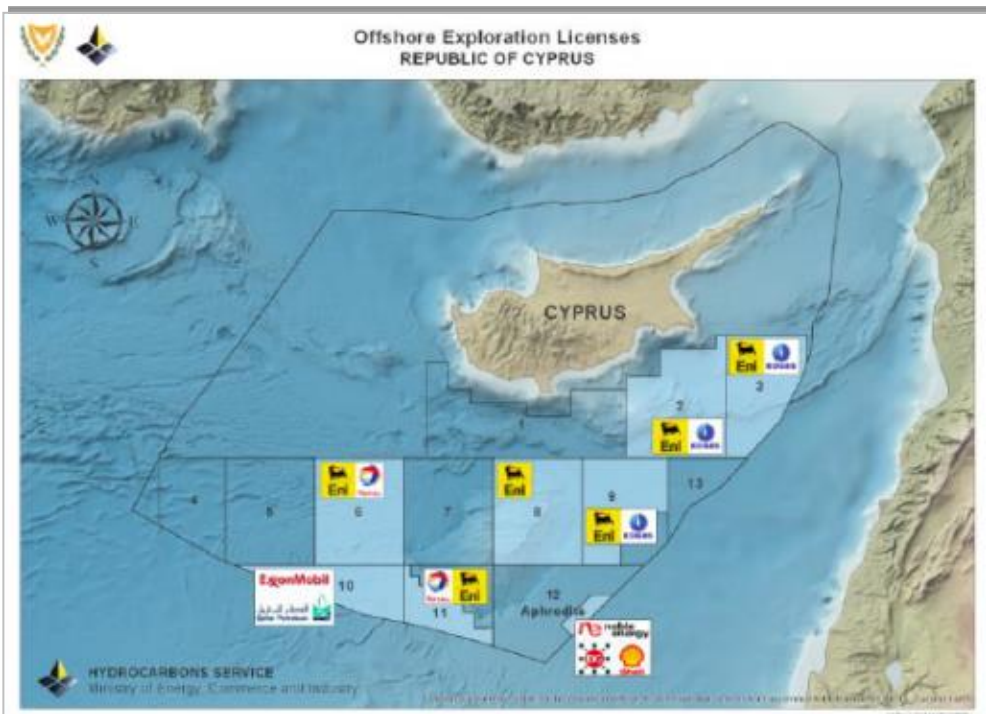
<sup>13</sup> 'Syria Conflict: 'Chemical Attack' in Idlib Kills 58,' BBC, 4 April 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39488539>.

<sup>14</sup> 'Remarks by the Minister of Energy at the Signing Ceremony for the Exploration and Production Sharing Contract for Block 10 of the EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus,' Portal of the Republic of Cyprus, Press and Information Office, 5 April 2017, <http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/moi/pio/pio2013.nsf/All/1B42910414A766C3C22580F900283080?OpenDocument&L=E>; Tasos Tzionis, 'Recent Developments in the Continental Shelf/EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus,' Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus, 7 June 2019, p. 4, <https://bit.ly/2VMxYfD>.

<sup>15</sup> 'Remarks by the Minister of Energy at the Signing Ceremony for the Exploration and Production Sharing Contracts for Blocks 6 and 8 of the EEZ of Cyprus,' Portal of the Republic of Cyprus, Press and Information Office, 6 April 2017, <http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/moi/pio/pio2013.nsf/All/DB1BC30E5A134E4BC22580FA0026CE2E?OpenDocument&L=E>.

<sup>16</sup> Michael R. Gordon, Helene Cooper, Michael D. Shear, 'Dozens of U.S. Missiles Hit Air Base in Syria,' The New York Times, 6 April 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/06/world/middleeast/us-said-to-weigh-military-responses-to-syrian-chemical-attack.html>.

<sup>17</sup> 'Egypt's Coptic Churches Hit by Deadly Bombs on Palm Sunday,' BBC, 9 April 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39544451>.



*Plate 1: Cyprus offshore exploration licenses*



*Plate 2: Turkish seismic survey in the Cyprus EEZ – 21 April – 30 June 2017*

by 51% of the voters granted Erdogan sweeping powers.<sup>18</sup>

19. 21 April 2017 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017 - Turkey conducted a seismic survey in Famagusta Bay (see Plate 2).<sup>19</sup>
20. 25 April 2017 – Turkish Air Force conducted airstrikes against Kurdish Popular Protection Units (YPG) in northern Syria and northern Iraq, killing around two dozen fighters.<sup>20</sup>
21. 7 May 2017 – The construction of the Turkish Stream gas pipeline began. The pipeline would carry Russian gas to Turkey via the Black Sea.<sup>21</sup>
22. 12 May 2017 – The Chinese ambassador to Turkey said China was ready to discuss Ankara's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.<sup>22</sup>
23. 18 May 2017 – The RoC approved a proposal by Natural Gas Public Company (DEFA) to proceed with two tenders for the import of natural gas. The first tender would provide for the creation of the necessary infrastructure and the second for the procurement of the natural gas.<sup>23</sup>
24. 22 May 2017 – A British-born jihadist of Libyan origin detonated a bomb after a concert at the Manchester Arena, killing 23 and injuring 139 people. The ISIS-linked bomber was a former member of one of Libya's Islamist militant groups who fought against Kaddafi in 2011 and was believed to also have fought in Syria.<sup>24</sup>
25. 3 June 2017 – A van was deliberately driven into pedestrians on London Bridge. The assailants then began stabbing people in the Borough Market area. The attackers were reportedly inspired by the IS. Eight people were killed and 48 injured.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Kareem Shaheen, 'Turkish Referendum: All You Need to Know,' The Guardian, 10 April 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/10/turkish-referendum-all-you-need-to-know>.

<sup>19</sup> Navigational Warnings and NOTAM's in Force in Nicosia FIR - Cyprus SRR, Cyprus Joint Rescue Coordination Center Larnaca, 21 April 2017, <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/CJRCC.nsf/AII/315D4BD1AC62B81EC22581080059B726?OpenDocument>.

<sup>20</sup> 'Turkey Air Strikes on Kurds in Syria and Iraq Spark US Concern,' BBC, 25 April 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39708909>.

<sup>21</sup> Chase Winter, 'Russia's Gazprom Starts Building TurkStream Gas Pipeline under Black Sea,' Deutsche Welle, 7 May 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/russias-gazprom-starts-building-turkstream-gas-pipeline-under-black-sea/a-38746809>.

<sup>22</sup> 'China Ready to Discuss Turkey's Membership into Shanghai Pact, Says Ambassador,' Daily Sabah, 12 May 2017, <https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/05/12/china-ready-to-discuss-turkeys-membership-into-shanghai-pact-says-ambassador>.

<sup>23</sup> 'Cabinet Approves Natural Gas Import Plan,' Cyprus Mail, 18 May 2017, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2017/05/18/cabinet-approves-natural-gas-import-plan/>.

<sup>24</sup> Vikram Dodd, Helen Pidd, Kevin Rawlinson, Haroon Siddique, Ewen MacAskill, 'At Least 22 Killed, 59 Injured in Suicide Attack at Manchester Arena,' The Guardian, 23 May 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/may/22/manchester-arena-police-explosion-ariana-grande-concert-england>.

<sup>25</sup> Saphora Smith, Fiona Day, Chloe Hubbard, Phil Helsel, 'London Bridge Attack: 7 Killed, 48 Wounded; 3 Suspects Shot Dead by Police, 4 June 2017, <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/london-bridge-attack/london-bridge-closed-after-major-incident-report-van-hitting-people-n767966>.

26. *5 June 2017* – The so-called Qatar diplomatic crisis began, after Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Egypt and Jordan, among others, severed their diplomatic relations with Qatar, citing the country's alleged support for Islamist terrorist groups. Diminishing its ties with Iran and closing the Al-Jazeera were among demands posed by the Saudi-led anti-Qatar coalition.<sup>26</sup>
27. *15 June 2017* – Cyprus, Israel and Greece held the third trilateral meeting in Thessaloniki. The three leaders expressed their support for the East Med Pipeline as well as EuroAsia Interconnector. Discussions on renewable energy, environment, research and innovation, telecommunication, health and tourism were also carried out.<sup>27</sup>
28. *28 June 2017* – A Conference on Cyprus opened in Crans-Montana. The participants of the conference included Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom – the three guarantor powers in Cyprus – as well as 'the Greek Cypriot leader' and the 'Turkish Cypriot leader'. The Republic of Cyprus was not represented at the conference.<sup>28</sup>
29. *5 July 2017* – After a three year-long battle General Haftar captured Benghazi after defeating a coalition of Islamists who refused to accept the result of June 2014 elections.<sup>29</sup>
30. *6 July 2017* – Cyprus talks in Crans-Montana broke down with no settlement. According to the UN Secretary Antonio Guterres, no one particular issue could be blamed for the collapse of the talks. However, according to the reports, the main point of disagreement was the issue of the continuation of the stationing of Turkish troops on the island as well as the security guarantees and the right to intervention which Turkey did not wish to relinquish.<sup>30</sup>
31. *10 July 2017* – The Prime Minister of Iraq Haider al-Abadi officially declared victory over ISIS in Mosul.<sup>31</sup>
32. *12 July 2017* – Drilling operations started in Block 11 at the site of the Onisiforos West 1

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<sup>26</sup> 'Qatar Row: Calls for Diplomatic Talks to End Gulf Crisis,' BBC, 6 June 2017,

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-40168856>.

<sup>27</sup> 'Greece-Cyprus-Israel Trilateral Summit, Thessaloniki 15 June 2017, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 15 June 2017, <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2017/Documents/IsraelGreeceG2GJointDeclaration.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> '28 June 2017, Crans-Montana, Near-Verbatim Transcript of the Press Point on the Conference on Cyprus,' Department of Political Affairs, United Nations, 28 June 2017, <https://www.un.org/undpa/en/speeches-statements/28062017/cyprus>.

<sup>29</sup> 'Haftar's Forces Declare Victory in Battle of Benghazi,' Al Jazeera, 6 July 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/07/haftar-forces-declare-victory-battle-benghazi-170705231914703.html>.

<sup>30</sup> Tom Miles, 'Cyprus Reunification Talks Collapse, U.N. Chief 'Very Sorry',' Reuters, 7 July 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cyprus-conflict/cyprus-reunification-talks-collapse-u-n-chief-very-sorry-idUSKBN19S02I>.

Jean Christou, 'Picking up the Pieces from Crans Montana, Cyprus Mail, 7 July 2017, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2017/07/07/picking-pieces-crans-montana/>.

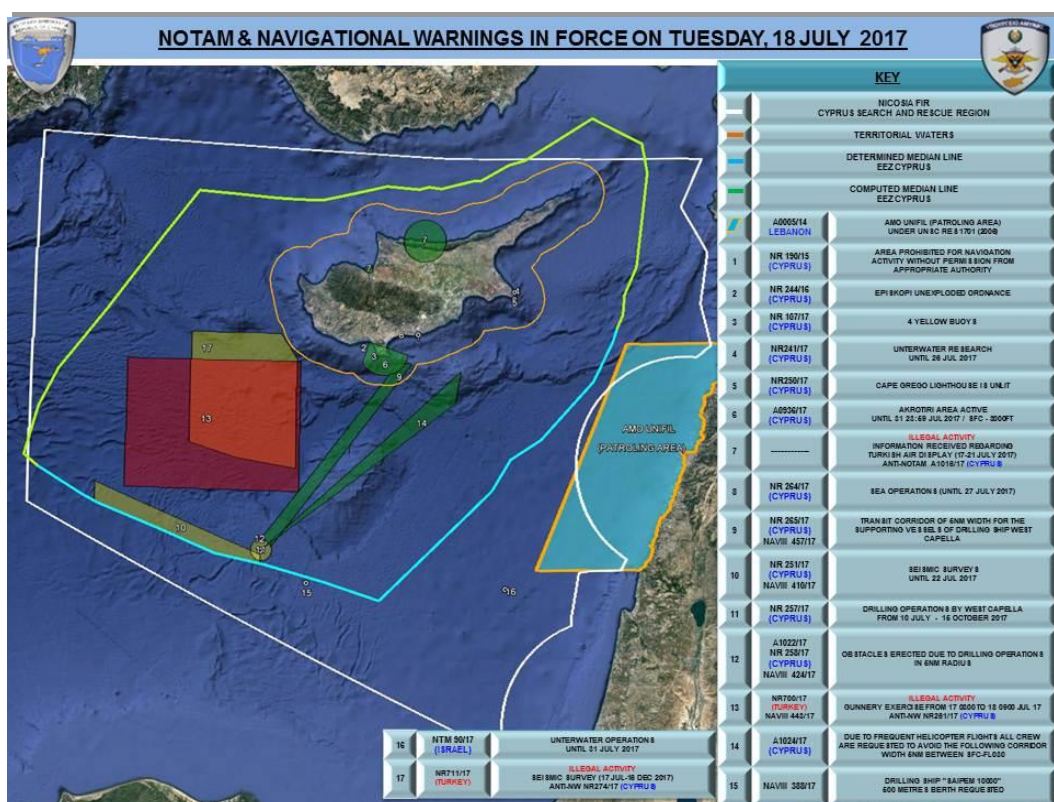
'Turkey Torpedoed Crans-Montana Conference, Greece Says,' Cyprus Mail, 9 July 2017, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2017/07/09/turkey-torpedoed-crans-montana-conference-greece-says/>.

<sup>31</sup> Tim Arango, Michael R. Gordon, 'Iraqi Prime Minister Arrives in Mosul to Declare Victory Over ISIS,' The New York Times, 9 June 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/09/world/middleeast/mosul-isis-liberated.html>.



well in the RoC' EEZ. Drilling was conducted by the *West Capella* drillship.<sup>32</sup>

33. 13 July 2017 – Turkey dispatched the frigate *TCG Gokceada* to track the *West Capella* drillship in Block 11.<sup>33</sup>
34. 17 July - 20th November 2017 - Turkey conducted a seismic survey in the south-west off Cyprus within the RoC's EEZ in the area overlapping with Blocks 6 and 7 (see *Plate 3*).<sup>34</sup>



*Plate 3: Turkish seismic survey in the Cyprus EEZ – 17 July - 20 November 2017*

35. 17 August 2017 – A van was run into pedestrians in Barcelona, Spain, killing 13 people and injuring at least 130. Nine hours after the Barcelona attack, five men thought to be members of the same terrorist cell drove into pedestrians in nearby Cambrils, killing one

<sup>32</sup> 'Announcement Regarding the Drilling of 'Onesiphoros West 1' Well in Block 11, within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Cyprus,' The Portal of the Republic of Cyprus, Press and Information Office, 12 July 2017, <http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/moi/pio/pio2013.nsf/All/128862C9ED7EAB1BC225815B004749AF?OpenDocument&L=E>.

<sup>33</sup> Elias Hazou, 'Turkey Ups the Ante Over Cyprus Drilling,' Cyprus Mail, 13 July 2017, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/07/13/turkey-take-measures-cyprus-oil-gas-exploration-fm/>.

<sup>34</sup> Navigational Warnings and NOTAM's in Force in Nicosia FIR – Cyprus SRR, Cyprus Joint Rescue Coordination Center Larnaca, 18 July 2017, <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/CJRCC.nsf/All/CEA898057AF5AE68C2258160007DFEE5?OpenDocument>.

woman and injuring 6. The attacks were believed to be ISIS-inspired.<sup>35</sup>

36. 6 September 2017 – US energy giant ExxonMobil said it would carry out two exploratory drilling in Block 10 of the Cyprus EEZ, adding that depending on the exploration results the company could consider participating in the construction of an LNG plant in Cyprus.<sup>36</sup>
37. 12 September 2017 – The Onisiforos well located in Block 11 of Cyprus's EEZ was declared not commercially viable.<sup>37</sup>
38. 14 September 2017 – Cyprus announced it planned to construct a jetty at Vasilikos port that would host a floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU) for natural gas imports to Cyprus. The estimated cost of the project was 340 million euros and it was foreseen to be completed by the end of 2019.<sup>38</sup>
39. 19-21 September 2017 - Turkey conducted seismic surveys in the north and north-west off Cyprus in the RoC's EEZ (see Plate 4).<sup>39</sup>
40. 25 September 2017 – An independence referendum in Iraqi Kurdistan was held. Israel became the first state to back independent Kurdistan, but the other governments were overwhelmingly unsupportive. The government of Iraq declared the referendum illegal.
41. 6 October 2017 – Turkish Cypriot 'foreign minister' said during a press conference that federation in Cyprus was impossible.<sup>40</sup>
42. 13 October 2017 – A consortium of Total, Eni and Novatek, the only bidder in Lebanon's first hydrocarbons licensing round, submitted two bids for Blocks 4 and 9 of the Lebanese EEZ.<sup>41</sup>
43. 17 October 2017 – Kurdish SDF liberated Raqqa, the capital of ISIS.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> 'Barcelona and Cabriels Attacks: What We Know So Far,' BBC, 27 August 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40964242>.

<sup>36</sup> Tasos Kokkinidis, 'ExxonMobil to Carry Drillings off Cyprus in 2018,' Greek Reporter, 7 September 2017, <https://greece.greekreporter.com/2017/09/07/exxonmobil-to-carry-drillings-off-cyprus-in-2018/>.

<sup>37</sup> 'Onisiforos Well Not Commercially Viable,' Lakkotrypis Says,' Cyprus Mail, 12 September 2017, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2017/09/12/onisiforos-well-not-commercially-viable-lakkotrypis-says/>.

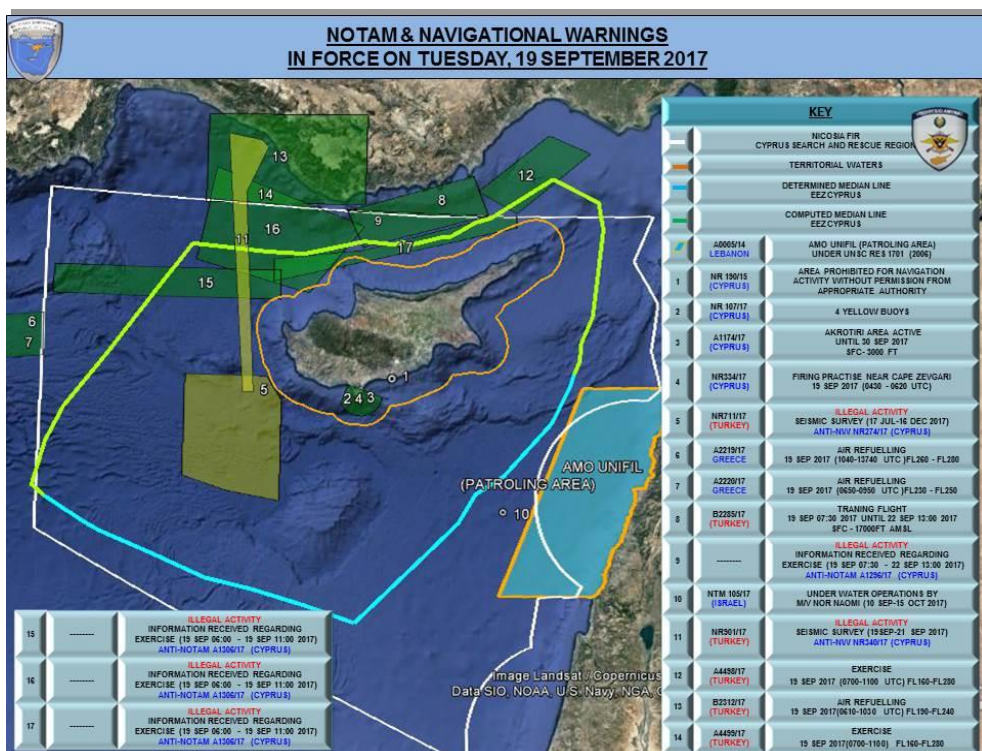
<sup>38</sup> 'Vassilikos Energy Hub to Host Floating LNG Facility,' Cyprus Mail, 14 September 2017, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2017/09/14/vassilikos-energy-hub-host-floating-lng-facility/>.

<sup>39</sup> Navigational Warnings and NOTAM's in Force in Nicosia FIR – Cyprus SRR, Cyprus Joint Rescue Coordination Center Larnaca, 19 September 2017, <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/CJRCC.nsf/All/DAD492C9B21C6E14C225819F0050E00F?OpenDocument>.

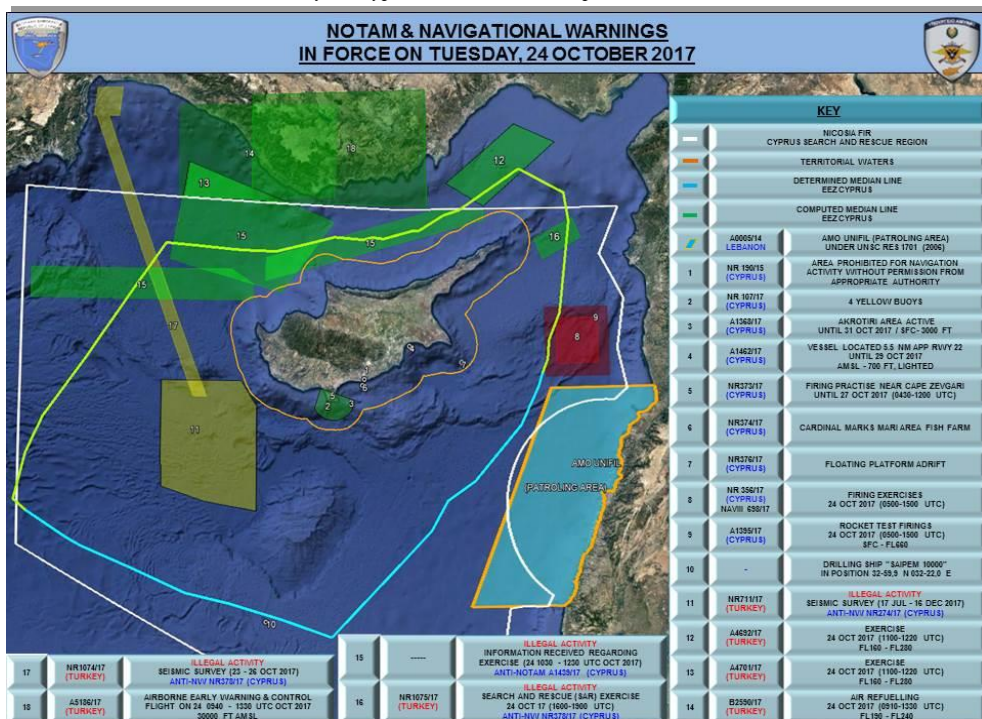
<sup>40</sup> Murat Demirci, 'Turkish Cypriot FM Says Federation on Island Impossible,' Anadolu Agency, 6 October 2017, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/turkish-cypriot-fm-says-federation-on-island-impossible/929149>.

<sup>41</sup> 'Update 1-Total-ENI-Novatek Consortium Bids for Lebanon Offshore Blocks,' Reuters, 13 October 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/lebanon-energy/update-1-total-eni-novatek-consortium-bids-for-lebanon-offshore-blocks-idUSL8N1MO4TD>.

<sup>42</sup> 'Raqqa: IS 'Capital' Falls to US-Backed Syrian Forces,' BBC, 17 October 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41646802>.



*Plate 4: Turkish seismic survey in Cyprus EEZ – 19-21 September*



*Plate 5: Turkish seismic survey in Cyprus EEZ – 23-26 October 2017*



44. 23-26 October 2017 - Turkey conducted seismic survey in the north-west off Cyprus in an area partly overlapping with the RoC EEZ (see Plate 5).<sup>43</sup>
45. October 2017 -Turkey acquired its first drilling vessel called Deepsea Metro 2, produced in South Korea.<sup>44</sup>
46. 15 November 2017 – Following the start of production from the Zohr field, Egypt announced it would stop gas imports in 2018.<sup>45</sup>
47. 30 November 2017 – EU cut pre-accession funds to Turkey by €105 million in response to the deteriorating situation in relation to democracy, Saadet and human rights.<sup>46</sup>
48. 5 December 2017 - Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Israel, Cyprus, Greece and Italy on cooperation in enabling and enhancing the development and the implementation of the East Med pipeline project.<sup>47</sup>
49. 6 December 2017 – President Donald Trump announced the US' recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and orders the relocation of the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The move was rejected and condemned internationally.<sup>48</sup>
50. 7 December 2017 –During his two-day visit to Greece, the first by a Turkish president in 65 years, Erdogan challenged the 1923 Lausanne Treaty defining borders between Greece and Turkey.<sup>49</sup>
51. 10 December 2017 – During the AKP convention, Erdogan called Israel a 'terror state' and approved of delegates shouting 'Jerusalem is ours' slogan.<sup>50</sup>
52. 14 December 2017 – Total, Eni and Novatek were granted licenses for the exploration of Blocks 4 and 9 in Lebanon EEZ.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Navigational Warnings and NOTAM's in Force in Nicosia FIR – Cyprus SRR, Cyprus Joint Rescue Coordination Center Larnaca, 24 October 2017, <https://cutt.ly/Wg7iR4I>.

<sup>44</sup> Tahsin Eroglu, 'Turkey Acquires Drillship-Reports,' Cyprus Mail, 12 October 2017, <https://cutt.ly/Tg7iLZE>.

<sup>45</sup> Kobi Yeshayahu, 'Egypt to Stop Importing Gas in 2018,' Globes, 15 November 2017,

<https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-egypt-to-stop-importing-gas-in-2018-1001211994>.

<sup>46</sup> 'EU Budget 2018 Approved: Support for Youth, Growth, Security,' European Parliament, 30 November 2017, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20171127IPR88936/eu-budget-2018-approved-support-for-youth-growth-security>.

<sup>47</sup> 'Joint Statement of the Ministers of Energy of Cyprus, Greece and Israel and the Ambassador of Italy,' The Portal of the Republic of Cyprus, Press and Information Office, 5 December 2017, <https://cutt.ly/yg7iG8I>.

<sup>48</sup> 'Statement by President Trump on Jerusalem, December 6, 2017,' U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Italy, 6 December 2017, <https://it.usembassy.gov/statement-president-trump-jerusalem-december-6-2017/>.

<sup>49</sup> 'Outspoken Erdogan Shocks Hosts on Visit to Greece,' Financial Times, 8 December 2017, <https://www.ft.com/content/c348340c-dc43-11e7-a039-c64b1c09b482>.

<sup>50</sup> Ari Khalidi, 'Erdogan Says 'God Willing' to 'Jerusalem Ours' Slogans,' Kurdistan24, 10 December 2017, <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/01656f25-531a-46d2-a9f5-d1d52d20a413>.

<sup>51</sup> Dana Khraiche, 'Total, Eni, Novatek Win Lebanon's First Offshore Licenses,' Bloomberg, 14 December 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-12-14/total-eni-novatek-win-lebanon-s-first-offshore-energy-licenses>.



53. 26 December 2017 – The drillship Saipem 12000 arrived at the Calypso drilling site in Block 6.<sup>52</sup>
54. 29 December 2017 – Turkey and Russia signed a deal for Moscow to supply Ankara with S-400 surface-to-air missile batteries.<sup>53</sup> The deal marked the beginning of a severe crisis in Turkey's relations with the US and NATO.
55. 29 December 2017 – Turkey issued a Navtex for seismic surveys to be conducted by *Barbaros* north-east off the Cyprus' coast. The area was reserved until 30<sup>th</sup> March 2018 (see Plate 6).<sup>54</sup>



*Plate 6: Turkish seismic survey in the Cyprus EEZ – 29 December 2017 – 30 March 2018*

## 2018

1. 1 January 2018 – Drilling operation began in Block 6 in the Cyprus EEZ.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Elias Hazou, 'Saipem Drillship Arrives for Exploration in Block 6,' Cyprus Mail, 28 December 2017, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/12/28/saipem-drillship-arrives-exploration-block-6/>.

<sup>53</sup> Tuvan Gumrukcu, Ece Toksabay, 'Turkey, Russia Sign Deal on Supply of S-400 Missiles,' Reuters, 29 December 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-turkey-missiles/turkey-russia-sign-deal-on-supply-of-s-400-missiles-idUSKBN1EN0T5>.

<sup>54</sup> Navigational Warnings, 2017 Series, Nr 1443/17, Turkish Naval Forces, Office of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography, <https://cutt.ly/Nggi5ru>.

<sup>55</sup> 'ENI Drills Offshore Cyprus In Spite of Turkey Threats,' Middle East Economic Survey, 5 January 2018, <https://cutt.ly/xggoe0z>.

2. 15 January 2018 – During a press conference in Moscow, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that the US was no longer the world's superpower. It therefore must accept the reality of an increasingly multipolar world and stop dictating policy to other nations.<sup>56</sup>
3. 20 January 2018 – Turkey launched Operation Olive Branch in north-west Syria and invaded the Kurdish-controlled canton of Afrin. The invasion ended with the occupation of Afrin, 400-500 civilians killed, and 300,000 internally displaced.<sup>57</sup>
4. 4 February 2018 – Nikos Anastasiades was re-elected president of Cyprus.<sup>58</sup>
5. 4 February 2018 - Cyprus issued navigational warning for drilling operations by drilling ship Saipem 12000 at the Soupia site in Bloc 3. The area was reserved from 12<sup>th</sup> February until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 (see Plate 7).<sup>59</sup>



**Plate 7:** Location of Soupia drilling site in Block 3 of Cyprus EEZ

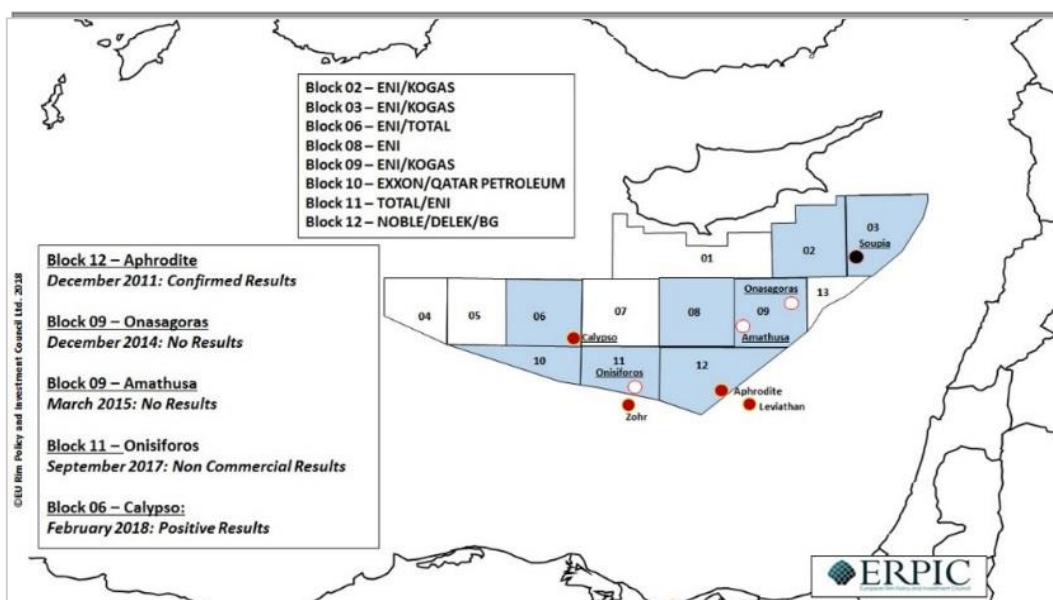
<sup>56</sup> Sabra Ayres, 'U.S. Must Accept a New, Multipolar World Order, Russian Foreign Minister Says,' Los Angeles Times, <https://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-russia-lavrov-20180115-story.html>.

<sup>57</sup> 'Turkey Bombs Kurdish-Controlled City of Afrin in Northern Syria,' The Guardian, 21 January 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/20/turkey-bombs-kurdish-controlled-city-of-afrin-in-northern-syria>.

<sup>58</sup> Michele Kambas, 'Cyprus President Anastasiades Wins Run-Off to Land Second Term,' Reuters, 4 February 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cyprus-election-copy/cyprus-president-anastasiades-wins-run-off-to-land-second-term-idUSKBN1FO0QB>.

<sup>59</sup> NAVTEX Messages in Force, Cyprus Joint Rescue Coordination Center Larnaca, 5 February 2018, <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/CJRCC.nsf/All/D8161F6D6B7B53FAC225822A0044594D?OpenDocument>.

6. 8 February 2018 - Eni announced gas discovery in Block 6 at the Calypso site, estimated to hold 6-8 tcf. The discovery confirmed the extension of the “Zohr like” play in the Cyprus’s EEZ (see Plate 8).<sup>60</sup>



*Plate 8: Locations of Calypso, Onisiforos, Amathusa, Onasagoras and Aphrodite sites in Cyprus EEZ*

7. 9 February 2018 - Turkish navy flotilla harassed the Saipem 12000 drillship on the way to the Soupia drilling site in Block 3 licensed to Eni. Saipem’s captain received instructions to stay in place until the situation is resolved. The ship was effectively blocked by the Turkish navy and prevented from reaching its destination located around 15 nautical miles away.<sup>61</sup> Several days later the EU called on Turkey “to commit unequivocally to good neighbourly relations and avoid any kind of source of friction, threat, or action directed against a member state,” but refrained from taking any action against Turkey (see Plate 9).<sup>62</sup>
8. February 2018 - Turkish patrol boat rammed into a Greek coast guard boat near the Imia islets, damaging the vessel.<sup>63</sup> Several days later, Erdogan’s adviser threatened Greece that Turkey “will break the arms and legs of any officers, of the prime minister or of any minister who dares to step onto Imia in the Aegean.”<sup>64</sup>

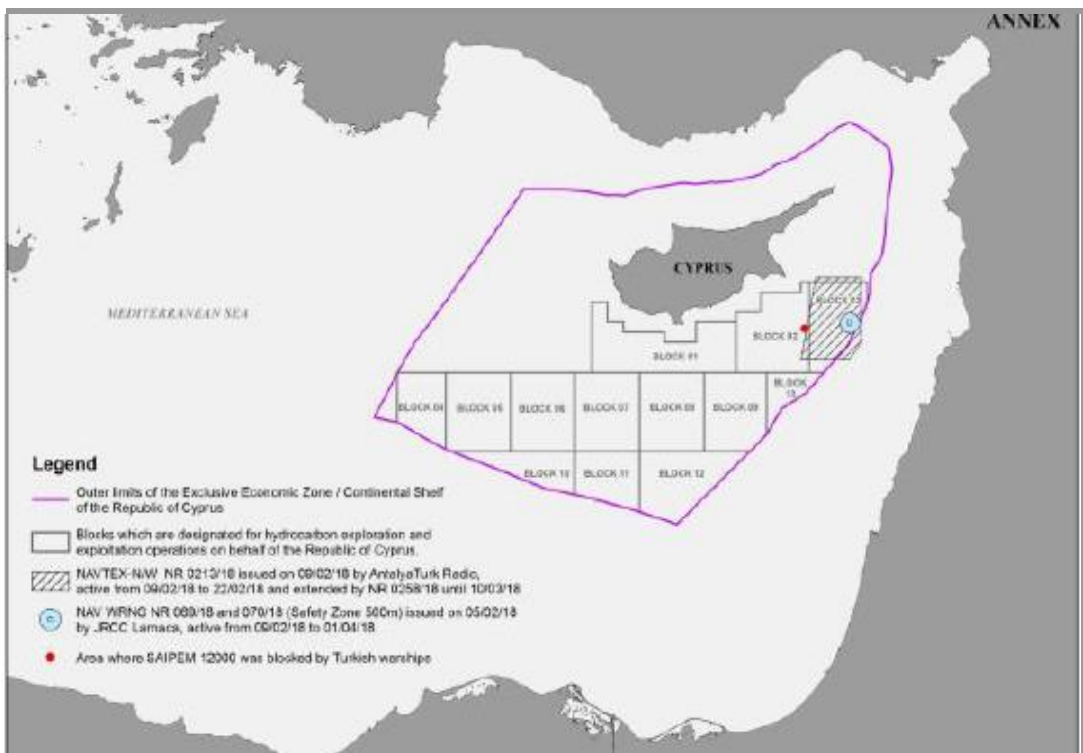
<sup>60</sup> ‘Eni Announces a Gas Discovery Offshore Cyprus,’ ENI, 8 February 2018, <https://cutt.ly/4ggsts3>.

<sup>61</sup> Metin Gurcan, ‘Tempers Flare Over Gas Exploration in Mediterranean,’ Al Monitor, 15 February 2018, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/02/turkey-major-crisis-in-eastern-mediterranean-is-nearing.html>; Tasos Tzionis, *Recent developments in the continental shelf/EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus, 7 June 2019, p. 7, <https://bit.ly/2VMxYfD>.

<sup>62</sup> Eric Maurice, ‘EU Warns Turkey over ‘Threat’ to Cyprus,’ EUobserver, 12 February 2018,

<sup>63</sup> ‘Turkish Coast Guard Vessel Rams Greek Patrol Boat off Imia,’ Kathimerini, 13 February 2018, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/225780/article/ekathimerini/news/turkish-coast-guard-vessel-rams-greek-patrol-boat-off-imia>.

<sup>64</sup> ‘Turkish President’s Adviser Threatens Greece over Imia Islets,’ Neos Kosmos, 20 February 2018,



**Plate 9:** Area where SAIPEM 1200 was blocked by Turkish warships

9. 19 February 2018 – The private Egyptian company Dolphinus Holdings signed a deal with Israel for the purchase of \$15 billion of Israeli natural gas over ten years from Tamar and Leviathan fields.<sup>65</sup>
10. 20 February 2018 – Lebanon signed oil and gas exploration contracts with a consortium of Eni, Total and Novatek for two offshore blocks.<sup>66</sup>
11. 23 February 2018 – Turkish warships threatened to use force against Saipem 12000 after it attempted again to reach the Soupia drilling site in Block 3. After the incident, the drillship left the area and headed towards Limassol port.<sup>67</sup>
12. 25 February 2018 – Turkish Cypriot “energy minister” Ozdil Nami said that the Greek

<https://neoskosmos.com/en/111576/turkish-presidents-adviser-threatens-greece-over-imia-islets/>.

<sup>65</sup> Tova Cohen, Ari Rabinovitch, ‘Egyptian Firm to Buy \$15 billion of Israeli Natural Gas,’ Reuters, 19 February 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-egypt-natgas/egyptian-firm-to-buy-15-billion-of-israeli-natural-gas-idUSKCN1G31BK>.

<sup>66</sup> Chloe Domat, ‘Lebanon Signs First Oil and Gas Exploration Contracts,’ Global Finance, 20 February 2018, <https://www.gfmag.com/topics/blogs/lebanon-signs-first-oil-and-gas-exploration-contracts>.

<sup>67</sup> ‘After New Incident on Cyprus, EU Calls on Turkey to Rein in Naval Aggression,’ Ekathimerini, 23 February 2019, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/226125/article/ekathimerini/news/after-new-incident-on-cyprus-eu-calls-on-turkey-to-rein-in-naval-aggression>.

Tasos Tzionis, ‘Recent developments in the continental shelf/EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus,’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus, 31 May 2019, p. 7, <https://cutt.ly/igIHmJq>.



Cypriots should either agree to a co-management of hydrocarbons with the Turkish Cypriots, or halt hydrocarbons exploration until the solution to the Cyprus conflict is reached. He also stated that the Turkish Cypriots had the rights to all exploration blocks, and so Turkey might prevent exploration in the remaining parts of the EEZ of Cyprus in the future, including Blocks 10 and 6.<sup>68</sup>

13. 26 February 2018 – The drillship Saipem 12000 departed Cyprus for Morocco without drilling any wells in Block 3.<sup>69</sup>
14. 14 March 2018 – The European Court of Auditors issued a report on the effectiveness of 3.8 billion euro pre-accession assistance to Turkey within the sectors of the rule of law, governance, and human resources. The report concluded that “due to a lack of political will and because the Commission has made little use of conditions, EU assistance has insufficiently addressed some fundamental needs and the sustainability of results is often at risk. We therefore consider the effectiveness of the funding to be only limited and make a number of recommendations for improvements, including better targeting of funds and increased conditionality.”<sup>70</sup>
15. 26-28 March 2018 – Presidential election was held in Egypt. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi won the election with 97% of the vote. The election was declared by human rights groups to be completely fraudulent.<sup>71</sup>
16. 30 March 2018 – The Great March of Return began in the Gaza Strip, a Palestinian campaign of protests and demonstrations demanding the right of return to Israel. Although most protests were peaceful, violence was provoked by Hamas militants resulting in nearly two hundred dead and about one thousand injured, most of them members of Hamas and other Palestinian militias.<sup>72</sup>
17. 2 April 2018 – Saudi Arabia’s crown prince Mohamed bin Salman said in an interview that the Israelis, just like the Palestinians, had the right to their own land.<sup>73</sup> Earlier this year, Saudi Arabia opened its airspace for the first time to commercial Israel-bound flights.<sup>74</sup>
18. 7 April 2018 – Chemical attack was reported in the Syrian city of Douma, killing up to 50 people. The attack was attributed to the Syrian Army by rebel forces in Douma, and by

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<sup>68</sup> Λευτέρης Αδειλίνης, ‘Ναμί Στον «Φ»»: Είτε Συνδιαχείριση Είτε Παγώνουν Όλα,’ Ο Φιλελεύθερος, 25 February 2018, <http://www.philenews.com/eidiseis/politiki/article/493452/nami-ston-f-eite-syndiacheirisi-eite-pagnoyn-ola>

<sup>69</sup> Evie Andreou, ‘Saipem Drillship Departs for Morocco,’ Cyprus Mail, 27 February 2018, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2018/02/27/saipem-drillship-departs-morocco/>.

<sup>70</sup> EU Pre-accession to Turkey: Only Limited Results So Far,’ European Court of Auditors, Special Report No. 7, 2018, [https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR18\\_07/SR\\_TURKEY\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR18_07/SR_TURKEY_EN.pdf).

<sup>71</sup> ‘Sisi Wins Egypt Election With 97 Percent of Valid Votes: Official,’ France24, 2 April 2018, <https://www.france24.com/en/20180402-sisi-wins-egypt-election-with-97-percent-valid-votes-official>.

<sup>72</sup> ‘Gaza Protests: Thousands Mark ‘Great Return’ Anniversary, BBC, 31 March 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43593594>.

<sup>73</sup> ‘Saudi Crown Prince Says Israelis Have Right to Their Own Land,’ Reuters, 2 April 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-prince-israel-idUSKCN1H91SQ>.

<sup>74</sup> ‘Saudi Arabia Opens Airspace to Israel-Bound Flight for First Time,’ The Telegraph, 23 March 2018, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/03/23/saudi-arabia-opens-airspace-israel-bound-flight-first-time/>.

the American, British, and French governments. The Syrian and Russian governments asserted that a widely-circulated video allegedly showing the aftermath of the attack was staged.<sup>75</sup>

19. 12 April 2018 – The American *Foreign Policy* magazine published an article in which it claimed Turkish negligence was one of the main factors contributing to the rise of the Islamic State. According to the article, in late 2013 jihadi militants from around the world established the so-called ‘jihadi highway’ in Turkey as they used Turkish border cities as logistical hubs on their way to Syria. This led to 30,000 militants crossing the Turkish-Syrian border in 2013 alone. Other examples of Turkish ‘passive support’ to Islamic extremists listed in the article include wounded ISIS militants treated for free in Turkish hospitals, the illegal purchase of oil from ISIS, Turkish forces’ enlistment of former Islamic State members to fight against the Kurds, and Turkey’s contribution in the manufacture of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by ISIS.<sup>76</sup>
20. 14 April 2018 – US, France and the United Kingdom launched airstrikes on Syria in response to the chemical weapons attack in Douma that allegedly took place a week earlier.<sup>77</sup>
21. 14 April 2018 – The five-year long siege of Eastern Ghouta came to an end and the Syrian Army regained control over the region.<sup>78</sup>
22. April 2018 – Five Turkish shipyards joined forces to build Turkey’s first indigenous engines for military vessels. It was part of an effort to make Turkish defence industry self-sufficient and independent from foreign military technology.<sup>79</sup>
23. 8 May 2018 – President Donald Trump announced the US withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as ‘Iran deal’.<sup>80</sup> It was an agreement signed in 2015 between Iran and the P5+1, namely the permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany.
24. 8 May 2018 – Cyprus, Greece and Israel held the fourth trilateral meeting in Nicosia. The three leaders announced their intention to proceed with policies that could promote, facilitate, improve and strengthen economic growth, emphasizing the importance of

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<sup>75</sup> Ben Hubbard, ‘Dozens Suffocate in Syria as Government Is Accused of Chemical Attack, The New York Times, 8 April 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/08/world/middleeast/syria-chemical-attack-ghouta.html>

<sup>76</sup> Ahmet S. Yayla, Colin P. Clarke, ‘Turkey’s Double ISIS Standard,’ *Foreign Policy*, 12 April 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/04/12/turkeys-double-isis-standard/#>.

<sup>77</sup> Julian Borger, Peter Beaumont, ‘Syria: US, UK and France Launch Strikes in Response to Chemical Attack,’ *The Guardian*, 14 April 2018, <https://cutt.ly/xglH273>.

<sup>78</sup> Leith Aboufadel, ‘East Ghouta Officially under the Syrian Army’s Control After last Militant Convoy Leaves Douma,’ *AmnNews*, 14 April 2018, <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/east-ghouta-officially-under-the-syrian-armys-control-after-last-militant-convoy-leaves-douma/>.

<sup>79</sup> Burak Ege Bekdil, ‘Turkish Shipyards Join Forces to Develop First Locally Made Ship Engine,’ *Defense News*, 16 April 2018, <https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2018/04/16/turkish-shipyards-join-forces-to-develop-engine/>.

<sup>80</sup> ‘Iran Nuclear Deal: Trump Pulls US Out in Break with Europe Allies,’ *BBC*, 9 May 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-44045957>.

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises and start-ups.<sup>81</sup>

25. 22 May 2018 – Turkish court sentenced 104 former military officers to life in prison for their involvement in a 2016 coup attempt in Turkey.<sup>82</sup>
26. 11 June 2018 – The Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline started operations. It plans to transport 6 billion cubic meters of Azeri gas from the Caspian region through Georgia to Turkey, and 10 billion cubic meters to Europe per year.<sup>83</sup>
27. 19 June 2018 – In response to Ankara's S-400 deal with Russia and its detention of an American pastor Andrew Brunson, the US Senate voted to block the sale of F-35 aircrafts to Turkey.<sup>84</sup>
28. 24 June 2018 – Presidential and general elections took place in Turkey. Erdogan was re-elected president. The AKP won the general election but with a few seats short of an absolute majority in the parliament.<sup>85</sup>
29. 18 July 2018 – After two years, Turkey ended its state of emergency. During that time, an estimated 130,000 civil servants, including teachers, academics, police officers, doctors, officers, and others were dismissed by emergency decrees.<sup>86</sup> Over 150,000 were detained and 78,000 arrested for alleged links to terror organizations.<sup>87</sup> Close to 200 media outlets were closed and more than 200 journalists were arrested, earning Turkey a reputation of world's worst jailer of journalists.<sup>88</sup> Other human rights violations included, arbitrary killing, suspicious deaths of persons in custody; forced disappearances; torture; restriction of freedoms of assembly and association; and restrictions on freedom of movement, among others.<sup>89</sup>
30. 9 August 2018 – In an ongoing feud with Turkey over detention of Pastor Andrew Brunson, the US raised tariffs on Turkish steel and aluminium.<sup>90</sup> This came a week after

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<sup>81</sup> 'Cyprus-Greece-Israel 4<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Summit Declaration,' Press and Information Office, Government of the Republic of Cyprus, 8 May 2018, <https://www.pio.gov.cy/en/press-releases-article.html?id=1656#flat>.

<sup>82</sup> 'Turkey Coup Trial: Court to Jail 104 Ex-military for Life,' BBC, 22 May 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44204634>.

<sup>83</sup> 'Dubbed the 'Silk Road of Energy,' TANAP Begins Gas Delivery,' Globes, 12 June 2018, <https://www.dailysabah.com/energy/2018/06/12/dubbed-the-silk-road-of-energy-tanap-begins-gas-delivery>.

<sup>84</sup> Joyce Karam, 'New Congress Bill to Block F-35 Sales to Turkey,' The National, 27 April 2018, <https://www.thenational.ae/world/the-americas/new-congress-bill-to-block-f-35-sales-to-turkey-1.725232>.

<sup>85</sup> 'Turkey Election: Erdogan Wins Re-Election as President,' BBC, 25 June 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44596072>.

<sup>86</sup> 'Purged Beyond Return?' Amnesty International, 2018, [https://www.amnesty.org.tr/public/uploads/files/Purged%20Beyond%20Return\\_Report\\_EN.pdf](https://www.amnesty.org.tr/public/uploads/files/Purged%20Beyond%20Return_Report_EN.pdf).

<sup>87</sup> 'Turkey 2018 Report,' European Commission, 17 April 2018, p. 5, <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-turkey-report.pdf>.

<sup>88</sup> 'Clampdown on Foreign Journalists in Turkey,' Stockholm Center for Freedom, August 2018, pp. 6-7, <https://stockholmcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Clamp-down-on-foreign-journalists-in-Turkey.pdf>.

<sup>89</sup> 'Turkey 2018 Human Rights Report,' Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018, U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TURKEY-2018-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf>.

<sup>90</sup> Jacob Pramuk, 'Why Trump Is Attacking Turkey with Sanctions and Tariffs,' CNBC, 10 August 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/08/10/why-trump-is-attacking-turkey-with-sanctions-and-tariffs.html>.

sanctions were imposed on Turkey's justice and interior ministers. Brunson was accused by the Turkish government of having links to the PKK and the Gulen movement.<sup>91</sup>

31. *13 August 2018* – Turkish lira hit a record low against the US dollar, becoming the world's worst performing currency. Turkish economic challenges were exacerbated by its row with the US over pastor Brunson's detention.<sup>92</sup>
32. *15 August 2018* – Qatar pledged it would invest \$15 billion in Turkey as it tackled economic challenges and the collapse of the lira.<sup>93</sup>
33. *17 September 2018* – Russia and Turkey signed an agreement in Sochi on the establishment of a demilitarized buffer zone in the Idlib province to separate the Syrian government forces and the rebels. The deal aimed at preventing a humanitarian crisis that could be triggered by the Syrian army's all-out attack on Idlib. In return, Turkey was obliged to remove jihadist groups, in particular HTS, from the area.<sup>94</sup>
34. *19 September 2018* – Cyprus and Egypt signed an agreement for an underwater gas pipeline to carry gas from Aphrodite field to Egypt's LNG facility in Idku (*Plate 10*).<sup>95</sup>
35. *27 September 2018* – During the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, Benjamin Netanyahu claimed that Iran maintained a secret facility in Tehran where it stored equipment and material for nuclear weapons. He also said that an intended consequence of the nuclear deal with Iran was that it brought Israel and many Arab states closer than ever before.<sup>96</sup>
36. *5 October 2018* – Cyprus announced a tender for the construction of a floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU) and additional infrastructure for the import of natural gas.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> 'Andrew Brunson: US Hits Turkey with Sanctions over Jailed Pastor,' BBC, 2 August 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45036378>.

<sup>92</sup> Ben Chu, 'Why Has the Turkish Lira Slumped to a Record Low?' Independent, 13 August 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/analysis-and-features/turkish-lira-latest-rueky-economic-crisis-dollar-erdogan-us-pastor-trump-banks-a8489426.html>.

<sup>93</sup> 'Qatar to Invest \$15 Billion in Turkey, Ankara Says,' In Cyprus, 15 August 2018, <https://cutt.ly/FglJWem>.

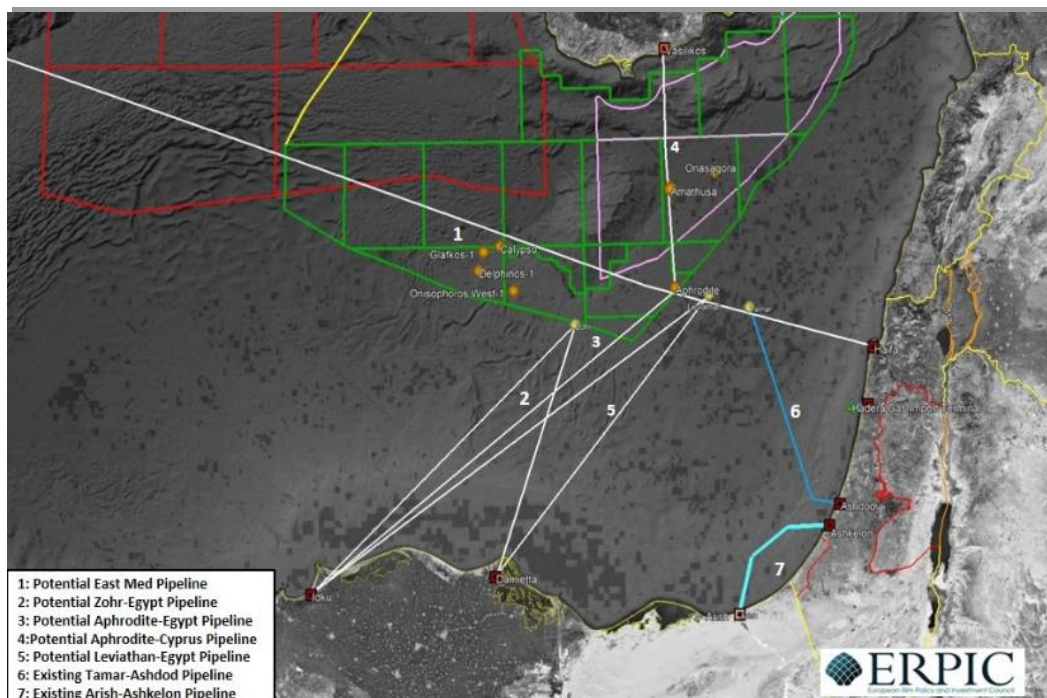
<sup>94</sup> Maria Tsvetkova, 'Russia and Turkey Agree to Create Buffer Zone in Syria's Idlib,' Reuters, 17 September 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-putin-erdogan-hope/russia-and-turkey-agree-to-create-buffer-zone-in-syrias-idlib-idUSKCN1LX1BU>.

<sup>95</sup> Sonia Gorodeisky, 'Egypt, Cyprus Sign Gas Pipeline Agreement,' Globes, 20 September 2018, <https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-egypt-cyprus-sign-gas-pipeline-agreement-1001253963>.

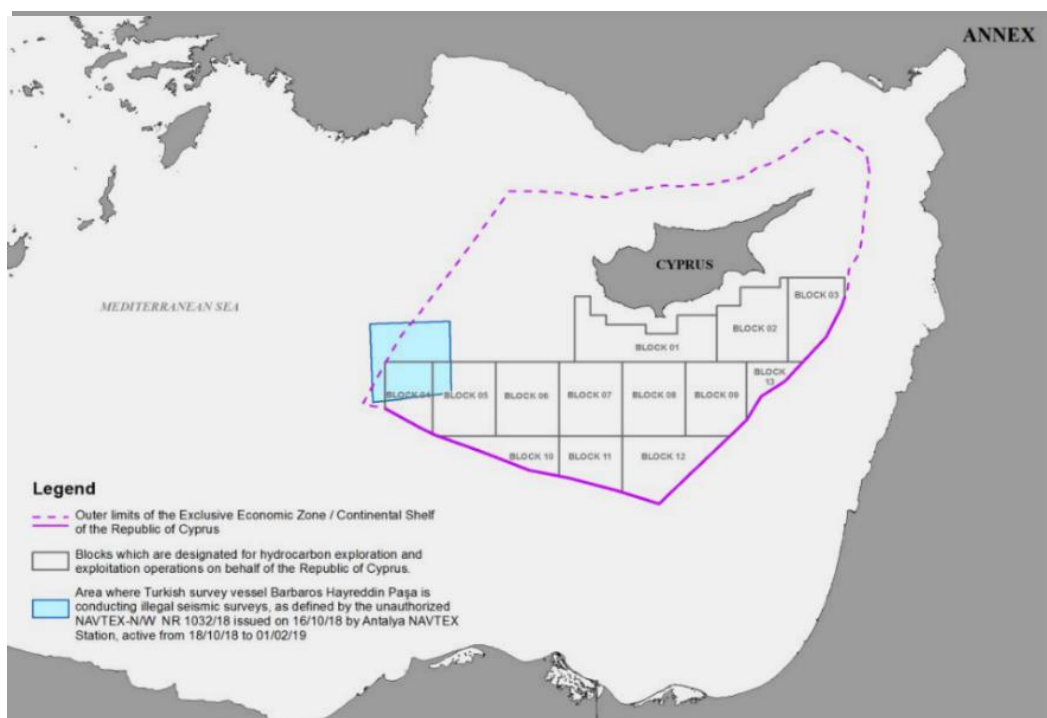
<sup>96</sup> 'At UN Assembly, Israel's Netanyahu Claims Iran Harboring Secret Nuclear Site,' UN News, 27 September 2018, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/09/1021192>.

<sup>97</sup> 'Cyprus Announces €500 Million Tender for LNG Terminal,' Kathimerini Cyprus, 5 October 2018, <https://cutt.ly/DglJzVx>.





*Plate 10: Existing and potential pipelines in the Eastern Mediterranean*



*Plate 11: Turkish seismic survey in Cyprus EEZ – 18 October 2018-1 February 2019*

37. 18 October 2018 – 1 February 2019 – Turkish seismic vessel *Barbaros* conducted seismic survey south-west of Cyprus within Cyprus's EEZ (see Plate 11).
38. 26 October 2018 – In response to Ankara's announcement that it would proceed with the installation of Russian S-400 missile system, the US threatened Turkey with sanctions.<sup>98</sup>
39. 26 October 2018 – In a sign of improving relations between Israel and the Gulf Arab states, Benjamin Netanyahu paid a surprise visit to Oman. It was the first visit of Israeli Prime minister to this country since 1996.<sup>99</sup> In the following days, several Israeli ministers visited UAE.<sup>100</sup>
40. 4 November 2018 – The third corvette of Turkey's MILGEM program, TCG Burgazada, was commissioned by the Turkish navy.<sup>101</sup>
41. 16 November 2018– ExxonMobil began exploration in Cyprus' Block 10.<sup>102</sup>
42. 13 November 2018 – The European Court of Auditors issued a report on the Facility of Refugees in Turkey, saying the assistance had not been used efficiently enough. The chief EU auditor said it was impossible to verify how over €1bn was spent because of Ankara's data protection laws. The court complained that the monitoring of EU-funded projects is limited to due Turkish authorities' refusal to grant access to beneficiary data.<sup>103</sup>
43. 28 November 2018 – During the conference of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Istanbul, Erdogan called for Muslims to overcome divisions and unite. He pointed out the ongoing crises within the Muslim world stemmed from the West's divisive and oppressive policies post-World War I which the Islamic world needed to liberate itself from.<sup>104</sup>
44. 13 December 2018 – The Cyprus government signed a €290 million deal with a consortium led by China Petroleum Pipeline Engineering Co Ltd. for the construction of an FSRU and related infrastructure for the import of natural gas to Cyprus. The project would be partly

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<sup>98</sup> 'US Warns of Sanctions over Turkey's Plans to Install Russian S-400s,' Ekathimerini, 26 October 2018, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/234079/article/ekathimerini/news/us-warns-of-sanctions-over-turkeys-plans-to-install-russian-s-400s>.

<sup>99</sup> 'Israeli MP Netanyahu Makes Rare Visit to Oman,' Reuters, 26 October 2018, <https://br.reuters.com/article/instant-article/idUSKCN1N01WN>.

<sup>100</sup> Par Nadine Dahan, 'After Oman, Israeli Officials' Gulf Trips Signal New Diplomatic Détente,' Middle East Eye, 29 October 2018, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/news/did-netanyahus-oman-visit-spark-defrosting-relations-israel-and-arab-gulf-states-1084967012>.

<sup>101</sup> Ada Class (Milgem), Bosphorus Naval News, <https://turkishnavy.net/ada-class-milgem/>.

<sup>102</sup> Anthee Carassava, 'Contentious Gas Drilling Starts in Cyprus Amid Turkish Threats,' Deutsche Welle, 16 November 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/contentious-gas-drilling-starts-in-cyprus-amid-turkish-threats/a-46312501>.

<sup>103</sup> Nikolaj Nielsen, 'EU Unable to Fully Trace €1Bn Spent on Refugees in Turkey,' EUobserver, 13 November 2018, <https://euobserver.com/migration/143364>; 'Special Report No 27/2018: The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: Helpful Support, but Improvements Needed to Deliver More Value for Money,' European Court of Auditors, 13 November 2018, <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=47552>.

<sup>104</sup> 'President Erdogan Calls for Muslim Unity,' TRT World, 28 November 2018, <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/president-erdogan-calls-for-muslim-unity-22028>.

funded by the European Union, the European Investment Fund, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Electricity Authority of Cyprus.<sup>105</sup>

45. *19 December 2018* – President Trump announced the withdrawal of US military from Syria after declaring victory over ISIS.<sup>106</sup>
46. *20 December 2018* – Israel, Greece and Cyprus held the fifth trilateral meeting in Beersheva. The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the East Med pipeline and discuss the enhancement of cyber-security ties between the three countries and the creation of an innovative technology park in Thessaloniki.<sup>107</sup>

## **2019**

1. *10 January 2019* – Tender documents for the design and construction of the EurAsia Interconnector was published in the Official Journal of the European Union.<sup>108</sup>
2. *14 January 2019* – Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority and Egypt adopted the Cairo Declaration establishing the East Mediterranean Gas Forum, based in Cairo, with the aim to foster multilateral cooperation for the creation of an integrated regional natural gas market.<sup>109</sup>
3. *26 January – 26 May 2019* – Turkish survey vessel *Barbaros* and supporting vessels, accompanied by Turkish warships, conducted seismic surveys in the southern EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus (*see Plate 12*).<sup>110</sup>
4. *28 February 2019* – ExxonMobil and Qatar Petroleum announced a gas find of 5 to 8 tcf in Glafkos-1 field in Block 10 in the RoC' EEZ.<sup>111</sup>
5. *14 March 2019* – Eni announced a new gas discovery located in its North Sinai concession in Egypt. The new find was believed to be equal or even larger than the Zohr discovery of 2015.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Annette Chrysostomou, 'Government Signs €290m Gas Infrastructure Deal (Update),' Cyprus Mail, 13 December 2019, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2019/12/13/government-signs-e290m-gas-infrastructure-deal/>.

<sup>106</sup> 'Trump Shocks Allies and Advisers with Plan to Pull US Troops Out of Syria,' The Guardian, 20 December 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/dec/19/us-troops-syria-withdrawal-trump>.

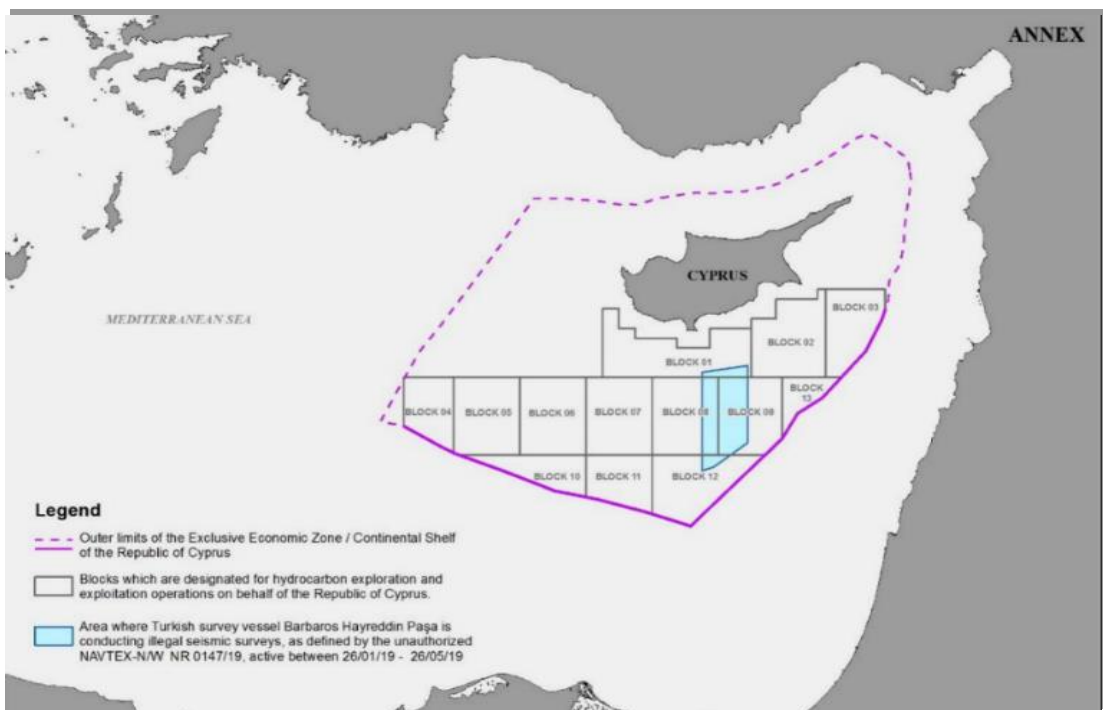
<sup>107</sup> Mark Landler, Helene Cooper, Eric Schmitt, 'Trump to Withdraw U.S. Forces from Syria, Declaring 'We Have Won Against ISIS,' The New York Times, 19 December 2018, <https://cutt.ly/Qhwam7h>.

<sup>108</sup> Eliaz Hazou, 'Tender Documents for Design and Build of EuroAsia Interconnector Published,' Cyprus Mail, 10 January 2019, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2019/01/10/tender-documents-for-design-and-build-of-euroasia-interconnector-published/>.

<sup>109</sup> 'Cairo Declaration Establishing the East Mediterranean Gas Forum,' Press and Information Office, Government of the Republic of Cyprus, 14 January 2019, <https://cutt.ly/Gxuyfbo>.

<sup>110</sup> Letter dated 19 February 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General, A/73/753-S/2019/160, Security Council, 20 February 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/73/753>

<sup>111</sup> Michele Kambas, Sabina Zawadzki, 'Exxon's Cyprus Gas Discovery Adds another Giant to East Med Collection,' Reuters, 28 February 2019, <https://cutt.ly/gxuybWC>.



**Plate 12:** Turkish seismic survey in Cyprus EEZ – 26 January - 26 May 2019

6. 29 March 2019 – President Trump recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, making the United States the first and only country to make such recognition.<sup>113</sup>
7. March 2019 - According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) report, between 2014 and 2018 Azerbaijan was Israel's second largest buyer of military equipment with a share of 17% of its total military exports. Russia was the largest military supplier of Azerbaijan in that period with 51% share of its total imports, followed by Israel at 43%, and Turkey at 2.8%.<sup>114</sup>
8. 4 April 2019 - Western Libya Offensive aka Operation Flood of Dignity was launched by the Libyan National Army led by Marshal Haftar to capture the western region of Libya and eventually the capital Tripoli held by the GNA. General Haftar's forces were aided by Egypt, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Russia, in the form of foreign fighters, weapons, military experts, airpower, and funds.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>112</sup> 'Egypt Announces New Gas Discovery in Egypt,' Egypt Today, 14 March 2019, <https://cutt.ly/HhwaxuT>.

<sup>113</sup> Vanessa Romo, 'Trump Formally Recognizes Israeli Sovereignty Over Golan Heights,' NPR, 25 March 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/03/25/706588932/trump-formally-recognizes-israeli-sovereignty-over-golan-heights>

<sup>114</sup> Pieter D. Wezeman, Aude Fleurant, Alexandra Kuimova. Nan Tian, Siemon T. Wezeman, 'Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2018,' Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, March 2019, pp. 2 and 6, [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/fs\\_1903\\_at\\_2018.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/fs_1903_at_2018.pdf).

<sup>115</sup> 'Eat Libya Strongman Visits Russian Aircraft Carrier in Mediterranean: RIA, Reuters, 11 January 2017,

9. 9 April 2019– Parliamentary election was held in Israel. Likud and Blue and White parties won 35 seats in the Knesset each. Allied with right-wing and religious parties, Netanyahu was tasked to form a new government.<sup>116</sup>
10. 11 April 2019 – Cyprus and Lebanon agreed to start negotiations on natural gas exploitation in the area straddling the border between their exclusive economic zones.<sup>117</sup>
11. 24 April 2019 – In a surprising move President Trump made a phone call to General Haftar in which he backed his military campaign on Tripoli, causing confusion regarding the US’ policy on Libya.<sup>118</sup>
12. 30 April 2019 – The Syrian Armed Forces launched the “Dawn of Idlib” offensive against al-Qaeda-linked Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and other Islamist groups in the northwestern region around Idlib.<sup>119</sup>
13. 1 May – 31 July 2019 – Turkish seismic vessel *Barbaros* conducted seismic surveys in the southern EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus (see Plate 13).<sup>120</sup>
14. 4 May 2019 – Turkish drilling vessel *Fatih*, accompanied by warships, was deployed within the continental shelf/EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus at a distance of about 36 nautical miles from the western coast of Cyprus (see Plate 14).<sup>121</sup>
15. 27 May 2019 – Following his party’s defeat in the European Parliament elections, Prime Minister Tsipras announced snap elections to be held in Greece.<sup>122</sup>
16. 28 May 2019 – Turkey launched the so-called ‘Operation Claw’, a military operation against Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) fighters in northern Iraq.<sup>123</sup>

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<https://cutt.ly/ahwsuAv>; Patrick Wintour, ‘Libya Crisis: Egypt’s Sisi Backs Haftar Assault on Tripoli,’ The Guardian, 14 April 2019, <https://cutt.ly/2hwsSmm>; ‘Egypt Sends More Arms to Libya’s Haftar,’ Middle East Monitor, 7 June 2019, <https://cutt.ly/MhwsbqO>; Jared Malsin, Summer Said, ‘Saudi Arabia Promised Support to Libyan Warlord in Push to Seize Tripoli,’ The Wall Street Journal, 12 April 2019, <https://cutt.ly/Mhwsaz6>.

<sup>116</sup> Jonathan Lis, ‘Final Israeli Election Results: Likud Loses Seat, but Netanyahu Still Set to Form Next Government,’ Haaretz, 16 April 2019, <https://cutt.ly/zhwszDL>.

<sup>117</sup> ‘Cyprus and Lebanon to Negotiate Gas Exploitation Agreement,’ Cyprus Mail, 11 April 2019, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2019/04/11/cyprus-and-lebanon-to-negotiate-gas-exploitation-agreement/>.

<sup>118</sup> Philip H. Gordon, ‘Trump’s Support for Haftar Won’t Help Libya,’ Foreign Policy, 24 April 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/04/24/trumps-support-for-haftar-wont-help-libya/>.

<sup>119</sup> ‘Syrian Army Begins Amassing Forces for Mother of All Battles in Idlib,’ AmnNews, 30 April 2019, <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/syrian-army-begins-amassing-forces-for-mother-of-all-battles-in-idlib/>.

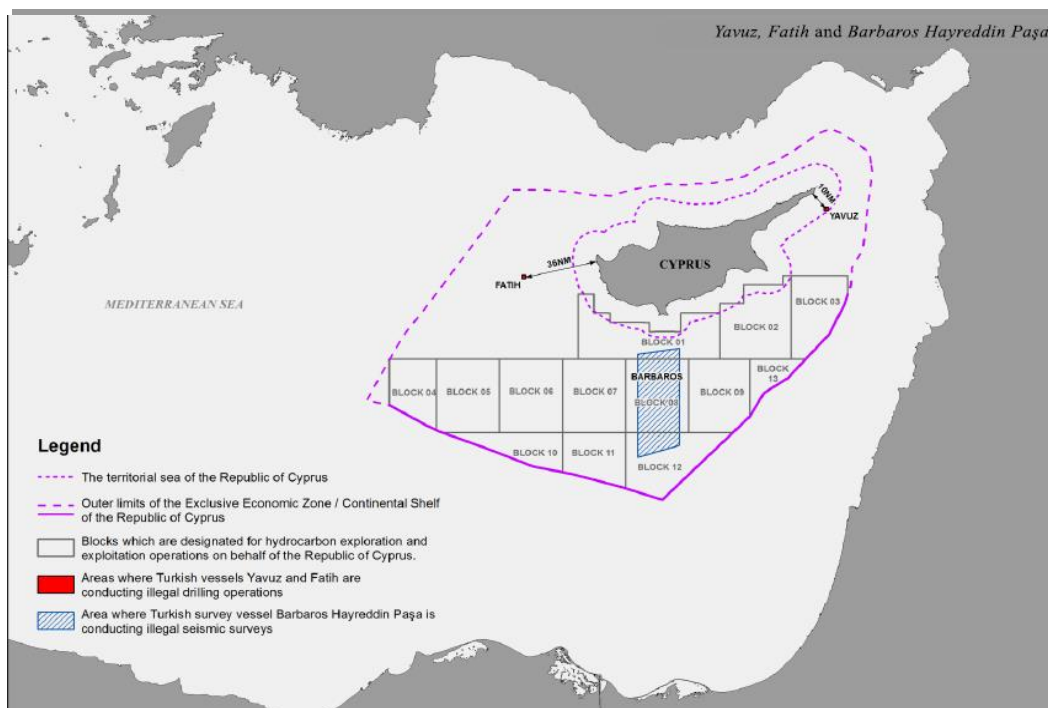
<sup>120</sup> Letter dated 11 July 2019 from the Chargé d’affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, A/73/944–S/2019/564, Security Council, 12 July 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/73/944>.

<sup>121</sup> Letter dated 11 July 2019 from the Chargé d’affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General, A/73/944–S/2019/564, Security Council, 12 July 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/73/944>.

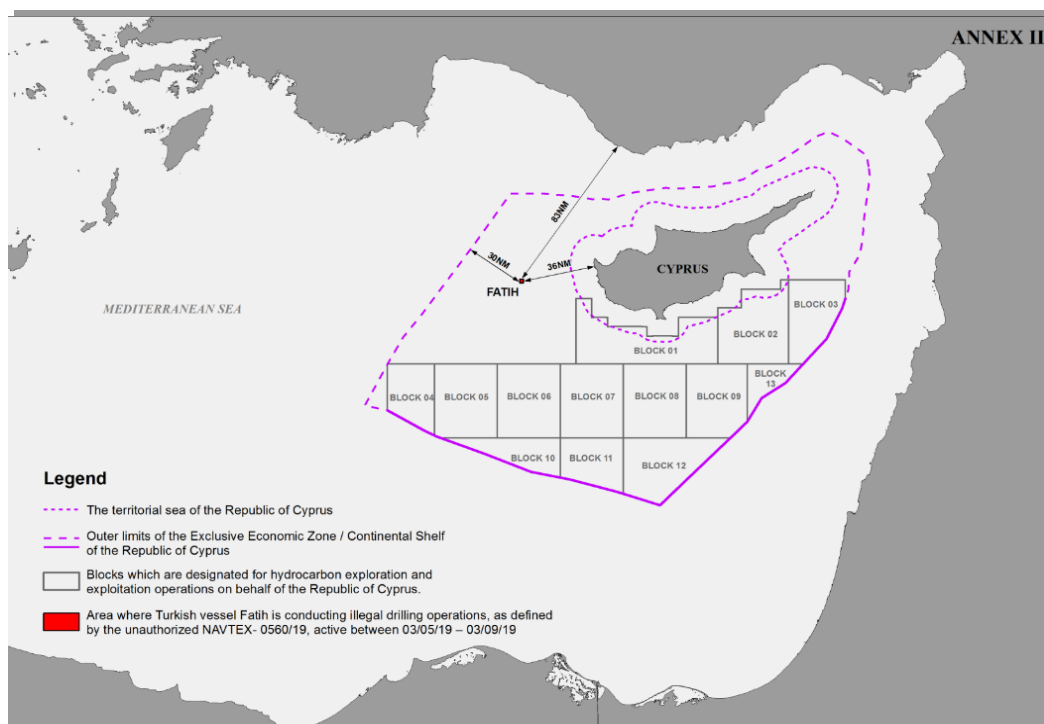
<sup>122</sup> ‘Greece Headed to Snap Elections after Syriza Defeat in EU Vote,’ Euronews, 27 May 2019, <https://www.euronews.com/2019/05/27/greece-headed-to-snap-elections-after-syriza-defeat-in-eu-vote>.

<sup>123</sup> ‘Turkey Launches Operation Against PKK Fighters in Northern Iraq,’ Al Jazeera, 28 May 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/05/28/turkey-launches-operation-against-pkk-fighters-in-northern-iraq/>.





*Plate 13: Turkish seismic survey in Cyprus EEZ – 1 May – 31 July 2019*



*Plate 14: Area of Turkish illegal drilling in Cyprus EEZ – 3 May – 3 September 2019*

17. 29 May 2019 - Following Benjamin Netanyahu's failure to form a government - the first such failure in Israeli history - the Knesset dissolved itself and new elections were announced for September 2019.<sup>124</sup>
18. 4 June 2019 - Cyprus's Natural Gas Public Company (DEFA) invited expression of interest for the supply of natural gas to the LNG import facility under development at Vasilikos.<sup>125</sup>
19. 6 June 2019 - In a letter sent to Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar, US Defense Secretary Patrick M. Shanahan gave Turkey an ultimatum to stop the installation of Russian S-400 system. The Americans warned that if Turkey proceeded with the installation of the Russian missile system, it would be barred from participation in the F-35 fighter program that would mean the cancellation of the delivery of the aircraft to Turkey.<sup>126</sup>
20. 16 June 2019 - Egypt and Israel reached a \$500 million settlement over the 2012 cancellation of gas exports to Israel.<sup>127</sup>
21. 20 June 2019 - Turkey sent a second drillship called *Yavuz* to begin operations near Cyprus. It was announced that drilling would commence in July.<sup>128</sup>
22. 20 June 2019 - 151 people, including senior military officers, were sentenced to life in prison over the 2016 failed coup in Turkey.<sup>129</sup>
23. 29 June 2019 - Turkish military support saved the GNA from the defeat by Haftar's LNA. In response, Haftar banned commercial flights from Libya to Turkey and ordered his forces to attack Turkish ships in Libyan territorial waters. Turkish businesses in Libya were also declared legitimate targets.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Jonathan Lis, Chaim Levinson, Aaron Rabinowitz, Jack Khoury, 'Israel Heads to New Election After Netanyahu Fails to Form Coalition,' Haaretz, 30 May 2019, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/elections/israel-heads-to-new-election-after-netanyahu-fails-to-form-coalition-1.7302559>.

<sup>125</sup> 'Tenders Opened for Supply of LNG,' Cyprus Mail, 4 June 2019, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2019/06/04/tenders-opened-for-supply-of-lng/>.

<sup>126</sup> C. Todd Lopez, 'DoD Sets Date to Begin 'Unwinding' Turkey from F-35 Program,' U.S. Department of Defense, 7 June 2019, <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/1870207/dod-sets-date-to-begin-unwinding-turkey-from-f-35-program/>.

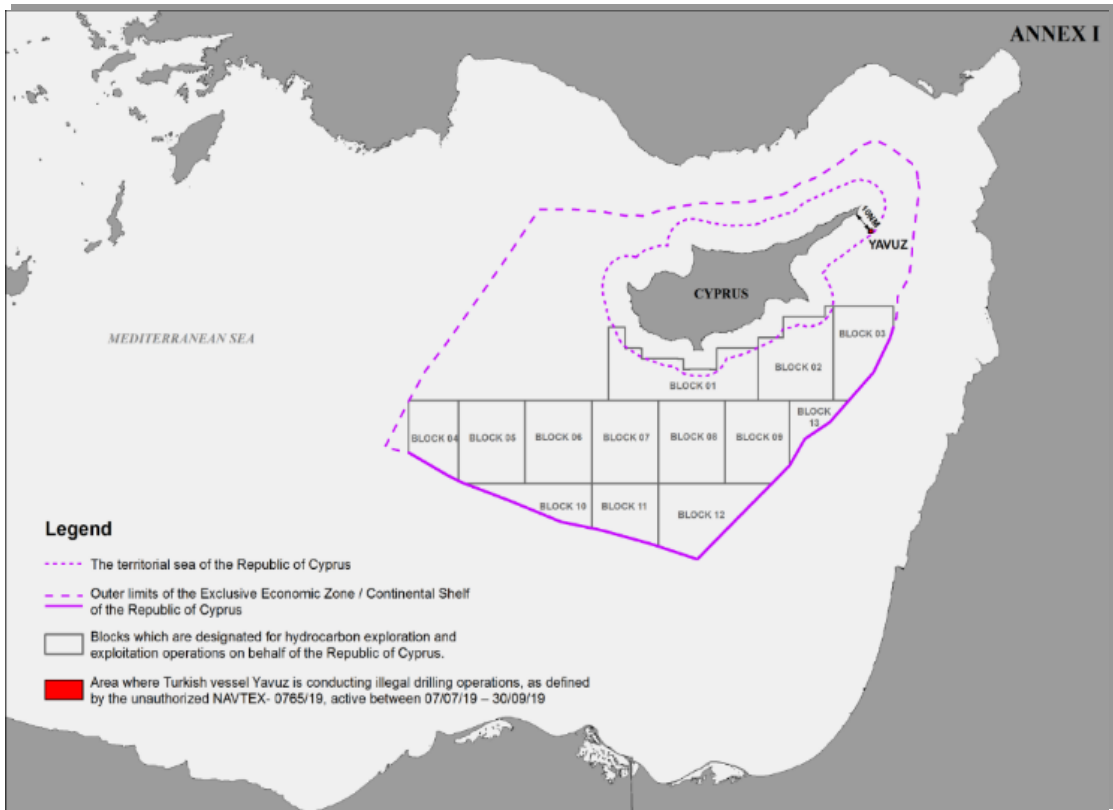
<sup>127</sup> UPDATE 1 - Egypt in \$500 Million Settlement with Israel Electric Corp - Statement,' Reuters, 17 June 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/egypt-energy-israel/update-1-egypt-in-500-million-settlement-with-israel-electric-corp-statement-idUSL8N23N0TY>.

<sup>128</sup> 'Turkey Sends Second Ship to Drill Near Cyprus, EU Warns of Action,' Reuters, 20 June 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cyprus-turkey-ship/turkey-sends-second-ship-to-drill-near-cyprus-eu-warns-of-action-idUSKCNITLIR6>.

<sup>129</sup> 'Turkish Court Sentences 151 to Life in Prison over Failed 2016 Coup,' France24, 20 June 2019, <https://www.france24.com/en/20190620-turkey-court-sentences-24-life-prison-failed-2016-coup>.

<sup>130</sup> Abdullah Benlbrahim, 'Warlord Haftar Threatens to Attack Turkey's Airplanes and Ships, Arrests Its Nationals in Libya,' The Libya Observer, 29 June 2019, <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/warlord-haftar-threatens-attack-turkey%E2%80%99s-airplanes-and-ships-arrests-its-nationals-libya>.

24. 7 July 2019 – New Democracy won snap parliamentary election in Greece. Kyriakos Mitsotakis becomes prime minister.<sup>131</sup>
25. 8 July 2019 – Turkish drilling vessel *Yavuz*, accompanied by warships and supporting vessels, was deployed within the territorial sea of the Republic of Cyprus, approximately 10 nautical miles south of the Karpasia Peninsula (see Plate 15).<sup>132</sup>



**Plate 15:** Area of Turkish illegal drilling in Cyprus EEZ – 7 July 2019 – 30 September 2019

26. 12 July 2019 – Despite numerous warnings from the US, the delivery of the Russian S-400 missile system to Turkey began, further worsening the crisis in Turkey's relations with the US.<sup>133</sup>
27. 13 July 2019 – Following the EU's warning that it would curb funding for Turkey in retaliation for Ankara's illegal drilling off Cyprus, Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci

<sup>131</sup> 'Greece Elections: Centre-right Regains Power under Kyriakos Mitsotakis,' BBC, 8 July 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-48902766>.

<sup>132</sup> Letter dated 11 July 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, A/73/944-S/2019/564, Security Council, 12 July 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/73/944>.

<sup>133</sup> 'Turkey Receives First S-400 Missile Delivery from Russia,' Deutsche Welle, 12 July 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/turkey-receives-first-s-400-missile-delivery-from-russia/a-49566433>.



made a proposal regarding a cooperation in hydrocarbons exploration.<sup>134</sup> The proposal included the establishment of a joint committee that would be under the supervision of the UN and the participation of the same number of members from both sides. It also set the structure, targets and methodology of the committee and also the establishment of a fund with details on how the fund would be used.<sup>135</sup>

28. 15 July 2019– In response to Turkish drilling activities in Cyprus’s EEZ, EU foreign ministers suspended negotiations on the Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement and agreed not to hold the Association Council and further meetings of the EU-Turkey high-level dialogues for the time being. It was agreed that the EU would also reduce the pre-accession assistance to Turkey for 2020.<sup>136</sup>
29. 24-25 July 2019 - The second meeting of the East Mediterranean Gas Forum took place in Cairo. The meeting was attended by the Egyptian, Cypriot, Greek, Palestinian, Israeli, and Italian energy ministers, as well as a representative of the Jordanian Minister of Energy. The ministers decided on the forum’s governing rules and procedures. They also reinforced the goal of enhancing regional cooperation in the energy sector paving the way for a sustainable regional natural gas market.<sup>137</sup>
30. 25 July – 20 August 2019 – Turkish seismic vessel *Barbaros* conducted seismic survey in an area in the southern part of the EEZ/continental shelf of Cyprus spanning licensed blocks 2, 8, 9, 12 and 13.<sup>138</sup>
31. 5 August 2019 – Turkey launched ‘Asia Anew’ initiative aimed at increasing cooperation with Asian countries, namely Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, India, and Japan. The initiative consists of four pillars: 1) improvement in interstate relations; 2) expanding trade capacity of the private sector; 3) improvement of academic cooperation; 4) development of interaction between the societies.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> ‘Turkish Cypriot Leader Renews Pitch for Joint Gas Committee,’ The Associated Press, 13 July 2019, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/world-news/2019/07/turkish-cypriot-leader-renews-pitch-for-joint-gas-committee/>.

<sup>135</sup> “‘New hydrocarbon proposal’ from Akıncı to Anastasiades,” ‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus,’ ‘Public Information Office,’ 15 July 2019, <https://pio.mfa.gov.ct.tr/en/new-hydrocarbon-proposal-from-akinci-to-anastasiades/>.

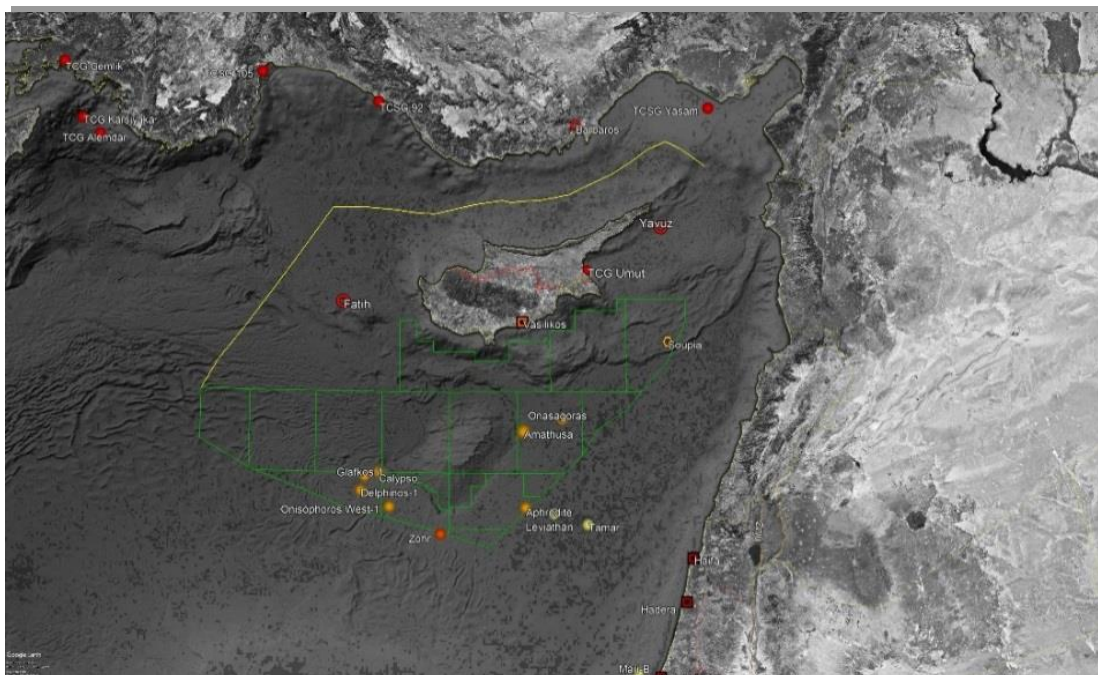
<sup>136</sup> ‘Turkish Drilling Activities in the Eastern Mediterranean: Council Adopts Conclusions,’ European Council, Council on the European Union, 15 July 2019, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/07/15/turkish-drilling-activities-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-council-adopts-conclusions/>.

<sup>137</sup> ‘EMGF Second Meeting Concludes in Cairo,’ Egypt Oil & Gas, 25 July 2019, <https://egyptoil-gas.com/news/emgf-second-meeting-concludes-in-cairo/>.

<sup>138</sup> Letter dated 13 November 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General, A/74/549–S/2019/881, Security Council, 15 November 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/74/549>.

<sup>139</sup> Asia Anew: Initiative to Shape Future of Turkish Diplomacy,’ Daily Sabah, 11 August 2019, <https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2019/08/10/asia-anew-initiative-to-shape-future-of-turkish-diplomacy>.

32. 6 August 2019 – Yavuz started drilling operations off Karpasia peninsula (see Plate 16).<sup>140</sup>



**Plate 16:** Areas of Turkish illegal drillings by Fatih and Yavuz drillships in Cyprus EEZ

33. 7 August 2019 – Cyprus, Greece, Israel and the US signed an agreement to enhance cooperation in energy and security.<sup>141</sup>
34. 2 September 2019 – Turkey deployed a second seismic vessel, the Oruç Reis, for an illegal seismic survey in an area falling partly within the western EEZ/continental shelf of Cyprus.<sup>142</sup>
35. 4 September 2019 – In response to Mustafa Akinci's July proposal on hydrocarbons, RoC's President Anastasiades offered Turkish Cypriots a share of possible gas revenues if Ankara recognized Republic of Cyprus' energy exploration rights. The counterproposal included the establishment of an escrow account that would secure the Turkish Cypriot share of gas revenues, but only on the precondition that Turkey acknowledges Cyprus EEZ and ceases its drilling activity within Cyprus waters. The proposal also included the creation of a bank account linked to the hydrocarbon fund, to which the Turkish Cypriot

<sup>140</sup> 'Turkish Drillship Started Operations off Karpasia Peninsula, Newspaper Reports,' Kathimerini, 6 August 2019, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/243341/article/ekathimerini/news/turkish-drillship-started-operations-off-karpasia-peninsula-newspaper-reports>.

<sup>141</sup> 'Joint Statement on the Ministerial Meeting of the U.S., Greece, Republic of Cyprus, and Israel Regarding Cooperation in the Field of Energy,' U.S. Embassy in Cyprus, 7 August 2019, <https://cy.usembassy.gov/joint-statement-on-the-ministerial-meeting-of-the-united-states-greece-republic-of-cyprus-and-israel-regarding-cooperation-in-the-field-of-energy/>.

<sup>142</sup> Iain Esau, 'Turkey Dispatches Seismic Vessel to Cyprus,' Upstream, 2 September 2019, <https://www.upstreamonline.com/exploration/turkey-dispatches-seismic-vessel-to-cyprus/2-1-664523>.

- share from natural gas revenues, expected to be around 30%, would flow into. The Turkish Cypriots would have the right to withdraw cash from the account after 2022, as state revenue from gas is expected after that date. Anastasiades also proposed that a mechanism be set up to inform the Turkish Cypriot community on decisions and developments regarding the country's natural resources.<sup>143</sup>
36. 5 September 2019 – Erdogan threatened to allow a new wave of migrants to the EU if Turkey did not receive European aid to create a 'safe zone' in Syria.<sup>144</sup>
  37. 17 September 2019 – Snap parliamentary elections were held in Israel after Benjamin Netanyahu's failure to form a government following the April elections. The Blue and White party under the leadership of Benny Gantz, the chief rival of Netanyahu, topped the polls, but neither party had enough seats to form a coalition.<sup>145</sup>
  38. 18 September 2019 – The RoC government granted an exploration license to Eni and Total for Block 7. It also granted Total a license for Blocks 2, 3, 8 and 9, in which Eni is already a main licensee holder. Under the new licenses, Total would receive from Eni a share of 20% for Blocks 2 and 9, 30% for Block 3, and 40% for Block 8 (see Plate 17).<sup>146</sup>
  39. 11 September 2019 – The UN and the German government launched the Berlin process, a series of consultations between the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and the states intervening in Libya.<sup>147</sup> Several preparation meetings for a conference took place in the following months in Berlin, signalling Germany's role as a mediator in the conflict.<sup>148</sup>
  40. 29 September 2019 – The fourth corvette of Turkey's MILGEM program, TCG Kinaliada, was commissioned by the Turkish navy.<sup>149</sup>
  41. 17 October 2019 – Deutsche Welle reported that German arms exports to Turkey had reached the highest level in 14 years, with weapon transfers worth 250 million euros in 2019 alone, most of them for the navy sector.<sup>150</sup> Turkey was the largest receiver of German weapons, amounting to one third of Berlin's total arms exports.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> 'ÉNERGY: Turkish Cypriots Offered Gas Share if Turkey Recognizes Cyprus EEZ,' Financial Mirror, 4 September 2019, <https://cutt.ly/gg7dw4q>.

<sup>144</sup> Oscar Schneider, 'Turkish President Erdogan Threatens Europe with New Wave of Migrants,' The Brussels Times, 5 September 2019, <https://cutt.ly/Iggci4T>.

<sup>145</sup> 'Israel Election: Netanyahu and Gantz Compete over Leadership,' BBC, 19 September 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-49753221>.

<sup>146</sup> 'Block 7 License Award,' Cyprus Hydrocarbons Company, 18 September 2019, <https://chc.com.cy/2019/09/18/block-7-licence-award/>.

<sup>147</sup> Ulf Laessing, Mahmoud Mourad, 'Germany Aims to Host Libya Conference to Stabilize Oil Producer,' Reuters, 11 September 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-germany-idUSKCN1VW23S>.

<sup>148</sup> Rene Wildangel, Tarek Megerisi, 'Germany's Quiet Leadership on the Libyan War,' European Council on Foreign Relations, 20 November 2019, <https://cutt.ly/FggceoQ>.

<sup>149</sup> Ada Class (Milgem), Bosphorus Naval News, <https://turkishnavy.net/ada-class-milgem/>.

<sup>150</sup> Natalie Muller, 'German Arms Exports to Turkey at Highest Level Since 2005,' Deutsche Welle, 17 October 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/german-arms-exports-to-turkey-at-highest-level-since-2005/a-50866242>.

<sup>151</sup> 'Turkey Biggest Receiver of German Arms Exports,' Ahval, 24 June 2020, <https://cutt.ly/sg7s8Uu>.

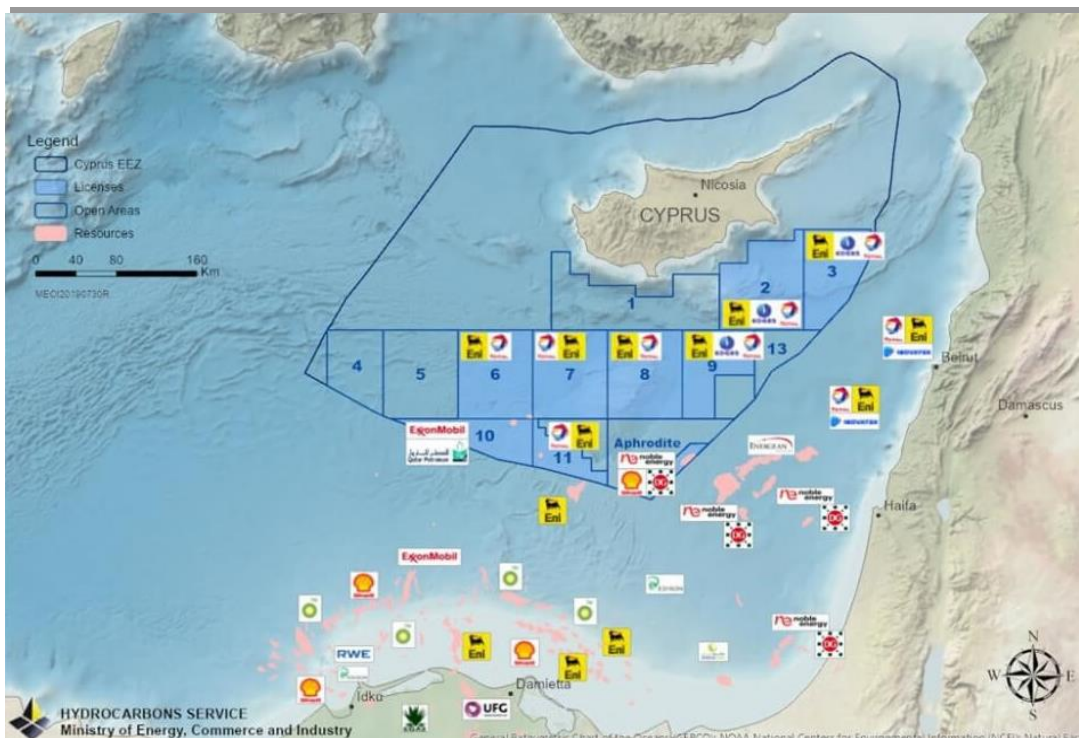


Plate 17: Exploration licenses in Cyprus EEZ

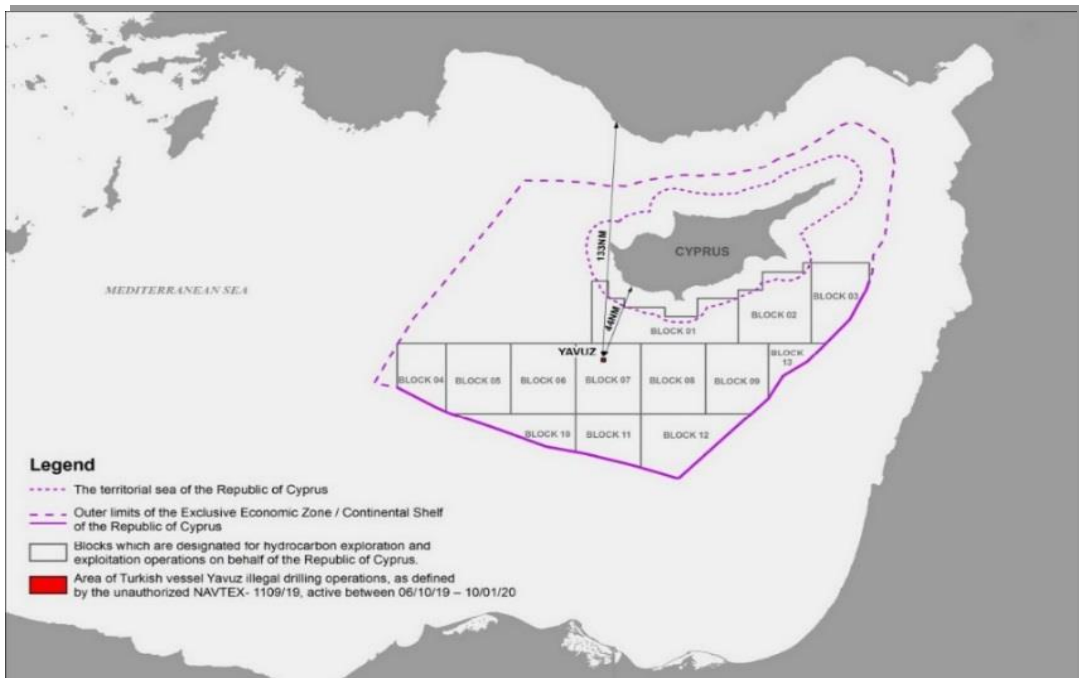


Plate 18: Turkish illegal drilling in Cyprus EEZ – 6 October 2019 – 10 January 2020

42. 6 October 2019 – Turkey's drillship *Yavuz* began drilling operations in Block 7 within Cyprus EEZ. The drillship was escorted by two frigates (see Plate 18).<sup>152</sup>
43. 6 October 2019 – Following a phone call between Presidents Trump and Erdogan, the White House released a statement announcing that Turkey would soon commence an operation in Kurdish-controlled northern Syria without any involvement of the US Armed Forces.<sup>153</sup>
44. 9 October 2019 – Turkey launched the Operation Spring of Peace against the Syrian Kurdish YPG-led SDF positions along the Turkish-Syrian border. The operation was carried out by the Turkish Armed Forces with the assistance of the Syrian National Army. The stated goal of the operation was to create a 'safe zone' along the border that would be cleared of YPG/YPJ fighters viewed by Ankara as terrorists and to resettle Syrian refugees currently living in Turkey.<sup>154</sup>
45. 13 October 2019 – President Trump ordered US withdrawal from northern Syria.<sup>155</sup>
46. 17 October 2019 – Mass civil protests against government's corruption erupted in Lebanon, leading to a political crisis and the resignation of Prime Minister Hariri.<sup>156</sup>
47. 22 October 2019 – Russia and Turkey struck a deal in Sochi over the 'safe zone' in northern Syria, securing Turkey's presence in the recently captured 120km-long territory between the towns of Ras al-Ain and Tal Abyad in northern Syria. According to the agreement, the YPG/YPJ were ordered to withdraw 30 km from the Turkish border by 29<sup>th</sup> October and the area would be subsequently supervised by Turkish and Russian joint patrols.<sup>157</sup>
48. 22 October 2019 – Turkey launched its first indigenous submarine program. According to the project, local defence contractors would design, develop and produce the R-class submarines at domestic shipyards by using the technology they received from an ongoing submarine program realized in cooperation with German ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems. The first delivery was expected by 2040.<sup>158</sup>
49. 27 October – The ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was reported to have been killed

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<sup>152</sup> Letter dated 13 November 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General, A/74/549–S/2019/881, Security Council, 15 November 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/74/549>.

<sup>153</sup> 'Statement from the Press Secretary,' White House, 6 October 2019, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-press-secretary-85/>.

<sup>154</sup> 'Turkey Launches Ground Offensive in Northern Syria,' BBC, 9 October 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-49983357>.

<sup>155</sup> 'Trump Orders Withdrawal of U.S. Troops from Northern Syria,' The New York Times, Julian E. Barnes, Eric Schmitt, 13 October 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/13/us/politics/mark-esper-syria-kurds-turkey.html>.

<sup>156</sup> 'Violence Flares in Lebanon as Protesters Tell Their Leaders to Go,' The Guardian, 18 October 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/18/lebanon-brought-to-a-standstill-by-protests-over-economic-crisis>.

<sup>157</sup> 'Turkey Syria Offensive: Erdogan and Putin Strike Deal over Kurds,' BBC, 23 October 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50138121>.

<sup>158</sup> Burak Ege Bekdil, 'Turkey Launches Homemade Submarine Program,' Defense News, 22 October 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2019/10/22/turkey-launches-homemade-submarine-program/>.



during the US Special Forces raid in Syria.<sup>159</sup>

50. 7 November 2019 – The RoC signed its first 25-year natural gas exploitation agreement with the consortium of Shell, Noble Energy and Delek for Aphrodite gas field in Block 12. It projected the revenue of approximately 9.3 billion euros over 18 years. According to the development and production plan, gas from the Aphrodite field would be transferred via a subsea pipeline to the Idku LNG plant in Egypt where it would be liquefied and exported to international markets.<sup>160</sup>
51. 11 November 2019 – The Council of the EU adopted a framework for restrictive measures in response to Turkey's drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean. The framework would make it possible to sanction individuals or entities responsible for or involved in unauthorized drilling activities.<sup>161</sup>
52. 15 November 2019 – Turkish *Fatih* drillship started drilling operations off Karpasia.<sup>162</sup>
53. 19 November 2019 – The Greek company Energean Oil and Gas submitted an application to import and supply natural gas to Cyprus starting in 2021. According to the application, gas would be transported from Israel's Karish North field to a floating production, storage and offloading unit operated by Energean, and from there through a pipeline to Vasilikos in Cyprus. The estimated cost of the project was \$350 million and it would be funded by Energean.<sup>163</sup>
54. 22 November 2019 – Turkish *Hurriyet* Daily reported that Turkey was working on an undersea electricity cable and natural gas pipeline that would connect it to northern Cyprus. The gas pipeline, that would run parallel to the water pipeline, was foreseen to be completed in 2025.<sup>164</sup>
55. 25 November 2019 – During his visit to Doha, Erdogan announced the completion of the second military base in Qatar. The new installation was named after Khalid bin Walid, a

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<sup>159</sup> Michael Safi, Martin Chulov, 'Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi Killed in US Raid, Trump Confirms,' *The Guardian*, 27 October 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/27/abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-isis-leader-killed-us-donald-trump>.

<sup>160</sup> 'Cyprus Signs Deal for Offshore Gas Concession,' *Reuters*, 7 November 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cyprus-energy-gas/cyprus-signs-deal-for-offshore-gas-concession-idUSKBN1XH1ZK>.

<sup>161</sup> 'Turkey's Illegal Drilling Activities in the Eastern Mediterranean: Council Adopts Framework for Sanctions,' European Council, Council of the European Union, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/11/11/turkey-s-illegal-drilling-activities-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-council-adopts-framework-for-sanctions/>.

<sup>162</sup> Evie Andreou, 'Turkey's Latest EEZ Violations 'an Act of Extreme Contempt, Cyprus Says,' *Cyprus Mail*, 15 November 2019, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2019/11/15/turkeys-latest-eez-violations-an-act-of-extreme-contempt-cyprus-says/>.

<sup>163</sup> 'Energean Submits Applications to Import and Supply Natural Gas to Cyprus. Gas from Karish North Will Flow in 2021,' Energean, Press Release, 19 November 2019, <https://www.energean.com/media/3549/20191119-proposal-to-cyprus-eng.pdf>.

<sup>164</sup> Ankara Working on Natural Gas Pipeline between Turkey, Turkish Cyprus: Minister,' *Hurriyet Daily*, 22 November 2019, <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-turkish-cyprus-continue-to-work-on-mutual-energy-projects-148993>.

famous general of Muslim armies in the seventh century, reflecting Turkey's self-styled role as the defender of Muslim interests worldwide. Erdogan also suggested that Qatar could finance his plan to resettle Syrian refugees in Kurdish areas in northern Syria that Turkey had taken over following its October incursion.<sup>165</sup>

56. 27 November 2019 – Libya's Tripoli-based Government of National Accord led by Fayeze al-Serraj signed an agreement on maritime boundaries with Turkey as well as on military and security cooperation. Libya's neighbor Egypt dismissed the deal as 'illegal', and Greece said any such accord would be geographically absurd because it ignored the presence of the Greek island of Crete between the coasts of Turkey and Libya. The rival government in eastern Libya and associated with the Libyan National Army led by Khalifa Haftar also declared the accord illegitimate.<sup>166</sup>
57. 6 December 2019 – Greece expelled Libyan ambassador over Libya's GNA deal with Turkey, reiterating that the deal is legally invalid. It also accused the Tripoli government of 'deceiving' Greece.<sup>167</sup>
58. 13 December 2019 – The RoC signed a landmark deal for the construction of the LNG import facility at Vasilikos. The deal was between Cyprus's Natural Gas Infrastructure Company (Eftaf), a subsidiary of the state natural gas company Defa, and the international joint venture JV China Petroleum Pipeline Engineering Co. Ltd, and Metron SA., with Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding Co Ltd and Wilhelmsen Ship Management Limited. The terminal would include a LNG floating storage and re-gasification unit (FSRU), a floating unit pier, a pier duct and other related infrastructure. The total cost of the project is €290 million, out of which €101 million will be funded by the EU, €43 million by the Electricity Authority of Cyprus, and the by the European Investment Bank or the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.<sup>168</sup>
59. 16 December 2019 – Turkey began delivery of armed surveillance Bayraktar TB2 drones to occupied Cyprus. This followed the 'TRNC' authorities' decision to approve the use of Geçitkale Airport as a base for Turkish unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) to assist Turkish drillships in the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>169</sup>
60. 17 December 2019 – Syria's parliament approved contracts for oil exploration with two Russian companies Mercury LLC and Velada LLC.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Thomas Seibert, 'Turkish Moves Likely to Ratchet up Tensions Between Doha and Gulf Countries,' The Arab Weekly, 26 November 2019, <https://the arabweekly.com/erdogan-broadens-turkeys-military-footprint-qatar>.

<sup>166</sup> Daren Butler, Tuvan Gumrukcu, 'Turkey Signs Maritime Boundaries Deal with Libya amid Exploration Row,' Reuters, 28 November 2019, <https://cutt.ly/Ng7Frzw>.

<sup>167</sup> 'Greece to Expel Libyan Ambassador over Maritime Border MoU,' Ekathimerini, 6 December 2019, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/247268/article/ekathimerini/news/greece-to-expel-libyan-ambassador-over-maritime-border-mou>.

<sup>168</sup> Annette Chrysostomou, 'Government Signs €290m Gas Infrastructure Deal,' Cyprus Mail, 13 December 2019, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2019/12/13/government-signs-e290m-gas-infrastructure-deal/>.

<sup>169</sup> 'First Turkish Drone Arrives in Northern Cyprus,' Daily Sabah, 16 December 2019, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2019/12/16/first-turkish-drone-arrives-in-northern-cyprus>.

<sup>170</sup> 'Syria Hands Oil Exploration Contracts to Two Russian Firms,' Reuters, 17 December 2019, <https://cutt.ly/zg7dVVW>.

61. 19 December 2019 – The al-Sarraj government ratified security agreement with Turkey, opening way for potential military support from Turkey. The deal allowed Turkey to provide military training and equipment at the request of the Libyan government that controls the capital. Turkey's parliament ratified it two day later.<sup>171</sup>
62. 19 December 2019 – The Syrian armed forces and its allies launched the second offensive in north-western Syria called “Dawn of Idlib 2” against Syrian opposition forces including the Turkish-backed SNA, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and other rebel and jihadist groups in Idlib.<sup>172</sup>
63. 20 December 2019 –The East Mediterranean Energy and Partnership bill concerning Greece and Cyprus was signed into law by the US Congress. Among others, the bill encouraged natural gas exploration in the East Mediterranean, lifted the 1987 arms embargo on Cyprus, restricted the sale of F-35 to Turkey, and required a report on Turkish violations in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>173</sup>
64. 22 December 2019 – Turkey launched the Pirireis submarine, the first one of six of the New Type Submarine Project. It was part of a contract signed with German ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems for submarine manufacturing signed in 2009. During the ceremony at the Gölcük Shipyard, Erdogan said a total of six new submarines, one each year, would join the Turkish Naval Forces between 2022 and 2027.<sup>174</sup>
65. 25 December 2019 – Turkey said it planned to establish a naval base in occupied Cyprus in the Famagusta area. According to Turkish pro-government Daily Sabah, a new naval facility in Cyprus would speed up Turkey's hydrocarbon exploration activities around Cyprus.<sup>175</sup>
66. 31 December 2019 – Israel's Leviathan gas field began production.<sup>176</sup>
67. 31 December 2019 – China reported a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause in Wuhan, Hubei Province.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> ‘Libya’s Internationally Recognized Government Ratifies Security Deal with Turkey,’ Middle East Monitor, 19 December 2019, <https://cutt.ly/Qg7dG3D>.

<sup>172</sup> Emma Graham-Harrison, Hussein Akoush, ‘More than 235,000 People Have Fled Idlib Region in Syria, Says UN,’ The Guardian, 27 December 2019, <https://cutt.ly/yg7dPUy>.

<sup>173</sup> ‘Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act of 2019,’ Library of Congress, 20 December 2019, <https://www.congress.gov/bills/116/congress/senate/bills/1102/all-info>.

<sup>174</sup> ‘Turkey to Boost Naval Strength with 6 New Submarines to Go into Service in 2022-2027, Daily Sabah, 22 December 2019, <https://cutt.ly/tg7d4th>.

<sup>175</sup> ‘Turkey Plans to Establish Naval Base in Cyprus,’ Daily Sabah, 25 December 2019, <https://cutt.ly/zg7fqDq>.

<sup>176</sup> ‘Israel’s Leviathan Gas Field Begins Production – Companies,’ Reuters, 31 December 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/israel-natgas-leviathan/israels-leviathan-gas-field-begins-production-companies-idUSL8N2950IA>.

<sup>177</sup> World Health Organisation, ‘Pneumonia of Unknown Cause – China,’ 5 January 2020, <https://www.who.int/csr/don/05-january-2020-pneumonia-of-unkown-cause-china/en/>.



# **CONTRIBUTIONS**



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## ENERGY BRIEF

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Gary Lakes\*

January 2017

### Lebanon's East Mediterranean Gas

On January 4, 2017 Lebanon's new government approved two long-delayed decrees needed to proceed with the stalled 2013 offshore licensing round.

Meeting for its first time since passing a parliamentary vote of confidence in mid-December last year, the government of Saad Hariri passed one decree endorsing the delineation of Lebanon's 10 offshore blocks as devised by the Lebanese Petroleum Authority and another concerning the model licensing agreement and tendering procedure. Both decrees were necessary for Lebanon to set a closure date for receiving bids, but their approval will not lead to the automatic resumption of the round. Having taken this step, the government now seeks the passage of a new petroleum tax law before the licensing round is fully revived.

Lebanon launched a pre-qualification round in February 2013 in which 12 international oil companies – among them ExxonMobil, Chevron and Shell – were selected as operators and another 34 okayed as consortium partners. The round was officially opened in May of that year with a closing date tentatively set for the following November.

In the meantime, the government of Najib Miqati resigned in March 2013 and in its caretaker capacity did not have the authority to approve the decrees. Subsequently, the government formed by Tammam Salam in February 2014 was unable to secure approval due to Lebanon's numerous internal political differences. The situation was complicated further when Michel Suleiman's term as president expired in May 2014.

Political differences prevented parliament from electing a new president until October 2016, when Michel Aoun was elected during the parliament's 29th attempt to hold a quorum. Saad Hariri, son of assassinated former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, shortly thereafter agreed to form a government, his second time as serving as the country's prime minister.

The government's failure to pass the decrees proved frustrating to the qualified bidders and local businesses seeking a role in the new economic sector. Initially there was considerable

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interest in the Lebanon offshore, especially in light of the 35 trillion cubic feet of gas (991 billion cubic meters) that had been discovered offshore Israel, and the 4.5 tcf (127 bcm) Aphrodite discovery offshore Cyprus, but repeated postponements of the closing date left qualified companies believing the emerging Lebanese energy sector would be a non-starter.

During the sixth postponement of the closing date in August 2014, then Energy Minister Arthur Nazarian said the closing date for the round would be six months after whenever the government endorsed the two decrees, effectively suspending the round indefinitely.

But that will not be the case now. The passage of a new petroleum tax law, in which the government will look to secure a 25% tax on profits, will first be reviewed by the cabinet and then presented to the parliament for approval. The cabinet is expected to take three weeks to review the law, but there is no guarantee of quick passage through parliament despite the growing momentum now that the government has made this progress.

Lebanon's new Minister of Energy and Water Cesar Abou Khalil, a member of Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement and former advisor to the two previous energy ministers, said last week after the government approved the decrees that Lebanon would tender five of its 10 blocks when bidding reopened. He did not identify those blocks, but he told a press conference that it is possible that exploration contracts could be signed before the end of this year and that drilling might begin in mid-2018. This could be possible due to the fact that Lebanon has had extensive 2D and 3D seismic work carried out within its 22,000 square kilometer exclusive economic zone (EEZ). According to the Lebanese government, there is a 50% chance that its EEZ contains up to 96 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 865 million barrels of liquids, but at this point this figure is regarded as speculation. Only drilling will tell. Furthermore, it will likely be the mid-2020s before an energy industry is producing gas or liquids, but considering the rate at which neighboring Israel and Cyprus have been moving, Lebanon will not be that far behind.

A source close to the Lebanese Petroleum Authority told this correspondent that a new pre-qualification round is expected to be held in parallel with the reopening of the licensing round. According to the source, those companies already qualified will not have to re-apply for qualification but some that were qualified as partners may wish to apply for operator status. A determination on qualification will be made regarding new participants after their bids have been received.

"Bidding will be carried out over a six months period," the source said, "so the idea is to carry out the pre-qualification evaluation of companies new to the process during the six-month bidding timeframe, or it can be a post-qualification option." He added, "a number of new companies have shown interest."

Lebanese parliamentary elections are due to be held in May, but the source said that the Hariri government is planning to reopen the licensing round before then and that the election should not interfere with the procedure. The post-election government is expected to look very much like the one that has just taken office.

One other problem facing Lebanon's nascent energy sector is a dispute with Israel over an 854-square kilometer wedge of offshore territory along their common maritime border that affects Lebanon Blocks 8, 9 and 10. Israel has awarded no exploration licenses within the disputed area. The US has attempted during the last several years to negotiate a compromise over the

territory, but with no working government or president in office, talks with Lebanon on the issue were essentially put on hold.

Like the passage of the decrees and a new tax law, it would be in Lebanon's best interest to resolve the maritime dispute before the licensing round opens. If Beirut should choose to tender any three of those blocks, it could find a reluctance from participants to bid for the licenses, even though the seismic data shows them to be highly prospective. Given the fact that the two countries technically remain at war, compromise might not come easy. Yet both Lebanon and Israel well know that war is not a healthy environment for emerging, or even established, energy sectors. There are plenty of examples throughout the Middle East and North Africa that prove this.



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## ENERGY BRIEF

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Gary Lakes\*  
February 2017

### **Total's Cyprus Offshore Drilling Program**

According to reliable information, France's Total is expected to drill its first exploration well offshore Cyprus in June or July of this year. Last October, when it signed a service contract to use facilities in Limassol port, the company said it intended to spud the well in April this year. This was some eight months behind Total's original plan.

Due to complications caused by uncertainty over what port on the island Total might use as an onshore logistics base, the Paris-based firm has had to postpone its first well twice. It had originally planned to drill in Block 11 in September 2016, but that plan was interrupted when a license for access to the port in Larnaca was not renewed by the municipal council there. After taking steps to operate out of the island's main port in Limassol and launch the well in April 2017, a service agreement signed with a local oil service company was found to be in violation of the government's contract for management of Limassol port by a consortium headed by Dubai's DP World and including local partners.

The Cypriot government had signed the contract with DP World and partners earlier in the year, but had apparently overlooked a clause that extended full management of the port to the private contractor, including onshore services used during the course of offshore drilling.

The obstacles with working out of Limassol were overcome through negotiations at the end of December, but the length of negotiations have forced Total to delay hiring a rig and finalizing HSE (health, safety, environment) requirements, the source said.

"A rig contract should be awarded by the end of this week. With the rig secured, Total will award all the other contracts necessary for the drilling campaign," the source said, adding: "As one might imagine, it was a challenge to keep the tendering process alive and valid during the three months' interruption."

Total must now compile the HSE requirements, which must be submitted to the various competent authorities in the Cypriot government three months prior to the start of drilling.

\* *Journalist; Director, Energy Program, ERPIC*

Once it gets underway, the well will take about two months to complete, the source said.

Total, which was awarded Blocks 10 and 11 in February 2013, will drill the well, which has been identified by the Cypriot government with the name Onisiforos, in a geological stratum described as a carbonite platform that could be an extension of the geology in which Egypt's giant Zohr gas field was discovered by Eni in August 2015.

The Zohr field, which has a gas reservoir of 30 trillion cubic feet (tcf), lies in the Shorouk Block only 6 kilometers from the Cyprus-Egypt maritime border. Zohr's discovery prompted the Cypriot government to launch its third licensing round early last year and in December it announced the preferred bidders for the three blocks tendered. ExxonMobil and partner Qatar Petroleum were named for Block 10, Eni was awarded Block 8, and a Total/Eni partnership were awarded Block 6.

Although awarded Block 10 in February 2013, Total relinquished the block in early 2015 before Zohr was discovered because it could not find a low-risk target. Total requested from the Cypriot government after the Zohr discovery that it retrieve the block, but Nicosia decided that the block had to be retendered. In the 2016 bidding round, Total bid on Block 10, but lost out to the US/Qatari partnership.

The second half of 2017 promises to be an interesting time in the Cyprus offshore. Total should finish its well by September and Eni is expected to return during the second half of the year to resume a drilling program that it suspended in the autumn of 2014 after it drilled two dry holes in Block 9, for which it was awarded a license, along with Blocks 2 and 3, in January 2013. Should Eni be awarded Block 8, it will have a sizeable portion of exploration area in the eastern region of the Cyprus Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Only four wells have been drilled in the Cyprus EEZ: two dry holes by Eni, and the Aphrodite discovery and appraisal wells by US explorer Noble Energy in Block 12. Discovered in December 2011, the Aphrodite field holds a gas resource estimated at 4.5 trillion cubic feet, but plans to monetize the gas have yet to take shape. Negotiations have been carried out with Egypt to send the gas there by subsea pipeline with the intention of processing it into LNG at Shell's idle Idku facility for export to foreign markets. Talks on this scheme have been underway for some time, but there appears to be little headway. Some analysts think that Aphrodite's future is directly linked to that of the nearby giant Leviathan field in the Israeli offshore.

Separately, EU energy officials and representatives of the energy ministries of Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Israel, heard last week in Brussels that a proposed subsea pipeline from the East Mediterranean to Greece and Italy was technically feasible and economically viable at a cost of \$6 billion.

The project is being promoted by IGI Poseidon [Interconnector-Greece-Italy], a joint venture between Greece's natural gas company DEPA and Italy's Edison. The pipeline, which is targeted for operation in 2025, would transport 16 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas per year from the East Mediterranean to Greece and Italy through a combination of subsea and onshore pipelines stretching some 2,000 kilometers. A member of the IGI Poseidon team has told this correspondent that the company hope to see the pipeline in operation in 2025.

The Brussels presentation, carried out by Edison, was in preparation of a meeting that is due to



take place in Israel in May that will include EU Commissioner for Energy Miguel Arias Canete and the energy ministers of the four countries briefed at EU headquarters. IGI Poseidon argues that the pipeline would be a practical way to export natural gas from the region directly to the European market. It takes into consideration that more gas would need to be discovered in the East Mediterranean in order to supply adequate gas volumes for the pipeline's successful operation.

Phase 1 development of Israeli and Cypriot gas resources is expected to target local regional markets as primary customers. Exports beyond the region would be part of Phase 2 development, except in the case of another major discovery on the scale of Egypt's Zohr field. That is exactly what Total is hoping for.



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## ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION\*

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Stanislav Osadchiy\*\*

28 February 2017

### Russia and Regional Security

**Ambassador Stanislav Osadchiy (S.O):** If you allow me just as an introduction a general comment on the situation in the world. We witness many interesting things in the world, beginning from Brexit in Britain, and then many changes in the United States. With our friend French Ambassador we can discuss who will be the next president of his country, which is difficult to envisage now. Many, many other things happening in the periphery of Europe, for example in Moldova, Bulgaria, and so on and so forth. So the world is changing. And our minister took an initiative in Munich in the last international security conference. He called that a new world is emerging, and particularly emphasized the fact that the historic era that could be called the post-Cold War order has come to an end. Its main result was the complete failure of the Cold War institutions to adapt to new realities. The world has become neither Western-centric, nor safer and more stable place. He stressed that we categorically reject the allegations of those who accuse Russia and the new centers of global influence of attempting to undermine the so-called liberal world order. This global model was programmed for crisis right from the time when this vision of economic and political globalization was conceived primarily as an instrument for ensuring the growth of an elite club of countries and its domination over everyone else. It is clear that this system could not last forever. He expressed his hope that the choice will be made in favor of building a democratic and fair world order, which he called a post-West world order. According to this vision, in such a world each country develops its own sovereignty within the framework of international law and will strive to balance their own national interest with those of their partners with the respect for each country's historical and civilizational identity. In other words, as I understood, it could be presented perhaps as multi-polar world based on international law. One could also add that in this context such an important issue mentioned in particular in foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation and approved by President Putin can be formulated as promoting partnerships across cultures, religions and civilizations. We hope that the new world order, the post-West, will take place now. That's

\* *Transcript of oral presentation*

\*\* *Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Cyprus*

just general words that I wanted to say, and I'm ready to answer your questions. It's much better now I think this way.

**Ambassador Andrestinos Papadopoulos (A.P.):** Mr. Ambassador, allow me a very challenging question. Turkey has been actively involved in the attempts to overthrow the Assad regime and has supported the armed Syrian rebels, including various jihadi groups. Russia has also accused Turkey of financing ISIS through oil smuggling from ISIS-controlled territory. How come that Russia now seems to regard Turkey as part of a solution to the conflict?

**S.O.:** Everyone should expect, of course, question about Turkey on Cyprus. I didn't escape it. (*Laughing*) So, you know (*inaudible*) achievements of process of normalization and developing of relations with Turkey during last year and beginning this year, maybe, one can mention intense dialogue between Moscow and Ankara. One cannot say that Turkey has changed its position concerning situation in Syria, and it became absolutely identical to Russian position. No. We still have quite a lot of differences, divergences. This is the truth. But the most important is the fact that now we have more understanding of situation on spot, in Syria. I mean, securing ceasefire first of all, a work with opposition, promotion of political dialogue with Syrian side. We should not forget that divergences always exist between us and Ankara, but important is to discuss them. And we are looking for this in the interest of the situation in this region. And we share the understanding that it is imperative to eliminate the terrorist threat in Syria as soon as possible, stop the bloodshed, move the settlement process to the political track and provide a solution to the humanitarian problems in Syria. All of that must be done together with Ankara, and also in accordance with the early decisions adopted by International Syria Support Group of which Russia and Turkey are members, and based on the UN Security Council Resolution 2254 which articulated and integrated approach to all aspects of Syrian crisis in the interest of a durable settlement. I would also mention such a format for Syrian talks as Russia-Iran-Turkey format which is the most effective now. What we managed to do in this format in Astana, for example, we put on the table not political figures; we put on the table the fighters which are really in Astana, and this was achievement, which really influenced the situation in Syria. Not political groups, which some days are gathered in Geneva and discussing what can be done politically, but they are living abroad in some countries, rich countries. But we put on the table fighters. And this helped us understand each other. And then, now we have more success in Geneva talks. So it helped the dialogue. Because we found approaches to each other with Turkey. I think that was a good thing. Of course many contradictions with Turkey are still there, we don't find common ground on many questions, but on Syria it is important.

**Questioner 1:** Your Excellency, thank you very much for your kind introduction. And allow me to forward a question that is related to the Kurds in a post-settlement of the Syrian problem, talking about the Kurds in Syria, in particular, but the Kurds in northern Iraq and Turkey itself in general. Position of Russia on this.

**S.O.:** Yes, this is one of the questions on which we have differences with Ankara, of course. As you know, talks under the UN auspices were resumed lately in Geneva. We ensured a constructive and acceptable approach towards the composition of the participants of this

conference through the line-up of the Geneva meeting participants could have been broader, we understand it. Concerning Kurds, I would like to remind that we constantly advocate for implementation of UN Security Council resolutions on this regarding the broader representation of the opposition. This cannot be assured without Kurds. We understand that. We realize that there are certain difficulties in positions, in particular outside players. Nevertheless, we don't think that the present line-up of Geneva talks will be a serious impediment to Syria peace process. There are plenty of far more serious impediments during these talks and the course of these talks. This is a step in the right direction. Of course, at necessary stage it will be impossible to do anything on Syria without the representation of Syrian Kurds. We understand it, we have differences, again I repeat, with Turkey on this subject, we try to influence Ankara on this subject, but when we cooperate in Syria with Turkey, for us the most important thing is the fight against ISIS.

**Ambassador of Germany Nikolai Von Schoepff:** Dear Stanislav, first of all I would like to appreciate our good cooperation between Russia and Germany, especially here in Cyprus. I would like to ask you on the so-called "Plan B". I met recently several times with (*inaudible*) and we both agreed that Cyprus has no "Plan B" since Turkey does not know any autonomy. There would be no autonomy for our Turkish-Cypriot friends in future. I would like to ask you, is there a Russian concept for the so-called "Plan B" in case a solution fails here?

**S.O.:** Thank you Mr. Ambassador. My dear friends, from the time of Gorbachev the most difficult questions are from Germany [*laughter*]. And we always make attempt to understand something you're asking from us, and we always welcome to answer your questions. But you know, sometimes you ask difficult questions. I'm not a Cypriot to answer about "Plan B", I can just say about our position on Cyprus. A problem which is well known, which is a constant. Lately I looked through all the resolutions on Cyprus problem during the last forty two years. A young lady came to our embassy to work, she's had just graduated from the university, she knew nothing about Cyprus problem so I made her to study something. She made a collection of all the resolutions on Cyprus problem for me. And we always were supporting all these resolutions from the beginning, from Varosha issue, the other issues and so on and so forth, implementation, different steps of Cyprus. "Plan B" – I don't know what should be "Plan B", what may be "Plan B". Two Cypriot states? No, we don't want it. You know, from the beginning of these twenty two months of negotiations we were supporting the negotiations. And I had difficulties, because the stance of my minister, the stance of minister of foreign affairs, when I was calling Lavrov and saying we should do this and this, he was answering me: "Get quiet, don't interfere, let the two sides sit quietly and decide". So, we did it. And they didn't decide, unfortunately. But we hope that "Plan B" shouldn't be here in Cyprus. We love Cyprus, we love both sides of Cyprus, and "Plan B" – it's just not a solution. It's a separation as I understand, and it's not good for Cyprus.

**Questioner 2:** A few weeks ago in the Cyprus Weekly you had a comment piece where you stressed Russia's commitment to stability in the Eastern Mediterranean and the role as a member of the P5. And you said at the time that the security of Cyprus should be guaranteed by the UN Security Council - more than by one, two or three parties. And as you say Russia has been a solid supporter of the existing resolutions, every six months on UNFICYP and

Good Offices. And I wonder, I think it costs around 15 million dollars a year to run the UN mission here. If this new Cypriot-led process doesn't produce results despite Mr. Eide's and Ms. Spehar's best efforts, is there a danger that the international community and the Security Council will turn their backs on Cyprus and say, "They had a chance with our best will (inaudible)"?

**S.O.:** Thank you for the question, it's a good question. To my mind, that's why a solution should be. When there is a difficulty, the international community should help overcome the difficulty. And this is the case of Cyprus. Now, to my mind - and I know that my minister supports me on this question - it's a kind of deadlock now, and what should be way out in this exactly situation, the role of the Security Council, the role of the Secretary General of the United Nations should be much higher, should be more active. And we are waiting just from the UN side some concrete steps to resume talks, to make sides to come to the table. And in this respect we think that Guterres should be even more active. Not only Eide, but Guterres himself.

**A.P.:** If I could add a footnote to what has been said, I would like to mention that the Good Offices Mission of the Secretary General are under article 98, when the Security Council orders the Secretary General to follow an event which might lead to breach of the peace or threat to the peace. Now, Dag Hammarskjöld and U Thant, both of them said that under the Good Offices Mission of the UN Secretary General he has to implement, apply the UN resolutions and all the principles in the Charter. So, also in one case which relates to Russia, which was the expenses for UN peace keeping forces ordered by the General Assembly, the International Court of Justice said that when there is a specific order or duty for the Secretary General to implement, he has to follow the resolutions of the UN Security Council. And also, international lawyers of high caliber also underlined the fact that the UN Security Council resolutions and the principles in the Charter should be implemented by the UN Secretary General. So what the ambassador said, that he wants to see more active role by the Secretary General, means that he has to implement these resolutions.

**Questioner 3:** True that the main issue in Cyprus is the Cyprus problem, but I'd prefer to focus on the main issue in the region, which is Syria, of course.

**A.P.:** And Russia and Iran.

**Questioner 3:** I'm not sure if Iran has any role. In Syria, I think it would be misleading to focus the argument on individuals, being this or that individual, and at the same time ignore the core of the problem, which is terrorism and extremism. We have the best example over there, which is Libya. There is no more Gaddafi in Libya. Of course, Gaddafi is very well known for his brutality, and so on. There is no more Gaddafi and everybody knows what is going on in Libya. So the main issue should be extremism, terrorism, and perhaps separatism. One may think that dividing a country could be a solution. For those people the best example could be Sudan - we have the division over there, while we may not forget that it's impossible at the end of the day to divide a nation, a people. For decades Germany tried and successfully reunified the nation. Still the question of the reunification of Korea is on the table. So nobody should forget the main issue, and everything, all the arguments should be continued, proceed

in this line: whether the international community would be able to defeat, diffuse extremism and defeat terrorism or not. As I've mentioned, other developments, other elements, factors should be analyzed under these precepts. Some friend mentioned the question of Turkish role. Ok, one may accept it as a regional country, as a neighboring country. Turkey has certain interest, but invasion is something else. Nobody would be happy with the invasion. Turkey attacked Syria under the pretext of Kurds and the Kurdish issue. That's one of the most critical, I would say - after the main issue, which is terrorism and extremism - that's one of the most critical issues in the region. Especially that nowadays we are witnessing escalation between Erbil and Baghdad on the other side of the coin. Apparently, recently there has been a meeting of Kurdish figures, if not to say leaders, in Moscow. Ambassador, what can you tell us about the meeting?

**S.O.:** It's difficult for me to tell something about the meeting, I have no, unfortunately, information about this. But you are absolutely right on one very important point – that we are fighting terrorism in Syria. We are fighting together and this is our joint goal. We will succeed in it - I am sure for this - and taking to consideration all kinds of populations in Syria, because it is multiethnic, including Kurds, Christians who live there. I visited Syria many times before these events, they lived altogether in peace and prosperity. And what is happening now is terrible. For example, what is happening with Christians in different regions. We are trying to support them also. We are supplying now Aleppo, eastern part of Aleppo is liberated and our convoys of food supplies almost every day are flying to Aleppo, and we are supplying humanitarian aid to Aleppo for people who are in a bad situation. So for us it is important for Syria to go to normal situation without division of Syria, which is very important. And some people are saying that we want division, because either we support or do not support Kurds, and so on. It is not true, Syria is an integral part, is an integral country, and this is important for the Russian Federation. That is why we support Kurds, we support Christians, we support every fight against ISIS in this country.

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** Just a quick follow up on that. Could you tell us a little bit about Russia's view of the safe zone that Turkey has established in Syria? It's something that Turkey has been calling for a number of years, it was hoping that it could get NATO or the West to support that idea. In the end of the day Russia supported that idea. Can you tell us a little bit more?

**S.O.:** It is not only Russia. In his electoral campaign President Trump also supported the idea. We are trying to discuss with Tillerson now what he meant by safety zone in Syria. The answer of Americans was: "We are still discussing and analyzing this subject, we don't have still a result on this safety zone." It is difficult to establish the safety zone when there are so many fights in Syria. We should take into account the situation on the ground in Syria, also. Many players are at work, so to speak, with their ground forces, as well as in Syria's airspace. Our position is that any such initiative regarding Syria's territory should be coordinated with the Syrian government. Otherwise, it will be very difficult to be implemented. I cannot imagine this.

**C.P.:** But it has been established.

**S.O.:** It has been established where? In some parts of Syria.

**C.P.:** At the cost of Kurdish dreams.

**S.O.:** Kurdish dreams, yes. But I think this is quite a temporary thing. The final solution of the Syrian problem will solve this problem also.

**Questioner 4:** What are your views on the prospects of Russia-US relations under the new Trump administration?

**S.O.:** [laughter] Good question. It is not an easy question to answer, because we know what is happening first of all in the United States. That is why it is difficult. As far as we are concerned, we are ready for better relations with the United States. Whether they are ready – we don't know. Trump is Trump. So what he will do, we will see, we are waiting. Of course, there are many possible fields of cooperation with Trump, and he says, first of all, a general approach, that he defends interests of his own country. We defend interests of our own countries. So if these interests coincide or not, we should sit at the table and look at it. But right now I can tell you, these interests coincide with fight with terrorism, first of all. And he says that he is eager to fight terrorism in his electoral campaign. And now the disarmament question, for example, anti-missile stations which have been created in Europe by Americans. What are the results? They created anti-missile stations, we created missile which can overcome the anti-missile stations in Europe, and we demonstrated it regarding Syria. So it is not reasonable to continue in this way. So we should think about a strategic stability in the region, something we could not agree with Obama on this question. We hope that we will do it with Trump. But if he will be allowed to do this? This is a good question to him, not to me.

**C.P.:** Russian diplomacy has lost a very large asset in the US Vitaly Churkin. We'd like to give you our condolences.

**S.O.:** Yes, Vitaly was a good friend of mine, we visited each other, especially when (*inaudible*) he was an ambassador there couple of times. He was just a personality, it's a pity, a big loss. You know that Samantha Power, the former representative to the United Nations, she wrote in her account that "He was really my friend". Even enemies acknowledge that he was a friend. Despite fights on Security Council sessions he was visiting her home, he was a guest of her parents, they were meeting each other, discussing friendly at the table with wine many questions. That shows that he was a real diplomat. We lost another big diplomat, Kadakin in India, for example, lately, who was in India all his life and he was with Indira Gandhi and others a good friend. The loss of my friend in Turkey, ambassador Karlov, which was a terrible thing.

**Costas Melakopides:** Mr. Ambassador, I'm sure you have noticed that during the last few weeks, and particularly the last few days, there is what reporters call an escalation of a verbal war between Ankara and Athens. Given the unquestioned connection between the problem of Cyprus and Greece vis-à-vis Turkey or caused by Turkey, do you think that there is a role here for Moscow to either openly or through quiet diplomacy make a statement, especially now that president Erdogan is visiting Moscow in few days?



**S.O.:** Yes, that is a good question, actually, regarding differences. And Turks (*inaudible*) in the regions of islands, of Greek islands and violation of space and so on, waters, of Greece - we condemn these acts. This behavior which attests to Ankara's complete disregard for international law has already become commonplace, unfortunately, and we have repeatedly said so that we condemn such actions. Unfortunately, Turkey's NATO partners, by the way, take such behavior for granted, don't you think so? Evidently, to satisfy the claims to Greece and the Aegean Sea, the Turks prefer to act provocatively. It was stated officially by the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia they incite tension and threaten the use of force. So we said it openly that Turkey, its blunt behavior coincides in time with its recent migration agreements with the European Union. The impression is that Ankara feels in a position to dictate its position to Europe and openly blackmail it. These are words of our official representative of the ministry of foreign affairs on this subject. Despite that Erdogan comes soon to Moscow, despite that we have a kind of rapprochement lately with Turkey, when we think we should condemn Turkey, we do it. Regarding Turks, we are trying to correct its behavior regarding Greece, we are saying directly what we think. Our relations with Turkey are sometimes up, sometimes down, but the Cyprus problem is still there, and our stand on Cyprus problem is for forty four years without any change despite this volatile relations with Turkey, and we will continue to do this.

**C.P.:** Mr. Ambassador, let me press you a little bit on that. Despite official statements, the West has always - at least with regards to Greece, and Turkey, and Cyprus - has always accused Russia of standing back and in some ways hoping that somehow the relationship within NATO deteriorates. I remember hearing these arguments back in '74. And I think there is still that view in the West, the mistrust of Russian positions, as I said, despite diplomatic statements, that at the end of the day this is to your benefit.

**S.O.:** I don't know whether it is a benefit or not, but I can assure you that we don't pay much attention to relations between Greece and Turkey in NATO. NATO itself for us is something like a closed club and what is happening there has now big result on our bilateral relations with different countries. So our stand is a stand of principles on many questions, and whether it influences the relations of Greece and Turkey inside NATO it doesn't matter for us. Like, for example, when our airplane was shut down, lately, Erdogan went immediately to NATO. What was result? No result, because it was natural not to put inside this provocation inside NATO countries. So we hope that logic prevails in NATO, and NATO has its own way, and we have our own way in international relations.

**Aris Petasis:** I've been meaning to ask you this question for a long time. So I'm very happy that we have the opportunity to ask it today. As long as I remember, the Cyprus problem is basically rotating on the same axis for the last forty two years. It doesn't change. Nothing has changed in substance. And basically, it is the Turkish surrender terms that had been set in 1974 for us, for the Republic of Cyprus, and the Kissinger principles of 1976. And if anyone is interested in reading on the Kissinger principles, for the original text from the British archives and the American archives, all he has to do is to go to the library and get the most recent book by William Mallinson called "Kissinger and the invasion of Cyprus," and he will see all the documentation. I'm not hopeful that anything can change on the Cyprus problem,

because it's the same players, the same issues, the same surrender terms, the same Kissinger principles. Most of us here in Cyprus would hope that this balance can change if other actors outside the West are also involved in the process. And when I say actors, I mean the UN Security Council members, particularly Russia, maybe Germany on behalf of the European Union, maybe a little bit China. But really, the fulcrum, the centerpiece has to be Russia, if there is going to be any change. So is Russia willing to take a more active role in the negotiations, in the whole peace process, and in supporting the Republic of Cyprus? Thank you.

**S.O.:** First of all, I think we support the Republic of Cyprus. And to what extent to support from our side the Republic of Cyprus depends not only on us – it depends mostly on you, on your leadership. My friend (*inaudible*) from France, we were discussing this matter many times what can we do for Cyprus, we were sitting the three of us together and speaking on this subject. But the answer was always one: what does your side want? I spoke with the president, I thought, we are the members of the P5, Germany is always eager to cooperate with us. Do you want us to be more? The president would always say, “Yes, we want”. But the Turkish side doesn’t want. And actually I went to... And Mr. Eide was there, and my friend from Germany was there... And we spoke with Akinci – he doesn’t want. So what would you suggest in this situation for us? To come to the table and to say we are here? At the table there are not only Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, somebody else maybe doesn’t want our participation. And if we are more persistent on this subject, the other side will be more persistent also on the rejecting us. So we were discussing with Lavrov who is very well aware of the Cyprus problem, we were discussing with him many times this: how active should Russia be now? And we had an impression always, you know, that maybe this time the two sides will sit quietly and solve the problem. “They are so close,” Lavrov says, “They are so close, let them do it!” That was two weeks ago, of course, not now. This was the answer. And maybe it was a correct answer because we were hoping on both sides to overcome the difficulties, to find the solution. So many good things were done during these twenty two months, so many difficult questions were found the solution to these questions. And we were hoping that everything will happen. It didn’t. But it’s a pity. That is why I told you that maybe now there will be an idea, but there should be an idea on your part to invite us to participate more actively. We are always ready, we are saying to the leadership that we are ready. But say to us what you need.

**C.P.:** Mr. Ambassador, what do you think about Turkish premier’s post-referendum position, assuming that he wins the referendum? How forthcoming will he be on the Syrian issue, and how forthcoming will he be on the Cyprus issue?

**S.O.:** I didn’t discuss it till now with my minister, with my ministry. I can say only my own estimation, and my view. You know, Erdogan has certain goals in Turkey. To achieve these goals he needs support of all kinds of groups of population. These include all kinds of groups of populations: ultras, lefts, and so on. So he will do everything for this, and after the 1<sup>st</sup> of April the situation will not be changed, to my mind. It will not be changed, because he will still have to support of the population for going further and further. So what do we expect? We can expect only one thing: that reasonable forces, let us say, outside Turkey, and the

reasonable forces in the world will support more persistently Cyprus negotiations, including Russia, if you want it, and including other countries, together with Guterres, and then make Turkey to go on with the negotiations and to make the process continue.

**C.P.:** What if he is unsuccessful with the referendum? The position will be the same?

**S.O.:** Of course the same, you know it better.

**Questioner 5:** There is still a question that bothers me very much. What are Russia or other powers in the whole confrontation talking about Cyprus... As soon as they realize, unless you did not realize, that the United Nations not adhering at its own principles and charter are not impartial during the Cyprus negotiations? Is it a Cyprus problem, or is it a universal problem?

**S.O.:** Difficult question for a local ambassador to answer such a global question [laughter].

**C.P.:** Mr. Eide is not here.

**S.O.:** Mr. Eide is not here, some other ambassadors also. So, to tell the truth, you know, it shouldn't be like that. United Nations was created just for the purpose of establishing peace and security in the countries and should follow. And we should influence the United Nations and the Secretary General of the United Nations, to fulfill its obligations, that's all I can say. Because otherwise it is not a proper world. And United Nations needs a reform which has been discussed for many years, and no results. It should be done in a proper way. I don't know the answer to this question to tell the truth.

**Questioner 5:** Mr. Ambassador, a new ceasefire agreement has been signed in Ukraine and announced recently. What are the prospects for peace in Ukraine after this ceasefire agreement?

**S.O.:** Yes, you know, it's exactly three years after Maidan took place, and the government of Turchynov and Poroshenko came to power. We hope they will stabilize the situation, but on the contrary the situation is getting worse and worse, lately. They are bombing, of course, Donetsk and Lugansk respond to this bombing, then the (*inaudible*) says that both sides are to blame. But who starts all this? Lately there was a deterioration of the situation when the forces of Poroshenko captured the water supply station in Donetsk. So it means that population is even without water now. And they were bombing *exactly* the water station, not somewhere else. They ruined the water station. What to do for us? The people in Donetsk and Lugansk are hoping for our support. And yesterday big convoy of trucks... Sixty convoys, you can imagine, sixty convoys during this year to Donetsk and Lugansk which supply just food, and they are in blockade. And the authorities of Ukraine are doing everything to aggravate this blockade. We are supplying foods, we are supplying materials to these regions and only with our help they are still alive. So how can we say about peace process, about ceasefire, when even human lives are not taken into consideration? It's terrible what is going on. It was not an attack from Donetsk fighters, it was not attack from Lugansk fighters, which wanted to capture more land - no. There are no Russian troops, I can assure you, in these regions, the simple people are fighting. But they are already fighters and not just simple people during these three years. We are trying to help them. And lately our president made a decision to

recognize the passports of Lugansk and Donetsk. Why? Because from the west border with Ukraine Lugansk and Donetsk is cut off. They cannot supply coal and get money, they cannot survive. They have coal, the only thing Donetsk has - coal. Miners live there. They were supplying to Kiev coal, and they were getting money for this, they were living on this. But ultras established blockade on the border, now they cannot do even this with Kiev. Kiev makes everything possible to make the situation in these regions even worse. How can we speak about the Minsk agreements implementation by Kiev side when they are doing such things. So Putin recognized the documents of Lugansk and Donetsk issued by... Because even people who are living in the Donetsk and Lugansk, they cannot go to Kiev, they are under blockade. For example, young generation, sixteen, seventeen years old, young generation, they cannot get to Kiev and to get passport, any document. How to live without any document in Donetsk and Lugansk for these peoples? So the situation is terrible, that is why we recognized the documents of Lugansk and Donetsk as a temporary step, to help these people just to survive.

**Questioner 6:** Mr. Ambassador, for forty three years we tried to solve the Cyprus problem within NATO. We have America, we have England, and we have Turkey trying to impose on us the surrender terms. We haven't accepted that. We look at our European friends that we joined some years ago, and we see that they look the other way. The Turks come in to Aegean and they don't even have the guts to tell them get out. They say: "Respect your neighbor." Will this sinister situation and cynical leave us in a limbo? You said, if we knock, you will answer. It could be our last hope?

**S.O.:** Yes, we understand the situation you are in. As I told, we are ready to help but in the framework of P5. Political steps, anything we can undertake. We were doing it for forty two years, you know our support. Now we are being criticized for the year 2004, but it was your request when we blocked the Annan Plan at the Security Council.

**Questioner 6:** (*inaudible*) regarding Makarios Drousiotis.

**S.O.:** [*laughter*] Drousiotis is Drousiotis, let it be on his part. What he is doing, what he is thinking, you know, I answered, partially, last Sunday in Fileleftheros to all these publications. I think that it's just imaginations of Drousiotis, because actually we were always at the side of Cyprus during all these years. I remember, and you remember that in '74 what was the mood of the population here. The main slogan was "NATO, ΣΙΑ, Προδοσία" [NATO, CIA, Betrayal - ed.]. Once Koenig, the former ambassador, in my presence was asked by some Cypriot, "Why an American ambassador was killed here after the invasion?" The answer of Koenig, "It was just a mistake." But mistake, can you imagine, huge demonstration in front of the American embassy and the American ambassador is killed. It was not a mistake. Black colonels were supported we know by whom, and so on and so forth. That is why when Drousiotis writes that the Soviet Union was not... First of all, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July took place the coup d'état, on the 17<sup>th</sup> there was a statement of the Soviet government - one day passed only. And it was the strict condemnation of the coup d'état in Cyprus. On the 20<sup>th</sup> invasion took place. The Ambassador of Turkey came to the ministry of foreign affairs of the Soviet Union, and said: "You know, we are going to restore the status quo on Cyprus." It was on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July. He came to the ministry and said: "We are going to restore, you will see tomorrow that everything on Cyprus

will be ok.” These are the words written down in our archives about the Turkish ambassador who came to see our deputy foreign minister those times. We waited for the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the escalation, captured more land, and the 23<sup>rd</sup> it was a statement of the Soviet government again: the intervention is not the right thing to solve the problem. So, after that, how Drousiotis can write such things that we were thinking for some days what to do and not to do, and neglecting, absolutely neglecting the role of United States those times and British role. So, I think you remember what happened, we remember what happened, we were always helping you. And I am saying again and again, we are ready to do it again, with others in P5 and with the United Nations to push on Guterres to do what you think is proper to do for us. But the initiative should be on your part.

**Questioner 6:** Mr. Ambassador, do you think that within the framework of the United Nations the Permanent 5 could initiate a procedure towards the UN Secretary General to provoke a kind of an invitation to participate in the Geneva conference on Cyprus, dealing, especially, with the international aspects of the Cyprus problem?

**S.O.:** It has to do with what previously was sad. Actually, we approached Guterres on this subject already. We didn’t get a clear answer. We said that we didn’t understand why Geneva was taking place in such format. We said it already to Guterres. Guterres said, “You know the difficulties which exist between the two parties and we don’t want to complicate more the situation.” So we already did it but got no clear answer.

**Ambassador of France René Troccaz:** Thank you for organizing this meeting, and thank you for what you have said which is very useful and clear. I have a small comment and a question. My comment is just to say that France - it has been mentioned for Russia, for your country, but I will speak, of course, for France - was on the side of the Republic of Cyprus not for six months but for forty two years, I would say, concretely. If you want me to precise, you just have to see, but I’m sure you know, all of you, that concerning - I take this example - weapons supply to the Republic of Cyprus - we are maybe two-three countries in the world who did that - France for forty two years was in that. This is one thing. At the United Nations we always support the positions of the Cypriot Republic. And there is one additional now factor, which of course we share with other partners of the European Union, is that with the Republic of Cyprus, we are - like Spain, Ireland, Bulgaria, Germany and many others - members of the same group of the European Union. Of course, Russia is not in this club. But this is something additional. So, one word: France was and is and will be - I’m sure of that - supporting the Republic of Cyprus, that’s very important. It’s very important because also it gives the position of France regarding the peace process in Cyprus. My question to the colleague and friend Russian Ambassador is: in case of a non-solution in Cyprus, does Russia see any threat for the long-term consequences of such a solution, not only for Cyprus, but for the area?

**S.O.:** But it is natural, of course there is such a danger. We’re advocating the solution, we are in favor of this solution, and just because that we are in favor for the security of this region, like France is. Syria is so close and we need peace here. We need stability on the island. That is why we condemn dangerous situation on the Greek islands, and we don’t want here any dangerous situation. It’s quite natural we are in favor, and if the solution will not take place -

“Plan B”, “Plan B”, what kind of a “Plan B”? It is not clear till now. But it means that any “Plan B” means aggravation of the situation. We would like to escape it. So I repeat that, I think you, us and other countries, we are ready to get together and to do something together if it is necessary. And why nobody is asking me about the Turkish Stream, for example? [laughter] Greeks, every Greek is asking me about the Turkish Stream, what will be the future.

**A.P.:** Mr. Ambassador, in this connection, as you know, there was a criticism that Russia doesn't want any solution to the Cyprus problem because this will - if a solution is there - the door will open for the hydrocarbons from the Eastern Mediterranean to go through Turkey to Europe, so this will damage the prospect of Russia-Turkey cooperation through the South Stream.

**S.O.:** Yes, we have plans, of course we started to construct Turkish Stream, these are our plans. I think it will be implemented, but it is... You know, the project proceeds in two lines of Turkish Stream. One line of Turkish Stream goes directly to Turkey and will stay there. Another line will go till the border with Greece and then it's up to European Union what to do with this. In any case, we have Blue Stream now in Turkey, the capacity of which is full already. Turks, they say they need another stream, so we are going to construct. It is bilateral, first of all, action between us. And if European Union will be eager to do this through Turkey, not through Bulgaria like it was envisaged before - the South Stream - we are there, we will be there already. This is our plans. If not, we are not disappointed very much, because Turkey needs more gas, economy is quite stable. Now the streams in Asia... Unfortunately, the Ambassador of China is not here, he can confirm it that they need a lot of gas. So we have prospects. We have (*inaudible*) who want to buy our gas, we sell it. There is no political.... It's just money.

**C.P.:** Mr. Ambassador, on that note...

**S.O.:** Optimistic.

**C.P.:**.... on the money note thank you very much for joining us this evening. Hope to see you next time.

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## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION\*

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Jovita Vassallo\*\*

17 March 2017

### **The Effects of Brexit on International Business**

Brexit. What is happening in the world? Wasn't expected, but typically with the British attitude we are where we are, so we have to move forward.

You've got the European Union. It's effectively, it's almost like a peace treaty. It came together after the war with an economic and political goal. But part of that goal was in order to get countries integrated moving forward as one, so that you have a harmonized state, effectively. It's currently made up of twenty eight member states, nineteen of which have adopted the euro. It's a fascinating achievement. You have the four movements: you have the movements of goods, services, people and capital. And probably the best achievement of Europe is the free movement.

So why leave? We've heard a lot of negative press. But there are reasons to leave as well. You have to remember that whatever everyone's opinion is, England, the UK is an island. It has a limited infrastructure. And our infrastructure is currently breaking down. Our NHS, our national health service, is at breaking point because we have a lot more people coming in and using these facilities. For example, in the UK you pay national insurance from the day you start working in order to gain access to the NHS. We have a lot of people now coming into the country, they haven't paid the national insurance but they have rights to use certain services. Then you have the fact that we can't nationalize freedom of movement, so when people come into the UK, a lot, the vast majority, actually, are coming to London. That's where you have your Square Mile, so you have a lot of the banks, the expertise, the legal field. So house prices in London have gone up. For example, a few years ago a studio apartment - so it's just one room - in Chelsea went for 1 million pounds. So what's happening is your doctors, your nurses, your school teachers, your bin men - they can't live in the center of London. So they have to move out. Now, this isn't necessarily a European problem. We've got some excellent European workers coming in, they're working in the banking facility, they are supporting our economy. So, there's a lot of propaganda because we have people from all over the world coming in. Certainly in London - Russian money, Chinese money, Middle Eastern money. So it's an issue that we've got. Now, part of the way there the government haven't looked at it so well: we need to give some assistance on housing, there are different right-to-buy schemes, for example. The

\* *Transcript of oral presentation*

\*\* *Partner, Head of Dispute Resolution, Fletcher Day International Business*

thing, again, with freedom of movement, so with a right-to-buy scheme any of the lower paid workers coming in from the EU have access to that scheme. So again, the center of London's becoming saturated. So there were reasons to leave. There's a lot of reasons, certainly, to stay.

Then we have this rather ludicrous situation of the meaningful vote. I say ludicrous, because the meaningful vote was effectively comprised of two things. One was telling all the EU nationals now in England, in the UK, that you have a right to stay and that nothing will change. And the other was that parliament - so our supreme legislative body - will be able to comment on the agreement once it's come back. And I say this is an unusual position for two reasons. One, who of us here would go into a negotiation and say, "Right, we're going to have this negotiation in one week's time. One of my key cards, one of my best positions is the fact that we have EU citizens here, they want to stay. But don't worry, before I even start the negotiation I'm going to guarantee those rights. But you are the twenty seven nations, you can do whatever you want with the expats. We don't care, we're not asking for reciprocation." So that's why I'm saying it's an unusual situation to be asked to give your hand away, or give one of your key cards away. At the end of the day, we all want to work together, we all want to trade together, there will be an agreement reached. There could be a form of work permit, it could be a form of visa, but we're not just suddenly going to say, "Okay, all Europeans get out." It's not the way it's going to be and it's been very heightened in the press that this could happen. I'm guessing the other point is the fact that we've got Theresa May and we've got our Brexit secretary who will be doing the best deal they can. Now, you have to remember it's not that the UK can say, "We want this!" - done. We have twenty seven national governments to have to agree. This is going to be a tough negotiation. To get your best deal and then to come back to parliament, and for parliament to say, "No, go back and do better." You're arguing against twenty seven other people, negotiating with twenty seven other people, so a difficult situation to be in. And luckily, only last week parliament did actually say, "No, we approve the bill as it is, go ahead and trigger."

The single market. This, as I say, is one of the biggest achievements within Europe. It has zero tariffs throughout the twenty eight countries allowing us to trade freely. It does impose certain restrictions to trade with non-EU members, so there has to be agreement. They've got the customs union - it's arguable, I guess, that the EU is the largest customs union - you have the customs union, and this is basically, it's a bilateral trade agreement, or two or more trade agreements that you can have within that union, so you can negotiate your own deals. Again, there are restrictions outside. So you agree your common import tax, tariff, but then you agree a common external tariff. And I think the best way to understand the common external tariff is to understand what will happen if it didn't exist, which is something relevant to Brexit, because this could well happen. So an example. Say, if you have Japanese sake imported into the UK at a zero tariff. But to import Japanese sake into Europe, say, into France, it's a 10% tariff, what can happen when you don't have the common external tariff is the Japanese can import to England, the British can then export to France - zero tariffs. This is police and there is something called the rules of origin tax. So when you are seem to be trying to do this and to not pay your taxes, the rules of origin tax apply and you then get slapped on with a misbehavior tax, effectively. Now, the problem is policing that - it's very, very difficult to police. So we've got restrictions here - import and export agreements. You can only trade within your areas. I'm saying, I mean the single market, what happens is Europe has to agree deals outside of the European Union. There's fifty two trade agreements, it's not like Europe only deals with itself. I mean, look at the Canada treaty that's just been signed. Trade will continue.



You've got different scenarios. You've probably heard the terms "hard Brexit" and "soft Brexit". "Hard Brexit" is coming out of a single market. 'Soft Brexit' is effectively adopting something like, say, the Norwegian system, where they're not a member of the EU, but they've allowed freedom of movement. And having freedom of movement, they're allowed full access to that single market. Then you have something like the Swiss model. That's more a collection of agreements which allows a limited access to the single market. But there is all this talk about staying in the single market for the UK. No, we can't. The starting point has to be: we are out of the single market. What we then want to do is try and negotiate a deal where we have a limited access to that market. And I say that because one of the key reasons that the vote, as limited as it was, was to exit the European Union, and it's because a lot of people want control of the borders again. So having that in mind, you cannot then just simply stay in the single market. We will have to come out and we will have to negotiate a deal then to have access.

Could we be a member, say, of the customs union and not the single market? Well, yes. Look at Turkey. Turkey is not in the EU, it's a member of the customs union. But again, would we want to do that? Well, if we're coming out of the single market and trying to negotiate a deal, remember there's these restrictions on having deals outside of your other customs union and single market. So why would we come out of the single market, possibly with limited access, hopefully with limited access, and go into the customs union? We wouldn't. So I think that's a little misleading. I don't think we will do one and not the other.

There is this term "crash out". Well, we're saying no deal is better than a bad deal. Now, the idea that if we cannot reach a deal, we simply leave. What happens then? Well, the European treaties will no longer apply, and the World Trade Organization will automatically kick in. So we'll be subject to certain taxes, import taxes, VAT border taxes.

Now, I think it's quite interesting to have a look at some of the key member states that are negotiating. So, for example Germany, the strongest economy in the EU. Now, one of the largest importers of German cars is the UK. Do the German government really want to lose that trade? Possibly not. Also, we've got the banks - some of the banks will now go to Frankfurt. I think that's inevitable. I think some of the European banks will move to Frankfurt. I think some of the US banks will probably get a stronger presence in the UK. But it was quite interesting to hear Theresa May's little threat in her January speech that we can always, worst case scenario, change our economic model. And what she's saying is, "Here, we have a 20% tax regime. If you keep saying we don't have a position, if you keep saying that we're coming in on a weak trade off, well, we can always change our tax regime. So if we're crashing out, we can become a tax haven, we can reduce our taxes." Again, UK don't want that, Europe doesn't want that. So, when people are saying you don't have a position, we actually do. We're not coming from the strongest position, but we certainly have a lot to play with. And Europe doesn't want to stop trading with the UK and vice versa. The UK's an island, we import a lot of goods.

As we can see, there are other options. We know about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Okay, we wouldn't be able to enter that, but there again, you guys have (inaudible) Trump. Well done by the way. He's not a fan of the TTIP. So is it going to go ahead anyway? We don't know. We all probably remember that slightly sickening picture of Trump and May sort of skipping across the lawn and holding hands. There is a deal, this deal has to be done with the external world. There is life after the EU. And as you know, we've got this new Canadian agreement now which has just been signed. So I think Canada, I think outside of the US the largest trade deals are done with Europe. So it's all very positive move. So there are

things to be done. Personally, I think, as I say, we're going to start with the 'hard Brexit', and then we negotiate back in, to an extent. I think we're going to be able to then broker deals, externally. So there's positive things. I think we'll end up with some sort of a hybrid agreement. I don't believe we're going to crash out, and I don't believe there's going to be a strict 'hard Brexit'. I think we're going to be somewhere in the middle.

Turning on to, for example, the court system. Now, the European courts - we will regain our sovereignty. So we will now repeal the human rights bill. We will repeal, alter some of the statutes that are currently in place, we could amend them, we could (inaudible) them or we could keep them. But England is going to now regain control (inaudible) back to the English courts under the laws of England and Wales.

The European Court of Human Rights, common to popular belief, this is not a European institution. It is outside, so the European Court of Human Rights still stands. What will happen - we're already committed to repealing the human rights bill. But that doesn't mean that England's going to go Wild West. We're going to then put in a new bill - it's the British Rights Bill. There's all these questions about whether or not Brexit can be a force majeure clause, whether or not it means that contracts can be frustrated. At the moment, to my knowledge there's been no case law on this. And I also think it's too soon. I think at this point, if you argue frustration of contract, I think it wouldn't fly, it would be a reactive situation. So for example, if companies are going into business, one company, say, in France, is saying, "Hold on, Brexit, I now want to get out of that contract," we will say, "Well, no. In that case we will have to litigate, you will have to defend, because it's not going to happen. We don't believe Brexit is enough to frustrate." How it will get interesting is when the deal is done and we all know what we're looking at. At that point could someone question whether or not the deal creates a situation where you could frustrate contract and therefore we (inaudible). We don't know. Let's hope not, because once that is litigated, if it's a negative result for the English legal system or the UK, then it would open the floodgates, increasing a lot of work for us litigators, but not, you know, in the long run being beneficial for the country.

Works and permits. I've touched on this. Again, no one is just suddenly going to be kicked out. This is scaremongering. Trade will continue, the City Square Mile will continue. We've got strong economy, we have strong banking structures, our legal system is respected throughout the world. There is still positivity here. We'll simply do something like, say, permits or maybe nationalize. So, instead of everyone coming into London, we might be able to say, "There is a quota here, we need assistance from the doctors, say, in some of our northern cities." We might be able to move the workers around a little more freely.

GDP and the economy. Well, I'd say the pound's probably dropped about 10%. I believe it will stay that level to the end of negotiations. It could fluctuate and certainly depending on the result - we'll see where it goes at that point. But at the moment, that's actually quite good for our exports. Because as our pound drops, it becomes cheaper for people outside of the UK to buy our goods. So our exports are actually increasing. On the converse side it's actually getting more expensive while our pound is lower to import, and that has a knock-on effect of course on inflation. And if the inflation rises, the cost of lending will rise. As the cost of lending rises and Brexit negotiations continue, regulatory issues could get higher. At that point, are those costs pass on to the customers? We are yet to see.

Tourism. Well, apologize to the Spanish, but tourism is probably going to continue. I think the

English have ruined (inaudible), quite a lot of coastal soil, but we will continue. As I say, England's an island, we travel a lot, we bring money with us into the economies. And no one's just going to ban the English. As much as some of you may well like to, it shouldn't realistically happen.

Areas of law. That is an entire topic on its own. Just touching very, very briefly. You have, for example, corporate law. You have to remember that probably over 50% of our laws somehow incorporate European regulations and directives. So we're already entrenched, it's already in our legal system. So, areas of law. Well, corporate law, there's probably going to be some devolution, but not necessarily that much. We are quite an established system, an established system with a lot of European influence in that. You will see an effect on competition law, because you have to remember, the competition law that arises in the place of business as opposed to the place of domicile. So that in itself will automatically change. The same with your IP - your intellectual property. That will affect enforcement and procedures.

Litigation. This is a bit of a minefield at the moment. How is it going to go - we don't know. What we could do, we might be able to sign up, say, to the Lugano Convention on our own rights. And the Lugano Convention - that covers jurisdiction. So how we all interact throughout the (inaudible) assisting each other in seizing jurisdiction, because obviously you cannot have two cases running on the same facts in two different jurisdictions. So we're going to have to do something. There is the Rome Convention. Now, the Rome Convention covers what law will govern specific contract. We'll have to work out a way in order to ensure this harmonization. But continuing, the English legal system has been going for generations. It's an established system. The English courts are trusted. The English judiciary is trusted. Now, there could be some protests. There could just be certain companies saying, "No, you voted Brexit, we're going to put in a German law clause or a French law clause" - two very strong countries in the legal arena. That could happen for a while. But also we have so much litigation going on for Russia, the Abramovich-Berezovsky type of cases, the Aeroflot cases. We're increasingly being used because we are seen as a just system. And even if there is a knock-on effect on the litigation on the claims being issued within the High Court, we could always turn to arbitration. Our arbitration is governed by the New York Convention. There's a lot more countries in the New York Convention than there is in the EU. So our arbitration actually may rise, because once again London is an arbitration seat.

State pensions. Well, state pensions are pretty much enshrined in our English law, because it's a nationalized system. However, for the English it won't change, but the question is expats - what will happen to our expats? We don't know. It's all yet to be discussed, to be decided.

Property. Well, land law itself, again, land law is governed by English law. The prices - it could be seen to be changed in the long run, because if some of the larger institutions move out, that will free up some of the, you know, the large buildings in, say, Canary Wharf in the City. So it could have an effect on the commercial side of it. The residential side, certainly in London, it's not going anywhere. There is an overkill. We need more housing in London. At the higher end the prices are coming down - so you know, two million plus - but a lower end, it's still business as usual.

Just a few points on imports. So it's not all bad. We import much more than we export, and we're key market for many of the member states.

Banking. We're one of the most banking-friendly countries. Taxation of bonuses are generous compared to the other countries. 20% corporation tax is favorable, although not if you compare us with Cyprus. But in general, we're quite a favorable country. But again, remember that underlying threat of change in the economic structure.

Labor costs. Again, competitive. And the language: English is the business language. And there's been calls to change it. It's not happening, it's going to remain English. It follows on there that your English law and your English jurisdiction clauses may still survive, once everything has calmed down.

So the pros and cons. It isn't all gloom and doom. We can see all the articles here, Australia, Commonwealth countries, certainly looking at Australia, New Zealand. It creates so many opportunities. So, as I say, it's not just a negative connotation. It's tiring to constantly hear this sort of negative "What have you done, you've got no negotiating position." We still do have a negotiating position. Don't put the British out yet, we're still in there. Mexico, Canada opening up to treaties. There are different ways we can go. We are going to regain our sovereignty, we're going to regain control of our borders, and we get to set our own tariffs. With that comes risk, of course it does. We've been a member of the EU since January '73. All of a sudden, we're coming out. We risk a drop in trade, we risk an increase in tariffs. How will it go? I think it'll all come good at the end, but it's going to be certainly a period of unrest.

Re-join? I would say no. What happens when you come out of the European Union, if you want to then go back in, firstly, you've got to have the other twenty seven nations plus - because the European Union will survive without the British, there is no doubt - they will all have to agree a) to let us back in, and then b) we have to take the euro, because this is the new rule if you come into the European Union. Scotland I don't think have figured this out yet. But if you want to come back into the European Union, you accept the euro. UK is not going to do that. Scotland is not going to do that. I think someone actually needs to tell Scotland that this is a position that you're going to have to account for if you do trigger.

And I think that's pretty much where we are. I hope I've given you a bit more of a positive feel about the Brexit than is general. Thank you.

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## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION\*

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Klearchos A. Kyriakides\*\*

17 March 2017

### **Anti-Money Laundering Principles and the Legal Profession: Some Lessons of History from England**

Thank you for that warm introduction and welcome everybody to Cyprus. Going back to Brexit, I have to declare an interest, because I am an expat. I'm a British citizen who's returned to the island of the roots of my parents. So I'm in a rather curious position here with loyalties both in the United Kingdom and here in Cyprus.

I've been asked to bring a bit of academic analysis to today's proceedings. I am rusty I have to admit, I've been out of practice for ten years. I have had the privilege for the past ten years of teaching the lawyers of the future, namely undergraduate and postgraduate law students. I've also had the privilege over the years of teaching practicing solicitors, lawyers in England through continuing professional development. And I've kept in touch with the profession through my local Law Society in England - the West London Law Society. So even though I'm out of practice, I've still kept in touch with practice, albeit at a distance.

Over the next twenty minutes or I just want to draw your attention to some of the things that have gone wrong with solicitors in England. I don't want to say very much about barristers because they, as many of you know, operate as a second branch of the legal profession in England. By and large, they don't handle clients' money, they don't do the type of office work that a solicitor does face to face with the client. So I don't really want to say very much about barristers. My remarks will be limited to the adverse experiences of a few solicitors who found themselves in breach of either the criminal law, or the principles of professional conduct, and therefore found themselves either in prison having been convicted of serious criminal offences, or struck off, either because of those serious criminal offenses or for other reasons.

Let me make one point clear at the outset. Having taught the money-laundering law for the best part of a decade, the best anti-money laundering principles are to be found in Aesop's fables. Those ancient Greek principles that Aesop and other ancient Greek writers articulated are as relevant to anti-money laundering and indeed to legal practice generally as they were back in antiquity. And I say that conscious of the fact that Zeno of Citium was from Citium,

*\* Transcript of oral presentation*

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which is within fifty kilometers or so of where we are today. He was one of the great Cypriot and ancient Greek philosophers of all time. And as I go through my analysis of anti-money laundering principles, I'll be referring to some of these ancient Greek principles, because where solicitors have gone wrong is they fail to comply with basic principles they should have learnt when they were at kindergarten or at primary school. I'll give you three or four examples. "Do everything in moderation, do nothing in excess." "Do not be greedy." "Be vigilant." And to go back to Aesop, "Look before you leap." So I'm going to refer to some more complicated principles as we go on, but the ancient Greek basic principles are as valid to any anti-money laundering as anything else.

I've put up a disclaimer like the gentleman earlier on today. I'm not giving legal advice. This is an academic analysis and I'm not holding myself out as being in practice as a solicitor. I'm an academic now, legal academic.

Let me just draw your attention to some eye-watering statistics that the British government has done. The British government loves washing its dirty linen in public and here we have a good example. The National Crime Agency, which is an agency of the British state, has stated that the best available international estimate is that money-laundering is an equivalent to some 2.7% of global GDP, or 1.6 trillion US dollars by 2009 statistics. The National Crime Agency assesses that many hundreds of billions of pounds - that's not millions of pounds with an "m", that's billions of pounds with the "b" - many hundreds of billions of pounds of international criminal money is laundered through UK banks, including their subsidiaries, each year. Not each decade, each year. So this is obviously a serious problem, and if we believe ministers, this is a high priority of the British government. And indeed, if you read the materials published by the National Crime Agency and other British governmental publications, one finds that the scale of the laundering of criminal proceeds is a strategic threat both to the United Kingdom's economy and its reputation.

Now, in this context the British government departments - and I'm referring here to the Treasury and the Home Office in particular - have alleged that some solicitors in private practice are "complicit professionals" - their expression. Now, we know from convicted solicitors who've been brought before the criminal courts, or solicitors who've been found guilty of professional misconduct through the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal, that some solicitors have indeed engaged in serious criminal misconduct. But what is interesting about what the Home Office and Treasury have told us is that they're keeping an eye on firms of solicitors through intelligence gathering activities. That comes across quite clearly, for example from the "UK national risk assessment of money laundering and terrorist financing" publication of October 2015. Now, we've all seen what happened with Hillary Clinton and John Podesta, and other people in America who, it appears, have had their emails or telephones broken into. And we need to just bear in mind that there is an ever-present risk of our telephones and our computers being hacked into, either by malevolent foreign entities or private individuals, but it could be - and I'm not saying this is happening - but it could be that we're under investigation by the authority. So we all need to be aware that this is the world in which we are living in. The professional enablers under the scrutiny of the governmental authorities include members of the legal profession, for obvious reasons. In England the solicitors are the ones who handle client money through client account and they're involved in the acquisition of property, or the acquisition of shares, or the acquisition of other assets on behalf of their clients. So money - and it may be hundreds of thousands of pounds or hundreds of millions of pounds - comes in

and out of solicitors' clients accounts. And that is one reason why, at least in England, crooks, fraudsters, imposters, other devious people might gravitate towards a firm of solicitors.

I'm not sure how the client account system operates in other jurisdictions, but in England the client account is one of the main dangers for firms of solicitors. And one of the principles I'm mentioning now – and I'll mention it perhaps later to – is all firms of solicitors and all lawyers generally should keep a close eye on their accounts – their bank accounts, whether their client account or office account – both in terms of risks that may exist within the firm, but also in terms of risks which may arise from beyond the firm. That's a very important lesson of recent history.

Before I just whip through some lessons of history in numerical format, let me just make the obvious point that money laundering doesn't happen by accident. There needs to be an underlying crime. And I'm addressing an international business forum, and it's obvious that the grave risks that business lawyers need to be aware of are proceeds of bribery or payments that might be interpreted as bribes by the authorities or by a court, the proceeds of false accounting, either accounting that's false as made by practicing lawyer on behalf of the client or in his own right, there's proceeds of fraud, proceeds of tax evasion, and proceeds of theft. And we just need to be aware even though we may be business lawyers – I'm not a business lawyer – but all lawyers, including business lawyers, need to be aware of these areas of the criminal law and how these areas of criminal law can come into existence and come into play.

Let me just go through eight basic principles of anti-money laundering law in no particular order. Number one: Most obviously, know the law and uphold it or at least try your utmost to uphold it. This is where lawyers get into trouble because they are either complicit in a criminal activity, or – and this is probably where the risk lies with honest, decent lawyers – they are reckless in terms of their understanding of the law. And I've chosen the word 'reckless' because it appears in a number of court cases and the judges have come down hard on lawyers who have been reckless, either in terms of the use or misuse of their clients account, or what they have done or not done in court, or how they have dealt or not dealt with their clients. And I think the message to take back to your firms is: keep an eye on your staff, keep an eye on your trainees – especially your trainees – bring them up in the right way, and teach them the importance of not being reckless. Because that's something that has caught out many otherwise good and honorable lawyers.

I won't go through the details of our code of conduct, but we are under a duty as solicitors to uphold the rule of law and the proper administration of justice. That's our number one mandatory principle, and that flows from our status as officers of the court. It's often overlooked that solicitors are not just the trusted advisors of their client; they are officers of the court with corresponding duties to the court, and they are also subject, at least in England, to the inherent jurisdiction of the court. There was a case where a solicitor was found guilty, his sentence was reduced on appeal. The case is called 'Crown and Griffiths', and the Court of Appeal emphasized in the context of the proceeds of crime act and anti-money laundering law generally the following: "We do not leave the case without underlining to all professional people involved in the handling of money and with an involvement in financial transactions the absolute obligation to observe scrupulously the terms of this legislation and the inevitable penalty that will follow failure so to do."

The courts have set a very, very high standard for lawyers to adopt and this is the sort of expectation that the judges have in relation to lawyers. Which is why these anti-money laundering principles are so important, because many - not all - but many of the solicitors who have found themselves before the criminal courts have breached these basic principles. And as you can see, most of them are not particularly complicated. Ancient Greek principle "Know yourself", and in that context know your firm's procedures, know your colleagues, and of course act with integrity, which is our number two mandatory principle in England. It's required of lawyers practicing in England that they should discharge their professional duties with integrity, probity and complete trustworthiness. That is a common law principle delivered by Sir Thomas Bingham, the then Master of the Rolls, later Lord Bingham, the great judge. That is the test that is used by the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal whenever a solicitor is brought before the tribunal on charges of misconduct based on failing to act with integrity. That is the test. It is an exceptionally austere test, but it's the one that we have in England. It applies to barristers and it's being used in relation to other professionals as well. Again, pass on those of you to whom this test applies, I'm talking about the English solicitors who may be here, lawyers in Cyprus and other common law jurisdictions. If that's the test in your jurisdiction, bring it to the attention of your trainees and your staff, because that is what you will be judged against in the event - and hopefully you won't ever have to face this - but if you ever are, at least in England or another common law jurisdiction that applies that test - that is the test. And it's not as well-known as it should be. I'm rather surprised by that when I meet some solicitors, I should say. And it's important to note, there's a recent High Court case *Scott and Solicitors' Regulation Authority* - it's part of a line of cases which made clear that lacking integrity can arise without necessarily being dishonest. So acting without integrity is normally associated with acting without honesty, in other words acting dishonestly. But we have here a relatively recent case which has underlined that you can act without integrity if you have acted recklessly. For example, as in this case, acting recklessly as to the use of various client accounts.

Money laundering principle three: Know your client, and take appropriate action if the duty to the client conflicts with the duty to the court. This is really very much aimed at the litigators who may be in this room. It's an exceptionally difficult balancing act to strike: acting in the best interest of your client, which of course it is a supreme duty, but you also have another supreme duty which is the duty to the court, and more specifically, for example, the duty not to knowingly mislead the court. And again, solicitors have found themselves in difficulty both in relation to criminal type cases and in other cases, civil cases, where these two duties have either not been properly balanced, or the solicitor has chosen or found himself giving weight to the duty to the client as against the duty to the court. There's a very important judgment - you may be interested in reading it - *Brett and Solicitors Regulation Authority*. It's not a money-laundering case, but it's a case in which the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, Lord Thomas, took the opportunity to set out the common law principles that any solicitor or barrister needs to bear in mind if they found themselves in an ethical dilemma, where they're caught between their duty of disclosure to the court on the one hand, and their duty of confidentiality to the client on the other. It's an exceptionally difficult balancing act, and it's one that you need to be fully aware of if you go into court, at least as an English solicitor or an English barrister, so read that judgment. It's a very clear guidance from the Lord Chief Justice on that very difficult balancing act.

Anti-money laundering principle four: Know your case. Very simple principle. Also, try to find out as much as possible about the other side. Be vigilant and be alive to any red flags or



warning signs. In England we've had a number of cases where fake - that's a Donald Trump's word, isn't it - fake solicitors or fake professionals have portrayed themselves as something that they're not - either solicitors or estate agents or something else. But we've had cases of fake solicitors. They've even gone as far, in England at least, to set up fake internet websites, fake identities online. We've even had - I haven't got time to go into the case I have in mind - but we've had some really interesting cases of impostor solicitors. So one of the things that I encourage my students and at least English solicitors to do, is make absolutely certain, as far as you can be certain, that the solicitor on the other side is a solicitor, he's regulated as a solicitor, he's registered on the Law Society database of solicitors, his firm exists, his firm hasn't been shut down, the solicitor that you're dealing with is in no way associated with criminality. You have to do these checks in England now, because we've had this proliferation of fake solicitors. And by the same token we have this - you've all received them - fake emails from people who are pretending to offer you lots of money, but these fraudsters and fake professionals are becoming increasingly sophisticated. So just be on your guard for that.

As regard to "know your client", the guidance that's been issued by the Law Society is summarized on that page. You can find the full version on the Law Society website. It's obviously primarily intended to English solicitors, but it might be of benefit. Can I just say "English solicitors" encompasses England and Wales, so I just don't upset anybody [*Laughter*]. I probably have, it's too late. Apologies. We've got used to say "England", but it's, yes, it should really be "England and Wales". Well, the guidance from the Law Society which the courts take into account in appropriate cases, is quite clear: be on your guard for secretive clients - and this is easier said than done but that's what they say - be on your guard for secretive clients, unusual instructions, instructions outside your area of expertise, changing instructions, unusual retainers. Be on your guard for an illegitimate use of the client account and, of course, the source of funds, beneficial ownership, third party payments and so on. And also, of course, be on your guard for suspect territories, which of course is a phrase open to interpretation.

Anti-money laundering principle five - I only have eight, so I'm towards the end - anti-money laundering principle five. This is the one where solicitors probably don't follow and they get into trouble: Follow your instincts, but don't follow the crowd, especially if the crowd is acting improperly. Now, if I was taught when I was an eighteen-year-old undergraduate and then when I was a postgraduate law student, I was told the same thing. If something smells wrong, it's probably rotten. If something feels wrong, it probably is wrong. The basic principles of instinct, in many cases that have gone to court, the solicitors have just not followed. They've either turned a blind eye, buried their head in the sand, smelt money at the end of the case and they've just gone along with something they shouldn't, and they found themselves ensnared either in a money-laundering transaction, or a scam of some sort. And then once they find themselves in this hole, instead of trying to clamor themselves out, they carry on digging. And I haven't got time to show you the case, but there's a case where the solicitor not only breached the anti-money laundering law and thus committed criminal offences, but he breached the perverting the course of justice criminal laws and obstructing police investigation laws, and so he just ended up being struck off. So just follow your instincts and don't follow the crowd. And if you find yourself in a hole, seek guidance. But try not to find yourself in the hole in the first place.

And this is quite important and interesting case: Serious Organised Crime Agency and Pelekanos. Full statement is a full statement regardless of the prevalence of the practice of

making of such statements. You know, again - some of us have - we've been browbeaten by other people but everyone does this. And as I say to my students, just because everybody's doing something improperly doesn't mean you have to do it improperly. That's why the banks suffered the way that they did in the United Kingdom in the late 2000s, that's one reason why the Cypriot banks suffered so much in 2013, because everybody was following the crowd. And you just have to exercise moral courage. It's an Aristotelian principle: exercise moral courage at appropriate moments.

Anti-money laundering principle six follows on from what I've just said. Because of anti-money laundering laws association with criminal law, we forget that any breach of anti-money laundering law can also have knock-on implications beyond criminal law. And we have a succession of cases which have had a sort of a civil dimension, even though they may in parallel have had or have not had a criminal law dimension. So this is a good example. The judge said, this case began as one about drug trafficking, it's ended up as one about mortgage fraud. But what this specific case was on was civil recovery law, civil recovery law under the relevant legislation, and the judge here warned us (this is of course English law): "As the law stands, any person, however otherwise law abiding, may be the subject of a civil recovery order if he makes a deliberately false statement in a mortgage application form. It is important that this be more widely known, and it is desirable that mortgage providers spell out this possible consequence of a misstatement in their application forms." So just be on your guard. So many solicitors have got themselves into trouble because they've made a full statement or a misleading statement, and sometimes it's because they made the statement on behalf of the client. So often you've got to check as much as you can, but there are very simple "cover your back" mechanisms if you have to make a representation on behalf of the client and you can't verify whether what they've said is true. So I understand from my client that X has happened or my client instructs me to pass on the following information. Don't make an assertion of fact if you are not in a position to know whether the fact is indeed a fact or whether it's a falsehood. And it's just an obvious point, but it's one that's often overlooked.

And that slide just summarizes my point for me: don't just think of anti-money laundering law in terms of criminal law. It can have civil law implications. We have cases in England where the courts have taken into account compliance with anti-money laundering law in a negligence claim or in a breach of contract claim, or a breach of trust claim. I've mentioned civil recovery proceedings. If you're an individual solicitor and employed solicitor in a firm, you can face internal employment law disciplinary proceedings, and of course then we have the risk of professional misconduct disciplinary proceedings externally.

Penultimate anti-money laundering principle: Know what to do and know what not to do if an ethical dilemma or other problem arises. Compliance officers exist to help firms deal with ethical dilemmas, the professional code of conduct provides a measure of guidance. The Law Society in England has a professional ethics helpline; the SRA might be able to give some guidance as well. But in difficult circumstances - I'm paraphrasing the Lord Chief Justice here - in difficult circumstances take independent advice. In England there are specialist firms of solicitors or specialist chambers that specialize in this area of law to try and help solicitors who are on the verge of tipping into a hole. So you want to maybe seek advice before you enter the hole. Don't enter the hole and then seek advice as to how to come out of it. Again, it's easier said than done, but it's a useful principle nonetheless.

And finally, I would teach my students the importance of having sweep-up clauses in contracts or leases or other documents in case you've left anything out. Here's a sweep up anti-money laundering principle eight: Act in line with all of the other anti-money laundering principles, of which there are too many for me to mention. An obvious one is stay up-to-date with relevant developments. You may or may not be registered in England, but it's well worth contemplating registering to receive free updates from the Law Society. I receive several a week. They have a number of free ones. There are others you have to pay for. If you go to the website of the Law Society - I think it's [LawSociety.org.uk](http://LawSociety.org.uk) - you can sign up for updates which they'll send to you electronically. And you can keep up to date with various developments. Here's an example I found the other day from the Home Office. The UK and Nigeria had signed the memorandum of understanding on criminal asset return. So if you have any clients from Nigeria, you obviously need to be aware of any bilateral agreements of that nature. I'm not going to go through that case, but I will finish with that. The Law Society has a lot of very helpful material to help solicitors, and this may or may not be of relevance to you outside England. They've also published a number of books freely available on the Internet. They're all accessible through the Law Society website. The National Crime Agency has published useful guidance as has the Solicitors Regulation Authority. ACAMS have published some useful guidance.

Maybe I'll finish with Zeno of Citium: "The reason why we have two ears and only one mouth is that we may listen the more and talk the less." At which point I'd better sit down. Thank you



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## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION\*

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Gary Lakes\*\*

17 March 2017

### **Cyprus, Israel, Lebanon, Egypt – Energy Developments in the East Mediterranean**

Good morning, welcome to Cyprus. I'm going to talk this morning about the offshore industry in the East Med. And it's really quite interesting for those of us who are involved in it and who have been paying attention to it for about - let me see - since about 2010.

This map shows the geopolitical layout of the East Mediterranean. There are some contentious issues, some controversial matters. And I'll explain: the map is based on the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS – ed.). Now, not everybody agrees with that, and I'll get into that a little bit later. You'll see how. This is the Egyptian offshore, these are the blocks that have been awarded. Most of Egypt's production comes around here - some of the Western Desert. This is a slice of offshore territory that's been allocated to the Palestinian Authority - it's right off the coast of Gaza. This is the Israeli offshore, and I'll mention that Israel is not a signatory country to the UNCLOS agreement. This is the Lebanese offshore - more about them later - but one of the areas of dispute is this area here between Israel and Lebanon. Also, here's the Syrian offshore - another area of dispute. Syria's not, I believe, a signatory to the convention. You see the Turkish coastline here. Now, the reason it's jagged like this is because of a little island here called Kastellorizo, and in accordance with the parameters of the convention that entitles Greece to this offshore area. And I'll have some more to say about that. This is, of course, the Cyprus offshore, and these are the blocks that have been designated so far. I'm sure you've learned that this area... There's a political problem here in Cyprus called the Cyprus problem - it seems to be pretty well known. But there have been no designations, no delineation of blocks here in that area.

So I'll just give you a rundown, a summary of what's going on in the region, what the developments have been. I'm sure we'll have plenty of time for questions later.

This area is the Levant Basin and that's the Levantine Basin right here. This is where most of the attention is centered on. So in the Levant Basin, according to the US government geological survey, there's 122 trillion cubic feet to be found in the area. There would be like 1.7 billion

\* *Transcript of oral presentation*

\*\* *Journalist; Director, Energy Program, ERPIC*

barrels of oil - none has been discovered yet. So far, the amount of gas that's been discovered in the area is 38 trillion cubic feet, and that's about 1 trillion cubic meters. Now, most of this has been found in Israel by a Houston-based company called Noble Energy. And they're also responsible for the discovery of the Aphrodite field offshore Cyprus.

Like I said, all significant discoveries in the East Med have been made by Noble Energy, but that hopefully will change in that next year or so. Israel's Tamar field is on-stream. It came on-stream in March 2013 and it supplies Israel's domestic market. That's the only field in the East Med, apart from what exists in Egypt, that's actually producing right now. The Leviathan partners, which include Noble and Israel's Delek and Israel's Ratio, they agreed on a final investment decision to develop the Leviathan field just in January. The Leviathan field was discovered in December 2010 and it has taken this long for things to get to the point where they can actually make a final decision to develop. It's been a very long and winding road, there are a lot of, you know, different things that have happened. And it's quite an interesting story, but I'll not get into all of that.

Cyprus is awaiting some commercial deals, preferably with Egypt, to develop the Aphrodite field. And just in February Lebanon re-launched its licensing round. It originally started in 2013. And because there were a lot of political problems in Lebanon, as I'm sure you all know, there was no government, there was no president, and that changed at the end of last year when the parliament, did elect a president and a new cabinet was formed.

With the gas that they found so far they believe that the East Mediterranean gas will supply the regional market. So that's like Israel, Egypt, there's now a plan to go and take Israeli gas to Jordan - there's a lot of debate about this - and some possibility of gas to Turkey, but also even building a pipeline to Greece. None of this stuff is decided, most of it is theoretical. There's pros and cons on both sides, people are arguing their position. It could become an important source of supply for European gas which is interested in developing its energy security, essentially to move away from its dependence on Russia. But developing depends on the markets and the politics, the financing. As I said just a while ago, there're pipelines under consideration to Greece and Turkey, and LNG is a possibility if there's significant quantities discovered. LNG is liquefied natural gas and, you know, it's a convenient way to move it about the world, it isn't tied to a pipeline. But it'd be about 2020-2022 before things start happening. And the entire region needs more exploration and drilling.

This coming summer Total, which has several blocks now offshore Cyprus, will drill a well in the southern Cypriot waters. And it's significant, because what really has people excited here is the Zohr discovery. It was made in August 2015 with 30 trillion cubic feet of gas. It came as a complete surprise to the region and it got everybody pretty excited. And it prompted the Cypriot government to launch its third licensing round. Which it's just finalized today, I understand, it's finally signed contracts with ExxonMobil and Eni and Total for more blocks. In the Cyprus offshore there's the Aphrodite field which is in Block 12, discovered by Noble Energy. Blocks 2, 3 and 9 have gone from the second licensing round to Eni-Kogas which is the Korean gas company. Blocks 10 and 11 went to Total. Eni drilled two dry holes in Block 9 and suspended its drilling program in 2014. It said it wanted to recalibrate its seismic. It did that and then it went off to Egypt and discovered the Zohr field. So that's another reason why everybody's sort of excited about what might come in the months ahead. Like as I said, Total will start drilling this summer. There has been a farm in - Noble and Delek sold some shares to BG, which has since been taken over by Shell in Egypt. So they're now part of the Aphrodite

field consortium. Like I said, with the Zohr discovery - it's only six miles from Cyprus maritime borders. And there's about the Cyprus licensing round, and also Total drilling. Total has been rewarded Block 6, Eni awarded Block 8, ExxonMobil has been awarded Block 10. The island is needing a new operations base with all the companies that are going to be coming here.

This will show you how the Cyprus offshore's divided up now based on that. Right down here is the Aphrodite field, and right along here is where Total and Eni - which has recently formed a new partnership, just two weeks ago - we'll be drilling this summer. Now, the Zohr field, the Egyptian Zohr field is right around there. Like I said, ExxonMobil in partnership with Qatar Petroleum has been awarded Block 10. This is a new award, just finalized today, this one was just finalized today too. Eni was awarded to 2, 3 and 9 two years ago - that's where they drilled the dry holes - and hopefully they'll be coming back here for the second half of this year.

This is what's got everybody excited. This is a geological layout. This is what they call a carbonite build-up. And before, you know, all the discoveries have been in sandstone. And this is the Zohr discovery here, and when that happened it really perked people up because things have been pretty quiet here. And now with 30 trillion cubic feet so close to the Cypriot area people are optimistic. And you know, looking forward to hopefully having something to happen at long last.

The Israeli offshore. There have been six good discoveries. Tamar is operating. There were regulatory issues that held things up for a quite a long time, but a framework agreement was arranged last year and so now that's why things like the Leviathan field are moving ahead. They would invest about 375 billion in phase 1 and produce about 1.2 billion cubic feet of gas a day. The Tamar gas will go to Jordan, beginning sometime in 2019. And then there's the details about letters of intent. There's a lot of talk between Israel and Turkey about putting a pipeline to Turkey through Cypriot waters. And this is quite a contentious issue.

Israel's launched a licensing round for twenty four blocks and it'll close in the summer this year. And there is this continuing dispute with the territory of Lebanon. The squares in green here are the blocks that Israel's made available for bidding. This area down here - in these fields Noble discovered gas in 2000 I think, and it was a very small supply. It's now depleted. Israel used to get gas from Egypt. And then when the revolution happened in Egypt 2011, and 2013 Egypt had stopped exporting gas. So it was quite a rush to get gas from Tamar, and so that gas was piped down here to this infrastructure and then taken onshore that way. This is right about where the Aphrodite field is and a part of it goes over into the Yishai block in Israel. And Israel and Cyprus are negotiating what they call a unitization agreement, which would basically agree on how the resources from that field would be divided once that goes into development.

This, again, is the area that's disputed with Lebanon. Nothing's been awarded there and I don't think it will be, on the Israeli side at least, until the matter is resolved. The Americans have been involved and try to negotiate for several years, so, you know, we'll see. It's just another one of these ongoing disputes between Israel and the Lebanese. So like I said, the Lebanon's licensing round reopened in 2013. There was a pre-qualification round for companies in 2013. Forty six companies were pre-qualified and the major international oil companies expressed interest in bidding in this, in the Lebanese offshore. It's just an indication of what they think the area may hold. So at that time they offered 10 blocks, there was a lot of disputes amongst the Lebanese as to whether that was the right thing to do or not. So at the end of 2016, there was a new president, a new government, there were two decrees that needed to be passed.

They've done that, they've made advances. The new round of bidding closes in September and it's only for these five blocks: 2, 4, 8, 9 and 10. But 8, 9 and 10 are in the disputed area with Israel, and there's sort of questions like, well, you know, you've had a lot of blocks to offer, why did you do that? Here's 8, 9 and 10 right here. This is the disputed area that shows you the Israeli blocks and where the Lebanese think that the Syrian Lebanese median line should be. This disputed area is about 854 square kilometers, I think.

There's the Cyprus EEZ. Cyprus and Lebanon have signed an agreement, but the Lebanese haven't ratified it yet. They dispute the points as to which Cyprus entered into its delineation agreement. And then, of course, there's this issue with Syria which can be expected to go on for a considerable period of time, considering the fact that Syria is in the state that it's in.

Here, again, you see the offshore zones as determined by the UNCLOS agreement. There has been a lot of discussion about... The main thing about developing these gas fields is finding a market for it and because it's a very expensive investment. Years ago there was quite a lot of talk about bringing Leviathan gas to a little place called Vasilikos and to develop LNG facilities there and export the gas that way. That hasn't developed. It may develop in time as more significant discoveries are made. But, you know, there are diplomatic discussions going on between Turkey and now there's a political rapprochement. But if you follow the press on Turkey, there's been quite a lot of turmoil there since this summer when there was an attempted coup. The idea would be to take a pipeline around Lebanon's and Syria's zones and put it through the Cypriot waters. But because the dispute between Turkey and Cyprus, that's quite an argument in itself. And frankly - my opinion - I don't think that's really going to happen. I think there's more and more talk these days about actually referring back to these LNG projects that would put an LNG project here in Cyprus. But again, that's a long shot and it all depends on how much gas is discovered.

What's being discussed now is taking gas from Leviathan over to the Aphrodite field and then sending it down here, where there are two LNG plants here that are idle, because Egypt is basically trying to meet its own domestic demand. And to do that, it has stopped exports by pipeline to Jordan, it stopped the exports to Israel, it added a cut-off gas supplies to these two LNG plants. And the one is owned by SHELL, which is now a partner in Aphrodite, and the other is owned by ENI which, as the map showed, has a lot of blocks offshore. ENI, which is the Italian company, is the major investor in the Cyprus offshore. Just to let you know, Egypt was exporting gas through what was called the Arab Gas Pipeline, and then there was also another pipeline that went offshore and bypassed the Gaza Strip. But there was an Arab Gas Pipeline that ran up this way up through Syria and there was a spur line here going into Lebanon. And then it almost made it to Turkey - it stopped just short of little town called Kilis there before being completed and feeding into the Turkish network. But that's not the situation anymore. So it'll be some while before anything like that can be considered again.

Okay, so we're back to this map and this is how the layout of the East Med may look. But then when we go to here: now this is essentially Turkey's view of the East Med. And Turkey is not signatory to the UNCLOS, and so it claims this area here, these areas, like this, as part of its exclusive economic zone. It says that this is part of Turkey's natural continental shelf. And as you can see, it's cutting into the blocks that Cyprus has delineated here. There's Block 6 right there which was just awarded to Eni and Total today. And this area here, this has essentially been awarded to Turkish petroleum company TPAO by the Turkish Cypriot administration. And this was done in 2013. It was basically when a lot of developments were happening here



with the south, and it was basically for the Turkish Cypriots to state that they feel that they have a claim to the natural sources in Cyprus as well. Now, the Cypriot government itself hasn't disputed this. What's being disputed, really, is the Turkish continuing occupation of northern Cyprus, and the fact that there's no peace settlement. But the Cypriot government stated repeatedly that the resources of the island are basically shared by all its citizens, and I think that once you see when and if there is a settlement - and hopefully there will be at some point in history - you'll see that this map could change significantly. Where Turkey will stand and all that with regard to the offshore, it's really unclear. It's impossible to say. I think that ultimately there needs to be some sort of... They're going to have to negotiate. The Greeks, the Cypriots, and the Turks are going to have to negotiate about this offshore area too.

This is just another display of the area that was awarded by the Turkish Cypriot administration. It doesn't really come down to Aphrodite, it doesn't hit that. The map was designed that way so as not to really contradict that which was a fact, but anywhere else. And very frequently when there's like seismic exploration being conducted, you will have the Turkish army intercede and warn ships to get out of Turkish waters, and this sort of thing. But the international companies operating here have shown quite a bit of resolve as far as the recognition of the Cypriot government's standing on this position, and that's certainly to be commended, I think everybody appreciates that.

Okay, we'll talk about some proposed export routes. There is a pipeline from Israel, Cyprus to Crete, Greece and Italy that might come into... The proposed date of operation is like 2025. This is a long shot, it really is. It's going to depend on a lot of things. It would have a capacity to transport 6 billion cubic meters a year. And this sort of says it. It was 1300 kilometers offshore pipeline, some of that would be in depths of like nearly three kilometers. The company that's proposing this, IGI Poseidon - which is a joint venture between Greece's national gas company and Italy's Edison - have run estimates that say that they could do this for like 5.7 billion. I was at a conference earlier this week and there were some experts there who were saying that the cost would have to be at least probably twice that amount. The project has, however, received political and economic support from the EU to conduct the studies, and I think it's been declared a project of common interest. But like I said, significant gas discoveries would be required in the East Med to make that happen. Now, this is how that pipeline would run. It would go from the Israeli and connect with the Cypriot offshore, then across to Crete, up to the Greek mainland, past Patras up here, and across the Adriatic, and then up into Central Europe this way. That's one heck of a pipeline, and so we'll just have to see. But I think it's going to be close to the middle of the next decade before people really begin to look at that.

So some stuff about Egypt. I think we all know that Egypt has really been through... I guess it was, apart from Tunisia, more or less the start of the Arab Spring and the revolution. I guess you could say it's been through quite a number of twists and turns. It had quite a number of energy shortages after 2011. Government subsidies damaged the energy market seriously there. It owed at one point more than 6 billion to companies who were supplying energy to the government, because they were paying well below market prices. They owed 6 billion, they still owe about 3 to 3.5 billion of those companies, and they're doing what they can to pay it off. They actually had to start importing LNG in 2015, and there are two what they call floating storage and regasification units anchored at Ain Sokhna on the Red Sea. So, as I said earlier, there are two LNG plants there, onshore plants that are standing idle, because they don't have any domestic supply. And that's where Leviathan or Aphrodite might come in. Last year they

made new price arrangements with foreign companies and boosted in some cases what they would pay for gas up to 5.80 dollars per million BTU. Egypt has natural gas resources of 100 trillion cubic feet which... I mean, that's a lot and lot of gas, but they don't really know the geology of the country really, there's not been enough exploration work. And also they've been, you know, there've been reluctance to actually get involved there and invest because of the financial circumstances that the companies can face. Like I said, it needs more exploration work.

The Zohr gas field has been fast-tracked with Eni developing that and will bring gas on-stream by the end of this year to feed into the domestic grid. And by 2019, it will be producing about 2.7 billion cubic feet a day, and that will translate to about 27 billion cubic meters a year, which is quite a bit of gas. But then Egypt is going to need a lot of gas. There's a lot of energy growth to take place down there, there's a lot of people in Egypt who still don't even have electricity. So that whole market is going to have to be developed. So by 2020 they expect a lot, you know... There are other projects, about a dozen other projects going on down there and Egypt has really tried to come around with producing energy. So by the early 2020s they hope to be exporting again and to put an end to the LNG imports. But we'll, you know, we'll see.

This is just a map of how the Egyptian offshore is laid out, where the companies are working, where they're producing. There's a lot of work in the Western Desert here and also in the Eastern Desert. The Nile Delta is very prolific and the Nile offshore here. And like I was saying, the Zohr gas discovery was here and that did get everybody quite excited, especially the Egyptian government, which is desperate for the gas. There's another layout and I'll show you. There's the Gaza Marine area and there's the Israeli offshore, and it shows Aphrodite and relationship to Zohr, and these are... Basically, Shell and BP – British Petroleum- that are operating there. There's a lot of other companies involved there, some are large, some are not that big, but there is a lot of work taking place there in Egypt.

I'll tell you a little bit about the Southern Gas Corridor and the TurkStream. When the Soviet Union collapsed, it opened up the Caspian Basin, the countries like Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan were open for Western exploration and development. So they discovered quite a bit of gas offshore Azerbaijan in the early... Well, about 2000s, and even before. So they decided to take this gas and transport it to Europe. And they came up with this concept of the Southern Gas Corridor, which would basically take Caspian gas, and also, I guess, it might develop from Turkmenistan - which again, that's another long shot, or from the Middle East, from Iraq, Iran and transport it to Europe that way. So the Shah Deniz field offshore Azerbaijan, it will be producing I think by 2019... It will add another 16 billion cubic meters. I think now it's producing about 6 or 8, and it'll bring it up to about 22-24 billion cubic meters a year. So the entire project of the corridor is going to be like 45 billion dollars.

There's also plan by Russia. Now, Russia planned to sort of compete with the Southern Corridor by laying another pipeline across the Black Sea and they called it South Stream, but they wouldn't comply with EU regulations. And so they had to scrap it. And they came up with a new plan with Turkey which is called TurkStream. And the whole thing, the idea of South Stream and TurkStream was to bypass the Ukrainian pipeline system. So TurkStream's quite an ambitious project too, but it's not going to get this big for quite a length of time. Huge amount of gas would be exported through it. It would land in Turkey and then presumably go to Greece and then to Europe. But, you know, there's going to be complications with this as well. I think they'll lay the first line to Turkey and then we'll see. The first line to Turkey will be about 15

billion cubic meters and that will cut out the pipeline that's currently coming to Turkey through Ukraine and Eastern Europe. That's the Southern Corridor there. Here's Azerbaijan, Baku, offshore Baku, that's the Shah Deniz field. It would travel all this way through an existing pipeline that was built to Turkey. I think it opened in 2006 and it does supply gas to Turkey, and also to Georgia. But the idea is to bring it all the way across here, across northern Greece through what's called the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline, and into southern Italy. This is the proposed TurkStream route. Previously the South Stream would have landed here in Bulgaria, but there were complications with EU, as I mentioned. There's an existing pipeline from Russia to Turkey called Blue Stream. I think it's got about 8 billion cubic meters capacity annually. But this is a new proposal that Turkey and Russia are working on here in western Turkey, and then going to Greece. There is a lot of projects here. I mean, you know, you can really go on about it for those of us who are into this stuff. It's kind of interesting.

But there's a project called the Euro-Asia Interconnector and it's an electricity cable. And it's designed to connect Israel's, Cyprus' and the Greek electricity systems. So once it gets in Europe, then, you know, it would go on to other countries as well. Egypt has recently been included in this project and the capacity would be like 2,000 megawatts. But it would follow the same route as that East Med gas pipeline. So with Egypt you've got like 1600 kilometers of cable and it would touch on all these countries, including Egypt. They think that it would cost under 4 billion dollars and be complete by 2022. And it also has political and financial support from the EU. Now, this would be the route that it would follow from Israel to Cyprus, and it would cross here to... This is Crete right there. It's a bit difficult to make out. And then went across here to Greece. This is the Peloponnese here, if you can make that out.

But one thing I need to point out about this cable and also the East Med gas pipeline. As you see, this map is drawn in accordance with the UNCLOS, with the Convention on the Law of the Sea parameters. So anyway, this would be the Greek offshore, this is a Cyprus offshore. But if you bear in mind that map that I showed you from Turkey's claims, Turkey just doesn't recognize this. It comes all the way down here. And so there'd be a lot of political... You know, it poses a political problem, really. So, I mean, this area certainly is... There's plenty of political problems to discuss.

So, I think that's it. Thank you. If you've got any questions about this, I think we've got ample time, so I'll be happy to help you with that.

Thank you.



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## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION\*

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Myron Nicolatos\*\*

17 March 2017

### The Judicial System of Cyprus

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. First of all, I would like to thank the organizers for their kind invitation to speak before a distinguished audience, and especially my good friend Chris Pelagias.

My topic is: The Judicial System of Cyprus.

When Cyprus became an independent republic, the Courts of Justice Law of 1960 was enacted according to which the courts of Cyprus apply mainly the Constitution, the laws which have been retained by virtue of the Constitution, the principles of common law and equity, and the laws enacted by Parliament after 1960.

Today, Cyprus has a mixed legal system, unique, probably, in the world. In the domain of private law we apply the English common law and equity, accompanied by corresponding rules of procedure and evidence, but in the domain of public law we apply administrative law based on the Greek model, which is itself largely based on the French *droit administratif*. It is well-known that the common law system, in the common law the accusatorial procedure is followed with the two sides having the responsibility of presenting their cases, and the judge being in the position of the umpire, whereas in the continental system the inquisitorial procedure is followed with the judge having the task of finding the truth.

The Law on the Administration of Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) 33/64 was enacted in 1964 in order to address the enormous constitutional and legal difficulties that arose in the functioning of the state with the withdrawal of the Turkish ministers, members of parliament and judges from its institutions. Law number 33/64 made several changes in the justice system, among which was the amalgamation of the Supreme Constitutional Court and the High Court of Justice in the present Supreme Court. The leading case in our constitutional law Attorney-General vs. Ibrahim considered that the above-mentioned law 33/64 was constitutional under the doctrine of necessity. It was unanimously held that the creation of the new Supreme Court was justified under the law of necessity. Inter-communal troubles and the decision in '64 of the Turkish Cypriot leadership to withdraw from participation in all functions assigned to their community by the Constitution created an impasse and it was imperative to have recourse to

\* Transcript of oral presentation

\*\* President of the Supreme Court of Cyprus

the law of necessity in order to secure the survival of the state.

Although established by the administration of Justice Law, the Supreme Court exercises its jurisdiction and powers in accordance with the Constitution and within the framework set out therein for the exercise of the powers of the Supreme Constitutional Court and the High Court respectively. The Supreme Court is the supreme Constitutional Court, therefore it decides preemptively questions of constitutionality of proposed legislation when asked to do so by the President of the Republic. In particular, article 140 of the Constitution provides that the Supreme Court has exclusive power to hear and determine references by the President of the Republic for the opinion of the court as to whether a law, or decision of the House of Representatives, or any special provisions thereof is repugnant to or inconsistent with any provision of the Constitution. Such reference may be made at any time prior to the promulgation of any such law. This is a preventive procedure and its purpose is to avoid the enactment of unconstitutional legislation. Very recently we had sixteen such references by the President of the Republic and eight of them have already been decided, and the Supreme Court has decided that all eight laws were unconstitutional as contravening certain articles of our Constitution. The remaining eight references are still to be decided.

The President of the Republic has the right to ask for the advice of the Supreme Court on the question of the constitutionality of a piece of proposed legislation before its signature by the President, and the ruling of the Supreme Court on the subject is binding on everyone.

The Supreme Court had also until recently acted as the First Instance Administrative Court consisting of panels of single judges and as the Appeal Administrative Court consisting of panels of five judges. However, we had recently the adoption of law number 131/215 by which a new First Instance Administrative Court has been established with the Supreme Court remaining the appeal court for administrative cases.

The Supreme Court is also the Civil and Criminal Appeals Court. Panels of three judges decide finally on civil and criminal appeals. The Supreme Court acts as the Electoral Court of the land hearing election petitions. It has also jurisdiction to hear and determine admiralty cases, both at first and final instance. It has also exclusive jurisdiction to issue the prerogative orders, *habeas corpus*, *certiorari*, *mandamus*, prohibition and *quo warranto* which are the traditional tools of the English system of judicial review.

The first instance courts.

The most important first instance courts, apart from the already mentioned Administrative Court, are the district courts, one for each of the six districts of Cyprus. They are the first instance civil and criminal courts for the district. Since the Turkish invasion of '74 and the continuing occupation of the north-eastern part of the island, two of our district courts, those of Famagusta and Kerynia are under occupation and their jurisdictions have been assumed by the Larnaca and Nicosia district courts respectively. The district courts have jurisdiction to hear at first instance civil cases where the cause of action has a reason, wholly or in part, within the limits of the district where the court is established, or where the defendant resides, or carries on business within that district. The district court judges have also jurisdiction to try at first instance summarily all offenses punishable with imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, or with a fine not exceeding 85,000 euros, or both.

First instance criminal jurisdiction is also exercised by the assize courts composed of three

judges. They have unlimited jurisdiction to try all criminal offenses punishable by the Criminal Code or any other law and they have power to impose the maximum sentence provided by the relevant law. At present we have four assize courts. The maximum sentence provided by law is life imprisonment. The other first instance courts and tribunals are courts of specialized jurisdiction, therein Control Tribunal; the Industrial Disputes Tribunal, which have jurisdiction to hear applications by employees for unjustified dismissal and redundancies; the Military Tribunal has jurisdiction to try offenses committed by members of the Armed Forces; the family courts, which have jurisdiction to hear matrimonial petitions for the dissolution of marriage as well as all the relevant property disputes between the spouses, and they have also exclusive first instance jurisdiction to hear cases of custody, maintenance, access and adoption of children. They are composed of one president and two other judges. At present we have three family courts.

All the lower courts are bound by the case law of the Supreme Court. English authorities are not binding on our courts but they are of persuasive effect, especially those of the Supreme Court. Since our independence there is no appeal from our Supreme Court to the Privy Council, but there is such right of appeal from the courts of the British Bases in Cyprus to the Privy Council.

The principle of separation of powers is fundamental in our constitutional law. In accordance with this principle each of the three powers of the state, the executive, the legislative and the judicial, is autonomous and sovereign in its sphere of activity. While the principle of separation of powers is not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution, several constitutional provisions underline that such a principle is fully applicable.

The independence of the judiciary, both institutional and individual, is inherent in the doctrine of separation of powers. Judges' independence is a cardinal feature of our legal and judicial system. An independent judiciary in the sense that it is distinct and autonomous in its sphere of competence is the cornerstone of democracy. The independence of the judiciary is evident by the way judges are appointed, their conditions of service, including their security of tenure and the safeguards for their remuneration. By virtue of article 157 of the Constitution and section 10 of law 33/64, the appointment, promotion, transfer, termination of appointment, dismissal and disciplinary matters of judicial officers are exclusively within the competence of the Supreme Council of Judicature, which is composed by the President and all the Supreme Court justices only. There is nobody else in the Supreme Council of Judicature, neither ministers, nor parliamentarians, nor advocates or anybody else. It is one of the few countries in Europe and in the world that the Supreme Council of Judicature - in other countries called High Council for the Judiciary - is composed only of judges.

By vesting the Supreme Council of Judicature with the exclusive competence to regulate the judicial profession and also to determine matters relating to their dismissal the independence of judicial power is guaranteed. The President and the members of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President of the Republic, securing in this respect the necessary democratic legitimacy. The President of the Republic, however, normally follows the recommendation of the President and members of the Supreme Court regarding the appointment of the members of the Supreme Court, and by doing so any risk of political or other interference with the appointment of justices of the Supreme Court is eliminated. Since 1960 there is only one known case where the President of the Republic did not follow the advice of the Supreme Court in appointing President and members of the Supreme Court. In all other cases the Presidents of

the Republic have considered themselves bound in practice to follow the advice of the Supreme Court.

By virtue of articles 153, 163 and 164 of the Constitution, the Supreme Court is vested with power to make its own rules of practice for regulating the practice and procedure of the Supreme Court and of any subordinate court established in accordance with the Constitution. In accordance with the principle of separation of powers, neither the executive, nor the legislative may interfere with a judicial process and issues relevant to the exercise of such power. Nobody may interfere with the judges' judicial duties. Such interference is a criminal offence punishable with imprisonment and/or fine. Senior judges may not interfere with the judicial duties of junior judges. Only on appeal there may be interference with the judgment. So there is both institutional and individual independence.

The fundamental rights and liberties of the individual are entrenched in part two of our Constitution which contains a list of fundamental rights based on the European Convention on Human Rights. I may say also with humility that some rights, such as the right to property, has higher protection under our Constitution than under the European Convention on Human Rights. Property may be confiscated in accordance with a convention for the public benefit or public utility, whereas in Cyprus it cannot be confiscated for these two reasons. The reasoning of judicial decisions, the adequate explanation of the foundations of judgments, and the ratio behind the conclusions of the court is mandatory and necessary for the proper administration of justice. The right of a litigant to present his case before the court requires that the case be heard by an independent and impartial court, having the same composition throughout the proceedings. For similar reasons it is impermissible for sentence to be imposed by a judge other than the one who tried the case.

Article 35 of the Constitution imposes a positive obligation upon each one of the three powers of the state to assure the effective application of human rights in its sphere of competence. It has always been the role of the courts to protect fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens within the framework of the law and the Constitution, and that is what an independent judiciary will continue to do to the best of its ability. The judges though are not empowered to question the expressed will of the legislature. Undoubtedly, the legislature legislates in his wisdom and the judge applies the law. Nevertheless, the general principles of constitutional and administrative law require the legislator to give sufficient reasons, especially when invoking public interest, and the judge has the right and the duty to scrutinize those reasons and the justification given. Moreover, the judge should not abandon his role as the guardian of legality and to allow without skepticism the subjection of basic individual rights to the general public interest. According to our law, the public interest has to be specified and justified. The state cannot use public interest in general in order to limit fundamental human rights.

Courts will seek, were possible, to construe domestic legislation as compatible with the international obligations of Cyprus. This is based upon the reasonable assumption that Parliament is not lightly to be taken to have legislated, so as to place our country in breach of its international obligations. Our national jurisprudence confirms an extensive application of the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights in the domestic law and the recognition of the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights as an important source for the interpretation of the Convention. Against judgments of our Supreme Court there is, of course, the right of recourse to the European Court of Human Rights in cases of alleged violation of human rights.



As of 1st May 2004 Cyprus is a full member of the European Union and therefore the *acquis communautaire* forms part of our legal system. Constitutional amendments have been made in order to give European law supremacy even over our Constitution. European law is there for an integral part of our Constitution, and no constitutional provision may invalidate any provision of a binding nature of European Community, or European Union law. Moreover, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is given legal recognition by the Treaty of Lisbon, having the same legal force as the Treaties. In the Charter the EU has set out in one piece the existing fundamental rights of every European Union citizen. The Charter covers the whole range of civil, political, economic and social rights of European citizens. The jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg has become gradually authoritative. The cooperation and dialogue between the national courts and the European Court of Justice through the preliminary rulings certainly contribute to the uniform protection of fundamental rights and freedoms of EU citizens.

In a democratic society the duty of the judge is imperative in ensuring and safeguarding the existence of effective constitutional checks and balances. The judge does not have the tools to examine policy considerations, and therefore it is accepted that some acts defined as acts de government are not subject to judicial control falling exclusively in the domain of the executive. But judges must defend the legal and legitimate rights and interests of all those who rely upon them in times of crisis the role of the judge is more difficult and more critical as there is a risk the other two powers of the state will exercise pressure in order to limit or even abolish basic rights. In such times the judges continue their mission to administer justice in accordance with the eternal principles of justice, as enshrined in the Constitution, the laws and international treaties. The judge in accordance with his oath should always administer justice to all in accordance with the law and without fear of prejudice, or hope of advantage. The judicial system of Cyprus provides all the substantive guarantees and safeguards of independence, impartiality and honesty and its standard is high. Therefore, it is capable and well equipped to administer justice honestly, properly and fairly.

Thank you for your attention.



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## INTERVIEW\*

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Habib C. Malik\*

13 May 2009

### Cypriot Federalism: A Nonstarter in the Shadow of Erdogan's Turkey

**George Pelaghias (G.P.):** Today we have the pleasure of welcoming back Professor Habib Malik who will be talking to us about the recent developments in Lebanon. Professor Malik is an Associate Professor of History at the Lebanese American University. Professor Malik, welcome back to ERPIC.

**Habib Malik (H.M.):** Thank you. Very happy to be here.

**G.P.:** Professor Malik, we've seen in Lebanon last year in October that the presidential post was finally filled with the election of Michel Aoun as president. Where do you see Lebanon go from here now when the presidential post has been filled?

**H.M.:** For a long time, almost a little more than two years before last October, there was a complete political paralysis in the country. Lebanon is a country that often functions on arrangements and mutually agreed upon compromises. And we seem to have hit a point where such compromises were frozen. But then, finally, because the real issue here is that the Sunnis and the Shiites in Lebanon, the two major Muslim denominations, have been able to bring forth their strongest leaders to represent them. It was the Christians that for a long time were deprived of fielding the strongest leader. And the strongest leader happened to be general Aoun who commanded the greatest support among the Christians. And we're talking really about a situation where Sunnis, Shiites and Christians more or less composed about a third of the country each at this point in time. There was obviously an imbalance in the fact that the Christians were not able to bring forth their strongest leader to fill the highest post that's apportioned to the community.

You know, Lebanon also for a long time had an oral agreement which has finally become written in our constitution, which is that the post of president goes to the Maronite Christians, the post of prime minister goes to the Sunni Muslims, and the post of speaker of the parliament - the House - goes to the Shiites. That's roughly the arrangement. It was oral, as I said, and

\* *Transcript*

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followed without being a written requirement. Lately, after 1989, it became part of the constitution. The problem, as I just said, was that the Christians were not able for a long time to bring forth their strongest representative. Finally, the ice on that one was broken this past summer and elections brought forth General Aoun who is now president of the country.

Now, you also have to keep in mind that since the Lebanon war ended in 1990 with the Taif Agreement in the fall of '89, the presidency, which was the prerogative of the Christians, has been stripped largely of many of its powers. And the prime ministership has been given most of those powers, if not the prime minister himself then he and his cabinet - the government, that is. So, that was one of the results of the ending of the war - a kind of diminishing of the powers of the Christians. Now, keeping that in mind, having someone like Michel Aoun as president does not really change the fact that the president's powers are restricted, circumscribed. But the mere fact that Aoun has a wide Christian representation helps to bolster the position somewhat and redresses a little bit the imbalance.

Once we had the president in October the ball started rolling, as it were, in political terms. Now, there are preparations underway in earnest for the parliamentary elections this spring and there's work going on on the electoral law that should be followed and there's a lot of haggling there because, you know, gerrymandering the district and knowing which community remains hostage to which other community in terms of the voting and so on - this is a very complicated can of worms that involves horse trading, as it were, among the various communities and their leaders. But eventually something gets hammered out and elections take place. So this in a nutshell is where Lebanon is right now. Since the paralysis that lasted for two years was broken with the election of a new president, matters have started to move forward and we're hoping, we're pretty hopeful that we will have an electoral law which will allow us to have parliamentary elections this spring. Now, the government that will be formed after the new parliament is in place will be the real effective government. There is a government right now headed by Saad Hariri, but its main job is to prepare for the elections, so we shall see after the elections what kind of government will emerge.

**G.P.:** You mentioned that the Christians were not able to bring forward a presidential candidate. Why was that?

**H.M.:** Well, because essentially, to put it in a nutshell, the Christians lost the war. And they lost the war to the combination of the Shiites and the Sunnis. Now, the Sunnis are supported by Saudi Arabia and the Shiites have Iran behind them, and also on the ground the paramilitary group Hezbollah. So, in that sense there is considerable political clout that emerges from these two supports, these two, if you will, dimensions of Sunni and Shiite power. The Christians don't have anything like that. Before the war of 1975, the Christians through the powers of the presidency had a lot of political influence in the country. That has been eroded gradually throughout the war and the final agreement that was brokered to end the war pretty much emasculated the powers of the Christians.

We also have demographic changes. Before the 1970s, the Christians were more than 50% of the country. Now they are somewhere around one-third. So there's been emigration, deaths during the war, all sorts of things. Also, the community doesn't seem to experience population growth at the same rate as other communities do. So there's a variety of reasons that have caused this to happen. Now, interestingly the new constitution which ended the war pretty much states that Christians and Muslims are regarded as fifty-fifty - 50% each. Now, this is of course a

numerical fiction. But it's there in order to imply that the rights of communities will not be affected by the diminishing of their demographic numbers. That's the intention, but, as I said, it's a fiction because at the end of the day, you know, Christian powers have been eroded as a result of the outcome of the war.

**G.P.:** You said that now with the election of the president there may be hopes that things could move forward. Are there also measures being taken within the constitution to avoid a similar incident in the future?

**H.M.:** The constitution is not tampered with at present. There are some people who are calling for reforms and revisions of the existing Constitution. The constitution, which is based on what is known as the Taif Agreement - Taif of course is a town in Saudi Arabia where many Lebanese politicians met to pretty much end the war under Saudi auspices at the time - the Taif Agreement which is the basis of the newly constitution empowers the Sunnis at the expense not only of the Christians, but also to some extent of the Shiites. So there has always been an unease among both Christians and Shiites with the current arrangement and there have been calls for amending it. Now, whether that will ever materialize without a fight is a big question. I can assure you that most Lebanese, and certainly on the level of the leadership, are not interested in revisiting the horrors of the recent past. So, nobody really wants to open up the issue of re-writing the constitution because it could lead to a renewal of conflict that nobody really wants. In other words, Lebanon prefers drift and open-end paralysis to decisive tinkering or changes with existing situations that may not be very congenial to some of the groups. It's the old issue of sweeping problems under the proverbial rug for another day, or kicking the can down the road as it were - you can use any one of these metaphors - rather than actually facing and solving problems and having to pay whatever price is demanded by such radical solutions.

**G.P.:** So, if I hear you correctly, the Christians not only have become a minority, but their political rights despite having a fifty-fifty power-sharing arrangement have in fact diminished, and will most likely continue to diminish because there is no real interest to alter the constitution in a way that would safeguard their 50% interest.

**H.M.:** I think you have summarized it very accurately with these words. Yes, matters don't look very encouraging down the road and the best that the Christians can hope for - and again it's not something in the cards at the moment - is some kind of federal arrangement. You know, creative federalism can in theory ensure the rights of all communities regardless of the ups and downs of demography. But at the moment this remains, even for Lebanon - which is, you know, a heterogeneous and divided society - it remains a distant solution. Nobody is really interested in going down that road. And there's tremendous misunderstanding of federalism. As soon as you mention the word people immediately think it means fragmentation, it means the dissolution of the state. They don't understand that some of the most successful countries in the world are federal and they happen to be unified states.

But you know, herein really lies the problem for a place like Lebanon. All the communities, once Lebanon was put together as heterogeneous state of many communities, all of the communities really lost a great degree of their autonomy, their previous autonomy. Even under Ottoman rule, in the Ottoman days the millet system gave a certain degree of local autonomy to communities that once they were put together and forced to, you know, hammer out a system of coexistence. These autonomous areas and spaces - they don't have to be physical

spaces, but, you know, autonomous existential, if you like, realities - began to erode. Since the creation of Lebanon, it's been a slippery slope of compromises all along.

**G.P.:** Cyprus, as you know, is currently negotiating solution to its problem along federal lines. Maybe a bi-zonal bi-communal federation. What is your opinion on that development?

**H.M.:** Well, let me tell you. In a sense, Lebanon is a sad vision of a possible future for Cyprus that I personally don't hope that Cyprus will try to achieve. What I mean by that is that right now the Greek Cypriots are in the position of controlling their own destiny on a piece of territory that is theirs exclusively and there is a great degree of communal homogeneity there. Now, I know it's not the entire island but it's two-thirds of it. And that is something that the Lebanon model is actually a devolution from. In other words, when I say Lebanon is a kind of sad future for Cyprus, if Cyprus goes down the federal road it will be losing rather than gaining, unlike Lebanon, which would like to climb up the federal ladder to gain, because Lebanon has slipped much more than any of the communities would like, certainly the Christians. So in a nutshell, given the fact that the Greek Cypriots control a territory that is exclusively theirs with considerable homogeneity, I think there should be a resistance to this irredentism of wanting at any price to have the entire island, even if that means opening the Pandora's box of compromises with the other Cypriots - the Turkish Cypriots. The problem is, if the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots were together on Mars, or in a vacuum, this could work. But Cyprus' neighbor to the north is an enormous, very powerful country, which obviously favors one side of the, you know, prospective federal arrangement, has demonstrated in the past that it is willing to take radical steps to bring about demographic changes - in 1974 thousands of mainland Turks were brought into the northern parts of Cyprus. And that country doesn't seem to have on its agenda the welfare of, certainly not of the Greek Cypriots, but I don't think of even a federally united Cyprus. So, given that kind of neighbor breathing down your neck it's a very hazardous prospect, frankly. It's almost like I feel I'm talking to you from a future I don't want you to have. Because that's exactly what happened to us and we've ended in one compromise after the other. First we were required after 1943 to speak of Lebanon as having an Arab face. Then that changed with time to become "Lebanon is Arab". And more recently there are questions about whether Lebanon shouldn't be declared Islamic because of the demographic majority there. So, there's a slippery slope.

We haven't even been able to climb to the relatively safe ledge of federalism and for Cyprus, for the Greek Cypriots you will be stepping down if you went for federalism. You don't need that. Overcome the irredentism of having one island and be very happy that you have two-thirds of it under your exclusive control, without any composite, or divided, or heterogeneous community in those two thirds.

**G. P.:** One of the main arguments for allusion to the Cyprus problem is that it would bring more economic stimulus, that it would improve Cyprus's role in the region, that Cyprus can be a model for other conflicts, and so on. You don't seem to see that as a reality.

**H.M.:** Not at all, no. I think it's very enticing to focus only on prospects of economic improvement and so forth, and perhaps this whole idea of the model, etc., all of these are very attractive in the abstract, in theory. But the question every Greek Cypriot has to ask him or herself is at what price is this sort of promised Eldorado, at what price is it going to come, if it's going to come at all. That's the first thing.

Second, I don't think countries should aim to become models of anything. I think countries and communities should aim to preserve their identities and freedoms - that's the most important thing - and chart a course forward that would safeguard their interests, not aspire to become a model and then eventually fail as a model. We live in a very nasty neighborhood, where minority communities tend to get trampled by larger powers. And the only way to avoid that is not to be in a situation to beg for federalism, but the only way to avoid that is, if you are fortunate enough, to already control a certain territory as a homogeneous community, then hang on to that, for God's sake, whatever you do. Because the alternative that "we can serve as a model," that there are economic benefits to be had, and so forth - all of these could amount to pipe dreams if one is not careful. And I think every Greek Cypriot should ask him or herself: at what price am I getting into this kind of federal arrangement? What will happen down the road five, ten years from now? Especially, given a powerful neighbor to the north that doesn't necessarily have my interests in mind. So, once again, let me say Lebanon has been called a message, a kind of a model - the Arabic word is *risala* - for the region, as a one of coexistence among various religious groups. Frankly, this sounds more like an advertisement than a reflection of reality. In reality, it's an endless series of compromises with not much appealing light at the end of that tunnel.

Now, let me just add here an important point. Lebanon does remain the freest society in the Arab world, despite all of the problems it has gone through in the last few decades - the wars and the foreign occupation, Syria, etc. - Lebanon remains the freest Arab society. But the reason for that is not so much the formula that puts Lebanon together. It's the fact that the Christian community in Lebanon, unlike the Christians of Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt, the Christians of Lebanon have managed against tremendous odds to preserve their freedoms and their way of life. And this has become over time infectious - almost like osmosis, you know, in biology - it's become infectious to other communities, Muslim communities, that have lived and coexisted with Lebanon's free Christians. So freedom makes all the difference, you see. And that's why Lebanon's Muslims are different from the Muslims in the Gulf or in other countries and they pride themselves on being different. And the reason, of course, why that is, as I said, that they have lived, and coexisted, and interacted openly and freely with the Christians. Not with dhimmi Christians - dhimmi being the category of reduction to second-class status under Islamic rule. So, to sum it all up, I don't desire for my beloved neighbors, the Greek Cypriots - it's a country I love to visit and I have many friends there - I don't desire for that country going down this road, especially with the presence of powers in the region that have different agendas. And so if you control the territory, no matter how small it is, and you are a homogeneous community, by all means stick to that. And that is your best option in an otherwise unpredictable and nasty neighborhood.

**G.P.:** Professor Malik, thank you very much. It's been a pleasure having you back and I'm quite sure we will be seeing more of you. Thank you very much for participating this evening.

**H.M.:** Thank you very much and thank you to ERPIC.





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## DISCUSSION\*

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Dimitris Konstantakopoulos\*\*

7 April 2017

### Cyprus in a Challenging Geopolitical Environment

**Christodoulos Pelagias (C.P.):** Dear friends, welcome again. This evening with us we have well-known author and political commentator Dimitris Konstantakopoulos. Mr. Konstantakopoulos, welcome back and thank you for agreeing to continue our discussion on the Cyprus issue.

**Dimitris Konstantakopoulos (D.K.):** Thank you.

**C.P.:** Mr. Konstantakopoulos, you've been following the Cyprus issue - as we discussed before - for many years. What makes the Cyprus problem so difficult to solve? What is the Cyprus problem all about today?

**D.K.:** Cyprus is one of the most strategic places on earth. And in the same time, it is both a European and a Middle Eastern country. So what is happening to Cyprus is a reflection of both what is happening in the Middle East and in Europe. And we all know very well, the Middle Eastern region is in a situation now of absolute turmoil, but a huge crisis is also affecting the European Union. So we cannot understand the Cyprus issue as a conflict between Greece and Turkey, or between the Greek Cypriot majority and the tiny Turkish Cypriot minority in the island. Those contradictions and conflicts, of course, have existed.

I have to remind at this point that historically Greeks and Turks, Christians and Muslims in Cyprus had not any difficulty to live together. They had even developed some kind - without resigning from their own national or religious identities - they have even developed a kind of, so to say, a Cyprus identity, as they were both born in this island. What created this conflict is the fact the imperial power, in that case Great Britain, which acquired Cyprus in 1878 from the Ottoman Empire, has used also in that question the method of *divide et impera* - divide and rule. So, this was the great problem which brought about the antagonism between the Greek Cypriot majority and the Turkish Cypriot minority and then brought inside the equation also Turkey itself and Greece.

Now, what we see is the prototype of the British colonial policy. One can trace its origins in the

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Journalist, Writer and Political Commentator*

adoption by the British when they acquired Cyprus of some form of the millet way of governing which was used by Ottoman Empire. They were using Cyprus by trying to govern it through each communities. They were trying to persuade Greeks that they are not Greeks, and they have created - three months after acquiring the island in 1878 - they have created a council for self-government. In this council there was one part which was Greek Christian - rather, as they were told that time, Greek Christian Cypriots - one part was Muslim Cypriots, and one part was representatives of the colonial power. But what they did at the same time, they gave more privileges to the minority, so by this cunning operation they have guaranteed that the minority would never ally with the majority to put into doubt the colonial regime. Because the minority had an interest, in that case Turkish Cypriots had an interest to align with colonial power in order to get more privileges. And the Greek majority, the Christian majority, was always against the minority for abusing its position and using these privileges. So this was the prototype.

But then this took more direct forms. London has used Turkey and Greece, because Greece as you know, it was ruled after 1949, after the Greek civil war was ruled by the regime which was completely controlled by the United States and Great Britain. So they got the agreement of the Athens regime and of Ankara, and they introduced Turkey into the Cyprus question. Turkey, by signing the Lausanne Treaty it had already signed off many claims on Cyprus. But the British have reintroduced Ankara into the Cyprus problem. This was the reason that led to the bloody conflict between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, which also is in the origin of the Greek-Turkish competition and antagonism. Greece and Turkey have arrived near war many times because of Cyprus. We had pogroms of Christians in Istanbul because of Cyprus. We had a dictatorship in Greece because also of Cyprus.

Why all this is happening? It is happening because as Harry Hopkins, the colonial secretary of the British Empire, said back in 1949, "Cyprus belongs...." At that time Griffiths who had been the Labor colonial secretary... You know what happens to the socialists. When they are in opposition, they remember they are socialists and they are struggling for the rights. When they go to the government they forget, usually, this. And what happened to Griffiths? He remembered Cyprus and he asked Harry Hopkins, the then Tory colonial secretary during the debate in the House of Commons, "What will happen to Cyprus?" This happened in July 1954 but it is still important for understanding the Cyprus conflict. He told him, "It was always agreed and understood - that is, Mr. Griffiths, don't forget what you had agreed on already, now you are in opposition - it was always agreed and understood that some territories of the Commonwealth will never become completely, fully independent." How the British could do that? By using the Turkish factor. And sometimes their imperial policy was so complex that even the ministers of Her Majesty could not understand what was going on. At one point Harold MacMillan himself was obliged, in order to explain to his colleagues inside the cabinet, he put his strategy like that: "Our strategy," he said, "in the negotiation, is that we oppose to the Greeks their refusal of Turks to accept the union with Greece in order to condition Greeks to accept our sovereignty over Cyprus." This is the essence of British policy on Cyprus which was later continued by the USA, and this is the root of the Cyprus problem.

**CP.:** But in all fairness Mr. Konstantakopoulos, the British colonial government had the interests of Britain at heart. I don't think that anybody would have expected that they would have behaved in a way as to promote the interests of Greece or the Greek Cypriots, or so on. Each country, its government supports its own national policy and its national interests.

**D.K.:** First of all, the world would be a jungle if every state does what is in its narrow national interest.

**C.P.:** But that's not my point.

**D.K.:** To tell you the truth, I believe it was against the British national interest, and it was against the United States' national policy.

**C.P.:** We are getting sidetracked. That was not my point. That was in passing that I made that comment. The point is, however, that it is now fifty years, sixty years later and certain things, yes, they do have historical basis and historical explanations, but things have moved on. There are different and new elements in the equation, and while it is clearly important to have in mind the basis of the problem, and quite frankly it wasn't just the colonial issue. Later - and I'm sure you agree - it was transmuted into a Cold War issue. The British in order to entice the Americans and to get Americans to help, they reinvented the Cyprus problem. Or not reinvented it, but shaped it to appeal to Cold War thinking in the United States. But that has changed also. Cyprus today has moved on. Supposedly, it's part of the European Union. So the EU is another player. Turkey has changed. The Eastern Mediterranean has been transformed. The rebirth of Islamism, resurgence of Russia, perhaps, coming back to another Cold War mentality. I think in order to understand the Cyprus problem, it's important to deconstruct it. And I agree, we have to start historically. But I think we've got to move to today's scenario and take the elements that are present today, if you would agree.

**D.K.:** I agree and I will answer your question by explaining how the modern-day problem is reflecting what I consider always existing colonial question behind the Cyprus conflict. But I want to tell you another two things, if you permit me, about history, to close this chapter.

First thing which I believe is that Great Britain and the United States of America, by what they did in Cyprus and Greece, they did not in fact help their national interest, even during the Cold War. What they had done is to create a serious conflict. They have all but destroyed the south east wing of the NATO, they had imposed the dictatorship, they had decades of fervent anti-Americanism in Greece and in Cyprus. So I think the net result of their policy was detrimental also to their interests. And even an American diplomat Monteagle Stearns who used to be an ambassador in Athens, he said that the only reason Soviets did not get more from Greece and Cyprus and Turkey crisis, it is because they were themselves incompetent, not because we did not give them... You see this kind of policy, which is not belonging unfortunately to the past, it is belonging to the future. This is what I believe.

And I'm afraid that the situation of course has changed since the fifties, but it has changed in a way which makes it much worse. Look what is happening next to your door in the Middle East. We have half of the Arab countries which were not, how to say, invaded, they were demolished, which is a terrible situation. Nobody knows what will happen in the Middle East. In the same time the European Union is transforming into a very strange structure. As the Financial Times of the 19<sup>th</sup> of December, they published a prominent article on Greece, and they called Greece a Western protectorate.

So I'm afraid that our world is much less democratic and much more dangerous than it was back in the fifties and the sixties. In that sense you are right. But that makes more dangerous the situation around Cyprus as a reflection of the processes in the Middle East and in Europe.

I have to tell you also one thing that historically speaking - not by using any model, by using just statistics - we know that every serious crisis in Cyprus, and also every supposedly serious effort to sort the Cyprus problem has preceded great wars in the Middle East. I was a little bit surprised when I heard the British defense secretary some days ago visiting Cyprus and saying on the record, "Our bases here are more important than ever in history". I'm wondering if I understand what he says. Because history is the creation of the state of Israel, history is the Yom Kippur War, history is the 1974 crisis and the Suez Crisis. So I'm wondering what will happen in the Middle East if the British defense secretary believes that the bases are now more important than they were during those times. But, anyway.

Now, you want to know how all those things are reflected in the present day situation. I will explain. First of all, unfortunately, because I'm Greek by origin, the Cyprus government, with the contribution of the Greek government, has proceeded to carry out a coup d'état. Now, you will tell me, is it possible that the government, or the head of a given state makes a coup d'état? Of course it's possible. If he decides to make the coup d'état, he is the most capable of doing the coup d'état. Because he has only to abuse the already existing power he commands legally. Why I say so? And the great example was the Vichy regime in France. Marshal Petain had been authorized by the French constitution on the 10<sup>th</sup> July of 1940, he was invested by the elected national assembly with the crushing majority with constituent powers. The same is what Mr. Anastasiades has done by calling for an international conference in Geneva to solve the Cyprus problem. People who are following this emission will understand immediately why this is an aberration by itself. Imagine, for instance, that tomorrow there is a conference in Bilbao, let's say, where France, Italy, Portugal will decide the ethnic conflict in Spain, without the Spanish state itself being present, only with representatives of Spanish national communities represented there. If I would propose such an idea everybody would say that I am mad. This is happening for Cyprus now in Geneva. There is a conference in Geneva, where three states are participating, Greece, Britain and Turkey, with representatives of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, and they are deciding the fate of the state of Cyprus.

**C.P.:** Just a point here with the suggestion that there is a government coup. A lot of people that I have talked to have reminded me when I've suggested that the leadership of the Cyprus Republic are more progressive, perhaps, and they've left behind the voters, people remind me that these negotiations of today haven't fallen out of the sky. These are continuation of negotiations that have been carried on for the last twenty years, thirty years. I'm not trying to defend Cyprus' administration in any way, but it's fair to say that they've continued on a line, perhaps in your view a wrong direction, but this direction has been taken by the Vassiliou government, by the Cleridis government after that, by all of the governments that have followed, including even the Tasos Papadopoulos government, in a lesser degree, but certainly the same line. So, who is at fault here? Is it, again, the outside powers, or is it a flow in democratic deficit in the Cyprus structure, and incidentally in the Greek polity as well. We should perhaps look for the problems at home? Yes, the foreigners have given us problems, but I think we have amplified these problems.

**D.K.:** I will answer to this Mr. Pelagias. What these people are saying is a huge lie, huge, very huge lie. Most of what they say are huge lies. Deception is the most usual method of making politics these days. And this is not only in Cyprus, it is everywhere in the world. But anyway, we are not going to open this discussion now. Why it is a lie? Up to now there was a procedure. One can agree with this procedure or can disagree with this procedure. This procedure was

negotiations between the representatives of the Greek Cypriot majority – 82% of the population, and the Turkish Cypriot minority – 18% of the population. For me this was not the right method. Anyway, this method was adopted. The program was to arrive to the conclusion and then the conclusion would go to a referendum, like it had in 2004, as you remember. Now, suddenly Mr. Anastasiades, the president of the republic, decided, and the Greek government agreed, to convene international conference on Cyprus conflict. That is three foreign states plus two representatives of the two communities - the majority and the minority of the Cyprus population - will decide what kind of state they want to have in Cyprus, what kind of international status this state will have, what foreign forces are going to station or not station, what other countries will have guarantee rights on this state, and so on and so forth. This way they have taken constituent power from the people of Cyprus – the only one who is entitled to decide about the faith of its country. If it's not a coup d'état, what is coup d'état?

**C.P.:** I agree with you there, but I think it's essential perhaps to look at... Because you've mentioned the process. A lot has been made that the Turkish Cypriot leadership of this day is moderate, forward looking, able to differentiate itself from the position of Turkey, and so on. This is the narrative that has been given, both internationally and in Cyprus, and in Greece. There is a lot of people that disagree with that narrative that point out...

**D.K.:** If it is like you say, Mr. Pelagias, why they did not follow the normal, usual, predicted procedure, and they changed the procedure? If it is true that Mr. Akinci, the leader of the Turkish Cypriots is progressive and keen to an agreement, why this agreement was not presented by Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akinci to the Cypriot voters?

**C.P.:** You are making my point exactly. What I wanted to say was that this entire process is a constituent process where you set up a new constitution, has to be transparent, has to be democratic, has to be inclusive.

**D.K.:** All this critique can be used about the talks that are continuing. The international conference – it's another thing. Because you take the constituent power from where it belongs, and it belongs to the people of Cyprus, and you get it to an international ad hoc conference. This is combining a coup d'état and foreign intervention in the affairs of one country. It is completely illegal. And I'm very sorry that Mr. Guterres has begun like he has begun his career in the United Nations. If he continues like that, maybe he does not know the Cyprus problem - I hope that he will get acquainted very soon - because if he goes on like that, he will be the worst UN Secretary in the history of this organization.

**C.P.:** I'm trying to get to the bottom of it, and I think we're on the same point here. Is that as this process has been constructed, it has certain elements that are clearly missing from it, and one of those important elements...

**D.K.:** You mean the Geneva conference?

**C.P.:** No, I mean the entire process, including the Geneva conference.

**D.K.:** No, no, Mr. Pelagias I disagree on this point, because we have two different processes, and we should make that clear. The one process is the talks between the two communities – on this we can discuss if it's the right method. But here there is something else which has happened, which is non-continuity with the process. It is the convening of the international conference which will decide things about Cyprus which only the people of Cyprus has the

right to decide, and for which Mr. Anastasiades or the Greek government have no authorization to take any decision and to agree to anything. It is a clear violation of the Articles 183 and 184 of the existing constitution of Cyprus, it is a clear violation of the treaties regulating the functioning of the European Union of which Cyprus is a fully sovereign and independent member. They are treating Cyprus like a colony, like a protectorate as it was in the past, and this is unacceptable. This is not simply illegality. This is why I said it is a coup d'état, speaking *stricto sensu*, not rhetorically, not politically, but legally.

**C.P.:** I would submit to you that it's even worse, because it's not only a coup d'état to dismantle the Republic of Cyprus. It is an acceptance of the dismantlement. Turkey has said that the Republic of Cyprus is defunct. Greece has not taken up a position, I remember, when this statement of the Turkish government was issued as part of its response to the EU findings several years ago, the Greek government did not respond in appropriate way. What I'm trying to say to you - and I think you will agree - is that beyond the democratic deficit in the negotiations, there has been a gradual deconstruction of the Republic of Cyprus, a dismemberment of its certain elements. That unfortunately is not just the Anastasiades administration that has done this. It has been accepted over a period of years. I will bring your attention to the water pipeline that was created and constructed to connect Turkey with the Turkish occupied areas. The Republic of Cyprus had very little response, legally or otherwise, to this issue. This goes very deeply in cancelling the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus. Incidentally, neither did Greece raise the word against this issue. A number of other such issues have happened.

**D.K.:** Mr. Pelagias, this is not only a problem concerning Cyprus or Greece. This is a problem concerning all European national elites. Very few of the people who are governing nowadays Europe are defending national interests against multinational economic interests, and against the United States of America in cases their national interest...

**C.P.:** But that is another level. I think what is valid is that, is there not an expectation from both Europe and the United States or anybody else, from the side of the Greek Cypriots and the Greeks to support principles that we do not support strongly enough? Why should the Europeans stand up for freedoms and principles that we keep quiet about?

**D.K.:** They should stand up because it is in their own interest. They induced in 2010 the Greek leadership to sign loan agreements which are of neocolonial nature, and they used its dependence which they have themselves created. For instance, in Greece everybody was bribed by Siemens and other firms in order to create the protectorate in Greece. If those things which are happening in Greece and Cyprus advance, there are two possible results. The one result is that it will translate into the abolition of any democratic element still existing in the European Union. It will be used against all European peoples and nations, not only against Greece. The second thing which can happen is that sooner or later the European Union will be destroyed out of those monster creations. And like the Greek situation now, and like Cyprus - if the Cyprus conflict is solved in the way they are planning to solve it. So, all European citizens have a huge interest in helping Greek people stop what our own governments are doing - acting as agents of very, very dangerous extremist forces inside the international system. Because you are right to involve the Cold War. But what has happened after the Cold War is unfortunately that instead of building a better world, better Europe, and better Middle East, instead of affronting the huge challenges we have, like climate change, like the problem of hunger in Africa or many other problems that planet is facing, we are doing something very different. The most extremist

forces inside both the United States, the European and the international establishment have thought that after the demise of the Soviet Union they can apply any crazy projects they have in their minds. And this is why we have wars in the Middle East and Africa, this is why we have an economic crisis which is not finishing in Europe and the United States, and which has been transformed to a crisis between the European nations. It has begun as a banking crisis in 2008. Banks were able not only not to face the consequences of their own policy and behavior, but to transform the crisis into a crisis between European nations. So I think we should stop this. And this is not a thing which is interesting only Greece and Cyprus. This is something which has to interest everybody in the world, and especially Europeans, as those two countries are members of the European Union and even of the eurozone.

**C.P.:** On a related issue to that, the picture has always been painted of Turkey that it is a contributor to stability, it is a contributor to regional progress, it is a contributor to European economic betterment. How would you comment on that? I think there are also people that are mostly supporting this picture is the Cyprus government and the Greek government, who have not in any way tried to change that image of Turkey, despite all that has been happening in Turkey.

**D.K.:** The train is changing from the first wagon – it's the action, and it needs sometime for the other wagons to get to the same direction. So usually in our world the initiative comes from the United States. After some time it moves to Western Europe. And it needs some time to come to Greece and Cyprus, which are maybe on the last places of the train. The leaders are not well adapted, supposedly, to the new tendencies in the international situation. And by the way, they are a little bit confused now, as most international elites. Because what is happening inside the international establishment is a kind of civil war which reminds me the civil wars in ancient Rome. When civil wars erupted in ancient Rome, every village in the Mediterranean would feel this conflict. And now we are in such a situation. What was Mediterranean in ancient times, is all the planet nowadays. But to be more precise, I think we are in a period where there are conflicting views inside the western establishment on the role of Turkey. There are those who still believe that Turkey should be included in the European Union, that this kind of empire that the European Union is - as Mr. Barroso himself has called it - has to develop and to include also Turkey. There are those who think that independent Turkey must be accepted, it is in the western interest for it to be accepted. So I think this difference is reflected also in the Cyprus negotiations.

But I would like to hear, to make a remark on the internal structure - because now we have spoken about the procedure, about the Geneva conference - and if those three states have any right to decide about the fourth state, which they don't have. But now I would like to speak about the structure of the solution itself. Because according to the very interesting interview the Greek foreign minister gave to the German news agency DPA in January 21, what solution they found for the Cyprus conflict? The first is that they want to create a 50/50 state – 50% rights for the majority and 50% rights for the minority. Here where I stand now in this city, for the first time in human history, Thucydides, rather Pericles, the leader of the Athenians explained to them... It was one year after the Peloponnesian War erupted. He said to Athenians why their sacrifices were justified. Why they had to see their relatives lose their lives. He said in his epitaphios speech, the funeral speech he made for the victims on the first year of the anniversary of the eruption of the Peloponnesian War: we made this war because our state is called democracy. It's called the rule of majority. Up to now, until our world becomes

totalitarian, for both the legal science and the political science democracy is defined as the rule of the majority. And dictatorship is defined as the rule of the minority. And it is not maybe by accident that the etymology of the word "democracy" is Greek, the etymology of the word "dictatorship" is Roman. So what I want to say is that this is legally a protectorate they are creating. Because if you make a fifty-fifty percent arrangement, it is impossible to work, you will need a third part, the power which will command the sovereignty over Cyprus to make the decisions. Because otherwise you will not make the decisions.

The second characteristic of this state is that it will not have its own army. They want to create a demilitarized, as they say, island, in the Eastern Mediterranean. Next to Israel, Syria, Egypt, somebody has the sudden inspiration to create a state without army. But this somebody does not believe that the world has become peaceful, so he is providing for remaining of the British bases on the island. He is providing also for installing there an international police force. I'm hearing that this would be from 50% Christian, and 50% Muslim countries.

Those things have nothing to do with general principles of constitutions accepted worldwide, of the constitutional law, of the European law, and of the international law. They are against the Charter of the United Nations, they are against the European treaties – the treaties regulating the functioning of the European Union. So the whole thing is completely illegal.

But this is from the legal point of view. From the practical point of view, this is a blueprint for making war in Cyprus, a bloody conflict in Cyprus. And if you make a war in Cyprus, it is the best way to have quickly the inhabitants leave the island. Or if they don't leave, to be disciplined, and to (*inaudible*) forces which will dominate this island will want from them to do.

By the way, if they agree on this in Geneva, Turkey will become next month a member of the European Union, interesting, by the window of the Cyprus settlement, because it is getting 50% of the Cyprus vote in the European Union. So I think this is the best way to destroy European Union to put in such a way Turkey inside it, but in the same time I'm afraid it is also a trap for Turkey itself. It is not a way for Turkey to become a member. If Turkey wants to become a member of the European Union and stay there as a stable member, it has to pass through the door, not through the window.

**C.P.:** Turkish accession aside, I want to stay on the point that you made that from a practical point of view what is being created is a protectorate situation, Finlandization, if you will, of Cyprus...

**D.K.:** No, no, excuse me, I did not say that. Maybe there is a misunderstanding here. From a legal point of view, it is created a protectorate. From a practical point of view, it is created a war.

**C.P.:** Ok, but in order to get to the war, you have to have a failure of the structure. And I think we are anticipating that a little bit.

**D.K.:** The plan itself guarantees for each failure, as it happened with previous efforts, like 1960, to solve the Cyprus problem.

**C.P.:** If you would stay with me for a second. I'm willing though to give credence, at least on the surface, to the efforts that are being made in order to create a security structure in Cyprus, a protectorate - whatever you want to call it - because it must be part of a greater master plan for



the security, or the western security of the Eastern Mediterranean. There has to be some logic behind it. I cannot readily accept your position that what they are trying to do is create a conflagration, create a war.

**D.K.:** I say they are doing it. I'm not judging it, I don't want to become a psychologist. I'm examining the objective facts.

**C.P.:** That's exactly what I want to bring you to do - examine what is the underlying logic, the geopolitical logic of this effort to pacify Cyprus, or to settle the Cyprus problem, in the way that it's been tried to be settled. There has to be some underlying premise. I would submit to you and comment on it that the underlying premise has always been an attempt to block Russian resurgence, or development of Russian position in the Mediterranean and the Eastern Mediterranean. What would you say to that?

**D.K.:** First of all, if you are searching for an underlying line and global logic, I think you would search Henry Kissinger. He said once, "Whoever controls Malta, Crete, and Cyprus, rules the world". So he explained by that what he did, I mean a coup d'état like the one he organized in Chile, he organized one more in Nicosia in 1973, and he organized also the Turkish invasion of the island. If you look for an underlying logic in those strange plans to solve the Cyprus conflict, you have to look to the underlying logic of neo-conservatives and what they did in the Middle East since 2001. We don't need to look for any mysterious plans, we have just to read what they write, and we have just to see in our televisions what they have achieved so far.

As far as it concerns Russian presence in Greece and Cyprus, this is an objection of the British policy for centuries now, and it became also an objection of the United States policy. There is one more problem here. Because the basic reason, the fundamental reason that has made Greek politicians, even sometime right-wing, anticommunist, very right-wing and conservative politicians look to Moscow, it was only one: the policy of Great Britain and of the United States of America in Greece and Cyprus. And this at least President Clinton has understood. This is why when he visited Greece, he has apologized for the dictatorship in Greece. And secretary Holbrooke also apologized for what the United States had done in Cyprus. So if they apologize, they know better than the victims, maybe, the reasons for which they apologize. And I think those reasons, these policies are what has the potential of bringing Russia into Eastern Mediterranean. And I don't know if it is really a fear of Russia, or it is just a kind of pretext to be found. During the Cold War it was communism, now it is Putin. We have to find pretexts in order to make conquests. But this is not very original. They have to rethink those extremist forces inside the United States and the British establishment, their own policy, and review it in their own interest, not in our interest. Because if we want to build a better world...

You know something, there is also another aspect. In the past, they were using classic colonialist or imperialistic tactics towards a country which was not belonging in the core of the western world. When you are using that inside the European Union and the eurozone, you don't make any more colonialism and imperialism. You make a regime change in the West. You are destroying western democracy - the core principles of western democracy. And I'm afraid there are forces in the western establishment, in both Europe and the US, which are not satisfied by what we have - some kind of democracy, and also social welfare state - and they want to destroy that. This is the link between what is happening in Greece, what is happening in Cyprus, and what is happening in the European Union.

**C.P.:** You've just touched on an interesting point, and you say that the major western countries have got to rethink their policy in this part of the world. But I'll submit to you that... Certainly, I don't know what you think of the new American president, but that's what he has announced. He has announced that he is reviewing the US policy in the Eastern Mediterranean. But there is some point beyond that. The whole structure, not only in the Eastern Mediterranean but beyond that, of the United States' policy was the pivotal state theory or paradigm, if you remember, of Paul Kennedy. For one reason or another, Turkey, in the United States for very good reasons, has been chosen as a pivotal state in this part of the world.

**D.K.:** Many years ago, Mr. Pelagias.

**C.P.:** Absolutely. But what I'm saying is that there has not been presented to the United States by the countries that are occupying this geographical space and alternative paradigm. I will suggest that these moves between Israel, Cyprus, Greece, Egypt to create a multilateral structure that will ensure security in the region and perhaps western interests, including those of the countries that are here, has been very late in the coming and with not enough effort put behind. I submit to you that yes, the British and the Americans should look at the alternative paradigm – there is no other paradigm, we have not offered another paradigm.

**D.K.:** Britain was a world empire, the United States is a superpower, so I will not attribute more responsibilities towards small nation which has fallen ten times in two hundred years to defend themselves like the Greeks, more than the superpowers. But what I want to say is that of course we have a huge problem inside Greece and inside Cyprus, and they are not the only European countries. You know, I believe that in Greece, the anti-Greek propaganda of the last decade is that we are kind of an exception, we are a little bit primitive, lazy, disorganized, things like that. And there is a propaganda which is made from lies and truth in order to justify and to permit the unprecedented economic and political warfare against Greece by international media. What is Greece? It is an extreme case which is very different from being an exception. In Greece, for particular historical and geopolitical reasons, you find the weakest link in the European chain. You find a country where you can, if you take a picture of the fractal in the chaos theory, you take a fractal, and you will see the same tendencies, the same curves, the same themes that you will find in all the picture. So in Greece you find really all the dominating tendencies in the whole European structure.

But it is not only Greece. For instance, the finance (*inaudible*) to Mr. Hollande that he has to apply a policy which was tantamount to the suicide of the historic party like the French Socialist Party. He did not, he did not defend his own political interest, or the interests of his party. This is a common situation in all Europe, and it reminds me of the situation at the end of the Roman imperial expansion. You know what was happening then? The kings of the kingdoms which had remained somehow independent, they were going to Rome and they were given to the emperor the keys of their cities. They asked from them to govern their own countries and they were getting some guarantees back for their fortunes, for their safety, sometimes some rule inside the kingdoms, after they became Roman dominions. I think we are not very far from this state of affairs also in nowadays Europe. And this is in order to be able to produce any paradigm or any idea for foreigners, we have to take back our own states, which is not the case. In Greece, anyway, it has been nearly formally abolished in many fields, there is no Greek state in economic policy, and indirectly in other policies, by virtue of the texts which were imposed on Greece by the European Union, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Central Bank, which have transformed Greece into a debt colony.

So, as for the paradigm, as I understand the world and its problems, it is in the interests of all great powers of Europe, of United States, of Israel, of Russia, to have a stable, independent, sovereign and democratic Greece and Cyprus. Maybe somebody will think that I tell this because I'm Greek. But they are important for our civilization. They are the birth place of the biggest intellectual evolution that humans have made in the history. It is important to preserve this. And I think it is in the best national interest of the United States of America, of Great Britain, of the countries of the European Union, of the Russian Federation, and also Israel, to have stable, democratic and sovereign and prosperous Greece and Cyprus. If they believe that humanism is over, if they believe that we are living in the world of Hobbes, they make out of this the self-fulfilling prophecy. All the problems Westerners have faced in Greece and Cyprus are the result of their own policy. So I hope they will not make the same mistake this time, but I am not sure. Because they have their reflexes. We are living with Neanderthal reflexes in a world with nuclear arms, with the capacity to alter the climate. We still have in our minds a very obsolete mind, which is not adapted to the situation we are facing. We are stupid. If Neanderthal people were much more intelligent, I think they were even more than we are, because they were better adapted to the situation they were facing. We are facing a completely different situation and we cannot think but in terms of domination, in terms of primitive instincts of another era. We have to find a way to change ourselves, otherwise we will be destroyed as biological species.

**C.P.:** But to be relevant in a timely way to contribute into a proper settlement to the Cyprus issue, I think it is important to realize that both criticisms that you've leveled against the Cyprus government and the ones against the government of Greece, they're just an example of the fact that both Greece and Cyprus, official Greece and Cyprus, have fully subscribed to the paradigm that has Turkey as the key element of stability in this part of the world. We cannot just say that we should be held up as models of principles. We have to stand up for those principles. Among those principles it is important to show the shortcomings of Turkey, the shortcomings of this Turkish-central paradigm that has allowed Turkey to act in a neo-imperialist, neo-Ottoman manner in the Eastern Mediterranean. We are the ones that are accepting this, would you not agree? We have to suggest that there is a better way. What is this better way?

**D.K.:** Yes, but that depends what the West wants to do in the Middle East. Because if they want to probably bomb Muslims from İncirlik, maybe they have to have İncirlik. I don't know how they are thinking the whole situation. I believe they should change their policy not only towards Cyprus and Turkey, they should change their whole regional policy, because the policy they are following since 2001 has completely failed, and has provoked havoc. And you see, it's a very good example. They are saying now that they face huge danger from Putin and Russia. Who brought Putin and Russia in the Middle East? Mrs. Nuland by her policy in Ukraine. So, you know, sometimes you say you are defending somebody, but if you are offending everybody by defending this somebody, you provoke sometimes the opposite results. You bring chaos everywhere.

Now, we have a refugee problem in Europe and many people are, if you want, protesting against this refugee problem. But they have done everything to provoke these refugee waves. And when bombs were falling in Libya, in Syria, everywhere, and we did not do anything to stop this procedure. The Americans have all but destroyed Iraq. The French have all but destroyed Libya. Now we are facing the consequences and we say, "Oh, terrible thing, let's make a new war to

stop Islamists.” If we go on like that, there will be nobody to make war, finally, both in the Middle East and in the West.

But I want to tell you something else. The basic characteristic of all the projects for Cyprus are not to give Cyprus to Turkey. They never wanted, they will never accept to give Cyprus to Turkey, for the same exactly reasons they are not accepting to give it to its own population to rule it, normally. I’m afraid they have used Turkey, because it was the only way to contain Greeks. Of course it’s a dangerous method. Because when you are doing this, you give a practical possibility to Turkey at some point to occupy all the island, if it thinks fit to its own goals. So they were playing with fire by bringing Turkey inside the Cyprus equation. But I think it is not enough to get Turkey out of Cyprus equation, if it is anymore possible. It is also important to let the Cypriots have their own normal state. And if they help Cypriots acquire a normal state, then Cypriots will be very grateful to the forces that will help them. Sometimes it’s very indirect what I say and maybe they are not able to think like that. But in the long run, I repeat, it is in the interest of the United States of America, of Great Britain, of the countries of the European Union, of the Russian Federation, and of Israel, to have a stable, prosperous and democratic Cyprus. It’s good for all of them. They should try to change the way they are thinking, and I think this is the problem.

As for the solution, as for what we have to do, listen, we are not going to discover the law of gravity now in Cyprus. There is a corpus, a legal corpus that we have created in three hundred years, since the British, the American and the French revolutions, about what means democracy, about what means the popular sovereignty, what means a state, what are the rights of the state. Before discussing any question of sovereign or not sovereign in the Cyprus conflict, we have to make an *a priori*, a serious decision. We are not going to touch on the fundamentals of those regulations. We cannot make exceptions of the most basic rules of international law, because if we do make such exceptions, war will come out of this, and it will not be in the interest of anybody.

For instance, take the problem of the minority. The minorities have to be protected. Special provisions have to be adopted for the protection of the minorities, special rights and things like that. To all this we agree. But where this has to stop? It has to stop when it reverses the whole democratic regime, that is when it denies to the majority the right to the rule. Practically, the proposed project for the solution of the Cyprus conflict is so inherently unjust and unstable that it cannot work as a protectorate. Maybe they don’t understand, I don’t know if it is an intention not to work, or it is not an intention. It is not important after all, the result will matter, and the result will be that this plan, if it is adopted, and if anybody tries to apply this on the concrete situation in Cyprus, he will blow up the country and the state. This will not be in the interest even of international forces, if they exist, which they may now think that this is a scenario which is good to have it as a potential possibility.

**C.P.:** I think what I hear you saying, and maybe I’m putting words in your mouth, is that principles should be followed, but unfortunately, I would add, they are followed, where they are useful for a particular geopolitical or geostrategic issue. Now, even if we accept that premise, it is important, as you mentioned... You mentioned Israel. I think Israel is a key element regarding western thinking for the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. You would agree to that.

**D.K.:** Absolutely. It has an enormous influence on United States’ and British diplomacy.

**C.P.:** And one of the integral parts of the turkey as a pivotal state paradigm was the close cooperation that for many years existed between Israel and Turkey. For a number of reasons that relationship has been damaged...

**D.K.:** Damaged, but not abolished. Their services are cooperating very closely from what I hear, I'm not a specialist.

**C.P.:** Right. But again, what I'm saying, therefore, is that perhaps it is a key for Greek policy and Cypriot policy while it's still independent to approach Israel in the right way. I think that that window of opportunity - and this is another criticism, unfortunately, on both Cyprus and Greece - that window of opportunity of a better rapprochement with Israel has been lost. It's been acted upon on the surface, there is good relations, there are visits, there are summit meetings and so on, but as you pointed out, on a deeper level, on the security, intelligence service, etc., on a military level it hasn't gone too far, or far enough to give an alternative to Turkish dominance in the region. I personally think, and I'm sure you agree, that Turkish dominance of the Eastern Mediterranean is not good for Israel. And a lot of Israelis see that. The point is, what do we have to offer other than principle?

**D.K.:** The main question is what we want to get, not what we want to offer. But I can answer to this. Jews and Greeks are the most historic nations in the Mediterranean. I don't want to say anything inferior for other nations, but probably one of the nations which played major role, also international world role. Greeks in the ancient history especially, Jews especially in the modern history. I appreciate very much the Jewish thinking. Everything that is of a value in the last two hundred years, or not everything, but many of them, were created by Jewish thinkers. It was not an accident that most of them were in opposition to their own establishment, but this is another question - they weren't anyway Jewish. So, it will be of enormous importance real dialogue between the Greek nation and the Jewish nation. But you know, this dialogue is extremely difficult. It is extremely difficult on both sides. On the Greek side, because our leaders and representatives are not really representing Greek national consciousness as it is still alive in the depth of the Greek nation, of the Greek people, and this has been proved last time in 2015 referendum, you know. There, because our Greek national project is a project which was created out of the world (*inaudible*). It was created in the first battle with Crusaders for Constantinople one thousand years ago. It is a national project of resistance to conquerors. So this is still alive, but it is alive in the depth of the Greek people, it is not alive in its elite. So, who will make this dialogue for the Greek side? As for Israelis themselves, and the Jews in general, out of their own peculiar path in history, their difficulty to metabolize their own past, the fact that they have suffered so much, they have developed somehow... They are very difficult in communicating. So it is quite difficult to organize such a dialogue, which I consider in the long run as I would say even if... I will be at fault for being a little bit arrogant... This meeting between Greek and Jewish spirit should be one foundation for the future world. But we are quite far away from this. And this could give also solutions to those other problems we are facing. But as soon as our politicians behave like they behave, I'm afraid they are not able to make it.

And you know, sometimes what is happening with politicians in Greece and Cyprus? They get for granted and in their mind they understand the two countries through what the leaders of the two countries are saying. And this can be a huge mistake if you confuse the Greek and the Cypriot leadership with the Greek and the Cypriot peoples. Here it could be a huge misunderstanding. And I have seen many foreigners making this misunderstanding. Treating

Greece as they have treated it with Tsipras, with Papandreou, with Venizelos, with different politicians. They are not Greece. And this is not Cyprus. Papadopoulos – maybe he is more Cyprus than Anastasiades. It is one aspect of Cyprus, without doubt. But it is only one aspect. You have to find the way to treat, otherwise you will have... You know what foreign conquerors in Russia, what has happened to them? They were advancing, advancing, advancing, and finally they found them nowhere. The question in the Greek space is not so much geographic - it is intellectual, it is historical.

**C.P.:** Mr. Konstantakopoulos, thank you very much.

**D.K.:** Thank you Mr. Pelagias, and I hope we will not see this kind of events which we described in the negative scenario. But this is why we say, by the way, to warn that there are serious dangers here and we have enough problems in our region not to multiply them.

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## COMMENTARY\*

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Gary Lakes\*\*  
10 April 2017

### Recent Energy Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean

Cyprus moved into a new offshore exploration earlier this week with the signing of production-sharing contracts for three blocks in its exclusive economic zone (EEZ). A license for Block 10 was signed with ExxonMobil and QatarPetroleum (QP) on Wednesday and licenses for Blocks 6 and 8 were signed with France's Total and Italy's Eni on Thursday.

Representatives from all four companies stated during signing ceremonies at the presidential palace in Nicosia that drilling in their respective blocks would begin in 2018. It was autumn 2014 when the last wells were drilled in the Cyprus' offshore. Two dry holes drilled by ENI at Block 9, which along with Blocks 2 and 3 the Italian firm won as a result of the island's second licensing round in 2012. Only two other wells have been drilled offshore Cyprus - Noble Energy's Aphrodite discovery well in 2011 and a 2013 appraisal well that put the Aphrodite field at 4.5 trillion cubic feet (tcf).

Cypriot Energy Minister Giorgos Lakkotrypīs said during the ceremony with Exxon and QP that during the seven-year course of the licensing period as many as 12 wells would be drilled in the three blocks.

With regard to existing licenses, Total will in mid-July drill its first well in Block 11 which it won in a second licensing round. The Onisiforos well will target the same geology in which Egypt's huge 30 tcf Zohr natural gas discovery was made by ENI in August 2015. Zohr lies only six kilometers from the Cyprus-Egyptian maritime border and seismic data shows the carbonite buildup in Egypt extends well into Cypriot waters. Block 11 lies adjacent to Egypt's Shorouk block where Zohr is located.

The Zohr discovery prompted Cyprus' largest third tender in 2016 attracting the attention of ExxonMobil and QP who's marked success in the LNG sector in Qatar has reignited in Cyprus talks of an LNG facility on the island if resources of which prove large enough. Block 10 is ExxonMobil's first license in the East Mediterranean, but this week's exploration and production-sharing contracts now give Eni Blocks 2, 3, 8 and 9, plus 50% of Blocks 6 and 11 in

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Journalist; Director, Energy Program, ERPIC*

which it is partner with Total.

ENI suspended a four-well drilling program offshore Cyprus in late 2014 after the dry holes in Block 9, and then went off to recalibrated seismic model and subsequently discovered the Zohr field. ENI stated previously that it intends to return to Cyprus to complete a suspended program during the second half of this year.

ExxonMobil senior vice president Andrew Swiger said his company was committed to conducting 3D seismic in Block 10 and it will drill two wells during the first licensing period.

Russo Carlo Vito, executive vice president for Central and South Europe for Eni said a well would be drilled in Block 8 during 2018, and Eleanor Rowley, Total's vice president for exploration in the Middle East and North Africa, said drilling would take place in Block 6 also next year. A large amount of the seismic data has already been gathered in the blocks, she said.

Six wells will likely be drilled in the Cyprus offshore before the end of 2018, which by that time will give the island a reasonable picture of its hydrocarbon resources.



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## INTERVIEW\*

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Marcus Templar\*\*

12 April 2017

### Turkish Constitutional Referendum

**Marta Murzanska (M.M.):** Welcome back to ERPIC. Today I've got with me Mr. Marcus Alexander Templar. Mr. Templar is a retired U.S. army cryptologic linguist and intelligence analyst of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency. He is also an expert on the Balkans and on the Middle East. Marcus, thank you very much for being with us again.

**Marcus Templar (M.T.):** Thank you very much Marta. It's my privilege to be here with you.

**M.M.:** Marcus, this Sunday the Turks will be voting in the constitutional referendum which might grant sweeping powers to President Erdogan. Is this drift towards authoritarianism a distinctive feature of Erdogan's Islamist regime, or is it a deeply rooted, integral part of the Turkish political culture in general? What is your take on it?

**M.T.:** I would say that is more Erdogan than the political culture. Erdogan is a megalomaniac in my opinion and he wants more power. Actually, if I consider everything he has done so far, he's seeking not just political power, but also religious power. If he could, he would be the next caliph, like a pope, in a way, for the Roman Catholics, or the Ecumenical Patriarch for the Orthodox. That's what he's looking for. He's a combination, I would say, his beliefs are a combination of politics - disregarding any laws, any constitution, because he is the top lawmaker in a way, and everybody has to abide by his wishes. This kind the kind of a personality he has. I'm not a psychologist, but to me he probably wants to be a dictator. That's all I see right now and he would try after, if the referendum gives him the power - because I do not know exactly what is going to happen, nobody does - he will seek to somehow through force and intimidation be considered as the caliph, the one that Kemal Ataturk had abolished. So I don't know what's going to happen. But it is him more than anything else.

**M.M.:** What do you think are his chances of becoming, well, a leader of the Muslim world? I mean, is he really that popular in the Sunni Muslim world in order to become a caliph?

**M.T.:** Well, let me go back a little bit. Turks were originally Shia, because they took Islam from

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Former US Army Cryptologic Linguist, All-Source Intelligence Analyst, Defense Intelligence Agency (Retired)*

the Persians who are Shia. And then when they expanded their kingdom – sultanate - they realized that most of their subjects were Sunni. So the sultan changed from Shia to Sunni and made all the Turks to be Sunni instead of Shia. But I believe they still have that old tendency to be Shia in a way. And that's why Erdogan praised Ali a few years ago, I remember. He said he loves Ali very much and so on. And Ali actually was the leader of the Shias, because he is the Muhammad's descendent.

I don't know, I doubt if he will, because he might have the desire but he has no means. There is a discrepancy between the desires of the politicians in Turkey and the means of enforcing anything by the military. Never mind what they show that they do. If we take as an example the coup that took place, to me it was not an attempted coup that failed. To me it was a coup Erdogan wanted it to be. I believe he was behind it. And many people fell as victims, I would say, to his will. In this way first he cleaned everyone he didn't like and then he started throwing to prison journalists and all the courts and everyone that he thought would be dangerous to his wishes. And now he gets the referendum to become, by the vote of the Turkish people to become the next dictator of Turkey.

But the failed coup shows to me that if that was a real coup, I mean a real one that failed, then the Turkish military has a lot of problems. Because, number one, you never start a coup in the evening, then change it to the afternoon. The coup should be done about two in the morning, three in the morning - that time. And the evening that people are not out having fun. So even two o'clock in the morning you shouldn't have people on the streets drunk and so on. And that's another thing. A good Muslim doesn't drink, and a good Muslim does not gamble. And Turks do both.

Now, coming back to the military. The planning of the coup lacked operational implementation. If that was a real coup, an actual coup, then the Turkish generals do not know how to plan, how to implement tactics which requires a good operational plan. There are three plans when you do anything: it's the strategic, then the tactical, and then you join those two with the operational plan - what do you need to take care of what you have planned. And this way the coup has failed, militarily at least. That's my view.

**M.M.:** Let me go back for a second to this issue of Turkish political culture. Why is it so difficult for democracy to take roots in Turkey?

**M.T.:** It seems to me that Turks are... Because of their education. Since even before the Kemal in order to educate yourself within the Turkish empire you had to study in Turkish. I remember a few years back in 2003 I was in California studying in Turkish, actually. And I met a couple of people who had a restaurant in Pacific Grove. They were Arabs from a town north of Amman in Jordan. And I happen to know somebody who was from there and they knew my friend. Anyway, we talked a little bit and they told me that they hated the Turks, because even if the whole area was Muslim, still the Turks wanted them to study in Turkish to become Turks. So that's a tendency, that's a culture of Turkish - they want everybody to become Turk. And with this notion Kemal put together the Kurds and the Turks as all of them being Turks. So the whole education of Turkey is to make everyone Turk and everyone to be a soldier. It goes back to the Mongolian invasions of Europe - this kind of a thing. That's the education that makes them like that.

Now, it seems to me that although individually the Turks are very nice people, when it comes

to Turkey, again, because of the education, because of the history, because of the pride they have for being such a huge sultanate, they still want to go back to become as great as they used to be. So the whole thing is, it's a mixed, I would say, cultural thing. On one hand they want to become, they have a tendency to go back to what it used to be, and on the other hand they find assistance in the way through the education. So the education feeds that nationalism. It's a circle. That's my view.

**M.M.:** The pro-Erdogan narrative of the referendum portrays Europe and the West as an enemy of Turkey and the Muslim world in general. Is this need for inventing an external enemy a constant theme in Turkish politics?

**M.T.:** Well, inventing enemies is not just in Turkish politics, in every politics, and that's the bad side of the whole thing. Unfortunately, many people who are weak, actually, and they want to show how strong they are, they invent external enemies. And in this way, I would say, they root nationalism, they rally people around them. Turkey is a very good example of this. They always find enemies everywhere and that's to me paranoia. But that's another story. And they always, whenever they do, they try to find a weak, in their opinion, country to do that. For example, they always want to take on Greece, because in their opinion the Greeks are weak, only because the Christians do not respond to what the Turks want to do. They try to do the same thing with Syria in the south and Erdogan really wants to destroy the country, because he had to feel that these are the enemies. Anything bad that comes to Turkey is not because of himself and his bad governance, but because of the people of the countries around him. So it is, I would say, something that every dictator needs in order to rally people around him, and forget the problems they have internally. Hitler did the same thing. They attacked the Poles to take, supposedly, all territories of Prussia, they attacked the Czechs, and then they found the Jews as being the root of the problem.

**M.M.:** But what about Europe? I mean, Turkey is a candidate for the European Union and it looks like it's becoming more and more hostile towards Europe. Where does this come from?

**M.T.:** Well, I think the reason for this is dual. Number one, the way I have seen the reaction of Erdogan, also to former president Gül, their reaction was as if Europe wanted to join Turkey instead of Turkey joining Europe. That was one of them. The other thing is that Erdogan wants Europe to do whatever Erdogan wants, and for that he's trying to rally the Turkish citizens or Turks in origin in Western Europe to give the feeling to the European leaders that if they don't do what Erdogan wants, Erdogan is in a position to destabilize their country anytime he wants. So one is the destabilization, and the other through destabilization is that he wants to govern Europe, as if Europe was to join Turkey and not Turkey Europe. That's why they do not change anything.

I was talking to a Turkish officer that time, now he is a lieutenant colonel of the Turkish army. And he said to me - I was talking about the European Union - he said to me back in 2004 that there is no way that Turkey is going to change in order to join the European Union. So Turks want to become members of the European Union without changing at all, which is impossible, you know very well.

**M.M.:** Marcus, thank you very much for giving us your time and for being with us again.

**M.T.:** Thank you Marta.



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## INTERVIEW\*

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David Altman\*

25 April 2017

### Turkey's Constitutional Referendum

**George Pelaghias (G.P.):** Today we have the pleasure of having with us Dr. David Altman, Senior Vice-President of the Netanya Academic College and Vice-Chair of the S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue. If we look at 16th of April constitutional referendum in Turkey, the results have provided Erdogan and the AKP with the means of strengthening the grip on Turkey's future domestic policies. In your opinion, how can we expect Turkey's regional policy to change after this referendum?

**David Altman (D.A.):** First of all, good morning to all of you. And I cannot start our conversation without saying that today is a very important day because it's the day of the commemoration of the Holocaust that we all can still remember and feel what happened in Europe seventy five years ago. And to meet with friends under those circumstances is to remember and to cherish and appreciate the people that we should and can, and to do everything that such an event won't happen to anybody anywhere in our generation and generations to come.

In general, your question is very valid, because I think we are talking about a revolution in the world stage altogether. I think that for the first time we can put on the table some of the differences between East and West. East - I mean Islam, and West - I mean Christians and Europe, Judeo-Christian – whatever you call it. Up till now we were trying always to hide differences and to speak about the unity, and to speak about the similarity, and to speak about that we are all having the same aims and the same goals, which is not correct. And this referendum puts the question on the table. What do I mean? We have some values which we think that those are the most important thing. Along those lines we are preparing all what we want do in the future, in the present, and some of it explains what we did in the past. Well, one of the most important thing is to say what is the most precious thing today in the world? If you are coming to evaluate “precious” - what would you say? Energy? Gold? Diamonds? Is there something which has such a big value that all the world economy and the world philosophy goes around it? The answer is very much yes. The answer is that the West believes that the most precious thing in the world is time - as we are only used to say “time is money.” We

\* *Transcript*

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

believe that money is the most important thing, but time is even dearer than money. And everything is accordingly now, because since we started to use the computers, since we are measuring time in nanoseconds, the value of time is getting dearer and dearer. This is the life of the West.

Unfortunately, the life of the East is completely different. Time is not important, if at all. Then when we are talking about contracts between West and East, we are not talking with the same language. When we are dealing with what to do in a short time that we are having, they don't care, because time doesn't matter. They can give you as much time as you want because we can wait five years, ten years, twenty years, forty years, or so. And that is very important in everything. Because when we are speaking of time taking over our life, we should measure what is happening in our society.

In a democratic society when you are electing a president, you are giving him power only for four years. In some places you are giving him the ability to be elected another time for four years, and in some places it's only for one time and that's all. Because power has to be limited, you cannot give power without controlling it. Somebody has power for too much time, as long as the time gets, as honest as the people will remain, when they are in position for too much time.

When Erdogan comes now and says, "We want to change the rules," he says time is not important. "I don't want to be a president for a short time, time for me does not exist. I'm getting the position, and I want to do with the position as much it is required to do the big job that I'm having."

And the man comes with the different opinion about everything. He is not coming here to give an answer for a short while; he is coming here to change. And what is he changing? The biggest gift given by Turkey after the First World War was when all the world was so much afraid of six hundred years of Ottoman Islamic Empire, and always with a scare that they are going to take over the whole of Europe and Europe will become a Muslim continent, came a new man and says, "Don't be afraid, I am coming with a new message, with the new present to you, world. Listen to me. My name is Kemal Ataturk and I'm going to give you a present. Turkey is not anymore a religious country. Turkey is a free country, a secular country, and they can become your brothers and your friends." And the world got crazy, because after six hundred years the threat of an empire with a different approach and of a different religion was taken off their heart and soul.

And that's why a lot of people were ready to give to Ataturk many, many concessions, they became one of the most important, accepted people in the world. And Europe opened their heart to a lot of people who came from a secular state. They wanted to prove that they are coming from the secular state.

And now comes a new man and says: "Listen, Ataturk unfortunately died long ago and together with him most of his philosophy. Don't take away the pride of religion of the Turkish people. We are back in business as a religious state, as a state with the message, with a lot of responsibilities to our people, to our nation - we are part of a very big nation." And this is part of the situation that has to be taken into consideration from this referendum.

**G.P.:** Certain media has suggested that this referendum outcome has given Erdogan the position to adopt the more moderate position in foreign policy. Is this more wishful thinking

than anything else?

**D.A.:** Only somebody who is a fool can accept it. Erdogan wants to be the leader of the Islamic nation, period. He is not hiding it, he's saying it in so many words, or in so little words. That is his aim, he wants to be the leader of one billion six hundred million Islamic people and to speak on their behalf in the struggle of leadership in the world. I can quote to you an article that was written by Dr. Ephraim Herrera, who is a great researcher on Islam, and he writes as follow. He quoted somebody who is very, very important in the whole hierarchy of the Islamic Brotherhood. The name is Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi. This is the leader, the spiritual leader. He used to be the head of al-Azhar, he quarreled with Egypt and he ran away to Qatar. And he writes as follow in 2014 - it's a free translation, but listen very, very carefully:

"The unification of the clever people of Islam are declaring that the caliphate has to be established in Istanbul who should become the capital of the caliphate. Turkey will be the new caliphate. Why? Because it is combined the region and the country, the old and the new, the Arab and somebody which is not Arab. She is united the *umma*, which means the nation, and the man who did it is Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and you should stand behind and swear loyalty to him, and to tell him, 'March on!' because I can see that he is going to be the leader because the will of Allah is future."

And then he says as follows: "Erdogan is a good candidate to be the caliph." The caliph – not the prime minister, nor the president and not whatever. We are speaking about new terms that the West is not using. The new caliph of Islam means the leader of all the *umma*, of the old Islamic *umma*, of all the Islamic nation. And he explains why - because he has his people all together in Europe already ready. So what are you telling me? That he is going to be more modest? That he's going to be more cooperative? He spoke very openly about it: "I waited 31 years to become part of Europe. Europe closed always the gate, they never opened. Now I'm going to speak in my language. I want to have Europe and according to my laws and to my terms." And that is very, very, very dangerous.

By the way, to you, people of Cyprus, it will be a great, great challenge, because up till now you were one of the things which happened in the region. Tomorrow this is the gate of Turkey to Europe. You are becoming the front of everything which is going to happen in all of Europe. Take it into consideration because it's your business.

We know that part of the problems that the Middle East is having is refugees. Who was behind the refugees? Erdogan was getting money from Libya for many, many years to try to build up Libya, modern Libya, and he got about five billion dollars a year. Suddenly, he was the one who stood behind NATO, France, to convince them that Gaddafi has to be thrown out. Although Gaddafi had the relationship with the United States, with Europe, gave away his nuclear arsenal, gave away his chemical arsenal too. And the truth of the matter is that I didn't see him as an immediate threat to the whole of the region. But as soon as he was thrown away with no alternative, the whole of Libya became a chaotic place and that was the gate to Europe. The island of Lampedusa was always the gate from Africa and the Middle East to Europe. And as soon as Gaddafi wasn't there to watch it, it became open gate and refugees are coming and coming and coming. And that is one of the problems of Europe. The same happened when he was the one of the best friends of the Hafez al-Assad, the father, and Bashar Assad, the son. For a long time he supported them and spoke highly only about them, and always was even in an opposition to Israel because we didn't see eye-to-eye with him about the Assads. And sadly he

became the enemy of Assad, he was the one who stood behind the big revolution in Syria, supported the rebellions, and that would start the transport of refugees from Syria also, so like scissors from two sides - from Syria on one end, and from Libya on the other end - all of Europe is being attacked. So what would you say, that it's just a coincidence, that it's something which happened incidentally?

The third gate is - might be, might be, if you want take it seriously, in Cyprus. And we should be very much aware because not you, not we, and not Europe wants to see such a thing happening in the very near future.

**G.P.:** Dr. Altman, thank you very much for your valuable insights. We look forward to having you back on this issue and other issues as well. Thank you very much.



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## ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATION\*

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Rene Troccaz\*\*

24 May 2017

### **The Role of France in the Security of the Eastern Mediterranean**

I'm not going to deliver an academic presentation, because I think you all are skilled enough to know about the situation in this area. But I will try to present some general thoughts about the way France sees the challenges, the situations in the broader area of the Eastern Mediterranean. And I received several questions which I'm going, or will try, rather, to answer to. And of course I understand that then we have a questions and answers session. So thank you again. Thank you to the organizers. And I will now start my presentation before the questions.

Eastern Mediterranean. France, and our views on this area we are in the very middle of here in Cyprus. Let me first start by telling you that at least for us, maybe for other countries it's not the case, but for France Eastern Mediterranean is an area, but it's not a political concept. We have other concepts covering this area. We have the Middle East, we have the Near East, we have what we call the Levant. Once upon a time there was also the Ottoman Empire which covered more or less most of the area we're speaking about today. And, of course, we have the Mediterranean itself. But for us Eastern Mediterranean is not a political, a geopolitical concept. But regarding this situation I have to say not on the contrary, but that for France this area is very important in our history, in our diplomacy, and for our interests.

Historically - and I'm not going back to the Crusades - but I just want to stay on the last century just to remind you that after the collapse and dismantling of the Ottoman Empire European powers, namely the United Kingdom and France specifically in this area, had a very significant role. As you know, we were present here in Lebanon and Syria till the independence of these countries. The United Kingdom was in other areas. And so this is to say that we had a presence which is historically relatively recent. But apart from that, this presence in the area was historically based on very solid items, such as promoting our language, archeology, and we had missions, scientific missions in the area. The role of - I have to mention that - the religious missions in the area. And, you know, you had in all these places - I don't know how you say that in English - the 'Les échelles du Levant'. It's a French term. What are these cities - they were all the harbors all around the Eastern Mediterranean, more or less in the Ottoman Empire, where

\* *Transcript of oral presentation*

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

you had French communities, traders, councils, people. So we have a history in this area as France. And last but not least, I have also to mention the role of the city, of the harbor rather, of Marseilles which was the gate through the Orient and which is a major harbor, a major city in contact with all the Mediterranean area and specifically with the Eastern Mediterranean, from Larnaca, to Beirut, to Haifa, Alexandria, Smyrna, etc. So this is the background.

I come to nowadays. Nowadays on this historical background... And here I was wondering myself as a French diplomat if I take as a statistical element the questions which are asked to the speaker, every day, to the speaker of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris. Every day we have a briefing and the speaker, who is the voice of France internationally, answers to questions of all newspapers, journals, media of all over the world. And more than 50% of the questions to these briefings on a daily basis are questions that relate to this area of the Eastern Mediterranean. It can be Syria, Israel, Palestine, it can be Lebanon, it can be Turkey, etc. So this is to say that probably in terms of statistics this area is the center of our diplomacy.

Of course, on what we built during the last centuries and what our history gave us and let us, we remain with a strong diplomatic presence in the area. Of course we have embassies, consulates all over this area, very important cultural, scientific network, very important network of schools, French schools. You have in this area and the broader area of the Eastern Mediterranean from Turkey to Jordan, including of course Cyprus, thousands of pupils going to French schools. So this is to say that it still remains this area a place, a point of very significant importance for us.

What is probably new compared to the past, the beginning of last century, the 20th century, is the importance of the diasporas between France and this area. Just to give you an illustration of that, I should remind that the newly elected president of France Macron paid two visits before being elected during his campaign abroad in this area, one to Israel and the other one to Lebanon. And these were very important. Other candidates did the same trips. It shows the importance of these countries and this area as a whole.

Here in Cyprus, even though, lucky us, we are in a relatively stable environment, and of course even though we have this specific situation in Cyprus, but it's a calm area compared to all the turmoil all around us. Cyprus for us is really a strong position, a strong place for partnership, cooperation. Just to give you two examples in totally different fields. First, our navy is coming here very frequently, very regularly, because it crosses in the area due to the situation. And the basis, the safest basis in the area is clearly, without any contest, Cyprus. Second, probably some of you know that we have here, apart from the headquarters in Paris, the most important office of the French press agency in the world. The office in Cyprus, one hundred persons covering all the Middle East, is the most important one. This shows of course the importance of the Middle East, it shows also the sensitivity and the importance of Cyprus as a place appropriate to cover all the areas, evolutions, situations, tensions, etc. I'm not going to give you a catalog of all the crises, all the challenges, all the problems of the area, so what I suggest you is to mention some different points of, let's say, where the crises, conflicts, tensions places, points of interests in the area, and there are many.

I will start and little bit on Syria. I will of course say some words on Israel-Palestine which is a conflict for years now. I will speak of Turkey and the relation between Turkey and the European Union. And keeping in mind, of course, the importance of all the countries, the major ones like

Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon in this area, the stability of which is so important and crucial for all of us, or at least for France and Europe.

Saying that, and before developing on Syria, let's always keep in mind the fact that beyond politics you have to consider the fact that this area, including Cyprus, has to face two major structural challenges. One is water; there is no water in the area. And the other one is demographic pressure. So if you combine these two elements, you always have to think that this area, apart from the political tensions, have to face and to live with these two factors which will of course last for years, and which are challenges for all the populations and governments of these other countries of the area.

So I come to Syria. Syria - five years of civil war, three hundred thousand dead people, thirty thousand foreign fighters - we can say terrorists most of them. I have to say here - it's well-known - two thousand of them coming from France, which is really a major concern, and from other countries of Europe, and from other places in the world. The simple observation is that it cannot last anymore. We need to find a solution. This is of course a humanitarian problem, a major humanitarian crisis, a diplomatic problem, problem of security, also moral problem, and it addresses the stability for all the region and probably also for the world. I'm not going to say that Syria is a Third World War - this is not the case - but it is clearly a local conflict globalized, which involves major powers, global powers, major regional powers and all the countries and populations of the area.

We have in this terrible context to face several major sensitive challenges in Syria. First, and this is the number one for us at least, for France, but probably for others also: terrorism. We have to fight terrorism. It is a fight against terrorism. That's the clear mandate we have with our partners and this is our diplomacy, our orientation and our new authorities will follow this priority.

Second, all the area, but also Europe and, of course, France, have to address the problem of refugees. It is a problem which concerns, of course, Europe, Greece, Italy, France, Germany. It is also a problem for the neighboring countries like Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon.

Third, you have new elements, or the element itself is not new, but the way it's developed is probably new - you have new aspirations. And here I'm referring to the Kurdish populations of Syria who are fighting and they have some new aspirations. We have to see how to take it into account, but I want to make it very clear: the policy of France is to maintain and respect the existing borders - that's very important for us.

And of course, because, as I was mentioning previously, the fact that it is a global conflict, which involves global powers and regional powers, what is at stake now in Syria is the reshaping of all the area. Not necessarily the borders, but the respective weight of each country, of different players, and the stability of the area, not for the coming two years, but probably for the decades to come.

With its geographical proximity Syria is, of course, a challenge for France and for Europe as a whole. Just to remind, unfortunately, that during the last two and a half years the terrorist attacks we suffered on our soil were, most of them, if not all of them, conceived and prepared whether in Syria, or in Raqqa, precisely, but in link with this area. So this is the reason why France is taking part in international coalition to fight Daesh and the Islamic State. In Syria, France is part of this coalition, but we're not in a war against Syria. We're not in a war in Syria.

We are in a war against terrorism which is not the same thing. So what do we want? I will try to make my talk as simple as I can. We want a political solution. This is what we want, this is the orientation. We wish an orderly, organized, managed, negotiated political solution in Syria. I have to say, by the way, probably some of you know that - regarding this our new president spoke with some of his counterparts in Europe, with the American president, and he's now going to receive president of Russia, President Putin in Versailles on the 29<sup>th</sup> of this month, in some days. And of course Syria - you can imagine - will be on the top of the agenda in this mood of finding realistic solutions. So we have some text fixing the basis for a settlement, one of them - I'll mention it because it's probably one of the most important - is the resolution 2254 of the Security Council of the United Nations of December 15<sup>th</sup>. And I have to say regarding that, that we don't consider the removal of Mr. Assad as a precondition to discuss a transition. So, just to make a long story short, our approach is a pragmatic one. We want a political situation, a stable situation in Syria if it's possible in the future.

What does this mean concretely? First, if we have a political transition, we need to rebuild a state, a robust, strong state which means that it will be agreed, accepted by the populations of Syria. This will probably allow - and we wish that it allows in the future - for the refugees to come home. But they need to have a safe home to come back to. We stick very much as France, and this will not change with a new president, on the protection of the minorities. And here I'm referring to the Christians of the Middle East, and specifically in Syria. We will also have to face as all the countries of the area, and specifically Syria, to the challenge of reintegrated generation of chaos. You have young fighters there - Syrians, foreigners - who are fighting for now five, six years. They are not going to school, they are not going to university, they are not working. And you can imagine these people who are acting freely without any control for years now. It is a problem in order to re-stabilize a whole society. It will take time. I've just mentioned that to show and to underline the fact that the solution in Syria will take time, needs real negotiations, and will need also to face challenges which concern also the societies. And when we finish that, hopefully - we know it will be very difficult and it will probably last some time - then comes the question of financing the whole architecture, the whole rebuilding of Syria. You know that worldwide European Union is the number one donor in financing development cooperation. Of course, in the case of Syria we first need a strong political solution on the basis - and this is our approach I was mentioning - and then comes the financing. So we need to finance something strong and not something weak. And of course - again, I'm mentioning that twice, but it is very important for us, it is of a major priority - the fact that the borders have to remain as they are, and we very much stick on the importance of integrity of Syria and of course of all the countries of the area. And here I'm thinking of Lebanon, of course, who is, as you know, a very good ally of France, historically.

After these few words on Syria let me come and I will be even shorter on the conflict of Israel-Palestine. Not to explain what the situation is - I wouldn't dare that - but just in a couple of words to tell you what is the meaning of what we think and what we try to do in this conflict and in this area. Our position is well known, I'm not going to repeat it here. You know that we want a two-state solution, living in peace, full securities for Israel, and having a Palestinian state. We think, we strongly believe - and the new administration in France is in the same mood - that it is an illusion to believe that in the long term we can live without a solution. We think it is a concern for Israel, for Palestine, for all the area, and of course for Europe. So this is just why, and we try to take in the recent past some initiatives in order to promote peace. Of course, we're not the ones who are going to make peace. Peace belongs to Israelis, to

Palestinians. But we think the international community has the obligation to support these initiatives. And this is the meaning of what we're trying to do in this area, because - I'm coming back to what I was saying at the very beginning - all these external questions, whether it's Syria, Israel, Palestine and other conflicts in the world are now domestic problems inside the European societies. So this is also another dimension we have to deal with when addressing these questions.

Turkey and Turkey-Europe. Again, I'm not going to deliver any academic speech on that, but few words to say and addressing to Cypriot friends and colleagues from other embassies serving here in Cyprus as I am. Turkey today is not Turkey in 1974. It's another country. I don't mean that countries remain what they are. But it's not the same size, it's not at all the same perspective. And I want a little bit to insist on that. Turkey is now one of the major players within the G20, it's a country which we understand has the ambition to discuss on an equal basis with Europe, with Russia, with the United States, with India, China, with all the countries of the world. It's a major player - it's not anymore a regional power in this area - it's a major player who probably has the ambition to become a global player. It's a major growing economy and I would like to give you an example to illustrate this approach. It's something which is not very much discussed here or analyzed, at least as far as I know, here in Cyprus.

Turkey is becoming a major player in Africa. Turkey is developing a strong African diplomacy. They open embassies in almost all the countries of Africa. They have a network now of flight connections between Turkey and most of the African capitals and major cities, much more than other European flight companies. Istanbul is becoming an African hub. If you want to leave Somalia, Mogadishu, to go abroad, except if you want to go to Kenya, the only way to go outside from Somalia is to go to Turkey with Turkish Airlines. It says a lot. Turkey invests a lot in a global, influential diplomacy, in a soft diplomacy in Africa. It shows that Turkey has worldwide ambitions. So what we need and we wish for us is of course a stabilized relation with Turkey.

Turkey is challenge, it's a neighbor, it's a country in a difficult situation, and it's a country with which we don't agree systematically on all the items. We stick very much and we insist, and our new president will - I'm sure of that - will insist on what our values are, namely human rights. We're not going to bargain that. But, of course, Turkey is a country we have to take into very serious consideration. And what we wish is to see how with the instruments we have - and when I say 'we' I don't mean France here only, but the European Union - we have the customs union, we have the discussions with the negotiations with Turkey. Frankly, I don't think that it's in a very good shape now, but at least to see how we can contribute to stabilize the Euro-Turkey relations. We think it's important, we are convinced it's important for us, it's important for the neighbors - the European neighbors of Turkey - starting by Greece which receives all these waves of migrants. We are convinced it's useful for Cyprus. And you know in this framework of negotiations we have with Turkey, let's consider also the efforts made by Europe which in some cases are a little bit forgotten or underestimated. I here want to remind that in order to support Turkey in its efforts to organize the flows of refugees, European Union - which means Cyprus, France and all the other countries of the EU which are represented around this table - we paid six billion euros, which is quite significant. So it's not true to say that Europe is not helping Turkey regarding this major problem of the refugees.

And of course we cooperate with Turkey. We have to fight common challenges like terrorism, and this is also something which stems from Syria as I was mentioning previously.

So I would just finish, conclude my words - and this will probably give us the possibility of a transition to the questions - saying some words on Cyprus, of course. Again, I'm not going to speak of the Cypriot problem here, I think I have here experts much more than I am. But anyway, I want to tell you what Cyprus is for us, is for France. And it's not slogans, it says, I think, how we consider the relation with Cyprus, and it tells you also our position on the Cypriot problem. Simple considerations. First, Cyprus is for us - for France - an ally. We are in the same European Union, we are in the same eurozone. Cyprus is a good friend of us and we are a good friend of Cyprus. Cyprus - I mentioned that previously when speaking of the whole region - is really - sorry to use this word - I would say basis for our navy which comes very often on the island. It was the case last year, the year before, and the cooperation is excellent. It's now, I have to say by the way, formalized by an agreement in the field of defense between the Republic of Cyprus and France. So this is the first thing - Cyprus is an ally.

The second thing - and this relates to the work of my ministry, my authorities regarding Cyprus and of course of the French Embassy in Cyprus - Cyprus is a unique case, because it's the only country within the European Union with a conflict and with the presence of the United Nations. Which means that in a way the French Embassy here and my instructions, and the mandate I have from my authorities, my president, my minister, is to serve in a country of the European Union - I was mentioning all the common structures we belong to, Cyprus and France - and also in a country where we have a UN problem. So this duality is one of the specificities. And I will conclude with these dualities saying that now that's a fact. France is within the P5 - permanent members of the Security Council, probably the only one for obvious reasons, which has this double quality of being a P5 member and a member of the European Union. And concerning the problem of Cyprus which is the only UN problem within the European Union, it gives us a specific role to play, we hope a useful one. And for us Cyprus is of course a problem for the United Nations, and it is also a question for the European Union.

I thank you very much for your attention and I'm ready to answer your questions, if there are any.

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## POLICY PAPER

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George Chr. Pelagias\*

14 June 2017

# Cyprus' Response to a Turkish Natural Gas Pipeline to Israel

## Introduction

It has been reported for several years that Turkish official and commercial circles have approached Israeli authorities, and Israeli energy companies, with proposals regarding the purchase of Israeli natural gas found in the Israeli Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).<sup>1</sup> Such proposals include the construction of a deep-water pipeline to the Turkish coast. In the event that such proposals materialise, and a pipeline is in fact built, there is a high probability that it will have to cross Cyprus EEZ.<sup>2</sup> Hereunder, we examine the rights of the Republic of Cyprus regarding this matter.<sup>3</sup>

## Legal framework

The main international conventions discussed are: the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); the 1994 Energy Charter Treaty and Related Documents ("ECT"); and the United Nations Economic Council for Europe Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Trans-boundary Context ("Espoo Convention") 25 February 1991.

The Cyprus legislative regime consists of: the Assessment of Impact on the Environment from Certain Plans and/or Programs Law (No. 102(I)/2005) implementing EU Directive 2001/42/EC;

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<sup>1</sup> 'Turkey's Zorlu Group Pushing Israel to Approve Gas Exports, Today's Zaman,' 14 February 2013, <http://todayszaman.com/>; Avi Bar-Eli, Itai Trilnick, 'Turkish Company Lobbying Israel for Gas Exports to Turkey', Haaretz, 14 February 2013, <http://www.haaretz.com/>; Matthew Bryza, 'Israel-Turkey Pipeline Can Fix Eastern Mediterranean,' Bloomberg, 20 January 2014, <https://www.bloomberg.com/>; Selin Girit, 'Gas Pipeline Hope Heals Rupture in Israel-Turkey Ties,' BBC News, 19 October 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/>; Ben-David Yuval, David Clarke (Eds.), 'Israel-Turkey Gas Pipeline Could be Ready in Four Years,' Reuters, 2 March 2017, <http://www.reuters.com>.

<sup>2</sup> 'Israel, Turkey and Gas, Jerusalem Post Editorial,' 18 May 2013, <http://www.jpost.com/>; Amiram Barkat, 'Pipeline to Turkey and LNG to China,' Globes, 19 June 2013, <http://www.globes.co.il/>; David Wainer, 'Turkey Sees No Need for Cyprus to Approve Israel Gas Pipeline,' Bloomberg, 13 April 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/>.

<sup>3</sup> Mišo Mudrić, 'Rights of States Regarding Underwater Cables and Pipelines,' 2010, <http://academia.edu/>.

the Assessment of Environmental Impact (EIA) from Certain Projects Law (No. 140(I)/2005) implementing EU Directive 97/11/EC; the Exclusive Economic Zone Laws of 2004 (No. 64(I)/2004) and 2014 (No. 97(I)/2014); the Hydrocarbons (Prospecting, Exploration and Exploitation) Law (No. 4(I)/2007); the Submarine Pipelines for Transfer of Oil and other Hydrocarbon Products Regulation of 1995; the Geological Surveys Law of 2013 (No. 140(I)/2013); the Environmental Responsibility Regarding the Prevention and Restoration of Environmental Damage Law (No. 189(I)/2007) implementing EU Directive 2004/35/EC, and amended by EU Directive 2013/30/EU; the Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution and Related Protocols (Ratification) Law of 1979; the Agreement between the Government of the State of Israel and the Republic of Cyprus on the Delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone of 17 December 2010; and the Submarine Pipelines Regulations of 2014 (No. 579/2014), issued pursuant to the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf Laws of 2004 and 2014 (the 2014 Regulations).

## Implementation

The right to lay offshore pipelines in a third state's EEZ, as well as cross-border transit of energy via pipelines, is primarily regulated by UNCLOS, the ECT, related international legal principles, and the transit state's domestic legislation.<sup>4</sup> Cyprus has signed and ratified both UNCLOS and ECT, while Israel is a signatory of neither. Turkey has signed the ECT, but is not a signatory of UNCLOS.

The International Court of Justice, in the *Libya vs. Malta* case<sup>5</sup>, stated that a coastal state has the customary right to establish an EEZ and that the principles in Part V of UNCLOS regulating the EEZ could be considered as customary law.<sup>6</sup> UNCLOS Part V Article 56 grants coastal states sovereign rights within its EEZ, but not sovereignty over it. The rights granted in Article 56 cover exploration, exploitation, conservation and management of natural and living resources, and the activities adjunct to the EEZ. The coastal state also has jurisdiction over artificial structures built, and marine scientific research conducted in its EEZ, as well as the protection of the marine environment. Furthermore, Article 56(3) states that the rights set-out in Article 56, with respect to the seabed and subsoil, shall be exercised in accordance with Part VI of UNCLOS. As such, the right to lay offshore pipelines on the continental shelf within the EEZ is recognised under Article 58 of Part V, and Article 79 and 87 of Part VI. However, a coastal state can still safeguard its interests as a transit state. The protective principle grants coastal states the right to take reasonable measures for the prevention, reduction, and control of pollution from pipelines crossing the state's continental shelf.<sup>7</sup>

In the case of the ECT which regulates cross-border co-operations in the energy industry, such as trade, transit, investments and energy efficiency, Article 7, which in turn regulates transit of energy, including pipelines, obliges signatories not to refuse transit, or refuse to agree to the

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<sup>4</sup> Mudrić Mišo, 'Rights of States Regarding Underwater Cables and Pipelines,' 2010, <http://academia.edu/>.

<sup>5</sup> 'Libyan Arab Jamahiriya-Malta Case,' ICJ Reports, 1985.

<sup>6</sup> 'Libyan Arab Jamahiriya-Malta Case,' ICJ Reports, 1985, 13, para. 33. See also: Adel Omar Alsied, 'Delimitation of Maritime Boundaries with Special Reference to the EEZ and the IMO Conventions Regime: A Libyan Case Study,' United Nations Nippon Foundation, 2006, p.14, <http://www.un.org/>; Arsalon Labaf, 'Costal State Jurisdiction in Offshore Pipeline Projects,' Faculty of Law, Lund University, 2010, p. 29, <http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/>.

<sup>7</sup> Arsalon Labaf, 'Costal State Jurisdiction in Offshore Pipeline Projects,' Faculty of Law, Lund University, 2010, p. 34, <http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/>.



construction of a new pipeline or network capacity, solely on the basis of the origin, destination or ownership.

While the ECT Article 7 makes clear that Cyprus could not obstruct the project, excluding Cyprus from the process could at a later stage deny Cyprus, as a transit state, valuable transfer tariffs. The ECT, similar to UNCLOS Article 208, recognises the principle of national sovereignty over energy resources. This sovereignty, granted in Article 18(1), must be exercised in accordance with and subject to the rules of international law. The ECT Article 7(8) also guarantees a signatory's rights and obligations under international law, customary international law, existing bilateral or multilateral agreements including rules concerning submarine cables and pipelines. It could be argued that since the treaty is legally binding upon the signatories, including its dispute resolution procedures, Turkey, by signing the ECT, not only recognises the Republic of Cyprus as a counter-party, but also acknowledges its rights and obligations under bilateral and multilateral agreements, such as UNCLOS. This could provide Cyprus with the possibility of opening a state-to-state arbitration process against Turkey under ECT Article 27.

Furthermore, Cyprus is obligated under UNCLOS, as well as EU legislations to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment arising from, or in connection with, seabed activities. Cyprus must ensure that the project is in line with the environmental requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC, which is part of Cypriot domestic law<sup>8</sup>, and that the company's EIA procedures follow Directive 2011/92/EU.

The Espoo Convention obliges the Parties to assess the environmental impact of certain activities at an early stage of planning. According to Article 2, the Parties either individually or jointly must take all appropriate and effective measures to prevent, reduce and control significant adverse trans-boundary environmental impact from proposed activities (including the transport of oil and gas through pipelines). Article 2(4) puts an obligation on the Party of origin (i.e. a Contracting Party or Parties in whose jurisdiction a proposed activity is envisaged to take place) to notify affected Parties of a proposed activity that is likely to cause a significant adverse trans-boundary impact.

## **Precedents**

An example of an offshore cross-border pipeline transit is the Nord Stream project which crosses the territorial waters of Russia, Denmark and Germany, as well as the EEZ's of Finland and Sweden. None of the transit states refused authorization of the project. However, they did put certain requirements upon the construction company in order to ensure that the project was in line with their domestic legislation, as well as bilateral and multilateral agreements.<sup>9</sup>

In the case of Nord Stream, all states involved were signatories of UNCLOS, and all states except Russia had ratified the Espoo Convention. However, Russia, who had signed the Convention in 1991, agreed to follow the Convention provisions as far as they did not contradict

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<sup>8</sup> Implemented into Cyprus Law by the Assessment of Impact on the Environment from Certain Plans and/or Programmes Law (No.102(I)/2005)

<sup>9</sup> The applicable legal texts were: UNCLOS, the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity, the 1992 Helsinki Convention, the 1996 London Protocol, (ASCOBANS) 1991 Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas, the 1972 World Heritage Convention (and Underwater Cultural Heritage), the 1998 Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, and the ECT.

Russia's national legislation.<sup>10</sup> The international consultation process set-out in the Espoo Convention proved to be a good instrument to prevent delays in obtaining authorizations, identifying mitigation measures involving recycling and recovery of components of waste streams, creating a cleaner working environment and identifying lower cost alternatives.<sup>11</sup>

The process conducted by the Swedish government is a good example of the obligations that can be placed on entities operating cross-boarder pipeline projects. The Nord Stream Consortium's original proposal was submitted to the Swedish government on 21 December 2007, but the company had to submit additional information on several occasions between 2008 and 2009 due to the fact that it did not satisfy Swedish requirements.<sup>12</sup> The final approval was delivered in November 2009.

The requirements set-forth by Sweden included: approval of the route of the pipes by the Swedish Geological Survey; obligation to develop and monitor all activities with the relevant Swedish authorities; control of the turbidity caused by work on the seabed; avoid construction work during the mating season of the cod fish (between May and October); consult Swedish authorities to protect against disruption of shipping and ship safety; and commitment to remove the pipeline, with the Swedish government having the right to decide the extent of the removal, and other measures necessary to restore the seabed to as near-original condition as possible.

While in the case of the Nord Stream all parties agreed to apply the Espoo Convention, and agree to notify and participate in the EIA procedure, Sweden could still have relied on UNCLOS Article 214 which states that contracting states shall enforce their laws and regulations, adopted in accordance with UNCLOS Article 208<sup>13</sup>, and that they shall adopt laws and regulations, and take other measures necessary to implement applicable international rules and standards to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment arising from or in connection with seabed activities.

### **Turkish claims against Cyprus's EEZ**

The Turkish government has laid claims, on behalf of the Turkish Occupied Areas of Cyprus (TOAC), to a large part of Cyprus EEZ. Turkey may further claim that any proposed pipeline will not cross Cyprus EEZ, but rather pass through the EEZ claimed by the TOAC. The areas of Cyprus EEZ which are claimed by the TOAC, have already been licensed out to the Turkish state-owned oil and gas company (TPAO) for seismic studies and future exploration.

In this case, the Republic of Cyprus must pursue all its rights under international conventions including the ECT, which Turkey has signed and ratified. The ECT makes clear that the sovereign rights of each signatory guaranteed in Article 18 must be exercised in accordance with

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<sup>10</sup> Notification in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Trans-boundary Context (Espoo Convention) for the Nord Stream Extension, 12 April 2013, [www.naturvardsverket.se](http://www.naturvardsverket.se).

<sup>11</sup> Arsalon Labaf, 'Costal State Jurisdiction in Offshore Pipeline Projects,' Faculty of Law Lund University, 2010, p. 43, <http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/>.

<sup>12</sup> Memorandum on the Authorization of the Nord Stream Pipeline in the Baltic Sea, 5 November 2009, Swedish Government Website, <http://www.regeringen.se/>.

<sup>13</sup> That coastal states shall adopt laws and regulations to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment arising from or in connection with seabed activities, and from artificial islands, installations and structures under its jurisdiction.

and subject to the rules of international law. Cyprus declared its EEZ in 2004 abiding by its obligations under UNCLOS, especially when rights and duties of other states are concerned.<sup>14</sup> In addition, Cyprus offshore exploration licensing rounds, and the legal framework that governs them, are based on EU Directive 94/22/EC. Cyprus' sovereign rights have also been accepted by the international community. Turkey's outright refusal to respect Cyprus' sovereign rights could provide Cyprus with a possibility of opening a state-to-state arbitration process against Turkey under ECT Article 27.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

The case of a deep-water pipeline from Israel to Turkey, via Cyprus EEZ, is unique since Cyprus and Turkey have diplomatic relations with Israel, but not with each other. In fact, Cyprus and Turkey are technically still at war since there has not been an official end to the 1974 war between the two states, other than the agreed ceasefire of 16 August 1974. Meanwhile, Cyprus is the only state among the three that have signed and ratified UNCLOS. Both Turkey and Cyprus are signatories to the ECT, Israel is not.

It would be difficult for Cyprus to prevent Israel and Turkey from laying a pipeline within its EEZ based on national and international law. However, Turkey and Israel would not be able to deny Cyprus' rights as a transit state under such laws, and will have to satisfy Cyprus' regulations and environmental concerns, a process that may involve considerable delays.

In line with the Barcelona Traction Case<sup>15</sup> of the International Court of Justice, it can be argued that a company owning and/or operating a pipeline should be regarded a national of the state of its incorporation and subject to the jurisdiction of such state in accordance with the nationality principle. If the incorporation state is a member of UNCLOS, the provisions of the convention would be applicable. Therefore, in the event that Cyprus is not able to enforce its rights directly against Turkey, it may proceed against international companies established outside Turkey.

Cyprus, with the support of UNCLOS, the ECT, other international conventions, and internationally accepted legal principles such as the protective principle, must insist on maintaining its rights as a transit state throughout the planning, implementation and operational stages of the pipeline. It is, therefore, recommended that Cyprus:

- Ensure that its legal framework for the evaluation and authorization of offshore pipeline construction is strictly enforced.
- Ensure that the evaluation process is of the highest environmental standard, and that it involves relevant Cypriot ministries and authorities, such as the ministries of Justice, Environment, and Commerce, Agriculture, Defense and Foreign Affairs, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Maritime Administration, the Transport Agency, the Board of Fisheries, the Geological Survey, the Cyprus Meteorological Service, the

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<sup>14</sup> Article 5(I) of the Exclusive Economic Zone Law 2004, states that the Republic shall have due regard to the rights and duties of other States and shall act in a manner compatible with the provisions of UNCLOS. Furthermore, Article 5(2) states that other States shall enjoy the rights to perform the duties provided under UNCLOS but that they shall comply with the laws and regulations adopted by the Republic of Cyprus in accordance with UNCLOS and other rules of international law.

<sup>15</sup> Barcelona Traction, Light & Power Co Ltd (Belgium v. Spain), 1970, <http://www.icj-cij.org/>.

Armed Forces, as well as any other relevant ministry/authority in order to make the procedure as transparent as possible.<sup>16</sup>

- Cyprus should explore the possibility of initiating procedures against Turkey based on Article 27 of the ECT for violations of Article 18 of the ECT.
- Cyprus should explore the possibility initiating procedures against the company that will be responsible for the construction and implementation of the pipeline in the event that the company fails to respect Cyprus's rights as a transit state.
- Cyprus as a full EU Member should insist that Turkey, as a candidate member state, fully respect Cyprus' rights as a transit state and Turkey's own obligations thereto, as a condition to Turkey's EU accession.
- Cyprus should invite Israel and Turkey to voluntarily accept the process provided by the Espoo Convention as a way to ensure regional co-operation and avoid delays in the proposed project.

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<sup>16</sup> The 2014 Regulations incorporate by reference related Cyprus legislation, and should be used to ensure the involvement of other Cyprus government agencies.

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## INTERVIEW\*

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Ephraim Sneh\*\*

15 June 2017

### The Qatar Crisis

**Marta Murzanska (M.M.):** Welcome again to ERPIC. Our guest today is Brigadier General Dr. Ephraim Sneh from Israel. Dr. Sneh is the Chair of the S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue at Netanya Academic College in Israel. Dr. Sneh, thank you very much for joining us today.

**Ephraim Sneh (E.S.):** My pleasure.

**M.M.:** Recently, several countries, including three members of the Gulf Cooperation Council as well as Egypt have cut all their ties with Qatar. What, in your opinion, lies at the heart of this diplomatic spat?

**E.S.:** It's not just a diplomatic dispute. We have to understand the entire context of this confrontation. There is a struggle in the region. And it is not between the Sunnis and Shias. The struggle is between those Islamist elements who want to impose the more extreme interpretation of Islam on other countries, to destabilize the region in order to take it over. And there are two such forces. One is Iran, and one is ISIS - the Islamic state - which acts in a different way but to pursue the same hegemony.

The region is divided. On one side you have most of the GCC countries, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt of course. And on the other side you see Qatar tries to take side with Islamists. That's the point. What are the manifestations of this Qatari position? They support the Islamist organizations, they support the Islamic Brotherhood, and they are financing the giant incitement machine which is called al-Jazeera. And the measures that the GCC countries are taking now are addressed to full scatter, to decide in which side of the fault line it is standing. If Qatar is standing with the Islamist forces, then Qatar will pay the price. But if Qatar prefers to join the other side of the fault line which is UAE and Saudi Arabia and so forth, then it's another picture. And they have to decide. And the purpose of those measures - which are not

\* Transcript

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easy - is to force Qatar to the side. Which side do they take? That's the way to understand it.

**M.M.:** Unsurprisingly, Turkey and Iran have offered their support to Qatar and it might suggest that there might be some sort of a regional alignment directed against Saudi Arabia. What is your take on that?

**E.S.:** It's not surprising that these two countries offered support to Qatar. Iran - because Iran is opposing most of the other Gulf States. They are against Bahrain, against UAE. They have territorial dispute with these the UAE - the islands. They have claims to Bahrain. So, of course, when there is a dispute what is the message of Iran? "Don't cross the line to the side of the moderate countries - be with us," with what they call the axis of "moqâvemat" - the Axis of Resistance, the axis of confrontation against the West and the moderate Arab countries. That is the message for Iran and Turkey.

Turkey is controlled by an Islamist movement. And maybe ideologically Turkey is closer to Iran, and that's why Turkey offers them a hand and says, "Don't cross to the camp of UAE and Saudi Arabia, stay in the other side of the fault line and we will support you".

**M.M.:** Saudi Arabia, similarly to Qatar, has been long accused of providing support to various radical Islamist groups in the region, in particular in Syria, but also beyond. Has the Saudis' policy changed in this respect?

**E.S.:** I think there is a substantial change in the global Saudi policy. I think that their support of radical Muslim movements is substantially reduced and they understand that this is fostering the tiger that one day may eat you. It seems to me that today you don't see this worldwide support by Saudi Arabia to madrassas and religious Muslim schools and so forth. It seems to me they understood it is the wrong policy. There is one question, and for me as an Israeli, is important how it would affect Gaza Strip. Qatar supports the Hamas regime in Gaza. Now, if Qatar will not be able to do it anymore - and I hope this will be the case because they are supporting a terrorist regime in Gaza - then the other GCC countries will have to step in and to replace Qatar in this support to Gaza. The situation in Gaza can be changed if the wealthy Arab countries will offer to the people of Gaza alternative to the regime of Hamas sponsored by Qatar. And this is rhetoric for the other Arab countries, those who now confront with Qatar, to step in instead of Qatar and to support the people in Gaza, but not to support the Hamas regime - this is very important distinction.

If someone wants to support the people in Gaza, they should do it through the government in Ramallah, the administration of President Abbas. They are the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

**M.M.:** But does, in your opinion, such an alternative exist?

**E.S.:** We should not underestimate how combustible the situation in Gaza is. We are now in June, it's hot, and they will have only few hours of electricity a day. Food can get rotten, people have no air condition, hospitals - they are in poor condition. And this is a time to change the equation in Gaza, but it can be done only if there are combined political, economic, military measures - it will change the situation in Gaza fundamentally.

**M.M.:** Since we're talking about Gaza and Hamas, and obviously Hamas is an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, how does Qatar support the Muslim Brotherhood? We know that the

spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Yusuf al-Qaradawi is hosted by Qatar, but what are other forms of support for it?

**E.S.:** Qatar supports Hamas financially. Till the very recent day they shelter the leadership of Hamas and we heard that some Hamas activists were forced to leave Qatar to somewhere else. And again, this was a good sign which showed some compliance of the Qatari government with the demands of the Arab States.

**M.M.:** And the alliance between the Qatari government and the Muslim Brotherhood - is it an ideological one?

**E.S.:** You don't know if the policy of Qatar is motivated by ideology or by interests. And you can't judge it clearly. But Qatar is the bottom line. They support Hamas, they support the Muslim Brotherhood. So for the side of those countries that feel threatened by this movement, it's very natural that they try to push Qatar to stop this support, because they consider it extremely hostile measure. If Qatar supports the enemies on certain Arab regimes, it's quite natural they want to dissuade them, to try to force them, or to convince them in the hard way to wave this support of Hamas and other subversive terrorist movements.

**M.M.:** Dr. Sneh, thank you very much for your time and for joining us today.

**E.S.:** Thank you.





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## INTERVIEW\*

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Habib C. Malik\*\*

10 July 2017

### Comments on the US-Russia Brokered Ceasefire in South-Western Syria

**George Pelaghias (G.P.):** I'm here today with Professor Habib Malik from the Department of History of the Lebanese American University. Professor Malik, welcome.

**Professor Habib Malik (H.M.):** Thank You.

**G.P.:** A ceasefire covering the southwestern part of Syria recently came into force after having been brokered by the US and Russia during the G20 talks last Friday, July 7<sup>th</sup>. What is your comment on this?

**H.M.:** Well, I think this ceasefire in southwestern Syria brokered by the United States and Russia is a very good thing and indeed a promising start to tackle the remainder of the thorny Syria crisis. That is a sensitive area in southwest Syria because any deterioration of the fighting there could conceivably drag Israel into the picture because it's very close to the Golan Heights. It involves three important towns: Daraa, Sweida and Quneitra. Daraa is a predominantly Sunni town where the Syrian civil war actually started and Quneitra is right up against the Golan Heights. So, if this ceasefire manages to, in a sense, stop possible future Iranian and Hezbollah adventurism in that area, then it would be good, because it would prevent a quick slide into a conflagration with Israel that would drag Israel in, and possibly a spillover with catastrophic consequences to Jordan and Lebanon. So yes, this is an important step and it also comes, I think, as a prelude to another agreement between the United States and Russia, and that is over safe zones in Syria for the eventual repatriation of refugees. That, I think, is also an important next step after consolidating the ceasefire. And, of course, there seems to be a US-Russian agreement broadly on fighting ISIS, more specifically in the Raqqa area, which is the ISIS capital in Syria. All of these are promising developments and so we all hope that the ceasefire will actually hold.

**G.P.:** Moving from Syria to Iraq, Prime Minister al-Abadi recently announced victory over the Islamic State in the city of Mosul. In your opinion, do you see that there could potentially be a

\* *Transcript*

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

spread of ISIS fighters west towards Syria, and perhaps even Lebanon?

**H.M.:** Yes, that is always a possibility. Now, the Iraqis have declared victory in Mosul. There are still a few remaining pockets of diehard ISIS fighters there. But even if the last ISIS fighter is eliminated from Iraq, that doesn't end ISIS as a potent ideology and radicalizing influence over impressionable young Sunni youth. That is the long-term problem that the world faces as far as this form of extremist terrorism is concerned. But obviously ISIS has been dealt a very severe blow in Iraq. ISIS is weakened considerably in Syria and will continue to be weakened there. The possibility of ISIS fighters spilling over from Iraq into Syria and eventually into Lebanon is definitely a disturbing prospect. The good news is that the Lebanese Army is very vigilant, especially on the eastern borders of Lebanon with Syria, and has managed to foil a number of ISIS plots and attacks. So that is somewhat reassuring. Plus the fact that the Sunni Lebanese community is not sympathetic to ISIS, they are not a cradling community for this form of radicalism. Only some of the Syrian refugee camps and Palestinian camps might be able to house some of these fighters, but that would be on the level of a nuisance, not an existential threat as far as Lebanon is concerned. The real problem right now is that the Lebanese government is refusing to talk to the Syrian government directly about repatriating some of the 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Now, that we have an agreement between the two big powers over ceasefire in southwest Syria, the next step would be the safe zones and no-fly zones which would open the door for repatriation of refugees. But as long as the Lebanese government is not talking to the Syrian government, that's very bad and not a good omen. And so the government in Beirut needs to get its act together and start the process of direct negotiations with Syria to repatriate some of these refugees.

**G.P.:** Professor Malik, as always, thank you very much for participating in our discussions and providing your valuable input. We look forward to having you back again.

**H.M.:** Thank you to ERPIC.

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## INTERVIEW\*

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Yair Hirschfeld\*\*

14 July 2017

### Comments on US-Russia Brokered Ceasefire in Syria

**George Pelaghias (G.P.):** I'm here today with Professor Yair Hirschfeld, Academic Director of the S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue in Israel. Professor Hirschfeld, welcome.

**Professor Yair Hirschfeld (Y.H.):** Good evening.

**G.P.:** Professor Hirschfeld, recent ceasefire covering the southwestern part of Syria has come into force after having been brokered by the United States and Russia last Friday. What is the Israel's view on the ceasefire?

**Y.H.:** I think it is good news and potentially bad news. The good news is that if the ceasefire holds, it should be possible to stabilize the area, stabilize the Syrian-Jordanian border, help to add more stability and economic support for the stability in Jordan, which carries a very heavy burden of 1.5 million refugees, most of them from Syria and from Iraq. I would also say that the American-Russian understanding to stabilize the situation is in essence a very positive development. Obviously, we have a very vested interest to stabilize the situation between the Golan, where our forces are, and the other parts of this three-state triangle. This is all potentially good news. There is potentially bad news. There is no American presence on the ground, and there is Russian presence on the ground. The Russians will either by their own will, or they will be pressured to get Hamas as well as Hezbollah fighters in there, or the Iranian fighters in there, who will stir a lot of trouble. And there is no Israeli government that can tolerate that. And if this happens, the ceasefire will turn into a very dangerous new flare that can cause much trouble to everybody involved.

**G.P.:** What do you perceive the risk of seeing an increased number of ISIS fighters fleeing towards Syria and perhaps even Lebanon? What would the impact for Israel be in that case?

**Y.H.:** So far, on the immediate Israeli understanding is to not get involved directly, to offer humanitarian help to victims of conflict in Syria (we've offered important humanitarian help in various ways), but to make it very clear that the strengthening of Hamas and Hezbollah presence in this area, the presence of other fundamentalist, radical, militant Islamic groups that

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Professor, S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, Netanya Academic College*

may have taken acts against Israel is not tolerable. And we will not tolerate Iranian deliveries of rockets and missiles via Syria to Hezbollah and Lebanon via this area. We have made this clear to the Russians. There's been an understanding between Israel and Russia and it will be coordinated with Russia. So far, the Russians have fully understood it and it has worked quite effectively. The question is what happens if there is a destabilization of the situation and the Iranian direct forces or Iranian proxies will try to intensify whatever militant tendencies they have - then there might be trouble. The other question is what will happen when there is a serious pacification effort. Again, a strong Iranian presence in Syria will not be tolerable for Israel because it will be a very serious statement. They have supported terror, they have encouraged terror against Israel, they have a very aggressive way of taking a vicious circle of violence, and Israel will not permit it to happen.

**G.P.:** Professor Hirschfeld, thank you very much for your input and we look forward to having you back.

**Y.H.:** Thank you very much, all the best.

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## INTERVIEW\*

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Klearchos A. Kyriakides\*\*

14 July 2017

### The Cyprus Negotiations after Crans-Montana

On July 7th the negotiations for a solution to the Cyprus problem concluded at Crans-Montana without reaching a settlement. With us today is Dr. Klearchos Kyriakides, Director of the Democracy and Rule of Law program at ERPIC.

**George Pelagias (G.P):** Dr. Kyriakides, what actually happened in Switzerland?

**Klearchos Kyriakides (K.K.):** The first thing I had to say in response to that question is: I do not know! And I do not know because the so-called ‘Conference on Cyprus’ unfolded in secret, behind closed doors, and behind the backs of the citizens and lawful residents of the Republic of Cyprus and the European Union of which it forms part. All we know is what has been released officially by the United Nations and by the various participants at the conference together with certain snippets of information that have been leaked out of the ‘Conference on Cyprus’, which came to close on the 7th of July, having begun on the 12th of January 2017. So the first answer is: we don’t know, because there has been a procedurally unfair process put in place by the United Nations which is designed, it seems, to keep out the citizens and those of us who might want to hold the various participants to account.

Now, having said all of that, I would make two main points with regard to what has happened. One relates to procedure, the other relates to substance. In terms of procedure, what seems to have happened, apart from meeting behind closed doors in secret, is the following. The Macmillan Doctrine, as I call it, has been revived. Now what is the Macmillan Doctrine? It’s the approach that was adopted by the government of the United Kingdom during the prime ministership of Harold Macmillan from 1957 until 1963. Harold Macmillan wanted the Cyprus problem, as the British started call it in the mid-50s, Harold Macmillan, the British prime minister of the day, wanted the Cyprus problem to be resolved by means of a partnership consisting of three sovereign states, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom operating in ‘partnership’ - Harold Macmillan’s word – with the ‘two communities’- another phrase Harold

\* *Transcript*

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

Macmillan gave birth to during the late 1950s. And even though that concept was created during the late British imperial era in Cyprus within the framework of what was then known as the British Crown Colony of Cyprus, the Macmillan Doctrine has been brought back to life in the twenty first century in the year 2017, in the context of an existing sovereign state known as the Republic of Cyprus, which is a full member state of the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the Council of Europe, and the European Union, to name but four international organizations. So what we've seen unfold in a supposedly post-imperial era is the revival of an imperial practice which dates back to the late British imperial era.

Now, why do I say that? I say that because of the evidence that's in the public domain. If one reads the official statements that have been published by the United Nations, particularly since the 12th of January 2017, when the so-called 'Conference on Cyprus' began, one barely finds any mention whatsoever of the Republic of Cyprus. What one does find are multiple references to the participants in the 'Conference on Cyprus', the three guarantor powers, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom, plus the 'two communities', who were described as 'the Greek Cypriot community' and 'the Turkish Cypriot community', who are represented at the conference by two gentlemen described as 'the Greek Cypriot' leader and 'the Turkish Cypriot' leader. We've seen unfold at this 'Conference on Cyprus' - to use the UN phrase - a really peculiar procedure that in my view is unfair and a throwback to the British imperial era.

Now, that's all by way of background as to what has happened procedurally. As to what has happened in terms of substance, I'll say something else. What we've seen at the so-called 'Conference on Cyprus' is the apotheosis of Turkish grand strategy. We've seen a collective capitulation to what I call the five pillars of irrationality, or the five pillars of partition. What are they? Firstly, the proposition that the Island of Cyprus is Turkish. Secondly, that the fundamental principles of majoritarian democracy, unitary self-determination and integration must be undermined. Thirdly, that the citizens of the sovereign state known as the Republic of Cyprus must be divided into two separate communities. Fourthly, that the two separate communities must be separated and segregated into two separate zones. And finally, that this extraordinary basket case of an arrangement must be held together by means of a federation locally, which is locked into a partnership internationally. And I've used the word 'partnership' again, because the two communities locally are locked into this trilateral partnership and arrangement involving Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Now, having said all of that, we mustn't lose sight of two basic facts. The first is that when the Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960, it was established in line with the demands of Turkey, which rested on the formation of a bi-communal state, so that the citizens would be fragmented into two communities. The second thing that we need to remember and never forget is that bi-communal arrangement fell apart through the inter-communal troubles of 1963 and '64, and ultimately through the two Turkish invasions of 1974, Turkey was able to implement its pre-existing designs by means of two invasions, the ethno-religious cleansing of the north of the Republic of Cyprus, the occupation of 36% of the territory and 57% of the coastline of the Republic of Cyprus, and the uprooting of members of the Turkish community who happened to live south of what became ceasefire lines, and their effectively forced relocation to the north.

What we've seen in answer the question what exactly happened at the 'Conference on Cyprus', what we saw was an attempt to legalize the *de facto* realities generated after the two Turkish invasions. But really, more deeply than that, what happened in Switzerland was the eclipse of

democratic values, the undermining of the concept of integration, the demise of the principle of majoritarian democracy. And we also saw a collecting bowing to Turkey and to the demands of Turkey, which predated the Turkish invasion and went back at least to 1964, but they owe their origins to 1956, and are switching in Turkish thinking. And in that context let me just remind everyone that when Turkey adopted the principle and the policy of partition in 1956, Turkey did so on the back of a British initiative. But perhaps more importantly and rather worryingly from that standpoint of today, Turkey embraced the policy of partition in 1956 as a 'sacrifice' - that's the Turkish word that was used as at the time. Partition was accepted as a 'sacrifice' because Turkey regarded the whole of Cyprus as Turkish, even though it was legally British under the Treaty of Lausanne. And the idea that the partition was a 'sacrifice' is something that should rather trouble us, because it suggests that partition, either through a *de facto* arrangement, as it existed since 1974, or through a *de jure* federal arrangement as the negotiators have been trying to find through these secret talks, either of those outcomes is not entirely in keeping with the original Turkish idea, which was that the island of Cyprus should pass from British into Turkish hands.

**G.P.:** Is the process of finding a solution to the Cyprus problem over?

**K.K.:** The search for a settlement to the Cyprus problem has been on and off in one form or another since the mid to late 1960s. We were told both before and during the conference on Cyprus that this was the last chance. And nobody actually went to any great detail as to what might happen next, if this last chance wasn't grasped. And to that extent the abuse of the phrase 'the last chance' in my view was calculated to play on the minds of people to create a sense of stress and trepidation. And also to provide, possibly, a psychological advantage to the beneficiaries of the last chance, if it was to be grasped, which of course so far it hasn't been.

I want to point out in this context that the phrase 'the last chance' was first used by Harold Macmillan, the then British prime minister, in the summer of 1958. It was also used by his Colonial Secretary Allan Lennox-Boyd in the context of the ill-fated Macmillan Plan of the summer of 1958. So it's a very old phrase that's been recycled, or reheated, or rehashed from time to time over the past 60 years. And what history does tell us is that the process is not over.

My one concern, having said all of that, is we've been put on notice by history that Turkey has a track record of invading, Turkey has a track record of occupying and colonizing Cyprus - in the last forty years they've done that in relation to the 36% of the Republic in the north and 57% of the coastline of the Republic in the north. So I think we should be on guard as to what Turkey may or may not do in the future. And I say that mindful of the undeniable reality that Turkey has been turned into an authoritarian, if not tyrannical regime, a state under the regime of President Erdogan.

**G.P.:** What comes next?

**K.K.:** Democracy is that the world need to wake up. They need to wake up and appreciate that their policies of appeasing Turkey have failed. The policy of appeasement was supposedly going to transform Turkey from an authoritarian Kemalist state into a shining democracy which could take its place in the family of democratic nations. That's failed. President Erdogan has shattered that to pieces. What appeasement has done is that it's given Turkey the appetite to be ever more aggressive, ever more bullying, and ever more intimidatory in its approach to the European Union. In the lead-up to the referendum in Turkey on the 16th of April one Turkish

Minister after another issued menacing statements. At the forefront of the menacing statements was President Erdogan himself. I refer you, for example, to the speech he gave on the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2017, when he effectively warned that no European would be safe walking on the streets of Europe if the Europeans didn't bow to his wishes.

So what should happen next? There needs to be a new strategy formulated, first of all here in the Republic of Cyprus, but also beyond the Republic of Cyprus into the remainder of the European Union.

**G.P.:** Thank you very much and we are hoping to have you back with us soon.

**K.K.:** You're welcome. Thank you.



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## INTERVIEW\*

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Fanoulla Argyrou\*\*

14 July 2017

### Comments on the Crans-Montana Conference on Cyprus

**Marta Murzanska (M.M.):** Our guest today is Mrs. Fanoulla Argyrou, a journalist and a writer based in London. Thank you for joining us and welcome.

**Fanoulla Argyrou (F.A.):** Thank you very much.

**M.M.:** The Conference on Cyprus in Crans-Montana collapsed without the settlement and many are actually wondering what is going to happen next. But first, according to your opinion, what happened in Crans-Montana during those negotiations? Why did they fail?

**F.A.:** What happened in Switzerland, apart from the theatrics, I would say, and the holidays for those gathered there, it was one more effort to legitimize the results of two Turkish invasions back in 1974, and at the end recognizing the occupied area as a legitimate Turkish constituent state.

If I can go back in time, because everything starts from forty three years ago, on the 16th of August 1974, when the Foreign Office decided our policy over Cyprus, and which was adopted at the time of the geographical federation, that is the bi-communal bi-zonal federation as we know it, and all their efforts have been concentrated ever since in achieving this and securing the acceptance of the Greeks in Cyprus, that is the Republic of Cyprus. For forty two years they have failed all these efforts, and the last chapter, as we have witnessed, was in Switzerland, in Geneva and Crans-Montana. I said theatrics, because, you know, they are not looking for a proper solution. First of all, Greece and 'the Greek Cypriot leader' in inverted commas, because the Republic of Cyprus was not represented. Turkey always wanted since 1974 a five-party conference and that is what was achieved. They wanted the abolition of the Treaty of Guarantee and the withdrawal of the Turkish troops. In this effort we saw the 'Greek Cypriot leader' in inverted commas Mr. Anastasiades to offer even more unmandated [sic] concessions to Turkey to achieve this. And how did Turkey reply? With a fistful of notes. And that was the end of the latest effort.

And you know something, even if Turkey had capitulated to the demands of abolishing the Treaty of Guarantee and immediately withdrawing all her Turkish-occupying forces, it would

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Journalist, Researcher and Author*

still come out triumphant because the end result from our side was the capitulation of accepting a constituent Turkish state in the occupied areas.

**M.M.:** So what is next Mrs. Argyrou? What do you think will happen next? Are the negotiations over?

**F.A.:** No, I don't think they're over, I think one way or the other they will commence again. But you know something, as long as there are no leaders in Cyprus determined with guts and determination to swing the problem from a bi-communal dispute as they started it back in 1977, nobody had the courage to swing this to its proper direction, that is of invasion and occupation, bring the situation back to its basics, which is invasion and occupation, injustice, violation of human rights. I don't think we will see any change, but the talks will continue on the same line as left in Switzerland.

And you know something, I see the leaders in Cyprus with this policy, they remind me of the Turkish whirling dervishes, when they go round, and round, and round until they drop. So how the situation is in Cyprus, unfortunately, and will continue like this until we have a leader courageous enough to do this great change. You know, I hear them saying that they all call now for a new strategy. But what new strategy? They don't say much. They all support the bi-zonal bi-communal federation and I don't see how this can make any difference to what the present government is following. Until they come out clearly and specifically against this solution and take a line for the liberation of Cyprus, for justice, for real justice, because there can be no justice and no fair solution unless the human rights violations are addressed and people can go back to their homes, and only then Cyprus can become a proper democracy, when the rule of law is respected and enforced.

**M.M.:** Mrs. Argyrou, thank you very much for joining us today and thank you very much for your time.

**F.A.:** Thank you very much indeed.

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## INTERVIEW\*

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Fanoulla Argyrou\*\*

14 July 2017

### The “Cyprus File” Handover

**Marta Murzanska (M.M.):** Today, Friday 14th, the Greek parliament will hand over to the Republic of Cyprus the findings of an inquiry into the 1974 coup followed by the Turkish invasion. Twenty nine years later they are finally being handed over. Our guest today is Ms. Fanoulla Argyrou, a journalist and a writer based in London Ms. Argyrou, thank you very much for joining us and welcome.

**Fanoulla Argyrou (F.A.):** Thank you very much for inviting me.

**M.M.:** Could you please tell us what significance it has for a better understanding what happened in 1974.

**F.A.:** Yes. These files are long awaited, but if what I read this morning is something to go by, and that is that this file and all these boxes do not really contain what we are looking for, and it contains testimonies and statements of people at the time who were called to give evidence to the Greek Parliament’s inquiry, I don’t think we will be satisfied and have enough material to justify that at last we have something from Greece. Because what I would like to see, it’s not the testimonies, because all of these were known at the time. And people read all about this. It’s in the public domain. I’ve seen it on the Internet even. But the thing is what I’m looking for as a researcher is the documents and archives of the Ministry of Defense of Greece and of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I’m not interested in the testimonies of people which are already known. I want to know the inside of the Foreign Office of Greece and of the Ministry of Defense of Greece. Because then we can compare those documents with the documents we already have released in the British archives and the American archive and then we can compare them and see where they match. And then we can come to some sort of result nearer to the truth of what really happened in 1974. So far, we have the American and the British documents. And as far as Cyprus is concerned, and what happened in Cyprus in ‘74 and everything that happens around Cyprus, primary sources are the British sources, secondary sources are the Americans’. And once you match and you compare these two archives, then you have a good picture of what happened. But there is a little bit missing. And it would have been very helpful if we could have Greek archives, but proper archives, not testimonies of different people. So I’m a bit

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Journalist, Researcher and Author*

disappointed of what I heard this morning if this is what we are getting from Greece.

**M.M.:** So what you're saying is that these findings actually do not carry as much value as we would expect them to.

**F.A.:** As I said, I read this morning some reports saying that this is what the boxes contained. So if it is only testimonies and things that were already known back in the 1980s in Greece when the inquiry was conducted, I am disappointed that we will not get exactly what we are looking for, unfortunately.

**M.M.:** Mrs. Argyrou, thank you very much for joining us for being with us today and thank you for your time.

**F.A.:** Thank you very much indeed.

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## COMMENTARY\*

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Andrew Lambert\*\*

3 October 2017

### **The Kurdish Referendum for Independence in Northern Iraq**

Before we start, let's just remind ourselves some of the history, because of the context in which this was established, that actually dictates the way in which the future is likely to unfold. Of course, we should remember that the Sykes-Picot agreement at the end of World War I envisaged a separate entity for the Kurdish nation. If a plebiscite was agreed, then according to the Treaty of Sèvres the Kurds would have the area to the east of the Euphrates river, across almost to the boundary of Mosul, but not including Mosul itself, while Armenia would have the area from Trabzon in the north, almost up to the edge of the area by the Kurds, and Turkey would have the remaining part of western Anatolia.

As I'm sure listeners will recall, in the early 1920s the group of Turkish officers under Atatürk carried out several attacks that began a Turkish war of independence in order to regain all the annexed territories. Most importantly, they were concerned about the territories to the west, around Izmir and Constantinople, and the area to the east was always something additional, but not necessarily essential. However, as a result of their success in their war of independence, the Treaty of Sevres, which was the original treaty granted to the Kurds, was negated, and the Treaty of Lausanne was instituted in its place. This gave the whole of Anatolia to the Turkish Republic, and negated the Turkish promises that were offered under the Treaty of Sèvres.

Of course, since then, the Kurdish territories had been divided up between, as I said earlier, the Turkish areas to the east and part of Anatolia, the northern part of Iraq, and the western part of Iran. And the Kurds in all three of those areas have effectively been second-class citizens. They've been taking the lowliest jobs, and suffering considerable discrimination. And nowhere was this more stark than of course during the 1980s, when under Saddam Hussein's regime the Iraqis conducted the Al-Anfal Campaign, which climaxed with the weapons of mass destruction, specifically the use of chemicals against Halabja in 1988, when probably something like 7000 civilians – women and children – were killed as a result of the chemical attack. In fact, I spoke to some of the Kurdish survivors, and they said what surprised them after the attack, was the fact that nothing moved. Not only were all the women and children dead, but all the

\* *Transcript*

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

animals were dead, the birds were dead, everything in that area, apart from cockroaches, had been killed. Now that was ethnic cleansing on a grand scale by the Saddam Hussein regime. It was a form of attempted genocide, and this has now, as I am sure your listeners will know, been recognized by Iraq's Supreme Court.

So the Kurds have long sought to have a proper homeland, to live in peace. They are a relatively modern grouping, relatively liberal, and very much Western-orientated regime. Now the Kurdish area, certainly in the northern part of Iraq, is an island of stability in what is essentially a sea of chaos. To the west we see the chaos in Turkey, to the east we see the problems in Iran, the problems with weapons of mass destruction, and the aspirations there, and of course in Iraq itself we see an ongoing Sunni-Shia conflict. Saddam, at the end of Gulf War I, attempted to reassert his authority, and the UK government, as Saddam attempted to move to the Kurdish areas, decided they would attempt to prevent the humanitarian excesses that were taking place. And what then happened was that many of the Kurdish villages were just left like the Mary Celeste. The Kurds departed, moved up in to the hills in order to escape the Saddam regime. Approximately five hundred to a thousand women and children were dying every single day up in the hills, because there was no water, no food, and no shelter. And in order to prevent this humanitarian outrage, the UK government, alongside the Americans, decided to set up what eventually became the no-fly zones in northern Iraq, and indeed, subsequently in southern Iraq also.

In 1999, I was commanding the British forces in the northern area of Iraq, and we were imposing a no-fly zone on Iraq north of the 36<sup>th</sup> parallel. My task was to ensure that Saddam Hussein did not move forces into the area, and start to threaten the Kurds, and cause the mass evacuation of villages again. So we end up in a situation that having established now since the fall of Saddam, following the 2003 Gulf War, the Kurds do have a considerable regional autonomy, and indeed a Kurdistan Regional Government has been set up. They enjoy that autonomy, but they nevertheless, certainly in the northern part of Iraq, are under control of the Iraqi regime. For those Kurdish assets, or those Kurdish peoples in the eastern side of Turkey, of course there is not such government, nor indeed is there any such form of autonomy for the Kurds in the western part of Iran.

So the question is, why is it that right now the Kurds have decided to set up a referendum to decide whether or not to have an autonomy? And that autonomy, of course, or the question on the ballot paper is: Do you wish to have autonomy for the Kurdish Regional Government, i.e. the Kurdish grouping in northern Iraq? It has no effective mandate in either eastern Turkey, or western Iran. But why now? Why did they decide to do it now? I think that the answer to that really comes in two parts.

The first is that, of course, the Kurds have been fighting essentially as the West's surrogate ground forces in the fight against ISIS, and they've done exceptionally well. Obviously, they've been supported by a massive Western air power, but the real hard fighting has largely been done by the Peshmerga of the KDP forces, the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq. And they have been very successful indeed. As a result of that, two things have really happened for the Kurds. First of all, they've built up a considerable Kurdish pride in the strength and capabilities of their own armed forces. But equally importantly, there is probably a sense of indebtedness: the West owes them for the forces they have committed, for the losses that they

have incurred, and for the successes they've clearly had, against ISIS. Not only in taking places like Mosul, but also for the Syrian Kurds, in starting and continuing the battles in Raqqa. So of course the West does owe the Kurds something.

Secondly, 90% of the revenues that the Kurds enjoy come from oil. And this, of course, has been very much subject to the reductions in the price of oil that has occurred in the last three or four years. This has caused considerable difficulties for the Kurdistan Regional Government. A lot of salaries have not been paid. And of course, by having a plebiscite right now, it does rather focus the attention somewhere else, and makes it seem as though that is the problem, and the salaries are less important than anything else. Now we come to the reactions by the countries that have direct interest in this area. The US has actually condemned a referendum, and the diplomats have gone out of their way to say, of course, we should realize that support for the Kurds - and there has been a considerable support for the Kurds - does not equal support for independence. So the US, of course, is somewhat equivocal on this: it does not want the independence referendum to cause any form of difficulty in the area, but at the same time it wants to try and support the Kurds where possible.

For the other three nations that are directly involved, both, or three of them have considerably overreacted. The one nation that has probably reacted least is Iran, although there have been reports of missiles being fired in the area from Iran into some of the Kurdish areas. Whether it is true or not is difficult to know. But they have shut off all air links between Teheran and the Kurdish Regional Government. To the west, of course, there is Turkey, and Turkey probably has a population of some 20 million Kurds in the eastern part of Anatolia. And they see a grave danger, that if the Treaty of Sèvres, or some surrogate of the Treaty of Sèvres were to be implemented, it would essentially mean the partition of the eastern part of Turkey. And they are considerably worried that unless they do something to stop the Kurdish referendum migrating, or evolving, into a form of a proper independence, they would then find themselves with half of their country disappearing. But what it has done, of course, is it's probably encouraged the PKK under Abdullah Ocalan who, we should recall, was imprisoned, was captured in Kenya, was imprisoned by the Turks, was sentenced to death, although his sentence to death has now been revoked, and substituted by a life of hard labor. But Abdullah Ocalan and the PKK are continuing to carry out their terrorist attacks in the eastern parts of Turkey against the Turkish regime. And there are some concerns that this referendum will cause the PKK to fight with renewed vigor. But there is a great danger from that, that if Turkey then does what it says it is going to do, which is to close the borders and shut off the oil, when you recall that 90% of the revenue for Kurdistan comes from oil, if Turkey shuts off the oil, then of course there will be essentially no money to support the Kurdistan Regional Government. The danger of that will of course be that it will convince all the other countries that have pipelines through the area that Turkey is not a reliable partner, and whenever some difficulty arises, Turkey can begin to turn off the oil, or turn off the oil pipeline.

But it's really in Iraq that one sees the most vehement form of reaction. And the problem with Iraq's reaction, which is to close the borders and stop any movements in the air space, is that it will force the Kurdistan Regional Government to look elsewhere for its friends. And the danger already is that with Iran already heavily involved in Syria, and with the Russians already heavily involved in Syria, I would be very surprised indeed if the Russians did not use the opportunity to start improving links with the Kurdistan Regional Government. So it really comes down to

America realizing where it's best interests lie, because if it doesn't manage to resolve this little impasse, then I would be surprised if the Russians did not start to move into supporting the Kurds in their aspirations.

Known of course also is the other element in this, and that is China. China, as we know, under the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, is already trying to reestablish the Silk Road, which, no doubt, will pass, in some way or form, across the territories of northern Iraq, and may involve also the Chinese becoming involved. I would find it very difficult for the Kurds if they did not start to look towards China and Russia to see if they would be prepared to support their best interests.

It would be a great shame, given all that, if the West were to allow the Kurdistan aspirations just to be left on one side and to become stillborn. And it seems to me that it's in the best interest of the West, best interest of Turkey in particular, and certainly of the Iraqi government, to try and look at the Kurdish aspirations in the historical context, and say to them, "We recognize what you wish, and we will work towards it, but we won't carry out some form of draconian operations against you. Because to do that, we'll create exactly the sort of situation, that we do not want to happen, which will be instability, and growing involvement by Russia and China in the region."



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## COMMENTARY\*

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Ephraim Sneh\*\*

25 October 2017

### Comments on the Hamas-Fatah Reconciliation Deal

The so-called reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas is not a genuine, authentic process. It is a kind of, let's say, cease fire agreement, which is imposed by the Egyptian intelligence, and the record of this so-called reconciliation is very, very poor. What's the reason? Why it has never succeeded, or succeeded but didn't last for a long time and the agreement brakes after a short time? There is something which is very profound.

The political and ideological visions of Hamas and Fatah are contradicting and irreconcilable. Why? Because their visions about how the Palestinian society, the Palestinian state should look like are totally different. The people of Fatah, which is a national movement, speak about a modern, Western-oriented society: modernised, progressive, part of the "new world", while Hamas speaks about a theocratic, religious, Muslim state. And it is not the same. That's why there is no reconciliation between their dreams, there is no reconciliation on the ground. They are heading towards two very different goals. That's why all kinds of so-called reconciliation are very short-time.

But there is another very profound reason. In the collective mentality of political Islam there is no power-sharing. And you can look at other examples, where political Islam is in power. It's either-or. Either they have total control, total power, or they are opposing existing order. Power-sharing, maybe only in Tunisia you have an example of power-sharing, not anywhere else.

So if they are speaking about joint management, cooperation, I wonder if it will work, because there are built-in reasons why it cannot last very long. But there is another reason in the specific example of Gaza. As long as Hamas is not disarmed and the so-called military wing of Hamas remains at large heavily armed – strong military force in Gaza – all the other kinds of government are fictitious. They are not real. Because at the end of the day, what will define who will rule Gaza is not the agreement in Cairo, but the reality on the ground. And the fact that Hamas is actually an old, very strong military leverage, sooner or later will bring about the collapse of the agreement, because it is not sustainable. Because if, for instance, the security

\* *Transcript*

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forces which are loyal to Ramallah, to Abu Mazen, will arrest somebody and the Hamas will not like it, they will immediately use force to stop it. Any decision that the Hamas will not like, they will not obey, and sooner or later they will use military force to change it. In such reality the fact that Hamas is the strongest military force in Gaza will make any solution impossible.

Although in the short run, for a short period of time, maybe this reconciliation agreement will make the lives of the population of Gaza a little bit easier. We are speaking about two million Palestinians who are living in Gaza in very bad social conditions. Maybe some payments from outside, some measures from Ramallah, restoring of some salaries – these kinds of measures will make the lives of the population of Gaza a little bit better. But it will not solve the basic economic problems of Gaza. New investments will not come from private sector to a place where forty thousand fanatics are holding Kalashnikovs. It will not work. And the solution for the economic problems of Gaza – the unemployment, the poverty – is not vouchers, not donations, but foreign investment in projects that are feasible in Gaza, but under normal conditions. No other terror organisation has such a heavy say in how the lives are run in Gaza. The solution to the problem of Gaza is a combined one: economic, political, administrative and military. And only by cooperation of the Palestinian Authority, Egypt, at least one wealthy Arab state which is not Qatar, and Israel. If these factors work together, then a solution for Gaza is possible.

And again, there is no solution in Gaza which is not connected to the political solution of the Palestinian problem through agreement with Israel, with support of the regional powers: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Jordan. Without such a regional cooperation which is supporting the agreement, Gaza will not be another place, though it can be another place: without terror, without launching missiles against Israel. With heavy foreign investment Gaza can be a Dubai of the Mediterranean. But for this what is needed are genuine arrangements and agreements and not fake reconciliations, as the current agreement is.

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## COMMENTARY\*

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Habib C. Malik\*\*

26 October 2017

### **Syria, Lebanon and Israel in a Changing Geopolitical Environment**

The question arising these days is about all of this talk of war and conflict between Lebanon and Israel, and in the broader Syrian theater. Thankfully, it's all still talk and most likely to remain that way, unless some unforeseen unilateral action or human error occurs.

The situation is actually somewhat altered by the fact that Russia has entered militarily into Syria two years ago, in September 2015. And that has introduced some constraints on both Iran and Israel in very different ways. For Iran, who might have thought they have a free hand in Syria, they have discovered that that's not going to be the case that easily. Especially now, that Russians, in agreement with the United States, have declared the ceasefire in southern Syria, near the Jordanian-Israeli border. Israel now finds itself having to constantly ensure the deconfliction parameters with the Russians in order for Israel to conduct its interdiction of weapons coming through Syria to Hezbollah and Lebanon. And that is also a constraint – Israel has never had to clear these things in the past with anyone.

Now, given all of this and the high rhetoric on both sides of the border – Syria, Lebanon and Israel – the sense that one gets is that the way to avoid war and conflict would be for Israel and Russia to cooperate. And recently the Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu was in Israel, and he got an ear full of Israeli concerns about the security situation. And essentially his response was down to: if Israel was just to address Iran's presence in Syria that would be best done either through or in coordination with the Russians, rather than taking any unilateral actions.

There was a slightly disturbing incident couple of days ago when a Syrian anti-aircraft battery opened up on an Israeli plane flying over Lebanese airspace. Nothing happened, of course, and the Israelis retaliated against that particular site. But this is indicative of how things can spiral out of control if that coordination doesn't take place.

I guess one last point on this has to do with Hezbollah and Lebanon. The Israelis constantly repeat that Hezbollah is really in control of the Lebanese army. That cannot be accurate,

\* *Transcript*

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because how is it then that the US continues to supply weapons and training and sharing intelligence with the Lebanese Army, if in fact what the Israelis are saying is true? That would be impossible for the Americans. So one has to temper all these statements down a bit, bring them down to reality. I guess the answer to the two questions, "Has Hezbollah swallowed Lebanon?" and "Can Hezbollah swallow Lebanon?" the answer to both of these questions is "no", and "no". Moreover, I would add Hezbollah knows this, and they steer clear of the attempt.

Lebanon is a complicated sectarian can of worms. And it's very difficult for any group, no matter how powerful or strong, to actually dominate and control a place like Lebanon.

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## COMMENTARY\*

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Klearchos A. Kyriakides\*\*

7 November 2017

### **103<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the British Annexation of Cyprus**

This short presentation marks a significant anniversary in the history of the island of Cyprus, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and the Eastern Mediterranean region. I'm referring to the 103rd anniversary of the annexation of the island of Cyprus by the King of England on Thursday the 5th of November 1914.

Now, why on earth 103 years after this event should we be casting our mind back to this event? I'm going to put forth three main reasons, among others, as to why the annexation of the 5th of November 1914 is of enduring significance to the island of Cyprus, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and the Eastern Mediterranean.

The first reason is that the annexation reminds us that the United Kingdom was stabbed in the back by Turkey as a result of Turkey's alliance with Germany at the start of the First World War, which began in August 1914. And that act of betrayal on the part of Turkey - and indeed it was an act of betrayal - required the United Kingdom to respond, and respond in the way that it did, firstly by annexing the island of Cyprus, and secondly by declaring war on Turkey.

A little bit of background is needed here in order to understand this first point that I'm making. The Ottoman Turks invaded the island of Cyprus in 1570, then proceeded to conquer the island in rather blood-soaked and unsavory circumstances in the following year, 1571. The Ottoman Turks ruled, or rather misruled, the island of Cyprus from 1571 until 1878, against the background formed by Russian advances at the expense of Turkey and in general malaise in the Ottoman Turkish Caliphate and Empire. The Sultan of Turkey had to cut the deal with the British in secret in what was then known as Constantinople, and this deal was cut on June the 4th 1878. And under that deal the island of Cyprus was assigned to be occupied and administered by the British under the terms of the Anglo-Turkish Convention of Defensive Alliance of that date, that is to say the 4th of June 1878. That convention, as the name suggest, was meant to seal an alliance of defensive nature between the British and the Turks, but in the subsequent years the Turks rather let the British down by gradually peeling away from the British and moving towards Germany. And the alliance between Germany and Turkey was

\* *Transcript*

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eventually clenched in 1914 and that formed the background to the events of 5th November 1914, in other words the British annexation of the island of Cyprus and the British declaration of war against Turkey.

Now, the contemporary significance of this is that over the last few years, I would suggest, Turkey under Prime Minister and now President Erdogan have been engaged in a campaign of backstabbing: stabbing the British in the back and stabbing much of the rest of Europe in the back through various activities that are well documented and in the public domain. That's important for everyone to grasp that Turkey has proven itself to be, over the decades and indeed the centuries, to be a rather unstable and unreliable state, and unreliable "friend" of Europe. And what happened between 1878 and 1914 should serve as a warning to the West that Turkey cannot be trusted, either to abide by the terms of agreements it has just entered into, or to act in the interest of democracies in the world.

The second reason why the annexation of the 5th of November 1914 is so important is that it formed the backdrop to a number of subsequent events. Most immediately, of course, it formed a backdrop to what became the Armenian Genocide, the Hellenic Genocide, and the Assyrian Genocide, all three of which were preceded by Turkish declaration of war against the British and other allies of the British, and it was also of course accompanied by the declaration of a holy war by Turkey. That was a short-term development. And this, of course, led to the eventual dismantlement of the Ottoman Caliphate and Empire, the crushing defeat inflicted on Turkey by the Treaty of Lausanne, and, as part and parcel of the treaty of Lausanne of 1923, the confirmation by Turkey to be recognized as lawful the annexation of Cyprus proclaimed by the United Kingdom on the 5th November 1914. That was achieved by article 20 of the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923.

That was the short-term relevance of what occurred on the 5th November 1914. But the longer-term relevance was that with the onset of the Cold War during the late 1940s and 1950s, the British decided to forget and turn the blind eye to what had happened during the First World War, and the British decided to bring Turkey back into the picture as regards the then British Crown Colony of Cyprus. So in the 1950s, or more specifically in 1955, following the outbreak of the EOKA campaign against the British imperial rule, the United Kingdom convened a tripartite conference in London, and it was at this tripartite conference that the British effectively gave Turkey a *locus standi* in the constitutional future and indeed legal destiny of the island of Cyprus. At that tripartite conference the participants were Greece, Turkey and the UK. The population of the island of Cyprus, as so often has happened in the history, was shut out of this conference. Of course, this conference formed a backdrop to what occurred in the first week of September, when we saw a pogrom in what is now known - by Turkey at least - as Istanbul, where the Greek and Christian population of the city was targeted in a coordinated and calculated campaign, which eventually resulted in the constructive expulsion of what was left of the Greek population of that historic city.

The 1955 tripartite conference was just a stepping stone on route to what was eventually achieved in 1959 with the Zurich-London Agreements and the treaties of 1960, which was the fully-fledged reincorporation of Turkey into the affairs of the Island of Cyprus. This was achieved with the three treaties of 1960: the Treaty of Establishment, to which Greece, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Cyprus became parties, the Treaty of Guarantee of 1960, to which the same four parties were involved, and a Treaty of Alliance, to which Greece, Turkey and the Republic of Cyprus, but not the United Kingdom became parties. So in spite of

the annexation of 5th of November 1914, and in spite of article 20 of the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, the United Kingdom oversaw the subsequent reintroduction of Turkey into the affairs of the Island of Cyprus and what became on the 16th of August 1960 the Republic of Cyprus. I would suggest that this was a neo-imperial stitch-up, an attempt by the final and the penultimate imperial powers on the island of Cyprus to protect their position, to exploit their strength and to take advantage of the vulnerability and the political immaturity of the population of what was the Crown Colony of Cyprus and what became the Republic of Cyprus.

And we are still living with this neo-imperial arrangement today. During the course of the year 2017, we saw the so-called conference on Cyprus unfold in Switzerland, in secret. The conference unfolded from the 11th of January 2017 until the 7th of July 2017. At that conference there were 5 parties, to use the terminology deployed by the United Kingdom and the United Nations. The five parties were: Greece, Turkey, the UK and “the representatives of the two communities: the Greek community and the Turkish community.” The Republic of Cyprus was not present at the conference that was designed to determine its own legal and constitutional future. But the final and the penultimate imperial powers of the island of Cyprus were represented at that conference. And I would suggest that this is a classic example of neo-imperialism in action. And regrettably, people have just gone along with this as if it’s normal behavior. I would suggest the Republic of Cyprus and its citizens need to wake up and ask themselves a number of fundamental questions: do they really want to see their sovereign state kept in the hands of the last and penultimate rulers of Cyprus? Because that’s effectively what has been unfolding.

The third reason why the annexation of the 5th of November 1914 is so important is rather interesting. As far as the constitutional law of the United Kingdom, and indeed the constitutional law of the Sovereign Base Areas are concerned, it would appear as if the source of the claim to sovereignty over the Sovereign Base Areas by the United Kingdom is to be found in the annexation of the 5th of November 1914. The Republic of Cyprus was established on the 16th of August 1960, subject to the maintenance by the United Kingdom of two areas of the island of Cyprus, which continue to remain under British sovereignty, or if you prefer, two areas over which the UK continue to assert British sovereignty. It would appear, based on a number of cases that have gone before the courts, and it would also appear from a number of other sources, which is Halsbury’s Laws of England, that the source of British sovereignty, or the British claim to sovereignty over the two Sovereign Base Areas is indeed the annexation of the 5th November 1914. That’s a topic for another day, but that’s a third major reason why the annexation of the 5th of November 1914 is so important.

So to sum up, I’ve given you the three reasons, among several reasons I could cite, as to why the Annexation Order in Council of the 5th of November 1914 is of enduring relevance to the island of Cyprus, the Republic of Cyprus that was situated in the Republic of Cyprus on the 16th of August 1960 onwards, the Sovereign Base Areas over which the UK asserts sovereignty, the UK itself and Turkey. It’s an incredibly important moment in history and I hope that this short contribution has illuminated your understanding as to why we should mark this occasion.

Thank you.





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## COMMENTARY\*

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Habib C. Malik\*\*

14 November 2017

### **Saad Hariri's Resignation as Prime Minister of Lebanon**

It is somewhat odd, to say the least, that a sitting Prime Minister of Lebanon, Saad Hariri, would actually tender his resignation on Saudi television from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and then would not come to Lebanon to follow up such a move according to all of the constitutional specifications for such an eventuality. So people in Lebanon have been quite puzzled at this development, and some have actually seen in it a rather poorly-produced tragicomic play. But on the other hand there are underlying ominous sings attached to this given the regional atmosphere of tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Now, the statement that Prime Minister Hariri made while announcing his resignation, in it he said that there was some danger on his own person. But, actually, since then all of the credible Lebanese security services and the Lebanese Army have come out with official statements saying they have no knowledge, no information, that there was any plot to assassinate the Prime Minister or to do him any kind of bodily harm. So that aspect apparently has been discounted.

There was lots of speculation initially about whether Hariri is actually free to move about, or whether he's been detained in Saudi Arabia, perhaps even as part of the ongoing detentions of princes and so on. It wasn't clear, and frankly it's still not clear, even though he was allowed to go the Emirates briefly, and he is returning to Saudi Arabia, that maybe a move simply to allay fears and put to rest suspicions that he is in fact not very free to move about. Obviously his arrival in Lebanon would be a very important step. What's behind all of this is a number of things. Saudi Arabia has been very frustrated regarding its failures almost everywhere in the Arab world – whether in the Syrian arena, in Iraq in Yemen, in Lebanon, in the face of what the Saudis perceive as a kind of advancement of Iran.

What is surprising about the sudden resignation of Hariri is that in fact he had been cohabiting with Hezbollah in Lebanon for the past year, and in fact all of this was part of a deal to bring General Michel Aoun as President of the Republic after two years of vacancy of the presidency in Lebanon. And during this past year a lot of achievements have come about by the Hariri government, and as part of this deal. A budget was passed, an electoral law was put in place,

\* *Transcript*

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

and now parliamentary elections are scheduled for this coming spring, and people were, in a sense, anticipating that matters would start to improve. Certainly, economically that was the case. So this came as a blow. There has been some discontent in the Sunni community with the leadership of Hariri. This is a fact. He's been perceived by some as being weak, and by others as being rather tight-fisted, meaning stingy, as compared with the generosity and largesse of his late father Rafic Hariri, as far as the Sunni community is concerned.

In any case, matters now go beyond the person of Hariri. The question is – will Lebanon be able to put together a government to replace the fallen Hariri government, many scenarios are being considered. One is to have a small government of technocrats that would not include any of the political parties, and certainly not include Hezbollah, whose main job would be to prepare for the spring elections, and after those elections normal, political life can resume. That is one idea. Other ideas are perhaps to rename Hariri himself as the new Prime Minister and start consultations on that basis, but that would require that he would need to come, and he would need to approve. His future movement is very much inclined in that direction. So a number of things are being considered.

However, we should not overlook the ominous side of all of this. It appears that there are some in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, who would like to cause trouble in Lebanon, mainly in the view of punishing Hezbollah, or reducing its power. Doing that can occur in many ways: fabricating a crisis, perhaps using the presence of a large number of Syrian refugees in the country in one way or another to bring about internal unrest and foment sectarian trouble. One should be assured that Lebanese are going to resist this, because no one in Lebanon is interested in revisiting the horrors of the civil war. Nobody wants to return to that, and so very few will fall into a manufactured trap of that sort, including Hezbollah themselves. So I think in that regard there is some awareness of the danger. But who knows, things can get out of hand. And even though Lebanon has a strong army for internal purposes, and very competent security services, those who want to foment unrest can find all sorts of ways to do that. So Lebanon seems poised on one of those roller coaster rides of uncertainty and possible upheaval.

I would hope that the United States would do anything in its power to hold any nefarious plans that some may have to destroy Lebanon or to bring about this catastrophic scenario. Lebanon has been one of the most peaceful places in the Arab world since the start of the upheavals associated with the poorly named Arab Spring. Everything should be done to preserve that peace and tranquility, and all other problems, I think, can be resolved short of something as cataclysmic as that. Lebanon is quite robust and resilient and has been through many periods where there was no government, for months on end, and even as I said recently, Lebanon did not have a President for two years. So Lebanon can endure a lot. But one thing that is for sure, no one in Lebanon in their right mind now wants a return to sectarian civil strife, whether it's Shia-Sunni, or any other configuration in that respect. So it would be very, very important for the international community, the European Union, the United States, others of good will who care about Lebanon to do the best to abort nip in the bud any brewing, nefarious plans for bringing about unrest in Lebanon.

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## COMMENTARY\*

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Asher Susser\*\*

24 November 2017

### Israel's Role in the Eastern Mediterranean

Speaking about Israel and the Eastern Mediterranean really requires first to have a look at Israel and its place with reference to the Arab Middle East. Because I would argue that Israel's increasing interest in the Eastern Mediterranean is a function of the changes that have taken place in the Arab world in recent years, and that have made it much more appealing for Israel to look westwards into the Eastern Mediterranean rather than eastwards to its Arab neighbors, who are facing such profound domestic crisis.

Israel made peace with two very important Arab states – Egypt and Jordan. In both cases these have been very stable peace agreements that remained in place for decades, but have never really produced a firm people to people relationship, either between the Israelis and the Egyptian people, or between the Israelis and the Jordanian people. And it's very customary in Israel to speak about the peace both with Egypt and Jordan as what we call a "cold peace". Its formal, it's diplomatic, it's governmental, but there is none of the people-to-people warmth, and therefore a certain sense of disappointment on the Israeli side, because the "cold peace" also means to the Israelis, that their legitimacy hasn't really been fully accepted, even though there is a peace treaty. The peace treaty represents a recognition on the Arab side of the balance of power in Israel's favor, but not a recognition of Israel's legitimacy, and the Israelis feel that is sorely lacking.

So when the Israelis look eastwards, essentially they look beyond the horizon. Israel looks over the Arab states: to India, to China, and to Japan. And in the last twenty five years or so it is Israel's relations with these countries that have developed very dramatically – in economic relations, in defense relations, in diplomatic relations – in a way that has not emerged with the Arab states.

And the closer, more proximate Arab world that we face is in the throes of this what I call the "crisis of the Arabs". What exactly is the "crisis of the Arabs", and what exactly does it mean for Israel's place in the region? In the 1950s and 1960s there were great expectations among the

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Professor Emeritus of Middle Eastern History, Tel Aviv University*

Arabs, that Arab nationalism would provide the power, the prestige and the prosperity that Abdul Nasser or Egypt promised the Arabs. but that great movement of Arab nationalism ended in political failure. And the political failure of Arab nationalism was also a political failure of secular, and secularizing Arab politics. After all, Arab nationalism was a secular ideology. It was about the belonging of people to a nation on the basis of language they speak, not on the basis of their religion. And therefore Arab nationalism was also this platform for secularizing politics, and the failure of Arab nationalism was therefore also the failure of the secularizing effort.

The consequence of that is that the vacuum left by Arab nationalism has been steadily filled over the years, for the last half century or so by Islamic politics. Islamic politics have a very divisive effect on the Arab countries. First of all, there is a Sunni version of Islamic politics, and there is a Shiite version of Islamic politics. If Arabism and Arab nationalism were designed to paper over the sectarian differences between the Arabs, Islamic politics exacerbates sectarianism. It differentiates obviously between Sunnis and the Shiites, it also differentiates between the Muslims and non-Muslims. It has contributed to the break-up of some key Arab states, like Syria and Iraq.

So the neighborhood to the east in this profound crisis is not very appealing to the Israelis as they look in that direction. Moreover, the crisis of the Arabs is also the expansionism of Iran at the Arabs' expense. The weakness of the Arabs, the vacuum in the fertile crescent, the collapse of Saddam's Iraq, the breakup of Syria have allowed for Iranian hegemonic design to develop almost without any real restraint. If Iraq was once the gatekeeper to Iranian expansionism, the downfall of Saddam was the downfall of Sunni Iraq to be replaced by Shiite Iraq, which is a partner for Iranian expansionism rather than the gatekeeper. Today Iranian expansionism is represented most clearly in Syria, where the Iranian intervention contributed to the survival of the Bashar Assad regime. But the Iranian intervention on its own would never brought about the success of Bashar had it not been for the intervention of Russia. And this has changed the balance. If Assad has emerged victorious, and Iran has therefore emerged victorious as well in the struggle for Syria, the Sunni Arabs have lost another major round against Iran. Syria is now very much in the Iranian sphere of influence, and therefore this Shiite crescent that everyone refers to from Teheran all the way to the Mediterranean through Iraq, Syria and Hezbollah in Lebanon. It's not Russia that is Israel's main problem in Syria, but that the Russian presence in Syria is the umbrella and the facilitator of the Iranian expansion. And that has become a major Israeli concern in recent months.

There are three major powers in the Middle East today. It would be way out of date to speak of the Middle East today as the Arab world in political terms. The Middle East today is governed by three regional powers, none of which is an Arab state: Iran, Turkey and Israel. If you look at this triangle there was a time when Israel and Turkey had a very close relationship. That was a good balance to Iranian hegemonic design. But the relationship has soured in recent years between Israel and Turkey. And this, I fear, is not a temporary change, it reflects a profound change of direction, a reorientation of Turkish politics. Erdogan and the more Islamic politics of Turkey, is undoing much of the secular Turkish republic, as established by Ataturk with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War. This is a very different Turkey: less European, more Islamic, and therefore more hostile to Israel and in this triangle of powers – Turkey, Iran and Israel – Israel is on the wrong side of both of these regional powers today.

Because of the Iranian expansionism and the rising power and influence of Iran, and the threat that the Israelis feel from Iran, the Israelis here have a common interest with the Sunni Arab states like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, and the Gulf States. The problem with that is that Saudi Arabia does not seem to have the clout to stand up to Iran as an equal, and the Sunni states that have an ever-increasing, I would say even alliance with Israel, are states that are relatively weak in the present regional architecture. Add to that what is happening in Syria recently, and I will link that with Lebanon, the fact that the Saudis lost in Syria, lost to Iran, no doubt, in Syria, has led to an effort by the Saudis to correct the balance. The recent apprehension, arrest, whatever it is, of the Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri in Saudi Arabia, is one such action. How that will impact upon Lebanon is anyone's guess, but there is fear in Lebanon that the Saudis may wish Israel to do its dirty work in Lebanon, which I think the Israelis would be very disinclined to do. But that is raising the stakes and raising the tensions between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon. As we speak there are reports in the news today of Hezbollah being very anxious of something happening between Hezbollah and the neighbors, whether it be Saudi Arabia or maybe Israel.

But as I say Israel is very disinclined to get involved in that. Israel was very careful not to get involved in the Syrian issue at all, except when it related directly to Israel's own security that is the Iranians trying to supply Hezbollah through Syria. Very often there were reports that the Israelis were interdicting these kinds of supply routes in an effort to prevent Hezbollah from upgrading its arms arsenal. And that probably remains true. But Israel does not seek to intervene in the Lebanese issue or in Syria. The big problem here for Israel is neither Lebanon in and of itself and Syria, but rather the Iranian influence in both of these countries – the Iranian influence via Hezbollah, and the Iranian influence via the direct Iranian presence which is being built up now in Syria. And that of course has a great deal of concern for Israel. So it is against that background that Israel looks far more attentively towards the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Eastern Mediterranean in comparison to Israel's other neighbors – Turkey and the Arab States – has countries like Greece and Cyprus, like Israel the non-Arab, non-Muslim players in the Eastern Mediterranean. Culturally closer to Europe, have a lot in common in everything from cuisine to music. There is a people-to-people relationship between Israel and Cyprus, between Israel and Greece, which has been going on for decades, with thousands of Israeli tourists spending time in these countries, and very familiar and close relations between Israelis, Greeks and Cypriots over the years, as opposed to the rather distant, non-existent I would say almost, people-to-people relationship between Israel and its Arab neighbors. If one needs to add to that, what has emerged in recent years in terms of strategic ties, and this comes especially as a result of the change between Israel and Turkey, which as I say is not a temporary hiccup, but a change of direction.

The importance of the strategic relationship between Israel and its neighbors in the Eastern Mediterranean – Greece and Cyprus – assumes an ever more important element. The fact that the Israeli military trains in Greece and in Cyprus too, air exercises, special forces exercises, is very impressive indeed. There was an air exercise in Israel last week and the Greeks participated in that too. So there is a strategic component which is ever more important. If one adds to that economic issues, gas, the possible building of a pipeline, that would link Cyprus and Israel with Greece and the European continent, this is of huge potential economic consequence. So I would say that what we see today between Israel and the Eastern Mediterranean on the one

hand, and Israel and the Arab east on the other hand are two parallel trends that represent an ever-increasing orientation of Israel westwards – toward the Eastern Mediterranean rather than looking for its involvement, integration with the Arab east, which is not very appealing these days.

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## COMMENTARY\*

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Antonia Dimou\*\*

13 December 2017

### **Greece: An Emerging Energy Player in the Eastern Mediterranean**

The discovery of natural gas resources in the East Mediterranean promise important benefits of energy security and economic gains. A 2010 US geological survey showed that the Levantine Basin – offshore Israel, Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Cyprus – could hold as much as 120 trillion cubic feet of gas, thus securing supply of energy not only for the countries of the region, but also for Europe.

Regional countries are currently at various stages of exploration and development, which are however fraught by political risks and policy dilemmas. Thus, cooperation, conflict resolution and the creation of interdependency structures are prerequisites to unlock the potential of the region and safeguard the unimpeded flow of future gas production.

It is in this geopolitical context that Greece has emerged as a new gas player, who looks eager to develop own indigenous as well as regional gas resources.

Greece's oil and gas exploration efforts have accelerated with the launching of tenders, following express of interest by oil majors, for blocks south of Crete and one block in the Ionian Sea. In late October, a consortium led by French Total and with members Hellenic Petroleum and Italy's Edison signed a lease agreement for one block in the Ionian Sea. The agreement, however, has to be ratified in parliament before exploration activities can start. It has to be noted at this point, that French Total has moved to Greece and together with Hellenic Petroleum in a consortium led by US oil major ExxonMobil has also expressed interest for two blocks in the south of Crete in southern Greece, following major East Mediterranean gas findings off Israel and Egypt.

Key challenges however remain in place when it comes to oil and gas exploration in Greece, such as the complex geology and the high cost of exploration and drilling activities in ultra-deep and deep waters, exclusive economic zone (EEZ) delimitation boundaries with neighboring Turkey, delays in the evaluation of tenders, and low oil prices that have so far

\* *Transcript*

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discouraged potential investors.

We have to admit that two Greek energy companies have been pioneers in oil and gas exploration activities in Greece: the first is Hellenic Petroleum and the second is Energean Oil & Gas. Hellenic Petroleum has explored as operator twenty six areas in Greece in the past and thus has acquired extensive knowledge when it comes to the geology of the country that is enhanced by activities in the upstream sector in the greater Middle East region, and specifically in Egypt, Libya, Albania, and Montenegro.

Hellenic Petroleum has participated in three licensing rounds and has already been awarded exclusive exploration and production rights – alone or in coordination with international partners – in the blocks west of Patraikos Gulf, and in north-west Peloponnese and Arta-Preveza onshore blocks whose lease agreements were signed a few months ago with the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy.

At the same time, the other Greek energy company, Energean Oil & Gas has emerged as a smart investor, as it has managed to acquire two new licenses in Western Greece and two in Israel during the low part of the cycle of the upstream industry. The Greek company has a powerful shareholder basis, such as petroleum engineers, ship owners, the US-based Third Point fund and a long term off-take lease agreement with BP, while it is supported by financial institutions like the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Energean has initiated a \$200-million investment plan for the period of 2015-2018 with the aim to raise production for the Prinos field in the north Aegean Greece to 10,000 barrels of oil per day. This is a significant increase from today's 3,000 barrels.

There is also a recent decision of Energean Oil and Gas to farm out a 60% interest to Spain's Repsol for its onshore Blocks in Western Greece that was driven by the latter's expertise that can lead to new discoveries. In the existence of new discoveries, of exploitable hydrocarbons, Greece will get tangible benefits not only for its national economy, but also for the local communities.

Greece has been also pivotal, as I said before, in the development of regional gas fields in the East Mediterranean, having as flagship Energean, because the Greek energy company has secured full ownership of the Israeli Tanin and Karish gas fields, aiming to deliver 88 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas and over 20 million barrels of light oil to the Israeli market in the next forty years, facilitating Israeli competition in line with the lately revised regulatory framework in Israel. The company has already presented a field development plan that has been approved by the government of Israel so that first gas is produced in 2020, and has secured sales agreements for more than 3 bcm annually at a 20% price discount compared to Leviathan partners' pricing to Israeli power provider Dalia Power Energies and its sister company Or Power Energies. And I reiterate that this arrangement has set the stage for competition in the Israeli market that will benefit the consumers and the Israeli economy.

With this, Israel has facilitated Greek energy interests which can help Europe diversify supply of energy resources. It is in fact the first presence of Greek interests in the significant gas findings located at the East Mediterranean that can help shape a new regional map.

The value of Greece as a gateway for regional gas supplies to Europe cannot be ignored. The Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) route, as part of the Southern Gas Corridor, for example, will run through thirteen provinces in Northern Greece and is expected to create 10,000 direct and



indirect jobs. Another project that will help Greece become a gateway for regional gas supplies to Europe is the floating storage and re-gasification unit in Alexandroupolis in northern Greece, with the aim to receive ships full of LNG, even from the United States, that can be funneled not only to Europe but also to the Balkans. In addition, the expansion of the Revithoussa LNG terminal in the south paves the way for the creation of infrastructure to bring new natural gas to Europe.

To grasp energy opportunities in the national and regional setting, Greece should motivate foreign companies to get involved in oil and gas exploration and production activities in Greece and in partnerships, of course, as a means of helping Greek energy companies build capacity and knowledge. Athens should also encourage cooperation with Israel on joint development of regional infrastructure for the transportation and marketing of gas, like the East Med pipeline, as a potential route for the Israeli gas to Europe, via Cyprus, Crete, continental Greece and Italy. The Greek government should also proceed with the appointment of specialized personnel at the Greek Hydrocarbon Management Company, as these appointments will make tender procedures more transparent and attractive to potential energy companies that wish for Greek gas and oil exploration and production.

The government of Greece should also speedily proceed with plans to supply American LNG to the Balkans, through the Greek Revithoussa LNG terminal, that not only will establish the US as an alternative source of supply, but will also bolster Greece's geostrategic stand.

Evidently, Greece is offered the golden opportunity not only to develop indigenous and regional gas resources, but also to provide energy security to Europe. It is an opportunity that must not be missed, because as it is aptly highlighted in a famous proverb, "three things do not return: the spoken word, the spent arrow, and the neglected opportunity". It is in this spirit that Greece coordinates energy policies with regional countries so that the opportunity is not missed.



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## COMMENTARY\*

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Andrew Lambert\*\*

21 January 2018

### **Turkish Invasion of Syria – 21 January 2018**

On Sunday 21st January 2018, armed forces of the Turkish Republic invaded Afrin province in northern Syria. This invasion, codenamed somewhat paradoxically as Operation Olive Branch, involved tanks, artillery, infantry and aircraft. It is a very significant event and begs a number of strategic questions for the region, for Turkey's future, and for Turkey's allies.

First, is there a proper justification for this invasion under international law? Perhaps Turkey regards this as an act of self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, but it would be difficult to argue that an armed attack had actually occurred against Turkey.

An armed attack by whom? By either the state of Syria, or by the Kurdish group, known as the YPG who, hitherto, had enjoyed Russian support and had operated solely inside Syria.

In any case, to be justified, such action would require Turkey immediately to report the matter to the United Nations Security Council to allow the council to take measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.

In the event, it was France which summoned the UN Security Council. In a closed doors session, and with the US Permanent Representative surprisingly absent, the Security Council neither condemned nor approved Turkey's actions. This lack of authorization left the Turkish assault in a state of international law limbo.

Of course, this is not the first time that Turkey has bent international law to suit. On many occasions over the past few decades, Turkey has carried out armed attacks into Northern Iraq, without UN approval, attacking Kurdish villages in the hunt for Kurds who supposedly were supporters of the terrorist PKK organization. According to Ankara, the YPG are in reality an offshoot of the PKK, an expediency totally rejected by Washington.

The second item of concern is why Turkey is acting against warnings and in direct defiance of the foreign policies of its allies, particularly its most important ally, the USA. Even Mr. Putin has had his arm twisted. Russian forces supporting the Syrian regime had deployed 300 military police to Afrin but, after lengthy discussions with Moscow, they had to be rapidly redeployed so

\* *Transcript*

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that the Turks would have a clear line of fire against the Kurds in Affrin.

But it is against the US that the rift is particularly stark.

In the UN-authorized fight against ISIS/Daesh, the Kurdish YPG were equipped and trained by the USA. Turkey watched with dismay as the YPG, and indeed the Kurdish Peshmerga, had been so successful against ISIS and how they now control about a quarter of Syrian territory, almost the whole of the north-east. The Kurds regarded the USA as their prime supporter; however, if the YPG are now to be thrown to the wolves it must surely beg the question in the minds of many Kurds, and indeed other supposed US friends, just how much can the USA be relied on when the chips are down?

Of course, Donald Trump was known to admire the ruthlessness of President Tayyip Erdogan, and successive US administrations have bolstered Turkish defenses against a possible armed attack by Syria. But how pleased will Mr Trump now be, since the man he admired has bitten the hand that feeds him?

Anti-American sentiment is running high, and is exacerbated by the state-controlled media fuelling nationalist anti-Kurdish sentiment.

On the face of it, the Turkish invasion was triggered when the US-led coalition said it was working with the YPG-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to set up a new 30,000-strong border force along Syria's northern border.

But this infuriated President Erdogan who stated during a speech in Ankara, "A country we call an ally is insisting on forming a terror army on our borders." He characterized US support to Syrian Kurds as undermining Turkey's security, adding, "What can that terror army target but Turkey? Our mission is to strangle it before it's even born." And just in case this might spark reaction from Kurds inside Turkey, President Erdogan warned on Sunday that any Kurds who protested "would pay a high price." So much for basic freedoms!

This now begs the third question: to what degree can Turkey continue to be considered a dependable NATO member? Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, the "attack on one is an attack on all" article, is no justification for settling old scores, for ethnic cleansing or the suppression of ethnic minorities.

According to Reuters, quoting the Turkish state-run Anadolu agency, General Hulusi Akar, armed forces chief, speaking at a meeting of NATO top brass in Brussels, said that Turkey will not allow the Kurdish YPG to receive support, and said NATO should not differentiate between terrorist groups: "We cannot and will not allow support and arming of the Kurdish YPG terror group under the name of an operational partner. We hope this mistake will be corrected in the shortest time."

Even more imperiously, last Sunday, Foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu declared that anyone who opposes Turkey's operation there is siding with terrorists and will be treated accordingly.

These are hardly the words of a friend and ally. Rather, they echo the nationalist ultimatums that were heard so much in the 1930s.

Internally, too, the Turkish government is becoming increasingly imperious. In the aftermath of the so-called "Gülen coup" just over a year ago, as many as 160,000 were, without due process,

either imprisoned or dismissed from their jobs. Recent wrangles between the Turkish constitutional and lower law courts seem politically motivated, and this all points to a deterioration in the rule of law. Judicial impartiality, according to the Financial Times, has now all but disappeared. Perhaps one should also recall that in the aftermath of the attempted coup, a number of Turks on the NATO staff actively sought asylum, while many others of middle and senior rank still in Turkey, were purged.

Although NATO press announcements from Brussels portray an aura of calm and business as usual, other NATO nations, in particular the USA, must now feel distinctly uneasy about a member that seems to operate in its own self-interest, without any agreement from its allies. Other NATO members must, it seems, simply fall into line or accept the threatened consequences.

One has to ask, does Turkey no longer see herself as part of an organization working to achieve consensus, or is she now a major regional power who can dictate terms?

If, however, NATO membership now sits awkwardly with Turkey's unilateralist ambitions, one must also raise an eyebrow at Turkey's increasing interests elsewhere. Moscow has found it hard to conceal its delight at the growing rift between NATO members. Turkey is already a dialogue member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a NATO look-alike in Asia. One wonders if she can, in all honesty, keep a foot in each camp, especially as she is increasingly turning her back on the West and the EU in particular.

So, in summary, one has to be concerned about the future path Turkey will take under her maverick, and increasingly nationalist, President Recep Tayip Erdogan.

In the words of President Lincoln, "A house divided against itself cannot stand," and this applies not just to NATO, but Turkey as well. With a permanently suppressed Kurdish minority amounting to some 15-20% of the population, and with frequent extra-territorial forays to attack Kurds in Northern Iraq and now Syria, it is clear that Turkey is indeed divided. This ethnic split, coupled with the growing gap between the aspirational urban middle classes on the one hand, and the rural Erdogan supporters on the other, does not bode well for the future unity of a free country.

Whether President Erdogan's neo-Ottoman, pan-Islamist actions, adventures, and ambitions herald a real shift in Asia Minor, or are just the short-term, nationalist escapades of an opportunist remains to be seen.



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## POLICY RECOMMENDATION

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George Chr. Pelagias\*  
19 February 2018

### **Assessing Turkey's Actions against the Republic of Cyprus' Offshore Hydrocarbon Activities**

#### **Observations**

1. On 7 March, 2017, ENI announced that it had finalized a farm-in agreement with TOTAL to acquire 50% participating interest in Block 11 in Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). TOTAL would remain the operator under the Joint Operating Agreement.<sup>194</sup>
2. On 25 June, 2017, Cyprus issued a Navigational Telex (NAVTEX 240/17) for natural gas drilling, between 10 July and 15 October, 2017, in Block 11. TOTAL's ultra-deep-water drillship *West Capella* began drilling on 12 July, 2017.
3. On 11 July, 2017, Turkey issued NAVTEX 697/17 announcing that naval exercises were to be held on 12 July and 13 July, 2017 off Cyprus's west coast. The area reserved by Turkey began at a distance of some 14 nautical miles off Cyprus' coast, and covered parts of Block's 5, 6 and 7.<sup>195</sup>
4. On 11 July, 2017, Turkey issued three Notices to Airmen (NOTAM) by which it reserved portions of the Nicosia Flight Information (FIR) zone. The first took place from 11am to 4pm in an area 100km long and 25km wide northeast of the island. The second NOTAM extended from Apostolos Andreas to the Akamas peninsula and at a distance of some 25km from the island's northern shores, also from 11am to 4pm. The third NOTAM 'reserved' a section of the Nicosia FIR between the northern coast of Cyprus and the southern shores of Turkey, at an altitude of up to 20,000 feet.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup>194 'Italian Energy Major to Increase Its Own Exploration Portfolio in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea,' New Europe, 8 March 2017, <https://www.neweurope.eu/article/eni-acquire-50-block-11-offshore-cyprus/>.

<sup>195</sup> Navigational Warnings (NW) and NOTAMs in force in Nicosia FIR – Cyprus SRR, 11 July 2017, <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/CJRCC.nsf/All/9D2B1E0B1EEB5391C225815A004CEAC1?OpenDocument>.

<sup>196</sup> Elias Hazou, 'Drillship Fast Approaching Drilling Site,' 11 July 2017, Cyprus Mail, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/07/11/drillship-fast-approaching-drilling-site/>.

5. On 13 July, 2017, Turkey dispatched the frigate *TCG Gökçeada* (formerly the USS Mahlon S. Tisdale) to monitor the West Capella drillship.<sup>197</sup>
6. On 18 July, 2017 the Turkish seismographic research/survey vessel *Barbaros Hayreddin Pasa*, moved into the waters west of Cyprus in order to begin seismic surveys in Blocks 6 and 7. Block 6 was awarded by Cyprus to TOTAL and ENI in 2016.<sup>198</sup> The survey was expected to last until 16 December 2017.<sup>199</sup>
7. On 10 August, 2017 Cypriot media reported that ENI is preparing two additional drillings in 2018, and has applied for drilling permits for Blocks 8, 6, and 3. The results in Block 11 would determine the exact drilling target.<sup>200</sup> Block 6 lies within the area of Cyprus EEZ claimed by Turkey.
8. On 26 December 2017 the drillship Saipem 12000 leased by ENI arrived at the Calypso drilling site located in Block 6.<sup>201</sup> Drilling activities commenced on 1 January 2018.<sup>202</sup>
9. At the end of December 2017, Turkey issued NAVTEX 1443/17 for seismic survey to be conducted by *Barbaros Hayreddin Pasa* northeast of Cyprus. The survey was to start on 29 December, 2017, and is scheduled to be carried out until 30 March 2018.<sup>203</sup>
10. On 29 January, 2018, Turkey issued NAVTEX 0153/18 for military training covering area off Famagusta Bay, including part of Block 3.<sup>204</sup>
11. On 6 February 2018 ENI announced a gas discovery in Block 6 offshore Cyprus, containing an estimate 6-8 tcf.<sup>205</sup> After completing its operations in Block 6, Saipem 12000 drillship was about to be transferred to Block 3 to the drilling site called “Soupia” (Cuttlefish). The area

<sup>197</sup> ‘Turkey Sends Frigate to Observe Greek Cypriot Drilling,’ Daily Sabah, 13 July 2017, <https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/07/13/turkey-sends-frigate-to-observe-greek-cypriot-drilling>; Tassos Kokkinidis, ‘Turkey Frigate, U.S. Aircraft Carrier Sail by Cyprus Drilling Site,’ Greek Reporter, 13 July 2017,

<http://greece.greekreporter.com/2017/07/13/turkey-frigate-u-s-aircraft-carrier-sail-by-cyprus-drilling-site/>.

<sup>198</sup> ‘Turkish Seismic Survey Vessel Barbaros Heading for Guzelyurt,’ LGC News, 16 July 2017,

<http://www.lgcnews.com/turkish-seismic-survey-vessel-barbaros-heading-for-guzelyurt/>.

<sup>199</sup> Navigational Warnings (NW) and NOTAMsin Force in Nicosia FIR – Cyprus SRR, 13 August, 2017. <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/CJRCC.nsf/All/6240B3517C0A44A3C225817A00331FFB?OpenDocument>.

<sup>200</sup> ‘Results from Block 11 Will Determine ENI’s Next Target,’ Cyprus Mail, 10 August 2017, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/08/10/results-block-11-determine-eni-next-targets-two-drillings-early-2018/>.

<sup>201</sup> ‘Saipem Drillship Arrives in for Exploration in Bloc 6,’ Cyprus Mail, 28 December 2017, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/12/28/saipem-drillship-arrives-exploration-block-6/>.

<sup>202</sup> ‘ENI Drills Offshore Cyprus In Spite of Turkey Threats,’ Middle East Economic Survey, 5 January 2018, <https://www.mees.com/2018/1/5/geopolitical-risk/eni-drills-offshore-cyprus-in-spite-of-turkey-threats/ce17aaa0-f22d-11e7-b449-bba7acf4b2ac>.

<sup>203</sup> ‘President Stonewalls Turkey’s Survey Notice,’ Cyprus Mail, 29 December 2017, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/12/29/president-stonewalls-turkeys-survey-notice/>; Turkish Naval Forces, Office of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography, [http://www.shodb.gov.tr/shodb\\_esas/index.php/en/safety-of-navigation/navigational-warnings/all-stations](http://www.shodb.gov.tr/shodb_esas/index.php/en/safety-of-navigation/navigational-warnings/all-stations).

<sup>204</sup> ‘Ankara Issues New Navtex,’ The Greek Observer, 30 January 2018, <http://thegreekobserver.com/cyprus/article/35356/ankara-issues-new-navtex/>.

<sup>205</sup> ‘ENI Announces a Gas Discovery Offshore Cyprus,’ ENI, 8 February 2018, [https://www.eni.com/en\\_IT/media/2018/02/eni-announces-a-gas-discovery-offshore-cyprus](https://www.eni.com/en_IT/media/2018/02/eni-announces-a-gas-discovery-offshore-cyprus); ‘CEO ENI: Ίσως και περισσότερα από 6-8 τρις. κυβικά πόδια στο «Καλυψώ»,’ Πολίτης News, 13 February 2018, <http://politis.com.cy/article/ceo-eni-isos-ke-perissotera-apo-6-8-tris-kivika-podia-sto-kalipso>.



was reserved for drilling activities from 9 February to 1 April 2018 (NAVTEX 070/18).<sup>206</sup>

12. On 6 February 2018 Turkey issued NAVTEX (0198/18) for military training for the area overlapping with Cyprus' Bloc 3. The NAVTEX will be in force until 22 February.<sup>207</sup>
13. On 9 February 2018 Turkish vessel harassed Saipem 12000 on the way the Soupia site.<sup>208</sup> Saipem's captain received instructions from ENI to stay in place until the situation is resolved. As of 17 February, the ship has been remaining in a standstill, effectively blocked by Turkish navy from reaching its destination located around 15 nautical miles away. Turkish flotilla in the proximity of Saipem 12000 is said to include a frigate, a corvette, two assault boats, a fuel tanker, and, possibly, at least two submarines. The presence of a fuel tanker suggests the flotilla could remain in the region for the weeks to come.<sup>209</sup>

### Perceived Threat and Risk Scenarios

Following the commencement of the drilling by ENI and TOTAL, Turkey declared that it intends to take measures in response to Cyprus' exploration.<sup>210</sup> Turkey has not yet made any statements on what such actions may entail. By looking at actions taken by Turkey towards Cyprus in the past, as well as recent developments in other international maritime disputes, there are four possible scenarios of Turkish response that can be identified.

#### A. Military Actions towards Cyprus

1. A maritime dispute of particular interest, especially in connection to the actions taken by Turkey towards Cyprus, is the multi-state *South China Sea Dispute*. The South China Sea is a semi-enclosed sea in the western Pacific Ocean. It is a vast area, and a crucial shipping lane, rich fishing ground, and is believed to hold substantial oil and gas resources. China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, and Brunei all have conflicting claims in the area. At the heart of the disputes lies the historical claims of China, illustrated by what has come to be known as the dotted nine-dash- line, which encloses the main island features of the South China Sea, namely: the Pratas Islands, the Paracel Islands, the Macclesfield Bank, and the Spratly Islands.<sup>211</sup>
2. The conflicting claims have resulted in several confrontations, between the states involved. Some of the more notable confrontations include the following: In 1974 the Chinese seized the Paracel Islands from Vietnam, killing 70 Vietnamese soldiers; in 1988: China and

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<sup>206</sup> Cyprus Joint Rescue Coordination Center, JRCC Larnaca,

<http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/CJRCC.nsf/All/50EBB96813ED6C11C225822B0046CF62?OpenDocument>.

<sup>207</sup> Turkish Naval Forces, Office of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography,

[http://www.shodb.gov.tr/shodb\\_esas/index.php/en/safety-of-navigation/navigational-warnings/all-stations](http://www.shodb.gov.tr/shodb_esas/index.php/en/safety-of-navigation/navigational-warnings/all-stations).

<sup>208</sup> 'Turkish Vessels Harass Drillship in EEZ,' Cyprus Mail, 9 February 2018,

<http://cyprus-mail.com/2018/02/09/turkish-vessels-harass-drillship-eez/>.

<sup>209</sup> 'Tempers Flare Over Gas Exploration in Mediterranean,' Al Monitor, 15 February 2018, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/02/turkey-major-crisis-in-eastern-mediterranean-is-nearing.html>.

<sup>210</sup> 'Turkey Warns Greek Cypriots against Drilling in Eastern Mediterranean,' Daily Sabah, 13 July 2017, <https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/07/13/turkey-warns-greek-cypriots-against-drilling-in-eastern-mediterranean>.

<sup>211</sup> 'Why is the South China Sea Contentious?' BBC World Service, 12 July 2016,

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13748349>; Hudson Lockett, 'Timeline: South China Sea Dispute,' Financial Times, 12 July 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/aa32a224-480e-11e6-8d68-72e9211e86ab>.

Vietnam clashed in the Spratly Islands, with Vietnam losing about 60 sailors; in 1997 the Philippines navy blocked Chinese boats from approaching Scarborough Shoal. In ensuing years, the Philippines detained Chinese fishermen for alleged illegal fishing in the area; in 2012 China detained 21 Vietnamese fishermen in the Paracel Islands for fishing; in 2014 China moved a drilling rig into waters near the Paracel Islands which led to multiple collisions between Vietnamese and Chinese ships. The rig left the area later the same year.<sup>212</sup>

3. A more recent incident between Vietnam and China illustrates how pressure can be applied upon companies to stop exploration all together. On 21 June, 2017, Vietnam began drilling for oil in an area also claimed by China. A drilling ship on contract to international firm *Talisman-Vietnam* had been contracted for the operation. The area in question is known as *Block 136-03* by Vietnam but as *Wan-an Bei 21* by China. In 2014 the Chinese license was bought by a Hong Kong-based company called *Brightoil*. *Talisman-Vietnam* had allegedly, been denied permission to drill by Hanoi over the past three years to avoid upsetting China. Vietnam's Block 136/3, in addition to Vietnam's state oil firm, the license is also held by Spain's Repsol and Mubadala Development Co of the United Arab Emirates.<sup>213</sup> In July 2017, Vietnam reportedly ordered Repsol to cease its drilling operations as China apparently threatened to attack Vietnamese bases in the Spratly Islands if the drilling continued. The halt to the drilling came right after Repsol had confirmed the existence of a gas field.<sup>214</sup> In August, 2017, Repsol reported that it had suspended its multi-million-dollar oil exploration project in the area.<sup>215</sup>
4. It is evident that the use of military strength in order to disrupt hydrocarbon exploration is not uncommon in international maritime disputes. It is, however, unlikely that Turkey would physically attack ships or drilling rigs since the exploration in Cyprus EEZ is not conducted by Cypriot companies, nor are the vessels conducting the drilling Cypriot or under Cyprus flag. Turkey may also want to avoid escalating tensions at sea, due to the high concentration of foreign naval vessels currently present in the Eastern Mediterranean. For example, the US aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush had been reported sailing near Block 11 at the time of the drilling, and as of July 2017, the Russian Black Sea Fleet Mediterranean Task Force Group numbered 15 vessels, including the Russian navy's newest frigates '*Admiral Grigorovich*' and '*Admiral Essen*', as well as corvette '*Smetlivy*' and

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<sup>212</sup> 'Why is the South China Sea Contentious?' BBC World Service, 12 July 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13748349>; Hudson Lockett, 'Timeline: South China Sea Dispute,' Financial Times, 12 July 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/aa32a224-480e-11e6-8d68-72e9211e86ab>.

<sup>213</sup> Bill Hayton, 'Vietnam Drills for Oil in South China Sea,' BBC News, 5 July 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-40493277>; Elias Jones Rodríguez, 'Repsol Says Drilling Suspended on Vietnam Oil Block Disputed by China,' Reuters, 2 August 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinesea-vietnam-idUSKBN1AI27D>.

<sup>214</sup> 'Spanish Oil Company Stops Vietnam Drilling amid China Pressure,' Offshore Energy Today, 26 July 2017, <http://www.offshoreenergytoday.com/report-spanish-oil-company-stops-vietnam-drilling-amid-china-pressure/>.

<sup>215</sup> Elias Jose Rodríguez, 'Repsol Says Drilling Suspended on Vietnam Oil Block Disputed by China,' Reuters, 2 August 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinesea-vietnam-idUSKBN1AI27D>; 'Repsol Suspends Oil Project in Disputed Sea off Vietnam,' France24, 3 August 2017, <http://www.france24.com/en/20170803-repsol-suspends-oil-project-disputed-sea-off-vietnam>.

the submarine *Krasnodar*.<sup>216</sup>

5. Cyprus has received wide support for its exploration activities from the international community, and especially the countries from which the companies, that are conducting the exploration, originate from. The French Minister for Armed Forces visited Cyprus on Monday 17 July, the third meeting on a defence-ministry level between Cyprus and France in the past four months. At the same time, the French Navy frigate Languedoc, docked at the Larnaca port as part of a Mediterranean mission.<sup>217</sup> On 31 July, 2017, Italy's Minister of Defense visited Cyprus at the invitation of his Cypriot counterpart.<sup>218</sup> While not directly connected to the exploration of either TOTAL or ENI, such meetings could be interpreted as a signal to Turkey in response to its warnings issued to the two companies. Cyprus should make increased efforts to enhance its energy and defence cooperation with countries such as Israel, Italy, France and the United States.
6. Turkey's goals are rather to project coercion toward the Republic of Cyprus by using its air and naval dominance in order to delegitimize Cyprus' maritime claims, and establish that Cyprus does not have control over its sea and air space. Turkey may, on the other hand, choose to escalate tensions by creating an unsafe environment for merchant ships and tourist airlines in order to damage Cyprus' economy.

#### **B. Obstructing Cyprus' Regional Energy Cooperation**

1. Turkey wants East Mediterranean gas to pass through its territory, for both political and economic reasons. Such routing would make Southeast Europe dependent on Turkey, similar central Europe's dependency on Ukraine as a transit hub, and it would ensure Turkey has ample supplies of gas for its own use.<sup>219</sup>
2. The ability to halt, or in one way or another control the development of Cyprus' exploration activities clearly lies in Turkey's interest. As Turkey continues to escalate tensions over Cyprus's right to own and exploit hydrocarbon resources within its EEZ, Israel will come under increased pressure to reduce its' relationship with Cyprus. Turkey's ambition to tie Israeli exports to its own market should be viewed in this context.
3. The collapse of the Cyprus reunification talks was followed by a swift announcement by Ankara that Energy Minister Berat Albayrak would travel to Israel for further negotiations with his counterpart, National Infrastructure, Energy and Water Minister Yuval Steinitz, on the long-discussed subsea gas pipeline project that would connect Israel's Leviathan field to

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<sup>216</sup> 'Russia's Black Sea Fleet to Maintain 15-ship Task Force in Eastern Mediterranean – Navy,' RT News, 1 June 2017, <https://www.rt.com/news/390482-russia-black-sea-fleet-figures/>; Tassos Kokkinidis, 'Turkey Frigate, U.S. Aircraft Carrier Sail by Cyprus Drilling Site,' Greek Reporter, 13 July 2017,

<http://greece.greekreporter.com/2017/07/13/turkey-frigate-u-s-aircraft-carrier-sail-by-cyprus-drilling-site/>.

<sup>217</sup> Andria Kades, 'Fokaides Briefs French Defence Minister on EEZ Activity,' Cyprus Mail, 17 July 2017, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/07/17/fokaides-briefs-french-defence-minister-eez-activity/>.

<sup>218</sup> 'Italian Minister of Defence Pays Official Visit to Cyprus,' CNA, 31 July 2017,

<http://www.cna.org.cy/webnews-en.aspx?a=dc4de6c5d94c4b2c881bdde71c882488>.

<sup>219</sup> Ryan Stevenson, 'Total Launches New Drilling Era Offshore Cyprus, Much to Turkey's Dismay,' NewsBase, 24 July 2017, <https://cutt.ly/Ag7j4Xv>.

Turkey.<sup>220</sup>

4. Turkish official and commercial circles have been approaching Israeli authorities, and Israeli energy companies, for years with proposals regarding the purchase of Israeli natural gas.<sup>221</sup> Such proposals would include the construction of a deep-water pipeline to the Turkish coast. In the event that such proposals materialise, and a pipeline is in fact built, there is a high probability that it will have to cross Cyprus EEZ.<sup>222</sup>
5. One of the main Israeli supporters of exporting gas via a Turkish pipeline is Minister Yuval Steinitz.<sup>223</sup> According to Steinitz, the pipeline to Turkey could be completed within three years. Since his visit to Turkey in October 2016, Steinitz has already held three rounds of talks on the matter with Turkish Energy Minister Albayrak, and Steinitz has expressed his desire to conclude a government-to-government agreement on a MoU between Turkey and Israel during the summer of 2017.<sup>224</sup> On July 12, 2017, it was reported that Albayrak is set to visit Israel by the end of this year to conclude the agreement.<sup>225</sup>
6. Steinitz has also stated that building the 500-km pipeline is doable regardless of Cypriot approval, due to the fact that it would pass through the country's economic rather than territorial waters.<sup>226</sup>
7. In October 2017, in an interview given to the Anadolu Agency the adviser to Israel's Minister of National Infrastructure, Energy and Water Resources Dror Cohen stated that the talks regarding the Israeli-Turkish pipeline construction were at an advanced stage, focused on the proposed pipeline's price and route. According to Cohen, signing of an agreement between the two countries was just a "matter of time".<sup>227</sup>
8. Diplomatic relations between the two countries deteriorated again after Trump's recognition of Jerusalem on 6 December 2017. Erdogan called Israel a "terrorist state" and

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<sup>220</sup> Stevenson Ryan, 'Total Launches New Drilling Era Offshore Cyprus, Much to Turkey's Dismay,' NewsBase, 24 July 2017, <https://cutt.ly/hg7kqc5>.

<sup>221</sup> 'Turkey's Zorlu Group Pushing Israel to Approve Gas Exports,' Today's Zaman, 14 February 2013, <http://today'szaman.com/>; Avi Bar-Eli, Itai Trilnick Itai, 'Turkish Company Lobbying Israel for Gas Exports to Turkey,' Haaretz, 14 February 2013, <http://www.haaretz.com/>; Matthew Bryza, 'Israel-Turkey Pipeline Can Fix Eastern Mediterranean,' Bloomberg, 20 January 2014, <https://www.bloomberg.com/>; Girit Selin 'Gas Pipeline Hope Heals Rupture in Israel-Turkey Ties,' BBC News, 19 October 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/>; Yuval Ben-David, Clarke David (ed.) 'Israel-Turkey Gas Pipeline Could be Ready in Four Years,' Reuters, 2 March 2017, <http://www.reuters.com>.

<sup>222</sup> 'Israel, Turkey and Gas,' Jerusalem Post Editorial, 18 May 2013, <http://www.jpost.com/>; Barkat Amiram, 'Pipeline to Turkey and LNG to China,' Globes, 19 June 2013, <http://www.globes.co.il>; Wainer David 'Turkey Sees No Need for Cyprus to Approve Israel Gas Pipeline,' Bloomberg, 13 April 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/>.

<sup>223</sup> Sharon Udasin, 'Israel Branching Out,' The Jerusalem Post, 4 January 2017, <http://www.jpost.com/printarticle.aspx?id=485711>.

<sup>224</sup> Sharon Udasin, 'Israel Branching Out,' The Jerusalem Post, 4 January 2017, <http://www.jpost.com/printarticle.aspx?id=485711>.

<sup>225</sup> 'Turkish Energy Minister to Visit Israel for Pipeline Deal,' Times of Israel, 21 July 2017, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/turkish-energy-minister-to-visit-israel-for-pipeline-deal/>.

<sup>226</sup> Sharon Udasin, 'Israel Branching Out,' The Jerusalem Post, 4 January 2017, <http://www.jpost.com/printarticle.aspx?id=485711>.

<sup>227</sup> Ebru Sengul, Muhsin Baris Tiryakioglu, 'Turkey, Israel Discuss Price, Route of Gas Pipeline,' Anadolu Agency, 13 October 2017, <https://cutt.ly/xg7j2dJ>.

threatened to cut diplomatic ties with Israel.<sup>228</sup> Turkey's Petroleum Pipeline Corporation BOTAS allegedly cancelled its December trip to Israel, although the information was not officially confirmed. Despite crucial mutual economic interests, Erdogan's worsening anti-Israel rhetoric has highlighted long-term concerns related to tying Israel's energy export to Turkey. Nevertheless, according to Delek's Director Malcolm Hoenlein, it is too early to rule out gas pipeline deal with Turkey.<sup>229</sup>

9. As a result, Egypt has re-emerged as a preferable route for Israeli gas export, although not bereft of issues of concern either. Prime Minister Netanyahu has also confirmed that all export options for Israeli gas, including Turkey, remain on the table.<sup>230</sup>
10. While it would be difficult for Cyprus to prevent Israel and Turkey from laying a pipeline within its EEZ based on national and international law, Turkey and Israel would not be able to deny Cyprus' rights as a transit state under such laws.<sup>231</sup>
11. Turkey may also apply pressure on Qatar in order to delay Cyprus' developments. Qatar Petroleum, a fully state owned entity, holds, together with ExxonMobil, the Block 10 licence. Turkey and Qatar have a long history of being on the same side of regional conflicts and developments. They both provided support for the Egyptian revolution and condemned the military coup that brought the country's current leader, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, in to power. Like Turkey, they also refuse to classify the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas as terrorist organisations, and they both backed rebel fighters in Syria. Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani also showed strong support for the Turkish government and President Erdogan during, and after, the failed coup in July 2016.<sup>232</sup> After Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates cut ties with Qatar in early June, 2017, accusing Qatar of supporting extremists and terrorist groups and being allied with Iran, one of the requirements for restoring relations was to close the joint Qatari-Turkish military base in Qatar. As a response Turkey deployed more troops to Qatar. Turkey also wants to attract Qatari investments, and views the emirate as a major arms market for its defence industry.<sup>233</sup>

### C. Increased Seismic Activities and Future Exploration in Cyprus EEZ

1. Turkey lays claim to parts of Cyprus' western EEZ. Turkey's state-owned National Petroleum Company (TPAO) was awarded exploration rights in Cyprus' eastern EEZ by the Turkish Occupied Areas of Cyprus ("TOAC") in 2011.

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<sup>228</sup> 'Will Erdogan Cut Ties with Israel over Jerusalem,' Al Jazeera, 14 December 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/words-erdogan-jerusalem-israel-171212113605165.html>

<sup>229</sup> Yaacov Benmeleah, David Wainder, 'Fraying Israel-Turkey Ties Threaten Planned Natural Gas Venture,' 2 February 2018, <http://www.worldoil.com/news/2018/2/5/fraying-israel-turkey-ties-threaten-planned-natural-gas-venture>

<sup>230</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>231</sup> 'Cyprus' Response to a Turkish Natural Gas Pipeline,' European Rim Policy and Investment Council, 14 June 2017, [www.erpico.org](http://www.erpico.org).

<sup>232</sup> Birce Bora, 'Analysis: Why is Turkey Deploying Troops to Qatar?' Al Jazeera, 11 June 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/06/analysis-turkey-deploying-troops-qatar-170607174911372.html>.

<sup>233</sup> Giorgio Cafiero, 'How Turkey Fits into the Qatar Puzzle,' Al-Monitor, 2 July 2017, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/07/turkey-military-qatar-crisis-egypt-saudi-arabia-uae.html>.

2. Turkey, which is not a signatory to UNCLOS, objects to the definition of islands in article 121 based on the position that island's capacity to generate maritime zones should be restricted when the island's is in competition with a continental coastal state, and the equidistance/median line is not applicable. In the case of Cyprus, Turkey maintains that Cyprus EEZ/CS should be restricted in areas claimed by Turkey. In the case of the island of Kastelorizo in Greece, Turkey maintains that the island should be treated as an enclave within in the Turkish CS, and not be regarded as forming part of Greece's CS.
3. A recent decision from the Permanent Court of Arbitration in connection to the South China Sea, provides some clarity on the matter of the definition of islands under UNCLOS. In 2013, the Philippines initiated arbitration under Annex VII UNCLOS, questioning China's claims to much of the South China Sea as incompatible with the Convention. Both the Philippines and China are parties to the UNCLOS but China had repeatedly stated that it would not accept or participate in the arbitration. The tribunal proceeded anyway since UNCLOS state that the absence of a party or the failure of a party to defend its case shall not constitute a bar to the proceedings. The Tribunal issued its award on 12 July, 2016, with China declaring that it considers the decision as null and void.<sup>234</sup>
4. In the ruling, the definition of islands, under article 121, and its application to features in the South China Sea, was extensively analysed. In line with UNCLOS article 121, islands generate an entitlement to an EEZ of 200 nautical miles and to a Continental Shelf in contrast to rocks, which cannot sustain human habitation or economic life of their own. The Tribunal interpreted Article 121, and concluded that the entitlements of a feature depend on (a) the objective capacity of a feature, (b) in its natural condition, to sustain either (c) a stable community of people or (d) economic activity that is neither dependent on outside resources nor purely extractive in nature. The Tribunal also concluded that the Convention is clear in allocating sovereign rights to a state with respect to sea areas in its exclusive economic zone. Based on its findings, the Tribunal concluded that China had violated the sovereign rights of the Philippines, especially in connection to Philippine petroleum exploration, and fishing.<sup>235</sup>
5. The China vs. Philippines case clearly supports the position that both Kastelorizo and Cyprus are to be regarded as islands under article 121, and, therefore, are entitled to and EEZ and CS. However, Turkey is not a signatory to UNCLOS, and will therefore not take much notice of the decision.
6. In October 2017, Turkey's Energy Minister Berat Albayrak announced that Turkey would hold its first hydrocarbon drilling in late 2017, and its first deep drilling in early 2018. The drilling would take place in Turkish and Cypriot waters.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Press Release, Permanent Court of Arbitration, The South China Sea Arbitration, 12 July 2016, <https://pca-cpa.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/175/2016/07/PH-CN-20160712-Press-Release-No-11-English.pdf>. South China Sea: Tribunal Backs Case against China Brought by Philippines, BBC News, 12 July 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-36771749>.

<sup>235</sup> Press Release, Permanent Court of Arbitration, The South China Sea Arbitration, 12 July 2016, <https://pca-cpa.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/175/2016/07/PH-CN-20160712-Press-Release-No-11-English.pdf>.

<sup>236</sup> Turkey to Hold First Deep Drilling for Oil and Gas in Med in 2018: Minister, Hurriyet Daily News, 11 October 2017, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-to-hold-first-deep-drilling-for-oil-and-gas-in-med-in-2018-minister-120693>; 'Turkey to Begin Drilling for Hydrocarbons in E. Med,' LGC News, 12 October 2017, <https://www.lgcnews.com/turkey-begin-drilling-hydrocarbons-e-med/>.



7. In the same month Turkey acquired its first drilling vessel called Deepsea Metro 2 and produced in South Korea in 2011.<sup>237</sup> The vessel arrived in Turkey in January 2018.<sup>238</sup> It is, however, unknown when and where exactly it is going to be dispatched.
8. On 29 October, 2017, Cypriot Phileleftheros reported that the data obtained by the seismic research vessel *Barbaros* indicated there was a natural gas in the area between the Gulf of Iskenderun and the Karpasia Peninsula. According to the report, Turkey was preparing to install a drilling platform in the off the peninsula, in the Apostolos Andreas area. Allegedly, it was also intending to use the same platform in RoC's Block 6.<sup>239</sup> These reports were later denied by Albayrak.<sup>240</sup>
9. Turkey and the TPAO will continue to deploy its seismic research vessel *Barbaros*, in Cyprus EEZ, and as the Repsol incident illustrates, international drilling companies, including European companies, are willing to enter into disputed territories. It is, therefore, not unlikely that the TPAO could find a drilling company that would enter Cyprus' western EEZ, which is claimed by Turkey, in order to further enforce its claims *vis-a-vis* Cyprus.
10. At the time when Turkey acquires drilling capacity of its own, it may very well authorize the TPAO to proceed with drillings in the areas awarded to the TPAO by the TOAC in 2011. Such actions have already been advocated by retired Turkish Ambassador, former Deputy Director General of Energy Environment and Water Affairs, and OECD Permanent Representative, Mithat Rende.<sup>241</sup>

### **Freezing Cooperation with IOCs operating in Turkey**

1. Turkish President Erdogan has warned both TOTAL and ENI, and indirectly Paris and Rome, not to proceed with the drilling in Cyprus, as they would risk "losing a friend".<sup>242</sup> Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu also warned that Turkey would take action after the start of exploration drilling, and that the Turkish Ministries of Energy and Foreign Affairs were working together to draw up measures to be taken.<sup>243</sup>
2. Since 2011, Turkey has repeatedly threatened international oil companies not to conduct

<sup>237</sup> 'Turkey Acquires Drill Ship-Reports,' Cyprus Mail, 12 October 2017,

<http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/10/12/turkey-acquires-drillship-reports/>.

<sup>238</sup> Murat Temizer, 'Turkey's First Drillship Arrives in Izmit,' Anadolu Agency, 30 December 2017,

<http://aa.com.tr/en/energyterminal/natural-gas/turkeys-first-drillship-arrives-in-izmit/16177>.

<sup>239</sup> Φυσικό αέριο και στον Απόστολο Ανδρέα, Filenews, 29 October 2017,

<http://www.philenews.com/eidiseis/politiki/article/447657/fysiko-aerio-kai-ston-apostolo-andrea>.

<sup>240</sup> Elias Hazou, 'Turkey Has Not Yet Found Mediterranean Gas,' Cyprus Mail, 2 November 2017, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/11/02/turkey-not-yet-found-mediterranean-gas/>.

<sup>241</sup> Yinanç Barçın, 'Turkey Should Start Drilling Where Greek Cypriots Discovered Gas,' Hurriyet Daily News, 24 July 2017, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-should-start-drilling-where-greek-cypriots-discovered-gas.aspx?pageID=238&nID=115867&NewsCatID=359>.

<sup>242</sup> Michalopoulos Sarantis, 'Greece-Turkey Tensions Mount Over Plan to Start Cyprus Gas Drilling, 13 July 2017, Euractive, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/greece-turkey-tensions-mount-over-plan-to-start-cyprus-gas-drilling/>.

<sup>243</sup> Michalopoulos Sarantis, 'Greece-Turkey Tensions Mount over Plan to Start Cyprus Gas Drilling, 13 July 2017, Euractive, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/greece-turkey-tensions-mount-over-plan-to-start-cyprus-gas-drilling/>.

exploration and production activities in what it considers disputed zones, under the threat of an exclusion from the business operations in Turkey.<sup>244</sup>

3. In 2013, Turkey did in fact suspend ENI's participation in the Samsun–Ceyhan pipeline project after ENI participated in the 2012 Cyprus Offshore Licencing Round. The pipeline project was never realized.<sup>245</sup> However, ENI still operates in Turkey, and sells natural gas supplied from Russia to Turkey, transported via the Blue Stream Pipeline. In 2016 sales amounted to 6.55 bcm.<sup>246</sup>
4. TOTAL has a strong presence in Turkey, and is active in sectors like lubricants, chemicals, natural gas, international transport supply and petrochemicals. TOTAL holds an 11% market share in the Turkish Lubricants Market. TOTAL also supplies LNG to Turkey, and holds a 5% stake in the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project.<sup>247</sup>
5. While Turkey may not obstruct current activities of these companies in Turkey, it may prevent them from participating in future projects.

### **Concluding Remarks and Recommendations**

In view of the above scenarios, Cyprus should contemplate taking the following measures:

1. As Turkey's relationships with Italy and France may deteriorate, Cyprus should make considerable efforts in strengthening its energy and security cooperation with both Rome and Paris.
2. Israel will come under increasing pressure to reduce its' relationship with Cyprus. Turkey's ambition to tie Israeli exports to its own market should be viewed in this context. However, not everyone in Israel supports the pipeline project. A recent example is Israeli opposition party leader Yair Lapid, who has expressly stated that Israel should forget about its "misguided dream" of building a pipeline to export natural gas to Turkey. Opponents to the pipeline also argue that Israel would become more dependent on Turkey, an untrustworthy country whose leadership actively supports Hamas.<sup>248</sup> Cyprus should make clear to Israel that it will in no way be involved, and shall not cooperate with any scheme to transfer natural gas through Cyprus EEZ to Turkey at the cost of its rights as a transit state. At the same time, Cyprus must show willingness to work with Israel in order to find alternative, and credible, export solutions. Cyprus should also ensure to maintain close contact with the Israeli political elite that oppose a closer relationship with Turkey.

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<sup>244</sup> 'Erdogan Warns Energy Companies over Cyprus Drilling,' In-Cyprus, 10 July 2017, <http://in-cyprus.com/erdogan-warns-energy-companies-over-cyprus-drilling/>.

<sup>245</sup> 'Turkey Freezes Eni's Projects,' Azernews, 23 March 2013, [https://www.azernews.az/oil\\_and\\_gas/51288.html](https://www.azernews.az/oil_and_gas/51288.html).

<sup>246</sup> 'Eni's Activities in Turkey,' Eni, [https://www.eni.com/enipedia/en\\_IT/international-presence/europe/enis-activities-in-turkey.page](https://www.eni.com/enipedia/en_IT/international-presence/europe/enis-activities-in-turkey.page).

<sup>247</sup> 'Total in Turkey,' Total, <http://tr.total.com/en/total-turkey/total-turkey>.

<sup>248</sup> Gabriel Mitchell, 'The Risks and Rewards of Israel-Turkish Energy Cooperation,' The Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Policies, January 2017, [www.mitvim.org.il](http://www.mitvim.org.il). Herb Keinon, 'Lapid: Israel Should Support Kurdish State, Recognize Armenian Genocide,' The Jerusalem Post, 28 July 2017, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Lapid-on-Erdogan-Israel-should-support-Kurdish-state-recognize-Armenian-genocide-500897>; Raphael Ahren, 'Lapid Calls for More Aggressive Stance on Turkey,' The Times of Israel, 28 July 2017, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/lapid-calls-for-more-aggressive-stance-on-turkey/>.



3. Turkey is likely to increase its seismic survey in areas within Cyprus EEZ.<sup>249</sup> Turkey will also speed up its efforts to conduct exploratory drilling offshore Cyprus. Turkey is not a signatory to UNCLOS, and will therefore not take much notice of the decision issued in the *China vs. Philippines* case. However, Turkey, similarly to Cyprus, is a signatory to the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT), and is therefore bound by the ECT's conflict resolution mechanisms. ECT regulates cross-border co-operations in the energy industry, such as trade, transit, investments and energy efficiency. The treaty is legally binding upon the signatories, including its dispute resolution procedures. Turkey, by signing the ECT, has recognized the Republic of Cyprus as a counterparty, as well as its rights under bilateral and multilateral agreements.
4. In the event that the Israel-Turkey pipeline project moves ahead, Cyprus should take all measures to protect its rights as a transit state. This could include exploring the option of initiating state-to-state proceedings against Turkey under Article 27 of the ECT. Disputes under Article 27 shall be decided in accordance with the ECT, and applicable rules and principles of international law. Any award under the ECT will be final and binding.<sup>250</sup>
5. Transit of energy, including pipelines, is regulated by ECT's Article 7. It obliges signatories not to refuse transit, or refuse to agree to the construction of a new pipeline or network capacity, solely on the basis of the origin, destination or ownership. While Article 7 makes clear that Cyprus could not obstruct the project, excluding Cyprus from the process could deny Cyprus its rights as a transit state, and its entitlement to transfer tariffs. The ECT recognizes the principle of national sovereignty over energy resources. This sovereignty, granted in Article 18(1), must be exercised in accordance with, and subject to, the rules of international law. Article 7(8) also guarantees a signatory's rights and obligations under international law, customary international law, existing bilateral or multilateral agreements, including rules concerning submarine cables and pipelines.<sup>251</sup> The dispute settlement process under Article 27 only reaches the tribunal state once the parties to the ECT have failed to reach a diplomatic solution within reasonable time. If no solution can be found, an ad hoc tribunal will be established with members appointed by the two parties. Failure to appoint a tribunal member, will result in the ECT Secretariat appointing one instead. Any award under the ECT will be final and binding.<sup>252</sup> It should, however, be noted there are no documented cases of any state-to-state dispute reaching the state of ad hoc tribunal.
6. Another option available to Cyprus is to initiate proceedings against to initiate proceedings against the company operating the project, should such company fail to respect Cyprus' rights as a transit state. If the incorporation state is another state than Turkey, and such

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<sup>249</sup> Ryan Stevenson, 'Total Launches New Drilling Era Offshore Cyprus, Much to Turkey's Dismay,' NewsBase, 24 July 2017,

<https://newsbase.com/commentary/total-launches-new-drilling-era-offshore-cyprus-much-turkey%E2%80%99s-dismay/>.

<sup>250</sup> The International Energy Charter, Consolidated Energy Charter Treaty with Related Documents, 15 January 2016, <http://www.energycharter.org/fileadmin/DocumentsMedia/Legal/ECTC-en.pdf>.

<sup>251</sup> The International Energy Charter, Consolidated Energy Charter Treaty with Related Documents, 15 January 2016, <http://www.energycharter.org/fileadmin/DocumentsMedia/Legal/ECTC-en.pdf>

<sup>252</sup> Conflict Prevention and Dispute Resolution: Main Provisions and Instruments, Energy Charter Treaty Secretariat, November 2016, <http://www.energycharter.org/what-we-do/publications/conflict-prevention-and-dispute-resolution-main-provisions-and-instruments/>.

state is a member of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the provisions of the convention would be applicable. Therefore, in the event that Cyprus is not able to enforce its rights directly against Turkey, it may proceed against international companies established outside Turkey.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> 'Cyprus' Response to a Turkish Natural Gas Pipeline,' European Rim Policy and Investment Council, 14 June 2017, [www.erpac.org](http://www.erpac.org).

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## ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATION\*

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Rene Troccaz\*\*

27 March 2018

### **Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Greater Middle East**

I will try to summarize, as much as I can, our position as France on the item this evening, which is the French views of the developments and evolution in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. Of course, that includes also Cyprus. It's not the main point of the topic, but it's also part of it. I will try to focus on three parts. First, where we are as France in this area regarding our own history. Second, what our priorities are. And third, I will mention various cases, mainly Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, and broader approach which includes Turkey, Cyprus and the energy question.

So first, history. France is one of the countries which historically have been present in this area for centuries. Even though we are not geographically part of it, but politically we are a player of this area. And this with other major countries, historically: the United Kingdom, Russia, Italy, more recently, historically speaking, the United States, and of course the major countries of the area.

The other point regarding history is that we are facing different situations, country by country, but we are also facing a global, common problem. The speaker of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs is asked every day by the international press questions related to this part of the world, which represent more than 50% of questions he receives.

Third element regarding history. We have different histories, different specific relations, historically, with various actors of the area. As you know, in the recent history France was present in the Middle East in Lebanon and Syria, we have historical relations with Egypt, and specific ties with Israel. On some places, because of history, we are more neutral, meaning by that we don't share the same past, and in other places, for example the countries I've mentioned, we have specific links due to history.

Fourth element regarding history is to make a clear differentiation between what is the news, what is the actuality, what is immediate, and what is the long run. And here I think that it's important not to avoid the TV news of this evening, but to consider the long run: the past, the

\* *Transcript*

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

future - where we want to go. And our analysis is also led by this idea that we are building for the long run.

And fifth point regarding history, which is the conclusion which leads to the present, is the repercussions of what happens in this area internally in France. More and more in the global village we live in, what happens in the world has immediate consequences in every country. Regarding France, what happens here in this area, I mean the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean, is of major importance. We have important communities coming from this area, we have people very sensitive to what happens in the Middle East and to all the difficulties, the crises, the challenges faced in this area. So, it is not only an external affair; it is also an internal question.

Second part of my presentation will be on our priorities. First priority is stability. We want and we try to contribute as much as we can to stability of this area, which is more and more closely linked to Europe. Again, it's both external and internal. Just see how many major challenges we are facing either coming from this area, or related to it, or with some kind of a relation to it. Migration, refugees, terrorism, human relations, cultural expansion, education for us - so a lot of perspectives. I don't want my approach to be understood as dark or negative. It is a very turbulent area with a lot of crises, but also an area with a lot of possibilities. One also has to consider Eastern Mediterranean as an area of difficulties, but also of chances and potentialities.

Second element regarding the priorities is that we also have to advocate within the European Union. France is one of the most convinced countries within the EU to give emphasis to the cooperation between the EU as a whole with what we call the southern flank of it. You have Eastern Neighborhood, which is Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and the Caucasus, and the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. France is one of the countries within the EU which advocates a lot in order to give importance, emphasis, financing to this area.

Third element regarding our priorities, and here I want to dissipate something which is said, heard many times which is not true, and believe me, our priorities in this region are first political, and then economic. Of course, we have economic interests, as every country in the world, but our purpose here on the top of the list is political, security concerns which lead our approach. So to say that in this area we are with our partners of the EU in a group of countries sharing the same approach, the same values, the same financial capacities, but of course, due to this history I was reminding you, we have also a specific role to play and a margin of action with our partners, our interlocutors and all the countries of the region. This is why our ministers, our authorities, our diplomats are travelling around this area constantly speaking to everybody.

So, I will come now to the different challenges, in some cases crises or problems we have to face and tell you what our position or approach is.

I'll start with Israel and Palestine as a block. Israel for us, I said that in my introduction, is a country with which we have friendly relations and we have a specific history. So Israel is clearly a historical friend of France. What we wish, and there is nothing new about that, is peace which lasts and is built in this area. We have more or less the same position regarding that. We want Israel and Palestine to live peacefully, and in full security, jointly in this land, in this area. This is why we recently did not approve the American position regarding the transferring of the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. This is for us legally speaking a unilateral decision of the United States, which is contrary to all the resolutions of the UN and we consider it as

something which does not favor the cause of peace and of the settlement. We are convinced that it does not help the cause, the purpose of security, including, of course, Israel security itself and the Israeli citizens. So our involvement is to build strong peace in the area and having two states living peacefully in full security, having Jerusalem for capital, divided of course, for two states. We support any initiative which is balanced, reasonable, which favors peace, and this is why our authorities invite the Israeli authorities to show some gesture or some initiative in order to help the Palestinians to get out of today's situation which is more or less a deadlock. But what we believe is that apart from the role of the international community, including Europe. Which, by the way, I have to remind that, because when it comes to Europe, many times it is said that it has no external policy, it's not a major power. Europe is not a major power per se, but Europe is a major player, and we all have to keep in mind the fact when it comes to financing, the most important donor to this area of the world is Europe, so it has a say and can speak with every legitimacy. What we believe is that the peace process in Israel and Palestine will be a result of talks between the two sides, between the two governments, between the two societies, the two people. This, of course, is for Israel and Palestine; it's also the case of Cyprus. You cannot have an imported peace solution anywhere in the world. So it's not France, it's not the US, it's not the international community which will import and impose any peace process to this area. It's a matter which firstly concerns, and we are going to support both of them, Israelis and Palestinians.

I come to Syria and here I want to make things very clear. We have one enemy in Syria, and this enemy is Daesh. This is our priority. You saw that recently we had tragic terrorist attacks in France last week which are related to that. One target, one priority, and this is clearly Daesh and terrorism. So, what we need and we have to do in Syria is to first finish with the war, and second, we have to win the peace. First, by defining a common goal which is to reduce, to suppress, to eradicate terrorism, and then to rebuild stability of Syria. Of course, we have these so-called red lines regarding the use of chemical weapons, and also we insist a lot on allowing the humanitarian access to the zones and areas of conflicts. Here, again, I want to add that as in every crisis in the war we have to avoid the neo-conservatism which imports a solution from other countries to the area. We cannot impose any solution. We want to help, we want to fight, we want to be part of the solution, we want to be positive, but we want to avoid any imported solutions to Syria, as we want to avoid that everywhere in the world. Is President Bashar al-Assad a friend of France? The answer is clearly "no". Mr Assad, we think, is an enemy of his own people, but the reality is very simple. The reality is that President Bashar al-Assad is now in power in Damascus, in Syria, so we cannot ignore this fact, we have to consider the reality in order to favor the political transition. We want a political transition in Syria. We want steadily, gradually to get out of war against Daesh in order to have a political transition. We don't want for the future a status quo, we want changes, but we want a gradual approach leading to a political solution. This is why we need to have collectively diplomatic initiative, and we spoke of that, represented our views - my authorities did that recently in New York at the General Assembly of the United Nations last September, and since then all our statements were constantly going in the same direction. This is a major question, a very sensitive one. We are speaking with all the leaders of the world - Russia, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Israel, Turkey - to all the major parties concerned in this major crisis in the Middle East, Syria. So, what we have to do in order to rebuild Syria is a political transition, a lasting stability for this country, we want plurality of all religions, minorities, from the Christians to the Alawites, to the Sunnis - to all the minorities, and of course a political plurality. This is what we want to support and we try to promote that politically.

In the short term I want to insist here on the humanitarian dimension of this crisis. This is why we insisted so much on implementing the resolution 2401 of the Security Council of the United Nations. We need first, as the international community, to elevate the situation of the civil population. This is part of our global approach which favors a political solution under the auspices of the UN, because we don't want this crisis, which is already so tragic, to expand in all the areas of the Middle East. We really believe that it is in the interest of all the countries in the area. And something else - we want to maintain the internationally recognized borders of every country in this area, and not to start changing these borders.

My president recently spoke to the Turkish President regarding Syria. He reiterated the need of ceasefire as it has been decided, but not implemented by the Security Council of the UN. We don't want any more indiscriminate bombing, and we want an access for humanitarian aid. This is basically what he said to Mr. Erdogan and this, of course, concerns the last point of major tensions. Here I'm referring to Ghouta area, but also Afrin where, as you know, the Turkish army led an operation. That's a major point of concern for us. We think, and we said to our interlocutors as part of the Astana process - and here I'm addressing to my Iranian colleague, also Russia and Turkey - that we consider these countries have a responsibility due to their influence which can help in order to make these recommendations reality on the ground.

On Lebanon, you know our position, which is consequent of this so important relation historically we have with Lebanon. Unity and total independence and sovereignty of Lebanon is the major goal. Even though during its history this country has been in different phases - some of them were very tense - we think that it's religiously and politically plural model has to be preserved and maintained. We are committed, as France, to help as much as we can to preserve the stability of Lebanon and this is why we want to involve international community in order to support financially Lebanon with investments. Conference will be held in Paris on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April with international donors and we also need to help the security forces of Lebanon in order to fight terrorism. As you know, we called all the Lebanese political forces to avoid any implication in regional crises, mainly in Syria. And the way around that we want is not to import any regional crises to Lebanon. The idea is to preserve integrity of Lebanon politically and in terms of sovereignty. And I will also close concerning Lebanon saying that we really insist on the importance of the contribution of the United Nations to the stability of south Lebanon to the border with Israel.

Of course, we could have spoken of any other item in this area. As always, speaking about this area, which starts from the Eastern Mediterranean and goes to the broader Middle East, we have to define what the limit of the broader Middle East is. Does it include the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, Turkey, Egypt? I'm not going to speak on all these questions, but I'm going to say some words about these three major crises or places of challenges.

Let me say few words about Turkey. Not about Turkey as it is often presented here in Cyprus for obvious reasons - we fully respect and understand that - but more to focus on Turkey as a major player in the area. Of course, Cyprus is a concern for Turkey, but Turkey also has a lot of concerns in the area and beyond the area. This is why I told you that Turkey, for instance, is a country which is developing an African policy. President Erdogan recently had a tour of several African countries: he went to Algiers, he went to Mauritania, he went to Mali with diplomats, with ministers, with a lot people. It shows that Turkey has ambitions which are global or of an important range. For us, Turkey - something which is not going to change - is that it is our neighbor. It's your neighbor here immediately in Cyprus, it is an important player in the

Eastern Mediterranean, and it's the neighbor of the European Union. We are facing with Turkey some common challenges, namely security and fight of terrorism. I have to remind that for us, for France - and I was mentioning this recent terrorist attack which occurred some days ago in southern France - it's not only the question of stability of this area. And to this regard Turkey has a role to play, it's not only something external and theoretical. A major part of the internal security of France is related to the area. If you consider all the terrorist attacks which happened during the last four years in France, most of them are linked to this area. And in this regard we cannot ignore Turkey, which is a player and also a way where some people crossed to come to Europe. So that's very important to keep in mind when considering the French position towards this area.

I was about to conclude my presentation with some words on Cyprus. But what I think is that I should leave that for questions. I'm not here to deliver a speech on Cyprus. That would be immodest because you are all specialists, some of you are Cypriots, so I prefer to leave that for the questions. Thank you very much for your attention.





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## PRESENTATION\*

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Uriya Shavit\*\*

18 April 2018

### **Political Islam in the Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond**

First, it is important to emphasize that there are different definitions, some of which are so broad that they're almost meaningless. Let me tell you how I understand political Islam. Political Islam are movements that believe that Islam must be reinstated as the all-encompassing framework of all aspects of life, including the political. And that the means to achieve this objective are through politics.

I think the best example for a political Islam movement are the Muslim Brothers, because that is basically the idea that they have championed through the years. That is basically their flagship idea: that there was a time in history when everything in Muslim societies was regulated in accordance with Islamic norms. And then with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and even before that time in history, that ended. And the only way to remedy the misfortune of Muslim societies in our day and age is to return to those old, glorious days, where the law is the law of Allah, where the norms are the norms of Allah, and nothing but the laws of Allah, and nothing but the norms of Allah is legitimate.

Now, we have to understand that it is not as if Muslim societies today are radically in contradiction with these ideas. If you read the amended Egyptian constitution of Anwar Sadat, it stated very clearly that laws must be in line with Sharia. So in that sense, it's catering to the demands of the Islamists. The problem is that from the point of view of political Islam, not a single norm, not a single code can breach the norms of Allah. If Allah said that you shouldn't drink alcohol, then you shouldn't drink alcohol. If Allah said "no" to abortions, then abortions are strictly prohibited. If Allah said "no" to gay marriage, or to gay sex, then obviously no one can allow something that Allah banned. And further, if Allah permitted something, if Allah made something permissible, no human being can say it is not permissible. So if Allah said that a man should be allowed to marry four wives, then human beings cannot legislate that it is illegal. Basically, the concept of the political Islam movement is that anything that Allah legitimized is legitimate, and anything that he delegitimized is illegitimate. So, to the extent that there is one law in Egypt which breaches the norms regulated by Sharia, if there is even one such law, then the country defies God. And this makes perfect sense in one way. If you accept that there is God and that Prophet Muhammad was his Final Prophet, the Messenger,

\* *Transcript*

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and that the Quran is the Holy Book of God, then it doesn't make sense to accept some of the laws and deviate other laws. So either you accept them as your framework, or you don't. This is the basic philosophy of the Muslim Brothers.

Through the years the Brothers had to face the question of whether or not they engage and participate with the political system that doesn't abide by the norms that they hold so dear. And I think it was in the 1980s when they reached a decision that it is permissible for them, it is beneficial for them, to take part in an electoral democracy that doesn't abide by the codes that they adhere to. Obviously, they did that already during the 1930s and the 1940s, but there was a period of loss of faith in the democratic system and it was regained during the 80s. The Muslim Brothers' theory is that today it is - or was after the 80s - that it is permissible to take part in elections, even if the elections lead to a parliament that doesn't exclusively and comprehensively abide by God's laws.

But there is a bigger issue, and I think that that is the issue that possibly needs to be addressed, or should be the focal point of attention. The Muslim Brothers' understanding of democracy is that the origins of Western democracy can be found in Islam, and that democracy is the Western way of practicing the Islamic principle of *shura*, which is mentioned in the Quran twice explicitly, and in the traditions and elsewhere in less explicit way.

The Muslim Brothers' understanding is that when God commanded Muslims to abide by the principle of *shura*, or consultation that is the equivalent of the way Westerners practice democracy today in many ways. First and foremost, according to the Muslim Brothers, because God commanded human beings to practice *shura*, leaders are only legitimate to the extent that they are elected in universal, fair, and frequent elections. That their regime is transparent. That they respect the will of the people, if the people decide that they should leave office. It is also the firm belief of the Muslim Brothers that God commanded Muslims not only to abide by *shura* in this narrow electoral sense, but also to practice freedom of speech and other human freedoms. And that practicing those freedoms is not just something that Muslims can do; it is something that they must do. It is something that God commanded them to do. And in this sense, the fact that Western nations, and also the fact that Israel, are more democratic, or have been more democratic for such a long time while other states are not, is not just an offence against democracy in the simple sense. It is also an offence against Islam. Because if God commanded Muslims to live in democratic societies and they do not, then by not being democratic they are also not being good Muslims.

So far so good, it seems it is a very clear and coherent theory of democracy. And let me explain where I think the problem lies. The reference for all of this, what legitimizes all these ideas from the Muslim Brothers' point of view, is their understanding of God's commands. That is, democracy is something that has to be practiced, leaders must be elected, freedom of speech must be respected, because this is what God ordered. Democracy is part of Islam. Therefore, from the Muslim Brothers' point of view it also makes perfect sense that you can legislate in a Muslim democracy only on those issues, on which God did not legislate. And here is why this makes sense. It makes sense, because if we accept that the premise of democracy, that the source of democracy's legitimacy is God's commands, if we accept that, then it doesn't make sense to disobey God's command on other issues. Therefore, according to the Muslim Brothers, the democratically elected parliament in a Muslim country cannot legitimize the drinking of alcohol. The democratically elected parliament in a Muslim country that abides by the principle of *shura*, cannot legitimize, for example, abortions. It cannot illegalize marrying four wives. So

democracy is good so long as God's laws are abided by. That is the basic principle of the Muslim Brothers. This is their theory of democracy, which is just as in the West, except that in the Muslim democracy, in a Muslim Brothers' democracy you cannot legislate against God's commands.

If you tell a Muslim Brother that this theory is not very democratic, he will tell you, or she will tell you if she is a Muslim Sister, or he will tell you if he is a Muslim Brother, that it is not fair to argue that their theory is non-democratic. And they will present the following argument, which I have to say is a very appealing argument. They will say, "In a Western democracy parliaments also cannot legislate on anything as they deem fit." For example, it is possible in the United States, which, most people will argue is a democracy, it possible there that the Congress, both Houses of Congress, approve through legislation, through a very broad margin a piece of legislation which later the Supreme Court, which is basically nine justices, will decide with the 5:4 majority that that piece of legislation is unconstitutional, and everyone will accept that these are the rules of the game. The Congress legislated and everyone was happy there, but the Supreme Court found that this act of legislation is unconstitutional, and that's the end of that. So a Muslim Brother will say, "Where is the difference, theoretically speaking, between an Egyptian Parliament, where it is established that the Quran is the constitution, or let's say broadly that the Quran and the traditions, any of God's decrees, and the Prophet's decrees are the constitution, *sharia* is the premise for all legislation, and if parliament legislates in a way that the Supreme Court of Egypt, or some other panel, will find is unconstitutional, that it negates, it counters the Quran, then the law will be declared unconstitutional, and that will be the end of that. What is wrong with this theory?" They say, "Where is the difference between such a system and the American system?" And I have to say this is something I elaborated quite a bit on in my book "Scientific and Political Freedom in Islam" in a more systematic fashion. But I have to say, just in the context of our conversation, there is a lot of sense in this theory, and this way of presenting things by the Muslim Brothers makes perfect sense, save one crucial issue.

And here is that one crucial issue. Obviously, those justices in the United States, who decide that something is constitutional or not, they are indirectly elected by the people, because it's the president who decides who the justices will be – he is elected by the electors, and the electors are elected by the people. So in the end those justices represent the popular will. What do the Muslim Brothers have in mind in their hypothetical state is the panel that will decide whether a piece of legislation is compatible with the Quran or whether it is not. What will that be? I've been reading Muslim Brothers' literature from the 1930s to the early 2000s that dealt with the issues that we're discussing: the issue of who should have the authority to decide whether certain legislation is compatible with the Quran or not. And it's very interesting, and I hardly think it's a coincidence, that the Brothers have neglect to fully answer that question. They've neglect to fully answer that question, because if they say that those justices, that legal panel that will have the full authority should be indirectly or directly elected by the people, then they describe a democracy, not a liberal democracy, but nevertheless a democracy. But in a situation whereby this panel will be comprised of religious scholars, of Ulema, who will be elected by other religious scholars, the name for such a regime is not a democracy - the name for a regime of that kind is a theocracy.

I'm not splitting hairs here, this is actually a crucial issue. The reason why the Brothers are avoiding answering it, is that they want to be able to play on both fields. That is to have an

appeal with people who are very eager to see Egypt as a theocracy, but also to have an appeal with people who want the more Islamic Egypt, but nevertheless a democratic one. That is, basically they wanted to appeal both to those, who wish Egypt to be some variation of Iran, and those who want it to be some variation of conservative European countries.

I was very eager to see them once and for all in power in Egypt, because they figured that once they are in power, they would have to answer the question, and then they would realize, and the Egyptian public would realize, that you have to make a choice. You have to make a choice between a theocracy and a democracy, you cannot have both. And I have to say it is rather interesting that when they passed the constitution in Egypt - their span in power was very short, but they did manage to pass the constitution - and it was very interesting that even in that constitution they managed to avoid answering that question. They left it open for the future.

But why did we have millions of Egyptians marching on the streets of Cairo and elsewhere? We had millions of Egyptians, including liberals, who marched there because they were quite convinced that given the chance, that if they are enough time in power, then what the Muslim Brothers would do is lead Egypt towards the path of becoming a theocracy. And I have to say, Egyptian liberals faced a rather uncomfortable dilemma. They had to choose between a military regime - because everyone, I think, realized that el-Sisi would end up with the establishment of a military regime - so they had to choose between establishing a military regime, former authoritarian regime that they knew well, that was the evil they knew, or accepting the gradual encroachment of theocratic norms on Egyptian society.

And they finally did choose the evil that they knew, and that is what we have seen in Egypt over the last four-five years. The evil that the Egyptian liberals new. A non-democratic regime led by a strongman that nevertheless is strong enough to fend off the Islamist threat.

A very crucial question is, "Is it possible to have a democracy with strong political Islam movement as part of that democracy?" The answer to that question is "yes". But under one condition: that that political Islam movement does not enjoy a majority. Because if it enjoyed the majority, it will ultimately lead the country to a theocratic regime. If it doesn't, it may just have an effect on leading the country to be more conservative, more Islamic, more religious, but not in the way that doesn't allow popular vote to express itself and doesn't allow regime change.

We spoke a lot about Egypt, but Tunisia, the events that took place in Tunisia ever since the Arab Spring, they prove that political Islam can have different faces and can function differently in democratic systems, so long as one thing is maintained. And that one thing is their acceptance of a non-*sharia* abiding regime.

Political Islam can take part in liberal democracy as long as it doesn't win an absolute majority. You have political movements in Israel whose dream would be to see here a regime, a society that is governed by the laws of God, by the rabbinical law. And they take active part in Israeli politics. The difference is that they don't comprise more than 15-20% of the Israeli parliament. You have in Indonesia political parties - the largest Muslim country in the world - you have political parties that are Islamic, that even preach variations of political Islam, but they haven't been able to win an absolute majority. And that has also been the case in Tunisia. Political Islam movements want one thing, ultimately, in the end. That one thing shouldn't make it

impossible for them to participate in politics so long as they don't get that one thing that they actually want.

### **Is Turkey under Erdogan's leadership an Islamist regime?**

Turkey is a very interesting example. What a lot of people do not know is that Erdogan managed to assert his control over Turkish politics only after he went that extra mile that other Islamists at the time were not willing to take. Erdogan basically renounced all the demands for the *sharia*-led government and the *sharia*-led society. And he was as clear-cut and unequivocal in renouncing those old concepts that Erbakan and other Turkish Islamists preached for and that was how it was possible for him to take power in Turkey. A lot of people ask, "So where does Erdogan really want Turkey to go?" Giving full authority, facing no opposition from the public, from the judiciary, will he still abide by his commitment to a different face of Islamism? He says he would. But knowing that this is Erdogan and how capricious he is, that is not necessarily going to be the case. Nevertheless, there is a great disparity between the political views and the ideology of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers and that of the Turkish Islamists. And knowing that since 2016 the Tunisian Islamists have also gone that extra mile that Erdogan has gone through already in the late 1990s and now they are not preaching, they're not insisting on the *sharia*-led society.

### **What is the role of political Islam in Europe?**

That is a whole new topic and I will only say two things. It's very difficult and not very analytically constructive to discuss European Islam as a whole. European Muslims are so diverse and there is so much that brings them apart, aside of the basic beliefs in God and his final Prophet, that it is not possible really to discuss them as one coherent political group, not even on a national basis. Not even if we discuss British Muslims, or German Muslims. There is so much disunity to make such an analysis credible. It is true that among first, second and third generations of European Muslims there are individuals who find integration more difficult. We also need to be cautious that it is not obvious what we mean when we say "integration". I think that we see very little Islamic politics in Europe. Maybe that will change in twenty years, or thirty years, or forty years. But at the moment those Europeans of Muslim faith who do well in politics are actually secular, or if not secular, then at best traditionalists. You have very little Islamic influence in European parliaments, in European politics. I would speculate that could change, but right now Islamic politics is almost redundant in the broader map of European politics.

### **What is the future of democracy in the Eastern Mediterranean?**

Some of the states are vibrant democracies, some are challenged democracies, and some are not democratic at all. Of all these, the greatest shame is Egypt because they had a unique historical opportunity to change the face of their society, to drastically and dramatically transform it. The Arab Spring brought such a wonderful opportunity and Egyptian society could not find in itself the forces of revival and the forces of renewal. It is extremely unfortunate considering what Egypt can contribute to the region and to the world. My guess is that, just by very crude and even cold-calculated analysis, my guess is that that Egypt's worst days are still ahead of it. Because I don't think it makes much sense to think that the Muslim Brothers and Islamists at large have said the last word. A movement that comprises some half of the Egyptian population didn't just disappear. And the moment will come, maybe when el-Sisi is weakened, maybe

when he's gone, maybe for another reason, but the moment will come that these forces will resurface. And when they resurface, I tell you one thing is going to be different. They're not going to buy the idea that they can achieve anything through electoral processes. They bought this idea and now they are disillusioned. Now they understand that the only way to make change is using violence, applying force. And, therefore, I repeat my rather gray and grim statement that I fear that Egypt's worst days are still ahead of it.

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## COMMENTARY\*

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Andrew Lambert\*\*

20 April 2018

### US-Led Strike against the Syrian Regime

On the night of Friday/Saturday 13/14<sup>th</sup> April, fighters and bombers from the USA, France and Great Britain conducted a three-pronged strike on “the heart of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.” Very early on the Saturday morning, a total of 76 US cruise missiles, fired from B-1B bombers and naval ships, smashed into Barzeh chemical weapons research and development facilities. Meanwhile, the UK and France attacked chemical facilities near Homs. French air and naval units fired a total of twelve missiles, while four RAF Tornados, each fired two Storm Shadow bunker-busting stand-off missiles.

This attack was in response to an alleged chemical attack a week earlier on the suburban town of Douma, just east of Damascus - a town held by rebel forces but still occupied by a considerable civilian population. At least seventy people were killed and hundreds more injured. The attack provoked widespread abhorrence in the West, heightened by the sight on TV and social media of children gasping for breath.

The suffering of the victims was consistent with the chlorine gas the regime often uses — but this time mixed with a nerve agent. Officers of the UN Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons have now, on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April, rather belatedly, been given access to the area where the chemical attack took place, and their results are expected probably by the end of May. Given the fact that barrel bombs were seen to be dropped in the area, and the widespread effects of the chemicals, there is little doubt that a chemical attack took place.

But the question for the world jury is: who was guilty? The Russians have steadfastly maintained a) that no chemicals were used, citing the fact that Russian ground troops were in nearby areas shortly afterwards and found no ill-effects, and b) that it would make no sense for Assad to use chemical weapons when he is so close to total victory.

A previous large chemical attack just over a year ago at Khan Sheikhoun met with the response from the newly inaugurated President Trump of fifty nine Tomahawk missiles fired at the Syrian airbase from where the attack took place. That clearly failed to deter any subsequent use.

Fighting in built-up areas is fearsomely expensive, both in weapons and casualties, and the

\* *Transcript*

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ground once taken is often so destroyed that one is left with little more than a wasteland. Chemicals have the advantage that they drift in and around buildings causing casualties not directly in the line of fire and over a longer period, and hence deterring fighters and civilians alike from being in an area likely to be targeted.

Part of the point of using chemical weapons this time, it is suggested, is perhaps to soften up global opinion for using them again in the rebels' last stronghold: Idlib.

So, was this a legal act?

First, the use of chemicals. Chemical weapons are already outlawed by the Chemical Weapons Convention which entered into force in 1997. And following the first use of chemicals in the Syrian civil war, Presidents Obama and Putin agreed that Russia would supervise the total removal of all chemical weapons from Syria. That clearly has not taken place.

And for the Western air forces?

Under Article 51 of the UN Charter, "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security."

Increasingly, however, the use of force in support of collective self-defence for humanitarian operations has now increasingly been established by precedent. So you can say that it was a legal action, as far as the West was concerned.

Fortunately, despite the trumpeting from Washington, the actual targets chosen showed considerable restraint, confining weapon impacts to military areas, and the Barzeh scientific laboratories where weaponised gas was capable of being manufactured. Although this provoked considerable outpouring of anguish, nevertheless, Russia did not fire on Western aircraft, nor did it carry out any subsequent military response, although the media widely predicted a cyber-attack. However, though no direct attack was forthcoming, the Russians clearly worked hard at winning the war of words. According to the Pentagon, the number of Russian bots active on social media increased by 2,000% in the wake of the Syrian strikes, with the intention of undermining support for the attack, and the West's intentions for Syria.

So, was this military act effective? And the answer to this is that although executed almost perfectly by the military, this was in reality a political act, designed far less actually to deny Assad the physical availability of chemical weapons, rather more to coerce or deter, and gain political advantage.

Nevertheless, yet again this operation underscored the utility of air power as both a political weapon of choice and as an effective weapon of war. All designated targets were attacked with precision.

Of course, Syria claimed that it had intercepted 71% of all weapons *en route* to their targets, but this farcical figure has yet to be substantiated, and it is sure that the TV downlink of each of the RAF's eight Stormshadow missiles showed them right on target.



According to Lieutenant General Kenneth McKenzie, Syrian air defences fired forty intercepting surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) but failed to hit any of their targets. He said most were fired after the last incoming missile had already struck its target.

One other aspect often overlooked is that all forty SAMs still had to come down somewhere, and analysts need to be somewhat sceptical from any random reports of widespread collateral damage.

For President Assad, the attack was most likely a lot less severe than he feared or expected. Indeed, journalists reported Syrian civilians coming out of their houses to watch the missiles flying past. Somewhat different to WWII! On the other hand, a rebel forces' spokesman expressed disappointment, "They did not target the air bases that the regime uses to attack civilians, children, women, infrastructure, hospitals."

So, what then are the lessons and implications for the future?

And this is where staring into the crystal ball is sure to make any commentator seem naïve, if not foolish.

Is this attack, and the one a year earlier, going to be sufficient to deter Mr. Assad from digging into his stockpiles when he needs to clear out Idlib?

It is clear that both Presidents Macron and Trump were certain that they wanted to send a direct message to those that contemplate using weapons of mass destruction. Such actions will not be tolerated, and any future use will unquestionably cross the proverbial red line and will invite punishment. Of course, sadly, this also opens the door for deniability bluff and counter bluff as each side attempts to shift blame onto the other. Or worse, sets up a deniable chemical attack in the hope the other side will be blamed.

For Mr. Trump, this resolute operation has played well – as it was meant to do – and has demonstrated to anyone else in the world (Little Rocket Man, perhaps? And even the theocracy in Teheran?) that Washington is not afraid to use its military if the situation needs it. No doubt the Kurds will be pleased too that Mr. Trump has not entirely forgotten them, and even Mr. Erdogan may just realise that the free hand he thinks he has in and around Afrin is not entirely free. Possibly, as well, it demonstrates that wiser councils in Washington still prevail and the mixed messages that were coming out of the presidential Twitter feed, have been supplanted by restrained military action, designed clearly to be non-escalatory.

Whether this means there is anything of a Middle Eastern strategy emerging from Washington is still in doubt, and maybe this will have to wait till Messrs Pompeo and Bolton have time to establish a direction for presidential policy. Israel and Saudi Arabia are certainly already dismayed by the increase in Iran's influence in Syria, and the mixed messages from Washington don't help, especially over the Iran nuclear deal.

But Mrs. May, too, can be somewhat pleased. The poisoning of the Skripals on the streets of Salisbury had drawn the world's attention to the horrific nature of chemical warfare and this operation was in part a clear response to that use of chemicals. Although UK involvement was probably as much in the nature of an operation to support her allies, it was militarily successful and thankfully precise.

Politically, however, there was considerable political angst in the UK in the days leading up.

Despite Jeremy Corbyn's pacifist demands that all military action should always be considered first by parliament, both the media and most MPs have realised that time-critical decisions just cannot be taken after lengthy debate in parliament. Such a move would give succour to our adversary, destroy any element of surprise, and cause the lives of far more British servicemen to be put at risk.

Of course, it is right when great strategic issues confront the British people that parliament should be involved, but when a decision to mount a particular operation depends so much on intelligence, and shared intelligence at that, it cannot be right for that intelligence to be flaunted across the floor of the House and analysed by the inexperienced. In practice, this is one of the cardinal reasons for retention of the Royal Prerogative, which gives the Prime Minister the authority to order an attack, with the backing of the Cabinet, and possibly with the acquiescence of security-cleared members of the Queen's Privy Council.

Needless to say, however, the PM is still nevertheless accountable to parliament, and if it all goes wrong, and her strategy is seen to be at fault, then she can subsequently be dismissed in a vote of no confidence.

What we are probably seeing in Syria, as far as the West is concerned is more like an attempt to put a stake in the ground. The West has to remain interested in the outcome in Syria, and its implications for Israel, Lebanon and the Gulf as a whole. Although *pro tem* it seems as if the Russian-backed Assad regime will remain, the West was rightly keen to indicate its continuing vital interests in the region, despite the USA becoming virtually self-sufficient in oil.

As far as Russia is concerned, her intervention in Syria has been seen as a great success. Russia has established herself as a great power once again, one that all other powers have to recognise. The Alawite Syrian Regime, Hezbollah, Iran, and increasingly Iraq's Shiite regime are all now in the Russian camp, and a potent counter to Saudi's pro-West stance of Prince Mohammed bin-Salman.

And if Mr. Putin succeeds in driving an even greater wedge between NATO Turkey and the rest of NATO, then he can be very pleased that NATO itself will have been weakened, with further implications for the Baltic region and possibly Ukraine and Israel.

Mr. Putin's actions will be seen both inside Russia and across the Middle East as strong. He did not allow the West to walk all over the Assad regime and begin targeting for regime change; instead, the punishment was forced to be very constrained. Given the widespread Russian air defences, the US had to consult Russia before the bombing and in doing so *de facto* acknowledged the *primus inter pares* position of Russia in the Middle East. Again, this degree of necessary cooperation demonstrates the decline of US power in the region and emphasises the position of the Astana Group of Russia, Turkey and Iran in determining the future, not just of Syria, but of many smaller powers as well.

At a more tactical level, I would have thought too, that, seeing again the effectiveness of air power, Mr. Putin would be encouraged to push President Assad to bring this conflict to a speedy conclusion over this summer. This will probably require considerable effort on the ground as well as in the air, and the need for speed will probably reduce the constraints on Russian air operations so that, although we may see less use of poison gas, we can expect far more civilian casualties from indiscriminate air attack, especially in difficult to reach areas, out of sight of journalists.

So, what can we say in summation?

Well, as the Financial Times put it so well: “Firing missiles is no substitute for a strategy. Nor is pulling out US troops as Mr. Trump apparently intended shortly before Douma was attacked.” Last weekend’s bombing will do little to change the trajectory of the war in Syria.

Unless the US and its allies start to be serious about events in the region and begin to participate not just with the occasional military strike, but diplomatically and economically as well, they will have given the match to Russia with consequences not only for Syria, but for NATO, Israel, oil supplies and Saudi Arabia.

We may have just won a game but the West is already two sets down. There is much to play for.



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## COMMENTARY\*

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Habib C. Malik\*\*

14 May 2018

### Parliamentary Elections in Lebanon

On the recent parliamentary elections that took place in Lebanon on May 6th pretty much the results for the most part were expected. For example, the block that includes Hezbollah and the other Shiite allies, the Amal Movement led by Nabih Berri, the Speaker of the House, garnered pretty much more or less the same amount of seats that they had previously in their main strongholds of Baalbek in the northern Beqaa Valley and throughout southern Lebanon. In fact Hezbollah, if anything lost seat in the Byblos area, where there is a small Shiite community living within a larger Christian community. As for the other groupings, well, Hezbollah's main Christian allies, the Patriotic Movement, actually lost some seats, led initially by Michel Aoun, now President, and now led by his son in law Gebran Bassil. Hariri's Future Movement lost some seats as well but the fiercely anti-Hezbollah Lebanese Forces led by Samir Geagea, actually made some impressive gains.

So, all and all, we can say that there is a kind of a Lebanese style of checks and balances here. And the idea that after the elections Hezbollah is basically in full control of Lebanon is neither accurate nor true. It is too simplistic and in fact, in a sense, it is an exaggeration that can be the source of obfuscation, in terms of understanding the true picture of Lebanon and its many nuances.

Now, as far as the recent clashes between Israel and Iran in Syria, well yes, they are worrying. And the problem there is that human error or some kind of miscalculation or overreach can always result a spiral towards catastrophe. I am talking basically about some form of runaway escalation which can get out of hand. That is always a possibility. But that said, my sense is that neither Israel nor Iran are looking for a wider or larger conflict at this point. And given that, and given, if you like the US – Russian sealing on how much the Syrian situation can deteriorate and affect its surroundings, I think for now at least the region is spared a major conflagration between Israel and Iran. The other interesting noteworthy observation is that Hezbollah in Lebanon have kept out of any direct engagement with Israel. This has been the case for a long time ever since the end of the summer 2006 war and in fact today the Lebanon-Israel border has never been quieter. And, although some Hezbollah members might be involved in activities inside Syria alongside the regime forces and the Iranians, Hezbollah has considerably scaled

\* *Transcript*

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down its involvement in Syria over the last several weeks and months. And that too is part of the internal agreement in Lebanon of what is known as “distancing” Lebanon from other Arab arenas and other inter-Arab conflicts. And so Hezbollah, to some extent, has abided or has been abiding by that. So I don’t see any imminent breakdown of the current deterrence equation that seems to be quite robust at this point between Hezbollah and Israel in south Lebanon.

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## INTERVIEW\*

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Darko Trifunovic\*\*

8 June 2018

### **Political Islam in South-Eastern Europe and Beyond**

#### **How Significant is Turkey's influence in South-Eastern Europe?**

We used to deal with Turkey and Turkish officials that they are type of Atatürk, basically, they are holders of Atatürk's legacy. But with the "new generation", with Tayyip Erdoğan, with Gülen and others, Grey Wolves as well as Muslim Brotherhood rise up in Turkey and as well in northern part of your island. The Muslim Brotherhood, of course, is a basic organization for all jihad. We are now facing a big misunderstanding, mainly coming from lack of knowledge from the West and the Western countries, because they do not call all these organizations Muslim Brotherhood but regionally they call them Al-Qaeda, Islamic State, etc. But it's very well-known among us experts that basically Bin Laden, Zawahiri, Al Baghdadi, Tayyip Erdoğan and others, they are all members of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Recently, Erdoğan visited Bosnia. Bosnia is not a Muslim country, it is predominantly Christian country if you see population, if you consider Croatian Catholics and Serb Orthodox residing in Bosnia. And what he did at the airport? Immediately after his disembarkment from the airplane on the Sarajevo International Airport he showed the four-finger of the Muslim Brotherhood<sup>1</sup>. He showed all what is our destiny according to his plan. The same Muslim Brotherhood is present in northern part of your island.

Erdoğan doesn't hide that his aspiration is to become a new caliph. That's why he is in confrontation with all those prominent individuals in groups coming from Arabic Sunni population, particularly Al-Baghdadi, that they are claiming that they are supposed to be a caliph in the caliphate. It is very clear for all of us that the Muslim Brotherhood is basically an organization which propagates political Islam. Political Islam is just the platform for their ultimate goal - the goal is creation of umma and caliphate. And methods of their operations, modus operandi, is guerilla, terrorism, and right now we are facing also state terrorism.

And if you consider at this moment what Mr. Erdoğan and army under his control in Turkey

*\* Transcript*

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<sup>1</sup>The so-called 'Rabia sign'.

right now, what they are doing - provoking conflict with Greece. There is no day that Turkey doesn't violate the Greek sovereign territory. There is no day that the Turkish forces are not committing crimes in Syria. Because what is Turkish army doing in north of Syria according to international law this is a clear act of aggression. Regardless if Russian side would contact now with the Turks, if Russians decide to allow the Turks to enter the territory of Syria, but according to the international law, Turkey is behaving very aggressively and, I repeat, against Greece, and in the same time you can expect in the future of course any kind of aggression towards Cyprus, towards the East European nations, particularly in the Balkans, and as well as Syria.

And, of course, their aggressive policies now are very visible in Central Asia. Few thousands Uyghurs are members of Al-Qaeda and Al-Nusra and, particularly, all these units of Islamic State fighting in Syria and Iraq. After the defeat in Syria they are now in Turkey, and according to my knowledge, they are now preparing operation and actions against western China in province called Xinjiang. So Turkey has become a problem not only for Europe and European partners, not only for the Greek and the US governments. Turkey is now becoming also a problem of China. Nobody stopped Turkey in their effort to organize, recruit and support by any other ways and means equipping Uyghur terrorists, because in Turkey there is a common opinion that Uyghur people are originally Turks and they speak Urdu language that most of the Turkish citizens consider as old Turkish. So we are now facing, as I said from the beginning, not really old Turkey that we used to deal with - type of Atatürk. Now we are facing a giant, which is completely out of civil control, out of control of our civilization, they don't accept values of our civilization, they become more and more radical, and there will be in the future, of course, this kind of a clash.

Regarding the Balkans, and indeed it's the same policy, radical circles from Turkey try to widespread this Turkish radical form of Islam. And by that way Turkey tries to keep the interest and to misuse local Muslim population from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Albania, Serbia, all the way up to Bosnia. Of course, there is now the conflict between Turkish influences and Arabic, mainly Saudi Arabia influence. And Saudis are more present in our part of the world, but Turkish influence is present more and more in your part of the world. And particularly right now there is a very strange marriage between Turkey and Russians. And since you have in Cyprus a large population of the Russians, now we need to think whether all of these Russians are our Orthodox brothers and fellows, whether all of these Russians are just our neighbors, or some of them do some kind of intelligence gathering job for their new ally at the moment - Turkey.

### **What is the connection between Turkey and the Muslim Brotherhood?**

Muslim Brotherhood is not an organization which strictly respects the rules from country to country. You can see Muslim Brotherhood in Saudi Arabia, and their relation towards, for example, the women issue. You can see Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and their relation to, for example, the women issue again. And it's from country to country. They are root organization, they have common goals and they have common platform. The platform is political Islam, but it's from country to country, and in every country the Muslim Brotherhood respects some traditional relations among those inhabitants of those countries. So you can see, if you are studying the Muslim Brotherhood carefully, you can see that their roles are not the same from country to country. In Egypt, for example, their representatives behave completely differently than in Saudi Arabia or in Morocco. There is a strong connection, they are part of one body. Of



course in this body there are different wings. Basically, they want to put themselves above all others. You remember that from the beginning all kinds derive from the Arabic world. But the last twenty, maybe thirty caliphs they came from the Turkish world. And Atatürk, at the beginning of the twentieth century shut down the caliphate and that was the end of the caliphate. And basically, all these jihadists right now, whenever they do something, they recall the past. They recall Salahuddin, they are living in the past. They are back in seventh century, and that's why they've attacked first France, whose French troops came to Baghdad and killed the idea of, at that time, the guy who claimed that he was going to be the caliph from the Arab Syrian (*inaudible*).

Turkey is a part of this. Regardless how much they are different, regardless that they are not Arabs, but they are claiming, they are in constant fight, among the Sunni (*inaudible*) their Arab fellows. But at the end of the day they have the same idea of *jihad*, they are misinterpreting Quran and misunderstanding the basics of the religion.

But now, if you talk about religion, in particular Sunni version of religion, then, I said just a minute ago that they misinterpret religion. Maybe I'm wrong? Maybe they interpret the religion in the right way? But who can understand, for example, verses from the Quran: "When the holy months pass, kill infidels wherever you find them, burn their property, until they start paying *jizya*." What does that mean for an average Muslim inhabitant, for an average Muslim citizen, this order from the Quran? Of course, there are Muslim scholars that are lying to us that in other parts of the Quran there is a verse that propagates love and tolerance among the people, etc. But the main thing is that in the Quran there is a verse that says that the newer *Surah* is above the older. That means that in the second part of the Quran there is much more power than in the older part of the Quran. That's why they lie to us.

### **How should Europe deal with religious radicalization?**

The key is de-radicalization. But it is also from country to country. For example, Serbia, Bosnia - our Muslim population are not Muslims that come from somewhere - they are out of our blood, they are autochthon Muslims from Europe and they have a unique position that we need to create out of them our first defense. And more and more Bosnian and Serbian Muslims here converted during the Ottomans. They are European Muslims with European standards and European traditions. Last twenty-twenty five years, someone, mainly Saudis, Turks and others, started to change them. They want to change their name for example. They used to call themselves Bosnian Muslims, and now they convert to Bosniaks. They don't speak now Serbo-Croatian language, which is basically our language. Now they call it Bosnian language, which is nonsense. They used to go to mosque, this type of mosque which is Turkish-style, with low minarets, etc., but after the civil war in Bosnia they started to build very high minarets, like those you can see in Saudi Arabia and all other places. So, the last twenty-twenty five years someone has tried to change the identity of the European Muslims. This is one category.

The second category is a Muslim population that came from North Africa, Middle East and other parts of the world. Again, de-radicalization, but because we are dealing with the radical, we are not dealing with Islam here. And we need to make clear distinction between Islam as a great world religion, and radical jihadists, radical Islamists that want to jeopardize our values, they want to destroy our civilization, and they want to put in our mind their ideals in a very brutal way. Every day they are sending this kind of a message to us, that they are brutal, that they are terrorists, that if we don't accept their values and their civilization, we are going to die.

It's a kind of message they are sending to us every day.

So how do we confront that? Of course, with de-radicalization. But also, since we are dealing with radical Islam, we need to treat them as Europe treated communists, Bolsheviks, in the past. We need to create a ban list that they cannot travel. We cannot allow them enter our civilization. And also, if you are taking Israeli experience, if some of them commit any kind of terrorist activities, in particular suicide, we need to take measures against the traitors' family and keep them entirely out of Europe. If someone grew up in Europe and becomes a suicide bomber or any other radical jihadist, there is no space for these people. Europe is liberal. They came to our world. They want to change our habits, they want to change our way of life. They want to change everything. So, if they don't like us, why are they coming to us? And why do we allow them to come? It sounds maybe like a radical approach. But explain to mothers and fathers of those kids that were killed by jihadists in Bosnia. Explain to the family of the France bombing how they feel right now. Explain all the families that suffer from jihadist or Islamist terrorism, from America, China, India and Europe. Think a little bit about families, think a little bit about victims, and then you will find that we need to implement very extreme measures.

De-radicalization means soft and strong measures. For example, one of the leading experts on de-radicalization is Mr. Asir Hafiz. He used to be an imam of a London mosque. But he realized how dangerous radical Islam is to Muslim population. He wants to underline that radical Islam is targeting namely Muslim kids. They want Muslim kids to be the suicide bombers. They want Muslims to convert to their way, to confront the rest of the civilization. The average Muslims in Europe, in particular Bosnian or European-born Muslims, not second or third generation, but our Muslims that they are here for the last 500 years, they understand that they are victims and so are their kids. We need to talk to those that came to Europe. We need to tell them why their family came to Europe - because they cannot live under the Islamic rule and other circumstances in their own country. So what do they want from us? If they don't like our way of life, if they don't like our civilization, we need to find out way how to face them with the consequences. The consequences vary from jail to ban list that they cannot travel. Our legislators and our colleagues from law faculties can give us which kind of measures we can implement. But also there is a big dilemma in that sense. Which kind of the measures? What can you do to someone who decides to die? That is also a key question for me and my colleagues and we are still looking for answers. I find out that those jihadists, they are using techniques, special psychological techniques to brainwash young Muslims to become suicide bombers. So we need to do the opposite. And in psychology there are measures. But unfortunately, our not only Serbian, but also European legislators don't understand gravity of the threat. When they start to understand the gravity of the threat, they'll do things about legal measures and ways of how to confront it.

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## COMMENTARY\*

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Alan Makovsky\*\*

22 June 2018

### Turkey's Election 2018

The Turkish elections will be held on June 24th, about sixteen months ahead of schedule. Usually when we talk about elections, the first question that we ask is who is going to win. It's a reasonable question. In this case we really have to ask a preliminary question: Will it be fair? Will it be free and fair? There are, unfortunately, a lot of reasons to be suspicious that it might not be fair. Why is that? Basically, three reasons.

First of all, recent history. In April of last year, Turkey held a very significant referendum on thoroughgoing change of its constitution through a series of amendments which greatly empowered the presidency far beyond what it had been before, and abolishes the prime ministry, and diminishes the power of parliament, although it does not totally eliminates parliament's powers. The vote was very close, roughly 51,8 % was the winning total as officially reported but many people suspected that the vote was unfair, that it had passed because of fraud. Many unmarked ballots, unstamped ballots were counted - according to Turkish law only officially stamped ballots are supposed to count - nevertheless these unstamped ballots were counted, there were counter-arguments by the Turkish government as to why these votes were counted. But nevertheless there was a lot of suspicion about it. I would say this and I think it's very important: Turkey has had its democratic problems over the years. But until the election last year, starting in 1950, Turkey had had more than twenty - almost two dozen - national, parliamentary and referendum elections and this was the first time in all those elections that the losing side said we lost because we were cheated. Of course, there have always been issues of localized fraud, there have been local elections where the loser cried "faul", but this is the first time in a national election that that happened and there is concern that there will be a repeat of cheating in the upcoming elections.

Second of all, there is a new election law which in fact makes cheating, seems to make cheating much easier, by making it official that unstamped ballots in certain circumstances can count and also by limiting the monitoring that can be done by other parties. In fact, one of the reasons that early elections were called according to the Turkish opposition was so that they would have less time to train monitors. One political party said that it was planning to train 200,000 election monitors, now it only has time to train 50,000. And the access of those

\* *Transcript*

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monitors will be limited.

Thirdly, there is the issue of the media environment. Turkey has been under emergency rule, something very akin to martial law, since the failed coup d'état of July 2016. That means that president Erdogan can really do almost anything he wants and he has been doing that. He can limit the rallies that the opposition holds. One thing that is clear is that he overwhelmingly dominates the media. It's hard to put a number on it but I don't think anyone will quarrel with the idea that 90% of the media is a mouthpiece for President Erdogan and his supporters. So for all of those reasons it's not clear that the upcoming election will be fair.

Now, why would Erdogan want to cheat? Obviously, the reason is to win. But, those people who are expecting, who think that he is willing to cheat really cite two reasons. One is that he is power hungry, he is in power since 2003 - his party won in 2002, he did not formally become the prime minister until 2003 - then in 2014 he became the president. The other reason is, since 2013, there have been corruption allegations swirling around him and his family and some of his supporters. Some people feel that if Erdogan should lose, his fate would be prison. And, therefore, he cannot let himself lose. People argue how much can he change, how much is he willing to change. I think most people agree that there could be significant cheating in rural areas and in the Kurdish-dominated southeast where there is a strong military presence. But most people feel there is a limit to how much he can cheat without being fully obvious.

Anyway, this is the environment in which the election is taking place. And what about the election itself? Let's put aside the issue of fairness and let's just look at what is about to happen, let's assume it will be fair. This election is unique in Turkish history in terms of its mechanics and in terms of the political tactics being used. What do I mean by that? So, I mentioned that the referendum passed, at least legally it passed last April that brought in a new system of an empowered presidency. There were several other changes related to it, one of them is that for the first time in Turkish history Turks will vote separately but on the same day for parliament and for the president. The first direct presidential election in Turkey happened in 2014 when Erdogan was elected, before that the president was always elected by parliament. However this is the first time that the presidential election and parliamentary election will be held on the same day. And constitutionally now, so long as the new amendments that were passed in the referendum last year are in place, that will be the case from here on in Turkey.

Let me say a word about those two elections. According to the polls, they are both surprisingly close. Foreigners tend to look at Turkey from the outside and they see Erdogan and his party, the Justice and Development Party known as the AK Party in Turkish, as unassailably dominant in Turkish politics and governance. And that has been true. However, the opposition has never been so united as it is for this election.

Let's look first at the presidential election. The rules are basically the same as the rules for the French presidency election. That is, in the first round there are multiple candidates, the top two candidates then face off against each other in a subsequent round with the winner becoming president. In 2014, the first direct presidential election in Turkey, Erdogan won in the first round with approximately 52% of the votes. Nobody is expecting him to win in the first round this time. It is a virtual certainty that he will finish first but it seems unlikely that he will get more than 50% in the first round. By the way, if you get more than 50% in the first round, it is over, there is no need for a second round. There are several other presidential candidates but in particular there are two very strong candidates who are also strong campaigners. Many people

feel Erdogan is a very tough style of campaigning that he often just railroads over his opponents. At least two of his opponents have a very strong style of their own. One is Muharrem İnce, who is a center – left candidate for the secular Republican People's Party (CHP) which has for several elections now been finishing second to Erdogan's party. The other candidate is Meral Aksener. She is originally from the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), she broke away from it, has formed her own party (İyi Party). She is still somewhat finding her identity, but she is generally seen as nationalist, some people see her as more center-right. She is drawing some votes from the AKP voters according to the polls, some votes from her former party and some votes from Muharrem İnce's center – left CHP. The big issue will be which of those two candidates finish second and will all of the opposition then support the candidate that finishes second in the following round assuming Erdogan fails to get 50% plus in the first round. That's the real fight in the presidential election, it's between the two opposition candidates.

Now, there is a third opposition candidate of prominence who is running - his name is Selahattin Demirtas. He is Kurdish, he leads the Kurdish-dominated HDP party – Peoples' Democratic Party - and he, like almost a dozen of his colleagues from his party have been arrested and he's been in jail for over a year. He has announced that he is going to run for president from jail. He was a very impressive candidate for president in 2014 when he got just under 10% of the votes but really made a big splash in the Turkish media and showed that he was not frightened to go up against Erdogan. He will certainly get a lot of Kurdish votes but he will unfortunately not be able to campaign unless he gets a last minute reprieve that nobody is expecting.

On the parliamentary side of the election - and this is the second really unique feature of this year's contest - we see two blocks running against each other. Historically, in Turkey parties run separately, not as blocks. There is some exception here and there were a couple of parties run as a block but basically parties run separately. This year, Erdogan and the nationalist party decided to run as a block. That is the nationalist MHP that I mentioned a few minutes ago from which Meral Aksener departed in order to form her own party and run for president.

In response to the block that Erdogan and the nationalists forged, the opposition, most of the opposition forged its own block. So, now this is just on the parliamentary side. I know this is complicated, but these are two separate elections happening on the same day. The opposition block consists of the center – left secular Republican People's Party (CHP), the right-center, more nationalist İyi Party (Good Party) that was formed by Meral Aksener, who broke away from the nationalist MHP, and there is a small conservative party called the Democrat Party. And most surprising of all, the most religious party in Turkey is part of this block, it is called Saadet Partisi (Happiness Party). Now, the ultimate odd couple in Turkish politics is to have the CHP, the highly secular party, that was actually founded by Mustafa Kemal *Ataturk*, the founder of modern Turkey, in a block together with Saadet Party which is the most religious party. On most issues these two parties are completely at loggerheads, can't agree on the time of day. But there is one thing that these two parties as well as Aksener's party and the small Democrat Party do agree on, and that is that Erdogan must go. And that the presidential system is bad and that they should try to take power and get rid of that.

There is an "X" factor here, the Kurdish party, the one that I said is led - by the way not formally led because he is in jail, but he is the face of the party - by Selahattin Demirtas. That Kurdish party is not part of either block. There may be a Kurdish block, but it is the dominant element.

And there is a trick to the Turkish parliamentary system - it was there before, it's not new with this parliamentary election. In order to get into parliament, you need to get 10% of the vote. Otherwise, you get 9.99%, all those votes are wasted because your party doesn't get in. The Kurdish party HDP did get in in the last two elections, in the last one just barely - it got between 10-11%. Most polls are showing that Erdogan's block, AKP along with MHP, is not getting 50% of the vote. Now, that won't matter if HDP doesn't get into parliament - almost certainly Erdogan's block will come in first. But will they have enough to have the majority in parliament? And that will probably be determined by the success or failure of the Kurdish party to get more than 10%. Should the Kurdish party get in and ally itself with the opposition block and should they have a majority, they can create a lot of problems for whoever is president. Now, it's widely believed that under this new system parliament has zero powers, so it doesn't really matter what happens. But that is not accurate. Again, we are assuming that the system is going to be applied fairly for these purposes of this discussion, so by what is on paper, by what is in the amendments that were passed in the referendum in April last year, parliament does retain some very important powers. For one thing, it can overrule any presidential decree. Another thing is, the president is not supposed to do any decree in an area where parliament has already passed law. And third of all, there are certain powers in the constitution, such as the power to declare war, but others as well that are specifically reserved for parliament. I don't want to say that Erdogan's party and his block, cannot win a majority of parliament - they might. But the polls right now are not showing that.

By the way, I know this is complicated, let me try one more time. Let's say Erdogan's block gets 48% and the opposition block gets 40%. Well, if the Kurds get 11% then the Kurdish party plus the opposition block will have 51% to Erdogan's 48%. Now, seat distribution is complicated, but assuming it's done proportionately, that will give the opposition along with the Kurds a majority over Erdogan's party. If, however, Erdogan's block gets 48%, the opposition block gets 40% and the Kurds let's say get only 9% with the other votes scattered among various other small parties that are running, then Erdogan's block wins 48% to 40% and all those votes for the Kurdish party are thrown out. And that would undoubtedly yield a clear majority in parliament for Erdogan's party.

One other factor that I'll mention. It seems there is a certain Erdogan's fatigue in Turkey, even among his supporters. His early rallies have not revealed the same exuberant, let's say, that is traditionally enjoyed from his supporters. Still, it is odds-on that he will finish first in the first round of the presidential election and odds-on that his block will finish first with the most votes for parliament. The issue is: can the opposition in the presidential race keep him under 50% and then with all their votes coalescing defeat him in a second round? In parliament the issue is again keeping Erdogan's block under 50% and between the opposition block the four-party opposition block and the Kurdish party, can they get more votes than the AKP? Here is the ultimate dream scenario for the opposition that they win the parliamentary vote, that is that the opposition block plus the Kurdish party outpaces the Erdogan block, then two weeks later there will be a run off in the presidency and they would then campaign saying, "Look, don't vote for a guy who doesn't have control of parliament because there would be chaos". So then they would urge that voters to vote for Aksener or İnce, whichever of the two emerges as the run off candidate based on the idea that stability requires it. We will see, there are a lot of possibilities here, too many to talk about.

This is a very momentous election for Turkey. So, what are the issues in this election? The overwhelming issue, as it has been for many elections in Turkey, is Erdogan's persona. Do people want this person who has been running Turkey since 2003 to continue to dominate to get another five-year term? Which, by the way, under the new system could ultimately lead to fifteen more years of Erdogan. That is the dominant issue. But there are other issues. The economy, which traditionally has worked in favor of Erdogan and his party, has been stifling recently and the Turkish lira has dropped to an all-time low against the dollar. And people are feeling that, and there is a lot of concern. The one saving grace for Erdogan and his party may be the people also do not have a lot of confidence in the economic stewardship skills of the opposition. Another big issue is education. A surprising number of Turks, even among those who vote for Erdogan's party feel that Turkey has enough religious schools. The government's policy of increasing the number of religious schools should come to a halt. But I would say that the two top issues, Erdogan's persona and the economy... Erdogan is also hoping to score points from his recent invasion - anti-Kurdish, seen in Turkey as an anti-PKK - invasion of Syria.

One way or another, this is going to be a momentous election. We know that there's been increasing authoritarianism in Turkey. Certainly, since emergency rule started in July 2016, but even before it started. And since July 2016, over 75,000 people have been arrested on charges somehow related to the coup or being Gulenists, the group that Erdogan accuses of being behind the coup. And about over 150,000 civil servants have been fired. This authoritarian trend will likely continue if Erdogan wins the presidency and his party wins parliament.

The second possibility is, if the opposition wins the presidency and wins parliament that would be an incredible result because it would mean the first time since 2002 that Erdogan and his party will not be governing. The third possibility is cohabitation. Erdogan wins the presidency but the opposition has the majority in the parliament or the opposition wins the presidency defeating Erdogan, but Erdogan's party, his block has the majority in parliament. That would be a formula that would be a mess, because those in parliament would be trying to block the president at every turn in that case. So I think this is a very momentous election coming up and it is very complicated. I tried to make it as clear as possible, there is much more that can be said but it is a highly important election in a highly important country. It is going to take place in a month and it is certainly merits are very close observation. Thank you very much.





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## COMMENTARY\*

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Alan Makovsky\*\*

4 July 2018

### **The 2018 Turkish Presidential Elections Results**

As everybody knows, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was re-elected president on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 10 days ago. He won with 52,6% of the vote, far ahead of his next closest challenger, Muharrem İnce of the Republican Peoples' Party, or CHP by its Turkish acronym. İnce received 30.6%, 22% points less than Erdogan. By winning a majority, Erdogan averted the need for a second round runoff against İnce. The result continued the pattern of narrow Erdogan victories, a reflection of the deepening polarization of Turkish society between pro and anti-Erdogan forces.

This is only the second time that Turks elected their president directly. The first time was 2014, when Erdogan also got slightly more than half the votes in the first round. However, this election marks the first time in Turkish history that Turks voted simultaneously and separately for the head of their government and for their parliament. The election and swearing of Erdogan and the parliament on July 8<sup>th</sup> this coming Sunday will trigger a new system in Turkey with greatly enhanced powers for the presidency. This is the result of wide ranging government-sponsored constitutional amendments, narrowly passed, possibly the result of fraud, in a public referendum last year. In this system the president will be the all-powerful master of the executive branch with unreviewable powers of appointment and a broad ability to govern through decree. The prime ministry will cease to exist. Nevertheless, the parliament will retain some important powers at least on paper, including the right to overrule presidential decrees.

Let's look at the parliamentary vote as well. In the parliament vote Erdogan's Justice and Development Party, AKP by its Turkish acronym, won an unprecedented sixth straight election although for the second time in the past three elections it failed to win outright parliamentary majority. It came very close, it won 295 seats in the 600-seat parliament leaving it just six votes short of a majority. Erdogan is likely to pick up the extra votes he needs in parliament through the alliance he has maintained over the past three years formally during the election campaign but otherwise informally with the hard right Turkish nationalist Party, called the Nationalist Movement Party or MHP by its Turkish acronym. Erdogan will also probably try to allure a few

\* *Transcript*

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parliamentarians to AKP from other parties to ensure an absolute majority for AKP on its own so that it won't have to rely on MHP. In that regard a likely target is former Interior Minister Meral Aksener of İYİ Parti or Good Party.

"Good" is the English translation of the name of her party. It perhaps might strike some people as a funny name, it doesn't tell you much about what the party stands for except that it inspires to be good, but when written with upper case letters it is reminiscent of a symbol that is dear to many Turkish nationalists, that evokes an ancient Turkic people. Aksener herself is seen as quite nationalist, and indeed she used to be a member of MHP. Aksener's party, newly formed last year, as in fact a breakaway from MHP was expected to far outpace its nationalist rival MHP in the parliamentary vote. In fact, MHP won the intra-nationalist contest finishing fourth overall, with 11% of the vote and 49 seats to the İYİ Parti's fifth place finish with 10% of the vote and 43 seats.

Many who joined İYİ Parti did so because they expected it to be a winner or at minimum at least the winner of the nationalist right with the prospect of absorbing what was anticipated to be a collapsed MHP. Now, that that prospect is no longer tenable, that is the MHP very clearly did not collapse, and now that İyi is out in the wilderness of the opposition with no real leverage to speak of within parliament, it will not be surprising to see some of its members of parliament seduced into signing up with Erdogan's AKP, providing AKP with the few extra MPs necessary to achieve the absolute parliamentary majority it could not win at the polls.

I have mentioned that AKP came first, MHP was fourth, İYİ was fifth, so what about the in-between? The secular Republican Peoples Party, or CHP, that's the Party of presidential candidate Muharrem İnce who we mentioned a few minutes ago, and more famously the party established by Turkey's founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, nearly a century ago, that party finished second in the parliamentary vote, with 22,6% of the vote and 146 seats. It marked the sixth straight parliamentary election in which CHP is finished at distanced second to AKP. In third place is the Kurdish rights-focused and Kurdish-dominated Peoples' Democracy Party or HDP with 11,7% of the vote and 67 seats. Under Turkish law a party must receive 10% of the national vote in order to enter parliament. HDP succeeded in doing that for the first time in June 2015 and this is now the third consecutive election in which it has managed to win parliamentary seats. In both, the presidential and parliamentary elections, the basic pattern of recent elections remained intact. The secular CHP wins the western Aegean coast and the western Mediterranean coast. The HDP dominates the Kurdish population in the south-east and MHP, Turkish nationalists have a meaningful presence in central Anatolia which they share as a junior partner to AKP. But the AKP itself remains the only Party in Turkey that is competitive all over the nation winning the overwhelming majority of the provinces and rarely finishing worse than second anywhere.

The elections results provoke myriad of questions but let me just try to address four of them in the brief time we have. They are: First, was the election free and fair? Second, why did AKP get so many fewer votes for parliament than its leader Erdogan received for president? Third, why did MHP performed so much better than expected? The polls were showing prior to the election that MHP would get somewhere between 3-6% of the vote which is what led to the expectation that it might crumble and be absorbed by Aksener's İYİ Parti. And fourth, how significant is it that the Kurdish-dominated HDP got into parliament for the third consecutive election? Does it hold any meaning for the prospect of a solution to Turkey's long-standing and most difficult issue, the Kurdish problem?

First, was the election free and fair? Clearly, the campaign wasn't fair. Turkey's media industry is overwhelmingly controlled by pro-Erdogan forces, it is said that roughly 90% of the media is pro-Erdogan and that media made sure that the opposition got minimum coverage even when millions attended opposition rallies in the closing days of the campaign. In the Kurdish dominated south-east, access to the ballot box was suppressed for at least tens of thousands of voters and possibly up to 200,000, whose place of voting, polling stations were moved to distanced towns, ostensibly for security reasons. This was somewhat odd because if anything, security is much better now in those areas. There is less violence in those areas than there was during the last several elections, when the polling stations were not moved.

Further, thousands of members of the pro-Kurdish rights HDP were arrested in the course of the campaign and to top it off, the entire campaign and election were conducted under emergency rule, which has been in place for two years and gives Turkish security officials extraordinary powers to suppress demonstrations and other manifestations of free speech. Ok, but was the vote count itself honest? There are plenty of rumors of ballot box stuffing and tampering and the election was conducted under an election law passed in March that seemingly facilitated ballot box stuffing. Nevertheless, no clear proof of fraud has emerged. Unless and until it does the count must be deemed legitimate. In his concession speech widely viewed as gracious, the candidate who finished number two in the presidential race, Muharrem İnce, claimed that there had been fraud, but not enough to explain what he calls the ten million vote gap – it was actually eleven million – between him and Erdogan. And therefore, he said, Erdogan should be seen as the legitimate winner. This is somewhat puzzling, because İnce did not address the issue of whether the fraud had been large enough to explain the roughly 1.8 million vote gap between Erdogan's official vote total and the 50% mark that would have forced the second round run-off. And I should mention, 1.8 may sound like a lot but in the referendum on the constitutional amendments last year the OSCE delegation that monitored, estimated that it was possible that between 1-2.5 million votes were fraudulent. So, that 1.8 would fall within the range between 1-2.5 million. That doesn't mean there was that much fraud, only that the vote total that put Erdogan over the 50% mark in the first round is far more significant than the vote gap between him and İnce. OSCE election monitors were also present this time around and they will issue a report in just a few weeks rendering their assessment of the election and the vote gap. That report will be important in shaping perceptions no doubt, but whatever the verdict of the OSCE, the official results as announced by the Turkish government already are the ones that will stand.

Questions two and three. The gap between the Erdogan presidential vote and the AKP parliamentary vote on the one hand and the unanticipated success of MHP on the other are linked. Those two questions are linked. For the first time Turkish voters were casting separate and simultaneous votes for the head of government, the president, and for parliament, as I pointed out. Also for the first time, some of the parties were running for parliament in blocks. There were two main blocks. The *Cumhur İttifakı* or People's Block, which grouped AKP and MHP, and the *Millet İttifakı* or Nation Block which grouped three main opposition parties: the secular CHP, Aksener's nationalistic İYİ Parti and a small Islamist but anti-Erdogan party called *Saadet Partisi* (Felicity Party).

Besides the parties in these two blocks, the only competitive party in the election was the Kurdish-dominated HDP, which did not affiliate with any block. Actually, it was widely reported that HDP wanted to be part of the opposition block but that idea was vetoed by the

Turkish nationalist Meral Aksener, the head of İYİ Parti. So, AKP ended up with 42.6% of the parliamentary vote, exactly 10% points less than Erdogan received in the presidential contest. We don't know why so many Erdogan voters chose not to vote for his party but we can hazard a reasonable guess. It seems likely that many voters recognising that Erdogan was about to assume immense new presidential powers decided to check his power by voting for AKP's only block partner MHP. For such voters, those who wanted Erdogan as president but with some degree of checks and balances, MHP really was the only choice since they weren't going to go so far to vote for a party in the opposition block.

This also helps to explain why MHP ended up outdistancing the İYİ Parti. Originally, Aksener was hoping her party would attract not only most of the former MHP voters but also former AKP voters. I think she might have been able to do that but for one fact - she wanted to run for president and her presidential campaign was an abysmal failure. A part of that was that she couldn't get any traction in the media which wasn't entirely her fault for reasons we have already mentioned. But she came in a distant fourth in the presidential race with only 8% of the vote. Not only did she trailed Erdogan and İnce, but she trailed the Kurdish party's candidate as well who was actually forced to campaign from prison – that's another story in itself. Thorough presidential campaign was a failure. In retrospect it seems her best bet would have been to run only for parliament unaffiliated with any block, while declaring her party would work with whoever wins the presidency on an issue by issue basis. Had she done that, her party may indeed have attracted some of the checks and balances voters, those who voted for Erdogan but not his party that otherwise went to MHP. Of course, this is only my speculation.

The fourth question is: What's in store for the HDP, the pro-Kurdish rights party? They were celebrating in Diyarbakir, the main city in the Kurdish populated area of Turkey, celebrating, that is on June 24<sup>th</sup>, because HDP had once more succeeded in getting over the 10% threshold and getting into parliament. But there is little prospect in my view that anything good will come of it regarding the long-standing Kurdish problem. The HDP was helped getting over the 10% threshold by small numbers of non-Kurdish Turkish liberals, some supporting HDP's liberal agenda and some voting merely tactically to get them into parliament to diminish AKP's portion of parliament. I won't tire you with further explanations of Turkey's electoral system, but suffice it to say that had HDP fallen below 10% and thus failed to get into parliament, AKP would have won dozens of additional seats and thus would have had an overwhelming parliamentary majority instead of falling just short of a majority, as actually happened. And that's why some voters who did not necessarily agree with or like HDP voted for HDP tactically as a means of suppressing AKP's parliamentary representation.

Erdogan dislikes the HDP which has actively opposed him and he shows no interest in reviving the peace process he once courageously pursued with the Kurds. That process came to a decisive end with the Turkish military's onslaught against several Kurdish towns where pro-PKK forces were (*inaudible*) three years ago. To the extent Erdogan might be inclined to renew the peace process the MHP, his unofficial coalition partner, will be there to make sure he gets back to the Turkish nationalist path. The Kurdish problem anyway is unlikely ever to be solved through a parliamentary process unless there is initiative from the head of the government and there is no prospect of that now. 20% of HDP MPs from the last parliament are in jail, many others were detained and then released during their term of office. Nobody should be surprised if the current incumbents meet a similar fate.

Notwithstanding the implementation of a new presidency-focused system in Turkey, governance probably won't look much different to outsiders than previously, particularly not much different than it has for the past two years since the declaration of emergency rule following the failed coup attempts of July 2016. Under emergency rule, Erdogan has essentially been able to decree whatever he wants and the constitutional court has said that it has no jurisdiction over emergency rule decrees. So, opposition efforts to contest those decrees have fallen on deaf ears.

Now, following this election, Erdogan will continue to call all the shots and he will be able to do so constitutionally by decree, based on these new powers given in last year's referendum. Given AKP's near majority in parliament and its close working relationship with the Turkish nationalist MHP as well as its prospect for using its considerable patronage and other forms of leverage to allure other MPs from other parties, Erdogan can pretty much count on having a rubber stamp parliament. Continuity in foreign policy is also likely, which isn't good news for the US, the western alliance, Israel, Egypt and many of the Arab monarchies. It is good news for Qatar where Turkey has established a small military base and which has come to view relations with Turkey as critical in fending off the isolation and boycott imposed on it last year by Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Erdogan's resentment over Greek refusal to extradite accused Gulenist Turkish soldiers who fled Turkey in the wake of the coup is likely to continue to rile Aegean relations. Nor is there any prospect of Turkey's softening its approach to the Cyprus problem and related Eastern Mediterranean gas exploration issues.

Now, is there any chance that Erdogan will alter the nationalist, (*inaudible*) Muslim Brotherhood-sympathetic path he has pursued in recent years? It seems to me, perhaps, only in this case. Many economists are expecting a very serious economic downturn in Turkey in the months to come. Many are saying a crisis is likely. The Turkish lira has lost roughly 15% of its value against the dollar already in 2018. Year on year inflation is at a 14-year high, measuring it just over 15% in June. Now, it should be remembered that the Turkish economy has often proven more resilient than economists' predictions, we should keep that in mind, still should the worst happen and should Turkey need an IMF bailout, Turkey might just project a friendlier attitude toward the wealthy western nations that dominate IMF decision-making. At this point, however, the reasonable overall conclusion must be that Turkish voters have chosen five more years of continuity and Erdogan dominance. The only exit from recent policies during those five years being the whims of an all-powerful President Recep Tayyipp Erdogan – the longest serving leader of Turkey in the history of the Republic.

Thank you very much.



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## COMMENTARY\*

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Charles Ellinas\*\*

10 July 2018

### Hydrocarbons Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean

First of all, in Cyprus it is hoped that when the Turkish elections are over, the Cyprus negotiations will start. And we've had some developments recently, and hopefully that will lead to the resumption of the negotiations, which is going to help, eventually, hydrocarbons, especially if there is a solution. The big event will be the drilling by Exxon Mobile in Block 10, in October or November. We will talk about it later on.

In Egypt, development of Zohr gas and market liberalization have been the big events in this year and they will continue being the big events later this year and next year. In addition to that, though, Egypt is embarking on new licensing rounds, in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, and even the Nile of Delta, which will increase exploration and lead to more gas finds. In fact, in August ENI intends to start drilling in a new prospect called Nour, which all indications show that it may be very big - as big as Zohr. But obviously, the drilling needs to be done to see what happens.

In Israel, there was a deal to export gas to Egypt, but will it happen? That's a question. In Lebanon, exploration has started but there are EEZ disputes. On top of all these things, the global energy markets and prices are very challenging.

So, let's start with the developments in Egypt. Egypt has just issued its last LNG import tender. And the second half of this year will be the time when LNG imports will stop, and beginning of 2019 Egypt will start exporting LNG using surplus gas from various gas fields led by Zohr. Zohr - the first gas was developed in December and production is increasing this year, and it's expected to reach a plateau sometime next year, and achieve much as 27 billion cubic meters (bcm) per year or a bit more, maybe even 30. Yet to find gas in Egypt, it's estimated to be between 50 - 150 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of gas. This can more than double production. If that happens, the chances for Egypt exporting large amounts of gas increase dramatically. Egypt has also liberalized its gas market. And a program has already started to achieve that, and it will be fully in place by 2032. This has led Eni, Shell, Edison, BP to announce plans to expand existing activities and investment in Egypt. Egypt also aspires to become East Med's energy hub, and in that respect it has a support of the European Union, which in May signed a memorandum of

\* *Transcript*

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understanding to support Egypt. The EU is quite interested in the idea of LNG imports from Egypt, but also interested in helping Egypt to develop its renewables resources.

In terms of impact of all of these developments on Egypt's gas sector, Egypt's gas production will reach close to 80 bcm of gas per year by 2019, exceeding consumption by over 10 bcm of gas. That is the basis of resuming exports. So that will happen next year. An organization based in Paris, OME, whose members are all the international oil companies operating in Egypt, has gathered all the data, and according to them, gas production can reach 120 bcm per year maybe by 2035, but it will keep increasing between now and then. That will also mean that the surplus gas in Egypt will keep increasing and could be as much as 20-30 BCM per year surplus gas which will feed exports. That means that the two LNG plants in Egypt, Idku and Damietta, will reach a full utilization probably early 2020s. And that utilization, the capacity of the plants is 17,5 bcm per year. And this is what is of interest to the European Union. Because these plants were feeding gas to Europe before they ran out of gas. And now, once the surplus happens, they will be able to resume export to Europe. That has been confirmed by Egypt's petroleum minister, who said that the priority is to resume uninterrupted LNG supply contracts to Europe. So, Egypt is underway to achieve all of these things, with more investment, with more exploration, with more development of renewable resources, and so on.

All these things will have an impact on Israel and Cyprus. Both Israel and Cyprus have been aspiring to export their gas to Egypt for liquefaction and export. And more recently, we've heard that Shell is in negotiations to buy Aphrodite gas and the Leviathan gas for liquefaction at Idku and exports. The problem is commercial. By the time gas from Cyprus and Israel comes to Egypt, is liquefied and exported to Europe, it will arrive in Europe at prices higher than the average prices in Europe and as a result it will be difficult to find buyers of that gas. This is why, despite the fact that these negotiations have been going on for a while now, they have not concluded. And now, with Egypt's opportunity to sub-export its LNG itself they may not be concluded, unless they find a cheaper way of getting the gas to Egypt.

Noble and Delek signed an agreement to sell to Egypt 64 bcm of gas over a 10-year period for an Egyptian company called Dolphinus. And this deal was supposed to be completed fairly soon. But it is facing major challenges. One of the challenges is how do you get the gas to Egypt? There is still a need to find a credible pipeline. The second is that a few years ago there was an arbitration award against Egypt for stopping gas supplies to Israel in 2012 and that arbitration award was over 2 billion dollars. Egypt has made it clear that nothing is going to happen until that is resolved, which hasn't happened yet. There are also security issues and political issues, and as a result, even though the deal has been signed, it has not been put into place yet.

Success, when ExxonMobil drills in Block 10 in October in Cyprus, can transform our fortunes, and I will talk about that in a minute.

Let's talk briefly about Israel. Leviathan's phase 1A construction is about two-thirds complete. It's progressing well, and they still expect to start producing gas by the end of next year. However, Energean has come into the equation in Israel, acquired two fields called Tanin and Karesh, and they have proceeded to develop these fields. And there have been undercutting Leviathan gas on price. Tamar and Leviathan gas is being sold to customers in Israel at about 6 dollars per Mbtu. Energean is selling its gas at less than 4.5 dollar. Very low. So as a result it has been very successful in signing deals for all the gas from these two gas fields, 4.2 bcm per year, and they have secured finance, they have secured investments from Israel and they went for an



initial public offer in London, and they've got another half a billion dollars - more than enough to fund the project. As a result, earlier this year they reached final investment decision, and they are proceeding with developing these two gas fields, with exports expected to start in 2020.

On the part of this, actually Energean has also made an offer to Cyprus to export gas from these two gas fields to Cyprus cheaply. It could reach Cyprus at 6.5 dollar per Mbtu. This is quite cheap in comparison to Cyprus plans to import LNG, which will be announced very soon. LNG imports, by the time they are completed and the gas arrives to Electricity Authority of Cyprus for electricity generation, it will cost between 10 and 11 dollars, which is substantially more than Energean offers, which should be taken more seriously.

The idea of exports from Israel to Turkey has receded. With political problems and the animosity between Netanyahu and Erdogan it's not going to happen. In any case, it is commercially challenged as well. And so is the famous East Med gas pipeline - I call it the East Med 'pipe dream'. It probably won't happen, simply because it is commercially non-viable. If it will become commercially viable, the prices of gas in Europe reach 8 dollars per Mbtu - something highly unlikely to happen.

As a result, Israel has limited export options, this is the reason why its first licensing round was more or less a flop. They are talking about another round, I think they will face similar problems. Unless there are secure export routes, convincing export routes, customers won't be interested to come and invest in Israel.

Prospects in Lebanon are better. However - and Lebanon, as you know, have allotted Blocks 4 and 9 to Total, Eni and Novatek - however part of Block 9 is in an area disputed by Israel, and that has led to a lot of threats exchanged between Israel and Lebanon, and it could be a problem in future exploration.

Total has approved plans to start exploring and drilling, and these plans have been approved, and the first well is expected to be drilled next year. Lebanon is also preparing for a second offshore licensing round. But they need to have, first of all, political stability within Lebanon, no more changes in government. And second, the differences that exist between Israel and Lebanon with regard to the EEZ boundary need to be resolved. Hopefully, they will be resolved to enable peaceful development of the gas. Without it, there may be future challenges.

In Cyprus, the news has been good. ENI has been successful in drilling in Block 6 with Calypso, which probably has between 6 to 8 tcf of gas - that's what the Eni's CEO has said. It is a sizable amount of gas. However, the bad news is that Turkish intervention stopped Eni drilling in Block 3, in February, and Turkey itself may drill in Cyprus EEZ with its new drilling rig called Fatih. These are difficult times, it remains to be seen what happens after Erdogan's win in Turkey and hopefully as he sets up his new government and settles down into his new term, he will see light and cooperate with countries in the region to develop resources of the region peacefully. I'm not very hopeful. Turkey also has threatened to stop all activity in Cyprus EEZ, simply because they say they are supporting Turkish Cypriots' interests in the region, and that remains to be seen as to how it is converted into action.

Eni said in April that it is evaluating data so far, and it will be considering a resumption of drilling in 2019. However, they have not given us a firm timetable as to what exactly they are going to do and when.

And Total, positively, is interested in farming-in in Eni's Block 8, and possibly 2, 3 and 9. That is a vote of confidence that Total has that there is future for gas in Cyprus and they want to be part of it. However, all of these things still depend very much on how the Cyprus problem can be negotiated and can be resolved. Without it harassment by Turkey probably will continue and will make it difficult.

The big news is expected to come later in the year or probably early next year, with ExxonMobil's drilling in Block 10. There are good indications of a possible sizable find in Block 10. If that is confirmed, and it is quite substantial, then all games are on, basically it would change prospects in Cyprus EEZ. As you've probably heard, ExxonMobil said last year they are very keen to develop an LNG plant in Cyprus for exports of LNG. And that is how ExxonMobil operates - they like to operate independently, develop their own projects, they have the technology, they have the might, and they have the finance to do it. The difficulty will be, first of all, to discover a substantial gas field - hopefully they do - and the second would be the political problems. Even mighty Exxon Mobil requires finance to proceed with major projects. A discovery in Block 10 and building a sizeable LNG plant will probably need 15 billion dollars finance. Substantial part of that, two-thirds, will have to come from investors, and banks, and financial institutions. They are risk-averse. If Turkey threatens the project, it may have an impact on securing the finance and as a result it may cause delays in developing the plant, even though the plant will benefit all Cypriots: Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. So the sooner we sort out the Cyprus problem, the better it is for the future of these possibilities and these projects.

Cyprus is going to import LNG, as I said before, and I think it's misguided, it's not the right way forward taking on Energean's offer. Liberating renewables and expanding the development of renewables would be a better way to go forward.

The global markets and prices are challenging. Even though prices have gone up recently, they are still very difficult. For example, during the International Petroleum Week in London in February, BP's CEO said specifically that there are abundant global energy resources and supplies, and as a result low oil and gas prices will continue in the longer term. That is an important factor that effects the development of the East Med gas, which is expensive to develop, and if it is going to succeed, it means to be able to reach these markets and sell at the prices that prevail globally on average, and not just the high prices that develop that we have now. The world is awash with oil, gas and LNG, and with US shale coming up and up, and the preparation of renewables is unstoppable. And coal is holding its own - the use of coal in India and China is increasing, not decreasing. As a result, competition to secure markets will be fierce. Prices will be dictated by renewable, which are become cheaper, and by coal, which is much cheaper than gas. And we need to be aware of these things. The international oil companies are aware of these things. We need to be patient, we need to work with international companies to make sure that development of the gas in Cyprus and the East Med is competitive to benefit from the potential export markets.

So in conclusion, the East Med and the Middle East regions are geopolitically volatile. Developing and exporting oil and gas is a challenge, especially in the prevailing low-demand, low-price environment globally. Disputes are often the result of competing oil and gas interests and unresolved borders and EEZ disputes, particularly in the East Med. And more often than not diplomacy is sidelined by aggressive action. Turkish warship intrusion in Cyprus EEZ has now altered the balance and has increased the risks in the region. With the US reinforcing

sanctions on Iran it may complicate the picture even further. Egypt is successful in exploiting its hydrocarbon resources and liberalizing its energy markets. The solution of the Cyprus problem could go a long way in improving regional geopolitics in the East Med. With Turkish elections over, negotiations are hopefully expected to resume, and hopefully they will lead to a solution. As we saw earlier, we need that to develop the resources in the region. East Med oil and gas plans need to be tempered with a dose of reality. Fierce competition to secure markets is there, and will stay and not go away. Low gas prices are imposing their own challenges and aspirations to export the East Med gas, and we need to find ways to work within this low-price environment. The key conclusion is that the East Med still has reasonable prospects for more gas discoveries. But securing export markets and prices will be the key factors.



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## COMMENTARY\*

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Marcus Templar\*\*

16 July 2018

### Aftermath of the 2018 Turkish Elections

The elections in Turkey were nothing more than the continuation of Erdogan's grasping of all the powers he could and more in Turkey since the coup two year ago. Last year, they had the referendum which changed the political system and this year he actually took officially, I would say, the radar of Turkey in his hands. He has more powers than Kemal had and definitely has more powers than our president, because in our democracy in the United States there is a balance of powers. Erdogan doesn't have any balance. He controls everything and he has put either relatives in cabinet posts or very close friends and associates - the minister of finance that is very important for a country is in the hands of his son-in-law Berat Albayrak.

And then we have a number of others that are already known in Turkey and they are very rich people, like the minister of education, who is the owner of a private college, the minister of health owns a chain of pharmacies, and the minister of culture and tourism has a successful travel agency. So the whole thing is now in his hands. He has control over sixty five boards, commissions, committees, established with laws and other regulations that are merged in nine entities, namely social policies council, law policies, security and foreign policies, local governments, health and food, economy, education and science, technology and innovation. Now, the president is on a chair in these boards, but at the same time he has already installed other chairs because he cannot be president everywhere, he has his own representatives in the same boards. So, these boards, according to the new system, propose policies, oversee implementation of the policies, make decisions, long-term strategic decisions and these decisions are beyond the responsibilities of the ministers. So, in essence Erdogan controls even the ministries.

He has installed eight directorates which include the Directorate of General Staff, Directorate of National Intelligence, Directorate of Religious Affairs, and for the first time Turkey sees the Directorate of Strategy and Budgeting. So, how it is going to work? I am not sure and I don't believe anybody can be sure, but also he has the Directorate of Communications which actually will organize media and communications activities. In essence, he is going to control even the press and he has already thrown to prison a lot of journalists, religious people who are against

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *US Army Cryptologic Linguist, All-Source Intelligence Analyst, Defense Intelligence Agency (Retired)*

him, other politicians, and that's how he got actually elected, because he didn't have any real opposition to begin with.

So, slowly he's trying to become a modern sultan and he hopes to get the caliphate again. But in my opinion, he has a problem with that because the caliphate was a product of occupation of lands, and since he had occupied all the Islamic centres and mostly Sunni people, he became himself a caliph, like the Pope, if I could say, like the Ecumenical Patriarch, this kind of a thing. There is no democracy in that caliphate. So, what he wants to do is to control even the religion of other countries, and through the religion of other countries impose his own power to other countries, his own influence. And that would be Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo in Europe, and also he could control the Muslims in Greece, in Thrace especially, the Dodecanese islands, the occupied territory of Cyprus in the north and also Saudi Arabia, all the Arab countries, Iran, Afghanistan, Western India and Pakistan. So, this is what he wants to do. The problem he has with that is that he is not in political control of those countries. Also, most Arabs, most Muslims, I should say, do not consider the Turks to be real Muslims. And this is because they gamble a lot, which is against the Quran, and also they drink alcoholic beverages, which is also against the Quran. So, that's what we have on the religious side. I don't believe he's going to make it.

At the political side, I think he might keep the power for a few years but I don't see him staying, because the world is unlike when Kemal was, or sultans before. Today, even if he controls the social media, there is always a way for people to find out what is happening outside of the country and to get to be influenced from outside of the country.

I don't believe that he will be able to control the Muslims in Western Europe, although I'm sure he will send his own people to agitate, I would say, other countries, mostly Germany, and I say that because in Germany, in the West, most of the Muslims there that come from Turkey are not Turks - they are Kurds, and that would be a problem.

Also in Constantinople most of the Muslim inhabitants, the non-Greeks of Constantinople, are Kurds - they are not Turks. So, I believe it is a matter of time. He is not going to stay like that and I do believe that Turkey, because of the control he has, might not be able to sustain the economy it has right now. Some people say it will be stronger. I am not an economist, but I don't believe in a controlled economy. I cannot see how a controlled economy can flourish. Economy requires innovation, education is very important. And if these two are controlled, investments are controlled, I don't see how the economy can become better. Again, I'm not an economist - that is just my belief. In a free economy you have movement of ideas, movement of economic culture, businesses come and go, if they don't like what they see they can always change the product, they change the way it works. When you control the economy like that, I don't know how he can make it better, allow the economy to grow. That's my belief as a non-economist.

Turkey is losing its importance. Turkey kept importance all these years because of the location. The Straits do not have the importance they used to have. Never mind that people say they still do. They don't. And number of reasons is supporting this. One is that they are getting shallower and shallower, while the ships are getting bigger and bigger, so you cannot pass through the Dardanelles big ships like they used to pass one hundred years ago, because the ships were smaller and the bottom of the Dardanelles were deeper. At the same time, we have different weapons that we didn't have a hundred years ago like missiles - you do not need to be close,

let's say, to Crimea if you want to bomb it. You can do it from Chicago. So, they have lost that. And Erdogan has realized that and I'm sure he wants to open a canal, the Istanbul Canal, which will be actually a line from Küçükçekmece down south, up north - I don't remember the town today. But it's like an alternate route which is going to be dug like a regular canal.

Also, he wants to expand the airport in Istanbul, Constantinople, which is actually outside in Yeşilköy, and some other airports, so that he can buy the F-35s. Personally, I don't believe the United States will sell F-35s to Turkey, but Turkey has a very strong lobby. It has a very strong lobby because it pays money to lobbies. I was reading the other day that the President of PSEKA<sup>1</sup> Mr. Christopher, stated that Turkey spent a hundred and two million dollars just in lobbying. Greece, for example, has spent nothing.

The problem now would be that if Turkey continues to be the way Erdogan wants it to be, it is going to come in opposition mainly of Germany, and this is because Germany would never allow Turkey to direct traffic, if I can say that. I don't know how NATO is going to take care of that because he is becoming more of a liability as he goes and against NATO standards. To be a NATO country you have to follow the OSCE and have democracy, and Turkey is losing it. The question I have is how NATO is going to handle this, because to my knowledge there is no mechanism to kick a country out, just like in the EU. I have not seen anywhere a mechanism that allows the other party members to say to the country, to Turkey or whosoever, "We don't want you, you are a liability to us, you don't serve anything, get out of here."

But, again, that would be related to how Russia is going to act. And to tell you the truth, I'm not really sure about the United States because it seems to me that with the exception of the president all the others are against Russia and our President now says, "Russia is our friend." That makes a few countries, especially in the Baltic Sea, nervous because they used to be under the Russian occupation since 1918, or so. I don't know how that is going to work. It is a matter of, I think, a guessing game right now. But as long as Erdogan is pushing the West, the West is going to react against him. And I don't know how Russia and Turkey are going to work together or against each other, because now they have the problem in Syria, the problem of Kurdistan in Iraq, in part of Syria. I'm sure in few years we are going to see the tiles will fall where they may and we will see how it's going to go.

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<sup>1</sup> The International Coordinating Committee "Justice for Cyprus"





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## PRESENTATION\*

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Dr. Ehud Eiran\*\*

17 July 2018

### **Israeli Perception of the Iranian Threat**

My name is Ehud Eiran. I'm an Assistant Professor at the University of Haifa at the Department of International Relations. I want to thank ERPIC for this opportunity to talk today about Israel's perception of the Iranian threat and how it has changed over time. In part, because it may form some of the significant security-related events that may unfold in Syria, specifically the potential for a direct Israeli confrontation on Syrian soil as the Syrian civil war is coming to an end.

So I want to make three big points this afternoon. One is that Israel traditionally perceived Iranian threat as stemming from Iran's nuclear project, but we have seen a shift in the last few months to the focus on Iran's conventional or strategic threat, specifically the position it's gaining in Syria - that's my first point. The second point is the triangle between Israel, Iran and Russia. The point there is that Israel is trying to work with the Russians to contain, or control, or constrain the Iranian role in Syria. And finally, to point at the recent developments from the last six weeks in which Israel is essentially hinting at its interest in regime change in Iran, which is also a change in Israeli policy. So, from nuclear to conventional, from a two-player game to, perhaps, a three-player game with Russia, and finally, sort of a new Israeli approach towards a regime change which also comes to new tools, mostly – surprisingly - through YouTube videos.

So let me start with the notion of a threat. Israel has been concerned for a long time - at least two decades - with the military aspect of the Iranian nuclear program. Israel's insistence, which is supported by a lot of facts, that Iran had a program to develop its nuclear program into a militarized nuclear capability.

If we look at the notion of threat, if we unpack it, it actually has, in my view, four separate sets of threats. That's important to understand, because any future arrangement or an effort to deal with these threats may entail a separate solution for each type of threat. The first threat is existential. So in the 2012 poll, 77% of Israelis said that if Iran has the bomb they would perceive it as an existential threat to Israel. So this is the most primordial, atavistic fear that once your foes have the capability to destroy you, they will do so. Israelis who hold to this position point to Iran's ideological commitment grounded in its interpretation of Islam, which calls for the

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Assistant Professor of International Relations, University of Haifa, Israel*

destruction of the state of Israel. The previous president, especially, Ahmadinejad, was known for some statements that came to this effect. And of course, it's informed by experiences that the Jewish people went through long time ago and far away from here, namely the Holocaust, in which a third of the Jewish people were destroyed, were annihilated by the Germans from the early 1940s until 1945. So a lot of rhetoric that comes out from Israel, especially from Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu, alludes to the Holocaust: "They have tried to destroy us and they will try to do so again." In a famous speech in 2008, Prime Minister Netanyahu said: the year (he referred to that time frame) is 1938 - the eve of the Holocaust - and Iran is Germany. So, part of the interpretation of the existential threat in fact stems from Israeli and Jewish historical experiences. So that's one set of threats.

The second one is highlighted not so much by politicians, but mostly by professionals, by the security establishment. This is focused on the here and now, very realist, materialist, if you will - that is, what I would call, a strategic threat, the notion that once Iran has the bomb, Israel's dominance as a nuclear hegemon (although never publically stated but largely believed to be the state) will be shaken up. And the element of the strategic threat is that Iran will be emboldened to be much more assertive once it has the bomb (although we see it's quite assertive even without the bomb), that there will be, what the experts call, a cascade effect. In other words, once Iran has the bomb, other regional actors, like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, maybe Turkey, will strive for their own bomb, making Israel's strategic environment much less calm, much more prone to instability. Another strategic element that's mentioned is that Iran's allies - Syria, Hezbollah - will feel more emboldened and will take more risks in confronting Israel once they know they are supported by a nuclear power.

The third set of concerns, not as dominant on the discourse but I think largely there, is what I would call a social-economic threat. The idea is: Israel has boomed economically in the last fifteen years, largely due to a big stream of foreign direct investments. Israelis are proud to say that Warren Buffet's single biggest investment outside of Israel is in the Israeli company - the Iscar Technologies. The high-tech sector that is driving the Israeli economy is largely funded by investments from abroad - we know Google bought Waze, for example, and other deals along those lines. The argument goes: if Iran has a nuclear bomb and threatens to destroy Israel in a matter of a few minutes, foreign investors will be cautious to invest.

And finally - and I would not disregard it as an ideological identity-based threat of an Iranian nuclear weapon - here the story is: Israel promised to be a safe haven for Jews. It was a solution, if you will, to security threats Jews have been facing in Eastern Europe since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century culminating in the Holocaust, and so the promise was here of a safe Jewish fortress, where the Jewish lives will be protected. But what does it mean ideologically if this fortress can be destroyed in a ten-minute notice and become a nuclear desert. That's the first point.

What has happened the last year, the Syrian civil war is coming towards the end. We had the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) - the agreement that Iran agreed to halt its nuclear program in 2015. And so the notion of threat shifted a bit from existential - nuclear and so on - to the more conventional one, specifically Iran's allies: Bashar al-Assad, with massive Iranian, Russian, Hezbollah and so on support seems to be winning the civil war. Syria is entering the phase where the arrangements for the structure of the future Syrian state and the way power will be distributed there are being organized now. As may be expected, the winners with the invested effort from outside, the Iranians, want to hold positions close to Israel, potentially deployed forces, built bases, created a real conventional deterrent close to the

border by deploying missiles. Israel was very vocal in rejecting that and trying to push an arrangement in which the Iranians will be deployed kilometers away - 40-50 kilometers. The rumors say that Israel and Russia agreed for such a deal, in which the Russians will guarantee that the Iranians will be deployed further away in return for Israel's acquiescence for Assad forces deployed closer to the border. It's not clear, partly because of the nature of the actors, specifically the Russians, if this deal will come through. But Israel already demonstrated its willingness to use force to enforce this sort of red lines by attacking Iranian and pro-Iranian targets in Syria on quite a large scale. So, we've moved from a nuclear to a conventional threat. The Americans pulling out from JCPOA recently means that the nuclear file may reopen. It's not clear if Iran will keep its part of the deal once the Americans are out. If there is a better deal, as Trump is hoping of course, I think the Israeli, at least the security establishment, will of course support it. I'm not sure what will be the prime minister's position. If there is no deal and the Iranians go back to an active program, we may see escalation over this because this has been defined essentially as a red line for Israel.

And finally, my last point. I want to draw the listeners' attention to a new tack in Israeli behavior. Up until now, prime minister and other Israeli elites advocated on the international arena, employed force, employed covert action to try to stop the Iranian advances in the region. Since late May, Prime Minister Netanyahu took a new direction by releasing three clips directed at the Iranian people, essentially highlighting that Israel's issue is with the Iranian regime rather than the Iranian people. It's a much more nuanced approach, conveyed through a new medium. Israel traditionally, specifically Netanyahu, was a great believer in dramatic speeches on institutionalized world forums like the Security Council of the United Nations, and in government-to-government dialogue. Netanyahu now, perhaps in the populist spirit of Trump, or maybe acquiescing to the new realities of the new media, is producing these short clips in English to the Iranian public, saying how wonderful the public is, how horrible the regime is, and in fact reminding the Iranians why the regime is bad for them, focusing on issues that seem to be of interest to the public, for example the water prices in Iran. So Netanyahu starts a clip by drinking some water and telling the Iranians that Israel has a technology that can help them, but it is their evil leaders who are preventing it. And in fact, consequently, Israel launched an internet site in Farsi, which has some information and knowledge of how to deal with water shortages. This also plays into this Israeli recent image of the start-up nation advanced technologically, and so on.

It seems that this new tack is coordinated with the Americans and there are some hints that Israel and the US are quietly creating a working group to try and think more concretely about changes in Iran. This is not fully public, but it was mentioned in the press that Israeli officials that spoke to the press were careful and calibrated in the expectations saying, "We know we cannot change the regime, but this creates some leverage."

Nevertheless, it's interesting, because Israel has been traditionally very cautious to get involved in internal affairs of other countries. The few times Israel did intervene are perceived here as a failure and a cause of a greater problem. Iran, of course, is a specific case, in which the West is very careful about, partly because of the 1953 Mossadegh coup, in which the CIA and the British were able to reinstate the Shah through their involvement, but this led to this resentment and suspicion toward the West for a long time.

Some of these issues are discussed in other places and the listeners are welcome to read them. I had a piece in *The Washington Quarterly* four-five years ago with my colleague Martin Malin

analyzing the notions of threat. And recently, I've been contributing to a blog at the Atlantic Council site that deals with Iran – the IranSource. You can read mine and other people's thoughts about the current situation in Iran.

So, thank you for this opportunity. I want to thank ERPIC again, and I look forward to future engagements.

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## PRESENTATION\*

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Eran Lerman\*\*

27 July 2018

### **A Strategic Vision for the Eastern Mediterranean**

Within the last few years against the background of the so called Arab Spring - that is by the way a very absurd term given the extent of the bloodshed and destruction we have been witnessing - and against the background of the rise of very dangerous, very ambitious, very radical Turkish policies and actions, we have been seeing the emergence of new dynamics in the Eastern Mediterranean. Already we are talking about a very close system of consultation and cooperation in the Israeli-Greek-Cypriot triangle. We are already looking at very similar patterns of cooperation and consultation in the Egyptian-Greek-Cypriot triangle, including series of trilateral summits. There has been already one trilateral summit of Jordan, Cyprus and Greece. So the two Hellenic nations are driving a policy that is leading to the emergence of what could be described as an alliance of likeminded forces in the Eastern Mediterranean. This has economic dimensions, specifically in the field of energy, given the discovery of major energy sources of gas and possibly even oil in the Eastern Mediterranean, in the EEZs of the three countries and of Egypt. So we are talking about four countries here. And, moreover, we are talking about great potential for economic and technological cooperation along very broad range of issues. Israel, for example, can bring to the table very impressive achievements in the field of water management, desalination, conservation, reuse, which, I think, is very relevant, particularly for the Greek islands, or Cyprus and, possibly in not too distant future, even for Egypt, when the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is fully erected and there is a change in the Nile water supply.

All of these are important elements, but there is also clearly a security dimension: exercises, agreements on cooperation, technological solutions to security challenges and a pattern of close cooperation and coordination, including trilateral meetings at the level of ministries of defence.

So, we are looking at something which is new, dramatic, significant given the challenges that we all face in the Eastern Mediterranean that are long-term challenges. Islamist radicalization, the bid by Iran to get a foothold on the Mediterranean coast, the existence of very radical Islamist groups like offshoots of Islamic State (ISIS) in Sinai. At some point there was a hold on

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Vice-President, Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security*

the Mediterranean in Libya which was destroyed in battle, but the game is not over.

And, of course, the third challenge, side by side with Iran and ISIS, is the challenge of the Muslim Brotherhood supported by Turkish and Qatari policies. These are all long-term persistent threats which require long-term persistent efforts to stop them, to turn them back, to defeat them, and to ensure stability and security for our respective nations.

One missing element is an anchor in the European system and I would have hoped to see Italy come in as a key player given their investment in Egyptian stability and given their involvement in the regional energy markets. And given the fact that Italy basically faces both sides of the Mediterranean, so if we are talking about the Eastern Mediterranean basin, it should be a very important anchor. The problem may be for the immediate and intermediate future that Italy has a serious problem putting its own political house in order. But having said so, I think we should look towards a future in which we can build a loose but effective consultative framework that I would think of in terms of 3+3: Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Jordan, Israel and Egypt. And, of course, open to further accessions in the future, for example some Adriatic nations – the Adriatic is an adjunct of the Eastern Mediterranean basin that could find a place there. Certainly, Croatia markets itself as Mediterranean as it used to be, and, of course, now when they have won some respect and glory in Russia, in soccer, they are entitled to be considered as part of this broader Eastern Mediterranean equation.

Albanian governments have resisted the temptation to be drawn into the Islamic or Islamist category and they could certainly find their place there. And of course this should be open to a different Turkish leadership if Turkey changes course. Right now that doesn't look like a very likely proposition. Erdogan has quite convincingly secured his powers for the foreseeable future.

The template can be borrowed from what already exists in the Western Mediterranean - in addition to the pan-Mediterranean organization umbrella, the UFM, the Union for the Mediterranean, Barcelona Process, which sits in Barcelona and provides, theoretically at least, framework for all Mediterranean countries and for all European countries to come together. There is also the 5+5 consultative structure, loose, without director, without a permanent establishment, but nevertheless an institutionally established framework that includes the five relevant European countries. One of them, Portugal, is an honorary Mediterranean - it is an entirely Atlantic country. But obviously being an Iberian nation it is part of the south-western arc of Europe. So it is Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Malta - all members of the EU - and five North African countries - countries of the Maghreb Arab Union. Again, Mauritania is a fully Atlantic nation but it is counted as part of the various Mediterranean dialogues, the NATO-Med and the Euro-Med. So it is Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya - to the extent that you can speak of Libya as a nation nowadays.

So, the parallel to the 5+5 could start as a 3+3 and then, possibly, be broadened. But what makes the 3+3 relevant is the fact that currently they are likeminded on all major issues. Italy used to be Turkey's friend. It turned around under the impact of Erdogan's behaviour in the Libyan crisis. It certainly has - despite the friction with Egypt over the *Regeni* case, at the end of the day it has a vested interests in the Egyptian stability - it has vested interest in putting an end to chaos in the Eastern Mediterranean that could also have an impact on immigration. It certainly has a vested interest in curbing the spread of Islamist ambitions.

And so the six do already have a firm base in common. On energy, Italy has already joined Greece, Cyprus and Israel in planning for a possible integration of our energy capabilities in the Eastern Med. In terms of security cooperation, two of the important building blocks of such a cooperative system could also be the Israeli-Jordanian relationship which is almost overt - Israel even sold weapons to this Arab neighbour of ours. So you get this general sense that this is not a part of the Arab - Israeli conflict anymore. In fact, since 1970s Israel and Jordan have been working pretty closely together against various challenges. Egypt clearly is part of what I would call the camp of stability in the region at large. The position that Sisi talked about in his famous speech on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2015 on the question of turning back the tide of Islamist totalitarian fantasies is a very important text for all of us.

So we are looking essentially at a group of likeminded nations with a common agenda and the obvious next step should be closer regional integration. Thank you.





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## COMMENTARY\*

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Marcus Templar\*\*

30 July 2018

### Turkey's Political and Economic Future under Erdogan

The Hellenic Cultural Commission sponsored a panel discussion on July 25<sup>th</sup> in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The panel discussion transpired during of the Family Supreme Convention of the American headquarters for the American-Hellenic Educational Progress Association, or AHEPA. The moderator of the panel was Mr. Lou Katsos and the participants in the discussion were Professor Alexander Kitroeff, former ambassador Karolos Gadiis, and I. The subject of the discussion was "Turkish Irredentism and the Finlandization of the Eastern Mediterranean". As it is known, finlandization is the process or result of being obliged to favor for economic reasons, or at least not to oppose the interests of the great power, as in the case of Finland, the interests of the former Soviet Union despite not being politically allied to it.

The panellists suggested and discussed several points of view from historical, political, diplomatic, and psychological aspects of Turkey and its present leadership, especially of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Some of the opinions expressed below were also communicated during a radio program and individual conversations. The core of the discussion was Erdogan and the new Turkey as he has envisioned it. And to implement his vision even before he took an oath as president, he issued a published 143-page dictum changing the operation of every single ministry and other agencies under the ministries.

After that Erdogan continued issuing decree after decree making the Republic of Turkey a fully functional dictatorship that *Ataturk* would be jealous of and the Sultan disgusted. Controlling all political life, Erdogan could essentially become president for life whose psychopathic cruelty would make Francois Duvalier of Haiti, and also known as Papa Doc, a cub scout. The man fundamentally caused unchecked, wicked authority as Russia's Vladimir Putin and Hungary's Viktor Orban. They all use democracy to expand their influence in the same manner that the communists had done in the past.

But Erdogan's vision for Turkey is magnificently ambitions and costly. Because the Straits are getting shallower and narrower, Erdogan is determined to open a canal from the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara near Küçükçekmece, 25 kilometres west of Istanbul. The name of the canal is Kanal İstanbul and Erdogan is determined to make the canal the rival of Suez and Panama.

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *US Army Cryptologic Linguist, All-Source Intelligence Analyst, Defense Intelligence Agency (Retired)*

He has brushed aside legal, environmental, and budgetary questions to make the canal a central plank of his re-election bid in June 24<sup>th</sup>.

But the Financial Times stated that according to Erdogan, one of his first projects in the new era will be to start building Kanal İstanbul. There might be a Suez somewhere, a Panama somewhere else, but the Kanal İstanbul will send the world a message. The problem is that when Erdogan announced the canal in 2011, the estimated cost was 13 billion US dollars. Today it has increased to 15 billion US dollars, and by the time the project ends its price could reach 20 billion US dollars. That's very expensive.

Also, Erdogan wants to build at least one runway long enough to take care of the taxiing needs of F-35 aircraft. However, it always depends on specific variants as whether Turkey will be trusted to own such an aircraft, the capacity for such a heavy and costly aircraft to manoeuvre, like turn, climb, run, the specific models of the aircraft like traditional take-off, landing, versus vertical take-off, landing, guns, and a few other variants. With a price tag of 94,6 million US dollars each for only the basic F-35A - the price for a more advanced model of F-35 could include and increase its cost to 132,44 million US dollars.

If we add the grand plan for the Istanbul Airport that Erdogan has in mind we can quickly add the cost of 12 billion US dollars as he wants to improve the airport by adding six runways across a strip-like land. It will take about a decade to complete with a projection of making the busiest airport not just in the region but also on the planet. The projected number of passages could hit 200 million people annually.

However, in a global economy which is afflicted gradually by worries from an unfolding trade war to higher oil prices, Turkey could be very far from comfort. Turkish economy is 22nd in the world, below that of the state of Illinois of the United States, which is 20<sup>th</sup>, and below Russia, which is 13th in the world.

Starting a business is not an easy venture, but including family in the government is unwise. Yet in a country whose finances constitute a bubble ready to burst, the worst thing anyone wants to do is having a relative as finance minister. Berat Albayrak is a Turkish businessman and politician, but also Erdogan's son-in-law. The question is whether Erdogan will listen to his relative or he will tell his son-in-law to implement his personal policies. As Bloomberg Business Week pointed out, it is abundantly clear that the president's whim will appraise all the future strategic decisions taken about anything in Turkey and the new cabinet will function purely as the rubber-stamping forum.

The only constraints set to be imposed on Erdogan are those likely to derive from bond and currency markets which may inhibit any overtly reckless economic polls-making. The chances in the function of the government are expected to have a severe impact on Turkish assets and it is assumed that Turkish assets to remain under pressure, unless policy measures address the country's high inflation and external dependence, it won't make it.

The Central Bank has not raised rates enough like some other countries given the government's focus as GDP growth rather than inflation or currency stability. On the other hand, Turkey is likely to face more challenges ahead and it is running a massive fiscal deficit but don't have savings to fund it.

So, Erdogan atop of it was the only one who actually decided Turkish monetary policy keeping

the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey captive. He has prevented any recent Central Bank constraints and in the last two years under Erdogan's control, because he helped the Turkish voters to do better by offering cash bonus and other trading methods.

Turkey has had extraordinary loose monetary and fiscal policies. Turkey is facing a variety of issues. The Turkish lira has declined, the inflation rate is in the area of 12%, although the target was 5%, and there is also Erdogan's restriction of the Central Bank's independence. Setting interest rates which opt in for a monetary policy that prioritizes growth over controlling the inflation, is a real problem. Nevertheless, the voters preferred the man who as a mayor of Istanbul had cleaned this city, even if their first choice was a bit shaky - and that is an understatement.

Democracy in Turkey suffered since its inception, oscillating from the socialism of *Ataturk* to the right-wing Islamists of Erdogan, and that includes about 1.5 million people who live abroad, most of them in Germany. The burst of the economic bubble and the consequent implosion of the present political survival of Turkey is not a matter of supposition but a matter of time.



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## PRESENTATION\*

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Dr. Avner Barnea\*\*

2 August 2018

### **Israeli Counterintelligence Discipline: Theory and Practice**

I would like to speak today about the Israeli counterintelligence and discipline theory and practice. And in order to explain and to give more information about it and to emphasize later the current situation I have to go back to the early days of the Israeli state in 1948.

As some of you may know, Israel got independence from the British mandate in 1948, and immediately after the British left and the formal launch of the State of Israel more than 10% of the population in the new state were Arab, most of them Muslims, which at that time were considered, as I will call it, hostile population. Because before the independence of Israel we were engaged in war with Arab states and also with the local population, the Palestinians, between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River. And when the war was over, still around 10% of the Arab Muslims living in State of Israel stayed and wanted to live here. But it was quite complicated, a challenge for the State of Israel because there was no clear understanding of how loyal they were to the new state. And that was the reason why in 1948 the Israeli government took a decision to impose a military regime on the Arabic population in Israel. And this actually lasted for eighteen years - until 1966. So at this time, during those eighteen years the Arab population was living in Israel, they were under military regime, as I said. And they had to get a lot of approvals for many activities they were doing at that time because the State of Israel wasn't sure that they are loyal and would behave as loyal citizens. And in 1968, after a long discussion between the heads of the political parties in Israel and the military, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), a decision was taken to stop this military regime.

At that time, during those eighteen years, the Israeli Security Agency (ISA), which is the intelligence agency for counterintelligence, was responsible, I would say, to cover this population and to make sure that they do not become a threat to the existence of Israel. So, Israel has had a lot of experience in activities of counterintelligence for such a long time.

And a year after, in 1967, there was a well-known Six-Day War when Israel actually won the war against the Arab states around us, and we got new territories. And the most populated were in the West Bank - Judea and Samaria – that was before under the regime of the Jordan Kingdom, and the Gaza Strip which until '67 was under the regime of Egypt.

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Head, Competitive Intelligence*

In 1967 the Six-Day War, when Israel won the war against the Arab neighbors, was a turning point for the State of Israel, as well as for the ISA - the Israeli Security Agency. Suddenly, Israel took control of millions of Palestinians which were living in Judea and Samaria - what's called also West Bank, which was the west bank of the Jordan in the Jordan Kingdom - and the Palestinians in Gaza Strip. Nowadays the numbers in the Gaza Strip are approximately two million Palestinians, and in the West Bank - Judea and Samaria - around three million.

So, the ISA had to get ready to get involved in what was going on in this territory which immediately after the war became again under military regime. But the decision was taken that the military will just be the overall responsibility, while the counterintelligence, mainly counterterrorism, activity will be done by the ISA. Just a few months after the end of the Six-Day War, the first terrorist attacks against Israel started from the West Bank as well as from Gaza Strip, and since then, since 1967 up to now the ISA has been a major arm for counter terrorism coming from the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria.

We also have to remember that during this long period of fifty years there were not only terrorist attacks against Israel from these territories; there were a lot of attacks against Israeli installations outside Israel, mainly embassies, consulates, the Israeli national airlines and so on. So, actually the ISA became not just responsible for the counterterrorism in attacks coming from the West Bank and from the Gaza Strip, but also to take the security measure for protecting the Israeli institutions outside Israel, as I said, mainly diplomatic stations, embassies, and the Israeli airlines, and also Israeli shipping and so on. So, if we look at the situation, if the ISA before '67 was more focused on countering political subversion, since '67 the focus has been on anti-terrorism and counterterrorism. And actually I don't think that there was one day in the last fifty years when there was no terrorist attempt or terrorist activity that from the Palestinian point of view was successful. So it's an ongoing battle against the terrorist attacks when actually the main problem is that it's very difficult to forecast who is going to be the next terrorist. And in order to prevent it, you need a very close monitoring of the population in order to be able to get information - intelligence - before the terrorist activity actually has been executed.

So, this is the history of the Israeli counterintelligence for the last seventy years since the independence of Israel. And it's a major challenge, and obviously we are lucky. Partly because, let's say, unlike other countries in the world that have a counterintelligence responsibilities, in our case Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip are actually surrounded by Israel and these areas are closed areas, and that makes them more easy to cover with intelligence means.

So, this is the history. And we've had not just terrorist attacks. We had two major Intifadas. Intifada is actually an uprising, popular uprising, that's not done by, as in terrorist attacks, specific people acting as terrorists. The first Intifada in 1987 and the second in 2000 were actually the whole population revolting against the control of the Israeli regime. It was quite complicated; it took Israel a long time to bring the situation back to kind of a control.

And there was another major event in that time. Israel had an agreement with the Palestinian Authority in 1993 when at that time it was seen as if Israel and the Palestinians are coming to agreement to split this area for two states, what we call a two-state solution: the Israeli state and next to it the Palestinian state. But because of many reasons that I don't want to discuss now, we don't have the time, mainly because the religious fractions of the Palestinians, mainly the Hamas, who is now by the way responsible for the Gaza Strip, didn't accept the signature of

Chairman Arafat at the time for this kind of reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinians. And the whole thing actually had been broken away – what we call the Oslo Agreements. And they are not actually practical, they don't exist anymore.

In 2002, the Israeli government took a decision to bring to the Parliament of Israel a new law called the “Israeli Security Agency (ISA) Law”. It is a security agency law that has actually defined what the responsibilities of the ISA are, what this organization is allowed to do and not allowed to do. Up to 2002, the ISA would usually act by government decisions and by internal procedures between the ISA and the military and the police. But since 2002, there is a very brief and clear law which defines exactly what the ISA is allowed to do, what it is expected to do, what it's not allowed to do. By the way, similar laws exist also in Canada, in Australia, in the UK. And so Israel actually took what was written in laws in other Western countries and tried to build a combination of all of its laws into something which will be good and relevant for the Israeli challenges.

So, if we look at the challenges of the counterintelligence in Israel, we see three major challenges. The most important one is, obviously, the counterterrorism which we are involved with in the last fifty years. So, Israel has a lot of experience with counterterrorism, not only internally in Israel, but also, as I said before, terrorist activity outside Israel, regarding Israeli interest and institutions. The second one is the countering of extreme political subversion, meaning that organizations that do not accept the Israeli law, the Israeli independence, actually - they are opposing many of the major rules of the State of Israel. And so they are not involved in terrorism, but we can say that there are some fractions, some groups that are thinking of changing the democratic status of Israel. And the third challenge of the counterintelligence in Israel is counterespionage, which was, by the way, a very major challenge before 1967. And if we look now at the last few years at counterespionage, we can see a new *modus operandi* of counterespionage, when states like Russia, China and Iran are trying to gather information in Israel through a cyber-activity. Offensive cyber activity became a major activity by countries that get information about Israel and this has actually demanded Israel to develop cyber-security capabilities which a few years ago were not existing in Israel. And in the last, I would say, four, five years Israel has become quite significant power in cyber security.

So if we look now at counterespionage and also counterterrorism, we will see that suddenly cyber became a tool for attacking Israel. But the conventional *modus operandi* of terrorism, like bombs and shootings, and throwing Molotov bottles, and so on, still happens in the area. But we are seeing now a change when the conventional terrorist attacks, although many of them are still going on as it was before, are becoming more sophisticated and we have to be ready for countering cyber-attacks. And this is making the ISA much more technology-oriented organization than it was before. If before it was like the conventional counterintelligence organization, as we had known them for so many years, nowadays counterintelligence becomes a highly technological organization. The old *modus operandi* of attacks and tourist attacks and so on still exists, but we have to be ready for these new tools that are threatening Israel, as they threatening many other countries in the world.

I would like to say a few words about the control of the counterintelligence in Israel. Usually, counterintelligence organizations are quite strong organizations, because they are involved in the internal security of the state. In Israel the cabinet minister who is responsible for the ISA is the Prime Minister himself. That's also mentioned and defined in the ISA law that I mentioned

before. And so this organization can be, or has the potential to be a very strong factor in all kinds of events that happen in the democratic state.

And so the ISA is controlled, first of all, by the government. We have a government controller, which is a very high position in Israel, and this office can control every state organization in Israel. So this is one organization which controls and looks at the activity of the ISA. The second one, there is a special committee in the Israeli Parliament which is responsible for overall control of the ISA as well as the Israeli foreign intelligence organization - the Mossad. And inside the ISA there is a control organization which actually is independent in the organization, and this unit can look at every activity that the ISA is doing in order to see if it's right or wrong, if it's according to the law, according to the rules, according to the procedures. And no one can get involved with them and tell them what they have to do or what is not allowed to do. They are very independent. So actually, if we look at the situation of the control of the ISA, there is quite a good governmental control, as I said before, including also internal control, which is very independent.

I would like to say a few words about teaching, about the academia, and teaching counter-intelligence in the academia. In many countries, especially United States, there are universities that have intelligence studies and among the classes of intelligence studies there is usually also a class, or a lesson, for counterintelligence. In Israel, first of all, we don't have a very structural organization for intelligence studies. We have intelligence studies in various universities. But in Europe or in the United States you can have an MA in intelligence studies - we don't have it in Israel. In Israel, if you want to learn intelligence, you do it usually through lessons in political science, or international relations, or in government. And up to now, there have been only very few universities in Israel which have lessons on counterintelligence. One of these lessons I am reading in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem when we have lesson course called counterintelligence in democratic societies, which is for the third-year students for BA in Political Science, and I have been teaching this lesson for the last three years. And, obviously, it's based on open-source intelligence. There are no secrets there, they are no hush-hush activities in this course - it's all open and according to what was discovered, what was revealed about the ISA, its success stories, also its failures. And we have a few lessons about the effectiveness of the control by the state and by checks and balances of this organization by other organizations, and the cooperation with other government organizations, including courts, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Defense. And so it's more to make the students aware that in many democratic states in the world there is a counterintelligence organization which is a quite powerful organization, and to explain to them what it is expected to do, what it is doing, what is its history, how other counterintelligence organizations in Western countries are operating, and so on. And I feel that this is quite an important value for the making counterintelligence known and appreciated by the citizens and not something that nobody would like to speak about because it is a clandestine activity. There is an aspect of clandestine activity but still a lot of what I say it is doing is well known to the population and we have to explain it to students, and especially when many of them are looking also to be employed by the ISA when they will graduate from the university.

So this is actually what I have to say about the experience of Israel with counterintelligence. I think that we are keeping an organization, a very effective organization, which is countering terrorism quite successfully. You can't be always successful but I would say that if you come to visit Israel and you see that we are behaving like any other country and the atmosphere is quiet



and people don't feel under a lot of security pressure, and one of the reasons actually is the efficiency of the ISA which makes living in Israel easy and not under security threat. And as the ISA is so successful, it gives also the government the ability to discuss future agreements with the Palestinians not under the threat of terrorist attacks and in fears of the population, but to look at the situation in a very calm and balanced way which couldn't be, if there was no control of the terrorist activities in Israel.

Thank you very much for listening.



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## COMMENTARY\*

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Andrew Lambert\*\*

8 August 2018

### A 2018 Summer Tour d'Horizon

In British politics, the summer holiday is known as “the silly season”. That is because politicians are all away on holiday, and the media is short of something to say, so they resort to reporting inconsequential nonsense. But the start of the silly season, as parliament disbands, is the time for government to announce bad news, news that they hope will pass unnoticed by the general population. As usual, difficult Brexit announcements were made, as was the closure of RAF Scampton, the home of the Dambusters in WWII, and the home of the Red Arrows today.

But if it's the silly season in the UK, it certainly isn't in the rest of the world.

2018 will, I am sure, be known as the year of the long hot summer, and I would like to be able to say that it was also the summer when the cause of peace advanced. Sadly, that just wasn't true. Quite the opposite in fact – the world has become a more fractious and volatile place than it has been for some time.

And, very sadly, the cause of world peace is also not being helped by the proliferation of personality-based regimes, with each leader exhibiting varying degrees of megalomania.

From his actions and his words, it seems that President Trump appears to have a purely two-dimensional view of the world. In his view, Washington seems to sit like a big spider at the centre of its web, and all events elsewhere in the world shuttle backwards and forwards to greater or lesser extent and to distances out towards the periphery. Bizarrely, this view seems also to chime well with his isolationist redneck supporters, but it certainly ignores the interconnectivity of the global sphere, where events in one part of the world inevitably have knock-on effects to another, and then to another, before finally coming back to taunt you.

Thus, his politically-motivated, rather simple idea of bullying Iran for finding ways of circumventing the nuclear treaty, principally over the development of ballistic missile technology, has strategic effects that seem to have been largely overlooked in the White House. Of course, the US' withdrawal from the treaty is a truly US-only unilateralist act, which none of the other five signatories are bound or likely to follow.

\* *Transcript*

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

US sanctions, which began last Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> August, are to be followed by oil sanctions ninety days later, and they are likely to produce some of the following.

First, the domestic sanctions now imposed will squeeze the very middle and lower classes that the US hopes to enlist in undermining the theocratic regime. As consumer goods and medicines dry up, the only beneficiaries will be Iran's rich elitist black marketeers with close ties to the regime. At the same time, those citizens that stick their heads above the parapet and complain about the nuclear programme and the consequent sanctions will be branded as US-sympathisers, if not traitors.

Second, with China already locked in a bitter trade war with the Trump Administration, and with China's Asia-focussed "One Belt, One Road" policy, it is almost certain that China will use this opportunity to move closer to Iran. If, as a result of US sanctions, Iranian oil has nowhere to go, then both India and China would be extremely foolish not to take advantage of this spare oil - for the right price, of course. And, given China's oil interest in Iran, it is hard to see Beijing voluntarily reducing its investments elsewhere in Iran, especially those in Iran's nuclear energy sector.

If China and Iran become closer, then so too must we expect Iran and North Korea. Much of Iran's ballistic missile technology originated in North Korea, and with both of these renegade countries still pursuing nuclear strategies, it is inevitable that Mr. Kim, fresh from his blustery meeting with Mr. Trump - (that is if the Putin/Trump meeting is anything to go by) - will seek far closer relations in their aspirations, and in their dealings with Mr. Trump. It should come as no surprise, therefore, for listeners to learn of the visit to Teheran yesterday, 7<sup>th</sup> August, by Pyongyang's Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho. These two pariah states will have much to discuss, not least whether to unite in their dealings with the US Administration.

Turning now to events elsewhere in the Middle East, I think that one can now confidently predict that, with the help of Russian airpower, with help from Hezbollah's militia, with the help of a number of Iraqi militia, and with the sizeable deployment of Iraqi forces, the war in Syria is likely very soon to come to a bitter end. President Assad has effectively won this war, and the recriminations will no doubt start soon, but he and his Alawite regime owe a debt of honour to both Hezbollah and Iran, who have not only kept him in power but more tellingly have most likely saved his, and his family's, lives. He and his regime will have to be compliant, if not enthusiastic, in whatever Iran seeks next.

And the third effect of President Trump's sanctions will be the question of what will happen to the vast number of newly-redundant Shiite militiamen in the region, all directly or indirectly under the control of Teheran. As the Financial Times reported, quoting diplomat Mr. Robert Ford, "... nearly all the Iraqi Shia militia understand that the American influence in the region sooner or later will diminish, but Iran will always be their neighbour." But if Syria really is pacified, then the piggy in the middle, Iraq, continues to be a basket case.

Following May's general election no one can be sure who will become the true power broker in Iraq. Frustration over failing water supplies, coupled with frequent electricity outages, and little economic progress, has given the largest number of seats to the radical Shiite nationalist cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, followed closely by the seats for the 120,000-strong militia party, known variously as Hashd al-Shaabi, the PMU or Fatah, run by the pro-Iranian Mr Hadi al-Ameri. As seems increasingly likely, a coalition between these two large parties would place Iraq

increasingly in Iran's camp, from whence Iran would control 10% of the world's oil production, as well as the Straits of Hormuz through which over a third of the world's oil passes.

To say this leaves Iran in a strong geo-strategic position is something of an understatement. Although the Iranian Rial is falling and the economy under pressure, the population have seen all this before and did not crumble; rather it gave them a focus for their hatred and an opportunity for the clerics to crack down on any liberals. Given Iran's perceived persecution by the US, and Hezbollah's antipathy to Israel, the newly unemployed militia will surely turn to something else. As the saying goes, "the Devil makes work for idle hands"!

Israel is particularly vulnerable. Israel's move of the capital from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, coupled with the US's move of her embassy, as well as the continuing bloodshed in Gaza, have all conspired to create a *casus belli* when things go wrong, as they surely will. Although Mr. Trump is on the verge of revealing his "ultimate deal" for Palestine peace, both the Fatah administration in Ramallah as well as the Hamas organisation in Gaza have already signalled that it is weighed far too much in favour of Israel. And even with considerable Saudi support, it is difficult to see this ultimate deal as anything more than just one more sterile proposal.

Although I don't want to appear alarmist, it does seem that the stage is now set for one of the more worrying confrontations than we have seen in recent history. To the north of the Persian Gulf sit the Shiite states - more or less tied by some sort of fealty to Iran - from Alawite Syria, through volatile Iraq, to angry Iran, all supported to a greater or lesser degree by Russia and China. To the south sit the allies of the US: Israel, the Sunni Gulf Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. To the north will soon be unemployed irregular militias spoiling for a fight; to the south are sophisticated nations rich in infrastructure and armed with high technology. While both Iran and Saudi remain as non-nuclear powers, any confrontation across the Gulf could, hopefully, be controllable but, should either, or presumably both, acquire nuclear weapons then the consequences could be unthinkable.

And finally, into this bubbling Middle Eastern cauldron we have Turkey. Hitherto, a staunch NATO ally, one that fought with distinction in the Korean War, Turkey is increasingly in the hands of a Sultan-like figure whose rule is increasingly autocratic and capricious. Over 50,000 Turkish citizens were arrested and, according to Amnesty International, a further 107,000 summarily dismissed from their posts for their supposed involvement in the 2016 coup. Judges are now appointed by decree and freedom of expression and freedom of assembly curtailed. The media is largely state-controlled.

In 2003, the Erdogan government refused to allow its principal ally to deploy troops from Turkey's borders, and following years of worsening relations involving amongst other things Iranian sanction-busting by Turkey's Halkbank, and attacks on the Kurds whose Peshmerga fought ISIS as America's allies, the Erdogan regime criticised the US for not condemning the 2016 attempted coup quickly enough, and for supposedly harbouring its initiator Fethullah *Gulen*.

In what increasingly appears a tit-for-tat action, Turkey arrested Pastor Andrew Brunson, a US citizen whom they accused of being one of the plotters. And he remains under arrest despite a trilateral agreement that Israel would release a Turkish national, Miss Ozkan, who had been apprehended smuggling currency to Hamas. After a fractious Trump/Erdogan phone call, the

US has now imposed sanctions on the politicians responsible for Brunson's detainment, the ministers of justice and the interior.

The President of Turkey has now gone further and accused the US President of "psychological warfare". Meanwhile, the Turkish lira is falling and the banks are under pressure; but, no doubt, Mr. Erdogan will portray this as yet another hostile act by the West.

Meanwhile, Turkish relations with Russia have been improving. At a time of growing antipathy between the United States and Turkey, Turkey and Russia agreed to cooperate on Syria, to construct a new gas pipeline to Turkey, and to supply Turkey with the advanced Russian S-400 missile defence system. Understandably, the US has now postponed deliveries of its most advanced F-35 fighter for fear that the technology could fall into the hands of Russia.

Such actions by Turkey, coupled with Mr. Erdogan's stated intention of joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a full member – a body which both China and Russia aspire to make into the Asian version of the EU and NATO – place considerable doubt on Turkey's continuing reliability as an ally.

So, with the anti-ISIS glue, which for the past five years has kept all these very disparate groups if not together, then at least in some form of co-operation, with that glue now fast coming unstuck, what does the future hold for the Middle East in particular, and the world in general?

If history teaches us anything, it is to beware the power of a populist nationalist leader with an over-inflated ego. Every time one has been thrown up – and one can think of Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Napoleon to name but a few – then bloodshed has ensued, and the resulting chaos took decades, if not centuries, to sort out. Between the two World Wars, there were two, or arguably three, such idolized personalities.

Now, we have at least four in major positions of power, together with a whole host of petty autocratic acolytes. Can they all live in harmony in this world of eight billion people? I wonder!

Where have all the true statesmen gone when you need them? Or are they all on holiday?

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## PRESENTATION\*

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Harry Theocharis\*\*  
30 October 2018

### **Offshore Hydrocarbon Developments in Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean**

Let me start by thanking ERPIC for the opportunity to discuss the Greek oil and gas fields, as well as the role of the Greek companies in the past six months in terms of exploiting the reserves that lie in the East Med basin. Obviously, this is a very wide region and some Greek companies play some role in that and we will discuss it, especially the Israeli gas fields.

The Greek energy sector has continued its growth process during the whole of 2018. The developments lie mainly in two fields.

The first is the internal market, and in the internal market the consortium of Total – Exxon – Hellenic Petroleum S.A. (Helpe) has won the Cretan blocks, while the consortium of Repsol – Helpe has one the Ionian block and they have made significant steps in moving forward the process of developing these fields. The active presence of major American and European companies highlights the prospects of the Greek fields and the dynamic of this area as an alternative to the politically unstable and hostile existent sources that supply Europe. We understand that European policy dictates to diversify as much as we can our resources, obviously within the market framework and the price pressures.

In terms of the second pillar of our discussion, Energean Oil & Gas is deepening its presence in the Israeli fields, advancing with its strategic plan. The Israeli – Greek cooperation in energy issues is strengthened by the fact that Energean has proven to be a very reliable partner of the Israeli state in terms of exploiting and pushing forward the use of the fields that have already been awarded, as well as participating in the process of the five plots that were awarded to the company and will start the process of exploiting those plots as well.

There are many challenges that the oil industry faces, and especially Helpe, which is a Greek incumbent oil corporation and it's a company that mainly drives the creation of consortia which undertake the responsibility for exploiting the Greek plots.

On one hand we have a very promising acreages ('frontier' areas) in many parts of Greece, and the fiscal terms are very competitive and attractive for investments in hydrocarbons exploration

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Independent MP, Hellenic Parliament*

and production industry.

On the other hand, however, these offshore fields – especially in the southwest of Crete – display a very complex geological history and are located in ultra-deep waters – the depths exceed 3000 meters in most of this area. So this means that very deep wells are required and correspondingly the cost of both prospecting and finding out whether there are any fields there, and as well exploiting afterwards those fields is significant.

The Ionian block, located in the southwest of Corfu Island, covers an extensive offshore area of 6,671 square kilometers and has average water depths of around 1300-1500 meters. This is a shallower area, but still an area which has significant depths. The area is under-explored with few wells drilled so far in nearby locations outside the block. In terms of geological point of view, it is expected that any possible discoveries will be analogue to the ones that have already been found in Albania and Italy which are adjacent to the area.

From a hydrocarbon exploration point of view, offshore Crete represents a frontier area. It's an area that has a significant hope to bring a number of reserves. The reserves of the greater East Med basin have increased the hope of the industry to find significant finds there. But as we've said, the problems are not to be taken lightly, especially the depth.

In terms of the latest developments of the Cretan exploration, on 5th March 2018, following the 'Call for Tenders for the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons Offshore West Crete and Southwest Crete' (Official Government Gazette 2848/11.08.2017), the consortium of Total E&P Greece B.V. (40%, operator), ExxonMobil Exploration & Production Greece (Crete) B.V. (40%) and Hellenic Petroleum S.A. (20%) has submitted an offer for granting of rights for those areas.

On 3rd July 2018, by Ministerial Decision, the above-mentioned consortium was declared as the Selected Applicant for granting rights of hydrocarbons exploration and production for the two offshore blocks of Crete, West Crete and Southwest Crete.

The exploration stage will be up to eight years, divided into three phases with separate work programs. In the event of a commercial discovery, the production lease will be for twenty five years plus two five-year extensions.

In the Ionian Sea and more specifically in Ionian block, located in the southwest of Corfu island, the consortium of Repsol Exploration S.A. (50%, operator) and Hellenic Petroleum S.A. (50%) has submitted an offer for the offshore block.

This offer is currently in evaluation phase and it is expected to be concluded in the next few months.

Hellenic Petroleum S.A. has managed through a number of contracts that came out and were won by different consortiums to build up extensive experience in terms of exploration of geological strata that pertain to the Greek morphology. They have developed techniques that with the minimum cost allow to take data, mainly from the regional 2012 PGS seismic survey, and result in the identification of potential exploration targets in the subsurface.

The growth plan of Helpe E&P in terms of trying to explore the greater East Med basin, is currently hampered by two things. One is the fact that its investment budget is effectively as much as a company can amass – this is an investment budget of more than 1 billion euros for the next five years, and I think it's been already two years in terms of the planning phases. And



it would be a stretch to add to that investment plan more expansive ideas.

The second thing is that currently we are in the process of privatization of Hefsa and both the investment plans and the strategic plans of the company will be under review of the new owners, as soon as the privatization process finishes in the next few months.

Moving on to our second subject, which is the role of the Greek company Energen Oil & Gas, which is working with the Israeli government in the Israeli market to explore and help with the production of Israeli gas.

Energen Israel is the operator of the Karish and Tanin leases, which were awarded to the company due to the High Court decision that forced the Israeli government to open up the market to more players in order to avoid monopolies. It has a 100% working interest in those fields. The Karish and Tanin fields are world class assets with 2.4 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of natural gas and about 33 million barrels of light hydrocarbon liquids.

Energen has made the final investment decision for the development project in March 2018, after having signed twelve gas sales and purchase agreements for 4.2 billion cubic meters (bcm) in total annually and securing financing for the project. It managed to secure the sale of the gas and the financing for the project and made the final investment decision to go ahead with the investment in those two fields.

The Karish main field will be the first asset to be developed in the Karish and Tanin blocks by the group. Because it is the largest discovery, it is expected to provide the highest yield of liquid per volume and is the closest discovery to shore. So it has all the advantages to be the first one to start the development.

The assets required to develop these fields will be installed and commissioned by early 2021. The second source of gas supply which will be provided by Energen will be operational sometime in 2021 or early 2022.

The gas produced by both those fields is intended to supply the rapidly growing domestic Israeli market.

There is a huge demand driver for gas because there is a population growth in Israel, an increasing standard of living, a greater use of water desalination, the electrification of the railway system, an increased use of air conditioning, the adoption of electric vehicles and the increased adoption of CNG for transportation - all these drive demands for gas from the Israeli market and Energen is well-poised to help fill that demand together with the main sources that are already in place.

In December 2017, Energen was successfully awarded five new offshore exploration licenses within the Israeli exclusive economic zone (EEZ). These are Blocks 12,21,22,23 and 31, which are located near the currently producing Tamar gas field as well as the Karish and Tanin gas fields. Energen will start moving towards the development of those fields.

All those five licenses are located in the proven Tamar sand play fairway and are considered highly prospective for gas. Additional deeper exploration potential has also been identified with the possibility of thermogenic oil.

The next phases will be 3D seismic acquisition and reprocessing of existing datasets. And there

is going to be a 3-year exploration phase to try to ascertain if there are any potential fields that could be developed.

Energean as well is willing to acquire and operate the Gaza Marine field. But this acquisition will be conditional on the resolution of the ownership disputes between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. This could help, politically as well, to ease tensions between the different Palestinian authorities and between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

The East Med region has been attracting more and more significant interest on the global stage from Exxon, Total, Repsol, Edison. We all know the developments in Cyprus, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan. Their gas reserves and potential for future discoveries could assist Europe diversify its energy supply. Trade war rhetoric and risks, a late cycle energy price increase, and the proliferation of political uncertainty, instability and hostility in a number of oil and gas producing or transiting countries make both Greek, Cypriot, Egyptian and Israeli reserves a pragmatic alternative for the European energy supply. The countries in this region are part of an ever-changing geopolitical landscape, while at the same time a lot of infrastructure needs to be in place in order to maximize the potential of the region.

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## PUBLICATION

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November 2018

### Challenges to Liberal Democracy in the Eastern Mediterranean

In this chapter, we focus on the challenges to liberal democracy in the Eastern Mediterranean region, clarifying them as internal, or inherent to the concept of liberal democracy, and external, or contextual. The internal problems relate to the requisite balances between notions of majority vs. minority, sovereign vs. popular powers, individual vs. group rights, and the spirit of accommodation and compromise needed to reach and maintain such balances. The external challenges are twofold: the first stem from the position that secularism – that is government by man-made law – cannot lead to a righteous life; and the second, that in a secular context liberal democracy is not the only path to the good life, that is to say, a life of security, modernity, economic prosperity and even good governance.

Middle-Eastern countries are generally ranked low on various democracy/freedom indices. In 2017, for example, only two countries – Israel and Tunisia – were ranked as democracies (albeit as flawed ones) in the Economist Intelligence Unit's democracy index.<sup>1</sup> Even when expanding the focus to include Eastern Mediterranean countries, such as Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus, multiple challenges for democracy, are present: Turkey in moving further away from democracy and Greece is dealing with the rise of extremist parties as the traditional democratic institutions battle to provide answers to a struggling economy.

There are both structural and ideological reasons for the limits of democracy in the Middle East. Some countries in the region such as Morocco, the Gulf States, and Jordan are still ruled by rather autocratic monarchs. Though most of these nations have parliaments, they usually have limited political power. More modern regimes, such as Egypt, Syria and Iraq, under

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*This chapter was originally published in 'Promoting Liberal Democracy in the Eastern Mediterranean,' Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Israel and S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, November 2018*

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<sup>1</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, 'The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index,' <https://infographics.economist.com/2018/DemocracyIndex/>

Saddam Hussein, applied advanced forms of socialism with a strong pan-Arab national position. The focus on redistributive policies and nationalism in societies with weak middle classes left little room for democracy to evolve. Social and political instability, such as experienced in Syria in the late 1940s and during the 1950s, paved the way for the rise of authoritarian rulers such as Assad, Kaddafi and Saddam Hussein. Finally, the old-new religious ideology of political Islam further challenged democracy.

Great power involvement in the Middle East also curtailed the development of democracy. Between 1917 and the 1940s much of the region was ruled by European states whose democracy had progressed quite far domestically, but ruled their overseas dominions in the region in traditional colonial fashion. American regional involvement – again, despite its democratic values – is similarly perceived by many in the region as an anathema to democracy. The U.S., allied with non-democracies such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, is suspected of having supported regime changes in Iran in 1953, and in Greece in 1967 that resulted in undermining democracy rather than promoting it. Other great powers interventions in the area – most notably the USSR (and later Russia), and more recently China – were never committed to democracy. Finally, the current global environment is not conducive to democracy.

In sum, therefore, liberal democracy must reconcile the tensions between individual freedom, and state sovereignty, majority rule, and minority rights, and address the essentially adverse relationship between individual, and group rights. That is to say the question whether human rights are both inalienable, and a birthright, or whether they are derived from ones ethnic, religious, racial or tribal affiliation. On a pragmatic level liberal democracy also faces a challenge as to its relation to prosperity and modernity. The suggestion being that illiberal democracy, and even authoritarianism (benign or otherwise) can form an alternative paradigm to the Western idea that liberalism, if not liberty, is an indispensable part of the modern prosperous state. This challenge is particularly important in the Eastern Mediterranean, because the illiberal paradigm has important sponsors, and because cultural, religious and historical factors create favorable conditions for its adoption.

### **Liberal Democracy and Its Limits**

A fundamental problem with the doctrine of liberal democracy is that its two main components – individualism and majoritarianism – in principle contradict each other. Liberal democracy pursues conflicting goals - the sovereignty of the state, the sovereignty of the people, and the protection of individual and minority rights. It is crucial, therefore, that a liberal democratic state guard against populist tendencies that disregard minority needs, and radical pluralism, or communalism, which may violate individual rights.<sup>2</sup>

Traditional Enlightenment thinkers suggest that in order to prevent abuse of authority, and tyrannical use of power, human liberty must be protected by guaranteeing freedom of thought, conscience, opinions and expression, freedom to independently define and pursue life goals according to one's tastes and character, and freedom of association.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Marc F. Plattner, 'Populism, Pluralism and Liberal Democracy,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 21, Issue 1, January 2010, pp. 84, 87.

<sup>3</sup> John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001, pp. 15-16; Alexis de Tocqueville, 'Of the Omnipotence of the Majority in the United States and Its Effects,' *Democracy in America: Historical-Critical Edition*, Volume 2, 1835.

Increasingly, multiculturalism is used to reconcile majority rule, and minority rights, by allowing for group difference in the application of law, and group difference in political discourse.<sup>4</sup> The concept of multiculturalism, however, if carried to its logical limits, becomes incompatible with the notion of individual freedom and equality, as guaranteed by a set of civil and political rights to be enjoyed by all citizens without discrimination. Politics of special recognition, and cultural accommodation, through group-determined collective rights can easily become a prescription for discrimination. Moreover, the right to decide how to distribute group benefits opens the door to clientelism, and corruption. Setting objective, strictly applied, criteria for determining the beneficiaries of such special benefits is a very difficult task for most political cultures.

Supporters of multiculturalism argue that it is the liberal state that is obligated to recognize, accommodate, and protect cultural differences.<sup>5</sup> Others caution that the politicization of cultural group identities goes against the liberal ideal of universalism and equality of citizenship. Protecting, strengthening and perpetuating cultural differences may lead to deepening inequalities instead of guaranteeing equality of opportunity to all citizens.<sup>6</sup> This is particularly relevant to minority groups that uphold illiberal values. There is a possibility, therefore, that illiberal group rights may lead to state-sanctioned discrimination, oppression or even persecution in the name of cultural preservation or religious freedom.<sup>7</sup> This “paradox of tolerance” appears where illiberal beliefs are tolerated in liberal democratic societies to the extent that they threaten the very concept of freedom.<sup>8</sup>

The threat of both majority and minority tyranny is important in the Eastern Mediterranean. In either case, democratic elections may bring to power illiberal forces that are not committed to safeguarding individual rights. Moreover, a peculiar form of multiculturalism based on the legacy of the Ottoman *millet* system, which served as a means of managing minority affairs in an ethnically and religiously diverse Ottoman Empire, has prevailed in the Eastern

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<sup>4</sup> Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism. A Civic Idea*, Polity Press, 2013, p. 2; Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship. A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 10-11, 27-32.

<sup>5</sup> Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, p. 83. Kymlicka defines “societal culture” as a culture “whose practices and institutions cover the full range of human activities, encompassing both public and private life”, and are typically associated with national groups. *Ibidem*, 75-76; Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular. Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 42; Amy Gutmann, ‘Introduction,’ *Multiculturalism. Examining the Politics of Recognition*, Amy Gutmann (ed.), Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Brian Barry, *Culture and Equality. An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism*, Polity Press, 2001, pp. 5, 7, 115-116.

Barry remarks that egalitarian liberalism, which he is a proponent of, does not exclude special measures and policies to be adopted in order to assist members of disadvantaged groups to eliminate obstacles in achieving equality of opportunity, as long as these disadvantages are not voluntarily chosen but result, for example, from disability, poverty, unemployment or unhealthy environment. However, he is opposed to special treatment of those groups, whose disadvantaged position in the society is a consequence of a choice, such as inability to do certain jobs due to the religious attire or to eat certain types of meat that are not religiously authorized. *Ibidem*, p. 114; Brian Barry, “Liberalism and Multiculturalism,” *Ethical Perspectives*, Vol. 4, Issue 2, 1997, pp. 4-6.

<sup>7</sup> The issue of accommodation of sharia law in the Western legal system can serve as an example. Academics, journalists, feminists and human rights activists, some of them from minority communities, have warned that legal pluralism applied as a form of group rights accommodation in the West can have serious consequences for vulnerable groups, such as women, children, or sexual minorities. See: Susan M. Okin, Joshua Cohen, Matthew Howard, and Martha C. Nussbaum, *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* Princeton University Press, 1999; Elham Manea, *Women and Shari'a Law: The Impact of Legal Pluralism in the UK*, I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Frank Cunningham, *Theories of Democracy. A Critical Introduction*, Routledge, 2002, p. 39; Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies. Volume One: The Spell of Plato*, Routledge, 1947, p. 226.

Mediterranean. It favors collective rights over individual rights to the detriment of equality, individual freedom and responsibility.

While some might claim that the *millet* was proof of Islamic tolerance of diversity,<sup>9</sup> others would disagree referring to Ottoman use of the *millet* system for enforced religious conversion, and ethnic annihilation.<sup>10</sup> The problem with the *millet* system's contemporary application is twofold.

First, the *millet* legacy is one of the main reasons behind the general skepticism of minority politics in the region, where minorities are generally treated with a significant degree of suspicion and distrust, leading to their marginalization and social and legal discrimination, leading to reciprocal responses on their own part. In contemporary Muslim-majority countries, the Islamic tradition of *ahl al-dhimma* and the *millet* system leads to the prevailing notion that the state is owned exclusively by Muslims, while non-Muslims are merely tolerated, but do not belong to the society as a whole, hence their legal status is not equal to that of Muslim citizens.<sup>11</sup> This preconception creates a condition for the justification of "tyranny of the majority" on religious grounds and cannot be compared with the modern concept of multiculturalism which rests on the assumption that religious or ethnic groups in a state are all equal.

Second, the Ottoman *millet* system was based on communal rights – a euphemism in the case of non-Muslims, as opposed to individual rights. The legacy of *millet* is reflected in the legal systems of several countries in the region. The *millet* remnants are still embedded in the legal systems of several countries in the region formerly under the Ottoman rule, as reflected by the legal autonomy granted to groups in religious and family matters.

Further clouding the scene, is the issue of "minorities within minorities," that is, when members of religious groups are discriminated in the name of religious rights that are granted collectively to such groups rather than their individual members. Where matters of personal status are governed by religious courts, discrimination of women and children with regard to marriage, divorce, custody and inheritance is more likely to occur.<sup>12</sup> While it might be argued that such legal pluralism allows for free practicing of one's religion, hence fulfills a fundamental right of freedom of religion, religious monopoly on family laws defies the principle of equality before law as well as freedom of conscience since individuals in these countries are deprived of

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<sup>9</sup> Tesneem Alkiek, 'Tolerance, Minorities, and Ideological Perspectives,' *Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research*, 2018,

<https://1pjht3ggnei4el40qfi16ch-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/FINAL-Tolerance-Minorities-and-Ideological-Perspectives-pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, Verso, p. 366; Nesim Şeker, 'Forced Population Movements in the Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic: An Attempt at Reassessment through Demographic Engineering,' *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, Volume 16, 2013,

<https://journals.openedition.org/ejts/4396#ftn4>; George N. Shirinian, *Genocide in the Ottoman Empire: Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks, 1913-1923*, Berghahn Books, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Will Kymlicka and Eva Pfösl, 'Introduction,' *Multiculturalism and Minority Rights in the Arab World*, Eds. Will Kymlicka and Eva Pfösl (Eds.) Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 9-10.

<sup>12</sup> Dima Dabbous, 'Legal Reform and Women's Rights in Lebanese Personal Status Laws,' *Chr. Michelsen Institute*, Report nr. 3, September 2017, [see: https://www.cmi.no/publications/6341-legal-reform-and-womens-rights-in-lebanese](https://www.cmi.no/publications/6341-legal-reform-and-womens-rights-in-lebanese).

Yuksel Sezgin, 'The Israeli Millet System: Examining Legal Pluralism through Lenses of Nation-Building and Human Rights,' *Israel Law Review*, Vol. 43, No. 3, 27 October 2011, pp. 631-654.

an option to regulate their personal status in a non-religious manner.

Without doubt, the cultural, ethnic and religious diversity of the Eastern Mediterranean requires effective protection. Such protection should not only include institutional safeguards, but also promotion of the concepts of diversity, tolerance, and inclusion. Such protection, however, must not be exercised at the expense of individual rights and freedoms of the citizen. Unequal treatment of individuals based on their group membership, should not be accepted in societies that recognize that each individual has equal worth and dignity.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Challenge of Political Islam**

An ideological challenge currently facing liberal democracy is Political Islam. Many view Islam as an all-encompassing system of a divine law which must be applied to every aspect of human existence, including public and political life. Political Islam, poses two main challenges to liberal democracy, namely the negation of the universality of human rights and freedoms, and secondly the legitimization of the illiberal paradigm as a basis for the good life. Political Islam, of course, goes further in claiming that the good life must be defined by theocratic values as applied by an Islamic political and legal regime.

Such Islamist ideas can be traced to various Sunni and Shia revivalist movements calling for the purification of Islam from un-Islamic elements. It is such movements, including *Salafism* and *Wahabism* that led to the creation of Saudi Arabia, and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>14</sup> Many more contemporary Islamist movements draw inspiration from the Society of the Muslim Brothers established in Egypt in 1928. Over several decades the Muslim Brotherhood developed into a transnational religious movement.<sup>15</sup> Rooted in the Brotherhood is the ideology of Qutbism, which today serves as a driving force behind *jihadism*, as it is also referred to. It stems from the collection of writings by the Muslim Brothers, but also other Islamic intellectuals.<sup>16</sup>

Of primary importance in Qutbism is the concept of *jahiliyyah*: the state of ignorance of the guidance from God.<sup>17</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 God-given law, in every aspect of human existence, including its public and political realms.<sup>18</sup> All societies, and systems of government based on man-made laws must be abolished, and in their place there should be the establishment of *sharia* rule.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Francis Fukuyama, 'Identity, Immigration & Democracy,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 17, Issue 2, April 2006, p. 15.

<sup>14</sup> John Esposito, 'Islamic Fundamentalism,' *SIDIC Periodical XXXII*, 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>15</sup> Bassam Tibi, 'The Totalitarianism of Jihadist Islamism and its Challenge to Europe and to Islam,' *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* Vol. 8, No. 1, March 2007, p. 39, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14690760601121630>.

<sup>16</sup> Dale C. Eikemeier, 'Qutbism: An Ideology of Islamic-Fascism,' *Parameters: Journal of the US Army War College*, Spring 2007, <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/Articles/07spring/eikmeier.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones: Ma'alim fi'l-tareeq*, A.B. al-Mehri (Ed.), Maktabah, 1964, p. 33, <http://www.kalamullah.com/Books/Milestones%20Special%20Edition.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 67.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

The nostalgia for Islam's past glory and the re-establishment of its lost supremacy over the world are recurring themes in Islamist teachings.<sup>20</sup> The West, perceived as a single, homogenous political and cultural unit, is identified as the main rival and obstacle to Islam's world dominion. 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>21</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>22</sup>

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>23</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". Western 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>24</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>25</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 upon which this concept is based. 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 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>26</sup>

The series of failures and crises in the Muslim world, such as 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-

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<sup>20</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.

<sup>21</sup> Tibi, *The Challenge...*, p. 15.

<sup>22</sup> Bernard Lewis, 'The Roots of Muslim Rage,' *The Atlantic*, September 1990, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1990/09/the-roots-of-muslim-rage/304643/>.

<sup>23</sup> Luke Loboda, 'The Thought of Sayyid Qutb,' *Ashbrook Statesmanship Thesis*, 2004, p. 3, <http://www.ashbrook.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/2004-Loboda-The-Thought-of-Sayyid-Qutb-PDF.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 11-13.

<sup>25</sup> Lewis, 'The Roots....'

<sup>26</sup> Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism*, University of California Press, 1998, pp. 6-7; Lewis, 'The Roots....'



exported models of modernization, perceived as a form of neocolonialism.<sup>27</sup> The Iran-Iraq War, as well as the First and Second Iraq Wars later shattered the nation-state model for the Arabs, as did the recent disintegration of Syria and Libya. The rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria can partly be justified with the fact that central to its ideology concept of a caliphate unifying Muslim lands, and replacing regional nation-state system is a powerful idea broadly supported within the Muslim world.<sup>28</sup>

Political Islam, or Islamism, therefore, can be defined as an ideology which aims to fully subordinate politics to religion. It challenges the Western secular order, norms and values, and desires to replace them with an Islamic order of Allah's sovereignty on earth embodied in the *sharia*.<sup>29</sup> The conflict in question is between modernisms, and in particular secularism, including institutions and values it is associated with, and the forces within the Islamic world which reject them. The fall of Communism contributed to the re-emergence of the Islamic model, as a *de facto* competitor to Western dominance over the Islamic world.<sup>30</sup>

Although certain branches of Islamism declare commitment to human rights their conception of how such rights should be defined and applied effectively negates them. Initiatives aiming at constructing alternative human rights discourse, as well as certain governments' reservations with respect to full adoption of specific human rights conventions, often serve as justification for widespread human rights abuse, in particular in the field of gender equality, religious freedom and freedom of speech, in disguise of compliance with Islamic law.<sup>31</sup>

Islamists regard gender equality as a Western concept, and women's rights activists are believed to be driven by a foreign agenda that aims at corrupting Islamic family values, leading to demoralization of the entire society. Based on their interpretation of Islamic law, according to which gender relations rest upon the conviction that men and women have complimentary roles in the society that imply different rights and duties, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood has been consistently opposing reforms aimed at improving the situation of Egyptian women. In particular such issues as polygamy, divorce, child marriage, and female genital mutilation, a practice widespread in Egypt, are often justified on religious grounds.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, women's rights have been declining in Turkey under the rule of the Islamist Justice and Development

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<sup>27</sup> Esposito, 'Islamic Fundamentalism.'

<sup>28</sup> Shadi Hamid, *Islamic Exceptionalism: How the Struggle Over Islam Is Reshaping the World*, St. Martin's Griffin, 2017, p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> Bassam Tibi, 'Religious Extremism or Religionization of Politics?' *Radical Islam and International Security. Challenges and Responses*, Efraim Inbar, Hillel Frisch (Eds.), Routledge, 2008, p. 13.

<sup>30</sup> Tibi, *The Challenge* ..., p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 'The Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam,' Adopted at the Nineteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, 31 July to 5 August 1990, [https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/2TheCairoDeclarationonHumanRightsinIslam\(1990\).aspx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/2TheCairoDeclarationonHumanRightsinIslam(1990).aspx); Salam Azzam, Secretary General, 'Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights,' *The International Journal of Human Rights* Vol. 2, No. 3, 2007; Ann Elizabeth Mayer, 'The Islam and Human Rights Nexus: Shifting Dimensions,' *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2007, pp. 5-7. Austin Dacey, Colin Koproske, 'Islam & Human Rights. Defending Universality at the United Nations,' *Center for Enquiry*, September 2008, [https://www.centerforinquiry.net/uploads/attachments/ISLAM\\_AND\\_HUMAN\\_RIGHTS.pdf](https://www.centerforinquiry.net/uploads/attachments/ISLAM_AND_HUMAN_RIGHTS.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> Moataz El Fegier, *Islamic Law and Human Rights. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016, pp.197-236.

Party (AKP).<sup>33</sup> Numerous statements by the AKP's leadership regarding women, such as that gender equality is "against nature"<sup>34</sup>, or that women that put their careers over motherhood are "half persons"<sup>35</sup>, are indicators of the party's position on women's rights.<sup>36</sup>

Freedom of speech is another issue where Islamism is at odds with international standards of human rights. In Egypt, it is guaranteed as long as it complies with Islamic law. Blasphemy was for the first time explicitly prohibited in the 2012 Constitution, drafted by the Muslim Brotherhood and its Salafist allies, and blasphemy charges increased under President Morsi.<sup>37</sup>

Political Islam is also at odds with the issue of religious freedom. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt supported and propagated the application of discriminatory principles related to the treatment of religious minorities as stipulated in Islamic law, deepening the discrimination that Christians, Baha'is, Shi'a Muslims, as well as Ahmadis, Quranists and Jehovah's Witnesses have experienced for decades. According to these principles, Christians and Jews, the only religious minorities that deserve recognition as "Abrahamic religions" (or the "People of the Book") should be granted protection by the Islamic state. However, this protection is conditional on their acceptance of the status of second-class citizens. Their subordinate to the Muslim majority position is reflected, among others, in restrictions on constructing places of worship, running for certain public offices (in particular that of head of state), or exercising certain basic personal freedoms (e.g. prohibition on Muslim women to marry non-Muslim men).<sup>38</sup> With regard to the unrecognized religious minorities, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt has opposed registering their religious affiliation, called for their criminalization, engaged in incitement campaigns leading to violence, and some of their members have stated they should be punished by death.<sup>39</sup>

Similar to Egypt, religious minorities have also experienced discrimination in Turkey. The only religious groups that are granted legal minority status are Jews, Greek Orthodox Christians and Armenian Orthodox Christians. Non-Sunni Muslims, in particular Alevi, the second largest religious group in Turkey after Sunni Muslims, are denied treatment equal to the Sunni majority.<sup>40</sup> Following the 2016 coup attempt against Erdogan, the Alevi were subject to hate speech, acts of harassment and violence.<sup>41</sup> Similar accusations were made against Turkey's

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<sup>33</sup> Human Rights Watch, 'Turkey: Backward Step for Women's Rights. Abolishing Women's Ministry Harms Women's Rights Efforts,' 9 June 2011, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/06/09/turkey-backward-step-womens-rights>

<sup>34</sup> 'Turkish President Erdoğan Says Gender Equality 'Against Nature', *Hürriyet Daily News*, 24 November 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-president-erdogan-says-gender-equality-against-nature-74726>

<sup>35</sup> Bruton F. Brinley, 'Turkey's President Erdoğan Calls Women Who Work 'Half Persons', *NBC News*, 8 June 2016, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/turkey-s-president-erdogan-calls-women-who-work-half-persons-n586421>.

<sup>36</sup> BBC, "Turkey President Erdoğan: Women Are Not Equal To Men," 24 November 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30183711>.

<sup>37</sup> El Fegieri, *Islamic Law and Human Rights*, pp. 120, 125.

<sup>38</sup> Traditionally, in return for protection dhimmis were also obliged to pay a poll-tax called jizyah, which also symbolized their submission to the Muslim rule. Abdullahi A. An-Na'im, 'Religious Minorities Under Islamic Law and the Limits of Cultural Relativism,' *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 1, February 1987, pp. 11-12, [https://www.jstor.org/stable/761944?read-now=1&loggedin=true&seq=12#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/761944?read-now=1&loggedin=true&seq=12#page_scan_tab_contents).

<sup>39</sup> El Fegieri, *Islamic Law and Human Rights*, pp. 168, 170 and 134-171.

<sup>40</sup> United States Department of State, 'Turkey 2016 International Religious Freedom Report,' pp. 5, 7, 10-11, 15, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/269120.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> 'Responses to Information Requests,' Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 26 January 2017,

Christians and Jews, who have been portrayed in the pro-Erdogan media as agents of the West – one of the main culprits behind the coup according to the regime.<sup>42</sup>

### **Liberalism and its Detractors: The Illiberal Paradigm**

As the Communist Bloc was collapsing, the “end of history” was announced, hailing the universal triumph of the liberal democratic model “as the final form of human government” guaranteeing global peace and prosperity.<sup>43</sup> This theory was later countered by the argument that even in a conducive international environment liberal democracy was not a universally applicable model. Favorable economic and social conditions needed to exist in order for it to take root within a given society. If these conditions are not in place, previously non-democratic states that implement democratic institutions are likely to reverse back into authoritarianism.<sup>44</sup>

Recent global developments seem to validate that argument. Some believed that popular uprisings against authoritarian leaders known as the Arab Spring were another wave of democratization. Eight years later, the legacy of the Arab revolutions include the resurgence of authoritarianism, the rise of religious extremism and sectarianism, economic decline, civil wars, countless of deaths, and displaced persons.

It would seem that the decline of democracy has entered into a global trend. According to the 2017 Democracy Index published annually by the Economist Intelligence Unit, only 19 out of 167 countries covered by the index (less than 5% of the world’s population) could be categorized as “full democracies”, followed by 57 “flawed democracies”, 39 “hybrid regimes”, and 52 “authoritarian regimes”.<sup>45</sup>

Many controversies and questions regarding liberalism, and in particular human rights doctrine have arisen around the issue of their compatibility with Islam. Syed Abul A'la Maududi, an influential Muslim scholar and the founder of the Pakistani Islamist movement Jamaat-e-Islami, put forward an Islamic concept of human rights, granted by God and based on the Quran and the Sunna. Maududi argued that not only had human rights been embedded and guaranteed in the Islamic tradition since its conception, but they were superior to what he considered to be a Western equivalent that “cannot be compared with the rights sanctioned by God; because the former is not applicable to anybody while the latter is applicable to every believer”.<sup>46</sup>

It has been argued that the liberal democratic model may not be applicable outside of the Western context. Principles and institutions indispensable for the functioning of liberal democracy, such as the rule of law, church and state separation, social pluralism, representative bodies and, above all, individual autonomy which gave rise to individual rights and liberties, were all distinctive traits of Western civilization. The concept of “universal civilization” based on supposedly globally-shared values was in fact perceived as justification for Western cultural,

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<https://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/country-information/rir/Pages/index.aspx?doc=456925&pls=1>

<sup>42</sup> Uzay Bulut, Kasim Cindemir, ‘Christians, Jews in Turkey Growing More Fearful of Islamic Extremism,’ *Voice of America*, 25 September 2016,

<https://www.voanews.com/a/christian-jews-in-turkey-growing-more-fearful/3524266.html>

<sup>43</sup> Francis Fukuyana, ‘The End of History?’ *The National Interest*, Summer 1989, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, ‘Democracy’s Third Wave,’ *Journal of Democracy*, Spring 1991.

<sup>45</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, ‘Democracy Index 2017: Free Speech Under Attack,’ 2018, p. 2, [http://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIO-438/images/Democracy\\_Index\\_2017.pdf](http://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIO-438/images/Democracy_Index_2017.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> Syed Abul A'la Maududi, *Human Rights in Islam*, Islamic Publications Ltd., 1977, p. 12.

political and economic imperialism, as “the non-Westerns see as Western what the West sees as universal”.<sup>47</sup>

Liberalism's claim to universality has been challenged on the grounds that it fails to appreciate cultural particularities and diverse ways in which social norms, behaviors and institutions are embodied by different cultures. Cultural relativists, among others, believe that all cultural norms, customs and practices are equally valid and no matter how abhorrent they seem to be to the outside observer, they should not be criticized due to lack of universal standards against which they could be judged. It is also argued that an attempt to formulate universal human rights standards stem from North American and Western European ethnocentrism, and such standards are irrelevant in the non-Western cultural contexts in which beliefs and values seen as essentially Western are not shared.<sup>48</sup> While Western cultures are preoccupied with freedom, personal autonomy and individual rights, Eastern cultures, it is argued, place more value on family, the community, the nation, emphasize hierarchy, paternalism, discipline and order, social and economic over individual rights, as well as the balance between rights and responsibilities.<sup>49</sup>

The issue regarding compatibility of liberal human rights doctrine with Islam is one example of such controversy. Some Muslims reject it on the basis that it is rooted in a secular, man-made way of life that is fundamentally contradictory to Islam and its laws.<sup>50</sup> Others put forward an Islamic concept of human rights which they believe to be superior to its liberal equivalent. There are also those who reject argument in favor of irreconcilability of Islam and liberal democratic values offering interpretations of Islamic scriptures that render them compatible with secularism, gender equality and religious freedom.<sup>51</sup> It is stressed, however, that at the heart of the liberal human rights doctrine lies the emphasis on the individual, which is in contrast to the collectiveness of the Islamic cultural system based on duties and obligations vis-à-vis the community.<sup>52</sup>

### Challenging the Western Model

An important secular challenge to liberal democracy comes in the form of illiberal economic prosperity. It is based on the premise that liberalism is not a necessary precondition to economic development and technological advancement. The Western-led security, political, and economic world-order is increasingly challenged by the emergence of new transactional alternatives to the existing normative frameworks of international cooperation that stress non-interference, respect

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<sup>47</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, The Free Press, 2002, pp. 66-72.

<sup>48</sup> Elizabeth M. Zechenter, ‘In the Name of Culture: Cultural Relativism and the Abuse of the Individual,’ *Journal of Anthropological Research*, Vol. 53, No. 3, Autumn, 1997, pp. 323-324; Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann, ‘Cultural Absolutism and the Nostalgia for Community,’ *Political Science Faculty Publications*, 1993, pp. 316-317.

<sup>49</sup> Michael D. Barr, ‘Lee Kuan Yew and the ‘Asian Values’ Debate,’ *Asian Studies Review*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 2007, pp. 310-312.

<sup>50</sup> Nazreen Nawaz, ‘Why Muslims Should NOT Use ‘Personal Freedom’ or ‘Human Rights’ to Argue Against Niqab Bans,’ Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir, [file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/secretary/My%20Documents/Downloads/2013\\_11\\_04\\_Articl\\_Why\\_Muslims\\_shouldnt\\_use\\_Persoan\\_freedom\\_to\\_argue\\_against\\_niqab\\_bans\\_P1\\_OK%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/secretary/My%20Documents/Downloads/2013_11_04_Articl_Why_Muslims_shouldnt_use_Persoan_freedom_to_argue_against_niqab_bans_P1_OK%20(2).pdf)

<sup>51</sup> Syed Abul A'la Maududi, *Human Rights in Islam*, Islamic Publications Ltd., 1977, p. 12.

<sup>52</sup> Bassam Tibi, ‘Islamic Law/Shari'a, Human Rights, Universal Morality and International Relations,’ *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 2, May 1994, pp. 289-299.

for “civilizational diversity” and defense of “traditional values”.<sup>53</sup> Such alternatives also offer access to financial resources without the structural political and economic reforms required in order to borrow from traditional financial institutions within the Bretton Woods framework.<sup>54</sup>

Champions of this counter-model to the liberal democratic international order have started to gain influence in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean. After a quarter-century long absence, Russia's military intervention in Syria signaled its return to the region. China's economic encroachment on the region encompasses a growing number of states and many fields of cooperation. As international isolation of Iran continues, the Islamic Republic seeks membership in the Russia-China-driven Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), while it focuses on the expansion of the “Shia Crescent” - an Iranian sphere of influence that stretches from Iran through Iraq and Syria down to Lebanon, aimed at challenging the American, Israeli and Saudi power in the region,<sup>55</sup> through a network of political and military proxies. Turkey has also expressed its interest in a SCO membership as the crisis in its relations with the West deepens.

### **Turkey's Neo-Ottomanism/Revisionism**

Over the last decade and a half, Turkey under Erdogan's rule has experienced a democratic reversal. Constitutional amendments have abolished any remaining checks and balances and allowed for accumulation of nearly unlimited power in Erdogan's hands.<sup>56</sup> The crackdown on freedom of speech and expression, violent suppression of peaceful protests, widespread purges of dissidents from the civil service, judiciary, military, media and academia, as well as mass arrests, abductions and torture in police custody have become the sad norm of Erdogan's regime.<sup>57</sup>

The AKP's Islamization agenda, in particular in the field of education, is undermining the secular foundations of the republic. AKP ideology is firmly rooted in the Turkish religious and political movement called Millî Görüş, or National Vision, established by Necmettin Erbakan, one of the most prominent Islamist activists and politicians in Turkey. Although itself rooted in one of the Sufi orders of Islam, the development of Millî Görüş was influenced by other powerful Islamist movements, mainly the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and ideologues such as Syed Abul A'la Maududi, Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb. The outlook of Millî Görüş, as elaborated by Erbakan, is anti-liberal, anti-Western, anti-Semitic, pan-Islamic, defining Islam as an all-encompassing way of life which should be accepted by all mankind. While it accepts scientific and technological achievements of the West, it is contemptuous of the philosophical underpinnings of the Western civilization. The Millî Görüş worldview is also conspiratorial and anti-Semitic to the core – it perceives international institutions and organizations, such as the EU or the UN, as founded and controlled by world Jewry in a bid to establish global Jewish

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<sup>53</sup> Alexander Cooley, ‘Authoritarianism Goes Global,’ *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 26, p. 3, July 2015, pp. 50-53.

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem, p. 58.

<sup>55</sup> Patrick Clawson, Hanin Ghaddar, and Nader Uskowi, Policy Analysis, ‘Middle East FAQs Volume 1: What is the Shia Crescent?’ The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 17 January 2018, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/middle-east-faqs-volume-1-what-is-the-shia-crescent>.

<sup>56</sup> Sibel Hurtas, ‘Turks Enter Uncharted Waters as Erdoğan Forges Ahead with New Powers,’ *Al Monitor*, 13 July 2018, <https://cutt.ly/Ag7zIwl>.

<sup>57</sup> Human Rights Watch, ‘In Custody: Police Torture and Abductions in Turkey,’ 12 October 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/10/12/custody/police-torture-and-abductions-turkey>.

dominance.<sup>58</sup>

Growing authoritarianism of Erdogan's regime goes hand in hand with enforced re-Islamization of the country. It is most vividly present in Turkey's education sector and in line with his wish "to raise pious generations".<sup>59</sup> The AKP's policies have drastically expanded the religious imam-hatip schools as well as religious content of national curriculum.<sup>60</sup> Turkey also intends to establish an international Islamic university to challenge Egypt's Al-Azhar University's role as the most prominent institution of Islamic education in the world.<sup>61</sup>

The Arab Spring was perceived in Turkey as a golden opportunity to realize the neo-Ottoman dream that existing, secular autocracies would be replaced by Islamist regimes following the Turkish model.<sup>62</sup> However, Turkey miscalculated the outcome of the Arab Spring and its support for Islamist parties quickly backfired. Its backing of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and condemnation of the 2013 military coup, led to mutual withdrawal of ambassadors and relations between the two countries have remained strained ever since.<sup>63</sup> In Syria, Turkey turned against Bashar Al-Assad and sided with the insurgents, including radical jihadi groups, in an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the regime and replace it with a Sunni, Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated one. Turkey's 2018 military operation against the Kurdish-controlled areas in northern Syria further strained relations between the two countries. Turkey's threats of military intervention in northern Iraq against Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) strongholds, as well as uninvited involvement in the 2016 retaking of Mosul from the Islamic State justified on the grounds of Turkey's historical rights to Iraqi city, cast a shadow over its relations with Baghdad.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Michael A. Reynolds, 'The Key to the Future Lies in the Past: The Worldview of Erdoğan and Davutoğlu,' *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 19, Hudson Institute, 2015, p. 12; Svante E. Cornell, M. K. Kaya, 'Political Islam in Turkey and the Naqshbandi-Khalidi Order,' *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 19, Hudson Institute, 2015, pp. 51, 53; Eric Edelman, Svante Cornell, Aaron Lobel, Hali Karaveli, 'Turkey Transformed: The Origins and Evolution of Authoritarianism and Islamization Under the AKP,' Report, Bipartisan Policy Center, October 2015, pp. 16-21.

<sup>59</sup> Alon Ben Meir, 'Erdogan Exploits Islam For Personal And Political Gain,' HuffPost, 1 March 2017, [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/erdogan-exploits-islam-for-personal-and-political-gain\\_us\\_58b6ed8ce4b0658fc20f9c5c](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/erdogan-exploits-islam-for-personal-and-political-gain_us_58b6ed8ce4b0658fc20f9c5c)

<sup>60</sup> Daren Butler, 'Turkey Says Plans to Place Quarter of Top Students in Islamic Schools,' Reuters, 12 April 2018, see: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-education/turkey-says-plans-to-place-quarter-of-top-students-in-islamic-schools-idUSKBN1HJ2IW>;

Lizzie Dearden, 'Turkey to Stop Teaching Evolution in Secondary Schools as Part of New National Curriculum,' The Independent, 23 June 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/turkey-evolution-secondary-school-education-national-curriculum-recep-tayyip-erdogan-regime-a7804016.html>

<sup>61</sup> Michael Kaplan, 'Turkey Plans to Establish an Islamic University with a Broader Muslim Curriculum,' The Washington Post, 23 December 2014, <https://cutt.ly/qg7zik6>.

<sup>62</sup> Nathan J. Brown, 'The Arab Spring at Five: Updates on Tunisia, Egypt, and Turkey,' Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 8 February 2016, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2016/02/08/arab-spring-at-five-updates-on-tunisia-egypt-and-turkey-pub-62836>.

<sup>63</sup> Bilge Nesibe Kotan, 'An Overview of Turkish-Egyptian Relations Since the Arab Uprising,' TRT World, 27 November 2017, <https://cutt.ly/fg7zdJY>.

<sup>64</sup> Orhan Cokun, 'Turkish PM Says Troops 30 Km Inside Iraq, Could Move on Kurdish Stronghold,' Reuters, 8 June 2018, <https://cutt.ly/Ig7zD7k>. Tim Arango, Michael R. Gordon, 'Turkey's Push to Join Battle for Mosul Inflames Tension With Iraq,' The New York Times, 23 October 2016, <https://cutt.ly/jg7zxpK>, Ari Khalidi, 'Erdogan Invokes Document That Claims Mosul as Kurdish Soil,' Kurdistan 24, 17 October 2016, <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/1e9e370c-0585-4aaf-b6dd-ebccb92ca93f/Erdogan-invokes-document-that-claims-Mosul-as-Turkish-soil>.



Erdogan's views of the future of the Eastern Mediterranean are rooted in Ahmet Davutoğlu's revisionist ideas of a Turkish revival with the regional and global power projection of the old Ottoman state at its prime.<sup>65</sup> To this end, Erdogan's Turkey has focused upon a new military build-up, with an emphasis on maritime forces that can carry modern Turkish influence to the far corners of its former imperial domains. Turkey's bid to free itself from what it sees as the constraints of the U.S., and the Western alliance, has led it to join forces, albeit opportunistically, with Russian and Iran. Its new strategic objectives are to reach for the energy resources in the Kurdish populated areas of Iraq and Syria, and at the same time, thwart any efforts for the establishment of a Kurdish state. Turkish support of the anti-Assad forces in Syria is not motivated by any love of democratic principles, but rather stems from the desire to participate in the carve-up of a post-Assad Syria. The same motivations drive its behavior in Iraqi Kurdistan where Turkey seeks to eventually replace Iraqi dominance. Similarly Turkish involvement in the collapse of the Kaddafi regime in Libya, and Erdogan's support of the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt had little to do with the promotion of democratic ideals, and everything to do with the projection of Turkish power and influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, and its access to and control of energy resources.

As far as the Eastern Mediterranean region is concerned, Erdogan would, therefore, like to promote the kind of authoritarian illiberal democracy that he has constructed for himself in his own country. Added to this illiberal democratic constructivism are the contributions of Putin's Russia, and the Islamic Republic of Iran. At the same time, the West is opting for a pragmatic foreign policy for the region, supporting friendly illiberal and often tyrannical regimes. By refraining to support liberal democratic principles, the West tolerates, and makes economically possible, the unrestrained promotion of theocratic agendas with a distinct anti-Western and anti-democratic character.

### **Resurgence of Russian Power in the Eastern Mediterranean**

During the Cold War, the Middle East constituted one of the theaters of Soviet-American rivalry and the Soviet Union had an established presence in the region. The immediate post-Soviet Union period saw the newly-founded Russian Federation's retreat and the unchallenged regional dominance of the U.S. This state of affairs, however, seems to be coming to an end, as Russia has re-asserted its role of a major player in the Middle Eastern politics.

The 9/11 attacks and the subsequent War on Terror, which brought about the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq signaled a U.S. foreign policy priority for the region that still persist despite the Obama administration's lukewarm response to the challenges of the Arab Spring. In Syria, Russia has grasped the opportunity to fill a perceived western policy void and re-establish itself in the region in line with Vladimir Putin's objective to regain some of Russia's global status.<sup>66</sup>

In Moscow's perception, the Arab Spring was not a shift towards democratization but a force challenging the regional status quo and bringing about chaos and destabilization. Upon the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War, Russia decided to provide the Assad regime with economic, military and diplomatic support. However, its 2015 military intervention in Syria became a real game changer, turning the tables on the Syrian opposition, saving the Syrian regime from losing

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<sup>65</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*, Küre Yayınları, 2001.

<sup>66</sup> Dmitri Trenin, 'Russia in the Middle East: Moscow's Objectives, Priorities and Policy Drivers,' Task Force White Paper, Carnegie Moscow Center, 5 April 2016, <http://carnegie.ru/2016/04/05/russia-in-middle-east-moscow-s-objectives-priorities-and-policy-drivers-pub-63244>.

the war and bringing the conflict to an endgame that will most likely allow Assad to remain in power. The intervention has raised Russia's regional profile, allowing it to gain permanent foothold in Syria, position itself as a major regional player, and challenge the U.S., and NATO's, military supremacy in the region.<sup>67</sup>

Another way for Russia to reassert itself in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean has been its attempt to capitalize on the rifts between the U.S. and its long-standing allies, in particular Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Israel.<sup>68</sup> It has used its nuclear technology, as well as its energy and arms deals, to boost its influence in the region.<sup>69</sup> By skillfully maneuvering through the complexities of the Middle Eastern geopolitics, Russia has managed to establish good working relations with all major regimes of the region in an attempt to position itself as a power broker and a viable alternative to the U.S.'s regional dominance, which is perceived by many to be waning. Void of ideological underpinnings, Moscow's Middle Eastern policy is driven by pragmatism and self-interest: "All Moscow's alignments are situational or conditional, serving primarily Russia's regional interests or its larger world-order goals."<sup>70</sup>

### **China's Economic Neo-Imperialism**

For many years, the Middle Eastern region was considered peripheral to Chinese foreign policy. China's interest in the region started growing in the 1990s and in the recent years its involvement in the region, through trade and investment, research and innovation, and energy has reached unprecedented levels.

China is a net oil importer, and since 2017 the largest oil importer in the world, with half of its supplies coming from the Middle East.<sup>71</sup> In China's first Arab Policy Paper published in 2016, the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibidem; Alina Polyakova, 'Russia Is a Great Power Once Again,' The Atlantic, 26 February 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/02/russia-syria-putin-assad-trump-isis-ghouta/554270/>.

In October 2016 Russia confirmed deployment of S-300 and S-400 air defence systems to Syria, while in December 2017 it signed a deal with Damascus for the expansion of its naval facility in Tartus and air base in Hmeimim establishing foundations for its permanent military presence in Syria. Moscow's increased projection of power has raised concerns in the West that Russia is attempting to establish an A2/AD (Anti-Access/Area Denial) capabilities in the Eastern Mediterranean. "S-300, S-400 Air Defenses in Place": Russian MoD Warns US-led Coalition Not to Strike Syrian Army,' Russia Today, 6 October 2016, <https://www.rt.com/news/361800-russia-syria-usa-aistrikes/>.

<sup>68</sup> Carlotta Gall, Andrew Higgins, 'Turkey Signs Russian Missile Deal, Pivoting From NATO,' The New York Times, 12 September 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/12/world/europe/turkey-russia-missile-deal.html>  
Boris Zilberman, Romany Shaker, 'Russia and Egypt Are Growing Closer,' The American Interest, 6 June 2018, <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/06/06/russia-and-egypt-are-growing-closer/>.  
Patrick Wintour, 'Saudi King's Visit to Russia Heralds Shift in Global Power Structures,' The Guardian, 5 October 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/05/saudi-russia-visit-putin-oil-middle-east>.  
Seth J. Frantzman, 'Despite Syria, Israel-Russia Relations Are the Warmest in History,' The Jerusalem Post, 25 March 2017, <https://cutt.ly/1g7z3AQ>.

<sup>69</sup> Matthew Cottey, Hassan Elbahtimy, 'Russia's Nuclear Ambitions in the Middle East,' Foreign Affairs, 20 May 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2016-05-20/russias-nuclear-ambitions-middle-east>.  
Nicholas Trickett, 'Why Putin's Oil Maneuvers Will Keep Russia in the Middle East,' The Washington Post, 5 April 2018, <https://cutt.ly/vg7zXmj>.  
Anna Borshchevskaya, 'The Tactical Side of Russia's Arms Sales to the Middle East,' Policy Analysis, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, December 2017, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-tactical-side-of-russias-arms-sales-to-the-middle-east>.

<sup>70</sup> Trenin, 'Russia in the Middle East....'

<sup>71</sup> EIA, 'China Surpassed the United States as the World's Largest Crude Oil Importer in 2017,' U.S. Energy Information Administration, 5 February 2018, <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=34812>.



region was indicated as a transit route for the proposed land and maritime corridors of China's Belt and Road initiative launched in 2013. The initiative's framework, dubbed "1+2+3", places energy as the "core" of cooperation; infrastructure, and trade and investment facilitation as the "two wings"; and nuclear energy, space and clean energy as the "three breakthroughs".<sup>72</sup> Billions of dollars-worth of investment agreements connected to energy, infrastructure and technology have been recently signed between the Chinese government and the Gulf countries.<sup>73</sup> Closer to the Mediterranean, China has expanded its economic presence in Egypt, where it has become the largest Suez Canal investor, among other projects.<sup>74</sup> In 2016 it acquired 51 % stake in the Port of Piraeus, Greece's largest port.<sup>75</sup> In Israel, China accounts for one-third of all high-tech investments, in addition to a rapidly growing cooperation in infrastructure, education and tourism.<sup>76</sup>

China's vast infrastructure projects are financed through the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) – a China-led multilateral development bank launched in 2013. The AIIB is perceived as a rival institution to the western-dominated international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and hence to the economic order tied to the promotion of liberal democratic worldview.

### **Iranian Expansionism**

The expansion of Iran's influence in the region has taken two major forms: alliances with like-minded states as well as support for regional non-state actors. Regional developments of the recent decades, in particular the Iraq War and the Arab Spring, have enabled the Iran's to advance its presence in the Eastern Mediterranean region and strengthen its foothold in Lebanon, Iraq and Syria.<sup>77</sup> Despite pan-Islamic ideals propagated by the Iran's leaders, these alliances have acquired an increasingly sectarian, namely Shiite, character that forms part of the Shia Crescent.

The 2003 invasion of Iraq and the following overthrow of Saddam Hussein regime created

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EIA, 'China,' U.S. Energy Information Administration, 14 May 2015, p. 12, <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=34812>.

<sup>72</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 'China's Arab Policy Paper,' 13 January 2016, [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1331683.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1331683.shtml).

<sup>73</sup> Ben Blanchard, 'China, Saudi Arabia Eye \$65 Billion in Deals as King Visits,' Reuters, 16 March 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-asia-china/china-saudi-arabia-eye-65-billion-in-deals-as-king-visits-idUSKBN16N0G9>.

Stanley Carvalho, 'Xi's Visit to UAE Highlights China's Rising Interest in Middle East,' Reuters, 20 July 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-uae-china/xi-visit-to-uae-highlights-chinas-rising-interest-in-middle-east-idUSKBN1KA26K>.

<sup>74</sup> 'China Now Biggest Investor in Suez,' China Daily, 23 March 2017, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2017-03/23/content\\_28648386.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2017-03/23/content_28648386.htm).

'Al-Sisi in China to Boost Investments Cooperation,' Daily News Egypt, 1 September 2018, <https://dailynewsegypt.com/2018/09/01/al-sisi-in-china-to-boost-investments-cooperation/>.

<sup>75</sup> George Georgiopoulos, 'China's Cosco Acquires 51 Pct Stake in Greece's Piraeus Port,' Reuters, 10 August 2016, <https://cutt.ly/Fg7xpjg>.

<sup>76</sup> Elliott Abrams, 'What's Behind Israel's Growing Ties With China?' Expert Brief, Council on Foreign Relations, 21 June 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/expert-brief/whats-behind-israels-growing-ties-china>.

<sup>77</sup> Suzanne Maloney, 'How the Iraq War Has Empowered Iran,' Op-ed, The Brookings Institution, 21 March 2008, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/how-the-iraq-war-has-empowered-iran/>.

Benjamin Miller, '4 Middle East Events That Helped Expand Iran's Influence,' The National Interest, 10 December 2017, <https://cutt.ly/Ig7xeEE>.

instability and power vacuum in a state that had been up to that date considered Iran's major regional rival. The collapse of the Sunni-dominated regime and the following political empowerment of the Iraq's Shias allowed Iran to step into Iraq's political game and exert influence on post-2003 Shia-majority governments through various political parties allied with Iran. Simultaneously, the Islamic Republic has been either creating or empowering already existent violent Iraqi militias through financial support, arms supply and training.<sup>78</sup>

The Syrian-Iranian alliance has been a long-standing one, despite ideological discrepancy.<sup>79</sup> Syria is crucial to Iran's regional interests constituting an important element of Iran's "axis of resistance" against the U.S. and Israeli presence in the region, facilitating weapons storage and transfer to Iran's Lebanese and Palestinian proxies and providing training camps for their fighters.<sup>80</sup> Iran has become heavily involved in the Syrian Civil War, providing the regime forces as well as pro-regime militias with intelligence, military advice, training, supplies and personnel through Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) forces and its special forces, also known as the Quds Force.<sup>81</sup> Iran's intention is to maintain a long-term military presence in Syria, potentially including the establishment of military bases.<sup>82</sup>

Since its establishment in the 1980s Iran's main regional proxy Hezbollah has managed to transform itself from an anti-Israeli guerilla group into one of the most significant political movement and social welfare provider in Lebanon supported by a powerful military wing. Its military capability allegedly exceeds that of the Lebanese Arms Forces, and includes 20.000 combatants and up to 150.000 short, medium and long-range rockets and missiles.<sup>83</sup> Similarly to Iran, Hezbollah has been aiding the Assad regime to stay in power, and the organization's involvement in the Syrian war, which has become the largest military operation in its history, has elevated its status from a local terrorist organization to a major regional power.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Michael Eisenstadt, Michael Knights, and Ahmed Ali, 'Iran's Influence in Iraq: Countering Tehran's Whole-of-Government Approach,' Policy Focus No. 111, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, April 2011, pp. 3-6, 8-9, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus111.pdf>; Alireza Nader, 'Iran's Role in Iraq: Room for U.S.-Iran Cooperation?' Perspectives, Rand Corporation, 2015, pp. 5-7, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE151.html>.

<sup>79</sup> While Iran is an Islamic theocracy, the regime of Bashar Al Assad is founded on secularist Baat'hist ideology, despite being dominated by the Alawite Shia sect.

<sup>80</sup> Nadav Pollak, 'The Transformation of Hezbollah by Its Involvement in Syria,' Research Notes No. 35, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, August 2016, p. 2, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/ResearchNote35-Pollak-2.pdf>.

<sup>81</sup> Will Fulton, Joseph Holliday, and Sam Wyer, 'Iranian Strategy in Syria,' Institute for the Study of War, 1 May 2013, pp. 10-21.

<sup>82</sup> Al-Monitor Staff, 'Assad Says He's Open to Establishing Iranian Bases in Syria,' Al-Monitor, 14 June 2018, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/06/iran-syria-president-assad-alalam-interview-military-bases.html>.

Bozorgmehr Sharafedin, Dan Williams, Gareth Jones and Peter Graff, 'Iran Says to Maintain Military Presence in Syria Despite U.S. Pressure,' Reuters, 8 August 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-iran/iran-says-to-maintain-military-presence-in-syria-despite-u-s-pressure-idUSKCN1LD1JQ>.

<sup>83</sup> Nicholas Blanford, 'Hezbollah's Evolution: From Lebanese Militia to Regional Player,' Policy Paper No. 4, Middle East Institute, November 2017, p. 6, [https://www.mei.edu/files/publications/PP4\\_Blanford\\_Hezbollah.pdf](https://www.mei.edu/files/publications/PP4_Blanford_Hezbollah.pdf).

John T. Huddy, 'Rockets, Missiles and More: Predicting the Third Lebanon War,' The Jerusalem Post, 9 February 2018, <https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Rockets-missiles-and-more-Predicting-the-third-Lebanon-war-542171>

<sup>84</sup> Blanford, 'Hezbollah's Evolution,' p. 7.

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## REPORT

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November 2018

### Cypriot Liberal Democracy and its Challenges

#### Post-Colonialism in a Cold War Perspective

In 1960, Cyprus became a field experiment for power-sharing in the Eastern Mediterranean. In less than three years, the experiment failed leading to inter-communal violence, and ultimately to foreign invasion, ethnic cleansing, and occupation of a large part of the Island that has lasted for more than forty years. Nevertheless, since 1977 all UN proposals for the settlement of the Cyprus problem have rested upon the concept of power sharing in the form of a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation.<sup>1</sup>

After hundreds of years of Ottoman rule, decades of British colonialism, and four years of anti-colonial struggle for self-determination, Cyprus became an independent in 1960 as a result of the international Zurich-London Agreements between the UK, Greece and Turkey. Prior to the Agreements, the Greek Cypriots had repeatedly expressed their willingness to unite the island with Greece without success.

The 1960 Cyprus Constitution, a unique example of complexity, incorporated several expressed objectives and one unstated driving purpose. The objectives had to do with addressing the inter-communal dispute that was defined as a central element of the Cyprus problem. The constitution, and the treaties that were an integral part of it, however, served deeper geopolitical and geostrategic needs of the West in the context of the Cold War. After the traumatic experience of the Suez operation of 1956, Britain found itself at odds with U.S. decolonization policies. There was a conscious decision by the British, at the start of the Cyprus liberation struggle in 1956, to try to solicit U.S. assistance for its Eastern Mediterranean and Middle Eastern policies. The British, therefore, decided to redefine the Cyprus problem from being a decolonization dispute that was losing Britain the sympathy of the post-World War II world opinion, to a Cold War problem that put Britain at the front line of Western defense. The contemporary events in Cuba

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus of the Republic of Cyprus, 'High-Level Agreement of 12 February 1977,' [http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2016.nsf/FB80B3D87DE5A915C2257F95002BE30E/\\$file/High%20-%20Level%20Agreement%20-%2012%20February%201977.pdf](http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2016.nsf/FB80B3D87DE5A915C2257F95002BE30E/$file/High%20-%20Level%20Agreement%20-%2012%20February%201977.pdf)

provided the blue print of a possible loss of Cyprus to Soviet power. The result of this British ploy was full U.S. support for a post-colonial Cyprus regime that would ensure that the Soviets could not be able to attain a foothold in Cyprus. The British had craftily cast the Greek Cypriots in the role of the Cubans with archbishop Makarios serving as a Castro-type “Red Pope”. Greek Cypriots pro-Soviet proclivities were alleged on the basis of the existence of a powerful communist party which the British themselves had nurtured for their own security purposes since its establishment in the early 1920s.<sup>2</sup>

The Western policy on Cyprus which was born in the early 1960s continues to this day and involves the prevention of the Greek Cypriots from turning Cyprus into a base for former Soviet, and current Russian, power in the Eastern Mediterranean. Under the London and Zurich Agreements this was to be accomplished by a constitutional regime that would effectively contain Greek Cypriot freedom of action and abort any eastern tilts that could result from the frustration of their dreams of union with Greece. Turkish irredentism was employed, in the guise of support for a Turkish-Cypriot minority.<sup>3</sup>

This driving purpose determined the nature of the Cyprus power-sharing arrangement, and was embedded in several constitutional provisions that could never be changed. It granted Turkish-Cypriot super-privileges that the Greek-Cypriots were not ready to graciously accept, and the Turkish-Cypriots were not ready to sparingly exercise accommodation and compromise, which was necessary for a successful consociational power-sharing regime. That regime, however, was accepted by all outside powers with interests over Cyprus’ future developments, viewing the difficulties and the ambiguities of the constitution as providing the best service for their own interests.

The structure of the regime exacerbated the inter-ethnic cleavages that served Turkish interests, but also as far as the Greek community was concerned led to intra-ethnic fractions that were exploited by foreign powers to serve their Cold War interests. After the 1964 collapse of the power sharing aspect of the Cyprus state, international efforts were initiated to contain the Republic of Cyprus, and guide the parties back to the London-Zurich arrangement. Tacit acceptance of the 1974 Turkish invasion, and its continuing aftermath as well as all efforts since then to “reunify” the island under a new power-sharing regime, can best be understood in this context.

## Power-Sharing

Power-sharing has been seen as a tool for conflict-management in societies deeply divided along religious, ethnic or other lines. The concept involves complex government mechanisms, a technocratic rather than an ideological approach, and relies on political practices that involve accommodation and compromise. The theory was developed in a specific cultural and political context, which makes its successful application questionable in different settings. Power-sharing requires an environment of cooperation and trust, a shared vision of a common future and a

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<sup>2</sup> For the analysis of documents related the Cyprus problem drawn from the National Archives of Great Britain, see William Mallinson, *Britain and Cyprus: Key Themes and Documents Since World War II*, I.B. Tauris, 2011, pp. 87-121; see also Laurance M. Stern, *The Wrong Horse - The Politics of Intervention and the Failure of American Diplomacy*, Times Books, 1977; George W. Ball, ‘Cyprus,’ *The Past Has Another Pattern: Memoirs* W.W. Norton & Company, 1983, pp. 337-359; Brendan O’Malley, Ian Craig, *The Cyprus Conspiracy: America, Espionage and the Turkish Invasion*, I.B. Tauris, 1999; Fanoula Argyrou, *Conspiracy or Blunder? The Evolution of a Bizonal Bicomunal Federation in Cyprus*, Adouloti Kyrenia, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, p. 179.

genuine commitment on all sides. The viability of power-sharing also depends on a favorable international environment. External actors are required to play a constructive role in drafting and implanting power-sharing agreements, and in constructing a post-conflict democratic state.

The formulation of a non-geographic, administrative based power-sharing regime, as applied to Cyprus in 1960, was developed by Gerhard Lembruch, Arend Lijphart, Eric A. Nordlinger, Hans Daalder, and others, became known as consociationalism.<sup>4</sup> Lijphart identified the main elements of consociationalism as: executive power-sharing in a grand elite coalition of representatives of the various ethnic communities; separation and balance between executive and legislative powers; adequate minority representation; a multi-party system; proportional representation; territorial or non-territorial administrative separation and decentralization; and most importantly a minority veto. Lijphart stressed that the entire exercise depends upon a “self-denying hypothesis,” leading elites into a grand coalition.<sup>5</sup>

Consociationalism, therefore, rests on a conscious inter-elite accommodation, a kind of elite cartel that relies upon the electoral system to ensure that no single actor gets an independent mandate. All political actors are forced to seek security in coalition with other groups. Governmental powers must be narrowly circumscribed, with mutual vetoes and concurrent majorities in matters affecting core values. At the same time consociational societies must opt for technocratic rather than ideological approaches to most matters, even those requiring political decisions. The problem is that such politics of bargaining behind closed doors reduces the importance of elections and the accountability of political leaders, and presupposes a rather passive electorate.<sup>6</sup>

Some scholars question the viability of power-sharing in divided societies when applied after intense civil strife. Empowerment of disruptive leader’s power-sharing deadlocks and general governmental inefficiency, inflexibility and inadaptability are some of the challenges of a consociational model. A culture of accommodation and compromise, sincere commitment to power-sharing strong and effective state structures, economic prosperity and equality, stable demographics, as well as a stable international environment and constructive role of external actors are indispensable conditions for the viability of a power-sharing model. Such conditions are, however, absent in the societies emerging from violent conflicts.<sup>7</sup>

Another important drawback is that consociationalism reinforces group identities, and divisions preventing development of a common national identity. Such sectarianism often fosters

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<sup>4</sup> Gerhard Lembruch, ‘A Non-Competitive Pattern of Conflict Management in Liberal Democracies: The Case of Switzerland, Austria and Lebanon,’ *Consociational Democracy: Political Accommodation in Segmented Societies*, Kenneth D. McRae (Ed.), McClelland and Stewart, 1974, pp. 90-97; Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*, Yale University Press, 1977; Arend Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands*, University of California Press, 1968; Arend Lijphart, ‘Typologies of Democratic Systems,’ *Comparative Political Studies* Vol. 1, No. 1, 1968, pp. 3-44; A. Nordlinger, ‘Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies,’ Occasional Papers No. 29, Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1972; Hans Daalder, ‘The Consociational Democracy Theme,’ *World Politics*, Vol 26, No. 4, 1974, pp. 604-621.

<sup>5</sup> Arend Lijphart, ‘The Belgian Example of Cultural Coexistence in Comparative Perspective,’ *Conflict and Coexistence in Belgium: The Dynamics of a Culturally Divided Society*, Arend Lijphart (Ed.), University of California, 1981, pp. 1-13.

<sup>6</sup> Daalder, ‘The Consociational Democracy Theme,’ pp. 607-609.

<sup>7</sup> Donald Rothchild and Philip G Roeder, ‘Power Sharing as an Impediment to Peace and Democracy,’ in *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy After Civil Wars*, Philip G. Roeder, Donald Rodichild (Ed.), Cornell University Press, 2005, pp. 29-50.

patronage and clientelism. Moreover, communal autonomy of religious sects grants them authority over personal status laws covering matters of marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance, therefore, undermining civil rights of individuals. Such sectarianism creates parallel societies. An example of such power sharing problems is Lebanon, a country which is perpetually failing, but never quite fails, and that has often come dangerously close to civil war.<sup>8</sup> Consociational theories also fail to take into account the transnational nature of religious and ethnic allegiances.<sup>9</sup> In the Middle East, religious conflict does not recognize sovereign borders.<sup>10</sup>

The problem with power-sharing, therefore, is one of context. Any system, or structure, by definition is dependent upon accommodation, compromise and above all tolerance of another's point of view be it political or religious. On the same token a system becomes extremely vulnerable if it is applied in an environment that lacks these characteristics. Disagreements quickly turn into conflicts unless there are mechanisms for dispute resolutions that are allowed to function properly. Yet, in an environment of mistrust where ulterior motives and hidden agendas of both local and foreign actors determine political behavior, no dispute resolving mechanism – no matter how ingenious – will be able to avert conflict, and ultimate systemic breakdown.

Without dismissing the responsibility of both sides of the Cyprus ethnic and religious divide, one cannot avoid blaming the vulnerable constitutional mechanisms built into the system, which were used to accommodate both domestic and foreign divisive agendas. Geographical division, whether pre-existing or as a consequence of a post-conflict power sharing agreement, is often an issue of great importance. Concerns over ultimate secession of a geographically defined community may easily become a source of violent conflict. Separation of powers in the context of a unitary state or a federal or confederate system, are issues that require tolerance, compromise and accommodation. The absence of such ingredients, especially when compounded by the presence of outside factors, irredentist, revanchist, or expansionist agendas, does not bid well for the success of a power sharing regime.

The initial challenges to Cyprus liberal democracy were related to the power sharing character, and from the international, and regional context in which it has been applied. The lesson to be drawn from the Cyprus experience is that liberal democratic values are diluted, or even qualified, only at the risk of destroying the delicate balances that define liberal democracy itself. The efforts to implement power sharing during the years 1960-1963 failed, causing a violent inter-ethnic conflict. Intense involvement by Greece and Turkey over the Cyprus dispute caused deep concerns for Western security in the Eastern Mediterranean. An attempt to topple the Republic

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<sup>8</sup> Habib Malik, 'The Future Cyprus Settlement: Lessons from Lebanon,' European Rim Policy and Investment Council, 28 September 2015,

<https://erpip.org/portfolio-post/the-future-cyprus-settlement-lessons-from-lebanon-interview-with-associate-professor-habib-malik-september-24-2015/>.

Makdisi, Samir Makdisi and Marcus Marktanner, 'Trapped by Consociationalism: The Case of Lebanon,' *Topics in Middle Eastern and North African Economies*, Vol. 11, 2009,

<https://ecommons.luc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1118&context=meea>.

<sup>9</sup> Marisa Sullivan, 'Hezbollah in Syria,' *Middle East Security Report*, Vol. 19. Institute for the Study of War, April 2014; Raphaël Lefèvre, 'The Roots of Crisis in Northern Lebanon,' Research Report, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 2014, [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/crisis\\_northern\\_lebanon.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/crisis_northern_lebanon.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Sally Nelson, 'Is Lebanon's Confessional System Sustainable?' *Journal of Politics and International Studies*, Vol. 9, 2013, p. 364.

of Cyprus in 1974 by the junta in Greece was followed by a Turkish invasion that occupied and ethnically cleansed 37% of the northern part of the island from its Greek inhabitants, and at the same time orchestrated the migration of Turkish Cypriots from their southern homes to the north.

Despite this traumatic experience, the Republic of Cyprus continued to function, retaining its internationally recognized status.<sup>11</sup> Over the next four decades the Republic of Cyprus developed into a pluralist, liberal, democratic state incorporating the values, principles, regulations and practices of the European Union, whose full member it became in 2004. Its population today is multicultural, with guaranteed freedoms for a variety of ethnic and religious groups.

Nevertheless, the constitutional model of bi-communal power sharing continues to be the formula for the Cyprus reunification efforts, supported by all the main parties of the dispute. The problem with this formula, however, is that while it grants a privileged minority status to Turkish Cypriots, it disregards other minorities and ignores the diversity of the Cypriot population. It leads to discrimination of those citizens of Cyprus that identify themselves as neither Greek Orthodox, nor Turkish Muslim. This refers not only to the constitutionally recognized religious groups, namely the Latins, the Armenians and the Maronites, but also to many other national, ethnic and religious minorities such as Roma, Jews, and many expatriates from Europe, Middle East, and Asia.<sup>12</sup>

The 1960 Constitution, which is still in force in the Republic of Cyprus, defines the “Greek Community” as citizens of Greek origin and Greek-Orthodox faith or who share the Greek cultural traditions and whose mother tongue is Greek, and the “Turkish Community” as citizens of Turkish origin and Muslim faith or who share the Turkish cultural traditions and whose mother tongue is Turkish. The Constitution requires citizens who are excluded from these definitions to choose to belong to either of the two communities, either individually, or collectively as members of one of the recognized religious groups, namely the Maronites, the Armenians and the Latins. Therefore, being a Cypriot citizen means that one is coerced to endorse one of the two constitutionally recognized identities defined along ethno-religious lines, which amounts to a form of institutional discrimination and cultural assimilation. This leads to the “paradox of consociationalism”, where commitment to cultural heterogeneity at the national level enforces homogeneity at the subnational level.<sup>13</sup>

Similar to other countries of the region, Cyprus has yet to rid itself of its Ottoman past. The historical roots of bi-communalism in Cyprus can be traced back to the *millet* system. It resembles in some aspects the “Islamic bi-compartmentalization”, which foresees classification of territories into those which are ruled by Islam, and those where Islam has not established itself yet.<sup>14</sup> It gives legitimacy to the Islamist worldview which maintains that Western and

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<sup>11</sup> UN Security Council, “Security Council Resolution 367 (1975) [The Situation in Cyprus],’ 12 March 1975, S/RES/367, <https://undocs.org/S/RES/367>; UN Security Council, ‘Security Council Resolution 541 (1983),’ 18 November 1983, S/RES/541, 1983, [https://undocs.org/S/RES/541\(1983\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/541(1983)).

<sup>12</sup> Andrekos Varnava, ‘The State of Minorities in Cyprus: Cultural Diversity, Internal-Exclusion and the Cyprus ‘Problem’, essay presented at the Tenth International Conference on Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations, Queen’s University Belfast, 12-21 July 2010; Costas M. Constantinou, ‘Aporias of Identity: Bi-communalism, Hybridity and the ‘Cyprus Problem,’ *Cooperation and Conflict*, September 1, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Costas M. Constantinou, ‘Aporias of Identity...,’ p. 247.

<sup>14</sup> Ahmet Davutoglu, the former Prime Minister of Turkey argued that Islam and the West represent two contrasting, irreconcilable and competing worldviews, stemming from fundamentally different philosophical,



Islamic civilizations are at odds with each other, while liberal democracy with its central tenet of empowerment of an individual is inherently incompatible with Islam. It is in line with Islamist segregationist tactic applied elsewhere to create parallel societies where Muslims would be isolated and prevented from integrating into the non-Muslim society which flies in the face of modern, liberal pluralist society. It creates favorable conditions for introducing legal pluralism under which citizens would not be equal before the law and some would be exposed to discrimination in the name of religious freedom

In such conditions, the development of a common Cypriot civic identity, built around a shared citizenship that would bridge ethno-religious loyalties will be impossible. In addition, it may yet again make the Republic of Cyprus prone to unwelcomed external interference, this time in the form of transnational Islamic fundamentalism. The anachronistic and illiberal model of communalism is clearly inapplicable to a diverse, multicultural society of Cyprus.<sup>15</sup>

Over the last 40 years, Cypriot democracy has developed in the absence of power sharing. Any efforts to re-establish a power sharing regime should be accompanied by serious efforts to ensure that all the pre-conditions for power sharing exist and/or are put in the place, and that conflict avoidance, and consensus building mechanisms, and institutions, do not operate at the cost of liberal democratic values and principles.

### Political Corruption and the Failure of Liberal Democratic Values

Definitions of the term corruption include “dishonest or illegal behavior by officials or people in positions of power,”<sup>16</sup> “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain,”<sup>17</sup> “the action or effect of making someone or something morally depraved”<sup>18</sup>, “a process that falsifies the essence of something”, or more generally “a process of decay”<sup>19</sup>.

In a social context corruption refers to the falsification, abuse, manipulation and subversion of values, and principles that form the fabric of society. It is a deviation from the deeper sense of natural morality, and the understanding of right and wrong. It often expresses itself through the exercise of undue influence in the public decision-making process in return for monetary or other benefits. The motivations for corruption are related to human weaknesses, and human

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methodological and theoretical backgrounds. Such contrasting worldviews have been translated into alternative political cultures, different socio-political systems with differing approaches to the legitimacy of political authority, the idea of pluralism, and, lastly, the concept of universality expressed by the separation between *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-Harb*. 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”). The essence of Davutoglou’s alternative paradigm is that there is a legitimate non-Western, non-liberal democratic path to national and state growth, good government, economic prosperity, and even modernity. Ahmet Davutoglu, *Alternative Paradigms. The impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory*, University Press of America, 1994.

<sup>15</sup> As of 2016, foreign residents constituted close to 16% of the island’s overall population. Statistical Service, ‘Demographic Report,’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus, 2016, [http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/All/6C25304C1E70C304C2257833003432B3/\\$file/DEMOGRAP\\_HIC\\_REPORT-2016-271117.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/All/6C25304C1E70C304C2257833003432B3/$file/DEMOGRAP_HIC_REPORT-2016-271117.pdf?OpenElement)

<sup>16</sup> ‘Corruption,’ def. 1, Macmillan Dictionary, [https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/corruption#corruption\\_1](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/corruption#corruption_1)

<sup>17</sup> ‘What is Corruption?’ Transparency International, <https://www.transparency.org/what-is-corruption#define>

<sup>18</sup> ‘Corruption,’ def. 1.1, Oxford Living Dictionaries, [see: https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/corruption](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/corruption)

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem, def. 3.



desires, and are also related to a natural cycle of creation, and ultimate destruction that characterizes most human enterprises.

Corruption can be on a grand scale, at the highest level of government, or at a petty everyday interaction between low and mid-level public servants and citizens.<sup>20</sup> Political corruption therefore involves the abuse of power, and has a detrimental effect on society and the moral, political and legal rules that keep it functioning effectively.<sup>21</sup>

Sources of corruption in liberal democratic regimes are related to the internal problems of liberal democratic systems: namely, the failings of the legal and constitutional order, and are often amplified by the historical behavioral patterns of the society. The historical experiences of a society that gave rise to its political culture determine social susceptibility to, or acceptance and tolerance of corruption in the first place. Such local tendencies, however, are often compounded by foreign political and economic agendas.

In Cyprus, corruption is clearly related to the country's historical experiences. The presence of an abusive and highly exploitative Ottoman tax and administration system, for the better part of 300 years, instilled a deep social need to subvert the system. Especially, by the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire who were the target of exorbitant taxes, and who quickly learnt that even the smallest government benefit bore a high price commanded by corrupt officials. Almost 100 years of British colonial rule did a lot to change the "bribery – based" Ottoman social order, introducing the concept of a professional civil service, and a legal system dedicated to the rule of law. The application of English law, albeit serving British colonial interest, was still a far cry from the dehumanizing Ottoman experience.

British colonial rule, in turn, gave way to the power sharing constitutional experiment of 1960, which was meant to reconcile the ethnic and religious conflict that the British left behind between the main Cypriot communities so enabling them to live in peace. For the first time since the Persian conquest of the Island Cypriots, free from colonial rule, were left to navigate the treacherous waters of the modern world. A world that had just emerged from the tragedy of the Second World War plunged into the ideological and geopolitical conflict of the Cold War. Henceforth, the internal stresses, strains of an untested governing system, social habits, traditions and experiences of a population whose centuries-old suffering had become part of its collective personality, encountered a new type of foreign domination of its domestic affairs.

Over the next half century systemic inefficiencies, social inequities, human weaknesses and excesses, were compounded by a series of political, military and economic disasters that shook public confidence in the country's institutions, and undermined national and personal pride. The near collapse of the Republic in 1964, the Turkish invasion, and geographical division of the Island in 1974, the waves of homeless destitute refugees of the invasions' aftermath, a stock-market meltdown in 2003, followed by a collapse of the banking system in 2013, only confirmed to a desperate and struggling population the absence of fairness, and even morality, from a system that was at the mercy of forces beyond their control. However, other than the occasional expression of fatalistic despair, they conveniently ignored their own degree of

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<sup>20</sup> 'How Do You Define Corruption?' Transparency International, <https://www.transparency.org/what-is-corruption#define>

<sup>21</sup> Joseph Nye, 'Corruption and Political Development: A Cost-Benefit Analysis,' *Political Corruption: A Handbook*, Arnold J. Heidenheimer, Michael Johnston and Victor T. LeVine (Eds.), Transaction Publishers, 1989, p. 966.

responsibility in allowing this to come to pass.

The pride of a people that won a social contract with their Sovereign has been absent, and for whom the rule of law was a reflection of their belief in themselves, and the system they built to govern their lives. This was a society that had to rely once more on traditional kinship methods of social and economic survival, and their modern expressions of nepotism and clientelism. Corruption, therefore, gradually found fertile ground in a broad spectrum of social, political and economic activities, involving state and municipal government and its links with private enterprise. Political parties entered the fray, institutionalizing corruption, rendering it acceptable, and even expected.

One interesting observation is relevant for the period 2003 – 2015. During this time, the citizens of the Republic, particularly the Greek Cypriot community, came under intense pressure to agree to abandon the Republic of Cyprus in favor of a new constitutional power-sharing order that ostensibly reunited the Island. Setting aside the merits of the new proposed regime, this greatly depressed the general morale of the population, and created doubts as to the ability of the Republic to satisfy basic needs of security and long-term welfare. It also brought to mind all the smaller failings, as well as the economic and social inequities that were now blamed upon the system with renewed vigor. It was as if the citizens themselves were trying to justify their abandonment of the Republic, and all it stood for, by focusing on its shortcomings. At the same time the external threats, especially those emanating from Turkey, further emphasized the inadequacies of the State and undermined its sovereignty, international legitimacy and standing, especially in the minds of its own citizens.

Studies measuring the degree of actual and perceived corruption in the Republic of Cyprus have rendered alarming findings. Cyprus has been consistently ranking among the countries with the highest corruption perception in the EU. According to a 2017 survey, 94% respondents believed corruption was a widespread problem in Cyprus.<sup>22</sup> Half of those polled stating it affected them personally.<sup>23</sup> Nearly nine in ten Cypriots surveyed believing that corruption existed in public institutions at national and local levels,<sup>24</sup> and nine in ten agreed that public services were easiest obtained through bribery and the use of connections – the highest such perception in the EU.<sup>25</sup>

Despite adopting a number of measures aimed at tackling corruption in Cyprus, the anti-corruption legal framework that exists for this purpose remains insufficient. For example, lobbying regulations in Cyprus have not been implemented yet, placing it among the European countries with the lowest ranks of transparent and ethical lobbying, leaving decision-makers prone to unwarranted influence.<sup>26</sup> Public consultation and participation in decision-making is also very low.<sup>27</sup> Regulations regarding assets disclosure by public officials remain inadequate.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> European Commission (EC), 'Special Eurobarometer 470: Corruption,' Report, October 2017, p. 17.

The rates for the previous polls were as follows: 93% in 2005, 90% in 2007, 94% in 2009, 97% in 2011, 78% in 2013, 94%.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 26.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>26</sup> Suzanne Mulcahy, 'Lobbying in Europe: Hidden Influence, Privileged Access,' Report, Transparency International, 2015, pp. 27, 39, [https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/lobbying\\_in\\_europe](https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/lobbying_in_europe)

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, p. 49.

In addition, no freedom of information law exists in Cyprus posing a further challenge to transparency.

Banking over-regulation, especially after the banking collapse of February 2013 turned the Cyprus banking system from a laissez-faire, intensely competitive system, into a restricted, cumbersome, exploitative, money-lending operation. By cutting off the flow of credit rather than curing the problems of banking and financial corruption, the new regulatory regime caused more corruption. Long lists of politically exposed persons, and their friends and relatives, had their bad loans excused and new financial facilities approved.<sup>29</sup> High-profile court cases further highlighted the problem of corruption at the high levels of governance.<sup>30</sup>

Political cronyism, where job allocation and promotion in the civil service sector depend on connections or party allegiance, has developed into a particularly insidious form of corruption.<sup>31</sup> Multiple pensions for government jobs held simultaneously have become the hallmark of such government and party cronyism and systemic abuse.<sup>32</sup>

In the Cypriot case, as elsewhere, the citizens' willingness to submit to the rule of law undoubtedly depends on whether or not both the law and its administration are fair. An additional conclusion from the Cyprus experience is that corruption depends upon the way the citizen views his state, his government, his own security under it, and its status in the international community. Given the profound social effects of political corruption, it is necessary to sustain the public's belief in its values, its principles, and the national causes

### **The Long Shadow of Erdogan's Turkey**

Since the invasion of Cyprus in 1974, the Turkish-occupied and internationally-isolated northern territories of the island have been politically and economically dependent on Turkey.<sup>33</sup> Political upheavals in Turkey have not remained without impact in the occupied areas of Cyprus, and repressions against individuals linked to Erdogan's political opponents were indeed extended to

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<sup>28</sup> Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO), 'Corruption Prevention in Respect of Members of Parliament, Judges and Prosecutors. Evaluation Report: Cyprus,' Council of Europe, 27 July 2016, pp. 20-21.

<sup>29</sup> Newsroom Iefimerida.gr, 'Όλη η λίστα της ντροπής: Σε ποιους χάρισαν δάνεια στην Κύπρο,' *Ιεφημερίδα*, 29 March 2013, <https://bit.ly/2OMUwdh>

<sup>30</sup> Elias Hazou, 'Five Guilty in CyTA Scam,' *Cyprus Mail*, 23 December 2014, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2014/12/23/five-guilty-in-cyta-scam/>

Former Staff, 'Erotokritou and Others Found Guilty, Judges Found Defence Witnesses Unconvincing (Updated),' *Cyprus Mail*, 8 February 2017, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2017/02/08/criminal-court-delivering-verdict-rikkos-trial/>.

<sup>31</sup> CM: Our View, 'Our View: Nepotism is the Root Cause of Public-Sector Problems,' *Cyprus Mail*, 24 September 2017, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2017/09/24/view-nepotism-root-cause-public-sector-problems/>

<sup>32</sup> Philippos Mannaris, 'The Cypriot Pension System: Adequacy and Sustainability,' *Cyprus Economic Policy Review*, Vol. 6, Nr. 2, 2012, p. 50, [see: https://ucy.ac.cy/erc/documents/Mannaris\\_49-58-new.pdf](https://ucy.ac.cy/erc/documents/Mannaris_49-58-new.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Ahmet Özyigit, 'The Impact of Aid on the Economy of Northern Cyprus,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 40, Nr. 2, May 2008, pp. 185-187, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-journal-of-middle-east-studies/article/impact-of-aid-on-the-economy-of-northern-cyprus/1CB23AD87811F03B8CA0A532E4657902>

Petros Savvides, 'The Semantics Behind the 'Water of Peace': Strengthening the Dependence of 'TRNC' on Anatolia,' *Eastern Mediterranean Policy Note No. 3*, Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs, 16 February 2016, [https://ceeia.unic.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/EMP\\_N\\_3.pdf](https://ceeia.unic.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/EMP_N_3.pdf)

Direnç Kanol, 'Quality of Democracy in Unrecognized States: Lessons from Northern Cyprus,' *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* Vol. 17, Nr. 3, 2017, pp. 389-402, [see: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14683857.2017.1279257?src=recsys&journalCode=fbss20](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14683857.2017.1279257?src=recsys&journalCode=fbss20)

the north of the island.<sup>34</sup>

Part of Erdogan's power grab in Turkey has been a takeover of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet). The directorate was founded upon the establishment of Turkish Republic as a means for the state to supervise religious affairs of the newly secularized country. Diyanet has been one of the key institutions of modern Turkey, however over the recent years with the AKP's support it has significantly expanded its influence in Turkish public sphere in pursuit of the Islamization agenda which it shares with the Turkish Islamist regime.

Diyanet's outreach extends beyond Turkey's borders. The directorate provides religious services to Turkish and Muslim minorities in Europe, Central Asia, Latin America, and Africa and increasingly in the Middle East. International expansion of the directorate is related to Erdogan's ambitions to become the leader of the global Muslim umma.<sup>35</sup> There has been growing evidence that Erdogan has been using Diyanet to infiltrate and exert an influence on Turkish diaspora in Europe. 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, it began to establish its network of DITIBs (Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği - Turkish Islamic Union of the Directorate for Religious Affairs) - umbrella organizations and mosque associations.<sup>36</sup>

In 2016, following the coup attempt in Turkey, allegations emerged in several European countries that DITIB had been involved in intelligence operations on behalf of Turkey aimed at identifying opponents of Erdogan.<sup>37</sup> These developments have raised serious concerns among European leaders regarding Turkey's influence exerted over the Turkish diaspora. The former German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble warned that Erdogan was undermining the process of Turkish minority's integration into the German society. Indeed, Erdogan has repeatedly warned European citizens of Turkish origin against the dangers of assimilation, calling it "a crime against humanity" and emphasizing the importance of maintaining the connection between the diaspora and the Turkish homeland.<sup>38</sup> The 2017 Turkish constitutional referendum results showed that Erdogan and his authoritarian policies do enjoy a significant support among the

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<sup>34</sup> Staff Reporter, "Three More Arrests in the North With Alleged Gulen Ties," *Cyprus Mail*, 10 August 2017, see: <https://cyprus-mail.com/2017/08/10/three-arrests-north-alleged-gulen-ties/>  
Stockholm Center for Freedom, 'Turkish Court Imposes Jail Sentences on 342 People Over Alleged Links to Gülen Movement,' 25 April 2018, <https://stockholmcf.org/turkish-court-imposes-jail-sentences-on-342-people-over-alleged-links-to-gulen-movement/>

<sup>35</sup> Ceren Lord, 'The Story Behind the Rise of Turkey's Ulema,' *Middle East Research and Information Project*, 4 February 2018, <https://www.merip.org/mero/mero020418>.

<sup>36</sup> Thijl Sunier, Nico Landman, *Transnational Turkish Islam. Shifting Geographies of Religious Activism and Community Building in Turkey and Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p. 50.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Hockenos, 'Erdogan's International Network of Muslim Cleric Spies,' *Foreign Policy*, 27 March 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/03/27/erdogans-international-network-of-muslim-cleric-spies-turkey-germany-gulen-coup/>

Chase Winter, 'Turkish Islamic Organization DITIB Admits Preachers Spied in Germany,' *Deutsche Welle*, 12 January 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/turkish-islamic-organization-ditib-admits-preachers-spied-in-germany/a-37106126>

<sup>38</sup> Harry de Quetteville in Berlin, 'Turkish PM Speaks Out Against Assimilation,' *The Telegraph*, 12 February 2008, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1578451/Turkish-PM-speaks-out-against-assimilation.html>  
Özlem Gezer, Anna Reimann, 'Erdogan Urges Turks Not to Assimilate,' *Spiegel Online*, 28 February 2011, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/erdogan-urges-turks-not-to-assimilate-you-are-part-of-germany-but-also-part-of-our-great-turkey-a-748070.html>

European Turks.<sup>39</sup>

Similar to actions taken in Turkey, the Turkish regime has been applying a policy of Islamization of education system in the occupied part of Cyprus. In 2009 religious education was made compulsory in public schools along the establishment of religious schools and educational institutions, while the number of mosques exceeded that of schools.<sup>40</sup> The newly-constructed on the outskirts of Nicosia massive Hala Sultan mosque is the most vivid symbol of Turkey's attempt to increase religious character of the occupied Cyprus.<sup>41</sup> The Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations warned in a 2017 letter to the Secretary-General that Turkey's policy aimed at changing the demographics of the island has brought thousands of illegal settlers from Anatolia who "consciously or unconsciously assume the role of a catalyst for the advancement and implementation of AKP policies intended to further integrated the Turkish Cypriot community into Turkey and to 'Turkify' the occupied areas of Cyprus, with far reaching repercussions in the Government-controlled areas of the Republic."<sup>42</sup>

In this context, it is of crucial importance to the Republic of Cyprus to carefully consider the future implications and consequences of the proposed settlement to the Cyprus problem based on the division of the Republic's de facto multicultural and pluralist society into two communities defined along ethno-religious lines, with Turkey extending its influence and protectorate over one of those communities.

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<sup>39</sup> TRT World, 'Why Many Turkish Citizens in Europe Rallied Behind the 'Yes' Vote,' 20 April 2017,

<https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/heres-why-many-turkish-citizens-in-europe-rallied-behind-yes-vote-339295>

<sup>40</sup> 'Letter Dated 3 October 2017 From the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General,' Nr. A/72/507-S/2017/831, General Assembly Security Council, 5 October 2017, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N17/311/63/PDF/N1731163.pdf?OpenElement>

Tahsin Eroglu, 'Turkish Cypriot Teachers Complain North Has 'More Mosques than Schools'' Cyprus Mail, 14 June 2017, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2017/06/14/turkish-cypriot-teachers-complain-north-mosques-schools/>

<sup>41</sup> Helena Smith, 'We're Not Muslim Enough' Fear Turkish Cypriots as Poll Looms,' The Guardian, 6 January 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/06/were-not-muslim-enough-fear-turkish-cypriots-as-poll-looms>

<sup>42</sup> 'Letter Dated 3 October 2017.'



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## COMMENTARY\*

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Gary Lakes\*\*

28 November 2018

### Recent Hydrocarbon Developments in Cyprus

By mid-November of this year, the Stena IceMax arrived at the Block 10 drill site which is operated by ExxonMobil. It's an important well and most significant about it will be two wells drilled back-to-back by ExxonMobil. They're expected to take perhaps two to three months to complete. At the end of that Cyprus should have some idea whether or not there is anything significant in Block 10. What I understand, the target is the carbonate strata that most likely extends from the one that runs through the Egyptian waters where the giant Zohr gas field was discovered. Fortunately, the drillship arrived on site without any interference from Turkey so far. Hopefully, it will remain that way. Block 10 is outside the area that Turkey is claiming as its continental shelf. Block 11 is outside of that as well. However, there have been a lot of warnings from Turkey. Turkish president Erdogan has made a number of comments warning Cyprus and the companies involved in the offshore exploration not to explore in what Turks consider Turkish waters and those that the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is claiming as their own territory.

Cyprus was adhering to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea when it drew up its exclusive economic zone (EEZ). And so there have been a number of steps taken by Turkey to basically interfere with that. One is the claim by Turkey to quite a large continental shelf that extends to what it considers to be Egyptian waters. It doesn't recognize the Republic of Cyprus. It doesn't take Cypriot EEZ seriously. Then, also to the eastern side of the island and to the south east of the offshore of the Turkish administration of the north has made some claims and awarded those claims to Turkish Petroleum. So, this follows an incident last January when the Italian company Eni made a discovery which could be a six to eight trillion cubic feet (tcf) at the Calypso well in Block 6, which is to the west of the island. It then sent its drillship, the Saipem 12000, east to the Block 3 to drill another one and it was confronted there by Turkish warships that prevented it from reaching the drill site and also forced Eni to abandon the plan.

Turkey claims the continental shelf extends from the mainland south to the west of the island. These claims overlap with Cypriot blocks 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7. And the Turkish Cypriot administration claims the offshore area north and east of the island, also south and southeast of the island, and these have been licensed, as I said, to TPAO. The claim overlaps with Cyprus's

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Journalist; Director, Energy Program, ERPIC*

Blocks 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 12 and 13. But it doesn't extend as far south as the Aphrodite gas field which is located near the Cypriot, Israeli and Egyptian maritime borders. So, Turks and Turkish Cypriots claim practically everything with the exception of Blocks 10 and 11. Following the statements made by the Turks and the Turkish Cypriots, it seems as if Turkey's policy is to control exploration and production in the Cypriot waters or to stop it, judging by their actions.

So, Cyprus has made it clear to Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots that any benefits received from future gas sales would be shared amongst all the Cyprus citizens. This seems to be a big complaint by the Turkish Cypriots as they feel that they're not going to be giving any share from these gas resources when, and if, they're eventually developed. The Cypriot government has repeated several times that all Cypriot citizens, Turkish Cypriots included, will have some share in whatever revenues are received and that they'll be distributed fairly.

So, last week, speaking at the 14th Economist Cyprus Summit in Nicosia President Anastasiades remarked that Cyprus would have a geostrategic role to play as hydrocarbon resources in the region are developed. He said that future Cyprus policy would be based on the pillars of respect for international law, creation of opportunity and the conviction that hydrocarbon discoveries would lead to closer cooperation amongst all the countries in the region. So, Cyprus has close relations with all countries, he said, except Turkey. And he added that the government would continue with its energy program despite Turkey's provocations for the benefit of all islands' legal citizens.

The Foreign Minister Mr. Christodoulides also said at the conference that they advised Turkey to get involved with the exploration in the East Mediterranean. But the ball was in Turkey's court on this.

The Energy Minister Giorgos Lakkotrypis said that Cyprus would be drawn into play if, what he called, the instability came with Turkey over claiming rights in the Cyprus EEZ. He said the ministry had been operating in close coordination with the license companies in the Cyprus offshore and their main offices, and the government had also been working to solidify good relations with these Mediterranean companies in order to establish the geopolitical stability that those companies seek to work in. So, Lakkotrypis said the focus is now on further exploration and the monetization of gas discoveries, those being the Aphrodite field and the Calypso discovery.

Plans for new wells in 2019 are under discussion and also Block 7 is due to be licensed within the next couple of months. So, a crucial commercial agreement to pipe Aphrodite gas to Egypt for export is under negotiations and in the coming year we should see some important developments in Cyprus and the East Med, and hopefully that will be the case.

On Aphrodite, companies started negotiations with the government to reframe the production sharing contract and adjust the revenues shares because the partners are saying that it's going to be quite an expensive undertaking and the return on investment under the current contract will be sufficient. Apart from that, they're hoping to get a final investment decision by the end of 2020 and then, once development takes place, the gas should flow to Idku LNG plant in Egypt by around 2022.



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## PRESENTATION\*

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Klearchos A. Kyriakides\*\*

7 December 2018

### **The Possible Effects of Brexit**

I have been asked to say a few words about the agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community. This agreement has been presented to the Parliament of the United Kingdom on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2018. What this means is that the agreement is subject to approval by the House of Commons and the Houses of Parliament, of which the House of Commons forms a part, in line with the constitutional procedures of the United Kingdom. I don't want to say too much about this agreement because it's 599 pages-long. So let me just make five very general comments about this agreement and its implications for the Eastern Mediterranean generally, but more specifically the Republic of Cyprus.

What has happened with the United Kingdom's decision to trigger the process of withdrawal is that they've opened the Pandora's Box and when the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom triggered the process on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2017, she failed to apply the basic principle of Aesop, which is to look before you leap. What has now happened is that the United Kingdom is on the verge of exiting the European Union on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2019 in extraordinary circumstances. By all accounts, and these accounts may be wrong, the House of Commons is likely to reject the agreement on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2018 when a meaningful vote is going to take place on the floor of the House of Commons, following a debate on the agreement.

Now, if there is a no approval given by the House of Commons, it looks as if the United Kingdom would exit the European Union in the absence of an agreement. And for the United Kingdom to crash out of the European Union in the absence of agreement would cause all sorts of problems for multiple states, multiple commercial actors, and multiple other persons and bodies.

Why is all this of importance to the Eastern Mediterranean? Well, it's important to the Eastern Mediterranean because this is a case study in how not to go about negotiating agreements and drafting documents. But what the United Kingdom did was they served a notice before they were ready, and after serving the notice which triggered a two-year period for negotiation, they

\* *Transcript*

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

found themselves up against it, and try to cobble together an agreement which would try and satisfy enough people to approve it. And they ended up with an agreement which has been passed by the European Union, but is not being accepted by a large number of people in the United Kingdom.

So, one lesson of this whole sorry saga is that you need to take exceptional care over triggering any processes, especially processes which result in narrow timeframes and extraordinary pressure being put on the parties to negotiate agreements.

A second point I want to make as a result of that initial analysis is that the terminology that's being deployed in this whole saga is inappropriate. Let me take the very phrase "Brexit". That phrase is inherently misleading. It's entered the English language as an alternative, or rather a variation to "Grexit". That was a word that according to the Oxford Dictionary first came to prominence in 2012 when it looked possible that Greece would exit the eurozone. That phrase has been adopted in the context of the United Kingdom's proposed exit from the European Union and its current state, which is being on the verge of exiting the European Union. The problem with the phrase "Brexit" is it is inherently misleading for three main reasons. First of all, it's not Britain alone that is going to exit the European Union. Northern Ireland is going to exit the European Union. The official name of the United Kingdom is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and it's often forgotten that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, but not part of Great Britain. There is a special protocol built into the withdrawal agreement that was concluded a few days ago, which deals with Northern Ireland, and Ireland. And it's quite interesting that in the relevant pages in the withdrawal agreement, Ireland and Northern Ireland are separated by a slash. And this has caused enormous problems in the United Kingdom for the reasons I won't go into, because there is a fear that the withdrawal agreement will result in the splintering away of Northern Ireland from the remainder of the United Kingdom. So that's one very important point that people need to bear in mind that the terminology is misleading and wrapped to mislead.

Related to that, "Brexit" is not just going to affect the United Kingdom and Great Britain part of the United Kingdom. "Brexit", to use the phrase, is also going to affect Gibraltar which has a special and rather unsettling relationship with Spain. Brexit, to use that phrase again, is also going to affect the two Sovereign Base Areas that are situated on the island of Cyprus and over which the United Kingdom asserts sovereignty.

So for those reasons alone "Brexit" is misleading because the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union is going to result in the dissolution of the protocols from 2003 which were applied upon the accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the European Union on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2004. What this means in practice is that a special protocol has had to be drafted and woven into the withdrawal agreement. I'm not going to go into that protocol in any detail, but it is of huge significance to both the Sovereign Base Areas and the Republic of Cyprus.

This leads me to my next point. That agreement emerged a few days ago in draft form and then it was formally approved on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November and then presented to the House of Commons on the following day on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November. Within the agreement is a protocol, this is its full name: "The Protocol Relating to the Sovereign Base Areas of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Cyprus." That protocol did not emerge until it was released in draft form on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November. And now people like me and a few other academics are no doubt struggling to make head or tail of that protocol in readiness for this

vote on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December in the House of Commons. But the point is that this protocol, of 20 or so pages-long, has not been subject to a proper, fair and transparent consultation exercise. And, therefore, if this protocol is introduced on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2019, if it's approved before then, it will radically alter the arrangements that affect the Sovereign Base Areas on the island of Cyprus. I'm not making any comment in favor or against the Sovereign Base Areas. I'm not making any comment against or in favor of the protocol. I'm merely pointing out that this process that was adopted in relation to the protocol was in my judgment deeply unfair. It should have been subject to proper transparency, so that everybody affected by this protocol could have had a say in its drafting, or at the very least they could have had a say in the decision-making process resulting in the drafting. As it is, this document has been sprung on us almost at the last minute, and that in my judgment is deeply unfair.

The final point I want to make is to just point out what is going to happen geo-strategically. Now, irrespective of whether or not there is a withdrawal agreement, the geostrategic situation in Eastern Mediterranean is going to change. Why? I go back to the 1960 treaty framework relating to the Republic of Cyprus and the Sovereign Base Areas and thus the island of Cyprus as a whole. The 1960 treaty framework was put into place at a time when all four of the parties were excluded from the then European Economic Community. Which were those four parties? Most obviously the Republic of Cyprus, but also Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

On 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1973, the United Kingdom joined the then European Economic Community. The other three parties to the 1960 treaty framework stayed out. And for the next years the United Kingdom was in the unique position of being the only one of the four parties to the 1960 treaties to be in the then European Economic Community.

What happened in 1981? Greece joined the then European Economic Community alongside the United Kingdom. The Republic of Cyprus and Turkey stayed out of the European Economic Community.

Fast forward a few years to the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2004, the Republic of Cyprus joins the now European Union. So since the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2004, three of the four parties to the 1960 treaties, that is to say the United Kingdom, Greece and the Republic of Cyprus are in the European Union, and Turkey is the only one in the four that is out, although Turkey is officially a candidate country.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2019, the United Kingdom is scheduled to exit the European Union. What will therefore happen will be a complete reversal of the situation between 1973 and 1981. The United Kingdom will withdraw from the European Union and Greece and the Republic of Cyprus will remain in the European Union, and Turkey will stay out, albeit as a candidate country. So the dynamics of the 1960 treaty relationship are going to undergo an extraordinary and indeed unprecedented change. In practice, what does this mean? Let me just offer you three practical implications which will be of relevance to the Eastern Mediterranean.

Firstly, the United Kingdom will inevitably withdraw from the decision-making processes in the EU. Therefore, the Republic of Cyprus and Greece will be making decisions in the European Union which could have consequences for both the United Kingdom and Turkey. The consequences for the United Kingdom in a post-March situation could be even more profound if this withdrawal agreement is approved, because this withdrawal agreement is subject to all sorts of provisions that will lock the United Kingdom into a relationship with the European Union. Rather like ex-husbands are sometimes locked into a relationship with ex-wives

pursuant to divorce agreement. But we're going to have an interesting dynamic at play there. Greece and the Republic of Cyprus which will effectively constitute one-fourteenth of the European Union, will be taking decisions which could affect the United Kingdom. There might be an allegation of reverse colonialism there, but that's a story for another day.

A second implication, of course, is that the United Kingdom will be extracted from the foreign policy, defense, counterterrorism and policing structures that have evolved within the European Union over the last few years. This could actually have adverse implications for the Republic of Cyprus, and perhaps also for Greece. The United Kingdom is an actor in the Eastern Mediterranean through the Sovereign Base Areas and for other reasons, such as the situation in Syria. But what is now going to happen is that Greece and the Republic of Cyprus will be in the European Union tent, dealing with counterterrorism and other related matters from within the tent, but the United Kingdom will be outside the tent. Time will tell whether that actually gives rise to any difficulties or whether there are any agreements reached which will enable the United Kingdom to be indirectly linked to those counterterrorism policing and other structures. But that is a potential cause for concern.

And the final point that I would make is a broader one. The European Union is now going to become even more dominated by Germany. It could also, of course, be on the verge of disintegrating, because of a situation in Italy, Greece and elsewhere. But on the basis that the European Union survives the next few years, the British will not be in the European Union from the 29<sup>th</sup> of March onwards, and what that means is that Germany will become an even stronger actor. The United Kingdom will therefore find it much more difficult to influence what is happening on the European continent, and the United Kingdom might find itself dominated or influenced, at the very least, by developments on the European continent, which might be in the future led to a greater extent than before by Germany. This, of course, will have knock-on effects on the Republic of Cyprus. Here, the United Kingdom has traditionally been in the lead in various different spheres, such as education, such as cooperation with the Cyprus government and so on. But in the future I foresee - and I may be wrong - Germany exercising far more prominent role in the Republic of Cyprus through a mixture of three forms of power: hard power, smart power and soft power. That could have interesting implications which I'm not going to go into now. And having mentioned Germany, I also have to mention France, of course, because where Germany leads, France normally follows. So I expect to see the French to have a much more pronounced role in the Republic of Cyprus in the post March 2019 époque. On that note I close this contribution.

Thank you.

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## PRESENTATION\*

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Uzi Rabi\*\*

15 January 2019

### **Syria, Iran and the Future of the Middle East**

Syria has become a microcosm of what I would call the post-Arab Spring Middle East. We should look at it as kind of a reflection to the situation of the Middle East, and Arab state Syria is being controlled by those Russians, and Iranians to some extent, and Turkey, and Israel also has an interest in the post-Arab Spring situation in Syria.

All of them, Russia, Turkey, Iran and as well as Israel, are non-Arab players which says a lot about the, I would say, civilization of the decline of the Arabs. Iran has been very consistent in its bid for hegemony in the Middle East. Already in 1982, it actually installed Hezbollah in Lebanon in the post-2003 period after the downfall of Saddam Hussein it managed to actually infiltrate Iraq, and the Iranians in both places, Lebanon and Iraq, did it not only by Shiite militias that served as boots on the ground for them, they also actually penetrated via what I would call soft penetration which means indoctrination schools a lot of money going to welfare and indoctrination and of course industry, and some grip over the economy in the region.

While looking at the map of the Middle East the missing link is Syria. Syria is sort of a bridgehead between Lebanon and Iraq, and it goes without saying that presence of Iran in Syria would serve the goal of having a corridor between the Persian Gulf and the eastern flank of the Mediterranean. This has become something of a real concern to all Arab States, some of them actually depicted that kind of a corridor as the Shiite Crescent - this is the Shiite axis which is being stretched from, as I said before, the Persian Gulf to the eastern flank of the Mediterranean. So Syria is definitely a very crucial link in Iran's bid for hegemony, let alone that the Iranians have inserted a lot of effort in rescuing Bashar al-Assad, saving him, together with the Russians, and the Iranians do feel that it is high time for them to have this whole thing become profitable by installing themselves in Syria.

Now, of course the mechanism is very complex because there are many hands in Syria, but while looking at the recent events in the Middle East, especially the American withdrawal from Syria, this is sort of a green light for Iran to start dealing with their profits in kind of a more practical way. This is one thing that is the concern of many Arab states and it has to do with the post-Arab Spring Syria but at the same time there is the angle of Israel, and Israel actually

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Director, Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Tel Aviv University*

having learned a bitter lesson from what happened in Lebanon after the evacuation of May 2000.

Israel is determined not to allow Iran to turn south Syria into kind of a second south Lebanon which is definitely something which is in the cards when it comes to Iran. So there is a kind of an ongoing interaction or a dialogue between Israel and Russia as to how to prevent Iran from doing that, and if we take into account that Israel actually went in the open with its attacks on Iran in Syria and made it known that Iran and Israel are on a collision course, and we'll have to wait and see how the Russians are going actually to handle this.

Another thing that we should just mention is that both Israel and some Arab states do not count any more on what they call the West or outside powers and it goes without saying that they should just collaborate in order to minimize the danger which had been posed against them by Iran. So the flipside of that would be a growing collaboration between Israel, Egypt, Jordan and mainly Saudi Arabia and some Gulf States, but this is part and parcel of the new geopolitical chessboard of the Middle East.

As for the Mediterranean I think that this is a very, very crucial development especially as the Russians do control the eastern bank of the Mediterranean. It remains to be seen how and whether Russia could be a part of an ongoing communication line all over the many terror lanes, but as I said before, it is too premature to evaluate that. In any case, Syria has become kind of an arena which definitely reflects Iran's bid for hegemony in this region and this bid for hegemony served to change the whole geopolitical chessboard. And, as I said before, created sort of a collaboration or an alliance even, an ad-hoc alliance between Israel and some Arab states.

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## ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATION\*

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Nikos Christodoulides\*\*

23 January 2019

### **Cyprus and the Future of East Mediterranean Security and Co-operation**

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, let me begin my presentation by extending my sincere thanks to the European Rim Policy and Investment Council for organizing today's discussion and for inviting me to share my thoughts on a topic that lies at the heart of the Cyprus foreign policy and which permeates the core pillars of how we envision Cyprus foreign policy footprint in our immediate region and our neighborhood.

The title of my intervention, "Cyprus and the Future of Eastern Mediterranean Security and Co-Operation," masterly encapsulates some of the core elements of Cyprus' efforts in recent years in what is not only our region, the Eastern Mediterranean, but also a region where developments have proven to have a deep, long-standing impact in Europe and beyond. And so with this indisputable assessment in mind and being an inherent part of the region we have set in the recent years on a journey to fully utilize our role as a country that lies at the crossroads of Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia, at the southeastern most state of the European Union with historically excellent relations with its neighboring states, Cyprus has embarked on constructing a new narrative for the Eastern Mediterranean bolstering its role as a geostrategic bridge. A narrative that has as its principal tenets respect for international legality, promotion of good neighborly relations, fostering of cooperation and the creation of synergies as a vehicle for promoting security and prosperity.

To move beyond conflict that for so long became a trademark characteristic of our region, our premise is that we must bolster cooperation and collaboration. Prior to outline our efforts to create this new narrative for the Eastern Mediterranean, I would like to express my appreciation to ERPIC for its exceptional work including through its programs on regional security, democracy and rule of law, and energy. When the organization was founded in 1999, the Eastern Mediterranean was not so much on the headlines as it is now. Very few I believe were able to identify or predict that this area immediately adjacent to the European Union will have such an effect on Europe. We see that effect today with the humanitarian migration crisis, the root causes of which are to be found in this region. A crisis that has had a profound effect

\* *Transcript of an oral presentation*

\*\* *Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus*

on Europe threatening even its cohesion.

We see that effect also with the rise of violent extremism, which bruise in the region, but whose effects are felt beyond, including in Europe. At the same time, even fewer, and ERPIC was among them, could identify beyond its great challenges the region's remarkable potential.

The discovery of substantial energy deposits in the region that could have become a trigger for cooperation between the neighboring countries are testament to this potential and to the transformative effects energy could have, not only for the countries in the region, but also in advancing Europe's energy security goals through diversification of routes and resources.

Dear friends, in discussing the future of the Eastern Mediterranean security and cooperation in Cyprus' role and perspective on this, I would like briefly to outline the three core pillars of Cyprus' foreign policy and how this also became a vehicle for building a more secure future for the region. Our goal over the last years has been to move beyond a monothematic foreign policy, projecting into a diverse polythematic one, utilizing Cyprus unique characteristics, amplifying its geostrategic value and promoting a vision for our region that resonates well beyond its boundaries.

The rationale is that the benefits accrued from this tragedy would also have a beneficial ripple effect in our efforts to achieve our number one priority at the epicenter of our foreign policy, which is through Cyprus and its people, and allow them to reach their full potential which the current division hinders. The multi-faceted foreign policy I have referred to it is anchored on three main pillars.

The first pillar is the enhancement and expansion of our relations with countries in our immediate region: the Middle East and the Gulf. At the core of this first pillar is geography and the unique geographical position of Cyprus on the map that I have referred to at the outset. In the last few years our determine effort has focused on reversing history's narrative and transforming our geographical position into a blessing, placing it at the forefront of our geostrategic value. Building on the traditionally excellent relations with our neighbors, we have worked methodically in deepening our ties and building a cooperation that yields tangible results that are beneficial not only for the countries involved, but also for the region as a whole.

Indicative of this priority is the fact that within the first month of assuming office I visited Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan as well as Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. Last month I visited Kuwait and there are upcoming visits plan in the coming weeks for Bahrain and Oman. Beyond the bilateral value of this effort our actions are underpinned by a long-term vision for our region that we believe is important also for Europe. At the time of shifting of powers in the region, we see significant added value in increasing EU involvement in the region. We believe that our vision for the Eastern Mediterranean is relevant because the region is highly relevant. We keep making the case at every opportunity in Brussels that unless Europe turns its attention to this region it cannot effectively come out of the challenging injection it is in currently. We believe that Cyprus, a member state of the union, at the same time a country of the region with historically close and excellent bilateral relations with its neighbors and a deep understanding of the dynamic of the region can play a catalytic role in this direction. We are investing political and diplomatic capital in the region because we believe in the region's increasing geostrategic importance which relates not only to its challenges, but also to the promises it holds.

The Middle East and Gulf region is witnessing the remarkable demographic and social change.



The shift in global economic power that we have been witnessing has in fact placed the Middle East firmly in the middle of the world's fastest-growing markets and at the heart of fast-growing trade flows. I refer to energy in my introduction precisely because it illustrates the potential of the region. According to relevant studies, the Eastern Mediterranean region holds enormous quantities of natural gas and oil. In fact, the total quantities of natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean are estimated to be 9700 billion cubic meters (bcm). So far, approximately 2800 bcm have been discovered in the exclusive economic zones of Cyprus, Egypt and Israel. The presence of energy giants in the region, such as ExxonMobil, Eni, Total, Noble, Shell are proof of this potential. Our viewpoint is that hydrocarbons can become the new coal and steel in a new regional context, a tool for cooperation and synergies that will contribute in meeting the energy security needs of the region and that of the European Union, and gradually contribute to create stability in relations among neighboring countries and promote security and peace. Having realized the energy potential, we embarked in negotiations that led to the conclusion of delimitation agreements with Egypt, Israel and Lebanon. The delimitation of our seas has created a new regional dynamic and a new diplomatic framework. The trilateral cooperation mechanisms we have established were in fact triggered by the energy developments in our region with the realization that these developments have the potential of also reshaping the political map of the region. Working closely with Greece and others in the region, such as Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Cyprus has created this innovative cooperation fora that are arguably one of the most successful additions to Cyprus foreign policy footprint in a manifestation of our strategy to create synergies and forge closer cooperation with modern countries in the region in a broad range of areas, from political and economic cooperation to security, energy, education, innovation and agriculture.

The central premise of the trilateral cooperation is that they have a positive agenda and are an instrument for promoting cooperation. They are neither exclusionary nor exclusive, nor are they directed against another country. Moreover, in terms of thematic they constantly evolve in areas where there is a comparative advantage, including broadening the trilateral format to bringing in additional partners in specific fields. For example, Cyprus, Greece and Israel have expanded their talks to include Italy and the European Commission in our discussion of cooperation on energy-related issues. At the latest trilateral with Israel we finalized the text of the intergovernmental agreement between Greece, Cyprus, Israel and Italy on the East Med pipeline. We are also currently in discussions with France on the creation of a new cooperation formation in the region with the participation of Cyprus, Egypt and Greece, including in the field of security. Moreover, we are exploring the possibility of having a quadrilateral thematic ministerial meeting in 2019 with the United States, specifically on issues of energy and security.

The fact that the trilateral mechanisms have attracted the interest of other countries is a recognition of their success and of the growing understanding that this form of regional cooperation contributes to collective efforts to address challenges. The recent decision of the Council of Ministers to create a Permanent Secretariat in Nicosia for the trilaterals will not only solidify the progress achieved, but will also create additional momentum going ahead. It could also be a step along the path of implementing a long term – very long, we hope short – vision we have for our region which is the formation of a regional organization for cooperation and security.

The second pillar of Cyprus foreign policy is a more active involvement of Cyprus within the European Union beyond issues that directly touch upon the Cyprus problem or Turkey, which

for a long time following our accession to the European Union in 2004 was the case. We have worked methodically to build our voice in Brussels on an array of issues where Cyprus has a strong added value. Take, for example, issues relating to our region. Syria is only 98 kilometers from Cyprus, Lebanon 150 kilometers, Israel less than 250 kilometers, and Egypt less than 350 kilometers. Cyprus has a deep understanding of the way countries in the region operate, how to get messages across effectively. Countries in the region often react to what they see as a lack of understanding by the European Union of the complexities of the region and the dynamics within their countries. Cyprus is seen as a credible, trustworthy, reliable child of communication between the European Union and the countries in the region, and this has been increasingly recognized. It was within this context, for example, that we were insisting in Brussels for the need to organize an EU-Arab League summit and we are glad that the summit will finally take place in the very near future. Indicative of the focus we are placing on building an active involvement within the European Union is the decision to form a permanent Secretariat on EU affairs in charge of horizontal cooperation within the government on the whole range of EU issues, formulating positions and building a more effective and proactive participation for Cyprus in Brussels. A relevant proposal would be submitted to the Council of Ministers in the coming two weeks. Furthermore, next week Cyprus will be hosting for the first time the summit of the southern European Union countries – the fifth heads of state and governments meeting of Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain. This is yet another indication of our efforts for active participation in the Union delivering. The forum of the southern European Union countries who very much share a common vision and commitment to a strong and united Europe, particularly at these challenging times, will send a message on the importance of solidarity and collective response.

Dear friends, the third pillar of our foreign policy relates to the strengthening of relations with the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council as well as with key players in the international arena, such as Japan and India. So far, as the five permanent members of the Security Council are concerned, we have worked in building our relationship beyond the remit of the discussion of the Cyprus problem at the Security Council, creating an evolving and continuously advancing cooperation in all fields. With the United States, for example, at the bilateral and regional level relations have grown and there is an increasing cooperation on a number of areas, always based on a positive agenda. With Japan, over the last year remarkable progress in bilateral relations has been achieved. Japan has opened an embassy in Cyprus and Cyprus is reciprocating by opening a resident embassy in Tokyo. During the visit of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in Cyprus in the summer for the opening of the Japanese embassy, a memorandum of understanding was signed for civilian evacuation and a commitment was made for tangible deepening of our ties. I responded to the invitation by the Japanese government immediately thereafter and I paid an official visit to Japan at the end of October. The consultations were eye-opening on the commonalities between Cyprus and Japan's foreign policy. The commitment on rule-based international order, the importance of promoting stability and security in the Eastern Mediterranean are also a priority of Japanese foreign policy. The preparation of visits to both Russia, for the second time, and China, countries with whom Cyprus has a long history of excellent bilateral relations that are constantly growing is underway and are expected to take place in the immediate coming month.

Dear friends, my effort has been to make the case of how Cyprus has embarked on an effort to create a new narrative for the region and a major part of that equation is acting as an anchor of stability. Indispensable component of this role is our active role in the area of regional security

and countering terrorism. For Cyprus this is a collaborative multilateral effort. To this end we are in close dialogue and collaboration with our regional neighbors, all recognizing for example that the nature of 21st century security threats is international and fluid. To this effect Cyprus is an active member of a number of international efforts including the coalition against the Islamic State and the Aqaba Process. We have actively in cooperation with some of our European allies provided military assistance and also provided non-military support to the European Union efforts in the Sahel. Cyprus has also actively contributed to the collective efforts of the international community for the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons arsenal following the United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 serving as the host country of the support base of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons – UN Joint Mission, and offering its infrastructure and facilities to other states which participated in the multilateral mission. Moreover, Cyprus facilitates the deployment of United Nations interim force in Lebanon, known as UNIFIL, by hosting its maritime task force whose primary task is the preservation of peace and security of the shores of Lebanon in a highly volatile region. Cyprus supports Lebanon's efforts to confront the immense challenges faced with, among others, through a productive military bilateral cooperation. In this regard since 2015 Cyprus has donated arms and ammunition to the Lebanese Armed Forces and has offered technical assistance and training to its officers in the context of supporting Lebanon's sovereignty, stability, security, and state institutions. Cyprus has also contributed financially, through the European Union, to Lebanon and Jordan, to support their efforts to address the refugee crisis.

Dear friends, I mentioned at the beginning of my presentation of how the ultimate goal remains reunifying Cyprus and that the implementation of a multi-faceted foreign policy that amplifies the role of Cyprus in the region ultimately has a positive ripple effect on our efforts to solve the Cyprus problem. I believe you will agree with me that to discuss a potential of the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus role in the region without referring to the Cyprus problem and the impact that ending the forty-four-year division and military occupation through a viable and functional comprehensive settlement will have on the region, will be telling an incomplete story. A viable, functional solution of the Cyprus problem which is a feasible goal would not only amplify Cyprus bridging capacity but will also mark a paradigm shift in bringing about peace and stability in the region. This will certainly serve the interests of our key partners, of the European Union, and certainly of the region. It goes without saying that for the good of regional stability Cyprus needs to remain a truly independent state without third party interference so as to continue to function as a reliable pattern and security provider in the region. The sovereignty, dependence and territorial integrity of the reunited Cyprus through a comprehensive settlement that is fully in line with international and EU law is crucial and non-negotiable. Let me conclude by thanking you once again for your initiative and for offering me the opportunity to share my thoughts with you and gain an insight into your perspective and expert assessments. And I very much look forward to interacting with you and answering any questions that you may have. Thank you very much.



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## COMMENTARY\*

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Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak\*\*

12 February 2019

### Turkey at the Eastern Mediterranean Crossroads

First of all, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Dr. Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak and I'm affiliated with the *Moshe Dayan Center* at the Tel Aviv University and the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security.

Today, I would like to speak about the Turkish perspective on the Eastern Mediterranean. First of all, we need to understand something that this discovery of natural gas changed the whole picture in the Eastern Mediterranean. While the Turkish foreign policy once designed upon more, you know, national concerns vis-à-vis Greek Cypriots and Greece, now it is much more complex because of the Eastern Mediterranean. The fact that Egypt, Israel, Greece, and Cyprus also found this natural gas bounty, this basically created a common denominator between these four states. And I would also like to emphasize the fact that the current Turkish foreign policy, which is very critical against Israel and Egypt, and also of course vis-a-vis the Republic of Cyprus and Greece, created a common denominator between these four states. In a way, I may say that this antagonist Turkish foreign policy basically pushed Israel and Egypt to the arms of Greece and Republic of Cyprus. So it is very weird but the architect of this new alliance is Ankara, and not Jerusalem, Cairo, Nicosia or Athens. This should be noted in advance.

And these four states, as far as I understand, they are very much aware of the huge potential of this natural gas, and as a result they launched a rapprochement between themselves. And of course another important common denominator of this rapprochement, of course, is the sort of a political alliance against Turkey, because these four states are suffering from harsh criticism from Turkey.

As a result, we began to see a change of paradigm in Turkey's Eastern Mediterranean politics. They came to a new crossroads, whether they will proceed alone and they will initiate a brinksmanship policy, which means that they're going to send their fleet to Eastern Mediterranean, and will cause troubles for international companies who would like to cooperate with the Cypriot government, and with the Israelis, and the Egyptians, and the Greeks, or they will choose whether to initiate a more harmonious foreign policy, which it seems to me today is very far away from us. But it's also an option on the table. Of course, since

\* Transcript

\*\* Researcher, *Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern Studies*; *Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security*

there is a huge the problem of confidence, mutual trust - I think this is the biggest obstacle that is standing between Ankara and other four capitals, because these four capitals do not trust Turkey anymore. And one of the most important reasons is the daily bashing of Israel and Egypt in the domestic Turkish politics. Mr. Erdogan is using these states in order to get more public approval at home. We already know that in the previous election campaigns bashing Israel or bashing Egypt, especially Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, resulted very positively for the Turkish president.

Another important issue is the domestic Turkish politics. In this regard I would like to emphasize the new ally of the Turkish president - the Nationalist Movement Party which, of course as you may understand from the name is a nationalist party. And they have a very harsh stance towards Greece and towards the Republic of Cyprus. Of course, in order to satisfy this political party of Devlet Bahçeli, Mr. Erdogan is doing everything almost in order to satisfy this party, and therefore we are seeing a more harsh Turkish foreign policy, also towards Greece and Cyprus. Because whenever Mr. Erdogan is getting out and giving a very harsh statement against Greeks, whether Cypriots or Greeks in Greece, he is accumulating so much public approval at home.

So in a way we can say that the Turkish foreign policy became a hostage of Turkish domestic policy, or in other words it is the public relations of the Justice and Development Party of Mr. Erdogan. So in this regard unfortunately I cannot see any positive step that Turkey can also become a genuine party of this cooperation. This is a huge minus also for other four states, because if Turkey could become a genuine partner in this venture, so also we could speak about a political solution, a peace solution also, for the island itself. We could see that the natural gas could be used for peaceful purposes as a catalyst in order to get to a genuine solution in the island. And this basically could trigger prosperity for the whole region.

I still personally want to believe that this will be the case, that this will be the point that we have to proceed. But unfortunately what I'm seeing today in the field, we are very far away from this point. The Turkish fleet is also very much present in the Eastern Mediterranean. There are disputed zones with the Republic of Cyprus, Turkey is not recognizing the Republic of Cyprus as a legitimate state, let alone its exclusive economic zones. So it is a huge headache for this whole venture. And as a result, this whole Eastern Mediterranean pipeline may change its direction - instead of Egypt, Israel, Cyprus, Greece, and Italy, maybe the direction should be Cyprus, Israel, Egypt and from there without a pipeline, but with a liquefied natural gas option it might be sent to Europe. Of course, this is not what is desired, but it is also it is also an option. And in this regard, of course, if we would like to see a prosperous Eastern Mediterranean we may ask and hope for a sort of a recognition, or maybe the Turks and the Cypriots can come and end the disputes between themselves in terms of the maritime borders. But again, we are very far away from this from this point.

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## COMMENTARY\*

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Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak\*\*

12 February 2019

### 2019 Turkish Municipality Elections

On 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2019, Turkey is heading to the municipal elections. Of course, maybe for you municipal elections is not that important, but for the Turkish case it is a sort of a rehearsal for the general elections. What I'm trying to say is, in terms of the Turkish decision-makers, whoever is going to get Istanbul and Ankara is most likely to get the whole Turkey.

So it's very critical, it's like a public survey. And as a result, Mr. Erdogan doesn't want to miss any chances, and of course he would like to get more public approval at home. For instance, last month again we have seen a verbal attack against Israel. And this kind of verbal attacks, or these kind of statements may come also in the future, we should not be surprised.

The most important issue here for an ordinary Turk whenever there is a friction between a non-Muslim country and Turkey, it is basically sort of a demonstration of power of the Turkish Republic. That means, from their perspective, Turkey is no longer afraid of the West or the East. I can give you some concrete examples. Of course this all diplomatic deterioration with Israel is a good example, but not only that. Constantly there is a friction with the United States. But since we are speaking about these municipal elections, recently Mr. Erdogan made a very important statement that he would like to give the authorization to the farmers so that they can grow cannabis. The cannabis is not an ordinary plant. If we are looking at the bilateral relations between United States and Turkey we could remember that in 1974 we had the opium crisis, or the cannabis crisis - the United States wanted Turkey not to plant any cannabis because they thought that it was influencing the US cannabis consumption. In 1971, while the Turks accepted the US demand, in 1974 Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit - who also conducted an extraterritorial military operation against Cyprus - he basically rejected the American demand, and as a result we have witnessed American sanctions against Turkey. Why I am reminding this issue? Because from the Turkish perspective, replanting or reproducing cannabis means that we are not getting orders anymore from the United States. And it is very crucial, because when you're looking at Turkey's map, you're going to see the southern provinces of Turkey, which means the Aegean provinces, and Mediterranean provinces, which are the hub of this cannabis

*\* Transcript*

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growth.

In other words, if we are talking about the municipal elections, and if the people who are living in these provinces are mostly farmers, so it means that with this single decision Mr. Erdogan is touching the lives of hundreds of thousands of farmers. So it means that if you're going to vote for Justice and Development Party, you will be rewarded. And by doing so he is also creating new job vacancies and job opportunities for the Turkish farmers which means more money for the Turkish economy. As you know the Turkish economy is suffering from an unprecedented devaluation of the Turkish lira. So this is a very wise move because it will also bring more income to the region, new job opportunities, and at the same time it will give a clear message, not only to Washington DC, but also the Turkish public that the Turkish government is independent, and they are not getting any orders from the West. Which means this opium, this cannabis reform, the 2019 reform, might be considered again as a tool in domestic policy, but with a theme of Turkish foreign policy.

Another important example is the Uyghur case with China, another important example of course is the Russian jet crisis with Russia, another important example is Turkey's intervention in German elections where they put some posters why not to vote for Angela Merkel - because from their perspective the Germans wanted to bar the Turks to make election propaganda in Germany for Germany's Turks. And as a result you may also remember that Holland declared the Turkish Family Minister Fatma Kaya as *persona non grata*.

So in last two or three years we've witnessed lots of frictions between Turkey and non-Muslim states. Of course we can also remember how president of Turkey, and president of Greece had a very extraordinary press conference where they spoke about whether they should readdress the fundamentals of the Treaty of Lausanne or not.

In each these cases Mr. Erdogan is an expert of politics, and he is turning all these frictions into public approval at home. And so since it's a matter of national interest also the opposition parties cannot criticize Mr. Erdogan's points of views for the public. And as a result, you know, in political science there is a principle called rallying around the flag. So Mr. Erdogan is capable of rallying his people around the flag and that's how he is also neutralizing the criticism of the Turkish opposition.



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## COMMENTARY\*

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Laury Haytayan\*\*

2 March 2019

### Recent Hydrocarbon Developments in Lebanon

Lebanon is Cyprus' neighbor, of course, and Lebanon, same as Cyprus, is trying to use and exploit its oil and gas resources in its seas. So for that Lebanon has been able to sign the first contract with Total, Eni and Novatek as one consortium for two blocks. One block is called still for now Block 4 in the north, and the other block is Block 9 in the south. These two blocks haven't started yet any exploration and it is supposed to start by end of 2019 according to the contracts that were signed last year in 2018. And supposedly and hopefully the first drilling will start in Block 4 in the north of Lebanon by end of 2019 and it will be followed by exploration or drillings in Block 9 in 2019 or maybe 2020. That's not very clear at this stage if Block 9 in the south will start end of this year or the drilling will start in 2020.

And the government is aiming for the first licensing round - it was a successful round because they attracted companies such as Total, Eni and Novatek. They are hoping that there will be recoverable resources, they will be commercially viable quantities and at least we would know what the sea hiding for Lebanon is.

At the same time, Lebanon is aiming to launch a second licensing round soon, maybe by mid-2019 and they are hoping that this would attract new companies to bid, to invest in the offshore of Lebanon and hoping to have more discoveries since for now we have no discoveries. And because we don't have any discoveries, we cannot talk of the quantities that the sea is hiding for Lebanon. But there are hopes and we are seeing what is happening around Lebanon from Cyprus to Israel to Egypt, and this is making us hopeful that maybe Lebanon as well will have viable quantities that would help the country to develop the sector and use the revenues from the resources for the benefit of the people and for the economy of the country.

Plus, on this, and in addition to this we are still, we are working as a country, they are working on the sovereign wealth fund law, and the national oil company law, and the onshore activities law. So these three laws are still pending, they haven't been discussed in the parliament or passed in the parliament, but in the hope that at one point these laws will be as well implemented, maybe. There are some discussions happening, same as it happened in Cyprus, so the same discussions are happening around the sovereign wealth fund, around the need of the

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *MENA Director, Natural Resource Governance Institute, Beirut*

national oil company at the stage (inaudible), but these are all discussions happening in the parliament, happening at the government level, and the same time happening within the civil society sphere where these discussions are happening about the usefulness of having a sovereign wealth fund or a state oil company at the stage before any discoveries. So this is what is happening internally.

At the same time, as you know, Lebanon is a small market and any discovery may be more than enough to fulfill the needs of the market locally, especially for the electricity and power plants. But the aim of Lebanon, same as Cyprus, and same as Israel, is to find markets outside the region, and especially in Europe. And for that, as you know, by now we need to have the markets. At the same time, we need to have the infrastructure to be able to export the gas to the markets. And what is happening for Lebanon, which has been laid in these discoveries, they're late in the game, later than Cyprus, or Israel, or even Egypt. That's why we are looking, or the country is looking into these new collaborations that are happening in the region and how this will be affecting the Lebanon's choices or Lebanon's options, or if you want, even Lebanon being able to export its gas to the European market. For instance, the newly-established East Med Gas Forum has been really interesting to look at and Lebanon was curious to know how this would be developed. Because in the East Med Gas Forum, as everybody knows by now, most of the countries around the Mediterranean are taking part in this East Med Gas Forum, and therefore the only three countries in this basin left out are Lebanon, Syria and Turkey. And if this East Med Gas Forum is a reality and becomes reality, and not just on paper, it will make Lebanon's life really difficult because, as many of you know, Lebanon and Israel are at war. And any forum that has Israel, such as the East Med Gas Forum, which is talking about high level of collaboration and cooperation regarding the common policies, common market, use of the infrastructures that exist in the region, it will make it very difficult for Lebanon to be part of that forum. And if Lebanon is not being able to be part of that forum, what is left for Lebanon? What are the other options that Lebanon has to be able to be part of a group that would be able to export the gas to Europe? So one other option is maybe a new forum that might be created in face of this East Med Gas Forum, that is not ready now, but maybe in the future this could be another option. It's the option that maybe Russians are favoring, which includes at one point Iran, Iraq, Syria, and if the Syrian peace process is set and the Turks are happy with it, Turkey would be part of this forum, and then from Turkey to Europe. Maybe Lebanon then could be part of this forum because there won't be any political challenges and obstacles the way that Israel creates that obstacle for Lebanon. But that forum is not ready yet and there are many political, security and economic challenges for it to happen. So therefore, if Lebanon cannot use the Syria-Turkey option and it cannot use the other options – East Med gas option through Egypt - what is it left for Lebanon? So for them the option, the viable option for now under these scenarios that we have currently - political scenarios and economic scenarios - we see that maybe the option for Lebanon would be the LNG. And then through LNG it can export its gas to Europe.

But one other issue that is facing Lebanon as well and Lebanon is looking at is the East Med pipeline that is being talked about. And recently there was a visit of the US foreign minister Pompeo to the region and he has met with Israeli and Cypriot and the Greek leaders supporting the East Med pipeline. I think it was more of a political support more than economic support. We haven't seen him saying that we would want to pay for it or we would encourage all the companies to start funding it and find banks to fund it, to fund this project. But anyways, again Lebanon feels nervous about the East Med pipeline. And recently, the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs in Lebanon released a statement that was sent to the UN and to the relevant countries warning them not to use the Lebanon EEZ to pass the pipeline. Even though we know that it won't pass, but that was a warning, a long-term warning and it has implications that Lebanon is not happy to see this collaboration between Israel, Cyprus and Greece through this pipeline, knowing that this pipeline now, it's really difficult to see it happen.

So in conclusion, we can say that in 2013 there were hopes that Lebanon will start its oil and gas sector activities. Unfortunately, political deadlocks prevented it from starting the process and signing the contracts with companies. It took us more than five years and in 2018 we signed the two contracts with Total, Eni and Novatek. But during these five years there were other activities happening in the region - in Cyprus, in Israel and Egypt - that made Lebanon in a very difficult position and kind of isolated at this stage.

But at the same time, we can say that this gas exploration in the region is bringing a kind of stability, at least for Lebanon towards Israel, because we know that Israel and Lebanon have the borders issues in the southern part of Lebanon, which is the northern part of Israel, there is the maritime disputed borders - 860 square kilometers- and for now there is no solution. Lately, with Pompeo's visit, he has launched maybe a new initiative which is like through the UN to find the solution, and he said that the US supports the UN initiative to solve the problem with the Israelis on the border so that both countries can develop their resources in that area.

But at the same time we see that there is a kind of stability that is going on between the two countries because they don't want to go to war, because they want to use their resources peacefully. And we see that even Israel is not going easily to war with Lebanon as before, because they know that its platforms, its Tamar platform, and later on the Energean platforms might targeted. So that's why kind of ironically the gas is bringing stability for Lebanon and Israel which might not be maybe the situation in the region with other conflicts that are real in the region. But at least for Lebanon we see that this gas issue is bringing kind of stability.

But the other conclusions that we can make as well is there is a newcomer to the region which is Russia. And Russia is being involved in the upstream of Lebanon through the contracts that have been signed between Total, as we said, Eni and Novatek, and through a new contract for the storage operations in Lebanon, in the northern part of Lebanon through Rosneft. So now we see Rosneft and Novatek being major players in the energy sector in Lebanon. And this is new, this hasn't been the case. And the US is a bit nervous about the situation, but Lebanon is trying to see where its interests are, and with whom to make the energy sector, use the energy sector to its benefits.

And the final point that I would like to say is that maybe the whole region is looking towards Europe for its market. But I think there is a reality that we need to keep in mind, which is that at the end of the day we might be in a situation where all the countries of the East Mediterranean have to collaborate together and use their gas within the region and not Europe. And that would require to solve all the crises and all the conflicts that exist in the region to be able to benefit from the gas. And if Europe wants to tap into the East Mediterranean gas, it needs to do that, it needs to be involved in its politics as well and try to be a partner to solve the conflicts that exist in the region. But I think the key word is peace in the region that would help all the countries of the region to benefit from its oil and gas, or else there are going to be many challenges that might prevent all countries of the region to use their gas to the benefit of their people.



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## ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATION\*

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Elie Friedman\*\*

5 March 2019

### Israeli Elections 2019

I've been asked to give a little bit of an analysis about the upcoming April 9<sup>th</sup> general election in Israel. This is quite a unique kind of election. It's, I would say, somewhat of a culmination of several trends that have been going on in Israel for the last ten or fifteen years. The most obvious trend in my mind is a breakdown of the large ideological right wing versus left wing blocks into many small splinter parties that are often personality based, meaning they're not parties that have long histories or even primary elections but they're based on a certain personality, somebody who is well known in the public sphere, deciding to start a party, which in some ways is kind of a personality cult also, and then choosing the various people who will be members of that party. So for example the new party and the most kind of interesting party in this election, the story of this election, is the new party which is called in English Resilience for Israel, which is led by the former IDF chief-of-staff Benny Gantz, and this is kind of a centrist party. We have another one which is also centrist, many of them were kind of centrist and non-ideological, led by a television personality named Yair Lapid. I'll say a little bit more about these kinds of parties a little bit later. Some of these parties are interesting in the sense that they don't really have much of a difference from one another. They tend to have a very similar platform and there are just very nuanced differences. And in a way their way to attract voters is based on what kind of a person is at the helm of the party rather than what kind of an ideological approach they're trying to sell to the public. This can result in a rather shallow discourse. It kind of turns the Israeli elections to some extent into like a reality TV show where people are voting based on the most popular candidates. And often the most hoarded items in the media are kind of gossipy type of items, like who is going to form a coalition with whom and who is going to kick whom out of the party, and these kinds of issues which are basically based on dramas between different personalities.

Another important feature of this election is this is actually the first time that the party whose precursor was the founding party of the State of Israel, and really the party that built the State of Israel which is today known as the Labour Party, is not really a contender. They've gone down quite significantly in the in the polls and it seems like they'll be a very minor player in the next Knesset, the next parliament. And part of the reason that the Labour Party has gone down so significantly is that many who used to define themselves as left-wing have instead moved

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Project Manager, S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, Netanya Academic College*

towards centrist parties, these kinds of personality type parties that don't necessarily sell a very ideologically strong line, but try to be kinds of all things to all people. I mentioned earlier this party Resilience for Israel which is led by the former IDF chief-of-staff Benny Gantz. And this is an interesting example because he has intentionally taken people in to his party who have somewhat contradictory positions, and you think, well, this is odd, an inconsistent party line, and how do I have people who believe in, for example, not returning any territory to the Palestinians versus others who do believe in a territorial compromise as all part of the same party. Well, in today's political climate it's less important to be ideologically consistent and more important it seems to offer many different possibilities to many different types of voters. And in a way this is an example of the victory of the media strategists over the politicians where the ability to be dynamic and to pitch different things to different audiences is more important than the notion of having a clear ideological line.

So we really see this time a breakdown of the left versus the right blocks in the Israeli election towards more of a kind of a salad of different personalities who are all kind of competing over the same wavering votes.

One of the most important aspects of this election which is kind of what we call the elephant in the room is that in the next month or two apparently before the election the Attorney General of Israel Aluf Avichai Mandelblit is going to publish his decision on whether the Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu will be indicted on bribery charges on three different cases. I'm not going to go into the details of the cases but one of them is accepting lavish gifts in return for favors, and the two others relate to trying to acquire favorable media coverage in trading it for some kind of positive business deals that these media organizations may need and the prime minister can advance through his various powers. So this creates kind of an interesting phenomenon where before the election, in the next month or two, there may be an indictment against a prime minister.

Now, according to Israeli law, a sitting prime minister does not have to resign if he is indicted. He can actually go to court in the morning and be prime minister in the afternoon - this is not against Israeli law. However, if he does face an indictment, it may create a situation where he cannot form a coalition because the various other parties will not agree to sit with a prime minister who is has an indictment against him. And within his own Likud Party, there may be a situation where the various other candidates may what's called "smell blood" and try to form a kind of an internal coalition within the party to depose of the Prime Minister.

So in some ways this election is kind of an interesting mix of an actual competition between various candidates. The main candidate who's presenting an actual threat to Netanyahu is this former chief of staff, Benny Gantz. So there is an actual competition to the possibility of the Likud being victorious. But on the other hand, this election is kind of a wait-and-see until we know what happens with these bribery charges against Netanyahu. And then the other politicians, be it within the Likud Party or in other parties, will basically try to inherit what Netanyahu leaves behind. So it's a very odd election in that sense.

Another important issue, and this is related to what I mentioned earlier about these small personality parties, is that the issue that has been probably the most prominent issue in Israeli politics for the last fifty years, is not really a central issue. And I'm talking about the issue of the future of the occupied territories, and whether or not we are interested in annexing these

territories, or continuing settlements in these territories, or returning them in hopes of gaining a peace agreement with the Palestinians and with the broader Arab world.

The centrist parties tend to make hints that they would be willing for a territorial compromise. The Likud Party has stated that it's interested in reaching a settlement with the Palestinians. It's theoretically interested in a two-state solution, however it has basically done anything it can to prevent this from happening. And Netanyahu has also stated on various occasions that he would not uproot Jewish settlers in the West Bank, or as it is called in the right-wing Israel "Judea and Samaria". This issue has kind of gone down. It's not a central issue. Some of the centrist parties don't like to give it much emphasis because they're afraid of being accused of being left-wing. They want to be able to appeal to these floating voters, these soft right voters as well, so this is another reason why probably the most strategic issue for Israeli foreign policy is not a major election issue. Though within the Israeli voting public there's also the settler public, meaning the citizens of Israel who have chosen to reside in the West Bank, or as they call it "Judea and Samaria". Depending on how you count, whether you count the East Jerusalem suburbs or not, if we do count them it's about 700,000 people, if we don't count them it's about 400,000 people. They tend to vote for either the Likud Party which is the Netanyahu Party, the governing party, or the further right parties.

So we have a new party which is actually ironically called the New Right led by Neftali Bennett, and they'll probably get about seven seats in the Knesset - that's according to the surveys - which is about 5% of the popular vote. And we also have some smaller further right parties. Bennett left his former party which was called the Jewish Home Party.

And there's another party called the National Union Party. They're very new on various nuances on the far-right, and there's even a very far-right called Strength for Israel which is also running now. They probably won't make it into the Knesset, they probably won't pass the threshold, but these parties are generally the ones to the right of the Likud and have a very staunch ideological approach regarding the West Bank, "no" to a Palestinian state, "no" to giving the Palestinians more land even for autonomy, "yes" to increasing the amounts of settlers living in this land. And their approach is in my mind leading to something that's quite irreversible and would result in a bi-national state based on differential rights, which means that there are only Jewish rights in the West Bank, whereas the Arabs are a docile conquered people. And this is the approach that these parties are aiming for. They probably wouldn't admit it but that's their endgame.

Now, these parties are important. They're part of the government, the current government, and if Netanyahu would win he would probably form a coalition with them as well as some other smaller religious parties. And they have a very strong influence beyond their numbers because they're very ideologically committed and they tend to wield quite a bit of influence. The settlers tend to wield quite a bit of influence within the Likud Party itself and if Netanyahu were to form a similar coalition to what he has now, which means Likud, some ultra-orthodox parties and these pro-settler parties, any chance of a peaceful solution based on Trump's deal of the century which they've been working on for about two years now and are supposedly going to reveal after the elections, any chance of this kind of a deal success would be probably dashed. Whereas if there was a centrist or a centre-right coalition without the pro-settler parties, there's more of a chance of at least some intermediary steps towards a solution with the Palestinians, even if a final status agreement may not be possible.

It seems that most of the parties have a pretty similar stance with respect to the Iranian threat and radical Islam in general even if they have different nuances of how to deal with it and how to build coalitions. They seem to have a pretty similar militant approach towards the Iranian issue.

All parties are in favor of advancing Eastern Mediterranean relations, relations with Greece, relations with Cyprus, with other European countries, as well advancing economic relations. All seem to have a pretty anti-Turkey approach that doesn't seem to be much of a difference in that there are obviously different shades, but these are kind of consensus issues.

So just to summarize. I think that a lot of these kind of non-ideological voters are not really sure how they're going to vote. They don't really see a clear picture of what the various candidates stand for. We see various splinters between the different ideological blocks. There could be a situation where various small parties decide to form joint lists and run jointly. So we'll actually have less parties than we do now before the cutoff date where you have to submit your party lists.

In any event the Likud is still favored to win the election. However this new party, Resilience for Israel led by Benny Gantz, is rising in the polls and seems to be giving a fight. The other parties, the smaller and midsize parties are important players because they can impact how the coalition will look, whether it will be a strict right-wing coalition, whether it will be a more centrist coalition. There is a small possibility that it could be a center-left coalition as well if Benny Gantz would win the election. So there are really several possibilities that do relate to some extent to how the small parties turn out as well.

So I'm going to end this for now I hope this was informative and I wish us a good election day and a democratic election day. Thank you



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## COMMENTARY\*

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Ehud Eiran\*\*

14 March 2019

### What to Expect from the 2019 Israeli Elections

As you may know, Israelis will go to the polls on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Under the Israeli system people vote for a party list rather than a leader, but the winner is not necessarily the largest party, but the party that is able to create a coalition of at least 61 members of Knesset.

The two main contenders to set up such a coalition are the Likud Party led by Prime Minister Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister since 2009, and a new party that was set up literally in the last few weeks called Blue and White led by three former generals - three former chiefs of staff - and a fourth media personality who had been in electoral politics for quite a while.

Current, polls predict a small majority for the right, although, as I will discuss in a few minutes, this is far from being a final.

The main topic on the elections is really the leadership of Prime Minister Netanyahu. He has been in power, as I mentioned, since 2009, and had an earlier period in the prime minister between 1996 and 1999.

The issue is not even necessarily political in the sense of items on an agenda or a public debate over policy, but rather Netanyahu's leadership. Most significant questions surrounding him is a possible indictment by the state against Netanyahu on three corruption charges. Earlier in the month the attorney general had announced his intention to prosecute Netanyahu, although Netanyahu was still giving given a chance for a hearing that will occur after the elections to try and deflect the indictment. If he's indicted, that will be a constitutional question: can he stay in power? And in fact it seems that Netanyahu had asked for the elections - these are somewhat earlier elections - in order to be in a better position as he faces the indictment. Netanyahu's calculation, it seems, is that if he wins the elections it will be harder prosecuting him, because he could always argue that the popular vote brought him to power despite these allegations.

So on one hand we have Netanyahu fighting for his political life, and on the other hand this party that is set up by the former generals and include also some right-wingers, including Netanyahu's former defense minister - the member of his party who had left - and one of his chiefs of staff and some other people from the right-wing, from Netanyahu's party who are

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Assistant Professor of International Relations, University of Haifa, Israel*

running against him, further highlighting that the competition is really around his leadership rather than deeply ideological.

Having said that, Israel is a society that is still torn over a significant question, first and foremost: should Israel retain control over the West Bank? It's a subtle behind-the-scene question that lurks in the election. Netanyahu is clearly in support of keeping the West Bank, whereas the party that opposes him is probably supporting some sort of withdraw from the West Bank.

The second subtle and discussed element in this competition is the role of the state in public life, and specifically populism versus stateism. The generals' party presents a more mainstream belief in the state institutions, where's Netanyahu has been on an attack in the last few months on state institutions like the courts, the state prosecution, the police, arguing they're all hunting him politically. And in that sense he represents a populist streak, somewhat similar to what we see in Europe, versus a party that's more identified with the state and led with people are very proud to say that for most of their adult life they had worked for the state, mostly the security.

And finally beneath, I think, these two groups is also a question of identity. This generals' party represents Israel's traditional elite whereas Netanahu, although he's in power for so many years, represents what were traditionally more peripheral forces in Israeli body politic, like religious, people of Middle Eastern descent. So it all also a clash about identity. Netanyahu's party represents a more ethnocentric inward-looking party, where the generals belong at least to a social strata that's more liberal, if you will, more committed to liberal democrat project.

As I mentioned, there's a slight advantage to the right, although I can see at least three arenas that can (inaudible). First of all, another further development on Netanyahu's investigation issues, for example leaks, recordings, or more state witnesses. Immediately after the Attorney General announced his intention to indict Netanyahu, he took a little bit of a dive in the polls. A second possibility or development that can change the events, is an armed clash with the Palestinians. In part because of the elections Israel is taking harsher steps towards the Palestinians, mostly in Gaza. This can lead to another round of violence. And Netanyahu traditionally was very careful in military moves towards the Palestinians, in part because he realizes it has a potential to cause political damage, but the realities on the ground and Israel's harsher line may lead to a dynamic in which we see more violence. How exactly it will play in the elections is not clear. Netanyahu is supposedly a hardliner, but on the other hand the party that opposes him is comprised of generals who always in the security context look more convincing.

I should also add that the Israel Defense Forces is the single most appreciated institution among the Israeli public, at least among the majority of a Jewish Israeli public, and so this is a territory where Netanyahu already has a little bit of discount or disadvantage.

Two other predictions beyond the elections. One, if Netanya wins, it is largely assumed that once he's indicted it would be hard for him to stay in power, and so we may see another elections within relatively short time once he is indicted. It seems that either way these are going to be Netanyahu's last elections. Likud, the party he leads, is traditionally loyal to its leader and internal opposition is muted. Nevertheless, some of his internal opponents, most notably former Minister of Interior *Gideon Sa'ar*, have decided to take a more aggressive line

that's indicating that they're smelling or sensing that this is the end of Netanyahu's era and they should position themselves for the post-Netanyahu era.

The other side of it is if Blue and White- these generals party - does not win the elections, it's hard to see how it will survive politically. We know that historically these lines of parties that are created from number of stars do not survive long if they're not in power. Even if they win the elections, because it was a makeshift party very quickly without traditional institutions, it may face internal tensions.

Let me conclude maybe with making three broad comments what the elections tell us about Israel's body politic and how it affects its approach to the Eastern Mediterranean. On the last point, I don't think the elections are expected to change Israel's approach to this what we call the Hellenic alliance - our alliance with Cyprus and Greece. On this issue I think both parties, or both mainstream parties probably share the same approach. There are some voices in Blue and White that are cautioning against fully exhausting Israel's gas depots, but generally the materialistic power-based approach represented by the generals - one of them by the way former head of a gas company - is expected to kick the Alliance into place.

A second interesting point relates to internal Israeli politics. Netanyahu's party and other parties on the right took a more aggressive line towards the Arab-Israeli population - as you may know we have 21% of our citizens who are Palestinians - one line that Netanyahu took in order to attack his opponents is to delegitimize the possibility of Arab parties to join a coalition against him, arguing there against the state, etc. This is a line he already took in 2015 which served him quite well. Long-term this does not bode well for Israel, this internal tension against the fifth of the population.

The third broad point that we see these elections tell us is a weakening of traditional parties. When I say traditional, I mean parties that have been around for decades. One of them, the Labor Party, was in fact the country's founding party and was in power for over four decades. Labor Party, the National Religious Party, and even to some extent Likud are not as strong as they used to be and we have seen the rise of parties that are organized around a single charismatic leader, or in the case of Blue and White two or three charismatic leaders. I think this on a deeper level indicates some loss of trust among the public of the traditional party system, streak of populism, and also an element of instability - because these parties are organized around the charismatic leader, they sometimes appear for one or two rounds of elections and then disappear.

In fact, two parties, one held the finance ministry, Kulanu, and the other one held the defense ministry, Yisrael Beiteinu - Israel is Our Home - are both possibly not to be elected again. So these were formerly significant coalition parties who secured important portfolios, but they may not even make it to the next elections. So long-term this indicates some level of instability.

Finally, we have for the first time a party that truly adopted Israel's self-image as a high-tech country, the start-up nation and so on. This is a party that adapted itself to this new era of communications and offers to elect people who promise to vote according to what their voters will tell them on each individual vote through an app on a cell phone. The party is led by former senior civil servant who is a deputy national security advisor, so this is not a fringe operation. They are not expected to get in, but they do indicate perhaps what happens when modern technology meets notions of democracy, and potentially even destabilizing the whole

idea of government by representatives, utilizing technology to affect politics in a more direct way.

So this is pretty much where we stand. We are three weeks before the elections and I suspect that if we talk again, even in a week or two, things may look rather different.

So thank you again for this opportunity.

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## PRESENTATION\*

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Christos Minagias\*

17 March 2019

### Αντιμετωπίζοντας τον Τουρκικό επεκτατισμό

Η Τουρκία αποτελεί μια δύναμη μεσαίου μεγέθους στο παγκόσμιο σύστημα, κατέχοντας την 37<sup>η</sup> θέση στην έκταση, την 19<sup>η</sup> στον πληθυσμό, την 17<sup>η</sup> στην οικονομία και την 9<sup>η</sup> στις ένοπλες δυνάμεις. Συγκεκριμένα, η Τουρκία δεν είναι ούτε υπερδύναμη, ούτε μεγάλη δύναμη, ούτε περιφερειακή δύναμη, αλλά είναι μια χώρα που έχει τις δυνατότητες να παρεμβαίνει στρατιωτικά, πολιτιστικά και οικονομικά σε περιφερειακό επίπεδο. Γι' αυτό το λόγο Τούρκοι αναλυτές θεωρούν ότι η χώρα τους αποτελεί μια «υποπεριφερειακή» δύναμη. Συγκεκριμένα, η κατηγοριοποίηση των χωρών στην παγκόσμια ισορροπία ισχύος σύμφωνα με τους Τούρκους περιλαμβάνει:

Την **υπερδύναμη** που έχει παγκόσμια κυριαρχία, όπως οι Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες.

Τη **μεγάλη δύναμη** που έχει περιφερειακή κυριαρχία και επιλεγμένη παγκόσμια επιρροή, όπως η Κίνα, η Ρωσία, η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, η Ιαπωνία κ.λπ.

Την **περιφερειακή δύναμη** με περιφερειακή κυριαρχία, όπως η Ινδία, η Βραζιλία, το Ιράν κ.λπ.

Την **υποπεριφερειακή δύναμη** με δυνατότητες περιορισμένης επιρροής, όπως η Τουρκία.

Και τέλος, την **ανίσχυρη δύναμη** που περιλαμβάνει χώρες με εξαρτώμενες δυνατότητες.

Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, οι βασικοί στόχοι της εθνικής πολιτικής έχουν να κάνουν με την τουρκική αντίληψη ότι, μια ανεξάρτητη εσωτερική πολιτική ισχύς και οικονομική ισχύς θα έχει ως αποτέλεσμα τη δυνατότητα ενάσκησης μιας ανεξάρτητης εξωτερικής πολιτικής σε έναν ευρύ γεωγραφικό χώρο εξοπλισμένη με την ιστορία και την πολιτιστική ταυτότητα. Εν προκειμένω, η απόφαση της Άγκυρας να τηρεί ίσες αποστάσεις μεταξύ Ηνωμένων Πολιτειών και Ρωσίας μπορεί να δημιουργεί προβλήματα στις αμερικανοτουρκικές σχέσεις με άμεσες επιπτώσεις στην οικονομική της ισχύ, ωστόσο η Τουρκία εκτιμά ότι, τελικά θα αναβαθμισθεί το περιφερειακό και εν μέρει το παγκόσμιο προφίλ της. Αναφορικά με τις ρωσοτουρκικές σχέσεις, η ακόλουθη δήλωση του Tayyip Erdogan είναι ενδεικτική των τουρκικών προθέσεων και σχεδιασμών: «Τα κύρια στοιχεία που καθορίζουν τις σχέσεις της Τουρκίας με τη Ρωσία είναι η καλή γειτονία, τα

\* Text as submitted by the speaker

\*\* Brigadier General, Hellenic Armed Forces (Retired)

κοινά συμφέροντα και ο αμοιβαίος σεβασμός. Μέχρι τώρα έγιναν αρκετά βήματα, όμως αυτά δεν είναι αρκετά. Γι' αυτό θα συνεχίσουμε τις προσπάθειες ώστε η συνεργασία μας να βελτιωθεί ακόμη περισσότερο.».

## **ΤΟΥΡΚΙΚΟΙ ΕΞΟΠΛΙΣΜΟΙ**

Τα δομικά χαρακτηριστικά της τουρκικής αμυντικής βιομηχανίας ταξινομούνται σε πέντε περιόδους: από το 1923 έως το 1951, από το 1952 έως το 1973, από το 1974 έως το 1984, από το 1985 έως το 2016 και από το 2016 μέχρι σήμερα.

Η πολιτική των εξοπλισμών και της τουρκικής αμυντικής βιομηχανίας καθορίζεται από ένα σύστημα που περιλαμβάνει τρεις βασικούς μηχανισμούς: την Εκτελεστική Επιτροπή Αμυντικής Βιομηχανίας, τη Διεύθυνση Αμυντικής Βιομηχανίας και το Ταμείο Υποστήριξης Αμυντικής Βιομηχανίας.

Η **Εκτελεστική Επιτροπή Αμυντικής Βιομηχανίας** σχεδιάζει και συντονίζει τη γενική στρατηγική, εκδίδει κατευθυντήριες οδηγίες και αποφασίζει για τον τρόπο προμήθειας οπλικών συστημάτων και άλλων υλικών.

Η **Διεύθυνση Αμυντικής Βιομηχανίας** είναι ένας φορέας με χαρακτήρα νομικού προσώπου δημοσίου δικαίου που έχει ιδιαίτερο προϋπολογισμό και υπάγεται στον πρόεδρο της Δημοκρατίας. Η Διεύθυνση αυτή υλοποιεί τις αποφάσεις του προέδρου της Δημοκρατίας και της Εκτελεστικής Επιτροπής Αμυντικής Βιομηχανίας, ενώ το 2012 αναβαθμίστηκαν οι αρμοδιότητες της, ώστε αυτή να αποτελεί έναν εξειδικευμένο φορέα που αφενός θα κατευθύνει και θα επιλύει όλα τα δομικά προβλήματα της αμυντικής βιομηχανίας της χώρας, αφετέρου θα παρουςιάζει πρωτότυπες λύσεις ώστε αυτή να είναι ανταγωνιστική και να ενταχθεί στη διεθνή αγορά.

Το **Ταμείο Υποστήριξης Αμυντικής Βιομηχανίας** ιδρύθηκε το 1985 και τα καθήκοντά του αφορούν αφενός στη συνεχή και σταθερή εξασφάλιση των αναγκαίων πόρων, εκτός του γενικού προϋπολογισμού, για τη διασφάλιση του εκσυγχρονισμού των τουρκικών ενόπλων δυνάμεων, της αστυνομίας, της στρατοχωροφυλακής, της Διοίκησης Ασφαλείας Ακτών και της ΜΙΤ, αφετέρου στη σύσταση μιας σύγχρονης αμυντικής βιομηχανίας στην Τουρκία.

Ας σημειωθεί ακόμη, ότι η πολιτική και η στρατιωτική ηγεσία της Τουρκίας συνεχώς τονίζουν την ανάγκη απεξάρτησης των εξοπλιστικών αναγκών της χώρας από εξωτερικούς προμηθευτές, οι οποίοι χρησιμοποιούνται ως μοχλός άσκησης πιέσεων για πολιτικές παραχωρήσεις εκ μέρους της τουρκικής κυβέρνησης. Υπόψη ότι, το 2002 η εν λόγω εξάρτηση επί συνόλου 66 εξοπλιστικών προγραμμάτων ανερχόταν στο 80%, το 2008 αυτή μειώθηκε στο 55,8%, το 2010 στο 47,9%, το 2017 στο 35% και το 2018 στο 32% επί συνόλου 600 εξοπλιστικών προγραμμάτων, ενώ ως επόμενος στόχος ετέθη η περαιτέρω μείωση της εξάρτησης από το εξωτερικό στο 20%.

Επίσης, ενώ το 2002 το κόστος των τουρκικών εξοπλιστικών προγραμμάτων που υπογράφηκαν συμφωνίες ανερχόταν σε 5.448.000.000 δολάρια, το 2012 αυτό αυξήθηκε στα 25.338.000.000 δολάρια και το 2018 στα 45.000.000.000 δολάρια.

Παράλληλα, η τουρκική αμυντική βιομηχανία αυξάνει τις εξαγωγές αμυντικού υλικού, οι οποίες το 2018 έφθασαν τα 2.035.00.000 δολάρια με στόχο αυτές να αυξηθούν στα 25.000.000.000 δολάρια το 2023.

Πέραν των παραπάνω, μια αθέατη παράμετρος της τουρκικής στρατιωτικής ισχύος αποτελεί ο τομέας της έρευνας και ανάπτυξης αφού το 2018 είχαν διατεθεί 1,25 δισ. δολάρια, ενώ για το 2019 το ποσό αυτό αυξήθηκε στα 2 δισ. δολάρια.

## **ΤΟ ΝΕΟ ΔΟΓΜΑ ΧΡΗΣΙΜΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΤΟΥΡΚΙΚΗΣ ΝΑΥΤΙΚΗΣ ΙΣΧΥΟΣ**

Στις 19-05-2015 δημοσιεύθηκε η Στρατηγική των Τουρκικών Ναυτικών Δυνάμεων βάσει της οποίας το δόγμα χρησιμοποίησης της ναυτικής ισχύος περιλαμβάνει τα εξής:

- Χρησιμοποίηση των τουρκικών ναυτικών δυνάμεων στις ανοικτές θάλασσες με ειρηνικούς σκοπούς. Επιπρόσθετα, εφόσον απαιτηθεί οι ναυτικές δυνάμεις θα χρησιμοποιήσουν με αποφασιστικότητα την ισχύ τους σύμφωνα με τους κανόνες του Ο.Η.Ε., καθώς επίσης σύμφωνα με το εθνικό και διεθνές δίκαιο.
- Το προσωπικό, τα ναυτικά μέσα και τα αεροπορικά μέσα θα τελούν σε πολεμική ετοιμότητα.
- Θα συνεχίζονται αδιαλείπτως οι δραστηριότητες αναγνώρισης, επιτήρησης, περιπολίας και συλλογής πληροφοριών προκειμένου να εξασφαλίζεται η επίγνωση της κατάστασης στις θαλάσσιες περιοχές πέριξ της Τουρκίας.
- Θα διεξάγονται εκπαιδεύσεις και ασκήσεις, καθώς επίσης δραστηριότητες επίδειξης της τουρκικής σημαίας και της τουρκικής ναυτικής παρουσίας στο πλαίσιο της αποτροπής και της προετοιμασίας ανάληψης πολεμικών αποστολών.
- Οι κανόνες εμπλοκής θα εφαρμόζονται σε συντονισμό με τους αρμόδιους Φορείς, αφενός για να εξασφαλισθεί η επιτυχία της αποστολής, αφετέρου για να τεθεί υπό έλεγχο μια ενδεχόμενη κρίση και ένταση.
- Μεταστάθμευση μιας ναυτικής ομάδος σε σύντομο χρονικό διάστημα σε μια περιοχή που θα εκδηλωθεί μια κρίση. Στη συνέχεια, απόκτηση της επιχειρησιακής υπεροχής έναντι του αντιπάλου, ολοκληρώνοντας ταυτόχρονα όλες τις αναγκαίες προετοιμασίες προκειμένου να αντιμετωπισθεί η περίπτωση μετατροπής της κρίσης σε μια θερμή συγκρουσιακή κατάσταση.
- Επιβολή της θέλησης των τουρκικών ναυτικών δυνάμεων έναντι του αντιπάλου σε περίοδο πολεμικής σύρραξης.
- Τήρηση ετοιμότητας ταχείας αντίδρασης σε περιπτώσεις παραβίασης των θαλασσιών ζωνών, στις οποίες η Τουρκία έχει κυριαρχικά δικαιώματα που πηγάζουν από τις Διεθνείς Συμφωνίες και το Διεθνές Δίκαιο.
- Θα αναχαιτισθούν (παρεμποδισθούν) οι δραστηριότητες ερευνών και γεωτρήσεων που θα πραγματοποιηθούν χωρίς άδεια σε θαλάσσιες περιοχές, οι οποίες, είτε γνωστοποιήθηκαν στη διεθνή κοινή γνώμη ότι ανήκουν στην Τουρκία, είτε αυτές ανήκουν εν δυνάμει στην τουρκική δικαιοδοσία.
- Εφόσον απαιτηθεί, θα παρασχεθεί υποστήριξη σε δραστηριότητες ερευνών και γεωτρήσεων που θα πραγματοποιηθούν βάσει αδειών που εκδόθηκαν από την Τουρκία.

- Οι τουρκικές ναυτικές δυνάμεις θα συμβάλλουν στην αναβάθμιση της συνεργασίας και του συντονισμού σε εθνικό επίπεδο προκειμένου να υλοποιηθούν οι εθνικοί στόχοι που καθορίζονται στην Εθνική Στρατηγική Θαλασσίων Ερευνών της Τουρκίας.

**Η Τουρκία, ως μητέρα πατρίδα (ana vatan) και ως εγγυήτρια δύναμη, θα υποστηρίζει την άμυνα του ψευδοκράτους μέχρι να επιτευχθεί μια δίκαιη και μόνιμη λύση στην Κύπρο.**

- Θα παρακολουθούνται οι δραστηριότητες ερευνών και γεωτρήσεων στις παρακείμενες θαλάσσιες περιοχές και εφόσον απαιτηθεί θα εκδηλωθεί η επιβεβλημένη αντίδραση.
- Εφόσον απαιτηθεί, θα παρέχεται υποστήριξη σε θέματα που αφορούν στην έρευνα και διάσωση.
- Θα συνεχισθούν οι αεροναυτικές δραστηριότητες στο Αιγαίο στα πλαίσια: της αρχής της αμοιβαιότητας, των συμμαχικών σχέσεων, της καλής γειτονίας, των δικαιωμάτων στις ανοικτές θάλασσες που πηγάζουν από το Διεθνές Δίκαιο, της αρχής της ελεύθερης ναυσιπλοΐας, των ισορροπιών της Συνθήκης της Λωζάνης και των δικαιωμάτων της Τουρκίας που πηγάζουν από τις Διεθνείς Συμφωνίες.
- Θα δοθεί προτεραιότητα στις διμερείς στρατιωτικές συνεργασίες με τις γειτονικές χώρες.
- Θα αναζητηθούν οι δυνατότητες συνεργασίας με τους αρμόδιους Φορείς στο πλαίσιο της Θαλάσσιας Στρατηγικής της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης.
- Θα παρέχεται υποστήριξη και θα υπάρξει συμμετοχή στις δραστηριότητες του Ο.Η.Ε. και του ΝΑΤΟ.

Ας σημειωθεί ακόμη ότι, το δόγμα αυτό έτυχε ιδιαίτερης προβολής από την Τουρκία στο τέλος του 2018 και το πρώτο τρίμηνο του 2019 με τη μορφή ενός γεωπολιτικού μανιφέστο. Και συγκεκριμένα με την ερμηνεία που έδωσαν οι Τούρκοι στον όρο «Mavi Vatan (Γαλάζια Πατρίδα)».

Ο όρος Mavi Vatan (Γαλάζια Πατρίδα) χρησιμοποιείται προκειμένου να περιγραφούν οι περιοχές της θαλάσσιας δικαιοδοσίας της Τουρκίας στη Μαύρη Θάλασσα, στο Αιγαίο και στη Μεσόγειο (ήτοι τα χωρικά ύδατα, την υφαλοκρηπίδα και την Αποκλειστική Οικονομική Ζώνη), ενώ η γεωπολιτική διάσταση της «Mavi Vatan» και η σημασία που δίδει η Τουρκία για τις εξελίξεις στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο και το Αιγαίο προσεγγίζονται ιδιαίτερα αποκαλυπτικά από τον Τούρκο καθηγητή πανεπιστημίου Çağrı Erhan και στενό συνεργάτη του Erdoğan στο ακόλουθο κείμενο που δημοσιεύθηκε στις 03-02-2019, δύο ημέρες πριν την επίσκεψη του πρωθυπουργού της Ελλάδος στην Τουρκία: «Πλην ελαχίστων εξαιρέσεων, σε κανενός το μυαλό δεν υπήρχε η σκέψη ότι, η Τουρκία δεν αποτελείται μόνο από χερσαίο χώρο, αλλά από θαλάσσιο και εναέριο χώρο. Τις περισσότερες φορές μας έκαναν να ξεχάσουμε ότι αυτή η πολύτιμη χώρα που περιβάλλεται από θάλασσα στις τρεις πλευρές της, ταυτόχρονα, είναι και μια Γαλάζια Πατρίδα (Mavi Vatan). Την περίοδο που το ξεχάσαμε αυτό, μας έλειψε η βούληση και το σθένος να εκμεταλλευθούμε τα αγαθά που μας αναλογούν σύμφωνα με το Διεθνές Δίκαιο. Σε κάποια χρονική περίοδο, οι γείτονες μας, με τους οποίους μοιραζόμαστε την ίδια θάλασσα, μερικές φορές διαστρέβλωσαν το Διεθνές Δίκαιο και προέβησαν σε μονομερείς ενέργειες ύπουλα και πονηρά επειδή νόμισαν ότι, εμείς θεωρούμε τις ακτές ως την τελική συννοριακή γραμμή όπου σταματάει η πατρίδα μας. Σε όσους δεν αντιλήφθηκαν ακόμη, ούτε το τι θέλει να πράξει η Τουρκία, ούτε τις αλλαγές που έγιναν στην τουρκική στρατηγική για τη Μεσόγειο μετά την



εξάλειψη του προβλήματος των γκιουλενιστών, διατυπώνουμε τις επίσημες θέσεις μας με πέντε φράσεις: α. Η Τουρκία θα υπερασπισθεί τα νόμιμα και κυριαρχικά δικαιώματα της σε όλες τις περιοχές της θαλάσσιας δικαιοδοσίας της στη Μεσόγειο, τις οποίες είτε ανακήρυξε είτε δεν ανακήρυξε ακόμη. β. Η Τουρκία θα ανταπαντήσει σε κάθε είδους παραβίαση που θα γίνει στη Γαλάζια Πατρίδα (Mavi Vatan), όπως έπραξε στις παραβιάσεις που έγιναν στον τουρκικό χερσαίο χώρο. γ. Η Τουρκία δεν θα επιτρέψει σε καμία δύναμη να σφετερισθεί το μερίδιο της «βόρειας Κύπρου» (σ.σ. κατεχόμενη Κύπρος) από τον πλούτο της Μεσογείου. δ. Η Τουρκία θα υπερασπισθεί τα δικαιώματα της «βόρειας Κύπρου» με τον ίδιο τρόπο που υπερασπίζεται τα δικά της δικαιώματα. ε. Η Τουρκία θα τηρήσει την ίδια στάση και συμπεριφορά έναντι όλων των κρατών που επιθυμούν μια ακριβοδίκαιη συνεργασία στη Μεσόγειο στο πλαίσιο μιας ειλικρινούς και καλόπιστης αντίληψης.».

### **Η ΔΙΑΔΙΚΑΣΙΑ ΔΙΑΔΟΧΗΣ ΤΟΥ ERDOGAN ΘΑ ΕΠΗΡΕΑΣΕΙ ΤΗΝ ΤΟΥΡΚΙΚΗ ΕΞΩΤΕΡΙΚΗ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗ;**

Σε ό,τι αφορά στις ελληνοτουρκικές σχέσεις, εκτιμάται ότι η διαδικασία διαδοχής του Erdogan δεν θα επηρεάσει την τουρκική εξωτερική πολιτική. Μάλιστα, η εκτίμηση αυτή προκύπτει από μια απλή ανάγνωση για το πώς αντιλαμβάνονται οι Τούρκοι την έννοια του εθνικισμού που αποτελεί το κύριο συστατικό όλων των κοινοβουλευτικών κομμάτων στην Τουρκία πλην του κουρδικού. Συγκεκριμένα σας παραθέτω το ακόλουθο κείμενο μιας ομιλίας που πραγματοποίησε ο Erdogan το 2010: «Ο εθνικισμός συνενώνει συγκεκριμένα ιδεώδη και συγκεκριμένες αξίες, καθώς επίσης συσπειρώνει την κοινωνία κάτω από ένα κοινό όραμα και τη μετατρέπει σε μια ψυχή και μια καρδιά εν ονόματι της γαλήνης και της ειρήνης. Τα κύρια συστατικά στοιχεία του εθνικισμού δεν είναι ο δεσμός αίματος και οι γενετικοί κώδικες, αλλά η ιστορία, ο πολιτισμός, τα κοινά ιδεώδη και οι κοινές αξίες. Ο εθνικισμός μεγαλώνει τη χώρα, την κάνει υπολογίσιμη και παρέχει υπηρεσίες στο έθνος.».

### **ΕΚΜΕΤΑΛΛΕΥΣΗ ΕΝΟΣ ΠΙΘΑΝΟΥ ΤΡΩΤΟΥ ΣΗΜΕΙΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΤΟΥΡΚΙΑΣ**

Πρωτίστως, θα πρέπει εμείς ως κράτη, Ελλάδα και Κύπρος, να προβούμε σε μια αντικειμενική αξιολόγηση των εαυτών μας, να εντοπίσουμε τα τρωτά μας σημεία και στη συνέχεια να τα εξαλείψουμε αυτά πλήρως. Το επισημαίνω αυτό διότι η τουρκική στρατηγική στηρίζεται σε δύο άξονες: στην εκμετάλλευση των τρωτών μας σημείων και στην παρερμηνεία των Συνθηκών και Συμφωνιών εκμεταλλευόμενη η Άγκυρα μερικά ανύπαρκτα κενά σημεία που αυτή θεωρεί ότι υπάρχουν.



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## COMMENTARY\*

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Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak\*\*

4 April 2019

### Comments on the 2019 Turkish Municipal Elections

First of all, I would like to mention that this latest election from my perspective was a revolutionary one. I was expecting a downfall in the capital city of Ankara, but I was not expecting such a secular CHP (Republican People's Party) victory in the city of Istanbul. Personally, I was there, and I got an impression that the Justice and Development Party would have succeeded, but the outcomes surprised not only me, but many people in Turkey. And I guess even the candidate himself, *İmamoğlu*, was also surprised in my opinion.

According to the Turkish political history, we all know that whoever is going to win the elections in Ankara, and in Istanbul, are supposed to also gain control of the country in the general elections, so it's a very core indicator for the Turkish politics.

In this regard, I guess the alarm bells rang for Mr. Erdogan, and that's why he needs to basically ask himself what he has done wrong. And in this regard, we may say that the deteriorating Turkish economy played a very crucial role.

In order to prevent such defeat Mr. Erdogan had attempted to take some precautionary movements, like he gave orders to the municipalities to arrange some cheap markets for selling vegetables and fruits so that the ordinary Turkish citizens would not be badly affected from the inflation.

But when the ordinary Turkish citizen began to see the huge queues and the growing poverty in the Turkish cities, I understand that they wanted to send a very clear message to Mr. Erdogan that he has to mend the situation in the economy. And of course, when we are speaking about the economy, I would like to remind you what has happened last year in August when Mr. Erdogan engaged in a war of tweets with U.S. President Donald Trump, for not releasing pastor Branson.

Now, after the elections again we are witnessing a very tense situation between the United States and Turkey. While Turkey would like to buy the Russian S-400 missile systems, the U.S. is making it very much clear that Turkey cannot dance at two weddings at the same time,

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Researcher, Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern Studies; Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security*

meaning it cannot acquire F-35s, and at the same time the S-400s.

Of course, these, I mean the American warnings, will I guess be supported by new economic and military sanctions which will gravely influence the Turkish lira vis-à-vis the dollar, and again it will influence very badly the Turkish consumer, the Turkish citizen, so if not in the short term but in the long term, the Turkish administration should come to a new junction, and they have to ask themselves whether to go with the United States and the West, or to choose between its historical nemesis - the Russians.

I must admit that it is not an easy decision, but when we are looking on this particular matter I can tell you that Mr. Erdogan, as far as I understand it, sees himself a lot closer to Vladimir Putin than to Donald Trump since he is not accused, or he is not criticized on the basis of democracy or human rights for the elections, and other matters.

That's why we are saying that these elections were municipal elections, but from my perspective it was a lot beyond that. That's why it was very much crucial, and that's why Erdogan is still not internalizing the results of these elections as we see that his party already submitted objections to the results of this of these elections and we're going to see whether if they are going to accept it or not.

Ironically this defeat may also serve Mr. Erdogan's reputation in the Western world. We all know that the Western leaders and Western politicians, especially the European Parliament, are criticizing Mr. Erdogan's authoritarian attitude, and some of the politicians are even calling him a dictator. So he may come and tell, "Look, if I was a dictator, then how come I lost this election?" So if he will be wise enough, he may even use this this election defeat for his popularity and for his legitimacy both at home and also abroad.

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## COMMENTARY\*

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Habib C. Malik\*\*

15 April 2019

### **Lebanon Following the State Visit by the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo**

In the escalating US confrontation with Iran, Lebanon is a part of the picture. So far, that confrontation has been verbal, as well as involving sanctions. Verbally we just saw all the recent American designation of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization and the same thing applies to Hezbollah in Lebanon as an extension of that in American eyes.

We also saw on the recent visit of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to Lebanon some very clear warnings both to the Lebanese government, and to Hezbollah, and in fact in a few minutes of public statement he mentioned Hezbollah about eighteen times, which was taken by the leader of Hezbollah, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, as an indication of how strong they actually are. And we have of course the sanctions on Hezbollah which have carefully tried to avoid implicating Lebanese banks, but so far, Hezbollah has not been using the banking system in Lebanon they have other means of transferring cash to and from the country for their own purposes.

Also, in this context, US military moves are I think important in Lebanon. First of all the continued support by Washington of the Lebanese Armed Forces - the Lebanese Army - in terms of training and in terms of equipment, also the dramatic enlargement of the US embassy in Lebanon, almost making it perhaps the largest compound for the United States in the region, and clearly going well beyond being defined as a purely diplomatic mission.

There has been some interest by the United States in further north in Lebanon, in expanding an airstrip there that the Lebanese Army uses for possible extended American use in the future, and maybe even creating another military base there. So all of this we see activity on the ground by the United States. Lebanon is also concerned with the US support for the Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights.

The reason is that that annexation would also cover the Shebaa farms that Lebanon considers as Lebanese territory occupied by Israel, and that has been a sore point, and in fact it has been the most visible excuse for Hezbollah to carry arms and to carry on what they consider to be their “resistance movement” against Israel because some Lebanese territory remains in Israeli

\* *Transcript*

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

hands. There are also some disputes, lingering disputes, over how to demarcate the so-called “blue line” that separates Lebanon from Israel. So all of this seems to have been thrown into jeopardy with the blanket annexation and a US endorsement of the Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights.

Another noteworthy theme or item in Lebanon these days, which the United States focused on in Secretary Pompeo’s recent visit here, was the question of the demarcation of the oil and gas maritime lines between Lebanon and Israel. The United States has been offering itself as a third-party arbitrator to bring about this kind of demarcation, and by extension of course once extraction begins on the Lebanese side, the issue of unitization, unitizing what both and Lebanon are entitled to. The fact that the Lebanese have hesitated, and procrastinated, and voiced all kinds of reservations about this so far has not been very helpful. I mean, even if there are some feelings that the United States may not completely be impartial when it comes to Israeli interests, there is no better third-party arbiter than the United States in this particular situation.

I think the United Nations or any other international body of that sort is a non-starter, so it's the Lebanese who need to come to a decision fairly quickly on this one. Now, the President of Lebanon, Michele Aoun has openly stated that Lebanon will not be part of any arrangement on the Gaza oil situation that would include Israel, and the Lebanese have taken some steps with both Cyprus and Greece to try and forge links there, and perhaps even begin a new licensing round that would have in mind future cooperation with both Cyprus and Greece. How to integrate that with what Cyprus and Greece have already agreed to on the issue of maritime energy reserves with Israel is going to be quite a challenge I think, because at the end of the day, from a purely economic perspective it makes absolutely no point to duplicate pipelines or refinery access simply because of considerations of not wanting to deal with Israel. And so this is going to be a challenge moving forward for the Lebanese.

We've already seen some indications of disagreement within the Lebanese government. Some have said that the recent American proposals are a good opportunity to begin working as quickly as possible on settling the maritime line issue. Others have said no, we should press for a comprehensive deal, meaning to include both the land and sea demarcation lines that would then bring in the blue line issue and perhaps eventually Sheba as well. So even on the Lebanese side there is much agreement as to the best way to proceed.

Another important issue is the recent win by Benjamin Netanyahu for a fifth historic term as prime minister in Israel. From the Lebanese perspective, this is seen as pretty much a continuation of the more of the same, as it were, because Netanyahu is a known quantity. So the expectation is that the mutual deterrence status quo between Israel and Hezbollah in the south will continue, and certainly from Hezbollah's perspective there seems to be very little desire to shake or upset that kind of modus vivendi right there.

What is also to be expected is that Israel will continue launching raids against Iranian positions in Syria using Lebanese airspace. We've seen that as recently as yesterday and this has been a pattern that has continued throughout.

Lastly, many are apprehensive about the so-called deal of the century that might be announced by the Trump administration sometime in the near future regarding the Palestinian issue, but most people agree that there are so many difficulties in the face of what we've at least already

heard about the contours of that deal that in many respects it's really a non-starter.

Another very important issue for Lebanon is the question of the Syrian refugees which are at the present more than a million in number and they are quite a drain and a burden on the Lebanese economy. The official position of the Lebanese government has been to insist that these refugees need to be repatriated to Syria as soon as possible and not to wait until a final settlement of the Syrian problem and of the war in Syria. The idea is that there are many parts of Syria that are tranquil and transferring these large numbers to those areas, again, pending they returned to their respective villages, would be an important first step. The problem is that the Syrian regime and President Assad himself don't seem to be eager to want to bring back all these Syrians into Syria. If that's the case, then we are facing an impasse and that impasse can only be broken by direct intervention from Moscow. The Russians can make a decisive difference in altering the Syrian regime's view on this but then the question from Lebanon perspective is what price Moscow will ask in return from Lebanon.

Now we have seen recently a visit by President Aoun of Lebanon and a high government delegation to Moscow, and it seemed that the approach was to kind of use Moscow as a counterweight to the United States and to some of the displeasure that the Lebanese have had regarding certain recent American moves and policies. Frankly, I think this is a faulty approach because there is no need actually for an either/or here. The ideological tensions between East and West are gone, communism is over, and that element of the Cold War is gone. Yes, the United States and Russia are rivals on the world stage, but there are many points of intersection, especially in the Middle East, that can be exploited by a country like Lebanon to further its own interests. And so working with the Russians need not be crafted in terms that would appear anti-American and vice-versa. So I think in keeping with the Lebanese policy aspiration of distancing Lebanon from delicate or tricky disputes both regionally and internationally, I think that's the healthy approach for a country like Lebanon. Both the United States and Russia should be approached vigorously, and robustly, and meaningfully in order to solve a variety of issues including the question of the refugees.

The Europeans are very anxious that Lebanon remains stable because any instability in Lebanon might mean a new huge influx of refugees in Europe's direction, from Lebanon meaning mostly the Syrians, and that is something that the Europeans don't want. And so they're also on board and trying to facilitate perhaps a repatriation, or the beginnings of a serious repatriation of Syrian refugees back to their country.





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## PRESENTATION\*

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Eran Lerman\*\*

31 May 2019

### Key Issues of National Security Facing Israel

As you may know, the Jerusalem Institute of Strategy and Security is a relatively new conservative think-tank. Some of us came over from the Begin-Sadat Center at Bar-Ilan University, others have joined us since we established the institute. More recently, we've been joined by the outgoing deputy chief of staff of the IDF general Yair Golan, and we already have among the ranks the former National Security Advisor General Yaakov Amidror, and several others. We felt obliged to put together for what we all assumed, or hoped, would be a newly elected government, an outline of key issues, key policy recommendations in the field of national security and foreign policy grand strategy.

As you may all know, the prime minister has failed to put together a working coalition despite what was clearly an election victory on the 9th of April, and as of yesterday we are once again going to an election for the next Knesset, because this one has dispersed itself after this failure, and we are scheduled to have a new election on September 17. And hopefully by then there will be a new government. But the challenges require response anyway, and so we've listed them and put our recommendations in the public domain.

At the core of our concerns where we felt obliged to make very clear take a very clear, position is the sense that the regional situation remains unstable. Iran's plans and designs, and the possibility of a major confrontation, and of major conflict, still looms very large particularly on our northern frontier where the Iranians have full control of Lebanon and share control of Syria with the Russians. And they also have proxies with in the Gaza Strip, and of course elsewhere in the region with the Houthi uprising in Yemen, with elements of the Iraqi militias, and so on.

So, the possibility of conflict requires, we believe, a very robust effort by the government of Israel, and in the future the next government, first of all to sustain national cohesion, to limit and control the harm done by very abrasive election campaign, and heal some of the wounds, and keep the people united around the purpose of confronting and prospering against very determined enemies. We also suggest in the years - I believe that's the imprint of some of our former senior soldiers - we also suggests that the old spirit of the IDF taking the conflict to enemy territory, once again asserting the importance of maneuver in the battlefield is also part

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Vice-President, Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security*

of what we would recommend to the incoming government, or to the present government as it considers and reconsiders its options.

We put a very strong emphasis on Jerusalem. We are a Jerusalem institute, we believe that Israel's duty is to keep Jerusalem united, functional and govern fairly and firmly in united Jerusalem not only because of its historic and religious and moral value for the Jewish people and for Israel as a state, but also because of its absolute strategic centrality in the balance of strategic factors for the future of Israeli security which also calls for sophisticated policy towards the 1/3, more or less, of the population in Greater Jerusalem who are Palestinian Arabs.

We also - and I know this is a delicate proposition - we also believe that Israel, for the time being, given the very limited prospects of a breakthrough in the peace process - if that's even the proper word - we need to focus on effective conflict management with the Palestinians on one hand, and we need to extend a welcome to president Trump's initiative and to his efforts to change the dynamics, to break the logjam, to walk away from what I call the "EKP" - it's almost as bad as the AKP - the "EKP" is the initials for Everybody Knows Paradigm, the assumption that everybody knows what a Palestinian Israeli permanent status agreement would and should look like. There's one problem with this "EKP", with this very common wisdom around the world, which is that Israeli politics and Israeli people do not accept some of its basic premises for example the interpretation that a resolution of the conflict requires a withdrawal to more or less '67 lines. That's not our position, it's never been our position, this has not been the position of most American administrations over the years and if the present administration would move the goalposts who change the dynamics, that would actually make a future agreement of future solution more likely right now. We've had very long logjam, a very long failure to move forward precisely because of unrealistic expectation. So we need to manage the conflict while extending a welcome to Trump's initiative.

We also need to be very careful in managing our relations with elements, foreign elements who are now trying to penetrate Jerusalem - and not only Jerusalem - with a special emphasis on what the regime or government of Erdogan in Turkey is trying to do: to incite, organize, push for destabilization of the situation in Jerusalem and elsewhere. That requires close attention and countermeasures, and this also extends more to stand together with others in the Eastern Mediterranean in building up a capacity to contain and to limit the impact of this.

Here we point to the emergence of the Israeli-Greek-Cypriot tripartite secretariat. Add to this the creation of the EMGF, the East Mediterranean Gas Forum, in January this year. These are all very important developments and they are closely related to this question, to this challenge posed by the present trajectory of Turkish policy, of AKP policies.

Beyond that we look at broader agenda of Israeli foreign policy trying to build new patterns of cooperation with more and more elements in Europe who find it useful and beneficial to work with Israel to step carefully in Asia so as not to find ourselves, so to speak, on the elephant path between the People's Republic of China and our close and dear friends in the Indian government, and of course to sustain a relationship with the United States, and under increasingly polarized political conditions in America to sustain the bipartisan base of support for the Israeli American special relationship. And ultimately to build, and I would say to rebuild, because a lot of damage was done to the professional capacities of the Israeli foreign ministry in recent years for various reasons - that's that beyond the point here - but we need robust capacity not only to make remarkable breakthroughs in bilateral and multilateral

relations - and I think the prime minister deserves credit for what happened in this respect over the last few years - but also to follow up in with a wide variety of policies and operational relations with more and more countries in the world which find Israel an important and useful partner.

This is in a nutshell what we are recommending to the government and of course we drill down to details on this whole range of issues.

For me, as you may know the Eastern Mediterranean is one of the highest priorities. And I find the developments of the last seven-eight months since the Egyptian-Greek-Cypriot tripartite in Elounda to be of extremely positive and promising nature. Insofar, as we now have the beginning of institutionalization with the secretariat, with the EMGF, joint military exercises. And just recently, in very sad circumstances of major fires in Israel - luckily no loss of life like in previous occasions but still quite a lot of damage done - it was very gratifying to see essentially the entire what I call the "3+4", that is to say Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinians - the Jordanians did manage to send any help, but everyone else came and participated. So did the Croatians because there is a quadripartite emergency response arrangement or agreement between Israel, Greece, Cyprus, and Croatia - countries of the Eastern Mediterranean which know what forest fires are like, unfortunately. And so this is another opportunity for Israelis to be reminded of the benefit of Eastern Mediterranean integration.



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## ARTICLE

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George Chr. Pelagias\*  
13 September 2019

### **Offshore Hydrocarbons Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean**

The Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum was officially announced on the 14th of January in Cairo between Cyprus, Israel, Greece, and Egypt. The forum, a result of cooperation efforts between the four states, also demonstrates the growing commercial links between Israel and Egypt. In 2018, the two states entered into a landmark natural gas deal worth 15 billion US dollars in which Israel's Leviathan and Tamar partners agreed to export natural gas to Egypt's Dolphinus Cooperation.

On the 2nd of June, it was reported that trials had been held using the 90-kilometer on the water gas pipeline between Ashkelon in Israel and el-Arish in Egypt.

On the 25th of July, the gas forum held its second meeting in Cairo. This time the forum was attended by the energy ministers and representatives of Egypt, Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority, as well as representatives from France, the World Bank, and high-level participants from the US and the European Union.

A third forum is scheduled to be held during the second half of January 2020.

In Egypt, Eni announced on the 14th of March that it had made a new gas discovery located in the North Sinai concession. While additional tests will have to be made, it is believed that the discovery could be equal or even larger to that of the Zohr discovery made in 2015.

In Israel, while international companies have been cautious to get involved in the hydrocarbon industry due to the risk of jeopardizing their interests in the Arab Gulf, it was reported on the 14th of March that ExxonMobil had been holding talks with Israeli energy minister regarding bidding for rights of offshore blocks. If ExxonMobil would proceed in Israel, it would be the first oil major to operate in the country.

On August 4, the Israeli competition authority authorized Noble Energy and the Delek Group to acquire part of Arish-Ashkelon pipeline owned by the East Mediterranean Gas Company. The pipeline has been inactive since 2012 when it was shut down following a series of terrorist

*\*Executive Director, ERPIC*

attacks.

In Cyprus, ExxonMobil announced on the 28th of February that the Glafkos 1 field located in Block 10 in Cyprus exclusive economic zone could contain 5-8 trillion cubic feet of gas. This would be equivalent to 140-230 billion cubic meters of gas. For the sake of comparison, the Tamar gas field located in Israel contains approximately 280 billion cubic meters of gas. The discovery is likely to prompt further work on the Calypso field discovered by Eni and Total in 2018 which is estimated to contain 6-8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. This would bring Cyprus's total estimate gas reserves to about 20 trillion cubic feet.

As part of their effort of enhancing regional cooperation, Cyprus and Lebanon announced on the 11th of April that they had entered into negotiations for delineation of their exclusive economic zone.

With regard to the Aphrodite field in Block 12, it is expected that production would start in 2024 and latest 2025. Discoveries were first made in 2011, but production has been delayed since the stakeholders Noble Energy, the Delek Group and Royal Dutch Shell have renegotiated their production sharing agreement with the Cypriot government. The Cypriot government granted the exploitation license for the Aphrodite field on the 21st of July. The license was granted for an initial period of up to 25 years with an option of one renewal up to ten years.

On the 30th of July, the Cypriot government granted a license to Eni and Total for Block 7. The two companies hold 50% each. At the same time, the cabinet granted Total a license for Blocks 2, 3, 9 and 8, in which Eni is already the main licensee holder. Under the new licenses, Total will receive from Eni a share of 20% for Blocks 2 and 9, 30% for Block 3, and 40% for Block 8. The government also granted a 12-month extension for Block 2, 3, 9, 8 and 11. At the same time, the government also announced that they expect that nine exploratory and appraisal wells will be carried out in the next twenty four months.

In Lebanon, Total, the operator under the licenses awarded in 2017 for Block 4 and 9, announced on September 3rd that it, along with its consortium partners Eni and Novatek, are hoping to begin exploratory drilling by the end of December 2019. Drilling would be first carried out in.

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## COMMENTARY\*

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Elie Friedman\*\*

24 September 2019

### Results of the September 2019 Israeli Legislative Elections

Hello everyone. I am going to give you a quick input about last week's general election in Israel which occurred last Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. This was actually the second general election that we've had in the last number of months. We had an election in April that it appeared that Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of the Likud Party, had won. But he was then unable to forge a coalition, and immediately dispersed the Parliament when he wasn't able to form a coalition and called for new elections which occurred on Tuesday September 17<sup>th</sup>.

And this election, the second election produced a little bit of a different result than the first one. We can say, for sure, that the one loser of this election is Benjamin Netanyahu, because he didn't succeed in achieving what he set out to achieve. He set out to achieve a government, a coalition that would be based exclusively on his Likud Party with the ultra-orthodox and further right-wing parties. And that goal was not achieved. He didn't get the minimum of 61 seats, 61 out of 120 Knesset seats, or parliament seats that he would need to form that coalition. And he was hoping to have that coalition in part in order to be able to pass a law which would grant him immunity from facing the law. He has a pre-indictment trial coming up in two weeks for a few different charges that he is apparently going to have to face now because he will not be able to form a coalition that would be supportive of such a law.

So Netanyahu did seem to lose this election. But it's not really clear who won the election. The chief rival party, which is the Blue and White party, achieved more seats than Netanyahu's Likud Party. The Blue and White party that's led by the former chief of staff of the Israeli army Benny Gantz, they received 33 seats in the Knesset, whereas Likud achieved 31 seats. However, neither party really has a clear path to be able to form a coalition. Netanyahu immediately after the election, I believe one day after the election, immediately gathered what he calls his natural partners in for a meeting, which is the ultra-orthodox parties and the further right-wing party, the Jewish settlers' party which is now called the Yamina, or Rightwards. He gathered them into a meeting and signed that they would all operate as a bloc, and basically the idea being that Netanyahu would try to negotiate on all of their behalf with possibly centrist or left-wing parties, smaller parties that he would be able to bring them into a coalition along with them.

\* *Transcript*

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They're together forging a fifty-five-seats grouping, again short of that magic number of 61.

But it's not completely clear what Netanyahu's strategy here is, because the centrist party, Benny Gantz, the Blue and White party has stated that he would not sit in this kind of government. And he may try to entice certain members of that party to leave that party and join with this block with various offers of certain portfolios in the government. It doesn't seem that that's going to work though. Gantz, on the other hand, has set his own terms. He does also not have the numbers to form a government, a coalition with the smaller left-wing parties. And it seems that the only possibility is going to be some kind of national unity government. But this also has its own problems because Netanyahu is not going to easily give up being prime minister - he's been prime minister of Israel now for over ten years. And also, if he is indicted - which looks like he very well may be in the next probably two months or so - an indictment does not force a prime minister to leave his post. However, if Netanyahu was a minister in a unity government and not prime minister, say, he was defense minister or foreign minister, Israeli law dictates that he would have to leave that post and leave government activity while sitting trial. So it's a very weird law that actually a prime minister can be under trial, but a foreign minister or a defense minister cannot. So Netanyahu is going to be very hesitant to give up being prime minister under a unity government with Gantz.

But on the other hand, Benny Gantz said over and over as a campaign pledge that he would not sit in a government that was led by Netanyahu - Netanyahu as prime minister - basically as an anti-corruption stance. The fact that Netanyahu is going to be facing indictment means that Gantz would not sit in a government under a prime minister who is facing indictment or soon, in the next couple months, probably will actually be indicted.

So it's kind of a game of chicken, a game of politicians playing chicken, of who's going to blink first. Neither one of them wants to be blamed for forcing on the Israeli public a third round of elections which would be terribly unpopular among the Israeli public and a huge waste of money. But on the other hand, neither one wants to, let's say, blink first in letting the other one sit as prime minister first in a rotation agreement under a unity coalition.

Now, Gantz can probably justify to his voters sitting with Netanyahu in a government as long as Gantz himself is first in this rotation as prime minister, meaning that Gantz would be prime minister for two years, and then Netanyahu would be prime minister for two years. And the reason that Gantz could justify this is because if Netanyahu were to be indicted and the trial would take place, that trial would end, and Netanyahu would either have a plea agreement, or be sitting in prison, or be found innocent, be found not guilty within that two-year period. So the issue would become a non-issue. And Gantz would then according to his thinking be prime minister for two years and then after hand the reins over to another candidate from the Likud Party, probably not Netanyahu who would be forced to leave political life at that time.

So it's a very complicated situation. I imagine that around the world people are scratching their heads saying, well, who won the election? Well, it's really not clear. It seems that there's going to have to be some kind of a unity government with a rotation agreement. Neither one wants to blink first though. I mean, I really think that if Gantz blinks first and allows Netanyahu to serve as prime minister for I guess two years, he would lose a lot of credibility with his voting public, and it would really portray him as being weak and someone who flip-flops on his most significant campaign promise.



Now, a couple of important takeaways from this election, no matter who ends up forming the government in the end. One thing to point out is that this election was very much not an election on any issue. It wasn't really an election about the Palestinian issue, about the broader Israeli-Arab conflict. It wasn't that much of an election about socio-economic issues. It was very much an election that was a referendum on Netanyahu as a person and the direction that he is taking the country in. And I would say that in general the public has spoken in the sense that even though Likud did reach 31 seats, it's quite a bit less than they did in April, and in a way the public has spoken in the sense that it's saying "no" to the direction that Netanyahu was taking the public discourse, in the sense that Netanyahu was very much very divisive, portraying the justice system, the police, the media, various other democratic institutions as in some ways enemies of the state. And I believe that the public has said "no" to this kind of extremist rhetoric. And you can see that in the way the voting distributed among the various parties, the centrist parties. We can say Likud is maybe somewhat of a right center party, got a significant amount of votes, but even more so that the centrist Blue and White party. The center-left, let's say, Blue and White party received a large amount of votes, whereas the smaller rightist parties and the smaller leftist parties received a smaller amount of votes. So in a way, this election was an illustration that the public is to a large extent centrist and rejecting more extremist approaches both on the right and the left-wing.

Another important issue is that the Arab public came out to vote much more in this election than in the previous one. What is called the Joint Arab List party, which is actually a conglomeration of four different Arab parties, had quite an achievement in this election as it has shown that they are a significant political force that they weren't in previous elections. Also this party, aside from three members of the party, three Knesset members who did not agree to this, recommended actively for Gantz to be Prime Minister, which the Arab parties have not done over the last number of years. Since the time of *Yitzhak Rabin* in the early 1990s, the Arab parties have not recommended any candidate to be prime minister. Which means it's a signal that they want to take an active role in political life more so than in the past.

One thing to point out right now, today is Tuesday, I'm speaking to you on Tuesday September 24<sup>th</sup>, so by the time you see this it will be at least September 25<sup>th</sup> which means that the president... President is a symbolic position in Israel, but it's more than a symbolic position, because the president will announce his decision tomorrow, on September 25<sup>th</sup>, of who he has given the first try to try to form a government. Over the last three days, the president has had consultations with the leaders of the various parties and asked each of them who they recommend to be prime minister. I mentioned just a few minutes ago that the Arab party, the Joint Arab List, recommended Gantz, whereas the centrist and left-wing parties also recommended Gantz, and the right wing and ultra-orthodox parties recommended Netanyahu.

There's one party who's kind of a kingmaker of this election, which is Avigdor Lieberman's party called Yisrael Beiteinu, which is a Russian immigrant party who has basically said they're not recommending either candidate as prime minister, they will only support a unity government that would exclude the ultra-orthodox parties, so a kind of a secular unity government. That's what the Yisrael Beiteinu led by Avigdor Lieberman would recommend.

So it's a very, very complex political picture where various parties seem to boycott sitting in a coalition with other parties. And it's a situation of trying to have to square the circle. In my mind the only solution is a unity government. I'm not the only one who has this view, this is what many analysts have stated, and it seems that it's the only way that it can work out

mathematically. However, the question is who's going to flinch first in on the issue of who will be prime minister first in a rotation agreement is kind of the key issue that no one really knows how that's going to work out.

Netanyahu is some ways fighting for his life here, his political life will be over, it seems, soon, pending these indictments. So he's not just fighting for his political life, he's in a way fighting for his chance to stay out of prison. And there's a chance that he will at some point reach a plea agreement, but he may just go down fighting until the bitter and actually stand trial. So the legal issues and the political issues are quite interconnected here.

And unfortunately I don't have a very solid idea of where this is going all going to lead. It really is a question of who's the more wily negotiator and who is going to blink first. And I assume it may take more than a month or two until we have final solutions to these, but I would say by November or at the latest December we would have to have an idea of who our next prime minister will be and what the government will look like.

So I hope I've been able to in some ways make some semblance of order in this mess, because that's what it really is. And one takeaway that we should take, I mean this has been stated many times over the last number of years, but I'll state it again. The results of this election illustrate that our representative election system which is always based on coalition-forming is broken and we need to maybe think about a different electoral system, possibly a regional system, or maybe a presidential system, because the issue in which there has never since Israel's establishment been one party that's been able to form a government alone, being able to reach that threshold of 61 seats alone without forming a coalition, the fact that's never happened and that the large parties are always being in some ways played by the smaller parties who can threaten to form or leave a coalition if their needs are not taken care of, becomes a real problem for government stability, and it's not very good for democracy.

So I'm going to leave you with those thoughts for now and I assume that in the next number of weeks or months you'll have more of an idea of where this is all leading. Things change quite quickly here so it's possible that by the time you're watching this some of the things I'm saying are not totally relevant, but this is the best analysis I can give from the vantage point of September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Thank you for listening.

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## COMMENTARY\*

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Keya Izol\*\*

13 October 2019

### Turkey's Invasion of Northern Syria and the Kurds

We shall talk about the situation after the Turkish attacks in northeastern Syria.

This is the fifth day of the invasion of Syria, and at the moment the situation is very serious. There has been violence against civilians, and over 200,000 are fleeing right now, and about 400 individuals have been killed, many of them civilians. According to Turkish reports, it is only Kurdish guerillas that have been killed, but international reports show that over 40 civilians died. The rest are Kurdish activists. The number increases continuously.

According to Turkey, they were going to take 30 km, and by 30 km they mean the Kurdish cities like Kobane, Qamishlo, Gire Spi, and Ras al-Ain. All these are big cities, they are almost 5 km from Turkey's border. It means that they will take control, and that will include almost 4 million people.

Now, almost 200,000 are fleeing and they don't know where to go, and there is no international assistance on the ground. International assistance is not allowed into the area, the UN does nothing, the US does nothing, and Russia does nothing. So the only ones there are the Kurdish civilians and those with weapons, but they cannot defend themselves against Turkey's offensive, because they have modern weapons that they use against the Kurds.

And this is a one-sided attack from Turkey. The Kurds have not done anything against Turkey. On the contrary, they want to cooperate with Turkey, since they have been fighting against IS and defeated IS, but with the help of 12,000 martyrs from the Kurdish side. And during four-five years they have been fighting together with the US and other coalition countries and now they are left to their fate. And that is why we will continue to influence the public opinion abroad in order to stop the Turkish advancements. All Kurds abroad are very disappointed with the great powers, with the international community and the European Union. Certain countries have stopped weapons exports to Turkey. But Turkey has weapons to fight in Syria, and this attack was already known to happen about two-three months ago. Erdogan kept saying on a daily basis that he was going to attack.

So this double standard shown by European and US administration is very high. They shut their

\* *Transcript*

\*\* *Chairman, Kurdish Association of Sweden*

eyes when an ethnic group gets slaughtered by a regime like Turkey, a dictatorship like Erdogan's. He extorts Europe with 3.6 million refugees. Every time he extorts Europe, he receives more funds which he uses to murder the Kurds. The international community must take its responsibility. Right now, there is a risk that 12,000 IS warriors that are in prisons will be set free if the war continues, since the Kurds will not be able to guard them. And this means a danger for Europe and the whole region.

The future, the Kurdish question is divided into four countries: Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. We know that in Iraq, since 2003 the Kurds have controlled a part as a regional self-government. And what is happening in Syria as a result of the civil war, the Kurds have created an area where they have taken control where they live. And Turkey wants to prevent the contact between southern Kurdistan – Iraqi Kurdistan – and western Kurdistan in Syria. And it is this distance they want to take control over in order to cut the connection between parts of Kurdistan. This also means that Erdogan has silenced the Kurdish movement in Turkey. At the moment there are very severe restrictions against the Kurds in Turkey and everyone is silent. They are afraid and the whole of Turkey is like a prison. In the future this will develop so that Iraqi Kurds will eventually enter into the war. There are already talks about this. Masoud Barzani, who is the leader of the Iraqi Kurds, have made a statement that all Kurds must unite and defend Rojava. He did not mention a military intervention, but his words weigh heavily amongst the Kurds. And if these atrocities continue with killings of civilians, eventually the Iraqi Kurds will enter the region in order to assist their brothers. This is a scenario that Turkey is aware of and Erdogan will eventually want to attack southern Kurdistan, in other words Iraq.

If we look at the unrest in Iraq and Syria, and at the same time the unrest in Iran, Iran is much more strictly controlled than the other two states that I have mentioned. But neither Iraq nor Syria are de facto states – they are divided. And Turkey has the ambition to take over those areas that were abandoned after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. So these are the plans of Turkey: to ethnically cleanse the area and place Sunni Arabs there in order to cut the connection between the two part of Kurdistan. And at the same time, they know that this will develop into a full scale war between Turkey and the Kurds, which will include the whole of Kurdistan, including southern Kurdistan.

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## ARTICLE

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George Chr. Pelagias\*  
December 2019

### Offshore Natural Gas Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean

*In 2010, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) estimated that the Eastern Mediterranean, could hold potential reserves of 1.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil, and 122 trillion cubic feet, (tcf) of recoverable natural gas, in what is known as the Levant Basin, and 1.8 billion barrels of recoverable oil, and 223 tcf of recoverable gas in what is known as the Nile Delta Basin.<sup>1</sup> Since the publication of the USGS studies, there has been a significant number of offshore natural gas discoveries that support these estimations. The natural gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean not only promise an era of economic stability and energy security in a region historically plagued by instability, but they also have the potential of becoming an important part of the wider energy map of the Mediterranean and Europe. However, existing geopolitical conflicts in the region cast doubts over the prospects of these developments, especially as traditional land bound conflicts come to manifest themselves as conflicting claims over resources, and disputes over demarcation of maritime borders.*

#### Regional Discoveries to Date

To date, Egypt, Israel and Cyprus, have made most progress in exploring and developing their domestic resources.

Egypt, with a long history of both onshore and offshore hydrocarbon development, was estimated to hold 75.5 tcf of proven gas reserves in 2018, according to the 2019 BP Statistical Review of World Energy.<sup>2</sup> Egypt's natural gas deposits will no doubt continue to increase, especially if there are more discoveries like that made in the Zohr field in 2015, a gas discovery

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This article was originally published in *Särtryck ur Tidskrift i Sjöväsendet*, Nr 6, 2019, pp.471-476.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S Geological Survey, 'Assessment of Undiscovered Oil and Gas Resources of the Levant Basin Province, Eastern Mediterranean, March 2010', <http://pubs.usgs.gov>; U.S Geological Survey, 'Assessment of Undiscovered Oil and Gas Resources of the Nile Delta Basin Province, Eastern Mediterranean, March 2010'.

<sup>2</sup> BP Worldwide, Statistical Review of World Energy 2019, [www.bp.com](http://www.bp.com).

estimated at 30 tcf and considered the largest in the world.

Israel, according to the same statistical review, is estimated to hold proven reserves of 14.6 tcf. Taking into account that this does not include the Leviathan field, estimated at approx. 20 tcf, and that several new offshore licenses have been issued, Israel's hydrocarbon deposits are likely to increase in the coming years. Cyprus, which is a relative newcomer to the hydrocarbon industry had its first discovery in 2011, of approx. 4.5 tcf. There have since been a total of six exploration wells drilled, two of which have been confirmed to hold gas deposits (the Calypso field, estimated at 6-8 tcf, and the Glafkos-1 field, estimated at 5-8 tcf). This brings the estimated reserves of Cyprus to approx. 15-20 tcf. Additional wells are scheduled to be drilled within Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) over the coming year, and experts are optimistic that more discoveries are to be expected.

It has been estimated that Lebanon could hold up to 25 tcf of natural gas, and exploratory drillings are scheduled to be carried out in areas awarded during the first licensing round in 2017. A second licensing round was launched in April 2019, and is expected to close on 31 January 2020.

However, offshore explorations and developments are very costly, especially if deep water drillings are involved. There is only a certain type of large International Oil Companies (IOC) that have the technical knowhow required to undertake such projects. The profit margins of the companies involved must therefore be guaranteed in order to justify the high expenses involved.

In the case of Israel and Cyprus, developing the resources strictly for the domestic markets is not financially viable, and at present there are primarily three export options being considered: a) liquefying the gas (LNG) and transporting it to international markets by ship, b) constructing an underwater pipeline to Turkey in order to supply the Turkish market, and by extension Turkey's European neighbors, and c) a underwater pipeline to Greece that would also link up to Italy.

It should be noted that the cost of pipeline projects are usually directly proportional to the length of the pipeline for any given flow rate or pipeline diameter. Offshore pipelines are more expensive than onshore pipelines, as are very large diameter pipelines, and pipelines with additional compression facilities. LNG, however, only becomes economically feasible in the case of long distances, or when the construction of a pipeline becomes complicated due to geographical or geo-political reasons. Experts' opinions differ on the issue of the economic feasibility of long distance pipelines. As a rule of thumb, however, the cost effectiveness of pipelines vs. LNG shifts at distances that go beyond 5,000 km onshore and 2,000 km offshore.

When Cyprus and Israel are concerned, geopolitical complications that would make pipelines difficult are manifested in the deteriorating relations between Turkey and Israel, as well as the continuing Turkish military occupation of northern Cyprus. Taking into consideration that global LNG trade is on the rise, and is expected to overtake inter-regional pipeline shipments by late 2020,<sup>3</sup> the most probable option, at this stage, is that of LNG, whether it is from the existing Egyptian liquefaction facilities in Idku or Damietta, or from a facility constructed in Israel or Cyprus.

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<sup>3</sup> BP Worldwide, Statistical Review of World Energy 2019, [www.bp.com](http://www.bp.com).

## Significance for Europe

With Europe's own energy supplies limited, the need for greater diversity in the petroleum and natural gas sector is vital to the EU's energy security. Current EU energy security policy centers on the notion of diversification and interconnection. In this respect, the Southern Corridor, which aims at turning Turkey into a natural gas transit hub, bringing gas from Central Asia to serve European needs, is a cornerstone of such diversification policy. But pipelined gas from Turkey and/or the Eastern Mediterranean is in the end of the day unlikely to rival existing gas imports from Russia, primarily due to the limitation of the amount of gas that can be transferred via pipeline. In 2018, the EU's gas consumption stood at 458.5 bcm, and imports from Russia were approx. 168.6 bcm by pipeline, with an additional 6.9 bcm by LNG.

The recently inaugurated Trans-Anatolian Pipeline, considered to be the cornerstone in the Southern Corridor project, will have an initial capacity of 16 bcm/year, of which 6 bcm will be reserved for Turkey. By 2026 it is scheduled to have a capacity of 30 bcm/year and may in the distant future reach 60 bcm/year. How much of this gas that will be reserved for the growing industrial needs of Turkey, and how much will be available for the European market, is still not clear. In addition, European imports of Russian gas will certainly continue especially with the completion of the Nord Stream 2 project which would double current exports via the Baltic Sea to 110 bcm/year.

But while the gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean may not be able to compete with the flow of gas from Russia, the fact that this gas lays both within the boundaries of the EU as well as in its proximity enforces the argument that the gas should enter the European market, and that LNG is the most viable way to make that happen. At the same time it should be pointed out that it is the IOCs involved that will have the final say, as long as they are footing the bill.

## Prospects of Regional Cooperation

The development of a regional energy sector has the potential to be a catalyst for peace, stability and future co-operation between the states in the region. In the past few years, two tripartite alliances have emerged in this respect. The first is between Greece, Cyprus and Egypt, the second between Greece, Cyprus and Israel. These relationships have materialized both out of joint economic interests, primarily connected to the development of the offshore natural resources, and out of common security concerns in the form of religious radicalization and the rise of regional hegemonic powers.

The first meeting of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) was held in Cairo on 14 January, 2019, and included Cyprus Israel, Egypt and Greece. The forum, in particular, cemented the growing commercial links between Israel and Egypt, as Israel is scheduled to become a gas exporter to Egypt as a result of a USD 15 billion deal in 2018, under which up to 3.5 bcm will be exported from the Leviathan and Tamar fields.<sup>4</sup>

A second EMGF meeting was held later in July and was attended by the energy ministers and representatives from Egypt, Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority. The meeting was also attended by representatives from France, the World Bank, the US, and

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<sup>4</sup> Schmil Daniel, Tamar gas to begin flowing to Egypt this month, Globes, 02.06.2019, <https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-tamar-gas-to-beginflowing-to-egypt-this-month-1001288125>

the EU. The focus of this meeting was the future development of the EMGF as well as increased cooperation for the promotion and exploitation of natural gas reserves in region. The EMGF is scheduled to hold its third meeting in January 2020.

### **Maritime Border Disputes**

Unfortunately, these energy developments are taking place in the backdrop of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the existing state of war between Israel and Lebanon, and the continuing Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus. There is also the ongoing internal conflict in Syria as well as the persistent existence of Islamic militants in the region.

The effect of this is that the ability to find diplomatic solutions to issues like delineation of maritime borders and joint exploration is difficult. While the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982 offers means of how to address such matters, not all states have signed or ratified the convention. To date only Greece, Cyprus, and Egypt have ratified the convention. Lebanon has signed but not ratified it. Israel, Turkey and Syria have neither signed nor ratified it.

Cyprus and Egypt delineated their EEZ in 2003 Lebanon and Cyprus in 2007, and Israel and Cyprus in 2010. All these agreements are based on the so called median line principle under UNCLOS. Lebanon insists that the ratification will continue to be pending as long as its territorial disputes with Israel continue. This has relevance to Cyprus since the maritime border between Israel and Lebanon connects to the Cypriot EEZ.

Turkey strongly objects to the agreements Cyprus have signed with Egypt, Lebanon and Israel on the basis that Cyprus does not represent the entire population of the island. Relations between Cyprus and Turkey have been strained ever since the independence of Cyprus in 1960. The strained relationship primarily derives from Turkey viewing Cyprus as being part of its sphere of strategic interest. In July 1974, Turkish invasion of Cyprus's northern part took place in response to a Greek military coup inspired by the junta in Athens. This action resulted in the current UN-monitored 'Green Line' dividing the Republic Cyprus and the self-proclaimed Turkish state in the north in 1982. To date, Turkey is alone in its recognition of the northern part and non-recognition of Cyprus.

Turkey also claims that it holds the over the areas within the Cyprus-Egypt EEZ demarcation to the west of Cyprus (west of longitude of 32°16'18"E), which it registered with the UN. Meanwhile, Turkey signed a continental shelf agreement with the Turkish Cypriots in September 2011 to delineate between the Turkish coast and the north of the island.

Turkey has escalated its claims in the Eastern Mediterranean in areas that form part of Cyprus EEZ or that are claimed by Greece. In this highly confrontational atmosphere, Turkey, arrogating the perceived rights of the Turkish Cypriots, has granted licenses over large sections of Cyprus EEZ to the TPAO, Turkey's national energy Exploration and Production Company. Since 2017, Turkey has conducted continuous seismic surveys within Cyprus EEZ, and in February 2018 Turkey dispatched naval warships to block an IOC licensed by Nicosia from conducting exploratory drillings within Cypriot waters. In May, 2019, Turkey stepped up its violations by sending its drillship, the *Fatih*, to conduct exploratory drillings within Cyprus' waters. A second drillship, the *Yavuz*, was sent to a different location to commence drilling later in August.



In a move that will further contribute to the destabilize the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey entered into two Memorandums of Association with the Tripoli based government in Libya on 28 November 2019. While the memorandums have not yet been published at the time of this article, media reports indicate that the first memorandum relates to military co-operation between Turkey and Tripoli, while the second relates to the delineation of the maritime boundaries. Greece has strongly objected to the memorandum since it completely ignores the presence of the Greek island of Crete between the coasts of Turkey and Libya, and thus disregards the rights of islands under UNCLOS.

The Libyan National Army (LNA) who controls the eastern part of the country since 2014, and is receiving active support from Egypt, have supposedly opposed the agreements and called them illegitimate as Tripoli does not have the right to sign memorandums with other countries outside the scope of the U.N.-brokered agreement that established this government. Egypt, which has been at odds with Turkey since the Egyptian military overthrew Islamist President Mohamed Mursi in 2013, has also dismissed the deal as “illegal”.<sup>5</sup> The move by Turkey and Libya have prompted Egypt and Greece to announce the need to accelerate talks to define and delineate the EEZ between the two states.<sup>6</sup>

### **Concluding Remarks**

Current and future natural gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean have the potential to transform the region into a self-sufficient energy producer, and a future source of energy for Europe.

Establishing and maintaining regional co-operations will be essential in order for such an enterprise to be successful. In this respect, the emergence of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum is truly a positive development and should receive full support from the international community, especially the EU.

But the future prospects of the Eastern Mediterranean are also dependent on the inclusion of Lebanon and Turkey. Unfortunately, the continuing state of play between Lebanon and Israel, as well as Turkey’s belligerent behavior towards Greece and Cyprus, is making such inclusion increasingly difficult. Still, it is rather evident that the established co-operations in the region will continue despite this.

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<sup>5</sup> Butler Daren & Gumrukcu Tuvan, Turkey signs maritime boundaries deal with Libya amid exploration row, Reuters, 28.11.2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-libyaidUSKBN1Y213I>

<sup>6</sup> Greece, Egypt to speed up creating EEZ’s, Ekathimerini, 01.12.2019, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/247053/article/ekathimerini/news/greece-egypt-to-speed-up-creating-eezs>.



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## COMMENTARY\*

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Ashraf Mohamed Naguib\*\*

19 December 2019

### **A Look at Egypt's Domestic Challenges**

We're talking about a set of challenges, the domestic challenges facing the current administration and leadership in Egypt. And, of course, Egypt is a humongous country by all definitions and not an easy country for anyone to be able to lead, especially after two revolutions and very turbulent, how can I say, sixty years pre-2011.

But one of the main sets of challenges - and some people might look at it as opportunities as I do - but it is a current and immediate challenge, and that is a population of about 110 million people with a growth rate of about 2.7%, so we're adding about 2.7, 2.8, 2.9 million people a year to our population. And that in itself is a very, very difficult task for any leadership. Especially when you're working on what they call a structure reform program. And it is a structure reform program but I see it as a recovery reform program. Because that's a recovery program, because that's where we're getting to and that is pre-2011, GDP growth 2011, pre-2011 tourism, pre-2011 everything, basically, is trying to recover back to that pre-2011 numbers and indices.

But more importantly is that you have other sets of issues. That 110 million people, you've got 38% of them that live under the poverty line, and we're talking about 1.9-2 dollars a day. So you've got 38% of a population within that context.

Additionally, that results in, of course, a lack of proper education. We've got a very high illiteracy rate as well, and more importantly that 50% of Egypt's population is basically under the age of 30. And 50% of them are under the age of 20. So you've got this, you know, amazing demographics, composition of the population, and it's very difficult for you to be able to do the recovery, do the structural reform program, and be able at the same time to maintain what we call the safety net for the majority of Egyptians that are living under the poverty line and, you know, lack the proper education and literacy for them to be able to be productive part of Egypt's recovery program. So I would say, these would be the main difficult parts.

Of course, this leads to issues of unemployment, leads to issues in productivity, leads to issues in divorce rates. So the impact of illiteracy, lack of education, and at the same time the very large number of Egyptians living under the poverty line is extremely, extremely hindering for

\* *Transcript*

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any administration that would come to the same situation or under the same circumstances.

Now, that being said, there are a lot of other set of challenges that happen and these are more regional challenges. If we look at the region around us, just next door, I'm just going to talk about our next-door neighbors. And I'll consider Chad to be one of them in this case. You've got Sudan, you've got Chad, you've got Libya, you've got of course Palestine and Israel, and let's throw into the mix Jordan here.

Most of that region itself is extremely turbulent. We see what's happening within the context of the region. And these were places... even Iraq at one point can be considered as part of the hindering process of what's happening in Egypt. Because we had a lot of people, a lot of these people living under the poverty line or uneducated that used to go to these countries and were workers there. We are talking about maybe 2-3 million people in Libya, another 3-4 million that were living and working in Iraq. And they've all come back, and that adds to the unemployment problem, adds to a lot of other issues domestically. So until we are going to see some kind of recovery, or some kind of normality within the region, I think this situation is going to continue to be quite challenging for Egypt.

### **Recent Constitutional Amendments Related to Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's Presidency**

In 2019, there were constitutional amendments that had taken place and part of these constitutional amendments were ratified by parliament and had gone through a popular referendum as well. And that was to change the terms of the 2014 constitution, the presidential terms and how long a president can stay. And hence el-Sisi is in his second term according to the 2014 constitution, but starting in 2022 he will be able to run for president again with a longer term, which will be a six-year term, and he will be able to run for two terms. And hence we could be expecting to have el-Sisi in the presidency for a good 2030, 2031 to 2034. So he'll be able to run in 2022, 2028 and he will be able to exercise six-year terms rather than the four-year terms that were placed in the constitution.

Now, the constitution, even the amended constitution says that the presidential terms would be only two terms. But it's sort of like a reset, so they'll go from the next elections with another two terms, but there will be six-year terms. So we're probably going to see that there will be elections as they were in the past two presidential run ups for presidency. It is very, very possible that el-Sisi will be able to get the votes and maintain his leadership in Egypt till about 2034.

So there have been constitutional changes that have sort of managed that, the parliament was overwhelmingly pushing it and they did ratify the popular vote for it in the referendum as well. So basically I don't think we're going to be seeing major changes in the upcoming two elections in Egypt under the new constitution.

### **The Future of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt**

Being on the ground here in Egypt, you have to look at it from two perspectives, or actually three perspectives. The Muslim Brotherhood as an international organization that does really exist, and then you have the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood here in Egypt that is the birthplace but not by (inaudible) voice. Again, a lot of people, if they read the history of the Muslim Brotherhood, you will get to the point that they were a foreign sort of employment into Egyptian society, even back then. And then the third aspect of this equation, or variable of the

equation, are the people, the regular Egyptian people. There's about if the numbers are correct about 2.2 million Egyptians that subscribe to being part, directly or indirectly, of the Muslim Brotherhood as a thought ideology rather than an actual organization.

And we will look at the international part first, and they're spread all around the world, but the majority of them will be probably in the United States and the others in Turkey. And we can see that Erdogan and the Turkish current administration, and government, and leadership is a very strong part of that international organization of the Muslim Brotherhood - whether they like it or not it is a truth.

Then you've got the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood which was the most prominent of them all as the birthplace of the Muslim Brotherhood, so they have the strongest offices here in Egypt. And the leaders were also living and were members of parliament pre-2011, well known and by names, in a sense were given some leeway to be part of the political process pre-2011.

Of course, they were again given this leeway as part of the political process post the-2011 revolution. But the reality at the end of the day is, when you look at the composition of the Muslim Brotherhood and really try to understand it, it's not like you walk into a company that is registered and has a legal entity. The Muslim Brotherhood per se is an ideology and you really can't take that away from people. So you will find a lot of the 2.2 million people that I talked about or Egyptians that subscribe to this ideology, still probably do subscribe to the ideology, and herein that is the political Islam, is the creation of the Islamic umma or the reviving of the Islamic umma - countries without borders, a caliphate, going back probably a thousand four hundred years in thinking.

And with the advent of the Erdogan of the region, a lot of the Muslim Brotherhood thought that this could be another model that they can emulate here in Egypt by playing the West with their own tools, and that is democracy, and open transparency, and all of the things that we see, Turkey having tried to do and now really showing the other side of the coin. So that was really the perspective that they're going to come to Egypt, they're going to use the Western tools of democracy, and transparency, and governance to solidify their power in Egypt, and then move with their true agenda. And their true agenda, again, is to wipe away all of the borders of the Arab or Islamic region to become one Islamic umma.

And I think that's really not the true basis of democracy, and it's not the true direction of where Egyptians - 110 million people minus 2.2 million of them - where we want to head with a modern Egypt that is built on its real background, true civilization of seven thousand years, you cannot eradicate that by simply taking away even the minority, which is the Coptic Egyptians, which are about 12 million to 13 million people now, if not a little bit more than that.

So it was very, very difficult for them to be able to come in and convince - the rest of the world, yes - but to convince Egyptians that they are the way forward and they will be leading Egypt into what we believe should be the natural place of Egypt globally. So you will find very little people talking about the Muslim Brotherhood today in Egypt or at least promoting themselves as being such. The rest of the Egyptian leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood are either neatly tucked away in Qatar or neatly tucked away in Turkey. And with a couple of them in London, others in the United States, probably the ones in the United States are a little bit more active because they get the - how can I say - the audience of some of the senators, some of the Congress people, some of the media. But in all reality as we move forward here in Egypt, they

are really not part of our day to day lives, they're not part of our day-to-day thinking. There are, of course, some hindering steps that they take. We might call it terrorism in a sense, but that's all around the world as well, so we can't really pinpoint. But we believe, we strongly believe - a lot of Egyptians do - that they are the mother of all terrorist organizations. Again, you cannot just simply because you replace what a man wears - like a suit and a tie - change the ideology of them doing whatever it takes to be part of or create this Islamic umma.

So they're not really being taken into consideration as an opposition. Even right now you can't really call them an opposition, you can't see them in the street, there's no influence, and nobody promotes themselves specifically as being part of the Muslim Brotherhood. I think the 2013 revolution, despite how Western media and a lot of other countries might have viewed it, it was a popular revolution, it was even more popular than the 2011 revolution. It was in a sense the way and the means that Egyptians not just told the Muslim Brotherhood, not all other terrorist organizations, but for the rest of the world that for a country that is 7,000 years old that is known specifically for building pyramids under their religious context back then, we are religious people - Muslims and Copts - and we will not be dictated, and do not allow for an organization, a terrorist organization like the Muslim Brotherhood to dictate the way that we believe in God, or the way that we practice our religions. And I think in 12 months the Muslim Brotherhood had instigated the Egyptian people to such an extreme where these numbers were... Some people might doubt the numbers, but there were 30 million Egyptian people in the street asking for the ousting of this organization which we never believed to be in power because of a democratic process, really. Because, you know, democracy here, it's a fine line. Yes you can have democratic elections, but then if they're not fair and they're influenced by the concept of God, if you do not vote for the Muslim Brotherhood candidate, you're going to go to hell. I mean, that's a very, very, very big statement to be using.

And hence we've talked about inclusion for all minorities in society. There is nothing wrong to have an ideology as such as long as you do not refer to any violence, which they have, and have done, and I've seen it as somebody that lived through the 2011 revolution onwards in Egypt. We have seen their violent acts, we continue to see a lot of their violent acts simply because they're not probably labeled Muslim Brotherhood, but if you call them Mujahedeen of Sinai, if you call them whatever it is at the end of the day that they all fit within, whether it's ISIS, whether it's... Whatever it is. As long as the ideology is eradication of the borders, national sovereignty and build-up of Islamic umma, or in the case of Erdogan in Turkey the reviving of the Ottoman Empire, is always going to be unacceptable for not just the leadership, but normal Egyptian people as myself and others.

By default we've got this incredible religious balance that we have here. You'll find people on a Thursday evening, which is our pre-weekend, that they'll go out, they'll have fun, they'll have weddings, belly dancers, maybe have a couple of drinks here and there, a smoke here and there. But on a Friday they're in the mosque and on the weekends they're in the church. And it's a very religious-based culture since the ancient Egyptians. And dictating to them on how to practice, and what your future is, and then take away your national identity - as confusing as our national identity is now - it was very, very unacceptable by the people. And then take into consideration what was happening around us with this Arab Spring. We were looking at what's happening in Syria, what's happening in Tunis, what's happening in Libya and the extremism of the approaches of such terrorist organizations. And again, it was this push from the United States very specifically on saying we've got to respect all opposition, and that I respect, yes. But

respect the opposition that is actually within the context of national sovereignty, not a terrorist organization - as I like to refer to them - that is using your support as the West with tools of democracy in the country that has only till today had three, actually four presidential elections, and if you were going to play that game and call it the first democratically elected president of Egypt, it's not true, because the first democratically elected president of Egypt was Hosni Mubarak, believe it or not. And that was in the 2005 presidential elections. It was the first ever multi-candidate presidential elections to happen in the history of Egypt. Again, I'm not saying that they were fair and transparent, but that was the first time that Egyptians went down and had multi candidates running for office. So the 2012 elections were not the first and he was not the first democratically elected president. And if you were on the streets, if you saw the lack of transparency, if you saw all the infringement against the concept of democracy that happened during these elections... And again, if you give people the choice that either you vote or you go to hell, and that's a very, very, very strong message and hence can get a lot of people. And like I said, 38% of our population lives under the poverty line, and almost 30% that are illiterate and uneducated and hence very easily manipulated by the one thing that they are so confident and sure of, and that is their relationship with the Supreme Being regardless of what religion that you are. So you don't need to convince Egyptians to go to the mosque or to pray to God, and they were just pushing it a little bit too much. And it just took them a year to show their failure, that this is the only thing that they had in their pockets, to actually play around with as a leadership.

The other thing is they lack complete and utter experience in anything regarding economics, regarding politics. And what they did was basically a Stockholm Syndrome, in a sense, because they had been under the Mubarak regime and Sadat regime before that, let's say they were oppressed to some extent, they were given a little bit of leeway in the 2000s where they were members of parliament known as Muslim Brotherhood - I think there was a good 30 of them in Parliament at the time if not a little bit more - but they had zero experience and started to use the same tactics and the same methodology, and the same approach as the Mubarak regime had done in terms of giving out things at elections, food, money, providing cooking oil, and rice, and spaghetti, and Qurans, and things totally out of context of what we believe the democratic process in elections should be.

Now that being said, I'm not going to say that the past two elections have been the fairest elections either. But that is by definition just a maturity of a population that has never gone through elections before till 2005. So when I say it wasn't fair in a sense, a lot of people... Because el-Sisi was extremely popular, extremely, extremely popular in the 2013 elections, everybody wanted him to come in. He was in a sense until today considered to be a savior against these terrorist organizations that we're trying to (inaudible) and influenced by countries like Qatar, and Turkey, and the United States, and a lot of others that had vested interests to see Egypt fail.

So the difference was that in polling booths, in stations you'd have pictures of el-Sisi all around, not in the station itself but on the buildings around, cars driving around singing songs about him. So it was a very fine line between what you would call fair, free elections versus in this case he was a national hero that saved us from these people and hence we were just celebrating him coming into power, in the sense. So he never went on a campaign trail, for example, he never gave speeches before his election in 2013, none of that really happened.

So I think every country needs to take its time in creating its democratic process and go through a maturity level, and I think Egyptians need to fix a lot of things demographically within Egypt itself before we can really say that we've reached that maturity and sophistication of free democratic elections as we move forward.



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## COMMENTARY\*

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Andrew Lambert\*\*  
20 December 2019

### 2019 UK Election Results

It is difficult to be entirely dispassionate about the current state of British politics. Indeed, the recent spat over Brexit seemed at times almost like the opening shots to another civil war.

Despite all the hype, and maybe because of all the falsehood, in an election where 88% of all Conservative output into the social media was judged as either incorrect or downright lies, Boris Johnson gained an 80 seat majority in the House of Commons. Conservative message was to “Get Brexit Done”! With the implication that all would soon be over, and the “broad sunlit uplands” awaited.

Voting turned on Brexit weariness, dislike of foreigners (especially in the Midlands and North Country) together with an aversion to Jeremy Corbyn, whose policies were regarded not only as costly to individuals but also incredible, or unbelievable, in their sheer financial scale.

But the results when they came in gave Mr. Johnson the Largest Conservative majority since Margaret Thatcher in 1980s, in aftermath of the Falkland Islands conflict. With a majority of 80 seats, Boris has almost unlimited powers to force Brexit through and then to begin a range of other issues that he says will make Britain surge ahead.

Nevertheless, the UK runs a first past the post system and an analysis of total no of votes cast still shows 52% for Remain parties (including Labour) and 48% for Conservatives & Brexit party.

However, for now though the wind has been taken out of the Remain sails, and the Remain cause is leaderless and directionless.

As the FT has noted: “If ever Brexit is to be fully or partly reversed, it will be far in the future. It would require profound changes in British politics and public opinion, and changes in the EU as well.”

So, it is now all but inevitable that UK will leave EU on 31 Jan 2020, thereby losing all EU rights and influence, and becoming a middle- rate power stuck on the outskirts of Europe. And as the Pax Americana declines, and other powers, notably China, rise a global Britain could well be

\* *Transcript*

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buffeted by nationalist winds as she seeks to trade across the world.

Under the terms of the Withdrawal Plan, UK will have a period of transition between Jan and 31 Dec 2020 in which to craft a Free Trade Agreement. Failure to agree an FTA would result in the UK having no agreement with EU after 2020, and all subsequent trade would be on World Trade Organisation or WTO terms. The Transition could be extended by mutual consent after 31 Dec for a period of up to 2 years to allow negotiations to be completed. The Decision on any extension has to be made by 31 Jul 2020.

In his victory speech Boris appealed to “one-nation” conservatives, intimating not only a need to keep his new adherents in the North on side, but also a desire for the Remain voices to be heard. However, his appeal was almost entirely lost in Scotland where the SNP under Nicola Sturgeon enjoyed their greatest ever election success, gaining 48/59 Scottish Seats, and giving her a renewed opportunity to play on that supposed mandate to hold another Independence Referendum in Scotland. In reality though much of her success was predicated upon many Scots’ antipathy to Brexit and had little to do with any move to independence.

Nevertheless, both Boris Johnson and Michael Gove have immediately rejected the SNP claim, reminding voters that the 2014 Referendum was sold as a “once in a generation” opportunity for independence. However, the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2021 are likely, now that Conservative Leader Ruth Davidson has left the stage to become a mother, to yield a sizeable majority for the SNP in Holyrood, and with this mandate Nicola Sturgeons’ drive for another referendum, probably in 2022, may be impossible to resist. On current showing, this is likely to be won by the SNP, heralding the break-up of the UK.

Let’s turn now to looking at the new Conservative Government.

Despite a disastrous spell as Foreign Secretary, Boris has few if any foreign policies, apart from exiting the EU, and striking up some “fantastic” trade deal with Trump’s USA. His almost exclusive focus now is on getting us out of the EU, hopefully with some Canada style trade agreement, and then investing heavily in his new supporters “up north”.

But the EU/Canada deal took some seven years to negotiate, about the same as the EU/Japanese deal. So, it is believed very unlikely by negotiators and commentators alike that any reasonable deal can be crafted before the end of 2020. In the immediate wake of the election, pundits whispered that his large majority gave Boris the headroom to negotiate a delay in order to get better terms that would suit industry and services. However, not a bit of it, in just the last few days, Boris has again stated that there will be no extension and that the EU will have to agree a trade deal on time, on his terms ... or else. Thereby creating yet another crisis, and a run on sterling. This brinkmanship served him quite well in his renegotiation of the Withdrawal Agreement, though he did metaphorically “die in a ditch” when his deadline for leaving the EU on 31 Oct could not be achieved, and the deadline had then to be extended till 31 Jan.

Boris likes ultimatums, especially when failure to achieve a deadline can be offloaded onto someone else.

In what the Financial Times headline has described as a “Bumpy Year Ahead”, “... senior government figures are letting it be known that, far from wanting a soft Brexit that leaves UK regulations in high alignment with the single market, they want a clean break.”

So, to anticipate what Boris' plans might be for the Eastern Mediterranean in particular, or the Middle East in general, one is most likely to be dealing with an almost blank sheet of paper. If pressed, the Prime Minister is likely to react to the last known emergency, but, on current form, will no doubt be prepared to sacrifice anything if it makes him look good.

Which brings us to a consideration of Boris' character. He is a flamboyant and lazy liar. Flamboyant, because of his style of dress, demeanour, charisma and clear seMurzanx-appeal to women. Working men see him as one of the lads, with a contempt for hierarchies and authorities, and this, together with his "get things done" attitude goes down well in working men's clubs. Lazy because he fails to read his briefs and prefers to take all, even the most pressing items, off the cuff, often with disastrous consequences. And the most obvious example of this are his casual remarks that landed Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe with a further 5 years in an Iranian jail because he fluffed his lines and said that she was training journalists, when she was actually in Iran on holiday visiting her parents. And a liar because he has a casual attitude to the truth that borders on the infantile. Future generations of psychologists will probably regard him as a fantasist, who believes that what exists in his daydreams are actually true. Nevertheless, this has already led him into deep water when he persuaded the Queen to prorogue Parliament for 5 weeks, because it would get him off the hook. Similarly, his avoidance of any pre-election interview with Andrew Neill, known for his incisive questioning, would have been sure to reveal him as both a perjurer and a fantasist.

So, what does all this add up to? Assuming that he does indeed manage to negotiate with Trump for a wonderful trade deal, then in foreign policy he is unlikely to plough a new furrow, most probably becoming Trump's poodle in the hope of earning his master's praise. But as Trump himself recedes ever further into isolationism, especially during his own Presidential elections next year, it is difficult to see Britain going off on its own. This creates something of a world vacuum into which other powers are sure to step. Russia and Turkey in the Middle East, and China in both the Far East and Africa.

In the UK, much of Boris' credibility will turn on how the EU negotiations turn out, and the personality of the soon to be elected Leader of the Opposition. No doubt there will be much rejoicing from the Conservatives once we actually leave the EU, and during the early part of the transition. However, if negotiations start to go awry, and a no deal exit seems imminent with potentially catastrophic implications for many small northern industries, then many of his erstwhile supporters will desert the conservative flag.

And worse still, if a No Deal actually takes place after 31 Dec 2020, and the complacent life of lower-middle class England is actually affected, then things could turn very nasty. Then much will depend on the stature of the new Leader of the Opposition. If the new man, or woman, can be seen to represent the will and aspirations of middle England, then Boris will find himself in very deep water where not even his flamboyant style and natural deceptions will save him.

That said, those such as the Eminence Grise of Downing St, Dominic Cummings recognize that full well. Money is likely to be showered on the new conservatives in their northern heartlands, and considerable effort will be devoted into finding scapegoats for any disasters that Boris will have caused. If that's not bad enough the Labor Party seem very short of suitable charismatic leaders to combat Boris. Most are too reliable and staid, and prefer truth to untruth.

According to the Financial Times, “The deal will be a minimal free trade agreement, and it will leave many other details to be filled in over time. It will serve Mr. Johnson’s overriding political purpose: to look like a prime minister who gets things done.”

“The deal will be a minimal free trade agreement, and it will leave many other details to be filled in over time. It will serve Mr Johnson’s overriding political purpose: to look like a prime minister who gets things done.”

Of course, my commentary today comes from a dedicated Remain voter, and there is an alternative view. Leavers and Tory supporters earnestly believe that Boris’ election success mean that he now can revert to his true self demonstrated during his time as Mayor of London. Then he seemed liberal and sensible.

So, what of Britain’s wider world role for the 2020s? Perhaps the best answer is: Lock up the Foreign Office and throw away the key!

If Boris has time, and interest, he will play it all by ear!

## Concluding Remarks to Volume 4

The current volume is the fourth part of the series examining the developments in the Eastern Mediterranean over the last decade. It covers events as they unfolded over the years 2017-2019. The choice of topics has been selective and by no means exhaustive. A more complete picture however, is presented through the timeline included in this volume.

The years under review were marked by important developments in Turkish domestic and foreign policies. Following the 2016 coup attempt, the AKP regime pursued a crackdown on the opposition under a state of emergency. This, coupled with the sweeping powers granted to Erdogan by constitutional reform, accelerated Turkey's slide to authoritarianism, and limited opposition to Erdogan's neo-Ottoman ambitions. Turkey's internal changes, therefore, went hand in hand with Ankara's evolving irredentist foreign policy. Following upon its military incursion into northern Syria in 2016, Turkey carried out two more invasions of Syrian territory and a military operation in northern Iraq ostensibly to prevent the establishment of a Kurdish corridor along its southern border. The assault against the Syrian Kurds, a crucial ally of the Western-led coalition against the Islamic State, came with the tacit approval of Washington.

Regarding the regional social and economic environments, the failure of the Arab Spring to bring about substantial social and political changes, left parts of the Arab world in a state of socio-economic and political limbo. The chaos caused by the Arab uprisings allowed Iran to strengthen its foothold in Syria and advanced Teheran's ambitions of a 'Shiite Crescent' – a sphere of Iranian influence stretching from the Persian Gulf through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon. Such perceived Iranian expansionism eventually drove Israel and many Sunni Arab monarchies into closer cooperation. The driving powers behind regional developments during this period were non-Arab, namely Turkey, Iran, and Israel. Turkey like Iran, saw itself, as a candidate for Muslim leadership in the region and beyond. This prevented Turkey from normalizing its relations with Israel, pushing Jerusalem to look for alternative regional partners.

This period also saw a deepening Turkish-Russian partnership. As US antagonism of China escalated and Washington's appetite for global policing decreased, Ankara and Moscow seized the initiative in the Syrian conflict. Expanding Turkish-Russian cooperation and especially Turkish procurements of Russian advanced weaponry were seen as actions openly antagonistic to Western interests. This led to a new low point in Ankara's relations with the US and NATO, raising questions about Turkey's reliability as a partner for regional stability. Russia, through direct military involvement in the Syrian civil war, re-asserted its role as a major player in the Eastern Mediterranean. Ankara's violations of the Cyprus EEZ intensified as Turkish state-

owned companies conducted seismic surveys and drilling operations within blocks licensed by the Republic of Cyprus to international energy companies. In addition, by the end of 2019 Turkey's support for the Tripoli faction in Libya paid-off with the signing of a maritime deal that threatened Greek sovereignty and Egyptian interests. The maritime agreement with Tripoli marked Turkey's expanding claims in the Aegean and Erdogan's growing appetite for the natural resources of the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey increased the frequency of its incursions over both Greek air and sea territory and directed refugee streams to Greek Aegean Islands and to Cyprus, in an effort to further pressure the Greek and Cyprus governments whose offshore energy reserves Turkey coveted. Turkey's assertiveness was backed by a substantial naval buildup that began in the mid-nineties and continued through the second decade of the new millennium.

The war in Syria from its outset was related to an uncertain Western security strategy. Russian military facilities and Iranian ambitions were targeted by an unsuccessful, US-sponsored bid for Syrian regime-change. Russian support of the Assad government, on the other hand, initially motivated by a need to preserve its naval facilities in the East Mediterranean, grew out of a broader effort to re-establish Russian influence in the Middle East. Iranian designs of an arc of Shia influence reaching the Mediterranean were also targeted by the West, but with limited success. Turkey on the other hand viewing with alarm the development of a US Kurdish relationship and the threat of a Kurdish corridor along its southern border, sided with Russia and Iran. On its part, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or simply the Islamic State (IS), sought to cover an area that would link the Syrian and Iraqi interior to the Levantine coast. The apparent defeat of ISIS and the successes of the Assad regime in re-establishing control over Syrian territory did not ensure the survival of Syria as a functioning unitary state. Should foreign support of the current regime falter, the country could easily slide back into civil war. It is also hard to envision Syria as a federal state, in that it lacks the required accommodative political culture.

State failure and protracted civil war is also a probable future for Libya. The successes of the Turkish military interventions in that country's tribal conflict proved the efficiency of Turkey's Ottoman strategic depth as well as the utility of Turkey's naval rearmament. Being a committed military sponsor of the Tripoli regime also provides Turkey with a useful narrative to support its power-projection over large areas of the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey has been careful not to overtly challenge Egypt or Israel with regard to their Mediterranean interests. Regarding Egypt however, Turkey's support of the Muslim Brotherhood did not work in Turkey's favor. In a similar manner, Turkey's support for Hamas and the more aggressive Palestinian causes kept Israel from normalizing relations, at least in the short term. The end of the decade also saw Moscow's deeper engagement in the Libyan civil war. Russia lent support, along with Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, to Khalifa Haftar and his Libyan National Army fighting against the so-called Government of National Accord (GNA) supported by Turkey and Qatar.

With the exception of the Republic of Cyprus, Greece is the state that is most threatened by Turkish power. Turkish claims over the Aegean have been growing as witnessed by Turkish air and naval incursions in both disputed and until more recently, undisputed border areas. Greece's economic meltdown of the last decade has meant that the country was unable to maintain the standard of its armed forces, especially its navy. Greece has been unable to match

the significant Turkish rearmament of the last two decades. Greece's sensitivities have been directly challenged by Turkey's East Mediterranean and Aegean "Blue Homeland" claims. Greece's inability to redress the naval imbalance with Turkey in the short run as well as NATO's unwillingness to check Turkish ambitions in the Aegean, led Greece to look at other regional partners, and reach for security cooperation with Israel, Egypt and France. Cyprus too contributed to an evolving concept of regional cooperation through its close relations with both Egypt and Israel, as well as its commanding geographical location in the Eastern Mediterranean. Moreover, during the last decade Cyprus continued the process that began with its accession to the European Union and confirmed its commitment to a Western-sponsored system of regional security. The confirmation of Cyprus' commitment to the West, together with a deepening relationship with Israel, has led the United States to view Cyprus's participation in a future regional security structure in a positive light.

The return of Russia and its successful support of Assad's Syria, but also the prospect of a Shia corridor from Iran to the Levantine coast, underpinned the West's renewed interest in establishing a new regional security architecture for the Eastern Mediterranean. By the end of the decade, these two challenges together with the spectre of neo-Ottomanism, provided additional incentives for a new collective response among regional states. At the same time, the United States, while troubled by the potential alienation of Turkey, appeared supportive of a common energy cooperation and ultimately even a common security concept between Israel, Cyprus, Greece and Egypt. The trend toward regional cooperation led to the establishment of the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF). The declared aim of the Forum to create an institutional framework for cooperation in the energy sector could potentially pave the way for the establishment of a regional East Mediterranean natural gas market. Together with Cyprus, Israel and Greece, Egypt was perhaps the most important addition to the EMGF. Cairo looks forward to develop its large energy resources and to become, with the use of its LNG terminals, a regional energy hub.

The prospects for the expansion of such co-operation into a common security pact, however, are questionable. One reason is the lack of a common commitment on the part of the states involved, at least for the time being. Although there is indeed an interest by each state to further ensure its own security, there is, however, as yet no clear sense of common threat. The hydrocarbon discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean have not yet led to the creation of a regionally integrated energy industry. Should this happen, the states concerned would have a set of common interests that could lead to a broad spectrum of economic, political, and even security cooperation. In the absence of a common perception of clear and imminent threat however, thoughts of a collective defense agreement would be premature. For example, even if a commonality of threat emanating from Turkey was to be perceived, the level of threat would be disproportionate. The threat to the Republic of Cyprus would be existential, to Greece it would be territorial, to Israel potential but unspecified, while to Egypt only conditional and even unlikely. Under such circumstances, Israel and Egypt would be unwilling to underwrite the sovereignty of Aegean Islands or the exclusive economic zone of the Republic of Cyprus. Israel would rely upon its own technological and military resources, its intimate relationship with the United States, and its history of good relations with Turkey. In a similar vein, Egypt's only marginally antagonistic relationship with Turkey may be enough for an expression of diplomatic support for Greece and the Republic of Cyprus but not much more. In addition, any uncertainty regarding the nature and the timing of a Cyprus settlement is bound to have a detrimental effect upon the credibility of Cyprus' commitment to a common defense intended

to contain Turkish expansionism. In the absence of any effective resistance, it is likely that Turkey would prevail in carving-out of its own exclusive zones in the Aegean and the East Mediterranean, as well as securing its agendas in Syria, Iraq and Libya.

As we approach the end of the decade, we see the Eastern Mediterranean in the grips of a struggle for a new regional order. The exercise of Turkish, Iranian and Russian political, economic, and military power in the region as well as the reaction of the other regional and global actors will determine future events. It remains to be seen which of the competing visions of the future will prevail. A vision of a voluntary regional commonwealth of economic prosperity, democratic governance and friendly neighborly relations, or a vision of endless regional competition for power projection and dominance.



## Index

---

### A

Abbas, Mahmoud · 149  
Aesop · 65, 285  
Afrin · 14, 167, 186, 197  
Air power · 146, 196, 198  
Akar, Hulusi · 27, 168  
Akinci, Mustafa · 28, 30, 54, 97  
Aksener, Meral · 209, 210, 214, 215, 216  
Al-Arish-Ashkelon pipeline · 329  
Al-Assad, Bashar · 5, 48, 115, 116, 120, 160, 185, 195, 196, 197, 198, 230, 248, 256, 266, 267, 268, 270, 289, 323  
Al-Assad, Hafez · 115  
Alawite · 198, 248, 249, 270  
Al-Baghdadi, Abu Bakr · 33, 34, 203  
Albayrak, Berat · 175, 176, 178, 179, 225, 238  
Aleppo · 51  
Alevis · 262  
Al-Qaeda · 4, 203, 204  
Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf · 115, 130  
Al-Sadr, Moqtada · 248  
Al-Thani, Tamim bin Hamad · 177  
Amal Movement · 201  
Amidror, Yaakov · 325  
Anti-Money Laundering · 65-71  
Anastasiades, Nikos · 14, 29, 30, 31, 96, 97, 98, 105, 141, 284  
Annan Plan · 56  
Aoun, Michel · 39, 40, 87, 88, 157, 201, 322, 323  
Aphrodite · 20, 34, 40, 44, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 107, 220, 284, 330  
Arab Gas Pipeline · 76  
Arab nationalism · 160  
Archbishop Makarios · 272  
Armenian Genocide · 154, 180

Armenians · 258, 275  
Astana peace talks on Syria · 4, 48, 186, 198  
Ataturk, Kemal · 109, 114, 145, 160, 203, 204, 205, 209, 214, 237, 239

---

### B

Balance of power · 159, 260  
Barbaros seismic vessel · 13, 22, 23, 25, 29, 172, 179  
Bassil, Gebran · 201  
Belt and Road Initiative · 248, 269  
Berri, Nabih · 201  
Bi-communal bi-zonal federation · 3, 90, 138, 141, 142, 271, 275  
Bin Laden, Osama · 203  
Bin Salman, Mohamed · 17  
Bingham, Thomas Henry · 68  
Blue and White party · 25, 31, 309, 311, 331, 332, 333  
Blue Stream · 58, 79, 180  
Bolton, John · 197  
BOTAS · 177  
Brexit · 47, 59-64, 65, 247, 285-288, 349, 350  
British Gas · 74  
British Presence in Cyprus · 93-95, 153-155  
Brunson, Andrew · 19, 20, 249, 250

---

### C

Calypso · 13, 15, 172, 221, 283, 284, 330, 338  
Charter of the United Nations · 167, 196  
Chevron · 39  
China · 7, 22, 29, 35, 36, 54, 58, 121, 123, 148, 159, 173, 174, 176, 178, 181, 204, 206, 222, 243, 248,

249, 250, 256, 265, 268, 269, 294, 300, 326, 349, 351, 353  
 China Petroleum Pipeline Engineering · 22, 35  
 Chinese presence in the Eastern Mediterranean · 269-270  
 Clinton, Hilary · 66  
 Clinton, Bill · 101  
 Cold War · 47, 95, 98, 101, 154, 267, 271, 272, 277, 323  
 Consociationalism · 87-91, 271-276  
 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus · 275  
 Coptic Christians · 5, 345  
 Corbyn, Jeremy · 198, 349  
 Corruption · 33, 37, 208, 257, 276-279, 309, 332  
 Crans-Montana Conference on Cyprus · 8, 137, 141  
 Cummings, Dominic · 351  
 Cyprus EEZ · 4, 5, 10, 13, 30, 31, 33, 44, 76, 107, 123, 126, 127, 171-182, 221, 222, 284, 340, 354  
 Cyprus gas · 43-45, 74-75, 107-108, 283-284  
 Cyprus judiciary · 81-85  
 Cyprus LNG export facility · 10, 74, 76, 222, 338  
 Cyprus LNG import facility · 27, 35, 221, 222  
 Cyprus problem · 49, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 73, 87-91, 90, 93-106, 137, 139, 141-142, 143-144, 217, 222, 223, 271-276, 281, 293, 294, 295  
 Cyprus's role in the Eastern Mediterranean · 291-297  
 Cyprus Treaty of Alliance · 154  
 Cyprus Treaty of Establishment · 154  
 Cyprus Treaty of Guarantee · 141, 154

---

## D

Damietta LNG terminal · 220, 338  
 Delek Drilling · 34, 74, 177, 220, 329, 330  
 Demirtas, Selahattin · 209  
 Dhimmitude · 91  
 DITIB · 4, 280  
 Diyanet · 4, 280  
 Dolphinus Holdings · 16, 220, 329  
 Douma chemical attack · 17, 18, 195, 199

---

## E

East Med gas pipeline · 79, 221  
 East Mediterranean Energy and Partnership Bill · 36

East Med gas pipeline · 3, 5, 8, 12, 23, 161, 165, 293, 302  
 East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) · 23, 29, 326, 327, 339, 340, 354  
 Eastern Ghouta siege · 18  
 Eastern Mediterranean democracy · 255-270  
 Eastern Mediterranean energy · 39-41, 43-44, 73-79, 107-108, 287-288, 219-233, 329-330, 337-341, 354  
 Eastern Mediterranean regional cooperation · 8, 18, 23, 138, 233-235, 293, 339  
 Eastern Mediterranean security · 133-134, 151-152, 167-169, 183-187, 195-199, 289-290  
 Ecevit, Bulent · 299  
 Edison · 3  
 Eide, Espen Barth · 50, 54, 55  
 Egypt's domestic situation · 343-348  
 Egypt natural gas · 12, 16, 20, 23, 27, 44, 73, 74-75, 77, 107, 219-220, 283, 284, 329, 337, 338, 340  
 El-Sisi, Abdel Fattah · 17, 25, 177, 192, 193, 235, 269, 298, 344, 347  
 Energean · 34, 164, 220, 221, 222, 251, 253, 254, 303  
 Eni · 4, 5, 10, 12, 15, 16, 23, 31, 44, 74, 75, 76, 78, 107, 108, 171, 172, 173, 175, 179, 180, 219, 221, 222, 283, 293, 301, 303, 329, 330  
 Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) · 123, 181  
 Erbakan, Necmettin · 193, 265  
 Erdogan, Recep Tayyip · 4, 7, 12, 15, 19, 22, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 52, 53, 54, 87, 109, 110, 111, 113, 114, 115, 139, 140, 154, 160, 168, 169, 176, 177, 179, 180, 186, 193, 197, 203, 208, 209, 210, 211, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 221, 225, 227, 234, 237, 238, 239, 249, 250, 262, 263, 265, 266, 267, 279, 280, 283, 298, 299, 300, 313, 316, 317, 319, 320, 326, 335, 336, 345, 346, 353, 354  
 Espoo Convention · 123, 125, 126, 128  
 EU Facility for Refugees · 22  
 EU Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance · 17  
 EurAsia Interconnector · 23  
 Eurasianism · 2  
 European Central Bank · 102  
 Exclusive economic zone (EEZ) · 1, 9, 44, 123, 124, 127, 171, 338  
 ExxonMobil · 23, 107, 219, 222, 251, 254

---

## F

Fatah · 149, 248, 249  
Fatih drillship · 25, 34, 221, 340  
Free Patriotic Movement · 40  
Freedom of speech · 190, 261, 265  
French foreign policy in the Eastern Mediterranean · 117-122, 183-187  
Future Movement · 40, 201

---

## G

Gaddafi · 201  
Gaddafi, Muamar · 50, 115  
Gantz, Benny · 31, 305, 306, 308, 331, 332, 333  
Gaza Strip · 17, 73, 76, 78, 130, 149, 150, 163, 241, 242, 249, 254, 310, 322, 325  
Geagea, Samir · 201  
Geneva Conference on Cyprus · 3, 57, 96, 97, 99, 100, 141  
Glafkos 1 · 23, 330, 338  
Golan Heights · 24, 133, 321, 322  
Golan, Yair · 325  
Greece natural gas · 163-165, 251-254, 77  
Greek Cypriots · 17, 54, 90, 91, 94, 98, 173, 179, 222, 271, 272, 297  
Gulen, Fethullah · 203, 249  
Gulen movement · 4, 20, 168, 211, 217  
Guterres, Antonio · 8, 50, 55, 57, 97

---

## H

Haftar, Khalifa · 8, 24, 25, 27, 35, 354  
 Hamas · 17, 130, 131, 135, 149, 177, 180, 242, 249, 357  
Hariri, Saad · 33, 39, 40, 88, 156, 157, 161, 201  
Hayat Tahrir al-Sham · 4, 25, 36  
Hellenic Petroleum · 163, 164, 251, 252  
Hezbollah · 88, 133, 135, 151, 156, 157, 160, 161, 198, 201, 230, 248, 249, 270, 274, 289, 321, 322  
Hoenlein, Malcolm · 177  
Hollande, Francois · 102  
Hopkins, Harry · 94  
Hussein, Saddam · 36, 145, 146, 256, 269, 289

---

## I

Idku LNG terminal · 20, 34, 44, 220, 284, 338  
IGI Poseidon · 44, 45, 77  
Illiberal democracy · 256, 257, 259, 264, 267, 276, 355  
Ince, Muharrem · 209, 213, 214, 215  
International Monetary Fund (IMF) · 217, 269  
Intifada · 242  
Iran nuclear deal · 18, 230, 231  
Iranian policy in the Eastern Mediterranean · 269-270  
Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL) · 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 18, 33, 48, 49, 51, 119, 129, 133, 134, 135, 146, 147, 168, 185, 203, 204, 233, 234, 249, 250, 261, 266, 295, 353, 356  
Islamism · 259-263, 189-194, 203-206  
Israel-Iran relations · 229-232  
Israel natural gas · 16, 73, 74, 75, 34, 36, 219, 220-221, 329, 328-334, 330  
Israel-Turkey gas pipeline · 75, 123-128, 175-177, 180-181, 338  
Israel's role in the Eastern Mediterranean · 159-162  
Israeli counterintelligence · 241-244  
Israeli elections 2019 · 305-308, 309-312, 331-327  
Israeli national security · 325-327  
Israeli-Palestinian conflict · 2, 340  
Iyi Party · 209

---

## J

Jabhat al-Nusra · 4, 204  
Jews · 105, 111, 230, 262, 263, 275  
Johnson, Boris · 349, 350, 352  
Justice and Development Party (AKP) · 12, 19, 113, 209, 210, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 262, 265, 266, 280, 281, 326, 353

---

## K

Karish · 34, 164, 253  
Khan Sheikhou chemical attack · 5, 195, 250  
Kissinger, Henry · 53, 101  
Kogas · 74  
Kurdistan independence · 10, 145-148  
Kurdistan Regional Government · 146, 147

Kurds · 7, 10, 18, 27, 33, 48, 49, 51, 110, 145-148, 167, 168, 169, 197, 210, 216, 226, 227, 249, 266, 336

---

## **L**

Labour Party (Israel) · 305  
Lakkotrypis, Giorgos · 10, 107, 284  
Lapid, Yair · 180, 305  
Lavrov, Sergey · 14, 49, 54  
Lebanese Army · 134, 152, 156, 321  
Lebanese Petroleum Authority · 39, 40  
Lebanese politics · 151-152, 156-157, 210-202, 321-323  
Lebanon EEZ · 12, 303  
Lebanon natural gas · 39-41, 74, 75, 76, 219, 221, 301-303  
Levant · 117  
Levantine Basin · 73, 163  
Leviathan · 16, 36, 44, 74, 75, 76, 77, 164, 175, 220, 329, 338, 339  
Liberal democracy · 2, 37, 191, 192, 255, 256, 259, 263, 264, 274, 276, 355  
Libya Government of National Accord (GNA) · 24, 27, 35, 354  
Libya vs Malta continental shelf case · 124  
Libyan Civil War · 1, 2, 24, 25, 27, 31, 35, 36, 50, 103, 115, 116, 324, 267, 341, 346, 354, 355  
Libyan National Army · 24, 35, 341, 354  
Lieberman, Avigdor · 333  
Lijphart, Arend · 273  
Likud Party · 25, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 331, 332, 333  
LNG · 10, 20, 27, 34, 35, 44, 74, 76, 77, 78, 108, 123, 165, 176, 180, 219, 220, 221, 222, 284, 302, 338, 339, 354

---

## **M**

MacMillan, Harold · 94  
Maronites · 275  
May, Theresa · 60, 61  
MILGEM · 22, 31  
Millet · 89, 93, 257, 258, 275  
Mitsotakis, Kyriakos · 28  
Morsi, Mohamed · 262  
Mosul Operation · 8, 133, 134, 145, 147, 266

Mubarak, Hosni · 347  
Muslim Brotherhood · 130, 131, 177, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 203, 204, 217, 234, 259, 261, 262, 265, 266, 344, 345, 346, 347, 354, 357

---

## **N**

Nasrallah, Hassan · 321  
Nasser, Gamal Abdel · 160  
Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) · 209, 210, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217  
NATO · 13, 51, 53, 56, 95, 115, 168, 169, 198, 199, 227, 234, 249, 250, 268, 354, 357  
Neo-imperialism · 2, 155  
Neo-Ottomanism · 265  
Netanyahu, Benjamin · 20, 22, 25, 27, 31, 177, 221, 230, 231, 306, 307, 309, 310, 311, 322, 331, 332, 333, 334  
Noble Energy · 34, 44, 74, 75, 107, 220, 293, 329, 330  
Nord Stream · 125, 126, 339  
Novatek · 10, 12, 16, 221, 301, 303, 330  
Nuland, Victoria · 103

---

## **O**

Obama, Barak · 52, 196, 267  
Ocalan, Abdullah · 147  
Onisiforos · 8, 10, 44, 107  
Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) · 215, 227  
Ottoman Empire · 89, 93, 94, 103, 114, 117, 153, 154, 160, 169, 189, 257, 258, 260, 266, 267, 271, 275, 277, 336, 346, 353, 355, 356

---

## **P**

Pahlavi, Reza · 231  
Palestinian Authority · 23, 73, 150, 242, 254, 329, 339  
Palestinians · 17, 37, 121, 150, 185, 241, 242, 245, 254, 306, 307, 310, 311, 326, 327  
Patriotic Movement · 201  
Peloponnesian War · 99  
People's Democratic Party (HDP) · 209, 210, 214, 215, 216

People's Protection Units · 7, 33, 167, 168  
Political Islam · 189, 192, 203, 259, 260, 261, 262, 266  
Pompeo, Mike · 197, 302, 303, 321, 322  
Poroshenko, Petro · 55  
Putin, Vladimir · 33, 47, 56, 101, 103, 120, 167, 196, 198, 237, 248, 267, 268, 320

---

## Q

Qatar · 5, 8, 20, 23, 34, 37, 44, 75, 108, 115, 129, 130, 131, 150, 177, 217, 345, 347, 354  
Qatar crisis · 129-131  
Qatar Petroleum · 5, 23, 44, 75, 177  
Qutb, Sayyid · 259, 260, 265

---

## R

Regime change · 101, 192, 198, 229, 356  
Republican People's Party (CHP) · 209, 213, 214, 215, 319  
Revithoussa LNG terminal · 165  
Rojava · 336  
Rule of law · 12, 17, 37, 67, 142, 169, 263, 277, 278, 279, 291  
Russo-Ukrainian war 2014 · 2, 55-56, 103  
Russian policy in the Eastern Mediterranean · 1, 2, 4, 5, 13, 20, 33, 47-58, 79, 101, 103, 133-134, 147-148, 151, 160, 167, 196, 198, 199, 204, 229, 231, 250, 267-268, 268-269, 289, 290, 303, 323, 353-354, 356

---

## S

Saadet Party · 215  
Salafism · 259  
Sectarianism · 151-152, 157, 160, 263, 269, 273, 274  
September 9/11 attacks · 267  
Shah Deniz · 78, 79  
Shanahan, Patrick M. · 27  
Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) · 7, 148, 169, 250, 265  
Shiites · 1, 87, 88, 89, 160, 198, 201, 248, 249, 269, 289, 353  
Shell · 34, 39, 44, 74, 78, 219, 220, 293, 330

Shiites · 88, 160, 198, 201, 248, 249, 269, 289, 353  
Shoygu, Sergey · 151  
Sinai · 233  
Six-Day War · 241, 242  
Southern Gas Corridor · 78, 79, 164, 339  
Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia (SBA) · 155, 286, 287, 288  
Stearns, Monteagle · 95  
Steinitz, Yuval · 175, 176  
Sunnis · 1, 87, 88, 89, 110, 129, 133, 134, 146, 157, 160, 161, 185, 203, 205, 226, 249, 259, 262, 266, 270, 336, 353  
Sykes-Picot agreement · 145  
Syrian Armed Forces (SAF) · 25  
Syrian Civil War · 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 14, 17, 18, 20, 23, 25, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 48-49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 57, 73, 76, 91, 103, 111, 116, 117, 118-120, 121, 130, 133-134, 135-136, 147, 151-152, 160, 161, 167-169, 185-186, 195-199, 204, 227, 229, 230, 248, 249, 250, 261, 267, 270, 289-290, 323, 335-336, 353, 355, 356  
Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) · 10, 33, 168

---

## T

Taif Agreement · 88, 89  
Tamar · 16, 74, 75, 220, 253, 303, 329, 330, 339  
Tanin · 164, 220, 253  
Total · 4, 5, 10, 12, 16, 31, 43-45, 74, 76, 107, 108, 163, 171, 172, 173, 175, 179, 180, 221, 222, 251, 252, 254, 293, 301, 303, 330  
Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) · 79  
Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) · 19, 339  
Treaty of Lausanne · 139, 145, 154, 300  
Treaty of Sevres · 145  
Tripartite Conference on the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus · 154  
Trump, Donald · 12, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 33, 34, 51, 52, 61, 68, 168, 176, 195, 197, 199, 231, 247, 248, 249, 307, 319, 320, 322, 326, 350, 351  
Tsipras, Alexis · 25, 105  
Turkey-Cyprus conflict · 94, 103-104, 123-127, 137-139, 141-142, 143-144, 171-182, 279-281, 316, 340  
Turkey-Russia S-400 deal · 13, 19, 22, 27, 28, 250, 268, 319-320  
Turkey-Russia Sochi agreement 2018 · 20  
Turkey-Russia Sochi agreement 2019 · 33

Turkish Cypriots · 17, 30, 31, 54, 76, 90, 94, 97, 221, 222, 275, 281, 284, 340

Turkish constitutional referendum 2017 · 109-111, 113-116

Turkish coup d'etat attempt 2016 · 19, 27, 76, 110, 168, 177, 208, 211, 217, 225, 249, 262, 263, 280, 353

Turkish expansionism · 114-116, 265-267, 297-298, 313-317

Turkish invasion of Cyprus · 340

Turkish invasion of northern Syria 2018 · 14, 167-169

Turkish invasion of northern Syria 2019 · 33, 335-336

Turkish municipal elections 2019 · 299-300

Turkish navy · 15, 22, 31, 173

Turkish parliamentary elections 2018 · 207-211, 225-227

Turkish presidential elections 2018 · 213-217

Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) · 76, 126, 177, 179, 283, 340

Turkish Straits · 226, 237, 249

Turkish Stream · 7, 58, 78, 79

---

## U

United Kingdom Elections 2029 · 349-352

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) · 73, 76, 79, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 178, 181, 340, 341

United Nations Security Council · 18, 23, 25, 28, 29, 31, 33, 48, 49, 50, 52, 54, 56, 120, 122, 167, 186, 196, 231, 275, 281, 294, 295

Uyghurs · 204

---

## W

West Bank · 241, 242, 307, 310

World Trade Organisation (WTO) · 350

World War I · 22

World War II · 271

---

## Y

Yavuz drillship · 27, 28, 30, 33, 340

Yisrael Beiteinu · 311, 333

Yom Kippur War · 96

---

## Z

Zeno of Citium · 65, 71

Zohr · 12, 15, 23, 44, 45, 74, 75, 78, 107, 108, 219, 283, 329, 337

Zurich-London Agreements · 154, 271, 272

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