



## CYPRUS, GREECE AND TURKEY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ENERGY COMPETITION IN THE EAST MED AND THE MIDDLE EAST

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*«Καὶ γνῶναι ἐλευθερίαν μὲν, ἣν ἀντιλαμβανόμενοι αὐτῆς διασώσωμεν, ῥαδίως ταῦτα ἀναληψομένην, ἄλλων δὲ ὑπακούσσει καὶ τὰ προκεκτημένα φιλεῖν ἔλασσοῦσθαι».*

*«Πρέπει να ξέρετε ὅτι με την ελευθερία, αν την υπερασπιστούμε και την διαφυλάξουμε, εύκολα θ' αποκτήστε πάλι και σπίτια και χωράφια, ενώ αν υποκύψετε σε ξένους, τότε θα χάσετε κι αυτά που έχετε».*

*Θουκιδίδου Ιστορία του Πελοποννησιακού πολέμου, [2.62.3].*

*"You have to know concerning freedom, that if we defend and protect it, it is easy to acquire houses and fields again, but if you succumb to enemies, then you will lose what you already have too."*

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian war.*

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### Abstract

This Paper examines in Sections 1 and 2 the historical impact of the defeat of Greece in the 1922 Greek-Turkish war on its economic and military capabilities over the ensuing decades. The defeat resulted in severe negative repercussions with the country becoming inward-looking, while remaining dependent on foreign powers. The Greek economic, financial and political "elites" have proven incompetent and unable to develop a viable model for the country's development leading to a failed economy and repeated bankruptcy in the domestic field. As a consequence of the erosion of the balance of power, Greece fell into the Thucydidean trap of a rising Turkey, with its foreign policy unable to assert or protect national interests in the Aegean and in the Eastern Mediterranean. Cyprus was abandoned to Turkish designs, as the victim of Greek inherent weakness and

the unforgivable failures of the ruling “elites.” Section 3 analyses in detail the objectives of Ankara in Cyprus in the context of regional geopolitics, reflected in the ongoing Middle East instability that intensifies in its turn the new Great Game of geopolitical rivalry over energy routes. The final Section of this Study suggests a range of measures to counteract Turkish aggression and Ankara’s violation of international law, which harm the interests of neighbouring countries and destabilize the East Med and the Middle East regions.

### **1. Historical record and the verdict of history**

History may or may not repeat itself but certainly never forgives errors. History shall repeat itself if mistakes are repeated. Cyprus is a case in point. Cyprus finds itself today in its worst predicament ever since the Turkish barbaric invasion of 1974. Abandoned helpless and unprotected, it is being invaded again surrounded by Turkish warships and the drill ships Fatih and Yavuz that are illegally trying to steal the oil and gas resources of the Republic of Cyprus. History should always record the truth and call things by their name. The intention of this Paper is to caution, alert and propose some measures and indicated actions in the hope that Hellenism may finally wake up before the total and unmitigated Turkish threat.

Today Greece is reaping the grave consequences of its 1922 defeat by Turkey for three main reasons:

First, Great Britain and France, by exploiting Greece’s unforgivable mistakes, changed camps in 1922 and supported Kemal Ataturk. This resulted in the supersession of the Treaty of Sèvres (10.8.1920) by the Treaty of Lausanne (24.7.1923), whereby Turkey was given so much territory and resources, that its economic and consequential military rise within a few decades was inevitable, since military strength is a function primarily of economic power and geopolitical position. Besides the whole of Asia Minor, Turkey was also granted Eastern Thrace and thus control of the strategic Dardanelles straits without a fight by Greece. Thus, a long series of errors and incredible bungling overturned the expected gains from being on the winning side of the 1st World War and turned Greece from victor to vanquished, reversing roles with Turkey. It should be emphasised that by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne Turkey surrendered all claims or rights over Cyprus, which became officially a British colony, but Greece, blundering again and falling into the trap of Britain accepted the reinvolvement of Turkey as an interested party in the 1955 London Tripartite Conference.

Second, the Turkish military and other elites, ever since the eviction of Greece from its ancestral home in Asia Minor have unwaveringly pursued a model of greatness and independence with Machiavellian tenacity, based on military aggression consistent with the historical roots of raiding, pillage, robbery, plunder, looting, sacking, devastation, depredation, rape and marauding of the Turkish tribes, which descended upon the borders of the Byzantine empire. This strategy, to their credit has paid off and Turkey joined the Group of Twenty (G-20, generating more than 85% of the global gross domestic product (GDP)) of the world’s major advanced and

emerging economies, ranking 18<sup>th</sup> in 2018 but, aspiring to rise to the top ten world economies.

Third, by contrast, the greatest ambition of the Greek “elites” has invariably focused on winning power and enjoying its fruits by state capture. Ever since its inception as a state, Greece has always been dependent on some foreign power(s) to a greater or lesser extent. Inevitably this state of affairs has led to the country’s impoverishment despite joining the European Community in 1981 and the Eurozone in 2001. The latest bankruptcy in 2010 and three Economic Adjustment Programs or bailout packages involving financial assistance in order to cope with the Greek government-debt crisis has cut the Country’s GDP from €226 billion in 2010 to €177,7 billion in 2017, representing a decline of almost 22%. According to Eurostat, Greece’s government debt-to-GDP totalled 146,2% in 2010 and has since soared to reach 178,6% or about €317 billion in 2017. It is the highest in the European Union (EU), far ahead of the second most indebted country, Italy, whose debt-to-GDP ratio was 131,8% of GDP in 2017. The above indicators, which hardly even capture the suffering endured by the Greek people, are sufficient to prove the country’s economic failure and political bankruptcy. Some analysts even consider the Greek state as non-viable. In contradistinction, any talk about the fall of the Turkish lira and the problems of the Turkish economy is irrelevant compared to its long-term potential, which fuels Turkey’s military buildup.

## **2. The march from failure to failure and the trip into the Thucydidean trap**

Greek failure was not restricted to domestic economic policy but also expanded into the field of foreign policy. The abandonment of Cyprus to Turkish designs and the failure of Greece to extend its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles, owing to the fear of the Turkish “casus belli” are two of the most highly-botched issues.

Greece is in fact one of the oldest states in the international system ever since its reconstitution by gaining independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830. However, its historical progress has been inversely related to its old statehood. In stark contrast to Turkey, whatever aspirations existed have been consistently frustrated by incompetent leadership and an erratic path. The charismatic and illustrious first Governor of Greece Ioannis Kapodistrias, who attempted to establish the rule of law, build a proper-functioning state and set it on the road to economic development, was assassinated on 9.10.1831, thus stopping progress in its tracks from the very beginning. Ever since, Greece has been trying to find its way to the seemingly impossible. The clientelistic and parasitic political and economic systems, reinforced by state capture by the “elites”, that fear losing their economic privileges, have prevented Greece from becoming an effective instead of a failed state. Unlike the highly-commended monolithic will of the Turkish deep state to build a strong nation, with Israel being another prominent example, the Greek “elites” have never had a vision for the nation’s destiny. A strangulating decay keeps undermining the country and rendering it non-viable,

crushing society, notwithstanding the admirable and deserving qualities of the Greek people. A similar malaise, albeit to a lower extent, has been afflicting Cyprus, which has chosen to import the afore-mentioned state-busting evils from Greece, straying away from the British colonial tradition and legacy.

Nowhere has this self-destructive, built-in weakness been more evident and more catalytic in its grave repercussions than in the bank haircut / bail-in<sup>1</sup> illegally imposed on Cyprus in March 2013. Instead of assisting Cyprus, due to their superior capacity, expertise and negotiating preparation vis-à-vis the Eurogroup, the Greek economic, financial and political "elites" took advantage of Cyprus's predicament in order to pocket a few more billions of Euros, knowing that such comparatively meager sums could not save Greece but would certainly destroy the Cyprus economy and its banking system. Forgetting the generosity and solidarity displayed by Cyprus during the Greek PSI (Private Sector Involvement in Greece's debt relief), that was driven more by Cypriot ignorance rather than wisdom as to its severe consequences for the Cypriot people and the Cyprus economy, the Greek political and economic "elites" exploited and abandoned Cyprus not for the first, nor for the last time. This is of course indicative of the nation's morbidity leading to recurring failure and incapacity to meet the Turkish challenge. It also contrasts sharply with the billions of Euros with which Turkey has been financing the budget of the illegal regime of the so-called TRNC ever since the invasion and occupation of 1974.

Comparing Turkey's long-term strategy in its aim to repossess the whole of Cyprus, always several steps ahead, to Greece's amateurish actions or inactions, it is no wonder that Cyprus has been tragically led into the wolf's mouth. The coup d'état against Makarios, carried out by the Greek military junta<sup>2</sup> under misguided American aiding and abetting and British blessing in violation of the Treaty of Guarantee, was not only traitorous, given that Turkey was long-known to be waiting for such a pretext, but one of unfathomable stupidity. The consequences for Cyprus have been tragic, disastrous, catastrophic, devastating, ruinous and unprecedented in comparison with any foreign conquest in the island's history. The consequences for Greece, almost equivalent to those of the Asia Minor disaster, were aggravated by the choice not to fight against the Turkish invasion of Cyprus despite the much better balance of power in relation to Turkey at the time. Karamanlis the elder refused to assist Cyprus in 1974, claiming that "Cyprus was too far" and thus selling out Cyprus to Turkey for reasons of expedience, severely compromising Greece's security at the same time. It was this very same Karamanlis, regarded by many in Greece as a "father of the

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed analysis of this issue see the Author's Policy Paper entitled "Causes and impact of the MOUs on the economies of Cyprus, Greece and Portugal." Available from: [https://ccea.unic.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/POLICY-PAPER\\_7-2015.pdf](https://ccea.unic.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/POLICY-PAPER_7-2015.pdf) and from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292154943>

See also the Author's Article entitled "Troika, MoU and bail-in: economic folly and an illegal crime against the Cypriot people - the 'voracity effect' as a cause of Cyprus state failure." Available from: <https://ccea.unic.ac.cy/volume-12-issue-6-p-tilliros>

<sup>2</sup> In secret talks with Turkey at a NATO meeting Lisbon in June 1971 the Greek military junta advanced further its conspiracy for the partition of Cyprus. See O'Malley Brendan and Craig Ian (1999). The Cyprus Conspiracy: America, Espionage and the Turkish Invasion. US: I. B. Tauris.

nation", who initiated and facilitated the betrayal of Cyprus by accepting Turkey as a guarantor power in 1960, ignoring the advice of George Seferis, then ambassador of Greece in Great Britain, and purposefully excluding him from the London-Zurich negotiations, thus catapulting Cyprus into its unending tragedy. Similarly, it was the very same Evangelos Averoff, whom as foreign minister, the visionary Seferis rebuked for amateurish frivolity and wrong choices concerning the acceptance of Turkey as a guarantor power at the time of the London-Zurich Agreement, who as minister of defence in 1974 abandoned Cyprus to fall prey to the clutches of Turkey.

History does not forgive political nonentities and errors of this magnitude. These severe mistakes have launched Greece's ordeal in the Aegean Sea, at least half of which is now claimed by Ankara on the basis of "continental shelves", since Turkey claims that the islands, including Cyprus should have very limited sovereign rights in the sea that surrounds them, ignoring their Exclusive Economic Zones or continental shelves that are recognized by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Specifically, Turkey, under the "Blue Homeland" propaganda, claims the EEZ of many Mediterranean islands, including Cyprus, Rhodes, Kastellorizo, Karpathos, Kassos and the eastern section of Crete.

Surrendering Cyprus without a fight and giving in to Turkey's threat of "casus belli" concerning the delineation of its maritime borders have both boomeranged and backfired with a vengeance against Greece. Indeed, ever since the conclusion of UNCLOS in 1982, Greece has never presented a single official map nor deposited any Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) geographical coordinates or nautical charts at the United Nation despite the fact that the Aegean archipelago is filled with Greek islands. And this, despite the fact that Article 121 of the UNCLOS defines clearly the regime of the islands, entitling them to territorial sea, contiguous zone, EEZ and continental shelf, unless they are just rocks, which cannot sustain human habitation. Nor has Greece dared to demarcate its EEZ with Cyprus (as Cyprus has done with Egypt in 2003, Lebanon in 2007 (unratified) and Israel in 2010), which thanks to Kastellorizo, would have unified the Cyprus EEZ with that of Greece, extending all the way from the Eastern Mediterranean (East Med) to the Aegean sea. On the contrary, since 1974, Turkey has been producing illegal maps claiming half the Aegean and as much as 70% of the Cyprus EEZ. Based on Turkey's steadfast will to pursue its grandeur designs, underpinned by its systematic military build-up and the heavy investment for the acquisition of seismic survey vessels and drill ships, there should be no doubt whatsoever that, following the invasion of Cyprus's EEZ, the turn of Greece will arrive soon, with Ankara drilling most probably in the EEZ of Kastellorizo.

Greece, down to its knees from the economic and debt crises, should acknowledge that these very crises are the direct consequence of the miserably pathetic mismanagement of the country by its rulers. Already enslaved by its Turcophobia, Greece has long been paralysed by its constant inaction and the lack of a strategy, driven by its fear of a war against Turkey that need not happen if properly prepared. The current huge strategic deficits of Greece, the political

establishment's fear of Turkey and defeatism have brought it only insults and repeated defeats across the board from the East Med to the Aegean Sea.

By allowing continuous erosion of the balance of power, Greece has been caught in the Thucydidean trap<sup>3</sup> of a rising Turkey. This refers to the trap vividly depicted by Thucydides in the famous Melian dialogue of the strong imposing their will on the weak. Unlike Herodotus, whose stories in his "Histories" often teach that hubris invites the wrath of the deities, Thucydides realistically does not acknowledge divine intervention in human affairs. However, Herodotus, the father of history, is not at all irrelevant: The hubris of the neglect of the nation's fate has led to Greece's nemesis: Turkey.

### **3. The objectives of the invasion by Turkey of Cyprus's EEZ**

"Energy or oil wars"<sup>4</sup> have been an aspect of big power politics even prior to World War 1, which impacted on the post-great-war delineation of Middle East state borders through the Sykes-Picot Agreement between Britain and France, and continued through the cold war and the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 to the present day.

Energy wars are the new form of geopolitical rivalry<sup>5</sup> in the post-Cold War era. A subterranean but evident global war regarding natural gas, encompassing American shale and Russian gas, is going on. The New Great Game of geopolitical rivalry over energy routes involves new competing American, Russian and European pipeline projects and gas corridors in order to manipulate gas flows, such as the Nord Stream II and the Turkish Stream, which help Russia to bypass Ukraine. The New Great Game has extended to the East Med. It is underlined that pipelines are not just an economic issue but primarily geopolitical. They involve national, strategic and energy security parameters. A pipeline entails long-term, decades-long commitment and renders both the exporter and the importer hostage to the transit state. China is also involved in the new great game of energy, not least through its Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century

<sup>3</sup> Based on the ancient Greek historian Thucydides who, in his "History of the Peloponnesian war", wrote: "What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this instilled in Sparta", Professor Graham Allison coined the phrase Thucydides's Trap to refer to the situation of a rising power causing fear in an established power, thus escalating towards war. This interpretation, though related to the one above, is different and applies more to the situation of a rising China being on a collision course with an immovable America. Germany and Britain on the eve of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War is another example. The above interpretation ("The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must") is also reflected in the maxim "Right is might" put forward by Thrasymachus in Plato's Republic and is of course given further political content by Machiavelli who, in his "Prince / Il Principe", argued for maintaining and acquiring more power.

<sup>4</sup> See Yergin's factual analysis in:

Yergin Daniel (2012). *The Quest: Energy, Security and the Remaking of the Modern World*, second edition. USA: Penguin Books. And:

Yergin Daniel (2009). *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power*, third edition. USA: Free Press.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 6: "The geopolitics of energy" in the Author's Thesis entitled "The Cyprus energy system and energy security: the transformative effect of gas on the Cyprus economy and the energy system." Available from:

<https://www.academia.edu/32471372> and,

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316145175>

Maritime Silk Road, now called Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)<sup>6</sup> but this is outside the scope of this Paper.

Turkey, an acknowledged competent actor, has never hidden its objective to become an energy hub for both oil and gas and a transit country between major consuming areas in the EU and suppliers in the Middle East, Central Asia and Russia. As a hub, Turkey would benefit from transit fees and other energy-generated revenues. Ankara wants much more than simply to “enter the East Med energy equation”: Turkey attempts to determine its solution. In fact, Turkey does not seek win-win outcomes in what it views as a zero-sum game. Ankara essentially wishes to acquire a monopoly position with respect to the transportation of East Med gas and become indispensable as an oil and gas pipeline transit hub<sup>7</sup> for energy supplies heading to Europe and other markets from Russia, the Caspian region and the Middle East. By doing so it aims to partially replace Europe’s significant dependence on Russia for energy supplies and flows with dependence on Turkey itself. With such leverage Turkey will be able to exert pressure on Europe at any time as it does now with the immigration issue. Consequently, it sees the development of the oil and gas resources of the East Mediterranean as a major threat to its goal of becoming an energy transit hub and ensuring its own energy security. This is a major reason why Ankara wants to hegemonise the East Med and Middle East area via energy pipelines.

Besides the Blue Stream and Turkish Stream across the Black Sea from Russia and TANAP across Asia Minor from Azerbaijan and the Caspian Sea, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) or Shah Deniz gas Pipeline both run from Azerbaijan to Turkey via Georgia. In addition, the Kirkuk-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline, also known as the Iraq-Turkey Crude Oil Pipeline, is a 970-km-long pipeline that runs from Kirkuk in Iraq to Ceyhan in Turkey. Hence, Ceyhan, to the North-East of Cyprus’s occupied karpasian peninsula on Turkey’s Mediterranean shore, is a transportation hub for Middle Eastern and Central Asian oil and natural gas. The above-mentioned Blue Stream pipeline and the new Turkish stream pipeline that carry natural gas from Russia into Turkey across the Black Sea, like TANAP-TAP<sup>8</sup> (gas from the Caspian Sea), constitute major parts in Ankara’s planning to strengthen its own energy security and render Europe

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<sup>6</sup> The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched in 2013, is a global development strategy adopted by the Chinese government involving infrastructure development and investment initiatives in 152 countries and international organizations in Asia, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas. Some observers see it as an extension of China’s rising power and a push for Chinese dominance in global affairs with a China-centered trading network. The United States is concerned that the BRI could be a Trojan horse for China-led regional development and military expansion. Hence, the currently observed trade war between America and China.

<sup>7</sup> See: Ole Gunnar Austvik and Gülmira Rzayeva (Sept. 2016): Turkey in the Geopolitics of Natural Gas. Harvard University. Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business & Government. M-RCBG Associate Working Paper Series | No. 66, and: EIA (Article, 4.2.2017). Turkey energy profile: important transit hub for oil and natural gas - Analysis Available from: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/04022017-turkey-energy-profile-important-transit-hub-for-oil-and-natural-gas-analysis/> [Accessed 19.7.2019].

<sup>8</sup> Two key constituent parts of the Fourth Corridor-the Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline (TANAP) and the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) are bound to enhance Turkey’s ambition to become a transit state.

hostage to Turkey for its energy supply. Evidently any diversification away from Russia will be translated into European dependency<sup>9</sup> on Turkey. To the extent that pipelined gas from the Turkish stream will again be coming from Russia, this will raise dependency and cost in transit fees. This is why Turkey views the proposed East Med pipeline, as antagonistic to its plans confronting it as the devil does the cross. In essence, Turkey's illegal actions in the East Med are geared towards preventing the rise of the East Med as an independent "Fifth Corridor" or prospective route underpinning the EU supply diversification strategy. Turkey wants to merge the "Fourth Corridor"<sup>10</sup> and the "Fifth Corridor", with itself becoming the new, exclusive transit supplier of Europe, despite not being a producer. Turkey is also an important importer of Russian oil (not just gas) and of Iranian oil and gas. In particular, the Tabriz-Ankara natural gas pipeline runs from Tabriz, Iran, and through Erzurum, to Ankara. In Erzurum, this pipeline is linked to the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP), which is the initial section of the TANAP project, connecting the giant Shah Deniz gas field in offshore Azerbaijan for the transportation of gas to Europe via Italy and the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP). The Tabriz-Ankara pipeline has been attacked and damaged several times by PKK Kurdish guerillas.

The conflict in Syria also entails an energy dimension. In the case of Syria larger international players positioned themselves on the geopolitical chessboard so as to advance their geoeconomic<sup>11</sup> interests in the energy field. The South Pars/North Dome field is by far the world's largest natural gas field located in the Persian Gulf, with ownership of the field shared between Iran and Qatar. Before the civil war, two competing pipelines were proposed by Qatar and Iran to transport gas to Europe through Syria. For instance, the Persian Pipeline, also known as the Pars Pipeline (independent from the North Pars, which holds about two-thirds of the resource, owned by Qatar) was a proposed natural gas pipeline to transfer Iranian gas from the Persian Gulf to European markets passing through Turkey. It was seen as establishing the "Energy Silk Road." Qatar's plans were first put forward in 2009 and involved building a pipeline from the Persian Gulf via Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and Turkey. Assad rejected Qatar's proposal and Qatar is believed to have funded anti-Assad rebel groups between 2011 and 2013. Qatar's plans put Turkey at the centre of its plan. Turkey acquired a military base in Qatar in 2015 giving its troops a foothold in the Gulf. Qatar and Turkey share similar positions on the Syrian Civil War and have also been accused of helping the Islamic State. The above analysis has thrown all the jigsaw puzzles in place: Turkey wants a foothold in Syria not only in order to promote its

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<sup>9</sup> EU-28 Natural gas dependency was 74.4 % in 2017, with around 39% of the imported gas coming from Russia, about 30% from Norway, and 13% from Algeria. In fact, about 80% of the gas that Russian state-controlled company Gazprom produces is sold to Europe, hence maintaining this crucial market is important for Russia. The total EU-28 energy dependence rate (Net imports/GIEC+Bunkers) has hovered around 53-55% over the last decade.

<sup>10</sup> The "Fourth Corridor", or the Southern Gas Corridor concerns the planned supply of gas from the Caspian Sea (Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan) via Turkey. The three traditional gas supply routes include: 1. Russia, 2. Norway, 3. N. Africa.

<sup>11</sup> The combination of economic and geographic factors relating to international trade. As a branch of geopolitics, geoeconomics theorizes that states pursue international commerce and economic activity in order to maximize outcomes viewed as zero-sum games with the same logic that underlies military conflict.



Ottoman Empire dream but also to control the formation of a Kurdish state and especially to determine the route of future oil and gas pipelines. Turkey would not accept pipelines bypassing its territory. This enhances its energy security<sup>12</sup> vis-à-vis Russia and its capacity to hold Europe hostage, killing two birds with one stone. Russia stepped in to help the Assad regime in Syria in order to protect its own dominance in the gas market, through the control of future Middle East energy routes and pipelines. This explains and highlights why Moscow views the Republic of Cyprus gas as antagonistic to its own, despite statements to the contrary. This is why Russia never got involved in the Republic of Cyprus exploration program, why it equivocates regarding the Cyprus EEZ and has rejected the EU sanctions against Turkey. Countering American presence in the area and reasserting the former Soviet power are additional bonuses for Putin, who has proven to be an adept player. By enticing Turkey, Moscow, in line with its own interests, not only causes problems and weakens NATO's southern flank, but also wins lucrative arms deals like the sale of the S-400 surface-to-air missile system and promotes geopolitically significant energy projects like the Turkish Stream and the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant. Regarding the latter project, it should be stressed that Turkey's ultimate goal is not so much civil nuclear power generation but rather to become a nuclear power using the nuclear plant's centrifuges to produce enriched uranium with a view to acquiring nuclear weapons.

The USA and NATO officials are concerned about Russia's spreading influence and the way in which regional powers are turning to Russian and Chinese technology over American weapon systems. Weapons shipments from both East and West have always been vital for entrenching alliances and establishing spheres of interest and influence. Putin's S-400 sale to Turkey and the inability of the USA to stop it highlight the capacity of Russia to extend its will across the Middle East. It also sends a bad geopolitical message to NATO allies and adversaries alike. The de facto axis between Russia, Turkey, Iran and captive Syria perforce opposes America's interests in the area. It remains to be seen how the new energy great game plays out and how the competition over natural gas determines the passage of pipelines. Whether energy will flow from the Persian Gulf and Iraq through exit to the Mediterranean, or overland via Turkey, Ankara wishes to control energy developments in all cases, including the Republic of Cyprus EEZ and its Energy Program.

In fact, Turkey, by invading the Cyprus EEZ, wishes to contain the potential role of the Republic of Cyprus as an energy player and to annul the geopolitical value of Republic of Cyprus. Essentially, Turkish actions aim to control the energy developments in the East Med and restrict the role that the EU, Israel and Egypt can play in the area. At the same time, Turkey wants to prevent the developing energy network of cooperation between the Republic of Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, already advanced through trilateral and quadrilateral

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<sup>12</sup> According to Eurostat data Turkey's total energy import dependency (the percentage of imports in total energy consumption) has been increasing in recent decades rising from about 55% in the 1990s to between 76-78% over the last 5 years. Dependence on imported gas is 99% of total gas usage with more than half of Turkey's consumption coming from Russia.

partnerships and alignments, from forging regional collaborations in the hydrocarbon sector and other soft power issues.

At this juncture, Ankara's plans seem to coincide with those of Moscow and Tehran. With the Turkish stream and TANAP-TAP, Turkey and Russia will strengthen their position in the pipeline war, the former as a transit state and the latter as a supplier. Putin's geostrategic objectives go beyond even those of the Soviet Union. Preserving hegemony over the former Soviet heartland in all its facets, political, economic and military and state control of the energy sector as the main "commanding heights" of the economy are major parts of the Russian foreign policy agenda since energy revenues constitute a substantial part of Russian export and budget revenues. It is noted that Russian oil and gas majors are involved in Egypt's Zohr field,<sup>13</sup> in offshore Lebanon<sup>14</sup> and in Syria, whose offshore blocks are bound to be a gift to Putin for saving Assad. For Moscow the East Med gas supplies are competitive to its own, not so much in price terms, as they are more expensive to extract and bring to the market, but because they threaten its near-monopoly position in Europe and contract-negotiating power once alternative supplies appear on the market. This explains the drive to control the East Med hydrocarbons with Russian oil and gas majors and the enhanced collaboration with Turkey in trading, economic and military matters.

USA priorities in the East Med, the Middle East and the Gulf comprise safeguarding its commercial interests and wider business interests in the area and ensuring the energy security of the West. The Bush Administration used its massive military build-up in Central Asia for a powerful triple play: 1) Seal cold war victory against Russia; 2) contain Chinese influence; and 3) tighten the noose around Iran. Most notably, Washington, supported by the Blair government, exploited the war on terror in order to further American oil and gas interests in the Middle East and the Caspian region. Weaning Europe off Russian gas and instead preferably feeding it American shale gas (despite it being more expensive) not only entails profits but also weakens Russian influence over Europe. Establishing the East Med as an additional energy supply source and an American strategic anchor in relation to other powers like Russia, China, Turkey and Iran, which have increased their strategic footprint at the expense of the USA and Europe, are additional goals. Defending Israel at all costs while blocking the rise of a hegemon that could interfere with the flow of oil and gas from the region are also important parameters of US foreign policy, but with the erratic president Trump it remains to be seen whether that includes Turkey too and not Iran specifically. So far the response of the USA to Turkish maverick behaviour remains half-hearted, procrastinating and uncertain, apparently unwilling to push Ankara further into Putin's hands. Consequently, Turkey, by ignoring the USA concerning the purchase of the Russian S-400 missile system, has humiliated the superpower not for the first time. Ankara has been following its own policies in Syria and views indifferently American sanctions against Iran. At the same time, Turkey has been playing the two superpowers off against one another in a cunning and

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<sup>13</sup> Rosneft (30% stake) could also supply Europe from the giant Zohr gas field in Egypt, where it is a partner in a joint venture with ENI (60% stake) and BP (10% stake).

<sup>14</sup> The Russian Novatek is involved in exploration in Lebanon's Blocks 4 and 9 with Total and ENI.

manipulative Anatolian bazaar and extracting maximal benefits from both sides. An “Ankara-Moscow axis”<sup>15</sup> presents a nightmare for the USA and western capitals, especially Britain, which has traditionally supported the Ottoman Empire in order to prevent Russian exit into the Mediterranean by possession of the Dardanelles and Constantinople, and protect its trade routes to India and other colonies. Cooperation in hostility between the Ottoman Empire and Czarist Russia was not unknown and deep Turkish gratitude to Russia for the Bolshevik support to Kemal Ataturk against Greece, (owing to yet another Greek disastrous historical mistake) at a turning point in the “Turkish War of Independence”, has never been forgotten.

Ankara has calculated the costs and benefits of acquiring the S-400 air defence missile system<sup>16</sup> in its quest for initially regional air, land and sea supremacy and has determined that the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. Ankara knew that the EU purported sanctions were going to be too little too late and so they proved when adopted by the EU Council of Foreign Ministers on 15.7.2019. US sanctions are also expected to be weak and of minimal impact. Cancelling the sale to Turkey of the F-35 fifth generation stealth fighter aircraft, for how long is another matter, while at the same time regretting the profit lost, will not turn Ankara around. Turkey does not feel isolated and will not budge unless sanctions are sufficient in number and targeted to cause real damage to the Turkish economy, including companies (such as TPAO, the Turkish Petroleum Corporation and its BOTAŞ subsidiary (Petroleum Pipeline Corporation), which is a state-owned crude oil and natural gas pipelines and trading company in Turkey) and individual leaders, the freezing of assets, the blocking of international bank accounts and foreign direct investment, as well as political sanctions. Evidently, Turkey is not thrilled by the Senate’s Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act of 2019 that promotes a comprehensive American regional strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean, including lifting the prohibition on arms sales to the Republic of Cyprus and stopping the treatment of Cyprus as merely a problem but positioning it as a solution. However, the Act imposes specific requirements on the Republic of Cyprus, while the eventual benefits for Cyprus of the American updated strategy are unclear and must necessarily be judged accordingly.

Indeed, Turkey’s revisionist policy in the East Med and the Middle East has far wider implications than just the permanent control of Cyprus and the grabbing of its EEZ: In fact, it entails the encirclement of all the neighbouring countries, including Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq and most notably Syria with severe consequences for their national security, as well as for the

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<sup>15</sup> Prof. Dr. Erol Mehmet Seyfettin (Article, undated). Is Turkey-Russia Centric “Eurasian Axis” Possible? Available from: <https://ankasam.org/en/is-turkey-russia-centric-eurasian-axis-possible/> [Accessed 20.7.2019].

<sup>16</sup> The S-400 missile system may potentially compromise NATO security if integrated into the alliance’s broader air-defense systems and also pose risks to the F-35 fighter stealth features via intelligence collection mechanisms or cyber back doors built into the Russian system. In addition, the system will deny Israel air supremacy by assisting Turkey to control the land, sea and air all the way from the East Med to the Aegean because of the system’s mobility. Finally, the system deteriorates further the imbalance of power between Greece and Turkey.

peace, stability and the welfare of the region. Erdogan's neo-ottoman vision and ambition is to lead the Arab and Islamic world challenging the interests of the countries involved. By embracing the Palestinian cause Ankara has also infuriated Israel. Furthermore, Turkey has not hidden its intention to keep the Syrian and Iraqi Kurdistan Northern provinces along its borders under permanent suzerainty.

In a previous article<sup>17</sup> Turkey's objectives in invading Cyprus's EEZ were listed and are now corroborated by Ankara's explicit blackmail demands:

1. To stop the hydrocarbons exploration program of the Republic of Cyprus and further to prevent hydrocarbon exploitation.
2. To claim a significant part of the EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus in violation of the Convention on the Law of the Sea.
3. To become a co-owner of the energy wealth of Cyprus under the pretext of the Turkish Cypriots and blackmail the Republic of Cyprus to change its energy policy in a direction serving Turkey's goal of becoming an energy transit hub itself.
4. To grab the energy wealth of the Republic of Cyprus and to channel it through a pipeline to Turkey, imposing its own conditions and terms on prices and making Cyprus hostage, although Cyprus has much better export options.
5. To effectively compel the international oil companies (IOCs) involved in the Republic of Cyprus hydrocarbon exploration and production program to negotiate with Turkey through a so-called hydrocarbons co-management committee with the Turkish Cypriots, utilizing the 1960 Constitution on an à la carte basis.
6. To humiliate and draw at the negotiating table a fully-weakened President of the Republic of Cyprus in order to impose upon him the terms for the solution of the Cyprus problem on the basis of essentially a condominium with Turkey via the Turkish Cypriots in a confederation. Gas will be part of the solution preferred by Turkey at the negotiating table.
7. To abolish the Republic of Cyprus with the proposed solution and transform it not just into a satellite within its own sphere of influence but into a colony. Already in the northern part of Cyprus occupied since July 1974, Turkey has transferred thousands of settlers as part of its progressive ethnic cleansing and eventually complete occupation of Cyprus, based on the Ismail Nihat Erim Report of 1956.
8. To turn the Levantine Basin into a Turkish lake, using coercion tactics and to demonstrate at international level that it is the regional hegemon in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East.
9. To prevent other great and regional powers from gaining access or a decisive role in the region's energy resources except under its own terms and time framework.

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<sup>17</sup> See the Author's Article entitled "The energy wars of Turkey and the Thucydidean trap of Greece." Available from:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324112206\\_The\\_energy\\_wars\\_of\\_Turkey\\_and\\_the\\_Thucydidean\\_trap\\_of\\_Greece](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324112206_The_energy_wars_of_Turkey_and_the_Thucydidean_trap_of_Greece) and,  
[https://www.academia.edu/36291937/The\\_energy\\_wars\\_of\\_Turkey\\_and\\_the\\_Thucydidean\\_trap\\_of\\_Greece](https://www.academia.edu/36291937/The_energy_wars_of_Turkey_and_the_Thucydidean_trap_of_Greece)

Turkey's hardly-disguised current proposal to the United Nations, using the Turkish Cypriots as a vehicle for its designs, suggesting the establishment of a committee for joint exploitation of Cyprus's natural resources confirms precisely point number 5 (either stop or hijack the Republic of Cyprus Energy Program) and the objectives in their totality. There is no doubt whatsoever that Ankara wants to grab at least half the value of the resources and the wealth that rightfully belongs to Cypriot people, just like it has grabbed 37% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus. Moreover, Ankara wants to impose a single monetization option concerning Cyprus's hydrocarbons: Transportation by pipelines to Turkey, most likely to Ceyhan.

At the same time, Turkey does not intend to make any concessions in terms of resolving fairly the Cyprus problem, which is none other than Turkish illegal occupation of part of a small nation. Turkey's aim is to control Cyprus with a Turkish-Cypriot veto or a required positive vote in all policy areas, change the island's demography in just a few decades utilizing the Turkish settlers' high birth rate and eventually annex the whole island in the same way as it has done with the Hatay province of Syria in 1939. The occupied northern part of Cyprus is in practice already annexed by Turkey in all but name, while further annexation moves, such as the opening of the occupied Famagusta area are currently promoted in order to exert additional pressure on the Republic of Cyprus. Under these circumstances it is impossible to find a fair and workable solution unless committing suicide is considered to be an option.

If Cyprus yields to the blackmail of Turkish gunboat diplomacy and the invasion of its EEZ by Ankara's drill ships it will gain nothing under the current circumstances. On the contrary, Ankara will obtain the recognition of the illegal occupying regime and will keep advancing the islamization of the occupied territories, with a view to the already visible annexation, unless prevented by superior force. In fact, Turkey is not interested in finding a solution to the Cyprus problem that safeguards the Republic of Cyprus independence and sovereignty as well as western interests, let alone the interests of the Cypriot people comprising all communities. Erdogan is steadfastly pursuing Turkey's neo-ottoman, revisionist dream of not just becoming a great regional or Asiatic power but of joining the league of superpowers like the US, Russia and China. Ankara is currently geared towards the monopolization of Cyprus's hydrocarbons at the expense of European Union interests, that seek diversification away from energy dependence on Russia, and even wider western and American interests in the Middle East and the Gulf, such as control of energy supply routes, the containment of Russia and Iran, the protection of Israel etc.

If Turkey succeeds in grabbing Cyprus's hydrocarbon resources and EEZ, Greece's turn will follow. This is why the lack of will, some would argue the inability of Greece to protect Cyprus's EEZ is tragically misguided, as the security of both countries is undivided. However, the inability is the outcome of the irresponsibility of those who have held the nation's fate in their hands. And this was long before Greece's bankruptcy in 2010. There have been many ignored warnings. In a

declassified CIA memo<sup>18</sup> dated 4.11.1987 on the military balance of power between Greece and Turkey after the Aegean crisis of 1987, the CIA predicted that in around a decade Turkey would become militarily stronger and upset the existing balance. Indeed the Imia crisis followed in less than a decade. Moreover, the institutional malaise and political-military dependence afflicting the Greek state were pointed out by a number of scholars including the philosopher and intellectual historian Panayiotis Kondylis.<sup>19</sup> The persistent policy of supposedly securing "peace" by retreating before all Turkish provocations and accepting from a position of military weakness unacceptable national compromises, like the 1996 Imia Agreement, has simply turned Greece into a satellite through the process of finlandisation.

On 5.2.2018, when Turkey first invaded the Cyprus EEZ and prevented the Saipem 12000 drillship of the Italian company ENI from proceeding with the planned exploratory drilling for natural gas in offshore Block 3, Greece was absent despite being a guarantor power. As a result, Ankara was able to achieve strategic objectives and war results without even firing a shot. Such historical crimes have continued ever since accepting the Armistice of Mudanya on 14.10.1922 and giving up Eastern Thrace and the strategic Dardanelles straits,<sup>20</sup> again without a fight. This is how history rewards daring and punishes cowardice. This is how Greece ended up in a Thucydidean trap, with Turkey demanding half the Aegean.

Turkey has been a rising, ambitious and notably successful actor in global arms exports. It has been developing its military technology and capacity, under a national development scheme called the 2023 Vision,<sup>21</sup> named after the 100th anniversary of its modern establishment. The country has produced in recent years domestic tanks, fighter jets, defence systems and unmanned aerial vehicles (drones). Turkey's growing defence industry satisfies its military needs to a significant extent, while Ankara also resorts to extensive arms purchases. According to the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database,<sup>22</sup> which contains information on all transfers of major conventional weapons, Turkey imported arms valued around 1.110 million TIV<sup>23</sup> over the period 2017-2018, compared to 146 million TIV acquired by Greece. Ankara's armament and rearmament policy resembles that of Hitler in the 1930s and represents a destabilizing and highly dangerous build-up of weapons, fueling Turkish aggression. The Turkish military diplomacy through arms imports creates economic dependencies with supplier countries (Russia, USA, Germany, Holland, Italy, Spain), thus influencing their policies. Compared to the Turkish defence industry planning and vision, the Greek defence

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<sup>18</sup> Follow the web link:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP93T00837R000400080009-3.pdf>.

Accessed on 16.7.2019.

<sup>19</sup> See various works by Panayiotis Kondylis including his Theory of war (1999). Themelio Press.

<sup>20</sup> The Dardanelles straits are one of the seven most important energy choke-points in the world, through which about half of the world's total oil production is transported over water.

<sup>21</sup> Turkey's Strategic Vision 2023 Project was launched by Erdogan. Follow the web link:

<http://www.tsv2023.org/index.php/en/>

<sup>22</sup> Follow the web link: <https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers>

<sup>23</sup> TIV or Trend Indicator Values are the Units used by SIPRI for comparative calculations of international weapons transfers between countries. It is a unique system measuring the volume of transferred military resources rather than their financial value.

industry has been decimated, importing nearly all its weapon systems, while Turkey produces with domestic technical knowhow about 70% of its arms. It can easily be guessed in which group of the wise and foolish virgins in Jesus' Bible parable each country stands. Under such circumstances, a Turkish attack cannot be withheld for more than a few days. This explains Greece's fear to confront Ankara's provocations and why Cyprus was abandoned to its fate, despite Greece being a guarantor power.

#### **4. Conclusions - What is to be done**

International law is not a guarantee of protection for the weak. Nor is hope or reliance on "allies" a strategy. Realism always indicates the path of virtue and wisdom. In the light of the above analysis and bleak facts, the following proposals comprise important policy choices and courses of action that can offer effective ways of handling the Turkish threat:

Greece must do its utmost to exit from the Thucydidean trap of the advancing Turkey. First, it must reconstitute the balance of power as fast as possible. Second it should devise a long-term strategy based on the self-evident Roman doctrine "If you want peace prepare for war / Si vis pacem, para bellum." War does not necessarily mean catastrophe if a country is well prepared and determined to defend its freedom and its honour. It has not yet been comprehended that in the ambiguous but realistic Orwellian world of the political and international chessboard peace can mean war and war peace.

Cyprus should persuade Greece to conclude without delay a demarcation agreement of their respective EEZs in order to pre-empt Turkish moves to reach such an agreement with one of the disputed regimes in Libya, thus laying claim to Crete's EEZ. Greece should also define its EEZ boundaries with Egypt and choose the right horse to back in Libya with the same aim in mind.

Both Cyprus and Greece should capitalize on the vested interests of countries like the USA, France and Israel in the region in order to counterbalance Turkish might. It goes without saying that there must be a quid pro quo for any facilities offered.

A small country like Cyprus can leverage its foreign policy influence beyond material capabilities only through alliances where possible and certainly alignments in different fields of common interests with neighbouring countries. The promotion of existing trilateral/quadrilateral partnerships and the further enhancement of regional cooperation with neighbouring countries based on a shared vision and win-win solutions will maximize the benefits for all and safeguard regional stability. This does not exclude Turkey provided it respects international law, ceases the illegal drilling in Cyprus's EEZ and cooperates for a fair solution of the Cyprus problem that encompasses withdrawal of Turkish occupying troops and international guarantees, excluding Greece, Turkey and Great Britain, none of which have respected or safeguarded the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus. Britain, which has repeatedly proved to be an unreliable and perfidious guarantor of the Republic of Cyprus, has taken the expected double-dealing stance with regard to the Turkish violation of the Cyprus EEZ and

its sovereign rights. In fact, British policy remains totally pro-Turkish within the framework of the ever-applied "divide and rule" doctrine, so that the Republic of Cyprus can never have real independence or adopt policies against the interests of Britain. Ankara's current intimidation is an omen of how much "freedom" the Cypriot people will have in the proposed confederation under Turkish suzerainty.

Even if negotiations on resolving the Cyprus problem have to restart, the Energy Program must not be on the table. However, ceasing immediately all illegal drilling in Cyprus's EEZ by Turkey should preferably be a pre-condition for restarting talks. The energy wealth is practically the only weapon available to the Republic of Cyprus to help play an important role in the European Union, regarding its energy security and find a fair and viable solution to the Cyprus problem. Hence, Cyprus should remain unequivocally committed to continuing its hydrocarbon exploration and proceed with monetization the fastest possible. If Cyprus does not use this trump card wisely and consistently as an incentive for Turkey to acquiesce to a fairer solution, then this critical window of opportunity will close without achieving a desired outcome. Specifically, any resolution of the "Cyprus Problem" under the terms dictated by the Turkish occupation will simply legalize the illegal status quo in the occupied part of Cyprus, while placing under Turkey's control the state of Cyprus. What is currently on offer is just partition disguised under an obfuscating term as bizonal, bicomunal federation which constitutes a neologism—a recent addition to the vocabulary of political science. In return for some minor territorial adjustments, mainly in the unoccupied neutral zone, since the Turks are now preparing to colonize also the occupied city of Famagusta, Ankara will turn Cyprus into a Turkish protectorate. Such a development is not in the interests of the West, the USA, the European Union and Israel, which will be able to gain strategic depth in the air and the sea via an independent and sovereign Cyprus, without any restrictions to be certainly imposed by Turkey and its hegemonic ambitions. By disseminating these facts persuasively to foreign governments and decision-making centers, the necessary international pressure upon Turkey may be forthcoming once the West realizes that its interests can best be served by a truly independent and sovereign Cyprus and not one that will effectively be under Turkish overlordship.

Given Turkey's menacing aggressiveness, any resolution of the "Cyprus Problem" without prior delineation of the EEZ between the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey at the median sea water line prescribed by UNCLOS,<sup>24</sup> secured under a New Treaty of exclusively International or Security Council Guarantees, would be inadmissible and politically myopic and dangerous. If left afterwards, Turkey, as the stronger party, will determine what happens, based on the illegal maps it produces concerning the Cyprus EEZ and the Turkish "continental shelf", using the Turkish-Cypriot veto, which Ankara demands in order to turn Cyprus into its satellite. Hence, once the issues of the return of occupied territory and the

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<sup>24</sup> The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) does not differentiate between big coastal states and small island states with respect to their maritime rights. Therefore, the EEZ boundary between Cyprus and Turkey must be demarcated along the median sea water line. UNCLOS came into force in 1994 and although Turkey is not a signatory of it, it is bound by the Convention under international law. It is noted that Turkey concluded EEZ delimitation agreements on the basis of the median line with its neighbours in the Black Sea.



constitution of a properly-functioning state are settled, in a way that would avoid recurring constitutional crises, recognition by Turkey of the Republic of Cyprus EEZ should be part of the solution package.

The existing National Investment Fund / Sovereign Wealth Fund Law safeguards fully the interests of the Turkish-Cypriots, indeed of all the population. The share of Turkish-Cypriot revenues after subtracting all capital and operational expenses should not exceed their 18% share of the population prior to the Turkish invasion. Any talk of creating an escrow account<sup>25</sup> on their behalf, or any oversight of the Fund by any organization, disputes the credibility of the Republic of Cyprus and compromises its sovereignty. In any case, what Turkey really wants is well-known, as explained in Section 3 of this Paper, and such a step will simply be a futile and dangerous act.

As a concession to Turkey the proposed East Med gas pipeline should be abandoned in return for rejecting a pipeline through Turkey too. The government, based on a revised Master Plan, should launch immediately the preparations for the construction of an LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) Plant and related infrastructure, such as the Pre-FEED (Preliminary Front End Engineering Design) and FEED (Front End Engineering Design). By the time the FID (Final Investment Decision) stage is reached, proven gas reserves will be more than sufficient than the existing gas-in-place in the Calypso (Block 6) and Glafkos (Block 10), even allowing for Aphrodite's (Block 12) gas being directed for liquefaction in Egypt. The objective should then be fast-track development as was the case with Egypt's Zohr offshore field. This is neither a gamble nor a leap of faith. It is a strategy to forestall and pre-empt Ankara's plans to direct East Med gas by pipeline to Turkey. Forecasts indicate that a wave of LNG will be heading to Europe (besides the higher-priced Asian markets) in order to satisfy rising demand and move towards a greener energy mix, in accordance with the European Energy Union goals. Therefore, all the pre-conditions for a successful venture are in place. Economic, political and geopolitical considerations render a three-train<sup>26</sup> LNG Plant a necessity of extreme national importance. Safeguarding the fifth energy corridor for an independent and separate supply of Europe from the East Med, while denying Turkey full control of energy flows from the region is a question of literally national survival. The EU will then have reasons to support a fairer solution of the Cyprus problem. America's Exxon-Mobil supports the construction of an LNG Plant, while the Italian ENI, with leading expertise in LNG and heavily involved in the Cyprus gas exploration program is certain to invest along with the French Total. This is how economic and strategic alliances are built.

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<sup>25</sup> Escrow is a legal concept describing the use of a third party, which holds an asset or funds before they are transferred from one party to another, when there is uncertainty over whether one party or another will be able to fulfill their obligations.

<sup>26</sup> The 3 trains will have a total capacity close to 20 BCM/y, with each train producing around 5 MTPA (Metric tonnes per annum). 1 MTPA of LNG=1.38 BCM/y (Billion cubic meters per year) or 1 BCM=0.74 MTPA LNG.

The LNG Plant will impart substantial geopolitical leverage and deterrence to the Republic of Cyprus as a strategic energy player. The earliest possible construction of the LNG Plant<sup>27</sup> will create favourable dynamics, drawing in the reserves of Israel and the expected gas discoveries of Lebanon and Syria before Turkey grabs them. Common ground may be found even with competing Russian gas interests. The advantages from an LNG Plant<sup>28</sup> are far greater than those of the East Med gas pipeline, which, besides its technical challenges, constitutes a red cape for the Turkish bull. The gas liquefaction Plant will bestow maximal benefits on the economy and enhance Cyprus prospects to become an energy trading hub and a service centre. LNG from Cyprus can be exported to Asia and Europe via the import terminal in Alexandroupolis. Greece will derive huge benefits by onward gas supply of the Balkans and East Europe via the Interconnector Greece Bulgaria (IGB) pipeline, thus relieving Russian dependence, in line with EU energy policy. Finally, the LNG Plant will enable regional cooperation by creating common economic, commercial and strategic interests. Turkey can be allowed to invest in the LNG Plant at Vassilikos bay with or without a solution to the Cyprus problem, resulting from the Turkish invasion and occupation, for self-evident reasons. Natural gas from the LNG Plant can be sold to Turkey based on appropriate international contracts determining the terms of such a trade. It is noted that Turkey already possesses four LNG import terminals, two land-based and two FSRUs,<sup>29</sup> of which one is located very near Cyprus at a port in the Dörtyol district (near Ceyhan), in the ex-Syrian Hatay province, grabbed by Turkey in 1939.

Some analysts have suggested activating the EU's mutual assistance / defence clause<sup>30</sup> (article 42(7) of the Treaty on the EU). Even though this seemingly binding obligation of the Treaty of Lisbon strengthens the solidarity between EU member-states, it does not affect the neutrality of certain EU countries and is consistent with the commitments of EU countries that are NATO members. Furthermore, Article 42(7), just like the solidarity clause of Article 222, providing for the obligation to act jointly when an EU country is the victim of a terrorist attack, are largely seen as merely symbolic with little actual relevance. At any rate, the slow pace of reaction and the inadequate sanctions of the EU against Turkey as well as the lack of solidarity when the EU / Eurogroup imposed an illegal and discriminatory bail-in on Cyprus in March 2013 are indicators that expectations should not be set high, as national interests always take precedence.

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<sup>27</sup> An LNG Plant requires 3-4 years to build at an approximate cost of \$10 billion.

<sup>28</sup> See the Author's Article entitled "The Role of East Med Gas in the European Energy Security and the Best Cyprus Gas Monetization Option." Available from:

<http://cceia.unic.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/article02-P.Tilliros-14-2.pdf> and, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325085074\\_The\\_Role\\_of\\_Cyprus\\_and\\_East\\_Med\\_Gas\\_in\\_the\\_European\\_Energy\\_Security\\_and\\_The\\_Best\\_Cyprus\\_Gas\\_Monetization\\_Option](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325085074_The_Role_of_Cyprus_and_East_Med_Gas_in_the_European_Energy_Security_and_The_Best_Cyprus_Gas_Monetization_Option) and, [https://www.sigmalive.com/news/opinions\\_sigmalive/429059/o-rolou-tou-fysikou-aeriou-tis-anatolikis-mesogeiou](https://www.sigmalive.com/news/opinions_sigmalive/429059/o-rolou-tou-fysikou-aeriou-tis-anatolikis-mesogeiou)

<sup>29</sup> A Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU) is used for storing, transiting and transferring (special type of ship) or for regasifying (offshore terminal installation) LNG.

<sup>30</sup> This clause provides that if an EU country is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other EU countries have an obligation to aid and assist it by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. France invoked this on 13.11.2015 for the first time, asking for aid and assistance from the other European Union (EU) Member States in the aftermath of the deadly terrorist attacks in Paris.

Reviving the “Unified or Joint Military Defence Doctrine” has its merits but will lack credibility unless supported by concrete military measures, such as the installation of an effective air defence missile system<sup>31</sup> and the display of a demonstrable will by Greece to abide by the doctrine. Integrating the air defence systems of Greece, Cyprus and Israel and regional defence cooperation and coordination also appear to be rational proposals provided the USA gives its blessing and Israel agrees in the context of the quadrilateral alignment of interests. Enhancing security and defence capabilities through PESCO<sup>32</sup> initiatives may also add value. Implementing the above measures and actions across the board will create synergies and dynamics that will certainly strengthen the Republic of Cyprus position against Turkey’s aggression.

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<sup>31</sup> According to a comparison of technical parameters by Defenseworld.net, the Russian S-400 is currently the most advanced air defense missile system in the world capable of shooting down both aircraft and ballistic missiles. Its closest rival is the American Patriot, which however is behind in crucial technical capabilities.

Follow the web link:

[https://www.defenseworld.net/feature/20/Battle\\_of\\_the\\_Air\\_Defense\\_Systems\\_\\_S\\_400\\_Vs\\_Patriot\\_and\\_THAAD](https://www.defenseworld.net/feature/20/Battle_of_the_Air_Defense_Systems__S_400_Vs_Patriot_and_THAAD). Accessed on 18.7.2019.

<sup>32</sup> The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in the area of security and defence policy was established by a Council decision on 11.12.2017, aiming to raise cooperation in the said fields among the currently 25 participating EU Member States.