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Ioulia Bekou

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Kostas A. Lavdas, Professor of European Politics in the Department of International, European and Area Studies of the Panteion University of Social and Political Studies (Director of research)

Kostas Ifantis, Associate Professor of International Relations in the Department of International, European and Area Studies of the Panteion University of Social and Political Studies

Harry Papasotiriou, Professor in the Department of International, European and Area Studies of the Panteion University of Social and Political Studies



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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Τίτλος: Ο πόλεμος της ενέργειας στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο

Ο στόχος μου στη διπλωματική εργασία είναι να αναδείξω τις προκλήσεις στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο αναφορικά με το θέμα της ενέργειας που οδηγούν είτε σε συνεργασίες, είτε σε διαμάχες. Η ενεργειακή διπλωματία αρχίζει να γίνεται όλο και πιο κρίσιμη καθώς οι χώρες αντιλαμβάνονται όλο και περισσότερο τη σημασία της ενέργειας για την ενδυνάμωση ακόμα και επιβίωση της κυριαρχίας τους. Τα δίκτυα μεταφοράς φυσικού αερίου, πετρελαίου αλλά και ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας αποτελούν πλέον προτεραιότητα αρκετών κρατών παγκοσμίως. Η Ανατολική Μεσόγειος αποτελεί μία περιοχή ιδιαίτερα κρίσιμη και ευαίσθητη λόγω της μεγάλης της γεωπολιτικής σημασίας και φυσικά των πλούσιων ενεργειακών της πόρων. Τόσες Ευρωπαϊκές χώρες όπως η Γαλλία και η Ιταλία όσο και ΗΠΑ, παρόλο που δεν ανήκουν στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο είναι ισχυροί παίκτες στη περιοχή μέσω των εταιριών- μεγαθήριων, όπως TOTAL, ENI, EXXONMOBIL αντίστοιχα, στα διαμερίσματα που τους έχουν δοθεί από τη Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία. Επιπρόσθετα, η περιοχή της Ανατολικής Μεσογείου αποτελεί ιδιαίτερης σπουδαιότητας λόγω της γεωγραφικής της θέσης, που επηρεάζει τη πολιτική πολλών άλλων κρατών, καθώς είναι σταυροδρόμι τριών ηπείρων. Επιπλέον, η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση θέλει να μειώσει την ενεργειακή της εξάρτησή από τη Ρωσία μέσω αγωγού από την Ανατολική Μεσόγειο.

Η Σύμβαση των Ηνωμένων Εθνών για το δίκαιο της θάλασσας (UNCLOS), το 1982, είναι το κύριο διεθνές έγγραφο, που ρυθμίζει τις θαλάσσιες ζώνες και τα όριά τους (Υφαλοκρηπίδα, Αποκλειστική Οικονομική Ζώνη). Οι οριοθετήσεις των θαλασσίων ζωνών επιτρέπουν σε κάθε χώρα να διεκδικεί μέσα σε αυτές κομμάτι κυριαρχίας, ώστε να στήσουν την ενεργειακή τους πολιτική.

Στην ερευνητική μου αναφέρομαι αρχικά στη γεωπολιτική σημασία της περιοχής, στα τωρινά ζητήματα που ταλανίζουν τη περιοχή καθώς και στο μεγαλεπήβολο έργο του αγωγού EastMed. Έπειτα, απευθύνομαι στις συνεργασίες και στις αντιπαλότητες που στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο λόγω της ενέργειας πως σχηματίζεται αυτή ανάλογα με τα ιδιαίτερα χαρακτηριστικά κι επιδιώξεις κάθε χώρας (σχέση προμηθευτών-διαμετακομιστών- προμηθευόμενων). . Τέλος, αναλύω την ενεργειακή πολιτική κάθε παίκτη (Ελλάδα, Κύπρος, Τουρκία, Ισραήλ, Αίγυπτος, ΗΠΑ, Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση με

ειδική μνεία στη Γαλλία και στη Γερμανία, Ρωσία, Κίνα) και Επιπρόσθετα, θα αναφερθώ ακροθιγώς και στις πολιτικοκοινωνικές διαφορές ορισμένων κρατών που οδηγούν σε συγκεκριμένες πολιτικές στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο και πως το δίκαιο της θάλασσας καθορίζει τις κινήσεις των παικτών στη περιοχή. Τέλος, θα αναλύσω τις σημερινές ενεργειακές διπλωματικές ενέργειες ή συμφωνίες και πως αυτές διαμορφώνουν το ενεργειακό παιχνίδι στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο.

ABSTRACT

Title: The energy war in the Eastern Mediterranean

The goal of my research is to highlight the challenges concerning Energy that induce either cooperation or antagonism amongst the major actors in the Eastern Mediterranean. Energy Diplomacy is becoming increasingly crucial as countries become more and more aware of the importance of the energy, which strengthen their sovereignty. Gas, oil and electricity transmission networks are now a priority for several countries worldwide concerning their foreign policy. The Eastern Mediterranean is a particularly vital and sensitive area due to its great geopolitical importance and of course its rich energy resources. So many European countries such as France, Italy and even far Atlantic USA are strong actors in the Eastern Mediterranean through their companies, like TOTAL, ENI and EXXONMOBIL respectively, in the regions given by the Republic of Cyprus. In addition, the region of the Eastern Mediterranean is of particular importance due to its geographical location, which affects the policy of many other countries, as it is a crossroad of three continents. Moreover, the European Union try to reduce its energy dependence on Russia through the pipeline from the Eastern Mediterranean.

The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is the principal international document, which regulates the maritime zones and their delimitation (Continental Shelf and Exclusive Economic Zone). The delimitations of the maritime zones allow each country to claim within them a piece of sovereignty in order to set up its energy policy.

In my research, I first mention the current geopolitical challenges along with the geopolitical importance of the region. Furthermore, I indicate the energy policy of each actor in the region (Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, Israel, Egypt, USA, European Union -France, Germany, Russia, China etc) and how it is formed according to the particular attributes and aspiration of each country (supplier-transferor relations). In addition, I will refer to the socio-political differences of some states leading to specific policies in the Eastern Mediterranean and to what extent the law of the sea determines the life and the activities of the actors in the Mediterranean while highlighting the contributions that the Mediterranean specificity might have conferred on such geopolitical activities. Finally, I will analyze current energy diplomatic actions or agreements and how they shape the energy game in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Timeline of the energy activities in the Eastern Mediterranean

1960-1970: offshore exploration on the shallow shelf of Israel and Northern Sinai

mid. 1970s- mid 1980s: second exploration campaign in Sinai where light oil was found in several areas

1974: Turkish invasion in Cyprus

1987 (14 of July): official submission of Turkey's candidacy in the European Commission

1994: Russia signed the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) with the European Union

1999-2000: five natural gas fields were discovered at a shallow depth west of the coastal town of Ashqelon and the Gaza Strip

1999: Israel made its first offshore natural gas discovery-the Noa field

1999: British gas (BG) announced the discovery of Gaza marine in the waters of the Palestinian authority

2000: discovery of the Mari-B field (Israel from an importer becomes a domestic supplier of natural gas)

2003: substantial increase in gas prices

2004: Cyprus declared an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

2005: Euro-Arab Mashreq Gas Market Project (Project of cooperation supported by European Union)

2007: Creation of 13 licensing blocks off the island of Cyprus

2008 (January): Turkey and Syria signed an agreement to construct a 63km pipeline between Aleppo and Kilis (at the Turkish border) as the first segment of a Syria-Turkey connection with the Arab gas pipeline

2008: The European Union, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria reached a consensus to extend the Arab gas pipeline to Turkey and Europe with a connection to Iraq

2008: A license for Block 12 of Cyprus was given to the US company Noble Energy (Aphrodite)

2008: The EU initiated the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean as re-launching of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (The Barcelona process of 1995) with special emphasis on energy security.

2009: Noble Energy announces the discovery of the Tamar field (250 bcm) in offshore Israel

2010: Noble Energy announces the discovery of the Leviathan field (476bcb) in offshore Israel

2010: Syria and Turkey started talks concerning gas imports through Turkey that could be supplied by Iran or Azerbaijan

2011: Noble Energy announces the discovery of the Aphrodite field (140-220bcm) in offshore Cyprus

2012: BP announce two gas discoveries in offshore Egypt's Nile Delta

2013 (March): Beginning of gas production at the Tamar field

2015 (February): Cyprus signed a memorandum of understanding to deliver gas from the Aphrodite field through an offshore pipeline to Egypt for re-export

2015: ENI's discovery of 850 bcm of gas in the Zhor field offshore Egypt

2016: Cyprus, Greece, Israel

2019 (January): Cyprus, Egypt, Greece and Israel established the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum to coordinate their energy policies, create regional gas market, cut infrastructure costs, and offer competitive prices

2019 (May): Turkish foreign minister Melvut Cavusoglu announces that a Turkish vessel would drill in the waters west of Cyprus

2019 (June): EU threatens Turkey to impose restrictive measures on Turkey for the "continued and illegal drilling activities"

2019 (November): The Sarraj government in Tripoli has signed an agreement with Turkey to establish an exclusive economic zone from the Southern Turkish coast on the Mediterranean to the northeastern coast of Libya (this sparked widespread anger especially from Cyprus, Turkey and the EU because of the agreement which has been described as contrary to international law)

2019 (December): US Congress approval the Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act, which redefines U.S. diplomatic, military and economic policy in the Eastern Mediterranean and the alliance between the United States, Cyprus, Greece and Israel

2020 (August): Greece and Egypt agreement, delimitating their Exclusive economic Zone (EEZ)

Introduction

Plato, in Protagoras, explains that Epimetheus – “he who has afterthought” - created the animals, giving to them all the necessities for their survival. On the contrary, he left the humans naked and without any defense. For correcting his mistake, he gave to man, the fire. It is therefore energy - fire - which ensures the domination of man over nature. This aptly signifies the true importance of energy for mankind. It explains their ability to walk, to produce, to survive and dominate.

Eastern Mediterranean is a special part of mare nostrum (our sea) that entails a grand history and from the eve of the 21st century has become the center of interest because of the discovery of its rich energy wealth. Energy in the region has a crucial historical impact for the people whose security is always at stake. The countries in Eastern Mediterranean differ a lot culturally, politically, and historically. Even though they share the same sea, they have never found a reason for a long-term collaboration that will highlight the value of the area. Throughout the centuries, the region had a warlike environment. Energy has acted as a reason to bring the regional countries together on a table, either to cooperate or to dispute. The discovery of energy fields has completely altered the equilibrium of power in the region and new forms of power have emerged. In the past, the disagreements or the conflicts were interpreted in military terms. The multilateralism and the progression of international law along with the vital particularity of energy has turned policy makers to confronting conflicts in a diplomatic way and discovering different forms of power to survive and influence others. The region is an arena of antagonism where energy has the key role to express sovereignty.

In the first chapter, there will be an analysis of the current events taking place in the area along with the huge EastMed pipeline project which seems to be the bond for further collaboration of the actors. The second chapter explains the way actors react to the current situation in the region, either by forming collaborations or by facing continuous frictions. Finally, the last chapter deals with the particularity of energy in a multipolar system where everyone in the region wants as big a piece of the pie as they can get. However, there exists the question of whether the actors are strategically prepared to deal with each other. The American leadership is still clearly influencing the course of the policies in the region and it is hence crucial to question whether the European Union is determined to defend its rights.

The energy game in the Eastern Mediterranean has no rules and thus, it is difficult to predict the next steps. Nevertheless, a strong energy policy can impose its footprint in the region.

Chapitre 1: A region in transition

A. The rising interest in Eastern Mediterranean: energy as a means of cooperation or conflict?

In our mind we see the region as a coherent image, as a system where everything is mixed and is recomposed as an original entity. Nevertheless, we can't deny that its diversity and the different perspectives of the actors disintegrate the region. What then, is Eastern Mediterranean? In addition to its obvious geological significance as a sea, it's an expression that presents a "world". Eastern Mediterranean is a huge melting pot with a bunch of different civilizations, cultures, history and mainly with different interests and ambitions for their future plans. The economic activities, the human migrations, the cities and their hinterlands, the conflicting political divisions oblige us to consider all regional actors as a whole to our analysis. It's a geopolitical object, a space of contradictions and conflicts, which makes it difficult to considerate it as a whole and whose extreme complexity requires to question what we define as "Mediterranean". In every case, an intriguing similarity is featured in all States of the Mediterranean Sea without the slightest deviation: they all have interests in the sea that bathes their coast. The Mediterranean concept encompass the close bond of the regional countries. Every activity of an actor in the region affects the policy-making of the other.

Throughout the centuries, the region has been the center of confrontation for the regional actors. The bloodshed of the 20th century has put the interstate relations into a state of military antagonism interpreted as total wars. In the Cold War era, Eastern Mediterranean was a point of the antagonism between Russia and the United States. Now the competition isn't military and ideological but a contest in the spheres of energy and arms sales that resembled market competition.¹ The 21st century has opened a new

¹ Tziampiris A. (2015), *The Eastern Mediterranean in transition: Multipolarity, Power and Politics*, p. 10

phase in international relations seen in geopolitical and geoeconomic terms. This century has changed the priorities of the region. Previous to this century, the economy was what defined the regional interests in a vast sense. Economy still remains a powerful component of the international and local relations but what makes now Eastern Mediterranean a point of reference for every great country's foreign policy is energy. Historically, all the countries in the region have been resource poor and so the prospect of significant gas discoveries is important both for energy security and for revenues. Even former prime minister of Israel, Golda Meir, had famously quoted in the 1970's "Let me tell you something that we Israelis have against Moses. He took us 40 years through the desert in order to bring us to the one spot in the Middle East that has no oil".² In contemporary times, petroleum dominates port activity in Mediterranean as a whole. The entire basin has 58 port tankers, 60 refineries and a hundred oil-fired thermal power stations.³ These numbers mark the significant progress in terms of energy in the Mediterranean basin.

Energy security is interpreted as the way of management of vital energy systems. The consequences of mismanagement vary, depending, firstly, on who controls the energy resources and on how long will these resources last. In other words, to reassure the stewardship of energy resources, it depends on the number of actors controlling the energy in a region and moreover on their endurance. Even from the first world war, when Churchill aspired to make the Britain fleet faster than the German, he had understood the value of energy security as an essential aspect to form a national strategy.⁴ Furthermore, in 2006, the G8 pointed out the energy as an indispensable quality in people's life.⁵ As years go by, energy depletes further for the supply to countries and so it can be seen as a pillar of cooperation and stability of the region if it is used wisely. Some countries, like France is starting to incorporate more a policy of reducing the amount of used energy with the perspective to boost the economy.⁶ In a nutshell, energy is turning into the first preoccupation and priority in the countries' foreign policy.

² The Economist, (June 16, 2005)

³ Kayser Bernard (2001), *L'information géographique*, Géopolitique de la Méditerranée, p. 292

⁴ Yergin D. (2006), "Ensuring Energy Security", Foreign Affairs, p. 69

⁵ Ministry of Foreign affairs of Japan, (July 16, 2006), St Petersburg
(<https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/summit/2006/energy.html>)

⁶ Thoraval Gaetan, (December 3, 2020), "Economiser l'énergie doit être prochaine grande orientation politique française »

The Mediterranean is a mutable space. First of all, it is a sea where commercial navigation is intense and a sea of passage, of transit where powerful flux is dominated by fuel. The energy in Eastern Mediterranean does matter when forming national strategies for two main reasons. Energy is a big source of the economy. Economy in the broadest sense is what expanded the region in a universal dimension. Economy as it was mentioned before was always a great factor but now it has become more precise. As president of Russia, Vladimir Putin declared during his opening address at the Security Council Session, the energy ensures the growth of the world economy⁷.

The second reason is for geostrategic control of the regions. The control of energy resources especially in Eastern Mediterranean empower the control of crucial areas which can support the interests of the powerful actor. The region is a particularly vital and sensitive area due to its great geopolitical importance and its rich energy resources. In addition, Eastern Mediterranean is of particular significance due to its geographical location, which affects the policy of many other countries, as it is a crossroad of three continents: Europe, Africa and Asia.

By the birth of States, the space acquires a permanent geopolitical dimension. Thus, inevitably, in the space, an abundance of rivalries take place. Natural gas findings are flourishing in the offshore of Egypt, Israel and Cyprus. Therefore, the matter of maritime delimitations seems to be the apple of discord for the actors because everyone wants a piece of the richness of Eastern Mediterranean. It's not only a matter of power growth but also a power with symbolic meaning. It is in this area where the actors deploy their power. In other words, the energy policy is essential for the survival and the economy of a State but it is also important for confirming its sovereignty.

The increasing interest in the Eastern Mediterranean appeared when the energy richness of the region was discovered. The energy interest started even from the decade of 60's when it began an offshore exploration on the shallow shelf of Israel and Northern Sinai. One decade later there was a second exploration campaign in Sinai where light oil was found in several areas. In 1999, five natural gas fields were discovered at a shallow depth west of the coastal town of Ashqelon and the Gaza Strip. British gas (BG) announced the discovery of Gaza marine in the waters of the

⁷ Tziampiris A. (2015), *The Eastern Mediterranean in transition: Multipolarity, Power and Politics*, p. 46

Palestinian authority. Israel made its first offshore natural gas discovery, the Noa field. It then begins for Israel a particular interest in forming energy policy and gradually a series of discoveries will take place in the offshore of the country - in 2009 and in 2010 the Tamar (140-220bcm) and Leviathan (476bcb) field respectively. The discoveries in the Levant basin have opened a lot of possibilities to boost the regional economy who stand to reap big economic benefits when the gas is exploited effectively and sustainably. Excitement in the region's potential was stoked by the March 2010 publication of a U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) report on the Levant basin, which said there were 1.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil and 3.500 billion cubic meters (bcm) of recoverable gas possibly lying under the seabed.⁸ Cyprus already from 2007, understood the value of energy and it created 13 licensing blocks off the island, giving one year later the block 12 to the US company Noble Energy. In 2011, the mega-company announces the discovery of the Aphrodite field (140-220bcm) in offshore Cyprus. In 2012, British Petroleum (BP) company announce two gas discoveries in offshore Egypt's Nile Delta and in 2015 Italian mega-company ENI discover 850bcm of gas in the Zhor field offshore Egypt. The Zhor field is the eight largest gas discovery since then.⁹

The success of the neighbor boosts the energy policy of other countries. All these discoveries whetted the appetite of the regional actors and the big gas and oil companies. Eni-Kogas consortium recently agreed on a two-year extension of the initial exploration phase for the consortium's blocks. TOTAL, the French company, which previously was rumored to be considering giving up its rights, now plans to do more exploration. Officials in Lebanon have started to push hard for the two pending decrees to be finalized. They fear that the country is being put at a disadvantage by further delays while its neighbors are rushing to secure their future markets. Energy becomes for the countries a means to express power. Everybody wants a big piece of the area to unroll their interests. Consequently, energy discoveries have turned Eastern Mediterranean into an arena of constant and intense competition. No actor wants to stay out of the energy game which provides them energy independence and power.

As a matter of fact, the regional actors dispute one over the other for some piece in the Mediterranean Sea. Tensions are created in the region revolving around disputed

⁸ Nakhle Carole (March 10, 2016) "Politics, Economics still stifle Eastern Mediterranean gas", Crystol

⁹ *Ibid*

maritime boundaries. Israel and Lebanon disagree over the delimitation of their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) claiming 800 square kilometers offshore the coast of southern Lebanon. Both sides are arguing that their mapping is more accurate. Since 1999, Israel has experienced its first discovery, the Noa field. But the discoveries in 2009 and 2010 have made Israel the most powerful actor in the region in terms of energy with the Tamar and the Leviathan field respectively. On the other hand, Lebanon has not yet initiated an attempt to further its energy policy with having of course the difficulty of the Syrian civil war. In addition, Cyprus is striving to explore and exploit its natural gas findings. Substantial energy resources exist in the Levant basin. This would expect a wider regional cooperation and prosperity, though an outcome of conflicts and disagreements cannot be discounted. Many European countries such as France, Italy and even far Atlantic USA are strong actors in the region through their companies, like TOTAL, ENI and EXXONMOBIL respectively, who exploit blocks given by Cyprus. In 2011, the discovery of Aphrodite field in Cyprus was a blessing. With approximately 130 bcm/year, Cyprus can easily be energy independent. In 2003, a study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that the discovery of Aphrodite's field is so powerful that Cyprus can easily gasify its entire economy and be also an exporter.¹⁰ Yet, in comparison with the offshore pipelines, it is better to use liquified natural gas (LNG), which requires a minimum field size to be around 170 bcm. Until now for Cyprus, aside from Aphrodite field, there are no new discovery perspectives.¹¹ As a consequence, Cyprus necessitates in the long run to pursue and invest to a more meticulous research of new fields and expand its cooperation with other actors. Turkey is turning against the licensing blocks of Cyprus with the demand of sharing the profit with Northern Cyprus (only recognized by Turkey). Same, Turkey argues that Greece has no right to award drilling concessions unless an agreement with Northern Cyprus on sharing revenues is reached and the two parties agree on a final settlement.

However, energy policy in Eastern Mediterranean is not affected by the discoveries and the big energy companies per se but besides that, the region is grappling with a series of political and social issues. All the conflicts in the region affect the conduct of the exercise of the energy policy. The diplomatic methods and the treaties are hitherto

¹⁰ *Ibid*

¹¹ *Ibid*

ways for the countries to legalize their claims. However, the doubts about the tensions concerning the diplomatic actions and the blatant disregard for the treaties aggravate the aggressiveness of the States who are not willing to recede their rights. In the next chapter, an attempt will be made to explain how all these factors form the energy policies of each actor leading to collaborations or frictions.

Except of the tensions revolving around disputed maritime boundaries there is of course the ongoing division of Cyprus. The continuing problem in Cyprus is the stumbling block of the demarcation for the maritime zones. The Greek and Turkish Cypriot inter-communal conflict transcends the borders of the island Republic. Along with the constitutional stalemates and enmity between both Greece and Turkey and the two Cypriot communities, the problem is heavily influenced by the involvement of a number of interested external parties. The Cypriot problem is one of the main disputes in national and international level. However, in the first phase of the Cold War, it initiated the presence of the US intercepting the proceeds of the Soviet Union in the region.¹² Despite the peacemaking intention of the United Nations both Greek and Turkish Cypriots are unwilling to reach a peaceful political settlement through inter-communal talks. The de facto island division is one of the few conflicts that the end of the Cold War did not affect. Since several years, yet it is considered that it is of vital importance for the safety of the region to restore peace and stability throughout the post-Ottoman area, from Bosnia to the Persian Gulf.

Moreover, the antagonisms Arab-Israelis in general and particularly in Palestine come as an added destabilizing agent in the region. Characterized as *second Intifada* (as a reference to the period of violence), Israel has its issues with the adjacent actors. A constant conflict in Gaza culminated in the plan “Plomb durci” taking place along with the Isrealis-Libanese conflict of the summer of 2006 with 2000 deaths wherein 170 were Israelis.¹³ Turkey was the first Muslim country recognize Israel in 28th of March 1949 and one year later the two countries signed a commercial agreement. However, in 1967, Turkey had turned its back on Israel and supported the Arab world in its war against the former. But the relations between the countries got worse in 2009 when president Erdogan used strong language against Israel and got worst with the episode

¹² Rizas Sotiris (3/08/2009) “Cold War in the Aegean, Managing a conflict between allies: United States policy towards Greece and Turkey in relation to the Aegean dispute, 1974-76”

¹³ Defay Alexandre (2003), *Géopolitique du Proche-Orient*, Que sais-je? pp 7-8

of *Freedom Fortilla*. These two incidents have hindered every hope of good neighborhood and it still affects the systemic structure and concomitantly the systemic stability of the region.

All these incidents are not just a regional issue but they have international impact. US can't pull out of the Eastern Mediterranean tensions either because of its close bond with Israel or because of its big profits in the field of energy. Furthermore, the tension between Turkey and US has also security reasons. Turkey and US have been participating in a joint strike fighter program with the 5th generation F-35 Lightning II. But Turkey never delivered them because of the simultaneous purchase of S-400 Russian missile defense system. The advanced Russian radar technology could compromise NATO's military systems and could potentially be used to target NATO jets in Turkey, including the F35. Despite the allies' opposition Erdogan has confirmed the summer of 2019 that "the topic of S-400 is finished for both us and Russia" with the complete needed training.¹⁴ France is also opposed to Turkey and their relations are deteriorating. The stable ally of Turkey in the European Union is Germany. Russia is not an ally but better say an occasional supporter of Turkey who sees favorably the tensions between NATO members.

During the Cold war, there was a confrontation between two blocks with equipollent military alignment. US and USSR contested with each other for allies in the region.¹⁵ Now, the structure of Eastern Mediterranean has been reshaped and many actors have been assembled pursuing different interests. The current multipolar system had transformed the equilibrium of the region. Every policy of each actor influences the stability in the region and consequently the energy projects. Beyond all the pandemic of 2020 has deteriorated every energy prospect of the region. The Covid-19 has slowed down the economy. It has deeply affected the oil markets, with consequences throughout the supply chain. The oil demand has declined 20% with an estimated loss of up to 500.000 barrels a day.¹⁶ Major energy French company TOTAL and Italian ENI postponed their gas exploration in the region until 2021 at least.¹⁷

¹⁴ Tass, Russian News Agency (June 20, 2019), "S-400 contract 'done deal' for Turkey and Russia"

¹⁵ Tziampiris A. (2015), *The Eastern Mediterranean in transition: Multipolarity, Power and Politics*, page 46

¹⁶ Nackle Carole, (November 13 2020), "Has Covid-19 defined a new path for the energy industry?", Chrystol, <https://www.crystolenergy.com/has-covid-19-defined-a-new-path-for-the-energy-industry/>

¹⁷ *Ibid*

Nevertheless, energy diplomacy is becoming increasingly crucial as countries become more and more aware of the importance of the energy, which strengthen their sovereignty. Gas, oil and electricity transmission networks are now a priority for several countries worldwide concerning their foreign policy. There are two ways to vindicate a part of sovereignty, either by diplomacy or by provocations. The Eastern Mediterranean is a key for the energy security not only for the actors but for externals who see the region as a dignified salvation. European Union's interest for the region is vital as the continent is dependent, in energy terms, on Russia. Seeking for alternatives, Europe aspires for the realization of the project of East Med pipeline.

B. EASTMED PIPELINE PROJECT

Before 2009, the region of Eastern Mediterranean was fully dependent in the form of oil and natural gas on Egypt and initially, via a swap agreement on Syria. The initial discovery of Tamar field was the trigger giving the impetus for a drastically change of dynamics in the region. The constant discoveries of sizeable natural gas resources (of around 975 bcm) offshore Israel and Cyprus has tremendously transformed the region's energy outlook, from a long-term importer of energy to a potential exporter of natural gas. Its strategic location close to European market could render the Eastern Mediterranean a possible future gas supplier to Europe. In other words, gas exports benefit each economy that will be involved.

Eastern Mediterranean pipeline or EastMed is a 1.900km (1300 km offshore and 600km onshore) gas pipeline project which aspires to transport ten billion cubic meters per year (bcm/y) of gas from Cyprus to Crete, from Crete to Greek mainland (Peloponnese) and from Peloponnese to other south-east European countries. In that process, the regional actors aspire to become the transit country for gas from the Eastern Mediterranean to European market. For the construction of the underwater EastMed pipeline has mobilized an energy collaboration in the region.

In 2015, the project got the approval from the Cypriot, Greek, and Italian governments and it got part in the second Project of Common Interest (PCI).¹⁸ In 2016, a tripartite

¹⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-energy/7.3.1-0025-elcy-s-m-15>

cooperation took place: Cyprus-Greece-Israel. These three countries guarantee as the hubs of stability in the Eastern Mediterranean collaborating for this project. Three summits took place for the tightening of the collaboration. In January 2016 first trilateral summit took place in Nicosia which strengthen energy cooperation. In December 2016, the second trilateral summit was processed in Jerusalem and in the same month the third trilateral summit in Thessaloniki.

In 2017, Italy joined the trilateral club, signing a declaration in Tel Aviv to that effect. The plan is that the pipeline connects Western Greece to Italy, east of Otranto via a 207 km offshore pipeline across the Ionian Sea, the so-called Poseidon. Finally, on 2nd of January 2020, the EastMed agreement was signed in Athens by the leaders of Greece, Israel and Cyprus.

Cairo didn't stay out of it. Egypt, Israel, Greece, Cyprus, Italy and Jordan established the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) as an intergovernmental organization in a virtual ceremony hosted by Cairo. The group unites regional rivals of Turkey, which has been locked in a bitter dispute with European Union members Greece and Cyprus over gas drilling rights in the region. Six states signed a charter for an Egypt-based energy forum, giving formal status to a group that seeks to promote natural gas exports from the eastern Mediterranean and Israel hopes that will strengthen ties with the Arab neighbors.

In an environment of collaboration and stability, European Union searches its way to be part of this great project that will alleviate her from any energy dependence. According to the article 194 (referring to energy) of the Reform Treaty of EU, member states are involved in an effort to ensure the functioning of the energy market, to ensure security of energy supply in the Union and to promote the interconnection of energy networks with a respect to the environment seeking renewable forms of energy.¹⁹ In 1994 a bilateral agreement on partnership and cooperation was signed between EU and Russia to boost trade and investment and peaceful economic relations. Russia is one of the main suppliers of oil and gas to the EU. In any rate, EU is trying to abolish its energy dependence on Russia, flirting also with the idea of LNG as a substitute for the Russian Gas. The crisis in 2014, Russian gas reserves in Ukraine stopped under the contract Gazprom-Naftogaz over allegations by Russia that the Ukrainian company owes 5.3

¹⁹ Treaty of Lisbon, article 194, Title XXI

billion dollars. In December 2019, Russian Gazprom and Ukrainian Naftogaz had signed a five years transit agreement. Still, this fact has been a strong drive for European Union to seek alternatives.²⁰ One major alternative is the EastMed pipeline project.

This alternative for European Union is more initiated by the United States. The American policy aim to three main things. Firstly, LNG will be promoted more to the European Markets. Moreover, the European dependence on Russia will be reduced and also the collaboration with the regional actors will make American's presence in the region more powerful in economic and geostrategic terms. In the presence of Mike Pompeo, secretary of State of the United States, an intergovernmental agreement was signed for the pipeline in Tel Aviv on 20th of March 2019.²¹

Nevertheless, the realization of the project may be much more optimistic than the leaders expect. Panos Papanastasiou, an engineering professor at the University of Cyprus has declared his doubts over the realization of East Med pipeline project which he considers as not very mature.²²

The aspiring project of the East Med pipeline encounters two significant obstacles: the technical constructability and the cost. The non-delimitations maritime zones aggravate the plan of construction. There is conflict of interests in the territorial rights over the sea. Both Greece and Turkey sides have threatened military actions to defend what they claim to be their territorial rights over the sea. Additionally, the Cypriot stalemate is contributing more tension to the already existing problems faced by the ambitious EastMed pipeline high-value project, mainly after the Turkish-Libya agreement.

The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is the principal international document, which regulates the maritime zones and their delimitation (Continental Shelf and Exclusive Economic Zone). The document allocates up to 12 nautical miles from any nation's shore concerning the territorial sea (article 3) and up to 200 nautical miles as its Exclusive Economic Zone or else EEZ (article 57). The delimitations of the maritime zones allow each country to claim within them a piece of sovereignty in order to set up its energy policy. Turkey claims to be its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)- continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean from western

²⁰ The Oxford Institute for Energy Studies (March 2020), "Implications of the Russia-Ukraine gas transit deal for alternative pipeline routes and the Ukrainian and European markets"

²¹ *Ibid*

²² Kotsev Victor (August 18, 2020) "East Med Pipeline: maybe someday", Petroleum Economist

Cyprus (32nd meridian east) to the Greek island of Rhodes (28th meridian east) to the eastern shores of the Greek island of Crete (26th meridian east).²³ This claiming refuse to recognize the EEZ and the continental shelf of both Republic of Cyprus and Greece (who has not demarcated its maritime zones). Two options are on the table. Firstly, there is the idea of a 550 km submarine pipeline starting from Leviathan reservoir in Israeli waters, crossing Cypriot waters and reaching southern Turkey. In other words, a constructed pipeline will transfer Israeli gas from southern Turkey to Europe. The second option is the use of the already existing LNG by the LNG facilities of Damietta and Idku located in Egypt. No option is easy.²⁴

However, Turkey is to be avoided by Israel taking into consideration the Cyprus question which continues to beset the international and mainly the Mediterranean actors. Until it is solved the first option seems impossible. Turkey is considered as a destabilizing agent and obstruction for the pipeline. In 2019, Cyprus, Greece, Egypt, Lebanon and Israel had reassembled for assuring the EastMed project without inviting Turkey.

In other words, it obstructs the planned route of the pipeline. Furthermore, the project is highly expensive. In addition to that, a pipeline between Cyprus and Greece would be technically challenging because of the structure of the seabed between the two countries.²⁵ As it is mentioned before, the economic decline because of the pandemic deteriorates the hopes for this ambitious project. The added European disagreements, following the lack of common ground in the foreign policy make the realization of EastMed pipeline less feasible. There are countries in Europe which don't necessarily want to break the energy bonds with Russia. For example, Germany has a highly economic relation with Russia which is profitable for both the countries.

If EastMed pipeline is constructed it would be the longest and the deepest subsea pipeline on earth.²⁶ It can't be contested that EastMed pipeline project is a difficult challenge for the actors. Whether the pipeline would be functioning or not, is a high symbolic act which becomes the epitome of legitimacy and cooperation in the region.

²³ *Ibid*

²⁴ Tzogopoulos G.N., 2017, "The EastMed Pipeline could be a giant step towards enhancing regional security", Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, p. 4

²⁵ *Ibid*

²⁶ *Ibid*

From European Union to external actors, they all want to be involved in EastMed pipeline project. This lucrative project is urging all actors to collaborate because the benefits from it are vital for everyone. However, the difficulty emerges from the fact that the number of actors is vast for such a small closed sea of Eastern Mediterranean. The maritime delimitations are hard to be defined. The point is that the aspiration of the region to become a gas exporter will not be fulfilled unless circumstances locally, regionally and globally align favorably. It comes as a prerequisite for the future stability of the region. The actors follow its policy depending on their interests. Through treaties or aggressiveness, they try to impose their sovereignty. In the next chapter it will be examined the way every actor responds to the regional facts and whether they prefer to collaborate or to exacerbate the already tense situation. The one thing that is certain is that all actors need to form a grand strategy for a region which is constantly on transition.

CHAPTER 2: Collaborations and sticking points

A. Energy Policy among the actors of Eastern Mediterranean

Every actor in the region has completely realized the value of energy in Eastern Mediterranean. Its urgent more than ever to engage in the game of energy, or else a piece of sovereignty can be lost. Eastern Mediterranean is an arena where the regional actors deploy their power. To achieve the desired gains either collaboration or aggressiveness is needed. The actors, in accordance with their inside agenda, form their energy policy searching for allies or for ways to legalize their actions through treaties. However, aggressive and destabilizing actions are also present. Maintaining peace in Eastern Mediterranean is quite a difficult challenge for the actors who share different interests, mentalities and languages. The multiplicity of policies defuses tensions. The project of EastMed pipeline gives hope for the region to find a common point of reference so that actors can collaborate instead of pointing out the deep-rooted differences. Still, strong strife persists and the agony of an armed incident is constant.

For the formulation of effective energy policy, a series of factors need to be taken into consideration. Every country has to examine its geopolitical situation classifying itself

as a supplier country, a transit country or a consumer. This triangular relation is interdependent. The consumer has the risk of a temporary disruption of the oil supply and the producer country runs the risk of not being able to sell its oil. As for the transit country, it risks losing the opportunity to make profit from transferring oil.²⁷ The matter of energy security is of vital importance and it is considered as a necessity for the composition of successful foreign policy. This interdependence of a win-win relation encourages / incentivizes collaboration and therefore contributes to the prevention of war. However, the political turmoil of some countries inevitably affects their energy policy and can thereby endanger inter-state cooperation.

Israel traditionally relies on imports to meet its energy demand. The aforementioned discoveries of offshore gas fields have made the country a strong regional actor. Energy security is a major topic for the country which is politically isolated in the region. Exporting its natural wealth is not easy, and, for sure, Israeli investors have faced difficulties. Both political and business risks in Israel are high. The political instability of the country has provoked regulatory obstacles to investment. For example, between 2000 and 2013, the regulatory and fiscal framework for upstream oil and gas was revised time and time again. For energy security reasons, in 2012, Israel government committed to reduce its gas exports 40% of potential reserves for keeping the necessary domestic supply for the next 25 years, also imposing additional taxes on gas exports. Around 2016, the antitrust authority concerned about the monopoly associated with the Israel's largest gas fields, Tamar and Leviathan desisting their functionality. Inevitably this concern reflected to the companies related to these fields, Noble Energy and Derek.²⁸ As for Gaza Marine, the future of the field's development remains highly uncertain, especially in the light of the continuing conflict between Israel and Hamas and taking in consideration that Palestine, on the other hand depends on Israel's energy supply. As put by The Brookings Institution, a think tank, the development of the field primarily depends on Palestinian-Israeli cooperation.²⁹

In addition, Israel's disagreement with Lebanon is provoking more insecurity in the region. However, recently, in 14 of October 2020, the two countries decided after 30

²⁷ De Lestrangé Cédric, Paillard Christophe-Alexandre, Zelenko Pierre (2005) *Géopolitique du pétrole*, éd. TECHNIP, page 213

²⁸ Nakhle Carole (March 10, 2016) "Politics, Economics still stifle Eastern Mediterranean gas", *Chrystol*

²⁹ *Ibid*

years to restart the negotiation over this dispute.³⁰ Lebanon has been stuck for years in a political stalemate, with no president from 2014 to 2016. Seismic surveys carried out in Lebanese waters have indicated significant potential for Lebanon to exploit its waters. Nevertheless, until companies are able to start exploration activities, one cannot know for sure if the resources are there.

The Republic of Cyprus is an actor that has potential for cooperation with Israel taking into consideration the richness of its fields and the stability of its policy. A small island in the middle of Eastern Mediterranean is still the center of interest of all the bigger countries. Its unique geographic position and its tremendous energy discoveries have made Cyprus one of the most important actors of the region. Indeed, according to U.S. geological survey the richness in recoverable gas between Cyprus and Israel is far more than the equivalent gas resources in the whole Europe.³¹ The country hopes to become a regional gas hub, but the animosity among its neighbors, including Lebanon and Israel, which are still officially at war, has been a challenging hurdle to overcome. Exporting Israeli gas to Cyprus for re-export has been mooted on several occasions, but little material progress has been made so far.³²

Greece holds a great geostrategic position for being a European country which is seen by the West as a geostrategic embankment to deter Russia and Egypt's willingness to expand in the Eastern Mediterranean.³³ Greece is the only country in the region who hadn't declared its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). On 8 June 2020, Greece and Italy signed an agreement in the Ionian Sea and on the 6th of August of the same year Greece signed with Egypt designating an EEZ in the Eastern Mediterranean.

In the last decade the country has become more involved in Eastern Mediterranean. In the region's energy game, Greece can be seen as a transportation hub given its geographic location. The first energy discussions were in 2011 at the visit in Athens of Israel's Deputy foreign Minister Danny Ayalon. It was an initiative for both Greece and Cyprus to be included as distribution centers for Israeli gas. Finally, this cooperation between Greece and Israel was officially confirmed in 2013.³⁴ The cooperation between Israel and Greece wasn't easy to build. In the beginning the two countries accused one

³⁰ Dulphy Anne (2000) *La politique étrangère de la France depuis 1945*, Paris : Hatier/ La Découverte

³¹ Eastern Mediterranean Book, The Energy Dimension, page 141

³² Nakhle Carole, "Politics, Economics still stifle Eastern Mediterranean gas", 10 of March 2016, Chrystol

³³ Fouskas Vassilis K., « Greece: A history of Geopolitics and Bankruptcy », Global Dialogue <https://globaldialogue.isa-sociology.org/greece-a-history-of-geopolitics-and-bankruptcy/>

³⁴ Eastern Mediterranean Book, The Energy Dimension, page 381

another with the latter not recognizing de jure Israel until 1990. It was the political turmoil between Ankara and Tel Aviv that brought together the two countries not only politically but economically.³⁵ Greece's foreign policy in the 21st century is aligned with that of the European Union. The country has incorporated the values of the Union giving priority to their strong bond.³⁶ Indeed, the country, guaranteed as transportation hub collaborated, even more with its Eastern Mediterranean neighbors building a strong bond with Cyprus and Israel. The tripartite collaboration embodies the idea of the Eastmed pipeline as an alternative supplier to the European Union.

Another East Mediterranean country, Egypt, will be added to this tripartite collaboration for energy. The country is the only energy exporter in the region. Egypt's international gas transport infrastructure system is composed of two international LNG plants – Damietta and Idku, and two pipelines – the El Arish- Ashkelon Pipeline and the Arab gas pipeline. Egypt's proven gas reserves were estimated at 2.2. bcm in 2011, representing the third largest reserves in Africa after Nigeria and Algeria. Most of these reserves are located in the Mediterranean area and in the western Desert. Damietta LNG is located 60km west of Port Said and has a train with a total capacity 4.8 MT/year. It is owned and operated by SEGAS, a Spanish-Egyptian gas company.

Egypt and Israel are connected by the El Arish-Ashkelon, a 90 km submarine gas pipeline connecting the two countries, owned and operated by the East Mediterranean Gas Company (EMG) since 2008. EMG buys Egyptian gas for resale in Israel. The internal political uncertainty and its bureaucratic inertia slow down the progress in the field of energy. A parliamentary approval is required before final agreements can be signed. Egypt's seventeen months of political unrest, decision-making vacuum in government ministries has effectively blocked the inflow of the needed upstream investment. Eni's 2015 discovery of 850 bcm of gas in the Zohr offshore field in Egypt has not only altered the country's market, but has forced its neighbors to review their plans. Both Cyprus and Israel had originally hoped to export some of their gas to Egypt. However, since Zohr is set to start production as early as 2019, their supplies will not be needed.³⁷

³⁵ Eastern Mediterranean Book, Israeli-Greek relations, page 384

³⁶ Rozakis Christos, "La position internationale de la Grèce », 23/04/2018, Pole sud, La Grèce du politique, page 111

³⁷ Nakhle Carole, "Politics, Economics still stifle Eastern Mediterranean gas", 10 of March 2016, Chrystol

These regional collaborations had reinforced peace and stability in the region. The latest joint declaration between Cyprus, Greece and Egypt reconfirmed the strong partnership. In the joint press conference, the president of the Republic of Cyprus declared that only through dialogue and common interests, good relations can be built, contributing to the successful cooperation for the Europe Africa Interconnector. Nevertheless, these cooperation networks need to deal with challenges, like the migratory flows and growing provocations by Turkey. However, one regional country is not participating in this schema of partnership Turkey is staying out of this.

Without the approval of the other actors, Turkey is feeling diplomatically isolated, left out of this emerging system of cooperation. The extremely important geostrategic role of Turkey was clear even from the beginning of the European Union's construction. General de Gaulle in his visit in Ankara had predicted that Turkey will play a crucial role because its actions can lead to either peace or war.³⁸ So it was urgent to include Turkey in the West block as a connecting bridge between the East and the West. President Chirac was a big defender of Turkey's accession in the European Union because he deeply thought that it is a way to stabilize and reinforce the democracy in Europe.³⁹ Numerous Turkey's strategic aspects have been reviewed as to point out its significance. Above all, its regional geographic situation absolutely essential as a crossroad between the East and the West has been one of the main reasons every actor in the region wants Turkey in its sphere of influence. From a historical point of view, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union Turkey has been released from the sackers of the USSR and became the only real power of the region. Nevertheless, in terms of energy, with a rapidly growing population and the reliance on imports for 90% of its natural gas, Turkey is willing to secure its own supply of resources at any cost.

Turkey is not excluded from being an ally in Eastern Mediterranean for no reason. After 2009, the relations between Israel and Turkey along with the relations between Egypt and Turkey have deteriorated. At the same time, the relation between Greece-Cyprus and Turkey is facing a dangerous escalation. The Turkish government doesn't accept the bilateral agreements Cyprus has made with Greece, Lebanon, Egypt and Israel. The main sticking point for the friction between the regional actors is the division

³⁸ *Le Monde*, October 26, 1968

³⁹ *Le Monde*, Octobre 1, 2004

of Cyprus. The illegal occupation in Cyprus has always been a source of disappointment internationally.

The division provokes claims and counterclaims over the territorial rights on the sea. Although Turkey has not signed the UNCLOS convention for the law of the sea, it has its own way of deciding limits of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Turkey uses the continental shelf theory which rejects the EEZ of the islands. It, also, eliminates any maritime right for Kastelorizo, the Greek island, because it can't accept that a small island cut its access to Eastern Mediterranean. The Turkish government entertains a very poor opinion of the power of Greece. In the 27th of November 2019 Libya (the Government of National Accord recognized by the United Nations) and Turkey signed a maritime deal. It's a maritime Boundary Treaty that divides a large portion of the Eastern Mediterranean between them. This was a major destabilizing move that provoked the regional actors. The treaty was characterized void and geographically absurd by Greece and Cyprus.

Greece as a member of the European Union usually receives help from the European countries but not in the case of this provocation. That's the reason why it is important for the foreign policy of Greece to expand the network of alliances. Indeed, even though Turkey has demonstrated its military power to several countries, until now there is no military plan in the Turkish strategy towards Greece. Turkey is trying to legalize its actions, albeit the flagrant violation of international law incorporated in drilling over non-delimited areas of Greece and delimited areas like in the offshore of Cyprus.

But the aggressiveness of Turkey doesn't stop there. Louis de Guiringaud, declared in 1976, that France cannot abstain from responding to Turkey's hostile actions that destabilize the Eastern Mediterranean and can't ignore its alliance with Greece which is highly affected.⁴⁰ A war or a tension at the border of European Union is not desirable among European leaders. The coup d'Etat in 1980 had clearly frozen the bilateral relation between France and Turkey but also with CEE and Turkey. In 1984, France condemned all secessionist measures for the Turkish community proclaimed by Turkey and supported the resolution of the United nations.⁴¹

⁴⁰ La politique étrangère de la France depuis 1945, Anne Dulphy, Nathan 1994 ou F. Bozo, Ed La découverte, 1990, 2^e semestre 1976, page 89

⁴¹ Baillon Morgan, 2006, Paris, France, *L'adhésion de la Turquie à l'Union européenne*, page 73 (*Chypre ou le poids du contntieux greco turc : un facteur majeur de stagnation*)

Turkish president Erdogan is a capable leader but due to his spontaneous policy he lacks the statesmanlike qualities of a trustworthy leader. Turkey becomes more and more diplomatically isolated because it is so far detached from the mentality of the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean. Early in October, on the eve of presidential elections in the territory, Turkey decided provocatively to reopen the Varosha seafront in north Cyprus after 46 years, as criticism mounts both internationally and on the island itself. In fact, responding to this action Cyprus asked the United Nations to step in and decide/evaluate the admissibility of Turkey's decision under international law, and at the same time provoked the jiggle of Athens's patience once more. While Turkey does not cultivate the image of the irreplaceable regional power of stability, anymore its unreliability is incrementally pushing the Europeans and the Americans to realize the lack of stability in the region. They will not permit neither the European borders nor their petroleum companies to be affected by the aggressive mentality of Ankara. However, for the aforementioned reasons nobody is willing to push the Turkish policy harder. On the other hand, Greece has been persistent to persuade Europe that it is the only guarantor of stability in the Eastern Mediterranean by creating alliances and by not responding spontaneously to Turkey's provocations.

Turkey's diplomacy towards Europe had always two characteristics: patience and irritation.⁴² The debate for the accession of Turkey to the European Union was always a point of friction for the Europeans. It was expressed by many that Turkey is the guarantor of stability in the Eastern Mediterranean and as a member of the majority of organizations it is has the full right to be a member of the European Union too.⁴³ (Council of Europe in 1949, NATO in 1951- 10/02/1952). Turkey has many times used its position as a member of NATO to pressure Europe for its defense using the veto.⁴⁴

European Union's interest over Eastern Mediterranean is mostly for cutting its reliance on Russian gas. The region is considered the modern European energy line along with its drawing point. The energy reliance on Russia is a fact. Even though European Union has 5 times bigger GDP than Russia, Russia ensures 27% of European gas demand and 32% of oil demand. Europe accounts for 57% of oil exports and 86% of gas exports from Russia. In consequence, it is clear that Europe is dependent on Russia for energy.

⁴² Baillon Morgan, 2006, Paris, France, *L'adhésion de la Turquie à l'Union européenne*, page 71 (*Une politique étrangère turque problématique*)

⁴³ Baillon Morgan, 2006, Paris, France, *L'adhésion de la Turquie à l'Union européenne*, page 31

⁴⁴ Same, page 37

Nevertheless, the reliance is mutual as 15% of Russia's GDP depends on this energy relation between the two actors.⁴⁵ According to some experts this dependence is not such a big problem. On the contrary, as long as Europe doesn't find cheap and safe alternatives the Russian-European Union interdependence has more beneficial outcomes from an economic and political perspectives⁴⁶. On a European level, the constant discussion over the legality of Turkish actions in the Eastern Mediterranean brings more political turmoil. Not all countries share the same viewpoint over the Turkish policy in Eastern Mediterranean. As it is now in European Union there is the Franco-German hegemony who have a different perspective for the course of European Union taking into account their interests. The German presidency of the European Union was incomplete and failed to reach a consensus/formulate a coherent policy towards the issues in the Eastern Mediterranean. Having the presidency, Germany was obliged to express a clearer view if the region's conflicts as two member States, Greece and Cyprus, faced an illegal provocation, or more precisely aggression, by Turkey, in their respective sea territories. However, Germany's delegation is characterized by moderation and it did not defend with ardor the two members of the Union. The strong Turkish-German relations can be traced back more than 100 years to the time when the two countries fought side by side during WW1. Germany's behavior can be explained by two major factors. First of all, Germany there has a large minority of Turkish people that are registered as German citizens. Secondly, Germany and Turkey have a close and extensive commercial relation. As a consequence, every sanction against Turkey is likely to significantly impact the German economy.

France can't stay aloof from the Turkish provocations in Eastern Mediterranean. With the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, it is now time for France to take the lead of the Union. Historically, as a grand power in the Mediterranean Sea, it will never accept a power like Turkey to prevail in the area. Lately, the dialogue between France and Turkey has become more intense. An aggressive rhetoric has been emerged emanated by the increasingly revisionist foreign policy of the latter and by the arrogant policy of the Turkish president Erdogan. The French oil company TOTAL is conducting drilling investigations in the block 11 of Cyprus, while France has immediate interests in the region, eliminating and condemning any unstable action.

⁴⁵ Mongrenier Jean-Sylvestre, Thom Françoise (2018), *Géopolitique de la Russie*, Que-sais-je ?, p.

⁴⁶ Schubert Samuel R., Pollak J., Brutschin E., "Two futures: EU-Russia relations in the context of Ukraine", Springerlink.com, 11.12.2014

Europe has repeatedly discussed ad nauseum the sanctions for Turkey. The repeated measures against Turkey have more symbolic than effectual influence. Due to the major importance of Turkey in pivotal issues, such as the management of refugee flows and economic relationship/ties, Europe hesitates to be tougher in its position and lacks coherence for a common European foreign policy. These measures do not bother the president Erdogan to continue the harsh rhetoric towards other actors, especially the European Union and the exploration activities in waters off the island. However, Turkey has to comply at some point with some of the European arguments and appease its revisionist policy. Against this backdrop, Europe remains Turkey's large trade partner and so Turkey needs to broaden its policy by enlarging the scope of their cooperation in the future.

In 2005, there was an attempt, supported by the European Union, for the Euro-Arab Mashreq gas Market cooperation project. The goal was the integration of the gas markets of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria in order to create a regional gas marketing the Mashreq creating gradually a European gas market. However, the Arab Spring has toppled the aspiration of the project.⁴⁷

But the pressure from Turkey towards other actors doesn't stop there. Erdogan uses the religion as a shield to defend Turkey's interest. His foreign policy relies on the mobilization and instrumentalization of Islam and the jihadist powers.

Europe's heavy reliance to the USA for the safety and security of the region has made the continent to constantly suffer from the abandonment syndrome.

B. The far-flung actors

Eastern Mediterranean has a vast international impact. The tensions and the disagreements have altered the policy even for the far-flung players. The Great powers like United States, Russia and China keep a watchful eye in the region. After the Cold War, Eastern Mediterranean was dominated solely by the West. Gradually, the Great Powers become more involved, evaluating the dynamic of energy and the role it plays for the geostrategic control concerning the adjacent countries. The antagonism in the

⁴⁷ Tziampiris A. (2015), *The Eastern Mediterranean in transition: Multipolarity, Power and Politics*, p.98

region grows bigger as it is no longer exclusively a sphere of Western strategic interest/influence.

On 4 June 2009, Obama in a speech at the university of Cairo announced “A new Beginning” reviewing the American policy in the Middle East. After completing his first term he was highly criticized by the fellows Americans for his “small foreign policy”.⁴⁸ Traditionally, the United States, conforming to the idea of a great and ideal power, used its foreign policy to expand its influence abroad and especially to areas with geostrategic importance like Eastern Mediterranean. The first reason United States interfered in the Middle East, far away from their land was because of energy security. In 1945, Franklin Roosevelt wanting to secure the Western supply system with hydrocarbons, made a deal with the king Ibn Saud.⁴⁹ In their foreign policy, one of its main goals has always been the containment of Russian expansion to the West. The increasingly expanding energy system in the region encourages the American interest. The United States are highly interested in the EastMed pipeline as they want to diversify European energy imports away from Russia. The United States and Europe are already attached to the Union for Mediterranean (UFM).⁵⁰ However, the difficulty of taking decisions encourages Europe to rely on the United States. This dependency of Europe to USA for the safety and security of the region had make the continent suffer constantly from the abandonment syndrome.⁵¹

The antagonism between Russia and the West among other issues concerns energy. During the first two tenures of Vladimir Putin he managed to take control of the European Union’s energy demand. The energy supply became the weapon to influence Europe and decrease the power of the United States. This constitutes a great attainment for the Russian foreign policy. Furthermore, the dependence was built by

⁴⁸ Tziampiris A. (2015), *The Eastern Mediterranean in transition: Multipolarity, Power and Politics*, p. 67

⁴⁹ Gilles Keppel, *Sortir du chaos*, Esprits du monde Gallimard, page 34

⁵⁰ Tziampiris A. (2015), *The Eastern Mediterranean in transition: Multipolarity, Power and Politics*, p. 101

⁵¹ Boniface P. (2019), Donald Trump, syndic de faillite de l’hégémonie libérale ?, *Géopolitique de la Transition Énergétique*, RIS, Numéro 113

methods such as blackmail. Many times, Russia was accused of energy blackmailing the European Union taking advantage of the European reliance on Russia.⁵²

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union an ideological blank with an added domestic economic collapse has forced Russia to reconsider and reorganize its strategic policy. Henceforth, Russia now is turning from military and ideological antagonism to an energy and arm sales strategy which is oriented towards the region of Eastern Mediterranean with large reserves of natural gas. During the first decade of 21st century Russia regained its leading position in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The 2014 Ukrainian crisis has fundamentally changed the political and strategic relationships of the post-Soviet period between Russia and European states. European countries had proceeded to sanction Russia which has imposed counter-sanctions. A new Cold War emerged with an escalation of sanctions which started in diplomatic terms and continued with freezing the programs of European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Bank for Construction and Development (EBRD) for huge groups energy corporations/enterprises like Rosneft and Novatek.⁵³ Even though the gas sector was not included in the sanctions, an imminent disappointment and deterioration on a political level was conspicuous. There was a general reluctance on the part of the European Union and individual members to conduct any dialogue with Russia on natural gas.⁵⁴

At the turn of the century, the aforementioned new strategy of Russia is energy. Russia has clearly understood its significance and influence and is using it as a weapon to impose its will on other countries. Its energy exclusivity on the European Union has been used as blackmail to force its political policy. As the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown (2008) summed up the attitude to Russia's policy in his article to the Observer "no nation can be allowed to exert an energy stranglehold over Europe".⁵⁵ Donald Tusk, elected president in European council in September 2014, has sincerely

⁵² Tziampiris A. (2015), *The Eastern Mediterranean in transition: Multipolarity, Power and Politics*, p. 65

⁵³ Mongrenier J.-Sylvestre, Thom F., *Géopolitique de la Russie*, Que sais-je, Paris, 2018, page 73

⁵⁴ Dickel R., Hassanzadeh E., Henderson J., Honoré A., El Katiri L., Pirani S., Rpgger H., Stern J., Yafimava K., (2014) *Reducing European Dependence on Russian Gas: distinguishing natural gas security from geopolitics*, Oxford Institute for energy studies, , p. 68

⁵⁵ Tziampiris A. (2015), *The Eastern Mediterranean in transition: Multipolarity, Power and Politics*, p. 45

expressed his worry about the Russian energy dependence, calling to search for alternatives.

Yet, Russia has only one access in Eastern Mediterranean: the port city of Tartus. For now, it is a small material supply center. Moreover, the growing cooperation between Russia and Turkey is undermining the relations between the members of NATO and especially between Turkey and the United States.

The escalating bad relation between Greece and Turkey seems to worry the United States. Both Greece and Turkey are members of NATO. However, the big stalemate concerning the relation between the United States and Turkey is the market of the Russian S-400 by Turkey. The American secretary Pompeo, in the latest meeting of foreign affairs in NATO used strong language against Turkey, saying that the use of S-400 is “gift from NATO to Russia”. The confrontation, along with the imminent sanctions against Turkey has deteriorated the contacts between the two countries.

The impact of Arab spring has accelerated the participation of the other grand powers, Russia and China, in Eastern Mediterranean. The impending rise of Islamic radicalism have altered the policy of the Great powers. It was now a matter of security involving in the region.

The intervention of China in Eastern Mediterranean is through its projection of naval power but, also, through its participation in the market share with an interest for promoting the LNG in Cyprus.⁵⁶ China can play a role by helping the stabilization and the reconstruction of the region.

China and NATO could work together for the stability of the region. Both of the actors need the security of the region. As a matter of fact, they are already cooperating for the anti-piracy in the region.⁵⁷ However, the bad relation between Turkey and the United States deteriorates the very foundation of NATO.

This amalgam of actors in the region is putting the peace at stake as no one is going to give up his rights in the area. The interdependent relation among producers, suppliers and transferors is leading to a constant interaction among the related actors trying to collaborate or to oppose when they feel left out of this. Even though the international

⁵⁶ Tziampiris A. (2015), *The Eastern Mediterranean in transition: Multipolarity, Power and Politics*, pp. 93-94

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 104

law is constraining the actors, there is still infringements and violations. Ironically, every actor, no matter how aggressive policy he follows, invokes international law to justify his actions. The multipolar system along with different aspirations of each actor seems to destabilize the area even more. Every country tries to use its power for persuading the others to follow its interests. The use of power is hitherto translated in diplomatic initiatives or provocative and illegal actions but not leading to an armed incident. The strict abidance by the rules in the field of energy is far from clear as it remains difficult to specify what is lawful and what is not.

CHAPTER 3 :The necessity of a grand strategy for energy

A. Dealing with Energy In A Multipolar Region

During the Cold War, Eastern Mediterranean was the arena of confrontation between the two blocks, the United States and the Soviet Union. Both sides possessed equivalent military power to influence any actor of the region serving their interests. During the 1990s, the West, and mostly United States, controlled the area completely, eliminating any other external actor. At the beginning of 21st century, the presidency of Russian Vladimir Poutine and China's accelerating economic growth altered the balances in the region especially after the Arab Spring. Now there exist not one or two actors that can exert force, but a plethora of different actors seeking this role. The amalgam of different civilizations and the multiple actors who share quasi-equal power in the region reveal the multipolarity of the Eastern Mediterranean. In the Eastern Mediterranean case, there are many imminent rulers who aspire to prevail in the region, and they refuse to abdicate their interests. This turbulent environment threatens the preservation of peace and the states are prepared to risk more in order to assure their security. Energy is the epitome of the country's projection for power and sovereignty.

Why these escalated tensions for energy? When it comes to the market of goods/products there is World Trade Organization (WTO) that imposes rules and limits to the procedure of trading. In terms of energy, there is no similar multilateral trade regime that can demonstrate how energy trade can be achieved. As a consequence, in a multipolar environment, like in Eastern Mediterranean, the energy trade seems difficult to deal with because it can't be controlled or restricted by a higher authority. Therefore,

the energy game is played by rules of power. An environment without surveillance, is an anarchic environment where the revisionist policies are hard to control.

Prominent scholars' point of view varies in accordance with the level of security in that kind of system. Even the realist school of thinkers share different opinions over the safety of this system in multipolarity. In terms of offensive realism, the large number of actors in accordance with the unequal distribution of power in the region inflame the situation and increase the possibility of a war. Mearsheimer would describe it as an unbalanced multipolar system. The equilibrium between peace and war is fragile and the unbalanced multipolarity can prove disastrous for the balance of power.⁵⁸ On the contrary, Morgenthau and Gulick regard the multipolar system as the more stable one because of the many possibilities for the actors to form coalitions.⁵⁹ We can thus deduce from the different perspectives that the number of actors would either have a positive or negative effect on the stability of the region. The EastMed pipeline project promotes the favorability of cooperation, whereas the delineation of the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf in Eastern Mediterranean muddles the relation among the states. The network of co-operations and enmities in the region reveal the complexity of the multipolar system.

The multipolar system in accordance with the absence of a central authority in energy trade makes the actors construct their reality based on trust. Former BP CEO, Lord John Browne, explained that the issue of trust is becoming increasingly important in the oil business as permission is needed for "developing" oil in unstable environments.⁶⁰ Indeed, trust exposes the regional conditions, that shape the energy trade, which are related to political circumstances or geopolitical visions.⁶¹ Every energy policy must be adapted to a specific case taking into consideration every aspect of the region. This is the reason why all regional and non-regional actors try to deal with energy in the Eastern Mediterranean in a way that legalizes their actions through treaties. Treaty based on international law is a formal and peaceful way to build trust, not only with the regional actors, but with the whole international community. It's a demonstration that

⁵⁸ Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of great power politics*, The power of the great powers in 21st century, chapter 10

⁵⁹ Eastern Mediterranean book

⁶⁰ John Browne and Philippa Anderson, *Beyond Business* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2010).
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⁶¹ Mark Ozawa, "Trust and European-Russian Energy Cooperation: The case of oil and gas Partnerships and Long-term Contracts, University of Cambridge,

the energy policy chosen by a state is clear and obvious without unfair means and underground agreements. For example, as per the Preamble to the Greece-Egypt agreement for the delimitation of EEZ in August 2020, it recognizes the relevance and applicability of the UN Charter and UNCLOS.⁶² It specifically refers to the principles of good neighborliness, cooperation, and good faith. Consequently, it becomes clear that energy cooperation and stability goes hand in hand with the building of trust. States as principal subjects in the international law confirm the endeavor of its application in dealing with energy and building cooperation in a straightforward manner.

However, violations and security breaches do happen in the Eastern Mediterranean, albeit the existence of international law. Instances ranging from bellicose arguments to illegal drillings at no-delimited or even sovereign maritime areas clearly do not help the chances of establishing peace. International law constitutes a real progress for the humanity to eradicate the possibility of war, promoting diplomacy as a way to appease or even to solve the disagreements. The supporters of liberal theories advocate the exaltation of international organizations as political apparatus to oversee and regulate the international interactions. The real implantation of international law can thwart aggressive policies.⁶³ Nevertheless, until now, Eastern Mediterranean suffers from a great number of provocations. From May 2019, Turkey proceeds to exploratory drilling within the Cyprus delineated EEZ, an action completely illegal according to international law. Any state has the sovereign rights for exploration in its EEZ. Hence, there is a clear violation over the sovereign rights of Cyprus. As the professor Angelos Syrigos indicates, the exploration is a move far more severe than just a seismic activity as it constitutes an irreparable damage.⁶⁴ Plato stipulates in the dialogue *Laws*, that it is a necessity that laws must be imposed by force to citizens in a sense that they have to understand the urgency to conform to the rules in order to instruct them how they may live on friendly terms with one another and partly for the sake of those who refuse to be instructed.⁶⁵ When it comes to law, in a domestic environment, it is undeniable that it refrains individuals from illegal actions. On the contrary, in international law, it is still abstract to cope and interpret an illegal action. As Jack Goldsmith and Eric Posner

⁶² Preamble to the Greece-Egypt agreement

⁶³ *Eastern Mediterranean book*, page 16

⁶⁴ Άγγελος Συρίγος. *Τουρκικές διεκδικήσεις σε Αιγαίο και Ανατολική Μεσόγειο*, Καθημερινή, 2020, σελ. 68

⁶⁵ Platon, *Laws*

declare, the states act out of self-interest. The whole difficulty lies in the theoretical impossibility of considering an international legal order outside state sovereignty and the practical impossibility of ensuring respect for international law without a real power of sanction at the international level.⁶⁶ This pessimist ontological approach of international law is a reference to understand the complexity of dealing with the tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. In energy trade without nothing to abstain actors from acting illegally, they continue to do so to the point where they reach their interests at the cost of threatening the stability.

The stability is not easy to be reached. There are two approaches that affect systemic stability. Firstly, stability is interconnected with hierarchy in the international system. There are the dominant actors and the secondary ones. The existing status quo is influenced by their relation and by the willingness and the ability of the secondary ones to challenge the equilibrium of the system (Kang, 2004). The second approach sees the stability of a system in accordance with the proportion of systemic change - the greater the change regarding the flow of politics in the international arena, the greater the systemic instability that follows. In the extreme form, Gilpin demonstrates that only war can generate large-scale changes, which can deeply affect systemic structure and concomitantly systemic stability. International law fails to prevent the countries abstaining from aggressive actions and gives more space to the realists' theories. War remains a mean to change decisively, the will of others. The Eastern Mediterranean oscillates between cooperation and hostility. Despite the weakness of international law to obtrude upon illegal activities, actors have to find their own way to exercise power in the region.

When the discussion comes to the balance of power, in the public domain, it is hard to capture its real meaning. This balance of power is such a multidimensional concept that every analyst depending on his/her theoretical background perceives it differently. Some consider it an ongoing battle for power (Haas, 1953) and others perceive it like a counterbalance toward hegemonic aspirations that are aiming to become hegemonic powers. The balance of power implies a collective opposition against a rising hegemonic power that aspires to be the master of the region. It is for this reason that, in

⁶⁶ Maxime Lefebvre, *Le jeu du droit et de la puissance, Précis de relations internationales*, 5eme édition, puf, 2018

the Eastern Mediterranean, there is a constant battle of prevalence, one toward the other, either by using the international law for justifying illegal actions to create *fait accompli*.

During their conversation over the very essence of justice Thrasymachus explains that the advantage always accompanies the stronger. The situation of the Eastern Mediterranean aptly explains what Thrasymachus told Socrates – ‘justice leans to the powerful’. The multipolarity has given the opportunity to every actor in the region to have almost an equipollent power. The crucial fact is how actors use their power to bring balance in the region avoiding revisionist policies that put in danger the peace in the region. It is in the interest of everyone to control power with the intention of a positive sum - my gain is your gain-as Joseph Nye proposes. Therefore, Energy should be seen as an opportunity of cooperation and it is in a country’s best interest to pursue stability in the region.

B. West: Formation of Grand Strategy or Just “Muddle Through”?

In the 21st century, the very essence of power has completely changed. The energy in Eastern Mediterranean has become the epicenter of the deployment of power. The pursuit of peace in the area is vague, or more precisely, utopic when there is such a differentiation among the actors. Hence, if the grand strategy of countries relates to a perpetual peace in the region, it may lead to futility. However, peace can be a part of grand strategy in the form of tolerance towards the provocative attitude of a neighbor, akin to the so-called strategy of appeasement. At any rate, peace is a multidimensional concept that makes it hard for scholars to flesh out a conclusive definition for it.⁶⁷

The region is not certainly doomed to witness a long-protracted conflict and tension. The systemic stability is a pragmatic political aim that can lessen the violence and bring more security to the area. The interstate antagonisms may still exist along with the security dilemmas.⁶⁸ The multipolarity doesn’t guarantee the joint endeavor of the

⁶⁷ *Eastern Mediterranean book*, page

⁶⁸ *Eastern Mediterranean book*, page 10

countries to collaborate but a well-organized and structured view of the regional conditions is a necessary step for every actor who is implicated in the energy game.

When it comes to energy, there are four main areas of cross-border energy relations: hydrocarbon, energy technology and electricity trading and foreign energy sector investments. Every country forms its strategy in accordance with the role it has to play in these areas. If an actor has an advantage in one of these areas, he can deprive another actor who needs its service, as a form of pressure. Nevertheless, the interdependence that exists in energy makes it difficult for actors to apply pressure. At any rate, actors use their strong elements interpreted as their own form of power. His power is included in his policy, depending on his geographical location and his resources. There are many ways to use power - ability to affect others to get the outcomes you want: threats, payments, to get the outcomes without coercing. Military power still is extremely crucial but in a multipolar environment not all possesses that. Each country has its narrative and at the end it is about whose story wins. Some countries use hard power incorporated in military terms while others prefer soft power which is more financial and diplomatic route. The combination of these two types of power is the smart power as Joseph Nye describes. This kind of power is reflected in the United States which interest for Eastern Mediterranean and its energy policy is vital for its prestige and its great influence that exercises worldwide. The growing interest of its ally, Israel, to China, is worrying the country. As a matter of fact, due to the maladministration of European Union to bring peace for the Palestinian matter imposing boycott, Israel turned to China for strategic infrastructure projects, such as railways, internet and telecommunications.⁶⁹

In many ways, United States of America is an exceptional country either for its geography and history or for its values and power. Being in an insular situation, US, a country that was created only two centuries ago, promotes the values of liberal democracy in a messianic and quasi-religious vision. It's what the former US secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, called as "indispensable nation".⁷⁰ An exceptional country goes together with an exceptional foreign policy which inclines either to interventionism or isolationism.

⁶⁹ *Eastern Mediterranean book*, page 99-100

⁷⁰ Madeleine Albright

Since the end of the Cold War, US foreign policy has been based in liberal hegemony. Their principal interest is to apply this strategy in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. These areas are of particular importance and risk at the same time for US in both economic and political terms. Despite the general opinion, Donald Trump was not the first American who vowed to put an end to America's traditional strategy. Already before him, Obama had made clear his intentions to abstain from any military activity in the area especially in Syria and he was hardly resisting, against the push of Hilary Clinton, to the intervention in Libya. In Obama's term, American foreign policy was more inclined to a "transformational diplomacy" explained as smart power.⁷¹

On 26 of December 2018 Donald Trump declared that the United States cannot continue to be the policeman of the world following the retreat of American troops in Syria. The American strategic community strongly condemned this decision. But is Trump completely wrong by arguing that the US military interventions of the 21st century was disastrous? Donald Trump's foreign policy has implicitly been understood behind the slogan "Make America Great Again". US would not continue to supervise the course of the world. Indeed, both economically and strategically the interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya were a tremendous loss for the USA. A major shortcoming of the US foreign policy in Eastern Mediterranean is that the concept of Smart Power is not in line with the needs and circumstances of the region. Eastern Mediterranean is a region of transition. Only a clear and specific policy will really affect the course of actions and developments. The ambivalent US policy in the region fills with uncertainty the actors and it leads actors with revisionist policy in more daring and provocative actions. A more catholic policy is needed so that the US can powerfully guide the energy game.⁷² But, still US can't abstain from the region's turmoil because of Eastern Mediterranean strategic spot and for the valuable energy as the first energy consumer of the world. Walt proposes offshore balancing as an alternative to isolationism. This is a strategic concept whose goal is to preclude/prevent a regional actor to exercise hegemony over the other regional actors in some regions with specific geostrategic interest for them. They won't use their military power unless the regional actor tends to impose themselves over the other regional actors.

⁷¹ *The Eastern Mediterranean book*, page 77

⁷² *The Eastern Mediterranean book*, page 69

However, since Obama's presidency the foreign policy of the USA has completely turned. In the USA there are two contradictory points of view for the America's grand strategy. On the one hand, there is the traditional view of liberal hegemony, which points out its exclusiveness and uniqueness as a country. The idea is that the democracy of USA has to be spread in all over the world as they lead by example for the other uncivilized countries. On the other hand, since the Obama's presidency, there is a contradictory wave to the liberal tradition. US has to retreat all her troops from all around the world and focus to the interior policy with a selective interventionism.

However, United States had lost their credibility in the region. Already from The outburst of the Arab Spring, the American were splinted between supporting or not the protesters of the democracy in the Arab world. Joe Biden as vice president in the Obama presidency feared that the revolutions in the Middle East will have different turn for the West. But Obama, finally, decided the intervention, a catastrophic decision for United States after the armed intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq.⁷³ Divided politically as within the administration there are different opinions concerning the US's foreign policy.

Obama wanted to improve the image of United States in the Muslim world and from the begging of his career, in April 2009, he visited Turkey as a great example of a Muslim democracy (before the authoritarianism).⁷⁴

Europe, on the other hand, can't use hard power, because as an organization per se doesn't possesses neither an organized army nor political coherence to decide for its foreign policy. However, energy is of extreme importance in the European agenda since the beginning of the European creation. In 2014 the European Energy Security Strategy has been presented in the European Council and in the European Council by the European Commission, a statement declaring that the security and the prosperity of European Union depend on the stable and the abundant energy supply. Regarding the article 194 of the Treaty on Functioning of the European Union the European policy of energy is legalized and becomes common for all the European members. This policy is based upon three pillars: a. the security of supply, b. resistance/ durability, c.

⁷³ Χαράλαμπος Παπασωτηρίου, *Η Αμερικανική πολιτική από τον Φράνκλιν Ρούσβελτ στον Ντόναλντ Τραμπ*, Εκδόσεις Ποιότητα, Αθήνα, 2018, σελ. 617

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, σελ. 616

competitiveness of production sources. To accomplish that the European Union has to liberate and incorporate networks and energy markets. (CHAPTER 2) The pressure by the Russian energy reliance and the internal disputes doesn't let Europe form a grand strategy for the Eastern Mediterranean and let other actors like Turkey violate the European maritime territory and make the already contested project of EastMed pipeline more difficult. France's and Germany's different aspirations and policy toward Turkey, make Europe dependent to US's decisions. This will be maybe the new challenge of the incoming president, Joe Biden. Whether he will choose a more French or German approach. This will largely direct the course of Europe's stance towards the Eastern Mediterranean. Europe needs to unify and stop the strategy of appeasement for every actor that threatens its interests.

There is a big discussion over the predictability or not of Turkish president Erdoyan. Are the hydrocarbons just a realistic pretext for persuade the Turkish people to understand their interests in the region or they are a real necessity? After the outburst of the pandemic of coronavirus the value of gas is extremely low. For example, the Azor field has not yet received any buyer interest.

But the thing about Turkey is that domestically Erdogan has lightened up the flame of the uprising new powerful Turkey and he won't stop to be revisionist until he gets the more possible so that the country become one century after its creation the most powerful regional power. In that sense, the defensive realism theory has been excluded as a possible strategy to avoid war in the Eastern Mediterranean. Beyond the security, hydrocarbons are used as a tool for expansionism of the State sovereignty.⁷⁵ However, the Turkish president has bigger aspirations beyond his energy policy. Erdogan use the religion of Islam so as to unite the Muslims all over the world against the western civilization. Turkey want the Finlandization of European countries to achieve his goal and he takes advantage of the different voices in European Union, been closer to Germany and other countries with which they are economically interdependent, like Spain.

Greece, on the other hand, uses soft power and especially diplomatic ways to its policy. This policy contains the building of alliances. The country is an ally with Middle East countries, United States and France. In addition, Greece is supporting equilibrium with

⁷⁵ Levy and Thomson (2010) *Causes of war*, Wiley Blackwell, p. 35

humanitarian program and builds a wider system of alliances (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, India) to control Turkey's expansionism. This clearly suggests a more opening strategic horizon. In the Eastern Mediterranean, the big challenge of Greece is to avoid incorporate/interpret the escalating aggression with Turkey as a bilateral issue. It is a European issue. Greece is the border of European Union and the loss of Greece will be the loss of the Union. The country is constantly informing Europe for the escalated tensions in the region. The different visions in the European Union leads Greece to a closer diplomatic relation with countries that are afraid, too, of the Turkish revisionist policy in the Eastern Mediterranean, like France. Surely, each relationship is of strategic interest to the respective third party, with potential spillovers that present risks and opportunities. There is big discussion over the red lines of Greece's strategy. After numerous Turkish infringements and provocations in the Greece's continental shelf,⁷⁶ Greece hasn't reacted in military terms but it continues to face Turkey in diplomatic terms. The strategic tranquility and the extent of alliances are necessary for Greece who always seek the dialogue with Turkey over their differences.⁷⁷ Only if Turkey abandon its Neo-Ottoman vision will it be able to have a constructive dialogue orientated to a feasible peace. Perpetual peace should be the goal of Greece without abandoning its basics positions.⁷⁸

Cyprus as an island with an extremely geopolitical interest is deprived by a strong military power and uses other ways, firstly to be protected by revisionist and warlike neighbors and secondly, to empower its own position. As an aspiring regional gas hub, Cyprus is using its maritime blocks to strengthen and bind its allies with financial agreements. The use of soft power is proven more than effective for its safety.

However, the West countries seems to be confused concerning the formation of a grand strategy towards the region, either for internal problems or other external interests. By the time, other external actors from the East is progressively entering the Eastern Mediterranean energy gam, like Russia and China.

⁷⁶ Greece has not delineated its continental shelf but according to the UNCLOS maritime agreement continental shelf exists ipso facto and ab initio (article 76 (1))

⁷⁷ Konstantinos Ifantis, <https://www.liberal.gr/apopsi/i-tourkia-thelei-na-akrotiriasei-tin-elliniki-kuriarchia/306301>

⁷⁸ Lavdas K., "Historical compromise or dangerous fennel?" Ιστορικός συμβιβασμός ή επικίνδυνη φενάκη, Liberal, 26/09/2020

The foreign policy and the grand strategy of Russia concludes firstly the influence at the so called “near abroad” and then the recovery of the status of international power, in contrary with the West.⁷⁹ During the first decade of the 21st century the region swiftly transformed into a zone of geopolitical and geoeconomic competition between Russia and the Western States. To untangle the skein, the historical approach is important: Russia is a geopolitical phenomenon that it is inscribed in the long term.⁸⁰ In a neo-imperial logic called eurasism Russia is trying to expand firstly in the adjacent countries and then to other areas affecting also those countries. Russia is using energy as a powerful weapon to blackmail other countries. In 1994, Russia signed the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) with the European Union and they defined a political framework based on common values. With this agreement starts the longtime reliance of Europe to Russia. But the crisis in 2008 and 2009 has proven the incapability of the country to truly become a huge economic power. Other methods can be in the spotlight, like activation of the special services, the mobilization of the Russian diaspora in the Post-soviet states and the use of military intimidation, a wakeup call for Russia to reinforce and modernize its armed forces.⁸¹

However, Russia is facing again its historical dilemma: to be trapped in the obsolete imperialist mentality which lead him to an economic stagnation or prioritize the prosperity giving up the hegemonic ambitions and the autocratic political model.⁸² The selective cooperation with Turkey surely help Russia achieve its goals without big costs. A military way in the Eastern Mediterranean is surely not a way for Russia to be involved in the area.

There is another country that is absolutely conscience to that and it masters soft power to expand its influence in the region. Joseph Nye understands power in the 21st century in two ways: power transition and power diffusion. Power transition take the sense of a change of power among states from West to East and power diffusion shows the transfer of power from States to non-state-actors. He expressed his thought through the rise and fall of Great powers picturing the rise of China and fall of USA. Indeed, China’s approach in the Eastern Mediterranean is increasing through markets. China’s strategy

⁷⁹ Mongrenier J.-Sylvestre, Thom F., *Géopolitique de la Russie*, Que sais-je, Paris, 2018, page 5

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Mongrenier J.-Sylvestre, Thom F., *Géopolitique de la Russie*, Que sais-je, Paris, 2018, page 6

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 21

⁸² *Ibid*

in the region is through economy which is constantly growing. United States have to option towards China. Either to empower its ability or to build a network of alliances. In Waltzian terms, the first choice is corresponded to internal balancing and the second one to external balancing, the second choice is based to the institutional liberalism in which the interdependence promotes the collaboration, thus the peace.⁸³

The formation of grand strategy is more than urgent for the West, taking into account the big revisionist aspirations of some actors in the region. It is the weakness of the West to find this mix of policy that lead actors like Turkey or Russia to acquire or to try to acquire their own spheres of interest. Energy is a valuable necessity for the future of everyone and it should not be treated irrationally and arbitrarily. The interests of the actors go way far than the energy. East and West unfold their differences in Eastern Mediterranean and energy is the key to gain more power and put pressure to the opponent. However, in the 21st century, the military power is decreasingly necessary to reach a goal forming a grand strategy. The strategy of “carrot and stick”, a combination of soft and hard power is what Europe and the United States needs to develop.

Results

More than just a simple geographic space, the Eastern Mediterranean is approached as an object of fantasy that encourages conquest. The multiculturalism of the region doesn't allow the Eastern Mediterranean countries to be united politically. Gas can't be, by itself, a pillar of collaboration. The “gas dividend” is not big enough to overcome the historic, deep-rooted divisions. Despite the decline of the energy market because of the outburst of the coronavirus pandemic, it is still and it will be a sector that remains at the center of foreign policies. However, beyond energy, in “huntigtonian” terms, Eastern Mediterranean is a meeting point of three civilizations, the Orthodoxy, the Christianity and the Muslimism. Throughout history the Eastern Mediterranean has always been a region of antagonism between these three civilizations. The defended vision of this space remains ethnocentric. From a micro perspective, Turkey's lust for energy is surely important to explain the region's hostility but in the broader sense, Turkey's pan-

⁸³ Χαράλαμπος Παπασωτηρίου, Η Αμερικανική πολιτική από τον Φράνκλιν Ρούσβελτ στον Ντόναλντ Τραμπ, Εκδόσεις Ποιότητα, Αθήνα, 2018, σελ. 627

Islamic, neo-ottoman ideology is what is hidden behind all the aggressiveness. Erdogan's plan of converting Turkey into one of the ten biggest economies in the world and to become a regional hegemon by 2023 is not yet feasible, but, the west must not be complacent. Professor Konstantinos Lavdas reminds us that this wave of Islamism must be dealt with harshly, preventing this new form of terrorism that tends to take political shape.⁸⁴ Even in the last European summit held on 10th December 2020, it was proven that the lack of a common European strategy towards foreign affairs lead to a reliance on the American policy, for imposing sanctions against the Turkish illegal drilling in Eastern Mediterranean. Nevertheless, it is sure that the Euro-Atlantic relations will come to a new phase with better understanding. The question is whether the new American president, Joe Biden, will follow a more French or German approach in Eastern Mediterranean. Peace or war in the region will depend effectively on the new American policy, unless Europe as a whole decides to understand the forthcoming threats knocking on its door and speaks with earnestness while trying to steer away from short-sighted policies. However, the absolute leadership of the United States is not certain. The answer to 'Who Rules Who' in the relationship between Israel, US and Saudi Arabia is highly contested. The multipolarity has affected the norms of the functioning of the international system, let alone the Eastern Mediterranean where the East and the West meet. Is energy the reason of the fighting in the region or is it simply that the Eastern Mediterranean is the region of the enactment of the clash of civilizations as described by Samuel P. Huntington? In any case, stability in the area will only come with the formation of a structured grand strategy for every actor. The energy game in Eastern Mediterranean is still being played and will continue in the same manner. He who refuses to play, puts his security at stake.

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