

Mediterranean Sea Struggle between Turkey and Greece and its Implications for the Existence of NATO and the Way Forward

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Abstract: The Mediterranean Sea has been a vital passage since time immemorial. It was the cultural and ideological fault line between empires in eastern and western countries. Contrary to its previous past, the last century saw the peaceful sea. However, Greece and Turkey's recent standstill ruins this ideal time. Turkey's assertive policies to explore gas and oil in the Mediterranean Sea, known as the Blue Homeland approach, have been a significant disruption in the region's status quo. The presence of France, Egypt, and the UAE in the dispute has exacerbated this rivalry. The negotiated conflict settlement is essential; otherwise, NATO's very existence and regional stability are in danger. The author explains the conflict actors' their interests and introduces the potential solution to this conflict and NATO alliance revitalization that could end Russian aggression in the region.

Keywords: NATO; Mediterranean Sea; Turkey; Greece; Israel; Geopolitics

1. Introduction

The Mediterranean Sea has long been at the convergence of civilizations and several continents. Its name itself suggests, which means "The Sea in the middle of the earth," which has its origin in Greek mythologies. Today it is again becoming the source of contention between regional players, which eventually gave way to the interference of major powers like China, Russia, and the United States. It will target a clash of ideologies on the one side, and oil geopolitics in an era of revisionist movements and global turmoil. After peace in the last century, it is again giving way to violent and greedy powers at the expense of peace. The Mediterranean Sea has geopolitically essential and Faultline of conflict among cultures. (Straus, 2019).

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Under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey has been revisioning its history. It has been following the policy of becoming the region's significant power, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region under the framework of Neo-Ottoman policy. Nevertheless, after some defeats in Syria and Egypt and competing interests with the Gulf Sheikhs, it is now revising its policy against the West and North Africa, called the Blue Homeland Strategy of Turkey. Its primary emphasis is on the Blue Mediterranean Sea. This new policy is mainly about exploiting the energy resources at the bottom of the sea. This exploration directly revived the old fault-lines at the center of NATO-Turkey relations. Recently it resulted in a Turkey-Greece standoff over the Mediterranean Sea. Greece has an advantage over Turkey because of its better position vis-à-vis Turkey in the Law of the sea, but the problem is Turkey is not part of the Treaty. Historically, the main dispute was only in the area of Cyprus, the Turkish drilling off the Northern Cyprus coast. However, the situation is now very different, shifting the conflict to the open sea (Gingeras, 2020). Turkey has claims on rights to exploitation within its area under the continental shelf, while Greece counters its argument that The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) with all its populated islands is 200 miles. Some loopholes in the Law of the sea rules and its blind application result in locking Turkey's exploitation rights in a tiny area compared to its coast of the sea (DYKE, 2005).

Turkey's recent discovery of a big natural gas field in the Black Sea, which is estimated at 320 billion cubic meters, will become functional until 2023 has dramatically changed the regional politics. Turkey has a dream of shifting its dependence on energy exporters like Iran, Russia, and Azerbaijan to become a net energy exporter. Turkey is currently facing a substantial shortfall in its current account. So, any decline in Turkey's oil import bill would boost its finances. It will also help the Lira (Turkish currency) rebound against the dollar (Turkey's April current account \$4.5 billion in deficit, 2020).

Since an unprecedented naval standoff took place in the Eastern Mediterranean between French and Turkish warships at the beginning of June, Paris, and Ankara, have been exchanging increasingly sharp verbal blows over their respective acts in the enforcement of the U.N. weapons embargo against Libya. Although this may seem just another moment of tension among NATO allies, especially with Turkey, it is not. This incident reflects both a more fundamental geopolitical challenge for NATO and an increasingly sharp division between Turkey and the European Union. France argued that the military had been mobilized to improve the independent evaluation of the situation and reinforce France's commitment to freedom of travel,

protection of maritime traffic in the Mediterranean, and respect for international Law (NATO, U.N. chief seek to tamp down the dispute, 2020).

All claims are formalized in bilateral agreements with other countries in the region; Turkey has reached an EEZ agreement with the Libyan Government of the National Agreement (GNA) at Tripoli in late 2019 and, more recently, with Egypt in Greece. The Treaty between Turkey and Libya ensures that on Crete, the largest Greek island, is not a continental shelf – not to mention the much smaller Castelorizo on the coast of Turkey (Lycia). This rule is technically tricky, but Germany seemed to accept Turkey's demand for a specific portion of the offshore cake in particular (Valori, 2019). E.U. leaders have not been able to agree to impose fresh sanctions on Turkey to apply, at least for the time being, to those they recently placed in reaction to the drilling off Cyprus. Erdoğan has reportedly told Merkel that, in the days ahead, Turkey would soften its position. The length of this standoff between Turkey and Greece depends mainly on Turkey's appetite for escalation, but longer-term tranquility would entail tackling specific fundamental differences that have proved intractable for decades (E.U. sanctions Turkey, 2020).

2. Geographical Importance of the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean is an enclosed sea, with an area of around 2,5 million square kilometers. It is usually navigable, warm, and mostly tideless, but not without demanding winds and currents. Around the Mediterranean, three continents meet Africa, Asia, and Europe. Three continents in such close vicinity are nowhere else on Earth. Besides, the Mediterranean provides entry, by narrow waterways, to the Atlantic Ocean in the West and the Black Sea in the East. The Gibraltar Strait between Europe and Africa lies in the West, while the Hellespont, the Marmara Sea, and the Bosphorus divide Europe and Asia by the thinnest margins in the East (Salah, 2020). Underground resources in ancient times often proved to be of strategic value. E.g., Athens supported the fleet, which defeated the Persian Invasion of 480-479 B.C. In the mines south of the city, silver was found. Carthage paid for the Hannibal mercenaries in silver the mines he had conquered in Iberia. More recently, in the eastern Mediterranean, significant quantities of oil and gas have been found. Cooperation arrangements have been signed between Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, and Israel, but other countries seek to gain control over those resources. China, Iran, Russia, and Turkey all want a part, and at least some have laid out challenges for control (Calleja, 2005).

The Mediterranean could become less important in one respect, which has to do with its position as a transport center. In the future, alternatives will shadow the Suez Canal, the conduit for shipping from Europe and East Asia. One choice is a sea-land transport route that links Western Europe and South Asia and involves India, Iran, and Russia. Another is an Arctic Ocean shipping route that may become commercially feasible due to global warming and ice melting. This path between the East Asia and Europe is two weeks quicker than the old Suez Canal. So, if continued warming makes this workable, it will mark a real shift.

The Mediterranean will continue to be an agonizing route of trade and confrontation for the near future. Neither Athens, nor Rome, nor Istanbul, nor Jerusalem, nor Cairo, nor Madrid, may have the influence they had once exerted in ages past, but their fate is not something that London or Berlin can safely disregard, not with the involvement of Moscow, Tehran, Beijing, and Washington. The Mediterranean remains an important sea (Grygiel, 2020).

3. Geopolitics Through Times

In ancient times Assyria and Persia spread from Southwestern Asia to the Levant and Egypt in the Achaemenid and Sasanian periods. Germanic tribes in the Late Antiquity, most notably Goths and Vandals, crossed the Rhine and Danube, invaded the Roman Empire, and occupied Mediterranean lands, including Spain, Italy, and North Africa. The Arabs advanced from Arabia in the middle Ages to conquer the Levant, North Africa, Spain, and Sicily, the long-ruled regions of southern Italy and France, repeatedly assaulting Corsica and Sardinia, and even occupying the Vatican. Italy and France both gained colonial positions in North Africa and the Aegean and the Levant in modern times. In Mediterranean history, hegemonic and not colonial empires played a key role, which is only suitable for the sea. Various states have found bases for fostering maritime trade and the naval power projects rather than settling territories. There was Athens in Antiquity, Genoa, and Venice in the Middle Ages (Lopes, 2010).

The British Royal Navy and the United States and their NATO partners have controlled the Mediterranean Sea in recent years, but not without challenges. Germany and Italy have battled with the Allies for sea power in the World Wars. Russia, which has a Mediterranean ambition for a long time, continues today to project influence in the region, notably in Syria and has an airbase. In Greece, Israel,

Italy, and Turkey, China recently became the largest investor. In today's Mediterranean, Iran represents a different form of hegemonic influence, mostly through the ground and the air rather than by sea. Iran is deeply interested in Syria and Lebanon over a land bridge through Iraq. The mighty arch spreads eastwards to Yemen and further East to Central Asia. This reflects Iran's most significant influence from the early Byzantine period. The Mediterranean is the South Flank of NATO, and also a restless ally under Recep Tayyip Erdogan is NATO's main old-world army in Turkey and Turkey, with neo-Ottoman aspirations and a willingness to extend its influence. Turkey has proved a mature target for Vladimir Putin, equally revisionist and highly shrewd, who has successfully restored Russia's power. Russia's selling of its S-400 Air Defense missile system has put a dent in NATO's armor, contributing to the tensions between the U.S. and Turkey. The upshot drives Putin's aspirations forward. The Mediterranean suffered, but North and West Europe have been spared (with a recent exception of Ukraine) since 1945. It is the Yugoslav War, the Greek Civil War, the invasion of Cyprus, the Civil War in Syria, the Civil War in Lebanon, the numerous Arab and Israelis conflicts, the Libyan Civil War, and the Algerian Civil War, all across the basin, relatively close to the sea (Straus, 2019).

4. Escalating Tensions with NATO Allies

Turkey's safeguarding its regional presence in the eastern Mediterranean is colliding with the official Union and NATO activities, disrupting broader regional and international peace. The first substantial incident occurred in April 2020, when the European Union conducted the E.U. Operations EUNAVFOR MED IRINI, aimed at implementing the U.N. Security Council arms embargo on Libya: the value of avoiding further military confrontation through joint action to implement the U.N. embargo. Turkey condemned IRINI as following a one-sided approach to the embargo, concentrating solely on limiting the Government of National Accord, supported by Turkey (Carassava, 2020). According to Turkish interpretation, Assistant Secretary of State David Schenker criticized whether the European Union's mission was 'real' since it focused on banning Turkish items and not stopping Russia from entering Libya. Operation IRINI attempted to inspect a cargo vessel with Tanzanian flag led to Libya by Turkish warships on June 10, 2020. The Turkish ships prevented inspection of the vessel by the Greek navy and French navy *Le Courbet*, saying the cargo was "medical supplies" (Tuysuz, 2020).

5. Broader Political and Geopolitical Causes



5.1. Regional Alignments

However, Turkey's assertiveness has undoubtedly galvanized possible enemies, including Greece, Egypt, Cyprus, Iraq, and France, where Turkish forces are carrying out a massive operation against the Kurdish separatist PKK. Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has emerged as the leader of this coalition (Erdogan: Turkey could suspend relations with the UAE over Israel, 2020). The Gulf monarchies and Egypt are under pressure from Turkey and Qatar's pro-Muslim Brotherhood stance, plus their military cooperation arrangements – most recently involving a naval base in Misrata's Libyan rebel stronghold. The UAE is also interfering in Libya, publicly claiming responsibility for a recent airbase attack in western Libya in which Turkish drones operate in support of GNA (Turkish seized airbase, 2020). It reveals how closely the gas dispute is related to the civil war in Libya along with the Turkey-Libya EEZ deal. The peace agreement between the UAE and Israel can be seen in the light of this Turkish expansionism policy regarding which Jerusalem was surprisingly quiet (Cook, 2020).

Another Mediterranean force, led by a president who proclaimed NATO "brain dead" in 2019, partially in response to Turkey's invasion of northern Syria, is more

assertive as Israel tacitly supports the Alliance. Simultaneously, the EastMed Gas Forum was created at the beginning of 2019 and included most countries in the region except Turkey and Lebanon. It gave the impression that it would have no place in future energy cooperation (East-Med Gas Forum encourage energy cooperation, 2019). The visit of Macron to Beirut was no accident, it was the pre-planned visit with the assistance of UAE to co-fund port repairs, preempting Turkey's offer (James, 2020). France also has military agreements with the UAE, Greece, Cyprus, and Egypt, all aimed at curbing fellow NATO members and applicants for E.U. membership. And while Berlin remains trying to strike a balance in the Greek-Turkish conflict, Washington, usually the guarantor of peace among NATO's rivals in the Aegean, is nowhere to be seen (Turkey rebuild Beirut port, 2020)

5.2. Turkey's Domestic Politics

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the president of Turkey, is facing a weakened economy. Turkey recovers from an electoral rebuke at mayoral elections in Istanbul — all good reasons for a leader to play the patriotism card (Kirby, 2019). This geopolitical dilemma is rooted in Turkey's current regional foreign and security policy, partly focused on its "Blue Homeland" doctrine. The execution of this doctrine has led to a series of serious incidents that have been observed, albeit fleetingly if rarely, discussed by Turkey's allies. Faced with little opposition, Turkey assumes its acts are generally recognized (as others do, restricting Russian influence). However, Turkey's entire strategy and intervention have now reached a point of dangerous escalation that could significantly threaten the coherence of the collective defense position of NATO in the Mediterranean and undermine its political cohesion. Turkey's actions are also threatening to disrupt critical NATO-EU cooperation in the region. In order to prevent this, allies should address the growing uncertainty in the Mediterranean by defining those agreed principles of direct regional action through an integrative strategy that aims to de-escalate conflict and develop mutual interests with Ankara. If Turkey does not wish to join this project, there will be more significant transatlantic tensions (Pinko, 2020).

5.3. Turkey's Blue Homeland Ambitions

The Blue Homeland Doctrine of Turkey has its roots in a proposal drawn up in 2006 by Turkish admiral Cem Gurdeniz. It sets an ambitious goal of underlining and extending Turkey's presence in the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Black Seas via assertive diplomacy and military means, thus allowing access to energy and other economic resources. It was introduced in 2015 by President Erdogan as an integral part of the national 'forward defense' strategy in the form of his continuing push to impose Turkish independence in all areas of foreign policy to include the control in its surrounding regions. In early 2019 drills were held concurrently in the Black, Aegean, and Eastern Mediterranean Seas known as Mavi Vatan-Blue Homeland, which was the most massive Navy exercise. Another example was Turkey's strong energy statements around the contested Cyprus Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (Gingeras, 2020). The exercise was described as a 'war rehearsal' by the Turkish state media. Turkey sent naval vessels in February 2018 to deter an Italian exploration vessel on her way off the coast of Cyprus to explore for gas. Ankara then sent submarines, escorted by the Turkish navy, into Cypriot waters in 2019 to do its drilling operations. The Member States of the European Union unanimously condemned these 'illegal acts' and expressed their support for Cyprus by limiting E.U. pre-accession assistance to Turkey and postponed dialogs on air transport (Pinko, 2020). Gunboat diplomacy: Israel also experienced the naval activism of Turkey when its oceanographic ship, Bat Galim, operating with Nicosia in Cypriot waters, was driven out by Turkish warships. In November 2019, with Turkey signing an agreement with Libya's Government of National Accord, regional tensions reached a new peak. The agreement establishes a maritime boundary between the two Mediterranean countries and allows Turkey to protect Libya's maritime interests (which unfolds to six nautical miles as of Crete) and to harness Mediterranean energy resources together (Wilks, 2020).

5.4. US-Turkey

Turkey's relations with the United States are tense, primarily since the Russian-made air defense system S-400 has been adopted by Turkey (Cinar, 2020). So far, the United States has expelled Turkey from the F-35 program and may also sanction it under the CAATSA (Oguz & Al, 2019). These increased tensions result from the efforts of the U.S. government to foster a strengthened partnership between Cyprus, Greece, and Israel, a strategy that is endorsed both by Administration and bipartite

Law – and regarded with skepticism in Turkey (Ward, 2019). The U.S., too, has a double stance that represents the two conflict elements. The USA still refers to Cyprus’ ‘claimed’ areas in terms of the sovereignty dispute between Turkey and Cyprus, which means the U.S. does not accept that these waters belong to the Turkish and Cypriot countries; only does it believe that Turkey’s surveying or drilling is “extremely disruptive and risks raising tensions in the region,” urging the Turkish authorities to avoid these options. In relation to the question of sovereignty, the U.S. position endorses the notion that ‘it must be divided, like all of its resources, equally between the oil and gas resources of the island in terms of their overall agreement.’ This is close in reach to that of Greek Cypriots; In principle, the Turkish Cypriot stance also correlates, except that the TRNC considers that it should have a say in income-generating agreements; that a mechanism should be formed to guarantee income even without (or prior to) final settlements (Turner, 2020).

5.5. Cyprus Dispute

Efforts have meanwhile stalled to settle the longstanding Cyprus conflict. The Turkish-Cyprus dispute was not a significant barrier to gas production so far. In the future, this could change. The first dimension is straightforward. Turkey believes that the sea law and its provisions on the continental shelf and the EEZ leave it to the Eastern Mediterranean at the odd spot. Turkey is also not a signatory to the UNCLOS and has pursued a negotiated settlement of territorial water with Greece (and ultimately after a settlement with Cyprus) (Dağlı, 2017). It describes Cyprus as its EEZ, situated on its mainland shelf. The second conflict is more complex and involves the Cypriot dispute over long periods. The island, accepted as an international community other than Turkey as the Republic of Cyprus since 1974, has been divided into a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot part accepted solely by Turkey (the TRNC) (Mortimer, 2019). There are some problems with this fact. Turkey challenges the Republic of Cyprus’ (Greek) right to sign or issue licenses for mining and development in an international agreement to delimit its maritime borders — as with Egypt, Israel, and Lebanon. Turkey furthermore considers that the TRNC and the citizens living in Northern Cyprus should share some income, including under licenses it has not formally recognized (Sayin, 2008). Turkey is also of the view that, in areas offshore in Southern Cyprus, the TRNC has an equal right to grant licenses. Due to this last issue, some naval disputes arose (Pope, 2011). Following the 2011 agreement by Turkey and the TRNC to delimit the border,

TRNC has issued several TPAO Exploration Licences, including in areas overlapping with Cyprus Licences. Eni and the second vessel (Yavuz) were the critical subjects of the incident of February 2018 (TPAO has also performed seismic work in these areas) (Turkey protecting rights in East Med, 2020).

5.6. NATO-Turkey Issues

The latest standoff will have negative implications for NATO. Besides this issue, NATO and Turkey had some contention issues, and now the issue will affect their very relationships (GILSINAN, 2019). Before this issue, NATO first lamented Turkey's purchase of the Russian S-400 system against the will of the U.S. and its NATO allies. Secondly, its unilateral military aggression against Kurdish forces in Syria. Thirdly, in June 2020, his repeated military actions in Northern Iraq were last. Fourthly, its breach of Iranian (and even Venezuelan) sanctions. Fifth, it is continuing probing of Greek airspace, and a recent veto on major NATO proposals to protect the eastern flank of NATO leads us to believe that Turkey is following its domestic interests increasingly over the collective security interests of NATO. (Erlanger, 2020).

6. Impact on NATO

These disputes among allies could seriously harm NATO. In terms of NATO's security, readiness, compatibility, and performance, and the recent decision by the U.S. and other partners in the F-35 to remove Turkey from the program have already shown less progress securing NATO (Mehta, 2018). Secondly, the announcement that France will withdraw its forces from the NATO Operation Sea Guardian following the naval incident with Turkey limits the need for the European Union and NATO to jointly implement the United Nations embargo on weapons in Libya in the Eastern Mediterranean (Vavasseur, 2020). Thirdly, the European Union uses NATO intelligence and other support to carry out many of its work, and the diminished NATO is also diminishing the European Union. Fourthly, the Alliance is exclusively orientated towards its eastern flank if more attention is not placed on the Mediterranean, Ankara, and Southern part of the European NATO. These members should work to protect and promote their interests in the region, model Turkey's conduct of ad hoc arrangements and the formation of new regional alignments, and reversible bilateral agreements (Dempsey, 2020).

6.1. Impacts on Turkey-EU Relations

The E.U. sees Ankara has a range of problems, such as the violent quest for energy interests, the neglect of the rule of Law inside Turkey, and migrants' use to pressurize the European Union. The European Union may not be a neutral participant in the case of Cyprus. It supports its Cyprus Member State and its right to pursue its economic interests under international Law within its EEZ. Despite the detriment of common European interests, Turkey is free to follow its national interests; its acts exclude it from a more fruitful relationship or strengthening economic relations with the E.U. It complicates further attempts in the Western Balkans, Ukraine, and the Caucasus since troubled EU-Turkey relations (Henderson, 2019).

6.2. Impacts on East Med Gas?

The recent three discoveries in Cyprus – Aphrodite, Glauco, and Calypso – are outside the contested areas. Turkish naval forces were primarily operating in areas to which TPAO licenses, either by Turkey or TRNC. (Aphrodite extends into the Israeli waters and how both sides share profits, but that is a separate, much more peaceful dispute). Once, in 2018, Eni was prevented from drilling a well, which had the most direct effect on explorative operation in the area (Kambas, 2019). The Cyprus dispute has long been recognized as potential obstacle to the exploitation, together with Turkey's vigorous assertion of its rights and the rights of Turkish Cypriots, and certainly one of them (different) barriers which could inhibit the construction of a pipeline with E.U. support in Greece (and, naturally, in Turkey).

Nevertheless, the obstacles to avoid gas developments often seem commercial — even Cyprus is very likely to import gas before exporting it amid the apparent contest over how to invest bonanza. The latest refurbishment of Turkey's TRNC plan for a formulation for the sharing of revenue demonstrates that both Turkish and Cypriots will benefit from it, despite the dispute, which they can both agree to. An optimal development path would benefit from resolving the various problems; what is less clear is to what extent the failure to resolve political disputes hamper the exploitation of existing discoveries (Butt, 2020).

7. Way Forward

7.1. Eastern Mediterranean Principles

Heather A. Conley, Senior Vice President for Europe, Eurasia and the Arctic; and Director, Europe Program and Rachel Ellehuus, Deputy Director, Europe Program, suggested the preamble to the NATO Charter notes that its members are committed to “promoting North Atlantic security and well-being.” The Eastern Mediterranean security should be encouraged by all NATO allies, including Turkey. A first step would include developing an agreed set of principles:

1. Ensuring that the benefits of energy production in the region are reaped by all regional stakeholders, to generate a fair part of the energy income to re-establish confidence in the peace process in Cyprus;
2. Contain Russian power and regional presence;
3. Ensure the freedom of action of NATO from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean;
4. Act for regional stability and counter-terrorism initiatives in North Africa and the Middle East region;
5. Ensure respect for international legal standards and United Nations resolutions, such as the United Nations weapons embargo on Libya and prohibition of fire efforts and territorial or maritime sovereignty of countries (including current disputes);
6. Double efforts by developing new protocols to prevent potential maritime accidents in the Eastern Mediterranean between NATO allies (Conley & Ellehuus, 2020).

Secondly, an open war against Turkey cannot help if the E.U. wants to export gas from Israel’s coastline to Europe through Cyprus and Italy. In all interests, uncertainty must be minimized, and the solution to the gas dispute diplomatically and mutually acceptable. Third, it is unwise to exclude Turkey, which has a long Mediterranean coast. It would be strategically catastrophic to allow a resurgent Turkey to harass smaller forces in the region. The E.U. needs to reconcile these two (Troubled Seas, 2020) choices. Fourthly, America should have joined the ring in the past (as after the 1996 confrontation). However, the anarchy in the eastern Mediterranean demonstrates how, and at what cost, this old order is unraveling. Fifthly, the president of France, Emmanuel Macron, had invited to his presidential retreat in Fort de Brégançon on the French Med on August 20, Chancellor Angela Merkel. A mixture of Mr. Macron’s muscle and the mediation of Merkel could still

be useful in compelling Turkey to heed its concerns, although the rule-breaking is unreasonable.

The priority is to provide Greece and Turkey with breathtaking space for debate. It might be a positive start to an exploration moratorium in contested waters. Sixthly, it is ironic that today's low prices are delaying the further exploration of large oil firms near Cyprus. There is a constant transition to cleaner energy. In their acquisitions, energy firms are increasingly selective. The longer the Eastern Mediterranean war goes, the greater the possibility of gas resting under seafloors (Dealing with a dangerous dispute in the eastern Med, 2020). Seventhly, Strengthening U.S. political participation and stability in the region would lead to strengthening NATO's eastern Mediterranean resolution, a shield against the increasing military intervention of Russia, and improving the balance of tensions between France and Turkey. Eighthly, in particular France, the European Union must recognize and not merely condemn the behavior of pragmatic ways to interact with Turkey over a variety of issues. Ninthly, increased economic opportunities such as the expansion of bilateral E.U. relations with Turkey or growing U.S. foreign direct investment as Turkey's economic situation deteriorates could lead Ankara to participate in the creation of the Regional System. (Turkey's deteriorating economy, 2020).

8. Conclusion

Unfortunately, the tensions have escalated, and Turkey's unilateral action greatly destabilized the region as such ties have become quite unstable. It is hoped that by concentrating again on a collection of negotiated principles and exciting development, NATO can restore stability and concentrate again on defending its southern flank. That means that Turkey cannot reverse without a more comprehensive diplomatic initiative — a resolution of the Aegean maritime frontiers and a resolution of the Cyprus dispute. Turkey will determine whether or not to escalate. However, only after a settlement of conflicts that lasted for decades can the underlying dispute go away. All players, onshore, and offshore want to take advantage of this before the U.S. elections. Strangely, the vacuum resulted in political rivalries instead of fossil fuels. Unfortunately, with the departure of the U.S., the continuation of Moscow's opaque borderline, and the E.U. separation from Turkey, the situation is expected to increase uncertainty.

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