

VI. Geopolitical Analysis of the Commercial Sea Channel Dardanelles-Aegean Sea

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1. The Problem¹

Geopolitics is the geographical and analytical method which studies and describes the power distribution and control of the influence zones on the planet. It is important to stress that whoever controls the international commercial routes also controls the planet.

What does this concept mean in the case of Aegean Sea? The Aegean is a sea route and an air passage extending from the Mediterranean Sea and Europe to the Dardanelles and to the Turkish ports in the East. Moreover, while the Aegean Sea exerts a geopolitical influence on Greece and Turkey, it is also -in a practical and not in a legal sense- a sea and an air passage serving the former Soviet Republics, such as Ukraine and Russia, and connecting, as far as transports are concerned, the commercial flow between Europe and Asia.

If, on a Mercator map, we draw a line starting from Amsterdam, the seaport of the free oil market in Rotterdam ending at Port Said, the transit point of approximately 40% of Middle-East oil, this will be an absolutely straight line crossing Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Skopje, the middle of Khalkidhiki Peninsula (which

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the Skopje maps present as part of the “unredeemed Macedonia of the Aegean Sea”), the Sporades and the Dodecanese.

The distance on this straight line between Rotterdam and Skopje is out 1500 km, while the distance between Skopje and Port Said, on the same line, is approximately 1650 km: in fact, the capital of multinational Skopje is in the middle of the commercial route connecting the most important location for the export of crude oil with the most significant location for the transit market.

The Sporades and the Dodecanese (SE Aegean) have been for more than 20 years the target of Turkish intentions supported by absurd arguments which are contrary to international law. Turkish misinterpretation of the Treaty of Lausanne and the invention of curious “gray zones” in the Aegean Sea etc. are ample proof of their intentions.

We must also stress that the above space is part of one of the airways connecting Israel with the USA and is of major importance for the survival of the State of Israel. We must also realize that Israel could never consent to the occupation of this space by powers that in future could block this essential airway to western markets and the USA. Thus, we should view the agreement between Turkey and Israel in this perspective, an agreement which is completely unfavorable for Greece, given the fact that Turkey claims restriction of our national air space from 10 to 6 miles. This claim must make the planners of Greek foreign policy (if there are any) think seriously on such issues, especially after the case of Gavdos (Crete) whose air space is bordering with that of Libya. Since the relations between Turkey and Libya and those between Israel and Libya are very delicate, the Turkish claims on Gavdos would solve the problem of Turkey’s air space which, at present is Greek air space, preventing the free movement of Turkish aircrafts to the Western Europe and the USA.

This fact became clear recently when Turkish A/F F-16s, which were part of the Allied Air Force participating in the “peace process” in Bosnia, violated Greek air space over Gavdos. These violations of Greek air space at that time demonstrated the importance of this island.

It is thus obvious that Turkey, taking advantage of its last agreement with Israel, which also provides for an “Open Skies Treaty”, wishes to strengthen its pressure over Greece by making Israel believe that it will also profit from the Gavdos’ air passage, Naturally, Israel’s reaction has demonstrated that it does not concede to such promises and does not support similar Turkish claims at Greece’s expense.

The Israeli President, when asked by a Turkish journalist of the

Turkish Daily News (11 March 1990) if Tel Aviv considers that the Turkish-Israeli Agreement for Military Training and Cooperation² “was likely to result in a wider cooperation in the fields of Defense and strategic collaboration” answered: “*Defense collaboration against whom? Thank God, we have no common enemies. You have the PKK and we have terrorists* (sic)”.³ However, Greek foreign policy must at last realize that Greece, Cyprus and Israel have common interests and should decide to explore ways for their common satisfaction before Israel is seduced by the proposals of Turkey.

At this point I would like to stress the importance of the Cyprus-Greece Unified Defense Doctrine, particularly its aspects concerning the consolidation of an important and stable military training between Greece and Israel, with Cyprus serving as a junction point.⁴

From the above we draw the conclusion that the Aegean Sea constitutes a very important space in the context of geopolitical dynamics and control, and that this space is an asset to the power that is able to exercise its sovereign rights on it. The main feature of this area is that it is a commercial passageway through which enormous quantities of Azeri and Russian oil, as well as natural gas, will move resulting in the decrease of the prices of corresponding Middle-East products. Thus, the big multinational cartels will conveniently proceed to investments in the new markets of China and India.

2. The problems which the ambitious administrator of the Aegean -apart from Greece and Turkey- will have to “resolve” are as follows:

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2. The agreement was signed on February 21 1996 in Israel. The Turkish side was represented by the Deputy Chief of the Turkish Joint Army General Staff, General Cevik Bir. The Turkish newspaper «*Sabah*» (22 February 1996) characterizes these agreements as a "historical cooperation against Greece and Syria". This agreement will create the preconditions for the military training of Turkish Officers in the Israeli Army and of Israeli Officers in the Turkish Armed Forces. Additionally there will be collaboration between the two countries for the exchange of military information of technical level common exercises and mutual ship visits.
 3. It must also be noticed that Mr. Weizman did not call the PKK "terrorist", but used its name.
 4. Israel must attribute importance to the "good" relations of Greece with Syria and Iran, as well as to the excellent relations between France and Iran, and between Germany and Iran based on the Iranian oil reserves and their exploitation. As an example I may mention the effort of the French Total and the British-Dutch Shell oil companies to conclude an agreement for oil production on Iranian ground amounting USD 3, 5 billion; this agreement will be finally concluded between Iran and Total.

- a) The issue of the Greek territorial waters;
- b) The status of domination on the rocky islands;
- c) The issue of the continental shelf or the Greek islands in the Aegean;
- d) The issue of the Exclusive Economic Zone of both littoral countries which is directly linked to the continental shelf;
- e) The extent of the Greek air space;
- f) The control over the civil air corridors over the Aegean and within Athens F.I.R.
- g) The defense issue of certain Greek islands; and,
- h) The Cyprus issue.

I will make a brief analysis for each of the above issues.

a) The issue of the Greek territorial waters

If we take into account that (i) in the Aegean Sea there are 2,400 islands and island clusters which almost “touch” Turkey and (ii) each of these islands has its own territorial waters which, under the present status of the 6 miles, join and overlap the territorial waters of continental Turkey, we can easily understand the rhetoric of our neighbor, friend and ally, aiming at the revision of the International and Bilateral Treaties.

However, in my effort not to create false impressions, I must underline that under the present status of the 6 miles there are strips of international waters between Aegean islands and islets providing for the so-called “Sea Crossing” from the Mediterranean to the Dardanelles and the Black Sea, linking the ports of Asia Minor with Europe.

According to estimations taken seriously into account by the American Government, the extension of the Greek territorial waters from 6 to 12 miles -which is absolutely legitimate according to the International Sea Law - would cede 72% of the Aegean to Greece and only 9% to Turkey; at the same time, the percentage of the international waters would fall to some 19%, closing almost all sea-passages and “transforming the Aegean Sea into a Greek lake” creating “similar ‘stifling’ situations” in the air space, according to Turkish declarations.

However, things are different. The Sea Law Treaty provides for important exclusions from the delimitation of the territorial waters. For instance, it provides for the right for “safe crossing” according

to which warships of any nationality may rapidly cross the territorial waters of a littoral country under some preconditions.⁵

The new forms and classes of the passage rights, as they apply to passages through international straits and sea routes within an island archipelago which are defined as not being extensions of the continental country, are considered less troublesome by the international users. This is the reason why, according to the American position, the passages within international waters between Greek islands are defined as “International Straits” and, consequently, are excluded from the limitations of the “safe crossing”. It is obvious that Turkey and other countries, particularly the naval countries, have the same view on the subject.

What Turkey probably does not understand is that its revisionist behavior against any legal status in the Aegean Sea, as this derives from the Treaty of Lausanne (24 July 1923), also casts in doubt the legal status of the Bosphorus Straits as determined by the Convention of Montreux (20 July 1936), that is subordinate to Article 23 of the Treaty of Lausanne. We must also note that the validity of the Convention of Montreux has expired since July 1976.

An Aegean without “Straits” lacks substance. One must control the block of Aegean-Straits, otherwise the control of the Aegean Sea or the Straits alone is meaningless. The geostrategic unity of those two countries is obvious if we consider Turkey’s intentions during World War II. Its aims were then focused on the control of the Port of Thessaloniki in order to stabilize its control over the Straits and the Dodecanese which would permit the control of the sea traffic in South Aegean. Besides, the Imia case did not involve only two rocky islands. Turkey aimed much higher, specifically at the repeal of the legal status of the Dodecanese through its official and rather intensive claims against Greek sovereignty over this area.

b) The status of domination of the rocky islands

Here I focus only on the geopolitical dimension of the subject and I shall point out that the status of domination (“possession” according

5. In this way warships will have no right to proceed to pre-determined actions such as field exercises, aircrafts landings and information collection. Submarines will have to travel on surface, while merchant vessels will be submitted to safety and environmental protection regulations of the off-shore country.

to American texts) is particularly important because it influences the determination of both the extent of the territorial waters and the Zone of Exclusive Exploitation.

c, d, e, f) The issue of continental shelf, air space, civil air corridors and littoral zone

Taking into account that (i) the Montego Bay Convention in 1982, signed immediately by Greece and subsequently ratified in January 1995, and (ii) the legal definition of continental shelf, as presented in the Convention text, the largest part of the Aegean continental shelf belongs to Greece.

The Turkish view, which ignores the continental shelf of the Greek islands, reaches questionable results. As far as the Greek national air space is concerned, we know Turkey's opposition to the 10 miles of Greece's air space which is intended to serve as a wider neutral zone that will function as an early warning zone against a sudden Turkish air attack.

Under the spirit of those concepts we must attempt to interpret the Turkish NOTAM 714 issued by the Turkish Airlines Service in 6 August 1974. This NOTAM was withdrawn in 22 February 1980 following the issue of the Greek NOTAM 1137 which declared the Aegean a dangerous area, resulting in the interruption of civil aircrafts flying over the Eastern Aegean air corridors. The Greek NOTAM was withdrawn by NOTAM 1157, issued one day after the withdrawal of the Turkish one.

2. So, what would be the approach of one or more hegemonic metropolitan naval powers having particular interests in the Dardanelles-East Aegean commercial sea channel?

At the outset, we must ascertain that both the Convention of the Sea Law⁶ concerning the Greek continental shelf and territorial waters and the Treaty of Montreux about the Straits, mainly in their last form as given - *contra legem*- by the Turkish side, are not very attractive to some users of this commercial sea channel.

6. Set in force in 1991 and signed by 109 countries until now.

This is evidenced by the fact that even though President Clinton signed the Convention in 7 October 1994 and sent it to the Senate for ratification, the latter has not yet finished its task.

This rather “disturbing” hesitation of the USA to accept the Convention of the Sea Law is explained by the dominating concept in the Defense Department of the USA according to which “the access to oceans, including the coasts of foreign countries, even in great distance from the USA, is vital for both the political and economic interests of the USA”.

We cannot but consider USA’s concerns, mainly those of reliable and important policy planning centers, such as the Council of Foreign Affairs (CFR), relating to a final proposition concerning the American international activity which aims at national security and the protection of the American national interests within the current international conjuncture. This understanding becomes more factual when we consider the words of Les Aspin, Defense Secretary of State under Clinton’s Presidency and member of the CFR: “*In the ‘old world’ there was only one danger, the Soviet Union. In our world there will be many dangers. In the ‘old world’ our nation’s survival was a bargain. In today’s world **our national interests will be endangered.** In the old world we knew what threatened us. In today’s world we are obliged to know what threatens us (sic).*”⁷ *In the ‘old world’ the policy of ‘prevention’ diminished the danger of a nuclear war. In today’s world ‘prevention’ cannot always stop an opponent from threatening Americans and American interests.*⁸ *In the ‘old world’ the two superpowers possessed thousands of nuclear weapons and were ready to use them. In today’s world **many countries and groups will compete for the acquisition of nuclear weapons**”.*

Of course, an important lesson of political realism is also taught by President Clinton (September 1994) who clarified the theoretical guidelines mentioned above by his Secretary. The President said that the main objectives of American international intervention are “*Peace and Prosperity, Stability and Security, Democracy and Defense*” and continues

7. Underlining by the author.

8. The permanent and respectable (at least for the writer) refrain about the American nation, Americans, and American [national] interests sounds very ‘nationalistic’ to those who exorcise nationalism wherever they find it. Of course, the attention paid to the protection of the national interests of a country, without any ideological brainwaves and fancies about ‘chosen people’, is not ‘nationalism’ but protection of the territorial integrity, prosperity and social and political dignity of her citizens.

saying that “*the objective of Democracy is subject to limitations imposed by the co-evaluation of the other goals for the making of USA’s foreign policy. All countries are not equally able to support a democratic regime nor have they the same importance for the strategic interests of the USA (sic).*”⁹ Thus, *the successful strategy or the shaping of the foreign policy [of the USA] demands the preference of certain countries while neglecting others, including some countries that must be preferred despite the fact that authoritarian regimes are in office (sic)*”.

“Otherwise American patience and American natural resources will go through a severe test to the point of exhaustion,” according to the historian and member of the CFR Francis Fukuyama. In this case, the importance of Stability and Security as far as the continuous and unhindered oil flow to the USA is concerned predominates over the demands for Democracy (sic).¹⁰

Of course, those “political and economic” interests become more clear if we mention that this channel will trade the oil reserves of the wider region of Caspian Sea, the reserves of which amount to 2,2 million tons, of which Kazakhstan alone drills 512,100 barrels, on a daily basis, namely 25,6 million tons yearly.¹¹ In May 1992 Chevron signed a contract for the exploitation of the oil-wells of Tenguz/Kazakhstan for the production of 72,000 barrels per day, an amount which will rise to 780,000 per day within 17 years following the will signing at the contract.

A year later, in June 1993, the consortium of Total, British Gas, British Petroleum/Statoil, Agip, Mobil and Shell signed a preliminary contract for seismological research on a 100,000 square kilometers area in the Listau region, according to which the drillings would start in 1996.¹²

The transport of those enormous quantities of oil -which they do not include the oil-wells of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kirghizia- depends mainly on the existing network of Russian pipelines

9. This is the same phraseology about the interests of the USA. President Clinton’s position is absolutely legitimate in relation to the national interests of his country. However, he must recognize the right of other countries to have their own opinion for their national interests without being accused of ‘nationalistic’ attitude.

10. See F. Fukuyama, ‘The Beginning of Foreign Policy’, *New Republic* 17/8/1992, 24/8/1992, 24-32.

11. See also Charles W. Kegley, Jr. & Eugene Wittkopf, *American Foreign Policy*, 5th Edition, St. Martin’s Press, New York 1966.

12. See IMF Report, 1993 in *Business Eastern Europe*, 25 October 1993.

which lead either to the Dardanelles or to Alexandroupolis via Burgas. That is, in both cases we have to deal either with the entire channel or with a part of it. In any case, this channel cannot be by-passed.

The issue of the “oil triangle” between the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea¹³ and the Eastern Mediterranean, with new geopolitical features arising in its geographical coefficients due to the dissolution of the USSR, needs a detailed analysis; particularly, the issue concerning the pipelines and the strategic interests hatched around their axes.

We shall try to analyze the strategic importance of each oil route in this region and the role of Turkey as the centres of strategy in Ankara conceive it.

a) The case of Ukraine is of particular interest when talking about oil pipelines on its soil. The Russian pipelines which cross Eastern Ukraine and end in Odessa and Cherson will be easily subjected to a combined Ukraine-Turkish blackmail in the form of serious increase of transit fees, the “rights” over the percentage of the passing oil etc., if Turkey accomplishes the connection between Ceyhan-Samsun and joins the end of Samsun with Baku through Georgia (Northern Route) or Nakhichevan (Southern Rome). In this case, Ukraine will accept with pleasure to undertake the refinement of Baku oil transferred through the Samsun facilities. This fact could make Ukraine independent of Russian oil.

The importance attributed by the USA to the strategic role of Ukraine against Russia is characteristic and has become obvious during the last year (1995) by the common American-Ukrainian aeronau-

13. At the beginning of the 1990s the specialists estimated, based on Russian data that the Caspian Sea resources amounted to 16-19 billion barrels and 139-324 tcf of natural gas. According to Dr. Fiona Hill only the Persian Gulf reserves are larger (15-17 January 1996 Conference of the Research and Development Centre of Cyprus Intercollege. Main subject: "Security and Cooperation in East Mediterranean"). The exploitable reserves of the Azerbaijan resources are estimated to 3-4 billion barrels. Real Reserves of about 6 billion barrels have been discovered in Tengiz of Kazakhstan, with additional inferred reserves of about 3 billion barrels. The actual reserves in both countries could be larger, exceeding these calculations: even the most conservative specialists estimate that the production of the Caspian Sea will be 750000 barrels at the beginning of the century. As far as Turkmenistan is concerned, it is already the fourth bigger natural gas producer in the world, with an annual production of 120 billion m³. This quantity can satisfy half of the energy requirements of Europe, which are expected to reach 240 billion m³ until 2005.

tical exercises in the Black Sea. To the same conclusion we are led by the signing of the Cooperation Treaty between NATO and Ukraine on 14 September 1995.

b) The oil route Azerbaijan (Baku)-Georgia (Gory)-Turkey (Ceyhan) seems attractive to the USA,¹⁴ for it deprives Russia of a very strategic advantage which made it a dominant factor in the issue of energy transport to the Mediterranean through the dipole Caspian Sea-Black Sea. The consortium concerned must spend approximately 4 years and about 1, 1 billion dollars for the completion of the project.

c) The Northern Route, namely the route Baku-Aktau-Agdaz-Ghianza (Azerbaijan) and its continuation in Georgia, namely Tbilisi-Caspian Sea-Kutaisi, ending at the strategic Georgian ports of Batumi and Poti¹⁵ in the Black Sea appears equally attractive to the USA.

Surely, the exodus into the Mediterranean will have to be chosen out of three choices: i) the planned Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline through the Black Sea, (ii) the pipeline to Ceyhan, proposed by Turkey, (iii) the transfer of its oil through the Bosphorus Straits.

Solution (i) is rejected by Turkey because it reinforces Greece, Bulgaria and Russia strategically. Solution (iii) does not offer the possibilities for the transport of large quantities because of transit restrictions imposed by Turkey, invoking the environmental pollution due to the numerous tankers crossing the Dardanelles. This solution of course may be chosen as auxiliary to solution (ii) because it increases Turkey's strategic position and its ability to negotiate through the black-mail which it already exerts on any interested party.

Solution (ii) is the most preferred for Turkey's strategic interests, but it entails a high risk because of Kurdish rebellion and the political and ideological instability in Turkey at present.

d) To the above oil routes we must also add the following:

1) The Russia-Kazakhstan pipeline which connects Samara (Russia) with the Kazakh Gurev port in the Caspian Sea.

14. The USA is present with the following companies that are operating or are interested in operating in Azerbaijan: Pennzoil, Amoco, Occidental, Unocal and Mobil.

15. In the Black Sea the Russian ports of Novorossiysk and Tulapse and the Georgian ports of Batumi and Poti are today the main and most likely terminals of the oil pipelines. According to the Security Agreement with Georgia in 1995 Russia controls all ports, either directly or indirectly, since it retains a naval presence in Poti and a planned military presence in Batumi.

2) To the east of the above pipeline is that of Orsk (Russia)-Makat (Kazakhstan)-Gurev (Kazakhstan),¹⁶ as well as

3) The branching of this pipeline from Makat towards the Kazakh port of Aktau in the Caspian Sea.

The terminations of these pipelines in the Kazakh ports of the Northern and Central Caspian Sea lead to the choice of the Grozny (Chechnya)-Novorossiysk (Russia) route which ends in the Black Sea.

Consequently, we can easily conclude that the Baku-Grozny-Novorossiysk-Alexandroupolis route is of “major” importance as far as the geopolitical and geostrategic role of Northern Greek space and the island networks of the Aegean Sea is concerned, because they control one of the most important oil routes in the Mediterranean. We must also stress that the behavior of Turkey until now with respect to the use of the Straits by the ships of the former USSR cannot be ignored and properly evaluated.¹⁷ Despite recent protests by Turkey for “excessive environmental pollution” in the Straits, caused mainly by some procedural problems in the Russian Confederation,¹⁸ the extortionate repetition of the same procedures on Ankara’s side is a geopolitical ideology which cannot be ignored but by people ignorant of the issue.

The NATO administration of the Aegean space in this case is the best geopolitical counterbalance and geostrategic countermeasure for the naval metropolitan powers. The “gray zones” in the Aegean Sea projected by Turkey and seemingly “tolerated” by Washington belong neither to Greece nor to Turkey; most probably, they will belong to NATO. This point must be studied by Greek foreign policy makers, for it endangers the territorial sovereignty of the country. On the other

16. The following companies are interested in the fields of Kazakhstan: Chevron (USA), British Petroleum, Total (France) and Agip (Italy).

17. The first Soviet aircraft carrier crossed the Straits in 1976: it had been characterized as an anti-submarine equipped only with helicopters. The Soviets had then argued that it was not equipped with the proper equipment for the braking of aircrafts. However, when the Soviet ship was in the open sea, it was upgraded to aircraft carrier which had been used for aircrafts of vertical of small-runway take off. The argument of the Turkish General Staff to the West was that "it would be unfair on the allies' side to ask Turkey to undermine its relations with the USSR because of an aircraft carrier (sic).

18. These problems at least the part that concerns oil transport, can be easily solved through the planned Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline. Besides, this Turkish blackmail aimed at the energy aspect: yet, it had not taken well into account the geographical potential of the region.

hand, the appropriate diplomatic manipulations of Athens may ensure NATO support for Greece, protecting the interests of the western collective security systems in the SE Mediterranean.

Consequently, we conclude that since the Western Collective Security Systems risk losing the geopolitical control of the Straits, the strategic importance of the Aegean space becomes stronger, particularly at the present where the geopolitical “fluidity” in the SE Mediterranean, the Middle East, the Gulf and the Balkans have transformed the Southern Wing of NATO to a preeminently juxtaposition front, marked by changing strategic interdependencies, political and ideological contradictions and broadened defense gaps.

However, the above geostrategic and geopolitical analysis supports our contention that the historical event of the collapse of the Berlin Wall has not affected negatively the geopolitical position of Greece with respect to the Western Collective Security Systems. On the contrary, it has strengthened it. So, we must formulate proposals which would serve as fundamental guidelines for the cohesion and coordination of these advantages for Greek foreign policy.

At this point, it is necessary to stress that the sterile nationalistic views and xenophobia do not offer any solutions, but create the conditions for isolationism which harm the economic role of the country in the Mediterranean, the Balkans and Europe. So, we have to make clear that:

The exploitation of the off-shore oil deposits in the Aegean and the Ionian Sea may proceed in collaboration with Overseas (ARAMCO) and European (B.P.-R.D. SHELL) cartels. However, this must be done honestly and fairly for our country, without delay and with no drum-like noises.

There is however an opposite route of commercial flow for which the above mentioned channel is irreplaceable: this is the route Middle East-Thessaloniki or Middle East-Piraeus or Middle East-Volos, particularly the first option. This route emphasizes the geo-economic role of Cyprus, Crete and Malta. Those are islands situated on the same parallel crossing the Gibraltar Straits, i.e. the 35th parallel.

However, if this commercial route is to offer its services, it must be secured from any possibility for a hot event between the two littoral states, a hot event that would set this route “out of use” while it would endanger the stability of the entire SE Wing of NATO.

3. Which “reformist” institutional status -on the basis of these considerations- could be imposed to the complex of the Aegean-Straits, and how could it transform the new status of Greek sovereign rights?

The formula that seems likely to dominate is that the Aegean Sea tends to be considered as an “International Sea Strait” and not as a “Sea” where both littoral countries have rights.

This means that the Aegean Sea must be ruled by a “special status” which, through “special agreements” will give the right for free crossing to all eventual users. However, we must stress that this international status is much different from that of the “Sea Strait” and the obligatory rules imposed by the state (or states) to which it belongs, as it is the case with Dardanelles.

In the case of “International Sea Strait” a special institutional status is proposed with the participation of many countries. Thus, in case of an eventual Greek-Turkish conflict the intervention of Security Council of the UNO would be absolutely legitimate; the Security Council might authorize the settlement of a multinational (i.e. NATO) force on a certain “green line” which, in a partitioned Aegean, would create all the prerequisites for a “creative distribution of the continental shelf”. This is what some in the Defense Department of the USA seem to believe.

The same people consider that “above all, the dominant role of the UNO in the Aegean Sea would change the today bilateral image and release USA from the responsibility to elaborate and impose a compromise to those two ‘narrow-minded’ competitors”.

According to the same people, these ‘narrow-minded’ competitors are Greece and Turkey. It is rather difficult for me, being a geopolitics analyst of the Realist School, to take for granted the impartiality of the United Nations and, particularly, of the Security Council which -by its structure of five permanent members- violates the very notion of the equal participation of its member-states in the taking of decisions concerning the luck of nations. I must also point out the recent progress concerning the approach between Russia and NATO, which strengthen my doubts about the uncommitted decisions of this international institution.

On the other hand, I agree with Prof. P. Iphestos¹⁹ that the UN. Security Council is an instrument of political character functioning on the basis of hegemonic criteria, which remains inactive when there are no big interests imposing actions on its behalf and the resolutions of which are not impartial. I have also to stress the self-evident truth that it is impossible for a normative system (either international or state system) to be built and survive with such criteria.

I completely agree that a reliable collective security system must first and foremost fulfill the precondition of collectivity, provide security to all participating member-states and effectively deter any threat deriving from those outside this system that tend to disturb the international world order through the use of force.

For a successful function of such a system the following factors are necessary:

(a) the existence of common interests between the nations-states participating in the system; (b) a common perception about external threats between all member-states; (c) the exclusion of hegemonism as a concept for the creation of an international normative system; and (d) the use of its military power for defensive reasons only.

If the above conditions are not fulfilled, particularly in the scenario which we have unfolded, the above security system will be placed under doubt and tossed aside with destructive consequences for peace and stability in this region.

The insistence on what the above circles of the American Department of Defense call “dominant role of the UNO” leads with mathematical accuracy to the decision to transfer competencies to the collective security system called NATO which is a familiar environment to the Anglo-Saxon political concept of the Naval -and consequently Nuclear- Powers.

Of course, it is impossible for the process of transformation of the Aegean Sea to an “International Strait” with “neutral spaces” and “green lines” to start without the previous mediation of a certain factor for the formation of the necessary prerequisites which will lead to the “solution” known as Hot Regulation.

The establishment of a new collective security status in the plexus

19. P. Iphestos, *Η εξωελληνική νοοτροπία και τα αίτιά της: Το ζήτημα του διεθνισμού, πατριωτισμού, εθνικισμού και η εθνική στρατηγική της Ελλάδος* [*The unhellenic mindset and its causes: Internationalism, patriotism, nationalism and Greece's national strategy*], Poiotita, Athens 1997.

Straits-Aegean Sea-Cyprus will probably derive from the July NATO Summit in Madrid where -if everything evolves well for Mr. Solana- a new NATO with new structures, competencies, members and architecture will emerge. The prospects show that an upgrading of the WEU will be decided, *yet always within the framework of NATO*, and the UNO Security Council which will take the essential final decisions. This form is realistically predictable in view of the aforementioned amelioration of the relations between Russia and NATO and other Eastern European countries with NATO.

It seems that the constitution of “Combined Joint Task Forces” is almost certain; these will be multinational forces under the new enlarged NATO Commands in the form of multiple tasks forces. The number of Commands is expected to be reduced with the purpose of abolishing the dominating element of “settlement” and promoting the new concept of mission; in brief, the Responsibility Area will be determined by the kind and magnitude of the crisis to be confronted and by the multinational forces involved. The concept of “geographical distribution” will be limited at the top of the hierarchy and in a large scale.

The international structure is expected to result in two Supreme Commands: one Atlantic Command comprising the USA and Canada and one European Command linked to the former. The final goal is to ensure an inter-Atlantic relation and to preserve the American presence in Europe, which is positive in my opinion.

The two Regional Commands, namely AFNORTH (Allied Forces North) and AFSOUTH (Allied Forces South) will remain under the European Command. The first Combined Joint Task Forces will be constituted within the Framework of these Commands,

Our interest of course is focused on the South Wing: as it seems the AFSOUTH will remain in Naples (Italy) and its area of responsibility will be the region from Spain to Eastern Turkey. The South Wing Commander (CINCSOUTH) will have two Commanders under his authority: the COMNAVSOUTH of the Navy and the COMMAR-SOUTH of the Air Force.

Moreover, there will be new Commands whose areas of responsibility shall be the sub-regions of Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and, probably in the future, of South France. Those sub-regions under CINCSOUTH will have operational responsibility only within the territory of the countries where they are settled. This means that the open seas

and the air space above them will not belong to the Sub-Regions but will be under CINCSOUTH control.

The conclusion is that the Aegean Sea, as an area of responsibility, will not belong to Greece, yet we shall be responsible for the defense of our islands and territorial waters. Naturally, we can understand why some of our NATO allies are annoyed when we refer to the extension of our territorial waters to 12 miles, which will be nothing but the implementation of our legal right.

It is obvious that the notion of the Area of Responsibility in the form of command and control that we know so far and which NATO, based on the Turkish objections, did not let us to acquire is substantially downgraded according to the new architecture. The so-called Task Force Concept will apply to sea operations, which means that NATO forces will dominate in the area of Central Aegean; operational control of the latter will belong to NATO.

Concerning air defense and information exchange (Cross Tel) it is almost certain that the Turks will try to promote the geographical limit to Information Exchange in the middle of the Aegean! If this is accomplished, it will undoubtedly bring about the loss of the Aegean Sea for Greece.

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