

XLVIII. The Geostrategic Axis between Israel, Cyprus and Greece: Turkey's Planning in the Region

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Abstract: Europe's "energy hunger" in the years to come will be such, as to oblige it to seek alternative fuel sources, far beyond the ones currently in use. A solution that presents itself as ideal is the supply of the continent with natural gas from the new reserves of Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey, a country outside this political game, reacts to such a perspective. However, the era does not seem to be favoring it.

Introduction

Based on the figures of the worldwide consumption of energy sources, it is concluded that in 2005, "natural gas covered 23 percent of the total energy consumption and was rated directly below crude oil (37 percent of the total energy consumption on a global level), and carbon (24%)".¹ More specifically, natural gas consumption in the 27 EU member states has reached 471 cu. Gm., a quantity corresponding to 17 percent of the world market.² Its main suppliers during the same year, indeed at an increasing rate of 3% on an annual basis, providing quantities that cover

1. See: <http://www.selectra.info/index.php/Consommation-mondiale-de-gaz-naturel> (downloaded February 9 2012).

2. BP Statistical Review of World Energy, June 2010 [Source: Includes data from Cedigaz].

more than half of consumption worldwide are the Russian Federation, ensuring 1/4 of its total needs by means of the Russian Gazprom, as well as Norway and Algeria. It must be reminded that Russia (23%), Canada (11), Norway (9%) and Algeria (7%) export 50% of their natural gas to international markets. Coming next in terms of supply volumes to the EU are Nigeria, Qatar and Egypt. It should also be noted that Germany (9%), Italy (9%) and France (6%) consume in total 24% of European natural gas imports. This is also a clear explanation of the –incomprehensible for many– official visit of the German Chancellor to Cyprus (on January 11, 2011), and of her fierce declarations against Turkey for its implacableness in resolving the Cyprus issue.

The German Chancellor's interest is further analogous to the active “hot” intervention of French and Italian military forces in Libya, to topple the Ghaddafi regime. However, the fact that by 2020 the energy production in the EU will be less than one third of its needs, while after 2030 it will depend on imports, by 80% approximately, is both important and intensifies the force of this conceptualization of “Western intervention” in the Arab uprising events. There are important remarks to make in this respect: Netherlands will preserve its energy autonomy for several years to come, while the UK, once the largest hydrocarbon producer on a European level, has now become an importer. Also, other important natural gas-consuming EU states, such as Germany, France and Spain, are beginning to show increasing rates of energy dependence.³

Moreover, taking into consideration that in 2009, the international natural gas consumption reached 2.94 trillion cubic metres (cu. Tm), and that the probable reserves that can be technically exploited using current technologies, in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Cyprus are about 3 Tm³ (based on data from BEICIP/FranLAB and the IFP (Institut Français du Pétrole), as well as that an equivalent amount in the order of 2–3 cu. Tm is also considered highly probable in the Greek jurisdiction of the Herodotus basin (not taking into consideration a total of 800 bn. c.m. of Israeli natural gas reserves), it is obvious that only the Greek and Cypriot reserves, in total, almost double the annual worldwide natural gas consumption. Taken together with the Israeli re-

3. See: <http://www.science.gouv.fr/fr/dossiers/bdd/res/2619/quel-avenir-pour-le-...> (downloaded February 9, 2012).

serves, an energy strategic axis between Israel, Greece and Cyprus is more than twice the total international energy natural gas consumption, measured in trillion cubic metres. We should not forget, also, that the EU currently imports almost 83 percent of its total needs in petroleum and 57% of its needs in natural gas and is therefore considered the largest hydrocarbon importer on a global level.

Consequently, on the EU level, it is concluded that these three reserves suffice for the exclusive supply of the EU-27 for 20 years approximately, and for 200 years approximately, only if Libya contributes partially with its natural gas reserves in this supply. This situation, of EU's dependence on states of the Arab-Muslim world, that are in an extremely sensible political and geostrategic transition (Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia) and on states such as Russia, with its high level of geostrategic antagonism with the London-Washington dipole, forces the Western world and the Anglo-Saxon countries to turn their eyes on the particularly promising reserves of Cyprus, Greece and Israel.

I. The US and Russia in the new energy complex of SE Mediterranean

The zone of the Arctic circle, owing to the geo-climatic change and the ever- accelerating melting of the icebergs, is gradually becoming a new alternative axis for the movement of Russian products, which further provides the shortest routes, both geographically and temporally.

This fact releases Russia from the "slavery of the Rimland", in N.J. Spykman's⁴ terming, which had obstructed it from serving its trade, by exiting into the "hot waters" of the Mediterranean. Now, Russia is free, in terms of trade routes, and will be increasingly free in the future. Based on this assumption, it is clear that Turkey does not have any more its old strategic importance for the London-Washington "Special Relationship" and, naturally, also for NATO, as part of this embankment (Rimland) against Russia's south-bound tendencies and aspirations. This means

4. See: I.Th. Mazis (ed.), Nicholas J. Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace* [1943], GEOLAB-Papazissis, Athens 2003.

that Turkey is forced to invent, to create and to claim a new “geopolitical uniqueness” that will be able to provide it with a corresponding “geostrategic uniqueness”. In this context, Turkey has invented neo-Ottomanism, in its effort to subjugate the Arab-Muslim world, as well as the Iranian and Muslim Shiite world. This is, in its view, the only way to emerge as the “indispensable” ally of the Special Relationship in the future, in the hope that it will become the new hegemonic power of the oil and natural gas regions of the Middle East. Consequently, if this were to happen, Turkey would surface as the leader in the control of hydrocarbons in the greater region and, hence, as an international hegemonic power.

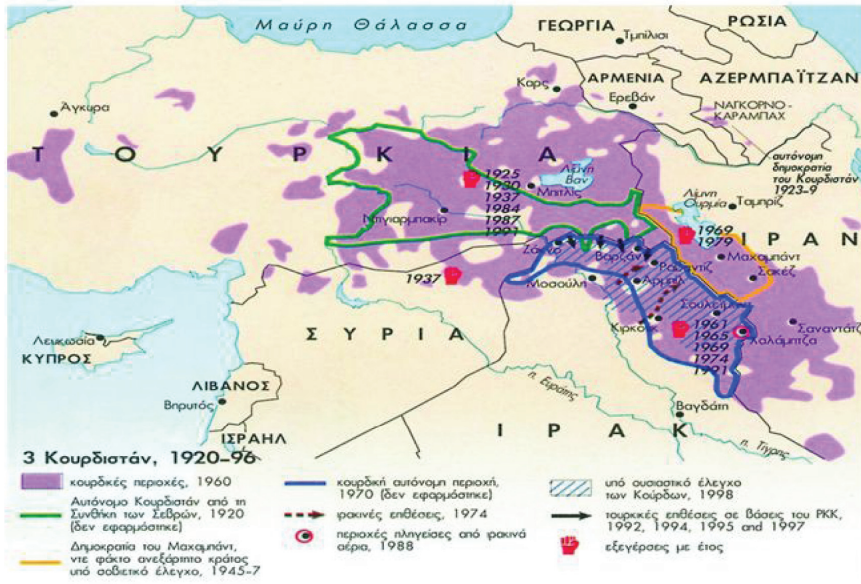
However, Russia does not seem willing to allow the elimination of certain counterweights, such as the collapse of the Ba’ath from the political scenery of New Syria, even if it concedes, eventually, to the removal from power of Bashar al-Assad. Moreover, this cannot be considered a positive eventuality, from the Israeli perspective: a pluralist political spectrum in Syria would be to the benefit of democratic processes, but it would also hinder the autocracy of the Muslim Brotherhood in Damascus.

This situation allows Jerusalem to have secular interlocutors in Syria, even if the latter do not agree in principle with Israel’s foreign policy. Besides a pluralist political scenery in Syria, acting as counterweight to the power of the rising Muslim Brotherhood, is not a negative perspective, even for the balance in the region.

Consequently, assuming the broken relations between Damascus and Ankara and the, now overt, role of the Turkish MIT in favor of the toppling of President Assad, Cyprus must maintain the balances and a background of friendly relations with the secular policy in this flank of the Syrian political spectrum. This is because, the Syrian territory is becoming a field of antagonism between the Iranian and the Turkish secret services, with the support of Turkey and the expressed malaise of Assad, and with the grim look of Moscow, which is not willing to see the overturning of balances in the region, to its detriment and with the concomitant reinforcement of the Islamist movement in its periphery.

Consequently, the Republic of Cyprus must prove particularly cautious with regard to the manipulation of Russia’s vital interests, i.e. of a country with an increasing projection of power in the region of the SE Mediterranean.

ΧΑΡΤΗΣ 1



Κατανομή κουρδικών πληθυσμών και τα κατά καιρούς ιδρυθέντα και μη ισχύσαντα κουρδικά κράτη.

Map 1: Distribution of Kurdish populations and demarcation of the, never applied, Kurdish states

This is because, the Russian concerns are aligned with the increasing fear of Syrian Kurdish populations vis-à-vis the eventual dominance of the Muslim Brotherhood in New Syria. It is an overt fear, that is fully shared also by Moscow, even China, as well as Washington and Jerusalem (see Map 1), that these populations (almost 2.5 million) live in areas that are geographically adjacent to the Iraqi Kurdistan, a de facto integrated state, with a parliament consisting of 111 MPs, with a flag, a national army, police forces and a national judiciary, under US protection.

Therefore, the rhetorical question posed is how the government of Iraqi Kurdistan will react to the wave of immigrants that will result towards its territories, from the Syrian side, in the eventual domination of an Islamist government of the Muslim Brothers in Damascus. Will the reaction come with an announcement of the integration of their (Syrian) soils in the soils of Iraqi Kurdistan? Or possibly, with a policy of

open frontiers towards the Syrian Kurdish region? This, however, would not fatally end up in the unification of the two Kurdish regions into one state? Of course, if this were to happen under US control and security guarantees, it would not be possible for other kinds of objections and refusals to be expressed by Ankara's Islamist government. The latter can by no means claim that it will constitute the guarantor of the rights and political freedoms of these Kurdish populations. Its "penal records" are burdened in this respect. Moreover, there can be no rationality on the part of Washington in sacrificing a loyal ally and the only island of stability it has in this fragile region, simply to satisfy the pro-Iranian Islamist of Ankara. Therefore, committing the same mistake twice would be a consecration sin for the US policy in the region.

Moreover, the recent bloodless withdrawal of the American forces from Iraq suggests a deliberation between Washington and the Shiites in the Iraqi South, so as not to disturb the US forces during their withdrawal from the Iraqi soil. This was made possible by "ceding influence" to the Arab-Shiite element of S. Iraq, an area under the leadership of Ayatollah Sistani, an Iranian national, in which "Mahdi's Army" (Jaish al Mahdi) is active, providing a strong armed Shiite civil guard. Indeed, considering that 62 percent of the Iraqi population is Shiites, it is evident that the Iranian influences in the new Iraq would be important, even absolute, in addition to the already formed Iraqi Kurdistan.

This "quasi-state" may eventually become the future firewall protecting against Iran's power projection effort on Iraq's Arab Shiites. In other words, it will play an essential role of security and stability in the region, for the strategic planning of Washington. This would in turn imply that, on the one hand, Turkey's aspirations for the projection of power on Iraqi territory are significantly limited, as long as the position of the Kurdish population concentrations in the region is reinforced. Consequently, Ankara is still framed in a strategic dilemma, since it pursues its diplomatic "pirouettes" in its relations between Damascus and Tehran. Under these circumstances, the dynamics of the US power projection and strategic manipulations in the region are crystallized in the axis defined by Israel, Cyprus, Crete, Malta and Gibraltar.

II. Turkish plans against Cyprus

Turkey, however, expresses discontent also with regard to the forthcoming Cypriot presidency of the EU, and for this very reason, it tries to involve the UN presidency also in this case. It does so, by means of Mr. Alexander Downer, the Australian mediator and a person clearly controversial in terms of his good judgment.

The author belongs to the group of the “late” and many, lately, supporters of the co-operation among Greece, Cyprus and Israel, and continues to sustain, for the last twenty years approximately, that the strategic co-operation of Greece, Cyprus and Israel must be completed also in the fields of energy and defence, as well as in the field of ensuring stability and security in the greater basin of the Mediterranean. This is so, because Greece’s European dimension, which is concomitantly also NATO’s dimension, and the European dimension of Cyprus and Israel’s dimension of international diplomatic influence are the optimum security guarantees, in a region shaken by the instability of the recent “Arab Spring”, which is evolving into an “Islamic Autumn” and, my fear is that it is rapidly moving towards an “Islamist Winter”.

This “Islamist Winter” may become extremely negative in the progress of the Cyprus issue, as is apparent in the statements by the Turk analyst Erol Kaymak, who is cited also by the English-language “Cyprus Mail” newspaper. The Turk analyst holds that the Turkish-Cypriot leaders, allegedly fearing a “failure of the negotiations”, hope and promote the following agreement: the re-cognition of the self-declared and never recognized, practically non-existent “Republic of Northern Cyprus” by the Arab countries of the region, in exchange for Turkey’s support in the Palestinian issue.⁵ It is well-known that these countries are also members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and of the Arab League and have already recognized that state, in the context of their Organisation, under the name “Turkish Cypriot State”. It is “recognition” decided with the positive vote of the Palestinians, whose independent Palestinian Authority has already been

5. See: <http://actualite.portail.free.fr/france/06-02-2012/chypre-turquie-gare-a-l-explosion> (downloaded February 9, 2012).

recognized in the context of the OIC, under the name “Palestinian State”.⁶

It was clear, and the author had stressed the fact, that the Palestinian hopes and aspirations for a self-determination would be exploited for reasons of self-interest and aggression towards Greece and Cyprus. This was evident already during the operation of the Islamist IHH in the first “flotilla” led by “Mavi Marmara” towards the Gaza Strip. The author’s views, expressed already in May, 2011, were fully justified, approximately one year later, by the so-called Palmer Report⁷, a text that has overwhelmed Turkey and caused an outburst of indignation in Ankara, as happens every time that Israel reveals Turkey’s empty threats or claims. This report emphatically annuls the aspirations of the Islamist Turkey, to act in a “regime of support of international legality and of humanism” in the Middle East and in the waters of SE Mediterranean, which are full of natural gas and methane hydrate resources, so as to obtain, inexpensively and in a cover of justice, the lion’s share of morality and legality, and the approval of the Arab-Muslim world, and even of the West.

Neo-Caliphate Ankara is fully aware that, if the axis of transport of hydro-carbons between Israel, Cyprus, Crete, the Ionian Sea,⁸ and Europe ultimately functions, all its ambitions will fail (See Maps 2 and 3, and the combination of their routings included in the axis: Israel, Cyprus, Crete, Ionian Sea, EU). These ambitions are:

- to blackmail the economy and politics of the West, by means of the ITGI natural gas pipeline, and by means of the Nabucco pipeline that may alternatively be built; and
- to co-operate with Russia in the domain of natural gas transport from Samsun in the Gulf of Cilicia, so as to influence Lebanon

6. See: I. Th. Mazis, «The Organisation of the Islamic Conference, Turkey and the ‘inalienable rights’ of Hellenism», *Epikaira* 35 (2010), 80-83 (in Greek).

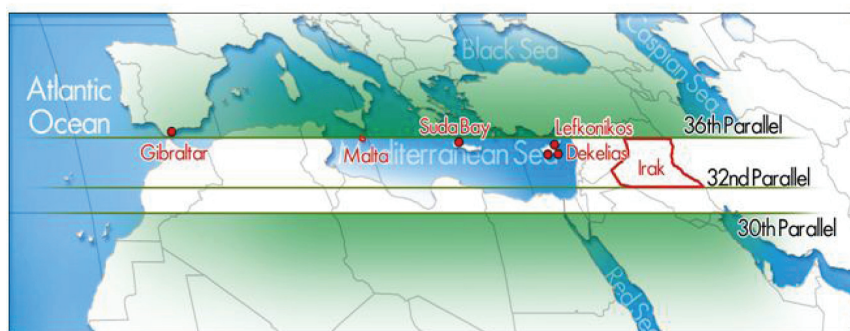
7. See: “Report of the Secretary-General’s Panel of Inquiry on the 31 May 2010 Flotilla Incident, July 2011 [Strictly Confidential] (Sir Geoffrey Palmer, Chair: President Alvaro Uribe, Vice-Chair: Mr. Joseph Ciechanover Itzhar, Mr. Süleyman Özdem Sanberk).

8. N.B.: As had been suggested by the author in: I. Th. Mazis, *Geopolitical Approach to a New National Defence Doctrine*, Papazissis, Athens 2006, 47 (in Greek).

and Syria, as well as principally Israel, in an analogous manner.

However, the Israel-Cyprus-Crete-Ionian Sea-EU axis, already in 2014, will have a transportation capacity of nearly 1 trillion cubic metres of natural gas to the energy-intensive European economy and, moreover, in a period of economic crisis. Additionally, within the next 8 years, its capacity will be multiplied by a factor of 6. This would mark a complete disengagement of the West from the Arab-Muslim hydrocarbons, as well as also from the Russian ones –in other words, complete obsolescence of the routes that Ankara aspires to control. However, the control of these routes by an Islamist Turkey, is not in the interests of the US and Israel, because it exposes them to the blackmails of a neo-Ottoman Ankara, with extremely dangerous “friendships and cooperations” in the region.

ΧΑΡΤΗΣ 2



Ζώνη αγγλοσαξονικού ενδιαφέροντος επάρκειας μεταξύ 36ου και 32ου παραλλήλου στο εσωτερικό του οποίου δύναται να αναπτυχθεί ασφαλώς ο άξονας μεταφοράς υδρογονανθράκων Ισραήλ-Κύπρος-Κρήτη. Πηγή και Πρωτογενής Χαρτογράφηση: Ι. Θ. Μάζης, Γεωπολιτική προσέγγιση για ένα Νέο Εθνικό Αμυντικό Δόγμα, Παπαζήσης, 2006, σ. 47

Map 2: Zone of Anglo-Saxon influence, between the 36th and the 32nd parallel, within which the hydrocarbon transportation axis between Israel, Cyprus and Crete can develop

[Source: I. Th. Mazis, *Geopolitical Approach to a New National Defence Doctrine*, Papazissis, Athens 2006, 47 (in Greek)]

ΧΑΡΤΗΣ 3



Συνδυασμός των Αξόνων Αγγλοσαξωνικής επιρροής για την μεταφορά υδρογονανθράκων προς την ΕΕ.
ΠΗΓΗ: Ι. Θ. Μάζης, Γεωπολιτική προσέγγιση για ένα νέο Εθνικό Αμυντικό Δόγμα, Παράρτημα, 2006, σ.48

Map 3: Combination of the axes of geopolitical influence for transfer of hydrocarbons to the EU

[Source: I. Th. Mazis, *Geopolitical Approach to a New National Defence Doctrine*, Papazissis, Athens 2006, 48 (in Greek)]

Also, Ankara considers that it is only with its increased status that it can persuasively claim its loot from the oil and natural gas deposits of New Libya, as well as conclude agreements with Egypt on the common limits of the EEZs of the two countries, without reference to the EEZ of Kastellorizo. This effort is facilitated by Greece's negligence.

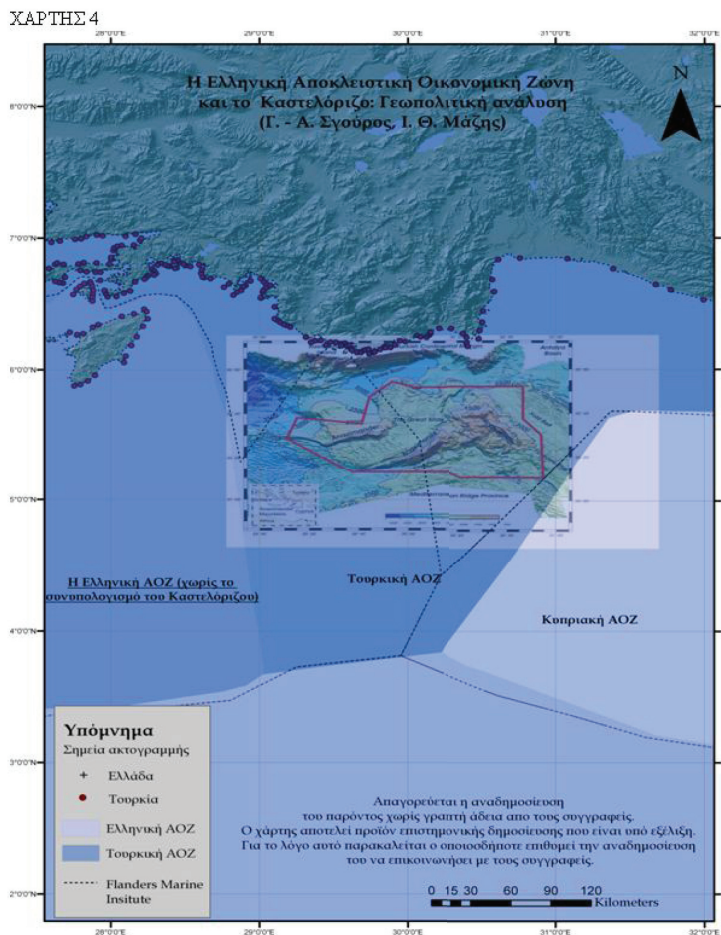
It is well-known that Turkey does not recognize a right of an EEZ, or of a continental shelf, for Kastellorizo and, in this sense, it proceeds to cessions to TPAO (the Turkish Oil Corporation), in its usual self-serving attitude. Also, it is obvious that Ankara is fully aware of the existence of methane hydrate de-posits in the area of the underwater mountain ranges of Anaximander, Anaximenes and Anaxagoras. It is also obvious that by unlawfully “eliminating” from the map of the EEZ of islands Megisti (Kastellorizo), Strongyli and Ro, Turkey's EEZ extends up to the Egyptian EEZ and is tangential to it, at a breadth of 140 km, approximately (see Map 4).

The first geographical remark on Map 4 is that the underwater mountains of Anaximander, Anaximenes and Anaxagoras, which are rich in methane hydrate deposits,⁹ are subject, according to the Turkish view, entirely to “Turkish jurisdiction”. This geometrical demarcation on the basis of arbitrary planning, considering also the relevant statements of the Turkish side, that it will not allow Israel to use the Turkish EEZ for transporting its hydrocarbons (either using a pipeline, or in the form of LNG), causes a metaphorical suffocation for Israel and is a factor or intolerable blackmail, given that Egypt’s EEZ is located on the South, and that the future relations with Egypt are latent, in the eyes of Jerusalem. It is therefore clear that the only geopolitical actor in the region, the one that can reverse the metaphorical suffocation of the Israeli state, is the Greece–Cyprus dipole, with a common boundary in their Exclusive Economic Zones.

This case is practically the only one suggested by the 1982 UNCLOS,¹⁰ as set forth in Articles 55 and 56 thereof.

9. Mazis, Ioannis Th. & Sgouros, George, «Geographical Distribution of Methane Hydrates and International Geopolitics of Energy: The Resources in Eastern Mediterranean», *Civitas Gentium* 1:1 (2011), 33-40.

10. The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) includes, among others, clear definitions of the Territorial Sea, of the Contiguous Zone, and of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which was concluded in 1982 in Montego Bay, Jamaica, and entered into force on November 16, 1994, has substituted four older international agreements. During a vote on the new convention held on April 30, 1982 in New York, 130 countries voted for it, 4 countries voted against, and 17 abstained. Turkey was among the countries that voted against the Convention. By the end of 2008, 157 countries had ratified the Convention, including Cyprus (December 12, 1988) and Greece (July 21, 1995).



Η κατανομή υδριτών μεθανίων ανά ΑΟΖ χωρίς το Καστελόριζο. (Έγινε γεωαναφορά και υπέρθεση χάρτη οροσειρών Αναξიმάνδρου, Αναξίμενου και Αναξαγόρου που περιλαμβάνεται σε: Lycoussis et al., 2009).

Πηγή και Πρωτογενής Χερτογράφηση: Γ. - Α. Σγούρος & Γ. Θ. Μάζης

Map 4: The distribution of methane hydrates, per EEZ, without Kastellorizo (Geo-reference and map overlaying has been effected for the mountain ranges of Anaximander, Anaximenes and Anaxagoras, included in: Lycoussis et al., 2009).

However, in relation to the continental shelf, the formulations are straightforward and are indeed reinforced by the 1982 Montego Bay Convention. Turkey insists on ignoring all these facts, so as to achieve its aim, by blackmailing Israel, up to the point of suffocation, in order to gain the confidence of the Arab- and Iranian-Muslim world, to

achieve the recognition of the pseudo-state in the occupied Northern Cyprus, to proceed to the Turkification of the free Southern part of the island, and by controlling the entire island, to dominate over most part of the deposits of the basin of Levant and Herodotus. This means that it would control 5 cu. Tm of natural gas. Following this, the “Greek issue” will be a very simple one for Turkey. Turkey’s calculations are not safeguarded. There is a multitude of interests in the region: American, Kurdish, Iranian, Syrian, and of course, Israeli interests.

III. Multiplier of diplomatic power

Moreover, the aspiration of the Turks involves significant theoretical and practical problems in its perception. More specifically:

- Why would Saudi Arabia (a country controlling the holy places of Is-lam, Mecca and Medina, and in the subsoil of which the largest and most important, internationally, oil reserves are to be found, i.e. approximately 40 percent of the world’s crude oil¹¹ cede the hegemony of the Arab-Muslim world to a non-Arab state, which further-more does not have any theological or economic precedence?
- Why would the Arab-Muslim world accept to become the puppet of the “Turk destroyers of the historical Caliphate”?
- Why would Iran, i.e. the Shiite, religious and political centre of the Greater Middle East, cede such a type of hegemony to the “Sunnites of Ankara”? This is even more so, considering that its hydrocarbon re-serves are approximately 137.6 Gbbl, in other words it ranks fourth on a global level, in terms of proven crude oil reserves and that, its natural gas deposits are in the range of 1,045.7 trillion cubic feet, or 29.61 trillion cubic metres (i.e. approximately 15.8 percent of the international natural gas reserves). Consequently, it is the world’s second largest holder of natural gas reserves, below Russia.
- Why would a Turkish supremacy would be accepted by Cairo, the renowned hearth of the Arab Caliphate with the Arab Fatimid Caliphs from 909 to 1171 and the Abbasid Caliphs from 1261 to 1517, i.e. a total of 518

11. N.B.: in the order of 267 Gbbl [billion barrels], including 2.5 Gbbl in the subsoil of the Saudi-Kuwaiti Neutral Zone.

years, given that the Ottoman dynasty held this seat for one hundred years less, and all the Arab historians still mourn for the year 1517, when the Caliphate was in their opinion toppled, when the last Abbasid Caliph in Cairo was forced to surrender his authority to the Ottoman Turk Selim I?

• And, if Ankara has lately remembered the Islamic government and the Caliphate,¹² what would the Egyptian Muslim Brothers have to say, i.e. the open supporters and first theoreticians in the modern history of this institution, as well as creators of the international Islamist movement in 1928, in Ismailia of Egypt, under the rule of Hasan al-Banna? This holds particularly true today, when the power of their Brotherhood is strongly expressed in the post-Mubarak Egypt.

Of course, the relations between Israel and the Republic of Cyprus were reinforced also by the visit of the Israeli PM Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu on February 16, 2011, i.e. the first visit of an Israeli prime minister in Cyprus, and indeed a very successful one.¹³

Considering all of the above, it should be noted that the Western world, including the US in particular, would see the elimination of the dependence of their energy-intensive industry from the Arab-Muslim and Iranian hydrocarbons. A perfect example in this respect is the recent decision (January 4, 2012) of the EU and the US for an embargo on the imports of Iranian hydrocarbon products by the West. The strategic importance of an already functioning natural gas transportation corridor to Europe, under these circumstances, is more than obvious.

This is precisely where the construction of a natural gas transportation axis to Europe would contribute, starting from Israel and ending into the Italian ports, by extending across the Republic of Cyprus, Crete and the Ionian Sea. This axis would avoid any involvement of the Arab-Muslim element, as well as any involvement of Turkey, that would be an extreme disturbance for Israel and the US, particularly during this period, and because of the very tense Turkish-Israeli relations and the controversial stance of Ankara in its relations with Tehran, following the imposition of the embargo on Iran's nuclear programme.

12. See: Kyriakos Nikolaou-Patragas, *Caliphate and Islamic Governance*, Herodotus, Athens 2011 (in Greek).

13. See: <http://actualite.portail.free.fr/france/06-02-2012/chypre-turquie-gare-a...> (downloaded February 9, 2012).

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