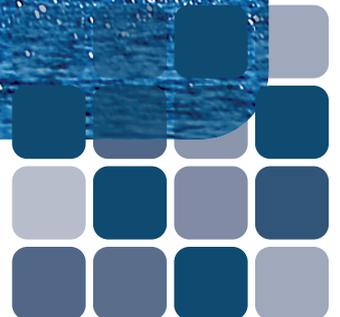


ENERGY CONFLICT AND COOPERATION IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN



ASSOC. PROF. DR. İSMAIL ŞAHİN





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Abbreviations List

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| BHP | : Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha |
| ECHR | : European Court of Human Rights |
| EEZ | : Exclusive Economic Zone |
| EU | : European Union |
| GCASC | : Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus |
| ICJ | : International Court of Justice |
| IEA | : International Energy Agency |
| MFA | : Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Turkey) |
| MTA | : Mineral Research and Exploration |
| OECD | : Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OIC | : Organization of the Islamic Conference |
| RG | : <i>Resmî Gazete (Official Gazette)</i> |
| TANAP | : Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline Project |
| TBMM | : Grand National Assembly of Turkey |
| TPAO | : Turkish Petroleum International Company Ltd |
| TRNC | : Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus |
| TRNC MFA | : Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| UN | : United Nations |
| UNCLOS | : United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea |

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Introduction

Turkey has a strategically valuable position between the energy-producing countries and energy consuming countries. From this perspective, the geography where Turkey is positioned is very precious in terms of energy geopolitics. This position offers the opportunity to safely transport the Caspian, Russian and Middle Eastern energy resources to the world markets via Turkey. For today, when energy security is carefully discussed, sustainable and stable energy supply has become important for developed and developing countries. Thus, Turkey has begun to focus on energy projects. That Turkey implements its energy projects will, on the one hand, lay the groundwork for the transformation of the country into an energy commercial center, and, on the other, contribute to the region's energy security.

When we look at the historical process, it is seen that energy sources based on fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas have an undeniable effect on the course of international relations. Population growth and developing economies have increased the demand and dependency of countries upon energy. This increase in energy demand has naturally brought about the international competition for energy resources. The competition at the same time has directed countries towards high-scale and costly energy investments to meet their energy needs.

In this context, according to the data of International Energy Agency, it is estimated that a total of 66.5 trillion dollars will be invested in the energy sector on a global scale between 2016 and 2040.¹ With the transformation of economy into a very tight structure bound to energy, the easy access to energy resources such as oil and gas has taken its place among the sine qua non of the international economy. For this reason, in addition to the fact that oil and natural gas are considered as strategic assets with the high value associated with production, finance and credit systems, they are also regarded as a national security problem. Furthermore, the direct proportion between economic growth and energy

demand increases the demand of the countries for dollar and thus, ensures that the dollar maintains its international power.

In addition to revealing the political power of oil, the 1973 and 1979 oil crises can be asserted to cause that the energy security has risen through ranks in diplomatic rhetoric of the oil importing countries and become one of the most significant elements. The rift between energy production and consumption prompts energy importing countries to rapidly become dependent on foreign resources. This encourages countries with adequate technological and financial infrastructure to develop renewable and sustainable non-fossil resources (nuclear, solar and wind). Despite all attempts and efforts towards alternative energy sources, indicators based on research indicate that by 2050 fossil fuels will remain the dominant power in energy supply.

In the Cold War era, the international policy was largely focused on security, disagreement, and conflict. However, whereas economic and political developments such as the “nationalization” efforts that took place in the oil-producing countries in the later years of the Cold War period, the establishment of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the weakening of the Bretton Woods institutions, the collapse of the international monetary system, the oil crisis and the introduction of the economy to stagflation led to the pushing of the classic security issues aside, they later on let the relationship between politics and economy come to the forefront. In other words, the political and economic developments that emerged in the 1970s revealed and reinforced the idea that “there is no wall separating politics and economy through strict borders; there are no pure markets which are not affected by political events and that exist in their own borders”.

In this process, the transformation of oil into a political weapon put a new role on energy security in the determination of the direction of international relations and diplomacy by starting to necessitate the discussions on energy supply

security in oil-dependent Western countries. In comparative terms, while there was a struggle among powers to dominate, have privilege over and, at least, to be close to initially the coal, and then the oil fields, as of the 1970s, this struggle was largely replaced by the rivalry between oil producers and oil consumer countries. For example; the International Energy Agency (IEA), established by consumer countries against OPEC, is very striking in this regard. US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, in a speech he gave on the First Oil Crisis, on December 12, 1973, recommended that an “international energy working group” should be organized in order to overcome the energy crisis and develop new energy technologies.

Following this proposal, the “Washington Energy Conference” was held on 11-13 February 1974, as a result of Kissinger’s initiative, with the participation of ministers of 13 petroleum consumers and top executives of the Organization of Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD). The main theme of the conference was the comprehensive struggle with the energy crisis, as might be expected. This conference was followed by the activities of the Energy Co-ordination Group, which met in Brussels between March 1974 and November 1974. All these initiatives yielded results with the establishment of the International Energy Agency (IEA) on November 18, 1974. 17 oil-consuming countries including Turkey agreed to cooperate and to act collectively in ensuring the security of oil supply.

As can be seen, the process exacerbated by the Petroleum Crisis led oil producing and consuming countries to an organizational behavior and thus brought about a change in the size of energy diplomacy. It can even be argued that; the scope of the overall foreign policy strategies of the countries has significantly included the energy supply security to the extent that it can serve the long-term objectives that necessitated continuity. Nevertheless, in spite of everything, this sentence should be interpreted in such a way as not to prevent the struggle among states

to dominate the energy resources since the Industrial Revolution.

Within the scope of this study, maritime jurisdiction areas limitation conflicts, natural gas and oil exploration activities, energy-based Cyprus question and the approaches of regional and global actors to the conflicts that have been occurring in the Eastern Mediterranean Basin and affecting Turkey since the early 2000s are analyzed.

1. Importance of Energy Resources and Turkey

The fact that energy is a vital raw material makes energy security an important agenda item for states. In spite of all diversification efforts, the ongoing energy dependency has led states to attach more significance to energy diplomacy than ever before. Energy dependency can, therefore, be described as an irreversible way. The international strategic benefits in the form of economic, military and political competitive advantages that are provided by safe and inexpensive energy enable states to lean to energy security without hesitation.

In the background of the coal and then the oil’s becoming the “symbol of supremacy and mastery”² before the First World War lays the fact that the energy has the power to influence human life in a multifaceted way. Stating that in international politics it would not be enough to focus solely on energy, Henry Kissinger also saluted its tremendous power. According to Kissinger, there are three important factors in international politics that cannot be neglected: Food, energy and money ... Kissinger, who also served as US Secretary of State (1973–1977) and US National Security Advisor (1969–1975), expressed the role he assumed on energy as follows: “Those who control energy supply can control all of the continents.”³ It is seen that this strong emphasis on energy continues today with all its vitality.

Today, all international actors acknowledge that energy supply and security are undeniably

crucial forces. In establishing superiority and domination in international relations, changing the balance of power in its favor; energy-related titles such as “energy resources”, “energy transmission lines” and “energy concessions” continue to be important.

The majestic importance of fossil fuels (oil, natural gas and coal) in the industry will continue to exist until a substitute source is found. As a natural consequence of this, the lobbying activities in the energy sector that affect the energy policy of the decision makers in foreign policy will continue to be significant. While lobbying activities in particular in this direction manifest their impacts upon production, distribution and trade, public relations experts, law firms, think tanks and trade associations try to influence political decision-makers in various ways. As of the day when the horses and coal-powered machines were replaced by oil-powered vehicles, oil has increased its importance in the industry and turned into an “irreplaceable source of energy for which the countries are to wage wars against one another”. Petroleum and natural gas are regarded as a “vital product”, which is the main element of global and regional competition and conflict. The spread of oil and natural gas from agriculture to pharmacy through chemical industry has increased the dependence of modern men on these two hydrocarbons.

In this context, Daniel Yergin’s saying “we must not forget that if the world’s oil wells suddenly dry out, this civilization, which we call contemporary, cannot survive for a day and is doomed to collapse”⁴ is noteworthy in terms of framing the dependence. Although serious objections and actions have been taken in the context of environmental problems, climate change and global warming, regarding the consumption of fossil fuels, that US President Trump announced the American withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement for economic reasons on June 1, 2017, stands out as a serious event that indicates that the model of production and consumption based on fossil fuels will not disappear in the short term. Indeed, at the joint

press conference with Norwegian Prime Minister Era Solberg at the White House, President Trump said, “the Paris Agreement includes unfair articles against the United States. We have a country rich in gas, coal and oil resources. The agreement envisages severe penalties to use them”⁵ and revealed that the fossil fuels will maintain their significance in the near future.

Energy is one of the most important inputs in order to achieve the goals of economic development, sustainable growth, industrialization and improvement of living standards. Research by international organizations shows that there will be a significant increase in global energy need in the coming years and therefore an explosion in energy demand. In its “2018 Outlook for Energy: A View to 2040”⁶ report, Exxon Mobil discusses possible energy scenarios up to 2040, indicating that global energy needs will increase by 25 percent with the impact of non-OECD countries. According to the report, a growth of 80 percent will occur in the global middle class in this process. It is foreseen that improvements in living standards (such as more people having personal vehicles, air conditioners, etc., development of natural gas infrastructure and urban infrastructure works) will result in a significant increase in energy consumption.

The report also attaches a key role in natural gas. In the report, it is mentioned that natural gas will turn into a multifaceted energy source in the future due to the wide usage area in heating and the efficiency and convenience it provides in electricity production.⁷ Predicting the global natural gas demand will grow by approximately 40 percent from 2016 to 2040, the report asserts that the trade of natural gas would take a fragile form due to increasing demand. Finally, another remarkable point in the report is that China and India will have a share of 45 percent in global energy demand.⁸ In the end, this and similar reports suggest that in 2040 natural gas will account for about a quarter of global energy demand. Today, the share of natural gas in the world energy consumption sources is around 20 percent.

1.1. Turkey's Energy Security

Turkey is a country situated between the producer region which has the three-quarters of the proven oil and gas reserves and the consumer markets in Europe. In addition to this strategic position, Turkey's growing economic structure and rising income level increase the country's energy needs. For a country that is 72% dependent on foreign energy, this situation presents a very difficult picture. In a period when the "energy equals economy" equation prevails, reducing energy dependency for energy-importing countries is becoming the primary policy. Reaching the most rapid energy demand growth in the last 10 years among OECD countries, Turkey is dependent on foreign natural gas, oil and coal resources in the ratio of 98, 92, and 50 respectively, and thus, the primary goal of the country is to ensure energy supply security.

In this context, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated to the Reuters News Agency during the United Nations General Assembly on September 25, 2018 on US sanctions, which include oil and natural gas for Iran and will start on November 4 that "If I don't buy natural gas, what am I going to heat my people with? We buy 50% of the natural gas consumed by my country from Russia. We take the rest from Iran (...) Am I supposed to make my people feel cold in the winter by not buying this gas?". This statement is a remarkable expression in understanding Turkey's sensitivity towards energy supply security. The strategies Turkey cares about with a view to strengthening and empowering the energy supply security can be listed as follows:⁹

- Resource diversification in oil and gas supply,
- Establishing alternative routes to oil and gas supply,
- Investing in renewable energy resources that can minimize energy dependency,
- Strengthening technological infrastructure that will increase energy efficiency and savings,

- Developing sustainable habits that raise awareness of energy saving in the country,
- Focusing on alternative energy investments that will diversify the energy basket.

Except those mentioned above, another strategy to be followed in Turkey is to transform Turkey into an energy trading center. With the realization of such a project, a significant contribution will be made to Europe's energy supply security and the energy factor in diplomacy will be strengthened. In short, for Turkey to maintain its economic progress in an uninterrupted manner and to reach its economic targets, it must give importance to the energy supply security more than ever before. In this regard, from production to consumption and distribution, every point of energy needs to be approached with precision. On the other hand, renewable energy projects that will reduce import dependency should not be neglected.

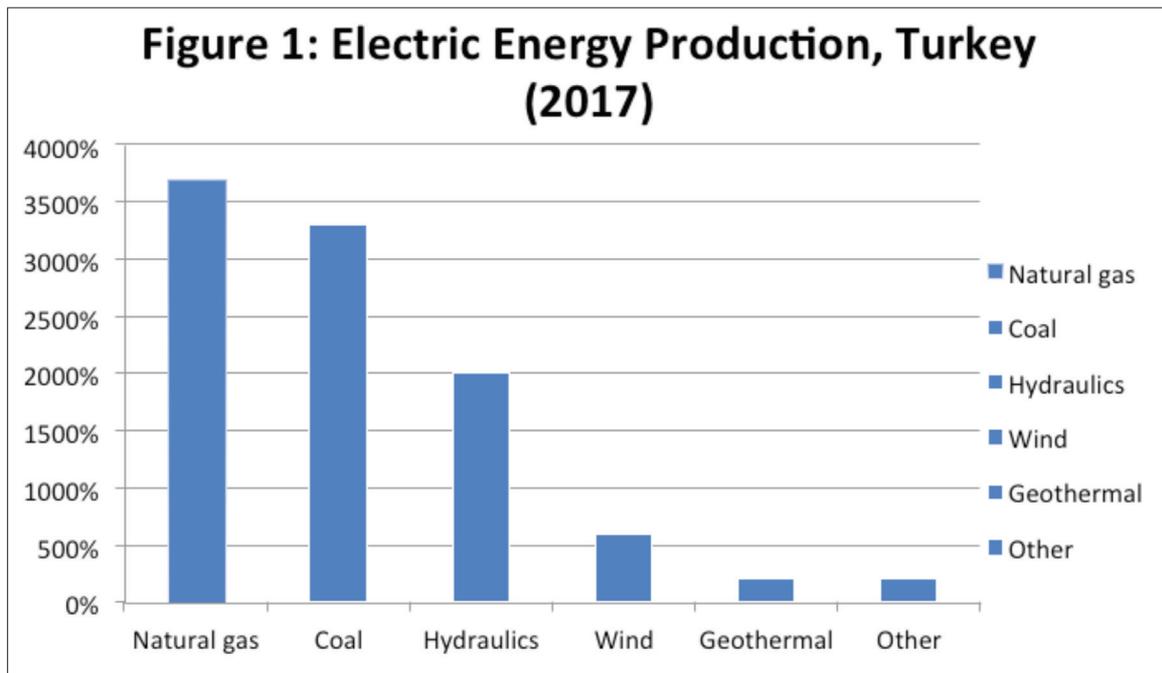
Turkey is a country situated between the producer region which has the three-quarters of the proven oil and gas reserves and the consumer markets in Europe.

For Turkey, energy imports are not an issue only discussed only in the context of energy supply security. There is also an aspect that concerns the economy. When the figures are analyzed, it is seen that energy import brings a heavy burden to the foreign trade balance of the country. Turkey has spent a total of 527.8 billion dollars for energy imports in the period between the years 2005-2017. Within this period, the share of energy in total imports is about one fifth.¹⁰ Therefore, the burden of foreign dependency on energy is quite severe. Therefore, Turkey has accelerated oil and gas exploration and drilling activities within national borders as well as the said measures. To this end, two seismic exploration

ships (Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha and Oruç Reis) and one drilling ship (Fatih) joined the inventory.¹¹

As seen in Figure 1 Turkey met its electricity demand in 2017 from natural gas (37%), coal (33%), hydroelectric (20%), the wind (6%), geothermal (2%) and other energy sources (2%).¹²

are aiming to deliver these resources to international markets safely. Here in this context, Turkey has a strategic location which has the potential to link importing countries with exporting countries. A successful energy diplomacy that Ankara could carry out would ensure Turkey to take advantage of this position, and this could turn the country into an energy and trade base. On the



Source: Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources

As will be easily understood from the graph, reducing dependence on foreign energy resources, increasing the resources diversification and enhancing the use of local energy resources at a maximum level among the issues that Turkey has to overcome.

Turkey is geographically located on the passing route of energy sources. To protect energy supply security against all threats and dangers, to ensure energy diversity and to turn to renewable energy sources have become the main energy policy of energy-dependent states. On the other hand, energy exporting countries

other hand, the dependence of European countries on Russian gas has been intensively discussed since the Ukrainian Crisis. The data of Gazprom and European gas producers in 2016 show that Russia has more than one-third of Europe's gas market. A similar situation also applies to Turkey. Turkey is the second largest country after Germany that buys Russian gas. The uneasiness created by dependence on a single country in energy supply can lead to serious concerns at a time when energy is seen as a potential weapon. That's why European countries and Turkey are looking for ways to get rid of Russia's energy dominance.

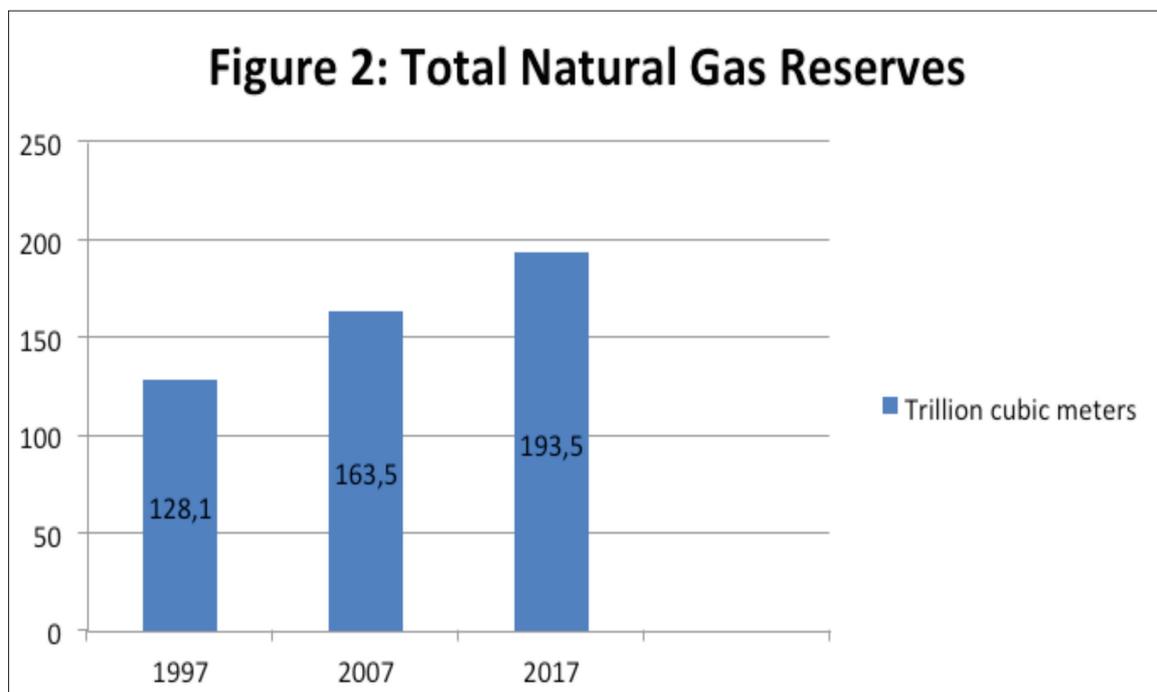
Access to alternative and renewable energy sources is, therefore, one of Europe's energy security priorities. Another factor that brings energy security to a critical point is the use of energy as an important foreign policy trump that will affect the foreign policy decisions of the countries. It is known that Russia has an important role in the natural gas market. It has the most natural gas reserves on a world scale. According to the "BP 2018 World Energy Statistics Outlook Report", there are a total of 193.5 trillion cubic meters of proven natural gas reserves worldwide, of which 35 trillion cubic meters are in Russia. Considering the 2017 data, Russia was followed by Iran with 33.2 trillion cubic meters and Qatar with 24.9 trillion cubic meters. According to BP estimates, the available natural gas resources are sufficient to cover the future consumption of the world for 52.6 years.¹³

As seen in Figure 2, a significant increase was observed in world natural gas reserves between 1997-2017. Undoubtedly, the most significant reason for this increase is the discovery

of new reserves. Foreign dependency experienced in the energy sector has led the countries to look for new reserves. When the distribution of proven natural gas reserves in the world is examined, it is seen that the Middle East region has the most resources. After the Middle East comes the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)¹⁴. However, it should be immediately noted that Russia and Turkmenistan take the lead within the CIS. These two countries have 54.5 trillion cubic meters of the total 59.2.¹⁵

The striking point in Figure 3 is that Europe is one of the most inefficient regions in terms of natural gas energy resources. Europe's being a

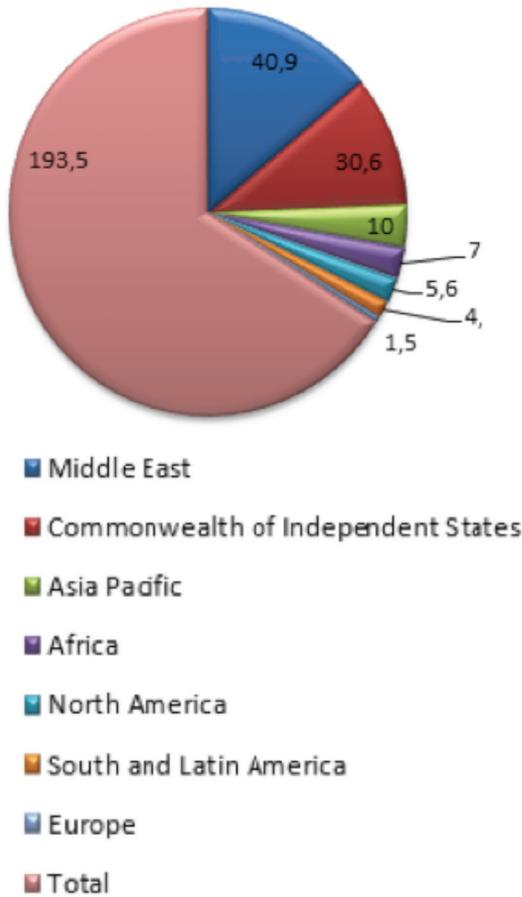
“The dependence of European countries on Russian gas has been intensively discussed since the Ukrainian Crisis.”



Kaynak: BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2018.

region with the least natural gas reserves is interesting in terms of the share of energy in European diplomacy.

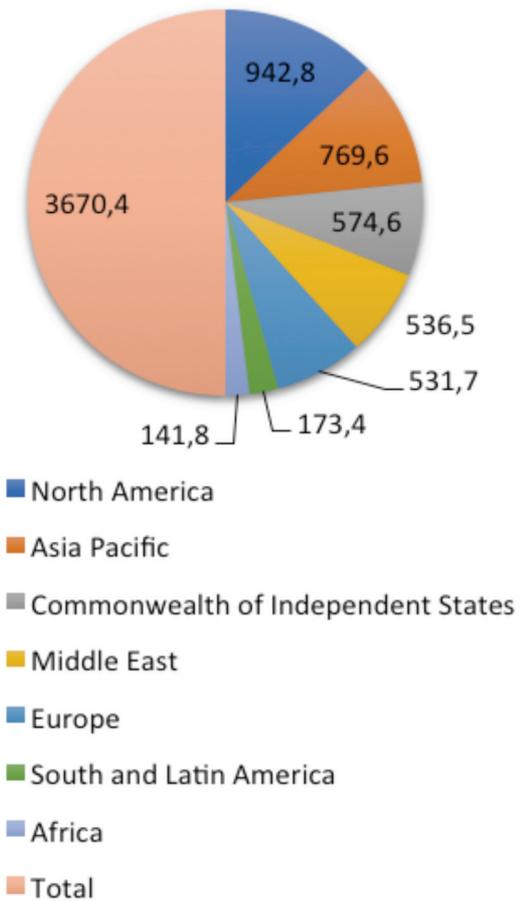
Figure 3: Regional Distribution of Natural Gas Reserves (2017)



Source: BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2018

Figure 4 shows the global natural gas consumption in billion cubic meters. As can easily be seen in the graph, the first region where natural gas is consumed most worldwide is North America. In North America, the US alone consumes about 78% of total consumption. As to the graph below (figure 5), it shows that natural gas production in 2017 occurred mostly in North America. The lion’s share in production belongs to the US as in consumption. In North America, 77% of the total natural gas reflected in the figures in 2017 was produced by the US.

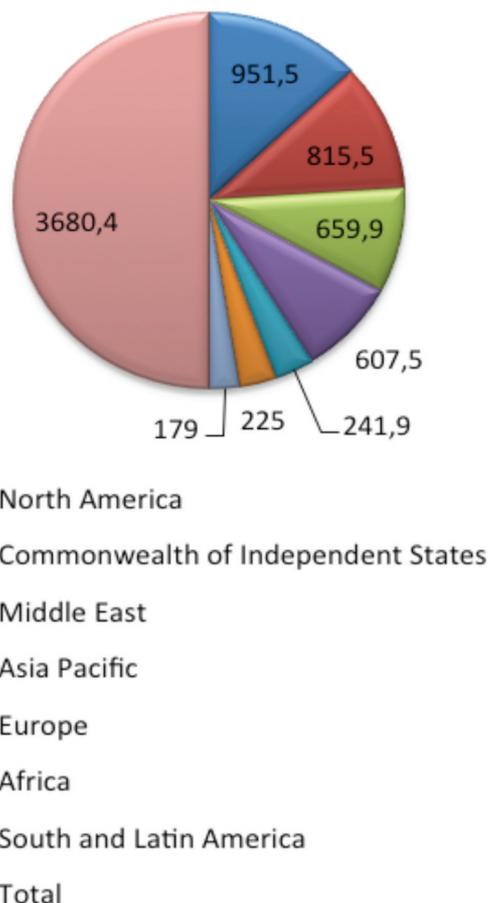
Figure 4: Region-based Natural Gas Consumption (billion cubic meters)



Source: BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2018

China has a decisive role in natural gas consumption in the Asia Pacific region. Research shows that 31% of the natural gas consumed in the Asia Pacific region was due to China. China’s relationship with energy contains many equations. As clearly illustrated in Figure 6, there is a 91.2 billion cubic meter gap between China’s natural gas production and consumption. The said deficit is pushing China into aggressive policies regarding the natural gas supply. While some of the energy strategies are based on bilateral agreements, some of them contain an equation based on turning crises into opportunities.

**Figure 5: World Natural Gas Production 2017
(Billion cubic meters)**



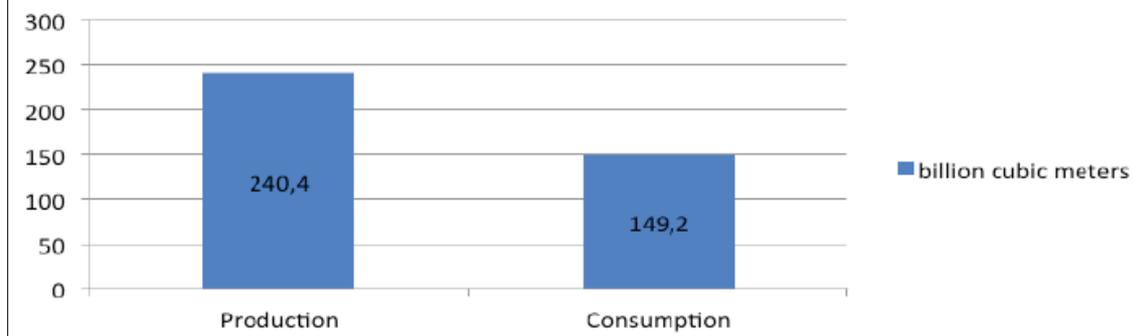
Source: BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2018

In this regard, it is seen that China has obtained favorable results from the US sanctions against Iran. After the French oil and natural gas company Total decided to sell the South Persian Gas Field shares in the Persian Gulf with an excuse of new US sanctions, China State Oil Company (CNPC) acquired its 30% and increased its share up to 80%.¹⁶ The share transfer has made the Chinese company the largest in the 5 billion dollar project. The economic growth and increasing population in China are increasing the country's energy demand day by day.

According to data from the International Energy Agency, China is the most energy-consuming country in the world. Future energy scenarios suggest that until 2040, there will be a serious demand for energy supply from non-OECD countries, of which about 45% will be from China and India. According to estimates, China's share of world energy consumption will increase to 24% in 2040. In addition, China is experiencing intense air pollution as a price of economic growth based on industry.

Therefore, the transition from dependence on coal to clean energy in the fight against the environment and air pollution has become a significant policy in China. For, in global coal production and consumption, China ranks first in the world. With the help of clean energy investments, the Chinese administration, which sets

Figure 6: China's Natural Gas Production and Consumption 2017



Source: BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2018

sustainable economic growth as a target, is trying to increase its energy diversity through natural gas agreements made since the beginning of the 2000s. In this context, Central Asia-China natural gas pipeline, China-Myanmar natural gas pipeline and Russia-China natural gas pipeline stand out as substantial projects. Rolling up its sleeves to transfer from coal to natural gas, China does not neglect to establish close relations with countries with rich natural gas reserves.

In this context, the Middle East and Eurasia region are one of the prominent areas of special interest to Chinese foreign policy. Energy diplomacy carried out with these regions has an important strategic value in terms of ensuring China's energy security and transforming the country's energy structure into clean energy.

With the help of clean energy investments, the Chinese administration, which aims at sustainable economic growth, is trying to increase its energy diversity through the natural gas agreements it has made since the beginning of the 2000s.

That China put an emphasis on the mixed market economy by taking into account the global economic conditions and keeping its ideology in the background, has caused this country to make an undeniable economic leap. Unlike Mao Zedong, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping can be claimed to have succeeded in giving the priority to the economy instead of ideology. This change in China has been portrayed by this very saying: "What is important is not the color

of the cat, but whether the cat catches the Mouse or not." The transformation of China that is to affect the global system continues with all of its vitality from the point Deng Xiaoping left it out. It is said that the "One Belt One Road" project announced by President Xi Jinping in 2013 will be a move that will fundamentally change the rules established in trade, security and energy.

"One Belt One Road" project, which is presented by China as a "global peace project", is planning to implement the "Maritime Silk Road" project as well as aiming to revive the historical Silk Road by road and rail links. Thus, new infrastructure will be built to connect Europe, Africa and Asia with new commercial networks to be established through land and sea. Having the potential to produce a great economic result, the project is expected to remove barriers to free trade from east to west through new transportation and trade infrastructures and to create new economic integrations.

Naturally, the axis shift of economic infrastructure will give rise to the possibility of the West-based global structure being substituted by China-based alternative institutional mechanisms. That China's currency Yuan is becoming more widespread in international financial transactions and its possibility of being turned into international reserve money is important in showing to what level the change has reached. Hence, this change will add different approaches to China's foreign policy. First of all, China's foreign policy will make a special effort for a systematic change in the international order.

Concordantly, in the light of the developments, it seems possible for China to follow a foreign policy that attaches special importance to "corridor countries" among which China aims to establish a network of transport, investment, energy and trade that connects Asia, Europe and Africa.

1.2. Overview of the Cyprus Problem

Foreign policy issues are more global and complex than in the past. The Cyprus issue should be considered in this context. In the con-

ditions of the Cold War era, the shape and scope of this problem, which has emerged as a function of the events in the Middle East, have undergone a radical change. Starting with the disappearance of the Republic of Cyprus, which was founded in 1960 as a result of the inter-communal violence that occurred in 1963, the problem has survived to the present day despite many initiatives for the solution of the problem. The asymmetrical events that took place in the form of “de facto disappearance of the Republic of Cyprus and the expropriation of the political, economic and social rights of Turkish Cypriots” opened the door to the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) on 15 November 1983.

Thus, two countries and two states came into existence in Cyprus. However, while no other country except Turkey officially recognized the TRNC, all states except Turkey recognize the Republic of Cyprus. Therefore, Turkey describes the Republic of Cyprus as the Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus (GCASC). On the other hand, the Republic of Cyprus is seen as “one state” representing the whole island and the TRNC is ignored in legal terms. However, Turkey asserts that GCASC is not authorized to represent the whole of Cyprus. The long-term solution seeking on the island continued with the 24 April 2004 referendum. While 75.83% of Greek Cypriot population voted “no”, 64.91% of the Turkish Cypriots voted “yes” to the settlement plan that emerged with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s initiatives and Turkey’s efficient support. This comprehensive solution plan supported by the entire international community, particularly the UN and the European Union (EU), was sentenced to invalidity by the Greek community’s negative approach to the referendum.

On the other hand, on 1 May 2004, GCASC was accepted as a “full member” of the EU, representing the entire island under the name “Republic of Cyprus”. Ankara reacted pretty harshly to this decision. The statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated 1 May 2004 found the

GCASC’s accession to the EU incongruous with international law and the treaties of Cyprus for the following reasons:¹⁷

The EU has repeatedly stated that it would be appropriate for a united Cyprus to join the Union and actively supported the Annan Plan for the emergence of a subsequent result. In this context, the European Commission was present at the final stage of the negotiations in Switzerland and an agreement was reached between the Commission and the parties regarding the comprehensive settlement.

Under the UN agreement plan (Annan Plan), the text of the founding agreement recognized that there were two constituent states of equal status as the “Greek Cypriot State” and the “Turkish Cypriot State”, and that neither side may claim authority or jurisdiction over the other. The referenda held separately and concurrently in Cyprus on 24 April 2004 confirmed that there were two people of equal status on the island and that one was not authorized to represent the other.

As shown by agreements, negotiations and referenda, both parties’ consent is required for any solution in Cyprus. Therefore, the claims that the island is represented by a single authority are groundless. For the agreed texts of the agreement report that Cyprus is the common homeland for both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots and both communities recognize the distinct identity and integrity of one another. This situation cannot be ignored. In this regard, the Greek Cypriots who joined the EU on 1 May 2004 do not have the right to represent the Turkish Cypriots or the whole of Cyprus.

Similarly, they do not have the power to exercise sovereignty over the whole island or Turkish Cypriots. Therefore, the Republic of Cyprus cannot be imposed on Turkish Cypriots as a legal government representing the Turkish Cypriots or the whole of Cyprus. Greek Cypriot Administration’s EU accession shall not prejudice the rights and obligations of Turkey on Cyprus

which are based on the 1960 treaties. In addition, Turkey will continue to recognize the TRNC.

“Yes” by TRNC in the referendum, all of the diplomatic initiatives of Turkey as well as the UN and the EU’s commitments were not enough to lift isolation the Turkish Cypriots have been exposed for years. Coming to power with the support of the international community and actors, Mehmet Ali Talat’s efforts did not yield any results even though there existed an optimistic atmosphere for new developments in favor of the Turkish Cypriots in this process.¹⁸ From the Annan Plan to now, with a view to bringing a permanent solution under the roof of the UN, many meetings took place among the leaders and negotiators; however, there was no substantial progress in the negotiations. The Cyprus Conference, which re-gathered in the town of Crans-Montana, Switzerland, between June 28 and July 7, 2017, did not differ from its predecessors despite high expectations. Negotiations consisted of six sensitive chapters: “property, land, economy, European Union, management and power sharing, as well as security and guarantees”. When the Greek Cypriot side proposed “zero troops and zero guarantees as a sine qua non condition” and rejected the “rotating presidency” proposal, which the Turkish side regarded as the main parameter of political equality, the Cyprus Conference was dispersed.

2. Conflict of Maritime Jurisdiction in the Eastern Mediterranean

The Mediterranean has witnessed the birth and death of many civilizations and played a central role in the scientific, artistic, cultural, economic and political development of humanity. For this reason, it became a region where the inter-state struggle prevailed and there were disagreements and conflicts. Connecting Asia, Europe and Africa, as well as the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean, having strategic crossing paths such as the Suez Canal and the Strait of Gibraltar, the Mediterranean has undeniable geopolitical value. Being the largest of all known inland seas, the Mediterranean lost its commercial

superiority after the geographical discoveries, but became an important trade route once again with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.

In addition to these, the Mediterranean Sea is an important route for the Middle East and Black Sea energy resources to reach to global markets. As the commercial, military and political importance of the Mediterranean continued, the hydrocarbon reserves were also added to all of them since the beginning of the 2000s. The new energy resources discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean Basin have led to the revival of the region as never before. The discovery of such valuable resources in an environment where the disputes in the maritime jurisdictions in the Mediterranean have not been solved has caused debates over intergovernmental authority to exacerbate.

For many years, the Eastern Mediterranean, which has been kept occupied with the Turkish-Greek conflict, the Cyprus issue and the Palestinian issue, is now obliged to face the energy problem connected to hydrocarbon resources. However, this energy problem is quite different from the others. There is a natural gas and oil distribution at the root of the problem. Therefore, the problem is both economic and security-related. On the other hand, there exist many international actors at the state, organization and company levels. In addition, the amount, production and marketing of hydrocarbon reserves may change the balance of power on a regional and global scale. According to the estimates, there are 122 trillion cubic meters of natural gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean Basin. Taking into account that there are the world-wide proven 193.5 trillion cubic meters of natural gas, it is easily understood how important the estimated amount is. Finally, the multiplicity and diversity of the actors and the economic and security sensitivity of the issue have the potential to endanger security and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean and ultimately global peace.

On the other hand, all these negative developments may also have a triggering effect on re-

gional peace. In other words, if the process is well managed, the discovery of new hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean may contribute to regional peace. However, considering the ongoing events and the statements made by the parties around them, it is observed that the risk of conflict is higher than that of regional cooperation.

Although rumors and news about the existence of rich oil fields around Cyprus have been on the agenda since the 1970s, they have not been seriously discussed. One of the most noteworthy of these rumors is the fact that the Greek Cypriot Administration allowed many international companies to search for oil in the marine areas between the Cape Kormakitis (Koruçam Burnu) and the Zafer Burnu (Cape Andreas) in the east before 1974. Nevertheless, there was no de facto such search. Another interesting news is that the Greek Cypriot Administration conducted nego-

If the process is well managed, the discovery of new hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean may contribute to the regional peace. However, it is observed that the risk of conflict is higher than that of regional cooperation.

tiations with foreign companies in 1986 to carry out oil surveys at marine areas in the south of the island. At that time, this news was reflected in the Turkish press through the Greek press.¹⁹

The most striking claim on oil fields around Cyprus came from TRNC Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Serdar Denktaş on 10 December 2003. Denktaş, in his press statement, stated that rich oil and natural gas fields were discovered around Cyprus and that the EU sup-

ported the Annan Plan in order to control these resources. According to Denktaş, Cyprus' membership to the EU was part of the energy game, and the United States was a part of this game. The common goal of the two (the EU and US) is to "estrangle Turkey from natural gas and oil resources."²⁰ Just a few days later following Serdar Denktaş's statement "Cyprus is rich in oil and natural gas resources", the Mineral Research and Exploration Institute (MTA) rejected it.

In the statement made by MTA, it was stated that "there is no energy raw material which can provide economic benefit at the suitable level for exploitation in TRNC."²¹ Giving an interview to Hürriyet in 2007 when the discussions on oil and gas exploration in Cyprus' marine areas gained diplomatic identity, Serdar Denktaş shared the following information: "In a meeting in Ankara where Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül was present, before the Peace operation, I had stated that the Shell company had signed an oil exploration agreement with the Republic of Cyprus out of Karpaz and that the Americans had found large oil fields among offshore Famagusta and the Gulf of Karpas and the Gulf of Iskenderun. Drawing attention to the agreement signed with the Greek Cypriots with Egypt, I told him that there was oil around the island. (...) When I went to New York in 2004 because of the OIC meeting, I spoke with the oil company representative as a TRNC representative. I don't want to name him; because this company may still want to be in touch. He gave me a large file and asked me to look for oil and gas between Karpas and Iskenderun. The American official told me, 'We know, the Greeks are going to file a lawsuit right now, but we are ready for these cases and we will cover all the costs. We resist the Greeks'. This file is now in the TRNC Presidency."²² Initially, the relationship between Cyprus and oil or natural gas was subjected to a geopolitical analysis in the context of the proximity of the island to energy sources and its control capacity to the transfer routes. However, the new developments in the Eastern Mediterranean have broken the mold of the Cold War Era.

2.1. Discussions on Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

The rapid advance of science and technology has begun to enable the operation of natural resources in the seas. However, this progress in technology, the established rules of international law cannot respond at the same speed. When the natural resources in the seas are considered in terms of quality, they are divided into two as living resources and minerals [hydrocarbons and other minerals]. In order for states to benefit from natural resources in marine areas, the boundaries of maritime areas within national jurisdictions should be determined. In other words, there should be no conflict between the riparian states regarding maritime jurisdictions. According to international law, the exploitation of resources in fields outside international marine areas is left to the national authority of the states.

In this context, international maritime law, inland waters, territorial waters, fishing zone, continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone provide littoral states with sovereign rights and powers to let them benefit from the resources.²³ In addition to the above-mentioned issue, states must also take into account the geographical relations with seas. For, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) dated 1982 explicitly refers to the *geographically unfavorable states* and regards the “*states bordering enclosed or semi-enclosed seas*” within this scope.²⁴ Furthermore, Article 123 of the given Convention provides for “*cooperation of the states bordering enclosed or semi-enclosed seas among one another*”. The content of the Article is written as follows:

Article 123: States bordering an enclosed or semi-enclosed sea should cooperate with each other in the exercise of their rights and in the performance of their duties under this Convention. To this end they shall endeavor, directly or through an appropriate regional organization:

- (a) to coordinate the management, conservation, exploration and exploitation of the living resources of the sea,
- (b) to coordinate the implementation of their rights and duties with respect to the protection and preservation of the marine environment,
- (c) to coordinate their scientific research policies and undertake where appropriate joint programs of scientific research in the area,
- (d) to invite, as appropriate, other interested States or international organizations to cooperate with them in furtherance of the provisions of this article.

Therefore, the limitation of the marine areas between the neighboring states in the enclosed and semi-enclosed seas cannot be achieved by the attempt of a single state; the geographical situation of the region should be taken into account for the determination of the boundaries as well. Finally, this has been reaffirmed by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in its decision dated 3 June 1985 on the Continental Shelf Cases of Libya and Malta.²⁵ The ICJ ruled that the delimitation methods and techniques used for large marine areas cannot be applied in *enclosed and semi-enclosed seas*. In addition, another important aspect of the decision is that the Mediterranean has been confirmed to be a semi-enclosed sea.²⁶

Another issue on the determination of maritime jurisdictions is the status of the islands. Research shows that the geographical location of the island country in international court decisions and discipline is effective in determining the maritime jurisdiction areas of the given island. Court cases and jurisprudence have made decisions to either provide an island country with a narrow continent or make it content itself with territorial waters, depending on the proximity of the neighboring state to its land country.²⁷

Another main discussion issue on the subject of the Eastern Mediterranean jurisdictions is the limitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as well as the above-mentioned points. The definition of the concept developing since the end of the Second World War is as follows: “An EEZ is a concept, whereby a coastal State

assumes jurisdiction over the exploration and exploitation of marine resources in its adjacent section of the continental shelf, taken to be a band extending 200 miles from the shore.”²⁸ The EEZ concept, which gives a coastal state the authority to use living and non-living resources within the maritime borders, has been regulated by Articles 55-75 of the UNCLOS.

The limitation of the exclusive economic zone between the riparian states is discussed in Article 74. Accordingly, the EEZ limitation between the coasts of adjacent or confronted states should be done *in accordance with an agreement complying with international law* in a just manner. It should also be noted that the EEZ and the continental shelf are not part of the coastal state. The rights of the coastal state on these areas are limited. Due to this limitation, the EEZ and continental shelf are called “maritime jurisdictions”.

2.2. Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (GCASC) and EEZ Agreements

There has been news about a possible EEZ delimitation agreement between the Greek Ad-

ministration of Southern Cyprus and Egypt since the early 2000s. However, as the Annan Plan and the Invasion of Iraq kept Turkey’s agenda quite busy during this period, the EEZ issue did not attract enough attention in the press. Before long, it was announced that the Agreement on the Delimitation of Exclusive Economic Zones was signed between GCASC and Egypt on 17 February 2003.²⁹ The EEZ agreement signed between Egypt and GCASC entered into force in March 2004. Turkey showed its reaction to the agreement signed between the two countries at the UN level. In this context, Turkey delivered the memorandum numbered 2004/Turkuno DT/4739, dated March 2, 2004, to the UN through the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the UN. Taking its place in UN Law of the Sea Bulletin No. 2004/54, Turkey has declared that it does not recognize the agreement dated February 17, 2003.

In addition, Turkey stated that she had areas of its own along the west of longitude 32° 16’ 18” and thus, she did not recognize coordinates including the western part of the said area.³⁰ Turkey also stressed that she reserved all of its

Map 1: GCASC-Egypt EEZ Agreement, 17 February 2003



Source: United Nations, Law of the Sea Bulletin, Vol. 52, 2003

rights including seabed, underneath of the seabed and the water masses above it in the area west of longitude 32° 16' 18", and reported that the delimitation of EEZ and continental shelf could be conducted through fair agreements by concerned states.³¹ The part till this very point is related to Turkey's sovereign area. This part is frequently misinterpreted. In other words, with the agreement dated February 17, 2003 Turkey's maritime jurisdiction areas in the Eastern Mediterranean have been disseized.

Turkey's second objection is that there is no legally or actually authorized government in Cyprus that represents the Turkish and Greek Cypriots as a whole.³² As seen, Turkey has two main objections to the given agreement. After this incident, Ankara is to struggle to protect the rights and interests of both Turkey and the TRNC in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, Turkey's and TRNC's efforts will never be enough to make the GCASC take a step back. On April 2, 2004, the Greek Cypriot Administration announced its the exclusive economic zone and the adjacent zone which were to be valid as of 21 March 2003.³³ With the adoption of a 24-mile adjacent zone and a 200-mile EEZ, the Cyprus dispute has mirrored on the seas and has gained a new dimension.

The development that may be more dangerous for Turkey is the likelihood that GCASC signs an EEZ delimitation agreement with Greece, just as it did with Egypt, through equal distance/median line method. In such a scenario, Turkey's situation in the Aegean and Mediterranean seas will worsen in terms of maritime jurisdiction areas. Turkey has expressed at every opportunity that such an initiative cannot remain unresponsive. Therefore, this situation may lead to a new crisis in which the military measures are taken into account. The EU will certainly not be impartial in the face of tension between the two EU members, on the one hand, and Turkey, on the other. Indeed, from the very moment when the Eastern Mediterranean maritime jurisdiction areas delimitation crisis emerged, the EU has adopted an obvious attitude that

does not favor Turkey. Therefore, there may be a serious crisis in the region, including the EU.

The agreement between the GCASC and Egypt was held at a stage in which the Annan Plan was negotiated. Considering the fact that other riparian states did not declare their EEZs, GCASC's initiative reveals itself as the first to have taken place. In the Annan Plan process, GCASC's delimitation upon EEZ and adjacent zone is seen as a preventive step towards the possibility of the establishment of "United Cyprus State". The reason for this judgment is that; The United Cyprus Republic's adoption of an international treaty within the framework of the adjacent region, EEZ, territorial waters, continental shelf and airspace jurisdictions, or the adoption of an internal regulation, could only be valid by the "special majority" method, with the decision of the federal state legislature.³⁴

In the "special majority" procedure, each constituent state had a decisive role in the decision-making process. To this end, the "special majority" method gave the Turkish Cypriot representatives the power to influence decisions on the aforementioned issues. In Kudret Özersay's own words, "the enactment and entry into force of the United Cyprus Republic law and treaty drafts, which concern the interests of Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean, have been made subject to the approval of the Turkish Cypriots senators."³⁵ As seen, through the diplomatic maneuvers it carried out before the April 24, 2004 referendum, GCASC did not want to recognize the right of authority to the "United Cyprus Republic" in the areas of jurisdiction of the EEZ, territorial waters, and continental shelf. This intention of the Greek Cypriot Administration is manifested in Article 12 of the founding agreement. Article 12 states that the legal, executive and judicial proceedings before the entry into force of the agreement would continue in the context of the "past acts norm" and would be closed to objections.³⁶ Therefore, the GCASC wanted to benefit from the opportunities of Article 12 as much as possible.

The efforts to drive Turkey, with the longest coastline of the Eastern Mediterranean, into a narrow maritime area reveal a situation contrary to the rules of goodwill principles and equity norms of international law. Similarly, the unilateral agreements made by the Greek Cypriot Administration to identify the maritime jurisdictions of the island are contrary to the principle of political equality of both communities on the island. Furthermore, in accordance with the rules of international law and court decisions, the middle line method cannot be used to limit the maritime jurisdiction of the island of Cyprus. This also applies to Rhodes and Meis. For there are many international law rules and court decisions that indicate that the islands have a special status.

Therefore, there exists serious malfeasance towards Turkey in this regard. Thick lines on Map 2 are the alleged maritime jurisdictions by GCASC through bilateral agreements while the dashed lines indicate the alleged maritime juris-

dictions by GCASC through middle lines method. According to this map, Turkey's EEZ in the Eastern Mediterranean has been restrained to a great extent and her border with Egypt's EEZ has been eliminated. In case of an EEZ agreement between Greek Cypriot Administration and Greece on the basis of middle lines, Greece and the GCASC will border one another on the basis of the maritime jurisdictions due to the Meis Island. That Ankara accepts or remains silent in the face of these agreements to the detriment of Turkey at this point is not possible. As stated earlier, according to the International Maritime Law, the continental shelf or EEZ delimitations in enclosed or semi-enclosed seas shall only be determined by agreements to be made among all relevant countries and in a manner that respects the rights and interests of all parties. Therefore, the treaties of the GCASC with regard to maritime jurisdictions or agreements with the concerned countries jeopardize peace and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Map 2: GCASC's EEZ Claims



Source: Republic of Cyprus officials

In addition, in a period of persistent settlement negotiations on the Cyprus conflict, the Greek Cypriot side casts doubt on the seriousness of the solution process due to its non-consideration of the Turkish Cypriots in an irresistible and impossible matter that is closely related to the sovereignty right, tightly coupled with both communities. Despite all the diplomatic warnings of Ankara, the Greek Cypriot side continued to insist on sign EEZ agreements. It signed an agreement with Lebanon and Israel on 17 January 2007 and 17 December 2010 respectively. Turkey has demonstrated a reaction at a high level as usual. The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on 30 January 2007, and argued that the EEZ or continental shelf delimitations in the Eastern Mediterranean which has the characteristics of an enclosed sea are possible only through arrangements to be made among all of the concerned states and in a manner that takes into account the rights and the interests of all parties.³⁷ The statement also stressed that Turkey was determined to protect its rights and interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and that attempts to erode them would not be allowed.

On the other hand, it was underlined that the licenses which the GCASC is trying to give in the marine areas of the island of Cyprus are unauthorized, it was warned that “countries and companies that could consider conducting oil-natural gas surveys on the basis of unauthorized permits should take into account the sensitivity of the situation and the will of the Turkish Cypriots”³⁸, the other founding nation on the island; in any case, they were advised to stay away from initiatives that may have a negative impact on the solution process of the Cyprus problem.

2.3. GCASC’s First License Contract and Turkey’s Reaction

Not paying attention to the objection and warnings of Turkey, GCASC identified 13 oil and gas exploration license areas, accounting for approximately 3,907 square kilometers, within the boundaries of the EEZ borders which it agreed on with Egypt and Lebanon by means of

a law adopted in the House of Representatives following the agreement signed with Lebanon on 26 January 2007. On February 15, 2007, GCASC went out to the tender for oil and gas exploration for these parcels.

In a statement on 15 February 2007, Turkey’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated its objections and warnings to the GCASC. The statement asserted that “the Greek Cypriot Administration does not represent the Island as a whole nor does it have the authority to conclude agreements on behalf of Turkish Cypriots; it violates the joint rights of the two peoples on the Island on issues like oil and natural gas exploration; it creates fait-accomplis which are not based on common understanding among the Eastern Mediterranean states and Turkey does not give its consent to the calls for international tenders.”³⁹ As a result of the first tender process in 2007, the Noble Energy International Ltd (NEIL) Company was granted hydrocarbon exploration license on the 12th parcel on October 24, 2008.⁴⁰ The name of the 12th parcel, located at the border of Israel’s “Leviathan” parcel, is Aphrodite. This area is likely to be outside Turkey’s EEZ borders. Therefore, there exists no continental shelf violation to Turkey’s disadvantage. The main problem here is the usurpation of the rights and interests of the Turkish Cypriots.

“The EEZ or continental shelf delimitations in the Eastern Mediterranean which has the characteristics of an enclosed sea are possible only through arrangements to be made among all of the concerned states and in a manner that takes into account the rights and the interests of all parties.”

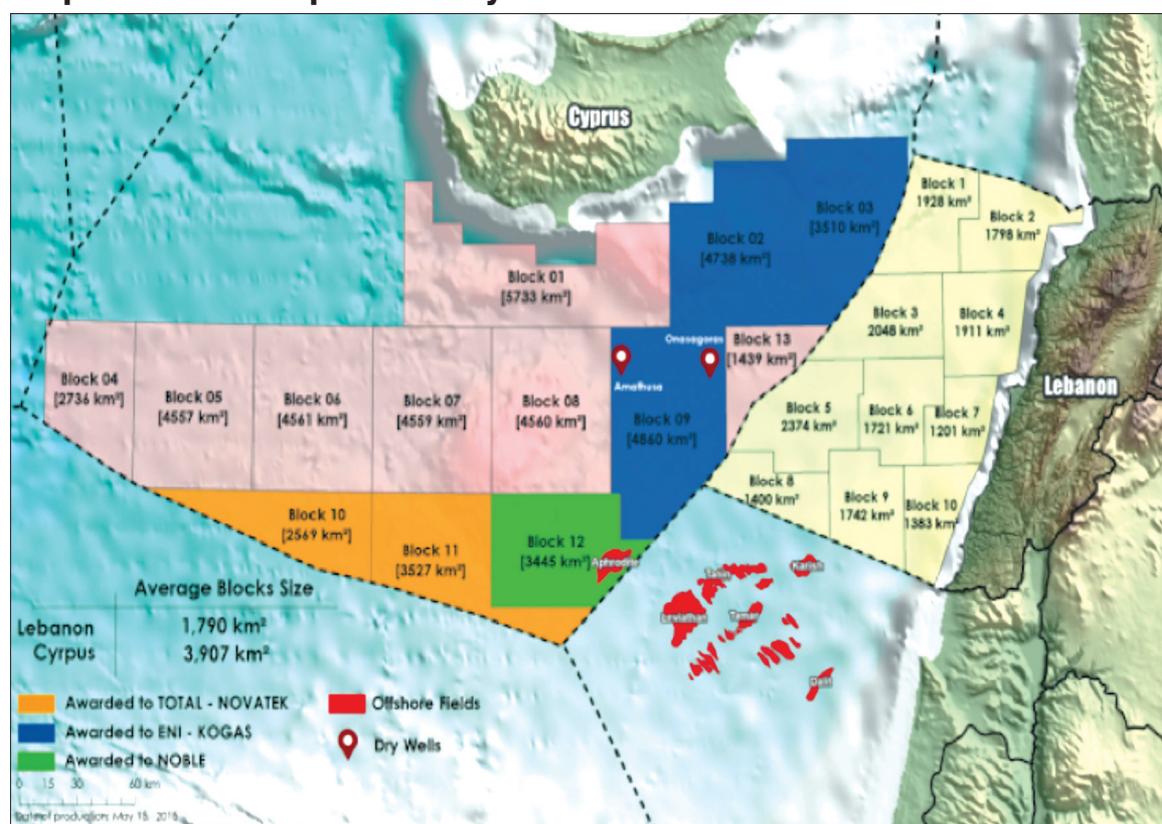
Since 2007, Ankara has been trying to apply to the actual moves in the Eastern Mediterranean

as well as the diplomatic enterprises. That Turkey's peaceful efforts have not yielded results has paved the way for action-oriented initiatives. On the other hand, many incidents that Turkey experienced in these years such as the Council of State attack, the Republican demonstrations, 367 Crisis, April 27 Declaration and the AK Party Closure Case did not prevent Turkey from pursuing closely the developments in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Due to the intensity of successive political crises in Turkey, however, the Turkish media

Mediterranean. Through its decisions dated 30/07/2008 and numbered 2008/14002, 2008/14003, 2008/14004 and 2008/14005, and in accordance with its geological exploratory view on the maritime areas of the Eastern Mediterranean, the Council of Ministers granted the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) the license to explore oil and gas in outside the boundaries of the Turkish territorial waters in the Mediterranean, in the fields the limits of which are shown in the maps attached to the decisions.⁴¹

Map 3: Parcels Specified by GCASC



Source: Lebanese Petroleum Administration –<https://www.lpa.gov.lb>

paid a very limited attention to the developments in the Eastern Mediterranean. It should also be noted that the issues regarding the natural gas and oil exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean have brought to the agenda Turkey's need to invest in technological infrastructure that could let it make seismic and drilling operations in the

Thus, the allegation that Turkey has also legitimate rights and authorities over the maritime zones in the west of Cyprus in the Mediterranean as of the 32°16'18 longitude, which is also expressed by relevant international organizations, primarily the UN, and states were reaffirmed by the decision dated

30/07/2008 of the Council of Ministers. The areas mentioned in these decisions (which authorize TPAO) and the area declared EEZ by the GCASC's collide with one another.

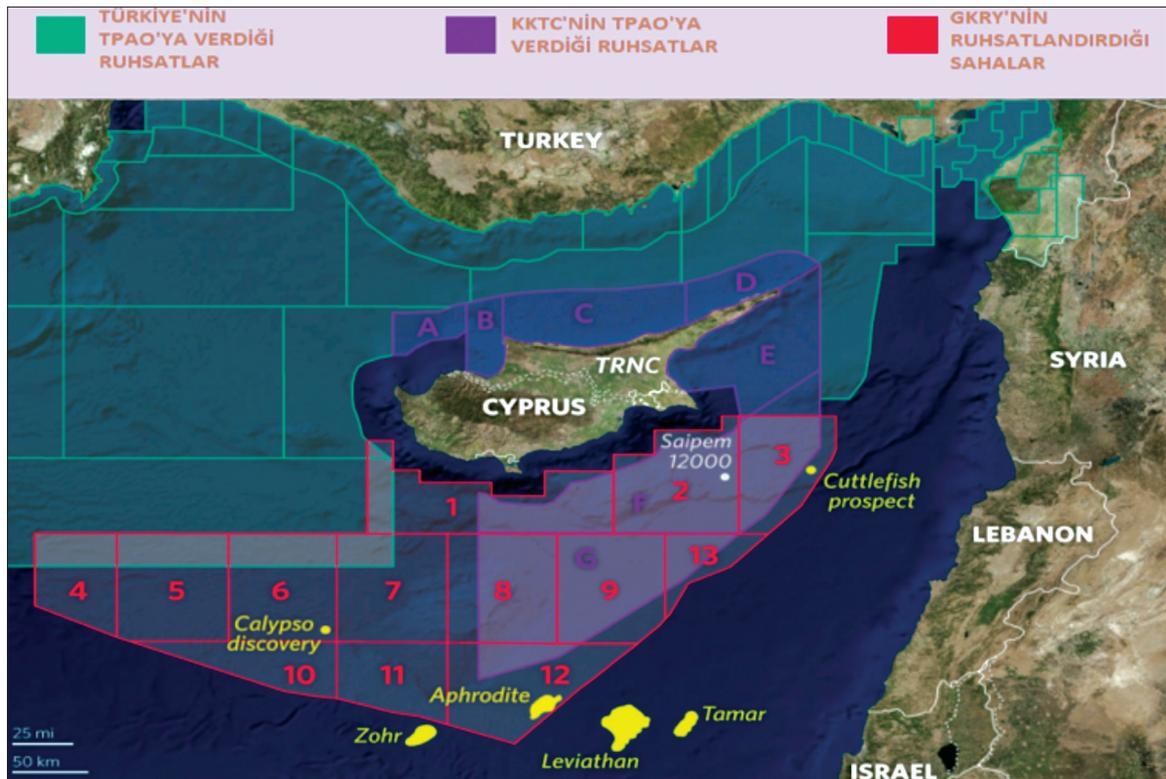
In the light of the decisions given above, the first attempt of the TPAO was performed on 14-18 November 2008 through the Norwegian-flagged research ship "M/V Malene Ostervold" within the maritime jurisdiction areas determined by Turkey in the research field that was previously published by the previously published navigation announcements (NAVTEX).⁴²

The Greek media described this initiative as "the most serious event on the continental shelf since 1987". In a statement dated 19 November 2008 by the Greek Foreign Ministry, it was stated that "the area where the research has been conducted is in the Greek continental shelf and therefore no investigation or research shall be

carried out without the permission of Greece". With Turkey's actual entry into the field, a number of conflict-of-jurisdiction-based incidents have taken place regarding gas and oil exploration activities in the Eastern Mediterranean. Thus, the risk of a hot conflict between the parties has climbed to the highest level.

As clearly seen in Map 4, the parcels numbered 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7 GCASC announced to possess collide with the fields that Turkey has granted the TPAO the license to explore gas and oil. Nevertheless, the problem is not limited only to this. As frequently mentioned above, the prospective EEZ of Turkey also overlaps with that of GCASC. This can be immediately noticed when maps are carefully monitored. Another issue that we will mention in the following pages is the issue of the licenses granted to the TPAO by TRNC. The map given above includes this topic as well. In other words, the areas that GCASC

Map 4: Maritime Jurisdiction Delimitation Issues in the Eastern Mediterranean



Source: Stratfor

has split into 13 and tries to grant licenses to international companies to operate clash with the licenses both Turkey and TRNC granted TPAO. Considering the licenses granted to TPAO by TRNC, it is understood that there is an authority conflict in the parcels 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 12 and 13.

The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Turkey is seen to be continuing determinedly to authorize TPAO on its continental shelf. In this context, through the resolutions the Council of Ministers adopted on 25 April 2011, 30 January 2012 and 16 March 2012, TPAO was granted oil exploration and drilling permits on the maps marked in the relevant decisions on the basis of the Anatolia-Egypt median line in the Eastern Mediterranean.⁴³ In the XVIII Muğla Petroleum Region numbered 2012/2974 and dated 16/3/2012 where TPAO has been provided with the right for oil activities, the authorizations numbered AR/TPO/5033, 5034, 5035 shown in the maps situated outside the Turkish territorial waters and the boundaries of which are annexed to the resolution were protested before the UN by Greece. This is due to the fact that there is no maritime jurisdiction other than the territorial waters of the Meis Island in the field belonging to the authorization numbered 5033.⁴⁴

Furthermore, the decision numbered 2012/2968 and dated 16/3/2012 has undergone the protests of the GCASC as the eastern borders of the fields numbered 5027 and 5028 among the fields belonging to the authorizations numbered AR/TPO/5026, 5027, 5028, which are located outside the Turkish territorial waters in the Mediterranean in the Antalya Petroleum Region numbered XVI stretch out through the related parts of the 32°16'18 longitude and the external boundaries of the territorial waters in the West of the Cyprus island. For these borders intersect with the western part of the areas declared by the GCASC.

On the ground of the “violation of the Greek continental shelf”, Greece raised an objection on February 20, 2019 in the presence of the UN to the Council of Ministers decisions announced

July 16, 2009 and April 27, 2012, in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Turkey regarding the “maritime jurisdictions where Turkey granted authorization to the TPAO”.⁴⁵ Greece’s objection is based on the claim that the island of Rhodes and the Meis archipelago have marine areas such as mainland.⁴⁶ Ankara responded to this objection of Athens on 12 March 2013. The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the areas of permission subject to the complaint were determined in accordance with the practices and international law and therefore the areas in question remained within the Turkish continental shelf. It was therefore stated that all of the allegations and objections raised by Greece were rejected. In the above-mentioned letter to the UN; as stated in the Turkish verbal notes, respectively, dated March 2004 and numbered 2004/Turkuno DT4739; dated 4 October 2005 and numbered 2005/Turkuno DT/16390; numbered 54(2004) and 59(2005) published in the Law of the Sea Bulletin, Turkey has emphasized once more the existence of its “ipso facto” and

Greece’s objection is based on the claim that the island of Rhodes and the Meis archipelago have marine areas such as mainland.

“ab initio” legal sovereign rights in the areas in the west of the 32° 16’ 18” east longitude (meridian) in the Eastern Mediterranean.⁴⁷

Overall, it is also observed that the GACS has major objections to Turkey. First of all, the GCASC officials expressed that they did not find it appropriate that Turkey calls them “Greek Administration of Southern Cypriot”.⁴⁸ According to the Greek Administration, there exists no legal authority on the island but the Republic of

Cyprus. The only exception that does not recognize this situation is Turkey.

The “existence and uniqueness” of the “Republic of Cyprus” approved by the international public law and the European Union law was also confirmed by the UN Security Council resolutions 541(1983) and 550(1984).⁴⁹ Apart from these, the claims of GCASC regarding the EEZ declaration can be listed as follows:

“The Republic of Cyprus” has fulfilled all processes related to EEZ within the scope of international law and other accepted practices; “the Republic of Cyprus” recognizes the presence of median line in principle in the parts of Cyprus’s marine areas where delimitation areas have not been signed, including the Republic of Turkey; the “Republic of Cyprus” has fully complied with the internationally recognized technical methodology and specifications collected in the relevant handbook and directives of the International Hydrographic Organization when making delimitation agreements; the “Republic of Cyprus” has refrained from any action to eliminate the sovereign rights of the third coastal states when making the delimitation agreements.⁵⁰ In addition to what is mentioned above, GCASC filed an objection to the UN against the licenses granted to TPAO on 19 June 2012.⁵¹ The objections can be summarized as follows:⁵²

Decisions of the Turkish Council of Ministers numbered 2012/2802, 2012/2973 and 2012/2968, which provide TPAO with hydrocarbon exploration and extraction licenses in the Eastern Mediterranean, partly or entirely within the continental shelf and EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus are the violation of international law and the use of the so-called rights given to the “Republic of Cyprus”.

The fields that the Turkish Council of Ministers has granted a license to TPAO (2012/2802, 2012/2973, 2012/2968) remain within the boundaries of the continental shelf and EEZ areas of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Turkey’s given decisions are a clear challenge to international law. Therefore; granting TPAO hydrocarbon

exploration licenses in these areas by Turkey is inoperative and shall not affect these rights of the “Republic of Cyprus” in any way. These put forward by GCASC are not accepted by Turkey and the TRNC. According to the Turkish Cypriots, the 1960 Republic of Cyprus has disappeared and the negotiations under the auspices of the UN to establish a new state on the basis of political equality since 1968 point to this situation.⁵³ In this framework, the GCASC does not have the authority to represent the entire island or the Turkish Cypriot people. For this reason, GCASC’s unilateral agreements to restrict maritime jurisdictions and attempts to search for oil and natural gas in declared areas are seen as a clear attack on the legitimate rights and interests of Turkish Cypriots.⁵⁴

As Kemal Gokeri, the representative of the TRNC, stated in his letter to the UN on August 8, 2007, the GCASC both jeopardized the stability of the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus through its unilateral initiatives and undermined the prospects of a solution on the island.⁵⁵ The biggest expectation of the TRNC from GCASC is that the two peoples do not take any unilateral steps on natural resources until a comprehensive solution is found.⁵⁶ Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat also wrote a letter on April 14, 2009 to the UN and stressed there that the treaties and the hydrocarbon exploration licenses GCASC authorized were invalid.⁵⁷

In the letters sent by the high-level representatives of the TRNC to the UN, it was clearly stated at all times that Greek Cypriot representatives represented only the Greek Cypriots on the island and therefore did not have the right to negotiate, contract and authorize on behalf of the whole of Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriot side proposed before the UN “the suspension of natural gas and oil exploration activities until a comprehensive solution is found on the island; and if this is not possible, a joint commission, in which the parties are represented, makes its decision on oil and natural gas activities”. However, these recommendations were not taken into account by GCASC.

3. Continental Shelf Delimitation Agreement between Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)

The diplomatic and political initiatives taken by Turkey and the TRNC, in compliance with international law, in order to protect their legitimate rights and interests in the region stating that the Greek Cypriot Administration (GCA) did not have the right and authority to make decisions on the natural resources of the entire island or to sign an agreement on behalf of the whole island did not yield the expected results. An “Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Delimitation Agreement” was signed between the GCA and Israel in Nicosia on 17 December 2010.

It was known that the negotiations were ongoing between the parties to sign such an agreement. Ankara delivered numerous demarches to Israel in this regard and Ambassador of Israel to Ankara was even summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 16 December 2010 and was informed of Turkey’s concerns. For Turkey, the agreement between the GCA and Israel is different than the agreement signed with Egypt since Turkey does not directly claim any rights in the maritime areas subject to the mentioned EEZ Delimitation Agreement. Ankara considers the agreement within the scope of the Cyprus question. Turkish authorities have conveyed to their counterparts the views that “the GCA does not represent all the island and Turkish Cypriots also have rights and authorities in the maritime areas of Cyprus”. That is why the opinion that “the agreements made by the GCA with the countries in the region will not be considered to be in force by Ankara” has been totally maintained.⁵⁸

Having first started the tendering process for hydrocarbon exploration concession in February 2007, the GCA announced in August 2011 that the drilling operations were soon going to be launched for the bloc 12 by Noble Energy. Turkish Foreign Ministry made a statement on 5 August 2011, showing its reaction to the drilling

operations.⁵⁹ In the statement, it was indicated that “the delimitation of the continental shelf or the exclusive economic zone in the Eastern Mediterranean, a semi-enclosed sea, was not effected between the relevant states and the GCA did not comply with the principle of equitability, without taking into account the rights and interests of all parties and conducted activities violating the international law and the rights of the third parties.”⁶⁰ The opinion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is that such activities of the Greek side do not have legal grounds and cause tensions on the island and in the region. Besides, the right of Turkish Cypriots, who have equal political status on Cyprus, to equally benefit from the natural resources of the island is also encroached upon. Moreover, the acts of such nature prejudice the ongoing negotiation process.⁶¹ In a period when there is ongoing diplomatic traffic with the aim of establishing a new common state on Cyprus, this decision taken by the GCA with regard to the maritime jurisdictions have not been considered as a well-intentioned attempt by Turkey and the TRNC. Furthermore, it is thought that such policies of the GCA will create an impression that will remove the ground for potential reconciliation.

Special Representative of the TRNC President Derviş Eroğlu, Kudret Özersay declared on 17 August 2011 that “Turkish Cypriot side was going to start signing agreements and exploring oil and natural gas in the maritime areas of the island unless Greek Cypriot side suspended the drilling activities in the south of the island.” American Noble Energy company that the Greek Administration granted the concession for the bloc 12 announced, on its part, that it was going to sign an agreement with Israeli company Delek Group Limited on 25 August.

In the aftermath, the GCA Foreign Minister Erato Kozaku Markulli declared on 26 August that “the Greek Administration would launch its oil and natural gas drilling activities in the bloc 12 it called “Aphrodite” in two weeks. The process accelerated when Noble Energy explored a precious natural gas reserve in Israel’s Leviathan

maritime area located on the border of the Aphrodite bloc. The claims that natural gas and oil reserves exist in the blocs of Leviathan and Aphrodite in such an amount to change the energy balances paved the way for energy-based debates in the region.

While the GCA tried to strengthen its bilateral relations with Israel in order to reduce Turkey's influence in the East Mediterranean and to set a balance on its own behalf, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released an announcement to the public, indicating that Turkey and the TRNC agreed to sign a "Continental Shelf Delimitation Agreement" if the GCA started drilling operations in the south of the island.⁶² According to the announcement, such an agreement to be signed between Turkey and the TRNC provided the opportunity to conduct exploration activities not only in the north but also all around the island. Frankly, all the diplomatic efforts of Turkey and the TRNC were focused on the deterrence of the Greeks from oil and natural gas exploration activities.

The bilateral agreements that the GCA signed with Israel and international energy companies enhanced its diplomatic resistance against Turkey. Acting upon such encouragement, the Greek side announced on 19 September 2011 that Noble Energy initiated drilling activities and confirmed once again that it would not take a step back. Such an act of Southern Cyprus led Turkey to react similarly. Therefore, new doors were opened to add a new chapter of disputes in the disagreement. As a reaction to drilling activities that the GCA initiated in the south of the island, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and President of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Derviş Eroğlu, who were in New York for the meetings of the 66th General Assembly session on 21 September 2011, signed the Continental Shelf Delimitation Agreement between Turkey and the TRNC. The agreement was the first concrete step that Turkey and the TRNC took within the scope of the crisis breaking out upon the limitation of their maritime jurisdiction. The continental shelf between Turkey and the TRNC was limited

upon the combination of 27 geographical coordinates in compliance with international law and on an appropriate equitable basis. It was also recorded in the agreement that Turkish Cypriots kept reserved the legitimate, equal and indivisible rights over all the continental shelf.⁶³ It offers the opportunity to conduct natural gas and oil exploration activities together between Turkey and the TRNC as well as all around the island.

Therefore, this agreement removed all the obstacles before Ankara to explore oil and natural gas in the Mediterranean. Indeed, following the agreement signed between both countries, the TRNC Cabinet of Ministers determined 7 concession blocs around Cyprus on 22 September 2011 and announced that it granted the licenses of these areas to Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO).⁶⁴

Following this decision that the TRNC took, it was seen that TPAO rented seismic exploration ship "Piri Reis" and launched its two-dimensional seismic exploration activities in the south of the island as of 26 September 2011. Therefore, the TRNC and Turkey tried to set a balance, by retaliation, to the asymmetrical situation in the East Mediterranean. It is possible to see on map 4 the seven concession blocs set by the TRNC. As seen on the map, the disagreement between the TRNC and the GCA as well as Turkey and the GCA concerning the maritime jurisdiction in Cyprus fit into a concrete framework.

Turkey and the TRNC turned their words into actions and tried to make the Greek side take a step back. The solution proposal that the TRNC President Derviş Eroğlu presented to the UN Secretary-General in New York on 24 September 2011 was a significant example showing this situation. Eroğlu suggested that "the GCA and the TRNC stop the exploration and drilling activities in the maritime areas reciprocally and simultaneously; a trilateral committee to be established under UN auspices request the TRNC's and the GCA's written consent for hydrocarbon activities if this could not be provided; the distribution rates of oil and natural gas revenues be

determined and used for financing the comprehensive solution of the Cyprus question”.⁶⁵

Eroğlu declared that the natural gas and oil exploration activities launched with Turkey’s support would continue on the entire island unless the mentioned proposal was accepted. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement regarding Turkey-TRNC Continental Shelf Delimitation Agreement, pointing out that “Turkish Cypriots had legitimate, equal and indivisible rights over all the continental shelf of the island just as Greek Cypriots did.”⁶⁶ In the statement, the Greek side was also asked to stop, without losing time, the drilling activities that would undermine the solution process. As mentioned before, Ankara’s biggest expectation was to primarily find a permanent solution to the Cyprus question and to ensure that both sides would equally share the natural wealth of the island in the aftermath.

As a result of the developments starting on 15 February 2007 when the GCA went out to drilling tender for the first time in the region, Noble company’s de facto started the drilling activities on 19 September 2011, leading Turkey to immediately take action. The depth and scope of the drilling crisis in the East Mediterranean increased further following these developments; such that the GCA tried to underline frequently on any occasion that it was an EU member and to develop a discourse that would turn the issue into an EU question in this process while it made efforts to involve international energy companies in the question and to increase the pressure on Turkey on the other hand.

It is also seen that the Cyprus negotiations continued under UN supervision in a political atmosphere where there were ongoing disputes and reciprocal showdowns concerning the maritime jurisdiction. There was intense diplomatic traffic within this context between 2010 and 2012. The leaders convened in New York on 18 November 2010, in Geneva on 26 January 2011 and again on 7 July 2011, in New York/Greentree on 30-31 October 2011 and 22-24 January 2012

with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon acting as an intermediary. No solution could be reached in the negotiations from which the UN and the communities had significant expectations.

While the UN negotiations were ongoing, no diplomatic criticism except for that of Turkey and the TRNC was made regarding the GCA’s drilling tender. On the contrary, the latter was encouraged not to take a step back.

3.1. The GCASC’s Second License Contract

Within this direction, the GCA announced on 11 February 2012 that it went out to a new international natural gas and oil exploration-exploitation licensing tender in its so-called exclusive economic zone. It was stated that 12 parcels other than the parcel 12 called “Aphrodite” were included within the scope of its call for tender. It was indicated in the published statement that the applications would be accepted within 90 days as of the date of announcement and the GCA would finalize the applications within 8 months as of the last date of application. According to tender terms, the applications were going to start being received on 11 February and to end on 11 May.

Taking into consideration the so-called concession blocs in this tender announced by Greek Cypriots, it is understood that the majority overlapped Turkey’s continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean. Therefore, Turkey was not late to react to the announced tender. In the statement of the Foreign Ministry with regard to the tender, it announced that “Turkey would not allow under any circumstances foreign oil companies to conduct unauthorized oil/natural gas exploration and exploitation activities in the overlapping areas and would take all necessary measures to protect its rights and interests in the maritime areas falling within its continental shelf”.⁶⁷ Besides, the license fields in the Greek side’s tender did not only violate Turkey’s continental shelf. They also overlapped the license fields granted by the TRNC to TPAO on 22 September 2011. Ankara considered that the tenders an-

nounced by the GCA and the granted licenses were unlawful.

Within this framework, it was declared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that “the international companies that might be interested in bidding for the tender would absolutely confront Turkey and the TRNC; and thus would lead to an undesired tension in this case; Turkey, in such eventuality, would give every support to the TRNC to prevent possible violations of Turkish Cypriot concession blocks and thus to protect their rights and interests in the maritime areas.” The steps unilaterally taken by the GCA concerning the maritime jurisdiction and the measures taken by Turkey in return inevitably increased the tension in the Mediterranean and in the region.

The unilateral initiatives put into effect by the GCA without any comprehensive solution to the Cyprus question aggravated the problem day by day. Consequently, the tensions might be defused if the works conducted for hydrocarbon exploration are postponed until after the solution process and a joint commission represented by Greek Cypriots and Turks takes decisions on the future of the hydrocarbon exploration/exploitation activities under UN auspices.

Emphasizing on a solution seeking within the framework of the “European Coal and Steel Community” model may start a reasonable and necessary process. Otherwise, it is seen that the parties forge ahead towards a close conflict. Noble Energy company’s declaration that a natural gas reserve was found in the parcel 12 called “Aphrodite” in December 2011 promoted participation in the GCA’s second licensing tender. Likewise, Noble Energy mentioned that around 5 to 8 trillion cubic meters of natural gas reserves existed in this region.

Fifteen companies bidding for the tender of the parcel 12 were remarkable for pointing out the scale of the encouragement. Following the evaluation of the bids, the Greek Administration announced to the public on 30 October 2012 that it decided to grant licenses for 4 parcels (2,

3, 9 and 11). When the licensed parcels are analyzed, it is understood that they were the blocs surrounding the parcel 12. On the other hand, these parcels are close to Israel’s Leviathan region, which also led to intense interest in them. Indeed, it had already been released to the public that the Leviathan region was rich in natural gas reserves, before the beginning of exploration activities in the Aphrodite region. Within the scope of the tender, the parcels 2 and 3 were granted to the consortium of Eni (Italy) and Kogas (South Korea) while the parcel 9 was licensed to the consortium of Total (France), Novatek (Russia) and GPB Global Resources (Russia).⁶⁸ On the other hand, Total also obtained the concession to explore oil and natural gas in the parcel 11 by itself.⁶⁹ It is seen on the map 4 above that the fields other than the parcel 11 fell within the concession blocs that the TRNC granted to TPAO. As a result of the second tender opened by the GCA, France, Italy, Russia and South Korea became part of the question by means of their energy companies, following the USA and Israel.

Turkish Foreign Ministry harshly criticized the companies bidding for the tender upon the announcement of their application. The Ministry indicated in the statement dated 18 May 2012 that “the companies would be responsible for the tensions that might arise in the region if the mentioned companies entered into cooperation with the GCA in the field of natural gas in spite of all warnings and the companies that would cooperate with the GCA would not be involved in the energy projects in Turkey.”⁷⁰

Turkey and the TRNC came to a phase where they could not legally protect their own rights and interests within the framework of the peaceful approaches of the international law.

Turkish authorities also called the companies “not to conduct operations in the conflictual maritime areas in terms of the Cyprus question and to withdraw from the mentioned tender.”⁷¹ However, no result was yielded. Following the declaration of the company names that would sign agreements on 30 October, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a statement, reiterating its statements dated 15 February 2019 and 18 May 2012.⁷² The biggest problem for Turkey was its lack of power of sanction against these energy companies in the international arena. In other words, Turkey and the TRNC came to a phase where they could not legally protect their own rights and interests within the framework of the peaceful approaches of the international law.

The solution proposals of Turkey and the TRNC concerning the conflictual maritime areas were not taken into consideration by their counterparts. The Greek side continued to claim on any platform that “they were taking their own actions and implementing the agreement every time within the framework of the provisions of international law, so they were acting within the framework of their own sovereignty rights.” All these acts and attitudes both suspended the efforts to find solutions to the reunification of the island and led to emergence of new uncompromisable conflicts.

Considering the warnings that Turkey made in terms of international law as “threat and provocation”, the GCA de facto maintained its ambiguous discourse about the distribution of natural gas revenues and the search for a solution on the island. The current conditions going on without any change also caused Turkey to come up with de facto solutions complying with the international law and to take similar steps to the GCA’s unilateral policies within this context.

3.2. Energy-oriented Solution Seeking

It is seen that Turkey started to make significant investments in the oil and natural gas exploration technology in order to change the imported sources into domestic resources on one hand and to obtain national power in the oil and

natural gas exploration and drilling activities. The disagreements in the East Mediterranean were a severe lever for this decision to be made. Considering that the competitive power of oil and natural gas was going to exist at least until 2050, the implementation of such a policy can be deemed as a correct move. The seismic reports of oil and natural gas exploration urge upon the information that the drilling depth is 4500-5000 meters in the Mediterranean and 6000-6500 in the Black Sea.

Despite this, experts say that Piri Reis seismic exploration ship assigned for seismic exploration in the East Mediterranean could make examination until 1200 meters at most. Therefore, Turkey’s launching of Piri Reis ship on 26 September 2011 as a retaliation to the GCA was far away from a realistic reaction. With the aim of closing the mentioned technological gap, carrying out exploration activities suitable for ground conditions and showing a realistic reaction to the Greek side, Barbaros Hayreddin Pasa (BHP) ship capable of conducting bidimensional and tridimensional seismic scanning until eight-kilometer depth in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea was put into service by TPAO on 23 February 2013. Having been constructed in Dubai in 2011 for Norwegian company Polarcus, the seismic exploration ship was purchased by TPAO in 2013.

Upon the flag change, 84-meter-long seismic exploration ship that was called “Barbaros Hayreddin Pasa” and had advanced technology disturbed the Greeks seriously. After this phase, it can be said that Turkey started to make its influence felt within the framework of two principal policies in terms of maritime areas in the East Mediterranean Sea. The first of them was to actively carry out oil and natural gas exploration activities in the fields of TPAO licensed by Turkey and the TRNC. The second was not to allow the companies licensed by the GCA, in the conflictual maritime areas between the GCA and the TRNC as well as between the GCA and Turkey, to conduct oil and natural gas exploration operations in the mentioned parcels.

Turkish Naval Forces Command plays a vital role in bringing both policies into action. Concretely speaking, Turkish Naval Forces Command acts effectively in order to protect Turkey's rights and interests in the areas of its maritime jurisdiction in the East Mediterranean, with the Operation Mediterranean Shield as of 1 April 2006. Within the scope of the Operation Mediterranean Shield, Turkish Naval Forces Command 1) provides protection and support to the exploration ships operating on behalf of Turkey in the East Mediterranean, 2) warns the exploration ships about their unauthorized exploration activities on behalf of other countries within Turkey's maritime jurisdiction, 3) prevents the exploration ships from maintaining exploration activities without permission from Turkish authorities.⁷³

The natural gas explored offshore in 2011, the normalization process of the relations between Turkey and Israel, that went through a crisis after Mavi Marmara Incident (31 May 2010), when Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu apologized to his counterpart Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on 22 March 2013, the incidents breaking out in Ukraine at the end of 2013, the bankruptcy of the GCA economy, the diplomatic initiatives of the USA looking for a new balance in the East Mediterranean were certain primary developments that motivated the restart of the Cyprus negotiations. The project of transferring the Mediterranean energy resources to Europe through Turkey was frequently focused on in this period. Thanks to this US-supported project, it was thought that Turkey's and Europe's dependence on Russian gas resources would be diminished and therefore, Russia's leadership in the field of natural gas would end. Again, on the same axis, one of the important topics of the agenda was the conviction that the natural gas resources in the East Mediterranean constituted a new diplomatic opportunity that might ameliorate Turkey-EU relations, solve the Cyprus question and pave the ground for improving Turkey-Israel relations. Especially with Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline Project (TANAP) signed

between Turkey and Azerbaijan on 26 June 2012, it was emphasized that the East Mediterranean gas could be transported to Europe in a shorter period and at a cheaper cost. However, all these scenarios were focused on the solution of the Cyprus question.

At the very beginning of 2014, the search for cooperation around the East Mediterranean gas hopefully opened the door of the Cyprus negotiations again. It can be said that the driving force of the negotiations was to end the eye-for-an-eye drilling process that increased the tensions and made the solution more conflictual between the GCA and the TRNC as well as between Turkey and the GCA. The benefits of the natural gas cooperation among Cyprus-Turkey-Israel-EU motivated the parties again to solve the Cyprus question and, within this framework, the Cyprus negotiations started again under UN auspices on 11 February 2014. Despite the direct support of notably the USA, EU and the UN, the negotiations did not reach the expected solution again. US Vice-president Joe Biden even visited the island on 21 May 2014 and held meetings with both leaders in order to show clearly that he supported the process.

The diplomats in charge of energy affairs in US Secretary of State also accompanied the Vice-president, which showed that the USA was looking for alternative options in order to prevent its European allies from being dependent on Russian energy resources and that, within this context, it supported the Cyprus negotiations. Walking out from the negotiation table on 24 July, the GCA leader Nikos Anastasiadis⁷⁴ alleged on 7 October that Turkey sent warship to its natural gas exploration field and released to the public its decision to withdraw from the negotiations.

An important issue that should be underlined at this point is that natural gas was not a secondary but primary aspect of the Cyprus question from then on. When a Bahama registered ship named "SAIPEM 10000" arrived in the region on 25 September 2014 to launch oil and natural gas

exploration operations in the parcel 9 granted by the GCA to Eni/Kogas consortium, “TCG Bafra” corvette registered under Turkish Naval Forces Command made a call to the mentioned ship, saying that “it was in Turkish maritime jurisdiction and should leave the shelf.”⁷⁵

However, TCG Bafra started to monitor SAIPEM 10000 ship closely since it did not take the call into consideration. This initiative regarding the drilling activities led to a situation contrary to the goodwill principle of the negotiations and the positive atmosphere existing before the negotiations. In a written statement the TRNC Foreign Ministry made on 3 October 2014, it considered the initiation of drilling activities in the parcel 9 with Bahama registered “SAIPEM 10000” ship as a “concerning development” in a period when a new special advisor was assigned by the UN Secretary-General, with expectations that he would play an active role in the Cyprus negotiations, and a new chapter was opened in the negotiations.⁷⁶ The TRNC President Derviş Eroğlu and the GCA leader Nikos Anastasiadis agreed to carry the structured negotiations to the following phase in the meeting held on 17 September, with the participation of Special Advisor on Cyprus to the UN Secretary-General Espen Barth Eide. Within the scope of the Cyprus negotiations of the leaders, they were supposed to come together again in the buffer zone in Nicosia on Thursday, 9 October.

One day before the leaders’ meeting dated 17 September, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu visited the TRNC on 16 September. In the TRNC where Davutoğlu went on his first visit abroad, he issued a call for peace in the joint press conference with President Eroğlu. Davutoğlu stated as follows:

“I take this opportunity to address Mr. Anastasiadis: Let’s make peace as immediate as possible, today but not tomorrow, this week but not the next week, this year but not the next year. (...) If the Greek Prime Minister is ready, let’s first go south together, have a cup of tea and talk. Let’s go north afterward altogether again.

The Mediterranean Sea has been the common sea of many civilizations, many peoples. Let’s build peace here altogether. (...) I am addressing the allied countries having especially contributed to the process of negotiating framework such as the United Kingdom, the USA: Protect the negotiating framework. You have your efforts on it, too. Let’s build peace on that negotiating framework.”⁷⁷

The tensions rising as a result of the unilateral drilling initiatives of the GCA disrupted the negotiations starting on 11 February. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused the GCA of acting irresponsibly and declared that “it would not be acceptable under any circumstances if the Greek side prioritized acting by itself concerning the natural resources instead of partnership and equal distribution and it supported the TRNC’s statement dated 3 October within this context.”⁷⁸ Despite all the warnings, the Greek side decided to withdraw from the meetings on 7 October 2014 on the grounds that Turkey intervened with the GCA’s sovereignty right in the maritime areas and used military threats. Turkey deemed this decision of the GCA as “a clear indicator of insincerity” and “a sign showing that the Greek side did not want a new partnership.”⁷⁹ Therefore, all the expectations of commonwealth, stability and security vision in the East Mediterranean region were put aside once again.

The major reason underlying the dispute in Cyprus was that the GCA directly signed agreements with Israel, Egypt and Lebanon through the EEZ it declared and that it granted the licenses of these parcels to international companies that were highly likely to carry out lobbying activities.

However, the GCA always continued to ignore Turkish Cypriots who are “the primary constituent of the Republic of Cyprus” pointed out by the 1960 agreements and the meetings beginning after 1968. The natural gas regulations implemented between Turkey-TRNC-TPAO in order to remove this inequality that Turkey and the

TRNC faced and to protect the rights and interests of Turkish Cypriots remarkably disturbed the Greek side. On the other hand, the Greek side did not open up to the idea of transferring the East Mediterranean natural gas to Europe through Turkey even though it had more suitable conditions than the other itineraries.

Within this context, it found it reasonable to keep the Cyprus question unsolved and to the rising military and political tension high. That is why it maintained its natural gas exploration activities independently from the negotiation process. The GCA thought that the Cyprus question should be solved before the natural gas distribution. In other words, the main principle is the solution first and then the distribution. The Turkish side, on its part, backs the halting of any kind of natural gas exploration activities until the solution is provided. Especially the economic crisis surrounding the GCA and Greece in this period has increased the need of Nicosia for hot money. The Greek Administration has developed certain financial scenarios such as gaining hot money by means of the tender of explored natural gas reserves and using these reserves as a guarantee for the recovery loans demanded by the EU. It has been foreseen that both hot money will enter the country and the country's economy will gain stability through the tenders. However, the tenders opened to international companies and then the agreements signed show that Turkish Cypriots will not have any authority to take decisions on the natural gas activities as long as the negotiation process continues at this pace and with this understanding.

“The natural gas regulations implemented between Turkey-TRNC-TPAO remarkably disturbed the Greek side.”

In parallel with the above-mentioned viewpoint, the GCA has continued signing bilateral military cooperation agreements with countries that might affect the balance of power and cooperation agreements for natural gas and oil exploration with international companies that might contribute to the lobbying activities on its own behalf. The main purpose of this policy is to get rid of the economic bottleneck on one hand and to balance Turkey in the region on the other hand.

The scenarios or the speculations about the energy resources in the region are followed rigorously by several countries since they constitute great importance for economic, political and geopolitical balances. There is still no clear information that it has been agreed upon the importance of energy exploration in the East Mediterranean region for the world's market. Even so, it is strongly estimated that it could affect the energy-based balances of power between the countries of the region.

As a retaliation for the GCA's starting oil and natural gas exploration operations in the parcel 9 with Bahama registered ship SAIPEM 10000 on 25 September 2014, Ankara decided to send “BHP” seismic exploration ship to the region, depending on the agreements made between the TRNC and Turkey. The mentioned ship arrived in the region under the supervision of Turkish Naval Forces on 20 October, whereupon the Greek Administration declared that BHP ship entered its EEZ “unlawfully”, accompanied by two military ships and it called the National Council to an urgent meeting to discuss the measures to be taken.

On the other hand, a military exercise was cooperated by Russia-Israel-GCA on the same day, with the aim of threatening Turkey that had started natural gas exploration, accompanied by military ships. The Greek National Council convened under the leadership of Greek Administration President Nikos Anastasiadis on 21 October announced that they would take certain

measures against Turkey.⁸⁰ The most striking sanction for Turkey among all that the Greek Administration considered was about blocking Turkey-EU relations. Besides, these measures were not new, the GCA had applied these measures since the beginning of its EU membership.

Therefore, Turkish authorities considered the mentioned measures to be deprived of the power to constitute a new situation that would make Turkey concerned. Turkey wants to record that it opposes the activities ongoing on the GCA side and wants international institutions and actors to stop these activities, which underlies the diplomatic and de facto actions about the maritime jurisdiction in the East Mediterranean. Almost five months after the political tensions, SAIPEM 10000 that had been sailing off Cyprus since September 2014 for drilling activities in the parcels 2, 3 and 9 granted by GCA to Eni/Kogas consortium within the framework of the hydrocarbon resources activities of the GCA around the island left the island on 31 March 2015, followed by BHP ship. Thanks to this, the exploration activities of both sides stopped reciprocally.⁸¹

On 26 April 2015, Mustafa Akıncı who won the second round in the elections took office as the TRNC President. Fourth President of TRNC, Akıncı assigned the TRNC Foreign Minister Özdil Nami as “Turkish Cypriot negotiator” on 1 May. The TRNC President Akıncı and the GCA leader Anastasiadis came together at a dinner where Special Advisor to UN Secretary-General Espen Barth Eide was also present on 11 May. In the statement that Special Advisor Eide made following the meeting in the buffer zone, it was indicated that the negotiations were going to start over on 15 May. In the negotiation process that started again, the parties held concise meetings on 29 June and intensified negotiations as of November. The leaders continued the mentioned intensified negotiation process in Mont Pèlerin district of Switzerland on 7-11 November 2016. The deadlock in the negotiations caused by the lack of result in Mont Pèlerin meetings

was resolved after the meeting that the leaders had on 1 December 2016.

As a result of this, Cyprus Conference was convened in Geneva on 12 January 2017, with the participation of Cypriot community leaders and guarantor states as well as the EU as an observer. Nevertheless, “Enosis” overshadowed the negotiation process this time. Chauvinist ELAM (National Popular Front) submitted a regulation to the Greek Assembly on 15 January 1950 regarding the commemoration of the plebiscite, held for Enosis purposes among the Greek, at Greek schools. The adoption of the regulation on 10 February 2017 led to a chilling effect on the TRNC and Turkey. The TRNC Assembly of the Republic published a joint declaration on 13 February, condemning the adopted regulation.

The TRNC Assembly considered the accepted regulation as “an attitude that would deepen the distrust of Turkish Cypriots and a severe disrespect for the main philosophy of the solution negotiations.”⁸² Following this development, the negotiation process halted on 16 February 2017. Upon the declaration of President Akıncı that he would not continue the negotiations if the Greek side did not take a step back from its decision “to celebrate the Enosis referenda at schools”, the Greek side had to take a step back from this regulation at the beginning of April. As a consequence of the negotiations starting over from where they were left off, it was agreed upon the reconvention of Cyprus Conference in Crans-Montana district of Switzerland between 28 June – 7 July 2017. However, Cyprus Conference ended on 7 July without any positive consequence.

3.3. Deepening Crisis: GCASC’s Third License Contract

During the Cyprus negotiations, it was seen that natural gas tendering continued, but drilling activities were not realized. On 24 March 2016, the Greek Cypriot Administration announced a

new tender. Paragraphs 6, 8 and 10 were included in the scope of the third tender and it was announced that the companies could submit their bids until 22 July 2016. Even though the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the TRNC reported that “during a period of intense negotiations, the GCASC should avoid taking such actions that would harm the current positive atmosphere”⁸³, the GCASC did not take a step back. The parcels, which have been the subject of the tenders opened up to now, consisted of areas not covered by the Turkish continental shelf.

Thus, Turkey gave response to the first and second tenders in accordance with the rights and interests of TRNC and the Turkish Cypriots. Parcel no. 6 located on the third tender is a matter of dispute between GCASC and Turkey. Turkey argues that parcel no. 6 is in its own continental shelf. Hence, Ankara declared that “it would not allow foreign companies to engage in unauthorized activities of hydrocarbons in Turkey’s maritime jurisdiction areas; that it would take any measure to protect its rights and interests in its continental shelf”.⁸⁴ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the licenses that GKRY could attempt to grant were null and void, and called on the countries and companies which may think of getting engaged in hydrocarbon exploration activities to have common sense and “not to take steps that could adversely affect the solution process of the issue”.⁸⁵

One of the reasons for the Turkish warships blocking the hydrocarbon exploration activities in the 6th parcel of the “SAIPEM 12000” drilling ship belonging to the Italian Eni Company on 9 February 2018 is the given dispute. The companies applying for the parcels that went out to tender were announced on 27 July by the Greek Cypriot Administration Spokesman Nikos Christodoulides. According to the statement, six applications were made by eight companies for three parcels. Following the spokesman, the Minister of Energy of the GCASC, Yiorgos Lakkotrypis, also shared information including the map of the companies that bid for the tender. The Minister of Energy

stated that the companies were very satisfied with the bidding of important companies and listed the bidding companies as follows:

ExxonMobil (USA), Qatar Petroleum (Qatar), Statoil (Norway), Eni (Italy), Total (France), Cairn Energy (England-Scotland), Delek/Avner (Israel).⁸⁶ Eni and Total bid for parcel 6; Eni, Cairn Energy and Delek/Avner bid for parcel 8 and Eni, Total, ExxonMobil, Qatar Petroleum and Statoil for parcel 10. Note that the parcel with the highest bid is the field numbered 10. As a matter of fact, this parcel is adjacent to Egypt’s Zohr gas field. The Italian Eni Company announced on 30 August 2015 that Egypt’s Zohr field has rich natural gas resources. Specifying that the Zohr field covers a 100 square kilometer area, Claudio Descalzi, CEO of Eni, stated that “this discovery is one of the world’s largest natural gas exploration discoveries” and “it will transform Egypt’s energy scenario”.⁸⁷

Italian oil company Eni has 60 percent of the Zohr field while Russian Rosneft has 30 percent and British BP holds 10 percent. The Zohr field is approximately 6.5 km away from the EEZ border unilaterally declared by the GCASC and is directly opposite the parcel numbered 11. On 21 December 2016, the Greek Cypriot Administration announced the final results of the third round of the tender. According to this, it is deemed appropriate to license the parcel no. 6 to the Eni and Total partnership, the parcel no. 8 to Eni and finally the parcel no. 10 to ExxonMobil and Qatar Petroleum partnership.⁸⁸ On March 7, 2017, the authorization of the parcels by the GCASC by means of a Council of Ministers resolution were conducted as shown in the table below.

As can be easily understood from the table below, as of March 2017 GCASC granted license for 8 out of 13 parcels. On a country basis; international energy companies from Italy, France, South Korea, USA, Israel, Qatar, England and the Netherlands conduct natural gas and oil exploration activities in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Table 1: Fields Authorized by GCASC (2017)⁸⁹

| Parcel | 2, 3, 9 | 6 | 8 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|----------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|---|----------------------|--|
| Operator | ENI | ENI | ENI | EXXON MOBIL | ENI | NOBLE ENERGY |
| Company | Eni %80 Kogas %20 | Eni %50 Total %50 | Eni %100 | Exxon Mobil %80 Qatar Petroleum % 20 | Eni %50 Total %50 | Noble % 35 Shell % 35 Delek %15 Avner %15 |

4. Global Actors and Regional Interests

The long coastline, starting from the southern side of the Gibraltar Strait and stretching out to the Gulf of Iskenderun, has increasingly become a stage for the energy-based power struggle. The radical change in the political and social life as a result of the Arab Spring has brought about a new structure that reverses inter-state relations. It is not possible to explain this change only through the Arab Spring.

In fact, the Arab Spring has emerged in a period when natural gas and oil exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean has accelerated. With the discovery of new energy resources, the Mediterranean, which 30 percent of global trade passes through, has become more important in terms of the international balance of power. The idea that the natural gas resources discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean might be a good opportunity to diversify Europe's energy paths has also been a catalyst for the construction of new political accounts. The possibility that this energy-based power struggle cannot be solved in an inclusive manner within the framework of law, equity and cooperation may lead the riparian countries to a land conflict among themselves.

While some of the new energy sources in the Eastern Mediterranean are explored in the regions where historical disputes exist, some of them have been identified in the nondescript maritime jurisdictions which will give birth to new conflicts. On the other hand, noteworthy determinations

have been made in four areas so far. These are Zohr (Egypt), Aphrodite (GCASC) and Leviathan plus Tamar (Israel). As of today, the only field which produces is Tamar. It was announced that the natural gas flow from Tamar, which is located 90 km away from Haifa, started on March 31, 2013. The first discovery in the Tamar area took place in 2009.

With the discovery of the first natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean region, an energy-based intensive diplomacy traffic has begun to appear. Moving along the lines of energy security, this movement of diplomacy is progressing rapidly in the direction of bringing economic, political and military cooperation together. In this process, the GCASC, Israel and Egypt experience a significant rapprochement. In particular, the military coup in Egypt on July 3, 2013, has had a triggering effect on the progression of cooperation among the three states. However, this new situation may lead to new problems that could lead to substantial changes in the content of the Cyprus, Palestine, Aegean, Lebanon and Syria issues. AFTER 2010, Israel got involved in the GCASC-Egypt-Greece relations that had been developing since 2003. As a result of the discovery of the Eastern Mediterranean energy resources, two tripartite cooperation mechanisms (GCASC-Egypt-Greece and GCASC-Israel-Greece) that serve the same purpose have been formed. The aim of these countries is to bring natural gas resources in the Cyprus-Egypt-Israel triangle to international markets in cooperation.

In this regard, the countries mentioned in the context of regional cooperation, stability, energy security and regional welfare work in the name of the joint work. Nevertheless, there exist solid and serious objections arguing that international law violations exist on the basis of these cooperation initiatives, Turkey and the TRNC suffer from the loss of rights and benefits and their sovereignty is violated.

The development of natural gas discovered in the Israel- GCASC-Egypt triangle depends on an efficient and productive export infrastructure. The common desire of Israel, Egypt and GCASC is to overcome this problem through the natural gas pipeline from Israel to Europe. The US and the EU are supporting the project, called “East-Med”, which aims to transport the Eastern Mediterranean natural gas to Europe by means of a pipeline to be built under the Mediterranean and to pass through GCASC, Crete, Italy and Greece. The signatory states, namely Israel, Greek Cypriot Administration, Italy and Greece, took the first concrete step through the joint declaration made on April 3, 2017 in Tel Aviv.

The US and the EU believe that Russia’s energy pressure on Europe will be reduced by this project. Research on the subject and expert opinions underline that the East-Med project is not an economically viable route. Numerous scientific research agree that the transfer of the Eastern Mediterranean gas via Turkey would be cheaper and more stable and offer more in terms of regional stability. The decision by GCASC-Israel-Greece to develop trilateral cooperation in the Mediterranean and the agreements they have signed at this point have pushed the delivery of the Eastern Mediterranean gas to the international markets through Turkey and the possible energy transmission line projects from Ceyhan to Israel into the background. It is also pretty much likely that the East-Med project will deepen the Cyprus conflict and consolidate the division of the island. President Mustafa Akıncı summarized the East-Med project with these words: “This is not a route of peace.” Despite the comments that the delivery of the Eastern Mediterranean gas to

Europe via Turkey is more appropriate in both technical and financial terms, the European Union has announced that it will support the East-Med Project in an active manner. The US and the EU see the East-Med project as an alternative to the North Stream-2 project.

The project, which is carried out by Russia, requires two separate sea pipelines with a total capacity of 55 billion cubic meters (1200 km) from Russia to Germany under the Baltic Sea. The US is highly responsive to the North Stream-2 project, which was signed on September 4, 2015, and has been mostly completed, and is looking for ways to curb the project. Similarly, it is known that the US is against the Turkish Stream project. According to the US, two projects deepen the energy dependence of Europe on Russia. On the other hand, Germany, which has the biggest economy of the EU, supports the North Stream-2 project.

Therefore, it can be said that the East-Med and North Stream-2 projects lead to an energy distinction in the EU. Israeli news reports suggest that energy investments in the Israel- GCASC-Egypt triangle will be the most reliable natural gas supply center to replace the North Sea in 30-40 years. France seems to follow a strategy to expand its own sphere of influence in the Eastern Mediterranean. For this purpose, it aims at establishing close relations with Egypt, Israel and GCASC. With the discovery of natural gas, France’s interest in Cyprus has intensified. In this context, with its political power of being a member of the UN Security Council and a founding member of the EU, France has implemented the strategy of making the Greek Cypriots dependent on itself in political and military ways. This strategy came to light on 28 February 2007 with the “Defense and Military Cooperation Agreement” signed by French Defense Minister Michelle Alliot-Marie and Greek Cypriot Foreign Minister George Lilikas. According to the agreement, Greek Cypriot military personnel will be trained in French war academies, and the Greek Cypriot Administration and France will organize a joint military exercise.

Perhaps the most delicate point of the agreement is to allow France to use the Andreas Papandreou Air Base and the Zigi Naval Base in the south of the island. France can be said to have obtained a good outpost and bridgehead in organizing strategic area. Turkey regarded France's initiative as "a worrying development" and "an act contrary to the 1960 Cyprus Treaty"⁹⁰ and requested from France to show the text of the agreement. France, on the other hand, stated that "the agreement was a technical and routine agreement made with other EU members and that there was no content such as the use of bases in Cyprus as alleged". A new agreement was signed in Paris on April 4, 2017, which extended the scope of the 28 February 2007 Defense and Military Cooperation Agreement.

In July 2018, according to the agreement which entered into force by being published in the Official Gazette; the Greek Administration will grant the French army the right to continuously use air and sea bases in his country, and in return, France will also support the Greek Cypriot Administration concerning the safety of energy drillings and maritime traffic in the Eastern Mediterranean. With this agreement, the Greek Cypriot Administration aimed both to win the political support of France, member of both the UN Security Council and EU, and to meet the need of a military ally to curb Turkey in the Mediterranean.

The Greek Cypriot Administration's engagement in an alliance and cooperation against Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean and, at this point, its achievement in receiving full support from the EU and the US have increased the reaction of Russia. From the Cold War onwards, Russia's Cyprus policy is based on an "independent and nonaligned Cyprus". Russia has opposed the possibility that Cyprus with high geopolitical value in the Mediterranean get under the control of Turkey and Greece, NATO members. In other words, the suspicion that the US would indirectly turn Cyprus into a NATO base was one of the biggest concerns of the Kremlin against the Eastern Mediterranean.

The efforts regarding the militarization of Cyprus, starting with the offering of the establishment of military bases for France and the US, pave the way for dangerous effects which could impair the regional stability.

It is seen that this anxiety that existed in the past still continues. Anastasiadis's multifaceted foreign policy conducted at every opportunity to contain Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean brings about the isolation of Russia from the Eastern Mediterranean as well. At this point, while the aim of the Greek Cypriot side is Turkey, the EU and the US allegedly target Russia. That the Russian Foreign Ministry Press Secretary Maria Zaharova said, "Moscow cannot ignore the anti-Russian movements. If they are implemented, Russia will have to take measures" in December 2018 is an important indicator of Russian dissatisfaction with the politics of GCASC. The efforts regarding "the militarization of Cyprus", starting with the offering of the establishment of military bases for France and the US, pave the way for dangerous effects which could impair the regional stability."

Although Prodromos Prodrome, spokesperson of the Greek Cypriot Administration stated that they did not take action to increase the military presence on the island and that their aim was to establish facilities only for humanitarian missions, this statement was not accepted as a reassuring explanation, which may reduce tension in the Eastern Mediterranean. China, which is a global actor, is another country that closely follows the international struggle on Eastern Mediterranean energy resources. China's interest in the region has increased with the "One Belt, One Road" project. Agis Loizou, the Greek Cypriot ambas-

sador to Beijing, told Chinese International Radio in December 2015 that Southern Cyprus would play an active role in the construction of the “One Belt, One Road” project. In this context; diplomatic contacts between the two countries are carried out in order to strengthen the existing good relations in tourism, trade, renewable resources, research and education. In addition, the Taiwan problem has been the main factor driving China’s Cyprus policy.

This is a prominent factor that brings both countries closer together. At the reception organized on 12 December 2016 to mark the 45th anniversary of the diplomatic relationship between Cyprus and China, Greek Cypriot leader Nikos Anastasiadis reiterated that they would actively participate in the “One Belt, One Road” Project and pointed out that Cyprus was one of the major crossroads in the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” project.

As predicted the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” project is the sea transportation line that will connect China to the Persian Gulf through the Indian Ocean and to the Mediterranean through the Red Sea. Thus, China’s commercial and logistics network will reach to the Asian-African-European markets by sea. At this point, Cyprus has a key role in the Eastern Mediterranean. Especially in 2015, the development of the international transport infrastructure of the

Suez Canal, one of the most important maritime passages in the world, has increased the commercial and logistic value of Cyprus.

It is known that China, which hired old Larnaca Airport from the Greek Cypriot Administration in March 2012, is conducting an intensive diplomacy to maintain these initiatives in ports and energy. For example; visiting Southern Cyprus in December 2015, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi explained that China is interested in Limassol Port and that it wishes to make Cyprus the maritime base of the region.

Within the scope of “the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road” project, China is making significant investments in ports that are important for international maritime trade. Among these investments are Pakistan/Gwadar, Greece/Piraeus, Turkey/Kumport and Israel/Haifa Port. Besides, the fact that the Beijing Administration opened its first overseas military base in Djibouti, which cut the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, does not escape from our attention. At the same time, China is planning to complete the largest port of Mediterranean and North Africa by 2023 in the city of Sharash, Algeria. As you can see, China, the Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, is also looking for ways to turn the international weakness in the Mediterranean into an opportunity.

Conclusion

Since 1999, when the scientific findings of hydrocarbon reserves were obtained on the Eastern Mediterranean coast, the content of the problems in the region started to change radically. After this date, Israel, Lebanon, Southern Cyprus and Egypt made vigorous efforts to explore and commercialize natural gas reserves. Before the limitation of the maritime jurisdiction of the riparian states in the Eastern Mediterranean under a common agreement, signing of bilateral MEB agreements that will bring about disputes between some riparian states and initiation of hydrocarbon exploration and drilling activities in these areas caused disputes between Turkey-GCASC, Turkey-Greece, Turkey-Egypt, Israel-Lebanon and GCASC-TRNC concerning the use of maritime areas.

In this regard, Turkey has continuously opposed the GCASC's signing of MEB limitation agreements with Egypt, Lebanon and Israel since 2003 and giving drilling licenses to international energy companies concerning oil and natural gas activities in the regions declared as MEB on the grounds that the rights and interests of the continental shelf of Turkey and TRNC were violated within the framework of international diplomatic rules. However, Turkey has been unable to obtain any results from these diplomatic initiatives.

While the natural gas and oil exploration activities that have started before the resolution of conflicts on the limitation of maritime jurisdictions and the settlement of Cyprus problem are turning the current issues into a multifaceted complex situation, conflict-based search for new balance makes the Eastern Mediterranean basin vulnerable to unpredictable disputes.

Although there was an optimistic atmosphere that "natural gas reserves could be the locomotive of the region's peace" at first, the results were contrary to expectations. The escalation of political tensions between parties has led to political friction in the Eastern Mediterranean and

caused an atmosphere which is the mixture of "cold peace" and "cold war". In addition, when the ongoing discussions on the discovery, transfer and marketing of hydrocarbon resources are discussed, it is seen that they are based on political estimates rather than economic data. It is a general opinion agreed by the experts that the most efficient and effective way for the transfer of the energy sources to be exploited from the maritime jurisdictions of Israel, Palestine, Cyprus, Lebanon and Egypt in the cheapest and easiest way to the European market is the Egypt-Israel-Cyprus and Turkey route.

Nevertheless, the actors, who believe in political analyzes based on the idea of being an effective player in managing energy resources, have reached a consensus on the Israel-Cyprus-Crete-Greece-Italy (East-Med) route for the transfer of energy resources to these areas in Europe. The acceptance of the route which does not take regional peace and stability into account, is generated by political estimates and constitutes a violation for the economic analysis paves the way for a conclusion that there exists a search for an alliance against Turkey.

The East-Med project, which is an alternative route for Turkey has legal difficulties as well as technical challenges such as cost, time, capacity, sustainability and efficiency. For, some parts of the project remains in the continental shelf claimed by Turkey. Besides, the Cyprus problem stands out as another obstacle. The argument by the supporters of the East-Med projects put forward, "unsettled state of the Cyprus problem is an obstacle to the use of the Turkish route" should also be equally valid for the East-Med project. Just like Greek Cypriots, the Turkish Cypriots have absolute rights over the natural resources which are the common heritage of the island. Therefore, without the consent of the Turkish Cypriots, no authority alone has the right to dispose of the natural resources of the island. Therefore, it is important to carry out joint research on economic cooperation models in which all parties are represented to overcome the existing bilateral conflict. Only such a model

of cooperation can contribute to overcome political problems. Otherwise, disagreements may turn into conflict.

On the other hand, the Eastern Mediterranean gas can give a new impulse to the Turkey-EU relations. Alienating a strong regional state to join the EU from cooperation through the East-Med project is contrary to the EU's founding philosophy. It is very interesting that the idea of ending the centuries-long conflict between France and Germany to establish lasting peace in Europe is not reflected in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, the EU could have pursued a policy of establishing a model similar to the European Coal and Steel Community in the Eastern Mediterranean. The developments in the Levant region provided an important opportunity to re-develop the EU's global power and thus to avoid the idea of "European Union pessimism". Nonetheless, it is a difficult issue to explain why the EU, condemning its future to the national interests, supports projects with high influential power that could let political alliances happen in the region, and narrow economic and social integrations down.

The same applies to the US. The US policy aiming at freeing Europe from dependence on Russian energy cannot be sustained as it could bring down NATO's Mediterranean wing. Today, both the EU and NATO are being questioned by their members due to changing international conjuncture. This situation confronts both organizations with a serious crisis of confidence. In order to overcome the crisis of trust for both organizations and to increase the cooperation among the members, Eastern Mediterranean gas can offer a new opportunity. In the given circumstances, the US and European support for a project which excludes Turkey would not be a rational move for the NATO and EU in these days when the Western alliance gets wounded. Indeed, that the disputes between NATO members cannot be settled in peaceful manners may undermine the functioning of the organization and encourage new conflicts among members in the long term. This may reduce the effectiveness of

the United States, the EU and NATO against Russia and China. As for another important issue, that the United States and EU have given green light to the projects that alienate Turkey may empower the allegation that the social protests that started with the Arab Spring and the fight against Daesh be an "excuse" the global powers use to seize regional energy resources of the region and to redesign it and strengthen the anti-Western rhetoric.



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The Greek Administration's insistence on refraining from the negotiation upon the natural resources of all the island's inhabitants without resolving the Cyprus problem, its claim of sovereignty over the entire island and its activities of delimitation of maritime jurisdictions without taking into account the Turkish continental shelf have been the developments that elevated political tension. Motivated to make the most of the Turkey-US, EU-Turkey, Turkey-Israel and Turkey-Egypt disputes, the GCASC's policies to isolate and contain Turkey are not the attempts to bring solutions to problems in the medium and long terms. GCASC's strategy to turn the natural gas issue into a political trump for the Cyprus problem is beyond a reasonable approach.

Considering the current conditions, it can be argued that the most rational initiative for all parties is to start the solution line from the perspective of economic cooperation. Otherwise, it is envisaged that the insistence on the continuation of the political solution would pave the way for open-ended prolongation of the peace process,

deepening and consolidation of the existing problems and the introducing of the military measures instead of diplomatic initiatives.

Even though the Greek Cypriot side expresses at every opportunity that the Turkish side will receive its deserved share in order to reduce political tension and this very act shows up as a convincing discourse, it is still not a realistic and equitable approach. Likewise, in a political structure where there is no justice in representation, it is inconceivable that a fair share can be accrued. What's more, the dispute is not only limited to the sharing of wealth. The Turkish Cypriots have rights and powers in the political saving of natural resources as well. Therefore, we cannot talk about a constraint or adjournment in the execution of this right and authority. In this case, in addition to the Cyprus negotiations, the principle agreements regarding the management of the natural resources of the island and the revenue to be derived from these sources should be urgently made. The agreements must be signed without delay and before the finalization of the volume of the resources in the maritime jurisdictions of Cyprus and the abandonment of the period of gentlemanship and goodwill.

For how much hydrocarbon reserves are present in the north and south of the island is not yet clear. This period of time, when all activities remain as a scenario or project, and no serious investments are carried out, should be evaluated

in the best way. In other words, it is necessary to take the necessary diplomatic steps before going into the phase of indispensable costs from acceptable costs. It may not be possible to go back to the preceding step again after passing into the indispensable costs phase.

The discovery of commercialisable hydrocarbon reserves in Turkey's Eastern Mediterranean maritime zones or in the fields where TRNC has authorized TPAO to carry out drilling activities, will pave the way for the re-examination of all scenarios on the Eastern Mediterranean gas, especially the East-Med project. Moreover, if there is an adequate amount of energy resources in the north of the island, these resources can be delivered to the markets in a shorter time compared to those in the south via Turkey. The realization of such a projection will lead to the results in favor of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and ultimately to the end of the efforts to unite the entire island under a single state.

As a result, that the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots should firstly reach an agreement on this issue and build common institutional mechanisms by taking into account the hydrocarbon issue separately from the Cyprus problem is more appropriate to the common interests of the island under the current conditions. In this context, a joint commission, directorate or ministry may be a good start.

Chronology

- 17 February 2003:** GCASC-Egypt EEZ Agreement
- 2 March 2003:** Communication by Turkey to the UN of the memorandum that Turkey does not recognize the EEZ agreement between GCASC-Egypt
- 24 April 2004:** Annan Plan Referendum
- 1 May 2004:** EU membership of GCASC under the name “Republic of Cyprus”
- 17 January 2007:** GCASC-Lebanon EEZ Agreement
- 26 January 2007:** GCASC divides the area it declared EEZ into 13 parcels
- 30 January 2007:** Turkish Foreign Ministry’s objection to the parceling
- 15 February 2007:** GCASC’s call for oil and gas exploration tender for the first time
- 15 February 2007:** Turkish Foreign Ministry’s appeal against the tender call
- 28 February 2007:** Signing of the Defense and Military Cooperation Agreement between the GCASC and France
- 30 July 2008:** The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Turkey grants TPAO license to conduct oil and gas exploration activities outside Turkish territorial waters in the Mediterranean
- 14-18 November 2008:** Norwegian-flagged research ship M/V Malene Ostervold carries out oil and gas exploration activities on behalf of TPAO within the maritime jurisdiction areas Turkey determined in the Eastern Mediterranean.
- 19 November 2008:** The Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ objection to the research activities of the research ship M/V Malene Ostervold
- 24 October 2008:** GCASC grants license to American Noble Energy International on the 12th parcel for oil and gas exploration activities.
- 17 December 2010:** GCASC-Israel EEZ Agreement
- 21 December 2010:** Turkish Foreign Ministry’s objection to GCASC-Israel EEZ Agreement
- 19 September 2011:** Noble Energy International commences oil and gas exploration activities in the 12th parcel
- 21 September 2011:** Continental Shelf Delimitation Agreement is signed between Turkey and TRNC

- 22 September 2011:** On 7 September 2011, the TRNC Council of Ministers identifies 7 license areas around Cyprus and the TPAO gives oil and natural gas exploration licenses in these areas.
- 26 September 2011:** Piri Reis launches oil and gas exploration activities in the Eastern Mediterranean.
- 28 December 2011:** Nobel Energy announces that natural gas and oil reserves are found in the 12th parcel.
- 11 February 2012:** GCASC's second call for oil and gas exploration tender.
- 15 February 2012:** Turkish Foreign Ministry's appeal against the call for tender.
- 16 March 2012:** The Council of Ministers of Turkey issues licenses for oil exploration and exploitation to TPAO in the Eastern Mediterranean based on the Anatolia-Egypt median line.
- 22 April 2012:** Egyptian national gas company announces agreement to sell gas to Israel
- 18 May 2012:** Turkish Foreign Ministry warns international companies participating in the tender.
- 19 December 2012:** The second call for tenders comes to an end. Accordingly, the parcels numbered 2, 3 and 9 are given to Eni/Kogas partnership while the parcel numbered 11 is given to Total.
- 23 February 2013:** The commissioning of Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha ship by TPAO
- 31 March 2013:** Israel launches natural gas production at Tamar gas field.
- 3 July 2013:** The military coup occurs in Egypt.
- 25 September 2014:** On behalf of the Eni/Kogas consortium, Bahama-flagged ship SAIPEM 10000 begins the search for oil and natural gas in parcel no. 9.
- 20 October 2014:** Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha launches oil and gas exploration offshore Cyprus.
- 30 August 2015:** The Italian company Eni announces to have found natural gas resources in Egypt's Zohr sea area.
- 24 March 2016:** GCASC's third call for oil and gas exploration tender.
- 25 March 2016:** Turkish Foreign Ministry's appeal against the tender call.
- 21 December 2016:** The formal conclusion of the third tender call. Accordingly, the parcel no. 6 is given to the Eni and Total partnership, the parcel no. 8 is given Eni and the parcel no. 10 is given to the ExxonMobil and Qatar Petroleum partnership.

- 3 April 2017:** Israel, GCASC, Italy and Greece reach a mutual understanding on the East-Med project with the agreement signed in Tel Aviv
- 4 April 2017:** Extending the scope of the 28 February 2007 Defense and Military Cooperation Agreement between the Greek Cypriot Administration and France
- 9 February 2018:** Turkish warships interfere with the hydrocarbon exploration activities of the Italian Eni company's SAIPEM 12000 drilling ship in the 6th parcel.
- 20 February 2018:** Signing of two agreements between the US Noble company operating in Israel, the Israeli Delek company and Egypt's Dolphin Energy Company for the supply of a total of 65 billion cubic meters of natural gas for a period of 10 years (32.5 billion cubic meters from each of the Tamar and Leviathan sites).
- 29 October 2018:** The start of Turkey's first drilling ship Fatih for oil and gas exploration activities Alanya-1 well.

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Seçim sonuçlarının açıklanmasından sonra yaptığı basın toplantısında konuşan Anastasiadis, öncelikli hedefinin ekonomiyi ayağa kaldırmak olduğunu belirtmiştir. Bu amaçla Avrupalı ortaklarıyla yakın bir işbirliğine gireceklerini vurgulayarak, Avrupa'nın desteğine dikkat çekmiştir. "Kıbrıs Avrupa'ya aittir." ifadesini kullanan yeni lider, yeni hükümetin dışa dönük bir dış politika takip edeceğini ve tüm ülkelerle yaratıcı bir işbirliği sağlama yolunda gayret sarf edeceğini belirtmiştir. 1946 yılında Limasol'da dünyaya gelen Anastasiadis, Atina ve Londra'da hukuk tahsili görmüştür. Detaylı bilgi için bkz: *Kıbrıs Haber Ajansı*,

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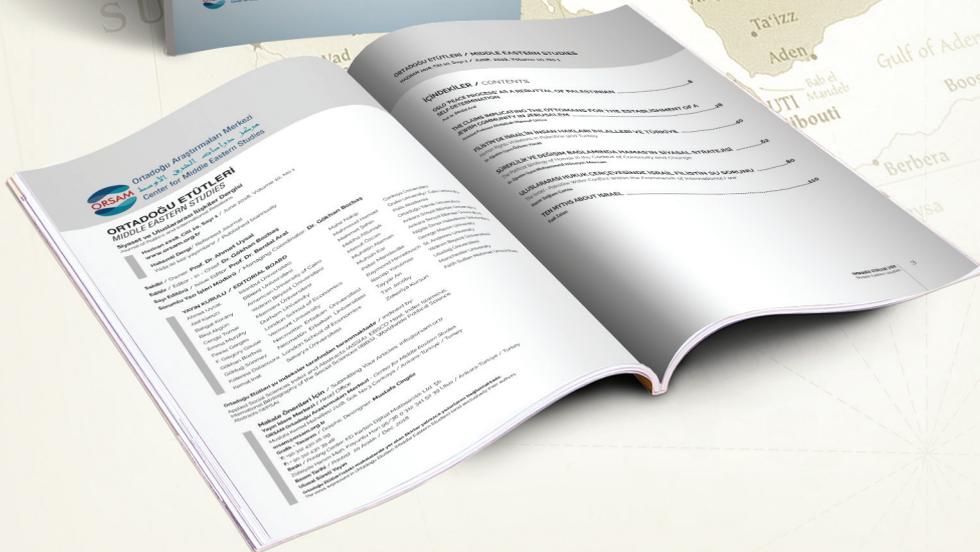
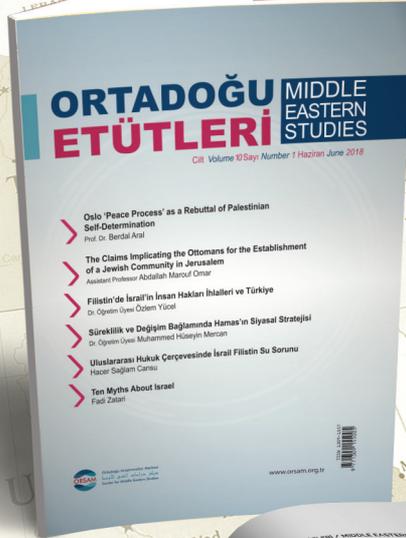
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