

THE CYPRUS QUESTION WITHIN THE AXIS OF ENERGY POLITICS IN THE
EAST MEDITERRANEAN

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JUNE 2022

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EAST MEDITERRANEAN

BY

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DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE PHD

IN

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS

YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY

JUNE 2022

PLAGIARISM

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to study, beginning from the events of the 19th century and based on the structural environment of the balance of powers, the question of Cyprus within different structural frameworks and from a historical perspective of the transitional period in the 20th century (1919-1940) as well as the Cold War breaking out in the second half of the century, and the subsequent post-Cold War events and happenings in the international arena. The present dissertation aims to contribute to the literature by discussing the effects of structural changes and developments on the Cyprus Dispute from the perspective of the new international order within the context of energy politics in the East Mediterranean. The present dissertation will also contribute to the literature by investigating the effects of the geopolitical concerns and races of interest of the countries which are not in the region given the existence of the incompetence of the countries in the region on the solution of the Cyprus Dispute.

Keywords: *East Mediterranean, structural factors, energy politics, geopolitical competition*

ÖZET

Bu tez 19. yüzyıl olaylarından ve güçler dengesine dayanan uluslararası yapıdan başlayarak, 20. yüzyıl geçiş dönemi, Soğuk Savaş ve Soğuk savaş sonrası olaylarda Kıbrıs sorununu değişik yapısal çerçevelerde incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma Doğu Akdeniz’de bulunan enerji kaynakları bakımından yapısal değişme ve gelişmelerin Kıbrıs sorununa nasıl etki ettiğini göstererek literatüre bir katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca bu çalışma Doğu Akdeniz bölgesi dışında olan ülkelerin jeopolitik endişe ve çıkar yarışlarının ve bölgedeki ehliyetsiz devletlerin varlığının Kıbrıs sorununa ve Kıbrıs sorununun çözümüne etkisinin nasıl olduğu konusuna değinerek literatüre ek bir katkı sağlamayı hedeflemektedir

Anahtar sözcükler: Doğu Akdeniz, yapısal faktörler, enerji politikası, jeopolitik yarış

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank her supervisor, Prof. Cengiz Okman for his guidance, inspiration, and feedback throughout the writing of the thesis and her research. She would like to thank Prof. Dr. Hasret omak in introducing her to Prof. Dr. Yařar Onay to whom she thanks for accepting to be in her thesis defense committee. Finally, she would like to give her thanks to the thesis follow- up committee members, Do.Dr.M. Deniz Tansi and Do. Dr. Melih Grgn who challenged her with their questions and spared time for reading and evaluating her work.

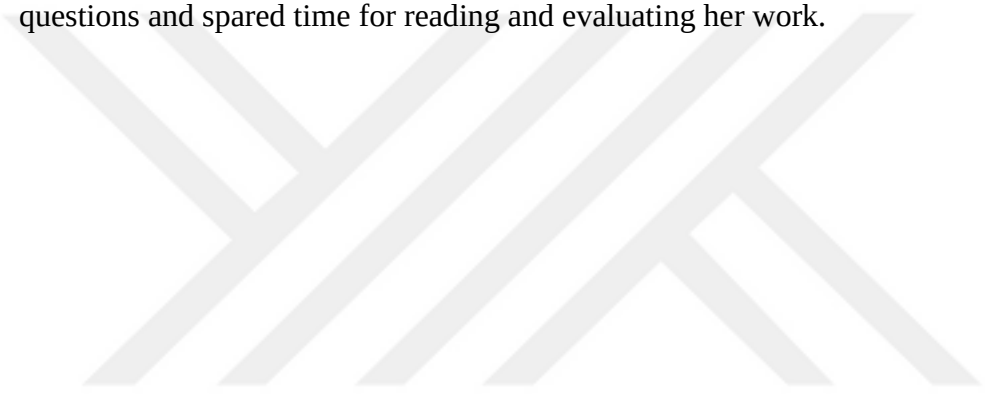


TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ÖZET	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
ABBREVIATIONS	viii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background Information	1
1.1.1. Hypothesis	18
1.1.2. Methodology	21
2. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CYPRUS QUESTION IN A STRUCTURALIST FRAMEWORK.....	22
2.1. A Historical View of Cyprus: The Process Giving the Region Its Current Importance.....	22
2.1.1. The History of Cyprus	23
2.2. Cyprus within the framework of the 19 th century “Balance of Power”:	33
2.3. Cyprus in the 20 th century transition period (1919-1940).....	44
2.3.1 International outlook in the transition period	44
2.3.2. Political progress on Cyprus in the transition period, the Treaty of Lausanne, and the declaration of Cyprus as a Royal colony by Britain	46
2.4. The Cold War period.....	50
2.4.1 Frozen period (1947-1953):.....	51
2.4.2. Conflict and cooperation, competition, or intrigue (1953-1969).....	56
2.4.3. Detente (1969-1979):.....	68
2.5. The Post-Cold War Period	75
Section III: THE FACTOR OF ENERGY AS A NEW DIMENSION TO THE CYPRUS QUESTION	82
3.1 New structural process and the changing political position of Cyprus with respect to Energy	82
3.1.1. The sondage crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus.....	83
3.2. Evaluation of the sondage crisis with respect to international law	104
3.3 Agreements of littoral states with respect to EEZ in the Eastern Mediterranean .	107

Section IV: VIEWS OF REGIONAL AND EXTERNAL ACTORS ON THE CYPRUS HYDROCARBON ISSUE.	112
4.1. Attitudes and strategies of littoral states in the region and the International Stakeholders on the issue of hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation.....	112
5. CONCLUSION.....	143
REFERENCES	148
APPENDIX.....	180



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 The Disputed Blocks in the Eastern Mediterranean	180
Figure 2: Turkish Petroleum Exploration Licence Areas	181
Figure 3: Possible Gains in a Future Turkish-Israeli EEZ Agreement	182
Figure 4: Lebanon-Israel EEZ Conflict and Lebanon Licencing Agreements	183



ABBREVIATIONS

AKEL	Anorthotikon Komma Ergazemenou Laou. The Progressive Party for Communist People
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control Systems
BTC	Baku Tiflis Ceyhan
CENTO	Central Europe North Treaty Organization
CEPS	Center for European Policy Studies
CNOOC	Chinese National Offshore Oil Corporation
CYREP	Cyprus Research and Publishing Center
EOKA	Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agoniston: The Organization of the National Struggle of the Cypriots
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EMGF	East Mediterranean Gas Forum
EU	European Union
FETÖ	Fethullah Gülen Terör Örgütü
ROC	Republic of Cyprus
NAVTEX	Navigational Telex
GCA	Greek Cypriot Administration
GCASC	Greek Cypriot Administration of South Cyprus

GMEI	Greater Middle East Initiative
GNA	Government of National Accord
IGB	Interconnector of Greece and
IISS	The International Institute for Strategic Studies
IRAM	Iran Research Center
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISRES	The International Society for Research in Education and Science
ITLOS	International Tribunal of Law of the Sea
JINSA	Jewish Institute for National Security of America
KRANI	Kurdistan Regional Administration of Northern Iraq
LNG	Liquidified Natural Gas
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NY	New York
PKK	Partîya Karkerên Kurdistanê, Kurdistan Labor Party
PYD	Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat, Democratic Alliance Party
RT	Russia Today
SEAP	SouthEast Anatolia Project
TANAP	Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline

TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
TPAO	Turkish Petroleum Joint StockCompany
USA	United States of America
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention Law of the Sea
UN	United Nations
US	United States
VOA	Voice of America
YPG	Yekîneyên Parastina Gel, Alliance of the Protection of the People
SEAP	Southeast Anatolian Project
SETA	Siyaset Ekonomi ve Toplumsal Araştırmalar

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background Information

The presence of hydrocarbon¹resources in the Eastern Mediterranean,²particularly around the island of Cyprus, has been a factor affecting the delicate geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean. It is said that the Aphrodite gas field, the exclusive economic zone self-proclaimed by Southern Cyprus, holds 5 to 8 trillion cubic meters of gas (Glain, 2012; Oil Daily, 2012). It is believed that the Leviathan and Tamar gas fields, the exclusive economic zones self-proclaimed by Israel and explored by the American company Noble Energy, holds a gas reserve of 11 and 22 trillion cubic feet respectively (Hacaoğlu, 2019). The US Geological Survey in 2010 estimated that there were 1.7 million barrels of undiscovered oil and 122 trillion cubic feet of undiscovered gas on average in the Levant Basin (USGS, 2010). The rising energy demand throughout the EU (European Union), and especially the post-Soviet construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) Crude Oil Pipeline, the new pipelines coming to the fore thereafter and Turkey's increasing importance to the EU's energy safety, led Southern Cyprus to make attempts at having a strategic position in the region by making use of its EU membership advantage.

Having an important place in transportation and trade routes in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Greek Cyprus had also begun taking steps toward becoming a prominent actor in the existing energy potential in the region. Believing that the island would become important in energy transfer, South Cyprus began producing policies to

¹ This is the general term for petroleum and its derivatives. Those with small atoms naturally occur in a gaseous state while those with large atoms occur in a liquid state.

² The Eastern Mediterranean includes Turkey, Syria, Israel, Lebanon, The Palestinian Territories of Gaza Strip and West Bank, Egypt, Southern (Greek) Cyprus, The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), and Jordan. With a coastline of 569 miles, Turkey is the state with the longest coastline on the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, followed by Egypt with 522 miles.

that end. Among these policies are EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone)³ delimitation agreements with Lebanon, Israel, and Egypt and tenders for oil and gas exploration launched subsequently (Siousiouras & Chrysochou, 2014). Furthermore, South Cyprus made a series of decisions on issues against Turkey, including the Cyprus Dispute by consensus with Armenia, Israel, Russia, and the leading countries of EU, namely France and Italy. Greek Cyprus signed a military pact with Armenia (Daily Sabah, 2015). South Cyprus also signed a military cooperation agreement with France in March 2007 which was opposed by Turkey on the grounds of the guarantor agreement and the fact that South Cyprus did not represent all the people of the island (Örmeci, 2021, p. 105). Moreover, Greek Cyprus⁴ also signed a defense cooperation agreement with France on the 15th of May 2019 which would give France the permission to position itself permanently in the Evangelos Florakis naval base and this agreement would give France the right to protect TOTAL, the French firm's sondage ships from any aggressive actions (Ahwal News, 2019). Russia also had signed 11 agreements that entailed the access of Russian navy to the ports of South Cyprus on the 26th of February of 2015 (TASS, 2015; Sabah, 2015). With an ever-increasing demand for energy, even China made attempts to get a share of the hydrocarbon market in the Mediterranean. It was declared that a Chinese company named "China National Offshore Oil Corporation" (CNOOC) bid for the construction of a pipeline that would carry to the land the natural gas that was to be drilled because

³ The concept of 'Exclusive Economic Zone' (EEZ) was described in the Articles 55 – 60 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The EEZ is a legal concept which denotes a country's right to explore and exploit the maritime resources, whether living or non-living, carry out general marine research and exploration activities, establish installations or structures above the sea surface, and install submarine cables and pipelines in an area extending no more than 200 nautical miles. While the term "Continental Shelf" has a relatively more geopolitical meaning, the term "Exclusive Economic Zone" has an economic and legal meaning.

⁴ Greek Cyprus and South Cyprus are used as synonymously to denote the South part of Cyprus populated by Greeks which is not recognized by Turkey as a representative of all the island

of the prospecting works in the Mediterranean, and for the natural gas liquefaction works (Offshore Energy, 2012).

The multilateral cooperation and agreements also prevailed. The East Med gas pipeline agreement project was signed by Israel, Greek Cyprus, and Greece Prime Ministers on the second of January 2020 in Athens (DW, 2020). Greek Cyprus, Greece, France, and Italy undertook joint naval and aerial exercises initiative codenamed “Evnomia” in the Eastern Mediterranean from the 26th to the 28th of August (Financial Mirror, 2020). Israel conducted a part of the Noble Dina exercise including joint maneuvers with Greece, France, and Greek Cyprus on the 12th of March 2021 (Shaham, 2021). The last development of multilateral cooperation among Cyprus, Israel and Greece was in forming “the EuroAsia Interconnector which is a high voltage subsea cable system project planned to connect the electricity grids of Israel, Cyprus, and Greece with the European transmission network.” which will violate the Turkish continental shelf (EuroAsia Interconnector, 2021).

In today’s world where the global need and demand for energy has increased, the Eastern Mediterranean has gained importance in the security of natural gas and petroleum distribution and transfer routes. The Eastern Mediterranean is incredibly important in that the Middle East, the boiling cauldron, has coasts fronting it, and that it plays a key role in controlling the commercial, economic and energy activities concerning the three continents. As a feature increasing its importance even more, the Eastern Mediterranean region lies right between Russia, the Middle East, and North Africa, which are the main energy arteries supporting the energy-deficient EU, US, China, and India (Özer, 2013, p. 69).

Dursun Yıldız, an expert on hydropolitics, associates the importance of the Eastern Mediterranean with its being an energy transfer and distribution corridor as well as sea on which the Middle East has a coastline, with the overall safety of countries having coastlines on the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, with the policies of the global centers of power for the region, and with its being at crossroads for commercial and military traffic. Having provided an inland sea route for shipping with the opening of the Suez Canal, the Mediterranean Sea has also caused an increase in transit and shortened the trade route between the East and West. The Eastern Mediterranean has been the westward sea route for oil transport from the Middle East, which has 65% of the world's crude oil reserves. Crude oil pipelines coming from the Caspian Sea will increase the importance of the Mediterranean Sea as a transport corridor. The Eastern Mediterranean region will be the strategic transfer site, and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline (BTC), the Southeastern Anatolia Project (SEAP), and the marketing of the Russian and Kazakh crude oil via the Eastern Mediterranean will increase the importance of the Eastern Mediterranean ports and the Gulf of Iskenderun even more (Yıldız, 2008, pp. 87-90, 101).

The Armenian attack on Tovuz city in Azerbaijan on the 12th of July 2020, was directed strategically to harm the energy routes going to Turkey and the train route between Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Kars (Çetiner, 2020). Aiming to control the energy, transport, and trade centers of the three continents, actors such as the US, the EU, Russia, and China have already shown an increased level of interest in the region.

Dealing also with the importance of the Eastern Mediterranean to Turkey, Dursun Yıldız states that Turkey is the country which has the longest coastline on the Mediterranean Sea and the geographical advantage to control the Eastern

Mediterranean from the land, sea, and air. Yıldız believes that the Eastern Mediterranean will become more important for Turkey with the opening of Caspian crude oil to the world from the Gulf of Iskenderun, and the additional import and export opportunities to be brought by SEAP (Yıldız, 2009, p. 69).

One of the most important works dealing with the importance of Cyprus alongside the Eastern Mediterranean is the book *Kıbrıs Annan Belgeleri (I., II. III.) Üzerine Değerlendirmeler (Reviews of the Documents of the Annan Plan [I, II, III] For Cyprus)* by Prof. Osman Metin Öztürk states that the island of Cyprus controls the Eastern Mediterranean, and that the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus have been important for being a transition and transport route for the import and export of the rich raw materials coming from the Caspian Region after 1990, Öztürk emphasizes the function of these two places in controlling trade over Gibraltar, Suez, and the Black Sea. He also reports that these two regions control the Middle Eastern and Caspian centers of energy and the pipelines coming from these centers (Öztürk, 2004, pp. 3-4).

Another recent book, dealing with the importance of the East Mediterranean is the edited two volume book *Akdeniz Jeopolitiği* maintains in one of the articles that Cyprus is in the center of naval and air commerce routes controlling the Middle East and Suez Canal. The energy discoveries in the East Mediterranean has also made it an energy transfer center in the 21st century (Kısacık, 2019, pp. 979-980).

The Island will also be controlling both the water problem to emerge in the Middle East and in the Eastern Mediterranean and the important centers of water and transport routes. The Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus have been used as an evacuation zone and attack base during periods of high tension and conflicts in the

region. The US evacuated its citizens through the island of Cyprus during the bloody Lebanese events in the 1980s. Moreover, the British and Americans used the island for their air raids in Iraq (Öztürk, 2004, pp. 4-5).

The importance of Cyprus has increased due to its key role in logistics and intelligence. Today, Cyprus has also an important geographic location for the global surveillance policies of the imperial powers. It is said that the effective intelligence collection and interception system ECHELON (Yıldız & Yaşar, 2012, p. 116) will be coordinated from Cyprus. This is a system which will scan and monitor the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Caucasus from Central Cyprus (Yıldız & Yaşar, 2012, pp. 116-117).

Furthermore, it is becoming more important to control the island of Cyprus for the rogue states (Syria and Iran) neighboring the Eastern Mediterranean which want to have weapons of mass destruction (Yıldız & Yaşar, 2012, p. 5). The value of the island of Cyprus has increased even more with the change of political regimes because of the demands for democracy in a series of countries, beginning with Tunisia and extending to Egypt, Libya, and Syria within the scope of the Arab Spring.

The island of Cyprus is also important for the safety of Turkey. Regarding the balancing of the security risks relating to such countries as Israel and Syria, the island allows the engagement of these countries from various directions and establishment of Turkey's defense line at a further point (Yıldız & Yaşar, 2012, p.6).

In a scenario in which Turkey wishes to safely navigate international waters but can only make this happen by transiting through the Greek territorial waters – as Greece has extended its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles in the Aegean Sea – the

control of Cyprus by actors not supporting Turkey will prevent Turkey from safely navigating through international waters at all. (Yıldız & Yaşar, 2012, p.7). It is a generally accepted fact that the island of Cyprus holds a crucial importance in keeping the Anatolian transfer routes open (Öztürk, 2003, p. 130).

The Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus have also become important in disputes over maritime jurisdictions. The Exclusive Economic Zone delimitation agreements signed between the Southern Cyprus on one side, and Egypt, Lebanon, and Israel, individually, on the other, make things harder for Turkey, which has not declared its Exclusive Economic Zone in the Mediterranean Sea, in terms of the Cyprus Dispute (Buluç, 2008, p. 2, 15).

It is also known that there is an ongoing plan for the Middle East to open to the West through Cyprus; the island of Cyprus and the British bases thereon are still important for future interventions in the Middle East, and Cyprus is as important as the Aegean Sea for Turkey (Sütçü, 2008; Öztürk, 2003). The breaking out of the Syrian crisis has caused Cyprus, which is the “fixed aircraft carrier,” to come into prominence strategically as well. On the importance and history of the Syrian crisis, Meriç states that:

Being the transit region for two important energy corridors, namely the Caspian Sea – Red Sea route and the Iraq – Mediterranean route, Syria, with a coastline of 192 km, is a region which no global/regional power can remain indifferent to and give up the share under their control. The 1977 “Green Belt Project” and the 2000 Greater Middle East Initiative (GMEI) drawn up by Z. Brzezinski were all US attempts at controlling the region in question and stopping Russia. The attempts to establish an “Exclusive

Economic Zone” which are led by the EU and have recently been frothed in the triangle of the South (Greek) Cyprus, Greece and Israel were, again, attempts at controlling the natural resources of the Eastern Mediterranean. The realization of the South Stream Projects patented by Russia as an alternative to the EU- and the US-supported Nabucco, and Russia’s casting anchor in Syria’s Tartus Port as one of its ancient dreams, are just two of the reasons for which the region has been suffering from bloodshed and tears for the past year and a half. Having urgently asked NATO to intervene to overthrow the regime in Libya which has the largest oil reserves in Africa, plunder the country and fulfill the revolution, the West cannot play the same card with Syria (Meriç, 2012).

Tensions between Turkey and Israel have risen in the Eastern Mediterranean. Among the reasons for this tension is the Mavi Marmara incident (the Gaza flotilla raid). Tel Aviv responded with its own search for an axis to Turkey’s attempts at becoming the regional center of attraction for the geographies from the Central Asia to the Balkans, from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea and even from Pakistan to North Africa, and at converging based on the principles of political proximity and security sharing.

Just like the US, Russia is trying to attain a zone of influence in the Eastern Mediterranean as well. Cyprus is located at the junction of the Middle East and Europe, which is crucially important. This feature of the Island allows Russia to realize that ancient dream, which is to gain access to a warm water port. More importantly, Cyprus lies in NATO’s oil route to Europe. Besides, with its military presence on the Island, Russia “is informed about all of NATO’s moves and actions in

the Mediterranean Sea.” With the NATO membership following the agreements signed by Poland, Hungary, and The Czech Republic in 1997, Cyprus has become a bargaining tool for Russia against NATO’s eastward expansion. Russia has been playing the Southern Cyprus as a trump card against Turkey’s power in the Caucasus (Arisoy, 2012; Müftüler Baç, 1999, p. 568). To take the Eastern Mediterranean under its control, Russia has dispatched a flotilla of 11 warships to the Tartus Port in Syria from three different directions, namely the North Sea, the Black Sea, and the Baltic Sea. The flotilla is led by the largest ship in Russia’s Northern Fleet, the destroyer Admiral Chabanenko (Özdağ, 2012).

Having supported the Assad regime in the Syrian Civil War, Russia launched air raids on the opponents of the regime. Russia made this intervention upon the gradual weakening of the Assad regime it had been supporting and loss of critical regions to its opponents and to ISIS. After the Aleppo supply line and the Hama-Homs supply line were imperiled following the fall of İdlib and the Latakia offensive, Russia had to intervene in Syria. What lay behind this strategic move of Russia’s was that it wanted to consolidate its presence in the Eastern Mediterranean and ensure the permanent supply of the naval and air force bases by the Assad regime. Additionally, having been embargoed by the West due to the Ukrainian crisis and annexation of Crimea, Russia might have also aimed at baring its teeth in Syria. This move by Russia seemed to have restored the balance of powers in Syria. It could be suggested that Russia, in response to US support for the Kurds, planned to reinforce the ground forces supporting the Assad regime and the air forces of the regime (Muir, 2015).

Syria’s fate was brought forward in the Second Vienna Summit for Syria, but this summit was futile as well, and the US, which was one of the sides disagreeing

upon the fate of Bashar Al-Assad, stated that Assad could not be a unifying power for Syria, while Russia argued that such a decision was for the Syrian people to make (BBC Türkçe, 2015). Saudi Arabia and Iran, which are two competitors, were also called for to attend the summit this time (McDowall & Sharafedin, 2015). The Paris attacks taking place on 13 November 2015 after this summit was included in the agenda of the G20 summit held in Antalya, Turkey on 16 November 2015, and the American and Russian presidents Barack Obama and Vladimir Putin agreed, on 15 November 2015, upon “a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned political transition.” According to a statement from a White House official, Obama and Putin agreed on the UN mediation for the post-ceasefire talks and bargains between the opponent groups and the regime in Syria (Murphy, 2015). Staffan de Mistura, the United Nations mediator, was assigned to arrange and organize the talks between the fighting sides in Syria until 1 January 2016 (Sengupta, 2015). The Saudi Arabian- Iranian crisis breaking out because of the execution of a Shiite cleric could hamper these talks, and the militias sponsored by these two countries may further fuel and intensify the ongoing civil wars, not only in Syria, but also in Iraq and Yemen (Taylor, 2016; McDowall, 2016; Labbott & Crawford, 2016). There were ongoing summits and meetings regarding the future of Syria, such as Astana and Sochi meetings. It seems that having failed to reach an agreement on the Syrian crisis and its solution despite these meetings, the states in the region and more powerful states will also consider and estimate the extent to which their interests in the resolution of the Cyprus Dispute will comply with each other. Hence, the settlement of regional disputes and conflicts will depend on the extent to which the concerns of the regional and superpowers are eliminated and their policies on the Eastern Mediterranean comply with each other.

It seems that the energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean have caused the region to be multi-centered rather than bipolar, unlike the Cold War atmosphere in the region. The fate of the Cyprus Dispute⁵ depends on the satisfaction of geopolitical concerns of such actors as the EU, the US, Russia, and China, and on the extent to which the Eastern Mediterranean policies of these actors comply with each other. To sum up, Cyprus has become even more important as the epicenter of the conflict of powers in the region.

In today's world where new geopolitical initiatives have emerged, such actors as the US, the EU, Russia, Israel, and China have been striving to open the Eastern Mediterranean and carry their fields and areas of challenge and power into this region. In addition to the presence of hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean, disputes over the maritime jurisdiction, the Syrian crisis and war, a probable Iran-Israel showdown, the military coup overthrowing Egyptian President Morsi, Israeli attacks on Gaza for exploiting gas and oil, the recent tensions of Turkey with Israel , Greece, Greek Cyprus, France and Arab countries such as United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, the recent Armenian-Azerbaijani clashes and war over Karabag region, the Ukrainian-Russian war, increase the importance of the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus. Alkin (2020) states that Russia and Tehran used Armenia and PKK foreign fighters in their quest to sabotage the projects Bakü Tiflis Ceyhan (BTC) and Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) that would increase Turkey's weight in the global and regional energy (Alkin, 2020).

⁵ In the literature on dispute resolution, the resolution on the Cyprus Dispute is an intractable dispute which complies with the power-based dispute resolution approach at the center of geopolitical interests and power conflicts. The settlement of the Cyprus Dispute depends on the extent to which these interests comply with each other and are met. In this case, the literature on dispute resolution should be reviewed Please see for intractable conflicts in Louis Kriesberg, "Intractable Conflicts" *Peace Review*, Volume 5 , Issue 4, 1993, pp. 417-421, for power based approach, see Maiese, Michelle. "Interests, Rights, Power and Needs Frames." *Beyond Intractability*. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder

Palestine's being granted of a "non-member observer state" status in the UN affects the Cyprus Dispute as well. Initiation of direct peace talks between Palestine and Israel about two-state solution with the mediation of the US Obama administration would impact the balance in the East Mediterranean, but it was stalled by Abraham Accords of normalization of relations of Israel with United Arab Emirates and Bahrain against the rising influence of Iran in the region. This agreement signed in the White House on the 15th of September 2020 agreement impeded Palestine's becoming an independent state (Hürriyet Daily News, 2020; Sak, 2020)

The agreement on allocation of oil revenues and the budget executed on 13 November 2014 between the Kurdish Administration in Northern Iraq and the Central Iraqi government may also play a role in the resolution of the Cyprus Dispute (TRT Türk, 2014). This oil and budget sharing agreement can be seen as a precedent agreement that could be executed by both parties in Cyprus island.

Having taken Iraq and Syria under its control, ISIS has become a threat for the region. Furthermore, in addition to ISIS, new formations and organizations have also been coming into prominence in Syria. The PYD, the PKK's affiliate in Syria, declared a Constituent Assembly in November 2013, and Salih Muslim, the leader of the PYD, argued that this was not a declaration of an interim government, but still, a first step for it. One year after this statement, Muslim reported that they wanted to establish an autonomous government in northern Syria (Al Jazeera Türk, 2015). The General Coordinator of the Syrian Turkmen Assembly, Samir Hafez, stated that there were plans for a coastal Kurdish state to be founded in Northern Syria as well, after Northern Iraq, with the aim of transporting both Northern Iraqi oil and Syrian oil to

the Mediterranean. Thus, Northern Iraq and the Kurds would be less dependent on Turkey (Sabah, 2015).

Since October 2015, Russia has had the aim of uniting all the Kurdish cantons in Syria under PYD control with the aid of Shiite soldiers sponsored by Iran and the Assad government. Russian supportive policies with respect to Kurds seems to be affected by the Turkish-Russian dispute that started with the downing of the Russian military jetplane for the violation of the airspace by Turkey in November 2015. But with the mending of the bilateral relations after the 15th of July attempted coup when President Putin expressed support for Erdoğan who in response wrote an apology letter for the downed plane, “unprecedented levels of cooperation, spanning new gas pipelines, nuclear energy, tourism, investment, joint peacemaking efforts in Syria through the trilateral Astana process with Iran, military-to-military dialogue, and Russian arms sales to Turkey” started with the mending of the relations” (IISS, 2018).

The US aid to Kurdish terrorist groups in Syria coupled with the retreat of the US troops from Syria on the 13th of October 2019, Turkey exploited this opportunity to prevent this coming danger for its border security (Shinkman, 2019; The Jerusalem Post, 2019). Based on self-defense reasons, Turkey made three operations to the Syrian border: Fırat Kalkanı (the Euphrates Shield), Zeytin Dalı (Olive Branch), and Barışpınarı (Peace Spring) with the aim of securing the border with Syria from terrorist activity respecting the territorial integrity of Syria. (Shaheen, 2016; Gürçan, 2019; Uras, 2019). These operations also aimed to secure the interests of Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean given the fact that Spring Peace operation led Eni, an Italian firm, to stop its exploration activity in offshore Cyprus (Hız, 2019).

The Idlib crisis created the last tension in Syria after the Syrian army with the help of Russia organized an aerial attack with the killing of 33 Turkish soldiers. Turkey responded to the Syrian targets aftermath the 27th of February attack (BBC Türkçe, 2020). The decision of the Turkish government was that it would no longer block the Syrian refugees to pass to Europe opening its borders. The move came after the air strike of Russian backed Syrian army on the 27th of February 2020. The decision of the Turkish government appeared to be planned to force the EU and NATO to support Ankara's new military operation named as the Spring Shield operation in Idlib (McKernan & Boffey, 2020). On the 5th of March, The Russian president Putin, and the Turkish President, Erdoğan made an agreement in Moscow, that included a cease-fire that would come into force in Idlib, the last stronghold of Syrian rebels, at midnight. The agreement also included joint patrols by Russian and Turkish troops of a seven-mile-wide corridor along a highway that runs through Idlib eastward from the Mediterranean coast toward the border with Iraq (Higgins, 2020).

It could also be said that the coming into power of a left-wing political party in Greece would play an effective role in the Cyprus negotiations. Having been elected for the second time on the 20th of September, Tsipras talked to the French President Hollande who stated that they supported the President of the Greek Cypriot Administration and underlined that the European Union had to support the Republic of Cyprus (Cyprus News Agency, 2015). Following the TRNC presidential elections, the new President Mustafa Akıncı stated that he would come to the table decidedly without offering any prerequisites, which increased the possibility that resolution was close. The GCASC responded to this with a series of confidence-building measures (Ekinci, 2015). The negotiations, which had been suspended for 7 months, were re-initiated on 15 May 2015 when the two leaders met in the Buffer Zone. The Turkish

Cypriots stopped requiring visas while the Greek Cypriots provided the Turkish Cypriots with a map showing the coordinates of 28 minefields in the north of the island. They also decided to set up a committee for cultural events to bring the two communities together (Karahasan, 2015). Having met in the Buffer Zone on 23 May, the two leaders paid social visits to both the Turkish and Greek sides of the island. The leaders, who met for a second time on 28 May 2015, agreed on a new confidence-building measures package consisting of five steps. These steps are as follows: (1) Opening of the Deryneia and Aplici crossing points, (2) Interoperability of mobile telephones on both sides of the island, (3) Interconnection of electricity grids in Turkish and Greek Cyprus, (4) Integration of TV channel frequencies of Turkish and Greek Cyprus, and (5) Establishment of a common committee on gender equality on both sides (UN News, 2015). The next meeting was scheduled to be held on 17 June. The return of Varosha to Greece is still a priority for the Anastasiades government (Morelli, 2019). Meanwhile, the Armenian Minister for Defense, Seyran Ohanyan, stated that Armenia and the GCASC agreed on a bilateral combined military exercise plan (Şuvalova, 2015). It was an issue of concern whether these events would affect the Cyprus talks or not. The facts that Mustafa Akıncı had regularly been continuing the reunification talks with the Greek Cypriots since he was elected President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and that the current United States Secretary of State John Kerry had talks with both sides during his visit to the island on 3 December, 2015, after which he stated that “the reunification was within reach,” gave impetus to the resolution of the Cyprus Dispute (DW, 2015). The negotiations are in a standstill after Crans Montana conference in 2017 and informal Berlin meeting in 2019 (Kampouris, 2019; Theodoulou, 2016).

The Ukrainian crisis and annexation of Crimea in 2014 has indirect results for the Cyprus Dispute. Kyriacou (2014) supports that “as the crisis in Ukraine deepens, Cyprus seems to be seen as a key player in EU rush for alternative gas supplies. Policy makers have even gone as far as to hope that new gas routes could help end decades of division in Cyprus” (Kyriacou, 2014). US Vice President Joe Biden gave a message in Istanbul about Cypriot natural gas. Having stated that the annexation of Crimea in 2014 by ripping it off from Ukraine was against the law, Biden reported that Russia used the threat of natural gas against the EU embargos and the Europeans had to consider the alternatives, such as the Eastern Mediterranean and Africa. He also said that Israel, Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, and Egypt had to collaborate on natural gas (Koçbaş, 2014). In one of his interviews, the TRNC’s Washington Representative Ahmet Erdengiz explained that the Ukrainian crisis gave impetus to the resolution of the Cyprus Dispute with the following statement: “Europe’s need and demand for the natural gas and alternative energy fields in the Eastern Mediterranean has surfaced once more with the breaking out of the Ukrainian crisis. Therefore, for the first time ever, external dynamics are involved in the big picture along with the internal ones” (Erdengiz, 2014).

The recent Ukrainian crisis which stemmed from the Russian-build of military forces near Ukrainian border, triggered the energy anxiety of the European countries. USA threatened the halting of operations of Nordstream 2 that provided gas to Western Europe from Russia if Russia invaded Ukraine (BBC, 2022). European countries began to search for natural gas alternatives in the case such a scenario happened even after the first Ukrainian crisis and annexation of Crimea in 2014. Azerbaijan and European Union officials agreed to renew a partnership agreement on energy issues which included the TANAP that passed from Turkey on the 6th of

February 2017. This created an opportunity for Turkey to be apart of the energy security for Europe (Çağatay, 2017).

The Russian-Ukrainian crisis which turned out to be a hot war on the 24th of February 2022, has repercussions on the Cyprus hydrocarbon issues as well. The US, to draw Turkey into the western alliance in the case of a Russian attack, made a statement that it withdrew its support from the East Med project. This act could lead to the rapprochement meetings between Israel and Turkey for building a natural gas pipeline between the two countries. It could also cease the isolation of Turkey in the East Mediterranean affairs (Sağlam, 2022). The result of hot war that arose between Russia and Ukraine in February 2022 will have an impact on the structure of the international system if Russia is weakened by the various sanctions the Western World has imposed on it. In the case of a defeat scenario of Russia in this war, it might decrease its military capabilities in Syria and the rest of the world which would make it a declining power.

Following the evaluation of these current events, several questions may arise to contribute to the drawing up of a preliminary hypothesis on which the main thesis statement is to be based:

a. Is it possible to think of a resolution approach to the Cyprus Dispute based solely on the idea of energy?⁶

b. To what extent do the abovementioned events, such as the Syrian conflict, the Arab Spring, Iranian Israeli tensions, the race of interests between

⁶ Focusing on the political interactions based on the energy factor from a structuralistic viewpoint may cause vicious circles, i.e., non-resolution. In other words, we may have to seek the structural changes within the framework of vicious circles and in hostile relations. From the current perspective, these relations comply with the characteristic of the free competition atmosphere.

such actors as the US, Russia, the EU and Israel, and the disputes over maritime jurisdiction in the Eastern Mediterranean, Russian-Ukrainian war affect the resolution of the said dispute?

c. How do the energy reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean change the geopolitical balance in the region?

Departing from these questions, the hypothesis of the thesis can be stated as the following:

1.1.1. Hypothesis: There are three main points the hypothesis is based on. The first one is that the resolution of the Cyprus Dispute cannot be explained solely by the energy politics. The second point is that the resolution of this dispute depends on the extent to which the geopolitical concerns of the actors such as the EU, the US, Russia, and China are eliminated and to which their policies relating to the Eastern Mediterranean comply with each other. The third and most important point is that this dependence has tended to change constantly depending on the structural changes and the issues and threats imposed by the conditions brought about by these changes. The Cyprus Dispute is a function of structural changes and developments. Accordingly, the incompetence of the states in the region and the incompatibility between the approaches of the great powers have caused the Cyprus Dispute to arise as well. This incompetence and the disagreement of the great powers on the regional conditions may even cause the Cyprus Dispute to remain unresolved.⁷ Thus, the race of interests

⁷ Prof. Osman Metin Öztürk says that formal recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as a state is not seen as a resolution because this would deprive the actors outside the region of their right to speak relating to the relevant geography, and that the Annan Plan (Documents) was proposed, not to resolve this issue, but to maintain it. See Osman Metin Öztürk, *Kıbrıs: Annan Belgeleri (I., II., III.) Üzerine Değerlendirmeler [The Evaluations on Cyprus: Annan Documents (I, II, III)]*, (Ankara: Odak Publishers, 2004), p. 2.

between the great powers and the direction of the geopolitical concerns relating to the region will decide the fate of the Cyprus Dispute.

Based on the preliminary hypothesis drawn from these explanations and the questions above, it will be possible to state the main idea to be the basis of the study within the framework of a thesis as the following:

The Cyprus Dispute is a function of the structural changes and developments. The incompetence of the states in the region (their relative political incompetence and the multidimensional instability predominating in the region)⁸ and the compatibility/incompatibility between the great powers' interests relating to the regional conditions are the factors affecting the fate of the Cyprus Dispute.

Having used Cyprus as a base, which played an important role in Great Britain's Ottoman Empire policy in the 19th century, and having subsequently annexed Cyprus in 1914, Great Britain adopted the strategy of establishing national states dependent on herself on the route to India and of causing minority issues to emerge in the Ottoman Empire to ensure the security of the route to India. Great Britain abandoned her policy of preserving the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire after the Congress of Berlin in 1878.

Within the scope of the bipolar nature of the Cold War, what was important for the US and NATO was to prevent the events and developments related to the

⁸ Gerd Nonneman who emphasizes that presence of Israel that causes instability in the region, believes that the Arab Israeli conflict and the concept of citizenship (the issue regarding to what extent the Palestinians residing in Israel are considered citizens) play an important role in the establishment of a Zionist welfare state. For further information, see Gerd Nonneman, 'Rentiers and Autocrats, Monarchs and Democrats, State and Society: The Middle East between Globalisation, Human "Agency," and Europe', *International Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (Jan. 2001), pp. 141-162. The recent Middle East plan introduced by Trump administration introduces a unilateral solution favoring Israeli part leading to a refusal of the plan on the Palestinian side. Please see for the content of this peace plan in Joseph Hincks, 'Trump Called His Middle East Peace Plan a 'Win Win.' Palestinians Disagree'', *Time*, 28 January 2020

Cyprus Dispute which were to allow the Soviet Union to become effective in the region. On the other hand, the US did not want the Cyprus Dispute to get out of control completely and harm the southern wing of NATO. According to Assoc. Prof. Kamer Kasım, with the emergence of new independent states following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, border issues and ethnicity-based conflicts have occurred more frequently. In the post-Cold War period, unlike the bipolar world, the leaders of each pole were no more able to prevent and control the conflicts and disputes both in their own allies and in the regions close to them (Kasım, 2007, p. 60). The emergence of non-conventional security issues, such as energy and natural resources safety, the spread of nuclear weapons, and terrorism, has led the interests of the Great Powers in the regional conflicts to play a role in the resolution of these conflicts. In addition, the incompetence of the countries in the region invites the Great Powers to intervene.

The present dissertation explains that the Cyprus Dispute is dependent upon different structural factors. It aims to study, beginning from the events of the 19th century and based on the structural environment of the balance of powers, the question of Cyprus within different structural frameworks and from a historical perspective of the transitional period in the 20th century (1919-1940) as well as the Cold War breaking out in the second half of the century, and the subsequent post-Cold War events and happenings in the international arena.

The present dissertation will contribute to the literature by investigating the effects of the geopolitical concerns and races of interest of the countries which are not in the region and have not been investigated before by the said studies, as well as the effects of the incompetence of the countries in the region on the Cyprus Dispute. The

present study also analyzes the effects of structural changes and developments on the Cyprus Dispute as a function of the direction in which the resolution of the Cyprus Dispute has been going over time and investigates the effects the changes in international order and the energy resources have on this dispute. The said studies in literature considered the Cyprus Dispute from the perspective of the Soviet-US confrontation and ethnic conflict during the Cold War within the framework of structural factors but did not deal with it comprehensively from the perspective of a post-Cold War multipolar and multi-actor world order where geopolitical competition, new issues and concerns have emerged, especially with the discovery of new energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean. The present dissertation aims to contribute to the literature by discussing the effects of structural changes and developments on the Cyprus Dispute from the perspective of the new international order.

1.1.2. Methodology

The method and materials to be used for and in this dissertation include library research, document searches via media tools and means of communication, and conferences, seminars, and panels. As and when deemed necessary, interviews will also be made with specialists in the field.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CYPRUS QUESTION IN A STRUCTURALIST FRAMEWORK

After a short review of the history and question of Cyprus, this section discusses, within the structuralistic⁹ framework, the course of the processes constituting the current important scene in the region and the geopolitical activity in parallel to this. These processes will be studied in 4 historical periods: (1) Cyprus within the framework of the 19th century ``Balance of Power, (2) Cyprus in the 20th century transition period (1919-1940), (3) Cold war period (1947-1989) (4) post-Cold war period (1990-)

2.1. A Historical View of Cyprus: The Process Giving the Region Its Current Importance

Since the 19th century, there have been various periods of conflict¹⁰ over and around Cyprus. The scope of this dissertation is to view the Cyprus Dispute, in terms of its purposes and frameworks, as a conflict assuming long-term and various characters and displaying different nuances during different geopolitical periods. Having been leased to Great Britain as a defensive base in the 19th century because of the Treaty of Berlin, signed in 1878 following the Russo-Turkish War, Cyprus was annexed by Great Britain in the early 20th century due to its growing importance in the

⁹ In the field of international relations, the concept of structurality assumes the presence of stable and permanent structures, and even whether the internationally interacting parties are shaped by the structure, the number, and capacity distributions of the actors with characteristic features. The structures give the associations between the actors and agents, as well as the framework of the responses by these actors and agents. Among these structures are the systems that are interacting actor and agent groups. The way in which the actors interact with each other, and the structure-agent relationship are the keys to understanding the changes systematically. The systems compose the ontology of structuralism together with the agents and structures. Please see See James E. Dougherty, and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff Jr. *Contending Theories of International Relations-A Comprehensive Survey*, 5th Ed., (NY: Addison Wesley Longman, 2001), p. 106 and Tayyar Arı, *Uluslararası İlişkiler Teorileri: Çatışma, Hegemonya* 4th Ed., (İstanbul: Alfa Publishers, 2006), p. 513.

¹⁰ Cyprus dispute is considered as an intractable conflict where `` intercommunal or interstate conflicts related to ethnic and religious differences, often sink into self-perpetuating, mutually reinforcing, violent antagonisms'', for the citation, please see Louis Kriesberg (1993) *Intractable Conflicts*, *Peace Review*, 5:4, 417-421

Middle East. Having started as an ethnic conflict during Cold War and then becoming a matter of dispute between Turkey and Greece, the Cyprus Dispute has obtained a more central position in light of the new global issues, such as setting of rules for the property of seabed resources as per the post-Cold War NY Convention on the Law of the Sea, discovery of new energy resources and the increase in migration activities following the Iraqi and Syrian crises, and the power gap in the Eastern Mediterranean due to Syrian crisis, and thus it has become an issue in which many actors have been involved within the scope of their own interests. This first chapter provides a short review of the history of Cyprus and then deals with the process which lends the Cyprus Dispute its current importance.

2.1.1. The History of Cyprus

Until conquered by the Ottomans in 1570-1571, the island was controlled by the Hittites, Phoenicians, Assyrians, Ancient Egyptians, Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Byzantines, Arab Muslims, the British (Richard the Lionheart), Lusignans, the Genoese, and the Venetians, respectively (The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus website, 2012). Ottoman Cyprus and British Cyprus prepared the ground for the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus on 16 August, 1960 under the London-Zurich Agreements (6-12 February 1959 (Pepin, 1992, p. 126-133). With the implementation of the *Akritis* plan, which was an attempt to subvert the Republic of Cyprus, massacres of the Turkish people were initiated on the island to which UN Peacekeeping Forces were sent (Keser, 2012, p, 256). While Turkey wanted to intervene on the island, such intervention was prevented by the US President Johnson's letter stating that no military weapons supplied to Turkey could be used for this purpose, and by the fact that Turkey did not have the landing craft for such

intervention (The New York Times, 1964). Furthermore, the UN General Assembly Resolution adopted on the 16th of December 1965 announced that Cyprus was a sovereign state and stated that it opposed to the external interventions, and thus rejected the 1959 London Agreements

On 15 November 1967, the Kofinou (Geçitkale) and Agios Theodoros (Boğaziçi) villages were attacked as a reaction to the presence of a UN Peacekeeping Force established in March 1964 by the UN to prevent the violence between the two communities (Hürriyet, 2008; Göktepe, 2007). Upon these events, the “Interim Turkish Cypriot Government” was established on 28 December, 1967, and the two communities of the island were separated (Tamkoç, 1988, p. 116). The first intercommunal talks took place from June 1967 to July 1974 to identify the terms and conditions of the Zürich Agreement causing conflicts in the implementation thereof, and to agree upon amending these terms and conditions (Coşkun, 2018, p. 66). While these talks continued in 1968, two different views emerged in the Greek Cypriot community. Makarios III wanted to realize the Enosis by breaking the resistance of the Turkish Cypriots with economic and political pressures within the framework of a long-term program. Furthermore, the former “EOKA” advocates and “pro-Junta” commissioned officers were aiming to realize the Enosis with an abrupt military campaign. There was a disagreement between Makarios and the group reviving the old, “Junta”-allied “EOKA” in Greece and founding the “EOKA-B” (Kıralp, 2018, pp. 451-452).

On 15 July, 1974, the Greek Cypriot National Guard and “EOKA-B” (as referred to by Makarios to distinguish the pre-1970 EOKA terrorist activities from the newer ones) attempted a military coup d'état plotted by the Greek officers against

Makarios upon which Sampson declared the “Hellenic Republic of Cyprus.” The aim of this coup was to ensure the union of Cyprus with Greece (Van Gelder, 1974). As a response to this military coup, Turkey commenced the First and Second Cyprus Peace Operations (20 July and 14 August 1974, respectively (Savrun, 2018, p. 266). The second operation was referred to as an invasion by the international community. However, the Administrative Court of Appeal of Athens acknowledged with its decision no. 2658/79 on 21 March 1979 that Turkey was right to intervene, and the Greek commissioned officers were responsible (Eroğlu, 2003, p. 27). The US imposed an embargo on weapons upon the Cyprus Peace Operation. The current question of Cyprus began with the massacres of the Turkish Cypriots by the Greek Cypriots and Greece were involved in on Christmas of 1963. This was not a question triggered by the 1974 Peace Operations (Uzer & Cengiz, 2002, pp. 66-67).

In 1975, the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus was founded. The 1975 Population Exchange Agreement enabled a bizonal and bicomunal community federal structure. During the 1980-83 intercommunal talks, the Greek Cypriots declined the bizonal administration; the Greek Cypriots did not see the Turkish Cypriots as their equals, and they saw the Turkish Cypriot community as an ethnic minority group who came to the island after themselves (Akgün, 2018, p. 91). The Greek Cypriots argued that the Turkish Cypriots did not have the right to self-determination. Having used their right to self-determination arising out of the 1960 Constitution, the Turkish Cypriot community declared the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) (TRNC). Rauf Denktaş said that the goal was to be united with the Greek Cypriot community in the form of a bizonal federation. Having found the union with Turkey out of resolution, Denktaş promised to cooperate in the UN’s resolution activities (Morelli, 2019, p. 2). With the formal declaration of the TRNC, the question

of Cyprus became a dispute, not between two communities, but between two states (Tuncer, 2005, p. 104). The UN Security Council stated in 1983 that the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC) was not a legal entity and thus declaration thereof had to be undone (UN, 1983)

Talks in search of a resolution within the framework of the UN continued. However, the Greek Cypriots aimed in these talks to maintain their formal recognition as the “Government of the Whole of Cyprus” and persuade the Turkish Cypriots to surrender to the Greek Cypriot administration. The talks between 1974 and 2002 were based on the aim of reestablishing the central government. The Turkish Cypriots preferred two separate bizonal and independent communities with limited contact based on the political equality of the two communities, while the Greek Cypriots had an idea and understanding of the freedom of movement, property, and accommodation. There was a disagreement between both sides as to how to end up in a federation as well: The Greek Cypriots wanted to transfer the power from their own internationally recognized government to the Turkish Cypriots to join the Republic of Cyprus later. However, the Turkish Cypriots wanted two separate communities to join a new federation. These disagreements prevented the issues such as property claims, the status of Cypriot citizenship of the Turkish people residing in the mainland Turkey and other legal matters from being resolved (Akgün, 2018, p. 91; Morelli, 2019, p. 2). The disagreements even affect the current bargaining process.

The Southern Cyprus submitted a membership application to the EU on 3 July, 1990. This application contradicted with the first clause of the 1960 Constitution, and furthermore, Turkey had granted the Turkish Cypriots the right of veto in accordance with the Clause 50 of the Cypriot Constitution. In 1993, the European

Commission approved the application of the Greek Cyprus. In 1995, the GCASC and the EU agreed on scheduling the full membership negotiations. The 1999 Helsinki Summit concluded that the settlement of the Cyprus Dispute would not be a prerequisite for the EU accession of Cyprus. In the EU Copenhagen Summit, Cyprus was granted accession to the EU. The European Commission stated that the non-settlement of the Cyprus Dispute would prevent Turkey from being an EU member state. On 1 May 2004, the GCASC became a member of the EU under the name of the “Republic of Cyprus” (Kaya, 2018, p. 188).

The reunification of the island failed when the Annan Plan, the last attempt at reuniting the two communities, was accepted by the Turkish Cypriots in the referendum on 24 April 2004 but was rejected by the Greek Cypriots. The Secretary-General Kofi Annan held the Greek Cypriots responsible for the failure of the Annan plan and called for the termination of the economic isolation of the Turkish Cypriots. As stated by SETA analyst Mehmet Uğur Ekinçi (2015, p. 4):

“The resolution negotiations re-initiated in the mid-2000s following the failure of the Annan Plan were taken one step further with the signing of an agreement relating to the framework of the resolution on 11 February 2004, and it was even said that both parties could have taken the resolution to referendum by the end of the year.”

The talks had also continued during the offices of TRNC President Mehmet Ali Talat and TRNC President Derviş Eroğlu, with the Greek Cypriot leader Christofias and his successor Nikos Anastasiades, but the Greek Cypriots withdrew from the United Nations negotiations, claiming that the Turkish Cypriots intervened in drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean (Bilge, 2014). It was seen that the

Turkish seismic research vessel Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa anchored in the Famagusta Port until March 2015; however, Turkey did not withdraw its NAVTEX broadcast (Morelli, 2019, p. 12). Turkey declared that it would not extend its NAVTEX message and, would not renew the message on 6th April, which is the date of expiry of this message. It also stated that it would cease its exploration activities. Anastasiades stated that they would resume the negotiations after Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa left the area off the Cypriot coast, and even that the exploration activities carried out with the partnership of South Korea and Italy on behalf of the Southern Cyprus would be paused. The Greek Cypriots offered that the energy issues be negotiated at the federal level upon reaching an agreement based on the decision made by the bilateral joint declaration, whereas the Turkish Cypriots wanted the energy issues to be negotiated as a part of the talks (Morelli, 2019, p. 12, 18).

The statement of the newly elected TRNC President Mustafa Akıncı, that he would not proceed with the negotiations bearing a “but-for” condition in mind, was welcomed by the South Cyprus. To accelerate the negotiations, Greek Cypriot leader Nikos Anastasiades made a gesture of good will by announcing that he would take several confidence-building measures, such as providing the Turkish Cypriots with a map of the minefields in the Kyrenia (Beşparmak) Mountains and employment of Turkish-speaking officers in government offices (Kıbrıs Postası, 2015; NTV, 2018). Espen Barth Eide, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Advisor for Cyprus, visited the island on 4th of May 2015 and sped up the preparations for negotiation. Eide and the two leaders were expected to come to the negotiation table immediately after dinner on 11th May, 2015 (Ekinci, 2015, p. 4). As expected, the leaders met in the Buffer Zone on 15 May 2015 and the Turkish Cypriots waived the visa implementation while the Greek Cypriots provided the Turkish Cypriots the maps showing the minefields in

the TRNC. The two leaders agreed on meeting at least twice a month and planned the next meeting to be held on 28th of May (Karahasan, 2015).

The Turkish Cypriots stopped requiring visas while the Greek Cypriots provided the Turkish Cypriots with a map showing the coordinates of 28 minefields in the north of the island. They also decided to set up a committee for cultural events to bring the two communities together (Karahasan, 2015). Having met in the Buffer Zone on 23 May, the two leaders paid social visits to both the Turkish and Greek sides of the island. The leaders, who met for a second time on 28 May 2015, agreed on a new confidence-building measures package consisting of five steps. These steps were as the following: (1) Opening of the Deryneia and Aplici crossing points, (2) Interoperability of mobile telephones on both sides of the island, (3) Interconnection of electricity grids in Turkish and Greek Cyprus, (4) Integration of TV channel frequencies of Turkish and Greek Cyprus, and (5) Establishment of a common committee on gender equality on both sides (UN News, 2015).

At the leaders' meeting on 17 June 2015, both parties completed the screening phase of the negotiations and shared the documents revealing their positions relative to the different aspects of the Cyprus question. It is said that an Akıncı-Anastasiades Document (the AA Document) was drawn up revealing the agreements and disagreements between the parties. The AA Document, which is said to have about 100 pages, is "the second most extensive attempt after the Annan Plan in the Cyprus talks." (Dünya Bülteni, 2015). On 28 June 2015, the two leaders commenced talks which include chapters on six subject matters: Administration and Power Sharing, property, the EU-related issues, Guaranties, Land and Map, and Economy (Milliyet, 2015). At his meetings with the EU Brussels officials from the 30th of June to the 2nd of

July, Turkish Cypriot leader Akıncı gave the message that the Turkish Cypriots needed to prepare for EU membership (Şahin, 2015, p. 6). At the meeting of the two leaders on 10 July 2015, he gave the message that the resolution to be agreed on for the island had to be in accordance with the basic values and principles of the EU, came into prominence (Şahin, 2015, p. 5). On 3 December 2015, John Kerry claimed that the reunification of Cyprus was “within reach.” Kerry added that “a United Cyprus would set an example in a problematic region.” (DW, 2015). Anastasiades and Akıncı will have three more meetings on the thorny issues of property, security, and border regulations. Before John Kerry’s visit, diplomatic contacts with the island were boosted by the visits from the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov, the Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and the British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond (Smith, 2015).

As for the energy matter, Akıncı seemed to accept Anastasiades’ idea that the energy revenues are to be shared by both sides and does not raise this issue in the bargaining talks. But in 2016, Anastasiades and Akıncı failed to agree on territorial adjustments during November talks in Mont Pelerin, Switzerland (Pelerin, 2016). But both committed to continue negotiating. On Dec 1 Anastasiades and Akıncı agreed to resume negotiations in Nicosia and to meet in Geneva on January 9. Two days later they were to present maps on their respective proposals for the internal boundaries of a future federation. The January 2017 meeting in Geneva on securities and guarantees ended with out a deal. The already wobbly talks broke off in mid-February when parliament in the south voted to introduce an annual commemoration in public schools of the January 1950 ‘Enosis’ (union with Greece) referendum. An angered Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akıncı said he would not resume negotiations until Greek Cypriots took “corrective action”. Around the same time, Anastasiades, who

rejected Akinci's demand, also drew a new line in the sand – the issue of the four freedoms in Cyprus for Turkish nationals, which was raised publicly by a Turkish government official. The talks were cut until April 2017 when Ankara issued the first stinging warning on Cyprus' upcoming hydrocarbons activities.

In the same month Turkey reserved parts of the Cyprus Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for seismic surveys. Another opportunity came with June 28, 2017, Crans Montana talks on securities and guarantees that broke down despite the broad participation of not only the UN but the guarantor powers Turkey, Greece, and Britain, plus the participation during the last day of the EU's High Representative for Security, Federica Mogherini. The reason behind the breaking of the negotiations was: The Greek community, supported by Greece, refused to accept a federal Cyprus with Turkish troops on its soil and Turkey's unilateral right to intervene, while the Turkish Cypriots, backed by Turkey, could not settle for the withdrawal of the approximately 30,000 Turkish troops still stationed in the North (Andrei, 2019).

After the Crans Montana failure, the two leaders met with UN Chief Gutierrez in NY in September 2018 separately. The two leaders as agreed on the 26th of October meeting, opened the two border crossings in Lefka and Dherinya. In 2019, most of the going back and forth focused on the Turkish activities in Cyprus' exclusive economic zone (EEZ) where Ankara sent its drillship in May to a non-licensed maritime area off the west coast of the island. Cyprus managed to secure the public support of the EU and US in backing its sovereignty within the EEZ. Anastasiades has insisted talks cannot go ahead if Turkey continues its activities. On the Turkish Cypriot side, a new element regarding the lifting of the decades-old US arms embargo on Cyprus prompted Akinci in December 2019 to state that the lifting

of the embargo would hamper any peace process (Theodoulou, 2016; Financial Mirror, 2019). The recent effort by UN Chief Antonio Gutierrez was to gather both leaders in Berlin, Germany at a dinner table in Germany on the 25th of November to find a way to resume talks. Because of the Turkish Cypriot elections up in 2020, the ambiguity of the British with respect to Bre-exit, the negotiations will not be likely to start again in May 2020 (Kampouris, 2019).

The recent opening of the Varosha, a resort town closed for 46 years on the 8th of October 2020 led to two different thoughts to the Turkish and Greek Cypriots. Turkish Cypriots see Varosha's opening as an incentive for the peace talks (Kokkinidis, 2021). The Greek Cypriots hope that the resort will be returned to Greek Cyprus Administration before talks begin. Ersin Tatar was elected the new president during the elections. He is an avid supporter of two-state solution in Cyprus as opposed to Mr. Akıncı who supported the unification with Greek Cyprus to create a federal state (Harding, 2020; BBC, 2020).

The recent informal Cyprus talks in Geneva in the format of 5+1 including both parties with the guarantor states within the UN framework were concluded with no results. No common ground was found to continue with the formal negotiations (Yeni Şafak, 2021). The president of Turkish Cypriots, Ersin Tatar supported a proposal based on an equal sovereign Turkish Cypriot state whose equal international status was recognized and accepted by a Security Council resolution. Only after this acceptance, formal negotiations could begin in the issues of property, property sharing, etc. (CNN Türk, 2021). The Greek part focused on a federation while the Turkish Cypriots emphasize two state solution.

After delineating the Cyprus question historically, it is time to look at the course of the processes instituting the current important scene in the region within a structuralist framework and the geopolitical actions in parallel to this. These processes will be studied in 4 parts: (1) Cyprus within the framework of the 19th century ``Balance of Power, (2) in the 20th century transition period (1919-1940), (3) Cold war period (4) Post Cold war period.

2.2. Cyprus within the framework of the 19th century “Balance of Power”:

2.2.1. The concept of balance of power and the European balance of power

As the 19th century European State System, there had been a time when the concept of balance of power worked. The balance of power system comprises a minimum of five national states within which the powers are assumed to be nearly equal. No single coalition or state within the system is allowed to achieve hegemony to the extent that it would lead to the demolition of the system. Since each state has the motive of increasing its capacity and dominating the system, it prevents similar attempts from the others. In such systems, wars are common as the states try to make use of suitable conditions, if any, to increase their capacities. Additionally, balance of power systems is known to be systems where diplomacy is frequently involved. No single state can constantly dominate another in such systems. The most important factor in this is the approximate equality of the powers (Ari, 2006, pp. 518-520; Morgenthau, 1967, pp. 161-219). In this period, wars were precluded to some extent thanks to the system of alliances created by the Chancellor of the German Empire, Otto von Bismarck (Kasson, 1886, p. 105; Altıntaş, 2012, pp. 43-53). The great powers of the time were Great Britain, Russia, France, Germany, Italy, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In this period, we often see the attempts by Great Britain and other European powers to restrict Russia's power. From the 1815 Congress of Vienna to the conflicts across

Europe in 1848, and from the 1871 Franco-Prussian War to 1914, peace had been kept within the framework of a balance of power, while this balance of power transformed into period of armament and tension in a sense after Bismarck's reign (Kegley Jr. & Wittkop, 1995, p. 476; Okman, 2010, p. 17).

In the 19th century, Britain formed an empire of dominions, which had the biggest and most powerful navy in the world. The most important dominions in this empire were India, the Far East, and Africa. For such reasons as the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the security of the route to India, the increasing importance of the Middle East, and the security of the Eastern Mediterranean, Britain became interested in Cyprus (Şahin, 2015). In the early 19th century, there were two countries which wanted to expand their borders into the Ottoman territories, namely Russia and France. Russia coveted Istanbul and the Straits. Its dream was to have a port in warmer waters and open to the Mediterranean. On the other hand, France wanted to settle in the Middle East, especially in Syria and Lebanon. Cyprus was discussed in the international arena for the first time in the 1878 Congress of Berlin. For Turkey, the question of Cyprus began with Britain's demanding Cyprus as a base in 1878 from the Ottoman Empire (Uçarol, 1978, p. 24).

2.2.2. Political developments preparing the ground for the Cyprus Dispute

The Ottoman Empire, along with Britain, France, and Piedmont, defeated Russia in the Crimean War of 1853-1856. As per the 1856 Treaty of Paris signed at the end of this war, all weapons were removed from the Black Sea and it was rendered impartial, the rights to autonomy of Wallachia and Moldavia, which were Ottoman states, were extended and guaranteed by the undersigning states, and the transport on the Danube River was left to the administration of an international commission. Thus, the region

from the Black Sea to the Austro-Hungarian Empire was jointly guaranteed by the European states. This meant a political obstacle to Russia's proceeding to the south. With this Treaty, the Ottoman Empire was included in European international law as well, and its territorial integrity and independence was jointly guaranteed by the European states. The Ottoman Empire was free of Russian pressure for a while (Uçarol, 1978, p. 19; Hale, 2000, pp. 26-27).

This European balance of power began to be disturbed when Prussia was defeated by France in the 1870 Battle of Sedan. Shortly after the Battle of Sedan, Russia declared that it would not recognize or acknowledge the terms of the Treaty of Paris prescribing the impartiality of the Black Sea (Armaoğlu, 1997, p. 329). Despite the objections of the Ottoman Empire, this was accepted at the international meeting held in London in 1871 (Armaoğlu, 1997, p.332) and Russia re-adopted its policy of proceeding southward. By launching the "Pan-Slavism" doctrine¹¹, it made the Slavic and Orthodox communities in the Balkans revolt against the Ottoman Empire, thus causing conflict and chaos in the region (Sönmezoğlu, Arıboğan, Ayman, & Dedeoğlu, 2017; Aydın, 2004, pp. 73-82). The Herzegovina Uprising of 1875 and the April Uprising of 1876 were two events showing that Russia was active again in the Balkans. Russia found a way to make use of these uprisings too, and especially with the propaganda it made after the April Uprising, it managed to create an anti-Ottoman and anti-Islamic atmosphere across Europe.

¹¹ Pan-Slavism emerged in first half of the 19th century as a movement which aimed to ensure that the common ethnic background of the Slavs living in the Central and Eastern Europe would be accepted and a cultural and political unity would be established among these Slavs. Having begun developing after the mid-19th century, Pan-Slavism was interpreted, as from the 1870s, by the Western European political circles as the unification of the Slavic peoples under Russian rule. The term Pan-Slavism was coined by the Slovak author J. Herkel in 1826. He coined the term to scientific literature by first using it in one of his works on the Slavic language written in Latin, and thus led the term to be considered and discussed as a political term. Herkel literarily and scientifically discussed Pan-Slavism in his said work as the mutual cultural interaction between all the Slavic peoples, whereas he defined it politically as the unity of all the Slavic peoples to form a single greater state

Another event causing Russia's gaze to turn to the Balkans again was the change in Austria's Balkan policy. Having failed to prevent the establishment of the German and Italian national states, Austria was left only with the Balkans dominated by the weak Ottomans to choose as its territory for expansion. Austria adopted the policy of capturing Bosnia-Herzegovina and reaching the Mediterranean Sea through Thessaloniki. This naturally disturbed Russia, which considered the Balkans its own territory of influence. It began to watch for an opportunity to turn the situation in the Balkans to its own advantage. At this very point, Serbia and Montenegro's declaring war (with the Russian support, of course) against the Ottoman Empire with the aim of gaining independence gave Russia the opportunity it had been waiting for to intervene in the Balkans. When the Serbians were defeated, they called on Russia to help. However, Russia could not intervene due to objections from the European states, particularly Britain (Kenar, 2021; Hale, 2000, pp. 22-23).

Britain suggested that the events and issues caused by the Herzegovina Uprising, the April Uprising and Serbian-Ottoman War in the Balkans be resolved with a conference (Artuç, 1998, p. 57). Despite its objections, the Ottoman Empire had to accept this offer on 18 November 1876 because of Russia's attitude and pressure from Britain. This conference, referred to as the Istanbul Conference in Ottoman history, was chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Safvet Pasha on 24 December 1876 on the upper floor of the Naval Department known as Divanhane (Artuç, 1998, p. 59).

Germany, Austria, France, Britain, Italy, and Russia participated in the said Conference, along with the Ottoman Empire. Having aimed at making a final maneuver, the Ottoman Empire declared the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 (Kanun-i

Esasi) before the Conference with an attempt to void the Conference; however, it failed.

Ignatyev¹², who represented Russia in the Conference, presented a bill declaring the demands of the Russians (Armaoğlu, 1997, p. 511; Bütün, 2012). It demanded the following:

a) Bulgaria shall be divided into two provinces, between which the Balkan Mountains shall be the border.

b) Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be united, rendered a province, and granted autonomy.

c) Serbia and Montenegro shall be given territories.

d) Governor-generals shall be appointed to each province by the Ottoman Empire with the approval of the 6 states participating in the Conference. The governor to be appointed to Bulgaria shall be a Christian; and

e) foreign forces shall be present in these provinces to ensure security.

By presenting such a bill to the Conference, Russia wanted both to outmaneuver the Ottoman Empire and to weaken it even more since, if it had succeeded even with the slightest chance, the Ottoman Empire's agreeing on such terms would have meant its partition. Having realized this maneuver, the Ottomans surely agreed on none of these terms and ensured that the Istanbul Conference collapsed on 12 January 1877. At this point, however, Russia reached its goal lying

¹² Nikolay Pavlovich Ignatyev, Russia's Istanbul Ambassador in 1864, delicately paved the way for the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 with the help of the diplomatic skills he used during his 14-year office, and he also played the leading role in many significant events, such as the emergence of Pan-Slavism, the uprisings and partitions in the Balkans, the obtaining of Cyprus by Britain, the Treaty of San Stefan which hog-tied the Ottoman Empire, and fabrication of the Armenian Question still troubling us, although the last one is not a well-known fact

behind its presentation of a list of demands, that would not be accepted by the Ottomans, to this Conference supervised by the Western states; it began to create reasons to justify itself before the Western states, and the collapse of the Conference gave Russia, in a sense, an opportunity for war. Now Russia had a dual purpose. It was making various maneuvers to justify and legalize its decision for war in the eyes of the Western states, and in the meantime it used the time spent by these maneuvers to constantly prepare its army for war, and thus, it created its own opportunity to prepare its army well against the Ottoman Empire. As a result of all these diplomatic maneuvers, Russia first signed the Budapest Convention with Austria on 15 January, 1877, under which they shared the Balkans. The Austro-Hungarian Empire would gain Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in return, Russia would be free in the Balkans on the condition that it would not establish a single great Slavic state (Uçarol, 1978, p. 21).

After completing its army's preparations for war, Russia launched a committee, led by Ignatyev, to Europe and it commenced talks with the European states with the aim of ensuring that these states would at least remain impartial in the war it would declare against the Ottoman Empire later. As a result of this move by Russia, the European states signed a protocol in London based on the clauses of the Istanbul Conference and submitted it to the Ottoman Empire. After long disputes, on 3 April, 1877, the Council of Ministers of the Ottoman Empire rejected this protocol on the grounds that it would compromise the independence of the state (Armaoğlu, 1997, p. 516). When the offers Russia made for reforms in the Balkans were rejected on 12 April, 1877, Russia found the opportunity it had been looking for to declare war against the Ottoman Empire, and accordingly, it did so on 24 April, 1877 (Uçarol, 1978, p. 21).

Russian forces defeated the Ottomans several times, both in the Caucasus and in the Balkans, and they invaded the regions up to Erzurum in the east and part of Thrace up to the walls of Istanbul, including the entirety of Bulgaria and Edirne. With the agreement dictated on the 3 March 1878 by the Russian Forces, which built their headquarters in San Stefano (Yeşilköy) outside the walls of Istanbul, the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 ended. Having feared that the Russians would grow extremely strong and have a port in warmer seas, the European states, particularly Great Britain, objected to this agreement, which had quite strict clauses. The concern that Russia could dominate Istanbul and harm Great Britain's interests in the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and India caused Great Britain to intervene (Uçarol, 1978, p. 24).

Russia's attempts to deal by itself with the Eastern Question, also known as the partition of the Ottoman Empire, disturbed the balance in Europe in 1856, and the new independent Balkan states were not pleased with the lands given to them (Uçarol, 1978, p. 27). They decided to convene for a congress in Berlin in July 1878. As it could not risk another war, Russia had to agree to this congress. Meanwhile, Great Britain told the Ottoman Empire that she would defend the Ottoman Empire in this congress on the condition that "Cyprus is given to her as a base." The Ottoman Empire, Russia, Britain, France, Austria, Germany, and Italy participated in the congress. At the request of the British, Greece participated in the congress as well. They replaced the Treaty of San Stefano with the Treaty of Berlin. This Treaty accelerated the partition of the Ottoman Empire. The Armenian Question was included in an agreement for the first time. It is the treaty by which the Ottoman Empire lost the greatest amount of land after the Treaty of Karlowitz. With the Treaty of Berlin, Great Britain also took part in the partition of the Ottoman Empire.

In this Conference, a much smaller and independent Bulgarian state instead of a “Great Bulgaria,” the autonomous Eastern Rumelia administered by a Turkish governor but still supervised by the European Commission, and the rest of Bulgaria were left to the Turkish rule. Russia’s influence in Armenia was reduced, and Great Britain promised Austria, with two secret treaties, that she would help it invade Bosnia-Herzegovina and assured the sultan of receiving the Asian part of the Ottoman Empire. In return, the sultan permitted Britain to use Cyprus as a naval base (Kissinger, 2004, p. 147).

The temporary lease of Cyprus to Great Britain, on the condition that the right to property of land would be reserved by the Ottoman Empire, took place under the treaty signed on 4 June 1878. Having obtained Cyprus as per the Turkish-British Defense Agreement, Britain made diplomatic contacts with other Great Powers of Europe to prevent the probable reactions from these states during the Congress of Berlin to be held soon. She persuaded Germany and France about the necessity of such an agreement. She stated that France’s influence on the Catholic countries of the Middle East, and especially Syria, would not be harmed in the slightest, and that the interests of Britain and France in the Levant would be maintained based on the principle of mutual respect and understanding. The 3rd Marquess of Salisbury strictly assured the French (Gazioğlu, 2000, p. 25). So, government turnover of Cyprus to Britain depended on the extent to which the interests of the great powers complied with each other and were satisfied. Britain managed to take over Cyprus with a diplomatic *fait accompli* by obtaining the consent of the states participating in the Conference.

Each year, Great Britain would pay to the Sublime Porte the surplus income after costs were deducted, and this surplus income would be calculated using the

average value of the last five years. This made 22,936 meses (92,799 pounds, 11 shillings and 3 pennies) (Boran, 2011). After the Treaty of Berlin, Great Britain replaced its strategy of preserving the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire with the strategy of obtaining control of the Ottoman lands important to the security of the route to India, and to establish nation states dependent upon herself in these territories. Economic factors played an important role as well in this change in Britain's policy. By 1875, more than half of the Ottoman budget had been allocated to foreign liabilities, and new debts were being taken on to pay off the interests arising out of the outstanding debts. With the decrease in the Ottoman Empire's credibility, interest rates increased and drawing capital to the country became difficult. The decrease in the amount of harvest in Anatolia and the exports prices reduced by the US financial crisis of 1873 led the Ottoman Empire to delay more than half of its external debt in 1875. Having difficulty paying its debts in 1876, the Ottoman Empire officially declared itself bankrupt in 1879. When the Ottoman Empire had problems paying its debts in 1876, it became harder to draw British capital to the Empire, and the British sold their assets in the Ottoman Empire to the French and Germans and made investments in more profitable and less risky areas (Cain & Hopkins, 2001, pp. 344-345).

In the same year when the Treaty was signed, British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli revealed the importance of Cyprus to them with the following words: "The main reason for which we annexed Cyprus is not the Mediterranean, but India." In response to criticisms of the taking over of Cyprus from the Ottomans, Disraeli underlined "the strategic importance of Cyprus, especially for protecting and controlling the Suez Canal opened in 1869," as well as noting that "it might act as a highly important base on the routes to the biggest dominion, India.

Moreover, Disraeli believed that “due to its strategic location, Cyprus might function as a “place d’armes” (arsenal) and an important base on which the soldiers deployed temporarily in case of a potential Russian attack on the region, and economically, it could play an important role in the security of the trade routes to India” (Yellice, 2012, p. 15). The first implementation step of Britain’s policy of a base for the security of India was the invasion of Egypt in 1882 (Ülman, 2002, p. 169).

The 1896 decision of the Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany to adopt *Weltpolitik*¹³ marked the beginning of Germany’s becoming a global power (Mitchell, 1999, p. 23). Germany threatened Britain’s supremacy outside of Europe. According to Sir Eyre Crowe, who was an analyst in the British Foreign Office, there were no rational grounds for Germany’s threatening policy. In Crowe’s words, with Germany’s global calls for challenge in South Africa, Morocco, and the Near East and its desire to build a sea force, a “combination of the largest infantry and the largest navy in the world under the rule of a single state would oblige the whole world to come together in order to preclude a nightmare.” (Bourne, Watt, Stevenson, & Keiger, 2018, p. 367; Kissinger, 2004, p. 187).

Due to the risk of a British-Russian confrontation in the Black Sea, Germany’s influence from the Balkans to the Ottoman Empire caused Britain to focus on Egypt and the Suez Canal for the security of the Eastern Route instead of on the Straits (Taylor P. J., 1993, p. 42). Having declared the Ottoman alliance with Germany in World War I as an excuse, Britain globally declared that she unilaterally

¹³ *Weltpolitik* is the policy adopted by the Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, which aimed to make Germany transform into a global power from a local power and attached importance to the naval force. With the adoption of this policy, the period of avoiding a two-front war and watchful diplomacy during Bismarck’s reign had ended, and a policy aiming at improving the navy was adopted. The strengthening of the German navy and its aggressive diplomatic style disturbed Britain and led her to sign with the French a series of agreements called *Entente Cordiale* resolving the conflicts between them.

terminated the agreements with the Ottomans on 5 November, 1914 and she annexed Cyprus as well. This annexation was indeed an implementation of Britain's changing Ottoman policy upon the Anglo-Russian Entente of 1907, Britain had to change her policy toward the Ottoman Empire. The said policy was based on preserving the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire and on preventing the Russian influence and dominance from extending to the Straits and Istanbul. After 1908, Britain changed this policy to maintain it without making an impression which was against former enemy Russia (Ahmad, 2008, p. 142). Faruk Sönmezoğlu (2005, p. 54) states that British-Ottoman relations between 1908 and 1914 were associated with Britain's relations with France and Russia and her policy toward the Persian Gulf and its whereabouts. The British Foreign Secretary Grey said that he both strengthened the relations with the Triple Entente and acquired the desired privileges in the region without conceding the Ottoman Empire in the slightest. Among these privileges is the temporary turning over of the government of Cyprus by the Ottoman Empire. This shows how important the international structure and the compliance of interests, and the conflicts of the great powers became for regional policies.

The annexation of Cyprus by Britain was not unexpected by the Turkish Cypriots. Thus, Britain's decision to annex Cyprus did not worry the Turkish Cypriots so much. What really worried them was that this annexation could possibly be a step toward giving the island to Greece (Hitchens, 1997, p. 33). Accordingly, the events of the First World War showed how much the Turkish Cypriots were right to worry. On 17 October 1915, Britain offered Cyprus to Greece on the condition that it would join the war as her ally (Mallinson, 2005, p. 11). However,

this offer was rejected by the pro-German King of Greece, Constantine I, and the ruling party of Zaimis (Gazioğlu A. C., 2002, p. 922).

2.3. Cyprus in the 20th century transition period (1919-1940)

2.3.1 International outlook in the transition period

The Treaty of Versailles, which was signed at the end of World War I, politically degraded Germany while enforcing economic limits that prevented her from immediately recovering. With this treaty, a large Germany was left heavily wounded in the middle of Europe. Other aims for forming this treaty were to recreate the map of Europe, to form ethnic and linguistic nation states, to clear Europe of the Bolshevik regime and other revolutionist powers, and to prevent a new world war (Hobsbawm, 2008, pp. 39-43). France was uneasy about the German border in the north, but she took her share from the colonies of a defeated Germany. Taking the lion's share from the lost colonies, Britain strengthened her role as a world empire. As a status quo power, Britain did not accept the principle of self-determination as valid outside of Europe. The United States and Japan shared the soil Germany lost in the Pacific and China. At the end of World War I, France and Britain came out as status quo powers in Continental Europe and the world, respectively. After the war, the US had planned to place new principles and establish new institutions in the international system under the leadership of President Wilson. However, upon the defeat of President Wilson in the elections and the Senate's rejecting the membership of the US to the peace-making League of Nations, the League became the mask of the absence of power in the world system (Taylor, 1993, p. 44-45; Hobsbawm, 2008, p. 42). A huge milestone in the international arena, "The Great Economic Depression" of 1929, which affected the world, weakened the popularity of governments. Two major events in 1931 caused the absence of power to be prominent: Firstly, Britain intensified the

economic competition by abandoning the gold standard; and secondly, Japan invaded Manchuria (Gregory, 1933; Young, 1998, p. 90, 95).

The prominence of the absence of power started when the countries established their own economic and political domains. The world was increasingly divided. The most extensive domain belonged to the US. Issued in 1823, the Monroe Doctrine dictated the policy of stopping the European powers from approaching the western hemisphere, which resulted in American armed interventions as of 1930. Changing after 1932 with the “good neighbor” policy of the Roosevelt administration, these interventions came to an end with seventeen bilateral agreements.

In the Far East, on the other hand, after invading Manchuria, Japan tried to suppress the Chinese for more compensations. This caused a war in China in 1937. Meanwhile, Japan was inciting in Asia nationalist feelings against the Western countries. With this purpose, the concept of the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” was announced in 1938 (Yellen, 1999).

Fascist Italy invaded Ethiopia in Africa in 1934 for imperial purposes. Stalin, on the other hand, was conducting the self-sufficiency program with the slogan “Socialism in One Country.” After the Great Depression of 1929, the principle of “free trade” was abandoned. In the name of “imperial choices,” Britain adopted a policy against the US and her other commercial rival countries in Europe. The fact that the British Empire expanded all over the world and that it was in a period of decline in the 1930s, as well as Canada’s commercial dependence on the US, and Australia’s weakness against Japan, prevented Britain from establishing such a trade bloc (Holland, 1981, p. 138).

Germany, on the other hand, tried to establish such an economic and political domain in Germany because of the expansionist foreign policy. The application of these foreign policy purposes included the fortification of the Rhineland in 1934 in violation of the Treaty of Versailles, the seizure of Central and Eastern European countries under the principle of “Lebensraum,” and the attack on Russia afterwards (Hobsbawm, 2008, p. 47-48). Finally, she went to war with the oceanic powers to re-share the world’s soil. This would result in her acquiring more of the soil and colonies she lost in World War I, and, maybe, in obtaining a second domain comprising of European and African soil. These domains caused two opposite blocs to be formed, after Germany and Japan united against the Soviets with the Anti-Comintern Pact. Italy joined this bloc in 1938. Germany’s invasion of Poland in 1939 signaled the end of the appeasement policy of Britain in Munich. The world was divided in two blocs after Germany defeated France in 1940 and attacked Russia in 1941. World War II ended when the Central Powers were defeated in 1945 (Taylor, 1993, p. 47-49).

2.3.2. Political progress on Cyprus in the transition period, the Treaty of Lausanne, and the declaration of Cyprus as a Royal colony by Britain

After being defeated in World War I, the Ottoman Empire signed the Treaty of Sèvres with the Allied Powers on 10 August 1920. With this treaty, Ottoman Empire accepted the annexation of Cyprus by Britain. However, with the Turkish War of Independence under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the Turks did not allow the Treaty of Sèvres to become valid. After the War of Independence had resulted in the victory by the Turks, the Allied Powers and the Government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey negotiated to sign a new treaty. After these negotiations between the parties, the Treaty of Lausanne was signed on 24 July, 1923. Articles 16, 20 and 21 are related to Cyprus. In Article 16, it is stated: “Turkey hereby renounces

all rights and title whatsoever over or respecting the territories situated outside the frontiers laid down in the present Treaty and the islands other than those over which her sovereignty is recognized by the said Treaty, the future of these territories and islands being settled or to be settled by the parties concerned. The provisions of the present Article do not prejudice any special arrangements arising from neighborly relations which have been or may be concluded between Turkey and any limitrophe countries". In Article 20 of the relevant treaty, it is indicated that: "Turkey hereby recognizes the annexation of Cyprus proclaimed by the British Government on 5 November, 1914" (Hale, 2000, p. 130; TTK, 2012). Moreover, in Article 21, it is stated that Turkish nationals already resident in Cyprus on the 5th of November 1914, will acquire British nationality subject to the conditions laid down in local law, and will thereupon lose their Turkish nationality. They will, however, have the right to opt for Turkish nationality within two years of the coming into force of the present Treaty if they leave Cyprus within twelve months after having so opted.

Turkish nationals already resident in Cyprus on the coming into force of the present Treaty who, at that date, have acquired or are in process of acquiring British nationality in consequence of a request made in accordance with the local law will also thereupon lose their Turkish nationality. It is understood that the Government of Cyprus will be entitled to refuse British nationality to inhabitants of the island who, being Turkish nationals, had formerly acquired another nationality without the consent of the Turkish Government (Şanlı, 1967, pp. 30-33; Soysal, 2000, pp. 99-100).

Therefore, after being removed from Turkey's hands, Cyprus became a British territory and colony. Turkey recognized the British annexation of Cyprus with the Treaty of Lausanne on 5 November 1924. With this treaty, Turkey lost all its legal

rights on Cyprus, and the island became a British territory. Determining the final status of Cyprus, the Treaty of Lausanne was recognized by the British Parliament on 6 August 1924. Following the recognition of the Treaty, George V of England made an amendment in the status of Cyprus on 10 March 1925, and signed the Royal Charter, declaring Cyprus a British Crown Colony. With this Charter, the highest-ranking British officer in the Island was started to be referred to as governor instead of high commissioner (Gazioğlu, 2000, p. 209).

Under the political and military conditions of that time, it did not seem possible to declare war on Britain, an effective country of the League of Nations, because of Cyprus. Moreover, Turkey adhered to and was party to the Kellogg-Briand Pact, signed in 1928. This pact prohibited the signatory states to solve problems among themselves by means of war (Nelsson, 2018).

Affected by the Great Depression, Britain faced the riot of Greek Cypriots demanding Enosis in 1931 (Bilim Araştırma Vakfı, 2012). The great economic depression that lasted from 1929 to 1931 inescapably affected Cyprus as well. Following these negative conditions, the government's attempt to levy an additional customs tax in order to close the budget deficit during the budget discussions in 1931 was the last straw. When the resolution of the Budget Committee to increase the customs tax was put to vote in the Assembly on 28 April, 1931, it was rejected by the representatives of the Cypriots in the Council. Upon the rejection of the Customs Tax Resolution in the Assembly, the British government, following the governor's order, authorized him to collect additional tax by issuing an "Order in Council" on 11 August, 1931. Following the announcement of this decision on the island on the 9th of September, the resistance forming against the Island's government accelerated (Göktürk, 2008, p. 341).

A development on Cyprus in this transition period was the fact that Britain promised an autonomous government to the island when World War II broke out, which is of strategic importance in controlling the Middle East. Greeks, on the other hand, were determined to achieve Enosis. As the Cypriots were not allowed to form nationalist groups, the headquarters of the struggle for Enosis was relocated to London in the 1930's. In 1937, a committee sworn to act before British Parliament to gain the right of autonomy was established under the name of the "Committee for Cyprus Autonomy." Even though the attempts of this committee were welcomed with sympathy by some British MPs, they were objected by the British Government (Solsten, 1993, p. 23). However, the Cypriots were the most loyal supporters of the British during World War II, and 6000 Cypriots voluntarily took part in the attack organized by the British to save Greece when she was occupied in 1940. On the other hand, 30,000 Cypriots assisted the British forces during World War II, and Cyprus was used by the British as an air force base (Solsten, 1993, p. 23-24).

In spite of the support they gave during the war, the negative reaction of the Cypriots towards the British did not end; not giving up on their Enosis policy, Greek Cypriots continued their London-based works. As seen in the case of Anthony Eden, Foreign Secretary of Britain, British politicians and officers made statements on the possibility of solving the Cyprus Problem if the war is won, so as not to lose the support of the Cypriots. However, Britain did not make a move during World War II either to restore the constitution she cancelled in 1931 or to prepare a new constitution and grant civil freedoms. The reason for this may be the fact that Britain did not want to weaken against Germany with regards to war conjuncture.

Another important development in Cyprus during the war was the German invasion of Crete in 1941. Upon the danger of a German invasion of Greece and

Crete, as well as Egypt over North Africa, Anthony Eden, Foreign Secretary of Britain, is known to have suggested that the war cabinet transfer the island to the exiled Greek government after the war, to eliminate the possibility of the Germans seizing the island and transferring it to the Greeks. However, this suggestion was not supported when the German danger passed (Sönmezoğlu, 2006, p. 77).

Following the invasion of Crete, Britain turned her attention to Cyprus, which led her to increase the number of troops on the island and to start defense-based infrastructural works. An increase in the employment rate in Cyprus allowed for an economic boom. This boom reflected on political mobility. The British administration permitted political activities in 1941. In that year, the communist Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL) and the Cypriot National Party (KEK), founded by the church, were established. Against the Enosis demand, expressed both by the church and AKEL, the Turkish Cypriot leaders, Necati Özkan and Dr. Fazıl Küçük, came together under the name of the Cyprus Island Turkish Minority Foundation (KATAK). In order to eliminate the effect of AKEL on Turkish workers, the Turkish Cypriot Workers' Unions were founded in 1945. The fact that AKEL was party to the enosis demands prevented a monolithic left movement from being formed on the island. Therefore, the only movement that would bring the two societies together on common ground in the struggle against the British administration was precluded (Oran, 2001, pp. 594-596).

2.4. The Cold War period

When it comes to the Cold War period, the standard approach is to compare the differences in Eastern-Western relations in terms of the degree of enmity. Peter J. Taylor studied in four stages how these differences occurred parallel to the progress of Northern-Southern politics (Taylor, 1993, pp. 53-58).

2.4.1 Frozen period (1947-1953):

i. International outlook

In this period, the geopolitical world order took 40 years and never changed back. The first period in which this communication between East and West did not work represents the deepest form of the Cold War division. The foundations of the crises to occur afterward in Eastern-Western relations were laid in the 1950s. Meanwhile, the population in the countries of the two pole leaders were being directed to new ideas against communism and imperialism, and anti-governmentalists were being effaced (Truman's Loyalty Oaths, McCarthy's "witch-hunt" and Stalin's final exiles) (Taylor, 1993, p. 53).

The Cold War started when Europe was divided into two blocs. Following the Truman Doctrine, promising military aid to Europe to defeat communism, American funds were provided in 1947 with the Marshall Plan in order to rebuild Europe. As the Soviet Union rejected the acceptance of such a plan by its satellite states, Europe was economically divided in two when the plan came into effect in 1948. Invasion zones of the US, Britain, and France in Germany formed "West" Germany, while the Soviet region formed "East" Germany. Europe and Germany were divided. This division was approved with the foundation of NATO in 1949 (Taylor P. J., 1991, pp. 183-195; Taylor P. J., 1993, p. 53).

Eastern Europe was important for the Soviets; it insisted on politically controlling the buffer countries from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea (McCauley, 1983). As the first architect of the containment strategy in the US, George

Kennan¹⁴ determined Britain, Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union to be the four industrial regions that could resist the US in a war, and indicated that the containment strategy would include keeping Britain, Japan and Germany in the Western camp (Hobsbawm, 2008, p. 305). The division of Europe was completed when the communists were no longer in charge of the government in Italy and France, they were defeated in Greece, and a communist government was formed in Czechoslovakia. The Berlin Blockade of 1948 intensified the division, but did not result in a military conflict. Europe was the battlefield of the clash between the East and West.

In 1949 and the 1950s, the international relations arena was no longer Europe, but Asia. Communists won the civil war in China in 1949, and the Korean War started a year later, in 1950. The containment strategy was extensively amended. The NSC-50 paper of 1950 introduced the armament policy to defeat communism around the world. Thus, the Russians would not be fought against in Korea, but the Chinese troops would be. This hot war to be fought outside Europe gains importance since it incorporated the East-West conflict into the North-South conflict. Following the World War II, the Philippines, Myanmar, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka became independent; however, the conflicts against French, Dutch, and British colonialism continued in Indochina, Indonesia, and Malaya, respectively. While the “North” evaluated the civil wars in China and Korea as an East-West conflict, it may be interpreted for the “South” as an order of resistance. In 1950, India took the lead in the formation of the first “South” Caucus in the United Nations. These countries called themselves the “Third World,” to separate themselves from the bipolar world.

¹⁴ George Kennan was an American diplomat, advisor, and historian. He was the architect of the Soviet containment strategy and was the mastermind of the ideas of the Cold War, such as the Marshall Plan and Truman Doctrine.

India entered the process of announcing the dissatisfaction of the Third World countries to the United Nations. The ceasefire and division of Korea following the Korean War were the result of the activities of Prime Minister Nehru of India to bring peace to the South (Taylor, 1993, pp. 53-54).

In this period, the international structure was divided in two, and NATO was formed, of which Turkey and Greece became members.¹⁵ The colonies also demanded independence in this period. The Cyprus dispute was perceived within the frameworks of the NATO memberships of Turkey and Greece, as well as the self-determination demand of Cyprus.

ii. US and Cyprus

It can be asserted that the US, instead of being interested in Cyprus after 1945 and in the 1950s, took into consideration the general balance, and tried to prevent the Soviet Union from penetrating the region. That is why from time to time it was observed to be in dispute with British policy, the priority of which was the direct interests of the British Empire in the region. The most explicit example of this was the policy of Britain about the Suez Canal and Egypt. Desiring that Britain abandons her military bases in that region, the US put pressure on London (Sönmezoğlu, 2006, p. 67). The two countries also had disagreements with regard to accepting Turkey and Greece in NATO and defending the Middle East. The biggest concern of the US was the weakness of the southeastern wing of NATO. That is the reason why the US desired a strategic air commandship to be established in Turkey. Britain, on the other hand, was planning the establishment of a separate Middle Eastern commandship affiliated with the British Middle Eastern commandship, joined by Egypt and other

¹⁵ In this period, the conflict correlates with the realist assumptions. According to conflict theories, the cold war bears realistic features.

Middle Eastern states. Britain indicated that it might be dangerous to extend the NATO European Commandership towards the Caucasus, and that Turkey and Greece should be accepted for the Middle Eastern defense plan instead of directly to Europe. Britain also opposed the fact that the US was commanding the Mediterranean forces via the Atlantic Commandership (Gönlübol, et al., 1996, p. 231).

iii. Cyprus within the framework of the Turkish-British-Greek perspective

Britain knew that she would not be able to stay long in Egypt due to escalating Arab nationalism (Gönlübol, et al., 1996, p. 277). Therefore, she placed importance in Cyprus to maintain her military existence in the Mediterranean. Emphasizing the existence of a Turkish society in Cyprus against the demands of enosis, the British Government announced in October 1946 that it would make political and economic reforms. AKEL representatives left the negotiations when the constitution, which did not include self-governance of the island, was brought by Britain to be negotiated in the Assembly. On 23 November 1949, AKEL presented a note to the UN General Assembly and Security Council, blaming Britain. After Makarios III became the archbishop on 18 October 1950 and increased his political activities in Greece, Greece was on the fence between the Enosis demands and her policy of maintaining good relations with Britain and Turkey. However, Greece's policy until 1954 was to solve the Cyprus dispute with bilateral negotiations with Britain (Çay, 2019, p. 15).

Turkey evaluated the Cyprus dispute as part of the Lausanne status quo and was concerned about the possibility of ally Britain interfering in her internal affairs (Sönmezoğlu, 2006, p. 145; Bölükbaşı, 1993, pp. 507-508). Avoiding a rupture of the relations between the British Government, which did not accept the existence of the Cyprus dispute, and with Greece, Turkey, via the Ministers of Foreign Affairs at the

time, Necmeddin Sadak and Fuat Köprülü, respectively, announced that the Cyprus dispute did not exist, and that Britain's abandoning Cyprus was out of the question (Armaoğlu, 1963, p. 19, 20, 24). Unable to detect a foreign policy outside NATO, and unwilling to rupture the relations between Greece and Britain in the Western alliance, Turkey chose to act apolitically with regards to Cyprus and supported Britain (Oran, 2002, p. 596, 598; Sanjian, 1997, p. 243).

The fact that the *Free Officers Movement*, which seized power by overthrowing the kingdom with a coup d'état in 1952 and filling the evident lack of power in Egypt after the Arab-Israeli War of 1949, and the fact that the republic was proclaimed on 18 June, 1953, were two of the reasons why Britain pursued this policy with regard to Cyprus (Örmeci, 2011). The importance of the island increased when Britain transferred her Middle Eastern Commandership to Cyprus after such events (Sönmezoğlu, 2006, p. 77). Turkey and Britain reconciled on their policy against Enosis (Sönmezoğlu, 2006, p. 78). The British kept the Cyprus dispute out of the agenda, and dodged the Greeks' suggestions. In the unofficial meeting between Anthony Eden, Foreign Secretary of Britain, and Alexander Papagos, Prime Minister of Greece, Eden suggested that the Cyprus dispute does not exist, and asked Papagos, in a snidely way, why they did not demand Alexandria or New York, both of which have a higher Greek population (Oran, 2002, p. 597). Eden indicated that Cyprus is included in Britain's domestic affairs, and that Britain would never give up on Cyprus. Papagos, on the other hand, was angry at Eden due to his precise words (Ehrling, 1974, p. 12). Britain had placed importance on Turkey with respect of the Middle Eastern policy (Sönmezoğlu, 2006, p. 78, Stephen, 1966, p. 133).

Britain elaborated on two international legal principles in her early 1950s policy of the continuation of British dominance on the island:

(1) Recognition of the British dominance in Cyprus by the Treaty of Lausanne, its inalterability without Britain's consent, inexistence of a law forcing Britain to do so, and the validity of the *pacta sunt servanda*¹⁶ principle in international treaties

(2) The concept of absolute authority in the principle of sovereignty granted Britain the right to rule Cyprus. Moreover, international law did not force Britain to try to negotiate with the Cypriots (Ehrling, 1999, p. 21).

2.4.2. Conflict and cooperation, competition, or intrigue (1953-1969)

i. International outlook

The balance of terror was caused by the Soviet atomic bombing in 1949 and nuclear bombing in 1953, thereby ending the American monopoly on these weapons of mass destruction. Due to the fear of a nuclear war, this period involved superpower summits. On the other hand, this period witnessed the armed interventions of two bloc leaders to protect their domains. The US intervened in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic, while the Soviets intervened in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The important events of this period were the Warsaw Pact in 1955; the establishment of CENTO and SEATO, apart from NATO, by the US in order to extend the policy of containing the Soviets; the Suez Crisis of 1956; the Berlin Blockade of 1961 and construction of the Berlin Wall; the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, nearly escalating into a nuclear war; and the beginning of the Vietnam War. The number of independent colonies accelerated in this period. Also in this period, in 1961, the Non-Aligned Movement was effective in reporting to the United Nations the demands of the Southern

¹⁶ The sacred principle of the classical law of obligations was the idea of *pacta sunt servanda* (sanctity of contracts), which means that contracts are binding under any conditions. According to the classical theory of contracts, each reasonable person has the freedom to enter a contract upon terms determined by that person and to be certain that a contract concluded voluntarily will be subject to judicial enforcement and binding on the parties.

countries from the Northern countries, and stayed out of the East-West conflict (Taylor, 1993, pp. 54-56). This period can be interpreted as a period of reconciliation and disintegration, in which the third world and the Non-Aligned Movement came out, competitions, conspiracies, clashes and reconciliations were experienced together, a new global economic order was sought for, and new actors other than the governments came to the forefront (Okman, 2010, p.30).

Towards the middle of the 1950s, new incidents were happening in the Eastern Mediterranean. The features of this period of the Cold War were formed by the Suez Crisis, the Palestine Issue, problems within the Arab societies, and the strategies of great and regional powers. The Cyprus dispute widened this high tension in the Eastern Mediterranean. In the middle of the 1950s, as the capitalist western bloc was observing the movements of the socialist eastern bloc, Britain attached importance to British dominance in Cyprus. Cyprus was a significant castle in Eastern Mediterranean. (Stelya, 2013).

- ii. **Progress on Cyprus:** The progress on Cyprus in this period is to be embraced within the scopes of the independence process of the colonies and the attempts of two bloc leaders to extend their domains. The importance of Cyprus increased when Egypt became a republic and when British troops retreated from the region as per the Suez Canal Base Agreement of 1954. After Minister of State for the Colonies Henry Hopkinson had said in the House of Commons that “there are certain territories in the Commonwealth which can never expect to be fully independent,” (Holt, 2014). Greece brought the Cyprus dispute to the international arena, and the issue was discussed in the United Nations for the first time. Following the rejection of Greece’s application, EOKA started its terrorist activities in 1955, which targeted British officers, policemen, and

aldermen (Stelya, 2013). As a result of these terrorist activities, Britain started to implement a policy that included Turkey in the problem (Oran, 2002, pp. 597-598).

Following the start of the armed actions of the National Organization of Cypriot Struggle (EOKA) on 1 April 1955, the Turkish Cypriot Leadership believed this new situation would be required to be politically confronted in the name of the Turkish Cypriots, and that the collaboration of the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey with London in the Eastern Mediterranean would be reconsidered. The main purpose of this effort was to constitutionally secure the political and societal rights of Turkish Cypriots. Within this framework, it defended the political equality of the two societies in Cyprus against EOKA's demand regarding the unity of Cyprus with Greece (Stelya, 2013, p. 16).

Britain made Turkey an official party to the dispute at the Conference of London on 20 June 1955 and gave the impression that there might be a conflict between Greece over this issue. (Oran, 2002, p. 602). Following the rejection of the Greek discourse in the United Nations, Makarios, disregarding that, struggled to make an agreement with the British Government to determine the fate of Cyprus. In response, considering the imbalance in the population structure in Cyprus, the Turkish Cypriot leadership offered a revision on the treaty of Lausanne, and the handling of the problems by Turkey and Greece. Therefore, it would keep London out of the negotiations on the future of Cyprus and eliminate the political role of EOKA. (Stelya, 2013, p.22).

After the failure of the Suez invasion of 1956, Britain lost its effective power in the region. Britain transferred the task to look out for the interests of the West to the

US with the Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957. Cyprus was not strategically less important, and it was enough for the British bases to be present on the island. Britain indicated that she gave up on governance, but that the island could be divided. Turkey started to adopt the Taksim (Division) objective, while the US was in favor of solving the dispute within the framework of the NATO alliance. Adopting the “Taksim” objective in 1956, Turkey emphasized the transfer of the territories, on which Turks and Greeks live separately, to Turkey and Greece (Bahcheli, 1990, pp. 36-40).

Even though the Istanbul pogrom – attempts to vandalize the properties of the Turkish citizens of Greek origin and to force them to leave Istanbul – which occurred during the Conference of London, was said to have designed by the government, apart from national honor and prestige, the thought of Enosis’ laying siege to Turkey strategically from two sides was both a concern and doubt about the future of Turkish Cypriots. Turkey would oppose the idea of Enosis, even if it was not for the Turkish Cypriots (Hale, 2000, p. 131). Upon the incapability of British authorities against the increasing terrorizing movements of EOKA, the ideas of an alternative state organization, and the requirement of the division of the island for the security of Turkish Cypriots started to come to light. (Stelya, 2013, p. 23).

Turkish Cypriots asserted their local self-governing plans in Cyprus between 1956 and 1958. However, they were not accepted due to the opposition of the Greek Cypriots. The exile of Archbishop Makarios to the Seychelles in 1956 caused a well-armed revolt by EOKA. By 1958, the problem turned to a Turkish-Greek civil war instead of a problem between the Greeks and the British (Hale, 2000, p. 131). Following Makarios' exile, the Greek population was governed by the mayors, and they supported the terrorizing movements. In 1957, following the terrorizing movements that spread to the Turkish Cypriot population, clashes that occurred

between the populations and Nicosia's division by the local government as "de facto," the Turkish Cypriot Leadership started to pay attention to London (Bahcheli, 1990, pp. 34-37). According to the Turkish Cypriot press, the solution to the Cyprus issue was only possible with collaboration between Ankara and London in the Eastern Mediterranean (Bahcheli, 1990, p. 41). Britain, on the other hand, attached the continuation of her existence in Cyprus to the targets of bringing the Cyprus issue to the international arena, and Ankara's playing a role in the dispute as a balancing element. (Bahcheli, 1990, p. 40). Within this scope, only Britain and Turkey were involved in the problem, and Greece and Greek Cypriot side were voiceless. The Turkish Cypriot press defended the opinion that Britain shall continue to dominate the island, and in case the island changes hands, it shall be returned to Turkey, its former owner (Bağcı, 2001, p. 119). This new idea was asserted by the Turkish side during a period in which the conflict between the western and eastern blocs in the international structure was deep.

It was a solution for the US and Britain to grant independence to the island, on the condition that their military bases and facilities stayed in place. Britain's decision to abandon their dominance over Cyprus in 1958 can be explained by political, military, and strategic reasons. The fact that more than 30,000 British soldiers were required to control the EOKA terrorists was a cost-increasing element. Other factors were that the Greek Cypriots isolated and alienated themselves from Britain due to violence, and that the problem was at the alert level in the international arena. Strategically, the opinion that spread among the British military officers was that the strategic interest of Britain could be protected by preserving the sovereignty of the military bases on the island. Following the Suez Crisis and the 1958 Iraqi coup d'état, the reconsidered military requirements were also effective in this decision. Moreover,

it was militarily very costly to keep the island as a weapons camp. The US and NATO member states forced Britain to solve this problem at once, which damaged the relationship between NATO, Turkey, and Greece. The number of newly independent countries increased parallel to the number of anti-colonialist discourses. Being in power at that time, the Workers' Party's opinion suggesting that "the Cypriot societies have the right to decide on their future" was also a part of this decision (Ehrling, 1999, p. 20).

Hence, the Republic of Cyprus was formed in 1960; however, it was a functional federation with no rights to change its constitution and which recognized a partial British sovereignty on its territory. Inner-NATO relations were taken into consideration in the formation and operation of this state. With the establishment treaty of this state, the military bases of Akrotiri and Dhekelia stayed under British dominance, and with a second treaty between Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus, Greece and Turkey deployed 950 and 650 soldiers on the island, respectively. With the Treaty of Alliance and Guarantee, Britain, Greece and Turkey, as guarantor states, accepted and undertook to prevent the island from dividing and uniting with another state. In case the situation created by the treaty is imperiled following the negotiation of the three countries, they would have the right to act separately unless a common action is at stake (Hale, 2000, pp. 132-133; Kyriakides, 1968, pp. 55-71).

Following the constitutional agreement in 1960, Greek Cypriots, who did not abandon their Enosis dream, started not to respect the Turkish Cypriots' constitutional rights. Desiring to make the best of their constitutional rights, Turkish Cypriots did not accept the constitutional change prepared by Makarios in 1963, which would take away their rights if accepted; this rejection was followed by attacks on and murders in the Turkish villages, aimed at forcing the Turks to accept the Akritas plan. These

incidents caused serious ethnic conflicts and the Turkish Cypriots to withdraw from the government; approximately one third of the Turkish Cypriots became refugees in their own countries and forced to live in the residential areas encompassed by the Greeks (Hale, 2000, p. 149). According to Mehmet Hasgüler, Makarios aimed at “destroying the structure of a two-nation society and turning to the one-nation, namely, the Hellenistic structure” (Hasgüler, 2007, p. 238).

ii. a. The US’s stance

After Britain accepted ending her military presence in 1954, the US, approving that Greece would forward the Cyprus issue to the UN, changed her stance, accepted British sovereignty in the island and waived from supporting the efforts of Greece; pursuant to this period, she dealt with the Cyprus issue in terms of the integrity of NATO and the southeast wing. When the island became more important during 1957-58 Middle Eastern Affairs, she led the way to solving the conflicts in favor of NATO through negotiations in Zurich and London. The fact that Britain ended her military presence in the region in 1954 rendered the US and Britain, not competitors, but two NATO members that came to an understanding. The US and Britain, which came to a mutual agreement on a union of interests and geopolitical concern in the Eastern Mediterranean, began discussing the Cyprus issue in favor of NATO’s interests. After the disintegration of colonies, and terror incidents that arose in Cyprus, Britain caused Turkey to be a party to the Cyprus issue and began to trigger nationalist ideology on the island within the framework of her interests. After 1964, British policy aimed at protecting Britain’s means of flying over Turkey, ensuring that British bases remained on the island and resuming British responsibilities in the Persian Gulf and CENTO. Furthermore, it intended to avoid the

breakout of a war between Turkey and Greece because of Cyprus and to prevent Cyprus from falling under Soviet influence (Sonyel, 2003, p.180).

The Eisenhower regime assumed the authorization to address US troops to any armed threat and to the countries under Soviet dominance in order to avoid a revival of Soviet influence in such countries as Egypt, Syria and Jordan, to prevent the spread of anti-West pan-Arab policies and communism, which may be caused due to British and French influence that faded away after the Middle Eastern affairs in 1957-1958 and the Suez Crisis in 1956, intervention of the US in Lebanon and the joint intervention of the US and Britain in Jordan may be interpreted within this scope (Tal, 1995, pp. 39-57). The stance of the US towards Turkey and her Cyprus policy in terms of technological and strategic changes. Before 1957, the US and USSR had only medium range missiles and thus she was clearly in need of her bases in Turkey to be within range of the Soviet Union. Putting strategic submarines, each with 16 Polaris missiles, into operation in 1960 caused Turkey to lose her importance as a base. Jupiter Missiles placed in Turkey in 1958 became an issue of bargaining in the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and were decided to be disassembled in 1963. Replacing missile launchers with strategic submarines that are hard to hit may be one of the reasons why the 1964 Johnson letter was so harsh. The fact that the USSR also had long range missiles after 1960 may have led to a general nuclear war threat due to the Soviets' provocation of and intervention in the Turkish-Greece conflict to arise in the Eastern Mediterranean. Thus, the comparative balance of power with the USSR as well as technological and strategic factors played a structural role in the US's policy (Sönmezoğlu, 2006, pp. 67-68; Sönmezoğlu, 1995, pp. 29-30).

The fact that Makarios was part of a non-aligned movement, and his support of the Soviets was in contradiction with America's aim to support Makarios to

diminish the communist effect on the island, and it annoyed the Americans (Sonyel, 2003, p. 27). The US's aim was to organize economic aid programs to reach American communication points and overcome communism, and to get support from guarantor forces to restore order on the island. Americans did not want Makarios to increase the tension with the Turkish Cypriots, and the United Nations, on the other side, wanted him to stop asking for support from neutral states. The US warned Makarios with respect that Makarios' interests coincided, not with a non-aligned movement, but with the interests of west (O'Malley & Craig, 1999, p. 89).

The relationship between Turkey and the US reached the most intense level in terms of the Cyprus issue in 1964 with the "Johnson Letter". In June, by his letter to İnönü, President Johnson stated that other NATO members had no time to think about whether they were obliged to protect Turkey in case of any Turkish intervention that might lead to Soviet intervention, and Turkey would not be able to use American weapons during her intervention in Cyprus (Hart, 1990, p. 15). In addition to the reactions by the Soviets, Turkey had no such military equipment and did not own any landing ships (Bölükbaşı, 1993, p. 521). When National Guards, illegally organized by Grivas, stated that they would attack a Turkish residential region near Kokkina in August 1964, Turkey tried to prevent these attacks only through airstrikes (Hale, 2000, pp. 150-151). Pursuant to these airstrikes, the Soviet news agency TASS announced that if Cyprus was invaded, the Soviet Nations would help protecting the freedom and independence of Cyprus and start with the negotiations in this respect" (Rubinstein, 1982, p. 30).

The harsh wording of the Johnson Letter led to alienation from the US and to a period of establishing multilateral relationships in Turkish foreign policy. The most

significant stage was convergence with the Soviets. As İnönü did, the Demirel government also abided by a cautious policy and started direct negotiations with Greece. These negotiations continued with Keşan and Dedeoğlu meetings after the military junta. During these negotiations, Demirel stated that he would only accept the unification of Cyprus with Greece provided that the Turks were granted an independent base; however, the Greek Cypriots did not approve it (Bölükbaşı, 1993, p. 133). Two months after these negotiations, on 15 November, 1967, Cyprus re-burst following the assault of the Cyprus National Guard on two Turkish villages. Pursuant to the threat of an airstrike, the Greek Cypriots withdrew from these two villages (Göktepe, 2005, p.431-444)

ii. b. The Soviet stance

Between 1955 and 1959, the Turkish Cypriot press expressed that, according to Dr. Stelyo, external authorities like the Soviets and Britain expanded EOKA's field of activity under the leadership of Makarios. The newspapers of the period, *Bozkurt* and *Halkın Sesi*, reported news in this respect. Turkish Cypriot author Talat Taşer wrote that the source of the pain was the church that lived with the dream of the Byzantine Empire and the Soviet policy that disturbed the Balkans, the Mediterranean and the Middle East (Stelya, 2013, p. 19).

After 1960, Soviet leaders wanted to raise political instability and unrest in Cyprus in order to increase partitions within NATO. The Soviets also aimed at minimizing possible British influence on the island, including British bases on and right to flight over the island (Adams & Cottrell, 1968, pp. 29-30). In an article published in August, 1961, the New York Times, emphasizing the communist effect on the island, indicated that the Soviets could see communism's rule in Cyprus only

through democratic processes; that as unemployment increased pursuant to the foundation of the Republic of Cyprus, the effect of communism also increased; and that the voter rates of communists would increase to 35% at free elections, and that would pose a danger to the West, thinking of the strategic importance of Cyprus (Sonyel, 2003, p. 27).

The Soviets rejected Enosis and wanted an independent Cyprus. Communism would be stronger in an independent Cyprus than it would be in Cyprus that was dependent on Greece island (Adams & Cottrell, 1968, pp. 28-29). Thus, the Soviets were supporting the independence of the island, criticizing the Turkish and Western leaders as they interfered in the internal affairs of Cyprus and threatening to forward the issue to the Security Council (Sonyel, 2003, p. 81). Furthermore, there were rumors that Soviet delegates offered Makarios military assistance when necessary (Adams & Cottrell, 1968, p. 34).

After airstrikes in August 1964, the declaration of the TASS agency, with regard to the fact that the Soviets would exert every effort to protect independence and freedom of Cyprus, caused Turkey to feel the US's pressure even more. In order to diminish the influence of this threat, and because of Russia's desire to form a closer relationship with Turkey since 1945, the two countries started converging. Hence, the Soviets declared that they abandoned their requests from the Republic of Turkey through a memorandum on 30 May, 1953. In 1965, a Politburo member Nikolai Podgorny visited Turkey, and this convergence started to yield fruit in the economic field (Kuniholm, 1983, p. 427).

As a political result of this convergence, the Soviets decided that it would be advantageous for them to approach the Turks in an egalitarian manner instead of

supporting the Greeks unconditionally. After 1964, and particularly in 1967 when an extreme right-wing government came to power following the coup d'état in Greece, Turkey and the Soviet Union adopted a common attitude against Enosis. Thus, the Soviets started to harbor the idea of protecting the rights and interests of both societies on the island (Rubinstein, 1982, p. 32).

During the Cold War, in a bipolar and two-bloc system, the Cyprus issue was regarded as a tool for East-West policies and was perceived within the framework of the US's concern that she would be weak against the Soviets and that NATO's south wing would be wounded. The US supported Turkey against the UN General Assembly's resolution in 1965; however, this resolution rejected the 1959 London treaty. The US's idea in rejecting this resolution was to pacify the anti-American atmosphere that was caused by the Johnson letter, and because the US was not pleased with policies of Cyprus Government ruled by Makarios. (Sönmezoğlu, 1995, p. 22). The US was uncomfortable as two of her allies faced off on this issue (Oran, 2002, p. 734). The Soviets objected to the idea of making Cyprus a base for NATO. The Soviet Union had been interested in Cyprus since its declaration of independence. A Cyprus governed by Makarios, who supported an independent foreign policy in Eastern Mediterranean, reiterated that Cyprus would not be a member of NATO and allow the activities of the communist AKEL party in his country to become important to the Soviets. In 1960s, Soviet policy was to support Makarios, keep the region from NATO supervision and improve relationships with Turkey and Greece (Oran, 2002, p. 729).

Faruk Sönmezoğlu stated that two factors were important to the US's Cyprus policy after 1964 until 1974. The US regarded Makarios as an obstacle to NATO. The

power of the communist AKEL party in Cyprus and Makarios' good relationship with Moscow might cause the Soviet Union to be a part of strategic Eastern Mediterranean affairs rather than keeping the Cyprus issue as a local conflict (Adams & Cottrell, 1968, p. 4). British bases became important in terms of intelligence and logistics during this period when competition between the US and the USSR was intense (Sönmezoğlu, 1995, p.7).

2.4.3. Detente (1969-1979):

i. International outlook

The US's commencing of peace talks after realizing that the Vietnam War could never be won corresponds to a period of détente between the two bloc leader countries, that is, a term of alleviation of tension. This period, when mutual force reductions between the two poles took place and the Helsinki Final Act was signed (1975), was also host to the Prague Spring in the Eastern and Western Blocks, as well as centrifugal movements symbolized by De Gaulle (Özcan, 2004). Additionally, returning from the threshold of a nuclear war after the Cuban crisis also led to an increase in communication between the two countries. It was a period of commencing of negotiations concerning nuclear weapon testing and control of the spread thereof. The US's Vietnam trauma caused Secretary of State Kissinger to follow a pluralistic foreign policy. This policy also included China, the Soviet Union, the European Community and Japan. The inclusive containment policy was abandoned. The treaty of limitation of strategic weapons was signed in 1972. In 1971, the US finalized US dollar's role of reserve money in the capitalist system and some signs of the end of US economic hegemony became visible (Gowa, 1983, pp. 13-32).

The influence of Third World Countries increased in the global policies; these countries brought issues such as environment, food, technology transfer and agricultural reforms to the United Nation's agenda. The end of this détente period occurred in 3 incidents: (1) Overthrow of the Shah in the 1979 Iranian Revolution; (2) the Sandinistas' coming into power in Nicaragua; and (3) the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (Taylor, 1993, pp. 56-57).

ii. Progress on Cyprus.

Progress in Cyprus in this period was witnessed by the military coup against Makarios in 1974 and the Cyprus Peace Operation thereafter. The US policy was to prevent the political progression from turning into a Greco-Turkish war. Moreover, the US Government was very busy with the Watergate scandal at that time (Oran, 2002, p. 743). The Soviet Union was opposing the sovereignty of the US in Cyprus and the island's becoming a NATO base. The constitution of a rightist regime in Greece with the military coup on 21 April 1967, which was leaning on the US, did not please the Soviets at all. The overthrow of Makarios with the Sampson coup on 15 July 1974 in Cyprus further bothered the Soviets. This was because Makarios was following a policy of independence and used to care about maintaining good relations with the Soviets against Turkey, as it happened during the 1963-1964 Cyprus crisis (O'Malley & Craig, 1999, pp. 132-133). Thus, the Soviets displayed a strong reaction to the Sampson coup and declared that they would not recognize any power other than the Makarios government (Bölükbaşı, 1998, p. 317). Thus, the Soviets had no reaction to the Turkish intervention on 20 July, and in fact, they welcomed it in a way. This was because they hoped that the preceding legal and administrative status in the island would be recovered with the intervention of Turkey, as well as the return of Makarios.

However, the July 30 Declaration published at the end of the first Geneva Conference turned out to be a frustration for the Soviets, because the declaration made no reference to Makarios. Turkey's start of the second Cyprus operation on 14 August, and the declaration by Greece on the same day that they retreated from the military section of NATO, created a radical change in the Soviets' attitude toward Turkey, along with their Cyprus policies. The Soviets were extremely pleased with the retreat of Greece from NATO (The NY Times, 1974). Soviets entered a period of apathy in their relations with Turkey, while suddenly improving the relations with Greece. The factor leading the Soviets to such an attitude was that Turkey had captured more than one third of the island, and the island was, in a way, split up (Aslım, 2016, p. 257). The Soviets had always admitted the presence of two separate nations, while ever opposing the partition of Cyprus. For them, partition had an explicit meaning that the island would become a NATO base. On the contrary, an independent and a non-aligned Cyprus governed by a person like Makarios would always be prevented from being such a base (Tarih Portalı, 2012).

A prominent work by Faruk Sönmezoğlu analyzes the foreign policy of the United States toward Turkey between the years 1964-1980, mainly pursuant to the Cyprus issue. Pointing out the most stressed period between the two countries in the Johnson Letter¹⁷ and in the USA embargo due to Turkey's intervention on the island during the 1974 crisis, and the harsh policy in 1980 followed by Ronald Reagan against The Soviet Union; Faruk Sönmezoğlu(1995) reported that the said period ended when the military government in 1980 became a crony of the USA government,

¹⁷On 5 June 1964, the US Ambassador to Turkey, Raymond Hare, sent a letter signed by President Johnson to Turkish Prime Minister Ismet Inonu. The letter cautioned Inonu not to intervene in Cyprus and threatened that the US might reconsider its commitment to Turkey's defence if Turkish intervention provoked a Soviet response. The content of this letter could be read in "President Johnson and Prime Minister Inonu: Correspondence between President Johnson and Prime Minister Inonu", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. XX, No.3 (1966), p. 386

emphasizing on the strategical significance of Turkey. Sönmezoğlu always considered the Cyprus problem between the two countries as a catalyst of the relations in the scope of the limits determined by power and power-balance approach. At this point, the fact that the Cyprus problem is the function of structural changes supports my thesis. Nasuh Uslu (2000, p.36) states that the general policy of the USA between the years 1964 and 1974 can be summarized as the USA avoiding any activities that might lead to losing Greece and Turkey and overlooking the actual state that segregates societies in Cyprus. In his book titled *Cyprus, Ethnic Conflict, and International Politics: From Independence to the Threshold of the European Union*, Joseph S. Joseph (1997) claimed that the pre-1960 Cyprus problem occurred as a part of ethnic problems among ethnic communities of Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus; however, during the 1960s and 1970s, the problem was exposed to superpower intervention. At that time, the Cyprus problem was considered as a part of Cold War and the race between the USA and the Soviet Union. Briefly, the Cyprus problem was being perceived as a device for the Eastern and Western politics.

Concerning the objectives and dimensions, the Cyprus problem was initially an ethnic conflict between Turkish and Greek populations on the island; then it became an international superpower struggle and finally became a problem including several actors and involving its energy potentials instead of its location. In the Cyprus problem, ideology, values, and interest conflicts are observed as well as structural conflicts between the two societies

ii. a. The USA and Cyprus

By the end of 1968, Richard Nixon came to power as the president of the USA. The Nixon government and the Greek junta despised Makarios. The USA began to work

on a two-phase system: The USA had an embassy in Cyprus and had responsibilities for Greece and Turkey due to the NATO pact even without being a guarantor country. The USA was also utilizing the English bases with the approval of Makarios to fly U2 and other aircraft over the Middle East. Theoretically, the official policy of the USA was befriending both sides as a forceful intermediary. However, this turned into leaning on the junta regime in Athens. Here, it was a matter of cohesive harmony (symbiosis). The junta was supposed to act to regain the Greek honor regarding the Cyprus problem. On the other hand, the USA needed to reinforce its position in Ankara and Athens.

The compliance of the USA with the dictators and skeptical view of junta regime about the American aid made this cohesion policy result with unfavorable outcomes. In 1970, the Colonels started a campaign in Greece against Makarios. Violence elements were begun to be employed before the political isolation (Özcan, 2004).

Though the USA viewed the Cyprus problem in favor of its own global interests and security, this view was influenced by the concern to prove its power against the Soviet Union during Cold War. Resulting from the Cyprus problem, a possible war outbreak between two NATO member states; Turkey, and Greece, would mean a deep wound in the durability of NATO's south wing. For the USA, the most important issue was to stop the island from being a base to be used against the USA and to use the island in accordance with the USA's interests. According to the USA, Cyprus is situated in an area that could be turned into a base to intervene in the events in the region opening to the Middle East.

2.4.4. Freezing and Détente Period (1979-1989)

i. International Outlook

Like détente, a period where the USA was in a trauma state has started. The weakened appearance because of the American hostage crisis has led to the presidency of Reagan, a powerful Cold War fighter. Reagan was supposed to "make America great again." This period meant a return to the first period: simple bipolar system. Reagan was referring to the Soviets as "the evil empire" (Reagan, 1983). Military expenditures and missile deployments were increased. *Strategic Defense Initiative*, an armament program for space, was started in 1983. This period was also called the "Third World War" and generated a new scope against the war against communism. By exceeding the comprehensive containment policy, the Reagan doctrine became a war campaign against communism all over the world. Rebellious groups against communism in Angola, Afghanistan and Ethiopia were supported to a large extent so that American soldiers would not be used, and a cost-effective solution could be achieved. (Pach, 2006, p. 75).

Moreover, the war between Iran and Iraq from 1980 to 1988 and other civil wars caused third world countries to place emphasis on armament. In these countries with a debt spiral, other problems related to starvation, refugees and poverty arose. As the war among the weak occurred, this condition prompted an increase in terrorism, hijacking, and hostage-taking incidents. By giving priority to political issues, the USA proved its world leadership once again. In this period, economic issues became less important than military preparedness.

When Gorbachev came to power in 1985, not being able to get into an arms race, the Soviet Union has achieved the chance of a détente. The agreement regarding the annihilation of medium scale weapons in 1987 and the disengagement of the soldiers in Afghanistan by the Soviet Union were developments leading to the end of Cold War. The period was reconfirmed by the Eastern European Revolutions in 1989. Communist regimes began to crack upon the declaration by the Soviet Union that they were not going to use force to keep their influential zones. The collapse of Berlin Wall and the reunion of Germany were the events ending the Cold War (Taylor, 1993).

ii. The USA and Cyprus

During this period, one of the most significant developments regarding Cyprus was the founding of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in 1983. At this time, Reagan was the president of the USA, and the most heated days of Cold War were being experienced. Although the USA had declared that they were upset about the founding of TRNC, and advised other nations to disclaim the founding, no compulsory action was taken by the USA to make Turkish government take a step back. The USA, as a solution, supported the founding of a federal government to stop the division of Cyprus, and it spared a total of 250 million US dollars in 1984 to facilitate the economic unity (Reagan 1984). The importance of the Cyprus problem for the USA and the NATO was that it shouldn't lead to an advantageous development regarding the Soviet Union. Under the circumstances of the Cold War period, the USA was not pleased with Makarios, who was trying to follow an independent policy. However, the possibility that the Cyprus problem would completely get out of control and damage the NATO's south wing was also inconsistent with the interests of the USA. The 1987 arms embargo was designed to restrict United States arms sales and

transfer to both the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish part of Cyprus to avoid hindering the reunification efforts (Rubin, 2021). By the end of Cold War, inter-societal negotiations, which were launched by the USA's encouragement owing to the presence of Vasiliu in the power of Greek Cypriot State, who was in close relation with the USA, ended up with failure in 1990. Following the negotiations, The United Nations' Security Council approved the decision numbered 649. The decision was calling both sides for the establishment of a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation. During the last days of Cold War, on the 3rd of July in 1990, Greek Cypriots applied for full membership integration to the European Union (EU) (Kasım, 2007, p. 58).

2.5. The Post-Cold War Period

In this period, no impetuses such as avoiding conflict due to Cyprus or preventing the Soviet influence existed between the two allies of the USA: Greece and Cyprus. Some events, such as the September 11 terrorist attacks, the war in Iraq, the Arab Spring and Syria crisis, made the need for stability vital in Cyprus. From this date on, not only the USA and Russia but also China, European Union member states, Israel, and Iran and some international organizations also became actors in the international arena. Furthermore, the existence of English bases in Cyprus was still relevant to interventions in the Middle East. In this period with non-traditional threats and with a higher significance of energy and water resources, in a multilateral order, the effectiveness of world powers' actions for the solutions of the regional problems depended on how relevant their interests were to each other. For example, it's possible to correlate the USA's taking a backseat about the Syria crisis and passive attitude towards air action in Libya in 2011 with this benefit-cost calculation (Arı, 2007, p. 23). Regarding the Cyprus problem, the benefit-cost calculations of superpowers coming

into prominence and reaching an agreement regarding the harmony of interests affect the solution of the problem.

After Cold War, upon the collapse of the Soviet Union, minorities and ethnic conflicts increased. Clement H. Dodd (1996, p.2) states that a problem like the Cyprus problem might be seen in Northern Ireland where grandchildren of Protestant Anglo-Scottish people who settled in Ireland during the rule of English centuries ago, cannot claim any rights on their lands in the Republic of Eire. (Dodd, 1996, p. 2). In post-cold war period, international developments also affected the views of sides regarding the Cyprus problem. While the Greek populated southern part of Cyprus moved towards full membership with the support of Greece, it started to behave more independently in negotiations whereas the Turkish populated northern part of Cyprus was affected by globally increasing ethnic-based conflicts and the disintegration of federations.

Besides the international status, against the attempts of the Greek Populated southern part of Cyprus for the integration to the EU, the Council of TRNC settled on the decision numbered 47 on the 29th of August 1994. In this decision, it was emphasized that Turkish population in Cyprus had its own rights of independence, and the attempts between Greek Populated southern part of Cyprus and Greece for improving the defense had compulsorily made Turkey and the TRNC sign agreements related to foreign affairs, defense, and security.

After the end of Cold War and because of Gulf War, the regional significance of the Middle East and the proximity of Cyprus and other bases to the region came into prominence. It was a period when the European Union also actively started to get involved in discussions on the Cyprus problem. Previously, the USA was in prominence in the attempts for inter-societal negotiations and meetings between both

sides, but now, the EU started to strive for a solution because of the membership process since it was reluctant to get involved in the issue (Kasım, 2007, pp. 60-71).

According to Kamer Kasım, the most important aspect about the Cyprus problem for the USA until the mid-1990s was a solution in accordance with NATO interests and the involvement of the EU was problematic due to the opposition from Turkey. The USA changed this policy by the mid-1990s because the USA focused on the idea that the Cyprus problem should be solved without the disruption of Turkey-EU relations since Turkey's EU membership process was vital for its connection to the EU. In this concept, the USA supported a customs union between Turkey and the EU member states. Previously, the USA was opposed to the membership application of the Greek-populated southern part of Cyprus; however, it changed this policy as well starting from the mid-1990s. The fact that the USA considered that regional conflicts would be costly after the Cold War and that the EU could play a role in preventing such conflicts could be cited as the reasons for the policy change (Kasım, 2007, p. 62).

After the post-cold war period, the USA considered its interventions at various levels to the regional problems were due to its leadership in the international arena. While solving the problems in the Balkans, it was also being criticized for not adopting an effective attitude towards the Cyprus problem. During this period, the USA policy regarding the Cyprus problem had the principles as follows: (1) Prevention of the issue before it turns into a conflict and causes tension in Turkey and Greece relations, (2) Unacceptability of the division (the status quo), (3) Maintaining the negotiations within the scope of the United Nations and prominence of the USA if they fail (4) Supporting the realization of the EU membership in a federation, (5) Prevention of Russia's intentions of entering the region. On the other hand, Russia had problematic

relations with Turkey regarding the Cyprus problem. The relations of Russia, commercial and economic relations, with Greece and Greek Populated southern part of Cyprus were highly developed. The volume of investments of both sides was tremendous. It was known that Russian capital used the Southern part of Cyprus as an offshore. Because of these reasons, Russia was reluctant for these political and economic relations to be disrupted. Cyprus was a springboard for Russia to establish dominance in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The presence of hydrocarbon fields in the Eastern Mediterranean had also encouraged Russia to get into the race of getting the lion's share. The first problem occurring after the post-cold war period was in 1996 regarding the sale crisis of S-300 missiles to Greek Populated Southern part of Cyprus. Owing to the close relations of Russia with the Southern part of Cyprus, Russia obstructed the call to terminate the isolation of the Turkish population in Cyprus in the referendum held on the 24th of April in 2004 by the UN Security Council. Even though Putin declared that Russia would adopt a particular attitude towards the termination of the isolation of Turkish population in Cyprus and the support of the Annan Plan in the UN during his visit to Turkey in 2004, this has not been realized (Özbay, 2011, p. 50).

The Kosovo operation in 1999 and developments in the Balkans have made Turkey's position more prominent and strengthened its presence in the transportation projects of energy resources in Caspian Sea Region to international markets. At this point, the EU gave a membership status to Turkey at the Helsinki Summit in December 1999. However, it was emphasized in the Summit Final Declaration that a political solution would facilitate Cyprus' (the Southern Greek part of Cyprus') integration into the EU and that the Council would settle on a decision even if a

solution were not attained (Kasım, 2007, pp. 63-64). Turkey has assumed a stronger position in NATO after the events of September 11 in 2001. At this time, the Annan Plan acclaimed by the UN in 2004 was opposed in the referendum held by the southern part of Cyprus (Efegil, 2003). However, the UN still accepted the EU membership of the southern part of Cyprus on behalf of Cyprus. Turkey approved the Additional Protocol, which is also known as the Conformity Protocol, which extends the European Community Association Agreement to cover ten new EU member states, but also made a declaration. This declaration consisted of 6 paragraphs in which Turkey emphasized that approving the protocol didn't mean the acceptance of the recognition of Cyprus. Turkey reported that it was determined to solve the Cyprus problem and stated that the Republic of Cyprus was not the common state founded in 1960 and did not represent the Turkish population. With the declaration, Turkey confirmed that there were no changes in its rights and benefits arising from the warranty, foundation, and alliance agreements in 1960. Turkey also emphasized that the signing of the Additional Protocol would not change its attitude towards the relations with TRNC. Moreover, Turkey stated that it was ready to establish relations with the new associated state to be established after a comprehensive solution. In addition, along with the declaration, in the press briefing issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, it was reported that the southern part of Cyprus known as the Republic of Cyprus was only dominant in the south of Green Line (Kasım, 2007, pp. 66-67). After the referendum, the opening of ports and airports to the southern part of Cyprus was added to agenda. To do so, Turkish side wanted the termination of the isolation policies against TRNC (Kasım, 2007, p. 68).

After the discovery of hydrocarbon reserves off the coast of Cyprus, The European Union (EU) started to view the Cyprus problem not as the extension of the

union but as having a say in the region and energy security. Rather than the geopolitical factors, the non-traditional security issues like energy and refugees became dominant in their politics. It was calculated that the hydrocarbon resources located in the southern part of Cyprus had a high level of economic worth and these resources alone could meet the 30 % of energy demands of the EU by 2025 (Ellinas, 2013)

The reserves in Greece are calculated to be 165 trillion cubic feet. As an important actor in the transportation of gas from Caucasus to Europe, thanks to the trans-Adriatic pipeline, Greece may help European countries achieve more independent energy resources. If market demands, geopolitical realities, and technological developments could be reached and made available, Greece, Israel, and southern part of Cyprus as a triangle might become the third biggest gas supplier of Europe following Russia and Norway in the Eastern Mediterranean (Johnson, Ross, & Zemenides, 2015, p. 5). The interests of EU and the Greece, Israel, and South Cyprus are reconciled on the issue of hydrocarbons while Turkey is seen as an impediment to the objectives of these countries. With respect to Russia and the USA, Cyprus is seen as a place of power competition between different state configurations. The US lifting of arms embargo imposed on Cyprus in 1987 in 2021 for non-lethal weapons is not a maneuver for only Turkey but also to Russia and China which have cultivated economic ties with the Greek Cypriots. When Mike Pompeo, the US secretary of State announced the partial lifting of arms embargo for Greek Cyprus, he explained that this was an action to reduce the Russian influence.

Moscow has developed military relations as well with the Greek Cypriots, selling arms and using maritime facilities for military operations in Syria. China called

the island a “strategic partner” (Bandow, 2019; Cupolo, 2020). The rapprochement between Russia and Turkey and mending bilateral relations is also seen as problematic for the EU, which tries to be independent in energy resources by forming an alliance with Cyprus, Greece and Israel with respect to the energy supply to Europe. US wants to have a say in the Eastern Mediterranean energy discoveries by its exploration activities via the US firms.

With the discovery of new hydrocarbon resources in Eastern Mediterranean, the Cyprus problem has again come into prominence with its energy potentials instead of its geographical location. The Cyprus problem, with its energy potentials, has caused a multipolar structure comprising of regional and world powers which have contradictory as well as harmonious interests within the Eastern Mediterranean. In this case, the solution of the Cyprus problem depends on the harmony of interests of these countries and to what extent their interests are satisfied. In the following section, the Cyprus problem will be looked through the lens of energy security with a character of multi-actor, and multi-polar framework that comprises contesting and harmonious interests of regional and superpowers within the Eastern Mediterranean.

Section III: THE FACTOR OF ENERGY AS A NEW DIMENSION TO THE CYPRUS QUESTION

3.1 New structural process and the changing political position of Cyprus with respect to Energy

Following the Cold War, a new and (the last) structural transition period commenced. Like the period between 1919-1945, within the general framework of the last structural transition period, globalization trends came into existence. Along with this episode, new questions, problems, and threats began to take their final forms. Under these conditions, essential qualities of the geopolitics¹⁸ began to change moving away from two-dimensional spatial domain towards a three dimensional one. Thus, this trend provided Cyprus with a completely new political framework. In the 21st century, the energy issue, besides being connected to the space or location, has brought a new dimension to the Cyprus question. Cyprus has become the center of new political rivalry process which mainly stem from the clashes in the Middle East and the related new assets such as energy and natural resources. Hence, Cyprus has become part of this comprehensive political rivalry. For example, upon the discovery of the hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean, The Greek Cypriots began

¹⁸Geopolitics as a term means “ how the politics of a nation is affected by its geography. This encompasses location, topography, climate, natural resources, wealth, and of course, positioning in relation to significant forces such as bodies of water and most prominently, neighboring nations”. Geopolitics considers” how people across nations relate to eachother as well through international relations (war/conflict, diplomacy, competition) governance, institutions, trade, and the coalescing of cultures”. (Versprite website,2018). Thus, Geopolitics as a term means the movements and concentration points of the political considerations and views. For example, the issue of climate change is related to growing inequality to terrorism, fanaticism, ethnicism, overpopulation and lack of resources leading at the final stage towards mass immigration. This kind of geopolitical process is taking place in the Middle East and Africa and is related to how Cyprus gained a new layer of importance with respect to energy issue other than the traditional realism perspective emphasizing on territory and power distribution. Emmers (2010) defines the term geopolitics in realistic perspective as, “ Geopolitics emphasizes the importance of geography as necessary to the understanding of patterns of states’ behavior and conduct of foreign policy. In this thesis, geopolitics is more of a dynamic view of political conduct of behavior with respect to movement and concentration. It does not involve a two-dimensional relation between space- and natural resources as the classical realism asserts. Geopolitics has a gained a new dynamic dimension with respect to energy abundance versus scarcity along with political rivalries. For the pioneers of this term, please see Alfred Thayer Mahan ve Sir Halford Mackinder who influenced Karl Haushofer and Nicholas Spykman in the studies of geopolitics. Mac Kinder is the pioneer of heartland theory that depicts a geopolitical concept that analyzes the political and economic success of the world's regions by geography.

to make exclusive economic zone delimitation agreements with Egypt, Lebanon, and Israel. The Greek Cypriots also began to award licences to extract oil and natural gas, in the parcels which it unilaterally announced to be in its own exclusive economic zone. Hence this sondage crisis lighted a fuse to the Cyprus negotiations and brought the Cyprus problem to the international relations agenda.

3.1.1. The sondage crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus

The Greek Cypriots, who started exploration activities of hydrocarbon resources with Egypt in 2003, caused a crisis in revealing their intention of awarding exploration licenses for petroleum and natural gas to international firms. These collaboration in exploration activities with Egypt were followed by Lebanon, Syria, and Israel in 2007. The Greek Cypriots who in their capacity, took advantage as an internationally recognized state, started awarding licences in exploration activities as early as the year 2007. The first round of licencing for the offshore Cyprus for the award of hydrocarbon exploration licenses excluded blocks 3 and 13 and only 11 of the blocks were offered for licencing on the 15th of February 2007 (Gürel, Mullen & Tzimitras, 2013, p. 3). (Gürel, Mullen, & Tzimitras, 2013)

Ayla Gürel, Fina Mullen and Harry Tzimiras summarizes the crisis:

They signed 69 (EEZ-exclusive economiczone)¹⁹delimitation agreements with Egypt in 2003, Lebanon in 2007 and Israel in 2010. These agreements

¹⁹The concept of the exclusive economic zone is one of the most important pillars of the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea. The provisions contained in the articles 55 and 75 reflect an array of interests pertaining to the sovereign rights of coastal states to manage the zone in goodfaith; the regard for the economic interests of the third states; regulation of certain activities in the zone, such as marine scientific research, protection and preservation of the marine environment, and the establishment and use of artificial islands, installations and structures; freedom of navigation and overflight; the freedom to lay submarine cables and pipelines; military and strategic uses of the zone; and the issue of residual rights in the zone. Part V of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea establishes the legal regime of the exclusive economic zone. Scovazzi (2012:2) explains in his article, ‘ ‘ In the exclusive economic zone, the coastal state enjoys “sovereign rights” for the purpose of exploitation of the natural

demarcated the outer limits of a 51 km square exploration area in the sea south of the island, which is carved into 13 blocks. ROC launched its first international tender for exploration licences. Noble Energy was authorised by the ROC to carry out drilling in block 12. In December 2011, Noble announced the discovery of an estimated 5 to 8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. In February 2012, the ROC announced its second round of international tender in the remaining 12 blocks. ... Early in 2013, ROC signed agreements with ENI_Kogas for blocks 2,3,9 and with TOTAL, for blocks 10 and 11'' (Gürel, Mullen & Tzimitras, 2013, pp. 84-85).

Greek Cypriots awarded the licence of exploration of hydrocarbon resources of the 12th parcel, also called as Aphrodite, to an American firm, Nobel Energy that started its sondage activities on the 18th of September 2011 (Sabah, 2011). As a reaction to the exploration activities, Turkish response conveyed warnings that Turkey would take necessary actions to halt the exploration activities in the maritime zones that Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots deem as disputed areas. One example of this rhetoric was from EU Minister and Chief Negotiator Egemen Bagis on the 2nd of September on the impendings on the crisis:

The kinds of things that have happened in the past whenever the Greek Cypriots have made such attempts may well happen again. That is how serious Turkey is. Doing this in waters where they have no jurisdiction is illegal. Turkey will rely on international law to fully pursue its rights. This is what we have the navy for. We have trained our marines for this; we have equipped the

resources, whether living or non-living, and production of energy from the water, currents, and winds, as well as "jurisdiction" regarding artificial islands, installations and structures, marine scientific research, and protection and preservation of the marine environment (Article 56). The other states enjoy the freedoms of navigation, overflight, and laying of submarine cables and pipelines, and of other internationally lawful uses of the sea related to these freedoms. The breadth of the exclusive economic zone cannot exceed 200 n.m. from the baseline of the territorial sea (Article 57). The exclusive economic zone is established based on an express proclamation by the coastal state concerned. ‘

navy for this. All options are on the table; anything can be done” (Gürel, Mullen & Tzimitras, 2013, p. 71).

Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc also made comments about the crisis: “We do not have no intention to go to war. I hope the Greek Cypriots do not urge us to use force” (İnternet Haber, 2011).

More importantly, Turkish Prime Minister said:

The Greek-Cypriot administration and Israel are engaging in oil exploration madness in the Mediterranean. The Greek Cypriot administration's drilling activity is nothing but sabotage of the negotiation process between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots," he added before a UN General assembly meeting in a press conference in NY (Reuters, 2011).

As a response to the sondage operations in the Mediterreanean of the Greek Cypriots, Turkey and Turkish Cypriots signed a continental shelf agreement in New York on the 21st of September in 2011 in New York. On the 22nd of September 2011 the TRNC (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) Council of Ministers decided to grant to the Turkish state petroleum company, TPAO, oil and gas exploration licences for certain sea areas in the North, East, and South of Cyprus. In the decision the areas are identified as Blocks A, B, C and D (north); E (east); and F and G (south). Blocks F and G partly coincide with some of the Greek Cyprus licensing blocks, namely Blocks 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 12 and 13 in the south. There was an onshore licence marked as (H) in the village of Sinirustu near Famagusta district (Gürel, Mullen & Tzimitras, 2013, pp .65-68; TPAO, 2015). According to this agreement, on the 23rd of September, Piri Reis set sail for the Eastern Mediterreanean with technical personnel

from TPAO (Turkish Petroleum Joint Stock Company) searching for hydrocarbons near the Plot 12 where the Greek Cypriots were undertaking sondage activities (Safety4Sea, 2011). From 26 September to 1 November 2011, it carried out surveys collecting 2-D seismic data in the so-called Turkish Cypriot Block off the island's southern coast, which include parts of the southern coast, which include parts of the Greek Cyprus's Block 12 (Gürel, Mullen, & Tzimitras, 2013, p. 6). On November 23, 2011, a joint operating agreement was signed between TPAO and Shell Upstream Company for exploration licences in offshore areas of Antalya, a southern city of Turkey (Gürel & Le Cornu, 2013).

After the discovery of considerable amount of hydrocarbon reserves in the plot 12 led to a new interest in the second bid. TPAO, increased its petroleum search in the Turkish part of Cyprus. The national petroleum company began its search for oil in "Türk Yurdu" (Turkish Nation) well in the east of the island and took a search licence in Güzelyurt which is in the Northwest region (Sözcü, 2012).

Turkey had to take new precautions when the Greek Cypriots insisted on the second round of awarding licences for exploration and drilling of natural gas by using their advantage of the presidency term of European Union in 2012. The spokesman of Foreign Ministry Selçuk Ünal maintained:

One part of the marine regions west of the island that have been the subject of the so-called bidding of the Greek Cypriots, overlaps with the Turkey's continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey will never allow any activities in this area" (MFA, 2012).

Mr. Unal added that the areas that the Greek Cypriots contracted for licencing coincide with the licence areas that the Northern Cypriots have awarded to the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO). He also said:

If the international petrol firms participate in the activities in these (disputed) areas in the future, this incident will lead to their coming face to face with the Northern Cypriots and the Turkish Petroleum Corporation. There may be some undesirable tensions. We invite the international firms and countries to behave with common sense and withdraw from the tender (MFA, 2012).

Turkey warned fifteen countries including Russia, China, France, England, and Norway. This warning was undertaken through the embassies of countries that are interested in the tender of the Greek Cypriots. The Foreign Ministry also issued a warning to the international oil companies such as Russian giant Novatek, French company TOTAL, South Korean firm KOGAS, and ENI from Italy. But some of these companies, the partnership of ENI-Kogas and Total signed agreements with the Greek Cypriots regarding production sharing and drilling inspite of the warnings from the Turkish government (Milliyet, 2012).

On the 23rd of September 2014, when SAIPEM 1000 started drilling under the licence awarded to Italian- South Korean partnership in the alleged Cyprius EEZ block 9, ‘‘the Turkish authorities declared that the drill ship violated Turkey’s area of maritime jurisdiction and sent the Corvette Bafra to monitor operations. Another Turkish warship, the Gelibolu, engaged in planned maneuvers in south of Cyprus ostensibly to ensure maritime safety in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Cyprus foreign minister, Ioannis Kasoulides, said that exploration would continue despite Turkey’s ‘‘potential harassment’’ (Leigh, 2014).

Israel increased the tension by violating the airspace of the Turkish part of Cyprus, but this did not have an impact on the search activities of Turkey as of now. The military sources claimed that in the case of a harassment of Israeli-Greek military forces to the Turkish search activities, the Turkish navy and airforces would give a comparable response (Sabah, 2012).

On October 3, a Turkish NAVTEX (navigational warning) notified mariners that Turkey would conduct its own seismic surveys starting on October 20 in sea areas that encroach on Cyprus's EEZ. Turkey has committed, with the issue of a relevant NAVTEX, certain areas in blocks 2, 3 and 9 within the Exclusive Economic Zone of Cyprus for seismic exploration surveys, from 20 October 2014 to 30 December 2014 (Kassinis, S., 2014). According to Michale Leigh's article, "The Cyprus president, Nicos Anastasiades, asked UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon to persuade Turkey not to violate Cyprus's EEZ. Anastasiades also announced that he would not participate in further talks with the Turkish Cypriot leader Derviş Eroğlu, aimed at ending the division of the island, if Turkish activities, which he deemed unlawful and threatening, continued offshore" (Leigh, 2014).

With the notification of the NAVTEX, TPAO, with the seismic exploration vessel Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha, conducted seismic data acquisition in the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus Famagusta region. Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha, the seismic vessel started working under the escort of 3 warships at the 3rd parcel which overlaps with the Greek Cypriot drilling had already started (Seanews, 2014).

Mark Langfan (2014) writes in his news article, aftermath the NAVTEX, "the Turkish foreign ministry issued a press release denouncing the "Greek Cypriot Administration's (GCA) continuing unilateral research activities of hydrocarbon

resources in its so called Exclusive Economic Zone without taking into account the Turkish Cypriots' detailed and concrete cooperation proposals for a fair sharing". The press release statement also added the following: "Turkey calls on the international community to act to prevent the provocative and unilateral steps of the GCA. Until it is done, all kinds of support to the TRNC's future steps of conducting seismic research activities, acquiring a drilling platform, and dispatching it to an area to be determined, which are necessary to protect its inherent rights over these resources, will be provided by us" (MFA, 2014).

On the 7th of October, Cyprus suspended UN sponsored talks on reunifying the island in response to Turkey's plan to search for oil and gas in waters where the Greek Cypriot government claims to have internationally recognised drilling and exploration rights (Al Jazeera, 2014). This incident also led to shifting alliances in the region leading to Cairo Declaration during a tripartite summit between Greece, Greek Cypriots, and Egypt. Cairo Declaration committed for negotiations with the aim of the delimitation of marine zones between the three countries and calling for Turkey to recognize Cyprus's EEZ rights in the Eastern Mediterranean (Ekathimerini, 2014).

When NAVTEX expired on December 31, in early January, Turkey issued a new one, again reserving areas in the Eastern Mediterranean – parts of Cyprus' maritime zone among them – from January 6 to April 6. Turkish seismic vessel, Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha was positioned in Famagusta port until March 2015, but Turkey did not withdraw the NAVTEX advisory. Turkey announced that it would not renew NAVTEX advisory on the 6th of April for the seismic vessel and stop search activities. Anastasiadis declared that if Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha seismic vessel departed off the coast of Cyprus, he would continue with the unification talks with the

Cypriot Turks (Morelli, 2012). With UN mediation, Turkey agreed not to renew that marine advisory and withdraw the Barbaros from Cypriot waters. In turn, the fact that Cyprus itself will not be conducting offshore drilling for several months opened a window for the resumption of talks (Cyprus Mail, 2018). The new leader of Turkish Cypriots, who was elected as president and the Greek leader Anastades met on the 2nd of May in 2015 with some confidence building steps including handover of maps detailing the location of 28 mine fields the Greek Cypriot military laid before a 1974 war which now fall in Turkish Cypriot-controlled territory. It would also cede the administration of Turkish Cypriot places of worship now in the Greek Cypriot south to Efka, a Turkish Cypriot religious foundation and trust (Kambas, 2015).

In August 2015, Eni found the Zohr field off Egyptian waters. This discovery sparked further interest in Cyprus concessions of ENI and Total. Cyprus announced the third offshore licensing round, putting up for auction blocks 6, 8 and 10 in February 2016. The bids submitted were for Block 6: ENI/Total, Block 8: Capricorn Oil/Delek Drilling, ENI, Block 10: ENI/Total, Exxon Mobil/Qatar Petroleum, Statoil (Hazou, 2016). The concessions were granted to a consortium of ENI and Total for Block 6, Eni for Block 8, and a consortium consisting of Exxon Mobil and Qatar Petroleum for Block 10 and contracts were signed on the 17th of March 2017 (Orphanides, 2018).

As a response to the third-round licencing, claiming block 6 to be in the continental shelf of Turkey, Turkey's energy minister Berat Albayrak stated that his country will step up seismic exploration of oil and natural gas resources in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (Daily Sabah, 2017). Turkey also issued a NAVTEX, reserving an area inside the island's Exclusive Economic Zone, off

Famagusta, to carry out seismic surveys between April 30 and June 30 via Barbaros Hayreddin pasha vessel on the 20th of April 2017 (The National Herald, 2017).

On the 6th of February 2018, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu announced that Turkey intended to explore the East Mediterranean for oil and gas and considered the 2013 Egyptian-Cypriot agreement on utilization of natural sources in East Mediterranean's economic zone to be invalid (Al-Youm, 2018). This comment sparked a reaction on the part of Egypt. Egypt's Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmed Abu Zeid warned against any attempt to contest the 2013 accord and said it had been deposited with the United Nations (Reuters, 2018).

The crisis turned into a military tension after Eni made a gas discovery in Calypso well in block 6 on the 8 th of February 2018 (Orphanides, 2018). SAIPEM 12000, the drilling vessel of ENI encountered with Turkish warships when it was on its way to Cuttle fish well in block 3, which the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus deems as its own EEZ (Psyllides, 2018). SAIPEM 12000 could not do any drilling and returned after two weeks back to its base port (Kontos & Bitsis, 2018). After Exxon Mobile sent two surveying vessels to the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey vowed to send a drilling ship to the contested area of Cyprus on the 22nd of March 2018 (Smith, 2018). On the same date, the 22nd of March 2018, European Union adopted conclusions on the Turkish actions in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea: The European Council strongly condemned Turkey's continued illegal actions in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea and underlined its full solidarity with Cyprus and Greece and the European Council urgently called on Turkey to cease these actions and respect the sovereign rights of Cyprus to explore

and exploit its natural resources in accordance with EU and International Law (EU, 2018).

EXXON-Mobil launched its first drilling in Block 10 on the 16th of November 2018 with the escort of US Navy after Fatih, the Turkish drilling vessel had begun its operations Alanya-1 borehole, located 100 kilometres (60 miles) off the southern province of Antalya and 60 kilometres off Antalya's Alanya district (Çelik, 2018; Financial Mirror, 2020). Exxon Mobil makes natural gas discovery offshore Cyprus in Glaucus 1 well in Block 10 on the 28th of February 2019 representing 5 to 8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas (Exxon, 2019).

The drilling dispute continued with the announcement of Turkish Foreign Minister that Turkey would start drilling near Cyprus. Çavuşoğlu added that they would move Fatih vessel to South Cyprus (Reuters, 2019; TRNC, 2019). On the 6th of May 2019, Turkey sent its drillship Fatih to an area west of Cyprus. According to a navigational telex (Navtex) issued by Ankara, Fatih would conduct exploratory activities at longitude 31 29 25 E and latitude 34 55 32 until the third of September 2019 (Daily Sabah, 2019). As a response, European Council President Donald Tusk confirmed that “the European Union stood behind Cyprus in a dispute with Turkey over offshore drilling operations” (Reuters, 2019). On the 10th of June 2019, the Greek Cypriot Administration issued an international arrest warrant for 25 people including the personnel of the Turkish drill ship Fatih and officials from companies cooperating with the state-run Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) (Daily Sabah, 2019). That triggered a response on the Turkish part by sending a second vessel, Yavuz, that would start drilling in early July in the east of the island of Cyprus (Erşen, 2019). The European Union again condemned Turkey’s action of second drilling plan

in the northeast of Cyprus by calling it as ‘a grave concern’ (Reuters, 2019). A week later, on the 15th of July, The European Council published a final declaration made by foreign ministers of its member states. The council said in the statement that in light of "Turkey's continued and new illegal drilling activities, the Council will suspend negotiations on the Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement and agree not to hold the Association Council and further meetings of the EU-Turkey high-level dialogues for the time being (Stavis-Gridneff, 2019).

Greece, Israel, South Greek Cyprus Administration, and the US agreed to enhance cooperation in energy, cyber and infrastructure security on the 7th of August 2019. US assistant energy minister Francis Fannon announced its support to the trilateral group of Israel, Greece, and South Greek Administration by saying that ‘energy could be a bridge for more political stability (Reuters, 2019). The two states and the South Cyprus began their trilateral meetings on the 28th of January 2016 when they discussed cooperation in a plan of the possibility of a pipeline that would take our common resources of gas and export them to Europe via Greece - a pipeline from Israel, Greek Cyprus through Greece to Europe. Part of the plan is creating an interconnected underwater cable to connect the electricity grids of Israel, Cyprus, and later Greece, to have a common electric grid (Israel MFA, 2016). The participation of the US in the trilateral meeting that focused on the EastMed pipeline project, which aims to construct a 2,000 kilometers gas pipeline linking Israel's vast eastern Mediterranean gas resources to Europe through Cyprus, Greece, and Italy, at a cost of 7 billion dollars, took place on the 21st of March 2019 (Idiz, 2019). Seven energy ministers, including those from Israel, Egypt, Cyprus, Greece, Jordan, Italy, and the Palestinian territories came together for a meeting in Cairo to mark the launch of the

East Mediterranean Gas Forum that excluded Lebanon and Turkey on the 16th of January 2019 (The New Arab, 2019).

Turkish Energy Minister, Fatih Dönmez told to the press that one of the ships, Yavuz had completed its drilling operations in Karpaz northeastern coast of Cyprus, while Fatih the other drill ship continued its operations in West of Cyprus (Reuters, 2019). On the 3rd of October, Turkey sent Yavuz to waters of Southern Cyprus, 90 km southwest of the port of Limassol, that falls within an oil and gas exploration block which Cyprus has awarded to Eni and Total. Turkey announced a shipping advisory that the drilling operations would take place between October 19- January 20 (Reuters, 2019). Greek Cypriot government denounced the arrival of the Turkish drill ship, Yavuz on the disputed waters off the island where the European energy companies, Total and Eni are licenced to conduct research and called it a severe escalation on the 4th of October 2019 (Hadjicostis, 2019). According to Yulia Teemofeeva (2020), a Russian expert on international affairs, ‘‘The Council of the EU adopted a decision on sanctions against Turkey on November 11, 2019. It instructs EU member countries to ban entry or transit of individuals and companies involved in the support or planning of drilling operations or any individual or company associated with them. Second, they will freeze the financial assets of individuals and companies involved in drilling.’’ She adds in the article that ‘‘In December 2019, the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations approved a bill to impose sanctions on Turkey for the purchase of Russian S-400 missile systems and for its actions in Syria. However, this bill has not yet become law’’ (Teemofeva, 2012).

With response to these sanctions and a response to sabotage the East-Med Project, Turkey made a strategic move by signing an agreement on maritime

boundaries in the Mediterranean and a deal on military and defense cooperation with internationally recognized Tripoli government of Libya (Butler & Gumrukcu, 2019). Butler&Gümrukçü (2019) also mention that Greece condemned the Accord as geographically absurd since it ignored the presence of the Greek island of Crete between the coasts of Turkey and Libya and Egypt called it illegal. As a requirement of the deal, Turkish parliament approved sending troops to Libya on the 2nd of January 2020 (Gall, 2020). This approval came on the same day when Israel, Cyprus and Greece signed a 6 billion euro for an undersea pipeline that would carry gas from new offshore deposits in the southeastern Mediterranean to continental Europe (Dalton, 2020). As a response to the trilateral pipeline deal, Turkey responded with Turk stream project which was signed in 2016. Turkey and Russia inaugurated the project during Putin's visit to Turkey on the 8th of January 2020 (Cupolo, 2020). The first string will deliver gas to Turkey, while the second string is intended for gas transit to southern and southeastern Europe through Turkish territory (GazProm, 2020).

The member countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum²⁰ convened in Cairo on the 16th of January 2020 to turn the forum into an international organization by signing an establishment charter without inviting Turkey and Turkish Cypriots (AA, 2020). Meanwhile, Yavuz, was relocated on January 17 to the Block G in the south of the island to conduct its third drilling activity as part of the licenses given to Turkish Petroleum in 2011 by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus government (Erşen E. , 2019). The area of concern overlaps with the Greek Cypriots 'so called' EEZ area, where the Italian firm ENI has been exploring reserves. Any

²⁰ The energy ministers from Italy, the Republic of Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority launched the EMGF, which aims to create a regional gas market.

discoveries made in that block can force the Greek Cypriots to negotiate with the Turkish Cypriots.

Turkey reiterated a proposal brought to the table by the Turkish Cypriot government through UN on July 13, 2019, to the Greek Cypriots although the former was ready for forming a joint committee on energy and cooperation on revenue sharing on hydrocarbon resources that would not lead to its recognition. The Greek government refused the proposal and they made it clear that they did not favor of a political settlement to end the division of the island and to share revenue (Demirtaş, 2020).

The High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy has maintained that “the EU is preparing a list of names of figures and businesses from Turkey who are to be sanctioned over the ongoing dispute regarding resources in the Eastern Mediterranean waters.” (EU prepares to expand Turkey sanctions, 2020).

Nikos Chrysoloras from Bloomberg reported that “European Union diplomats agreed to impose travel bans on two Turkish national and freeze their assets in retaliation for Ankara’s gas prospecting in disputed waters near Cyprus” (Chrysoloras, 2020).

Energy and Natural Resources Minister Fatih Dönmez announced on broadcaster TRT Haber that “Turkey's second drill ship will make its way into the country's territorial waters in the Mediterranean around February 20 to begin exploration” (Daily Sabah, 2019). Moreover, Energy Minister announced that Turkey purchased its third offshore drilling ship from Britain called Sertoo (2020).’ (MEMO, 2020). It arrived in Mersin on the 15th of March 2020 and the ship is named as KANUNİ (TRT Haber, 2020).

In April 2020, a statement criticizing Greece came from Ankara. Minister of National Defense Hulusi Akar stated that three meetings were held with Greek

military officials, that Greece claimed its air space was 10 miles even though its territorial waters were 6 miles and that it armed 16 of the 23 islands by landing troops against the 1923 Lozan Treaty (Akar, 2020).

A while later, on May 30, seven separate announcements were published in the Official Gazette. Turkish Petroleum (TPAO) applied to the General Directorate of Mining and Petroleum Affairs for an additional licence of 116.745 hectares for one of its two oil fields outside Turkish territorial waters and 193.552 hectares for the other (Please see Appendix A). Meanwhile, Fatih vessel had withdrawn the Eastern Mediterranean and started its Black Sea Mission. With this application, a licence was requested from the government to start hydrocarbon exploration in the 6-mile territorial waters of Rhodes, Karpathos, Kasos, and Crete, belonging to Greece across the Turkish coast. Greece reacted since ‘‘ the continental shelves of the Greek islands and therefore the EEZ areas, including the island of Crete) are ignored in the map of TPAO. Then French President Emmanuel Macron announced that he could send naval ships to the region to support Greece. There was also a short-term tension between Turkish and French ships (Özsedef, 2020).

On June 11, Turkish Air and Naval Forces carried out ‘‘ Open Sea Training’’ in the Mediterranean and demonstrated a military tour de force (Kaya, 2020). By mid July, Turkey signaled its determination to continue its presence in the area with NAVTEX postings one after another. Greece retaliated to Turkey’s NAVTEX announcement with another announcement in the same region, arguing that Turkey took steps contrary to international law. On the 7th of July, a NAVTEX was broadcasted from Turkey offshore around Libya for its navy drills (Yeni Şafak, 2020). On July 15, NAVTEX was announced until August 18 for the Yavuz drill ship

currently operating in the region. While the concept of NAVTEX has entered the agenda of Turkey, the tension escalated in the East Mediterranean with the NAVTEX announcement of sending Oruç Reis, a seismic research ship to the region between Rhodes and Meis islands on July 21. Greece reacted and argued that its continental shelf has been violated. Greek Prime Minister Kiriakos Mitsotakis stated that if Turkey does not cease its natural gas exploration activities in the Mediterranean, the EU has no other option than to impose sanctions on Turkey (Özsedef, 2020). Thereupon, German Chancellor stepped in as a mediator for the two countries to start negotiations (Şimşek, 2020). Meanwhile, Turkey did not send Oruç Reis to the controversial area and kept it waiting in Antalya (Ersöz, 2020). At the end of July, mutual constructive statements began. On July 26, Greece spokesman Stelios Petsas announced that Greece is ready for negotiations within international law and good neighborly relations.

After the crisis emanating from Oruç Reis NAVTEX, Turkey announced that Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha, a seismic research ship would work in the disputed region between the island of Cyprus and Lebanon, TPAO's F zone, and Cyprus's second and third parcels between July 28 and September 18. Greece and European countries criticized Turkey arguing that the region is within the continental shelf of Cyprus Republic (Özsedef, 2020). Despite these reactions, Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha vessel and two navy ships reached Cyprus offshore on July 30th (Arslan, 2020). This incident did not seem at first to interrupt the negotiations and both Turkey and Greece agreed to announce officially that they would start exploratory talks that were terminated in 2016 on August 7 (Özsedef, 2020). But on August 6, Greece signed a maritime jurisdiction agreement with Egypt. This agreement contradicted the areas of the contract Turkey signed with Libya in November 2019. Ankara stated that this

agreement, which envisioned creating a vertical corridor with Egypt's continental shelf where the continental shelves of Crete and Rhodes Island were partially accepted, violated Turkey's maritime jurisdiction (Demirtaş, 2020). Following the agreement's signing, Turkey suspended negotiations under German mediation, and the statement on August 7 was postponed. On August 7, President Erdogan said, "Following this agreement, Turkey has ended the moratorium in which Oruç Reis was held for weeks, and seismic activities will begin in the designated area" (BBC Türkçe, 2020). On August 10, NAVTEX was once again announced for the Oruç Reis Ship. It was reported that the ship would conduct seismic research in the region previously announced but the ship was not sent until August 23.

After Turkey sent the Oruç Reis ship to the Eastern Mediterranean with warships, the Greek navy started to sail in the same region. The Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs evaluated Turkey's sending its ships to the region as a "blackmail policy" and stated, "NAVTEX announced by Turkey is in the Greek continental shelf area south of the island of Meis." On August 13, there was a small-scale collision between the military ships of the two countries. While the ships were not damaged, the Greeks announced that it was an accident. President Erdogan declared, "We are not seeking unnecessary adventures. The way to a solution is dialogue" (BBC Türkçe, 2020). While the tension continued, the NAVTEX announced for Oruç Reis was about to expire. Turkey extended the duration of NAVTEX until September 1 on August 22. The course of NAVTEX announced for Yavuz was extended from August 18 to September 15. Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and France also held a naval exercise west of Cyprus's island on 26-29 August in response (BBC Türkçe, 2020; Özsedef, 2020).

National Defense Minister Hulusi Akar stated that these regions partially coincided with the Oruç Reis ship's field of activity. On August 28, when exploratory talks were planned to begin but were canceled upon cancellation of the meetings, images showing Greece landing troops on Meis Island, one of the tension points, were released by the press (Hürriyet, 2020).

While the tension in the Eastern Mediterranean had led to the redeployment of the navies, Germany focused on dialogue efforts. Merkel, along with Spain and Italy, prevented sanctions against Turkey from being taken at the European Union summits held both in mid-July and at the end of August. Foreign Minister of Germany Heiko Maas visited Ankara and Athens. NATO also stepped in when tensions escalated in August. Although Turkey extended Oruç Reis's term of office until September 12, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg announced on September 3 that the two countries agreed to come together under NATO mediation. Ankara did not announce a new extension NAVTEX for Oruç Reis, whose term of office expired on September 13, while joint statements were continuing with difficulties, and withdrew it along with the accompanying naval ships. While Merkel's chief advisor, Jan Hecker, negotiated with Erdogan's chief advisor Ibrahim Kalin and Miçotakis's advisor Eleni Sorani, Turkey extended office terms of Yavuz (until October 12) and Barbaros Hayrettin Pasha (until October 18) with new NAVTEX notices. With the retreat of Oruç Reis, the waters settled partially at the end of September. On September 22, Turkey and Greek officials met five times in a month at the NATO building in Brussels. The European Union summit held at the end of September was held in this environment. Again, there was no sanction decision against Turkey from the summit (Özsedef, 2020).

At the beginning of October, another step came from Turkey to reduce tension. The Yavuz drill ship, mandate of which expired on October 12, returned to Taşucu Port on October 5 before Erdoğan met with Stoltenberg, who was visiting Ankara. The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources announced that the ship “is back for preparation, maintenance, and supply for its new mission” (Sözcü, 2020). Thus, only Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa seismic research ship remained on duty.

Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu met with his Greek counter part, Dendias, in Bratislava on October 8. Greece wanted the talks to be limited to the continental shelf’s determination. In contrast, Turkey wanted to include the issues of airspace, islands, and islets of unknown ownership, clarification of the search and rescue zones, and the armed Greek isles to the agenda (BBC Türkçe, 2020). Dendias blamed Turkey for the termination of the exploratory talks in 2016. With the last mutual statements, the possibility of returning to the negotiations was once again interrupted (Sözcü, 2020).

A new 10-day NAVTEX was issued on October 12 for the Oruç Reis ship, waiting in Antalya Port for about one month when Greece’s tension was relatively low. It was announced, “The ship’s maintenance work was completed” and was assigned to the same area of Meis Island. Oruç Reis once again went to the region with the escort of Turkish naval ships (Daily Sabah, 2020). Greek Government spokes person Stelios Petsas said that they could not have exploratory negotiations with Turkey if Oruç Reis ship was in the region: (Berberakis, 2020). German Foreign Minister Maas also canceled his visit to Ankara, which was announced to be paid after Athens (Ahwal News, 2020).

With the latest NAVTEX released by Turkey on October 22, the ship's activities were extended until October 27. Greece announced a NAVTEX, including the October 29 Republic Day. On the other hand, Turkey made a NAVTEX announcement for shooting training on October 28, based on reciprocity. Having its new work area determined with the new NAVTEX, Oruç Reis will serve until November 14 in the south of Rhodes Island. Oruç Reis, a seismic research ship, carried out seismic studies in the Eastern Mediterranean together with ships named Ataman and Cengizhan (Temizer, 2020). The Barbaros, along with support vessels the Apollo Moon and Tanux-1, will conduct hydrocarbon exploration activities off the Cyprus coast till 20th of November, but this NAVTEX was extended to 16th of February according to Turkish Navy's Office of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography's Antalya station. (Temizer, 2020; Ahwal News, 2020)

Another recent development in the Eastern Mediterranean is that "on Sept. 29, the Greek Cypriot administration issued a Navtex navigational alert for the research activities by the Malta-flagged Nautical Geo vessel in an area including Turkey's continental shelf" (AA, 2021). The Turkish Navy removed the Maltese flagged and Italy owned research ship "Nautical Geo" for violating its continental shelf in the Mediterranean Sea on the 3rd of October. Nautical Geo had violated the Turkish continental shelf area in East Crete in the last week of September and was removed out of that area (Özer, 2021). The Maltese flagged Nautical Geo entered the block 1 of Greek Cyprus's EEZ overlapping the area of the Turkish continental shelf. Its aim was to conduct seismic research until 23rd of October for charting a route for the East Med gas pipeline project (Financial Mirror, 2021).

Coronavirus pandemic all over the world has converted the balances in the East Mediterranean in favor of Turkey. The petroleum prices have declined due to the tension between Russia and Saudi Arabia and later by Covid 19 pandemic have led the international actors and the regional countries to postpone or stop their search activities due to budget restrictions. For example, ENI, The Italian energy firm announced a 90 % loss in their profit margins in the last quarter. Turkey, acting with national government financing capabilities and continue its exploration activities in the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey has gained a competitive edge in gas competition by discovering 405 billion cubic meters of gas in Sakarya basin in Black Sea (Al Jazeera, 2020). The gas will be available for public use by 2023. Another 135 billion cubic meters of gas reserve was found totalling up to 540 billion cubic meter of gas in Black Sea region (Daily Sabah, 2020).

Hydrocarbon exploration issue has a strategic, political, economic, and social importance. For the Greek part of Cyprus, this issue, has become the vehicle for promotion of the national cause against Turkey; the way out of the economic crisis, there affirmation of (The Greek Part's) legitimacy; the means of cementing of bilateral relations with several states; and the securing of an economically, politically, strategically viable future (Gürel & Tzimitras, 2015).

Cyprus, within the energy safety perspective, has led to a multi-actor, non-state structural formation where regional security frameworks such as trilateral cooperation between Greece, Greek Cyprus, and Egypt against Turkey and Turkish Republic of Cyprus with the support of USA, European Union, and Russia. Israel has become a participant of this cooperation with the East Med Project. The international petroleum and natural gas companies have become part of the equation supported by

the superpowers. Hence, the new multinational order with new regional security structure entails a more conflictual and competitive character depending on the freedom of movement of the later states regardless of the international law. The international law becomes insufficient to comment and explain the conflictual processes regarding energy issues with respect to Cyprus. It is a function of the structural changes and developments. The following section will explain why this is so.

3.2. Evaluation of the sondage crisis with respect to international law

It is hard to evaluate the role of international law on a region like the Eastern Mediterranean which has peculiar geographical features. The main reason in the tension in Eastern Mediterranean is that it is not equitable to share the jurisdictional zones in the Eastern Mediterranean which is a semi closed sea (Kaysi, 2013, p. 4). This unequitable sharing of marine zones creates political tensions in this region as well. Maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean are complex due to the long-lasting political tensions that pervaded the region such as Cyprus conflict and Israeli-Palestine conflict), making difficult for the investing companies which would like to participate in natural gas exploration activities in the region (Kaysi, 2013, p. 7-13). Among the countries involved in the political disputes, Israel, Turkey, and Syria are not signatories to United Nations Convention Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Egypt, Lebanon, and Cyprus have signed the convention in 1983, 1995 and 1988, respectively (Stergiou & Karagianni, 2019, p. 85).

The mentioned convention has a purpose to present dispute settlement mechanisms for the delimitation of EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zones) and the issues of continental shelf jurisdiction. UNCLOS article 57 and article 76 refer to the

exercise of delimitation of EEZ and the jurisdiction of continental shelf. Article 57 states that the exclusive economic zone shall not extend beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured. Article 76 states that in some cases, states are entitled to a part of continental shelf exceeding 200 miles (UNCLOS III, 1982). Article 83 regulates the demilitation of EEZ between opposite or adjacent states (UNCLOS III, 1982). In cases where riparian states face each other and their low water lines are within 400 nautical miles, as in the case of East Mediterranean, EEZs are to be delimited by bilateral agreement. The countries in the region have delimited their EEZ`s with respect to UNCLOS. Egypt, Syria, and Cyprus were the first countries to do so (1983,2003 and 2004, respectively). Lebanon and Israel followed suit in 2011 (Caşın, 2019). EEZ`s constitute a part of customary law so they can be contested by states such as Israel or Turkey who are not party to UNCLOS. In the case where claims over the EEZ`s overlap, unilateral declaration disputes can be resolved bilateral or by arbitration before an international court. Article 33 of the UN Charter provides for the peaceful settlement of disputes by means of the parties' own choice (Mensah, 2020, pp. 309-313)

On the other hand, one issue that Turkey and the Turkish part of Northern Cyprus object is that Turks should have a say in the petroleum and natural gas search activities. The alleged bid that the Greek Cypriots announced include some of the marine zones located in the West of the island which overlap with the Turkish continental shelf in the Mediterranean (Pamir, 2012). Besides, the coastal states in the Eastern Mediterranean, Israel, Turkey and Syria are not party to the United Nations 1982 Sea Law Convention. Turkey is not a party to the 1958 Continental –Shelf Convention, either (Peker, Öztürk Oktay, & Şensoy, 2019, p. 91). The origin of the international problems due to the marine zone delimitations was mainly since the

continental shelf of states had become valuable economic natural resources that can be utilized because of the technological advances (Aksar, 2012, p. 226).

Turkey, as a littoral state, will face three vital challenges in the delimitation of the jurisdictional maritime areas such as continental shelf and exclusive economic zones due to the fact that (a) East Mediterranean sea is semi-closed (b) states in this region, as having adjacent coasts with each other, are in serious political conflict amongst each other (Greek and Turkey, Greek Cyprus and the Turkish Cyprus, Israel and, Palestine, Israel and Lebanon, Turkey and Egypt) (c) Greek Cypriots, being a part of European Union, are trying to get some monetary gain with respect to the recently discovered hydrocarbon reserves. Turkey has to be more active in this region due to the three reasons: (1) Greek Cypriot Administration of Cyprus has been acting as a representative of whole Cyprus in the exclusive economic zone agreements with Egypt, Israel and Lebanon, (2) the zones, which the Greek Cypriots distribute to oil firms for the purpose of petrol excavation activities, coincide with the continental shelf of Turkey (Boncukçu, 2012, p.2).

States announce their continental shelf up to 200 miles but in narrow regions like the East Mediterranean, the continental shelf zones overlap with each other, hence Turkey can not apply its continental shelf (3) The delimitation of continental shelf issue is peculiar in the sense that the Eastern Mediterranean sea, compared to Aegean Sea, is wider in scope and has less islands. No state in the Mediterranean has 400 nautical miles amongst each other and the Eastern Mediterranean does not have a geological continental shelf. For this reason, the physical formulations designated in 1982 UNCLOS will not contribute to a final solution (Gündüz & Öztürk, 2002, pp. 16-17). In that case states form alliances based on their interests and whoever is

powerful in the arena with respect to military and naval power takes its share in this chicken game regardless of what international law requires states to obey. The issue revolves around which state or states has the capacity to project its power and freedom of movement in the area.

3.3 Agreements of littoral states with respect to EEZ in the Eastern Mediterranean

Israel and Palestine: The Gaza-jericho agreement (known as Oslo Accords) between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization granted in article 5 para(1a) of the said agreement that the Palestinian Authority maritime jurisdiction overwaters of upto 20 nauticalmiles from the coast including economic activities and drilling. But Israel has reduced Gaza's maritime jurisdiction in 2002 when Hamas won the elections in Gaza, under Bertini Commitment to 12 nautical miles, and to 6 miles in 2006 when Israel declared Gaza hostile entity and to 3 miles in 2008 during the Operations Cast Lead also known as Gaza War (Akkad, 2015; Kraska & Pedrozo, 2013, p. 897-898).

Israel and Lebanon: Israel and Lebanon submitted claims to the United Nations delimiting their EEZ in 2011. Both countries signed marine border agreements with Cyprus in 2010 and 2007 respectively. Arising from these agreements, there is an overlap of Israeli and Lebanese EEZs which brings up a contested area which encroaches on Tamar and Leviathan fields (Nathanson, Levy, 2012, pp. 20-23).

Israel and Cyprus: In 2010 Cyprus and Israel signed an agreement on the delineating their own EEZs based on the median principle. The agreement entered

into force in 2011. Turkey does not recognize this agreement which excludes the interests of the Northern part.

Israel and Egypt: There is no maritime boundary between Egypt and Israel. But the issue was raised when Israel discovered new natural gas deposits. Egyptian oil minister Same Fahmi declared that Israel's gas discoveries lie partly with Egypt's maritime jurisdiction area in January 2011 (De Micco, 2014).

Cyprus and Egypt agreement: Greek Cypriot Administration officially declared an EEZ in April 2004. On the 17th of February, it signed an agreement with Egypt to share the sea areas for delimitation of exclusive economic zone in the Eastern Mediterranean and had it adopted in United Nations in 2004. In this agreement, the boundaries of the exclusive economic zone between the two countries have been identified based on the equidistant line between the African coast and the island of Cyprus (median line principle) (Kariotis, 2011, p. 4). Turkey does not recognize this agreement between Egypt and Cyprus due to the reason that Turkey does not recognize Cyprus as a representative of the whole island.

Cyprus and Lebanon agreement: On January 17, 2007, Cyprus signed demarcation of EEZ agreement with Lebanon based on the median principle (Scovazzi, 2012, p. 6-8, Grbec, 2013). That demarcation remains as valid even though Lebanon has disputed the demarcation of sea borders of Cyprus with Israel since the valuable natural gas deposits under the seabed of Lebanon might be violated (Sitiides, 2014, p. 87). Turkey does not recognize this agreement since Cyprus does not represent the interests of the whole island which also encompasses the Northern part

Cyprus and Syria: The issue of signing of delimitation of EEZ and continental shelf agreement was raised but the agreement has not realized so far (Tziampiris & Litzas, 2015, p.97). Syria is in a civil war since 2011.

Greece and Italy: Greece and Italy signed an agreement on maritime boundaries to establish and EEZ between the two countries on the 9th of June 2020 in Athens. The new agreement is an extension of the 1977 agreement which added the rights of the Greek fishermen in the agreement (Hatipoglu, 2020). Italian fisher men have been given the right to fish in Greek waters as part of the agreement. The agreement entailed a joint notification that in the case of Greece's expansion of maritime zone from 6 to 12 nautical miles, the fishing activity of Italians between 6 and 12 nautical miles will be maintained.

Egypt and Greece: signed the maritime demarcation deal on the 6th of August 2020. This agreement of delimitation of the exclusive economic zones between the two countries was a step to nullify the Accord of the internationally recognized Libya government and Turkey. Greece and Egypt called the latter agreement illegal infringing the continental shelf of Greece and that of the island of Crete.

Libya and Greece: They have not made an agreement on demarcation of their EEZ because they are disputing the extent to which the tiny island of Gavdos south of Crete and Libya's claims at the Gulf of Sidra which Libya sees as being in its internal waters should determine the demarcation point (Kariotis, 2007, p.71).

Cyprus and Greece: Likewise, Cyprus and Greece have not delineated their EEZs with respect to one another, largely due to Athens' reluctance to aggravate

Ankara in a long-standing and thus far intractable dispute among the two nations in defining their respective territorial waters and continental shelves. Cyprus and Greece only concluded a bilateral agreement allowing for joint search and rescue between the two countries. Greece is a party to UNCLOS and chose ITLOS as the means for the settlement of disputes concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention. ITLOS is a UN adjudicatory body with jurisdiction over maritime disputes, like but with a more special focus on maritime law than ICJ. Although Greece has not yet officially proclaimed an EEZ in the Mediterranean Sea, it has signaled in 2013 through a verbal statement at the UN and via printed press that it intends to proclaim full 200-mile EEZ for Greek islands in the eastern Mediterranean and make it contiguous with the EEZ of Cyprus (Çubukçuoğlu, 2015, p.19). Cyprus and Greek foreign ministers resumed talks in September 2013 to finalize EEZ demarcation and lead the way for Egypt to negotiate with Greece and Turkey to demarcate the rest of the Eastern Mediterranean where the most rewarding hydrocarbon discoveries were made (Stilides, 2014, p. 91).

Turkey and Turkish Northern Republic of Cyprus: Turkey signed a Continental Shelf delimitation Agreement with TRNC on September 21, 2011 (Gürel, Mullen & Tzimitras, 2013, p. 24). TRNC is recognized only by Turkey in the international arena.

Turkey and UN Recognized Libya: Turkey has signed a memorandum of maritime boundaries and security and military agreement on the 27th of November of 2019 with the UN recognized Libya in the Eastern Mediterranean (Butler & Gumrukçu, 2019). This agreement was ratified on the 5th of December and took effect on the 8th of December (Aljazeera, 2020). Turkey had declared its EEZ in

the Black Sea with a Council of Ministers decree on December 5, 1986 with number 86-1264 (Ece, 2014).

Given the political disputes in the region and recognition problems at hand, the bilateral agreements concluded by the littoral states are contested by the third party of littoral states. Moreover, the peculiar physical features of the Eastern Mediterranean do not allow a solution formulated by the UNCLOS making the international law alternative as non feasible. Cyprus conflict becomes a function of structural changes and the harmony of the interests of the super and regional powers in the region. Hence, the elements of cooperation and competition coexist, overlap, and inhibit each other in the East Mediterranean with respect to Cyprus Question within the axis of energy politics. To understand cooperation and competition aspects of the Cyprus question and if a consensus could be reached between the regional and great powers to solve the conflict in hand, it is required to delve into how their attitudes and strategies converge or diverge from each other.

Section IV: VIEWS OF REGIONAL AND EXTERNAL ACTORS ON THE CYPRUS HYDROCARBON ISSUE.

4.1. Attitudes and strategies of littoral states in the region and the International Stakeholders on the issue of hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation

a. Turkish Stance

Turkey's objections to the Greek Cypriot exploration activities of the Greek Cypriots on two grounds: (1) First, it objects to the Greek Cypriots' unilaterally declaring maritime jurisdiction zones, awarding licences to international energy companies to conduct offshore hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation with no regard to the Cyprus problem in hand. (2) Turkey's continental shelf claims in the Eastern Mediterranean coincide with the EEZ proclaimed by the Greek Cypriot. EEZ blocks of 1,4,6,7 are the disputed areas. (Gürel, Mullen & Tzimitras, 2013, p.51).

According to Michael Emerson, an associate senior research fellow at CEPS (Center for European Policy Studies), Turkey does not recognize the EEZ agreements that Cyprus has signed with Egypt, Lebanon, and Israel because Cyprus is not a united island and does not represent the interests of the Northern part, in a hypothetically reunited island, which would have a single EEZ. In Emerson's words, "Turkey also makes claims to a continental shelf, delimited to the west of Cyprus by a median line between Turkey and Egypt, and partly overlapping with blocks 1,4,6, and 7 of the Cyprus's EEZ. He also adds that Turkey has made a continental shelf agreement with Northern Cyprus and agreed to the claims of Northern Cyprus pertaining to the waters extending to the blocks of 1,2,3,8,9,13 and above all block of 12. (Please see Appendix A for the overlapping blocks). As a result, Northern Cyprus gave exploration licences to the Turkish state oil company to research in the blocks not

only in the waters between Northern Cyprus and Turkey but also in the designated blocks of the ‘‘socalled’’ Cyprus EEZ blocks of 1,2,3,8,9,13 (Emerson, 2014, p.4).

As for the Cyprus question, Turkey does not recognize the Greek Cypriot administration as the legitimate constitutional Republic of Cyprus. The question arises from the fact that, according to Turkey, is that there is no legitimate government or single authority that represents Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots as a whole. Turkey maintains that Turkish Cypriots have inherent equal rights and interests in the maritime zones and natural resources of Cyprus. Turkey also does not recognize the delimitation of sea boundaries agreements of Greek Cypriots with Israel, Lebanon and Egypt since these agreements ignore the rights of Turkish Cypriots in the natural resources of whole Cyprus (MFA, 2007). Foreign Ministry of Turkey also announced a press release that emphasized that Turkey has legitimate and legal rights existing in the Eastern Mediterranean particularly to the west of longitude 32° 16’ 18” E which have been registered to the UN. It is only natural that Turkey will protect its rights in its maritime jurisdiction areas (TRT World, 2019).

Turkey also holds that the unilateral activities of Greek Cypriots do not conform to the soul of the UN sponsored negotiations of the solution to the Cyprus problem. These unilateral initiatives also create fait accomplis that disadvantage the Turkish Cypriots during the negotiation process. These unilateral initiatives, according to Turkey, should be suspended until a satisfactory solution is reached between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots about the Cyprus problem (MFA, 2011).

Turkey argues that not all islands have the same maritime rights as the mainland, especially in semi-closed seas, where there are overlapping claims for sovereignty. Ankara also says that the Greek Cypriots cannot disregard the rights of

the Turkish Cypriots. As the country with the longest coastline in the eastern Mediterranean, Turkey says that it cannot accept what it sees as unilateral and maximalist claims by some littoral states (Altunışık, 2020). Hami Aksoy, a spokesman for the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a statement on the 26th of March 2020:

The maritime jurisdiction area claims brought forward by Greece as if she was an archipelagic state, disregarding the principle of just and equitable delimitation which is the primary rule in maritime boundary delimitation, are indeed the violation of international law. The most striking exhibit of this, as referred to in our previous statements, is the island of Kastellorizo/Megisti (Hürriyet Daily News, 2020).

Turkey is not a signor UNCLOS, so it does not recognize the delimitation agreements of Greek Cypriots with Israel, Egypt, and Lebanon. Ankara's position is based on the equity principle that calls for the consideration of "special circumstances" to respect proportionality and non-encroachment rules, as Turkey's coastal length is over twenty times that of Cyprus. Due to conflicting claims by Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities on maritime delimitation within the wider context of bi-communal talks and reconciliation on the island, Turkey holds the view that the exploitation of natural resources should be deferred until a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem is reached (Çubukçuoğlu, 2015).

Turkey applied resistance strategies to counter the Greek and Greek Cypriot actions to close the East Mediterranean to Turkey and solve the Cyprus question unilaterally via the newly discovered hydrocarbon resources in the area after 2011. The rhetoric became reality when Turkey positioned itself in the region by its own

national military and active exploration efforts. These strategies can be summarized as:

(1) Turkish firm (TPAO) got licences from Turkish Cypriots for seismic research and sondage activities around the island of Cyprus

(2) Turkey increase its ability to make exploratory search and sondage in its continental shelf around Cyprus

(3) Turkey initiated military activities that affected the event happening in Libya and Syria (4) Turkey initiated a road map by the announcement of Libya –Turkey demarcation of marine area as that would pave the way too their maneuvers which would render the Greek claims invalid

(5) Turkey gained power by projecting its capability of military and civil operations out into Syria and application of diplomacy in regional matters

(6) Turkey combined its border security land operations into Syria with the development of a ‘BLUE HOMELAND’ strategy which entailed navy drills and maneuvers in the Mediterranean and Aegean. Turkey issued NAVTEXes to protect its sondage ships to continue its decisive actions to protect its rights in the East Mediterranean. Blue Nation is a concept that determines the borders of Turkey in Black Sea, Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean sea. It is the total sea area that covers certain rights and sovereignty. This concept has become the basis of Turkey’s strategy based upon the active and military power strategy after 2015 (Hürriyet, 2020).

Besides these strategies, the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan reiterated his proposal for an East Mediterranean conference where all the parties come together to discuss the hydrocarbon issues whilst his communication with Europe Commission and European Council officials (Yaman, 2021).

b. Turkish Cypriot Stance

Turkish Cypriot position on the exploration of hydrocarbon maintains that all the Greek Cypriot actions relating to maritime zones are not acceptable. These actions include all the third-party agreements regarding the delimitation of sea boundaries, for joint development or production sharing, organizing bids for searching hydrocarbons and authorizing licences for drilling and extraction of these resources.

The Turkish Cypriot position essentially is that initiatives concerning Cyprus offshore hydrocarbons should wait until a political settlement is reached and a bicommunal federal authority (i.e., a joint government of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots) competent to engage in such initiatives is established (Gürel, Mullen & Tzimitras, 2013, pp. 46-51). Turkish leader Mustafa Akıncı proposed a joint committee for cooperation on research and management of hydrocarbons to UN on 13 July 2019 to be delivered to the Greek Cypriot officials.

c. Greek Cypriot Stance

The Greek Cypriot position on exploration depends first on the claim that Cyprus government is recognized internationally as republic of Cyprus, unlike the Turkish part. They have the position that it is their sovereign right to explore for natural resources as long as it is within the bounds of international law. The Greek stance sees the natural resource issue as a federal expertise. Any sharing of

hydrocarbon revenues would come after the political settlement, that is after reunification when there is a federal government in place. The Greek Cypriots are resistant on including the issues of the method of sharing of hydrocarbon revenues in a future reunited Cyprus or the joint management of the future discoveries of hydrocarbons in the negotiations (Gürel, Mullen&Tzimitras, 2013, pp.41-45).

The Greek Cypriot position is essentially based on the claim that the maritime delimitation between mainland Turkey and Cyprus must be done exclusively by the adoption of the equidistance principle irrespective of any “special circumstances” that may exist. According to this view, Cyprus has sovereign right to exercise jurisdiction over its 200-mile wide EEZ around the entire island as per Article 121:2 of the UN Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Greek Cypriot EEZ overlaps the area Turkey claims as its EEZ in five of the thirteen offshore research blocks in the Mediterranean Sea (Çubukçuoğlu, 2015).

d. Greek Position

The ongoing maritime boundary dispute between Greece and Turkey in the Aegean and the Cyprus conflict have a direct relevance on current developments in the eastern Mediterranean. Through their delimitation claims, the Republic of Cyprus and Greece have sought to control a significant portion of the eastern Mediterranean — a situation that is opposed by Turkey. Greece supports Greek Cypriot Administration in the drilling dispute with Turkey and both urged EU to take punitive measures even sanctions against Turkey to ‘condemn the illegal actions of Turkey’ (Smith, 2019). Greece and Greek Cypriot Administration are the participants in the East Med Project along with Israel. Therefore, mentioned countries are also members of the East Mediterranean Gas forum along with Egypt, Jordan, Italy, Jordan, and

Palestinian Administration with the aim of creating a regional gas market, sharing the infrastructure, and developing the natural gas fields in the East Mediterranean (Altunışık, 2020).

Greece became anxious about the maritime delimitation agreement with Tripoli-based, UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) in Libya on Nov. 27, 2019. The agreement, which defined the western maritime delimitation of Turkey in the eastern Mediterranean, aimed to override Greek claims for the full effect of maritime rights for its lands, and thus increased not only Turkey's but also Libya's continental shelf rights (Altunışık, 2020). This deal also is a game changer in the way that Greek Cyprus, Greece, Israel, and Egypt must get permission from Turkey when they conduct exploration or establish future gas transmission lines (Cohen, 2020). To nullify it, Greece has signed demarcation of EEZ agreements with Italy and Egypt recently.

Greece is in close contact with European Union and particularly with France about the Turkish actions in the Eastern Mediterranean. Greece, taking advantage of the European Union membership, along with the Greek Cyprus continuously asks for sanctions in the European Union meetings for Turkey and has already engaged in frigate and fighter jet procurement from France (Greece backs targeted Turkey sanctions, 2020, Greece to boost arms, 2020). Greece also became a member of a tripartite military and navy cooperation with Greek Cypriot and Israel for the year 2021 to isolate Turkey about the East Mediterranean issues (French air force participate, 2020). Recently Greece parliament committee approved the bill to double its territorial waters in the Ionian Sea from six nautical miles to 12 nautical miles which could be applied to the other sea territories in the future as well according to

Greek officials (Draft Bill Extending Greek Territorial Waters Approved by Parliament Committee, 2021). But on the other hand, Greece accepted Turkey's invitation to start exploratory talks on the 25th of January 2021 (Kirbaki, 2021).

Cyprus, Greece and Israel signed an initial agreement to build the world's longest and deepest underwater power cable that will traverse the Mediterranean seabed at a cost of about \$900 million and link their electricity grids (Israel, Cyprus and Greece agree to link power, 2021). Greece and Egypt also agreed on connecting the electric grids between them on the 1st of April (Greece signs a MOU, 2021). Moreover, on the 7th of April 2021, Greece, Greek Cyprus and Egypt signed a military cooperation agreement to increase the joint military exercises and training activities (Greece, Cyprus, and Egypt Sign Trilateral, 2021).

e. Israeli Position

Israel discovered in 2009 (Tamar) and (Leviathan), two gas fields estimated to hold 26 trillion cubic feet of gas, allowing it to satisfy its energy needs and making Israel able to become a gas exporter (Georgakis. 2014). Israel signed agreements with Egypt to export gas for export. The deal included 64 billion cubic meters of natural gas to be exported to Egypt for 10 years (Egypt to begin importing Israeli natural gas, 2018). Israel also tries to keep a low profile and does not want to be dragged in a severe conflict with Turkey in the East Mediterranean. The reason is clear: Israel does not want its maritime routes to put into jeopardy since its main trade income passes through the Mediterranean Sea (Berkat, 2019). Both Israel and Turkey had made a reconciliation agreement in 2016 after 6 years of strained relations after Mavi Marmara Incident in 2010. This agreement did not lead to progress in energy diplomacy and cooperation since Israel had been apart of the East Med Project which

excluded TRNC and Turkey from the share of the hydrocarbon resources around the island of Cyprus (Erşen, 2019).

After years of diplomatic tension, Turkey showed its interest to Israel its desire for rapprochement by sending a message of reconciliation to Israeli counterparts regarding the energy cooperation. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the process stopped. The last attempt came from Former Turkish Admiral Cihat Yaycı who proposed a bilateral agreement on the countries' shared exclusive economic zones last December, which would leave Israeli ally Cyprus in a difficult position (Yaycı & Ceyhan, 2020). Yaycı and Ceyhan (2020) support that the agreement on the delimitation of the Maritime Jurisdiction Areas between Turkey and Israel would be a win win solution. Both authors maintain that if Israel signs a marine border agreement with Turkey instead of South Cyprus, it would “ obtain up to 16,000 km² of maritime jurisdiction area. According to the Turkish-Israeli maritime border, Israel not only gains approximately 16,000 km² of maritime area, but this includes the entirety of parcel 12 known as the Aphrodite field, large amounts of the parcels numbered 8, 9 and 11, along with a portion of the parcels numbered 7 and 10. At the same time, Turkey gains around 10,000 km² of maritime area along with portions of the parcels numbered 1,5,6,7,8 and 10” (Yaycı&Ceyhan, 2020; Yaycı, 2020, p.96). For the delimitation of the sea marine jurisdiction areas and the map proposed by both authors, please see Appendix A. The rapprochement between the two countries on the issue of energy cooperation is more feasible now. Turkey has established relations with United Arab Emirates recently. After the US’s statement regarding the East Med project’s infeasibility in terms of environment and the financial costs, the US withdrew its support from the project (EastMed projesi çöktü, 2022). After these two important developments, the relations between Turkey and Israel are expected to

normalize. Israeli President Herzog is expected to visit Turkey in the following days in March and participate in the Diplomacy Forum in Antalya (İsrail Cumhurbaşkanı Herzog, 2022).

Israel has two other anxieties with respect to the area. The first one is Israel is insecure about the normalisation of relations with United Arab Emirates because the latter requests F35 planes and nuclear program to counter Iran. These demands would prevent Israel's anchor state position of the United States in the region. Israel would not want to share that role with any other state. The second anxiety of Israel comes from the radicalization of the power struggle in the East Mediterranean by Greece and France that would disturb Turkey and Russia leading to a hot flash in the region. Israel knows its limits and is afraid to lose its projection of power in the area (Güney, 2020, p.35). For this reason, Israel tries to keep its relations lukewarm with the regional countries.

f. Lebanese Position

After the mentioned Israeli discoveries of natural gas, Lebanon responded that a part of the Leviathan field lies in its waters. Lebanon and Israel have not agreed on their ground borders since 2000, and so maritime borders are not agreed too. The disputed area is a triangle of 330 square miles. Hezbollah threatened to bomb the Israel's gas platforms to "secure" Lebanon's resources and as a result Israel built more naval vessels with nuclear missiles to secure the platforms (Georgakis, 2014, p.8).

Lebanon's foreign minister, Gebran Bassil, wrote a letter to U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres, EU foreign policy head Federica Mogherini and the foreign ministers of Cyprus, Greece, and Italy'' to request that the pipeline (The East

Med) does not infringe on Lebanon's rights within what it claims as its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) (Lebanon warns neighbors against using disputed, 2019). Lebanon has given two blocks; Blocks of 4 and 9 for offshore licences to a consortium of firms including ENI, Total and Novatek and one of the two blocks (Block 9) consists of waters in dispute with Israel. (Barrington, 2018; Fairbanks, 2019). For the disputed block with Israel and offshore licenced blocks, please see appendix A. Lebanon is left out of the gas alliances, e.g the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum that aims to form a regional gas market. This country must make a choice between prioritizing its economy over geopolitics when it finds great amount of gas enough to export in its maritime borders (Azrahi, 2020).

g. Egyptian Position

Egypt aspires to be a regional hub for natural gas and its infrastructure that includes two facilities for liquifying natural gas and 19 plants for natural gas treatment which can help its exports (Mohammed, 2018). Egypt also exports gas to Jordan through Arab Gas pipeline. This pipeline also is connected to Israel via Arish Ashkelon pipeline via which will be used to export Israeli gas to Egypt. Israeli fields Tamar and Leviathan will supply Egypt with 85.3 billion cubic meters(bcm) of gas over 15 years (Dalsh, 2020).

Zohr field discovered offshore Egypt in August 2015 brought Egypt back its capability to export natural gas (Hosny,2020). Later, Egypt and Greek Cypriot Administration signed an agreement to construct a pipeline from Aphrodite gas field to Egypt and its LNG facility in Idku in September 2018 (Psyllides, 2018). In February 2020, Egypt signed agreements with five major energy firms: Chevron and Exxon Mobil, BP, Total, Royal Dutch Shell to explore gas off its Northwestern coast

near Libya. This might spark tensions with Turkey who signed maritime and military agreements with UN recognized Tripoli government when drilling takes place in the following years (Mahmoud, 2020). Egypt along with Greece, France and Greek Cypriot Administration called the two agreements. “ null and void” (European Egyptian ministers reject Turkish deals, 2020). Egypt is a leading member of East Med Gas Forum which became an international body with the signing of its foundation charter along with its other six members (EastMed Gas Forum makes history, 2020).

h. European Union Position

The Eastern Mediterranean gas gains importance in the eyes of the European Union because by 2020 the European Union will be facing a serious energy shortage not only because oil production will decrease dramatically but also because Russia and North Africa will not be able to satisfy the ever-increasing demands in natural gas (Bruneton, Konofagos& Foscolos, 2011, p.18). According to USGS technical report 2010, besides the already discovered gas in Egypt and Israel, the potential discoveries offshore, in Levantine basin and Nile Cone will amount a total of 14t cm. This exceeds the Azerbaijani natural gas amount through Nabucco line (Bruneton et al., 2011, p.18). European Union is interested in the Eastern mediterranean gas for several reasons: (1) Eastern Mediterranean gas can strengthen the energy security of Cyprus (an EU member state), Israel, and the Palestinian Authority (both of which the EU has close links with), and because it could strengthen the EU's own energy security; (2) Turkey, a candidate for EU membership, shares the interest in regional stability, especially given current developments in Syria (3) the safety and security of energy installations is important for all Mediterranean countries (Kohler, 2012).

For European Union, due to its heavy dependence on oil and gas imports, security of Europe's energy supply is an important policy objective for Brussels. Security of supply dictates that the EU diversifies its gas imports. Emmanuel Karagiannis writes in his ISA conference paper, delineating this interest of the EU countries to the East Mediterranean region, ``The EU is directly involved in the regional energy affairs, because Greece and Cyprus are member states. Also, Turkey is a candidate for EU membership and has a customs union with Brussels. Moreover, the EU has a close relationship with Israel. Currently, European countries import liquefied natural gas (LNG) from politically unstable Middle Eastern countries like Egypt and Yemen. The discovery of Israeli and Cypriot gas could help strengthen Europe's energy security at a time that there are increased tensions with Russia; indeed, the Eastern Mediterranean may serve as the third gas corridor for Europe, the other two being Eastern Europe with Russian gas and South-East Europe with Azeri gas. In anycase, European companies will play an important role in the region's gas exploration process. For example, the French Total, the Italian Eni, the British Premier Oil, and the Dutch Oranje-Nassau Energie expressed an interest to bid in the second round of licensing for natural gas in Cypriot EEZ'' (Karagiannis, 2014, p.5).

European Union wants to diversify its energy supplies to break the monopoly of Russia as a gas exporter to Europe (Dempsey, 2015; Lewis & Emmott, 2014). With that aim, the Commission launched an initiative to create a European Energy Union to ``reform how Europe produces, transports, and consumes energy on the 4th of February 2015. The goals of this union were ensuring security of supply, building a single internal energy market, raising energy efficiency, and decarbonizing national economies (Conca, 2015). The Eastern Mediterranean should play a vital role in reaching these goals by supplying a portion of the additional 100 bcm of natural gas a

year that will be needed in Europe the next 15 years (Cohen, 2015). The challenge comes when the decarbonizing the energy sectors of the European Union countries might not be the common policy throughout. (Cohen, 2015)

There is also a discrepancy of how the individual countries react and conduct their foreign policy with respect to the East Mediterranean affairs in European Union. Emmanuel Macron, the French leader has been acting on an aggressive note openly supporting Greece and Cyprus with the aim of projecting its power to the Middle east and the East Mediterranean (Cook, 2020). On the other hand, Angela Merkel, the German leader engaged on diplomatic actions to smooth out the dispute and bring Greece and Turkey to the negotiation table. Merkel's diplomatic efforts for mediation between Turkey and Greece was severely undermined earlier in August 2020 after Macron announced that France would send its warships to the region in support of EU member Greece (Daily Sabah, 2020). Germany sees the eastern Mediterranean from the perspective of European Union unity and common policy, but France acted independently as Macron visited Beirut and gathered the Med 7 countries in Corsica to discuss East Mediterranean issues (BBC, 2020). German policy is to favor the cooperation with Turkey and act together with Italy, Spain, and Malta to balance France time to time. The SPD, the Center Left Party won the elections by a narrow margin in Germany, but it had to form a coalition government. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz gave support to Greece by saying ‘‘ Invading Greek airspace and flying over Greek islands is not okay.’’ (Reuters, 2022). He seems to be acting in opposition to the constructive policy of previous Chancellor Merkel ‘s in the affairs of Eastern Mediterranean issues.

England is an actor who has the most freedom of movement in the Eastern Mediterranean. First it has a control over Gibraltar and over the two bases in Cyprus which used to be its former colony from 1922 to 1960. The base in Akrotiri is reportedly U.K.'s largest outside of its territory. Here, there are 16 war planes, an AWACS (airborne warning type airborne early warning and control systems), aircraft, two destroyers, a frigate and a submarine. Moreover, it has a special relation with Malta making it a strategic actor unlike France. England has human resources and partnerships in the Gulf and the Middle East. It has also showed up as an independent actor after Breexit as opposed to the divided Europe being opposed to France's radicalizing the East Mediterranean arena. Having said that, England like Italy is in favor of a pragmatic approach to Turkey and North Cyprus Turkish Republic searching for a cooperation venue with Turkey. Turkey might seek Eurofighter Typhoons from the UK given the aerospace ties both countries began forging after signing a deal to develop the TF-X (The Turkish national fighter plane) (Iddon, 2020).

Joseph Borrell, who is the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy announced in Brussels that member states agreed to launch a new operation in the Mediterranean to monitor Libya's UN arms embargo. The special supervision mission is expected to be put to action in March aiming to disturb the influence of Turkey in the region and support the official stances of Greece and Greek Cyprus (Ulger, 2020). EU stood next to Greek Cyprus in the parcel conflict with Turkey when Fatih drillship was sent to the region with an announcement of the Head of EU Council on the 9th of May 2019 in an informal summit in Sibiu, Romania (Becataros & Hadjicostis, 2019). France and Greek Cyprus have signed a deal that would allow French warships to use a naval dock, Mari on the island of Cyprus (Ahwal News, 2019). The U.K. also decided to increase the number of fighter jets in

bases in the Akrotiri and Dhekelia regions of Southern Cyprus from 17 to 138 (Ulger, 2020). Additional tension brewed in the Eastern Mediterranean when Greece illegally arms the 16 islands in the Aegean Sea (Hürriyet Daily News, 2020).

i. Russian Stance

With the discovery of natural gas in the Levant Basin, Russia, has become active in its military and diplomatic maneuvering in the Eastern Mediterranean. The accord signed between Russia and Syria on the 25th of December 2013, allowed for exploration and drilling in an area off the Syrian coast. If oil or natural gas is discovered, the state-controlled Russian group Soyuzneftegaz will have a controlling interest for twenty-five years (Henderson, 2013). Russia was also building its naval presence since December 2012.

Russia wants to settle in the Eastern Mediterranean since it does not want to lose its naval and air (Latakia air base and Tarsus naval base) presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. Russia also wants to reap the benefits of the natural gas resources in the region. It does not want to endanger the deals he broke with Bashar Asad over natural gas drilling. That is the reason why Russia began its air strikes in Syria to support Bashar Asad government. Russia has also real commercial interests in Syria. Russia has made contracts to sell arms to Damascus – both those signed and under negotiation -- totalling \$5 billion. Having lost \$13 billion due to international sanctions on Iran and \$4,5billion in canceled contracts to Libya, Russia's defense industry is already reeling. Besides, arms exports, Russian companies have investments in Syria's infrastructure, energy, and tourism sectors, worth of \$19.4 billion in 2009 (Treisman, 2012). Since 2011, Russia has conducted three series of naval exercises in the Mediterranean, on a scale unseen since Soviet times.

Commenting on the exercises, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said, “We are not interested in further destabilization of the Mediterranean region, and the presence of our fleet is an unconditional factor of stability” (Zhukov, 2013). Thus, Russia wants to stay in the Eastern Mediterranean for commercial, defense and energy purposes.

Russia made a forceful strategic action by positioning itself in Syria in 2015 and became dominant in the field. This happened simultaneously with the retreat of the United States from the region. Russia’s dominance in the East Mediterranean rendered the efforts of Israel, Greece, and Greek Cypriots to control the Eastern Mediterranean invalid. Russia encircled the European/NATO security in the South which gave it a stronghold in the regional affairs. Russia has a naval base in Tartus where it sent ‘‘Rostov on Don’’ submarine equipped with caliber cruise missiles in addition to the previously sent two submarines and a cruiser carrying an air defense system like the S-300 missiles to the Eastern Mediterranean. The air base in Latakia housed 55 fighter jets, bomber and helicopters as well (Hacıoğlu, 2015). Russia also asked from the Greek Cypriot government a military base and Greek Cypriot President Nikos Anastasiades has announced that Russian fighter jets in Syria could use military bases and other airports in Greek Cyprus if caught in a “difficult situation.” (Hürriyet Daily News, 2015). In terms of the Cyprus question, Russia does not want the island to be a part of NATO, so it does not favor a united island. Russia uses Pafos and Limassol ports for military and economic reasons as well so the solution to the Cyprus question would not be beneficial for Russia which does not want Cyprus island to be a part of NATO block (Ercan & Kılınç, pp.19-20).

Due to the rise in mobility by Russia's sending its essential parts of Black Sea Navy to East Mediterranean led Turkey and NATO to increase precautions. Russia is the most powerful country in the area with its ten warships and three logistic support ships. U.S. has nine, France has four, Italy has two and seven NATO countries have one warship in the area. There are a total of 32 warships from 12 countries putting the East Mediterranean waters in full alert.

The Russian existence in the East Mediterranean is of utmost importance for Russian survival. Russia planned to establish naval bases in Trablus, in Tartus and Sokotra islands in Yemen to balance the US naval power in the East Mediterranean and the Middle East (Onay, 2020, p. 801). Russia also sees a Nato member Ukraine as a threat and an obstacle in the case of opening to the Black Sea (Onay, 2020, p. 800).

The Turkish-Russian relations was in a downward swing before the failed 15th of July coup. The visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Russia on August 9, 2016, came just after the coup attempt on the 15th of July 2016. Erdoğan had written an apology letter for the downing of the Russian aircraft and opened the way for the reconciliation and rapprochement between the two countries through concessions (Luhn & Black, 2019). Said Al Haj states this interdependence between these two countries:

Russia is in need for the Turkish food commodities while Ankara benefits from the Russian tourism revenues, where the Russians are second to German tourists. Bilateral commercial exchange reached \$ 31 billion in 2014, and both parties, particularly the Turkish side, desire to raising it to \$ 100 billion by 2023. In addition, there are giant strategic joint ventures, particularly the "Turkish Stream"

project for natural gas, and Akkuyu project to construct a nuclear plant in Turkey with a Russian investment of billions of dollars (Al Haj, 2016).

Turkey adopted a multi-axis foreign policy when ‘’ the lack of unequivocal Western support for Turkey's ruling government on the Gülenist Terror Group’s (FETÖ) failed coup attempt in the summer of 2016 has also fueled Western/European skepticism in Turkey and offered further ammunition to assertive nationalism in Turkish politics.’’ (Oğuzlu, 2008).

Russia and Turkey began to collaborate on Idlib and engaged in defense related projects. NATO member Turkey's 2019 purchase of Russian S-400 missile defence batteries prompted Washington to cancel the sale of U.S F-35 fighter jets and sanction Turkey's defence industries. President Erdoğan announced that Turkey was considering more joint defence industry steps with Russia including for fighter jets and submarines and building two more nuclear plants along with Akkuyu project after talks with President Vladimir Putin during the Sochi meeting on the 29th of September, despite a U.S. warning of further sanctions. Putin also suggested building platforms for space rocket launches. (Reuters, 2021).

j. The US Stance

The United States has an economic interest in the natural gas developments in the Eastern Mediterranean. For that matter, it engages in peace building activities to promote its business interests. Major aims of the United States in the United States are:

- 1) to support Israel’s security

2) to provide incentives for political settlement in conflicts to the regional countries

3) to promote European energy security by diversifying the energy supply infrastructure

United States, to bolster Israel's security, conducted a navy drill, a simulation of an attack to the gas platforms and installations, called `` Noble Dina `` with Israel and Greece. The drill started in the island of Crete, continued in the south coast of Cyprus and ended in Haifa port. The aim of the drill was the defence of the gas platforms in the Eastern Mediterranean (Ravid, 2012). Some say that it was a message to Turkey which has conducted seismic research in the South coast of Cyprus.

To bolster its economic interests in the region, United States engages in peace building activities in the regional conflicts. In the quest for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, John Kerry, the United States secretary of State announced in the occupied territories in May 2013. The economic plan would channel \$4 billion into Palestinian business sectors ranging from agriculture to telecommunications by 2016 (Shaban, 2013). The Palestinian economic plan proposes big new projects across eight industrial sectors, to be supported by foreign investors and lenders. They range from the pumping of natural gas off the Gaza Strip and the mining of potash on the Dead Sea to developing new "Holy Land" tourism in places such as Bethlehem (Reed, 2013).

To further economic interests, the United States aimed to end the conflict between Lebanon and Israel in the issue of maritime zone border dispute. Lebanon had been warning the US firm Nobel Energy against drilling in the contested area with Israel. Up to now no agreement has been reached between the parties. The sondage crisis between Turkey and Cyprus had been an obstacle for the Noble Energy firm to export Leviathan gas from Cyprus to Turkey (Eli, 2015). Eli (2015) maintains

that ‘‘Noble Energy had the plan of exporting the gas from the Leviathan gas field to a facility that would be established in Vassilikos, in southern Greek Cyprus.

Alternatively, the gas could be delivered via an underground pipeline to the port of Jihan in southern Turkey, but en route the pipeline would have to cross under the territorial waters of Greek Cyprus to avoid crossing Lebanese and Syrian territory.

This plan had geopolitical obstacles where Israel, Turkey and Cyprus had to reconcile regarding their disputes.’’

To bolster the Israelian security in the region, the United States has led to series of agreements dubbed as ‘‘Abraham accords’’ between the United Arab Emirates and Israel for normalisation of relations in exchange of suspending the occupied western bank territories (The New York Times, 2020).

The United States has also an aim of maintaining energy security. Amos Hochstein, US Secretary of State’s Special Envoy for International Energy Affairs, told in an interview in Turkish Policy Quarterly, ‘‘ Our (The US Government’s) goal has always been to work with our partners in Europe to foster energy security through diversification of energy types, sources, and routes in Europe. We have been working bilaterally with our partners and with the European Commission to complete the Southern Gas Corridor and to improve inter-connectivity among countries in the region. Gas from Azerbaijan, the United States, Iraq, the Eastern Mediterranean, and elsewhere can reach Europe through the Southern Corridor or an LNG facility in Croatia, and distribute through out the region through the Greece-Bulgaria interconnector (IGB) and other infrastructure. I have advocated aims to ensure that infrastructure is in place to support diversification for all countries in Europe to have the ability to choose from multiple suppliers, and for suppliers – from Azerbaijan to

Israel, from Qatar to Norway, and from Iraq to the US – to have equal access to European markets (TPQ, 2015). He also referred to the US shale gas production being as a paradigm shift in the world natural gas market, making the US an LNG exporter like Qatar and Australia in a few years (TPQ, 2015).

The US had to create a new strategy against the Russian dominance in the Eastern Mediterranean since 2015. Trump Administration designed a three-axis strategy to tame the rival and resistance powers via using proxies in the region (Güney, 2020, pp. 33-35)

1. Israel-Egypt- Greece/ Greek Cypriot Administration-Italy and France (East Med axis)

US adopted the East Med Act in which it supports the cooperation on the issues of energy and security between Israel, Greece and Cyprus and threatens Turkey with sanctions for the purchase of Russian S-400. The US sanctions Turkey to buy F35 fighter planes. The act also lifts the ban on the arms sales to Cyprus (Financial Mirror, 2019). These are measures to prevent against Turkey and Russia's domination and control over the Eastern Mediterranean.

This first axis deteriorated when the Pipeline Project became questionable to realize. Italy did not even participate the signing ceremony of the East Med project on the 2nd of January 2020 because the project was required to prove its economic sustainability and the ability to attract the necessary capital (Sudagezer, 2020). Italy was desperate since it could not benefit ENI's discoveries around Cyprus and Egypt because of the geopolitical struggle. Thus, Italy was more willing to work with Turkey which could lessen the geopolitical clash and silence

the French aggression. After sharing the Ionian Sea with Greece, Italy left its place in the first axis to France as the rescuer of the Greek Cypriots (Güney, 2020, p. 34).

France has an aim to position itself in the East Mediterranean via the navy base negotiations, defense agreements and sending Rafale jets to Greek Cypriots. Having sold 18 Rafale jets to Greece, France participated in joint training drills with Greece via its aircraft carrier, named Charles De Gaulle (Hürriyet, 2021); Greek, French aircraft hold joint training, 2020). France participated the İskiri 2021 drill with 4 Rafale jets along with Greek war planes (Greek City Times, 2020). There are also talks regarding the modernization of Greek navy between Greece and France for Belharra corvettes (Daily Sabah, 2021).

Moreover, France and Greece announced a defense and security deal worth around 3 billion euros (\$3.5 billion), which includes the Greek purchase of three French frigates which will be delivered in 2025 and 2026 on the 28 th of September 2021. The mutual defense assistance also includes maritime and land, Panagiotopoulos responded that it would be valid for “the entire sovereign area” of Greece (Hürriyet Daily News, 2021). This defense and security deal was ratified by the Greek Parliament. This agreement came after the deal struck between US, Australia, and England to build a trilateral security partnership aimed at confronting China’s expansion in the South China Sea and showing belligerent actions against Taiwan. This trilateral deal will include helping Australia to build nuclear-powered submarines and spells the end for a \$90bn contract Australia signed with the French company Naval Group in 2016 to build 12 state-of-the-art attack class submarines (Burger & Sabbagh, 2021). This was a disappointment for

France and the European countries which want to play a role in Indo-China region. This also showed the need for an independent security and military force for Europe when it relied only the US forces to airlift its citizens out of Afghanistan after Taliban entered Kabil (Euronews, 2021).

2. Israel-Greek Cypriot Administration-Greece-France axis:

This axis is designed to rescue the Greek Cypriots from the Russian influence. France and Israel encouraged Greece and Greek Cypriots administration to make irrational and maximalist demands from Turkey. These led to the counter responses on the Turkish part:

(1) Turkey announced the Western border of marine jurisdiction areas to the United Nations after concluding the EEZ agreement with Libya which is a win-win agreement for both parties (2) Turkey became permanently active with its 3 sondage and exploratory ships with its own national capabilities (3) Turkey began to use Turkish cypriot naval base Geçitkale as the İHA-SİHA (weaponed drones with no humans) (4) Turkey began operations to establish a strategic port in the Turkish Cypriot part. (5) Opening to Africa deepened the strategic line in Northern Africa 6) Ankara gained punitive advantages as well as deterrence when Greece signed EEZ agreements with Italy and Greece in which the latter made compromises from the legal thesis that “islands have jurisdiction areas.” (Güney, 2020, p.34)

After the crisis that emanated after the press meeting of Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias and his Turkish counterpart Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu on the 15th of April 2021, two events happened: (Sözcü, 2021).

1) Greece, Greek Cyprus ,Israel and UAE gathered for the first time in the form of a regional forum in the city of Baf on the 16th of April 2) Israel and Greece signed a 1.65 billion dollar military defense agreement on the 18th of April 2021 that entailed an establishment of a flight training center in Kalamata military airport which would be rented by the Israeli firm Elbit systems , sending of M346 training planes and training the Greek air Forces by Israel for 22 years (The Algemeiner, 2021). In the early days of April, Greece had also established a drone base in Skyros Island where the drones rented from Israel for three years was positioned (Greek City Times, 2021). Greece also might have to buy air defense systems from Israel (Iron Dome) according to the recent military deal with Israel (Kavaler, 2021). It seems that Greece has not given up its provocative actions against Turkey.

Moreover, on the 8th of April, Greece and Israel had undertaken a joint two-day air defense military exercise called ‘‘Onisilos-Gedeon 2021’’where Israeli F35 jets were used (Shaham, 2021). Greece had also undertaken an air military exercise called ‘‘Iniohos 21 ‘’with the US, France, Greek Cyprus, Canada, UAE, and Spain from the 12th of April to 22nd of April 2021 (Turner, 2021).

3. United Arab Emirates (UAE)-Greek Cypriot administration-Greece axis.

The second axis was also unsuccessful because the first and second axis policies were so focused on stopping Turkey that it had no impact on Russia. The deviation of the strategic aims of these axis policies led to an anxiety for NATO and Germany. This anxiety paved the way to a hasty design of an axis which included the UAE-Greece and Greek Cypriot Administration because of the Israel and UAE’s normalisation of relations. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and

Greece signed a foreign policy and defense agreement as their mutual tensions with Turkey in the Mediterranean Sea continue (Al-Monitor, 2020).

Saudi Arabia also cooperated with Greece to take part in ‘‘Eye of the Falcon’’ military exercises with F15C fighters which arrived in Crete. Saudi Arabia sees the Turkish engagement in Somalia as a threat. Turkish war ships in the Red and Arabian sea and the military bases in Somalia and Qatar disturb Saudi officials (The Arab Weekly, 2021).

On the 11th of February, The Philia Forum was held in Athens with the participation of foreign ministers of Greece, Egypt, France, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and the Greek Cypriot administration (AA, 2020). Meanwhile in February a development happened regarding a NAVTEX announced by Turkey regarding TCG Çeşme ship’s being in the region including the area of Limni, İskiri and Kirlangiç islands for hydrographic and oceanographic studies between the 18th of February to the 2nd of March. Although this NAVTEX created a crisis between the two countries, the 62. round of the exploratory talks between Greece and Turkey started on the 16th of March in Athens (Akşam, 2021).

The U.S elections ended with the victory of Joe Biden who is well -informed about the East-Med issues as an ex-vice president and a Foreign Relations Committee Member. Strong traces of the cooperation of Greece and the US were evident in the form of military air drills in western thrace in Xanthi, a naval base allocated to US by Greece on 23 February 2021 (Kokinidis, 2021). Greece Prime Minister visited US Dwight Eisenhower aircraft carrier which positioned itself at the island of Crete since the beginning of March 2021 (Mehmet, 2021). The US participated in military drills spanning the areas from Crete to Selanik. The US

also removed the arms embargo imposed on Greek Cyprus for thirty years. The US has also a base in Dedeağaç, a Greek city near the Turkish border. The US also positioned its attack helicopters here in Dedeağaç. This is in violation of the Lozan agreement which specifies that there should be no militarization in Dedeağaç. Moreover, Greece and the US undertakes joint military drills ignoring this fact. US ship Endurance will participate in NATO military exercise “Defender Europe 21” which lasted till June 2021. Moreover, The U.S. and Greece signed an extension of their bilateral Mutual Defense and Cooperation Agreement on Oct. 14, 2021. In this agreement, “the United States, as well as Greece, are firmly determined to mutually safeguard and protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each country against actions threatening to peace, including armed attacks or threats thereof” (Hürriyet Daily News, 2021).

k. Chinese Stance

China’s presence is visible not only through its acquisition of the controlling stakes in ports of Piraeus in Greece and Haifa in Israel but also in the creation of the “16+1” mechanism through which China has established a dialogue platform through which China established with South European countries, something that has rankled European Union feathers (Brown, 2017). Toolan, Bird & Hoshovsky (2020) state in their article that China’s taking over commercial ports creates anxiety because it “is a calculated move to create a network of facilities designed to provide logistical support to Chinese warships.” This network could be used for tracking and preventing naval movements in the future.

China has become more assertive in the East Mediterranean to assure its energy security and the safety of these routes of energy. China conducted a naval drill

Joint 2015 with collaboration of Russia as its new strategy of ``the New Silk Road``. China strives to connect itself with markets and producers across Middle East, Europe, and Central Asia. To that end, Chinese companies have poured considerable resources into modernizing and expanding Mediterranean ports, including the Port of Piraeus outside of Athens, Greece. These maritime outlets would lead to an extended influence of China in the Strait of Hormuz and Suez Canal where the most important maritime choke points had occurred (Bender, 2015).

China has also political reasons to be in the Eastern Mediterranean. According to Dr. Christina Lin, in September 2013 when the U.S. threatened to attack Syria and Russia responded by dispatching a naval flotilla, China also deployed warships to the coast of Syria to “observe” the situation. In January 2014, China and Russia conducted joint naval war games in the Eastern Mediterranean in a “show of flags” (Lin, 2014). Lin (2014) also adds that ‘‘Chinese Uyghurs from Xinjiang as well as those residing in Turkey have crossed over to Syria to join jihadi fighters, with goals of returning to Xinjiang to launch attacks. Beijing further fears that through linking with international jihadist groups, Chinese Uyghurs and their terrorist cohorts would spawn home -grown radicalization of China’s 20 million Muslims.’’

Turkish-Chinese relations improved after China promised support for Tayyip Erdoğan after the 2016 coup attempt (Kabakçı, 2020). China’s Belt and Road Initiative offers Turkey a source of fresh cash and Beijing strategic hold on the Mediterranean Sea. Chinese consortiums have controlling interest of Turkey’s third container terminal, Kumport. Chinese investors also salvaged the Yavuz Sultan Selim Project when the Italian-Turkish Consortium wanted out in January 2020 (Alemdaroğlu & Tepe, 2020).

I. Iran's Stance

As for Iran, the Mediterranean became a focus of its naval strategy beginning in the year 2010. According to Dr Shaul Shay,

“In September 2010, Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari relayed Iran's plan to continue naval deployment in the high seas as part of Tehran's strategy for defending its interests abroad. In addition, he announced several months later that Iran would deploy its first home-made destroyer, Jamaran, in international waters. Soon after, on February 25, 2011, two Iranian warships docked in Syria after passing through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean Sea, the first time Iranian ships passed through the canal since 1979” (Shay, 2012).

Shay also points out that:

“this new development came at a time of significant turmoil in the region and illustrated the Iranian search for strategic dominance in the region and Iranian efforts to support its regional allies in the Mediterranean: Syria, Hizbullah, and Hamas. In June 2012 Iran announced that it would hold a naval exercise together with Syria and Russia in the Eastern Mediterranean. This reflected an ongoing change in Iranian naval strategy. For years Iranian vessels have operated exclusively in the Persian Gulf. A new evolving strategy has now caused Iran to send military vessels to other waters including the Gulf of Oman, Caspian Sea, Red Sea, and even the Mediterranean Sea. Iran's naval leadership has declared that since today's major global threats are sea-based, Iran must update its naval forces and strategy. On February 18, 2012, Iranian Admiral Habibollah Sayyari announced that two war ships entered the Mediterranean for the second time since the 1979 Islamic Revolution,

showcasing Iran's "might" to regional countries. They docked at the Syrian port of Tartous, marking Iranian naval cooperation with the Syrian regime. This expanded naval presence has been accompanied by threats in response to the ever-harsher sanctions being imposed on the country over its nuclear program. For example, in February 2012, Hossein Ebrahimi, a vice chairman of the Iranian Parliament's national security and foreign policy commission, called the ships "a serious warning" in case of any US strategic mistake in Syria'' (Shay,2012).

Eisenstadt states in his article:

‘’ Iran could eventually exploit its Levantine foot hold to create an anti access "bubble" along the Lebanese and Syrian coasts, using the more capable Russian bubble around Tartus and Latakia to shield its own effort. Iran could threaten Israel's critical coastal infrastructure (power stations and ports) and offshore assets (natural gas platforms), as well as seaborne leg of NATO's missile defense.’’ (Eisenstadt, 2015). It is important for Iran to bypass the Persian Gulf in finding routes to transport its oil where Saudi Arabia and the US can prevent them. That is why Iran sponsors pro-Iranian formations to occupy strategic locations in Syria.

The killing of Kasım Husein, the head of rebellion guards, made an impact on Iran's influence on neighbor countries (BBC, 2020). The permanent positioning of Russia also limited Iran's power by dividing Syria into different influence sectors and reaching with Tahrán to an agreement of non-intervention to these areas. Russia also acts ambivalently against the air operations of Israel towards Iran since Russia wants third countries to weaken Iran. USA also benefits Russian policy of blocking Iran from reaching the East Mediterranean and preventing the Iraq-Syria land crossings of militias (Askeroğlu, 2020).

After delineating the effects of the structural changes and developments in four periods of historical periods, the geopolitical concerns of the superpowers and regional countries were outlined in the last section of the thesis. The next part reveals the findings



5. CONCLUSION

The Cyprus problem cannot be evaluated only in terms of energy politics. The problem followed up structural features. The incompetence of the countries in the region and the inconsistency of the interests of the exterritorial countries have given birth to the Cyprus problem. The solution to this problem will depend on how coherent the East Mediterranean policies of major states and how much of these interests will be satisfied. Contrary to the bipolar order of the Cold War, the Cyprus problem should be considered within a multi-polar, multi-actor system.

The main factor in the emergence of other crises in the region and the continuation of these conflicts is that the USA's presence in the Middle East has decreased after 2011; that the American government is in an effort to re-consolidate its weight in the region through 'imperial coalition' it formed with England, France against China and Russia and that it is trying to provide this through factors such as ISIS terror, Turkey-Russia tension, Turkey-Iran conflict, Saudi-Iran crises; and that in this sense, we are facing a different imperial coalition that activates all kinds of ethnic, sectarian and geo-political conflict mechanisms. The imperial coalition is in calculations to make their influence felt more both in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean and in the Gulf, that the new method isn't based on the invasion but on the balance of violence and conflict, that the cause of crises in the region is that these major states arise as the "solution powers" firstly and then make everything more chaotic. The new world order and the resolution of these crises coincide with a "multi-layered and multi-actor" period. The Cyprus problem is also a problem that needs to be evaluated by considering the multi-actor and non-traditional threat elements. The Cyprus problem is a function of structural changes and developments.

The incompetence of the countries in the region (relative political ineffectiveness and the prevailing multidimensional instability in the region) and the compatibility/incompatibility of interests of the major states about regional conditions are the factors that affect the fate of the Cyprus problem.

The Cyprus problem was considered within the framework of a balance of power and European harmony in the 19th century, however, in the 20th century, it was considered within the framework of ideological beliefs in Cyprus that came into existence because of the emergence of the power gap and the emergence of two opposite blocs after the First and Second World Wars and the starting of the Cold War period. Non-traditional threats, terrorism, and multi-layered energy dimensions that emerged after the cold war had an impact on the solution of the Cyprus problem. The issue of how these problems is evaluated by regional powers and super forces and how much the interests of these countries match with each other are the leading factors that will affect the solution of the Cyprus problem.

As seen in the chapters of the thesis, the decreasing influence of the USA in the Middle East has led to the filling of this gap by Russia, and the actions of other NATO member countries to increase their influence in the region. Regional countries made military agreements with NATO member countries such as Turkey, France, and England to increase their security because of Iran's increasing influence in the region after the nuclear agreement between USA and Iran. After the production of energy reserves discovered in the coast of Cyprus and Israel, the agreement in the interests of regional countries and super states about how this reserve will reach Europe and other markets, that is, whether it will be exported as liquid gas through terminals or through

a pipeline, or about which transit country or countries these energy reserves will reach the markets affects the solution of the Cyprus problem.

Syria Crisis and the civil war in the country poses a great importance in terms of the natural resources in the Eastern Mediterranean since the country who controls Syria will control the use, production, and the logistics of these resources. For that matter, the positioning of the Russian warships in the Eastern Mediterranean and ground troops in Syria, the military cooperation between Israeli-Greece and Greek Cypriots and defense cooperation of Greek Cyprus and France, the navigation of Israel submarines loaded with nuclear missiles in the East Mediterranean, the Turkish incursions to Syria doing operations to protect border security and prevent the Kurdish corridor to the Eastern Mediterranean, the empowerment of the Chinese navy, the positioning of the French navy forces in the Cypriot ports to observe the security of TOTAL, the gas firms' exploration activities in the so called EEZ zone of Cyprus, Turkey's recent sondage and exploratory activities around Cyprus and the NAVTEX wars between Greece and Turkey, reveal the signals that the race for energy resources will be severe. Military power-backed war diplomacy is dominant in the region instead of a search for solutions in the light of international law norms. Thus, the Eastern Mediterranean has become a geography where hybrid struggles over marine areas are experienced (Yorulmaz, 2019).

Zahra Mirzafarjouyan, during his interview with Mehmet Ögütçü, Chairman of Global Resources Corporation states in a Q&A session with him that "The insecurity of the Strait of Hormuz, the influence of Iran on the Persian Gulf and other Middle Eastern disputes, have led to the proposals to create a new Energy Corridor in the Middle East to the Mediterranean. This corridor is perhaps the most important

conflict area of the next century. All the major players of the world are now fighting to have their share in this corridor linking Iran-Iraq-Syria to the Mediterranean or connecting the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean to bypass the Strait of Hormuz. Turkey is particularly sensitive to the Kurdish energy corridor and has been the fiercest opponent to that design” (Mirzafarjouyan, 2019).

The interest competition can lead to a conflict anytime in the East Mediterranean via the Exchange of Navtex announcements between Greece and Turkey and military drills within the borders of these NAVTEX areas and the presence of military and navy forces of various countries swarming in the East Mediterranean. The global and regional powers, in their struggles spanning from the Middle East to the East Mediterranean or even the Caucasus are operating within a “mini-Cold War” amongst each other. The recent-Russian-Ukrainian war and the possible expansion of this war to the Balkans via Kosova-Serbian tension are prime examples of “mini-Cold Wars” that could transform into a bigger hot flash which might endanger the world peace.

The USA and European Union are designing various axes using proxies to isolate Turkey, but they have ignored the possibility of the formation of a counter alliance of Russia, China, Tehran, and Turkey in the Middle East and East Mediterranean affairs. Lately, in the Azerbaijan-Armenian war, the solution of the conflict, was reached upon the consensus of Turkey and Russia’s decision for sending peace forces to the area. This is an example that shows how the geopolitical interests of super and regional powers should be satisfied to reach a consensus in the regional conflicts and end mini cold wars around the world.

It is apparent that the energy reserve discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean led to a multi polar world order contrary to the Cold war bipolar order. The outcome of the Cyprus dispute depends on the satisfaction of the geopolitical anxieties of external powers such as the United States, European Union, Russia, and China and the regional powers such as Turkey, Egypt, Israel, Greece etc. The consequence of the Cyprus conflict will also depend on the harmony of these external and regional actors with respect to the East Mediterranean policies.

In summary, Cyprus has gained importance as the center of the power struggle in the region. The solution of the Cyprus conflict depends on the structural developments and changes in the international arena with respect to how interests of international actors coincide or diverge with respect to the hydrocarbon issues in the East Mediterranean. The nature and configuration of the alliances and counteralliances with respect to the East Mediterranean will also have an impact on the solution of the conflict.

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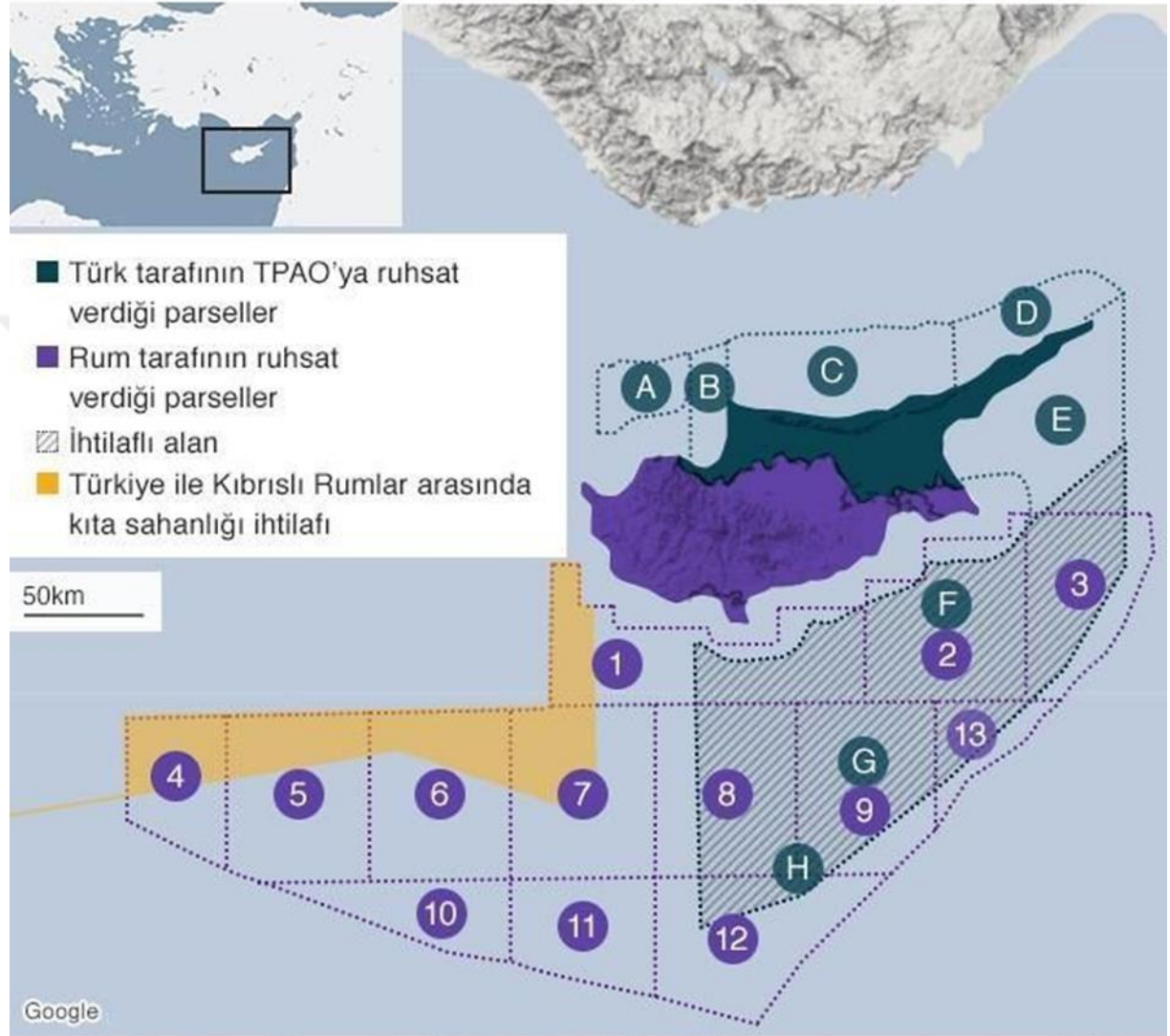
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Appendix A -Maps

Figure 1

The disputed blocks in the Eastern Mediterranean

Doğu Akdeniz'deki ihtilafli parseller

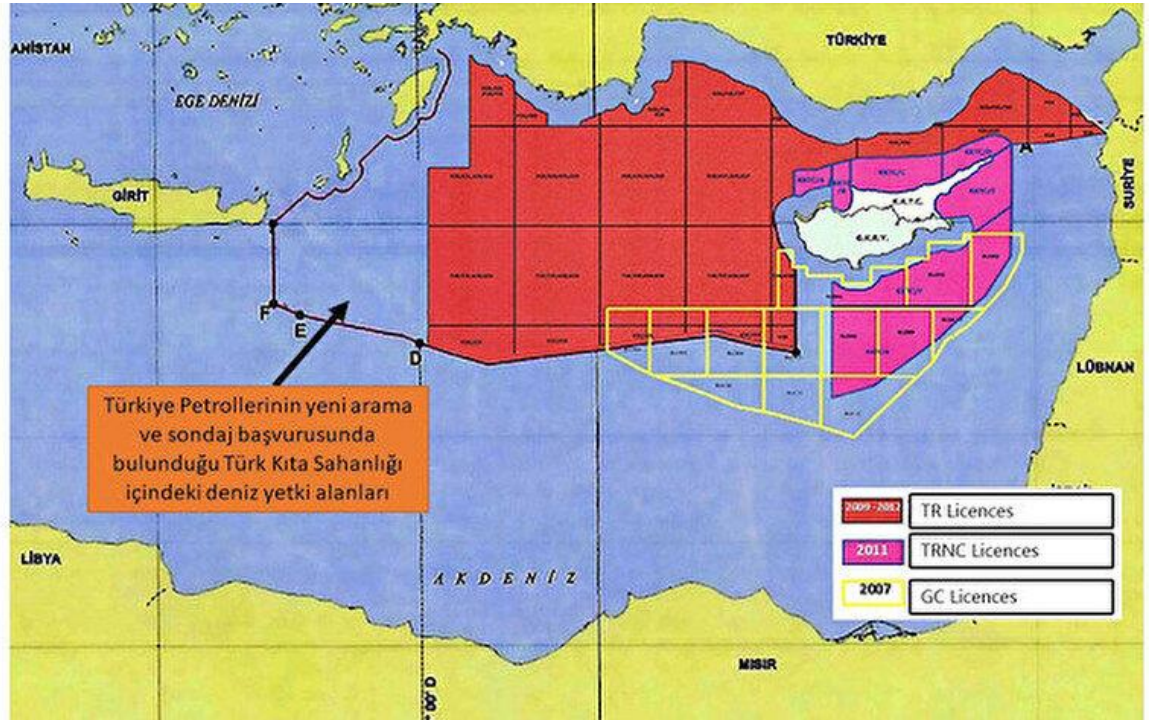


Kaynak: Kıbrıs Tarım, Çevre ve Kırsal Gelişim Bakanlığı & TPAO

BBC

Figure 2

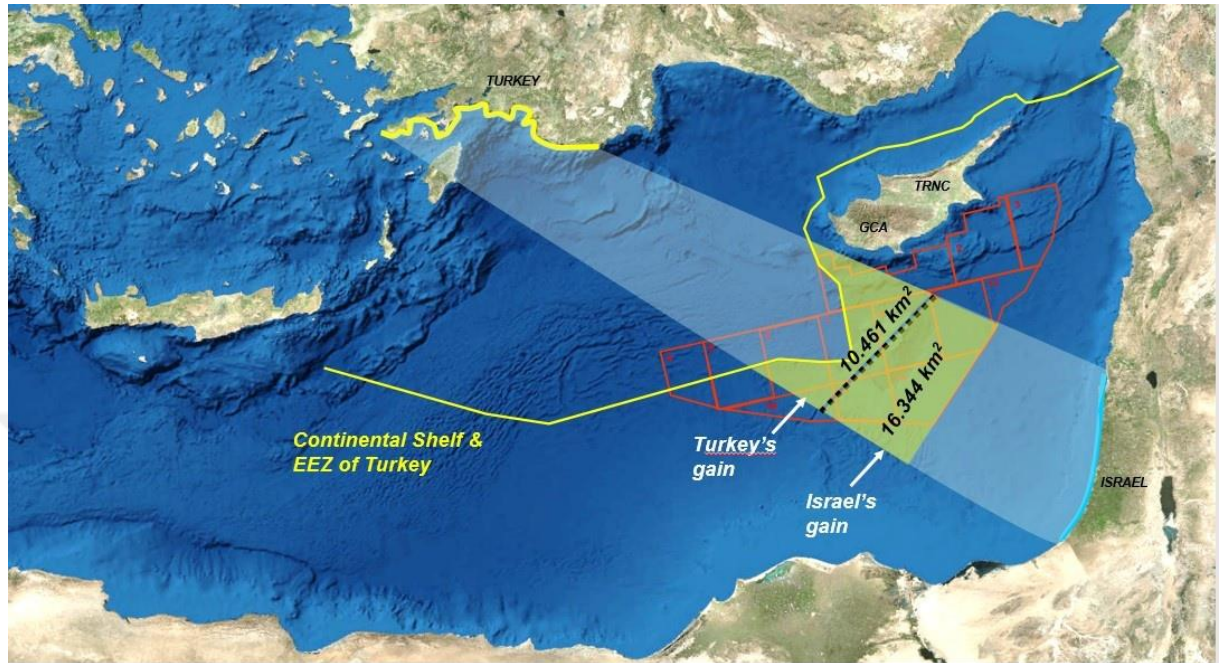
Turkish Petroleum Exploration Licence Areas in the East Mediterranean



Note: Adapted from *Yeni Şafak Newspaper* article 03.06.2020
<https://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/disisleri-bakanligi-haritayi-paylasti-turkiyenin-dogu-akdenizde-yeni-ruhsat-basvurusu-yaptigi-sahalar-3542817>

Figure 3

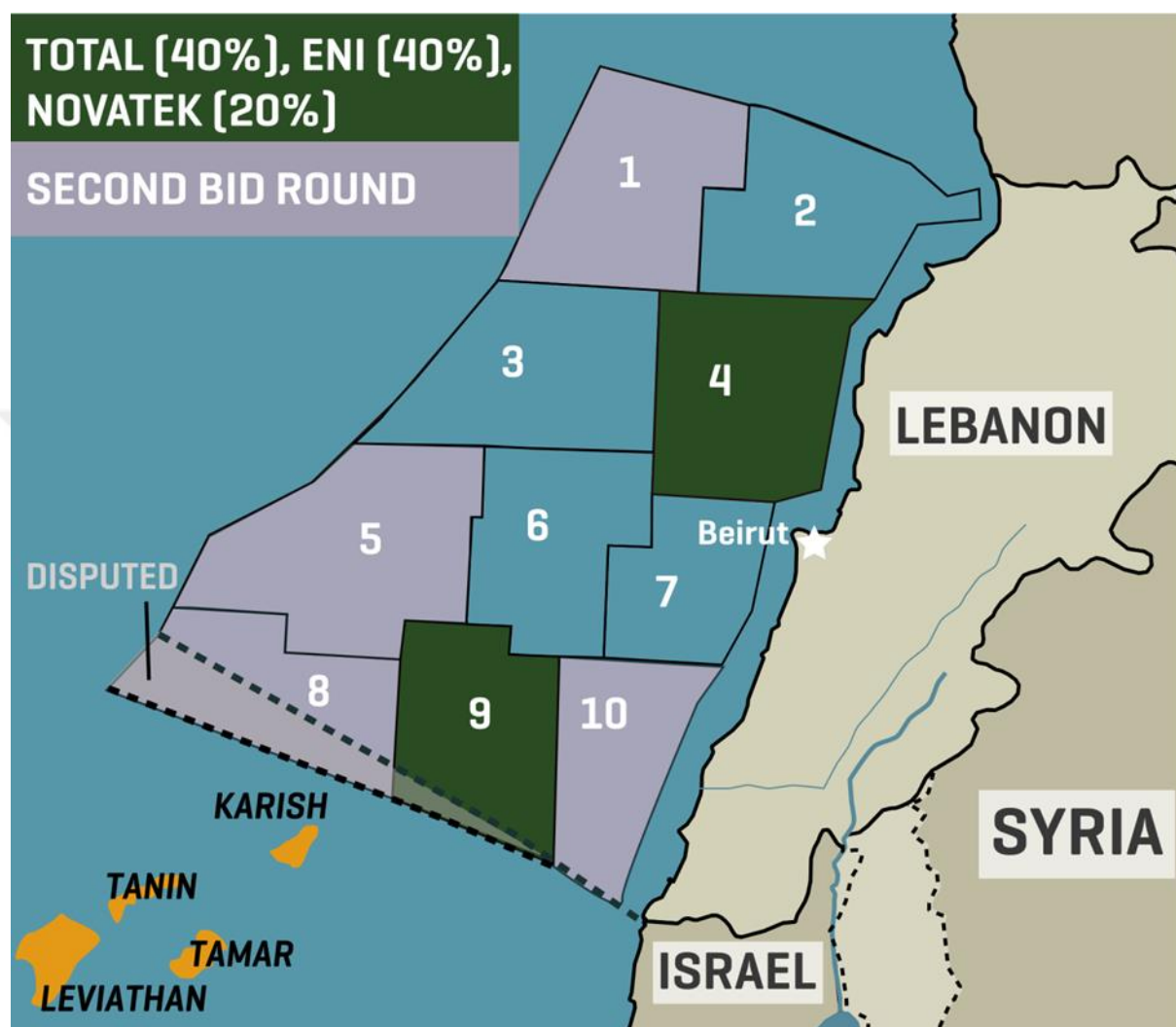
Possible Gains in a Future Turkish-Israeli EEZ Agreement



Adapted from the article of Yaycı, Cihat & Ceyhan, Zeynep (2020) Turkeyscope: Insights on Turkish Affairs Editors: Dr. Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak and Dr. Joel D. Parker Vol. 4, No. 8.

Figure 4

Lebanon and Israel EEZ conflict and Lebanon Licencing Agreements



Note: MEES, 1 March 2019