



The security question of the Cyprus Problem: Strategic implications

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While the security question of the Cyprus problem is a pivotal aspect pertaining to the *strategic future of the island and the existential fate of its people*, its generic approach as an ordinary element of the negotiating process is simplistic and precarious; threatening, in case of a sloppy solution, not only the disintegration of a prospective Federal Republic of Cyprus (FeROC)¹ but also the subversion of the Eastern Mediterranean security sub-system, the importance of which has significantly increased during the last decade as a consequence of the devastating Middle Eastern mess. Contrary to existing domestic notions and foreign assessments, *the security question is much deeper than the controversial issue of Turkish guarantees and the presence of Turkish forces on the EU island member after a solution*; since, beyond the security of the two communities on the island, it directly undermines the fragile Greek-Turkish strategic equilibrium, *liquidates the existing contributing role of the Republic of Cyprus (ROC) in the Eastern Mediterranean* and the wider Near East – including its balanced relations with Washington and Moscow and its creative cooperation with both Israel as well as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and the Palestinians – and dissolves the island's role as a EU security outpost in the volatile region. Eventually leading to the unopposed hegemony of the Eastern Mediterranean by Turkey, the revisionist strategy of which – under its fluctuating self-serving (rather than bilateral) relations with Washington, NATO, EU, Moscow and Jerusalem – will dominate the delicate strategic equilibrium in the region to the detriment of multiple sensitive regional interests.

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¹ Turkey and the Turkish-Cypriot side oppose a name for the new federal state that contains the term Republic of Cyprus.

The strategic control of the island

Perhaps the essence of Ankara's long-term strategic conception over Cyprus lies in Professor Ahmet Davutoglu's 2001 *Stratejik Derinlik* [Strategic Depth]:

The Cyprus Question is neither an ordinary Turkish-Greek ethnic issue nor a simple lingering Turkish-Greek tension. [...] the importance of the geographical position of the island from a geostrategic perspective. This axis itself is of vital importance, independently of the human element that exists there. *Even if there was not a single Moslem Turk there, Turkey ought to have sustained a Cyprus Question.* No country can remain indifferent to such an island that lies in the heart of its vital space.²

Turkey has been successful in sustaining a Cyprus Problem. Since the formal introduction of *Taksim* [partition] in the Nihat Erim policy reports of 1956,³ Ankara – with silent British instigation during the EOKA anti-colonial campaign in the 1950s and Washington's pro-Greek junta machinations in the 1960s and 1970s – has been successful in using the Turkish-Cypriots on the island, who willingly accepted and still continue to play the role,⁴ as a strategic minority in the pursuit of its Eastern Mediterranean objective: *the strategic control of Cyprus*. Whitehall, and elusively Washington, having safeguarded the strategic use of the island through the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) and the Retained Sites, conceived the fettered independence and sovereign existence of the newly formed, crippled, Republic as of minor importance against the grand strategy scheme of Turkey's geostrategic importance in the context of Cold War.⁵ The convenient pretext of the Greek coup against Makarios, after a long intra-Greek rivalry between Athens and Nicosia – amplified by *the silent acquiescence of Washington, Whitehall and Moscow* during the Cyprus crisis of 1974⁶ – encouraged the Turkish invasion that led to the island's military partition.

Although Ankara's intensive efforts for the international recognition of the self-proclaimed, illegal 'Turkish Republic of North Cyprus' ('TRNC')⁷ failed, the transformation of the occupied part of

² Author's emphasis; Ahmet Davutoglu, *To Strategiko Vathos: E Diethnis Thesi tis Tourkias* [Strategic depth: the international position of Turkey], ed. by Neoklis Sarris, transl. by Nikolaos Raptopoulos (Athens: Poytita, 2010), p. 279.

³ Between the dilemma of Greek-Cypriot *Enosis* [union (with Greece)] and the Turkish-Cypriot return of the island to its previous ruler (Ottoman Empire), the two Nihat Erim policy reports of 24 November and 22 December 1956 adopted the position of partitioning the island; interestingly the report explored in detail the particularities of the Turkish strategy (stationing of Turkish troops, demographic engineering, referendum, etc.) but there was not a single reference to the Turkish-Cypriots of the island: Neoklis Sarris, *E Alli Plevra* [The other side], 2 vols (Athens: Grammi, 1977-1983), IIA (1982), pp. 274-301.

⁴ When Turkey decided not to change its time to daylight saving (winter) time on 31 October 2016, the Turkish-Cypriots decided unilaterally to follow the Turkish practice without ever Ankara requesting such compliance: 'Cyprus to have two time zones, north to follow Turkey in refusing to turn clocks back', *Cyprus Mail*, 8 September 2016, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2016/09/08/two-time-zones-cyprus-turkey-will-not-turn-clocks-back-next-month/>; '1 ada, 2 zaman' [one island, two times], *Afrika*, 9 September 2016, pp. 1/3.

⁵ Christos Kassimeris, 'The Inconsistency of United States Foreign Policy in the Aftermath of the Cyprus Invasion: The Turkish Arms Embargo and its Termination', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 26:1 (May 2008), pp. 91-92.

⁶ Chapter V ('Unexpected Soviet Silence and British Acquiescence with Belated Opposition') and VI ('The American Implication'), in Petros Savvides, 'The Role of Athens and the Invisible Factors that Formulated the Outcome of the Cyprus Crisis in 1974' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2016), pp. 237-325.

⁷ On 15 November 1983 the Turkish-Cypriot leadership unilaterally proclaimed the establishment of the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus', an illegal state recognized only by Turkey. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) considered the declaration as legally invalid and condemned the exchange of ambassadors between Turkey and the TC leadership. The term 'occupied area of the Republic of Cyprus' is formally used in the UNSC Resolution 550: UNSC Resolution 541, 18 November 1983, S/RES/541(1983); UNSC Resolution 550, 11 May 1984, S/RES/550(1984).

the Republic into ‘one of the most highly militarised areas in the world’,⁸ and the presence today of 35,000 Turkish troops,⁹ sustained segregation and encouraged the isolation of the Turkish-Cypriot community, that turned into a minority itself in the occupied area as a consequence of the encouraged flood of mainland settlers and nationals. Ankara, having realised the impossibility of its exaggerated solution demands, silently proceeded, during the last decade, into moves on the ground for *Plan B*, creating a *strategic fait accompli* for the Greek-Cypriots: *either accept a heavily-burdened solution now or suffer the gradual annexation of the occupied area to Turkey in the following years.*

Ankara’s solution prescribes multiple divisive elements and constructive ambiguities that are equivalent to an *agreed partition*: among them, the dissolve rather than the constitutional evolution of the ROC, the pre-solution recognition of ‘TRNC’, a *co-federal structure of almost two distinct states under a loose co-federal scheme*, Turkish military guarantees, Turkish forces on the island, the division of the prominent Nicosia Flight Information Region (FIR), and an unclarified jurisdiction for the corresponding Search and Rescue (SAR) region that dominates the Eastern Mediterranean – 36 km from the Haifa coast, covering more than half of the Israeli Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). On the other hand, during the last decade, the preparation for the implementation of Ankara’s Plan B was founded on specific measures: a) the Islamisation of the occupied area; b) the encouragement of extensive Turkish investments in ‘TRNC’; c) the control of Turkish-Cypriot utilities by Turkish companies through an imposed privatization; d) the domination of Turkish-Cypriot affairs in the occupied area (Turkish Embassy, coordination office, Turkish directors of local organizations, etc.); e) the regulation of Turkish-Cypriot political behaviour, through the control of funds transfer to the ‘TRNC’ as well as Turkish-Cypriot pensioners and civil servants.

Turkish guarantees and mainland forces after a solution

Today, two types of guarantees shadow the negotiating process. The first relates to the ROC effort for an international safeguard over the implementation of an agreed solution. While the inter-communal negotiations have been conducted, since June 1968, under the auspices of the UN, importantly the international organization, as well as the EU, while encouraging, even exercising pressure for, a solution, appear unwilling to guarantee its proper implementation. The second pertains to Ankara’s demand – with encouraging Turkish-Cypriot support¹⁰ – for a military guarantee

⁸ Paragraph 28 in UN Security Council, ‘Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus (for the period 23 November 1993 to 31 May 1994)’, 7 June 1994, S/1994/680, p. 8.

⁹ Author’s interview with military source, 7 October 2016.

¹⁰ In the spring of 1958 Ankara assigned to *Seferberlik Tektik Kurulu* (STK) [Mobilization Supervision Committee] – the Turkish wing of the ultra-secret NATO *Stay Behind* network in Europe – the covert paramilitary organization of the Turkish-Cypriot minority on the island colony of Cyprus. In August 1958 the STK invisibly established the *Türk Mukavemet Teskilati* (TMT) [Turkish Resistance Organisation] on the island, in accordance to the *Kıbrıs İstirdat Projesi* (KIP) [Cyprus Recapture Project], under the command of Turkish officers that arrived secretly on the island. Between 1958 and 1960 (independence year), through the smuggling of arms and ammunition and the covert training of Turkish-Cypriot cadres in Turkey, Ankara secretly trained and armed 10,000 Turkish-Cypriots: İsmail Tansu (ret. Colonel), *Aslında Hic Kimse Uyumuyordu: Yaraltında Silahlı Bir Gizli Orgüt, Hem de Devlet Eliyle...TMT* [In reality no one was sleeping: an underground armed secret organization with the support of the state...TMT], (Ankara: Minpa Matbaacılık, 2001). A secret Turkish-Cypriot document, dated 14 September 1963, signed by Dr Fazıl Kutçuk [Vice President of the Republic of Cyprus] and Rauf Denktaş [President of the Turkish Communal Chamber], entitled ‘A cursory glance on the general policy of the Turkish community as regards the future of the Republic on the occasion of the completion of three years since the establishment of the Republic’, was indicative of the preplanned Turkish-Cypriot strategy for the creation of autonomous enclaves: ‘In the event the Greeks [Cypriots] officially abrogate the Constitution or try to amend it, [...] there is only one thing the Turkish community will do: take its destinies in its own hands and *establish a [Turkish] Cyprus Republic outside of the Zurich Agreements*’. The eight-stage plan provided for the immediate establishment of a de facto

and the presence of Turkish troops on the island EU member after a solution.¹¹ The Greek-Cypriots, having suffered bitterly by the military occupation of the northern part of the island after the Turkish invasion of 1974, which was carried out under the pretext of Article IV of the Treaty of Guarantee,¹² adamantly refuse any Turkish guarantees or the stationing of Turkish troops after a solution. Ankara tried to obfuscate the critical impact of both issues through a tricky proposition of a (half) guarantee for the Turkish-Cypriot component state and the stationing of mainland forces in a Turkish base.¹³ Strengthened by the red-line refusal of the Greek-Cypriot majority over Turkish guarantees and Turkish forces, the GOC rejects both issues. Nicosia considers that the adoption of any type of foreign guarantee is unacceptable, undermining the sovereignty and independence of the proposed federal state; especially by an occupying force – and a non-EU member – for a member state of the UN and the EU.

The other two guarantor powers also differentiated their position from Ankara. Athens, clarified that it considers any type of guarantee as anachronistic and obsolete and is not interested to participate in any guarantee scheme.¹⁴ Whitehall, reiterated its position over the continuation of British sovereignty over the SBAs, with the exception of some areas that may be returned to the component states, and sought to excuse itself from the guarantor burden;¹⁵ by tactfully insinuating that it may discuss the issue only if the parties request it. Remarkably, the selective utilization of the 1960 Treaties of Establishment and Guarantee¹⁶ for the SBAs and Turkish guarantees, by the British and the Turks respectively, excludes the principal issue of ROC's existence. With the exception of Paris¹⁷ and Moscow, and the recent clear statements by Federica Mogherini,¹⁸ the Turkish demand for the dissolve, rather than the evolution of the ROC, is silently accommodated by

regime on the island (stage 1) – an illegal TC state within the constitutional ROC state – ‘followed by the intervention of our mother country [Turkey]’ (stage 3). The plan envisaged that the Turkish-Cypriots abandoning their positions in the bi-communal Republic would compose a new TC government under Dr Kutchuk, a new parliament and a new civil service (stage 1, 4 and 8). The secret document concluded that ‘when the struggle begins, the Turkish community, dispersed throughout the Island, should be *forcibly* concentrated in an area and be compelled to defend it’ (stage 7): author's emphasis; Glafcos Clerides, *My Deposition*, (Nicosia: Aleithia, 1989), vol. I, pp. 203-207. Today, the Turkish-Cypriot leadership claims that the community demands Turkish guarantees and the presence of the Turkish Army as a consequence of the 1963-64 inter-communal strife and its isolation in semi-autonomous Turkish-Cypriot enclaves between 1964 and 1974.

¹¹ ‘No retreat on guarantees’ (in Greek), *Phileleftheros*, 7 August 2016, <http://www.philenews.com/el-gr/eidiseis-politiki/39/326013/kamia-ypochorisi-gia-engyiseis>.

¹² Her Majesty's Government, *Cyprus, Treaty of Guarantee*, Treaty Series No. 5 (1961), Cmnd. 1253 (London: HMSO, 1961).

¹³ The Turkish proposition for a Turkish base was passed to president Nikos Anastasiades through the US Vice President John Biden: ‘Discreet US suggestions for Cyprus: they favour a Turkish proposal for a military base’ (in Greek), *Mignatiou*, 2 October 2016, <http://mignatiou.com/2016/10/ipodixis-me-to-ganti-apo-ipa-gia-kipro-evnooun-tourkiki-protasi-gia-stratiotiki-vasi/>.

¹⁴ The contents of a document entitled ‘The abolition of the guarantees system and the adoption of a Treaty of Friendship and Security’ by the Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias were published in Kostas Venizelos, ‘The Greek dogma for the security’ (in Greek), *Phileleftheros*, 23 October 2016, pp. 1, 3-4.

¹⁵ In July 2015, when asked about the future role of the UK as a guarantor power in case of a settlement, the British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond remarked that ‘we [UK] are not seeking any special role’: ‘Hammond: UK not to seek special role in Cyprus after a solution’, *Sigmalive*, 17 July 2015, <http://www.sigmalive.com/en/news/politics/132303/hammond-uk-not-to-see-special-role-in-cyprus-after-solution>.

¹⁶ Her Majesty's Government, *Cyprus*, Cmnd. 1093 (London: HMSO, 1960).

¹⁷ Interview of French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault to Kostas Venizelos, ‘A thunderous presence by Paris’, *Phileleftheros*, 25 October 2016, pp. 1/3.

¹⁸ The High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy clarified that the best security guarantee of any state in the world is a functional state and for any member state of the EU the best guarantee for security is the fact that it is a EU member: Cyprus News Agency, 28 October 2016.

Whitehall, Washington and Brussels, which wash their hands over the critical question of the Republic's future.

Taking into consideration the problematic cohesiveness and declining path of the EU and the selective impartiality of the United Nations, the ROC may wisely seek guarantees, for the unobstructed implementation of an agreed solution and the unfettered sovereignty and independence of a Cypriot federal state, by Her Majesty's Government and the US Government themselves; both of which strongly encourage the specific federal model for a Cyprus solution. Of course, in order for such guarantee to be binding and have meaning, the British Parliament and the American Congress should respectively ratify them.

The contributing role of the Republic of Cyprus

Despite the relatively limited size of its territory, the ROC, since its accession to the EU (2004), has been a *silent contributing actor* in the Eastern Mediterranean, a *discreet balancer* between global and regional interests. Adhering to the political principles of Brussels it serves the Union's interests with modesty. Regionally, the ROC has grown into an unthreatening agent of multilateral cooperation promoting bilateral agreements with neighbouring states in vital geopolitical issues such as EEZ delimitation, security, intelligence, energy and commerce; initiatives that have painfully deprived Ankara from the role. Its close bonds with Greece and its friendly relations with Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians, have multiplied the levels of regional cooperation, creating a network of stability and regional understanding.

Nicosia, a traditional friend of Moscow, recipient of Russian support in the United Nations and the political arena, and – as a consequence of a British and an American arms embargo – importer and user of advanced Russian weaponry, tried to accommodate Russian interests without compromising those of the West. While grateful for the close Russian-Cypriot political relations, Nicosia under pressure, and contrary to press reports,¹⁹ refused to offer *special* porting facilities to the Russian Navy and limited the air landing of Russian military planes only on emergencies.²⁰ Similarly, the 7 July resolution of the House of Representatives against the imposed sanctions on Russia²¹ was meant as a political compensation to the decision of Nicosia to interrupt a supply of vital importance to Russian interests in the region,²² after Western interference.

At the same time the ROC, taking advantage of the Turkish-Israeli void, invested on its political and energy relations as well as its security and intelligence cooperation with Jerusalem. The participation of the Israeli Navy in Cypriot Search and Rescue Exercises (SAREX) was soon followed by Suppression of Enemy Air Defence (SEAD) exercises *ONESILOS-GEDEON* between the Israeli Air Force (IAF) and the Greek-Cypriot National Guard (NG), and CSAR (Combat SAR)

¹⁹ Paul J. Saunders, 'Cyprus port deal gives Russian navy alternative to Tartus', *Al-Monitor*, 3 March 2015, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/03/russia-sanctions-europe-nato-economy-cyprus-mediterranean.html>.

²⁰ Angelos Anastasiou, 'Russia keen to use military bases in Cyprus', *Cyprus Mail*, 21 January 2015, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2015/01/21/russia-keen-to-use-military-bases-in-cyprus/>; 'Cyprus denies "Russia deal on military bases"', *BBC*, 9 February 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31293330>.

²¹ 'Cyprus parliament calls for end to EU sanctions on Russia', *Cyprus Mail*, 7 July 2016, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2016/07/07/cyprus-parliament-calls-end-eu-sanctions-russia/>.

²² Author's interview with diplomatic sources, 11 September 2016 and 2 October 2016.

exercises on Cypriot soil. The recent order for an Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) from Israel is also an indication of the developing cooperation between the two neighbouring states.²³

During the last years, the overt as well as the unseen cooperation with Washington increased significantly. Beyond the US interest for the Cypriot EEZ, the positive response of Nicosia towards American interests over security and anti-terrorism affairs in the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as the ROC readiness to accommodate American requests over sensitive military issues in the Middle East, led to a discreet bilateral understanding. Without relaxing the restrictions on arms sales to Cyprus, Washington strengthened its ties and cooperation with ROC over security, intelligence and anti-terrorism. For the very first time a NG officer was invited in specialized military educational programs abroad, while USN Sixth Fleet ships participate in joint CYPUSA SAREX under the Larnaca Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC).²⁴

A similar security opening to Nicosia was encouraged by Whitehall. Easing its arms sale restrictions to Cyprus, it permitted the procurement of Accuracy International precision rifles by the NG, while a full scholarship was awarded to a Greek-Cypriot officer for the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) in London by the British Ministry of Defence. Beyond the joint CYPUK SAREX, Whitehall, not without a reason, indicated an intimate interest to participate in the joint NG-IAF exercise *ONESILOS-GEDEON* and proposed the exchange of the air tactical situation recorded by its Air Defence (AD) radars on Olympus and Akrotiri with that of the NG AD radars.²⁵ In February and again in September 2016, elite squadrons of 22 Special Air Service (SAS) and the Special Boat Service (SBS) were trained in anti-terrorist operations, in the company of NG elite elements, on Cypriot soil under exercise *CHAMELEON*.²⁶

The unthreatening presence of the ROC in the strategic Eastern Mediterranean as well as its willingness to contribute positively to regional security affairs and to cooperate with major global powers for the stability of the area has been noted in the West. Whether though it was acknowledged that, in the grand perception of global affairs, the cooperation and contribution of small, democratic and unambitious, states is sometimes more reliable and stable than the fluctuating and ambitious demands of *grand allies*, it is not known.

The strategic domination of the Eastern Mediterranean

The abstract political perception that a solution of the Cyprus Problem will – magically – contribute to the stability of the area is oversimplified if not unthoughtful.²⁷ While it is generally considered that the assumed abandonment of the island by the Turkish occupation forces – Ankara insists on the presence of Turkish forces and guarantees after a solution – would be a positive step towards a compromise settlement, *the resolution of the Cyprus Problem with the liquidation, rather than the constitutional evolution, of the ROC will have explicit internal and regional implications.*

²³ After the imposed restrictions on the use of NG air defence missile systems at the NATO fire range at Crete, as a consequence of Turkish intervention, Israel offered to accommodate NG air defence missile firing in Israel: author's interview with military sources, 14 June 2014.

²⁴ During 2016 the ROC carried out three joint CYPUSA SAREX with USN Sixth Fleet ships in the Cyprus SAR region.

²⁵ Author's interview with military sources, 7 September and 29 September 2016.

²⁶ Author's interview with military sources, 6 June and 22 September 2016.

²⁷ In March 2016, the president of the European Council Donald Tusk stressed that a Cyprus settlement 'will be beneficial to the wider security and stability of the region and in particular to the strategic relationship between Turkey and the EU': 'Cyprus solution will be beneficial to EU-Turkey relations, Tusk says after meeting Davutoglu', *Cyprus Mail*, 3 March 2016, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2016/03/03/cyprus-solution-will-be-beneficial-to-eu-turkey-relations/>.

Firstly, the Greek-Cypriot majority of the island²⁸ – that would be stripped of any deterrence – will find itself entrapped in an extremely complex con-federal model of two states, a labyrinth of multiple constitutional ambiguities and deviations from existing UN and EU principles, and will eventually turn into a hostage to Turkish domination and political caprice. A long history of Turkish disrespect towards bilateral agreements – such as those involving the Greek population in Asia Minor (Imvros and Tenedos, Istanbul pogrom of 1955, and violent expulsions in 1964) as well as the Third Geneva Agreement of 1975 regarding the enclaved Greek-Cypriots in the occupied area²⁹ – should have been taken more seriously by foreign emissaries and interested governments.

Secondly, the dissolve of friendly ROC, and its substitution by a protectorate FeROC under the strategic domination of Turkey, increases significantly the geopolitical risks in the Eastern Mediterranean by undermining rather than strengthen regional stability and peace. Even on the eventuality of the *demilitarization* of the island as was proposed by president Glafkos Clerides³⁰ – a scenario that would deprive the FeROC of the inherent right of self-defence³¹ and would be contradictory to British interests since a *complete demilitarization* would logically prescribe the dissolve and abandonment of the SBAs – the security of the island and stability in the wider region will not be safeguarded. While the *ROC serves as a political, rather than a military, bulwark* to the ambitious strategic designs of Ankara in the wider region,³² the gambling of its existing role with the hope of stability is extremely risky. The shooting down of the Russian jet, the diverging objectives between Ankara and Washington over Syria,³³ the uninvited military intrusion of Turkey in Syria and Iraq,³⁴ the threatening of the EU over the refugee crisis,³⁵ Turkish accusations about American implication in the July coup attempt,³⁶ Ankara's fluctuating loyalty to the West,³⁷ and Turkey's gradual immersion into an autocratic Islamic regime, should have logically alarmed the West.

²⁸ The Turkish-Cypriot community has already surrendered to Ankara's strategic domination.

²⁹ In August 1974, 20,000 Greek-Cypriots and Maronites were enclaved in the occupied areas; today there are only 460 (340 Greek-Cypriots and 120 Maronites). For the Third Vienna Agreement of 2 August 1975 see <http://www.pio.gov.cy/moi/pio/pio2013.nsf/All/F6EDEC0FE359DADC22580560027C602?OpenDocument>.

³⁰ 'Letter dated 17 December 1993 from the President of Cyprus addressed to the Secretary-General', Appendix in UN General Assembly Security Council, 13 September 1996, A/50/1039, S/1996/752, pp. 4-5.

³¹ 'Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations [...]': Article 51, *Charter of the United Nations*, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-vii/index.html>.

³² On 23 October 2016, Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan, referring to the post-WW I period, emphasized that 'we [Turkey] did not voluntarily accept the borders of our country' and when people ask 'what business does Turkey have in Iraq, Syria and Bosnia?' the answer is that 'these geographies are each part of our soul': Nick Danforth, 'Turkey's new maps are reclaiming the Ottoman Empire', *Foreign Policy*, 23 October 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/10/23/turkeys-religious-nationalists-want-ottoman-borders-iraq-erdogan/>.

³³ Laura King and Umar Farooq, 'Turkey has further complicated the Syrian war by attacking the United States' Kurdish allies', *Los Angeles Times*, 20 October 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-syria-turkey-20161020-snap-story.html>.

³⁴ Tim Arango and Michael R. Gordon, 'Turkey's push to join battle for Mosul inflames tension with Iraq', *New York Times*, 23 October 2016, <http://nyti.ms/2evofp4>; Jonathan Marcus, 'Will Turkish ambitions complicate fight for Mosul?', *BBC*, 24 October 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37751579>; 'Turkey will take "own measures" in Iraq, Syria', *Hurriyet Daily News*, 26 October 2016, pp. 1/9;

³⁵ Agence France-Presse, 'Turkey threatens to block EU migration deal without visa-free travel', *The Guardian*, 24 May 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/24/turkey--eu-migration-deal-visa-free-travel-recep-tayyip-erdogan>; Lizzie Dearden, 'Germany says EU "will not be blackmailed" as Turkey threatens to ditch refugee deal over visa-free travel', *Independent*, 2 August 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-eu-will-not-be-blackmailed-turkey-threatens-ditch-refugee-deal-visa-free-travel-erdogan-a7168536.html>.

³⁶ Victor Kotsev and John Dyer, 'Turkey blames US for coup attempt', *USA Today*, 18 July 2016, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/07/18/turkey-blames-us-coup-attempt/87260612/>; Steve Herman, 'Turkey-US relations strained by coup attempt', *Voice of America*, 28 July 2016, <http://www.voanews.com/a/turkey-us-relations->

In the absence of the ROC, the geographic particularities of the Eastern Mediterranean strategically favour Turkey. Erdogan's recent insinuation for the revision of the Treaty of Lausanne³⁸ throws its dark shadow not only on the removal of Cyprus from the Lausanne security arrangement, through a pro-Turkish privileged solution, but also opens the door for further claims over the Greek islands in the Aegean after the elimination of Cyprus from the fragile Greek-Turkish strategic equation.

The disappearance of the ROC from the Eastern Mediterranean will encourage the unchallenged expansion of Turkish hegemony in the region. The Turkish Air Force (TAF) – with AD radars at Iskenderun, Anamur and Kas, and Air Bases (AB) at Incirlik, Konya, Antalya and Dalaman – will control the airspace from the shores of the Levant up to Crete (Figure 1).



Figure 1: The maximum coverage of TAF AD radar stations in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Furthermore, the Mediterranean section of the Turkish Maritime Integrated Surveillance System (TIMSS) of the Long Horizon (*Uzun Ufuk*) program – that consists of *Thales Suricate-2000 Mk 2* Over the Horizon Radars (OTH-R) and *DR-3000 R-ESM* systems – which is complimented by coastal radars and Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA), encourages the control of the Eastern

strained-coup-attempt/3439070.html [accessed 26 October 2016]; Tim Arango and Ceylan Yeginsu, 'Turks agree on one thing: US was behind failed revolt', *New York Times*, 3 August 2016, p. A6.

³⁷ Emma Graham-Harrison and Stephanie Kirchgaessner, 'The West is supporting terrorism against Turkey, claims Erdogan', *The Guardian*, 2 August 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/02/the-west-is-supporting-terrorism-against-turkey-claims-erdogan>; Ishaan Tharoor, 'What the West struggles to understand about Turkey and Erdogan', *Washington Post*, 10 August 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/08/10/what-the-west-struggles-to-understand-about-turkey-and-erdogan/>; Burak Bekdil, 'Turkey: Erdogan's stealth jihad against the West', Gatestone Institute, 26 October 2016, <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/9091/erdogan-stealth-jihad>.

³⁸ 'Erdogan's remarks on treaty that formed modern Turkey irk opposition', *Hurriyet Daily News*, 29 September 2016, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/erdogans-remarks-on-treaty-that-formed-modern-turkey-irk-opposition.aspx?PageID=238&NID=104386&NewsCatID=338>; 'Greek anger at Turkey border treaty remarks', *BBC*, 30 September 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37525650>.

Mediterranean waters under the domination of the continually growing Turkish Navy,³⁹ the strategic ambitions of which expand beyond its transformation to a regional naval power (Figure 2).

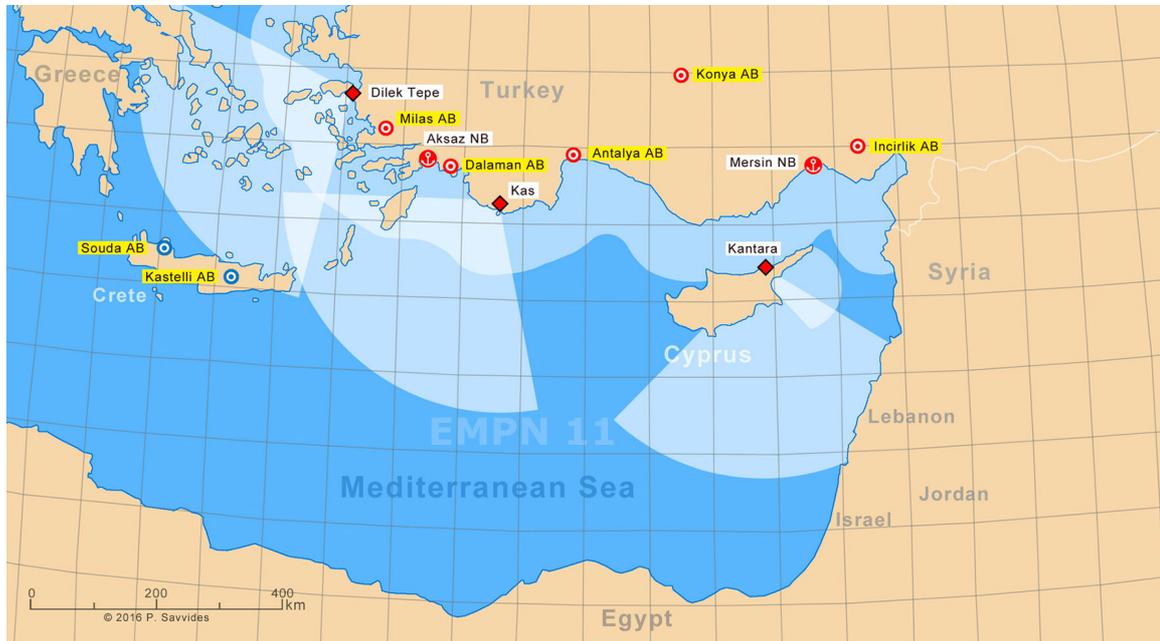


Figure 2: The TIMSS coverage in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Taking advantage of *the ambiguity concerning the security instruments of a prospective FeROC*, the tempting projection of Turkish air and maritime power in the Eastern Mediterranean, which is the far southeastern European bastion of the West, will undermine the existing balance of power in the region with unpredicted consequences on the unstable neighbouring Middle East and North Africa, especially under AKP's evolving Islamic dogma for the resurrection of Ottoman glamor.

The already increasingly assertive, and often interruptive or threatening, policies of Ankara in the region – the shooting down of a TAF RF-4 by Syria on 22 June 2012, the shooting down of a Russian Su-24 over Syria in November 2015, the frequent harassment of foreign research vessels in Cypriot EEZ,⁴⁰ the questioning of existing delimitation agreements,⁴¹ etc. – will not ensure a

³⁹ John C. K. Daly, 'The Rise of Turkey: The Mediterranean's new regional naval power', Jamestown Foundation, <https://jamestown.org/program/hot-issue-the-rise-of-turkey-the-mediterraneans-new-regional-naval-power/>; Metin Gurcan, 'Turkish navy outlines 2033 vision', *Al-Monitor*, 21 May 2015, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/05/turkish-navy-aims-high-for-2033-become-global-force.html>.

⁴⁰ Letter by President Christofias dated 25 November addressed to the UN Secretary-General regarding Turkish provocations in Cyprus Republic's EEZ, 3 December 2008, <http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/pio/pio.nsf/all/395E026DA00B717CC225751400292C33?opendocument&print>; Confidential SIPDIS, Nicosia (Urbancic) to State, 910, 'Cyprus: ROC condemns Turkish Navy harassment in its EEZ', 18 November 2008, 09NICOSIA910, <https://wikileaks.org/plusd/pdf/?df=59674>; Michael Leigh, 'Turkey's Mediterranean provocations', RealClear World, 13 October 2014, http://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2014/10/13/turkeys_mediterranean_provocations_110744.html; UN General Assembly, Security Council, 'Letter dated 6 October 2014 from the Charge d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General', 8 October 2014, A/69/425, S/2014/723; George Psyllides, 'Turkish frigate harasses research vessel in EEZ', *Cyprus Mail*, 3 February 2014, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2014/02/03/turkish-frigate-harasses-research-vessel-in-eez/>; 'Cyprus appeals to UN for harassment by Turkish ship', Signalive, 8 March 2016, <http://www.signalive.com/en/news/politics/142588/cyprus-appeals-to-un-for-harassment-by-turkish-ship>; Agence France-Presse, 'Greek Cyprus accuses Turkey of "harassment" in energy search', *Hurriyet Daily News*, 3 February 2014,

tranquil region. The existing arrangements between the ROC and Jerusalem for IAF readiness exercises in the Nicosia FIR will almost certainly be nullified; similarly the extensive training exercise area of the Hellenic Air Force (HAF) and IAF, between Israel and Crete, will be disrupted, while the unopposed activities of RAF and USAF from Akrotiri AB may be challenged.

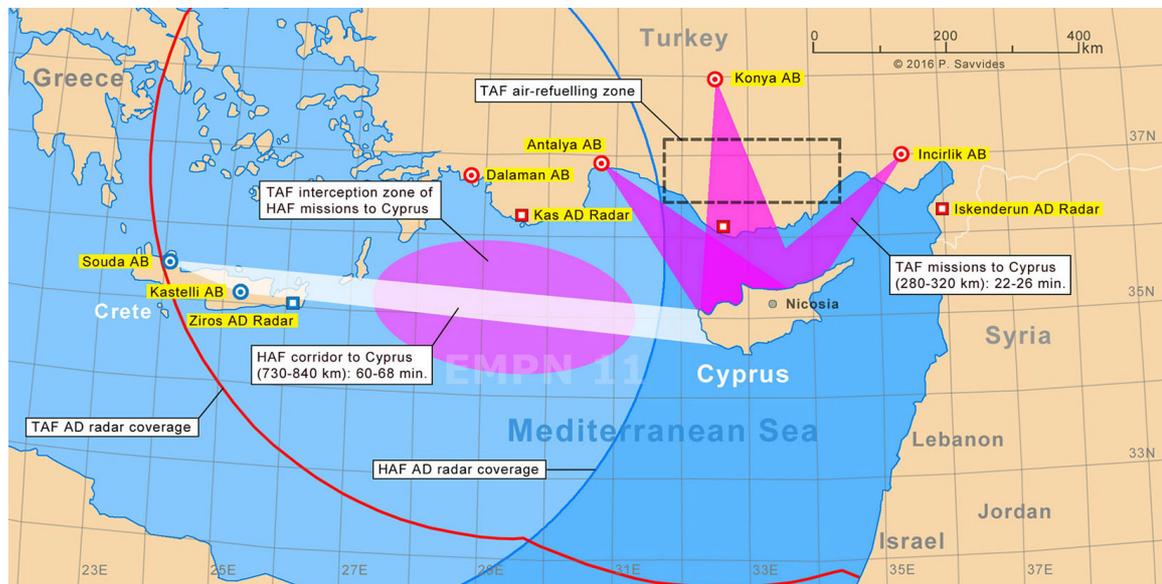


Figure 3: A contingency scenario of TAF and HAF operations over Cyprus on an emergency.

On the eventuality of a deadlock between the two component states or even the collapse of the FeROC – where the former ROC will turn into a homeless state in search of international recognition and the previously illegal and unrecognized ‘TRNC’ into a Turkish province – an air demonstration by the TAF over Greek-Cypriot cities will require no more that 22 minutes from Incirlik AB. Comparatively, in case of an emergency on the ground or at sea, the HAF with an AD Radar at Ziros Crete, the maximum range of which is about 70 km west of the Paphos shore (meaning that the HAF will not have a real time capability of monitoring Cypriot airspace as Turkey), will require a minimum of 60 minutes to reach Nicosia from Kastelli AB at Crete (Figure 3).

Conclusion

The security question of the Cyprus Problem, contrary to domestic perceptions and foreign assessments, contains critical strategic implications that are much deeper than the controversial

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/greek-cyprus-accuses-turkey-of-harassment-in-energy-search.aspx?pageID=238&nID=61956&NewsCatID=348>.

⁴¹ Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘Press release regarding the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Delimitation Agreement signed between Greek Cypriot Administration and Israel, No. 288, 21 December 2010, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-288_-21-december-2010_-press-release-regarding-the-exclusive-economic-zone-_eez_-delimitation-agreement--signed-between-greek-cypriot-administration-and-israel.en.mfa; ‘Turkey threatens Cyprus’ EEZ anew in UN letter’, *Sigmalive*, 12 May 2016, <http://www.sigmalive.com/en/news/politics/144852/turkey-threatens-cyprus-eez-anew-in-un-letter>.

aspects of Turkish guarantees and the presence of Turkish forces on a EU member state after a solution. The core of the problem is founded on the *sought disappearance of the ROC from the region* – through its liquidation, rather than its constitutional evolution, in a prospective solution of the Problem – and *the fallacious assumptions of the West (US, NATO, EU) and the United Nations* that an agreement will end an intractable local problem and enhance stability in the sensitive region. Underestimating the unthreatening and contributing role of the small island Republic in the stability and security of the Eastern Mediterranean – as an asset of balanced relations between the US and Russia and cooperation between Israel and neighbouring states – as well as the aggressive ambitions of Turkey in regional affairs, *the West and the UN wash their hands over the quality of the encouraged solution and its strategic consequences on the volatile region.*