Mediterranean & the New ‘Eastern Question’: A comprehensive (Geo)strategic Assessment

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Content

1. DEFINING the Geopolitical System
2. ORDO AB CHAO: REACTING to the Current Geopolitical Challenges
3. Concluding Remarks
1. DEFINING the Geopolitical System
Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island controls the world.

[Mackinder, Democratic Ideals and Reality, p. 106]
The **System** in question: *EU’s Near Abroad*

**Three Sub-systems** (Interrelated-Overlapping):

1. **Northern Sector [NC]: Eastern Europe [EE]**
2. **Central Sector [CS]: Black Sea-Straits-Aegean- Eastern Mediterranean Water Axis [BSSAEM]**
3. **Southern Sector [SS]: Broader Middle East & North Africa [MENA]**

- **Common Geopolitical Factor(s)** connecting them in a meaningful whole [System]: A process that since 2010 leads most of the countries of the system (sub-systems) to:
  - A fundamental **DESTRUCTION** of the existing defence-political-economic-cultural pillars of state power
  - A painful **RESTRUCTURING** is taking place
  - A **new STRUCTURE** will soon arise

- **The major geopolitical / geocultural (f)actors (national-subnational-supranational)** that decisively affect – NOT ALL IN A NEGATIVE MANNER NECESSARILY- the sub-systems (thus the system) in question are: RUSSIA – TURKEY – Islamic Sectarian Friction
Arab Spring & Political/Armed Unrest: “Cutting –Throat” competition

European Sovereign Debt Crisis: “Organized” competition

EU/Greece’s Geopolitical Reality/Challenges

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Factors Deteriorating the Problem

1. Economic crisis
2. General dissatisfaction about the EU functions
3. Extreme-right rise
4. Tremendous increase of the refugee/migrant flows
5. Internal security concerns / terrorism / geopolitical uncertainty (Hybrid threat / terrorism / Western Balkan uncertainty / Revisionist Powers)

A modern “migration of the nations”

- Central & Eastern VS South: “No proper registration-identification”
- South VS Eastern & Central: “They act on a unilateral base”
- South & Central VS Eastern: “They do not demonstrate solidarity”

EU/Greece’s Geopolitical Reality/Challenges
EU/Greece’s Geoeconomic Reality/Challenges

- Falling share of the world population: 20th c (25% of world population) – 2060 (6% of world population)
- EU27 population is aging: Average 45yrs (2030, the most “aged” region of the planet)
- EU27 share of global GDP is shrinking: Now 22% of world GDP – 2030 (20%) / loss of competitiveness
- EURO is a global player with increased competition: China’s Yuan -2017, 11% of IMF’s basket of currencies (SDR)
- EU27 represents a “soft power” not being able to use force when coercion prevails over rules
- “RACE TO THE BOTTOM”
EU/Greece’s Geoeconomic Reality/Challenges
## The four major forms of power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defence-Security</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. State revisionism</td>
<td>1. Energy Security concerns</td>
<td>1. Political-societal arrangements fundamentally different of the Western-type democracies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. ‘Cold War’ conditions &amp; militarization bilateral relations</td>
<td>2. Economic losses due to undergoing economic &amp; trade war</td>
<td>1. Alternative to the European one identities which in the best case scenario are not hostile but incompatible to the West, in the worst case scenario are directly belligerent with the rationalistic framework of the European polity</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. All types of armed conflicts (from full scale war to proxy war)</td>
<td>2. Socio-economic pressures due to human trafficking</td>
<td>2. Based on obsolete experiences - incompatible and hostile to the Western paradigm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Transfer of belligerent conditions to western societies</td>
<td>3. Articulation of alternative narratives regarding the global economic arrangements</td>
<td>3. Ruling elites – where they are-seem well established, without serious opposition</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. De facto collapse of the WWI border arrangements &amp; nation-building processes</td>
<td>4. Socio-economic pressures due to human trafficking</td>
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</table>
2. ORDO AB CHAO: RECONCEPTUALIZING Major Geopolitical Challenges
The four major forms of power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defence-Security</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Culture</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Solidify Euro-Atlantic bonds</td>
<td>• Further develop a comprehensive Energy Policy</td>
<td>• Through “soft power” try to engage the neighboring ideologies into a cooperative and mutually beneficial synergy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Meaningful EU CFSP/CSDP</td>
<td>• Solidarity –with no exceptions- on the migration/refugee problem</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. EU Maritime Security Strategy</td>
<td>• Solidarity –with no exceptions- on the migration/refugee problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Russia: A modus vivendi (avoid new Cold War / accept each others legitimate security concerns / Ukraine: Minsk Agreement)</td>
<td>• Solidarity –with no exceptions- on the migration/refugee problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Defence - Security</td>
<td>• Solidarity –with no exceptions- on the migration/refugee problem</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Economy</td>
<td>• Solidarity –with no exceptions- on the migration/refugee problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Culture</td>
<td>• Solidarity –with no exceptions- on the migration/refugee problem</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Russia: Trade war is counter-productive: harms member-states, some of them might (re)act unilaterally / Energy relations need to change not to collapse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Turkey: The energy bond between Ankara and Athens has to be strengthened (i.e. TAP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. MENA: Humanitarian aid / facilitate peace process &amp; financial/technical aid to decrease the human flows (restructuring / creation of jobs)</td>
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EU March 2017: The “Beginning of the End” or the “End of the Beginning”?  

- **March 1, 2017: White Paper for the future of Europe**  
  o Road-map for EU’s future structure (EU27) – 5 scenarios  

- **March 6, 2017: “mini-Summit” of Versailles**  
  o France-Germany-Italy-Spain: EU27 “multi-speed Europe or the EU will collapse” (Fr.)  

- **March 25, 2017: Rome Declaration** (60th anniversary from the treaties of Rome)  
  o “We will act together, at different paces and intensity where necessary, while moving in the same direction…Our union is undivided and indivisible”  

- **March 29, 2017: BREXIT process has been activated**
### Q1: The Future of the EU:

#### 5 Scenarios, no Clear Answer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single market &amp; trade</th>
<th>Carrying on</th>
<th>Nothing but the single market</th>
<th>Those who want more do more</th>
<th>Doing less more efficiently</th>
<th>Doing much more together</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single market is strengthened, including in the energy and digital sectors; the EU27 pursues progressive trade agreements</td>
<td>Single market for goods and capital strengthened; standards continue to differ; free movement of people and services not fully guaranteed</td>
<td>As in “Carrying on”, single market is strengthened and the EU27 pursues progressive trade agreements</td>
<td>Common standards set to a minimum but enforcement is strengthened in areas regulated at EU level; trade exclusively dealt with at EU level</td>
<td>Single market strengthened through harmonisation of standards and stronger enforcement; trade exclusively dealt with at EU level</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Economic & Monetary Union | Incremental progress on improving the functioning of the euro area | Cooperation in the euro area is limited | As in “Carrying on” except for a group of countries who deepen cooperation in areas such as taxation and social standards | Several steps are taken to consolidate the euro area and ensure its stability; the EU27 does less in some parts of employment and social policy | Economic, financial and fiscal Union is achieved as envisioned in the report of the Five Presidents of June 2015 |

| Schengen, migration & security | Cooperation in the management of external borders stepped up gradually; progress towards a common asylum system; improved coordination on security matters | No single migration or asylum policy; further coordination on security dealt with bilaterally; internal border controls are more systematic | As in “Carrying on” except for a group of countries who deepen cooperation on security and justice matters | Cooperation on border management; asylum policies and counter-terrorism matters are systematic | As in “Doing less more efficiently”, cooperation on border management, asylum policies and counter-terrorism matters are systematic |

| Foreign policy & defence | Progress is made on speaking with one voice on foreign affairs; closer defence cooperation | Some foreign policy issues are increasingly dealt with bilaterally; defence cooperation remains as it is today | As in “Carrying on” except for a group of countries who deepen cooperation on defence, focusing on military coordination and joint equipment | The EU speaks with one voice on all foreign policy issues; a European Defence Union is created | As in “Doing less more efficiently”, the EU speaks with one voice on all foreign policy issues; a European Defence Union is created |

| EU budget | Partly modernised to reflect the reform agenda agreed at 27 | Refocused to finance essential functions needed for the single market | As in “Carrying on”; additional budgets are made available by some Member States for the areas where they decide to do more | Significantly redesigned to fill the new priorities agreed at the level of the EU27 | Significantly modernised and increased, backed up by own resources; a euro area fiscal stabilisation function is operational |

| Capacity to deliver | Positive agenda for action yields concrete results; decision-making remains complex to grasp; capacity to deliver does not always match expectations | Decision-making may be seen as a step forward but capacity to act collectively is limited; issues of common concern often need to be solved bilaterally | As in "Carrying on", a positive agenda for action at 27 yields results; some groups achieve more together in certain domains; decision-making becomes more complex | Initial agreement on tasks to prioritise or agree to is challenging; once in place, decision-making is easier to understand; the EU acts quicker and more decisively where it has a greater role | Decision-making is faster and enforcement is stronger on the board; questions of accountability arise for some who feel that the EU has taken too much power away from the Member States |
Q1: The Future of the EU: 5 Scenarios, no Clear Answer

Germany, Ireland and Scandinavia are most export-dependent on China

China share of total and extra-EU exports (EU member states plus United Kingdom, 2019)

- China larger export market than United States
- United States larger export market than China

Source: Comtrade
Q1: The Future of the EU: 5 Scenarios, no Clear Answer
Q1: The Future of the EU: 5 Scenarios, no Clear Answer

**Defence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total amount</th>
<th>% of GDP</th>
<th>% of total defence expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personnel</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equipment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(equipment procurement and R&amp;D)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operations and maintenance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Investment per Soldier**

Equipment procurement and R&D

**Duplication of Systems in**

Number of types of weapon systems*

Examples:

- Main battle tanks
- Destroyers/frigates
- Fighter planes

*For selected weapon systems categories

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**EU-28**

- € 227 Bn
- 1.34

**UNITED STATES**

- € 545 Bn
- 3.3

- 27,639 Euro

- 108,322 Euro

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Towards a New US Grand Strategy (‘Offshore Balancing’)?

Q2: The Future of the US in the Mediterranean

- EU contribute more to defence
- ‘Rapprochement’ with Russia
  - Alliance of the ‘willing’ / unilateralism / regional defence architecture

- Pivot to Asia: Concentration of US military effort

- Combat Islamist Fundamentalism
  - Alliance of the ‘willing’ / unilateralism / regional defence architecture

New ‘Monroe Doctrine’
1. Greek/Cyprus-US Defense Cooperation
2. Greece-Cyprus-Israel-US cooperation
3. 5 Nations Cooperation [i.e. MEDUSA 10’ (Nov/Dec. 2020)]
4. NATO 2030 Report: Questioning adopted practices of NATO-member countries / Acknowledging internal rigidities / Envisaging Political Role
Q3: What the US (and the UK) Really Want from/for the EU?
The Anglo-saxon traditional Geopolitical theory suggests that...

I. Continental Europe should never be ‘unified’ under a sole continental power

II. Europe, should never be ‘interlinked’ to Russia (Heartland / Pivot area)

III. If Europe will be ‘unified’ and if this Europe will be ‘connected’ with Russia then the emerging power of the combined forces of these two geopolitical actors might threaten Anglosaxon geopolitical supremacy on the World Island and then on the planet

...thus, the “Solution” includes:

I. This kind of “architecture” in Western, South and Central Europe that will not allow the emergence of a really cohesive entity

II. A “buffer/controlled zone” in E. Europe
Q4: CHINA: ‘Belt Road Initiative’ & RUSSIA: ‘Pivot to Asia’... Cooperative OR Antagonistic?

China aims to build a global infrastructure network
“Belt and Road” Infrastructure projects, planned and completed (March 2017)

Silk Road Economic Belt
Maritime Silk Road
of the 21st century
A16 member states

Source: MERICS research

The Republic of Armenia joined the EAEU on 2 January 2015

The Kyrgyz Republic joined the EAEU on 12 August 2015

Total Internal Trade: 2014: $57.4 bln. USD
Total External Trade: 2014: $868 bln. USD
Share of world production: Natural gas: 18.4%
Oil: 14.6%
Q5: Who is the main adversary for each (f)actor?
Q6: What will happen to our region?

The Greek – Turkish Conundrum

**Aegean On Edge: Greek & Turkish Military Strength Compared**

Selected military equipment/personnel of Greece and Turkey compared in 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ground Forces</th>
<th>Naval Forces</th>
<th>Aircraft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active-duty personnel</td>
<td>Frigates</td>
<td>Fighter jets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107,593</td>
<td>533,000</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanks</td>
<td>Corvette/patrol/attack vessels</td>
<td>Transport aircraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,355</td>
<td>3,435</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphibious warfare ships</td>
<td>Submarines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Estimations - naval totals include active vessels and Turkish transport total includes aerial refuelling aircraft.
** 2019 for Greece, 2015 for Turkey.
Sources: The Drive, armedforces.eu, news reports
Q6: What will happen to our region?

The MENA Challenges

The ‘The shocking paper’, Sykes-Picot Agreement (“Agreement for the Asia Minor”) (May 16, 1916) IS DEAD... ISIS ‘killed’ it
**Q6: What will happen to our region?**

The MENA Challenges

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**A UN REPORT SAYS FOUR TYPES OF MISSILES HAVE BEEN FOUND IN LIBYA. ONE OF THEM IS THE IRANIAN-MADE DEHLAWIYA ANTI-TANK MISSILE**

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**ON DECEMBER 8, A TURKISH SHIP SAILING UNDER A JAMAICAN FLAG WAS INTERCEPTED BY THE LNA NEAR LIBYA’S COAST. THE SHIP WAS EN ROUTE TO THE GNA-CONTROLLED PORT CITY OF MISRATA**

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**ON DECEMBER 8, THE GNA DEFENSE MINISTER, GNA MILITARY COMMANDERS AND MEMBERS OF THE GNA 5+5 COMMITTEE MET TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION IN SOUTH OF LIBYA AND THE CEASEFIRE**

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**ON DECEMBER 8, UNKNOWN GUNMEN ATTACKED THE HOME OF OMAR TUGHI, THE COMMANDER OF THE TRIANGLE ROOM, IN THE JOINT SECURITY COMMITTEE OF THE SABHA MILITARY DISTRICT IN SABHA TOWN**

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**MILITARY SITUATION IN LIBYA DECEMBER 09, 2020**

**AREAS OF DIRECT CONTROL**
- LIBYAN NATIONAL ARMY AND ALLIED FORCES
- GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL ACCORD AND ALLIED FORCES
- TABU MILITIAS
- TUAREG MILITIAS
- ISIS PRESENCE

**AIRPORT/AIRBASE**
- OIL REFINERIES/STORAGES
- MAJOR PORT/NAVAL BASE
- OIL PIPELINES/FIELDS
- GAS PIPELINES/FIELDS
- ROAD
Q6: What will happen to our region?

E. Med. - MENA
Q7: Towards a New-Medievalism?

The nation-state is not the sole source of power in the international scene, a complex network-grid of overlapping authorities (subnational-national-supranational) and overlaying allegiances has been developed.

Five characteristics which provide prima facie the proof of this trend:
1. Regional integration projects
2. Dismantlement of existing state-formations
3. Restoration of a practice of the use of military / coercive force from non-state agents
4. Emergence of Supranational Organizations
5. Global integration through technological advancements
1. EU’s/Greeces’ Near Abroad, a geopolitical system which covers EU’s neighboring Eastern & Southern space involves three major geopolitical (f)actors – Russia, Turkey, Islamic Sectarian Friction, and undergoes a fundamental restructuring in all the main pillars of power (defence-security, economic, political, cultural).

2. These transformations result to an increased level of challenges and threats.
   - **Security**: EU/Greece has to respond to all kinds of armed conflicts and prepare to defend its vital interests within its interior & adjunct Seas.
   - **Economy**: Energy-security issues, human trafficking & the financial crisis are pressing and demand a cumulative response.
   - **Political & cultural parameters**: EU/Greece will have to prepare itself to coexist and/or confront with political systems and identities that in the best case scenario are not compatible or are semi-compatible with the European standards, in the worse case scenario are explicitly hostile and belligerent.

3. EU needs to solve its main existential issue of internal legitimacy / future direction as it has been emerged through the ashes of the financial, refugee and COVID-19 crises.
4. Greece’s important geopolitical position decisively contributes on the geopolitical / geoeconomic / geocultural posturing of the West in general.

5. The chaotic conditions in EU’s ‘Near Abroad,’ the current internal legitimacy deficit along with the policies of the other major extra-regional geopolitical (f)actors in the geopolitical system in question could be approached through an explanatory model that includes

- A major re-conseptualization of the main priorities of the world powers,
- A closer scrutiny of the main geopolitical tradition as it has been developed in the Anglosaxon world and
- A deeper debate on the true nature of an emerging international system which departs from the more secure, simplistic and understandable Westphalian paradigm and emulates a more aggressive, complex, chaotic full of challenges and opportunities though, romantic (?) Neo-Medieval one.
“the possession of Greece ... would probably carry with it the control of the World-Island [Europe-Asia-Africa]’

[Mackinder, Democratic Ideals and Reality, p. 107]

[Mackinder, Democratic Ideals and Reality, p. 164]
“I am not blaming those who are resolved to rule, only those who show an even greater readiness to submit”
Hermocrates, 1st Speech towards Syracusans, 425 B.C.)
[Thucydides, Thucydides’ History, Book IV, 61]