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Hellenic countries' role in the new Eastern Mediterranean-Persian Gulf geostrategic 'Great Game' and Region-Building

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Abstract

The modern Greek state -for the first time in its bicentennial history-, spans its interest toward its Middle East neighbors. Indeed, the synergies between the Gulf and the eastern Mediterranean theaters have grown substantially in recent years. Developments ranging from the Libyan civil war to the Abraham Accords have created a space in which the interests of eastern Mediterranean states, such as Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, and Israel, and Gulf states, like the UAE and Saudi Arabia, seem more aligned than ever before. Seemingly unrelated developments in areas like the energy sector are now interlinked in ways that further solidify the interdependence of the two regions.

These “quasi alliances” could be coupled with an Indian-Arabian-Mediterranean (Arab-Med) Corridor to Europe as an emerging multi-modal, economic axis that - embedded in the western security nexus-, could radically reconfigure trade patterns between the Indian Ocean Region, the Middle East and Europe by creating an arc of commercial and security connectivity spanning Eurasia’s southern rim from India’s Arabian Sea coast to Greece’s eastern Mediterranean coast. This new connectivity would constitute a strategic paradigm shift of enormous geopolitical consequence for the Mediterranean-Indo-Pacific Rimland. This new connectivity architecture is a consequence of the 2020 diplomatic normalization between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Israel, which is giving rise to the creation of a UAE-to-Israel railway network via Saudi Arabia and Jordan with Israel’s Haifa port as its Mediterranean terminal. The trans-Mediterranean maritime link from Haifa to the European mainland at the massive transshipment port in Piraeus, Greece means Indian goods shipped to the UAE’s ports will be able to reach major markets and manufacturing centers of Europe.

This analysis aspires to give a neo-realist approach to Greece’s strategic importance in the new regional international order, where the Mediterranean returns as a focal geopolitical space on a world level.

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Key words: Greece, EU, energy security, Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East, North Africa, Red Sea, Indian Ocean, France, Gulf states, Suez canal, Islamism, Muslim Brotherhood, Cyprus, Israel, Egypt, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, India, Libya, Jordan, Abraham Accords, US, Russia, regionalism, Iran.

Abbreviations: - Eastern Mediterranean (EM)

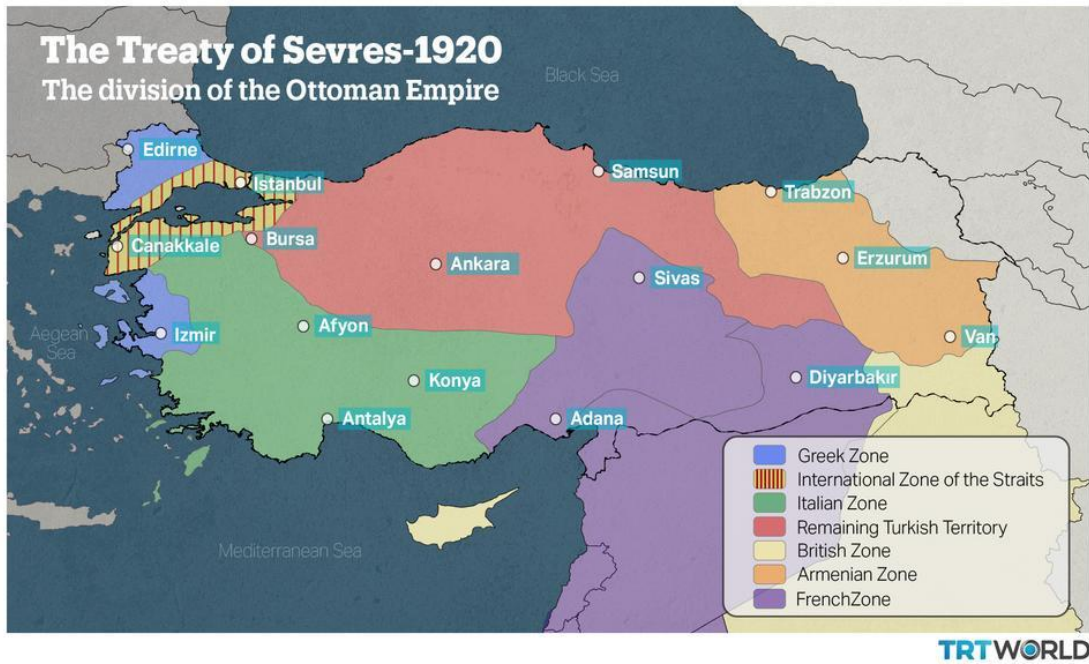
- Middle East-North Africa (MENA)

- Eastern Mediterranean-Red Sea (EMRS)
- Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)
- United States (US)
- United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
- Muslim Brotherhood (MB)
- Sea Lanes of Commerce (SLOCs)
- Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF)
- Government of National Accord (GNA)
- Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)
- Libyan National Army (LNA)
- Gulf States Council (GSC)
- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

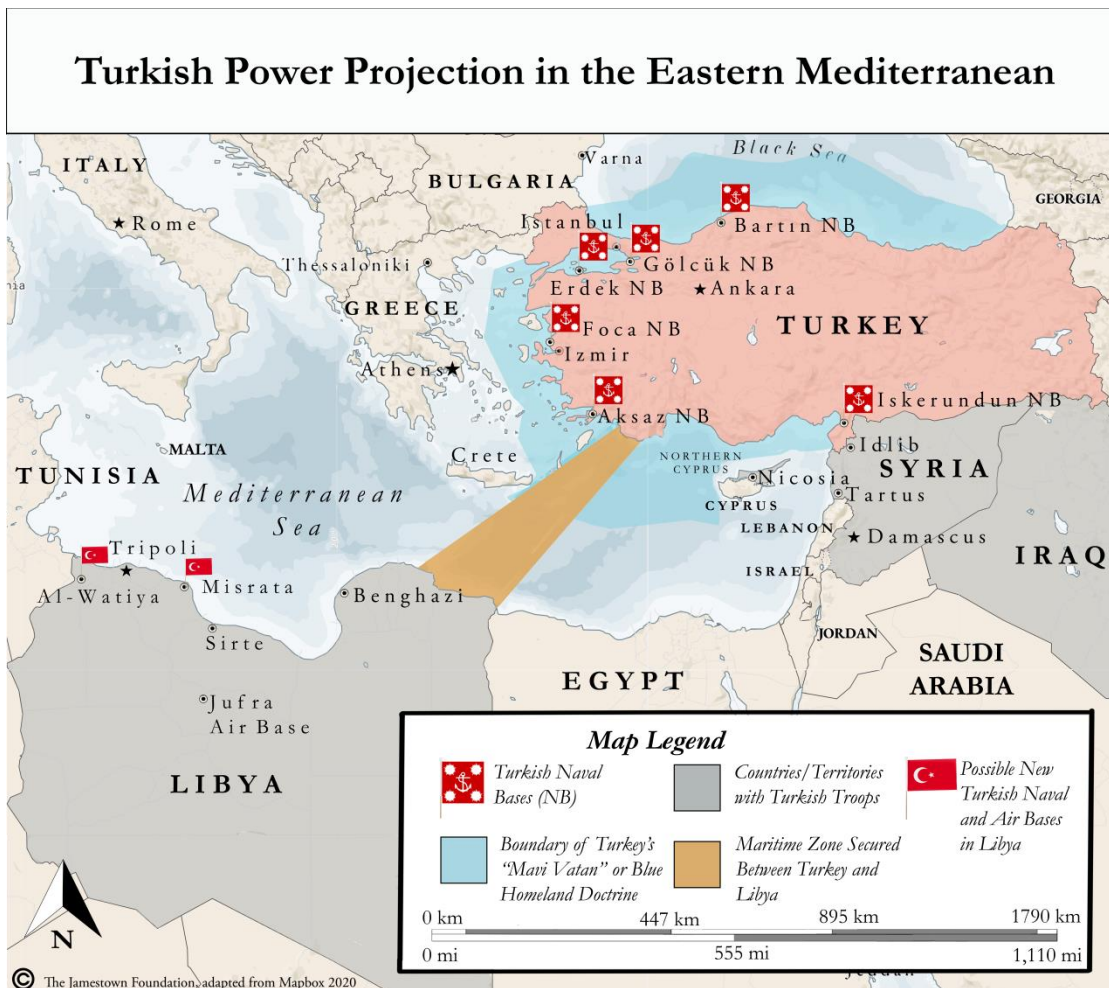
1. Greece's new foreign policy patterns

The Hellenic Republic was until 2010 conceiving the EMRS region as an alien to its foreign policy area, especially as regards its relations with the Middle East. C. Tsardanidis argues that "...the 2010's saw Greece making a gradual shift towards a new role, one more integral to the Eastern Mediterranean. The international power vacuum, the growing number of threats stemming from regional instability, the shift in Turkish foreign policy, its own domestic challenges, Greek leadership beliefs, and new geopolitical opportunities prompted Greece to become somewhat more assertive" (1). Athens, performing an active foreign policy, seized the opportunities presented by the deteriorating Israel-Turkish relations and the natural gas discoveries in the Cypriot EEZ, to improve its relations with Jerusalem.

In opening its foreign policy in the EM, Greece aimed to tackle its security interplay with Turkey, but as Z. Tziarras comments, "...Athens wanted to participate in dynamics that would shape the region's new security architecture in terms of power balances, regional development, and networks of cooperation. It appeared willing to become an agenda-setter. In fact, a new foreign policy role and identity seemed to become more and more an objective" (2). In parallel, while Turkey was maintaining delicate relations with the US, Greece -within the limits of its western foreign policy balances-, was expected to potentially replace Turkey as the foremost western ally in south-eastern Europe given that Turkey was drifting away from its western allies, creating a growing divergence between Turkish and western interests (3). Issuing Greece's more important place in the US, EU and NATO mechanisms, was obviously relieving Athens, as it had to deal with an openly revisionist Turkish stance that is seeking to revise or upgrade the Lausanne Treaty (1923) which fountains the regional border status quo (Map I). In this context, the Turkish government indorsed the 'Blue Homeland' naval doctrine that covers an area extending from the Black Sea to the Aegean and the EM, and concluded an EEZ maritime agreement with the Islamist oriented Libyan GNA government (2019) that arbitrarily denies big Greek islands' effect on its demarcation (Map II).



Map I: The Treaty of Lausanne (1923), Enes Danis / TRTWorld, 2018.



Map II: The disputed Turkey-Libya (GNA) EEZ demarcation (Nov. 2019),

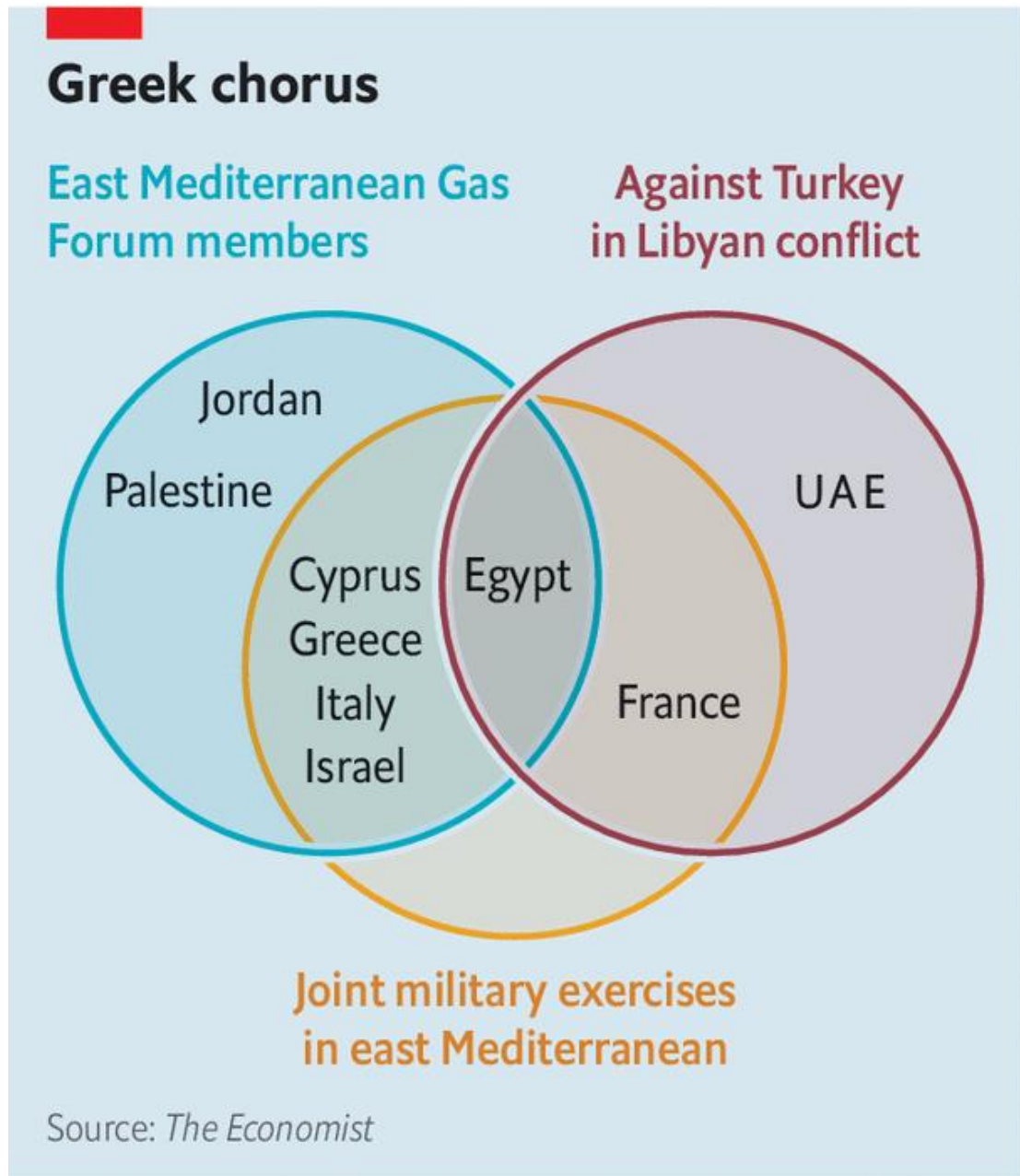
Facing an increasingly assertive Turkish policy and the 2015 migration crisis -partly driven by the Syrian and Iraqi wars-, Greece strategized a bilateral relations expansion with Israel, Egypt, France, Cyprus, and UAE in various fields, multilateral cooperation within trilateral schemes with Israel, Egypt and Cyprus as external balancing acts that function as power multipliers, internal balancing through weapon's purchase, continental shelves and EEZ agreements with Italy and Egypt, and energy projects with various actors. The above mentioned "trilateral partnerships (Cyprus-Greece-Israel and Cyprus-Greece-Egypt), are the cornerstone of Athens' search for a new regional identity and strategy as well as part of a broader pro-western security architecture in the area" (4, Map III). "They were built on improved bilateral relations and thereafter expanded to trilateral relations and eventually to multilateral relations and institutions"(5).



Map III: Conflicting alliances in Eastern Mediterranean, F. W. Engdahl, 'The Mad Geopolitics of Israel's EastMed Gas Pipeline', 19.01.2020

These synergies are military, energy and economic purpose oriented within a clearly defined security framework. In their contours, Greece has signed a defense deal with Israel, a defense pact with UAE and conducts frequent naval exercises with Egypt, UAE and Cyprus. Athens has negotiated and signed the EastMed pipeline agreement with Israel and Cyprus and EMGF international organization establishment (2020, Map IV), while invigorating its economic transactions both with UAE and Egypt. Despite the uncertainty that COVID-19 epidemic's economic crisis and international gas prices dropping have dispersed in relation to the EastMed project, and unsubstantive EMGF initiatives so far, "both projects have a significant diplomatic-political weight that contributes to the sustainability, future, and enhancement of regional relations. In addition, they contribute to Greece's efforts to become integrated into the Eastern Mediterranean and deal with its traditional security

concerns” (6). Greece, apart its participation to the ‘Euro-Africa Interconnector’ project along with Egypt and Cyprus, is also planning its direct electrical grid connection to Egypt (2021). Both projects are scheduled to carry natural gas, renewable sources’ and even ‘Blue hydrogen’ produced electricity, and are expected to enrich -compatibly to EU ‘Green Deal’ policy- Europe’s energy mix.



The Economist

Map IV: 'Angst in the Aegean.

A row between Turkey and Greece over gas is raising tension in the eastern Mediterranean', The Economist, 20.08.2020

2.2 Turkey's strategic re-orientation.

Athens' gravitated security concerns are produced by Ankara's strategic reorientation beginning by the end of the Cold War in the 1990's and continuing after AK party won 2002 parliamentary elections. Turkey systematically built an expeditionary capability thanks to blue-water capability building and forward bases establishment. Turkey's strategic goal was set to become an inter-regional power that –seeking to 'reclaim' Ottoman Empire's foreign policy-, will negate Lausanne Treaty predicament (Map V). Ankara seeks to alter the EMRS region geopolitics by enhancing its capacity to project its military forces far beyond its littoral, thanks to its rising defense industry. "Turkey's calibration is occurring in the geopolitical context of two concentric containment arcs: an inner arc in the Eastern Mediterranean and an outer arc roughly corresponding to the 19th parallel north latitude, spanning the G-5 countries of the western Sahel and Sudan. The extent to which Ankara will succeed in building a Turkey-centered connectivity after its success in Libya, will depend on the manner in which its post-Lausanne logic guides Turkey's calculus in these two regions" (7).



Map V: The former Ottoman Empire, Fonte: Atlante The Times, Complete History of the World

Ankara's strategic re-orientation was enhanced by the Erdogan government, in the absence of a trustworthy US and other major NATO allies reaction to the July 15, 2016 failed coup attempt. Allies' unnerve reaction persuaded the Turkish government that it should proceed becoming an independent regional power.

Therefore, Turkey enhanced relations with Russia and China, while developing blue-water power projection and forward bases in the Suez Canal, the adjacent seas and foreword to the Indian Ocean, practically designing Ankara's strategic re-orientation toward inter-regional connectivity. Turkish forces deployment in Qatar and military base opening (2016), was followed by the 2019 agreement to expand the Joint Force Command in Doha, military facility inauguration in Mogadishu (Somalia, 2017), close to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean entry of the Red Sea. The latter base, not only is critical to the activation of Turkey's partnership to Qatar, but also tracts SLOCs from the EM through the Red Sea-Gulf of Aden corridor to the Horn of Africa, further to Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

Turkey has also taken full advantage of the western Libya's government precarious condition, by concluding the establishment of an air force base and reportedly a naval one, in accordance with the 'Security and Military Cooperation' and 'Delimitation of Maritime Jurisdiction Areas in the Mediterranean' (November 27, 2019). The Turkey-Libya EEZ delimitation agreement was among other targeting the possibility of an Egyptian and Greek navies' Mediterranean blockade to Turkey in case of hostilities, from the eastern Dodecanese Greek islands to Crete and the eastern Libyan/western Egyptian border coast.

In the aftermath of the Turkish 2016 coup attempt and issuing president-centric foreign policy, Ankara proceeded in assertive hard power actions against Cyprus and Greece, which enticed France to involve actively to the EM dispute. Paris signed with Cyprus a warship's service agreement at the southern Mari naval base, while the Italian energy company partnered with France's Total in all licensed gas exploration Cypriot blocks. Obviously, the EM offshore natural gas resources transformed the territorial sovereignty disputes between Greece, Cyprus and Turkey from being primarily a local concern to becoming the pivot around which wider conflicts involving Europe and the MENA region began to revolve (8). Categorically, Greece and Cyprus look for calibrating France's economic interests in the EM energy reserves and systemic rivalry with Turkey, so as to gain security guarantees.

As Turkey was engaged in gunboat diplomacy acts from 2018 to 2020, Israel, Egypt, Greece and Cyprus interlinked security partnerships have been gradually backed by the United States, France and Italy, each having important economic interests invested in EM gas resources. France in particular, shares security deals with Turkey's rivals, Egypt and UAE, with which cooperated in supporting eastern Libya's forces against the Tripoli GNA government in the context of Paris systemic competition with Ankara for influence zones in Africa. France and UAE systemic inimical view of Ankara, consider the latter's connectivity strategy as antagonizing their national interests. As a matter of fact, French interests in North Africa are threatened by Turkey's inter-regional connectivity, as Tunisia's vital Mediterranean

ports and Algeria’s trans-Saharan highway, “position Turkey to play a major role in an emerging nexus of commercial routes that connect West Africa to Europe and the Middle East” (9, Map VI). In the EMRS corridor, Ankara equally challenged Egypt trying unsuccessfully to erect in Sudan’s Suakin Port a naval base. Cairo’s Saudi and Emirati allies funded the toppling of the Sudanese government (2019).



Map VI: Turkey West Africa to Europe and the Middle East economic connection.

In reaction, European and Middle Eastern powers aligned militarily and EMRS powers created a regional multilateral energy cooperation institution, the EMGF (2020), devoted in developing the EM region natural gas deposits. France is enjoying full membership (2021), and US was admitted as observer. When in August 2020 Turkey performed maritime aggression against Greece, UAE and Egypt aligned with Athens. Abu Dhabi applied for membership, but EMGF founding member Palestine vetoed its intention. Russia on the other hand, is absent due to the US EM gas perception as tool to reduce Russian gas determining role in the European market, and increasing its schystolistic LNG share in Europe. In addition, EMGF plans are regarded as competitive to the Kremlin’s. Admittedly nevertheless , the ‘Abraham Accords’ Israel-UAE and three other Arab countries diplomatic normalization (2018), along with the strong Israel-Egypt energy ties, secure EMGF’s future and put the foundations for a new Eastern Mediterranean-Middle Eastern strategic architecture.

2.3 EMRS inter-regional connectivity ‘Great Game’.

As Z. Tziarras and J. Harchaoui argue, “The revisionist undercurrents of Erdogan’s worldview indicate that the Eastern Mediterranean crisis is not primarily about natural gas but decades-old sovereignty issues –infused with old and new geopolitical ambitions alike. Material gain has motivated Turkey’s expansionism, but it is also animated by identity and ideology considerations. Actually, Turkey’s current approach to underwater exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean offers low probability of commercial discovery; no hydrocarbons have been found off of Libya and Greece thus far, and Turkey’s attempts off of Cyprus have proved unsuccessful.

Therefore, Turkey uses its sea zone delimitation revisionist plan as a stepping stone for acquiring more influence in the Maghreb, the Sahel, and West Africa” (10).

M. Tanchum affirms this by arguing that “...the Mediterranean basin is a regional system and the inter-linkage of Eastern Mediterranean flashpoints is increasingly becoming a context over the reordering of power relations across that system. The Mediterranean basin system, moreover, forms the hub of an emerging architecture of inter-regional connectivity so that the Eastern Mediterranean conflicts and the reordering of Mediterranean power relations are now intertwined with a new ‘Great Game’ –an intense and complex competition over the nexus of trans-Mediterranean trade routes, energy transit routes, and industrial manufacturing value chains that connect Europe and the MENA (Middle East-North Africa) region” (11).

In this new ‘Great Game’, the principal actors are Turkey, Egypt, France, and Italy, with the latter, defining its strategic priorities with the term ‘il MediterraneoAllargato’ (wider Mediterranean), stretching from the Balkans to the Sahel, to the Horn of Africa (Map VIII). Rome has achieved compartmentalizing its eastern Mediterranean interests, and has had “a more distant alignment with Turkey based on a confluence of interests in Libya as well as in the central Maghreb states of Algeria and Tunisia” (12). Indicative in that sense is the absence of Rome in the signing ceremony of the EastMed pipeline project (2019, Map IX). However, Italy’s largest company by revenue, ENI’s drive to expand its market share across the MENA –following its Egypt massive Zohr natural gas field discovery in 2015-, has shaped the parameters of Italy’s foreign policy orientation (13). ENI -being the lead operator in Cyprus’s natural gas development-, promoted the pooling of Egyptian, Cypriot and Israeli gas and transfer to Egypt’s liquefaction plants –where the company is the leading stake holder-, to cost effectively market the region’s gas to Europe as liquefied natural gas (LNG) by leaving Turkey off the picture.



Map VIII: ‘Il Mediterraneo Allargato’ (wider Mediterranean), M. Tanchum, 2020.



Map IX: 'EastMed' natural gas pipeline project (2020).

M. Tanchum stipulates thereon that: “The supralocal agendas, on the part of the Mediterranean actors...are increasingly superseding the specifically local grievances that originally gave rise to the Turkey-Greece maritime boundary dispute, the Cyprus problem, and the Libya conflict. The role played by Eastern Mediterranean offshore energy in the interlinking of these conflicts illustrates the transformative impact of these supralocal agendas in shaping the Eastern Mediterranean. At the same time, the Eastern Mediterranean’s three interlinked conflicts now have become a central arena in the Great Game to reorder Mediterranean power relations and the pattern of trans-Mediterranean connectivity” (14). Egypt, Turkey, France, and Italy involvement in the Libyan civil proxy war has now expanded to EM’s waters between Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus.

Trans-Mediterranean connectivity refers mainly to the peculiar cooperation established between Rome and Ankara –a geopolitical symbiosis, as M. Tanchum stipulates (15), aiming to the creation of a Turkey-Italy-Tunisia transportation corridor, an arc of commercial axis from the Maghreb to the wider Black Sea. This central hub project lies in Italy’s deep-sea port of Taranto -located on the southern tip of the Italian peninsula, in the strategic heart of the Mediterranean Sea-, which is managed by the Turkish port operator Yilport. The arc Taranto-Tunisia segment serves simultaneously as a core link of the corridor Europe-to-Africa transport route by connecting North Africa’s coast to the manufacturing centers of Italy, Germany and Northern Europe via Italy and Europe’s high-speed rail systems. From Tunisia’s ports, the corridor can link via Algeria to the Trans-Saharan Highway, potentially extending Italy and Turkey’s Europe-to-Africa corridor southward into West Africa as far as Lagos, Nigeria.

This Italy-Turkey alignment –incorporating Tunisia and Malta-, marks Italy’s rebalancing toward the wider Mediterranean basin –a geopolitical continuum termed ‘il Mediterraneo allargato’ (the enlarged Mediterranean)-, where Rome has

exerted its strategic autonomy, particularly in its pivot to Africa, to challenge France's dominance in Africa. Thus, a new strategic paradigm for Mediterranean geopolitics –formulated by the Maghreb and the Horn of Africa on one side and the Balkans and Middle East on the other- is created, very accurately now augmented by the entrenchment of Turkish hard power in Libya. Turkey's drive refers in developing inter-regional connectivity in the roughly overlapping geographical space defined by the territories of the former Ottoman Empire. Worth mentioning is that Italy has long been among the strongest advocates of closer EU-Turkey relations. We are witnessing thus a compartmentalization of policies between Italy and Turkey, given that these are at odds regarding Cypriot offshore natural gas development.

Despite Italy's proximity to the North African coast, France remains the dominant foreign policy actor in the Maghreb. Notwithstanding Rome's heavily state influenced company ENI leading role in the development of Egypt's natural gas industry, Italy's economic relations in North Africa and the rest of Africa are constrained by France's outsized influence on the pattern of Afro-Mediterranean commercial connectivity. Italy's influence is constrained by France's strong security relationship with Cairo, as Paris is Egypt's third largest weapons supplier and maintains a naval base on the coast of Egypt's close strategic partner, the United Arab Emirates. Paris was engaged in covered cooperation with Egypt and the UAE to support General Khalifa Haftar's forces in eastern Libya against the western Libyan GNA supported by Italy and Turkey, before the early 2021 creation of Libyan interim government. M. Tanchum argues thereon that "The Franco-Emirati-Egyptian partnership was put on prominent display in late August 2020, with concurrent Franco-Emirati-Greek joint air force exercises and Franco-Egyptian-Greek joint naval exercises, in support of Greece in its eastern Mediterranean stand-off with Turkey".

M. Tanchum adds that "Turkey's ability to establish its own inter-regional commercial connectivity via North Africa is stymied in the western Mediterranean by Morocco and in eastern Mediterranean by Egypt –both of whom share deep economic and military ties with France and the UAE". Adding that "Turkey's overt military intervention during the first half of 2020 to preserve Libya's GNA has created an important strategic beachhead for Turkey in the central Maghreb" though with Ankara "has cemented its status as a major power in North Africa", translated in regional clout in Tunisia and Algeria by means of air and naval forces stationed in Libya (16).

Combined with the trilateral energy interconnectivity that Italy has actively promoted with Algeria and Tunisia (TransMed natural gas pipeline and electric grids), Turkey's major ports on the Aegean connection to Taranto (Italy) and to Malta and Biserte and Sfax (Tunisia), form a north-south axis corridor connecting North Africa to major manufacturing and commercial centers of Europe. "By interconnecting the

EU's Scandinavian-Mediterranean Corridor with Africa's Algeria-to-Nigeria Trans-Saharan Highway, the Turkey-Italy-Tunisia corridor potentially forms the vital link for the creation of a mega-corridor spanning Europe and Africa from 60o N. latitude to 6o N. latitude". Assorted by sizable investments in Tunisia by Turkey's strategic partner Qatar, "Italy and Turkey have achieved a paradigm shift in Mediterranean geopolitics that is reshaping the contours of NATO's and the European Union's strategic agenda" (17).

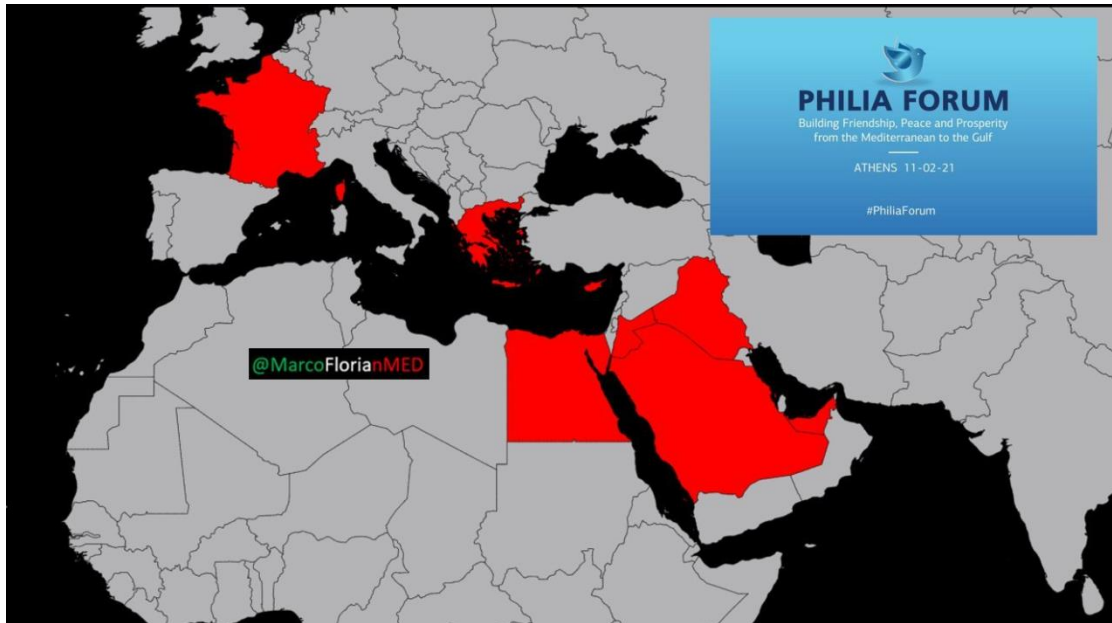
2.4 Greece in the new trans-regional pattern of connectivity between Europe, Africa and Asia.

Italy's and Turkey's synergy achievements notwithstanding, "the key geopolitical formation in the Mediterranean's Great Game is the partnership between France and Egypt to oppose the expansion of Turkish influence on the shores of the southern Mediterranean and adjacent regions of sub-Saharan Africa.... The Franco-Egyptian partnership also serves as a platform for the UAE in its systemic competition with Turkey and Qatar. France maintains a naval base in the UAE while Abu Dhabi engages close security cooperation with both France and Egypt in Africa. The three countries collectively maintain seven naval bases along the entire Red Sea approach to the EM on the Red Sea's African coast. The UAE is the foremost backer of Khalifa Haftar in eastern Libya and has been working steadily over the past five years to develop partnerships with non-Arab regional actors in the Eastern Mediterranean –Greece, Cyprus, and Israel" (18). Hellenic countries cooperate closely with UAE: Nicosia has awarded two concession agreements to the UAE marine terminals operator, DP World, in Cyprus's Limassol port, while Emirati air force has participated in 2017 and 2019 Greece's 'Iniochos' multi-national exercise, and mostly important, Greece signed partnership and defense agreements with the United Arab Emirates (2020), a mutual defense pact with France (2021) and renewed its military partnership with the United States (2021).

Equally important are the 2015 status of forces agreement (SOFA) that Tel Aviv has signed with Athens (first such agreement Israel has signed with any other country besides US), and the August 2020 UAE-Israel relations normalization treaty. These two Israel/Greece-UAE agreements, mark the full entrance of the UAE into the broad Eastern Mediterranean alignment. Moreover, USA, Italy and UAE participation in 'Iniochos' 2017 military exercise in Greece, explicitly shows that NATO is no longer an even-handed broker in the EM but acts to contain Turkish power in the region, and that Italy –notwithstanding its commonalities with Turkey on Libya-, could potentially support Greece and Cyprus (19). Indeed, Greece's new foreign policy has responded to EMRS competing maritime interests and maritime zones claims, as well as military assertiveness with vigor and stealth.

Noteworthy mentioning is that although Turkey's 2020 intervention preserved the Tripoli based GNA government -on whose territory almost all of Italy's considerable energy assets are concentrated-, Turkey's outsized military presence has rendered Italy's vital economic interests vulnerable to Ankara's dictates. Turkey starts to leverage its status as Tripoli's security guarantor to obtain contracts in Libya's energy sector and infrastructure development. In fact Rome –already since 2018 closer to France so as to mitigate risk to its energy interests in Cyprus from Turkish interference-, is on the verge of shifting away from Turkey toward a Mediterranean-wide strategic partnership with France and Egypt. Turkey's military power moves in EM and Libya seem to have changed the strategic calculus in both Paris and Rome, providing momentum for a comprehensive Franco-Italian rapprochement (34). M. Tanchum hereby concludes that, if this trend leads to “equitable solutions to the Greek-Turkey maritime boundary dispute, the Cyprus problem, and the Libya conflict, rooted both in the rule of law and realpolitik”, one could acquiesce “a reset for the EU-Turkey relations as well as for the future of EU-MENA cooperation” (20).

This strategic outlook led the Hellenic Republic to host in Athens (11.02.2021) an important foreign ministerial summit of EU and Arab states (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, France, Greece and the Republic of Cyprus), named 'Philia (Friendship) Forum' (Map X), a capstone to Athens' extraordinary series of diplomatic achievements in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region throughout 2020 (21). Issues concerning common interests and concerns related to sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference and freedom of navigation were discussed, all explicitly referred to International Law, UN Security Council Resolutions and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Participants, including France, reiterated their will to put in place result oriented exchanges, joint actions and initiatives in the fields of energy, innovation, digital economy and civil protection. The EastMed crisis with Turkey, the ambivalent end of the Qatar crisis and the clear and present danger of offshore security in regional maritime waters (East Med, Suez Canal and Red Sea), are the main issues in the region. Accessibility and freedom of navigation are the topics upon which regional actors' economic plans depend on. While more than 80 percent of global trade and commodities is maritime bound, for most 'Philia Forum' countries these alignments constitute a lifeline, not only for oil, gas or commodities exports, but also for mere survival, as the region is more than 80 per cent dependent for food and feedstock imports.



Map X: "Philia Forum" participating countries, Athens, 11.02.2021

'Philia Forum's' declared aim is to emerge as supra-regional cooperation tool on economic, security and politics issues, at a moment when South East Europe, EM sub-region and Gulf States Council (GSC) are involved in expanding maritime logistics and energy integration, as a post Covid-19 pandemic strategy. Hopefully, Israel will soon cooperate on maritime and security issues with its GCC counterparts in application of the Abraham Agreements.

Conclusion

Turkey in the new arising security architecture of Europe provoked by the Russia-Ukraine war (February-March 2022), intensifies efforts aiming to appease relations with EMRS major actors, like UAE, Egypt and Israel, even Greece. As NATO rejuvenates in its contra Russia mission, the US welcomes the trans-Atlantic alliance possible strengthening. An altered 'Abraham Accords' model could be encouraged by Washington and Brussels and applied, an outcome that would indeed favor the West trans-regional and region-building processes. Of course, in detriment to Moscow's Mediterranean, African and Middle East influence endeavors.-

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