

**The discovery of gas reserves and the escalation of the Cyprus conflict:  
Exploring the causal mechanisms**

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Abstract

The gas discoveries south off Cyprus has become a new twist of the Cypriot saga. My research question is: what is the impact of the gas reserves on the escalation of the Cyprus conflict, from the disputants' perspectives? Theoretically motivated by the literature investigating the causal mechanisms between natural resources and the outbreak of conflicts, I focus on two types of perspectives: geopolitical and political economy. My exploratory study illuminates their plausibility by adopting a discursive framework; I endogenize agency by putting the agents' views regarding the conflict and the natural resources on the spotlight. I apply Q-methodology, a forum tailor-made to "measure" human subjectivity linking the gas discoveries to the escalation of the conflict. Through this method, I conclude to five distinct viewpoints: (a) "gas boosting our geopolitical standing" (b) "pipe-dreams and imported national myths" and (c) "resentment matters", (e) "gas stimulating political equality" and (f) "micro-politics".

## 1.1 Introduction: Puzzle & Research Question

In February 2018, the Italian state-owned energy company, ENI, discovered an allegedly significant amount of gas reserves in a well within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Cyprus. After this discovery, the company headed towards a different destination within the same area to initiate drilling in another well. In its journey towards the new surveying spot it faced a couple of Turkish warships, which, following a navigational warning issued by Turkish authorities, harassed its drilling rig and threatened to sink it. The Italian vessel maneuvered to avoid the collision and sailed for a different destination in another country.

Commenting on this incident, the Italian Foreign Ministry announced that this issue had nothing to do with the bilateral relations between Italy and Turkey. It rather concerned “relations and economic balances between the Republic of Cyprus and the Island’s northern part” (ANSA 2018). The Turkish Foreign Ministry, while explaining this “gunboat diplomacy”, published a press release casting the blame of this standoff on the Greek-Cypriots. After the collapse of the 2017 Crans Montana re-unification talks between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots, Turkey has been accusing Greek-Cypriots of promoting their energy plans “as though they were the sole owner of the Island”, instead of “expending their efforts towards a just and lasting comprehensive settlement in Cyprus” (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2018). Back in 2011, 2014 and in the summer of 2017, Turkey had promulgated similar navigational warnings and dispatched seismic vessels to areas encroaching the Cypriot Exclusive Economic Zone. Turkey justified these incursions on the grounds that Turkish-Cypriots were left out from the energy initiatives run by the Greek-Cypriot administered Republic of Cyprus. These activities had severe implications on the continuation of the re-unification talks between the two communities. For instance, in 2014 the Greek-Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, invoking Turkey’s “provocations in the Cypriot Exclusive Economic Zone”, had pulled out from the negotiation talks with the Turkish-Cypriot leader Dervis Eroglu. The discovery of the gas reserves has become a new twist of an old saga; a new chapter of the Cyprus conflict.

The question that naturally follows from this assumption is *why is this the case*. The current exploratory study sets forth the following research question: **from the disputants’ perspective, “what is the impact of the gas’ discoveries on the escalation of the Cyprus conflict”?** By closely scrutinizing Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot viewpoints, the study investigates the *causal mechanisms linking the gas reserves to the exacerbation of the Cyprus conflict*.



Due to the broad scope of the research question, I divided it into five sub-questions, whose answers, in their turn, provide the structure of my study as well:

- **Sub-question 1:** What kind of theories examine the causal mechanisms between the discovery of natural resources and the escalation of pre-existing conflicts? How does the literature inform us on conflicts on resource-related or resource-laden conflicts? What kind of examples has this literature provided? What are the main gaps of these theories?

- **Sub-question 2:** How does my study differ from the existing theories? Why is a discursive framework conceptually more appropriate to examine the incompatible objectives of the disputants? Furthermore, how could a Q-methodological design analyze these discourses in a more rigorous fashion?
- **Sub-question 3:** What are the (incompatible) central viewpoints of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot opinion-leaders regarding the linkages between the historical and the energy discourses?
- **Sub-question 4:** How do the contrasting viewpoints of the disputants have led to the escalation of the conflict, in light of the existing theories?

Addressing each of the sub-questions sets out the structure of the paper. I start with a brief literature review on the topic under investigation, move with the conceptual framework and the methodological design, present my findings and conclude with my answer to the research question.

### 1.2 Literature review: geopolitical and political economy perspectives

During the last two decades, researchers from the fields of sociology, political economy and conflict studies have conducted empirical studies to assert a positive correlation between the discovery of natural resources and the risk of conflicts' onset and duration. Most of them have coined this phenomenon as the "resource curse" or "resource wars". The pioneering and influential work of Collier and Hoeffler (1998; 2001; 2002; 2004) on 'greed and grievance' as the main drivers of wars over natural resources, triggered a large number of quantitative and qualitative studies (Aspinall, 2007; Basedau & Lay, 2009; Frynas, Wood, & Hinks, 2017; Humphreys, 2005; Le Billon, 2001; 2009; 2014; Ross, 2006; Tang, Xiong, & Li, 2017) to test and build theories explaining the links between oil and gas and the likelihood of conflicts.

The relevant literature broaches two broad theoretical sets of perspectives associating the natural resources with the eruption of conflicts. The first set of perspectives, more structural in its formation, coined as the "geopolitical" or "neo-realist" one, sheds light on the geographic understanding of power relations between the contending parties as well as other regional and global stakeholders involved. It posits that the very nature of "anarchy", meaning the lack of an overarching authority in the international system, spurs the units of the system, the states, to engage in conflicts in order to safeguard their survival. Gas reserves are treated as military assets that enhance the 'relative position' of each state-unit in this "anarchic environment". This explains the competition over natural resources.

The second one, "the political economy of natural resources", rooted in the fields of political science and development studies, assumes that the significance of resources in conflicts largely lies in the interplay between 'greed' and 'grievance'. Theorists advocating grievance-based explanations have underscored the centrality of pre-existing 'perceived injustices' to understanding the outbreak of conflicts over natural resources. During the last two decades, a burgeoning quantitative empirical literature, guided by rational choice theorists has emphasized the role of "greed" in influencing the incidence of conflict outbreak (Collie & Hoeffler 1998; Ross 2006; Soysa, 2000). Through inferential statistics they identified strong correlation between economic opportunities that the natural resources offer to key actors in the conflict and the escalation of the conflict *per se*; therefore key actors prefer to keep fighting rather than reaching a settlement.

It goes without saying that the insights offered by these "geopolitical" and "political economy" perspectives are useful in understanding how natural resources influence the escalation of conflicts. Therefore, I clearly establish that I do not question that the 3Gs -geopolitics, greed and grievance- matter in this respect. What begs the question, however, is their *modus operandi*, meaning how they actually work to that direction. When it comes to grievances about natural resources, we cannot comprehend them as "readily observable and measurable facts",

at least in the form that Collier & Hoeffler (1998, 2001, 2004) suggest<sup>1</sup>. They take place within particular historical contexts, whose explanation is significant in their occurrence. Finally, the statistical significance between greed and eruption of conflicts does not necessarily imply substantive significance, in the sense that correlations deriving from cross-country data do not adequately capture the procedural causal mechanisms essential to present the sound understanding of conflict incidence. For instance, the geopolitical perspectives, while instrumental in offering a ‘big picture’ regarding the future of international tensions over ‘strategic’ resources, are less attentive to the role of agents and how the latter de-code, decide and act in this “anarchic environment”.

### 1.3 Discursive framework and Q-methodological design

To comprehend how the causal mechanisms work, I have to “penetrate” the officially incompatible utterances of the contending parties and examine the process of their very formation. For this purpose I need a different type of empirical data which endogenize agency in their formation; the disputants views over the history of the conflict and how this history serves their understanding over the current developments with the recently discovered gas reserves. Such views-empirical data involve information about how political and economic actors of the contending parties build-up their incompatible collectively shared ideas over the topic (Schmidt 2008). I intend to create empirical data that catch what influences, motivates or inspires the rationality of the stakeholders within conflict-settings. Through this exploratory logic, I empirically unravel the *modus operandi* of the 3Gs in real-world politics. I fathom the constituents’ articulated fears or *hypophysis*<sup>2</sup>, the distrust, the emotions and rational evaluations of their international environment (Dryzek and Berejikian 1993, Dryzek and Holmes, 2002) and then see how my findings fit into or re-evaluate the above-mentioned “Weberian” categories. The theoretical schema that captures this bottom-up logic is *discourses*, while the methodological design to analyze them is Q-methodology. By setting the stage on the micro-level (the discourses of the opinion-leaders in both sides) readers can grasp a good deal of the ideational factors underpinning the macro-level of analysis (the prolongation of the conflict). The stake in the whole endeavor remains to endogenize agency by letting the Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots decide and articulate what is meaningful and significant when it comes to the hydrocarbons’ management and its association with the Cyprus conflict. To tackle such a challenge, I apply Q-methodology, a method described as “the best-developed paradigm for the investigation of human subjectivity” (Dryzek and Holmes 2002, 20). It offers a set of systematic procedures for “not only incorporating the participants’ perspectives, but also placing them at the center of analysis” (Durning and Brown 2006, 537). The very logic governing Q-methodology renders such a design a more suitable strategy to introspect the historical and energy discourses of my interviewees and forge linkages between them. The introduction of Q-methodology in the study of resource-related conflicts facilitates further the implementation of the micro-level analysis of this project. It provides researchers with a systematic and rigorously quantitative means for examining “human subjectivity” which comes here at the spotlight, without neglecting structural (be it geological or economic pre-existing) realities.

Four distinct stages account for the implementation of Q-methodology: formulating the concourse, the Q-sample, the Q-sort technique and the factor-centroid analysis. Concourse represents the “universe of verbalizations” within a certain community with respect to a particular topic, representing an “interplay or running together of positions, ideas, and

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<sup>1</sup> Collier & Hoeffler (2001), for instance, seek to identify what they call “objective measures” for “objective grievances”

<sup>2</sup> A term, whose literal meaning is “looking underneath the surface”, is borrowed by Thucydides and captures the politics of fear

opinions” (Brown 1980, 58). In my particular case, and as clearly established in the previous paragraphs, it is the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot discourses that lay out my concourse. To formulate these discourses, I resorted to open-ended interviews with historical analysts, sociologists, former policy-makers and chief negotiators from both sides.

I reduced the concourse (consisting of historical and energy discourses) to a manageable volume through “political discourse analysis”. For the Q-sort I drew a template distribution with a number of cells corresponding to the number of statements of the Q-sample (see Figure 1). Furthermore, I approached a number of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot policy-makers, NGO representatives, journalists and energy affiliates to match these statements against the template-configuration. These representatives would constitute the P-Set of my study, along the lines of Q-methodology. After collecting their rankings, I conducted factor-centroid analysis in both the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot P-Sets, showcasing how Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot opinions and participants bunch together (in each side). I backed the centroid analysis through interpretation provided by the arguments that the selected respondents used while sorting the statements in the distribution. This process would lead me to my findings, meaning their viewpoints.

**Figure 1**

Most disagree								Most agree
-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4
(1)								(1)
	(5)						(5)	
		(6)				(6)		
			(7)		(7)			
				(10)				

**1.4 Findings: Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot viewpoints**

After conducting factor analysis, I came across five centroid viewpoints that illustrate the incompatible objectives of Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots concerning the exploitation of the gas reserves: “gas boosting our geopolitical standing”, “pipe-dreams and imported national myths” and “resentment still matters” from the Greek-Cypriot side, “Gas stimulating political equality” and (e) Micro-politics from the Turkish-Cypriot side. The first centroid-viewpoint, along the lines of the geopolitical perspectives, framed the energy landscape in the Eastern Mediterranean as an “anarchic environment”, wherein the Greek-Cypriots correctly carved out strategic collaborations with Greece, Egypt and Israel in order to safeguard the smooth implementation of their energy program. The participants loading in this centroid-viewpoint treated the gas reserves as an “energy-diplomatic weapon” that would incentivize Turkey to change its allegedly intransigent stance vis-à-vis a potential settlement. Au contraire, the second centroid-viewpoint, expressed its fierce opposition against the geopolitical rationale inspiring the first centroid-viewpoint. The respondents participating in this viewpoint echoed Turkish-Cypriot grievances about the future architecture of the Island ration and illuminated

the role of opportunism (greed) behind the articulation of the “geopolitical overtones” associated with the gas reserves. In the third centroid-viewpoint, “resentment matters”, the participants shed light on the intangible factors sustaining the Cyprus conflict. The fourth centroid-viewpoint, “Gas stimulating political equality”, emphasized the grievances of the Turkish-Cypriots as regards their exclusion from the energy security debate and underlined their need to achieve “political equality” through the gas developments, regardless of whether they have an autonomous agenda to promote. The fifth centroid-viewpoint, “Micro-politics”, showcases how the greed hypothesis, in the form of diversionary tactics, operates in real world cases.

### **1.5 Conclusions: 2 models linking the gas discoveries to the escalation of the conflict**

While digging into the viewpoints, there are two models explaining the impact that the discovery of gas reserves had on the escalation of the Cyprus conflict. The first model includes the interplay between “geopolitics” and “grievances”, while the second model contains the interplay between “greed” and “grievance”.

The first model contrasts the Greek-Cypriot viewpoints “gas boosting our geopolitical standing” and “resentment matters” with the Turkish-Cypriot “Gas stimulating political equality”. Based on my findings, Greek-Cypriots are unable to locate an agreement with the Turkish-Cypriots about the natural resources without a settlement because of the “*issue indivisibility*”. Natural resources is not solely a “military asset” as the geopolitical perspectives dictate. It is a matter of **sovereignty** that cannot be compromised by letting Turkish-Cypriots participate in the hydrocarbons management without reaching a settlement for the Cyprus conflict beforehand. Such a cooperation schema would hold their sovereignty, as exercised through the natural resources management, hostage of the re-unification talks, which are “dictated by Turkey”. Therefore, a conflict-prone issue, like natural resources management, may be effectively *indivisible*. However, the cause of this “indivisibility” lies more in grievances inherited from the past rather than the nature of the issue *per se*. Greek-Cypriots, while encountering Turkish-Cypriot demands to participate in the hydrocarbons management, draw upon parts of the ‘history’ to express their grievances. Turkish-Cypriots were the ones that since 1960s were dragging Turkey’s involvement in the Island’s affairs. Turkish-Cypriots established and sustained the breakaway regime through the military, economic and administrative aid offered by Turkey. Therefore, Greek-Cypriots deem the Turkish-Cypriots incapable of voicing their own agenda; they allegedly act as Turkey’s mouthpiece and infiltrator of Turkey’s interests in the hydrocarbons management. The rage and embarrassment that Greek-Cypriots experienced in 1974 functions as a “prison-analogy”, where the respondents, dictated by the need to reduce uncertainty of Turkey’s gunboat diplomacy, diagnose it in terms of a historical parallel with the 1974 events. In this light, Greek-Cypriots exclude any possibility to locate Turkey as an export option of the gas reserves, despite the attractive economic profits that such an option would probably elicit<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, the economic profits deriving from the construction of a pipeline to Turkey does not gain primacy, regardless of whether a settlement between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots is reached. The role of historical mistrust vis-à-vis Turkey dominates the two Greek-Cypriot centroid-viewpoints here. This historical parallel underpins the issue *indivisibility* and pinpoints the important role of grievances in the Greek-Cypriots’ strategic rationality.

On the other hand, Turkish-Cypriots feel compelled to participate in the hydrocarbons management, regardless of whether they have not formulated a concrete policy-agenda. Different security concerns underpin this urgency. If they do not participate in the hydrocarbons’ management, they feel like letting Greek-Cypriots create *fais accomplis* on the

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<sup>3</sup> Regardless of whether under the current low prices even this option is economically not that attractive.

security architecture of the Island, which they have to comply with in the aftermath of a potential settlement. Therefore, Turkish-Cypriots label the gas reserves as an issue affecting “the future security architecture” of the Island, for which their involvement is more than imperative.

Historical grievances underpin their need to have a say in the decision-making on the natural resources: the lack of international recognition. Turkish-Cypriots want to participate in a quasi-federal or quasi-confederal committee, which in their eyes would make the international community recognize their existence and their “legal-status”. This is quite significant for them, because no country has recognized their state-entity *de jure*, except for Turkey. The Turkish-Cypriot viewpoint highlights Turkish-Cypriots’ “obsession with political equality” that would emerge in case Turkish-Cypriots achieved such a participation. Therefore, gas could act as a stimulant prompting the upload of their international status. Such a view, however, contradicts Greek-Cypriots treatment of “natural resources” as a question of sovereignty. This explains why Turkish-Cypriots rely on Turkey’s gunboat diplomacy: to urge Greek-Cypriots bring Turkish-Cypriots on the decision-board.

The second model contrasts the Greek-Cypriot viewpoint “pipe-dreams and imported national myths” with the Turkish-Cypriot “micro-politics”. Some policy-makers, on the eve of elections or in the face of economic crises, invoke this “thymic” in order to gain foothold in the respective parliaments or restore their “broken image” of their government, after a crisis has shaken their legitimacy in the eyes of the public. They invoke these grievances by talking about how the “gas reserves boost the geopolitical standing” of their country; how will they use the gas reserves as a confrontation tool vis-à-vis Turkey; how will Turkish-Cypriots take reciprocal steps by dragging Turkey into the energy chessboard in order to not be left out of the future security architecture that shapes itself after the discovery of the gas reserves<sup>4</sup>. As this model explains, it is this rhetoric for the sake of domestic-political expediencies that flares-up the tensions and thus contributes to the prolongation, complication or escalation of the Cyprus conflict; not only the anarchic environment *per se*.

While interpreting the 2011 crisis, Turkish-Cypriots for instance, accuse the former President of the Republic of Cyprus, Demetris Christofias, of deliberately choosing the timing to sign agreements with Israel<sup>5</sup> in order to divert domestic attention away from the country’s economic crisis and restore his “broken image” after the Mari tragedy which had led to 13 casualties. In this vein, the Greek-Cypriot president adopted a “diversionary strategy”; he knew that by carving out a strategic collaboration with Israel, he would irritate Turkey, whose relations at that time with Israel were more than problematic, at least the leadership level. As some Turkish-Cypriots alleged, Christofias was ready to put his country in risk in order to re-draw the public’s attention to a tension with Turkey, whose threat is fixated on Greek-Cypriots’ mindset, rather than on the domestic problems. At the same time, such an “assertive” and “risky” policy would generate support for his presidency, whose legitimacy at that time was in jeopardy. Such an approach, elucidates the interplay between “greed” in terms of political opportunism and “grievance” in terms of constituents’ revenge-seeking sentiments against Turkey.

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<sup>4</sup> Neglecting probably the fact that Turkey would embark its gunboat diplomacy regardless of whether Turkish-Cypriots want that or not.

<sup>5</sup> Whose relations with Turkey at that time had hit a new low

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# **THE RISE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS'S (ROC) DEFENCE DIPLOMACY IN ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD**

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## **Abstract**

Despite the fact that Cyprus is a small state in the international system, with all that this entails in the exercise of diplomatic practice, the Republic of Cyprus (RoC), particularly in the last ten years, has taken several initiatives for activities that fall in the realm of defence diplomacy. The overall objective of this article is to examine the bilateral defence diplomacy initiatives of the RoC with its neighbouring states in the Eastern Mediterranean, such as Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon in the period 2010 - 2017.

**Keywords:** defence diplomacy, Republic of Cyprus, Eastern Mediterranean, bilateral relations.

## Introduction

There is a widespread perception that defence diplomacy, which in general terms means the use of defence actors for diplomatic purposes, is a practice that is exercised almost exclusively by large and powerful states, since they are the nations with the wherewithal to achieve that. Winger<sup>1</sup> indicatively notes that ‘every major global power, such as the United States, France, China, and the United Kingdom, has adopted defence diplomacy’. At the same time, Muthanna has stressed that ‘the United States, Britain, France, China, Australia, India and the NATO countries could be considered as leaders in defense diplomacy’.<sup>2</sup> However, in recent years, there has been an increasing trend by small states to deploy defence diplomacy initiatives in a more consistent and organised manner in order to impact and interact in the international system for their benefit.

This paper investigates the rise of the bilateral defence diplomacy efforts of a small state, that of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC), between 2010 and 2017 in its near neighbourhood.<sup>3</sup> In the last decade, the RoC has embarked on several defence diplomacy endeavours within this framework in order to develop defence relations with neighbouring states, such as Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon. Of course, these defence diplomacy initiatives of the Republic have been urged by a series of different dynamics and regional changes that have led to the gradual development of the RoC’s defence diplomacy from 2004. This article is separated into three main sections. The first section describes briefly the basic theoretical tenets of the main concept of the paper – that of defence diplomacy. The second part illustrates, in a nutshell, some basic elements regarding the rise of RoC defence diplomacy in the last decade. The third section analyses in detail the basic bilateral defence diplomacy initiatives of the RoC in the Eastern Mediterranean, as have been deployed in approximately the last decade.

### **The RoC’s Bilateral Defence Diplomacy Initiatives in its *Neighbourhood***

This section will feature an examination of the RoC’s bilateral initiatives in defence diplomacy with its Eastern Mediterranean neighbours during the period 2010 through 2017. This policy is best described by the volume of bilateral cooperation relations with Israel, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan.<sup>4</sup>

#### ***Israel***

Israel and the Republic of Cyprus are enjoying a new and flourishing partnership in recent years, despite the fact that relations have not always been good. During the latter decades of the twentieth century, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, the RoC had voiced misgivings over Israel’s close defence alliance with Turkey, while Nicosia prioritized its relationships with the Arab states of the region. However, from 2009, those relations between the two countries were set on a different basis. One of the main reasons for this turn was the disintegration of Israel’s relationship with Turkey, because of various events,<sup>5</sup> together with

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<sup>1</sup> G. Winger, ‘The Velvet Gauntlet: A Theory of Defence Diplomacy’, in Lisiak A. & Smolenski N. (eds.), *What do I do?.* Vienna: IWM Junior Visiting Fellows’ Conferences, Vol. 33 (2014), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Brig. K. A. Muthanna, ‘Military Diplomacy’, *Perspectives*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2011), 8

<sup>3</sup> The RoC has also initiated some multilateral (and particularly trilateral) defence diplomacy initiatives and its neighboring states (Cyprus - Greece - Israel, Cyprus - Greece - Egypt, however, the analysis of these initiatives are fall outside of the scope of this paper.

<sup>4</sup> It must be stressed that the RoC was traditionally maintained extremely close defence relations with another neighbouring state, Greece from the establishment of the Republic, however, since this is a special case and will be analysed in a different paper

<sup>5</sup> About the Turkish - Israel Relations see: O. Bengio, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

the turmoil thrown up by the Arab Spring. Having cooperated strategically with Turkey in previous times, Israel had to face major issues as their relationship with Turkey deteriorated. Tensions between the two nations led to Israel looking to make new friends in the area in order to avoid regional isolation, and this became the foundation for a new accord between Cyprus and Israel. As Cyprus was the single non-hostile nation with which it shared air and sea boundaries, the case for cooperation with Cyprus was attractive to Israel.

Without a doubt, the discovery of hydrocarbons in both states was another reason that enhanced the rapprochement of Israel and Cyprus. The possibility of mutually beneficial official cooperation between Cyprus and Israel became apparent for the first time in December 2010, when the two countries signed a delimitation agreement on their Exclusive Economic Zones. Cyprus President Dimitris Christofias visited Israel in March 2011 for the first-ever official visit by a Cypriot head of state.<sup>6</sup> In November of the same year, Israeli President Shimon Peres paid an official visit to Cyprus, where four agreements were signed between the two countries on research and development, renewable energy, archeology and telecommunications.<sup>7</sup> During the visit, the Israeli President stated that the RoC is ‘an important strategic partner for Israel’, and expressed his hopes that ‘the strategic relations between our countries will strengthen and the cooperation deepen’.<sup>8</sup> In February 2012, Netanyahu visited Cyprus, the first visit of an Israeli Prime Minister in history.<sup>9</sup>

The field of defence had not seen any particular collaboration in recent times between the two states. The RoC had bought a small amount of Israeli military hardware in the mid-1990s, but generally, the two sides were unwilling to cooperate much more. However, the rapprochement between Cyprus and Israel at the political level has led to the gradual expansion of initiatives and contacts in the defence sector, mainly after 2009, where the two defence ministries explored the possibility of working together. In January 2012, the official kick-start of their defence relations was initiated, as the RoC Minister of Defense Demetris Eliades visited Israel, the first defence minister from Cyprus to do so. In February 2012, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Cyprus for the first time, whereupon it was agreed that Israel could use Cyprus’ airspace and territorial waters if it needed to conduct search and rescue operations.<sup>10</sup> In December 2012, a bilateral cooperation programme for 2013 was signed. Within the frame of this programme, in April 2013, a joint exercise was conducted within and outside the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus.<sup>11</sup>

In May 2013, RoC Minister of Defence Photis Photiou paid an official visit to Israel. During the visit, Israeli Minister of Defence Moshe Ya’alon stressed the importance of the strategic relationship between Israel and the RoC, and explained ‘Israel’s intention to improve the preparedness of its navy in the Mediterranean to protect the gas facilities.’<sup>12</sup> In February 2014, for the first time a joint military exercise was conducted between the RoC and

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<sup>6</sup> Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in Tel Aviv, available at [http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/embassies/embassy\\_telaviv.nsf/DMLbilateral\\_gr/DMLbilateral\\_gr?OpenDocument](http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/embassies/embassy_telaviv.nsf/DMLbilateral_gr/DMLbilateral_gr?OpenDocument), accessed 1 May 2017.

<sup>7</sup> F. Toli, ‘Israel’s Peres to Visit Cyprus’, *Greek Reporter.com*, 2 November 2011, available at: <https://greece.greekreporter.com/2011/11/02/israels-peres-to-visit-cyprus/>, accessed 1 May 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘President Peres Meets with Cypriot President Anastasiades’, [Press Release], May 7, 2013, available at: <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2013/Pages/Peres-meets-Cypriot-President-Anastasiades.aspx>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>9</sup> The Economist, ‘Israel and Cyprus - Getting Friendly’, *The Economist* (2012, February 18), available at: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2012/02/israel-and-cyprus>, accessed 10 November 2018.

<sup>10</sup> A. Stergiou, ‘Greece, Cyprus and Israel Change the Military Balance in the Mediterranean’, *Geopolitical Intelligence Service* (4 December 2013), available at: <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/greece-cyprus-and-israel-change-the-military-balance-in-the-mediterranean-politics.644.html>, accessed 10 November 2018.

<sup>11</sup> E. Benari, ‘Israel and Cyprus to Hold Joint Military Exercise’, *Israeli Frontline* (10 April 2013), available at: <http://www.israelifrontline.com/2013/04/israel-and-cyprus-to-hold-join.html> (accessed 10 June 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Arutz Shevi, ‘Israel and Cyprus to Improve Military Cooperation’, *Israel International News* (n.d.), available at <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/Flash.aspx/267521#.VQ6hgY7kfTN>, accessed 10 June 2017.

Israel, called *Onisilos-Gideon*, off the RoC's southern coast, involving the Israeli air force.<sup>13</sup> Photiou declared in a press conference: 'The relations between Cyprus and Israel are entering a new phase. I am confident that the strategic dialogue that began several months ago will benefit both countries and will continue in all areas, including energy security'.<sup>14</sup> In May 2014, five Israeli navy ships visited and participated in the multinational exercise *Argonaut 2014*.<sup>15</sup> In August of the same year, the new Cypriot Minister of Defence Christoforos Fokaides paid an official visit to Israel. Fokaides agreed at his conference with Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon to create a joint committee to assist in implementing an upgrade of defensive collaboration between the two countries.<sup>16</sup> In February 2016, Moshe Ya'alon made the first official visit to Cyprus, during which he and Fokaides signed a Status of Forces agreement (SOFA).<sup>17</sup> Speaking after the meeting, the Israeli Minister said: 'The relationships between our defence establishments, as well as between our armed forces and intelligence agencies, are long-standing, productive and important. My visit here today demonstrates a strong relationship.'<sup>18</sup>

During 2017, the Cypriot Minister of Defence visited Israel three times, where the appointment of a Cypriot defence attaché to Israel was announced.<sup>19</sup> The attaché took his office in September of the year. Moreover, during 2017, many joint military exercises were conducted. In March the military exercise *Onisilos-Gideon*<sup>20</sup> was held, and in June the military exercises of *Iason 1* for training in air force activities and *Kinyras – Saoul* for the training of ground forces were conducted.<sup>21</sup> In December, the joint military exercises *Iason 2*, *Nikoklis-David* and *Onisilos-Gideon* were held with the ground and airborne units and personnel of the Cypriot and Israeli armed forces.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'The Armed Forces of the Republic of Cyprus and the State of Israel hold a joint exercise named "Onisilos-Gideon"', [Press Release] (11 February 2014), available at: <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/FF3E4C24E329CBC9C2257D9E002A91F6?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 June 2017).

<sup>14</sup> Turner, K, 'Cyprus and Israel Mount Joint Military Exercise', *Cyprus Mail*, (1 November 2014), available at: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2014/01/11/cyprus-israel-mount-joint-military-exercise> (accessed 10 June 2017).

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC) Joint Rescue Coordination Center, 'Multinational Exercise "ARGONAUT 2014"', [Press Release] (19 May 2014), available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/CJRCC.nsf/All/CA73F1C8296FCDE0C2257CDD00457921?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Christou, J., 'Defence Minister Concludes Israel Visit', *Cyprus Mail* (4 August 2015), available at: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2015/08/04/defence-minister-concludes-israel-visit/>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>17</sup> The agreement defines the rights and obligations of each country's military personnel during joint activities.

<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'First official visit by the Israeli Minister of Defense to Cyprus. An Agreement on the Status of Forces was signed' (in Greek), [Press Release] (24 February 2016), available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/FDA813524FCCE376C2257F630041F07E?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'Visit by the Minister of Defense to Israel as part of a series of visits to the Eastern Mediterranean (in Greek), [Press Release] (14 May 2017), available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/9D90086B1F0F111BC2258121002313F8?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'The "Onisilos-Gideon" exercise was successfully completed' (in Greek), [Press Release] (22 March 2017) available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/C7DB27407F52D0C3C22580EC00227304?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'The exercises "IASON 1/2017" and "KINYRAS-SAUL 2017"' were successfully completed (Greek: Ολοκληρώθηκαν με επιτυχία οι ασκήσεις «ΙΑΣΩΝ 1/2017» και «ΚΙΝΥΡΑΣ-ΣΑΟΥΛ 2017»), [Press Release] (14 June 2017), available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/D0788D0CE04FEC14C2258141001BF52E?OpenDocument> accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'Military Exercises Iason, Nikoklis-David and Onisilos-Gideon' (Greek: Ασκήσεις «ΙΑΣΩΝ», «ΝΙΚΟΚΛΗΣ-ΔΑΥΙΔ» και «ΟΝΗΣΙΛΟΣ-ΓΕΔΕΩΝ»), [Press Release] (3-14 December 2017), available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/D0788D0CE04FEC14C2258141001BF52E?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

Broadly translated, our findings indicate that from 2010, the bilateral relations between the Republic of Cyprus and Israel have entered a new and flourishing period at the defence level. In particular, from 2012 to 2017, many high-level visits have taken place, such as between the ministers of defence, high ranking officials and delegations of the two ministries. Also, many defence agreements have been signed in which Cyprus and Israel have conducted several joint military and search and rescue exercises. All the above confirm that in five years, the RoC, via gradual defence diplomacy efforts, established high-level relations with Israel.

### ***Arab Republic of Egypt***

The diplomatic political relations between the Republic of Cyprus and Egypt were very good since the establishment of the Republic, mainly due to the two states' participation in the Non-Aligned Movement.<sup>23</sup> A serious incident in the late 1970s resulted in a break in their diplomatic relations for several years,<sup>24</sup> however, diplomatic relations of the two states has been restored gradually. Initially, a significant event was the two states' agreement on the delimitation of their Exclusive Economic Zone in 2003.<sup>25</sup> The discovery of hydrocarbons in the Cyprus EEZ was an additional event which opened up new opportunities for the two states to cooperate in the energy sector. More specifically, Nicosia and Cairo signed an agreement for the construction of an underwater pipeline to export natural gas to Egypt. The pipeline will transport natural gas from the 'Aphrodite' field to a liquefaction plant in the town of Encu in Egypt. The aim of the agreement is to ensure the timely and safe development, construction and operation of the underwater pipeline, said the Cypriot Minister of Energy Mr. Lakkotropis. He also said, 'It constitutes one more critical step for our country towards the effective exploitation of undersea wealth in the Cypriot EEZ to benefit all Cypriots,' the Cypriot minister said. 'Ultimately, through re-exporting gas from Aphrodite in the form of LNG, the pipeline will enable the transport of the first quantities of natural gas from the eastern Mediterranean to the EU.'<sup>26</sup>

An additional event which seems important for the rapprochement between Cyprus and Egypt was that Egypt severed its diplomatic relations with Turkey in 2013. Turkey's and Egypt's worsening relations since Mohammad Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood leader, was deposed in 2013 was illustrated by the fact that each country recalled their ambassadors from the other's capitals in November of that year. These diplomatic casualties occurred following Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan's announcement that he 'will never respect those who come to power through military coups.' Erdoğan's regime was sympathetic to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and made efforts to reinstate Morsi as president, but the military regime that took over in Egypt stated that Erdoğan was guilty of 'attempting to influence public opinion against Egyptian interests, and supporting meetings of organizations that seek to create instability in the country.'<sup>27</sup> The divergence of Turkish and the new military-backed

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<sup>23</sup> The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a group of states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. As of 2012, the movement has 120 members. See Non-Aligned Movement: <http://csstc.org/>.

<sup>24</sup> Egyptian Special Forces invaded Larnaca International Airport on February 10, 1978 to try to end a hijacking. Prior to that, two terrorists had murdered well-known Egyptian editor Youssef Sehai, and then took a number of Arabs hostages who had been at a Nicosia conference. While Cypriot military were attempting to negotiate, the Egyptian forces made an unauthorised assault, which resulted in a gun battle between Egyptian and Cypriot soldiers, ending with the death or injury of over 20 Egyptian soldiers..

<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs (RoC), 'Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf', [Press Release] (19 October 2016), available at: [http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2016.nsf/mfa86\\_en/mfa86\\_en?OpenDocument](http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2016.nsf/mfa86_en/mfa86_en?OpenDocument) (accessed 10 June 2017).

<sup>26</sup> Psyllides, G. 'Cyprus, Egypt sign gas pipeline agreement'. *Cyprus Mail* (19 September 2018), available at <https://cyprus-mail.com/2018/09/19/cyprus-egypt-sign-gas-pipeline-agreement/>, accessed 20 December 2018.

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Policy and the Strategic Relationship of Greece, Cyprus, and Israel: Power Shifts in the Eastern Mediterranean.

government in Egypt undoubtedly was one of the main factors that brought Cairo closer to Nicosia.

The establishment of excellent political relations between the two states has led to the gradual development of relations in the defence field. The primary motivations behind this cooperation have been on the one hand the common perceptions in energy-related interests and on the other hand the shared insights regarding Turkey as a security threat. The two states' defence relations have gradually developed since 2014. Initially, they cooperated in search and rescue matters, such as a joint exercise that was held off the coast of Larnaca in May 2015, and was attended by staff of the Egyptian Naval Academy of Alexandria. From 2015, defence relations intensified between the two countries, with the two defence ministers making regular visits and signing several agreements on defence-related issues. On November 2015, Egyptian Minister of Defense General Sedki Sobhi paid an official visit to Cyprus, which was the first visit by a defence minister of Egypt. During the visit, he and Fokaides signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Defense and Military Cooperation between the two countries.<sup>28</sup> In response, the Cypriot Defence Minister Fokaides also visited Cairo on February 2016, the first visit by a Cypriot Defence Minister to Egypt. During the visit, a bilateral military cooperation programme for 2016 was signed.<sup>29</sup>

In October 2016, Egypt participated for the first time with observers in the multinational exercise *Nemesis*,<sup>30</sup> while in April 2017, the Fokaides officially visited Egypt for the third time. During the meeting, the RoC announced that they would post a defence attaché at the embassy in Cairo from October 2017.<sup>31</sup> In August 2017, a military delegation from Egypt's Ministry of Defence paid a three-day visit to Cyprus and signed with Nicosia a bilateral programme for the implementation of military and maritime cooperation in search and rescue missions for 2017-2018.<sup>32</sup> In December 2017 a Memorandum of Cooperation on Aeronautical Search and Rescue was signed during Defence Minister Sobhy's official visit to Cyprus.<sup>33</sup> Beyond signing defence / military agreements and exchanging official visits between the two ministries of defence, cooperation is identified in other cases, such as exchanges in military personnel for educational purposes.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, through the

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<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'First official visit by the Egyptian Minister of Defense to Cyprus - A Memorandum of Military and Defense Cooperation signed' (in Greek), [Press Release] (3 November 2015), available at: <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/4A122751FA7BC502C2257EF2004AD506?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>29</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'First official visit by the Cypriot Minister of Defense to Egypt' (in Greek), [Press Release] (28 February 2016) available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/9F18BE51CF1750E9C2257F670057625F?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>30</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'Multinational Exercise Nemesis- 2016' (in Greek), [Press Release] (12 October 2016), available at: <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/0C3AE7527544D3F8C225804A004F877B?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>31</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'Minister of Defence meets with President El Sisi in Egypt - It was established Permanent Co-ordinating Committee on Defense Issues' (in Greek), [Press Release] (12 April 2017), available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/F9546D3081EE3471C225810000570A92?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>32</sup> Gold News, 'Cyprus and Egypt Sign Program for Implementing Their Military Cooperation', *Gold News* (25 August 2017), available at <http://www.goldnews.com.cy/en/energy/cyprus-and-egypt-sign-program-for-implementing-their-military-cooperation>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'Egyptian Defense Minister's Official Visit - Signing of Memorandum on Aeronautical Research-Rescue' (in Greek), [Press Release] (12 December 2017), available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/A50D0190A151E393C22581F400456D5F?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>34</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'Delegation from the Egyptian training ship "SHALATIN" visits the JRCC Larnaca, [Press Release] (21 December 2017), available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/CJRCC.nsf/All/DF992A2DE7B5E347C22581FD004717ED?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

Memorandum of Understanding between RoC and Egypt, the two states have held many joint exercises in search and rescue.<sup>35</sup>

The new regional conditions, as were described above, favoured the gradual development of closer defence relations between Nicosia and Cairo, since the two states had major motivations to develop these relations. On the one hand, for Cyprus, the development of defence relations with a state which has over a million square kilometres of territory, 2450 kilometres of coastline of which roughly 900 kilometres are on the Mediterranean Sea, and a population of 84 million, was a great achievement.<sup>36</sup> In addition, Egypt is recognised as a major power in the Arab world, countering the ambitions that Turkey harbours to be a dominant force in the worldwide Muslim fraternity. It is also recognised that the armed forces have a lot of respect within Egypt, and many senior soldiers enter politics when they leave the armed forces. On the other hand, for Egypt, the establishment of relations with Cyprus had a significant importance for the country since Cyprus, beyond the fact that it supports Egypt's positions in various international forums, and mainly in the European Parliament, was regarded as a non-hostile, non-competitive state and the safest choice as a hub for the exportation of the Egyptian gas to Europe.

### **Lebanon**

The Republic of Cyprus has traditionally maintained very good diplomatic relations with Lebanon; however, beyond their close relations, they have not cooperated much on matters of defence. Only in the last decade have the two states initiated closer defence relations, brought on by two major events. In 2006, during the military conflict in Lebanon between Hezbollah paramilitary forces and the Israel Defence Forces, the Republic of Cyprus contributed to the evacuation of Lebanese refugees. The Government of the Republic of Cyprus granted access to its resources and infrastructure in order to facilitate safe passage from Lebanon. Cyprus also became the hub for delivering humanitarian aid to Lebanon. A second turning point was the 2007 agreement that the two countries signed regarding the maritime delimitation of their Exclusive Economic Zones.

Following these landmark events, cooperation developed between the countries, thereby improving relations in the field of defence. Initially, in January 2008, RoC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs negotiated an agreement between Cyprus and Lebanon on aeronautical and maritime search and rescue.<sup>37</sup> The two ministries of defence then made initial contacts in 2011. In September 2012, the Minister of Defence of RoC, Mr Dimitris Eliades, paid an official visit to Lebanon, which was the first visit by a Cypriot Minister of Defence.<sup>38</sup> The next year, another visit was paid by the Cypriot Minister of Defence, whereby a Memorandum of Understanding on Defence and Military Cooperation was signed.<sup>39</sup> Official

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<sup>35</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'International Exercise Search and Rescue CYPEGYP - 02/17'' (in Greek), [Press Release] (22 December 2017), available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/C1F7F8ED0F953E02C2258204001FB48F?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>36</sup> *CIA World Factbook*, available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/eg.html>, accessed 27 March 2012.

<sup>37</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs (RoC), 'Cyprus and Lebanon sign an agreement on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue', [Press Release] (16 January 2008), available at <http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2016.nsf/All/412081E0FA216C46C2257FA000458A4D?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>38</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'Official Visit by the Minister of Defense to Lebanon and Talks with the Leadership of the Country' (in Greek), [Press Release] (21 September 2012), available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/13D67786AAACEEF55C2257D9E002A90CD?OpenDocument> (accessed 10 June 2017).

<sup>39</sup> Cyprus Investment Counsel, 'Lebanon - Cyprus', *Cynvestco.com* (2016, August), available at <http://cynvestco.com/wp/2016/08/21/lebanon-cyprus/> (accessed 10 June 2017).

visits of the Ministers of Defence and other high ranking officials continued and intensified in the following years, mainly during 2016 and 2017. During a visit by the Cypriot Minister of Defence to Lebanon in October 2017, a decision was made on the formation of a joint committee for the development of defence relations between the two states.<sup>40</sup>

The RoC MoD offered several search and rescue training exercises to Lebanese armed forces. In the The RoC also promised to help Lebanon build a search-and-rescue center to respond to emergencies off its coastline.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the Lebanese army participated in the annual multinational exercise *Argonaut* in 2013 with ships and from 2014 until 2017 with observers. The Republic of Cyprus also provided military materials to the Lebanese Government. From 2015 until 2017, Cyprus provided ammunition worth over €20 million, the last tranche of which was delivered in October 2016.<sup>42</sup>

### ***Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan***

Bilateral relations commenced between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Republic of Cyprus in early 1962. Cyprus' first embassy was opened in Amman in December 2009, while the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's embassy opened in Nicosia in August 2016. In the interests of bilateral cooperation, many reciprocal official visits have happened.

The two defence ministries had had no contact since 2014, until 2017 when, after a series of negotiations between the two ministries, Cyprus and Jordan signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Defence and Military issues during an official visit by Defence Minister Fokaides in Jordan in May 2017.<sup>43</sup> The RoC Ministry of Defence also provided equipment, in the framework of Jordan's international initiative, known as *Aqaba Process*,<sup>44</sup> to counter terrorism.<sup>45</sup> In November 2017, Jordanian Lieutenant General Mahmoud Fraihat paid an official visit to Cyprus for the signing of a Bilateral Military Cooperation Programme.<sup>46</sup> The Minister of Defence of the RoC pointed out that: 'The signature of a Bilateral Military Cooperation Programme puts in practice practical actions, so that this cooperation can become even more fruitful to the mutual benefit of our countries in various areas, such as

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<sup>40</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'Official visit by the Minister of Defense Christoforos Fokaidis in Lebanon' (in Greek), [Press Release] (30 October 2017), available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/933BB90296A53CA5C22581C9005548B8?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Cyprus Mail, 'Beirut and Nicosia to deepen cooperation, new ambassador says', *Cyprus Mail* (30 December 2017), available at: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/12/30/beirut-nicosia-deepen-cooperation-new-ambassador-says/>, accessed 10 June 2017; The Associated Press, 'Cyprus to help Lebanon build Mediterranean Sea rescue center', *Defence News* (30 November 2017), available at <https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2017/11/30/cyprus-to-help-lebanon-build-mediterranean-sea-rescue-center/>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>42</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'Know-how and ... "Zastava" from Cyprus to Lebanon' (in Greek), [Press Release] (30 October 2017), available at: <http://www.philenews.com/eidiseis/politiki/article/447991/technogonia-kai-zastaba-apo-kypro-pros-libano>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>43</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'Cyprus-Jordan had signed a Military Memorandum of Understanding' (in Greek), [Press Release] (23 May 2017), available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/17D60BDAACF36E9BC2258129003FA5C4?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>44</sup> The Aqaba Meetings are part of a series of international meetings launched by Jordan in 2015 to bolster security and military cooperation, coordination and exchange of expertise among regional and international partners to counter terrorism and its threat to global peace and security within a holistic approach.

<sup>45</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'Official visit by the Head of Jordanian Armed Forces' (in Greek), [Press Release] (30 November 2017), available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/45A7A94086E45DACC22581E90020F8A8?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>46</sup> Ministry of Defence (RoC), 'Official visit by the Jordanian Lieutenant General Mahmoud A. Fraihat to Cyprus' (in Greek), [Press Release] (1 December 2017), available at <http://www.mod.gov.cy/mod/mod.nsf/All/3CDE6B2E65DAAE88C22581E9004659C7?OpenDocument>, accessed 10 June 2017.



joint exercises, training and other joint programmes dealing with common threats'.<sup>47</sup> The RoC has also accredited a defence attaché at its diplomatic mission in Jordan, who is stationed in Cairo.<sup>48</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Despite the fact that Cyprus is a small state in the international system, with all this entails in the exercise of its diplomatic practice, a series of different dynamics and regional changes led the Cypriot governments, independently of their political orientation, to aggressively pursue defence collaborations during the last decade. This policy was even more obvious in the RoC's bilateral defence diplomacy initiatives with its neighbouring states, such as Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon. In view of the volume and the quality of different parameters (e.g., signatures of agreements, regular high-level visits, common military drills, etc.), the RoC, via a gradual and systematic defence diplomacy policy, undoubtedly, has developed close defence relations and partnerships with its neighboring states. It is noted, however, that the quality and quantity of the defence relations RoC has formed with its neighbouring states differ in each case. There is no doubt that the deepening of defence relations with Israel and Egypt is a priority for Cyprus' defence diplomacy for obvious reasons. In addition, beyond the fact that the RoC has developed close relationships with its neighbouring states in the defence field, it must be stressed that these defence partnerships should not be confused with military alliances, which, of course, are something very different.

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<sup>47</sup> Cyprus Daily, 'Cyprus and Jordan sign bilateral military cooperation programme', *Cyprus Times* (1 December 2017), available at <http://english.cyprustimes.com/2017/12/03/cyprus-jordan-sign-bilateral-military-cooperation-programme/>, accessed 10 June 2017.

<sup>48</sup> Cyprus News Agency, 'Cyprus Defence Minister meets Egyptian President', *CNA.org.cy* (12 April 2017), available at: <http://www.cna.org.cy/webnews-en.aspx?a=b202944eba10483aaff99bf04b54609>, accessed 10 June 2017.

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# **THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS ENERGY SECURITY CRISIS MANAGEMENT: A DUAL THEORY APPROACH**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The hydrocarbon research activities have brought economic and political benefits to the RoC. However, it has also brought a new field of confrontation between the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) and the Turkey/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) axis. This paper aims to contribute to the discussion related to the RoC energy security crisis management and more specifically on the variables determining it. Several reasons made the researcher avoid limiting his analysis on a single theory and apply simultaneously two paradigms: Neoclassical Realism and Social Constructivism and their application are made through analytic eclecticism.

Key words: Energy Security, Crisis Management, Analytic Eclecticism

## **INTRODUCTION**

Giedrius Česnakas (2010) has argued that the existing theoretical background on energy security and energy diplomacy is limited. In fact, he has claimed a considerable number of scholars base their analysis mainly on historical and empirical assumptions and not on theoretical evidence stemming from IR theory or foreign policy analysis.

On the case of the RoC, several public statements made by the highest level governmental officials have led the author to the conclusion they consider the state's energy security primarily as a foreign policy issue (Anastasiades, 2014 and Lakkotrypis, 2018). Thus, this paper rests on the argument that like any other foreign policy issue it is divided into two subcategories: long term and crisis management.

This paper discusses the RoC energy security crisis management and in particular, intends to answer the following question:

“Which are the variables determining the RoC energy security crisis management.”

The next section, as the main part of the paper is divided into three subsections. It begins with a brief discussion on the terms foreign policy crisis management and energy security and continues how analytic eclecticism makes the simultaneous application of different theories evitable. The next subsection is devoted to the application of Neoclassical Realism (NcR) and Social Constructivism (SC) to the RoC energy security and finishes by answering the stated research question.

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## THE RoC ENERGY SECURITY CRISIS MANAGEMENT MECHANISM

Charles Hermann (1969) was among the first who tried to both define the term “foreign policy crisis”. He has described it as a situation where at least one of the actors is a state and has three characteristics:

- Threatens high priority goals set by a state’s decision makers
- Restricts the amount of time available for a response before the situation is transformed and
- Surprises the decision makers when it occurs

On the other hand, the lack of a commonly accepted definition describing energy security makes its analysis rather problematic. Ang, B.W. & Choong, W.L. & Ng, T.S (2015) have found in literature 83 different definitions. Natalya Esakova (2013) has suggested the division of the different definitions into three groups:

- The strictly economic
- The strictly political and
- The “umbrella terms” including elements, without being limited to, the previous two categories

This lack of a commonly accepted definition has led the author to the decision instead of trying to adjust an existing definition to the examined case determine the variables having an impact on it. Thus, for the RoC, an energy security crisis is a situation where one or more of those variables are threatened and the decision maker has a minimum time to react.

To do so, he has based his research strategy on the following two objectives:

- Clarify who is/are the RoC decision maker (s)
- Identify the variables the RoC decision maker (s) take into consideration while dealing with an energy security crisis

Concerning the first objective, the author could accept Nikos Christodoulides (18<sup>th</sup> of June, 2018) viewpoint arguing the Ministerial Council is responsible for any decision related to the RoC foreign and defense policy. However, significant provisions on the RoC constitution have led him to the decision to separate his opinion from the RoC Minister of Foreign Affairs and consider the President as the central player on the crisis management mechanism.

Due to the limitations of this paper concerning its length the author will limit his discussion on the Articles 48 and 57, mentioning, among other rights that President can:

- Sign international treaties, conventions, and agreements
- Order the application of emergency measures including the military law
- Appoint any citizen to a Ministerial position, including those of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defense and veto the council’s decisions related to the state’s foreign affairs, defense and security issues.

About the author’s decision to base his analysis on the two theories it stems from the fact he shares the same opinion with scholars considering all IR theories having significant weaknesses that make them non-applicable on real-life foreign policy cases (Walt, 1998). Prior preceding further the author finds it necessary to mention he does not consider the two theories he applies to have an equal impact on the examined case. SC acts, as a supportive theory to NcR due to the author’s belief that NcR can identify the majority of the factors having an impact on the RoC energy security crisis management. On the contrary, some factors that have an impact on the

examined case and NcR do not pay so much attention, whereas SC considers them essential. The question posed here is: “How NcR and SC can be applied simultaneously?”

A brief answer to this question could be through a pluralist method of analysis. This paper for significant reasons analyzed below has decided to apply the one referred to literature as “analytic eclecticism.” Even though it was a pre-existing technique, Peter J. Katzenstein and Antonio Okawara (2001) are among the first who have used the area of foreign policy analysis. As it is seen below on the next page, the two scholars consider this approach acting as a link between Realism, Liberalism and Social Constructivism.

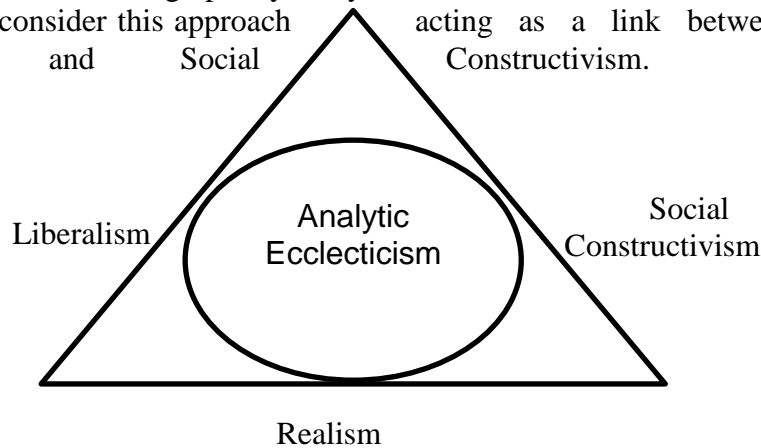


Figure 1: The triad of major IR paradigms (Source: Peter J. Katzenstein and Rundra Sil (2010))

Given the fact, analytic eclecticism is not the only pluralist approach aiming to introduce different paradigms under a single case the author has selected it mainly for two reasons. At first, analytic eclecticism aims to provide answers to real-world problems without worrying if those solutions apply to any, single, IR theory. Thus, unlike to IR theories, which are aiming “to explain broad patterns of state’s behavior” (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2013: 432); analytic eclecticism focuses on the utility of factors on a significant time and place. As this paper investigates a particular case study during a considerable period and place the author consider analytic eclecticism a suitable approach. Secondly, analytic eclecticism consider each case unique and the foreign policy decision-making procedure a mixture of variables having a different impact both on different decision makers and various crises. Rundra Sir (2010) have argued that analytical eclecticism can be considered an approach being able to include on a single case the agents, the governmental structure, the material, and the ideological factors. On the next pages, the author aims to present a similar viewpoint concerning the variables having an impact on the RoC energy security related issues.

For Neoclassical Realists, foreign policy, both in long term and crisis, is an amalgam of different variables usually grouped into three categories: the central unit of analysis, the domestic variables, and the external variables.

Gideon Rose (1998) has described the central unit of analysis consisting of the people making the decisions on a foreign policy issue. He has also raised the issue of misperception and the impact it has on the decision-making procedure. The lack of accurate information, and the way the central unit understands the world politics are the main factors impacting the decision makers’ perception.

On the case of the RoC, the author has already clarified that the decision maker is the state’s President. Regarding the possible misperception and the RoC intelligence services capabilities to provide the President with accurate information



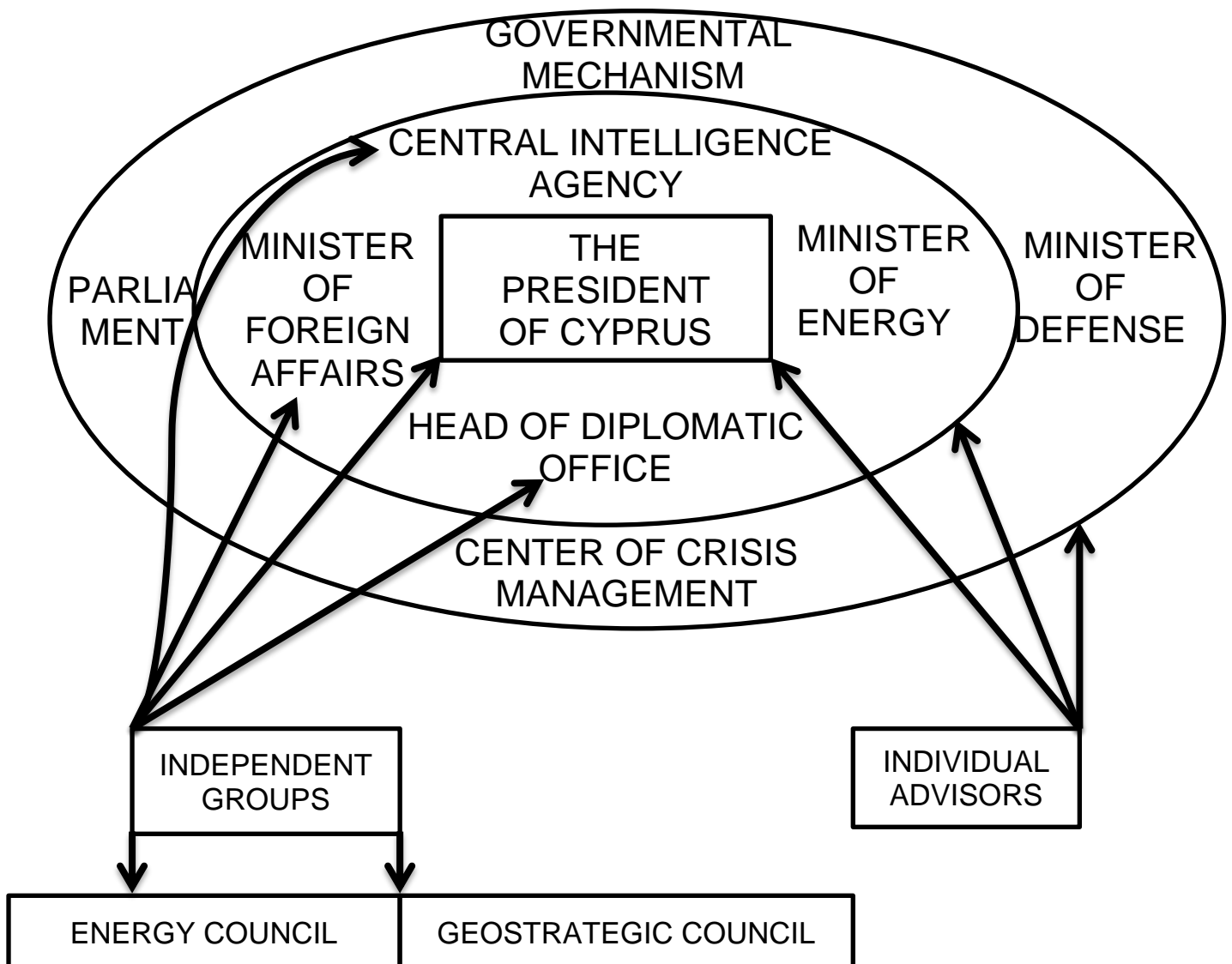
the former Head of the state's Central Intelligence Agency, Lt. Gen. (ret) Andreas Pentaras, has argued that the Agency is on a constant attempt to improve its capabilities (29 March 2019). Concerning the President's view on world politics he has repeatedly expressed his will all the issues between states being settled under the provisions of international law. However, he has admitted there are occasions when "national interests outweigh the international law (24 February 2016)."

Regarding the domestic variables Lobell et al. (2009) have argued they consist of:

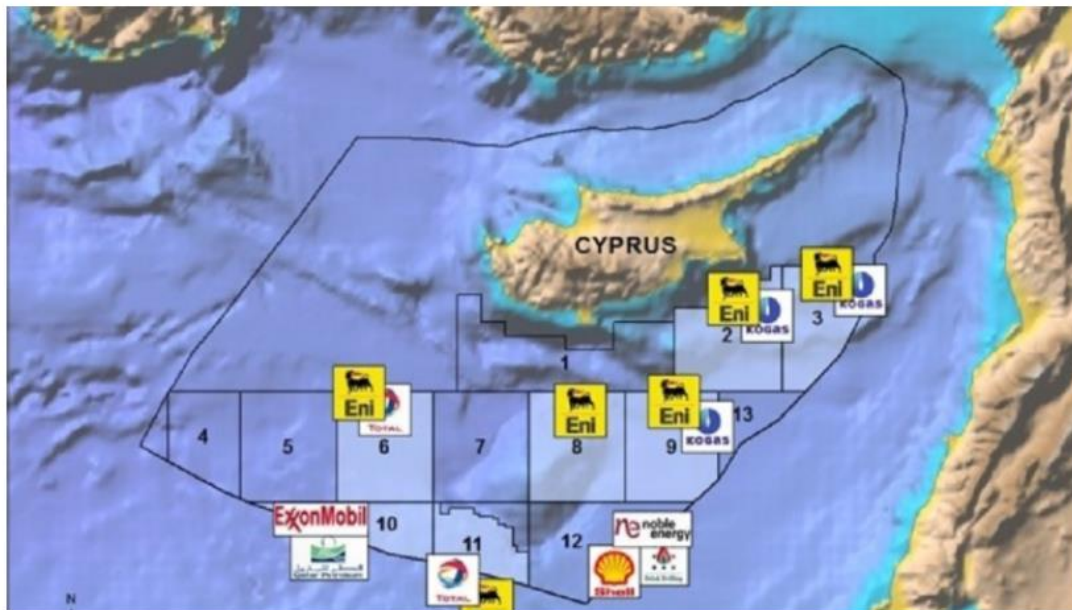
- The individuals and organizations having an impact on the decision maker,
- The available resources,
- The relative capabilities and the decision maker's ability to mobilize them.

About the people having an impact on the RoC crisis management procedure, the author on his Ph.D. thesis has proposed the figure presented on the next page. Briefly, is based on Morton Halperin and Pricilla Clapp (2005) "inner and outer circle" governmental structure and its compatibility on the RoC energy security is confirmed, among others by the state:

- Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Head of the Central Intelligence Agency



Regarding the RoC resources, this paper focuses exclusively on energy security issues. Thus, the author limits his discussion on making a brief but likely illustrative overview of the current facts related to the state’s natural gas researches. As you can see below the RoC has divided the southern maritime section of the island in 12 sea blocks and has already signed exploitation agreements on eight of them. The issue raised here is how both these energy resources will be transferred to the EU market in a price that can make them antagonistic to other consuming states.



Map 1: The Republic of Cyprus exploitation blocks (Source: The Republic Cyprus Ministry of Energy Official Website)

The RoC Minister of Energy on different occasions has presented three alternatives the state’s government discusses for exploiting the discovered hydrocarbons. On the table below the author presents the four alternative routes analysts and governmental experts have occasionally supported being the most prominent for transferring the RoC energy reserves to the EU market. During an open discussion, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has confirmed the author’s understanding that each alternative has significant pros and cons that can be divided into three groups: the political, the economic and the technological.

Alternative Solution	Political Factors	Economic Factors	Technological Factors
Liquefaction to Egypt	Medium Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
East Med pipeline	Low Risk	Medium to High Risk	High Risk
Liquefaction Facility in Cyprus	Medium to High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
Pipeline to Turkey	High Risk	Low Risk	Low Risk

Table 1: Representation of the possible alternative routes and their risk



Figure 3: Schematic Representation of a proposed route for the East Med pipeline (Source: Cyprus Mail, 2017)

Regarding the state's capabilities, Christopher Hill (2003) has divided them into four categories: military, economic, diplomatic and industrial. The author has already presented the RoC President abilities to mobilize them. However, what differentiates NcR both from Structural and Classical Realism is that it does not consider the capabilities of being an abstract concept but a mean of correlation between opponents. On the case of the RoC, it is outnumbered by the Turkey/TRNC axis on military, economic and industrial capabilities but the recent exploitations have increased its diplomatic prestige or as Gideon Rose refers to them, its external variables.

As external are defined those factors related to other states or organizations and have an impact on a state's foreign policy. On the case of the RoC the external factors are:

- The states supporting the RoC energy program. The US, Israel, Italy, and France are the states being, at least so far, more actively supporting this program and have a positive impact on the RoC energy security.
- The states and entities showing opposition to this energy program, including Turkey and the TRNC.
- The oil/gas enterprises activated on the energy program. Even though the enterprises consider energy security.

On the other hand, Alexander Wendt (1992) has argued that Social Constructivists consider foreign policy decision-making mainly impacted by:

- Significant norms. Usually, those norms are developed from the international society and being adopted by the states through international organizations (Fennimore, 2012). On the case of the RoC the state's willingness having a more active role within the EU organs combined with its enclosure on the union's energy security strategy as a potential energy consumer has led the former trying being fully harmonized with the latter's energy security related norms.
- Identity. Excluding the geopolitical and energy security related reasons behind Turkey's willingness to halt the RoC energy program, the TRNC express its opposition also for reasons related to its domestic security.

Briefly, the TRNC officials believe the exploitation of hydrocarbons may strengthen the RoC position on the negotiations for the settlement of the Cyprus issue. The question posed here is how does identity impact this issue? As someone can see below in the long term both the TRNC and the RoC citizens acknowledge that the vast majority of the island of Cyprus citizens have either a Turkish or Greek identity background. Thus, on periods of crisis, both sides turn for support to the two 'motherlands', Greece and Turkey. The two states intervention on the island's domestic disputes has a significant impact on the crisis de-escalation process. Since 1960 and mainly since 1974 we have a considerable amount of cases where both the RoC and the TRNC asked Turkey and Greece to support them on periods of tensions.

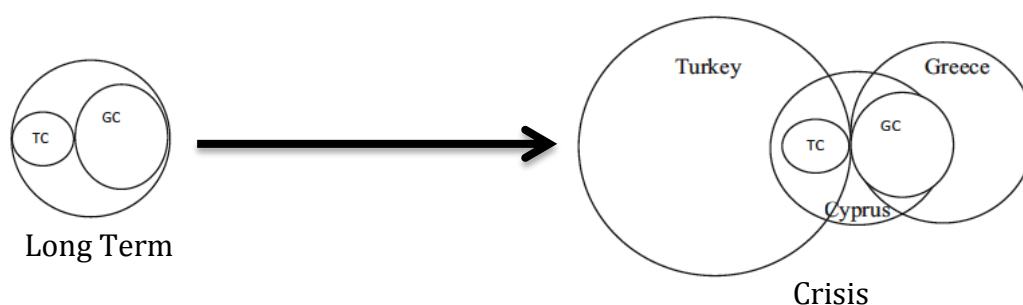


Figure 4: Schematic representation of the National Identities in the island of Cyprus in long term and crisis (Based on: Social Identity on a Divided Cyprus (Psaltis and Cakal, 2016))

Last but not least, Social Constructivists consider the decision-makers' beliefs and ideas having an essential role in the determination of the states foreign policy. The author has already explained how the RoC President understand the impact both the International Law and the national interests have on the bilateral relations. Additionally, he has clarified his willingness to avoid a military confrontation with any state in the region for any issue. This statement has to lead the author to the conclusion that the application of military means is an alternative the RoC shall use only in case it does not have another choice, for example as an act of self-defense.

## CONCLUSIONS

The RoC energy security crisis management, like any other foreign policy crisis related issue, is a dynamic, complex and fluid situation based on different variables on a determined place and time. The blind spots of the IR theories combined with the unique characteristics of each case been behind the author's decision considering the application of pluralist method an approach that can provide new insights to the energy security related issues. Concerning the RoC, the opposition the Turley/TRNC axis have on the development of its energy program make the foreign policy related parameters outnumbering both the economic and the technical variables. Thus, finding a way of shrinking the gap between the theoretical and the technocratic understanding of foreign policy crisis management and decision-making

is relatively critical. At least on the examined case study, the researcher believes that analytic eclecticism can contribute to this discussion.

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