

# Greece, Cyprus and the Crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean

**Ioannis N. Grigoriadis**

*Bilkent University*

*ioannis@bilkent.edu.tr*

# The Eastern Mediterranean in Uncharted Waters

- Main Points

- Why has the Eastern Mediterranean turned into a Conflict Zone
- Four main reasons
  - Energy
  - Cyprus
  - Libya
  - Turkey's "Blue Homeland" Project

# The Eastern Mediterranean in Uncharted Waters

## ■ Energy

- Recent energy discoveries have put the Eastern Mediterranean into the European energy map
- Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel and Turkey got involved
- Volatility in global energy markets is likely to affect the viability of several projects
- Initial estimates may prove too optimistic;
  - Yet energy has become an additional factor in regional politics





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## ■ Cyprus (I)

–Energy Monetization moves by the Republic of Cyprus

- Energy exploration
- New licenses
- Declining sentiment in energy markets
- Monetization ever more difficult

–Turkey's reaction

- Escalation and spillover towards Greece



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- Cyprus (II)
  - Turkey's View on Cyprus Discoveries
    - The Republic of Cyprus cannot exploit energy resources, as it does not represent Turkish Cypriots
    - Yet Turkey has recognized the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” in the north of the island
    - Dispatch of the exploratory vessels
      - Interruption of intercommunal negotiations

# The Eastern Mediterranean in Uncharted Waters

## ■ Libya

- The Arab Uprisings and the Libyan civil war
- Strong Turkish interest
  - Business
  - Muslim Brotherhood
- GNA vs LNA/HR
- Turkey's clash with Egypt, the UAE and Saudi Arabia
- Turkey's conflict with France

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- Turkey's Involvement in Libya
  - Sponsor of the GNA side
  - Bitter enemy of LNA/HR
  - Military engagement
  - Stronger interest in the Eastern Mediterranean
  - The November 2019 memorandum of understanding
    - Its effect on Greek-Turkish relations

# The Eastern Mediterranean in Uncharted Waters

- The “Blue Homeland” and Greek-Turkish Relations
  - Delimitation of Greek-Turkish Maritime Borders
    - A long-standing dispute referring to territorial waters, continental shelf and airspace in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean
    - The discovery of energy resources brought about the question of delimiting the exclusive economic zone (EEZ)

# The Eastern Mediterranean in Uncharted Waters

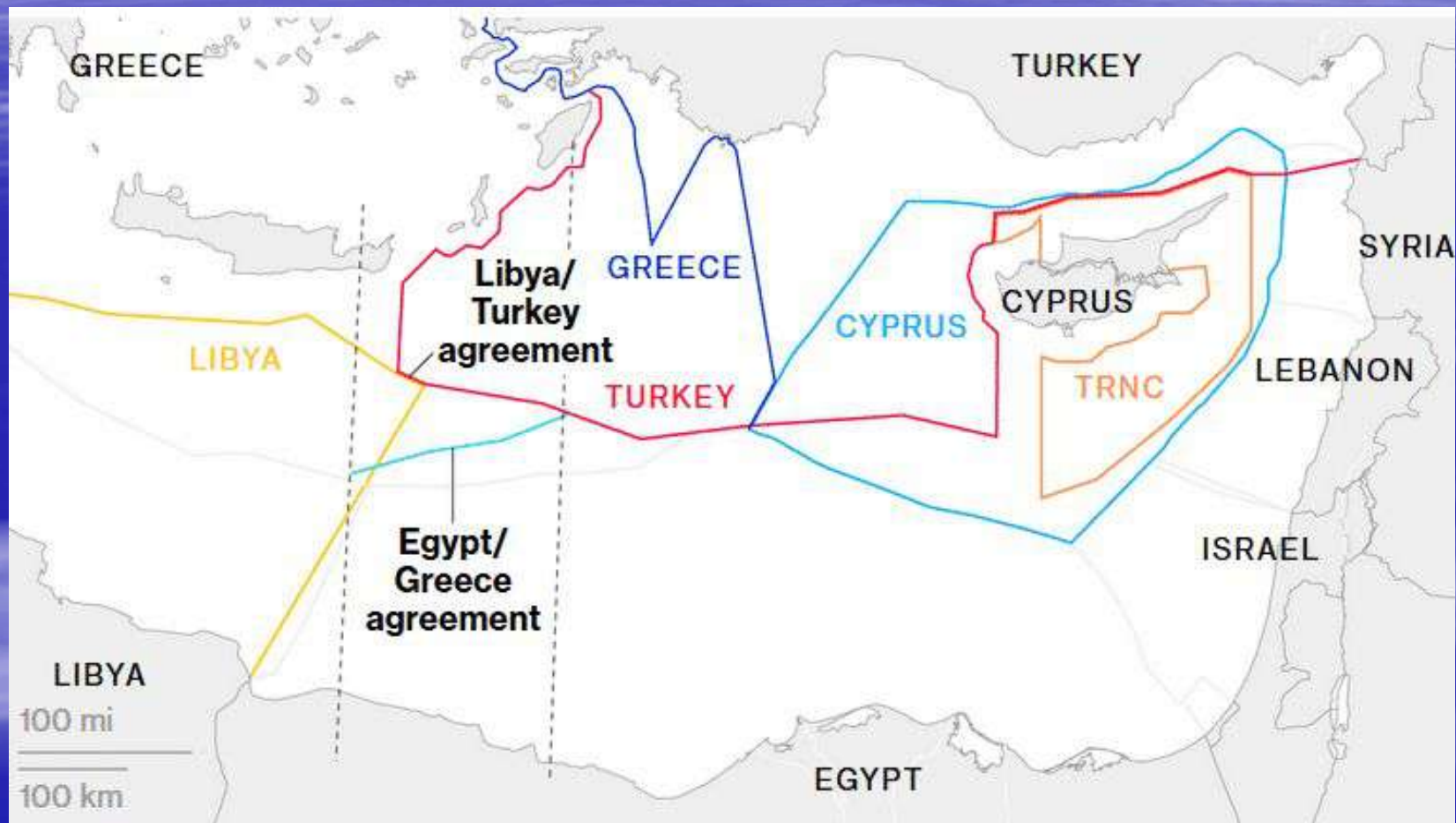




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- **Turkish Shifting Political Landscape and Foreign Policy**
  - The AKP and *Ulusalçılık*
    - From bitter animosity to swift collaboration
  - The effect of the 15 July 2016 coup attempt
  - The “Blue Homeland” vision
  - The signature of the EEZ agreement with Libya

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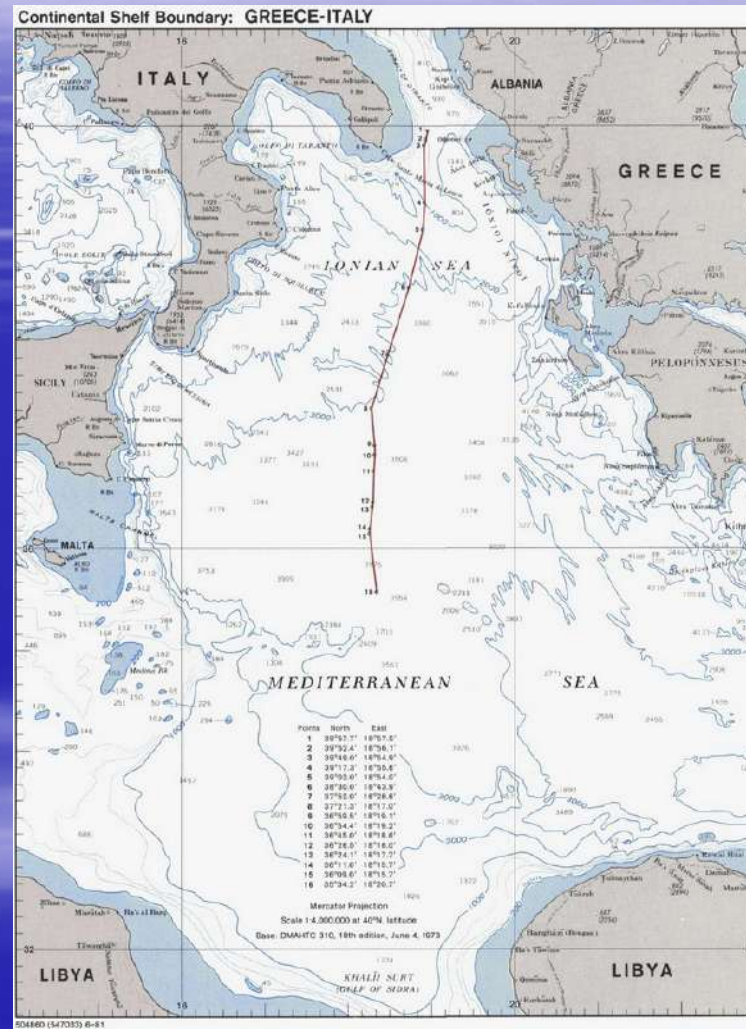
## ■ Greece's Response

- Signature of EEZ agreements with Italy and Egypt
- UNCLOS is applicable but flexibility shown
  - Islands given EEZ rights, but not always 100 percent

## ■ Turkey's Response

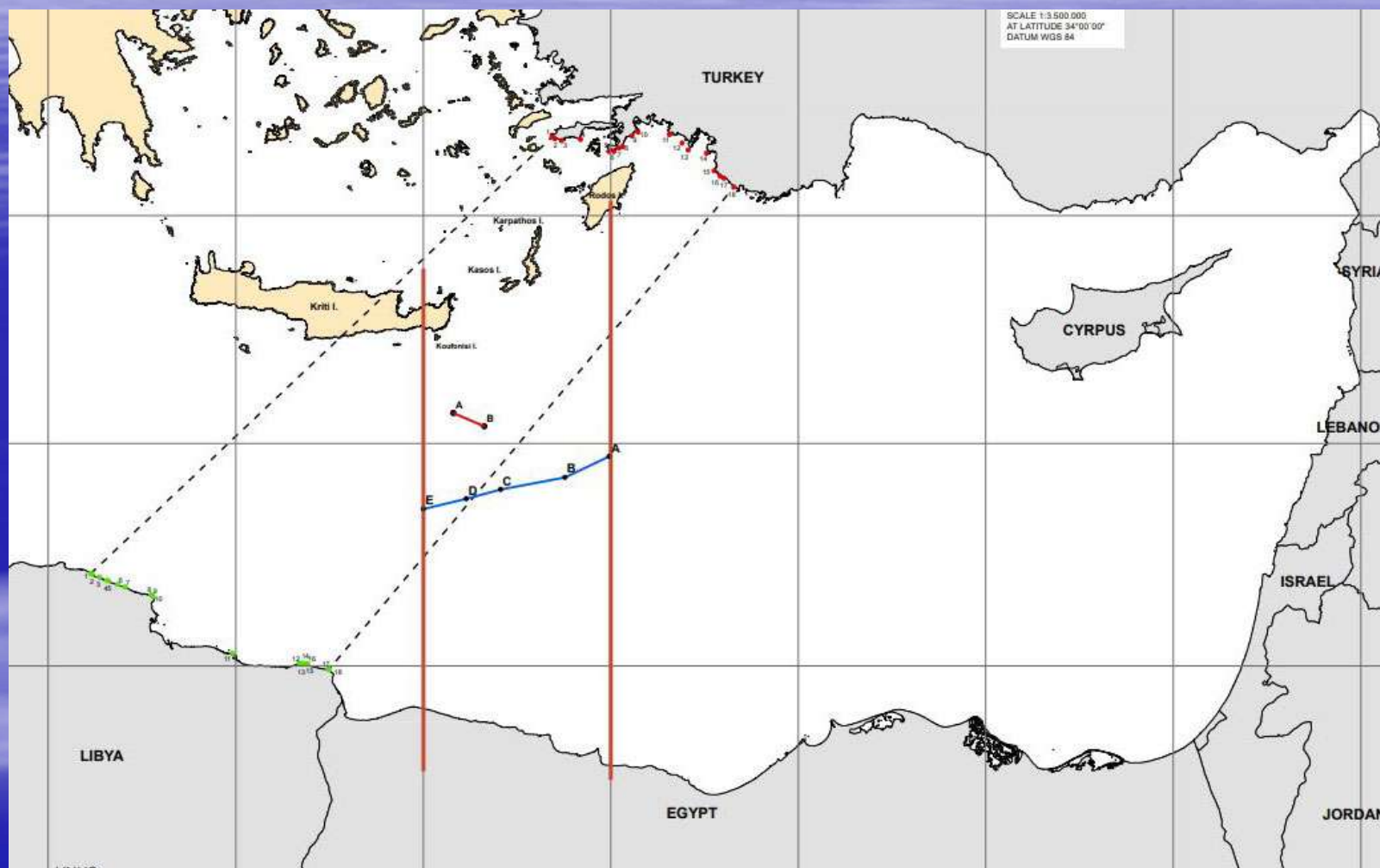
- The *Oruç Reis* vessel and exploration activities
- Military escalation and threat for an accident

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## ■ Conclusions

- Four factors have contributed to the escalation of Greek-Turkish conflict
- De-escalation should be the first step for negotiations to bring the case to ICJ
  - The ICJ has shown remarkable flexibility within the limits of UNCLOS
- Inertia is highly risky and dangerous for both countries and the region

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