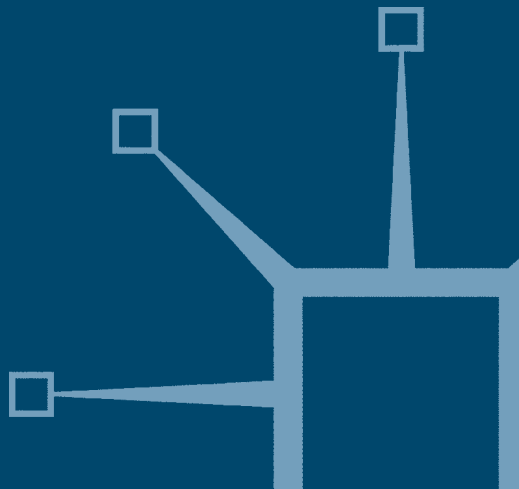


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The Greek-Turkish Conflict in the Aegean

Imagined Enemies

Alexis Heraclides



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Imagined Enemies

Alexis Heraclides

*Professor of International Relations and Conflict Resolution,
Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Greece*

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To Ada

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Abbreviations

AKEL	Progressive Party of the Working People (Cyprus)
AKP	Justice and Development Party (Turkey)
ANAP	Motherland Party (Turkey)
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CBMs	Confidence-building measures
CHP	Republican People's Party (Turkey)
CPU	Committee of Progress and Union
CUP	Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress
DSP	Democratic Left Party (Turkey)
DYP	True Path Party (Turkey)
EC	European Community (pre-1993)
EMU	European Monetary Union (of the EU)
EOKA	National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters
EU	European Union
FIR	Flight Information Region
GNA	Grand National Assembly (of Turkey)
GTF	Greek-Turkish Forum
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
MBFR	Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (Vienna Talks)
MHP	Nationalist Action Party (Turkey)
MSP	National Salvation Party (Turkey)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ND	New Democracy party (Greece)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NOTAM	Notice to airmen
OSCE	Organisation on Security and Cooperation in Europe

PASOK	Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (Greece)
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
SC	Security Council of the United Nations
SEECF	South-East European Cooperation Process
SPP	Social Democratic Populist Party (Turkey)
TGNA	Turkish Grand National Assembly
TMT	Turkish Resistance Organisation (Cyprus)
TPAO	Turkish Anonymous Petroleum Company
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS-I	1st United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (1958)
UNCLOS-II	2nd United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (1960)
UNCLOS-III	3rd United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (1973–82)
US	United States of America

Note on Turkish Letters

- c, pronounced as j, as in jungle
- ç, pronounced as ch, as in chair
- ğ, not pronounced, lengthens the preceding vowel and in names ending with oğlu pronounced as a lighter y in year or as a γ in Greek though lighter
- ı, i without the dot, pronounced as uh, like the o in women
- ö, pronounced as in German or eu in French
- ü, pronounced as in German or u in French
- ş, pronounced as sh, as in ship
- â, older use, pronounced as double aa
- û, older use, pronounced as iou

Preface and Acknowledgements

The Aegean dispute is the main bone of contention between Greece and Turkey. The conflict, which is now in its fourth decade, poses a threat to stability in this geopolitically sensitive region between Europe and Asia, geographically at the centre of a wide troubled triangle, with the shaky western Balkans to the north-west, the turbulent Caucasus to the north-east and the explosive Middle East to the south-east.

The Aegean conflict has triggered three very serious crises on the brink of war between Greece and Turkey (August 1976, March 1987 and February 1996). The Aegean is a constant source of tension for Greece and Turkey and a heavy drain on the economies of the two states, in view of the consequent heightened arms procurements. The dispute is also a major irritant for NATO, making the south-eastern flank of the Alliance appear shaky, much to the delight of its adversaries over the years. Among other things, the Aegean conflict involves dangerous dogfights between military aircraft on a weekly basis, with the occasional airplane crash. Another central dispute of the Aegean conflict, the territorial sea, is a source of concern not only for Turkey, but for all countries whose vessels or goods pass through this important navigating point and sole access to the Black Sea through the Straits.

In the last decade, the Aegean dispute has become a factor in the EU-Turkey equation as well; obviously, the resolution of the Aegean problem and a Greek-Turkish rapprochement would reinforce Turkey's application to join the EU as a full member.

The Aegean conflict poses a challenge for conflict resolution because, as we shall see, the contours of a settlement are fairly obvious and involve few sacrifices on either side.

However, the Aegean conflict has not attracted the international and scholarly attention it deserves. One reason for this relative lack of attention is the preoccupation with other more pressing conflicts worldwide that pose a more direct threat to peace and security. The Aegean conflict as a low-intensity conflict appears manageable. The view prevails that when the chips are down, neither party, for all its sword-rattling, would dare play with fire and attack, as that would be sheer lunacy and, come what may, the UN, NATO, the US or the EU could be counted upon to intervene effectively.

The few worthwhile studies on the Aegean conflict or on the wider Greek-Turkish antagonism are dated. There exist about a handful of books devoted to the Aegean (most of them edited) but – with one or two exceptions – they are strikingly biased, written by Greeks and Turks with an axe to grind. As such, a detailed and balanced study of the Aegean conflict is long overdue. I have tried to be as fair and unbiased as possible. My hope is that if the book were read without the knowledge of the author's name, one would not spring to the conclusion that it is written by a Greek analyst.

In preparing the book, I have benefited from the valuable information and views of several individuals. My greatest overall debt is to my colleague Hercules Millas, who in the 15 years of our friendship has introduced me to the various Turkish realities and to a deeper understanding of the Greek-Turkish antagonism. The information and insight provided by my Turkish interlocutors was also of particular value. I would thus like to start by first thanking them. They include (in alphabetical order) Ayhan Aktar, Gülden Ayman, Halil Bertay, Melek Firat, Ahmed Insel, Kemal Kirişçi, Elçin Macar, Ziya Öniş, Soli Özel, Umut Özkırmı, Bahar Rumelili and Hakan Yılmaz. Thanks are also due to Mehmet Ali Birand, Suha Bölükbaşı, Gün Kut and Seyfi Taşhan. In particular, I would also like to thank Turkish ambassadors Turgut Tülümen, Temel Iskit and (posthumously) Coşkun Kırca, as well as ambassadors Ali Tuygan, Güner Öztek, İlter Türkmen, Yalim Eralp and (posthumously) Gündüz Aktan. On the Greek side, I owe special thanks to Christos Rozakis, Petros Liakouras, Harry Tzimitras and ambassadors Byron Theodoropoulos (posthumously) and Costas Zepos, as well as George Dertilis, Theodore Couloumbis, Eugenia Vathakou, Antonis Bredimas, Stephanos Pasmazoglou, Nicos Themelis, Panayotis Tsakonas, Asteris Huliaras and Ioulia Pentazou. I would also like to thank Tozun Bahçeli and John Groom, as well as Constantine Papadopoulos, James Ker-Lindsay, Gilles Bertrand, Alkis Kourkoulas, Ioannis Grigoriadis, Christos Lyrantzis, Othon Anastasakis and Paulina Lampsas.

This book would have not been possible without the valuable help and advice of Susannah Verney and the contribution of Berin Myisli, who was kind enough to translate many Turkish texts for me, including valuable memoirs by Turkish diplomats and politicians, without which the book's coverage would have been lopsided. Last but not least, I would like to thank historian Ada Dialla, my partner, for her advice and patience.

Part I

Greeks and Turks: History Shrouded in National Myth

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1

Introduction

Greece and Turkey is a classic 'adversarial dyad' and 'enduring conflict' between neighbours,¹ as are the cases of Germany and France (until 1945), Japan and China, the Serbs and the Albanians, Israel and the Palestinians or India and Pakistan. It is one of a handful of ongoing rivalries with a history of a hundred or perhaps two hundred years.

If 1912, the starting date of the First Balkan War, is taken as the point of no return of the Greek-Turkish conflict instead of 1821, the starting date of the Greek War of Independence, the record indicates cordial relations one third of the time and tense relations for two thirds of the time, ranging from a cold war to armed confrontation.² Thus, one could draw the conclusion that enmity is a more 'natural' status in their relationship. Recall the well-known platitude 'Greeks and Turks destined to be enemies'. However, cordial relations for one third of this period is not a meagre harvest. It is an indication that burying the hatchet is far from fanciful. Another rendition of the old platitude reads 'Greeks and Turks are destined by geography to be friends'. But as Richard Clogg has put it, Greeks and Turks are 'condemned by history to be enemies and where history and geography come into conflict then history tends to prevail'.³ Clearly, what is implied is not history as such, that is, what came to pass as we know on the basis of authoritative historical studies, but the events of the past as 'historical memories of wrongs, real or imagined, committed by the respective parties to the dispute'.⁴ Put differently, 'due to historical reasons each party conceives the "other" as a prospective threat' and as a challenge to one's identity.⁵

Thus, before trying to trace the itinerary of the Greek-Turkish conflict in the Aegean, a historical presentation of the vicissitudes of Greek-Turkish relations is necessary, with an emphasis on the respective narratives, including the chosen national 'traumas' and 'glories' of the

Greek-Turkish encounters. Otherwise many a claim, over-reaction or fixation by either side will seem far-fetched, almost paranoiac. In this initial exercise, we will highlight the many historical inaccuracies and ahistorical *ex post facto* narrations, extracting historical fact from national myth and fantasy (we will return to this aspect of the conflict in the concluding chapter of the book).

One of the most common and enduring beliefs in both countries is that the Greek-Turkish conflict is perennial, almost primordial; its origins and point of no return are to be found in the distant past, in the Middle Ages or, according to an approach entertained in Turkey for decades, even in antiquity, since the days of the legendary Trojan War.

The perennial shibboleth is contested by two other more convincing perspectives: the modernist approach, which regards the conflict as a product of the winds of modernity and nationalism that swept the European part of the Ottoman Empire in the early 19th century; and by the contemporary perspective, which regards the conflict barely a century old, essentially a product of the early 20th century.

Notes

1. Stuart A. Bremer (1992), 'Dangerous Dyads', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 36, 2, pp. 309–41; John A. Vasquez (1993), A. *The War Puzzle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 123–52.
2. Alexis Heraclides (2004), 'The Greek-Turkish Conflict: Towards Resolution and Reconciliation', in Mustafa Aydın and Kostas Ifantis (eds), *Turkish-Greek Relations: The Security Dilemma in Aegean* (London: Routledge), p. 67.
3. Richard Clogg (1983), 'Troubled Alliance: Greece and Turkey', in Richard Clogg (ed.), *Greece in the 1980s* (London: Macmillan), p. 125.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
5. Hercules Millas (2004), 'National Perceptions of the "Other" and the Persistence of Some Images', in Aydın and Ifantis (eds), *op. cit.*, p. 53.

2

The Perennial Imagination

The most popular rendition of the Greek-Turkish conflict as perennial is that it all started almost a thousand years ago, in 1071, at the epic battle of Manzikert in eastern Asia Minor when the Byzantines under Emperor Romanos IV Diogenis were defeated by the Seljuk Turks under Sultan Alp-Arslan. From this point on, the Seljuks were present in Asia Minor. When the power of the Seljuks declined in the second part of the 13th century, the Ottoman Turks succeeded them and reduced the Byzantine state to a small entity. The final phase of this first Greek-Turkish conflict ended in 1453, with the siege of Constantinople by Sultan Mehmed II *Fâtih* (the Conqueror), with the incumbents under their last Emperor, Constantine XI Palaiologos, refusing to surrender. The outcome is well-known and has passed into legend. Needless to say, each side presents the period from 1071 to 1453 in bipolar mirror-image terms: by one side as heroic, noble and just, with great cultural achievements to boot in 'our lands' and by the other side as the abode of cruelty, injustice and darkness.

The second phase of the Greek-Turkish relationship along perennial lines is the period from 1453 to 1821, which is portrayed by the Greeks as '400 years of Turkish yoke' and by the Turks as a model of tolerance, where the Greeks (*Rum*) flourished like no other non-Muslim community, yet ended up by revolting against their Ottoman Turkish 'benefactors'.

The perennial imagination is part and parcel of the respective national historical narratives in the two countries, propagated through every conceivable means, from the educational system (history textbooks) to anniversaries and commemorations.

The Greek narrative

In Greece there is one dominant national narrative: the one conceived in the mid-19th century by the erudite historian Constantinos Paparrigopoulos. It is the idea of 3000 years of uninterrupted Greek 'national history'. Historically this was the second Greek national narrative to appear. The first that dominated the scene until the 1840s was the approach of scholar Adamantios Korais, the most revered figure of what is known as the Greek Enlightenment.

According to Korais, the Greeks were direct descendants of the ancient Greeks. The emergence of modern Greece in 1821 was an instance of 'resurrection' (*palingenesis*). Greece was reborn like the mythical phoenix from its ashes. From the late 4th century B.C. until 1821 the Greeks, who presumably had not petered out, were a subject people, in chronological order, of the Macedonians, the Romans, the Byzantines and the Turks.¹

The emphasis on the ancient Greeks was obviously aimed at raising the sense of self-worth of the modern-day Greeks, but it was also intended for Europe, which under classicism and the Enlightenment venerated ancient Greek civilisation. This can also be put the other way round: the newly self-defined Greeks of the late 18th and early 19th century discovered themselves as descendants of the ancient Greeks by discovering Europe, its Enlightenment and classicism.² Thus, the modern Greeks acquired a glorious 'passport' as it were, readily recognised in Europe, without having to undergo the agony of their Balkan neighbours and most other putative nations, who could not claim such a prestigious pedigree.³

At the time, many had reservations about Korais's scheme, especially those attached to the Orthodox Church and the Byzantine tradition. The phoenix idea could not easily instil an emotional attachment and popular ideology, as it involved a time gap of 2000 years and overlooked Orthodox Christianity, the very stuff that had unified the Greeks in the struggle for independence. As such, bringing in the Macedonian, Hellenistic and in particular the Byzantine eras was regarded as indispensable by Paparrigopoulos and others. But incorporating Byzantium and tying it with the ancient Greek world was no easy task, for the Enlightenment treated the Byzantine Empire with disdain.⁴ Fortunately for the Greeks, things were made easier with the rise of Romanticism in Europe, with its positive approach towards the medieval period, including the Byzantine era. The need for continuity and for the inclusion of the Byzantine era had also been a response to the thesis of Bavarian historian Jacob Phillip Fallmerayer that in the southern Balkans there lived no descendants of the ancient Greeks, but only Albanians and

Slavs, who had arrived in waves during the Middle Ages. Clearly this claim – which incidentally was ‘literally accurate’⁵ – challenged the very *raison d’être* of a Hellenic national state. Paparrigopoulos’s reaction was also intended to buttress Greece’s irredentist case towards the Ottoman Empire. As regards Macedonia, the inclusion of Alexander the Great in the narrative was crucial for Greece’s claim to Ottoman Macedonia.⁶ The Byzantine link was even more indispensable. By ‘proving’ that the modern Greeks were direct descendants of the Byzantines and that the Byzantines were ‘Greeks’, Greece could base its case on historical rights, on being the successor state of an empire (and a Greek one at that) that governed the Balkans and Asia Minor many centuries before the ‘Turks’.⁷

By the mid-19th century, the Paparrigopoulos grand narrative replaced the implausible Korais scheme. It was mainly due to the efforts of Paparrigopoulos, the Greek national historian *par excellence*, that the Greeks have come to regard themselves as a nation with an uninterrupted history from the Homeric days to the present day. According to Paparrigopoulos’s *magnum opus*, the seven-volume *History of the Hellenic Nation*, the national genealogy is the following: Ancient Hellenism, Macedonian Hellenism, Christian Hellenism, Medieval Hellenism and Modern Hellenism.⁸ Another basic ingredient of the Greek national narrative is the concept of ‘Helleno-Christianity’ (first coined by Paparrigopoulos’s contemporary, Spyridon Zambelios, a historian and folklorist),⁹ in effect ‘a Hellenic-Christian synthesis formula’.¹⁰ Paparrigopoulos also claimed that ‘modern Hellenism’ started in the 13th century in the wake of the conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders (1204).¹¹

The merger of Ancient Greece and Byzantine Christianity, though odd, was not frowned upon in Europe. In Greece it was greeted with relief, as being more ‘authentic’ and ‘natural’ than sudden rebirth.¹² In effect, as Tom Nairn has put it, the Greeks ‘brought about the simplest and most straightforward ... secularisation of religion on record’.¹³ The modernising Greek intelligentsia ‘performed the astonishing feat of convincing the early 19th century Greek-speaking population that it was descendant from the antique gods; and that today this state of affairs was identifiable with being an Eastern Orthodox Christian ... few other feats in the history of nationalism can be compared with this one’.¹⁴ And as far as ‘mythology, identity, psychological security and glamour were concerned’, the Greek narrative has few rivals.¹⁵

From Paparrigopoulos onwards, Greek national history presents the Greeks (*Hellenes*) as a noble nation that ‘civilised’ Europe and the world, twice round, via the Ancient Greeks as well as the Byzantine Greeks

who, after having repeatedly saved Europe from recurring invasions from the east, played a vital role in the revival of Europe from the Renaissance onwards.¹⁶ From 1453 the Greek nation, though beaten with its face on the ground, did not perish; it survived in spite of the tyranny of the Turks ('four hundred years of slavery and dudgeon'), taking up arms in 1821, to 'once again achieve independent rule'.

The Greek grand narrative, though obviously an ahistorical construction, is regarded as the absolute 'truth' in Greece and among the Greek Cypriots for that matter. Perhaps one reason for its remarkable resilience to date is that it happens to be less questioned as a national myth even by many non-Greeks, including scholars, compared to most other national mythologies. Put differently, it appears less arbitrary than most other 'inventions of tradition'. In lieu of an example, Anthony D. Smith, the respected specialist on nationalism, claims that if a nation is defined on the basis of ethnicity, vernacular language, religion and ensuing culture, a Greek nation may be said to exist in the latter days of the Byzantine Empire, as well as under Ottoman rule, which was led by Greek-speaking clergy. Smith also points to a tenuous cultural link with classical Greece following the revival of Greek philosophy and language in the latter days of the Byzantine Empire.¹⁷ Smith also argues that despite the adoption of a new religion (Christianity), certain ancient Greek traditions, such as the dedication to competitive values, have remained fairly constant, as have the basic forms of the Greek language and the contours of the Greek homeland.¹⁸

The Paparrigopoulos approach falls under what A.D. Smith calls 'continuous perennialism', the view that 'a particular nation has existed for centuries, if not millennia'.¹⁹ In the last 50 years, a 'recurrent perennialist' approach²⁰ has gained some ground in Greece. Its proponents include noted historians, such as Apostolos Vakalopoulos, Nicos Svoronos, D.A. Zakythinos (in the 1950s and 1960s) and Speros Vriionis (in the 1970s and 1980s), though none of them would regard themselves as national historians. They accept that the Greeks had disappeared for centuries from the forefront of history, but after a long absence Hellenism made a comeback from the end of the first millennium onwards. Eventually the gap between Hellenism and Orthodoxy (previously 'Greek' amounted to pagan) was bridged and by the early 13th century, the territory under the Byzantines, now split into two entities (the Byzantine Empire and the Empire of Trebizond) and smaller principalities, was in fact culturally Greek, the entities in question being akin to 'Greek nation-states'. The year 1204 (the Crusaders' conquest) is regarded as the date of the birth of 'New Hellenism'.²¹

In the last three decades, another narrative, known as neo-orthodoxy, has gained some adherents on both sides of the political spectrum. It is deeply attached to Christian Orthodox theology and the Byzantine era, and its main figure is theologian Christos Yiannaras. This approach claims that the Orthodox Christians, headed by the Greeks, are under threat from the West and the Turks. The scheme is similar to that of the 'clash of civilisations' à la Huntington, only here the Orthodox world is the highest (and most humane) 'civilisation', with all the others being culturally and morally inferior.²²

Despite certain disagreements between the dominant Paparrigopoulos narrative and the others, all agree that the Greeks have a very long history, that the modern Greeks are descendants of the Ancient Greeks and that the 'Turks' are the traditional enemy and are 'uncivilised', essentially 'barbarians', up to the present day. They are also in agreement as regards a 'Turkish occupation' and 'yoke' for several centuries that severed the Greeks from their natural environment, Europe, whose heritage was Greco-Roman to begin with.

The first attempt to deconstruct the Paparrigopoulos scheme came in the 1920s from Yianis Kordatos, a Marxist self-taught historian and one-time Secretary-General of the Greek Communist Party. Kordatos argued that the Greek uprising of the 1820s was basically a class struggle against oppression from both Ottoman and Greek dignitaries. Moreover, the historical trajectory of the ancient Greeks had ended in 147 B.C. (with the Roman conquest) and the Byzantines hardly regarded themselves as descendants of the ancient Greeks.²³ But such views gained little momentum and Kordatos was attacked by his contemporary historians as well as by the Greek state.²⁴

It is only in the last 25 years or so that Greek historians and other social scientists have increasingly put the Greek narrative to the test.²⁵ According to Antonis Liakos, a contribution by the late John Petropoulos (an important historian of Greek extraction who worked in the US) was decisive in this regard. Petropoulos argued that Greece had inherited three different traditions: the Hellenic, the Byzantine and the Ottoman. The living past is Ottoman, which the Greeks try to discard by the politics of oblivion.²⁶ The Ottoman period is still alive in the everyday culture of the Greeks, but it is consciously suppressed, for it was seen as the hallmark of backwardness. Petropoulos's view, which 'turned the issue on its head', opened the way for a number of works on the construction of the Greek past.²⁷ However, this scholarship has been met with resistance, even among members of the intellectual elite, including historians.

The Turkish narrative

When the Turkish nation was born in the first decade of the 20th century, its main agenda was the sheer survival of the Ottoman Empire. Previously, from the 1840s onwards, two collective identities had been entertained to save the Empire: Ottomanism and Islamism. According to Yusuf Akçura (a learned émigré from Simbirsk, on the Volga), in a seminal paper of 1904, with the advent of the 20th century, Ottomanism and Islamism were no longer realistic; only Turkism, the new idea of 'Turkish nationalism based on ethnicity', could save the day, though he admitted that this idea was very recent, with followers only in Istanbul.²⁸

The Turkish grand narrative is made up of not one but several competing national narrations, in the following historical sequence: (1) Turkism and its pan-Turkist version, (2) the 'Turkish History Thesis', (3) the Anatolian approach and (4) the 'Turkish-Islamic Synthesis'.

The leading theorists of Turkism and Turkish nationalism are Akçura and Ziya Gökalp. Gökalp (a sociologist from Anatolia and part ethnic Kurd) proposed a triple synthesis, which he called 'Turkism-Islamism-Modernism', linking the Turkish nation with the Islamic religion and both with European civilisation.²⁹ He maintained that Ottoman-Turkish history had gone through three phases: the Turks as a racial group, living in Central Asia; as a religious community within the Ottoman Empire; and as a modern nation within Turkey.³⁰ Gökalp had no illusions about 'national history'; it was not a science but rather an art, whose task was above all 'pedagogic', to enhance patriotism by presenting a shining past.³¹

Gökalp's approach to nationhood was mainly cultural, while Akçura's was ethnic and racial. Akçura's ethnic-racial line was based on Turkish as the mother tongue and a lineage from the original Turkic peoples who came from Central Asia to the Middle East to found the Seljuk and the Ottoman Empires. In spite of their differences, both were also advocates, at least initially, of pan-Turkism. Until the end of the First World War, Turkism stranded both Turkish nationalism *tout court* and pan-Turkism (the union of all the Turkic groups from Central Asia to Turkey, with Turkey at the centre). Other exponents of Turkism and pan-Turkism include Ismail Gasprinsky, a Crimean Tatar, Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, a major poet, Halide Edip, the celebrated first Turkish woman novelist and the ardent pan-Turkist, and Tekin Alp (a former Jew from Serres) who, according to Jacob Landau, was mainly responsible for the confusion between Turkism and pan-Turkism.³²

In political terms, the heyday of pan-Turkism was short-lived, only some six years, from early 1913 until the end of the First World War,

having the triumvirate of Enver, Talât and Cemal (the dominant leaders of the Ottoman Empire at the time) as its enthusiastic supporters.³³ Pan-Turkism made a partial comeback from the late 1930s onwards, this time with a more racist twist than previously. Its major proponents were Ahmed Zeki Velidi Togan, a noted history professor at Ankara University, the journalist brothers Hüseyin Nihal Atsız and Necdet Sançar, and the prolific writer Reha Oğuz Türkkan, a disciple of Togan, who tried to expunge the fascist elements of pan-Turkism advocated by Atsız and Sançar. There is also a milder version of pan-Turkism, which somehow brings in the notion of human rights.³⁴

The main tenets of the pan-Turkist ideology are Turanism (the emotional association with a mythical region in Central Asia named 'Turan'), racism and racial unity (all non-Turkish speakers are seen as having alien blood), militarism (the importance of the army and the significance of war) and anti-communism. Other elements of the pan-Turkic ideology are authoritarianism, obedience, glorification of the leader and self-sacrifice to the state.³⁵

Since the 1960s, pan-Turkism, mainly headed by Atsız, has been a faction within Turkish ultra-nationalism, led since the 1960s by the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) set up by former colonel Alparslan Türkeş (a Turkish Cypriot and initially a fervent pan-Turk) and his fellow officer, Muzaffer Özdağ.³⁶ This version of Turkish nationalism (which covers anywhere between 5 and 12 per cent of the electorate, and in one instance, in 1999, attained almost a fifth of the vote) harbours all that is anti-democratic, racist and anti-European in Turkey, with a visceral hatred of the Greeks to boot. The irony is that even though the Turkists and pan-Turkists have never wielded real power in Turkey since its independence, they are regarded by most Greeks, who are almost mesmerised by Turkey, as the 'real Turks', whose antagonism towards Greece knows no bounds.

Now let us dwell at some length on the Turkish History Thesis (THT). The THT, the first official version of national history in Turkey since it became an independent nation-state (1923), is a blatant case of construction and nation-building from above by none other than Mustafa Kemal 'Atatürk' (father of the Turks), the founder of the Republic of Turkey. The Thesis was concocted by lesser (mainly self-taught) historians under the guidance of Kemal,³⁷ by his adopted daughter Afet Inan and by Ahmed Refik, Reşit Galip, Samih Rifat and other members of the Society for the Study of Turkish History (renamed the Turkish Historical Society in 1935), in which Akçura also participated.³⁸

The aim of the Thesis was to present a glorious Turkish past since the dawn of history. Its most authoritative version is the four-volume

Tarih (History), which was officially introduced in the 1st History Congress (1932). The Turks are depicted as a very ancient people, who migrated from Central Asia (due to climate changes and drought) in around 4000 B.C. or perhaps earlier, in 10,000 B.C., during the Bronze Age, according to Afet Inan, whose THT version is the most extreme.³⁹ This migrant people became the progenitors, indeed the creators, of all the major ancient civilisations in Anatolia (Asia Minor), the Fertile Crescent (Mesopotamia) and the Asian part of the eastern Mediterranean; they were the quintessential state-builders throughout the centuries. The THT downgrades the Ottoman past, surprisingly even the golden period of the Empire, from 1350 until 1600.⁴⁰

In the THT, the encounter with the ancient Greeks appears in the Trojan War, with the 'Greek invaders' deviously (using the 'Trojan Horse') succumbing the valiant Trojans, presumably the ancestors of today's Turks. The Ionians (the many Greek city-states in Asia Minor) are stripped of their Greek culture and presented as yet another Turkish people. As for the modern Greeks, their claim as descendants of the ancient Greeks is given a strong dose of Fallmerayer, being presented as a mere fabrication intended to enlist the Europeans to the Greek cause against the Turks.⁴¹

Kemal's vision of the 'ancient Turks' is so exaggerated and downright false that it smacks of *folie de grandeur* even by the standards of nationalist narratives. Apparently Kemal overdid it, for his aim was to demolish the Orientalist view of the Europeans and in doing so to also cope with the deep trauma of the abrupt dissolution of empire.⁴² However, the THT was hardly intended to drive a wedge between Turkey and Europe. Kemal in his many pronouncements to the Turks urged them, often in a blunt (indeed self-Orientalist) manner, that if they wanted to be modern and civilised, they had to emulate European ways and shed all vestiges of their Ottoman-Islamic past.⁴³

Apart from striking at the negative European image of the Turks, Kemal's vision had two other important goals in mind: to reinforce his recently launched secularism, hence the need to downgrade the Islamic Ottoman past; and to inexorably tie the new Turkish nation with Anatolia and do away with any adventurism along pan-Turkist lines.⁴⁴

The THT was unassailable from the late 1920s to the 1950s. Around the mid-1970s it was silently dropped, though never officially withdrawn. In fact, the scientific underpinning of the Thesis had first been questioned at the 1st History Congress by the then-doyen of historical studies, M. Fuad Köprülü, who dared voice certain doubts about the methodology and findings of Inan.⁴⁵ Following the Second World War,

no major Turkish historian of the Ottoman Empire or Turkey has taken the THT seriously, as demonstrated by the seminal contributions of Halil İnalcık, Niyazi Berkes, Şerif Mardin or Kemal Karpat.

As the THT became increasingly less convincing, a number of contenders came to the fore in addition to Turkism and its pan-Turkic version.

First came Anatolianism,⁴⁶ a contribution of the classicist and novelist Cevat Şakir (who wrote under the pen name 'Fisherman of Halikarnassus') and the novelist Kemal Tahir in the 1950s and 1960s. Some leftist professional historians have also entertained this approach, examples being Idris Küçükömer, Sencer Divitçioğlu and Bozkurt Güvenç.⁴⁷

The Anatolianists reacted to the far-fetched views of the THT by trying to foster a sense of Anatolian identity not on Turkishness emanating from Central Asia, but on the existence and presence of all the peoples that have lived in Anatolia (Asia Minor), in the sense that the Ottomans and the modern Turks are the cultural descendants of all the civilisations and peoples that had flourished in Anatolia.⁴⁸ In fact, the very first version of Anationalism seems to have appeared in the early 1920s, in a journal named *Anadolu Mecmuası* (*Anatolian Review*), whose main target had been Turkism, with its racist overtones. As was correctly pointed out, there is no Turkic nation, as there is no Slavic, Latin or Germanic nation. In Anatolia, many a state had been created through the centuries, the last one being the Republic of Turkey, whose name should rather have been the 'Republic of Anatolia', so as to include the Kurds and other non-Turks.⁴⁹

Anatolianism has made very little headway in Turkey as a national narration, though it remains the refuge of several leftist or liberal intellectuals. Interestingly, Turgut Özal, the shining star of Turkish politics for a decade, seems to have adopted it in his book, *Turquie en Europe*,⁵⁰ apparently in order to enhance the Turkish-European link (in fact he was no real supporter of this approach but rather of the 'Turkish-Islamic Synthesis').⁵¹

However, neither the THT nor Anatolianism were convincing to the majority of Turks, who also based their identity on Islam and had almost living memories of the existence of the grand Ottoman Empire. Thus emerged the 'Turkish-Islamic Synthesis' (TIS).

The TIS did not come out of the blue. Perhaps the first to follow such a line of reasoning was the 19th century historian Ahmed Midhat, with his emphasis on the Uighur roots of the Ottomans from Central Asia and their ethnic link with the Seljuks, claiming that in the

Ottoman Empire, those of Turkish origin were identified more readily with the Ottoman state than the other Muslims.⁵² Gögalp had also often referred to Islam as basic to Turkish identity, in addition to Turkic culture.⁵³ But the author who can probably be regarded as the progenitor of the TIS is Köprülü, who argued in a scholarly manner that the origins of the Ottoman Empire were Turkish, 'a continuation of the history of the Anatolian Seljuks and the different Anatolian beyliks',⁵⁴ who were all of Turkish ethnic stock. Most of them were Oghuz/Uighur Turkmen like the Ottomans, who migrated from Central Asia after the first millennium.⁵⁵ Köprülü did not downgrade the importance of Islam in the Ottoman Empire, but was of the view that Turkish culture, language and identity remained the backbone of the Empire throughout its existence.⁵⁶

The TIS was launched in the early 1970s by the Intellectuals' Hearth (*Aydınlar Ocağı*) and reached its maturity by the next decade. The most respected advocate of the TIS is the prolific historian Ibrahim Kafesoğlu, the first president of the Intellectuals' Hearth.⁵⁷ Another well-known proponent is Muharrem Ergin.⁵⁸ The main aim of the TIS as a narrative was to integrate Turkish identity with Islam and, in so doing, to also hit at communism in the country, which had been on the rise since the early 1960s.⁵⁹ As Hercules Millas points out, the TIS resembles 'Helleno-Christianity' in its attempt to forge national identity and its historical origins on ethnicity and religion.⁶⁰

According to the TIS, the Seljuks and other Turkic ancestors of the Ottomans converted enthusiastically to Islam, which was suited to their culture and value system, and became fervent Muslims. Without the devotion and dynamism of the Ottoman Turks (who migrated from Central Asia in the 12th century), Islam as a whole would not have stood the passage of time, for it had run out of steam. Islam is regarded as an integral part of national identity together with Turkish identity, with its Central Asian origins.⁶¹ The TIS reinstates the Ottoman Empire and its heritage, but tends to regard the Ottoman and Turkish cultural heritages as superior compared to those of other peoples in the region who differ from the Turks ethnically and religiously. Thus, contrary to the relative tolerance of the Ottoman Empire, it brings in a lack of tolerance for non-Muslim minorities, both in the Ottoman Empire (as rich traders who, in conspiracy with Europe, destroyed the Empire) and in present-day Turkey.⁶²

To conclude, the various competing Turkish narratives may disagree on several important points: on whether the Ottoman Empire was a great achievement, Turkish or a shame to Turkism. But they agree on one point, that it was tolerant of other religious communities and

ethnicities, by the standards of the period a 'paradise of cultural pluralism', so much so that the non-Muslims, and most of all the *Rum* (Orthodox) and the Armenians, thrived even more than the Muslims. Furthermore, all the Turkish national narratives (with the possible exception of Anatolianism) slight the Greeks.

In Turkey from the early 1980s onwards, as in Greece a little later, a growing number of historians and other social scientists, many of them with leftist backgrounds, came to criticise the various competing national narratives, and most of all Turkism, the THS and the TIS. The initial group, which formed the Economic and Social History Foundation of Turkey, introduced alternative scholarly interpretations of the past, moving away from national mythologies. Of particular importance have been works that also examine the important role and contribution of non-Muslim groups in the Empire as well as the discriminatory measures taken, mainly in Turkey, against the minorities in the name of Turkishness.⁶³

Now let us see if the idea of perennial Greek-Turkish conflict holds any water.

Beyond the idea of perennial conflict

From Manzikert to 1453: contact and clash of civilisations

As Ernest Renan has famously put it in 1878, 'historical error is a most essential factor in the creation of a nation, which is why the progress of historical studies often puts nationality in danger'.⁶⁴

To begin with, the Manzikert episode, though a battle, ended amicably between the emperor and the sultan, and from then on the two sides established a *modus vivendi* in Asia Minor. But more importantly for our concerns, at Manzikert, in 1071, the two sides fighting each other were not 'Greeks', or 'Byzantines' for that matter,⁶⁵ and 'Turks'. They were self-defined *Romaioi* (Romans), their emperor was the king of the Christians and their country was the 'Eastern Roman Empire';⁶⁶ and on the other side were Seljuks, whose main identity was Islam, though they were ethnically a Turkic people. This also applies to the Ottomans who appeared on the scene from 1300 onwards.⁶⁷

In the Byzantine case, the adoption of Greek as the official language and the fact that Greek had become the *lingua franca* (following the Macedonian conquest and almost three centuries of Hellenistic rule) in the wider region did not imply the adoption of ancient Greek culture or ethnicity. For the Byzantines, *Hellene* was tantamount to being pagan and denying Christianity.⁶⁸ Interestingly, it was Catholic Europe that

depicted the Byzantines as 'Greeks' and the empire as a 'Greek Empire' in order to undermine their credentials as heirs to Rome and as true Christians.⁶⁹

The Byzantines did not regard themselves as descendants of the ancient Greeks or associated in any way with ancient Greek culture. Characteristically, they were not adherents of the ancient Greek system of government and political culture, and were utterly opposed to the idea of democratic rule. For them time did not start in Homeric terms (à la Paparrigopoulos), but in Biblical terms (in 5509 B.C. to be exact). They saw themselves as the continuation of three empires: Babylon, Alexander's Macedonian Empire and the Roman Empire.⁷⁰ As for their political organisation and culture, it followed the Roman imperial pattern, but as a theocratic Christian state, as the 'Christian *Oecumene*', the land of all the Christians. Moreover, ethnic identity was of no significance whatsoever (note that several Byzantine emperors were not Romans or Greeks ethnically, but Armenians, Slavs and others).⁷¹

However, following the first conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders (in 1204), a prominent group of intellectuals, mainly in places away from Constantinople (at Mistra in Peloponese, Thessaloniki and Trabizond), increasingly began to espouse Hellenic identity, culturally as well as politically.⁷² This was especially evident in the last 100 years of the empire. But for the vast majority, *Hellene* continued to mean worshipper of the 12 gods, as it had in the previous centuries. The main advocate of Hellenism *tout court* was the neo-Platonic philosopher Georgios Gemistos (Plethon) who, in a well-known memorandum to Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus, stated that 'we are Hellenes *to genos* [by origin], as witnessed by our speech and *patrios paideia* [the culture of our fathers]'⁷³ and called for the rebirth of ancient *Hellas* as a single monarchy inspired by Plato's *politia*.⁷⁴ With the empire having shrunk dramatically, Hellenic identity rather than Roman identity seemed a sensible option for Plethon and several others. Incidentally, Plethon was also a pagan, which made it easier for him to make the switch to Hellenic identity,⁷⁵ but difficult for him to secure a wider audience among the Byzantines of his time.⁷⁶

Apparently most intellectuals in the 14th and 15th centuries that have left written records defined themselves as *Romaioi* as well as *Hellenes*, so perhaps the term *Romaio-Hellenes* is more appropriate,⁷⁷ together with the standard designation of Christian (in fact Christian Orthodox). This triple designation found its echo in the dying days of the empire in Constantinople proper, as seen in the last speech of Emperor Constantine XI Palaiologos on the day before the fall of the city.⁷⁸

The most authoritative rendition of Byzantine identity comes from philosopher-theologian Georgios Scholarios, later to become the first Patriarch (as Gennadios I) under the Ottomans. In a dialogue with a Jewish scholar, he stated that 'I do not think as the *Hellenes* did' (though he admitted that he spoke Greek as his mother tongue), concluding that for him the most appropriate self-designation was being 'a Christian'.⁷⁹ This was no doubt the dominant view among the populace in the remnants of the empire.⁸⁰

In any event, with the advent of the Ottoman Empire, the Hellenic dimension disappeared.

As for the Ottoman state, it was 'the land of Islam' and the sultan was the head of Islam worldwide, the *Padişah-ı İslam*, from the early 16th century of Sunni Islam.⁸¹ As Bernard Lewis has put it: 'So completely had the [ethnic] Turks identified themselves with Islam that the very concept of the existence of nationality was submerged – and this despite the survival of the Turkish language.'⁸² Indeed, all 'the pre-Islamic past was forgotten' and till this day 'the term "Turk" is never applied to non-Muslims ... one can speak of Christian Arabs but a Christian Turk is an absurdity and a contradiction in terms'.⁸³

In fact, the term 'Turk' did exist in pre-Islamic times in Central Asia, but it is not clear whether it referred to a wider ethnic group as a whole (the counterpart of Slav or Germanic) or to a specific ethnic group or sub-group. In the Orkhun inscription of the 8th century (in Central Asia), which is regarded as the earliest historical record in a Turkic language, the designation 'Turk' was used to distinguish a group of people from other Turkic-speaking groups and hardly implied all Turkic speakers as a whole. The term 'Turk' re-emerged in the next two centuries, again in Central Asia, to refer to sub-groups within the Oghuz, but not the Uighur as such (whom many regard as the ancestors of the Ottomans). In Uighur texts there is no evidence that they regarded themselves as Turks. Various Arabic, Persian, Byzantine and Chinese sources begin to use the term 'Turk' as early as the 6th century in reference to various Turkic groups that moved westwards, such as the Pechenegs or the original Bulgars (before becoming Slavs). As for the Seljuks, they did not refer to their homeland as Turkey or Turkistan, but as '*Rum*' (Roman land) and themselves as Seljuks of *Rum*.⁸⁴

Interestingly, at roughly the same time as many Byzantine intellectuals were increasingly claiming Hellenic roots, members of the Ottoman elite became interested in the Turkic roots of the Ottoman state. This tendency was evident during the late 14th century and the first half of the 15th century, especially during the reign of Sultan Murâd II (1421–51), with

several court historians and poets trying to write in the unalloyed simplistic Turkish of their forefathers. The reason for this trend was that apparently the Ottomans had encountered several other Turkic groups in Asia Minor and felt an affinity with them as Turkish speakers (they were in fact speakers of various Turkic dialects). However, this vogue was abandoned and forgotten following the conquest of Constantinople (as had been the case with Hellenism and the Byzantine intellectuals), except for the myth of the Oghuz or Uighur origins of the Ottomans from Central Asia that remained part of the lore of the Ottoman dynasty regarding its origins.⁸⁵

The Byzantine Orthodox Christians and the Seljuk and Ottoman Muslims were obviously two different cultures, two distinct worlds. In this sense, one can speak in terms of a 'contact of civilisations' (Arnold Toynbee) or 'clash of civilisations' (Samuel Huntington). But as Geoffrey Lewis has aptly put it, in the case of the Ottomans, one can hardly speak in terms of a contact and clash between 'barbarians from the steppes of Central Asia whose victory over the Byzantines was a victory of darkness over light. It was no such thing; it marked the end of a struggle between two different lights, one of which had long been fading'.⁸⁶ (Note that it was fading politically but not culturally, as seen by the surprising 'Palaeologean Renaissance' in the arts.)

In spite of the obvious cultural-religious and, to begin with, ethnic differences, and the sheer fact that the Seljuks and particularly the Ottomans were constantly on the rise and moving westwards,⁸⁷ taking over Byzantine territories (by conquest or more peacefully), not all was bleak on the Byzantine-Seljuk and Byzantine-Ottoman horizon. The barrier between Byzantines and Seljuks and Ottomans 'was not as impassable as it may now seem to us'.⁸⁸

If one examines the situation on the ground from 1071 until 1453, one is struck by the fact that in spite of the obvious adversity, there were extended cultural exchanges and amicable relations. There were intermarriages between the Byzantine aristocracy and royal houses with the corresponding houses of the Seljuks and the Ottomans, as well as friendships between Byzantine sovereigns and Seljuk or Ottoman sultans or heirs. The most revered theologian of the last two centuries of the Byzantine Empire, Gregorios Palamas (the Orthodox equivalent of Thomas Aquinas), was very interested in Islam and had extended scholarly discussions on the possible links between Islam and Orthodoxy with members of the Ottoman royal family and Islamic scholars (when taken as a prisoner to the first Ottoman capital, Konya). Moreover, the fatal person for the Byzantines, Mehmed II, knew Greek

and appreciated Hellenic learning, not to mention the fact that he had Byzantine blood in his veins from the Cantacuzeni and Comneni families and prided himself on being heir to the Byzantine emperors.⁸⁹ There were also many military alliances against common foes, while Byzantine mercenaries fought on the Ottoman side, and Ottoman and other Turkic mercenaries fought on the Byzantine side, on several occasions against their co-religionists in the Balkans or elsewhere. Even the legendary frontier warriors of either side, the Byzantine 'Akrites' and the Ottoman 'Gazi' (fighters of the Faith), fraternised and intermarried to a surprising degree for 'avowed enemies' on the two sides of a civilisational fault-line. The most celebrated Akritas, Digenis, earned his name (which means having two origins) precisely because his ancestors were Christian and Muslim.⁹⁰

Another development should also be taken into consideration. With the decline of the Byzantine Empire and the constant conquests of the Ottomans, throughout the 14th and early 15th centuries, the Orthodox (and other) Christians converted in great numbers to Islam, for the most part without duress.⁹¹ For the early Ottoman leaders, such as Sultans Osman and Orhan, the deliberate aim was to maintain good relations with their Christian neighbours in Asia Minor, not to coerce them into becoming Muslim, but to 'co-opt them rather than to conquer'⁹² them and 'gain their confidence through a policy of accommodation'.⁹³ Survival apart, this conversion to Islam was also motivated by a desire to join a thriving and, by the standards of the time, secure, effective and (in several respects) just state. The prospects of conquest, glory in combat, high office and material gain through plunder were also important incentives. It is no coincidence that two out of the three greatest Ottoman warrior families of the 14th and 15th centuries originated from Byzantine Christian families which had converted to Islam (the families of the renowned warriors Mihal and Evrenos).⁹⁴

Certainly, much of this give and take and relative lack of animosity was due to expediency on both sides. In the Byzantine case in particular, sheer pragmatism weighed heavily, as it became obvious that the Ottomans had come to stay in Asia Minor and south-eastern Europe (in the wake of the famous battle at Kosovo Plain in 1389).⁹⁵ Indeed, from 1350 onwards, it is arguable as to which side was more threatening for the Byzantines: the Ottomans or the Catholic West. It seems that, for the majority of Byzantines, the view prevailed that the latter was a greater danger, a threat to the very 'soul' of the Byzantines, Orthodox Christianity. Thus, in the 15th century, the anti-Unionists (those against union with Catholicism that meant subordination to the Pope)

under Marcus Eugenicus and later under Scholarios were the dominant force in Constantinople.⁹⁶ The famous pronouncement of Lucas Notaras (the most influential political figure in the last three decades of the tiny Byzantine Empire) was characteristic: 'the Turkish turban' is preferable in the midst of the city (Constantinople) 'than the tiara of the Latin cardinal'.⁹⁷

1453–1821: the Ottoman state and the Orthodox Christians

From the late 14th century onwards until the Balkan Wars (1912–13), the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans was a given.⁹⁸ There are basically two interpretations of this legacy. One is fairly negative, pointing to an alien imposition on indigenous Christian medieval societies, positing the incongruence between Christianity and Islam and the incompatibility between a nomadic civilisation and established urban and agrarian civilisations. This is the standard view of all national Balkan historiographies, including the Greek one, which tend to regard the Ottoman influence as negative, severing the Balkan peoples from their milieu, European civilisation.⁹⁹ A second interpretation 'treats the Ottoman legacy as the complex symbiosis of Turkish, Islamic, and Byzantine/Balkan traditions' which may have produced, after so many centuries, a 'common legacy'.¹⁰⁰ The various extremes of the first approach have been put to rest by scholarly works, mainly outside of the Balkan historiographical tradition.¹⁰¹

The period from 1453 until 1821 was hardly 'paradise on earth', but it was certainly not 'hell on earth', an unbearable tyranny for the Christian and Jewish subjects of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire was a theocratic empire based on Islam (just as the Byzantine Empire had been a theocratic empire based on Christianity). It was an absolutist state, with an all-powerful sovereign as its head, as was the case for that matter with all other contemporary empires or large states in Europe until the late 18th century. The Ottoman Empire was tolerant of other religions and of their communities, especially if they were 'people of the Book' (the Koran), that is, Christians and Jews (the Zoroastrians were also included by courtesy). Clearly, the Ottoman Empire was not the 'abode of felicity' as the Sublime Porte (the Ottoman government) styled itself, but it was the nearest to a relatively secure and peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians that had ever existed in world history from the advent of Mohammed in the 7th century to the end of the 19th century. The Christians, though nominally 'second class subjects' by comparison to the Muslims, were as a rule not abused *qua* Christians. Once they were no longer *harbi* (non-Muslim infidels outside

the realm of Islam), they became *zimmi/dhimmi* (protected minorities), as a result of the *zimmet/dhimma* pact of loyalty to the sultan and the Ottoman state. All those who were not members of the ruling class were *reaya* (flock), irrespective of religion until the third quarter of the 18th century.¹⁰²

The Ottoman rulers were 'blind' to ethnic or racial markers. Those that converted to Islam could reach the highest echelons of power, save for the post of sultan, which was reserved for the Ottoman dynasty. In fact, from 1453 until the mid-17th century, the vast majority of Viziers (ministers of state), Grand Viziers (prime ministers) and other high officials were of Christian origin (not ethnic Turks or Muslims by birth), due mostly – though not exclusively¹⁰³ – to the famous or rather infamous *devşirme* system that had been conceived at the end of the 14th century. This was the systematic snatching of male Christian children (as well as Bosnian Muslims) from their families in rural areas (and not from urban centres) for good, converting them to Islam and instilling in them a strong identification with Ottoman Islamic culture as well as utter devotion to the sultan. They were to become the sultan's 'slaves' (*kul*), the most gifted of whom were educated within the sultan's palace (Topkapı) with the sultan's sons, to then rise to the highest echelons of power and prestige, while remaining 'slaves of the Sublime Porte' (*kapıkulu*). From 1453 (when a *kul* was first appointed as Grand Vizier) until the mid-17th century, the non-Turkic Grand Viziers outnumbered those of Turkic origin by seven to one.¹⁰⁴ All the members of the elite army corps, the Janissaries (*Yeniçeri*: new army), were of non-Muslim origin. The *devşirme* was abolished at the end of the 17th century due to rising internal criticism, but continued sporadically until the early 18th century. Thus, ironically in a non-secular Muslim state, from 1453 and for some three centuries, those of Muslim ancestry were less involved in military or governmental affairs (their main domain was religious affairs), while those of Christian ancestry were most of the time directly responsible for the fate of the empire.¹⁰⁵

This amazing regime of coexistence between Muslims and Christians (as well as Jews) was the product of the political genius of Mehmed II (then barely 21 years old), who introduced the *millet* system in 1453, a system of parallel religious communities. Barely had he conquered 'the city of cities' when he summoned the anti-Unionist leader Scholarios and convinced him to take over as Patriarch and head the 'Orthodox flock' throughout the empire, offering him his personal guarantee and protection. No doubt the reasons for such magnanimity were instrumental: to engage the Greek Orthodox population and not permit

any wavering towards Catholic Europe. Mehmed faced criticism from several of his functionaries for having gone too far with vanquished infidels. Yet this unique system was not threatened (save momentarily by Mehmed's grandson Selim I in the early 16th century)¹⁰⁶ and held on for more than five centuries. The head of the Orthodox *millet* throughout the empire was the Patriarch, as the *Milletbasi* (the undisputable leader of the *Rum* community). The Patriarch's domain was in many respects a 'state within a state' (with a quasi-government whose dignitaries retained Byzantine title names), wielding considerable influence, economic power and prestige (including in the eyes of the Ottoman rulers), to a far greater degree than under the Byzantine Empire where Caesaro-Papism had been the rule. The Patriarch ran the school system for the Orthodox *millet*. Thus, until the first decades of the 19th century the main language apart from Turkish and Arabic that was taught was Greek (something which, by the mid-19th century, came to be resented by the new Balkan nationalisms).¹⁰⁷

In the pecking order of the Ottoman state, after the Muslims, known as the 'ruling *millet*' (*millet-i-hakime*), came the Orthodox *millet* (*Rum millet* or *millet-i-Rum*), followed by the two Armenian millets (the Gregorian and Catholic), with the Jewish *millet* trailing behind.¹⁰⁸ By 1875, there were nine recognised millets and by 1914, as many as 17. Education among the *Rum* rose considerably during the course of the 18th century and by the time of the Greek War of Independence (the 1820s), the *Rum millet*, or rather its Greek-speaking members (ethnic Greeks but also Hellenised Romanians, Albanians and Bulgarians), thrived like no other *millet*.¹⁰⁹

From the late 17th century, the Greek-speaking *Rum* held high state positions apart from those where being Muslim was a prerequisite, in effect becoming part of the ruling elite, although not Muslims. The positions held by the *Rum* (basically the Greek-speaking or Hellenised *Romioi*) included the coveted post of Grand Dragoman (chief translator), the equivalent of deputy foreign minister, a post that made its occupant a confidant of the Grand Vizier and of the sultan himself, as well of the foreign ambassadors. The first Grand Dragoman from the rank of the Greek-speaking *Rum* was Panagiotis Nicousios, followed in 1673 by perhaps the most famous Dragoman, Alexander Mavrocordato, later elevated to the post of Councillor of State of the Empire for his valuable service in the successful negotiation of the Peace of Carlowitz with the Habsburg Empire in 1700. Another high post was that of Grand Dragoman of the Fleet, who was administratively and financially responsible for all the islands of the Aegean. Other very high appointments reserved for Greek-speaking *Rum* (from 1709 until 1821) were those

of prince (*voivoda* or *hospodar*) in the autonomous principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, a rank almost equivalent to that of the Grand Vizier. Those appointed as dragomans and princes were Phanariots, members of the Greek-speaking quasi-aristocracy, who lived luxuriously in the Phanar suburb of the Ottoman capital (only the Patriarchs and other members of the clergy were of more humble origins). Phanariot families, such as the Mavrocordato, Ghika (partly Albanian), Soutzo, Callimachi (partly Romanian), Mourousi, Ypsilanti and Racovitza (partly Romanian), succeeded each other as dragomans and hospodars as well as dignitaries of the Patriarch, in the process acquiring great wealth and prestige. However, as with all the other top bureaucrats of the Empire, including the Grand Vizier and Patriarch – as well as many a sultan's brothers and even on occasion the sultan himself – they could suddenly be imprisoned for a while or even in some cases executed if things had turned against them.¹¹⁰

Going back to the collective identity question, the *Rum millet* was not a nation from 1453 until the end of the 18th century, but a religious community (*to genos*), part of which was ethnically Greek, though ethnic identity did not matter in those days.¹¹¹ The Ottomans for their part were not self-defined as 'Turks', as the Europeans had chosen to call them for centuries, when 'the Turk' was 'the dominant other in the history of the European state system'.¹¹² No Turkish nation or sense of Turkish national consciousness existed before the beginning of the 20th century. There were only Muslims within an imperial setting and mentality who spoke various languages, including simple Turkish, and the elite who, irrespective of ethnic origin, spoke elaborate Ottoman Turkish (the official language of the Empire with its many Persian and Arabic words and phrases), which for many happened to be their mother tongue. Until the very end of the 19th century, the term 'Turk' was derogative; it meant a yokel, a peasant from Anatolia.¹¹³

To conclude, to speak in terms of a Greek-Turkish clash, and an entrenched one at that, during the period 1453–1821 is as mistaken and anachronistic as it is for the period 1071–1453.

Concluding remarks

The perennial imagination as to the existence of the Greek and Turkish nations before the age of nationalism and to a Greek-Turkish clash *per se* (as opposed to a Christian-Muslim clash and contact) is obviously a latter-day construction. In the Greek case it is some 200 years old and in the Turkish case it is of more recent vintage, being less than a century old. The respective national historical narratives are hardly 'historical'

but retrospective; they purposefully forget centuries of peaceful cohabitation and affinities, in what amounted – in spite of the obvious religious rift – in many respects to a shared ‘Ottoman-Levantine heritage’¹¹⁴ and culture for centuries in the southern Balkans and the Near East; a lost world, which ended less than 90 years ago as a result of a series of dramatic events within a decade, from 1912 to 1922.

As for the ethnicity factor, that is, the pre-existence of ethnic roots (of an *ethnie* à la Anthony Smith) that were supposedly of relevance in the 14th and 15th centuries among the Byzantines and Ottomans, this again is clearly another latter-day social construct. As in the case of nationhood, ethnic identity is ‘established over time or invented, and forged together often arbitrarily, according to the judgment or needs of nation-builders’.¹¹⁵ As seen in the Greek and Turkish case, it is the outcome of ‘retrospective legitimation’ as of course is the case with the wider nationalist project.¹¹⁶

As Umut Ozkırmlı and Spyros Sofos have eloquently put it:

Modern Greeks, having been offered a revered pre-packaged classical past courtesy of European classicism, literally found themselves in a landscape of stone paths and tumbled columns that acquired a tremendous symbolic weight. In the case of modern Turks, the lack of recognition of such a significant past by European intelligentsias meant that this past had to be created virtually from scratch and often against a European Orientalist gaze that saw the trail of barbaric hordes where Turkish nation-builders recognized the advance of a glorious civilisation.¹¹⁷

Notes

1. Eli Skopetea (1988), *To ‘Prototypos Vasileio’ kai i Megali Idea* [The ‘Prototype Kingdom’ and the Great Idea] (Athens: Polytypo), pp. 171–4; Constantine Tsoukalas (1999), ‘European Identity and Greek National Identity’, *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, 1, 1, pp. 7–14; Antonis Liakos (2008), ‘Hellenism in the making of Modern Greece’, in Katerina Zacharia (ed.), *Hellenisms; Culture, Identity and Ethnicity* (Aldershot; Ashgate), p. 204.
2. Stephanos Pasmazoglou (1993), *Evropi-Tourkia. Ideologia kai ritoria* [Europe-Turkey: Ideology and Rhetoric] (Athens: Themelio), pp. 382–3.
3. Liakos, op. cit., p. 206.
4. For the denigration of the Byzantine Empire by no lesser figures than Voltaire, Montesquieu, Gibbon and Hegel, see A.A. Vasiliev (1958), *History of the Byzantine Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press), vol. A, pp. 6–11.

5. Stathis Gourgouris (1996), *Dream Nation: Enlightenment, Colonization, and the Institution of Modern Greece* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), p. 141.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
7. Skopetea, *op. cit.*, pp. 171–2, 177–8; Michael Herzfeld (1982), *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press); Roderick Beaton (1988), 'Romanticism in Greece', in Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich (eds), *Romanticism in National Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 103–6; Gourgouris, *op. cit.*, pp. 140–54.
8. Constantinos Paparrigopoulos (1932) [1865–74], *Istoria tou ellinikou ethnous* [History of the Hellenic Nation], volumes 1–6, 6th edn, edited by Pavlos Karolides (Athens: Eleftheroudakis).
9. Spyridon Zambelios (1852), *Asmata dimotika tis Ellados* [Folk Songs of Greece] (Athens).
10. Umut Özkırmlı and Spyros A. Sofos (2008), *Tormented by History: Nationalism in Greece and Turkey* (London: Hurst and Company), p. 84.
11. Skopetea, *op. cit.*, pp. 175–89; Liakos, *op. cit.*, pp. 208–10.
12. Skopetea, *op. cit.*, pp. 175–89; Thanos Veremis (1990), 'From the National State to the Stateless Nation', in M. Blinkhorn and Thanos Veremis (eds), *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality* (London and Athens: Sage-ELIAMEP) p. 10; Liakos, *op. cit.*, p. 204–6.
13. Tom Nairn (1979), 'Cyprus and the Theory of Nationalism', in Peter Worsley and Paschalis Kitromilides (eds), *Small States in the Modern World* (Nicosia: The New Cyprus Association), p. 32.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
16. Liakos, *op. cit.*, p. 212.
17. Anthony D. Smith (2001), *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History* (Cambridge: Polity), pp. 105–6.
18. Anthony D. Smith (2000), *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Polity), p. 43.
19. Anthony D. Smith (2000), *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 5.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
21. Apostolos E. Vakalopoulos (1974), *Istoria tou Neou Ellinismou* [History of New Hellenism] (Salonika), vol. I; Nicos Svoronos (1983) *Episkopisi tis Neoellinikis Istorias* [Review of Neohellenic History] (Athens: Themelio), pp. 3–36 and *passim*; D.A. Zakythinos (1976), *The Making of Modern Greece: From Byzantium to Independence* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell); Speros Vryonis (1971), *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley: Berkeley University Press).
22. Christos Yiannaras (1992), *Orthodoxia kai Dysi sti neoteri Ellada* [Orthodoxy and the West in Modern Greece] (Athens: Domos). See also Georgios Metallinos (1988), *Tourkokratia* [Turkish Rule] (Athens: Akritas).
23. Yianis Kordatos (1977) [1924], *I koinoniki simasia tis ellinikis epanastasis* [The Social Significance of the Greek Revolution] (Athens: Ekdotiki Epikairotita), pp. 21–3.
24. Hercules Millas (2001), *Eikones Ellinon kai Tourkon* [Images of Greeks and Turks] (Athens: Alexandria), p. 292.

25. They include historians Philipos Eliou, Eli Skopetea, and Antonis Liakos and his disciples, as well as political scientist Paschalis Kitromilides, sociologist Constantinos Tsoukalas, political psychologist Thanos Lipowatz, student of literary criticism Stathis Gourgouris, social scientist Stephanos Pesmazoglou and, among students of international relations, this author.
26. See John A. Petropoulos (1978), 'The Modern Greek State and the Greek Past', in Speros Vryonis (ed.), *The 'Past' in Medieval and Greek Culture* (Malibu: Undena Publications), pp. 163–76.
27. Liakos, op. cit., p. 219.
28. Özkırmırlı and Sofos, op. cit., p. 27.
29. Özkırmırlı and Sofos, op. cit., p. 34.
30. Özkırmırlı and Sofos, op. cit., p. 90.
31. Özkırmırlı and Sofos, op. cit., p. 90.
32. Jacob M. Landau (1995), *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation* (London: Hurst and Company), pp. 9–35.
33. Ibid., pp. 51–6.
34. Ibid., pp. 95–7, 119, 130–1.
35. Mehmet Ali Ağaoğulları (1987), 'The Untranationist Right', in I.C. Shick and E.A. Tonak (eds), *Turkey in Transition-New Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 190–1.
36. Hugh Poulton (1997), *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (London: Hurst and Company), pp. 136–53.
37. One of Kemal's guidelines was that the Turks were in no way related to the Mongolians, but were fully-fledged members of the Aryan race. See Özkırmırlı and Sofos, op. cit., pp. 92–3.
38. According to Mete Tunçay, the first to come out with the whole idea was Yusuf Ziya (Özer), a law professor at Istanbul University. See Poulton, op. cit., p. 103.
39. See the following work with its characteristic title: Afet Inan (1947), *Türkiye Halkının Antropolojik Karakterleri ve Türkiye Tarihi: Türk Irkının Vatanı Anadolu* [The Anthropological Characteristics of the Turkish People and the History of Turkey: Anatolia, the Fatherland of the Turkish Race] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu).
40. Büşra Ersanlı Behar (1989), 'The Turkish History Thesis: A Cultural Dimension of the Kemalist Revolution', doctoral dissertation, Boğaziçi University, pp. 109–50; Poulton, op. cit., pp. 101–14; Özkırmırlı and Sofos, op. cit., pp. 65–7, 89–99.
41. Millas, op. cit., pp. 31–3, 57–70, 204–11.
42. Poulton, op. cit., pp. 101, 103; Millas, op. cit., p. 62.
43. See the characteristic statements of Kemal to the Turkish Grand National Assembly, in Bernard Lewis (1968) [1961], *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press), pp. 267–9.
44. Ibid., pp. 3, 255–6, 357–60; Landau, op. cit., pp. 74–5; Poulton, op. cit., pp. 92–101.
45. Ersanlı Behar, op. cit., pp. 167–73.
46. This term has been coined by Hercules Millas. See for example Hercules Millas (2006), 'Ethnic Identity and Nation Building: On Byzantine and Ottoman Historical Legacy', conference on 'The EU and the Historical Legacy in the Balkans', University of St-Ignatius, Antwerp, pp. 6–7.
47. Idris Küçükömer (1989) [1969], *Düzenin Yabancılaşması* [The Alienation of the Social Order] (Istanbul: Alan); Sencer Divitçioğlu (2003) [1967], *Asya*

- Üretim Tarzı ve Osmanlı Toplumu* [The Asian Mode of Production and the Underdeveloped Countries] (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi); Bozkurt Güvenç (1993), *Türk Kimliği: Kültür Tarihine Kaynakları* [Turkish Identity: Sources of Cultural History] (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları).
48. Millas, 'Ethnic Identity and Nation Building', op. cit., pp. 6–7; Çağlar Keyder (2003), 'The Consequences of the Exchange of Populations for Turkey', in Renée Hirschon (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Exchange of Populations Between Greece and Turkey* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books), p. 50 and p. 52, note 10.
 49. Özkırmırlı and Sofos, op. cit., pp. 134–5.
 50. See also the English edition that appeared in 1991, entitled *Turkey in Europe and Europe in Turkey* (Nicosia: Rustem and Brother).
 51. Özal hardly had the knowledge or time to write such a book (the book is full of detailed references to historical events on antiquity among other things). Apparently the late ambassador Gündüz Aktan ghostwrote the book. This information has come to me from Hercules Millas, who had several meetings with Aktan when he was ambassador in Athens in the early 1990s.
 52. At least according to my understanding of Midhat's views as presented in David Kushner (1977), *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism* (London: Frank Cass), pp. 29, 40.
 53. Özkırmırlı and Sofos, op. cit., p. 61.
 54. M. Fuad Köprülü (1992) [1935], *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire* (Albany: State University of New York) (translated and edited by Gary Leiser), p. 23 and *passim*.
 55. Ibid., pp. 43–4.
 56. Ibid., pp. 2–26, 43–4, 108–17 and *passim*. On Köprülü's wider contribution to the debate on the origins of the Ottoman Empire, see Cemal Kafadar (1995), *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 32–7.
 57. İbrahim Kafesoğlu (1970), *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Meseleleri* [Issues of Turkish Nationalism] (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi); Kafesoğlu (1999), *Türk İslam Sentezi* [The Turkish-Islamic Synthesis] (İstanbul: Ötüken).
 58. Muharrem Ergin (1988), *Türkiye'nin Bugünkü Meseleleri* [Contemporary Issues Regarding Turkey] (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları).
 59. Millas, 'Ethnic Identity and Nation Building', op. cit., p. 8; Özkırmırlı and Sofos, op. cit., pp. 60–2.
 60. See Millas, 'Ethnic Identity and Nation Building', op. cit., p. 8, footnote 16.
 61. Kafesoğlu, *Türk İslam Sentezi*, op. cit., *passim*.
 62. Millas, 'Ethnic Identity and Nation Building', op. cit., p. 8.
 63. For the Ottoman Empire, see in particular the works of Şevket Pamuk and Çağlar Keyder; for Turkey and Turkish nationalism, see the works of Mete Tunçay, Murat Belge, Ahmet Insel, Halil Berktaş, Ayhan Aktar and others.
 64. Ernest Renan (1904) [1878], 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?', in Ernest Renan, *Discours et conférences* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy), p. 285.
 65. The word 'Byzantine' for the Eastern Roman Empire was coined by Hieronymous Wolf in the second part of the 16th century.
 66. Steven Runciman (1968), *The Great Church in Captivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 119–27 and *passim*; Donald M. Nicol

- (1993), *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Cyril Mango (1984), *Byzantium and its Image: History and Culture of the Byzantine Empire and its Heritage* (London: Variorum); Tonia Kioussopoulou (2007), *Vasileus i Ekonomos: politiki exousia kai ideologia prin tin aloxi* [King or Economist: Political Authority and Ideology Before the Conquest of Constantinople], pp. 201–25; Claudia Rapp (2008), 'Hellenic Identity, Romanitas, and Christianity in Byzantium', in Katerina Zacharia (ed.), *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity* (Aldershot: Ashgate), pp. 129, 132–47.
67. B. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 2, 11–3, 15; G. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 27–31; Kafadar, op. cit.
 68. Runciman, op. cit., p. 119.
 69. Rapp, op. cit., p. 141.
 70. Rapp, op. cit., pp. 145–6.
 71. See note 66.
 72. Vakalopoulos, op. cit., and Svoronos, op. cit., pp. 3–36.
 73. Quoted in Kioussopoulou, op. cit., p. 218.
 74. Runciman, op. cit., pp. 121–3.
 75. C.M. Woodhouse (1986), *George Gemistos Plethon: The Last of the Hellenes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
 76. Runciman, op. cit., p. 124; Nicol, op. cit., p. 117 and *passim*.
 77. Kioussopoulou, op. cit., pp. 201–3.
 78. Rapp, op. cit., pp. 146–7.
 79. Dimitris Livanios (2008), 'The Quest for Hellenism: Religion, Nationalism, and Collective Identities in Greece, 1453–1913', in Zacharia (ed.), op. cit., pp. 241–2.
 80. Rapp, op. cit., pp. 133–4.
 81. Suraiya Faruqi (2004), *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around it* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris), pp. 29, 30.
 82. B. Lewis, op. cit., p. 2. See also G. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 27–31.
 83. B. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 8, 15.
 84. Özkırmlı and Sofos (2008), op. cit., p. 98.
 85. B. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 27–30; Kushner, op. cit., pp. 2–3.
 86. G. Lewis, op. cit., p. 30.
 87. The remarkable sudden rise of the Ottoman territory from a modest *beylik* (principality) to an Empire within half a century has given rise to a lively debate. The starting point is the book by Herbert Gibbons (1916), *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), which puts forward the idea of some 400 tents under Osman that grew tremendously in size within a few decades due to masses of Christians as well as pagan Turks becoming Muslims and thus creating the 'Ottoman race'. This approach was rebutted by M. Fuat Köprülü (see Köprülü, op. cit.) and by the German Ottomanist Friedrich Giese. In the inter-War period, the debate ended with Paul Wittek's famous Gazi thesis that the Ottomans were not a tribe or ethnic group, but were Muslim fighters of the faith fighting against the infidels. See Paul Wittek (1938), *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland). The debate was revived after the Second World War, starting with G. Gorgiades Arnakis (1947), *Oi protoi Othomanoi* [The First Ottomans] (Athens), followed by Halil

- Inalcik (2000) [1973], *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300–1600* (London: Phoenix) and (1981–2), 'The Question of the Emergence of the Ottoman State', *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 2, 2, pp. 71–9; the Byzantinist Speros Vryonis (1971), *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley: Berkeley University Press); the Ottomanist Rudi Lindner (1997) [1983], *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia* (London: Routledge) and some others. For a crisp presentation and critique of this debate, see Kafadar, op. cit.; and Heath W. Lowry (2003), *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany: State University of New York Press).
88. G. Lewis, op. cit., p. 31.
89. Runciman, op. cit., p. 166–7.
90. Köprülü, op. cit., pp. 29–32, 48, 70; Wittek, op. cit., pp. 16–7, 25–9, 44; Arnakis, op. cit.; Runciman, op. cit., *passim*; Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, op. cit., pp. 7, 9, 12–14, 17; G. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 30–1; Lindner, op. cit.; Kafadar, op. cit., pp. 4, 11–12, 19–26, 48, 51–5, 70, 81–2.
91. Vryonis, op. cit.
92. Lowry, op. cit., p. 68.
93. Lowry, op. cit., p. 69.
94. *Ibid.*, pp. 56–61, 64–6, 70, 140–2; Kafadar, op. cit., pp. 40, 74, 127, 151.
95. Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, op. cit., p. 15.
96. Runciman, op. cit., pp. 125–6, 160.
97. G. Georgiades Arnakis (1952), 'The Greek Church of Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire', *The Journal of Modern History*, 24, 3, p. 236.
98. Maria Todorova (1995), 'The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans', in L. Carl Brown (ed.), *The Ottoman Imprint in the Balkans and the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press), p. 46.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
100. *Ibid.*, pp. 48–9.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
102. Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, op. cit., pp. 66–88; B. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 2, 7–15, 23; G. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 34–7, 48; Kemal H. Karpat (2002), *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays* (Leiden: Brill), pp. 35–8, 393–4, 411–4, 595–7, 601, 616–7; Sina Akşin (2007), *Turkey from Empire to Revolutionary Republic* (London: Hurst and Company), pp. 8–10, 18–19; Erik J. Zürcher (1993), *Turkey: A Modern History* (London, I.B. Tauris), pp. 12–16; Feroz Ahmad (1993), *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge), pp. 19–21. See also Alexis Alexandris (1983), *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations* (Athens: Center for Asia Minor Studies), pp. 21–5.
103. In the period 1453–1516, most of the Grand Viziers were not *devşirme* but hailed from the Christian nobility (Byzantine, Serbian, Bosnian and Albanian). A case in point was one Grand Vizier and maybe a second who were heirs to the Byzantine throne (they were nephews of Constantine XI, who was childless). See Lowry, op. cit., pp. 115–6, 120–9.
104. Overall, even by the strictest of criteria and over-emphasising Turkish element, of the 215 Grand Viziers of the Empire from 1453 until 1918, there were 78 ethnic Turks, 31 Albanians, 11 Bosnians, 11 Georgians, nine Abkhaz, four Greeks, three Circassians, two Croats, two Armenians, two

- Italians, and many of unclear origins, three of which were probably Arabs. See Roderic Davison (1997), 'Nationalism as an Ottoman Problem and the Ottoman Response', in William W. Haddad and William Ochsenwald (eds), *Nationalism in a Non-National State: The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press), p. 35. This was even more pronounced from 1453 until 1516, according to Lowry. Of the 25 Grand Viziers from 1453 until 1516, many were from Byzantine, Serbian or other Balkan nobility and not from the *devşirme* system, and only three of the 25 were Muslim Turkish. See Lowry, *op. cit.*, pp. 116–25.
105. Akşin, *op. cit.*, p. 10; Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, *op. cit.*, *passim*; Karpat, *op. cit.*, *passim*.
 106. Arnakis, 'The Greek Church of Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire', *op. cit.*, pp. 240–1.
 107. *Ibid.*, pp. 235–50; Runciman, *op. cit.*, 159–97, 361–76; Richard Clogg (1982), 'The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire', in B. Braude and B. Lewis (eds), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Pluralist Society* (New York and London: H&M Publishers), pp. 185–207; Davison, *op. cit.*, pp. 35–7; Karpat, *op. cit.*, pp. 404–7, 411–4, 595–7, 616–7 and *passim*; Philip Mansel (1995), *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire, 1453–1924* (London: John Murray), pp. 5–14, 148–62.
 108. Davison, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
 109. Clogg, *op. cit.*, pp. 185–195.
 110. Clogg, *op. cit.*, pp. 185–95; Karpat, *op. cit.*, pp. 411–4, 595–7, 635 and *passim*; Mansel, *op. cit.*, pp. 148–62, 165.
 111. Livanios, *op. cit.*, pp. 247–9, 251–2.
 112. Iver B. Neumann (1999), *Uses of the Other: 'The East' in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), p. 39.
 113. B. Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp. 1,332–3; G. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 55; Kushner, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–1.
 114. A.J.R. Groom (1986), 'Cyprus, Greece and Turkey: A Treadmill for Diplomacy', in John T.A. Koumoulides (ed.), *Cyprus in Transition, 1960–1985* (London: Trigraph), p. 152.
 115. Özkırmlı and Sofos, *op. cit.*
 116. Özkırmlı and Sofos, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
 117. Özkırmlı and Sofos, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

3

The Modernist Imagination: A 19th Century Conflict

The origins of the Greek-Turkish conflict can be found in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The spark was the French Revolution with its call for popular sovereignty, republican rule, civil rights and the principle of nationalities.

The initial reaction of the Ottomans to the French Revolution was that it was an internal affair of *Frangistan* that would hopefully 'spread like syphilis to the enemies of the Empire, hurl them into prolonged conflict with one another and thus accomplish results beneficial to the Empire'.¹ But as the message of the French Revolution sank in, it was seen as a call to sedition and atheism.² The Ottoman rulers were at a loss to comprehend mass mobilisation on non-religious national grounds. As such, they tended to see nationalist ferment as a transient phenomenon, instigated by foreign agitators and intrigues undertaken by great powers.³

From the subject peoples of the Ottoman Empire, the first to be influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution were the *Romioi*, now defining themselves as Greeks, followed closely by the Serbs. From then until the beginning of the 20th century, the chronological order of the rise of nationalism was the following: Romanians, Bulgarians, Armenians, Albanians and Arabs.⁴ The Turkish-speaking Ottomans were the last to be affected by nationalism, from 1904 to 1914, at the level of a critical mass within the elite, and at a wider level in 1919–22, with the Greek threat as the catalyst.⁵

By the time of the French Revolution, the Greek-speaking *Romioi* had been dominant in the Balkans and Asia Minor as merchants, craftsmen and men of letters.⁶ Indeed, the 18th century as a whole was in several respects 'the Greek century' of the Ottoman Empire at an educational, economic and social level.⁷ To use concepts from the recent study of ethnicity and separatism, the Greek-speaking *Romioi* were in a state of

relative (and not absolute) disadvantage⁸ or 'rank disequilibrium'.⁹ In some areas they were in fact 'more equal', to use the famous Orwellian phrase, namely at an educational and economic level (like the Tamils in Sri Lanka or the Ibo in Nigeria in the 1960s), but not at a cultural or political level, in the sense that their culture *cum* religion was not dominant. The Greek case also seems to confirm our research findings regarding post-1945 separatist conflicts: that the more 'a group can be characterised as an ethnic group or nation, the more secondary is the role played by the factor of inequality or disadvantage (or, put differently, the lesser the degree of inequality necessary to spawn secession)'.¹⁰ However, for a separatist struggle to ensue, 'if a stark disadvantage does not exist in the first place it has to be invented',¹¹ thus most independence movements tend to stress victimhood and discrimination (akin to 'internal colonialism'),¹² as amply seen in the Greek case.

The Greek Revolution

Events

The Greek-speaking intellectuals and merchants with their international connections were well-placed to absorb the message of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.¹³ Thus, what is known as the 'Greek Enlightenment' was spawned in the last decades of the 18th century. Intellectuals and men of action came to regard Ottoman rule as unacceptable and the Greeks as being 'in chains'. The time was deemed ripe to take up arms for freedom. The main figures of the Greek Enlightenment were Adamantios Korais, who lived in Paris, and Rigas Velestinlis, a Hellenised Vlach from Thessaly who called for a multi-ethnic Balkan federation, with Greek as the official language.¹⁴

As this new definition of the situation took root, the eventual uprising was a matter of time, especially after the founding in Odessa (September 1814) of a revolutionary organisation called *Philiki Etairia* (Friendly Society). In 1820, the *Etairia* approached Ioannis Capodistrias (an aristocrat from Corfu), then co-foreign minister of the Russian Empire, offering him the leadership, but he declined, given his position in Russia, warning that the time was not ripe for an uprising in view of the adverse climate in Europe. The leadership of the *Etairia* was then bestowed on Alexandros Ypsilantis (a young Phanariot general in the Russian army and aide-de-camp of Tsar Alexander I) in April 1820.¹⁵

Ypsilantis launched the 'Greek Revolution' (in an obvious reference to the French Revolution) on 21 February 1821, at Kishinev in Russia, and with a small force crossed the Prut River and entered Ottoman soil in Moldavia.

There he joined forces with the Phanariot Hospodar of Moldavia, Michael Soutzos and the Vlach (Romanian) leader Tudor Vladimirescu (who had already taken up arms against the Ottomans). Ypsilantis's small army was comprised of Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians and Albanians. Ypsilantis sent a letter to the Tsar calling for his support to liberate the Greeks from 'their tyrants' and 'purge Europe from the bloody monsters' (the Turks).¹⁶ The Tsar (who was then participating in the Laibach council of the Concert of Europe) was embarrassed and, though not unsympathetic to Ypsilantis, lent no support and dismissed him from the Russian Army. Soon Vladimirescu abandoned the struggle, fearing Greek Phanariot dominance, and by June of the same year a strong Ottoman army quelled the rebellion at the Battle of Dragashani.¹⁷

The Greek uprising that was to succeed was the one that started in Peloponese in March 1821. The date of 25 March 1821 is regarded the starting date of the Greek Revolution proper, though the actual date is fictitious. Mountainous Peloponese, with its large Christian Greek and Albanian-speaking majority (of 85–90 per cent), its small Ottoman army, geographically almost cut off from the southern Balkan peninsula and at a safe distance from Istanbul, was regarded – and correctly so – as the ideal terrain for the uprising.¹⁸

The Ottoman reaction to the Greek uprising is of considerable interest and little known until recently. The revolt was utterly unexpected; it was 'as sudden as lightning', according to the words of the Ottoman foreign minister.¹⁹ Contrary to Greek claims, the Ottoman state was unaware of the fact that an uprising had been in the making since 1814. As for the *Philiki Etairia*, its existence was barely known, if at all. The fact that the uprising was also regarded as unthinkable for the non-Mulsim *reaya* made Sultan Mahmûd jump to the conclusion that it was a Russian plot; that without Russian encouragement and support, the *Rum* would never have contemplated rebelling or taking up arms. The fact that Ypsilantis was a Russian general and had ignited the revolt from Russian soil did little to dissuade the sultan. In fact, the Russian Empire was not involved²⁰ and it permitted the Ottoman forces to enter the two principalities and quell the rebellion (under the 1812 Treaty of Bucharest, Russian permission was needed for entry into the Danubian principalities). Mahmûd clung to this view (a self-fulfilling prophesy as it turned out) until the end and regarded himself vindicated when Russia did intervene in 1827 and 1829 in support of the Greeks. Another *idée fixe* of the sultan was that the revolt was the work of the 'perfidious Phanariots', given the links of the hospodars with Russia over the years. In the wake of news of massacres of Muslims in Moldavia and Morea

(Peloponese), the view prevailed that the infidel *Rum*, with Russian help, were out to 'trample', 'massacre' and 'God forbid ... annihilate all Muslims'. As such, they were no longer *zimmi* (protected minorities) but *harbi* (anti-Islamic warring groups) and the *zimmet* pact (protection as a result of loyalty) no longer applied.²¹

In the years 1821–4, the Greeks were able to subdue the Ottoman forcers sent against them, though they lost part of their advantage due to infighting that amounted to a full-scale civil war in 1824. One of the reasons for the Ottoman military failures was that in 1821–2, the elite force, the Janissaries, were preoccupied with subduing Ali Paşa, the powerful *ayan* (regional notable) of Yannina (an ethnic Albanian), who held sway over most of today's Albania and Greek Epirus, and was acting as an independent sovereign. With the Greeks in control of most of the territories south of Thessaly, the sultan summoned Mehmed Ali of Egypt (another all-powerful *ayan* of Albanian origin acting as an independent ruler) to quell the Greek revolt. Mehmed Ali, who had reorganised his forces with French technical assistance, sent a navy and army under the command of his adopted son Ibrahim, who was able to defeat the Greeks in 1825–7, leaving only some pockets of resistance intact. Had it not been for the timely military intervention of Britain, Russia and France, this would have been, in all probability, the end of the Greek bid for independence. What made the difference was that the Greek uprising had become a *cause célèbre* in Europe, giving rise to an impressive wave of what is known as *Philhellenism*, which resulted in hundreds of men (*Philhellenes*) swarming to Greece to assist in the War of Independence, including Lord Byron. There was also strong public pressure, particularly in Britain, France and Russia, to come to the support of the beleaguered Greeks.²²

Three acts were crucial in saving the Greeks and, incidentally, can be seen as an early manifestation of humanitarian intervention:²³ the naval Battle of Navarino (1827), in which a joint naval force of British, French and Russian battleships destroyed the entire Egyptian-Ottoman fleet; the French expeditionary force that fought together with the Greeks against the Egyptian land forces; and the Russian attack against the Ottoman Empire in 1829, with the Russian army reaching Edirne. Thus, the reluctant sultan had to accept, at the very least, autonomy for the Greeks (Treaty of Edirne, 14 September 1829).

On 3 February 1830 (4th London Protocol), the so-called three 'Protecting Powers', Britain, France and Russia, recognised Greece as an independent state. These great powers, also known as the 'Guaranteeing Powers' (guaranteeing Greece's independence), had made Greece in effect

a semi-independent state, akin to a protectorate in its first decades of existence.²⁴ The Protecting Powers imposed a monarchy on the new state and an absolutist one at that. This was against the grain, for during their struggle the Greeks had adopted a series of very liberal constitutions, from 1822 until 1827, and from January 1828 had been governed by Capodistrias, in what was a semi-authoritarian regime, but hardly a monarchy. The first monarch was Otto, the son of the Bavarian king, who arrived in Greece on 30 January 1833.²⁵

Consequences

The Greek Revolution was 'a watershed event',²⁶ not only for the *Romioi*, who from a religious-cultural community (*to genos*) became a nation²⁷ and created a state of their own, but also for the Ottoman Empire, which for the first time experienced military setback and territorial losses as a result of a secessionist uprising from within. For the Ottomans it had 'brought nationalism home'; now they could no longer 'treat nationalist ideas as distant curiosities of the French Revolution'.²⁸ Greek independence was the first independent state to be created out of the Ottoman Empire, the first crack to Ottoman legitimacy in the Balkans, spurring other groups, apart from the Serbs (who had revolted in 1804–13, gaining autonomy), to regard themselves as nations, entitled to independence.

The Greek independence bid was also of seminal importance for the Ottoman Empire for two other reasons, which until recently had not been entertained by Ottomanists. One is the role of the Greek War of Independence in transforming the Ottoman Empire. It had a 'revolutionising impact', spurring substantial reform at a time when 'there was nothing to suggest that the Ottoman state was on the eve of momentous changes'.²⁹ As Hakan Erdem has aptly put it, the Greek Revolution was 'a curt message that the Ottoman non-Muslims were no longer content with living in a society where the state had two types of subjects categorized in line with religious affiliation'.³⁰ Another reason is that in the longer term, the Greek revolt against the Ottoman Empire 'spawned not only the modern Greek state but also the modern Turkish state ... both modern Greece and modern Turkey are the outcomes of the Greek War of Independence'.³¹ Put differently, various important developments within the late Ottoman Empire, including the creation of the modern state of Turkey, can be seen as 'a delayed reaction to the Greek Revolt'.³²

The culmination of reforms within the Empire instigated by the Greek independence struggle can be seen as a three-step process. When the

forces of Ibrahim overwhelmed the Greek uprising, even though the Egyptian forces were smaller in number in comparison to the Janissaries sent in 1822–4, the sultan used this to justify raising a new army. When the Janissaries rebelled at the sultan's move, he obliterated them. The killing and abolition of the Janissary corps, known as the 'The Auspicious Event', was to signal several important reforms by Mahmûd, from the adoption of the 'fez' in place of the turban to primary education becoming compulsory and the creation of several secondary schools, a school of medicine and a military academy. This was to be the prelude to the Tanzimat (reordering) reforms, the third, more delayed impact of the Greek uprising. The initiation of the famous Tanzimat reforms, which started in 1839 (see below), was also intended to stem centrifugal tendencies by the minority communities, as shown by the example of Greece's independence, and by the same token preclude foreign involvement on their behalf, such as that of 1827–9 in support of the Greeks.³³

The far from sweeping conflict

Clearly the period 1821–9 is far more convincing a date for the start of the confrontation. Undoubtedly it was in several respects the first act of the clash, but, as we shall see, hardly one leading to a relentless conflict that knew no bounds and that has lasted until today.

To begin with, only one of the two sides was a self-defined nation of *Hellenes* (*Graikoi* according to Korais), originally a 'civic nation' and not an ethnic one, in view of the fact that a significant number of self-defined Greeks were Christian Albanian-speakers (*Arvanites*) and some were Romanian-speakers (Vlachs). The Ottomans were not Turks; this self-definition was to prevail almost a century later. Thus, strictly speaking, the antagonism was not between two nations in arms, as it were, but one between a new nation and an empire based on Islam.

Furthermore, the Greek challenge of the 1820s was far from sweeping as far as the *Romioi* themselves were concerned. Reverting again to recent studies on ethnic conflict, in instances of advantaged groups in backward states or regions, a secessionist struggle ensues belatedly and may not be overwhelming as far as the group in question is concerned.³⁴

In the Greek case, the claim to statehood was geographically limited to the southern Balkans. The highest echelons of the *Rum* community, the powerful Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Phanariots, did not approve of the uprising and remained loyal to the sultan (with several noteworthy exceptions).³⁵ Prior to the uprising, the then-Patriarch,

Gregorios V, a revered figure in the Orthodox world, was at the forefront of what has been called an 'anti-Enlightenment' movement, which condemned the idea of sedition against the rule of the sultan, 'the God-sent protector of Orthodoxy'. This reaction was part of a wider abhorrence for the French Revolution and what it stood for.³⁶ Moreover, a small group of notables took another line: though proponents of the values and goals of the Greek Enlightenment, they were against a resort to arms as such and believed that the Greeks could gradually gain the upper hand in the Empire through a lengthy peaceful process.³⁷

When the Greek struggle for independence was launched under Ypsilantis, Gregorios condemned the insurgency and went as far as excommunicating Ypsilantis and Soutzos.³⁸ The Patriarch sent a memorandum to the Sublime Porte, suggesting that the rebels repent and ask for pardon, thus resulting in a return to the status quo ante.³⁹ The Patriarch and his Phanariot entourage were no doubt also motivated by instrumental reasons: not to lose their immense wealth and influence in the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁰ In any event, in spite of the Patriarch's moves, following reports of the massacre of Muslims in Morea, Mahmûd decided to execute the Patriarch (he was hanged outside the Patriarchate's gate), holding him responsible for the rebellion, for not having been able to control his 'flock', even though he was obviously innocent.⁴¹ For the same reason he also executed some 50 influential *Romioi* and exiled and confiscated the properties of some 50 Phanariots. Interestingly, the wrath of the sultan also fell on the *Şeyhülislâm* (the highest religious authority and chief jurisconsult), Hacı Halil Effendi, because the latter regarded the punishment of the Patriarch as contrary to Islamic law, called for the retraction of the decree ordering the massacre of the *Rum* in Morea and elsewhere, and refused the sultan's request for a *fetva* (a religious legal ruling) of approval for such retribution.⁴²

Developments in the Ottoman Empire and Greece (1830–50s)

The Tanzimat era

The Greeks did not regard the borders of their new state as permanent but ephemeral. The territory they were able to take over was seen as too meagre (even though it did include most of classical Greece) in comparison to what they felt they were entitled to, given their historical presence in the region and their numbers in the Ottoman Empire (the inhabitants of the new state were three quarters of a million while the Greek-speaking *Romioi* in the remaining Ottoman Empire

were about a million and a quarter).⁴³ Thus, they were in search of the next opportune moment to 'liberate Greek territories', as they saw it, and for this they counted on Europe, where the dominant mood was that the Ottoman Empire was in decline, 'the Sick Man of Europe' suffering from terminal illness.

Yet relations between the small kingdom and the Empire were fairly smooth and remained so until the eve of the Crimean War in the mid-1850s. The need for friendly relations was dictated not only by the comparative size and military prowess between the two states, but also by the fact that the *Romioi* lived in considerable numbers in the Ottoman Empire. Their position was restored a few years after the independence of Greece. The only real change by the Ottoman rulers intended to punish them was that from then on, neither the two prestigious dragoman posts nor the two hospodar posts were to be held by Greek-speakers. Otherwise the coexistence in relative harmony of the two communities continued from the 1830s onwards, as if the Greek Revolution and independence had not taken place.⁴⁴

The improvement of relations within the Empire was due in particular to the Tanzimat reforms, which made the Greek Ottomans (and the Armenians for that matter) 'richer and more self-confident'.⁴⁵

The Tanzimat-ı *Hayriye* (Auspicious Reorderings) covered more than three decades (1839–76) of legislation and reform, in an attempt to gingerly bring the Empire into the modern age. The architect of the first edict, the *Gülhane Hatt-ı Şerif*, the Noble Rescript of *Gülhane* (the rose bower), was foreign minister Mustafa Reşid Paşa, who launched it on 3 November 1839, in the presence of the new sultan, Abdülmecid. The reforms included the guarantee of the life, honour and property of all the sultan's subjects; and equality before the law of all subjects, whatever their religion. Henceforth, the non-Muslims were no longer 'second class subjects', but enjoyed equality with the Muslim majority, on paper at least. There followed a number of other edicts, the most important of which was the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* (Noble Edict) of 1856, which was promulgated a month before the Treaty of Paris that ended the Crimean War (apparently the aim was to convince the 'Great Powers' to include the Ottoman Empire in the Concert of Europe, an objective which was achieved).⁴⁶ The Tanzimat, and not least the 1856 Edict, was deeply resented by the conservative Muslims. It was also resented by the Orthodox Patriarchate, for it weakened its privileged status vis-à-vis the other non-Muslim religious institutions (perhaps most of all, the Patriarchate was appalled at seeing its community now equal with the Jews).⁴⁷

With the Tanzimat, four cornerstones of the traditional Ottoman edifice were brushed aside: the *kul* system; the hierarchical distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims, with the latter as 'protected minorities' (*zimmi*) and the former as true Ottomans; the status of *reaya* (flock) for the ruled (as opposed to the ruling class), which by the late 18th century had come to denote the non-Muslims;⁴⁸ and the *millet* system itself, at least on paper, with the heads of the various communities also being obliged to modernise. The institutions and laws of the empire were now secular. With the Tanzimat, a new kind of collective identity was introduced, known as Ottomanism (*Osmanlılık*), aspiring to gain the adherence of all those who were now Ottoman citizens (the *Rumioi* were now Ottoman Greeks). The Tanzimat may have been half-hearted, many of the reforms being initiated so as to stem foreign involvement on behalf of the Christian minority communities. However, it is more than certain that the reformists had the sense to realise that 'if nothing was done to remove the grievances of the subject people, the empire might crumble into ruin even without foreign interference'.⁴⁹ From the viewpoint of the Ottoman bureaucrats who spearheaded the reforms, it was for obvious reasons fundamental to do away with their vulnerable status as 'slaves' of the sultan.⁵⁰

Irrespective of its flaws, the Tanzimat reforms 'contributed substantially to the remarkable economic and demographic resurgence of the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire after the setbacks of the 1820s. They also encouraged the substantial immigration of Greeks from the independent kingdom to the Ottoman Empire'.⁵¹ The main motive for emigration was economic, as the Empire offered more opportunities for young people seeking better opportunities in commerce, business and even agriculture. The precise number of emigrants is not known, but what is obvious is that the Greek presence in the Empire increased dramatically from 1840 until the end of the century.⁵² In 1830 there were about 1,250,000⁵³ Greeks and by 1876 their number had risen by 60 per cent to 2,100,000.⁵⁴ What is more than certain is that the majority in the western coastal regions of Asia Minor were 'the product of immigration from the Aegean islands and continental Greece'.⁵⁵

Another important consequence of the dynamic created by the Tanzimat reforms was the impressive rise of liberal thought among the bureaucrats and elite in the Empire which was endorsed by many Ottoman Greeks and Armenians. A case in point was the New or Young Ottomans (*Yeni Osmanlılar*), who appeared in the mid-1860s. They were highly critical of the Tanzimat reforms for being too meagre and articulated the need for a constitutional monarchy, elections and a parliament.

The central figure among them was Namık Kemal, followed by Ali Suavi, Ziya Paşa and prince Mustafa Fazıl Paşa, brother of the khedive (viceroy) of Egypt, all of whom ended up in Paris for a decade. Their great moment was to come in 1876–7.⁵⁶

Under the circumstances, one can search for other dates within the 19th century where the Greek-Ottoman clash was more complete and permanent. An obvious candidate is the so-called *Megali Idea* (Great Idea), Greek irredentism, which was in full swing as the main foreign policy objective from the mid-1850s onwards.

The Great Idea

The starting point of the Great Idea is 14 January 1844. It was launched in a famous speech by the head of the pro-French party, Ioannis Kolletis (a Hellenised Vlach and several times prime minister), in nebulous terms, as a ‘civilising mission’ of the Greeks towards the east, implying the resurrection of the Byzantine Empire as a Greek empire.⁵⁷

From the onset of the 1850s, the Great Idea was to become the fixation and *raison d’être* of the small kingdom.⁵⁸ It manifested itself in three ways: (1) the resurrection of the Byzantine Empire as a Greek empire (‘empire or death’); (2) the gradual move forwards at the expense of the Ottoman state, by the use of military means as well as diplomacy (‘union or death’); and (3) a variant that appeared last – trying to create a Greek-Ottoman state through peaceful means in which the Greeks (in view of their great economic power, education and capabilities in the Ottoman Empire) would end up having the upper hand.⁵⁹

The first foreign policy act of the Great Idea was the behaviour of Greece in the months prior to the outbreak of the Crimean War. With Russian encouragement, Greece sent arms and officers and men, as volunteers, to foment uprisings in Epirus, Thessaly and southern Macedonia, and there were various sporadic rebellions. King Otto, a staunch supporter of the Great Idea, was on the verge of joining the fray as the head of a Greek army. The Great Powers (save Russia of course) as well as Bavaria (whose king was Otto’s brother) tried to convince Greece to halt its irresponsible behaviour, but to no avail. Thus, Britain and France took the extraordinary measure of occupying Athens and Piraeus for almost three years, from May 1854 until February 1857.⁶⁰

Obviously, with the Great Idea in full swing, the landscape was hardly conducive to untrammelled relations between the two states. Yet here again things are not as clear-cut as one might have expected. The final clash was not unavoidable and was not necessarily a foregone conclusion. Let us examine why.

Developments in the Ottoman Empire and Greece (1860–80s)

The Great Idea was immensely popular, leading the Greek public to occasional bouts of national enthusiasm verging on frenzy. However, at least one Greek party, representing a third of the electorate, seemed more pragmatic: the pro-British party headed by Alexander Mavrocordatos, a respected senior politician and diplomat from the days of the Greek Revolution. Moreover, the adventurism of Otto in the Crimean War had caused the king to lose his throne, due to British initiatives. The new king, George I, who hailed from the Danish royal family, took over the throne with the understanding that the Great Idea would be put on the shelf. This came with a handsome gift from Whitehall of the Ionian Islands (1864).⁶¹

More crucially, further developments within the Ottoman Empire seemed promising enough, tempering the irredentist urge, save with regard to Thessaly, Epirus and Crete. The Empire seemed to be within reach of the ideals of the Young Ottomans in 1876–7, with the promulgation of a constitution, parliamentary elections and the sessions of the first Ottoman parliament. At the forefront of these momentous events was the enlightened Grand Vizier Midhat Paşa, assisted by the Young Ottomans, notably Namık Kemal and Ziya Paşa. This initial process was endorsed by the liberal and very educated Sultan Murâd V, who reigned for only a few months in the course of 1876 (he was deposed due to mental illness).⁶² His brother and successor, Abdülhamid II, promised Midhat that he would go along with the process, though he did his utmost to water down the constitution⁶³ and add a crucial clause permitting him to dissolve parliament. Elections were held (January–March 1877) and the first Ottoman chamber of deputies emerged. All major religious and ethnic groups were represented. The chamber held session from 19 March 1877 to 13 February 1878, where lively debates took place. Thus, Midhat's ideal of reconciling Muslims and Christians was to a certain extent realised and, ironically, it was the success of the parliamentary experiment that caused its demise.⁶⁴ The sultan dissolved parliament on 14 February 1878 on the pretext that the Empire was in a state of crisis, in view of the Ottoman-Russian war of 1877–8.⁶⁵

Abdülhamid established a despotic and personal regime that was to last until the Young Turk Revolution (1908), emphasising Ottomanism with a strong dose of Islamic solidarity.⁶⁶ In recent years some scholars have argued that the Abdülhamid regime was not as reactionary as it appeared, given its great emphasis on education at all levels, its fiscal policy and its development of an extended railway network.⁶⁷

The thriving of the Ottoman Greeks that had started with the advent of the Tanzimat continued. In the second part of the 19th century, a considerable number served in leading positions in the Ottoman administration, most of all in the prestigious diplomatic service. The ambassadors to major foreign capitals in the second part of the 19th century were predominantly Ottoman Greeks. A case in point was Constantine Mousouros, who served as ambassador to London for 35 years and also John Aristarchis (son of a Grand Dragoman), who served for many years as ambassador to Berlin and as senior diplomat at the Sublime Porte. In the course of the Berlin Peace Conference (1878), the head of Ottoman diplomacy, the minister of foreign affairs, was an Ottoman Greek, Alexander Karateodori, who had also earned the prestigious title of Paşa.⁶⁸

Reference should also be made to the Patriarch during Abdülhamid's rule, Joachim III, who supported the supra-national character of the Ottoman state and opposed Greek nationalism and irredentism.⁶⁹

Even more strikingly, the financial and economic control of the Ottoman Empire, especially at the centre (Istanbul, the southern Balkans and Asia Minor), was largely in the hands of the big Galata bankers (*sarrafs*) who were mostly Ottoman Greeks (such as Leonidas Zariphis and Christaki Zographos, with direct access to Abdülhamid) as well as other Ottoman Greek (and Armenian) entrepreneurs and merchants.⁷⁰ The Ottoman Greek economic influence was so pronounced that it has been plausibly claimed that, from 'an economic point view the Ottoman Empire ... constituted a Greek state, since all economic life and many public works were carried out either by Greeks or by Greek capital'.⁷¹ The economic and commercial predominance of the non-Muslim minorities was so pronounced that by the end of the first decade of the 20th century, it came to be resented, sparking an 'economic nationalism' against the Ottoman Greek merchants in particular.⁷²

At this point, a number of clarifications are in order. The prosperity of the Ottoman Greeks by no means implies that the Great Idea was on the wane in Greece or that it had gained no adherents among the Ottoman Greeks. Characteristically, even the most moderate and astute of the Greek premiers in the second part of the 19th century, Charilaos Trikoupis, whose main emphasis was on internal development, was an advocate of the Great Idea but regarded 'internal reconstruction as a prerequisite for national integration'.⁷³ In the meantime, schoolteachers (graduates of the University of Athens) and consuls (diplomats) were sent from Greece to instil Greek consciousness and the Greek language, and propagate the idea of union with Greece, in the spirit of Greek irredentism. Surprisingly, the Ottoman authorities, with a few exceptions, took no measures to

ban these activities or otherwise stop the fomenting of disloyalty to the Ottoman state.⁷⁴

By and large, however, the most extreme version of the Great Idea (the empire or 'Ionian vision' as it was sometimes called) was put aside and emphasis was placed on acquiring neighbouring Ottoman territories in the Balkans through diplomatic means. Thus, in early 1878, following the Serbian-Bulgarian crisis (1876–8) and the Bulgarian massacres that led to a Russian attack against the Ottomans, a motley force of 23,000 semi-trained Greek soldiers were sent across the border into Thessaly, out of fear that the Bulgarians would get the spoils from the Russian victory. The force was ordered to turn back, but Athens tried to convince the Great Powers in the Berlin Peace Conference (June–July 1878) that its self-restraint called for territorial rewards. The Conference recommended a change of boundaries to be confirmed after agreement between Greece and the Ottoman Empire. After several delays, the Porte accepted that most of Thessaly would be annexed by Greece, together with the town of Arta in Epirus (1880).⁷⁵

Coexistence still alive

Other greater threats

Interestingly, even though the Great Idea in its more restricted rendition was still prominent in Greece from the 1870s, until the turn of the century the other side was not regarded as the main object of hate and the great threatening 'Other', either at inter-state level or at inter-communal level within the Ottoman Empire. As far as Greece was concerned, Bulgaria was the main threat from the 1870s onwards,⁷⁶ and occasionally the Russian Empire was feared, being seen, mistakenly, to be in the grip of pan-Slavism. As for the Ottomans, they did not react, as we have said, forcefully to the various anti-Ottoman activities of the schoolteachers and consuls, due perhaps to imperial aloofness or sheer administrative incompetence. What is more than clear is that in the last decades of the 19th century, the 'Sick Man of Europe' had to face more daunting problems from far more formidable foes, such as the Russian and the Austrian Empires. Under the circumstances, small irredentist Greece, though an irritant, was hardly seen as a major danger, in spite of the vexing Cretan and Macedonian questions that marred the relations between the two countries on several occasions, especially from the 1890s onwards.

Abdülhamid's rule may have been despotic and inclined towards Islamic identity, but the Ottoman Greeks, as we have seen, did not suffer as a consequence. Moreover, there were promising developments from 1889

until 1902. Opposition to the Abdülhamid regime was on the rise, as a group of intellectuals and activists known as the Young Turks came to the fore, enticing several Greeks as well as Armenians to join their ranks.

The Young Turks in opposition

The Young Turk movement, which came to be known as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), was an umbrella organisation. Its first nucleus, known as the Ottoman Union Committee (*İttihad-ı Osmani Cemiyeti*), was set up in 1889 by four medical students, who tried to emulate the Carbonari, the Russian nihilists and, interestingly, the *Philiki Etairia*. Within less than a year, what amounted to a student group became a large organisation, including among its participants several prominent Ottoman bureaucrats, a clear indication of how widespread the feeling to do something drastic to save the Empire was. The Young Turks were persecuted and fled to Paris, Cairo, Geneva and Britain. From 1895 the main centre of the Young Turks was Paris, with Ahmed Rıza as the dominant figure. The movement was renamed the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress (*Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*). The use of 'Ottoman' and 'Union' implied 'the co-operation of all nationalities within the Ottoman unity'.⁷⁷ Rıza believed in the assimilation of nationalities under the framework of Ottoman citizenry, while the liberal CUP members were of the view that different national or ethnic identities were not incompatible with Ottomanism.⁷⁸

The leadership of the CUP in 1896 passed for a while to Murad Bey, a major personality of the Ottoman Empire, who was keen to enlist the support of the Armenians. Abdülhamid feared Murad due to his impressive international connections and finally convinced him to return to Istanbul. The co-optation of Murad by Abdülhamid in 1897 was a major blow to the CUP, but in 1899 there was a new impetus to the movement with the flight to Paris of Damad Mahmud Paşa, brother-in-law of Abdülhamid, with his two sons, princes Sabahaddin Bey and Lûtfullah Bey (grandsons of Sultan Abdülmecid), an event that was widely reported in the European press. The Abdülhamid regime became very apprehensive and called upon Britain, Germany and France to ban CUP activities. Damad was a strong advocate of assistance from Britain to overthrow the Abdülhamid regime and considered Armenian support essential to the movement. Sabahaddin, who was soon to head the liberal wing of the CUP, was an advocate of minimal government, liberal multiethnic rule and decentralisation, bordering on federalism.⁷⁹

In February 1902, Sabahaddin and Lûtfullah organised the 1st Congress of Ottoman Opposition in Paris. At the Congress, the liberal

faction under Sabahaddin, which included Armenians, Albanians and Greeks, carried the day. The Greek participants at the Congress were Vasilios Mousouros-Gkikis (a former member of the State Council and son-in-law of ambassador Mousouros), who was very close to Damad and Sabahaddin, historian Constantinos Sathas, Georges Fardis and Anastase Adossidis. The chair of the Congress went to Sabahaddin, with Sathas and Sisyan Effendi (the main Armenian representative) as vice-chairmen; apparently this was intended as an acknowledgment of the 'preferential treatment accorded to the Greeks and Armenians'.⁸⁰ Sabahaddin supported the violent overthrow of the Abdülhamid regime, with the active intervention of the democratic powers Britain and France. Rıza and his faction (known as 'the minority') were vehemently opposed to foreign intervention. At the end, the compromise formula reached was to call for the Great Powers' 'moral support' (*action morale*). The central committee of the CUP elected at the end of the Congress was a victory for the liberals, being headed by Sabahaddin and including Mousouros-Gkikis and Fardis among its eight-member ruling committee. However, the victory of the liberals was short-lived, as the more conservative elements under Rıza soon gained the upper hand. In this group, which renamed the movement the CPU (Committee on Progress and Union), no Greeks, Armenians or Jews participated. The members of the minorities rallied around Sabahaddin, who created the Society of Ottoman Liberals. In the 2nd Congress of 1907 (Paris), the Young Turkish movement was reunited, actually as a result of Armenian initiatives, and the reunited CUP approved the use of violent means to overthrow Abdülhamid, though without external assistance.⁸¹

In the period 1902–8, according to M.Şükrü Hanioğlu, the group under Rıza had become Islamic as well as Turkish nationalist.⁸² However, the CPU under Rıza did not come out against Ottomanism and did not opt for Turkish nationalism *per se*. The case of Akçura (then a rising CPU star) was more of an exception than the rule, though he touched a chord among many Young Turks with his views on Turkish nationalism (see Chapter 2). Prior to 1908, even Ziya Gökalp was an advocate of 'Ottoman nationality' as regards Turks, Greeks, Arabs and others, who could first be Ottomans and then Turks, Greeks, Arabs or others.⁸³

The idea of a Greek-Ottoman state

It is thus no coincidence that it was in the last decades of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century that an imaginative new idea was to surface in several quarters, among members of the elite, among the Ottoman Greeks, in Greece proper and among

the Ottomans themselves: to create an Ottoman-Greek condominium, a democratic liberal state shared by the two communities in quasi-parity. Figures prominent in this endeavour on the Greek-Ottoman side were Cleanthi Scalieri as early as the 1870s,⁸⁴ a Freemason and close friend of Murâd (the brief sultan), his son Georges Scalieri and Mousouros-Gkikis, who were both very close to Sabahaddin.⁸⁵ On the Greek side were the banker Andreas Syngros, historian Pavlos Karolidis, Athanasios Souliotes-Nikolaidis and diplomat Ion Dragoumis,⁸⁶ and briefly even Greece's great future leader, Eleftherios Venizelos (while in Crete, before he became Prime Minister of Greece). On the Ottoman side, the most prominent advocates of such a development were the members of the liberal wing of the Young Turks in opposition, headed by Sabahaddin, though strictly speaking the prince was not supportive of an Ottoman-Greek state as such, but rather of a multiethnic democratic quasi-federal state, with active participation from the Greeks and Armenians.

With the benefit of hindsight on the events that occurred between 1912 and 1922, such visions were utterly unrealistic or too little too late, but they made considerable sense at the time for at least three reasons. One was the aforementioned perception of the Russian-Slavic threat for both sides. Secondly and more importantly, a major Greek-Ottoman military clash would be avoided. Thirdly, the presence of the Ottoman Greeks in Asia Minor would not be jeopardised, which would be the case in any confrontation. Here a clarification is in order.

In the last century of the Ottoman Empire, the homeland for the Ottoman Turkish-speakers was mainly the Empire's European part, *Rumeli*. On the Asian side, the Ottoman Muslim sense of homeland did not go further than Bursa or Eskişehir at the most.⁸⁷ The Istanbul elite was more attached to *Rumeli* than Anatolia and it is no coincidence that the power basis of the CUP was Macedonia, with Salonika as its headquarters.⁸⁸ On the Ottoman Greek side, the areas that were considered their homeland were, in addition to Istanbul (Constantinople) and the islands of the eastern Aegean, the Aegean coast of Asia Minor, Ayvalık, Smyrna and Aydın, as well as faraway Pontos, a world unto itself, where the Ottoman Greeks formed about a third of the population.⁸⁹ In other words, the human tragedy of it all was that if nationalism prevailed, the prospective *patries* of either community were geographically on the wrong side in the Ottoman lands vis-à-vis Greece. To ever be able to claim national homogeneity as nation-states, they would have had to switch sides and obviously this could come about only through war, ruin and expulsion.

In conclusion, so long as Turkish nationalism was not yet on course and Ottomanism remained the main focus of identification (for both the state, the opposition and the majority of Ottoman Greeks) and the Turkish-speaking Ottomans were, with few exceptions, still blind to Turkish identity, which was the case until the first years of the 20th century, the glue tying the Ottoman Greeks to the Empire could still hold, in spite of the frustration with the Islamic turn of Abdülhamid and the lack of liberalisation.

Notes

1. Bernard Lewis (1968) [1961], *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press), p. 65.
2. Ibid., pp. 62, 66–7.
3. Ibid., pp. 53–5, 65–7; Roderic Davison (1977), ‘Nationalism as an Ottoman Problem and the Ottoman Response’, in William W. Haddad and William Ochsenwald (eds), *Nationalism in a Non-National State: The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press), p. 38; Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993), pp. 28–9; Şükrü Hanioğlu (2008), *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press), p. 51.
4. Davison, op. cit., p. 25.
5. Davison, op. cit., pp. 26, 52; Niyazi Berkes (1998) [1964], *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (London: Hurst and Company), p. 322; B. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 344–50; David Kushner (1977), *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism* (London: Frank Cass), pp. 1–26, 31–7, 100; Faruk Birtek (2005), ‘Greek Bull in the China Shop of Ottoman “Grand Illusion”: Greece in the Making of Modern Turkey’, in Faruk Birtek and Thalia Dragonas (eds), *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey* (London: Routledge), pp. 37–48.
6. Traian Stoianovich (1960), ‘The Conquering Balkan Merchant’, *The Journal of Economic History*, 20, pp. 234–313.
7. Charles A. Frazee (1969), *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece, 1821–1852* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 7.
8. Alexis Heraclides (1991), *The Self-Determination of Minorities in International Politics* (London: Frank Cass), p. 17.
9. Johan Galtung (1964), ‘A Structural Theory of Aggression’, *Journal of Peace Research*, 1, pp. 95–119.
10. Heraclides, op. cit., p. 19.
11. Heraclides, op. cit., p. 17.
12. For the concept of internal colonialism, see Michael Hechter (1975), *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in the British National Development* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).
13. Paschalis M. Kitromilides (1989), ‘La révolution française dans le sud-est de l’Europe. La dimension politique’, in *La révolution française et l’hellénisme moderne*, Actes du III^e colloque d’histoire (Athens, 14–17 October), pp. 223–45.

14. K. Th. Dimaras (2002) [1977], *Neohellinikos diafotismos* [Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment] (Athens: Hermes); Paschalis Kitromilides (1996), *Neohellinikos diafotismos* [Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment] (Athens: Morfotiko Idryma Ethnikis Trapezis); Richard Clogg (1982), 'The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire', in B. Braude and B. Lewis (eds), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The Functions of a Plural Society* (New York and London: H&M Publishers), pp. 189–93.
15. Theophilus C. Prousis (1994), *Russian Society and the Greek Revolution* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press), pp. 22–3; Stephanos P. Papageorgiou (2005), *Apo to genos sto ethnos: i themeliosi tou ellinikou kratous* [From genos to Nation: The Establishment of the Greek State] (Athens: Papazisis), pp. 84–88.
16. Frazee, op. cit., p. 17.
17. Frazee, op. cit., pp. 13–7; Prousis, op. cit., pp. 26–8; Papageorgiou, op. cit., pp. 87–93; H. Şükrü Ilicak (2009), 'The Revolt of Alexandros Ipsilantis and the Fate of the Fanariots in Ottoman Documents', in Petros Pizaniyas (ed.), *I Elliniki Epanastasi tou 1821: ena evropaiiko gegonos* [The Greek Revolution of 1821: A European Event] (Athens: Kedros and Ionian University History Department), pp. 227–8, 321–3.
18. Papageorgiou, op. cit., pp. 93–5.
19. Ilicak, op. cit., p. 320.
20. Russia denied any involvement and it is clear that there was no Russian conspiracy against the Ottoman Empire with the Greeks at the forefront. However, it is obvious that there was some limited support to Ypsilantis and the Etairists at a lower level by Russian officials. See Prousis, op. cit., pp. 8–26; Ilicak, op. cit., p. 324. Interestingly, Kemal Karpat supports Mahmûd's line, claiming that there is documentary evidence that the Russians organised Ypsilantis's revolt, though they later disavowed it for fear of international complications. See Kemal H. Karpat (2002), *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays* (Leiden: Brill), p. 417.
21. Ilicak, op. cit., pp. 321–5, 328–30. See also Vitali Sheremet (1992), 'The Greek Revolution of 1821: A New Look at Old Problems', *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* (University of Minnesota), 8, pp. 41–55; Yusuf Hakan Erdem (2005), 'Do Not Think of the Greeks as Agricultural Labourers: Ottoman Responses to the Greek War of Independence', in Faruk Birtok and Thalia Dragonas (eds), *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey* (London: Routledge), pp. 67–84; Karpat, op. cit., pp. 417, 419, 604; Hanioglu, op. cit., p. 69.
22. The bibliography of the Greek War of Independence is legion, particularly in Greece. For recent books, see Papageorgiou, op. cit., pp. 79–284; and Petros Pizaniyas (ed.) (2009), *I Elliniki Epanastasi tou 1821: ena evropaiiko gegonos* [The Greek Revolution of 1821: A European Event] (Athens: Kedros and Ionian University History Department). In English see in particular, Douglas Dakin (1973), *The Greek Struggle for Independence, 1821–1833* (London: B.T. Batsford); John A. Petropoulos (1976), *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821–1830)* (Thessaloniki: Institute of Balkan Studies); and Richard Clogg (ed.) (1973), *The Greek Struggle for Independence* (London: Macmillan).
23. André Mandelstam (1923), 'La protection des minorités', *Recueil des Cours* (The Hague: Académie de droit international), I, pp. 374–5; Martha Finnemore (1996), 'Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention', in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security* (New York: Columbia

- University Press), pp. 161–4; Garry J. Bass (2009), *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (New York: Vintage Books), pp. 45–157.
24. John Anthony Petropoulos (1968), *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece, 1833–1843* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p. 145; Dakin, op. cit., p. 315.
25. Papageorgiou, op. cit., pp. 134–141, 152–8, 166–170, 195–284.
26. Hanioglu, op. cit., p. 69.
27. Papageorgiou, op. cit., p. 82.
28. Erdem, op. cit., p. 81.
29. Yusuf Hakan Erdem (2009), 'The Greek Revolt and the End of the Ottoman Order', in Pizani (ed.), op. cit., pp. 281, 284.
30. Ibid., p. 288.
31. Ibid., p. 286.
32. Ibid., p. 287.
33. Ibid., pp. 281–2, 284–5. For the reforms along the more traditional Ottomanist line, that is, without mentioning the Greek Revolution as the triggering event, see B. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 78–9, 100–1; Geoffrey Lewis (1974), *Modern Turkey* (London: Ernest Benn Limited), pp. 42–4; Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 53–4; Hanioglu, op. cit., pp. 60–71, 77.
34. Donald L. Horowitz (1985), *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 243–9.
35. Alexis Alexandris (1983), *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations* (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies), pp. 24, 32–3, 36.
36. Kitromilides, *Neohellinikos Diafotismos*, op. cit., pp. 272–8, 428–9, 439–44, 450–4.
37. The best-known proponent of this little-known view was Ignatius, bishop of Hungary and Wallachia. See Papageorgiou, op. cit., p. 82.
38. Frazee, op. cit., pp. 28–9; Clogg, op. cit., p. 193.
39. Erdem, 'Do not Think of the Greeks as Agricultural Labourers', op. cit., pp. 72–3.
40. B. Lewis, op. cit., p. 62; Alexandris, op. cit., pp. 24, 32–3, 36.
41. Clogg, op. cit., p. 193; Karpat, op. cit., p. 415, 604.
42. Karpat, op. cit., pp. 415, 604–5; Ilıcak, op. cit., p. 329–30.
43. Clogg, op. cit., p. 193; Clogg (1992), *A Concise History of Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 12; Michael Herzfeld (1982), *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press), pp. 3–4.
44. For the status of the *Romioi* in the Ottoman Empire after 1821–30, see Alexandris, op. cit., pp. 21–51; Clogg, 'The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire', op. cit., pp. 195–6; Dimitri Gondikas and Charles Issawi (eds) (1999), *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, Inc.); Sinan Kunalalp (1988), 'Le Grecs en Stamboul: diplomates ottomans d'origine grécque', in Vaner (ed.), op. cit., pp. 41–6.
45. Zürcher, op. cit., p. 64.
46. Hanioglu, op. cit., p. 85.
47. Roderic Davison (1963), *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–76* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); Berkes, op. cit., pp. 144–200; B. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 105–28; G. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 44–5; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw (1977), *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), vol. II, pp. 55–171; Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 52–69; Hanioglu, op. cit., pp. 72–102.

48. Davison, 'Nationalism as an Ottoman Problem and the Ottoman Response', op. cit., p. 36.
49. G. Lewis, op. cit., p. 44.
50. See note 47.
51. Clogg, 'The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire', op. cit., p. 195.
52. Clogg, 'The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire', op. cit., p. 195; Sia Anagnostopoulou (1997), *Mikra Asia, 190s aionas-1919. Oi ellinorthodoxes koinotites* [Asia Minor, 19th Century–1919. The Greek-Orthodox Communities] (Athens: Ellinika Grammata), pp. 190–204 and *passim*.
53. Clogg, 'The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire', op. cit., p. 193.
54. Davison, 'Nationalism as an Ottoman Problem and the Ottoman Response', op. cit., p. 29.
55. Paschalis Kitromilides (1990), 'Greek Irredentism in Asia Minor and Cyprus', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 26, 1, p. 4.
56. Şerif Mardin (2000) [1962], *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press); Berkes, op. cit., pp. 201–22; Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 71–4; Hanioglu, op. cit., pp. 103–4.
57. Elli Skopetea (1988), *To 'Prototypos Vasileio' kai i Megali Idea* [The 'Prototype Kingdom' and the Great Idea] (Athens: Polytypo), pp. 257–9.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 259–60, 285–6; Clogg, 'The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire', op. cit., p. 193.
59. Skopetea, op. cit., pp. 269–324; Michael Llewellyn Smith (1973), *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor* (London: Allen Lane), p. 4.
60. Domna Donta (1973), *I Ellas kai oi Dynameis kata ton Krimaikon Polemon* [Greece and the Powers during the Crimean War] (Thessaloniki: IMXA).
61. Lena Divani (2000), *I edafiki oloklirisi tis Ellados* [The Territorial Integration of Greece] (Athens: Kastaniotis), pp. 143–9.
62. At this point a striking vignette is worth injecting, which is illustrative of the level of Ottoman-Ottoman Greek relations. Cleanthi Scalieri, an Ottoman Greek and high ranking Freemason, was close to the Ottoman heir, Mûrad and initiated him into the Freemason's lodge. The aim was to bring about the much needed liberalisation and democratisation of the Empire with Mûrad (well-known for his intellect and liberal views) as sultan. When Mûrad was deposed, a committee was formed under Scalieri and Aziz Bey in order to reinstate Mûrad by a coup. When this venture failed, Scalieri and other Freemasons, mainly Greeks, lobbied for the next few decades in Western capitals to get assistance for the reinstatement of Mûrad to the throne (apparently Mûrad, who was held all along at Çirakan Palace, had recovered completely). See M. Şükrü Hanioglu (1995), *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 34–6.
63. The constitution was drafted by a group of 28 personalities chaired by Midhat and including Ziya and Kemal. Among them were three Ottoman Greeks and three Ottoman Armenians, all senior state officials. See Berkes, op. cit., pp. 235–6.
64. Berkes, op. cit., p. 249.
65. Berkes, op. cit., pp. 202–49; B. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 160–9, 178; G. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 47–9; Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 75–81; Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, op. cit., pp. 103–29; Karpat, op. cit., pp. 75–89; Akşin, op. cit., pp. 37–45.
66. G. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 48–51; Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 80–90; Akşin, op. cit., pp. 43–5.

67. Selim Deringil (1998), *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London: I.B. Tauris); Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, op. cit., pp. 125–9.
68. Kuneralp, op. cit., pp. 41–6; Kuneralp, op. cit., pp. 41–6; Alexandris, op. cit., pp. 27–9.
69. Kitromilides, 'Greek Irredentism in Asia Minor and Cyprus', op. cit., p. 11.
70. Alexandris, op. cit., pp. 27–32.
71. Clogg, 'The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire', op. cit., p. 197.
72. Alexandris, op. cit., p. 32. On the rise of Turkish 'economic nationalism' against the Ottoman Greeks, see Ayhan Aktar (1996) 'Economic Nationalism in Turkey: The Formative Years, 1912–1925', *Bogazici Journal: Review of Social, Economic and Administrative Studies*, 10, 1–2, pp. 265–9.
73. Thanos Veremis (1983), 'Kratos kai ethnos stin Ellada, 1821–1912' [State and Nation in Greece, 1821–1912], in D.G. Tsaoussis (ed.), *Ellinismos kai ellinikotita* [Hellenism and Greekness] (Athens: Estia), p. 65.
74. Kitromilides, 'Greek Irredentism in Asia Minor and Cyprus', op. cit., p. 9; Clogg, 'The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire', op. cit., pp. 197–8.
75. Roderic Davison (1983), 'The Ottoman-Greek Frontier Question, 1876–1882', in *I teleftaia phasi tou Anatolikou Zitimatou kai o ellinismos, 1878–1981* [The Last Phase of the Eastern Question and Hellenism, 1876–1881], Minutes of an international conference held in Volos, pp. 185–204; Divani, op. cit., pp. 223–54.
76. Eli Skopetea (1999), 'Oi Ellines kai oi exthroi tous' [The Greeks and their Enemies], in Christos Hatziosif (ed.), *Istoria tis Elladas tou 20ou aiona. 1900–1922: oi aparches* [History of Greece in the 20th century. 1900–1922: The Beginnings], vol. A2 (Athens: Vivliorama), pp. 14–20.
77. Berkes, op. cit., p. 325.
78. Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, op. cit., pp. 17–8, 71–6, 213–5; Berkes, op. cit., p. 321; Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 90–1; Akşin, op. cit., pp. 45–7.
79. Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, op. cit., pp. 76–101, 142–6, 149, 156; Zürcher, op. cit., p. 92; Akşin, op. cit., pp. 48–9.
80. Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, op. cit., p. 189.
81. Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, op. cit., pp. 173–89, 196–7, 214; Akşin, op. cit., pp. 48–50; Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 2–3.
82. Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, op. cit., pp. 215–6.
83. Berkes, op. cit., pp. 321–2. For the different social backgrounds between the liberal and conservative Young Turks (the former upper class, cosmopolitan and fluent with foreign languages, the latter lower middle class), see Feroz Ahmad (1993), *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge), pp. 34–5.
84. Hanioglu, op. cit., pp. 34–6.
85. Alexandris, op. cit., p. 40.
86. However, as Alexandris has rightly pointed out, what was meant was to gradually take over the running of the state from the Ottomans by having Greeks holding all the key positions in the state apparatus. See Alexandris, op. cit., pp. 38–9.
87. Şerif Mardin (1997), 'The Ottoman Empire', in Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen (eds), *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building* (Boulder: Westview), pp. 115–7. See also Ahmad, op. cit., p. 17.
88. Poulton, op. cit., pp. 63, 69.
89. Smith, op. cit., pp. 22–9.

4

The Contemporary Perspective

The prelude

National Schism defined by Venizelos

The Greek-Turkish antagonism is neither perennial nor primordial and it is a 19th century rivalry only in part, as we have seen. Thus, a good case could be made that the rivalry and enmity is mainly, though of course not exclusively, a contemporary conflict, a clash of the 20th century. The turning point is the 1st Balkan War (1912),¹ which catapulted relations to their worst ever level for a decade, with armed conflict, persecution and ethnic cleansing being the rule of the day. Before picking up the thread from 1912, three events are worth highlighting as preludes to what was to come.

First is the Greek-Ottoman war of April–May 1897, prompted by a bout of Greek nationalist frenzy triggered by the recurring Cretan question (the Greek Cretan call for union with Greece). The small Greek army on the attack crossed the Greek-Ottoman border in northern Thessaly, only to be soundly beaten within less than a month. The Great Powers intervened and no territory was ceded to the Ottomans, but Greece was made to pay a heavy indemnity. The lesson of the war for Greece was that it was futile to take on the Ottomans head on, yet the prevailing spirit was that, despite reverses, ‘a general historical tendency was at work in favour of Greece’,² with the European parts of the Ottoman Empire destined to be ‘liberated’ by the Balkan peoples.³

A second event as far as Greece is concerned on the road to the show-down of 1912–22 is the 1909 *pronunciamento* by a group of officers that brought the government down (the ‘Goudi Revolution’ as it is known in Greece), which led, a year later, to the summoning of Eleftherios Venizelos, a distinguished Cretan leader of the 1897 call for union, to take over power. Thus, after 13 years in the wilderness, Greece made

a comeback as a potential actor to reckon with. Rid of its meagre self (as it was seen at the time), and with a leader of the stature of Venizelos, it could more confidently contemplate the realisation of Greater Greece at the expense of the 'Turks'.⁴

But by far the most momentous event in the region is the Young Turk Revolution of July 1908. In fact it was no revolution, in the sense of a popular uprising, but a military insurrection organised mainly by the nationalist wing of the CUP.⁵ It was 'conceived and executed in Macedonia by a conspiratorial organization whose leadership harboured a quintessentially conservative aim: to seize control of the empire and save it from collapse'.⁶ Abdülhamid tried to react but in the end conceded, issuing a decree for future elections for a new chamber of deputies (after a year he was relieved of office and was succeeded by Mehmed V Reşad as a constitutional monarch).

The Young Turk Revolution espoused liberty, equality and 'a new fraternal Ottoman identity'.⁷ The restless minorities hailed the Young Turk Revolution, rejoicing in the cities of the Empire, in Salonika, Istanbul, Izmir/Smyrna and beyond.⁸ The pre-Goudi Greek government was duly impressed. The Young Turks promised elections and kept to their word. The elections (November–December 1908) were surprisingly fair and the ensuing parliament represented, proportionately, the various ethnic communities (only the Arabs were under-represented), with Turkish-speakers comprising only slightly more than half of the deputies. The Ottoman Greek deputies won 26 out of 288 seats, that is, nine per cent of the total, which roughly amounted to their percentage in the still-large Empire. Thus, for the first time since 1878, the hopes for the much needed evolutionary transformation seemed a distinct possibility. However, the two main protagonists seeking change, the nationalist and liberal wings of the Young Turk movement, were at loggerheads, with irreconcilable visions of the future. Needless to say, only if the liberals were to prevail could real change for the better take place. Unfortunately, the nationalists had the upper hand most of the time, making the non-Muslim communities as well as the Arabs all the more apprehensive. There were also conservative Islamic groups which strenuously resisted change and resorting to violence. The liberal wing under Sabahaddin (with Greeks and Armenians in its ranks) split from the CUP and formed the Party of Ottoman Liberals (*Osmanlı Ahrar Fırkası*), while the nationalists took over the CUP. Finally, opposition to the heavy-handedness of the CUP gained momentum and most of the opposition forces united into one party, known internationally as *Entente Libérale*.⁹

The Balkan Wars and the First World War

The tragic irony is that in August 1912, two months prior to the First Balkan War, the liberals managed to take power, following a putsch in July by disgruntled CUP officers known as the 'Saviour Officers'. A government was formed, composed of elder statesmen with liberal tendencies and headed by the respected soldier and scholar Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa. Thus, it is far from fanciful to claim that: 'Had it not been for the outbreak of the Balkan War in October 1912, they might have succeeded in destroying the Committee and purging its supporters in the army. Had they done so, the history of Turkey under the liberals would have been very different.'¹⁰ But with the coming of the First Balkan War (8 October–3 December 1912), with first Montenegro and then Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece on the attack, the days of the liberal government were numbered. The 'hopes of the Ottomanists perished for ever',¹¹ as did the faint hopes for a Greek-Ottoman partnership.¹² Two months after the end of the War (with even Edirne, the Ottoman capital until 1453, being captured, momentarily, by the Bulgarians), the CUP, blaming the liberals for the losses, orchestrated a successful military coup (23 January 1913). Henceforth the main driving force was a triumvirate compromise of Enver, Talât and Cemal, in what was 'a virtual military dictatorship'.¹³ All three were staunch advocates of the pan-Turkic version of Turkish nationalism, though the regime wavered for a moment between Ottomanism, pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism.¹⁴

For the Ottoman Empire, the 1st Balkan War was 'a disaster in human, economic and cultural terms'.¹⁵ The Empire was thrown out of south-eastern Europe after having been there for more than five centuries, save for a foothold, in what is roughly today's European part of Turkey. The Ottomans lost a huge area (60,000 square miles, inhabited by four million people), a region that had been the 'core area of the empire',¹⁶ its richest and most developed province, from where the majority of the Ottoman ruling elite hailed.¹⁷

For Greece, the Balkan Wars were a triumph, as the country almost doubled its size by taking half of geographical Macedonia and southern Epirus, as well as having de facto gained the eastern Aegean islands (save for the Dodecanese) and having assured the future annexation of Crete (then an autonomous island with a Greek prince as high commissioner). The incorporation of such a large chunk of Macedonia was a considerable feat, given Bulgaria's opposition, stronger army and the greater presence of ethnic Bulgarians in Macedonia as a whole. Even in the region secured by Greece, the ethnic Greeks amounted to barely more than a third of

the population (the Muslims made up the largest single group and the Bulgarians comprised about a quarter of the population).

In the course of the First Balkan War, the armies of the Greeks, the Bulgarians and the Serbs burned, plundered and killed in what was a deliberate strategy of 'ethnic cleansing' (the term did not exist at the time, but the policy was well understood) aimed against the Muslims.¹⁸ The Muslim refugees who fled eastwards were close to 180,000, some 69,000 from the regions acquired by Greece.¹⁹ Most of the refugees lived in squatter towns for years and there was a high mortality rate from typhoid and cholera.²⁰

Following the Balkan Wars, Venizelos the realist, aware of the ethnic problem (more than 300,000 Muslims) that Greece was being saddled with, tried to mend his fences with the Sublime Porte by negotiating the voluntary exchange of population between Muslims living in newly acquired Macedonia and Epirus and Greeks living in parts of Asia Minor, in the *vilayet* (province) of Aydın, though not in its sub-province (*sanjak*) of Izmir/Smyrna. The Ottomans agreed to go along with this, but to Venizelos's dismay, they demanded that all of the Greeks leave Asia Minor and for the islands of the eastern Aegean to revert to them. In any event, the coming of the Great War was to put an end to this scheme.²¹

In the meantime, another tale of human suffering was unfolding, this time in Eastern (Ottoman) Thrace, in Istanbul and along the western littoral of Asia Minor, as many destitute refugees pillaged Greek properties out of revenge. By 1914 these activities became systematic, with irregular bands (*chettes*) joining the fray, now with the collusion of the Ottoman authorities. Apparently these ugly acts were intended to clear areas in order to populate them with the refugees. Another possible reason for this behaviour was to put pressure on Greece to hand back the eastern Aegean islands. The incidents were dubbed 'persecution' (*diogmos*) by no lesser authority than the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Many left for the safety of the nearby Greek-held islands, such as Lesbos and Chios. The remaining Ottoman Greeks craved union with Greece as their only salvation, however practically impossible it seemed before the start of the Great War.²²

With the turn to Turkish nationalism and pan-Turkism, the days of the Ottoman Empire were numbered. Technically, however, the fate of the Empire was sealed with the mistaken decision of the CUP to align with Germany, which was taken, secretly, by a small circle headed by Enver, Talât and the Grand Vizier.²³ In the course of the War, the Ottoman army held its ground better than expected (a case in point is its victory in the Gallipoli peninsula against the British in late 1915 and

early 1916), but could do little more, fighting as it was on three fronts and suffering huge casualties.

In the course of the First World War, there were terror campaigns against the Greeks and their businesses in Western Asia Minor, organised by a group of volunteer officers close to Enver (then Minister of War), which was known as the 'Special Organisation'.²⁴ Ministers Enver and Talât, and the Special Organisation, headed by CUP central committee member Bahaeddin Şakir, were responsible for an even more appalling deed: the deliberate policy of extermination of the Armenians in the midst of the War, in 1915–16, aimed at eradicating them from Anatolia.²⁵

For the Ottomans, the end of the Great War came with the Mudros Armistice (31 October 1918), signed on board the *HMS Agamemnon*, anchored off Mudros on the island of Lemnos. The Armistice amounted to a capitulation and permitted the Allies to occupy any part of the Empire deemed necessary for security reasons (Article 7 of the Armistice). The terms were made more palatable to the Ottomans by a secret undertaking by the British signatory, Admiral Sir Somerset Calthorpe, to his counterpart, the Ottoman Navy Minister, that he would recommend to his government that Greek troops would not be sent to Istanbul or Smyrna/Izmir and that Greek warships bound for the Black Sea would pass through the Straits only by night. In fact, two weeks later, 61 vessels, including the Greek cruiser *Averoff* of Balkan War fame, dropped anchor in the harbour of Istanbul.²⁶

On the very next day of the Armistice, Enver, Talât, Cemal and Bahaeddin Şakir left Istanbul by night aboard a German submarine for fear of being charged with the Armenian massacres by the Allies.²⁷ The reconvened parliament, fearful that the Armenian massacres would have a bearing on the upcoming Paris Peace Conference, initiated an extended discussion in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate, in order to 'hold the CUP accountable for the Armenian massacres, and thereby absolve the rest of the political establishment ... from responsibility'.²⁸

The Greek-Turkish War

The clash *in extremis* of the two peoples in the 20th century came in 1919–22, with the Greek-Turkish War. The first act of the drama came with the Greek occupation of Izmir/Smyrna. The project was Venizelos's brainchild and he was able to get it through at the Peace Conference with the support of David Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister and his consistent supporter.²⁹ Many had voiced their concern about

the sheer madness of such a venture, but to no avail.³⁰ The Greek contingent was depicted as a peacekeeping force of the victorious Allies. The Allies invoked Article 7 of the Mudros Armistice, although they faced no security threat in the region.³¹

The Greek army landed in Izmir/Smyrna on 15 May 1919, amidst an enthusiastic crowd holding Greek flags, with the Metropolitan of the city, Chrysostomos, blessing the Greek soldiers (in the city itself the Greeks were in the majority, but they made up only a third of the population in the wider province).³² From the start, the Greeks made it abundantly clear that they had come to stay and annex the territory in due course.³³ However, instead of behaving impeccably as peacekeepers and thus perhaps earning the right to stay, the Greek forces did the very opposite, incredible as it may seem. On the very first day of their arrival, they killed 30 unarmed Ottoman soldiers and even though the perpetrators were court martialed and convicted, not much later there were more killings and other atrocities. And this was only the beginning of what was to follow in the Anatolian hinterland.³⁴

Four days after the Greek landing, General Mustafa Kemal (a hero of the Great War but a secondary figure within the CUP, mainly due to his antagonism with Enver) set foot at Samsun in the Pontic region (19 May 1919). He had been sent by the Ottoman government ostensibly to put down disorder. In fact, the object of the exercise was to get rid of him, for given his popularity he could become a major thorn to the regime of Sultan Mehmed VI Vahideddin, which was keen to placate the occupying Allied forces in the capital.³⁵ In early June 1919, there was a huge demonstration in Istanbul, in which the Ottoman Turks voiced their outrage at the Greek landing and occupation.³⁶ This generous 'gift' to their enemy was regarded as baseless, for the Greeks had entered the War on the side of the Allies belatedly in 1917 and had not defeated Ottoman troops.³⁷ Ironically the Greek landing was probably the 'most pivotal event' that was to lead to the creation of a Turkish nation-state at the 'expense of other alternatives (for example Sabahaddin's Ottomanist project)'.³⁸

Ottoman elections were held in October 1919 and the CUP nationalists supporting Kemal gained the majority of seats (Kemal himself was elected deputy but prudently stayed in Ankara). The new parliament faced the wrath of the Porte and the Allies, and was dissolved by the next year. But, before dissolving, it was able to adopt a historic document known as the 'National Pact' (*Misak-i-Milli*) on 20 January 1920, which stated that only the territories where there was an Ottoman Muslim majority were to be secured, excluding the Arab territories (the fate of Western Thrace and of the *vilayets* of Batum, Kars and Ardahan were to be decided by a plebiscite).

This document, which was based on two previous congresses of the nationalists under Kemal in Erzerum (July 1919) and Sivas (September 1919), is considered the standard statement that the new state of Turkey would not revise its boundaries and would stick to Anatolia.³⁹

But let us move to more sumptuous surroundings, to the Paris Peace Conference. The most difficult and time-consuming meetings were those dealing with the fate of the Ottoman Empire, which were the last to be held at the Conference, culminating in the adoption of the Treaty of Sèvres on 10 August 1920. Venizelos, by now a revered political figure internationally and one of the stars of the Paris Conference, was extreme in his territorial claims regarding Asia Minor, raising many an eyebrow as a blatant imperialist. He claimed almost all of Eastern Asia Minor, including Eastern Thrace on the outskirts of the Ottoman capital. He refrained from claiming Istanbul/Constantinople and Pontos, despite extended lobbying for union with 'mother Greece'. Venizelos could see that including faraway Pontos, where the Greeks, though prominent, did not comprised the majority (they were about a third of the population) was unrealistic, and instead suggested a Greek-Armenian federation, but could not get it through at the Conference.⁴⁰

At Sèvres, Greece acquired Eastern Thrace (having secured Western Thrace from Bulgaria by the Treaty of Neuilly of 1919), all the islands of the Aegean, including the Dodecanese, save for Rhodes (which remained under Italian control), as well as the islands of Imvros (Gökçeada) and Tenedos (Bozcaada). The region of Izmir/Smyrna, in fact a wider region than the Izmir *sanjak*, including parts of the wider Aydın *vilayet* (from Bergama and Ayvalık to the city of Aydın), were handed over to Greece provisionally (it remained nominally Ottoman), but could be annexed by Greece in five years, following a plebiscite or a motion by the local parliament. An independent Armenian state was set up (that included Eastern Pontos with the city of Trabizond) as well as an autonomous Kurdish state (intended as a buffer state between British Iraq and Asia Minor), while Italy took the southern part of Anatolia. Sèvres was a Greek triumph and was Venizelos's moment of glory – the creation of 'a Greece of two continents and five seas' as it was called at the time – though an ephemeral one at that. For the Ottoman Empire, it was akin to a 'death warrant' and to some extent the end of Turkey itself, which would have been no more than a rump state, limited to only a quarter of Anatolia, having lost most of its richer and most developed regions. The Treaty was glaringly unjust and unduly harsh, a far worse punishment than the one given to vanquished Germany. However, it was not only unjust but also unrealistic and could not be implemented.⁴¹

The impotent Ottoman government in Istanbul acquiesced with great difficulty and signed the Treaty of Sèvres. But the government of the Grand National Assembly (GNA) in Ankara, as it came to be known, would have none of it. Kemal faced what seemed an almost impossible double task: against both the encroaching Greeks and the humbled Sublime Porte. The Sublime Porte condemned Kemal and his associates as rebels and sentenced them to death *in absentia*.⁴²

In Greece, Venizelos, the triumphant leader, surprisingly lost the elections (November 1920) by a small margin and left for Paris in disgust. But previously, under his leadership, the Greek army had made the grave mistake of moving eastwards, beyond the Milne Line (the limit set by British General George Milne and adopted by the Allies in October 1919). The conservative pro-Royalist opposition that took over power did not honour its electoral platform to end the Greek-Turkish war, but instead embarked upon an all-out war, the 'Asia Minor campaign' as it is known in Greece. The move may not have been as wholehearted as it appeared at the time to outsiders, but the Royalists felt they had little choice with the problem they had inherited from the adventurism of Venizelos.⁴³ For a year the Greek army was on the offensive and by late 1921 it controlled a territory seven times the size of the original one envisaged by the Treaty of Sèvres. It moved into the Anatolian hinterland where there were hardly any Greek-speaking people, but still continued its onward march, killing, burning and pillaging one village and town after another.⁴⁴

Until late 1920, the Turkish army under Kemal was in dire straits, bitterly divided and far outnumbered by the well-equipped Greek army. But by this point, Kemal got his act together. The first successful Turkish blow came in January 1921, with Colonel Ismet in command, at the First Battle of İnönü (hence the name Ismet İnönü). As it had become obvious that the real power was in Ankara and not in Istanbul, the Allies called a conference in London (February–March 1921) to examine the situation in view of these new developments. The solution suggested by Lloyd George, intended as a compromise, was for the Turks to retain formal sovereignty over the region of Izmir/Smyrna, and for the Greeks to retain the administration up to the Milne Line. The Turkish delegation could accept nothing less than the evacuation of the Greek army from Anatolian soil. Under the circumstances, the Greeks simply pocketed assurances from the Allies (at Lloyd George's prompting) that a further Greek offensive was permissible.⁴⁵

In mid-1921, the Greeks were less than 100 kilometres from Ankara. At a war council convened at Kütahya under premier Dimitrios Gounaris

(28 July 1921), with King Constantine present, it was decided that the Greek army should advance on Ankara.⁴⁶ The army tried a pincer movement from the Eskişehir-Kütahya-Afyon Karahisar front. Kemal himself took part in the counter-attack, as armaments left by the Italians and French reinforced the Turkish army. An epic battle was fought for three whole weeks over an area of some 100 kilometres, ending on 13 September 1921, with the Greeks retreating to their original positions to the east of the Sakarya river. For months the Greek army remained around Afyon Karahisar, not risking another offensive. In March 1922, the Allies tried to bring about an armistice in Paris, but Kemal was adamant about the evacuation of the Greek army. The final assault came in August 1922. The Greek army collapsed and retreated, but found time to once again burn and destroy. This last act of Greek violence, which could have been avoided (indeed, some well-disciplined units retreated in orderly fashion without misbehaving), was apparently due to their utter frustration at having suddenly lost everything that they had gained (the frustration-aggression hypothesis) and partly a deliberate scorched earth tactic aimed at hindering the Turkish army's advance, depriving it of food and water, roads, bridges and railways.⁴⁷

The endgame in Asia Minor

The last days of the Greek-Turkish Asia Minor encounter witnessed yet another tragedy, this time with the roles reversed. When the Turkish army entered Smyrna on 9 September 1922, there was a semblance of order. However, not much later, order broke down; there was pillage, beatings and killings of unarmed Greeks and Armenians prepared to resist. The Turkish commander of the 1st Army in charge of the city handed the Archbishop of Smyrna, Chrysostomos, to the Turkish mob, who beat him to death. On 14–15 September, the Greek fleet evacuated the last detachments of the Greek army. The Turks allowed women, children and the elderly to leave by boat so as to reach the allied vessels. The young and able-bodied men were taken prisoners for forced labour, hundreds of them perishing in the atrocious circumstances that they were made to endure (the survivors were released following the Lausanne Peace Treaty of 1923). The number of refugees fleeing was staggering. Almost a million fled within a few weeks in September–October 1922 in treacherous conditions.⁴⁸

The last act of the drama, which is known in Greece as the 'Asia Minor Disaster' or 'Catastrophe' (*Mikrasiatiki Katastrophi*), was not limited to the fleeing old men, women and children, many of whom

drowned in their attempt to reach the Allied vessels. There was also the burning of Izmir/Smyrna (13 September), which each side blames on the other. The Greeks are absolutely convinced that the arsonists were the Turks acting out of hate for what they regarded as 'infidel Izmir' (*gâvur İzmir*).⁴⁹ The Turks, following an 'argument from analogy',⁵⁰ claim that since the Greeks were in the habit of burning wherever they passed, they also burned Izmir, not wanting the city to fall into the hands of the victors intact.⁵¹ There is also a third story: since the initial fire started in the Armenian quarter, it may have been ignited in desperation by the Armenians in the hope of triggering an international intervention to save the city from the Kemalist forces. On the basis of the available data, one cannot be absolutely certain as to who lit the fire and if it was done on purpose. But two things are certain. The fire did start in the Armenian quarter and the Turkish army, which had been in place since 9 September, was technically in a position to extinguish it, but did nothing of the kind. Several foreign eyewitnesses saw Turkish soldiers doing the very opposite, throwing petrol on fire.

There is an illuminating passage in the memoirs of İsmet İnönü. When İsmet arrived on the scene with Kemal, he remembers the latter watching the fire from afar and muttering, 'one day we might find ourselves making an alliance with the Greeks',⁵² but feeling no remorse for the fire burning the city; his response was simply 'Let it burn, let it crash down'.⁵³

Following the endgame in Smyrna/Izmir and other coastal cities, the Turkish army moved northwards to dislodge the Greek army still in Eastern Thrace, but had to face the Allied Occupation Force under the British at Gelibolu (Gallipoli). In the end, a clash was avoided in the nick of time by the signing of an armistice at Mudanya, by the Sea of Marmara (11 October 1922). It was agreed that the Greek forces were to leave Eastern Thrace and that the Straits, Istanbul and Eastern Thrace were to be handed to the GNA government.⁵⁴

The respective national narratives

What transpired within these 12 years was so grave, the killings, destruction and suffering so widespread, that the Greeks and Turks have never fully recovered from their chosen traumas and heroic deeds of that period. Both sides cling to a stubborn narrative of self-righteous victimhood; a belief that 'our' suffering was far greater than that of the other side.⁵⁵ It has been argued that these shattering events, especially those of 1919–22, galvanised the two peoples to become enemies as never

before. Their national self-identity crystallised with 'the threatening and vicious other', as an essential ingredient of their respective collective identity, to which they cling with great passion until this day.⁵⁶

On the Turkish side, the period 1919–22 is depicted as the heroic 'War of Independence', of 'Liberation' (*Kurtuluş*) against the imperialist invaders, the Greeks and their sinister foreign supporters, the Great Powers. The Turkish narration presents the Greeks as beastly invaders, who looted and burned everything in sight, raped women and killed unarmed men, women and children. As for the Greek landing in Izmir (15 May 1919), it is presented as an atrocious act of 'occupation and invasion' (note that the very wording in reverse order, 'invasion and occupation' is the standard Greek presentation of the events of 1974 in Cyprus). Needless to say, there is no mention of the *diogmos*, of the hardships suffered by the Ottoman Greeks in the course of the Great War or of Turkish atrocities in the course of the Greek-Turkish war.

The Greeks for their part have painted an idyllic picture of the heroic onward move of the Greek army during the two Balkan Wars and in 1919–22 as a noble campaign of 'liberation', freeing one town and city after another from 'Turkish occupation'. This ended abruptly with the Asia Minor Disaster, with the 'slaughtering of the Greeks *en masse*' by the Turks upon entering Smyrna, the ghastly burning of the beautiful city by the 'savage Turks' and the 'violent uprooting' of a whole people (more than a million in number) who had lived there, in what was their homeland, 'since time immemorial'. There is no mention whatsoever of the Greek atrocities of 1912 and 1919–22, save for some allusions to a few 'mistakes' by some individual Greeks as a form of revenge for what they had suffered under the 'Turks' for hundreds of years (under the 'Turkish yoke') and more recently in the period 1913–18.

As one can see, both nations and nation-states emerged by fighting, by liberating themselves from the historical enemy. Both Greeks and Turks have shaped their national identity and independent statehood following a violent, and in many respects valiant, struggle against the encroaching 'Other'. This is somewhat unusual even by the standards of enduring rivalries.

Notes

1. On the First Balkan War as a watershed after which nothing could be the same in the Empire, see Michael Llewellyn Smith (1973), *Ionian Vision: Greece*

- in *Asia Minor* (London: Allen Lane), pp. 11–12, 30; Geoffrey Lewis (1974), *Modern Turkey* (London: Ernest Benn Limited), pp. 56–7; Eric J. Zürcher (1993), *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris), pp. 111–14; Feroz Ahmad (1993), *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 6; Çağlar Keyder (1997), ‘The Ottoman Empire’, in Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen (eds), *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building* (Boulder: Westview), pp. 38–9.
2. Smith, op. cit., p. 6; Faruk Birtek (2005), ‘Greek Bull in the China Shop of Ottoman “Grand Illusion”: Greece in the Making of Modern Turkey’, in Faruk Birtek and Thalia Dragonas (eds), *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey* (London: Routledge), pp. 37–8.
 3. Smith, op. cit., pp. 5–6; Yiannis Yianoulopoulos (1999), ‘*I eugenis mas tyflosis...*’. *Exoteriki politiki kai ‘ethnika themata’ apo tin itta tou 1897 eos ti Mikrasiatiki Katastrophē* [‘Our Noble Blindness...’. Foreign Policy and ‘National Issues’ from the Defeat of 1897 to the Asia Minor Disaster] (Athens: Vivliorama), pp. 3–196.
 4. Smith, op. cit., pp. 9–10; Yianoulopoulos, op. cit., p. 209.
 5. Şükrü Hanioğlu (2008), *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press), pp. 147–8.
 6. Ibid., p. 148.
 7. Ibid., p. 150.
 8. Alexis Alexandris (1983), *The Greek Minority in Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations, 1918–1974* (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies), pp. 38–40.
 9. Bernard Lewis (1968) [1961], *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press), pp. 210–30; G. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 53–60; Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 97–108; Ahmad, op. cit., pp. 31–47; Keyder, op. cit., pp. 38–9; Hugh Poulton (1997), *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (London: Hurst and Company), pp. 67–70; Hanioğlu, op. cit., pp. 150–7.
 10. Ahmad, op. cit., p. 6.
 11. G. Lewis, op. cit., p. 56.
 12. Richard Clogg (1982), ‘The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire’, in B. Braude and B. Lewis (eds), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The Functions of a Plural Society* (New York and London: H&M Publishers), p. 200.
 13. B. Lewis, op. cit., p. 225.
 14. B. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 223–5; G. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 58–9; Ahmad, op. cit., pp. 6, 37; Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 107–8, 111–15; Jacob M. Landau (1995), *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation* (London: Hurst and Company), pp. 51–6; Sina Akşin (2007), *Turkey from Empire to Revolutionary Republic* (London: Hurst and Company), p. 86; Hanioğlu, op. cit., pp. 156–7.
 15. Zürcher, op. cit., p. 114.
 16. Zürcher, op. cit., p. 114.
 17. Zürcher, op. cit., p. 114.
 18. For what transpired, see the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (1914), *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan War*.
 19. Arnold J. Toynbee (1970) [1922], *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey: A Study in the Contact of Civilisations* (New York: Howard Fertig), p. 138.
 20. Zürcher, op. cit., p. 114; Smith, op. cit., pp. 30–1.

21. Smith, op. cit., pp. 32–3; Clogg, op. cit., p. 200.
22. Smith, op. cit., pp. 31–2; Clogg, op. cit., p. 200; Keyder, op. cit., pp. 5–6.
23. G. Lewis, op. cit., p. 60; Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 116–17.
24. Zürcher, op. cit., p. 114.
25. For a succinct presentation of the Armenian massacres, see Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 119–21. For a wider discussion, see Ronald Grigor Suny (1998), 'Empire and Nation: Armenians, Turks, and the End of the Ottoman Empire', *Armenian Forum*, 1, 2, pp. 17–51.
26. G. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 61, 63; Zürcher, op. cit., p. 138.
27. Zürcher, op. cit., p. 139. Note that only Enver did not meet his death from an Armenian bullet, but from a Soviet one, while fighting for the cause of pan-Turkish in Turkestan.
28. Ayhan Aktar (2007), 'Debating the Armenian Massacres in the Last Ottoman Parliament, November-December 1918', *History Workshop Journal*, 64, p. 248. For details of the discussions that followed in parliament, see pp. 251–63.
29. Smith, op. cit., pp. 78–9.
30. Smith, op. cit., pp. 80–1.
31. G. Lewis, op. cit., p. 65.
32. Smith, op. cit., pp. 88–9.
33. B. Lewis, op. cit., p. 241; Smith, op. cit., p. 88.
34. Smith, op. cit., pp. 89–91. See more generally Toynbee, op. cit. and a recent study in Greek by Tasos Kostopoulos (2007), *Polemos kai ethnokatharsis: i xehasmeni plevra mias dekaetous ethniki exormisis* [War and Ethnic Cleansing: The Forgotten Aspect of a Ten Year National Campaign] (Athens: Vivliorama), pp. 91–149.
35. B. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 242–6; G. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 65–70; Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 147–9.
36. As Bernard Lewis has eloquently put it: 'The Turkish people, beaten and dispirited, seemed ready to accept almost anything that the victors chose to impose on them. Almost, but not quite – for when, under cover of Allied warships, a Greek army landed at Izmir in May 1919, the smouldering anger of the Turks was at last kindled into an inextinguishable blaze. The cession of remote provinces inhabited by alien peoples could be borne, even the occupation of the capital could be suffered, for the occupiers were the victorious great powers of the invincible West, and their soldiers would sooner or later return whence they came. But the thrust of a neighbouring and former subject people into the heart of Turkish Anatolia was a danger – and a humiliation – beyond endurance.' In B. Lewis, op. cit., p. 241.
37. Zürcher, op. cit., p. 154; Birtek, op. cit., p. 41.
38. Birtek, op. cit., pp. 37–8.
39. G. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 72–4; Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 143–4.
40. Smith, op. cit., pp. 67–85.
41. Smith, op. cit., pp. 128–9; B. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 246–7; G. Lewis, op. cit., p. 77; Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 141, 152–3.
42. G. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 74–5; B. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 251–3.
43. Smith, op. cit., pp. 182, 204. The only Royalist of stature to disagree was General Ioannis Metaxas (who was to become Greek dictator in 1936–41). From the start, Metaxas had opposed Venizelos's Ionian vision. When called upon by the Gounaris, the Greek premier (in 1921) to head the hard-pressed

- Greek army, he declined on the grounds that it was inconceivable that the Greeks could take over the land of the Turkish nation and that in any event they would not get away with it. See the English translation from the personal diaries of Metaxas, in Smith, op. cit., pp. 48–9, 202–7.
44. As Venizelos had written to the Greek government (October 1922), ‘our moral standing in the civilized family of nations has been terribly diminished as a result of the arson and other acts of violence which the Greek army allowed itself to commit in Asia Minor’. Quoted in Bruce Clark (2006), *Twice a Stranger: How Mass Expulsion Forged Modern Greece and Turkey* (London: Granta Books), p. 55. According to Kostopoulos, the deliberate aim was ethnic cleansing modelled along colonial lines. See Kostopoulos, op. cit., pp. 91–105.
 45. Smith, op. cit., pp. 189–97; Zürcher, op. cit., p. 161.
 46. Smith, op. cit., pp. 229–31.
 47. For balanced presentations on the Greek-Turkish war of 1919–22, see Toynbee, op. cit., pp. 153–319; Smith, op. cit., pp. 180–299; G. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 81–4; Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 158–63; and Kostopoulos, op. cit., pp. 91–153. For a blatantly pro-Turkish presentation, see Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw (1977), *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), vol. II, pp. 340–65.
 48. Smith, op. cit., pp. 300–11; G. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 83–4; Kostopoulos, op. cit., pp. 124–49.
 49. According to two of the even-handed accounts of the Greek-Turkish war, it was the doing of the Turkish army. See Smith, op. cit., pp. 308–11; Kostopoulos, op. cit., pp. 145–7.
 50. Clark, op. cit., p. 23.
 51. Justin McCarthy (1995), *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* (Princeton: Darwin Press), pp. 291–2. Even Arnold Toynbee’s initial reaction was that those to blame were probably the Greeks. See Arnold Toynbee (1922), ‘The dénouement in the Near East’, *The Contemporary Review*, 682, p. 413.
 52. Clark, op. cit., p. 23.
 53. Clark, op. cit., p. 23.
 54. G. Lewis, op. cit., p. 84; Zürcher, op. cit., pp. 162–3.
 55. Renée Hirschon (2003), “Unmixing Peoples” in the Aegean Region’, in *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Exchange of Populations Between Greece and Turkey* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books), p. 11.
 56. Clark, op. cit., pp. 10–12.

5

From Lausanne to the 1974 Cyprus Crisis

The landmark of Lausanne

With the Treaty of Sèvres being overtaken by events, the Lausanne Peace Conference was convened (21 November 1922–24 July 1923). İsmet Paşa (İnönü) headed the Turkish delegation while Venizelos headed the Greek delegation. Lord George Nathaniel Curzon, the British foreign minister, chaired the Conference and was the dominant figure on the part of the Allies. The Turks faced an uphill struggle at Lausanne, with Curzon adopting a patronising attitude towards the diplomatically inexperienced Turkish delegation. This adverse climate for Turkey gave some room for manoeuvre to Venizelos, though the Greeks were hardly more popular in the wake of their Asia Minor invasion.¹

The first agreement to be reached at Lausanne was the Convention on the Exchange of Populations, adopted on 30 January 1923. It was decided that all the 'Greek Orthodox' (in the religious sense) and all the 'Muslims' would have to leave their respective homelands.

This 'unmixing of peoples' as Curzon had famously put it was 'thoroughly bad and vicious' but necessary; there was no other option in the face of the hardships and violence that could ensue if the people in question remained in their original homelands.² Rarely 'in history has there been a proposal whose parenthood was so vehemently denied by all the interested parties, even though each side had its own strong reasons for wanting it to be accepted'.³ For Venizelos and Kemal, the main aim was to render their states as ethnically homogeneous as possible.⁴ Apparently the idea of mutual expulsions had first come up on the Kemalist side, in discussions in London with Lord Curzon in 1922, before the final Turkish victory. But Venizelos could be regarded as the progenitor of the whole idea of exchange of populations, for he had proposed it (albeit on a voluntary

basis) to the Ottomans in 1914 and to the Bulgarians in 1915, and it had been adopted upon his initiative in the Treaty of Neuilly (Article 56).⁵

For a fleeting moment it seemed that the Turkish-speaking Orthodox of Cappadokia were to be exempted. Turkey insisted that all should leave, including those in Istanbul as well as the Patriarchate, for under Patriarch Meletios IV they had called for the incorporation of 'Constantinople' into Greece. Venizelos, with the support of Curzon, insisted that the Greeks of Istanbul and the Patriarchate remain in place. Finally, Ismet accepted both Greek demands, ostensibly showing moderation but in fact having pocketed the guarantee that the 'Muslims' of Western Thrace were also to be exempted and that the Patriarchate's role was to be strictly spiritual. Thus, those exempted were the Orthodox of Istanbul and the islands of Gökçeada (Imvros) and Bozcaada (Tenedos), and the Muslims living in Western (Greek) Thrace, all of whom were to enjoy minority rights.⁶

The religious criterion for the exchange of populations was decided in view of the pre-existing *millet* tradition. Language would have been more difficult to apply, since the Muslims in Crete (the *Tourkokrites*) and in Macedonia (the *Valaades*) spoke Greek, while many Greek Orthodox in Pontos and in Cappadokia spoke Turkish. In fact, the religious designation was used flexibly in the exchange: no Greek Orthodox Arabs or Gagauz (the only Turkic people who are Greek Orthodox) were deported to Greece, nor were the Muslim Albanians of Epirus deported to Turkey.⁷

The wider Lausanne Peace Treaty signed on 24 July 1923 was a landmark in Greek-Turkish relations. Turkey acquired its present borders in Anatolia and it regained Eastern Thrace and the islands of Gökçeada (Imvros) and Bozcaada (Tenedos), which it had lost under the Treaty of Sèvres. The only other change of borders since then in the two countries has been the annexation of Alexandretta (renamed Hatay) from the French mandate of Syria in 1939 and the annexation of the Dodecanese Islands by Greece (in 1947 under the terms of the Paris Peace Treaty).

The aftermath: friends at last

The full normalisation of relations came seven years later, with Venizelos, back in power (following a stunning electoral victory on 20 August 1928), taking the initiative. He sent personal letters to premier İnönü and foreign minister Tevfik Rüştü Aras (on 30 August 1928), proposing the amelioration of relations between the two states, since after all neither state had claims to the territory of the other. İnönü and Aras reacted positively. The first task was to settle several remaining issues from the exchange of populations. An agreement was reached in Ankara

(10 June 1930). Then came the historic visit of Venizelos to Ankara (26–30 August 1930), where a comprehensive Treaty of Friendship was signed. Two months later (30 October) three agreements were signed: a Treaty of Neutrality, Conciliation and Arbitration, a protocol on the limitation of naval armaments and a commercial convention.⁸

The level of friendly relations and historical compromise achieved was astounding. Kemal was on record as saying that ‘the Turkish-Greek friendship is eternal’;⁹ Venizelos went so far as to suggest Kemal for the Nobel Peace Prize; and more strikingly he even toyed with the idea of a Greek-Turkish confederation.¹⁰

There followed a period of very cordial relations between the two states as long as Kemal held power in Turkey (until his untimely death in November 1938) with Aras as foreign minister, in spite of several changes of government in Greece. The Greek dictator Ioannis Metaxas (1936–41) was well-known to be an ardent supporter of Greek-Turkish friendship. It is worth mentioning the official visit by İnönü and Aras to Athens (October 1931), where even the refugees warmly welcomed the two Turkish leaders; the Greek-Turkish *Entente Cordiale* agreement signed in Ankara by premiers Panayis Tsaldaris and İnönü (14 September 1932); a second visit by İnönü and Aras to Athens (26 May 1937); and a visit by Metaxas to Ankara (November 1937). To this should be added the Balkan Entente between Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia and Romania, guaranteeing their mutual Balkan frontiers (1934).¹¹

What made the rapprochement stick only a few years after the events of 1919–22 was that the Great Idea seemed safely dead and Turkey under Kemal honoured the National Pact of January 1920 (see Chapter 4). Moreover, both countries, devastated by the war, were in urgent need of reconstruction and development, not least to meet the daunting task of integrating the refugees, which in the Greek case amounted to 1.2 million added to a population of barely five million.¹²

Another factor that brought the two previous enemies together was the looming shadow of Mussolini’s Italy, with its notion of the Mediterranean as an Italian sea (*mare nostrum*). Italy was also physically present in the Aegean, in the Dodecanese Islands. Fear of Italy brought Greece and Turkey closer to Britain, then still a great power and very much present in the eastern Mediterranean (in Cyprus, mandate Palestine, Transjordan and the Suez Canal).¹³

Clouds on the horizon and renewed friendship

Upon Kemal’s death, however, the first clouds were apparent on the Greek-Turkish horizon, as İnönü and the new foreign minister Şükrü Saracoğlu

did not seem as committed to the friendship as Kemal. Certain events in the course of the Second World War are indicative of this.

While the Greeks had put up a valiant fight against the Axis forces, earning international praise, Turkey had remained neutral and until 1943 seemed to tilt towards Nazi Germany. In talks with the German ambassador, Franz von Papen, Ankara tried to secure the islands of Lesbos and Chios as well as the Dodecanese Islands. In the meantime the İnönü government turned against the Greeks and other minorities for no apparent reason, other than shrill nationalism (at the time the racist pan-Turkic version of Turkism was on the rise).¹⁴ Between November 1942 and March 1944, an emergency tax, a capital levy (*varlık vergisi*), was introduced, ostensibly to curb inflation, by which the members of minority populations (and not the rest) were made to pay huge taxes. Those unable to pay were sent to labour camps (some 1400 Greeks, Armenians and Jews were sent there).¹⁵

Turkey has tried to downgrade these incidents. As regards its dealings with Germany, it has claimed that, after all, it had not reached any agreement with Berlin even though the Germans were prepared to offer them the Greek islands. Moreover, in the course of the War, Greece, though occupied, had tried to prepare the ground for annexing northern Epirus as well as Cyprus and the Dodecanese Islands, both very close to Turkey with sizeable Turkish communities. Turkey also refers to its considerable humanitarian assistance sent with its ships *Kurtuluş* and *Dumlupınar* when Athens was hit by one of the worst famines of the War, in the chilling winter of 1941–2.¹⁶

With the start of the Cold War, Greek-Turkish relations picked up from 1939, as the two states found themselves in the same ideological camp, with a common enemy: communism, the Soviet Union and its satellite states in the Balkans. Thus, they fought together in Korea, joined NATO hand in hand on the same date in 1953 and there were visits at the highest level in both capitals, where the public atmosphere was warm. As such it seemed that the historical compromise of 1930 was back on course.

But soon both had to deal with the rumblings of the Cyprus volcano. A few years later, in the autumn of 1954 to be exact, Cyprus sounded the death knell of their good neighbourly relations. Ever since and above all due to the ongoing Cyprus problem, their relations have never fully recovered.

The Cyprus debacle

This is not the place to dwell in detail on the Cyprus problem and how it poisoned Greek-Turkish relations. We will limit ourselves to five

points that have left their imprint on Greek-Turkish relations and not least on the Aegean conflict.

Firstly, from 1954 until 1974, Cyprus was the main bone of contention between the two states and the thorniest issue, preoccupying their foreign policy on a constant basis.¹⁷ Secondly, contrary to conventional wisdom on both sides of the Aegean Sea, the two motherlands were compelled to intervene.¹⁸ Their active involvement was prompted by the Greek Cypriot call for *enosis* (union with Greece), followed by the Turkish Cypriots' *taksim* (partition). Despite the attempts of both governments to withstand the Cyprus torrent, they caved in, Greece doing so first as a result of acute pressure from the Greek Cypriots under Archbishop Makarios, with overwhelming support from the public in Greece. Athens pursued the matter at the UN in 1954 and initiated a guerrilla campaign in Cyprus against the British, known as EOKA. Ankara reacted in kind, initially calling for 'the return' of Cyprus to Turkey and thereafter for partition, and formed a resistance movement to counter EOKA, called TMT.¹⁹

This brings us to our third point. At the heart of the Greek-Turkish conflict from the mid-1950s onwards, with Cyprus at the epicentre, lies the question of attempts to change the territorial status quo. Turkey blames Greece for irredentism along the lines of the Great Idea, and Greece blames Turkey for expansionism and a quest for aggrandisement along Ottoman lines. This mirror image calls for some elaboration.

In Greece, the long-standing belief is that the Great Idea experienced a sudden death in 1922. As for the desire for Cyprus, it is not regarded as a manifestation of irredentism (or perhaps as a 'small Great Idea'),²⁰ but as a legitimate claim to national integration.²¹ For Greece, the Cyprus problem was the primary 'national issue' (*ethnikio zitima*). Turkey was seen as having no say on the matter, as presumably it had given up Cyprus at Lausanne. The view prevailed that it was the British that had brought in a reluctant Turkey, but that the Turks were bound to bow to the inevitable: *enosis*.²² Such flagrant wishful thinking resonated well into the 1960s. Only gradually did another interpretation gain ascendancy: that Turkey had turned expansionist, a view regarded as axiomatic from 1974 until recently.

It is a fact that Kemal had not tried to secure Cyprus at Lausanne and Cyprus was not included in the territories covered by the National Pact.²³ This was the case because Cyprus was regarded as a lost cause, given Britain's presence.²⁴ But in 1954–5, with Greece's involvement, the Cyprus question also became a 'national issue' (*milli dava*) for Turkey. Ankara's great concern for Cyprus was (and is) motivated by ethnic affinity with

the Turkish Cypriots and by security considerations, by the image of the island poised as a huge 'unsinkable airplane carrier' under 'Turkey's soft underbelly'.²⁵ In Turkey's eyes, it is Greece's interest that is unjustified, for Cyprus has never been part of a Greek state, while it has been part of Turkey (the Ottoman Empire) for 300 years.²⁶ Greece's fixation with Cyprus was seen at best as 'a caprice'²⁷ and at worst aimed at upsetting the strategic balance in the eastern Mediterranean at Turkey's expense.²⁸ And there was also a worst case scenario that could not be taken lightly: the possible revival of the Great Idea, with Cyprus intended to envelop Turkey from the south in a 'strategic control belt'.²⁹

Going now to our fourth point: interestingly, not all was bleak on the Greek-Turkish horizon. In February 1959, the two sides (later joined by Britain) under Prime Ministers Constantinos Karamanlis and Adnan Menderes decided to resolve the Cyprus question by leaving aside both union and partition, and setting up an independent Cypriot state along bi-communal 'consociational' lines, though of course the concept did not exist at the time (Zurich and London Agreement). The Greek Cypriots under Makarios reluctantly acquiesced. For the next four years (until November 1963), Greek-Turkish relations improved, as seen by the halting of measures taken against the Greek minority in Istanbul. The minority had suffered a terrible blow in the riots of 6–7 September 1955 in Istanbul. A huge Turkish mob had taken to the streets, upon governmental prompting, ostensibly to voice its outrage at the fate of the Turkish Cypriots in the case of *enosis*, unleashing wanton destruction of Greek property, churches and even graveyards.³⁰

There followed the first Cyprus crisis of the 1960s (in December 1963–January 1964), involving inter-communal armed violence, with the Turkish Cypriots suffering far more. In early 1964, the Greek Cypriots took control of the Cypriot state and the Turkish Cypriots lived, for the most part, cramped in less than three per cent of the territory in enclaves until the Turkish military intervention of July–August 1974. Yet from 1964 until 1973, there were attempts by Athens and Ankara to find a peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem; however, these came to naught due to Makarios's intransigence.

We now come to our fifth and final point, the dramatic events of July–August 1974 in Cyprus that have left a huge scar on the Greek side, almost comparable to that of 1922. The new leader of the Greek junta, a fanatic brigadier named Dimitrios Ioannidis, orchestrated a coup against Makarios, the latter only miraculously managing to escape death.

With *enosis* around the corner and the Turkish Cypriots in terror, the Turkish government under Bülent Ecevit felt it had no choice but to

intervene militarily, otherwise 'it [would] run the risk of forfeiting a rare opportunity for intervention'³¹ and would be permitting Greece to become its 'southern neighbour'.³² The Turkish assault, launched in the early hours of 20 July 1974, was dubbed a 'peace operation'. The Turkish forces secured only some seven per cent of the Cypriot territory. Meanwhile, in Greece, as a result of the Cyprus fiasco, the military dictatorship had crumbled. Karamanlis was summoned from Paris to take over as prime minister, but he felt he was in no position to put pressure on Makarios to be more realistic and accept a federal solution. Thus the second Turkish operation took place, which was more heavy-handed, leading to the killings of many Greek Cypriots, several of them unarmed. The Turks acquired almost 37 per cent of the island's territory. The second Turkish operation was strongly criticised internationally, in contrast to the first one, which was condoned in view of the previous Greek intervention.

The Cyprus conflict of 1974 was to condemn Greek-Turkish relations to decades of ill feeling and was to loom over the Aegean conflict that had sprung up nine months before.

Notes

1. Bruce Clark (2006), *Twice a Stranger: How Mass Expulsion Forged Modern Greece and Turkey* (London: Granta Books), pp. 90–3; Eric J. Zürcher (1993), *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris), pp. 167–70.
2. Curzon in Michael Barutciski (2003), 'Lausanne Revisited: Population Exchanges in International Law and Politics', in Renée Hirschon (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Exchange of Populations Between Greece and Turkey* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books), p. 25.
3. Clark, op. cit., p. 42.
4. Clark, op. cit., pp. 11–19, 42–64, 87–107. See also Renée Hirschon (2003), 'The Consequences of the Lausanne Convention', in Hirschon (ed.), op. cit., pp. 14–15.
5. Barutciski, op. cit., pp. 28–30; Baskin Oran (2003), 'The Story of Those Who Stayed', in Hirschon (ed.), op. cit., pp. 98–100; Clark, op. cit., pp. 42–64, 78–9; Ayhan Aktar (2006), 'To proto etos tis ellinotourkikis antallagis plithismon: Septembrios 1922–Septembrios 1923' [The First Year of the Greek-Turkish Exchange of Populations: September 1922–September 1923], in Constantinos Tsitselikis (ed.), *Iellinotourkiki antallagi plithismon* [The Greek-Turkish Exchange of Populations] (Athens: Kritiki), pp. 112–22, 132–4. See also Stephen P. Ladas (1932), *The Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey* (New York: Macmillan), p. 21; and Dimitri Pentzopoulos (1962), *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact Upon Greece* (The Hague: Mouton), p. 56.
6. Clark, op. cit., pp. 87–107.

7. Renée Hirschon (2003), "'Unmixing Peoples" in the Aegean Region', in Hirschon (ed.), op. cit., p. 8; Oran, op. cit., pp. 89, 100–7.
8. Alexis Alexandris (1983), *The Greek Minority in Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations, 1918–1974* (Athens: Center for Asia Minor Studies), pp. 174–9; Alexandaris (1988), 'To istoriko plaisio ton ellinotourkikon scheseon, 1923–1987' [The Historical Framework of Greek-Turkish Relations], in Alexis Alexandris et al., *Oi ellinotourkikes scheseis* [Greek-Turkish Relations] (Athens: Gnosi), pp. 72–4; Melek Firat (2001), 'Yunanistan'la İlişkiler' [Relations with Greece], in Baskin Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası, Cilt I 1919–1980* [Turkish Foreign Policy, vol. 1, 1919–1980] (Istanbul: İletişim), pp. 346–7.
9. Firat, op. cit., p. 354; Alexandris, 'To istoriko plaisio ton ellinotourkikon scheseon', op. cit.
10. Dimitris Kitsikis (1969), 'Les projets d'entente balkanique', *Revue historique*, 93, 241, pp. 117–20.
11. Alexandris, *The Greek Minority in Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations, 1918–1974*, op. cit., pp. 179–80; Alexandaris, 'To istoriko plaisio ton ellinotourkikon scheseon, 1923–1987', op. cit., pp. 77–81; Firat, op. cit., pp. 347–54.
12. On the refugee problem, see Elisabeth Kontogiorgi (2006), *Population Exchange in Greek Macedonia: The Rural Settlement of Refugees, 1922–1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); Çağlar Keyder (2003), 'The Consequences of the Exchange of Populations for Turkey', in Hirschon (ed.), op. cit., pp. 39–52; Ayhan Aktar (2003), 'Homogenizing the Nation, Turkifying the Economy: The Turkish Experience of Population Exchange Reconsidered', in Hirschon (ed.), op. cit., pp. 79–95.
13. Alexandris, 'To istoriko plaisio ton ellinotourkikon scheseon, 1923–1987', op. cit., p. 79.
14. Jacob M. Landau (1995), *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation* (London: Hurst and Company), pp. 111–21.
15. Alexis Alexandris (1982), 'Turkish Policy towards Greece during the Second World War and its Impact on Greek-Turkish Relations', *Balkan Studies*, 23, 1, pp. 184–7; Firat, op. cit., pp. 578–9.
16. Firat, op. cit., pp. 580–1. See also Ecmel Barutçu, (1999), *Hariciye Koridoru. Hatıralar* [The Foreign Ministry's Corridor. Memoirs] (Ankara: Yüzyıl Yayınları), pp. 238–46. For details on the two ships sent to occupied Greece with humanitarian aid, see Elçin Macar (2009), 'İşte Geliyor Kurtuluş': *Türkiye'nin II. Dünya Savaşı'nda Yunanistan'a Yardımları (1940–1942)* ['The Kurtulus is Coming': The Turkish Humanitarian Aid to Greece During the Second World War (1940–1942)] (İzmir: İzmir Ticaret Odası Kültür).
17. Theodore A. Couloumbis (1983), *The United States, Greece, and Turkey: The Troubled Triangle* (New York: Praeger); Selim Deringil (1992), 'Turkish Foreign Policy since Atatürk', in Clement H. Dodd (ed.), *Turkish Foreign Policy: New Perspectives* (London: The Eothen Press), p. 5.
18. For a useful distinction between pull and push involvement, see Chris R. Mitchell (1970), 'Civil Strife and the Involvement of External Parties', *International Studies Quarterly*, 14, 2, pp. 166–74.
19. Ioannis D. Stefanidis (1999), *Isle of Discord: Nationalism, Imperialism and the Making of the Cyprus Problem* (London: Hurst and Company), pp. 1–59, 207–84; Stefanidis (2007), *Stirring the Greek Nation: Political Culture, Irredentism and Anti-Americanism, 1945–1967* (Aldershot: Ashgate), pp. 77–142; Suha Bölükbaşı

- (1988), *Turkish-American Relations and Cyprus* (Lanham: University Press of America), pp. 25–32; Bahcheli, op. cit., pp. 31–9.
- 20 Alexis Heraclides (2006), *To Kypriako Provlima, 1947–2004* [The Cyprus Problem, 1947–2004] (Athens: I. Sideris), pp. 167–72.
- 21 Stefanidis, *Stirring the Nation*, op. cit., pp. 55–143.
- 22 Dimitri Bitsios (1975), *Cyprus: The Vulnerable Republic* (Salonika: The Institute of Balkan Studies), pp. 26, 30.
- 23 James A. McHenry (1987), *The Uneasy Partnership on Cyprus, 1919–1939: The Political and Diplomatic Interaction between Great Britain, Turkey, and the Turkish Cypriot Community* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc.), p. 45.
- 24 Ibid., pp. 45, 51, 59, 156–79; Bahcheli, op. cit., pp. 28–9; Deringil, op. cit., p. 5.
- 25 Frank Tachau (1959), ‘The Face of Turkish Nationalism as Reflected in the Cyprus Dispute’, *Middle East Journal*, 13, 3, pp. 263–4, 267–9; Tozun Bahcheli (1992), ‘Cyprus in the Politics of Turkey’, in Norma Salem (ed.), *Cyprus: A Regional Conflict and its Resolution* (New York: St. Martin’s Press), pp. 68–70; Marie-Pierre Richarte (1996), ‘La question Chypriote dans la politique étrangère de la Turquie’, *Trimestre du Monde*, 4, 46, pp. 106–7.
- 26 A. Suat Bilge (1989), ‘The Situation in Aegean’, *The Aegean Issues: Problems and Prospects* (Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute), p. 69.
- 27 Turkish President Celal Bayar to American officials, quoted in Evanthis Hatzivassiliou (1997), *Britain and the International Status of Cyprus* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Mediterranean and East European Monographs), p. 4.
- 28 A. Suat Bilge (1975), ‘The Cyprus Conflict and Turkey’, in Kemal H. Karpat (ed.), *Turkey’s Foreign Policy in Transition, 1950–1974* (Leiden: E.J. Brill), p. 136.
- 29 Şükrü Elekdağ, ‘2½ War Strategy’, *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, 1, 1 (March–May 1996), p. 43; See also Kemal H. Karpat (1975), ‘War on Cyprus: The Tragedy of Enosis’, in Karpat (ed.), op. cit., p. 188; Bilge, ‘The Situation in Aegean’, op. cit., p. 68.
- 30 It has been well established that the ruling Democratic Party had planned the riots, though it had not anticipated such mayhem. See Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations*, op. cit., pp. 256–70.
- 31 Bahcheli, *Greek-Turkish Relations since 1955*, op. cit., p. 97.
- 32 Mehmet Ali Birand (1976), *30 Sıcak Gün* [Thirty Hot Days] (Istanbul: Milliyet), pp. 35–6 and *passim*; Bolukbaşı, op. cit., pp. 187–90; Jan Asmussen (2008), *Cyprus at War: Diplomacy and Conflict during the 1974 Crisis* (London: I.B. Tauris), pp. 32–3, 50, 53, 59–63, 75, 85.

Part II

The Aegean: Conflict and Diplomacy

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6

The First Years of the Dispute

The wider Greek-Turkish antagonism consists of the Aegean dispute, the Cyprus problem and issues relating to minorities, including questions related to the Patriarchate in Istanbul. Alongside the strained relations from 1974 until early 1999, a number of other issues had cropped up. Foremost among them was Turkey's European Community/Union (EC/EU) application, which Greece blocked until the EU December 1999 summit, and the alleged support by Greece in the 1980s and 1990s given to the PKK Kurdish separatists.

The Greek-Turkish conflict in the Aegean is comprised of seven disputes: (1) the continental shelf, (2) the breadth of the territorial sea, (3) the breadth of the Greek national airspace, (4) the demilitarisation of the eastern Greek islands, (5) the Imia/Kardak islets and the 'grey zones' issue, (6) the rights and obligations related to Flight Information Regions (FIRs), and (7) the operational control of NATO in the Aegean. So long as the conflict persists and not a single dispute is resolved, other Aegean disputes could come to the fore. Possible candidates include three areas covered by the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea: the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), the fishery zone and the contiguous zone, even though the two sides have tacitly agreed not to claim any of them so as to avoid further friction.

The beginning: continental shelf, territorial sea

The first Aegean dispute to see the light of day was the continental shelf question. According to Greece, the conflict started on 1 November 1973, when Turkey awarded exploration rights to the state-owned petroleum company TPAO (*Türkiye Petrolleri Anonim Ortaklığı*) in 27 maritime areas, several of which were to the west of Greek islands such as Lesbos and

Chios. A map was attached to the awards that divided the Aegean using a median line between the Turkish and Greek mainland, implying that half of the Aegean seabed was Turkish.¹

Turkey regards the conflict as having been in place, albeit in latent form, since the early 1960s, for Greece had granted oil exploration licences to a number of foreign companies, beyond the Greek territorial waters, thus unilaterally delimiting the Aegean continental shelf.² The Greek licences were an established fact, though it is unclear whether the starting date was 1961 or 1963. In 1968–72, more licences were provided to explore and exploit the seabed beyond Greece's territorial sea, in the mid- and northern Aegean.³

At this point two questions arise. Firstly, why did Greece provide licences instead of first sorting out the matter with Turkey? Secondly, why did it take Turkey a whole decade to react, although it had been aware of the licences since the early 1960s?

The key to Greece's attitude was its interpretation of the relevant article in the Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf (1958). Given the fact that the Convention afforded continental shelf to islands, without referring to any limitations, Greece jumped to the conclusion that all the islands of the Aegean, including those very close to Turkey, enjoyed 'full effect', as is the case with mainlands, and thus that the entire Aegean seabed to the west of its eastern islands (those close to Turkey) could only be Greek. It then went about delimiting the continental shelf *de facto*.⁴

For Turkey, one reason for its lack of response was that prior to the rocketing of oil prices in the autumn of 1973, it had not faced an urgent need for alternative sources of supply.⁵ Now having to pay exorbitant prices for Middle Eastern oil, it was in search of oil elsewhere. Moreover, before 1973 there was no evidence that the companies operating on behalf of the Greeks had found a worthwhile quantity of oil. But in the course of 1973, the Greek military government had made a number of exaggerated statements to the effect that huge deposits had been discovered around the islands of Thasos and Lemnos, and Greece was to become self-sufficient in oil within a few years.⁶ Thus, the Turks gained the impression that the 'selfish Greeks' had found sufficient quantities of oil in the Aegean seabed and wanted to keep it all for themselves.⁷

Furthermore, before 1973, the dominant view in Turkey's diplomatic establishment was that the Greeks would find nothing in the Aegean. This detached line is in line with Turkey's general aloofness on matters related to the Aegean until the early 1970s. Until 1974, Ankara had not even contested Greece's national airspace, which is ten miles instead of six

(the breadth of the territorial sea). Equally it had not opposed the handing of control of flight information to almost all of the Aegean to Greece in the 1950s by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). Turkey only raised the question of the militarisation and fortification of the Greek eastern Aegean islands (in the 1960s), which was contrary to treaty obligations, but was prepared to accept the Greek reassurances that nothing of the sort had taken place. According to Mehmet Ali Birand, a seasoned Turkish commentator, 'for years Turkey was sleeping beauty, unaware how much it had lost [in the Aegean], but now it had suddenly awakened claiming its due'.⁸ It was in 1973–4 that for the first time the view sunk in that the Greeks, having followed 'a devious policy', had acquired certain rights at Turkey's expense, the ultimate aim being 'to exclude Turkey from the Aegean, closing its outlets to the sea'.⁹

Now let us turn to what transpired from November 1973 until the Cyprus crisis nine months later. Greece took more than three months to react to the TPAO licences, apparently due to internal reasons relating to the governing military junta.¹⁰ Finally, Athens came up with a strongly worded *note verbale* (7 February 1974), rejecting what it regarded as a *fait accompli* and claiming that the region in need of delimitation was between the Greek islands of the eastern Aegean and the Turkish coastline. Turkey reacted with an extended note (27 February 1974), setting out its arguments and calling for negotiations to resolve the issue (see Chapter 11).¹¹

The Greek side again delayed its response, much to the dismay of Ankara, which did not know what to make of it: contemplation in the Greek ranks or some ploy aimed at putting Turkey in the corner?¹² Athens finally responded in late May 1974 with a brief note accepting the need for delimitation on the basis of existing international law, as codified by the Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf of 1958. Turkey took this to mean talks to reach an agreement and reacted by accepting the offer (5 June 1974). In the meantime, Turkey sent its oceanographic craft *Çandarlı* to the disputed regions for exploration (29 May–4 June 1974). In what was a clear display of power, no less than 32 Turkish warships accompanied the vessel. Greece surprisingly reacted very calmly or timidly (in comparison to its over-reaction in 1976 and 1987 to lesser provocations). Athens limited itself to a note stating that Turkey was contravening the Geneva Convention and sending a naval squadron to cover the activities of *Çandarlı* from afar. Apparently the reason for restraint was that insofar as the seabed remained untouched, the vessel's activities could not be construed as damaging Greece's interests (apparently this view prevailed as a result of US prompting).¹³

Until the fall of the Greek military regime (July 1974), relations worsened, but there were also attempts by the two foreign ministries to defuse the situation. Athens suggested a moratorium on research on the Aegean seabed, but Ankara feared that the measure would benefit Greece.¹⁴ Turkey suggested instead an exchange of lists of the various outstanding Greek-Turkish issues that could be addressed, separately or as a whole in a package deal. The list idea worried Athens, but it reluctantly produced a list of its own some time after the Turkish list had been handed in. Both lists were quite impressive, even though the Cyprus problem was not included. The Turkish list included minority issues, the continental shelf, territorial waters and the issue of the FIRs. The Greek list put greater emphasis on the continental shelf and issues relating to the Greek minority in Istanbul and the Patriarchate.¹⁵

In the Greek camp, senior diplomats and foreign minister Spyridon Tetenes favoured a dialogue with Turkey, but had difficulty persuading the impotent Prime Minister Adamantios Androutsopoulos, under the thumb of the military, which was headed by the shadowy dictator Brigadier Dimitrios Ioannidis, who had little if any contact with reality.¹⁶

For a fleeting moment, the diplomats were able to sway the puppet premier.¹⁷ Thus, when Tetenes met his Turkish counterpart, Turan Güneş, in Ottawa (20 June 1974), the meeting concluded with a joint communiqué on the need to start a process by which all the outstanding differences would be dealt with.¹⁸

In less than a week, a summit meeting was held in Brussels on the margins of a NATO summit (26 June 1974), between Bülent Ecevit and Androutsopoulos (NATO Secretary-General Joseph Luns was the host, but did not participate). The Turkish premier tried to convince his interlocutor of the need for talks, for the two sides to tackle the outstanding issues comprehensively, and thus not allowing them to fester and further mar their relations. Ecevit suggested the convening of two committees, one on the Aegean and the other on minority issues. Androutsopoulos avoided any commitment with arguments bordering on the ludicrous. The meeting ended in failure with the blame placed squarely on the Greek side.¹⁹

The US and the UK followed these developments and were duly alarmed, but Secretary of State Henry Kissinger discouraged any involvement. Luns tried to offer his good offices and hinted at joint exploitation, but made no headway. The Soviet Union voiced its concern at diplomatic level, also alluding to Greece's unorthodox airspace, which put its helicopters in a bizarre situation once they took off from a helicopter carrier in the international waters of the Aegean Sea (once off the carrier, they found themselves in Greek airspace). Moscow asserted that an extension of the Greek

territorial sea to 12 nautical miles would not be tolerated, as that would close the Aegean, with grave consequences for Soviet shipping.²⁰

This brings us to the second Aegean dispute that made its appearance prior to the Cyprus crisis, the 12 miles of territorial sea, which had gained in resonance at the 3rd UN Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS-III), which had started its second session in Caracas in early 1974. Turkish Defence Minister Hasan İşik (a former senior ambassador) stated in parliament (4 April 1974) that the problem of territorial waters between Greece and Turkey had to be resolved through talks on the basis of mutual understanding, with due regard to the interests of each side.²¹ On the very same day, ambassador İsmail Soyzal (Secretary General of the Turkish foreign ministry) told the Greek envoy in Ankara that if '[you] extend your territorial waters to 12 miles, let it be known that the Turkish state will ignore such a unilateral act'.²² The Turkish interventions were timely, for at the time the Greek foreign ministry pondered whether to increase its territorial sea to 12 miles, as that limit had gained ascendancy at UNCLOS-III. In the words of ambassador Byron Theodoropoulos, the aim was to transform a large part of the Aegean into Greek territorial sea, thereby curbing 'the *exaggerated* Turkish claims to the continental shelf [emphasis added]'.²³

Two months later, foreign minister Güneş stated (3 June 1974) that 'an extension of the Greek territorial waters in the Aegean to 12 nautical miles will make it [the Aegean] Greek soil (*sic*); we will never accept such an extension and Greece cannot impose it on us by force'.²⁴ A few days later, almost the entire Greek state-controlled press reported that Athens was contemplating extending its territorial sea to 12 nautical miles.²⁵ It was then that Turkey delivered its most emphatic statement: the government spokesman threatened that 'an extension of the Greek territorial sea to 12 nautical miles would mean a Greek-Turkish war' (12 June 1974).²⁶

From the 1974 Cyprus crisis to 1977

New disputes in the Aegean

This brings us to the third Aegean dispute. On the day of the Turkish military intervention in Cyprus, Turkey declared that the eastern Aegean was too dangerous an area to be controlled by Athens air traffic control. In early August 1974, between the first and second Turkish military operation in Cyprus, Turkey formally contested the area of control in the Aegean airspace by 'Athinai FIR' by issuing 'Notice to Airmen' (NOTAM) 714 (6 August 1974) in an attempt to extend the control of 'Istanbul FIR' to roughly half of the Aegean. Greece reacted with

NOTAM 1157 (7 August 1974), calling for the retention of the existing ICAO regime, stating that in view of the Turkish notice, it was not in a position to guarantee the safety of international flights over the Aegean Sea. This led to the halting of all international flights over the Aegean for six years, until mid-1980.²⁷

During the 1974 Cyprus crisis and immediately after it, Greece stepped up the fortifications of its eastern Aegean islands, which gave rise to the fourth dispute. Ankara protested and publicised its protest far and wide, not least within NATO. Greece did not deny having done so. The Greek premier, Constantinos Karamanlis (who had taken over after the fall of the Greek junta in July), stated, with an air of self-righteousness, that Greece had after all not abandoned its natural right to defence at a time when Turkey had launched an attack in Cyprus. Before long Turkey reacted in kind by setting up a 4th Army in Izmir (also known as the Aegean Army) and amassing a considerable number of landing craft in the region.²⁸

A month later, in September 1974, Ankara raised a fifth issue: that of the Greek national airspace, with its four additional miles, as constituting a flagrant breach of international law. By early next year, Turkey made its opposition more tangible by having its military aircraft fly precisely over these additional four miles to demonstrate unequivocally that it in no way condoned this 'illegal' regime. The flights in question continue to this day, leading to dangerous interceptions and dogfights.²⁹

In March 1975, a sixth dispute cropped up, operational control of NATO in the Aegean, as a result of Greece having left the military wing of NATO in protest at the stance of the US and NATO in the Cyprus crisis (namely that they had done very little to halt Turkey's aggression). The Turkish foreign minister, Melih Esenbel, stated to the Turkish press that the operational control of NATO in the Aegean should be handed to Turkey, given Greece's exit from the military wing of the Alliance.³⁰

Thus, before long, six Aegean disputes had sprung up. No doubt the Cyprus crisis functioned as a triggering event, as four of the disputes appeared in its wake.

First steps towards a dialogue

With the Cyprus crisis and its consequences pervading the atmosphere, the US Congress decided on an arms embargo against Turkey on 17 October 1974 (following fervent activity on the part of the Greek lobby at Capitol Hill headed by congressman John Brademas). Despite Kissinger's attempts to foil it, the embargo was imposed on 5 February 1975, to the fury of Turkey, which regarded it as biased and unjustified.³¹

On the two home fronts, Greece under Karamanlis (who won with a handsome majority on 17 November 1974) had a strong government, under a statesman who enjoyed international acclaim. Turkey on the other hand was in the throes of a political crisis, due to the mistaken decision of Ecevit (CHP: Republican People's Party) to resign after falling out with his coalition partner, the Islamist Necmettin Erbakan (MSP: National Salvation Party), in the hope of winning by a large margin. There followed some five months of caretaker government under elderly professor Sadik Irmak, with Esenbel as foreign minister.

For the rest of 1974, the Cyprus problem remained the main issue on the Greek-Turkish agenda. The public mood in both countries was very hostile. Washington, London and NATO called for calm and urged a return to the negotiating table on the Cyprus question. For any meaningful talks to take place, Turkey had to be prepared to exchange 'territory for a peace settlement' and Makarios to accept a 'federal bi-communal' solution. Neither of these seemed forthcoming.

Then, almost out of the blue, on 27 January 1975, Greece made an official proposal to Turkey for joint recourse to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for the delimitation of the continental shelf. The Irmak government reacted positively (6 February), but added that other Aegean issues should also be addressed, such as territorial waters and airspace, preferably by negotiations. The Irmak government faced the wrath of Ecevit in parliament. Interestingly, Karamanlis also faced heavy criticism from the opposition in Greece for opting for the ICJ (when in fact, it was claimed, Greece could decide unilaterally on the Aegean issues).³²

The Karamanlis initiative and the Turkish reaction call for some elaboration. Turkish analysts have tended to regard the Greek initiative as a sign of assertiveness on the Greek part, intended to further Greece's interests in the Aegean at the expense of Turkey, and as being shrewdly made so as to appear as a sign of flexibility, mainly for EC audiences. In addition, Greece was keen to take advantage of the embargo, as long as it lasted, in order to catch up with Turkey militarily, particularly in its air force capability.³³

In Greece, the initial Turkish positive reaction has been treated as hollow, as being merely prompted by the embargo, or perhaps as a momentary sign of weakness, which did not last for long, as Turkey was soon to return to its avowed aim of wanting to change the status quo in the Aegean at Greece's expense.³⁴

There are some elements of truth in both of these harsh blanket appraisals. As far as Greece is concerned, given the vibrant anti-Turkism

of the period that pervaded public opinion, a new security perception had gained ascendancy, almost overnight: that of 'the eastern threat' from Turkey (previously the dominant dogma was that of 'the northern threat' from the Soviet Union).³⁵

Within the Karamanlis government, the most authoritative formulation of the 'Turkish threat' came from a senior figure, defence minister Evangelos Averoff.³⁶ According to Averoff, in a memorandum to the prime minister, the eastern Greek islands surrounding Turkey gave rise to a sentiment of 'suffocation', hence Ankara sought to split the Aegean into two parts. Averoff referred to the rising role of the Turkish military in foreign affairs and to the military preponderance of Turkey, particularly in the air, which made the Greek islands of the eastern Aegean vulnerable to an attack. He concluded with the need to greatly reinforce the Greek forces, especially the air force and navy, so as to be well prepared should things take a turn for the worse.³⁷

This worst case scenario was disputed by the Greek ambassador in Ankara, Dimitris Kosmadopoulos, who painted a different picture, based on his many contacts with leading Turkish officials, including Ecevit (in office and in opposition), foreign minister Esenbel and future foreign minister Ihsan Sabri Çağlayangil. He elaborated that despite many exaggerated statements by officials for domestic purposes, the Turks regarded the continental shelf as basically a technical issue that was solvable. Moreover, as Kosmadopoulos pointed out, the Turkish political elite held Karamanlis in high esteem and counted on his moderation.³⁸ Kâmurân Gürün, the Turkish ambassador in Athens, reinforced this perspective in his contacts with Greek officials.³⁹

Kosmadopoulos, based on his soundings with the Turkish foreign minister, was of the view that Ankara would not reject the ICJ proposal and informed Athens accordingly.⁴⁰ It is within this context that the view matured in the Greek ranks that recourse to the ICJ was the most appropriate course of action. There is no evidence that the ICJ road was intended to harm Turkey, at least not at the level of Karamanlis, whose whole philosophy was not adversarial towards Turkey,⁴¹ though he felt the trauma of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, which still weighed heavily on his mind.

Be that as it may, the ICJ idea was decided at the Greek foreign ministry (21 January 1975), with the Greek ambassador in Ankara as its main advocate. A formal note was drafted, Karamanlis gave his consent, and it was decided that the proposal was to be handed in by Kosmadopoulos to Esenbel.⁴²

Irmak called a meeting of the political leaders and all, with the exception of Ecevit, agreed not to reject the proposal.⁴³ No doubt the embargo

issue was a factor for responding favourably (not wanting to alienate Washington). Another reason was the belief that Turkey had a good enough case and would be vindicated in an international court, thereby putting the 'Greek lake' spectre to rest.⁴⁴

But at the end of March 1975, a coalition government was formed in Turkey, known as the 'Nationalist Front', under Süleyman Demirel (Justice Party), with the participation of Erbakan's MSP and the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) of Arpaslan Türkeş. Upon taking office, Demirel stated that the delimitation of the continental shelf should be the outcome of negotiations. As İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil, the revered foreign minister, put it at the time: 'Let's talk first – we may reach an agreement – and not go to The Hague.'⁴⁵ This approach has dominated Turkish thinking ever since.⁴⁶

For about a month, things appeared in a state of limbo, but this did not last long. At a meeting (4 April) between Stavropoulos, the new Greek deputy foreign minister, and the Turkish ambassador, the former said that he was available for a meeting with a Turkish representative to discuss the Aegean issues, hinting that he would be in Geneva by mid-April. Apparently Stavropoulos, a moderate (a former UN Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs), was at pains to understand the level of adversity over the Aegean. The deputy minister managed to get Karamanlis's endorsement for his move, but his initiative did not get off the ground due to the reaction of the diplomatic establishment, which was adverse to Stavropoulos (a dove) taking charge of the delicate Aegean dispute.⁴⁷ But secret talks did start, a little later (2 May), between the political directors of the two foreign ministers, ambassadors Ioannis Tzounis and Necdet Tezel, in Geneva, to prepare the ground for a meeting of foreign ministers that would then lead to a summit meeting.⁴⁸

Turkey did not seem adverse to the ICJ option, no doubt due to the embargo. Demirel wanted to request its lifting from President Ford and at the time the US administration favoured a high level Greek-Turkish meeting to iron out their Aegean differences.⁴⁹

A ministerial meeting between Çağlayangil and his Greek counterpart, Dimitris Bitsios, took place in Rome (17–19 May 1975) in order to prepare the ground for a summit meeting. The Greek delegation seemed to have jumped the gun as it were, pressing for the drafting of a *compromis* (a formal agreement) of a joint submission to the ICJ. For this reason, it included among its ranks eminent foreign experts on the law of the sea. Çağlayangil could not accept the drafting of a *compromis* (and was taken aback by the presence of the foreign experts), though he appeared more flexible than his advisors, headed by ambassador A. Suat Bilge. The Turkish foreign minister also referred to his pet project, joint exploitation.⁵⁰

From the Brussels meeting to mid-1976

Karamanlis and Demirel met in Brussels (31 May 1975) for two hours (with only one interpreter each). The Greek prime minister tried to convince his Turkish counterpart that it was in the interests of both sides to refer the matter to The Hague. Karamanlis conceded that on the other matters of the Aegean, there were to be negotiations (something not accepted by Athens until then); as for the continental shelf, following the joint submission to the ICJ, there would be parallel bilateral attempts to resolve the issue and, should they be successful before the court decision, the outcome could be submitted to The Hague for approval. Needless to say this would have been a most unusual procedure to follow, but Karamanlis was probably sincere. Demirel finally chose to go ahead, resisting contrary advice from the bureaucrats. Apparently he felt confident that he could withstand criticism at home by blaming the ICJ idea on the Irmak government and by arguing that adjudication was not obligatory but on an equal footing with negotiations. The joint Brussels Communiqué underlined the need to create a good atmosphere in their relations, the amelioration of which would be to the benefit of both countries; the outstanding problems were to be resolved through negotiations and the continental shelf issue, it would be settled by recourse to the ICJ. The Greek participants were extremely happy with the result; the opposite was the case with their Turkish counterparts, who could not believe their eyes.⁵¹

Talks started on airspace and the continental shelf. The working group on airspace involving experts (ambassadors) started its work in mid-June 1975. It was led, in 1975–6, by ambassador Denis Karayiannis on the Greek side and by ambassador Yüksel Söylemez on the Turkish side, followed by ambassador Selcuk Korkut. The first such meeting took place in Ankara (17–19 June 1975). In 1978–81, the interlocutors were ambassadors Dimitris Makris and Korkut, followed by ambassadors Reşat Arım and Rıza Turmen. The deliberations were cordial and frank, but there were few tangible results. One reason for this was that the Greek side was under firm instructions from Karamanlis not to discuss the ten-mile Greek national airspace, which was the real problem that worried Turkey regarding airspace.⁵²

Talks on the continental shelf took longer to materialise, for Greece took them as being aimed at a *compromis* for the ICJ, while Turkey was trying to extract itself from the Brussels undertaking. Ankara asserted (30 September 1975) that there was no need for haste; that substantial negotiations should first take place and, if they failed, the ICJ option would then come in.⁵³ Karamanlis was furious and Greece reacted with a lengthy, strongly worded statement blaming Turkey for reneging.⁵⁴

Indeed, why was Ankara prevaricating? The answer is that Demirel had faced heavy domestic criticism upon his return from Brussels, as had Irmak before him. Ecevit, the main opposition leader and on bad personal terms with Demirel, called it a sell-out. Moreover, the diplomatic establishment did its best to convince the prime minister that going to The Hague was a grave mistake.⁵⁵

Expert level talks finally started in Berne at the end of January 1976. Ambassador Ioannis Tzounis (the political director and former ambassador to Ankara) headed the Greek delegation, while the Turkish ambassador in Berne, A. Suat Bilge (a noted law professor), headed the Turkish delegation. Foreign experts on the law of the sea assisted both delegations. In the first two meetings (31 January–2 February and 19–20 June 1976), the Turkish side stressed the need for joint exploitation, with the Greek side maintaining that this could be discussed only following delimitation, which should preferably come about as a result of a decision of the ICJ. The Greek representative was perturbed with Turkey's tendency not to regard the islands as entitled to a continental shelf. His Turkish counterpart's main emphasis was on the need for 'natural prolongation' of the two mainlands (this was inspired by the ICJ 1969 decision on the continental shelf of the North Sea, which had taken into consideration Germany's natural prolongation). Tzounis retorted that natural prolongation also applied in the case of islands, otherwise the Turkish continental shelf would be allotted to the west of the Greek islands, which was unacceptable to Greece.⁵⁶

From the Brussels summit until June 1976, relations were kept within reasonable bounds, although there were several difficult moments, mainly due to dogfights, military exercises in the Aegean or Turkish statements claiming that Greece was arming itself and that it had expansionist aims.

Following one such pronouncement by Demirel, Karamanlis reacted by proposing a non-aggression pact and also suggesting putting a stop to the ongoing Greek-Turkish arms race. Demirel was taken aback by this move and was not forthcoming (contrary to the Turkish diplomats who this time were more positive). The Turkish opposition (and Ecevit in particular) interpreted Karamanlis's proposal as a manoeuvre aimed at preparing the ground for extending Greece's territorial waters to 12 miles,⁵⁷ which was not the case. The Greek ambassador in Ankara could do nothing to convince Demirel that this was a bona fide offer with no hidden agenda. NATO, for its part, found a non-aggression pact between two NATO allies an oddity sure to give the wrong signal to the Warsaw Pact. In the end, Demirel put an end to the Greek proposal by over-reacting with a strongly worded letter to Karamanlis, where Greece was blamed for everything, be it the Aegean or Cyprus.⁵⁸

In the meantime, the two expert groups continued with their work and there were few signs of what was to come: the first major crisis in the Aegean.

The August 1976 crisis and its aftermath

The fuse that ignited the August 1976 crisis had been set by the Turkish prime minister six months earlier in February, when he decided (and said so publicly) to send a Turkish research vessel to the Aegean. This was intended to placate his critics and re-assert Turkey's claims to the Aegean.⁵⁹ In mid-summer, Demirel ordered the Turkish research ship *Sismik I* (formerly *Hora*) to embark upon a three-day trip (6–8 August 1976), in search of seismic data, in the regions west of Lesbos, regarded as being part of the 'Greek continental shelf' by Greece and 'disputed' by Turkey. *Sismik I*, a ramshackle vessel, barely able to float, let alone conduct any thorough research on the continental shelf, was escorted by only one Turkish warship, instead of the 32 that had accompanied *Çandarlı* in 1974. But the head of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), Türkeş, (one of the two deputy prime ministers), threw oil on fire by stating that the eastern Greek islands should have been Turkish.⁶⁰

The situation seemed to be getting out of hand, with several Greek statements giving the impression to the Greek public that a forceful reaction was being contemplated. The Greek armed forces were put on full alert. Andreas Papandreou, the leader of PASOK (Pan-Hellenic Socialist Party), the third party with 14 seats in Parliament, called for a dynamic response, implying the use of military force ('sink the *Hora*' as it was reported in the Greek press), and suggested the extension of the Greek territorial sea to 12 miles forthwith. Washington was appalled, pointing out that the Turkish vessel was merely conducting seismic research and was not in contact with the seabed. Moscow for its part stressed the need to preserve the open seas.⁶¹

In the end Greece got its act together and Karamanlis reacted calmly, in spite of the clamouring of the public and opposition. The Greek government opted for a double recourse, to both the UN Security Council and the ICJ (10 August 1976). Technically, the simultaneous recourse may have been a mistake (Bitsios, the Greek foreign minister, cautioned that one recourse would undermine the other),⁶² but Karamanlis wanted to demonstrate Greece's utter indignation to the Greek public and the international audience. In any event, it seems that the move impressed Turkey, though it was worried by the unilateral recourse to The Hague.⁶³

The two sides presented their case to the Security Council and the outcome was SC Resolution 395 (25 August 1976), which stated that the dispute should be resolved peacefully, through 'direct negotiations' leading to 'mutually acceptable solutions', but also referred to 'appropriate judicial means', in particular the ICJ, as an appropriate means of settling the dispute. It is generally acknowledged that the wording of Resolution 395 was imprecise and ambiguous,⁶⁴ as shown by the fact that even foreign legal authorities disagreed as to who had gained the upper hand.⁶⁵ Predictably, each side chose to emphasise what suited it best: Turkey negotiations and Greece the ICJ. But, upon closer scrutiny, the resolution seems to tilt more to the Turkish side, by placing negotiations first and by not condemning Turkey for its action, which was one of the Greek aims.⁶⁶ However, Karamanlis seemed genuinely content at the time, partly because no mention was made of the demilitarisation issue, which the Turks had tried to insert in the Resolution.⁶⁷

The Greek recourse to the ICJ has been registered in the annals of the court as 'The Aegean Sea Continental Shelf Case'. Athens had sought the services of the ICJ on two grounds: one was to condemn Turkey for undue damage to Greece's right to enjoy the benefits of the Aegean continental shelf and hence to adopt 'interim measures of protection' of the rights of Greece pending the final decision; and the other was to adjudicate on substance, trying to draw Turkey into the proceedings. The attempt to involve Turkey was based on the 1975 Brussels Communiqué and on a commitment in a forgotten international treaty of 1928 on the settlement of disputes by the ICJ. The decision of the ICJ was negative on both counts (11 September 1975 for the damages and 19 December 1978 for Turkey's participation), although regarding the substantive aspect, there were disagreements among the international judges, which led to an interesting legal debate.⁶⁸

However, let us return to the aftermath of the Security Council Resolution.

Dialogue resumed: the Berne understanding

Following Resolution 395, the two foreign ministers, Çağlayangil and Bitsios, met twice in New York (25 August and 1 October 1976) and decided to resume the diplomatic dialogue on the continental shelf and on airspace. The renewed meetings started on the same date (2 November 1976), the first in Berne and the second in Paris, with the former gaining a lasting place in the history of the Aegean dispute, due to the adoption of the Berne Agreement.

The Berne Agreement was signed by Tzounis and Bilge on 11 November 1976. In Greece, this document is known as the 'Berne Communiqué' (in an obvious attempt to downgrade its significance) and in Turkey as the 'Berne Declaration' (in an attempt to upgrade its significance). Irrespective of its designation, the Berne understanding amounts to an agreement under international law.⁶⁹ Its main points were that the negotiations would be secret with no leaks to the press, unless otherwise decided by consent; 'to abstain from any initiative or act relating to the continental shelf of the Aegean Sea that might prejudice the negotiations'; 'to abstain from any initiative or act which would tend to discredit the other party'; and to study state practice and international rules with a view 'to educating certain principles and practical criteria' of use in the delimitation of the Aegean continental shelf.⁷⁰

It has been claimed that a secret annex was attached to the Agreement, to the effect that if agreement on the delimitation of the continental shelf were reached, the two sides would then jointly submit it to the ICJ for endorsement.⁷¹ The existence of such an annex is not implausible, given what Karamanlis had proposed in Brussels.

In Greece, the reaction of the public and opposition to the Berne Agreement was negative. In Turkey, the situation was more opaque, though Ecevit stated that he would not abide by it when in government.⁷² Despite such short-sighted reactions, the Berne understanding retains its significance today, as regards both procedure and the need for restraint on both sides.

The next year was less tense, with two meetings of experts on the continental shelf (London, 31 January–6 February and Paris, 1–3 June 1977). However, aeronautical exercises by Turkey in March were a cause of some friction, leading to the cancellation of the next scheduled meeting on the continental shelf. In the summer of 1977, Turkey underwent yet another political crisis, with Demirel instead of Ecevit being able to form a government once again. Demirel appeared more conciliatory towards Greece during his six months in office.⁷³

In Greece, Karamanlis won the elections for a second time (22 November 1977) but gained a slimmer majority, with PASOK under Andreas Papandreou now heading the opposition. Upon taking office, Karamanlis stated in parliament that he sincerely supported the amelioration of Greek-Turkish relations, which would benefit both countries. On the Aegean issue, he proposed serious talks based on international law and practice and, on the matters where no agreement could be reached, recourse to the ICJ. As one can see, Karamanlis was not adverse to negotiations and, indeed, they were already taking place.⁷⁴

Notes

1. Byron Theodoropoulos (1988), *Oi Tourkoi kai emeis* [The Turks and Us] (Athens: Fitrakis), p. 269.
2. Kámuran Gürün (1994), *Büyükelçilik Anıları* [Bucharest-Paris-Athens: The Memoirs of an Ambassador] (Istanbul: Milliyet), p. 252.
3. For 1961 as the starting date, see Theodoropoulos, op. cit., p. 269; and Gürün, op. cit., p. 252. For 1963 as the starting date, see Yiannis Valinakis (1989), *Eisagogi stin elliniki exoteriki politiki* [Introduction to Greek Foreign Policy] (Thessaloniki: Paratiritis), pp. 122–3; Deniz Bölükbaşı (2004), *Turkey and Greece. The Aegean Disputes. A Unique Case in International Law* (London: Cavendish Publishing Limited), pp. 239, 274.
4. Based on discussions of the author with Greek ambassadors active at the time. On de facto delimitation, see Valinakis, op. cit., pp. 122–3.
5. Note that in 1968, Turkey made seismic explorations in the Aegean, which indicates an interest for seabed resources before 1973. See Bölükbaşı, op. cit., p. 239.
6. Aurel Braun (1983), *Small-State Security in the Balkans* (London: Macmillan), p. 239.
7. Gürün, op. cit., pp. 252–3; Dimitris Kosmadopoulos (1988), *Odoiporiko enos presvi stin Angyra, 1974–1976* [Travelogue of an Ambassador to Ankara, 1974–1976] (Athens: Euroekdotiki), p. 69; Mehmet Ali Birand (1979), *Diyet (Türkiye üzerine uluslararası pazarlıklar 1974–1980)* [Diet (Turkey's International Negotiations, 1974–1980)] (Istanbul: Milliyet), pp. 189–90.
8. Birand, op. cit., p. 105. See also, in a similar vein, Gürün, op. cit., pp. 252–3.
9. Birand, op. cit., p. 108.
10. Krateros Ioannou and Anastasia Strati (2000), *Dikaio tis thalassas* [Law of the Sea], 2nd edn (Athens: Sakkoulas), p. 445.
11. Ibid., pp. 445–8; Theodoropoulos, op. cit., pp. 269–70; Hüseyin Pazarıcı (1988), 'Aspect juridique des différends Gréco-turcs en mer Égée', in Semih Vaner (ed.), *Le différend Gréco-Turc* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan), p. 105.
12. According to the secretary-general of the Turkish foreign ministry. See Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., pp. 50–1, 53.
13. Andrew Wilson (1979/1980), 'The Aegean Dispute', *Adelphi Papers*, No. 155 (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies), p. 6; Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., pp. 75–6, 91; Ioannou and Strati, op. cit., pp. 445–50; Sotiris Rizas (2006), *Oi ellinotourkikes scheseis sto Aigaio, 1973–1976* [The Greek-Turkish Relations in the Aegean, 1973–1976] (Athens: I. Sideris), pp. 58–9, 64–5.
14. Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., p. 69.
15. Gürün, op. cit., pp. 253–5, 258, 264, 267; Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., p. 68.
16. Angelos Vlachos (1980), *Mia fora kai enan kairo enas diplomatis...* [Once Upon a Time a Diplomat...] (Athens: Estia), vol. 6, pp. 408–9; Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., pp. 79–90; Rizas, op. cit., pp. 40–1, 50.
17. Rizas, op. cit., pp. 61–2.
18. For details, see Gürün, op. cit., pp. 273–9; and Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., pp. 87–90.
19. For details, see Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., pp. 97–103; and Gürün, op. cit., pp. 285–93.
20. Rizas, op. cit., pp. 51, 75–6, 87–8; Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., pp. 258–9.

21. In Christos Sazanidis, *Oi ellinotourkikes scheseis stin pentaetia 1973–1978* [Greek-Turkish Relations within Five Years, 1973–1978] (Thessaloniki), pp. 181, 460.
22. Quoted in Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., p. 51.
23. Theodoropoulos, op. cit., p. 278. See also Sazanidis, op. cit., p. 181; Rizas, op. cit., pp. 56–7.
24. Sazanidis, op. cit., p. 181, 460; Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., p. 76.
25. Sazanidis, op. cit., p. 181; Valinakis, op. cit., p. 209.
26. See Sazanidis, op. cit., pp. 181–2. Interestingly, this statement does not appear in the memoirs of the Greek ambassador in Ankara.
27. Braun, op. cit., pp. 240–1; Theodoropoulos, op. cit., pp. 283–4; Gürün, op. cit., pp. 358–60; Theodore A. Couloumbis (1983), *The United States, Greece, and Turkey: The Troubled Triangle* (New York: Praeger), pp. 120–1; Wilson, op. cit., p. 23.
28. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 6–7; Sazanidis, op. cit., pp. 75; Valinakis, op. cit., 207–8.
29. Tozun Bahcheli (1990), *Greek-Turkish Relations since 1955* (Boulder: Westview), pp. 143–4; Christos L. Rozakis, 'To diethnes nomiko kathestos tou Aigaiou' [The International Legal Regime of the Aegean], in Alexis Alexandris *et al.*, *Oi ellinotourkikes scheseis, 1923–1987* [Greek-Turkish Relations, 1923–1987] (Athens: Gnosi, 1988), pp. 352–56.
30. Sazanidis, op. cit., p. 75.
31. Birand, op. cit., pp. 37–54.
32. Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., pp. 178–9, 183, 190–1, 199–200; Constantinos Karamanlis (1992–1997), *Archeio: Gekonota kai keimena* [Archives: Events and Texts], edited by Constantinos Svolopoulos (Athens: Ekdotiki Athinon) [henceforth *Karamanlis Archives*], vol. 8, p. 297; Sazanidis, op. cit., pp. 252–3, 254–5; Gürün, op. cit., pp. 374–6; Bahcheli, op. cit., pp. 132–3.
33. Birand, op. cit., pp. 89–90, 92; Melek Firat (2001), 'Yunanistan'la İlişkiler' [Relations with Greece], in Baskin Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası, Cilt I 1919–1980* [Turkish Foreign Policy, vol. 1, 1919–1980] (Istanbul: İletişim), pp. 749–51.
34. Sazanidis, op. cit., pp. 74–5 and *passim*.
35. Valinakis, op. cit., 128; Ioannou and Strati, op. cit., pp. 484, 500.
36. Averoff, in his tenure as foreign minister in the period 1956–63, had been the architect, on the Greek side, of the 1959 Zurich-London Accord on Cyprus.
37. For the Averoff memorandum, see *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 8, pp. 248–9.
38. Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., pp. 56–7, 69–70, 77, 183, 190, 203.
39. Gürün, op. cit., pp. 372–3 and *passim*.
40. Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., p. 183.
41. Those close to Karamanlis at the time acknowledge his lack of animosity, and this is more than obvious in his various speeches in the Greek parliament. The Turkish ambassador in Athens, based on his meetings with the Greek premier, also confirms this. See Gürün, op. cit., pp. 453, 472.
42. Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., pp. 190–3; *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 8, p. 297.
43. From Athens, Gürün recommended a positive response. See Gürün, op. cit., p. 375.
44. Birand, op. cit., p. 91.
45. Wilson, op. cit., p. 7.
46. Wilson, op. cit., p. 7; Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., pp. 199–200; Bahcheli, op. cit., pp. 132–3. Sazanidis, op. cit., pp. 254–5.

47. For the Stavropoulos incident (which interestingly is not reported in Greek sources), see Gürün, op. cit., pp. 383–5, 387; Birand, op. cit., p. 104.
48. Gürün, op. cit., p. 390.
49. Birand, op. cit., pp. 103, 114–5.
50. Birand op. cit., pp. 109–12; Dimitris Bitsios (1983), *Pera apo ta synora, 1974–1977* [Beyond the Borders, 1974–1977] (Athens: Estia), pp. 71–2; Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., pp. 225–8; *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 8, pp. 391–2.
51. Birand, op. cit., pp. 116–21; *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 8, pp. 420–3; Bitsios, op. cit., p. 74.
52. Rozakis, op. cit., p. 359.
53. Sazanidis, op. cit., p. 259–61.
54. Bitsios, op. cit., p. 76; Sazanidis, op. cit., pp. 261–4.
55. Birand, op. cit., p. 121; Wilson, op. cit., p. 7; Bahcheli, op. cit., p. 134.
56. Bölükbaşı, op. cit., pp. 543–62.
57. Wilson, op. cit., p. 8.
58. Bitsios, op. cit., p. 77; Kosmadopoulos, op. cit., pp. 298–300; Birand, op. cit., pp. 184–6. The Turkish ambassador in Athens recommended a positive response but was brushed aside; however, he was put in the unenviable position of having to deliver the harsh Demirel response to Karamanlis (17 May 1975). See Gürün, op. cit., pp. 462–5, 471–2.
59. Bahcheli, op. cit., p. 134.
60. According to Birand, if Karamanlis had been aware of the lack of seriousness on the matter then existing in Turkey and the state of the ship, he would have sat back and laughed, rather than initiating a campaign against Turkey. See Birand, op. cit., pp. 183–4.
61. Christos L. Rozakis (1978), *Tria chronia ellinikis exoterikis politikis, 1974–1977* [Three Years of Greek Foreign Policy, 1974–1977] (Athens: Papazisis), p. 70; Bahcheli, op. cit., p. 134; Rizas, op. cit., pp. 146–9.
62. Bitsios, op. cit., p. 81; Rozakis, *Tria chronia ellinikis exoterikis politikis*, op. cit., pp. 71, 73; Ioannou and Strati, op. cit., pp. 459–75.
63. Rozakis, *Tria chronia ellinikis exoterikis politikis*, op. cit., p. 70; Bahcheli, op. cit., p. 134; Rizas, op. cit., pp. 146–9.
64. Wilson, op. cit., p. 9.
65. Leo Gross (1977), 'The Dispute between Greece and Turkey Concerning the Continental Shelf in the Aegean', *American Journal of International Law*, 71, 1, pp. 48–54; T.R. Robol. (1977), 'Limits of Consent: The Aegean Sea Continental Shelf Case', *Harvard International Law Journal*, 18.
66. Christos L. Rozakis (1989), 'Oi ellinoturkikes scheseis: i nomiki diastasi' [Greek-Turkish Relations: The Legal Dimension], in D. Conostas and Ch. Tsardanidis (eds), *Synchroni elliniki exoteriki politiki* [Contemporary Greek Foreign Policy], vol. 2 (Athens: Sakkoulas), p. 28.
67. Bitsios, op. cit., pp. 90–1; Ioannou and Strati, op. cit., p. 461; Türkmen, op. cit., p. 634.
68. See in particular Gross, op. cit., pp. 48–54. See also Angelos Syrigos (1998), *The Status of the Aegean Sea According to International Law* (Athens and Brussels: Sakkoulas/Bruylant), pp. 135–40; Ioannou and Strati, op. cit., pp. 466–75; Bölükbaşı, op. cit., pp. 264–84.
69. Syrigos, op. cit., p. 142.
70. Syrigos, op. cit., p. 142; Bölükbaşı, op. cit., p. 286.

71. This has been claimed by ambassador Bölükbaşı; see D. Bölükbaşı, *op. cit.*, pp. 286–7. Curiously, Bölükbaşı bases his claim not on a Turkish source, but on a Greek one: a book of archives by journalist Lambros Papandoniou. See Lambros Papandoniou (1992), *Hanoume to Agaio* [We are Losing the Aegean] (Washington, D.C.), p. 23.
72. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
73. Sazanidis, *op. cit.*, pp. 85–7.
74. *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 10, p. 68.

7

The Montreux Spirit (1978–September 1981)

The Montreux summit

In January 1978, Bülent Ecevit took over from Demirel, raising high hopes in Turkey and abroad.¹ The new premier, immediately after gaining a vote of confidence (17 January), expressed a readiness to ameliorate Greek-Turkish relations and suggested a summit meeting. There followed a personal letter from Ecevit to Karamanlis (22 January 1978) to this effect. Karamanlis replied that preparation was needed before a summit. Ankara took this to mean that Athens had cold feet.² Ecevit's response was that little preparation was necessary, as the meeting was to be informal with no fixed agenda. Karamanlis readily agreed, putting to rest Turkish fears. Thus the meeting was set for early March 1978.³

The Ecevit initiative raised some expectations in Athens that progress could be achieved on the Aegean issue. At the same time Athens was apprehensive that Ecevit's conciliatory move had only the embargo in mind. Moreover, Karamanlis was weary of meeting Ecevit, the prime minister of the 'Turkish invasion of Cyprus'.⁴ Ecevit did have the embargo in mind, for at the time President Jimmy Carter was contemplating lifting it.⁵ The US and the leading EC states voiced their support for such a meeting and the Turkish premier wanted to show moderation in order to enhance Turkey's image. But apparently the Turkish leader was also interested in progress on the Aegean front in the hope of leaving his imprint on an eventual solution; at the very least, he wanted to sound out Karamanlis as to whether he regarded the Aegean as a 'Greek lake' or was prepared to share it with Turkey.⁶

The summit meeting took place at Montreux (11–12 March 1978). The two prime ministers met behind closed doors for two whole days (with the presence of one adviser each) in an amicable atmosphere.

In Greece, the erroneous impression was created that at Montreux the two prime ministers had signed a secret agreement to abstain from any research on or exploration of the Aegean continental shelf.⁷ In fact, the only tangible result of the meeting was to continue the dialogue at expert level, but also have talks at a higher level, between the secretary-generals of the foreign ministries. Thus, until recently, the tendency in works on Greek-Turkish relations has been not to give much credit to the meeting, even less than to the much briefer Brussels summit of 1975. In fact, Montreux is unique and of considerable value, for it was the first and in fact the last time that the leaders of the two countries discussed, at length and in detail, the Aegean dispute as a whole.⁸

Both prime ministers came to Montreux well prepared, though Ecevit, almost 20 years younger, had a keener sense of detail. At the outset, Karamanlis made it abundantly clear that his government was content with the existing status quo in the Aegean, but did not regard it as a 'Greek lake'. He added that their positions were far apart and the atmosphere was difficult as a result of the events in Cyprus of 1974. Ecevit was quick to point out that Greece was acting as if its aim was a step-by-step expansion in the Aegean: with its avowed intention to expand its territorial sea to 12 miles, its 'illegal' ten miles of national airspace, its attempt to take over all of the continental shelf of the Aegean and its treatment of civil aviation control, behaving as if its claims amounted to sovereignty. In view of all this, Turkey felt that its vital interests were in jeopardy, which led to an acute sense of 'claustrophobia in the Aegean'.⁹

Regarding the continental shelf, Karamanlis stressed submission to the ICJ, not immediately but following negotiations. He was of the view that the ICJ could not be avoided in the end, given the contrasting views on the matter. A court procedure, he said, would also absolve the two governments of any responsibility regarding the outcome and spare them of the clamouring of the opposition that a sell-out was afoot, which would be difficult to dodge in a negotiated settlement. Ecevit was not completely unfavourable to recourse to The Hague, but pointed out that if the ICJ was seen from the outset as the real destination, there would be no serious attempt to arrive at a settlement in the course of the talks.¹⁰

Karamanlis acknowledged something that is regarded as a taboo in Greece: that the Geneva Convention of 1958 did include 'special circumstances' in delimitations of continental shelves and that, in any event, if special circumstances were not taken into consideration in the Aegean, the outcome would be 'unjust for Turkey'.¹¹ However, the Greek public and opposition (he implied Papandreou) read the Geneva Convention as not including the

special circumstances caveat, hence Greece could draw its own continental shelf without any negotiation or judicial recourse with Turkey. Turkey, for its part, reached the other extreme by ignoring the islands and not recognising that they were also entitled to a continental shelf.¹²

Ecevit referred to the case of the British-owned Channel Islands near France, which as a result of being on the wrong side of the median line were awarded a minimal continental shelf, so as not to leave France without a continental shelf in the English Channel. He also referred to joint exploitation, an exercise that could enhance cooperation between the two states. Karamanlis saw no comparison with the British case, for the Greek islands were many and 'geographically continuous'. Ecevit said that he was aware of the Greek fear that the 'enclaving' of the eastern Greek islands by a Turkish continental shelf might lead to their sovereignty being put into question. He thus proposed addressing the anxieties of both sides: for Turkey to give clear assurances that Greek sovereignty would not be threatened in any way; and for Greece to reciprocate by stating that it had no intention of expanding its territorial sea to 12 miles.¹³ Karamanlis retorted that the two undertakings were not comparable. Greek sovereignty over these islands was undisputed, so the Turks were offering nothing of substance by stating the obvious, while Greece would be abandoning its legal rights. When Ecevit pressed the issue of the Turkish fear of a 'Greek lake', Karamanlis was crystal clear on at least two occasions: Greece had no intention whatsoever of extending its territorial waters from six to 12 miles; on the other hand, his government could not officially renounce Greece's legal rights.¹⁴

As for the thorny problem of the Greek national airspace of ten miles, the Turkish leader pointed out that it was contrary to international law and gave the impression that it was a stepping-stone for the extension of the territorial waters. The Greek leader, apparently aware that this was Greece's weakest point, feigned a lack of detailed knowledge, but added that this regime had been accepted by Turkey when it was introduced back in 1931.¹⁵

Ecevit was more unyielding on the FIR question, arguing at length about the extent of abuse of rights on the part of Greece, which acted as if civil aviation control amounted to sovereign rights. Karamanlis conceded that Greece was in the wrong as to the island of Lemnos in particular, having set a huge area for aeronautical exercises, stating that he intended to remedy the situation. As for the wider FIR question, he made a pertinent point: that the Turkish NOTAM of August 1974 was perceived in Greece as a blunt attempt to split the Greek state into two parts and take over control of the national airspace over Greek islands.¹⁶

Regarding militarisation of the eastern Greek islands, Karamanlis asserted that it had taken place purely for defensive purposes, adding that it was inconceivable that such small islands could act as launching pads for aggressive acts. Interestingly, he did not mention the threat to Greece posed by the existence of the Turkish 4th Army or the many landing vessels in the Izmir region.¹⁷

As one can see, Montreux was no mere icebreaker and it ushered in what could be called the 'Montreux spirit', which lasted for three and a half years, until September 1981, reducing moments of friction and not permitting any difficulty on the Aegean or elsewhere to rock the boat.

The Greek-Turkish dialogue (1978–September 1981)

The official talks

The secretary-generals' meetings began later than scheduled. This was due to the sensitive issue of the US embargo on arms to Turkey, for at the time President Carter was trying to convince Congress to lift it, something which was hailed as long overdue by Turkey and unthinkable by the Greeks and Greek Cypriots, though not necessarily by the astute Karamanlis. For good measure, however, the Greek premier postponed the scheduled meeting of secretary-generals in a show of indignation for the benefit of the Greek public. In view of this hiccup, the two prime ministers met in earnest in New York (29 May 1978) to iron out their differences and re-launch the talks. Karamanlis persuaded Ecevit that he had cancelled the talks not as a reaction to the prospects of lifting the embargo as such, but in order to avoid the bad atmosphere that had been created in Greece as a result. It was thus agreed that the talks would start in early July.¹⁸

The secretary-generals' talks duly started in Ankara (4–5 July 1978). The talks were *ad referendum* (not binding to their governments), with no official minutes or publicity other than an occasional communiqué that they had taken place. From July 1978 to September 1981 some 14 meetings were held, eight of them scheduled, alternating between capitals, and six of them *ad hoc* at four different venues (see Table I). The secretary-general on the Greek side for most of the talks was ambassador Byron Theodoropoulos and on the Turkish side ambassador Şükrü Elekdağ, followed by Özdemir Yigit. The sixth scheduled meeting, which was to be headed on the Turkish side by the new secretary-general, İlter Türkmen (a former ambassador to Athens), did not take place, as a result of the 12 September 1980 military coup in

Table I Official talks at secretary-general level (1978–81)

Meetings	Interlocutors	Main themes discussed
1st scheduled meeting Ankara, 4–5 July 1978	Şükrü Elekdağ Byron Theodoropoulos	Continental shelf, method of settlement, territorial sea, national airspace, FIR, bilateral agreement, mutual fears
2nd scheduled meeting Athens, 18–19 September 1978	Byron Theodoropoulos Şükrü Elekdağ	Continental shelf, territorial sea, national airspace, FIR, militarisation, Lemnos–control zone, bilateral agreement, procedural issues
3rd scheduled meeting Ankara, 8–9 February 1979	Şükrü Elekdağ Byron Theodoropoulos	Continental shelf, territorial sea, bilateral agreement, mutual fears
Geneva meeting 5–6 April 1979	Byron Theodoropoulos Şükrü Elekdağ	Continental shelf, mutual fears
Strasbourg meeting 11 May 1979	Byron Theodoropoulos Şükrü Elekdağ	Continental shelf, militarisation, NATO operational command
4th scheduled meeting Athens, 9–10 July 1979	Byron Theodoropoulos Özdemir Yigit	Continental shelf, territorial sea, FIR, bilateral agreement
London meeting 26–27 October 1979	Byron Theodoropoulos Özdemir Yigit	Bilateral agreement, continental shelf
Vienna meeting 18–19 January 1980	Byron Theodoropoulos Özdemir Yigit	Continental shelf, FIR, bilateral agreement
5th scheduled meeting Ankara, 18–19 February 1980	Özdemir Yigit Byron Theodoropoulos	Continental shelf, FIR, <i>casus belli</i>
6th cancelled scheduled meeting, Athens, 15–16 September 1980	Byron Theodoropoulos İlter Türkmen	Meeting cancelled due to Turkish military coup of 12 September 1980
New York meeting 3 October 1980	Byron Theodoropoulos Kâmuran Gürün	Continental shelf, national airspace, FIR, militarisation, mutual fears
7th scheduled meeting Athens, 4–5 December 1980	Byron Theodoropoulos Kâmuran Gürün	Continental shelf, method of settlement, FIR, procedural issues
Ankara meeting 16 January 1981	Kâmuran Gürün Stavros Roussos	FIR, mutual fears

Table I Continued

Meetings	Interlocutors	Main themes discussed
8th scheduled meeting, Ankara, 16–20 March 1981	Kâmurân Gürün Stavros Roussos	Continental shelf, national airspace, FIR, militarisation
9th scheduled meeting Athens, 7–8 September 1981	Stavros Roussos Kâmurân Gürün	Continental shelf, territorial sea, FIR

Turkey. The talks were resumed very soon after the coup (on 3 October 1980). Theodoropoulos's counterpart was Kâmurân Gürün, who had served as ambassador to Athens after Türkmen (who was now foreign minister). Throughout 1981, Gürün's counterpart was Stavros Roussos, the last secretary-general under the New Democracy government (see Table I).¹⁹

In the course of the talks, all the Aegean issues were touched upon, though the continental shelf remained the central theme (see Table I). From July 1978 to January 1980, time was also devoted to trying to draft an agreement on friendly relations (a Greek proposal), but since there was little consensus, the venture was abandoned, following a meeting in Ankara of foreign ministers Constantinos Mitsotakis and Hairetin Erkmen (June 1980).²⁰

At the deliberations, the Greek side favoured a step-by-step approach, starting with the more manageable issues (such as the FIR). The Turks preferred a parallel package deal approach, in order to be able to take stock of gains and losses as events progressed.²¹ However, by 1981, Mitsotakis and premier Constantinos Rallis (Karamanlis had become president) also favoured a 'global approach' that would perhaps include Cyprus.²²

The Greek secretary-general was under firm instructions from Karamanlis to play it safe. According to the instructions, the aim of the talks was 'to ameliorate the climate so as to gain time', but also to ascertain whether there was scope for reaching 'substantive solutions'.²³ The continental shelf could best be resolved through adjudication. As for the other issues on the Aegean agenda, the FIR question could be broached, but not the territorial sea (that is, the Greek right to extension) or Greek national airspace, both of which could be addressed at the endgame, at summit level.²⁴

At the talks, the Greek side reiterated its clear preference for adjudication regarding the continental shelf, not least because it would stem domestic criticism, but was not opposed to covering as much ground as possible in negotiations. Turkey favoured negotiations for a final

settlement, but did not reject the ICJ or arbitration, also toying with conciliation, which Greece found unsavoury.²⁵

Regarding substance, Greece stuck to its traditional line that delimitation involved only the region between the Greek islands of the eastern Aegean and the Turkish coastline. Turkey reacted with 'natural prolongation', that is, that the eastern Greek islands by the Turkish coastline were geologically a part of Anatolia. If natural prolongation was not taken on board, Turkey would be left with no continental shelf at all in the Aegean. The Greek side suggested compensating with continental shelf to the south of the Dodecanese Islands.²⁶ As for joint exploitation, the Greek side was prepared to discuss it only with regard to oil reserves that were to be found on the delimitation line.²⁷

By July 1979, the Greek representative seemed prepared to discuss the possibility of half effect for some of the islands in the mid-Aegean and even a quarter effect for those in the eastern Aegean, provided Turkey abandoned its standard prolongation line.²⁸ Once the Greek side showed signs of flexibility, the Turkish side referred less to natural prolongation provided it could secure continental shelf in the Aegean to the west of the eastern Greek islands. Greece highlighted the danger of the eastern Greek islands being surrounded ('enclaved') by Turkish continental shelf. Turkey responded with the need for non-closure of the Turkish coastline by Greek continental shelf. For Ankara, the area to be delimited involved the seabed in the Aegean beyond the six miles of territorial waters, providing for full effect only for those Greek islands in the Aegean that were to the west of the median line between the two continental territories. The key was an equitable, just outcome and in this respect some level of joint exploitation could help.²⁹

The first Turkish secretary-general toyed with the idea of a moratorium of some 25 years without attempts at delimitation, with a view to tackling the other Aegean issues in the immediate future, but a month later Elekdağ backtracked, saying that Ankara had not been happy with his suggestion.³⁰ Yigit, his successor, calculated that some 70 per cent of the continental shelf would go to Greece and 30 per cent to Turkey, with only Lesbos being enclaved by Turkish continental shelf. In their next meeting, the Turkish appetite had risen, claiming that with the existing six miles of territorial waters, Greece possessed 36 per cent of the seabed of the Aegean, while Turkey possessed 9 per cent; if the remaining 55 per cent was divided into half, each side would get 27.5 per cent, hence Greece would be acquiring 63.5 per cent of the Aegean seabed (under open seas and territorial waters) and Turkey 36.5 per cent. A month later (Ankara, February 1980), the Turkish representative

returned to the moratorium idea and suggested setting up what could be called a 'no man's shelf' (akin to a 'no man's land').³¹

With Turkey under military rule, Gürün suggested that a tentative first line of delimitation could be drawn without the islands in the Aegean; the islands could be added later, with the delimitation line changing accordingly.³² From the mid-Aegean onwards, there would be gradual limitation of the effect of the islands, with less or no continental shelf for those near the Turkish coast, which would yield the following percentages: of the 56 per cent of the seabed under high seas, 35 per cent would be Turkish and 65 per cent Greek, that is, two thirds would be Greek and one third Turkish continental shelf. Alternatively, some 14 per cent would go to either country, with the remainder to be negotiating or adjudicated. Alternatively, part of the Aegean continental shelf could be submitted to adjudication and the rest left for negotiations.³³

By the first months of 1979, the two sides were in agreement on a set of guiding principles. According to Theodoropoulos (and his Turkish counterparts concurred), the points of consensus were the following: (1) that neither country would declare an exclusive economic zone (EEZ); (2) that freedom of navigation was to be assured; (3) that the principle of non-encroachment as regards the eastern Greek islands was to be met; (4) that the end result of delimitation was to be based on international law and practice, applied in such a way as to lead to an equitable solution; and (5) that Turkey would be offered compensation if its continental shelf ended up being meagre, though there was disagreement as to where: to the west within the Aegean Sea, said Turkey, to the south, outside the Aegean, said Greece.³⁴

Ankara was attached to the non-encirclement of the Turkish coastline as a principle, but Athens was of the view that it could not be taken on board without damaging non-encroachment.³⁵ Gürün pointed out to both his Greek interlocutors that, in fact, the question of non-encroachment normally did not arise, since after all the sea above the continental shelf remained an open sea, to which Roussos retorted that encroachment also applied to the seabed.³⁶

The points of disagreement included the following: (1) Greece could agree to half effect or perhaps less in some cases, while Turkey preferred no effect at all for the eastern islands by its coastline; (2) the method to be used, with Turkey supportive of a negotiated agreement and Greece favouring adjudication; (3) the legal basis of a final solution, with Greece preferring existing international law and Turkey stressing the principle of equity, implying flexibility in the application of law; and (4) joint exploitation, favoured by Turkey but not by Greece.³⁷

Regarding the territorial sea (the 12 mile issue), the Turkish representative pointed out that the 'illegal ten miles' of Greek national airspace were seen as a stepping-stone for an eventual extension to 12 miles of the territorial waters.³⁸ The Greek representative reacted by arguing that Greece retained the right to extend its territorial sea up to 12 miles, a right that was to be codified in the forthcoming Convention on the Law of the Sea, yet Greece had shown restraint in view of Turkey's sensitivity on this issue.³⁹ The Turkish reaction was that the right to unilateral extension could only apply to states with open seas before them and not to instances of semi-closed seas, as in the case of the Aegean, in which another state had a huge coastline. Any extension on the part of Greece would be tantamount to 'strangling' Turkey.⁴⁰ The Greek side reiterated that Greece had no intention of renouncing of such a right, but added that Athens could contemplate an agreement on the matter, at a future date, at a higher level.⁴¹

The territorial sea resurfaced in the 1981 talks. Gürün acknowledged that for Turkey the main problem was the territorial sea, the fear of the 12 miles, though he admitted that Greece did have a right of extension. He made a subtle distinction between the existence of a right and its use. Greece could resign itself to making use of such a right without this amounting to an abandonment of a right, a practice followed by other countries in similar circumstances so as not to create difficulties with a neighbour. In any event, the issue could be resolved by bilateral agreement or perhaps by arbitration.⁴²

On the ten-mile Greek national airspace, the Turkish representative maintained that Ankara had first heard of this in late 1974, the reason being that Greece had concealed it in the 1930s; in any event, the disparity between territorial sea and national airspace was contrary to international law and the only such instance in the world. His Greek counterpart retorted that the 1931 extension had been widely known internationally since the 1930s and that from then on, given its unhindered use until 1974, it had evolved into a regional international custom. Moreover, ten miles were less than the 12 to which Greece could extend its territorial waters. Turkey's reaction was that ten or 12 miles were simply inapplicable in the circumstances in the Aegean and that the 'illegal ten miles' drastically limited the international airspace of the Aegean; so long as the ten miles remained in place, there could be no progress on the FIR issue, namely lifting the Turkish NOTAM of 1974. The Greek side said that a reduction from ten to six miles would be impossible for the Greek public to swallow, especially without substantial gains, concluding that the ten mile limit could be tackled at the endgame, as with the territorial sea, at the highest level.⁴³

The two sides briefly reverted to the subject of national airspace in their October 1980 meeting held in New York. Gürün told Theodoropoulos that Turkey had indeed been unaware of its existence before 1974, hence Ankara had not tacitly accepted this regime.⁴⁴ He then came out with a personal proposal of his own: Greece restricting its airspace to six miles but Turkey agreeing that its aircraft would not enter within ten miles.⁴⁵ At the March 1981 meeting in Ankara, the Turkish representative tried to raise the issue of restricting the airspace to six miles, but the Greek reaction was that the two foreign ministers had decided to address this issue exclusively among themselves.⁴⁶

Regarding the FIR, the initial issue was the withdrawal of Turkish NOTAM 714, but when this was finally withdrawn, in early 1980, a new conflict arose: the refusal of the Turkish military aircraft to submit flight plans to the 'Athinai FIR' (apparently until then they had submitted flight plans). The Greek side stressed that it did not regard its FIR responsibilities as sovereign rights or the FIR region as national airspace, but required the flight plans in order to be able to ensure the safety of civil aviation. The Turkish reply was that ICAO rules did not require the submission of such plans for state aircraft, such as military planes. Gürün stressed that the military (then in power in Turkey) 'do not want to submit plans to the political authorities of another country, for them it is a matter of principle'.⁴⁷ Turkey's aim was to open up as much of the Aegean airspace as possible, by abrogating danger zones, so as to provide ample space for military exercises. In March 1981, Greece agreed to abrogate three danger zones and Turkey two, and both sides pledged to reach an agreement between the civil aviation authorities on exchange of information on flights in corridors covered by the Athens and Istanbul FIRs.⁴⁸

Regarding demilitarisation, the two parties avoided the intricate legal dimension and focused on the real issue involved: the mutual threat factor. Theodoropoulos claimed that in the case of a Greek-Turkish war, the invasion and occupation of Greek islands was highly probable. Elekdağ's reaction was that this has never crossed his mind, that if Turkey chose to attack, they would be open to bombardment by Greek fighters and they would have been responsible for triggering such a mishap in the first place. The Turkish representative maintained that Turkey would gain nothing by grabbing a Greek island, while a Greek attack was more plausible, for it could bring military gains to the attacker. It was precisely for this reason that Turkey had set up the 4th Army in Izmir: to act as a deterrent against Greece. Theodoropoulos's reaction was that Greece had never contemplated a first strike against Turkey; that Greece had no

claims against Turkey that would give rise to an attack. In fact, a Turkish attack made more sense, given the fact that Ankara was seeking changes in the Aegean status quo as regards the continental shelf, the FIR and Greece's national airspace. However, both sides agreed that at the root of this problem was the total mutual lack of confidence, that Greece was sincerely fearful of a Turkish attack and Turkey of a Greek attack.⁴⁹

Elekdağ, expressing a personal thought as he put it, wondered whether the adoption of confidence-building measures (CBMs) could make Greece cut down its militarisation. For their part they could limit their 4th Army to a minimum and scuttle their landing craft, noting *en passant* that the 4th Army amounted to some 140,000 men. Theodoropoulos was quick to point out that such a course would benefit Turkey, as would the MBFR (Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction) talks then taking place in Vienna, which if successful were bound to benefit the Soviet bloc and not the West.⁵⁰ The Greek representative maintained that militarisation had taken place, among other reasons, in order to give a sense of security to the inhabitants of islands. The Turkish representative made the point that militarisation had taken place well before the creation of the 4th Army or the presence of the landing craft. Theodoropoulos admitted this, claiming that it had taken place following the Cyprus crisis in November 1967. Gürün added that the landing craft idea had arisen as a result of the Cyprus experience, adding that Turkey's defence planning in its western region was against Bulgaria and not against Greece.⁵¹

An alternative channel of communication

After the first two meetings of the secretary-generals and as the talks seemed to have lost their momentum, Karamanlis initiated an alternative channel of communication, which was to be secret and unofficial, something very unusual given the considerable formality of Greek-Turkish exchanges. Former ambassador Dimitris Kosmadopoulos, who was known for his personal rapport with Ecevit,⁵² was entrusted to pursue private meetings with the Turkish premier, with a view to breaking new ground. Ecevit agreed to follow this course. Three such informal meetings took place, the first at Ecevit's home in Ankara (19 October 1978), the second in Brussels (16 December 1978) and the third again at Ecevit's home (24–25 February 1979).⁵³

In the first meeting, Kosmadopoulos made it as clear as possible that Karamanlis was sincere in his desire to resolve the Aegean dispute, adding that Turkey should take advantage of his presence in power to settle the existing differences.⁵⁴ As had happened at Montreux with Karamanlis, Ecevit stressed the need for Greece to abandon the idea of

expanding its territorial waters, adding that the national airspace had to be harmonised with the territorial waters and not vice versa, as Greece had at times implied. According to Ecevit, Greece had taken advantage of Turkey's 'naiveté' in the 1950s to embark upon a 'methodical nibbling' of the Aegean to its benefit, for example, with the control and responsibilities under the FIR, which the Turks saw as a stepping-stone to eventual sovereignty in the whole of the Aegean, hence their sense of 'strangulation'.⁵⁵

The Turkish leader reiterated his Montreux proposal for a formal statement that Turkey would never infringe on the sovereignty of the eastern Greek islands, in exchange for Greece abandoning its right to extend its territorial waters, to which his interlocutor responded as Karamanlis had done at Montreux: that this was not a fair *quid pro quo*, since Greece's sovereignty over its islands was not in doubt.⁵⁶

Regarding the continental shelf, Ecevit favoured negotiations but also toyed with conciliation. Ankara, he argued, was not dogmatically opposed to adjudication, provided that both sides were well prepared for a process of adjudication, for it should not amount to a 'Russian roulette'.⁵⁷ The solution to be reached had to be equitable and just (both men agreed on this point). Ecevit accepted the principle of non-encroachment of the Greek islands provided there was adequate compensation within the Aegean. Within a wider settlement, no new straits should be created in the Aegean Sea. From the comment on straits, Kosmadopoulos drew the conclusion that Ecevit was mainly concerned with non-expansion in the eastern Greek islands, which may have implied that Turkey could live with some adjustments in other parts of the Aegean, though the Greek diplomat refrained from clarifying the point.⁵⁸ According to Ecevit, joint exploitation was probably unavoidable in some regions of the Aegean Sea.⁵⁹

Regarding the fortification of the Greek islands, Ecevit said that they were illegal and in fact useless, since Turkey was not threatening Greece. However, he could accept the fortifications as a gesture of goodwill and in order to meet Greece's 'security concerns'.⁶⁰

Above all, the Ecevit-Kosmadopoulos encounter provides us with a poignant imagery of the substance of the conflict. According to Ecevit, 'a double-edged Damoclean sword' loomed over the two countries and their peoples.⁶¹ The Turks lived with 'the nightmare of being strangulated if Greece extends its territorial waters', the spectre of the 'Greek lake', which led to 'a crisis of claustrophobia'. As for the Greeks, they detected 'a neo-Ottoman expansionism that threatens their sovereignty in the islands', which led them to a 'psychosis that the islands will

be snatched', hence the fortification of the islands.⁶² Both were in agreement that this was the crux of the Greek-Turkish entanglement in the Aegean and that if only these genuine fears were addressed forthwith, relations between the two countries could normalise and the outstanding issues could be settled.⁶³

Ecevit pondered whether a second summit meeting could do the trick, a thorough 'brainstorming en tête-à-tête' as he called it.⁶⁴ He also requested Karamanlis's view as to whether a meeting somewhere abroad with Andreas Papandreou would be worth pursuing. Nothing came of this latter suggestion.⁶⁵ On the last meeting (24–25 February 1979) Karamanlis sent a message to Ecevit, which Kosmadopoulos read out in English. The otherwise prudent Greek leader appeared optimistic regarding the ongoing Greek-Turkish dialogue, believing that it could achieve concrete results, and did not reject the possibility of a second summit meeting, though conveniently he did not go into details as to where and when this might happen.⁶⁶

An assessment of the Greek-Turkish dialogue

The dialogue of the period 1978–81 was unique in Greek-Turkish relations, comparable only to the dialogue on the Aegean more than two decades later in 2002–3 (see Chapter 10). Of course, no agreement was reached on any of the Aegean items, save for some aspects related to the FIR and the tacit agreement to shun away the concept of an EEZ. Thus, the dominant trend nowadays is to regard the talks as 'a dialogue of the deaf' or at best a dialogue for dialogue's sake to keep the channels of communication open.⁶⁷ In fact, the exercise was far more than that. For one, the two sides at a diplomatic-political level got to know the other's positions, their sticking points, underlying fears and possible trade-offs as never before, all of which would have been impossible without the exchanges.⁶⁸ The ongoing talks prevented friction getting out of hand and leading to a major crisis, as in August 1976. But most important of all, a number of basic parameters of a final settlement emerged. From the Montreux summit onwards, one can glean at least 12 tentative points of convergence (see Table II, p. 108).

The valuable knowledge and bonhomie that prevailed in the talks was largely lost soon afterwards (in spite of the existence of records of the talks in the respective secret archives), with all renewed attempts having to start almost from scratch.

The intense dialogue of this period raises at least two questions. Was it the intention of either side to reach a settlement on the

Table II Emerging principles on the settlement of the Aegean disputes (1978–81)

❖	On the continental shelf, recourse to the ICJ is the ultimate course to follow, but first substantial negotiations should take place that might settle the question as a whole or in part.
❖	The Turkish continental shelf should not interpose (enclave) Greek islands.
❖	The Greek continental shelf should not cover all of the Aegean eastwards, blocking the existing openings of Turkey in the open sea of the Aegean.
❖	The Greek islands from the mid-Aegean eastwards should have less than full effect, contrary to the mainland and islands to the west.
❖	The need to take into consideration the special circumstances prevailing in the Aegean Sea in order to arrive at a just (equitable) solution on the continental shelf.
❖	Greece will not unilaterally expand its territorial waters to 12 miles. Athens cannot officially and publicly abandon such a right, but this could perhaps be the case in the endgame, following an overall agreement in the Aegean conflict.
❖	Solutions in the Aegean should satisfy both sides, with due consideration to the fears and needs of each side.
❖	Under no circumstances will the freedom of navigation be impaired in the Aegean Sea.
❖	There is the need to harmonise airspace with the territorial waters.
❖	FIR responsibilities in no way imply sovereign rights; the need for flight plans from military aircraft is purely for the safety of civil aviation.
❖	The Athinai FIR will collaborate with the Istanbul FIR and will not unilaterally set up large corridors or otherwise curtail the airspace of the Aegean.
❖	EEZs would not be sought by the two states.

Aegean conflict? Or was it basically intended as window dressing for international audiences, for the EC in the Greek case and for the US in the Turkish case?

If the first assessment is nearer to the truth for both parties (or at least one of them), an obvious related question is how near were they to clinching a deal? According to the testimony of both Tzounis⁶⁹ and Bilge,⁷⁰ the two negotiators on the continental shelf, the two parties were not far from a deal on it, but the arrival of Andreas Papandreou destroyed everything that had been painstakingly built up to then.

In any event, if one of the parties was nearer to wanting a settlement, this was probably Greece, with a strong government and with Karamanlis at the helm, weary of Papandreou, who was bound to win the next elections and play havoc with Greek-Turkish relations. Karamanlis, a pragmatist and statesman who shunned populism and

emotionalism, sought to mend the Greek-Turkish fences in spite of the Cyprus imbroglio. Therefore, the Aegean dispute had to be tackled before it gained a life of its own, marring Greek-Turkish relations for decades. It is worth stressing, however, that the moderate line taken by Karamanlis was very much against the grain. The Greek public remained virulently anti-Turkish in the aftermath of the events in Cyprus of 1974. Only a leader of the calibre of Karamanlis could go ahead as far as he did, withstanding the constant accusations of this being a sell-out heaped upon him by the opposition, the press and public opinion, who were ready to pounce at the mere suggestion of talks, let alone of a meeting of minds with the enemy.

On the other hand, it is well established that Karamanlis's relative flexibility was due to the EC factor as well, to ensure Greek accession as smoothly as possible. This was something that had not passed unnoticed in Turkey.⁷¹ It was vital to show a spirit of dialogue and compromise so as not to give the impression of wanting to draw the EC as a party into the Greek-Turkish rivalry, be it on the Aegean or Cyprus. The Greek government also made it clear that when it became a member of the EC, it would not put obstacles in the way of an eventual Turkish application for accession.⁷²

The actual Turkish landscape is far more difficult to decipher for a variety of reasons. Turkey was constantly under weak and ephemeral coalition governments, with a tenuous parliamentary majority, often with the participation in government of the ultra-nationalist and anti-Greek MHP of Türkeş or the National Salvation Party (MSP) under Erbakan, which in those days appeared only slightly less virulent than the MHP. What could have saved Turkey from unstable governments would have been a coalition between the parties of Demirel and Ecevit, which were actually not that far apart ideologically. However, this was impossible due to the intense personal rivalry between the two leaders.⁷³

Among the two main political leaders of the time, sophisticated but fiery Ecevit was more forthcoming (at least when in government) and more able to grasp the details and essence of the Aegean conflict. But it is unclear whether he or the more down to earth Demirel could have pushed a compromise solution through if it came to that. Remember that whenever there was momentum, there was uproar that a sell-out was afoot by the very leaders who as prime ministers were more reasonable and conciliatory.

A second basic factor, the Turkish diplomatic establishment, seems to have been split between hard-liners and supporters of accommodation, with the former in their role of spoilers. For the

Turkish diplomats, bilateral talks on the Aegean in a cordial atmosphere were one thing, but they did not fail to notice that the Greek public remained almost on a war footing.

As for the third and least known factor in Turkish foreign policy, the military, they have been routinely regarded as hard-liners, as the *bête noire* in Greek-Turkish affairs. This is by and large a sound rule of thumb. On 12 September 1980, the military assumed power under the chief of the general staff, General Kenan Evren. All political parties were banned. From this coup onwards, the third of its kind in Turkish politics, the role of the military in foreign affairs became more pronounced, especially from the confines of the famous Council for National Security (half of its members were from the military until a few years ago). The top brass insisted on having considerable say when 'a national issue' (*milli dava*) was involved, such as Cyprus, the Aegean dispute or the Kurds, all of which triggered the famous 'Sèvres syndrome'.⁷⁴

This military factor was to have a long-term effect on Greek-Turkish relations, but at the time military rule did not seem to have a negative impact. Could one perhaps reach the opposite conclusion, that in 1980–1 the military were keen to get things done on the basis of reciprocity and arrive at a deal on the Aegean disputes?

When the military took over power in September 1980, Türkeş and other members of the MHP were arrested and kept in detention for several years. With the ultra-nationalists out of the picture, Greek-Turkish relations could move along with less turbulence.⁷⁵ What is clear is that in the one year of military rule before Papandreou took over power in Greece (September 1980–September 1981), Turkey did not appear to stall the Aegean talks. The talks continued smoothly by professional diplomats entrusted by the military. The secretary-general during the period that Turkey was under military rule had repeatedly reassured his Greek counterparts that the generals then in power meant business and were keen to resolve the Aegean dispute.⁷⁶ There were also several cordial meetings between the two foreign ministers, Mitsotakis and Türkmen, who was a seasoned diplomat and no hard-liner. At a meeting between the Greek secretary-general and the Turkish prime minister, retired admiral Bülent Ulusu, the admiral characterised the Aegean dispute as 'artificial' and said that the real problem was the lack of confidence between the two peoples, adding naively that the problems had been instilled by the Soviets and even by some NATO allies to further their interests. As for himself, he warmly supported reinstating the Greek-Turkish friendship of the old days.⁷⁷

If the above assessment regarding the military is not far from the truth, perhaps one of the motives of the generals (perhaps upon the

advice of the diplomats close to them at the time) may have been to ingratiate themselves with the West, so as to mellow the sting of their involvement in politics.

Notes

1. Mehmet Ali Birand (1979), *Diyet (Türkiye üzerine uluslararası pazarlıklar 1974–1980)* [Diet (Turkey's International Negotiations, 1974–1980)] (Istanbul: Milliyet), pp. 255–6.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
3. Constantinos Karamanlis (1992–7), *Archeio: Gekonota kai keimena* [Archives: Events and Texts], edited by Constantinos Svolopoulos (Athens: Ekdotiki Athinon) [henceforth *Karamanlis Archives*], vol. 10, pp. 91–2.
4. Karamanlis could understand the initial July 1974 Turkish military intervention given the Greek (junta) intervention to oust Makarios, but was furious with and deeply hurt by the second August Turkish operation (in which almost 37 per cent of the Cypriot territory was seized by the Turkish forces), an act that had taken place when he was in office and a legitimate government was back in place in Cyprus. Thus, he took the opportunity to ask Demirel (in Brussels) and Ecevit (at the Montreux meeting) why it had taken place. Demirel (who, it should be noted, had even been against the initial Turkish military intervention of July 1974) blamed it on the military, that the army could not remain immobile within a few square miles in Cyprus. Ecevit justified the Turkish assault by referring to the Greek Cypriot and Greek rejection of the cantonal federation plan proposed by Turkey at the Geneva five-party meeting (which was held between the first and second Turkish operations). Karamanlis seemed taken aback by this, for he seems to have been unaware of the plan in question. Incredible as it may seem, it could be that the then-foreign minister, Georgios Mavros, may not have properly informed him. See Birand, *op. cit.*, pp. 117, 276. See also references to the exchange between Ecevit and Karamanlis, by Ecevit in conversation with Kosmadopoulos, in *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 10, p. 379.
5. Carter told Karamanlis at their meeting in the Oval Office (31 May 1978) that the embargo was leading nowhere and had become increasingly counter-productive, with the Greek Cypriots in particular dragging their feet. See *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 10, p. 243.
6. Birand, *op. cit.*, pp. 258, 264, 267–9; *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 10, pp. 91–2; See also Bulent Ecevit (1984), 'Turkey's Security Policies', in Jonathan Alford (ed.), *Greece and Turkey: Adversity in Alliance* (London: Gower), p. 140.
7. Angelos Syrigos (1998), *The Status of the Aegean Sea According to International Law* (Athens and Brussels: Sakkoulas/Bruylant), p. 167.
8. There are two main sources regarding the talks: Birand's, gleaned from interviews with Turkish diplomats and politicians (see Birand, *op. cit.*, pp. 270–80) and the extended report of the meeting (probably written by Petros Moliviatis) produced in the *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 10, pp. 133–44.
9. *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 10, pp. 133–6.

10. Ibid., pp. 134, 136, 138–40.
11. Ibid., p. 138.
12. Ibid., p. 138.
13. Ibid., pp. 138–9.
14. Ibid., pp. 139, 140–1.
15. Ibid., pp. 138, 140–1.
16. Ibid., pp. 135–6, 138.
17. Ibid., p. 134.
18. Ibid., pp. 235–8.
19. Little was known about the talks until recently. For the last year of the talks (1980–1), the memoirs of ambassador Kâmurân Gürün cover all the meetings, but the book is only available in Turkish. See Kâmurân Gürün (1995), *Fırtınalı Yıllar: Dışişleri Müsteşarlığı Anıları* [Stormy Years: Memoirs as Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry] (Istanbul: Milliyet). As regards published documents, there are two sources: the *Karamanlis Archives* that refer occasionally to the talks on the basis of reports by Theodoropoulos; and the Greek foreign ministry's secret documents of these talks, which have been published, almost in their entirety, in Washington (in Greek) in 1992, by Lambros Papandoniου, a journalist, under the alarmist title *Hanoume to Aigaio* [We are Losing the Aegean]. The documents gleaned by Papandoniου, though intended to embarrass the New Democracy party as 'a traitor to the nation', are genuine. Several of the texts are to be found in the *Karamanlis Archives*, while others tally with Gürün's memoirs. To my knowledge, the archives published by Papandoniου have not been used until now in any research on Greek-Turkish relations. The archives of the Greek foreign ministry in question will henceforth be referred to by the acronym GFM.
20. Referred in minutes of the meeting of secretary-generals (New York, 3 October 1980), GFM, p. 179.
21. Document dated 20 September 1978, GFM, pp. 66–7.
22. Document dated 4 December 1980, GFM, pp. 205–6; document dated 5 December 1980, GFM, pp. 235–6; Gürün, op. cit., pp. 213–4.
23. See 'Instructions to Greek Representative', in *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 10, p. 273.
24. Ibid., pp. 273–4.
25. Document dated 7 July 1978, GFM, pp. 40–1; document dated 7 April 1979, GFM, p. 89; note on the 7th meeting (4–5 December 1980), GFM, p. 217.
26. Document dated 7 April 1979, GFM, p. 88.
27. Ibid.
28. Athens, 4th scheduled meeting, document of first session (9 July 1979), GFM, p. 101; document dated 31 October 1979, GFM, p. 128.
29. Document dated 7 July 1978, GFM, p. 41; document dated 10 February 1979, GFM, p. 73; document dated 7 April 1979, GFM, p. 87; document of first session (9 July 1979), GFM, pp. 100–2; Gürün, op. cit., p. 190.
30. Respectively at the Geneva meeting (5–6 April 1979) and the Strasbourg meeting (11 May 1979). See document dated 7 April 1979, GFM, p. 89; document on the meeting of the Secretary-Generals on 11 May 1979, GFM, p. 91. See also *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 11, p. 94.
31. Respectively at the London meeting (26–27 October 1979), the Vienna meeting (18–19 January 1980) and the 5th scheduled meeting held in

- Ankara (18–19 February 1980). See document dated 31 October 1979, GFM, p. 128; document dated 19 January 1980, GFM, pp. 131–3; document dated 12 February 1980, GFM, p. 144.
32. Note that foreign experts on the law of the sea have recently aired this idea as a starting point in the process of delimitation of the Aegean continental shelf case. Based on information of the author on the basis of non-attribution.
 33. Gürün, *op. cit.*, pp. 211, 275–6, 302; document on the 7th meeting (Athens, 4–5 December 1980), GFM, pp. 216–7; minutes of the 8th meeting (Ankara, 17 March 1981), GFM, pp. 291–2.
 34. Document dated 7 April 1979, GFM, pp. 87–8; document of first session of the 4th meeting (Athens), dated 9 July 1979, GFM, p. 102; minutes of the meeting of secretary-generals (New York, 3 October 1980), GFM, pp. 185–6; *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 10, p. 274 and vol. 11, pp. 93–94, 194.
 35. In the course of the 3rd scheduled meeting in Ankara (8–9 February 1979) and the Geneva meeting (April 1979); see *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 11, pp. 94, 194; document dated 7 April 1979, GFM, p. 87; document of the first session of the 4th meeting (Athens), dated 9 July 1979, GFM, p. 102.
 36. On the 7th Athens scheduled meeting, see Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 211. On the 8th Ankara scheduled meeting, see minutes of the meeting of 17 March 1981, GFM, p. 290.
 37. *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 10, p. 274 and vol. 11, pp. 93–94, 194; document dated 7 April 1979, GFM, p. 88; document of first session of the 4th meeting (Athens), dated 9 July 1979, GFM, p. 102; minutes of the meeting of secretary-generals (New York, 3 October 1980), GFM, pp. 185–7.
 38. Document dated 7 July 1978, GFM, p. 33.
 39. Document dated 20 September 1978, GFM, p. 53.
 40. *Ibid.*, pp. 53–4; document of the first session of the 4th meeting (Athens), dated 9 July 1979, GFM, p. 99.
 41. Document dated 20 September 1978, GFM, pp. 52–3; document dated 20 September 1978, p. 65; document of first session of the 4th meeting (Athens), dated 9 July 1979, GFM, p. 99.
 42. Document dated 22 September 1981 of minutes of the Athens meeting (7–8 September 1981), GFM, pp. 333–4.
 43. Document dated 7 July 1978, GFM, pp. 32–4; document dated 20 September 1978, GFM, pp. 52–3.
 44. Minutes of the meeting of secretary-generals (New York, 3 October 1980), GFM, p. 184; Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 195. In his previous book of memoirs, Gürün concedes that Turkey was aware of the extension in the 1930s, but Ankara did nothing about it due to the good relations existing at the time. See Kâmurân Gürün (1994), *Bükrës-Paris-Atina: Büyükelçilik Anıları* [Bucharest-Paris-Athens: The Memoirs of an Ambassador] (İstanbul: Milliyet), p. 356.
 45. Minutes of the meeting of secretary-generals (New York, 3 October 1980), GFM, p. 184. In his memoirs, Gürün makes no reference to such a suggestion on his part in his otherwise detailed presentation of the New York meeting.
 46. Summary of the minutes of 16 March 1981, GFM, p. 284.
 47. Document on the 7th meeting (Athens, 4–5 December 1980), GFM, p. 225.
 48. Document dated 7 July 1978, GFM, pp. 33–4; document of the first session of the 4th meeting (Athens), dated 9 July 1979, GFM, p. 103; document dated 22 January 1980, p. 149; minutes of the meeting of secretary-generals

- (New York, 3 October 1980), GFM, pp. 183–4; document dated 5 October 1980, pp. 198–9; document on the 7th meeting (Athens, 4–5 December 1980), GFM, pp. 211–25; telegram dated 27 March 1981, GFM, pp. 314–5; document dated 22 September 1981 on the minutes of the Athens meeting (7–8 September 1981), GFM, pp. 330–1.
49. Document date 20 September 1978, GFM, pp. 57–9.
 50. For the Strasbourg meeting, see the document on the meeting of secretary-generals (11 May 1979), GFM, p. 92.
 51. October 1980 meeting in New York, minutes of the meeting of secretary-generals (New York, 3 October 1980), GFM, pp. 187–90.
 52. This rapport is more than obvious in Kosmadopoulos's memoirs; see Dimitris Kosmadopoulos (1988), *Odoiporiko enos presvi stin Angyra, 1974–1976* [Travelogue of an Ambassador to Ankara, 1974–1976] (Athens: Euroekdotiki), pp. 29–31, 33, 56, 64, 98, 133–8, 141–4, 157, 182, 270–1. See also Birand, *op. cit.*, pp. 184–6.
 53. This unusual process was unknown until the publication of volumes 10 and 11 of the *Karamanlis Archives* in 1997.
 54. 'Kosmadopoulos report to the Prime Minister' (dated 25 October 1978), *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 10, p. 379. This point regarding Karamanlis is also made by Gürün in 1976; see Gürün, *op. cit.*, p. 453.
 55. *Karamanlis Archives*, vol. 10, pp. 380–1.
 56. *Ibid.*, p. 381.
 57. 'Kosmadopoulos report to the Prime Minister' (dated 16 December 1978), *ibid.*, p. 412; 'Kosmadopoulos report to the Prime Minister' (dated 27 February 1979), *ibid.*, vol. 11, pp. 55–6.
 58. *Ibid.*, vol. 11, p. 55.
 59. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
 60. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
 61. 'Kosmadopoulos report to the Prime Minister' (dated 25 October 1978), *ibid.*, vol. 10, p. 381.
 62. *Ibid.*, p. 381.
 63. *Ibid.*, p. 381.
 64. *Ibid.*, p. 382.
 65. *Ibid.*, p. 380. Kosmadopoulos informed Ecevit that Papandreou had rejected several attempts of the Turkish ambassador in Athens to meet him.
 66. *Ibid.*, vol. 11, pp. 57–8.
 67. Byron Theodoropoulos (1988), *Oi Tourkoi kai emeis* [The Turks and Us] (Athens: Fitrakis), p. 312; Gürün, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–90.
 68. Theodoropoulos, *op. cit.*, pp. 321–2.
 69. Interview of ambassador Tzounis with Huliaras, in Asteris C. Huliaras (1989), 'The Foreign Policy of the Greek Socialists (1981–1986): Forces of Continuity and Change', unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Hull, p. 80.
 70. A. Suat Bilge (1989), in 'Discussions' in *The Aegean Issues: Problems and Prospects* (Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute), p. 9.
 71. According to Bilge, the 'EEC demanded that Greece should not import its disputes with Turkey to the Community. Because of this necessity Greece continued to negotiate with Turkey'. See A. Suat Bilge (1989), 'The Situation in the Aegean', in *The Aegean Issues*, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

72. Susannah Verney (1994), 'Panacea or Plague: Greek Political Parties and Accession to the European Community, 1974–1979', unpublished doctoral dissertation, King's College, University of London, pp. 112–6, 138–9.
73. Feroz Ahmad (1993), *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge), pp. 160–80; Erik J. Zürcher (1993), *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris), pp. 274–6.
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75. Aurel Braun (1983), *Small-State Security in the Balkans* (London: Macmillan), p. 242.
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77. Telegram dated 18 March 1981, GFM, pp. 304–5.

8

Greek-Turkish Relations at the Nadir (October 1981–9)

The new setting

Greece in the throes of populism

The Aegean dialogue ended abruptly with the rise to power of Andreas Papandreou's PASOK following the Greek elections of 18 October 1981 (with 48 per cent of the vote and 172 seats out of 300).¹

For Papandreou, the first priority of Greek foreign policy was to address the 'Turkish threat', which he and his party regarded as immutable. Thus, antagonism towards Turkey became the top priority of Greek foreign policy. The perception of the threat from Turkey was not limited to the governing party but was overwhelming, covering all shades of opinion, as if the previous Greek-Turkish dialogue had never taken place.²

According to Papandreou's rhetoric, Greece had yet to attain true 'national sovereignty and independence'. Until PASOK's electoral victory, the country had been servile towards the US (in Papandreou's view, the 'capitalist and imperialist' power to blame for most of the ills of the world); pliant towards the EC (the 'European plutocrats'); and had followed a damaging policy of appeasement towards 'aggressive militaristic Turkey', the trusted ally of Washington in the region.³

Supporters of Papandreou and several people that came to know him intimately have pointed out that one should not judge him from his rhetoric but from his deeds when it came to important issues. For instance, he did not get Greece out of the EC or NATO, nor did he close down the US military bases. On the other hand, during his premiership relations with the US as well as with the EC – which was simply seen as a convenient cash cow – plummeted to their worst level, with Greece acting on several foreign policy issues almost as a member

of the Warsaw Pact. As for relations with Turkey, rhetoric and deed were one and the same, except for a period of eight months in the course of 1988.⁴ Moreover, during the Papandreou years, the Muslim-Turkish minority in Thrace suffered discrimination by the Greek state at an unprecedented level.⁵

On the Aegean front, Papandreou's strongly held belief since the 1970s was that negotiations were out of the question, as Greece was content with the existing status quo. In any negotiations between a status quo state and a revisionist state, the former is bound to lose, as the pressure is on the status quo party to make concessions so that agreement can be reached.⁶ This simplistic line (in fact the opposite usually applies: a *demandeur* in a negotiation is at a disadvantage) had the merit of being easily understood by the Greek public.

Upon taking over power, the PASOK government cancelled all scheduled diplomatic meetings with Turkey, though there was a modicum of communication (contacts between deputy foreign minister Yiannis Kapsis and the Turkish ambassador in Athens, Fahir Alaçam). In July 1982, agreement was reached on a mutual ban on aggressive statements, but it ran aground following an attempt by Turkey to begin a dialogue on Aegean matters, which Greece took as proof of Turkish revisionism. A year later, in April 1983, the two foreign ministers agreed on a moratorium on provocative actions, but this was shelved following a tussle over a NATO exercise in the Aegean. In November 1983, Denktash declared northern Cyprus as an independent state called the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus', an act that infuriated the Greek government. Papandreou perceived it as a calculated Turkish initiative, intended as a slap in the face of Greece (in fact this was not the case).⁷ Almost the next day, Greece adopted a new 'New Defensive Dogma', based wholly on the 'Turkish threat' and there was a steep rise in the procurement of arms.⁸

Thus, at the end of 1983, Greek-Turkish relations were at their lowest point since 1974. No one expected that changes in Turkey would bring a new leader in to office who would act as a *deus ex machina* in Greek-Turkish affairs.

Turkey's overtures and the Greek reaction

In Turkey, after more than three years of military rule, elections were allowed to take place with new political parties and without the participation of the previous political leaders. Turgut Özal, an unknown quantity, headed a centre-right party, the Motherland Party (ANAP: *Anavatan Partisi*) that won unexpectedly with 45 per cent of the

vote (6 November 1983), thrashing the favourite of the military, and surprisingly forming a one party government, an unusual development by Turkish standards. Although the generals were still vigilant, the charismatic Özal was gradually able to steer his own course and earn the confidence of the Turkish public.⁹

Özal, with a background in economics, appreciated the economic dimension in internal and external affairs. The new premier was determined to start a new page for Turkey and its place in the world. Özal's primary foreign policy goals were the very antithesis of what Papandreou had been pursuing. He strived for excellent relations with the US and the EC (the ultimate aim being accession) and was also keen to resolve the Greek-Turkish conflict. Ameliorating relations with Greece became a top priority in Turkish foreign policy, as it was seen as a prerequisite to approaching the EC. In this context, greater flexibility on the Cyprus problem was also sought.¹⁰

Özal chose not to treat Papandreou as a virulent nationalist and perhaps 'unbalanced leader',¹¹ as the Turkish military-diplomatic establishment did. On the contrary, he regarded Papandreou as a responsible leader who knew what he was doing and was genuinely, though mistakenly, fearful of Turkey's intentions. The key was to show to Papandreou and to the Greek public that Turkey harboured no expansionist plans and was equally fearful of the other side's machinations in the Aegean and beyond. At the same time, the deep-seated anti-Greek sentiment in Turkey had to be harnessed, for it served no purpose and harmed Turkey's prospects of joining the EC. Thus, Özal embarked upon an 'olive branch' approach towards Greece, taking a number of concrete measures between 1984 and 1986, such as the abolition of the entry visa for Greek citizens, positive measures for the Istanbul Greek minority who through the years had suffered as a result of Greek-Turkish rivalry (leading most of them to leave for Greece), as well as initiatives to enhance trade between the two countries, which was surprisingly low for neighbouring countries.¹²

Greece's initial reaction to these initiatives was one of utter disbelief. Papandreou's gut reaction was that Özal was a mere stooge of the generals and said so publicly. At the 1st Congress of PASOK (May 1984), Papandreou called the Turks 'chauvinists' and 'expansionists' and elaborated on the Turkish strategy: Ankara's immediate aim was to draw Athens into a dialogue; the next short-term aim was co-sovereignty in the Aegean airspace, the division of the continental shelf of the Aegean into two, the joint exploitation of the seabed and the demilitarisation of the Greek islands; in Cyprus 'the cycle of invasion and occupation' was

to be consolidated with the declaration of the 'pseudo-state', thereby establishing *de facto* partition; and the long-term goal was to question the sovereignty of the Greek islands and of Thrace.¹³

But Özal remained unperturbed, regarding such utterances as merely aimed at the Greek public. He stated that Turkey had no territorial claims against Greece and suggested putting the bilateral problems on ice or, alternatively, embarking on a dialogue. Yet Papandreou continued with his traditional tough line, now putting into effect the new Defence Dogma by (among other measures) transferring the Greek forces from the Bulgarian border to the border with Turkey. The tension was such, with the Aegean conflict very much in the minds of both sides, that even Özal came out with a harsh statement, to the effect that in the case of Greece extending its territorial waters to 12 miles, Turkey would 'take the necessary actions',¹⁴ apparently even implying the use of military means.¹⁵

PASOK was re-elected in 1985, though with a slimmer majority (2 June). The procurement of arms had been a heavy drain on the Greek economy and Papandreou came under strong pressure from Brussels and Washington to abandon his confrontational approach towards Turkey. It was then that, for the first time, Papandreou showed some signs of change, not ruling out the possibility of a meeting with Özal. Thus, an informal meeting between Papandreou and Özal was organised in utter secrecy, with the chairman of the Davos Economic Forum, Dr Klaus Schwab, acting as the host. It was to take place on 30 January 1986, but the news leaked to a Turkish newspaper. As a result, Papandreou cancelled the meeting, though apparently a brief chat did take place between the two leaders at Davos.¹⁶

Papandreou, realising that his intransigence was costly, set forth three preconditions for dialogue with Ankara (1986): the acceptance of the existing status quo in the Aegean; the Turkish army to leave Cyprus; and Turkey to denounce the 'pseudo state' of the Turkish Cypriots. Obviously these were non-starters for Ankara, though they were not intended as such by Athens. Towards the end of 1986, the Greek premier admitted that a dispute did exist in the Aegean, but that it concerned only the continental shelf, and made another major concession as he saw it by calling for recourse to the ICJ.¹⁷ The Turkish side hardly regarded all this as a change of tune. Moreover, Greece's continued policy against Turkey in international forums, now putting obstacles in the way of its attempt at an association agreement with the EC, did little to convince Ankara that Papandreou had somehow mellowed.¹⁸

With Özal's peace offensive towards Greece coming to naught, the Turkish military-diplomatic establishment reasserted itself, calling for

an end to tolerance towards Turkey's arch-enemy. The prevailing view in Turkey, which did not (and does not) regard itself as aggressive and expansionist towards Greece, is that Papandreou and PASOK had fabricated the 'Turkish threat' for domestic reasons, in order to remain in power and to extract more military and economic aid from the US.¹⁹ Another Turkish interpretation of Papandreou's posturing is that he held on to the Turkish threat idea when in power to justify going back on his word, namely for Greece to leave both NATO and the EC, by giving the impression that with such an 'aggressive neighbour', Greece could not afford to stand alone.²⁰

As the two sides were speaking at cross-purposes, with mutual misunderstanding and lack of confidence having reached astounding levels, the ground was fertile for a major crisis and, under the circumstances, it was surprising that it had not occurred earlier.

The March 1987 crisis and the day after

The second crisis over the Aegean dispute took place in March 1987. At its peak, the crisis lasted for a few days, bringing the two countries even closer to war than in August 1976.

According to the Greek reading of the situation, the crisis started on 19 March 1987, when the Turkish oceanographic vessel *Piri-Reis* entered the international waters of the Aegean, escorted by two warships, with the aim of conducting explorations on the 'Greek seabed'. The *déjà vu* could not have been more striking, as none other than *Sismik I* also entered the scene. Greece ordered partial mobilisation of its armed forces and put its navy on alert. Papandreou was convinced that this was a deliberate move on the part of Turkey intended to test him and usurp Greece's continental shelf, and that it had all been instigated by Washington and perhaps London to punish him for being a 'disobedient ally'. The situation called for action to safeguard Greece's vital national interests, if need be through the threat or use of limited armed violence. Papandreou even tried to gain the support of Bulgaria, but President Todor Jivkov kept at a safe distance.²¹

According to Turkey, the crisis could have erupted well before, for Greece had started exploring for oil, but Özal, in the hope of normalising Greek-Turkish relations, had prevented publication of this fact in the Turkish press.²² Let us see what had actually happened on the Greek side. When PASOK took power, the view had prevailed that the ban on exploration and drilling east of the island of Thassos – a ban following the November 1976 Berne Agreement – no longer held, since no talks

on the Aegean dispute were taking place.²³ But from 1982 onwards, Athens was embroiled in a legal tussle with the oil companies in an attempt to control their activities.²⁴ Under the circumstances, exploration or extraction was highly unlikely beyond the Greek territorial waters. On the other hand, the predominant view at the time was that most of the Aegean continental shelf was Greek anyway.²⁵

The matter came to a head on 18 February 1987 when Athens announced that it would buy shares of all the foreign companies active around Thassos, so as to hold the majority of shares, because 'the reserves in question were of particular strategic importance'.²⁶ This was followed by an announcement on the part of the representative of the major foreign company active in Thassos, the Canadian company Denison, that drilling was to take place eight miles to the east of Thassos, an announcement that infuriated the Greek government.²⁷

Turkey read the Denison statement as the true intentions of Greece and was duly alarmed. According to Ankara, the timing of the crisis was not unrelated to the fact that, at the time, Turkey was contemplating submitting its request for membership to the EC. As the temperature in Turkey reached great heights, the Turkish ambassador in Athens, Nazmi Akuman, tried to defuse the situation by gaining assurances from deputy foreign minister Kapsis that no activity beyond the six miles was envisaged. But in their meeting, the hawkish Kapsis reacted brusquely (27 February), insisting that 'when and where' drilling would take place was for Greece alone to decide, exercising its sovereign rights to the Aegean continental shelf. Akuman interpreted this to mean that the Greek government had bought the shares in order to be able to drill in the seabed beyond the Greek territorial sea.²⁸ The Turkish foreign ministry, after consulting with the General Staff, sent a note (1 March) warning Athens that if it started searching for oil in the continental shelf 'under dispute', an act that was contrary to the letter of the Berne Agreement of 1976, Turkey would react in kind. Greece did not back down and announced military exercises in the Aegean (19 March). It was then that the first oceanographic vessel was sent on its mission, followed by the second, and the Turkish armed forces were put on alert.²⁹

Turkey's reaction was exaggerated, but at the time no 'red phone' was in place and Özal was out of the country, in Houston, Texas, undergoing open heart surgery. Thus, it is more than certain that the Turkish reaction was the hard-liners' doing, who were dismissive of Özal's overtures towards Greece.³⁰

As emotions reached boiling point, the US, the UK and NATO intervened to defuse the crisis. Instrumental in this were Robert Keeley, the US

ambassador in Athens, Sir Geoffrey Howe, the British foreign minister, and Lord Carrington, the NATO Secretary-General. Howe and Carrington got in touch with Özal as he was returning to Ankara via London.³¹

On the Greek side, the most decisive act that defused the situation is little known. Yiannis Boutos, a former cabinet minister under the Karamanlis government, then an independent deputy and friend of Papandreou, got wind of the affair from a scheduled meeting with Akıman (with whom he was on good terms) that happened to coincide with the peak of the crisis. Boutos, after consulting with retired ambassador Theodoropoulos, rushed to Papandreou's house at Kastri and presented to him the facts of the situation. The Greek leader was dumbfounded,³² for apparently he was unaware of the Kapsis-Akıman exchange and the role of the former in bringing the crisis to a head.³³

Boutos contacted the Turkish ambassador on Papandreou's behalf, reassuring him that 'the Greek government did not want to buy the shares of the consortium in order to do research out of its territorial waters; on the contrary it wanted to stop the Canadian company from doing research east of Thasos'.³⁴ Akıman accepted this reassurance, which was also confirmed to him by Kapsis. He then phoned his prime minister in London. The crisis ended with a statement on the part of Özal (28 March 1987), where he made it clear – in his far from fluent English – that so long as Greece did not pursue drillings, Turkey would pull back its vessels.³⁵

The 1987 crisis, even more than that of 1976, was the outcome of a series of misunderstandings that would not have arisen had the two sides not been in the midst of a cold war. The positive side of this crisis was that, as in 1976, it acted as 'a catalyst'³⁶ for a brief thaw in Greek-Turkish relations.

Papandreou summoned the Turkish ambassador barely a day after the ending of the crisis and gave him a message for Özal, to the effect that such crisis situations should not occur again. Özal answered positively in record time. Apart from the shock of the recent crisis, the prompt Turkish response was also probably due to the upcoming Turkish request for membership to the EC (which came on 14 April 1987). There followed several such exchanges between the two leaders until early autumn 1987, which took the form of 'secret talking points' (with the Turkish ambassador in Athens and the Greek ambassador in Ankara as go-betweens). The talking points were unknown at the time in the two countries, save for a very small circle of confidants of the two leaders.³⁷

In these exchanges, Özal initially suggested negotiations on all the Aegean issues, while Papandreou stuck to the traditional Greek view of recourse to The Hague for the continental shelf. Papandreou suggested a moratorium on provocative actions and for talks to take place by ad hoc

ambassadors with the aim of leading to recourse to the ICJ. Özal agreed with the moratorium idea and accepted the talks at ambassadorial level, but also suggested a meeting of the two leaders at some point in the near future. He did not insist on tackling all the issues and agreed to take on the continental shelf. However, the Turkish leader argued that the continental shelf dispute was so complex that it was perhaps better to give negotiations a chance, for it might well be that the two parties could clinch a better deal between themselves. Papandreou suggested starting negotiations in order to examine whether an agreement was possible, with the use of legal means, such as adjudication and especially the ICJ, and accepted the idea of a meeting of the two leaders.³⁸

There followed a lull of some three months where almost no one knew what was going on.³⁹ The only exchange that saw the light of day was a message of congratulations by Papandreou to Özal upon his second electoral victory in the November 1987 elections, which would have been unthinkable for Özal's first electoral victory.⁴⁰ Then out of the blue, in early December 1987, it was announced that the two leaders were to meet at Davos, Switzerland in late January 1988, on the occasion of their participation at the World Economic Forum. In Greece, the impression was created that Papandreou would be able to extract from his Turkish counterpart a *compromis* for the ICJ and also discuss the delicate matter of the missing people in Cyprus.⁴¹ The meeting also raised hopes among the members of the Muslim-Turkish minority in Greece that their plight would also be addressed (days before the Davos meeting, there had been a crackdown by the Greek police on a demonstration in Thrace, leading to several wounded members of the minority).⁴²

The spirit of Davos

Papandreou and Özal met informally *à deux* at Davos (30–31 January 1988). What really transpired between them will probably never be known, as the two have left no written testimony and were sparing in their statements, but apparently the chemistry was right and they hit it off well. Papandreou seems to have realised that Özal was sincere in his claim that Turkey harboured no expansionist designs and that he was serious in his desire for good neighbourly relations. Perhaps what did the trick was the Cyprus question, with Özal making it as clear as possible to Papandreou that Ankara had not been behind the 1983 declaration of independence and that he was furious when he had heard of it.⁴³ Özal was also careful not to raise the question of the Turkish minority,⁴⁴ something that must have gone down well with

Papandreou. Of course, this personal rapport and the 'spirit of Davos', as it came to be known, were completely out of tune with the reigning mood in both countries, particularly in Greece.

The Davos Communiqué, hurriedly written in clumsy English, was a milestone for its time. It stated that events such as the crisis of March 1987 were never to be repeated and that the two sides should put their emphasis on developing 'permanent peaceful relations'. Two committees were created: one on economic cooperation (trade, tourism, joint economic ventures, communications and cultural exchanges) that came to be known as the Economic Committee; and the other aimed at defining the problematic areas in order to eventually arrive at permanent solutions, which came to be known as the Political Committee. The two leaders were to personally supervise the work of the two Committees. They also agreed to encourage contacts between Greek and Turkish politicians, military, journalists and businessmen, and create 'a Greek-Turkish Business Council'. They decided to install a direct red telephone line between them and meet at least once a year. Moreover, they went as far as admitting that in their societies, intransigent views had been entrenched regarding the problems existing between Greece and Turkey and this was also a feature of school books, implying that something had to be done about it (this was revolutionary stuff by the standards of the time).⁴⁵

Papandreou was reticent upon returning from Davos. His main thrust was that 'no problem had been resolved', but that 'a no war situation' had been established (as if a war situation had existed before). However, he stated that Özal was sincere in wanting to ameliorate relations with Greece. PASOK and the vast majority in Greece were speechless; clearly they were behind the times, attached to the old Papandreou. A major mistake on the part of Papandreou was that he had not bothered to prepare the groundwork for the new switch of policy within his party or in the foreign ministry, both of which came out decidedly against the venture. Özal was more ebullient upon his return from Davos and faced less adverse reaction. However, the military-diplomatic establishment, which, as in the Greek case, had not been consulted, was uneasy with the new situation. Nevertheless, Turkish analysts and diplomats, who were aware of the link between good relations with Greece and future entry into the EC, were supportive.⁴⁶

The two prime ministers met for a second time in Brussels, on the margins of a NATO summit (3–4 March 1988). In their joint communiqué, they reiterated what they called 'the spirit of Davos'; they agreed that the two sides needed to discuss military exercises and flights of military aircraft; that the Political Committee was to meet in Athens within the

month; and that as regards the humanitarian issue of the missing people in Cyprus, the relevant committee in the island had to be reactivated. Özal promised to take measures to reinstate the rights of the Greek citizens who had left Istanbul in the 1950s and 1960s. Papandreou for his part abandoned the Greek veto to Turkey's association agreement with the EC and invited Özal for an official visit to Athens in June.⁴⁷

The Political Committee convened at the plush Athens seaside suburb of Vouliagmeni (24–26 March) but made little headway. The only tangible outcome of the spirit of Davos was the signing by foreign ministers Karolos Papoulias and Mesut Yılmaz of a Memorandum of Understanding on Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) on 27 May 1988. It was agreed that: 'In conducting national military exercises in the high seas and international airspace, the two parties shall endeavour to avoid interfering with smooth shipping and air traffic ... [and] avoid also to the maximum extent possible the following: (a) the isolation of certain areas, (b) the blocking of exercise areas for long periods of time, (c) their conduct during the peak period (1 July–1 September 1988) and main national and religious holidays.'⁴⁸

Özal's official visit to Athens took place on 13–15 June 1988. It had been some 35 years since the previous visit of a Turkish premier or president. Özal was accompanied by 170 people, most of them industrialists, but nothing came of the visit, though the two prime ministers continued to be on good personal terms. The general mood in Greece was hostile and there were several harsh statements by Greek officials, including the Greek president, a former judge.⁴⁹

The second meeting of the Political Committee, held in Ankara (5–8 September 1988), was to be the swan song of the Davos process. The two parties agreed that the dialogue would continue, but it was more than obvious that they were speaking a different language, with Greece returning to its call for a *compromis* for the ICJ and Turkey pushing for talks on all the outstanding Aegean issues. In spite of the bad atmosphere, the two sides adopted a document of 'Guidelines for the Prevention of Accidents and Incidents on the High Seas and International Airspace'. This included the following points: to 'refrain from acts of harassment of each other while operating in the high seas'; 'naval units engaged in the surveillance of ships of the other party during firing operations and other military activities ... would not hamper their smooth conduct'; and 'aircraft of the parties shall display utmost caution when in proximity of aircraft of the other party and shall not manoeuvre or react in a manner that would be hazardous to the safety or flight and/or affect the conduct of the mission of the aircraft'.⁵⁰

In the meantime, Papandreou was under considerable pressure, not least from his own party, to abandon the spirit of Davos.⁵¹ Thus, by autumn 1988, Papandreou caved in, stating that Davos had been a mistake and taking the blame for it, '*mea culpa*' as he famously put it. For good measure he reverted to his previous policy of setting obstacles in the path of Turkey's relations with the EC.

An assessment and the Greek enigma

Irrespective of its end result, Davos remains a landmark in Greek-Turkish relations⁵² and a prelude of what was to come 11 years later, in 1999, not least with its emphasis on low politics. As it has been aptly put, 'Davos offered a ray of hope, if not in resolving the substantive issues, at least in piercing through the thick cloud of suspicion that separates the two countries'.⁵³ And for a while, well after the spirit of Davos was dead, there was an attempt at reducing tension and exercising self-restraint by both sides.

For most of the 1980s, Greek-Turkish relations were dominated, as we have seen, by Andreas Papandreou and Turgut Özal, both of them charismatic and immensely popular until the end of 1988. Their inability to render the spirit of Davos permanent is a clear example that personality and top leadership was not sufficient to put national 'groupthink' at rest on important national issues. Özal had to face the hostility of a large part of the military-diplomatic establishment as well as of the formidable Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktash (independently or in collusion with the Ankara establishment). But if Papandreou had stood his ground, Özal may have pushed it through and a Greek-Turkish détente may have been in place, sparing both sides yet another decade of senseless and costly cold war. Given Özal's clear stance, the enigma is Greece under Papandreou, the *dramatis persona* whose spectre still haunts Greek-Turkish relations.

One explanation for Papandreou's overall stance is that he sincerely believed in the Turkish threat, as did almost every Greek. Thus, even if he had been swayed for a while by Özal's bonhomie and sincerity, he returned to his perception that Turkey was a threat, a view he had held since his return to Greece in 1974 and with which he felt more at ease psychologically (cognitive consistency).

Another possibility is that Papandreou may have grasped that Turkey was not expansionist towards Greece. Canadian political scientist Tojun Bahcheli, in his careful book on Greek-Turkish relations, refers to a dialogue that took place between Papandreou and US officials as early as

1976, where Papandreou presumably said: 'I may not believe in a Turkish threat, you may not believe in a Turkish threat, but the Greek public believes in it, and that makes it Greek reality and you have to deal with it in those terms'.⁵⁴ Could it be that Papandreou's anti-Turkish posturing was not sincere from the start, but was treated by the cunning politician as a convenient asset to assure his dominance in Greek politics?⁵⁵

There is an astounding episode recounted by the Turkish ambassador in Athens, Fahir Alaçam, which, if accurate, makes the Papandreou enigma even more baffling and difficult to unravel. According to Alaçam, Papandreou summoned him less than two weeks after his electoral victory. A secret meeting took place (30 October 1981) lasting for several hours. Papandreou started by saying that many of his pre-election statements may have dismayed the Turkish leaders, but his sincere desire was 'for the resolution of all the problems and the establishment of very close relations between the two countries'.⁵⁶ He voiced a lack of satisfaction with the Greek-Turkish talks up to that point and suggested another format, starting with informal contacts between the Greek foreign minister and the Turkish ambassador. He requested the Turkish government's views on this proposal and their positions on the bilateral matters. He admitted that in recent years a *détente* was in place, but that the ongoing dialogue was far from satisfactory. His strong desire, he said, was 'to upgrade relations at the highest possible level', adding that this was 'no propaganda' on his part, but his 'true belief'. Indeed, a return to the days of the Venizelos-Kemal friendship, he added, was one of his 'primary aims'.⁵⁷

The Turkish ambassador (who no doubt could not believe his ears) reacted saying that Turkey had been consistently very supportive of ameliorating relations and resolving the outstanding problems through dialogue. Ankara, after hurried consultations, reacted positively to Papandreou's overtures, but posited that the talks should be known publicly so as to give impetus to a change of climate between the public in Greece and in Turkey. Papandreou seemed prepared to go along with this and expressed satisfaction that Turkey, as he put it, reciprocated his 'olive branch' approach. He added that his forthcoming speech to the Greek parliament as premier (the speech announcing the government's programme) would please Turkey. Needless to say, Papandreou's statement regarding Turkey in his maiden speech as prime minister in parliament was by no means different from his usual anti-Turkish diatribes.⁵⁸

If Papandreou was not simply playing games with Turkey and was sincere in wanting to bury the hatchet, perhaps his otherwise inexcusable behaviour was due to his conviction that the torrent of anti-Turkish

feelings in Greece (with him as one of its main spokesmen) could not be handled.⁵⁹ Upon taking power and even in the days of the spirit of Davos, he probably felt that pursuing such a course was suicidal and Papandreou was hardly the suicide-prone type.

Yet from 1981 until the end of 1988, Papandreou was at the peak of his power and prestige, both in his party and in Greece as a whole. With his huge popularity and impeccable patriotic credentials, had he tried hard (which he did not), he may possibly have convinced the Greek public or at least a critical mass (intellectuals, industrialists and so on) that it was time for a great historical compromise, as had occurred in the 1930s. He could then have gone down in history as another de Gaulle, Sadat or Rabin (although note that the latter two were assassinated as 'traitors' and the first narrowly escaped an assassin's bullet).

With such power and popularity, why did Papandreou not become a Rabin? Specialists on the Papandreou phenomenon provide the following answer: that Papandreou, though all-power in those days, felt he had little leeway, that he was immobilised on the Turkish front, due to three factors, all of them domestic, which he took very seriously. One was PASOK's line against any compromise with Turkey, a view strongly held by the powerful left wing of his party, to which Papandreou remained attached as a 'true socialist', as he styled himself (and no mere social democrat). Second was the Greek communist party (KKE), which was against the US, NATO and the EC and very much opposed to Turkey ('the agent of the American imperialists'). Strange as it may seem to us today, Papandreou took KKE very seriously, at a time when PASOK was bent on stealing the communists' thunder on a number of questions, not least on international issues. Third was Papandreou's somewhat irrational fear of the Greek army and of its intentions, given his vivid memories of the Greek military dictatorship (this was one reason why he held on to the defence portfolio throughout his first term in office, as if Greece were at war). The Greek top brass was staunchly opposed to any reconciliation with the 'traditional enemy', no doubt still feeling the sting of the events in Cyprus in 1974, of not having been able to halt 'Attila'.⁶⁰

Notes

1. Tozun Bahcheli (1990), *Greek-Turkish Relations since 1955* (Boulder: Westview), p. 153.
2. Christos L. Rozakis (1989), 'Oi ellinoturkikes scheseis: i nomiki diastasi' [Greek-Turkish Relations: The Legal Dimension], in D. Constanas and

- Ch. Tsardanidis (eds), *Synchroni elliniki exoteriki politiki* [Contemporary Greek Foreign Policy] (Athens: Sakkoulas), p. 30; Yiannis Valinakis (1989), *Eisagogi stin elliniki exoteriki politiki* [Introduction to Greek Foreign Policy] (Thessaloniki: Paratiritis), p. 214; Asteris C. Huliaras (1989), 'The Foreign Policy of the Greek Socialists (1981–1986): Forces of Continuity and Change', unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Hull, pp. 79–89, 95–6; Richard Clogg (1991), 'Greek-Turkish Relations in the Post-1974 Period', in Dimitri Conostas (ed.), *The Greek-Turkish Conflict in the 1990s* (London: Macmillan), p. 18; Ronald Meinardus (1991), 'Third-Party Involvement in Greek-Turkish Disputes', in Conostas (ed.), op. cit., p. 159.
3. Huliaras, op. cit., pp. 79–89.
 4. Huliaras, op. cit., pp. 291–5; John C. Loulis (1984–85), 'Papandreou's Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs* (Winter), pp. 375, 381–3, 387–9; Stephen Larrabee (1981–82), 'Dateline Athens: Greece for the Greeks', *Foreign Policy*, 45 (Winter), pp. 161–2.
 5. Alexis Heraclides (2001), *I Ellada kai o 'ex anatolon kindinos'* [Greece and the 'Danger from the East'] (Athens: Polis), pp. 309–12, also published in Turkish as *Yunanistan ve 'Doğu'dan Gelen Tehlike' Türkiye* (Istanbul: İletişim), pp. 302–4; Melek Firat (2001), 'Yunanistan'la İlişkiler' [Relations with Greece], in Baskin Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası (Cilt II, 1980–2001)* [Turkish Foreign Policy (vol. II, 1989–2001)] (Istanbul: İletişim), p. 106.
 6. Rozakis, op. cit., p. 30; Valinakis, op. cit., p. 214; Huliaras, op. cit., pp. 79–80; Clogg, op. cit., p. 18; Van Coufoudakis (1991), 'Greek Political Party Attitudes towards Turkey: 1974–89', in Conostas (ed.), op. cit., p. 47. See also the autobiographical account of Costas Simitis, Papandreou's successor as prime minister, in Costas Simitis (2005), *Politiki gia mia dimiourgiki Ellada, 1996–2004* [Politics for a Creative Greece, 1996–2004] (Athens: Polis), pp. 56–57.
 7. The declaration of independence of Northern Cyprus had been Denktash's doing and on this he had been able to convince the reluctant military of Turkey then still in power, who went along with it grudgingly. Özal for his part was very unhappy with the declaration, but could do nothing about it, as he had not yet formed a government. See Firat, op. cit., pp. 107–8.
 8. Valinakis, op. cit., pp. 213–15; Huliaras, op. cit., pp. 80–1; Clogg, op. cit., p. 18.
 9. Eric J. Zürcher (1993), *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris), pp. 296–7. For the Motherland Party and its leader, see Üstün Ergüder (1991), 'The Motherland Party, 1983–1989', in Metin Heper and Jacob M. Landau (eds), *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris), pp. 152–69.
 10. Mehmet Ali Birand (1991), 'Turkey and the "Davos Process": Experiences and Prospects', in Conostas (ed.), op. cit., pp. 28–9; Heinz Kramer (1991), 'Turkey's Relations with Greece: Motives and Interests', in Conostas (ed.), op. cit., pp. 65–6; Firat, op. cit., pp. 102, 109; William Hale (2002), *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774–2000* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), pp. 66–7, 178–9.
 11. Birand, op. cit., p. 30.
 12. Birand, op. cit., pp. 30–1; Kramer, op. cit., pp. 66–7.
 13. Huliaras, op. cit., p. 88.
 14. Yücel Acer (2003), *The Aegean Maritime Disputes and International Law* (Aldershot: Ashgate), p. 31, footnote 181.

15. Firat, op. cit., p. 111.
16. Interestingly, this meeting is mentioned only in the Turkish bibliography. See for example Firat, op. cit., p. 112.
17. Valinakis, op. cit., p. 215; Rozakis, op. cit., p. 31.
18. It is worth noting that only Greek authors refer to these Papandreou initiatives and treat them as shows of moderation.
19. Bahcheli, op. cit., pp. 153–4, 157.
20. Firat, op. cit., pp. 105, 111. Note that this and the previous explanation are not entertained in the Greek bibliography.
21. For a scholarly presentation based on a series of interviews, see Eugenia Vathakou (2003), 'International Crisis and Peace Processes as Autopoietic Systems in World Society: Examples from Greek-Turkish Relations', unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Kent at Canterbury, pp. 200–22. For a blunt and biased Greek presentation, see the memoirs of Kapsis, in Yiannis Kapsis (1990), *3 meres tou Marti* [3 Days of March] (Athens: Livanis).
22. Firat, op. cit., p. 113.
23. Anastasis Peponis (2008), *Gia to zitima tou Aigaïou* [On the Aegean Issue] (Athens: Livanis), pp. 33, 43–7.
24. Ibid., pp. 48–71.
25. Based on the author's interviews with ambassador Costas Zepos, who then headed the Turkish department of the Greek foreign ministry.
26. Peponis, op. cit., p. 74.
27. Peponis, op. cit., p. 79.
28. Vathakou, op. cit., p. 221.
29. Firat, op. cit., p. 113.
30. Firat, op. cit., p. 113.
31. Vathakou, op. cit., pp. 223–6.
32. Papandreou's reaction upon listening to Boutos's side of the story was the following: 'I'll be damned! This [unmentionable word] Kapsis, will take us to war on the continental shelf?' In Vathakou, op. cit., p. 222. The outburst in question is confirmed by Boutos's son, diplomat Pericles Boutos, who was kind enough to read to me extracts from his late father's forthcoming memoirs.
33. Boutos to Vathakou, op. cit., pp. 221–2. Also confirmed by Boutos's son to the author.
34. Boutos quoted in Vathakou, op. cit., p. 222.
35. Vathakou, op. cit., p. 222.
36. Bahcheli, op. cit., p. 158.
37. The talking points saw the light of day (and created an uproar in Greece) when they were published in full in late 1989 in the Greek satirical weekly, *To Pontiki* [The Mouse]. See *To Pontiki*, 27 October 1989, p. 22; and 3 November 1989, p. 11.
38. See previous note.
39. Kapsis, op. cit., p. 116.
40. Firat, op. cit., p. 114.
41. See reports in the Greek quality daily *To Vima* (24 January 1988 and 31 January 1988).
42. Firat, op. cit., p. 116–17.
43. Based on information from journalists close to Papandreou at the time.

44. First, op. cit., p. 117.
45. Davos Communiqué in Kapsis, op. cit., pp. 317–18. See also Angelos Syrigos (1998), *The Status of the Aegean Sea According to International Law* (Athens-Brussels: Sakkoulas, Bruylant), pp. 256–9; Firat, op. cit., p. 115.
46. Syrigos, op. cit., pp. 257–9; Firat, op. cit., p. 115; Thanos Veremis (2005), *Istoria ton ellinotourkikon scheseon, 1453–2005* [History of Greek-Turkish Relations, 1453–2005] (Athens: I. Sideris), p. 205.
47. Syrigos, op. cit., pp. 259–61; Firat, op. cit., p. 115–16.
48. Quoted in Syrigos, op. cit., p. 262.
49. Syrigos, op. cit., p. 262–3; Firat, op. cit., p. 115.
50. Syrigos, op. cit., pp. 264–6; Veremis, op. cit., pp. 206–7.
51. Three ambassadors resigned, including the influential hard-liner Mihalis Dountas; and the two hawkish deputy foreign ministers, Kapsis and Pangalos, did their utmost to derail the Davos process and persuade Papandreou to go back to his traditional anti-Turkish line.
52. Valinakis, op. cit., p. 216; Duygu Sezer (1991), 'The Strategic Matrix of SEM: A Turkish Perspective', in Constan (ed.), op. cit., pp. 119–20.
53. Sezer, op. cit., pp. 119–20.
54. Quoted in Bahcheli, op. cit., p. 154.
55. Aurel Braun (1983), *Small-State Security in the Balkans* (London: Macmillan), p. 243.
56. Alaçam's report as produced in summary in the memoirs of ambassador Kâmurân Gürün (1995), *Fırtınalı Yıllar: Dışişleri Müsteşarlığı Anıları* [Stormy Years: Memoirs as Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry] (Istanbul: Milliyet), p. 361.
57. Ibid., pp. 361–2.
58. Ibid., pp. 363–6.
59. Alaçam had the nerve to insist that, given his interlocutor's well-known statements that were highly critical of Turkey, would not a change of tune be difficult to get across to the Greek public? The ambassador added that Papandreou wielded a strong majority and the opposition (the New Democracy party) could be counted on not to be averse to ameliorating relations. Papandreou's reaction was 'I agree with your assessment'. In Gürün, op. cit., p. 362.
60. Loulis, op. cit., pp. 380–2; Larrabee, op. cit., pp. 168–70; Huliaras, op. cit., pp. 232, 238–51, 261–72, 276–81. Also based on discussions with a leading PASOK specialist, Professor Christos Lyrintzis.

9

In the Doldrums (1990–February 1999)

From a standstill to traditional antagonism

With the spirit of Davos dead, Greek-Turkish relations ‘returned to their depressingly familiar situation of mutually suspicious stand-off’.¹

In 1989, Greece underwent a major political crisis, with Papandreou an invalid (following open heart surgery in London) and his government falling amidst a major bank scandal. In April 1990, the New Democracy party won the Greek elections, with a handsome vote but a marginal majority, which limited the government’s room for manoeuvre on important foreign policy issues. The new prime minister, Constantinos Mitsotakis, a veteran politician and Papandreou’s implacable foe since the mid-1960s, was an advocate of good neighbourly relations with Turkey,² but was unable to put the spirit of Davos back on track, mainly because Greece had become embroiled in the Macedonian conflict (the Athens-Skopje clash over the name ‘Macedonia’, which the former has regarded ever since as imbued with irredentism against Greece’s Macedonian region).³ Moreover, the Greek premier was of the view that only with the resolution of the Cyprus problem could there be Greek-Turkish reconciliation,⁴ but by clinging to such a tall order (and an unrealistic one at that), his prospects were limited. Surprisingly, even when Özal made concrete proposals for the return of territory to the Greek Cypriots and a federal solution, Mitsotakis was not forthcoming.⁵

On the Turkish side, several developments were not conducive to rekindling the spirit of Davos. To begin with, the EU rebuff in December 1989 of Turkey’s application for membership put Greek-Turkish affairs low on the list of Turkish priorities. With the EU ‘carrot’ out of the picture, there was little incentive to mend fences with Greece. Furthermore, there was the diminished influence and popularity of

Özal, particularly as a result of economic failures (an inability to curb inflation). When Özal succeeded Kenan Evren as president, he was obliged constitutionally to break all links with his party and have little say in everyday foreign policy, though he continued to control his party behind the scenes for a while by placing the incompetent Yıldıırım Akbulut (instead of his former foreign minister, Yılmaz) as party head and prime minister. Yılmaz took over in June 1991 only to lose the October 1991 elections. Then Özal's main rival, Demirel, head of the True Path Party (DYP), formed a coalition government with Erdal İnönü's Social Democratic Populist Party (SPP).⁶

Despite the unfavourable circumstances, there were high level meetings from 1990 until 1993. Mitsotakis met Akbulut (6 July 1990) and argued that the resolution of the Cyprus conflict should come before broaching the Aegean dispute; his Turkish counterpart put it the other way round.⁷ Upon taking over, Mesut Yılmaz sent a letter to Mitsotakis suggesting the opening of a dialogue.⁸ As a result, a summit meeting was held in Paris (11 September 1991), which apparently went smoothly. But the day after was a cause of embarrassment to the Greek premier, for Yılmaz claimed that Mitsotakis had been prepared to go ahead with negotiations to resolve the continental shelf issue. The Greek prime minister vehemently denied having done so, but could not avoid the smear of the opposition (Andreas Papandreou) and the media that he was selling out on vital national issues.⁹

A third summit meeting worth referring to is the one between Demirel and Mitsotakis at Davos (1 February 1992), sometimes known, misleadingly, as 'Davos II'. In the joint communiqué there is talk of drafting a friendship and cooperation agreement; a proposal for Greece, though not a Black Sea country, to join the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) project; and the need for both sides to assist in finding a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem. There was no follow up to the friendship agreement.¹⁰

In Turkey, the untimely death of Özal in 1993 was to lead to a protracted period of political instability, with short-lived governments and the hard-liner generals in the ascendancy, having a considerable say on security issues and foreign policy.¹¹

In Greece, the rise to power of Andreas Papandreou, following electoral victory in October 1993, was yet another blow to the idea of mending Greek-Turkish fences. In what was vintage Papandreou, he declared a 'Common Defence Dogma' with the Republic of Cyprus. Turkey was alarmed at a time when PASOK's sympathy for the Kurds (and not least for the lethal PKK) was no secret. Moreover, when the UN

Convention on the Law of the Sea was put into force (November 1994), Greece stated that it would extend its territorial waters to 12 miles at an opportune moment. At the time, the only ray of hope was a meeting between foreign ministers Karolos Papoulias and Hikmet Çetin in Turkey (June 1994) in which, apparently, the 12 mile issue was put aside and emphasis was placed on avoiding tension.¹²

By the mid-1990s, Greek-Turkish relations were in the doldrums and, as a cynic would say, the situation was ripe for a major crisis that could jolt the two sides.

The Imia/Kardak crisis

The third crisis over the Aegean was the worst of its kind since 1975, with the two sides coming even closer to blows. This time a clash would not have been limited to a few incidents; in all probability, it would have led to a major encounter involving the two navies. In this case, as in the previous ones (August 1976 and March 1988), neither side wanted the crisis to occur, nor was it part of a power politics strategy or brinkmanship for gains in the Aegean dispute, as some Greek and Turkish analysts have wrongly surmised.¹³ Routine events got out of hand due to the irresponsible stance of the media and press, in what could have been the first media-triggered war in history. The crisis could not have come at a worse moment, for both countries were under new governments and fresh prime ministers: Costas Simitis in Greece (who had taken office a few days before Papandreou's death) and Tansu Çiller in Turkey, heading a government that had not secured a vote of confidence.

The crisis erupted on 24 January 1996, but things had been set in motion a month earlier, a day after Christmas 1995. On 26 December, *Figen Akat*, a Turkish bulk carrier, ran aground on one of two islets known in Turkey as Kardak and in Greece as Imia. The Turkish captain refused assistance from the Greeks on the grounds that the ship was within the limits of Turkey. On 29 December, Turkey sent a *note verbale* to the Greek embassy in Ankara, asserting that the 'Kardak rock' was part of Turkish territory. The Greek reaction was that this was not the case and referred to an 1932 agreement between Italy and Turkey, where the latter recognised the 'Imia islets' as part of the Italian Dodecanese Islands.

The whole incident would have remained within bounds, at the diplomatic level, had it not leaked to the Greek private TV channel *Antenna*, which made of it a headline issue, presenting it as 'Turkish

provocation' against Greek sovereign territory. Upon hearing the news, the mayor of the island of Kalimnos (some five miles away from the islets), together with a priest and some others, rushed to one of the two islets and raised the Greek flag. The Turkish daily *Hurriyet* (with the widest circulation in Turkey) ran the story on its front page together with a picture of the raising of the Greek flag, predictably presenting it as a 'provocative act' by the Greeks in what was Turkish soil. Several hours later, journalists from *Hurriyet* replaced the Greek flag with the Turkish one. The crisis became more severe when the head of the Greek armed forces, Admiral Christos Limberis (upon his own initiative or following instructions from the minister of defence, Yerasimos Arsenis, a hard-liner, who at the time was vying to lead PASOK and became prime minister) ordered the Greek navy to take charge of reinstalling the Greek flag.¹⁴ Turkish commandos placed the Turkish flag on the other Imia/Kardak islet. In the meantime, the Greek armed forces were put on full alert and a major part of the Greek navy set sail to the disputed areas, upon orders from the defence minister and Limberis, without the approval of the Greek prime minister, who was furious when he got wind of it.¹⁵ Çiller, for her part, ordered Admiral Güven Erkaya, the head of the Turkish navy, to send units to the region and to surround the islets.¹⁶

As the crisis unfolded, both parties believed that the other side was following a stratagem to further its 'expansionist goals' in the Aegean. The Greek prime minister spoke of Turkey's 'aggressive nationalism', warning that Greece was prepared to react forcefully in defence of its national sovereignty.¹⁷ As for the Turkish prime minister, she stated that her country was not prepared to give an inch of the motherland and would not permit a foreign flag to fly on Turkish soil.¹⁸ Turkey threw oil on fire by arguing that this case was part of a much wider problem of 'grey zones' in the Aegean, perhaps as many as 150 'rocks' whose sovereignty was undetermined (the Greek media reported that as many as 1000 'Greek islets' were potentially challenged).

With the two sides poised to come to blows (with Limberis in particular clamouring for an attack), the situation calmed within 48 hours. The first to show moderation was Simitis, when he realised the extent of responsibility of Limberis and the defence minister for escalating the crisis. Çiller took more time to show moderation, for she had favoured the escalation (though not an armed clash) for reasons of her own, in order to be able to hold on to her post as prime minister against her main opponent, Yılmaz. The crisis had reached such heights that it could only be defused by effective foreign involvement. In this, Washington

was to save the day. Warren Christopher, the Secretary of State, William Perry, the Defence Secretary and even President Bill Clinton himself became actively involved. The main architect of the final deal was trouble-shooter Richard Holbrooke (the Under-Secretary of State) of the recent Dayton Agreement fame: the formula was to remove the two flags and return to the status quo ante (however defined).

In the aftermath of the crisis, Çiller faced scathing criticism in Turkey for her self-serving stance from Yılmaz, the Islamist leader Necmettin Erbakan (Welfare Party), as well as from the head of the General Staff. It seems that Çiller had been misled by ambassador Onur Öymen, the hawkish deputy foreign minister, who had assured her that the Turkish case regarding the Kardak rocks was sound, concealing information to the contrary that had arrived from the Turkish ambassador in Rome, who had unearthed the 1932 agreement from the Italian foreign ministry.¹⁹

With the benefit of hindsight, the overall impact of the Imia/Kardak crisis is mixed. On the negative side, it added one more item (Imia/Kardak and 'grey zones') to the already overloaded Greek-Turkish agenda in the Aegean. It reinforced Greek fears that Turkey continued to have expansionist designs in the Aegean and whetted the appetite of the hard-liners in Turkey. Actually, at the height of the crisis, the Turkish General Staff had made a hurried study of the situation and had come up with the 'grey zones' idea, namely that those islets or rocks not mentioned in any convention were of 'undetermined sovereignty', a concept that could be of value for the breadth of the territorial sea as well as the future delimitation of the continental shelf.²⁰ On the positive side, the crisis did act as the much-needed shock to render both sides more sensible and more ready to give peace another chance, even though the new thinking took some time (three whole years) to bear fruit.

Cautious steps that came to naught

The crisis was barely over when Washington offered to mediate in order to bring about a settlement of the Aegean conflict as a whole or at least of the Imia/Kardak dispute. The two sides momentarily accepted and the mediation was to be headed by Holbrooke. But Athens backed down, as the Greek public was in one of its recurring bouts of virulent anti-Americanism (the equidistant US mediation in the crisis was wrongly seen as having favoured Turkey). The Clinton administration was to remain preoccupied with the Greek-Turkish dispute for the rest of the decade, advising moderation and discreetly offering food for thought for an overall settlement of the Aegean conflict.²¹

Greece played the EU card against Turkey, trying to link economic aid with recourse to the ICJ for the Imia/Kardak case. But its EU partners would have none of this blunt 'carrot and stick' tactic. The Greek foreign minister, Theodoros Pangalos, reacted brusquely by blocking the first economic package to Turkey amounting to 250 million dollars, as well as the programme of Mediterranean aid (MEDA), which was intended not only for Turkey but also for 11 Mediterranean counties.

In Turkey, due to the hand of the military, the Welfare Party of Erbakan (which in December 1995 had come first in the elections, with 158 out of 550 seats) was unable to form a coalition government. Instead, a coalition government was formed (12 March 1996) between the two main rival parties, with Yılmaz (Motherland Party) as prime minister and Çiller (True Path Party) as foreign minister. The coalition lasted barely a month, followed by a wholly unexpected coalition between Çiller (a staunch secularist) and Erbakan, with the latter as prime minister from 26 June 1996 and remaining so for almost a year.²²

In the meantime, both sides were under pressure from both Washington and Brussels to mend their fences, notably on the Aegean plane. Simitis's preference was for the EU as a whole to become a party to the Greek-Turkish conflict, rendering 'the Greek-Turkish difference Euro-Turkish'.²³ Turkey pointed out that it was not unfavourable to resolving the Aegean issues, but found the Greek line that only the continental shelf was on the agenda unacceptable.²⁴

Yılmaz, apparently upon US and EU prompting, made a contribution to Greek-Turkish affairs, in his very brief stint as prime minister. He called upon Greece (24 March 1996) 'to enter into a procedure of peaceful settlement, which will not exclude from the outset any method of settlement including third-party arbitration',²⁵ adding that 'recourse to the ICJ is not excluded either'.²⁶

In itself, this proposal was radical by Turkish standards, for it recognised third party involvement, including adjudication. The proposal had not arisen simply to placate Washington and Brussels, but had the support of influential Turkish industrialists as well as diplomats and politicians. Greece, under the sway of hawkish Pangalos, rejected the offer as 'provocative', ostensibly because it did not limit itself to the Imia/Kardak islets or the continental shelf. Ironically, Yılmaz faced the wrath of the hard-liners as well (a case in point being Professor Mümtaz Soysal, a former foreign minister and close adviser to Rauf Denktaş) as being too accommodating towards the Greeks. Not much later, to the embarrassment of the Turkish foreign ministry, the Turkish military representative in NATO challenged the sovereignty of the Greek island

of Gavdos (31 May), a small island situated to the south of the large island of Crete.²⁷

In the wake of the Yılmaz proposal, Greece was under considerable pressure from the EU and the US to withdraw its veto on economic aid to Turkey so as not to alienate Turkey and reinforce the Islamists. But Athens seemed unimpressed, so the EU threatened not to open enlargement negotiations with Cyprus (whose candidacy had been accepted a year earlier). Greece did not budge an inch and went as far as threatening to block the new enlargement of the ten states as a whole. At the critical moment, internal developments in Greece limited the power of the hard-liners. Simitis won the leadership contest in PASOK's national conference (against hard-liners Arsenis and Tsohatzopoulos) and a few months later (September 1996), PASOK under his leadership won the elections. After taking office, Simitis decided to reduce the funds for armaments, realising that without such a cut, Greece would be unable to join the European Monetary Union (EMU), which was one of his primary goals.²⁸

As was the case with Ankara, at about the same time the need for new thinking on Greek-Turkish relations began to surface, in a small circle close to the Greek premier, with the new deputy foreign minister, Christos Rozakis, a respected international law professor, as the most articulate advocate.²⁹ Rozakis, a close adviser and friend of Simitis, suggested an annual moratorium on exercises in the Aegean and came forward against the extension of Greece's territorial waters to 12 miles. Pangalos would have none of it. Rozakis was put under severe pressure by the hard-liners and resigned after less than six months in office. Fortunately, he continued to be very close to the prime minister, influencing him positively on Greek-Turkish relations as well as on Cyprus.

In the spring of 1997, the Netherlands presidency of the EU offered to mediate in the Aegean dispute. Pangalos could not stomach such an involvement (he regarded the Dutch as pro-Turkish) and set forth several preconditions for rapprochement with Turkey, such as to retract the *casus belli* threat and to accept adjudication, all intended to nip the initiative in the bud. Yet the initiative somehow survived by the setting up of a 'committee of wise men', as it was called, two on each side, to informally discuss the Aegean issues. The wise men never met, but simply exchanged notes for about a year through the Dutch foreign ministry, which was allowed to see the exchanges and highlight points of convergence (if any). The Turkish wise men were two hard-liners from the 1970s talks, Şükrü Elekdağ and A. Suat Bilge, and on the Greek side were two international law professors, Argyris Fatouros

(a committed dove) and Krateros Ioannou (a hard-liner), later succeeded by Professor Theodore Couloumbis (a soft realist).³⁰

Turkey for its part was embroiled in yet another political crisis. The generals, as self-appointed custodians of secularism and Kemalism, could not stomach Erbakan's premiership any longer, so they engineered his ousting in stages, in slow motion as it were (from March to May 1997), in what came to be known as 'the post-modern coup'. At the generals' behest, a coalition government was formed with Yılmaz as prime minister and veteran Ecevit as deputy prime minister in May 1997.

A few days after the formation of the coalition government, on the margins of a NATO summit meeting in Madrid, the Americans took the initiative and convinced Simitis and President Demirel to sign a document, known as the Madrid Declaration (8 July 1997). The main drafter of the document was Holbrooke, with Madeleine Albright, the Secretary of State, also taking an active part in the process. Involved in the proceedings were alternate foreign minister George Papandreou and the new Turkish foreign minister, Ismail Cem, a former academic and journalist. The Madrid Declaration made reference to the need for a peaceful settlement of disputes, to the respect of both states' sovereignty and to abiding by international law and international agreements, all of which were intended to please the Greeks. It also referred to the respect of the 'legitimate' and 'vital interests' of both sides in the Aegean, obviously intended for the Turks. No mention was made of the retention of the status quo in the Aegean, apparently so as not to be seen as an abandonment of Greece's legal right to extend its territorial waters or as abandoning the 'grey zones' issue on the part of Turkey. On the other hand, it is also mentioned that both sides should undertake to refrain from unilateral acts so as not to jeopardise peaceful relations, which implied no unilateral extension of the territorial waters and by the same token also put the *casus belli* to rest.³¹

In Turkey, the Madrid Declaration was considered a major diplomatic success.³² In Greece, it faced heavy criticism from Pangalos and the other hard-liners, who were furious at its implications for the 12 miles and the reference to legitimate and vital interests. In general, Greece has acted ever since as if the Madrid Declaration does not exist, unlike Turkey, which regards it as an important step, which for the first time made Greece appear more accommodating.³³

Throughout 1997 and in early 1998, another issue soured Greek-Turkish relations, the S-300 missiles that President Clerides of Cyprus had ordered from Russia (apparently upon the advice of Arsenis, when he was minister of defence, without the knowledge of Simitis).

This move had put the Turks, and not least the military, in a state of frenzy.³⁴ Turkey went so far as to threaten to destroy the missiles from the air should they arrive on Cypriot soil. This festering crisis led to timely interventions on the part of President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair. The EU in particular warned Clerides that the procurement of the missiles was out of tune with his country's EU candidacy. Finally, in 1998, Simitis offered a face-saving device, to put the missiles in storage on the Greek island of Crete, where they remain until today.³⁵

In early November 1997, there was a brief ray of hope when the two prime ministers, Simitis and Yılmaz, had a closed meeting *à deux* for a couple of hours in Crete, on the margins of a summit meeting of the states of south-eastern Europe. According to Simitis (in his memoirs), they did not get far. He pressed for a gradual 'step-by-step' approach, while Yılmaz insisted on a dialogue on everything that divided the two countries.³⁶ A few days later, Yılmaz stated to foreign journalists that the two parties should try to resolve as many existing differences as they could bilaterally by negotiations and where there was no agreement to refer the matter to arbitration or, as a last measure, to the ICJ.³⁷

A month later, an incident that did little to smooth Greek-Turkish relations was the Luxembourg EU summit meeting (December 1997), which decided not to include Turkey in its list of candidate states (though there was no outright rejection of its candidacy). Greece had expressed itself as being against Turkey's candidature, though it was obvious that others were hiding behind it, such as Germany. The Luxembourg document was a very 'Greek text',³⁸ stating that for a future Turkish candidacy to be considered, Turkey had to first resolve its differences with Greece at the ICJ and ameliorate its treatment of its minorities (implying the Kurdish issue). For Turkey and not least for Yılmaz, a committed supporter of Turkey's European vocation, Luxembourg came as a severe blow, for it was misread as closing Turkey's EU road for good. The deeply hurt Turks over-reacted by accusing Greece, Germany and the EU of hiding behind the Greek veto, and by taking measures to further integrate the Turkish Cypriot part of Cyprus into Turkey.³⁹

Despite the adverse climate created by the Luxembourg summit, Turkey reverted to the idea of resolving the Aegean differences peacefully on two occasions (12 February and 11 March 1998). Foreign minister Cem proposed a meeting of foreign ministers to initiate a dialogue and to render the Madrid Declaration more tangible. He also suggested agreeing on CBMs in the Aegean and reviving the 'wise men' process. Pangalos, who was still in control of Greek foreign policy, would

have none of this, once again dashing any hope of a Greek-Turkish dialogue.⁴⁰

Thus, in the end, for the two governments to embark on a dialogue and an eventual détente, another crisis had to surface, involving, of all people, Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK, the most hated person among ethnic Turks. Greece was in the unenviable position of being found to be harbouring Öcalan in its Nairobi embassy in early 1999, a most embarrassing situation, which made Greece appear to be caught red-handed (note that Turkey had claimed all along that Greece, from the days of Andreas Papandreou, has consistently assisted the PKK financially and otherwise). Simitis sacked Pangalos and other hawkish ministers, who had been involved in the Nairobi affair, and now the moderates were at the steering wheel of the foreign ministry, with George Papandreou as their head.⁴¹

Notes

1. William Hale (2002), *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774–2000* (London: Frank Cass), p. 168.
2. Sotiris Rizas (2003), *Apo tin krisi stin yfesi: O Constantinos Mitsotakis kai i politiki prosengisis Elladas-Tourkias* [From Crisis to Détente: Constantinos Mitsotakis and the Politics of Rapprochement between Greece and Turkey] (Athens: Papazissis), pp. 15, 68–70.
3. Thanos Veremis (1995), *Greece's Balkan Entanglement* (Athens: ELIAMEP).
4. Rizas, op. cit., pp. 15, 68–70.
5. Thanos Veremis, *Istoria ton ellinotourkikon scheseon, 1453–2005* [History of Greek-Turkish Relations, 1453–2005] (Athens: I. Sideris), pp. 207–8; Hale, op. cit., p. 253; Philip Robins (2003), *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War* (London: Hurst and Company), p. 83.
6. Hale, op. cit., pp. 178–9, 196–7; Üstün Ergüder (1991), 'The Motherland Party, 1983–1989', in Metin Heper and Jacob M. Landau (eds), *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris), p. 160.
7. Rizas, op. cit., pp. 113–14.
8. Melek Firat (2001), 'Yunanistan'la İlişkiler' [Relations with Greece], in Baskin Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası (Cilt II, 1980–2001)* [Turkish Foreign Policy (vol. II, 1989–2001)], p. 443.
9. For the negative side of the meeting, see Rizas, op. cit., pp. 165–7, 175. For the positive side, see Firat, op. cit., p. 443.
10. Firat, op. cit., p. 444; Rizas, op. cit., p. 184; Veremis, *Istoria ton ellinotourkikon scheseon*, op. cit., pp. 210–1.
11. Gencer Özcan (2001), 'The Military and the Making of Foreign Policy in Turkey', in Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirisci (eds), *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner), pp. 13–30; Ahmet

- Insel and Ali Bayramoğlu (eds) (2004), *Bir Zümre, Bir Parti: Türkiye'de Ordu* [One Social Class, One Party: The Turkish Military] (Istanbul: Birikim Yayınları); Kemal Kirişçi, (2006), 'Turkish Foreign Policy in Turbulent Times', *Chaillot Paper* No. 92, Institute for Security Studies (Paris), pp. 12–13, 17; Robins, op. cit., pp. 75–9 and *passim*.
12. Firat, op. cit., p. 459–60.
13. For such erroneous conjectures, see Efsathios T. Fakiolas and Panagiotis Mavrides (2001), 'Strategy of Crisis Management and the Greek-Turkish Rivalry: The Case of the Imia Islets', in Christodoulos K. Yiallourides and Panayotis J. Tsakonas (eds), *Greece and Turkey after the End of the Cold War* (New York: Aristide D. Caratzas), pp. 207–38; and Güliden Ayman (2001), 'The Kardak (Imia) Crisis and Turkish-Greek Relations', *Hellenic Studies*, 9, 2, pp. 49–72.
14. See the autobiographical account of Costas Simitis (2005), *Politiki gia mia dimiourgiki Ellada, 1996–2004* [Politics for a Creative Greece, 1996–2004] (Athens: Polis), p. 59.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 62. Admiral Limberis justified his initiatives on the basis of a 'worst cost scenario'. See Christos Limberis (1997), *Ethniki stratigiki kai cheirismos kriseon* [National Strategy and Crisis Management] (Athens: Poiotita), p. 170.
16. Alkis Kourkoulas (1997), *Imia: kritiki prosengisi tou tourkikou paragonta* [Imia: A Critical Approach Regarding the Turkish Factor] (Athens: I. Sideris); Eugenia Vathakou (2003), 'International Crisis and Peace Processes as Autopoietic Systems in World Society: Examples from Greek-Turkish Relations', unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Kent at Canterbury, pp. 70–110; Firat, op. cit., pp. 464–6.
17. Simitis's statement in the daily *Eleftherotypia* (29 January 1996).
18. Çiller's statement in the daily *Hurriet* (30 January 1996).
19. Kourkoulas, op. cit., pp. 58–9. Also based on discussions of the author with Professor Kemal Kirişçi.
20. Firat, op. cit., pp. 465–6.
21. Ekavi Athanassopoulou (1997), 'Blessing in Disguise? The Imia Crisis and Greek-Turkish Relations', *Mediterranean Politics*, 2, 3, pp. 77–9; Angelos M. Syrigos (2001), 'Greek-Turkish Disputes: Recourse to the International Court of Justice and Stability in the Aegean', in Yiallourides and Tsakonas (eds), op. cit., pp. 278–9. For information about the ongoing US interest in the settlement of the Aegean dispute, I would like to thank John Brady Kiesling, an American diplomat who served in Athens at the time and author of the timely book (2007) *Diplomacy Lessons: Realism for an Unloved Superpower* (Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books).
22. Hale, op. cit., p. 197.
23. Simitis, op. cit., p. 86.
24. Firat, op. cit., p. 466.
25. Quoted in Syrigos, op. cit., p. 281.
26. Syrigos, op. cit., p. 281. See also Firat, op. cit., pp. 466, 468.
27. İlter Türkmen (2002), 'Prooptikes gia tis ellinotourkikes scheseis' [Prospects for Greek-Turkish Relations], in Thanos Veremis and Thanos Dokos (eds), *I syghroni Tourkia* [Contemporary Turkey] (Athens: Papazissis), p. 635; Deniz Bölükbaşı (2004), *Turkey and Greece, the Aegean Disputes: A Unique Case in International*

- Law* (London: Cavendish Publishing Limited), pp. 70–1; Güliden Ayman (2004), 'Negotiation and Deterrence in Asymmetrical Power Situations: The Turkish-Greek Case', in Mustafa Aydın and Kostas Ifantis (eds), *Turkish-Greek Relations: The Security Dilemma in Aegean* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group), p. 227; Kirişçi, op. cit., p. 17; Athanassopoulou, op. cit., p. 83; Syrigos, op. cit., pp. 280–2.
28. Athanassopoulou, op. cit., p. 87.
29. Simitis claims that new thinking in his ranks started at about that time. See Simitis, op. cit., p. 85. Information also taken from discussions and interviews of the author (in the period 2001–7) with various personalities close to Simitis and George Papandreou, such as Professor Rozakis and author Nicos Themelis (the closest adviser of Simitis).
30. Angelos Syrigos (1998), *The Status of the Aegean Sea According to International Law* (Athens and Brussels: Sakoulas/Bruylant), pp. 376–9. Also based on discussions of the author with international lawyer Dr Petros Liakouras.
31. Athanassopoulou, op. cit., pp. 93–4; Syrigos, *The Status of the Aegean Sea According to International Law*, op. cit., pp. 379–82; Ayman, 'Negotiation and Deterrence in Asymmetrical Power Situations', op. cit., pp. 230–1.
32. Cem regarded Madrid as a diplomatic victory for, as he points out, the text incorporated the main Turkish priorities. However, he does not regard Madrid as a Greek defeat, but as a win-win outcome. See Ismail Cem (2004), *Türkiye Avrupa Avrasya* [Turkey, Europe, Eurasia] (Istanbul: Bilgi University Press), pp. 86–92.
33. Ibid., pp. 92–4.
34. Türkmen, op. cit., p. 636; Kirişçi, op. cit., p. 15; Firat, op. cit., p. 472; Gulden Ayman (2002), 'A Case of Brinkmanship: S-300 Missile Crisis', *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies*, 7.
35. David Hannay (2005), *Cyprus: The Search for a Solution* (London: I.B. Tauris), pp. 71, 96.
36. Simitis, op. cit., pp. 88–9.
37. Yılmaz in Tozun Bahcheli (2004), 'Turning a New Page in Turkey's Relations with Greece? The Challenge of Reconciling Vital Interests', in Aydın and Ifantis (eds), op. cit., p. 101.
38. Hannay, op. cit., p. 82.
39. Hannay, op. cit., pp. 82–5; Hale, op. cit., pp. 239–40, 256; Robins, op. cit., pp. 108–10, 116, 142; Bahcheli, op. cit., pp. 112–13; Atila Eralp (2004), 'Turkey and the European Union', in Lenore G. Martin and Dimitris Keridis (eds), *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), pp. 71–2.
40. Türkmen, op. cit., pp. 635–6; Ayman (2004), 'Negotiation and Deterrence in Asymmetrical Power Situations', op. cit., pp. 229–30; Melek Firat (2006), 'Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Türk-Yunan İlişkilerinde Değişim' [The Transformation of Turkish-Greek Relations in the post-Cold War Era], in Mustafa Aydın and Garpı Erhan (eds), *Beş Deniz Havzasında Türkiye* [Turkey and the Five Sea Basin] (Ankara: Siyasal), pp. 257–80. See also the testimony of Cem regarding his peace initiatives in Cem, op. cit., pp. 100–7.
41. Cem, op. cit., pp. 103, 110–18; Türkmen, op. cit., p. 636; Firat, op. cit., pp. 476–8.

10

Détente

The unexpected thaw of 1999

From the second part of 1999, there was a marked thaw in Greek-Turkish relations that has been characterised as a rapprochement or reconciliation.¹ Although the thaw was tangible and proved to be far from ephemeral, détente is probably a more appropriate term to describe the period from mid-1999 until today.² The decade of détente that followed (1999–2009) can be divided into two phases: its steadier and warmer period until the first part of 2004 and the more unsteady period thereafter.

In the wake of the Öcalan incident, the sudden improvement of relations was totally unexpected, save perhaps for a very small circle close to the Greek prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs, who were responsible for the switch on the Greek side. The Öcalan crisis had traumatised relations to such an extent that even the Greek-Turkish Business Council (which had been active since 1998) had suffered as a consequence. In addition to the Öcalan affair with its implied Greek link with the PKK, two other factors were a source of frustration and anger on the part of Turkey in the last three years of the 1990s: Greece's continuing veto to Turkey's bid for candidate status in the EU; and the candidacy of the Republic of Cyprus to the EU, which was pursued with great fervour by Greece and was seen in Turkey as an attempt to pursue 'indirect union' with Cyprus via accession to the EU. Indeed, the Cyprus-EU process had become a major thorn in the side of Greek-Turkish relations instead of the much-anticipated (by the Greek side) 'catalyst' to resolve the Cyprus problem and ameliorate Greek-Turkish relations.³ Furthermore, in Turkey, following elections (18 April 1999), a coalition government was formed under veteran Bülent Ecevit in 1999

(DSP: Democratic Left Party, with 22 per cent of the vote), with the participation of the ultra-nationalist Nationalist Action Party (MHP), which gained as much as 18 per cent of the vote, which was hardly promising for Greek-Turkish relations.⁴

A popular somewhat romantic view has it that the earthquakes of August–September 1999 were responsible for this major shift in Greek-Turkish relations. This, it is argued, led to ‘seismic diplomacy’ and ‘earthquake rapprochement’, as the two sides rushed wholeheartedly to each other’s aid, starting with the Greeks in August following the devastating Ismit-Gölcük earthquake of 17 August 1999 (with George Papandreou phoning Ismail Cem within an hour of the earthquake, offering whatever assistance was needed),⁵ which was duly appreciated by the Turkish people. The Turks reciprocated when an earthquake hit Athens on 7 September.⁶

In fact, ‘the earthquake spirit’ was not the triggering event that led to this change of approach, but more of a catalyst.⁷ The triggering event was the Kosovo crisis, in the first months of 1999, which was to provide the opportunity for repeated contact between Cem and Papandreou that was to lead to a famous rapport between them (in itself unique by Greek-Turkish standards from 1954 onwards). What initially brought the two foreign ministers together was the common fear of change of boundaries and general destabilisation in the region as a result of the Kosovo imbroglio.⁸

Cem sent Papandreou a letter on 24 May 1999 proposing good neighbourly relations following ‘an agreement to combat terrorism’, a sensitive issue, as Cem put it, in view of ‘what is perceived as links that exist in Greece with terrorist organizations and their systematic encouragement’.⁹ He concluded by suggesting the initiation of a ‘plan for reconciliation ... emphasizing resort to all peaceful means referred to in the UN Charter’.¹⁰ The Cem letter was loaded with dynamite, for it implied that Greece had to admit, however indirectly, that it had condoned the activities of the PKK. According to Cem’s own account, the Turkish aim was to embark upon a new beginning in Greek-Turkish relations that would improve Turkey’s image abroad, limit the danger of a crisis in the Aegean and put international pressure on Greece to abandon its veto against Turkey’s candidacy to the EU. The more immediate goal, according to Cem, was to make Greece sign a bilateral agreement against terrorism and on that basis embark upon an amelioration of bilateral relations.¹¹

Needless to say, had the recipient of the letter not been Papandreou or Simitis, the Greek prime minister, with whom Papandreou consulted, the Cem letter would have been rejected as a blunt provocation. In the event, the explosive potential of the Cem letter was imaginatively defused

by putting the matter into a wider perspective. In a lengthy letter (dated 25 June), the Greek foreign minister welcomed the willingness for an improvement in relations and then went on to outline a whole range of issues of common interest on which eventual agreement could be reached: cultural cooperation, tourism, the environment, crime, economic cooperation, placing terrorism under a wider rubric, 'organized crime, drug trafficking, illegal immigration and terrorism'.¹² Apparently, Cem was taken aback by the fact that his anti-terrorism proposal was not self-standing, but under the circumstances could do little about it.¹³

This was to be the seed of the low politics 'functional' (*à la* Mitrany)¹⁴ approach to peace that the two sides were to adopt a few days later, on 30 June 1999, at a meeting of the two foreign ministers in New York, on the margins of a UN meeting on Kosovo. Papandreou and Cem agreed to inaugurate a concrete dialogue by holding meetings with a view to signing bilateral agreements on a series of 'low confrontation' (as it was curiously put) topics, in fact on non-confrontational low politics issues (contrary to confrontational high politics, such as the Aegean or Cyprus).

Two months later, the 'earthquake spirit' was a major boost to the Cem-Papandreou endeavours, which until then were viewed with suspicion by the public in both countries. Following the earthquakes, working groups were set up and by early next year no less than nine agreements were concluded, a unique achievement by Greek-Turkish standards. The nine agreements were on the following points: (1) cooperation on customs administration, (2) economic cooperation, (3) promotion and protection of investments, (4) cooperation on environmental protection, (5) tourism, (6) maritime transport, (7) science and technology, (8) cultural cooperation and (9) cooperation on combating crime, especially organised crime, terrorism, drug trafficking and illegal immigration. To date, 17 agreements have been signed.

Furthermore, a 'Steering Committee' was set up under the secretary-generals of the two foreign ministries. This committee meets twice a year and addresses the various low politics issues between the two countries. A Task Force on the EU was also set up in January 2000 to assist Turkish functionaries in dealing with EU issues. Moreover, a series of CBMs have also been adopted at the military level from October 2000 onwards.¹⁵

But for the Greek-Turkish *détente* to stick, one more essential ingredient was needed: Greece's withdrawal of its shortsighted veto against Turkey's candidacy to the EU, which took place at the Helsinki EU summit (10 December 1999). This amounted to 'a U turn in Greek politics'.¹⁶

According to the account of Costas Simitis, the Greek government was prepared to lift its veto in the forthcoming summit provided it

achieved satisfaction on two counts: (1) entry of the Republic of Cyprus to the EU even if it did not prove possible to settle the Cyprus problem and reunify the island (much as Greece and the Cyprus Republic under Clerides desired a final resolution); and (2) putting the settlement of the continental shelf issue on course by recourse to the ICJ. Foremost in the mind of Simitis and his close advisers was the active engagement of the EU in the resolution of the Greek-Turkish differences, the 'cum-munitarisation' of the Greek-Turkish conflict as it was called.¹⁷

After a lengthy exchange at the Helsinki summit, the EU leaders decided that the settlement of the Cyprus was not to be 'a precondition' for the accession of Cyprus into the EU.¹⁸ As regards candidate states (for this read Turkey), the stipulation was as follows:

the European Council stresses the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter and urges candidate States to make every effort to resolve any outstanding border disputes and other related issues. Failing this they should within a reasonable time bring the dispute to the International Court of Justice. The European Council will review the situation relating to any outstanding disputes, in particular concerning the repercussions on the accession process and in order to promote their settlement through the International Court of Justice, at the latest by the end of 2004.¹⁹

For Turkey's candidacy to go through, a process of 'Europeanisation' was in order, under scrutiny by the EU bodies, and only if it passed the various tests would it be in a position to enjoy full accession. In particular, Turkey would have to conform with the 'Copenhagen criteria', adopted at the June 1993 European Council at Copenhagen, which included stable democratic institutions, the rule of law, protection of human rights and minority rights, and the administrative capacity to implement the *acquis communautaires* as well as the declared aims of the EU.

The Helsinki European Council decision gave rise to a heated debate in Greece. Simitis and Papandreou considered it, not undeservedly, a major Greek success, arguing that the decision gave ample leverage to Greece to be able to push Turkey to abide by EU principles and rules of conduct, be it on Cyprus or the Aegean.²⁰ The opposition New Democracy party (ND), though known to favour abandoning the veto, was vitriolic. Costas Karamanlis, the leader of the opposition ND, criticised the government for having accepted the existence of Greek-Turkish differences on the Aegean.²¹ Other leading members of the

ND were even more scathing, calling the 'Helsinki comprise' a major mistake akin to a sell-out, not least for its acceptance of talks (that is, negotiations) on all the issues of the Aegean and not only on the continental shelf.²²

On the Turkish side, the initial reaction of Ecevit to the Helsinki package had been one of frustration, to such an extent that for a moment he was not prepared to accept it, on the grounds that Turkey was paying too high a price for its candidacy. He finally conceded following strenuous efforts by the Finnish EU presidency and EU Commissioner Xavier Solana. Of course, what Ankara found difficult to swallow was the treatment of the Cyprus question and the future prospect of going to the ICJ. However, when things subsided, more optimistic readings of the situation gained ascendancy. For one thing, Turkey had after all gained the status of candidate state, a major achievement and an unattainable goal for more than a dozen years. As for Greece, it may have pocketed two major gains (the entry of Cyprus to the EU with no preconditions and the ICJ), but it was made to accept that the Aegean differences were all to be resolved (and not only the continental shelf) and that they were to be settled by negotiations if possible, something which made dragging one's feet in order to finally end up by going to the ICJ less likely, with the EU Commission and Council and its Member States on the alert for any such stratagem.²³

Explaining the unexpected

The unexpected Greek-Turkish thaw of 1999 can be explained using three levels of analysis.²⁴

At the external structural level, the main factor was the EU. To the extent that Turkey was sincere in its EU vocation, dramatic changes had to take place on the Greek-Turkish plane. Turkey's candidacy was difficult to conceive without a clear amelioration of Greek-Turkish relations taking place. On the Greek side, the accession of Cyprus would have been difficult to achieve without the abandonment of the adversarial posture towards Turkey. From a more general perspective pertinent to Greece, its new stance was the end result of a belated process of Europeanisation of its foreign policy.²⁵ As for Turkey, in the wake of the 1999 Helsinki decision, its new more benign stance towards Greece was clinched by the 'engagement of Turkey by the European Union and the principle of conditionality that the EU employs with candidate countries'.²⁶ Another important external factor was the subtle but effective pressure exercised towards the two parties by the Clinton administration.²⁷

At the agency (decision-maker) level, on the Greek side the premiership of Simitis was crucial, even though it took considerable time for the Greeks to get their act together, in view of the reaction of the hawks.²⁸ As we have seen, the first elements of new thinking had come to the fore in the second part of 1996, but it was only with Papandreou as foreign minister in 1999 that Greece was in position to move along this new road resolutely. In particular, the EU factor was seen by Simitis and his advisers as the ideal 'carrot' to make Turkey more accommodating towards Greece; to make it more 'European' and less under the influence of the military establishment.²⁹ Clearly, this 'socialisation' approach, as one author has described it,³⁰ amounts to vintage realism in international politics, to 'instrumentalist play'³¹ rather than to an emergent, more liberal thinking.

At the agency level in Turkey, Cem was undeniably a key figure before the advent of the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkima Partisi: Justice and Development Party) government to power. A new thinking had matured in some segments that were influential in foreign policy in the second part of the 1990s, which believed that a drastic change of approach was necessary and in Turkey's interests, particularly if the prospect of joining the EU was to make headway, a prospect that was regarded (at the time at least) as the best guarantee against Islamism and the threat to secularism. On the Aegean dispute in particular, another possible factor for a more relaxed approach may have been that a new generation of Turkish experts on international law felt more confident and less on the defensive regarding the 1982 Convention in the Law of the Sea and recourse to the ICJ than in the 1970s and 1980s, and advised their government accordingly.³²

The fact that the Turkish overtures had taken place in 1996–7, before the official Greek switch, has made many commentators in Turkey claim, not entirely implausibly, that Ankara had all along (or at least following the Kardak crisis) been in support of dialogue and cordial relations, but Athens was unable to meet Ankara eye to eye; that the Greeks remained unrealistic, guided by nationalist and emotional outbursts in their foreign policy towards Turkey, a case in point being the 'irresponsible Pangalos'. When the Greeks were caught red-handed abetting PKK terrorism with the Öcalan affair, the international humiliation was such that they finally became more pragmatic and were able to follow the Turks on the road to reconciliation.³³

One of the most persuasive presentations of this Turkish line of reasoning had come from the late Ismail Cem in his autobiographical account,³⁴ although one should probably treat his assertions with a pinch of salt. According to the Greek-Turkish specialist Melek Firat, the earliest date where one can see flexibility and a constructive spirit

on the part of Turkey is not 1996, but July 1997, from the Madrid Declaration onwards.³⁵ More generally, as Ziya Öniş has pointed out, for most of the 1990s, Turkey acted as a 'coercive regional power', with foreign policy controlled by a small elite who viewed the world exclusively from a 'national security perspective'.³⁶ According to Kemal Kirişçi, in the 1990s the 'culture of national security' and the 'Sèvres syndrome' (the fear of the dismemberment of Turkey) dominated the scene, with 'Greece as the major source of security threat'.³⁷ New thinking did surface from time to time, as with the Yılmaz initiative of 1996, but it was against the grain. The military in particular were able to thwart such constructive initiatives.³⁸

It was 1999 that the 'new Turkish foreign policy' was clearly in place, after the capture of Öcalan.³⁹ The increasing role of the Turkish army in peacekeeping operations in the Balkans and elsewhere was apparently a factor in bringing a new perspective to the army and making it more relaxed at an international level. A case in point was General Hilmi Özkök, Chief of the General Staff in the early 2000s, who played an important role in stemming the opposition of the military and steering Turkey towards the EU. This new foreign policy was further reinforced with the Helsinki summit decision of 1999 and was consolidated following the victory of the AKP in November 2002, which led to the formation of a government with Abdullah Gül (the deputy of the party) as premier, followed by the leader of the party, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in early 2003.⁴⁰

The third level of analysis is that of civil society. It was directly in the wake of the Imia/Kardak crisis that for the first time ever in Greek-Turkish relations, a small but articulate group of people began to voice the need for doing away with the traditional animosity and confrontation in Greek-Turkish relations. This group was more vocal in Greece and included several senior figures, such as veteran politicians and retired ambassadors, as well as academics and journalists, who were able to attain a critical mass by 1998. Older NGOs were rekindled and new ones emerged, such as the 'Front for Reason for a Modern Greek Foreign Policy' (headed by the former foreign minister Mihalis Papaconstantinou and the former leader of the Left, Leonidas Kirkos). These individuals and groups had access to those in the Greek government and opposition who held similar views. In the case of Turkey the activity at a civil society level was less widespread, but it was far from negligible. An increasing number of articles appeared in the Turkish press by eminent columnists, such as Sami Kohen, Mehmet Ali Birand, Erdal Güven and Cengiz Çandar, for the first time openly criticising the negative Turkish stance on taboo issues such

as Cyprus or the Kurdish question, as well as the lack of bold steps that could open up Turkey's chances of gaining accession to the EU. In Turkey far more than in Greece, industrialists and other economic magnates were at the forefront of this new thinking. There were also joint meetings and even common NGOs comprised of Greeks and Turks, many of them set up by journalists. The most promising bilateral interactions were the activities of the Greek-Turkish Business Council from 1998 onwards (which had remained dormant since the days of the spirit of Davos in 1988) and of an NGO of a totally different kind, the Greek-Turkish Forum (GTF).⁴¹

By 2000, the results of the thaw in Greek-Turkish relations were already tangible. Apart from the agreements and ongoing official talks on low politics, economic cooperation, which had been minimal until 1999 due to the mutual antagonism, picked up at an impressive rate. The volume of exports-imports rose from around 630 million dollars in 1999 to almost 900 million dollars in 2000. Investments rose nearly sevenfold between 1999 and 2000, from 2.4 million dollars to 14.7 million dollars.⁴²

The question at the time was whether low politics would spill over into high politics, along the neofunctionalist logic described in the case of the European Community (Ernest B. Haas, L.N. Lindberg).⁴³ High politics did begin to be dealt with by 2002, with the sides tackling the Aegean issues. But this was not so much a spill-over effect propelled by neo-functional logic (at the very least, a spill-over effect needs more time to come about and greater momentum). The official rationale of the two governments was that Greek-Turkish consultations on the Aegean were inevitable, as this was pursuant to the deal adopted in the 1999 Helsinki decision.

The Aegean dialogue: the small package

The unofficial dialogue

Official Greek-Turkish talks on the Aegean started at the beginning of 2002. These talks would have been very difficult to arrange or move forwards had there not been considerable previous groundwork undertaken at two different venues. One such deliberation that has seen the light of day is the GTF, strictly speaking a process of 'Track-2 diplomacy', from 1998 until 2000.⁴⁴ The other deliberation was official ('Track-1 diplomacy') but informal and took place secretly following the Helsinki decision so as to clear the ground for the eventual talks that were to take place following the Helsinki understanding. Nothing is known about this, though apparently it was successful in its task.⁴⁵

The GTF (which had been set up in 1997 in the UK at a meeting at Wilton Park) was no mere NGO striving to improve Greek-Turkish relations.

On the Turkish side, there were several senior retired ambassadors, including former foreign minister İltis Türkmen, Admiral Erkaya (of Kardak fame, now an advisor to Yılmaz) and a number of well-known analysts. On the Greek side, Rozakis (Simitis's closest adviser on foreign affairs) was involved in the early stages; also involved were one senior retired ambassador, Costas Zepos, Professors Theodore Couloumbis and Thanos Veremis of ELIAMEP (the best known Greek think tank on foreign policy, known for decades for its close links with recurring Greek governments), as well as Professor Argyris Fatouros, who was later to be involved in the formal talks. Moreover, the GTF had the blessing of the two foreign ministries, which were in contact with the respective representatives.⁴⁶

Given its participants and its function, George Papandreou is known to have called the GTF 'Track-1 and ½ diplomacy'.⁴⁷

The main achievements of the GTF were a list of CBMs and what were called CAMs (Crisis Avoidance Measures),⁴⁸ and particularly a document entitled 'Issues in the Aegean: Openings and Possibilities', prepared by the GTF's main body, the Political Analysis Group, and adopted in March 2000.⁴⁹ The text in question was submitted to the respective foreign ministries and the EU.

'Issues in the Aegean' refers to four topics: delimitation of the continental shelf, territorial waters, airspace and 'the disputed interpretation of treaty restrictions on the militarisation of certain Greek islands'. Emphasis was placed on resolving the continental shelf issue by a two-stage process: (1) 'negotiation, of a predetermined duration, which may lead either to an agreement on some or all substantive issues' and (2) 'submission of any remaining issues to the ICJ through a *compromis*'. As for territorial waters and airspace, they 'might be approached incidentally to the main issue [the continental shelf], at either stage of the process, as primarily problems of interpreting treaties and precedent'. Freedom of navigation as well as the exploitation of sea resources was to be ensured. As for the issue of militarisation, it was suggested that it be left until last, in the hope that once the other Aegean issues were settled, 'the salience of this issue would decline sharply'.⁵⁰

Apparently what did the trick, making senior Turks and Greeks agree on a text on the sensitive Aegean conflict, was the clear indication by the Greek side (by Zepos to Türkmen to be exact) that Greece 'could live' with not extending its territorial waters to 12 miles.⁵¹

The official dialogue

Talks on the Aegean – on matters of 'high confrontation' – started at the beginning of 2002, following a decision taken by Papandreou and

Cem on a visit of the former to Istanbul in February 2002. The talks in question were dubbed 'exploratory contacts', in an obvious attempt, particularly on the part of Greece, to stem domestic criticism.

The talks commenced on 12 March 2002, at expert level, with two representatives on either side, with meetings alternating between Athens and Ankara. The format was flexible, with no fixed agenda, no minutes and a strict embargo on the deliberations. Away from the prying eyes of the media and the opposition, the two sides could speak more openly. In the talks from March 2002 until February 2004, the representatives on the Greek side were the secretary-general of the foreign ministry, ambassador Anastasios Skopelitis (later ambassador to London) and Professor Emeritus Argyris Fatouros (one of the drafters of the GTF's 'Issues in the Aegean'). Behind the scenes, Professor Rozakis followed the proceedings closely, giving advice to the Greek team and keeping the Greek prime minister well informed. On the Turkish side was ambassador Ugur Ziyial, succeeded by ambassador Ali Tuygan (previously ambassador in Athens), with the second in command throughout, ambassador Deniz Bölükbaşı, a hard-liner who headed the legal division of the Turkish foreign ministry.⁵²

The talks did not pick up immediately after the electoral victory of the AKP, due to the inexperience of the new government, which was hard-pressed by more immediate questions, such as the opening of accession negotiations with the EU for entry and coping with the Iraq crisis, with its haunting Kurdish dimension.⁵³ Yet by spring 2003, the talks reached a high gear and by the end of the year, the two sides seemed very near an agreement on procedure as well substance. But the deal was not clinched, due to the upcoming elections in Greece in February 2004, with Simitis weary lest an Aegean deal become an electoral liability.⁵⁴

In the 2003 talks, it is more than clear that the two parties were serious in their dealings. Greece was not dragging its feet so as to arrive at the December 2004 deadline and thus draw a reluctant Turkey into the ICJ. Turkey for its part was not opposed to resorting to the ICJ for the continental shelf, provided the territorial waters and airspace issues were satisfactorily resolved as well (after all, for the delimitation of the continental shelf, a fixed breadth of territorial waters is a prerequisite). Greece tried to get the ten mile limit through and in this way harmonise its territorial waters with its airspace. Turkey was adamantly opposed to this, but was prepared to discuss the possibility of eight miles in some areas, provided there was no closure of the high seas from the Straits to the wider Mediterranean Sea. As 2003 drew to a close, Greece wanted to extend its territorial waters (as they had been agreed with Turkey) and for this to be followed by negotiations, in earnest, for a *compromis* to

the ICJ. The Turkish preference was for all three issues to be addressed simultaneously (continental shelf, Greek territorial sea and Greek airspace), akin to a package deal.⁵⁵

In the end, it was agreed that a joint statement would be issued regarding the start of official negotiations on the Aegean conflict and that wherever agreement could not be reached, there would be recourse to the ICJ. As had happened in 1978–81 and in the GTF, there was considerable movement and meeting of minds precisely because Greece indicated that it fully understood Turkey's concern with the 12 mile limit and had no intention of extending its territorial sea unilaterally.

Undoubtedly, this is the closest that the two parties had ever come to a substantial deal on the Aegean and it is almost certain that had it not been for the change of government in Greece, the resolution of the Aegean dispute would have been put on course, with traditional negotiations as well as adjudication.

In both the GTF deliberations and in the official preliminary contacts, one sees what I would call a 'small package' approach to the Aegean conflict or 'quick fix': appearing to focus mainly on the continental shelf question, but by the same token also addressing territorial waters and airspace, since all three are inter-related. In this context, demilitarisation and the 'grey zones' were left out, either to be dealt with later or in the hope that they would become less prevalent once the three big issues were resolved.

Détente running out of steam (2004–9)

Stagnation in Greek-Turkish relations

In Greece, PASOK lost the February 2004 elections to the ND. The new government of Costas Karamanlis was not opposed to good Greek-Turkish relations and remained a firm supporter of Turkey's EU aspirations throughout its five and a half years in office. It also tried to decouple Greek-Turkish relations from the Cyprus problem, but made little headway in this regard. However, the new government prevaricated on the Aegean talks, in effect putting them on ice, although they technically continued. This switch on the Aegean front by Greece was due to a general inactivity in foreign affairs under Karamanlis, but it was also the result of policy choice on the part of the new foreign minister, Petros Moliviatis. Moliviatis, an elderly former diplomat, who was in complete control of Greek foreign policy during his two-year tenure, was opposed to any Aegean settlement with Turkey and was even against recourse to the ICJ, ironically along the lines of reasons

put forward by Turkey over the years, namely that it was inconceivable that a third party would pass judgement on matters involving sovereign rights.⁵⁶ This line of reasoning harks back to Andreas Papandreou's intransigent stance, which was based on the premise that any talks and agreement with Turkey were bound to be in the latter's favour. In any event, in the second part of the 2000s, Athens was in no hurry to settle the Aegean dispute, in the belief that the closer Turkey came to the EU, the softer Ankara's position towards Greece on the Aegean dispute would become.⁵⁷

As the end of 2004 approached, with its Helsinki sunset clause, Greece (apparently after consultation with Turkey) let the deadline lapse on the grounds that more time was needed for the ongoing consultations to bear fruit. The Karamanlis government faced criticism from the opposition party, PASOK, now headed by George Papandreou, and from Simitis 'for abandoning Helsinki' and allowing Turkey to get away with it.⁵⁸ Needless to say, both positions, Moliviatis's immobility and the Papandreou-Simitis call to drag a reluctant Turkey to the ICJ, were ill-advised.

Turkey, realising that Greece had got cold feet regarding an Aegean settlement, stepped up its activity in the Aegean (much to the delight of Greek hard-liners), with more overflights of Greece's airspace and the Greek-controlled FIR region, in what continues to remain a *domain réservé* of the military. On one such instance, in May 2006, the clash between two military aircraft led to the death of the Greek pilot. Fortunately, the incident was kept within reasonable bounds by foreign minister Abdullah Gül and his new Greek counterpart, Dora Bakoyiannis. Apparently, Bakoyiannis (daughter of the former premier Mitsotakis) initially contemplated invigorating the Aegean talks,⁵⁹ but in the end did little about it for fear of alienating the die-hard nationalists of the ND and thus endangering her prospects as a future successor to Karamanlis.

On the other side of the Aegean, Turkey was preoccupied with other far more pressing matters, such as the existential drama being played out between the mild Islamists in power and the military, as seen by the 'e-coup' or 'cyber-coup' (April 2007) triggered by Abdullah Gül's candidacy (the AKP's second in command) for president which was regarded by the military and many Kemalists as a threat to secularism. This led to the 22 June 2007 elections, with the AKP raising its share of the vote from 34 per cent to almost 47 per cent, but now saddled with a second opposition party in parliament, the MHP. Soon after, Gül become president. In the following year, there was the attempt at a 'judicial coup' against the AKP, brought about by the chief prosecutor

on the grounds that the AKP was planning the introduction of Islamic law (the *Sharia*); and in tandem with this a sprawling conspiracy known as 'Ergenekon' (a deeply emotional term for Turkism, akin to 'Turan') by former military and other ultra-nationalists against the AKP government. During most of this period, the Kurdish issue rumbled on, with Turkish incursions against the PKK in Iraqi territory.

The EU parameter was equally unhelpful, with the Turkey-EU link becoming more tenuous by the day and less popular among several EU countries, as well as within Turkey itself.⁶⁰ Increasingly, there was talk in EU circles of 'privileged partnership' with Turkey instead of accession. When the Turkish government achieved the opening of accession negotiations with the EU (October 2005), it surprisingly lost its initial enthusiasm and the required reforms lost their momentum. The election victory of the AKP in July 2007 provided a new opportunity to put Europeanisation and the reforms back on track, but again the AKP government did little about it, bitterly disappointing many of its liberal supporters in the country.⁶¹

According to Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, Turkey's international activity has gone through two phases. From the rise of the AKP government (November 2002) to the formal opening of the accession negotiations with the EU (October 2005), Europeanisation and progress regarding the EU was the hallmark of Turkish foreign policy. From then on until today, Turkey has been more lukewarm towards the EU, though it has not abandoned its aspirations entirely. In the second part of the 2000s, it has followed a 'loose Europeanization' or 'soft Euro-Asianism' strategy.⁶²

Returning to Greek-Turkish relations in view of the paucity of positive movement during this period, worth mentioning is the official visit of Costas Karamanlis to Turkey on 23–25 January 2007 (the previous visit by a Greek premier was by Karamanlis's illustrious uncle 49 years previously, in the spring of 1959).⁶³ By all accounts the trip went smoothly, although there were no tangible results. It was reaffirmed that the existing good relations (for this read *détente*) were still alive and that a final reconciliation was the goal of both sides.⁶⁴

Until early 2009, the only worthwhile positive development came from an unexpectedly quarter: the eternal Cyprus affair. In the presidential elections in the Republic of Cyprus (February 2008), the intransigent incumbent Tassos Papadopoulos surprisingly lost to the leader of AKEL (the communist party), Dimitris Christofias. The new president made it abundantly clear that he had sought the presidency in order to resolve the Cyprus conflict and would strive to achieve this in a sincere dialogue

with his former comrade, Mehmet Ali Talât, the Turkish Cypriot leader. The two leaders have met on many occasions and a number of working groups have been set up, each one tackling a separate item, in order to pave the way for a comprehensive solution of reunification within the framework of a binational, bizonal federation of two equal partners.⁶⁵ Clearly, any positive development on the Cyprus issue could only benefit Greek-Turkish relations and the settlement of the Aegean dispute, but a final solution is far from assured, as the rejectionists on both sides are dragging their feet.

A ray of hope: recent developments

With the Cyprus settlement hanging in the balance, 2009 has brought a ray of hope that the two sides may be forced to move ahead once more, be it on the Aegean or on the other ongoing problems. A new possible window of opportunity may be in the making as a result of three developments.

The first new development is indirect. It is the more active and friendly foreign policy of Turkey towards its neighbours to the east and south, notably Syria and even Armenia,⁶⁶ and its expressed willingness to eliminate differences with all of its neighbours.⁶⁷ This proactive approach is obvious even on the most delicate of issues, the Kurdish problem, where a dialogue of sorts has opened, with a view to resolving the problem peacefully (apparently the Turkish General Staff, now under General Ilker Basbug, has been convinced to go along with this).⁶⁸ Undoubtedly, this welcome new approach by the Erdoğan government also has Turkey's EU prospects very much in mind.

If one individual is to be credited for this development in Turkey's international behaviour, it is Ahmet Davutoğlu, an international relations professor, who became foreign minister in May 2009. Davutoğlu (who had previously served as the main foreign policy adviser to Erdoğan and Gül)⁶⁹ has been known since his academic days for his doctrine of 'strategic depth' (*stratejik derinlik*), in the sense that Turkey, due to its historical presence in the region (given the legacy of the Ottoman Empire) and its geographical position as a 'pivotal/central country', should play an active and positive role in the area, not least in the Middle East. According to Davutoğlu, this active involvement would not distance Turkey from the EU, but would do the very opposite, paradoxical as it may seem. It would enhance Ankara's EU prospects, as the EU with Turkey on board – a constructive and benign Turkey of course – would wield much greater clout internationally, geopolitically and otherwise. Davutoğlu has also been associated with the concept of

neo-Ottomanism, a concept coined by columnist and academic Cengiz Çandar in the early 1990s, who called for a more 'diversified foreign policy in the region based on the Ottoman historical heritage'.⁷⁰ Davutoğlu for his part has stated that he is not an advocate of neo-Ottomanism but of 'zero problems' with Turkey's neighbours. Apparently he is not a supporter of a neo-Ottomanism that implies Turkish assertiveness of the kind that is threatening to its neighbours (as is traditionally understood in Greece).⁷¹

Turkey's new role and confidence is not unrelated to the importance attached to it by the new US administration of Barack Obama, which is the second new development. Obama, who visited Turkey early on upon taking office (on 6 April 2009), considers Turkey an invaluable ally, a major stabilising force in this volatile region and a model of democracy for Islamic societies; as such, he is keen for Turkey to enter the EU.⁷² US foreign policy priorities may be further to the east (Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and North Korea) and less attention may be focused on what Washington considers to be fairly manageable disputes, such as Cyprus and the Aegean Greek-Turkish conflict. But the Obama administration has shown interest on both counts and has made clear its preference for final solutions in the not too distant future. In July 2009, a non-paper was delivered by the US embassy to the Karamanlis government, setting out the Aegean issues and urging an overall settlement, and in November 2009 this call was reiterated through NATO channels, again advising an eventual settlement of the Aegean dispute, so as to avoid any incident that would get out of hand and damage NATO.

The third recent development that may reactivate the Greek-Turkish talks in the Aegean, shepherd the Cyprus talks and steady the wobbly détente is the Greek change of government, following a handsome victory of PASOK by a wide margin (more than 10 per cent of the vote) in elections held on 5 October 2009. The new Greek premier, George Papandreou, is well-known for his views on resolving the Cyprus problem, the Aegean and Greek-Turkish affairs, since his days as foreign minister, then as one of the main architects of the surprising Greek-Turkish thaw. Papandreou took the unusual step of keeping the foreign ministry portfolio to himself, which indicates that he wants to run a tight ship and rouse Greece from its slumber in international affairs. One of his first acts internationally was to visit Turkey, on the occasion of an informal meeting of the foreign ministers of the SEECF (South-East European Cooperation Process) held in Istanbul (9 October) and while in the country, he made a number of gestures that were duly appreciated by the Turkish public.⁷³ However, Papandreou is bound

to tread carefully on all three major foreign policy issues that Greece has on its plate – the Aegean, Cyprus and the vexing Macedonian question – to avoid running the risk of being branded soft on national issues at a time when there is a nationalist backlash in Greece (and in Turkey for that matter).

Notes

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3. Heinz-Jürgen Axt (1999), 'The Island of Cyprus and the European Union', in Clement H. Dodd (ed.), *Cyprus: The Need for New Perspectives* (London: The Eothen Press), pp. 174–94; Christopher Brewin (2000), *The European Union and Cyprus* (Huntingdon: The Eothen Press); Thomas Diez (2002), 'Last Exit to Paradise? The European Union, the Cyprus Conflict and the Problematic "Catalytic Effect"', in Thomas Diez (ed.), *The European Union and the Cyprus Conflict* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 139–62.
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5. Ker-Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 57–67.
6. Ker-Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 68–71.
7. Heraclides, op. cit., pp. 19–22; Evin, op. cit., p. 8; Kirişçi, op. cit., p. 20. See also the testimony of Cem, in Ismail Cem (2004), *Türkiye Avrupa Avrasya* [Turkey, Europe, Eurasia] (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları), pp. 119–28.
8. İlter Türkmen (2002), 'Prooptikes gia tis ellinoturkikes scheseis' [Prospects for Greek-Turkish Relations], in Thanos Veremis and Thanos Dokos (eds), *I syghroni Tourkia* [Contemporary Turkey] (Athens: Papazisis), pp. 636–7; Heraclides, op. cit., pp. 17–21; Tozun Bahcheli (2004), 'Turning a New Page in Turkey's Relations with Greece? The Challenge of Reconciling Vital Interests', in Mustafa Aydın

- and Kostas Ifantis (eds), *Turkish-Greek Relations: The Security Dilemma in Aegean* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group), p. 95; Evin, op. cit., p. 8; Kirişçi, op. cit., p. 20; Öniş and Yılmaz, op. cit., p. 127; Ker-Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 39–41.
9. Cem's letter can be found at www.greekturkishforum.org. Date accessed 10 January 2002. Also quoted in length in Ker-Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 45–7, 123–4.
 10. See previous note.
 11. Cem, op. cit., p. 120.
 12. Papandreou's letter can be found at www.greekturkishforum.org. Date accessed 10 January 2002. See also Ker-Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 50–1, 124–6.
 13. Cem, op. cit., p. 123.
 14. David Mitrany (1966) [1943], *A Working Peace System* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books).
 15. For the Steering Committee and Task Force, see Heraclides, op. cit., pp. 23–4. For the first CBMs, see Panayotis J. Tsakonas (2001), 'Turkey's Post-Helsinki Turbulence: Implications for Greece and the Cyprus Issue', *Turkish Studies*, 2, 2, pp. 26, 29, note 109.
 16. Heinz-Jürgen Axt (2005), 'Relations with Turkey and the Impact of the European Union', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 5, 3, pp. 366–8.
 17. Costas Simitis (2005), *Politiki gia mia dimiourgiki Ellada, 1996–2004* [Politics for a Creative Greece, 1996–2004] (Athens: Polis), pp. 92–3.
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 19. European Council, *Helsinki European Council Presidency Conclusions*, 10–11 December 1990.
 20. Simitis, op. cit., pp. 99–101; George Papandreou (2000) 'Ellinotourkikes scheseis, apo ti syngrousi sti synergasia kai tin oikodomisi tis Europis tou 21ou aiona' [Greek-Turkish Relations, from Conflict to Cooperation and the Building of the Europe of the 21st Century], *Anaskopisi Amyntikis kai Exoterikis Politikis*, ELIAMEP, pp. 30–1.
 21. Ker-Lindsay, op. cit., p. 100.
 22. See in particular the criticism of the main foreign policy spokesman of the ND, Moliviatis, in Petros Moliviatis (2000), 'Protaseis gia tin exoteriki politiki' [Proposals on Foreign Policy], *Anaskopisi Amyntikis kai Exoterikis Politikis*, ELIAMEP, p. 75.
 23. Türkmen, op. cit., p. 638; Bahcheli, op. cit., pp. 100–1; Bahcheli (2003), 'Cycles of Tension and Rapprochement: Prospects for Turkey's Relations with Greece', in Tareq I. Ismael and Mustafa Aydın (eds), *Turkey's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: A Changing Role in World Politics* (Burlington: Ashgate), pp. 174–5; Ycel Acer (2003), *The Aegean Maritime Disputes and International Law* (Aldershot: Ashgate), pp. 58–9; Kirişçi, op. cit., pp. 20–2; Ker-Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 99–100.
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 25. For this aspect, see in particular Panayiotis Ioakimidis (2000), 'The Europeanisation of Greece's Foreign Policy: Progress and Problems', in A. Mitsos and E. Mossialos (eds), *Contemporary Greece and Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate); and

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26. Kirişçi, op. cit., p. 29.
 27. Rumelili, op. cit.; Rumelili (2003), 'Liminality and Perpetuation of Conflicts: Turkish-Greek Relations in the Context of Community-Building by the EU', *European Journal of International Relations*, 9, 2, pp. 213–48; Ker-Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 115–9; Panayotis J. Tsakonas (2010), *The Incomplete Breakthrough in Greek-Turkish Relations: Grasping Greece's Socialization Strategy* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
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 29. See the account by Panayotis Tsakonas, which is based on several interviews with Costas Simitis, in Tsakonas op. cit.
 30. Tsakonas, op. cit.
 31. H. Tarık Oğuzlu (2004), 'The Latest Greek-Turkish Détente: Instrumentalist Play for European Membership or Long-term Institutional Cooperation', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 17, 2, pp. 338, 347–9.
 32. Türkmen, op. cit., p. 637; Cem, op. cit., pp. 82, 91–2, 120; Erol Kurubaş (2002), 'Türk-Yunan İlişkilerinde Neo-Detant Dönemi ve İlişkilerin Geleceği' [The Period of New Détente in Turkish-Greek Relations and the Future of the Relationship], in Birgül Demirtaş-Coşkun (ed.), *Türkiye-Yunanistan, Eski Sorunlar, Yeni Arayışlar* [Turkey-Greece, Old Problems, New Quests] (Ankara: ASAM), pp. 1–2, 15–24; Birgül Demirtaş-Coşkun (2002), 'Ankara-Atina İlişkilerinde Son Dönem: Değişenler ve Değişmeyenler' [The Last Period of Relations between Ankara and Athens: The Things That Change and the Things That Do Not Change], in Demirtaş-Coşkun (ed.), op. cit., pp. 202–6; Gülden Ayman (2004), 'Negotiation and Deterrence in Asymmetrical Power Situations: The Turkish-Greek Case', in Aydın and Ifantis (eds), op. cit., pp. 227–34; Bahçeli, 'Turning a New Page in Turkey's Relations with Greece?', op. cit., pp. 98–101, 115–16; William Hale (2002), *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774–2000* (London: Frank Cass) pp. 258, 355; Kirişçi, op. cit., pp. 12, 19, 29–38; Acer, op. cit., *passim*.
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 34. Cem, op. cit., pp. 82–3, 94–102, 105–9.
 35. Melek Firat (2006), 'Soguk Savas Sonrası Türk-Yunan İlişkilerinde Değişim' [The Transformation of Turkish-Greek Relations in the Post-Cold War Era], in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (eds), *Bes Deniz Havzasında Türkiye* [Turkey and the Five Sea Basin] (Ankara: Siyasal), pp. 271–3.
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 38. Kirişçi, op. cit., pp. 12–21, 29–37.
 39. Kirişçi, op. cit., pp. 18–9.
 40. Kirişçi, op. cit., p. 29.
 41. Heraclides, op. cit., pp. 20–1; Gilles Bertrand (2003), *Le conflit hellénoturc: la confrontation des deux nationalismes à l'aube d XXIe siècle* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose), pp. 273–310; Bahar Rumelili (2005), 'Civil Society

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 44. Soli Özel (2004), 'Rapprochement on Non-Governmental Level: The Story of the Turkish-Greek Forum', in Aydın and Ifantis, op. cit., pp. 269–90.
 45. Based on information gathered by the author on the basis of non-attribution.
 46. For a thorough presentation of the activity of the GTF see Özel, op. cit., pp. 269–90; and Costas Zepos (2003), 'Intervention', in Stelios Perrakis (ed.), *Aigaio: exelixeis kai prooptikes epilyxis ton ellinotourkikon dienexeon* [The Aegean: Developments and Prospects for the Resolution of the Greek-Turkish Disputes] (Athens: Sakkoulas), pp. 144–5. Also based on discussions of the author with ambassador Costas Zepos and Paulina Lampsa.
 47. GTF participant Paulina Lampsa provided me with this vignette. Apparently Papandreou had in mind the conflict resolution workshops involving private individuals that are distant from their respective governments, a procedure adopted by conflict analyst Herbert Kelman and others (see e.g. Herbert Kelman (1976), 'The Problem-Solving Workshop: A Social Psychological Contribution to the Resolution of International Conflicts', *Journal of Peace Research*, 13, 2). But if one was to follow the original more ambitious version of a problem-solving workshop introduced by John Burton in the mid-1960s, then the GTF is clearly Track 2. Burton's workshop involves personalities on either side that hold no official position in the respective governments but are very close to the top leaders and their views regarding the ongoing conflict (the first such workshop by Burton was on the Cyprus conflict in 1966). See John W. Burton (1969), *Conflict and Communication: The Use of Controlled Communication in International Relations* (London: Macmillan); Burton (1972), 'Resolution of Conflict', *International Studies Quarterly*, 16, 1.
 48. 'Report on Suggested Confidence Building Measures and Crisis Avoidance Measures', at www.greekturkishforum.org. Date accessed 10 June 2000.
 49. Ibid. For the text in question, see also Özel, op. cit., pp. 286–9.
 50. Özel, op. cit., pp. 286–9.
 51. Based on discussions of the author with ambassadors İlter Türkmen in Istanbul (in December 2007) and Costas Zepos on several occasions in the course of 2005–8.

52. In 2006, Bölükbaşı was elected to the Turkish Assembly on a Nationalist Action Party (MHP) ticket.
53. Ayman, op. cit., p. 235.
54. Simitis, op. cit., p. 104; George Papandreou's interview in *Ethnos* (9 October 2006). Also based on discussions of the author with Professor Rozakis.
55. See the following credible reports in the Greek press: Irini Karanasopoulou, in *Ta Nea* (3 June 2006 and 10 June 2006); Alexis Papahelas, in *To Vima* (11 June 2006); and Dora Antoniou, in *Kathimerini* (20 May 2007). See also George Papandreou's interview in *Ethnos* (9 October 2006) and the testimony of Professor Haris Pamboukis, a close adviser of George Papandreou, in *Eleftherotypia* (11 June 2006). See also the revealing though guarded remarks of Costas Simitis in Simitis, op. cit., pp. 102–4.
56. Moliviatis, op. cit., pp. 71–6.
57. Based on discussions of the author in 2005 with officials close to the Greek foreign minister and to the deputy foreign minister, Yiannis Valinakis.
58. Simitis, op. cit., p. 105.
59. See Bakoyiannis's interview in *Eleftherotypia* (7 October 2007).
60. For a thorough presentation of various aspects of the Turkey-EU debate, see Hakan Yılmaz (ed.) (2005), *Placing Turkey on the Map of Europe* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Press); Hakan Yılmaz (2009), 'Europeanisation and its Discontents: Turkey, 1959–2007', in Constantine Arvanitopoulos (ed.), *Turkey's Accession to the European Union: An Unusual Candidacy* (Berlin: Springer). See more generally other chapters in Arvanitopoulos (ed), op. cit.
61. Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz (2009), 'Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era', *Turkish Studies*, 10, 1, p. 15.
62. Ibid., pp. 7–24.
63. According to the Turkish foreign ministry, the visit 'carried symbolic significance as it was the first visit of a Greek Prime Minister in the last 49 years'. See www.mfa.gov.tr, 'Turkish-Greek Relations', subchapter 'The Rapprochement Process', date accessed 21 November 2009.
64. Based on discussions of the author with senior Greek diplomats present at the visit.
65. See International Crisis Group, 'Reunifying Cyprus: The Best Chance Yet', Report no. 194 (23 June 2008); and United Nations, Security Council, 'Update Report on Cyprus', no. 1 (28 April 2009) and no. 2 (19 May 2009).
66. See 'Turkish-Armenian Relations: Football Diplomacy', *The Economist* (5 September 2009), pp. 33–4; 'Turkey and Armenia: Bones to Pick', *The Economist* (10 October 2009), p. 33.
67. See for instance, 'Turkish Foreign Policy: Dreams from their Fathers', *The Economist* (25 July 2009), pp. 23–4.
68. See 'Turkey and the Kurds: Peace Time?', *The Economist* (29 August 2009), p. 25; 'Turkey and the Kurds: Return of the Natives', *The Economist* (24 October 2009), p. 35; 'Turkey and the Kurds: Peace in Sight?', *The Economist* (14 November 2009), pp. 38–9.
69. See 'Turkish Foreign Policy: An Eminence Grise', *The Economist* (17 November 2007), p. 38.
70. Alexander Murinson (2006), 'The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 42, 6, p. 946.

71. See Ahmed Davutoğlu (2001), *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* [Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Standing] (Istanbul: Kure Yayınları). For succinct presentations in English of Davutoğlu's approach, see the following: Murinson, op. cit., pp. 946–53, 960–1; Öniş and Yılmaz, 'Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism', op. cit., pp. 9, 12–14; Pinar Bilgin (2007), "Only Strong States can Survive in Turkey's Geography": The Use of "Geopolitical Truths" in Turkey', *Political Geography*, 26, p. 749.
72. See 'America, Europe and Turkey: Talking Turkey', *The Economist* (11 April 2009), p. 16; and 'Turkey and Barack Obama: Friends by the Bosphorus', *The Economist* (11 April 2009), p. 28.
73. See Papandreu's speech to the informal SEECF meeting of foreign ministers and statement to the Turkish media at www.papandreu.gr, date accessed 30 October 2009.

Part III

The Legal Dimension of the Aegean Conflict

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11

The Continental Shelf

The Aegean continental shelf dispute involves the delimitation of the respective sovereign rights of the two countries in the Aegean seabed and its subsoil.

The legal concept of continental shelf emerged following the Second World War. It consists of the continental margin beyond the territorial waters.¹ The Geneva 1958 Convention on the Continental Shelf defines the continental shelf as: '(a) ... the sea-bed and subsoil of the submarine areas adjacent to the coast but outside the area of the territorial sea, to a depth of 200 metres, or beyond that limit, to where the depth of the superjacent waters admits of the exploitation of the natural resources of the said areas; (b) ... the sea-bed and subsoil of similar areas adjacent to the coasts of islands.'² Only small islets and rocks that cannot sustain human and economic life do not enjoy a continental shelf, as reiterated in the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea (Article 121).³

The 3rd UN Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS-III) re-examined the concept in view of developments in technology that permitted extraction at a depth of more than 1000 metres. Article 76, paragraph 1 of the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea defines the concept to mean the seabed and subsoil areas 'to the outer edge of the continental margin, or to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured'.⁴ Continental shelves afford 'sovereign rights' and not sovereignty (a compromise in Geneva between the supporters of sovereignty and those in favour of functional jurisdiction and control),⁵ with the above waters remaining open seas. The sovereign rights of the coastal state are 'exclusive', in the sense that if a state does not exploit its natural resources, 'no one may undertake these activities, or make a claim to the continental shelf' (Article 2 of the 1958 Convention).⁶

The respective arguments and their limitations

The first Greek *démarche* (February 1974) states that the rights awarded by Turkey to the state-owned petroleum company TPAO cover 'Greek continental shelf' as they include areas to the west of Greek islands in the Aegean. Greece argued that: (a) islands have continental shelves like mainlands (1958 Geneva Convention); (b) in the absence of an agreement between neighbouring states, the median line applies, which in this case would be equidistant between the Greek islands of the eastern Aegean and the Turkish coastline; and (c) that in the case of the Aegean, no special circumstances applied not permitting the application of the median line.⁷

Turkey counter-argued that: (a) the Greek islands of the eastern Aegean are formations on Anatolia's natural prolongation, as seen by the shallowness of the waters in the region between the Turkish coastline and the islands, so they are not entitled to a continental shelf; otherwise Turkey will find itself in the absurd position of not enjoying a continental shelf at all in the Aegean Sea on its very own natural prolongation; (b) the equidistance principle is inappropriate when special circumstances apply, as is the case with the Greek islands of the Aegean by the Turkish coastline; (c) these islands, together with the fact that the Aegean is a 'semi-closed sea', call for an agreement on delimitation between the two opposite states; and (d) any solution should lead to an equitable result, with both states enjoying a continental shelf in the Aegean Sea.⁸

Ever since then, the two parties have stuck to their original positions with some further elaborations. According to Greece, the equidistance principle and full rights for islands are also rules of customary international law, hence they bind non-signatories such as Turkey. Delimitation does not concern the Aegean open sea as a whole, but only 'the underwater prolongation of the Thracian border' and the islands of the eastern Aegean. It is claimed that Turkey wants 'to acquire continental shelf rights to the west of the Greek islands' in order to 'ensnare them in an area under Turkish jurisdiction'.⁹ 'Special' or 'relevant' circumstances do not apply to continental shelves. The Greek islands are so numerous and close to each other that they form 'an integrated whole, geographically, politically and economically with the rest of the Greek space'.¹⁰ Greece's sovereignty cannot be split into two parts by the interposition of Turkish continental shelf. This preoccupation was evident in the failed Greek attempt at UNCLOS-III to have archipelago regimes extended to countries that are not archipelago states.¹¹

As for equity, as invoked by Turkey, it is a smokescreen intended to conceal Turkey's revisionist aims.¹²

Turkey points out that the eastern islands cannot have full effect, as otherwise Turkey, with almost 3000 miles of coastline (*façade*), would end up having no continental shelf in the Aegean Sea. Thus, a more logical initial provisional boundary is the median line between the two mainlands. The Aegean is a textbook case of a 'semi-closed sea', namely of a sea in which the actions of one state 'with respect of its offshore areas may clearly affect the interests of other littoral states'.¹³ At UNCLOS-III, the Turkish delegation tried to include natural prolongation as a criterion of delimitation. Since this specification was not included, Turkey is not bound by provisions that could be read as implying that the median line applies more or less automatically, even between offshore islands and mainlands. In any event, it is inconceivable for Greece to demand a delimitation that harms the vital national interests of a neighbour and NATO ally.¹⁴

Apart from the obvious attraction of the prospects of oil and gas, the continental shelf dispute is also an expression of the deep-seated fears on both sides of the Aegean Sea. On the Greek side, there is the fear that if Turkish continental shelf surrounds Greek islands, this could undermine Greece's sovereignty in these islands. This is the case, according to Greece, as Turkey has never fully accepted the fact that the eastern Aegean islands were acquired by Greece.¹⁵ On the Turkish side, the main fear is that of being left out of the Aegean continental shelf altogether, due to the relentless Greeks, always on the alert to grasp every conceivable opportunity to extend their maritime boundaries eastwards.

Obviously, the respective flagship arguments (the equidistance and unilateral delimitation, and natural prolongation) have done little to dispel these anxieties. Thus, let us see what international law and practice have to say on the matter.

In clear-cut cases, when a state faces an open sea or ocean, a continental shelf may be drawn by the state concerned on its own. However, in instances of opposite states (states facing each other), the normal practice is to agree on the median line between their two shores as the boundary. This principle of equidistance is set out in Article 6 of the Geneva Convention in the following terms: 'In the absence of an agreement, and unless another boundary is justified by special circumstances, the boundary shall be determined by application of the principle of equidistance.'¹⁶ This article is reproduced almost verbatim in the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea (Articles 15 and 83). Special circumstances 'such as the presence of offshore islands or the general configuration of the coast, or claims to

water areas based upon historical title, will demand the adoption of some other boundary line'.¹⁷ Since islands 'could generate their own continental shelf, a single small offshore island could create massive distortions in the line of equidistance that would be produced by considering only the coast of the mainland'.¹⁸ Put differently, if such islands have 'full effect' instead of more diminished effect (half effect or less), the equidistance principle will produce an unjust delimitation, especially if certain islands are on the 'wrong side' of the median line between the two mainland territories.¹⁹

As for natural prolongation of a continental territory, it is one of the possible 'relevant circumstances' that can be taken into consideration in an adjudication, together with other geological features, such as a deep trench which gives rise to discontinuity in the seabed, in order to assure an equitable delimitation among two or more states. This criterion was applied in the very first ICJ decision of this nature, the North Sea continental shelf case (1969), relating to Germany, but since then no arbitration or ICJ decision has taken it on board, even when invoked by a party to a continental shelf dispute.²⁰

A procedural dispute and its misreading

As Christos Rozakis has pointed out, the dispute 'has acquired the character of a "procedural" dispute, in the sense that although both parties have adhered adamantly to their original positions as expressed in the 1974 exchange of notes, their main preoccupation has been to agree on the method of settlement of their dispute'.²¹ Greece clings to the idea of recourse to the ICJ, while Turkey insists on a negotiated agreement.

The starting point for Athens is that 'the only issue' to be resolved in the Aegean is the delimitation of the continental shelf. Ankara, in its attempt to change the status of the Aegean as a whole, 'disputes Greek sovereignty' and has come out with a series of preposterous claims regarding six more issues, which Greece is not prepared to discuss.²² Turkey rejects the Greek *à la carte* approach of 'one difference-one solution' as baseless. Such an attitude slams the door on the prospect of talks that could lead to a solution of the continental shelf issue and of the other well-known outstanding differences in the Aegean.²³

Indeed, holding on only to the continental shelf as if no other dispute existed (a legacy of Andreas Papandreou) is untenable and has been increasingly criticised in Greece in recent years.²⁴ Thus, the retention of 'one difference-one solution' should rather be seen as a negotiating posture.²⁵

Going back to the procedural difference, this has led to a number of misperceptions. Greek experts, with almost no exception,²⁶ are convinced

that negotiations are a bad thing. The continued preference of Turkey for negotiations further reinforces this Greek belief. Presumably Turkey, with the law against it, hedges its bets on negotiations in the hope of wielding its greater power (geopolitical, military and otherwise) to its advantage.

Turkey for its part is impressed by the Greek insistence on adjudication and jumps to the conclusion that the Greeks must know what they are doing; that the international law of the sea is indeed on the Greek side. The cards are stacked against Turkey as a result of developments in the law of the sea, which did little to enhance justice by the adoption of unfair provisions favouring Greece. In fact, Athens has been pursuing, since the mid-1950s, a policy of legalistic piecemeal expansion, by first of all securing the adoption of as many convenient legal provisions as possible in international law (as with the idea of continental shelf to islands, the equidistance principle or the 12 miles of territorial sea), which in turn seem to give Greece the right to expand in the Aegean at Turkey's expense.

In recent years, Turkish legal experts have not failed to notice that most of the court decisions regard offshore islands as special or relevant circumstances, giving them half effect or less. Yet most Turks in key positions remain uneasy with adjudication. Why is this the case? Firstly, 'the continental shelf issue is of such vital importance to Turkey that responsibility for its resolution cannot be placed in the hands of others',²⁷ even if they are presumably equidistant judges. Moreover, Ankara could accept recourse to adjudication only if it was absolutely certain that international law was on its side; otherwise such a venture would be a gamble that no Turkish government in its right mind could risk.²⁸ More generally, adjudication is seen as a zero-sum game 'in which one side would emerge the victor and the other side the vanquished'.²⁹ But above all, Turkey is apprehensive because it feels that an international judiciary organ will simply not do its job properly. It would favour the Greeks, who have a better international reputation than them.³⁰

As for the hidden charm of adjudication (a Greek argument since the 1970s), that it conveniently causes less domestic criticism compared to any agreed settlement, it is far from watertight. In the event of an unfavourable court decision, the home public and opposition could bring the government to its knees for not having adequately defended the country in court and for having gone to court in the first place. The irony is that even a fair and equitable decision could be seen as unjust, due to exaggerated expectations. Under the circumstances, one or both

sides could try to wriggle out of the decision or harden their position on the other Aegean disputes or concoct yet another difference.³¹

Adjudication and case law

In general, adjudication is chosen sparingly by states as a method of settlement of disputes in comparison to negotiations or mediation. This is the case for a variety of reasons, but above all because a third party is entrusted to arrive at a final and irrevocable decision (and an unpredictable one at that) on an important matter, something which most governments would find difficult to accept.³²

However, in the case of the delimitation of continental shelves, which is by its nature a technical legal matter, adjudication has been utilised. Decisions by adjudication are authoritative and irrevocable (particularly those of the ICJ). Continental shelf cases are classic instances of 'judge-made law', in the sense that courts, in applying law, also improvise and develop it, in view of the fact that all delimitations have unique geographical characteristics that could not have been foreseen by the international law of the sea, whose provisions are general in nature.³³

Ideally, two parties opt for adjudication in order to resolve a maritime dispute and remove a bone of contention in their neighbourly relations. Of course, few parties would be prepared to seek adjudication if they predict a resounding defeat. What is more than clear is that neither party should be drawn into such a process without its express will (contrary to what Greece attempted in 1976 with its unilateral recourse to the ICJ). A joint recourse ensures that the decision, however unsavoury to one side, will be implemented, for even though court decisions, particularly those of the ICJ, are binding and final, one cannot be absolutely certain of implementation. All in all, courts are better suited when the dispute is clear-cut and legal in nature and when relations between two states are cordial.³⁴ If relations between two states are problematic, if the matter is part of a wider conflict between them and if the issue is seen as being of vital importance, involving sovereignty or the very survival of the state or nation, then recourse to adjudication is unlikely.

To date, there have been some 12 such court decisions, seven emanating from the ICJ and five from arbitrations. The main task of adjudication is to arrive at a just, 'equitable' solution. In its wider connotation, equity implies a just outcome. In this sense, it falls under the 'general principles of law', that is, one of the three main sources of international law, together with conventional (treaty) law and international custom.³⁵ The 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea refers to equity in the context of

the delimitation of continental shelves (Article 83). Furthermore, equity is expressly mentioned as the basis for delineation in more than half of the adjudications that have taken place and the spirit of equity (in the sense of a fair outcome) pervades all court decisions.³⁶

Equity also appears in a narrower sense, in what is known as *ex aequo et bono*, meaning tolerance (Article 38, paragraph 2 of the Statute of the ICJ). This version of equity is intended to mitigate the harshness of law in a particular case (following the Roman maxim *summum jus summum injuria*). It could even be made to overstep law (*contra legem*), provided that the parties submitting their case to adjudication expressly agree to such an extra-legal course. Obviously, *ex aequo et bono* brings considerable unpredictability as to the outcome, so it is not surprising that to date no parties jointly submitting their case to the ICJ or arbitration have put it on the table, with the exception of one case in the inter-War period, which was not accepted by the ICJ.³⁷

Until very recently, Greece took Turkey's insistence on equity as meaning *ex aequo et bono*, that it was trying to impose a delimitation of the continental shelf beyond the purview of the law of the sea and of international law as a whole. In the 1970s, Greece's fear was probably not completely unfounded, as in those days, with the new law of the sea still in the making, Turkey seemed to oscillate between the wider and the narrower meaning of equity (though the latter may have been intended to nip adjudication in the bud).

Reverting to case law, the ICJ and arbitral courts have refrained from setting out concrete principles for delimitation. However, we have a rough picture of how they go about their task. They start by defining the relevant region to be delimited, then they identify the geographical parameters, the coastline, islands and so on. In instances of states with opposite coasts, they usually draw a provisional boundary on the basis of the equidistance principle, however defined. As far as possible, a court avoids choosing 'as a boundary a line that encroaches on or cuts off areas that more naturally belong to one party than the other'.³⁸ Then there are 'special' and 'relevant circumstances', on the basis of which the provisional boundary is altered accordingly so as to end up with an equitable outcome.³⁹

The two notions, though similar, are not identical. 'Special circumstances' is based on Article 6 of the 1958 Geneva Convention and includes three instances: exceptional configuration, presence of islands and navigable channels.⁴⁰

Relevant circumstances overlap with special circumstances in two instances (the presence of islands and exceptional configuration), but they are much wider in scope. According to Churchill and Lowe's classic treatise

on the law of the sea, several such circumstances 'can be identified with some confidence as there has been a degree of consistency in the case law'.⁴¹ One such relevant circumstance is the configuration of the coast (as seen in the North Sea continental shelf case and the Tunisia/Libya case). A second circumstance is the presence of islands, which are usually given half effect, less than half effect or none at all if they are small and on the 'wrong side' of the median boundary between the mainlands (as with the Kerkennah islands in the Tunisia/Libya case and the Channel Islands in the Anglo-French case). Full effect is exceptionally afforded when small islands form part of a wider insular state (as in the Libya/Malta case). A third relevant circumstance is the relative length of the two coastlines. In order to assure proportionality on the basis of each country's coastline, the median boundary line may be adjusted to come closer to the state whose coastline is less (as in the Libya/Malta case and the Greenland/Jan Mayen case between Denmark and Norway). A fourth circumstance is the prior conduct of the parties, such as having agreed on a provisional boundary line, and by doing so having granted offshore oil and gas concessions up to a point beyond which no party is allowed to drill (as in the Tunisia/Libya case). A fifth relevant circumstance that may be considered is the issue of security. A sixth circumstance is natural prolongation, as seen in the North Sea continental shelf case (without this criterion, Germany would have been awarded a minimal continental shelf).⁴²

International courts have considerable discretion as to the criteria (special and relevant circumstances) to be applied, hence results are unpredictable. Courts avoid win-lose decisions. They strive to 'split the difference' between the positions of the two sides as to the delimitation boundary.⁴³ Thus, each party gets a 'partial loaf' rather than a 'full loaf'.⁴⁴ Court decisions are designed 'to establish a result that both parties can live with, albeit reluctantly'.⁴⁵ This may sound unsatisfactory from the point of view of law and its strict application, but what good would it do to arrive at an impeccable legal decision that leads to blows?⁴⁶ Furthermore, one should bear in mind that when two parties resort to an international court, they do so presumably because they believe they have a sound case and are unlikely to end up with net losses. As such, splitting the difference appears logical. Alternatively, if both sides produce far-fetched arguments and have an equally bad case, splitting the difference may again do the trick nicely.

The Aegean continental shelf: delimitation?

The Aegean is one of the most complex settings imaginable for continental shelf delimitation, in view of its intricate geography and the

large number of islands. As such, it poses a considerable challenge to the prospective arbitrator. A court decision on the Aegean will almost certainly be a landmark case.⁴⁷ However, in the Aegean case, 'the impossibility to reach an agreement – or to submit the difference to a third party settlement – is not due to the difficulties as such but to political reasons',⁴⁸ to the existing tense relations.

For Turkey and Greece, there are three main options ahead: (1) to live the matter unresolved *sine die*, preferably by adopting a moratorium, (2) joint exploitation and (3) taking the plunge: delimitation.

The first option may be advisable because oil and gas in the Aegean subsoil is probably not financially worth extracting. Environmental reasons are also of importance: not polluting the Aegean Sea, one of the few less polluted seas in the world (and imagine what a number of ugly rigs sprinkled around the Aegean would do to the beauty of the sea and its picturesque islands and coastline). Another reason for leaving matters to rest with an extended moratorium is that any court decision or agreement is bound to be difficult to swallow for one side or for both.

Joint exploitation may have a positive influence, encouraging cooperation and interaction, functioning as a 'superordinate goal', according to the concept introduced by social psychologist Mujafer Sherif more than four decades ago.⁴⁹ Superordinate goals are vital needs that cannot be reached by one side alone, but require both adversaries' efforts, jointly, in order to be met. In such a joint effort, a conflict may lose its resonance and relations could become smoother between rivals. But then again, in the Greek-Turkish case, where mutual distrust is almost congenital, close collaboration might have the opposite result, giving ample ground for misunderstandings and friction on an almost daily basis.

Neighbouring states have agreed on joint exploitation without both-ering to delimitate the continental shelf, but in these instances exploitation is unlikely, as oil companies are reluctant to invest in disputed regions.⁵⁰ Moreover, in the Aegean, some percentage must be agreed upon beforehand as a 50–50 solution to the profits would clearly be unjust to Greece. Thus, the issue of delimitation inevitably arises. There are also instances where exploitation is part of a wider agreement on delimitation, as in the case of France and Spain (regarding an area of some 800 square miles in the Bay of Biscay). More common are the instances of joint exploitation when oil or gas fields are discovered straddling an already agreed boundary, as between Britain and Norway or Abu Dhabi and Qatar. Thus, in most instances of joint exploitation, prior delimitation is a prerequisite.⁵¹

Therefore, we arrive at the third option, delimitation. To begin with, a number of principles or guidelines are worth setting out at the very beginning that could be included in a bilateral agreement through negotiations or in a *compromis* if the dispute is submitted to adjudication. Given the legal intricacies of the whole affair and the fact that both sides have 'a reasonably valid case',⁵² perhaps adjudication could also be more advisable than negotiations in view of the domestic factor (where the public is bound to see any negotiated settlement as akin to a sell-out). As we have seen, considerable ground has been covered in this regard in the Greek-Turkish dialogue of 1978–81. In particular, the original equidistance approach shown by Greece is far-fetched and would not lead to an equitable result, for it excludes Turkey from the Aegean seabed. In this sense, a unilateral move of extension of the Greek territorial sea to 12 miles so as to capture most of the continental shelf is also out of the question. Equally, the median line between the two mainland territories, a line preferred by Turkey, would not contribute to reaching an equitable result, since there are almost 3000 Greek islands, many of them inhabited, and the percentage of the coastline (of the islands and mainland) is at a ratio of four to one in favour of Greece.⁵³

As food for thought, we will refer to two attempts at arriving at delimitation by Andrew Wilson and Donald Karl.

Wilson is known for his 'fingers' approach. Accordingly, Turkish continental shelf would extend westwards from the existing four openings of Turkey to the open sea in the Aegean: between Samothrace and Lemnos, Lemnos and Lesbos, Lesbos and Chios, and Chios and Samos. The four fingers are intended to deal effectively with the non-encroachment of Greek islands by Turkish continental shelf.⁵⁴ Apparently, however, the four fingers fall below what Turkey feels it is entitled to, which is some 30–35 per cent of the Aegean seabed under the open sea.⁵⁵ Perhaps instead of fingers, 'nails' or 'arrows' could be drawn, making sure that the head of the nail or tip of the arrow does not encircle Greek islands.⁵⁶

Karl divides the Greek islands into three groups: those with full effect, half effect or no effect at all. The least complicated area is the northern Aegean and most difficult to cope with is the southern Aegean, with its array of islands. The Dodecanese Islands are linked with the Cyclades Islands to the west, in what is virtually an unbroken chain of islands, leaving Turkey with no continental shelf at all in that part of the sea, even if the Dodecanese Islands are given no effect at all. In the middle category, the most difficult instances are Lesbos and Chios. According to Karl, in order to arrive at an equitable outcome, they would probably

have to face the fate of the British Channel Islands, which were enclaved by French continental shelf. These islands should get half effect or none at all, otherwise Turkey would be left out of the Aegean in that region.⁵⁷

To conclude, a fair delimitation will take due consideration of the islands (leaving some of them with half or no effect) as well as the extent of coastline (façade in the Aegean Sea) and its configuration, the aim being a proportional outcome. The end result would probably be anything between 20 and 35 per cent of the Aegean subsoil (beyond the territorial waters) going to Turkey and 65 to 80 per cent going to Greece. Can the two sides live with any of these percentages or is 20 to 25 per cent very difficult to swallow for Turkey and 65 to 70 per cent for Greece unbearable?

Notes

1. One third of the continental margin is the geomorphic continental shelf, the rest being the continental slope and the continental rise that ends with the abyssal plane.
2. *Encyclopedia of Public International Law* (1990–2000), Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law (Amsterdam: Elsevier), under the supervision of Rudolf Bernhardt [henceforth *Encyclopedia*], vol. I, p. 783.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 784; E.D. Brown (1994), *The International Law of the Sea. Volume I. Introductory Manual* (Aldershot: Dartmouth), p. 142.
4. *Encyclopedia*, vol. I, p. 784.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 787.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 787.
7. Christos Sazanidis (1979), *Oi ellinotourkikes scheseis stin pentaetia 1973–1978* [Greek-Turkish Relations within Five Years, 1973–1978] (Thessaloniki), pp. 235–7.
8. Hüseyin Pazarıcı (1988), 'Aspect juridique des différends gréco-turcs en mer Égée', in Semih Vaner (ed.), *Le différend gréco-turc* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan), p. 105; Yücel Acer (2003), *The Aegean Maritime Disputes and International Law* (Aldershot: Ashgate), pp. 152–5.
9. 'Continental Shelf' in 'Differences', under Foreign Policy-Turkey, www.mfa.gr. Date accessed 7 September 2008.
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25. Greek legal experts of the hard-liner school have questioned the wisdom of the traditional Greek adjudication line, on the grounds that the ICJ is not doing its job properly by slighting the role of islands. See for example Constantin P. Economides (2003), 'Intervention', in Stelios Perrakis (ed.), *Aigaio: exelixeis kai prooptikes epilysis ton ellinotourkikon dienexeon* [The Aegean: Developments and Prospects for the Resolution of the Greek-Turkish Disputes] (Athens: Sakkoulas), pp. 151–2.
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 30. Marsh, op. cit., pp. 231–2; Angelos M. Syrigos (2001), 'Greek-Turkish Disputes, Recourse to the International Court of Justice and Stability in the Aegean', in Christodoulos Yiallourides and Panayotis J. Tsakonas (eds), *Greece and Turkey after the End of the Cold War* (New York and Athens: Aristide D. Caratzas), pp. 275–6.
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49. Mujafer Sherif (1966), *Group Conflict and Co-operation* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), pp. 88–93, 107.
50. Churchill and Lowe, op. cit., p. 199.
51. Churchill and Lowe, op. cit., pp. 199–200.
52. Aurel Braun (1983), *Small-State Security in the Balkans* (London: Macmillan), p. 239.
53. For the last calculation, see Karl, 'The Delimitation of the Aegean Continental Shelf', op. cit., pp. 164–6.
54. Andrew Wilson (1979/1980), 'The Aegean Dispute', *Adelphi Papers*, No. 155 (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies), p. 38.
55. Marsh, op. cit., pp. 232–3.
56. One could perhaps sell the nail idea to the Greeks by presenting it as nailing Turkey onto Asia, and the arrow idea to the Turks as a Cupid's arrow aiming at Europe.
57. Karl, 'The Delimitation of the Aegean Continental Shelf', op. cit., pp. 158–64.

12

Territorial Sea

The dispute over the Aegean territorial sea (territorial waters) arises out of the possibility that Greece may extend its territorial sea from six to 12 nautical miles. With the existing six miles no dispute arises, and since Greece is unlikely to ever extend its territorial waters, the issue is latent and at most a 'threatened dispute'.¹ Yet the territorial sea issue is very much alive, for Greece is reluctant to relinquish its right to extension. As for Turkey, it regards even the theoretical prospect of an extension a major provocation which gives rise to 'enormous tension'.²

Developments in international law and the stance of Greece and Turkey

The breadth of the territorial sea, though a simple matter in comparison to the continental shelf, has occupied the world community for half a century since 1930, when the three mile limit (known as the 'cannon shot rule') came under challenge by an increasing number of states. At UNCLOS-II (1960), the six mile limit was not adopted by a hair's breadth (only one vote), but by then its main rival was the 12 mile limit, which was to carry the day at UNCLOS-III (1973–82).

Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982) provides that 'Every State has the right to establish the breadth of its territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles'.³ Turkey did not sign the Convention, due to a considerable extent to this provision (the other non-signatories were the US, the UK, the Federal Republic of Germany, Israel, Ecuador, Venezuela and Peru).

Interestingly, as late as the 1960s, Turkey and Greece were not at odds on this question and both behaved erratically. In 1936, Greece extended its territorial waters from three to six miles, but from 1930 (at the

International Law Codification Conference) until 1958 (at UNCLOS-I), it supported the three mile limit championed by the UK. At UNCLOS-II (1960), it favoured the six mile limit and at both the first and second UN sea conferences, it rejected the adoption of the 12 mile limit, arguing that such a breadth of territorial waters would have been inappropriate, as it would close seas such as the Aegean from international navigation, hinder trade and cause friction. Ever since then, Turkish lawyers and diplomats make reference to these Greek statements with obvious glee.⁴ Turkey for its part had appeared equally haphazard. It had not objected to Greece's extension to six miles, nor did it follow suit by extending its own territorial sea (it did so three decades later, in 1964). But in 1930, at the Codification Conference, it supported the six mile limit, while at UNCLOS-I it supported the three mile limit.⁵

From the 1980s onwards, Turkish experts have claimed that the 1936 extension was not as innocent as it had appeared at the time, but was part of a hidden agenda to render the Aegean a 'Greek lake' by instalments.⁶ As far as 1936 is concerned, no evidence has surfaced to support this conjecture and at the time Turkey did not perceive the extension as an unfriendly act.⁷

The dispute arose in late spring 1974, shortly before the Cyprus mega-crisis of July–August, when the Greek foreign ministry contemplated the extension to 12 miles so as to resolve the continental shelf dispute in its favour. Turkey got wind of this and reacted strongly. Following the 1974 Cyprus crisis and so long as Constantinos Karamanlis held sway, the dispute was kept within bounds, following reassurance that no extension was contemplated. The dispute was mainly played out within the confines of UNCLOS-III. Greece was one of the champions of the 12 mile limit, without any limitations created by islands and for the 12 miles to equally apply to small islets incapable of sustaining inhabitants and economic life.⁸ The Greek delegation also tried to widen the scope of the archipelago concept to include states such as Greece that are not archipelago states as a whole, in order to be in a position to draw a line of demarcation around all the islands, an attempt that infuriated the Turks and was rejected by the majority of delegates.⁹ The misconceived archipelago initiative was to have a lasting influence, convincing the Turks that the other side was bent on ejecting them from the Aegean.¹⁰

In recent years, Turkey seems to have shifted its position. Apparently it no longer rejects the 12 mile limit, but regards it as applicable only if the special circumstances in the sea in question permit it, which is the case for example in the Black Sea or the eastern Mediterranean, but is not the case in the Aegean. Thus, Turkey has extended its territorial sea to 12 miles in the Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean.¹¹

The Greek case

Greece has argued that the right emanating from the Convention on the Law of the Sea is absolute and unalienable. Athens is under no obligation to consult with Ankara on the matter. The adoption of the 12 mile limit constitutes a codification of pre-existing custom, hence Turkey is also bound by it. Moreover, according to Greece, the right to extension cannot be qualified by special circumstances restricting or limiting this right. The only plausible qualification is the call for cooperation between neighbouring states (Article 123 of the Convention), but this is worded in lenient terms and is not obligatory. Greece has tried to temper its argument by adding that it has not lost sight of the freedom of the seas, as after all it is one of the countries with the largest commercial fleet in the world. If and when the extension to 12 miles takes place, the freedom of navigation in the Aegean will not be impaired, given the right of innocent passage. Some Greek international lawyers have hinted that if innocent passage is considered inadequate, Greece could set up (again unilaterally) high seas corridors in the Aegean to ensure free passage. As for the Turkish *casus belli* threat (if Greece proceeds with extension), this is a flagrant abuse of the ban on 'the threat or use of force' (Article 2, paragraph 4 of the UN Charter), the hallmark of civilised behaviour in inter-state relations.¹²

The Greek argument has remained essentially the same since the mid-1970s, but this is only part of the picture. In fact, there is a clear shift from a moderate stance under Constantinos Karamanlis to an assertive stance from 1982 onwards. Since the adoption of the Convention in 1982, Greece has repeatedly stated that the non-extension to 12 miles on its part by no means implies the relinquishment of such a right, adding for good measure that it intends to go ahead with the extension in the future, when it is 'expedient and nationally beneficial'. The most official statements of this line are in 1982 upon the signing of the Covenant, on 23 June 1995 upon the ratification of the Convention by the Greek parliament and on 21 July upon submitting the documents of ratification to the UN Secretariat.¹³

The Turkish case

For Turkey, this dispute is regarded as the central issue in the Aegean and as the nucleus of all the other differences that have surfaced in the region. The Turkish case can be split, in logical sequence, into two groups of arguments. The first group stresses the reasons why abiding

by the six mile limit makes sense and is necessary, while the second group points to the great cost and injustice resulting from an extension to 12 miles.

Starting with the reasoning for the retention of the six miles, Turkey claims that: (1) the extension of territorial waters is not an automatic unilateral act; (2) the Aegean Sea is a 'semi-closed sea', with a great number of Greek islands off the shore of the Turkish Anatolian coastline, so such 'special circumstances' do not permit any extension by Greece beyond the existing six miles; (3) with the existing six miles, Greece controls almost half of the Aegean (43.68 per cent according to Turkey), with Turkey securing only 7.5 per cent, leaving the open seas with some 49 per cent; (4) with the existing regime, Turkey, with almost 3000 miles of coastline in the Aegean Sea (2820 to be exact), has an 126 mile façade to the open seas, with four openings (between the islands of Lemnos and Lesbos, Lesbos and Chios, and Chios and Samos and a narrower one between Lemnos and Samothrace), which are all absolutely necessary for access to its ports; (5) in view of all this, any unilateral extension on the part of Greece would constitute a flagrant case of abuse of rights (Article 300 of the Convention); and finally (6) with the existing six miles, the needs and interests of both parties are adequately met, thus there is no need for Greece to extend its territorial sea.¹⁴

Now let us see the consequences of an extension to 12 miles: (7) an extension to 12 miles would drastically curtail the open sea, from 49 per cent to only 19.71 per cent, with Greece acquiring 71.53 per cent, that is, almost three quarters of the Aegean; (8) such an extension would leave very little of the continental shelf to be delimited; (9) an extension would limit the Turkish façade in the Aegean to a mere 11.9 miles, with only two very narrow openings between Lesbos and Chios, and Chios and Samos, which would not constitute real passage to the open seas, for a Turkish vessel would be obliged to pass through Greek territorial waters in order to reach the rest of Turkey or the eastern Mediterranean; moreover, 'innocent passage' through another country's territorial sea has several drawbacks and is not tantamount to free and secure passage in the open seas; (10) Turkey would find itself in the absurd position of being locked out of the Aegean – a country with almost 3000 miles of coastline would find itself in the predicament of landlocked states with no access to the open sea; (11) this would have grave consequences for Turkey economically, commercially, navigationally and even environmentally or scientifically (research in the Aegean would not be possible); and (12) rendering the Aegean a virtual 'Greek lake' would also be a direct threat

to Turkey's very existence, a terrible blow to Turkish national (military) security. With the country being virtually 'suffocated' from the west by Greece, it would be in no position to (or have the much-needed space to) even organise its defence against an act of aggression.¹⁵

Consequently, an extension to 12 miles (or any extension for that matter) is totally unacceptable to Turkey. It is an unfriendly act contrary to the spirit and letter of the UN Charter and the 1997 Madrid Declaration between Turkey and Greece, which states that neither side would act unilaterally against the vital legitimate interests of the other. The obvious question is why does Greece persist in this matter? According to Turkey, this is the case because it is above all with the 12 miles that Greece can achieve its cherished long-term goal in the Aegean: to render it a 'Greek lake' and, among other things, unjustly appropriate all the mineral resources of its seabed.

Given the gravity of the situation, Turkey seems to follow a two-pronged approach, taking both a soft line and a hard line. According to the soft line, Ankara's consistent objection to the automatic application of the 12 miles throughout the UNCLOS-III deliberations has made Turkey a 'persistent objector', hence such an unilateral extension by Greece could not be legally binding or be imposed.¹⁶ Ankara also wields a blunt weapon, the threat of *casus belli*, that an extension would be regarded a hostile act that would possibly be met by military action.

Casus belli

In Greece, the *casus belli* has reached mythical proportions. From 1974 onwards, Turkish officials have spoken in terms of not permitting such an extension to take place, but without specifying the means by which they would prevent it (see Chapter 6). The first statement akin to a *casus belli* came from Turgut Özal in March 1986, with Greek-Turkish relations at very low ebb, where he threatened Greece that in the event of extension, Turkey would 'take the necessary actions'.¹⁷

The most unequivocal statement of the *casus belli* is a unanimous motion of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) eight days after Greece's ratification of the Convention on the Law of the Sea (where it was stated, as we have seen, that the lack of extension does not amount to relinquishing such a right). The wording of the TGNA is the following:¹⁸

While the TGNA hopes that the Greek Government will not decide to increase its territorial waters in the Aegean beyond six miles, ... it has

nevertheless decided to grant the Turkish Government all powers, included those that may be deemed necessary in the military field, for the protection and defence of our country's vital interests in the face of such an eventuality.

Greek hard-liners have toyed with the idea that Turkey is bluffing and that Greece should call this bluff and score a resounding diplomatic victory in the Aegean, making it a 'Greek lake'. Although a Turkish bluff is highly unlikely, given how vital and emotional the issue of extension is in Turkey, should Greece be so irresponsible as to extend its territorial waters, Turkey could take a number of measures short of military means (which is inadvisable, as the use of force as a form of retaliation does not meet the principle of proportionality) that would place Greece in an unenviable position and would in effect cancel out the extension. The least Turkey could do would be to simply state that it in no way accepts this extension; that it has no binding consequences as far it is concerned, duly addressing official notes to the UN Security Council, NATO, the EU, the IMO (International Maritime Organisation) and others, including all the states with ships navigating in the region, many of which could follow suit in rejecting Greece's extension as a blow to international shipping, trade and transportation. The practical consequences would be a number of difficult encounters in the Aegean, with Greek vessels trying to enforce the 12 mile limit and Turkish and other ships rejecting it. Turkey would in all probability send its ships to the disputed regions to demonstrate its rejection of the extension and use the area beyond six miles for military exercises.¹⁹ The Aegean would thus become an explosive region, a constant source of friction and a threat to peace and security.

In 2003–7, the Erdoğan government tried to downplay the significance of the *casus belli*, even implying that it was redundant given the present détente between the two countries. As Turkish diplomats and academics have put it in private to their Greek counterparts, the *casus belli* should not be taken literally, but as an expression – clumsy as it may be – of a real concern.²⁰

Clearly the 'reason for war' need not be taken literally, but Greece feels it is in no position to treat it in a more relaxed manner. In any event, the *casus belli* is still formally in place, poisoning the atmosphere and giving justification to those in Greece who continue to regard Turkey as aggressive and expansionist. At the very least, this bullying and 'imperial behaviour of bygone ages',²¹ as the Greek public sees it, hurts the ego (the *amour propre*) of the Greeks and does not enable

a more flexible attitude that could pave the way for accommodation with Turkey on the territorial sea and on the wider Aegean conflict. On the other hand, it should also be borne in mind that one of the most entrenched Turkish beliefs, which is not limited only to the hard-liners, is that the threat of retaliation should remain in place, for it is the most reliable deterrent stopping the Greeks from extending their territorial waters to 12 miles.

Now let us see what international law and practice has to say on extensions of territorial waters to 12 miles.

International law and practice

The predominant line in international law and practice on the delimitation of maritime boundaries is that 12 miles is the maximum breadth permitted, but it is hardly compulsory; a state may choose to have less breadth of territorial waters on all its coastlines or on parts of them.²² Before 1994, and certainly before 1982, it would have been somewhat far-fetched to claim that 12 miles was a customary rule by international law and hence binding for all states, in view of the many different territorial limits set by individual states.²³ But today, and at least since 1994, when the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea was put into force, the 12 mile rule has gained so many adherents that a strong case can be made that it is part of customary law; put differently, it codifies a pre-existing international custom.²⁴

But does this imply that the right of states to extend their territorial waters unilaterally up to 12 miles is generally accepted and cannot be questioned by another state? This is a moot point. In the first instance, states are entitled to such a right. In the case of opposite or adjacent states, the normal practice is to follow the equidistant principle, the so-called 'median line' (Article 15 of the 1982 Convention, which is almost identical to Article 12 of the 1958 Territorial Sea Convention). But Article 15 further specifies (as did Article 12 in 1958) that: 'The above provision does not apply, however, where it is necessary by reason of *historic title or other special circumstances* to delimit the territorial seas of the two States in a way which is at variance therewith [emphasis added].'²⁵ Other than the reference to 'historic title', the 1982 Convention does not specify what is meant by 'special circumstances'. The only available source to refer to are the minutes of UNCLOS-I (1958), when the matter was discussed, where it is clear that apart from historical title, the following were understood as special circumstances: the exceptional configuration of the coasts, the presence of islands and navigable channels.²⁶

Clearly, a simple mechanical application of the median line is unlikely to yield a just (equitable) result, due above all to the configuration of the coasts, offshore islands (the islands of one state being very near the islands of the other state) and other special circumstances. Depending on the circumstances in any given situation, self-restraint is called for, above all so as not to close the high seas and not to inhibit free access to the ports of another state (or states) with a coastline in the same sea or gulf. There are many instances of delimitations by agreement between two opposing states and also of decisions by international tribunals which have shown flexibility, the main goal being to seek a delimitation that would produce an equitable result. Such instances include the agreements between India and Sri Lanka, Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago, Abu Dhabi and Qatar, Argentina and Chile or Australia and Papua New Guinea regarding the Torres Strait;²⁷ and tribunal decisions in the cases of Dubai and Sharjah (1981), Guinea and Guinea-Bissau (1985), and Guinea-Bissau and Senegal (1989). In particular, in the case of islands on the 'wrong side' of the median distance between the coasts of two mainlands, the states or tribunals in question have decided not to apply a 12 mile delimitation but to restrict it to six or three miles, or to follow a modified median line favouring mainlands as opposed to islands.²⁸

In lieu of a conclusion

To begin with, an extension to ten or 12 miles is hardly necessary for Greece.²⁹ Greece's interests are fully met by the existing regime. Things would have been different if it was assured that huge quantities of oil were to be found, which is not the case; even if this had been the case, it would have been unfair for one of the two countries of the Aegean to selfishly acquire all the oil and other mineral resources of the Aegean seabed.

What is more than clear is that in the Aegean case, a Greek extension to 12 miles would limit the open seas to 26.1 per cent (from 56 per cent)³⁰ and would extend Greece from some 35 or 36 per cent to as much as 63.9 per cent. The extension in question would indeed have the effect claimed by Turkey, regarding its façade and its lack of access to the open seas.³¹

Clearly, an extension is unjust and would have grave consequences for Turkey. No Turkish government could swallow an extension and hope to remain in place.³² It is not only a matter of vital national interests, but also a matter of prestige for Turkey not to be robbed of

its openings to the Aegean, as if it were a 'second class state' that could be abused at will.³³ As for innocent passage, it hardly amounts to free passage through open seas, for it implies 'certain obligations for passing ships and certain rights of control and inspection'³⁴ by the coastal state. The state in question could take advantage of this, impeding the passage in various ways.³⁵ After all, the Aegean Sea 'is of vital importance to international navigation as the sole access to the Black Sea through the Dardanelles Straits'.³⁶ Consequently, an extension that would close the open seas would be unacceptable not only to Turkey but to other states with vessels navigating from and to the Black Sea through the Aegean, most of all the Black Sea states, particularly Russia, with whom Greece is keen to be on very good terms. Moreover, with an extension to 12 or ten miles, Greece would find itself in the unenviable position of acting like a 'policeman' of the Aegean and an ineffective one at that.³⁷ On the other hand, it is understandable for Greece not to want to abandon its rights to extension and to do so without anything in return. Obviously, it is of considerable value as a bargaining counter.³⁸

Under the circumstances, one can conceive of two main possibilities. One is to abide by the existing six mile rule, in which case this item would disappear from the agenda. A second option is a partial extension in some areas but not in others, following an agreement between the two countries or an international court decision. There are several possibilities, provided the open sea is not limited beyond a certain degree and no narrow sea straits and channels are created. They include the following: the extension to ten or 12 miles of the continental shores of Greece and Turkey, but not of the islands; and the extension for some islands, those closer to the Greek mainland or to the west of the median line between the two mainlands. Some legal experts have proposed such solutions by dividing the islands into various groups,³⁹ with different territorial waters for each group or island. Apparently, this possibility was discussed in the course of the 2003 talks (see Chapter 10).

Notes

1. Andrew Wilson (1979/1980), 'The Aegean Dispute', *Adelphi Papers*, No. 155 (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies), p. 5.
2. Yücel Acer (2003), *The Aegean Maritime Disputes and International Law* (Aldershot: Ashgate), p. 32.
3. E.D. Brown (1994), *The International Law of the Sea. Volume I. Introductory Manual* (Aldershot: Dartmouth), p. 43.

4. For references to the statements of two Greek delegates (Associate Professor Krispis and diplomat Angelos Vlachos, in 1958 and 1960 respectively) see: Yüksel Inan and Sertaç H. Başeren (1996), 'The Troubled Situation of the Aegean Territorial Waters', *Hellenic Studies*, 4, 2, pp. 58, 64, 67; Yüksel Inan and Yücel Acer (2003), 'The Aegean Disputes' (Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute), p. 45, note 53; Acer, op. cit., p. 99; Deniz Bölükbaşı (2004), *Turkey and Greece, the Aegean Disputes: A Unique Case in International Law* (London: Cavendish Publishing Limited), pp. 128–9.
5. C. John Colombos (1967), *The International Law of the Sea* (New York: Longman), pp. 99–100, 104; Emmanuel Roucounas (1997), 'Greece and the Law of the Sea', in T. Treves (ed.), *The Law of the Sea* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International), pp. 229–30; Acer, op. cit., pp. 29–30, 103.
6. Şükrü Elekdağ (1996), '2½ War Strategy', *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, I, 1, pp. 37, 43; Aslan Gündüz (2001), 'Greek-Turkish Disputes: How to Resolve Them?', in Dimitris Keridis and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization* (Herndon: Brassey's), p. 89; Duat Aksu, (2002), 'Preservation of Demilitarized Status of the Aegean Islands for the National Security of Turkey', *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies*, 7, p. 109.
7. Wilson, op. cit., p. 5.
8. Roucounas, op. cit., pp. 229–33, 254–5; Krateros M. Ioannou (1997), 'The Greek Territorial Sea', in Theodore C. Kariotis (ed.), *Greece and the Law of the Sea* (The Hague: Kluwer), pp. 21–3.
9. Roucounas, op. cit., pp. 232–3; Bölükbaşı, op. cit., pp. 412–17.
10. For the last point, see Hüseyin Pazarıcı (1988), 'Aspect juridique des différends gréco-turcs en mer Égée', in Semih Vaner (ed.), *Le différend greco-turc* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan), p. 104; Inan and Başeren, op. cit., pp. 60–1; Bölükbaşı, op. cit., pp. 412–17.
11. Pazarıcı, op. cit., pp. 108–9; Joel Evan Marsh (1995), 'Turkey and UNCLOS III: Reflections on the Aegean', in *The Aegean Issues: Problems and Prospects* (Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute), pp. 221–7; Tullio Scovazzi (1995), 'Maritime Limits and Boundaries in the Aegean: Some Maps with Legal Commentaries', in Seyfi Taşhan (ed.), *Aegean Issues: Problems-Legal and Political Matrix. Conference Papers* (Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute), pp. 83–4; Acer, op. cit., pp. 30–1, 103–9; Bölükbaşı, op. cit., pp. 120–4, 180–7, 216–27, 412–17.
12. Christos Rozakis (1988), 'To diethnes nomiko kathestos tou Aigaiou' [The International Legal Regime of the Aegean], in Alexis Alexandris et al., *Oi ellinotourkikes scheseis, 1923–1987* [Greek-Turkish Relations, 1923–1987] (Athens: Gnosi), pp. 340–1; Constantin P. Economides (1995), 'La nouvelle convention sur le droit de la mer et la Grèce: le pour et le contre', *Revue hellénique de droit international*, 48, pp. 56–7; Ioannou, op. cit., pp. 117–18, 130–7, 139–40; Angelos M. Syrigos (1998), *The Status of the Aegean Sea According to International Law* (Athens and Brussels: Sakkoulas/Bruylant), pp. 47, 106–8. See also 'The Greek Positions for the Airspace and Territorial Sea', under 'Foreign Policy-Turkey', www.mfa.gr. Date accessed 4 December 2003; and 'Greek Territorial Waters-National Airspace', in 'Differences', under 'Foreign Policy-Turkey', www.mfa.gr. Date accessed 17 January 2009.
13. Ioannou, op. cit., pp. 130–2.

14. Concluding statement by ambassador Coşkun Kirca, upon the closing of UNCLOS-III, quoted in Scovazzi, op. cit., pp. 83–4; Pazarci, op. cit., pp. 107–10; A. Suat Bilge (1989), 'The Situation in Aegean', in *The Aegean Issues*, op. cit., pp. 67–80; İhsan Gürkan (1989), 'Certain Defense Issues in the Aegean Sea Basin: A Turkish View', in *The Aegean Issues*, op. cit., pp. 113–31; Tozun Bahçeli (1990), *Greek-Turkish Relations since 1955* (Boulder: Westview), pp. 142–3; Yüksel İnan (1995), 'Introduction: The Effects of the Entry into Force of the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention on 12 Miles Territorial Sea Limit', in Taşhan (ed.), op. cit., pp. 37–41; Rauf Versan (1995), 'Legal Problems Concerning Territorial Sea Delimitation in the Aegean Sea', in Taşhan (ed.), op. cit., pp. 105–10; Mustafa Aydın (1997), 'Cacophony in the Aegean: Contemporary Turkish-Greek Relations', *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, 28, pp. 116–17; Gündüz, op. cit., pp. 89–90; Acer, op. cit., pp. 24–34, 103–10, 137–48; İnan and Acer, op. cit., pp. 18, 21–4; Bölükbaşı, op. cit., pp. 105–21, 183–232; İnan and Başeren, op. cit., pp. 61–4. See also 'Territorial Waters', in 'Further Reading on the Aegean Issues' and in 'Background Note on Aegean Issues', under 'Turkish-Greek Relations-Aegean Problems', 'Foreign Policy-Greece', www.mfa.gov.tr. Date accessed 5 December 2003; and 'The Breadth of the Territorial Waters', under 'Aegean Problems', 'Foreign Policy-Greece', www.mfa.gov.tr. Date accessed 6 December 2008.
15. See previous note.
16. Kirca in Scovazzi, op. cit., pp. 83–4; Acer, op. cit., pp. 109–10.
17. Acer, op. cit., p. 31, footnote 181.
18. Acer, op. cit., p. 32.
19. Marsh, op. cit., p. 226; İnan and Başeren, op. cit., p. 64; Acer, op. cit., p. 144.
20. Based on discussions of the author with Turkish former ambassadors and academics.
21. Economides, op. cit., p. 58.
22. Brown, op. cit., pp. 43–5; Malcolm N. Shaw (1997), *International Law*, 4th edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 402.
23. For the chaotic situation as it presented itself in the early 1970s, see Ian Brownlie (1973), *Principles of Public International Law*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press), pp. 194–5, footnote 2.
24. Brown, op. cit., pp. 43–51; R.R. Churchill and A.V. Lowe (1999), *The Law of the Sea* (Manchester: Juris Publishing, Manchester University Press), pp. 79–80.
25. Cited in Churchill and Lowe, op. cit., p. 183.
26. *Encyclopedia of Public International Law* (1990–2000), Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law (Amsterdam: Elsevier), under the supervision of Rudolf Bernhardt [henceforth *Encyclopedia*], vol. III, p. 302.
27. For the similarities of the Aegean with the Torres Strait, see David S. Saltzman (2002), 'A Legal Survey of Some of the Aegean Issues of Dispute and Prospects for a Non-Judicial Multidisciplinary Solution', *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, I, 2.
28. *Encyclopedia*, vol. III, pp. 301–2, 308–13; Churchill and Lowe, op. cit., pp. 182–3; 'Aegean Sea', in *Encyclopedia*, vol. I, p. 45; Jon M. van Dyke

- (1995), 'The Aegean Sea Dispute: Options and Avenues', in Taşhan (ed.), op. cit., pp. 59, 65–7.
29. Aurel Braun (1983), *Small-State Security in the Balkans* (London: Macmillan), p. 238.
30. According to Wilson, op. cit., p. 36. According to another estimate, the percentage of open seas is 65 per cent. See *Encyclopedia*, vol. I, p. 45.
31. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 5, 37; *Encyclopedia* vol. I, p. 45; Bahcheli, op. cit., pp. 142–3.
32. Monteagle Stearns (1992), *Entangled Allies: U.S. Policy Toward Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press), p. 139.
33. Wilson, op. cit., p. 14.
34. *Encyclopedia*, vol. I, p. 45.
35. Byron Theodoropoulos (1988), *Oi Tourkoi kai emeis* [The Turks and Us] (Athens: Fitrakis), pp. 278–9.
36. *Encyclopedia*, vol. I, p. 43.
37. Theodoropoulos, op. cit., pp. 279–81; and the views of four senior former Greek ambassadors in the following work: Byron Theodoropoulos, Efsathios Lagakos, George Papoulias and Ioannis Tzounis (1995), *Skepseis kai provlimitismoi gia tin exoteriki mas politiki* [Thoughts and Reflections on our Foreign Policy] (Athens: I. Sideris), pp. 66–7.
38. Wilson, op. cit., p. 23; Theodoropoulos, op. cit., p. 281; Bahcheli, op. cit., p. 143.
39. Jon M. van Dyke (1989), 'The Role of the Islands in Delimiting Maritime Zones. The Boundary Between Turkey and Greece', in *The Aegean Issues*, op. cit., pp. 274–8; van Dyke (1995), 'The Aegean Sea Dispute: Options and Avenues', in Taşhan, op. cit., pp. 59–60, 67–9.

13

National Airspace

The Aegean dispute over national airspace has arisen because Greece's airspace is ten nautical miles instead of six, which is its range of territorial sea.

International law, Greece and Turkey

Every state 'has complete and exclusive sovereignty over the airspace above its territory' (Article 1 of the 1944 Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation). The upper limits of airspace are uncertain, but there is no doubt as to the breadth of national airspace; laterally it extends to the outer limits of the territory and, if it is a coastal state, to the outer limits of its territorial sea. For good measure, this stipulation is reiterated in the 1958 Geneva Convention on the Territorial Sea as well as in the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea (Article 2), namely that no state's national airspace can exceed its sea territory. Civil aircraft enjoy a right of free passage through national airspace in times of peace but require authorisation from the state in question to use its national airspace. As for military aircraft, they require special permission for overflight or landing.¹

The Greek airspace regime, which is unique in the world, was introduced by presidential decree on 6/18 September 1931. At the time, the breadth of the territorial sea was three miles for both Greece and Turkey. Turkey did not challenge the Greek airspace regime and remained silent on the matter until September 1974. The only state to formally protest at this extension was the UK in 1932. In the wake of the July–August 1974 Cyprus crisis, Turkey rejected this ten mile regime and since 1975 has been sending its military aircraft, on a regular basis, to enter the zone between six and ten miles so as to demonstrate its non-recognition of the regime.

This provokes Greek protests and interceptions by Greek aircraft that often lead to dangerous dogfights between Greek and Turkish fighters. This has particularly been the case from 1983 onwards, when the Turkish aircraft became more intrusive, staying longer within Greece's national airspace, in several instances overflying even within the six mile zone, which Turkey recognises as Greek. The airspace dispute has come up within the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and has been brought to the attention of the UN Secretary-General.²

As one would expect, Turkey maintains that Greece's claim to a ten mile national airspace is flagrantly unlawful and unprecedented,³ and that in any event, this regime cannot be tolerated for the additional reason that it reduces the international airspace of the Aegean considerably, adding some 27 per cent, almost a third of the Aegean, to Greece. As Ankara points out, no state recognises this regime, not even NATO allies, as seen by the aircraft of member states in Allied exercises, which routinely 'violate' Greek airspace. As for its silence on the matter until 1974, Ankara claims a lack of knowledge, for Athens had on purpose kept the extension secret. Turkey maintains that it first became aware of it in June 1974, when ICAO, upon Greece's request, announced it to its member states.⁴

Undoubtedly, national airspace is Greece's weakest position in the wider Aegean dispute. Thus, its gut reaction is to avoid discussing the matter altogether, using the traditional line that there is nothing to settle apart from the continental shelf. But since this is not a very defensible line, Athens has come up with a triple arsenal. Firstly, it claims that the ten miles is not for airspace as such or for airspace only, but that it sets a 'second territorial sea' of ten miles. This is derived from the wording of the 1931 decree, which does in fact speak in terms of the breadth of the territorial waters being extended to ten miles, but for the purposes of air navigation and air policing. Secondly, Turkey has tacitly accepted the air regime in question as, unlike the UK, it did not raise any objections when the extension was introduced. The ten miles were certainly known to Ankara, for the 1931 decree was published in the *Government Gazette* for all to see, hence Britain's reaction. Following the Second World War, the ten mile regime was widely known and discussed within the confines of ICAO in the 1950s, when the FIRs were set up across the world. Yet only in September 1974, after more than four decades, did Turkey choose to react. Thirdly, the fact that this regime existed from 1931 until 1974, unhindered and unchallenged, has led to the creation of a 'regional international custom'. Another fashionable Greek argument from the 1970s is that since Greece has the right to extend its territorial sea up to 12 miles, it can hold on to the ten miles. According to a well-known phrase coined at the time, 'since we can do the

maximum, 12 miles, we can do less, ten miles', thereby harmonising territorial sea with airspace.⁵

Greek experts have been at pains to produce further arguments. One noted legal expert, Krateros Ioannou, has come up with the following formulation: that in point of fact, the breadth of the Greek territorial sea is actually ten miles, but 'Greece is not exercising its jurisdiction as to the surface and subsoil upon a four mile zone'.⁶ Even stranger oddities have been peddled, for instance that airspace is by its very nature distinct and hence it can be wider than the territorial waters, depending on the circumstances. Greek international lawyers of stature have rejected this absurd line⁷ and Greece has spared itself further embarrassment by not including such views in its official line of defence.

Assessing the Greek case

As Christos Rozakis admits, the idea of a second ten mile territorial sea does not hold water, for, irrespective of the tortuous wording of the 1931 decree, it actually refers to airspace. As for the absurd wording of the 1931 decree, he attributes it to confusion at the time between the terms 'territorial sea' and 'national airspace'. According to Rozakis, only two Greek lines of defence are worth considering: (a) regional custom and (b) acquiescence/estoppel.⁸

Continental or even regional customs do indeed exist in international law.⁹ And one could perhaps argue that in the inter-War period, Greece's action was not as unlawful as it appears today, for in those days the rule on the breadth of territorial sea was confused, with different breadths for different purposes. Thus, a putative regional custom may have existed for a while, with Turkey tacitly consenting in the inter-War period. But this is hardly the case following the 1944 Chicago Convention and the Convention on the Law of the Sea. As Deniz Bölükbaşı has rightly pointed out, domestic law may be enacted only in conformity with international law or in order to implement international law; it does not itself create a right by international law.¹⁰ Furthermore, from 1975 onwards, it is not only Turkey but also other NATO states that have been 'violating' this 'regional customary law', and have done so with impunity, without being challenged by Greek fighters. The few Greek protests to the US and others were either left unanswered or were answered in vague terms.¹¹ Furthermore, it could be argued that ideally, if not logically, regional customs emerge if they bring benefits to the parties concerned. Only then would exceptions to general international law be acceptable. In this case, the supposed regional custom is decidedly lop-sided, benefiting

one party and damaging the other. Not surprisingly, only one side, the party that clearly benefits from it, invokes it.

The concept of acquiescence comes into play if, as a result of a particular action on the part of state A, a protest is called for by state B because its interests are likely to suffer, but state B, surprising as it may seem, does not protest. This implies that state B has simply accepted the new situation. Henceforth, the concept of estoppel may come into play, in the sense that state B cannot, after a considerable period of time, change its position and reject state A's action, arguing that its interests are suffering as a result. One of the reasons that state B is estopped from asserting its rejection is that state A had presumably based its subsequent activity on what appeared to be state B's tacit consent.¹² In the case of Turkey, Greece argues, it cannot after 43 whole years switch its position and legally object to the ten mile regime.¹³ Put more aggressively by hawkish Greek experts, if Turkey had 'slept upon its rights', it must pay dearly for its mistake.¹⁴

Turkey, as we have said, has claimed a lack of any knowledge of the extension. However, 43 years could obviously possibly qualify it as a case of acquiescence *cum* estoppel, particularly if it can be proven, for example, by archival research in the Turkish foreign ministry that Turkey at some point discovered its existence but did nothing about it. If this can be established, then the fact that two states had excellent relations from 1931 until 1954 may have been factor for Turkey's relaxed attitude.¹⁵ But Ankara did not even react from the mid-1950s onwards, when relations had turned sour due to Cyprus. Some Turkish experts have claimed that the reason that Turkey had done nothing was that, prior to 1974, its military aircraft had not attempted to fly over the Aegean Sea within the additional four miles, so had not discovered the ten mile regime.¹⁶

No doubt the acquiescence-estoppel line is the most convincing Greek claim in what is an almost hopeless case. However, estoppel is not crystal clear in international law and has arisen in very few international judicial decisions. Apparently, it is 'one element in a complexity of relevant principles'.¹⁷ It cannot in itself create a title, but provides supporting evidence, along with other facts of the situation. Furthermore, it is unclear whether silence creates estoppel in the first place. Much will depend 'upon the surrounding circumstances, in particular the notoriety of the situation, the length of silence maintained in the light of that notoriety and the type of conduct that would be seen as reasonable in the international community in order to safeguard a legal interest'.¹⁸ To conclude, acquiescence-estoppel may be Greece's best shot, but it is unlikely to win the day.

A reappraisal

Turkey has been arguing for decades that the extension is part of a wider strategy aimed at rendering the Aegean a 'Greek sea'. As regards 1931, no evidence has surfaced that Greece's aim was to harm Turkey's interests. This would have been nonsensical in the second year of the famous Greek-Turkish rapprochement. Apparently, the reason for the extension at the time was 'national security',¹⁹ for Greece to be in a better position to monitor Italian aircraft in the Aegean.

In 1931, the speed of aircraft may have been minimal in comparison to today, but it was not regarded as minimal when compared to the speed of the fastest ship. As such, a wider 'territorial reach in the air than on the water'²⁰ had practical meaning, in the sense that intrusive foreign aircraft could be monitored.²¹ Today the impressive supersonic speeds, as well as the sophisticated early warning systems available, have 'invalidated the rationale of air defence' as it existed until the 1950s, yet Greece is left with 'the unorthodox incongruence between territorial waters and airspace'.²²

Turkey's indignation is understandable, as it faces a situation which clearly damages its national interests in the region and also happens to violate international law. But by over-reacting, with overflights on a constant basis (with some of them entering the six mile zone or even overflying islands),²³ it reinforces the case of the hawks in Greece, who deplore any concession to the 'historical enemy'. On this issue, the cards are stacked against the moderates in Greece, because the 'violations' are regularly reported in the mass media, in highly emotional terms. The outcome is that for the vast majority of Greeks, of all the Turkish actions in the Aegean, the 'constant violations of Greek airspace' are the most tangible proof of Turkish aggressiveness, second only to the 'invasion and continued occupation' of the northern part of Cyprus.

It might be wondered whether the incursions of the Turkish fighters are all that necessary. Would not some token flights do the trick, say one or two a month, to indicate that no consent has been given, together with a regular note to all and sundry, to the UN, the ICAO, NATO, the EU and other forums? There is also the staggering economic cost of these flights for both parties, not to mention the crashes, at the rate of one or two annually that presumably have to then be replaced at considerable cost. Ironically, the only advantage of this affair is that the Turkish and Greek pilots are among the most well trained in the world in what are almost battle conditions.

In any event, no dramatic drop of the Turkish overflights has taken place (except for a drop in the early years of the 1999 Greek-Turkish

détente), Apparently, Turkish decision-makers believe that the Greeks are likely to see any drop as a vindication of their view and become more provocative, more ready to extend the territorial sea to ten or 12 miles. The fact that the Turkish military has a considerable say on this matter makes any show of moderation more difficult. The military is not alone in depicting the Greeks as unflinching, always on the prowl, ready to take advantage of any Turkish generosity. Thus, the huge cost of the flights is worthwhile and probably the only way to halt the Greeks from their gradual expansionist strategy, to scare them away, as it were, by shows of military prowess and resolve.

On the Greek side, obviously it is no easy matter to abandon a 'right', however illegal, enjoyed for decades.²⁴ The ten miles could prove to be of some value in an overall negotiation process, as a bargaining chip. Moreover, its eventual abandonment could be presented as a sign of goodwill and moderation.

In the short term, a way out of this adversarial spiral is to put the matter on ice. A moratorium is probably the most practical tool to use, not only in the summer months (as has been the case until now), clearly stating that this in no way implies that the positions of the two sides have changed. But at the end of the day, and the sooner the better, Greek national airspace should tally with territorial waters.

Notes

1. Malcolm N. Shaw (1997), *International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 4th edn, pp. 369–80; *Encyclopedia of Public International Law*, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1990–2000), under the supervision of Rudolf Bernhardt [henceforth *Encyclopedia*], vol. I, p. 66.
2. *Encyclopedia*, vol. I, pp. 45–6; Christos L. Rozakis (1988), 'To diethnes nomiko kathestos tou Aigaiou' [The International Legal Regime of the Aegean], in Alexandris *et al.*, *Oi ellinotourkikes scheseis, 1923–1987* [Greek-Turkish Relations, 1923–1987] (Athens: Gnosi), pp. 352–73; Tozun Bahcheli (1990), *Greek-Turkish Relations since 1955* (Boulder: Westview), pp. 143–4; Deniz Bölükbaşı (2004), *Turkey and Greece. The Aegean Disputes. A Unique Case in International Law* (London: Cavendish Publishing Limited), pp. 575–602.
3. Bölükbaşı, *op. cit.*, pp. 579, 591.
4. Şükrü S. Gürel (1993), 'Turkey and Greece: A Difficult Aegean Relationship', in Canan Balkır and Allan M. Williams (eds.), *Turkey and Europe* (London: Pinter Publishers), pp. 167–8, 171; Şükrü Elekdağ (1996), '2½ War Strategy', *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, I, 1, pp. 34–5, 41; Mustafa Aydın (1997), 'Cacophony in the Aegean: Contemporary Turkish-Greek Relations', *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, 28, pp. 118–19; Yücel

- Acer (2003), *The Aegean Maritime Disputes and International Law* (Aldershot: Ashgate), pp. 34–6; Aslan Gündüz (2001), ‘Greek-Turkish Disputes: How to Resolve Them?’, in Dimitris Keridis and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization* (Herndon: Brassey’s), pp. 83–4, 87–8, 90; Yüksel Inan and Yücel Acer (2003), ‘The Aegean Disputes’, Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute, pp. 27–8, 37; Bölükbaşı, op. cit., pp. 579–80, 587–602. See also ‘Air Space Related Problems’, in ‘Aegean Problems’, under ‘Foreign Policy-Greece’, www.mfa.gov.tr. Dates accessed 20 June 2007 and 6 December 2008.
5. Rozakis, op. cit., pp. 361–4; Constantin P. Economides (1993), *Themata diethnous dikaïou kai ellinikis exoterikis politikis* [Issues of International Law and Greek Foreign Policy] (Athens: Sakkoulas), pp. 52–3; Angelos M. Syrigos (1998), *The Status of the Aegean Sea According to International Law* (Athens and Brussels: Sakkoulas/Bruylant), pp. 116–19; *Encyclopedia*, vol. I (1992), p. 46.
 6. Krateros M. Ioannou (1997), ‘The Greek Territorial Sea’, in Theodore C. Kariotis (ed.), *Greece and the Law of the Sea* (The Hague: Kluwer), p. 133.
 7. Krateros M. Ioannou, Constantin P. Economides, Christos Rozakis and Argyris Fatouros (1990), *Dimosio diethnes dikaio* [Public International Law] (Athens and Komotini: Sakkoulas), p. 36.
 8. Rozakis, op. cit., pp. 369–70.
 9. On customary law and its limitations, see *Encyclopaedia*, vol. I, p. 902; Ian Brownlie (1973), *Principles of Public International Law*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press), pp. 4–11.
 10. Bölükbaşı, op. cit., p. 602.
 11. Rozakis, op. cit., p. 357.
 12. Brownlie, op. cit., pp. 616–19; Shaw, op. cit., pp. 350–1; *Encyclopedia*, vol. I (1992), pp. 14–16.
 13. Rozakis, op. cit., p. 370.
 14. Syrigos, op. cit., p. 119.
 15. As acknowledged by ambassador Kâmurân Gürün, who adds that in the 1930s, Turkish planes refrained from entering the ten miles of airspace. See Kâmurân Gürün (1994), *Bükres-Paris-Atina: Büyükelçilik Anıları* [Bucharest-Paris-Athens: The Memoirs of an Ambassador] (Istanbul: Milliyet), p. 356.
 16. Based on discussions between the author and retired Turkish ambassadors and academics.
 17. Shaw, op. cit., p. 352.
 18. Shaw, p. 352. See also *Encyclopedia*, vol. I, p. 15.
 19. This is acknowledged even by hard-liner Deniz Bölükbaşı; see Bölükbaşı, op. cit., pp. 580–2.
 20. Bölükbaşı, op. cit., p. 581.
 21. According to four senior former Greek ambassadors. See Byron Theodoropoulos, Efsathios Lagakos, George Papoulias and Ioannis Tzounis (1995), *Skepseis kai provlimatismoi gia tin exoteriki mas politiki* [Thoughts and Reflections on our Foreign Policy] (Athens: I. Sideris), p. 67.
 22. Ibid., p. 67. Bölükbaşı also quotes from the book by the four Greek ambassadors; see Bölükbaşı, op. cit., p. 581.
 23. The flights over islands may be due to the great speed that does not permit a sharp turn so as to keep within the six miles. However, in several instances,

it is obvious that this is done on purpose. Equally, some Greek pilots have now and again entered Turkish airspace and have flown over the Turkish mainland, clearly some of them on purpose, be it on their own initiative or on instructions.

24. Bahcheli, op. cit., p. 144.

14

Demilitarisation

Demilitarisation aims to prevent armed conflicts that may be triggered from border regions. Examples include the 15 year demilitarisation of Thrace between Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria agreed in 1923 at Lausanne or the short-lived demilitarisation of five small Italian islands and the partial demilitarisation of Sicily and Sardinia adopted by the Paris Peace Treaty (1947).¹

Demilitarisation in the eastern Aegean is not uniform, but falls into three categories: one for Lemnos and Samothrace in the north; another for Lesbos, Chios, Samos and Ikaria (Nikaria) in the mid-Aegean; and a third for the Dodecanese Islands in the south Aegean.

Lemnos and Samothrace

Demilitarisation for the islands of Lemnos and Samothrace is provided for by the 1923 Lausanne Convention on the Straits (Article 4), which also provides for the demilitarisation of the Straits and the Turkish islands of Gökçeada (Imvros), Bozcaada (Tenedos) and Lagousai (Rabbit Islands). The Lausanne Convention was replaced, as far as the Straits were concerned, by the 1936 Montreux Convention on the Straits.

Greece claims that the Montreux Convention superseded the Lausanne Convention as a whole, thereby permitting the militarisation of the two islands, even though no express mention was made to this effect in the 1936 Convention. Athens bases its claim on the following points: (a) on the *travaux préparatoires* of the Montreux Conference, such as the statements of the Greek chief delegate, Professor Nikolaos Politis; (b) on the soundings of the Turkish ambassador to Athens prior to the Conference, where it was clear that Turkey accepted the request of the Metaxas government that Lemnos and Samothrace should benefit from

the abolition of demilitarisation of the Straits at the upcoming conference; and (c) on a revealing statement by the Turkish foreign minister, Tevfik Rüştü Aras, at the Turkish Grand National Assembly, in the presence of premier İnönü. Aras stated that 'Provisions concerning the islands of Lemnos and Samothrace, which belong to our neighbouring and friendly country, Greece, and which were demilitarized in conformity with the Convention of Lausanne of 1923, are also cancelled by the new Montreux Convention and we are pleased for this'.²

Greece's legal arsenal also includes the following: that less than a year after the signing of the 1936 Convention, Lemnos was characterised as a 'fortified area under surveillance' (text in the *Government Gazette* of April 1937) and Greece proceeded forthwith to fortify Lemnos without Turkey objecting to it; that Greek and Turkish membership of NATO has drastically changed the security situation in the region, making the demilitarisation redundant; and that since the original rationale for demilitarisation has been eclipsed, it would be absurd to insist that Greece should retain it, for this would amount to singling out Greece for 'punishment' for no apparent reason. Another Greek argument is that normally demilitarisation regimes should apply reciprocally to the territories of two neighbouring countries and not only to one of them.³

Turkey's line of defence runs as follows: (a) that in fact the *travaux préparatoires* focus on the Straits and do not mention the two Greek islands, except for a very vague reference by Politis;⁴ and there is no mention whatsoever in the deliberations at Montreux of the security of Greece, but there is a mention in the *travaux préparatoires* to the security of Turkey and the riparian states of the Black Sea; (b) the lack of any explicit mention is not a mere omission by the Greek side, but ample proof that the signatories did not have Lemnos and Samothrace but the Straits (defined as 'the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus') in mind; and after all the whole conference had taken place as a result of a Turkish initiative, precisely in order to get rid of the demilitarisation regime for security reasons; (c) as for the Aras statement, it was merely an expression of goodwill at a time when relations between the two countries were very cordial. The statement could have had legal weight had it been uttered in response to an explicit Greek request, but this was not the case.⁵

Turkey also claims that Lemnos was not militarised at the time but much later, in the 1960s; in other words, for 30 years Greece abided by its obligations. Furthermore, when Greece began to violate its treaty obligations, Turkey complained, only to be reassured by the Greek foreign ministry (in May 1969) that Greece was abiding by its obligations, that only radar

installations in Lemnos (pursuant to NATO requirements) and construction works at Lemnos airport for civil aviation purposes were involved.⁶

Greece is convinced that this is its best case as far as demilitarisation is concerned. But the fact remains that there is no explicit mention in the Montreux Convention and there is no other indication that Greece pressed for such a reference. At the very least, the omission was a grave error on the part of Greece in 1936.⁷ Perhaps a way out is to clarify the status of the Turkish islands in the region, Gökçeada, Bozcaada and Lagousai. If they had been militarised, although they were not mentioned at Montreux, then the Greek case would be enhanced.

Lesbos, Chios, Samos and Ikaria

The islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos and Ikaria (Nikaria) are under a partial demilitarisation regime (Article 13 of the Lausanne Peace Treaty of 1923). The installation of a naval base or fortifications is prohibited. The military forces permitted in these islands are only those that have been called for military service, presumably inhabitants of these islands. A gendarmerie and police force is allowed for the maintenance of law and order.

Greece started militarising and fortifying these islands in the mid-1960s, some ten years before the Cyprus crisis, but denied doing so when Turkey protested on at least three occasions from 1968 to 1971.⁸ Following the events of 1974, Greece admitted having militarised and fortified them, but claimed to have done so purely for defensive purposes, based on its unalienable right to defence. According to Athens, the possibility of Turkish aggression could not be taken lightly, in view of: (a) Turkey's 'invasion' and continued 'occupation' of Cyprus, (b) the *casus belli* looming in the Aegean, (c) various provocative statements regarding the Aegean by high-ranking Turkish officials, (d) the formation of the Turkish 4th Army based in Izmir and (e) the presence in the region of a large flotilla of landing vessels. If Greece were not defensively prepared against Turkish sabre-rattling, it would be very difficult to defend itself in the event of aggression and 'island hopping'. In the last decade, Greece has also claimed, however implausibly, that the Lausanne Treaty does not provide for demilitarisation.⁹

Predictably, Turkey counter-argues that Greece is contravening its international obligations; that it did so well before the events of 1974 and that the 4th Army was set up precisely as a reaction to the illegal militarisation of virtually all of the eastern Greek islands, which grew massively in 1974. Moreover, Turkey can do as it wishes (the 4th Army), since its territory is not under a demilitarisation regime. Moreover, the presence of Turkish

forces in Cyprus has no bearing on the security of Greece in the Aegean. As for the so-called 'Turkish threat', it is a fabrication of the Greeks.¹⁰

Clearly, Greece's case is weak from a legal viewpoint, but from mid-1974 onwards (although not before), its position has not been as untenable as it may appear, given the level of animosity between the two states until 1999, the Turkish army in Cyprus, and the 4th Army and landing craft. The Turks claim that the 4th Army is 'basically a training army'¹¹ with little military muscle; as for the landing craft, they are, as Turkish analysts privately point out, in bad shape, rusting by the seaside and of no use militarily. But the Greeks are either not convinced or not prepared to follow anything less than a 'worst case scenario'. In general, Turkey tends to interpret the right of defence narrowly, as merely the right to use force once an attack has been launched.

The Dodecanese Islands

The demilitarisation status of the 14 Dodecanese Islands in the south-eastern Aegean Sea is covered by Article 14 of the Paris Peace Treaty (1947), by which the islands were annexed to Greece.

Here again, Greece claims its legitimate right to self-defence in view of Turkey's aggressive posture from 1974 onwards. Athens also points out that Turkey was not a party to the Paris Treaty. A treaty creates rights and obligations only for its signatories and not for third parties (*pacta tertiis nec nocent prosunt*). Moreover, the demilitarisation in question did not have Turkey in mind, but was introduced (upon a US initiative, with the support of the UK and France) in order to preclude a Soviet military presence in the region. In any case, the concentration of arms and men in these islands is purely defensive and Greece is technically not in a position to launch an attack on the Turkish mainland.¹²

Turkey retorts that Article 14 potentially applies to all states (*erga omnes*) in view of the geographical position of the Dodecanese Islands being at a key point for navigation between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Moreover, it could only have had Turkey's security concerns in mind since, after all, these islands are a breath away from the Turkish coastline and any militarisation or fortification could only pose a security threat. In fact, the *travaux préparatoires* of the Paris Conference indicate that the British and American delegations were aware that demilitarisation would serve Turkish security interests. Illegal militarisation had taken place at least ten years prior to the events of 1974. In 1964 and 1968–71, when Ankara expressed its concern about fortifications in Rhodes and Kos, Athens, in its official reply, denied

having fortified the islands in contravention of its treaty obligations and made no reference to Turkey having no say on the matter in view of it not being a signatory of the Paris Treaty.¹³

From a narrow legal viewpoint, Turkey's protests may appear out of place, since it was not a signatory of the Paris Treaty. However, it is quite obvious that Greece's militarisation had none other than Turkey (the 'Turkish threat') in mind. Moreover, it violates obligations vis-à-vis the other parties to the Paris Treaty. During the Cold War, the regime in question was regarded as being in place by the two superpowers. As early as 1948, the Soviet Union had accused Greece of violating its treaty obligations by militarising the islands, and in 1970, it claimed that the anchoring of aircraft carrier *Franklin Roosevelt* in the waters of Rhodes contravened the demilitarisation regime.¹⁴

Concluding remarks

On the question of militarisation, the sticking point is the fear of each side regarding the true intentions of its adversary. Turkey has not contemplated 'island grabbing' and Greece has not thought in terms of using its airports as launching pads for an attack on Turkey. Clearly, the militarisation of the islands and the 4th Army sent the wrong message. If scrapping both is difficult to accept in the short term, a good case could be made for 'mutual and balanced force reduction' and arms control that could function, *inter alia*, as a poignant military CBM.

The Turkish hard-liners argue that they cannot be absolutely certain that Greece will never fall under the sway of the ultra-nationalists. After all, the military potential for the Greek fighters acting as 'daggers' against Turkey's 'soft underbelly' exists.¹⁵ The Greeks for their part point to the considerable influence of the Turkish military on 'national issues' such as the Aegean and Cyprus. The Turkish military, with their well-known penchant for armed violence, no doubt have a contingency plan of attack for good measure. Thus, Greece must be on the alert.

In the meantime, and so long as the Aegean dispute remains unresolved, the abuse of the demilitarisation regime has another consequence. It has made some Turkish legal experts take an abrasive line, hinting that the illegal militarisation may cast doubt on the sovereignty of these islands, since they were annexed by Greece on the condition of demilitarisation.¹⁶ This line has alarmed the Greek foreign ministry, which has jumped to the conclusion that Turkey has no limits to its revisionist claims.¹⁷ There is little evidence that Turkey is thinking of going this far, though a threat of this kind may be of use in an overall negotiation process.

Mutual paranoia apart, here we have a textbook case of a 'security dilemma' situation,¹⁸ namely the accumulation of arms and armaments for defensive reasons which is seen by the other side as having offensive aims, the result being that it responds in kind, in turn confirming the original perceptions of a threat.

Notes

1. Natalino Ronzitti (1989), 'The Aegean Demilitarization, Greek-Turkish Relations and Mediterranean Security', in *The Aegean Issues: Problems and Prospects* (Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute), pp. 295–6; Christos Rozakis (1988), 'To diethnes nomiko kathestos tou Aigaiou' [The International Legal Regime of the Aegean], in Alexis Alexandris *et al.*, *Oi ellinotourkikes scheseis, 1923–1987* [Greek-Turkish Relations, 1923–1987] (Athens: Gnosi, 1988), pp. 428–30; Deniz Bölükbaşı (2004), *Turkey and Greece. The Aegean Disputes. A Unique Case in International Law* (London: Cavendish Publishing Limited), pp. 750–4, 779–80.
2. Rozakis, *op. cit.*, pp. 434–5; Byron Theodoropoulos (1988), *Oi Tourkoi kai emeis* [The Turks and Us] (Athens: Fitrakis), pp. 294–5; C.P. Economides (1981), 'La prétendue obligation de demilitarisation de l'île de Lemnos', *Revue hellénique de droit international*, pp. 12–13; C.P. Economides (1989), 'To nomiko kathestos ton ellinikon nison tou Aigaiou' [The Legal Regime of the Greek Islands in the Aegean], in Hüseyin Pazarcı and C.P. Economides, *To kathestos apostratikopioisis ton nison tou anatolikou Aigaiou* [The Demilitarisation Regime of the Islands the Eastern Aegean] (Athens: Gnosi), pp. 146–54.
3. See previous note and the following: Christos L. Rozakis (1989), 'Oi ellinotourkikes scheseis: i nomiki diastasi' [Greek-Turkish Relations: The Legal Dimension], in D. Conostas and Ch. Tsardanidis (eds), *Synchroni elliniki exoteriki politiki* [Contemporary Greek Foreign Policy] (Athens: Sakkoulas), pp. 57–9; Philippe Drakidis (1983), 'La démilitarisation du Dodécanèse', *Défense Nationale* (April), pp. 81–2; Drakidis (1984), 'Le statut de démilitarisation de certaines îles grecques', *Défense Nationale* (August–September), pp. 75–82.
4. Politis merely stated that 'there is no need to make reference to a convention [the Lausanne Convention]' and that 'the Lausanne Convention regarding demilitarization, does not effect only Turkey. It affects other countries as well'. Quoted in Bölükbaşı, *op. cit.*, p. 760.
5. Hüseyin Pazarcı (1985), 'Has the Demilitarized Status of the Aegean Islands as Determined by the Lausanne and Paris Treaties Changed?', *Turkish Review Quarterly Digest* (Winter), pp. 24–45; Pazarcı (1986), *Doğu Ege Adalarının Askerden Arındırılmış* [The Demilitarisation Regime of the Islands of the Eastern Aegean] (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Yayınları), also translated in Greek, Pazarcı and Economides, *op. cit.*, pp. 58–92; Bölükbaşı, *op. cit.*, pp. 722–6, 733, 760–81; Yücel Acer (2003), *The Aegean Maritime Disputes and International Law* (Aldershot: Ashgate), pp. 23–4; Yüksel Inan and Yücel Acer (2003), 'The Aegean Disputes' (Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute), pp. 11, 13–15. See also 'Militarization of Eastern Aegean Islands' in 'The Aegean

- Problems' and 'The Demilitarization Status of the Eastern Aegean Islands', in 'Background Note on Aegean Dispute', under 'Foreign Policy-Greece', www.mfa.gov.tr. Date accessed 16 December 2008.
6. See previous note.
 7. Ronzitti, *op. cit.*, pp. 298–9.
 8. For details of the various *notes verbales* and a bilateral meeting that took place at the time, see Bölükbaşı, *op. cit.*, pp. 722–5.
 9. Economides, 'To nomiko kathestos ton ellinikon nison tou Aigaiou', *op. cit.*, pp. 166–71; Rozakis, 'To diethnes nomiko kathestos tou Aigaiou', *op. cit.*, pp. 429–30, 436–8; Yannis A. Stivachtis (1999), 'The Demilitarisation of the Greek Eastern Aegean Islands: The Case of the Eastern Aegean and Dodecanese Islands', *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, 29, pp. 105–30. See also 'The Greek Positions on the Military Status of the Islands of the Eastern Aegean', under 'Foreign Policy-Turkey', www.mfa.gr. Date accessed 4 December 2003; and 'Military Status of Aegean Islands', in 'Differences', under 'Foreign Policy-Turkey', www.mfa.gr. Date accessed 7 December 2008.
 10. Pazarcı, *op. cit.*, pp. 98–102; Şükrü S. Gürel (1993b), 'Turkey and Greece: A Difficult Aegean Relationship', in Canan Balkır and Allan M. Williams (eds), *Turkey and Europe* (London: Pinter Publishers), p. 168; Duat Aksu (2002), 'Preservation of Demilitarized Status of the Aegean Islands for the National Security of Turkey', *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies*, 7, pp. 112–15; D. Bölükbaşı, *op. cit.*, pp. 781–98, 805.
 11. See 'The Demilitarization Status of the Eastern Aegean Islands', in 'Background Note on Aegean Dispute', under 'Foreign Policy-Greece', www.mfa.gov.tr. Date accessed 6 December 2008.
 12. Drakidis, 'La démilitarisation du Dodécanèse', *op. cit.*, pp. 73–138; Economides, 'To nomiko kathestos ton ellinikon nison tou Aigaiou', *op. cit.*, pp. 162–5; Rozakis, 'To diethnes nomiko kathestos tou Aigaiou', *op. cit.*, p. 337; Stivachtis, *op. cit.*, pp. 117–30. See also the website of the Greek foreign ministry in note 9.
 13. Pazarcı, *op. cit.*, pp. 94–5; Inan and Acer, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 15.
 14. Ronzitti, *op. cit.*, pp. 300–1.
 15. A. Suat Bilge, 'The Situation in the Aegean', in *The Aegean Issues*, *op. cit.*, pp. 67–80; Ihsan Gürkan, 'Certain Defence Issues in the Aegean Sea Basin: A Turkish View', in *The Aegean Issues*, *op. cit.*, pp. 113–31; Şükrü Elekdağ (1996), '2½ War Strategy', *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, I, 1 (March–May), pp. 33–57; Aslan Gündüz (2001), 'Greek-Turkish Disputes: How to Resolve Them?', in Dimitris Keridis and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization* (Herndon: Brassey's), pp. 83–4, 87–90; Aksu, *op. cit.*, pp. 107–33; Mümtaz Soysal (2004), 'The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy', in Lenore G. Martin and Dimitris Keridis (eds), *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), pp. 37–46; Mustafa Kibaroglu (1999), 'Turkey's Deterrent', *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 55, 1.
 16. See Hüseyin Pazarcı (1997), 'Différend gréco-turc sur le statut de certains îlots et rochers dans la mer Egée: une réponse à Mr. C.P. Economides', *Revue générale de droit international publique*, 101, 2, p. 370; Erdem Deng (1999), 'Disputed Islets and Rocks in the Aegean Sea', *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, 29, pp. 129–55; Ali Kurumahmut and Sertac Hami

- Başeren (2004), *The Twilight Zones in the Aegean. (Un) Forgotten Turkish Islands* (Ankara: Publications of Turkish Historical Society), pp. 3, 19.
17. See 'Points of Friction', in 'The Parameters of Greek-Turkish Relations', under 'Foreign Policy-Turkey', www.mfa.gr. Date accessed 17 December 2008.
 18. On the security dilemma see for example Robert Jervis (1978), 'Cooperation under the Security Dilemma', *World Politics*, 30, 2. For the security dilemma in the Aegean, see Mustafa Aydın and Kostas Ifantis (eds) (2004), *Turkish-Greek Relations: The Security Dilemma in the Aegean* (London: Routledge); and Panayotis J. Tsakonas (ed.) (2001), *Études Helléniques/Hellenic Studies*, issue entitled 'Is the Greek-Turkish Conflict a Security Dilemma?', 9, 2.

15

Imia/Kardak and the Grey Zones

The case of the two Imia islets (in Greek) or Kardak rocks (in Turkish) is a more recent addition to the already heavy Aegean agenda. It came to the fore in 1996 (see Chapter 9). At the time, Turkey raised the wider issue of the existence of 'grey zones' in the Aegean, that is, islets and rocks in the eastern Aegean whose status as to sovereignty was 'undetermined'.

We will focus here on the first issue, Imia/Kardak. For the 'grey zones', suffice it to say that Athens regards it as a major act of provocation on the part of Turkey and clear proof of Turkish expansionist intentions in the Aegean. As for Ankara, it seems to hold on to the 'grey zones' idea as a trump card or as a handy bargaining chip within an overall settlement in the Aegean. However, it is a fact that the two countries have not demarcated their maritime boundaries, from the delta of the Evros/Meriç river in the north to the northern tip of the Dodecanese Islands.

As regards the Imia/Kardak dispute, the main thrust of the Greek case is as follows. As a result of the terms of Articles 12 and 16 of the Lausanne Peace Treaty, all the islands beyond three nautical miles of the Turkish coastline were handed to Greece, with the exception of Imvros (Gökçeada), Tenedos (Bozcaada) and Lagousai (Rabbit Islands). Thus, all the islets such as Imia (at 3.62 and 3.85 miles from the Turkish coastline) are Greek. The two Imia islets are considered to be part of the Dodecanese Islands, which remained Italian under the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty. On 4 January 1932, Italy and Turkey signed an agreement delimiting the sea boundaries between the coasts of Anatolia and the island of Castellorizo. When the agreement was signed, the two parties exchanged letters regarding the need for a supplementary agreement that would delimit the remaining maritime boundary between them. A second agreement, a protocol, was signed on 28 December 1932, in which reference was made to the Kardak (Imia) islets and the boundary

was set at the median line between them and a Turkish islet named Kato I. Both states ratified the January agreement and it was duly submitted to the Secretariat of the League of Nations. The December protocol did not follow this formal procedure, for it was a mere appendage to the January agreement. Following the end of the Second World War, the Dodecanese Islands and all 'adjacent islands' were ceded to Greece in the Paris Peace Treaty (1947), hence the rules of successor states apply.¹

Turkey counter-argues that the relevant articles of the Lausanne Peace Treaty refer to the delimitation of the Aegean between Greece and Turkey and do not refer to islets or rocks. The articles mention by name the islands beyond three miles of the Turkish coast that are to be Greek. The term 'islet' appears only in Article 15 of the Lausanne Treaty, in the phrase 'dependent islets' to the Dodecanese Islands. The wording is repeated in the Paris Treaty, with one minor difference: the wording 'dependent islets' is replaced by the term 'adjacent islets'. The Kardak 'rocks' can hardly be defined as 'adjacent islets' in that region, for the obvious adjacent islet to the nearest Dodecanese Island of that region, Kalymnos, is Kalolimnos, at a distance of 1.5 miles from Kalymnos. In international law, no concept of 'adjacent islet to an adjacent islet' exists, that is, of the Kardaks being adjacent to the adjacent island of Kalolimnos. The Kardak rocks are 5.5 miles from Kalymnos, 3.62 and 3.85 miles from the Turkish mainland and 2.2 miles from the Turkish island of Cavus, hence the Kardak rocks can only be Turkish. As for the January 1932 agreement, it has no bearing on the Kardak rocks, for it covers a region far away from these rocks, between the island of Castelloriso (to the south) and the Turkish coastline. In the January agreement, no mention was made of the need for an additional agreement. The January agreement is self-standing. In fact, there was another agreement, covering a totally different maritime region, which was signed in December 1932, where mention is made of the two Kardak rocks. However, Turkey and Italy did not ratify this protocol. Apparently there was disagreement at the time between the two sides about aspects of this text, as seen by several *démarches* on the part of Italy in the 1930s regarding the modalities of this agreement. Thus, it is not a valid agreement. In any event, following the ceding of the Dodecanese Islands, there is no evidence that Greece manifested acts of sovereignty such as installing a lighthouse or other installations. Greece sent a number of formal notes to Turkey from 1950 to 1956 seeking to ascertain the status of the December 1932 protocol, which clearly implies that Athens had doubts as to its validity.²

The Greek response to this is that Italy and Turkey did not disagree among themselves on the substance of the December 1932 protocol,

but rather were unclear as to whether a formal procedure for such a supplementary agreement was needed or not; the lack of response by Turkey implies that a formal procedure was unnecessary. In fact, a series of letters and *notes verbales* from Turkey from 1933 to 1936 (including one from the foreign minister, Rüştü Aras, in January 1933 and one from the secretary-general of the foreign ministry in September 1936) clearly indicates that the Kardak rocks are under Italian sovereignty. As for the island of Kalolimnos, although it is not mentioned in the Lausanne or Paris treaties, it is hardly a dependent or adjacent islet, but a sizeable populated island in a wider area imbued with 'archipelagic unity', which includes the Imia islets, at a distance of 1.8 and 1.9 miles from Kalolimnos, that is, nearer than the Turkish island of Cavus. After 1947, Greece did exercise its sovereignty over the Imia islets by setting up a trigonometric marker on the larger Imia islet and later on, in the 1980s, by including the islets in environmental activities within the European Community. Finally, as for the attempts of Athens to contact Ankara in the early 1950s, they should be read as seeking some clarifications at a time when relations between the two countries were cordial.³

Both Greece and Turkey tend to over-react in the case of the Imia/Kardak rocks or islets. Greece regards it as clear proof of Turkish expansionist designs in the Aegean, which here are even more serious, for they do not concern sea or air but a piece of 'Greek land'. As such, the Imia case is regarded as the first instance where Turkey has laid claim to Greek soil. Interestingly, Turkey does not regard the two Kardaks or the 'grey zones' as territories *per se*, but as mere rocks. Athens does not seem to perceive this difference in definition, but even if it did, it is highly unlikely that it would attach any significance to it.

Greeks legal experts suspect that their Turkish counterparts have dug up two other arguments that are explosive in nature. One is that those Greek islands that are not expressly mentioned in the Lausanne Treaty as belonging to Greece and are further than three miles from the Turkish coastline are of undetermined sovereignty. Secondly, Turkey could wield the *rebus sic standibus* clause: that treaty agreements are honoured if the situation that gave rise to the agreement has not changed dramatically.⁴ As regards the first argument, Turkish legal experts of the hawkish school have indeed toyed with this idea and have linked it with demilitarisation, in the sense that if certain islands, such as Agios Eustratios or Psara, not mentioned in the Lausanne Treaty are militarised, this undermines Greek sovereignty.⁵ As for the *rebus sic standibus*, there is no evidence that Turkey has seriously considered it, though it might be inspired to do so by the Greek fears. In any event, in international law this clause is to be used

sparingly (Article 62 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties), only if circumstances have changed completely and insofar as they do not concern boundaries.

Turkey for its part is equally indignant. Greece, with its emphasis on the three mile limit regarding even rocks and islets, is seen as trying to lock Turkey out of the Aegean completely, with obvious consequences for the delimitation of the continental shelf as well. The Greeks discover uninhabited rocks in the Aegean Sea, which they name as islets and treat them as islands, trying to create *fait accomplis* by adding lighthouses and wanting to populate them, despite the fact that they are unviable. They inch their way eastwards in the sea nearer to their ultimate goal of making the Aegean a 'Greek lake'.⁶

In conclusion, as in all the other disputes in the Aegean, one sees once again mirror images, the mutual fears of the other side's presumed expansionist intentions in the Aegean.

Notes

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2. Hüseyin Pazarcı (1997), 'Différend gréco-turc sur le statut de certains îlots et rochers dans la mer Egée: une réponse à Mr. C.P. Economides', *Revue générale de droit international publique*, 101, 2, pp. 353–89; Yüksel Inan and Sertaç H. Başeren (1996), 'The Troubled Situation of the Aegean Territorial Waters', *Hellenic Studies*, 4, 2, pp. 64–6; Ali Kurumahmut (1998), *Ege'de Temel Sorun, Eğemenliği Tartışmalı Adalar* [The Basic Dispute in the Aegean: Islands of Disputed Sovereignty] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu); Erdem Deng (1999), 'Disputed Islets and Rocks in the Aegean Sea', *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, 29, pp. 131–55; Yücel Acer (2003), *The Aegean Maritime Disputes and International Law* (Aldershot: Ashgate), pp. 19–22, 32–4; Yüksel

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16

Flight Information Regions and NATO Operational Control

The Greek-Turkish differences relating to the control of international aviation (Flight Information Regions (FIRs)) and NATO's operational control in the Aegean are not self-standing differences, but are byproducts of the other disputes in the Aegean. This by no means implies that these two disputes have not been a cause of anguish to both parties. The first in particular is very costly, because, as with Greek national airspace, it involves interceptions and dogfights, with the occasional airplane crash.

Flight Information Regions

Following the Second World War, in view of the considerable rise of air transportation, a system known as the FIR was devised within ICAO in order to facilitate and safeguard flights. FIRs comprise national airspace as well as international airspace so as not to leave any part of the globe beyond air traffic control. Greece has the 'Athinai FIR' which, according to decisions taken by ICAO (in the European regional meetings of 1952 and 1958), covers the Aegean region to the outer limits of the Turkish territorial sea. Turkey has two FIRs: the 'Istanbul FIR', which covers the Turkish Aegean coastline and the eastern Turkish European and Asian territory; and the 'Ankara FIR', which covers parts of the international airspace of the Black Sea and of the eastern Mediterranean.¹

The FIR dispute started in August 1974 with Turkish NOTAM 714 and Greek NOTAM 1157, which led to the suspension of all international flights over the Aegean for six years (see Chapter 6). Ankara had justified NOTAM 714 on the grounds of national security, in order to obtain position reports on aircraft flying in the vicinity of the Turkish coast, when

relations between the two countries were on the brink of war due to the Cyprus crisis of the time.²

ICAO tried to mediate on several occasions but could do little in view of the conflicting positions of the two sides.³ According to Greece, the August 1974 NOTAM was intended to alter the FIR boundaries. In the various talks that have taken place either bilaterally or within the framework of ICAO, Turkey has tried to establish an early identification zone some 50 miles from its coastline and, failing this, to secure joint control of the international airspace of the Aegean. Greece for its part rejects any attempt at revising the FIR boundaries that would divide the Aegean in half and lead to Greek sovereign territory being placed under the flight control of Turkey, which would result in Greek planes flying from the mainland to the islands of the eastern Aegean being in the absurd position of being under the control of a Turkish flight centre.⁴

Turkey argues that the boundaries in the eastern Aegean between the Athinai FIR and the Istanbul FIR are not set out concretely by ICAO, nor does an agreement exist between the two countries as to the delimitation of the lateral sea boundary between them. Greece has been acting since the early 1970s as if its FIR responsibilities amount to rights emanating from sovereignty. Its behaviour is a clear case of abuse of responsibilities construed as rights (and sovereign ones at that), an attempt to establish 'de facto sovereignty' over the whole of the Aegean airspace.⁵ Athens treats the FIR as if it 'constitutes a national boundary line between the two coastal states in the Aegean',⁶ implying that the whole of the international airspace of the Aegean falls within Greek national airspace.⁷

The following instances are, according to Ankara, clear cases of abuse of responsibilities by the Athinai FIR: (a) it has unilaterally, without any previous consultation, coordination or agreement with the Istanbul FIR (contrary to standard ICAO practice), set up control zones; (b) it has unilaterally set up several air corridors for civil aviation in the international airspace; and (c) it insists that Turkish military aircraft submit flight plans, acting as if the flights were within Greek national airspace.⁸

Regarding control zones, a striking case is the island of Lemnos, where a 3000 square nautical mile 'control zone' was set up in June 1975, involving a large volume of international airspace. In March 1981, the lateral limits over Lemnos were slashed by 57 per cent to some 1300 square miles, but the vertical limits of the control zone remain very broad, from 1000 feet to 24,500 feet. Furthermore, according to Ankara, large air zones have routinely been closed to international air navigation for exercises undertaken by the Greek air force, obviously so as to limit

the flight of Turkish military aircraft. FIRs can hardly be used as 'defence perimeters' or transformed into 'national security zones'.⁹ From 1970 until the mid-1980s, three new air corridors¹⁰ were set up not in order to address an international need (that is, increased traffic over the Aegean), but so as to obstruct Turkish military aircraft flying over the Aegean. The three air corridors in question are unnecessarily wide, both laterally and vertically, in order to limit the overflight of Turkish military aircraft.¹¹

All these actions have a direct bearing on Turkey's national security. The area for aeronautical exercises is being limited and, more crucially, an enemy aircraft under Greek FIR supervision could well fly over the whole of the Aegean unnoticed and attack Turkey.¹² At this point it is worth stressing that the Turkish claims regarding corridors and control zones are by no means far-fetched. The needs of civil air navigation in the region did not necessitate new air corridors; they were set up in order to hinder the flight of Turkish military aircraft.¹³

Turkish fighters do not submit air plans on the grounds that, according to the 1944 Chicago Convention on Civil Aviation (Article 3, paragraph a), it is 'applicable only to civil aircraft'. As such, in their eyes the Greek demand for flight plans is baseless. Military aircraft 'cannot lawfully be required to submit a prior report and to obtain a clearance, or otherwise have its navigation rights restricted' by the Athina FIR.¹⁴

Greece is aware that military aircraft are exempted from submitting flight plans and tries to wriggle out of this difficult situation by maintaining that it requests flight plans only in order to safeguard international navigation, using the general rule of 'the safety of navigation of civil aircraft' (Article 3, paragraph d of the Chicago Convention); that the request for submission of flight plans in no way implies the refusal to allow the planes to fly. The rare instances of a refusal have occurred for compelling reasons, such as already scheduled Greek exercises or civilian flights.¹⁵

Turkey counter-argues that Article 3, paragraph d is fairly permissive and does not imply an obligation regarding military aircraft, though it is aware that ICAO resolutions have through the years been somewhat stricter with regard to state aircraft when their operations may endanger civil aviation; however, resolutions by no means amount to obligations emanating from international law (the Chicago Convention).¹⁶ Foreign state aircraft may choose to comply with the request of the Athina FIR, but it is for them to decide to do so or not, with no penalty attached.¹⁷ According to another Turkish view, if the aircraft in question follows what is known as the 'profile' manoeuvre, namely flying above and below a civil air corridor, no submission for safety reasons is required.¹⁸

In any event, what Greece calls 'violations' or 'infringements' of the Athinai FIR (as Greece calls 'the failure of Turkish military aircraft to submit flight plans to Greek authorities') are simply non-existent notions in international law.¹⁹

Greece's over-reaction with its interceptions and ensuing dogfights, as if the national airspace were being violated, has done little to further its case as a sound one vis-à-vis Turkey; not surprisingly, Greece has not gained supporters internationally, in spite of its attempts within ICAO and NATO.²⁰ Apart from the safety of civil aviation, the real reason for the insistence on the submission of flight plans is that Athens believes that Turkey harbours revisionist designs in the Aegean, wanting 'to weaken the sovereign status of Greek territory [islands] in the Aegean' and 'enclave its eastern Aegean islands into a Turkish "security envelope"'.²¹

Equally, Turkey's over-reaction, sending aircraft on a regular basis to enter the Athinai FIR, intended to demonstrate that no submission is needed, has made the problem more difficult to handle. Turkey justifies its stance by claiming that Greece's abuse of responsibilities cannot be left unanswered, not least because it has a bearing on its military security. National honour is also no doubt involved here, for it is seen as demeaning to be asked to submit flight plans when in fact other military planes of NATO members, notably those of the US, are also known to fly in the region without being asked to submit such plans or being intercepted.

To a considerable extent, this dispute is very much alive until today due to the active involvement of the military on the matter, particularly on the Turkish side, with their well-known sensitivity on matters of national security and honour.

NATO operational control

The dispute over NATO operational control arises mainly as a result of NATO air operational control and to a lesser extent naval control. It has come to the fore as a byproduct of Greece's withdrawal from the military wing of NATO in 1974, which provided Turkey with the opportunity to enhance its role in the south-eastern flank of NATO by taking over the NATO command of the Sixth Allied Tactical Force based in Izmir. This was decided by NATO in December 1977, a little after Greece's application to re-enter the military wing of NATO.

Previously, from 1952, when Greece and Turkey had jointly entered NATO, until 1974, the Sixth Allied Tactical Force was headed by a US

Air Force general with headquarters at Izmir, who was assisted by two deputies, a Greek Air Force general based in Larissa and a Turkish Air Force general based in Eskişehir. The Greeks in Larissa had air operational control in a region up to the point where the Athens FIR ends, except for a small part of the Dodecanese Islands which was under the control of the Turkish general until February 1964. The Izmir command was handed over to the Turkish generals due to Turkish insistence, which made sense in the wake of the Greek withdrawal; it would have been absurd for US generals to command only Turkish forces. Turkey also tried to assume responsibility for NATO air control over the whole of the Aegean, but failed to persuade its NATO allies on this issue.²²

When Greece negotiated its way back to the military wing of NATO, a process which took almost four years, it tried to re-establish the status quo ante regarding Izmir, Larissa and Eskişehir, but Turkey vetoed any such move. Finally, a plan prepared by the Supreme Allied Commander, General Bernard Rogers, was adopted, known as the Rogers Plan (18 October 1980), and two days later Greece re-entered NATO's military wing. The Rogers Plan provided for Greek NATO headquarters in Larissa, without specifying the limits of operational air control between Larissa and Eskişehir. According to Greece, delimitation comes first, to be followed by the establishment of the NATO command in Larissa. Turkey reverses the order (first headquarters in Larissa and then delimitation) and it seems that Turkey's case is based on deliberations within NATO in the period 1977–80.²³ The obvious practical result is that there is yet another unresolved Greek-Turkish dispute in the Aegean and NATO air operational control over the Aegean remains unclear. In view of this, Greece has systematically abstained from taking part in NATO exercises involving aircraft. The Greek reluctance is also due to Turkey's refusal to include the island of Lemnos in NATO exercises, as it regards it to be subject to demilitarisation, which Greece rejects on the basis of its own reading of the 1936 Montreux Convention (see Chapter 14).²⁴

Notes

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 3. Braun, op. cit., p. 241.
 4. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 23–4; Rozakis, op. cit., p. 387; *Encyclopedia*, vol. I, p. 46.
 5. Wilson, op. cit., p. 23; Bölükbaşı, op. cit., p. 617.
 6. Bölükbaşı, op. cit., p. 617.
 7. Bölükbaşı, op. cit., p. 617.
 8. Bölükbaşı, op. cit., pp. 617–60. See also 'Air Space Related Problems' in 'Aegean Problems' under 'Foreign Policy-Greece', www.tr.gov.tr. Dates accessed 4 December 2003 and 17 December 2008.
 9. Bölükbaşı, op. cit., p. 615.
 10. The air corridors in question are W-14 (later known as H-59), G-18 and UB-7. For details, see Bölükbaşı, op. cit., pp. 621–5.
 11. Bölükbaşı, op. cit., pp. 619–25.
 12. 'Air Space Related Problems' in 'Aegean Problems' under 'Foreign Policy-Greece', www.tr.gov.tr. Dates accessed 4 December 2003 and 17 December 2008; Wilson, op. cit., p. 23.
 13. Theodoropoulos, op. cit., p. 286.
 14. Bölükbaşı, op. cit., p. 613.
 15. Rozakis, op. cit., pp. 386–9; Theodoropoulos, op. cit., pp. 286, 290.
 16. Bölükbaşı, op. cit., pp. 611–2.
 17. Bölükbaşı, op. cit., p. 613.
 18. Kâmuran Gürün (1994), *Bükres-Paris-Atina: Büyükelçilik Anıları* [Bucharest-Paris-Athens: The Memoirs of an Ambassador] (Istanbul: Milliyet), p. 358.
 19. Bölükbaşı, op. cit., p. 654.
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Part IV

The Crux of the Problem

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17

What is to be Done?

The Aegean dispute is a complex conflict involving sovereignty, sovereign rights, natural resources (oil), freedom of transit, freedom of airspace, access to islands and ports, national security and other tangible interests. Undoubtedly, these are vital matters of national interest. However, they are not necessarily the main issues at stake.¹ And this clash of interests is not the one that has made the conflict intractable. What has made a settlement impossible from 1973 until today is the subjective dimension: the huge barrier created by a mutual utter lack of trust. Both parties are absolutely convinced of the righteousness of their side and of the wrongdoing of the adversary, who is bent on changing the status quo in the Aegean. Another basic obstacle to a resolution process is the domestic factor: governments are immobilised by the sheer dread of the potential domestic cost, of being seen as giving in to the adversary, with the opposition and the public at home all too ready to cry that a sell-out is afoot. On many occasions, weak or populist governments have fanned the flames of animosity, with long-term consequences.²

What is to be done? There seem to be three main options ahead. One is to put the Aegean conflict on ice and concentrate on crisis management, low politics and economic cooperation.

The obvious second option is to take the bull by the horns and broach the Aegean issues, as happened in 1978–81 and especially in 2002–3. Here it is also important to address the mutual fears and threat perceptions involved in the Aegean conflict. We will call this the short cut.

A third option is the long haul. It is based on the premise that trying to settle the Aegean dispute is unlikely because the Aegean conflict is not self-standing, but merely the tip of the iceberg. What has made the Aegean impervious to a settlement is not only the mutual fears and lack

of confidence on the Aegean *per se*, but something deeper and far more difficult to dislodge, let alone address in a meaningful way: the force of history weighing down on either side, and in particular imagined history, based on chosen glories and traumas. If this aspect of the conflict is not addressed one way or another, little can be done on the Aegean plane.

The Aegean dispute on ice: enter economic cooperation

Putting the Aegean dispute on ice for a decade or more could come about by default, by not striving for a settlement, as has been the case in the course of the largely cosmetic exploratory talks from 2004 onwards, which implied a tacit agreement to let matters stand. Needless to say, an explicit agreement to this effect by Greece and Turkey is preferable, as it could lead to various moratoriums regarding the continental shelf, grey zones and overflights that would limit the danger of an incident getting out of hand and causing a major crisis.

With or without a set of moratoriums, restraint and efficient crisis management are obviously called for if the Aegean settlement is postponed indefinitely. In the last ten years, there have been several instances where events in the Aegean could have led to a crisis, but where this was averted due to timely crisis prevention and management. For example, in the summer of 2001, the Turkish oceanographic vessel *Piri Reis* (of March 1987 fame) was to embark on a seismic survey in the disputed Aegean continental shelf, but the voyage was cancelled following consultation between foreign ministers Papandreou and Cem. And in the spring of 2005, when foreign minister Moliviatis was on an official visit to Ankara, there was an incident on one of the two Imia/Kardak islets involving coastguards and air force pilots on either side. The situation could have led to a replay of the February 1996 Imia/Kardak crisis, but was defused following consultations in Ankara between the two foreign ministers.

To prevent the lack of resolution of the Aegean issue from causing problems, the EU-Turkey link should increasingly come into the picture, with eventual membership rather than privileged partnership being the end result. Moreover, Greek-Turkish low politics need to continue smoothly, including contacts at all conceivable levels (exchanges, tourism and so on) and, perhaps above all, economic cooperation. Hopefully, after a number of years, provided that official relations remain fairly cordial and that Turkey accedes to the EU, the Aegean disputes may appear less salient and more amenable to a settlement. But let us focus on economic cooperation as the main palliative as long as the Aegean disputes remain unresolved.

It is worth stressing that important sections of the business community, especially in Turkey, had since 1997–8 been active in trying to improve Greek-Turkish relations. However, they could only make limited headway on their own and could not bring about change at an inter-state level. But once the two governments took the initiative, the business communities were ready to proceed at a brisk pace, reinforcing the normalisation of relations.³

Until the thaw of 1999, trade and other forms of economic cooperation were surprisingly limited for neighbouring states, the obvious reason being the ongoing Greek-Turkish cold war. In 1988, for instance, the year of the spirit of Davos, the volume of trade was only 108 million dollars, a situation more likely if the two countries were a thousand miles apart. In the 1990s, the volume of trade ranged from only 233 million dollars in 1992 and 273 million dollars in 1994 to 730 million dollars in 1997. At the time of the initiation of the thaw in 1999, it was a mere 695 million dollars. From then on it has risen considerably: 870 million dollars in 2000, 1.35 billion in 2003, 2.65 billion in 2006 and an impressive 3.22 billion in 2007 and 3.6 billion in 2008.⁴

Joint ventures and foreign direct investment are another very important factor. As Constantine Papadopoulos points out, foreign direct investment ‘represents arguably the deepest form of inter-state economic cooperation outside the common market *per se*. It reveals not only investors’ confidence in the economic prospects of the host country but – bearing in mind the size of the potential risks entailed by wholesale commitment of significant capital in an “alien” sovereign entity – also a willingness on their part to show a large degree of trust in that country’s institutions and political and legal culture’.⁵ Investments have also risen sharply, though curiously less in the first five years of the détente (when the thaw was more tangible), but more from 2005–6 onwards. In the first decade of the 21st century, some 80 Greek companies have made direct investments or synergies in Turkey, which is increasingly seen as a lucrative venue for Greek investment, despite the economic risk of the venture (a case in point being the acquisition of Financebank, Turkey’s fifth largest bank, by the National Bank of Greece). In the period 2002–7 Greece ranked as the third biggest foreign investor in Turkey (following the Netherlands and the US). Turkey’s investments in Greece are far more limited, due to two reasons: Turkish firms prefer lower cost countries and are discouraged by the considerable administrative obstacles they face in Greece, in what amounts to an almost protectionist zeal on the part of the Greek authorities.⁶ Apparently, these obstacles are not in place to deliberately prevent

the inflow of Turkish capital as such,⁷ but are due to Greece's chronic bureaucratic malaise that frustrates foreign investment in general.⁸

Two other fields of economic cooperation between Greece and Turkey are tourism and energy. As regards tourism, there has been a considerable rise since 1999 (to five times the amount), but the flow is overwhelmingly from Greece to Turkey rather than the other way round, due to a large extent to the visa requirement for entry into Greece, which does not apply for Greek citizens visiting Turkey.⁹

Energy cooperation is a new and potentially promising field leading to increased interdependence between the two countries, making armed conflict less likely, as it would be damaging to both sides as well as to other European states, the recipients of Azeri natural gas from the Caspian Sea. Worth mentioning is the 285 km natural gas pipeline from Karacabey (on the Asian side of the Sea of Marmara) to Komotini (in Western Thrace), which was inaugurated by the two prime ministers on 18 November 2007.¹⁰ However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of energy cooperation. Apart from the fact that Greek-Turkish energy cooperation is in its early stages, two other reasons call for caution: energy geopolitics by their very nature can also provoke competition and rivalry; and both states continue to maintain – and apparently want to maintain for the foreseeable future – a considerable degree of independence vis-à-vis each other when it comes to energy.¹¹

In summary, it remains an open question as to whether economic cooperation has reached such a level that it is no longer dependent on the ups and downs of high politics and can continue even if Greek-Turkish relations were to deteriorate. Moreover, has economic cooperation reached a point where it can influence high politics on the road to a rapprochement and perhaps act as a safety net against a deterioration? The answers are far from clear, but it is probably too optimistic to regard economic cooperation and other transactions à la Mitrany to be so potent as to be able to withstand a downward spiral in Greek-Turkish relations. Let us examine why.

To begin with, the Adam Smith 'peace-through-trade' ideal has inbuilt limitations. Increased trade could lead to misunderstandings and even open conflict, as shown by several historical examples. But even if this pessimistic scenario is somewhat far-fetched in the Greek-Turkish context, trade and other economic ties on their own cannot determine and set the pace of Greek-Turkish relations.¹² Moreover, as Constantine Papadopoulos points out, 'it is highly unlikely that economic relations will become so advanced in any domain as to assume a position of primacy in the bilateral relationship as a whole',¹³ and even if the

two economies did become closely intertwined, which is unlikely, this would not be enough 'to preclude the possibility of tension and conflict at given moment'.¹⁴ And the obvious cause of this would be none other than friction in the Aegean.

As regards economic relations *per se*, Greek-Turkish interdependence is only partial. As far as investment is concerned, it is, as we have seen, lop-sided in favour of Greek business, with still very low numbers of Turkish firms operating in Greece. As regards trade, Turkey is far more important for Greece than Greece is for Turkey. For instance, in 2007, of the overall volume of trade, 2260 million dollars were Turkish exports to Greece but only 950 million dollars were Greek exports to Turkey. This, together with heightened Greek investments in Turkey, makes Greece increasingly dependent on Turkey's economic situation. Greek exports to Turkey are on the rise (Turkey ranks as the sixth biggest importer of Greek goods), but Greece is not a significant market for Turkey, trailing below Bulgaria for instance. What is more than clear is that the full potential of economic cooperation has yet to be achieved. One reason for this, apart from Greek bureaucratic barriers to Turkish investments, is that the bulk of trade is transported by land through their common borders in Thrace. This is a far more costly and less efficient route than the Aegean Sea, but the Aegean route is barely used. This is the case because of the ongoing unresolved Aegean disputes.¹⁵

Moreover, Greece is fearful that extended trade and business transactions between the eastern Greek islands and the Turkish mainland will attach the islands to Turkey, thereby reinforcing the well-known Turkish argument that the islands are geomorphological prolongations of Anatolia. A case in point is the export of electricity to the eastern Greek islands by the Turkish coastline, which has occasionally been proposed by Ankara. This makes considerable sense economically and in other ways, but has not been accepted by Greece.¹⁶ Thus, we have turned full circle and come again to the Aegean conflict and the repercussions of its continued non-settlement.

To conclude, trade, investments and joint economic ventures, however extended, would probably not be in the position to withstand a deterioration in high politics, triggered as a result of an episode in the Aegean, a deadlock on the Cyprus talks, a rise in nationalist fervour in Greece or Turkey or the arrival of a new government that favours antagonism and brinkmanship. Peace through trade is a palliative if the Aegean dispute is not resolved for the time being, provided that the political will favouring cordial relations exists in both states. It is hardly a reliable safety net or guarantor of détente in its own right

should things turn sour. The Mitranian functional hope does not seem to have applied in the Greek-Turkish context to date, namely that 'by tying up the states in a complex web of interdependence and by solving economic and social problems so efficiently and humanely that they erode the material and psychological bases of conflict'.¹⁷

At the very least, for trade and low politics to do the trick and allow détente to muddle through without having resolved the Aegean conflict, progress on the other fronts that bedevil the relationship between Turkey and Greece is essential (Cyprus, minority issues, matters related to the Patriarchate). So long as all of these remain unresolved, the low politics approach is bound to remain vulnerable, especially if Turkey's accession to the EU does not come to pass. So long as the Aegean dispute remains in place, the full potential of economic cooperation will not be realised which can then act as a bulwark against a return to costly rivalry.

The short cut: resolving the Aegean conflict

The objective dimension: the package deal and the small package

The straightforward line is to try to address the Aegean issues with a view to arriving at a mutually acceptable settlement that will comprehensively resolve the dispute once and for all. Despite the well-known entrenched positions of both sides, there are obvious points of convergence, as seen in the talks of 1978–81 and 2002–3, provided both sides are willing to show moderation and a constructive spirit. Needless to say, for the short cut approach to carry the day, there is a need for a strong, resolute and moderate government on either side willing to clinch a deal and embark on a historical compromise with the 'enemy', as was the case in 1930–9.

Procedurally, there are two avenues ahead: an overall package deal, as implied in the talks of 1978–81; and a small package deal, as seen in the 2002–3 talks.

In any sincere and open negotiation, the main focus would be on tangible interests, sovereign rights, national security, access to islands and ports and so on.¹⁸ The aim would be to pinpoint manageable, negotiable issues, to be placed within a cost-benefit calculus. The final outcome would be of the 'split the difference' kind, in which both sides make concessions. In the years to come, this 'split the difference' 'fixed-sum' line may become 'positive-sum' in view of the beneficial effects to Greek-Turkish relations that will accrue from the resolution of the Aegean conflict.

As we have seen (see Part III), the harvest of such a peace process is fairly clear-cut. Regarding the continental shelf, there are basically two options and two procedures: to leave the matter unresolved *sine die* by

adopting a moratorium on freezing delimitation and explorations for oil; or to seek delimitation by adjudication or negotiations, perhaps on the basis of the principles established in the 1978–81 talks (see Table II, p. 108). In a delimitation, the end result would be anything between 20 and 30 per cent of the continental shelf (underneath the open seas) going to Turkey and 70 to 80 per cent afforded to Greece, with perhaps joint exploitation in some regions.

Regarding the territorial waters, there are again two main possibilities: abiding by the six mile limit or resorting to partial extension by Greece in some areas but not in others (for instance, 12 miles in the two mainlands and six in the islands or eight in the islands to the west) following an agreement between the two countries, as seen in the 2002–3 talks. Clearly, the simplest solution is to abide by the six mile limit, which will have a positive knock-on effect on the other Aegean issues.

Regarding national airspace, the Greek airspace has to tally with the territorial waters and not the other way round, limiting itself to six miles or to any other limit decided by the two parties for the territorial sea.

As for demilitarisation, it could 'take care of itself'¹⁹ once settlement has been reached on the other three issues, which are the main bones of contention. At the very least, a phased disengagement from both the Greek islands (partial demilitarisation) and the Turkish coast (the Turkish 4th Army and landing craft) is in order.

The Imia/Kardak issue and other 'grey zones' would either disappear from the agenda altogether if the previous issues were resolved or would lead to negotiations regarding the region north of the Dodecanese Islands up to the Evros/Meriç river border in Thrace, where the maritime boundaries are not clearly demarcated.

The FIR and NATO disputes would fall into place once the other issues were resolved, not least the national airspace question. Under the circumstances, flight plans could perhaps be tolerated, purely for reasons of safety, with no abuse of responsibility on the part of Athens.

This would be by and large the outline of an overall package deal. A small package or quick fix, like the one implied in 2002–3, would be to aim for the settlement of the continental shelf issue, but by the same token settle territorial waters, since for the continental shelf to be addressed in any adjudication or negotiation, the territorial sea must be agreed upon once and for all. This would also provide a unique opportunity for resolving the ten mile unorthodox Greek airspace by making it congruent with the territorial sea. As these three issues are the most important and self-standing ones, the other items would lose their resonance, as stated in the GTF document and as implied in the course of the 2002–3 talks.

In spite of the above and the handy 'small package' approach, the Aegean dispute continues, as does the wider Greek-Turkish conflict, with not even one item in the extended agenda having been resolved in spite of some ten years of détente. Social inertia apart, the Aegean conflict continues to be seen in 'zero-sum terms'; the 'win-win' element is not obvious. For many Greeks and Turks, any conceivable deal is worse than the ongoing rivalry. Thus, 'no solution may be a solution', as seen many times over in the case of Cyprus. Moreover, the fact that Turkey's EU prospects are far from assured is yet another factor that does not provide an impetus to resolving the Aegean dispute. In addition, there is of course the Cyprus conundrum and its continued negative effect on Greek-Turkish relations. The question is can the Aegean dispute and the other Greek-Turkish points of friction remain a hostage to the Cyprus problem?

Another basic reason for the non-settlement of the Aegean conflict is domestic: the fact that public opinion in both countries is still convinced that the other side is feigning being a status quo power. Opinion polls in both countries show that even after the earthquake spirit of 1999, more than 70 per cent regard the other as the enemy and the state most likely to attack them militarily. And in Greece almost 80 per cent are against Turkey's entry into the EU, that is, they run directly counter to Greece's obvious national interest.²⁰ Thus, we inevitably come to the subjective dimension of the Aegean conflict.

The subjective dimension: addressing fears and needs

The mutual fears concerning the Aegean are entrenched in the two countries. Thus, in trying to settle the Aegean disputes, emphasis should be put, in tandem, to the mutual fears and needs of both sides regarding the Aegean.

The mutual fears regarding the Aegean are, as we have seen, the following: the spectre of the 'Greek lake' that is seen as 'strangling' Turkey and throwing the country out of the Aegean, as if it were a land-locked state; and the fear of bypassing the islands, dividing the Aegean in half, cutting the Greek state in half and ultimately 'ensnaring' the eastern Greek islands. In this respect, it is worth remembering Bülent Ecevit's apt imagery of 'a double-edged sword of Damocles' hanging over the two parties to the conflict (see Chapter 7).

Various principles such as the non-closure of Greek islands by Turkish continental shelf or the non-closure of Turkey's existing openings to the high seas would go a long way to addressing these deeply felt fears and vital needs (see Table II, p. 108). Above all, if it is fully understood that the other side harbours no hidden expansionist agenda towards 'us' (save for

the clamouring of the ultra-nationalists in Turkey and Greece representing some 10–15 per cent of the electorate), a satisfactory deal could be clinched when the time is ripe.

As former US ambassador Monteagle Stearns, a seasoned veteran of Greek-Turkish relations, has put it, the aim should be ‘the creation of a regime in the Aegean that respects the sovereignty of Greece over its islands, that satisfies Turkish concerns over freedom of navigation, that enables both countries to explore and exploit the resources of the Aegean shelf on an equitable basis’.²¹

For the Greeks, the key is to abandon once and for all the well-known popular perception that the Aegean is a Greek sea or should become one (via the extension of the territorial sea to 12 miles), which is seen in Turkey as a revival of the ‘Great Idea’; and on the Turkish side, the abandonment of the tendency to ignore the islands, which is seen in Greece as implying that the eastern Aegean should have been Turkish, along the lines of the notion of neo-Ottomanism.

More specifically, for the Turkish side, the Turkish-Greek Aegean relationship must be guided, according to Professor Ahmet Evin, by ‘three cardinal principles: 1) the Aegean is a common sea between the two countries; 2) the freedom of the high seas, and that of the air space above it, should be respected in accordance with point 1); 3) any extension of territorial waters by any party should be based on mutual consent between the parties and should be implemented in a fair and equitable fashion’.²²

For the Greek side, according to Professor Theodore Couloumbis, ‘it must be made clear that the Aegean cannot be partitioned or subdivided in such a fashion that it *encloses* Greek territories such as the Dodecanese and eastern Aegean into a zone (or zones) of Turkish functional jurisdiction [original emphasis]’.²³ As the late ambassador Byron Theodoropoulos has stated, the primary and vital issue for Greece ‘is that no Greek island – not even one of them – in the eastern Aegean should find itself enclaved, be it under the seabed, on the sea or in airspace under the control in any way by Turkey’.²⁴ In addition, it should also be made crystal clear that recourse to the use of force in the Aegean is unthinkable and that Turkey harbours no expansionist goals whatsoever in the Aegean or elsewhere vis-à-vis Greece.²⁵

The long haul: identity and national narratives

Imagined enemies

So, are Turks and Greeks destined to be friends or enemies? Perhaps a more realistic goal would be to strive for a situation of being neither friends nor foes.²⁶ It could well be that being in a state of antagonism is

functional not only for warmongers who invest in the conflict, but also for the two peoples and their leaders, along the lines of the Simmel/Coser dictum that external threat breeds internal cohesion.²⁷ If the enemy is no more, the two states may find themselves with a host of insurmountable internal divisions and domestic problems. In the words of the famous verse of Constantine Cavafy, 'Now what will become of us without barbarians? These people were a kind of solution'.

Thus, we come to the more pessimistic view, the tip of the iceberg, that the real reason that Greece and Turkey cannot move beyond the present rickety *détente* and resolve the Aegean dispute is national identity *cum* national history as conceived with the other side as the main enemy.

In the words of Hercules Millas, a pioneer of the theory of identity as the main issue in the Greek-Turkish rivalry, 'due to historical reasons each party conceives the "other" as a prospective threat or as a challenge to its identity and interprets each of his actions accordingly, creating a vicious circle'.²⁸ Portraying the 'other' as the 'historical enemy', violent, cunning and unscrupulous is intended to buttress national identity and self-worth.²⁹

According to psychoanalyst and conflict researcher Vamık Volkan, by portraying the other side as evil and full of negative traits, one projects those parts of oneself that one wishes to deny. Projection serves to enhance self-esteem in contrast to the despicable 'other'. In this context, Greeks and Turks have become the 'significant negative other'; they need each other, but as enemies. In this identity formation, 'chosen traumas' and 'chosen glories' are essential ingredients.³⁰

In the Greek-Turkish case, distrust is created by their 'living history'.³¹ In Greece and Turkey, 'history is not past, the past continues to live in the present',³² as both 'have shaped their "nation-state" identities through struggle against and interaction with each other'.³³ The enduring Greek-Turkish rivalry is perhaps 'the only case in history where two national states are created after a fight against "the other"'.³⁴ This goes a long way to explaining the tenacity of the rivalry. In their respective wars of independence as well as in instances when one party set foot on the territory of the other, this led to massacres, burnings and a huge trail of refugees and destitutes. Such suffering further galvanised the two peoples as tragic victims of the other side.³⁵

Greeks and Turks and their ancestors, the Orthodox Christians and Sunni Muslims of Turkic extraction, have lived in the same region, in the southern Balkans and Asia Minor/Anatolia, for centuries. As a result, they enjoy a shared history. Yet 'it is their shared history that

has separated Greeks and Turks from one another, a shared history that has been remembered and interpreted in a widely divergent manner on opposites sides of the Aegean Sea'.³⁶ As A.J.R. Groom has aptly put it, for different reasons, the two sides do not acknowledge their common 'Ottoman-Levantine heritage' and as a result 'neither state is at peace with itself'.³⁷ The exigencies of Greek and Turkish national identity call for this affinity to be denied. It is worth remembering Ernest Renan's famous postulate, 'oblivion, indeed I would even go as far as to say historical error, is a most essential factor in the creation of a nation'.³⁸

The 'Turkish Other' in the Greek narrative and identity formation

The Greek national narrative regarding the Turks is straightforward and blatant: they are their oldest rivals, the worst and most vicious enemies imaginable, they are 'invaders' (they have taken the Greek ancestral lands) and 'barbarians' to boot. When they finally defeated the glorious Greek Byzantine Empire (in 1453), they subjected the Greeks to ill-treatment for four hundred years (the Turkish yoke), until the Greeks were finally able to free themselves after a heroic struggle. Then at last the Greeks were able to follow their destiny, civilised Europe, which owes its civilisation to them. In the last few decades, the aim of inherently expansionist and aggressive Turkey is to grab as much of Cyprus as possible, several Greek islands and Greek Thrace, but the Greeks will not allow this to happen and, after all, justice and international law is on their side.³⁹

In the Greek narrative, Turkey and the Turks need to be demonised for the sake of Greek identity and pride. The negative image of the Turks is an essential ingredient of the Greek self-image and identity. But why is this the case?

Without the 'black other', it is difficult to establish the 'white' past and present of the Greeks,⁴⁰ hence the constant Greek claim that Turkey routinely violates international law, abuses human rights and is not a real democracy, and the glee of the Greeks whenever a report appears in the foreign media regarding Turkish violations of freedom of expression, torture or acts of violence. The object of the exercise is oblivion, to keep hidden the many untold stories that do not match with the dominant polarised black and white imagery regarding the past.

In particular, the yoke/occupation notion is essential so as to expunge even the hint of coexistence and almost partnership between the Ottoman Muslims and *Romioi* under Ottoman rule. Any questioning of the yoke/occupation idea, for example, by providing hard historical evidence to the contrary, creates uproar, for it is seen as undermining

the *raison d'être* of Greek statehood. It is not easily understood that there are other ways of fully justifying Greece's national independence bid, namely the reigning despotism, arbitrary rule, backwardness and utter opposition to the principles of the Enlightenment (secularism, human rights, popular democratic rule) in the Ottoman Empire until the 1820s prior to the Tanzimat.

Historically, the above imagination was also vital in pursuing the Great Idea, the Greek irredentist drive of the period 1850–1922, thereby presented as a justified claim to 'lost territories', including even regions where the Greek-speakers were not in the majority (such as wider Macedonia, Western Thrace, the coastline of Asia Minor and of course Istanbul, Constantinople to the Greeks); moreover, it was also of value until 1974 with regard to Cyprus, as long as the idea of *enosis* (union) was still alive in Greece or Cyprus.

Furthermore, the strong urge for the Greeks to present the Turks as the antipode of civilisation is due to the following vital reason: by claiming (from the days of Korais onwards in the early 19th century) direct descent from the glorious Ancient Greeks – from the 'classics' – the modern-day Greeks become part and parcel of the 'cradle of civilisation' and in particular of European civilisation and culture.⁴¹ They become Europeans by being the descendants of the 'great civilisers', the ancient *Hellenes*. As the late Stéphane Yerasimos has put it, 'in order to sustain the major argument of being the defenders of civilisation, they must convince themselves and the world of the barbarism of the other ... the ineptitude of the Turk to civilisation'.⁴² Another factor reinforcing 'Turkish innate barbarism' is the well-known fact that the 'Turk' was for Europe the primary 'Other', and a barbarian one at that, for centuries.⁴³ Hence, the Greeks as 'full-blooded Europeans' appropriate that aspect of the bad image of Turkey as well.⁴⁴

The final outcome, as I have put it with some exaggeration elsewhere, is that for most Greeks, 'hate for Turkey and love of the Greek fatherland go hand in hand, they are two sides of the same coin. If one declares (preferably at every occasion) how horrible the Turks are by the same token he/she manifests one's great love and utmost devotion to Greece; one proves how Greek he/she is'.⁴⁵

The Greeks seem to almost live in their imagined historical past, fixated with their 'great ancient ancestors'.⁴⁶ Past and present are one and the same, in what is a static narrative with a greater emphasis on the past than on the present or future. This almost amounts to denying history, to denying historical evolution and change.⁴⁷

Greece is regarded as the quintessential country of 'civilisation and history'. The end result of this self-identity is a haughty cultural arrogance,

indeed a megalomania⁴⁸ that knows few bounds. This sense of superiority conceals an 'existential insecurity' that breeds a defensive nationalism.⁴⁹ By having chosen to identify themselves with the Ancient Greeks as well as with the major European civilisations instead of with peoples and countries of their own size, the Greeks of today end up feeling miserable by comparison. This is combined with an acute feeling of being alone in the world, of being 'a brotherless nation' (*ethnos anadelphon*), even though they are part of the EU. The Greeks feel constantly threatened by outside forces, not only by the Turks, but also by the Americans, the British and other Western European countries, who are presumably constantly preoccupied with Greece and in the business of scheming against the Greeks and Hellenism (conspiracy theories abound even among intellectuals and academics). The tragedy and injustice of it all – according to the majority of Greeks – is that instead of being admired, cherished and always supported (by virtue of being the descendants of the original civilisers), the opposite is usually the case. As for the Turks, they are 'the favourite child of the Americans' and of several Western European states, for instance, the UK.⁵⁰

The 'Greek Other' in the Turkish narrative and identity formation

The Turkish national narrative regarding the Greeks is that they are descendants of a motley group of Christians living under the shrinking Byzantine Empire, an empire that is rarely mentioned in the Turkish narrative, other than as decadent, tyrannical, uncivilised and as having no relation whatsoever with the Ancient Greeks. When conquered, the *Rum* (Christian Orthodox) were brought under the just and multicultural rule of the Ottoman Empire, where they thrived. Yet they ungratefully ended up by revolting, with foreign connivance, against their benefactors and have ever since (or at least until 1922) attacked the Turks, trying to extract territories along the infamous Megali Idea, always with the support of the Europeans (incidentally, the present-day Greeks are hardly descendants of the Ancient Greeks), going as far as occupying and invading the Anatolian homeland, to be driven out in the epic Liberation War. The more recent exploit of the Greeks as a revisionist state is the attempt to grab the whole of Cyprus, though it was never part of any Greek state, and to expand piecemeal in the Aegean by using legalistic stratagems. But the Turks are convinced that the Greeks will not succeed in their devious schemes, for justice is on the side of Turkey which, after all, is a big and powerful country.⁵¹

The Turkish narrative (or rather narratives, for there are at least four in competition with each other) is by and large defensive, save for

the mention of Turkey's size and power. The main Turkish concern, which is a cause of intense insecurity, is the retention of their territory and sovereignty. Even though they have lived there for centuries as Ottomans and then as Turks, they have a sense of being 'newcomers' or 'successors' of another people. Even today (as was the case in the early days of Turkish nationalism), many Turks continue to regard the steppes of Central Asia as their 'home' (*ana yurt*) or even the beyond, the unknown as 'home'. As put by Ziya Gökalp in his famous 1911 poem 'Turan': 'For the Turks Fatherland means neither Turkey nor Turkestan; Fatherland is a large and eternal country – Turan.'

But undoubtedly the greatest trauma that has led to this Turkish sense of insecurity (apart from the Kurdish problem in its secessionist rendition, which is a real enough threat) is the historical experience of the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres (the harsh and unfair carving up of Anatolia proper) and the invasion of the Greeks (a former 'subject people') with Allied approval into the Turkish heartland in 1919–22. This has given rise to the 'Sèvres phobia' or 'Sèvres syndrome', the fear of amputation and dismemberment of the motherland, which is regarded not only as the hidden agenda of the Greeks, but also of many Europeans (in this light, EU membership is considered catastrophic by many in Turkey today).⁵² Hakan Yılmaz has pointed to another phobia as well, the 'Tanzimat syndrome', depicted as a generous offer of reforms that, instead of stemming the tide of nationalist uprising and foreign interventions, did the very opposite, ultimately leading to the destruction of the Ottoman Empire.⁵³

As in the Greek case, Turkish narratives are not devoid of megalomania, as seen most clearly in the 'Turkish History Thesis', where the ancestors of the Turks are presented as the creators of all the major civilisations across the world and as the quintessential state-builders. However, in this regard the Thesis was so far-fetched and downright implausible that it has lost much of its resonance in the country in recent decades. By and large, Turkey's arrogance is not so much based on pride in its culture and history (although the Turks do take pride in Ottoman and Turkish cultural achievements). It is rather based on its sense of superiority in comparison to other neighbouring states, such as Greece. This arrogance is derived from the gravitas of the imperial Ottoman past and Turkey's sheer size, military prowess and geopolitical clout. This barely disguised arrogance conceals a sense of inferiority, almost of powerlessness. Apart from the almost paranoid fear of amputation or dismemberment, the vast majority of Turks are convinced that they have no real allies worldwide (even though they have Turkic brethren stretching across Asia to the Great Wall of China). 'The Turks have no friends' is a well-known

Turkish saying (incidentally, the Kurds have the very same motto). They feel that they remain the 'hated other' of Europe (as was the case during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment), the abominable 'Great Turk', unlike Greece, which remains the 'spoiled child of Europe' to this day.

Geospace and mutual images: additional caveats

As Sofos and Özkırmlı point out, nationalism 'is almost invariably haunted by a fixation on territory, the quest for "home", real or imagined. This involves the reconstruction of social space as national territory, often with a force and intensity that erases alternatives and grafts the nation onto the physical environment'.⁵⁴

In the Greek case, according to the dominant Pararrigopoulos grand narrative, the European and Asiatic parts of the Aegean were Greek territory since time immemorial and remained so until the fall of the Byzantine Empire. It was on this basis that the Great Idea was concocted, with the 'regaining' of Constantinople (as the city is still called by the Greeks today) being the ultimate aim and greatest prize. When Greek irredentism ran aground in Asia Minor in 1922 and the Greek community left for good, Greece's newfound space was the Aegean as a whole. Greece came to be regarded as a quintessentially Aegean country. The Aegean Sea and its islands became central to Greek representations. The Aegean is portrayed as 'the epicentre of Greek civilisation and with the help of archaeological and historiographical discourse becomes diachronically and inextricably linked with Hellenism'.⁵⁵ This shift in Greece's definition from a successful northward expansion until the early 20th century to the Aegean as an 'incontestable territory' in its present-day self-representations goes a long way to explain the great sensitivity of the present-day Greeks in the Aegean dispute vis-à-vis Turkey.⁵⁶ Thus, even the mention of the obvious fact that the Aegean also happens to be a Turkish sea (since Turkey is after all a littoral state of the Aegean) is regarded as outrageous by the vast majority of Greeks and as a major provocation.

The various Turkish territorial-geographical imaginations have ranged from representations of vast geographical spaces as Turkish, such as from the Adriatic Sea to the Great Wall of China or even to the China Sea (as seen in pan-Turkism and Turanism), to the representation of Anatolia proper as the logical present-day homeland. The geographical narrative that has dominated the scene from the creation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 onwards is based on Kemal's stipulation that the Turks do not chase 'after fantasies' that cannot be realised and would increase their number of enemies; they will stick to 'their natural, legitimate limits'.⁵⁷ The only exception to this maxim is the case of the

annexation of Alexandretta, which was renamed Hatay (note that to the Greeks, Cyprus is another prospective Hatay). However, pan-Turkist aspirations did not disappear altogether. Thus, recurring Turkish governments since the inter-War period have taken various steps to either curb the activity of the pan-Turkists or to co-opt them. Cyprus and to some extent Western Thrace have been among the main preoccupations of the pan-Turkists and other ultra-nationalists; following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, an affinity with the newly independent Turkic states, leading to the creation of a huge pan-Turkic state under Turkish aegis, was also envisaged. In recent years, however, even the MHP has tempered its position and this has led to the creation of various disaffected fringe groups of ultra-nationalists and pan-Turkists.⁵⁸

Each side regards the other as the enemy *par excellence*. But there are at least two important differences worth highlighting.

On the whole, the Greeks are obsessed by Turkey and the Turks, they are almost mesmerised by 'the danger from the East'. There is a paranoiac fear of Turkey.⁵⁹ The dominant stereotype is that Turkey is equipped with an aggressive and bloodthirsty army (the Greek code word for this is 'Attila'), an army which is impervious to its military casualties (such as those incurred in Cyprus in 1974 and in conflicts with the Kurds thereafter). Moreover, there is an impression that the military continue to call the shots on vital issues, in what is an ultra-nationalist society in the throes of militarism.

The Turks for their part are not equally obsessed by the Greeks, nor are they equally fearful of the Greeks militarily. Indeed, at times, Greece is more of a nuisance to Turkey than a real threat.⁶⁰ Yet, by and large, the Greeks are regarded as aggressive nationalists contemplating an attack against Turkey if given the opportunity. This is seen to be the case because deep down the Greeks have not abandoned the dream of the Great Idea.⁶¹ This Turkish perception is largely a hangover from the painful historic memories of Greece's intrusion in Anatolia with European assistance in 1919–22 as well as the Greek Cypriot oppression of the Turkish Cypriots in the period 1964–74. As regards Cyprus, a well-known Turkish perception is that if the Greek Cypriots had it their way, they would have obliterated the Turkish Cypriots years ago – they would have drowned them 'in a spoonful of water'.⁶²

The main Turkish fear regarding the Greeks is that, given the fact that they have managed to be accepted as 'Europeans', are within the EU and have extended international connections – including the very active Greek diaspora, especially in the US – they are in a position to do them harm and have shown little restraint in this regard. Greece and the Greek diaspora try their utmost to diminish them, to smear Turkey's

international reputation and undermine its international standing. To this end, they have frustrated an array of fundamental Turkish foreign policy aims (a case in point being the US embargo on arms to Turkey in the mid-1970s and more crucially Greece's sustained veto to Turkey's candidacy to the EU until late 1999). Thus, if the Greek fear of the Turks is more at a military level, the Turkish fear is more at a diplomatic level. When it comes to actual military threat, Turkey is more fearful of an internal threat, from the PKK, but here again the Greek connection arises (as shown in the alleged Greek support given to the PKK until the Öcalan crisis of early 1999).

Another difference between Greeks and Turks is that Turkey and the Turks form an essential part of Greek self-identification as the 'negative Turk'. In the Turkish case, this is also true, but only in part.⁶³ The Turks are in need of a number of other negative 'others': foremost of all (until recently) the Arabs and the Arab world (which is seen as backward, undemocratic and prone to religious fundamentalism) and to some extent the Iranians, the Armenians and the Russians. Turkish hate and animosity towards the Greeks is more nuanced. It is probably no coincidence that Turkish diplomats and politicians have toyed more than their Greek counterparts with the well-known platitude that Greeks and Turks are destined by geography to be friends.⁶⁴ The Turks far more than the Greeks have been known to consider the 'black top enemy image': that the politicians in Greece are those responsible for kindling the flames of hatred; that the majority of Greek people, if left to themselves, would be amicable toward the Turks. Another variant, which is popular with the Turkish Left and among social democrats of Ecevit's hue, is that those to blame for the ongoing rivalry are not the Greeks and Turks as such, but the US and the other imperialist powers, as the Greek-Turkish antagonism provides them with the opportunity to regularly meddle in Turkish and Greek internal affairs, sell weaponry and keep both countries weak economically due to expenditure on arms. In Greece, this view is found mainly in the far left of the political spectrum. In addition, the Turks are far more prone than the Greeks to refer to common 'tastes, habits and behaviour',⁶⁵ not least in terms of cuisine, the well-known 'discourse of ouzo, feta and lakerda'.⁶⁶ The Greeks abhor any such allusion, as do the Turkish Cypriots when the Greek Cypriots remind them of their cultural similarities and the lack of conflict between 'Greeks' and 'Turks' in the island until the early 1950s.

Attitude change, paradigm shift

How best to overcome the Greek-Turkish antagonism requires a detailed examination that is beyond the confines of this book. Here I will limit

myself to a few cursory remarks in an attempt to trace the possible pathways ahead.

For Greek-Turkish relations to enter into a real process of rapprochement, an undermining of the national mythology is in order, which will find its echo in primary and secondary education. Officials of both countries have occasionally referred to the malign effect of schoolbooks (including Özal and Papandreou at Davos in January 1988) and some timid changes have been made in their history school texts. Of course, this is no easy matter and should be done with the utmost of care, since a more likeable 'other', worthy of recognition and respect, is difficult to accept, as it casts doubt on the cherished but insecure national identity and self-worth of the Greeks and Turks respectively which, as we have seen, is built to a large extent on belittling the 'other'. Thus, a frontal attack on national narratives is inadvisable. A more pragmatic goal (according to social psychologists specialising in attitude change) is to aim for gradual and partial changes to the image of the enemy by subtly undermining the extreme ingroup-outgroup polarisation by increasing the familiarity with the other side, as well as by promoting reliable information and increased contacts, in the hope that familiarity will not breed contempt.

In this regard, the popular Greek reactions to the August 1999 earthquakes in Turkey may provide a clue. All of a sudden, the Greeks saw with their very own eyes, on television and in the press, real Turks, in flesh and blood. The real Turk was very different from the imagined abstract Turk that the Greeks expected to see. What they saw were normal human beings suffering and thanking the Greeks for their active support. Thus, perhaps for the first time, the image of the Turk 'became blurred'.⁶⁷ As a result, the Greeks who supposedly despised the Turks and wanted to do them harm came to their support and were vividly moved by their suffering. The episode was replayed in reverse three weeks later when an earthquake hit Athens. Put differently, the respective original abstract images of a Turk or a Greek were so unreal and abominable that almost any contact with real Turks and Greeks respectively could only have a positive effect, undermining, at least for a while, the original stereotype.⁶⁸

A process of contact and familiarity could possibly lead, according to Jay Rothstein (based on his experience with Israeli-Palestinian conflict resolution workshops), to the following guarded reappraisal of the other side: 'I still do not like them. I don't fully trust them, I don't like aspects of their culture and some of their values seem negative, but I now do understand that they, like we, are motivated by deep needs and values.' This may fall well short of the ideal, mutual understanding, let

alone 'parity of esteem' (to remember the apt wording of the Northern Ireland Good Friday Agreement) or empathy, but it is a first modest step in the right direction and would be more sustainable than a sudden enthusiasm for one's rival that may prove hollow.

As a starting point, Millas has suggested that the two sides come to realise and accept that nations and nationalism are a modern phenomenon and that their nation is no exception (it should be noted that the Turks would find this easier to accept). From this vantage point, Greeks and Turks could hopefully: (1) distance themselves and their community 'from real or imaginary controversies of the distant past'; (2) feel no responsibility for the wrongdoings (real or imagined) of their distant ancestors and consider the other side as also having no responsibility for such wrongdoings; while (3) at the same time being ready to criticise one's own more recent unfriendly or aggressive behaviour against the other side.⁶⁹

Ideally of course, as psychoanalysts and social psychologists would argue, the two sides should be able to arrive at a new sense of collective identity and self-worth which is self-standing and mature and does not need to rely on denigrating the 'other'.

From the perspective of international relations, Greek-Turkish relations are in need of a paradigm shift along Kuhnian lines. What is in essence still largely a Carl Schmitt paradigm should give way to a liberal or reflectivist approach.

Schmitt had made a stark distinction between 'the Other' (*Andere*) as the 'Enemy' (*Feind*) that can never be 'a friend'.⁷⁰ Hence, the only way forward for a state is to be constantly on the alert for the enemy. The most extreme version of this is *Machtpolitik* and war. This line of reasoning is far from fanciful in the Greek-Turkish context. By way of an example, the late Panajotis Kondylis, a respected Greek philosopher, created quite a stir in Greece more than a decade ago by suggesting in all seriousness a massive 'first strike' on the part of Greece against Turkey as the only way to deal effectively with Turkey's awesome geopolitical might, as he saw it, which was bound to render Greece a satellite of Turkey.⁷¹ A Turkish counterpart of this is a 1996 paper by Şükrü Elekdağ, urging Turkey to be well prepared for war in order to quell a simultaneous military offensive on three fronts: Greece, Syria and the PKK.⁷² At least Elekdağ did not go as far as suggesting a first strike, following the notion of 'anticipatory self-defence', as was the case with Israel's June 1967 attack against Egypt, Jordan and Syria.

A variant of the Schmitt approach is the more traditional *Realpolitik* paradigm, still in vogue in Greece and Turkey: the deterrence-security

line and diplomatic pressure to outwit and corner the adversary, along win-lose, zero-sum logic. Beneath the veneer of what is regarded as hard-nosed realism, such strategies conceal ethnocentric 'patriotic moralism',⁷³ a struggle between right and wrong where 'our side' is always right and just and the other side is always wrong.

The much-needed redefinition of Greek-Turkish relations away from antagonism and enmity along Schmittean lines could perhaps follow a four-pronged strategy. One possibility could be to indicate the factual inaccuracy of certain perceptions of the other side and of its motivations in specific instances, past or present. Another could be to reveal the other side's suspicions and almost paranoiac fears of 'us' and then compare them with 'our' own fears, thereby revealing similarities (mirror images) and subtle differences. This input would hopefully temper either side's *angst* and may, incidentally, reinforce one's collective ego by indicating how threatening one can be to the other side. A possible third parallel road would be to elaborate on the various classic mutual misperceptions manifest in all acute conflicts, such as the belief that the other side is far more hostile and the (mis)perceived greater cohesion and coordination of the adversary in what is a well-thought out and unflinching strategy aimed against 'us'. A fourth approach would be to reveal the 'security dilemma' in the Aegean context (see the concluding remarks in Chapter 14), the negative role of selective reporting in the media of the two countries, the malign role of 'groupthink'⁷⁴ (when hawkish views prevail) and the danger of 'self-fulfilling-prophecy'⁷⁵ when following a worst-cost scenario.⁷⁶

A quasi-conclusion: the Aegean conflict as a paradox

In an attempt to forge a new paradigm in Greek-Turkish relations and assist in an Aegean settlement, I will conclude with the use of the paradox device: that the Aegean conflict is hardly normal and natural but a paradox. It is a paradox that should not have been in place for at least six reasons:

1. The borders between Turkey and Greece have been set, conclusively, at the Lausanne (1923) and Paris (1946–7) peace conferences and treaties.
2. The outstanding border disputes, namely those in the Aegean, are on water and in the air, not on land, not regarding land borders and their inhabitants, which would have been far more difficult to handle. Indeed, the Aegean disputes are amenable to a peaceful settlement, with few painful compromises on either side.

3. Both parties have always officially claimed (from 1930 onwards) that they harbour no territorial ambitions whatsoever vis-à-vis the other side. There is little reason to doubt the sincerity of these claims, that both sides are indeed *bona fide* status quo states (leaving aside the case of Cyprus in bygone years, that is, *enosis* versus *taksim*, or the clamouring of ultra-nationalists).
4. There have been three decades of cordial relations (the 1930s, 1945–54 and the last decade) as a result of a political will at the highest level, which means that a rapprochement is possible.
5. The non-settlement of the conflict in question is very costly, both economically and otherwise (in terms of necessitating an arms race and causing a rise in nationalism, xenophobia and paranoid tendencies), not least under today's economic recession. Conversely, good neighbourly relations are clearly of benefit to both Greece and Turkey.
6. The peaceful settlement of disputes is the cornerstone of the UN system, even more so in a region under the sway of the EU (the 'European security community'), with Greece as a member and Turkey as a prospective member. In the last half century, maritime disputes, such as those in the Aegean, have been resolved peacefully worldwide by bilateral negotiations, adjudication or conciliation. War over maritime differences is highly unlikely (the obvious exception being the Iraq-Iran war of 1980–8, instigated by the Shat al-Arab waterway dispute).

There is also a geopolitical dimension worth mentioning.⁷⁷ In cases of semi-closed seas or large gulfs, such as the Baltic Sea, the Adriatic Sea, the Black Sea or the Persian Gulf, it is highly unlikely for one state to end up controlling all the coastline, as historically many states and peoples have vied for an opening to the sea or gulf in question. The Aegean Sea could hardly be an exception to this, for the added reason that it happens to divide Europe from Asia (however imagined and arbitrary the division between Europe and Asia may be). Historically, only empires have been able to control both sides of the Aegean (the Macedonian, Roman, Eastern Roman and Ottoman Empires), with one empire not succeeding (the Persian Empire).

To conclude, the non-resolution of the Aegean conflict is not due to a lack of sensible solutions. The crux of the problem is not the incompatibility of interests as such, but the mutual suspicions and fears that are deeply rooted in historical memories, which portray the 'other' as the implacable enemy and 'us' as victims of injustice. An eventual solution should satisfy both states, taking due account of their vital needs and interests. By the same token, it will lay the 'Greek lake' spectre and

the fear of 'island grabbing' to rest, opening the road for a final historical compromise and reconciliation between the two neighbours.

Notes

1. As Andrew Wilson had rightly concluded three decades ago. See Andrew Wilson (1979/1980), 'The Aegean Dispute', *Adelphi Papers*, No. 155 (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies), p. 29.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2, 13, 27, 29; Richard Clogg (1983), 'Troubled Alliance: Greece and Turkey', in Richard Clogg (ed.), *Greece in the 1980s* (London: Macmillan), pp. 124–5, 128, 131; Theodore A. Couloumbis (1983), *The United States, Greece, and Turkey: The Troubled Triangle* (New York: Praeger), pp. 124–30; Aurel Braun (1983), *Small-State Security in the Balkans* (London: Macmillan), pp. 237–43; A.J.R. Groom (1986), 'Cyprus, Greece and Turkey: A Treadmill for Diplomacy', in John T.A. Koumoulides (ed.), *Cyprus in Transition, 1960–1985* (London: Trigraph), pp. 147–8, 152; Tozun Bahcheli (1990), *Greek-Turkish Relations since 1955* (Boulder: Westview), pp. 129–30, 152–4, 192–3; Richard Haass (1990), *Conflicts Unending: The United States and Regional Disputes* (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp. 59–64; Monteagle Stearns (1992), *Entangled Allies: U.S. Policy Toward Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press), pp. 134–44.
3. Soli Özel (2004), 'Turkish-Greek Dialogue of the Business Communities', in Taciser Ulaş Belge (ed.), *Voices for the Future: Civic Dialogue Between Turks and Greeks* (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press), pp. 163–8.
4. Maria Ververidou (2001), 'I ellinotourkiki oikonomiki synergasia: provlimata kai prooptikes' [Greek-Turkish Economic Cooperation: Problems and Prospects], *Agora horis Synora* [Market without Frontiers], 7, 1, pp. 4–7; Dimitris Tsarouhas (2009), 'The Political Economy of Greek-Turkish Relations', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 9, 1–2, pp. 45–6.
5. Constantine A. Papadopoulos (2008), 'Greek-Turkish Economic Cooperation: Guarantor of Détente or Hostage to Politics?', *South East European Studies at Oxford*, Occasional Paper No. 8, March, pp. 26–7.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
7. This is the view of Greek specialists on economic cooperation, but I suspect that the fact that the prospective investment is from a Turkish firm makes the Greeks in charge of issuing permissions uneasy. For instance, the Greeks would not stomach a Greek bank being bought by a Turkish bank.
8. Papadopoulos, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–15, 26–32; Tsarouhas, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–8. The 2008 trade volume is derived from the National Statistical Service of Greece.
9. Constantine A. Papadopoulos (2009), 'Economic Cooperation: Guarantor of Détente or Hostage to Politics?', in Othon Anastasakis, Kalypso Aude Nicolaidis and Kerem Öktem (eds), *In the Long Shadow of Europe: Greeks and Turks in the Era of Postnationalism* (Leiden & Boston: Martinus Nijhoff), pp. 296–7.
10. According to the Turkish foreign ministry, the Karacabey-Komotini project is 'a milestone in the energy cooperation between Turkey and Greece' that

- 'proves the potential of the two countries to contribute to the diversification of EU's energy routes'. In www.mfa.gov.tr, 'Turkish-Greek Relations', subchapter 'The Rapprochement Process'. Date accessed 21 November 2009.
11. Papadopoulos, 'Greek-Turkish Economic Cooperation' op. cit., pp. 17–26, especially pp. 19 and 25–6. Papadopoulos, 'Economic Cooperation', op. cit., pp. 299–304, especially pp. 299 and 303.
 12. Papadopoulos, 'Economic Cooperation', op. cit. pp. 290–1.
 13. Papadopoulos, 'Economic Cooperation', op. cit., p. 290.
 14. Papadopoulos, 'Economic Cooperation', op. cit., p. 290.
 15. Papadopoulos, 'Greek-Turkish Economic Cooperation', op. cit., pp. 11–15, 26–36; Tsarouhas, op. cit., pp. 48–54.
 16. Papadopoulos, 'Economic Cooperation', op. cit., p. 302.
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 26. As the late ambassador Zeki Kuneralp had argued. See Zeki Kuneralp (1999), *Sadece Diplomat. Anılar-Belgeler* [Simply a Diplomat. Memoirs-Documents] (Istanbul: ISIS), p. 270.

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29. Ibid., pp. 53–4. See also Alexis Heraclides (1980), 'Socialization to Conflict: A Case Study of the Ingroup-Outgroup Images in the Educational System of Greece', *The Greek Review of Social Research*, 38; and Heraclides (2004), 'The Greek-Turkish Conflict: Towards Resolution and Reconciliation', in Aydın and Ifantis, op. cit., p. 73.
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37. Groom, op. cit., p. 152.
38. Ernest Renan (1904) [1878], 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?', in *Discours et conférences* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy), pp. 284–5.
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48. Mouzelis, op. cit., pp. 42–3.
49. Lipowatz, op. cit. p. 277.
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56. Ibid., p. 29. This Greek sensitivity was also recorded by Andrew Wilson 30 years ago in his seminal paper on the Aegean dispute. Wilson noted the Greek emotional attachment to the Aegean and its place in Greek life and the economy, adding that Turkey on its part fails to realise this dimension of the Aegean dispute. See Wilson, op. cit., pp. 3, 29.
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 61. In this regard, there is a revealing (and amusing) passage in foreign minister Çağlayangil's memoirs. In one of his meetings in the late 1960s with his Greek counterpart, Panayiotis Pipinelis (a revered figure in the Greek foreign policy establishment with whom Çağlayangil was on excellent terms), the Turkish foreign minister complained that the Greek schoolbooks were starkly anti-Turkish and imbued with the notion of Greater Greece. Pipinelis is said to have replied as follows: 'Look we are not going to get back *tin Poli* [Constantinople] by giving our pupils these books to read. And even if we wanted to you of course would not give it to us. If we mobilised to try to get it by force, our power would not suffice. You are least five times our size. We simply want to imbue the youngsters with a national ideal for them not to transgress into unwanted paths. An ideal is an aim which moves away when you come close to it. It makes people run after it. Allow us to dream. It amounts to chimeras' (my translation from Greek to English). In the Greek version of the memoirs of Ihsan Sabri Çağlayangil (2001), *Oi Anamniseis mou* [My Memoirs] (Athens: Potamos), p. 239.
 62. As Çağlayangil has put it in his memoirs. See Ihsan Sabri Çağlayangil (1990), *Anılarım* [My Memoirs] (Istanbul: Günes Yayınları), p. 335.
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 64. At least according to my reading of various autobiographical accounts by Turkish and Greek diplomats and politicians that cover Greek-Turkish relations.
 65. Ergüder, op. cit., p. 13.
 66. Belge, op. cit., p. 13. See also Ergüder, op. cit., p. 14.
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 68. In an experiment held during the Cold War, American soldiers, duly infused with the notion of the Soviet threat and the stereotype of the despicable Soviets/Russians, were asked to listen to Soviet English-speaking radio. When asked their opinions after several days of listening, they came out with a more positive image of the Soviets than previously, obviously because the original image of the other side was so extreme. See Don D. Smith (1973), 'Mass Communication and Image Change', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 17, pp. 116–29.
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