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Introduction: Will new regional developments change the geopolitics in the Eastern Mediterranean?

The Mediterranean, is the only sea and waterway that surrounded by by countries of three different continents, and populations who speak 10 different languages. A geopolitically, it refers to the break point of a three main continents: Asia, Europe and Africa. Historically, it has characteristic of a birth place which emerged the elements of humanity and civilization in this region, and started from here to another place in the world. That is why, different cultures and societies are gathered, interacted and combined in the region. As well as in the contemporary era, there have been economic and financial dimensions¹.

So that, this article wants to contribute in the main arguments that have included the current issues in the Mediterranean basin, for that it classified the matters into two distinctive visions in the Eastern Mediterranean:

First: The discoveries of energy (Petroleum and Natural Gas) in the Eastern Mediterranean. Thus, Will energy and exited pipeline change the area in terms of Security and regional cooperation? It is clear the pipeline there not only have an economic dimension, but also it exactly means international political economy phenomena in the any specific region.

Second: The new regional developments in the Eastern Mediterranean and its impact on the European countries, Will the future coalitions change geopolitics in the Mediterranean basin or not ?

Finally, it is impossible to forget that there are other international phenomenon in that region, such as refugee crisis, especially, after the Arab Uprising/Spring in Middle East and North Africa in 2011 till now end of 2017. According to (Center of Mediterranean Refugee Crisis, 2017) the Eastern Mediterranean, where severely %20 of the refugees have come from Syria; victims of the five year long civil war in 2011 to 2017. The center has explained that the most of the refugees have ended up in camps in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. These three countries are hosting over (3.6) million Syrian refugees. An additional 500,000 refugees are scattered across a broad range of other states, with roughly three quarters of that number in Iraq and Egypt. An additional six million refugees remain displaced within Syria itself. Only a

¹Mediterranean Institute for Regional Studies. See here: www.mirs.co



relatively small portion of these refugees have tried managed to go to Europe, most of them crossing the eastern Mediterranean to either Cyprus or Greece².

Section One: Will Energy push the region to cooperate? Or igniting to the conflict between the countries in the region?

A. Why Energy is Important?

The Energy is the main source to move, the life without energy means That the Physical, social and economic movements are stopped. While there are a various types of Energy: Solar power, Nuclear energy, Hydropower, Petroleum “Oil and natural gas”, electrical energy, radiological energy, chemical energy, and thermal energy. In physic any matter needs energy in order to move and transfer. Whereas, The "Energy" is not only economic goods, but it's also directly connected with the human life as an emerge into existence. The Nineteenth and twentieth centuries were petroleum“Oil’s era. Still, the basic source in all industrial countries is depending on crude oil and natural gas “or its derivatives”. All the Cars, Airplanes, Marine vessels, factories, war instruments, and power electric generation are working in the Oil and natural gas.

It is relatively possible to use the concept of “Energy” instead of “Oil and Natural gas” Particularly, in this academic paper which will focus on the role of energy in the global market and its role in the regional cooperation, the intertwining or intersecting several different countries in the eastern Mediterranean is a possible example to increase the role of energy. On the other side, Energy pipelines may be reason to conflict or political escalation, and go to an intervention by superpowers. Also, can become a diplomatic and political coalition to promote the regional security.

²Micallef. V. Joseph (updated 2017) Reflections on the Mediterranean refugee crisis. Center of Mediterranean Refugee Crisis.



B. Energy Revolution in the Eastern Mediterranean: what happen in the future?

According to (International Energy Agency- IEA, 2014) which prepared the annual report as a “World Energy Outlook” has forecast (37%) increase in global energy demand by (2040)³ While the world's population is expected to rise from (7.2) billion in (2014) to (9) billion by (2040). The growing demands to Natural gas per year for (1.6%) and to Oil per year for (1.3%)⁴, Furthermore, presently, more than (50%) of all the energy consumed within the European Union is imported from outside. That is why the gas war took place between Russia and the European Union countries in (2006) and (2009) as well (2014) in the Crimean peninsula. At this important time, the discoveries of Natural gas about (2000) Billion cubic meters (bcm) and a ratio of Oil in the Eastern Mediterranean have really meant an Energy revolution, Probably change the geopolitics and political coalitions in the area all⁵.

So that, this scientific paper will focus on the energy pipelines in the eastern Mediterranean, especially, the connection between Cyprus and Israel also Egypt and its role in European countries, satisfying the demands. So, what is the role of energy pipelines in the regional cooperation? Does natural gas redrawing the map of forces in the region?

The natural gas reserves discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean region represent a golden opportunity and a valuable asset for all the countries of this region, including Egypt, Israel, Turkey, Cyprus, Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine.

B.A. Regional conflict and the role of global interests

The huge gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean represent a historical importance to the states of the area, which are relatively poor in the primary energy sources (oil and natural gas). On the one side, It allows them to increase the use of natural gas at the local level, and then reducing their imports from abroad. Additionally, these discoveries give hopes in leading the countries to export gas to abroad towards the European countries, either by setting up gas

³World Energy Outlook (2014). IEA, See www.iea.org

⁴Suleman. Khattaf (2016). The future of oil in the global energy mix sites.google.com/site/sypeteng/research/57-2

⁵Bakoni, Tareq (2017). Pipelines and Pipedreams: How the EU can support a regional gas hub in the Eastern Mediterranean, European Council on Foreign Relations. P.1.



liquefaction stations or by constructing pipelines to transport gas to international markets. On the other hand, the supply of gas discovered in the eastern Mediterranean is significant from the point of view of international markets, also its the ease of movement of these supplies within the entire Mediterranean basin, and through the Suez Canal in the east and west, north and south. Supplies flowing from the Arabian Gulf to the rest of the world, mostly through the Strait of Hormuz, placing these supplies at the mercy of Iranian threats to close the strait from time to time.

Moreover, the importance of these political economy relations in the Mediterranean stems from the dramatic rise in the interesting of controlling natural gas resources not only for the countries of the Middle East, such as Qatar (the second largest producer after Russia). But also for the European Union and China as one of the largest consumer in the world. Natural gas is a relatively safe and clean source of energy compared to nuclear power and coal, and it is therefore the best alternative to replacing nuclear power plants, especially after the disaster of the Fukushima nuclear plant, which caused massive carbon emissions. Thus, since the economic cost of using gas instead of wind power or any other alternative energy source is much lower, gas is accelerating rapidly to become the world's most important energy source⁶.

The discovery of energy, in the East Mediterranean influenced the benefits of Russia, the United States and the European Union, which threatens to fuel conflict in the region. Here are a serious Russia's relations with Cyprus and Israel, which Moscow is Israel's biggest supporter of crude oil. Also, the assets of Russian firms and individuals in Cyprus are estimated at (31) billion USD in (2013)⁷.

⁶Qandil, Ahmed (2013). After the discovered of gas in the Eastern Mediterranean. Ahram. (Translated from Arabic to English) See here: www.ahram.org.eg/News/748/65/134691/...

⁷Mabruk, Sharif (2015) Regional and International Allaince in the Eastern Mediterranean. Arab Center for Research and Studies. See here: www.acrseg.org/39723



C. Theoretical framework of the political economy in the Eastern Mediterranean

There are many perspectives from international political economy: The liberals believed that the economy is promoting the role of globalization, and vice versa is true, the states internationally can share the authority with MNC and international institutions, internally they can share the authority with central government. That is why the role of transnational company to increase the production are positive. The Realists already clear that do anything in order to serve to their countries, the U.S.A doesn't offer any service to any ally without specific interest, the energy for the superpower is a priority in the Middle East and Mediterranean basin, because when the countries that they're owned the Oil and Natural gas selling in Dollars, the Dollars means American Value, the American value directly related to US 's national strategy. The Marxism also viewed the economy as a sensitive phenomenon in the society, said that the MNC and the economic tools are the main reason to emerge of classes in society, the company when coming to host counties just wanted to produce more and profit.

Practically, the superpower role in the Mediterranean region has very competitively, the Russian loan to Cyprus, which was lastly restructured and estimated at (3.3) billion USD, and the signing of the Russian corporation GASPROM in (February, 2013), a twenty year agreement to purchase Liquefied Natural Gas from the fields, "Tamar and Dalit" Israelis, "Russian joint development agreement with the regime of Bashar al-Assad to discover sources and establish oil development projects in the exclusive economic zones of Syria for (25) years' worth about (90) million USD⁸. According to (Jesus Manuel Triana, 2017) the Eastern Mediterranean is the possible example to witness the raising of Russia in the International arena, during his security analyst Russia has established a permanent naval presence in the eastern Mediterranean. It has 16 ships, three naval helicopters and an aircraft carrier, which means it is ready to face potential threats to its interests in this region⁹.

In addition, the role of American oil firms, Particularly, Nobel Energy and ExxonMobil in the discovery and production of hydrocarbon resources in the eastern Mediterranean, have led the

⁸Mabruk. Sharif (2015) Regional and International Alliance in the Eastern Mediterranean, Arab Center for Research and Studies. See here: www.acrseg.org/39723

⁹ Jesus Manuel Triana (2017) Russia in the Eastern Mediterranean: A counterweight to the west?.



USA interests in energy security in this region. Also, the security of the countries that have a close ties with them (Israel, Jordan and Egypt) Especially in the framework of the transition to the conflict in Syria, the flows of refugees and the activities of terrorist groups.

The US has played an interesting role in stimulating negotiations between Greek Cypriot leaders and Turkish Cypriot parties with a view to finding a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus division. US officials hope that the energy will provide a strong impetus for progress in these talks and participation for reconciliation between Turkey and Israel, in addition to the US attention to the Russian presence in the Eastern Mediterranean, which made the United States to strengthen its presence there.

The new coalition: Israel, Cyprus and Greece, Where is the Turkey's position within the new geopolitical bloc?

It is true that the energy connection and production is important, but also there are several related issues between the Middle East – Mediterranean region on the one side, and the issues of Euro-Mediterranean policy on the other side. The last one has stimulated the countries to make a political economy rapprochement, and then to demarcate water boundaries.

Regarding this matter, ([The Jerusalem post, 2016](#))wrote entitled of (A new geopolitical Bloc is Born: Israel, Greece and Cyprus). It talks about the future of the trilateral summit was held in Nicosia with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Greece Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, and President of Cyprus Nikos Anastasiadis, which the summit was followed by a significant joint declaration, From an Israeli perspective, the recent developments with Greece and Cyprus constitute a win-win situation. The strengthening of ties with these countries creates a new geopolitical bloc that could, to some extent, stand up to Turkey.

This bloc has both military and political significances. Greece is ready right now to assist Israel within the European Union, as it proved recently when it led the opposition to labeling settlement products. This represents a sharp change in Greek policy within the EU. Cyprus almost automatically supports the Greek position, which gives the Greeks a double vote within EU institutions. Stronger Israeli relations with Greece and Cyprus may also serve to encourage Turkey to show more flexibility in negotiations regarding normalization of ties between Ankara



and Tel Aviv¹⁰. As we have seen in the early of (2016), the Turkey- Israeli relations has been normalized and sign agreement about the importing Israel's gas for Turkey, but this agreement might be non-successive.

Egypt also shares in the production energy in the Mediterranean, at the same time the Ambassador (Ibrahim Yusri, 2014) at Al-Jazeera, described this situation as a new regional conflict, they said that the “Gas War” coming in the Eastern Mediterranean, also he accuses Israel and Cyprus of stealing Egyptians gas in collusion with successive Egyptian governments¹¹.

For Cyprus, this international political Economy phenomenon is different than other countries. It has discovered the natural gas, and recognized globally by members of the European Union. While Turkey rejected to recognize the Republic of Cyprus instead of them recognize the North Cyprus. So, A Cyprus problem is of the international problem, Turkey maintains up (40000) troops in Northern Cyprus. According to (Michael Ratner, 2016) during his work outlined that the Negotiations to unify the island under one equally administered federation between Turkish Cyprus and the Republic of Cyprus quickened in (2015). While some commenters are optimistic about potential agreements, no resolution has yet been reached. Although Turkey has not specifically contested ownership of the Aphrodite Field*, Ranter argued that the Turkey mightily opposes the development of Cypriot natural gas resources unless the Turkish Cypriots will share in the financial benefits or until a resolution of the “Cyprus problem” is found¹². While many of commenters looks optimistically to normalization of Turkey – Israeli relations and also Turkey attempted to import the Israel's gas crossing Cyprus boundaries by the way of Energy pipeline, but it is once again has failed.

*Aphrodite Field: is a Cypriot offshore gas field in 1700m sea depth and has amounted 3.6-6 trillion cubic feet gas

¹⁰ The Jerusalem Post (2016): A new geopolitical bloc is born, prepared by: Arye Mekel. See here: www.jpost.com/Opinion/A-new-geopolitical-bloc-is-born...

¹¹Al- Jazeera (2014). The gas war in the Middle East, Program Dialogue (Translated from Arabic to English).

¹²Ratner, Michael (2016) Natural gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean, Congressional Research Service. P 6.



Conclusion

The Eastern Mediterranean position is one of the important geopolitical positions in the world, It has an influence on the Middle East events. Also, it is a geographical, economical, and a political break point between Asia, Europe, and Africa. The role of Israel and Cyprus will increase more in the future, Israel and Cyprus might become a main point of security and economic coherence to the European Union.

In conclusion, Countries within the Mediterranean, currently have no positive orientation towards Turkey. Cyprus has an aggressive tendency with Turkey, The Turkey and Israeli relations has declined during the rule of the Erdogan's party (AKP). Syria, Egypt, and Greece also had/ have a various troubles and historical conflict with Turkey. Thus Turkey much in need for Energy, its demand currently supplied by Russia, Iran, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and Azerbaijan. Hence, many commenters said that the Russian and Turkey ties have normalized more in (2017).

The new global order in the Eastern Mediterranean will go to a more competitive between Russian military and economic hegemony and American. Russia has a detailed plan to play and manipulate in the eastern Mediterranean through Syrian territory, Turkey and Egypt. The US also tries to test their alliance in the region, in order to prevent the Iranian hegemony and to maintain their economic interests in the region.



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