Power Politics, Security Dilemma, and Crisis Behaviour: The Case of Imia

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RÉSUMÉ

Cet article cherche à cerner la nature du dilemme sécuritaire greco-turc à travers le comportment des acteurs de la crise d'Imia, tout en démêlant les événements qui constituent cette crise. Selon l'auteur les facteurs structuraux revêtent une importance capitale ainsi que les objectifs revisionnistes de la Turquie, décrits comme n'étant pas liés à la sécurité de cet État, constituent une source majeure d'instabilité et de conflit

ABSTRACT

This article unravels the string of events surrounding the Imia Crisis while seeking to address the nature of the Greek-Turkish security dilemma with respect to crisis behaviour. The analytical framework is defined along clear neo-realist lines, where insecurity and conflict is caused by the inescapable self-help nature of the system and the emergence, thus, of balance of power and/or power politics state behaviour. The author argues that the structure of Greek-Turkish relations alone, defined as the distribution of capabilities and the anarchic nature of the system, cannot account for the security dilemma (and its intensity) which exists between the two states. Structural factors are extremely important, but equally important are the revisionist goals, described as non-security expansion, of one of the two actors – Turkey, as a major cause of instability and conflict. The predatory, power maximization Turkish behaviour has resulted in power politics. This premise is supported empirically by a review of Turkey's crisis conduct in the Imia incident of 1996.

Background

Since 1980 Greece and Turkey have been in a relationship of low intensity conflict 'disrupted' by shorter or longer détentes. This situation has also been described as a relationship of manageable tension. Regardless of terminology, there exists the disturbing potential of escalation leading to a more serious crisis with alarming destabilizing effects at a regional level.

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In January 1996 a team of Turkish journalists removed a Greek flag from the islet of Imia in the Dodecanese complex and hoisted a Turkish one. Greek troops replaced the Greek flag. The Greek Foreign Ministry considered the affair closed until the Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller laid an official claim on that and many other Greek islets and commenced a confrontation that almost escalated to warfare. The crisis was defused through US diplomatic intervention but yet another item was added to the overburdened agenda of Greek-Turkish problems.[1] According to Mavridis and Fakiolas, the Imia Crisis, "marked, primarily, a change in the way Turkey pursued coercion. Using military force for the first time, Ankara explicitly challenged Greek territorial integrity. The bloodless occupation of the western part of the Imia islets coupled with the military, diplomatic, and political management of the ensuing escalation lead to the conclusion that the Turkish leadership had adopted new policies in order to serve its objectives."[2] These objectives have been clearly perceived by Greece as revisionist, causing major security problems.

Ironically, despite the end of the Cold War and resulting overnight transformation of the military situation in Europe, Greece experienced the change less intensely than all its neighbours and allies. The post-bipolar order did not change the basic parameters as these have been consistently articulated by both Greek élites and public opinion. The Greek point of view treats Greece as 'status quo' country and Turkey as an adversary who has never stopped pursuing revisionist policies in Cyprus, the Aegean, and Thrace as well as aiming at altering the balance of power and interests in the region.

Argument and Context

This article seeks to address the nature of the Greek-Turkish security dilemma with respect to the crisis behaviour. The analytical framework is defined along clear neo-realist lines, where insecurity and conflict is caused by the inescapable self-help nature of the system and the emergence, thus, of balance of power and/or power politics state behaviour. My argument is that the structure of Greek-Turkish rela-

tions alone, defined as the distribution of capabilities and the anarchic nature of the system, cannot account for the security dilemma (and its intensity) which exists between the two states. Structural factors are extremely important, but equally important are the revisionist goals, described as non-security expansion, of one of the two actors – Turkey, as a major cause of instability and conflict. The predatory, power maximization Turkish behavior has resulted in a power politics Greek-Turkish interaction, which finds vivid expression in the numerous recurring crises in the Aegean and Cyprus. This premise is supported empirically by a review of Turkey's crisis conduct in the Imia incident of 1996.

The neo-realism perspective on international politics derives from its two core assumptions: the centrality of autonomous states wishing to survive and the salience of international anarchy.[3] Because world politics takes place within a self-help realm, states must rely on their own resources to protect themselves and further their interests. Whether they desire safety or opportunistic expansion, states are better served by superior, not equal, power. For this reason, statesmen are usually more concerned with relative advantages than with absolute gains. The problem of uneven gains giving advantage to one side or another makes international cooperation difficult to achieve and hard to maintain. The neo-realist paradigm is built on a fundamental belief in strong links between anarchy, security, and relative gains. Though states are not in a constant state of war, anarchy means that nations must constantly fear enslavement or extinction. Because the consequences of a mistake can be catastrophic, states must be cautious in assessing the intentions of both foes and allies, since today's friend may be tomorrow's enemy.

In the neo-realist perspective, the security dilemma refers to the notion that a state's efforts to increase its security, by threatening another state which then responds with steps to increase its own security, paradoxically erodes the first state's security.[4] The two states, without intending to do so, thus find themselves in a spiral of mounting hostility and arms buildup. The intensity with which the security dilemma operates depends upon a number of conditions: the degree

of trust between states; the extent to which uncertainty and incomplete information produce misperception of intentions; whether offensive or defensive forces would have the advantage; and whether states can distinguish between others' offensive and defensive armaments.⁵ The operation of the security dilemma is one of the key reasons that peace under anarchy may not be stable. Even if no states have explicitly aggressive intentions, anarchy fuels the security dilemma and can produce spirals that lead to growing hostility and, ultimately, to conflict. "The possibility that force may be used to settle disputes, even among peaceful, status-quo powers means that states cannot escape the security dilemma-an increase in one state's security decreases the security of others. Insecurity and the use of force, realists argue are enduring attributes of the self-help international system".⁶ The logic of the security dilemma arises from the anarchic structure of international relations.

Indeed, structure matters. However, in the absence of a rigid bipolar distribution of power in the wider international system, more attention should be paid to unit-level variables. When dealing with regional conflicts, like the Greek-Turkish competition, while structure-level variables are extremely important, studying unit-level variables becomes necessary. This means that, differences in state goals-whether states seek the minimum power required for security or additional power for goals other than security-have to be accorded an equal consideration along with anarchy and the distribution of capabilities. The attempt in this paper, thus, is to bring the concept of the revisionist state back in the neo-realist context. At bottom, the concept of the security dilemma in international politics rests on the fundamental assumption that some states are perceived to be either currently harbouring aggressive designs, or that they may become aggressive in the future.

Predatory states motivated by expansion and absolute gains are mainly responsible for power politics behaviors – instead of the more 'benign' security-seeking balancing behavior - that can prevail in international relations. The aim of revisionist states is "self-extension", which often requires power enhancement. "Goals of self-extension

generally place an extremely high premium on the resort to power as a means. The chances of bringing about any major change in the international *status quo* by means other than power or even violence are slim indeed. Because it is also true that self-extension is often sought passionately if not fanatically and by actors of various sorts of motivations, the tendency is toward frequent and intensive quests for enhanced power by nations belonging to this category". Aggressive states trigger recurring power politics turmoils (crises). Therefore, the level of system stability depends on unit-level variations, namely on the strength of revisionist (status-quo) forces. In the following section, the extent to which the power politics expectations on revisionism and aggressive conduct in crises are confirmed empirically within the context of the Greek-Turkish crisis over the Imia islets is examined.

Power Politics: Aggressive Turkish Behaviour in the Imia Crisis

As a school of thought in international relations, power politics makes an almost unqualified equation of the Hobbesian state of nature with international politics. Each state is, at least potentially, in the situation of a war against all others. State-to-state relations are dominated by conflict. The very basic assumption is the state quest for maximization of power. Thus, power is seen both as an end and as a means. Power is not only a crucial means for achieving security, but also a key objective for its own sake.[8] According to the power politics perspective, states, wishing to maximize their power and seeking superiority, will embark on expansionist foreign policies and adopt offensive military doctrines. In times of crisis, such inclinations are likely to result in aggressive, or force-prone, behaviour."

The popular image of Greek-Turkish relations meets nicely the expectations of the power politics perspective concerning aggressive security and power-maximizing state behaviour. This appears to be especially true during recurring crises in the Aegean and in Cyprus in which Turkey either used military force or threatened to do so and thereby posed a serious threat to regional peace. Turkey's crisis behaviour seems to have been especially competitive and confrontational.

During the Imia Crisis elements of aggressive Turkish conduct are rather easy to point out.

The beginning of the incident dates back to December 26, 1995, when a Turkish freighter ran aground on an uninhabited rocky islet group, called Imia, just off the eastern coast of the Dodecanese Island of Kalymnos[10] and about four miles off the Turkish coast. The freighter captain's refusal of Greek assistance coupled with the position of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Imia Islets are in Turkish territorial waters constituted an indirect challenge to Greek territorial integrity. The *verbal note* submitted to the Greek embassy in Ankara, on December 29, stating "that Kardak rocks are an integral part of Turkish territory"[11] was a direct challenge and thus represented quite a confrontational Turkish attitude aimed clearly at provoking a crisis. Indicative of this fact is the Turkish Foreign Ministry's not offering any credible argument or evidence to back its claim.

The Greek response came ten days later with a *verbal note* dated January 9, 1996, stating that the Imia islets belonged to Greece, and making a detail reference to the 1932 agreements between Italy and Turkey, which provided for the delimitation of the Italo-Turkish boundary between the Dodecanese islands and the Turkish coast.[12] It was a moderate diplomatic response, and a clear exhibition of Greece's commitment to the status quo and its ability to react.[13]

Although Turkey had not yet replied, on January 16, Greece suddenly increased surveillance measures in the area of the islets, an unanticipated action given the political language in the Greek *verbal note.* "This partial mobilization was not explicitly linked to the dispute over the salvage, in the sense that the Greeks had failed to give prior warning to Turkey of the military implications of its stance. The mobilization could be taken as an unreliable indication of deterrence. In fact, the military warning of deterrence seemed to be inconsistent with the political warning of deterrence".[14]

Meanwhile, Costas Simitis, having formed a new government on the January 22, tried to reshape the Greek strategy of deterrence. The

main feature of his approach was to keep a low profile and convey a clear indication of deterrence through diplomatic channels. The Greek minister of foreign affairs openly voiced the opinion that the entire issue was not worthy of debate. His statement clearly demonstrated Greece's will to avoid escalation of the dispute, while the new Greek *verbal note*, communicated to Ankara on January 26, aimed at placing emphasis on the seriousness of the issue for Greek interests. On January 27, the Turkish newspaper *Hurriyet* sent a boatload of journalists to Imia, where they took dawn the Greek flag, recently placed there by the mayor of Kalymnos, and hoisted a Turkish one. Media in each country took up the issue, in several cases with exaggerated, jingoistic coverage. Forced by events, the Greek government expanded the military measures of deterrence in tandem with the intensification of its diplomatic efforts. On January 28, a naval vessel was ordered to restore the Greek flag and a contingent of commandos landed on the islets giving a clear military warning of deterrence. Compared to the mobilization during the first phase, this move was at least timely and was linked to the ongoing incident. The Greek minister of foreign affairs briefed the ambassadors of the European Union's member-states and the United States of America on the incident, presented a new *verbal note* to Ankara, on January 28, and made it clear that the Greek government was determined to re-examine its position on the issue of Turkey's customs union with the EU.

The Greek actions, however, had no effect on Turkey's behavior. On January 29, Ankara issued another *verbal note* to Athens challenging Greek sovereignty over not only Imia, but numerous other Aegean islets as well, and demanding the removal of the Greek troops and flag. The Greek response came the same day in the Greek Parliament by the Prime Minister himself, who rigorously rejected the Turkish demands and demonstrated Greece's will to counter Turkish revisionism.

From that point onwards, Ankara increases the pace of response, thus, escalating the tension. Turkish naval forces become increasingly challenging and its conduct rather 'reckless', while Turkish air force violates Greek airspace. On January 30, Turkish National Security Council adopts a hard and rather aggressive stance. Moreover, Prime

Minister Tansu Ciller via the US President demanded the settlement of the dispute within the next two hours. According to Mavridis and Fakiolas, 'this move aimed to force Greece to conform to Turkish claims by political means. It represented an escalation since it transformed the low-intensity crisis into an all-out crisis. It was a political ultimatum, which substantiated a strategy of the escalation of crisis with brinkmanship diplomacy'.[15] After the expiration of the deadline, Turkish troops established a foothold on one unguarded (Imia) islet, while the Turkish government suggested a mutual disengagement and the initiation of negotiations. It becomes profoundly clear that the majority of the political and military leadership in Ankara is not interested in diffusing the crisis but aims at initiating an armed conflict in the Aegean.[16] An armed conflict that would almost certainly lead to a situation where Greece – even after 'winning' - would negotiate on what Turkey describes as 'outstanding issues in the Aegean', after a forceful US intervention. The 'reckless' readiness with which Turkey employed threats to use force, and actually used force is worth noting. 'Recklessness' in this case does not spring from a misperception of the balance of interests, miscalculation of a rival's resolve, or miscalculation of relative capabilities; rather, it is similar to aggressive conduct in being prone to resort to force quickly.

The Imia Crisis should be then understood as a clear demonstration of Turkish revisionism. A revisionism that was reinforced by changes in the function of the Turkish state caused by an alarming neo-authoritarianism and a nationalist hatred brought about by the Kurdish problem.[17] As Kourkoulas has indicated, the military campaign in Southeastern Turkey has resulted in a situation where the use of force or the threat to use force has become totally accepted as a legitimate foreign policy behavior by large parts of the Turkish society. The dominant position of the military in Turkish political life reinforces these tendencies.[18]

In Imia, Ankara saw an opportunity "to fabricate a case so as to put forward the idea of 'grey areas' and push Greece to the negotiations table"[19] in order to revise the status-quo in the Aegean. The Turkish position during the crisis "became a much wider challenge to Greek

sovereignty over small islets along the maritime border, as well as to the border itself". [20] The issue of 'grey areas' in the Aegean had never been raised by Ankara before the Imia Crisis. It should be seen in the context of Turkey's fear of the extension of Greek territorial waters[21] from six to twelve miles. The Turkish argument was that Turkey would lose out with regard to its Aegean high sea rights. The importance of this issue for Turkey was evident in its threat to Greece that any extension would be a cause of war.

Knowing well the weakness of its case, Turkey was reluctant to take the matter to The Hague. In such a context, it seemed that the foreign policy and defence establishments in Ankara invented the notion of 'grey areas' – choosing thus to stoke tension in the Aegean – in order to put more pressure on Greece. As Athanassopoulou notes, "if Turkey could push its borders westwards and thus strengthen its position regarding such questions as the delimitation of the continental shelf, the extent of national air-space and territorial waters." In the months that followed Imia, Ankara pursued the concept with rigour.

In an article published on 13 June 1996, the Turkish daily *Milliyet* listed the inhabited islets of Farmakonisi and Agathonisi as 'gray areas'. Along with disputing Greek sovereignty over islets close to its coast, Turkey in June 1996 also disputed Greece's sovereignty over the island of Gavdos, which lies off the southwest of Crete and is inhabited by some three hundred Greek fishermen. During the planning of the NATO exercise Dynamic Mix, the representative of the Turkish general staff submitted a statement according to which Turkey opposed the inclusion of the Greek island of Gavdos in the exercise 'due to the disputed situation regarding sovereignty'. It should be noted that the régime of Gavdos Island has nothing to do with the Treaty of Lausanne, since it is under Greek sovereignty in accordance with the arrangements of the 1913 Treaty of London.[22]

This Imia aftermath steeled Greek public opinion enormously. However, with Gavdos, Ankara appeared to push its luck too far. The reaction of Athens, this time fully supported by Washington, was strong and Turkey seemed to have withdrawn its claim. It should be

noted, however, that Ankara had indicated clearly its intentions to raise the stakes over the issue of the Greek territorial waters – in the first given instance – at least two years before the 1996 crisis. Ankara continued and intensified the policy of blocking the operationalization of the NATO Commands in Greece, which had been decided back in December 1992 (COMLANDCENT, 7ATAF, MND-SOUTH), while in November 1994 openly attempted to 'increase the heat' in the Aegean by transferring the most important annual Turkish military exercise Deniz Kurdu 2-94, from the Black Sea to the Aegean, and re-scheduling it for the period 14-24 November 1994. 16 November 1994 was the date of entering into force of the New Convention of the Law of the Sea. At the same time, Turkey reinforced its troops in the occupied northern part of Cyprus.[23]

The Imia Crisis was defused through US diplomatic intervention and a return to *status-quo ante* was secured, and, in that context, the outcome of the crisis – contrary to its management — was satisfactory for Athens. The US role and intervention should be interpreted as one of the most influential structural factors in the Greek-Turkish conundrum. It is important to note that the overall American strategic interests in the area have almost inevitably drawn the US into the dispute. The Washington approach was always a pragmatic one, since no American initiative has succeeded in achieving the normalization of Greek-Turkish relations. That is why the US has not been as involved in the search for a solution as actively as one might have expected. Moreover, during the Cold War, successive US administrations felt that the Aegean issues were not as acute as others and therefore placed them low on Washington's list of priorities. Although the dispute was recognized as posing a threat to NATO's southeastern flank, the primary objective of US foreign policy elites has been to control Greek-Turkish tensions and the administration of the implications of the problem for the function of the alliance.

For decades, a major failure of US foreign policy has been the inability to get its two allies astride the Aegean to settle their differences through compromise and cooperation. Washington's efforts have not, of course, been entirely fruitless. In January 1996, American diplo-

matic intervention prevented the crisis over Imia from escalating into violent conflict. In the framework of NATO, the augmented emphasis placed on the Mediterranean stability necessitated, more than ever, a cohesive southeastern flank free from the Greek-Turkish impasse. In what appeared to be a critical step in easing an extremely strained relationship – after the 1996 crisis – the US in the backstage of the Madrid NATO Summit in 1997 pressured the two countries to sign the Madrid Joint Declaration, whereby they committed to engage themselves to a peaceful and consensual settlement of their differences. 'If both sides indeed adhered to it, the communiqué portended a significant step in advancing stability and security in the eastern Mediterranean.'[24] But the expected shifts in relations did not follow. The Cyprus issue, not specifically alluded to in the Madrid Declaration, offered the setting for new-old tensions during the same year. Joint Greek and Greek Cypriot military exercises a few months later were 'enriched' by intense and quite alarming 'dogfights' in the Greek and Cypriot airspace.

Ameliorating the Security Dilemma: The Rapprochement

International anarchy and the security dilemma make cooperation among sovereign states difficult. Objectively, there can be little strategic rationale for premeditated conflict between two state actors like Greece and Turkey. Open conflict would pose enormous political risks for both of them, quite apart from uncertainties at the operational level. Yet the risk of an accidental clash remains, given the continuing armed air and naval operations in close proximity and the highly charged atmosphere surrounding competing claims.[25] The Aegean and especially Cyprus are sensitive national questions *par excellence*. Moreover, with both countries modernizing their military capabilities, the potential for destructiveness and escalation is far greater today than in the past. A Greek-Turkish clash would have profound implications for Turkey and the West. It would also have operational consequences for the US. In strategic terms, a conflict under current conditions might result in an open-ended estrangement of Turkey from

the West, since the Cold War imperatives that argued for restraint in sanctions against Turkey in 1974 are absent today. More broadly, a Greek-Turkish conflict might encourage 'civilizational' cleavages in the West. 'Even Israel might be sensitive to the political consequences of too overt a military relationship in the context of a conflict over Cyprus, especially if Israeli weapons were used, and might look for ways to scale back its cooperation.'[26] The risk of a clash and the likely strategic and operational consequences make risk reduction an imperative for the US (and NATO). The same is true for the EU. However, the EU has all the necessary systemic properties to turn an actor from an aggressive power-maximizer to a less threatening security-seeker.

Normalization, even at an embryonic level, represents a change in Greek-Turkish relations that is indeed strategic in nature. The Greek decision to support the offer of EU candidacy to Turkey at the December 1999 Helsinki summit – although emphasizing particular conditions favorable to Greek interests – reflects a new, strategic approach to the future of relations with Ankara, and it certainly represents a major step towards dampening the sources of unitended spirals. The strategic motivations for the Helsinki compromise and the Greek-Turkish raprochement were facilitated by a series of proximate factors. There was a perception on both sides in the wake of the Imia crisis, the 1997-98 tension over the planned deployment of S-300 surface-to-air missiles on Cyprus, and the Spring 1999 Ocalan affair, that brinkmanship had reached very dangerous levels. As noted earlier, an accident or miscalculation in the Aegean could easily escalate to large scale warfare. "This sense of peering over the brink, palpable in 1996, was arguably not unlike the effect of the Cuban Missile Crisis on US-Soviet relations more than 30 years earlier".[27] The Helsinki decisions proved to be instrumental in reversing the deterioration in EU-Turkish relations that had followed the Luxembourg and Cardiff summits and offered a path toward closer Turkish integration in Europe, reducing, thus, the Greek-Turkish tension.

The EU, as a collective security entity, can ameliorate the security dilemma since by nature promotes and deepens cooperation. Over

time, repeated acts of cooperation alter expectations and foster trust and confidence. As states come to expect each other to reciprocate concessions, rather than to exploit them, the wariness that fuels the security dilemma gradually subsides. Moreover, the EU engagement, by increasing transparency and thereby reducing uncertainty and the chances of misperception, decreases the likelihood of unintended spirals. Uncertainty is one of the key factors fueling the security dilemma.

Greece and Turkey cannot easily escape systemic-structural impediments, but they should make every effort to achieve a relatively high level of cooperation by exploring the opportunities offered by the collective security environment of the EU. The challenge for Greece (and Turkey) is enormous. As Jervis notes, it is impossible to eliminate the security dilemma, but it can be ameliorated: 'The ideal solution for a *status quo* power would be to escape from the state of nature. But escape is impossible. The security dilemma cannot be abolished, it can only be ameliorated. Bonds of shared values and interests can be developed. If actors care about what happens to others and believe that others care about them, they will develop trust and can cooperate for mutual benefit.'[28] The conditions that make collective security possible indeed ameliorate the security dilemma to a certain extent. Uncertainty about motives would be reduced. When the actors hold compatible views of an acceptable bilateral, regional and international order and share a minimum sense of political community, ideational change has already mitigated the suspision and competitiveness that fuel the security dilemma.

However, the European challenge for Turkey is without precedent. So far, Turkish élites have not had to confront the dilemma posed by a strong nationalist tradition and a powerful attachment to state sovereignty, on the one hand, with the prospect of integration in a sovereignty-diluting EU, on the other. Even short of full membership, candidacy implies a great institutionalized scrutiny, convergence and compromise. From the least political issues (e.g. food regulations) to high politics, a closer relationship with formal EU structures will pose

tremendous pressures on traditional Turkish concepts of sovereignty at many levels. For an EU member state, pursuing nationalist options outside the integration context has become almost impossible.

If there is a 'Helsinki spirit', that more than anything else reveals the need – for both countries – for a more 'strategic' approach towards each other. Both countries have a longer-term strategic interest in seeing Turkey's EU vocation succeed. Such a success has the potential of changing Greece's perception of threat, and fostering political and economic reform in a Turkey reassured about its place in Europe. The US and Europe will benefit from a more effective and predictable strategic partnership with Turkey. A key task for US foreign policy élites will be to make sure that Greek-Turkish brinkmanship no longer threatens broader interests in regional détente and integration. The stakes of bringing to fruition this strategy of reciprocal accommodation are extremely high. Lasting *rapprochement* would yield enormous benefits for everybody involved.[29]

However, such a *rapprochement* remains nascent and fragile for three main reasons. First, most of the changes have come on the Greek side. There has been no major shift in Turkish policy. Without a Turkish gesture to match Greece's lifting of its veto to Turkey's EU candidacy it may prove difficult for Athens to maintain domestic support over the long run. Indeed, the Greek government operates with the benefit of the doubt even within its own party confines. Second, so far the *rapprochement* has been limited to less-controversial areas such as trade, the environment, and tourism. The really sensitive issues have yet to be addressed. The current climate will prove its durability only when these issues are included in the reconciliation agenda. Finally, there is the issue of Cyprus. While Cyprus is technically not a bilateral dispute, it is an integral element of the broader fabric of the relationship and cannot be ignored. Although Athens has made a politically costly effort to downplay the linkage, without progress on Cyprus the current *rapprochement* will be impossible to sustain over time.[30]

More than anything, however, the current détente is intimately linked to the evolution of the broader Turkish-European relationship.

Stagnation or deterioration in relations between Brussels and Ankara would complicate and perhaps threaten the improvement in Greek-Turkish relations. Even relative stagnation in EU-Turkish relations would almost certainly result in a sense of disappointment and uncertainty, and would make Turkish behaviour towards Greece more unpredictable and perhaps harder for the US to control. Athens has a high stake in ensuring that Tuerkey's EU candidacy does prove real. The longer the relationship between Turkey and the EU remains overshadowed by uncertainties, the more the US remains 'the only and undisputed' arbiter in an essentially balance of power game. The potential deterioration of Turkey's ties with the EU will further increase the importance of strong ties to the US.

Conclusion

One factor that triggers security dilemmas under anarchy is the emergence of predatory states, the emergence of revisionist behaviour. Indeed, this fact allows us to explain why states should balance rather than 'bandwagon', and why they should be concerned about relative, not absolute, gains and losses. The ultimate concern of (some) states, in an augmented neo-realist perspective, is not only for security but for power as well. The objectives of (some) actors – whether they seek to maintain or overthrow the *status quo* – should be of importance to studies of security dilemmas. In that context, including unit-level attributes as causal variables should not be seen as reductionism. As atomistic actors, revisionist states are more intensive power-maximizers and less security- maximizers. This is especially true with regard to unlimited revisionist states bent on expansion and willing to take great risks to achieve it.[31] Revisionist states tend to value what they covet more than what they currently possess, though this ratio may vary considerably among their ranks and they will not hesitate to employ military force to destroy the existing arrangement among states. Because self-extension almost invariably calls for additional power, countries that seek self-extension tend to be the initiators of power competition and the resort to violence.

It should be emphasized, once more, that all post-1974 Greek governments have conceptualized the Greek-Turkish conflict in terms of Turkish revisionism. Any attempt to normalize bilateral relations is inevitably conditioned not only by the thesis that Ankara should stop pursuing any *anti-status quo* policies, but also by the need to find a viable solution to the Cyprus problem, acceptable to both communities. Military and diplomatic deterrence was, thus, indispensable to the Greek concept of survival. To policy-makers in Athens the stakes seemed extremely high; successful deterrence generated at best an uneasy peace, whereas failure would mean the transformation of Greek islands and Cyprus into battlefields. The Greek policy has had two dimensions: it has been both a policy of deterrence, and a policy of political de-escalation. This twin character has been compatible with the crisis prevention policy of the US, and has enabled Athens and Washington to converge on the specific issue of relaxation of tension in the Aegean.

In the case of Imia, "Turkey relied on several offensive policies of crisis management strategy, which fit the political and military concept of limited war.... Turkey employs the threat of use or the actual use of force to oblige Greece to comply with its demands. Athens usually perceives this position as Ankara's intention to engage in all-out war.... The occupation of the islet was a combined implementation of the strategies of limited, reversible probe and of *fait accompli*, which resulted in moving the conflict up from diplomatic to military engagement."[42] The Turkish conduct was profoundly aggressive and confrontational aiming at intended confrontations and premeditated armed conflict. Aggressive and confrontational conduct means that Turkey was quick to resort to force or to threaten the use of force disproportionately to what is at stake and how it affected its vital security interests. Turkish behaviour in Imia was guided by 'military logic,' using force as a blunt, crude instrument rather as a flexible, refined psychological device for diplomatic purposes.[43] Turkey was neither inclined to show sensitivity to Greece's interests nor responsive to Greece's signalling of its commitments. Indeed, Turkey acted aggressively in order to deliberately manufacture a crisis as a pretext for an

intended armed conflict – limited or all-out. An armed conflict is intended to the extent that a deliberate decision has been made to initiate it in a context that allows the state a choice between war and no war." The role of military force in the Imia Crisis does meet power politics expectations. The use of force or the threat to use force by Ankara was guided by military as well as diplomatic logic, aiming at an escalation that would have been difficult to control and would have required Turkey to up the ante further.

At the dawn of the new century, despite guarded post-earthquake and post-Helsinki optimism, the prospects for Greek-Turkish relations remain uncertain. The Aegean and Cyprus will remain potential flashpoints and pose an ongoing problem of crisis prevention for the US and Europe. The Greek sense of insecurity in relation to a neighbor of continental scale and uncertain strategic orientation has been sustained by Turkish revisionism. Of course, this is not a new phenomenon. The new element is Turkey's post Cold-War domestic and foreign policy agenda, the extent to which US policy will prove to be successful in defusing any new crisis, and the extent to which progress in EU-Turkish relations would successfully "anchor" Turkey even more closely to European institutional environment. Reinforcing Turkey's European vocation would render nationalist approaches counterproductive and therefore less attractive to Ankara, thus lending greater stability in the Aegean.

NOTES

1. Thanos Veremis, "The Protracted Crisis" in Dimitris Keridis and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (eds), *Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization* (Brassey's, 2001), p. 44.

2. Mavridis and Fakiolas, "Strategy of Crisis Management and the Greek-Turkish Rivalry: The Case of the Imia Islets", in Christodoulos P. Yallourides and Panayotis J. Tsakonas (eds), *Greece and Turkey After the End of the Cold War* (Athens and New Rochelle, N.Y., Caratzas, 2001).

3. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, (Reading Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

4. See Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma", *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (January 1978), pp. 167-214.

5. Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma"; and Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 58-113.

6. Randall L. Schweller, "Neorealism's Status-Quo Bias: What Security Dilemma?", in Benjamin Frankel (ed.) *Realism: Restatements and Renewal*, (London: Frank Cass, 1996), p. 116.

7. Arnold Wolfers, "The Pole of Power and the Pole of Indifference", in Arnold Wolfers (ed.), *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), as cited in Schweller, "Neorealism's Status-Quo Bias", p. 99.

8. Kenneth Waltz, "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 44, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1990, pp. 34-36.

9. Benjamin Miller, "Competing Realist Perspectives on Great Power Crisis Behavior", in Benjamin Frankel (ed.) *Realism: Restatements and Renewal*, (London: Frank Cass, 1996), p. 328.

10. The narrative of the events is based on the very helpful compilation produced by Mavridis and Fakiolas, "Strategy of Crisis Management", pp. 205-035, and on the excellent analysis of Alkis Kourkoulas, *Imia: Critical Approach of the Turkish Factor*, (Athens: I. Sideris, 1997), pp. 26-55 (in Greek).

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12. Kourkoulas, *Imia*, pp. 154-155.

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