The Kardak (Imia) Crisis and Turkish-Greek Relations

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RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet article l'auteur examine divers modèles afin de démontrer comment les crises peuvent mener à des conflits et même provoquer la guerre. Ces modèles sont appliqués à la crise des Rochers de Kardak (Imia), une crise récente moins connue que la question de Chypre au niveau des relations Greco-Turques. Les perceptions turques de la crise sont aussi analysées. Selon l'auteur, des facteurs tels l'histoire, la stratégie, les pressions sociales et la diplomatie doivent être pris en considération afin de pouvoir comprendre la situation qui prévaut actuellement et l'impact de diverses crises sur les relations internationales.

ABSTRACT

In this article, the author explores various crisis models to show how crises lead to conflict and even war. Models are contrasted with the example of the Kardak Rocks Crisis, a recent crisis less known than the Cyprus issue or Imia incident, within the framework of Greek-Turkish relations. The Turkish perceptions about the origins and outcome of the crisis are also discussed. According to the author, such factors as history, policy, strategy, social pressures, and diplomacy must be considered if we are to gain any understanding of the present situation and the impact of various crises on international relations.

Crisis and War

Short of war, crises are the most salient points of conflict between states. The relationship between international crises and war could be analyzed from three broad perspectives. The first area of investigation deals with the *origins of a crisis* hence it examines the factors leading to the eruption of crises. From this perspective, one may focus on the security concerns of the parties in conflict, international and domestic political, economic reasons that prepare crises. The second approach deals with the *outcome of a crisis* by posing questions like:

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-how crises lead to war?

-why do some crises result in wars while others are resolved through diplomatic means?

-are such outcomes determined by the nature of crisis?

-to what extent are crises a function of decisions made during the course of the crises itself?

-when is war the result of a deliberate decision and when is it the product of miscalculation?

Finally, international crises could also be investigated by their long-term impacts on the relationship between parties in conflict. Especially those crises so intense that they bring the parties to the brink of war and thus may constitute a turning point with respect to the nature of the relationship between the parties. The relationship between crises and underlying patterns of conflict is particularly important in terms of determining in which circumstances crises act to intensify or ameliorate the conflicts they reflect.[1]

When international crises are evaluated with respect to their long-term impacts they appear as important stages towards peace and/or war. This way of approaching crises is contrary to the widespread view that the underlying causes of war, e.g., aspirations for hegemony, demands for territory, hostile ideologies and nationalism, are more important than the immediate causes of war or crises which actually trigger war. According to the view that emphasizes the underlying causes of conflicts, crises are only the end-products of deeply rooted conflicts and as far as these conflicts remain unresolved, crises will erupt in one way or another. In this vein, one of the most important classical books that had greatly influenced students of war was Thucydides's Peloponnesian War. According to Thucydides, the Peloponnesian War (431 BC) was the result of the tension between Athens' Empire and other city states especially Sparta. For Thucydides, if war had not been initiated with Athens's involvement in the war between Corinth and Corcyra, another event would eventually have brought two great powers of ancient Greece to the brink of war. In his view, proximate causes of the Peloponnesian War were

important only in terms of their impact on the determination of the timing of the conflict.[3]

Hobbes, Kant, Rousseau and Marx followed the same line in their approach to the relationship between crises and war by emphasizing the underlying causes more than the immediate causes of the war. The most striking contemporary example of this approach could be found in the historiography of World War I. What is noteworthy is the surprising consensus of the historians who hotly debate which state bears more responsibility for the outbreak of the war in their evaluation of the assassination of the archduke as an excuse for the inevitable war. This may be a result of the fact that when a crisis leads to war, subsequent analyses tend to focus on how it results in war by undermining the essential question of how it may have been prevented. This type of reasoning may be seen as a product of the human mind which once faced with a highly destructive event tends to attribute rationality to its evolution, which in reality it does not possess.[4]

Regarding the long-term impacts of crises, the most important issue is whether or not a crisis reinforces mutual hostile feelings, adversarial perceptions, negative expectations and aggressive behavior patterns among protagonists (that would prepare the ground for war in the middle or long run) or in contrast improves the current state of adversarial relations to a certain extent and/or encourages dynamics of cooperation.

The type of influence which may be expected at the end of a crisis depends largely on how the crisis ends. For example, a crisis terminated through the efforts of the parties in conflict may have different long-term impact than a crisis terminated by the military or diplomatic intervention of a third party (or more parties). Besides, a crisis that terminates in a formal or semi-formal voluntary agreement is more likely to produce mutual satisfaction as a bilateral effect and, therefore, induces more stability than a crisis which ends through a unilateral act or tacit understanding.

Another important point to be considered is whether a crisis produces a winner and a loser even if it does not end up in a war. An

unharmonious definite outcome (victory/defeat) is more likely to accumulate higher tension and instability beyond a crisis than an ambiguous outcome (compromise, stalemate) or a harmonious definitive outcome (victory/victory). One reason would be that the side which was defeated or merely felt defeated is more likely to over-react or resort to aggression should a new problem or crisis emerge between the parties in conflict.[1]

How a crisis ends may also have a major impact on the formulation of foreign policy since there is a learning process implied. A state which experiences failure is more likely to change its strategy and behaviour; whereas, a state that experiences failure tends to provide a rich source of information for determining how to improve its strategy and operations.[5]

The Turkish-Greek Conflict and Crises

The Turkish-Greek case is viewed by many scholars of war and peace as an example of a protracted conflict, which has been defined by Azar *et al* as:

> hostile interactions which extend over long periods of time with sporadic outbreaks of open warfare fluctuating in frequency and intensity. They are conflict situations in which the stakes are very high… While they may exhibit some breakpoints during which there is a cessation of overt violence, they linger on in time and have no distinguishable point of termination… Protracted conflicts, that is to say, are not specific events or even clusters of events at a point of time; they are processes.[6]

As a process of conflict, Turkish-Greek confrontation had been ameliorated only once in the history, namely during the interwar period. Turkish-Greek *rapprochement* in 1930s stemmed from the existence of a mutually painful stalemate,[7] the emergence of common enemies and the positive role of charismatic political leaders who perceived the

strong need to settle Turkish-Greek conflict. However, for conflicts to be enduringly resolved, for instance, in the Turkish-Greek case, appropriate structures should be designed for the satisfaction of needs and alleviation of the differences in perceptions, which was not the case in the interwar period.[8]

Crises occur within as well as outside of protracted conflicts yet international crisis and international conflict are closely related. In essence, every crisis reflects a "state of conflict" between two or more adversaries, but not every conflict is reflected in crisis. In this vein, the Kardak Crisis is a reflection of the broader Turkish-Greek conflict, reactivated by the Cyprus problem, which emerged in the 1960s as the most critical issue dividing Turkey and Greece.

The Onset and Escalation of the Kardak Crisis

A Turkish bulk carrier called "Figen Akat" ran aground near the Kardak Rocks four miles off the Turkish mainland and two miles from the uninhabited Greek island of Kalimnos in the Aegean Sea, on 25 December 1995. When the captain radioed for help a Greek tug boat near the islet responded, and even though the captain of the Turkish bulk carrier said that he was aground on Turkish territory and awaiting Turkish tugs from the mainland to help him, the Greek captain insisted on helping because of the salvage fees.[9] After the rescue operation, the Greek captain's demand for salvage fees and the Turkish captain's refusal brought this case to the attention of the countries' respective foreign ministries.

Two different theoretical models could be used with respect to our level of analysis to describe the escalation process at the Kardak Rocks. The first one is the "aggressor-defender model", which draws a distinction between aggressor party and postulates a unidirectional causal sequence with the defender reacting to the aggressor's behaviour. The aggressor-defender model is used more often to understand the process because it provides a less complicated explanation about the origins of the crisis, motives and perceptions of the parties.

The second model is the "conflict spiral model", which holds that escalation results from a vicious circle of action and reaction. According to the second model, it is assumed that Party A's tactics encourage a contentious reaction from Party B, which provokes further contentious behaviour from Party A, thus completing the circle and starting it on its next iteration. Unlike the aggressor-defender model where causation flows in only one direction (aggressor acts defender reacts) in the conflict-spiral model, causation flows in both directions.[10]

The conflict-spiral model of escalation should not be viewed as an alternative to the aggressor-defender model for in many cases aggressor-defender sequences are part of larger conflict spirals. While the aggressor-defender model portrays each party's action as a response to the other's immediately preceding action only, in reality each action is the result of cumulative impressions from all the previous actions by the other side.[11] This point is frequently missed when an adversary is viewed as an aggressor and the causes of the conflict are exclusively attributed to adversary's aggression.[12]

In this article the conflict spiral model in conjunction with the aggressor-defender model is applied to understand the emergence of the Kardak Crisis. The conflict spiral model will provide insight to the dynamics or underlying causes of Turkish-Greek conflict while the aggressor-defender model will help us to understand the Turkish perceptions related to the evolution of the crisis. The first model directs our attention to the underlying causes of the Turkish-Greek conflict and to the atmosphere of distrust and lack of confidence. The second model is helpful to define the proximate causes of the conflict. Our analysis of the escalation process will not cover the domestic circumstances that played an important role in the rapid escalation of the dispute over the sovereignty of Kardak which have been examined by other authors.[15]

The Evolution of the Turkish-Greek Conflict

In order to grasp the conflict spiral between Turkey and Greece, one has to look at the broader context of the Turkish-Greek relations. The development of political antagonism between Turkey and Greece begins with the Cyprus problem. British rule of the island ended in 1960 with the new constitution which vested sovereignty jointly in the two communities. However, as many Greek Cypriots regarded the settlement as a temporary step toward the most desired goal of *enosis* (unión with Greece), they began to upset the balance of power violently by ousting the Turkish-Cypriots from the government. Following the December 1963, a unilateral declaration by Cypriot President Makarios to amend the constitution in favour of Greek Cypriot majority rule, thus holding out the potential for *enosis*, intercommunal fighting broke out. By June 1964, Athens had covertly transported five thousand troops to Cyprus. Under tremendous NATO pressure, all plans to change the status of Cyprus were left aside and a negotiated return to the *status quo* was reached. After the 1963-64 crisis, President Makarios followed a policy of controlling the island and consolidating its independence while never excluding *enosis*. In April 1967, a hard-line military junta coup seized power in Athens, which later became the main instigator of the November 15, 1967 attack by General Grivas and the Greek and National Guard troops on the Turkish enclave in Kophinou, thus triggering renewed fighting in the island. Makarios, the Greek-Cypriot leader, was overthrown by a coup directed by the Greek Junta in July 1974, and the well-known former EOKA fighter with a reputation as a Turk killer, Nikos Sampson, was appointed as president. The Turkish government tried to convince the British government that, as the two guarantors, they should jointly intervene to prevent a complete Greek takeover of Cyprus. When Britain was reluctant to get involved, Turkey moved alone under Article 4 (2) of the Treaty of Guarantee with the aim of protecting the independence of the island and putting an end to the terrible destruction of life and property of Turkish-Cypriots.[11]

After 1974, the Turkish-Greek conflict gained new dimensions in the Aegean through Greece's militarization of eastern Aegean Islands and Turkey's response of stationing an Army of the Aegean to defend its western coast against the Greek islands and with the surfacing of problems related to the continental shelf, territorial sea and air space.

The Aegean Problems and the Turkish Strategy

The Aegean problems, which closely parallel the evolution of political antagonism between Turkey and Greece, have important political consequences affecting the vital interests of Turkey. These problems may be seen in terms of four related aspects: the continental shelf, territorial sea; air space; and militarization of Aegean islands. At the heart of the interconnected Aegean problems lie the Aegean islands.

When we focus on the Turkish perception of the Aegean problems we observe that Aegean problems are interlinked with what had happened in the course of the evolution of the Cyprus problem. The lessons that the Turks drew from the Cyprus problem is that the Greek "Megali Idea" of restoring the lost Byzantine Empire of the former Constantinople and in the Anatolian heartland was not dead and any Greek designs and attempts aimed at creating or benefiting from a window of opportunity to extend Greece's borders at the expense of Turkey should not be tolerated in Cyprus, in Aegean or elsewhere.[15]

With regard to the Aegean Sea, Turkish fears stem from Greek attempts to transform the Aegean into a Greek lake.[16] In this vein, one of the most important problems between Turkey and Greece is the continental shelf issue. The problem of delimiting the Aegean continental shelf is exacerbated by Greek claims that Greek islands should have their own continental shelves. Greece has also argued that the whole Aegean is covered with Greek islands and that they constitute a political continuum with the Greek mainland; hence Turkey should not be granted sovereign rights in any area between Greek mainland and the islands. Turkey strongly opposes this argument by stressing that if the principle of allocating to islands their own continental

shelves were adopted, then the continental shelf of almost the whole Aegean would belong to Greece.

The continental shelf issue led to a clear controversy between Turkey and Greece in February 1974, when the Greek government announced oil and natural gas discoveries in the area by claiming all mineral rights on the disputed area. Turkey, in order to prevent a Greek *fait accompli* claim to most of the Aegean continental shelf, proposed negotiations to reach a mutual understanding that would demarcate the respective spheres of the Turkish and Greek continental shelves. However, Turkey could not get any positive response. In March 1976, Turkey carried out exploration activities in the Aegean. This led the Karamanlis government to appeal to the International Court of Justice to institute interim measures of protection to stop all exploration activity. However, in September 1976, the Court rejected the Greek appeal for interim measures of protection on the grounds that Turkey's research activities did not prejudice Greece's rights in the disputed areas. In January 1979, Athens suffered another setback when the Court ruled that Greece lacked jurisdiction in the continental shelf case. It was after the Court's first verdict on interim protection and a UN Security Council's Resolution (395) in September 1976 that called upon Turkey and Greece to resume negotiations, a bilateral dialogue was started, and in November, they signed a declaration which established the guidelines governing future negotiation on the continental shelf. The most important clause of that declaration was Article 6, which stipulated that both parties should abstain from any initiative or act relating to the continental shelf of the Aegean Sea. In spite of the Berne Declaration, which urges parties to refrain from conducting exploration activities until a resolution would be reached among them, Athens resumed oil exploration near the north Aegean Greek island of Thasos in 1981. Ankara responded to this move by declaring that if Athens was going to violate the Berne Declaration, Turkey would do the same. Nevertheless, the escalation of tension between Turkey and Greece was followed by an agreement on a moratorium in July 1982. The goal of the moratorium was again to refrain from statements and actions which could undermine peace

and dialogue. The moratorium was actually very similar to the 1976 Bern Declaration in the sense that both aimed at preventing any military confrontation that could occur due to a spillover of the continental shelf problem between Turkey and Greece.

Despite these efforts to freeze the problem, the continental shelf controversy brought Turkey and Greece to the brink of war in March 1987. The apparent reason of this confrontation was the Greek government's ordering a recently nationalized oil company to start drilling for oil near the Greek island of Thasos. In reaction, the Turkish government issued permits to the state owned Turkish Petroleum Company to drill in those parts of the Aegean which the Turkish government considered Turkish property even though Athens announced that it had started to mobilize its armed forces and would fight if Turkey violated Greece's rights on its continental shelf.[17]

The crisis ended within a few days after both capitals exchanged messages. In the end, Greece announced that it was postponing any drilling activity, but reserving the right to do so any time it wished. Ankara responded by declaring that it would not engage in exploration activity in disputed regions as long as Greece did likewise. The parties continued to stick by their views concerning the settlement of the dispute.

A second problem related to Aegean involves Turkey's securing equitable access to the waters of the Aegean. Greece claimed the right to extend its islands territorial sea limits to 12 nautical miles after the signing of the 1982 United Nation's Law of Sea (LOS) Convention. Were this rule applied in the Aegean by the allocation of 12-mile territorial seas to the Greek islands within 24 miles of the mainland coast or from each other it would result in overlapping territorial seas. Consequently, the Greek share of the Aegean would rise to approximately 64 percent while that of Turkey to only 10 percent. The proportion of the remaining high seas would accordingly fall from 56 percent to 26 percent. The Enclosure of Turkey's western coast by extended Greek territorial waters would upset the balance established by the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty through the reconciliation of the mutual

economic, navigational and security interests of both states in the Aegean.[18]

As a coastal state, Turkey has neither signed nor ratified the 1982 UNCLOS and has refused to recognize it. Ankara has declared that it would consider Greek territorial sea extension to 12 miles as a *casus belli* because this practically makes the Aegean a Greek lake, as ships traveling between Turkey's Aegean ports would have to pass through Greek territorial waters.

Another problem which preoccupies Turkey in the Aegean is the air space, which includes ten-mile claims of Greece and the Flight Information Region (FIR) issues. Turkish leaders protested Greek government abuses of the FIR responsibilities it held for the Aegean. According to the Turkish perspective, Athens was in violation of its FIR duties when it required that official Turkish aircraft including all military aircraft-file plans for flights in international space over the Aegean.

In another point related to airspace, Turkey refuses to accept that Greek airspace is ten nautical miles whereas its territorial waters are only six nautical miles. The fact is that this would reduce international air space in the Aegean by 50 per cent. Though the current international practice and international law repudiate Greece's policy because they provide for the width of the national airspace to correspond to that of territorial waters, Greece continues to claim that Turkey violates Greek airspace. Ankara frequently challenged the Greek claim by ordering its military aircraft to approach the Greek islands to a distance of six miles in order to demonstrate that Turkey does not recognize Greece's ten-mile airspace.

Turkey pursues a *status quo* policy[19] in the Aegean and defends the preservation of the existing order in the Aegean, as established by the treaties which defined borders and settled Turkish-Greek relations. Turkey's strategy is two-fold. On the one hand, it is based on a continuous effort to find fair, equitable and, therefore, durable solutions to Aegean disputes through diplomatic negotiations; on the other hand, it relies on deterrence to prevent any Greek *fait accompli*.

Turkey adapts the logic of deterrence in relations with Greece whose central argument could be summarized as follows:

> Great dangers arise if an aggressor believes that the status quo powers are weak in capability or resolve. This belief will lead the former to test its opponents, usually starting with a small and apparently unimportant issue. If the status quo powers retreat, it will not only lose the specific value at stake but, more important in the long run, will encourage the aggressor to press harder...To avoid this disastrous situation, the state must display the ability and willingness to wage war.[20]

In the context of crisis management, Turkey's deterrent power has been employed through three types of defensive strategy.[21] The first one is the "strategy of drawing a line."[22] By declaring that Turkey would consider Greek territorial seas' extension to 12 miles as *casus belli*, Ankara employs the strategy of drawing a line. This strategy not only reveals how determined Turkey is to protect one of her most important interests but also shows Turkey's willingness to avoid escalation of any crisis that would lead to an inadvertent war. The second strategy that Turkey employs is a "tit-for-tat strategy"[23] in which reprisals are very carefully chosen to match but not exceed the severity of the Greek provocations. Turkey considers "coercive diplomacy" when a tit-for-tat strategy is not successful or is not enough to deter Greece. Coercive diplomacy is defined as a strategy of employing:

> threats of force or quite limited increments of force to persuade the opponent to call off or undo the encroachment in which he is engaged—to induce him, for example, to halt provocations or to give up territory he has sized.[24]

In contrast with pure military coercion, coercive diplomacy seeks to persuade the opponent while providing an opportunity for the adversary to stop or back off before the defender resorts to a military strategy for forcing the adversary to do so. The successful application of

this strategy requires careful limitation of the demands of the defender in order not to give the impression that the threat to use coercive power will damage the interests of the opponent.[25]

The Turkish Perception of the Kardak Rocks

It may have been difficult for other states to understand why Turkey and Greece came to the brink of war in January 1996, for what consists of ten acres of grass and stone, the home of a few wild animals.

The Kardak Rocks, which have not been covered by any of the treaties that transferred islands, are only 3.8 nautical miles from the Turkish coast and closer to Turkey than to any Greek island named in any of the treaties. Besides their closeness to Turkey and the ambiguity of the international documents concerning their ownership, the Kardak Rocks attracted attention because they were viewed as a symbol of the sovereignty struggle between Turkey and Greece related to the unresolved problems in the Aegean on the continental shelf, territorial sea and air space.[26] The political and legal advantages that will be acquired by the acknowledgement of the sovereignty over the rocks were thought to be more significant than the territorial value of the entity.[27]

The issue of the sovereignty of the Kardak Rocks emerged in an atmosphere where Turkey was preoccupied with Greek attempts to inhabit small islands in an artificial and demonstrative fashion. Ankara wondered whether the real intention of Greece was to utilize the islets as baselines for the delimitation of the continental shelf and the territorial seas.[28] Since Turkey was convinced that Greece was pursuing a revisionist strategy in its overall Aegean policy, Ankara interpreted Greece's aims with regard to the sovereignty of the Rocks as the first step of a new Greek expansionist policy.

The Kardak Crisis began with a foreign policy crisis that was triggered by the perception of disruptive events and then was transformed into an international crisis with high levels of tension and the likeli-

hood of violent interaction. The question of which salvage team was going to save the Turkish tug raised the issue of who owned Kardak. The Turkish Foreign Ministry addressed a note to the Embassy of Greece declaring that the Kardak Rocks are Turkish. Greece responded with an assertion that the Kardak Rocks are adjacent to the islands ceded by Italy to Greece; therefore, they belong to Greece. Most interesting is the fact that at the time no crisis erupted. It was only a month later when the dispute was brought to the attention of the Greek public by 'Grammi' newspaper, known for its close ties with the Greek state, which was published on 20 January 1996[29] with the title "The Extreme Provocation from Turkey". Thereafter the sovereignty issue was transformed into an official problem between Turkey and Greece.

The first step towards the escalation of the crisis was the mayor of the Greek island of Kalymnos raising a Greek flag on the Rocks. This event was followed by a team of *Hürriyet* journalists lowering the Greek flag and hoisting a Turkish standard instead. Afterwards Greek navy commandos occupied the Rocks, lowered the Turkish flag and restored that of Greece.[30] At this point, Turkey had warned Greece to withdraw its soldiers and ships from the Turkish territorial waters several times and also made diplomatic initiatives to terminate the crisis, but to no avail. By January 29, both nations had dispatched naval vessels to the vicinity of the islet and Greek forces were put on the highest alert. At various times, up to 20 vessels were reported around Kardak. Turkey requested that Greek troops be recalled from the rocks and that all signs attempting to prove Greek sovereignty be removed. On January 31, Turkish commandos landed in a night operation on an adjacent outcrop where they planted a Turkish flag. Turkish Foreign Minister Deniz Baykal said that the Turkish troops would be removed when Greek forces withdrew from the neighbourhood. On January 31, due to American pressure on both sides, the Greek flag was withdrawn together with ships and commandos of Turkey and Greece.

The Turkish Strategy

The strategy that Turkey implemented during the course of events related to Kardak was shaped by the perception that Greece was attempting to extend its sovereignty to islands beyond those ceded to Greece in the Lausanne Peace Treaty of 1923 and Paris Peace Treaty of 1947. Although Greek aims regarding Kardak sovereignty were considered of a limited character for the time being, they were found unacceptable because it was believed that Turkey was confronted with an example of Greek piecemeal "salami tactics" that would encroach on Turkey's rights in a series of actions then force the country to accept the gradual erosion of its power.

In order to counter Greek claims, a passive appeasement strategy (not explicitly agreeing but not opposing) was found very risky because of the possibility of encouraging Greece to pursue its expansionist aims more actively and evoking further claims in the future. Instead, a tit-for-tat strategy with a limited coercive diplomacy that involved negotiation, bargaining and compromise was selected to be implemented against Greece.

However, this strategy did not prove effective because Greece did not step back. Neither did it show any flexibility, even when the Turkish warships had been deployed in the area. After the failure of the first tit-for-tat, together with coercive diplomacy strategy, Turkey moved to another tit-for-tat mixed again with the idea of compelling the opponent by sending Turkish commandos to the adjacent rocks in order to return to the *status quo ante*. With this second move, the two countries came to the brink of war. Only at this stage of the conflict did American diplomacy get a chance to influence the course of the conflict.

In employing this mixture of strategies, Turkey was very careful not to provoke Greece. On the one hand, Turkish authorities were stressing the possibility of Turkey and Greece engaging in war if Turkish forces were attacked; on the other hand, they were giving assurances to Greece about the limits of Turkish demands by stressing that, "if

there will be no attack on the Turkish soldiers, Turkey has given the order not to open fire on Greek military units and Turkey will with-draw from the Rocks if Greek flag, soldiers and air and naval forces are withdrawn simultaneously with the Turkish forces from the disputed area".[51]

The Long-Term Impacts of the Kardak Crisis

From the perspective of a conflict spiral, it is possible to evaluate the Kardak Crisis as an uncontrolled outcome of unresolved Turkish-Greek conflict and its reflection on the Aegean. However, it is also true that the same crisis is an event that influences the dynamics of conflict between parties and therefore needs to be also evaluated by its own outcomes.

In considering the outcome of this crisis, we must point out that it was not resolved through the use of classical diplomatic channels between Greece and Turkey. The crisis was overcome with the help of American mediation and without reaching a formal agreement between the parties.

From the onset of the crisis, Turkey called for the resolution of the problem through diplomatic means. Afterwards it warned for the urgent withdrawal of Greek ships but could not get a positive reply. Despite Turkey's strong reaction, Greece stressed throughout the crisis that it would not retreat from Kardak.

When the Kardak Crisis is evaluated alongside the 1987 crisis, it may be argued that in every crisis between Turkey and Greece the point where the two countries terminate escalation rises slightly high-er. While the employment of a tit-for-tat strategy along with a policy of coercive diplomacy was sufficient for a mutual retreat in 1987, two similar moves plus the American mediation barely stopped the escala-tion in 1996.

Since the crisis was over through the matching of military forces deployed on the Rocks, by Turkish commandos' landing and with the

United States' warnings, one might easily think of what would have happened if there were no other rocky islets to match Greek presence and if American mediation efforts were unsuccessful. Another point in this regard is that the Greek Defense Minister actually recommended ordering Greek forces to land on the smaller islet and arrest the Turkish commandos. After the crisis was over, Arsenis argued that the decision to withdraw was a political one made by Prime Minister Kostas Simitis.[32]

The Kardak Crisis reveals that strategic warning in emerging conflict might not appear when the course of the incident remains unknown until after the commitment of forces or when the pace of conflict moves too quickly. Kardak shows that an inadvertent war[33] is not impossible between Turkey and Greece and also underscores that prevention of a sudden spillover of a crisis depends heavily on the behaviour of the political leaders.

However, when the mediation role played by the US has been considered, together with the responsibilities of the political leadership, it might also be argued that in terms of highlighting the responsibilities of the political leaders in uncalculated escalations, the long-term impacts of the Kardak Crisis have been diminished by the role of the American mediation. American warnings and diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the crisis were critically important in averting war,[34] and their effect could be counterproductive with respect to long term impacts. Yes, American mediation was urgently needed because of the Greek resistance to enter into any kind of diplomatic negotiation with Turkey. Yet, the presence of American mediation may have also diminished the necessity of reaching formal agreements to resolve the Aegean problems. This situation may eventually lead the Turkish and Greek sides to think that the US will never let Turkey and Greece enter into war because this region is so important. The result may actually encourage irresponsible actions to escalate future confrontations.

Though the Kardak Crisis did not ended in fighting, the way war was averted did not contribute to finding possible ways to resolve the

Turkish-Greek conflict. On the contrary, adversarial attitudes were toughened, official theses were opposed, feelings of non-confidence were deepened, negative images were strengthened and the prejudicial judgements of Turks and Greeks towards each other were encouraged. After the crisis, it was widely observed that each party acquired sharper and more inflexible approaches towards the other, felt more confident that the other party had some secret designs to challenge the *status quo* and tended to resort more to "conspiracy theories" in explaining the other's behaviour.

The Kardak Crisis strengthened thinking that Turkish-Greek competition is a competition of military force and underscored the fact that future confrontations, military force, balance and mobilization capability will be very important in determining the outcome. The Kardak Crisis stresses the fact that in order to cope with the adversary one needs to be militarily powerful. In this respect, the Crisis encouraged the arms race between Turkey and Greece.

The Kardak Crisis, to the extent that it stressed power in military terms, is a necessary factor for the future in that it encouraged the arms race (one of the important manifestations of conflict spiral) between Greece and Turkey and to the extent that it led parties to think that "the faster one acts the more successful it will be in a future military confrontation". Kardak has had a diminishing effect on crisis stability. This negative effect has also influenced the perception of confidence-building measures. After the crisis, Greece acted very reluctantly on this issue; whereas Turkey supported broader implementation of such measures and argued that in no way can these measures take the place of negotiations.

Even though the Kardak Crisis was terminated without a war, it created a psychology of glory in Turkey and a psychology of defeat in Greece. The Simitis government, obliged to step back in the Kardak Crisis, was accused of betraying Greece by both the media[35] and the opposition. According to opposition leader, Miltiadis Evert, the government was lying to the people because the withdrawal of the Greek flag constituted the abandonment of national territory and an act of

treason, while an atmosphere of defeat and humiliation dominated in Greece.[36] As opposed to Greece, Turkey emerged from the crisis with a psychology of superiority yet felt the very disturbing possibility of an exaggerated reaction from Greece in future confrontations.

Furthermore, the Kardak Crisis has necessarily implied a learning process because it tested the validity and effectiveness of Turkish and Greek strategies towards each other. Turkey's concerns centered on how she could continue to maintain this power; however, for Greece the question seems to be what should be done in order not to be drawn into a similar position. The intensive attention paid to war scenarios that was observed in different segments of the Greek society could also be interpreted as a reflection of this way of thinking. As a result, while Turkey tried to elaborate her military strategy, Greece embarked upon efforts to change its military strategy.[37]

The Kardak Crisis has also produced some long-term impacts related to the alliance behaviour of Turkey and Greece. In the aftermath of the Kardak Crisis, since many Greeks blamed the United States – interpreting its neutrality as equivalent to siding with Turkey – Greece has temporarily distanced itself from the United States and sought more support from its EU partners.[38] The Kardak Crisis has activated both countries' efforts to establish stronger ties with those countries seen as supplementary to the ties established with the US and the European Union. As the Greek Defense Minister Arsenis pointed out, what stronger deterrence means for the Greek side is not only something to be acquired by the maintenance of strong armed forces but also by the empowerment of Greece through new allies.

> The problems between Greece and Turkey could only be resolved by the deterrence of a strong army. For this reason Greece's agreements on defense cooperation with Russia, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Armenia would be the right decision.[39]

While Greece began strengthening ties with these countries, Turkey strengthened relations with Israel especially to counter the Greek-

Syrian collaboration.[9] The Turkish-Greek conflict, which has already become very complicated because of the multiplicity of problems involved, became all the more intractable with the introduction of new parties and new dividing lines.

NOTES

1. See, Richard Ned Lebow, "Decision Making in Crisis" in Ralph K. White (ed.) *Psychology and Prevention of Nuclear War* (New York: New York University Press, 1986) pp.397-413.

2. See, Thucydides, Rex Warner (trans.) *History of Peloponnesian War* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972).

3. Baruch Fischhoff, "Hindsight/Foresight: The Effect of Outcome Knowledge on Judgement Under Uncertainty", *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, Vol.13, No.1, 1975, pp. 288-299.

4. *Ibid.*

5. See, Sim B. Sitkin, "Learning Through Failure: The Strategy of Small Losses", in Barry M. Staw and L.L. Cummings, (eds.), *Research in Organizational Behavior* (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1992); Philip Mirvis and David Berg, (eds.), *Failures in Organization Development and Change* (New York: Wiley, 1977).

6. Edward E. Azar, Paul Jureidini and Ronald Mac Laurin "Protracted Social Conflict: Theory and Practice in the Middle East", *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, Vol.8, No.1, 1978, pp.41-60, p.50.

7. Touval and Zartman suggest that long periods of pain and suffering may finally lead parties in conflict to realize that neither can benefit from the continuation of conflict and both have no choice but to reach a negotiated accomodation. See Touval Saadia and I. William Zartman, (eds.) *International Mediation in Theory and Practice* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985) p. 35-52.

8. For an explanation of these factors see, S.Gülden Ayman, "Settling a Conflict: Graeco-Turkish Relations in the Interwar Period", *CIDC Insight*, No.16, May 1998, pp. 93-101.

9. Nur Batur, Selim Çaglayan, "Ege'de Sertlesme", Hürriyet, 27 January 1996.

10. This model is found in the writings of many theorists, including Richard C. North, Richard A. Brody and Ole R. Holsti "Some Emprical Data on the Conflict Spiral", *Peace Research Society Papers*, No.1, 1964, p:1-14; Charles Osgood *An Alternative to War or Surrender* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962).

11. Ralph K. White, *Fearful Warriors: A Psychological Profile of U.S.-Soviet Relations* (New York: The Free Press, 1984).

12. Jeffrey Rubin, Dean Pruit, Sung Hee Kim, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), p: 72-81.

13. As an example of studies which stresses the role of the political climate which made both governments vulnerable to provocations by explorative press and caused the crisis to spread rapidly out of control see, Michael Robert Hickok, "Falling Toward War in the Aegean", http://www.dodccrp.org/Proceedings/DOCSwcd00000/wcd.00000. htm.

14. For a detailed examination of the factors that had led Turkey's reaction see, Tözün Bahceli, *Greek-Turkish Relations Since 1955* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990) p.51-95.

15. See *Türk-Yunan Iliskileri* (Ankara: Genel Kurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Baskanlığı Yayınları, 1986); *Ege Denizi ve Ege Adaları* (Istanbul: Harp Akademileri Basım Evi, 1995).

16. For a detailed examination of the evolution of Aegean problems see, Andrew Wilson, "The Aegean Dispute", *Adelphi Papers*, No.155 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1979).

17. Süha Bölükbası, "The Turco-Greek Dispute" in Clement H. Dodd (ed.), *Turkish Foreign Policy* (London: The Eothen Press, 1992), p: 27-54.

18. See Rauf Versan, "Legal Problems Concerning Territorial Sea Delimitation in the Aegean Sea", *Aegean Issues: Problems-Legal and Political Matrix* (Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute, 1995) pp.105-110, p.106.

19. In contrast with 'status quo states', revisionist states typically "feel humiliated, hampered, and oppressed by the status quo and thus demand changes, rectifications of frontiers, a revision of treaties, a distribution of territory and power to modify it. See F.L. Schuman, (1948) *International Politics: The Destiny of the Western State System*, 4th ed. New York: McGraw Hill) p.378.

20. See, Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p.58.

21. Alexander George identifies seven different defensive strategies which status quo states employ: "(1) coercive diplomacy; (2) limited escalation of involvement to establish ground rules more favorable to the defender, plus efforts to deter an escalatory response by the opponent; (3) tit-for-tat reprisals without escalation, plus deterrence of escalation by the opponent; (4) accepting a "test of capabilities" within the restrictive ground rules chosen by the opponent that initially appear disadvantageous to the defender; (5) drawing the line; (6) conveying commitment and resolve in order to avoid miscalculation by the challenger; (7) time-buying actions and proposals that provide an opportunity to explore a negotiated settlement of the crisis that might satisfy some, if not all, of the challenger's demands." See, Alexander L.George, *Avoiding War Problems of Crisis Management* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), p.384.

22. *Ibid.*, p.389-390.

23. *Ibid.*, p.388-389.

24. *Ibid.*, p.384.

25. *Ibid.*, p.384-387.

26. For the legal aspects of the Aegean Problems and The Kardak Crisis see Erdem Denk, *Egemenligi Tartısmalı Adalar: Karsılastırmalı Bir Çalısma* (Ankara: Mülkiyeliler Birligi Vakfı Yayını, 1999); Bayram Öztürk (ed.) *The Aegean Sea 2000* (Istanbul: Turkish Marine Research Foundation, 2000); Bayram Öztürk, Nesrin Algan (eds.) *Problems of Regional Seas 2001* (Istanbul: Turkish Marine Research Foundation, 2001).

27. See Yüksel Inan and Sertaç Baseren, *Status of The Kardak Rocks*, (Ankara, 1997) p.2.

28. See Ali Kurumahmut, "Kardak Kayalıkları Krizi ve Ege'de Temel Sorunun Ortaya Çıkısı", in Ali Kurumahmut (ed.) *Ege'de Temel Sorun-Egemenligi Tartısmalı Adalar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1998) pp. 6-16, p.10-11.

29. Yasemin Congar, "ABD'den 'Savasmayın' Uyarısı", *Milliyet*, 19 January 1996.

30. "Aykut Fırat, Cesur Sert, "Bayrak Savası", *Hürriyet*, 28 January 1996.

31. "Mehmetcik Kardak'ta", *Milliyet*, 31 January 1996.

32. Taki Berberakis, *Hürriyet*, 12 February 1996.

33. George defines inadvertent war as "a war that is authorized during the course of a crisis, even though at the onset of the crisis central decision makers did not want or expect war". See, George, *op.cit.*, p.8.

34. Çongar, *op.cit.*

35. Stelyo Berberakis "Yunan Ordusu Karıstı", *Milliyet*, 2 February 1997.

36. Nur Batur, "Atina Karıstı", *Hürriyet*, 1 February 1996.

37. As an example of the studies that question the effectiveness of the Greek strategy during The Kardak Crisis see, Eftathios T. Fakiolas and Panayiotis Mavrides, "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, Athens: Melissa International Publications, 2001), pp. 205-238.

38. See, Carol Migdalovitz, "Greece and Turkey: The Rocky Islet Crisis", *CRS Report for Congress*, March 7, 1996.

39. Dogan Ertugrul, Atina'dan Savas Çığlıkları", *CHA*, 28 March 1996.

40. "Tarihi Isbirligi", *Sabah*, 28 February 1996.