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**La République de Chypre: 50
ans après**

**The Republic of Cyprus: 50
Years After**

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The Cyprus Question in the Context of Geopolitics and Grand Strategy

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RÉSUMÉ

Le but de cet article est d'examiner les interrelations entre la géopolitique et la haute stratégie dans le contexte de la question chypriote. Il examine la formation de la stratégie turque basée sur la position géopolitique de Chypre du milieu des années 1950 jusqu'à nos jours et la manière dont les gouvernements turcs l'ont mise en œuvre et d'une façon réussie. Par ailleurs, cette étude compare les différentes adaptations de deux politiques étrangères, celle de la Grèce et celle de la Turquie sur la question de Chypre après l'invasion turque de 1974.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to examine the interrelationship between Geopolitics and Grand Strategy in the context of the Cyprus Question. It examines the formation of the Turkish Grand Strategy based on the geopolitical position of Cyprus from mid 1950's until nowadays and the ways the Turkish governments implemented it in a successful way. Furthermore, it compares the different adaptations of both Greek and Turkish foreign policies over the Cyprus issue after the Turkish invasion of 1974.

Introduction

Member States of the international system have certain strategic objectives, whether they are long-term or short-term, consistent or contradictory. In this way, the internal and external environment of a country creates different requirements and is the source of challenges and opportunities for the attainment of objectives and goals of the state.

The strategy of adaptation a state follows, is a proof of how national power structures are adapted to the interdependence of national and international system. Within this context, the states function as adaptive entities attempting through their foreign policy as well as their security policy to maintain their basic

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structures, namely the political, economic and social characteristics, within acceptable limits. The above constitute the essence of what, in the context of the strategic studies, is called Grand Strategy. In other words, Grand Strategy sets goals in hierarchy taking into account the international environment and the desired position of a country in order to mobilize the broader national capacity and resources of the state to achieve three key objectives a) stability, b) welfare and c) security. A prerequisite for the realization of Grand Strategy is to identify weaknesses and opportunities at national level in order to address effectively the risks and to exploit opportunities.

One of the key factors for the development and formation of the Grand Strategy is Geopolitics. For the purpose of this article Geopolitics¹ is defined as the interdependence between the geographic and political options made by one state in order to utilize and enhance the military, economic and diplomatic power. Therefore, the geopolitical analysis takes into account the existence of international competition in relation to strategic planning in various areas such as military force (geostrategy), economy (geo-economy), the natural environment, demographic trends, etc.

Cyprus in Terms of Geography

Cyprus is located in the northeastern part of the Eastern Mediterranean, between the parallels 34° 33' and 35° 42' N and meridians 32° 16' and 34° 35' A. It occupies an area of 9,251 square kilometers (3,572 square miles) and is the third largest Mediterranean island after Sicily and Sardinia. Its maximum length of 225 km (distance between Cape Drepanon and St. Andrew) and a width of 94 km (distance between Cape Kormakitis and Cat). The total coastline is 782 km.

The nearest country to Cyprus is Turkey (Asia Minor), whose southern coasts are just 70 km from the northern coast of Cyprus. There are about 100 km to the east coasts of Syria, while the southern coasts of Africa (Egypt) is 350 kilometers from Cyprus. Greece, located in the northwest, is the closest European country to Cyprus. The distance of the easternmost part of Greek territory, the island of Kastelorizo, is about 270 km from Cyprus.

Geographically, Cyprus holds a dominant position in the Eastern Mediterranean. This position of the island influenced greatly its course of history and culture in general. The main features of the position of Cyprus are:

Cyprus is situated in the middle of the ancient world (Syria, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Greece and Crete). That's why, it is not surprising that Cyprus has experienced an ancient civilization.

The geographical position of the island between three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa, enables Cyprus to develop trade and tourist relations with countries of these continents.

The Suez Canal is in a relatively short distance from the southern coast of Cyprus (the distance between Cyprus and Port Said is about 370 km). The operation of the canal, since 1869, has helped the Mediterranean to communicate with the Red Sea and Indian Ocean and the development of international trade. The proximity of Cyprus to such key artery, Mediterranean-Red Sea-Indian Ocean, lends the island its particular strategic importance in modern history.

The oil-producing Middle Eastern countries are very close to Cyprus. The transportation of oil, of this valuable form of energy to Europe is made either through the Suez Canal or through pipelines leading to coastal cities of Lebanon, Syria and Turkey, located in a short distance east of Cyprus (cities of Tripoli and Sidon, Lebanon, and Banigias Tartus, Syria, and Dortyol, Turkey). The importance of these pipelines was proved following the closure of the Suez Canal during the period 1967-1974, as a result of the «Six Day War» between Egypt and Israel.

The sea artery, Black Sea - Bosphorus - Dardanelles - Marmara - Aegean - Mediterranean region, lies in a short distance northwest of Cyprus. The artery has contributed to the spread of Greek culture and the development of Greek commerce for centuries.

The land artery, Mediterranean-Persian Gulf, through the valleys of the rivers Orontes, Euphrates-Tigris, is located east of Cyprus. The artery contributed to the development of trade relations both between Syria and Mesopotamia, and among various Mediterranean countries.

The prominent location of Cyprus in the key area of the Eastern Mediterranean is the main reason why the island was occupied at different times by various conquerors who have left their stamp on the Cyprus landscape. Britain, who lost bases in other areas, still retains two major military bases and many rights in Cyprus, which demonstrates the strategic importance of the Island. In 1974, Turkey invaded the island and, ever since, occupies 34,85% of its territory.

The Formation of Turkey's Grand Strategy in Cyprus

In order to understand the key fact of Cyprus' contemporary history, which is the 1974 Turkish invasion, is of significant importance to analyze the interplay between geopolitics and the Grand Strategy decisions of the Turkish foreign policy vis a vis Cyprus, from mid 1950's until today.

In 1956, the then Prime Minister of Turkey Adnan Menderes asked Professor of Constitutional Law, Nihat Erim, to prepare a strategic plan on which to base the long-term aspirations of Turkey on Cyprus.²

Nihat Erim delivered two reports to the government of Menderes in late 1956. Those reports became the strategic master plan of Turkish foreign policy on Cyprus.

That plan has been acceptable by all Turkish governments regardless of political and ideological differences and which has been followed with a steady and systematic consistency.

The key points of the reports were:

1. The claims by Turkey over Cyprus should be based on political reasons. However, to avoid poisoning relations between Britain - Turkey - Greece, whatever status will be granted to the island, the best solution is the middle ground partition (taxim).
2. The island has two different communities, each has the right to self-determination. The future of the two communities, two peoples, independence, unification with the motherland, continuation of British sovereignty will be decided by referendum in each community separately.
3. The principle of self-determination should apply after the transfer of Greek population in order to be under the administration of its choice. Such a population transfer would not cause unnecessary inconvenience but it will help to secure the rights of the Turkish community which is now a minority, and, at the same time, it will meet Turkey's security concerns and will prevent a future crisis.
4. Turkey should define the most suitable form of partition, according to her national interests, taking into account the economic and military interests and the interests of the Turkish Cypriots. In the security of the area which will be allocated to the Greeks of Cyprus, Turkey should be an integral part because the whole issue is related to her security. Greece is unable to claim the same right for the Turkish area since the island's distance from Turkey is 45 nautical miles and from Greece 600 ones.
5. Turkey should seek the free passage of Turkish population to Cyprus. Provided that we take our measures, the total Turkish population of Cyprus may increase and reach the proportion that it had during the Ottoman Era. Then, we will not worry about the outcome of a referendum, either for the future of the entire island or for the partition.³

The report was written in 1956 and identified distinct short, medium and long term strategic goals on whom the Turkish Grand Strategy in Cyprus was based. It is important to note that for the fulfillment of these goals, all the Turkish governments of the past 55 years agreed and no government has deviated from the basic principles, as well as the respective Turkish military elite who, whenever asked, gave solutions without any political interference.

In conclusion, although these reports were drawn up in 1956, 55 years later, they remain relevant and major strategic documents that prove the consistency and stability with which the Turkish governments applied them and pursue their strategic aims to Cyprus.

The situation after the Turkish Invasion of 1974

In the case of the Cyprus problem, as it has been shaped after the invasion of 1974, the correlation between Grand Strategy, Geopolitics and the Security factor, in relation to the strategic goal of solving the problem, has been decisively influenced by the manner in which both, Turkey and Greece, adjusted their policies to the new strategic environment created by the conflict of 1974.

Ever since, Greece and Turkey have followed two different patterns of adaptation of their foreign policy systems vis a vis Cyprus. This difference reflects, to a large extent, both the new strategic environment created by the invasion of 1974, and the strategic priorities both states paid on the issue of Cyprus. Greece followed the model of Acquiescent Adaptation⁴ and Turkey the model of Intransigent Adaptation.⁵

Greece – The model of Acquiescent Adaptation

Following the fall of the Junta in 1974, the Greek governments paid high priority in continuing the democratization of the country, by maintaining the structures of the social system and economic development. For the Greek governments, that goal could be achieved through the acquiescence and acceptance of the limits posed on Greece by the requirements of both the international and regional environment. Regarding the international environment, the requirements imposed the continuity of good relations with the U.S. and, later, the integration into the evolving European supranational institution (EU). From the outset, these targets were set at a higher priority than any other objectives of Greek foreign policy. This resulted to the demotion of the regional challenges by the Greek foreign policy priorities and therefore the Cyprus issue has come to be considered as a secondary one in the hierarchy of the goals of the Greek foreign policy. The decision

makers of Greek foreign policy have consolidated the view that Greece is not able to restore the strategic environment of Cyprus in the pre-1974 situation, because they considered that they could not change the requirements of the strategic environment in the Eastern Mediterranean. Since 1974, the Greek foreign policy on Cyprus has been governed by the logic that any attempt to overthrow the strategic consequences of the Turkish invasion in Cyprus was essentially a zero-sum game in which Greece would come out defeated. Thus, the solution should be found on the basis of a painful compromise. This rendered the Greek policy on Cyprus extremely prone to foreign influence with the permanent result to respond favorably to the recommendations of the international environment.

At the level of the political elite of Greece, this assessment regarding the form and the character of international and regional system adapted acquiescently the Greek foreign policy on Cyprus and inevitably led to maneuvers that placed the solution of the problem on the basis of acceptance of the strategic achievements of Turkey. The positive response of the Greek government in 2002 regarding the Annan plan, without taking into account the negative psychological climate that was created among the Greeks of Cyprus, after the publication of the draft, is a glaring continuation of the logic of the doctrinal acquiescence which characterizes the options of Greek foreign policy on Cyprus after 1974.

Turkey - Intransigent Adaptation

The Turkish foreign policy on Cyprus, particularly after 1974, followed the model of intransigent adaptation. The strategic victory of Turkey, following the invasion as well as the obvious strategic weakness of the Greek overall policy after 1974, benefited significantly Ankara to implement the model of intransigent adaptation.

After 1974, Turkey tried to convert the strategic area of the eastern Mediterranean, and more specifically where there was a Greek-Turkish conflict of interest, in order to comply with the requirements of its strategic aims. That is, the Turkish state has not shown that would alter its foreign policy and its political system because of requests from the international environment. This situation favored particularly by the fact that the U.S. as a superpower ally of Turkey, strongly perceived, at least until recently, the military and bureaucratic establishment of Ankara as the most important guarantee to promote American interests in the region. Within this context of increased confidence the U.S. support has given as well as the geopolitical victory in 1974, the decision makers of the Turkish foreign policy on Cyprus believe that the Greco-Turkish equation in

Cyprus is like participating in a zero-sum game in which the Turkish side will be definitely the winner.

The application of two completely opposite behavioral patterns of foreign policy was inevitable to be reflected in a plan to solve the Cyprus problem as the Annan plan, which internalized most of the strategic objectives of Turkey in Cyprus while calling on the Greek side to agree to a framework of strategic compromise according to the terms of Turkey.

The geopolitical environment of Cyprus has a large deficit of security for three reasons: a) the Turkish strategy aiming at hegemony remains unaltered, b) instability in the Middle East continues (conflicts and asymmetric threats) and c) any security guarantee from the EU is still at the stage of expectation. Therefore, the security factor is a dire need to be implemented in a final plan in order to ensure the stability and prosperity of the state entity that will result from the solution.

Turkish Coercive Diplomacy

Analyzing the strategy of Turkey in Cyprus after 1974, one can realize that it has been based on the exploitation of both the geopolitical advantages Ankara gained after the invasion and the ongoing military superiority of the country aiming to achieve its geopolitical goals of extending direct control over the strategic space of Cyprus, that covers a significant part of the Eastern Mediterranean.

In particular, Turkey has followed systematically a specific strategy after 1974:

a) She strengthens her position in Cyprus by creating legal grounds (eg efforts to legalize her presence in Cyprus or to gain international recognition for the pseudostate of "TRNC" b) weakens the Republic of Cyprus by undermining its legal underpinnings (e.g., the constant question posed by Ankara against both the legitimacy of the Republic of Cyprus as well as the options of the Republic of Cyprus to exercise the legal right of defense) c) Forces Cyprus on concessions under the threat of war (e.g. the crisis on the issue of S300 missiles, where Turkey managed to impose her will on the final decision of the Republic of Cyprus through the threat of military violence), and d) within this context the cost of a potential war is expected to be small for Turkey under the following conditions:

- When the defender is unable to raise substantial resistance (e.g. Greece and Cyprus have failed to create a strong doctrine of deterrence strategy against Turkish aggression since 1974) and
- When the circumstances create a framework for convergence of Turkish interests with those of major powers, particularly the U.S., just as in the Cold

War and post-Cold War context of US – Turkish relations.

The systematic threat of using violence by Turkey, which has become too obvious during the post-Cold War period, is intended to create a momentum in order to cause the maximum political effect. In parallel, Turkey has sought and achieved, at a large extent, to cultivate for herself the image of a decisive opponent who can always use the advantage gained by the military correlation of forces to impose her will. This supports the effort to become a regional hegemonic power in the strategically sensitive areas of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The coercive strategy pursued by Turkey is the most significant chapter in Greco-Turkish relations. Regardless of the internal problems the Turkish state faces and the overexpansion that features Turkish foreign policy, Turkey is gaining ground constantly.

The inefficient Greek foreign policy on Cyprus from 1955 until 1974, due to the dependence on the external factors, has resulted to the alienation of Greece from both the fundamental political demands of the Greeks of Cyprus and the major developments taking place in the Eastern Mediterranean. The substantial alienation of Greece from the geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean, that has been taking place since 1974, paved the way for Turkey to obtain four key advantages over Greece: a) to keep the island as a strategic hostage b) to consider the Republic of Cyprus as her satellite, c) to contain any geopolitical presence of Greece in the Eastern Mediterranean (the failure of the doctrine of the Unified Defense Area is the most unequivocal confirmation of this conclusion), and d) to increase her strategic control in the Eastern Mediterranean, which enables convergence of interest in geostrategic level with U.S., which is a prerequisite for her upgrade as a regional power.

The geopolitical advantages resulted from Turkey's invasion in Cyprus have greatly been protected from Ankara through strategic coercion applied systematically against Cyprus over the last twenty years. Given this reality, Turkey makes it clear to the international actors involved in the Cyprus Peace Process that there are certain limits within which she can make some «concessions». The Turkish governments project the image that they negotiate from a position of power, particularly when they know that the Republic of Cyprus does not have the ability to overthrow the strategic environment imposed since 1974. This situation facilitates the international mediators to submit peace plans favorable to Turkey and to exert more pressure on the Greek side to accept a solution that legitimize both the administrative and geographic separation of the two communities on the basis of the realities the Turkish Army has imposed. The strategic option of the governments of Greece and Cyprus from 1974 onwards, to seek a solution based

on the administrative and territorial division of the island, having already accepted that they can not reverse the negative consequences of the 1974 defeat, has resulted to the gradual drift of the Greek side to the Turkish positions. The Annan Plan was not a surprise. It was the product of the Turkish strategic coercion and the inability of the Greek side to cause strategic changes in Cyprus since 1974.

The Geopolitical Vision of Ahmed Davutoglu Over Cyprus

With the appointment of Professor Ahmet Davutoglu in May 2009 to the position of Foreign Minister of Turkey, an extensive literature has developed regarding his geopolitical vision for Turkey's place in the international arena.

As a scientist, Davutoglu is a great connoisseur and operator of the theoretical model of Halford Makinter's (1861-1947) geopolitical analysis. In other words, he knows very well the Anglo-Saxon geopolitical school, adjusting it to the major strategic objective of the Turkish Grand Strategy which is to seek the best possible geopolitical role for Turkey in the 21st century. His views have been consolidated in his book *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*, (Strategic Depth: The Position of Turkey on the international Scene) which was first published in 2001. Davutoglu tries to make the classical geopolitical coupling. On the one hand, he describes the geographical advantage of «strategic depth» deriving from the Turkish position in the international system and on the other he tries to explain what should be the policy objectives of Turkey dictated by geography, i.e. the balancing between the country's integration in Western institutions and the policy to exercise central and leading role in the Muslim world.⁵

Davutoglu substantiates his view as follows: Turkey is not a regional state but a geopolitical center. Turkey occupies a central position between Europe - Asia - and Africa with an infinite geographical depth which spans in three successive geographic zones: the near-land area (Balkans, Caucasus, Middle East), near-sea basins (Black Sea, Eastern Mediterranean, Caspian, Red Sea and Persian Gulf) and a near-continental area (Europe, North Africa, Central and East Asia. Also, for Davutoglu, Turkey's Ottoman past provides additional historical depth.⁶

What Davutoglu essentially suggests is that Turkey has the geopolitical advantage to become a powerful factor of the Euro-Asian security system. This will allow Turkey to emerge as a force of international stature in the forthcoming decades.

As regards the Cyprus problem, when Davutoglu speaks of «zero friction with neighbors of Turkey» he does not refer to Cyprus because, according to his

geopolitical analysis, Cyprus should remain embedded in the security system imposed by Turkey since 1974. This fully serves the central role Davutoglu envisions for his country in the Eurasian chessboard. Specifically in his book, under the chapter «The strategic Gordian knot of Turkey: Cyprus», Davutoglu analyzes the geopolitical position of the island as follows: «Cyprus has a central position within the global continent since it is equidistant from Europe, Asia and Africa. Together with Crete, the island is in a line on which the sea routes intersect. Cyprus has a geographic position among the straits that separate Europe and Asia, and the Suez Canal that separates Asia and Africa. Simultaneously, the island can be a stable base and an aircraft carrier that will catch the pulse of the sea lanes of Aden and Hormuz, together with the basins of the Gulf and the Caspian, which are the most important routes connecting Eurasia and Africa». Davutoglu concludes by arguing: «A country that ignores Cyprus can not be active in global and regional policies.»⁷

Davutoglu continues crystallizing his strategy for Cyprus: «Cyprus can not be ignored by any regional or global power that makes strategic calculations in the Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean, the Aegean Sea, the Suez Canal, Red Sea and the Gulf. Cyprus is situated in such a great distance from all these regions, thus having the status of a parameter that directly affects them all. As far as Turkey is concerned, the strategic advantage she gained since the 1970's on this parameter, must not use it as a defensive Cyprus policy aiming at preserving the current status quo, but as a fundamental linchpin for an aggressive naval strategy of diplomatic character».⁸

NOTES

1. Ioannis Mazis, *Geopolitics*, (2002) Athens, p.p. 9-27.
2. Nihat Erim, *Bildigim ve gurdugum olculerde icinde Kibris* (Cyprus according to what I know and what I Saw), (1976), Istanbul,, p. 13.
3. Nihat Erim, *op.cit.* p.p. 26-57.
4. J. N. Rosenau, *The Study of Political Adaptation*, (1981), N. York: Nichols Publishing Co.
5. J. N. Rosenau, *op.cit.*
5. Ahmed Davutoglu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*, (*Strategic Depth: The Position of Turkey on the international Scene*), (2001), Küre Yayınlar , p.p. 37-61.
6. Ahmed Davutoglu, *op. cit.* p.p. 74-81.
7. Ahmed Davutoglu, *op. cit.* p.175.
8. Ahmed Davutoglu, *op. cit.* p. 180.