

Political Stability and Economic Development in the Mediterranean

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Departing from different epistemological backgrounds, six members of the Department of Mediterranean Studies of the Aegean University explore a variety of issues related to the turbulent Mediterranean region.

However, before treating these thematics, the well-known Greek economist and professor of the University of Athens, Louka Katseli, deals with the possibility of Greece becoming a major European hub for services within the wider region in the years to come. Signaling a road-map for development in this direction could become a major driver for consensus-building around a national reform agenda that does not appear feasible under present conditions. Such an undertaking requires both solid analysis of likely changes in the global, European and regional environment as well as evaluation of domestic options, preferences, and capabilities. More importantly, it requires political leadership that would ensure policy coherence for development and effective mobilization of all relevant stakeholders.

International relations scholar Dimitrios Triantaphyllou deals with the issue of regionalism or regionalization, which has emerged to become a prominent feature of international relations with the end of the Cold War. In his article entitled “Region-Building in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea regions”, the author argues that in the European Union’s neighbourhood, one can account for at least two region-building models.

The first one, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), was the brainchild of the European Union in an attempt to put into a political, economic, and social framework the geographic space of the Mediterranean Sea. The other, the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), is an attempt at cooperation between littoral states and states belonging to the wider Black Sea region. The key challenge facing both

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frameworks is their cohesion and the extent to which certain degrees of Europeanization may be incorporated into both processes. Moreover, Triantaphyllou seeks to present some of the challenges facing both the EMP and BSEC given the changing context of transatlantic and regional relations.

International lawyer, Konstantinos Magliveras, writes on an issue which has recently occupied the agenda of the international community, namely the issue of trafficking in human beings. Each year many tens of thousand of men, women and children are entrapped by traffickers, who are often linked to organized crime. Transferred to foreign countries, these migrants are treated as commodities bought and sold in the sex industry, agricultural and construction sectors, to name but a few. In fact, trafficking in human beings has become a global problem which involves the whole of Europe and the Mediterranean basin.

In his article entitled *Combating New Forms of Transnational Criminality: Trafficking in Human Beings and the European* (with particular emphasis on the Euro-Mediterranean Region), Magliveras examines the European Union's initiatives and instruments as applied to the issue of human trafficking. More specifically, the article examines the institutional difficulties that the EU has encountered in dealing with the issue of human trafficking and analyses EU's two main objectives, namely the criminalization of human trafficking acts with prosecution of offenders, and the prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons.

Petros Siousiouras offers the perspective of international law in his article "The Geopolitics of the Marine Archaeological Heritage within the Context of the United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea". The author argues that cultural heritage is inextricably linked with the historical importance of certain areas in the same way that certain civilizations, and their historical course, are closely linked with the status and specific importance of certain national states within the international community. Moreover, there are cases of states which endeavour to create history in order to increase their stature and prolong their existence, which in turn provides a geopolitical dimension to the study of cultural-historical heritage.

The article argues that the Third Conference for the Law of the Sea (1982) can be regarded as the international community's 'success story' in efforts to deal with cultural heritage. The success stems from the extent to which the

conference constituted the first fruitful attempt to institutionalize legal rules regarding the protection of marine archaeological heritage. In order to define the jurisdiction rights of the coastal state (regarding the protection of marine archaeology), the article examines separately the sea zones envisaged by the 1982 Convention. An attempt is also made to give a conceptual definition of the terms “archaeological and historical objects” and “archaeological and historical objects found at sea” – which are not defined in the 1982 Convention and are extensively used in the ensuing analysis – to be offered.

In his article, entitled “The ‘Western Alliance’ and the Middle East in the early 1970s” historian John Sakkas examines the development of the European Economic Community (EEC) collective approach to the Arab world in the early 1970s. The author argues that the watershed for the European Community’s involvement in the Middle East came in the aftermath of the October War and after the Brussels and Copenhagen declarations of 1973, which marked the beginning of what was subsequently called the Euro-Arab Dialogue.

The article deals with the negative role the United States (the predominant outside actor in the Middle East since the mid-1950s) has played. The view is that American diplomacy did not encourage any independent European role in the Middle East. However, despite the strong American opposition to the Middle East initiatives of the Community, neither the Euro-Arab Dialogue nor developments in the EEC’s positions on the Arab-Israeli conflict were reversed. The Europeans were determined to increase their freedom of maneuverability independent of the United States, and to distance themselves from some American policies, especially in the Middle East. The author argues that the European reaction to the US challenge was characteristic of a lack of sufficient unity, both internally and externally.

By turning attention to contemporary developments in the turbulent region of the Middle East, Paraskevi Kefala discusses the implications of operation ‘Freedom for Iraq’ for the broader stability of the Middle East area. In her article, entitled “L’opération ‘Liberté pour l’Irak’ et ses conséquences sur la sécurité et la stabilité régionales”, Kefala discusses the consequences of the operation “Freedom for Iraq” both for the country itself and the wider region. The main idea is that the present war against Iraq is not the second phase of the American crusade against international terrorism but the final act of the “Desert Storm”, launched on January 16 1991.

The author argues that war's consequences are devastating for Iraq and that instead of recovering after more than three years of war, the country finds itself immersed in a ruinous civil war, whose end is nowhere in sight. According to Kefala, all these circumstances have placed the very existence of the Iraqi state and its secular character at stake while the current dangerous situation represents an additional and serious threat to the region's security and stability, already affected by the consequences of the September 11th terrorist attacks.

Last, but not least, security analyst Panayotis Tsakonas analyzes the strategy which Greece adopted in the mid-1990s with the aim of transforming the three decades' dispute with Turkey, Greece's NATO-ally and 'arch-enemy', into a less confrontational and more stable relationship. This article explores how certain domestic, regional and systemic reasons led Greece to introduce a 'strategy of socialization' *vis-à-vis* Turkey. His central argument is that Greece's new strategic priorities – which focused mainly on its ability to fully integrate into the European Union – resulted in a realization of the limits of Greece's 'internal balancing' efforts *vis-à-vis* Turkey and a quest for the adoption of sophisticated 'external balancing' policies.

In addition to providing a thorough account of the various reasons that have led to a reformulation of Greece's foreign policy towards Turkey since the mid-1990's, Tsakonas discusses in detail the conditioning factors for Greece's 'socialization strategy', namely a 'top-down', and a 'bottom-up' Europeanization of Greece's foreign policy. Realist/neorealist explanations of 'socialization' and certain aspects of the theory of alliances formation are used as methodological tools for assessing the empirical and historical data available.

The articles in this thematic issue come from a conference dedicated to the memory of Dr. Elias Alexopoulos, Professor, International Relations, Mediterranean Studies Department, University of the Aegean.

A brilliant, productive young scholar, Elias Alexopoulos left us too soon while still at the height of his creativity.