

The New Eastern Mediterranean

Spyridon N. Litsas • Aristotle Tziampiris
Editors

The New Eastern Mediterranean

Theory, Politics and States in a Volatile Era

 Springer

Editors

Spyridon N. Litsas
Department of International
and European Studies
University of Macedonia
Thessaloniki, Greece

Aristotle Tziampiris
Department of International
and European Studies
University of Piraeus
Piraeus, Greece

ISBN 978-3-319-90757-4 ISBN 978-3-319-90758-1 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90758-1>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018944678

© Springer International Publishing AG, part of Springer Nature 2019

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Printed on acid-free paper

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer International Publishing AG part of Springer Nature.

The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Foreword

The Eastern Mediterranean is emerging as one of the most important regions for scholarship in current global affairs. The vast, newly discovered natural gas reserves in the region have the potential to reshape dynamics of the Eastern Mediterranean countries and far beyond. With declining gas supplies in the North Sea and Europe searching for new energy source prospects to decrease its energy dependence on Russia, the Eastern Mediterranean has been emboldened as the “region” making international headlines.

For academics, scholarship on the Eastern Mediterranean is arguably one of the most important contributions of current times, as the countries work to create a stable and prosperous region.

This book defines the “core” Eastern Mediterranean countries as Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, and Turkey. The current political landscape in these countries requires significant effort and goodwill to overcome a number of (mainly) political challenges. If one broadens the Eastern Mediterranean, then the potential to promote stronger regional cooperation is great—but so is the potential for further conflict.

The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies the following countries as the Eastern Mediterranean: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Occupied Territories, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the UAE, and Yemen Arab Republic. Considering these countries, there are even more daunting difficulties that the Eastern Mediterranean must face ahead.

Energy matters stand as the focal point for Eastern Mediterranean progress and conflict. The Eastern Mediterranean has the potential to be a major energy source for Europe, which could decrease the continent’s dependence on Russian and Algerian energy imports. Per the U.S. Geological Survey, there is an estimated 120 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean. The race for drilling, pipeline routes, and export agreements has begun—and it is already a bumpy ride. In the end, fixed midstream assets and pipes will be the key to bringing newly discovered natural gas to the world energy markets.

Experts have reached notional consensus that a pipeline route north to Turkey via Cyprus is economically the most realistic possibility, regardless of the expansive mountainous terrain it must cover to connect it with the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) and the wider Southern Gas Corridor.

However, with Turkey's behavior as of late, serious political doubts have emerged. Up to the publication of this book, Turkey has threatened to use force against a drillship chartered by Italian oil giant Eni (operating in partnership with France) forcing the Saipem 12,000 drilling vessel to leave the area. A Turkish vessel rimmed a Greek coastguard boat off Imia, but fortunately no casualties were reported. The Cyprus government and the European Commission warned Turkey to refrain from any threat against Cyprus, calling Turkey's behavior "damaging for good neighborly relations and the peaceful settlement of disputes." Turkey denounced Cyprus's "unilateral" drilling that "undermined Turkish Cypriots inalienable rights on natural resources." The Italian government says it is monitoring the situation and that it would take "all possible diplomatic actions" to resolve the issue.

Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades stated that Turkish action violated the international law, but that he will do all it takes to "avoid further escalation" of the crises. Turkish Cypriots are now calling for the settlement of rights to all 12 drilling plots before there are any political discussions on Cyprus unification. It is believed that Cyprus's offshore natural gas reserves rival that of Egypt's vast Zohr gas field. Earlier hopes that the Turkey pipeline route would help bring a political compromise to Cyprus unification talks look grim at this point. Nevertheless, the suggested pipeline via Turkey—whose domestic gas market has grown much more rapidly than Europe's demand—is more economically feasible than a longer, expensive undersea route.

In the absence of Turkish cooperation, Cyprus, Egypt, and Greece have opened the door for cooperation on energy matters. The three countries have signed an agreement for the creation of a new undersea electricity cable, the Euro-African Interconnector. This cable will link Cyprus to Egypt and Greece through Crete and will further establish Cyprus as a regional energy center. The cable between Cyprus and Egypt will connect to other African and Middle Eastern countries, and the cable between Cyprus and Greece will create a connection with European countries.

Egypt also has an opportunity to position itself as an important energy hub. The country has oil trade agreements signed with Jordan and Iraq. Exploration of the Zohr gas field has led to an immense surplus of supplies, which Egypt will export. Such a financial windfall will significantly help Egypt with the ongoing robust reforms that the government undertook, supported by the IMF, after ousting Morsi's destructive Muslim Brotherhood government. Recently, Egypt's Dolphinus Holdings and Israel's Delek Drilling (together with its US partner, Noble Energy) have signed a 15 billion dollar, 10-year deal to export gas from Israel to Egypt. Gas will be delivered from Israel's already operational offshore Tamar gas field; from late 2019, this will also include the offshore Leviathan gas field. Development on the Tamar gas field began last year, a \$3.75 billion investment.

Currently, Egypt and Cyprus are closing a deal where Cyprus will sell natural gas to Egypt's liquefied natural gas plants (LNG) from its offshore Aphrodite gas field that has around 4.5 trillion cubic feet of gas. It will likely go to Egypt's Damietta and Idku LNG plants, located about 400 miles south of Cyprus. Egypt and Cyprus, together with the European Union, will sign an agreement to build a Cyprus-to-Egypt gas pipeline, the EU being the main beneficiary.

This deal has brought tension between Israeli and Cypriot interests. Owners of the rights to Israel's Ishai—which borders the Aphrodite field—have asked the Israeli government to stop the Cyprus–Egypt deal. They claim that any extraction of gas on the Cypriot side would lead to extraction of gas from Ishai as well. The Israel government responded that “development of the reservoir necessitates agreement between the parties and safeguarding the rights of both countries.”

The Eastern Mediterranean therefore has two viable options to supply gas regionally: to build a pipeline connecting Israel, Cyprus, and southern Europe or to create a network of pipelines from Israel into Egypt where it could be liquefied and exported. However, Islamist militants in Sinai are posing a serious energy security risk. In 2015, the jihadi group Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, otherwise known as the “Champions of Jerusalem,” blew up the natural gas pipeline near el-Arish (the provincial capital of North Sinai) although they did not directly claim the responsibility. It will be up to Egypt's military to secure northern and central Sinai from the terrorist group.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, with his recently launched military operation “Comprehensive Operation Sinai 2018,” plans to reign in full control of the Sinai Desert, the Nile Delta, and the Western Desert. This operation was ordered after an attack on a Sinai mosque that killed more than 300 people, stunning the entire nation as the deadliest attack of its kind in Egypt. Building up a permanent military and civil presence in these areas can eliminate security risks.

The shared strategic interest in Sinai stability has enhanced security and military cooperation between Egypt and Israel and has extended important commercial cooperation. However, it will take serious effort to build upon these positive trends.

Meanwhile, tensions between Israel and Lebanon over offshore energy continue to rise in real time. The Lebanese government has announced oil and gas exploration tender in disputed territory on the countries' maritime border, encouraged by the discovery of vast sub-sea gas fields over the past decade. These findings include Israel's Leviathan and Tamar gas fields, which are located in waters near the disputed Israeli-Lebanese marine border. This long-standing dispute between Israel and Lebanon over 300 square miles of waters has triggered talks of another conflict between the two countries.

With ongoing Syrian and Lebanese hostilities toward Israel, a much more economically feasible Israel-to-Turkey pipeline through Lebanon and Syria is off the table.

Indeed, Israel faces immense pressure on many fronts. Hezbollah continues to provoke Israel from its Syrian and Lebanese border, inflicting psychological warfare in an attempt to affect Israeli public opinion and influence Israel's military mobilization in crisis. These provocations are best viewed as proxy to mounting

Israel–Iran belligerence. Iran’s positions in Syria, Yemen, and Qatar, coupled with its nuclear ambitions, have increased the strategic pressure upon Israel and enabled Tehran to pursue its revisionist agenda. Tehran’s rise and Jerusalem’s pressure could ensure Thucydides’ Trap in the region.

Just recently Italy, Cyprus, Israel, and Greece signed the provisional agreement to complete world’s longest sub-sea pipeline. However, many question its economic viability. In April of 2017, EU and Israeli officials expressed their support for the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Pipeline (EastMed) via Crete, which bypasses Turkey and avoids liquefaction. The EastMed pipeline will require a serious investment, with construction costs estimated to be 6.2 billion euros. But the EU must acknowledge current political realities in the region that elevate their own energy security risks; considering this, the EastMed pipeline may end up more profitable thanks to its low-risk profile than other possibilities. Investors will inevitably look for more gas findings in the area that justify long-term investment, given sufficient volumes.

It is hard to say which of these pipelines will be realized and which will not. For example, huge efforts were made to bring Nabucco pipeline to life (an investment of five billion Euros) but that ended up being an unfulfilled history. Given the myriad of disputes and hostilities, perhaps the best way forward to maximize the benefit of the Eastern Mediterranean’s newly discovered offshore gas can be summarized in Rex Tillerson’s words when he addressed the Israel–Lebanon maritime dispute during a recent trip to Beirut: “We’ve asked no one to give up anything. Rather, we’re looking for a solution.”

The authors within this publication address important issues useful to those involved or interested in the Eastern Mediterranean. In an easy-to-read manner, they walk through the region’s complex history, offering readers a clear perspective on issues related to sovereignty, consequences of the emergence and defeat of the Islamic State, the increasing important role of Cyprus, the destruction of cultural heritage sites in Syria, and other important political dynamics that overshadow regional economic cooperation.

My admiration goes to the book editors Prof. Dr. Aristotle Tziampiris and Prof. Dr. Spyridon Litsas for spearheading this volume which makes an important contribution to ongoing discussions on the Eastern Mediterranean. I would also like to thank Springer Publishing for bringing this volume to light that in no doubt will help all to learn more about this important, dynamic, troubling, and above all relevant part of the world.

Center for Transatlantic Relations SAIS, Johns Hopkins University,

Washington, DC, USA
March, 2018

Sasha Toperich

Preface

More than 3 years ago, it became apparent to us that the Eastern Mediterranean was about to undergo a process of rapid change and transformation. We thus decided to embark upon the systematic research of the region's international relations. When our first coedited book was published (*The Eastern Mediterranean in Transition*, 2015), the region's primary challenges revolved around the volatility produced by the Arab Spring and the potentially dire prospects of the Greek sovereign debt crisis. Today, the Eastern Mediterranean faces substantial multidimensional and even existential threats that engulf almost all aspects of foreign policy, diplomacy, the economy, and even public and social life.

Indeed, the Eastern Mediterranean is experiencing some of the most intriguing, worrisome, and dangerous events in contemporary international politics. They include the brutal civil war raging in Syria; the rise (and now apparent decline) of ISIS; the gradual unraveling of Libya that has become a divided, weak state flirting with becoming a failed one; the outbreak of Islamic sectarian conflicts throughout the region; the uncertainty about Egypt's future (and that of the Arab Spring more generally); the persistent regional ambitions (and rising authoritarianism) of Turkey; and, more recently, a refugee crisis involving millions that has affected not only regional states but also the domestic politics of several European states and quite possibly the very nature and future of European integration. In addition, the Eastern Mediterranean is becoming a big "laboratory" where balance of power policies among Great Powers and regional states are being tested.

As a result, the Eastern Mediterranean has demanded and captivated the interest of "heavy-weight" international actors, as well as of all the states that consider the Great Sea as a "lifeline" to their survival. This, in turn, has propelled a shift of interest from the conundrums of the Middle East to the complexities of the Eastern Mediterranean; possibly a *sui generis* phenomenon of a subregion functioning as a region within a wider systemic framework.

With this book we conclude a trilogy on the Eastern Mediterranean (our second volume was *Foreign Policy under Austerity*, 2016), yet by no means does it close the circle of analysis on the region that will be necessitated for the foreseeable future. After all, the Eastern Mediterranean represents a "venue" for high antagonisms,

complex conditions, and unresolved socio-political puzzles. They have evolved under a bright sun that from time to time appears to act either as an ancient god-avenger or as a soothing reminder that everything seems more promising under shining light.

We feel particularly pleased that in our marvelous journey in the blue, warm waters of the Eastern Mediterranean we had great co-travelers. As always, we feel grateful for the support and the inspiration deriving from our families. We would like to dedicate this book to our parents Nikos, Eleni, Konstantinos, and Olympia, who lived in this region for all their lives and contributed to the construction of the new Eastern Mediterranean in the best possible way that they could.

Thessaloniki, Greece
Piraeus, Greece
February 2018

Spyridon N. Litsas
Aristotle Tziampiris

Contents

The New Eastern Mediterranean as a Regional Subsystem	1
Aristotle Tziampiris	
Hierarchy, Sovereignty, and Adaptation in the Eastern Mediterranean.	31
Harris Mylonas and Ariel I. Ahram	
Eastern Mediterranean: A New Region? Theoretical Considerations	45
Yannis A. Stivachtis	
The Political Economy of Eastern Mediterranean.	61
George Galanos and Spyros A. Roukanas	
Between Authoritarianism and Liberalism: The Potential and Limits of Elections	79
Sultan Tepe	
The Instrumentalization of Euroscepticism by Third Parties	97
Sharon Pardo and Neve Gordon	
Destruction and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage in Eastern Mediterranean: From Cultural Genocide to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity	113
Kalliopi Chainoglou	
Emerging Israeli Perspectives and the Mediterranean Future: Grand Strategy and National Identity	139
Eran Lerman	

Cyprus in the Eastern Mediterranean: A Small State Seeking for Status 151
Revecca Pedi and Ilias Kouskouvelis

The Russian Foreign Policy in the Eastern Mediterranean: A Sui-generis Revisionism 169
Spyridon N. Litsas

Index 191

Contributors

Ariel I. Ahram Virginia Tech School of Public and International Affairs,
Blacksburg, VA, USA

Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, Houston, TX, USA

Kaliopi Chainoglou Department of International and European Studies, University
of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece

George Galanos Department of Economics, Democritus University of Thrace,
Komotini, Greece

Neve Gordon Department of Politics and Government, Ben-Gurion University of
the Negev, Beer-Sheva, Israel

Ilias Kouskouvelis Department of International and European Studies, University
of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece

Eran Lerman The Jerusalem Institute of Strategic Studies, Jerusalem, Israel

Spyridon N. Litsas Department of International and European Studies, University
of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece

Harris Mylonas George Washington University, Washington, DC, USA

Sharon Pardo Department of Politics and Government, Ben-Gurion University of
the Negev, Beer-Sheva, Israel

Rebecca Pedi Department of International and European Studies, University of
Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece

Spyros A. Roukanas Department of International and European Studies,
University of Piraeus, Piraeus, Greece

Yannis A. Stivachtis International Studies Program, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg,
VA, USA

Sultan Tepe University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

Aristotle Tziampiris Department of International and European Studies,
University of Piraeus, Piraeus, Greece

About the Editors

Spyridon N. Litsas is Associate Professor of International Relations at the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki, Greece. He is also a Visiting Professor of International Relations and Eastern Mediterranean Politics at the Institut d' études politiques de Grenoble (SciencesPo at the University of Grenoble) and a Visiting Professor of International Relations and Strategic Analysis at the Joint Supreme College of War of the Hellenic Armed Forces. He has obtained his Doctorate of Philosophy in International Relations at the University of Durham, UK, where he taught for two years. He has also taught International Relations and Strategy at the University of Piraeus in Attica and at the Army Cadet's School of the Hellenic Armed Forces and the Politics of the Black Sea at the International Hellenic University. He is teaching, researching, and publishing on war theory, strategic analysis, security issues such as jihadism, politics of the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, and North Africa, US and Russian foreign policy in South-Eastern Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Middle East, Turkish foreign politics, etc. He has published in reputable publishing houses in Greece, the UK, and the USA and in international peer-reviewed journals. He is also publishing articles on strategy and politics in the Begin Sadat Center for Strategic Studies in Tel Aviv and in all the major Greek newspapers. He is an alumnus of the International Visitor Leadership Program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State.

Aristotle Tziampiris is Professor of International Relations, Chair of the Department of International and European Studies, and Director of the MSc Program in Energy: Strategy, Law & Economics at the University of Piraeus. He is also Standing Fellow at New York University's Remarque Institute, member of the Executive Academic Board of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), Academic Advisor to the Hellenic American Leadership Council (HALC), and Academic Coordinator for the Erasmus+ "Eastern Mediterranean Regional Training Partnership" Program.