

# Greece-Turkey Maritime Dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean: From Escalated Tensions to Diplomacy

---

Adeleke O. Ogunnoiki, Innocent O. Iwediba & Ifeanyi C. Ani

## Abstract

For centuries, the Mediterranean Sea has been a strategic sea lane for goods-laden vessels that are destined for ports in Europe and elsewhere. Beneath the East Mediterranean, a portion of the Mediterranean Sea, lies untapped natural gas deposits which the states bordering the semi-enclosed sea have competing claims over, thus heightening existing tensions in the region, which if not de-escalated, might have led to a military confrontation at a time countries around the world are battling the deadly respiratory disease – COVID-19. The protagonists of the maritime dispute are Greece, and Turkey which contends that it has the right to explore offshore natural gas below its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This paper is a bird's-eye view of Greco-Turkish maritime dispute. Specifically, close attention is paid to the vicissitude of the discord from escalated tensions to diplomacy. For the study, the historical approach was adopted, and data used were collected from secondary sources. Theoretically, neo-realism and liberalism were triangulated. The paper concludes that it is in the mutual interest of Turkey and Greece to make good use of the diplomatic window open to them to resolve once and for all their maritime dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

**Keywords:** Eastern Mediterranean, Exclusive Economic Zone, EU, NATO, Tensions

## Introduction

The Mediterranean Sea, a semi-enclosed body of water that keeps apart North Africa and Southern Europe, is a strategic shipping route for seaborne goods, especially those that traverse the Suez Canal from the Red Sea. In recent years, the Eastern Mediterranean, a section of the Mediterranean Sea, became a theatre of escalated tensions between two member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (hereafter NATO) – Greece and Turkey, whose conflicting maritime claims in the region almost led to a military confrontation, that would have turned the Eastern Mediterranean into a flashpoint at a time the world was dealing with the first and second waves of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Since vast natural gas deposits were discovered in the region in 2009/2010, Egypt, Israel, and Cyprus are not the only countries with energy interests in the resource-rich Eastern Mediterranean. Greece and Turkey also have hydrocarbon interests in the region (Erlanger, 2020; The Economist, 2020).

Being an ambitious transcontinental country (that intervened militarily in northern Iraq, the Libyan Civil War, Syrian Civil War, not forgetting the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020 over the disputed territory, Nagorno-Karabakh, in South Caucasus), the Republic of Turkey has become assertive, claiming rights to explore natural gas deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean. Obviously, modern-day Turkey's behaviour in the region cannot be divorced from her maritime doctrine '*Mavi Vatan*' (Turkish: meaning 'Blue Homeland') which was announced in 2006 by Turkish Amiral, Cem Gürdeniz. Succinctly, the maritime doctrine aims at achieving Turkey's dominance in the Aegean Sea, the Black Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea, and also to reduce the country's dependence on foreign energy (Kuhaleyshvili, 2020; Pinko, 2020; Anghel and Fusiek, 2021, p. 6).

Against this backdrop, the paper looks at the trajectory of the maritime dispute between Greece and Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean. The objective of the study is to examine the transition of the fresh Greco-Turkish maritime dispute from heightened tensions to dialogue. In line with the stated research objective, the paper has

been compartmentalised into eight sections. Methodology is the first subheading where the process of data collection is mentioned. In the second section, the significant concepts used in this study were clarified. Theoretically, neo-realism and liberalism were adopted and contextualised in the third subheading. The fourth section is a review of literature on the past and present disputes between Greece and Turkey. Here, regional energy cooperation in the Mediterranean was also touched. Under the fifth subheading, the maritime dispute was examined from an international law perspective. The sixth, which is the nucleus of the paper, looks at the transmutation of the new Greco-Turkish maritime dispute from escalated tensions at sea to the negotiating table in European cities. Lastly, the seventh and eighth sections are: our concluding remarks and suggestions respectively.

### **Methodology**

In the year 2020, Greece and Turkey were close to exchanging blows following heightened tensions over maritime dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean (Reguly, 2020). Subsequently, tensions were de-escalated by chiefly NATO and the European Union (hereafter EU). Seeing that the crisis was ongoing, this paper largely drew data from online news sites as events were unfolding. Other sources of information used in this piece are journal articles, extant literature, and a United Nations convention. Qualitative data from secondary sources were solely employed in examining Greco-Turkish maritime dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean. This is because; the study is non-numerical in nature.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

In the discourse of ‘Greece-Turkey Maritime Dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean: From Escalated Tensions to Diplomacy’, two concepts stand out. These concepts are ‘tension’ and ‘diplomacy’.

More often than not, tension does rear its ugly head from conflicts between peoples or states over disputed land, resources, sphere of influence and sundry. When provocative steps are taken by one of or all the disputants, tension is said to have been escalated. Some of the indicators of heightened tension are: unusual mobilisation and deployment of troops, arms build-up, and military drills. At this point, any miscalculated move or accident such as a collusion of the disputant states’ vessels at sea can ignite an unwanted war. To defuse escalated tension, diplomacy is often employed, which brings us to the next concept to be clarified.

According to Bull (2012, p. 157), “We must apply the term diplomacy to the official relations not only of states but also of other political entities with standing in world politics.” That said, “Diplomacy is the conduct of international relations by negotiation rather than by force, propaganda or recourse to law, and by other peaceful means (such as gathering information or engendering goodwill) which are either directly or indirectly designed to promote negotiation” (Berridge, 1995, p. 1).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Greece-Turkey maritime dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean is an inter-state dispute that can be explained, using, first and foremost, the lens of neo-realism (also called structural realism). Propounded by Kenneth Waltz in his book: *Theory of International Politics* (1979), neo-realism, which is an offshoot of classical realism by Thucydides, Thomas Hobbes, Edward H. Carr, Hans J. Morgenthau among others, differs from classical realism, in that it does not dwell on the ‘human nature’ argument in analysing the conduct of international politics (Ngan, 2016).

Like classical realism, neo-realism is a state-centric theory. That is, it avers that states are the main actors in the international system (Ngan, 2016). Inherent in neo-realism are three key assumptions. First, that states are in pursuit of power. Second, the international system is anarchic, and lastly that states survival is by ‘self-help’. It

is no wonder that Waltz (1979, pp. 91-104) assumed that “states seek to ensure their survival” in a self-help international system (Lundborg, 2019, p. 233).

Central to the Greece-Turkey feud, is the gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean. In this regard, national interest takes primacy, and ethical issues are greatly ignored (Akinboye and Basiru, 2014). This is where ‘power relations between unequally knitted states’ come in (Akinboye and Ottoh, 2005).

Though neorealism gives us an insight into why the existing tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean came to a rolling boil, liberalism takes over, explicating the de-escalation of tensions via diplomacy. Labelled by some as ‘utopian’, liberalism in International Relations (IR) is a mainstream theory with an optimistic world view. Like the realists, the liberalists accentuate that states are the principal actors in the international system. However, recognising the importance of the non-state actor – international organisation, sets them apart from pessimistic realists (Gold and McGlinchey, 2017, p. 47, p. 49).

Widely traced to the 18<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, who wrote his magnum opus *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795), liberalism submits that cooperation and peace between sovereign states in the international system are possible via the instrumentality of international organisations, and that states can adhere to international law.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of January, 1918 (the year the First World War, which broke out in 1914, ended), the idealist, President Woodrow Wilson of the United States (hereafter U.S.) delivered his ‘Fourteen Points’ address to the U.S. Congress. Seeing that the fourteenth point in his proposal called for the creation of “[a] general association of nations...”, the League of Nations was formed in 1919 to primarily maintain international peace. Two decades into its existence, the Second World War broke out, which exposed liberalism to criticism. It was not until after the said war ended in 1945 that the United Nations (UN) was established as the successor of the defunct League of Nations (see Gold and McGlinchey, 2017, pp. 47-49; Pevehouse and Goldstein, 2017, p. 38, p.73).

On the Greece-Turkey maritime dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean, liberalists are of the view that a costly war between the disputants and their allies can be avoided if, and only if, they abide by the law of the sea. They add that with the help of an international organisation(s), the long-standing maritime dispute can be resolved peacefully. Going by this standpoint, NATO and the EU made concerted efforts in the Q3 and Q4 of 2020 *vis-à-vis* the de-escalation of tensions between Greece and Turkey, which paid off. NATO, a transatlantic alliance which Greece and Turkey joined during the Cold War in 1952, played a pivotal role in facilitating dialogue, while the EU, at European Council meetings, offered Turkey a chance to strengthen its ties with the bloc and (re-)embark on a positive pathway of cooperation. However, the condition to this offer was that Turkey must refrain from further provocations of the EU member states – Greece and Cyprus (Anghel and Fusiek, 2021, pp. 1-2).

### **Literature Review**

Historically, the tensions between Greece and Turkey go back to the post-World War I (1914-1918) era. Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire during the aforementioned war, the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne was reached after the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1922) which created sovereignty issues for Greece and Turkey (Anthony and Sahlin, 2020; Foundation Robert Schuman, 2020).

In 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus following a *coup d'état* backed by the then military dictatorship in Athens. In 1983, the independence of the breakaway Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) was proclaimed (which only Ankara recognises to date), thus splitting the island into Turkish Cyprus in the North and Greek Cyprus in the South (i.e. Republic of Cyprus (hereafter ROC)). Years later, both countries were on the brink of war in

March 1987 over oil-drilling rights in the Aegean Sea, and in 1996, over a pair of uninhabited islets which Greece calls 'Imia' and Turkey 'Kardak' in the Aegean Sea. It took the U.S. diplomatic intervention to defuse the tension between both countries (Cowell, 1987; Erlanger, 2020; Hincks, 2020; International Crisis Group, 2020; Kos, 2020).

The Eastern Mediterranean is a resource-endowed region with an estimated "3.5 trillion cubic meters of natural gas and 1.7 billion barrels of oil." (Sönmez and Yaşar, 2020) In the last two decades, several gas fields were discovered in the region. Following the discovery of the Tamar gas field in 2009, Israel discovered the Leviathan gas field in 2010. Five years later, the Italian energy company, Eni, discovered the Zohr gas field, one of the world's largest natural gas fields, off the Egyptian coast. Another gas field – the Calypso gas field was discovered by Eni off the coast of Cyprus in 2018 (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2020; Kos, 2020; Mitchell, 2020; Reguly, 2020).

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of January, 2019, the energy ministers of Egypt, Italy, Israel, Greece, Cyprus, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority (PA) formed the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (hereafter EMGF) (Euro MeSCo, 2019). Excluded from the Forum, Turkey, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November, 2019, signed a controversial deal with the Libyan UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) on the delimitation of their respective Exclusive Economic Zone (hereafter EEZ), that criss-crossed the EEZ of some neighbouring countries. It was this accord that paved the way for Turkey's military intervention in the protracted Libyan Civil War between the GNA under the erstwhile prime minister, Fayeze al-Sarraj, in Western Libya, and the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by the warlord, General Khalifa Haftar (who enjoys the support of Russia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (hereafter UAE), and reportedly France) in Eastern Libya. Similarly, Greece reached an agreement *vis-à-vis* maritime boundary and EEZ delimitation with the government of Egypt's strongman, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August, 2020 (Altunişik, 2020; Anthony and Sahlin, 2020; Gagariadis, 2020; Hincks, 2020).

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 2020, the leaders of Cyprus, Greece, and Israel – President Nicos Anastasiades, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu respectively were in Athens where their energy ministers signed the trilateral deal for the \$6-7 billion EastMed project, a proposed 1,900 km (1,180 miles) subsea pipeline to carry natural gas from the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe. Though this undersea pipeline (that will connect Israel and Italy via Greece and ROC), will reduce European countries energy dependence on Russia when completed, Turkey opposed the deal, pointing out that the proposed gas conduit is unnecessary, since its Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) already exists (Kos, 2020; Mitchell, 2020; Koutantou, 2020).

At this juncture, it is worth stating that amid the maritime dispute, Greco-Turkish strained relations worsened over the status of a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Q3 of 2020. Under construction from 532 AD, and completed in 537 AD, the 6<sup>th</sup> century Orthodox Church of Hagia Sophia was taken over by the Ottoman Turks after they conquered Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire (i.e. the Eastern Roman Empire), in 1453. Following the conquest in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, the cathedral was converted into a Mosque during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II (a.k.a. 'Mehmed the Conqueror'). Centuries later, Hagia Sophia, located in present-day Istanbul, became a museum in 1935 when the founding father of modern and secular Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), was in power. But on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July, 2020, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who is reportedly transforming Turkey from a secular state to one practicing political Islam, joined hundreds of Muslims to perform Friday prayers in Hagia Sophia, which not only reverted the historic edifice to a Mosque, but irked Greece, and attracted international condemnation (Abdulla, 2020; Carassava, 2020; Gorvett, 2020; Kuhaleyshvili, 2020).

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of August, 2020, Ankara dispatched a seismic survey vessel *Oruç Reis* into the disputed waters near the Greek island of Kastellorizo, off Turkey's southern coast, to explore for natural gas deposits in the seabed. Two days after, one of the five naval ships which escorted the research vessel, collided with a Greek frigate (International Crisis Group, 2020; Kos, 2020; The Economist, 2020; Tsafos, 2020). Before the deployment of *Oruç Reis*, Turkey sent in 2019, two drilling ships – *Fatih* and *Yavuz* to the Eastern Mediterranean. The seismic exploration vessels – *Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa* and *Oruç Reis* only brought the number of Turkish vessels sent to the region, in recent years, to four (International Crisis Group, 2020; Sönmez and Yaşar, 2020).

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September, 2020, the representative of six states – Egypt, Israel, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Jordan, plus the Palestinian Authority (PA) signed in a virtual ceremony, the charter establishing the EMGF as an international organisation. Headquartered in Egypt, the Forum will promote natural gas exports from the Eastern Mediterranean (Reuters Staff, 2020).

### **International Law and Greco-Turkish Maritime Dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean**

Being “the rules and principles that govern states in their relations *inter se*” (Umozurike, 2005, p. 1), international law has zoned the sea which sovereign states can exercise jurisdiction over most of them as well as enjoy certain rights in all the zones. In the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (hereafter UNCLOS), the sea has five maritime zones i) *Territorial Sea*, ii) *Contiguous Zone*, iii) *Exclusive Economic Zone*, iv) *Continental Shelf*, and v) *High Sea*. As the Greco-Turkish maritime dispute concerns the EEZ and the Continental Shelf, only these zones of the sea will be expounded in the paragraph after this.

International law states that littoral states have the sovereign rights to explore, exploit, conserve and manage the living and non-living resources in the EEZ which is measured at 200 nautical miles from the baseline of a coastal state. Also, they can exercise jurisdiction over the building of artificial islands, marine scientific research, and the protection/preservation of the marine environment in the zone (Article 56, 1982 UNCLOS). Simply put, the Continental Shelf is the natural prolongation of a coastal state's territory to the seabed. Subjacent to the EEZ, the outer limit of a coastal state's continental shelf is measured, at most, 350 nautical miles from the baseline. It is in the continental shelf that offshore hydrocarbons can be found (Article 76, 1982 UNCLOS) (Ogunnoiki, 2018, p. 175).

In the Mediterranean Sea are many islands which are part of Greece's territory. To Turkey, the Greek islands along its coastline (which is the longest in the Mediterranean) have denied it access to undersea gas deposits (Aljazeera, 2020a). The question here is this. Do some of these Greek islands, according to international law, have EEZ or continental shelf? The answer concisely is 'yes'. Going by the 1982 UNCLOS, only “Rocks which cannot sustain human habitation or economic life of their own shall have no exclusive economic zone or continental shelf.” (Article 121(3), 1982 UNCLOS)

No doubt, Greece and Turkey are not the only countries dealing with an EEZ issue. A quick look at China and Japan, will inform us on the solution international law proffers to the Greco-Turkish maritime dispute. While simmering tensions in the East China Sea do stem from territorial claims over uninhabited islets (which China calls Diaoyu Islands and Japan, Senkaku Islands) (see Ogunnoiki, 2020), China and Japan are also faced with the problem of overlapping EEZ. Japan strongly believes the equidistance principle (i.e. the ‘median line’ between both countries' coastlines) is the solution to their EEZ problem. But energy-thirsty China keeps insisting on the natural prolongation of its continental shelf which extends its EEZ close to the coast of Japan, precisely up to the Okinawa Trough (see Peterson, 2009, p. 453; Hsiung, 2005 as cited in Yee, 2011, p. 173; Smith, 2012, p. 381; Bendini, 2014, p. 17).

### **The Eastern Mediterranean Dispute: From Escalated Tensions to Diplomacy**

At a time when the tensions between Greece and Turkey abruptly reached a boiling point in the Eastern Mediterranean, a number of scholars, think tanks and sovereign states anticipated the intervention of the immediate past president of the U.S., Donald Trump, as the U.S. did in the territorial dispute between both countries in 1996. Or better still, to play its leadership role in NATO *vis-à-vis* resolving the maritime dispute. But the U.S., which has begun a drawdown of or has airlifted all its troops from conflict-ridden/politically unstable countries e.g. Afghanistan and Somalia, is unwilling to be directly involved in any fresh foreign dispute.

In the absence of a concrete U.S. action, the government of former German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, was determined to mediate between Greece and Turkey, with France taking the side of the Greeks (Marcus, 2020). In a show of solidarity with Greece, French president, Emmanuel Macron, gave the green light for the deployment of a few Rafale fighter jets to Crete and a frigate to partake in Greece naval manoeuvres from the 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> of August, 2020. On the part of the UAE, four F-16 fighter jets were sent to Crete (Hincks, 2020; International Crisis Group, 2020; The Economist, 2020).

Unsurprisingly, Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September, 2020, warned Greece to settle their differences diplomatically or be ready to experience pain in the battlefield. In his words:

*“They’re either going to understand the language of politics and diplomacy, or in the field with painful experiences,”* (DW, 2020).

To be clear, Turkey wants its maritime dispute with Greece resolved equitably, as soon as possible (Hurriyet Daily News, 2020). Thus, in September 2020, Turkey withdrew *Oruç Reis* from the disputed waters to give diplomacy a chance. However, following the European Council meeting from October 1-2, 2020, Turkey’s research vessel returned to the disputed waters on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October, 2020, which angered France, Germany, and Greece (Aljazeera, 2020b; Anthony and Sahlin, 2020). Again, the vessel was withdrawn from the contested waters on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, 2020 (Wintour, 2020).

Despite NATO-Turkey frosty relations, NATO seized the opportunity of the Eastern Mediterranean dispute to demonstrate that the septuagenarian alliance is not experiencing a “brain death” as President Emmanuel Macron of France bluntly opined in November 2019 (The Economist, 2019). In September 2020, NATO Secretary-General, Mr Jens Stoltenberg, made it known that he was able to get Greece and Turkey to commence ‘technical military talks’ on how both countries can come up with bilateral military ‘deconfliction mechanisms’ which can help reduce the risk of accidents in the Eastern Mediterranean. The rounds of talks between the military delegations of Greece and Turkey took place at NATO’s headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. To de-escalate tensions in the region, the neighbouring countries agreed not to conduct their military exercises slated for late October 2020 (Çakmak, 2020; Daily Sabah, 2020).

Germany, one of Turkey’s major trading partners in Europe, has made diplomatic efforts to bring Turkey to the negotiating table with Greece. Despite calls from Cyprus, France and Greece to impose sanctions on Turkey, the EU which sees Turkey’s exploratory activities in the Eastern Mediterranean as a violation of international law, was reluctant to slam crippling economic sanctions on Turkey. Nevertheless, in December 2020, there was a proposal in the EU to place sanctions on Turkey (Wintour, 2020).

Greece and Turkey, before Germany decided to take upon itself the role of an ‘honest broker’, have since 2002 had 60 rounds of exploratory talks which stalled in 2016 (Çakmak, 2020). To forestall future escalation of



tensions, Greece and Turkey agreed to resume exploratory talks in Istanbul, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January, 2021. Like the previous rounds of talks before the five-year hiatus, both countries in the 61<sup>st</sup> round revisited their years-long maritime disputes, which include that of the Eastern Mediterranean (Smith, 2021). The 62<sup>nd</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> rounds took place in Athens and Ankara on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March and 6<sup>th</sup> of October, 2021 respectively (Cetinkaya, 2021, Kabakci, 2021). Hopefully, the consultative talks in the coming years will bring Greece and Turkey closer to resolving permanently their maritime dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean.

### Conclusion

The fresh Greece-Turkey maritime dispute was a crisis that almost led to the two neighbouring countries using their military assets against each other, following heightened tensions over Turkey's rights to prospect for natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean. Though the EU and NATO were able to de-escalate the existing tensions diplomatically, the long-standing Greco-Turkish maritime dispute is far from over. It is therefore in the mutual interest of Turkey and Greece to make good use of the diplomatic window open to them to resolve once and for their maritime dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

### Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this paper, the following are strongly recommended for consideration:

- i) The leadership of Turkey should avoid making provocative rhetoric and military threat to Greece;
- ii) Military exercises in the Eastern Mediterranean region should be reduced;
- iii) Foreign powers involved in the maritime dispute e.g. France and the UAE need to play a constructive role in resolving the discord;
- iv) Greece and Turkey must avoid a repeat of a collision of their vessels at sea which can trigger a war;
- v) For there to be meaningful cooperation on energy in the East Mediterranean, Turkey should be admitted into the EMGF.

### References

- Abdulla, N. (2020). Turkish military sees opportunity in vulnerable and war-torn places. Retrieved from <https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/turkish-military-sees-opportunity-vulnerable-and-war-torn-places>
- Akinboye, S. O. & Basiru, A. S. (2014). *Foreign policy analysis: Conceptual and theoretical logic*. Texas and Lagos: Wits Publishing Limited.
- Akinboye, S. O. & Ottoh, F. O. (2005). *A systematic approach to international relations*. Lagos: Concept Publications Limited.
- Aljazeera (2020a). Greece, Egypt seek Biden role in Eastern Mediterranean dispute. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/11/greece-egypt-seek-biden-role-in-east-mediterranean-dispute>
- Aljazeera (2020b). Turkey extends exploration in disputed East Med again. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/25/turkey-extends-exploration-in-disputed-mediterranean-area>
- Altunışik, M. B. (2020). Turkey's energy geopolitics. *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*. Retrieved from <https://www.thecaireview.com/essays/turkeys-energy-geopolitics/>
- Anghel, S. & Fusiek, D. (2021). The European Council and Turkey: Searching for a positive agenda. *European Parliamentary Research Service*, 1-12.
- Anthony, I. & Sahlin, M. (2020). Maritime disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean: Why and why now? *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*. Retrieved from <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/essay/2020/maritime-disputes-eastern-mediterranean-why-and-why-now>
- Bendini, R. (2014). *The struggle for control of the East China Sea*. Belgium: European Union, 1-24.
- Berridge G. R. (1995). *Diplomacy: Theory and practice*. London: Prentice Hall.
- Bull, H. (2012). *The anarchical society: A study of order in world politics* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). London: Red Globe Press.

- Çakmak, B. N. B. (2020). NATO: Talks between Greece, Turkey to help solve issues. *AA*. Retrieved from <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/nato-talks-between-greece-turkey-to-help-solve-issues/1988857>
- Carassava, A. (2020). Greece rallies international support against decision to recast Hagia Sophia into mosque. *VOA News*. Retrieved from <https://www.voanews.com/europe/greece-rallies-international-support-against-decision-recast-hagia-sophia-mosque>
- Cetinkaya, B. (2021). Turkey, Greece hold 62nd round of talks in Athens. *AA*. Retrieved from <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/turkey-greece-hold-62nd-round-of-talks-in-athens/2178455>
- Cowell, A. (1987). Greeks and Turks ease Aegean crisis. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/03/29/world/greeks-and-turks-ease-aegean-crisis.html>
- Daily Sabah (2020). Turkey, Greece agree to pause military exercises following NATO talks. Retrieved January 08, 2021, from <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkey-greece-agree-to-pause-military-exercises-following-nato-talks>
- DW (2020). Turkey threatens Greece over disputed Mediterranean territorial claims. Retrieved from <https://www.dw.com/en/turkey-threatens-greece-over-disputed-mediterranean-territorial-claims/a-54828554>
- Erlanger, S. (2020). Rising tensions between Turkey and Greece divide E.U. leaders. *The New York Times*. Retrieved November 17, 2020, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/27/world/europe/greece-turkey-eu.html>
- Euro MeSCo (2019). The energy ministers of 7 countries created the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum. Retrieved from <https://www.euromesco.net/news/the-energy-ministers-of-7-countries-created-the-eastern-mediterranean-gas-forum/>
- European Council on Foreign Relations (2020). Deep sea rivals: Europe, Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean conflict line. Retrieved from [https://www.ecfr.eu/special/eastern\\_med/timeline](https://www.ecfr.eu/special/eastern_med/timeline)
- Foundation Robert Schuman (2020). The conundrum of the great gas game and the ensuing strategic realignment in the Eastern Mediterranean. Retrieved from <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0571-the-conundrum-of-the-great-gas-game-and-the-ensuing-strategic-realignment-in-the-eastern>
- Gagaridis, A. (2020). Background: Geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean conflict. *Geopolitical Monitor*. Retrieved from <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/backgrounder-geopolitics-of-the-eastern-mediterranean-conflict/>
- Gold, D. & McGlinchey, S. (2017). International relations theory. In S. McGlinchey (Ed.). *International relations*. Bristol: E-International Relations Publishing.
- Gorvett, J. (2020). Turkey's challenge to the regional status quo begins in the Eastern Mediterranean. *World Politics Review*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/29031/how-eastern-mediterranean-tensions-are-complicating-the-cyprus-turkey-dispute>
- Hincks, J. (2020). How dangerous is Greece and Turkey's Mediterranean standoff? *Time*. Retrieved from <https://time.com/5884397/turkey-greece-tensions/>
- Hurriyet Daily News (2020). Turkey calls for making Mediterranean 'peace basin' again. Retrieved from <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-calls-for-making-mediterranean-peace-basin-again-158672>
- International Crisis Group (2020). How to defuse tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. Retrieved from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean/how-defuse-tensions-eastern-mediterranean>
- Kabakci, F. (2021). 63rd round of Turkey-Greece consultative talks held in Ankara. *AA*. Retrieved from <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/63rd-round-of-turkey-greece-consultative-talks-held-in-ankara/2384692>
- Kos, D. (2020). Greece-Turkey relations sour over disputed Eastern Mediterranean drilling rights. *Glimpse from the Globe*. Retrieved from <https://www.glimpsefromtheglobe.com/topics/politics-and-governance/greece-turkey-relations-sour-over-disputed-eastern-mediterranean-drilling-rights/>



- Koutantou, A. (2020). Greece, Israel, Cyprus sign EastMed Gas Pipeline deal. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-cyprus-israel-pipeline-idUSKBN1Z10R5>
- Kuhaleyshvili, G. (2020). Greek-Turkish conflict: Battle for resources and NATO crisis. *112 International*. Retrieved from <https://112.international/politics/greek-turkish-conflict-battle-for-resources-and-nato-crisis-54675.html>
- Lundborg, T. (2019). The ethics of neorealism: Waltz and the time of international life. *European Journal of International Relations*, 25(1), 229-249.
- Marcus, J. (2020). The Eastern Mediterranean tinderbox: Why Greek-Turkish rivalries have expanded. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53906360>
- Mitchell, G. (2020). COVID-19 put the Eastern Mediterranean hydrocarbon dreams on hold. *War on the Rocks*. Retrieved from <https://warontherocks.com/2020/06/covid-19-put-the-eastern-mediterraneans-hydrocarbon-dreams-on-hold/>
- Ngan, T. T. T. (2016). Neo-realism and the balance of power in Southeast Asia. *The Central and East European International Studies Association–International Studies Association Review Paper*, 1-17.
- Ogunnoiki, A. O. (2018). China as a rising power and her growing assertiveness in the South China Sea. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research*, 4(2), 156-184.
- Ogunnoiki, A. O. (2020). The East China Sea disputes: Examining China and Japan’s territorial Claims. *African Journal of Law, Political Research and Administration*, 3(2), 79-92.
- Peterson, A. M. (2009). Sino-Japanese cooperation in the East China Sea: A lasting arrangement. *Cornell International Law Journal*, 42(3), 442-474.
- Pevehouse, J. C. W. & Goldstein, J. S. (2017). *International relations* (11<sup>th</sup> ed.). Pearson.
- Pinko, E. (2020). Turkey maritime strategy ambitions: The blue homeland doctrine (Mavi Vatan). *Research Institute for European and American Studies*. Retrieved from <https://rieas.gr/images/editorial/eyalmaritime9.pdf>
- Reguly, E. (2020). A dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean has brought Turkey and Greece close to war once again. But this time it’s different. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved November 24, 2020, from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-a-dispute-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-has-brought-turkey-and-greece/>
- Reuters Staff (2020). East Mediterranean states formally establish Egypt-based gas forum. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-energy-idUSKCN26D14D>
- Smith, H. (2021). Greece and Turkey resume talks to try to avert military escalation. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/25/greece-and-turkey-in-talks-to-try-to-avertmilitary-escalation>
- Smith, S. A. (2012). Japan and the East China Sea dispute. *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 370-390.
- Sönmez, G & Yaşar, N. T. (2020). Making sense of the crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean and Turkish involvement in Libya. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*. Retrieved from <https://gija.georgetown.edu/2020/06/15/making-sense-of-the-crisis-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-and-turkish-involvement-in-libya/>
- The Economist (2019). Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead. Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead>
- The Economist (2020). Dealing with a dangerous dispute in the Eastern Med. Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2020/08/20/dealing-with-a-dangerous-dispute-in-the-eastern-med>
- Tsafos, N. (2020). Getting East Med energy right. *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. Retrieved from <https://www.csis.org/analysis/getting-east-med-energy-right>
- Umzurike, U. O. (2005). *Introduction to international law* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (1982). Retrieved from [https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention\\_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos\\_e.pdf](https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf)

- Wintour, P. (2020). EU plan to sanction Turkey will backfire, Erdoğan aide warns. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/09/eu-plan-to-sanction-turkey-will-backfire-erdogan-aide-warns>
- Yee, A. (2011). Maritime territorial disputes in East Asia: A comparative analysis of the South China Sea and the East China Sea. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 40(2), 165-193.

---

Adeleke O. Ogunnoiki, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos State, Nigeria  
adeleke\_ogunnoiki@yahoo.com. 08035286353

Innocent O. Iwediba Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos State, Nigeria  
iwedibai@gmail.com

Ifeanyi C. Ani Graduates, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos State, Nigeria  
ani\_clinton@yahoo.com