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Eastern Mediterranean and Turkey

INTRODUCTION

Although the seas are important geopolitically for the security and economic development of the coastal state, it is equally important that it can make its power felt to other states that are located on the same coast and regional states. It can be said that the seas, which were frequently used as trade and military logistics routes in the recent past, have become more important nowadays with hydrocarbon resources on the seabed that were discovered with the development of technology in the recent past. (Dilaver, 2018).

The Mediterranean, which plays a role in the spread of great civilizations, still maintains its importance due to its many crisis points. Thanks to its geopolitical location, which includes the Middle East,

North Africa, Anatolia and Southern Europe, and its geographical location that connects the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean, it has contributed to the development of civilizations while bear the burden of both history and coastal countries for many years. It has left its mark on history and we still see its effects; The Egyptian Civilization, the Roman Empire and the Ottoman Empire increased their dominance in the Mediterranean region by succeeding in being a dominant sea power (Yeni Şafak, 2016).

In light of this information, both in terms of geopolitical and military, as well as due to the inclusion of energy reserves in a regional problem, the Mediterranean/Eastern Mediterranean crisis is emerging as an area, in this context, Turkey can show her global impact and

regional power. Turkey's approach to the crisis in question, will be appropriate to examine under 3 main headings.

1- Cyprus

Turkey's military operation organized, for exhibiting the regional deterrence at the expense of the embargo in 1974, Cyprus which is acting as an aircraft carrier between the Middle East and North Africa region that, is more geopolitically crucial for Turkey as than ever (Demir, 2017). The invasion of Iraq, which is Turkey's border neighbour, The fact that Syria witness the civil war that started in 2011 and Turkey's another neighbour Iran's problems with USA, which is increasing incrementally, has laid the importance of the Mediterranean and Cyprus bare for the Middle East. On the other hand due to the geographical proximity Cyprus militates in favor Turkey and it is in a position deterrent against Israel and Egypt clearly seen. For many years, because of the posing an agenda topic and also even being qualified as an invader reveals the importance of 'Cyprus Peace Operation' more clearly with today's conjuncture (Tamçelik, 2011, p. 5-8).

2- Energy

The hydrocarbon deposits discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean have undoubtedly caused special attention not only to the states of the region but also to the global powers and therefore to the global energy companies. Syria's status as a failed state due to the civil war, Lebanon being overwhelmed with both weak and economic problems, Egypt's political stability has not been achieved yet, and Israel, who wants to be active in the region, wanted to increase her income by

exporting energy and the crisis have caused to deepen and constantly change the sides of the table. Israel, which move most easily among states mentioned above and that share same cost in Eastern Mediterranean, is concerned that Turkey's opponents towards becoming a regional power, can be used against Turkey in bargaining power in the eastern Mediterranean (Inat, 2019). It has been observed that Turkey's energy resource exploration activities that started around in their maritime jurisdiction around the island of Cyprus to be blocked by Greece and Greek Cypriot (TRT Haber, 2019). Turkey has prevented Search / scrutiny attempts to block own operations, in question, through fielding naval forces and giving military support to search / research vessel and clearly revealed that any initiative would see as a reason for the war clearly revealed (Anadolu Ajansı, 2020). By the 'EastMed Pipeline' project between Cyprus and Greece, which emerged last year, the energy sources of Israel and Egypt are planned to be transported first to Cyprus via Cyprus, then to Italy via Greece and exported to Europe. While the realization of the project in question is, one hand, reducing Europe's dependence on Russian gas, on the other hand, is wanted to bypass of Turkey, for losing her activity, that by reaping the first fruits of being an energy centre by the virtue of TANAP (Bilge, 2018).

Attempts of breaking dominance of Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean, which is ancestor's inheritance, by creating a public opinion is coming into view as another burning issue for Turkey in the recent years.

3- Security and Military Expansion

The fact that each state that wants to become a global power has geopolitical power is one of the basic elements. Eastern Mediterranean is important for Turkey not only as an energy source but also it is important in the context of dominance in regional sea can be considered a touchstone towards becoming a global power. (Kedikli & Deniz, 2015, p. 419). Besides Turkey's being a sharing coastal state in Mediterranean providing the connection to Hint Ocean, Europe and The Atlantic Ocean, also she keeps military bases (in the Red Sea with Sudan and Somalia, in the Persian Gulf with Qatar). Except for the Eastern Mediterranean littoral states, being dominant militarily in northern Cyprus caused to increase Turkey's effectiveness and power in the region with each passing day. On the other hand, the deepening of the crisis in the region, the outbreak of civil war in Libya, Syria's ongoing civil war and as mentioned in the previous paragraph in the context of 'energy reserve' global power's work for building interest balance, caused Turkey to feeling of safety concerns.

We see the states, in question, that cause these security concerns, primarily USA, Russia and France as global actors; Egypt, Israel and Greece as regional actors in the field. Turkey; intervene to the Syrian civil war to secure its borders, crossing terrorist organizations' corridor extending to the Mediterranean, and make her presence in the Eastern Mediterranean felt to other states. Because it has been observed that attempts have been made to transfer the energy resources of Iran, Iraq and Syria to Europe and to transfer the energy transmission lines to the Mediterranean in

the regions controlled by these terrorist organizations. (Şahin, 2018, p. 199-203).

Especially in Northern Syria, besides the energy, which is an important factor in the confrontation of the USA and Russia, both the Mediterranean geopolitics and the increase of Russia's power in the Eastern Mediterranean are clearly against the interests of the USA. On the other hand, we see that besides Iran's expansionist activities and to act together with Russia increase the security concerns of Israel another power in the region, USA is trying to ensure the security of Israel as well. The US, which has 46 bases in 11 countries in the Middle East but has not had a naval base in the Eastern Mediterranean until recently, by opening a new base on the island of Cyprus, and it is said that it is on the way to break the effectiveness of Russia and this causes complex confusion in the balance of power in the Mediterranean. ((Dursun & Karaalp, 2019) ve (Bilge, ABD sessiz sedasız Kıbrıs'a üs kurdu, 2020)).

On the other hand, Russia, which is effective in Syria and Egypt, is also seen in Libya, is seen in another conflict point in the Eastern Mediterranean. Undoubtedly, the fact that Russia, which wanted to be active in the Mediterranean for centuries, had achieved this desire to some extent in the Cold War years , and that it was on the field as a side in both the Syrian civil war and the Libyan civil war, would conflict with USA's interests, firstly. It can be said that Russia, which operates in the energy resources in Libya after Gaddafi, increased the instability in the region by acting together with the putschist Caliph Khafter, one of the parties of the civil war. (Canlı, 2020). In particular Libya's UN-recognized

National Reconciliation Government (UMH) and Turkey signed a maritime jurisdiction areas of agreement, thanks to declare the sea neighbourliness, Turkey, maritime jurisdiction areas in the Mediterranean has been announced in accordance with international law (Anadolu Ajansı, 2019). Another important development is NRG's request for support from Turkey, has led to confrontation of Turkey and Russia in Libya, besides Syria (BBC Haber, 2020).

As a result, the US and Russia's hegemonic conflict of interest and Eastern Mediterranean which Turkey, Israel and Greece's attempts for being regional power, provide an opportunity for making Turkey's presence felt in the field as an playmaker and make feel her power more than ever.

Via Libya's maritime jurisdiction and that the gains achieved through diplomatic means Turkey, making scene in the field,

clearly declares that she will never give up the gains an bein protector of "Blue Homeland". In recent days, Israel-Turkey allegations of possible agreements related to maritime jurisdiction areas, although both of them reject, given the achievements on parcels that are experiencing the dispute with Cyprus can be considered as a win-win for both countries.

Turkey's effective and deterrent power as there is in the field, tested the domestic and national defence industry products also contributes to introducing the world market and create even. In the context of energy, it provides the opportunity to obtain the necessary experience for finding and processing hydrocarbon resources and to catch technological development. Turkey who want to guarantee the independence of tomorrow as of today, will undoubtedly increase the domination and influence in the Mediterranean every day.

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