

# **Cyprus Hydrocarbons Conflict: A Model for Cooperation Prior to Comprehensive Settlement**

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Approval of the Institute of Graduate Studies and Research

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## **ABSTRACT**

The discovery of hydrocarbon reserves in the sea around Cyprus Island have generated another question of intransigence between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots. Moreover, it contributed to destabilize the Eastern Mediterranean region. Following the commencement of series of maritime delimitation agreements and granting of licences to explore and exploit the resources by the Greek Cypriot side, the Turkish Cypriot side reciprocated with similar steps. A solution is yet to be found. The purpose of this study` is to address the question of ‘How can the Hydrocarbons conflict be solved prior to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus conflict?’ The study employs rational choice approach as the basis of a possible model of solution and suggests some practical steps towards a solution. It is argued in this study that the main motive of Hydrocarbons conflict lies at the longstanding conflict between the two sides over sovereignty. During the conduct of research, qualitative analysis method is used for the collection of data. As implied above rational choice approach is utilized for theoretical evaluation.

The present study argued that it is irrational for either party to abandon their current positions unless their contest over Cyprus’ sovereignty is solved. In the light of abovegiven diagnosis, a solution of Hydrocarbons conflict before reaching a comprehensive settlement could only be mutually acceptable if a cooperation over hydrocarbons is integrated into a federal framework agreement. Through explaining existing differences between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot sides the author proposed appropriate forms of third party intervention considering the needs of the parties in conflict.

**Keywords:** Cyprus Conflict, Hydrocarbons Conflict, Conflict Management.

## ÖZ

Kıbrıs adasını çevreleyen denizde keşfedilen hidrokarbon kaynakları, bir yandan Kıbrıslı Rumlar ve Kıbrıslı Türkler arasında bir diğer uzlaşmazlık meselesini ortaya çıkardı. Öte yandan da, Doğu Akdeniz bölgesinin istikrarsızlaşmasına katkı sağladı. Kıbrıs Rum tarafının başka devletlerle bir dizi deniz alanı sınırlandırma anlaşması imzalaması ve hidrokarbon kaynaklarının araştırılıp işletilmesi için ruhsat vermesinin ardından, Kıbrıs Türk tarafı da benzer adımlarla karşılık vermiştir. İki taraf arasında bu alanda ortaya çıkan soruna halihazırda bir çözüm bulunamamıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, 'Kıbrıs sorununa kapsamlı bir çözüm bulunmadan hidrokarbon sorunu nasıl çözülebilir?' sorusuna yanıt vermektir. Çalışma, olası bir çözüm modelinin temeli olarak rasyonel tercih teorisini kullanmakta ve çözüme yönelik bazı uygulanabilir adımlar önermektedir. Bu çalışmada hidrokarbon sorununun temel sebebinin iki taraf arasında uzun süredir devam eden egemenlik çatışmasından kaynaklandığı öne sürülmektedir. Araştırma boyunca, verilerin toplanması aşamasında nitel analiz yöntemi kullanıldı. Teorik değerlendirme için ise yukarıda da belirtildiği gibi rasyonel seçim yaklaşımından istifade edildi.

Bu çalışma, tarafların Kıbrıs'ın egemenliği üzerindeki mücadelesi çözüme kavuşmaksızın pozisyonlarını terketmesinin irrasyonel bir davranış olduğunu savunur. Yukarıda sunulan teşhis ışığında, hidrokarbon sorununun kapsamlı bir çözümden önce halli, ancak hidrokarbonlar üzerindeki bir işbirliğinin federal bir çerçeve anlaşmasıyla bütünleştirilmesi durumunda karşılıklı olarak kabul edilebilir olabilecektir. Bu çalışma, Kıbrıs Rum ve Kıbrıs Türk tarafları arasındaki mevcut farklılıkları

açıklayarak ve çatışan tarafların ihtiyaçlarını göz önünde bulundurarak bunlara uygun üçüncül taraf müdahale biçimlerini önermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kıbrıs Sorunu, Hidrokarbon Sorunu, Çatışma Yönetimi.

# DEDICATION

*To My Family*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to extend my gratitude for all of my teachers who I came across at the Eastern Mediterranean University for their valuable contribution to my personal development.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKEL	Progressive Party of Working People
CTP	Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi/Republican Turkish Party
DIKO	Democratic Party
DIPA	Democratic Alignment
DP	Democratic Party
EDEK	Movement for Social Democracy
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ELAM	National Popular Front
ENOSIS	Union (with Greece)
EOKA	National Organisation of Cyprus Fighters
EU	European Union
HP	People's Party
RoC	Republic of Cyprus
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
TPAO	Turkish Petroleum Agency
UBP	National Unity Party
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Conference on Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
YDP	Re-Birth Party

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Historical Background

Cyprus became an independent state in 1960, more precisely a functional federative state between Greek and Turkish communities of the Cyprus. Its constitutional regime collapsed in the late 1963, as a result of disagreements between the respective community leaderships, which lead to eleven years long inter-communal tensions and fights. While Greek Cypriot leadership established a total control over the state powers, Turkish Cypriot leadership claimed their separate temporary administrations. In 15 July 1974, a military coup is organized by the mainland Greek junta against the government of the RoC. After five days, through justifying her acts over the provision of the Treaty of Guarantee, Turkish Armed Forces intervened. After all, diplomatic process realized until August did not bring susceptible results for settling conflict. As a result, a territorial division is brought in the island where each consists of homogeneous populations of Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

Currently, Greek Cypriot led Republic of Cyprus government is recognized as the legitimate government by the United Nations (United Nations Security Council, 1964, S/Res/186) , and likewise by Inter-Governmental and Supranational Organisations. Greek Cypriot side claims that inefficient structure of the 1960 constitution and separatist ideals of Turkish Cypriots and Turkey have made RoC malfunctioning. According to Greek Cypriot side, Turkish Cypriot side acts in accordance with a plan to realize

separation and used 15 July coup as a pretext to impose their aims (RoC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Background, 2021). According to Greek Cypriot side, the conflict is not an inter-communal one but rather a product of expansionist and colonial motivations. As a result, Greek Cypriot side rejects existence of any state other than RoC (RoC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012). On the other hand, the Turkish Cypriot side claims that the Greek Cypriot side commenced a deliberate campaign in order to reach enosis by altering the state of affairs created by Zurich-London agreements. As a result, the Greek Cypriot side forcibly seized the state organs and denied political equality between the two communities (TRNC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022). UNSC declared TRNC as an illegal entity called upon all member states not to recognise it (UNSC, S/Res/ 550,1984). Currently all member state except Turkey denied recognition of TRNC.

By 2003, Greek Cypriot-led RoC have started to conclude maritime delimitation agreements with a group neighbouring states located at the Eastern Mediterranean basin, namely Israel, Egypt and Lebanon.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, in 2007 Greek Cypriots announced the first offshore licencing (Stergiou, 2019, p. 13) and first exploratory drilling commenced in 20 September 2011 in Block 12. As a result, a new realm of competition between the two sides of the island emerged. Turkish Cypriot side and Turkey, reacted in 21 September 2011 through signing a bilateral continental shelf delimitation agreement. Additionally, TRNC granted of licence to Turkey`s state owned corporation Türkiye Petrolleri Anonim Ortaklığı (TPAO) for exploration and exploitation purposes. Subsequently, Turkish Cypriot side proposed in 24 September 2011 to either cease all exploration and exploitation activities until a comprehensive settlement is reached or

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<sup>1</sup> Agreement is not ratified by Lebanon.

to decide jointly for the future of activities including revenues and funding of a probable settlement (Erciyas, 2019, p.9). In that regard, no convergence is reached. Turkish Cypriot side argues that RoC's acts are null and void as Turkish Cypriot consent is absent (A/74/648-S/2020/28 , 2020). In contrast, Greek Cypriot side describes Turkish and Turkish Cypriot exploration activities as violation of both RoC's sovereign rights and international law (RoC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

Notwithstanding with the hydrocarbons conflict's relationship with the contest over sovereignty between the Turkish Cypriot side and the Greek Cypriot side, there exists a dimension of conflicting claims over maritime zones between Turkey and RoC.

In this frame, the Greek Cypriot side proclaimed its exclusive economic zone in 2004 via enacting the Law No:61(1). It is declared that ``the outer limit of the EEZ shall not exceed median-line``(RoC, 2004). Greek Cypriot communications also refers to the median-line method applied in agreements made between Egypt, Israel and Lebanon (UN General Assembly, A/66/851, 2012). As a result Greek Cypriot side's thesis advocates that median line principle to be applied against the states in which Cyprus have opposite or adjacent coasts.

On the other hand, as being non- party to any maritime delimitation treaties, Turkey bases its claims on customary international law. Turkey refers to "special circumstances" principle and argues that outer limits of its continental shelf (on the overlapping areas with RoC) are following the median line with Egypt's continental shelf (UN General Assembly, A/73/84, 2019). As a result, Turkey's legal thesis advocates that "Island of Cyprus in the west and the Greek Islands in the area including Castellorizo

cannot generate full EEZ/Continental Shelf under international law as they distort the equitable delimitation” (Erciyas, 2019, 24).

As a result of above given conflicting perspectives, Turkey`s claims regarding breath of its continental shelf is partly overlapping with RoC`s claims regarding breath of its exclusive economic zone.<sup>2</sup> An overlap is further available with RoC`s exploration and exploitation parcels, namely at parcels, 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7.<sup>3</sup> While, Turkey stipulates that it is ready to `conclude an agreement with all relevant coastal states` in which it recognises (and thus through excluding RoC) (UN General Assembly, A/73/84, 2019), Greek Cypriot side stipulates that it can only talk a cooperation arrangement over hydrocarbons if Turkey recognises RoC`s maritime zone claims. Thus, stipulations of Turkey and RoC excludes any possibility of a formal maritime delimitation agreement between Turkey and RoC until Cyprus conflict is solved. Hence, adding another obstacle for the solution of the Hydrocarbons conflict.

Regarding volume of hydrocarbons,4 commercially prominent discoveries exist within the declared EEZ of RoC. Aphrodite discovery in 2011, Calypso discovery in 2017, Glaukos discovery in 2019, and Cronos-1 discovery in August 2022 are suggested to hold around 13 tfc of gas reserves in total (Ellianas, 2022). According to an assessment, Cyprus gas has potential to cover 4 percent of EU`s demand (Deutsche Welle, 2020). Pertaining to monetization plans, either LNG or pipeline options are considered by the Greek Cypriot side. In that regard, Greek Cypriot side decided to halt building of an onshore LNG facility in Cyprus/Vassilkos due low promising volume of findings (Cyprus Ministry of Energy, n.d). Thus East-Med Pipeline Project remained as the only

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<sup>2</sup> See Map at figure 1.1

<sup>3</sup> See Map at figure 1.2

tangible contemplation since 2020 which is agreed between Greece, RoC and Israel to transfer gas to Europe. Pipeline was contemplated to bring 10 bcm/annual gas to Europe with a cost of 6.2 billion Euros (European Parliament, 2017, p.31). Beside suspicions over its commercial viability, withdrawal of US support in 2022 January further questioned its feasibility (Cyprusprofile, 2022). Apart from Greek Cypriot considerations, a method in which Cyprus gas be transferred to Europe transit Turkey is referred by many as the most cost-effective option (Gürel and Le Cornu, 2014, p.26). In addition, while not providing details due confidentiality, RoC Energy minister Natasa Petrides recently stated that connection of Aphrodite to Egypt's Idku LNG facility is being considered (Stockwatch, 2022). Notwithstanding with the effects of market demand for monetization of Cyprus gas, political instability in the region is on the other hand raising a security question for viability of monetization options. At this juncture, uncertainty prevails over exploitation plans of the reserves.

Conflict over hydrocarbons between the two communities is another reflection of the latent intransigence over sovereignty of the RoC, it poses both opportunities and threats for the actors as regards to their aims towards the Cyprus conflict. Latest round of federation talks, Crans Montana process, has showed that none of the parties of the conflict are ready to provide concession particularly at Governance and Guarantees chapters. Clearly, emergence of the hydrocarbons conflict stands as another competition realm of conflict over sovereignty among sides that is likely to affect parties' power position as to Cyprus Conflict. From an alternative dimension, hydrocarbons conflict has also generated a dynamic that is likely bring opportunities and threats for the respective goals of certain International and Regional actors.

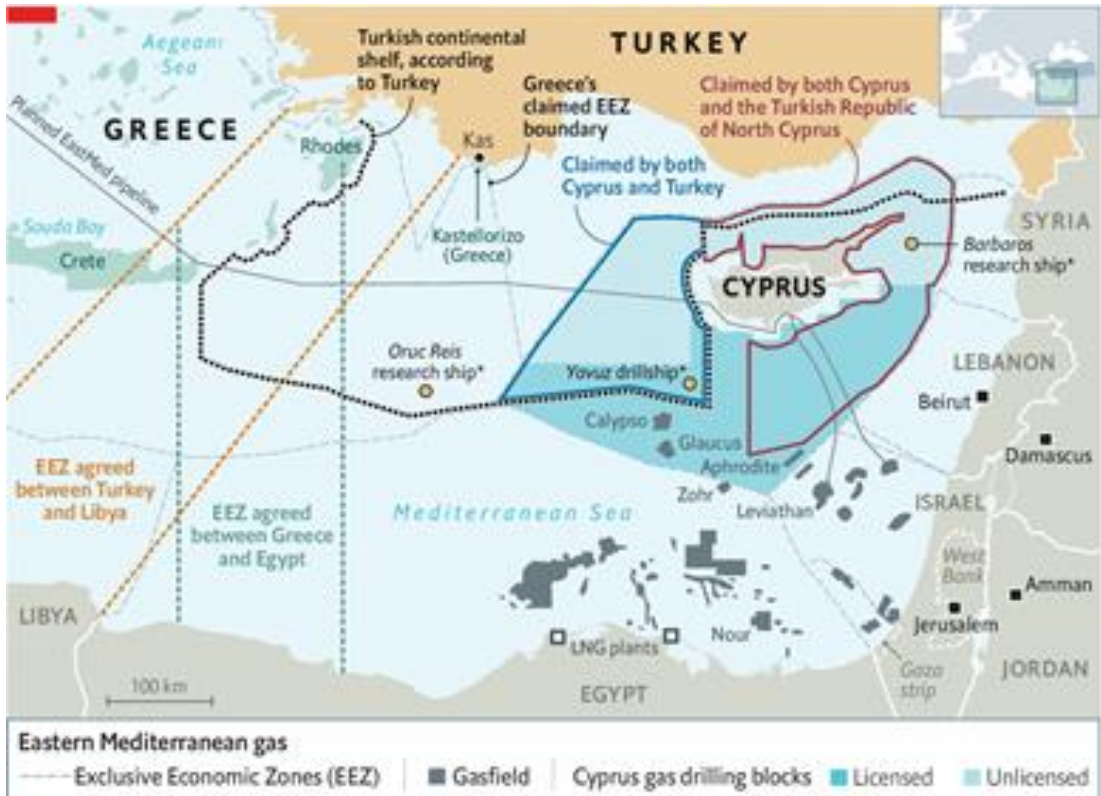


Figure 1: Overlapping maritime zone claims between Turkey, RoC and TRNC

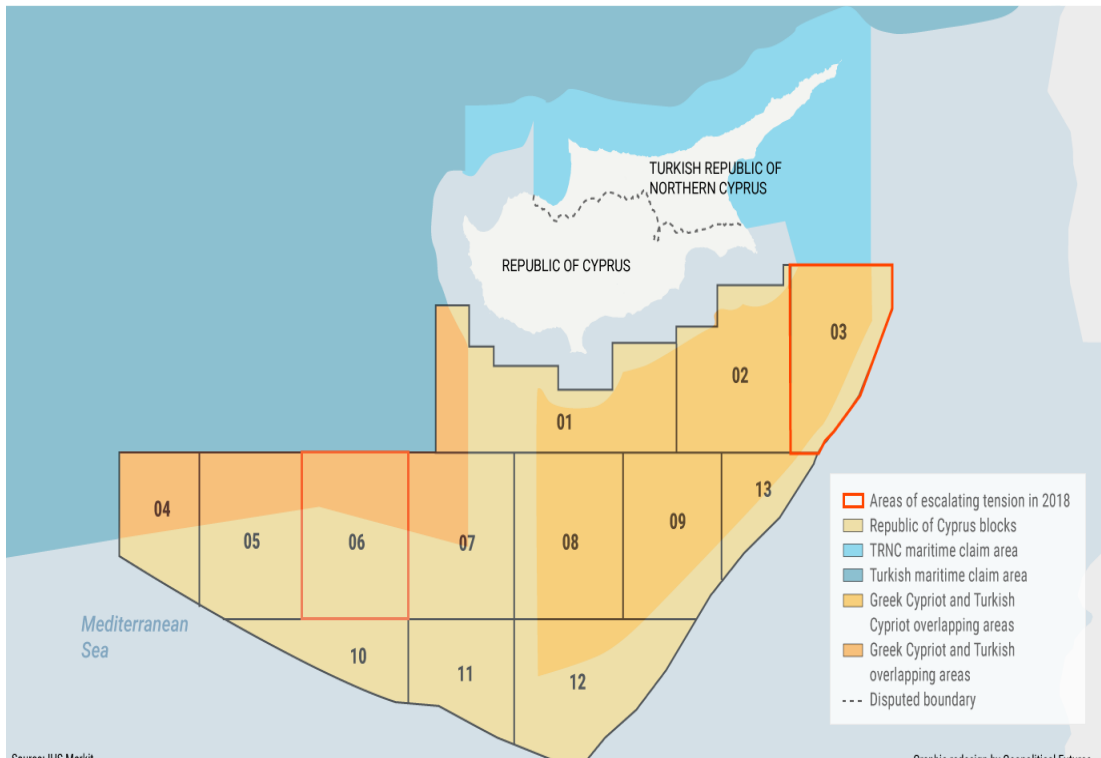


Figure 2: Overlap at parcels declared by RoC

## **1.2 Research Questions and Hypothesis**

The consequences of intransigence over Cyprus conflict and hydrocarbons conflict are bringing negative implications both at domestic and regional/international realm. Recent processes for comprehensive solution have not yielded results and such expectancy is currently low (Morelli V. L., 2019, pp. 40-41). The solution of the Hydrocarbons conflict until a comprehensive settlement reached, has potential to bring positive results, in terms of, stability, harmony and prosperity for domestic, regional and international actors. Even though actors and stakeholders are asymmetrically motivated for such aim, it should be the virtuous task of International Relations scholars to seek opportunities for a common ground. Considering highly dynamic nature of the conflict and its ongoing significance for international and regional politics, an up-to-date analysis of the Hydrocarbons conflict and a roadmap for its solution deserves to be revisited. With this motivation, it is primarily being aimed to contribute to academic thought and additionally to present objective analysis and suggestions for the use of public opinion.

This study is going to answer the following questions of: How can the Hydrocarbons Conflict be solved prior to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus Conflict? Under which conditions a mutually acceptable solution at Hydrocarbons Conflict is possible? It is argued that hydrocarbons conflict, as being a dynamic and internationalized intransigence, can only be solved with the concurrence of the all stakeholders. This assumption bases on following arguments: The ongoing stalemate over the hydrocarbons conflict reflects that neither side on the island is ready to concede from their positions nor strong enough to impose their terms through alternative means. It is also less likely for the Western states to impose the co-operation demand of one community to the

other community as stability and consolidation of allies in the region is a traditional interest of USA. In addition, to render a compromise over hydrocarbons rational for each conflict party, underlying conflict sources deriving from sovereignty issue of the Cyprus conflict, are required to be addressed at a prospective solution model of the hydrocarbons conflict. Thus, solution of hydrocarbons conflict should constitute a pillar of a piecemeal settlement approach for the solution of the Cyprus conflict.

Thereby, my hypothesis includes the following components:

- A) Through a method in which Turkey will act in harmony with the Western Alliance and in the case where Turkish Cypriots will actively participate in the process of solution, a solution to the Hydrocarbons conflict is possible;
- B) It shall be a rational choice for the Greek Cypriot side to acknowledge a bi-communal model of cooperation on Hydrocarbons if the international legal status of the Republic of Cyprus is not challenged;
- C) Since the stability in the region is a priority for the European Union and the United States of America, they can act as catalysers through a constructive third party intervention in order to promote cooperation to resolve the Hydrocarbons conflict.

### **1.3 Methodology**

This study will utilize Rational Choice approach as means for explaining conflict and predicting actor behaviour. Qualitative analysis method will be employed at analysing primary and secondary sources. Thereby, related treaties, legislations, official statements by executive organs and their representatives, statements by party leaders, res-

olutions and reports of International and Supranational Organisations, will be examined and their importance for the Hydrocarbons conflict will be reflected. In the frame of secondary sources, scholarly works on International Relations and its sub-disciplines; Conflict Studies; History; International Law; as well as, books and articles which contains prior analysis regarding Cyprus conflict, the Hydrocarbons conflict and International Politics will be examined. Analysis will be supplemented with up-to-date press releases, official reports and other pertaining academic sources when it deems necessary.

## **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

This section aims to provide a theoretical and conceptual ground to analyse both the hydrocarbons conflict and its possible solution. As a consequence of highly internationalised nature of the Hydrocarbons conflict and the deep-rooted and intractable (Coleman, 2006, p. 533), nature of the Cyprus conflict, this section is going to encompass the following concepts: sources of conflict, stability; third-party intervention; and, rational choice approach.

### **Sources of Conflict**

It is possible to identify two prominent schools of thought, namely, “needs-based” approach, and `Rationalist-strategic calculations` approach (Wallensteen, 2007, p. 32), for explaining the sources of the conflict.

In the context of the first approach, Burton (1990) and Azar (1990) stress the significance of the human-needs as the causal source of social conflicts. According to Azar, “security, distinctive identity, social recognition of identity and effective participation” are required conditions which sustain development of societies. In this frame, denial

of these basic human needs for a particular group generates conflict (1990, p. 146). In this context, Azar classifies Cyprus as a protracted social conflict. If one observes the Cyprus conflict from the “human needs” lens, as a historical fact “an absence of security culture” and “absence of political participation” is evident (ibid). In this perspective, it stressed that “In Cyprus, identity and security needs have been contested issues, along with justice and recognition” (Hadjipavlou, 2007, p. 351). As to Turkish Cypriot perspective, “participation of the two peoples, as politically equal entities, in decisions in legislative and executive organs” and continuation of the 1960 guarantee system is perceived as the only effective assurance of their lives and security, which are referred as “inalienable Basic Principles of Turkish Cypriots” (Feyzioğlu & Ertekün, 1987, p. 34). From this perspective a “distributive injustice”, and “extreme disparity” at economic, social, political opportunities are realized for Turkish Cypriots. On the other hand, Turkey is being perceived as a security threat for Greek Cypriots especially after 1974 (Hadjipavlou, 2007, p. 371). In short, while both communities are having differing degrees of needs, security is the most prominent one for respective communities. In the light of this approach, a model for solution of Hydrocarbons conflict must satisfy aforementioned basic needs, in order to make cooperation over Hydrocarbons compelling and viable. When abovementioned needs are unmet, even though conflict is repressed by enforcement, threat or violence of the other, whenever the conditions change over the time, the conflict is likely to emerge. In that sense, it is also stressed that these needs are not “bargainable” (Burton, 1990, p. 241), (Azar, 1990, p. 147), and, any accommodation which disregards basic needs will not “last long” (Azar, 1990, p. 147). For the satisfaction of these needs, and eliminating the sources of conflict in a protracted social conflict, decentralized arrangements are suggested as the most appropriate arrangement (ibid, p. 151).

From a rationalist outlook, actors are rational which acts in accordance with their interests, thus engaging in war or ending conflict relies on those strategic cost-benefit calculations (Wallenstein, 2007, p. 42). Similarly, while do not disregarding the merits of human-needs perspective, Fisher and Ury in essence introduced an interest based approach. “Behind opposed positions lie shared and compatible interests, as well as conflicting ones” (1991, p. 24), thus the key for solution lies over contenting interests. In that sense, solution of Hydrocarbon conflict is conditional to a compromise of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot interests as well as the international setting in which they operate. Unlike facilitative approach of needs-based perspective, this approach proposes the management of a conflict through mechanisms that are contingent to rational calculations for actors to reach the best outcome. In this light, to gain economic utility over the natural resources, to pursue positive political outcomes, including sovereignty and legitimacy, to maximize security and to earn a more advantaged position as regard with the Cyprus conflict, are standing as the basic incompatible interests of the Hydrocarbons conflict.

### **Stability**

Considering the high internationalized nature of the Cyprus conflict and Hydrocarbons conflict, it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding analysis and solution of the Hydrocarbons conflict without including stability,<sup>4</sup> as a prominent external variable. Besides Cyprus conflict itself, competition to control the hydrocarbon reserves and to exploit them via pipelines over the sea surrounding Cyprus is generating a threat for regional stability (Evagorou, 2018, pp. 1-2). From another perspective, instability is

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<sup>4</sup> It is possible to argue that the concept of stability `can mean peace but it can also refer to the endurance of a particular distribution of power regardless of how peaceful it is` (Griffiths et al, 2002, p. 19).

standing as an impediment for realization of exploitation and monetization of natural resources due to security concerns (EU Parliament, 2017, p. 37). As Touval and Zartman highlighted, third parties get involved in any conflict if they have interests to do so (1985, pp. 32-45). In this frame, mutual interest for reinforcing regional stability in the Eastern Mediterranean may bring powerful third parties` attention into the solution of Cyprus conflict and/or Hydrocarbons conflict. Therefore, the concept of stability stands as one of the most prominent external variables to my research problem in order to both explaining the nature of international and regional politics, actors` behaviour towards Cyprus and its impacts on realization of any exploitation and monetization activity on Cyprus Hydrocarbons.

Many theoretical approaches have observed the distribution of power within the international system as the most prominent factor for stability and actor behaviour Wohlforth (1995), Mersheimer (2001), Gilpin (1988). According to neorealist assumptions, bi-polarity is the most stable system, while uni-polarity is the least stable one (Wohlforth, 1999, p.5). As regards to multi-polar systems, if greater gap of power asymmetries among the actors exists, such systems are more prone to wars than bi-polar systems, on the contrary, multipolar systems with lesser power asymmetries among actors are suggested to stay in-between (Mersheimer, 2001, p. 337). On the other hand hegemonic stability theories approached the concept differently. Gilpin argues that “A stable system has unequivocally hierarchy of power and unchallenged dominant or hegemonic power. An unstable system is one in which economic, technological and other changes are eroding the international hierarchy and undermining the position of the hegemonic state” (1988, p. 592). In that sense Gilpin saw stability (who considered it as non-presence of total war) during bi-polar era of the Cold-war as a factor of the

presence of nuclear arsenal capability of USA and USSR (1988, p. 610), thus essentially stick to the degree of power asymmetry. Therefore, as the distribution of power gets asymmetrically unequal, where lesser powers cannot challenge the hegemon, stability prevails over the system. Similarly, Wohlforth suggests that as hegemon has preponderance, it is able to disincentive other powers to challenge, thus rather than rival balancing, buck-passing is the strategy for lesser powers which leads to stable and durable unipolar system (1999, p. 7-8). This debate provides a theoretical lens as regards to examining and predicting actors' behaviour within the perspective of the conditions of the international system.

Currently, the Eastern Mediterranean Sea and the Middle East in broad-spectrum, is witnessing a considerable degree of instability. Hydrocarbons discoveries is an element of it (Evagorou, 2018, p. 1-2), but US withdrawal from Iraq in 2011, the Arab Spring, emergence of ISIS, developments in Cyprus conflict, changing Turkish foreign policy under AKP, (Tziarras, 2019, pp. 5-6), civil war in Syria and involvement of great powers (Evagorou, 2018, pp. 1-2) are collectively contributing to instability. Thus, abovementioned theoretical background provides the following implications for the Hydrocarbon conflict. First, the level of stability will define the behaviour of actors involved, towards each other and over Cyprus respectively (cooperation or contestation), from power politics perspective. For instance, eroding US hegemony is providing a strong basis for such instability in the region which affects inter-state relations, resulting in a power vacuum in the region, thus more manoeuvrability for states to pursue autonomous Foreign Policies. But at the same time it suggests that US as the hegemon, willing to maintain stability in the region, and resolution of Cyprus is within this frame (Harrison, 2019, p. 4; (Evagorou, 2018, p. 14-15). Second, the level of

stability may indicate the likelihood of the realisation of exploitation and monetization projects. As Shaffer argued, “energy trade reflects existing peaceful relations. It does not create them” (Shaffer, 2014, p. 3).<sup>5</sup> In similar lines, it is suggested that “Eastern Mediterranean gas developments should be considered as a function of regional geopolitical stability, not the vice-versa” (EU Parliament, 2017, p. 47). In this light, analysis of conflict and the design of a model for cooperation regarding hydrocarbons conflict of Cyprus should consider power politics, in the context of stability, as a prominent external variable.

In contrary, Ikenberry argued that stability do not exclusively results from the unthreatened balance, but due to the merits of institutions provided for other states. It is given that, the US conceded from its opportunity to “dominate or abandon” other states and remained committed to multilateralism offered by post war institutional arrangements, in return other powers conceded their opportunity to balance against. Again the merits of “openness, reciprocity and multilateralism” have collectively compelled states to remain loyal to the system (Ikenberry, 1999, pp. 44-78). This approach indicates that regional actors may not challenge the hegemon and the current world order as long as they benefit from it. Thus, the propositions of idealist/liberal school of thought indicates an alternative insight for analysing, in particular, the behaviour of regional and international actors which are so far engaged in Cyprus and Hydrocarbons conflict. Merits of this approach provide alternative grounds for what to understand from cooperation rather than pure realpolitik.

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<sup>5</sup>There is no evidence from elsewhere in the world that trading in energy is an incentive for peace. Case studies show no instances in which the incentive of energy trade led countries to make concessions on issues critical to peace agreements such as borders and the status of refugees` (Shaffer, 2014, pp. 2-3).

### **Third Party Intervention**

Third party intervention to conflicts entails many aspects. The literature on third party intervention deserves a scrutinized study in order to complement the puzzle of how Hydrocarbons conflict can be catalysed into a model of cooperation. In this sense, this concept will clarify the following: What are the forms of third party interventions? Why are interventions needed? How can interventions be effective? And, how they may fit to the hydrocarbons conflict?

In accordance with the UN Charter, “ the parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their choice” (Article 33). The methods of third party intervention as dispute settlement, extends from diplomatic methods to legal methods (Merrils, 2005, p. 91). To begin from the last group, “Judicial settlement is a form of adjudication that involves the referral of a dispute or disputes to a permanent judicial body for binding settlement” (Bilder, 2001, p. 160). In accordance with the Article 36(2) of the Statute of ICJ, “Only states may be parties in the cases before the court” (Statute of the ICJ). Thus the consent of states is a precondition for the jurisdiction of court. Regardless of evaluating the general deficits and prospects of litigation and judicial opinion method, such case between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots is unimaginable, due to the matter of recognition. From an alternative perspective, as the cooperation of Hydrocarbons of Cyprus is a matter of sovereignty, it is unlikely for Greek Cypriots to resort to this method. As Bilder reflects “certain disputes, such as those involving national honour, ”vital” national interests, or the use of force, have inherent characteristics that

make them particularly inappropriate for the use of adjudication as a dispute settlement technique” (2001, p. 166). On the other hand, flexible nature of the arbitration method may aid conflict parties to overcome recognition problem in the first place. Moreover, as parties possess freedom to determine, the arbiters, the scope of issues and questions along with principles (law or *ex aequo bono*), to be applied, an international organisation or an ad hoc body may play a facilitative role over solution process.

In their studies, (Fisher and Keashly, 1991), (Bercovitch, 1991), emphasized how third-party involvements may and should take place in connection to conditions available in conflicts. Under this scope, Fisher and Keashly, observed that the stage of conflict is deterministic for fitting third party involvements. It is argued that mediation with power and arbitration is best fitting to conflicts where there exist significant gaps among parties’ interests. Again, it is viewed that third party consultation may aid parties to explore their differences. Through their illustration of Cyprus negotiations case as an example in protracted conflicts, it is argued that third party consultation was a significant missing dimension back in 1990s, and elaborate on the potential benefit for utilizing a mixed and complementing methodology based on mediation with power and arbitration along with third party consultation (Fisher and Keashly, 1991, pp. 29-42). Above given propositions are insightful for our research problem, as significant gap between parties’ interests and lack of third party consultation exist at hydrocarbons conflict. On the other hand, Bercovitch’s study (1991) suggests other factors, namely, nature of parties, nature of dispute and nature of mediator are relevant for the effectiveness of mediation (pp. 21-28). In the grounds of Bercovitch’s suggestions, the

existence of sovereignty matter in Hydrocarbons conflict hints that deterministic “impact of intermediaries” might be challenging (Bercovitch, 1991, p. 22).<sup>6</sup> Plus, it is given that, “the smaller the power difference between the adversaries, the greater the effectiveness of international mediation”, as the stronger one would resist to make concessions (ibid, p. 21). Therefore, the level of power asymmetry in Hydrocarbons conflict may affect the likelihood of success in mediation.

Rothnam`s piece (2014) rather attempted to develop the existing contingency approach of Fisher and Keashly (1991), and develop a holistic engagement model. This model is generalizable to both international and domestic conflicts. In brief, Rothnam classified conflicts at three levels. These levels are, respectively, “resource-based”, “objectives (goals)-based” and “identity- based” conflicts (2014, p.106). Even though motives of conflict at each level is different, a conflict over one level may lead to conflict over other layer as conflict process is dynamic. In the light of Rothnam`s assumptions, hydrocarbons resources can be dealt with relatively practical solutions such as dividing, sharing or (joint)trading of the resource (p.113). On the other hand, if objective based and needs-based problems, namely sovereignty, security, justice, participation problems which are deeply seating at Cyprus conflict are not addressed during the conduct of intervention, the said practical solutions on resources can lead to `deeper intransigence` (p.107). Therefore, author offers mediators to focus to diagnose each layer and act accordingly (p.113). This approach infers that a holistic intervention design shall be useful for the solution of hydrocarbons conflict.

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<sup>6</sup> Author offers to explore other aspects including ‘timing of mediation’, ‘duration of dispute’, ‘intensity of a dispute’ (Bercovitch, 1991, p. 22).

Considering the unrecognised status of the TRNC, narrowing down the gap between rivals' capacity and their respective needs for a solution is not an easy task. This phenomenon is largely affected by the approach of third parties. As a result, it is beneficial to derive implications from the literature on engagement in unrecognised states, which is in fact, a fairly a new area of interest among scholars.

Third parties are usually reluctant at expanding their interacting with unrecognised states, given their concerns to tacitly acknowledge the factual situation. In fact, it is observed that, isolation of unrecognised states by third parties rarely leads to integration of the said territories into parent states. Instead, causing unrecognised states to become increasingly dependent on a patron (Ker-Lindsay and Berg, 2018, p.337). In that grounds, author objects to employment of punitive policies by external actors and rather promotes generation of reward mechanisms. Regarding merits of reward mechanisms, EU's engagement to the unrecognised states in South Caucasus is referred in this piece. It is argued that, through keeping communication channels open after Russian intervention, EU aimed to limit prevalence of illiberal policies. Such policy resulted in increased US footprint in the area. Despite engagements' merits, authors also observed that engagement by the external actors rarely ceases unrecognised state dependence to patron state. Giving the suspicion that employment of engagement strategy cements partition. In that grounds external actors may be reluctant at intensifying engagement unrecognised states (pp.337-341). As a result, author presents that engagement to unrecognised states is a double edge sword, having detriments and merits for third parties.

From a more precise perspective, engagements' effects on conflict management in Cyprus, Kyris (2018) studied EU's and UN's engagement towards Cyprus. The study

presents negative effects of lack of engagement to TRNC at reaching a successful conflict management in Cyprus. It is given that, Greek Cypriot side managed to obstruct a constructive EU approach that shall contribute to even development (i.e via blocking of direct trade regulation), through the utilization of its membership status within EU. As for UN side, despite organisation's relative even treatment within the context of UNSG's mission of good offices (in comparison to EU's), UN treatment on remaining realms generated a huge disparity between the two sides. For instance, UNDP assistance remained limited for TRNC despite the said organ's mission is to sustain even development across the world. While Kyris informs that he does not argue that a fully-fledged engagement is key to a successful settlement at all conflict cases, it is argued that International Organisations' uneven engagement at Cyprus case, emboldened Greek Cypriot policy of isolating the Turkish Cypriot side while generating frustration and mistrust against International Organisations at Turkish Cypriot political elite and public, even amongst Turkish Cypriot 'moderates' (pp.432-439).

In Cyprus, international/supranational organisations and states which poses capacity to manipulate balance have stick to the idea that sovereignty is vested in the factual government of RoC. Such stance contributed to generation of a susceptible basis to canalise third party support towards Greek Cypriot sides' aims on the one hand; while disfavours Turkish Cypriot side to find allies other than Turkey. Moreover, obstructed Turkish Cypriot side to develop its economy. As a result, causing Turkish Cypriot side to become more dependent on Turkey instead of making concessions at solution talks. Thereby, hesitance by UN, EU, US and others' to not prejudice sovereignty of RoC contributes to Greek Cypriot comfort zone, thus, decreases Greek Cypriot need for a solution. Notwithstanding with third party hesitancy, limitations also

exists for expanding engagement with TRNC without recognition. For instance, the EU is incapable to enact direct trade regulation in presence of Greek Cypriot veto. Again, in presence of European Court of Justice decision, establishment of direct trade relations via TRNC ports by EU member states is not possible. Again, state actors including USA do not desire to complement Turkey`s foreign policy aims. Despite, the fact that attaining a game changing engagement is hard, alternative engagement methods are available. In case if UN, EU, USA, UK or other state and non-state actors intensifies their engagement at “less-political areas” such as education, culture, civil society, or, bi-communal efforts/projects such as Committee on Missing Persons (cf.Kyris,2018, pp.434-439), international society can contribute conflict management without prejudging RoC`s status. In addition, forms of indirect diplomatic contacts and statements at leader level towards unrecognised state (Ker-Lindsay, 2015, pp.267-285), may further contribute to elimination of disparity among the two sides through discouraging the favoured party.

### **Rational Choice approach**

“Rational Choice is a very flexible and versatile approach for studying international politics” (Tamm and Snidal, 2014). It means, this approach may either evaluate individuals, groups, institutions or states as actors. Again, its logic is simple, each actor is aiming to maximize the utility it will earn as a consequence of its preference made. On the other hand, such logic de-emphasize the significance of identity, culture and psychology.<sup>7</sup> For instance, rational actor model treats the state as the unitary decision

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<sup>7</sup> As regards the application of rational choice approach in security studies, in the context of the use of formal Game Theory, Walt differentiates such application from individual utility maximization (Walt, 1999, p. 10).

maker who, when faced with a problem, acts in accordance with its goals and objectives, thereby evaluates and ranks the costs and benefits of each action and chooses the one who brings more utility (Allison, 1969, pp. 693-694). On the other hand, Putnam's theory (1988) predicts single actors' behaviour in an international setting while considering its interplay with the domestic made politics, such as bureaucracy, corporates, cleavages (Putnam, 1988). According to Putnam, win-sets are affected by two factors: At "Level I" by international negotiators strategies; at "Level II" by domestic factors, namely, political institutions, preferences and possible coalitions (1988, pp. 441-448).<sup>8</sup> Such application of "two-level games" offers great understanding for predicting bargaining outcomes through including sub-state level actors. Thus, considering the fact that any topic to be negotiated between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots is highly important for respective communities, such perspective provides a useful lens. In comparison, the "Rational Actor Model" treats actors as "billiard balls" that are operating without domestic constraints and simplifies explanation and prediction as regards to the research problem which is highly internationalized and consists of multiple variables.

The popularity and versatility of rational choice approach derives from the application of the formal (mathematical) Game theory, where number of players, the interplay among their preferences and the outcomes can be predicted (Walt, 1999, p. 10). There are number of prerequisites for the application of Game Theory, namely, ability to rank order the varying outcome of an actor's preferences, the existence of transitive preferences (there should be a logical hierarchical order between the ordered preferences),

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<sup>8</sup> See pp.442-452 for detailed information regarding each factor determining the size of win-sets (Putnam, 1988).

identification of the structure of the game in a given problem, and search for the equilibrium of the actor's preferences (Walt, 1999, pp.10-11). Application of game theory may extend from strategic choice for nuclear deterrence to cooperation on bargaining games, encapsulates either co-operative or non-cooperative situations. *Brams* (2003) argues that superpower confrontations are illustrated through simple game tree modelling and game matrices. Chicken Game and Prisoner's Dilemma, is adapted to Cuban Missile Crisis, Yom Kippur War, and Solidarity Movement's struggle against Polish Communist Government through a developed approach. In these cases, "Theory of Moves" considers the fact that parties can forecast the subsequent move of their opponent and adapt their selection of strategies accordingly (pp. 101-187).

Using formal game theory or verbal methodology, Rational Choice approach provides necessary grounds for ranking Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot options towards their goals and to explain the costs and benefits of each option within the nature of the game accordingly. Under same approach, decision to resort to negotiations are scrutinized by Zartman (1989), Zartman (2000), and Pruitt (2007). In that regard, firstly, parties in conflict should be aware that the reached stalemate in a conflict is hurting and winning it through escalation is not possible. Secondly, parties should perceive the existence of a just and satisfactory formula for settlement (Zartman, 1989, p. 291), after all, a "negotiated solution is possible" (Zartman, 2000, p. 229). Pruitt (2007) builds on these theoretical background, and operationalize the willingness to engage negotiations through focusing on single party (pp. 1525-1526). In this respect, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots must perceive that a solution of Hydrocarbons conflict would not be possible by continuing by escalating conflict via military, commercial, political activities, or, through utilizing allies' leverage on the other's expense. In that

sense, the situation over exploitation and monetization of hydrocarbons resources, capability of parties to overwhelm the other via political and military means and legal dimensions of the conflict stands as deterministic variables on the path towards contesting parties' rational cost-benefit calculations, along with other external and internal dynamics.

Another concept which may render solution of the hydrocarbons conflict rational through ceasing the dyadic conflict situation is through generation of reciprocal cooperative steps (Axelrod, p.3). As maximization of benefit is the sole motivation of a rational actor, cooperation is possible if the alternative action brings more detrimental consequences. Thereby, application of piece-meal approach, in other words, phase by phase approach towards a comprehensive settlement, can build confidence. Within the parsimonious empirical data available on the effectiveness of piece-meal approach to comprehensive settlement, Mattes (2018) argues that "partial settlements might have an independent causal effect by changing international perceptions and domestic preferences regarding the desirability of further cooperation" (p.95). It is again highlighted that piece-meal settlements offers eradication of mistrust, and demonstration of benefits of solution (p.94). As a result of his large-n study, author presents the correlation between piece-meal approach and successful comprehensive settlement particularly at territorial disputes.

However, from the perspective of first track bargaining, conflict parties may refrain from providing concessions at negotiations. This is due conflict parties' reservations on the basis of the idea that conceding `too much` to their rivals may discourage them to approach a full settlement if a partial arrangement harms "a hurting stalemate" for rival party (Blum, 2007, p.47). In this light, it may not be rational for Greek Cypriot

Cypriot side and Turkish Cypriot side to accept a co-operation over hydrocarbons prior securing their interests on Cyprus conflict.

Another piece, study of Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis and Trigeorgis (1993), stressed importance of sustaining increased level of trust, flexibility and hopes for cooperation in order to address basic human needs of Cypriot communities at political elite and grass-root level (non-state actors like professionals, NGOs, interest groups) that shall motivate further cooperative environment prior to engaging a bargaining process (p.357). In this context, application of a second track intervention may be beneficial to be integrated with a prospective piece-meal settlement process. In the light of literature on piece-meal approach, solution of the hydrocarbons conflict prior to a comprehensive settlement is capable to bring about positive perspectives that shall transform both hydrocarbons conflict and Cyprus conflict from a negative-sum game to a positive sum. This transformation can arise through generation of regional interstate cooperation, thus catalization and monitoring of a peace process by international actors may be rational. Whereas, on domestic level, increased level of trust and interdependence shall render a solution more rational.

My thesis preferred utilization of Rational Choice approach at examination and prediction of the conflict for the following reasons: It provides a framework that enables analysis of multiple number of actors at once. Thus enables researcher to detect domestic level factors. Additionally enables to explain which available preference is/would maximize output for respective conflict parties. Moreover, it enables to explain the rules of the game, in other words, if hydrocarbons conflict has a zero-sum (non-cooperative) or non-zero-sum (cooperative) nature. With abovementioned functions, facilitates prediction of conditions for a mutually acceptable model of

solution. In connection, the theory also provides guidance for detecting how, to whom and to what extent an intervention may affect Greek Cypriot side`s and Turkish Cypriot side`s pay-off. Despite its merits, rational choice approaches` assumption that every actor is evenly wise when making decisions includes some flaws. Lack of intel, data or psychological reasons are excluded under this approach. Nevertheless, explained capacity of the rational choice approach to simplify a complex conflict both at analysis and prediction phases renders it a reliable framework for this thesis.

### **Chapterization**

In order to answer research question, an analysis of the conflict is going to be done in the first place. After reviewing the literature, the study will focus on the positions and impacts of the relevant actors in respect to the Hydrocarbons conflict. In this context, Chapter 2 will examine the positions of the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey; and, positions of Greek Cypriots. After assessing strength and weaknesses of actors` perspectives, available options for Turkish Cypriot official side and Greek Cypriot side at Hydrocarbons conflict will be determined, their respective outcomes for conflict parties will be explained and ranked with the use of rational choice approach. Subsequently, Chapter 3 will examine the positions of the third parties. In this scope, stances of the UN, USA, EU, Russia and Israel will be presented along with their impacts to the research questions. Eventually, the outcome of this analysis will be utilized for formulation of a cooperation model in Chapter 4 through the prediction capacity of Rational Choice approach. Chapter 4 will contain following subsections; scenarios for joint cooperation of actors, the model for a solution, and, the pathway towards a solution.

## **Chapter 2**

### **POSITIONS**

This chapter will describe primary actors of the hydrocarbons conflict, namely, the Greek Cypriot side, the Turkish Cypriot side and Turkey. In doing so analysis will be extended to Level II through including political parties. After classifying prominent political parties on the basis of their respective stances towards Cyprus conflict and hydrocarbons conflict, their positions will be examined. Following analysis of the strength and weaknesses of their perspectives, available options of the Turkish Cypriot side and the Greek Cypriot side at the hydrocarbons conflict will be explained.

#### **2.1 Positions of Turkish Cypriots and Turkey**

This section examines Turkish Cypriot actors in terms of their respective approaches towards Cyprus conflict and the hydrocarbon conflict. The significance of each Turkish Cypriot actor regarding their role in Turkish Cypriot domestic politics is also examined. It is possible to identify two major groups in Turkish Cypriot community, namely, the federalists and supporters of two state solution.

##### **2.1.1 Turkish Cypriot Actors**

###### ***Federalists***

Prominent political organisations in this group have socialist, social democratic or liberal views. Such parties as the Cumhuriyetçi Türk Partisi (CTP) [Republican Turkish Party] and Toplumcu Demokrasi Partisi (TDP) [Communal Democracy Party] along with other left oriented civil society organisations. Federalists supported Mustafa

Akinci on the second ballot of the presidential elections held in 2020 September, where he received 48, 31 percent of the total votes (KKTC- Yüksek Seçim Kurulu, 2020).

Regarding Cyprus conflict, CTP envisages a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation, based on political equality of the Cypriot communities and in cohesion with social norms of the EU, as the most viable way for Turkish Cypriot community to reach sustainable peace and development (CTP, 2021). Similar vision is shared by TDP (TDP, 2015), and former President Mustafa Akıncı (Ses Kıbrıs, 2021), and other smaller federalist parties.

Pertaining to the hydrocarbons conflict, CTP regards Greek Cypriot sides' approach towards hydrocarbons process as incompatible with 1960 arrangements since Turkish Cypriot consent is absent (Arslan, 2019). While CTP perceives solution of the hydrocarbons conflict as part of a comprehensive solution negotiations and highlights that their priority is solution of the Cyprus conflict (Erhürman, 2020), a co-operation model that has potential to contribute to solution of the Cyprus conflict is being supported (Arslan, 2019). Former president Mr. Akıncı shares similar disappointment against Greek Cypriot steps regarding hydrocarbons, and refers a co-operation model before comprehensive settlement, (which would include co-management competence for Turkish Cypriot community over hydrocarbons) as a constructive phenomenon towards reaching comprehensive solution basis (Deutsche Welle, 2019). In that regard, in 13 July 2019, Mr. Akıncı proposed a model for cooperation via establishment of a bi-communal committee. Basic frame of the model suggests simultaneous exploitation by the two communities, income sharing and establishment of a fund that shall be used for the issues that will assist unification process (Yenidüzen, 2019).

### *Supporters of Two-State Solution*

Ulusal Birlik Partisi (UBP) [National Unity Party], Yeniden Dogus Partisi (YDP) [Re-Birth Party], Demokrat Parti [Democratic Party] and Halkın Partisi (HP) are prominent 'right' or center-right parties in the north sharing nationalist ideology. In recent presidential elections UBP candidate and former Prime Minister Ersin Tatar have supported by the voter base of these groups and won the presidential elections with 51.69 percent (KKTC- Yüksek Seçim Kurulu, 2020).

Even though bi-zonal and bi-communal form of federation was initially demanded and approved as a feasible frame for solution by the protagonists of this ideological vein ( TRNC - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022), it has never been the most favoured option. Since the breakdown of Crans Montana process in 2017, Supporters of two-state solution begun to intensify promotion of two -state solution discourse. It is stated by incumbent TRNC President Tatar and Turkey's Vice-President Oktay that a federal solution basis does not exist. They rather refer to a solution model which bases on "sovereign equality of two States that co-exist side-by-side", and regard this basis as the only feasible approach for the solution of Cyprus conflict (Presidency of the TRNC, 2021). This two-state solution position also iterated in the presence of international public opinion, which conveyed at informal multilateral meetings (Deutsche Welle, 2021).

In respect to hydrocarbons conflict, TRNC MFA defines RoC's steps as null and void through justifying their argument over the absence of Turkish Cypriot consent in the decision making process of the RoC (2020). This stance is shared by Turkey (MFA of Turkey, 2007), where Turkey protests mentioned steps on the ground that she is one of the Guarantor States of the RoC and its constitution (BBC, 2019). From the other

angle of the hydrocarbons conflict, Turkey objects to the breadth of EEZ claims of the RoC in the grounds that, it violates Turkey's continental shelf rights ( UN Law of the Sea Bulletin No: 54, 2004, p. 127). In conclusion, through justifying over lack of Turkish Cypriot consent at RoC's acts, Turkey objects to the treaties concluded regarding delimitation of maritime zones, granting of licenses for research and acts regarding exploitation. Notwithstanding with the question of legitimacy of the said acts, Turkey advocates that its mainland's continental shelf should have a preponderant size against Cyprus's EEZ size. Pertaining to the solution of hydrocarbons conflict, supporters of two-state solution favour establishment of a cooperation mechanism between 'two-sovereign states' (Deutsche Welle, 2021).

### **2.1.2 Aims and Strategies of Turkish Cypriot actors**

#### *Aims and Strategies of Federalists*

Federalists perceive rightist Turkish Cypriot political party's vision, where separate sovereign states and equal right over Cyprus' hydrocarbon resources are demanded simultaneously, as an "inconsistent" idea (Erhürman, 2021), and rather argues that hydrocarbons conflict should be transformed into a constructive phenomenon which shall complement generation of a susceptible conjecture for reaching federative settlement (Bağ, 2019).

Throughout the cooperation talks made during the period of Mustafa Akıncı, Akıncı rejected Greek Cypriot proposal. Mentioned proposal stipulated non-participation of Turkish Cypriot community into management of processes of hydrocarbons resources and recognition of RoC and its maritime zone by Turkey (Yüzbaşıoğlu, Çam, & Arslan, 2019).

Turkish Cypriot side alternatively proposed the establishment of an ad-hoc bi-communal commission which shall be consisting of “same number of members” under UN supervision (TRNC - Public Information Office, 2019), where decisions shall be taken in accordance with consensus principle and proceedings regarding parcelling and licensing furthered by Greek Cypriot side will not be prejudiced. On the other hand, funds sharing among communities, future planning and determination for priority areas for fund usage shall be under commissions` competence. It is also proposed that a significant share of revenues can be used to finance the possible costs related with the property issue in Cyprus and to assist balanced development of respective communities in the frame of a prospective comprehensive settlement (Yenidüzen, 2019).

Therefore, it is envisaged to bring political and economic interdependence among communities as well as between Turkey and Greek Cypriot side (Bağ, 2019); to attain and validate political equality of the communities through co-decision power; to earn a foreign policy instrument for Turkish Cypriot community vis-à-vis related third parties as regards to energy affairs; and to generate a confidence building measure among two communities on the one hand, and to distort Greek Cypriot comfort through wanting her political power and through eliminating her to attain upper hand as regards with Cyprus conflict on the other. As a result, establishment of a bi-communal committee of which having co-decision mechanism prior of reaching a comprehensive settlement is aimed.

Federalist strategy for reaching co-operation, principally relies on persuasive strategy, and envisages to leverage process via coercive assets within bargaining process. Persuasive strategy aspires to manipulate Greek Cypriot pay-off through satisfying Greek Cypriot sensitivity over RoC's status. Federalists` principles regarding co-operation

envisage transferral of competence on behalf of respective communities in the first place, but more importantly perceives a settlement over hydrocarbons process as part of comprehensive settlement 'process' (Erhürman, 2020). Particularly, Federalists` willingness for reaching a framework agreement regarding overarching constitutional issues (Anadolu Ajansı, 2018), hints that federalists are willing to integrate solution for hydrocarbons within the process towards comprehensive settlement. In order to balance Greek Cypriot actions, Akıncı suggested deployment of "retaliatory acts" in the field if Greek Cypriot side insists to refrain from a co-operation model which disregards co-management principle (Kıbrıs Gazetesi, 2019). Similarly, CTP leader stresses that the only way for Greek Cypriot side to benefit from the resources in a viable and secure way is emergence of a cooperation.

### ***Aims and Strategies of the Supporters of Two-State Solution***

To understand the aim and strategies of supporters of two-state solution we need to understand new orientations in the foreign policy of Turkey. Turkey`s decision makers are not having a strong expectancy for returning former affairs vis-a-vis Western actors nor to attain full membership into the European Union. Even though a swift track change in her foreign policy orientation is at low odds yet, Ankara`s grand strategy is to diversify her relations in order to smooth the impacts of eroding relations with the West (Strand & Neset, 2019). This novel foreign policy approach have gradually transformed Turkey`s traditional status-quo-ist foreign policy in the region and paved way for revisionist agendas in order to address her threat perceptions. As a result Turkey is putting effort to expand her capacity and sphere of influence in the region (Turkish National Security Council, 2021). In the light of this observation, separation of Cyprus

is being favoured by Turkey (Deutsche Welle, 2021). As regards to their contemplations for the solution of the Hydrocarbons conflict, a model within the frame of `co-operations among two sovereign states` is being demanded (Güler, 2021), and being perceived as the most preferred outcome.

At the absence of favourable capacity and conjecture to attain the most preferred outcome (co-operation between two sovereign states), President Tatar (Kıbrıs Gazetesi, 2020), and Turkey (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, 2021) try to complement this model in the long run through salami tactics. In this context, review of official expressions indicates that currently, two alternative models are included in their agenda;

- a) Establishment of bi-communal cooperation through a joint company;
- b) Establishment of co-operation via joint bi-communal committee.

Procedure of the first one is hinted in its broad principles by former MFA of TRNC Mr. Kudret Özersay. According to him, transferral of all competence by both communities regarding hydrocarbon processes to a joint company is envisaged (Kıbrıs Postası, 2019). In respect to the joint committee option, 13 July 2019 proposal of former President Akıncı, is declared by TRNC MFA (2022) , and Turkey`s MFA (Erciyas, 2020, p. 69), as an available offer. Either of their contemplations refrains to bind Turkish Cypriot side to a prospective federal solution process. Therefore, outcome of reaching mentioned alternative procedures is expected to provide following benefits by supporters of two-state solution; firstly, to transform the balance on Cyprus conflict through depriving Greek Cypriot side of her capacity to ossify her factual control over RoCs sovereignty while making TRNC an actor in regional and energy affairs. Secondly, to

promote the feasibility of two-state solution model in the eyes of third-parties by establishing a cooperation mechanism at the absence of federal settlement.

In order to leverage these aims, the principal strategy is coercive diplomacy. Towards this end, Turkey and TRNC claimed the borders of their respective continental shelves via a maritime delimitation agreement. In addition, TRNC provided licence to Turkish Petroleum Company (TPAO) in order to conduct research activities in the waters which overlaps with RoC's claims (TRNC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Statement on the "Agreement on the Delimitation of the Continental Shelf in the Mediterranean", 2014). Turkish Naval Forces intervened RoC's exploration activities within her declared EEZ (Morelli V. L., 2018, pp. 2-3). Additionally, in order to harm RoC's Eastern Mediterranean policy, Turkey tried to persuade Egypt to revise her 2003 maritime zone delimitation treaty with RoC (Cyprus Mail, Egypt-Turkey rapprochement would isolate Cyprus, 2021), with the justification that "the outer limits of the Turkish continental shelf follow the median line between the Turkish and Egyptian coastlines" (Çevik, 2016).

It is evaluated by supporters of two-state solution that their coercive actions will function to break Greek Cypriot and/or International Oil Companies' willingness to maintain their activities in the field (Energy Review, 2019). In relation, Turkey's persistent stipulation for the solution of Cyprus conflict (in their terms) in exchange for negotiating the question of delimitation of maritime zones at the west of island with RoC (Erciyas, 2020, p. 69), indicates her willingness to utilize envisaged benefits from coercive policy at a prospective bargaining. From another angle, the recent Varosha policy of Turkey and Turkish Cypriot side which is intended to open the fenced-off area under TRNC's control while settling property issues via the means of the Immovable

Property Commission(IPC) located in the North, is being considered by senior Turkish Cypriot advisor Ergün Olgun as a “catalyser” to bring Greek Cypriot side into a cooperative stance towards separate state supporter`s model of hydrocarbons solution (Kıbrıs Gazetesi, 2020).

### **2.1.3 Strengths and Weaknesses of Turkish Cypriot Actors’ Perspectives**

The lack of international recognition of TRNC generated major weakness for Turkish Cypriot side for reaching an agreement by the terms of the supporters of two state solution. No state other than Turkey have diplomatic relations with TRNC. Prior resolutions of the United Nations Security Council which does not recognise the status of TRNC is in force (United Nations, SRES/550, 1984), and no indicator for their prospective revision is observed. Without influential allies, Turkish Cypriot side poses no manoeuvrability in international politics that shall enable elevation of TRNC`s status either as a recognised state nor an entity capable of entering into direct commercial relationship with other states. Turkey also remained incapable to promote such policy in practice. As a result, TRNC remained incompetent to threaten RoC`s status and her relative comfort, thus political balance of power favours Greek Cypriot side which renders Turkish Cypriot side`s proposals irrational for Greek Cypriot side.

Secondly, Turkish Cypriot two-state supporters and Turkey`s coercive diplomacy has strategic and tactical shortcomings. At strategic level, Turkey`s gunboat diplomacy is purely aimed to create impact on Greek Cypriot monetization options and related third parties` interests in energy cooperation. However the extend of the significance of energy cooperation for Greek Cypriot side and third parties is deterministic for the success of their strategy. If Greek Cypriot sides` mentioned interests are insignificant factor for their policy making, Turkey and Turkish Cypriot side would be incompetent

to exert leverage in favour of their cooperation terms.<sup>9</sup> At tactical level, it designed to deter Greek Cypriots from conducting exploratory drilling activities at the Northern Shores of the Sea and showed military presence. However, it did not stalled Greek Cypriot activities in the fields where discovered deposits exist nor was able to halt Greek Cypriot side to enter co-operation with third parties. Adversely, combined with deteriorated Turkish relations with the West and regional actors, this move have paved way for intensified cooperation between RoC and third parties.

As to the impact of Varosha policy, timeframe for its restoration and settlement of property issues is yet to be certain. Despite non-coercive reaction from UNSC and its members,<sup>10</sup> future impact of third parties may prevent benefits for current Turkish Cypriot policy. As a result, expected outcomes from Varosha card is not promising to bring about a fast and decisive impact over rival parties position.

Regarding Turkish Cypriot federalist`s perspectives, in case of solving Hydrocarbons conflict through a bi-communal committee before a comprehensive settlement prior to receiving concrete concessions pertaining to constitutional affairs, Greek Cypriot side would have nothing to profit in political and financial sense. Thus, it is irrational for Greek Cypriot side to accept such demand at this juncture. Rejection of Turkish Cypriot proposal during Mustafa Akinci`s period (13 July 2019) is a concrete reflection of this argument. On the other hand, federalists` tendency to solve the hydrocarbons conflict within the phase of comprehensive settlement is relatively appealing for the Greek Cypriot side as it does not pose threat to her status, yet again federalist instruments

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<sup>9</sup> This arguement will be scrutinized under Section 2.2 Greek Cypriot positions and Chapter 3.

<sup>10</sup> See Ch.3.

alone remain insufficient to alter Greek Cypriot stance over Cyprus conflict that will pave way for such co-operation negotiation.

#### **2.1.4 Options for the Turkish Cypriot official side**

##### ***Option 1- Accepting Greek Cypriot co-operation terms***

- The Turkish Cypriot side concedes from her traditional demand for political equality, receives financial benefits after settlement of Cyprus conflict.
- Turkey recognises RoC through delimiting contested maritime zones, concedes from her legal thesis for maritime zones, concedes from her traditional argument that the government in the South is not `legitimate`, earns no political benefit from gas transportation.
- The Turkish Cypriot side loses opportunity to become an actor in international/regional energy affairs, Greek Cypriot side will benefit from all political benefits from hydrocarbons affairs, balance of power over Cyprus conflict would favour the Greek Cypriot side.

This option leads to alteration of status-quo over hydrocarbons, this option will provide an absolute benefit for Greek Cypriot side. Costs would dramatically outweigh benefits. Among all options this brings the worst possible outcome among available options.

##### ***Option 2 – Refusing Greek Cypriot Proposal, Maintaining Position***

- The Turkish Cypriot side maintains claims over co-decision rights over hydrocarbons processes and does not concede from demand for political equality.
- This choice may lead to escalation where there exists two possible outcomes. USA and EU would either appease Turkey or may decide to exert pressure on

Turkey. This outcome is directly related with stance and level of impact of the third parties and will be examined in Ch. 3.

- Even though Greek Cypriot side monetize the discovered deposit, the cost of losing share over hydrocarbons will not be unbearable as the Turkish Cypriot side and Turkey`s interest in conflict is principally related with their demands over the Cyprus conflict.

This option leads to status-quo, and status-quo is yet to be hurting for the Turkish Cypriot official actor, Therefore benefits of this option outweighs costs. This option brings the best possible outcome among available options.

## **2.2 Positions of Greek Cypriots**

This section examines Greek Cypriot actors in terms of their respective approaches towards Cyprus conflict and the Hydrocarbon conflict. Political strength of each Greek Cypriot actor at Greek Cypriot domestic politics are also included. Two major groups are remarkable, namely, the federalists and supporters of Unitary State.

### **2.2.1 Greek Cypriot Actors**

#### *Supporters of Unitary State*

Among Greek Cypriot political parties, social democratic EDEK, ultranationalist ELAM and Solidarity Movement are against a transformation of RoC into a bi-zonal bi-communal federation. EDEK, ELAM and Solidarity Movement rather supports european solution (Michael, 2018, pp. 188-198), meaning implementation of EU acquis thus all freedoms without restrictions across the island following integration of Turkish Cypriot community into current RoC. In contrast, while DIKO has experience of discussing BBF under its prominent leaders it is noteworthy to refer the fact that parties`

stance can be rather classified as maximalist as regards to sub-issues of the Cyprus conflict (ibid).

Pro-unitary parties received %33 of total votes and currently holds 16 seats out 56 following disjunction of federalist DIPA (RoC Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2021). Due to impacts of the political system, a presidential candidate often needs to enter into a non-official coalition with smaller parties (Faustman, 2013,120-122). Therefore pro-unitary parties hold a pivotal position in the executive organ`s policy contemplations. As to the matter of creating a co-operation mechanism over hydrocarbons before solution of the Cyprus conflict, this group refused Turkish Cypriot side's co-management proposals (Philenews, 2022), and displayed a dissident stance towards federalist`s contemplations for creating an escrow account for Turkish Cypriot use after federal solution (Cyprus Mail, 2015).

### ***Federalists***

While each party classified under this group have diverging perspectives as to constitutional issues of the Cyprus conflict, they respectively envisage federation as the most appropriate solution model. Prominent parties in this group, namely liberal Christian/pro-European DISY and Socialist/Cypriot nationalist AKEL. Federalists, in total, has received 50.11 of the popular votes at recent legislative elections. After disjunction of DIPA, 4 more federalist members of parliament joint to former 36 federalist members (RoC Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2021). Despite the collective refusal of Turkish Cypriot proposal for joint management of hydrocarbons at the Greek Cypriot consultative organ National Council (Philenews, 2022), federalists embraces more moderate stance than other group. DISY leader and President Anastasiades referred to possibility of sharing revenues provided that the RoC will keep control of the management (North

Cyprus News, 2022). AKEL, on the other hand, advocates, (notwithstanding if solution is reached or not), Turkish Cypriots poses rights and their share will be deposited and will be available for use after the solution of Cyprus conflict (Cyprus Mail, 2015).

### **2.2.2 Aims and Strategies of Greek Cypriot Actors**

#### ***Federalists***

The outcomes of the Crans- Montana process indicate that Greek Cypriot actor, led by DISY, is not willing to acknowledge perpetuation of guarantees under any alternative terms (RoC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021),<sup>11</sup> and sharing power under presented conditions (effective participation of T/C at federal institutions). On the other hand, the claim that Anastasiades had adopted confederal or two-state solution can be ignored as no valid steps have observed towards this end. This phenomena indicates that Greek Cypriot federalists are interested to attain maximal control over state powers in a prospective federative arrangement. Without capacity to render abovementioned aim at this period, Greek Cypriot federalists are aiming to attain a favourable balance of power over Cyprus conflict in the long term. In accordance with her explained foreign policy objectives, federalists aimed enhancement of relations with UNSC members and EU institutions and expanding relations with the states of Middle East and the Gulf (RoC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020). Therefore, federalists` grand strategy for Cyprus conflict is to further her existing external balancing capacity and complement to buck-passing, in other words, to wait other actors to exert pressure on Turkey. Hereby, dynamic of hydrocarbons presents opportunities and threats in relation to federalists` grand strategy.

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<sup>11</sup> It is expressed that `The Conference came to a standstill due to Turkey's insistence on the permanent presence of military troops in Cyprus and on maintaining its invasive rights` (RoC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021).

Before further analysis of their aims towards Hydrocarbons conflict, it is imperative to examine federalists' latest position. Frame of Greek Cypriot federalists' position is as follows:

A) Federalists' does not recognize legitimacy of Turkish maritime zone claims and acts purported in the said areas on behalf of Turkey and Turkish Cypriots (Mavroyiannis, 2020). It is stated that the Republic of Cyprus should be the main interlocutor of Turkey for negotiating and settling maritime delimitation question between two states (Anastasiades, 2021, pp. 14-15).

B) Any settlement regarding utilization of hydrocarbon resources among two communities prior to a comprehensive settlement should be limited to sharing of revenues. Turkish Cypriot community can benefit from resources via establishment of an 'escrow account', where population ratio will be taken as basis for sharing. Expressed positions are declared conditional to "resumption of a meaningful peace process", as well as delimitation of maritime zone question via negotiations between the RoC and Turkey (ibid, p.15).

Considering incomparable value of financial benefits from resources in contrast to their interest for sovereignty their goal is purely sourcing from political motivations (Tsakiris 2017, 38-39).<sup>12</sup> In this light, frame of federalists' declared position indicates that federalists primary interest is to ossify her legal and factual dominance over RoC's sovereignty before solving Cyprus conflict. Ostensibly, federalists are conscious that

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<sup>12</sup> It is expressed by the author that the net profit share that would remain to RoC from the monetization of Aphrodite reserves sums up to 6.3 billion Dollars in total, hence in a fifteen years period of extraction leaves 370 million euros annually, which barely covers 2% of RoC's 2013 GDP (Tsakiris, 2017, 38-39).

it almost an impossible endeavour to find a compromise agreement with Turkish Cypriots that will not harm her status (Tsakiris, Sinan Ülgen, & Han, 2018, p. 10). As federalists perceive hydrocarbons conflict as a zero-sum game that shall provide favourable power position vis-à-vis rival conflict party over Cyprus conflict particularly through canalisation of third party support; current federalists aim over hydrocarbons conflict is preservation of domination over sovereignty and ossifying control over hydrocarbons process through by-passing of the Turkish Cypriot side.

Greek Cypriot federalist's strategy included the perception that it is necessary defend the legality of the RoC by ossifying its control over hydrocarbons process. This strategy also aimed at isolating Turkey and Turkish Cypriot side from the process. With this motivation, energy diplomacy is being utilized as a tool. In this context, in order to galvanize RoC's legal claims vis-a-vis Turkey and Turkish Cypriot side with tangible political support, maritime delimitation agreements are concluded with respective riparian states, namely Israel (2010) and Egypt (2004). Furthermore, international oil companies in which their host states poses diplomatic and military leverage in the international system are provided with exploration licences (Italy-ENI, Exxon Mobil-USA, , Total Energies - France, and Qatar Petroleum) and exploitation licences ( At 12 parcel only for Delek Drilling-Israel, Noble Energy - USA), since 2013 (RoC Ministry of Energy, 2022).

In coordination, Greek Cypriot federalists displayed effort for monetization of the hydrocarbons deposits thorough bypassing the Turkish Cypriot side. Towards this direction, East-Med pipeline project is being attempted to be utilized as a platform to accumulate support against Turkey. It has launched by Cyprus, Israel, Greece, Italy in order to “explore the possibility for construction of a natural gas pipeline linking Leviathan

and Aphrodite to European markets” (Stergiou, 2019, p.18), and as of January 2020 this effort has finalized by an agreement. Likewise, Greek Cypriot side took part in establishment of Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum joined by Egypt, Greece, Italy, Palestine, Jordan, France and Israel where EU and USA are observer members. The Organisation is aiming to cooperate for developing natural gas market (Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, 2022), where Turkey does not take part. It is noteworthy to refer that, federalists also planned to diversify her monetization options (Apart from East-med pipeline) in order to render monetization without Turkish influence.

Moreover, Greek Cypriot side tries to restrict Turkish actions in the field through conventional diplomacy with regional and global powers. In this case, by using her status at EU decision making mechanisms as a leverage (Euronews, 2020). EU member states are called upon for displaying solidarity against the Turkish actions in respect to Eastern Mediterranean and Varosha (RoC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020). Again, RoC managed to intensify her security relations with prominent Western and regional actors. In this context, low level security cooperation agreements are concluded with US in 2018 (US Department of State, 2021),<sup>13</sup> and with France in 2017 (2017),<sup>14</sup> and 2019 (Ekathimerini, 2019).

### ***Supporters of Unitary State***

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<sup>13</sup> It is stated that “security partnership has continued to deepen in the areas of counterterrorism, non-proliferation, maritime security, search and rescue, counter-trafficking, cybersecurity, disaster and emergency response, and non-combatant evacuation” (US Department of State, 2021).

<sup>14</sup> Actors agreed on to cooperate over “training and exchange of knowledge and experiences regarding the armed forces’ role in the fields of energy security, maritime security, early warning, evacuation of nationals and crisis management” (France, 2017).

Regarding supporters of a unitary Cyprus, as no co-operation is preferred vis-à-vis Turkish Cypriots or Turkey, it is here appropriate to argue that position of the Supporters of Unitary State Solution is overlapping with current policy application under President Anastasiades. Strategy of the Supporters of Unitary State Solution is to benefit from prospective revenues, develop relations with related third parties that shall complement weakening of Turkey and Turkish Cypriot side. In this way to complement their ideal of coercing Turkish Cypriots to acknowledge a unitary state solution.

### **2.2.3 Strengths and Weaknesses of Greek Cypriot Perspectives**

Greek Cypriot actors enjoy an absolute political advantage sourcing from her status which is unlikely to be challenged by Turkish Cypriot side or Turkey. While this phenomena strengthens her hand to preserve de jure control over the RoC and over hydrocarbons resources, it also renders Greek Cypriot side an absolute capacity to enter into relations as regards with exploration and exploitation with other state and non-state actors. This provided Greek Cypriot federalist capacity to canalise third party support towards her position regarding hydrocarbons processes which established political/military deterrence of Turkey against RoC`s activities in the sea.

Nevertheless, Greek Cypriot federalist effort to canalize further and decisive third party support as a result of energy affairs is an independent variable of broader geopolitical conjecture, and less correlated with energy. In theory, cooperation over energy is dependent on geopolitical calculations and not vice-versa (Shaffer, 2014), in practice the volume of gas is unlikely to cause a dramatic transformation over other actor`s position.<sup>15</sup> Thus it is unlikely to accept that a potential hydrocarbon export of RoC is

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<sup>15</sup> Details are provided under the discussion of to what extend third parties interests for Eastern Mediterranean gas is important for them in Chapter 3.

alone sufficient to bring deterministic third party support for Greek Cypriot positions at Hydrocarbons conflict and the Cyprus conflict. Even though military threat posed by Turkey is balanced and Greek Cypriot Federalists policy over hydrocarbons found third party support at present day, transformation of Turkish-Western Alliance relations may impede further support.

Regardless of geopolitical calculations, unilateral monetization of gas contains multiple complications. Option for using Egyptian LNG facilities is currently non-feasible as “the commercial window of opportunity is closing because of the rise of Egyptian production forwarded for liquefaction and they will not wait for Nicosia forever” (Energyworldmag, 2019), regarding construction of an on shore LNG in Cyprus, the inadequate volume of gas rendered its construction non-feasible (RoC Ministry of Energy, n.d.).<sup>16</sup> This leaves East-Med pipeline option, as the only remaining option. Regardless of the discussions related with pipeline’s commercial and technical feasibility, contested status of maritime zones generates additional disadvantages. By referring to various tribunal cases, it is being put forth by Turkish authorities that islands may only have partial or no effect in EEZ/Continental Shelf delimitation “if their location distorts equitable delimitation or if there are other special / relevant circumstances” available (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey & Erciyas, 2020, pp. 29-35). This argument, likewise found ground in EU Parliaments political reports where generation of a preponderant maritime zone for Anatolian mainland in contrast to Cyprus Island is referred and added that the proposed route for East-med pipeline is

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<sup>16</sup> According to official source ‘the unsuccessful results of the exploration wells drilled in Block 9 (“Onasagoras 1” & “Amathusa 1”), as well as the latest estimates that natural gas reserves in “Aphrodite” field range between 2.8 and 6.4 TCF, with a mean quantity of 4,5 TCF, have adversely affected the viability of the onshore LNG Plant, which currently is on hold’ (RoC Ministry of Energy, n.d.).

supposed to pass through probable Turkish Continental Shelf.<sup>17</sup> This strength may provide necessary legal pretext for Turkey to delay the project and to decide the route of the pipelines in accordance with International law (UNCLOS, Article 79, par. 1-5). In addition, probability of investing huge amounts of capital in a zone of insecurity stands as another dimension. Hence, in order to exploit and monetize resources in a sustainable and secure way, it is required for Greek Cypriot side to negotiate the issue with Turkish Cypriot side and on the other hand to settle maritime zone question with Turkey.

Despite given disadvantages, the low volume of projected financial benefits from monetization<sup>18</sup>, renders Greek Cypriot side less vulnerable in case of failure. Thus a failure is not likely to affect Greek Cypriot actors' positions in the conflict. Indicators for a hurting stalemate must arise for Greek Cypriot side to acknowledge Turkish Cypriot terms at hydrocarbons conflict. Currently, no indicators are available to validate this situation, Greek Cypriot side enjoys a relative comfort in contrast to Turkish Cypriot side either at hydrocarbons conflict and Cyprus conflict.

#### **2.2.4 Options for the Greek Cypriot Official Side**

##### ***Option 1 – Maintaining current position***

- Greek Cypriot side maintains domination over the sovereignty of the RoC.
- Probability for escalation with Turkey exist. Nevertheless, Greek Cypriot side managed to sustain balance in the field through deepening cooperation vis-à-

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<sup>17</sup> See the mentioned overlap in which delineation and proposed route is drawn in accordance with claims of Greece and Cyprus at (European Parliament, 2020, p.5).

<sup>18</sup> The net profit share that would remain to RoC from the monetization of Aphrodite reserves sums up to 6.3 billion Dollars in total, hence in a fifteen years period of extraction leaves 370 million euros annually, which barely covers 2% of RoC's 2013 GDP (Tsakiris 2017, 38-39).

vis USA, France and Israel, plus provided indirect security through canalising their Oil Companies.

- Uneasy relations between Turkey and the West is ongoing. If future state of affairs between the said parties provides susceptible basis, the conflict over hydrocarbons and maritime zones have potential act as a platform to canalise further third party pressure over Turkey,
- Greek Cypriot side may not monetize resources as legal/technical/commercial complexities exist in East-Med option, and insecurities for huge investments by International Oil Companies exist. However, failure of hydrocarbons monetization will not put Greek Cypriot side into a hurting stalemate as value of controlling RoC`s sovereignty is incomparable to financial benefits.
- On the other hand, a probable appeasement of Turkey by powerful states at Varosha policy may result in settlement of private property rights through the means of Immovable Property Commission in the future. This probability would make Turkish Cypriot side less motivated for a federal solution as it would complement the comfort zone in the North. Added with growing Turkification, permanent continuation of the status quo is probable. Nevertheless, indicators of a deep concern is yet to be at the agenda of Greek Cypriot political elites.

This behaviour brings more benefits than costs and is the best possible available option.

#### ***Option 2- Co-operation under Turkish terms***

- The Greek Cypriot side indirectly gives up sovereignty of the RoC and makes Turkish Cypriot side an actor in regional politics through energy affairs. The

share from profit may increase the comfort zone in the North which may encourage population to adapt to status quo.

- The Greek Cypriot side loses unique opportunity to provide third party pressure over Turkey because of the conflict over Hydrocarbons which is emanating from deteriorated Turkish-Western relations, along with ongoing economic depression in Turkey.
- De-escalation over Cyprus, along with established bi-communal confidence may bring the Cyprus conflict into international public opinions agenda, probably through promotion of `Guterrez framework` which Greek Cypriot unitary state supporters dislike.

In conclusion for Chapter 2, Turkish Cypriot Supporters of Two State Solution and Turkey aims at coercing Greek Cypriot side to accept a cooperation over hydrocarbons without being bound to a federal settlement process. Insistence over this demand hints that Turkish Cypriot Supporters of Two State Solution and Turkey aims to use a probable co-operation as means to consolidate theirs` two-state solution thesis. On the other hand, Turkish Cypriot Federalists aims at solving hydrocarbons conflict within the context of a federal settlement process. As for positions of the Greek Cypriots; Greek Cypriot federalists aims at establishing a limited co-operation with Turkish Cypriot side at the absence of a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus conflict. Demands for establishment of an escrow account for revenues and condition for Turkey to recognise RoC EEZ claims beforehand and condition for resumption of federal settlement process; and, low economic prospects of gas revenues hints following implication. Greek Cypriot federalists aims at maximize their benefit at Cyprus conflict and uses hydrocarbons conflict as a platform

to canalise third party support. While Supporters of Unitary state objects to any cooperation scenarios prior to a comprehensive settlement, they converge with Greek Cypriot federalists' strategy regarding canalisation of third party support. It is evaluated that, neither Turkish Cypriot side nor Greek Cypriot side is capable to impose their terms regarding a co-operation.

## Chapter 3

# THIRD PARTIES AND THEIR IMPACTS ON HYDRO-CARBONS CONFLICT

This chapter evaluate the stances of third party actors, namely, the United Nations, the European Union, the United States of America, Russia, and Israel regarding Hydrocarbons conflict respectively. In doing so, will also assess their impacts towards each primary conflict party`s perspectives and overall balance at hydrocarbons conflict.

### **3.1 The United Nations and its Impact on the Issue**

There appears no divergence at United Nation`s longstanding position for the parameters of the solution of the Cyprus conflict. The Security Council reiterated its urge for parties to “renew” their efforts to reach a comprehensive solution based on Bi-zonal Bi-communal Federation with political equality as set in prior resolutions “ including par. 4 of the 716 (United Nations Security Council, S/Res/2483, 2019). The Secretary General recommended to keep the convergences reached in 2014-2017 talks in hand. In that regard, stressed that parties should accept the 6 principle framework as basis for talks without being selective on topics (S/2019/883, 2019). Hereby, it is noteworthy to refer that, impact of UN regarding modality of negotiations remains at recommendatory level as it is up to parties to decide. As a result, no concrete reward and punishment mechanism is available to generate impact over the current balance between the Turkish Cypriot side and the Greek Cypriot side

Regarding Hydrocarbons conflict, the politically influential actors in the Security Council refrained to define the Hydrocarbon conflict as a dispute which is likely to endanger global security in accordance with Chapter VI, Article 34 of the Charter. As a result, the Council didn't called upon member states for use of "appropriate procedures or methods of adjustment." (Chapter VI, Article 36) nor decided implementation of coercive measures under Chapter VII. Such `neutral` stance in fact paved way to continuation of contestation. As political balance of power favours Greek Cypriot aims and strategies at current conjecture, UN impact indirectly favours Greek Cypriot perspectives at the conflict.

The hydrocarbons conflict is referred as a matter of concern by the latest UN Secretariat reports (S/Res/2348, 2019) , (S/2020/23 , Par.57, 2020). In this context, while referring to co-rights for both communities over island`s resources, the Secretariat confined itself of merely highlighting the need for de-escalation and peaceful solution of the Cyprus conflict (S/2020/23 Article 56).

Therefore it can be argued that the Secretariat is perceiving the hydrocarbons crisis in the context of non-intervention into the internal affairs of a member state (RoC). While such stance favours Greek Cypriot actor`s perspectives, the Secretary-General developed a more delicate approach and refrained from calling cessation of only Turkish side`s activities in the sea. On the other hand, while no specific referring is made pertaining to procedure for cooperation over hydrocarbons, Secretariat stated that parties should not refrain from the obstacle of recognition emanating from the status of the North for engaging cooperation (S/2020/23, par 62). Such vague statement regarding cooperation can be a positive reference for Turkish Cypriot efforts to reach a cooper-

ation before comprehensive solution. Even though recommendatory nature of Secretariat reports are not capable to generate decisive impact over the conflict, they are capable to influence public opinion.

Regarding, Varosha issue, UN Security Council Presidential statement in October 2020 reaffirmed its prior resolutions 550 and 789, which condemned Turkish Cypriot efforts and called upon for “reversal of course of actions”.<sup>19</sup> Security Council maintained organisational pressure against Turkish Cypriot steps. Considering low probability of attaining unanimity at the Security Council for deciding implementation of coercive actions, Turkish Cypriot side and Turkey would likely to be encouraged to take further steps in the future. This probability is likely to create restraining impact over Greek Cypriot perspectives. In conclusion, UN stance over hydrocarbons conflict did not generate a reward and punishment mechanism. Acknowledgement of RoC’s exploration and exploitation steps as legitimate acts encouraged Greek Cypriot perspectives. The Security Council has competence to take coercive measures and alter power balance if escalation continues, nevertheless, reaching unanimity among permanent members is unlikely in that regard. Notwithstanding with UN’s coercive capacity, as being an impartial organ with mandate to provide good offices, UN possess potential to play a mediator role between the two communities. However, without strong political leverage standing behind UN role, facilitation is the only expected impact that United Nations can exert for the solution of Hydrocarbons conflict, which is unlikely to alter the balance on a probable negotiation table.

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<sup>19</sup> In 550 `Considers attempts to settle any part of Varosha by people other than its inhabitants as inadmissible and calls for the transfer of that area to the administration of the United Nations` (1984). In 789 the Council Urges `with a view to the implementation of resolution 550 (1984), the area at present under the control of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus be extended to include Varosha` (1992).

### 3.2 The European Union and its Impact on the Issue

By 2021, the EU imported more than 40% of its total gas consumption, 27% of oil imports and 46% of coal imports from Russia. Where 62% of EU total imports are from Russia (European Commission, 2022). “In light of increasingly difficult relations with Russia and the conflicts that emerged on the EU's northern and southern supply routes, natural gas supply diversification becomes ever more important” (Ruble, 2017, p. 341). This illustrates the longstanding vulnerability of EU for any possible disruptions of gas supply. In that sense, EU perceives hydrocarbons developments in Eastern Mediterranean as an opportunity to sustain its energy security policy through diversification of sources. As a result the EU Commission has included the East-Med project within the list of Project of Common interests in 2015 and invested 2 million euros for feasibility studies (European Parliament, 2017, pp. 2 31). Despite low promise of Leviathan-Aphrodite gas, which would have capacity to cover 4 percent of EU demand and despite availability of alternative energy procurement means as a result of improvements in USA's LNG shipment capacity (Deutsche Welle, 2020), emergence of Russia-Ukraine war increased significance of Cyprus' reserves in the eyes of Brussels.<sup>20</sup> EU institutions recently took determined steps to end its dependency on Russia by 2030. In this context, diversification of gas suppliers constitutes one of the unions aims (European Commission, 2022). Thereby, Cyprus gas has capacity to contribute Unions energy security targets effectively in this transition period.

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<sup>20</sup> Nord-Stream 1, which became operational in 2011 and procures gas to Germany, which imports 26% of her gas from Russia, is experiencing regular cuts. Has potential to raise gas price even higher (BBC, 2022).

Since the beginning of hydrocarbon activities, EU position have supported Greek Cypriot steps (Gurel, Mullen, Tziarras, 2013, p.60), and merely confined itself of stressing that economic benefits should be eventually shared by everyone on island (Morelli V. , 2018, p. 2). Of course part of EU's interest in this conflict is not to provide a major political win for Turkey who pursues more autonomous and revisionist agenda. By 2019, EU's behaviour towards Turkey and Turkish Cypriot activities became more assertive. Turkish side's drilling activities in the field are treated as illegal and called upon to be ceased. In same direction, EU has taken restrictive measures against Turkey. This include prevention of personnel taking part in Turkish activities, suspension of talks on the Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement, endorsement of a proposal to cut pre-accession funds and decision to "not to hold the Association Council and further meetings of the EU-Turkey high-level dialogues" (Lenzu, 2019).

To sum up, the EU in principle supports the right of Turkish Cypriot community over the process of hydrocarbons and interested in a solution based on a unified Cyprus in order to reach internal and regional stability. However it is disinterested in providing opportunity to Turkey under her current foreign policy direction. Despite recent developments regarding energy and geopolitical basis, EU did not displayed an official shift in its position. Therefore, the EU is expected to support Greek Cypriot positions regarding Hydrocarbons conflict under prevailing conditions. On the other hand, considering EU-Turkey economic relations, where trade, foreign direct investment, and technology transfers play important roles, neither side can afford political, economic, and security relations to deteriorate beyond a certain point (Pierini, 2022). In other words, termination of partnerships and relations is unlikely. In economic sense, a major economic sanction is less likely to be imposed on Turkey, merely because of her

stance towards Eastern Mediterranean and hydrocarbons. Thus, a result oriented tactical economic sanction card may be showed to Turkey if a prospective compromise arrangement by conflict parties cannot be achieved.

### **3.3 United States of America and Russia and their Impacts on the Issue**

#### ***USA***

Literature on hegemonic stability shows that maintaining favourable distribution of power and preserving post-war liberal world are consistent with the core interests of the United States.<sup>21</sup> Currently, China is being perceived as a threat to US hegemony as China is promoting an alternative set of values which threatens post world war order (Walt, 2020). Some commentators perceive China's Belt-Road and Maritime Silk Road Initiative as a proactive soft power projection towards the region which exacerbates this threat (Litsas, 2020, pp. 184-191), (Chance, 2016, pp. 15-17). On the other hand, even though Russia is yet to be a global rival for USA, it carries potential in theory and practice to annoy favourable distribution of power for US interests in the region. Currently Russia is attempting to benefit every opportunity through soft-power and hard power projections in Syria, Libya (Litsas, 2020, pp. 192-199), Ukraine and Caucasus which reflects her revisionist quest towards unipolar system.

Against this backdrop, the USA is having manifold motivations towards Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East region in order to consolidate her hegemonic status. In this frame, traditional US interest is focusing to maintain her alliances in the region, securing them from external threats, to secure free flow of resources across the world

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<sup>21</sup> See stability section in the Literature Review.

(Mueller, Wasser, Martini & Watts, 2017, p. 2).<sup>22</sup> From US perspective, Iran is a `spoiler actor` in respect to a favourable stability as it engages into intra-state wars and threatens US partners Israel and Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, the contestation between US allies, namely, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Israel and Greece is further deepening the instability in the region through weakening alliance (JINSA, 2019:10-21). In relation to abovementioned situation, dispute over hydrocarbon resources and Cyprus conflict is further threatening traditional pillars of US interests. And, existence of natural resources motivates USA to seek restoration of relations between her allies (Stergiou, 2019, p. 26).<sup>23</sup>

USA`s official statements regarding the contestation over hydrocarbons points out necessity for cooperation and underlines `equitable` sharing of the resources between the two communities. On the other hand objects the drillings took place at block 6 and 7, where RoC and Turkish maritime claims overlap, and calls Turkey to halt her operations (U.S. Embassy in Cyprus, 2020). In relation to cooperation, until now, no US statement has pointed out solution of the hydrocarbons prior to a comprehensive. Until 2022, USA rather supported Greek Cypriot strategies. In this context, supported East-Med Gas Forum, East-Med pipeline project, lifted her long-standing arms embargo over Greek Cypriots (Mallinson, Kanevskiy & Petasis,2020, p.324), and US based

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<sup>22</sup>Even though US reliance on Middle Eastern energy have diminished due regards to her energy self-sufficiency, it is within US interests to sustain the security of transportations routes which feeds global economy (Mueller, Wasser, Martini & Watts, 2017, p. 2).

<sup>23</sup> According to Greek Cypriot top diplomat Mavrogiannis; *‘the prospect of significant energy wealth in the Eastern Mediterranean affected the US policy vis-a-vis Cyprus. The US have indeed attempted to use the prospective natural resources in order to achieve: a) the solution of the Cyprus issue, b) the restoration of the bilateral Turkey-Israel relations, c) the creation of a new framework of economic cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean to the best interest of the US and the UK, which might also include the exclusion of Russia from the energy exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean’* (Stergiou, 2019, p.26).

Exxon Mobil Company participated exploration activities at the expense of Turkish objection. Yet again, no result oriented involvement of USA is directed against stalling Turkish activities in the sea. In regards to lifting of arms embargo, it can be argued that such policy is simultaneously aiming to prevent Russia to expand her influence over Cyprus through preventing of Russian navy assets to use Greek Cypriot ports as well as money laundering activities (Kathimerini, 2020).

By January 2022, justifying unfeasibility of the East-Med project, USA withdrew her support for this project. During the official meetings held in April 2022 between Greek Cypriot side and US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland, this position upheld. Nuland stressed the importance of Cyprus gas for the diversification policy of the EU and hinted that `the US saw Turkey participating in the region's energy planning` (CyprusMail, 2022). It can be argued that, tension between Russia and the Western states prioritized consolidation of NATO allies and brought increased US interests in energy security of Europe. Thus increased US interest towards Cyprus reserves and a cooperation over Cyprus Hydrocarbons with the inclusion of Turkey.

In conclusion, USA's chronologic approach indicates that, US support for RoC's hydrocarbons policies are rather prudent in essence. USA opts to find delicate balance in order to not bring prejudice to either regional stability through paving way for an escalated military confrontation between allies; to prevent her valuable NATO member Turkey of acting more autonomously in her foreign policy; not to resent other related actors who will benefit from gas cooperation; or giving Russia an opportunity over RoC. Idea of supporting a federal agreement between Cypriot communities and regional actors may be rational for Turkey and USA upon a condition. If Turkey and USA develops closer relations due regards to impacts of the Russian revisionism. This

means, if Turkey`s basic security demands are satisfied (for instance demands towards FETO, PKK, YPG, armament of Greece), in exchange for satisfaction of Western demands towards Russia (such as participation to sanctions and termination of collaboration on regional affairs). This setting would appeal US`s interest to put her leverage in solution of Cyprus conflict and Hydrocarbons conflict since it arrangement addresses USA`s main regional interest.

### ***Russia***

As a result of relatively weaker US dominance in the region since the wake of last decade, Russia has begun to avert the political turmoil into her own favour. In essence, Russia is not pursuing a fully-fledged competition against USA as it did in USSR era, it is given that Russia is well aware of this incapacity. Nevertheless, Russia is determined to fill every gap (Litsas, 2020, pp. 192-196). In that regard, Russia is seeking opportunity to complicate Western Alliance`s leverage over Eastern Mediterranean countries like Greece, Cyprus and Turkey (Stronski, 2021).

Regarding its interests towards Cyprus, Russia is desiring a non-aligned, independent Cyprus, preferably free from the guarantee system and bases which NATO members are enjoying, and again free from foreign influence (Krasnov, Oposhnynskaya & Artiukh, 2020, pp.240). Likewise, Russia has discontent with strengthening of RoC`s cooperation with NATO states over Cyprus` Hydrocarbon affairs. However, even if Russia attempts to impose a track change in current Greek Cypriot gas strategy, this would have been an easy task (Litsas, 2020, 192-199). Currently, Russia may enjoy limited military assistance by RoC in terms of port calls due to the leverage of money laundering activities of Moscow where Cyprus is depended. Nevertheless, current level of relations vis-à-vis Cyprus did not affect RoC to enter deeper military cooperation with

France, USA and other Western states. Here, Greek Cypriots discontent with Russian-Turkish approachment is also a factor for RoC`s decision to enter into closer relations with the West (Stronski, 2021).

In specific to Russia`s level of interest towards energy prospects of gas deposits in the Mediterranean, it is true that a prospective exportation of gas to EU will decrease Russia`s stake in EU gas imports. Even though estimated share of the East-Med gas on EU imports will be limited to 4%, and cannot compete economically with much cheaper Russian gas (Semed Energy Defence, 2020), and not threatening current Russia`s “dominant” position over EU`s energy demand (Stergiou, 2019, p. 61), impacts of Russia-Ukraine war have changed this reality. EU`s policy of ceasing her dependence aims to assemble every possible reserve. Therefore, energy is a significant factor over Russian approach towards the Hydrocarbons conflict at current conjecture.

To sum up, grand strategy of Russia in the region is to rather opportunistic without aiming at competing with the West over Cyprus. Gaining naval bases, projecting power and showing flag over the Eastern Mediterranean and maintaining her status in Syria are primary Russian interests. Again Russia influence over leverage over Turkey, Cyprus and Greece remained at modest level (Stronski, 2021). Russia, could not manage to become a mediator of Hydrocarbons conflict (Hadjicostis, 2020). Even though Russia does not have a direct leverage over Cyprus conflict and Hydrocarbons conflict, its level of relationship with Turkey generates a reluctance for the West in relation to their stance towards Turkey.

### 3.4 Others

#### *Israel*

Developments over Hydrocarbons also coincided with the deteriorating Turkish-Israeli relations upon infamous Mavi Marmara ship incident, which resulted in killing number of Turkish citizens in international waters by Israeli forces. Thus, the prior equation prevailing until 2010s where Israel and Turkey were in strong relationship and where Greek Cypriots were holding tight relationship with Palestinians and Arab World has incrementally transformed. This energy driven cooperation have led to the conclusion of several agreements. This include EEZ delimitation agreement, and a commercial agreement where an Israeli firm, Delek, is holding 30% working rights of Cyprus`s Aphrodite (Gurel and Le Cornu, 2014, pp. 17-20).

At Hydrocarbons conflict, successful transportation of Cyprus gas is dependent on Israeli contribution (Ionannides, 2014:126). Given Israeli defence officials reluctance for the construction of a joint LNG onshore Cyprus or Israeli onshore due to security concerns (Tsakiris, 2018), plus unfeasible costs of their construction (Tsakiris, Ulgen, Han 2018, p. 21), East-Med pipeline remains as the only alternative option if Turkish influence is desired to be by-passed.

In conclusion of the Chapter 3, USAs traditional interests are consolidation of allies in the region and sustaining free flow of energy resources; disturbance of US hegemony. Hence, USA is, in principle, support the solution of the Cyprus conflict and a cooperation over hydrocarbons. EU also has same stance. As a result of increasing need for sustaining to EU`s energy supply security in the face of Russian threat, Cyprus hydrocarbons reserves became more important in the eyes of the EU and the USA interests.

At this juncture, USA and EU support Greek Cypriot side's perspectives at hydrocarbons conflict but they did not brought a game-changing intervention. In that regard, Turkey's relationship with Russia is causing reluctance. USA's and EU's dissidence at Turkey's quest for more autonomous policies constitutes backbone of US and EU approach to the hydrocarbons conflict. USA and EU are not willing to provide a major victory for Turkey. On technical side of hydrocarbons processes, withdrawal of US support from East-Med hampered Greek Cypriot policy of isolating Turkey and Turkish Cypriot side. Current stances of the EU and USA serves to status quo over Hydrocarbons conflict. On UN's side, the organisation upholds promotion of a BBF solution. Neither Turkish Cypriot side nor Turkey and Greek Cypriot side had specifically called upon by the UNSC to halt their actions at the sea. UN stance also serves continuation of status quo. While UN has capacity to act as a facilitator between the two sides on the Island, the EU and USA is capable to act as powerful mediators with the means of their leverage on both Turkish Cypriot side, Greek Cypriot side as well as over Guarantor states Greece and Turkey

## Chapter 4

### CONCLUSION

#### 4.1 Implications of the Analysis

Analysis of primary actor`s aims and strategies presents that Turkish Cypriot side aims at forcing the Greek Cypriot side to accept a co-operation under co-decision procedure without being bound to intercommunal negotiations for a federal settlement. The major argument behind this position of TC side is that ‘Republic of Cyprus collapsed in 1964’ and that ‘there are two political entities in the island’ who needs to cooperate to solve the conflict. On the other hand, Greek Cypriot side aims at isolating Turkish Cypriot side from having any say on the issue before solution, suggesting only economic benefits. This Greek Cypriot perspective relies on the official argument that exploration of natural resources is not a communal issue and that as a sovereign state RoC has the right to make necessary decision on the issue. Considering insignificant commercial/ economic value of discovered reserves (Tsakiris, 2018, pp. 8-39),<sup>24</sup> the conflictual perspectives on *Hydrocarbons derives from the differing perspectives on sovereignty*. At this regard, the Greek Cypriot side aims to reach a settlement that shall include single sovereignty and single international status under a federal arrangement sometimes questioning the principle of political equality, and, the Turkish Cypriot side aims to reach an arrangement that shall sustain separate sovereignty and separate

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<sup>24</sup> the net profit share that would remain to RoC from the monetization of Aphrodite reserves sums up to 6.3 billion Dollars in total, hence in a fifteen years period of extraction leaves 370 million euros annually, which barely covers 2% of RoC`s 2013 GDP see at. ‘Cyprus's Natural Gas Strategy: Geopolitical and Economic Preconditions` (Tsakiris, 2017, pp.38-39)

international status. Thereby, in order for achieving their respective aims over Cyprus conflict, parties perceive Hydrocarbons conflict as a zero-sum contest.

Regarding the balance over hydrocarbons conflict, Greek Cypriot side is not capable to impose her terms, namely, to exploit hydrocarbons resources unilaterally and to put Turkish Cypriot share into an escrow account until they join to central government. Primary interest of Turkey and Turkish Cypriot side is not to benefit from revenues but rather to promote recognition of two sovereign states model. Thus, a probable unilateral exploitation of the gas by the Greek Cypriot side is not likely to render acknowledgment of Greek Cypriot position on hydrocarbons conflict by Turkish Cypriot side. In practical dimension, Greek Cypriot strategy to bypass Turkish Cypriots is also unlikely, since unilateral exploitation by Greek Cypriot side will face with commercial and technical complications. As for Turkish Cypriot side, the aim is to force the Greek Cypriot side to acknowledge co-decision competence in all processes. This possibility is unlikely. Turkish Cypriot side does not have strong allies who supports her position at Cyprus conflict and hydrocarbons conflict. Thereby, Turkey's gunboat diplomacy didn't deter Greek Cypriot strategic efforts since international support balances situation and does not generate a strong threat towards Greek Cypriot side. In addition the TRNC's status is less likely to elevate in short term. As a result, Turkish Cypriot side does not poses leverage to transform Greek Cypriot position.

Regarding the third party positions and impacts, the USA and the EU are the most influential actors. They poses manipulation power over both communities, Turkey and Greece and thus are capable to act as powerful mediators. They are interested in de-escalation of and finding a solution to the conflict in order to secure their interests and

sustain stability. Under current conditions it is difficult for them and international community to be supportive of Turkey's demand for two state solution in Cyprus. On the other hand, they are not willing to pull Turkey out of Western influence. As a result, the third parties provided support towards Greek Cypriot exploration and exploitation efforts, which deterred a probable disruption by overwhelming Turkish military force. They also refrained from putting extreme pressures against Turkey while providing only decent political support for Greek Cypriot strategies.

Ongoing polarisation between the West and Russia, and growing contest between China and USA may pave the way for prioritization of Cyprus conflict and Hydrocarbons conflict in the eyes of Western States. The Russia-Ukraine war has further necessitated the need for consolidation of the Western Alliance against its hegemonic rivals, namely China and Russia. Thereby, promotion of a US led Western initiative for ending regional antagonism between its allies and partners Turkey, Greece, Israel, Egypt and solution of Cyprus conflict along through a multilateral cooperation over natural resources could be achieved in short or middle term. The emerging trend of rapprochement between Israel and Turkey and USA's new initiative by Undersecretary Nuland, which encouraged regional energy cooperation that would not exclude Turkey, is supportive development of abovementioned argument (Kathimerini, 2022).

For the United Nations, non-intervention principle is crucial. Upholding its traditional position illustrates the fact that the organisation mainly interested in the solution of the Cyprus conflict. UN also sees cooperation among communities in the island as a necessary factor to provide a basis for solution. As a result, UN's overall stance towards Cyprus conflict serves into status quo over Hydrocarbons conflict.

All in all, distance among Greek Cypriot side`s and Turkish Cypriot side`s positions are high. Issue of sovereignty is the main source of conflict. The Hydrocarbons conflict escalated and reached to a a stalemate where none of the parties are currently able to reach their respective aims . Under such conditions, none of the communities are incentivised through any ways to revise their positions over Hydrocarbons conflict. As a result, unless Greek Cypriot sensitivity over sovereignty is not satisfied and unless Turkish Cypriot sensitivity over participating to hydrocarbons process is not included, no model of solution would fall within mutually acceptable margin.

Differences in status and assymetry in terms of capacity between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot sides are due result of international dynamics. In that regard, symmetrical need for solution from the primary parties required. Lesser gap between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot power capacity should be present. USA and Europe should feel and immediate necessity for establishing a cooperation mechanism among her allies and partners in the region. UK holds guarantor state status of RoC, which means UK`s approval for any constitutional change in Cyprus is required. Plus Brexit provides possibility for UK to re-establish trade relations with Turkish Cypriots and such bid may render Greek Cypriot side to be more flexible at probable talks. Again, Germany and France holds capacity as the locomotives of the Union to manipulate talks particularly with their economic capacity through exerting either economic leverage over Turkey and/or offering financial support for the expenses of unification. With their urge, guarantor powers should reach a compromise over security arrangements, in which they currently hold through Treaties of Estblishment of RoC, thus help to overcome security deadlock over Cyprus conflict . As a result, their intervention could render favourable conditions to reach a negotiated settlement.

In short, `Mediation with power` should be utilized as the primary management tool. This method requires involvement of influential and interested third party(s) that has capacity to manipulate the conflict. Nevertheless, either political arbitration, conflict transformation or facilitation tools shall assist `power mediation` to be used in coordination whenever conflict's management deems required. Conflict transformation methods, such as empowerment of young and women, supporting trade chambers, civil society, media and meetings by religious leaders shall aid to build confidence among communities. On the other hand, political arbitration may help the process to carry on if issues remain unresolved. The reward and punishment capacity of western powers shall urge parties to agree on a "leave or take" procedure of political arbitration.<sup>25</sup> Without such international dynamics, a solution over hydrocarbons would not be achieved under the prevailing conditions.

## **4.2 Scenarios for Cooperation**

This section examines mutually acceptable scenarios for a co-operation on hydrocarbons in the absence of a comprehensive settlement over Cyprus conflict. In this context, political realities and technical possibilities will be considered.

A solution for Hydrocarbons conflict should satisfy both sensitivities of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sides on sovereignty / guarantees, and political equality, respectively. It seems that, it is irrational for either party to abandon their current positions without securing these demands. Thereby, settlement of differences over Cyprus conflict is a prerequisite to reach a mutually acceptable solution on hydrocarbons issue. Thus, solution of hydrocarbons conflict may be a part of a framework agreement associated with a comprehensive solution of Cyprus conflict according to UN parameters. After all, in the light of the commercial realities for

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<sup>25</sup> Detailed pathway and its justification is given under Section 4.4

transportation of prospective gas deposits, two communities shall decide the procedure for cooperation on all relevant processes including exploration, exploitation and sharing of revenues.

In brief, this research suggests the following political principles as the basis of a model of cooperation at hydrocarbons issue prior to a comprehensive settlement:

- i. Turkey and Turkish Cypriot sides should revise both their current two- state model and their insistence on existing system of guarantees on the basis of Guterres framework;
- ii. Greek Cypriot side should show flexibility towards accepting the effective participation of Turkish Cypriot community in federal decision making as envisaged in Guterres framework and UN Security Council resolutions;
- iii. The USA, EU and Israel should be involved actively in the process of finding a solution to the Cyprus conflict in order to manipulate the existing unfavourable balance of power for solution.
- iv. Natural gas shall be transferred to The EU via Turkey by using the existing pipeline network in Turkey. Considering Israeli willingness to transfer its exceeding gas portion, a pipeline to Turkey could be commercially viable investment. In addition, EU's current willingness which emerged after Russia-Ukraine war to alleviate its dependence on Russian gas is likely to be appeal to EU and USA to extend their leverage.

A future increase at the volume of recoverable gas may render building of an LNG or floating LNG facility which would be more rational for Greek Cypriot side to accept as it would limit Turkish influence at her energy policy. Nevertheless , in the light of

prevailing commercial conditions, final Israeli decision for how to utilize its remaining deposits at Leviathan and availability of further discoveries in Cyprus will be deterministic for feasibility of alternative transportation options. As a result, pipeline to Turkey option is ostensibly the only realistic commercial scenario at this moment.

### **4.3 Model for Solution**

Upon the introduction of the arrangements explained in section 4.2, the following model can be suggested:

1. Turkey and RoCs could resolve the conflict deriving their maritime zone claims according to the Law on the Sea. Turkish Cypriot side on the other hand shall accept the legality of exploration and exploitation licences already given by the RoC and concede from TRNC`s claims over maritime zones.
2. In exchange for the above, Greek Cypriot side shall abandon its current energy transportation plans, and should accept exportation of Cypriot gas to the EU through Turkish domestic market. This compromise should be a part of a multilateral energy co-operation agreement including Israel, Turkey and RoC, that shall enable transportation of Cyprus-Israeli gas reserves through Turkey to Europe.
3. Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sides shall agree to share the revenues in accordance with equity principle.

Under abovesaid conditions, the two communities shall accept to create a temporary regime for hydrocarbons processes until the two of them will share competence over hydrocarbons under a federal state. In this cooperation regime, two communities shall

transfer their mandate on hydrocarbons to a joint bi-communal committee. The committee will function as a temporary autonomous organ of the RoC. The committee shall comprise of equal number of six members, where decisions will be taken by majority. To encourage collaboration and plurality in the structure each side shall appoint 2 members from their own community and one member from the other community. The committee's main function would be to sign the said agreements on behalf of the State and to apply the frame set by the cooperation agreement.

#### **4.4 Pathway Towards Solution**

The pathway towards implementation of our model should comprise of three stages; a- Preparatory phase, b-Negotiation phase, c- Agreement phase.

At preparatory phase USA and the European Union should exert a result oriented influence towards conflicting parties in order to assist generation of a acceptable basis for a successful negotiation. Reducing the gap between the sides through manipulation of balance of power over the Cyprus conflict is essential (cf. Fisher and Keashly, 1991, pp.29-42). In this scope, third party actors' main intervention principles should focus on weakening Greek Cypriot comfort in order to encourage their positive input in Cyprus negotiation process. On the other hand, the same intervention should aim to persuade Turkish Foreign Policy to accept the existence of the RoC to be transformed into federal state. Moreover, as alteration of Treaty of Guarantees, which is one of the main tangles for reaching the framework agreement, requires consent of UK, Turkey and Greece. Thus a compromise, at least in form of a gentlemen's agreement, over this overarching principle is a pre-requisite for a result oriented negotiations. At its absence, the two sides would not be ready to give up their maximalist positions as either side would preserve capacity to pursue their aims through the means of their

allies (cf. Pruitt, 2007, 1525 -1526). Namely, Greek Cypriot side would continue to benefit from the merits of her international status and preserve her dominance of RoC; and, Turkish Cypriot side would maintain her two-state policy with support of Turkey. For this reason, Turkey and Greece should act rationally. It would be a major win for each side to acknowledge merits of mutual wealth that shall arise due to increased volume of trade, equitable benefit of living and non-living resources in the contested seas and pursuing de-armament policies. An intervention by US may pave the way for a cooperative environment between Greece and Turkey.

It should be noted that the will of two communities are highly deterministic for implementation and viability of this model. US and EU should simultaneously resort to 2nd track diplomacy at preparatory phase. In this direction, their involvement should manipulate political inertia, through mobilizing the two sides in Cyprus to acknowledge the necessity of a compromise agreement. In that sense, political elite and NGOs/interest groups in both sides should grasp the idea that acceptance would bring major gains. Considering fixed positions and low enthusiasm for federal solution, a fully fledged conflict transformation is less likely to succeed in short term. Thereby, it should be only considered as a supplementary tool. As such, on first track involvement, third parties should simultaneously maintain deterministic effort. In that regard, Western states may encourage Greek Cypriot side with the card of easing the isolation over Turkish Cypriots if status quo continues as a result of their behaviour. Likewise, Turkey should be encouraged to alter her policy through economic leverage. On the other hand, exploratory talks for energy cooperation between Israel, Turkey and Greek Cypriot side and EU should be promoted. This

controlled proximation policy is likely to intimidate conflict parties, approach regional actors closer and generate a win-win co-operation vis-a-vis third parties' interests.

The pressure generated should be utilized to bring two sides into a time framed negotiation phase. And, Western actors should maintain their controlled involvement throughout conduction of negotiation phase. Thereby, US and EU should continue to employ reward and punishment mechanism. Given the involvement of national honour and sovereignty in this negotiations, capacity of third party interventions for success would arise as a handicap (cf. Berchocitch, 1991, p.22). Intervieners must respect primary parties` honour and promote the idea that this model is a just solution which has potetial to satisfy Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot interests over sovereignty through the means of political equality (cf. Zartman, 1989, 291).

Throughout negotiation phase of the framework agreement, UN mission of good offices shall act as facilitation platform. If needed may act as an arbiter for delimitation of the maritime zones between Turkey and Cyprus. Nothwithstanding with its legal dimension, such need may principally arise due political conditions. Reference of the maritime zones delimitation case to the International Court of Justice within negotiation case will bring about following political problems: From the dimension of bargaining, Turkey would have to recognise Greek Cypriot side as RoC`s legitimate governement, which would lead to alteration of the balance in favour of Greek Cypriot side prior of securing any concessions by Turks. Plus adjudication process is time consuming and final result cannot be controlled. Thus any discontent it would generate may discourage conflict sides at the most important verge of conflict resolution phase. All in all, political arbitration, to be simultaneously conducted with negotiation

process, based on norms of the international law, remains as the best last resort if negotiations fail.

At Agreement phase, a framework agreement over Cyprus conflict, establishing agreement for bi-communal cooperation committee, maritime delimitation agreement between the committee and Turkey, and, a multilateral energy cooperation agreement between concerned parties should be concluded simultaneously. On behalf of RoC, the new bi-communal committee would sign the related agreements. Through this packaging, the Greek Cypriot side and the Turkish Cypriot side could be able to prevent any spoilers within domestic entities.

Although Rational Choice approach provides theoretical grounds to predict actors' behaviour, in case of maintenance of maximalist positions by the Greek Cypriot side and the Turkish Cypriot side due regards to irrational decisions, such as ruling political elite's stiff commitment to their ideological grounds, an opportunity for a framework agreement and solution of Hydrocarbons conflict will remain elusive. This possibility is constituting one of the limitations of this research. Given theoretical constraints, while Rational Choice approach simplified the research neglected ideological and psychological factors of the ruling elite. Another limitation derives from fluidity of international politics. Reliable primary sources regarding energy talks or feasibility projects for monetization are highly confidential, thus, limits unauthorized researchers to access in a period of rapid transformation in the region. Lastly, as this thesis focused on political context of the hydrocarbons conflict, many related sub-subjects which requires high level of expertise, namely, international maritime law, international economy, (military) security studies are omitted at the theoretical framework.

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