

EDITORIAL OBSERVATIONS

Dan Georgakas

The new year promises to be perilous for Greece and Cyprus as well as being a challenge to American foreign policy in the Eastern Mediterranean. Recep Erdogan's Turkey is intent on using any means needed to obtain territories and economic rights belonging to Greece and Cyprus. To that end, Turkey does not recognize the UN's Law of the Seas, scoffs at the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) assigned to Greece and Cyprus, and states that the Lausanne Treaty (1923), which set present borders, is invalid.

In December 2019, Turkey's entered an agreement with Libya that claims most of the Eastern Mediterranean as part of their individual EEZs. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has stated Turkey will use military means to stop any drilling in what it self-defines as its national waters. It has already forced Italian and French drillers to back off from areas in the EEZ of Cyprus. Further flexing its military muscle, Turkish warplanes violate Greek air space daily and Turkish warships hover in the drilling zones allotted Cyprus. Yet another aggressive action has been Turkey sending military advisors with promises to send troops if necessary, to assist the faction in Libya it favors.

In response to the Libyan/Turkish unilateral redrawing of sovereignty in the Eastern Mediterranean, the EU issued a sharp condemnation but did not impose even minor economic sanctions. Moreover, the EU has never commented on the absurdity of Turkey seeking EU membership while not recognizing Cyprus, a present EU member state. A major political factor in play is that the EU is terrified by Turkey's threat to flood it with millions of refugees from the Middle and Far East.

The daily violations of the air space of Greece, a NATO member, by Turkey, also a NATO nation, has never been addressed, partly for fear Turkey might respond by moving closer to Russia. In fact, when Turkey recently added Russian armaments to its arsenal, NATO did not respond vigorously.

Egypt, a traditional Greek ally, is upset by the Libyan-Turkish EEZ maps. It is wary of Turkey offering troops to the Libyan government in the midst of a civil war and Turkey's increased interest in the turmoil in Tunisia. But it is not likely to take any action without an American green light. Israel is more militarily powerful than Turkey and does not take

kindly to the threats made against its licensed drilling in the Cypriot EEZ. Like Egypt, however, unless directly attacked, it will not take unilateral action.

The decisive force in the area is the United States. Although three previous presidents blocked earlier Turkish provocations against Greece, President Trump is highly supportive of Erdogan. He facilitated Turkey's takeover of northern Syria and granted Erdogan a cordial White House visit.

American military and security agencies have a different mindset. They remember that Turkey refused the use of the American base at Incirlik during the second war in Iraq. They are particularly upset by the abrupt abandonment of our Kurdish allies and the acceptance of Turkey's acquirement of Russian arms. The military and security professionals do not trust a Turkey that routinely protects extreme Muslim groups, including ISIS. In contrast, the US military has excellent relations with its Greek counterparts and considers its base in Crete the major American asset in the Eastern Mediterranean. The military also is upset that elements in Turkey have spoken of closing down the major American air base at Incirlik if the US imposes sanctions on Turkey. Incirlik has a nuclear arsenal, including 50 B61 nuclear bombs. Nor has the military forgotten that Turkey refused use of that base for the second war on Iraq, which foiled the American plan for a third front for the invasion.

In our present issue Van Coufoudakis offers a gloomy assessment of the situation in Cyprus, where Turkey insists it will never remove its troops and demands access to what is now the EEZ of Cyprus. Constantine Danopoulos looks at the history of the Cypriot struggle for sovereignty in his review of Christos Ioannides' *Cyprus Under British Colonial Rule: Culture, Politics, and the Movement Toward Union with Greece, 1878-1954*.

Retired diplomat Patrick Theros examines the long-term consequences of the American withdraw of support of the Kurds and its acceptance of Turkish occupation of northern Syria. He is fearful that President Trump will not stand up to new Turkish ambitions in the Eastern Mediterranean and the dire consequences that could mean for Greece and Cyprus. Alexander Kitroeff discuss why anti-Greek sentiment by Turkish governments, of various ideological orientations, has been constant since the founding of the Turkish republic. He reviews *The Thirty-Year Genocide: Turkey's Destruction of its Christian Minorities, 1894-1924* by Benny Morris and Dror Ze'evi. Their work draws on newly available Turkish documentation and argues that the assault on Hellenism has not been a single event but a continuous process.

George Vardas offers a lengthy history of the attempt by Greece to regain possession of the Parthenon marbles. He is not confident the current course of the Greek government and the restoration movement will be viable.

The issues of the emerging Greek America of multi-ethics is addressed by Yiorgos Anagnostou and Eleni Sakellis. Anagnostou endorses and advances ideas presented by

Elias Gerasoulis at the 18th annual AHI conference on The Future of Hellenism in America. Sakellis maintains the course of traditional Greek music in America is not a form of nostalgia but an engaging aspect of current Greek American culture. She calls attention to new excellent books: *Lament from Epirus: An Odyssey into Europe's Oldest Surviving Folk Music* by Christopher King and *Greek Music in America* edited by Tina Bucuvalas.

Our Emerging Voices of Greek America section opens with an essay by Adam Hadjipateras, who is still in high school, on how he has set up a media project that has raised thousands of dollars to aid refugees in Greece and Greek American charities in the United States. Corinne Candilis, who has participated in study abroad programs sponsored by AHEPA and AHI speculates on how refugees in Greece might benefit the Greek economy. The section concludes with an interview by Kristina Koinoglou with a Greek American millennial on how traditional Greek dancing aids millennials in creating a viable cultural identity that links the emerging new generation with its predecessors.

The poets in this issue take on a broad range of social issues. Yiorgos Chouliaras speculates on the images missing in refugee and immigrant photographs. Dean Kostos examines the Greek poetic tradition that includes poets with controversial views. Karen Melander-Magoon pays homage to the women soldiers in the Kurdish army and evokes a love of Kurds for their homeland mountains that is similar to the Greek klephtic tradition.

Let me end by emphasizing that our journal is a forum for varying ideas and voices, not a perspective agenda. All unsolicited queries and essays are taken seriously. Our goal remains a healthy American policy regarding the Eastern Mediterranean and a vibrant Greek America that helps inform such a policy.