

# PRESERVATION OF DEMILITARIZED STATUS OF THE AEGEAN ISLANDS FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF TURKEY

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## Introduction

The *détente* process between Greece and Turkey is still far from leading to a stage where the two countries will discuss their fundamental problems. This *détente* process aims to abolish the lack of “trust” which existed and rendered difficult the dialogue and discussion stages’ being set into solid grounds. In addition to this, the civil societies of the two countries, media institutions and economic interest groups are considered to be additive in the development of grounds for mutual trust by the politicians. They are taking measures to ensure permanent collaboration in the areas where relations are dependent on mutual trust and common interest.

On the other hand, while the Helsinki Summit gave speed to the process of handling and providing solutions to the disputes between the two countries, it has not been possible to bring up any concrete problem to be discussed. When the natures of the problems between Turkey and Greece together with the political/legislative reasons regarding them are considered, the possibility of a successful result decreases.

In this article, the security concerns that arose with the violation of the status of the islands ceded to Greece with treaties stipulating the “demilitarisation” of these islands. In particular, the fact that Turkey proclaimed the extension of the territorial water borders by Greece to 12 miles as *casus belli*, and the determination of the status of island, islets and rocks the sovereignty of which had not been given over with treaties were all causes for the discord to build up and probably lead to battle. This situation may be significant in understanding the national defence strategies of both countries. This, on the other hand, does not justify the violation of the demilitarised status of the islands. Therefore,

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in the negotiation process where the problems at hand are to be handled, this matter should not be a bargaining or disputing point. This is not a prerequisite either, what both parties should do is the confirmation to adhere to the Treaty of Lausanne and other treaties. The two countries are already under this obligation and these treaties are legally valid.

To take the national security concerns as the only factor and to evaluate the relations within this framework would not be wrong, yet, it would be incomplete. But the main purpose of this paper is to analyse that the national security concerns have an important shaping role and that they are used in changing the *status quo*, which was formed in the Aegean Sea with the Lausanne Peace Treaty<sup>1</sup>. Within this framework, the issues which will be handled will be the causes for these two countries seeing each other as a source of threat with respect to their national safety and sovereignty, thus arming themselves.

Although they possess many common values, Turkey and Greece are two neighbouring countries, which have political, economic and legislative problems. They share the same geography and the same historical heritage, affected by a reciprocal influence. They have obtained this after the national independence wars and with the treaties signed the present *status quo* was created. This *status quo* is still legally valid but within the process it has been violated in act.

The basic treaty, which formed the *status quo* between Turkey and Greece, is the Treaty of Lausanne. Therefore, when the sensitivity shown by the two parties during the preparation of the Treaty is considered, we can see that Turkey persists in the determination which it showed during the national war and does not want another change in the national border line. The Lausanne Peace Treaty takes into consideration the concerns regarding the national security; in the status that was formed the most predominant is the acceptance of Turkey's security and territorial integrity and rights granted to the parties. During the Lausanne Conferences when we look at the points to be followed by the Turkish delegations we see that when the regimes of the islands surrounding Anatolia in the Aegean Sea and Turkey's security is in question, the solutions are either the demilitarised status<sup>2</sup> of these islands or they are to join Turkey; "...4) The islands: according to necessity, the immediate

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed information on the factors influential on Turkish-Greek relations see; Fuat Aksu, Türk-Yunan İlişkileri; İlişkilerin Yönelimini Etkileyen Faktörler Üzerine Bir İnceleme, Ankara: SAEMK Yayınları, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> According to Bilsel, "Managing without soldiers is a security and peace precaution which was brought up after the [First] World War. The Demilitarization of places or borders on which the presence of military power would be a threatening factor for the neighboring country, will pacify and make this country feel secure" When the sea and territorial borders of Turkey were being determined in the Lausanne Conferences and

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joining of the islands which are very close to our coasts inhabited or uninhabited. If it is not obtained, recurrence to Ankara for a way of action...7) A foreign military force in the Bosphorus and the Gallipolis Peninsula is unacceptable. If such a discussion is to be necessarily interrupted then before hand Ankara shall be consulted.”<sup>3</sup> When considered within this framework from the year 1923 when the Treaty of Lausanne was signed until the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, in the stipulations of the Treaty there have been developments against the safety of Turkey and these developments have also violated the stipulations. With the 1936 Royal Decree in Greece, which declared that the territorial water borders were increased to 6 miles instead of 3 has made a changing effect in the *status quo* of the two countries. At the time, the revisionist policies of Italy which aimed to expand along the Mediterranean as well as the endeavours shown to create friendship and cooperation between Turkey and Greece<sup>4</sup> has cast aside the fact that this decision taken by Greece was to impede and harm Turkey’s long term interests.

Within the process, there has been yet another development that has changed

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Turkey’s security was to be obtained via demilitarization, an expert was consulted regarding the terminology and the term “demilitarization” was analyzed. According to the French report prepared by the French General Maxime Weygand: “To eliminate misunderstandings caused by the concept of demilitarized areas, the following should be understood when such a region is mentioned: a) there should be no preparations concerning attacks or defense, this means that there are to be no military fortifications, ship yards, military supply storage, establishments used for military purposes b) other than policemen, customs officers, border guards and forces who are to maintain the internal order, there are to be no military forces and they are not to move around” Cemil Bilsel, Lozan, Cilt I – II, (Türk Basım) İstanbul: Sosyal Yayınlar, 1998, pp. 194-195. In the “...25/11/1921 Sitting of the Lausanne Conferences where the nautical border and opinions regarding the islands were put forth, İsmet Pasha explained the Turkish thesis regarding the islands in 2 steps: 1) İmbros [Gökçeada/mroz], Tenedos [Bozcaada] and Samothrace [Semadirek], as well as small and close islands should be given to Turkey 2) the remaining islands should be demilitarized, and also be neutral and autonomous.

According to the Pasha, the Mediterranean and Aegean islands are a part of Anatolia geographically and they are extremely important for Anatolia’s security. The islands are near the coast and they are small and big in size. For this reason those within the territorial water limits should be given to Turkey’s sovereignty. Because of its being near the Straits, Samothrace [Semadirek] should also be given to Turkey. Lemnos [Limni], Lesbos [Midilli], Chios [Sakz], Samos [Sisam] and Ahikerya [Nikarya] islands were ceded to Greece by the States. These islands are vitally important for Turkey’s safety. Economically, these should also be joined to Anatolia. For this reason, Turkey did not accept the decisions that were taken regarding these islands. The decisions regarding these islands are to be taken by the Big States; these decisions should be taken with respect to both countries security. The present decision does not satisfy Turkey. Greece’s world known ambitions on Anatolia, the artificial ambition created by the Greek government in its country to create another Greece in Anatolia has shown how dangerous it is for Turkey for these islands to belong to Greece. For peace these islands should be demilitarized and none should become naval bases. Turkey should be reassured on this account; these islands should be neutral and should have a political existence of their own. It is for such purposes that İsmet Pasha, did not ask for the islands again, but wanted to separate them from Greece and make them independent.” C. Bilsel, Lozan..., pp. 243-244.

<sup>3</sup> Atatürk’ün Milli Dış Politikası, Cilt I, Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1994, p. 497.  
<sup>4</sup> During the meetings held between the President, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the Greek Prime Minister, J. Metaxas on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 1937, opinions regarding the Balkan Entente and the Turkish-Greek Entente Cordial were exchanged, there were two sources of threat mentioned by both sides: the position of Bulgaria in the Balkans and Italy’s position in the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. On this subject see: Atatürk’ün Milli Dış Politikası, Cilt II, Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1994, pp. 361-373.

the *status quo* and the sovereignty borders in the Aegean Sea respecting only one of the parties concerned. This development occurred when Italy gave over of the Dodecanese with the 1947 Paris Treaty to Greece. This was accomplished by stipulating its demilitarised status. It is openly manifested that this continuation of the demilitarised status of these islands is a proof of the consideration of Turkey's ties with these islands and this country's security concerns.

When the developmental process of the relations between Turkey and Greece are taken into consideration, it is possible to say that divergences of opinions arose concerning the demilitarised status of the islands particularly regarding the status of Cyprus. In 1960, when Greece tried to take the Island over by Enosis, endeavouring to form the Cyprus Republic, thus violating the Zurich and London Treaties and when acts of violence against the Turkish population in the island were shown, it was visible that the mistrust of today was beginning to sharpen. In fact, in the justified reactions that Turkey showed to these acts of violence and particularly in the 1964, 67 crisis, the impediment of a military intervention by the USA had decreased the tension but it also demonstrated that battle between the two countries could start at any time. As a matter of fact, the two countries continued to prepare for any such occurrence and during these preparations what noticeable was the fact that Greece was trying to reinforce its military presence on the Island because of its distance to it geographically. At the same time Greece was getting ready for battle with Turkey in the Aegean Sea and Western Thrace and in order to be ready it was violating the demilitarised status of the islands.

After the coup against the archbishop Makarios in Cyprus, which was carried out with the help of the Greek military forces in 1974, who claimed to be the sole possessors of the Island, Turkey intervened with respect to its being the guarantor of the island by the treaties, thus because of this advent a new phase in the relations between the two countries began. The relations stiffened and there was an increase in the existing tension with the 1974 Cyprus events. Although this did not lead to battle it was demonstrative of the fact that the two countries would be striving for the sovereignty rights over Cyprus and in the Aegean Sea. A point which should not be disregarded is that while in the case of Cyprus the two parties faced each other for sovereignty rights of a certain part of a third country, the ongoing struggle in the Aegean Sea is to alter what has been already stipulated and determined by treaties.

In the period following 1974, the fact that the existing problems could not

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be dealt with and solved via peaceful means and diplomacy has reinforced the belief that they could obtain what they wanted with hot battle. The virtual facts have shown that in the quest of a solution both parties have been looking for compromises instead of trying to come to a consensus. Therefore, while creating *fait accompli, de facto* and trying to obtain tactical and strategic superiority, also they have tried to legitimise their struggle by showing effort and trying to form dialogues in the eyes of the public opinion. This period has been one of turbulence where the matters of dispute have been mainly over the Aegean Sea and the tension has increased from time to time.

In the period after the 1980's we see that the changes in the international political system have affected their relations deeply. The actualisation of the Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979, the 1980 *coup d'etat* of the Turkish Army, the rejoining of Greece to the NATO's military wing and its applying for full membership to the European Economic Community, as well as the undulations of the relations between the USA and the USSR, finally the collapse of the Soviets and such developments have all caused the changes of priority in their foreign policies.

When we came to the 1990's although the matters of dispute still remained unsolved, developments where the protection of the status between Turkey and Greece as two countries strategically important in the Aegean Sea, disregarding the security and interests of Turkey were occurring. Some of these occurring developments are as follows:

- After the collapse of the USSR, the process wherein the Central Asian countries gained their independence and related to this, the necessity of strengthening the political, military, and cultural ties between them and the Western countries, prevailed,
  - With the increase of countries that benefited from the Black Sea, the need to convey their economic values to international markets and therefore to use the Turkish Straits and the Aegean Sea has increased their strategic value,
  - In the Balkans, especially with the massacres of the Turkish-Muslim minorities that were carried out in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosova and Macedonia, the policy that Greece followed in these regions clashed with that of Turkey from time to time.
  - With the instability in the Balkans, the problems between the two countries and their being in conflict with respect to their interests resulted with
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the increase of the military preparations and therefore of the military preparations in the Aegean Sea were evident.

- The fact that the S300 missiles were to be stocked in Crete instead of the Greek Cyprus made it necessary for Turkey to revise the policies and strategies regarding the balance of power in the Aegean Sea.
- National security is not solely about the probability of a military attack, when the geographic position is considered, Turkey's endeavours to benefit from the Aegean Sea will also be endangered. The possible interruption of sea trade, aviation, benefiting from submarine and natural sources, military manoeuvres, sailing security, transit trade, tourism activities etc. are also taken as threatening factors.
- Some Greek islands in the Aegean Sea that are very close to the Turkish coasts are being used by terrorist groups in illegitimate passages.
- Drug trade and immigrant passages are being carried out through the islands are true facts.

### **The Concept of National Security and Turkey's National Security**

Within the international political system, when examined with respect to its process, an increase of the essential actors in number and kind is detectable. The augmentation of these actors who constitute the international society has also varied and condensed the relations among them. The increase of communication and transport facilities, parallel to technological developments, have also been the cause of the development of their relations. On the other hand, it has also brought to the surface an international system, which comprises numerous actors with conflicting interests. In such circumstances, the signification that has been given to the word security is no longer solely military.

The fact that Turkey regarded the militarization of the islands under the sovereignty of Greece in the Aegean Sea which, by the provision of various treaties should be demilitarised, as a threatening factor for its national security<sup>5</sup> is a perfectly natural response. Any other actor within the same international political system could have given this reaction. As also specified in the literature of the international relations, the most important point to be considered in the relations between the essential actors and other actors in the system is whether there is any threatening factor in the relation, if its security is in any danger. Other than the points we have mentioned, it is possible that there maybe other

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<sup>5</sup> The concept of "security" is relative and because it can be placed within a context and related only when it can be felt, brings about the problem of how to determine threat or a perception of threat with it. See; Roger Carey, "The Contemporary Nature of Security", Trevor C. Salmon, ed., *Issues in International Relations*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

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actions which have priority within the system. For instance, it is possible for an actor with aspirations to become an international power holder to follow policies, which aim to direct the system and convey its power, where the quest for respectability is prominent<sup>6</sup>. But what should not be disregarded is that when considered within the international system's development, the concerns of any two countries with respect to their security cannot be appeased unless they possess the same understanding. According to this; "A multi faceted, or common perception of security is based on the principle that no country can obtain nor increase its security without also increasing or rendering possible the other country's security...No country can be bereft of danger or exist in security if it considers the other countries as sources of threat for its security."<sup>7</sup>

When evaluated from Turkey's point of view, above everything else the fact that the islands in the Aegean have been armed and that concentration have been made, necessitates counter arming and precautions to be taken<sup>8</sup>. Within this perspective, "For a threat to be considered on a national security endangering basis some criteria have to be considered: 1) the type of threat, 2) how the country that is exposed to this threat perceives it, 3) the density of the threat."<sup>9</sup>

When shaping the actor's foreign policy behaviours, another issue other than the vital matters regarding its existence that must be seriously considered by the actor is security. To examine security only on a military basis would be incomplete, even though the security of a country does comprise all the other issues related to the system, essentially it is related to the military, political, economical, human and environmental influences<sup>10</sup>. Therefore with aims related to its existence the actor-here the nation-retains the right to take all the precautions that are necessary for its security, in face of all the possibilities of being under threat, far or near within the system. This situation causes for the strategies and tactics concerning the increase of power capacity to be determined and also it brings to the foreground the fact that other countries, which might be the source of the perception of threats, might also act similarly.

It is natural for Turkey to perceive the militarised status of the Aegean

<sup>6</sup> See; Faruk Sönmezoğlu, *Uluslararası Politika ve Dış Politika Analizi*, İstanbul: Filiz Yayınevi, 1995.

<sup>7</sup> Rana zci, "Uluslararası Güvenlik ve Çevre", *Uluslararası Politikada Yeni Alanlar Yeni Bakışlar*, ed. Faruk Sönmezoğlu, İstanbul: Der Yayınlar, 1998, pp. 403-421.

<sup>8</sup> Similarly, it could be said that Greece started its military preparations taking into account the balance of power in the Aegean Sea. Greece took into consideration its national security preoccupations and acted accordingly. What should not be disregarded here is the fact that the violations of the demilitarized status of the Aegean islands become a race for military preparations and power between the two countries.

<sup>9</sup> Rana zci, "Uluslararası Güvenlik ve Çevre...", p. 408.

<sup>10</sup> Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, 2nd ed., London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p.19.

islands, contrary to the treaties that determine their demilitarised status, as a source of threat. When the situation is considered from Turkey's point of view, the militarised status of these islands is not only a development that could be examined or handled on its sole military aspect. On the contrary, it is an attempt, which aims to change the balance of power between the two countries. Therefore this attempt, when the process is taken into consideration, is also reflective of Greece's return to its expansion policy and to the disadvantage of Turkey. In this respect, it can be said that the distribution of military power between Turkey and Greece reflects Turkey's superiority<sup>11</sup>. On the other hand, with respect to the other factors of power-particularly getting the support of the international public opinion, taking the other country under pressure-Greece has evident advantages over Turkey due to its relations with the alliances that it has made. Its membership to the EU and WEU, the activities and influential position of the Greek lobbies in the USA rendered it possible for them to shape the international public opinion against Turkey according to the wishes of Greece.

The degree of density of Turkey's national security concerns is, naturally, on the increase when there are moments of crisis and the matters that cannot be settled seem to lead to battle. The fact that the islands in the Aegean could be used as an impeding factor for the naval transportation of Turkey is a preoccupation that creates the necessity to always keep an eye on the islands. In fact, Turkey has taken the decision to develop an electronic early warning network and military radar to be on the alert for any possible attack. On the other hand, it is possible to consider the problems that arose between the Turkish and Greek military planes flying over the Aegean Sea in the same framework.<sup>12</sup>

Yet, when considered from another point of view, the multiple phased

<sup>11</sup> For an evaluation on the military power units that Turkey and Greece possess, see; <http://www.strategy.gr/english/defb5en.htm> Publishing date: 17.06.1999.

<sup>12</sup> Aiming to diminish the possibility of a battle and the tension that was experienced throughout these flights, in the 1999-2000 phase, during the reciprocal visits that occurred between Turkey and Greece, the issue of revising the security increasing precautions which had been initiated in 1998 in the Aegean Sea which had not been working out like they should have was brought up. The precautions that had been mentioned by Turkey during the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Papandreou's visit on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2000 had been regarded with the utmost precaution and care. Within the framework Turkey had proposed the two military forces to perform joint military operations, the battleships of both countries to visit the other country's ports, to increase the flow of information between the military forces, a red-line telephone to be set between the two countries' General Staff Headquarters, to decrease the number of military operations in the Aegean and asked for the military planes to fly unarmed. However, when evaluating these suggestions, the Greeks have shown a tendency to settle on the text upon which M. Yılmaz and K. Papulias had come to an agreement in 1988 to be more precise. For these suggestions see; Serkan Demirtafl, "Yeni Bir Gelecek Arayış", Cumhuriyet, 20 January 2000, p.9. ; Murat Çem, "Atina'da Bafar Beklentisi", Cumhuriyet, 20 January 2000, p.9; "Atina ile Yeni Dönem", Cumhuriyet, 21 January 2000, p.9; "Papandreou: Tabular Ykalım", Cumhuriyet, 22 January 2000, p.9; "Atina Öneriye Soak Bakıyor", Cumhuriyet, 3 February 2000, p.8.

relationships that Greece has started to develop with countries such as Iran, Syria and Armenia, which have problems with Turkey, is also a factor that increases the necessity for Turkey to protect its borders<sup>13</sup>. Following the military cooperation agreement that Greece signed with Syria, the news that Greece would be signing another military cooperation agreement with Iran and Armenia was spread around and this rumour was confirmed when the Greek Minister of Defence made a visit to Iran<sup>14</sup>. When its geographical position is considered, it can be seen that Turkey has many international problems with its neighbours. For instance, the PKK terrorist movement that was directed to Turkey from Iran, the trans-boundary waters issue and the issue of Hatay used to be brought to the foreground by Syria, rumors of groups claiming territorial rights on Anatolia, based on the Sevres Treaty and genocide claims by Armenia and other such problems affected the foreign policy of Turkey.

### **The Geo-strategic Position of the Aegean Sea and its Importance for Turkey**

When the present international political system's properties are considered, the proximity of the Aegean Sea to the military and economic battlefields, places the security concerns to the centre of Turkey's foreign policy<sup>15</sup>. After the Cold War period in Europe, the change of borders and balances of power due to wars in the Balkans and Central Asia, the problems that Turkey had with its neighbours necessitated the attentive protection of her national security.

As a country that has coasts on the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean, neighbouring countries watch her with different interests and aspirations, and while facing problems with them, the Aegean Sea exhibits an unparalleled strategic position for Turkey.

In the report prepared by the Greek Ministry of Defence, there are 3012 islands, rocks and islets and a 15.000 km long coastal line under the sovereignty

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<sup>13</sup> For an evaluation on this topic look; fitükrü Elekdağ, "2 1/2 War Strategy", Perceptions, March-May 1996, Volume III, N 4. pp.

<sup>14</sup> According to a press declaration made in Tehran on the 28th June, the Greek Minister of Defense Apostolos Athanasios-Tsoxhatzopoulos has declared that soon a defense cooperation agreement would be signed between Greece and Iran and Armenia, in order to preserve and build peace and consistency in the area. The agreement to be made on this issue was to be signed on the 12th of July 1999 in Athens on the first defense meeting to be made among the three countries. <http://www.stratfor.com/services/giu/070199.ASP> ; Publishing date: 17.08.1999.

<sup>15</sup> Erol Mütercimler, 21. Yüzyıl ve Türkiye, İstanbul: Güncel Yayınlar, 2000, pp. 296-298.

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of Greece, most of these border with the Anatolian coasts<sup>16</sup>. Those that are important for Turkey are the islands, which surround the Anatolian coasts and those that should be demilitarised according to treaties. The territorial border between Turkey and Greece is 203 km long, the Aegean coast border length extends from Dalaman River to Cape Kumkale is 2593 km and from Cape Kale to the Greek border is 212 km, which makes a total of 2805 km. The coastal length of the islands that belong to Turkey in the Aegean is 679 km<sup>17</sup>. Via the Turkish Straits, Dardanelle and Bosphorus, it is possible to connect the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea and the other warm seas, through the Aegean Sea.

When we consider the geo-strategic position of Turkey, it is possible to say that for the economic values in the Caucasus and Central Asia to reach the world market, Turkey acts as a passage. For this function to be carried out safely, stability in the region is also necessary. In this context, the strategies executed by Greece are disturbing the stability of the region. The issue that makes the risk of confrontation more visible, is the fact that Greece is trying to expand its territorial water border to 12 miles. Turkey accepts the attempt of Greece to widen the 6 miles border to 12 miles as a *casus belli* and is emphasizing its determination in the consequences of such an action<sup>18</sup>. Greece, on the other hand, claims its rights to expand the territorial water border to 12 miles making reference to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Therefore if Greece is to carry out its intentions this will render confrontation inevitable. These problematic issues cannot be solved, due to the fact that Greece considers them as national sovereignty issues and therefore keeps them out of discussion<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> There are different estimates as to the number of islands that Greece has under its domain. These numbers are shown to be between 2000-3000. Nevertheless, it can be seen that this number is exaggerated. When the total of island, rocks and islets under their domain is 1410 the number of islands for Turkey is 360. About 170-200 islands, rocks and islets have not been given over to Greece with any treaty and with regards to the succession to the Ottoman State, Turkey claims them. For discussions on islands, rocks and islets over which sovereignty is a problematic issue, see; Ali Kurumahmut (Ed.), *Ege'de Temel Sorun Egemenlik Tartımlar* Adalar, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1998. For data on the features of islands that belong to Greece, see; Islands of Greece, UN System-Wide Earthwatch. Web Site Island Directory, <http://www.unep.ch/islands/IBQ.htm> Publishing date, 01.07.1999. For the regional population distributions of Greece and for its features see; <http://www.statistic.gr/en/data/tables/table14.htm> Publishing date: 17.06.1999. According to the information in this source there are 456.712 people on the Aegean Islands.

<sup>17</sup> Türkiye İstatistik Yılı, Ankara: Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Yayınlar, 1997, p.4

<sup>18</sup> For instance the TBMM, with the decision taken on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1995 has openly specified its opinion and has given the government full authority including military precautions.

<sup>19</sup> Another probability for Turkey is to choose this way and to accept the International Court of Justice's judgment in the solution of this problem. But Turkey is against this pointing out that no solution can be obtained and that such a remedy should be sought only when the two parties agree on the problems at hand. Nevertheless, with the acceptance of Turkey's full candidacy to the EU on 11th of December 1999 in the Helsinki Summit, an important development came to the foreground. According to this, Turkey would sort

In addition to this, another issue that can be mentioned is the Kardak Rocks and the decision to be taken concerning the status of the islands, islets and rocks, which have not been hitherto determined by any treaty. This issue is about the sovereignty borders of both country and it is about altering the present *status quo*. Like the other problems arising between the two countries this has not been yet solved. As noted in the Kardak crisis, this problem can also lead to a battle and the tension may rise, so, this could also be taken as an intrusion to the national territories, and it is essential to consider the possibility for these developments to become a violent confrontation<sup>20</sup>.

In this framework, it is possible to consider as natural the quest for superiority of both countries in a battle that may break out. Also, the fact that Turkey may attack the militarised islands in the Aegean if a battle does indeed break out, and that it may invade the many Greek islands which are extremely near Anatolia, are possibilities that are being talked about and if such were indeed the case, then it would also mean that the *status quo* in the Aegean and the stability would be hindered and destroyed.

### **Turkey's Security Considerations and Demilitarisation Status of the Aegean Islands According to the Lausanne Treaty**

The problem that arose between Turkey and Greece regarding the demilitarised status of the islands stemmed from the fact that the stability that was formed in the Lausanne Treaty was being altered.

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out the problems with Greece via peaceful methods. If this would not to be possible then both countries will recur to the ICJ. According to the 4<sup>th</sup> article of the text concerning expansion, "... European Council stresses the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter and urges candidate States to make every effort to resolve any outstanding border disputes and other related issues. Failing this they should within a reasonable time bring the dispute to the International Court of Justice. The European Council will review the situation relating to any outstanding disputes, in particular concerning the repercussions on the accession process and in order to promote their settlement through the International Court of Justice, at the latest by the end of 2004. Moreover, the European Council recalls that compliance with the political criteria laid down at the Copenhagen European Council is a prerequisite for the opening of accession negotiations and that compliance with all the Copenhagen criteria is the basis for accession to the Union" [http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p\\_action.gettxt=gt&doc=PRES/99/99910IRAPID&lg=EN](http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=PRES/99/99910IRAPID&lg=EN) <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/Turk-%20AB/helsinki.htm> ; P. Date: 15 June 2001; (the emphasis belongs to me, F. Aksu) Although Greece tends to consider the year 2004 as the date when it will take the problems with Turkey to the International Court of Justice, Turkey sees the date as the date when the EU is to reconsider the issue. For evaluations on this subject, see; F. Aksu, *Türk-Yunan İlişkileri...*, pp 116-122.

<sup>20</sup> The risk of hot [violent confrontation] is a sensitive subject for the countries and organizations with which the two countries are in alliance. For this subject see; Monteaegle Stearns, "The Security Domain A US Perspective", *Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization*, Eds. Dimitris Keridis and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, *The IFPA-Kokkalis Series on Southeast European Policy*, Volume 1, 2001.

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Three essential agreements can be underlined concerning the islands, which were ceded to the sovereignty of Greece. The first of these, is the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, according to the 12<sup>th</sup> article “The decision taken on the 13th February, 1914, by the Conference of London, in virtue of Articles of the Treaty of London of the 17<sup>th</sup>–30<sup>th</sup> May, 1913, and Article 15 of the Treaty Athens of the 1<sup>st</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> November, 1913, decision of which was communicated to the Greek Government on the 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1914, regarding the sovereignty of Greece over the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean, other than the islands of Imbros, Tenedos and Rabbit Islands, particularly the islands of Lemnos [Limni], Samothrace [Semadirek], Lesbos [Midilli], Chios [Sakız], Samos [Sisam] and Ahikerya [Nikarya] was confirmed, subject to the provisions of the present Treaty respecting the islands placed under the sovereignty of Italy as from the content of Article 15.”<sup>21</sup>

The 13<sup>th</sup> article of the same agreement states: “With a view to ensuring the maintenance of peace, the Greek Government undertakes to observe the following restrictions in the islands of Mytilene, Chios, Samos and Nikaria: (1) No naval base and no fortification will be established in the said islands. (2) Greek military aircraft will be forbidden to fly over the territory of the Anatolian coast. Reciprocally, the Turkish Government will forbid their military aircraft to fly over the said islands. (3) The Greek military forces in the said islands will be limited to the normal contingent called up for military service, which can be trained on the spot, as well as to a force of gendarmes and police in proportion to the force of gendarmes and police existing in the whole of the Greek territory.”<sup>22</sup>

The second agreement that was made with reference to this issue is the 1923 the Convention of the Turkish Straits annexed to the Lausanne Treaty. According to the 4<sup>th</sup> article of the Convention, “in the Aegean Sea, the islands of Samothrace, Lemnos, Imbros, Tenedos and Rabbit Islands will be demilitarised” In the 6<sup>th</sup> article of the convention the conditions for demilitarisation and the status were determined<sup>23</sup>.

### **The Continuation of the Demilitarised Status of the Dodecanese Islands According to the 1947 Paris Treaty**

Another treaty that dealt with the demilitarisation of the Dodecanese Islands

21 <small Soysal, Türkiye'nin Siyasal Antlaşmalar>, Cilt I, Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1998, pp. 89-90.

22 <. Soysal, Türkiye'nin Siyasal Antlaşmalar> Cilt I..., p. 90.

23 For the discussions on the militarization of the Lemnos Island, see; Aslan Gündüz, Limni Adasının Hukuki Statüsü Üzerine Türk-Yunan Uyuşmazlığı, İstanbul: Ota Yayınları, 1985.

that were ceded to Greece in the Aegean is the 1947 Paris Treaty. “With reference to the 14<sup>th</sup> article of the Paris treaty and according to the XIII. Addendum, it is paramount that the 12 islands be demilitarised in the strictest sense of the word. It is forbidden for there to be any military base, facility to be built and also it is forbidden to produce arms and give military training.”<sup>24</sup>

As it is, the discussions concerning the demilitarised status of the Dodecanese Islands are brought up by creating actual events. For instance, in May 2001, before the ceremonies to be held in Turkey’s Aksaz base, Turkey rejected the flight plan of the Greek commander, who was to fly from Rhodes to Turkey to attend a NATO ceremony at the Aksaz Naval Base, because it would hinder the demilitarised status of the island in question<sup>25</sup>.

### **How the Two Countries Perceive the Treaties**

The fact that Greece started arming of the islands against the stipulations of the treaties also necessitated a legal support and explanation for such an action. We could state the views upon which Greece grounds its advent to militarise the islands as such.

The assumption that the conditions under which the treaties which required the demilitarised status of the islands had changed and that the development of peace, cooperation and friendship between the two countries after the war, rendered them non valid<sup>26</sup>. In 1936 Turkey requested that the Convention of the Turkish Straits annexed to the Lausanne Treaty be changed because the international conditions of the period and the developments in the Mediterranean necessitated such changes. After this the 1936 Montreux Convention was prepared. Therefore the fact that conditions have changed could also be used to justify the militarization of the islands. Other than this, the international and regional power changes occurred after the Second World War have demonstrated that radical changes have also occurred in the conditions under which the treaties were signed. Turkey and Greece did not stay out of these changes and they became a part of the NATO defence system. In relation to this, the fact that the NATO has created a general security system for Turkey and Greece has resulted in the neutralization of the demilitarised status of the islands.

<sup>24</sup> Hüseyin Pazarcı, “Ege Adalarının Hukuksal Statüsü”, A.Ü. SBF Dergisi, Cilt LXIII, No.3-4, Temmuz-Aralık, 1998, p.153.

<sup>25</sup> On this subject, see; Murat Dem, “Yunan ile Rodos Krizi”, Cumhuriyet, 9 May 2001, p.11. ; Mehmet Emin Berber, “Yunan Komutanın ‘hlal’ Girişimi”, Cumhuriyet, 15 May 2001, p 6.; “Turkey Rejects the Flight Plan of Greek Navy Commander Via Rhodes”, <http://www.turkishdailynews.com/FrTDN/latest/for.htm> , P. Date: 10 May 2001.

<sup>26</sup> H. Pazarcı, “Ege Adalarının Hukuksal...” pp.153-157.

Greece put forth the assumption that the replacement of the Convention of the Turkish Straits with the 1936 Montreux Convention has also annulled the articles that concerned the demilitarised status of the islands. According to Greece, Turkey has militarised the islands in front of the Dardanelle Strait and the Turkish Straits. The same right belongs to Greece and therefore Greece can militarise the Lemnos and Samothrace Islands.

Yet another pretext put forth within the same frame was the declaration made by the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs T.R Aras on the 31st of July 1936 concerning the acceptance of the Montreux Convention, with which the Turkish Straits region could be militarised and the following declaration made by Greece where it stated that the Samothrace and Lemnos Islands could be also militarised due to the same conditions. "Greece knows that the words of T. R. Aras constitute the true meaning and interpretation of the Montreux Convention and that the mentioned islands can also be armed with the same agreement."<sup>27</sup>

Another pretext that Greece put forth is the fact that Turkey has armed the islands in front of the Straits with reference to the Montreux Convention. According to Greece, the fact that all the islands' statuses are organized the same way and therefore Greece has the right to militarise Lemnos and Samothrace Islands<sup>28</sup>.

Besides all these facts, another assumption that Greece brought up concerning the Dodecanese Islands is the fact that since Turkey was not a party in the Paris Treaty in 1947 it cannot protest the militarization of the islands by referring to the treaty. According to Greece's approach, rights and obligations can only arise between the parties that have signed it and that therefore any third party who did not sign does not have the right to take advantage of it. Thus, Greece claims that since Italy, which had been demilitarised, with the Paris Peace Treaty in 1947 had started militarising itself since 1950 and that this fact created a difference in the status, so Greece would not adhere to the stipulations that necessitated the demilitarised status of the Dodecanese Islands.

<sup>24</sup> Hüseyin Pazarcı, "Ege Adaların Hukuksal Statüsü", A.Ü. SBF Dergisi, Cilt LXIII, No.3-4, Temmuz-Aralık, 1998, p.153.

<sup>25</sup> On this subject, see; Murat Dem, "Yunan ile Rodos Krizi", Cumhuriyet, 9 May 2001, p.11. ; Mehmet Emin Berber, "Yunan Komutanın 'İhlal' Girişimi", Cumhuriyet, 15 May 2001, p 6.; "Turkey Rejects the Flight Plan of Greek Navy Commander Via Rhodes", <http://www.turkishdailynews.com/FrTDN/latest/for.htm> , P. Date: 10 May 2001.

<sup>26</sup> H. Pazarcı, "Ege Adaların Hukuksal..." pp.153-157.

<sup>27</sup> H. Pazarcı, "Ege Adaların Hukuksal..." pp.156-157.

<sup>28</sup> Hüseyin Pazarcı, "Ege Adaların Lozan ve Paris Antlaşmalarıyla Saptanan Askerden Arındırılmış Statüsü Değişmiş midir?" A.Ü. SBF Dergisi, Cilt LXIII, No.3-4, Temmuz-Aralık 1998, p.216.

The assumptions regarding the self-defence right, given by the UN were: “Especially after the 1947 Cyprus events, Greece has claimed that Turkey constitutes a source of threat for the East Aegean islands and it is making this fact the milestone of its assumption. According to the 51st article of the UN Chart, the countries which are its members have the right to make legitimate defence and thus with reference to this article Greece is stating its right to militarise the islands.”<sup>29</sup>

In face of the assumptions that Greece came up with, Turkey defended its case by stating that the treaties concerning the demilitarised status of the islands were valid. Turkey insisted that the conditions that were valid at the time these treaties were signed and the conditions of the day were not at all different with respect to Turkey’s interests, security and defence. The fact that the relations between the two countries were undulating from mild to stern and the balance that was obtained with the treaties were of vital importance for both, increased the doubts that any alteration in the existing balance would lead to combat. The fact that there were no easily found solutions to the problems between the two countries also increased the doubts. Contrary to the assumptions that were made by Greece, it was not possible to apply Turkey’s view prevalent in the Montreux Convention where it stated that the existing conditions had changed to Greece’s case with the islands. In fact, there really is a status difference between the Greek islands and the Straits because with the Convention of the Turkish Straits annexed to the Lausanne Treaty it was put under the League of Nation and the big states’ warranty. Within this perspective, one of the most important issues for Turkey after 1930, was the active security of the Straits and how it could be defended was always deeply felt. Due to this, when faced with the risk of losing the security that the Convention of the Turkish Straits annexed to the Lausanne Treaty offered, Turkey conveyed to the countries that had signed the Convention its wish to make a new agreement, which would once again establish its control over the Straits and also would ensure that peace and security prevailed. Thus, the Montreux Convention was prepared in order to establish the sovereignty rights of Turkey on the Straits and to guarantee Turkey’s safety and security. What is more, Greece had not asked for a re-organization of the demilitarised status of the islands by pressing the fact that conditions had changed, from the countries that had signed the Lausanne Treaty and had not asked for them to declare their consent on its schemes to militarise the islands at all<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> H. Pazarcı, “Ege Adaları’nın Hukuksal...” p.160.

<sup>30</sup> For discussions on this subject see. H. Pazarcı, “Ege Adaları’nın Hukuksal...”; H. Pazarcı “Ege Adaları’nın Lozan...”; Aydoğan Özman, “Lozan Antlaşmalarında Ege Adaları’nın Hukuki Statüsü”, A.Ü. SBF Dergisi, Cilt LXIII, No. 2-4 Temmuz-Aralık 1998, pp. 197-207. For legal discussion particularly concerning the Eastern Aegean Islands see, Hüseyin Pazarcı, *Doğu Ege Adaları’nın Askerden Arındırılması Statüsü*, Ankara: Turhan Yayinevi, 1992. For discussions related to the Lemnos Island, see: A. Gündüz, *Limni Adası’nın...*,

The fact that international conditions have changed and that Turkey and Greece are now under the defence system of the NATO does not give Greece the right to militarise the islands, violating the treaties. “The NATO Treaty is in no way suggestive of the fact that the parties involved can in any way assume that the demilitarisation articles are annulled. On the contrary, in the 8th article in order to convey that there are no statements that contradict this Pact between the two parties involved, it also stresses the fact that the related demilitarisation edicts that were valid at time the two countries’ joined the Pact do not create a legal conflict.”<sup>31</sup>

There are various approaches as to the speech made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs T.R. Aras concerning the replacement of the Convention of the Turkish Straits annexed to the Lausanne Treaty with the Montreux Convention and how this gives Greece the right to militarise Samothrace and Lemnos. In reality, whether this evaluation is or is not personal, is a matter of dispute. For this matter is to concern Turkey, and for Greece to be able to militarise the islands all the countries that have signed the agreement should agree to it, and this is not the case.

Even if we were to accept the assumption put forth by Greece while militarising the islands, as to how the replacement of the Convention of the Turkish Straits annexed to the Lausanne Treaty with the Montreux Convention results with the annulment of the former, the fact that the Lausanne Peace Treaty’s 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> articles are still valid, brings upon Greece the obligation to demilitarise the islands.

The views upon which Greece rests its case while militarising the Dodecanese Islands are not acceptable for Turkey. In fact, although Turkey was not one of the countries that signed the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty, due to the 16th article of the Lausanne Peace Treaty, it has to accept the change in the statuses of the islands in cases when Turkey is not one of the parties in the concerning treaty or pact. In this framework, Turkey holds the right, even if partially, to take advantage of the stipulations of the Paris Peace Treaty. Furthermore, by stating that Greece is violating the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty and militarising the Dodecanese Islands, Turkey is resting its case on the truth that this treaty is creating an objective status with respect to international law. And taking this as a starting point, Turkey claims that although it is not one of the countries to sign the Treaty it has informed Greece that the stipulations which were put in order to protect third countries’ rights and interests were applicable to itself as well.

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<sup>31</sup> H. Pazarcı, “Ege Adaların Hukuksal...,” p.155.

The right of legitimate defence, as stipulated in the 51<sup>st</sup> article of the UN, was emphasized often, after 1974, during the period when Greece endeavoured to militarise the islands<sup>32</sup>. This article is far from granting Greece the right to militarise the islands.

“Initially, in the 51st Article of the UN Charter after accepting the right of self-defence as an inherent right, it goes about defining the way this right should be applied and sought. Primarily this right can only be used when there is an armed attack. Therefore, using the right of self- defence when there is a threat is out of the question. Also, the nature of the right of self- defence necessitates that in case of an armed attack there can be an armed response. If there is no such attack, the right of self- defence is automatically out of the question. In this perspective the endeavours to militarise the islands have no ground within the legitimate defence right.”<sup>33</sup>

On the other hand, merely a perception of threat is not sufficient for a country to use its right of legitimate defence. There has to be an armed attack. Even when there is a virtual attack, in case of a solution where there is no need to give an armed response, the right of legitimate defence ends. In the Convention of the Turkish Straits annexed to the Lausanne Treaty as is stipulated in the 9th article, the parties are expected to comply with the following: “If, in case of war, Turkey, or Greece, in pursuance of their belligerent rights, should modify in any way the provisions of demilitarisation prescribed above, they will be bound to re-establish as soon as peace is concluded the regime laid down in the present Convention.”<sup>34</sup>

The militarization issue of these islands, which are under the sovereignty of Greece, began to stiffen after the 1974 Turkish Intervention to Cyprus. The relations led to dense arguements as well as a race where the two

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<sup>32</sup> The edict of the 51st law in the Chapter VII of the UN Charter, titled Action With Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, And Acts of Aggression stipulates that : “Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defense shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.” Ismail Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Siyasal Bağlantıları*, Cilt II (1945-1990), Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1991 p.50; <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupe/ed/eda/eda03e.htm> (the emphasis belongs to me: F. Aksu) When considered within this frame, it is also apparent that Greece should, without delay, inform the Council of the militarization of the islands, in the Aegean, due to its self-defence right. This situation is not clear.

<sup>33</sup> H. Pazarcı, “Ege Adalarının Hukuksal...” p.160.

<sup>34</sup> İ. Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Antlaşmaları*, Cilt I..., p. 148.

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parties tried to reach each other in the militarization speed. The fact that the problems at hand could not be solved through peaceful, just and permanent means not only increased the lack of trust, but also sharpened the belief that the only way to an expedient solution would be through war. As a result Turkey formed a military force besides the one given to the service of NATO and these forces, which were named as the Aegean Army (The Fourth Army) and placed in the Aegean region. These forces were capable of conducting amphibian operations and they gave rise to speculations in Greece. These speculations claimed that Turkey would claim rights on the islands that were near Turkey and that they were only waiting for the right time. The suspicions in the Greek public opinion against Turkey and the negative conceptions for the *junta* period Greek army, brought to the foreground the need to reform it. On the other hand, attempts to bolster the national unity and to strengthen the ties among the army-populace-government with a nationalistic approach prevailed. This, in turn, caused the spread of the propaganda that Turkey was a continual source of threat and also it resulted in speedy militarization. These developments have facilitated the militarization process of the islands, by disregarding the treaties, which defined their status for Greece. To be prepared for a possible attack from the Turkish army, the concern to ensure safety and sovereignty over its own lands has resulted in the stipulations of the treaties concerning the demilitarised status of the islands, to be overlooked<sup>35</sup>.

### **Turkey's Security within the Framework of the Greek Defence Policy and Military Cooperation Attempts**

Even though both countries are the members of the NATO defence system, the international connections to which they are allies were not sufficient in solving their problems. The regional-international organizations such as the EU and NATO where both Greece and Turkey are parties involved, have caused these countries to seek support for their national approaches. The fact that the problems could not be solved and the race for militarization between the two countries can result in the hindrance of the endeavours shown by the NATO in trying to establish the national and regional security. Greece and Turkey being the countries, which constitute the southeastern flank of the NATO alliance

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<sup>35</sup> In the news it was said that the demilitarized statuses of the islands were being violated, against the treaties and that in a possible war, the people who lived in these islands would be used as a pretext. For example, the Patmos Island, which is situated in the Dodecanese Islands' region, was taken out of the border region status and was given the status of a tourist region by the Ministry of Health and Welfare and this drew negative response due to their having increased the tax of the inhabitants. Some of the inhabitants protested this by leaving the arms that had been supplied to them by the army at the door of the military regiments. Yorgo Kurbaki, "12 Ada'da Suçüstü", Milliyet, 16 May 2001.

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and defence system; the disputes between these countries, especially concerning the demilitarisation of the islands is creating new problems during the NATO defence plan preparations, the planning of military applications as well as during the military and economic investments that are planned to be made in both countries. This is mainly because both countries veto each other and this naturally creates new problems within the alliance<sup>36</sup>. The harsh political and legislative discussions that go on between the two countries give way to divergence of opinion within the alliance and from time to time a detachment or lack of communication is experienced in the Southeastern flank of NATO.

When the same issue is looked at from another perspective, the ongoing discussions between the two countries demonstrate that they have reached a viscous circle. To justify its endeavours to militarise the islands Greece affirms that Turkey holds the power and capability to make an amphibian military operation against the Greek islands and it points at the Aegean army as being created apropos, to be later utilized for the invasion of the islands as it happened with Cyprus. For this reason, the articles in the treaties, which deal with the demilitarised status of the Aegean islands, do not hold any importance for Greece since its territorial safety is in danger. The counter argument brought up by Turkey is that since 1960 Greece has started to militarise the islands, violating the treaties whereas the Aegean Army was formed in 1975. Turkey has stated that it has no claims on the lands of Greece and has accused Greece of militarising the islands against the stipulations in the treaties that were signed. Also, by doing this, Greece has also altered the balance that was formed between the two countries to its advantage. In a probable Turkish-Greek war, it is more than obvious that aiming to obtain a definite result promptly, the war will be conducted on air instead of land and it is also obvious that the missile system in such a war is of extreme importance. At this point, it could be thought that the Greek Military Forces will not think of a land assault, at least not in the Aegean. The military ammunition and attack or defence oriented military concentrations that will be formed on the islands will mostly be related to the missile systems and air forces. For this reason, however great Turkey's military power may be, for exterior reasons, the war will not last for long and it will be unwanted; But if it were to break out, the party, which would have the greater loss in the shortest time span would naturally lose and the party, which would be the cause of such destruction, would be the "victor". In such a circumstance the scattered position and the numerosity of the islands, not to mention their vicinity to the Turkish coasts gives them a strategic importance and Turkey evaluates this as a factor always to be taken into account.

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<sup>36</sup> The desire to include Lemnos and Gavdos Islands to the NATO Defense plan and the request that the forces placed by Greece be added to the NATO plans and Turkey's reactions are good examples to this.

Within this framework, the issue of the militarization of the islands is an issue, which in reality reflects excellently the mistrust between the two countries. Also it reflects the endeavour to obtain superiority in the strategic balance of power or at least to balance the power. It can be assumed that as long as the two countries hold the means to maintain the balance of power they will keep on their endeavours .

Therefore the new defence system is devised by Greece to encounter the perceptions of threat which assumedly arise from Turkey. According to Greece the threat no longer comes from the north, from the USSR/Warsaw Pact but from the east, from Turkey<sup>37</sup>.

In the White Paper For Armed Forces prepared by the Greek Ministry of Defence, Greece's national security concerns and strategies to be followed by the Greek Military Forces as well as the justifications for these are as follows:

“Greece is unfortunately obliged to confront the challenges of a hanging international environment, at the same time, to face Turkey's policies against Greece and Cyprus.

The revisionist policy of Turkey towards Greece, as demonstrated in the Aegean, Cyprus and Thrace causes serious concern and is considered as the most significant threat against Greek security. By disputing the legal sovereignty rights of Greece, by violating its national territory, -almost on a daily basis- and by twisting the international law principles, Turkey aims at convincing the international community that there are serious differences between the two countries, with the aim of changing through negotiations, the *status quo* in the area to Greece's disadvantage. Among Turkey's ambitions are the extension of its operational responsibility boundaries in the Aegean, within the NATO framework, the extension of its FIR westwards, the extension of the research and rescue boundaries, the changing of the territorial *status quo* in areas of the Aegean (a first step is the attempt to create "grey" zones) and the co-exploitation of the Continental Shelf. At the same time, it openly threatens Greece with war in case the latter decides to exercise its legal right (according to Article 3 of the new Law of the Sea) to extend its territorial waters from 6 to 12 miles. Turkey is clearly escalating a tension strategy as shown by its provocations and claims

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<sup>37</sup> On this subject see: White Paper for the Armed Forces; <http://www.md.gr/english/index.htm> ; After the détente process between Turkey and Greece, this paper is looked over, but mainly considers, priorities and strategies did not change. On the security doctrine of Greece see; Thanos Dakos, “Greek Security Doctrine in the Post-Cold War Era”, <http://www.mfa.gr/thesis/summer98/security.htm> P. Date. 02.03.1999.

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concerning the Imia rock islets that brought the two Countries on the brink of war, the unprecedented challenge of the Hellenic sovereignty of Gavdos (which Turkey was forced to withdraw because of Greek and International reactions) and of other islets and islands as well as the cold - blooded murders of civilians in Cyprus, in August 1996.”

Within this framework the Greek National Strategy contains the following principles:

- The deterrence of any external threat.
- The support of the country’s European course.
- The support of the country’s position in the Balkans with a view to its gradually becoming European Union’s Balkan gateway.
- The active presence of Greece in the area of the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean.
- The development of an active and dynamic defence diplomacy aiming at promoting civil security, peace and cooperation in the area of Balkans, Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean...
- Active participation in all international organizations.
- The presence of Greece as the metropolitan centre of Hellenism, that takes the necessary initiatives to mobilise the Hellenes around the world,

Within the frame of the view in the defence policy of Greece, “It [Greece] considers the survival of the Cypriot Hellenism, and the guarantee of its security to be a national duty of and a vital interest” and also that “Guarantee Cypriot Hellenism’s security and concern about the Hellenic minority’s security abroad” are among the aims of the national defence policy of this country. According to the Greek National Military Strategy, “The central axis of the Greek military strategy is the deterrence of the Turkish threat as well as of the dangers and risks stemming from other directions, in combination with the policy of relaxing the tensions.” Regarding deterrence of the threats, “As a result, Greece’s national strategy consists of three elements; ‘defensive sufficient’, ‘flexible response’ and the country’s ability to effectively cover the ‘Greece-Cyprus Joint Defence Area’.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> The Doctrine of Joint Defense Area between Greece and Greek Cyprus was signed in 1994. Within the framework of this doctrine Turkey’s military presence in the island would increase but so should the cooperation. Any attack to the Greek Cyprus will be considered as a “casus belli”. In this frame, cooperation between the Greece and the Greek Cyprus military forces and the development of training on a common basis will be ensured. See; T. Dakos, “Greek Security Doctrine...,”

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### The Placement of the S-300 Missiles in Cyprus and the Crete Solution

Since the years 1996-97 it is possible to talk of two important projects in Cyprus, in the frame of the Greece and the Greek Cypriot Joint Defence Doctrine. The first of these is to form an aviation base, which can be used by the Greek Air Forces, the other development can be said to be the S-300PMU-1 TMD missile systems that were to be bought from Russia and placed on the island<sup>39</sup>. Greek Cypriot administration specified its hopes of placing the missiles on the island between October and November 1998 with the assistance of Russian technicians. Following these announcements Turkey has opposed this with the pretext that it would disrupt the balance of power and that Turkey would not hesitate in showing the appropriate response including military intervention if necessary<sup>40</sup>.

According to Turkey's views, the placing of the S-300 missiles on the island does not only jeopardize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus but also Turkey's security. The fact that there will be Russian technicians who will come to erect these missile systems and provide training as well as technical support in southern Cyprus is a disrupting factor over the military movement capacities of the Turkish, English and Greek military forces using the NATO warning and security codes. It will definitely increase the Russian activities and influence in the Mediterranean.

Also this decision created the negative response of many NATO countries such as the USA. Finally, it was decided for the missiles to be placed in an island in the Aegean, Crete and the focus shifted from Cyprus to the Aegean Sea. The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yiannos Kranidiotis, in an announcement he made stated that the renunciation to the placement of the missiles in Cyprus would not harm the Greece - Greek Cyprus Joint Defence Doctrine signed between the two governments. Kranidiotis, in a declaration made to the Cyprus News Agency stated that Greece would protect Cyprus's interest as much as they regard Hellenism and that any aggressive act of Turkey towards Cyprus will be regarded as *casus belli*<sup>41</sup>.

Within this perspective, it can be said that the declaration that Greece and the Greek Cyprus to place the S-300 missile system is a tactic designed

<sup>39</sup> For more detailed information on S-300PMU-1TMA Systems, see; "The Russian S-300PMU-1TMD System", <http://www.cns.edu/research/cyprus/s300tdmms.htm>.

<sup>40</sup> For an analysis on the effects of the S-300 missiles over the Turkish-Greek relations see; Gülden S. Ayman, *Türkiye'nin Siyasetine Bir Örnek:S-300 Krizi*, Ankara: Avrasya Bir Vakfı Asam Yayınları, 2000.

<sup>41</sup> See: <http://mfa.gr/ykran/1998/s300981231.htm>

to augment its negotiation grounds and power over Turkey. As it was specified by Kranidiotis: “Our primary target should be the implementation of the two UN Security Council resolutions as well as the good use of the positive elements they contain...our second target should be the withdrawal of the USA made armaments, which the Turkish-occupied forces on Cyprus own in violation of US law... Greece would exercise pressure for the withdrawal of the US-made armaments from the island...the third target is to promote Cyprus’ accession course (to the European Union), which is the catalyst in the developments for the Cyprus problem.”<sup>42</sup>

In fact, as a result of withdrawing the missiles upon the reaction of firstly Turkey and then the USA and other NATO countries, Greece has tried to put forth the counter condition of the evacuation of all the military forces on the island for the missiles to be placed elsewhere<sup>43</sup>.

## Conclusion

The fact that Greece is violating the demilitarised status of the islands as stipulated in the treaties that determined the status of islands under the sovereignty of Greece in the Aegean cannot be considered as a simple violation of a treaty. Even if the legislative violation is to be taken aside, in reality when the nature of problems that are being experienced between the two countries are taken into consideration, the probability of hot battle, might lead both countries to a viscous circle. The two parties are preparing for battle and officially bringing to the foreground their national security concerns. Turkey’s rightfulness, especially when the treaties still valid are considered, is evident. Nevertheless, there is another truth and that is the fact that military preparations render the reaching of a solution more difficult. When the power balance in the Aegean is considered and the strategic interests are viewed, it is really difficult for the countries to stop this race in getting ready for any occurrence. In the steps taken from 1988 on, for increasing security precautions, the fact that there have not been any endeavours of these countries for the solution of the problems, still carries the probability of war. On the other hand, if the precautions were successful and Greece declared that it would not extend its 6 mile territorial water borders to 12 miles and it would demilitarise the islands in the Aegean, then it would be also possible for Turkey to convey (the Aegean army which is distressing for Greece in terms of its national security), to the Black Sea or the Mediterranean. Even though this situation would not solve everything it

<sup>42</sup> See; <http://mfa.gr/ykran/1998/s300981231.htm>

<sup>43</sup> On this subject see; “Missiles off to Crete, is Peace any Nearer?”, <http://www.turinfonet.org.tr/frame/articles/missiles.html>, P. Date: 27.07.1999.

would be helpful in creating trust for reverting to the peaceful methods and endeavours.

In case this situation does not occur, the continual creation of acts to reach national strategies and the military preparations will be inevitable. In fact it has been observed that in points where the national sovereignty is in question both countries are very sensitive.

Within the framework of the amicable relations initiated in January and February 2000, in the official visits exchanged by the Turkish and Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, the suggestions regarding the precaution measures to be taken for the augmentation of security, are all based upon the fading of events that may create tension in the Aegean. When taken from this point of view, if the serious approaches of both countries in the attempt to create milder relations were successful, then it would also be possible to take under control the military balance of power and armament. Also, if the proposal of a Security Committee in the Aegean submitted by the then Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, I. Cem were met with approval by Greece, it would be possible to say that the chances of success of a process aiming to diminish the security concerns would be tenfold. Still, the chances of a general demilitarisation in the Aegean are weak. In spite of this, with the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, G. Papandreou's visit to Ankara in April 2001, the news that Greece would cut down on the budget concerning militarization was spread around<sup>44</sup>. Similarly, it was also anticipated that Turkey would solve its economical crisis by decreasing the armament expenses.

On the other hand, that the matters of dispute between the two countries could be solved within the framework of the EU is also a possibility, although rather weak. The possibility of a solution to these problems by the year 2004 either by reciprocal meetings or by applying to the ICJ, when the sensitivity of the two parties is considered, is extremely difficult. Neither Greece nor Turkey will make one-sided declarations where the former affirms that it renounces to its plans of increasing the territorial water borders to 12 miles and the latter affirms that it no longer sees it as a reason for waging war. For

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<sup>44</sup> On April 2001, in the press there were news about the cut down on military expenses by Greece. It was also discussed that Turkey would do the same due to the economic crisis and the stability programme that it followed within the IMF framework. Although these are hope raising they should not be expected to yield immediate results. In fact the Turkish Minister of Defense, S. Çakmakoglu has specified that for there to be talk of demilitarization in the Aegean, the islands which were militarized against the treaties by Greece should be demilitarized. Thus he has underlined his considerations on this issue. On this subject see also; Irini Karanasopoulou, "Silahlanmanın Kısıtlanmasında da 'fbirliði'", *Ta Nea*, 5 April 2001, <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/YAYINLARIMIZ/DISBASIN/2001/04/06x04x01.HTM# 10 P>. Date: 09 April 2001.

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this reason, the most ideal solution would be preserving the present border at 6 miles. On the other hand, the islets and rocks, the sovereignty of which have not yet been determined create a greater source of problems and this situation is also related to the fact that the nautical borders between the two countries have not been determined yet.

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