

## **Geographical/Geopolitical Fragments**

### **Thoughts Ahead of NATO Vilnius Summit**

- Ahead of Vilnius NATO summitry (July 11-12, 2023), Turkey exposed her feelings of uneasiness and fragility; she claimed the Republic of Cyprus not to be mentioned by name, and in deviation from established terminology of the Montreux Convention on the Straits (1936), namely Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, insisted instead that the term “Turkish Straits” be sanctioned in the Alliance texts. It seems that NATO caved into these idiosyncratic claims. And as for the Republic of Cyprus, no surprise. But on the Straits, it is hard to comprehend Ankara’s obstinacy since nobody questions Turkey’s ownership of the said Straits. Are they afraid of a return to the previous legal document, governing this major water way, namely the Lausanne Convention of July 24, 1923?

- Ukraine and how to stop the war will dominate the agenda in the conference room, but it will also be the theme of the talks in the corridors of the summit. Hardly is expected that voice will be raised in the sense of a cessation of hostilities, of armistice, a road map towards a peace settlement, an exit strategy from the slaughterhouse, even as the returns from supporting Ukraine “as long as it takes” are diminishing. In the Bucarest summit, 15 years ago, NATO made a sensible decision with regard to Ukraine; they declined to grant Membership Action Plan status to Kiev. For all the catastrophic events which followed, the invasion by Russia and the war tragedy, common sense and knowledge of history and geography reads that NATO has no reason to cross Rubico by granting membership status to Ukraine in the foreseeable future.

- Turkey is a major provider of military manpower to NATO. This is no alibi for vetoing Sweden and blackmailing the Alliance, nor for seeking American acquiescence as far as terms and conditions for participation in the exploitation of the Eastern Mediterranean promising hydrocarbons wealth are concerned. East Med Gas Forum, based in Cairo, is an inclusive and not exclusive organization, respecting the norms and rules of International Law. The road is wide open for Turkey to join the Forum. No talk of multilateral cooperation with a view to hydrocarbon fields in EastMed can take place by pushing aside East Med Gas Forum.

- 10 years after regime change, Egypt’s resilience and stability of the social tissue, is central for Greece and other significant players in East Med, the Near and the Middle East. As President Al Sissi is struggling to revamp the economy, we keep an eye on the internal equilibria of Egypt, no less than other European partners and Atlantic allies are doing. The visit to Cairo of the Indian PM Narendra Modi (June 25) is well noted; it goes beyond the importance of the Suez Canal for food and energy security in the subcontinent, as Egypt turns her attention to the BRICS.

- Looking closer home,  
as time is of essence, there is ample room for understanding between Greece and Turkey, provided that the latter shelves the illegal memorandum with the provisional government of Libya in Tripoli on maritime zones, revokes the casus belli resolution by the Grand National Assembly and ceases to brandish threats

against Greece's territorial integrity. Turkey's good neighbourliness conduct in the Aegean over the last couple of months has been registered. Cyprus cannot stay outside the picture, where Ankara has yet to provide signs of constructive thinking.

- On Albania.

This country should be reminded that NATO, a community of democratic values, cannot turn a blind eye with regard to deviation from the rule of law. A flagrant case is the continuing custody of the elected mayor of the coastal town of Chimarra Fredy Beleri, an ethnic Greek, without so far initiating a judicial process against him.

***Stravon of Amaseia,  
Athens, July 6, 2023***