

## A DEEP SUMMER PAUSE FOR GEOPOLITICAL REFLECTIONS

- Three years ago, August 6, 2020, Egypt and Greece signed an agreement on delimitation of their respective Exclusive Economic Zones. The content of the agreement reveals the open mindedness of both parties, as they went beyond the implications of the exact geographical measurement in this part of Eastern Mediterranean, southeast of Crete. Egypt, with all her good will towards Turkey, which still stays aloof vis a vis the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, got at last to propose to the Greek side a finalization of the deal by further drawing the line east of the final point agreed upon 3 years ago in the said Cairo agreement.

- Greece consults with Egypt, as well as with France and Italy, regarding Libya and the issue of organic re unification of the country, with full respect of the particular geographic realities, traditions, resources of Cyrenaica. Greece welcomes the prospect of Libya exceeding the threshold of 1,3 mil. barrels per day oil production. It is also important that the authorities in both Tripoli and Benghazi maintain efficient control over their seashore. Incidentally, the next Greek Ambassador to Tripoli is set to assume duties readily. As the crisis in Niger unfolds, bordering Libya's positioning is important; yet, active involvement of the Libyan factions is not anticipated, nor sealing of the frontier to Niger and the rest of Sahel would be a realistic expectation.

- Niger: The prospect for rebounding of French influence appears dim. In retrospect, it looks as if France pays the price of President's Sarkozy drive in 2011 to topple Muammar Quaddafi; ever since chaos in Libya and mayhem in the Sahel followed. External military intervention in Niger purportedly with a view to restore constitutional order is not propitious. Strategic reason and patience is in order.

- Ukraine: It is high time for an armistice on the basis of *uti possidetis*. Armed Forces of Ukraine register some successes but the strategic picture favours Russia. The agony of the Ukrainian people is prolonged. Let us not make out of the European support for Kiev, a hollow issue, as the pillars of the European edifice France and Germany are battered, politically and economically. The issue of a peace treaty is a much more complex and difficult question. In any case, Ukrainian territorial integrity and sovereignty has to be respected. The formerly autonomous Crimean Peninsula is a special case.

- Caucasus: Armenia and the Armenians in Caucasus are facing existential threats. The very nation, which first in the world adopted Christianity as official religion, is hard pressed by an expansive Azerbaijan. Armenians misread their geography, but this is another issue. Now time is to safeguard the Armenian population and polity of Nagorno Karabagh (Artsakh), subject to suffocation by President Aliiev's forces.

- Greece: priority is accorded to the Supreme Cooperation Council meeting with Turkey, due to take place at the expiry of fall 2023. In the meantime, political consultations will begin with Ankara, aiming at defining the exact scope of the litigious difference on the EEZ/continental shelf to be submitted to the ICJ in Den Haag, if the two countries manage to agree. In the meantime, Turkey is awaited to declare readiness to join the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, to ditch their fallacious claim on "grey areas" in the Aegean, to lift the "casus belli" ultimatum and forego the illegal memorandum on EEZ with Libya. As for Cyprus, it is plausible that any progress in resolving this festering wound in the Mediterranean will have a positive impact upon bilateral Greek-Turkish relations; and vice versa.

***Stravon of Amaseia,  
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