



THE AEGEAN MARITIME DISPUTES AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

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last two years. However, they must be approached with caution. The past has demonstrated that in order to create realistic prospects, developments should first of all break ground in feelings and expectations beyond illusive appearances. Secondly, improvement in the relationship between the two countries should be followed by corresponding developments in closing the gaps between the parties' respective stances on the disputes. The following review will examine whether these developments offer such hope.

1. *Developments Between the Two Peoples*

Recent positive developments between Greece and Turkey have been initiated between the peoples. Following a major earthquake in Turkey in August 1999, the Greek people and some Greek organizations sent help to the Turkish people who were so badly affected. In the following month witnessed an earthquake in Greece which was relatively quite minor. The Turkish people initiated in return technical help to contribute to the rescue efforts.

In fact, the mutual help given during the earthquakes did not achieve much. Fortunately, the efforts did not stop there. Within the following years, relations improved in many areas. The conduct between the journalists of the two countries intensified. They have established an organization, "the Turkish-Greek Press Council" which has started to convene regularly, the first time between 5-6 February 2000 in Athens and the second time between 8-10 October 2000 in İstanbul. It was emphasized in the announcements after these meetings that the journalists should set themselves free from the influence of politicians and contribute more to the development of positive relations.³⁹

Relations have also improved between the intellectuals. Mutual visits, joint concerts and film production have become almost familiar events,⁴⁰ The relations in both the economy and tourism have also increased considerably.⁴¹

The fact that the positive relations between the peoples are increasing is a strong sign of significant improvement in the establishment of trust and friendship between the peoples. The inevitable repercussion of this improvement could be that one of the major obstacles for a negotiated settlement, namely animosity between the two countries, could be eliminated.

³⁹ For the second meeting of the Turkish-Greek Press Council, see the *Hürriyet* Daily, 08 October 2000.

⁴⁰ The joint concert of Greek singer Haris Alexiou and Turkish singer Sezen Aksu could be mentioned as an example. The movie titled the "Oyunbozan" which is a joint production of Turkish and Greek production companies and acted by Turkish and Greek actors and actresses, was put on show on 24 October 2000.

⁴¹ For instance, a computer company named as the "İndex Bilgisayar" has been established with a joint investment and opened to shareholders at the Turkish Stock Exchange (İMKB). See the *Milliyet* Newspaper, 20 October 2000. Moreover, the Greek and Turkish peoples have started to visit each other's countries quite frequently.

2. Developments Between the Governments

In the meantime, similar developments have been taking place between the governments. It is in fact possible to consider them as results of the friendship that previously had started to grow between the peoples. But, as will be seen below, they have, at least in later stages, gained an impetus of their own.

According to some Turkish and Greek officials, the cooperation between the governments of the two States began before the two peoples started to help each other during the earthquakes. According to these views, the representatives of the two governments cooperated during NATO's attack on Serbia in the early months of 1999.⁴²

Clearly, the two sides have begun to conduct negotiations since mid-1999. The Foreign Ministers of the two governments met in New York on 30 June 1999 and established a common approach, according to which, some high-ranking officials from both sides would have talks on trade, regional cooperation, tourism, culture, environment, organized crime, drug smuggling, illegal migration and terrorism.⁴³ It was decided that the issues of tourism, environment and trade would be taken up in Ankara between 26-27 July 1999 and the rest would be taken up in Athens between 29-30 July 1999. Such cooperation seems to have led consequently to the commencement of a "dialogue" or a "process of negotiation" on such matters.

As planned, the representatives from both sides met in Ankara on 26 July 1999 where the pre-determined issues were considered.⁴⁴ The following meeting was held in Athens in early September and the above issues were discussed. Some high-ranking officials from the foreign ministries of the two sides met in Ankara for the third time between 15-16 September. In this meeting, all of the above mentioned subjects were discussed.⁴⁵

Another significant development between the governments was the Greek support for Turkey's candidacy for full membership of the EU during the Helsinki Summit between 10-11 December 1999, where Turkey's candidacy was reviewed and approved⁴⁶ The already started friendship and cooperation gained a further impetus with Greek support in such a significant issue.

In the following month, the Foreign Minister of Greece, G. Papandreou, paid a visit to Turkey between 19-22 January 2000. As a result of the talks held, the two States signed several agreements of cooperation on the issues mentioned

⁴² See the Statement by Alternate Foreign Minister of Greece, Y. Kranidiotis, to the BBC World Service, 18 August 1999; the *Sabah* Newspaper, 27 July 1999.

⁴³ See the Press Release of the Foreign Ministry of Turkey, 22 July 1999.

⁴⁴ The *Sabah* Newspaper, 27.07.99.

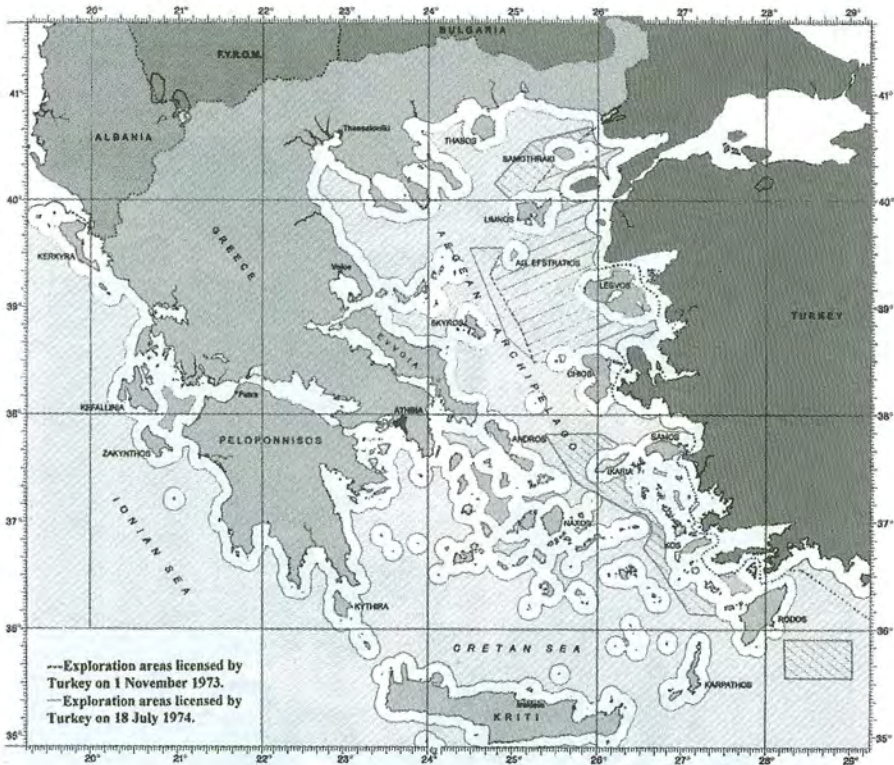
⁴⁵ The Joint Press Statement by the Turkish Foreign Ministry on 16 September 1999.

⁴⁶ The Helsinki European Council: Presidency Conclusions, Preparing for Enlargement, the Enlargement Process. Press Release, Brussels, No. 00300/99, 1 December 1999.



Map 4. Territorial waters of Greece and Turkey in the Aegean Sea if extended to 12-mile limit.

Source: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey.



Map 5. The map combining the two maps indicating the exploration areas licensed by Turkey in 1973 and 1974.

Source: The Turkish Official Gazette (*Resmi Gazete*), 1 November 1973 and 18 July 1974. Reproduced in *The Aegean Sea Continental Shelf Case*, Pleadings, p. 15-20.

