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Level : M1

Mediterranea Studies

Text:

Energy Conflict in the Mediterranean: A Geopolitical Flashpoint

The Eastern Mediterranean has emerged as a critical hotspot in global energy politics, driven by recent discoveries of significant natural gas reserves. This development has triggered a complex web of geopolitical rivalries, alliances, and disputes involving regional and global powers.

At the heart of the conflict lies the overlapping maritime claims and competing economic interests of countries such as Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, and Israel. The discovery of the Leviathan, Zohr, and Aphrodite gas fields has raised the stakes, as nations rush to secure exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and establish control over undersea resources.

Turkey, not recognizing the Republic of Cyprus and disputing Greece's maritime claims, has adopted an assertive approach, including dispatching exploration ships escorted by naval vessels into contested waters. This has drawn condemnation from the European Union and increased tensions with NATO allies, particularly Greece and France. Ankara argues it is protecting the rights of Turkish Cypriots and its own continental shelf, but its actions are often seen as unilateral and provocative.

Meanwhile, Greece, Cyprus, Israel, and Egypt have been strengthening their energy and defense cooperation, notably through the EastMed Gas Forum and the proposed EastMed pipeline. These alliances aim to counterbalance Turkish influence and promote regional energy integration, but they also risk further polarizing the region.

Beyond regional rivalries, global powers like the United States and Russia also have stakes in the Mediterranean energy equation. Washington has traditionally supported Greek and Cypriot positions while encouraging trilateral cooperation frameworks. Russia, already a dominant gas supplier to Europe, watches the developments closely, wary of new competition to its energy exports.

The energy conflict in the Mediterranean thus reflects broader geopolitical dynamics: the struggle for regional dominance, the clash of legal interpretations of maritime law, and

the strategic importance of energy security. Without a comprehensive diplomatic framework and inclusive dialogue, the Eastern Mediterranean risks becoming a zone of confrontation rather than cooperation.

Comprehension Questions:

1. What recent development has intensified geopolitical tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean?
2. Which countries are directly involved in the energy conflict in the region?
3. How has Turkey responded to the maritime claims of Greece and Cyprus?
4. What is the purpose of the EastMed Gas Forum and the proposed EastMed pipeline?
5. How have global powers like the United States and Russia reacted to the Mediterranean energy conflict?

Critical Thinking Questions:

6. Do you think Turkey's actions are justified from a geopolitical perspective? Why or why not?
7. How might the energy conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean affect European energy security?
8. What role does international law play in resolving maritime disputes like those in the Eastern Mediterranean?
9. Could energy cooperation become a platform for peacebuilding in the region? What steps would be needed?
10. How do alliances and partnerships among Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, and Israel shape the balance of power in the Mediterranean?

A. Grammar Questions:

1. Identify and underline three passive voice constructions in the text.
2. Find an example of a complex sentence. What are the dependent and independent clauses?
3. Change this sentence into the active voice:
"This has drawn condemnation from the European Union."
4. Identify all the modal verbs used in the text and explain their function.

5. Find a relative clause in the text and state what it refers to.

B. Summarizing Questions:

6. Write a 3-sentence summary of the text.

7. What is the main idea of the text?

8. Summarize the key reasons behind the energy conflict in a single sentence.

C. Paraphrasing Questions:

9. Paraphrase this sentence:

"Ankara argues it is protecting the rights of Turkish Cypriots and its own continental shelf."

10. Rephrase the final sentence of the text in your own words.

D. Vocabulary and Word Use:

11. What does the word assertive mean in the context of Turkey's approach?

12. Find and define the following words from the text:

Unilateral

Confrontation

Geopolitical

Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs)

13. Use the word provocative in your own sentence related to international relations.

E. Structure and Coherence:

14. How is the text structured? (e.g., introduction, body, conclusion)

15. What linking words or transition phrases are used to connect ideas?