

1. THE GREECE-ISRAEL-CYPRUS TRIANGLE AND THE NEW REALITIES

Μέσο: INTERNATIONAL NEW YORK TIMES_KATHIMERINI

Ημ. Έκδοσης: . . .29/04/2020 Ημ. Αποδελτίωσης: . . .29/04/2020

Σελίδα: 3

Innews AE - Αποδελτίωση Τύπου - <http://www.innews.gr>



The Greece-Israel-Cyprus triangle **and** the new realities

COMMENTARY

BY GEORGE N. TZOGOPOULOS *

The adaptation to new realities should be a gift **for** policymakers. The Covid-19 pandemic cannot but have an impact on security calculations. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg has said the Alliance needs to make sure that the health crisis does not become a security crisis.

The Eastern Mediterranean is no exception. The new global reality causes uncertainty. **For** example, sailors on the Charles de Gaulle, the French aircraft carrier that participated in drills in the Mediterranean Basin in February, have come down with the coronavirus. **And** the Iniochos-2020 international military exercise has been canceled.

What could all this mean **for** the Greece-Israel-Cyprus triangle? The military cooperation won't be affected much in the medium term, even if some adjustments are required. But the fall in energy prices puts important plans on hold. According to media reports, ExxonMobil has postponed its drillings off the southern part of Cyprus.

The US remains committed to its support of the trilateral bloc but a different energy landscape will certainly influence future discussions of the East Med Gas Forum concerning transportation options.

While patience is required in the field of energy, Greece, Israel **and** Cyprus can do more together. A virtual meeting of the **Israel-Hellenic** Forum that this author co-convened outlined new opportunities. The three countries, **for** instance, are facing similar economic consequences in tourism.

The development of a joint rescue plan will help. Additionally, Greece **and** Cyprus need perhaps to learn from Israel, which is extensively testing citizens **for** Covid-19 **and** is better prepared – technologically – **for** the ongoing online revolution.

And Greece **and** Cyprus have the potential to help Israel in its efforts to combat anti-Semitism, which has gained ground recently. Fake news has spread via social media at a speed equal to that of the virus.

In a period of instability, pillars of stability such as the trilateral bloc of Greece, Israel **and** Cyprus matter more.

* Dr George Tzogopoulos, senior fellow at the **Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)**, the Begin-Sadat Center **for** Strategic Studies **and** Centre International de Formation Européenne (CIFE), teaches international relations at the Democritus University of Thrace.