

## 1. ENRICHING GREECE'S FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES

Μέσο: . . . . . INTERNATIONAL NEW YORK TIMES\_KATHIMERINI

Ημ. Έκδοσης: . . . 11/05/2022 Ημ. Αποδελτίωσης: . . . 11/05/2022

Σελίδα: . . . . . 3

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



# Enriching Greece's foreign policy objectives

COMMENTARY

BY GEORGE N. TZOGPOULOS \*

**Prime Minister** Kyriakos Mitsotakis will meet US President Joe Biden on May 16 and speak in the Congress the day after. The visit showcases the dynamism of Greek-American relations. The timing is also crucial. As long as the war in Ukraine persists, serious dilemmas are posed and difficult policies are implemented by NATO, and the West in general. Greece's strategic choices have been crystal-clear from the very start in close coordination with the USA.

Despite the new war challenge in Europe's backyard, a diachronic paradox remains unchanged. This is the problematic status of NATO's southeastern flank. It is somewhat bizarre to evoke the unity in the Alliance against an external threat and simultaneously ignore the internal reality that finds a member-state, Greece, continuously threatened by another, Turkey. This is an anomalous situation that ought to be seriously taken into account by the American administration, especially at times of crisis such as the period that started after February 24, 2022. The March meeting between Prime Minister Mitsotakis and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Istanbul only temporarily paused Greek-Turkish tensions, which have intensified in recent days. Ironically, renewed tensions are the expected outcome of Ankara's standard foreign policy goals in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Greece needs to better position itself in view of the June NATO Madrid Summit. The Greek government can raise the theme of the cohesion of NATO's southeastern flank in the hope of receiving clear and specific answers. Complicated as it is, the optimum scenario will include the providing of American security guarantees in this direction. Also, it would perhaps be prudent for Athens to link the potential NATO membership of Finland and Sweden with that of Cyprus. The latter is not even a member of the Partnership for Peace Program due to Turkish objections. In recent years, however, the USA has expanded its collaboration with Cyprus, inter



**Turkish President** Recep Tayyip Erdogan is seen during a NATO summit at the Alliance's HQ in Brussels last year.

*'It is somewhat bizarre to evoke the unity in the Alliance against an external threat and simultaneously ignore the internal reality that finds a member-state, Greece, continuously threatened, by another, Turkey'*

alia by partly lifting the arms embargo.

Greece has emerged as an important ally of the USA in a turbulent neighborhood, in which Turkey systematically acts autonomously. In strategic parlance, Greece might thus attempt to persuade Washington that the consequences of a policy of no-mediation and no-solution of the outstanding problems in this neighborhood will be damaging for its geopolitical interests and NATO. The recontextualization of the debate will put the ball in the American court.

\* Dr George N. Tzogopoulos is a lecturer at the European Institute in Nice (CIFE) and senior fellow at the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) and the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.