

## 1. HOW WASHINGTON IS REWRITING THE MEDITERRANEAN POWER GAME

Μέσο: . . . . . ΤΟ ΒΗΜΑ ΤΗΣ ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗΣ\_ΕΙΔΙΚΗ ΕΚΔΟΣΗ 1

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# How Washington Is Rewriting the Eastern Mediterranean Power Game

By Cleopatra Kittl

The Eastern Mediterranean is entering a new phase of competition where legal claims, deterrence and sovereignty remain central, but are increasingly prosecuted through capital allocation, and transactional politics.

The rules of the game are not being renegotiated; they are being repriced.

For Athens, Ankara and other regional capitals, the strategic challenge is no longer whether to assert legal rights, but how to do so in an environment where investment decisions, corridor design and governance frameworks determine which claims acquire economic and political weight over time. Law still defines the

boundaries of the game; capital increasingly determines its outcomes.

Turkey approaches this landscape through scale and optionality. Its ambition to operate across the full energy and infrastructure spectrum deploying TPAO's capacity upstream, midstream and downstream, reflects a strategy aimed at indispensability. By extending its reach beyond the Aegean and East-

ern Mediterranean into Africa and Asia, Ankara ensures that legal isolation in one theatre does not translate into strategic marginalisation.

Greece operates on a different axis. Its strength lies in institutional alignment: regulatory predictability, EU embeddedness and compatibility with Western legal and financial systems. By positioning itself as an institutional gateway for capital,

Greece enhances its credibility with partners while assuming greater responsibility for managing geopolitical frictions beyond its direct control. The trade-off is between influence gained through alignment and the flexibility required in a fluid and contested regional environment.

The regional dimension is shaped by the gravitational pull of Israel's energy and in-



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infrastructure strategy, which increasingly anchors eastwest corridors. Israeli-led projects do not resolve Greek-Turkish disputes, but they alter their practical consequences by introducing alternative routes, partners and sequencing for capital. In doing so, they shape which legal positions translate into commercial reality first.

Egypt's potential role as a gas supplier to Lebanon, Palestine and Syria would depend on regional agreements and, the participation of Gulf, American and European financiers and operators. If structured to support

peace and stability, such arrangements could deepen regional integration embedding energy cooperation within broader diplomatic frameworks.

Within this architecture sits Cyprus: structurally pivotal yet politically exposed. Cyprus functions as a node, offering EU legal jurisdiction, proximity to Israeli systems and potential transit capacity, while lacking meaningful enforcement power. Its role is catalytic but fragile, dependent on transparent governance capable of withstanding sustained political pressure.

Overlaying these dynam-

ics is tension within EU energy strategy itself. Europe's pursuit of energy security, decarbonisation and strategic autonomy creates ambiguity for Eastern Mediterranean gas. While diversification away from Russia has raised the region's strategic relevance, the Green Deal questions asset longevity. The result is a narrowing window in which projects must secure political, regulatory and financial anchoring before policy shifts and regional instability overtake them.

Ultimately, power now flows through institutions as much as sovereignty. Le-

gal claims matter only when converted into investable projects anchored in trusted governance. The United States increasingly shapes outcomes by directing capital and privileging governance compatibility. Responsibility therefore lies not only with governments, but with investors and corporate leaders whose capital allocation choices will determine which outcomes endure.

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