

# AEGEAN SEA SUMMIT STUDY GUIDE

● OPEN AGENDA



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## I. LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

**Dear Participants,**

First of all, I'm delighted to point out that it is my utmost pleasure and honor to serve as the Secretary-General of IUMUN'23. Throughout the four days of our precious conference, different matters in different committees shall be discussed and very important decisions shall be taken on various past and present events that has or had a remarkable impact on our lives. From political controversies to social life problems, we will be creating the best environment for our participants to enjoy every moment they will have during the conference and find fruitful solutions by having heated and precise debates.

Heated and precise debates require a well-executed and right-on-the-dot preparation process. Therefore, our talented academic team has prepared study guides for their committees so that our participants will have a proper document to get prepared to our conference and perform accordingly. In addition, with the help of these study guides, the way to success and glory upon our academic careers will be way wide-open.

I sincerely believe that this year's IUMUN will be such a conference that many future diplomats and politicians will glow up like a hidden gem and make both the United Nations and Model United Nations great again. Trust in yourselves, and stand out for a better world for everyone. Referring to our motto, we see and observe from what our ancestors done during their lifetimes and shape our future by learning and innovating from their experiences.

Witness the history, shape the future!

**Bora AKAR**

Secretary-General of IUMUN'23



## II. LETTER FROM THE EXPERT AND UNDER-SECRETARIES-GENERAL

### LETTER FROM EXPERT

#### **We Couldn't Bid Farewell to Weapons!**

The ongoing tension between Greece and Türkiye, which has now been accepted as a natural state by both the Greek and Turkish populations, has intensified after the militarization of the islands in a manner inconsistent with international agreements, especially since the 1950s. Greece has raised questions about the validity of international agreements regarding the islands in a changed world. Meanwhile, Türkiye appears to be more focused on defense-oriented actions.

This text aims to discuss the historical and economic-political dimensions of the ongoing tension in a macro framework rather than at a micro level, with the intention of defining the situation and consequently developing a solution from a specific perspective.

The Greek and Anatolian civilizations are among the ancient civilizations that have contributed to world history. In fact, Ancient Greece is composed of the unity of these lands both territorially and intellectually/philosophically. And of course, Anatolia has been home to other civilizations as well. Following the ancient period, a dark Middle Ages in the West and the subsequent dominance of nation-states have fundamentally altered the historical journey of the concept of borders. The change in the concept of borders has not only affected territorial boundaries but has also led to changes in the perspectives of governments, societies, and individuals.

While expecting changes in governance and societies to follow a progressive development line with a modern reflex in historical progression, especially after the Cold War era, the changes that came along with the neoliberal order known as globalization, which became influential after the 1980s, have subjected governments and societies to radical marginal transformations both internally within themselves and at a macro level among themselves in terms of class dynamics. In the postmodern era, the developed and underdeveloped governments of the modern period have been classified as highly developed and lacking the possibility of further development. Every classification also entails a form of limitation. This situation includes nation-state governments as well.





This much smaller period of history, in which much greater changes have been experienced, is a chaotic period that capsizes the entire course of history. How should problems such as the Turkish-Greek Islands conflict be defined in this period, or is it a realistic point of view to see such problems simply as international issues?

Yes, in many sources, the dispute related to the Aegean Sea is defined not only as a dispute between Türkiye and Greece but also as a situation involving NATO and other regional security organizations. It should be noted that making a definition of the situation essentially assigns an ideological meaning to what is happening[1], and information about the issue is disseminated to the public from this ideological perspective. The ideological meaning here is to support the belief that the perspectives and decisions of the two countries are not sufficient and effective in solving the problem, thus legitimizing the neoliberal order[2]. Even if there is some validity to the inadequacies in the perspectives of the two countries in resolving the issue, it is important to avoid strategies that differentiate and otherize these two countries[3], essentially opening the door to a historical and human fragmentation, while trying to overcome these inadequacies and announcing it to the world as a text. This seems to be the real crisis. The governance of these two geographies and societies, which jointly shaped the ancient era, seem to think that they are justified in seeing each other as the other, as if the past never happened, which is actually one of the fundamental indications that there is indeed a crisis between them. Crisis is such a situation that when you look back, there is no past, and when you look ahead, it is blurry. The main ideology at work here is the legitimization of the neoliberal order[4]: by producing a dialectical process that reverses history, the roles of actors on the pages of history are changed, and new realities are produced. We all believe that without NATO and other regional security organizations, there is also a possibility of a hot war between the two countries. However, in the course of history, it is important not to overlook that the borders of these two countries and their class positions, connected to their global-level boundaries, are evolving within a context grounded in capitalist dynamics. Therefore, it appears important for these country governances to create a new starting point by making their own definitions of their borders and class positions.

The problems between the two countries have been legitimized through a narrative strategy throughout a significant portion of history[5], to be more specific, since the birth of most of the people reading this text. Who actually prepared their justifications? Are the problems actually being turned into justifications by these two countries?

Taking Türkiye and Greece together with an oxymoronic understanding is not realistic when considering that historically they have a relationship beyond mere neighborliness. They are not a binary that fits the oxymoronic perception where their togetherness is deemed impossible. Such a perception would solidify an invisible pattern that generates new problems between them, even if solutions to existing issues are found. On the other



hand, these two countries still possess the cultural infrastructure that can contribute to advancing humanity. They can also nourish a creativity that holds promise for the world by turning the crises they face, resulting from the rapid loss of their central roles within the neoliberal framework, into opportunities. Beyond interpreting the crises between them solely as border security issues, it is inevitable that they reconsider the roles given to them by neoliberal dynamics and agree to resolve these crises together rather than through each other. When viewed within a macro framework, the crises between them are not proclaimed as a crisis between them, and this proclamation is not determined by them. Therefore, first and foremost, it is essential for these countries to analyze how they are represented in this proclamation, in other words, to decode analytics in discourse regarding themselves. The most crucial components of escaping crises are to generate solution and to develop the situation that became the subject of the crisis to prevent the emergence of similar crises in the future. It is not possible for any crisis to be fully resolved. The fact that a crisis exists as an entity in the pages of history codes it as a new component for future history. Thus, as life continues, crises, even if resolved in certain ways, will potentially generate new crises in different dimensions and forms in the future. Consequently, an increasingly chaotic world pattern will emerge. While crises simply signify unexpected negativities, chaos describes the unpredictability arising from the unknown elements of a nonlinear deterministic system. The possibility of the crisis between the two countries, caused by the borders, escalating into chaos should be taken into account due to the ever-expanding and changing elements of a world, along with the long-standing unknown factors.

The problem in a macro perspective is that we have not been able to bid farewell to weapons. The weapon, which was initially utilized by the human subject as a tool for survival, has gradually been made available for the use of the objectified human, with its production guaranteed to the extent that it is used. This process serves the objectives of liberal and now neoliberal agendas, and it is evident that this is not the primary goal of either Türkiye or Greece.

If the issue now is to resolve the crisis, it seems necessary to analyze and redefine the problems we thought we already knew, taking into account the intervening factors that are coming into play as well as the previously existing ones that we may not have been aware of.

[1] Hall, S. (1997), p.103 [2] Thompson, J. B. (2013), p.77 [3] Thompson, J. B. (2013), p.83, [4] Thompson, J. B. (2013), p.77, [5] Thompson, J. B. (2013), p.79



## References:

1. Thompson, J. B. (2013). *Ideology and Modern Culture-Critical Social Theory in the Era of Mass Communication*, trans. İdil Çelik, publisher: Dipnot Yayınevi, Ankara.
2. Hall, Stuart "Ideology and Communication Theory", trans. Ahmet Gürata. In *Media Culture Politics*, (compilation book by Süleyman İrvan), 1997, publisher: Bilim Sanat/ Ark Yayınları, Ankara.

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## LETTERS FROM THE UNDER-SECRETARIES-GENERAL

*Esteemed reader,*

As the Co-USG of this committee, I blatantly declare that you will be required to perform a hard day's work. Not that I wish to imply a warning or a threat, this is the most advanced committee to the one of the most prestigious conferences in the country. Concerning the figuratively bilateral nature of the relations among Türkiye and Greece, you will be sitting on the fence regarding your actions since every single decision you take will impact various aspects of a diplomatic summit. Thus, we expect you to perform according to known standards of diplomacy.

On the study guide, we mentioned a brief history of the region. After you inspect it, you might notice conflicts around this region throughout history had some impacts that are incalculable. Hence, I suggest that military action should be your last asylum.

We have prepared a high level diplomatic summit simulation for you to prove your abilities. Wear that suit, grab that pen, and prove that you are capable of resolving discords and reaching accords.

Special thanks to our expert on diplomatic crises, Assoc.Prof.Dr.Sergün KURTOĞLU for their letter and guidance, Bora AKAR, as the secretary general of this conference and of course my brilliant companion Eren EROĞULLARI for this committee.

**Berat ÇAĞAN**

Under-Secretary-General responsible from Aegean Sea Summit

Istanbul University, Faculty of Communication



## ***Dear participants of IUMUN 2023,***

It is my utmost honor to welcome you all to the İstanbul University Model United Nations Conference 2023. I'm Eren Eroğulları, I currently study as a first year student at İstanbul University Faculty of Law. In this conference, I will be serving as the Under-Secretary-General responsible from the Special Committee: Aegean Sea Summit, together with my valued friend Berat Çağan Dürtek. Before moving on with personal statements, I want to express my general thanks to everybody who has contributed to this conference regardless of which point that their effort stands on the scale of contribution.

The Aegean Sea, or marine stuff in general, is the key branch that composes both my area of interest and academic future. So that, I want to inform everybody that the committee you are going to attend was prepared by one of the most spirited people of our globe on these topics. Moreover, I surely can not skip the contributions of my colleague and our Co-Under-Secretary-General Berat for this committee. What he mostly carried to this job has been experience, which has been one of the elements that has honestly boosted this committee to another level. Subsequently, I would like to state my special thanks for the IUMUN club and our Secretariat for giving me this opportunity of actualizing my interest. Lastly, I express my gratitude to Bora Akar, who is both our Secretary-General and my friend, for serving in such a crucial position and managing the academic progress successfully.

I kindly request everyone not to hesitate contacting us for handling any question that may pop-up in your minds. Wishing everyone a conference full of academic and social development and 4 special days worth to remember.

With my regards,

**Eren EROĞULLARI**

Under-Secretary-General responsible from Aegean Sea Summit

### III. INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: AEGEAN SEA CONFLICTS THROUGH HISTORY

*i: This part mentions significant conflicts and outcomes throughout history*

It is widely known that Aegean Sea has been through conflicts and power disputes since ancient times and this sea has been a part of myths related to the region (such as battle of Troy). Even philosophical debates including “*Theseus’s Ship*” and his death is related to earliest of conflicts regarding Aegean Sea. The geographic location it bears and facts based on oceanography created a suitable base for trade and military transport resulted in a complex history of conflicts which will be explained in this section.

#### 3.1) AEGEAN SEA DURING ARCHAIC ERA

Many Aegean islands were powerful and affluent throughout the archaic period (c. 750-480 BC), with Naxos being the most prosperous. However, they came under the control of the Athenian hegemony in the fifth century BC, and they became supply ports for the Athenian ships. As a result, even though the islands’ inhabitants were probably not poor, the islands came to be associated with frailty and poverty. In the following centuries, the Aegean Sea continued to help the Greek civilization flourish serving an important function in trade as well as in war. During this era main dispute to the region was trade related. Islands were not densely populated and Aegean Sea was used as a liquid bridge to transfer goods between Asia-Minor and Greek cities. Miniscule port towns were built and used as export-import bases.



#### a) Persian Conflict and Siege of Naxos

In the spring of 499 BC, the Persian fleet was properly constructed and sent to Ionia. Megabates was given command of the mission by Artaphernes, who also sent the Persian army with him to Miletus. They embarked and set sail after Aristagoras and the Milesian army joined them there. The fleet initially traveled north, towards the Hellespont, to avoid alerting the Naxians, but when they reached Chios, they turned around and headed south, toward Naxos.

*ii: Map of Naxos as population centers marked*

The city of Naxos was well-armed and equipped when the Ionians and Persians came there. Herodotus doesn't state the location specifically, but it seems likely that this was Naxos's capital. He provides few details of the military actions that ensued, although there is a suggestion that there was an initial assault on the city, which was repelled. As a result, the Ionians and Persians began to prepare to besiege the city. However, after four months, the Persians had run out of money, with Aristagoras also spending a great deal. Thoroughly demoralised, the expedition prepared to return to Asia Minor empty handed. Before leaving, they built a stronghold for the exiled Naxian aristocrats on the island. This was a typical strategy in the Greek world for those exiled.

Aristagoras found himself in a terrible situation after his failed attempt to take Naxos; he was unable to pay Artaphernes back for the expenditures of the voyage and had further alienated himself from the Persian royal family. He fully anticipated that Artaphernes would remove him from his position. The Ionian Revolt was started by Aristagoras, who made the desperate decision to urge his own people, the Milesians, to rebel against their Persian overlords.



### a) Importance of Ionian Revolt

Ionian revolt is an exemplary lesson for diplomats, rulers and also the proof that a negatively resolved dispute regarding the Aegean Sea for a nation adjacent to Aegean Sea, can result in harsh outcomes.

### iii: Military operations during the Ionian Revolt

## 3.2) EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE, VENETIAN ALLIES AND AFTERMATH OF THE FIRST CRUSADE

### a) Eastern Roman Empire, the First Crusade and Venetian Allies

The era of rule over Aegean by Romans has always been the calmest of all other eras. The Byzantine Empire has allied themselves with Venice, a wealthy trade and naval administrative city, thus they ruled over the sea by ease and outnumbered any piracy activity for the most part and neutralised threats.

After the First Crusade, Bohemond I of Antioch decided to take the road his father took and made a plan to conquer Greece. Secretly he prepared a coffin, pretended to be dead





and started to travel around ports of the Aegean Sea, since trade was an active element between Aegean ports, word spread fast and people all around the empire thought he was dead and not a threat anymore. Yet after completing his journey of Byzantine ports, he made his way to Corfu and prepared a letter to Byzantine Emperor. He wrote:

*“From Corfu, I send your majesty extremely disagreeable news, which you will not receive with pleasure, that I have handed over the city of Antioch to my nephew Tancred, bequeathing him as a suitable match for your generals. As for me, I’m going to my own country. To you and your friends, I’m considered a corpse, but to myself and my friends I’m living and planning clever schemes against you. To upset completely the Roman realm under your command, I died while living and while dead, lived. If I should reach the mainland across the sea and catch sight of the Lombards and all the Latins and Germans and our own Franks, warriors memorable in battle, I will fill your cities and countryside full of slaughter, full of blood, until I plant my spear in Byzantium itself.”*



*i: political rule over Aegean Sea during the First Crusade*

### **a.1) Importance of Bohemond Incident**

This incident is the proof that a scheme cleverly conducted on ports of the Aegean is spread fast due to the narrow nature of the Aegean Sea.

Bohemond managed to gather an army around 15.000 together with a Papal Letter, planned to invade the heart of the empire yet Venetian ships were guarding the entrance to Aegean. Thus Bohemond I failed to enter the Aegean sea, landing around Albania instead, failing to meet his ambition.





### **3.3) KNIGHTS AND THE AEGEAN SEA**

Venetians and Genoese competed for control of the island of Kos, which was then known as Lango, after the Crusaders conquered Constantinople in 1204 to the chagrin of the Republic of Venice and the ensuing weakening of the Byzantine Empire. For a while, the Genoese were successful in adding Lango to the other significant islands (Matelino and Scio) already had close quarters to Asia Minor's shore. The island of Kos was taken over by the Venetians, but in 1314 the Genoese corsair Vignolo of Vignoli, the island's master, appealed to the Knights of St. John. After a brief occupation the Venetians sold the island Lango to the Knights Hospitallers of St. John. Also known as the Knights of Rhodes, where the headquarters of the Order was established since 1306. Until 1336, the situation remained contentious and it is possible that the island was taken over by the Venetians, or even whether temporarily returned to Byzantine Empire. The fourteenth century saw the first attacks by the Turks, the Hospitallers managed to repulse the attacks in 1457 and 1477, mainly because of the fortifications built. After Turks managed to conquer Rhodes, two century long rule over several Aegean islands by the Order was concluded.

Knights on the Aegean Sea participated in cleansing the sea from piracy and they assisted the trade operations conducted by western nations. Thus erupting a conflict between them and Turks.

#### **a) Importance of this conflict**

The Aegean Conflict The Aegean issue was/is the other significant disagreement between Turks and western nations, For ages, the Turks and the Greeks have fought to establish and/or widen their spheres of influence over the Aegean Sea. The Aegean Sea was entirely under Turkish authority from the time Suleiman the Magnificent led the Turks to seize Rhodes Island in 1522 until Greece attained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1832. Then, following the Balkan Wars and Greece's independence.

### **3.4) REVOLT OF CRETE**

The Christian Cretans had risen up together with the rest of Greece in the Greek Revolution of 1821, but despite successes in the countryside, the Ottomans held out in the four fortified towns of the northern coast (Chania, Rethymno, Irakleio and Agios Nikolaos) and the island was eventually reconquered by 1828, becoming an Egyptian province (Muhammad Ali's Egypt, though nominally a vassal of the Ottoman Empire, was a regional power in its own right).



Armed bands were established as tensions on the island rose and many requests to the Sultan went unanswered. On August 21, 1866, the insurrection was formally declared. The uprising immediately sparked sympathy in Greece and throughout the rest of Europe. The four fortified towns on the north coast and the southern town of Ierapetra, as usual, remained under Ottoman authority, but the rebels initially succeeded in taking control of most of the hinterland.

Despite numerous violent uprisings by Cretan rebels, the Ottomans had controlled Crete for more than 220 years by the middle of the 19th century after capturing it from the Venetians. The London Protocol of 1830 forbade the island from being a part of the new Greek state, despite the fact that the Cretans revolted against the Ottoman occupation during the War of Greek Independence.



### ***i: A map of Cretan Revolt***

The Sultan was required by the Treaty of Paris to implement the Hatti-Houmayoun, which guaranteed civil and religious equality for Christians and Muslims, on March 30, 1856.

#### **a) Importance of Cretan Revolt**

History has once again recorded that after numerous armed conflicts, at the end, it is the table of politics that decides what comes true. People of Crete failed to reach a conclusion by revolting yet they acquired new rights and demographically gained the upper hand, preparing a base for further changes in the status-quo.

### **3.5) ANGLO-TURKISH WAR**

Sultan Selim III was forced by the British government to remove Sebastiani, declare war on France, hand over the Danubian Principalities to Russia, and hand over the Ottoman fleet and the forts on the Dardanelles to the Royal Navy in September 1806. Following Selim's rejection of the ultimatum, Vice Admiral John Thomas Duckworth's British squadron entered the Dardanelles on February 19, 1807, annihilated an Ottoman naval force in the Sea of Marmara, and anchored in front of Constantinople. The Ottomans

upgraded their defenses and built strong batteries with French aid. Two of the British warships were destroyed by gun fire. On March 3rd, 1807, Duckworth decided to retreat to the Mediterranean.

#### **a) Importance of this incident**

Case of Admiral Duckworth's abortive attempt on Constantinople in 1807 the failure had been due, not to inability to pass the Straits, but to inability to hold them behind him after he got through.

Istanbul is a key city and to acquire Istanbul a grand fleet must be put together. This is where comes the importance of the Aegean Sea. On Aegean, there are multiple islands with suitable ports to supply and anchor an armada. If an army aims to cross the straits and fight for Istanbul, they must have a good hold or at least fleet basing rights over the Aegean.

### **3.6) GALLIPOLLI CAMPAIGN AND THE AEGEAN SEA**

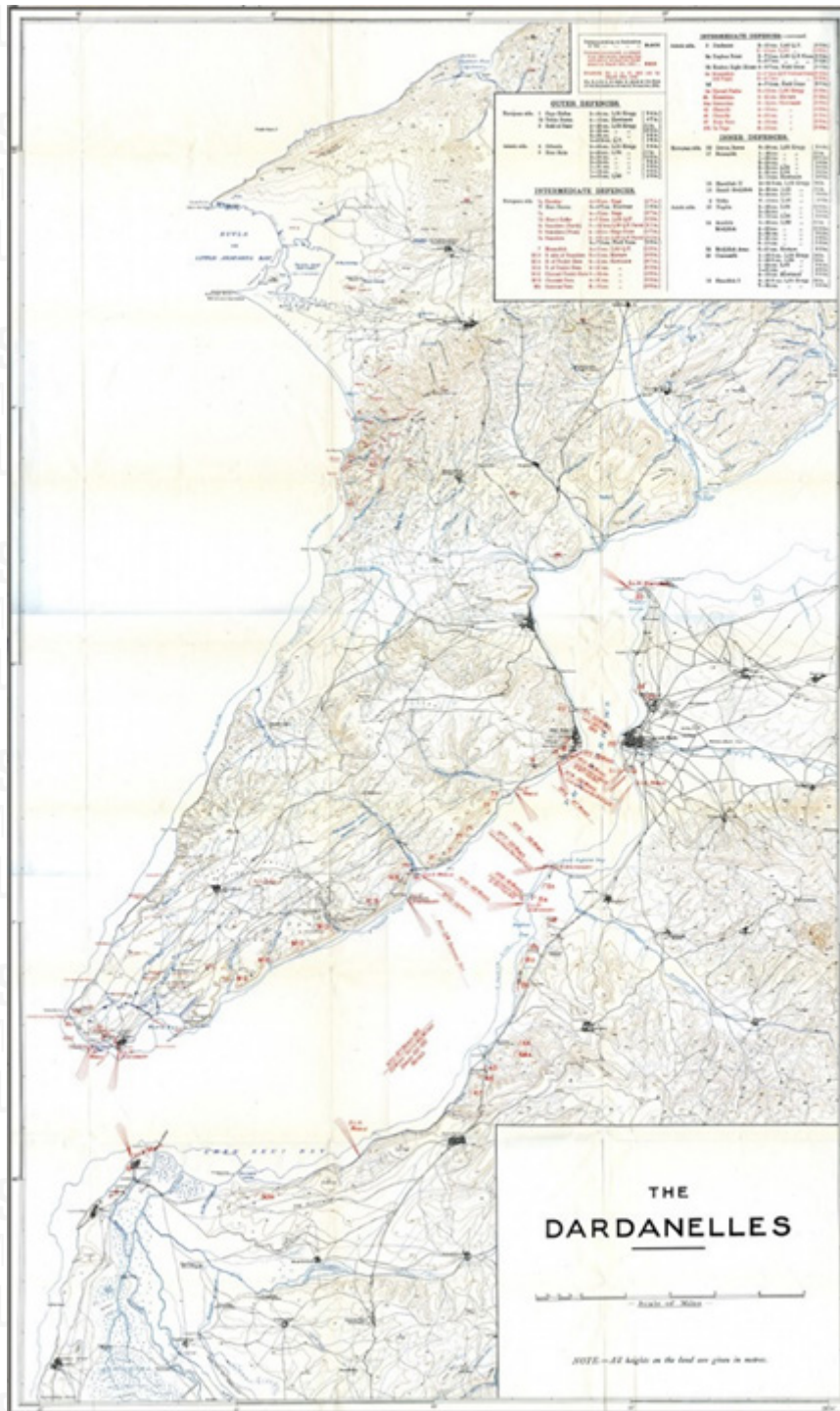
During this campaign, the desire to avoid a repetition of prior error on Anglo-Turkish war was very strong. The troops would at least be on the spot on Aegean Islands if the navy found — as was only to be expected — that they could not do without them, and in this way the needed success might be won.

On February 9 the British Government learnt of M. Venizelos' promise to evacuate Lemnos, and on receiving the undertaking the Admiralty at once ordered two battalions of Marines to proceed there. It was clearly understood that they were only intended to land after the entrance forts were silenced, in order to destroy the torpedo tubes which were believed to be part of the entrance defences. They could, in fact, be regarded as little more than a demolition force, but Lord Kitchener gave his assurance that if troops were required at a later stage they would be forthcoming.

The process of concentrating the troops in the Aegean went on accordingly. On February 20 Lord Kitchener instructed General Maxwell to prepare two divisions of Australians and New Zealanders for service at the Dardanelles, under command of General Birdwood, commanding the Australasian Expeditionary Force. The Admiralty continued the work of collecting the necessary transports both for them and the Royal Naval Division. On February 16, in pursuance of the War Council's resolution of that day, they had also ordered transports to be got ready for the XXIXth Division.







i: Turkish fortifications for a threat arriving from Aegean Sea

**a) Importance of This incident**

Ottoman Empire knew that a threat arriving from the Aegean sea would be devastating and prepared accordingly. Allied nations were aware that holding Aegean Sea and the islands on it was essential for this operation. Thus they based themselves to the islands. Proving the irrefusable importance of the Aegean Sea.





### **3.7) ITALIAN CLAIMS AND RULE OVER DODECANESE**

*Italy seized the Dodecanese, with the exception of Kastellorizo, during the Italo-Turkish War of 1912. According to the Treaty of Ouchy, which was signed in 1912, Italy had agreed to give the islands back to the Ottoman Empire. However, the text's ambiguity allowed Italy to temporarily administer the islands, and **Türkiye** eventually gave up all claims to the Dodecanese in Article 15 of the Treaty of Lausanne. Prior to the appointment of Count Carlo Senni as the Viceroy of the Dodecanese (Reggente del Dodecaneso) on August 7, 1920, the provisional Italian government on the islands, known as "Rhodes and the Dodecanese" (Rodi e Dodecaneso), was in the hands of military administrators. Following the conclusion of World War I, Italy twice consented to hand over the islands to Greece, with the exception of Rhodes, which would retain a great deal of autonomy. These agreements were the Venizelos-Tittoni agreement in 1919 and the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920. These accords were never put into effect because of Greece's involvement and loss in the Greco-Turkish War of 1919–22.*

#### **a) Importance of this Matter**

*Italians claimed the entire mediterranean as the successors of the Roman Empire, yet they managed control little of it. By asking direct control over Dodecanese and islands around it after the war of 1912, they enriched the narration that laying a foothold to the Aegean sea was essential for gaining dominance over the eastern mediterranean.*

### **3.8) 20TH CENTURY CONFLICTS**

#### **a) Demilitarized Status of the Eastern Aegean Islands**

The Eastern Aegean Islands are demilitarized by several international agreements, including but not limited to the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 and the Paris Treaty of 1947. These international treaties which are in force and thus binding upon Greece strictly forbid the militarization of Eastern Aegean Islands and bring legal obligations and responsibilities to Greece to this end.

Article 13 of the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty stipulated the modalities of the demilitarization for the islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, and Ikaria. It imposed certain restrictions related to the presence of military forces and establishment of fortifications which Greece undertook as a contractual obligation to observe stemming from this Treaty. The Convention of the Turkish Straits annexed to the Lausanne Treaty further defined the demilitarized status of the islands of Lemnos and Samothrace. It stipulated a stricter regime for these islands, due to their vital importance to the security of Türkiye by virtue of their close proximity to the Turkish Straits.

The demilitarized status of Eastern Aegean Islands was once again confirmed in the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty. But Türkiye is not a signatory state to this Treaty. The "Dodecanese Islands" namely Stampalia, Rhodes, Calki, Scarpanto, Casos, Piscopis, Nisiros, Calimnos,



Leros, Patmos, Lipsos, Symi, Cos and Castellorizo were ceded to Greece on the explicit condition that they must remain demilitarized. The demilitarization of the Eastern Aegean Islands was due to the overriding importance of these islands for Türkiye's security. In fact, there is a direct linkage between the possession of sovereignty over those islands and their demilitarized status.

However, despite the protests of Türkiye, Greece has been violating the status of the Eastern Aegean Islands by militarizing them in contravention of its contractual commitments and treaty obligations under international law. The dispute dates to 1974 when Athens started to militarize the islands off the Turkish coast in response to Türkiye's invasion of the Mediterranean island of Cyprus after a pro-Greek coup.

On the other hand, Greece also introduced a reservation to the compulsory jurisdiction of International Court of Justice on matters deriving from military measures concerning her "national security interests" when she accepted the Court's jurisdiction in 1993. In so doing, Greece aimed to prevent a dispute concerning the militarization of the islands to be referred to the International Court of Justice. In the Turkish view, this is a tacit acceptance by Greece that she is violating her treaty obligations.

#### **4. IMPORTANCE OF THE AEGEAN SEA BY THE PERSPECTIVE OF EACH NATION**

Aegean Sea. It has been a region where civilizations flourished and empires thrived throughout history. The sea witnessed the rise and fall of ancient civilizations such as the Hittites, Ionians, and Persians, as well as the Byzantine and Ottoman empires. The Aegean Sea's strategic location has facilitated trade, maritime dominance, and cultural exchanges, shaping identity of a nation around it and contributing to the nation's historical narrative.

On this part, aspects of each nation on Aegean Sea will be mentioned.

The Aegean Sea also served as the birthplace of democracy in ancient Greece and hosted iconic historical events.

##### **1) GREEK PERSPECTIVE**

The Aegean Sea plays a critical role in Greece's defense and deterrence strategy. The sea acts as a natural buffer, protecting Greece's mainland and islands from potential threats. The control and monitoring of the Aegean Sea allow Greece to detect and respond to potential security challenges, such as airspace violations, illegal activities, and territorial disputes. Greece maintains a strong naval presence in the Aegean Sea to safeguard its national interests and assert its sovereignty.

**Border Security and Sovereignty:** The Aegean Sea forms a significant part of Greece's maritime borders. The control and protection of these borders are of utmost importance to Greece's national security and territorial integrity. It serves as a frontier, a liquid bridge, where Greece must ensure the prevention of illegal activities, such as smuggling, illegal immigration, and potential security threats. The monitoring and patrolling of the Aegean



Sea allow Greece to assert its sovereignty, protect its maritime interests, and maintain border security.

**Regional Influence and Cooperation:** The Aegean Sea also offers Greece a platform to exert regional influence and promote cooperation among neighboring countries. Through naval diplomacy, joint exercises, and multilateral initiatives, Greece seeks to enhance stability, build trust, and foster regional security cooperation in the Aegean Sea. As a member of NATO and other regional security organizations, Greece actively contributes to the collective defense and security efforts in the Aegean region.

The Aegean Sea's strategic location provides Greece with the capability to respond swiftly to crisis and provide humanitarian assistance. The sea has witnessed various humanitarian emergencies, including refugee and migrant flows. Greece's naval and coast guard forces operate in the Aegean Sea to address these challenges, ensuring the safety of human lives, managing migration flows, and cooperating with international partners to mitigate the impact of humanitarian crises.

#### **a) Geographical Importance**

Geographically, the Aegean Sea acts as a natural border, separating the Greek mainland from Anatolia. Its numerous islands, including Crete, Rhodes, and Santorini, contribute to Greece's vast coastline and provide important tourist destinations. The sea's temperate climate, picturesque landscapes, and crystal-clear waters attract millions of visitors each year, bolstering the nation's tourism industry and generating substantial revenue. The Aegean Sea's geographical features have not only shaped Greece's physical landscape but also influenced the country's cultural and economic development.

#### **b) Economic Significance**

The Aegean Sea plays a pivotal role in Greece's economy, particularly through maritime activities. It provides an extensive coastline for fishing, contributing to Greece's seafood industry and supplying fresh produce to local markets. Moreover, the Aegean Sea serves as a major transportation route for international trade, facilitating the movement of goods between Europe, Asia, and Africa. Greek ports, such as Piraeus and Thessaloniki, act as crucial gateways to international commerce, enhancing the nation's economic growth and trade relations.

The sea also supports maritime transport and cruise tourism, providing employment opportunities and generating revenue for local communities. Aegean Sea has long been a hub for cultural exchange, hosting diverse civilizations and fostering cross-cultural





interactions. The sea's islands offer distinct cultural experiences, with each having its own traditions, architecture, and cuisine. From the ancient ruins of Delos to the iconic white-washed villages of Santorini, the Aegean Sea region has captivated the imagination of travelers and artists throughout history. Aegean Sea has been a source of inspiration for countless works of art literature, and mythology, influencing Greek culture and leaving a lasting imprint on the nation's identity. The tourism industry, fueled by the Aegean's natural beauty and historical sites, is vital to the Greek economy, providing employment opportunities and cultural exchange between locals and visitors.



*i: Greek military transports to Aegean Islands*

The Aegean Sea holds strategic importance for Greece and its national security. Its location at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa has made it a vital area for military operations, both historically and in modern times. Throughout history, control over the Aegean Sea has been sought after by various powers due to its strategic position for trade, defense, and influence. The sea's waters have witnessed conflicts and naval engagements, shaping the geopolitics of the region. Today, Greece considers the security of the Aegean Sea and its islands as crucial to its defense and sovereignty.

### **Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Sites**

The Aegean Sea is not only significant for its natural beauty but also for its rich cultural heritage and archaeological sites. Numerous ancient cities, temples, and archaeological sites are scattered along its coastlines and islands, providing a glimpse into Greece's glorious past. These sites, such as the Acropolis of Athens, the Palace of Knossos on Crete, attract tourists, historians, and archaeologists from around the world. The preservation and promotion of these cultural treasures contribute to Greece's cultural identity and serve as educational resources for future generations.



## Maritime Connectivity and Trade Networks

The Aegean Sea has historically been a maritime highway connecting Greece with neighboring countries and distant lands. The sea's waters have facilitated trade routes and cultural exchanges, enabling Greece to engage in commerce with the Mediterranean region, Europe, and beyond. Today, the Aegean Sea continues to serve as an important maritime trade route, linking Greece with major international markets. Greek ports along the Aegean coast, such as Piraeus and Thessaloniki, are vital gateways for imports and exports, contributing to the nation's economic development and foreign trade.

### TURKISH PERSPECTIVE

The Aegean Sea is of utmost importance to Türkiye's defense and deterrence strategy. It acts as a crucial buffer, protecting Türkiye's western flank and providing early warning against potential threats. Türkiye maintains a strong naval presence in the Aegean Sea to monitor and respond to security challenges. The control and defense of the Aegean Sea are essential for safeguarding Türkiye's national security interests.

Aegean Sea is not without its share of territorial disputes and regional tensions. Türkiye and Greece have overlapping claims and disagreements regarding maritime boundaries, airspace sovereignty, and the status of several Aegean islands. These disputes, if not managed effectively, can escalate tensions and pose a threat to regional stability. Türkiye's military presence in the Aegean Sea serves to protect its territorial integrity, assert its rights, and maintain stability in the region.

Türkiye faces various security challenges and threats in the Aegean Sea. These include illegal activities, such as smuggling, illicit trade, and human trafficking. The Aegean Sea is also a transit route for irregular migration flows, which pose humanitarian challenges and security concerns. Additionally, the presence of non-state actors, terrorist organizations, and the potential for asymmetric threats in the region further contribute to Türkiye's security concerns.

Aegean Sea provides **Türkiye** with opportunities for naval power projection and the ability to exert influence in the wider Mediterranean region. Türkiye's naval forces operate in the Aegean Sea to demonstrate its capabilities, protect its interests, and project its presence. The country's participation in NATO and other regional security organizations further enhances its ability to contribute to collective defense efforts and regional stability.

Assistance Given its geographical proximity to various humanitarian crises and emergencies, the Aegean Sea plays a critical role in Türkiye's crisis management and

humanitarian assistance efforts. Türkiye's naval and coast guard forces operate in the Aegean Sea to respond to maritime emergencies, provide search and rescue operations, and deliver humanitarian assistance. The sea has been a significant area of focus during refugee and migrant flows, and Türkiye's efforts in managing these challenges contribute to regional stability and address humanitarian concerns.

Türkiye recognizes the importance of maintaining constructive international relations and cooperation in the Aegean Sea. Through dialogue, diplomatic channels, and bilateral or multilateral agreements, Türkiye strives to address security concerns, resolve disputes, and promote regional cooperation. Collaborative initiatives, joint military exercises, and confidence-building measures are essential elements in enhancing stability and reducing tensions in the Aegean Sea.

### **Geographical Importance**

Geographically, the Aegean Sea plays a crucial role in defining Türkiye's western coastline. It offers access to important port cities such as İzmir, Çanakkale, and Bodrum, which are vital for maritime trade and transportation. The sea's diverse coastline, including the Aegean islands, provides tourism opportunities, attracting visitors from around the world. Türkiye's coastal resorts, archaeological sites, and pristine beaches along the Aegean Sea are major attractions that contribute significantly to the country's tourism sector and economic development.

### **Economic Significance**

The Aegean Sea holds significant economic importance for **Türkiye**. Its maritime resources support the nation's fishing industry, providing employment opportunities and contributing to the local economy. Additionally, the Aegean Sea acts as a vital transportation route for international trade, connecting **Türkiye** with European, Asian, and African markets. The ports along the Aegean coastline, such as İzmir and Çeşme, serve as important gateways for imports and exports, facilitating economic growth and enhancing trade relations for the Turkish nation.

### **Cultural Exchange and Tourism**

The Aegean Sea has been a hub for cultural exchange throughout history, hosting various civilizations and facilitating cross-cultural interactions. The region's historical sites, including the ancient cities of Ephesus, Troy, and Pergamon, attract tourists and scholars interested in exploring Türkiye's rich cultural heritage. The Aegean Sea has also inspired art, literature, and mythology, contributing to the cultural fabric of Türkiye. Tourism along







## 5. INTRODUCTION TO THE MAIN PROBLEMS ABOVE DIVIDED TOPICS

As well as it was mentioned above, problems related to Aegean conflicts, that are results of various historical reasons, are usually divided into different topics on the ground of international law for an opportunity of better understanding and a cleaner look towards the topics. Problems that are selected as subjects of this summit and will be negotiated upon are as followings:

- a. ***The problem of uncertain sovereignty upon islands, islets and rocks that were not legally awarded to any government***



<https://www.yenisafak.com/dunya/egenin-kilit-sorunu-egeaydaak-ada-ve-adaciklarin-turkce-isimleri-acilen-ilan-edilmeli-3567489>

Until the beginning of the 19th century, sovereignty of the Aegean Islands have been determined by international treaties and official declarations of states. Withstanding the common categorization upon Aegean Islands, it is obvious that there is a group of islands that were neither awarded to Türkiye or Greece in 1923 Lausanne Treaty nor 1947 Paris Treaty.



Considering the historical progress of legal status of Aegean Islands is chronologically consisted of *1830 London Protocol*,*1832 Treaty of Istanbul*,*1911 Treaty of Ouchy*,*1913 Conference of the Ambassadors*,*1923 Treaty of Lausanne* and *1947 Treaty of Paris*;the main objective documents for covering the issue should also be accepted as the mentioned documents. Furthermore,since the international legal system has also evolved during the flowing decades and Republic of Türkiye was established replacing the Ottoman Empire,the latest documents upon the issues were surely the most inclusive ones upon the matter. In other words,it can be said that *1923 Treaty of Lausanne* and *1947 Treaty of Paris* are the most inclusive international documents and sufficient sources to contain all historical and legal regulations related to the current status of Aegean Islands within their provisions. Based on the detection made,following attributions and explanations will mostly be stated depending on the aforementioned 2 treaty.

Moving on back with the topic,the main reason of it being told that there is a group of islands that their sovereignty were not stated in any international legal document,is simply that they were not stipulated in both of the most crucial and governing documents,*Treaties of Lausanne* and *Paris*. Total number of these islands,islets and rocks are 152 in total. They are marked with red color on the map pinned above.

## Turkish Theses

Republic of Türkiye claims that 152 islands belongs to Türkiye depending on 2 facts,that are;

- Türkiye is the successor of Ottoman Empire.
- Governmental exercises at approximately 800-1000 islands,islets and rocks that are in the status of non-belonging were made by the Aydın parliamentarian and former Minister of Internal Affairs Şükrü Kaya.

Beginning with the explanation of the first argument of Türkiye,state defends that since these islands were not given to any government through the *Treaties of 1923* and *1947*,these islands were automatically in the rule of non-belonging. However,even if the sovereignty on them was not determined by the *Treaties*,Republic of Türkiye should automatically become their sovereign since Türkiye is the great successor of Ottoman state,and so that it has the right of ownership on every territory that Ottomans have ruled and that were not given to another state by an international document.

Moving on with the second explanation,Türkiye declares that official land-registry records of the state shows that the related islands were registered in the name of Turkish property in 1936 and by Rüştü Kaya. Furthermore,it is said that civil fortifications were done on these islands that were visited by Şükrü Kaya such as planting signs and flags. Depending on the thesis of succession and the governmental actions said to be done by Şükrü Kaya proves that islands are under Turkish sovereignty. Moreover,former President of Türkiye Süleyman Demirel also had statements about sovereignty of the islands.

## Greek Theses

- There are none counter thesis about the part that the rights of belonging are not regulated by an international agreement. However,according to Greece,since there are state practices and civil Greek fortifications done at the islands, the property right belongs to the Greek state.

Interpreting the thesis of Greece,it is obvious that Greek thesis claims the stated sovereignty above a sociocultural influence. State officials regularly express that the claims of Greece depends on related articles of UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas). Mentioned thesis should also be considered and its ground should be researched within the terms of UNCLOS.

Before moving on with the upcoming phase,as further knowledge,it should be added that the 1995 Kardak Crisis was an issue reasoned from this title too. The uncertain sovereignty that has caused the crisis was upon the islets that were and still are within the category of “The problem of uncertain sovereignty upon islands,islets and rocks that were not legally awarded to any government”. Kardak Crisis is one of the vulnerable examples in order to understand the importance of the status,as an intimation.

Lastly,it is crucial to make an addition before closing the phase. Today,as much as international society knows, 23 islands and some other islets and rocks are under the *de facto* (Meaning of the term “De Facto”:Existing or holding a specified position in fact,but not necessarily by legal right.) control and sovereignty of Greece. Furthermore,important amount of military build-ups,base establishments,exercises,strategic plannings and army order were established on these islands. It is possible to say that although Greece is arming other regions in the Aegean Sea as well,it has the most serious military fortifications and preparations at the islands that are within the category of “Islands,islets and rocks that were not legally awarded”.







(A website to check for further researches upon military existence of Greece at the Aegean islands: [https://umap.openstreetmap.fr/tr/map/ege-denizindeki-yunan-askeri-varlig\\_588908#9/37.0508/27.7075](https://umap.openstreetmap.fr/tr/map/ege-denizindeki-yunan-askeri-varlig_588908#9/37.0508/27.7075))

**b. The problem of contradicting claims upon national territorial waters**

Beginning the phase, it is an important point to clarify the actual definition of the content of "Territorial Water". Territorial waters means the nautical area that reaches up to 12 miles away from the land borders of a country. According to the related articles of the United



Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS), it is not mandatory for territorial waters of a country to be exactly 12 nautical miles, but it is stipulated that the maximum territorial water area that can be proclaimed by states is limited with 12 nautical miles. Taking a look to the relevant provisions of the Convention:

“...

## *PART II - TERRITORIAL SEA AND CONTIGUOUS ZONE*

### *SECTION 1 - GENERAL PROVISIONS*

#### *Article 2*

*Legal status of the territorial sea, of the air space over the territorial sea and of its bed and subsoil*

- 1. The sovereignty of a coastal State extends, beyond its land territory and internal waters and, in the case of an archipelagic State, its archipelagic waters, to an adjacent belt of sea, described as the territorial sea.*
- 2. This sovereignty extends to the air space over the territorial sea as well as to its bed and subsoil.*
- 3. The sovereignty over the territorial sea is exercised subject to this Convention and to other rules of international law.*

### *SECTION 2 - LIMITS OF THE TERRITORIAL SEA*

#### *Article 3*

*Breadth of the territorial sea*

*Every State has the right to establish the breadth of its territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles, measured from baselines determined in accordance with this Convention.*

#### *Article 4*

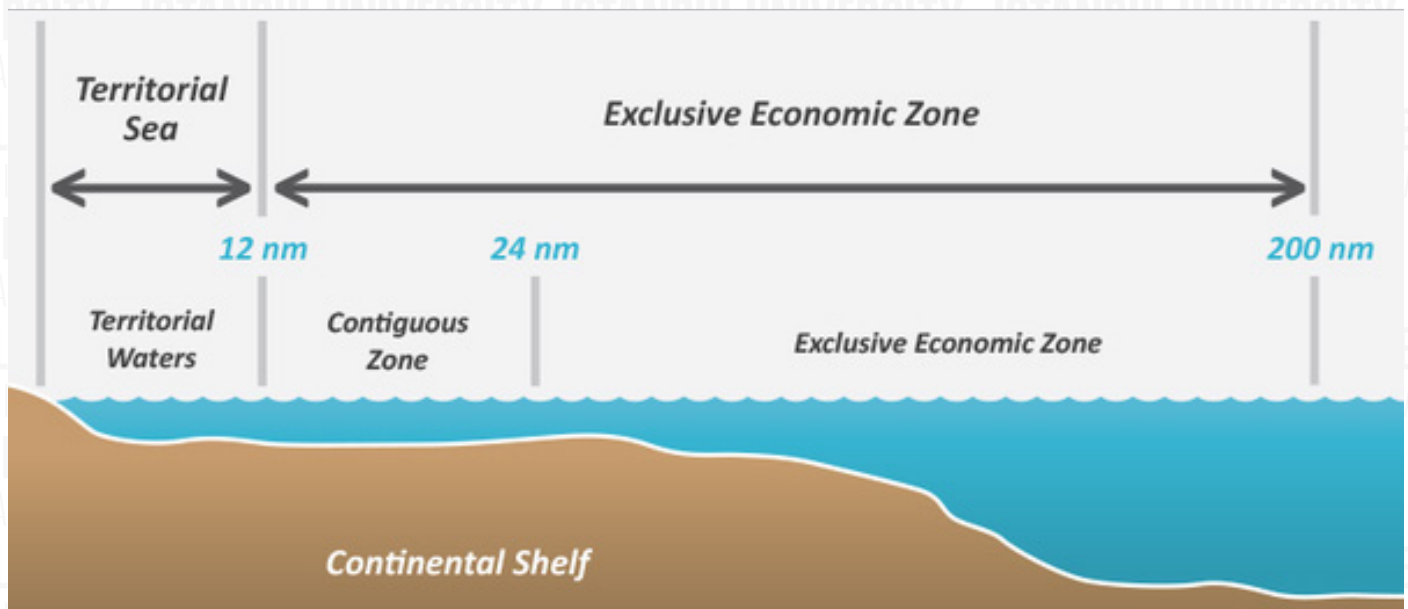
*Outer limit of the territorial sea*

*The outer limit of the territorial sea is the line every point of which is at a distance from the nearest point of the baseline equal to the breadth of the territorial sea.*

”<sup>1</sup>  
“...

1 [https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention\\_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos\\_e.pdf](https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf)





a simpler explanation, infographic above shows the intent of the concept.

(<https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-difference-between-exclusive-economic-zone-and-territorial-waters>)

As for the Turkish-Greek relations and the situation of the Aegean Sea, it is certain that determining exact territorial waters at the zone is way too challenging due to existence of various islands, islets and rocks. Furthermore, due to the contradiction between claims of the sides, the solution for this matter gets harder to be spotted.

The Aegean Sea is a marine area with a surface area of approximately 214.000 square kilometers, including approximately 3.000 different-sized islands, islets and rocks. And although the sovereignty of some of these islands is controversial on various issues, the main topic that makes it difficult to determine the territorial waters at Aegean Sea is not the point of “which islands will have territorial waters or not”. The uncertainty that stands out in terms of this problem is that, regardless of the island in question, the two states have not been able to reach an agreement on how much land water the island will have. When the historical and legal connections are taken into the account, both states have different territorial water demands, expressed in general terms, regardless of which islands’ territorial water is spoken upon. At this summit, it is expected that the participating parties will not discuss which islands will be recognized with territorial waters within the scope of this title, but how much of the territorial water will be recognized regardless of any specific island.

Taking the focus back on the subject, the historical background of the issue carries a long past filled with different legal instruments, diplomatic events and international declarations.

The aforementioned convention,UNCLOS,is the legal basis that covers the matters of maritime law. Under this status,it also sets the frame of governmental rights for declaring the territorial waters. Relatedly with the Aegean Sea it is important to underline that while Greece is party to the convention,Türkiye is not.

In 1923,the Treaty of Lausanne became the main legal instrument that ruled the issue after it was signed. The provisions related to the current topic,within the treaty,were the last clauses of articles number 6 and 12. Although there were none clear and strict provisions of the Treaty related to the matter,articles number 6 and 12 were the ones pointing the general purpose of the Treaty upon the matter. That purpose was reached through interpretations by legal methods on the base of wording in the articles,international applications about territorial waters and continuing traditions of international maritime law. According to the jurisprudence,it was acceptance of both states that the Treaty of Lausanne has pointed both of the states to own 3 nautical miles of territorial waters at the Aegean Sea. So that,both of the governments have used their territorial water area as 3 nautical miles in the following years,depending on the purpose of the articles number 6 and 12 at the Treaty of Lausanne.

Subsequently,in 1936,Greece has done a new national legislation about the matter. In 1936,Greece has released the new law expanding their territorial waters from 3 nautical miles to 6 nautical miles. With this unilateral move,the status became to a point that territorial waters of Greece is 6 nautical miles,and Türkiye's is 3. Both due to the favorable relations after the Turkish War of Independence between 2 nations at the date and opportune relations between the featured leaders of sides,*Eleftherios Venizelos* and *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*,there was none extreme reactions that could increase the diplomatic tension from Türkiye. Therefore,the territorial waters of Greece were extended to the level of 6 nautical miles in 1936.

The awaited response to be given by Türkiye for this step of Greece has occurred with a national law in 1964. With the Territorial Waters Law,which is the law number 476 of Turkish National Assembly,Türkiye has expanded its territorial waters to 6 nautical miles as well.

While evaluating this step in the following years,some academicians and mariners from the Turkish public have made various criticisms. It has been said that instead of pushing Greece to comply with the 3-mile condition of Lausanne,it is a diplomatic and legal mistake to respond with the 6-mile application. Furthermore,it was thought that after this point, the Greek doctrine will aim to reach 12 nautical miles, and it will be a strategic stalemate for the conditions of the Aegean Sea for Turks.

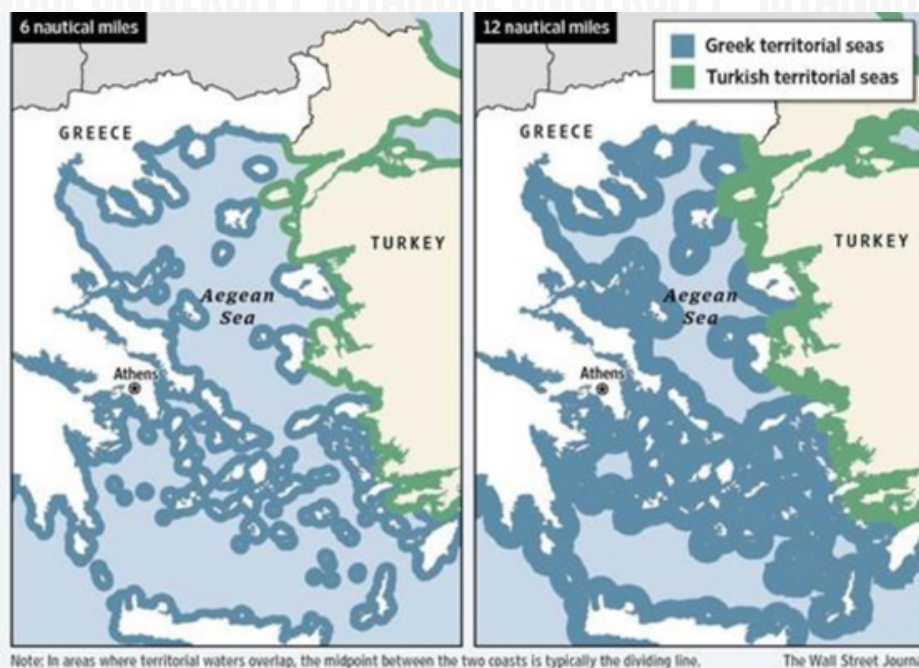


Some people both from the Greek mediatic channels and legal doctrine stated that as a result of this step, which they found to be highly affirmative as an approval of their own step, Türkiye's right to request both sides to return to the 3-mile conditions regulated by Lausanne did not remain according to international law.

Since this discourse has not yet become a matter of debate, whether it is legally valid or not has not been brought to the diplomatic table by state officials either Turkish or Greek ones. However, some Turkish academics reject this statement within the framework of international law, regardless of claims and practises of the Turkish government.

When the dates came to 1995, a very serious diplomatic crisis broke out between two states regarding the issue. At that time, regarding such parameters as "Continuing uncertainty of continental shelves and blocked seabed researches at the Aegean Sea", "Tension rooted from islands whose belonging is not legally clear (which was both explained in the previous title and caused the Kardak crisis at that time)", "Sovereignty and statehood in Cyprus"; Turkish-Greek relations was already going through a highly challenging period. There was a relationship between two states in which NATO and American bureaucrats were quite involved and held the reins.

Exactly in such a period, as a new diplomatic maneuver, Greece adopted the 1982 UNCLOS in its parliament on 31 May 1995. In addition to this acceptance, it was announced by Greece that there is a state will that the territorial seas in the Aegean Sea will be extended to 12 miles.



<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Greece-Türkiye-dispute-in-the-Aegean-and-the-ICJ-Papadakis/7036486a575aa8f2c799ef2b535109e42f7d85ac>

As it is obviously seen from the infographic above,option of both sides expanding their area up to 12 miles means the inability of Turkish navy to reach the Mediterranean,the closure of the transportation and nautical touch with international waters for Turkish seafarers,a maritime that is stuck in the Black Sea and the Marmara,a maritime rupture from the southern side of Türkiye,and many more strategic and security problems that can be listed.

An issue with so many negatives has risen to a very sensitive position for Türkiye. As a result, following the 12-mile statements by the Greek authorities after 31 May 1995,Turkish parliamenters and high-level government officials held the necessary meetings and formed a declaration in the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye on 8 June 1995. Content of that declaration was a decision of *Casus Belli* (the official reasons that will drag a country to declare a war). Simply,Turkish state has announced it to the whole world that if Greece will deign to expand its territorial waters to more than 6 nautical miles,Grand National Assembly of Türkiye has capacitated the Turkish government to use every method for preventing the situation,including the right for declaring a war. This declaration was condemned by Greece as a violation of the United Nations Charter, which prohibits “the threat or usage of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state”.

The territorial waters issue,which has been trembled in the balance since that time and has been discussed again at moments such as the eastern Mediterranean tension or the manifestation of other problematic topics,is currently in a freezed status in the means of dynamicness. Moving on with the theses and arguments of the sides:

### **Turkish Theses**

- Türkiye is not a party state to UNCLOS. Therefore, Türkiye argues that the majority of the agreement is not binding on itself, even if it is applied customarily in terms of the functioning of the international system.
- Türkiye expresses Greece’s request for a 12 nautical mile territorial water area as “acting maximalistically and strategically encircling Türkiye within the historical desire of Megola Idea rather than the purpose of using the right”,which means that the criterias stipulated in article 300 of UNCLOS;fairness,goodwill and prohibition of abusing the right,are being violated by Greece.



## Greek Theses

- Greece argues that it is very natural to use its rights of setting its territorial water borders originated from UNCLOS and that there are none legal obstacle to its right to expand its territorial water borders to 12 nautical miles.
- Greece expresses that 1995 declaration of Türkiye, *Casus Belli*, contradicts with the United Nations Charter.
- Not the state but academic community of Greece argues that if a possible situation occurs that Türkiye would want to set the Lausanne Balance again or want both sides to set the territorial water limits as 3 nautical miles; after the legislation at 1964, Türkiye has lost that right of request by not abiding by the provision of Lausanne itself.

### c. The problem depending upon the militarization at the islands



Considering the geostrategic location of the islands, and the geographical features of the Aegean Sea, there have been some provisions and conditions that have been met for the sovereign state to apply. In the historical flux, there were several legal elements that contributed to the process of many Aegean islands' status becoming demilitarized. However, rather than attributing to all the past documents, it seems enough legally-inclusionary to actualize explanations about related phases of the *1923 Treaty of Lausanne* and *1947 Treaty of Paris*.

The topic of “Demilitarized status of Aegean islands” should be examined on 3 pillars: *Unarmed status of the strait-front Aegean islands*, *Unarmed status of the islands whose sovereignty was determined in Treaty of Lausanne with the criteria of demilitarization* and *Unarmed status of the islands ceded and demilitarized by the treaty of Paris*.



## 1) Unarmed status of the Strait-Front Aegean islands

One of the most important documents signed in Lausanne at the same conference is the Agreement on the status of the Turkish Straits, that is called *Lausanne Straits Convention*. Article 23 of the Lausanne Peace Convention included the Straits issue in general, but the subject was regulated in detail with the Lausanne Straits Convention, which was annexed to the Lausanne Peace Treaty.

The Lausanne Straits Convention is an agreement composed of 20 articles, including various provisions that aim for ensuring the right of free passage through the Straits, the establishment of the Straits Commission for common management on the Turkish Straits, the demilitarization of the straits and their surrounding islands (Limnos, Samothrace, Gökçeada and Bozcaada) and the guarantee of the League of Nations.

The Lausanne Straits Convention was simply based on three principles:

1. Demilitarization of the Straits and surrounding zone
2. Establishment of a Straits Commission, which is authorized to control the passage of ships in the Straits and to inform the League of Nations about these passages,
3. Providing the guarantee of the League of Nations, especially England, France, Italy and Japan, in order to prevent a situation that would pose a military threat to Türkiye,

These three principles were very important for Türkiye. However, not being able to dominate the Straits region surrounded by its own lands, not being able to intervene immediately in the coming dangers, it being mandatory for getting permission from the guarantor countries to intervene; all these facts were a source of great concern for Türkiye at the time.<sup>2</sup> From the point of view of a Greece that had just emerged from the war at that time, an Italy that did not forget the Mediterranean basin, and a Türkiye that was trying to establish national sovereignty in the face of a world that could not yet suspend the heat of the First World War, this situation could also be perceived as a legitimate concern in the means of Turkish national politics.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.vda.org.tr/aylik-yazi/turk-bogazlari-3-lozan-ve-montreux-bogazlar-sozlesmele-ri/58#:~:text=%2D%20T%C3%BCrkiye'nin%20Bo%C4%9Fazlar%20%C3%BCzerinde%20mutlak,ge%C3%A7i%C5%9F%20yapan%20gemilerin%20iste%C4%9Fine%20b%C4%B1rak%C4%B1ld%C4%B1>

Although Türkiye has participated in various meetings of the League of Nations for disarmament, and it has taken initiatives for the self security and gaining 'peaceful' strength upon Straits there, it could not reach any results. As a concrete example, Türkiye, attending the Disarmament Meeting held in London on 23 May 1933, formally requested the cancellation of the provisions of the Lausanne Straits Convention on the disarmament of the Straits. However, Türkiye's request was not accepted.

The extraordinary meeting of the League of Nations held on 17 April 1935, Turkish Foreign Minister Tefik Rüştü Aras demanded the cancellation of the related articles of the Lausanne Straits Convention regarding the disarmament of the Straits. Aras emphasized that there are national concerns about Türkiye's security due to the disarmament of the Turkish Straits paralleled with the changing world conditions. According to the thesis of the Turkish side, when this region was demilitarized, a major breach was opened in Türkiye's western defense, so he argued that the Lausanne Straits Convention should abolish the provisions that threaten Türkiye's security.

Although Türkiye repeated the same problem at the League of Nations Security Council meeting in September 1935, it did not get any results too. Türkiye has created a general atmosphere in the direction it wants due to the various diplomatic activities it has carried out until these years. At the same meeting, the Russian and Greek delegates emphasized that Türkiye's view was reasonable. In Britain, government believed it necessary to amend the demilitarization clause of the Lausanne Straits Convention of Türkiye too. During these years, the situation in Europe was also changing both militarily and politically. While a trend towards disarmament was observed starting from 1923, the arms race was accelerating after 1930 again.

Türkiye eventually convinced many states that the status of the Straits should be changed and adapted to the daytime. Simply, the stance of Europe was moving from "the desire of governing the Straits" to "ensuring the security and advantage of the Straits against heated conditions". What Türkiye did was taking the successful diplomatic position for taking the advantage of that diplomatic evolution of Europe.

The Montreux Straits Conference began to negotiate an agreement that would replace the Lausanne Straits Convention after the appropriate international public opinion had formed. It has lasted from 22 June 1936 to 20 July 1936. In conclusion, the Montreux Straits Convention, signed on 20 July 1936, was a document consisting of 29 articles, replacing the aforementioned provisions in Lausanne Straits Agreement.



In accordance with the provisions of the Montreux Straits Convention, a Turkish force of 30 thousand troops entered the Straits region at midnight on the same day of signing the Convention. The brief historical background armament process of the Straits is as explained.

The main reason why the process of armament of the Straits is explained and the passage from Lausanne Straits Convention to Montreux Convention is included in this document, is that, these issues are directly and highly related to the armament of the Strait-front Aegean islands. It is important noting that the islands meant by the term "Strait-Front Islands" are Lemnos, Samothrace, Gökçeada and Bozcaada.



<https://21yyte.org/tr/merkezler/ege-denizinde-egemenligi-tartismali-ada-adacik-kayaliklar-sorunu-ve-son-durum-kardak-kayaliklari-kimin>

Islands called as Strait-front; Lemnos, Samothrace, Gökçeada and Bozcaada are not under the sovereignty of a single state. 2 of these islands, Lemnos and Samothrace, are under the sovereignty of Greece today, meanwhile Gökçeada and Bozcaada are under the sovereignty of Türkiye. So that, arguments meanwhile the negotiations for setting a status for these islands shouldn't and possible decisions to be taken about these islands should not be valid on behalf of a single side, but there should be common international provisions that both states will comply for these islands. For why, if the subject is these 4 islands in special, the ongoing legal status of the Strait-front Aegean islands has been formed by evaluating this island group as a whole, regardless of which island is under the sovereignty of which side.



Returning to the issue of the unarmed status of the islands, it is necessary to investigate the current situation at the State-front islands. Today, starting from the islands under Greek sovereignty, there is 1 military battalion exercising at the Samothrace and 1 military airport plus 1 brigade at the Lemnos. Considered relative to the surface and geographical facts of the island and other features of the region, this means a middle-level armament at Samothrace and a high-level armament at Lemnos according to objective criteria of global military doctrines.

Moving on with the islands under Turkish sovereignty, there is 1 regiment at Gökçeada and none military fortifications or troops, but standard security forces at Bozcaada. Considered relative to the surface and geographical facts of the island and other features of the region, this means a high-level armament at Gökçeada and a demilitarized/normal status at Bozcaada according to objective criteria of global military doctrines.

In the face of these situations, while there were no statements from the Turkish side, Greece stated that the unarmed status of the Strait-front island group was determined by the Lausanne Straits Convention. However, according to the opinion of Greece, after the replacement of that agreement by Montreux Convention and following automatic removal of the non-military status regulation, there was no obligation left related with the Strait-front island group. In addition, the Greek side has increased its theses by making 2 more separate evaluations about the matter.

Today, the issue of the disarmed status of the islands, which seems quiet for now except both for the letter sent to the UN and the wavy tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. As one of its 3 sub-titles, the issue of disarming the Strait-front island group has not been concluded yet either. The aforementioned military presences are also still on the islands today. In general, Türkiye demands that the Strait-Front island group be disarmed under the general title of disarmament of the islands, while Greece states that this demand is legally baseless.

## **Greek Theses**

- Greece claims that after the Montreux Straits Convention replaced the Lausanne Straits Convention, the obligations expressed by Türkiye are null and void, since the provision of disarmament of the surrounding islands in the first contract has disappeared.



- Greece claims that the Strait-Front island group forms a general integrity with the Straits, and since the Straits are armed by Türkiye, it would be meaningless to set a disarmed status of the Strait-front Aegean Islands. Furthermore, due to geostrategic integrity mentioned, the right to use these islands for military purposes arose according to Greece when Türkiye militarized the Straits.
- Greece states that it is inconsistent to demand applying Unarmed Status from Greece while Türkiye is arming the Strait-front islands itself that are under Turkish sovereignty.

## Turkish theses

- Türkiye states that the idea of “Straits and Strait-front islands being in an integrity” claimed by Greece is a subjective opinion, and since there are no regulations on which it is based in international law, the determination is not valid and binding on the situation at the Aegean Sea. Therefore, according to the Turkish thesis, it cannot be claimed by Greece that there is a right born to arm the Strait-Front island group just because the Straits are armed by taking advantage of an international right, since there is no legal connection or integrity regulated between the Bosphorus and these islands.
- Türkiye maintains that even if the Montreux Straits Convention replaces the Lausanne Straits Convention, the armament of the Lemnos and Samothrace islands is still opposing the international law due to the provisions in article 12 of the Lausanne Peace Treaty, and the agreements referred to within that article.

2) Unarmed status of the islands whose sovereignty was determined in Treaty of Lausanne with the criteria of demilitarization

After the 1897 Turkish-Greek War, 1911 War of Tripoli, 1912-1913 first and second Balkanian Wars, 1914-1918 First World War and finally 1939-1945 Second World War; the mentioned stages of the issue of the Unarmed Status of the Aegean Islands were completed through the historical process, and the current legal situation was formed as a result of the chain of consequences of these stages. In this section, the part of that chain of events and legal consequences within the Treaty of Lausanne will be examined.

Related article of the Treaty of Lausanne is article 13 at the current point. Taking a look at the related article:

“...

*Article 13: For the purpose of maintaining peace, the Greek Government undertake to respect the following measures on the islands of Lesbos,Chios,Samos and Nicara:*

*First: No naval bases and no fortifications will be established on these Islands.*

*Second: Greek warplanes and other aircraft will be banned from flying over the lands on the Anatolian coast. In turn,the Government of Türkiye will prohibit warplanes and other aircraft from flying over the said Islands.*

*Third: The Greek Armed Forces in the said Islands will be limited to a regular military unit that can be recruited and trained on the spot,and to a gendarmerie and police organization that will be proportional to the number of gendarmes and police in the entire Greek territory.*

...”

As it is seen from the article,mutual obligations do exist within the article. Taking a look at the provisions,at the second clause of the article 13,it is certain that army-oriented fortifications and bases,especially the naval bases are prohibited for Greece to establish such ones at the mentioned islands.

At the third clause of the article 13,both states have come under obligation in the means of staying away from violator aerial exercises and approaches oriented with air forces on the mentioned zones for each side.

Lastly,at the fourth clause of the article 13,it is observed that a stipulation and a limitation for Greece upon troop and police allocation at the mentioned islands do exist.

The conclusion gained from this brief interpretation is that,provisions related with the title of “Unarmed status of the islands whose sovereignty was determined in Treaty of Lausanne with the criteria of demilitarization” are,clause number 2 and 4. Verbally,the regulations upon banning military fortifications and allocation of police and troop forces are related with the current scope of the content.







(<https://welcome-to-greece.com/north-and-east-aegean-islands/>)

Taking a look at the situation today above aforementioned legal criterias, first point to cover pops-up as the current situation of military fortifications at the related islands.





As it is seen from the images above, Greek military presence on the said islands was recorded by journalists and international press. As it is understood from the common observations and the scenes within the other images released, that presence of the Greek army is not in line with the proportionality approach that takes place in the last clause of article 13 of the Treaty of Lausanne. Islets and rocks around these islands that are connected to these 4 islands are also subject to the same legal status, and Greece has taken similar steps at those territories too.

In addition, it is seen that there are military fortifications on these islands, although they are not on a large scale. Estimates are that the number of Greek military personnel on each of these islands is the size of a capacity between a battalion and a regiment.

As further information, it should not be overlooked that the islands within the category of "islands, islets and rocks that are not legally awarded to any side" are also an important subject of the content of Status of Demilitarization. Moreover, it can be said that the amount of armament and military fortifications at the islands in that category is geostrategically much more effective, compared to the islands in the context of the Lausanne and Paris Treaties. Both whether they are within the scope of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne or 1947 Treaty of Paris in terms of the legal validity of the disarmament status on those islands, and the extent of the military presence there, are important topics for the upcoming negotiations. Both of the Greek and Turkish sides can gain idea and knowledge from the image attached below, and also from the following website link that was also shared in the previous sections: [https://umap.openstreetmap.fr/tr/map/ege-denizindeki-yunan-askeri-varlg\\_588908#7/36.730/26.202](https://umap.openstreetmap.fr/tr/map/ege-denizindeki-yunan-askeri-varlg_588908#7/36.730/26.202)



Moving on back with the main topic, the presence of Greek soldiers on these islands and the established military bases are as stated. Although Türkiye is diplomatically silent on the subject in general, the legal theses that have the potential to be put forward by the Turks are nearly clear. On the other hand, when Greece is examined in terms of its actions on the subject, it is seen that military practices and power increase continue in the said islands, and frequent visits to these parts are made by high-level state officials. Except the Greek militarization, in the means of Greek thesis, there are several arguments that Greece puts forward about the matter of right to militarize.

#### *Greek theses*

- Greece claims that, as such as it was stated at the topic of militarization issue of strait-front islands, these islands are also a part of integrity between Straits and Aegean islands. Since these geographical locations form a military and geostrategic system together, it is unbalanced for it to be mandatory to administrate the islands with an unarmed status since Straits are militarized.
- Greece argues that periodic conditions have evolved, the political atmosphere has changed and so that, the provisions based on disarmament have become obsolete.

#### *Turkish theses*

- Türkiye argues that Greek theses are legally unfounded and that they are in the direction of adapting to the purpose by stretching international law.
- Türkiye maintains that the base establishments, building up military fortifications and troop reinforcement activities carried out by Greece through mentioned islands are a complete unlawfulness in terms of international law since they violate article 13 of the Treaty of Lausanne.

3) Unarmed status of the islands ceded and demilitarized by the treaty of Paris

Legal history of the Dodecanese islands (In Turkish, *Oniki Ada* or *Menteşe Adaları*) lays back to the Ottoman conquests done 600-500 years ago. Since the period of Ottomans governing the Dodecanese islands, until the 1821 Greek War of Independence, the sovereign of the Aegean islands was the Turkish state in general. After the war, the period of Turks





gradually losing sovereignty at the Aegean Sea began. For the specific title of Dodecanese Islands, the crucial event was the *1911 War of Tripoli*

While the War of Tripoli was ongoing, the Italian army invaded the Dodecanese islands with the purpose of cutting possible supply chains and martial connections that may be ensured by the Ottoman navy between Tripoli and Istanbul.

During the war between Turks and Italians, a situation among Balkanians occurred. Mutual conflicts between the Ottoman state and Balkanian countries have fastly turned into a regional war, right after the Balkanian countries set a front against Turks. Ottomans had to shift the focus of the army to the Balkanians. As a result of the urgent need of coming to an end with the war at Tripoli, the Ottoman Empire and Italy signed the Treaty of Ouchy on 18 October 1912.

Connection between the Treaty and the fate of Dodecanese islands was that Italy agreed to evacuate the Dodecanese islands when both the war and Turkish presence at Tripoli would end. Although Italy had agreed on the approach to be done, it was not actualized after the war. For why, Ottomans did not want to become the sovereign of the islands back again during the Balkanian war since the Ottoman navy was worn and disorganized, which could result with Greece invading the islands. So, even if the 1912 Treaty of Ouchy stipulated that islands would be given back to the Ottomans, what happened in practice was totally different. Ottomans found it safer for the islands to remain under *de facto* Italian sovereignty for a while. In the ongoing process, the Dodecanese islands never returned to Turkish sovereignty due to the ongoing wars, the increasing global tension and Italy's desire to take advantage of the situation.



Subsequently,when the First World War occurred,the French army invaded Megisti (also known as Meis,Kastellorizo) island. In the following months after the invasion,since the sovereign of the Dodecanese islands was Italy,France ceded the island to Italy.



In summary,the dominance on the island was of France during the First World War,and of Italy after the ceding of France. Island has been considered as a part of the Dodecanese island group since the day it came under Italian domination. With the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne,the Republic of Türkiye has approved that the official sovereign of the Megisti island is Italy.

Taking the dates to 1947,the year when Peace Treaty of Paris was signed after the Second World War;after the years of Italy,Germany and Britain spent at Mediterranean Sea during the war,the Dodecanese island group did not remain under Italian ruling since Italy was at a politically-demolished position at the end of all. Hence,at the end of the Second World War,Italy ceded its sovereignty rights over the islands to Greece,within the framework of the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty and on the condition of disarmament.

Related article of the Treaty is article number 14:

“...

*SECTION V -.GREECE (Special Clause)*

*Article 14*

*1. Italy hereby cedes to Greece in full sovereignty the Dodecanese Islands indicated hereafter, namely Stampalia (Astropalia), Rhodes (Rhodos), Calki (Kharki), Scarpanto, Casos (Casso), Piscopis (Tilos), Misiros (Nisyros), Calimnos (Kalymnos), Leros, Patmos, Lipsos (Lipso), Simi (Symi), Cos (Kos), and Castellorizo, as well as the adjacent islands.*

*2. These islands shall be and shall remain demilitarised.*

*3. The procedure and the technical conditions governing the transfer of these islands to Greece will be determined by agreement between the of the United Kingdom and Greece and arrangements shall be made for the withdrawal of foreign troops not later than 90 days from the coming into force of the present Treaty.*

”<sup>3</sup>  
“...

The simple evaluation to state on the provisions is that the conditions are clear enough. Although the meaning of criterias is clear, regarding some attempts at the Aegean Sea in the means of militarizing the related island groups, Türkiye and Greece has had periods of high tension, nights of diplomatic challenges and mutual official notes with the most popular ones being in 1964 and 1996.

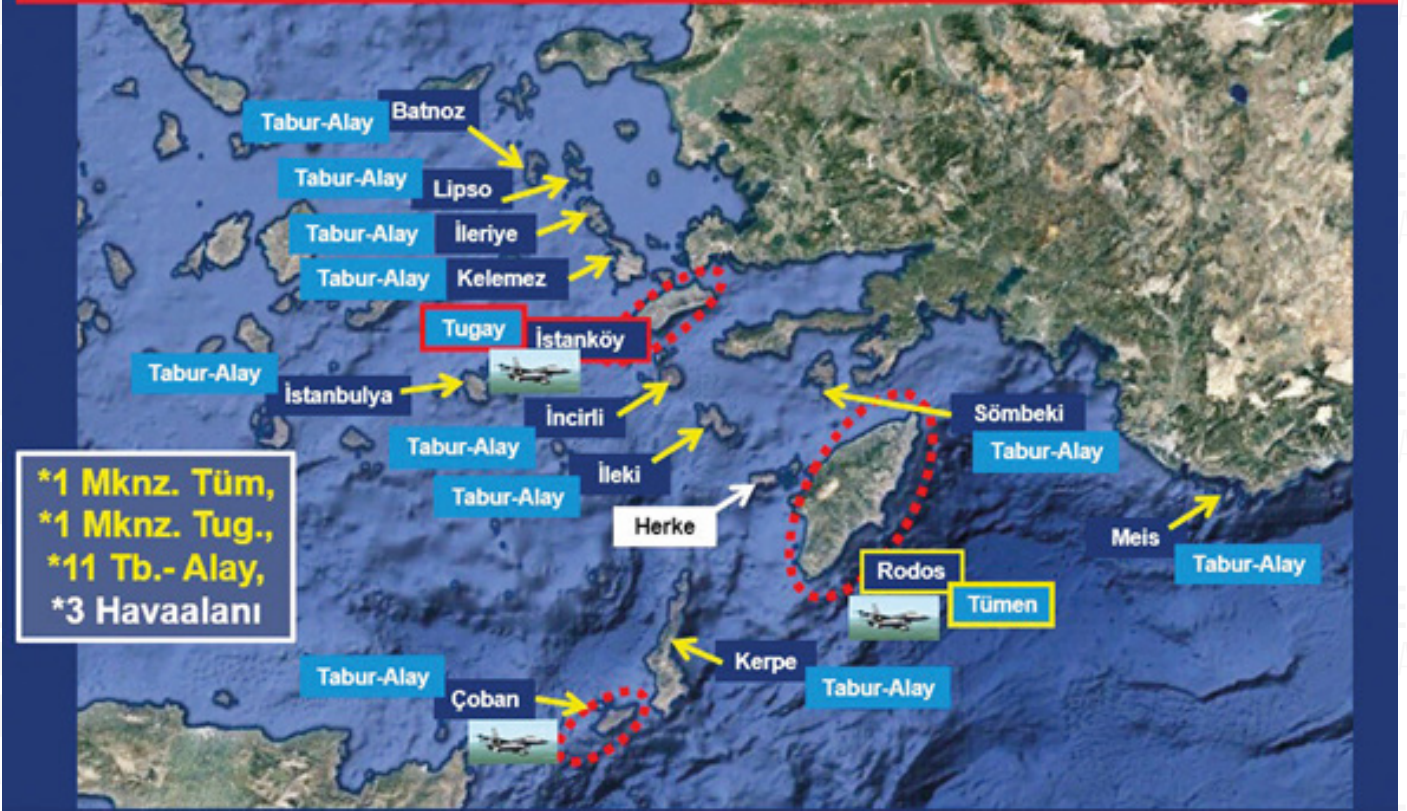
Last element to be considered about the evolution process of demilitarized status of the Dodecanese islands was the 1947 Paris Treaty in general. Moving on, the current situation at the Dodecanese islands in the means of militarization should be expressed.

<sup>3</sup> <http://gis.nacse.org/tfdd/tfdddcs/135ENG.pdf>





## Yunan Askeri varlığı ve Havaalanları



Visual averments shows that militarization on the Dodecanese islands exist at an important level as well as the other Aegean islands. Türkiye maintains that Greece clearly violates international law. On the other hand, Greece claims that conditions have changed, and also that Türkiye can not base their arguments on a treaty that they are not a party of.

## Turkish Theses

- Türkiye argues that there is a clear violation towards article number 14 of the 1947 Treaty of Paris. According to the Turkish thesis, it is prohibited for Greece to militarize the Dodecanese islands. Türkiye states that if Greece won't abide by the demilitarization criteria of the article even if the reminders, calls and legal requests are made by Türkiye; the legal validity of the Dodecanese sovereignty rights of Greece will become a matter to be discussed in terms of international law since the ruling rights are ceded to Greece connected and integrated with seeking the unarmed status.

## Greek Theses

- Greece states that since Türkiye is not a signatory of the 1947 Treaty of Paris, it is neither consistent nor prevailing for Turks to seek a contradiction between Greek administration and international law.
- Greece maintains that there are none legal statements or certain provisions spotting that there is an integrity between "Criteria of demilitarization" and "the sovereignty rights over Dodecanese islands". According to Greece, it is a subjective commentation of Türkiye's just for rendering the Greek authorization as a subject of discussion and to gain the opportunity to reclaim the islands. Reaction of Greece is that Türkiye acts expansionist and imperial through using the title of "militarization" as a tool, which means that Türkiye violates the basic principle of good faith and does strain the positive relations of governments.





# EXPLANATIONS AND INFORMATIONS ABOUT CHARACTERS

## **TURKISH CABINET:**

### *Participant Board Members*

#### *President of Türkiye (President Board Member)*

#### *Chief of Staff For Turkish Armed Forces (Vice Board Member)*

### **1- Turkish ambassador of Athens**

Throughout this committee the ambassador will have an active and important role. The Turkish Ambassador to Athens would be responsible for promoting political, economic, and cultural ties between **Türkiye** and Greece. This would involve engaging in diplomatic negotiations, addressing bilateral issues, and working to strengthen cooperation and understanding between the two nations. The ambassador would also handle consular matters, provide assistance to Turkish citizens in Greece, and serve as a point of contact for Greek officials and organizations.

### **2- Turkish Minister of Defence**

The Minister of Defense is responsible for ensuring the national security of the country. This involves formulating and implementing defense policies and strategies to protect the country from external threats and maintain its territorial integrity, oversees the armed forces and is responsible for ensuring their readiness and effectiveness. This includes overseeing the training, equipping, and modernization of military personnel and assets.

The Defence Minister of Türkiye plays a key role in formulating and managing the defense budget. They allocate resources to various defense programs, projects, and initiatives, ensuring that the military has the necessary funding to carry out its missions, participates in the development and implementation of defense policies in coordination with other relevant government agencies. This includes assessing security threats, formulating defense strategies, and aligning defense policies with broader national interests.

The Minister of Defense acts as a civilian authority overseeing the armed forces.



### **3- Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs**

Engages in diplomatic negotiations, meetings, and conferences with foreign counterparts to advance national interests, promote diplomacy, and maintain diplomatic relations.

Minister of Foreign Affairs plays a key role in formulating the country's foreign policy. They assess global political, economic, and security situations, identify national interests, and develop strategies to achieve those interests through diplomatic means, oversees and develops relations with other countries through bilateral and multilateral channels. This includes engaging in negotiations, signing treaties and agreements, and fostering cooperation on various issues such as trade, security, and cultural exchanges, may be involved in managing international crises and conflicts. They participate in diplomatic efforts to resolve disputes, mediate negotiations, and promote peaceful resolutions through dialogue and international cooperation.

### **4- Minister of Internal Affairs**

The Minister of Internal Affairs is responsible for ensuring law and order within the country. They oversee and coordinate law enforcement agencies, such as the police, to maintain public safety, prevent and investigate crime, and enforce laws and regulations, plays a role in safeguarding national security within the country's borders. This includes countering terrorism, espionage, and other threats to internal security. They may coordinate with intelligence agencies, implement security measures, and develop strategies to protect the nation against internal threats.

Minister of Internal Affairs may oversee civil protection and emergency management systems. They coordinate disaster response efforts, develop emergency plans, and ensure the readiness of emergency services to effectively handle natural disasters, public health crises, and other emergencies.

### **5- Spokesperson of Presidency**

The Spokesperson of the Presidency represents the President and the government in press conferences and public statements. They address the media, answer questions, and provide official statements on a range of issues, including domestic and foreign policy matters. In times of crises or sensitive situations, plays a crucial role in managing communication. They provide updates, clarify government positions, and address public



concerns to ensure transparency and maintain public trust, works closely with various government departments and officials to gather accurate information and ensure consistent messaging. They coordinate with relevant ministries and agencies to align communication strategies and disseminate official information effectively.

Spokesperson of the Presidency may contribute to shaping the government's messaging and assist in speechwriting for the President. They help formulate key messages, craft official statements, and ensure that communication aligns with the government's objectives and policies.

## **6- Undersecretary to the Ministry of Defence**

They work closely with the Minister of Defense to develop and execute defense policies, strategies, and plans to ensure national security and defense preparedness.

The Undersecretary plays a role in managing the defense budget and resources. They participate in the allocation of financial resources, oversee budget planning and execution, and ensure optimal utilization of resources for various defense programs, projects, and initiatives.

The Undersecretary must be involved in promoting and developing the national defense industry. They work to enhance domestic defense capabilities, encourage research and development, foster collaboration between the military and the defense industry, and support defense technology innovation.

Plays a part in fostering international defense cooperation. This involves engaging with foreign counterparts, participating in bilateral and multilateral defense discussions and agreements, and promoting collaboration in areas such as defense procurement, military training, and joint exercises.

Undersecretary collaborates with other government agencies and departments involved in defense-related matters. They coordinate activities, share information, and promote cooperation with entities such as intelligence agencies, foreign affairs ministries, and law enforcement agencies.

The Undersecretary provides analysis and advice on defense policy matters. They assess current security challenges, analyze defense trends, and offer insights to the Minister of Defense to inform decision-making and policy formulation.



## 7- Undersecretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Undersecretary contributes to the formulation and implementation of foreign policy strategies and objectives. They work closely with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and senior officials to develop policies, assess geopolitical developments, and ensure coherence in the country's diplomatic efforts, plays a crucial role in coordinating diplomatic activities within the ministry. They oversee the work of different departments, bureaus, and embassies to ensure effective coordination, information sharing, and collaboration in pursuing foreign policy goals.

The Undersecretary engages in diplomatic negotiations, meetings, and discussions with foreign counterparts. They represent the country in bilateral and multilateral forums, such as international organizations or regional groupings, to promote the country's interests, address key issues, and establish partnerships.

The Undersecretary may be involved in managing and responding to crises and conflicts that have international implications. They contribute to diplomatic efforts to resolve conflicts, mediate negotiations, and support peacebuilding initiatives in collaboration with other countries and international organizations.

## GREEK CABINET

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## FURTHER READING

<https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/STATEFILES/TUR.htm>

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