

Greece and Turkey: Adversity in Alliance

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Efstratios, Lesbos, Chios, Psara and Antipsara. The area thus designated overlapped with the area of the continental shelf claimed by Greece, and in some cases the Turkish awards were in areas where Greece had already granted licences to foreign companies.

When Greece protested, partly to preclude a finding of acquiescence in international law,¹³ the first Turkish response, on 28 February 1974, was to propose negotiations. This Greece accepted on 25 May 'in accordance with international law as codified in the Geneva convention' – a step described by the Turkish Prime Minister, Mr Ecevit, as a 'positive development'. Three days later, however, Turkey announced that a survey ship, the *Candarli* was to make magnetometric studies in the Aegean in preparation for oil-drilling. The area of the survey, according to the Minister for Power and Natural Resources, Mr Cahit Kayra, was to be 'in the Turkish continental shelf'.

The *Candarli* entered the Aegean on 29 May and, accompanied by 32 warships of the Turkish navy, spent six days exploring and sailing along the western limit of the areas in which Turkey had granted mineral exploration concessions. In the ensuing tense situation Greece sent a new protest, which Turkey rejected. A month later Turkey granted more exploration licences, extending further west and south including the waters around all the Dodecanese Islands.

At this point (in mid-July) the continental shelf dispute was overtaken by a sequence of outside events: the Samson coup in Cyprus, the Turkish intervention, and the fall of the Greek military junta in Athens and the return of Mr Karamanlis. The landing of Turkish troops, which was to lead to the occupation of nearly 40% of Cyprus, put Turkey in a position of strength in the island, with the possibility of trading concessions in Cyprus against concessions in the Aegean. The Cyprus crisis also introduced a new element – the dispute over air traffic control zones.

In 1952 a regional conference of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), with Greece and Turkey participating, had decided that, except for the narrow band of Turkish national airspace off the Anatolian coast, Aegean controlled airspace over the Aegean should form part of the Athens Flight Information Region (FIR) for air traffic control

purposes. The arrangement, which was purely technical, meant that all aircraft flying west from Turkey, whether civil or military, were required to file flight plans and report position as they crossed the FIR boundary a minute or so after leaving the Turkish coast (see Map 1 on p. 36). They then came under orders of the Athens flight control centre, which was responsible for providing meteorological and other information. Aircraft flying eastwards from Greece were similarly required to report to the control centre in Istanbul as they entered the Turkish FIR. To have placed the FIR boundary further to the west would have obliged Greek aircraft to pass through a Turkish control zone on flights to the Greek islands. To this extent the arrangement was consistent with geography and seems to have worked well for 22 years. But in the tension following the Cyprus landing it broke down.

On 4 August the Turkish authorities issued NOTAM 714 (a notice to ICAO for transmission to all air users) requiring all aircraft approaching Turkish airspace to report their position and flight plan on reaching the Aegean median line, which lay considerably to the west of the FIR line. The purpose, according to later Turkish explanation, was to enable Turkish military radar to distinguish between innocent flights and potential attackers bound for targets in Asia Minor.

Greece flatly refused to accept this instruction, saying that NOTAM 714 contravened ICAO rules by seeking to establish Turkish control measures in a region assigned to Greece. She noted that the proposed 'report line' appeared to have a political purpose, in that it approximated to the Western limit of Turkish claims to the continental shelf. On 13 September she issued her own NOTAM 1157, declaring the Aegean air routes to Turkey to be unsafe because of the threat of conflicting control orders. As Greece no longer accepted responsibility for safety measures or guaranteed traffic information, international airlines suspended all direct flights between the two countries – a situation that still exists at the time of writing.¹⁴

Tension and Initiatives, 1974–5

The tension following the Turkish landing in Cyprus on 20 July 1974, and more particularly the second landing, on 14 August, gave the whole Aegean dispute a very much more serious aspect. Within days of Turkey advancing her