



Atıf Bilgisi/Citation

Akosmanoğlu, Tuğçe. "Geopolitical Containment of China and Türkiye".
Diplomasi ve Strateji Dergisi, c.5 s.1 (2024): 49-103. DOI: 10.58685/dsd.1477490

Makale Bilgisi/Article Information
Araştırma Makalesi/Research Article

GEOPOLITICAL CONTAINMENT OF CHINA AND TÜRKİYE

Tuğçe AKOSMANOĞLU¹

Abstract

It can be said that the US, which wants to control the Eurasian region, is trying to control the Rimland region, that is, a corridor starting from Eastern Europe and extending to the Pacific region, including Türkiye, Iran, Pakistan and China. According to Nicholas Spykman's Rimland theory, the power that controls this region can hold world domination. In this context, Türkiye is trying to be limited to its own land border with the islands problem with Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean problem. When the Taiwan issue, the islands issue between China and Japan and the problems with the five countries claiming rights over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea are analysed as similar examples in China, the interventions and restrictive effects of regional and extra-regional actors are observed. It is understood that the US, as an extra-regional actor, aims to confine China and Türkiye to their land

¹Yüksek Lisans
Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat Üniversitesi
tugceakosmanoglu@gmail.com
ORCID: 0009-0003-5835-993X

borders. This article analyses the containment of China and Türkiye within the framework of Spykman's Rimland theory. As two important countries in the Rimland region, similar problems of China and Türkiye are tried to be clarified in line with Spykman's theory. The issues mentioned in the article include Türkiye's geopolitics, Türkiye's geostrategic encirclement, Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus geopolitics, geoeconomic interests, China's geostrategic encirclement and Türkiye-China geopolitics comparison, and these issues are analysed through the Rimland theory.

Keywords: Aegean Islands Crisis, Eastern Mediterranean, Rimland, Eurasia, The US.

ÇİN VE TÜRKİYE'NİN JEOPOLİTİK ÇEVRELENMESİ

Öz

Avrasya bölgesini kontrol etmek isteyen ABD'nin Rimland bölgesini, yani Doğu Avrupa'dan başlayıp Pasifik bölgeye kadar uzanan, Türkiye, İran, Pakistan ve Çin'i de içine alan bir koridoru kontrol etmeye çalıştığı söyleyenebilir. Nicholas Spykman'in Rimland teorisine göre bu bölgeyi kontrol eden güç dünya hakimiyetini elinde tutabilir. Bu bağlamda Türkiye, Yunanistan ile olan adalar sorunu ve Doğu Akdeniz sorunu ile kendi kara sınırı ile sınırlı tutulmaya çalışmaktadır. Tayvan sorunu, Çin ve Japonya arasındaki adalar sorunu ve Güney Çin Denizi'ndeki Spratly Adaları üzerinde hak iddia eden beş ülke ile yaşanan sorunlar Çin'deki benzer örnekler olarak incelendiğinde, bölgesel ve bölge dışı aktörlerin müdaahaleleri ve kısıtlayıcı etkileri gözlemlenmektedir. Bölge dışı bir aktör olarak ABD'nin Çin ve Türkiye'yi kendi kara sınırlarına hapsetmeyi amaçladığı anlaşılmaktadır. Bu makale Çin ve Türkiye'nin çevrelenmesini Spykman'in Rimland teorisi çerçevesinde analiz etmektedir. Rimland bölgesinin iki önemli ülkesi olarak Çin ve Türkiye'nin benzer sorunları Spykman'in teorisi doğrultusunda açıklığa kavuşturulmaya çalışılmaktadır. Makalede Türkiye'nin jeopolitiği, Türkiye'nin jeostratejik kuşatılmışlığı, Doğu Akdeniz ve Kıbrıs jeopolitiği, jeoekonomik çıkarları, Çin'in jeostratejik kuşatılmışlığı ve Türkiye-Çin geopolitik karşılaşması gibi konulara degenilmişt ve bu konular Rimland teorisi üzerinden analiz edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ege Adaları Krizi, Doğu Akdeniz, Rimland, Avrasya, ABD.

Introduction

It can be observed that there are attempts to confine Türkiye and China within their territorial waters, amidst the indirect and direct involvement of other regional actors and the global actor, the United States, in the islands and maritime disputes of both countries. The significant focus of America's dominance over the Rimland on Türkiye and China compels a close examination of the geostrategic, geopolitical, and geoeconomic activities of both nations. In the geoeconomic context, the increasing significance of energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean over the past decade for Türkiye and neighboring countries has become evident. Currently, the paramount importance placed on access to energy resources, it can be asserted that countries are engaged in a competition to secure access to the abundant energy resources in the region. A comparable situation can be observed in the South China Sea. The richness and abundance of natural energy reserves in the South China Sea have spurred an intensified interest among regional countries in acquiring and competing for these energy resources (Genç 2019, 24).

From a geopolitical and geostrategic perspective, China's recent advancements in military, technological, and industrial domains, have positioned it on the path to becoming a global superpower, have surpassed those of the US. In response, its has intervened in the South China Sea, the Taiwan issue, and the island dispute with Japan, with the aim of slowing down,

deterring, or halting China's progress. Despite these restrictions, China endeavors to assert its influence in the region by militarizing islands and islets and establishing military bases in areas it deems rightfully its own (Sar and Demirkiran 2023).

Meanwhile, in Türkiye, the efforts of Greece to expand its dominance over islands in the Aegean Sea and its provocative activities in the region are perceived as threats by Türkiye, which has repeatedly voiced its concerns. Türkiye has clearly stated that any attempt by Greece to extend its territorial waters from 6 to 12 nautical miles would be considered a cause for war. In the Eastern Mediterranean, disputes over maritime jurisdiction arise as regional states compete for access to recently discovered natural energy reserves. Moreover, despite Greece lacking legal authority in the Eastern Mediterranean, it has purportedly delineated maritime boundaries through bilateral agreements with Egypt (Acer 2020a). However, as subsequent sections of this article will demonstrate, these maritime boundaries are not in accordance with international law and are evidently aimed at restricting Türkiye's access to its own territorial waters.

In these two contexts, we will examine how Türkiye and China are affected from geostrategic, geopolitical, and geoeconomic perspectives in these similar regions and how they respond. The legal and on-the-ground activities of both countries in articulating the causes and consequences of similar problems will be subjected to scrutiny and elucidated.

1. Geopolitical and Geostrategic Theoretical Analysis

One of the significant theories guiding American foreign policy in terms of geopolitics and geostrategy, which aimed to dominate Eurasia after the Cold War, is the Rimland Theory proposed by American political scientist Nicholas Spykman. According to this theory, domination over the Rimland region (including countries within the Inner Crescent such as Western Europe, Türkiye, Syria, Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, India, China, Tibet) would lead to domination over Eurasia, which in turn would translate to global hegemony (Öztürk and İrfanoğlu 2021).

In this context, following the dissolution of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the United States, sought to encircle Russia, by establishing dominance in the Rimland region. This was pursued through various means, including making several countries in the region NATO members and fostering good relations with these countries for the United States own interests, effectively encircling the Heartland region (where Russia is currently located). Presently, another superpower, China, is emerging, and it can be observed that, akin to its encirclement of Russia, the United States is attempting to confine China within its maritime boundaries to impede its advancement. It wouldn't be incorrect to say that the United States has also been delaying Russia, notably through the Ukrainian issue in recent years (Pirinççi 2022). Similarly, efforts to confine Türkiye within

its maritime boundaries can be seen amidst Türkiye's advancements in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean regions, aimed at minimizing Türkiye's influence in these areas. The United States continually evaluates situations favorable to its interests to maintain its dominance in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions and exploit energy resources in the area. If Türkiye gains control over the region, it would be closer to Russia, making control even more feasible. Türkiye's procurement of the S-400 missile defence system from Russia has increased tensions and changed the structural dynamics of its relations, especially with the US. This step reflects Türkiye's desire to pursue a foreign policy course different from the US expectations and interests of preserving the global order and includes efforts to establish closer relations with Russia. Nicholas Spykman argues that geography is an unchangeable phenomenon in international relations and emphasises that states should determine their policies according to their geography. He argues that geographical expanse increases the power of a country by increasing access to natural resources and growing the population. He also states that geographical location and topography have significant effects on countries' defence strategies and overall power. When evaluated in the light of Spykman's theories, Türkiye's purchase of the S-400 and its rapprochement with Russia in this context can be seen as an effort to position Türkiye as an independent power in the international arena by utilising its geographical location and strategic

advantages. The Rimland theory, one of Spykman's most important theories, emphasises the strategic importance of Eurasia in the world and argues that controlling Eurasia is essential for world hegemony. Spykman argues that the control of the rimland region surrounding Eurasia is the key to controlling Eurasia and thus the world. Türkiye's strategic position in this region and its efforts to strengthen its relations with Russia reduce America's influence in Eurasia. In this respect, Türkiye's purchase of the S-400 can be considered as a part of its effort to increase its regional dominance and become a stronger actor in world geopolitics within the framework of Spykman's Rimland theory. Spykman also mentions the geographical advantages of the US and states that the country's access to two oceans at the same time and its distance from major powers provide it with an advantage in terms of defence and hegemony. In this context, Türkiye's geographical location offers the potential to develop strategic relations with both East and West. In recent years, Türkiye has become an important actor in global balances by pursuing a multidimensional foreign policy. Striving to strike a balance between Russia and the West, Türkiye maintained its relations with Moscow during the Russia-Ukraine conflict without joining the Western sanctions and is trying to ensure its regional dominance. In conclusion, Spykman's theory provides a comprehensive perspective to explain Türkiye's independent and multidimensional strategies in foreign policy. In line with Spykman's theories based on geography and power dynamics,

Türkiye's S-400 procurement and efforts to deepen its relations with Russia reflect the country's desire to take a more active role in the regional and global balance of power (Öztürk and İrfanoğlu 2021).

Therefore, the activities of the United States in Türkiye and China's regions for the purpose of a unipolar world order have been examined, with the aim of contributing to the literature by attempting to explain the similar issues of these two countries through the same theoretical framework.

2. Turkish Geopolitics

2.1. A Brief History of the Aegean Islands of Türkiye

Until the year 1830, the sovereignty of all the islands in the Aegean Sea (Adalar Denizi) belonged to the Ottoman Empire. However, with Greece gaining independence in 1832, during the declining period of the Ottoman Empire, its sovereignty over the Aegean Islands gradually began to diminish. The Italians and Greeks initiated the occupation of these islands during the Italo-Turkish War (1911-1912) and the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), and these occupations persisted until the end of the World War I (1914-1918), effectively ending Ottoman sovereignty over the Aegean Sea (Ak 2014, 291-295).

In 1913, through the London Treaty signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan States, all Ottoman rights over the islands were transferred to the major powers (England,

France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Russia, Italy). In 1920, the Treaty of Sevres, which never came into effect, allocated the islands to the occupying states. Finally, with the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, Limnos, Semadirek, Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Ahikerya, Thasos, Bozbaba, Ipsara were given to Greece. Gokceada, Bozcaada, Rabbit Islands, and the islands within three miles from the Anatolian coast were left under Turkish sovereignty. The Menteshe Islands; Istanbul, Rhodes, Herke, Kerpe, Coban, Ilyaka, Incirli, Kilimli, Ileriye, Batnoz, Lipso, Sombeki, Istankoy, and the island of Meis were given to Italy. Later, Italy ceded its islands to Greece through the Paris Treaty concluded between Italy and Greece (İnce 2013).

2.2. Türkiye's Geostrategic Encirclement

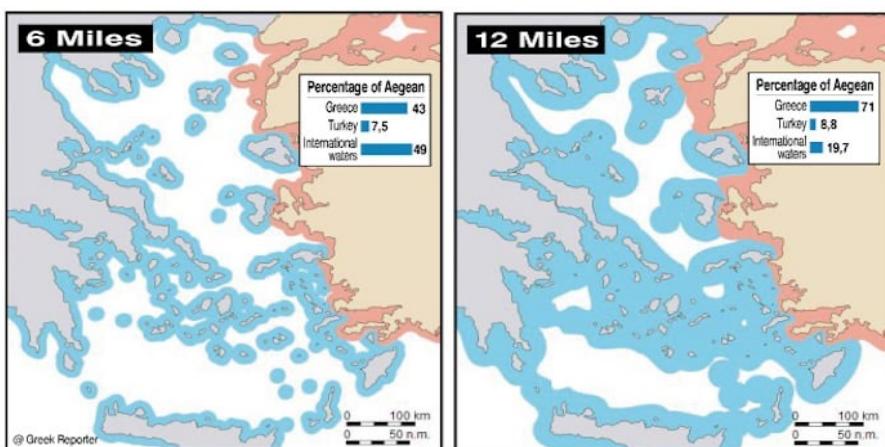
Türkiye's strategic location as a bridge connecting Asia to Europe underscores its significant geostrategic importance. With a rich history, this region has hosted hundreds of civilizations for thousands of years. Being rich in both surface and underground resources, experiencing four different climates, and being a peninsula surrounded by seas on all sides, Türkiye has always held a crucial position geopolitically, geostrategically, and geoeconomically. Its location at the intersection of the Silk Road and its role as an energy transit corridor make Türkiye a key player in many areas (Kazancı and Barun 2023).

Recent events have attempted to confine Türkiye within its own territorial waters in the Aegean and encircle it in the west and south, as evidenced by Greece's activities in this region.

At the forefront of the issues lies the proximity of Greek islands to the mainland of Türkiye. For instance, the Greek island of Meis is only 2 km away from the Turkish mainland but approximately 600 km away from the Greek mainland, marking the genesis of the problems. According to Greece, the sole issue in the Aegean is its desire to extend its territorial waters from 6 to 12 nautical miles (Erkeç 2023, 37). Under international law, states have the freedom to determine the width of their territorial waters among themselves (UNCLOS 1982). The width of territorial waters between Greece and Türkiye was set at 3 nautical miles by the Treaty of Lausanne. Subsequently, in 1936, Greece extended its territorial waters to 6 nautical miles, while Türkiye did the same in 1964. In 1982, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea granted states the right to extend their territorial waters to 12 nautical miles through mutual agreement. However, Türkiye is not a party to this convention, and Greece unilaterally signed it. On June 1, 1995, the Greek government authorized the extension of its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles. Extending territorial waters to 12 nautical miles would mean the confinement of Türkiye within its territorial waters. This implies that if one wants to travel by ship from one city to another in the Aegean, permission must be obtained from Greece as one would have to pass through Greek territorial waters, which Türkiye

cannot accept. Immediately after Greece's decision, the Turkish Grand National Assembly declared that all military powers would be delegated to the Aegean Sea upon the implementation of this decision, which was unanimously approved. Greece has not been able to extend its maritime jurisdiction to 12 nautical miles due to the *casus belli* (cause for war). Currently, both countries maintain their territorial waters at 6 nautical miles in the Aegean Sea (Erkeç 2023).

Map 1: 6- and 12-mile Difference Between Türkiye and Greece



Source: Greek Reporter 2022 (Kokkinidis 2022).

The internationally recognized width of airspace is the same as territorial waters. However, in 1931, Greece extended its airspace from 6 to 10 miles (Ulusoy 2013, 315-316). This was justified by the need to facilitate travel between islands. We only

became aware of this issue only in 1975 due to their failure to announce it internationally (Ulusoy 2013, 319).

When Turkish aircraft enter the airspace between 6 and 10 miles, Greece portrays it in the world media as a violation, announcing the violation of airspace to depict Türkiye as aggressive and occupying. However, this does not constitute a violation because this range is not considered a violation under international law (Aksu 2018).

Another issue is the ownership of islands and islets that are very close to Turkish territorial waters. After 1974 (following the Cyprus Peace Operation), Greece accelerated the militarization of islands in the Eastern Aegean. All 23 islands were transferred to Greece under international treaties on the condition of demilitarization. The Eastern Aegean Islands were ceded to Greece by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, and the 12 Islands (14 islands in total) were transferred from Italy to Greece by the 1947 Treaty of Paris. The demilitarization of the islands was a common condition in both treaties (Ertürk 2000).

Greece has increased tension in the region by militarizing the islands of Limnos and Samothrace after 2020. One of the justifications for their militarization is to cite Türkiye's militarization of the Straits and the islands of Gokceada and Bozcaada. However, Türkiye's fundamental right to militarize this region is in accordance with the 1936 Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits. Therefore, Montreux is

solely a treaty concerning the straits, not the islands. Greece tries to justify the militarization of the islands by fabricating excuses (Çibuk 2023).

In 2021, Türkiye declared in 2021 that Greece's militarization of these islands has brought the sovereignty over the islands into question. As a result, Türkiye stated that they have written two letters to the United Nations, in which it has clearly stated clearly that these islands were left demilitarized in accordance with the common condition of the Treaty of Lausanne and the Treaty of Paris, but Greece is violating them. Türkiye conveyed to the UN via letters that if Greece does not abandon this militarization, the sovereignty of the islands will be disputed. Greece attempted to justify this militarization by claiming their right to defend and safeguard their sovereignty according to the UN Declaration (Acer 2022).

In 2021, the United States further increased its presence in Greece and the Aegean waters by adding four new military bases to the existing five military bases in Greece. While the US claimed that it was increasing its presence here to control Russia, the presence of these bases near the mainland of Türkiye is perceived as a threat by Türkiye. Despite Türkiye being a member of NATO (Bölme 2012), the intensified military collaboration between the US and Greece in the region indicates extensive preparations for conflict in the Aegean and Greece. With its military bases in the region, the US will be able to easily control

the passages and straits in the region. In short, by establishing military bases on these islands and islets and through intensive militarization, the US is threatening the sovereignty of Türkiye (Güney 2021).

Map 2: Greece Opens All Military Bases to the US Military



Source: Manlio Dinucci, Greece clearance of military bases to the US, February 13, 2020 (Dinucci 2020).

The US military bases located in Greece include the following: the Dedeagac Yannuli headquarters, the Litohoro firing range, the Volos Georgula headquarters, the Souda Bay Base in Crete, the Skiros Early Warning Base, the Salamis Naval

Base, the Kalamata, Andravida, and Katelli Air Bases (Özcan 2022). As seen, the US bases have surrounded Türkiye not only from the west but also from the east; the US bases are found in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, the Republic of Cyprus (RoC), Israel, and Georgia to the east of Türkiye. Furthermore, we observe the presence of the US bases in Crimea, Ukraine, Romania, and Bulgaria to the north. Looking at the map, it would not be incorrect to say that Türkiye is surrounded (Gençlik 2021). The US containment policy towards Türkiye is based on various reasons such as Türkiye's strategic position, close relations with Russia, different policies in the Middle East, energy security and domestic political dynamics. Türkiye is a critical bridge between Europe and Asia and an important ally of the US as a NATO member. However, tensions over issues such as the procurement of the S-400 from Russia and the US support for the YPG have triggered the US efforts to limit Türkiye's foreign policy behaviour. Syria policies, defence system choice, democracy and human rights practices, and economic relations are the main factors shaping the US policies towards Türkiye. These policies are aimed at both maintaining regional stability and pursuing the strategic interests of the United States, and have occasionally led to serious tensions in relations between the two countries. One of Spykman's most important theories, the Rimland theory, argues that the control of the rimland region surrounding Eurasia is the key to controlling Eurasia and thus the world. Türkiye's strategic position in this rimland region forms the basis of the US

containment policies. Türkiye's location in the Eurasian margins, which plays a critical role in Spykman's theory, also explains the US efforts to maintain and expand its influence in this region. From this perspective, the US containment policy towards Türkiye can be considered in line with Spykman's theory. Türkiye is located at a key point in the Eurasia and is in a position to control both land and sea routes. According to Spykman's theory, a power that dominates the Eurasian rimland gains a critical advantage for world hegemony. The US sees Türkiye's rapprochement with Russia and its moves such as the S-400 purchase as threats that could upset this strategic balance. Therefore, the US containment policies aim to limit Türkiye's independent actions and protect its own strategic interests. Spykman also mentions the geographical advantages of the US and states that the country's access to two oceans at the same time and its distance from the great powers provide it with advantages in terms of defence and hegemony. Considering that the US has gained strategic advantages by expanding westwards throughout history and emphasised the importance of geography in becoming a global power, Türkiye's position in the Eurasia and the importance of controlling this position gains more meaning with Spykman's theory. In conclusion, the US policies towards Türkiye can be explained by Spykman's theories based on geography and power dynamics; these policies are seen as a part of the efforts to gain control of the Eurasia and maintain world hegemony (Öztürk and İrfanoğlu 2021). It is necessary to point

out that the militarization of the islands in the Aegean by the US is also contrary to the Treaty of Lausanne (Acer 2020b).

Map 3: The US Military Base Presence Around Türkiye



Source: TGB, February 28, 2022 (TGB 2022).

2.3. Eastern Mediterranean Issue

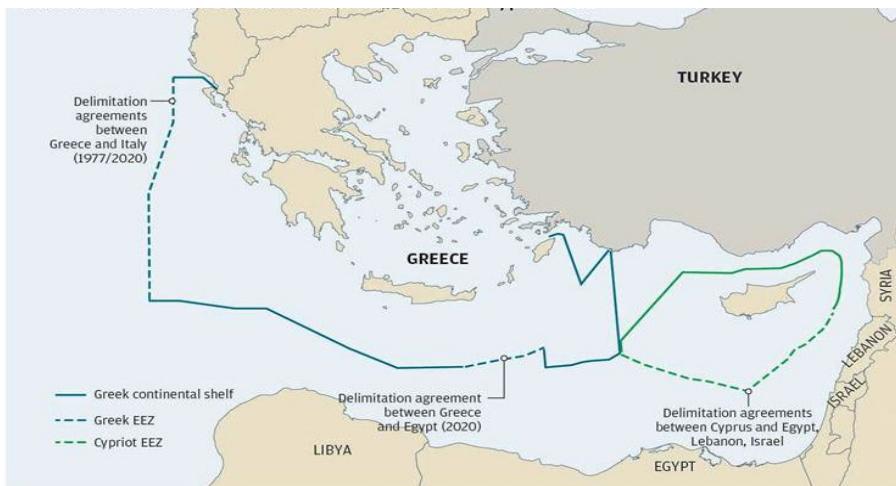
In recent years, we have often witnessed the geoeconomic, geostrategic, and geopolitical importance of the Mediterranean region. If we look at the countries neighboring the Mediterranean region, along with islands and islets, we see that the Mediterranean region is shared with Greece's islands such as Crete, Meis, Kasos, Kastellorizo, Karpathos, Rhodes, as well as

the RoC, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria (İnat 2020).

Some states wishing to delimit and use maritime borders and jurisdictional zones in the Eastern Mediterranean have concluded bilateral agreements among themselves. Agreements in this region were concluded between the RoC and Egypt in 2003, between Israel and the RoC in 2007, between Türkiye and the TRNC in 2011, and between Libya and Türkiye in 2019, outlining maritime jurisdictional boundaries. Immediately following this last agreement, Greece disregarded entirely the agreement signed between Türkiye and Libya, and instead concluded a maritime boundary delimitation agreement with Egypt (Acer 2020a).

Greece's demarcation and attempt to internationally recognise the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) border with the RoC in the Mediterranean region, based on the islands of Crete, Kasos, Kastellorizo, Karpathos, Rhodes, and Meis, as shown in Map 4, not only encircles Türkiye but also confines Türkiye to a narrow maritime area. Greece and the RoC have agreed upon and endorsed the EEZ map depicted in Figure 3 among themselves, but it lacks validity in the international arena (Kariotis 2021).

Map 4: EEZ Borders Advocates by Greece



Source: Angelos Syrigos, Atlas of the Greek Turkish Relations, Newspaper Kathimerini, December 12, 2021 (Syrigos 2021).

Türkiye, in accordance with international maritime jurisdiction laws and fairness, has created the EEZ map depicted in Figure 4 to delineate the EEZ border of each country in the region in compliance with these regulations. Türkiye and Libya delineated their continental shelf regions in Figure 4 in 2019, thereby determining their maritime jurisdictional areas (Akbiyik 2023).

Map 5: EEZ Borders Advocates by Türkiye



Source: (Casin 2019).

Immediately after Türkiye and Libya signed the EEZ Agreement, Greece expedited negotiations with Egypt and signed an EEZ agreement on August 6, 2020. Türkiye considers this agreement between Greece and Egypt null and void. This is because Greece attempted to establish an EEZ agreement with Egypt based not on its mainland but on islands facing Egypt's mainland. In fact, we are talking about an EEZ map drawn not considering all coastlines of these islands, but only the eastern coastlines facing Egypt. In short, we can say that this EEZ agreement between Greece and Egypt does not comply with maritime jurisdiction laws. Additionally, the EEZ Agreement concluded between Türkiye and Libya has been registered and approved by the United Nations (Yaycı 2020). The Republic of Türkiye declares that it considers this agreement between Greece

and Egypt null and void, and it has stated that it will demonstrate this stance both at the negotiating table and in the field (MFATürkiye, No: 165, 6 Ağustos 2020, Yunanistan ile Mısır Arasında Sözde Deniz Yetki Alanları Sınırlandırma Anlaşması İmzalanması Hk. 2020).

Map 6: EEZ Borders Claimed by Countries in the Eastern Mediterranean



Source: Prince Michael of Liechtenstein, GIS REPORTS, Turkey's complicated position in the Mediterranean Sea, September 2, 2020 (Liechtenstein 2020).

In order to secure its rights in its seas, Türkiye has formulated the Blue Homeland Doctrine. The Blue Homeland Doctrine holds significant importance for Türkiye in ensuring the protection of its continental shelf and the seamless utilization of its rights therein. Just as we protect the rights of our territorial integrity, ensuring the rights of our blue homeland is our

fundamental right, established in accordance with international law, which safeguards our maritime jurisdiction areas. The Blue Homeland Doctrine is crucial not only for regional security but also for ensuring the equitable and fair utilization of energy resources in the region by the countries concerned (Kadan 2021, 35-48).

2.4. Brief History of Cyprus and the Cyprus Issue

Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean region (9,251 km²) (WorldAtlas 2017). The island of Cyprus remained under the rule of the Ottoman Empire for exactly 352 years, from 1571 to 1923. During the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878, the Ottoman Empire suffered a major defeat. Subsequently, the Russians presented the Ayastefanos Treaty to the Ottoman Empire. However, this treaty was so harsh that Sultan Abdulhamid II collaborated with the United Kingdom to prevent the implementation of the Ayastefanos Treaty and temporarily leased the island of Cyprus to the United Kingdom for 50 years. Instead of the Ayastefanos Treaty, the Berlin Treaty was signed. The United Kingdom, which took control of the island, made strategic moves by continuously settling Greeks on the island during this period, leading to the outnumbering of the Turkish population on the island (Bora 2013).

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the Ottoman Empire entered the war on the side of Germany, against the United Kingdom, leading to the annexation of Cyprus by the

United Kingdom. Cyprus was completely cut off from the Ottoman Empire. Following the defeat in World War I, the Ottoman Empire signed the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, recognising the annexation of Cyprus by England under Article 20 and relinquishing its rights over the island (Gülen 2011, 3-4).

When the Greeks on the island sought to annex Cyprus to Greece without permission from the United Kingdom in 1920, internal conflicts on the island continued until the late 1950s (Vatansever 2012).

Under the leadership of Greeks in Cyprus, a terrorist organization named EOKA was formed. The goal of EOKA was to cleanse Cyprus of Turks and unite the island with Greece, a plan known as ENOSIS (Algür, 2020). In the incident known as Bloody Christmas in 1963, Greeks, under the leadership of EOKA, massacred Turks (Cankut 2006, 129-136).

On July 20, 1974, under the leadership of Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit and Necmettin Erbakan, the Turkish Armed Forces initiated the Cyprus Peace Operation, with the aim of protecting Turks in Cyprus and reclaiming the island (Savrun 2018, 263-268). Our slogan was “Let Ayşe go on holiday.” The entire West and the US imposed embargoes on Türkiye, causing the world to perceive Turks as occupiers (Başlamışlı 2021, 703-709).

In 1975, the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus was established, followed by the establishment of the TRNC in 1983.

Rauf Denktaş served as the President of both entities (MFATürkiye 2022).

The island is currently divided into the TRNC and the RoC. Apart from Türkiye, there is no country in the world that recognizes the TRNC (Erdal 2005).

2.5. Geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus

Since the mid-2000s, with the abundance of natural resource reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean, the region's geopolitical and geoeconomic significance has greatly increased. The interest of coastal and non-coastal states in the Eastern Mediterranean and their initiatives in the region continue to grow, leading to ongoing disputes over control of interests in the region (Keskin 2021, 63-80).

The inclusion of the RoC in the EU in 2004 appears to represent the entire island of Cyprus within the EU. This situation still causes disagreements in terms of the relationship between the TRNC and Türkiye with the EU. The EU recognizes the RoC but does not recognize the TRNC, leading to deep implications for the geostrategic and geoeconomic relations in the region and creating an impasse. Additionally, the rights of TRNC citizens are not recognized within the EU (Kumcuoğlu 2008, 72).

On the other hand, Greece's bilateral agreements with the RoC disregard Türkiye's EEZ. The agreement between Greece

and the RoC does not comply with maritime law conditions and has been drawn without considering fairness. It has been determined that unilateral or bilateral agreements should be implemented considering the shared area of other states (such as Türkiye) in the region. However, Greece and the RoC have failed to reach an agreement with Türkiye, which has the widest maritime jurisdiction in the region (Aksu 2017).

2.6. Geoeconomic Interests

Countries located in the Eastern Mediterranean include Türkiye, the TRNC, the RoC, Lebanon, Palestine, Gaza Strip, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. Although the hydrocarbon deposits discovered in this region may not be of global proportions, they are expected to significantly contribute to the economies of the countries in the region (Denizli, Akengin and Karaca 2023).

According to research conducted by the US Geopolitical and Research Center in the Eastern Mediterranean, approximately 15 trillion cubic meters of natural gas reserves have been found in the region, estimated to be worth around 3 trillion dollars. The announcement of natural gas and oil reserves in the region over the past decade has attracted the interest of both regional and external actors. Currently, the natural gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean account for approximately 4.5% of the world's total natural gas reserves (İnat and Duran 2020, 17).

With the identification of energy resources, competition among countries in the region to assume a leading role has begun. Additionally, agreements are being made to establish EEZs in the region. Given that the region hosts many countries, demarcating EEZs becomes quite challenging, as they may overlap with those of other countries. To address this issue, countries can resolve conflicts through mutual agreements in accordance with the principles of fairness outlined in maritime law conventions (Kaya 2023).

On average, about four thousand commercial and cargo ships navigate through the Mediterranean Sea each day, while Russian merchant ships continue their passage through the Mediterranean at a rate of about forty thousand ships per year. Moreover, 70% of Europe's hydrocarbon needs are transported through the Mediterranean region (Gür 2019, 657).

The Eastern Mediterranean region contains eight major basins: the Cyprus Basin, the Latakia Basin, the Eratosthenes High Basin, the Judea Basin, the Levant Basin, the Western Arab Province Basin, the Nile Delta Basin, and the Zagros Province Basin (Gür 2019, 656-657).

The extraction and exportation of reserves in this region have not only increased the interest of coastal countries but also attracted external actors such as the US, EU, and Russia, who are conducting gas extraction operations in these areas through

agreements with partner countries, actively participating in the region (Dönmez 2022).

3. China's Geostrategic Containment

3.1. South China Sea

The South China Sea is a region of significant geopolitical and strategic importance, characterized by overlapping territorial and maritime claims from multiple states. According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), each state has the right to determine its territorial waters, not exceeding 12 nautical miles, and an additional contiguous zone of 12 nautical miles beyond that. Consequently, a state may extend its jurisdiction up to a maximum of 24 nautical miles from its coast. Furthermore, states are entitled to a continental shelf, which can extend up to 350 nautical miles. Additionally, under the Convention, each state is granted a 200-nautical-mile EEZ from its coast. These provisions are particularly relevant in the South China Sea, where the delineation of territorial waters, contiguous zones, and EEZs has led to complex disputes and competing claims, reflecting the region's intricate balance of international maritime law and national interests. (Ertuğrul 2017, 55).

The South China Sea, situated between the continents of Asia and Southeast Asia, spans an area of 3.5 million square kilometers. Approximately one-third of the world's trade passes through this region. The South China Sea is surrounded by China, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and

Brunei Darussalam, with a total population of 2.2 billion (Gökten 2022, 100).

It is among the most crucial regions geopolitically and geostrategically in the world. The history, economic interests, and political dynamics have led to intense disputes among the states bordering the South China Sea, particularly concerning continental shelf and EEZ rights (Mermer 2022, 28-31).

China, in particular, has taken steps to realize its geostrategic ambitions in the region by transforming reefs and rocks in the Spratly Islands into artificial islands. China has been creating artificial islands by constructing its version of continental shelves and EEZs, using underwater reefs located thousands of nautical miles away from its shores. Violating international maritime law, China aims to acquire EEZs. Several of the reefs in the Spratly Islands, including Fiery Cross Reef, Cuarteron Reef, Gaven Reef, Hughes Reef, Johnson Reef, Mischief Reef, and Subi Reef, have been transformed into artificial islands by China, from natural underwater reefs in international waters. Large Chinese vessels gather around the reefs in the South China Sea, filling them with sand and rocks to create islands. With the expansion and construction efforts by China, Fiery Cross Reef has become a military base, equipped with a military airport, military buildings, a harbor, advanced radar stations, defense missile systems, and approximately 200 military personnel stationed on the island (Asia Times 2018).

In the Spratly Islands group, China does not have any islands. However, it unlawfully converts the underwater reefs within the EEZs of other countries into artificial islands and defines territorial waters and EEZ areas for these artificial islands. There are nearly 200 coral islands, rocks, and reefs in the Spratly Islands, particularly claimed by China, Malaysia, Vietnam, and the Philippines, with coral reefs overlapping one another. The territorial waters and EEZ claims of these four countries also overlap with each other, leading to ongoing confusion in the region (Pekcan 2017, 56).

China bases its claims in this area on a map with nine dashes dating back to 1947, asserting ownership of 80% of the area in question (Çelikkol and Karabel 2017).

Map 7: 1947 Map with Nine Dash Line



Source: ASIA TIMES (Roy 2024)

According to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, each state has the right to determine its territorial waters, not exceeding 12 nautical miles, and an additional contiguous zone of 12 nautical miles beyond that. Thus, a state may extend its jurisdiction up to a maximum of 24 nautical miles from its coast. States also have the right to a continental shelf, which can extend up to 350 nautical miles. Additionally, under the Convention, each state is entitled to a 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) from its coast (Ertuğrul 2017, 55).

Although islands have their own territorial waters and EEZs, there are legal criteria for an island to be considered as such. These criteria include being naturally formed, remaining above water at high tide, being habitable, and capable of sustaining economic activity. Moreover, according to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, islands cannot be altered, and even if they are, such alterations do not confer legal island status (UNCLOS 1982).

Despite reefs not having territorial waters or an EEZ according to the UN definition, China asserts its EEZ and territorial waters claims based on artificial islands built from reefs. China transforms these reefs into artificial islands suitable for human habitation and economic activities, establishing military bases on these islands and unlawfully declaring EEZs in the area (Yilmaz 2020, 100-105).

The US Navy conducts freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs) in these waters, leading to tensions with China, which accuses the US of violating its territorial waters. However, the US rejects China's self-created arguments, stating that according to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, reefs do not have territorial waters, and even if they are transformed into islands, they cannot be considered as such. Therefore, the US exercises its right to navigate freely in international waters and conducts exercises with some countries (Hamzaçebi 2022, 506).

Despite objections from other countries, China maintains its claims, basing its legitimacy on the nine-dash line doctrine created by the Chinese government in 1947. In fact, this nine-dash line dates back to the 1500s (Gao and Jia 2013, 100-104).

After losing the First Opium War to the British from 1839 to 1842, China shelved the nine-dash line doctrine when the South China Sea came under British control. However, with its growing regional and global power in recent years, China is attempting to revive this doctrine. Thus, the South China Sea continues to be an important region in terms of geopolitics, geoeconomics, and geopolitics for centuries (Kırilen 2015, 73-74).

In 2013, the Philippines brought the issue to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, Netherlands, after China conducted oil and gas exploration in a disputed area. The Permanent Court of Arbitration is a dispute resolution body whose decisions are not binding. On July 12, 2016, both parties announced their decisions, rejecting China's historical claims. They cited China's naming of these islands with new Chinese names, artificial island construction causing environmental damage, and illegal practices harassing fishermen in the region as reasons for their decision. However, China rejected all these claims. In 2016, the President of the Philippines changed, and they ceased their alliance with the US and started a new alliance with China (Genç 2019, 19-20).

Another island in the South China Sea is the Paracel Islands, which are under Chinese sovereignty. It consists of about 130 small and large rocks, coral islands, and reefs. This island poses a problem between China and Vietnam (Pekcan 2017).

3.2.Taiwan Issue

The United States' reluctance to relinquish its guardianship over Taiwan from a geopolitical perspective can be attributed to its desire to restrict China's strategic maneuverability in the Pacific region.

The distance between mainland China and Taiwan is only 160 kilometers. According to the 2023 updated data, the population of Taiwan is 23,923,276. In the IMF's 2023 ranking of the largest economies, China ranks as the second-largest economy after the United States, while Taiwan ranks twentieth in this table (IMF Global Growth Forecast, 2023). Both countries' economies hold significant positions in the global ranking (IMF 2023).

To understand the ongoing issues between Taiwan and China, it is necessary to briefly summarize the past. In 1895, following the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese occupied the island of Formosa (the former name of Taiwan). With the fall of the Qing Dynasty on October 10, 1911 (which was located in the area where the current People's Republic of China is), the crisis between China and Taiwan began to emerge. The Communist and Nationalist forces initiated the Chinese Civil War in 1927 (Çaklı

and Fidan 2020, 187). Taking advantage of China's turmoil in 1931, Japan began its invasion of China. However, during the Japanese invasion of China in 1931, the warring factions temporarily set aside their differences and collaborated to fight against the common enemy. As a result, the civil conflict was momentarily relegated to the background. In 1945, following the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan was forced to withdraw from the areas it occupied in China and relinquished control of Taiwan, which it had ruled since 1895. The Chinese Civil War that began in 1927 lasted until 1949 and resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people on both sides. From 1946 to 1950, the Communists, led by Mao Zedong, declared victory, while the leader of the Nationalists, Chiang Kai-shek, fled to Taiwan with 2,000 soldiers (Jennings 2007). In 1954, China's bombing of Taiwan's islands led to new conflicts between the parties. As a result of China's aggressive move, the United States intervened and signed a mutual defense treaty with Taiwan, promising to ensure Taiwan's security against any attacker. In 1958, while the Communists bombed the Taiwan islands, the Nationalists bombed port cities on the Chinese mainland. Active military intervention by the United States led to the Communists' withdrawal. Chiang Kai-shek continued to align with the United States against communism and the Soviet Union. In 1971, the People's Republic of China stated at the UN Council that it did not recognize Taiwan's independence and claimed

Taiwan as part of the People’s Republic of China (Çalışkan 2022, 73).

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, China rapidly developed and expanded, becoming a perceived threat to other countries. Consequently, the United States provided billions of dollars in military aid to Taiwan, which elicited a reaction from the People’s Republic of China (PRC). China was angered by Taiwan’s close relationship with the United States. Conducting missile exercises in the Taiwan Strait region, China directly provoked Taiwan and the United States. In response, the United States deployed two aircraft carrier fleets and an amphibious assault ship to the region, prompting China to back down. Following this incident, the region experienced a prolonged period of calm. However, tensions resurfaced in the region in 2003 when the United States announced a \$12 billion arms sale to Taiwan. In 2016, when Tsai Ing-wen was elected as Taiwan’s leader and announced plans to declare Taiwan’s independence, regional relations once again became strained (Doğan 2022). In 2019, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the “One Country, Two Systems” model to Taiwan, which was rejected by Taiwan’s leadership. The visit of U.S. representative Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan reignited tensions between Taiwan and China (Doğan 2022). Since Beijing considers Taiwan as part of its territory, high-level visits to the region are viewed as violations of sovereignty and territorial integrity, prompting warnings of potential military responses. Thus, animosity between these two

countries has persisted to the present day. Only 15 countries recognize Taiwan, and the absence of the United States among them suggests that the Taiwan-U.S. relationship operates based on strategic interests in the region (Gökçelik 2022, 2).

Another issue is the Pratas Island and Scarborough Shoal dispute between China and Taiwan. Pratas Island, also known as Tungsha Island, is a group of islands consisting of several reefs located in the East China Sea. It is under the administration of Taiwan, but China claims sovereignty over the island. Scarborough Shoal comprises 42 coral islands and reefs. Currently, it is under China's sovereignty, but both Taiwan and the Philippines claim rights over these shoals (Keyvan 2017).

3.3. Japan-China Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands Dispute

The Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, located in the East China Sea, have historically been referred to as Diaoyu in China and Senkaku in Japan, based on ancient sources. The Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands consist of five islands and three rocks. These islands are not suitable for human habitation. The distances of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands to China, Taiwan, and Japan in the region are as follows: 170km to Taiwan, 330km to China, and 410km to Japan (Lale 2020).

In the past, the issue of ownership of the islands among regional states was not as serious as it is today. The emergence of the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute can be attributed to the region's richness in natural resources and the revelation that it harbors

some of the world's most significant natural gas and oil reserves. This disclosure has led to increased interest and competition in the region. Consequently, we can speak of the intense geopolitical and geoeconomic significance of the region (Çakan 2020).

To understand the issue between China and Japan regarding the island, Senkaku/Diaoyu, a brief overview of its history is necessary. Following the First Sino-Japanese War, in 1895, the Treaty of Shimonoseki (Japanese) and Maguan (Chinese) was signed, and as a result, the Senkaku/Diaoyu island came under Japanese control. Later, with the outbreak of World War II, the United States became involved in the region, and from 1951 to 1971, under the San Francisco Treaty, the United States administered these islands for about 20 years. Subsequently, the sovereignty over these islands was returned to Japan. In summary, Japan's sovereignty over the islands dates back to 1895 (Çelik 2018).

China, on the other hand, claims its undisputed sovereignty over these islands based on its past. They assert that they have exercised control over the Diaoyu islands since the Ming Dynasty period, from 1368 to 1644, in their territories, thereby defending that the Diaoyu island is an integral part of China. They claim to have used this island as a military base to protect themselves from Japanese pirates in the past. China argues that the Maguan Treaty signed in 1895 was unjust, but they were compelled to sign it due to the circumstances of the time. China asserts that Japan has

occupied the Diaoyu island, which belongs to China, and insists that the island should be returned to China after World War II (Çakan 2020).

In this region, China has declared its EEZ length as 667km, while Japan has determined the length of its EEZ in the region as 371 km. These specified EEZ lengths constantly lead to conflicts between the two countries because the air and naval forces of both countries are continuously confronting each other in the region, leading to clashes.

China and Japan have not been able to reach a common solution for the Senkaku/Diaoyu island. China, which remembers Japan's occupation of Chinese territories and colonialist attitudes from ancient times, will not back down in this island crisis. For Japan, being supported by the legal and military alliance of the United States, it claims to have legal rights over the island, reinforced by the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki (İncesu 2021).

3.4 Geoeconomic Interests

25% of the world's captured and cultivated marine life is consumed by China. The South China Sea (SCS) is an important trade region with global GDP exceeding \$5 trillion. With approximately 5.381 trillion cubic meters of natural gas and 11 billion barrels of oil reserves, the SCS is significant for the entire world. It accounts for over 30% of global maritime trade and is the second-largest maritime trading area in the world, with the first being the Dover Strait between England and France. The

richness of energy resources such as oil, natural gas, and hydrocarbons makes the region significant. The transportation of finished and semi-finished products is also notable in the SCS. In addition to the trade of neighboring countries, the presence of non-regional countries like the United States is significant in the region. The United States, being China's largest importer, has numerous trading vessels in the region, with approximately \$1.2 trillion in trade annually (Humanity 2023).

Furthermore, fishing activities in the region contribute to its status as one of the world's most important trading areas. 10% of global fisheries operate in this region. In addition to fishing, the South China Sea is home to approximately 40 different bird species, over 400 species of corals, marine organisms, sea turtles, shrimp, echinoderms, oysters, among other commercially valuable marine assets. Apart from trading these organisms, the area is also preserved as a significant habitat and spawning ground (ChinaPower 2016).

The South China Sea is also crucial as a communication transit route for Southeast Asia, contributing to the technological and communication infrastructure of regional countries through communication lines laid under the sea (Gökten 2022)

The discovery of natural energy resources around the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea has suddenly made the region important. Active claims by China and Japan and indirect interventions by the United States, which is indirectly an

ally of Japan, are seen in the region. The potential economic resources of the region, including hydrocarbon resources, especially natural gas, oil resources, and fisheries, are significant. Research estimates the presence of 100 billion barrels of oil in the region (Valencia 2007, 128).

3.5 Comparison of Türkiye-China Geopolitics

When we examine the geopolitics of Türkiye, it is evident that due to its geographical location as a bridge connecting Europe and Asia, it holds strategic importance. Its control over the straits, status as an energy transit center, having the most populous population in Europe, and being a NATO member place it in a geopolitically and militarily strong position (Harunoğulları 2020).

Looking at the geopolitics of China, its adjacency to significant actors geographically, vast territorial expanse, richness in natural resources, a population of 1.4 billion, along with its military power, nuclear capabilities, and technological assets, make China a significant regional and global actor (Deniz 2014).

The issues experienced by Türkiye and China in the seas and islands can be defined as hot spots. Due to the reasons mentioned for both countries, maritime jurisdictional disputes and attempts to close their territorial waters lead to security threats in the regions. The presence of security threats complicates the extraction and utilization of energy resources in

the region. The efforts of both regional and non-regional actors to assert more rights in the region create challenges regarding the extraction of energy resources (Gökten 2022).

To compare the geopolitics of Türkiye and China, it is crucial to consider the advantages and disadvantages arising from the geographical features of both countries. After understanding the historical backgrounds of the issues, it is significant to analyze how both countries' rights are restricted within the framework of political, economic, and legal aspects today, and how they defend their rights through which methods, which is important in explaining the Spykman theory (Öztürk and İrfanoğlu 2021).

Türkiye does not accept the agreements made by the RoC for the whole island by ignoring the TRNC and considers these agreements null and void. However, the fact that no country other than Türkiye recognizes the TRNC in international law constantly puts Türkiye in a deadlock in the region. In order to protect its rights and strengthen its position in the region, Türkiye attempts to maintain dominance by deploying exploration and drilling vessels in the waters of the RoC and does not yield to those who want to close its territorial waters (Türkeş 2021).

Greece's unlawful armament and establishment of military bases in the Aegean Sea also constantly escalate tensions in the region. Greece's attempt to extend its continental shelf from 6 to 12 nautical miles is an attempt to confine Türkiye to its territorial waters. If Greece implements this, Türkiye has stated that it will

consider this attempt as a cause for war and will respond both at the negotiating table and in the field (Turan 2016, 6).

In recent years, with the increase of the US bases in the Aegean Sea and Greece, tensions have escalated in the region. China also faces obstacles from surrounding and external actors like the US. The US indirectly and directly prevents China from accessing the Pacific Ocean. It does this by forming alliances with other states in the region and positioning its military vessels under the pretext of international waters (Diler 2017, 20).

The situation is not different in the South China Sea. It is within the route of energy transfer, trade, and transportation between the West and the East, and China is a state that can potentially be invaded both by land and sea. It is important for China to dominate the region to strengthen its strategic maneuvers. However, China's aggressive stance in this area, such as building artificial islands, creates tension. The region is crucial due to its natural energy resources and living and non-living natural riches and serves as a hub for significant global trade networks. The struggle for dominance over the islands and islets by regional countries also places the region in a controversial position (EIA 2024).

Tension between China and Taiwan is escalating day by day. The continuous support of the US to Taiwan from military, economic, and strategic perspectives leads to constant escalations in the region. The US's attempt to confine China to its territorial

waters by forming alliances with regional countries and positioning military bases surrounding China aims to prevent China from expanding into the Asia-Pacific region (CRS 2024).

Conclusion

In order to compare the geopolitics of Türkiye and China, the existence of advantages and disadvantages arising from the geographical characteristics of both countries has been discussed. After tracing the origins of the issues from their inception dates and briefly contextualizing their historical backgrounds, it was explained how the rights of both countries are delimited within the framework of political, economic, and legal aspects today and how they defend their rights through which methods.

China generally favors the resolution of disputes with regional states through various treaties, but regional states seek to involve global powers in the region to balance China. As we know, the global power in question is the United States. In addition to regional states, the US will continue to encircle and pressure China in all aspects (commercial, economic, military, defence industry, etc.) to continue its path toward being the sole hegemonic power in the world. Because the US prefers a unipolar world rather than a multipolar one, we should always be aware that it will take all steps to maintain its hegemony. To summarise this situation more clearly: we must understand very clearly that the US used the Ukraine card to keep Russia occupied economically, politically, and militarily as another power against

it. It would not be wrong to say that the same applies China. We can say that China has made great strides in every field in the last twenty years. Aware of this situation, the US, unwilling to lose its hegemony in the world, uses its cards in the region every time. These include inflaming the Taiwan issue, displaying warships in the region under the pretext of international waters, and trying to keep China constantly under blockade by establishing the US bases in Japan and on islands through alliances with Japan.

The situation in Türkiye is no different. The United States, Türkiye's neighbor through Greece, has been increasing its military base agreements with Greece, thus escalating the security threat in Türkiye by expanding its military presence on islands and in Greece. Despite treaty provisions requiring the demilitarisation of the islands in the Aegean, both Greece and the United States have disregarded these provisions, leading to an increase in military base presence in the region, which poses security concerns for Türkiye. Despite being a NATO member, Türkiye perceives the US's encirclement of Türkiye and Greece's activities in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean against Türkiye as clear policies of containment, aiming to confine Türkiye within its territorial waters. Türkiye's policy, on the other hand, is geared towards a multipolar world. For example, it balances its relations with countries like Russia and China. It can be said that Türkiye is trying to establish a military relationship with every country, neither completely leaning towards the West

nor completely leaning towards the East, but rather striving to maintain a balance with every country.

In Türkiye, as well as in China, they will continue their rightful struggles in their blue homelands. While Türkiye solidifies its Blue Homeland Doctrine in every aspect, China, based on its historical past, continues its struggle to maintain its presence in the region by building military bases on reefs.

After World War II, Türkiye was surrounded by islands, and similarly, China was surrounded by Japanese islands, Taiwan, and neighboring countries, which can be said to be trying to encircle Türkiye and China and confine them to their territorial waters.

The US has a policy of containment towards these countries within the Rimland region. In other words, we see a containment within containment. This means that while encircling the Heartland, it is also encircling the Rimland region within itself. We can see this clearly in the case of Türkiye and China.

REFERENCES

- Acer, Yücel. 2020a. "Doğu Akdeniz'de Yunanistan Mısır Deniz Sınırı Antlaşması ve Türkiye." *Adalet Dergisi* (12) 14: 13-26.
- Acer, Yücel. 2020b. 5 Soru: "ABD'nin Dedeağac (Yunanistan)'ta Askeri Üs Kurmasının Anlamı ve Türkiye'ye Etkisi." SETA. Erişim Tarihi: 12.01.2024 <https://www.setav.org/5-soru-abdnin-dedeagac-yunanistanta-askeri-us-kurmasinin-anlami-ve-turkiyeye-etkisi/>.
- Acer, Yücel. 2022. "Doğu Ege Adalarının Silahlandırılması ve Egemenlik Tartışması: Türkiye İçin Yeni Bir Hukuki Yol." *Kriter Dergisi* (3): 1-7.
- Ak, Gökhan. 2014. "Tarih, Deniz ve Egemenlik: Ege'nin Isporadları 'Menteşe Adaları'nın Dünü ve Bugünü." *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 12(1): 283-313.
- Akbıyık, Esra. 2023. "Doğu Akdeniz'deki Enerji Nakil Güzeraahlarının Ulusal ve Uluslararası Enerji Güvenliğindeki Rolü ve Önemi." *Research Gate* 3(17): 1-75.
- Aksu, Fuat. 2018. "Ege Denizi'ne İlişkin Sorunlar Hava Sahası ve FIR Sorunu." Erişim Tarihi: 08.01.2024. <http://www.turkishgreek.org/index.php/iki-uelke-arasindaki-temel-sorunlar-ve-taraflarin-yaklasimlari/ege-denizi-ne-iliskin-sorunlar/hava-sahas-ve-fir-sorunu>.
- Aksu, Fuat. 2017. "Kıbrıs." Erişim Tarihi: 10.01.2024 <http://www.turkishgreek.org/index.php/ikili-iliskiler/uyusmazliklar/kibris/item/3-cyprus>.
- Bölme, Selin M. 2012. "Soğuk Savaş'ta NATO-ABD-Türkiye Üçgeninde Askeri Üsler: Sürekliklik Ve Değişim." *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 6(1): 51-71.

- Başlamışlı, Macide. 2021. “US’s Attempt to Feature 1974 Cyprus Crisis Instead of Poppy Issue Regarding Embargo Decision on Turkey.” *Asia Minor Studies* 1(22): 695-712.
- Bora, Erhan. 2013. “Cyprus in International Law.” *Ankara Bar Review* 1(1): 27-58.
- Cankut, Ayhan. 2006. “Kıbrıs Türkünün Varoluş Mücadelesi (Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı ve Faaliyetleri).” Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Fırat Üniversitesi.
- Caşın, Mesut Hakkı. 2019. “Legal Aspects of Turkey-Libya Deal”. Erişim Tarihi: 04.02.2024. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/analysis-strategic-legal-aspects-of-turkey-libya-deal/1673079>.
- ChinaPower. 2016. “How Much Trade Transits the South China Sea?” Erişim Tarihi: 03.02. 2024. <https://chinapower.csis.org/much-trade-transits-south-china-sea/>.
- CRS. 2024. “U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas: Background and Issues for Congress.” Erişim Tarihi: 02.04.2024. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R42784>.
- Çibuk, Faruk. 2023. “Türkiye Yunanistan İlişkilerinde Gayri Askeri Statüdeki Adalar.” Erişim Tarihi: 21.03.2024. <https://tudpam.org/turkiye-yunanistan-iliskilerinde-gayri-askeri-statudeki-adalar/>.
- Çaklı, Caner, ve Yusuf Fidan. 2020. “Çin Propagandasında Çin-Tayvan İlişkilerinin Sunumu: Mao Zedong Dönemi Üzerine İnceleme.” *İstanbul Gelişim Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 4(4): 185-202.
- Çakan, Varis. 2020. “Japonya ve Çin Arasında Senkaku (Diaoyu) Adacıklar Sorunu Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme.” *Asya Araştırmaları Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 4(1): 1-8.

- Çalışkan, Emre. 2022. “Çin'in Tek Çin Politikası: Tayvan ve Hong Kong.” Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli Üniversitesi.
- Çelik, Okan. 2018. “Uluslararası Hukuk ÇerçEVesinde Doğu Çin Denizi Senkaku/Diaoyu Adalar Sorununun Değerlendirilmesi.” *Academia*. Erişim Tarihi: 21.04.2024.
https://www.academia.edu/37489473/Assesment_of_East_China_Senkaku_Diaoyu_Islands_Crisis_Within_the_Framework_of_International_Law
- Çelikkol, A.Oğuz, ve Sibel Karabel. 2017. “Türkiye-Yunanistan İlişkileri ve Denizden Kaynaklanan Uluslararası Sorunlar.” *Bilge Strateji* 9(16): 13-31.
- Dönmez, Suat. 2022. “The Regional Security Challenge in the Eastern Mediterranean: Energy and Alliances.” *Bilge Strateji* 11(21): 186-208.
- Deniz, Taşkın. 2014. “Yükselen Güç Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti'nin Stratejik Hamleleri.” *Elektronik Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 9(10): 188-212.
- Denizli, Cihad, Hamza Akengin, ve Ali Karaca. 2023. “Doğu Akdeniz Hidrokarbon Kaynakları, Deniz Yetki Alanları ve Sınır Anlaşmazlıklar Üzerine Jeopolitik bir Değerlendirme.” *Türk Coğrafya Dergisi* 12(31): 233-247.
- Diler, Osman. 2017. “ABD'nin Sınır Ötesi İnsani Askeri Müdahalelerini Belirleyen Faktörler.” Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Yalova Üniversitesi.
- Dinucci, Manlio. 2020. Grecia, svendita di basi militari agli Usa. Erişim Tarihi: 02.05.2024.
<https://www.natoexit.it/2020/02/13/grecia-svendita-di-basi-militari-agli-usa/>.
- Doğan, Diren. 2022. “*Gri Bölge Stratejileri ÇerçEVesinde Tayvan'in Hibrit Tehditlerle Mücadele Stratejisi*.”

Türkiye'de Tayvan Çalışmaları-III içinde, yayına hazırlayan, A.Mert Dündar, 95-124. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi.

Doğan, Diren. 2022. "Tayvan Krizi Ekseninde Büyük Güç Rekabeti ve Küresel Sistemin Geleceği." *Kriter Dergi* 7 (71): 1-7.

EIA. 2024. "Regional Analysis Brief: South China Sea." The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). Erişim Tarihi: 23.04.2024.
https://www.eia.gov/international/content/analysis/regions_of_interest/South_China_Sea/south_china_sea.pdf.

Erdal, Selcen. 2005. "Uluslararası Hukukta Tanıma Kurumu ve Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti Örneği." *Selçuk Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi* 6(20): 157-196.

Erkeç, Elif. 2023. "Adalar Denizi'nde Yaşanan Türkiye-Yunanistan Geriliminin Doğu Akdeniz Bölgesel Güvenlik Kompleksine Yansımaları." *BRIQ Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi Dergisi* 1 (9): 1-25.

Ertürk, Yaşar. 2000. "Batı Anadolu'nun Ege Denizi (Adalar Denizi)'ne Uzantısı Olan Ada, Adacık ve Kayalıklar." Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Kırıkkale Üniversitesi.

Ertuğrul, Ümmühan Elçin. 2017. "Birleşmiş Milletler Deniz Hukuku Sözleşmesine Göre Kıyı Devletlerinin Egemen Hakları." *Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi* 1(1): 41-81.

Gökçelik, Şevval Beste. 2022. "Tayvan'ın Egemenlik ve 'Tek Çin' İkilemi." *Avrasya İnceleme Merkezi (AVİM)*, Erişim Tarihi: 23.04.2024. Link:
<https://avim.org.tr/tr/Analiz/tayvan-in-egemenlik-ve-tekinikilemi>.

- Gökten, Kerem. 2022. "Güney Çin Denizi Ekonomik ve Stratejik Rekabeti Anlamak." *İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi* 1(24): 97-122.
- Gülen, Ahmet. 2011. "İnönü Hükümetleri'nin Kıbrıs Politikası (1961-1965)." *Atatürk Yolu Dergisi* 12(1): 389-428.
- Güney, Nurşin A. 2021. "Yunanistan'daki ABD Üsleri: Yeni Çevreleme Stratejisinin Handikapları." *Kriter Dergisi* (4): 1-6.
- Gür, Halit. 2019. "Stratejik Kavşak Noktası Olan Doğu Akdeniz'de Yürüttülen Enerji Politikaları ve Türkiye." Erişim Tarihi: 11.04.2024. <https://21yyte.org/tr/merkezler/islevsel-arastirma-merkezleri/enerji-ve-enerji-guvenligi-arastirmalari-merkezi/dogu-akdenizde-paylasilanmayan-kaynaklar>.
- Gao, Zhiguo, and Bing Bing Jia. 2013. "The Nine-Dash Line in the South China Sea: History, Status, and Implications." *The American Journal of International Law* 1(1): 98-124.
- Genç, Aslıhan. 2019. "Enerji Kaynakları Çatışmasının Ortasında Güney Çin Denizi." *Mesleki ve Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 09(3): 11-28.
- Gençlik, Öncü. 2021. ABD Neden Başka Bir Ülkede Üs Açıar. Erişim Tarihi: 15.03.2024. <https://oncugenclik.org.tr/abd-neden-baska-bir-ulkede-us-acar/>.
- Hamzaçebi, Soner. 2022. "Çin - ABD Rekabetinde Güney Çin Denizi Sorunu: Çıkarlar ve Tehditler." *Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimlerde Teori ve Araştırmalar Kitabı*. İzmir. Serüven Yayınevi. 505-532.
- Harunoğulları, Muazzez. 2020. "Enerji Dağıtım Merkezi Perspektifinden Türkiye'nin Enerji Jeopolitiği." *Mukaddime* 5(27): 177-211.

- Humanity, Vision of. 2023. “Conflict in the South China Sea: Analysing the Economic Toll.” Erişim Tarihi: 19.03.2024. <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/conflict-in-the-south-china-sea>.
- IMF. 2023. “Global Economy to Slow Further Amid Signs of Resilience and China Re-opening.” IMF Economic Growth. Erişim Tarihi: 20.02.2024. <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2023/01/30/global-economy-to-slow-further-amid-signs-of-resilience-and-china-re-opening>.
- İnat, Kemal. 2020. “Türkiye’nin Doğu Akdeniz Politikası: Hedefler, Araçlar, Yöntemler.” *Kriter Dergisi* (9): 1-3.
- İnat, Kemal, ve Burhanettin Duran. 2020. “Türkiye’nin Doğu Akdeniz Politikasının Temel Parametreleri.” Doğu Akdeniz ve Türkiye’nin Hakları, by Kemal İnat, Burhanettin Duran and Muhittin Ataman, İstanbul: SETA. 60: 9-22.
- İnce, Fuat. 2013. “Lozan Barış Antlaşması ve Ege Adaları.” *Atatürk Yolu Dergisi* 09(1): 101-128.
- İncesu, Ayşegül. 2021. “Doğu Çin Denizi’nde Güç Mücadelesi: Senkaku/Diaoyu Adaları.” *Uluslararası Kriz ve Siyaset Araştırmaları Dergisi* 10(5): 699-737.
- Jennings, Ralph. 2007. Taiwan ex-communist on long march for independence. Erişim Tarihi: 11.03.2024. <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTP268147/>.
- Kırilen, Gürkan. 2015. *Cin’de Afyon Savaşları*. Ankara: Gece Kitaplığı.
- Kadan, Tevfik. 2021. “Mavi Vatan Doktrini Nasıl Oluştu.” BRIQ Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi Dergisi 02(1): 35-48.

- Kariotis, Theodoros. 2021. "The Ordeal of the Greek EEZ." Erişim Tarihi: 02.04.2024. <https://www.iene.eu/the-ordeal-of-the-greek-eez-p6076.html>.
- Kaya, Burak. 2023. "Birleşmiş Milletler Deniz Hukuku Sözleşmesi Bağlamında İç Sular, Karasuları ve Bitişik Bölgede Devletlerin Sorumluları." *Denizcilik Fakültesi Dergisi* 12 (29): 232-255.
- Kazancı, Baybarshan Ali, ve İlteriş Kaan Barun. 2023. "İpek Yolu Üzerinde Alternatif Güzergâhın Türkiye Açısından Önemi: Olası Türk Koridoru." *Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 06 (24): 570-581.
- Keskin, Funda. 2021. "Doğu Akdeniz'e Jeopolitik Açıdan Bir Bakış: Enerji ve Siyaset." *Ankara Üniversitesi Doğu Akdeniz Sempozyumu* İçinde, ed. Necdet Ünüvar, 87-112.
- Keyvan, Özlem Zerrin. 2017. "Güney Çin Denizi'nde Tahkim: Çin-Filipinler." *Bölgesel Araştırmalar Dergisi* 1 (3): 251-267.
- Kokkinidis, Tasos. 2022. "Greek Reporter." Erişim Tarihi: 05.04.2024. <https://greekreporter.com/2022/10/23/greece-extend-territorial-waters-12-miles-aegean/>.
- Kumcuoğlu, Ümit Ertuğ. 2008. "Kıbrıs Sorunu Üzerine AİHM Cephesinde Yeni Bir Açılım." Yüksek Lisans Tezi. İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi.
- Lale, Aybala. 2020. "Sona Ermeyen Adalar Çıkmazı: Senkaku/Diaoyu Adaları." *Diplomasi ve Strateji Dergisi (DSJournal)* 11 (17): 12-17.
- Liechtenstein, Prince Michael of. 2020. "Turkey's complicated position in the Mediterranean Sea." Erişim Tarihi: 06.03.2024. <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/economic-zone-mediterranean/>.

- Mermer, Cengiz Topel. 2022. "ABD Hegemonyasına Meydan Okuyan Çin'in Zorlu Virajı-Güney Çin Denizi." TASAM. Erişim Tarihi: 18.03.2024 Link: https://tasam.org/Files/Icerik/File/Güney_Çin_Denizi_C TM_son_pdf_4d8897a8-7b00-4bd0-af76-03b6b4478ca9.pdf.
- MFA Türkiye. 2022. "Kıbrıs Meselesinin Tarihçesi, BM Mütakerelerinin Başlangıcı." Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye. Erişim Tarihi: 09.04.2024. https://www.mfa.gov.tr/kibris-meselesinin-tarihcesi_-bm-muzakerelerinin-baslangici.tr.mfa.
- MFA Türkiye. 2020. "No: 165, 6 Ağustos 2020, Yunanistan ile Mısır Arasında Sözde Deniz Yetki Alanları Sınırlandırma Anlaşması İmzalanması Hk." T.C.Dışişleri Bakanlığı Güncel Açıklamalar. 08 06. https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-165_-yunanistan-ile-misir-arasinda-sozde-deniz-yetki-alanlari-anlasmasi-imzalanmasi-hk.tr.mfa.
- Özcan, Derya Gülnaz. 2022. "ABD ordusu Yunanistan'da yeni üslere yerleşiyor." Anadolu Ajansı. Erişim Tarihi: 04.02.2024. <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/abd-ordusu-yunanistanda-yeni-uslere-yerlesiyor/2587233>.
- Öztürk, Tolga, ve Eren İrfanoğlu. 2021. "Amerikan Dış Politikasında Jeopolitiğin Önemi." *Akdeniz İİBF Dergisi* 5(7): 17-27.
- Pekcan, Cemre. 2017. "Uluslararası Hukuk Çerçevesinde Güney Çin Denizi Krizinin Değerlendirilmesi." *Uluslararası Kriz ve Siyaset Araştırmaları Dergisi* 12: 54-80.
- Pirinççi, Ferhat. 2022. "ABD Ukrayna Krizinde Neyi Amaçlıyor." SETA. Erişim Tarihi: 12.04. 2024. <https://www.setav.org/abd-ukrayna-krizinde-neyi-amaciyor/>.

- Roy, Denny. 2024. “ASEAN stands idly by, as usual, on South China Sea.” ASIA TIMES. Erişim Tarihi: 17.04.2024. <https://asiatimes.com/2024/03/asean-stands-idly-by-as-usual-on-south-china-sea/>.
- Sar, İlknur, ve Özlem Demirkiran. 2023. “Güney Çin Denizi’nde Çin-ABD Güç Mücadelesi.” *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 4(30): 413-439.
- Savrun, Ergenekon. 2018. “Brief History of the Turkish Peace Operation Against Greek Junta Strikes in Cyprus.” *Uluslararası Beşeri Bilimler ve Eğitim Dergisi* 10(1): 258-273.
- Syrigos, Angelos. 2021. “Atlas of Greek-Turkish Relations.” Erişim Tarihi: 27.02.2024. https://www.syrigos.gr/books/Atlas_syrigos_dokos.pdf.
- Türkeş, İlkay. 2021. “Doğu Akdeniz’de Uyuşmazlık Teşkil Eden Deniz Alanlarında Gerçekleştirilen Hidrokarbon ve Doğalgaz Çalışmalarının Kıbrıs Sorununa Yansımı ile Soruna Getirdiği Yeni Dinamikler.” *Avrupa Birliği Politikalari Dergisi* 11(1): 86-107.
- TGB. 2022. “Akdeniz’den Karadeniz’e Tek Cephe.” Erişim Tarihi: 06.01.2024. <https://tgb.gen.tr/serbest-kursu/akdeniz-den-karadeniz-e-tek-cephe-31941>.
- Turan, Cem. 2016. “Türk-Yunan İlişkileri ve Ege Sorunları.” Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Edirne, Trakya Üniversitesi.
- Ulusoy, Ülkü Halatçı. 2013. “The Problems Between Turkey and Greece in the Aegean Airspace in Respect of the International Law.” *TBB Dergisi* Kasım 2013 (109): 303-334.
- UNCLOS. 1982. “United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.”

- Valencia, Mark J. 2007. "The East China Sea Dispute: Context, Claims, Issues, and Possible Solutions." *Asian Perspective* (1): 127-167.
- Vatansever, Müge. 2010. "Kıbrıs Sorununun Tarihi Gelişimi." *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi* 07 (1): 1487-1530.
- WorldAtlas. 2017. "Biggest Islands In The Mediterranean Sea By Area." Erişim Tarihi: 20.02. 2024. <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/biggest-islands-in-the-mediterranean-sea.html>.
- Yılmaz, Cem. 2020. "Güneydoğu Asya'nın Potansiyel Çatışma Kaynağı Olarak Güney Çin Denizi." *Doğu Asya Araştırmaları Dergisi* 7 (1): 95-114.
- Yaycı, Cihat. 2020. "Türkiye-Libya Arasında İmzalanan Münhasır Ekonomik Bölge Andlaşmasının Sonuç ve Etkileri." *Kriter Dergi* 4 (42): 34-37.