

## **From Antiochus to Akrotiri: Why Greece Has Returned to the Strategic Map**

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A strategic shift is underway, in which geography, deterrence, and regional architecture have quietly re-positioned Greece from the margins to the center. For years, Greece was not considered a central variable in Israel's strategic environment. The dominant analytical focus remained on the Gulf, the Levant, and Iran's expanding network of proxies. That analytical framework is no longer sufficient to describe the current regional reality.

The current war did not make Greece important. It revealed that Greece had already become important. The expansion of the conflict, from the Gulf to Cyprus, from proxy warfare to long-range strikes, from indirect confrontation to a more interconnected battle-space, has exposed a deeper structural shift. The Eastern Mediterranean is no longer a secondary arena; it is becoming part of the operational and strategic architecture of the conflict itself. Within that emerging structure, Greece is no longer an observer. It is now one of its active components.

Greece's current position cannot be understood solely through recent deployments or diplomatic coordination. It must be read against a longer historical arc, in which the Greek space moved, at times, from being a difficult and vulnerable environment for Israel to becoming part of a broader strategic framework in the Eastern Mediterranean. This is not a story of sudden relevance. It is a story of a position that has been evolving for years, and is now becoming impossible to ignore.

To understand that shift, one must begin not with today's alignments, but with a very different strategic memory. For decades, Greek space was not associated in Israeli thinking with strategic depth, but with exposure. Athens, in particular, belonged to an era in which parts of Europe, especially certain Mediterranean transit points, were deeply entangled in the age of international terrorism. Hijackings, diplomatic vulnerability, permissive operating environments, and the

presence of hostile networks gave Greece a very different meaning in Israel's broader security consciousness.

This is why history matters here, not as decoration, and not as nostalgia, but as structure. Greece was not simply another European country in Israel's strategic environment. It was, at various moments, a difficult and sensitive space, linked to the wider pattern of Palestinian terrorism, to the vulnerabilities of open transit hubs, and to an era in which Israeli and Jewish targets across Europe faced repeated exposure. Cases such as aircraft hijackings routed through or associated with Athens, the broader ecosystem that made operations like Entebbe possible, and repeated attacks on Israeli diplomatic targets all formed part of that memory.

That earlier reality is essential to understanding the significance of the present one. The strategic importance of Greece today does not lie only in what it is doing now. It lies in how far it has moved from what it once represented.

### **Greece Was Not Always Strategic Depth**

To understand why Greece matters today, one must first understand that it did not always carry a positive strategic meaning in Israel's regional consciousness. For long periods, the Greek space, and Athens in particular, was associated less with security partnership than with exposure. It belonged to an era in which parts of the Mediterranean functioned as permissive zones for transit, hijacking, diplomatic vulnerability, and terrorist activity. This matters because strategic memory is not built only through formal alliances. It is also shaped by patterns of risk. For Israel, Greece was not simply another European country on the map. It was part of a broader environment in which Palestinian terrorism, weak enforcement, open transit routes, and political ambiguity created repeated security challenges. Athens became associated with precisely that type of vulnerability.

The point is not to reduce Greece to a single chapter of its past. The point is to recognize that for years it was not perceived as strategic depth, but as a difficult and, at times, problematic space within a wider regional and European security environment. Aircraft hijackings, the broader ecosystem that made operations such as Entebbe possible, attacks on Israeli and Jewish targets, and the presence of hostile networks all formed part of that strategic memory. That earlier reality is essential to understanding the significance of the present one. Greece's importance today does not come only from what it is doing now. It also derives from how far it has moved, not only in Israeli strategic consciousness, but in the wider regional and European interpretation of its role.

### **From Vulnerability to Strategic Centrality**

Greece's transformation cannot be understood only through the lens of Israel or the Eastern Mediterranean. For years, Greece was viewed across Europe less as a strategic anchor than as a vulnerable flank state, fiscally strained, institutionally pressured, exposed to migration flows, and often burdened by the accumulated weight of economic crisis and regional instability. That image mattered. It shaped how Greece was perceived, not as a state projecting strategic weight, but as one managing fragility.

In that sense, the Greek space was often associated less with initiative than with exposure to economic stress, demographic pressure, porous transit dynamics, and the wider security spillovers of Europe's southeastern edge. For much of the post-crisis period, Greece was not widely perceived as a country shaping its environment. It was seen as a country being shaped by it. That is precisely why its current repositioning matters.

What is changing is not only Greece's diplomatic profile, but its strategic meaning. A state once read primarily through the language of vulnerability is increasingly being understood through the language of utility, as a node of access, a platform for coordination, and an anchor in a wider regional security design linking the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe and, increasingly, to Gulf-facing security concerns. This is not a cosmetic shift. It is a structural one.

### **The Shift Did Not Begin with the War**

The change did not happen overnight. Nor was it driven by sentiment. Greece's repositioning emerged gradually, through a changing regional balance in the Eastern Mediterranean. Cyprus became more central. Energy corridors and maritime space became more strategically relevant. Turkey's regional behavior altered the calculations of multiple actors, including Israel. Over time, Greece acquired a different meaning. It was no longer viewed only through the lens of its past vulnerabilities or its distance from the core Middle Eastern theater. It began to be seen as part of a wider strategic geometry, a state connected to Cyprus, embedded in Europe, positioned in the Eastern Mediterranean, and increasingly relevant to military cooperation, regional access, and long-term balancing.

This was the real shift. Greece did not suddenly join Israel's strategic environment. It was gradually repositioned within it. What had once been associated with exposure began, over time, to be associated with training, coordination, maritime depth, and converging interests. By the time the current war expanded across a broader regional map, much of that transformation had already taken place. The war did not create Greece's relevance. It exposed it.

## Turkey Changed the Equation

Greece's repositioning cannot be understood without addressing a central variable: Turkey. For years, Turkey was not just another regional actor. It was a structural pillar in Israel's strategic environment, a state that combined military capability, geographic depth, NATO membership, and operational relevance. In that framework, Greece was naturally positioned on the periphery. That reality no longer holds. Turkey's regional trajectory over the past decade has altered the strategic landscape in ways that extend far beyond bilateral tensions. Its assertive posture in the Eastern

Mediterranean, its approach to maritime boundaries, its growing willingness to operate independently of Western alignment, and its broader geopolitical ambitions have forced a recalibration across the region. This is not a story about rivalry alone. It is a story about strategic reconfiguration.

As Turkey's role became more complex and less predictable, other actors began to adjust. Israel, in particular, was required to rethink parts of its regional architecture, not through dramatic declarations, but through gradual, practical shifts in access, alignment, and strategic depth. Within that process, Greece acquired new relevance. Not as a replacement for Turkey. That would be analytically shallow. Rather, as part of a broader balancing framework. A state that offers geographic continuity with Cyprus, anchoring in the European system, access to the Eastern Mediterranean, and a platform for military coordination and strategic depth that had previously been less emphasized. This is where the shift becomes clear.

Greece's importance is not the result of a single decision or a single event. It is the outcome of a changing regional structure in which the assumptions that once defined the map no longer fully apply. Once those assumptions change, so does the map itself.

## From Coordination to Strategic Architecture

What has emerged between Greece, Israel, and Cyprus is no longer adequately described as cooperation. That word is too soft for what the region has gradually produced. What is taking shape is closer to a strategic defense architecture, a framework built not only on diplomacy, but on geography, military coordination, shared threat perception, energy security, maritime space, and the need to anchor stability in an increasingly contested Eastern Mediterranean. This matters because alliances are not defined only by formal declarations. They are also defined by function. Functionally, the Greece-Israel-Cyprus triangle has moved well beyond symbolic alignment. Joint exercises, intelligence coordination, air and naval interoperability, infrastructure considerations, and the overlapping logic of deterrence all point in the same direction.

This is no longer just a political understanding. It is an operational structure in formation. Cyprus is central to that structure, not merely as a geographic intermediary, but as a strategic hinge. Greece provides European anchoring, depth, continuity, and, importantly, control over a wider maritime environment that does not end in the Eastern Mediterranean alone. The Aegean matters here as

well. Not because it is formally part of a trilateral pact, but because it forms part of the wider strategic geography in which Turkish pressure, Greek defense logic, and regional balancing increasingly intersect. In that sense, the triangle is not only about energy routes or diplomatic alignment. It also contributes to a wider geometry of pressure on Turkey's strategic environment.

It links the Eastern Mediterranean to the Aegean, connects Cyprus to the Greek mainland more meaningfully, and reduces Ankara's ability to treat these theaters as separate and compartmentalized spaces. This is why the term cooperation no longer captures reality. The structure now taking shape is closer to a defense logic than to a diplomatic one.

### **The War Did Not Create the Architecture. It Exposed It**

The current war did not create this emerging architecture. It accelerated its visibility. That distinction matters. Too much analysis still treats the present alignment between Greece, Israel, Cyprus, and other regional actors as a reaction to immediate events. That is too shallow. What is unfolding is not an improvised response to one round of escalation. It is the exposure of a structure that had already been forming through years of regional recalibration. The war merely stripped away the ambiguity.

Once Cyprus became more directly exposed, once the Eastern Mediterranean could no longer be treated as insulated from the conflict, and once maritime, missile, and air defense considerations began to overlap across theaters, the strategic logic became harder to deny. Greece was no longer adjacent to the conflict. It had become part of the wider security system surrounding it.

This is where the article must be precise.

*Greece's role is not important only because of what it has done militarily, diplomatically, or symbolically during the current escalation. Its importance lies in the fact that the war revealed the existence of a broader regional design, one that links the Eastern Mediterranean to Gulf security, connects Cyprus more tightly to Israel's strategic depth, and embeds Greece more firmly in a defense-oriented regional framework.*

That framework also carries a second meaning. It is not only about protecting lines of coordination. It is also about shaping the space in which Turkey operates. What is emerging across the Eastern Mediterranean is not a formal anti-Turkish bloc. But it is a structure that reduces Ankara's ability to dominate the regional geometry on its own terms. By linking Greece, Cyprus, Israel, and wider security partners into a more functional architecture, the region is gradually producing alternative corridors, alternative alignments, and alternative strategic depth. This is not accidental. It is a strategy.

And it reflects a wider Israeli logic that extends beyond one front or one war, not only reacting to threats, but proactively reshaping the environment around them. In that sense, the Greek case belongs to a broader pattern. The goal is not only deterrence in the narrow military sense. It is the

construction of regional structures that constrain adversarial freedom of action before the next crisis fully unfolds. That is why the war matters here. Not because it created the shift, but because it made the shift visible enough that it can no longer be treated as secondary.

### **What Greece Represents Now**

What Greece represents today is larger than bilateral alignment, larger than a set of military exercises, and larger even than the current war. It represents a shift in the strategic grammar of the Eastern Mediterranean.

For years, Greece was read either through the language of vulnerability or through the language of diplomacy. Neither is sufficient any longer. Greece is increasingly being defined by function, as a geographic hinge, a maritime anchor, a European node, and a strategic component within a wider regional structure linking Israel, Cyprus, Europe, and the Gulf-facing security environment. That matters because regional power is no longer measured only by military inventories or formal alliances. It is measured by the ability to shape corridors, build depth, create alternatives, and deny adversaries the freedom to organize the map on their own terms.

This is precisely where Greece has returned to the strategic map. Not because it became powerful overnight. Not because one war changed everything. And not because symbolism suddenly gave way to substance. Greece matters because the region around it has been reorganized, and because Greece is no longer standing outside that reorganization. ***It is now part of the structure through which the Eastern Mediterranean is being redefined. That is the real significance of the shift.***

The old reading placed Greece at the margins. The emerging reality places it inside the system. And once that becomes clear, the conclusion is unavoidable: Greece is no longer adjacent to the Eastern Mediterranean story. It is now part of the structure that writes it. ***The strategic map has changed. Greece did not merely return to it. It is now helping define it.***