

Greece and Israel in the Emerging Security Architecture of the Eastern Mediterranean

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(www.rieas.gr) Publication date: 9 July 2026**

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Introduction

The Eastern Mediterranean is undergoing its most profound strategic transformation since the end of the Cold War (Tsailas, 2026). The era in which the maritime domain was regarded primarily as a commercial corridor has come to an end. Today, the Mediterranean has re-emerged as a contested geopolitical arena where sovereignty, deterrence, energy security, technological superiority, and naval power intersect.

As I have often argued, sovereignty in the twenty-first century is increasingly determined not only by legal rights but also by the ability to secure and defend maritime zones, critical infrastructure, sea lines of communication, and strategic access routes. As sovereignty increasingly depends upon the ability to protect maritime infrastructure and critical sea lines of communication, maritime security has become an essential component of national resilience (Tsailas, 2026; Till, 2018).

The contemporary maritime environment is no longer defined solely by naval competition. It has evolved into a multidomain strategic ecosystem in which maritime,

cyber, space, energy, and information domains are increasingly interdependent. Consequently, maritime security can no longer be viewed merely as the protection of sea lanes. It constitutes the preservation of the entire strategic architecture upon which economic resilience, national sovereignty, and regional stability depend.

At the same time, Israel is experiencing a historic strategic shift. Although it has traditionally been defined as a land and air power since its establishment, it is gradually evolving into a maritime power whose security and prosperity increasingly depend on controlling an expanding maritime perimeter extending from the Levant Basin to the Red Sea.

The convergence of these developments is creating a new strategic reality. Greece and Israel are no longer merely partners; they are becoming complementary pillars of stability within an integrated Eastern Mediterranean security theatre.

The Mediterranean as a Strategic Domain

The Mediterranean has re-emerged as one of the world's most strategically contested maritime spaces, linking Europe, Asia, and Africa through critical commercial and energy corridors (Tsailas, 2025a). The Mediterranean is no longer simply a body of water separating continents. It has become:

- a corridor for global trade,
- an energy basin,
- a communications network,
- a military operational environment,
- a platform for power projection,
- and an arena of geopolitical competition.

Submarine cables carry financial transactions and strategic communications. Offshore natural gas fields influence energy security. Ports shape logistics and strategic access. Maritime chokepoints connect Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Control over these interconnected systems increasingly determines national resilience. For Greece, this reality has long been self-evident. For Israel, it is becoming inescapable. Modern sea power, however, extends beyond naval fleets to include cyber resilience, undersea infrastructure, energy security, and maritime domain awareness (Till, 2018; Tsailas, 2026).

The Return of Classical Sea Power

Alfred Thayer Mahan's proposition that command of the sea underpins national power has regained renewed relevance under contemporary strategic conditions (Mahan, 1890/1987). Yet twenty-first century sea power extends beyond fleets and naval battles.

Today, maritime power encompasses the ability to secure data flows, protect subsea infrastructure, preserve freedom of navigation, ensure energy connectivity, and sustain uninterrupted commercial access. Sea control has become multidimensional, integrating military capability with technological innovation, economic resilience, legal legitimacy, and diplomatic coordination.

For medium powers such as Greece, maritime strategy therefore represents not simply an element of defence policy but the principal framework through which national influence is projected.

Israel's Maritime Awakening

For decades, Israel's security doctrine was overwhelmingly focused on land and air power. However, contemporary developments are steadily transforming Israel into a state that increasingly recognizes the sea as a vital dimension of national security. Israel's transition toward an air-maritime strategic posture reflects the growing importance of offshore energy infrastructure, subsea communications, and maritime trade routes in national security planning (Tsailas, 2025b).

The Mediterranean was once viewed primarily as a defensive frontier. That paradigm is coming to an end. Israel's maritime domain now encompasses:

- offshore natural gas installations,
- subsea infrastructure,
- underwater communications networks,
- commercial routes to Europe,
- strategic access to global markets,
- and the maritime approaches linking the Mediterranean to the Red Sea.

Protecting offshore gas fields, subsea communications networks, maritime trade routes, and access to European markets has elevated the maritime domain from a secondary concern to a strategic imperative.

This evolution reflects a principle long understood by Greece: national sovereignty extends beyond territorial boundaries to include the maritime spaces that sustain economic prosperity and strategic autonomy.

The emergence of platforms such as the **Sa'ar 6-class corvettes**, advanced naval air defence systems, underwater capabilities, and integrated maritime surveillance demonstrates that Israel is moving toward a comprehensive concept of maritime power rather than merely coastal defence. The introduction of the Sa'ar 6-class corvettes represents not merely fleet modernization but doctrinal evolution toward integrated maritime defence (Tsailas, 2025b).

The Sa'ar 6 corvettes symbolize this transformation. Equipped with advanced sensors, layered missile defence, a naval Iron Dome, electronic warfare capabilities, helicopter integration, and network-centric combat systems, they have transformed what was once a predominantly coastal fleet into a sophisticated maritime defence architecture.

The traditional mission of coastal protection has evolved into something far broader: safeguarding Israel's maritime sovereignty. From a strategic perspective, Israel is becoming an **air-maritime power**, rather than simply an air power.

Israel's maritime transformation should therefore be understood not merely as naval modernization but as doctrinal evolution. Strategic culture is adapting to the recognition that future threats will increasingly target economic infrastructure, offshore energy assets, digital connectivity, and maritime supply chains.

This evolution reflects a broader understanding that deterrence is no longer confined to territorial defence. It extends across the entire maritime ecosystem upon which national resilience depends.

The Greek Strategic Experience

If Israel contributes technology and innovation, Greece offers something equally valuable: experience.

Greek maritime strategy has evolved through decades of operational experience in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean, emphasizing deterrence, maritime domain awareness, and persistent naval presence (Tsailas, 2026). The Aegean Sea, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the maritime approaches to Cyprus have served as laboratories of deterrence, crisis management, and strategic resilience.

The Aegean constitutes a laboratory of modern deterrence, where geography, sovereignty, international law, military readiness, and crisis management intersect on a daily basis.

The experience Greece has accumulated in managing maritime disputes, maintaining persistent naval presence, and sustaining deterrence under conditions of continuous pressure provides valuable lessons for emerging maritime powers.

Greek expertise encompasses:

- maritime surveillance,
- island defence,
- anti-access operations,
- escalation management,
- maritime domain awareness,
- strategic resilience.

Greek naval doctrine has been shaped by the requirement to recognize pressure before it escalates into conflict. This is precisely the challenge that Israel increasingly faces in the Eastern Mediterranean. The lesson is not simply how to fight; it is how to deter.

The Greek strategic experience also demonstrates that effective deterrence rests upon credibility rather than escalation. Persistent presence at sea, continuous surveillance, legal consistency, operational readiness, and strategic communication collectively generate stability by reducing opportunities for coercion.

Maritime deterrence succeeds when potential adversaries conclude that attempts to alter the status quo would incur unacceptable political, military, and economic costs before a crisis ever emerges.

The Challenge of Revisionist Geopolitics

One of the central conclusions emerging from my research is that contemporary revisionism is increasingly expressed through maritime means. Revisionist powers increasingly employ grey-zone tactics below the threshold of armed conflict, combining legal narratives, coercive maritime deployments, and information operations (Gray, 1992; Tsailas, 2025c).

Today, pressure often precedes conflict.

It manifests itself through:

- disputed maritime claims,
- coercive mapping activities,
- naval escorts accompanying survey and drilling vessels,
- military exercises,
- strategic acquisition of ports,
- grey-zone operations,
- and the gradual normalization of contested realities.

The concept of **Mavi Vatan (Blue Homeland)** represents perhaps the most ambitious maritime geopolitical project currently unfolding in the Eastern Mediterranean. Illustrates how geopolitical narratives may be translated into operational maritime strategy (Tsailas, 2025c).

Its significance extends far beyond legal debates over maritime boundaries.

It seeks to reshape perceptions of access, influence, and strategic geography. The challenge facing regional states is therefore not merely legal, it is operational. Maps become patrol routes. Claims become deployments. Narratives become instruments of pressure. This dynamic directly affects Greece, Cyprus, and Israel.

Revisionist actors increasingly employ incremental coercion rather than conventional warfare. Their objective is not necessarily military victory but the gradual erosion of accepted legal and strategic norms.

This phenomenon, often described as "salami slicing" or grey-zone competition, places particular emphasis on maritime spaces where ambiguity can be exploited below the threshold of armed conflict.

Accordingly, successful responses require integrated deterrence that combines diplomatic engagement, legal legitimacy, intelligence, naval presence, cyber resilience, and strategic communication.

Cyprus: The Strategic Centre of Gravity

No state illustrates the strategic importance of the Eastern Mediterranean more clearly than Cyprus.

Cyprus occupies a pivotal geostrategic position linking the Aegean, the Levant, North Africa, and European maritime interests (Tsailas, 2025a).

Its significance derives from:

- geography,
- energy infrastructure,
- intelligence potential,
- maritime access,
- and regional connectivity.

Within an integrated Eastern Mediterranean security architecture, Cyprus becomes the central operational hub linking the strategic depth of Greece and Israel.

It serves simultaneously as:

- a forward observation platform,
- an energy hub,
- a logistics node,
- and a naval stronghold.

Consequently, the security of Cyprus directly affects the security of the wider region.

The Emergence of a Greek–Israeli Maritime Axis

The growing cooperation among:

- Greece,
- Cyprus,
- and Israel

is best understood as a response to structural realities rather than a temporary political alignment. The trilateral cooperation among Greece, Cyprus, and Israel should be understood as a structural response to regional security dynamics rather than a temporary political alignment (Tsailas, 2025b).

Each partner contributes unique strengths.

Greece provides:

- strategic geography,
- a maritime tradition,
- naval operational experience,
- access to Europe,
- and strategic depth across the Aegean.

Israel provides:

- technological superiority,
- integrated air and missile defence,
- cyber capabilities,
- Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) dominance,
- precision-strike systems,
- and autonomous naval technologies.

Cyprus provides:

- a central geographic position,
- advanced infrastructure,
- energy connectivity,
- and strategic continuity between the Aegean and the Levant.

Together, these assets constitute the foundations of a new regional balance.

From Cooperation to a Maritime Security Architecture

Future cooperation should move beyond joint exercises toward the development of an integrated maritime security framework.

Potential pillars include:

Maritime Domain Awareness

A shared operational picture extending from the Aegean to the Eastern Mediterranean Basin.

Undersea Security

Protection of:

- pipelines,
- communications cables,
- offshore platforms,
- and critical seabed infrastructure.

Anti-Submarine Warfare

Combining Greece's operational experience with Israel's technological capabilities.

Air–Sea Integration

Linking naval and air forces into a unified regional deterrence network.

Energy Security

Protecting critical offshore infrastructure from both state and non-state threats.

Cyber and Electronic Warfare

Defending the digital dimension of maritime operations.

Collective Maritime Resilience

Beyond operational cooperation, Greece, Cyprus, and Israel should pursue a common framework for resilience encompassing disaster response, protection of critical infrastructure, cyber defence, maritime logistics, and coordinated crisis management.

The objective is not solely to prevail in conflict but to ensure that regional systems continue functioning during periods of sustained strategic pressure.

Maritime Sovereignty in the Twenty-First Century

The central lesson emerging from both strategic analysis and the evolution of Israel's security doctrine is clear:

Maritime sovereignty increasingly encompasses infrastructure protection, strategic resilience, energy security, and freedom of navigation alongside traditional jurisdiction over territorial waters (Till, 2018; Tsailas, 2026). Maritime sovereignty is no longer defined exclusively by territorial waters.

It encompasses:

- access,
- resilience,
- infrastructure,
- strategic depth,
- and the ability to operate freely throughout the maritime domain.

States that fail to secure these dimensions become vulnerable to coercion even in the absence of direct military confrontation.

Conversely, nations capable of protecting their vital maritime lifelines gain strategic autonomy.

In the twenty-first century, sovereignty should be understood as a continuum rather than a fixed geographic boundary. Effective sovereignty exists where a state possesses the persistent ability to monitor, protect, regulate, and, when necessary, defend maritime activity across its areas of legitimate interest.

Legal rights unsupported by credible capabilities risk becoming increasingly vulnerable to coercion.

The Strategic Imperative for the Future

The Eastern Mediterranean is evolving into an integrated strategic theatre in which maritime power has once again become a decisive instrument of national policy. The convergence of Greek and Israeli maritime interests is not an episodic development but rather the manifestation of a broader geopolitical transformation.

Within this emerging strategic order, Greece contributes geographical depth, a distinguished maritime tradition, and decades of strategic experience. Israel contributes technological innovation, operational agility, and advanced defence capabilities. Cyprus provides the indispensable geostrategic link connecting the two.

For Greece, this development reinforces the enduring importance of maritime deterrence and naval superiority.

For Israel, it marks a historic transition from an air-centric security model to a comprehensive air-maritime strategy.

For Cyprus, it confirms its role as the geostrategic bridge linking Europe with the Eastern Mediterranean.

Viewed through the lens of strategic thought, the future of regional stability will depend not on the capabilities of individual states acting independently, but on the development of a coherent maritime order capable of protecting sovereignty, securing energy corridors, defending critical infrastructure, and preserving freedom of navigation.

Together, these elements form the foundations of a maritime partnership whose significance extends well beyond the national interests of its participants, contributing to the long-term stability and security of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The emerging strategic relationship between Greece and Israel should therefore not be viewed as a traditional military alliance directed against a particular state. Rather, it represents the gradual formation of a regional security community committed to preserving stability, safeguarding international law, protecting freedom of navigation, and securing the critical infrastructure upon which the prosperity of Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean depends.

This distinction is strategically important. Sustainable security architectures derive their legitimacy from the provision of regional public goods rather than from exclusive geopolitical competition.

Conclusions

The strategic future of the Eastern Mediterranean will not be determined solely by the relative size of fleets or the sophistication of individual weapons systems. Rather, it will depend upon the ability of regional actors to integrate military capability with technological innovation, economic resilience, legal legitimacy, and

political cohesion into a coherent maritime strategy. The convergence of Greek and Israeli maritime interests reflects a broader transformation in the strategic architecture of the Eastern Mediterranean (Tsailas, 2026).

In this respect, the emerging partnership among Greece, Israel, and Cyprus represents considerably more than an alignment of national interests. It reflects the gradual emergence of a regional maritime security community committed to safeguarding freedom of navigation, protecting critical infrastructure, preserving the rules-based international order, and maintaining strategic stability in one of the world's most consequential maritime theatres.

As history repeatedly demonstrates, maritime powers prosper by sustaining secure maritime systems rather than relying solely upon naval superiority (Mahan, 1890/1987; Till, 2018). History repeatedly demonstrates that maritime powers prosper not because they dominate the seas through force alone, but because they sustain secure maritime systems upon which commerce, diplomacy, and regional stability depend. The Eastern Mediterranean is once again becoming such a system.

For Greece, this validates a centuries-old maritime tradition founded upon strategic geography and naval excellence. For Israel, it marks the maturation of a security doctrine that increasingly recognizes the sea as an indispensable dimension of national power. For Cyprus, it confirms its indispensable role as the geostrategic bridge connecting Europe with the Levant.

Viewed through the broader lens of maritime strategy, the convergence of Greek and Israeli interests is not a temporary geopolitical convenience but the manifestation of a long-term structural transformation. Their evolving cooperation has the potential to shape not merely the balance of power but the future security architecture of the Eastern Mediterranean itself.

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