

Together, Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, and Israel Can Preserve a Free and Open East Mediterranean

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Abstract

Forming a formal defensive alliance among Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, and Israel reflects a strategic response to evolving regional threats and shared interests. While existing collaborations have laid the groundwork for enhanced security cooperation, the transition to a formal alliance would require careful consideration of geopolitical complexities, historical contexts, and the diverse interests of the nations involved.

Introduction

The strategic landscape of the Eastern Mediterranean (Levant) is undergoing a period of rapid transformation, necessitating a robust and unified response to regional threats. Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, and Israel share not only geographic proximity but also fundamental interests in security, economic stability, and the rule of law. To safeguard these shared interests, it is imperative to establish a Levant Treaty Organization (*East Mediterranean Treaty Organization - EMTO*) at the initiative of *Greece* -a formidable defensive alliance capable of deterring aggression and preserving regional stability.

The Need for a Strong Deterrence Mechanism

A free and open Mediterranean is essential to ensuring a rule-abiding international order. After Russia's repeated invasions of Ukraine and increased Turkish bellicosity towards Hellenism (Greece-Cyprus), Syria, and Israel, stability in the Eastern Mediterranean region holds even greater importance today. Instability in the Eastern Mediterranean would have severe direct impacts for the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) and the Indo-Mediterranean geopolitical complex dominated by the *India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)* and substantially impair the global economy. Regional infrastructure initiatives that seem to point towards the value of the Aegean-Mediterranean axis as added, increasing the geostrategic role of Hellenism.

The Eastern Mediterranean has increasingly become a contested region, with mounting geopolitical tensions fueled by territorial disputes, energy exploration, and external influences that challenge the sovereignty of regional states. Among the most pressing concerns is Turkey's expansionist agenda, which threatens the sovereignty of Greece and Cyprus, as well as the broader stability of the region. The creation of EMTO would serve as a clear counterweight to such hegemonic aspirations, ensuring that no single actor can dominate the region unchallenged.

A Two-Pronged Strategic Effort

Securing a free and open Eastern Mediterranean calls for a two-pronged strategic effort: First, a self-reinforcing institutional architecture should be constructed that preserves the military and economic security interests of Hellenism and its allies in the region. Second, Athens must recruit the wider world's interests and commitments to preserve regional security. This calls for clear-eyed Hellenism leadership, alliance-building, and burden-sharing.

The Importance of Collective Security

The security of the region would be substantially enhanced by a collective security arrangement among regional nations rather than a solitary reliance on unilateral alliance security guarantees. Alliance military effectiveness and resilience in the

region are also substantially augmented by a collective security architecture *and burden-sharing among allies*.

There is dissonance in the United States, which is censuring its European allies for greater contribution to collective North Atlantic security while offering a series of security guarantees in the East-Mediterranean - while its alleged primary theater of interest is now the Indo-Pacific. Hellenism has been an early and consistent advocate of a collective security framework. It is time to bring together a redoubtable defensive alliance that can deter Turkish hegemonic designs across the region—*an East-Mediterranean Treaty Organization (EMTO)*.

E.M.T.O.: A Strategic Imperative

An EMTO dedicated to the proposition of a free and open East Mediterranean should be of the highest priority for the Mediterranean states. EMTO constitutes a commensurate and timely response to the growing “no-limits” civil-military partnership between Turkey and Libya, with Russia and Iran included. EMTO’s main tenets may include an explicitly defensive (not offensive) posture buttressed with collective security obligations. It may also include a tiered deterrence approach to counter hybrid or cyber-attacks, including provisions for critical infrastructural security. *The operation protocols of EMTO would dramatically enhance intelligence sharing, systems interoperability, and strategic planning, as well as complementary, coordinated, and integrated defense manufacturing.*

Expanding the E.M.T.O. Coalition

EMTO represents a logical outcome of recent exponential growth in Turkish military capabilities and belligerence and the corresponding response from Hellenism and its allies. Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, and Israel are committed champions for EMTO and a free and open Eastern Mediterranean. These four nations should make history by establishing EMTO with additional founding members, including France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. Willing and able NATO nations should be welcomed as members of EMTO. Special partner status may be accorded to regional

actors with the ability to contribute, including Algeria, Lebanon, Saudi-Arabia and other like-minded nations whose sovereign territories are threatened by Turkey.

Hellenism's military capabilities, influence, and reach stand to be greatly enhanced by the presence of two robust collective security alliances, NATO and EMTO on Mediterranean, Aegean and Red Sea choke points. *The integration of EMTO within the broader transatlantic security framework would further bolster regional deterrence and ensure long-term stability.*

Securing the Mediterranean Archipelagos

The leading priority of EMTO, after defending the sovereign territories of its members, would be affording a security umbrella (and associated economic development) to the Mediterranean archipelagos stretching from the Suez Canal to Gibraltar. This area ensures uninterrupted economic and military reach across the vast sea. These strategic areas are integral to defending regional security and offering military assistance if needed. By securing these archipelagos, EMTO would ensure maritime stability, protect vital trade routes, and reinforce the alliance's military posture across the Mediterranean.

Shoring Up Energy and Economic Security

EMTO addresses the military aspects of securing a free and open Mediterranean. Complementary efforts to shore up the energy and economic security of the region are equally important. Turkey's economic coercion in the region is more pronounced and deeply rooted than its growing military belligerence. The four states should complement the establishment of EMTO with efforts to strengthen regional energy and economic security.

First is a **Mediterranean Energy Security Initiative** to address pressing regional energy demands through the supply of natural gas, including related exports. The initiative will also work with regional partners to facilitate a credible energy transition that is diverse and resilient in the face of growing Turkish economic pressures. Energy security is critical for economic growth and regional stability.

Second, a **Mediterranean Economic Security Initiative** should be established to forge sector-specific agreements in critical economic areas such as semiconductors, AI, fintech, cloud computing and communications, pharmaceuticals, critical minerals, batteries, shipbuilding, and civil aviation. These agreements would fortify collective economic security against Turkish economic shocks, coercion, and dominance. They also offer diverse and rich opportunities to align industry standards and coordinate the application of investment screenings, tariffs, quotas, qualitative standards, and other economic security tools (export controls, research security, and secure supply chain rules).

Our nations could form an initial core of such an initiative, with willing partners from ASEAN, Europe, and other regions able to join on a sector-specific basis. Strengthening economic ties within this framework will create a more resilient regional economy while countering Turkey's economic leverage.

Strengthening Strategic Linkages Across Regions

Consequently, strategic prudence calls for Hellenism (Greece-Cyprus), Egypt, and Israel to work tirelessly to strengthen the economic and security linkages between the East-Mediterranean, the Indo-Mediterranean, and the Free Seas, which comprises the Black Sea regions. Strong linkages among these free and open spaces reinforce the resilience of all three theatres while restricting the malign maneuverability of the Turkish-Russia-Iran nexus in the shared space. Therefore, strengthening linkages of adjoining free and open spaces with the East Mediterranean must be the conscious strategy for securing a free and open Mediterranean.

Conclusion

The formation of EMTO would mark a historic step in consolidating security and prosperity in the Eastern Mediterranean. *By forging a strategic alliance among Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, and Israel, the region can resist external pressures, uphold sovereignty, and create a secure environment for future generations.* Now is the time to act

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decisively and lay the institutional foundation for a free and open Eastern Mediterranean.

We have a historic opportunity to enshrine a free and open Mediterranean in a collective military, energy, and economic architecture that transcends political cycles and preserves peace and prosperity in the most important corner of the world. Hellenism articulated the vision of a free and open East Mediterranean, to clad with iron a free and open Mediterranean through a lasting institutional framework that would make the region great for years to come.