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Extracting Gas and engaging in Peace talks:

Normalizing a politics of defence and contesting reconciliation in Cyprus

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“Extracting gas and abstracting peace”

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Introduction/Abstract

The on-going gas extraction in Cypriot territorial waters since 2011, has already impacted the peace in Cyprus and geopolitical configurations in the region¹. The finding of gas has been attendant to certain changes in internal and external defence policies.

It appears that the so-called ‘Cypriot crisis’ is not only linked to the deregulation of the economy, but to a wider social and political crisis. This article aims to point to certain implications which the adoption of an aggressive defence policy can have on the peace process in Cyprus. It will highlight key questions formed in the context of ‘finding gas’ in Cyprus,

¹ Natural Gas Europe. (2014). *EU Resolution Against Turkey's Violation of Cyprus' Right to Exploit its EEZ*. Available: www.naturalgaseurope.com/eu-resolution-turkey-cyprus-eez. Last accessed 8th January 2015.

‘peace process’, ‘defence policy’ and the broader ‘turmoil in the Middle East’.

Research that addresses the geopolitical importance of natural gas² has discussed specific considerations for becoming a major gas supplier in a conflict zone³. Examining the situation of Cyprus could provide an in-depth case-study for understanding the rising levels of security and defence policy in the Middle-East related to the extraction of gas. Discussions on security and the geopolitics of gas in the Middle East have placed little attention to Cyprus⁴, most often focusing on the dispute between Israel and Turkey⁵. These discussions have neglected that the Cypriot government has responded to the military threats from Turkey by *undermining the current opportunity for reconciliation* and has built a new type of *militarism based on re-armament and coalitions with neighbouring and foreign military powers against Turkey*. This article aims to introduce the significance that the changing defence policy of Cyprus will have on the geopolitics of the region and by extension to peace in Cyprus.

Earlier studies on Cyprus have given particular attention to the legal and economic perspectives of the gas extraction⁶, with much less attention to the broader geopolitical and security consequences. Other efforts have focused on Turkey’s posturing for hydrocarbon hegemony in the eastern Mediterranean and the position of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot

² Myers Jaffe, Amy and Meghan L. O’Sullivan;. The Geopolitics of Natural Gas. July 2012.

³ Baker Institute Policy Report 29 on The Geopolitics of Natural Gas considerations of becoming a major gas supplier in a conflict zone.

⁴ For example Clabough. A. 2013. Beyond Oil: The New Energy Geopolitics of the Middle East. GSSR Vol. 1 Issue 3.

⁵ Reuters, “Israel’s Karish field has estimated 1.8 tcf of natural gas,” 14 July 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/14/israel-karish-idUSL6N0FK02F20130714>.

⁶ Gürel, Ayla; Fiona Mullen; & Harry Tzimitras (2013) The Cyprus Hydrocarbons Issue: Context, Positions and Future Scenarios, *PRIO Report*, 1. Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Centre.

community in relation to the extraction of gas⁷, however excluding the rapidly developing security dimension of the issue and its impact on the peace process. The issue of Cyprus defence policy and militarism remains to the present day understudied in the literature whilst becoming crucial in the development of peace. Understudied also remains the extent to which findings of natural resources and its relation to peace affect popular affiliation with far right ultranationalist parties. An analysis of the development of defence policy in the context of the finding of gas will reveal the formative links between defence policy and the reconciliation process.

Extracting gas and abstracting peace

The extraction of the gas, with the military antagonisms it has created, coalesced with the new round of negotiations (since 2013). The current rounds are considered from both Turkish and Greek-Cypriot communities to be a promising opportunity for peace and reunification of the island. In addition, the international community currently has a regional interest if peace is to come to Cyprus. With the escalating Syrian conflict at stake, increasingly attracting the involvement of foreign military powers and significantly exacerbating military forces in the area of the Middle East, the end to the Cyprus conflict could contribute towards building stability and peace in the region. In this light, in 2015, Philip Hammond, British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs said: “The whole region has a lot to benefit from the unclogging of the Cyprus question, and I think both sides realise there is now a serious window of

⁷ Faustmann, Hubert; Ayla Gürel; & Gregory M. Reichberg, eds, (2012) Cyprus Offshore Hydrocarbons: Regional Politics and Wealth Distribution, *PRIO Cyprus Centre Report*, 1. Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Centre.

opportunity.”⁸Some even go far enough to say that the island has its best chance in decades to end more than 50 years of conflict between the Greek and Turkish populations⁹. However, the discovery of gas and the spark of military threats by Turkey around the gas extraction has had significant implications for rapprochement between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The clearest manifestation of this is the fact that the Republic of Cyprus had in 2014 aborted the peace talks¹⁰. Indeed, UN General Secretary, Ban Ki Moon, on January 2015, criticized the Republic of Cyprus’ recent policies for “isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community” and urging for understanding “energy resources as belonging to the two communities”. In turn, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Cyprus commented: “I am concerned, and increasingly concerned that things are not moving, and I’m afraid that, as they are not moving, they are de facto moving in the wrong direction.”

The discovery of gas in Cypriot territorial waters in a time of economic crisis has placed it as the major avenue for economic recovery.¹¹ However, it has also sparked military confrontations with Turkey over the gas

⁸ Extract from interview with Philip Hammond IN: Foster, Peter (2015): “Cyprus close to reunification deal as Greek-Turkish talks enter key phase”. *Telegraph.co.uk*. Accessed on 03. 03. 2016 at:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/cyprus/12003639/Cyprus-close-to-reunification-deal-as-Greek-Turkish-talks-enter-key-phase.html>.

⁹ Foster, Peter (2015): “Cyprus close to reunification deal as Greek-Turkish talks enter key phase”. *Telegraph.co.uk*. Accessed on 03. 03. 2016 at:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/cyprus/12003639/Cyprus-close-to-reunification-deal-as-Greek-Turkish-talks-enter-key-phase.html>.

¹⁰ OffShore Energy Today. 2014. Cyprus president: No peace talks with Turkish vessels in our waters. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.offshoreenergytoday.com/cyprus-president-no-peace-talks-with-turkish-vessels-in-our-waters/>. [Accessed 08 January 15].

¹¹ For example see, Χρυσολωρά, Ν. (2013). Αναστασιάδης: Προοπτική η Κύπρος να καταστεί περιφερειακός ενεργειακός κόμβος. Available: <http://newsite.kathimerini.com.cy/index.php?pageaction=kat&modid=1&artid=134432>. Last accessed 22.8.2013.

extraction with Turkish military threats over Cyprus' natural gas ventures¹². This also prompted the reaction of the international community with the European Parliament voting (2014) for a resolution against Turkey's actions in Cyprus Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)¹³. The political and military contexts around the finding of gas in Cyprus are developing, prompting the urgent need for research into the geopolitical and security developments and their impact on peace in the Eastern Mediterranean and more specifically in Cyprus. The escalating confrontations over the gas with Turkey, which opposes any sole-Greek Cypriot sovereignty of the discovered gas, coincided with the latest round of negotiations of the reunification of Cyprus, leading to the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) walking away from negotiations for reunification in 2014¹⁴. With the natural resources supply offering Europe an alternative source of gas supplies for the next 20 years and covering Cyprus needs for 200 years, thus potentially reducing the region's dependence on Russian natural gas, the drilling efforts have the support of the United States, European Union, Russia and United Nations. The confrontations have been escalating further with increasing presence of the Turkish navy and repeated initial gas searchings' in Cyprus EEZ (since 2014)¹⁵ and the announcement by Turkey's President, **Tayyip Erdoğan**, that in January (2015) the drillings will start.¹⁶ In response, Cyprus has shifted

¹² For example see, emple013. emple013. Ευθείες απειλές της Αγκυρας κατά Λευκωσίας . Available: http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_politics_2_19/05/2012_482791. Last accessed 22.8.2013.

¹³ Natural Gas Europe. (2014). *EU Resolution Against Turkey's Violation of Cyprus' Right to Exploit its EEZ*. Available: www.naturalgaseurope.com/eu-resolution-turkey-cyprus-eez. Last accessed 8th January 2015.

¹⁴ Sigma Live. 2014. ΥΠΕΞ: Να φύγει το Μπαρμπαρός, να επαναρχίσουν οι συνομιλίες - See more at: <http://www.sigmalive.com/news/politics/182352/ypeks-na-fygei-to-mparmparos-na-epanarxisoun-oi-synomilies#sthash.vVBELXGO.dpuf>. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.sigmalive.com/news/politics/182352/ypeks-na-fygei-to-mparmparos-na-epanarxisoun-oi-synomilies>. [Accessed 09 January 15].

¹⁵ For example see, emplele: http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_politics_2_19/05/2012_482791. Available: http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_politics_2_19/05/2012_482791. Last accessed 22.8.2013.

¹⁶ Γαλιατσάτος Π. 2014. **ΚΟΣΜΟΣ 12.12.2014 Γεωτρήσεις προαναγγέλλει ο Τ. Ερντογάν**. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.kathimerini.gr/795521/article/epikairothta/kosmos/gewtrhseis-proanaggellei-o-t-erntogan>. [Accessed 08 January 15].

its defence policy towards a process of upgrading its geostrategic power in the Middle East. It created alliances with stronger military powers; it established a military and energy alliance, it launched naval and air military exercises with major military powers over the gas ventures in order to provide an armed deterrent force against Turkey and has again returned to an understanding of 'security' through armament rather than demilitarisation.

Militarising the territorial waters and contesting reconciliation

There are issues of international security and geopolitical consequences of Cyprus emerging as a gas producer in the Middle East and the particular implications for the Cyprus Problem. The on-going gas extraction has already impacted the peace in Cyprus and geopolitical configurations in the region. The finding of gas is attendant to certain changes in internal and external defence policies. The Defence Minister, Fotis Fotiou, announced the change in defence policy on Sunday 18th August 2013 saying that: “The facts, as they have lately been shaped in the field of energy, oblige Cyprus to take action towards the reform of its defence policy.”¹⁷ Thereafter, Cyprus created alliances with stronger military powers (currently showing a strong military presence in the Cyprus EEZ¹⁸) in order to provide an armed deterrent force against Turkey and, thus, to secure sovereignty over the gas¹⁹

¹⁷ Πιμπίσιης, Α . (2013). Τον επόμενο μήνα θα υπογράψουμε συμφωνία με την Ιταλία - θα ακολουθήσει με τη Γαλλία Φώτης Φωτίου: Ομπρέλα συνεργασίας και ασφάλειας για ενέργεια. Available: <http://www.philenews.com/el-gr/koinonia>. Last accessed 22. 8. 2013.

¹⁸Sigma Live. 2013b. Στην Κύπρο το ισχυρότερο υπερ-καταδρομικό πλοίο της Ρωσίας. [Online] Available at: <http://www.sigmalive.com/news/local/86883>. [Accessed on 16 January 14].

¹⁹ Ayla, G; Fiona, M; Harry, T. (2013). *The Cyprus Hydrocarbons Issue: Context, Positions and Future Scenarios* (PDF). PCC Report (1). Peace Research Institute Oslo. pp. 13–30. ISBN 9788272884863.

²⁰. In between other²¹, it established an energy alliance with Israel and Greece against Turkey under the 'Energy Triangle'²².

Moreover, in late 2014 in reprisal for Turkey's decision to conduct its own surveys in Cyprus oil and gas drilling areas, Cyprus launched with Russia and Israel naval and air military exercises over the gas ventures and developed joint operational procedures²³. It also gave the first license to explore for oil and gas to Noble Energy, a US based company. Thus ensuring that the military threats over the gas ventures will not result to a military offensive from Turkey and thus a termination of the gas extraction. Furthermore, the Cypriot government has allowed military naval and air facilities to be used by the Russian military²⁴, arguably, as part of the agreement over the €2.5bn emergency loan Cyprus acquired from Russia in 2012. This alliances- with Russia, USA and Israel point to a new approach to defence policy. This shift of defence policy has created a stronger military presence in the South of the island (area controlled by the RoC), further exacerbating Turkish military presence in and around the Northern part of the island.

²⁰ Bimbitisihs - Πιμπίσιης, Α . , 2013. Τον επόμενο μήνα θα υπογράψουμε συμφωνία με την Ιταλία - θα ακολουθήσει με τη Γαλλία Φώτης Φωτίου: Ομπρέλα συνεργασίας και ασφάλειας για ενέργεια. Available: <http://www.philenews.com/el-gr/koinonia>. [Accessed on 22 August 2013].

²¹ See as an example the discussions on the issue with France and Italy. Πιμπίσιης, Α . (2013). Τον επόμενο μήνα θα υπογράψουμε συμφωνία με την Ιταλία – θα ακολουθήσει με τη Γαλλία Φώτης Φωτίου: Ομπρέλα συνεργασίας και ασφάλειας για ενέργεια. Available: <http://www.philenews.com/el-gr/koinonia>. Last accessed 22. 8. 2013.

²² GIS. 2014. **Greece, Cyprus and Israel change the military balance in the Mediterranean**. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.geopolitical-info.com/en/geopolitics/greece-cyprus-and-israel-change-the-military-balance-in-the-mediterranean>. [Accessed 09 January 15].

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Βενιζέλος, Κ. (2013). Συμφωνία Μόσχας και Λευκωσίας για στρατιωτικές διευκολύνσεις Ρώσοι στην αεροπορική βάση. Available: <http://www.philenews.com/el-gr/top-stories/885/150596>. Last accessed 22. 8. 2013.

These new alliances are visible when cases of felt threat or ‘military exercises’ take place. The situation as shaped into an energy reserve military crisis by the presence of Turkey’s ‘research vessel’ and navy frigates, in 2014, in the EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus, provides a good example. The Turkish presence was promptly responded to by the ‘Greek Cypriot-Israel-Greece bloc’ and Russia. The response included joint naval exercise covering air defense, underwater attacks and anti-submarine operations and the participation of flagship of Russia's Mediterranean fleet, anti-submarine vessel Kulakov. In turn, NATO and Turkey were also quick to respond with "Blue Whale" exercise conducted by Turkish naval forces and a US logistics ship²⁵. Indeed, countries that stake claims over the energy reserves of the Eastern Mediterranean seem to have decided that diplomacy backed by a show of military force will be more persuasive than diplomacy alone²⁶. Regional rivalries over hydrocarbon reserves is gradually militarizing the issue strengthening the polarisation of rivers in antagonistic groups.

The policy of the RoC on the exploitation of the gas rests on a masculinist discourse of Greek Cypriot “legitimacy” over the EEZ of RoC (in opposition to power sharing with the Turkish Cypriots), and has been further supported by returning to an understanding of 'security' through armament rather than demilitarisation. This understanding of 'security' had been placing Cyprus until the early 2000 as one of the top five militarised countries in the world in the global militarisation index²⁷. Cyprus presents a particular case of militarisation with the heavy military presence on the island of six armies: the Greek Cypriot National Guard (NG), the Hellenic

²⁵ IBID.

²⁶ Gurcan, Metin (2014): “Military presence increases in eastern Mediterranean - Al-Monitor: the Pulse of the Middle East”. *Al-Monitor*. Accessed on 04. 03. 2016 at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/turkey-eastern-mediterranean-cyprus-nato-russia.html#>.

²⁷ Global Militarisation Index . 2014. **Bonn International Center for Conversion** . [ONLINE] Available at: http://gmi.bicc.de/index.php?page=ranking-table&year=2013&sort=country_asc. [Accessed 07 January 15].

force of Cyprus (ELDYK), the Turkish Cypriot Security Force (TCSF), the Turkish Armed Forces in Northern Cyprus (KTBK), the British Forces of Cyprus (BFC) and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)²⁸. Nicosia, the last divided capital in Europe remains divided into two zones of Greek Cypriot and Turkish armies buffered by the UN forces located in the middle. The so-called 'free' areas controlled by the Republic of Cyprus (South) that are represented exclusively by the Greek Cypriot community have experienced intense militarisation following the partition of the island (1974) into mono-ethnic Northern and Southern areas²⁹. The state, as part of the effort to reproduce its legitimacy against the Turkish 'occupation' of Northern Cyprus, marshalled financial and human resources to create a 'nation-in-arms'³⁰ (with long conscription service, currently the longest in the EU) that would have defended the community. The post-war political era was characterised by major defence procurements, especially in the 1990s (ibid). The most prominent and popular example being the purchase of the surface-to-air defensive S300s missiles from Russia in 1998.

How does this affect the understanding of peace with the Republic of Cyprus? Since the opening of the internal borders between North and South in 2002³¹, the accession of Cyprus to the EU (2004) and the intensified negotiations for reunification in recent years, between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, has led to a major effort to normalise Cypriot defence policy, becoming significantly Europeanised and reconciliatory³². There appears to have been increased recognition that nationalistic,

²⁸ Efthymiou, S (2016) Militarism in post-war Cyprus: The development of the ideology of defence. Defence Studies. Forthcoming.

²⁹ IBID.

³⁰For a definition of 'nation-in-arms', see: Ben-Eliezer, U. (1995). A Nation-in-Arms: State, Nation, and Militarism in Israel's First Years. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37(02), p.264.

³¹ Efthymiou, S (2014) 'Nationalism, Militarism And Masculinity In Post-2003 Cyprus'. PhD, Brighton: University of Sussex.

³² IBID.

militarised politics are neither conducive to the rapprochement with Turkish Cypriots nor to the image of a European country. For example, in recent years the Ministry of Defence has prohibited portraying the ‘Turk’ as the inherent dangerous ‘enemy’ within the force³³. Furthermore, the dramatic decrease in the Defence budget³⁴ has meant not only the non-modernisation of the force but also the end to major procurement programs³⁵. Moreover, the coordinated bilateral reconciliatory efforts with Turkey meant also the repeated cancellation of certain military parades and exercises³⁶, and thus a central part of the ‘stepping back’ from a nationalist assertion of militarist politics. However, the relationship between the finding of natural resources and peace; signals a shift away in direction from this defence policy.

The current change in defence policy is one that is moving away from the idea of a solution and returning to an understanding of 'security' through joint military presence with foreign armies and armament; hampering the possibility for more imaginative reconciliatory solutions. In this context, in order to aid the military confrontation with Turkey over the gas, the Cyprus Ministry of Defence has re-commenced major arms procurement programs³⁷ that were ceased over ten years ago. The government took up once again a nationalist militarist rhetoric announcing that the Cypriot army (namely the

³³ As Kyriacos Mavronicolas who was the Minister of Defence when Cyprus became a member of the EU in an interview I conducted with him in 2011:

“Basically, we need to fight for a united Cyprus but with a modern European army of a European member-state”

³⁴ See European Defence Agency (EDA) and European Defence Information (EDI).

³⁵ As Philelepheros, one of the most widespread newspapers in Cyprus, notes on Friday 12 of November, 2010 that: “The Defence budget for 2011 is reduced, and does not contain military armaments and procurement programs, with the exception of ammunition and some accessories for existing Defence armaments which were purchased years ago.”

³⁶ KYPE. (2011). Ακυρώθηκε η άσκηση "Νικηφόρος". Available:

<http://www.kathimerini.com.cy/index.php?pageaction=kath&modid=1&artid=62171>. Last accessed 22. 8. 2013.

³⁷ Η Kathimerini - Η Καθημερινή. 2013. Αγοράζει πολεμικά σκάφη για την επιτήρηση της ΑΟΖ η Κύπρος. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/w/articles/kathremote_1_19/05/2013_499629. [Accessed 15 January 14].

National Guard) is beginning to acquire a central role in the politics of the conflict situation,³⁸ making very clear Cyprus' position to defend its right to the gas until the end.³⁹

Recommencing major defence procurements in a high militarised divided post-conflict setting is symbolically to 'repel peace' and 'take-up-arms'. Media sources comment on Cyprus having reported plans for procuring: a patrol vessel from Israel and three more vessels from EU countries⁴⁰. Two ship vessels (for military as well as civil uses) are to be acquired from the United States. Also, negotiations were being conducted directly with other states to purchase gunboats for the National Guard⁴¹. Cyprus purchase gunboats for the Naopen-sea patrol vessels, or offshore vessels, with long-range capability and able to navigate rough seas⁴². According to published figures, the defence ministry's budget for 2016 includes €72m for armaments⁴³.

The RoC government, having already once undermined the current opportunity for reconciliation, aborted the peace talks in 2014 because of Turkish navy presence around the gas ventures. This new type of militarism allows space for coalitions with foreign military powers against Turkey and

³⁸Phileleftheros. 2013b. Η τουρκική στάση δεν αφήνει περιθώρια εφησυχασμού.[ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.philenews.com/el-gr/eidiseis-politiki/39/173787/ypam-i-tourkiki-stasi-den-afinei-perithoria-efisychasmou>. [Accessed 15 January 14].

³⁹ Γαλιατσάτος Π. 2014. **ΚΟΣΜΟΣ 12.12.2014 Γεωτρήσεις προαναγγέλλει ο Τ. Ερντογάν**. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.kathimerini.gr/795521/article/epikairothta/kosmos/gewtrhseis-proanaggellei-o-t-erntogan>. [Accessed 08 January 15].

⁴⁰ InCyprus, (2015): „Cyprus to buy patrol boat from Israel - Cyprus“. Accessed on 04. 03. 2016 at: <http://in-cyprus.com/cyprus-to-splash-millions-to-boost-sea-fleet/>.

⁴¹ Hazou, Elias (2015): „Reported plans to purchase naval gunships - Cyprus Mail“. Cyprus Mail. Accessed on 03. 03. 2016 at: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2015/11/10/reported-plans-to-purchase-naval-gunships/>.

⁴² IBID.

⁴³ IBID.

has thus returned to an understanding of security through armament. Moreover, with the defence coalitions and the new nationalist militarist rhetoric giving ground to the emergence of Greek Cypriot far right nationalist parties, the implications that such political voices will have on the peace process are also part of the gloomy picture.

The strongly emerging new independent ultra-nationalist parties in Cyprus⁴⁴ such as the National Popular Front (ELAM) follow a political agenda against the independence of the Republic of Cyprus and favouring unification with Greece, a political position that contributed to the creation of the war of 1974. Thus also supporting ethnic cleansing of the Turkish Cypriot community from Cyprus. Given their support for Cyprus unifying with Greece, the military coalitions are considered to be at the expense of unified military ‘self’-assertion with Greece through revival of the Single Area Defence Doctrine Cyprus – Greece, a defence military coalition with Greece implemented by the government during the 1990s. This defence doctrine has become quiescent as part of the ‘Europeanisation’ of Defence policy. For them, the threats by Turkey are a provocation of war and Cyprus should not rely on foreign military powers in this situation as this is submission to ‘foreign powers’. With the defence coalitions giving ground to the emergence of these parties, the implications that such political voices will have on the negotiations for reunification are an issue to be addressed.

Extracting gas and making peace?

Given the brief overview of the context of RoC and newly emerging regional alliances there is a lot of scope for further research. The recent changes in Cyprus defence policy in the context of the gas findings raise

⁴⁴ Efthymiou, S, 2016. The emergence of ultra-nationalist political parties in European Cyprus. Under Review.

questions about the relationship between the future formation of Cyprus militarism and the reconciliation process. Key questions are:

- (1) What is the relationship between the new defence policy and reconciliation process?
- (2) What are the implications of the new defence policy, including new defence coalition agreements, for the relationship between Turkey and Cyprus and the relationship between Greek and Turkish Cypriots?
- (3) What would the impact of these changes in defence policies be on the Turkish Cypriot community?
- (4) What do the developing dynamics of the new defence coalitions mean for the emerging ultra-nationalist parties, and what could this potentially mean for reconciliation in the future?
- (5) What do these developments collectively mean for the future of defence policy and for militarism in Cyprus?
- (6) Could an alternative defence policy over the drillings scaffold reconciliation?

There are issues of international security and geopolitical consequences of Cyprus emerging as a gas producer in the Middle East and particular implications for the Cyprus Problem. It is crucial to gain understanding of the impact that this new type of militarism and defence policy in Cyprus could have on the peace process. It is anticipated that whilst the current developments have already once led to the breakdown of peace negotiations, they could lead to undermining future potential for reconciliation, to further separation between the two main communities on the island and potentially to increase assimilation policies from Turkey in the North of Cyprus. Therefore, there is a crucial need for further research that will reveal the impact and implications of these developments in defence policy on bi-communal relations and, thus, prospects for reconciliation, prompting the need for a defence policy on gas extraction that will aid reconciliation.