



Ελληνική Εταιρεία Γεωγραφικών Μελετών
«Ο Στράβων»

THE GATHERING STORM

Ukraine

As the Pact of the Mecca Three is poised to gather momentum, STRAVON's eyes turn, in the heels of CIA Director's mission to Moscow, to the static battle line in Ukraine. A lot there depends on British conduct. London masters as no other the art of brinkmanship. Time is coming to give peace a new try and the FCO office possesses specific know-how and carries certain responsibilities. In London they realize by now that a repetition of a Crimean war style outcome is this time not in the books. For all social pressure within Russia, no change in the resolve of the Russian state apparatus to carry on war effort in the plains of eastern Ukraine is palpable. Instead, it is in western Europe, in France and Germany that the social fabric is being weakening to the benefit of populist political forces. Presumably, nobody beyond the old continent's shoreline, toys with the idea of eroding the foundation of continental political harmony, that is the European Union. On the other hand, to be sure, Russia will not succeed in their maximalist goals, e.g. withdrawal without further fight of Kiev's military forces from the still contested part of Donbas. It might be opportune to revamp peace initiatives, be it involving political third parties, like India, be it by coopting ecclesiastical figures from within the world of Orthodoxy. It is realistic to assume that Russia, out of the static war theater, edges toward a presentable military success against which the collective West will be left with few options other than to perilously escalate or to come in terms.

Balkans

The coalition of Croatia and Albania, two NATO member countries, with Kosovo, a NATO protectorate, technically the trilateral security cooperation MOU of Tirana (March 2025), does not reinforce sense of stability in the Balkans. This initiative signals an unnecessary posturing against Serbia (and latently against Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia's Republika Srpska), with Croatia aspiring to act as a benevolent sherpa, in the line of Central European predilections, for the two state structures of the Albanian nation. This is perhaps the most consequential move in the Western Balkans since the Thessaloniki June 2003 Agenda charting the way towards accession to the EU. The move is viewed in Belgrade as exerting pressure on Serbia to give up rights and claims on Kosovo. The tripartite endeavor carries the potential of escalating tensions rather than reducing them and is not conducive to the lofty program of the said Thessaloniki agenda.

Greece-Turkey-Israel

Stravon has not a lot to offer towards addressing the gathering storm in the Eastern Mediterranean. We note the written response of Defense Minister Guler to the parliamentary interpellation of an opposition CHP deputy (mid-August 2026), not excluding even recourse to war to safeguard Turkey's interests in the Mediterranean. The

written testimony of mr Guler, became known just a few days after Turkey proclaimed two marine environment protection parks at the mouth of the Dardanelles and around Aksaz naval base stretching to the gulf of Antalya, both extending beyond respective territorial sea and thus intruding into the non-declared potential Greek exclusive economic zone, disregarding established rules of the Law of the Sea. Turkey moves beyond the bounds of UNCLOS and Greece ruminates how to act/react.

Turkey feels emboldened in the aftermath of the Mecca Pact, having drawn its close friend and erstwhile CENTO ally Pakistan into it and inducing Saudi Arabia, its antagonist within Islamic Umma to it. Syria has evolved from a buffer state under Assad, to a battle ground rather than a condominium between Turkey and Israel, the latter paying a price for US change of policy vis a vis the Kurds of Rozawa. Israel has not benefitted from the advent of former Al Nusra Islamic terrorists to Damascus. Under the circumstances it is bound to count more on Greece's and Cyprus's moral and material support as these two EU republics offer strategic depth and psychological relief. In the present geopolitical set up Israel is called to revamp as pragmatically as possible links with Egypt, key holder in the Red Sea and by necessity partner of Somalia and Eritrea.

With all that said, both Greece and Egypt got to favor important for European economies operation of Suez Kanal and Port of Piraeus as transit route and outlet respectively for made in China products.

***STRAVON of Amaseia,
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