

Adding Fuel to the Fire: Energy Resources and International Negotiation in the Eastern Mediterranean

Experiential Learning Activity (ELA) for Intermediate Courses
Student Materials

The Undergraduate Experiential Learning Project

ELA Overview

In this role-play activity, students simulate a United Nations summit aimed at preventing interstate conflict over vast undersea gas and oil fields discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean. The discovery of these valuable resources has sparked tension between parties already embroiled in longstanding conflicts over identity and territory, namely the Republic of Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot Administration/TRNC,¹ Israel, and Lebanon. The UN summit is an attempt to obtain the agreement of all parties to negotiate disputes within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), a treaty which several of the parties have not yet ratified.

The simulation includes roles for UN mediators and representatives of each conflict party, as well as energy companies, environmental advocates, and the European Union. This simulation uses a contemporary scenario to enhance understanding of the complex dynamics of conflict and negotiation at interstate, regional, and international levels, and of identity, interests and international law as potential drivers of escalation or resolution. Students are asked to conduct background research, to represent conflict parties, and to engage in dialogue with other parties in an effort to agree on a framework for negotiating the rights to valuable undersea resources.

International conflicts are all too often framed in two-dimensional fashion, as encounters between two clearly defined opposing parties or positions. This activity is designed to provide students with an experience of the multi-dimensional nature of contemporary international negotiations, through the frame of an actual resource dispute involving diverse stakeholders - states, territories, companies, and international organizations - all embedded in an elaborate web of multi-lateral relationships. By striving to represent any single party to the dispute effectively, students become immersed in the intricacies of negotiation strategy and the dilemmas of decision-making, as they face the tradeoffs between the incentives of global commerce and the politics of regional conflict.

The development of each ELA represents the collective effort of faculty and project staff of the Undergraduate Experiential Learning Project at George Mason University's School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (S-CAR). The primary authors of *Adding Fuel to the Fire* are Athanasios Gatsias, Gul Mescioglu-Gur, and Dr. Ned Lazarus. -

¹ TRNC: Since Turkey's 1974 military intervention in the Cyprus conflict, the north of the island has been an enclave governed by the Turkish-Cypriot minority. Turkey maintains a large military presence there, and is the only state to grant official recognition to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC).

ELA Structure

Overall Schedule

The activity takes place in three stages:

Stage 1 Introduction

Overview of conflict, the activity, distribution of roles (60 minutes)

Stage 2 UN Summit Round I

- a. Parties' official opening statements and responses (90 minutes)
- b. Establishing the negotiation agenda (30 minutes)

Stage 3 UN Summit Round II

- c. Position statements and clarification (45 minutes)
- d. Negotiations, Concluding Vote, Debrief (75 minutes)

Times are approximate, estimated according to typical class size and class period duration; the structure and duration of the activity can be modified to fit different schedules and class sizes.



Marine Oil and Gas Drilling Platform. Photo Credit: Arbyreed, Flickr.

Resources/Background Materials

The following online resources can provide helpful background information on all parties to the summit, Eastern Mediterranean political dynamics, and the issues surrounding maritime hydrocarbon resources in the region.

Online Reports

The Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO) has published a comprehensive overview of the issue and positions of parties (as of early 2013) including maps: http://www.prio.no/Global/upload/Cyprus/Publications/Hydrocarbons_Report-ENG.pdf

The International Crisis Group (ICG) has published a report on the resource dispute, and on the sub-conflicts involved (Cyprus, EU-Turkey, Israel-Turkey, Israel-Lebanon): <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/turkey-cyprus/cyprus/216-aphrodites-gift-can-cypriot-gas-power-a-new-dialogue.pdf>

The ICG site also includes periodic reports on multiple Eastern Mediterranean conflicts, which can be highly informative for the specific parties involved, including:

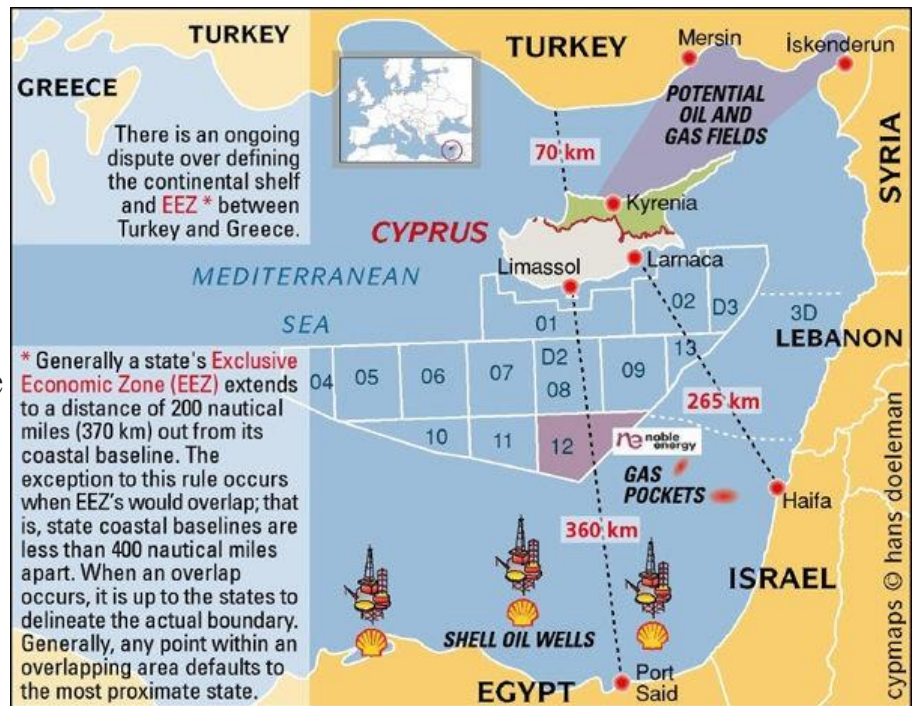
- Cyprus Conflict
- Aegean dispute
- EU/Turkey relations
- Arab/Israeli conflict

The **BBC** site also features brief overviews of regional conflicts.

Al-Monitor.com features excellent coverage of Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East news by local journalists.

UNCLOS/UN Law of the Sea

The history and content of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea can be accessed online from the *United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea*: http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_historical_perspective.htm



Cyprus and East Mediterranean EEZ Map. Photo Credit: Hans Doeleman.

All students should search their own party's English-language news sites for articles related to the conflicts and resource issues most important to their party. This can be done through keyword searches ("natural gas," "offshore drilling," "Law of the Sea," "Cyprus conflict," "Leviathan," "Aphrodite," "EEZ," etc.).



Map of Cyprus. Photo Credit: Nations Online Project.

Additionally, all government parties (all state parties, UN, EU, Turkish Cypriots/TRNC) should research their own official sites - e.g. Ministries of Foreign Affairs and/or Energy.

The following news sites are recommended for information on specific parties:

Energy Industry: *Noble Energy, Delek Group, Globes, Energy Tribune, Wall Street Journal, Natural Gas Europe*

Environmental Advocates: *Offshore-environment.com, Green Prophet, Mideast Environment, Greenpeace, Natural Gas Europe*

European Union: *EU Observer, Europa.eu*

Greece: *Ekatherimini, Tovima*

Israel: *Ynetnews, Haaretz, Globes, The Times of Israel*

Lebanon: *Daily Star, Lebanon Now, Naharnet, Al-Akhbar*

Republic of Cyprus/Greek Cypriots: *Cyprus Mail, Famagusta Gazette*

Turkey: *Hurriyet Daily News, Today's Zaman, Journal of Turkish Weekly, Turkishpress.com*

Turkish Cypriots/TRNC: *NorthCyprusNews.com, LGC News, Kibkom Times*

United Nations: *UNCLOS, UNFICYP (United Nations Force in Cyprus) Resources: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unficypr/resources.shtml>*

Energy Executives Narrative

The discovery of important hydrocarbon reserves by Eastern Mediterranean countries that were previously thought to have no such resources is changing the geopolitics and economics of the region. These new discoveries offer great opportunities both for Mediterranean coastal states and for energy companies alike. At the same time, these newly found resources have rekindled long-lasting conflicts in the Eastern Mediterranean, where pre-existing political disputes have not allowed for the demarcation of each country's exclusive economic zone. Although a potentially unstable political setting provides a less than ideal environment for conducting business and making investments of billions of dollars, companies from the energy sector believe that key actors in the region, brought together by converging interests and the prospect of economic gains, can very well find an effective and stable modus operandi that would allow all parties to benefit from the existing rich natural resource reserves in the region. Thus, over the past years corporations from the energy industry have partnered with local governments in gas and oil exploration and drilling and have emerged as important actors in the given context.

In our world of rising energy demands and environmental concerns, natural gas resources are the bridge to a sustainable energy future. This clean, green fuel provides all the power-generating potential of traditional hydrocarbons, with a much smaller carbon footprint. Natural gas produces less than half the greenhouse emissions per capita of coal or oil, which is one important reason why it is the world's fastest-growing energy source.¹ In recent years, vast new reserves have been identified underground and, especially, undersea - offering the prospects of energy independence and economic development to regions across the globe. As countries throughout the world have started scaling down the number of nuclear reactors used for the production of energy, especially after the Fukushima disaster, the global energy market has seen an increase of the demand for natural gas. Indeed, as mentioned above, in the years to come, the consumption of natural gas is expected to be the fastest growing among fossil fuels. The great challenges of our time are to build the infrastructure necessary to access reserves buried miles beneath the surface of the earth and the bottom of the sea, and then safely and efficiently deliver them to market. That is the role of our company/industry. Accessing these subterranean fields demands the sustained commitment of profound financial and material resources and the highest levels of technological innovation. Our company/industry is proud to provide these capacities to countries around the world which will draw on our expertise to enable them to power homes and create jobs for generations to come.

The Eastern Mediterranean region is a shining example of the potential benefits of productive cooperation in this endeavor. In recent years, our company/industry has discovered multiple natural gas fields in the greater Levant Basin area, offering an estimated 33 Tcf of high-quality reserves. We are grateful to the governments of Cyprus and Israel for their cooperation and support in the exploratory and preliminary drilling phase, and look forward to continuing to work together to fully develop the resources of their respective Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). Already, natural gas from the Tamar field offshore Israel's Mediterranean coast has started flowing into the country! Among others, our company - always in cooperation with partnering governments - is considering the different options for processing and transporting the natural gas that exists in the

1 http://205.254.135.7/forecasts/ieo/nat_gas.cfm

different fields we are working on. Moreover, we stand ready to provide equivalent services to all states in the region, whose reserves lie untapped, and whose citizens will reap the benefits of mutual cooperation.

To develop these resources, it will be necessary to construct a complex system of deep-water platforms, transport infrastructure, and processing facilities. This will be a prodigious investment, fraught with risk and potential reward. We urge all governments in the region to recognize their common interest in this endeavor, and to safeguard our investments by establishing a secure, stable working environment that will minimize risk and maximize value for all stakeholders. To this end, senior executive officers from our company have been invited to an UN-facilitated dialogue with all interested actors that will take place over the following weeks in an effort to reach an agreement. It is fortunate that the UN has recognized the positive aura that our knowledge and expertise can bring to the negotiating table; one could hardly think of anyone better than an energy official to clearly present the multiple benefits that can be reaped and the positive economic momentum that can be built through regional cooperation. There is an urgent need for all parties to find a solution, so as to come up with an arrangement that would define each country's rights in Eastern Mediterranean and allow for the undistracted drilling and use of the rich reserves of natural resources.

About the Project

This Experiential Learning Activity (ELA) has been developed as part of the Undergraduate Experiential Learning Project (UERP), U.S. Department of Education, Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE)-funded initiative that aims to enhance Conflict Analysis and Resolution (CAR) pedagogy in order to improve undergraduate learning.

The CAR field is uniquely positioned to deliver educational experiences that help students make the crucial link between abstract theories and practical application through learning activities such as: conflict mapping, intervention design, role plays, and simulations. The ELAs developed as part of the UERP advance specific learning outcomes, including critical thinking, problem solving, and perspective taking.

Each ELA produced through the UERP has been designed either to augment existing course curricula or to be used as a stand-alone activity. Instructors are encouraged to adapt activities to meet the needs of their specific learning environments, including class size and course objectives.

All UERP project materials are available for public use and may be reproduced without permission. Please ensure that all printed materials display both the FIPSE and George Mason University logos as well as the project URL (<http://scar.gmu.edu/experientiallearningproject/home>).

As your partners in advancing undergraduate education, we are committed to improving the quality of the learning experience and encourage all feedback and recommendations to support that commitment. Additionally, we welcome stories that highlight moments of student insight that arise from participation in these activities. If you are interested in supporting the collection of data for ongoing research, please contact us through our webpage. ▀



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