

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:

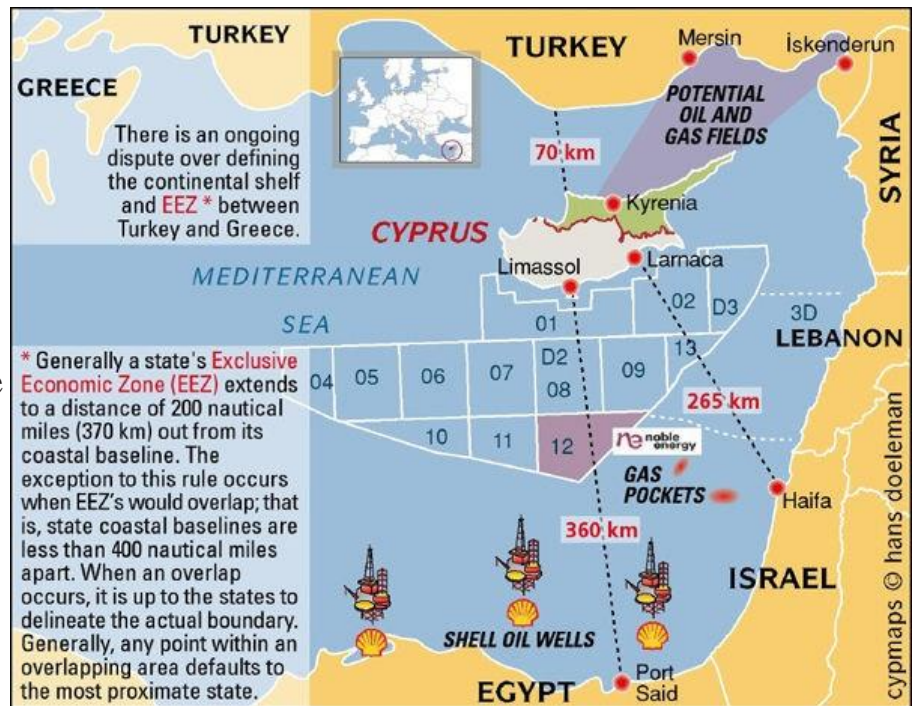
- Cyprus Conflict
- Aegean dispute
- EU/Turkey relations
- Arab/Israeli conflict

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>*

Lebanese 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. Lebanon is importantly affected by these developments and intends to play a significant role in this new geopolitical rearrangement. These newly found resources have rekindled long-lasting conflicts in the Eastern Mediterranean, while at the same time have added a new economic dimension to the 64-year-old Arab-Israeli conflict. Existing political disputes have not allowed for the demarcation of each country's exclusive economic zone and this perplexes the situation even further. In addition, multinational 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, being primarily interested in safeguarding their economic interests. For them, widespread political instability is not an ideal environment when investments of billions of dollars are at stake.

Lebanon is an ancient land - indeed, our cities and country appear by name in the Bible itself. The people of Lebanon today are direct descendants of the ancient inhabitants of the region, who have lived here uninterrupted for centuries and preserved their culture, through conflict, invasion and conquest. No one can dispute that the natural resources of our country rightfully belong to the people of Lebanon, Christians and Muslims alike. This is true in the sea as on land; since our Phoenician ancestors built the port cities of Sidon and Tyre in biblical times, Lebanon has been a center of maritime trade between Europe and the Arab World. Our modern state of Lebanon has had a troubled history, as foreign powers have fostered and exploited sectarian divisions, leaving us vulnerable to invasion, occupation and domination. Regional and global powers have used our land for their battleground and our people to fight their battles. The conflicts of the entire region have spilled over into our territory and drove us into civil war that served only foreign interests. Currently, we are about witnessing the same story once again, with the spillover of neighboring states' conflict in our country. The Lebanese people, however, have endured, and our will to rebuild, prosper and live in freedom remains indomitable. Our new prime minister, Tammam Salam, enjoys the support of domestic Lebanese constituencies and the international community alike and it is our great hope that he will lead a united Lebanon to prosperity and growth, rendering the country a factor of stability in the region.

Lebanon today does not seek to conquer territory or resources from anyone. We simply seek to protect our sovereign rights - rights that have been violated by Israel in the past through invasions, occupations and aggressions that have destroyed our infrastructure and made martyrs of our population. Even today, our borders were penetrated by Israel through its daily violations of our aerospace and territorial waters and espionage. Above all, our sovereignty is violated by the presence, since 1948, of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees, our brothers who must return to their homes in Palestine according to UN resolution 194. Indeed, it is the resolutions of the UN that Lebanon seeks to uphold - particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, to which we are among the only full signatories among the countries of the region. Israel's claim for its maritime boundary, restated in its recent agreement with Cyprus, violates our sovereignty and usurps valuable resources from the Southern boundaries of our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). We have no conflicts with the governments of Greece or the Republic of Cyprus, with whom we

have maintained peaceful relations throughout history - yet we are gravely concerned by their recent agreements with Israel regarding our sea borders. As a response to the Greek Cypriot-Israeli settlement, which clearly breaches our country's EEZ rights, the Lebanese parliament chose not to ratify the prior agreement Lebanon had signed with Cyprus in 2007 delimitating their maritime borders. It may do so, once the Greek Cypriot-Israeli agreement is renegotiated and amended in such a way so as to respect Lebanese maritime borders. We implore all parties to respect international law and UN resolutions in the full - regarding the Law of the Sea, the Palestinian cause and our territorial sovereignty and integrity. We acknowledge that divisions have plagued our country in the past; yet we stand united on the issue of our sovereign borders and rights to our natural resources - we will not tolerate any attempts to divide us from within.

Lebanon sincerely believes that the energy resources found in the Eastern Mediterranean could constitute an opportunity and a new beginning for peace and a lasting settlement, if justice is done in regards to each country's rights. It is within this climate that Lebanese officials will try to engage in a UN-facilitated dialogue with all interested actors over the following weeks in an effort to reach an agreement. 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. Given the troubled economies of many countries in the region, no one would be willing to invest billions of dollars in the infrastructure needed for the profitable use of these resources, as long as political stability is not guaranteed. For this reason, Lebanon is called to genuinely engage in a constructive dialogue, within the frames of a UN Summit, so as to settle existing differences, and find a modus operandi that would allow all parties to benefit from the existing rich natural resource reserves in the region.

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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