

## Redrawn Boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean: Türkiye's New Legal Moves

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An Exclusive Economic Zone does not grant absolute territorial sovereignty to a coastal state. However, it secures the exclusive rights of a coastal state to explore and exploit vital economic resources within the water column and the seabed. In an era of intense geopolitical competition, Türkiye introduced the [Blue Homeland](#) doctrine as a comprehensive maritime strategy. This visionary strategic framework protects these rights and safeguards Ankara's long-term interests in its surrounding seas. The implementation of this doctrine represents a fundamental shift in regional maritime geopolitics.

### The Aegean Sea and the Territorial Waters Status Quo

Greece has long-standing ambitions to extend its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles in the Aegean Sea. This proposed move would severely threaten regional stability and the delicate balance established over decades. Historically, Türkiye has declared that such an extension is an indisputable cause of war.

Currently, Türkiye is not a signatory to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. This abstention stems from the unique geographical structure of the Aegean Sea. Historically referred to as the Sea of Islands, the Aegean defies standard nautical mile limitations designed for open oceans. Applying these standard rules would severely restrict international airspace and maritime navigation.

While Athens maintains a six-mile limit for now, it has militarized numerous Aegean islands despite Turkish claims that such deployments violate the demilitarization provisions of the [Lausanne and Paris treaties](#). These historical agreements explicitly conditioned Greek sovereignty over these islands on their strict demilitarization. Consequently, the current militarization efforts undermine the foundational legal texts governing the region.

### Fault Lines in the Eastern Mediterranean

In the Eastern Mediterranean, shifting geopolitical fault lines have given Türkiye a significant strategic advantage. In 2019, Ankara signed a [Maritime Delimitation Memorandum of Understanding with Libya](#). This pivotal agreement completely dismantled the maritime containment strategy devised by Greece, Egypt, and the Greek Cypriot Administration.

Simultaneously, lucrative natural gas discoveries have transformed the Eastern Mediterranean into a focal point of global energy competition. Initial efforts by opposing blocs attempted to exclude Türkiye from regional energy infrastructure, notably through the [unviable EastMed pipeline project](#). However, the subsequent failure of these exclusionary projects proved that no regional energy equation can succeed without Türkiye's participation.

Today, Türkiye systematically codifies its maritime jurisdiction zones to consolidate these strategic gains. By defining legal boundaries for disputes dating back to 1982, Ankara actively redraws the Eastern Mediterranean energy map. Domestically, the [Blue Homeland doctrine](#) enjoys a robust bipartisan consensus across the political spectrum. The Turkish parliament is expected to legalize these maritime boundaries soon. Moving forward, Greece must face this newly established strategic reality. Athens must factor in both the regional energy resources and the renewed Libyan geopolitical equation. Rejecting diplomatic negotiations in favor of maximalist policies will not yield favorable outcomes for Athens.

### **The Legalization of the Blue Homeland**

Declaring an exclusive economic zone establishes a definitive and recognized legal framework. It places all living and non-living resources within the water column and the seabed under the strict jurisdiction of a single state. The upcoming legislative steps of Türkiye will reinforce its sovereignty in the Aegean Sea. This definitive legal action preempts Greek claims to these contested waters.

Crucially, this legal framework encompasses one hundred and seventy-six islands, islets, and rocks whose sovereignty remains disputed. Historical treaties never explicitly ceded the sovereignty of these specific geographic formations to Greece. Thus, this upcoming legislation solidifies both the legal and practical reality of the Blue Homeland doctrine.

Under the current Territorial Waters Law of Türkiye, the Aegean boundary remains at [six nautical miles](#) strictly out of geographical necessity. In contrast, Türkiye applies the standard 12-mile limit smoothly in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Despite this delicate equilibrium, Greece recently [announced plans](#) to create large national marine parks slated for 2025. This environmental initiative reveals a clear intent to establish unilateral control over disputed waters. Consequently, it poses a direct and unacceptable challenge to Türkiye's maritime rights.

### **Growing Concern in Athens**

Unsurprisingly, these structural moves trigger profound anxiety within political circles in Athens. The Greek government [publicly expresses fears](#) that codifying Türkiye's maritime claims could be an immediate cause of war, as the Turkish parliament [declared](#) in 1995. Meanwhile, the Greek domestic press frequently accuses its administration of underestimating these significant developments.

Greek media openly acknowledges that Türkiye's growing geopolitical influence fundamentally shifts the regional balance of power. Greek outlets often [mischaracterize](#) this growing influence as Turkish revisionism. This rhetoric serves to mask that Ankara seeks to secure its rights under international law.

## **Toward a New Regional Security Architecture**

The international system of today faces profound crises of global hegemony and a turbulent transition of power. Leaving maritime boundaries ambiguous in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean creates a massive and dangerous security vacuum. The recent initiative of Türkiye anchors its Blue Homeland vision upon a solid, unshakeable legal foundation.

This codification is a proactive measure carefully designed to close the existing security gap. The international community and regional actors should not view Ankara's actions as aggressive revisionism. Instead, they represent the foundational building blocks of a new regional security architecture. This new system is firmly grounded in legal clarity, effective deterrence, and geopolitical realism.

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