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Adding fuel to the conflict: How gas reserves complicate the Cyprus question

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ADDING FUEL TO THE CONFLICT:
HOW GAS RESERVES COMPLICATE
THE CYPRUS QUESTION

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ACRONYMS

AKEL	Progressive Party of Working People
AKP	Justice and Development Party
BCM	Billion Cubic Meters (of natural gas)
BG	British Gas Group
BKP	United Cyprus Party
BP	British Petroleum
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas
CTP	Republican Turkish Party
DEH	Public Power Corporation (of Hellenic Republic)
DEPA	Public Gas Company (of Hellenic Republic)
DIKO	Democratic Party
DISY	Democratic Rally
EastMed	Eastern Mediterranean Pipeline
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EIA	Energy Information on Administration
ENI	Ente Nazionale Idrocarbur
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
EOKA	National Organization of Cypriot Fighters
EU	European Union
FCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
FLNG	Floating Liquefied Natural Gas
FM	Foreign Minister
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HP	People's Party

HVDC	High Voltage Direct Current
IEC	Israel's Electricity Corporation
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOC	International Oil and Gas Company
KATAK	Turkish Minority of the Island of Cyprus
KOGAS	Korea Gas Corporation
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MCF	Million Cubic Feet
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
mW	milliwatt
NAVTEX	Navigational Telex
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
nm	Nautical miles
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PCI	Projects of Common Interest
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PRIO	Peace Research Institute of Oslo
RoC	Republic of Cyprus
SUMED	Suez-Mediterranean Pipeline
SC	Security Council
TCF	Trillion Cubic Feet

TDP	Communal Democracy Party
TMT	Turkish Resistance Organization
TPAO	Turkish Petroleum Corporation
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Program
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
USGS	United States Geological Survey

ABSTRACT

In this research I assess the impact of the recently discovered gas reserves south off Cyprus on the escalation of the Cyprus conflict. I examine the ideational dynamics underpinning the conflict-inducing role of natural resources. Theoretically motivated by the discursive shift in conflict studies, I prioritise the collectively shared meanings of the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot opinion-leaders on the gas reserves and how these justify their conflictual strategies. To uncover these discourses, I apply Q-methodology, a research design tailor-made to 'measure' human subjectivity. I distinguish five distinct discourses. With respect to the Greek-Cypriot side, I identify (a) 'gas boosting our geopolitical standing', which highlights the sovereignty attributes of the natural resources, (b) 'pipe-dreams and imported nationalisms', which acknowledges the opportunistic motives behind the 'geopolitical overtones' of the Greek-Cypriot side and (c) 'resentment matters', which emphasizes the Greek-Cypriot grievances. As regards the Turkish-Cypriot side, I came across two different discourses: (e) 'gas stimulating political equality', where Turkish-Cypriots stress their grievances over their lack of international status and the opportunities that arise from the gas reserves discovery to reverse their international isolation and (f) 'micro-politics', which highlights the political opportunism of particular policymakers who capitalize on the tensions in order to serve their political careers in the face of domestic turbulence. These discourses provide a holistic framework regarding the discursive factors underpinning the conflict-inducing role of natural resources within the protracted Cyprus conflict.