

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

Experiential Learning Activity (ELA) for Intermediate Courses  
Guide for Instructors

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,<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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).

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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.

Although role-play activities are a rich form of learning, they may be challenging for instructors and students. If role-playing is unfamiliar to students, they may be nervous, which sometimes leads to overacting and playing into cultural stereotypes. Instructors can guide students through such challenges by noting them while observing students engaged in role-play and addressing them in the debrief sessions built into this ELA. The benefits of a successful role-play activity are well worth the challenges. ■

## Learning Outcomes

Through simulating a negotiation process over issues that are embedded within a complex conflict system, this activity intends to help students understand:

- The "complex interdependence" of global economic and political systems;
- The multi-dimensional nature of global conflict taking place at multiple levels of analysis (local, regional, global) between state, sub-state and non-state actors;
- The tension between economic interests and nationalism in resource conflicts;
- Multiple approaches to international negotiation (Zero-sum/adversarial/positional vs. win-win/positive sum/integrative);
- Complex dynamics of "resource conflict" and international cooperation;
- The regional context of the Eastern Mediterranean, including Cyprus and Arab-Israeli conflicts;
- The role and limitations of the UN and of international treaties, such as UNCLOS.

Students will additionally practice the following skills:

- **Research and Conflict Analysis:** Investigating the context of the conflict, the perspectives and interests of specific parties, and the dynamics among parties;
- **Written and Oral Presentation and Argument:** Composing and presenting their party's position through public speeches and by responding to other parties' presentations;
- **Negotiation Strategy:** Devising and pursuing a strategy to secure interests and to achieve favorable outcomes in complex multi-party negotiations.

As the instructor, you can place special emphasis on any of the above learning objectives, as well as other aspects of the scenario, in introductory or post-simulation discussions or thematic reading and writing assignments.



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

# 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.

### Materials needed:

- Student Resources - Student Guides
- Red "objection cards" and objection forms
- Title cards to place on table, and/or name tags for each party
- Flip charts and markers for negotiations

## Roles

There can be up to ten conflict parties that students represent through role-play (see Student Materials). Ideally, two students will work together to represent each party. However, the activity has been successfully conducted with class sizes ranging from 8 to 30 students; numbers can be modified and roles included or excluded to fit a range of class sizes. Politically speaking, it is important to maintain a degree of balance in total numbers between informal "blocs" whose positions more or less align on key issues: on one side, EU, Greece, Israel, and the Republic of Cyprus; on the other, Turkey, Turkish Cypriots, and Lebanon.

The following roles are *essential* in that the activity cannot be conducted without them:

1. UN Mediators
2. Republic of Cyprus
3. Turkish Cypriot Administration/Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
4. Turkey
5. Israel

The following roles are *critical* and very strongly recommended for inclusion:

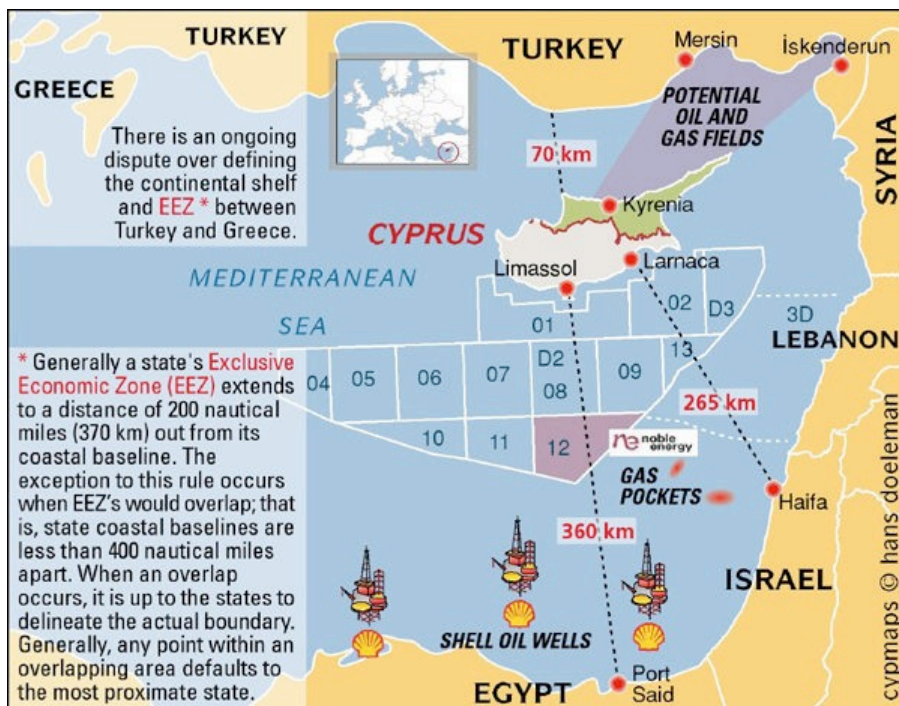
6. European Union (EU)
7. Greece
8. Lebanon

The following roles are highly valuable, if there are enough students in the class:

9. Energy Industry representatives
10. Environmental Advocacy Organizations

In order to best reflect the complexity of the actual conflict situation, and thereby fully achieve the learning outcomes cited above, all ten roles should be included.





*Notes on Role Assignment:*

There are three methods of assigning students to roles: random assignment, student selection, or instructor selection. For random assignment, students might draw roles from a hat, or be assigned alphabetically. For student selection, the instructor might ask students to list their top three choices and attempt to assign all students to one of their choices.

For instructor selection, the instructor would select students for particular roles according to strengths or weaknesses that might be relevant to the part.

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

In practice, the quality of students' research and role-play abilities is often uneven. An instructor may decide to assign roles to students based on abilities or knowledge. In that case the "essential" roles listed above should be assigned to the most able students.

The role of UN Mediators, above all, should be assigned to students capable of effectively organizing and facilitating the complex negotiation process. If an instructor is concerned about students' abilities to effectively lead the process, then the instructor can take on the UN role, either alone or as the leader (Secretary-General), and direct one or more students representing subordinate roles in the UN.

## Detailed Schedule

### Stage 1. Introduction (Background, Overview, Role Preparation)

In preparation for the activity, you should provide an introductory overview of the background and context of the conflicts, outline the activity and assignments, and distribute roles:

- a) *Background:* Offer a brief synopsis of the case at hand, presenting basic parameters of the conflicts and the parties involved (see list of video links and materials in the resources section);
- b) *Overview of Activity:* Describe the simulation, its goals, logistics, assignments and objectives;
- c) *Role Distribution:* Assign roles, distribute role narratives and background materials;

d) *Expectations*: Discuss preparation for effective participation in the process.

NOTE: Students will need a significant amount of time - a week in between classes, or longer - to research and develop their roles and to prepare to advocate on behalf of their parties.

The student materials packets contain advice for effective preparation, and instructors should review these instructions in class. Students are required to prepare statements for both rounds of the summit; it is recommended that instructors require prior submission of the statements as written assignments for the course.

**Stage 2. UN Summit Round One: Opening Remarks and Negotiation Agenda Setting**

**Part 1: Introductory Remarks - UN Mediators (10-15 minutes)**

- a. Summit Guidelines (ground rules and procedural details), Goals, and Aspirations, Role of UNCLOS and International Law

**Part 2: Opening Statements and Responses (50-60 minutes)**

- a. Each group presents, in turn, their opening statement (5-8 minutes, slides permitted).
- b. During the presentation no interruptions are permitted. However, parties not presenting should raise red flags to signal any objections to the content of the statement. A UN mediator keeps a list of all parties raising flags during the statement.
- c. The UN mediators will recognize parties who raised objections to the preceding statement. Each has 60 seconds to explain their objection, or ask clarifying questions.
- d. If time permits, presenters can respond briefly to objections and questions.

NOTE: As parties present their statements UN mediators should note the issues identified by each party in order to build the negotiation agenda for the next stage.

**Part 3: Setting the Negotiation Agenda (15-30 minutes)**

- a. After a break, UN Mediators present a suggested negotiation agenda, with a list of issues for resolution, based on notes from the previous stage.
- b. The parties ask for clarifications, discuss, and ultimately vote to approve/disapprove the agenda, going item by item. This vote should inform the agenda but is not binding; UN Mediators will ultimately decide the issues to be negotiated in Round II of the Summit.
- c. UN Mediators deliver a closing statement, summarizing their view of the first Round of the Summit and providing guidelines for Round II.
- d. Instructors may take time to clarify assignments and recommendations for effective preparation for the next round.

In between rounds, students can be encouraged to communicate with each other "in role" to share proposal ideas, debate, or clarify positions on issues via email. Instructors may be asked to be cc'd on communications related to the summit.

### Stage 3. UN Summit Round II: Position Statements and Negotiations

In this final stage representatives of the different parties engage in negotiations. During the process the UN representatives attempt to identify common ground and, based on this, suggest a plan or agreement. At the end of the talks parties are asked to state whether they accept the plan or not, and why. This last phase of the activity comprises the following parts:

#### **Part 1 (45 minutes)**

1. Introductory remarks by UN mediators (5-10 minutes)
  - a. Importance of the Summit; Expectations and Ground Rules
  - b. Presentation of Negotiation Agenda
  - c. Explain Negotiation procedure

2. Position statements by all parties (up to 5 minutes each)

Each party briefly presents positions or proposals on the agenda issues. Other parties may ask brief clarifying questions after each presentation.

#### **Part 2 (75 minutes)**

3. Negotiations: After hearing each party's suggestions, all parties engage in dialogue on the various negotiating issues. The UN representatives structure and facilitate negotiations, organizing participants into smaller groups to negotiate specific agenda items. During this phase, UN mediators should try to identify common ground in order to draft proposals for resolution.

4. Conclusion: After a break, the UN mediators re-convene all the parties for a final plenary session. Mediators present proposals for resolution of issues on the negotiation agenda; parties ask final clarifying questions and then vote yes or no on each item. Mediators present final closing remarks after the conclusion of voting.

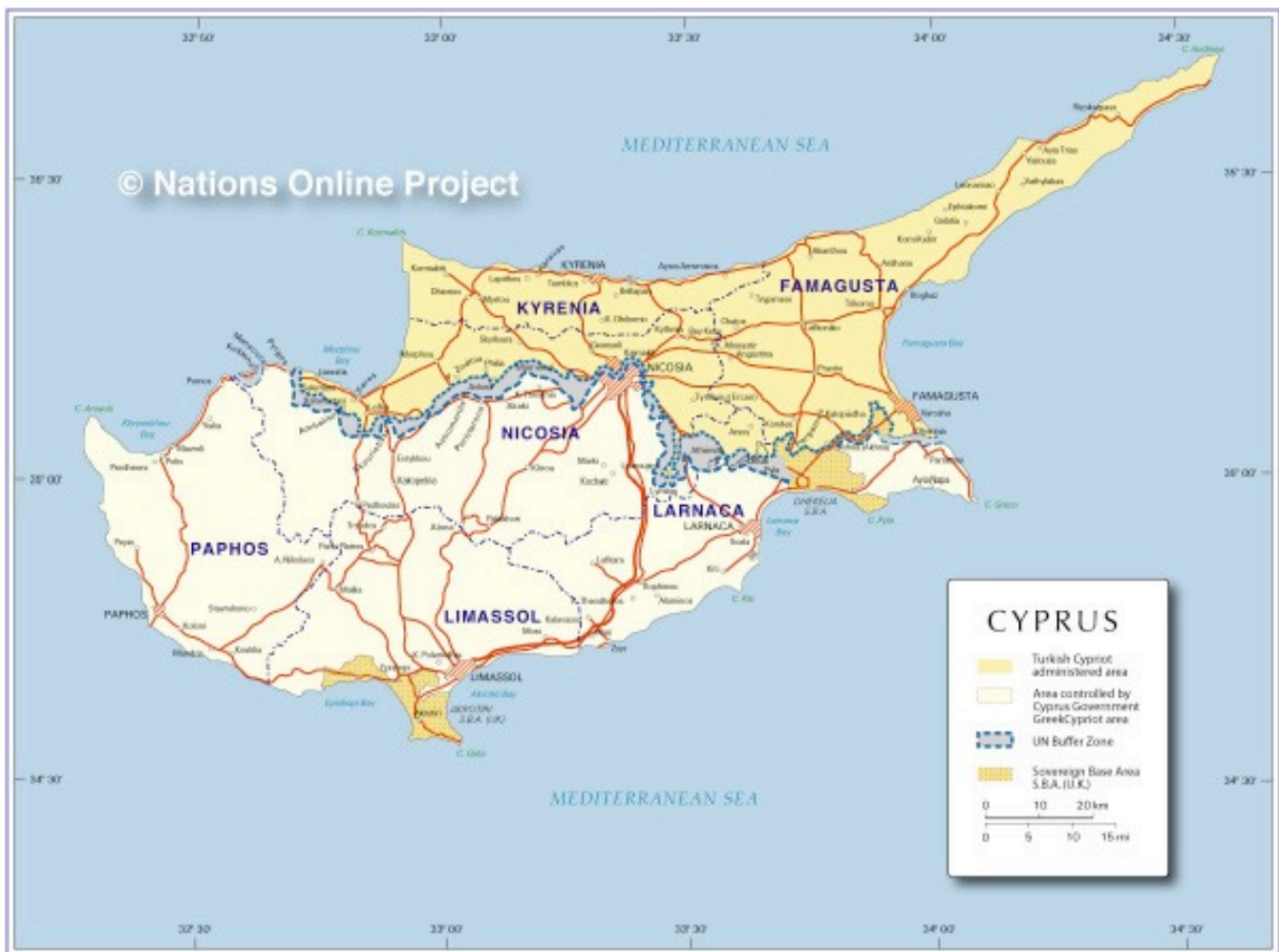
5. Debrief: Students should be asked to reflect on their experiences in the summit. Instructors are recommended to conduct a debrief immediately afterwards or during the next class meeting. Students can also be asked to compose a reflection paper detailing their experiences and insights from the activity.

NOTE: The issues in this conflict are highly complex. Although students are strongly encouraged to work toward a final settlement, the goal is not to reach an agreement for its own sake; the goal is for students to represent authentically the position and interests of each party. Whether students agree or disagree in the end is not as important as why they agree or disagree. Students must be able to explain agreement or disagreement in terms of an authentic and defensible reading of their party's identity, interests and strategic situation. Moreover, they need not reach a comprehensive agreement in order to make incremental progress toward a solution.

# Assignments

**1. Opening Statements (Due for Summit Day 1):** UN mediators open the summit with introductory remarks presenting guidelines, ground rules and procedures, such as order of presentation, goals for the summit, and advocacy for UNCLOS as a legal framework for resolving the issues. Afterwards, each party presents a five to eight minutes overview of its identity and core perspectives on the issues. During and after each statement, other parties are expected to respond (see below). NOTE: When two students jointly represent a party, instructors should ensure that both students contribute equally to presentations. Instructors are recommended to require parties to submit their statements in writing in advance of the presentations.

**2. Position Papers and Negotiation Strategies (Due for Summit Day 2):** To open the second summit meeting, UN mediators present guidelines for the conduct of negotiations and for the final voting procedure. Each party will then present a five-minute overview detailing opening negotiating positions and/or proposals on key agenda items. Additionally, it is recommended to assign each party to prepare a two-paragraph explanation of the negotiating strategy they will employ that will remain confidential and not be included in the presentation.



Map of Cyprus. Photo Credit: Nations Online Project.



# Resources/Background Materials

It is essential to provide students with a basic overview of the parties to the conflict and the issues in dispute, and access to resources to guide their research. Although students must do their own research, an initial overview from the instructor is essential.

## 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](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-aphroditas-gift-can-cypriot-gas-power-a-new-dialogue.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/europe/turkey-cyprus/cyprus/216-aphroditas-gift-can-cypriot-gas-power-a-new-dialogue.pdf)

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](http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_historical_perspective.htm)

## Online Videos and Resources

Selections from the following video links can be presented in an introductory lecture.

### Cyprus Conflict

ABC Australia, 2002: Cyprus - An Island Divided (14:40): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjKuexkCa5w&feature=fvsr>

The Atlantic, 2014: "Frozen in Time: The Cyprus Buffer Zone," By Neil Hall: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjKuexkCa5w&feature=fvsr>

United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), 2010: Peacekeeping in Cyprus (11:10): <http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2014/04/frozen-in-time-the-cyprus-buffer-zone/100714/>

National Geographic, 2012: The Island of Cyprus (43:52): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAwto68jEuI>

### Cyprus Natural Gas Drilling Dispute

Deutsche Welle TV, 2011: Cyprus – Conflict over Oil (4:45): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWzipUkT-xU>

Euronews, 2011: "Could Gas Reserves Further Strain Cypriot Relations" (9:56): <http://www.euronews.net/2011/11/25/could-gas-reserves-further-strain-cypriot-relations/>

### Israel/Lebanon Natural Gas Dispute

Russia Today, 2010: Black Gold Rush - Israel's oil find fuels Mideast tension (3:32): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r80kI20JrVc>

US Embassy Tel Aviv, 2011: Ambassador Shapiro visits the "Solitaire" offshore pipe-laying ship (3:05): [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UC64\\_qdwYsM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UC64_qdwYsM)



UN Buffer Zone at the Green Line in Cyprus. Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons

As the instructor, you should urge students to read updated reports on the resource issue and their party's relations with the other parties, so as to not represent outdated positions in the simulation. English news sites are available online for each party; these are detailed in the various student packets. Here are a few leading sites for updated information, for your reference as well as the students.

**Cyprus:** Cyprus Mail, Famagusta Gazette

**European Union:** EU Observer, Europa.eu

**Greece:** Ekatherimini, Tovima

**Israel:** Ynetnews, Haaretz, Globes (business)

**Lebanon:** Daily Star, Lebanon Now, Naharnet

**Turkey/TRNC:** Hurriyet Daily News, Today's Zaman, Turkishpress.com LGC News ■

# About the Project

This Experiential Learning Activity (ELA) has been developed as part of the Undergraduate Experiential Learning Project (UELP), 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 UELP advance specific learning outcomes, including critical thinking, problem solving, and perspective taking.

Each ELA produced through the UELP 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 UELP 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 ([tp://scar.gmu.edu/experientiallearningproject/home](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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