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ALERT IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

A documentary of 52'
Directed by Sophie Nivelles-Cardinale
Produced by ARTE France & Les Films d'Ici

PITCH

The eastern Mediterranean has become a zone of strategic, military and geopolitical tensions, which are revealed in an explosive way in the crisis that began in the summer of 2020. The film will decipher these issues by witnessing the historical turning point of the balance of this part of the world!

Given the importance and complexity of the issues at stake in the Eastern Mediterranean, it seems necessary to provide keys to comprehension to a public constantly solicited by an influx of direct information. The director knows this territory extremely well and has privileged access.



SYNOPSIS

Colonialism, greed, arrogance, incompetence! accuses the first; inadmissible, criminal responsibility retorts the other... It has been a few weeks since Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Turkish president, and Emmanuel Macron have crossed swords. The pressure is increasing around gas, a highly flammable element, even underwater. When regional rivalries, nationalist escalation and the prospect, in the medium term, of substantial income are added to the mix, the risk of an explosion becomes real.

For many Europeans, the Mediterranean is synonymous with summer vacations, lazing on the beach and blue skies. In the summer of 2020, this postcard landscape has been joined by incongruous elements: fighter aircrafts and warships visible to the naked eye in the blue Mediterranean sea and sky.

At sea and in the air, the Turkish and Greek armies are preparing for confrontation. France has sent frigates and Dassault Rafale to support the Greek army. This military rivalry between allies within NATO is unprecedented...

The Eastern Mediterranean has rapidly become a geopolitical hotspot: a consequence of the migratory crises of the last few years, of the ongoing conflicts in Syria and Libya, of an increasingly coercive diplomacy on the part of an increasingly authoritarian Turkish leader compared to a European diplomacy that is cooperative and often divided in its strategic interests, while the world order resulting from the end of the Cold War is no longer a reference. The end of American leadership and new alliances with Russia have also disrupted the balance of the region, which is crucial for the stability of the European Union.

Territorial disputes and international maritime law, new gas resources, but also military and political alliances: the stakes in the Eastern Mediterranean crisis are numerous and complex. What appears to be a rush for new resources in fact reveals a new geopolitical situation. The militarization of the area is unprecedented. Tension is at its peak. And diplomatic initiatives are multiplying, but in a tormented regional and world order, the maneuvers are delicate and tumultuous. At the heart of the new regional order, is emerging an actor that is troublesome for its traditional allies: Turkey.

EDITORIAL INTENTION

Built on a double-temporality, the film will be told through 2 main stages:

- The unveiling of the behind-the-scenes of crisis diplomacy in chronological order
- The clarification of the stakes and the setting in historical context.

The film will therefore be written partly through immediate history, considering that the crisis of the summer 2020 has not yet been resolved: the diplomatic game, in order to ease military tensions continues its ballet, the Turkish leader in a position of strength blows hot and cold as countries like Greece and Cyprus press their advantage, supported by a French president determined to stand up to the restless Turkish ally. Unknown but determining factors will take place before the filming starts. It is therefore a text in constant motion on which we are relying and which is going to become the most interesting during the interviews with the main characters, the actors involved in the story that is being created.

VISUAL APPROACH

It will be based on the direct testimonies of European political and economic leaders and diplomats from countries bordering the Eastern Mediterranean. Personalities involved in the decision-making process, whose list added at the end of the processing is indicative. A casting has yet to take place on the eve of filming to select the best storytellers, those who know how to make their stories come alive and powerful. Interviews will be processed with the same visual grammar, conducted with two cameras. Archive footage of all kinds will enrich the testimonies to clarify and put into perspective the role of certain protagonists in this unprecedented crisis. These elements will enlighten the viewer and will be used to contextualize, supported by the testimonies of the main characters and the narrative.

To support this work, a set of cartographies will enrich the topic.

Singularities in the genre

The Mediterranean is a scenery with character status and we will dive into this territory with the film. Beyond summoning the imagination, it will also be a matter of enhancing the geographical and geopolitical reality of the region. As the film unfolds, new strategic locations in the area will appear: the capitals of the countries involved (Ankara, Athens, Tel Aviv, Cairo), the Greek islands of the Dodecanese, embedded in the Turkish coast, Cyprus, divided since 1974 and its waters, being the target of new desires, and also the capitals of European power involved in solving the crisis (Paris, Berlin, Brussels).



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