

Ενα Νέο Βιβλίο Δείχνει τον Δρόμο για την Ειρηνική Επίλυση των Διαφορών Αναφορικά με τα Θαλάσσια Σύνορα



Ενας Οδικός Χάρτης Μπορεί να Βοηθήσει τα Παράκτια Κράτη να Επωφεληθούν του Υποθαλάσσιου Πλούτου

ΟΥΑΣΙΓΚΤΟΝ: Ο ειδικός σε θέματα ενέργειας, Ρούντι Μπαρούντι, στο νέο του βιβλίο αναδεικνύει μηχανισμούς μείωσης της έντασης, οι οποίοι συχνά ξεχνιούνται αλλά μπορούν να βοηθήσουν στην εκμετάλλευση πετρελαίου και φυσικού αερίου αξίας δισεκατομμυρίων δολλαρίων.

Το βιβλίο *Διαφωνίες επί των θαλασσίων Συνόρων στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο: Μια Πρόταση Επίλυσης* διανέμεται από το Ινστιτούτο Μπρούκινγκς και σκιαγραφεί το εκτενές νομικό και διπλωματικό πλαίσιο το οποίο διατίθεται για χώρες με διαφιλονεικούμενα θαλάσσια σύνορα. Ο συγγραφέας Ρούντι Μπαρούντι συζητά την αυξάνουσα επιρροή του Διεθνούς Δικαίου της Θαλάσσης υπό την αιγίδα των Ηνωμένων Εθνών (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea – UNCLOS), οι κανόνες του οποίου αποτελούν πια

την βάση για την επίλυση όλων, σχεδόν, των διαπραγματεύσεων και συμφωνιών στην θάλασσα. Εξηγεί, επίσης, πως οι πρόσφατες εξελίξεις στον επιστημονικό και τεχνολογικό τομέα – και ειδικά στην χαρτογράφηση ακριβείας – έχουν αυξήσει περαιτέρω την επιρροή των κανόνων του Διεθνούς Δικαίου της Θάλασσας, αφαιρώντας κάθε ενδεχόμενη ασάφεια από οποιαδήποτε διαπραγμάτευση που βασίζεται στους κανόνες του Δικαίου.

Το βιβλίο εστιάζει στην ανατολική Μεσόγειο, όπου οι πρόσφατες ανακαλύψεις υδρογονανθράκων ανέδειξαν το γεγονός ότι τα περισσότερα θαλάσσια σύνορα της περιοχής παραμένουν ακαθόριστα. Η αβεβαιότητα την οποία δημιουργεί αυτή η κατάσταση όχι μόνο καθυστερεί την εκμετάλλευση των πόρων και την διοχέτευση του πλούτου προς όφελος των κοινωνιών, αλλά δημιουργεί και κινδύνους θερμών επεισοδίων και πολέμων. Τέτοιου είδους προβλήματα υπάρχουν σε όλη την Γή. Ο Μπαρούντι σημειώνει, ωστόσο, ότι η δίκαιη επίλυσή τους σε μία περιοχή μπορεί να ενδυναμώσει την εμπιστοσύνη στους πολύπλευρους μηχανισμούς σε κάθε περιοχή.

Σε περίπτωση, σημειώνει, που οι χώρες της ανατολικής Μεσογείου συμφωνούσαν σε μια δίκαιη επίλυση των διαφορών τους με βάση το Διεθνές Δίκαιο, «θα ήταν μια έμπρακτη απόδειξη ότι η μεταπολεμική αρχιτεκτονική συλλογικής ασφάλειας παραμένει όχι μόνο εφικτή αλλά και απαραίτητη... θα απεδείκνυε σε όλον τον κόσμο ότι κανένα εμπόδιο δεν είναι τόσο μεγάλο και καμμία ιστορική εχθρότητα τόσο βαθιά ριζωμένη ώστε να μην υπερκελίζεται από τον βασικό κανόνα στον οποίο συναίνεσαν όλα τα μέλη των Ηνωμένων Εθνών με την συμμετοχή τους σε αυτόν – την ευθύνη να επιλύουν τις διαφορές τους χωρίς την χρήση ή την απειλή βίας.»

Το βιβλίο μας υπενθυμίζει πως υπάρχουν μοχλοί οι οποίοι μπορούν να αμβλύνουν τις διπλωματικές ανισότητες, και αυτό είναι ιδιαίτερα χρήσιμο σε μια εποχή όπου η όλη ιδέα της πολυπλευρικής προσέγγισης βάλλεται από τις ίδιες χώρες οι οποίες την δημιούργησαν. Ο τρόπος γραφής του βιβλίου ζωντανεύει ένα θεματικό πλέγμα ιστορίας, γεωγραφίας, δικαίου

και χαρτογραφίας, καθιστώντας τα θέματα αυτά προσιτά στο ευρύ κοινό στο οποίο απευθύνεται, καθώς και σε πολιτικούς και διπλωμάτες.

Ο Μπαρούντι εργάζεται εδώ και τέσσερις δεκαετίες στον ενεργειακό τομέα. Ανάμεσα στις πολυεθνικές εταιρείες, κυβερνήσεις και διεθνείς θεσμούς που έχει συμβουλέψει στο διάστημα αυτό συγκαταλέγονται τα Ηνωμένα Έθνη, η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, το Διεθνές Νομισματικό Ταμείο και η Παγκόσμια Τράπεζα. Οι εξειδικευμένες γνώσεις του βρίσκονται στους τομείς του πετρελαίου και φυσικού αερίου, τα πετροχημικά, τον ηλεκτρισμό, την ενεργειακή ασφάλεια και την μεταρρύθμιση του ενεργειακού τομέα για να αντιμετωπίσει περιβαλλοντικά ζητήματα, την αγορά του άνθρακα, τις ιδιωτικοποιήσεις, και τις υποδομές. Είναι Διευθύνων Σύμβουλος της ανεξάρτητης συμβουλευτικής εταιρείας Qatar Energy and Environment Holding, με έδρα την Ντόχα του Κατάρ.

Το βιβλίο αυτό είναι απόσταγμα πολυετούς προσωπικής έρευνας, ανάλυσης και υπεράσπισης θέσεων του Μπαρούντι. Την επιμέλεια του κειμένου ανέλαβε η Debra L. Cagan, (Distinguished Energy Fellow, Transatlantic Leadership Network) και ο Sasha Toperich (Senior Executive Vice President, Transatlantic Leadership Network).

Το βιβλίο *Διαφωνίες επί των θαλασσιών Συνόρων στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο: Μια Πρόταση Επίλυσης* εκδίδεται από το Transatlantic Leadership Network (TLN), μια ένωση δικηγόρων, παικτών του ιδιωτικού τομέα και αναλυτών οι οποίοι στοχεύουν στον διαρκή εκσυγχρονισμό των σχέσεων Ηνωμένων Πολιτειών και Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Η αρχική μορφή του βιβλίου ήταν ηλεκτρονική. Τώρα διανέμεται από τις Εκδόσεις του Ινστιτιούτου Μπρούκινγκς, που ιδρύθηκαν το 1916 για την έκδοση ερευνών του Ινστιτούτου, το οποίο θεωρείται από πολλούς ως το πιο αξιосέβαστο ινστιτιούτο έρευνας των ΗΠΑ.

Πολλοί εξειδικευμένοι παρατηρητές πλέκουν το εγκώμιο του βιβλίου. Παραθέτουμε λίγα αποσπάσματα:

Douglas Hengel, Professional Lecturer in Energy, Resources and Environment Program, Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, Senior Fellow at German Marshall Fund of the United States, and former State Department official: “Μέσα από αυτό το στοχαστικό και γλαφυρό βιβλίο, ο Ρούντι Μπαρούντι μας δίνει ένα πλαίσιο... το οποίο μας δείχνει τον δρόμο προς μια δίκαιη και ειρηνική λύση... οι χώρες της περιοχής, καθώς και η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση και οι Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες, θα έπρεπε να ασπαστούν την προσέγγιση του Μπαρούντι.

Andrew Novo, Associate Professor of Strategic Studies, National Defense University: “... Ένα καλά ισορροπημένο, καινοτόμο και θετικό μήνυμα το οποίο μπορεί να βοηθήσει πολλά θέματα να προοδεύσουν που δεν φαίνονται να επιδέχονται επίλυσης. Χρησιμοποιώντας το Διεθνές Δίκαιο, γεω-στοιχεία υψηλής ακρίβειας και μια ισχυρή οικονομική λογική, ο Μπαρούντι προσφέρει ένα πειστικό επιχειρήμα υπέρ ενός συμβιβασμού, εφόσον, φυσικά, οι εμπλεκόμενες πλευρές θέλουν να ακούσουν.”

US Must Lead Response To Perils Of COVID-19 And Oil Crisis



G20 should hold an emergency meeting to prepare a realistic agenda to tackle the economic crisis created by COVID-19

Roudi Baroudi – Doha

It took a global pandemic that has grounded airlines, idled factories, and kept billions of people indoors, but prices for some oil futures contracts have gone into negative territory for the first time ever.

Not since Colonel Drake struck oil – with commercially viable methods – in Pennsylvania in 1859 has a producer had to pay customers to take crude off their hands. Together, oil & gas still supply approximately 60 percent of the world's energy, and that is not to mention its myriad other uses in modern industry. So, what to do when a demand slump of unprecedented size & speed has brought so low the world's most ubiquitous commodity, one still required by so many people?

First, it is crucial to recall how we got here, specifically the fact that the COVID-19 crisis was not the only factor. Keep in mind that for weeks, the gathering collapse of demand coincided with a massive flow of oversupply as Russia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia refused to agree on production cuts, choosing instead to battle for market share going forward. Eventually, they will reach a new entente, but the effect of the virus had so destabilised the markets that even zero was no longer a floor in the minds of the investors.

Until COVID-19 shut down whole sectors the global economy, the world had been consuming approximately 100 million barrels of oil a day. By mid-April, that figure had dropped to something in the order of 80 million. The imbalance quickly filled up tank farms, and some analysts believe that as much as 160 million barrels of oil are currently being stored in tankers at sea but with nowhere to go. Airlines have slashed their schedules by 90 percent or more. Inevitably, oil-producing companies have had to shut down their wells, and dozens of refineries have had to suspend operations since they could no longer dispose of oil and related products.

There is no question that the heaviest damage has been sustained in the United States. The shale oil business had been so successful that the country had become the world's largest crude producer, managing not only to satisfy 90 percent of its own demand from domestic sources but also to compete with Russia and Saudi Arabia for customers overseas. The industry was always vulnerable, however, because of higher production costs, its producers were the first to fail.

Oil is unlike any other commodity in that a safe, affordable, and continuous supply of it is perhaps the single-most far-reaching factor of modern life for businesses, organisations, and almost 200 countries around the globe. Of course, renewables and other alternative sources have made great strides in recent years, and one or more of these technologies will be the future, but for now, and hydrocarbons and oil are

still the prime determinants of success or failure.

At the same time, the fact that this is having such a concentrated effect in the United States is a crisis because that country is a reliable bellwether for global economic health. Even as China's meteoric rise over the past decades has made it the world's second largest economy, with nominal GDP about \$14 trillion for 2019, the US economy remains far away the world's heftiest at about \$21 trillion. For this reason, when Americans stop buying, everywhere loses sales. And in just a few short weeks, more than 26 million of them have filed for unemployment benefits. Jobs are being shed in record numbers, meaning less capacity for anyone else to compensate for the evaporation of US demand for everything.

So how do we keep the of global epidemic and global oil glut from producing long-term damage that yields to even more human and economic losses? How do we get the world's most important economic engines – to get global commerce moving again? In a word, unity – of the sort that brings all humankind together for collective action. Even assuming that a vaccine is developed, the damage done to some of the world's most important economies will not be repaired overnight.

In short, recovery depends on sincere dialogue, full cooperation, and genuine transparency. We are all in this together now, so the best way out is to collaborate on an exit strategy that saves time, money, and human lives. The biggest responsibility falls on the biggest players, the US, China, and Russia, along with the European Union, Japan, and multilateral institutions. Going forward, each of these countries and entities will need to make commitments about what it will and will not do. Only then can the necessary confidence and stability be rebuilt around the world.

Exceptional challenges call for exceptional remedies. Already we have seen several global leaders pledge to work together on a vaccine, but the United States was notable by its absence.

For the broader purpose of steering a way out of the global economic morass, it is essential that Washington be present and accounted for. My suggestion is an emergency meeting of the G20 at the earliest, which probably means the first part of May. Not a moment should be wasted in preparing a realistic agenda that measures up to the enormity of the tasks at hand. To quote the quintessential American, Benjamin Franklin, “We must, indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately.”

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The Truth About the Trump Economy



It is becoming conventional wisdom that US President Donald Trump will be tough to beat in November, because, whatever

reservations about him voters may have, he has been good for the American economy. Nothing could be further from the truth.

NEW YORK – As the world's business elites trek to Davos for their annual gathering, people should be asking a simple question: Have they overcome their infatuation with US President Donald Trump?

Two years ago, a few rare corporate leaders were concerned about climate change, or upset at Trump's misogyny and bigotry. Most, however, were celebrating the president's tax cuts for billionaires and corporations and looking forward to his efforts to deregulate the economy. That would allow businesses to pollute the air more, get more Americans hooked on opioids, entice more children to eat their diabetes-inducing foods, and engage in the sort of financial shenanigans that brought on the 2008 crisis.

Today, many corporate bosses are still talking about the continued GDP growth and record stock prices. But neither GDP nor the Dow is a good measure of economic performance. Neither tells us what's happening to ordinary citizens' living standards or anything about sustainability. In fact, US economic performance over the past four years is Exhibit A in the indictment against relying on these indicators.

To get a good reading on a country's economic health, start by looking at the health of its citizens. If they are happy and prosperous, they will be healthy and live longer. Among developed countries, America sits at the bottom in this regard. US life expectancy, already relatively low, fell in each of the first two years of Trump's presidency, and in 2017, midlife mortality reached its highest rate since World War II. This is not a surprise, because no president has worked harder to make sure that more Americans lack health insurance. Millions have lost their coverage, and the uninsured rate has risen, in just two years, from 10.9% to 13.7%.

One reason for declining life expectancy in America is what Anne Case and Nobel laureate economist Angus Deaton call deaths of despair, caused by alcohol, drug overdoses, and suicide. In 2017 (the most recent year for which good data are available), such deaths stood at almost four times their 1999 level.

The only time I have seen anything like these declines in health – outside of war or epidemics – was when I was chief economist of the World Bank and found out that mortality and morbidity data confirmed what our economic indicators suggested about the dismal state of the post-Soviet Russian economy.

Trump may be a good president for the top 1% – and especially for the top 0.1% – but he has not been good for everyone else. If fully implemented, the 2017 tax cut will result in tax *increases* for most households in the second, third, and fourth income quintiles.

Given tax cuts that disproportionately benefit the ultrarich and corporations, it should come as no surprise that there was no significant change in the median US household's disposable income between 2017 and 2018 (again, the most recent year with good data). The lion's share of the increase in GDP is also going to those at the top. Real median weekly earnings are just 2.6% above their level when Trump took office. And these increases have not offset long periods of wage stagnation. For example, the median wage of a full-time male worker (and those with full-time jobs are the lucky ones) is still more than 3% below what it was 40 years ago. Nor has there been much progress on reducing racial disparities: in the third quarter of 2019, median weekly earnings for black men working full-time were less than three-quarters the level for white men.⁵

Making matters worse, the growth that has occurred is not environmentally sustainable – and even less so thanks to the

Trump administration's gutting of regulations that have passed stringent cost-benefit analyses. The air will be less breathable, the water less drinkable, and the planet more subject to climate change. In fact, losses related to climate change have already reached new highs in the US, which has suffered more property damage than any other country – reaching some 1.5% of GDP in 2017.

The tax cuts were supposed to spur a new wave of investment. Instead, they triggered an all-time record binge of share buybacks – some \$800 billion in 2018 – by some of America's most profitable companies, and led to record peacetime deficits (almost \$1 trillion in fiscal 2019) in a country supposedly near full employment. And even with weak investment, the US had to borrow massively abroad: the most recent data show foreign borrowing at nearly \$500 billion a year, with an increase of more than 10% in America's net indebtedness position *in one year alone*.

Likewise, Trump's trade wars, for all their sound and fury, have not reduced the US trade deficit, which was one-quarter higher in 2018 than it was in 2016. The 2018 goods deficit was the largest on record. Even the deficit in trade with China was up almost a quarter from 2016. The US did get a new North American trade agreement, without the investment agreement provisions that the Business Roundtable wanted, without the provisions raising drug prices that the pharmaceutical companies wanted, and with better labor and environmental provisions. Trump, a self-proclaimed master deal maker, lost on almost every front in his negotiations with congressional Democrats, resulting in a slightly improved trade arrangement.

And despite Trump's vaunted promises to bring manufacturing jobs back to the US, the increase in manufacturing employment is still lower than it was under his predecessor, Barack Obama, once the post-2008 recovery set in, and is still markedly below its pre-crisis level. Even the unemployment rate, at a 50-year low, masks economic fragility.

The *employment* rate for working-age males and females, while rising, has increased less than during the Obama recovery, and is still significantly below that of other developed countries. The pace of job creation is also markedly slower than it was under Obama.

Again, the low employment rate is not a surprise, not least because unhealthy people can't work. Moreover, those on disability benefits, in prison – the US incarceration rate has increased more than sixfold since 1970, with some two million people currently behind bars – or so discouraged that they are not actively seeking jobs are not counted as “unemployed.” But, of course, they are not employed. Nor is it a surprise that a country that doesn't provide affordable childcare or guarantee family leave would have lower female employment – adjusted for population, more than ten percentage points lower – than other developed countries.

Even judging by GDP, the Trump economy falls short. Last quarter's growth was just 2.1%, far less than the 4%, 5%, or even 6% Trump promised to deliver, and even less than the 2.4% average of Obama's second term. That is a remarkably poor performance considering the stimulus provided by the \$1 trillion deficit and ultra-low interest rates. This is not an accident, or just a matter of bad luck: Trump's brand is uncertainty, volatility, and prevarication, whereas trust, stability, and confidence are essential for growth. So is equality, according to the International Monetary Fund.

So, Trump deserves failing grades not just on essential tasks like upholding democracy and preserving our planet. He should not get a pass on the economy, either.

Putin's pipelines to power



Over the last year, predictions of serious struggles for Russian President Vladimir Putin – or even his political demise – have been increasingly frequent. A recent article in *The Economist*, “An awful week for Vladimir Putin,” is just one example. But it is Putin biographer and *New York Times* correspondent Steven Lee Myers whose assessment rings most true: “Putin,” Myers has repeatedly said to me, “always wins.”

Maybe “always” isn’t quite true. Russia’s economy is expected to grow by only 1% this year, owing to lagging export diversification, large-scale capital flight, and low levels of foreign direct investment linked to Western sanctions imposed after the country’s 2014 annexation of Crimea. As a result, Putin’s approval rating has declined somewhat from its annexation-fueled high of 83% in July 2014.

But 61% of Russians still rate Putin’s performance positively. Most democratic leaders can only dream of such favor with the

public. Fewer than 43% of Americans approve of President Donald Trump, for example. In fact, the same incoherent and combative US policies toward Europe, China, Turkey, and others that have contributed to Trump's unpopularity have fueled Putin's popularity, by handing him a series of tactical victories.

For example, a lack of effective US engagement in Syria has pushed Turkey into Russia's arms. In particular, in October 2015, the United States withdrew its Patriot missiles from southeastern Turkey, which had been deployed after the country appealed to its NATO allies to guard against missile threats from neighboring Syria. In 2017, the US offered to sell Turkey Patriot missiles, but without the underlying technology.

So Turkey reached a multibillion-dollar arms deal with Russia instead, despite the outrage of its NATO partners. (Beyond Putin's approval ratings, America's self-proclaimed master deal-maker Trump should envy his Russian counterpart's negotiating skills.) In retaliation for Turkey's decision to acquire Russian S-400 missile systems, the US has threatened sanctions and blocked Turkey from obtaining F-35 stealth fighters, suspending the country's participation in a program to build them.

But Turkey knows that it is Russia, not the US, that is shaping the Syria conflict, and will play a leading role in the country's potentially lucrative reconstruction effort, making it a much more desirable partner there. Strengthening the bilateral relationship further, Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan are about to inaugurate the TurkStream gas pipeline connecting their two countries.

Russia has also launched a massive new gas pipeline project with China, worth \$400 billion over 30 years, and is negotiating another. Here, too, the Trump administration's actions – in particular, its bitter (and self-defeating) trade war against China, which may well continue, despite the two

countries' recent "phase one" agreement – created a lucrative opening that Putin was quick to seize.

The pipeline project, according to Putin, takes bilateral "strategic cooperation in energy to a qualitative new level" and supports progress toward the goal, set with Chinese President Xi Jinping, "of taking bilateral trade to \$200 billion by 2024" – the year Putin's "final" presidential term ends. Perhaps he hopes that the fruits of such engagement will strengthen his position enough to enable him to remain in power, whether as president or in another position, such as security chief, endowed with greater powers.

Putin has picked up another gas-related win with regard to Ukraine, whose national oil and gas company Naftogaz just received a \$2.9 billion payment from Russia's Gazprom to settle a 2017 Stockholm arbitration ruling. The financial settlement was part of a larger deal between the two companies: a five-year plan, starting January 1, to ship Russian gas to Europe through Ukrainian pipelines. Naftogaz also agreed to drop another lawsuit against Gazprom.

Although fears of being under Putin's thumb fueled the protests that ousted Ukraine's pro-Russian president, Viktor Yanukovich, in 2014 – leading directly to Russia's annexation of Crimea and Russia-backed separatists' takeover of eastern Ukraine – the fear of confronting Russia alone is even greater. And, with Ukraine at the center of Trump's just-concluded impeachment by the US House of Representatives and upcoming trial in the Senate, the US cannot be considered a reliable partner.

This doesn't mean Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is going to roll over for Russia. He agreed with the Kremlin on an exchange of 200 prisoners in the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine – the second prisoner exchange this year. The recent pipeline deal can also be considered a win for Ukraine: Gazprom had previously insisted on a one-year deal, because it

already has the Nord Stream-1 pipeline, which crosses the Baltic Sea to Germany, and will soon complete Nord Stream-2.

But Russian negotiators eased their position, perhaps partly in the hope of easing resistance to the Nord Stream project. That resistance includes sanctions, included in the 2020 US defense budget, on companies working on Nord Stream-2, which the US argues would give Russia too much leverage over America's European allies, as well as those working on TurkStream.

It is not just Russia that wants Nord Stream to work. Germany, the main recipient of the Russian gas, argues that its energy policy should be decided in Europe, not the US. When a Swiss contractor obediently (if reluctantly) suspended its work in response to the sanctions, the Germans immediately suggested that they would find another way to complete the work as soon as possible.

Russian officials echoed this sentiment, noting that Gazprom has already lined up other companies prepared to take over. There is "nothing to worry about," claims Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, especially given the gas-transit arrangement with Ukraine. As in the Middle East and China, Putin knows that a moment when Europe's relationship with the US is severely strained is the ideal time to strengthen its position *vis-à-vis* its neighbor.

Putin may not have a winning long-term strategy to save Russia's economy, but his pipeline politics have led to a series of impressive foreign-policy victories. This approach may give him enough prestige to continue his long winning streak.

Germany tells US to back off over Russian pipeline



BERLIN – Germany on Thursday warned Washington to mind its own business after US lawmakers gave initial approval to a bill that would sanction contractors working on a Russian pipeline to Germany.

“European energy policy is decided in Europe, not in the US,” Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said on Twitter.

“We reject external interference,” he said.

The 9.5 billion euro (\$10.6 billion) Nord Stream 2 pipeline will run under the Baltic Sea and is set to double shipments of Russian natural gas to Germany.

The German-Russian Chamber of Commerce (AHK) said the pipeline was important for the energy security of Europe as a whole and called for retaliatory sanctions against the United States if the bill passes.

“Europe should respond to sanctions that damage Europe with counter-sanctions,” said AHK chief Matthias Schepp.

Supporters of the 1,230-kilometer (760-mile) line say it will be a reliable source of cheap energy but critics warn it could end up vastly increasing Russia’s political influence in Europe.

The EU joined in criticizing proposed US action.

EU Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan said Brussels “opposes the imposition of sanctions against any EU companies conducting legitimate business”.

“The (European) Commission objective has always been to ensure that Nord Stream operates in a very transparent and in a non-discriminatory way with the appropriate degree of oversight,” he said.

Germany’s Schepp said the sanctions would end up affecting European companies more than Russia.

Half of the project is financed by Russian gas giant Gazprom, with the rest covered by its European partners: Germany’s Wintershall and Uniper, Anglo-Dutch Shell, France’s Engie and Austria’s OMV.

Despite its own diplomatic tensions with Russia, including over the murder of a former Chechen rebel in Berlin earlier this year, Germany has repeatedly defended the long-running project.

The German economy ministry said it was awaiting the result of a US Senate vote expected next week on the bill – part of much wider US defense legislation.

US President Donald Trump has already said he would sign off on the measures if they are approved.

The bill requires the US State Department to report back

within 60 days with the names of companies and individuals involved in pipe-laying for Nord Stream 2 and TurkStream, another pipeline from Russia to Turkey.

The sanctions envisioned by the bill include asset freezes and revocation of US visas for the contractors.

One major contractor that could be hit by the sanctions is Swiss-based pipeline laying company Allseas, which has been hired by Gazprom to build the offshore section.

The power of Gazprom and therefore the Russian state is at the center of concerns about the pipeline in the United States and in eastern and central Europe.

Europe is Russia's main customer for natural gas and critics fear the pipeline, which has an annual capacity of 55 billion cubic meters, will increase its reliance.

Countries like Ukraine, a major transit country for Russian gas, also fear they could lose influence.

Russia had hoped to launch the pipeline in late 2019 but the completion has been delayed by difficulties in obtaining permits from Denmark.

In October, Copenhagen gave Russia a permit to build a section of the pipeline on the Danish continental shelf in the Baltic Sea.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Kozak told reporters last month that he expected the pipeline to become operational in mid-2020. – AFP

Gazprom and Ukraine agree on gas transit, settle legal issues



Bloomberg/ Moscow

Gazprom PJSC and Ukraine reached an agreement that will allow Russian gas to flow to Europe via its neighbour through the end of 2024 and settle all of the related legal disputes.

Ukraine's gas company, Naftogaz PJSC, will organise the transit of Russian gas through the country, with a booked pipeline capacity of 65bn cubic meters for 2020 shipments, Gazprom chief executive officer Alexey Miller said in a statement yesterday.

In 2021-2024, the booked capacities will reach 40bn cubic meters a year, he said. The companies also agreed to mull the possibility of gas transit through 2034, according to a protocol, signed late Friday evening in Minsk. An extension for the following 10 years may be on the same terms as the five-year deal, according to Ukraine's Energy Ministry.

"The transit via Ukraine will continue and the strategic

nature of the transit was understood by everyone and I believe it would help us open a new chapter in this relationship," EU Commission Vice President Maros Sefcovic told Bloomberg yesterday.

The bilateral agreement paves the way for the continuation of Russian gas flows to Europe via Ukraine, which has been the key transit route for Gazprom even amid the legal spats and political tensions between the two nations.

It also supports Europe's energy security as Russia has been the European Union's dominant and often cheapest energy supplier, providing some 37% of the fuel to the region last year. The current 10-year transit deal between Russia and Ukraine expires January 1. "There are very precise deadlines until when everything should happen," Sefcovic said. "I have no doubt that everything will go smoothly as of January 1 because there was full understanding of what needs to be done."

Russia and Ukraine reached the deal as the US administration imposed sanctions on Russia's future subsea gas-export pipeline, Nord Stream 2. The \$11bn pipeline is just weeks away from completion, but it has faced criticism from the US, and it wasn't immediately clear if the pipeline work can be completed without the input of AllSeas Group SA, which said it would halt operations.

Talks to find a deal between Russia and Ukraine intensified in recent days as the deadline loomed. "To be honest we have done almost the impossible in three months," Ukraine's Energy Minister Oleksiy Orzhel told reporters in Kiev yesterday.

Under the deal, Gazprom and Ukraine have agreed not to start any new gas lawsuits against each other and to cancel all their current legal claims that haven't been subject to court rulings, according to Miller. The Russian gas giant will also pay to Naftogaz \$2.9bn awarded by the Stockholm arbitration in 2018.

The sum includes a \$2.6bn debt and fines accumulated thereafter, a spokesman for Gazprom said in a separate statement. "It is very important that these \$3bn in line with

Stockholm arbitration will be paid in cash if we implement all the package of proposals before year-end," Orzhel said. At the same time Ukraine will withdraw its legal claims against the Russian company.

Last month, Naftogaz filed a lawsuit against Gazprom with a court of arbitration in Stockholm, asking to revise transit fees totalling more than \$12bn.

Gazprom and the Ukrainian government are also set to sign an "amicable agreement" on cancelling an antitrust claim that has reached about \$7.4bn, including fines. All the legal issues should be resolved by December 29, according to the protocol.

هيل إلى بيروت... القديم على ! قِدَمَه؟



منذ ولاية جورج دبليو بوش، إقترنت السياسة الاميركية بالنفط. تهتم أميركا أو لا بأسعار النفط الذي تستخدمه لبسط سيطرتها على الأسواق حاميةً بذلك اقتصادها الوطني، وفي الوقت عينه، تضغط من خلاله على قوى منافسة تعتمد بشكل أساسي عليه وعلى رأسها الصين. يتكئ الاقتصاد الأميركي إذاً على "التموين النفطي" الذي يؤمّن بدوره استقراراً في السوق، كما يؤمّن نوعاً من "التسيّد" يزخر به

.الدولار على حساب العملات الاخرى

من هنا، يتخذ موضوع الغاز اللبناني - بكل ما يحمله من تفاصيل تقنية - منحى استراتيجياً بامتياز، علماً ان أبعاده السياسية في شقّيها الداخلي والخارجي مرتبطة بشكل عضوي. فخارجياً يتخذ النفط اللبناني أهمية مضاعفة نظراً "للكميات الهائلة" التي بات من شبه المؤكد انه يخترنها براً وبحراً. وان كانت هذه الكميات نظرياً لا تغير الميزان الاستراتيجي المتعلق بانتاج الطاقة في الشرق الاوسط والمطلوبة بغالبيتها للانتاج الصناعي، إلا أن الحقول اللبنانية متصلة جغرافياً بالحقول المصرية والاسرائيلية والسورية والأهم القبرصية. ذلك يعني انه وعدا عن الدور المباشر الذي يحظى به "غاز لبنان" فهو قد يبرز أيضاً لدى طرح إشكالية أساسية هي المتعلقة بأماكن انشاء محطات تسييل وتكرير الغاز بالاضافة الى المنشآت والبنى التحتية الضرورية لتسييله مع آليات نقله وتسويقه. وعليه، لا يمكن التنبؤ بهوية الدولة التي ستتحوّل بما قد يستجد من تحالفات إقليمية ودولية؛ هذا الامر سيحتم حداً أدنى من التعاون بين الدول المعنية، وهنا يكمن بيت القصيد، بما أن هذه البلدان في حالة عداوة أو في حالة تصادم ما بين المحاور السائدة في الاقليم والمرشّح للتفاقم بسبب التنافس الشرس على الثروة الجديدة . في شرق المتوسط

اما البعد الثالث الذي يكتسبه غاز لبنان فـ"مالي" بحت والمقصود هنا ليس مالية الدولة بل الميل الى الالتفاف حول القانون لاستفادة الفريق السياسي المهيمن، وذلك من خلال السمسرات وعقود الخدمة للشركات والانشاءات المرتبطة بهذا القطاع فضلاً عن القدرة على توظيف "الازلام" تماماً كما جرى ولا يزال في شركتي الاتصالات وكازينو لبنان والكسارات والسدود وغيرها من المجالس التي قد تكون اكثر إغراء، خصوصاً اذا استغلت المراسيم كمنفذ مقونن للهيمنة على ما تبقى من موارد في البلاد، لا سيما وأن التعويل على العائدات النفطية "اليوم"، أي في ظلّ عدم وجود قانون واضح ينظّم وجهة استخدام هذه الاموال من خلال الصندوق السيادي، يعني حُكماً أننا تخلينا عن ثروتنا هذه لخدمة الدين وتحويلها من أموال استثمارية الى أموال "منهوبة".

من هذا المنطلق، لا يجوز الإفراط في التعويل على الثروة النفطية لانتشال لبنان من مأزقه النقدي، فالجدوى الاقتصادية، بحسب الخبراء، للنفط والغاز في المنطقة ككلّ لم تُثبّت بعد لا سيما وأن كلفة استخراج هذه المواد من قعر البحر تفوق بكثير الكلفة التي تتكبدها

روسيا لاستخراج غازها. وبراء الخبراء، فإنّ امكان تصدير هذا الغاز الى أوروبا على سبيل المثال قد يكون صعباً بما أن الاسعار ستكون عاجزة عن منافسة الغاز الروسي من جهة، ومن جهة ثانية يسبب العوامل الجيو - سياسية في منطقة شرقي المتوسط. أما كلّ ما أثير عن احتمال إنشاء أنابيب لربط هذه الآبار بأوروبا مروراً باليونان فقد سقط عملياً بعد دخول اسرائيل الى طاولة المباحثات اضافة الى صعوبة تأمين الاموال الاستثمارية اللازمة له.

لا تعني كلّ هذه الفرضيات أن دولة من دول العالم الثالث كلبنان "عاجزة عن الاستفادة من ثرواتها النفطية بل يمكن استغلالها، وإن لم يكن للتصدير، فذلك في إصلاح الكهرباء وتحويل الانتاج ليرتكز على الغاز، وهكذا يتم تخفيض العجز وتالياً تقليص الخضوع لهيمنة صندوق النقد الدولي كلما وجدنا أنفسنا مضطرين الى الاقتراض بنسب وشروط تعجيزية"، بحسب الخبراء.

الطروحات الاميركية

من جهة ثانية، تُضاف معضلة ترسيم الحدود التي لا تزال تتخذ حيزاً من المفاوضات والتي يوليها الجانب الاميركي أهمية كبيرة خصوصاً في ظلّ التواجد الصيني والروسي في المنطقة. ولا شكّ أن مساعد وزير الخارجية الأميركي للشؤون السياسية ديفيد هيل سيتطرق الى هذا الملف خلال زيارته إلى بيروت في الايام القليلة المقبلة.

طروحات ثلاثة، هي ما قدّمه الطرف الاميركي في ما خصّ مسألة ترسيم الحدود مع الكيان الإسرائيلي في المنطقة المتنازع عليها: الاول هو تقسيم رضائي بنسبة ثلث للكيان وثلثين للبنان. الثاني هو تصنيفها كمنطقة عدم أنشطة وبالتالي اعتبارها محظورة للطرفين؛ أما الطرح الثالث فيتمثّل باعتبارها منطقة أنشطة مشتركة، وهو ما يرفضه الجانب اللبناني حتى الساعة متسلحاً بالقوانين التي ترعى حقوقه في المياه الاقليمية إضافة الى الطلب الذي كان تقدّم به الى الامم المتحدة لحلّ النزاع في هذه القضية" يقول الخبير في قوانين وسياسات الطاقة المحامي علي برّو.

ويضيف برّو في اتصال مع "نداء الوطن" أنّ "قبرص تتحمّل مسؤولية مخالفة أحكام الاتفاقية مع لبنان سندا لاتفاقية 2007 حيث لم يكن ينبغي عليها ترسيم الحدود مع الكيان الاسرائيلي من دون موافقة الدولة اللبنانية. من جهتها، أودعت الدولة اللبنانية الامم المتحدة احداثيات منطقتها الاقتصادية الخالصة، إلا أنها قصرت في

مطالبتها قبرص لخرقها احكام الاتفاقية معه. من الناحية القانونية، لبنان جاهز لعملية إعادة الترسيم وفقاً للوسائل العلمية التابعة لقانون البحار. ومن خلال لجوئنا الى القانون الدولي، سنتمكن من "استعادة حقوقنا السيادية في المياه البحرية

في الاطار عينه، يوضح الخبير النفطي رودي بارودي أنه "من المتوقع أن يأتي ديفيد هيل وفي جعبته ملف ترسيم الحدود البحرية. هذا الموضوع بحاجة الى حل جذري لا سيّما مع بدء لبنان بحفر أول بئر استكشافي مطلع العام المقبل. وبحسب قانون الامم المتحدة للبحار لا شك أن لبنان سيحظى بالحصة الاكبر من المنطقة (UNCLOS) الاقتصادية الخالصة المُنْتَازع عليها، فصحيح أن الكيان الاسرائيلي ليس طرفاً في المعاهدة مع الامم المتحدة، الا أنه طبق قواعدنا من خلال تقيده بنود الاتفاقية بينه وبين قبرص. بالتالي أصبح من الممكن اللجوء الى إتفاقية تنمية مشتركة تماماً كما هي الحال بين الكويت والسعودية في ما يُعرف بالمنطقة المحايدة. بهذه الطريقة، تقوم شركة محايدة بعمليات الاستخراج وتوزع لكل دولة حصتها وفق "المعايير الدولية

كثيرة تصبح التأويلات عندما يتعلّق الأمر بغاز لبنان وليس هناك من حقيقة مطلقة عندما تكون المسألة جيو - سياسية. وحدها الايام المقبلة ستُظهر نوايا الولايات المتحدة تجاه لبنان إلا أن معيار ترسيم الحدود البحرية يجب أن يبقى القانون الدولي منفرداً. ولعلّه من الافضل لهذه الثروة أن تبقى نائمة في قعر البحر لحين ايجاد حلول آنية تُعيد خلق اقتصاد منتج بدلاً من اقتصاد ريعي وترك هذا الملف يأخذ مساره الطبيعي لئلا تصبح عوائده... "أموالاً منهوبة".

Thousands of UK jobs at risk as E.ON breaks up Npower

German energy group E.ON plans a £500mn (\$642mn) break-up of the struggling British Npower division it inherited from

Innogy, which a union said could put up to 4,500 jobs at risk. The revamp, the latest among established British retail power providers, effectively removes one of the market's so-called 'Big Six' players, which have lost customers to nimbler recent entrants and been hit by a regulatory price cap.

E.ON's plan includes managing Npower's residential and small and medium-size business customers on the same platform as its own, while putting Npower's industrial and commercial customers into a separate business.

The rest of Npower will be closed.

E.ON chief executive Johannes Teyssen said the group would examine options for Npower's industrial and commercial business, the division's only profitable part, suggesting it might be sold at some point.

The shake-up will result in up to 4,500 job losses at Npower, British union UNISON said, nearly 80% of the division's total staff.

"The UK market has been very challenging for several years," Teyssen said. "Churn (customer switching) rates are high, margins slim, and the price caps introduced this year have exacerbated the situation.

No company operating there has been spared these difficulties."

Teyssen said talks with British unions about the plans had started. Shares in E.ON were up 1.6% at 0951 GMT.

"We see this initial update as encouraging, given likely low market expectations around the outlook for Npower," Jefferies analysts wrote, keeping a "buy" rating on E.ON stock.

Npower has been suffering more than its large rivals, including E.ON itself, Centrica's, SSE, EDF and Iberdrola, partly because of internal billing problems.

E.ON said it expected its combined British business to achieve at least 100mn pounds of earnings before interest and tax (EBIT) and positive free cash flow from 2022 onwards. E.ON took over Npower as part of a far-reaching asset swap with RWE that included the break up of Innogy.

The deal, first announced in March 2018, has turned E.ON into

a pure energy retail and networks group.

As a result of the transaction, E.ON's net debt nearly doubled to €39.6bn (\$43.7bn) at the end of September.

E.ON also said yesterday the deal had led it to raise its 2019 adjusted EBIT forecast to €3.1-3.3bn from 2.9-3.1bn.

In the first nine months of the year, adjusted EBIT fell 6% at €2.2bn.

Full text of Turkey-Libya maritime agreement revealed



Nordic Monitor has obtained a copy of a recent maritime agreement between Turkey and Libya that determines the Turkish-Libyan continental shelf and exclusive economic zone coordinates.

The agreement, officially titled “Memorandum of Understanding Between Turkey and Libya on Delimitation of the Maritime Jurisdiction Areas in the Mediterranean,” has been the subject of criticism, especially by countries such as Egypt, Greece and Cyprus in the Mediterranean region.

The agreement states that both Turkey and Libya have determined a precise and equitable delimitation of their respective maritime areas in the Mediterranean in which the parties exercise sovereignty and sovereign rights and/or jurisdiction in accordance with the applicable rules of international law, taking into account all relevant circumstances.

It refers to achieving equitable and mutually acceptable solutions to the above-mentioned issues through constructive negotiations and in the spirit of good and friendly relations and says that the memorandum of understanding will contribute to the strengthening of relations and encourage further cooperation between the parties in the interest of the two brotherly countries.

The agreement, which was signed in Istanbul on November 27, 2019, includes the following provisions:

According to Article 1, the parties have agreed on these boundaries:

“The boundaries of the Continental Shelf and the Exclusive Economic Zone in the Mediterranean between the Republic of Turkey and the Government of National Accord-State of Libya begins at “Point A” (34° 16′ 13.720″N -026° 19′ 11.640″E) and ends at the Point B (34° 09′ 07.9″N -026° 39′ 06.3″E).

“The boundaries of the Continental Shelf and the Exclusive Economic Zone determined in ARTICLE I, paragraph 1 of this Memorandum of Understanding are shown on the Maritime Chart

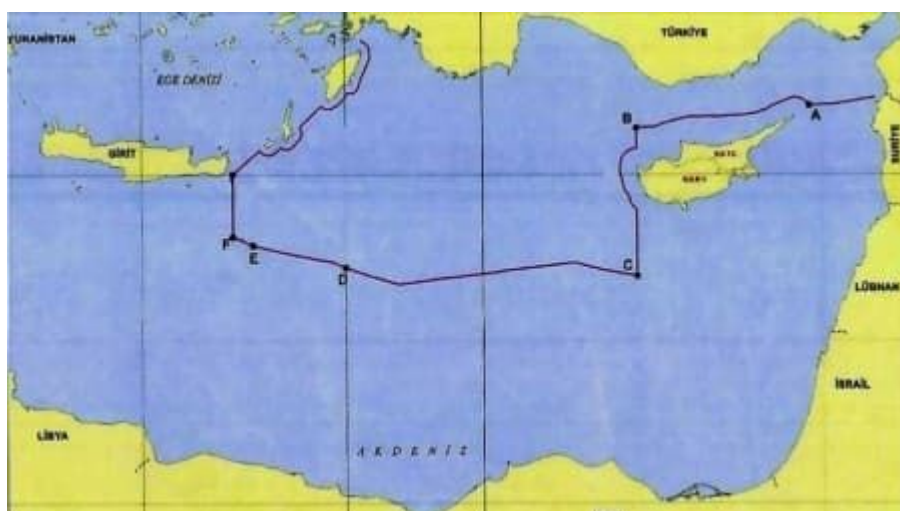
INT 308 (Data Source: BA Chart Edition 1992), scale 1: 1 02 000 (Annex 1). The coordinates are shown in the chart at Annex 1 in its coordinate system. The geographical coordinates referred to in ARTICLE I of this Memorandum of Understanding are expressed in terms of the World Geodetic System 1984 (WGS'84).

“Base points coordinates that are used to determine the equidistance line are shown in Annex.”

libya_MOU



Diplomat Leaks Map Confirming Turkey's Real Territorial Claims



A Turkish diplomat has revealed a map which delineates waters in the Mediterranean claimed by Turkey, amid an ongoing months-long standoff with Cyprus and Greece over Turkish oil and gas exploration and drilling inside Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

"After signing deals with its own puppet state in occupied northern Cyprus and with the pseudo-government in Libya's Tripoli, Turkey declares that it owns half of the eastern Mediterranean," Aron Lund, an analyst at The Century Foundation, observes of the newly published map.

New map outlining Turkey's claimed continental shelf and the borders of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), via Hurriyet Daily.

Meanwhile the entire eastern side of Cyprus is claimed by the internationally disputed "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus."

And Turkey's Hurriyet Daily explains: "With the chart, Ça?atay Erciyes showed the outer boundaries of Turkey's continental shelf and EEZ, designated in a 2011 agreement between Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), the median line between Egypt and Turkey's mainlands and a recent memorandum with Libya."

Over the past year Turkey has sent both oil and gas exploration ships, as well as military transport vessels, into Cypriot waters in the East Mediterranean related to expanded claims based on the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus (since 1974), earning the condemnation of both Nicosia and top EU officials, who have defended EU-Cyprus' interpretation of the conflict.

Turkey claims western waters off Cyprus, with the so-called TRNC eastern waters; and now Erdogan is cutting deals with Libya to expand from the southern Mediterranean.

In nearby Libya, as Turkish military advisers continue to play

a key role in support of the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA) against an offensive led by Gen. Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA), Turkey is also busy expanding maritime defensive operations off North Africa.

"On Nov. 27, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan held a closed meeting in Istanbul that lasted over two hours with Fayed al-Sarraj, chairman of the Presidential Council of Libya," Hurriyet Daily reports further.

In that meeting the two leaders reportedly struck a deal which is seen as key to expanding Turkey's maritime claims: