

What Africans want from COP30



The upcoming UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) will be the first to take place in the Amazon, sending a powerful symbolic message about the central role developing economies must play in the global response to the climate crisis. But at a time of geopolitical fragmentation and low trust in multilateralism, symbolism is not enough. Developing economies must plan and propel the green transition. Africa is no exception.

So far, Africa's climate narrative has been one of victimhood: the continent contributes less than 4% of global greenhouse-gas emissions, but it is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. This disparity fuelled the calls for "climate justice" that helped to produce ambitious climate-financing pledges from the industrialised economies at past COPs. But with those pledges going unfulfilled, and Africa's climate-finance needs rising fast, moral appeals are clearly not enough.

A shift to a more strategy-oriented discourse is already underway. The Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2), which took place in Addis Ababa last month, positioned the continent as a united actor capable of shaping global climate negotiations. It also produced several initiatives, such as the Africa Climate Innovation Compact and the African Climate Facility, that promise to strengthen Africa's position in efforts to ensure a sustainable future.

Instead of continuing to wait for aid, Africa is now seeking to attract investment in its green transition, not because rich countries "owe" Africans – though they do – but rather because Africa can help the world tackle climate change. But success will require progress on four fronts, all of which will be addressed at COP30.

The first is the cost of capital. Because systemic bias is embedded in credit-rating methodologies and global prudential rules, African countries face the world's highest borrowing costs. This deters private capital, without which climate finance cannot flow at scale. While multilateral development banks (MDBs) can help to bridge the gap, they typically favour loans – which increase African countries' already-formidable debt burdens – rather than grants.

At COP29, developed economies agreed to raise "at least" \$300bn per year for developing-country climate action by 2035, as part of a wider goal for all actors to mobilise at least \$1.3tn per year. If these targets are to be reached, however, systemic reform is essential. This includes changes to MDB governance, so that African countries have a greater voice, and increased grant-based financing. Reform also must include recognition of African financial institutions with preferred creditor status, and the cultivation of a new Africa-led financial architecture that lowers the cost of capital.

The second area where progress is essential is carbon markets. Despite its huge potential for nature-based climate solutions,

Africa captures only 16% of the global carbon-credit market. Moreover, the projects are largely underregulated and poorly priced, with limited community involvement. Africa is now at risk of falling into a familiar trap: supplying cheap offsets for external actors' emissions, while reaping few benefits for its people.

While some African countries are developing their own carbon-market regulations, a fragmented system will have limited impact. What Africa needs is an integrated carbon market, regulated by Africans, to ensure the quality of projects, set fair prices, and channel revenues toward local development priorities, including conservation, renewable energy, and resilient agriculture. This system should be linked with Article 6 of the Paris climate agreement, which aims to facilitate the voluntary trading of carbon credits among countries.

The third imperative for Africa at COP30 is to redefine adaptation. Rather than treating it primarily as a humanitarian project, governments must integrate adaptation into their industrial policies. After all, investment in climate-resilient agriculture, infrastructure, and water systems generates jobs, fosters innovation, and spurs market integration.

By linking adaptation to industrialisation, Africa can continue what it started at ACS2, shifting the narrative from vulnerability to value creation. Africa should push for this approach to be reflected in the indicators for the Global Goal on Adaptation, which are set to be finalised at COP30. The continent's leaders should also call for adaptation finance to be integrated into broader trade and technology frameworks.

The final priority area for Africa at COP30 is critical minerals. Africa possesses roughly 85% of the world's manganese, 80% of its platinum and chromium, 47% of its cobalt, 21% of its graphite, and 6% of its copper. In 2022,

the Democratic Republic of the Congo alone accounted for over 70% of global cobalt production.

But Africa knows all too well that natural-resource wealth does not necessarily translate into economic growth and development. Only by building value chains on the continent can Africa avoid the “resource curse” and ensure that its critical-mineral wealth generates local jobs and industries. This imperative must be reflected in discussions within the Just Transition Work Programme at COP30.

These four priorities are linked by a deeper philosophical imperative. The extractive logic of the past – in which industrialisation depended on exploitation and destruction – must give way to a more holistic, just, and balanced approach, which recognises that humans belong to nature, not the other way around. Africa can help to lead this shift, beginning at COP30.

The barriers to progress are formidable. China likes to tout South-South solidarity, but it does not necessarily put its money where its mouth is. The European Union is struggling to reconcile competing priorities and cope with political volatility. The US will not attend COP30 at all, potentially emboldening others to resist ambitious action. If consensus proves elusive, parties might pursue “mini-lateral” deals, which sideline Africa.

When it comes to the green transition, Africa’s interests are everyone’s interests. If the continent is locked into poverty and fossil-fuel dependency, global temperatures will continue to rise rapidly. But if Africa is empowered to achieve green industrialisation, the rest of the world will gain a critical ally in the fight for a sustainable future. – Project Syndicate

- *Carlos Lopes, COP30 Special Envoy for Africa, is Chair of the African Climate Foundation Board and a professor*

at the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance at the University of Cape Town.

Baroudi congratulates Lebanese government on boundary deal with Cyprus



The decision of the Council of Ministers to approve Lebanon's maritime boundary agreement (MBA) with Cyprus is a genuine tour de force, a feather in the cap for President Joseph Aoun and his government.

This step caps a process that was unnecessarily delayed for almost two decades, but that only makes this achievement more gratifying.

Having settled maritime boundaries is crucial right now because of the opportunities it opens up. The agreement makes

Lebanon much more attractive to the major international partners it needs to develop its nascent offshore oil and gas sector. If and when that sector reaches even a small fraction of its potential, the benefits should flow to virtually every corner of the Lebanese economy, so everyone in the country should really celebrate this.

As if to punctuate the moment, the Council of Ministers also awarded the rights to a key offshore area, Block 8, to a reputable international consortium consisting of France's TotalEnergies, Italy's ENI, and Qatar's QatarEnergy.

Together, these moves help to pave the road toward a future in which Lebanon becomes an energy producer and exporter, adding unprecedented momentum to an economy that desperately needs it.

These are both major milestones, and the government – along with President Joseph Aoun, whose own leadership on the border deal was crucial to initiating the negotiations – deserves plenty of credit.

The important part now is the follow-up. The government still needs to implement a long list of reforms, invest in capacity building, and retain competent personnel and managers to steward and safeguard the country's offshore resources. It also will need to do its homework on how best to nurture that offshore business.

There is so much to be done – but so much to be claimed by doing it! Getting the MBL with Cyprus finalized was at the top of the list, and resolving Block 8 was not far down, so the government deserves congratulations for both.

And since I mentioned nurturing, I also take this opportunity to propose that the Lebanese government immediately invite its Cypriot counterpart to negotiate another crucial deal: a joint development agreement, or JDA, which would govern the sharing of any oil and/or gas resources which straddle their border at

sea. Setting up a JDA now would not only prevent possible delays in the future – it also would make both countries' offshore energy sectors even more attractive to investors.

Σε συνομιλίες η Κύπρος για την ΑΟΖ με τον Λίβανο. Οι επαφές που κάνει ο πρόεδρος της Κύπρου



Οι τεταμένες σχέσεις Ισραήλ-Λιβάνου και οι ραγδαίες εξελίξεις στη Μέση Ανατολή έχουν κινητοποιήσει τη Λευκωσία για επαφές υψηλού επιπέδου για την επικύρωση της ΑΟΖ με το Λίβανο. Έτσι

ο πρόεδρος της Κύπρου Νίκος Χριστοδουλίδης συναντήθηκε με τον εμπειρογνώμονα περιφερειακής πολιτικής Ρούντι Μπραούντι, μακροχρόνιος υποστηρικτής του διαλόγου, της διπλωματίας και της ειρηνικής ανάπτυξης, ως προς τις ασφαλέστερες διαδρομές προς μεγαλύτερη σταθερότητα για ολόκληρη την Ευρω-Μεσογειακή περιοχή και άτυπο διαμεσολαβητή των δύο χωρών. Μάλιστα έχει γράψει και σχετικά βιβλία, όπως την «οριστικοποίηση θαλάσσιων Συνόρων στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο: Ποιος θα Είναι ο Επόμενος;» και «Ένα Κλειδί, Πολλαπλά Έπαθλα: Οριστικοποίηση θαλάσσιων Συνόρων ανάμεσα στην Κύπρο, το Λίβανο και τη Συρία».

Ο κ. Χριστοδουλίδης και ο ομόλογός του από το Λίβανο, ο πρώην Γενικός Τζόζεφ Αουν, συμφώνησαν τον Ιούλιο να διαπραγματευτούν και να οριστικοποιήσουν μια γραμμή θαλάσσιων συνόρων . Και οι δύο χώρες αναμένουν ότι θα αποκομίσουν πολλά οφέλη από μια τέτοια συμφωνία, και η κατοχύρωση εδαφικών συνόρων στη θάλασσα θα καταστήσει ευκολότερη την προσέλκυση ξένων επενδυτών για την ανάπτυξη των ενεργειακών πηγών τους.

«Η επίτευξη συμφωνίας θα ανοίξει όλες τις πόρτες για την Κύπρο και το Λίβανο», δήλωσε ο κ. Μπαρούντι μετά από τη συνάντηση. «Οι τάσεις πηγαίνουν στη σωστή κατεύθυνση, και όχι μόνο σε σχέση με το Λίβανο. Ο πρόεδρος της Κύπρου έχει φιλόδοξα σχέδια εξωτερικής πολιτικής, ιδιαίτερα σχετικά με τις δραστηριότητες της Κύπρου τους πρώτους έξι μήνες του 2026, όταν θα έχει την προεδρία του συμβουλίου της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης».

«Εκμεταλλεύτηκα επίσης την ευκαιρία να ευχηθώ στο πρόεδρο της Κύπρου καλή επιτυχία σε αυτή την αποστολή», πρόσθεσε, «ειδικά καθώς αναμένεται να εστιάσει όχι μόνο στην ενίσχυση της συνοχής της Ευρώπης, αλλά και στην ενίσχυση του ρόλου της Κύπρου ως γέφυρα μεταξύ Ευρώπης και γειτονικών χωρών.»

Πράγματι, η Λευκωσία έχει ένα φιλόδοξο πρόγραμμα για την προεδρία της και συνεργάζεται στενά με τη Δανία, που ασκεί την προεδρία αυτό το εξάμηνο , και την Πολωνία, που θα διαδεχθεί την Κύπρο. Η λεγόμενη«τριπλή προεδρία» βοηθά στη διασφάλιση συνέχειας από τη μία προεδρία στην επόμενη.

Ο κ. Μπαρούντι έχει γράψει αρκετά βιβλία και μελέτες σχετικά με το πώς τα υπάρχοντα εργαλεία του ΟΗΕ μπορούν να βοηθήσουν τις παράκτιες χώρες να συμφωνήσουν δίκαια και ισότιμα θαλάσσια σύνορα, να μειώσουν τις εντάσεις και να αποκομίσουν σημαντικά οικονομικά και κοινωνικά οφέλη. Έχει επίσης γράψει και μιλήσει δημόσια για διάφορες ευκαιρίες περιφερειακής συνεργασίας, από διασυνδεδεμένα ενεργειακά δίκτυα και υπεράκτια αιολικά πάρκα μέχρι κοινή διαχείριση θαλάσσιων προστατευόμενων περιοχών.

Το 2023, απονεμήθηκε στον κ. Μπαρούντι το Βραβείο Ηγεσίας από το Transatlantic Leadership Network, ένα think-tank της Ουάσινγκτον, για τη «πολύτιμη συμβολή του στην οικοδόμηση μιας ειρηνικής και ευημερούσας Ανατολικής Μεσογείου».

Σε δεκάδες άρθρα, μελέτες, εμφανίσεις στα μέσα ενημέρωσης και ομιλίες, για παράδειγμα, ο βετεράνος της κλάδου έχει τεκμηριώσει την επιχειρηματική βάση για το νησιωτικό κράτος να γίνει κέντρο επεξεργασίας και διανομής φυσικού αερίου για τους γείτονές του. Αυτό θα περιελάμβανε την Κύπρο να δημιουργήσει έναν υπόθαλάσσιο αγωγό φυσικού αερίου προς την ευρωπαϊκή ενδοχώρα, ένα εργοστάσιο υγροποιημένου φυσικού αερίου (LNG) που θα ήταν το μεγαλύτερο έργο που έχει ποτέ η χώρα, ή και υπεράκτια πλωτά συστήματα αποθήκευσης και υγροποίησης για την εξυπηρέτηση απομακρυσμένων χωρών δια θαλάσσης.

«Όλες αυτές οι μελέτες και οι παράγοντες που ανέδειξαν παραμένουν επίκαιροι σήμερα», δήλωσε ο κ. Μπαρούντι. «Η Κύπρος διαθέτει την εγγύτητα, τις τιμές γης και τις σχέσεις με τους γείτονές της για να γίνει ο συνεταιριστής όλων στις εξαγωγές ενέργειας, αλλά και να λειτουργήσει ως θεμέλιος λίθος για μια πιο σταθερή και ευημερούσα περιοχή.»

Amid Maritime Boundary Talks in the Region, Cypriot President Receives International Energy Expert, Roudi Baroudi, on UN Demarcation Tools



NICOSIA – 29, September 2025: Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides met today with the international energy policy expert, Roudi Baroudi, who presented copies of his two latest books, “Settling Maritime Boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean: Who Will Be Next?” and “One Key, Multiple Prizes: Settling Maritime Boundaries Among Cyprus, Lebanon,

and Syria”.

Baroudi, a long-time advocate of dialogue, diplomacy, and peaceful development as the surest routes to greater stability for the entire Euro-Med region, said he felt “honored to have been received by the President.”

Christodoulides and his Lebanese counterpart, former General Joseph Aoun, agreed in July to have their respective teams negotiate and finalize a maritime boundary line (MBL). Both countries expect to derive numerous benefits from such a pact, and having treated borders at sea will make it easier to attract the foreign investors required to develop their respective offshore oil and gas resources.

Reaching a deal “will open up all sorts of doors for Cyprus and Lebanon,” Baroudi said after the meeting. “The trends are going in the right direction, and not just vis-à-vis Lebanon. The President has ambitious foreign-policy plans, particularly with regard to Cyprus’ activities for the first six months of 2026, when it will hold the rotating presidency of the European Union.”

“I also took the opportunity to wish His Excellency every good fortune on that mission,” he added, “especially since it is expected to focus not only on shoring up Europe’s cohesion, but also on beefing up Cyprus’ role as a bridge between Europe and its neighbors.”

Indeed, Nicosia does have an ambitious agenda for its time in the presidency, and is working closely with Denmark, the current holder, and Poland, which will follow Cyprus’ term. The so-called “trio presidency” helps to ensure continuity from one presidency to the next.

Baroudi has published several books and studies on how existing United Nations tools can help coastal states to agree fair and equitable maritime boundaries, reduce tensions, and reap significant economic and social rewards in the bargain.

He also has written and spoken publicly about a variety of opportunities for regional cooperation, from interconnected power grids and offshore wind farms to joint management of marine protected areas. In 2023, he was awarded the Transatlantic Leadership Award by the Transatlantic Leadership Network, a Washington think-tank, for what it described as “his valuable contribution in building a peaceful and prosperous Eastern Mediterranean.”

In addition to these works, ever since 2011, when the full potential of the East Med’s offshore hydrocarbon deposits began to emerge, Baroudi’s advocacy role has seen him provide thought leadership for a variety of projects and proposals that would transform Cyprus into a regional energy hub. In dozens of articles, studies, media appearances, and speaking engagements, for example, the industry veteran has made the business case for the island nation to become a gas processing and distribution center for its neighbors. This would include Cyprus hosting one end of an undersea gas pipeline to the European mainland, a liquified natural gas (LNG) plant that would be the country’s largest-ever project, and/or offshore floating storage and gasification units(s) to serve more distant customers by ship.

“All of these studies and the factors they highlighted are still relevant today,” Baroudi said. “Cyprus has the proximity, the land prices, and the relationships with its neighbors to make it everyone’s partner for energy exports, but also to serve as the bedrock for a stabler and more prosperous region.”

**'The madness has to end':
Long-time promoter of
dialogue says 'decent
nations' must 'finally'
punish Israel for
'indefensible outrage' in
Doha**



Israel's strike on a residential building in Doha on Tuesday was a "cowardly, treacherous act of war" that "cries out" for stronger efforts to end the war, a prominent Lebanese expatriate said in a statement after explosions rocked the Qatari capital.

"This is an indefensible outrage, an unprovoked attack on a

country that has done nothing but try to reduce tensions and help the region regain some semblance of stability,” said Roudi Baroudi, a high-profile executive, author, and energy expert who has spent years advocating for dialogue, diplomacy, and peaceful development across the Mena region.

“This country and its government have done everything possible to help end Israel’s continuing wars, mediating ceasefire talks since the beginning of the conflict in Gaza, also helping to end the brief but exceedingly dangerous clash between Israel and Iran, and using its good offices to reduce tensions on several other fronts as well. Qatar’s leaders and diplomats have worked tirelessly, arranging several possible off-ramps that would not only have helped to spare the Palestinian and other peoples, but also to give Israel a way out of the corner its prime minister has painted it into. The Israelis should be thanking Qatar for having played such a diplomatic constructive and selfless role,” he added.

“Instead, today, the Netanyahu government has carried out a cowardly, treacherous attack that cries out for the international community to finally step in and apply all the pressure at its disposal. History will not look kindly on a government that clearly seeks to prolong the war – and the suffering of the Palestinians and others – for no other reason than to keep itself in power. Those who fail to stand for the defenseless civilians who continue to die under Israeli bombardment and blockade will not escape the same historical judgment.”

“The madness has to end, and for that to happen, all states with any influence over Israel have to use it,” Baroudi stated. “It must be made unequivocally clear that no state can conduct itself in this manner without inviting a swift and

painful response from the decent nations of this Earth: stop arming it, stop protecting it, stop funding it, stop trading with it – stop everything unless and until it starts behaving itself.” We need peace for all.

Qatar deserves global thanks – and a whole lot more



Most of the world is watching and waiting, hoping and/or praying that a hastily arranged ceasefire between Israel and Iran will hold. If it does, there will be sighs of relief virtually everywhere; if it does not, the State of Qatar should still be considered for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Yes, you read that correctly: even if the ceasefire that it helped to secure falls apart, Qatar should be considered for what many regard as the most prestigious prize on Earth.



I believe this because peace is more important than any other cause on Earth, and pound-for-pound, no country does more than Qatar to promote peace. Peace is more than a photo opportunity, more than a process that often allows belligerents to let their guns fall silent, more even than the gratitude of those whose lives and livelihoods are spared. It also serves other useful purposes, too, including as a commodity that promotes stronger growth and better socioeconomic development, and frees up resources for investment in education, healthcare, and transport infrastructure. Accordingly, achieving peace means more than simply not being at war: it means having the chance to better one's own situation by leaps and bounds. By extension, anyone who provides such a chance to anyone else deserves deep admiration.

By this measurement alone, Qatar's case for a Nobel is rock-solid – and has been for years, long before the world's most powerful county asked it to obtain Iranian consent to a ceasefire. A quick glance at Qatar's track record reveals a foreign policy focused almost entirely on the peaceful

resolution of differences. Over the past quarter-century, Qatari diplomacy has helped to resolve or mitigate multiple crises, disputes, and conflicts in too many places to count, including Afghanistan, Darfur, Gaza, Eritrea, Iraq, Lebanon, Russia and Ukraine, Sudan and South Sudan, and Yemen. These feats have included the winding down of one all-out civil war and the prevention of another, the brokering of several exchanges involving thousands of prisoners/hostages, the securing of temporary cease-fires, the resolution of dangerous constitutional deadlocks, and – most importantly – the kindling of hope in the hearts of millions.

Not surprisingly, Qatar's diplomatic corps is almost constantly and relentlessly engaged in one form or another of peacemaking. It does not always succeed, but its investments – both political and financial – in this mission pay dividends in other ways, too. Repeated successes are their own reward, but even “failure” both raises Qatar's profile and reaffirms its commitment to dialogue and peace. In addition, both the leadership and the professional diplomats learn important lessons from each and every engagement, making Qatari intervention increasingly effective over time. Just as importantly, this increasing effectiveness contributes to Qatar's growing reputation as an honest and capable broker, and that perception gives it still more influence, leverage, and flexibility going forward.

There are critics, of course. Many American officials, for instance, have criticised Doha for maintaining friendly relations with entities such as Hamas, the Taliban, and, indeed, the Islamic Republic of Iran. But when Washington and Paris wanted to end the presidential vacuum in Beirut, they turned to Qatar and other brotherly nations, which then helped to gain the acquiescence of Iran and Hezbollah. When Washington wanted to negotiate the release of Israeli soldiers and civilians held in Gaza, it was Qatar that made it happen. When the first Trump administration wanted a negotiated exit

from Afghanistan, it was Doha that made the contacts and hosted the talks. And when the current Trump administration decided it was time for Israel and Iran to end hostilities, it was the Qataris who delivered the Iranians – and this despite the fact that Iran had just retaliated against US air strikes by lobbing missiles at a US air base inside Qatar!

In effect, the peninsula is now a platform for peace promotion, and not by accident. As impressive as they are, even Qatar's obvious enthusiasm and evident aptitude for dialogue and diplomacy cannot account for the unprecedentedly large role it has come to play on the world stage.

Instead, today's Qatar is the product of a bold strategy rooted in both purpose and principle. Led by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the country's entire leadership views respect for international law and the maintenance of international peace and stability as existential objectives for Qatar and its population.

The Amir inherited some of this strategy from his father, but he has expansively built on it, adding both breadth of vision and depth of commitment. Even – and perhaps especially – when this approach has carried dire risks, His Highness the Amir has refused to waver, and his steadfast pursuit of fraternal relations among nation-states has continued. That resolve has been noted by state and non-state actors alike, and some former antagonists have even come to embrace and even emulate much of the Qatari approach.

That's why Qatar deserves the Nobel Peace Prize. Not because it helped end a war between Iran and Israel, but because no other country is so singularly dedicated to peace. It's the ideas behind its actions that make them special: that a country should not only refrain from seeking out conflict, should not only keenly avoid conflict unless necessary, but should also actively seek to prevent, shorten, and/or mitigate conflict among other countries as well.

What could be more noble – and therefore more Nobel-worthy – than that?

- *Roudi Baroudi is an energy and policy expert with more than four decades of experience in both the private and public sectors. The author of several books, he currently serves as CEO of Energy and Environment Holding, an independent consultancy based in Doha.*

ENERGY EXPERT'S NEW MARITIME BOUNDARY BOOK ARRIVES AMID WAVE OF EAST MED BORDER DIPLOMACY

Roudi Baroudi

SETTLING MARITIME BOUNDARIES IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN: WHO WILL BE NEXT?

 **NDU**
NOTRE DAME
UNIVERSITY
— LOUAÏZÉ —
LEBANON
PRESS

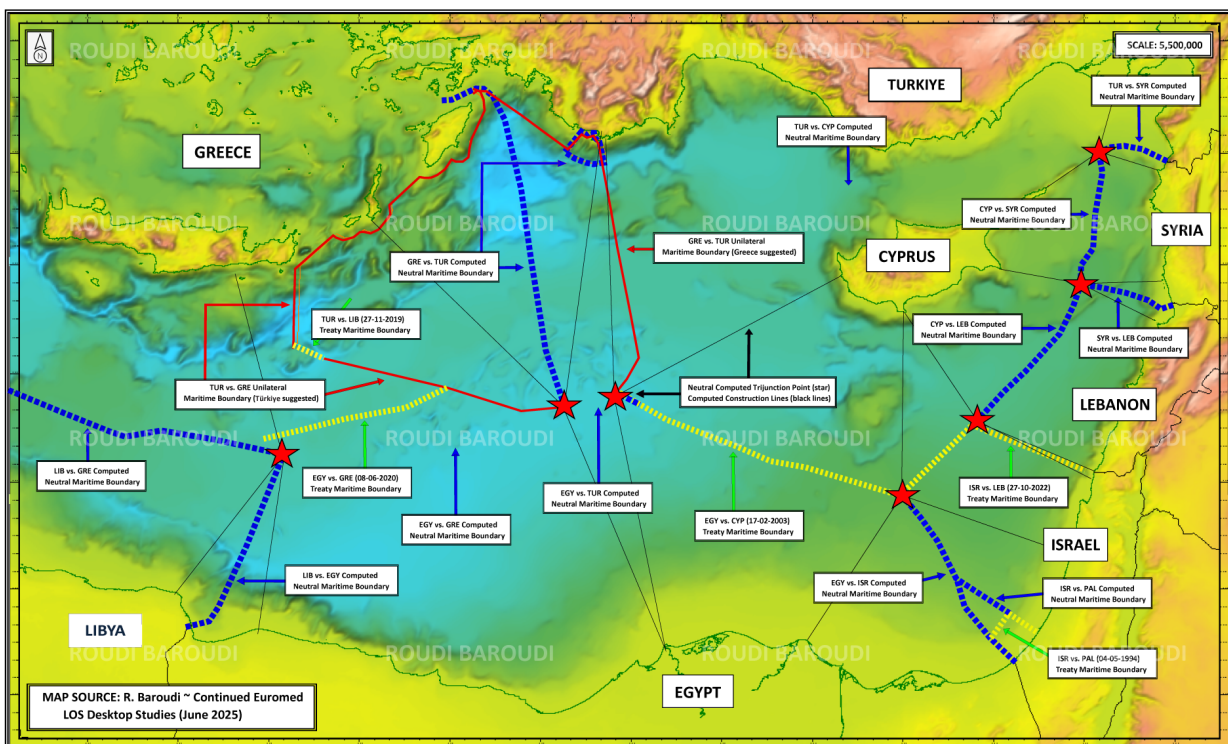
Recent weeks have seen multiple contacts among several countries including – Cyprus, Greece, Lebanon, and Syria – aimed at increasing cooperation among East Mediterranean

countries.

This flurry of diplomatic activity provides the perfect backdrop as Notre-Dame University – Louaize is pleased to announce that it will host a book launch and signing on April 23rd, welcoming international energy expert Roudi Baroudi as he releases his latest work, “Settling Maritime Boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean: Who Will Be Next? ”

The book outlines the need for countries in the region to resolve their maritime boundaries, the energy and other economic opportunities that doing so could open up, and the legal, scientific, and technical means of ensuring that delimitation is fair and equitable. The volume even carries exclusive, high-precision maps indicating with unprecedented accuracy where the negotiated or adjudicated sea borders of several East Med countries would be, as per United Nations rules.

EURO MED RESOLVED & UNRESOLVED MBL 2025



Yellow lines - Fully Treated MBs.

Dark Blue dashed lines - 100% neutral strict equidistance lines (unresolved/disputed)

Red solid lines - Unilateral Claimed MBL

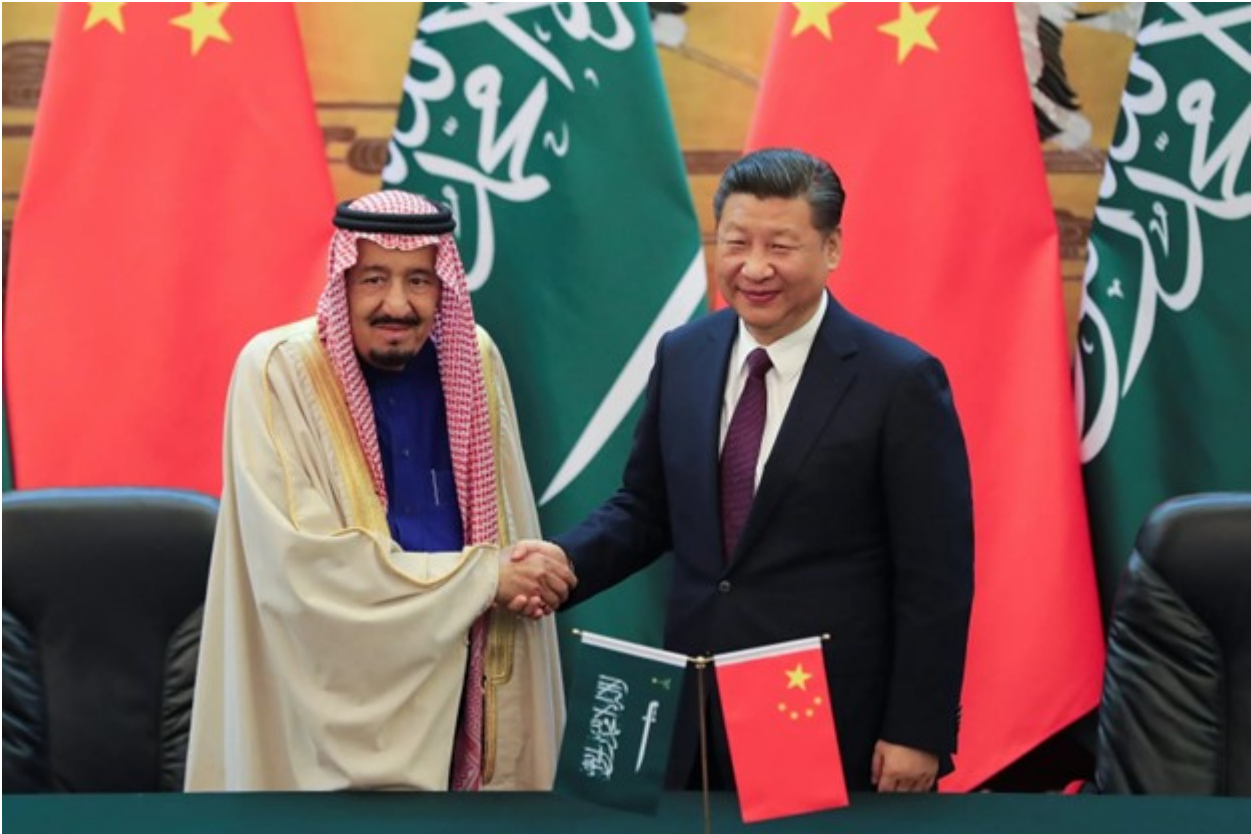
The book emphasizes that settling these unresolved boundaries – including those between Lebanon and Cyprus, Lebanon and Syria, Greece and Turkey, Turkey and Syria, Syria and Cyprus, and Turkey and Cyprus – is a necessary first step for those seeking to develop offshore energy resources. The advent of energy security and possible lucrative exports could have a profound effect on several states, allowing them to make historic investments in schools, hospitals, and transport infrastructure, all while creating well-paying jobs and reducing poverty and inequality. Baroudi also highlights a series of cross-border benefits, including reducing potential irritants between neighbors, building trust, and opening up new avenues for cooperation.

As a 47-year veteran of the energy industry, Baroudi has a wealth of experience to share, and does so frequently as an author and speaker, promoting energy as a catalyst for dialogue and peace wherever and whenever he can. He will be on hand for the launch at NDU's Pierre Abou Khater Auditorium beginning at 12:00 noon, answering questions and signing copies of the book for anyone who purchases one.

All sale proceeds will go toward Student Financial Aid at NDU.



**AS AMERICA “PIVOTS TO ASIA”,
SAUDI ARABIA IS ALREADY THERE
– BY ROUDI BAROUDI**



The biggest news in the energy industry last week was that a state-owned Chinese company had completed a massive offshore oil and gas platform for Saudi Aramco. Breathless media reports shared impressive details about the facility's record-setting size, weight, and output capacity, with some describing it as a massive bet on continuing strong demand for fossil fuels despite the meteoric rise of renewables.

The real significance of this news, though, is not to be found at the Qingdao shipyard where it was made, at the headquarters of the China Offshore Oil Engineering Company that built it, or at the Marjan field off Saudi Arabia's east coast where it will be installed and operated.

In fact, in order to truly appreciate the implications involved, one needs to travel back in time a little more than 50 years. For on 8 June 1974, the United States and Saudi Arabia reached a historic agreement that has bound the two countries ever since.

Signed by then-US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and then-Minister of Interior Prince Fahd bin Abdulaziz, the pact

established two joint commissions tasked, respectively, with increasing bilateral economic cooperation and with determining the kingdom's military needs. It also created several joint working groups responsible for specific elements to support growth and development, including efforts to: a) expand and diversify Saudi Arabia's industrial base, beginning with the manufacture of fertilizers and other aspects of the petrochemical sector; b) increase the number of qualified scientists and technicians available to make the most of technology transfers; c) explore partnerships in areas like solar energy and desalination; and d) find ways to cooperate in agriculture, especially in the desert.



Henry Kissinger with Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia, 1974

Contrary to widespread misperceptions, the agreement did not say anything about Saudi crude being priced and/or transacted

exclusively in US dollars. In a side-deal that remained secret until 2016, however, the United States pledged full military support in virtually all circumstances and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia committed to investing a massive share of its oil revenues in US Treasury bills. While there was no public quid pro quo, therefore, this was to some extent a distinction without a difference: the world's biggest oil exporter ended up spending hundreds of billions of dollars on American debt and American-made weapons, making it only sensible that the vast majority of its crude sales would be in greenbacks. By extension, the sheer weight of Saudi oil in world markets – and especially within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries – virtually guaranteed that the dollar would become the de facto default currency of those markets, Petrodollars.

These arrangements suited both sides at the time, which featured a very particular set of circumstances. The previous year, as Egypt and Syria attempted to regain territories occupied by Israeli forces since the 1967 war, US President Richard Nixon authorized an unprecedented airlift of weaponry – everything from tanks, artillery, and ammunition to helicopters, radars, and air-to-air missiles – to Israel. Arab oil producers responded by playing their strongest card, announcing an oil embargo against states that supported the Israeli war effort. That led directly to supply shortages, soaring prices, and long lines at filling stations across the United States and many other countries, too, and indirectly to several years of higher inflation. Although the embargo had been lifted in March 1974, Washington was keen to prevent similar shocks in the future.

The American economy was particularly vulnerable to longer-term repercussions because of several factors, including a general slowdown caused by its long, expensive, and ultimately unsuccessful war in Vietnam. The real problem, though, stemmed from another issue: in 1971, as the dollar continued to lose ground against major European currencies, Nixon had taken the

United States off the gold standard, gutting the Bretton Woods arrangements put in place after World War II and throwing foreign exchange markets into disarray. With the Cold War as backdrop, America appeared to be losing ground in its strategic competition with the Soviet Union.

The so-called "side-deal", then, was actually far more important than the public agreement because it would restore the dollar's primacy in international markets, making it once again the world's favorite reserve currency, while simultaneously reducing the likelihood of future Arab oil embargos. The new system worked very well for a very long time: the US economy regained its stability, and Saudi Arabia embarked on a long program of socioeconomic development that continues to this day. Even as the Americans have sought further protection by reducing their reliance on Saudi and other OPEC crude, their bilateral partnership and the dollar's general prevalence in the oil business have likewise persisted despite all manner of diplomatic spats, crises, and other obstacles.

Back in the present-day, the Soviet Union is no more, and although the United States has an even more formidable strategic rival in China, this competition carries neither the day-to-day intensity nor the seeming inevitability of nuclear Armageddon that the Cold War engendered. In addition, the United States is now producing more crude oil than any country ever has, further insulating its economy against exogenous shocks, while China's rapid expansion has made it the world's most prolific energy importer. In fact, Washington is years into a "pivot to Asia" that will see it focus less attention on the Middle East.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia is now led by Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), a young and highly ambitious ruler who has shown himself more than willing to act independently of American desires or even demands. Accordingly, it should not surprise anyone that the behemoth facility now being

transported to Marjan is just the most visible tip of the Sino-Saudi iceberg. Theirs is a burgeoning relationship driven by complementary needs, with both parties investing in one another's economies and cooperating on large-scale energy and industrial projects.

Given all of the foregoing, it is much too early to declare the end of an era. Even if rumors that the Saudis will soon start selling oil futures contracts in yuan or other currencies turn out to be true and the results include an erosion of the dollar's value, the US-Saudi economic relationship remains very much in place, as do defense ties ranging from procurement and maintenance to joint exercises and training. This is not to mention the approximately 60,000 Saudi students who study at American universities every year, or the countless other business and/or personal ties nurtured over decades.



Then, US President, Jimmy Carter receiving the Crown Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia at the White House in Washington, 1977. Seeing the continuation of the Petrodollar Agreement.

All the same, a new era has definitely begun: just as the Americans have opened up other avenues to secure their energy needs, the Saudis are now moving decisively to diversify their foreign partnerships and have been doing so for many years. Inevitably, the global oil and gas economy's center of gravity will shift eastward, but how could it be otherwise when China and several other Asian economies have become such powerhouses? The diversification path will almost certainly include occasional stretches where Riyadh will have to make difficult decisions, but this, too, reflects the confidence that MBS has in his country's ability to determine its own destiny.

Roudi Baroudi has worked in the energy sector for more than four decades, with extensive experience in both the public and private sectors. Having advised dozens of companies, governments, and multilateral institutions on program and policy development. He has been a loyal advocate for energy stability and peace. He is also the author or co-author of numerous books and articles, and currently serves as CEO of Energy and Environment Holding, an independent consultancy based in Doha, Qatar.

‘Prerequisites for peace’: Expert applauds Skylakakis for endorsing energy transition policies that ‘open the way to dialogue and cooperation’



ATHENS, July 7, 2024 Greece: Energy and Environment Minister Theodoros Skylakakis is on the right track with his approach to Greece’s energy transition plans, a noted regional expert says.

“He’s got the right perspective,” industry veteran and author Roudi Baroudi said after Skylakakis spoke at this week’s Athens Energy Summit. “He understands that although the responsibility to reduce carbon emissions is universal, the best policy decisions don’t come in ‘one-size-fits-all’.”

Baroudi, who has more than four decades in the field and currently serves as CEO of Doha independent consultancy Energy and Environment Holding, made his comments on the sidelines of the forum, where he also was a speaker.

In his remarks, Skylakakis expressed confidence that Greece's increasing need to store electricity – as intermittent renewables generate a growing share of electricity – would drive sufficient investment in battery capacity, without the need for subsidies. Among other comments, he also stressed the need for European Union policymakers to account for the fact that member-states currently face the costs of both limiting future climate change AND mitigating the impacts that are already under way.

“Every country is different in terms of how it can best fight climate change. Each one has its own set of natural resources, industrial capacity, financial wherewithal, and other variables. What works in one situation might be a terrible idea elsewhere. That's crucial and Skylakakis gets it,” Baroudi said. “He also understands that an effective transition depends on carefully considered policies, policies that attract investment to where it can not only have the greatest impact today, but also maximizes the impact of tomorrow's technologies and tomorrow's partnerships.”



“What Skylakakis is saying and doing fits in nicely with many of the same ideas I spoke about,” Baroudi added. “When he talks about heavier reliance on wind farms, the added storage capacity is a foundation that will help derive a fuller return from each and every turbine. When he highlights the utility – pun intended – of power and gas interconnections with other countries and regions, these are the prerequisites for peace, the building blocks for cooperation and dialogue.”

In his own speech shortly after Skylakakis’, Baroudi told the audience at the capital’s Hotel Grande Bretagne that countries

in the Eastern Mediterranean should work together to increase cleaner energy production and reduce regional tensions.

“Surely there is a method by which we can re-establish the same common ground enshrined in the wake of World Wars I and II, recall the same common interests and identify new ones, and work together to achieve common goals, just as the UN Charter implores us to,” he said.

Baroudi advises companies, governments, and international institutions on energy policy and is an award-winning advocate for efforts to promote peace through dialogue and diplomacy. He told his audience that with both climate change and mounting geopolitical tensions posing threats to people around the world, policymakers needed to think outside the usual boxes.

In this way, he argued, “we might develop the mutual trust which alone can create a safer, happier, and better world for our children and grandchildren.”

“Consider the possibilities if Greece, Türkiye, and Cyprus became de facto – or de jure – partners in a pipeline carrying East Med gas to consumers in Bulgaria, Romania, and Italy,” he said. “Imagine a future in which Israeli and Lebanese gas companies were similarly – but independently – reliant on the same Cypriot LNG plant for 10-20%, or even more, of their respective countries’ GDPs.”

He also envisioned bilateral cooperation scenarios between Greece and Turkey and Syria and Turkey, as well as a regional interconnection that would provide backup energy for multiple coastal states.

“Instead of accepting certain ideas as permanently impossible, we ought to be thinking ahead and laying the groundwork,” Baroudi said. “For Greece and Türkiye – as for other pairs of coastal states in the region – a good starting point would be to emulate the Maritime Boundary Agreement agreed to by

Lebanon and Israel in 2022.”

Stressing the potential for cooperation to address both energy requirements and the stability required for stronger growth and development, Baroudi – whose books include a 2023 volume about the Lebanon-Israel deal and a forthcoming one urging other East Med countries to do the same – called on the EU to take up the challenge.



“Using dialogue and diplomacy to expand energy cooperation would benefit not just the countries of the East Med but also the entire European Union and much of its surrounding ‘neighborhood’,” he told an audience of energy professionals and key government officials. “That level of promise more than merits the attention of Brussels, the allocation of support resources, and even the designation of a dedicated point-person tasked with facilitating the necessary contacts and negotiations.”

“This is how we need to be thinking if we want to get where we need to go,” Baroudi said. “Instead of allowing ourselves to be discouraged by the presence of obstacles, we need to be investigating new routes that go around them, strengthen the

rule of law – especially human rights law – as a basis for the international system, and promote lasting peace among all nations. Only then can we declare victory over what the 18th-century Scottish poet Robert Burns called ‘man’s inhumanity to man’.”

الخبير في مجال الطاقة رودري بارودي: دول شرق البحر المتوسط يجب أن تتعاون بمجال الطاقة



أشار أحد أهم الخبراء في مجال الطاقة رودري بارودي، في مؤتمر انعقد في أثينا، إلى أن “دول شرق البحر الأبيض المتوسط يجب أن تتعاون مع بعضها لزيادة إنتاج وتصدير الطاقة والتخفيف من التوترات الإقليمية”.

وقال بارودي امام المشاركين في المؤتمر: "يجب ان نضع في الاعتبار الاحتمالات الايجابية إذا أصبحت اليونان وتركيا وقبرص شركاء بحكم الواقع أو بحكم القانون في خط أنابيب ينقل غاز شرق المتوسط إلى المستهلكين في بلغاريا ورومانيا وإيطاليا، وان نتخيل مستقبلاً تعتمد فيه شركات الغاز الإسرائيلية واللبنانية ولكن بشكل مستقل "على نفس مصنع الغاز الطبيعي المسال في قبرص".

وأضاف بارودي "لننتصور اهمية وايجابية سيناريوهات التعاون الثنائي بين اليونان وتركيا من جهة وسوريا وتركيا من جهة ثانية إضافة إلى الترابط الإقليمي الذي سيوفر طاقة احتياطية لدول ساحلية متعددة"، لافتاً إلى أنه "بدلاً من قبول أفكار معينة على أنها مستحيلة بشكل دائم، يجب أن نفكر في المستقبل ونضع الأساس لعمال ايجابية مشتركة على ان تكون نقطة البداية الجيدة مماثلة لاتفاقية الحدود البحرية بين لبنان وإسرائيل في عام 2022".

وشدد بارودي أمام حشد من المتخصصين في مجال الطاقة ومسؤولين حكوميين على أن "استخدام الحوار والدبلوماسية لتوسيع التعاون في مجال الطاقة لن يفيد فقط دول شرق البحر المتوسط ولكن أيضاً جميع دول الاتحاد الأوروبي والكثير من" الجوار "المحيط به وان هذا الاستحقاق المهم يستحق أكثر من اهتمام بروكسل، لا بل يستحق تخصيص موارد الدعم، وتعيين موفد مكلف بتسهيل الاتصالات والمفاوضات اللازمة".

وختم بارودي بالقول: "هذه هي الطريقة الفضلى التي نحتاجها للتفكير إذا أردنا الوصول إلى حيث يجب ان نكون بدلاً من السماح لأنفسنا بالإحباط بسبب وجود عقبات، فنحن نحتاج إلى التفتيش عن طرق جديدة وحديثة تلتف على الافكار والمواقف القديمة، وتعزيز سيادة القانون وخاصة قانون حقوق الإنسان كأساس للنظام الدولي، وتعزيز السلام الدائم بين جميع الدول، عندها فقط يمكننا إعلان النصر على ما أسماه الشاعر الاسكتلندي روبرت بيرنز في القرن الثامن عشر: وحشية "الإنسان للإنسان".