

Qatar Airways allowed to reroute some flights through Saudi airspace



Qatar Airways on Thursday said it had started rerouting flights through Saudi Arabian airspace.

"This evening, Qatar Airways began to reroute some flights through Saudi airspace," Qatar's national carrier tweeted, adding the first flight to use Saudi airspace was QR1365, which was scheduled to leave Doha for Johannesburg at 8.45pm.

Flight-tracking websites later showed QR1365's flight path over Saudi Arabia on its way to the South African city.

This was the first scheduled Qatar Airways service to fly over Saudi Arabia since the start of the Gulf crisis in mid-2017.

Earlier this week, the Al-Ula Declaration was signed during the GCC Summit for the restoration

of full relations between Qatar and the four nations – Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt – that had cut ties in 2017. This includes the reopening of borders and airspace.

Meanwhile, aviation analyst Alex Macheras told Gulf Times that “this is the most significant development in more than three and a half years, as ‘NOTAMs’ (notices to flight crew issued by country aviation regulators) were updated by Saudi Arabia on Thursday, removing the airspace ban on Qatari-registered jets”.

“The removal of the ban was effective immediately, meaning just moments later a Qatar Airways A350 bound for South Africa became the first commercial airline flight in over three years to cross into Saudi airspace, reducing flight time and saving fuel,” he said. “The airspace of Saudi Arabia is now open to Qatar without restriction, and we should expect Qatar’s national airline, Qatar Airways, to resume flights to Saudi Arabia very soon.

“For now, flights that have been avoiding Saudi airspace for the duration of the blockade will now overfly the kingdom.”

Qatar Airways pilots will once again be communicating with Saudi’s air traffic controllers, and the airline will enjoy the fuel savings immediately – a win for the environment too, he noted.

“We’re expecting the ‘NOTAMs’ of the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt to also be updated in due course, following Saudi Arabia in removing their airspace bans on Qatar,” Macheras added.

China set to bail out Iraq with multibillion-dollar oil deal



Baghdad: Iraq is poised to sign a multibillion-dollar contract with China ZhenHua Oil Co., a bailout from Beijing for the cash-strapped government which will receive money upfront in exchange for long-term oil supplies.

The deal is the latest example of China, via state-controlled trading companies and banks, lending to struggling oil producers such as Angola, Venezuela and Ecuador, with repayment in the form of oil barrels rather than cash. This year's crash in oil prices has hammered Iraq's budget and the

government has failed to pay teachers and civil servants on time.

The Iraqi agency in charge of petroleum exports, SOMO, picked ZhenHua after asking oil traders for bids, according to people familiar with the matter. Cabinet spokesman Hassan Nadhim said on Tuesday there had been “several offers” and they were being studied before Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi makes the final decision.

Upfront payment

Under the terms of a letter SOMO sent last month, the winning bidder will buy 4 million barrels a month, or about 130,000 a day. They will pay upfront for one year of supply, which at current prices would bring in more than \$2 billion, according to Bloomberg calculations. The deal runs for five years – but the upfront payment is only for one year.

The deal attracted widespread interest among major oil traders, according to the people. The deadline for the tender was extended from late November to allow companies more time to bid.

ZhenHua Oil didn't reply to an email seeking comment that was sent to its headquarters in Beijing after normal business hours on Tuesday.

All major producers have taken a hit from oil's coronavirus-triggered plunge. But Iraq, where crude accounts for almost all government revenue, is in a worse position than most. Its economy will contract 12% this year, more than that of any other OPEC member under a production quota, according to International Monetary Fund forecasts.

Thousands of Iraqis have taken to the streets in recent months to protest about worsening living conditions. The government has struggled to fulfil its commitments to the Organization of

Petroleum Exporting Countries, which agreed at the height of the pandemic in April to cut output. Baghdad has pumped above its cap on several occasions, angering OPEC's de facto leader Saudi Arabia.

Rare deal

Energy-rich nations short on revenue have often relied on pre-payment deals to raise money, but Baghdad hasn't done so until now. The semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq has used similar contracts in the past, as have Chad and the Republic of Congo.

In a pre-payment deal, the oil buyer effectively becomes a lender to the country. The barrels are security for the loan.

Iraq's woes make it harder for the government to raise money more conventionally, such as through the bond market. The country's dollar yields average 7.5%, one of the highest levels for any sovereign. Goldman Sachs Group Inc. said this week that Iraq was among the most vulnerable bond issuers heading into 2021.

The pre-payment part of Iraq's contract is one of the largest in recent history, although less than the record \$10 billion that Russia's state-run Rosneft raised in 2013 from trading houses Vitol Group and Glencore Plc.

Besides its size, the Iraqi deal is rare because it allows the winner to ship crude to wherever it wishes for a year. Normally, Middle Eastern crude is sold with strict clauses preventing traders and refiners from re-selling the barrels to different regions.

The exclusion of that clause was probably seen as advantageous enough to compensate for the fact the pre-payment money is effectively interest-free for Iraq. A country usually pays a yield for the cash it receives upfront.

Revitalize China

ZhenHua produces and trades oil. The company has played a large role in Beijing's so-called "going global" policy for energy. It has invested in oil concessions in the United Arab Emirates, Kazakhstan and Myanmar, and trades crude originating from the likes of Kuwait, Brazil and the Republic of Congo.

The company was founded in 2003 as a subsidiary of the largest Chinese state-owned defense contractor, known as Norinco. According to its website, ZhenHua trades about 1.3 million barrels a day of oil and finished products.

Other major Chinese traders include Unipec, Chinaoil and Sinochem. Shrouded in relative secrecy in the past, these state companies are gaining prominence as China's oil consumption rises. It's set to soon overtake the U.S. as the world's largest crude importer.

ZhenHua, meaning "Revitalize China" in Mandarin, started a joint-venture with SOMO to market barrels into China in 2018, though it was later scrapped.

Lebanon sets starting point for sea border negotiations with Israel



BEIRUT (Reuters) – President Michel Aoun on Thursday specified Lebanon's starting point for demarcating its sea border with Israel under U.S.-mediated talks, in the first public confirmation of a stance sources say increases the size of the disputed area.

Israel and Lebanon launched the negotiations last month with delegations from the long-time foes convening at a U.N. base to try to agree on the border that has held up hydrocarbon exploration in the potentially gas-rich area.

A presidency statement said Aoun instructed the Lebanese team that the demarcation line should start from the land point of Ras Naqoura as defined under a 1923 agreement and extend seaward in a trajectory that a security source said extends the disputed area to some 2,300 square km (888 sq miles) from around 860 sq km.

Israel's energy minister, overseeing the talks with Lebanon, said Lebanon had now changed its position seven times and was contradicting its own assertions.

“Whoever wants prosperity in our region and seeks to safely develop natural resources must adhere to the principle of stability and settle the dispute along the lines that were submitted by Israel and Lebanon at the United Nations,” Yuval Steinitz said.

Any deviation, Steinitz said, would lead to a “dead end”.

Last month sources said the two sides presented contrasting maps for proposed borders. They said the Lebanese proposal extended farther south than the border Lebanon had years before presented to the United Nations and that of the Israeli team pushed the boundary farther north than Israel’s original position.

The talks, the culmination of three years of diplomacy by Washington, are due to resume in December.

Israel pumps gas from huge offshore fields but Lebanon, which has yet to find commercial gas reserves in its own waters, is desperate for cash from foreign donors as it faces the worst economic crisis since its 1975-1990 civil war.

Additional reporting by Ari Rabinovitch in Jerusalem; Writing by Ghaida Ghanous; Editing by Janet Lawrence

Athens responds to US State Department’s claim that Greek air space is only 6 nautical

miles



Regarding the report by the US State Department, which was forwarded to the US Congress on March 18 and in the framework of the provisions of the “Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act,” diplomatic sources pointed out that the borders of Greece’s territorial waters, as well as the maritime borders between Greece and Turkey, have been clearly defined for years on the basis of international law and are not in any dispute.

In particular, they stated in response to the State Department that regarding the Southeastern Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean, the maritime borders have been defined by the Italy-Turkey Agreement signed in Ankara on 4 January 1932, as well as the minutes which was signed in Ankara on December 28, 1932.

Greece, as the successor state under the Treaty of Paris of 1947, gained sovereignty over the Dodecanese without any change in the maritime borders, as agreed between Italy and Turkey.

Regarding the sea borders in Thrace (up to the point of a distance of three nautical miles from the Evros Delta), they emphasise that these were defined by the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 and the Athens Protocol of 1926.

Finally, regarding the sea borders between the above two areas (from Thrace to Dodecanese), where the territorial waters of Greece and Turkey intersect, they pointed out that the sea borders follow the middle line between the Greek islands and islets and the opposite Turkish coasts.

The same diplomatic sources noted that Greece's external borders, including its territorial waters, are at the same time the external borders of the European Union.

The recently released State Department report states that Greece claims an airspace that extends up to 10 nautical miles and a territorial sea of up to 6 nautical miles, but that "under international law, a country's airspace coincides with its territorial sea."

"The US thus recognizes an airspace up to 6 nautical miles consistent with territorial sea. Greece and the US do not share a view on the extent of Greece's airspace," the report said.

The State Department report adds that although Athens currently claims up to a 6-nautical-mile territorial sea in the Aegean, "Greece and its neighbors have not agreed on boundary delimitation in those areas where their lawful maritime entitlements overlap."

"Lack of such delimitation means there is no clarity on the extent of Greece's territorial sea and corresponding airspace in these areas rendering any assessment of total violations not feasible," the report said.

The State Department report said Washington encourages Greece and Turkey "to resolve outstanding bilateral maritime boundary

issues peacefully and in accordance with international law.”

Mediterranean crisis calls for ‘civilized solution’, energy expert tells EU-Arab gathering



‘Do we want the benefits of our own rightful shares more than we want to deny the same benefits to our neighbors?’

ATHENS, Greece: The latest legal and technological tools can resolve rival claims in the Mediterranean without anyone firing a shot, a veteran of the region’s energy industry told a conference in Athens on Monday.

“We have both the legal mechanisms and the high-precision

mapping technologies to draw up fair and equitable boundaries at sea,” Roudi Baroudi said in a speech to the 5th European Union Arab World Summit. “That means that countries in the Mediterranean region can settle their differences amicably, setting aside the costly and ultimately self-defeating ways of war.”

Appearing via Zoom from Doha, Qatar, Baroudi said the region had a long history of spawning great civilizations, but that each of these had squandered their good fortune by make war on their neighbors.

Thanks to huge deposits of natural gas having been found beneath the Mediterranean, he noted, “the region faces another crossroads”, largely because “the vast majority of maritime boundaries in the Mediterranean remain unresolved.” With neighboring states laying claim to the same undersea real estate, Baroudi said the resulting “patchwork of claims and counter-claims” only served to hamper all parties by jeopardizing their respective offshore oil and gas activities.

With more than four decades in the business – including significant experience in both the public and private sectors – Baroudi has become a leading proponent of the East Med’s emergence as a major energy producer. Having long argued that safe and responsible exploitation of the resource in question would allow regional countries to make historic gains, both at home and abroad, his most recent interventions have focused on how to draw fair and equitable boundaries at sea. In fact, his book “Maritime Disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Way Forward” is widely regarded as the most authoritative guide to the current situation.

Currently serving as CEO of Energy and Environment Holding, an independent consultancy based in Doha, Baroudi said all parties need to be honest with themselves by answering single question: “do we want the benefits of our own rightful shares more than we want to deny the same benefits to our neighbors?”

Those that want to focus on getting their share, he argued, need to put their faith in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Roudi Baroudi is CEO of Energy and Environment Holding, an independent consultancy based in Doha.

He also is the author of “Maritime Disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean: the Way Forward”, published earlier this year by the Transatlantic Leadership Network and distributed by the Brookings Institution Press.

5th EU- Arab World Summit – Maritime Borders in the Mediterranean: the Cradle of Civilization Deserves a Civilized Solution



ROUDI BAROUDI

CEO, Energy & Environment Holding

DELPHI
ECONOMIC
FORUM

الاقتصاد والحوكمة
Al-Iqtisad wal-Hukma

**FOR TURKEY AND GREECE, SHARED
TRAGEDY COULD SAVE LIVES IN
THE LONG RUN**



By Roudi Baroudi

The deadly earthquake that struck Greece and Turkey on Friday has brought out the best in the two countries' leaders, who have exchanged not only condolences, but also offers of assistance.

Like other natural disasters, this one showed no regard for national borders. Most of the casualties and damage took place in the Turkish city of Izmir, but the epicenter was located beneath the seabed in Greek waters, and the two Greek youths who perished did so on the island of Samos, which lies less than 2 kilometers off the Turkish coast. Far from discriminating between the two neighbors, then, the quake was a (literally) jarring reminder that their fates are inextricably intertwined.

And yet, the mutual goodwill expressed by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis owed most of its newsworthiness to the acrimony which has otherwise defined their relationship of late: most of their recent exchanges have involved accusations and even

thinly veiled threats over rival territorial claims at sea.

The dispute is not new, but in recent years its urgency has grown exponentially due to discoveries of enormous oil and (mostly) gas deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean. Far from eliciting offers to exchange resources and expertise – in a deepwater setting that will require massive upfront investment and world-class technical capabilities – the two sides have approached the matter as zero-sum game. Each is behaving as though any gains it achieves can only come by inflicting equal-size losses on the other, but given the realities of the dispute, nothing could be further from the truth.

Already, the mere fact of their having not progressed to negotiate a maritime border treaty – one allowing both parties to get on with the businesses of exploration and development in their respective zones, and perhaps in some joint areas as well – is costing a lot of money, and not just in terms of time lost to unnecessary delay. The absence of an agreement also means that whenever the Turks send their seismic research vessel, the Oruc Reis, to study the seabed in disputed waters, they also have to bear the cost of an armed escort. They may take solace in the fact that the Greeks are also paying heavily to monitor their activities, but there are no winners in such a contest. Both countries are only ensuring that whoever eventually finds, extracts, and sells the resources in question, the venture will have been less profitable than it should have been.

Similar obstacles apply to just about any scenario in which Athens and Ankara fail to delineate a mutually acceptable border and try to act unilaterally. Investors loath uncertainty, so any offshore blocks they auction off will fetch less money than they would if the dispute were settled. Underwriters are equally suspicious of oil and gas operations in potential war zones, which means that even if insurance can be obtained for ships, drilling rigs, and any other equipment, the price is likely to be exorbitant – and this is not to

mention the cost of liability coverage relating to life and limb, environmental consequences, etc.

Why would anyone opt for such a murky, risky, and uncertain venture when a much clearer, safer, and surer one is so close at hand? From any conventional business perspective, the far superior route is to negotiate a mutually beneficial solution that gives both parties the ability to make plans and implement them without fear of delay or interference.

A generation or two ago, there might have been an excuse for one or both countries to question the advisability of an early settlement, but not anymore: not when the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) sets out clear standards for the fair and equitable resolution of maritime boundary disputes; not when satellite imagery and data processing technologies allow virtually all nation-states to obtain high-precision maps ahead of time; not when we have such an extensive background of previous cases and established precedent to indicate in advance what an eventual settlement will look like.

If they have not already done so, both countries can commission a company like Fugro to carry out a Law of the Sea study and, within a few weeks, know within a few centimeters where their maritime boundaries should lie. If there are compelling reasons to alter the legal or data inputs that produce these results, they can negotiate swaps and/or designate certain areas for joint management or even shared sovereignty. Whatever the solution, it will be better than the bellicose rhetoric and high-seas brinkmanship on which they have recently relied.

Right now the priority has to be on search and rescue, saving any lives that can still be saved, taking care of those made homeless by the quake, and determining the full extent of the damage caused by the quake. Nothing should delay this process.

Once the danger has passed and the vulnerable have been secured, however, Greece and Turkey should follow their own example in this post-quake period by moving to defuse tensions and start talking about how to resolve their differences quickly, practically, and peacefully. Why waste any more time, expend any more resources, or risk any more lives when a negotiated solution is so easily obtainable?

Roudi Baroudi, a four-decade veteran of the energy business and CEO of Doha-based Energy and Environment Holding, is the author of "Maritime Disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Way Forward", published by the Transatlantic Leadership Network and distributed by the Brookings Institution Press.



Roudi Baroudi is CEO of Energy and Environment Holding, an independent consultancy based in Doha.

He also is the author of "Maritime Disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean: the Way Forward", published earlier this year by the Transatlantic Leadership Network and distributed by the Brookings Institution Press.

**ترسيم الحدود البحرية ينطلق
وبارودي لـ "النهار": الاجتهادات**

الدولية تساعدنا للحصول على كامل الحقوق



يشهد مقر "اليونيفيل" في الناقورة اليوم إنطلاق الجلسة الافتتاحية للمفاوضات بين الجانبين اللبناني والاسرائيلي حول الحدود البحرية، والتي يستضيفها المنسق الخاص للأمم المتحدة في لبنان يان كوبيتش في حضور الوفدين اللبناني والاسرائيلي. كما يشارك في الجلسة مساعد وزير الخارجية الأميركي لشؤون الشرق الأدنى ديفيد شنكر على ان ينضم اليها ايضا السفير جون ديروشر، الذي سيكون الوسيط الأميركي لهذه المفاوضات.

بعد انتظار دام اكثر من عشر سنين، ينتظر ان تبدأ مفاوضات ترسيم الحدود البحرية بين لبنان واسرائيل. وهذا المشهد في حال كتبت له نهاية سعيدة سيستفيد منه لبنان في مجالات اقتصادية ووطنية مختلفة. ولن تكون المفاوضات سهلة بل يمكن وصفها بالصعبة والجادة، هذا ما يؤكدته الخبر الدولي في شؤون النفط والغاز رودي بارودي في حديث لـ"النهار"، مشددا على "ضرورة التفاف الجميع حول الوفد اللبناني" الذي يضم العميد الركن الطيار بسام ياسين رئيسا، العقيد الركن البحري مازن بصبوص، عضو هيئة ادارة قطاع البترول وسام شباط، والخبير في القانون الدولي نجيب مسيحي الذي يعمل مع قيادة الجيش في المواضيع المتعلقة بالخرائط. المطلوب هو تأمين الدعم الكامل للجيش اللبناني في هذه المفاوضات، خصوصا ان التوصل الى اتفاق سيكون انتصارا لكل اللبنانيين كونه يؤدي حتما الى تسريع الاستفادة من الثروات النفطية والغازية الكامنة في عمق البحر، كما يسهل التفاوض مع الجانب القبرصي للتوصل إلى اتفاق نهائي معه أيضا.

ويعتبر بارودي ان "الجهود التي بذلها رئيس مجلس النواب نبيه بري طوال السنوات الماضية لوضع اطار صلب للمفاوضات هو جهد اساسي وله اثر ايجابي على لبنان، وبالتالي فإن اي جدل حول ما قام به الرئيس بري لن يساعد في المفاوضات بل على العكس سوف يحرم لبنان اوراقا رابحة هو بأمس الحاجة اليها".

ويضيف ان "الحل السلمي سواء عبر المفاوضات المباشرة او غير المباشرة، كما هي الحال بين لبنان واسرائيل، للنزاعات الحدودية البحرية يساعد البلدان الساحلية على الاستفادة من الموارد البحرية"، لافتا إلى أن "أدوات الحل بسيطة ومتاحة بسهولة وهناك سوابق واجتهادات كثيرة تدل على ذلك". ويشير الى دور للولايات المتحدة الأميركية في هذا المجال، ويقول إنه "نظرا الى حال الحرب بين لبنان واسرائيل لعبت الادارة الاميركية دورا كبيرا طوال السنوات الماضية لوضع اطار ناجح ومفيد للبدء بالمفاوضات، خصوصا انها الدولة الوحيدة التي تستطيع ان تكون صلة وصل بين الطرفين"، مشددا على الدور الاساسي للأمم المتحدة، ومعتبرا أنه "في المسائل المشابهة تتبنى الحكومات المعنية بشكل كلي المبدأ الاساسي للأمم المتحدة والنظام الدولي برمته والذي تم العمل عليه منذ الحرب العالمية الثانية: أي الحل السلمي للنزاعات. بمجرد اقرار هذا المبدأ سيكون هناك مزيج منطقي من القانون والعلوم والتكنولوجيا يجعل ترسيم الحدود ولا سيما منها البحرية عملية بسيطة وسهلة يستفيد منها جميع الأطراف. فاتفاقية الأمم المتحدة لقانون البحار وتأثيرها المتزايد جعل من قواعدها ومعاييرها أساسا لجميع المفاوضات والاتفاقات البحرية، كما ان التقدم الذي أحرز أخيرا في مجال العلم والتكنولوجيا لا سيما مجال رسم الخرائط الدقيقة، وسع نطاق المبادئ التوجيهية لاتفاقية الأمم المتحدة لقانون البحار لايجاد تسوية للنزاعات التي تستند إليها". وفي هذا السياق، يؤكد بارودي انه "عند اتباع الدول الساحلية المبادئ والممارسات المنصوص عليها في اتفاقية الأمم المتحدة لقانون البحار، فعليها ان تلتزم أيضا قواعد وأنظمة محددة وان تستند إلى الجوانب العلمية والقانونية لتنفيذ هذه الإجراءات بموجب المبادئ التوجيهية الرسمية المحددة من قبل الأمم المتحدة".

تفاصيل تقنية...

انطلاقا من هذا الواقع وبالعودة الى ترسيم الحدود البحرية بين لبنان واسرائيل، يلاحظ بارودي ان لبنان "اعتمد من اجل البدء بالترسيم 61 مترا في البحر بدءا من نقطة رأس الناقورة، بينما اعتمدت اسرائيل 37 مترا في البحر، فعلميا كلاهما خطأ في البدء بالترسيم من خط بحري offshore اذ عليهما اعتماد خط الناقورة البري (LT) الفاصل بين البلدين". وفي حال رفضت اسرائيل الاعتراف بحقوق لبنان فان الاجتهادات الدولية تعطي لبنان حقه الكامل، خصوصا اذا ما اعتمد الوفد المفاوض على النقاط الآتية:

القضايا المماثلة في التجارب السابقة التي ارتكزت على القانون

الدولي، وتؤكد ان لبنان سيُمنحُ معظم حقوقه، ومن القضايا التي اصدرت محكمة العدل الدولية أحكاما بها: قرار محكمة العدل الدولية في قضية ميانمار ضد بنغلادش (12 آذار 2012).

قرار محكمة العدل الدولية في قضية ليبيا ضد تونس (24 شباط 1982).
قرار محكمة العدل الدولية في قضية نيكاراغوا ضد هندوراس (8 تشرين الاول 2007).

مما لا شك فيه ان هذه الاجتهادات تعطي الجيش اللبناني الحجة القانونية والحق الكامل للمطالبة بترسيم الحدود البحرية وفقا للمصالح والحقوق اللبنانية".

ومن المؤكد أن القرارات لا تقيم وزنا للجزر الصغيرة في أي معادلة، ولا تعتبر قادرة على دفع أو ازاحة أي خط بحري واحد مقابل الخط الآخر وفقا لاجتهادات محكمة العدل الدولية، فكما هو واضح في الخريطة المرفقة، فإن الصخور والجزر الصغيرة لا تؤخذ في الاعتبار عند ترسيم الحدود، بحسب بارودي، وهذا ما اكده ايضا بيان لقيادة الجيش بان المفاوضات لن تعطي اهمية لهذه الصخور من اجل ترسيم الحدود. أما الخط المشترك الجانبي الذي لدى لبنان مع إسرائيل ويقارب 71 ميلا بحريا، فبمجرد أن ينتهي النزاع الحدودي البحري مع إسرائيل، سيتعزز تلقائياً موقف لبنان لناحية توقيع اتفاق نهائي لترسيم الحدود بين لبنان وقبرص والتي تبلغ حوالى 96 ميلا بحرياً، وبين لبنان وسوريا.

يؤكد بارودي في حديثه ان ترسيم الحدود اللبنانية "سيعزز فرص لبنان الاقتصادية، اذ ان الاكتشافات الأخيرة اكدت وجود كميات كبيرة من النفط والغاز، أما في حال عدم اعتماد الحل العادل والمنصف فسوف يؤدي ذلك ليس إلى إبطاء تنمية الموارد فحسب، بل سيزيد خطر وقوع حرب نحن في غنى عنها". وفي توضيحه لمنافع نجاح الترسيم واستغلال الثروات يقول: "ان الدول التي ستنتج الغاز ستعرف عائدات كبيرة من الإنتاج والصادرات، وحتى الدول غير المنتجة ستستفيد من استضافة مرافق المعالجة أو النقل، وفي أفضل السيناريوات، قد تنضم البلدان الأكثر حظاً إلى خطة إقليمية لتقاسم العائدات، وستسمح هذه التحسينات المالية باستثمارات طال انتظارها في التعليم والرعاية الصحية والنقل والبيئة والمياه النظيفة والحد من الفقر اضافة الى استقرار سياسي".

ويتمنى بارودي النجاح للوفد المفاوض وأن يعيد الى لبنان حقوقه المعترف بها دولياً، خصوصا ان الوضع الاقتصادي الضاغط على اللبنانيين قد يعرف تحولا ايجابيا في حال استطاع لبنان ترسيم حدوده واقناع شركات النفط العالمية بانه بات يؤمّن بيئة آمنة لكي تتمكن من العمل واستكشاف ثرواته النفطية البحرية كما هي حال معظم الدول المجاورة.

maurice.matta@annahar.com.lb

Twitter: @mauricemattta

بارودي يشدّد على التسوية السلميّة لحل النزاع على مياه شرق المتوسط

تحت عنوان "شرق المتوسط مياه هادئة، مشتعلة، جامدة"، تحدّث الخبير في شؤون الطاقة رودي بارودي على قناة "الجزيرة" عبر تقنية الفيديو، عن العوامل التي تدعو الأفرقاء في شرق المتوسط إلى التعاون وتسوية النزاعات، فأكد توفّر الحلول السلمية للنزاعات حول الحدود البحرية، وأشار إلى أن "الولايات المتحدة قبل 75 سنة وبقيّة النظام الدولي الذي تم تأسيسه بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية ونظام الأمم المتحدة، كله تم تصميمه من أجل جعل النزاعات المسلحة شيئاً من الماضي وتنظيم العلاقات ما بين الدول... إذاً الدول قد تدخل في فرضيّة عدم اتفاق لكن من دون السقوط في عمليات العنف بين الدول. لذلك هناك اتفاقات ومعاهدات من أجل السلم والأمن الجماعي"، مؤكداً أن "الأطراف كافة تتقيّد بكل الالتزامات القائمة من أجل حل نزاعاتها بشكل سلمي".

وقال في السياق: اليونان وتركيا دولتان جارتان ولديهما الكثير من النقاط المشتركة، كما تعانيان من النزاعات القائمة، أما الأراضي التي جرى الحديث عنها، قد تكون تغيّرت بسبب اتفاقات عدة كاتفاقية جنيف، وكذلك بعض المجموعات السكانية ربما تم منعها...

وأضاف: الأمور ليست مثالية، فالنظم القائمة في العالم فيها الكثير من نقاط الضعف لكن الوضع هو أفضل بكثير مما كان عليه تاريخياً عندما ننظر إلى الماضي حيث أن الغلبة للأقوى عندما يستغل القوي الضعيف، لذلك هذا النظام موجود لأننا نريد حل هذه المشاكل، لكنه الالتزام به ليس بالطريقة المطلوبة.

وأوضح أن "المشكلات والنزاعات المتعلقة بالحدود البحرية طالما كوّنّت إشكالية خصوصاً أن ليس هناك حكومة تريد النظر إليها على أن تتخلّى عن أي جزء من أراضيها والتي ينظر إليها الشعب على أنها جزء من أراضيهم. من هنا، بإمكان الخبراء والمختصين بالخرائط أن

يلتقوا سوياً للنظر إلى مثل هذه الأمور ويتفقوا على المكان الذي يتم فيه رسم هذه الحدود".

وأشار إلى أن الحدود البحرية هي أكثر تعقيداً وتبدأ من الحدود البرية، وقال: الأمم المتحدة طوّرت آلية لحل هذه النزاعات المتعلقة بمثل هذه القضايا وكل من تركيا واليونان والدول الأخرى كانت حاضرة، البعض وقّع والبعض الآخر لن يوقّع، وتتضمّن قواعدَ بكيفية ترسيم الحدود البحرية والجرف القاري والحدود الأخرى. وغالبية الأعضاء في الأمم المتحدة والدول المنضوية وقّعت وصادقت على هذه الاتفاقية حتى في حالات تم حلّها بأطر غير ثنائية أو معاهدات، فإن المبادئ ذاتها تنطبق على هذه الدول.

وذكر بأن "النزاعات الجارية والتي تم النظر فيها إما مع محكمة العدل الدولية أو من خلال غرف التحكيم، كلها تركّز على المعايير والمبادئ المتعلقة باتفاقية قانون البحار، بما في ذلك على الدول التي ليست طرفاً في هذه الاتفاقية".

وتابع بارودي: عندما يتعرّف الناس على هذه الاتفاقية، يقولون "إذا كان الأمر كذلك، لماذا لم يصادق العالم على هذه الاتفاقية؟ ولماذا لم يتم تعريف كل الحدود؟"، الجواب على هذا السؤال المهم، أن السبب الأساسي هو أن تكنولوجيا التقاط الصور والحوسبة عالجت كل المخالفات المتعلقة بها هذه الاتفاقية والدراسات التي بُنيت عليها، حتى أن هذه القدرات والإمكانات كانت مكلفة بالنسبة إلى الجميع، لكنها كانت متاحة للحكومات الثريّة.

وعن القوى لاتي تملك التأثير في دفع الأفرقاء المتنازعة إلى تسوية الخلافات ما بينها، قال: هناك 21 دولة في منطقة المتوسط الأوروبي وكلنا نستحق أن نعيش بسلام، فقد سئمنا الحروب... ويجب التفكير ما هو الأفضل بالنسبة إلى شعوبنا وأجيالنا وأطفالنا. على الأقل إن لم نتمكن من الاجتماع سوياً، فالولايات المتحدة مستعدة بالتأكيد للمساعدة وكذلك الاتحاد الأوروبي، والأمم المتحدة، وكذلك المملكة المتحدة بما أنها خرجت من الاتحاد الأوروبي فتستطيع بالتالي لعب دور الوسيط الحيادي، ولكن الأهم هو احترام القانون.

الأمر الأهم هو أن الأقوى لا يحترم القانون وعلى سبيل المثال إسرائيل. جلّ ما في الأمر أن علينا أن نتحاور بعيداً من السياسة. لنترك للسياسيين النزاع... ولنندع الشعوب تعيش، ولنندع اقتصاد عمق البحار الذي يمكنه إنقاذ الشعوب. فهم بأمرّ الحاجة إلى أنظمة

الرعاية الصحية والتعليم والأمن والكهرباء والهاتف بأسعار مقبولة ولتتركنا الدول الأجنبية في حالنا. يجب أن نعمل من أجل السلام ولدينا الآليات الضرورية اللازمة، وعلى سبيل المثال إن تركيا واليونان لديهما كل العلماء والخبراء وأفضل الدكاترة أصحاب الخبرة كي يجلسوا ويتصافحوا ويتوصلوا إلى اتفاق، خصوصاً أن أبناء الدولتين عاشوا داخل أراضي بعضهما البعض لسنوات، لماذا لا يقدرّون الآن على تكرار التجربة.

وعن ترسيم الحدود بين لبنان وإسرائيل، قال بارودي: لسوء الحظ، مرّت الدولة اللبنانية بمطبات وحروب... إلخ، وصدر عن مجلس الأمن ما يُسمّى الخط الأزرق وهو لا يصل إلى المنطقة البحرية... هناك منطقة نزاع تمتد على 872 كلم² بحسب العلماء والخبراء، ووفق قرارات الأمم المتحدة يحصل لبنان على ما لا يقل عن الثلثين، لأن إسرائيل استخدمت بعض الصخور وقامت باحتساب بعض حدوده البحرية. والولايات المتحدة مستعدة لمساعدتنا في هذا الموضوع، وتريد اعتماد الوساطة الجيدة، الأمر الذي يساهم في حل المشكلة.

ولفت إلى أن الـ"بلوك 9" غني بالموارد "ويساعدنا على العيش بسلام ومن شأنه أن يقضي على الفقر".

وعن شكل التسوية التي تراعي موازين القوى ومصالح مختلف الأطراف في شرق المتوسط، قال: حين تُحل المشكلة بين تركيا واليونان ينسحب بالطريقة نفسها على قبرص بجزءٍ لها، وتتوحد الجزيرة.

وختم: إذا كان شرق المتوسط يعيش بسلام بدون أي نزاعات أو عنف، فقبرص قريبة جداً من الساحل التركي... المطلوب النضج واحترام القانون والتناغم من أجل إبعاد الحرب، هذا كل ما نحتاج إليه.

How to Fix East Med Border Disputes



The Eastern Mediterranean is once again at the center of what can go wrong when countries fail to resolve decades-old disputes over offshore Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). On the face of it, the latest Greece-Turkey skirmish makes little sense now other than playing to domestic audiences and putting down markers to ensure a future piece of whatever this natural gas-rich part of the world has to offer. In today's brutal economic climate, few energy companies are lining up to undertake new projects, which means it will take longer for actual production to begin under the best circumstances. What's more, Turkey may not have the financial wherewithal or capacity to do the exploration and development work on its own, and no private energy company is likely to invest serious capital in a project that can be tied up for years by competing EEZ claims. This maximalist approach to solving maritime disputes will not work. Equitable results, perhaps based on the equidistance principle – a methodology endorsed by the 1994 UN Convention for Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) – would be the best way forward for settling the Greece-Turkey maritime boundary dispute.

The development of Israel's huge Leviathan natural gas field is a model studied closely by others in this region. Texas-based Noble Energy, which is now merging with Chevron, discovered Leviathan 10 years ago and quickly recognized that it was not only a world-class field, but that it needed an EEZ treaty for development to proceed without being contested by Cyprus. Noble carried out its own internal Law of the Sea desktop study, which became the basis for Israel's EEZ treaty with Cyprus. It also issued an ultimatum to the Israelis that no further exploration would take place until the EEZ deal was finalized. This pressure from Noble not only prompted the Israeli government to conclude a treaty with Cyprus, it did so in a document that explicitly states Israel must adhere to UNCLOS rules despite not being a signatory of the treaty. That in itself is an enormous change with broad economic implications.

While four of the seven recognized coastal states (Greece, Turkey, Syria, Cyprus, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt), are not signatories to the treaty, there is now a general understanding that even non-signatories to UNCLOS are increasingly ready to abide by its principles in settling disputes. The real threat to the East Mediterranean's prospects as an energy hub is politics, specifically the zero-sum games that have constricted and warped regional interactions. The best way to proceed is an orderly process in which Mediterranean maritime boundaries are fully delineated and individual countries are free to develop the resources within their respective EEZs. The UNCLOS contains a comprehensive rulebook for the fair and equitable resolution of such disputes by subjecting them to consistent legal standards and detailed scientific observations.

Necessary Conditions

Given the UNCLOS, the obvious question is: Why are we still talking about unresolved maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean? The short answer is that until recently few of

the necessary conditions were in place. Since its inception, both technology and case law have evolved. Old colonial-era charts were highly unreliable, with depictions of even easily observable shoreline features off by a kilometer or more. New, accurate technological mapping has removed much of the guesswork. The outcome of any legal process based on UNCLOS can now be predicted with considerable reliability.

The Israel-Cyprus treaty has itself been challenged by Lebanon, which has alleged that its neighbors used faulty coordinates for its shoreline border with Israel, thereby mistakenly locating the offshore “tripoint” among the three countries’ respective EEZs several kilometers from where it should be. But Israel has agreed to be bound by UNCLOS standards, making resolution possible. The situation also makes clear that precision mapping technology – now at the disposal of any government willing to pay for a Law of the Sea study – has finally established a clear, objective basis for discussion.

In what could be a valuable point for both Turkey and Greece, this crucial degree of accuracy, often down to sub-meter measurements, should make it easier for governments to sell any agreements they reach to their respective publics. It also leaves too little room for naysayers at home or abroad to accuse anyone of backing down or selling out. German efforts to reconcile the interests of Turkey and Greece are commendable, and with precision mapping accuracy both governments can reduce economic and political pressure while simultaneously demonstrating the potential advantages of reconciliation.

Clear Benefits

The Eastern Mediterranean’s emergence as an oil and gas hub promises a cure for the region’s poverty and instability. The first discoveries were located in uncontested waters off Egypt and Israel, so development was fairly straightforward. In

addition, most of the deposits were in the form of natural gas, whose cleaner properties and growing ubiquity as a global commodity, may give it better medium- and long-term market prospects than oil.

These discoveries and others that could follow are critical for the growing economies in the region, which need greater energy diversity and independence. Commercial interest in these resources also remains strong. Noble's East Mediterranean gas interests are considered one of the prize assets that Chevron was after in its bid. The energy majors already invested in offshore Cyprus, including the Exxon Mobil/Qatar Petroleum (QP) and Total/Eni consortia, have postponed – not canceled – exploratory drilling in their respective blocks. The involvement of QP is also a signal of long-term stability. As one of the world's most deep-pocketed national oil companies, its gas strategy is measured in decades, as Energy Minister Saad al-Kaabi likes to say.

Even with the current extraordinary economic circumstances of the coronavirus pandemic, for which few companies and governments were prepared, the East Med should remain attractive and financially appealing going forward. The resources are still there and, while their current market value has been diminished, the potential deposits are still highly prized assets whose development, extraction and sale can be expected to generate many hundreds of billions of dollars over several decades. Despite the increasing competitiveness of renewables, the ubiquity and low carbon profile of gas will keep it in the global energy mix for years to come.

Roudi Baroudi is CEO of Energy and Environment Holding, an independent consultancy in Doha. His recent book, "Maritime Disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Way Forward," is published by the Transatlantic Leadership Network and distributed by the Brookings Institution Press.

Debra Cagan is the Distinguished Energy Fellow at the Transatlantic Leadership Network. She is a former career US State Department and Defense Department official, having served from the Reagan to the Trump administrations.