

Saudi Aramco awards \$25bn in contracts for gas expansion



Saudi Aramco, the world's biggest oil producer, has awarded contracts worth more than \$25bn for the second phase of the expansion of its Jafurah gas field and the third phase of expanding its main gas network.

The development of the Jafurah field, which is estimated to hold 200 trillion cubic feet of gas, is expected to cost \$100bn and boost the state energy firm's gas production by more than 60 per cent by 2030.

"These contract awards demonstrate our firm belief in the future of gas as an important energy source, as well as a vital feedstock for downstream industries," said Amin H. Nasser, Aramco president & CEO.

"The scale of our ongoing investment at Jafurah and the expansion of our master gas system underscores our intention

to further integrate and grow our gas business to meet anticipated rising demand."

Aramco awarded 16 contracts, worth a combined total of around \$12.4bn, for phase two development at Jafurah. This phase will include the construction of gas compression facilities, pipelines, the expansion of the Jafurah gas plant, gas processing trains, utilities, sulfur, and export facilities.

The expansion includes the construction of new riyas natural gas liquids (NGL) fractionation facilities in Jubail, including NGL fractionation trains, utilities, storage, and export facilities.

The state-energy giant also awarded 15 lump sum turnkey contracts worth approximately \$8.8bn to kick off the phase three expansion of the master gas system. The expansion will increase the size of the network and raise its total capacity by an additional 3.15 billion standard cubic feet per day (bscfd) by 2028 through the installation of around 4,000km of pipelines and 17 new gas compression trains.

Furthermore, Aramco awarded an additional 23 gas rig contracts worth \$2.4bn, two-directional drilling contracts worth \$612m, and 13 well tie-in contracts at Jafurah, for a total of \$1.63bn.

Aramco's LNG ambitions

Saudi Arabia is working on developing its unconventional gas reserves, which require advanced extraction methods such as those used in the shale gas industry.

Aramco signed 40 corporate procurement agreements worth \$6bn with local suppliers in February as the state-owned energy giant seeks to develop the country's energy services sector while boosting its localisation programme.

The agreements cover the supply of a range of products

comprising strategic commodities, such as instrumentation, electrical, and drilling equipment.

Meanwhile, an additional 15 trillion standard cubic feet of gas (scfd) were proven at Aramco's Jafurah field in February, adding significant volumes to the kingdom's proven gas and condensate reserves.

The company estimates that Jafurah's reserves have reached 229 trillion cubic feet of gas and 75 billion barrels of condensates. Jafurah is the country's largest unconventional non-oil-associated gas field and reportedly the biggest shale gas development outside of the US.

Aramco is expanding its portfolio into LNG at a time when global demand for the fuel has surged, particularly in Europe, which is replacing reduced pipeline supplies from Russia. It forayed into the global LNG market last September by acquiring a minority stake in EIG Partners' MidOcean Energy in a deal valued at \$500m.

The state-energy giant signed non-binding agreements with two US energy firms Sempra and NextDecade, for the supply of 5 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) and 1.2 of mtpa LNG, respectively, for 20 years.

Potential Qatar-Greece investment ties seen in energy, high-tech industries

Greece's economic resurgence with Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis at the helm is seen to open potential Qatari

investments in a wide range of sectors, including energy, tourism, and high-tech industries.

In an exclusive interview with Gulf Times, Energy and Environment Holding CEO Roudi Baroudi underscored the growing bilateral ties of both countries, saying Qatar is well-positioned to capitalise on Greece's economic stability, which has been attracting foreign direct investments (FDI).

"After the bond and fiscal crisis that Greece went through in 2012-2014, it took them a few years of solid reconsolidating their books with the assistance of the IMF, the World Bank, and especially the EU...the stupendous economic growth brought about by Prime Minister Mitsotakis has brought a lot of FDI back.

"Qatar has always had certain private investments in the financial and energy sectors. Today, Greece is a hub for diverse investment opportunities and its economy is open to different markets other than just tourism, real estate, and industry, but they have direct access to Europe, as well, in terms of oil and gas," Baroudi explained.

Baoudi noted that the energy sector, particularly liquefied natural gas (LNG), is vital in enhancing further Qatar-Greece investment opportunities and economic ties. He also said Qatar's decades-long expertise in the LNG industry could help catalyse Greece's bid to become a major logistics centre.

"Greece has probably the largest ships, crude tankers, and gas tankers in the world, making them one of the leaders in the global maritime business. Qatar's LNG capabilities are already well-established with more than a dozen LNG ships working for QatarEnergy subsidiaries," Baroudi noted.

At the Qatar Economic Forum held in Doha last month, HE the Minister of Finance Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari emphasised that Qatar's energy sector is performing "very well," citing QatarEnergy's plans for a new LNG expansion project that would

further raise the country's LNG production capacity to 142mn tonnes per annum.

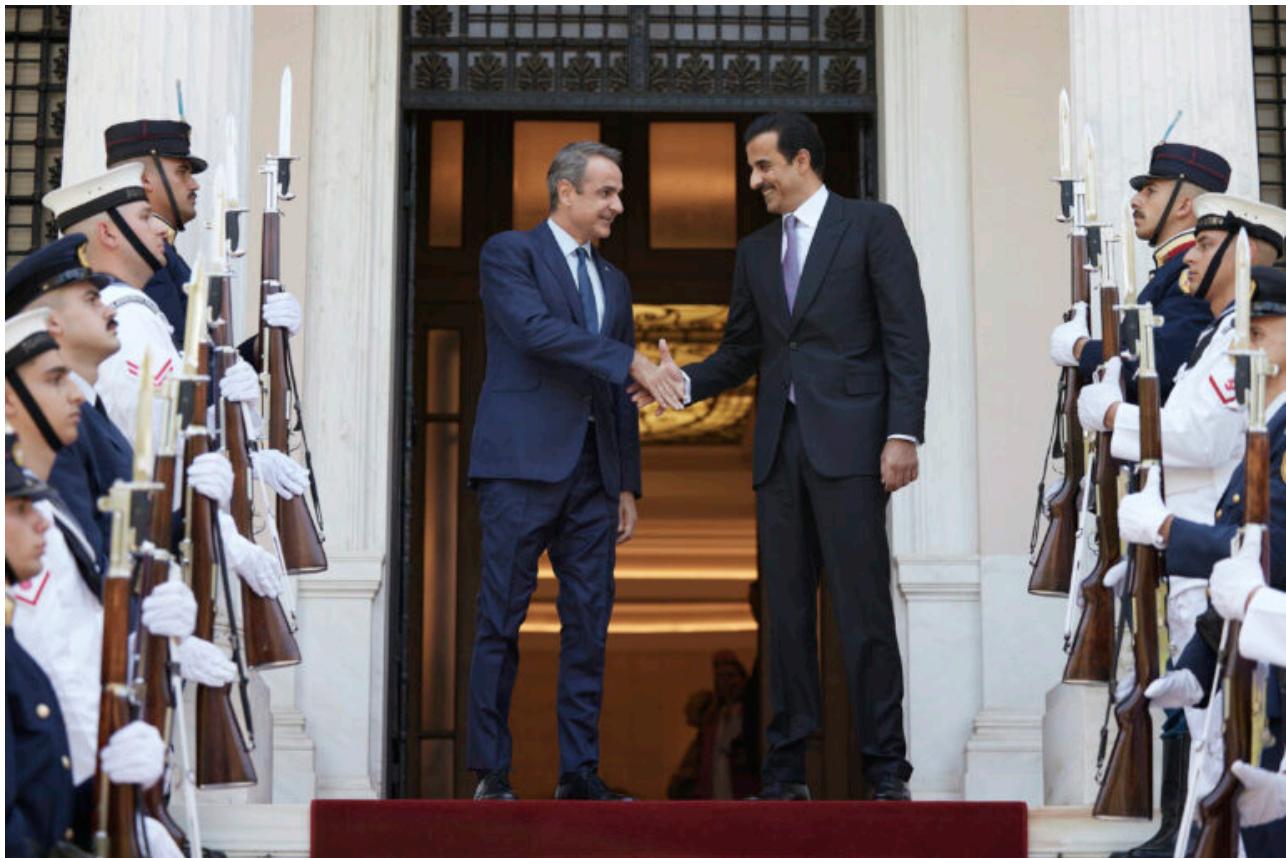
Al-Kuwari said, "We are going to increase Qatar's (liquefied natural gas) production by 85% in a phased manner until 2030. We are going to be reaching 142mn tonnes per annum of LNG."

According to Baroudi, recent developments in Qatar's energy industry could extend potential investment opportunities with Greece beyond shipping to LNG infrastructure. "Qatar's expertise could be crucial as Greece expands its LNG port to supply gas to neighbouring countries following the Ukraine-Russian war. QatarEnergy is also making strategic investments in the Eastern Mediterranean, such as in Cyprus and Egypt as part of a larger regional strategy," he said.

Baroudi also pointed to knowledge exchange as another avenue for collaboration and investment in terms of port management. "There is no question that Hamad Port will benefit a lot from further co-operation with the Port of Piraeus, which is Greece's largest port, and the second largest in the Mediterranean," Baroudi stated.

Asked about potential partnerships outside the energy sector and port management, Baroudi said both countries could also forge joint opportunities in digital connectivity, artificial intelligence (AI), and clean tech. Among other industries, Baroudi also noted that Qatar could expand its tourism and hospitality footprint amidst Greece's favourable economic environment.

EMIR IN GREECE AND CYPRUS



Political 04.06.24

Interview by ALEXIA TASOULI

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

POLITICAL.GR NEWSPAPER

Athens, Friday 31st of May 2024: Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad AlThani paid official visits to Cyprus and Greece this week, meeting with senior officials from both countries as part of efforts to expand cooperation. International energy expert Roudi Baroudi, CEO of Doha-based independent consultancy Energy and Environment Holding, sat down to answer a few questions about the outcome and significance of the emir's mission.

Question: Overall, how successful were HH the emir's visits to Greece and Cyprus?

Answer: Both visits appear to have been very fruitful. HH the emir and his delegation held constructive talks with their counterparts in both countries, and all sides came away with clearer understandings of where the already strong relationships should go next, and how they can get there. Several important first steps were taken toward identifying likely areas for further cooperation, and now both sides have the information they need to come up with proposals for the next steps on several fronts.

Q: From your perspective, what are the main takeaways from HH the emir's trip?

A: There are several elements at play here, multiple processes unfolding according to their own timelines, but all interrelated in some ways. The first thing to consider is that both visits constitute reaffirmations of Qatar's traditional diplomatic strategy, much of which revolves around having stable and friendly relations with as many counterparts as possible. That might sound a little basic, but it's really not: many governments "pick sides" in various international disputes, which often amounts to letting other countries decide your foreign policy for you. By contrast, the Qatari model seeks instead to be on good terms with all sides in most disputes, and the value of that approach has been on display for years: Doha has successfully used its good offices as a mediator in the past, and more recently it has done the same for ceasefire talks and other negotiations between Israel and Hamas.

This same philosophy also informs Qatar's stances in the Mediterranean, where it looks for the warmest possible relations with Greece and Cyprus while simultaneously maintaining close ties with Türkiye, with which both Athens and Nicosia have been at odds for decades. I should mention, too, that Cyprus follows a similar path, maintaining friendly

relations with both Israel and Lebanon, for example.

Both Cyprus and Greece also would like to play central roles in the development and buildout of facilities aimed at carrying energy to the European mainland. This is a core part of their respective plans to grow and develop their respective economies, and the necessary investment and expertise will require strong partnerships.

Q: So how do these priorities tie in with the emir's visit?

A: In several ways, really. First, HH the emir's goodwill visit is a reconnection: the COVID pandemic threw a lot of international issues into hibernation as governments everywhere spent a lot of time looking inward for several years. By visiting now, he's demonstrating in general that he values Qatar's relationships with both Cyprus and Greece. The reengagement also bodes well for particulars, and there are several opportunities for cooperation because the parties can help one another. Both Greece and Cyprus want to be part of plans to open new channels for natural gas into Europe, whether it's Eastern Mediterranean gas or from further afield. For this they could find no better partner than Qatar, which, in addition to its own worldleading LNG industry, has also been acquiring stakes in energy assets around the world. But both countries also want investment in other sectors, too, and once again, both the Qatar Investment Authority, the country's sovereign fund, and various private investors are on the hunt for moneymaking ventures.

Q: What does the emir's trip mean for Greece, in particular?

A: To me the time looks ripe for more cooperation. The period since 20072008 has been very difficult, but the current government under Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has done

wonders, not just to stabilize the Greek economy and restore hope to the population, but also to help Greece regain its rightful place at the European table. The country is now looking to build on this foundation by fully embracing cutting-edge sectors like digital connectivity and cleantech, but also by reinvigorating its traditional shipping expertise by becoming a major logistics center and by getting more out of its hospitality sector, too. The long recession is over, and some asset classes look very attractive to Qatari investors – and others, as well – especially given the stronger, cleaner governance and leadership on which Mitsotakis has built his reputation.

Q: What about Cyprus?

A: Another European land of opportunity. All other things being equal, if the world operated according to logic instead of politics, Cyprus would already be a major energy hub. Its location makes it the ideal base for the Eastern Med's burgeoning offshore gas industry, which also includes strategic ports, telecoms, and other support services. Many analysts see real potential in several sectors, including ports, banking, and a host of technologies. The increased economic activity will also introduce more people to the beaches and other attractions that make the island's tourism industry so popular. Another ingredient is leadership: President Nikos Christodoulides has been in office for less than a year, but the former diplomat and foreign minister has already shown himself to be both a highly competent Head of State and a stern defender of his country's economic development & interests.

And all this is not to mention the shipping of the gas itself, for Cyprus is not just part of the European Union: it is also

very much an East Mediterranean country, so it stands to reason that it should become a gateway through which some of the world's newest gas producers can sell their wares into the world's largest gas market. Whether it's a pipeline to Greece, an LNG plant to supply customers in Asia and East Africa, or both, it's a nobrainer that Cyprus is the place to start the journey. To me, this is Cyprus' destiny, and if it's further Qatari investment that makes it happen, so much the better. Remember, too, that QatarEnergy is already involved in Cyprus' gas industry, partnering with ExxonMobil to explore two offshore blocks. The Qataris know the LNG business like no one else, and their robust & steady reliability as partners is unchallenged: in 2017-2021, despite an illegal blockade imposed by some of their neighbors, they continued to process and ship at the highest rates to keep supplying LNG to all of their customers around the world, helping to calm world markets during a very vulnerable period.

"Baroudi, left, with Mitsotakis at the 2019 EUArab World Summit in Athens, before the latter became Greece's prime minister. According to Baroudi, Mitsotakis has done much to speed his country's recovery."



Finally, the role played by Qatar and its leaders has captured the attention of the international community due to the wise policies of the Ruler of the Gulf state. His efforts have been lauded and appreciated by East and West alike, ranging from visits of goodwill by the Emir to regional countries, to forging relations based on mutual respect and cooperation. It also has been noted that visits by the Emir tend to manifest high levels of support in mediation, bringing peace, providing materials or otherwise, as and when needed.

**What's next after new
Energean gas discovery in
Israel's Karish North Field?
Expert underlines need for
Lebanon to lay groundwork for
maritime boundary deals with
Cyprus and Syria**



DOHA/BEIRUT – By Myriam Balaa: Israel's latest undersea gas find further demonstrates that Lebanon should be doing everything it can to pave the way for its own offshore oil and gas industry, specifically by settling its maritime boundaries with Cyprus and Syria, one of the region's foremost authorities on energy development says.

In an interview following Greek/Israeli-owned Energean's announcement of a second discovery in the Karish North Field adjacent to Lebanese waters, energy consultant Roudi Baroudi said the news was actually good for Lebanon.

"It's no surprise that they found more. It just underscores

what we've known for several years: we haven't located all the resources tucked away beneath the seabed of the East Med, including deposits awaiting discovery off Lebanon's coast," said Baroudi, who has more than four decades of experience in the energy business. "The problem is that Lebanon's ongoing political quagmire has caused significant delays in the development of the country's nascent offshore hydrocarbon sector."

Baroudi, who currently serves as CEO of Energy and Environment Holding, an independent consultancy based in Doha, Qatar, confirmed that the new find seemed to be located very close to the maritime boundary line (MBL) agreed to by Lebanon and Israel in October 2022. That agreement, reached after years-long mediation by the United States, was a "necessary step", he explained, but "it alone has not been sufficient to fully activate Lebanon's oil and gas industry."

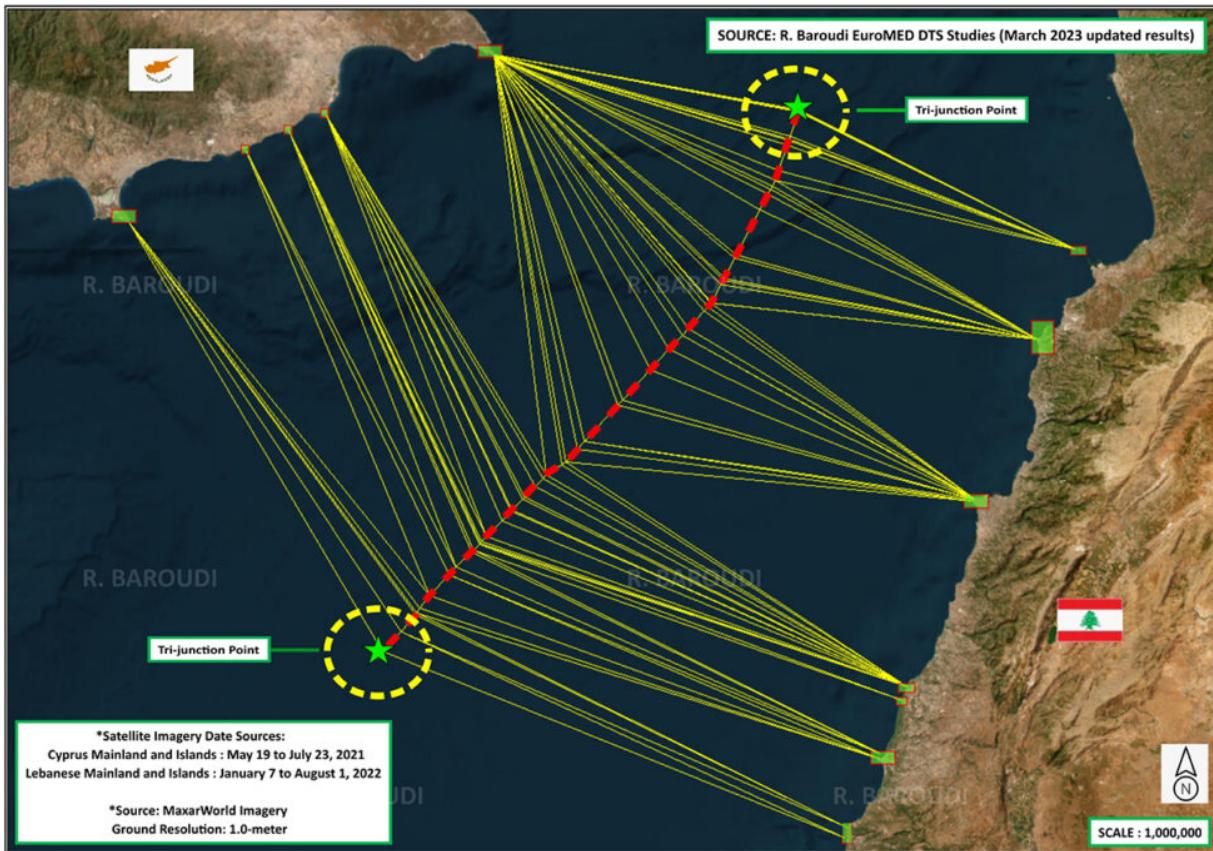
Asked how Beirut should proceed at this juncture, he stressed the importance of moving ahead with efforts to finalize Lebanon's MBLs with Cyprus and Syria, "which would achieve full international recognition of Lebanon's Exclusive Economic Zone, thereby reducing the risk for the big energy companies whose assistance we need in order to fully explore and exploit our offshore resources."

"We've already negotiated the different equidistance points for a completed MBL agreement with Cyprus, we just haven't ratified it," Baroudi explained. "That means we just have to adjust a few coordinates in order to set a trijunction point where the Lebanese, Cypriot, and Israeli MBLs intersect at sea. And setting that trijunction in the south will automatically simplify the process of setting another in the north for Lebanon-Cyprus-Syria".

CYPRUS - LEBANON MBL

Cyprus vs. Lebanon *Strict Equidistance Maritime Boundary Line (MBL)

100% *Full Effect Line (red dashed line), using all relevant Cyprus coastlines and offshore Islands (see close-up inset example), plus also all relevant Lebanese mainland coastlines and all offshore Islands (see closeup inset example). This MBL begins at the northern computed Cyprus-Syria-Lebanon Trijunction point (TRJ ~ green star) and terminates at the southern modified computed Cyprus-Lebanon-Israel Trijunction point (TRJ ~ green star). See the report for specific details on the Trijunction Points and MBL Line Latitude and Longitude geographic coordinates, along with methodology on how the Trijunction Points and this MBL was produced.



He also played down claims in some circles that a significant gap exists between the Lebanon-Cyprus line and the Cyprus-Israel line, making it more difficult to set a trijunction.

"There is a gap, of course, but it's really quite small," Baroudi told the reporters "The proof of this is in the delineation of the offshore blocks issued by both Lebanon and Cyprus about a decade ago. On all the international blocks maps of the area, even including the ones issued by the oil and gas companies, which focus on accurate portrayals of acreage, there is no overlap. In fact, virtually all of the line between Lebanese and Cypriot blocks precisely tracks almost a MBL line agreed which Nicosia and Beirut agreed to in the unratified agreement. The difference at the southern end of the trijunction point is very, very small."

The smaller the gap, he explained, the easier it should be to finish defining Lebanon's EEZ.

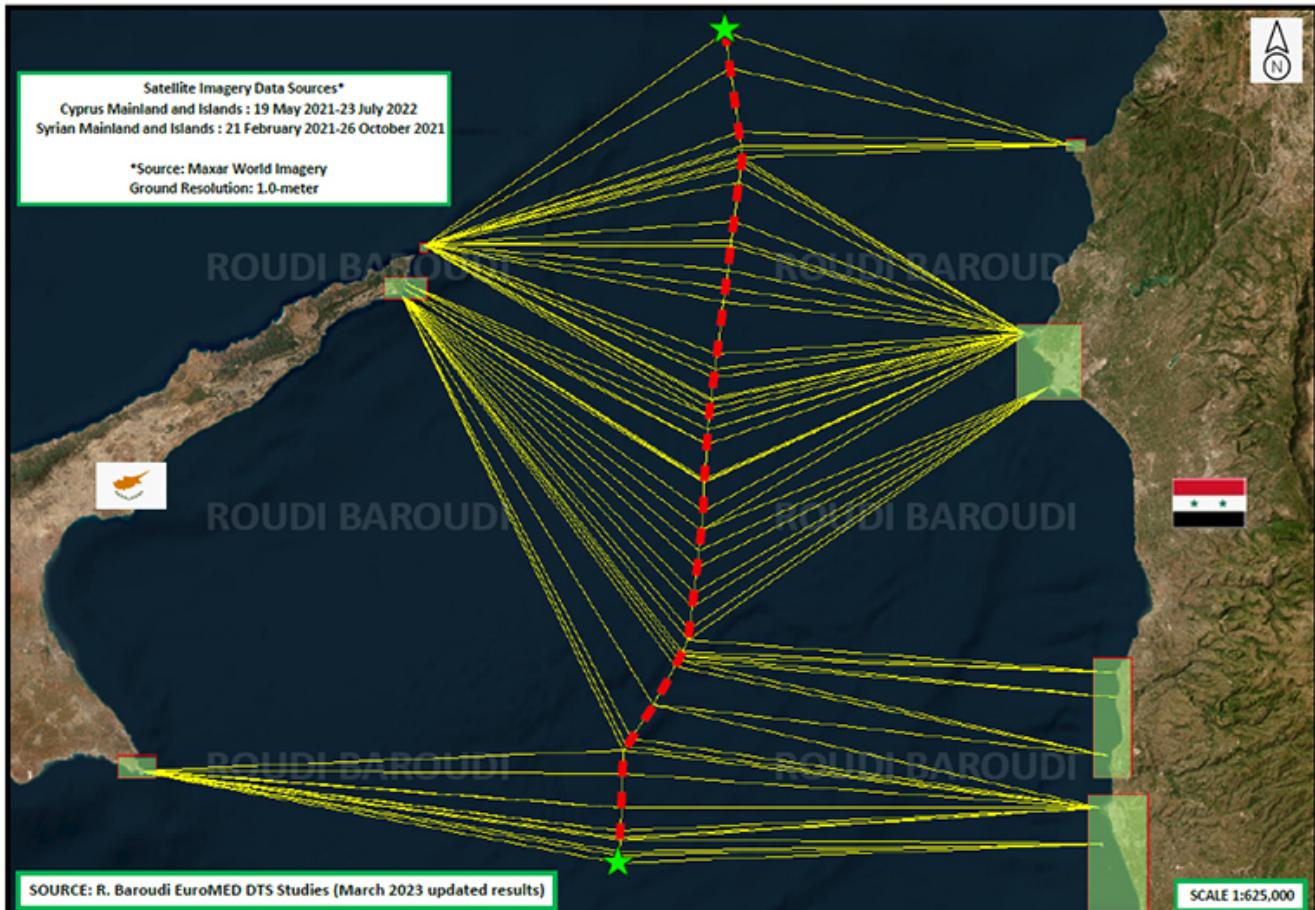
"Since the lines are so close, setting a trijunction – the point where the Lebanese, Cypriot, and Israeli boundaries intersect – should be relatively easy," he said. "In addition, agreeing that trijunction in the south would automatically simplify the process of setting one in the north for Lebanon-Cyprus-Syria. And keep in mind: Lebanon has strong & friendly relations with both Cyprus and Syria, so these negotiations will be a lot friendlier than the ones with Israel, which had to be pursued indirectly via American mediation."

When asked about how any new diplomatic efforts might be affected by the long-running political paralysis in Beirut, where the presidency has been vacant since late 2022 because rival parties in Parliament can't agree on a successor to former President Michel Aoun, Baroudi said the quagmire only accentuated the need for action.

CYPRUS-SYRIA MARITIME BOUNDARY LINE

Cyprus vs. Syria Strict Equidistance MBL*

*100% Full Effect Line (red dashed line), using all relevant Cypriot coastlines and offshore islands (see close-up inset example), plus all relevant Syrian mainland coastlines and offshore islands (see close-up inset example). This MBL begins at the northern computed Cyprus-Türkiye-Syria Trijunction Point (upper green star) and terminates at the southern computed Cyprus-Syria-Lebanon Trijunction Point (lower green star). See the report for specific details on the geographic (longitude and latitude) coordinates of the MBL and Trijunctions, along with an explanation of the methodology used to produce the MBL and Trijunctions.



"Right now, Lebanon can't officially ratify into a new MBL agreement with either Cyprus or Syria because it requires a presidential signature, but that doesn't stop us from carrying out the necessary talks," he said. "In fact, we should be rushing to get all of this settled now so that when we finally fill the vacancy at Baabda Palace, we'll have everything ready for the new president's signature."

In addition to settling its maritime boundaries, Baroudi said Lebanon also had another reason to re-engage with neighboring countries.

"It's been almost ten years since Cyprus proposed a

unitization agreement (joint development agreement) with Lebanon for joint production from any deposits that straddle their shared MBL," he recalled, "and the Lebanese paralysis has kept it from happening. We need to revive this process and get a deal in place. That way, again, once we have a president in office, we'll be ready to hit the ground running, with no further delays, and start collecting the badly needed gas revenues".

The War of the Straits: Impact on the World Energy Market



By Roudi Baroudi, TLN Senior Fellow

The recent significant disruptions in shipping through the Strait of Bab el Mandeb, situated between Yemen and Djibouti, underscore the geopolitical fragility of the waterway akin to that of the more widely acknowledged Strait of Hormuz. Among the six globally sensitive passages, including the Bosphorus, the Panama Canal and Malacca, the Middle East region boasts three critical and strategic maritime routes: the Suez Canal, Bab el Mandeb in the south of the Red Sea, and the Strait of Hormuz.

These passages witness the transit of not only crude oil and petroleum products but also liquefied natural gas (LNG). Bab el Mandeb, with its unique characteristic as a transit route for both northbound and southbound traffic, plays a pivotal role. Approximately 12 percent of total seaborne quantities traded to Europe, the U.S. and key Asian markets, including China, India and Singapore, pass through the Bab el Mandeb Strait. Protecting the unimpeded flow of energy trade on a global scale is a vital commitment, essential for maintaining it sustainable, affordable and securing supply to the world.

Reflecting on the 1960s, when the Suez Canal faced disruptions during and after the 1967 war, several nations, notably Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, collectively financed the construction of the SUMED pipeline. This double pipeline, stretching 320 kilometers from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean – passing entirely through Egypt, was instrumental in ensuring a continuous flow of approximately 2.5 million barrels of crude oil to Europe.

Saudi Aramco subsequently erected a dual pipeline from the Abqaiq Oil Field (in the east of the Kingdom) to the Yanbu Industrial Port (in the west), capable of transporting 5 to 7 million barrels per day. This strategic deterrent pipeline was a precautionary measure in case of a complete Strait of Hormuz closure. These initiatives not only protect the free trade of oil and gas but also underscore the significance of securing the unimpeded shipping of hydrocarbon products for reliable

and secure energy trade.

In a similar vein, the U.S. has previously faced similar challenges and responded strategically. During the Tankers War, then-President Ronald Reagan initially ordered Kuwaiti tankers to be escorted, eventually extending the protection to all commercial ships navigating in and out of the Strait of Hormuz. This broad security measure included a 24-hour air surveillance conducted by AWACS planes.

Applying lessons learned, similar measures could be implemented in Bab el Mandeb, considering its geographical similarity to the Strait of Hormuz, with both having narrow coast-to-coast widths at specific points. The minimum width of the Strait of Hormuz is 21 nautical miles, while Bab el Mandeb measures around 19 miles.

The significance of energy transit choke points through narrow channels cannot be overstated. As one-half of the world's crude oil supply relies on maritime transportation, protecting the free flow of oil and gas through maritime shipping routes is crucial for global energy price stability and security.

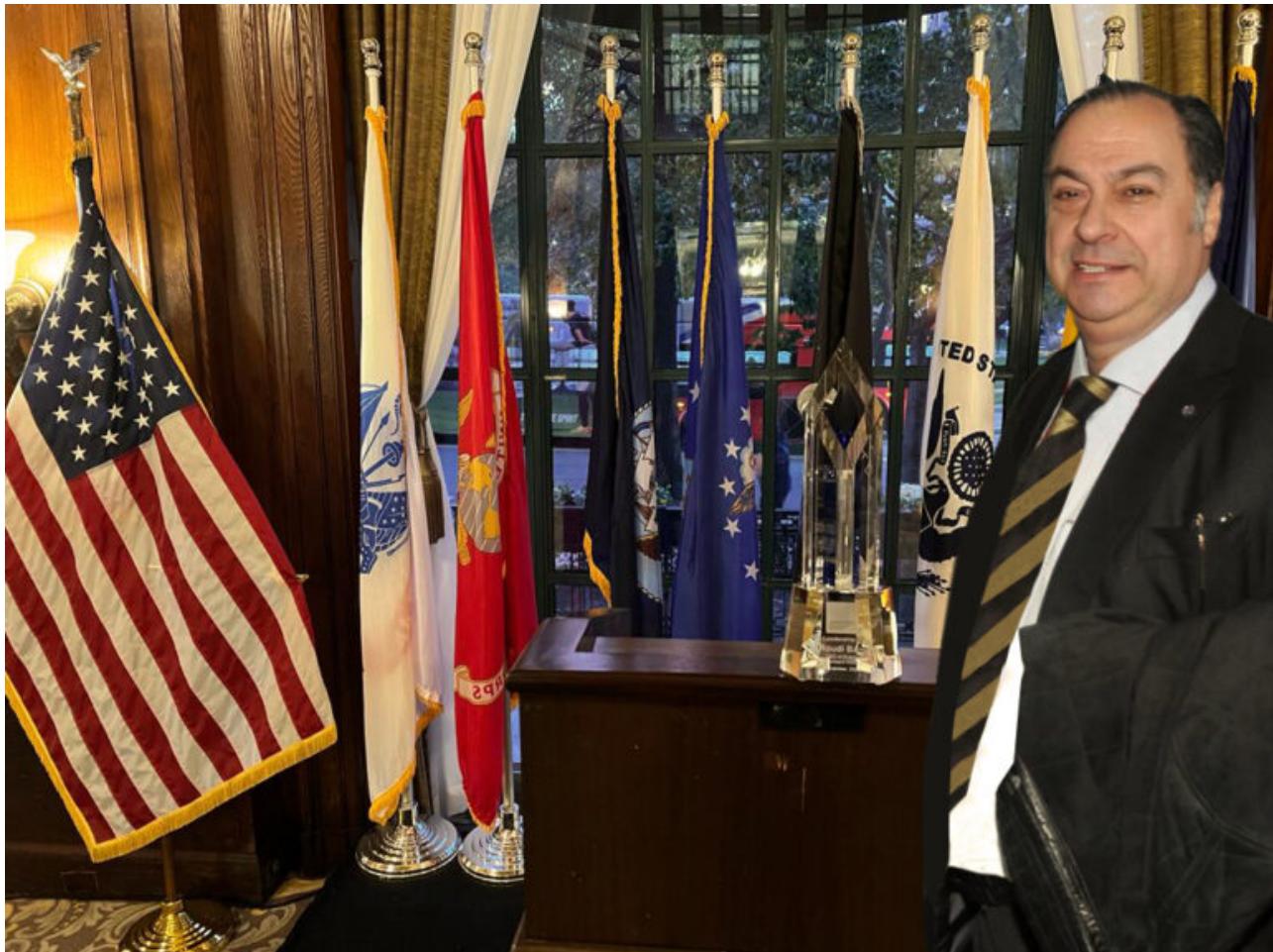
Dr. Roudi Baroudi, currently serves as CEO of Energy and Environment Holding, an independent consultancy based on Doha, has written extensively on the region, including "Maritime Boundaries in the Mediterranean: The Way Forward", a 2021 book that called for the very sort of creative diplomacy used to reach the Lebanon-Israel agreement. His latest book – "Climate and Energy in the Mediterranean: What the Blue Economy Means for a Greener Future" (published by the TLN this year and distributed by Eurospan). Baroudi is also a Senior Fellow at the Transatlantic Leadership Network, a Washington, DC-based Think tank. He is a recipient of TLN's 2023 "Leadership Award" for his ongoing work to promote peace and mutual cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Regional Energy Expert Roudi Baroudi Earns Award from Washington Think Tank



Regional Energy Expert Roudi

Baroudi Earns Award from Washington Think Tank



Transatlantic Leadership Network Recognizes Author for Contributions to Peaceful Development in Eastern Mediterranean

WASHINGTON, DC November 9, 2023: Doha-based Lebanese author Roudi Baroudi was one of two people presented with the 2023 Transatlantic Leadership Award at a ceremony in Washington this week.

Although circumstances relating to the conflict in the Gaza Strip prevented Baroudi from attending the event, both he and Joshua Volz – the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Europe, Eurasia, Africa, and the Middle East and the Office of International Affairs at the US Department of Energy – were recognized by the Transatlantic Leadership Network (TLN). Each was cited at a gala dinner on Monday for his “valuable

contribution in building a peaceful and prosperous Eastern Mediterranean" as part of the TLN's 2nd Annual Conference on Freedom of the Media.

"I was deeply honored to be named a recipient of this prestigious award, and I will always be grateful for the many ways in which the TLN has supported my work for several years now," Baroudi said. "I also look forward to working together in the future so that one day, our descendants can know the benefits of peace and coexistence. It is precisely in difficult and trying times that cooler heads must be able and willing to look at the reasons for current bloodshed and recrimination, then envision pathways to a better future."

Baroudi, who serves as CEO of independent consultancy Energy and Environment Holding in Doha, is a long-time champion of dialogue, cooperation, and practical solutions to both the global climate crisis and recurrent tensions in the East Med. A regular speaker at regional energy and policy conferences, Baroudi's insights are also avidly sought by local and international media, as well as governments, major energy companies, and investors.

Having advised both public and private sector actors on a wide variety of energy issues, Baroudi is widely credited with bringing unique perspective to all manner of policy discussions. He is the author of several books, including "Maritime Disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Way Forward" (2021), and "Climate and Energy in the Mediterranean: What the Blue Economy Means for a Greener Future" (2022). Together with Notre-Dame University – Louaize, Baroudi has also published a study of the US-brokered October 2022 Maritime Boundary Agreement between Lebanon and Israel, and is currently preparing another volume on Lebanon's prospects for similar deals with Cyprus and Syria.

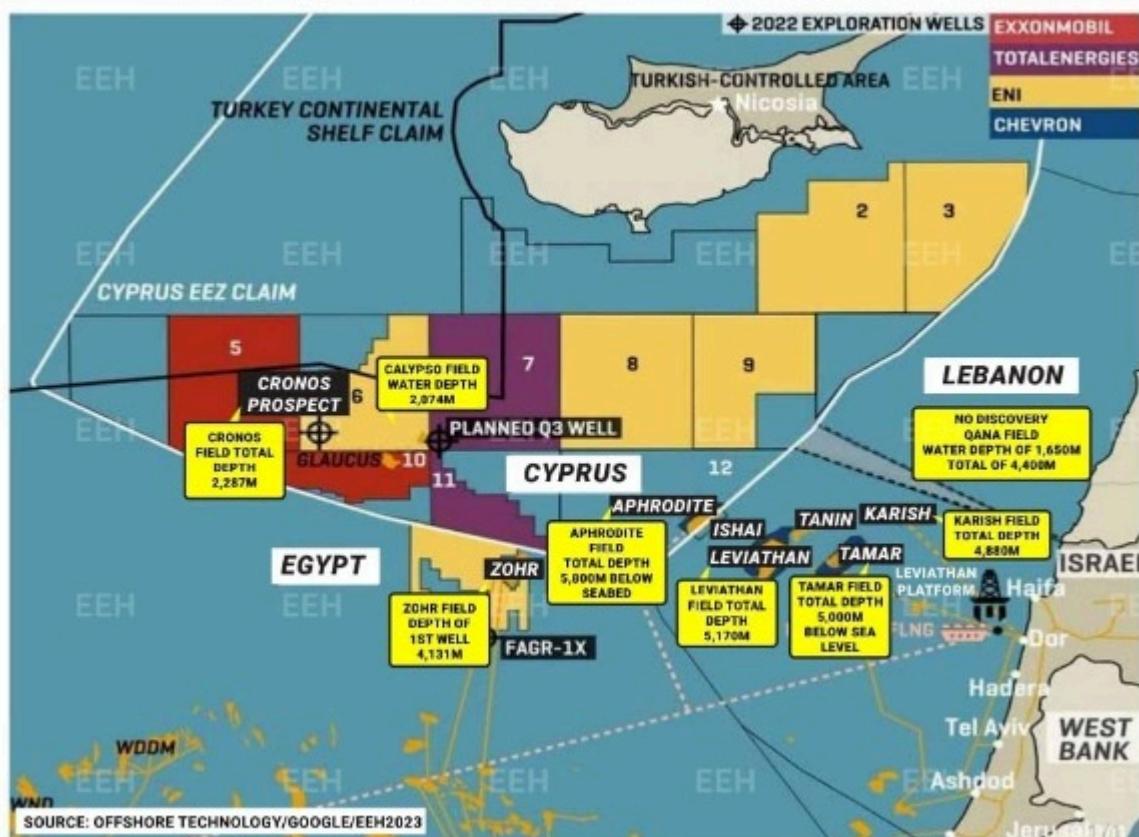
The TLN describes itself as "a nonpartisan, independent, international network of practitioners, private sector leaders

and policy analysts dedicated to strengthening and reorienting transatlantic relations to the rapidly changing dynamics of a globalizing world."

Monday's ceremony was attended by a broad cross-section of high-profile figures, including senior officials from the Departments of Energy and State, numerous members of Washington's extensive diplomatic corps, and representatives of both international organizations and various media outlets.

**بارودي مُصرٌ على التفاؤل
وينشر الخارطة: اكتشاف الغاز لا
يكون دائمًا من خلال حفر البئر
الاول**

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN GAS PLAY: AVERAGE OF SEAWATER DEPTH FOR GAS DISCOVERIES WELLS



بارودي مُصرٌ على التفاؤل وينشر الخارطة: اكتشاف الغاز لا يكون دائمًا من خلال حفر البئر الاول

الدراسات والأبحاث تؤكد ان احتمالات اكتشاف الغاز في المياه اللبنانية مرتفعة جداً

”خاص“ أخبار اليوم

أكَدَ الخبير في شؤون الطاقة رودي بارودي أنَّ القصة لم تنتهِ مع عدم اكتشاف الغاز في البئر الاول إذ أنه من المهم جداً معرفة أنَّ كل بلوك بحري يجب تقسيمه إلى عدد من الآبار ومن الطبيعي جداً أن تقوم شركات الاستكشاف بحفر آبار عدَّة قبل اكتشاف البئر الرئيسي الذي يحتوي على مخزون تجاري من الغاز.

و في حديث إلى وكالة ”أخبار اليوم“، أوضح بارودي إنه لم ييأس من عدم اكتشاف الغاز في البئر الأول، ذلك أنَّ أكبر حقل للغاز في البحر المتوسط الذي هو حقل ”ظُهر“ والذي يقع في منطقة بلوك شروق في مصر، ويمتد على الحدود بين مصر وقبرص. كانت حقوق استغلال هذا

الحقل تعود لشركة شل لمدة 15 عاماً، وخلال هذه الفترة قامت الشركة بحفر العديد من الآبار ولكنها لم تنجح في العثور على أي كميات من الغاز حتى قامت ببيع حقوق الاستكشاف لشركة إيني الإيطالية في عام 2015، التي بدورها حفرت بئراً واحداً على عمق 5100 متر لتجد أكبر مخزون من الغاز في شرق المتوسط والمقدر بـ 850 مليار متر مكعب.

ورأى بارودي أن هذا الأمر يشير إلى أن اكتشاف الغاز لا يكون دائماً من خلال حفر البئر الأول. وقد تكرر هذا الأمر مع حقول الغاز في قبرص إذ إنه لم تكتشف أي كمية من الغاز التجاري في البئر الأول، علماً أن حقل أفروديت في قبرص والقريب من لبنان احتاجت شركة نوبيل لحفر بئر على عمق 5800 متر لكي تجد الغاز، والخريطة المرفقة تبين الاعماق في البحر في كل من قبرص واسرائيل ومصر للحقول المستكشفة ومنها: كاريش (٤٨٨٠ متر)، تمار (٥٠٠٠ متر)، لفثيان (٥١٧٠ متر)، أفروديت (٥٨٠٠ متر)، كرونوس (٢٢٨٧ متر)، ظهر (٤١٣١ متر)، كاليبسو (٢٠٧٤ متر).

من هنا من غير الجائز علمياً القول بإنه لا يوجد كميات من الغاز التجاري في البلوك 9 اذ ان عملية الاستكشاف لم تشمل لغاية تاريخه إلا بئراً واحداً وعلى عمق فقط 3500 متر.

أما عن وجود مؤامرة تقوم بها شركات التنقيب، فقال بارودي: من المؤسف أن بعض المحللين وخبراء النفط يتحدثون عن مؤامرة يقوم بها الكونسورتيوم المكون من شركات عالمية وهي إيني، توتال، وقطر للطاقة وهي من الشركات العملاقة في مجال الطاقة والتي لا تدخل في البazar السياسي ولديها مصالح في كل بلاد العالم.

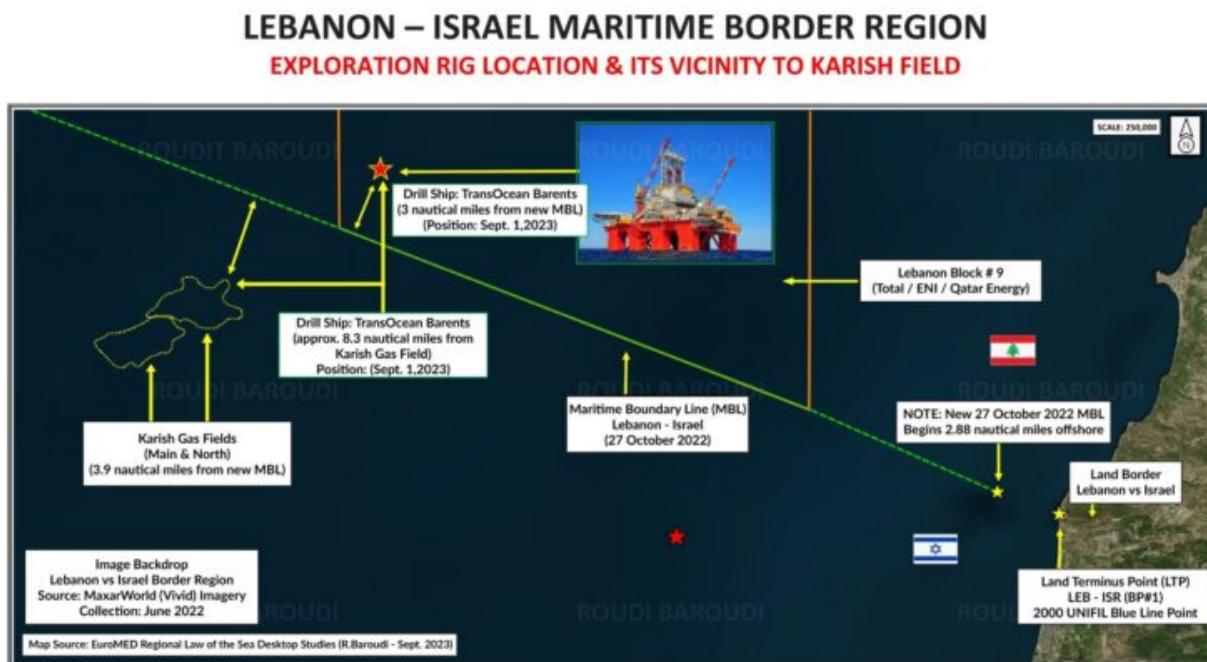
وأضاف: علينا أن نستفيد من وجودها في لبنان بدل اتهامها ورمي الشائعات عليها. ولكن من الممكن أن يؤثر الوضع العام الحالي، وخصوصاً أن الحرب دائرة على حدودنا أن تقوم الشركات بتعليق أنشطتها موقتاً ريثما تنجلب الصورة.

وتابع: الاتفاق المبرم بين الدولة اللبنانية والكونسورتيوم المكلف بالاستكشاف ينص على أن تقوم الشركات بحفر اثنين من آبار الاستكشاف قبل أن يتخذ قرار بشأن وجود الغاز أو عدمه. من هنا، فإن بث الأجواء السلبية وفكرة المؤامرة لا تفيدين لبنان بشيء، بل على العكس علينا المثابرة بالعمل لحفظ حقوقنا.

وختم: كما من واجب الحكومة والمجلس النيابي المباشرة فوراً بالاصلاحات المالية والاقتصادية المطلوبة من لبنان لكي نستطيع أن

نواكب عمليات الاستكشاف، فلا تذهب الثروة النفطية الموعودة في نهر الفساد الجارف الذي نعاين منه.

**لبنان أمام فرصة تاريخية...
شرط أن يُحسن استغلالها بارودي:
احتمال وجود كميات تجارية في
البلوکات 8 و 9 و 10 مرتفعة جدًا**



ميريام بلعة

المركزية - تقدّم عمليات الحفر واستكشاف النفط والغاز التي تجريها المنصة العالمية في الـ"بلوك 9" في المياه الإقليمية اللبنانية بقيادة "توتال إنرجي"، بوتيرة سريعة جداً من دون أي صعوبات أو عراقيل، بحسب المعلومات المتداولة في الساعات الأخيرة

والتي رجّحت أن تصدر النتائج الأوّلية لعملية الحفر قبل 15 يوماً من الموعد المحدّد!

هذه المعطيات حملتها "المركزية" إلى خبير الطاقة الدولي رودي بارودي لاستشراف أي معطى جديد في الأمد القريب، وعما يتوقّعه من في المرحلة الاستكشافية مع بدء عمل الباخرة TRANSOCEAN BARENTS في البlok 9، فيجيب بارودي: لقد قام الكونسورتيوم الذي ترأسه شركة "توتال" والذي يضمّ شركات "توتال" و"إيني" و"قطر للطاقة" بما وعد به والتزم باستئجار هذه المنصة الاستكشافية الرئيسية. لكن للأسف، لم تقم الحكومة اللبنانيّة بدورها بعد، فلبنان يحتاج أولاًً وقبل كل شيء إلى انتخاب رئيس للجمهورية وهو أمر مهم جداً للبلاد. كما على السلطات اللبنانيّة القيام بالكثير من الإصلاحات العاجلة، والأكثر إلحاحاً هو إحياء و/أو تعيين هيئة جديدة لإدارة قطاع البترول اللبنانيّ، علماً أنه تم تشكيل الهيئة في العام 2012، وقام أعضاؤها بأعمال كثيرة ومهّدوا الطريق أمام عملية الاستكشاف، إنما انتهت مدة ولاية الهيئة في العام 2018، ومنذ ذلك الحين غادر العديد من أعضائها لبنان أو استقال.

ويُضيف: الإصلاح الثاني الأكثر أهميّة هو الإصلاح القضائي على المستويات كافة من أجل حماية مصالح لبنان وشركات النفط والغاز الكبّرى. ومن المعروف أن القضاء المستقل يجذب الاستثمارات المهمة، من هنا فإن استعادة الثقة بالقضاء وعلى كل الأصعدة، واجبٌ. إضافة إلى ذلك، من الضروري تطبيق الإصلاحات المطلوبة من المجتمع الدولي ولا سيما الإصلاحات الماليّة التي تعطي الثقة مجدداً بالقطاع المصرفي، وبالتالي يجب إقرار قانون صندوق سيادي يوافق بين الحاجات اللبنانيّة والمبادئ العالميّة، خصوصاً لناحية الشفافية. لذلك ينبغي القيام بدراسة معمّقة لقانون الصندوق السيادي ليكون صندوقاً شفافاً يمكنه أن يؤدي واجباته على أكمل وجه، خصوصاً أن الثروة النفطيّة هي ملك الشعب اللبناني ويُفترض عدم التفريط بها.

ولم يغفل بارودي الإشارة في هذا المجال، إلى أنه "في حال وجد لبنان النفط في مياهه الإقليمية، فإن الاستثمار الأجنبي المباشر الذي سيحتاجه الكونسورتيوم الذي ترأسه "توتال"، سيتراوح (FDI) وبالتالي ما بين 1 و3 مليارات دولار، وذلك حسب البنية التحتية اللازمّة. علماً أن الاستثمار الأجنبي المباشر يحتاج دائمًا إلى "سيادة القانون والشفافية المطلقة والاستقرار السياسي".

وعن رأيه في احتمالية موجودات الـ"بلوك 9" وعما إذا كان هناك من أمل، يقول بارودي "إذا نظرنا إلى هذه الخريطة الحصرية" سترى من BARENT Ocean Rig، لـ"المركزية" والتي تُظهر موقع باخرة موقعها أنها بالكاد تبعد 3 أميال فقط عن خطوط الحدود البحرية الجديدة بين لبنان وإسرائيل. وإذا نظرنا أيضًا إلى الجنوب الغربي، فهي بعيدة حوالي 8.3 أميال، هذه هي المسافة التي تفصلها عن حقل غاز "كاريش". إضافة إلى ذلك، فإن أن سفيننة الحفر لا تبعد أكثر من 30-25 ميلاً عن الخطوط البحرية اللبنانية القبرصية حيث تم اكتشاف كميات تجارية. من هنا، فإن احتمال وجود كميات تجارية في البلوكات اللبنانية 8 و 9 و 10 وفقًا لعلماء الجيولوجيا الأميركيين، مرتفعة جدًا.

ويُلفت في هذا السياق، إلى أن "مساحة الـ"بلوك 9" تبلغ حوالي ± 1700 كيلومتر مربع، ومساحة الـ"بلوك 8" من ± 1400 كيلومتر مربع، ومساحة الـ"بلوك 10" ± 1380 كيلومترًا مربعًا على بعد 8 أميال قليلة جنوبًا، حيث تقع حقول الغاز مثل "تمار" و"كاريش" و"ليفياثان"، ويُضيف: يمتدّ ليبنيان وحوض "ليفياثان" بشكل عام، بإمكانات عالية جداً ليس فقط في البحر إنما أيضًا في البر. هذا ما أكدته دراسات عديدة موثوقة منذ العام 1992.

ويختتم بارودي: وبالتالي، هناك إمكانات كبيرة لاستكشافات تجارية واعدة، ما يحتاج إليه لبنان هو الاستعداد لتلقي الموارد النفطية والغازية بطريقة آمنة لضخ هذه الثروة في الاقتصاد والتنمية الاجتماعية والرعاية الصحية، وإطفاء الديون المالية... كل ذلك، شرط إجراء إصلاحات حقيقية وعلى كل الأصعدة المالية والاقتصادية، وإبعاد المنافذ السياسية عن هذا الملف الحساس.

تنبيه.. كي لا تذهب الثروة

النفطية"ة إلى المجهول



يقرب لبنان من ساعة الصفر في مجال الاستكشافات النفطية البحرية، التي تعاقدت معها شركة Transocean Barents خصوصاً أن سفينة الحفر لإتمام عمليات الاستكشاف في البلاوك رقم 9 -Total-Energies والموجودة حالياً في النروج، ستنتقل إلى لبنان في تموز الجاري للبدء بعمليات الحفر.

هذا ما يؤكده خبير الطاقة الدولي رودي بارودي في حديث لـ"المركزية"، ويشير إلى أن "هذا التطور الهام يعني أن شركة "توتال" تقوم بواجباتها التعاقدية إن لناحية استكمال التجهيزات التقنية واللوجستية، أو لناحية البدء الفعلي بعمليات الحفر والاستكشاف في هذا الحقل". ويقول إن "عملية ترسيم الحدود البحرية مع إسرائيل كانت ضرورية للبدء بهذا العمل المهم، خصوصاً لجهة طمأنة تحالف الشركات الدولية... كما أن هذا الترسيم سيسمح بفرز مكانة النفط والغاز ضمن المناطق المتداخلة مع إسرائيل فوراً، موضحاً أن "قانون البحار، Total-Energies" وذلك من خلال اتفاقية هو آلية أساسية لتسوية جميع المشاكل سلմياً، إذ أن الدول تستطيع اللجوء إليه ساعة تشاء لترسيم حدودها البحرية المتنازع عليها وهو المرجع الصالح لأحكام وقرارات المحاكم الدولية والتحكيم والمعاهدات الثنائية، ما يؤمّن استقراراً مطلوباً لجذب الشركات العالمية من أجل تطوير بلوکات النفط والغاز".

وفي هذا السياق، يلفت إلى أن هناك "أربعة بلوکات إسرائيلية وهي 74 و 27 و 36 و 70 التي ستُطرح للمزايدة، تتجاوز جنوبًا المنطقة

E4 - الاقتصادية المصرية الخالصة وتقطع من البلوك المصري رقم مساحة ١٤٠ كيلومتراً مربعاً، أي ما يوازي خمس مرات مساحة حقل "زهر"، وعلى الرغم من أن مصر وإسرائيل ليس لديهما توقيع رسمي فمن خلال المفاوضات واستناداً إلى القانون، MBL للحدود البحرية الدولي، يمكن تقاسم العائدات في المناطق المختلطة، من هنا فإن هذا التعدي أو التداخل لم يمنع الجانبان المصري والإسرائيلي من تعيين موعد للمناقصات في 16 تموز 2023 أي بعد حوالي الأسبوعين... أما لبنان كما أسلفنا ذكره، فيمكنه تحصيل عائدات المناطق المتداخلة . من خلال اتفاقية "توtal إنريجي" الموقّعة مع إسرائيل.

الإصلاحات أولوية وإلا..

ويشدد بارودي على أن "الإصلاحات الاقتصادية والمالية والقانونية المطلوبة من المجتمع الدولي والهيئات الاقتصادية اللبنانية، تبقى أولوية من أجل الاستفادة من الثروات النفطية التي يمكن أن تكتشف في المياه اللبنانية، إذ أن الحكومة الصحيحة هي التي تؤمنّ من الاستعمال الصحيح للثروة النفطية... فمن هنا ضرورة أن تقوم الحكومة فوراً بإصلاحات جذرية تبدأ بالاعتماد على خارطة الطريق المقترحة من قبل صندوق النقد الدولي، وضرورة إقرار قانون لصندوق سيادي مستقل شفاف على مثال البلدان التي سبقتنا في هذا المجال وإلا فإن مصير الثروة النفطية سيكون مشابهاً لغيرها من الثروات التي هدرت نتيجة فساد مستشّرٍ".

وليس بعيداً، يوضح أن "غياب الإصلاحات وسيادة القانون سيمعنان شركات النفط الدولية الكبرى من القدوم والاستثمار في بلد يحتاج إلى مداخل مالية جديدة وشفافة، ولعلّ التمديد الجديد لمهلة تقديم طلبات الاشتراك في دورة التراخيص الثانية في مياه البحرية اللبنانية التي انتهت في 30 حزيران حتى الثاني من تشرين الأول 2023، أكبر دليل على أن غياب الإصلاحات وترددّي الأوضاع السياسية والمالية وعدم تحسّن سمعة لبنان في مكافحة الفساد، ستمعن من تحقيق تقدّم فاعل في عمليات الاستكشاف، كما يُضاف إلى هذه المشكلة التباطؤ في استكمال عملية ترسيم الحدود البحرية مع قبرص، والتأخر في إطلاق ترسيم الحدود البحرية مع سوريا .

لبنان يتمتع بجزاً كثيرة" يختتم بارودي، منها "ديناميكيّة شعبه" ... وشمسه وبحره وجبله بالإضافة إلى حسن الضيافة، وقريباً جداً قد يتمتع باستكشافات غازية ونفطية واعدة تمكّنه في حال استغلالها بطريقة مستدامة وشفافة، من وضع لبنان على الطريق الصحيح في عملية "النهوض الاقتصادي والمالي التي يحتاج إليها".