هيل إلى بيروت… القديم على قِدَمه؟!

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

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

اما البعد الثالث الذي يكتسبه غاز لبنان فـ"ماليّ" بحت والمقصود هنا ليس مالية الدولة بل الميل الى الالتفاف حول القانون لاستفادة الفريق السياسي المهيمن، وذلك من خلال السمسرات وعقود الخدمة للشركات والانشاءات المرتبطة بهذا القطاع فضلاً عن القدرة على توظيف "الازلام" تماماً كما جرى ولا يزال في شركتي الاتصالات وكازينو لبنان والكسارات والسدود وغيرها من المجالس التي قد تكون اكثر

إغراء، خصوصاً اذا استغلّت المراسيم كمنفذ مقونن للهيمنة على ما تبقّى من موارد في البلاد، لا سيّما وأن التعويل على العائدات النفطية "اليوم"، أي في ظلّ عدم وجود قانون واضح ينظّم وجهة استخدام هذه الاموال من خلال الصندوق السيادي، يعني حُكماً أننا تخلينا عن ثروتنا هذه لخدمة الدين وتحويلها من أموال استثمارية الى أموال "منهوبة".

من هذا المنطلق، لا يجوز الإفراط في التعويل على الثروة النفطية لانتشال لبنان من مأزقه النقدي، فالجدوى الاقتصادية، بحسب الخبراء، للنفط والغاز في المنطقة ككلّ لم تُثبّت بعد لا سيما وأن كلفة استخراج هذه المواد من قعر البحر تفوق بكثير الكلفة التي تتكبدها روسيا لاستخراج غازها. وبرأي الخبراء، فإنّ امكان تصدير هذا الغاز الى أوروبا على سبيل المثال قد يكون صعباً بما أن الاسعار ستكون عاجزة عن منافسة الغاز الروسي من جهة، ومن جهة ثانية بسبب العوامل الجيو – سياسية في منطقة شرقي المتوسط. أما كلّ ما أُثير عن احتمال إنشاء أنابيب لربط هذه الآبار بأوروبا مروراً باليونان فقد سقط عملياً بعد دخول اسرائيل الى طاولة المباحثات اضافة الى صعوبة تأمين الاموال الاستثمارية اللازمة له.

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

الطروحات الاميركية

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

طروحات ثلاثة، هي ما قدّمه الطرف الاميركي في ما خصّ مسألة ترسيم الحدود مع الكيان الإسرائيلي في المنطقة المتنازع عليها: الاول هو تقسيم رضائي بنسبة ثلث للكيان وثلثين للبنان. الثاني هو تصنيفها كمنطقة عدم أنشطة وبالتالي اعتبارها محظورة للطرفين؛ أما الطرح

الثالث فيتمثّل باعتبارها منطقة أنشطة مشتركة، وهو ما يرفضه الجانب اللبناني حتى الساعة متسلّحاً بالقوانين التي ترعى حقوقه في المياه الاقليمية إضافة الى الطلب الذي كان تقدّم به الى الامم المتحدة لحلّ النزاع في هذه القضيّة" يقول الخبير في قوانين وسياسات الطاقة المحامي علي برّو.

ويضيف برّو في اتصال مع "نداء الوطن" أنّ "قبرص تتحمّل مسؤولية مخالفة أحكام الاتفاقية مع لبنان سنداً لاتفاقية 2007 حيث لم يكن ينبغي عليها ترسيم الحدود مع الكيان الاسرائيلي من دون موافقة الدولة اللبنانية. من جهتها، أودعت الدولة اللبنانية الامم المتحدة احداثيات منطقتها الاقتصادية الخالصة، إلا أنها قصرت في مطالبتها قبرص لخرقها احكام الاتفاقية معه. من الناحية القانونية، لبنان جاهز لعمليّة إعادة الترسيم وفقاً للوسائل العلمية التابعة لقانون البحار. ومن خلال لجوئنا الى القانون الدولي، سنتمكن من استعادة حقوقنا السيادية في المياه البحرية".

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

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

Qatar to sequester 7mn tonnes of CO2 by 2027, says al-Kaabi

Looking to advance efforts on sustainable development and the protection of the environment, Qatar is expected to increase its CO2 sequestration to 7mn tonnes by 2027, HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi said yesterday.

Al-Kaabi, who is also the president and CEO of Qatar Petroleum (QP), made the statement during the panel session titled 'The Future of LNG in Meeting the World's Energy Demand' at the Doha Forum, which concludes today (December 15). Joining the minister during the panel discussion are ENI CEO Claudio Descalzi and Total chairman and CEO Patrick Pouyanné.

According to al-Kaabi, Qatar had started to sequester 2.5mn tonnes of CO2 this year, which is expected to reach 5mn tonnes by 2024. He stressed that many companies in the oil and gas sector "are trying to reduce" CO2 emissions and "looking at the environment more critically."

"In the oil and gas industry, we take responsibility in what we do with carbon capture, storage, and looking at the environment in general. In Qatar, we've announced that we've started this year's 2.5mn tonnes of CO2 sequestration.

"In addition to that, with the expansion that we have announced earlier, by 2024 we will reach 5mn tonnes, and maybe for the first time, I can announce that we are going to reach about 7mn tonnes by 2027," al-Kaabi said.

"We have a responsibility to do more and I think most of the companies are being responsible, but for humanity, you need more energy and there are going to be developments that are required, otherwise, you can't have developments because

renewables alone cannot keep up with the growth requirements," he continued.

Commenting on the future of LNG and its impact on the environment, al-Kaabi said Qatar looks at gas "as a destination fuel rather than a transition fuel."

"I definitely think that renewable energy is going to be part of the solution…there are a lot of countries that are moving away from coal in favour of natural gas, while some are abandoning nuclear energy for various reasons, so we see gas as the future," he pointed out.

The minister also said Qatar is looking at Asian countries, citing upcoming peak demand from countries, such as China and India, as well as the development of countries in Southeast Asia.

"We are increasing our production capacity; currently, we are producing 77mn tonnes per year (tpy). We already announced that we will reach 110mn tpy by 2024. Recently, we announced a further development, taking production capacity to 126mn tpy by 2027.

"We think there is a requirement for gas in the future; peak demand is coming from a lot of growing economies, such as China, India, which are the largest growth areas. Demand is also being driven by countries in Southeast Asia due to various infrastructure development projects," al-Kaabi said.

He added: "Asia is our focus area; considering its sheer population, it is the biggest growth area. As for developed nations, mostly in Europe, we supply the entire continent, particularly those that use LNG. It is a big market and we don't see ourselves in competition with anybody, but rather we focus on what we control, which is our cost…we want to be efficient, safe, and reliable."

PM attends signing of pact between QIA, Volkswagen

HE the Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa al-Thani witnessed the signing between Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) and Volkswagen AG for the 'Project Qatar Mobility' initiative.

The agreement was signed by QIA CEO Mansoor al-Mahmoud and Volkswagen Group chairman Dr Herbert Diess. Joining the prime minister during the signing ceremony are HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani and HE the Minister of Transport and Communication Jassim Seif Ahmed al-Sulaiti.

'Project Qatar Mobility' underlines the mutual commitment to both smart technologies and green transport. QIA and Volkswagen will work together to develop the required physical and digital infrastructure to seamlessly integrate a fleet of self-driving vehicles into Doha's existing public transport network.

In a statement, the QIA said, "For the first time ever, a cutting-edge fleet of self-driving Level 4 electric shuttles will usher in a new era of urban mobility in a capital city in 2022." During the largest sporting event in the world, Qatar will thus be the venue for the world's first emission-free, electric and autonomous public transport system.

The goal is to develop a ground-breaking autonomous transport project and transform the future of urban mobility to a sustainable and commercial deployment of AD shuttles and bus services – even beyond 2022, QIA said.

Fostering cross-brand collaboration as blueprint for future AD (Autonomous Driving) solutions, Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles, Scania, MOIA and AID-Autonomous Intelligent Driving will play an important role in this project, it also said.

Autonomous, electric ID BUZZ AD from Volkswagen Commercial

Vehicles will shuttle up to four passengers in West Bay area on semi-fixed routes, while high-tech Scania buses pick up larger groups.

Volkswagen Group's units AID and MOIA will provide the SDS knowledge and the app software to run the service. For the first time, four Volkswagen Group brands are working together on a project of urban mobility.

The landmark project will create a holistic ecosystem for autonomous driving, including the creation of an appropriate legal framework, smart city infrastructure and transfer of knowledge, which can be used as a blueprint to transform urban mobility, both in Qatar and beyond.

Closed testing of the shuttle vehicles and buses is expected to begin in 2020 and trials will start as early as 2021. The project will go live during 2022, providing a technical showcase of future autonomous driving.

Diess said, "Project Qatar Mobility will play a very important role in our 'Strategy Together 2025+', addressing the economic growth, social development, and environmental management challenges identified as part of our vision, and underlines our commitment to investing in next generation mobility. We will be experiencing real-world learnings and use the project as a stepping stone for generations to come."

Within the Volkswagen Group, Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles (VWCV) is responsible for Autonomous Driving, Mobility as a Service (MaaS) and Transport as a Service (TaaS), due to the fact that first use cases are planned in the commercial sector. In future, VWCV will therefore be developing and producing corresponding Special Purpose Vehicles (SPV), such as robo-taxis and robo-vans.

Al-Mahmoud said, "For our cities to progress, we need a new wave of innovation. AI-enabled, emission-free transportation technologies will help advance urban mobility, while diminishing congestion and improving energy efficiency.

"We are proud that QIA has been able to partner with Volkswagen to ensure that Qatar is at the forefront of these new technologies. The development of a smart transport

solution will help transform the future of urban mobility, both at home and around the world.”
QIA is a long-term investor in the Volkswagen Group and has two highly-regarded representatives on its Supervisory Board of Directors. QIA continues to support the continued growth of the VW group, including its ongoing expansion and the leadership position it has taken in mass vehicle electrification.

Russian giant ready to join oil, gas exploration in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: In a positive development, TatNeft – a Russian state owned oil and gas company that has so far drilled 50,000 wells all over the world is ready to join oil and gas exploration activities in Pakistan in a big way.

The top officials of the said Russian Company came up with their willingness in becoming part of the E&P activities in Pakistan in a meeting of Pakistan Russian Joint Working Group (JWG) on Energy that met here on Monday. It was the 7th meeting of JWG on Energy between the two countries, a senior official who was part of meeting told The News.

The meeting participants discussed oil and gas sector, gas pipelines, power projects and barrages and dams.

In the meeting, Russia was represented by Talyat Aliev, deputy head of department, Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation whereas Joint Secretary Petroleum Division Syed

Tauqir Hussain represented Pakistan. This meeting was the part of Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) between the two countries. A 64-member delegation headed by Minister for Trade and Industries for the Russian Federation Denis V Manturov is visiting Pakistan for four days from December 8 to 11 to attend an Inter-Governmental Commission. Both sides will find out more avenues in cooperation on trade, economic, scientific, and technical areas in IGC meetings. The Joint Working Groups of the countries on Trade and Industry will also meet today (Tuesday).

However, the official said that since its emergence, in toto 1100 oil and gas wells got drilled in Pakistan when it comes to comparing the total wells of 50,000 spud by TatNeft alone. More importantly Bank of New York owns 23 percent shares of TatNeft company, and the government owns 34 percent and over 40 percent shares doled out in Moscow Stock Exchange and London Stock Exchange.

In today's meeting, the official said, it is also mentioned that subsequent to signing of Inter-Governmental MoU on cooperation for implementation of Offshore Gas Pipeline Project on September 27, 2018, the nominated entities – Public Joint Stock Company Gazprom from Russian side and Inter State Gas System (Pvt) Limited from Pakistan side – signed Inter Corporate MOU on 6th February 2019.

In the meeting, both sides agreed that the nominated entities will expedite execution of the relevant documents and initiate the requisite studies in the near future.

In the oil and gas sector, it is agreed that since the signing of MoU in July 2017 between PJSC Gazprom and Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), there is a need to expedite progress on the mutually beneficial projects by both sides.

Both sides encouraged their respective nominated entities

Gazprom International and OGDCL to jointly work on the envisaged areas of cooperation. It was noted that Gazprom International is currently reviewing Rajian Field of OGDCL for possible Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) application whereas OGDCL is in the process of evaluating an opportunity in Algeria in which Gazprom is the Operator and OGDCL intends to be JV partner.

The official said, that the Russian side informed of the interest of PJSC NOVATEK to discuss LNG supplies to Pakistan from the portfolio of the company. The official said that Pakistan side appreciated the interest of PJSC NOVATEK and encouraged it to participate in LNG tenders as and when announced.

The Russian side informed about the interest of the Russian State Geological Holding ROSGEO to establish cooperation with the governmental bodies and organisations of Pakistan and expand cooperation in the field of geological exploration with Pakistani institution.

Both Sides appreciated the offer of cooperation of the Russian State Geological Holding ROSGEO for the Pakistani institutions in the creation of a scientific and computational center in Islamabad for the processing and interpretation of geological and geophysical data.

Pakistan side proposed Geological Survey of Pakistan (GSP), Oil and Gas Development Company Ltd (OGDCL) and Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) as counterpart entities to further discuss the proposal in detail with Russian State Geological Holding ROSGEO. Both Sides expressed support for the training and professional development of the specialists in Pakistan in the field of oil and gas business on the basis of joint programmes of ROSGEO JSC and the Russian State Geological Exploration University named after Sergo Ordzhonikidze.

Pakistan side informed the Russian side about the forthcoming

divestment of government of Pakistan shares in OGDCL and PPL also encouraged Russian side to consider participating in the process to become a strategic partner by acquire the shares.

Pakistan side informed that Pakistan Refinery Limited, a subsidiary of Pakistan State Oil Limited needs revamping and upgradation, any Russian companies which may be interested in equity participation and EPC+F for revamping and upgradation of the refinery may approach.

Coming to Power Sector, the official said that the Russian side expressed its interest to continue work on the inter-governmental agreement on implementation of project of construction of 600MW combined cycle power plant in Jamshoro and expect that Pakistan side will take positive decision on the issue of feasibility of the project from the point of expanding generation of electricity.

Both the sides support the interest of Inter RAO-Engineering to consider the possibility to participate in engineering projects of construction of power generation and rehabilitation of existing power generating capacities in Pakistan.

The Russian side confirmed the interest of Power Machines PJSC in developing cooperation with Pakistani companies in the construction of new and modernisation of existing electrical energy facilities, including Muzaffargarh TPP.

Pakistan side has a the training centre at Muzaffargarh and invited Russian side to participate in the same. Russian side informed that Russian company IED has expressed interest in developing the training centre at Muzaffargarh TPP.

Sweden’s energy deal collapses amid clash over nuclear power

* Capacity tax to be phased out over 2 years from 2017

* New reactors to be built to replace old ones (Adds Energy Minister comment, background)

STOCKHOLM, June 10 (Reuters) – Sweden said on Friday it would phase out some taxes on nuclear power and build new reactors to replace aging plants and secure energy supplies for decades to come.

Nuclear power providers in Sweden have said they would be forced to shut the country’s loss-making nuclear reactors unless a tax on nuclear capacity is abolished, risking a spike in electricity prices and energy shortages for industry.

“The aim is … to make sure we can always guarantee electricity at competitive prices, in a stable and sustainable way, both in the short and long term,” Energy Minister Ibrahim Baylan told reporters.

The tax, which brought in about 4 billion Swedish crowns ($488 million) in 2015, will be phased out over two years starting from 2017, but households will see their energy bills rise as Baylan said the government would increase taxes on energy users to make up for the nuclear tax. Heavy industry, however, would be excluded from the tax rise.

In a broad deal agreed with the main opposition parties, the government also said it would allow up to 10 new reactors to be built as the country closes its old plants, built in the 1970s and 80s.

The tax on capacity – which was increased last year – has hurt profitability at plants already under pressure from low market prices and the need for expensive upgrades to meet tougher safety standards since Japan's Fukushima nuclear disaster.

Swedish state-owned utility Vattenfall and Germany's E.ON have said they will shut four of Sweden's 10 nuclear reactors earlier than previously planned. One of them was shut last year.

In April, Vattenfall said all the remaining six reactors would have to close by 2020 if the capacity tax was not abolished.

Nuclear plants produced around 34 percent of Sweden's electricity in 2015.

The deal to end the tax is a blow for the Green Party, which wants nuclear power phased out as soon as possible and instigated the increase in the tax last year. ($1 = 8.1964 Swedish crowns) (Reporting by Johan Sennero; Editing by Simon Johnson and Susan Fenton)

A new hope for US climate action

The United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP25) currently taking place in Madrid is supposed to prepare the ground for more ambitious national climate commitments. Nowhere is this more important than in the country where national leadership on climate change is least likely: the United States.

But a new report should give the world hope that it's not too

late to keep the U.S. on a path in line with global aspirations to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change. This will require continued leadership from American states, cities and businesses that are already stepping up, combined with reinvigorated action from the federal government.

The U.S. is the world's second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, and was the largest overall emitter for decades. Although China surpassed it in 2006, America's cumulative emissions remain unmatched. And yet, far from leading the way on climate action, the U.S. under President Donald Trump's administration has rolled back many federal climate and environmental rules and formally indicated its intention to withdraw from the 2015 Paris climate agreement by late next year.

Fortunately, the rest of the U.S. is not following Trump's lead. Across the country, a massive coalition of states, cities, businesses, universities, and others have declared that "We Are Still In." Despite the federal government's official withdrawal from the Paris agreement, they will take the necessary steps to fulfill America's climate commitments.

This is no pie-in-the-sky declaration. The coalition's more than 3,800 participants (and counting) include states, cities, and counties that account for 65 percent of the U.S. population, nearly 70 percent of U.S. GDP equivalent to an economy larger than China's and over half of U.S. emissions. For example, 145 U.S. cities have committed to 100 percent clean electricity, and six have already achieved it.

But serious questions remain. How much progress can this coalition make to reduce emissions without the federal government's support? And how much better would the situation be if the U.S. administration and Congress recommit to climate action?

These are the questions that America's Pledge, a Bloomberg Philanthropies initiative, has been working to answer over the last year.

The conclusions are both reassuring and daunting. According to the initiative's just-released third report, "Accelerating America's Pledge" (produced in collaboration with the Rocky Mountain Institute, the University of Maryland and the World Resources Institute), stronger action by states, cities and businesses could reduce U.S. greenhouse-gas emissions by 37 percent (compared to 2005 levels) by 2030.

In other words, even without the federal government, the U.S. can drastically reduce emissions, improve air quality and stimulate broad-based economic gains. Success would require an expanded coalition of non-federal actors to move quickly and ambitiously to transform energy and transportation systems, including by building on the innovative measures that U.S. states, cities and businesses are already taking.

The impact of such a movement promises to extend beyond U.S. borders, with bottom-up commitments in the country leveraged to increase climate ambition around the world. This is already starting to happen. For example, Alliances for Climate Action connects cities, states, the private sector, investors, universities and civil-society organizations in Argentina, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, the U.S. and Vietnam, so that they can work with one another and with their national governments to spur climate action.

But the role of the national government remains important. Despite the potential of bottom-up climate leadership, the fact remains that the results are much better when combined with top-down coordination and oversight. The America's Pledge report shows that aggressive U.S. federal re-engagement on climate action in the form of a comprehensive "all-in" strategy could reduce emissions by 49 percent by 2030, putting the country on track to reach net-zero emissions by mid-

century.

So, despite three years of federal indifference, all hope for effective climate action in the U.S. is not lost. But we cannot afford to rest easy. The needed transformation will require broad citizen mobilization, increased energy productivity, disruptive innovation, updated market structures and forward-thinking investment. The U.S. Congress and executive branch must take aggressive, quick action, placing climate change and the associated economic transformation at the top of the policy agenda.

The rewards would be tremendous. Beyond environmental benefits, the changes outlined in the America's Pledge report, if designed well and implemented efficiently, could boost prosperity, lower consumer costs and improve public health. By 2030, the economic transformation could deliver equal or better performance in electricity, vehicles, and buildings compared to fossil-fuel technologies and at a lower price.

For example, it is already cheaper to shut down coal-fired power plants and replace them with wind and solar than it is to keep the plants online. In addition, the transition will create new job opportunities and the careers of the future, including in renewable energy, electric vehicle manufacturing and sustainable forestry (among others). Recent analysis by the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate shows that smart climate action can create global economic gains of $26 trillion by 2030, as well as generating 65 million jobs.

Non-federal U.S. actors have laid a strong foundation for climate action, and they continue to drive progress. But to achieve the necessary transformation as quickly as required, more elected U.S. officials and national leaders will need to step up.

Jules Kortenhorst is CEO of the Rocky Mountain Institute. Andrew Steer is president and CEO of the World Resources

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The Strait of Hormuz is the world's most important oil transit chokepoint

The Strait of Hormuz, located between Oman and Iran, connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. The Strait of Hormuz is the world's most important oil chokepoint because of the large volumes of oil that flow through the strait. In 2018, its daily oil flow averaged 21 million barrels per day (b/d), or the equivalent of about 21% of global petroleum liquids consumption.

Chokepoints are narrow channels along widely used global sea routes that are critical to global energy security. The inability of oil to transit a major chokepoint, even temporarily, can lead to substantial supply delays and higher shipping costs, resulting in higher world energy prices. Although most chokepoints can be circumvented by using other routes that add significantly to transit time, some chokepoints have no practical alternatives.

Volumes of crude oil, condensate, and petroleum products transiting the Strait of Hormuz have been fairly stable since 2016, when international sanctions on Iran were lifted and Iran's oil production and exports returned to pre-sanctions levels. Flows through the Strait of Hormuz in 2018 made up about one-third of total global seaborne traded oil. More than

one-quarter of global liquefied natural gas trade also transited the Strait of Hormuz in 2018.

Crude oil, condensate, and petroleum products transported through the Strait of Hormuz
million barrels per day

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total oil flows through Strait of Hormuz	**17.2**	**18.4**	**20.6**	**20.3**	**20.7**
Crude and condensate	14.4	15.2	17.3	17.2	17.3
Petroleum products	2.8	3.2	3.3	3.1	3.3
World maritime oil trade	**56.4**	**58.9**	**61.2**	**62.5**	**N/A**
World total petroleum and other liquids consumption	**93.9**	**95.9**	**96.9**	**98.5**	**99.9**
LNG flows through Strait of Hormuz (Tcf per year)	**4.0**	**4.2**	**4.2**	**4.1**	**4.1**

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, based on *Short-Term Energy Outlook* (June 2019), ClipperData, Saudi Aramco bond prospectus, Saudi Aramco annual reports, Saudi Ports Authority, International Group of Liquefied Natural Gas Importers, and U.N. Conference on Trade and Development
Note: LNG is liquefied natural gas; Tcf is trillion cubic feet

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There are limited options to bypass the Strait of Hormuz. Only Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have pipelines that can ship crude oil outside the Persian Gulf and have the additional pipeline capacity to circumvent the Strait of Hormuz. At the end of 2018, the total available crude oil pipeline capacity from the two countries combined was estimated at 6.5 million b/d. In that year, 2.7 million b/d of crude oil moved through the pipelines, leaving about 3.8 million b/d of unused capacity that could have bypassed the strait.

Operating pipelines that bypass the Strait of Hormuz, 2018
million barrels per day

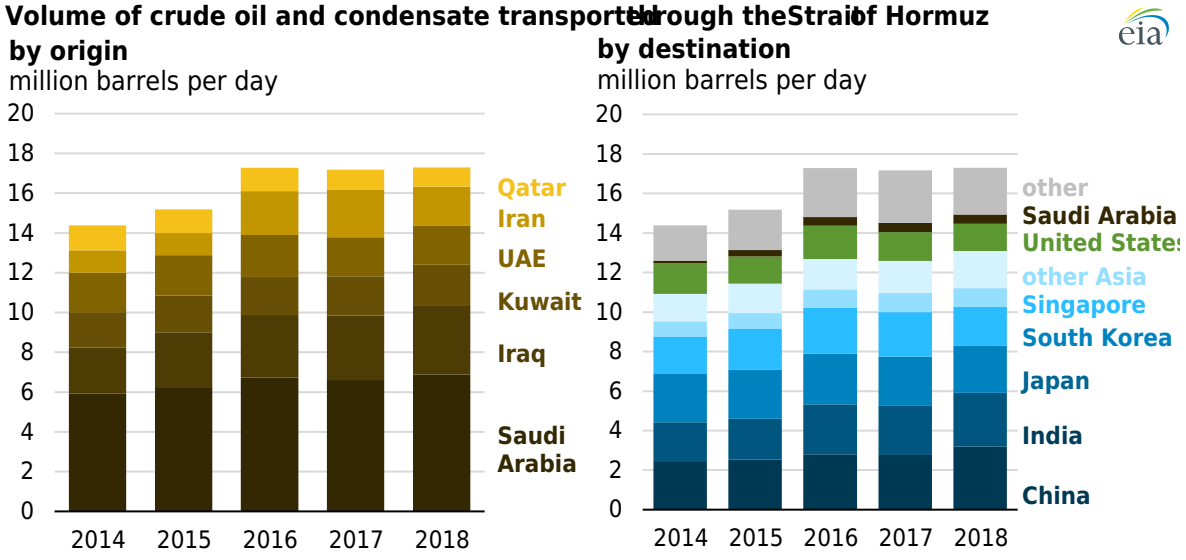
Pipeline name	Country	Capacity	Throughput	Unused capacity
Petroline (East-West Pipeline)	Saudi Arabia	5.0	2.1	2.9
Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline	United Arab Emirates	1.5	0.6	0.9
Abqaiq-Yanbu Natural Gas Liquids Pipeline	Saudi Arabia	0.3	0.3	0.0
TOTAL		**6.8**	**3.0**	**3.8**

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, based on ClipperData, Saudi Aramco bond prospectus (April 2019)
Note: Unused capacity is defined as pipeline capacity that is

not currently used but can be readily available.

Based on tanker tracking data published by ClipperData, Saudi Arabia moves the most crude oil and condensate through the Strait of Hormuz, most of which is exported to other countries (less than 0.5 million b/d transited the strait in 2018 from Saudi ports in the Persian Gulf to Saudi ports in the Red Sea).

EIA estimates that 76% of the crude oil and condensate that moved through the Strait of Hormuz went to Asian markets in 2018. China, India, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore were the largest destinations for crude oil moving through the Strait of Hormuz to Asia, accounting for 65% of all Hormuz crude oil and condensate flows in 2018.



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, based on tanker tracking data published by ClipperData, Inc.

In 2018, the United States imported about 1.4 million b/d of crude oil and condensate from Persian Gulf countries through the Strait of Hormuz, accounting for about 18% of total U.S. crude oil and condensate imports and 7% of total U.S. petroleum liquids consumption.

EU fuels Indonesia trade tensions with 5-year biodiesel tariffs

BRUSSELS: The European Union imposed five-year tariffs on biodiesel from Indonesia to counter alleged subsidies to producers in the country, a move that could prompt the Indonesian government to retaliate.

The EU duties on Indonesian exporters of this type of biofuel, which is made from vegetable oils and animal fats for use in diesel engines, range from 8% to 18%, the European Commission, the bloc's executive arm, said on Monday.

The levies mark the definitive outcome of an EU probe into claims by the European biodiesel industry that the Indonesian government gives trade-distorting aid to the likes of PT Ciliandra Perkasa, PT Wilmar Bioenergi Indonesia and PT Musim Mas.

Subsidised exports of Indonesian biodiesel to the EU are causing "a threat of material injury to the union industry, " the Brussels-based commission said in the bloc's Official Journal. The definitive anti-subsidy duties will take effect on Tuesday and follow provisional levies introduced in August at the same levels.

The five-year import taxes are the latest twist in a long-running EU trade dispute with Indonesia over biodiesel and mirror a fight the bloc has had with Argentina.

The duties restore a degree of protection that European

biodiesel producers such as Verbio Vereinigte BioEnergie AG lost in 2018 when the EU scrapped tariffs aimed at countering alleged below-cost – or "dumped" – sales in the bloc by Indonesian exporters.

That move followed successful Indonesian challenges against the anti-dumping duties, which had been introduced in 2013, at the World Trade Organization and in the EU courts.

Indonesian retaliation

The EU opened the subsidy inquiry in December 2018 and the Indonesian trade minister said in August this year that, should the bloc decide to apply new biodiesel levies of 8% to 18%, Indonesia would raise its tariffs on European dairy goods to the same levels (from 5% to 10%).

The EU duty rates vary depending on the Indonesian producer. The levels are 8% for Ciliandra Perkasa, 15.7% for the Wilmar Group, 16.3% for the Musim Mas Group and 18% for the Permata Group and all other Indonesian biodiesel exporters.

Indonesian exporters' combined share of the EU biodiesel market rose to 3.3% – or 516,088 metric tons – in the 12 months through September 2018 from 0.2% in 2017 and 0.3% in 2016, according to the commission.

Renewable-energy trade tensions between Europe and Indonesia have also grown as a result of a separate EU decision this year restricting the types of biofuels from palm oil that may be counted toward the bloc's renewable-energy goals. In Indonesia, palm oil is the main raw material for making biodiesel.

Both sides are fighting over steel as well. The EU has complained to the WTO about Indonesian export curbs on raw materials including nickel that are used to make stainless steel and is threatening to hit flat-rolled stainless steel from Indonesia with duties to counter alleged subsidies and

below-cost sales. — Bloomberg

Gazprom for Pakistan gas pipeline feasibility study

Russian company Gazprom is set to initiate the feasibility study in the first quarter of 2020 for laying down undersea pipeline starting from Gulf to Pakistan, India and Bangladesh initially that will ultimately end to China after touching Myanmar and Thailand, a senior official of the Petroleum Division privy to the development said.

The pipeline will pass through shallow waters of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh and every country will get the gas from the pipeline as per requirements.

The total cost of the undersea pipeline will hover around $20bn-$25bn when it will be extended to China at last.

The most important aspect of the project, the official said, is that every country will provide the transit fee to Pakistan, which will run into billions of dollars when the said pipeline will ultimately have access to China.

Pakistan will be getting transit fee from India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand and China. Pakistan’s Navy will provide services with regard to monitoring the pipeline and its security.

Pakistan and India have already signed MoUs and agreements with Russia separately for the project under which both countries would get gas from the undersea pipeline through the spur pipelines.

However, the three countries, at the outset Pakistan, India

and Bangladesh, will benefit from the billions of dollars Russian investment as buyer countries.

According to the official, the undersea pipeline would be laid down with an estimated investment of $10 for the regional three countries and Pakistan will get gas from the undersea pipeline up to 1bcfd.

More importantly Russia-Pakistan economic corridor will also be set up and Russia will also invest in fibre optic link, roads and power projects as ancillary facilities.

Pakistan will take the gas up to 1bcf per day when the said pipeline will come on stream with massive rollover impact on economy.

Russia is already engaged with Pakistan on North South Gas Pipeline, which will cost $2bn-2.5bn. However, Gazprom has also shown interest in building gas storages in Pakistan with investment of $400mn-$500mn. Russia is also interested in investing in exploration and production activities in Pakistan and to this effect Gazprom is currently engaged with the top management of OGDCL.

However, under the agreement, another top Petroleum Division official said Gazprom Company from gas deposits in Iran and in other Middle East countries owned by Russia will ensure gas sourcing in the pipeline for the said buyer countries. The buyer countries under separate agreements with the said Russian company will have gas intakes from the said pipeline.

The official said Pakistan will share its credible data with Russian company about the demand of gas with future projections in next one decade keeping in view existing pricing structure, and regulatory and taxation regimes. The data for demand would be worked out keeping in view the renewable power policy and future LNG terminal being installed by private companies.

The same data India will provide to Russian company too.

After having the required data from Pakistan and India, the Russian company will ink commercial agreements with buyer countries. Based on data from both the countries, Gazprom will start the feasibility in the first three months of 2020 and

the whole process staring from sharing the data to completion of feasibility report will be finished in one year time and if the project is found feasible, the pipeline will be laid down undersea in 3-4 years.
To a question, the official said that Pakistan had the option to build spur pipeline to connect the undersea pipeline and the spur pipeline can also be connected to S-N pipeline.

Can Pakistan make transition to electric vehicles soon?

KARACHI: When you think of electric vehicles, you think of Elon Musk, a noiseless Tesla and luxury more than zero emissions. But today the government wants to use the same technology for the common man – to run bikes, rickshaws and even buses, jeeps and trucks. Will this transition from fossil fuel vehicles to electric vehicles in Pakistan happen anytime soon?

Cities are witnessing the worst ever smog. This was followed by a climate march with youth demanding climate justice.

Thus the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government could not have chosen a better time than when the UN climate summit COP 25 is taking place to make a strong case against tailpipe emissions from urban transportation, a major contributor to air pollution and climate change.

Little wonder then they quickly got the nod of approval by the cabinet for the first national electric vehicle (EV) policy.

With 43 per cent of the airborne emissions in the country

coming from the transport sector, federal Minister for Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam said that transitioning to EV provided a “huge opportunity” for the country.

“These will have many advantages for Pakistan – it will reduce pollution, will cut the cost of fuel by 70pc thereby [leading to] huge saving for FFV (fossil fuel vehicle) owners, and will cut the country’s import bill tremendously.”

There are three million private cars and 20m motorcycles and motorised rickshaws plying the roads, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, as cited in the Economic Survey 2018-19, mainly due to the absence of a good public transport system.

Riaz Haq, who has worked in various tech firms for 35 years in the Silicon Valley and is an EV enthusiast, said that with 32m households and 17.5m motorcycles registered in Pakistan, the motorcycle ownership increased from 41pc in 2015 to 53pc in 2018.

The new policy envisions using electricity to get 100,000 cars, 500,000 two- and three-wheelers, 1,000 buses and trucks to ply the roads in the next five years. By 2030 it sees 30pc of all new cars, big and small trucks, vans, and jeeps and 50pc of all two-, three- and four-wheelers to be electric vehicles reducing tailpipe emissions by 65pc. By 2040, if all goes well, 90pc of all vehicles on the roads will be EVs.

“The PM wants all new buses coming on the road to be electric hybrid – run both on electricity and CNG (compressed natural gas),” said the federal minister.

Most experts are lauding the policy as a step in the right direction. “It is a forward-looking step needed to deal with climate concerns from growing transport sector emissions with rapidly rising vehicle ownership,” Mr Haq wrote in his blog.

Another proponent for EVs, Islamabad-based energy expert Vaqar

Zakaria, said that “surplus power generation capacity, building off-peak demand for better utilisation of generation capacity which also brings down generation costs, poor urban air quality, high levels of noise from traffic and safer cars” are some of the reasons to make the move.

The automobile industry remains sceptical though. “I would love to see EV launched in Pakistan, but it means developing a huge set-up anew,” said Juzer Amreliwala, the chief executive officer of a Honda partner in Karachi.

“On the face of it, it looks great. But establishing proper after-sales set-up requires both capital and human investment. Although most dealerships have come quite far in technology development, much training is still needed,” he added.

Aware of the infrastructure that will be needed for EVs, the minister for climate change sees it as an opportunity with a whole new service industry and numerous livelihood options opening up. “Pakistan is thirsting for new business opportunities and markets. If we build our capacity technologically, Pakistan can become a hub for exporting EVs — especially two- and three-wheelers,” Mr Aslam said.

However, a potential problem with the policy is the plethora of government supervisors — nine ministries, the Higher Education Commission, the State Bank of Pakistan and various authorities in energy sectors. “This industry transcends so many domains that all these stakeholders had to be included,” explained Mr Aslam. “Interaction and cooperation between stakeholders are the mark of good governance.”

Vaqar Zakaria warns of the “vested interests” who may not like the transition. “Those that sell low quality fuel and cheat on quantity sold will not like it, the refiners will not like it, the car traders will not like it as the EVs will last longer, the industry as it presently will not like it, the FBR may say the government will lose taxes on imported fuel which are huge

at the moment and a significant source of revenue for the government. But as a consumer I will be delighted… if they only let me import EVs and E-bikes at reasonable cost.”