

Geo-political Approach: Leviathan and Gaza Marine Gas—Israel and Turkey Are Major Players in the Energy Market

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Israel has tried and is still trying to get closer to Turkey to solve the problem of exporting gas to Europe via Turkey and Greece. The issue of energy supply is an important priority for Israeli leaders because they realized that Turkey, by its strategic geographical location, could be an important node for the transfer of energy supplies from east to west. With the potential of strategic action, after the success of the Turkish Torch project to transport Russian gas to Europe via Turkey, the main center of the network will remain the distribution of energy supply from east to west in the near and medium term. According to the strategic rule that energy sources make competitors the partners, Gaza Marine gas, will lift the economic blockade in exchange for the export of Israeli gas abroad. The Turkish diplomatic reward to allow the export of Israeli gas abroad is marine natural gas in Gaza and allows the Palestinians to invest to develop the infrastructure and the reality of services and stimulates the economy in the Gaza Strip, which was rejected by Israel for fear of investing Hamas revenues derived from the export of marine gas in the development of military capabilities, especially the missile system, which led to the threat of Israeli national security.

Keywords: Leviathan field, Gaza Marine field, Turkey, Israel, geo-strategic location

Turkey's foreign policy is a multi-dimensional one, meaning that Turkey's relations with important international players such as the United States, Russia, and the European Union (EU) are complementary rather than competitive.

This policy shows Turkey as a strategic partner with the United States through bilateral relations through NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), seeking to join the EU, and keeping good neighborly relations with Russia and complementary relations with the Eurasia region.

A good relationship, for example, with Russia is not a substitute for the relationship with Europe, and the model of strategic partnership with America is not a directed relationship against Russia. The determinants of implementation of Turkey's domestic and foreign policy are based on three strategic pillars:

- (1) The Middle East Regional System is the vital area and strategic depth of Turkish foreign policy;
- (2) Turkish foreign policy must be linked to the Islamic cultural affiliation;
- (3) Recalling that the Ottoman Empire was a multi-cultural empire, Turkish foreign policy must respect and absorb all national cultures, which the Justice and Development Party (Turkey) has committed to since its accession to power in 2002 and so far.

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The hypothesis of our research stems from the following:

First: soft power and pragmatism highlighted two pillars in the implementation of Turkish foreign policy.

They are two key elements in a pivotal country such as Turkey, which seeks to have the strength and position to be the ultimate player in its regional and international relations.

Second: despite the absence of a moral consensus between Turkish and Israeli politicians, it is possible to assume that, despite the great value gap existing between the Turkish and Israeli elites, Turkey and Israel may return to cooperate on points of mutual benefit.

Third: Turkey, by virtue of its geo-strategic position, can be present, influential, and effective in the geography of future conflicts, namely, competition for energy supply and the paths of its strategic lines.

So Israel has tried and is still trying to get closer to Turkey to solve the problem of exporting its gas to Europe via Turkey and Greece.

Fourth: the issue of energy supplies is an important priority for Israeli leaders because they realized that Turkey, by virtue of its geo-strategic position, could be an important node for the transfer of energy supplies from east to west.

With the potential for strategic action, Turkey, after the success of the Turkish Torch project to transport Russian gas to Europe via Turkey, will remain the main center for the East-West power distribution network in the near and medium term.

The most prominent tension in Turkish-Israeli relations after the Justice and Development Party (Turkey) took power in Turkey is as the following:

First: Gazan gas and the continuation of the Israeli blockade of Gaza. On September 8, 2011, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan told Al-Jazeera that his government had taken steps to prevent Israel from taking unilateral advantage of natural resources in the Mediterranean.

“Israel has begun to declare that it has the right to operate in exclusive economic zones in the Mediterranean”, he said, apparently citing Israeli plans to take advantage of newly discovered gas reserves near the shores of the sea.

“Israel will not be the owner of this right because it belongs to Gaza, and it has every right to export it abroad and use its revenues to develop its structural, service and economic reality”.

Second: the crux of the Turkish-Israeli dispute lies in the unresolved dispute over Cyprus. In the 1960s and 1970s, tensions on the island—between the Greek-speaking community supported by Athens and the Turkish-backed Turkic community—often seem to pose a greater threat to regional peace than the differences between Israelis and Palestinians.

Since 1974, when Turkey sent troops to the island to support the Turkish Cypriot community, the island has been divided and UN troops intervened to mediate between the two sides and repeated attempts to achieve reconciliation have failed.

With the support of Ankara, the Turkish Cypriots established the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” theoretically independent, reinforced by the presence of more than 30,000 Turkish troops. At the same time, the Greek Cypriot Republic has become a member of the European Union and is representative of the entire island.

Third: gas reserves in the Mediterranean basin and Turkish-Greek tension.

Turkey as guarantor of the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” has taken steps in the area (resources near the seashore) and will vigorously pursue its right to control international waters in the eastern

Mediterranean. Such a policy could put Turkey in conflict with all coastal governments in the region, from the Republic of Cyprus to Israel, Lebanon, Egypt, and Syria.

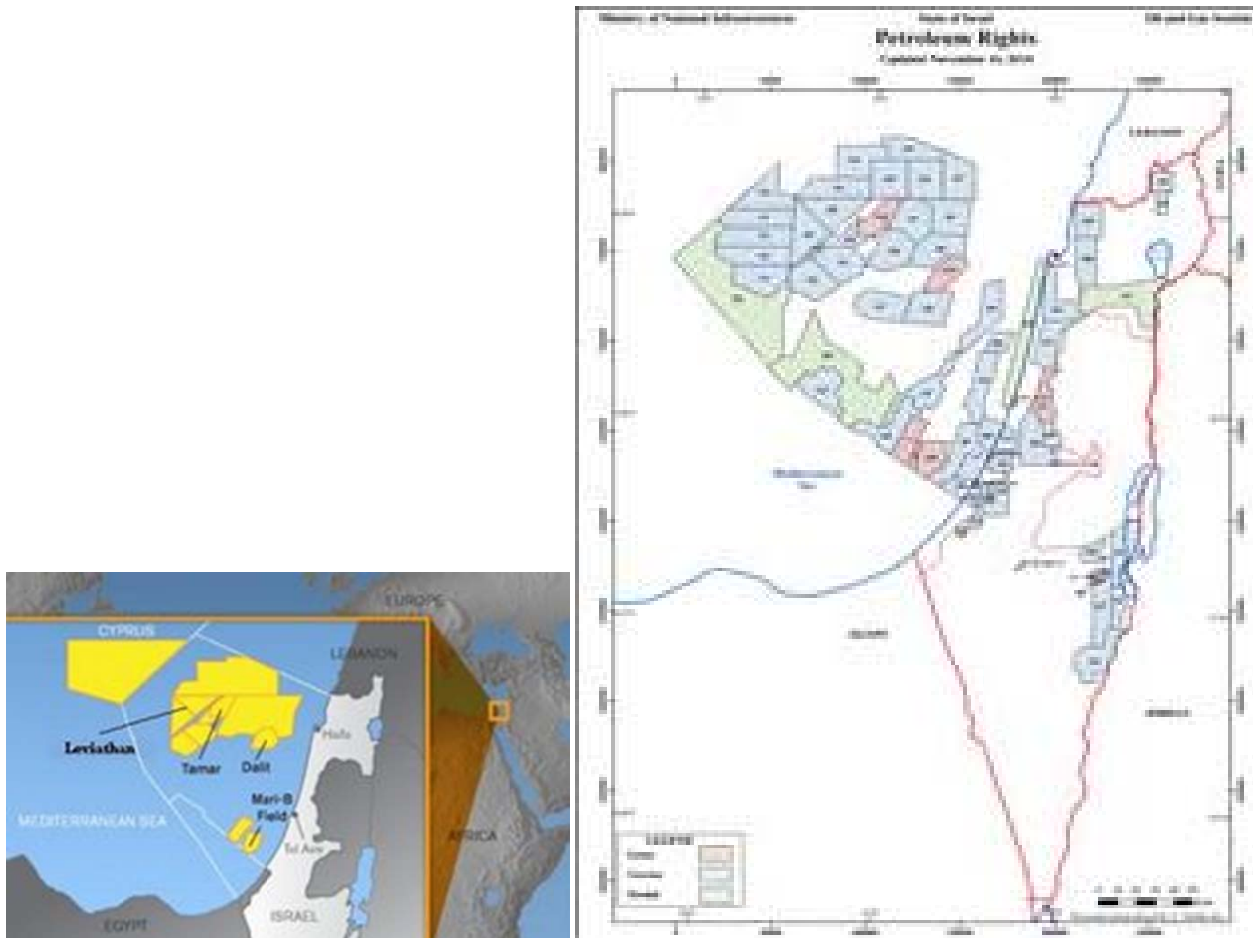


Figure 1. The energy resources strategy.

Energy sources make competitors a partner. Gaza Marine gas lifts the economic siege in return for the export of Israeli gas abroad.

The Turkish diplomatic reward for allowing Israeli gas to be exported abroad is the natural gas of the Gaza Strip, allowing the Palestinians to invest in infrastructure development, services, and economic revitalization in the Gaza Strip, which Israel rejects for fear of Hamas investing in the proceeds from the marine gas export, especially the missile system, and the result of the threat to Israel's national security.

The field, known as Gaza Marine, was discovered in 2000 and did not enter production due to differences between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, in addition to the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007. Despite the location of the field, it belongs to the Palestinian Authority, Hamas in Gaza.

Israel's submission here is required for security reasons, as the gas is located in an area patrolled by Israeli naval patrols. However, former Prime Minister Ehud Barak relinquished ownership of the field to the Palestinians in 2001 as a gesture of goodwill. Israel amended the virtual maritime border in the area so that the Gaza Marine field would be entirely located in Palestinian waters instead of crossing Israel's exclusive economic zone.

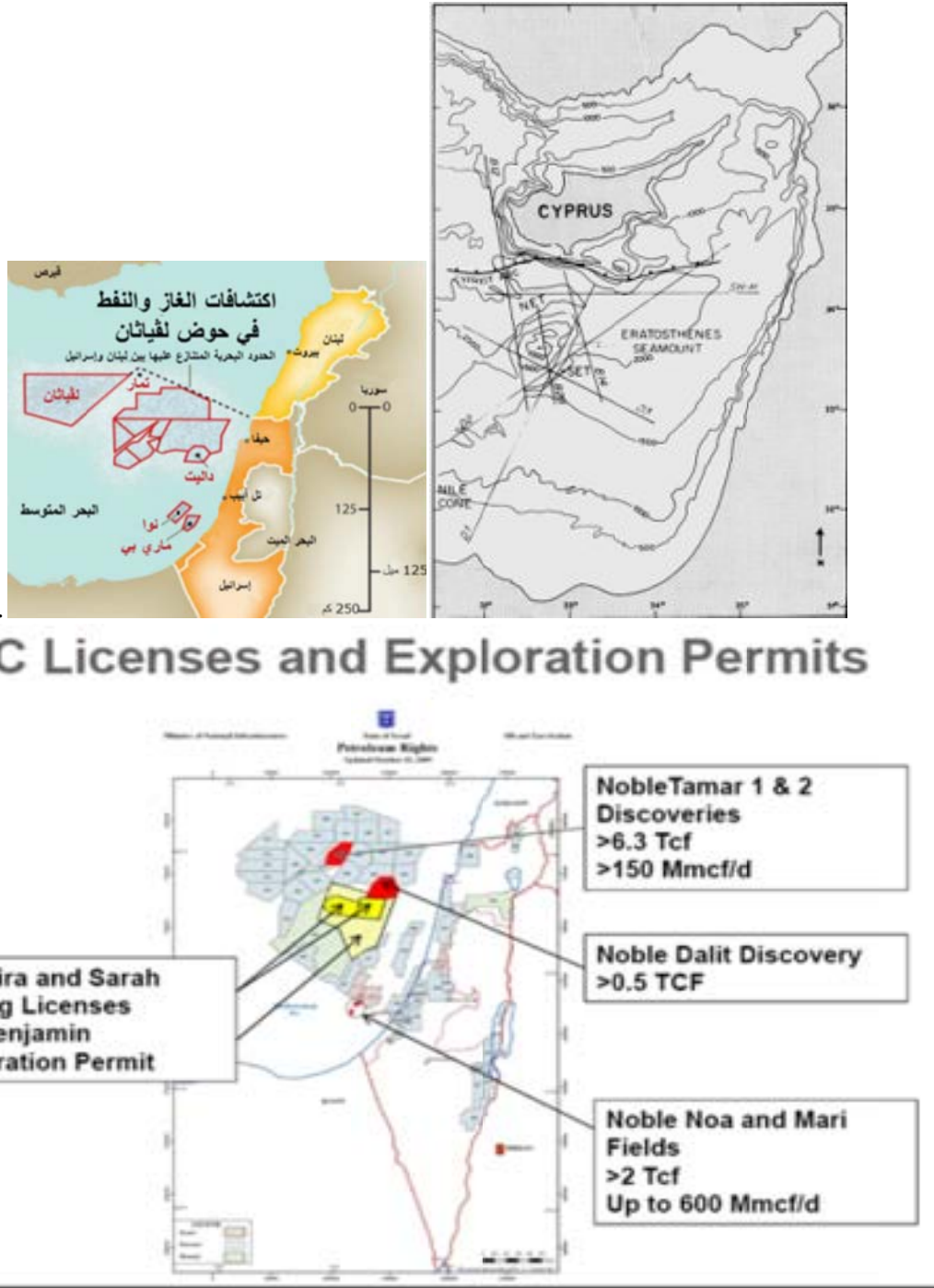


Figure 2. Gas and oil discoveries in the Leviathan field and the disputed maritime border between Israel and Lebanon as well as the size of gas discovered in the fields Tamar and Gaza Marine according to drawings and statements by the Nobel Company.

The field reserves amount to one trillion cubic feet, so its size is beneficial to the Palestinian economy, even though it is very small compared to its recent Israeli marine discoveries, Tamar field, located about 50 miles west of Haifa, the Palestinian field, which began production in March, while the nearby Leviathan field is larger than Tamar and is 19 trillion cubic feet (see Figure 2).

Gaza Marine reserves will probably last for 10-12 years, but its entry into production should encourage the start of new exploration operations on additional fields.

The most obvious way to bring gas to the mainland is by connecting the field to the adjacent pipeline structure at the seabed of Israel, which is connected to a gas treatment plant outside Ashdod. From there, gas can be easily and cheaply transported by pipeline to the West Bank.

The project will need to invest \$ 1 billion in capital and could start production by 2017, the Financial Times reported.

The development of “Gaza Marine” can benefit the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel, thus enhancing the economic prospects of the Palestinians and supporting the right of self-determination and contributing to the normalization of Turkish-Israeli relations.

What Are the Strategic Options and Alternatives for Exporting Israeli Gas to Europe

Azerbaijan is one of the main suppliers of crude oil to Israel. Azerbaijani supplies through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline reach Turkey and from there, they are supplied by tankers. Other supplies come through Black Sea ports.

After the discovery of Israeli gas fields, Israeli energy experts studied all options for exporting gas surplus starting in 2017. Their options were as follows:

(1) The offshore Tamar gas field, which entered the production phase in 2013, will meet current domestic demand for gas, and the Leviathan offshore field could make Israel a major energy exporter after the start of production in 2017. The possibilities are exporting it after converting it into liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Egypt is at the forefront of the Israeli options to export its gas to Egypt because of Egypt’s need for gas.

(2) The construction of a pipeline to Cyprus connected to a pipeline extending north across the island and then passing down the sea to Turkey, where it could join the pipeline network serving the European market (see Figure 3).

In the absence of political constraints, this option has the best commercial logic, since it is cheaper and faster to create, and it connects Israel to the nearest and largest market.

But this route gives two countries—Cyprus and Turkey—control of Israeli gas exports. These two countries do not have good relations with each other, and Turkey’s relations with Israel are not encouraging at present.

However, in the world of politics, the positions of countries change according to their interests and national security. Therefore, Israel will try to activate the option of exporting gas to Europe via Turkey and Greece, using various tools of Israeli diplomatic pressure starting with the US role, the Gaza Gazette, the siege of Gaza, Turkey, etc.

Israel’s decision to establish any natural gas export facility in an area under its control is predictable and understandable. But he points out that LNG—not the construction of a gas pipeline—is the preferred choice for Israeli energy experts and therefore they suggested the following:

(3) Establishing a LNG terminal on Israel’s Mediterranean coastline, or setting up a LNG terminal on Israel’s Red Sea coast near Eilat.

It will be closer to natural gas markets in India and Asia. But Turkey remains Israel’s strategic option to export its gas to Europe for its geo-strategic position, especially after Turkey’s success in signing with Russia to build the Turkish pipeline, including the transfer of Russian gas to Europe through Turkey’s preference for Ukraine.

So the argument of energy strategy makes competitors and adversaries real, not virtual, partners.

The energy resources strategy imposes fundamental rules to make the East Meade gas pipeline possible, linking Israeli and Cypriot fields through Turkey and Greece to Europe (see Figure 1), as follows:

First: topographical difficulties. This problem can be solved by signing a joint agreement between Turkey and Greece because the extension of the East Meade line would require Turkey to cross Cypriot waters, which requires agreement between the two countries, with direct pressure from US and Israeli diplomacy.

Second: energy is a catalyst for the normalization of Turkish relations with Greece and Israel.

Third: Washington supports the export of Israeli gas to Turkey, passing through the waters of Cyprus, ending in Europe.

Fourth: Mediterranean gas contributes to the diversification of European gas supplies away from Russia or at least less reliance on it.

The Export of Israeli Gas to Europe and the Turbulent Security Environment of the Mediterranean Basin

The Israeli strategy is to employ energy sources to normalize its relations with Turkey to achieve the following advantages:

(1) The benefits of normalization with an influential and present regional party in the Middle East and the Caucasus such that Turkey serves Israel economically and politically in a turbulent security environment and hostile to the existence of Israel in this region.

(2) Israel believes that the primary and real key to understanding the deterioration in its relationship with Turkey is governed by two issues:

The first is the Gaza Marine gas case and Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip.

The second is tension in Turkish-Greek relations and the problem of unresolved conflict over Cyprus.

Israel is aware that there are joint files with Turkey that could contribute to the normalization of relations between them. The most prominent of these are: the file of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, the Democratic Union and its military wing, the People's Protection Units, and the necessity of cooperation and coordination to face the increasing challenges and threats posed by the Da'ash organization in Iraq and Syria.

Ankara realized the benefit of improving relations with a stable regional party, such as Israel, which shares its resentment of the pro-Syrian axis, on the one hand, and could contribute to curbing the emergence of a Kurdish entity on the Turkish border.

The Palestinian Cause, the Siege of Gaza and the Turkish Support for the Gaza Strip

The East Meade route will not only transport Israeli gas but also deliver the marine gas to Gaza, so it is likely that the common energy interests are driving normalization efforts as well. Israel wants to reap the economic and political benefits of exporting natural gas from offshore fields to Turkey.

The extension of the East Meade gas pipeline through Turkey will contribute to its cheap gas supply (Turkey) if approved, because the success of such a deal could provide Ankara with cheap supplies of gas in addition to its current supply of Russian gas and an opportunity to re-export some of the gas to Europe, and a means to diversify its imports (Turkey) of energy away from Russia, which currently provides about 55% of gas to Turkey, or at least to strengthen gas supplies to Turkey after signing with Russia to establish the project of the Turkish pipeline to transport Russian gas to Europe.

Since the activation of the free trade agreement signed between Israel and Turkey in 1996 and the facilitation of the East Meade gas pipeline to transport Israeli gas to Europe via Turkey, despite the Turkish-Israeli political differences on the Gaza Strip and its siege, the economic reality indicates that the two countries have trade relations governed by the free trade agreement, which entered into force in 2000. The civil trade relations between them continue and develop these relations and increase the volume of trade between them possible to enhance the chances of political normalization and to activate the Turkish desire to study the possibility of approving the transfer of Israeli gas to Europe via East Meade if appropriate political conditions and environment exist.

One of Turkey's priorities is the issue of the Palestinian issue, including the lifting of the blockade on Gaza, the removal of Israeli obstacles to the Gaza Marine gas investment, Israel's approval of Turkey's request for housing projects, and the reconstruction of infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. Ankara also requested the establishment of a ship to generate energy at sea near to help solve the acute electricity shortage in the Gaza Strip.

On the other hand, Israel insists that all foreign aid to Gaza should be channeled into tight security arrangements, if possible within the framework of a long-term truce with Hamas, through US mediation and with the participation of the Palestinian Authority.

One of Turkey's goals of approaching normalization with Israel is to prevent Israeli support for Kurdish nationalism.

The "strategy of the parties" adopted by Israel to encourage the independence movements of non-Arab minorities, especially the Kurdish nationalism, has made many Turks consider strong suspicion that Israel is the main supporter of Kurdish nationalism in Iraq, Syria, and Iran.

Energy Experts Warn: Israel Must Refuse to Build a Natural Gas Pipeline to Islamic Turkey Because of the Political Risks Involved



Figure 3. An option.

Israel should avoid Turkey, including Cyprus in the gas export projects, said by Ariel Ben Solomon, also published on October 7, 2016.

Israel must refuse to build a natural gas pipeline to Islamic Turkey because of the political risks involved. Instead, they should consider using LNG technology for export via Cyprus. While this is costly, it is a less risky and more durable option. This possibility should be added to exports to Jordan and possibly even to Egypt.

While Israel has begun closing natural gas deals, it must avoid linking itself to any long-term agreement to build a gas pipeline with Turkey at the expense of allies such as Cyprus, Greece, or even Egypt.

Despite the recent easing of tensions between the two countries, Israel cannot rely on the Islamic regime of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as a central hub in Israel's natural gas export strategy.

At any moment, a crisis could erupt which could cause Erdogan, a volatile anti-Semite, to stop the flow of gas and turn Israel into a hostage. Such a crisis may occur because of a new war with Hamas-controlled Gaza, an ally of Turkey, a general escalation in the conflict with the Palestinians, or a series of other unexpected events. The deterioration of the already cool relationship is only a matter of time.

The latest improvement in relations between Israel and Turkey should be seen in the context of Ankara's volatile relations with Russia and other countries at the same time, not as a real change in Erdogan's attitude towards Israel.

Turkey has experienced a crisis in relations with Russia after a Russian fighter jet was shot down by the Turkish air force on its border with Syria last November. The crisis has put Turkey at its tail because of its dependence on Russia for half of its gas consumption and more than 12% of its oil consumption. Turkey has also strained relations with the United States and the European Union, as well as with various Arab countries that oppose its support for Islamists in their countries.

Therefore, the recent reconciliation between Turkey and Russia is changing the picture, giving Erdogan the freedom to resolve his relations with Israel as he sees fit. In addition, there are other countries where Turkey can buy gas, including Russia and Iran. Therefore, Turkey can benefit from any gas deal with Israel.

The proposed gas pipeline to Turkey will cost about \$ 5 billion and last seven to eight years. Other gas export options are Egypt and Greece.

Although Cairo has friendly relations with Jerusalem, Egypt suffers from political instability and terrorism. Even without these problems, Egypt is not an ideal option because it has its gas reserves and does not need Israeli gas in the long term. It cannot be part of an export plan for Europe, which requires Cyprus to be the Israeli gas transit terminal.

It leaves what seems to be a safer but more expensive option—the development of a LNG terminal in Cyprus. LNG technology converts natural gas into liquid for easy transportation.

Israel will wait if it focuses on long-range gas strategy in Cyprus.

The Aphrodite gas field off the south of the Cyprus coast and the nearby Israeli offshore gas field are likely to turn Cyprus into another export hub for Europe and Asia. For this purpose, it will be necessary to establish a LNG facility on the coast, and it is estimated that the construction of one of these facilities in Cyprus will cost more than 20 billion dollars.

When LNG deals were asked to source Israeli industry with the possibility that Israel would build a LNG facility of its kind in Eilat or anywhere else along the coast of Israel, the source said that it is possible for the environment and their political supporters to prevent it. Thus, it seems that the possibility of using LNG is

limited to the use of the existing facility in Egypt, the establishment of a new facility in Cyprus, or the establishment of a floating facility at sea.

“Cyprus is the safest bet”, the source said. “It is stable over the long term and even if the gas is found in Lebanon, it can be transported via the pipeline to Cyprus”, he said.

The other idea is the gas pipeline that will be put between Israel and Cyprus and from there to Greece, but some experts claim that this idea is unrealistic. Business newspaper Globe reported last April that officials from the three countries discussed the option, but it would take at least 1,100 kilometers of pipes, some of which would move at a depth of 3,000 meters, making this option complicated and expensive.

Tensions in Turkish-Egyptian Relations Are Another Major Obstacle to the Normalization of Turkish-Israeli Relations

Ankara has tried to file a complaint to the UN Security Council against the Sisi’s government for sanctions after it toppled the government of former Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi in 2013.

Egypt, on the other hand, used the Cyprus card, building close ties with the Greek Cypriots and conducting joint military exercises with Greece and Israel in 2015.

The Egyptian-Israeli relations are now at their best for decades (though mostly secret). The Egyptian president made clear to Israel that efforts to normalize relations with Ankara should not be at the expense of Cairo’s interests.

In conclusion, Washington supports the export of Israeli gas to Europe through Turkey, both for its own benefit and as a potential catalyst for normalization. During his visit to Israel, US Energy Secretary Ernest Muniz highlighted how this agreement could help diversify European gas supplies away from Russia, but that is not without its own challenges.

Ernest also said that the United States will make extraordinary efforts to achieve success in this project and through pressure on the three parties involved in this project, namely Israel, Turkey, and Greece, including the following:

- (1) Aphrodite field problem through joint exploitation (Aphrodite field is located in the waters claimed by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus);
- (2) Solve the problem of the Israeli field “Marie-B”, which extends to the maritime territory of Gaza;
- (3) Pressure on Jordan to secure its own gas supplies from the Tamar field.

Because the outcome of these American efforts will contribute to strengthening the Israeli economy by providing opportunities to develop and export the surplus of Israeli gas abroad, will energy sources from Turkey, Greece, and Israel, the current contenders and enemies, make allies and partners in the future?

But in the Middle East and North Africa region, which is known for its zero-sum results, further progress is likely to require a lot of diplomatic efforts, especially American diplomacy, which has been and remains Turkey’s strategic ally, indispensable in the current tensions in the Middle East and North Africa.

Will we see a change in the geography of energy supplies and their main corridors after the visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Greece and solve the outstanding problems between the two countries?

Will we see in the foreseeable future, rather than the average, a practical application of the energy sources strategy that will make the competitors the partners to export Israeli gas through Turkey and Greece to Europe after the recent Greek-Turkish rapprochement?

Conclusions

The Leviathan gas field is a large natural gas field located in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Israel, 47 kilometres (29 miles) south-west of the Tamar gas field.

The gas field is located roughly 130 kilometres (81 miles) west of Haifa in waters 1,500 metres (4,900 ft) deep in the Levantine Basin, a rich hydrocarbon area in one of the world's larger offshore gas finds of the past decade.

According to some commentators, the gas find has the potential to change Israel's foreign relations with neighboring countries Turkey and Egypt.

Together with the nearby Tamar gas field, the Leviathan field is seen as an opportunity for Israel to become a major energy player in the Middle East.

As of 2017, even by conservative estimates, Leviathan holds enough gas to meet Israel's domestic needs for 40 years.

In July 2010, Noble Energy announced that seismic studies indicated that there was a 50% chance of the Leviathan field containing natural gas, with the potential reserve size being estimated at 16 trillion cubic feet (450 billion cubic metres). The initial exploration well, Leviathan 1, was drilled to a depth of 5,170 metres (16,960 ft) and the discovery was announced on December 30, 2010. The cost of drilling the exploration well was \$ 92.5 million. The well was drilled by Noble's Homer Ferrington rig.

The second stage of drilling of the Leviathan 1 well was intended to reach a depth of 7,200 metres (23,600 ft), which would include an additional natural gas reserve and potential 600 million barrels of oil.

While the gas discovery at -5,170 m was made in the Tamar sands layer which was already known to contain gas, the additional oil and gas potential exists in layers that have not been explored in the Levantine Basin. Noble has twice failed to reach the deeper layers due to technical challenges with drilling to the extreme depths involved. However, during drilling towards the intended target, some gas was detected and as of 2012, Noble still had plans to explore those layers.

The Leviathan gas field was the largest gas field in the Mediterranean Sea until the August 2015 discovery of the Zohr gas field off the coast of Egypt, only 6 km from Cyprus' Block 11. Leviathan is the largest discovery in the history of Noble Energy. Noble Energy operates Leviathan with a 39.66% working interest; Delek Drilling holds 22.67%; Avner Oil Exploration holds 22.67%; and Ratio Oil Exploration holds the remaining 15%. In February 2014, Woodside Energy agreed to buy a 25% stake of the Leviathan field for up to US\$ 2.55 billion. It was announced on 21 May, 2014 that Woodside Energy pulled out of an agreement to take a stake worth up to \$ 2.7 billion in Israel's flagship Leviathan gas project, as the group developing the field shifted focus to regional markets.

The most straightforward option to transport Israeli gas from the Leviathan field to Turkey is by constructing an undersea pipeline, dubbed the "Leviathan-Ceyhan Pipeline" through Cyprus's exclusive economic zone. During the October 13 meeting of the World Energy Council, in Istanbul, Israel and Turkey agreed to examine the feasibility of such a pipeline. However, its construction through Cyprus's waters is constrained by the level of Turkish-Cypriot diplomatic rapprochement. The problem of dealing with Cyprus's exclusive economic zone is a prerequisite for moving forward. Moreover, the actual economic viability of the Leviathan-Ceyhan Pipeline project is itself questionable. However, successful energy cooperation could reconcile Turkey's relations with Cyprus and simultaneously strengthen Turkey's hand in its relations with the

EU. Yet, this project will challenge Russia's Gazprom, which is eager to complete its Turkish Stream natural gas pipeline's two legs as soon as possible before additional foreign gas can enter Turkey. According to Sohbet Karbuz, the director of the Hydrocarbons, Mediterranean Energy Observatory, France, "a potential gas pipeline from the Leviathan field to Turkey could connect to the BOTA? pipelines or to TANAP". But the combination of transport costs and Israel's current gas prices framework makes Israeli gas unattractive in the European market.

Israel could feasibly also use the planned LNG terminal at Vassilikos, Cyprus, or Egypt's current unused LNG export terminals in Idku and Damietta to sell its gas to European markets. However, none of the Leviathan field's corporate partners expressed interest in sharing the financial burden of transport.

(1) Based on the foregoing, the following conclusions can be reached:

Discovering reserves of natural gas and oil in economic areas, Israel and adjacent exclusive Cyprus have laid the foundations for a broad cooperation between Tel Aviv and Nicosia in the areas of economy, energy, and defense.

But it also revealed major challenges.

The Cyprus problem has become entangled in the broader international dispute over maritime energy and the increasing Israeli-Turkish tensions.

The resumption of negotiations between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, for the first time in February 2014 and then in April 2015, was driven mainly by the discovery of natural gas reserves off Cyprus and the desire of the EU and the United States of America to reconcile the Republic of Cyprus with Turkey and facilitate the rapprochement between Turkey and Israel. A compromise between Turkey and Greece could be a vital means of a "pro-Western" way of exploiting natural wealth, but relies on primary sources: archives and interviews from Israel, Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Lebanon, and the United Kingdom, a study of the background of the Turkish Cypriot-Israeli relationship as well as some political and economic elements of the complex geopolitical nature of the Eastern Mediterranean, and the feasibility of this option in the foreseeable future near or average, and whether it will be achieved or not.

Does the visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Greece in late 2017 contribute to removing obstacles and restraints that prevent the export of Israeli gas through Greece and Turkey?

(2) Regardless of the export of "Leviathan" gas to Jordan or export to Europe in future through Greece and Turkey.

Egypt will remain one of the most realistic options for Israel.

From a financial point of view, Nobel undoubtedly favors converting gas into LNG for export rather than selling it on the domestic market and joining Egypt's long line of creditors.

According to the Wall Street Journal, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources told reporters that he was interested in Mediterranean gas to replace oil as fuel for power generation, suggesting that one day the Israeli gas might end up in Saudi Arabia via an Egyptian natural gas plant Liquor.

Given the apparent military and intelligence ties between Egypt and Israel, Egypt is probably the best political choice.

Although US diplomatic resources are weak in the Middle East at the moment, natural gas cooperation is beneficial to America's allies in the region and is now much more useful than top-level peace initiatives.

The Gaza Marine gas may be the important connecting point for future Israeli-Turkish rapprochement, and Israel's understanding of Turkey's conditions to improve the service situation and developing the infrastructure

of the Gaza Strip will be a catalyst for the normalization of Israeli-Turkish relations in the foreseeable future !!!

(3) The relations with Turkey will also determine whether Israel could become a transit country for Russian and Caspian energy. In the range of Hamas' fire is the 254-kilometer pipeline connecting the Red Sea port of Eilat with the Mediterranean port of Ashkelon.

The pipeline is planned to be expanded to bring oil from the Russia and the Caspian region through Ceyhan to Ashkelon and from there pumped to Eilat and re-loaded onto tankers to be shipped to Asia at a more competitive price and with more capacity than the Suez Canal.

Such a plan would not only provide Israel with transit fees but also positions it as an important east-west corridor which reduces tanker traffic in the bottlenecked Suez Canal.

It can also open the Indian and Chinese markets to Russian energy and hence reduce Russia's dependence on the European market.

But to gain all of these energy security benefits, Israel and both Turkey and the Palestinians will have to mend some fences and work with Egypt, the US, Europe, and Russia to establish proper security arrangements that would diminish the risk of another flare.

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