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Towards a Liberal Leviathan: Strategizing the European Union's Energy Diplomacy in the
Eastern Mediterranean

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This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Josette.

*Thank you for your selfless dedication to my personal and intellectual development, and
for teaching me my earliest lessons in diplomacy*

Thank you...

Dr. Lutterbeck, for your wisdom, patience, and supervision

Anton, for sharing your brilliant mind. I never stop learning

Angela and Jess, for a lifetime of friendship, inspiration, and support

Abstract

Facing an energy security crisis prompted by the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict, in June 2022 the EU, Egypt, and Israel signed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation related to trade, transport, and export of natural gas to the EU. The research uses critical theory from the Copenhagen school to evaluate the most prominent influences on the EU's energy diplomacy strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean. A Hobbesian energy trap following Russia's use of the 'energy weapon' is the most immediate and commonly cited external factor, especially in shifting the commodity focus from pipeline to LNG gas. But Moscow is far from being the deepest motivation for Europe's changing energy diplomacy strategy. Benign at first glance, a closer examination of the MOU's provisions and intentions found significant implications for the region's emerging balance of power. Europe's typical global energy governance approach is explicit in the strategy, notably in basing the energy network off the East Mediterranean Gas Forum. However, global energy governance is overlayed by realist geopolitical and geoeconomic approaches outside of the MOU – most often deployed by superpowers, which the EU is not. Thus, a contrast exists between geopolitical operations ensuring the EastMed energy network will not be developed by 'unfriendly' states, and neoliberal economic and institutional policies which perpetuate the Union's asymmetric North-South relationships. Copenhagen school identifies the hybridity of neoliberal 'means' and a neorealist 'core' as the 'Liberal Leviathan' – the American model of unipolar hegemony that emerged out of the Cold War, and under which the EU takes a subordinate role. Ultimately, the research finds that downward pressure on Brussels by the Liberal Leviathan is the most significant motivating factor in the EU's EastMed energy diplomacy strategy.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy (of the EU)
CH ₄	Methane
COE	Council of Europe
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy (of the EU)
EAS	External Action Service (of the EU)
EastMed	Eastern Mediterranean
ECT	Energy Charter Treaty
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEZ	Exclusive economic zone
EMGF	East Mediterranean Gas Forum
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ESS	European Energy Security Strategy
EU	European Union
GCG	Gas Coordination Group
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GECF	Gas Exporting Countries Forum
GHG	Greenhouse gas
IEA	International Energy Agency
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPE	International political economy
LAS	League of Arab States
LNG	Liquefied natural gas
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MOU	Memorandum of understanding (reference to the 2022 EU-Egypt-Israel MOU)
nmVOC	Non-methane volatile organic compound
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PA	Palestinian Authority
SWF	Sovereign wealth fund
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
U.S.	United States
IET	International Energy Treaty
ECT	Energy Charter Treaty
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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1 Introduction

Energy is not just another commodity, but the precondition of all commodities, a basic factor equal with air, water, and earth – E. F. Schumacher

In the shadows of the twentieth and twenty-first century's defining conflicts, energy is ubiquitous – whether as a solution, bargaining chip, harbinger, or outright instigator. A post-Cold War neoliberal reconstruction of the international political economy formalized the linkages between energy and global power distribution. For the superpowers, energy diplomacy would prove integral to achieving strategic political and economic outcomes in petrostates across Central Asia, the Arabian Gulf, North Africa, Latin America, and beyond. The outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine crisis in February 2022 revealed the European Union's soft underbelly: a near total reliance on imported energy. The conflict reignited tensions between Russia and the United States, respectively Europe's main energy and security providers.

Attempting to influence narratives and policy direction on the Continent, asymmetries in the bilateral relationship with Brussels were targeted by both Moscow and Washington. As pipes ran dry of Russian imports, Brussels turned its energy security crisis to the Southern Neighbourhood as it scrambled to deconstruct and rebuild supply chains ahead of the fast-approaching winter. Asymmetry plaguing the European Union's energy relationships could be resolved by establishing influence over producers and diversifying energy origins, as reflected in the 2014 Energy Security Strategy and 2022 REPowerEU Plan. A possibility to win leverage in the Eastern Mediterranean energy melee likely brought the European Commission to Cairo in June 2022 – dust still unsettled on the EU-Russia energy relationship.

Conducted at a critical moment of polarization, the research has identified inconsistencies in the narratives surrounding the European Union's evolving energy diplomacy strategy. Using constructivist logic and critical theory from the Copenhagen school, internal and external factors have been organized into deepening levels of analysis

from the micro- to the macro-level, to determine the most prominent influences driving the European Union's energy diplomacy strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean.

On 15 June 2022, a trilateral Memorandum of Understanding was signed on energy cooperation between the European Union, Egypt, and Israel. Provisions centre on establishing a subregional energy hub exporting LNG on short-term contracts to the European market exclusively – at least until Europe phases out fossil-fuel reliance somewhere between 2030 and 2050. Basing this energy partnership on the East Mediterranean Gas Forum reflects the *global energy governance* approach of the European Union's typical energy diplomacy strategy. However, the exclusion of Türkiye, Lebanon, and Syria from the emerging energy-based alliance is a departure from Brussels' long-term goal to support regional cooperation and stability in the Southern Neighbourhood.

The European Union's southern pivot has struck at defining moment amidst a discovery boom of natural gas in Israel, Cyprus and Egypt. Brussels is not alone in vying for influence over resources, partnerships, and infrastructure. The Eastern Mediterranean's nascent energy industry signals blood in the water for the superpowers already congregating among the offshore gas fields, lured by the power vacuum of the Arab Spring – among them, Russia.

Though Brussels has all but abandoned energy diplomacy with the Kremlin in the east, key nonaligned states in the Southern Neighbourhood strategically use their multi-vector foreign policies to capitalize on the growing polarization between certain superpowers. This has posed a significant challenge to the European Commission and External Action Service, as in addition to coordinating a regional energy framework under a ticking clock, must contend with strong downward pressure by the United States – a hegemon whose attention has been doubly piqued by the Eastern Mediterranean's fragile balance of power and vast energy supplies.

The *Liberal Leviathan* introduced by Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan, and later developed by John Ikenberry, is a concept explaining the neoliberal strategies the United States adopted to achieve unilateral hegemony within the highly securitized, neorealist environment of the Cold War. Fears of *energy encirclement* whereby hostile actors gain control of American energy resources have pervaded Washington's grand strategy since forming an energy-based international political economy virtually indistinguishable from its own. This has led to fears over control of the global energy market – undoubtedly justified considering the dramatic history of energy weaponization against the United States by the OPEC+ producers.

Washington's interest in the Eastern Mediterranean is not a means of addressing supply insecurity, like Europe, nor is it primarily centred on strategic geoeconomics, like China. Rather, the United States is acting on a moment of global insecurity brought on by the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict, to establish greater control over a region lacking a centralized authority and plagued by divided loyalties. The Liberal Leviathan's universalist political philosophy produced this *idée fixe* of consolidating the Eastern Mediterranean into a subregion under Washington's locus of control. Ongoing conflict between dominant regional powers Egypt and Türkiye has provided an opening to design coalitions that will serve the American hegemonic project, and energy has proven the most direct path.

Though, this requires a reconfiguration of the existing regional balance of power, one being attempted adjacent to other influential heavyweights, like Russia and the Gulf Monarchies. Should nonaligned states be assisted by non-Western superpowers in developing independent commercial export capacity, the regional balance of power could tip in favour of a notoriously anti-West alliance – like a 'gas-OPEC' – especially if supplies come from disputed maritime zones. Moscow's active pursuit of energy hegemony through the resources and markets of Europe, Asia, and Africa pose an existential threat to the Liberal Leviathan.

Moscow's strategy exploits the energy encirclement paradigm; investments in the energy sectors of Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Egypt, Türkiye, and Libya keeps the United States and Europe occupied in the 'Rimland' and away from the more critically important (for Russia) 'Heartland.'

To achieve this reconfiguration, the United States has leaned on allies in Brussels to disrupt the energy diplomacy of rival superpowers and secure the partnership of producers in the Eastern Mediterranean through *geopolitical* and *geoeconomic operations*. Entanglement in the complex web of common institutions, economies, and collective security obligations allows Brussels a privileged position at the 'hegemonic core' – but at the cost of a foreign policy and diplomatic strategy bound to the ethos of American hegemony. Washington has rarely hesitated in promoting Europe to the frontlines.

Deep pockets and mass demand make Brussels the ideal consumer for high-cost American LNG, and windfalls from LNG exports could partially mitigate the cost of counterbalancing Russia in Ukraine; however, Russia's monopoly on the European energy market would pose an obstacle. Discussions on NATO enlargement and periodic increases in NATO activity near the Russian border keep the EU-Russia energy relationship tense, but any attempts at adopting punitive measures through the United Nations Security Council would be obstructed by the Russian veto.

In 2022, leverage arrived in the form of an energy weapon that would take rapprochement off the table and leave the EU-Russian energy relationship fragmented, opening up the market for American LNG. Unilateral sanctions regimes were adopted by the United States and European Union to obstruct Russia's ability to profit from its energy exports and use those profits to gain a foothold in Eastern Mediterranean energy. That American LNG exports are insufficient in meeting Europe's energy demands, only serves the United States' larger goals. Without Russian imports, Europe's demand has skyrocketed

along with spot prices for LNG. Though still a fossil fuel, and thus scraping the minimum criteria of Europe's climate ambitions, the Continent's energy security crisis evidently overrode environmental targets.

With Member States working with NATO to combat Russia on the Continent, the Union's executive wing would be empowered to strengthen cooperation and develop an LNG network in the Southern Neighbourhood. Brussels' proposal of an Eastern Mediterranean energy hub dependent on the European energy market, elevates the legitimacy of the Egypt-led East Mediterranean Gas Forum, and supports Washington's ambitions for a 'NOPEC' to counter the Russia- and Iran-dominated Gas Exporting Countries Forum.

Geoeconomic and geopolitical operations leverage IMF loans and bilateral aid against Egypt's economic crisis; EMGF and Egyptian primacy in the Egypt-Israel hub is leveraged against Cairo's superpower ambitions, and dominance over the emerging energy-based subregion in the Eastern Mediterranean overshadows Egypt's secondary role in the GCEF. Whether this yields a more permanent turn towards Europe and the United States is to be determined, though the contributions of these incentives will serve broader efforts in advancing neoliberal economic reforms in Egypt.

While Egypt is the 'face' of the energy relationship owing to its central role in the League of Arab States, prominent cultural influence, and significant diplomatic achievements in the region, Cairo's non-alignment policy makes it a less trustworthy partner than an unquestionably pro-West Israel. Though the bilateral relationship with Israel has been strained over humanitarian concerns and destruction of EU projects in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Brussels has looked past these transgressions as it takes a leading role on the energy diplomacy front. Türkiye's role in the region cannot be underestimated. Ankara's fixation on energy security is threatened by an expanding anti-Turkish coalition

developing competing energy networks, and have resulted in recent naval standoffs with Greece over maritime delimitation zones and offshore energy reserves in Cyprus.

The research will explore deeper implications of the EU-Russia relationship breakdown on Eastern Mediterranean energy. Employing a series of geoeconomic and geopolitical strategies targeting Russia, the European Union and Eastern Mediterranean states, Washington ultimately intends to balance against Russian influence, manage Türkiye's recalcitrance, and quietly buttress Israeli dominance over the energy hub. With Member States already embroiled in energy-related conflict, Brussels is edging a fine line as it continues to establish an Egyptian- and Israeli-led gas hub.

1.1 Aims

Using a focal point of the 2022 EU-Egypt-Israel MOU emerging after the 2022 Russia-Ukraine crisis, the research aims to critically examine the energy diplomacy strategies of the EU and in the EastMed. This strategy uses critical theory based on the logic from the Copenhagen school to bridge the gap between Eurocentric, EastMed, and American narratives. Looking at the neoliberal and neorealist components of the EU's larger hegemonic system, that of the Liberal Leviathan, security implications of EastMed energy will be applied to EU energy diplomacy strategy in the region.

1.2 Rationale and Significance

In signing the June 2022 MOU, the EU is signalling participation in an emerging regional balance of power that may pose risks to the already fragile security situation in the EastMed. With Member States like Greece and Cyprus already embroiled in energy-related in conflict, Brussels is taking a risk that this new energy diplomacy strategy will ultimately lead to stability in its southern neighbourhood, while also developing a favourable energy network to address supply shortages on the Continent. However, the MOU is accompanied by terms that may have a negative impact on reaching Europe's climate ambitions, terms that contradict of Europe's political values, and terms which could potentially trigger an outbreak of conflict over the EastMed' energy resources.

The MOU stipulates that natural gas to be imported into Europe will be purchased from Egypt and Israel; however, the energy need not originate in Egypt, nor Israel - a point of interest. Additionally, the Memorandum includes major investment plans for Egyptian and Israeli energy infrastructure, which would exceed Europe's timeline of natural gas reliance, and seemingly violates calls from the European Council to remove investments in fossil fuel infrastructure from Europe's diplomatic strategy.

The ‘whiplash’ of Europe’s Eastern Mediterranean energy diplomacy strategy is framed as a necessary justification against Russia’s use of the *energy weapon* after Moscow cut pipeline flows through Yamal-Europe and Nord Stream 1. However, Brussels never abandoned its energy relationship with Russia throughout previous conflicts, including the 2006 and 2009 Russia-Ukraine gas disputes, the Russo-Georgian war, and the 2014 annexation of Crimea. The sudden shift to a nascent and limited market in the EastMed absent of an existing strategy or adequate energy supply reserves, posed an obstacle to accepting the mainstream narratives in the literature.

Very seldom discussed is the role of the United States in directing the European Union’s energy diplomacy strategy to serve American hegemonic goals. U.S. influence appears to be centred on establishing a favourable balance of power based on energy. In part, this is seemingly accomplished by shifting energy delivery systems from pipeline gas to LNG which would serve to phase out Russian-pipeline dominance – especially relevant as the EastMed energy sector has a significant pre-existing relationship with Russia. If the U.S. is achieving its energy security goals through shaping European energy diplomacy strategies in the EastMed, this would bring into question what role the U.S. has played in the EU’s ongoing energy crisis.

The MOU suggests U.S. oriented modifications in the Union’s energy diplomacy strategy towards a neorealist conception of security, where emerging and existing energy structures in the EastMed generate challenges to the region’s balance of power. Europe’s energy diplomacy strategy also reflects increasingly neoliberal turns towards informal mechanisms of energy exchange, asymmetric dependence on the European energy market for certain EastMed partners, and an institutional framework to incorporate the private sector into the regional energy network.

1.3 Research Question

This study investigates a main research question:

RQ1: What are the primary factors behind the European Union's energy diplomacy strategy in the EastMed?

1.4 Sub Research Questions

To answer the main research question, the following sub research questions will be explored:

Q1: What factors motivated the EU to sign the June 2022 MOU with Egypt and Israel?

Q2: In what ways have changes in the EU-Russia energy relationship impacted the EU's energy diplomacy strategy in the EastMed?

Q3: To what extent is securitization a factor in the EU's energy diplomacy strategies in the EastMed?

Q4: To what extent do hegemonic and regional systems shape the EU's energy diplomacy strategy in the EastMed?

1.5 Scope of the Research

This analysis is primarily focused on natural gas, which constitutes the basis of Europe's energy needs, and the shortage of which precipitated an overhaul of the EU energy security strategy. Some additional mention of renewables, oil, and nuclear energy will be made when discussing energy cooperation and politics.

The Eastern Mediterranean is the regional focus, so Europe's gas imports from the Arabian Gulf, the United States, Nigeria, and Algeria will be only discussed when required.

While the internal politics between the Members States and various institutions are vital to the formation of the EU's energy diplomacy and strategy, they will only be discussed briefly in relation the context of shifting mechanisms of energy security, particularly within

the discussion of the MOU. Internal initiatives will mainly be used to illustrate the energy securitization process and strategy. Therefore, there will be no significant discussion of elements like REPowerEU, the EU 2030 vision, or other similar initiatives. Energy security strategy will primarily be explored in a diplomatic and foreign policy context.

Finally, the entire scope American energy strategy cannot be detailed in this thesis. Focus will be on the U.S. energy strategy within the EastMed, with some discussion of relevant events outside the region.

2 Methods

The thesis is predominantly a qualitative assessment of the factors driving the EU's energy diplomacy strategy in the EastMed. Quantitative elements are incorporated through a case study of the 2022 EU-Egypt-Israel MOU, and through an empirical overview of the EU-Russia energy relationship. As Russia was the EU's primary energy provider prior to 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict, the relationship's breakdown has produced a considerable amount of statistical data in support of energy securitization as a primary driving factor. However, the data alone was insufficient in determining that energy securitization resulting from Russian aggression is the only factory driving EU energy diplomacy strategy towards the EastMed. Rather, it points to a particular moment which tipped the scale of European energy security.

2.1 Ontology

Ontology informed by constructivism allows the critical theory to avoid attaching any single, overarching theoretical assumption about the nature of reality. Rather theoretical assumptions are localised to the perspective of each actor, and how these interact with differing theoretical assumptions encountered in its international relations.

The Constructivist school plays a significant role in the framework of how the research question was answered. Using critical theory from the Copenhagen school addresses the broadening of energy into the five domains of security, which reflect the overarching impacts of energy diplomacy taking place in the EastMed, and how securitization of energy has informed the EU's energy diplomacy strategy in region. Thus an interpretivist epistemology offers the flexibility to analyse various theoretical approaches to energy security and diplomacy which form the internally and externally motivated factors driving the EU's energy diplomacy strategy.

The argument moves along the ontology scale from positivist to constructivist, where concrete assumptions about the nature of reality motivating EU energy diplomacy strategy in

the EastMed cannot be ascertained. Inductive reasoning beginning with an empirically based contextual overview of the EU-Russia energy relationship breakdown, allows for a preliminary in absence of theory which might skew initial assumptions. In starting with a narrow scope, more immediate factors informing EU energy diplomacy strategy can be examined. Where clear answers cannot be found at a particular level of analysis, the perspective of analysis shifts to a higher level.

Levels of analysis are determined by the ‘deepening of security’ concept from the Copenhagen school, which was necessary in constructing the material framework of the argument. Inductive reasoning builds from positivist elements at the micro-level of European energy statistics and legal elements of the MOU, to conclude with over-arching theoretical constructivist explanations of the hegemonic system which the EU is contained within.

2.2 Epistemology

The research makes seven epistemological assumptions:

1. That a U.S.-led hegemonic system, in which Europe plays a significant but secondary role, has broadly existed since allied victory in 1945;
2. That the U.S.-led hegemonic system has played a dominant role in the organizing of international relations, and in establishing international institutions;
3. That the contemporary political ideology of the U.S. hegemonic system was developed in the intensely securitized climate of the Cold War, in direct response to the Soviet threat;
4. That a decisive U.S. victory in the Cold War saw the global projection of American hegemonic power, and resulted in a [temporary] period of unipolar hegemony, but did not radically reduce emphasis on securitization;

5. That U.S.-led global neoliberal reforms during the 1970s initiated widespread economic growth which led to the development of competing superpowers requiring greater shares of energy resources, and changing the global balance of power into a '*uni-multipolar*' system promoting increased securitization by the U.S.
6. That securitization of energy since the energy crises of the 1970s-1980s has greatly informed international relations, and had taken a leading role in the American hegemonic project, and;
7. That the EU and its predecessors have historically participated in the U.S. energy security strategy through diplomatic initiatives, membership in international institutions, military operations, and economic policies.

This hegemonic system is based off the 'Liberal Leviathan' concept, which critically examines how neoliberal and neorealist theoretical underpinnings contribute to a universalist, unipolar, American hegemony. These concepts appear in the literature review but are analysed in relation to EU energy diplomacy strategy in later chapters after an initially empirical analysis.

2.3 Structure

The research is structured around the June 2022 EU-Egypt-Israel MOU, in the broader context of the EU energy security crisis initiated during the 2022 Russia-Ukraine crisis. The research is broken down into the following sections, modelled to reflect the Copenhagen school's 'deepening' analysis of security from substate to superstate.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Methodology

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Chapter 4: Literature Review

Chapter 5: Background (MOU)

Chapter 6: EU Level

Chapter 7: The Role of Regional Actors (EastMed)

Chapter 8: The Role of Superpowers (Russia and the U.S.)

Chapter 9: Discussion

Chapter 10: Conclusion

2.4 Scope and Limitations

At the time of writing, the Russia-Ukraine crisis is ongoing, and few developments have been made on the MOU through which to test this theory. Furthermore, as Europe is still importing minimal quantities of Russian energy, the relationship cannot be considered as completely severed.

This analysis is primarily focused on natural gas, which constitutes the basis of Europe's energy needs, and the shortage of which precipitated an overhaul of the EU energy security strategy. Some additional mention of renewables, oil, and nuclear energy will be made when discussing energy cooperation and politics, and broader aims of EU energy security policy in the EastMed.

While virtually all EastMed states are important in the region's energy sector, focus will be on Türkiye, Egypt, and Israel, as these are the major local powers in the region.

The EastMed is the regional focus, so Europe's gas imports from the Arabian Gulf, the United States, Nigeria, and Algeria will be only discussed when required.

While the internal politics between the Members States and various institutions are vital to the formation of the EU's energy diplomacy and strategy, they will only be discussed briefly in relation the context of shifting mechanisms of energy security, particularly within the discussion of the MOU. Internal initiatives will mainly be used to illustrate the energy securitization process and strategy. Therefore, there will be no significant discussion of

elements like REPowerEU, the EU 2030 vision, or other similar initiatives. Energy security strategy will primarily be explored in a diplomatic and foreign policy context.

Finally, the entire scope American energy strategy cannot be detailed in this thesis. Focus will be on the U.S. energy strategy within the EastMed, with some discussion of relevant events outside the region.

2.5 Data Collection

The research collects data from a range of sources including peer-reviewed journals, government press releases, government publications, international organizations, think tanks, and news media. Diversity in the source material captures different elements for analysis. For example, government statements and publications communicate official positions, but news media and think tanks interpret those communications through cultural and academic analysis, while also investigating the validity of those statements.

To ensure an equitable range of perspectives, research and news media have been collected from a variety of national and theoretical perspectives. This prevents overreliance on a single narrative, which could bias the analysis towards the dominant perspectives of the source material. These include EastMed, EU, U.S., and Russian originating sources, and contributions from across the theoretical spectrum from Marxism to neoliberal institutionalism.

Most statistical data is available for the year 2022, and efforts were made to include verified data as recent as 2023. Every effort has been made to obtain statistical data from credible sources.

3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research is largely based off the 1998 work of Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde in *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, which presents the constructivist concept of securitization. Constructivism is a useful theoretical perspective in considering energy security and energy diplomacy as it recognizes a broader set of issues which the state claims to increase the national security agenda. Energy increasingly permeates the economic, political, military, social, and environmental sectors of security. Securitisation of energy has contributed to innumerable military operations, occupations, wars, and sabotage. The rise of Constructivism in the post-Cold War period formed the basis for subsequent energy security theories critical to this analysis which will be examined in the literature review: the global energy governance approach, the geopolitical approach, the geoeconomic approach, and the energy weapon model. Most importantly, the argument of is built upon concept of the ‘Liberal Leviathan’ – originally conceptualized in a 1998 working paper by Buzan and Wæver, and later developed by Ikenberry¹ – as a driving force behind the EU’s energy diplomacy strategy in the EastMed.

As a critical theory, constructivism does not develop an overarching theory about international relations, nor does it derive exclusively from either realist or liberal political theories. Use of a critical theory minimizes the risk of applying a political theory which may consequently favour one narrative of state behaviour over another. Instead, constructivism bridges the gap between realism and liberalism within the Liberal Leviathan, embodying the conflict between both political theories. Neoclassical realism takes on a secondary role in the analysis to address underlying contradictions and assumptions of the ‘Leviathan’ component

1. G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2011).

of the Liberal Leviathan. These will be explored in the literature review in the context of global power distribution and approaches to energy security and diplomacy.

3.1 The Case for Copenhagen School

Developed by Buzan and Wæver, the Copenhagen school of constructivism aims to “to construct a more radical view of security studies by exploring threats to referent objects, and the securitization of those threats, that are nonmilitary as well as military.”²

Securitization theory broadened the scope of security to add political, economic, social, and environmental security atop classical realism’s primacy of military security. The need for a reassessment of the term ‘security’ is stressed by Barry Buzan in *Peoples, States and Fear*. Buzan argues that ‘security’ is a relative term rather than absolute as definitions and objects of security are contextual, varying according to time and location.³ Chester agrees with the temporality of the term, adding that risks or threats to any dimensions applied to the definition will evolve in the short, medium, and long term.⁴

The process of securitization involves four components: an existential threat posed by an object or ideal, a referent object or ideal which faces an existential threat and must be protected; a speech act made by a securitizing actor which identifies the issue and frames it as an existential threat, and an audience targeted by the securitising actor, and which must accept the speech act.⁵ Therefore, through the securitization process, key actors transform non-military security risks into existential threats to the state. Executive control over

2. Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 4, https://www.academia.edu/39047709/Buzan_Waever_and_De_Wilde_1998_Security_A_New_Framework_For_Analysis.

3. Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, 2nd ed (Boulder, CO: L. Rienner, 1991).

4. Lynne Chester, ‘Conceptualising Energy Security and Making Explicit Its Polysemic Nature’, *Energy Policy* 38, no. 2 (1 February 2010): 891, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2009.10.039>.

5. Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *A New Framework for Analysis*.

securitized objects is claimed by the state under the auspices of national security, gradually expanding the scope of executive power with potential for militarisation against the threat.

Booth critiques Copenhagen school's differentiation between the political and security realms, which adopts a "conservative view of the latter as an area destined for militarisation."⁶ While Booth correctly identifies the militarisation of the security realm, the implication of the criticism suggests an affinity exists with traditional analytical perspectives, like classical realism, that because security is a value, efforts to protect it should be maximized. However, the Copenhagen school does not *attribute* a binary relationship between the concepts of 'security' and 'insecurity'. The absence of a securitization process of a potential threat security threat does not necessarily constitute a state of insecurity. Rather, as critical theorists, Buzan Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde only *describe* the current international state system as one of securitization, and broadly advocates for less securitization.⁷

This conservative view reflects the realist streak underpinning the Copenhagen school's political philosophy. Realism's position of the state at the epicentre of international relations carries over precisely because Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde's theory grappled with the post-Cold War conflict between the abstraction and practice of liberal ideology. The insecurities of hegemonic liberalism created a wider set of non-military existential issues over which the state could exercise control, and thus solidify and exert its power. Ultimately this hegemon, described by Buzan and Wæver' as the 'Liberal Leviathan,' employs securitization to advance its interests in dominating the international political economy (IPE).⁸ As

6. Ken Booth, *Theory of World Security*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 105 (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 169.

7. Ole Wæver, 'Securitization and Desecuritization', in *On Security*, ed. Ronnie D. Lipschutz (Columbia University Press, 1995).

8. Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, 'Liberalism and Security: The Contradictions of the Liberal Leviathan', in *Volumes 23-1998 COPRI Working Papers* (Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, 1998), <https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/wps/bub02/>.

“powerful promoters of the politico-conceptual separation of the economic and political sectors,” a core tenant of the liberal political philosophy has been contradicted in this increasing securitization of the IPE.⁹

In this context, the Liberal Leviathan is a useful concept to classify hegemonic ambitions, in particular the post-Cold War ambitions of Western powers. The core of the state’s strategy is Leviathan’s realism, which is preoccupied by simultaneous and conflicting desires to retain security and acquire more. The acquisition of additional security is achieved by broadening the concept of security to Copenhagen school’s five sectors and expanding the state agenda to monopolize policymaking in those sectors. Through liberalization, the hegemonic state can project its internal economy towards a global scale with the dual effect of making the economy vulnerable to external threats and establishing its internal economy as the IPE. Vulnerabilities from this liberalization create an insecurity feedback loop which continually expands the scope of securitization. Therefore, in failing to integrate an understanding of linkages between the global political economy and the construction of security issues, the Liberal Leviathan experiences a disjuncture between its national security policies pursuing global hegemony, and economic policies maximizing short term advantages.¹⁰

While the Westphalian model the Copenhagen school bases its understanding on would technically preclude the inclusion of superstates, the EU’s organization and foreign policy is so structured as to effectively operate as a state – though with considerably more bureaucratic functions. The Westphalian system is increasingly being challenged by the evolving global state system, particularly by Europe’s political and economic liberalization

9. Buzan and Wæver.

10. Michael Mastanduno, ‘Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and U.S. Grand Strategy After the Cold War’, *International Security* 21, no. 4 (1997): 28–29, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539283>.

which saw the dissolution of state borders within the Schengen zone. Practically, this would be resolved by Copenhagen's suggestion of a corrective approach towards integrating the IPE and security studies, which would yield a threefold effect.

First, a reconceptualization of security would address the incoherence resulting from an unlimited widening of the security concept. Second, it would liberate security studies from the existing state-based theories of international relations and address the political economies of scale arising from the Cold War, which constitute the basis of contemporary international relations. Third, it would spur larger discussions on the shortcomings of the liberal praxis, rather than a doctrine "of all things good and progressive."¹¹ The Liberal Leviathan has only deepened the chasm between the theory and praxis of contemporary liberalism, such that it no longer be considered the proponent of desecuritisation claimed by its classical predecessor.

3.2 Classical Liberalism as a Proponent of Desecuritisation

Buzan and Wæver propose that a four-phase evolution of classical liberalism provides evidence of it being a strategy for desecuritisation. Hobbes' empowerment of the sovereign to assume responsibility in providing for individual security, based on an inherent right to self-defence, was constrained by political theorists that followed. The necessity to develop individual liberties within the Hobbesian social contract formed the cornerstone of works by prominent 18th and 19th century political theorists, including Kant, Mill, and Locke, who advocated for limiting state power through constitutional processes, international law, and division of power.¹² A third phase of state self-limitation emerged with the convergence of

11. Buzan and Wæver, 'Contradictions of the Liberal Leviathan'.

12. Buzan and Wæver.

the 19th century's *laissez-faire* economic logic and Adam Smith's case for non-interventionism one century before.¹³ The effect was staggering.

Establishing a precedence of non-intervention in economic affairs constituted a redefinition of the role of the state. Rationalism was reassigned from the state-level to the individual; self-interest combined with the 'free hand' of the market would maximise economic function in such a way that could never be achieved by the limited perspective of the state. Therefore, the third phase marks the fragmentation of both the political and economic realms where *laissez-faire* was not an organic concept but a state-enforced policy, thus establishing a theoretical link between security and liberty.¹⁴ Jeremy Bentham equating liberty and security in *Theory of Legislation*¹⁵ reflected the era's contrasting discourse with the theorists of the 18th century: liberty emerged as a mechanism of governance, rather than a pursuit of disentanglement from state power.

Buzan and Wæver argue that these advancing domestic components of classical liberalism were accompanied by "an explicitly international liberal security strategy" intended to propagate the "mechanistic" ambitions of liberal universalism, and to defend domestic liberalism from tyranny when faced with war or militarisation.¹⁶ At the same time, agents in the 19th century free market wanted, as they do now, "to desecuritize, and eventually demilitarize, relations between states not by constructing a global Leviathan, but

13. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Bantam classic ed (New York, N.Y: Bantam Classic, 2003).

14. Buzan and Wæver, 'Contradictions of the Liberal Leviathan'.

15. Jeremy Bentham, *Theory of Legislation (Translated from the French of Etienne Dumont)*., trans. R. Hildreth (London: Trübner & Co, 1864), <https://doi.org/10.1037/12200-000>.

16. Buzan and Wæver, 'Contradictions of the Liberal Leviathan'.

by pursuing the logic of economic interdependence between states and democratisation within them.”¹⁷

‘Anti-state’ logic was not as pronounced in the domestic sphere as in international relations, where international cooperation and institutions were encouraged. In fact, not “anti-state” until the failure of the League of Nations threatened liberal civilisation. After the League of Nations, Buzan and Wæver stress that goals of liberalism, like free trade, peace, cooperation, began to conflict with effects of liberal policies during the interwar period, including “financial collapse, neomercantilism, [and a] spiralling security dilemma.”¹⁸ The ensuing collapse into a realist international order continued until the end of the Cold War.

Over the course of the Cold War, ‘security’ evolved as an integrative concept into ‘national security’ as an attempt to address American challenges with cooperative security in the Second World War. Somewhat paradoxically, this spiralled into a militarisation of security to protect the economic, political, and social ‘liberties’ threatened by Communism and the Soviet Union. The salience America’s military agenda for security was brutally undermined by its defeat in Vietnam. Coupled with Gorbachev’s desecuritisation of East-West relations in the 1980s, and dissolution of the Soviet military threat in 1991, the primacy of militarization in security was waning.

In theory, this should have supported the conclusions of the emerging international security community in the developed world that war was disappearing as an option for international relations in many states.¹⁹ However, the vast institutions and frameworks dedicated to security established during the Cold War, and their narratives, survived into the

17. Buzan and Wæver.

18. Buzan and Wæver.

19. Barry Buzan, ‘Rethinking Security after the Cold War’, *Cooperation and Conflict* 32, no. 1 (1997): 5–28, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45084375>.

millennium. Buzan and Wæver acknowledge that the inertia of Cold War security institutions played a role in the ‘vacuum theory’ assumptions that states must have a security agenda to legitimize their existence. While the vacuum theory may apply to post-modern states which have capped executive power, the Liberal Leviathan’s innate hegemonic formula positions it to fill the vacuum, reinforcing its dominance.

3.3 A Liberal Leviathan Emerges

The near instant hegemony of American liberalism dominating the British variety beginning in the Second World War has been attributed to an independent formation away from European influence,²⁰ specifically the aristocracies.²¹ Retaining the radical liberal policies and doctrines leveraged in the fight against the English monarchy, these components collided with unrestrained individualism on the Frontier.²² As the primacy of the individual in security theory took hold with the embedding of American liberalism internationally, a ‘hollowing out’ of the state eroded the sovereignty of most post-modern capitalist states. In effect, this ‘hollowing out’ extended into the international order, creating ‘lite states’ which outsource their monopoly on the use of force.²³ In the transatlantic sphere, NATO is the principal security provider. The U.S. capitalizes on dependent lite-states through its NATO dominance, but joins Russia in the privatisation of violence in the international sphere via military contractors and mercenary groups.

Merging the American capitalist ethos with an ardent streak of militarism in pursuit of hegemonic ambitions has historically allowed the U.S. to dominate international relations.

20. Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution*, 2nd Harvest/HBJ ed (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991).

21. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America (1835)*, ed. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

22. Buzan and Wæver, ‘Contradictions of the Liberal Leviathan’.

23. Buzan and Wæver.

Without being able to exercise power over any actor in the global state system, legitimacy as a hegemon is diminished, meaning the Liberal Leviathan's Achilles heel lies in energy.

Without it, military capabilities cannot be maintained, harming the alliance system with Europe based on NATO's collective security. Additionally, if the Liberal Leviathan is not an energy hegemon, the behaviours of those hegemonies have political, economic, and military implications on the American hegemonic project.

3.4 Enter the Hegemon: Power Distribution and State Behaviour

In 1999, Sam Huntington argued that the global state system is a "strange hybrid, a *uni-multipolar* system with one superpower and several major powers" led by the U.S. In the same article, Huntington defined a 'superpower' as having the ability to "[dominate] a coalition of allied states [competing] with other superpowers for influence among non-aligned countries."²⁴ Buzan and Wæver amplify the "global ambitions" of superpowers, which "largely transcend the logic of geography and adjacency in their security relationships."²⁵ In this context, a superpower has a monopoly on material power, though these factors inadequate in conceptualize the scope of the Liberal Leviathan.

In the *Prison Notebooks*, Antonio Gramsci developed the concept of the 'hegemon' to incorporate socio-cultural influences.²⁶ A prominent Marxist, Gramsci's hegemon integrated the element of ideology, broadly associated with negative connotations in Marxist theory where it is perceived as a tool of the ruling class to justify capitalist exploitation against the

24. Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Lonely Superpower', *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 2 (1999): 36, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20049207>.

25. Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 46, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511491252>.

26. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, 11th Reprint (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2012).

masses.²⁷ Luke furthered this Marxist concept, coining the “third dimension” of power which sees a relation between power and “*intention*.”²⁸ Building on both Gramsci and Lukes, Hall defines hegemony as

the struggle to contest and disorganize an existing political formation; the taking of the “leading position” (on however minority a basis) over a number of different spheres of society at once, economy, civil society, intellectual and moral life, and culture; the conduct of a wide and differentiated type of struggle; the winning of a strategic measure of popular consent; and, thus, the securing of a social authority sufficiently deep to conform society into a new historic project. It should never be mistaken for a finished or settled project.²⁹

Thus hegemony goes far beyond the struggle to conquer nominal political power, instead embodying a strategic normative power, which can reduce dependency on military and other “hard” capabilities.

Hall stresses the perpetual, insatiable nature of the hegemonic pursuit and refers to it as a “project.” Bodirsky finds intersocial alliances forged through ideological and material means to constitute a ‘hegemonic project’, whereby “formal state institutions and “key civil society organizations are dominated as part of an ongoing “process towards sedimented histories within which or against which later hegemonic projects must act.”³⁰ Creation of

27. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Tom Whyman, *The German Ideology: A New Abridgement* (London: Repeater, 2022).

28. Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd ed (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire : New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 76.

29. Stuart Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left* (London ; New York: Verso, 1988).

30. Katharina Bodirsky, ‘Making and Breaking Alliances: On Valuation in Hegemonic Projects’, *Dialectical Anthropology* 45, no. 1 (1 March 2021): 65–80, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10624-020-09585-3>.

these ‘histories’ could reasonably serve as lifelines to be appropriated as part of the hegemonic project, a pertinent theme of the EastMed region.

3.4.1 *Balance of Power*

In *Soft Power and Great-Power Competition*, Joseph Nye proclaimed that “the world is neither unipolar, multipolar, nor chaotic—it is all three at the same time. Thus a smart grand strategy must be able to understand different distributions of power in different domains and understand the trade-offs among them.”³¹ At the same time, hegemony and unipolarity are not mutually exclusive. Monteiro differentiates between the terms, the former ascribing points of gravity to dominant states within an anarchic state system, and the latter describing a dominant power’s ability to influence other state’s behaviour within a hierarchical system.³²

Traditional balance of power literature favours balancing behaviour as opposed to bandwagoning. Alliances *with* the dominant power are risky and contingent on its continued benevolence, the safer strategy is balancing with states “who cannot readily dominate their allies, in order to avoid being dominated by those who can.”³³ Some scholars argue that power aggregation gains momentum over time³⁴ which may inspire states to adopt bandwagoning either as an attempt at appeasement, or to capitalize on victory.³⁵ Walt’s account on alliance systems suggests four types of power which may motivate states to either

31. Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power and Great-Power Competition: Shifting Sands in the Balance of Power Between the United States and China*, China and Globalization (Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2023), 24, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-0714-4>.

32. Nuno P. Monteiro, ‘Unrest Assured: Why Unipolarity Is Not Peaceful’, *International Security* 36, no. 3 (January 2012): 9–40, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00064.

33. Stephen M. Walt, ‘Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power’, *International Security* 9, no. 4 (1985): 5, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538540>.

34. Scott W. Thompson, ‘The Communist International System.’, *Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs* 20, no. 4 (1977).

35. Walt, ‘Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power’, 8.

balance or bandwagon: aggregate power (resources and capabilities), proximal power, offensive power, and offensive intentions.³⁶

Highlighting the Eurocentrism of traditional theories, Levy suggests global powers historically protected their interests through playing the role of “balancer” in coalitions against potential hegemons, which may possess resources capable of positioning the state to challenge the leading global power.³⁷ Thus, balancing typifies the foreign policy strategies of twentieth century European superpowers. Winston Churchill claimed that despite temptations of joining dominant Continental powers, England has traditionally followed a balancing strategy to defeat “military tyranny.”³⁸ Similarly, Kissinger’s policy of rapprochement with China over the Soviet Union attempted to balance with the weaker side within the triangular relationship.³⁹

A frequently cited study by Wohlforth et al. based on classical balance of power literature, including the works of Waltz⁴⁰ and Morgenthau,⁴¹ argues that external balancing against offensives of any type often fail when inevitably confronted with Olson’s collective action problem.⁴² This supposes that rational actors have no economic incentives to

36. Walt, 9.

37. Jack S. Levy, ‘What Do Great Powers Balance Against and When?’, in *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*, ed. T.V. Paul (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2022), 43.

38. Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: Vol. 1, The Gathering Storm.*, vol. 43 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company., 1948), 208.

39. Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 178.

40. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Addison-Wesley Series in Political Science (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co, 1979), 164–65.

41. Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5th ed., rev (New York: Knopf, 1978).

42. William Wohlforth et al., ‘Testing Balance-of-Power Theory in World History’, *European Journal of International Relations - EUR J INT RELAT* 13 (1 June 2007): 158–59, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066107076951>.

contribute to the provision of a common good⁴³ However, Eilstrup-Sangiovanni refutes Wohlforth et al.'s claim, on the basis that that by ignoring literature published post-Waltz, the study overlooks endogenous factors rendering collective action problems insurmountable.⁴⁴ For example, Mearsheimer argues that geographic invulnerability tends to produce buck-passing in great powers,⁴⁵ and Christensen and Snyder's argument that in scenarios of multipolarity, great powers with a defensive advantage (i.e. superior military technology) will engage in buck-passing.⁴⁶ In these cases, buck-passing, or 'free-riding' is commonly attributed to great powers. Conversely, Schweller's redefinition of buck-passing as 'under-balancing' diametrically opposes the structural realist theory by attributing the concept to "fragmented" and "incoherent" states, where political considerations prevent effective response to acute threats.⁴⁷

The literature is sharply divided over whether hegemony has a net-positive or detrimental impact on the global state system, commonly framed as 'hegemonic stability theory'. Though Robert Keohane coined the term in 1980 prior to publishing *After Hegemony*,⁴⁸ the concept itself was first developed by Kindleberger in *The World in*

43. Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Harvard University Press, 1971), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjsf3ts>.

44. Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 'The End of Balance-of-Power Theory? A Comment on Wohlforth et al.'s 'Testing Balance-of-Power Theory in World History'', *European Journal of International Relations* 15, no. 2 (June 2009): 347–80, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066109103145>.

45. John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), 272–73.

46. Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, 'Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity', *International Organization* 44, no. 2 (1990): 137–68, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706792>.

47. Randall L. Schweller, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (Princeton University Press, 2006), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7rkxt>.

48. Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, 1st Princeton classic ed (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005).

Depression, 1929-1939.⁴⁹ A proponent of HST, Gilpin entirely opposes the balance of power theory, arguing that a decisive victor in a hegemonic war will result in greater overall stability of the regime, which can be facilitated through the investment in global public goods.⁵⁰ In addition, Gilpin agrees that ‘imperialistic overstretch’, as defined by Kennedy, in *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*,⁵¹ is a more likely contributor to the collapse of hegemonic power.⁵²

Zakaria⁵³ and Ikenberry question why contemporary states have not adopted these balancing approaches within traditional balance of power theories, particularly when faced with unprecedented accumulation of power by the U.S.⁵⁴ Evidence points to changes in polarity in the global state system, as well as the rise of new global and regional powers. Unipolarity in combination with hegemonic status combines to form a force impenetrable by conventional power. Paul argues that unipolarity complicates the ability of weaker states to form military-oriented balancing coalitions to counter the hegemon through ‘hard balancing’, at the risk of hegemonic retaliation against the weaker state’s economic and military security.⁵⁵ Therefore, Paul proposes that the ‘hard balancing’ of traditional balance of power

49. Charles P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929-1939*, 40th anniversary edition (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2013).

50. Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 138–39, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511664267>.

51. Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict From 1500 to 2000*, 1st Vintage Books ed (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 515.

52. Robert Gilpin, ‘The Theory of Hegemonic War’, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4 (1988): 591–613, <https://doi.org/10.2307/204816>.

53. Fareed Zakaria, ‘America’s New Balancing Act’, *Newsweek*, 5 August 2001, <https://www.newsweek.com/americas-new-balancing-act-151533>.

54. G. John Ikenberry, ed., *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).

55. T. V. Paul, ‘Introduction: The Enduring Axioms of Balance of Power Theory and Their Contemporary Relevance’, in *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*, ed. T.V. Paul (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2022), 3–4.

theory had moved towards states adopting a ‘soft balance’ approach against the U.S..⁵⁶ Such shifts in the power balance of the global state system since the Cold War have prompted a resurgence of regional coalitions that organize around a set of common interests.⁵⁷

3.4.2 *Regionalism and the Hegemon*

The preponderance of great powers in contemporary international relations, particularly with the rise of BRICS after the neoliberal turn in the 1970s,⁵⁸ has increased the influence of regional actors. Old approaches to regionalism characterised by interstate relations, increasingly give way to ‘new regionalism,’ which integrates non-state actors. Prevailing norms in realist scholarship, including by Morgenthau,⁵⁹ Waltz,⁶⁰ Levy,⁶¹ and Wight⁶² suppose that regions or groups of states without overarching governance will form alliances to balance against growing powers and preserve the system. Though a balance of power is usually restored, Melko argues that this typically instigates frequent changes of alliance as perceptions of power evolve.⁶³ While early interactions tend to remain within a limited regional or domestic scope, eventually they will coalesce into a single system which

56. Paul, ‘Introduction: The Enduring Axioms of Balance of Power Theory and Their Contemporary Relevance’.

57. Andrew Hurrell, ‘Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics’, *Review of International Studies* 21, no. 4 (1995): 331–58, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20097421>.

58. David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford University Press, 2005), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199283262.001.0001>.

59. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 171–225.

60. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 116–28.

61. Jack S. Levy, *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495-1975* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1983).

62. Martin Wight, *Systems of States* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977), 67.

63. Matthew Melko, ‘Hegemony vs. Balance of Power Within and Between Civilizations in World History’, *Comparative Civilizations Review* 58, no. 58 (1 April 2008): 75, <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr/vol58/iss58/9>.

may contain multiple civilizations.⁶⁴ Wars eventually emerging between the centralized powers will determine which become a dominant power, and the overall stability of the system.⁶⁵ ⁶⁶ Toynbee's theory of peripheral domination finds that the dominating or conquering state a system is often peripheral to the target state system.⁶⁷ Civilizationists like Quigley⁶⁸ and world systems analysts like Wallerstein⁶⁹ and Chase-Dunn and Hall⁷⁰ advanced this into the concept of core-peripheral relationships.

On the Gramscian world-hegemonic model where hegemony is more "intense and consistent at the core and more laden with contradictions at the periphery," Amoore notes that peripheral states will more easily adapt to the economic and cultural aspects of the hegemon, but typically struggle to implement its political models.⁷¹ Though the hegemons allies may not be mutually allied or even hostile to each other, Wallerstein argues that, with the addition of directing the alliance against recalcitrant members, hegemons have similar

64. Arthur J. Toynbee, *Contacts between Civilizations in Time (Renaissances); Law and Freedom in History; The Prospects of the Western Civilization*, vol. 9, A Study of History (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 261, <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.150068/page/n3/mode/2up>.

65. Toynbee, 9:234–87.

66. Rushton Coulborn, 'Structure and Process in the Rise and Fall of Civilized Societies', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 8, no. 4 (July 1966): 415, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417500004187>.

67. Arthur J. Toynbee, *The Growths of Civilizations*, vol. 3, A Study of History (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 301–6, <https://archive.org/details/dli.ernet.12120>.

68. Carroll Quigley, *The Evolution of Civilizations: An Introduction to Historical Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1979), 57–58.

69. Immanuel M. Wallerstein, *The Modern World System. 1: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*., Studies in Social Discontinuity (Berkeley, Calif.: Univ. of California Press, 2011), https://d11.cuni.cz/pluginfile.php/495082/mod_resource/content/1/Wallerstein-Modern%20World-System%20I.pdf.

70. Christopher Chase-Dunn and Thomas D. Hall, *Rise and Demise: Comparing World-Systems*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429493157>.

71. Louise Amoore, ed., *The Global Resistance Reader* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005), 43.

followership procurement in multilateral alliances as in bilateral. Regional hegemony could then be institutionalised by either “a set of bilateral arrangements or a single multilateral structure (or even both).”⁷²

In the *Geographical Pivot of History*, Mackinder introduces the “Heartland” theory as a centralized and geostrategic area encompassing most of modern Russia and China.⁷³ It was summarized in a later article as “[whoever] rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island [Greater Eurasia]; who rules the World-Island commands the world.”⁷⁴ Spykman found that the coastal “Rimland” surrounding the Heartland was of greater strategic importance, as it contains the majority of global resources and civilizations.⁷⁵ Katsoulas’ ‘Rimland Bridge’ theory highlighted the geostrategic importance of the Eastern Mediterranean through the Greece-Turkey-Cyprus connection.⁷⁶ Because of the broader region’s historic role as a transit and buffer zone,⁷⁷ the EastMed has

72. David Wikinson, ‘Hégemonía: Hegemony, Classical and Modern’, *Journal of World-Systems Research*, 26 August 2008, 139, <https://doi.org/10.5195/jwsr.2008.340>.

73. H. J. Mackinder, ‘The Geographical Pivot of History’, *The Geographical Journal* 23, no. 4 (1904): 421–37, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1775498>.

74. Halford J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction* (London: Forgotten Books, 2015), 150.

75. Nicholas J. Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace*, ed. Helen R. Nicholl (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1969).

76. Spyros Katsoulas, *The United States and Greek-Turkish Relations: The Guardian’s Dilemma*, Routledge Studies in US Foreign Policy (London ; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003224181>.

77. Robert D. Kaplan, ‘Central Asia: Shatter Zone’, *The Atlantic*, 1992, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1992/04/central-asia-shatter-zone/518034/>.

been described as both a “shatter belt” – a fragmented region prone to conflict⁷⁸ – and as a strategic chokepoint⁷⁹ with access to the Dardanelles and Bosphorus straits.

Often contained within in the region, is a subsystem. Thompson’s inventory of differing regional subsystem attributes across the literature, highlights the difficulties of scholars in pinpointing an exact definition of the term.⁸⁰ Contemporary literature from Buzan,⁸¹ Wriggins,⁸² and Kaiser⁸³ has integrated these criteria and settled on a scope of classification, characterising regional subsystems as “clusters of states coexisting in geographical propinquity as interrelated units that sustain significant security, economic, and political relations.”⁸⁴

3.4.3 *Energy in the International Political Economy*

The function of contemporary international institutions is debated by political theorists. Kindleberger proposes that the global economic crises of the 20th century were largely attributable to the lack of a world leader to develop, regulate, and enforce an

78. Peter E. Paraschos, ‘Geopolitical Risk in the Middle East & North Africa: Shatter Belts & Great Power Rivalry’, *Japan SPOTLIGHT*, no. 2017 March/April (n.d.): 17, https://www.jef.or.jp/journal/pdf/212th_Cover_03.pdf.

79. Katsoulas, *The United States and Greek-Turkish Relations*.

80. William R. Thompson, ‘The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory’, *International Studies Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (1973): 91–101, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3013464>.

81. Barry Buzan, ‘Third World Regional Security in Structural and Historical Perspective’, in *The Insecurity Dilemma*, ed. Brian L. Job (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), 188, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781685858346-011>.

82. Howard W. Wriggins, *Dynamics of Regional Politics: Four Systems on the Indian Ocean Rim* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 4.

83. Karl Kaiser, ‘The Interaction Regional Subsystems: Some Preliminary Notes on Recurrent Patterns and the Role of Superpowers’, *World Politics* 21, no. 1 (1968): 86, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2009747>.

84. Arie M. Kacowicz, ‘Regionalization, Globalization, and Nationalism: Convergent, Divergent, or Overlapping?’, *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 24, no. 4 (1999): 530, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40644977>.

international economic system.⁸⁵ Robert Keohane, a prominent advocate of institutional neoliberalism, rebuts that the independent nature of liberal institutions results in the global disbursement of liberal values – a net positive. Keohane argues that international economic stability is not contingent on interference by a hegemon.⁸⁶ Keohane's work developed the discipline of IPE in the U.S. Coined together with Nye, the concept of complex interdependence attempts to address the fragmentation and distribution of power within the IPE.^{87 88}

Institutional neoliberalism within the IPE is supported by Keohane's centring of new institutional economics (NIE) in arguments, rebutting hegemonic stability theory. Building on previous institutional economics theory and neoclassical economics, NIE considers how economic development is impacted by cultural and political economy factors, a contrast from neoclassical economic assumptions.⁸⁹ Arguing that the state is not a neutral actor,⁹⁰ NIE operates on the assumption that individuals are rational economic decision makers but are constrained by cognitive limitations⁹¹ – a perspective congruent with the cognitive

85. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929-1939*.

86. Keohane, *After Hegemony*.

87. Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, 'Globalization: What's New? What's Not? (And So What?)', *Foreign Policy*, no. 118 (2000): 104, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1149673>.

88. Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, 'Power and Interdependence', *Survival* 15, no. 4 (July 1973): 158–65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396337308441409>.

89. J. Haavard Maridal, 'Cultural Impact on National Economic Growth', *The Journal of Socio-Economics* 47 (December 2013): 136–46, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2012.08.002>.

90. Douglass C. North, *Structure and Change in Economic History*, 1st ed (New York: Norton, 1981).

91. Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio, *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (University of Chicago Press, 1991), <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226185941.001.0001>.

psychological model of foreign-policy making.⁹² While this reflects future visions of the IPE from international actors regarding multilateral institutions, neoliberal institutionalism is a means of dominating the IPE – rather than equitable participation – for the Liberal Leviathan.

Offensive realists like Mearsheimer argue that such institutions are an invention of global powers as a mechanism to increase power. Mearsheimer's rebuttal to Keohane that liberal institutions do not significantly affect state behaviour, or significantly contribute to international peace can be examined in two parts. Mearsheimer's claim that international institutions are "based on the self-interested calculations of the great powers, and they have no independent effect on state behaviour" has merit insofar as such institutions have no independent aim.

That global power shifts do not automatically lead to institutional adaptation⁹³ suggests maintenance of a status-quo. This is supported by Mearsheimer's claim that the agenda of these organizations is driven by external self-interested forces.⁹⁴ Second, a consequence of externally motivated international institutions is that Keohane's argument of such institutions inherently pursuing liberal values of peace, democracy, and development, is challenged. Keohane argues that institutions created under a hegemon do not necessarily obstruct cooperation, and that such cooperation can remain after the decline of the hegemon provided the institutions were founded upon common values and benefits.⁹⁵ While institutions like the IMF and UN can offer incentives, whether beneficial or punitive, to influence state

92. Michael J. Shapiro and G. Matthew Bonham, 'Cognitive Process and Foreign Policy Decision-Making', *International Studies Quarterly* 17, no. 2 (June 1973): 147, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2600226>.

93. Andreas Kruck and Bernhard Zangl, 'The Adjustment of International Institutions to Global Power Shifts: A Framework for Analysis', *Global Policy* 11, no. S3 (1 October 2020): 5–16, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12865>.

94. John J. Mearsheimer, 'The False Promise of International Institutions', *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1994): 5–49, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539078>.

95. Keohane, *After Hegemony*.

behaviour against war, Mearsheimer ultimately argues that these mechanisms do not work to create peace.⁹⁶

While Mearsheimer generally discounts critical theories on the basis that they reject self-interested motivations of states, this is not the case for the Copenhagen school.⁹⁷ Buzan and Wæver argue that the Liberal Leviathan constructs neoliberal institutions for the explicit purpose of undermining sovereignty within the global state system, and outsourcing control of such institutions to dominant powers.⁹⁸ In possessing the structural power of international institutions, the hegemon implements favourable policies. Supported by Levy, Paul links an overall lack of hard balancing against hegemonies to neoliberal institutionalism and globalisation, which have complicated the process of translating economic power into military power.⁹⁹ These arguments suggest that the Liberal Leviathan weaponizes 'global peace' through domination of international institutions which heavily penalize military conflict outside of the hegemon. Imposition of economic conditions like sanctions regimes, embargoes, and conditional aid packages restrict acquisition of hard power which empower states to engage in hard balancing against the hegemon.

Some scholars suggest that institutions have a constraining effect on hegemonies. However, Ikenberry argues that a hegemon will accept limits to its power imposed by institutions for two reasons: insurance and strategic restraint. First, "sticky" institutions function as a legacy of the hegemon, which can still be utilized advantageously should it face a decline in relative power. Second, institutions serve as a mask of reassurance that the

96. Mearsheimer, 'The False Promise of International Institutions'.

97. Mearsheimer, 9.

98. Buzan and Wæver, 'Contradictions of the Liberal Leviathan'.

99. Paul, 'Introduction: The Enduring Axioms of Balance of Power Theory and Their Contemporary Relevance', 4.

hegemon's capabilities are constrained, therefore reducing secondary state spending on "risk premiums" to thwart unconstrained power.¹⁰⁰

Energy plays a significant role in the IPE, particularly for the U.S. President Nixon's cancellation of the fixed-rate convertibility of U.S. dollars to gold in 1971 and subsequent collapse of the Bretton-Woods system, eventually saw the U.S. dollar emerge as a petrocurrency after 1973 agreements with Saudi Arabia and OPEC. OPEC subsequently quoted oil supplies in U.S. dollars, creating an enmeshment of the American economy and the global energy market, in what Hudson refers to as "super imperialism."¹⁰¹

The U.S. adopted a hypervigilance towards monitoring and protecting global energy prices and supply, as any shocks to the market would impact the U.S. economy. According to David Harvey, the widespread implementation of neoliberalism by the West during the 1970s was an attempt to jumpstart newly independent economies which emerged following the near total collapse of colonialism with the end of the Second World War. By facilitating economic growth in these nascent economies, the U.S. could develop new trade partners to participate in the liberal economic system.¹⁰² This IPE distinguished between core and periphery states, where the former resumed organic forms of liberalism supporting state sovereignty, and the latter pushed towards neoliberal systems designed to 'hollow out' state power.¹⁰³

Previously, the IPE under Bretton-Woods was contingent on the liquidity of the U.S. dollar. The intention in recreating the IPE was to create a global market for energy products "where a multitude of actors would guarantee that no single player wields too much

100. G. John Ikenberry, 'Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Order', *International Security* 23, no. 3 (1998): 57–58, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539338>.

101. Michael Hudson, *Super Imperialism: The Origin and Fundamentals of U.S. World Dominance*, 2nd ed (London ; Sterling, Va: Pluto Press, 2003), 24.

102. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.

103. Buzan and Wæver, 'Contradictions of the Liberal Leviathan'.

power.”¹⁰⁴ This new energy-based IPE provided opportunities for other global powers to compete with U.S. hegemony, either through currency warfare, or energy market interference. Salameh argues that China is attempting to usurp U.S. hegemony in the IPE with the launch of the ‘petro-yuan’ crude oil futures in 2018.¹⁰⁵

The role of sovereign wealth funds (SWF) in energy producing states cannot be underestimated, as dramatic size increases are possible with higher energy prices. The transatlantic community has expressed concern that these could be weaponized to maximize geopolitical leverage in politico-ideological rather than economic objectives,¹⁰⁶ particularly regarding foreign ownership of large sections of the American and European economies.¹⁰⁷

104. Aleh Cherp and Jessica Jewell, ‘The Three Perspectives on Energy Security: Intellectual History, Disciplinary Roots and the Potential for Integration’, *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 3, no. 4 (September 2011): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2011.07.001>.

105. Mamdouh G. Salameh, ‘The Petro-Yuan: A Momentous Game Changer for the Global Energy Markets, the Global Economy and Sanctions’, *IAEE Energy Forum* Third Quarter (2018): 29–33, <https://www.iaee.org/newsletter/issue/94>.

106. Gal Luft, ‘Sovereign Wealth Funds, Oil and the New World Economic Order. Testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.’ (Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, 21 May 2008), http://www.iags.org/Luft_HFRC_SWF_052108.pdf.

107. Thomas H. Oatley, *International Political Economy*, Sixth edition, international student edition (New York, NY London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019), 257.

4 Literature Review

Diplomacy is the art of saying 'nice doggie' until you can find a rock – Will Rogers

The literature review explores which factors shape energy diplomacy strategy, to determine which are used by – and on – the EU emerged. Hegemons continuously seek power through alliance systems, which is contingent on their ability to exert dominance within the global state system. The literature suggests that energy is the most powerful leverage, but as global resource wealth is disproportionately distributed, regional energy security complexes, like the EastMed, arise which may become theatres for superpower rivalry. For the hegemon, control over these regions is critical to appropriating their wealth and dominating the IPE, which is primary goal of the Liberal Leviathan. Securitization of both the IPE and energy commodities, as the drivers of the IPE, provides justification for the hegemon's disproportionate level of intervention in these sectors.

The findings suggest that realist approaches to energy diplomacy, including geopolitical and geoeconomic operations and use of the energy weapon, are most often the methods used by superpowers. When a state does not possess the leverage granted by an asymmetric position of power in the global state system, a global governance approach provides the most equitable framework for energy diplomacy.

Consensus in the literature favours the EU's historic and ongoing global energy governance approach. However, it also determines that the EU is often the target of realist diplomacy strategies, like the energy weapon. A possible conclusion might be reached that while strong internal motivations exist for EastMed energy diplomacy, notably influence over the regional EastMed energy system through the EMGF and MOU, the EU is targeted by these realist energy diplomacy strategies, because internal weaknesses in its postmodern structure make the Union a more vulnerable member of the U.S. hegemonic alliance. From this subordinate position, a degree of sovereignty is forfeited over Brussels' energy

diplomacy strategy and requires the diplomacy strategy to align, to a considerable degree, with that of the U.S.

4.1 Energy Security and Foreign Policy

A body of scholarly work emerged in the wake of the 20th century, which underscored the strategic importance of energy resources for the global economy.¹⁰⁸ Much of this work focused on energy security, and its universal importance.¹⁰⁹ Energy security has been examined in terms of its increasingly important role in military¹¹⁰ economic¹¹¹ security. Trends towards decolonization saw energy increasingly imported from independent states rather than dependent territories, which in turn became dependent on energy revenue for domestic development and stability.¹¹²

Wilson argues that existing political discourse in international relations can be characterized as a “debate between a realist-inspired ‘geopolitical’ approach that sees energy as a source of zero-sum conflict, and a liberal-influenced ‘global energy governance’ approach which emphasises interdependence and cooperative dynamics.”¹¹³ The Liberal Leviathan’s realist core assumes the zero-sum nature of inter-state competition,¹¹⁴ which necessitates state-control over production, development, and transit of energy resources – a

108. Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power*, Free Press Trade (New York: Free Press, 2008).

109. Wæver, ‘Securitization and Desecuritization’.

110. Cherp and Jewell, ‘The Three Perspectives on Energy Security’, 1.

111. Usama Al-mulali and Che Normee Binti Che Sab, ‘The Impact of Energy Consumption and CO2 Emission on the Economic and Financial Development in 19 Selected Countries’, *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews* 16, no. 7 (September 2012): 4365–69, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rser.2012.05.017>.

112. Cherp and Jewell, ‘The Three Perspectives on Energy Security’, 1.

113. Jeffrey D. Wilson, ‘A Securitisation Approach to International Energy Politics’, *Energy Research & Social Science* 49 (2019): 114, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2018.10.024>.

114. Václav Lidl, *The Natural Gas Conundrum Transformation of the Central Asian Energy Security Complex After 1991* (Karolinum Press, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.14712/9788024652856>.

great contrast to strict neoliberal provisions for all states except the hegemon, including the ruthless pursuit against resource nationalization by the U.S.¹¹⁵ Therefore, energy discovery booms often prompt diplomatic disputes between governments embroiled in interstate conflict over the distribution of those resources.¹¹⁶

Energy security plays a substantial role in foreign relations, overwhelmingly because of energy's implications in the IPE and domestic security.¹¹⁷ States wielding disproportionate influence over energy markets can shape energy security outcomes.¹¹⁸ According to Walt, "a decline in relative position will lead one's allies to opt for neutrality at best or to defect to the other side at worst."¹¹⁹ Therefore the hegemon securitizes factors which threaten its position, and as energy influences virtually all elements of domestic and international development,¹²⁰ it takes a central role in securitization.

Brussels' energy security strategy touches on both internal and larger hegemonic factors. For Europe, Increased interactions with EastMed energy is attributable to the geographic proximity informing Buzan' concept of the regional security complex (RSC)¹²¹ defined as

a set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot be reasonably analysed or resolved apart from one another. The central idea remains that substantial parts of the

115. Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (Verso, 2011); Francisco Parra, *Oil Politics: A Modern History of Petroleum* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

116. Wilson, 'A Securitisation Approach to International Energy Politics', 114.

117. Cherp and Jewell, 'The Three Perspectives on Energy Security', 1.

118. Andrei V. Belyi, 'Energy in International Political Economy', in *Transnational Gas Markets and Euro-Russian Energy Relations*, ed. Andrei V. Belyi and Kim Talus (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 9–39, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137482983_2.

119. Walt, 'Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power', 7.

120. E. F. Schumacher and Geoffrey Kirk, *Schumacher on Energy: Speeches and Writings of E.F. Schumacher* (London: Cape, 1982).

121. Jean-Loup Samaan, *The East Mediterranean Triangle at Crossroads*, The Letort Papers (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, 2016), 3.

securitisation and desecuritisation processes in the international system will manifest themselves in regional clusters”¹²²

While most actors are concerned with neighbourhood security, regional conflicts tend to attract superpowers, and occasionally great power conflict can play out in these proxy theatres. For hegemons with a unipolar agenda, the global nature of its neighbourhood does tend to increase the chances of a great power conflict projected onto an RSC. The risk is higher where state institutions exert direct control over energy enterprises and regulate their own energy market, thus the foreign policy can effectively utilize energy resources to project state power.¹²³

Further complications arise where multi-vector foreign policies are predominant. These involve a sequence of uneven negotiation scenarios over cooperation terms, involving smaller states and two rival regional powers. In these situations, smaller states either comply with the requests of dominant players to reduce external tensions or strategically navigate between the two dominant powers to gain benefits and secure better deals with one or both.¹²⁴ multi-vector and nonalignment are often used interchangeably. In practice, multi-vector foreign policies translate to ‘multidimensional diplomacy.’

States may lose their ability to achieve their objectives without conflict when they *appear* to fight for an issue, that they *would not actually* be willing to fight over.¹²⁵ While Burton claims that nonalignment does not rest on continued rivalry between two power

122. Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, 44.

123. Belyi, ‘Energy in International Political Economy’.

124. Elena Gnedina, “‘Multi-Vector’ Foreign Policies in Europe: Balancing, Bandwagoning or Bargaining?’, *Europe-Asia Studies* 67, no. 7 (9 August 2015): 1007–29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2015.1066313>.

125. Robert F. Trager, ‘Multidimensional Diplomacy’, *International Organization* 65, no. 3 (2011): 469–506, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818311000178>.

groupings,¹²⁶ Rothstein disagrees. Nonalignment works best for weaker states in a bipolar system where bipolar powers are unwilling to cooperate, and the nonaligned states are not a target of war, but of competition. Benefits from both powers can then be exploited, which would not be possible in a balanced great power scenario where support from peers is preferred over support from weaker states. Therefore, nonalignment is not a foreign policy, but a “tactical response” to rivalry among great powers, on which the viability of nonalignment is entirely dependent.¹²⁷

4.2 Approaches to Energy Diplomacy

As energy securitization involves treating energy-related issues as matters of national security rather than merely economic or environmental concerns, securitization typically leads to increased government intervention which may extend to foreign policy. Diplomacy is a tool for management of international relations through which a state’s foreign policy objective is achieved.¹²⁸ More simplistically, diplomacy is a means of managing relationships. A well-defined and coherent foreign policy¹²⁹ and soft power strategy¹³⁰ are directly linked to the effectiveness of diplomatic action. The literature identifies three key

126. John W. Burton, *International Relations : A General Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 167.

127. Robert L. Rothstein, ‘Foreign Policy and Development Policy: From Nonalignment to International Class War’, *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 52, no. 4 (1976): 603–4, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2616775>.

128. Andrew F. Cooper, Jorge Heine, and Ramesh Thakur, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, 1st ed. (Oxford University Press, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199588862.001.0001>.

129. G. R. Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-85931-2>.

130. Joseph S. Nye, ‘Hard, Soft, and Smart Power’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, ed. Andrew F. Cooper, Jorge Heine, and Ramesh Thakur, 1st ed. (Oxford University Press, 2013), 559–74, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199588862.001.0001>.

approaches to energy diplomacy: global energy governance, geopolitical, and geoeconomic approaches.

4.2.1 *The Global Energy Governance Approach*

The global energy governance approach to energy diplomacy is associated with the liberal tradition, and with the work of Goldthau, which applies an institutionalist lens on global energy governance in response to traditional hard-power oriented approaches. Goldthau argues that global energy governance is a multi-level system shaped by a complex network of institutions and regulatory practices, while currently imperfect, this network is continually improving.¹³¹ Lesage, Van de Graaf, and Westphal agree that while some level of global energy governance present, the biggest gap is how international organizations can enforce agreements and mediate conflicts.¹³² Additionally, van de Graaf suggests that globalization narratives on the “retreating role of the state” may be overemphasised, and too much emphasis may be placed on the role of international institutions.¹³³

Existing institutions and financial mechanisms have not yet constituted a coordinated global energy governance across the EastMed, particularly regarding renewables.¹³⁴ Dubash and Florini suggest global energy governance could have failed due to the fragmented and conflicted interstate system working against energy governance, a diversity of actors and

131. Andreas Goldthau, *Global Energy Governance: The New Rules of the Game* (Brookings Institution Press, 2010), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctt6wpgm3>.

132. Dries Lesage, Thijs van de Graaf, and Kirsten Westphal, *Global Energy Governance in a Multipolar World* (Farnham, Surrey, England ; Burlington, Vt: Ashgate, 2010).

133. Thijs van de Graaf and Jeff Colgan, ‘Global Energy Governance: A Review and Research Agenda’, *Palgrave Communications* 2 (26 January 2016): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2015.47>.

134. Kerstin Fritzsche, Driss Zejli, and Dennis Tänzler, ‘The Relevance of Global Energy Governance for Arab Countries: The Case of Morocco’, *At the Crossroads: Pathways of Renewable and Nuclear Energy Policy in North Africa* 39, no. 8 (1 August 2011): 4497–4506, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2010.11.042>.

institutions, and an overrepresentation of governments not effectively integrated into international institutions.¹³⁵

4.2.2 *The Geopolitical Approach*

The geopolitical approach to energy diplomacy is associated with the realist tradition, and contends that states pursue their energy interests guided by power politics¹³⁶ and the strategic importance of energy resources.¹³⁷ According to Kaplan, geographic factors including proximity of energy resources, significantly affect national strategies and the location of geopolitical power centres.¹³⁸ Klare argues that future global conflict is trending away from ideological control, and increasingly over management of current resources and influencing the geopolitical landscape to secure continued access to those resources.¹³⁹

This coordinated set of diplomatic strategies to influence or control energy resources, markets, or transit routes by economic, military, or political means is represented by Wigell and Vihma's 'geopolitical operation.' A geopolitical operation is typically initiated against high levels of threat perception, and are therefore overt, confrontational, and often employ bandwagoning or counter balancing behaviour.¹⁴⁰ Yergin's exploration of

135. Navroz K. Dubash and Ann Florini, 'Mapping Global Energy Governance', *Global Policy* 2 (September 2011): 6–18, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-5899.2011.00119.x>.

136. Mackinder, 'The Geographical Pivot of History'.

137. Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace*.

138. Robert D. Kaplan, 'The Revenge of Geography', *Foreign Policy*, no. 172 (2009): 101–4, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20684874>.

139. Michael T. Klare, *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002).

140. Mikael Wigell and Antto Vihma, 'Geopolitics versus Geoeconomics: The Case of Russia's Geostrategy and Its Effects on the EU', *International Affairs* 92, no. 3 (2016): 608–10, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12600>.

geopolitical strategies in *The Quest* finds that states secure these energy resources through maritime strategy, strategic alliances, and pipeline diplomacy.¹⁴¹

Other scholars have identified diplomatic strategies in an energy-oriented geopolitical operation to include economic sanctions,¹⁴² bilateral and multilateral energy partnerships,¹⁴³ resource nationalism,¹⁴⁴ and military interventions.¹⁴⁵ Though, international sanctions have been shown to reduce democracy levels of target states.¹⁴⁶ Eland argues that sanctioning nations are able to more easily obtain international cooperation when imposing import bans than embargos on the target. Because the targets of sanctions regimes are often developing countries exporting products overrepresented on international markets, this surplus tends to garner protectionism for the same industries by developed nations.¹⁴⁷

4.2.3 *The Geoeconomic Approach*

Still realist, offensive geoeconomic operations are covertly conducted through economic strategies which can be concealed and negated to greater effect than their

141. Daniel Yergin, *The Quest: Energy, Security and the Remaking of the Modern World*, Revised and updated (New York, New York Toronto London Dublin Melbourne New Delhi Auckland Parktown North Beijing: Penguin Books, 2012).

142. Lili Bayer, 'The Geopolitics of Sanctions' (Geopolitical Futures, 2016), <https://geopoliticalfutures.com/the-geopolitics-of-sanctions/>.

143. Rafael Leal-Arcas, Costantino Grasso, and Juan Alemany Ríos, 'Multilateral, Regional and Bilateral Energy Trade Governance', *Renewable Energy Law and Policy Review* 6, no. 1 (2015): 38–87, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24324807>.

144. Sangwani Patrick Ng'ambi, *Resource Nationalism in International Investment Law*, First published (London New York, NY: Routledge, 2016).

145. Bradley Hope and Justin Scheck, *Blood and Oil: Mohammed Bin Salman's Ruthless Quest for Global Power*, First edition (New York: Hachette Books, 2020).

146. Dursun Peksen and A. Cooper Drury, 'Coercive or Corrosive: The Negative Impact of Economic Sanctions on Democracy', *International Interactions* 36, no. 3 (30 August 2010): 240–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2010.502436>.

147. Ivan Eland, 'Economic Sanctions as Tools of Foreign Policy', in *Economic Sanctions: Panacea or Peacebuilding in a Post-Cold War World?*, ed. Ronald V. Dellums, David Cortright, and George A. Lopez, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2018), 39, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429493935>.

geopolitical counterparts. Wigell and Vihma argue that “economics is the [further] continuation of war by other means.”¹⁴⁸ Geoeconomic campaigns sabotage the target’s cohesion by deepening divisions or aggravating existing conflicts, ultimately intended to provoke “domestic political discord over the need to balance”¹⁴⁹

The operational logic of ‘selective accommodation’ – referred to by Izumikawa as ‘reward wedging’¹⁵⁰ – characterizing offensive geoeconomic operations involves avoiding a direct confrontation with the target, instead “[weakening] its resolve by more subtle inducements calibrated to undermine its internal cohesion.”¹⁵¹ Crawford defines the concept as a strategy whereby a state “uses concessions and other inducements to lure a target away from other adversaries, which are dealt with more firmly.”¹⁵²

Economic inducements, including “side-payments, discounts and other economic incentives” are selectively offered to certain actors therefore enabling geoeconomics to “be used as a wedge strategy, attempting to divide a target country or coalition, and through that to weaken its balancing potential.”¹⁵³ Successful geoeconomic offensives target alliances with incentives to provoke ‘buck-passing’ or ‘distancing’ behaviours¹⁵⁴ By targeting under-balancing members of the coalition likely through wedging behaviour, a geoeconomic

148. Wigell and Vihma, ‘Geopolitics versus Geoeconomics: The Case of Russia’s Geostrategy and Its Effects on the EU’, 605.

149. Wigell and Vihma, 611.

150. Yasuhiro Izumikawa, ‘To Coerce or Reward? Theorizing Wedge Strategies in Alliance Politics’, *Security Studies* 22, no. 3 (1 July 2013): 498–531, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2013.816121>.

151. Wigell and Vihma, 610–611.

152. Timothy W. Crawford, ‘Preventing Enemy Coalitions: How Wedge Strategies Shape Power Politics’, *International Security* 35, no. 4 (2011): 161, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41289683>.

153. Wigell and Vihma, 610–611.

154. Wigell and Vihma, 611.

offensive weaponizes the collective action problem through economic incentives. For example, Lidl's strategic-oriented model of neoclassical energy realism argues that certain states, like Russia and Iran, sell their energy resources at a preferred rate to target customers in order to strengthen influence and their own security.¹⁵⁵

4.2.4 *The Energy Weapon Model*

In diplomacy, energy can be used as a tool to pressure states by threatening or initiating sanctions regimes, creating asymmetric energy relationships, disrupting flows of energy supplies, and targets energy sources, delivery systems, and supply routes.¹⁵⁶ Smith-Stegen's *energy weapon model* (Figure 1.1) assumes that before a state can transform energy into 'political capital' for weaponization, the energy resources must be consolidated, control over transit routes must be secured, and energy must be used to achieve the state's own political objective – through implicit or explicit means.¹⁵⁷ Therefore, the energy weapon can refer to overt geopolitical operations or covert geoeconomic operations.

155. Lidl, *The Natural Gas Conundrum Transformation of the Central Asian Energy Security Complex After 1991*, 24.

156. Michael Carnegie LaBelle, 'Energy as a Weapon of War: Lessons From 50 Years of Energy Interdependence', *Global Policy* 14, no. 3 (June 2023): 531–47, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.13235>.

157. Karen Smith Stegen, 'Deconstructing the "Energy Weapon": Russia's Threat to Europe as Case Study', *Energy Policy* 39, no. 10 (2011): 6506, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2011.07.051>.

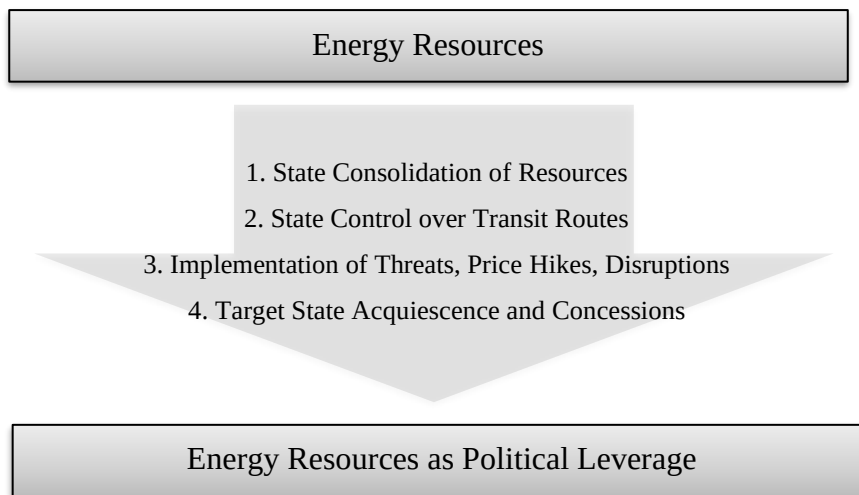


Figure 1: Smith Stegen's Energy Weapon Model¹⁵⁸

Pipeline gas and LNG present different elements of the energy weapon, with pipelines leaning in favour of the exporter and LNG leaning in favour of the importer. Proedrou, argues pipelines tend to facilitate and reinforce patterns cooperation, alliances and interdependence where interdependence is divided into “symmetric and asymmetric interdependence.”¹⁵⁹ Symmetric interdependence yields a mutually advantageous relationship, while asymmetric interdependence asymmetrical interdependence interacts with high sensitivity to eventually serve as a “conflict instigator.”¹⁶⁰ Additionally, Proedrou claims that the well-developed diplomatic channels established through pipeline trade can contribute to the “containment of crises.” At the same time, pipelines Orttung and Øverland argue that pipelines serve a

158. Smith Stegen, 6507.

159. Filippou Proedrou, ‘Revisiting Pipeline Politics and Diplomacy: From Energy Security to Domestic Politics Explanations’, *Problems of Post-Communism* 65, no. 6 (2018): 414, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2017.1303616>.

160. Filippou Proedrou, ‘Sensitivity and Vulnerability Shifts and the New Energy Pattern in the EU-Russia Gas Trade: Prospects for the Near Future’, *Studia Diplomatica* 63, no. 1 (2010): 85, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44838606>.

“toolkit” to equip producing states with variable uses of energy to achieve broader objectives, such as through supply cuts (threats or actual), price disputes, and “asset wars.”¹⁶¹

The literature is consistent in that a “quiet revolution” in gas transport is underway,¹⁶² predicting LNG will constitute a 50% share of the global gas trade by the end of the decade, with U.S. LNG dominating over Russian pipeline imports to EU-27 countries in 2022.¹⁶³ Because LNG transport avoids the possible legal and political risks posed by transit countries and has the flexibility to be sold on markets where it receives higher prices, LNG is a more secure commodity when faced with tense bilateral relations and an unstable geopolitical environment. These factors are perquisites for pipeline agreements, which “bind the contracting parties in rigid [cooperative] relationships” for decades.¹⁶⁴ For energy realists, the economic logic of pipelines is dwarfed by their strategic value to the energy weapon.¹⁶⁵

In contrast, LNG liberates dependencies on once indispensable traditional gas partners, and empowers energy agents to create new trade links and routes. LNG may also produce outcomes of “increased (perceived) security of supply, more flexible deliveries, improved storage capacity, lower/higher prices, and a diversified portfolio of

161. Robert W. Orttung and Indra Øverland, ‘A Limited Toolbox: Explaining the Constraints on Russia’s Foreign Energy Policy’, *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2011): 74–85, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2010.10.006>.

162. Proedrou, ‘Revisiting Pipeline Politics and Diplomacy: From Energy Security to Domestic Politics Explanations’, 410.

163. U.S. Energy Information Administration, ‘Natural Gas Weekly Update’, Natural Gas, 2022, https://www.eia.gov/naturalgas/weekly/archivenew_ngwu/2023/06_15/.

164. Proedrou, ‘Revisiting Pipeline Politics and Diplomacy: From Energy Security to Domestic Politics Explanations’, 412.

165. Michael T. Klare, *Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet: The New Geopolitics of Energy*, 1st ed (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008).

buyers/customers.”¹⁶⁶ Recursive use of the energy weapon during warfare¹⁶⁷ is minimized by LNG. At the same time, LNG is not invulnerable to sanctions bypassing as other energy commodities. Europe’s EastMed partners, especially Egypt and Türkiye, but also several Balkan countries, have participated in smuggling sanctioned Iranian, Libyan, and Venezuelan energy products.¹⁶⁸ Illegal gas can be mixed with legal supplies prior to export as LNG, or transported on vessels with concealed ownership, as with Venezuelan “oil tanker diplomacy.”¹⁶⁹

4.3 The EU and Energy Diplomacy

4.3.1 EU Energy Diplomacy Strategies

Goldthau argues the EU’s policies towards the Mediterranean are shaped by a particular construction of energy security that reflects its economic and political identity as a liberal, market-oriented, and normative power.¹⁷⁰ Thus, agreeing with the popular opinion that the EU is a proponent of the global energy governance approach, mainly owing to its participation in numerous institutions related to energy cooperation and transition.¹⁷¹

166. Proedrou, ‘Revisiting Pipeline Politics and Diplomacy: From Energy Security to Domestic Politics Explanations’, 415.

167. Felix Ciută, ‘Conceptual Notes on Energy Security: Total or Banal Security?’, *Security Dialogue* 41, no. 2 (April 2010): 123–44, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010610361596>.

168. Saša Đorđević, ‘Fuel to the Fire: Impact of the Ukraine War on Fuel Smuggling in South Eastern Europe’ (Geneva: Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2003), <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Sas%CC%8Ca-Dordevic%CC%81-Fuel-to-fire-Impact-of-fuel-smuggling-SE-Europe-August-2023.pdf>.

169. Thijs Van de Graaf, ‘The “Oil Weapon” Reversed? Sanctions against Iran and U.S.-EU Structural Power’, *Middle East Policy* 20, no. 3 (2013): 149, <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12040>.

170. Andreas Goldthau, ‘From the State to the Market and Back: Policy Implications of Changing Energy Paradigms’, *Global Policy* 3, no. 2 (May 2012): 198–210, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-5899.2011.00145.x>.

171. Marc-Antoine Eyl-Mazzega and Carole Mathieu, ‘The European Union and the Energy Transition’, in *The Geopolitics of the Global Energy Transition*, ed. Manfred Hafner and Simone Tagliapietra (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 27–46, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-39066-2_2.

However, domestic energy diplomacy occurs in a less securitized context than international energy diplomacy. Siddi and Kustova argue that increasing energy securitization, notably discussions to withdraw from the ECT and management of Nord Stream 2, demonstrate that the EU is moving away from a liberal approach towards a strategic approach.¹⁷² This might have been an attempt towards regaining the sovereignty lost to multilateralism of the 1990s.¹⁷³

Regionalism is a significant component of the EU's energy diplomacy, dividing the Mediterranean between the Euro-Mediterranean ('North') and the non-Euro Mediterranean ('South'), and defines relations as North-South and South-South.¹⁷⁴ In a 2014 report, the EU Parliament's Directorate General for External Policies of the Union admitted that the Union's policies were oriented towards bilateral agreements and had not managed to either "change the asymmetric 'centre/periphery' relationships (North-South) or to strengthen sub-regional cooperation (South-South)."¹⁷⁵ The same report claimed that the EU "cannot be held accountable" for strained relationships in the MENA region despite the Union's bilateral policy tending to "reinforce non-cooperative aspects, with each nation preferring to conduct its own negotiations with Europe for advantages over its neighbours."¹⁷⁶

172. Marco Siddi and Irina Kustova, 'From a Liberal to a Strategic Actor: The Evolution of the EU's Approach to International Energy Governance', *Journal of European Public Policy* 28, no. 7 (3 July 2021): 1076–94, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2021.1918219>.

173. Frédéric Simon, 'EU Asserts "Right to Regulate" as Part of Energy Charter Treaty Reform', www.euractiv.com, 16 July 2019, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy/news/eu-asserts-right-to-regulate-as-part-of-energy-charter-treaty-reform/>.

174. Cécile Jolly and European Parliament, *Regional Integration in the Mediterranean - Impact and Limits of Community and Bilateral Policies: In Depth Analysis*. (LU: Publications Office, Directorate General for External Policies of the Union, 2014), <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2861/63803>.

175. Jolly and European Parliament, 4.

176. Jolly and European Parliament, 10.

Dostol and Zorob, and Hinnebusch argue that the North-South partnership is a systematic attempt to access regional markets for European businesses through protectionist policies which negate the EastMed's comparative advantage. These include forced tariff reductions, disallowing indigenous capital preferences in bilateral contracts.¹⁷⁷ By opting for bilateral contracts and preventing the state from promoting national capital, the Cold War preferential trading arrangements for developing states are lost, and Europe could thereby establish "hub-and-spoke" relationships characterizing the core-periphery model of the EastMed's first wave of globalization.¹⁷⁸ This core-periphery strategy is useful where the EU has a position of leverage, but adopts a more securitized approach when dealing with an energy weapon.

4.3.2 *Europe and the Energy Weapon*

The literature is divided on whether Europe tends to be affected by the energy weapon. Stent claims that Russia would be discouraged from using an energy weapon against Europe.¹⁷⁹ Proponents of interdependence argue against Russia's use of the energy weapon on the grounds that supply disruptions are "economically counterproductive,"¹⁸⁰ because Europe receives pipeline gas from Russia, the only option for Russia is "to forego gas exports

177. Jörg Michael Dostal and Anya Zorob, 'Syria and the Mediterranean Partnership', *Syria Studies* 1, no. 2 (2009): 6–16, <https://ojs.st-andrews.ac.uk/index.php/syria/article/view/711>.

178. Raymond Hinnebusch, 'Globalization, the Highest Stage of Imperialism', in *The Middle East and Globalization: Encounters and Horizons*, ed. Stephan Stetter (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2012), 30, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137031761_2.

179. Angela Stent, 'An Energy Superpower? Russia and Europe.', in *The Global Politics of Energy*, ed. Kurt M. Campbell and Jonathon Price (Washington, DC: Aspen Institute, 2008), 76–95.

180. Smith Stegen, 'Deconstructing the "Energy Weapon": Russia's Threat to Europe as Case Study', 6506.

altogether.”¹⁸¹ Mahdi found that Russian gas exports to Europe did not lead to increased Russian leverage.”¹⁸² However, these studies were published prior to the 2022 cuts by Russia to Europe-bound pipeline gas. The geopolitical context as of 2022 would suggest evidence is better supported by adherents to the energy weapon argument. Newnham frames Russia’s energy weapon as using “both ‘petro-carrots’ (using oil and gas to reward allies) and ‘petro-sticks’ (using resources to punish states which defy the Kremlin).”¹⁸³

The EU has been careful to sustainably transition away from its asymmetric and peripheral role in the EU-Russia energy relationship. While the U.S. sanctioned Russian oil and gas in February 2022, Brussels did not immediately follow with gas sanctions. Eland’s argument may explain why the EU followed with its own sanctions against Russian coal in January 2022. While Members were divided on whether to implement oil and gas sanctions, coal sanctions would protect the prominent coal industries of Hungary, Slovakia, and Bulgaria, and incentivize these Members to reconsider their resistance the EU’s sanctions regime against their top domestic energy provider. Coincidentally, Hungary, Slovakia and Bulgaria experienced the lowest rises in energy prices within the EU in 2022.¹⁸⁴ This points to Russia’s successful geoeconomic operation, using varying energy process between EU members as a selective accommodation strategy to create divergent pressures within the

181. Amy M. Jaffe and Ronald Soligo, ‘Militaryization of Energy: Geopolitical Threats to the Global Energy System’, Working Paper Series, The Global Energy Market: Comprehensive Strategies to Meet Geopolitical and Financial Risks (James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, 2008), 35, <https://www.bakerinstitute.org/research/militarization-of-energy-geopolitical-threats-to-the-global-energy-system>.

182. Ahmed Mahdi, ‘Geoeconomic Leverage of Natural Gas Resources in the Mediterranean: The Case of Israel’, *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 12, no. 4 (2019): 146, <https://doi.org/10.1525/caa.2019.12.4.141>.

183. Randall Newnham, ‘Oil, Carrots, and Sticks: Russia’s Energy Resources as a Foreign Policy Tool’, *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 2, no. 2 (July 2011): 134–43, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2011.03.004>.

184. Eurostat, ‘Electricity & Gas Hit Record Prices in 2022’, [ec.europa.eu](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/DDN-20230426-2), 2023, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/DDN-20230426-2>.

Union.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, Europe's pivot to an-LNG based energy diplomacy strategy indicates that Brussels perceives Russia's incoming energy strategy as using the energy weapon. For this reason, Franza, de Jong, and van der Linde argue that LNG can serve to depoliticize the EU–Russia gas trade, a much-needed development in the aggravated energy and geopolitical landscape of the region.

Some scholars suggest U.S. LNG serves to depoliticize the European gas market and could be a long-term option if it meets EU emissions targets.¹⁸⁶ Seymour Hersch made a compelling yet controversial argument that the U.S. sabotaged Nord Stream 2 to amplify energy securitization in Europe, injure Member States's ability to profit from the processing and distribution of low-cost Russian gas, and prompt a pivot towards American LNG.¹⁸⁷ This does not reflect the predominant position in the literature, which holds that the U.S. does not apply an energy weapon towards Europe, instead working to counter its use by Russia.¹⁸⁸

185. Wigell and Vihma, 'Geopolitics versus Geoeconomics: The Case of Russia's Geostrategy and Its Effects on the EU', 611.

186. Stefano Cabras, 'American LNG and the EU-Russia Relationship: The End of Moscow's Energy Weapon?' (Bruges: College of Europe, 2021), http://aei.pitt.edu/103403/1/edp_2_2021_cabras.pdf.

187. Seymour Hersh, 'How America Took Out the Nord Stream Pipeline', *Seymour Hersh* (blog), 8 February 2023, <https://seymourhersh.substack.com/p/how-america-took-out-the-nord-stream>.

188. LaBelle, 'Energy as a Weapon of War'.

5 Background

What's going to happen is, very soon, we're going to run out of petroleum, and everything depends on petroleum... This is the end of the world.” – Kurt Vonnegut

The EU's energy dependence on Russia for natural gas has steadily increased in the past decades to meet exponential rises in domestic and industrial demand. Geographic proximity has facilitated pipeline agreements and low-cost transportation of inexpensive Russian energy products to Europe. However, since the beginning of the February 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict, the EU-Russia relationship has experienced significant tensions. A subsequent overhaul of Brussels' approach to energy security and diplomacy led to deepening partnerships with key players in EastMed energy.

5.1 Energy Securitization and the Breakdown of the EU-Russia Relationship

Predating both the EU and Russian Federation, the energy relationship in the late 19th century took the form of investment partnerships which developed the Russian Empire's Volga and Baku oil fields.¹⁸⁹ Tensions in the energy relationship swelled during the Cold War, notably regarding American concerns of Soviet, and later Russian, influence in western Europe vis-à-vis European energy dependency.¹⁹⁰ Since the 1970s, Europe has been a major importer of Russian energy via pipelines, beginning with the Druzhba pipeline supplying Eastern Bloc allies in 1964 with Western Siberian, Ural, and Caspian oil¹⁹¹ – one year after

189. Lauren Goodrich and Marc Lanthemann, 'The Past, Present and Future of Russian Energy Strategy', *Geopolitical Weekly*, 2013, http://www.businessforum.com/STRATFOR_Russian-Energy-Strategy.pdf.

190. Mamdouh G. Salameh, *Is a Third Oil Crisis Inevitable?* (Mamdouh G. Salameh, 1990), 56. American fears of the European-Russian energy partnership flared during the Cold War, where Soviet oil supply to the Eastern Bloc ensured economic dependence and cultural influence.

191. Ksenia Borisocheva, 'Analysis of the Oil-and Gas-Pipeline-Links between EU and Russia. An Account of Intrinsic Interests.' (Centre for Russia and Eurasia, 2007), <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/47031/Analysis%20Oil%20and%20Gas.pdf>.

natural gas was discovered in Tyumen.¹⁹²

The expansion evolved into an interconnected regional energy network (See Appendix A). Development of LNG production capabilities since the 1990s markedly expanded exports to Europe from Gazprom's Sakhalin-2 and Portovaya projects, and Novatek's Yamal LNG and Cryogas-Vysotsk projects. A series of 13 pipelines enter Europe through Russia directly via Nord Stream 1 (Germany), and through transit countries via Yamal-Europe (Belarus-Poland-Germany), Brotherhood (Ukraine-Slovakia), Blue Stream (Türkiye), and Turk Stream (via Türkiye).¹⁹³ Turk Stream allowed Moscow and Türkiye to bypass Ukraine in gas shipments to Europe, and has seen recent attacks by Ukraine in the Black Sea.¹⁹⁴ Construction of Nord Stream 2 was completed in 2021, but the highly contentious project was never operational. German energy regulators suspended the pipeline's certifications in February 2022 after sustained pressure from the Union and Washington.¹⁹⁵ A series of gas leaks in September 2022 prompted mutual accusations of

192. Sergei Ermolaev, 'The Formation and Evolution of the Soviet Union's Oil and Gas Dependence', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2017, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/03/29/formation-and-evolution-of-soviet-union-s-oil-and-gas-dependence-pub-68443#>.

193. European Commission, 'Commission Staff Working Document - Accompanying Document to the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council Concerning Measures to Safeguard Security of Gas Supply and Repealing Directive 2004/67/EC - The January 2009 Gas Supply Disruption to the EU: An Assessment {COM(2009) 363}', 2009, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52009SC0977>. The source states there are 12 Russian-originating pipelines to Europe, however, it was published in 2009 prior to the completion of Nord Stream 1 in 2011 and Nord Stream 2 in 2021. The latter was never operational and is therefore not included in the count of 13.

194. Reuters, 'Ukraine Attacks Russian Warship Guarding TurkStream Pipeline', Daily Sabah, 24 May 2023, <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/europe/ukraine-attacks-russian-warship-guarding-turkstream-pipeline>.

195. Sarah Marsh, Madeline Chambers, and Sarah Marsh, 'Germany Freezes NordStream 2 Gas Project as Ukraine Crisis Deepens', *Reuters*, 22 February 2022, sec. Energy, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/germanys-scholz-halts-nord-stream-2-certification-2022-02-22/>.

sabotage between Russia, the EU, and the U.S..¹⁹⁶

Europe imports 83% of its natural gas.¹⁹⁷ In 2020, Russia supplied 43.3% of Europe's natural gas imports, primarily for industrial use and domestic power and heating.¹⁹⁸ Imports peaked in 2021, with Russian gas reaching a 53.8% share of the EU's natural gas imports.¹⁹⁹ Import rates vary between Member States, but Malta, Cyprus, and Luxembourg import between 92.5% and 97.6% of their energy.²⁰⁰ The pipeline-focused energy relationship is rooted in long-term gas delivery contracts which Brussels is eager to withdraw from. Transit agreements between Russia and Ukraine are set to expire in 2024, and potential for renewal is likely to be impacted by the conflict.

Beginning in April 2022, the EU modified its energy policy towards Russian products, progressively employing a series of import restrictions and price controls as part of a plan to eventually phase-out reliance on Russia. Early restrictions targeted imports of products less critical to the energy mix, including coal and other solid fossil fuels. By February 2023, EU sanctions, or "restrictive measures," prevented the import of Russian coal, crude oil, and most refined petroleum products. Natural gas was never included.²⁰¹

196. 'Briefers Urge Security Council to Independently Investigate 2022 Nord Stream Pipeline Incident as Members Assess Speed of National Inquiries' (New York: United Nations, 11 July 2023), <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15351.doc.htm>.

197. European Council, 'Where Does the EU's Gas Come from?', Infographics, 2023, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/eu-gas-supply/>.

198. Directorate-General for Energy (European Commission), 'EU Energy in Figures: Statistical Pocketbook 2022', Publications Office of the European Union (Publications Office of the European Union, 2022), <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2833/334050>.

199. European Council, 'Where Does the EU's Gas Come from?' January 2021 represented the peak import of Russian natural gas at 53.8% since August 2019, which saw 56.1%.

200. European Council.

201. European Council, 'Timeline - EU Restrictive Measures against Russia over Ukraine', [www.consilium.europa.eu](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/history-restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/), 2023, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/history-restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/>.

Throughout this process, the European Council condemned Russia for selectively cutting gas flows to certain Member States,²⁰² but Moscow continued imposing its own restrictive measures aided by Gazprom's pipeline monopoly. A March 2022 announcement enforced payment in rubles for "unfriendly" customers of Russian gas. In June 2022, Moscow responded to the EU's energy sanctions with a devastating 75% reduction in flows for Nord Stream 1, which previously accounted for 35% of Europe's supply.²⁰³

Yet the EU-Russia energy relationship endures, though in a reduced capacity. Total imports from Russia have hovered around 12.9% since November 2022,²⁰⁴ while LNG imports have steadily risen since 2022. Independent producer Novatek, of which French giant Total Energies is a minority stakeholder, is the main exporter of Russian LNG to Europe.²⁰⁵ Yamal LNG flows have continued uninterrupted to Belgium, France, and Spain, with 2023 volumes on track to exceed previous years.²⁰⁶

Securing alternative natural gas supplies has proven more difficult than oil, despite the latter maintaining a 34.5% majority share of Europe's energy mix.²⁰⁷ Norway maximized its export capacity in 2022, managing to supply 25% of Europe's demand.²⁰⁸ The remaining

202. European Council, 'Energy Prices and Security of Supply', 31 March 2023, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/energy-prices-and-security-of-supply/>.

203. 'Nord Stream 2: How Does the Pipeline Fit into Ukraine-Russia Crisis?', *BBC News*, 2022, sec. Europe, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60131520>.

204. European Council, 'Where Does the EU's Gas Come from?'

205. Charlie Cooper, 'The Russian Gas Habit Europe Can't Quit: LNG', *Politico*, 6 November 2022, <https://www.politico.eu/article/russia-gas-europe-lng-putin/>.

206. Malte Humpert, 'EU Received 300 Shipments of LNG from Russia Since Beginning of Ukraine War', *High North News*, 22 June 2023, <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/eu-received-300-shipments-lng-russia-beginning-ukraine-war>.

207. Eurostat, 'EU Energy Mix and Import Dependency', [ec.europa.eu](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php?title=EU_energy_mix_and_import_dependency#Oil), 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php?title=EU_energy_mix_and_import_dependency#Oil.

208. European Council, 'Where Does the EU's Gas Come from?'

gas mix comprises Algerian pipeline gas (11.6%), mixed LNG from the U.S., Nigeria, and Qatar (25.7%), mixed LNG from the EastMed (2.5%)²⁰⁹ and gas of unspecified origins (13%).²¹⁰ Natural gas discoveries in Europe's Southern neighbourhood has attracted interest from the European Commission, evidenced by the June 2022 EU-Egypt-Israel MOU on natural gas imports.²¹¹

5.2 The MOU: Overview and Provisions

On 15 June 2022, the “Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation Related to Trade, Transport, and Export of Natural Gas to the European Union” (MOU) was signed in Cairo by representatives of the EU Commission for Energy (on behalf of the EU), the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and the Ministry of Energy of Israel. The “Sides” (See Appendix B).

The MOU was entered into effect immediately with a duration of three (3) years and will be automatically renewed for two (2) successive terms of (3) years each.²¹² The terms and provisions are outlined in nine sections: Affordable, Stable and Secure Natural Gas Supply; Implementation; Environmental Protection; Safety (of infrastructure); Promotion of Hydrogen, Green Energy Production, and Energy Efficiency; Meetings of the Sides; The Laws in Force & Dispute Settlement; Confidentiality; and, Duration & Termination.

The MOU makes a reference to the EMGF, though no other parties are signatories. It is noted that the EU will purchase natural gas until 2030, after which consumption will

209. Costis Stambolis, ‘Spotlight on East Med as Europe Scrambles for Gas Supplies’, *Financial Mirror*, 16 July 2023, <https://www.financialmirror.com/2023/07/16/spotlight-on-east-med-as-europe-scrambles-for-gas-supplies/>.

210. European Council, ‘Where Does the EU’s Gas Come from?’

211. Directorate-General for Energy (European Commission), ‘Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation Related to Trade, Transport, and Export of Natural Gas to the European Union’ (European Commission, 2022), https://energy.ec.europa.eu/publications/eu-egypt-israel-memorandum-understanding_en.

212. Directorate-General for Energy (European Commission), 5.

decline until 2050 to meet climate neutrality commitments.²¹³ The terms stipulate that natural gas exported to the EU will be purchased from Egypt and Israel, noting Egypt's intention to serve as a regional gas hub while leaving the destination for the LNG facility open-ended. However, while both Egypt and Israel are permitted to export, the MOU does not limit the origins of the energy to either Egypt or Israel - a major point of interest. Additionally, the MOU allows for investments into Egyptian and Israeli energy infrastructure, which would exceed Europe's timeline of natural gas reliance. Such investments would also run contrary to the Council's call to remove investments in fossil-fuel infrastructure projects from future EU energy diplomacy.²¹⁴

5.2.1 *Informal Legal Instruments and Enforceability*

For clarity, this section will continue to refer to the 2022 EU-Egypt-Israel MOU as the acronym 'MOU'; 'Memorandum of Understanding' will refer to the instrument in general. This section has three goals: to define the term 'Memorandum of Understanding', to discuss the benefits and shortcomings of Memoranda of Understanding as legal instruments, and to analyse the arguments in international law literature regarding the legality and enforceability of Memoranda of Understanding. By analysing the legal obligations of informal versus formal instruments, the motivations of the parties in negotiating the MOU may be determined.

Memoranda of Understanding are often used in international relations as a means of expressing a commitment to cooperation without necessarily establishing a legally binding obligation. The instrument sets out a clear process for implementing the agreement, including

213. Directorate-General for Energy (European Commission), 'EU-Egypt-Israel MOU'.

214. European Commission, 'Energy Charter', Energy, 2023, https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/international-cooperation/international-organisations-and-initiatives/energy-charter_en.

the distinct functions of each party.²¹⁵ In contrast, a legally binding contract is an agreement between two or more parties that creates an enforceable obligation to perform or refrain from certain actions.²¹⁶

In public international law, a Memorandum of Understanding is a document that expresses the intention of two (bilateral) or more (multilateral) parties to cooperate on a specific project or initiative, usually enumerating a set of operational arrangements through a “framework international agreement.”²¹⁷ According to Kolb, there are three main advantages for states to opt for informal instruments over formal, legally binding ones. First, States benefit from informality as they “worry less about elaborating final clauses or the formalities in relation to treaty making. Second, there is no requirement to publish or register the document with the UN, which accommodates confidentiality (i.e. for reasons of national security). Third, an informal instrument is easier to amend or even terminate.”²¹⁸ This can be useful in situations where the parties involved are not yet ready to commit to a binding agreement, or where the terms of the agreement are still being negotiated. Informal arrangements may bypass bureaucratic or legislative approval, and “public scrutiny.”²¹⁹

Additionally, informal instruments often feature dispute resolution provisions which “provide that any dispute will be settled by negotiation between the parties and not referred to

215. Bud H. Siple, ‘Memorandum of Understanding’, Technical Report (United States: U.S. Department of Energy, 1 July 2014), <https://doi.org/10.2172/1171425>.

216 Daniel Bodansky, ‘Legally Binding Versus Nonlegally Binding Instruments’, in *Towards a Workable and Effective Climate Regime*, ed. Scott Barrett, Carlo Carraro, and Jaime De Melo (London: Centre for Economic Policy Research, 2015), 155–63.

217. United Nations, Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs, ‘Treaty Handbook’ (United Nations, 2013), 68, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/source/publications/THB/English.pdf>.

218. Marina Kolb, ‘The Memorandum of Understanding’, in *The European Union and the Council of Europe* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 142, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137023636_7.

219. Kenneth W. Abbott and Duncan Snidal, ‘Hard and Soft Law in International Governance’, *International Organization* 54, no. 3 (2000): 453, <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081800551280>.

any third party, court, or tribunal. Such a provision is consistent with the intention of the parties not to conclude a legally binding instrument.”²²⁰ These provisions maximise parties’ control over dispute resolution, however, competing scholarship from international legal bodies suggests that informal mechanisms may, in fact, be binding.

While the MOU stipulates that it is nonbinding, it is essential to determine whether this is consistent in the policies of the legal bodies governing the parties and the instrument. There are debates in international law whether informal legal instruments are in fact binding. Article 2 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties defines ‘treaty’ as:

An international agreement concluded between States in written form and governed by international law, whether embodied in a single instrument or in two or more related instruments and whatever its particular designation.²²¹

As these instruments and agreements are made by subjects of - and operate within – the sphere of international law, the Vienna Convention’s definition may suggest that even informal instruments are treaties.²²² This is supported by an ILC statement that Memoranda of Understanding “could not appropriately be called formal instruments, but they are undoubtedly international agreements subject to the law of treaties. A general convention on the law of treaties must cover all such agreements.”²²³ Therefore, the international law literature suggests that any international agreement made by subjects of international law may be considered treaties that are legally binding.

220. Anthony Aust, ‘The Theory and Practice of Informal International Instruments.’, *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (1986): 791, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/759875>.

221. United Nations, ‘Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties’, 1969, 3, https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/1_1_1969.pdf.

222. Aust, ‘The Theory and Practice of Informal International Instruments.’, 794.

223. United Nations, ‘Yearbook of the International Law Commission’, 1967, 188, https://legal.un.org/ilc/publications/yearbooks/english/ilc_1966_v2.pdf.

Referring to an instrument as a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ “does not reveal its legal status nor reveal whether the instrument in question is binding or nonbinding.”²²⁴ Informal legal instruments typically avoid including terms “that denote an intention to conclude a treaty, such as ‘shall’, ‘agree’, and ‘enter into force’... and the instrument is supposed to ‘come into operation’ or ‘come into effect’ instead of requiring the parties to ‘agree’ or ‘undertake.’”²²⁵

The Council does not recognize non-legally binding instruments or Memoranda of Understanding as ‘treaties’ following the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*; however, it does differentiate between *bilateral* Memoranda of Understanding and broader ‘soft law.’²²⁶ The latter aims to ‘upgrade’ the legal status over time, for example, through ratification.²²⁷ The former ‘downgrades’ legal status by pre-emptively avoiding legal obligation, and is well-suited for the looser coordination preferred in multilateral settings.²²⁸ Indeed, Section 7 explicitly states its nonbinding nature:

Nothing in this [MOU] will create any legally binding obligations or commitments, or any financial obligations or commitments, between the Sides or in relation to any third party, under domestic or international law.²²⁹

In cases where Memoranda of Understanding, usually multilateral, are considered soft law, legal obligations may be incurred if the agreement possess pre-law functions that serve

224. Kolb, ‘The Memorandum of Understanding’, 142.

225. Kolb, 143.

226. Andreas Zimmermann, ‘Possible Indirect Legal Effects of Non-Legally Binding Instruments’, in ‘*Non-Legally Binding Agreements in International Law*’ (CADHI Expert Workshop, Strasbourg: University of Potsdam, 2021), 4, <https://rm.coe.int/1-2-zimmermann-indirect-legal-effects-of-mous-statement/1680a23584>.

227. Zimmermann, 3–4.

228. Siple, ‘Memorandum of Understanding’, 453.

229. Directorate-General for Energy (European Commission), ‘EU-Egypt-Israel MOU’, 1.

as “preparatory acts”²³⁰ for future legally binding instruments. Perhaps energy contracts or regulatory agreements. This pressure may come from Egypt, which “recognizes that the Law is enforced within a political framework, and that the Law must affect this political framework to the maximum possible extent and be affected by it to the least possible extent.”²³¹

5.2.2 *Critical Responses to the MOU*

Responses to the MOU have been mixed and can be broadly categorized into two areas of concern: environmental and political. The most critical have been from left-wing and humanitarian organizations who are concerned with the increased investment in fossil fuels, and the consequences establishing new partnerships with more states with poor human rights records. This section will briefly discuss the environmental and political objections coming from within the EU.

5.2.2.1 Political

Tel-Aviv’s disregard for EU-funded projects in Palestine has been a point of contention for some Member States. A 2020 by the Commission assessment found a 40% increase financial damages since the previous year to EU-funded structures which had been demolished or seized by Israeli authorities.²³² Additional concerns have been raised over implications of an Israeli energy hub on Palestine. The Palestine Authority (PA) has advocated for a revival of the offshore Gaza Marine fields in since discovery in 2000. Hamas has been critical of the PA for unilaterally signing way Gaza’s resources without further

230. Zimmermann, ‘Possible Indirect Legal Effects of Non-Legally Binding Instruments’, 6.

231. Arab Republic of Egypt, ‘Legal Memorandum Submitted by the Arab Republic of Egypt’ (International Court of Justice, 28 January 2004), 7, <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/104132>.

232. Tomasz Piotr Poręba et al., ‘Parliamentary Question | Destruction by Israel of EU-Funded Property in Palestine | P-003539/2021 | European Parliament’, www.europarl.europa.eu (European Parliament, 2021), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2021-003539_EN.html.

consideration of its existing dependence on gas imports from Israel, which would increase if the project goes ahead. In response to Israeli statements that it will claim a “major share of the revenues” from the Gaza Marine,²³³ Palestinian authorities instead insist that Ashdod will be bypassed, and the pipeline will be routed to the Egyptian city of Al-Arish to be processed and mixed with Egyptian gas for export to Europe. However Palestine must independently develop its infrastructure to achieve this, estimated to take over 15 years.²³⁴

In a question to the European Parliament, the Greens-European Free Alliance (Greens-EFA) expressed concern over the lack of a “territorial clause explicitly excluding the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel”, the concerns were threefold:

1. Why did the Commission sign an agreement with Israel without a territorial clause limiting its applicability to Israel’s internationally recognised borders, thereby contravening the EU positions and UN Security Council requirements thereon?
2. Can it confirm whether any aspects of the agreement apply to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including its exclusive economic zone as declared by the State of Palestine on 24 September 2019?
3. Can Israeli settlements benefit from investments relating to carbon capture under this MoU?²³⁵

The Greens-EFA argued that the European Commission signed the MOU on behalf of the European Parliament regarding an issue which is in direct violation of a 2012 European

233. Charles Ellinas, ‘Energy and Geopolitics in the Eastern Mediterranean’, Issue Brief (Atlantic Council Global Energy Center, 2022), 10, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Eastern-Mediterranean_Final.pdf.

234. Adam Khalil, ‘Egypt Nears Deal with Israel and PA to Revive Gaza Offshore Gas Production’, *Middle East Eye*, 20 October 2022, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/egypt-israel-pa-nearing-deal-revive-gaza-offshore-gas-production>.

235. Jordi Solé et al., ‘Parliamentary Question | EU Memorandum of Understanding with Egypt and Israel on Natural Gas, and the Absence of a Territorial Clause | E-002264/2022 | European Parliament’, www.europarl.europa.eu (European Parliament, 2022), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-002264_EN.html#ref2. The Greens-European Free Alliance (Verts-ALE or Greens-EFA) consists of two distinct European political parties - the European Green Party and the European Free Alliance. The latter represents stateless nations and has called on the EU to recognize Palestinian statehood.

Council decision on the Middle East Peace Process.²³⁶ Additionally, the decision violates the 2016 UN Security Council Resolution 2334 which calls on all states to ‘to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967’.²³⁷

This criticism was addressed by a response from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the EEAS, Josep Borrell. Borrell reiterated that EU support for UNSC Resolution 2334 on the 1967 border agreements renders any EU-Israel bilateral agreement inapplicable to the occupied territories. Moreover, the informal and non-binding nature of the MOU bypasses the need for a territorial clause, stressing that:

the EU is strictly prohibited, also in the implementation of a non-binding instrument, from acting in a way, which would amount to [recognition of] the illegal Israeli occupation. Therefore, the implementation of such [MOU] will not apply in any form to the occupied Palestinian territory, which entails that Israeli supplies of natural gas as per the implementation of the [MOU] may not originate from resources appropriated from Palestinian territories occupied by Israel.²³⁸

Borrell’s claim that the informal instrument isn’t legally binding, and therefore a territorial clause has not been “deemed necessary” may justify the exclusion of Palestine. However, that the EU does not permit implementation of any instrument recognizing the illegal Israeli occupation does not by default mean that gas cannot originate in occupied Palestinian territories. In fact, the text does not explicitly “entail as per the implementation of the memorandum of understanding” that Israeli gas supplies “may not originate from resources

236. Council of the European Union, ‘Council Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process’ (3209th Foreign Affairs Council meeting, Brussels, 2012), https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/134140.pdf.

237. United Nations, ‘Security Council Resolution 2334 on the Situation in the Middle East. S/RES/2334’, 23 December 2016, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/463/89/PDF/N1646389.pdf?OpenElement>.

238. Josep Borrell, ‘Parliamentary Question | Answer for Question E-002264/22 | E-002264/2022(ASW) | European Parliament’, www.europarl.europa.eu (European Parliament, 2022), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-002264-ASW_EN.html.

appropriated from Palestinian territories occupied by Israel.”²³⁹ Mention of Palestine or the occupies territories is entirely omitted. The only text referring to origins of energy is in Section 1, which states that:

Any shipment of natural gas from the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Israel to the European Union may be shipped inter alia via the use of the LNG infrastructure in the Arab Republic of Egypt. The activities contemplated in this Memorandum of Understanding shall be without prejudice to, and shall not restrict the ability of, the Arab Republic of Egypt or the State of Israel to export natural gas to other buyers or through other routes.

Any natural gas to be shipped to the European Union will originate either from the Arab Republic of Egypt, the State of Israel, or any other source in the East Mediterranean region, including EU Member States in the region, that is deemed acceptable by the Sides.²⁴⁰

It is unclear what purpose the obfuscation of Israeli gas origins serves for the MOU. Without prejudice to the statement by Borrell, it is possible that the process was generally deemphasising political criteria for partners that the EU typically includes in cooperation agreements. However, the claim that the MOU contains a provision which it does not in fact contain, raises interest.

5.2.2.2 Environmental

An EU-Egypt Joint Statement on Climate, Energy and Green Transition released on the same day as the MOU was signed, reaffirmed a “joint commitment and determination to accelerate the just energy transition and develop a resource-efficient, socially just and low emissions and climate neutral economy.”²⁴¹ However, the decision to frame the MOU as an environmentally sustainable achievement rests on the overwhelming focus of the joint

239. Borrell.

240. Directorate-General for Energy (European Commission), ‘EU-Egypt-Israel MOU’, 2.

241. Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, ‘EU-Egypt Joint Statement on Climate, Energy and Green Transition’, European Commission, 15 June 2022, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-egypt-joint-statement-climate-energy-and-green-transition-2022-06-15_en.

statement on future investments in the clean energy transition. Section 5 in the MOU on the Promotion of Hydrogen, Green Energy Production, and Energy Efficiency provides the only reference to clean energy in the document. It briefly outlines cooperation in three sectors: hydrogen, green energy, and energy efficiency.²⁴² The June 2022 joint statement was followed by a further Memorandum on an EU-Egypt hydrogen partnership in November 2022.²⁴³ This was the only statement released by the EU related to the MOU, and it draws attention only to environmental aspects.

The MOU's vague inclusion of long-term green energy initiatives is overshadowed by the short-term environmental consequences of LNG versus pipeline gas. According to Ulvestad and Øverland "if the natural gas is transported more than 9100 km, pipeline transport will demand a greater share of the natural gas than LNG transport, regardless of transport volume."²⁴⁴ This is to say that pipelines are "more cost-efficient on a scale proportional to the volumes they carry compared to LNG infrastructure. Moreover, LNG is more energy intensive and hence more exposed to variability in both the price of natural gas and carbon emissions."²⁴⁵ Some reports argue that methane (CH₄) emissions are the primary contributor to global warming, rather than carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the production and supply chains. The UNECE reports that the global warming impact of CH₄ is 84-86 times

242. Directorate-General for Energy (European Commission), 'EU-Egypt-Israel MOU', 4.

243. Directorate-General for Energy, 'Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership on Renewable Hydrogen Between the European Union and the Arab Republic of Egypt', European Commission, 16 November 2022, https://energy.ec.europa.eu/publications/memorandum-understanding-strategic-partnership-renewable-hydrogen-between-european-union-and-arab_en.

244. Marte Ulvestad and Indra Øverland, 'Natural Gas and CO₂ Price Variation: Impact on the Relative Cost-Efficiency of LNG and Pipelines', *International Journal of Environmental Studies* 69, no. 3 (2012): 419, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207233.2012.677581>.

245. Ulvestad and Øverland, 422.

stronger than CO₂ over a 20-year period.²⁴⁶ Russia's energy industry contributes towards 74% of CH₄ emissions, primarily from LNG facilities and pipelines,²⁴⁷ which totalled 1.7 million metric tonnes - nearly double the rate of American emissions per kilometre of pipeline.²⁴⁸ Russia's CH₄ emissions are attributed to "leaks or discharges from machines and valves at compressor stations and...from pipeline valves."²⁴⁹ Though leaky pipelines have high environmental impact, they have greater long-term environmental sustainability potential than LNG.

Abandoning Russian fossil fuels and accepting short-term LNG imports may counter Europe's efforts to reduce energy emissions and could be counterintuitive to the EU's climate strategy. The IEA reported that the gas transmission sector provides the largest opportunity for greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions, and they estimated that a 60% reduction of GHG emissions on the Russian pipeline network was possible.²⁵⁰ That LNG chains are significantly more CH₄ and nmVOC- intensive than pipeline chains – and that the European Commission recognizes this fact²⁵¹ suggests that the EU's motivations in the EastMed are less environmentally motivated than the spirit of the MOU implies. This is not to suggest that Europe is not genuinely concerned with a green transition. Rather, the pursuit of energy

246. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 'The Challenge', UNECE, 2023, <https://unece.org/challenge>.

247. International Energy Agency, 'Methane Tracker', IEA, 2023, <https://www.iea.org/data-and-statistics/data-tools/methane-tracker>.

248. International Energy Agency.

249. Stefan Lechtenböhmer et al., 'Tapping the Leakages: Methane Losses, Mitigation Options and Policy Issues for Russian Long Distance Gas Transmission Pipelines', *International Journal of Greenhouse Gas Control* 1, no. 4 (1 October 2007): 394, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1750-5836\(07\)00089-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1750-5836(07)00089-8).

250. IEA and OECD, 'Optimising Russian Natural Gas: Reform and Climate Policy' (Paris, 2006), 22, <https://www.iea.org/reports/optimising-russian-natural-gas>.

251. European Commission. Joint Research Centre. Institute for Energy., *Liquefied Natural Gas for Europe: Some Important Issues for Consideration*. (LU: Publications Office, 2009), <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2790/1045>.

security may follow Timothy Mitchell's logic, taking place under the auspices of – and sometimes *counter to* – environmentalism.²⁵² An exploration of the political elements of the MOU reveals deeper motivations of the signatories.

5.2.3 *Motivations of the MOU*

Though international law literature is undecided on the legality and enforceability of Memoranda of Understanding, it is essential to consider the intentions of the Sides in opting for this informal and non-binding instrument, despite the EU's pressing need for natural gas imports. If serious commitments are intended towards the natural gas partnership, a formal mechanism may provide a greater sense of security through a binding agreement. In contrast, formal mechanisms may constrain the trilateral relationship as the Sides experiment with a new energy diplomacy environment. Rather, Memoranda of Understanding can be understood as a milestone of negotiations; informal instruments offer a looser framework that lessens the stress on a nascent partnership, while providing an opportunity for optics. Even if the Sides are not prepared for a full commitment, they can use the publicity of the MOU to project an image of partnership – or alliance – internationally. In any case, the MOU is a contrast from the binding obligations of pipeline agreements.

252. Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*, 173–99.

6 The EU

The gardeners have to go to the jungle... otherwise, the rest of the world will invade us, by different ways and means. – Josep Borrell

Prior to 2022, energy securitization was not a primary driving factor in the EU's energy diplomacy strategy – in the EastMed or otherwise. A 2014 report by the European Commission acknowledged that “most Member States have not had to experience any lasting disruption of their energy supply since the oil crises of the 1970s” attributing this to the EU's ability to procure a “stable and abundant supply” of energy.²⁵³ The Russia-Ukraine gas disputes 2006 and 2009, which resulted from disputes between Russia and transit countries, underscored the vulnerability of European countries to supply disruptions and the role of transit countries, and heightened concerns about energy security. Following the 2014 annexation of Crimea, the EU published the European Energy Security Strategy citing the need to create a “common European energy policy” to secure and diversify gas supplies.²⁵⁴ Russia was increasingly identified as a potential threat to European energy security,²⁵⁵ and subsequent discussions in Brussels stressed the necessity of diversifying supply sources. The 2022 energy crisis marked the sharpest turn towards securitization of energy, the EastMed energy sector, and a liberalization of energy diplomacy strategy.

Interestingly, as energy security increases, Brussels shifts towards greater liberalization of energy diplomacy. The most recent evidence being the June 2022 MOU, which can be contrasted sharply with the Energy Charter Treaty previously governing EU energy diplomacy. As this research focuses on European energy diplomacy the EastMed, the

253. European Commission, ‘Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on European Energy Security Strategy’ (Brussels, 2014), 1, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A52014DC0330>.

254. European Commission, 2.

255. Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*.

inclusion of internal developments only serves to illustrate the EU's process of unfolding the inner security dimension into an external theatre. Energy security began to shift from the member states to the Commission. After the 2014 Crimean annexation, the EU began to seriously consider integrating energy security into its diplomatic agenda, citing a "need for a systematic use of foreign policy instruments, such as the consistent inclusion of energy issues in political dialogues particularly Summits with strategic partners" using the EEAS.²⁵⁶ Employing the EEAS lifted the issue of energy security from the national to the supranational level, and necessitated a coordinated energy strategy abroad.

6.1 Energy Securitization Process

Energy security initiatives in the EU correlate with periods of Russian political instability or aggression, particularly in the European neighbourhood or transit countries. They also correlate with fluctuations in the global energy market. Europe's First Energy Legislative Package was adopted between 1996-1998, coinciding with a sharp decline in oil prices in 1998 which caused a significant devaluation of the Ruble and led to the Russian financial crisis the same year.²⁵⁷ The Second Energy Package in 2003 coincided with an oil price shock spanning from 2003 to 2008 due to the impacts of the Iraq War; Russia's rejection of OPEC production quotas after the first quarter of 2002 instigated in a price war where Saudi Arabia offered significant discounts to mitigate demand shocks, yielding a 48% decrease in global oil prices.²⁵⁸ With only minor disruptions during the 2006 Russia-Ukraine

256. European Commission, 'European Energy Security Strategy', 18.

257. Tatiana Fic and Omar Farooq Saqib, 'Political Instability and the August 1998 Ruble Crisis', *Journal of Economic Integration* 21, no. 4 (2006): 766, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23001136>.

258. Natasha Turak, 'Oil Nose-Dives as Saudi Arabia and Russia Set Off "Scorched Earth" Price War', CNBC, 8 March 2020, <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/08/opec-deal-collapse-sparks-price-war-20-oil-in-2020-is-coming.html>.

gas dispute, Europe's focus on energy security intensified following the subsequent 2009 Russia-Ukraine gas dispute and the 2008 Russo-Georgian war.

In 2009 the EU adopted the Third Energy Package. This was followed by a 2010 regulation on security of gas supplies, and the 2011 Energy Infrastructure Package. Russia could not own both the energy supply and the energy infrastructure including pipelines and terminals within the EU, according to the EU's Third Energy Package.²⁵⁹ This document aims to liberalize the EU energy market and reduce dependence on Russian gas and includes provisions that prevent energy companies from owning both the infrastructure (such as pipelines) and the energy supplies. This limits the possibility of energy monopolies and constrains the ability of energy exporters to exert control over the supply of gas to Europe. When the Kremlin approved a new Energy Security Doctrine in 2019²⁶⁰ the EU adopted its Fourth Energy Legislative Package, which introduced a transformative energy governance system intending to move Europe away from fossil fuel dependency. The increasingly frequent shocks to the energy market began to be met with concern from policymakers in Brussels.

In the decades which preceded these internal events, energy security had been primarily addressed at the national level with minimal consideration of the Union as a whole. However, the Russia-Ukraine gas disputes 2006 and 2009 underscored the vulnerability of European countries to supply disruptions and the role of transit countries, and heightened concerns about energy security. However, Union-wide approaches were slow to develop -

259. Directorate-General for Energy (European Commission), *Clean Energy for All Europeans*. (LU: Publications Office, 2019), <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2833/9937>.

260. President of Russia, 'Russia's Energy Security Doctrine Approved', President of Russia, 13 May 2019, <http://en.kremlin.ru/acts/news/60516>.

even after the adoption the 2010 Lisbon Treaty raised expectations of increased cooperation at the EU level.²⁶¹

Following the 2014 annexation of Crimea, the EU published the European Energy Security Strategy citing the need to create a “common European energy policy” to secure and diversify gas supplies.²⁶² The subsequent discussion in Brussels reflected a reinvigoration of securitization theory applied to energy. In this framework, Russia was frequently depicted as a potential threat to Europe's energy security, and the necessity to diversify supply sources and routes was routinely emphasized.²⁶³ The Energy Strategy identifies eight points of energy action: avoiding supply disruption, addressing risk management and critical infrastructure, moderating demand, improving domestic interconnectivity, increasing domestic production, investing in energy technologies, diversifying supplies and infrastructure, and improving domestic coordination on external energy issues. While most of these concerns are internal, the Energy Security Strategy identifies projected Turkish infrastructure projects, notably pipelines in the Southern Corridor, as having a “vital” role in providing a connection to the Middle East. Further provisions recommend engagement in “intensified political and trade dialogue” with partners in the EastMed to establish “a Mediterranean gas hub in the South of Europe.”²⁶⁴

Regulation 2017/1938 of the European Parliament and of the Council, supplemented the Energy Security Strategy, announcing the establishment of a GCG for the facilitation of cooperative measures in security European gas supplies. Additionally, it proposed a

261. Marie-Claire Aoun, ‘European Energy Security Challenges and Global Energy Trends: Old Wine in New Bottles?’, *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, IAI Working Papers, 15, no. 3 (2015): 4, <https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaiwpl503.pdf>.

262. European Commission, ‘European Energy Security Strategy’, 2.

263. Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*.

264. European Commission, ‘European Energy Security Strategy’.

“proportionate system of crisis management and information exchange based on three crisis levels: early warning, alert and emergency.”²⁶⁵ Notably, the European Parliament identified gas supplies from third countries as central to the Union’s supply security, proposing that the Commission “should be entitled to deploy a task force to monitor gas flows into the Union in crisis situations...and, where a crisis arises from difficulties in a third country, to act as mediator and facilitator.”²⁶⁶ The 2014 Energy Security Strategy and GCG established the securitization framework which supported the MOU’s EastMed energy cooperation. In particular, the diversification, external engagement, gas pivot, and Southern and Eastern redirection are the most closely related to the EU’s 2022 energy diplomacy strategy in the EastMed.

In May 2022 the Commission released a joint communication on external management of energy concerns as an update to RePowerEU and the Energy Security Strategy of 2014. The document reiterated energy security concerns emanating from the Russia-Ukraine conflict and further stressed the importance of supplier diversification, LNG primacy, the role of international institutions, multilateralism, and the strategic importance of the Southern Corridor. Israel and Egypt are referenced in relation to the EU’s intentions to close an LNG partnership (the MOU), and regarding green energy. The document highlights the importance of developing a “common Mediterranean energy policy” based on the Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Declaration of 2021. Additionally, support is given for “regional

265. European Parliament, ‘Regulation (EU) 2017/1938 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2017 Concerning Measures to Safeguard the Security of Gas Supply and Repealing Regulation (EU) No 994/2010 (Text with EEA Relevance.)’, 2017, L 280/9, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/1938/oj>.

266. European Parliament, para. 58.

cooperation in the Eastern and Southern Mediterranean” in the energy transition.²⁶⁷ In response to this latest speech act, the Council retroactively identified all previous disruptions of gas supplies by Russia as “deliberate [attempts] to use energy as a political weapon.”²⁶⁸ The referent objects being the EU Member States, of where twelve have activated either the first or second crisis level.”²⁶⁹ These initiatives demonstrate that Brussels initially securitized energy in response to Russian threats, and energy diplomacy would evolve to reflect this perspective.

6.2 Liberalizing Europe’s Energy Diplomacy

Internally, the EU is simultaneously moving towards both increased securitization of energy, and a “loosening” of external cooperation and internal decision-making processes. These developments have seen the Commission take on increasing executive power, typical of bureaucracies. This has included an increasing role in developing and implementing the EU’s energy security and diplomacy strategy.

Established in 2009 from the Lisbon Treaty, the EEAS carries out the EU’s diplomatic functions. Independent from the Commission and the Council, the EEAS is headed by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The High representative is responsible for the CFSP and CSDP and the Commission is responsible for energy, development, and enlargement initiatives. Final decisions on CFSP require unanimous agreement by the European Council, represented by the heads of Member

267. ‘Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - EU External Energy Engagement in a Changing World’, Pub. L. No. SWD(2022) 152 (2022), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN%3A2022%3A23%3AFIN&qid=1653033264976>.

268 European Commission, ‘Proposal for a Council Regulation on Coordinated Demand Reduction Measures for Gas’ (Brussels, 20 July 2022), 1, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52022PC0361>.

269. Council of the European Union, Council Regulation (EU) 2022/1369 of 5 August 2022 on coordinated demand-reduction measures for gas (2022).

State governments. This could lead to stalled or delayed action which could adversely impact the resolution of critical and time-sensitive decisions.

Increased risks to Europe's energy security from the Russia-Ukraine conflict, among other factors, have pushed debates in the Union into the realm of modernising decision-making mechanisms. This has included exploring the greater involvement of Qualified Majority Votes (QMV) in CFSP decisions.²⁷⁰

6.2.1 *The Energy Charter Treaty*

Europe's framework for external international energy cooperation began with the 1991 European Energy Charter featuring a multilateral framework for cooperation aimed to improve market competition and established an annual Energy Charter Conference to facilitate inter-governmental dialogue. Its establishment in the early 1990s was an attempt to rectify Russia's exclusion from the international economic system following the collapse of the USSR. Based on the non-binding political declaration of the 1991 European Energy Charter inviting increased energy cooperation, signed by Russia, the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) came into effect in 1998. The ECT is a "legally binding multilateral instrument" of which Russia is a signatory but never ratified.²⁷¹ Through the implementation of a WTO-inspired rulebook, the ECT would facilitate energy trade, transit, energy-efficiency dispute settlement and investment. Europe, Russia, and the former Soviet Eastern European states could develop an integrate energy market and expand globally.

270. Viktor Szép, 'Making EU Foreign Policy More Effective: Qualified Majority Voting on the Horizon?', Carnegie Europe, 2 May 2023, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/89652>.

271. International Energy Charter, 'Energy Charter', The Energy Charter Treaty, 18 February 2019, <https://www.energycharter.org/process/energy-charter-treaty-1994/energy-charter-treaty/>.

In 2015, the International Energy Treaty (IET) built upon the ECT but did so as a non-binding political declaration similar to the European Energy Charter.²⁷² Jordan and Türkiye, are the only non-European signatories representing the EastMed in the ECT. While Palestine and Syria were a member of the 1991 Energy Charter neither became signatories on the ECT. Palestine's disputed statehood may have impacted its ability to enter into multilateral agreements. Though Palestine returned as a signatory for the non-binding 2015 International Energy Charter, Syria never participated again after 1991.

The decision to return to a non-binding instrument is more aligned with Europe's current energy diplomacy strategy. The Commission adopted proposals in July 2023 to withdraw the EU and Euratom from the ECT, further recommended the withdraw of all EU member states. The Commission noted that that the IET "has become increasingly outdated and no longer matches the climate ambition at the EU and international level."²⁷³ Simultaneously, the October 2022 treaty modernisation proposals were withdrawn as they had "become obsolete and are contradictory to the proposals to withdraw the EU and Euratom from the treaty."²⁷⁴

The Commission framed the decision as the result of internal rifts in the Council against modernisation, and the incongruity of the IET with contemporary climate ambitions. This was supported by calls from the Council in 2021 to remove investments in fossil-fuel infrastructure from the EU's future energy diplomacy strategy – prior to the 2022 energy crisis; development of the emerging EastMed energy network would then be left to regional and external actors.

272. Energy Charter Secretariat, 'International Energy Charter' (International Energy Charter, 20 May 2015), 2, <https://www.energycharter.org/process/international-energy-charter-2015/overview/>.

273. European Commission, 'Energy Charter'.

274. European Commission.

7 The New Geopolitics of the EastMed Energy Frontier

The Eastern Mediterranean is a frontier, a point in between the western world, an arena of continuous clash, a sui generis region whose place in the new multipolar world seems to be in flux once again - Aristotelis Tziampiris

Competition over energy resources in the EastMed did not begin with the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict. Fragmentation of the EastMed into a set of British “miniclient states” with concentrated oil reserves was achieved after the Ottoman collapse during the first wave of globalization.²⁷⁵ This carried over to contemporary challenges for regional cooperation, centred on competitive energy enterprising. The EastMed is not a new hydrocarbon producer, but major discoveries in the Leviathan and Aphrodite gas fields off the Israeli and Cypriot coasts between 2009 and 2011, respectively, and in Egypt’s offshore Zohr field in 2015 threatened a significant transformative impact on the EastMed’s energy security, and beyond.²⁷⁶ Again, the EastMed supplies 2.5% of the EU’s LNG imports.²⁷⁷ The maximum potential of the planned EastMed energy hub would replace 20% of imports from

275. Hinnebusch, ‘Globalization, the Highest Stage of Imperialism’, 23.

276. Andrea Prontera and Mariusz Ruszel, ‘Energy Security in the Eastern Mediterranean.’, *Middle East Policy* 24, no. 3 (2017): 145–46, <https://eclass.unipi.gr/modules/document/file.php/EBI131/Energy%20Security%20in%20the%20East%20Mediterranean.pdf>.

277. Stambolis, ‘Spotlight on East Med as Europe Scrambles for Gas Supplies’.

Russia.²⁷⁸ In total EastMed reserves represent 1.2% of global natural gas reserves, which would supply 4.9 years of EU gas requirements.²⁷⁹

7.1.1 Egypt

Egypt is the centre of gravity for energy in the EastMed. It is possibly the only local producer with the capability to serve as an independent exporter to Europe and has the ability to allow other producer states to access international energy markets through its LNG facilities along the northern coastline.²⁸⁰ Aside from Egypt, the closest LNG terminals are in Oman, Yemen, the UAE, Algeria, Angola, Nigeria, and Mozambique. Even before the discoveries in Israel, Egypt dominated the region's export potential and current proven reserves are approximately double the *combined* discoveries of Israel and Cyprus. This is projected to rise with greater exploration of its EEZ, though expansion of its energy industry between 2011 and 2015 had been slow due to political turmoil.²⁸¹ In 2020, just prior to the

278. Karim Haggag, 'The Eastern Mediterranean Could Strengthen Europe's Energy Security', BRINK, accessed 27 August 2023, <https://www.brinknews.com/the-eastern-mediterranean-could-strengthen-europes-energy-security/>.

279. Antonios Stratakis and Theodore Pelagidis, 'The Importance Of Southeast Mediterranean Natural Gas Reserves To EU's Energy Security; A Geopolitical And Economic Approach', *Regional Science Inquiry* 12, no. 2 (2020): 14, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Theodore-Pelagidis/publication/347928146_THE_IMPORTANCE_OF_SOUTHEAST_MEDITERRANEAN_NATURAL_GAS_RESERVES_TO_EU'S_ENERGY_SECURITY_A_GEOPOLITICAL_AND_EC ONOMIC_APPROACH_Regional_Science_Inquiry_journal_Vol_XII_2_2020_pp_11-29/links/5fe797e192851c13fec43d35/THE-IMPORTANCE-OF-SOUTHEAST-MEDITERRANEAN-NATURAL-GAS-RESERVES-TO-EUS-ENERGY-SECURITY-A-GEOPOLITICAL-AND-ECONOMIC-APPROACH-Regional-Science-Inquiry-journal-Vol-XII-2-2020-pp-11-29.pdf?_sg%5B0%5D=started_experiment_milestone&origin=journalDetail&_rtd=e30%3D.

280. Jan Mazač and Lukáš Tichý, 'Egypt, A Future Gas Supplier to the European Union?', Policy Papers (Prague: IIR Centre for Energy Policy, 2018), <https://www.iir.cz/egypt-a-future-gas-supplier-to-the-european-union>.

281. Theodoros Tsakiris, 'The Importance of East Mediterranean Gas for EU Energy Security: The Role of Cyprus, Israel and Egypt', *The Cyprus Review* 30, no. 1 (2018): 33, <https://ejournals.um.edu.mt/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/importance-east-mediterranean-gas-eu-energy/docview/2193108477/se-2?accountid=27934>.

revolution which overthrew Mubarak, one-third of Egyptian LNG was exported to Europe.²⁸² Discoveries at Zohr pushed Cairo to take the lead as a regional gas hub, monetizing production and working towards an interconnected LNG system with Israel and Cyprus beginning in 2018.

Egypt's spearheaded major multilateral energy development in the region. Establishment of the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF), with Cyprus, Greece, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, and Italy as members and the EU, U.S., and World Bank Group as permanent observers. In an unprecedented format, the EMFG brings together exporters, importers, and the private sector in a structured dialogue to cooperatively develop the region's energy market to its fullest potential. While the EMGF constitution entered into force in 2021, the first EMGF Ministerial Meeting was held in January 2019, after intentions to establish the Forum took place during a tripartite summit between Egypt, Greece, and Cyprus in 2018²⁸³ – all without Türkiye. The organization was a victory in a longstanding dispute with Ankara.

Strategically, Egypt had two directions to turn. The Eastern Mediterranean Natural Gas Pipeline connecting the Levantine Basin to Greece would make Cyprus the regional energy hub. Otherwise, the more attractive Egyptian option would make use of existing LNG facilities, connect to other regional producers, and achieve a shorter path towards an Egyptian hub.²⁸⁴ U.S. withdrawal for the Eastern Mediterranean Natural Gas Pipeline project in January 2022 set in plans to develop the Egyptian hub, citing environmental concerns, economic unviability, and potential to inflame tensions over EEZs. As the pipeline would

282. BP, 'Statistical Review of World Energy', June 2011, 22–29, <http://large.stanford.edu/courses/2011/ph240/goldenstein1/docs/bp2011.pdf>.

283. '1st EMGF Ministerial Meeting, Cairo', East Mediterranean Gas Forum, 14 January 2019, https://emgf.org/gva_event/1st-emgf-ministerial-meeting-january-14th-2019-cairo-egypt/.

284. Mazač and Tichý, 'Egypt, a future gas supplier to the European Union?'

bypass Ankara, the project's demise was a concession for Türkiye, though the Egypt hub cemented Cairo's dominance and risked more strain tensions with Ankara.

7.1.2 Türkiye

Ankara's longtime objective of becoming a regional energy exporter to Europe also included possessing the only gas supply route from the southeast and control all pipeline gas supplies. Originally, Ankara's multidimensional diplomacy made it a strong regional player, able to balance between Asia, Europe, and MENA.²⁸⁵ It has succeeded in developing the Southern Gas Corridor with the South Caucasus Pipeline, Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline, and Trans Adriatic Pipeline.²⁸⁶ Together with Russia, the Trans Balkan pipeline transiting Ukraine was replaced with Turk Stream in delivering energy to southeastern Europe. In the EastMed, strained relationships with regional partners Greece, Cyprus, Israel and Egypt work against these goals. Ankara has perceived growing Egyptian dominance as a threat and has responded to interventions against its neighbourhood energy strategy with hard power.

Importantly, Ankara has used its naval power and geostrategic location to impact energy supply routes. In February 2022, Ankara began referring to the Ukraine-Russia

285. Kemal Kirişçi, 'Turkey's Engagement with Its Neighborhood: A "Synthetic" and Multidimensional Look at Turkey's Foreign Policy Transformation', *Turkish Studies* 13, no. 3 (1 September 2012): 319–41, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2012.717444>.

286. K. S. Strigunov et al., 'Energy Market Wars as a Factor of Military-Political Escalation in Eastern Mediterranean Region: A Russian Perspective', ed. Gabriela Borz, *Cogent Social Sciences* 8, no. 1 (2021): 9, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.2005878>.

conflict as a ‘war.’^{287 288} This terminology carries consequences as per Ankara’s rights under the 1936 Montreux Convention to restrict access to warships – the definition being “subjective, depending on whether these vessels belong to Black Sea littoral States or not”²⁸⁹ – through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles straits.²⁹⁰ On 28 February 2022, Ankara invoked the Montreux Convention for all warships - regardless of littoral status. According to the Turkish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Montreux Convention’s restrictions on passages of vessels of war “are subjective depending on whether these vessels belong to Black Sea littoral States or not.”²⁹¹

Contemporary transatlantic literature largely attributes spiralling EastMed security to an increasingly militarized foreign policy by Türkiye²⁹² contrasted against Cairo’s increasing liberalization. Though, the littoral states have long disagreed on how to navigate conflicting maritime delimitation claims in accessing offshore energy stores. Stores which Ankara

287. President of the Republic of Türkiye, Directorate of Communications, ‘President Erdoğan, President Putin of Russia talk over phone’, Directorate of Communications, 25 March 2023, <http://wt.iletisim.gov.tr/english/haberler/detay/president-erdogan-president-putin-of-russia-talk-over-phone-25-3-23/>.

288. Thomas A. Brooks, ‘Turkey, the Montreux Convention, and Russian Navy Transits of the Turkish Straits’, U.S. Naval Institute, 30 March 2022, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2022/march/turkey-montreux-convention-and-russian-navy-transits-turkish>.

289. Republic of Türkiye Ministry for Foreign Affairs, ‘Implementation of the Montreux Convention’, Republic of Türkiye Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2022, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/implementation-of-the-montreux-convention.en.mfa>.

290. League of Nations, ‘Montreux Convention Regarding the Régime of Straits’, UNTC, 20 July 1936, <https://treaties.un.org/pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=0800000280166981>. The Convention was signed for a period of 20 years, after which it could be renounced by any signatory, though none have renounced it.

291. Republic of Türkiye Ministry for Foreign Affairs, ‘Implementation of the Montreux Convention’.

292. Ionnis N. Grigoriadis, ‘The Eastern Mediterranean as an Emerging Crisis Zone: Greece and Cyprus in a Volatile Regional Environment’, *Eastern Mediterranean in Uncharted Waters* (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2020), 25, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep28862.7>.

desperately requires to jumpstart production capacities sufficient for export, and regional cooperation on offshore energy has mainly been with Libya.

The primary objective of Türkiye's *Mavi Vatan* naval doctrine is to establish sovereignty over its EEZ and continental shelf claims, amongst strengthening general capabilities in the maritime domain. While *Mavi Vatan* was debuted in a 2006 announcement by Admiral Cem Gurdeniz,²⁹³ Ankara did not consistently apply the naval doctrine until the signing of a 2019 memorandum of understanding with Libya's UN-backed GNA government establishing a maritime EEZ and claim the natural resources contained within the seabed.²⁹⁴ The deal was contentious, and in 2020 culminated in a naval confrontation between Athens and Ankara in the EastMed – the longest of four instances of brinkmanship threatening the pair since the 1970s.²⁹⁵ In this sense, Türkiye occasionally abuses its NATO membership to pursue national energy interests, using hard power to limits any pipeline from the southeastern Mediterranean to Europe.

The agreement established a maritime corridor in the EastMed overlapping with existing EEZ claims by Greece, which had already been defined by UNCLOS in 1982. Because Libya is a signatory to UNCLOS, despite having not yet ratified the convention, the agreement was rendered invalid and was overturned by the Al-Bayda Court of Appeal in

293. Eyal Pinko, 'Turkey's Maritime Strategy Ambitions: The Blue Homeland Doctrine (Mavi Vatan)', International Institute for Migration and Security Research, 11 February 2021, <https://www.iimr.eu/post/turkey-s-maritime-strategy-ambitions-the-blue-homeland-doctrine-mavi-vatan>.

294. 'Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of National Accord-State of Libya on Delimitation on the Maritime Jurisdiction Areas in the Mediterranean' (United Nations, 27 November 2019), https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TREATIES/Turkey_11122019_%28HC%29_MoU_Libya-Delimitation-areas-Mediterranean.pdf.

295. International Crisis Group, 'Turkey-Greece: From Maritime Brinkmanship to Dialogue', 31 May 2021, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean-turkiye-cyprus/turkey-greece-maritime-brinkmanship>.

favour of the Libyan House of Representatives in 2021.²⁹⁶ Support for the appeal was unified across Libyan political groups and the international community, including U.S., EU, Russia, Israel, Egypt, and the Arab League, among others.

In any case, the Türkiye-GNA incident marked a moment of polarization against Ankara within its neighbourhood and served as a locus around which Euro-Mediterranean cooperation strengthened. Greece signed their own maritime agreement in 2020 regarding oil and gas drilling rights in the Mediterranean Sea.²⁹⁷ Still, Ankara has pushed towards the Libya energy relationship, signing another memorandum of understanding in October 2022 on hydrocarbon cooperation. Article 2 reiterates a shared interest in “exploration, development and increase of hydrocarbon production in both countries... [via] existing and future onshore and offshore fields and areas.”²⁹⁸ In response to backlash from Athens and Brussels, Ankara issued a press release noting that objecting to the bilateral cooperation between sovereign states is a violation of international law, and the “EU is not an international judicial body that can comment or adjudicate on agreements between sovereign third countries.”²⁹⁹ Though the agreement was later suspended by a Libyan Court.

296. ‘Ruling on the Cooperation Agreement and Border Demarcation Between the Presidential Council and Turkey’ (Tobruk: Libyan Parliament, 27 January 2021).

297. ‘Agreement Between the Government of the Hellenic Republic and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt on the Delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone between the Two Countries’ (United Nations Treaty Collection, 3 September 2020), https://treaties.un.org/Pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=080000028058a22f&clang=_en.

298. Government of the Republic of Türkiye and Government of National Unity-State of Libya, ‘Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation in the Field of Hydrocarbons’, 3 October 2022, <https://lawsociety.ly/assets/2022/10/TU%CC%88RKI%CC%87YE-LIBYA-MEMORANDUM-OF-UNDERSTANDING.pdf>.

299. Ambassador Tanju Bilgiç, Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘Statement in Response to a Question Regarding the Statements Made by the EU and Greece on the Memorandum of Understanding Between Türkiye and Libya on Cooperation in the Field of Hydrocarbons’, Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 4 October 2022, https://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc_-28_-turkiye-ile-libya-arasinda-hidrokarbonlar-alaninda-isbirligine-iliskin-mutabakat-zapti-konusunda-ab-ve-yunanistan-tarafindan-yayimlanan-aciklamalar-hk-sc.en.mfa.

7.1.3 Israel

Israel's long held ambition to emerge as a dominant regional power include plans to export its natural gas, yet Ankara's hostility against Euro-Med pipeline initiatives left Israeli authorities perceiving NewMed's preference for a floating LNG terminal in Israeli internal waters as high risk.³⁰⁰ Israel's biggest challenge is that even with Leviathan's capacity, it does not contain enough supplies to eventually become an independent exporter.

An historic deal struck with Hezbollah in 2022 granting Lebanon the prospective Qana field, and Israel the more productive Karish field over which it previously claimed partial ownership.³⁰¹ The U.S. brokered agreement established the 'Line 23' maritime boundary crossing the Qana-Sidon field, over which Lebanon has full control, but Israel is predicted to receive and estimated 17% royalty for the portion of the field extending into its EEZ. Prior to the agreement, Hezbollah had threatened to attack Israeli drilling operations in Karish.³⁰² A success in balancing against Russia and Iran's foothold in Lebanon, the improved Israeli-Lebanese bilateral relationship could bring Lebanon into the EastMed energy network through the Arab Gas Pipeline connection to Egypt via Jordan and Syria.

A partnership with Egypt allows potential for both to advance towards hub status and improve Israel's claims to regional legitimacy. So far, gas flows have improved Egypt-Israel

300. Stevenson, 'Collaboration Key to Unlocking Vast East Mediterranean Gas Potential', *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington* (blog), 17 July 2023, <https://agsiw.org/collaboration-key-to-unlocking-vast-east-mediterranean-gas-potential/>.

301. Bethan McKernan, 'Israel and Lebanon Reach "Historic" Maritime Border and Gas Fields Deal', *The Guardian*, 11 October 2022, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/11/israel-lebanon-historic-maritime-border-deal>.

302 Avraham Gold and Noam Ivri Adanani, 'The Israel-Lebanon Maritime Agreement: Energy Security and Geopolitical Stability Amid Uncertainty', APCO Worldwide, 10 November 2022, <https://apcoworldwide.com/blog/the-israel-lebanon-maritime-agreement/undefined/blog/the-israel-lebanon-maritime-agreement/>.

bilateral relations, through the EMGF³⁰³ and the MOU, which saw the first Egyptian delegation travel to Israel in more than a decade.³⁰⁴ However, gas exports to Egypt are bottlenecked as they have reached the existing capacity of the East-Mediterranean Gas (EMG) Pipeline linking Arish to Ashkelon. Alternatives may be the East Mediterranean Pipeline, or Arab Gas Pipeline (AGP).

8 Superpowers in the EastMed – A Race for Influence

The Roman Empire had no need for diplomacy. Nor does the United States – Boutros Boutros-Ghali

Superpowers attracted to EastMed energy generally aim to establish influence over natural resources, infrastructure and supply chain development, and historic transit routes; the extent of control will determine the regional balance of power. This section considers the EastMed energy diplomacy strategies of Russia and the U.S., their effects on Europe's strategy will be evaluated in the subsequent Discussion chapter.

The downfall of Nasser's pan-Arabism and Camp David Accords of the 1970s saw a reordering of superpower allegiances, and temporarily resolved the Egypt-Türkiye feud, partially over Ankara's loyalty to the West through NATO. Egypt joining Türkiye in normalizing relations with Israel shifted Cairo away from the USSR and towards a US-led regional system. In 2021, the EastMed's political environment in aligned in a way that brought Türkiye closer to Egypt, Israel, and the Gulf states. It also enabled the resolution of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) crisis, Iranian-Saudi talks, and the rapprochement

303. Peter Stevenson, 'Israel-Egypt Energy Ties Deepen As 2022 Sees Record Gas Flows', MEES, 2023, <https://www.mees.com/2023/2/24/geopolitical-risk/israel-egypt-energy-ties-deepen-as-2022-sees-record-gas-flows/bdda6fa0-b43c-11ed-a8ef-17ebb9947f2d>.

304. Mohammed Magdy, 'Egyptian Trade Delegation Visits Israel for First Time in Decade', Al-Monitor, 30 June 2022, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/06/egyptian-trade-delegation-visits-israel-first-time-decade>.

between Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.³⁰⁵ Saudi-Iran normalization in 2023 created pressure for Cairo to revisit relations with Tehran, which had been severed during the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

There is a strong but underrated argument that Iran – competing with the U.S. for the title of *most unpopular superpower in the EastMed* – is actually *more* ideologically anti-West than other superpowers actively competing for regional influence, like Russia. These efforts are mostly unsuccessful as much of Tehran’s bilateral relations have been plagued by its historically aggressive nationalist energy policy.

Despite the general shift away from Russian influence, European and U.S. narratives identify Russia as the most pressing concern for EastMed energy diplomacy. China’s rapid rise to superpower status since the 1990s, and arguably more extensive interference in Western hegemony through its prolific foreign investments and diplomatic initiatives, warrants a reconsideration of Russian threat primacy.

8.1 Russia

The Kremlin insists that Russia follows a multi-vector foreign policy,³⁰⁶ but some critics still doubt the existence of strategic vision in Russia’s energy strategy. Legvold argues that Russia’s goal to maintain control over its own energy industry, and commercial expansion in foreign energy does not necessarily comprise a strategic vision, which is hampered by contradictory internal policies. This is supported by statements from Vladimir Milov, a former Deputy Energy Minister of Russia that “systematic Russian energy policy

305. Emile Badarin and Tobias Schumacher, ‘The Eastern Mediterranean Energy Bonanza: A Piece in the Regional and Global Geopolitical Puzzle, and the Role of the European Union’, *Comparative Southeast European Studies* 70, no. 3 (27 September 2022): 432, <https://doi.org/10.1515/soeu-2022-0036>.

306. President of the Russian Federation, ‘The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation’ (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 31 March 2023), https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/fundamental_documents/1860586/.

does not yet exist” while also being fragmented, contradictory and “driven by short- and medium-term interests that do not take into account the capital-intensive nature of the industry.”³⁰⁷ However, these perspectives predate the significant shifts in Russian investments in EastMed energy, including Russian-Turkish cooperation on Blue Stream beginning in 2003.

Russia’s combined approach to the EU and EastMed may be examined through the Cold War lens of Moscow’s energy security and diplomacy strategies, this partially resembles the contemporary model through which Russia generates dependence from Europe.

8.1.1 *Energy Encirclement*

The USSR faced an almost certain future of becoming a net oil importer to supply the growing demands of the Soviet Bloc, which were set to exceed the USSR’s production capacity by the mid-1990s.³⁰⁸ The use of barter deals provided access to oil supplies for the Eastern Bloc, which otherwise would not have had sufficient hard currency to purchase energy.³⁰⁹ To prevent the Eastern Bloc from looking for funding from Western sources - potentially bringing them under the American sphere of influence, the USSR required supply security and sufficient capital for an estimated 4.5 million barrels per day.³¹⁰

Afghanistan’s promising reserves could bolster the USSR’s supply, but most importantly provided a route to the Arabian Sea. Prior to the Soviet troop withdrawal in 1989, approximately 80% of the Sheberghan natural gas field production was exported to the

307. Vladimir Milov, Leonard L. Coburn, and Igor Danchenko, ‘Russia’s Energy Policy, 1992-2005’, *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 47, no. 3 (January 2006): 285–313, <https://doi.org/10.2747/1538-7216.47.3.285>.

308. Yegor Gaidar, ‘The Soviet Collapse: Grain and Oil’, *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research* 9 (2007): 1–8, https://www.almendron.com/tribuna/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/20070419_Gaidar.pdf.

309. Salameh, *Is a Third Oil Crisis Inevitable?*, 56.

310. Salameh, 55.

USSR.³¹¹ With the American majors increasing operations in the Arabian Gulf to supply European and global markets, Moscow needed to intercept those supplies to maintain and increase control over its European energy market. Southern Afghanistan doubled as a preferred alternate route to access American supplies.³¹²

Access to the Persian Gulf would best be achieved via developing Pakistan's Gwadar port in the Arabian Sea, accessed through southern Afghanistan, and transiting through the Strait of Hormuz, bypassing Iran, where bilateral relationships were tense.³¹³ The success of the Soviets at the port of Gwadar was contingent on cooperation with Pakistan. Despite major Soviet investments in the then Pakistan-Soviet Oil Fields³¹⁴ and Guddo Thermal Power Station,³¹⁵ bilateral relations at the time were strained over Soviet support for India, which

311. Ahmad Tamim Mehrad et al., 'Assessment of Oil and Gas Resources of Northern Afghanistan and Their Impact on Energy Security in the Country', vol. 976 (IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering, IOP Publishing, 2020), 2, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1757-899X/976/1/012038>.

312. Salameh, *Is a Third Oil Crisis Inevitable?*, 57. Salameh proposed that the Soviets constructed a road from Kabul to the Strait of Hormuz through Baluchistan at Gwadar, prior to the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan, providing a means of mobilising Soviet troops to the Persian Gulf, though the author later disputed his claim of road construction in a personal correspondence. The Kremlin's intended actions towards American and European energy supplies in the Persian Gulf have not yet been determined.

313. Relations between the USSR and Iran have been complicated since the 1941 Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran. This operation was conducted to secure the Iranian oil supply for allied use during World War II, to limit Nazi influence on the Shah, and prevent Turkey from advancing to British India. Relations continued to sour following the 1945 founding of two Soviet-backed separatist groups: the People's Republic of Azerbaijan, and the short-lived Kurdish People's Republic.

314. Nazir Hussain, 'Pak-Russia Relations: Lost Opportunities and Future Options', *Journal of Political Studies* 19, no. 1 (2012): 79–89, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340165623_Pak-Russia_Relations_Lost_Opportunities_and_Future_Options.

315. Linda Racioppi, *Soviet Policy Towards South Asia Since 1970* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).

saw Pakistan increasingly cooperating with the United States.³¹⁶ Without Pakistan's Gwadar port, the USSR could not access the Arabian Sea, and the Iran route would pose too high a risk. Ultimately the Soviets failed in Gwadar, and the port was eventually developed by China.

Though Afghanistan falls outside the scope of the EastMed, it encapsulates the four-part energy strategy largely responsible for the collapse of the USSR, and serves as a blueprint which Russia has considered in its contemporary counterpart. Briefly acting Prime Minister of Russia from June to December 1992, Yegor Gaidar's assessment of Soviet leadership and energy strategy in Afghanistan is a valuable resource to which modern Russian strategy can be compared:

Yet one of the Soviet leadership's biggest blunders was to spend a significant amount of additional oil revenues to start the war in Afghanistan. The war radically changed the geopolitical situation in the Middle East. In 1974, Saudi Arabia decided to impose an embargo on oil supplies to the United States. But in 1979 the Saudis became interested in American protection because they understood that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a first step toward—or at least an attempt to gain—control over the Middle Eastern oil fields.³¹⁷

316. Muhammad Sheikh Bilal, 'Dynamics of the Nationalist Insurgency in the Balochistan Province of Pakistan', *Путь к Мир и Безопасности* 1, no. 46 (2014): 50–74, <https://www.imemo.ru/en/publications/periodical/pmb/archive/2014/1-46/articles/armed-conflicts-and-conflict-management/dynamics-of-the-ethnonationalist-insurgency-in-the-balochistan-province-of-pakistan>. The Gwadar project was abandoned after the dissolution of the USSR, and contemporary development of Gwadar is headed by China.

317. Gaidar, 'The Soviet Collapse: Grain and Oil', 4.

A proponent of liberal economic reforms attempted vis à vis the controversial shock therapy policy, ultimately saw Gaidar removed from his posting by the anti-Yeltsin Russian Congress of People's Deputies. This liberal perspective on the Soviet failure in Afghanistan may support arguments that the EU and certain EastMed states may be flexible with U.S. policies to protect energy resources from Russian control. However, it also demonstrates that Moscow is willing to engage in military operations to interfere in competitive energy markets.

Though the “initial optimism” of the EU-Russia relationship in the 1990s was period of was of mutual interest and benefit that shifted with Putin’s first presidency, this overlooks Russia’s dire economic situation at the time.³¹⁸ Russia’s economic condition in the 1990s led to its entrance into unfavourable agreements, as it did not possess military, economic, or political leverage.

8.1.2 *New Russia, New Strategies*

To become an energy hegemon, the Kremlin needed to reconsider its energy policies and learn from the errors of the Soviet and post-Soviet era. While Russia participates in modern international systems, it was actively excluded from the IPE to constrict its economic growth – even after Moscow’s liberalization programs intended to conform to the new IPE.³¹⁹ Privatization of the energy sector in 1992-1993 eventually generated enough FDI by the mid-2000s to see Russia integrated into the globalized economy “almost in spite of itself.”³²⁰ Putin’s aggressive response to capital flight post-2008 financial crisis spooked foreign

318. Wigell and Vihma, ‘Geopolitics versus Geoeconomics: The Case of Russia’s Geostrategy and Its Effects on the EU’, 613.

319. Gaidar, ‘The Soviet Collapse: Grain and Oil’.

320. Marshall I. Goldman, ‘Russia: A Petrostate in a Time of Worldwide Economic Recession and Political Turmoil’, *Social Research* 76, no. 1 (2009): 60, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40972139>.

investors, including occasionally shutting down the Russian stock market to prevent further price falls.³²¹

Putin's reforms included a revised rent collection system to keep Oligarch wealth inside Russia, which functions well in the immediate term but is constructed on a fragile foundation Based on Putin's individual promises to oligarchs, which allowed Russia to retain wealth within the country. However, the rent collection system has so far survived the 2008 financial crisis and the 2013 liberalization of the LNG sector – part of Putin's pursuit to achieve global domination over the U.S.' export specialty.

Russia's later attempts to regain its status as a hegemon through increased control over its energy assets involved government support of the global expansion of Russian energy companies. Retention of oligarch wealth has enabled initiatives including upstream cooperation between Russian energy companies and energy producers, and downstream cooperation where Russian companies acquired assets of energy consumers. The latter tended to be perceived as "Kremlin-influenced" by consumers afraid of Russia's growing influence.³²² This strategy was most effective during periods of high-demand, where Russia was able to dictate the terms of the agreement, that a buyers-market would pressure Russian companies into rethinking their strategies is only partly correct. Both the Kremlin and Russian companies liberalized and increased the subtlety of their energy policies to certain consumers.

Once Russia developed as a petrostate, energy security reoriented towards demand security.³²³ Russia's geostrategic position atop the largest global reserves of natural gas allow

321. Goldman, 61.

322. Nina Poussenkova, 'The Global Expansion of Russia's Energy Giants', *Journal of International Affairs* 63, no. 2 (2010): 121, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24384337>.

323. Jakub M. Godzimirski, 'Russian Energy and Grand Strategy' (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), 2020), 3, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep28535>.

energy to be leveraged for increased power. Access to global markets could solidify its status as a hegemon. Furthermore, it may use the windfalls to fund expansion, internal development, and increase military operations. This could pose direct threats to U.S.-NATO dominance and Russia's neighbourhood, specifically the EU. Putin's rise to power corresponded to a period of stabilization and higher oil revenues coupled with an increasing disillusionment in the EU-Russia relationship.

For the Kremlin, the Baltic NATO accessions of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania demonstrated that Europe was not willing to consider Russian security interests. NATO encroachment on former Soviet territory has always been regarded as a serious provocation; in 2008, Russia declared Ukraine and Georgia as a 'red line' that the Alliance should not cross. When Ukraine began formally preparing for EU accession in 2021, the Kremlin perceived this, occurring alongside the U.S.-Ukraine Strategic Partnership, as an act of aggression on former Soviet territory.³²⁴

This may have backed Russia into a defensive position and increased the level of aggression in their energy strategy towards Europe. First, by establishing an asymmetrical relationship where states develop a reliance on low-cost Russian energy. Second, by using long-term contracts which compel maintenance of the bilateral relationship. Third, by identifying competing producers and interfering in those markets. Fourth, gaining influence or control over major energy transport routes.

Should punitive economic policies be levied against Russia, energy products may be diverted through an intermediary to bypass regulations or sanctions regimes. The third and fourth strategies would be deployed to great effect against Europe and the U.S. in the EastMed.

324. The White House, 'Joint Statement on the U.S.-Ukraine Strategic Partnership', 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/01/joint-statement-on-the-u-s-ukraine-strategic-partnership/>.

8.1.3 Russian Energy Diplomacy in the EastMed

Egypt's Suez Canal presents similar opportunities and challenges to the Gwadar port. Russian efforts to gain access to strategic energy shipping routes have again been intercepted by transatlantic actors. Much of Russia's involvement in Egypt is trade-oriented, with Rosneft owning a 30% share in the Zohr field.³²⁵ Since a 2018 agreement to establish a Russian industrial zone in the newly developing Suez Economic Zone, construction has been interrupted by Russian sanctions.³²⁶ Egypt does not see the Russia-U.S. conflict as binary and as used its relationship with Russia to avoid overreliance on the U.S. and exert leverage.³²⁷

In Israel, U.S. support for Israel-Türkiye rapprochement and American private investment in Israeli gas exports counters Russian leverage.³²⁸ Encirclement also applies to Libya. While Europe received 63% of Libya's 2020 crude oil and condensate exports,³²⁹ Wagner Group remained active in the energy-rich Eastern province. On the Libya-Turkey hydrocarbon cooperation, Turkey and Russia have increased geopolitical influence on NATO's new Mediterranean front.³³⁰

325. Prontera and Ruszel, 'Energy Security in the Eastern Mediterranean.', 157–58.

326. Al-Monitor, 'Russian War Delays Major Industrial Zone in Egypt - Al-Monitor: Independent, Trusted Coverage of the Middle East', www.al-monitor.com, 2022, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/03/russian-war-delays-major-industrial-zone-egypt>.

327. Evan Hill et al., 'Egypt Secretly Planned to Supply Rockets to Russia, Leaked U.S. Document Says', *Washington Post*, 14 April 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/04/10/egypt-weapons-russia/>.

328. Prontera and Ruszel, 'Energy Security in the Eastern Mediterranean.', 157–58.

329. U.S. Energy Information Administration, 'International - U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA)', [Eia.gov](http://eia.gov), 2016, <https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/LBY>.

330. European Parliament, 'Report on a European Parliament Recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the Situation in Libya', Plenary Sitting (Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2022), 16, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2022-0252_EN.pdf.

Türkiye additionally serves as a buffer zone between Russia and the EastMed, and despite being a NATO member, can be described as “pro-Kyiv without being overtly anti-Moscow.”³³¹ Control over the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits make Türkiye a key player in the Black Sea, which serves as a transit corridor for trade, and importantly provides direct access to Russia’s growing military and energy operations in Syria.”³³² However, Ankara’s invocation of the Montreux Convention in February 2022 had considerable consequences on Russia’s ability to supply its military operation in Syria using naval vessels. Russia has been able to circumvent these restrictions by using civilian merchant vessels as naval auxiliaries to supply logistics to its military operations in Syria, Ukraine and Libya, and facilitate Rosatom’s nuclear power plant construction in Egypt.³³³ Whether or not Ankara is aiding in reducing Russian naval dominance in the Mediterranean will directly impact the extent of Moscow’s influence in the Syrian and Libyan conflict zones.³³⁴

Syria’s Tartus port and Khmeimim Air Base are the base from which Russia protects its interests in Leviathan and Zohr energy, and projects its military reach into and beyond the EastMed. Syria also serves as a sanctions bypassing lifeline for Putin’s allies impacted by U.S. sanctions. Russian company Kapital has struck energy exploration deals off the southern Syrian coast, and Stroytransgaz’s investments in the Jordan-Syria stretch of the Arab Gas

331. Galip Dalay, ‘Ukraine’s Wider Impact on Turkey’s International Future’, Chatham House, 10 March 2022, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/03/ukraines-wider-impact-turkeys-international-future>.

332. Alexandra Kuimova and Siemon T. Wezeman, ‘Russia and Black Sea Security’ (SIPRI, December 2018), 17, <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-background-papers/russia-and-black-sea-security>.

333. Işık Yörük, ‘Russia Is Violating the Spirit of Montreux by Using Civilian Ships for War’, Middle East Institute, 18 May 2022, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/russia-violating-spirit-montreux-using-civilian-ships-war>.

334. Dalay, ‘Ukraine’s Wider Impact on Turkey’s International Future’.

Pipeline and a gas processing unit near Homs have proved vital for Syria's war economy.³³⁵

Moreover, Russia has used private military contractors like Wagner Group to achieve foreign policy goals while maintaining a “thin veneer of plausible deniability.”³³⁶ Russia's dual strategy of energy and military involvement Syria's energy which are essential to further Russia's geopolitical interests in the EastMed.

Litsas does not find the aims of Russian revisionism to include “establishing a monopoly of influence in the [EastMed]. On the contrary, it tries to ‘softly’ infiltrate the region in order to establish a constant form of friction” Europe and the U.S. in particular.³³⁷ For Moscow, the EastMed constitutes an “outer circle” where of Russian influence distracts U.S. and NATO interests away from the wider Caucasus region.³³⁸ This strategy reflects the ‘Heartland’ theory, where the EastMed is a buffer protecting Russia’s core interests in Eurasia. This is achieved through FDI aimed to establish a monopoly over strategic energy structures and raw resources,³³⁹ to limit the influence of U.S. hegemony.³⁴⁰

335. Amy Mackinnon, ‘Putin’s Shadow Warriors Stake Claim to Syria’s Oil’, *Foreign Policy*, 17 May 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/05/17/putin-shadow-warriors-stake-claim-syria-oil-energy-wagner-prigozhin-libya-middle-east/>.

336. Mackinnon.

337. Spyridon N. Litsas, ‘The Russian Foreign Policy in the Eastern Mediterranean: A Sui-Generis Revisionism’, in *The New Eastern Mediterranean: Theory, Politics and States in a Volatile Era*, ed. Spyridon N. Litsas and Aristotle Tziampiris (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 180, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90758-1_10.

338. Litsas, 187.

339. S. Zhiznin and V. Timokhov, ‘Technological Aspects of Russian Energy Diplomacy’, *MGIMO Review of International Relations* 3, no. 38 (28 June 2016): 44, <https://doi.org/10.24833/2071-8160-2016-3-48-43-53>.

340. Amer Ababakr, ‘The Securitized Energy Relationship: The EU And Russia Political And Security Discourses’, *Security Science Journal* 3, no. 1 (26 March 2022): 13, <https://doi.org/10.37458/ssj.3.1.1>.

8.2 Ambitions of the Liberal Leviathan

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem. Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat.

- Quintus Horatius Flaccus, *Ars Poetica*, V. 143

‘He does not dwell on the smoke from the flame, but on the light, and all the marvellous wonders should it hence provoke.’ Without prejudice to the translation’s gender binary, the verse in *Ars Poetica* encapsulates the American hegemonic strategy of illuminating the dark corners remaining in the post-Cold War world with the bounties of democracy, freedom, and market liberalization. In the spirit of satire, Brazilian scholar Moniz Bandeira, counters that American strategy in the Middle East and Mediterranean amounted to *fumum pro fulgore dare* – ‘using smoke to create shine’. This corruption of Horace’s wisdom is arguably a more honest definition of what Bandeira considers “a ploy to cover up the contradictions of [American] power and dominance in the region.” One year prior to *Ars Poetica*, the Roman satirist and poet appealed to Augustus, who had recently transitioned Rome from republic to imperial empire, to award classical status to contemporary poets – Horace himself included.

Without drawing a direct comparison to Augustus’ autocracy, the U.S. has similarly tasked itself with rebuilding the balance of power shaken by the dictatorships of the twentieth century. A nascent power, America aspired to establish prominence amidst historical giants on the Continent. Just as Augustus’ success in the Illyricum and Dalmatian campaigns was vital in distinguishing the new emperor from Marc Antony’s military seniority during the Republic, American dominance required cleavage from the Great Powers of a bygone Europe and establishing its own legacy of military supremacy. This would be achieved by an energy-based global state system led by the U.S.

But unlike Rome, U.S. hegemony is unusual in that it continually searches for alliances.³⁴¹ America's relative economic decline in the post-Cold War period, largely owing to the success of economic neoliberalisation and its transformative effects on many developing states, fostered a sense of insecurity. These rising centres of gravity threatened multipolarity, shaking America's confidence in its unipolar hegemony as the victor of the Cold War. Because there is no EU 'superpower project', the EU is a safe strategic ally. Europe is prevented from being a superpower partly owing to its liberal-socialist institutionalist architects, and to its political realist underpinnings which recognize U.S. impediments to European independent action.³⁴² In supporting the EU, the U.S. minimizes possibility for a resurgence of any of the Continent's Great Powers.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict refreshed certain Cold War anxieties on polarity and IPE dominance, owing to the critical role of energy in U.S. and Russian economies. Narratives of natural gas being the 'environmentally friendly' fossil fuel, despite significant evidence to the contrary, were advanced by American energy companies and lobbyists; capitalizing on climate fears would raise market prices, protect the U.S. strategic reserves from overexploitation, and increase downstream taxes.

Developments in hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling processes during the Shale Revolution in the early 2000s allowed significant increases in oil and gas production, which reduced domestic reliance on OPEC imports and made the U.S a top energy exporter. Exorbitant technological development, production, and transportation costs of LNG networks are prohibitive for exporting giants Russia and Iran, which already struggle to maintain pipeline infrastructure. Technologically outpacing industry competitors using LNG networks

341. Melko, 'Hegemony vs. Balance of Power Within and Between Civilizations in World History', 83.

342. David Wilkinson, 'Unipolarity Without Hegemony', *International Studies Review* 1, no. 2 (1999): 157, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3186383>.

gives the U.S. an advantage in establishing a new global energy supply chain to preside over, liberating it from OPEC's energy weapon, and a future of Russian pipeline gas supremacy.

In practice, this involves establishing a hierarchical LNG-based alliance system to serve the European market. A strengthened energy partnership with Brussels is ideal for U.S. interests. Sales to the EU support politico-economic linkages and combat Russian influence, while yielding substantially higher profits for American LNG in Europe than would be possible in domestic or Asian markets.³⁴³ The decision to focus EastMed energy diplomacy on LNG rather than pipeline gas, lessening Russian influence over critical resources and supply route, and organizing energy-based coalitions balancing against rival superpowers, are all part of bringing the region into alignment with the U.S. vision of global energy markets.

Proximate to the hegemonic core, Europe can build a peripheral, energy-based subregion in the EastMed. Ideally, Israel would be established as the dominant power within the subregion, with Egypt playing a secondary role to lend legitimacy. While it can be "encouraged" with U.S. aid, Cairo's nonalignment, and resistance to severing the healthy bilateral relationship with Russia makes it less reliable than Israel in the American hegemonic project. Establishing Israeli regional dominance requires the U.S. to address legitimate rival claims by Cairo and Ankara.

Bandeira makes a bold argument that U.S. objectives have always taken into consideration Israel's interests, centred on removing Russian presence in the EastMed by eliminating the Assad regime in Syria, containing China's advancements in the MENA

343. Jarrett Renshaw, Scott Disavino, and Scott Disavino, 'Analysis: U.S. LNG Exports to Europe on Track to Surpass Biden Promise', *Reuters*, 2022, sec. Energy, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/us-lng-exports-europe-track-surpass-biden-promise-2022-07-26/#>. The 2022 Benchmark for natural gas in the EU is \$34.06 per mmBtu compared to \$29.99 in Asia and \$6.12 in the U.S.

region, and isolating Iran from Hezbollah in Lebanon.³⁴⁴ Parallel claims in a 1998 fatwa issued by Osama bin Laden accused the U.S. of endeavouring to “fragment all the states of the region...into paper statelets and through their disunion and weakness to guarantee Israel's survival.”³⁴⁵ The Carter doctrine would allow the U.S. to create international regimes under the pretence of energy securitization, which would approve the projection of military and political power against producer states to protect energy flows to its partners. Indeed, under George W. Bush, Washington’s “*pro-motion for democracy*” program was planned to invade seven (energy producing) countries in five years, including Syria, Lebanon, and Libya – Russia’s EastMed strongholds.³⁴⁶

NATO has identified key security risks as those posed by threats to the Bab El-Mandeb shipping route into the Suez Canal, which transits 12% of global trade and 7% of global oil – and from which the U.S. navy intercepts tankers smuggling sanctioned energy.³⁴⁷ Any kind of disruption in the maritime routes leading to the Suez Canal would have devastating consequences for Egypt’s economy and global trade, including driving up commodity prices, as in 2011. Additionally, the Suez provides a route to the Strait of Hormuz for access to Iran and the Arabian Sea, through the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. An anti-U.S. power gaining control over these routes could weaponize the energy supply chain against the U.S. and Europe - a major risk as both is dependent on imports. However, NATO has not successfully achieved greater military cooperation with Cairo, nor influenced any foreign

344. Luiz Alberto Moniz Bandeira, *The Second Cold War* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 336, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-54888-3>.

345 Osama bin Laden, ‘Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders. World Islamic Front Statement’, *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 23 February 1998, FAS, <https://irp.fas.org/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa-orig.htm>.

346. Cherp and Jewell, ‘The Three Perspectives on Energy Security’, 2.

347. Jeremy M. Sharp, ‘Egypt: Background and U.S. Relations’ (Congressional Research Service, 2 May 2023), 2, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/RL33003.pdf>.

policy changes to balance Egypt away from Russia.³⁴⁸ Instead, Egypt's cooperation is achieved through geoeconomic operations, a mix of bilateral aid and IMF loans.

Military assistance and arms sales facilitated through Washington's Foreign Military Financing account began after the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty to support regional stability. Additional bilateral aid was provided by USAID to support neoliberal goals in the 1990s, which remain the same today, including economic reform, privatization, and institutionalization.³⁴⁹ In addition, Washington leverages its leading role in international financial institutions, including through the IMF and as the largest shareholder in the World Bank.³⁵⁰ Structural neorealism in the IMF and WTO allows the U.S. and its Group of Seven partners to exercise power and command rents to sustain hegemonic control. This would force trading partners to adopt the system and "rogue nations" in defiance of those global rules-based order could be forced to submit with sanctions or other coercive means.³⁵¹

With the U.S. essentially cut off from Central Asian energy where Russia is the dominant power, as in TAPI, the IPI, Iran-Russia cooperation, there is a risk of Russia establishing itself as a hegemon in the gas sector once windfalls arrive from these investments. Russia's dominant share of global gas reserves position it to become a swing producer if the supplies are effectively developed and managed. Sanctions and attempts to polarize states against Russia in the UN have temporarily stunted the Russian economy and energy sales, but at a significant cost to America's biggest ally, Europe.

348. Adel El-Adawy, 'Challenges and Potential for NATO-Egypt Partnership', NDC Policy Brief (Rome: NATO Defense College, 2018), 3, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep19836>.

349. Denis J. Sullivan, 'American Aid to Egypt, 1975-96: Peace Without Development', *Middle East Policy* 4, no. 4 (1996): 36-49, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4967.1996.tb00236.x>.

350. World Bank, 'The World Bank in United States', The World Bank, 2023, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/unitedstates#>.

351. David Harvey, 'Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 610 (2007): 32, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25097888>.

9 A Discussion of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Influences

The value of the EastMed in energy diplomacy, as the Rimland, is the extent to which it provides political and resource capital essential to American hegemony, whereas Russia conceives of the EastMed as a peripheral zone. Establishing a centre of gravity for military and energy operations in Syria, Moscow has a local foothold from which to develop energy infrastructure across the region, occupying American and European attention away from the Heartland. Therefore the EastMed is not an end itself for Russian energy diplomacy, but a means for balancing and containing the U.S. – Moscow is more preoccupied with the Asian energy sector.

American hypervigilance against Russia creates a self-fulfilling prophesy where Moscow ‘triggers’ U.S. fears for Russian energy encirclement through competing investments in the EastMed energy sector and support for authoritarian regimes. The U.S. then applies the full spectrum of diplomatic strategies to mobilize its alliance to counter Russian influence, with consequences for the region, and for the EU. Thus, the U.S. presence tends to have a destabilizing effect as it relies on hard power and realist energy diplomacy approaches which are quick to escalate a conflict that might have been resolved without military emphasis.

For Brussels, the EastMed is an unpredictable neighbour, and regional instability has a direct impact on European security. A global energy governance approach affords Brussels a degree of control in organizing and containing the region’s insecurity, minimizing the overflow of EastMed instability onto the Continent. Advancing the narrative of Russia’s use of energy weapon on Europe, and covertly participating in its use against Brussels through sanctions and alleged pipeline sabotage, the U.S can ‘softly’ coerce the EU into jumpstarting a serious diplomatic campaign for influence in EastMed energy.

Europe's energy diplomacy must then contend with geopolitical and geoeconomic operations led by the superpowers, in order to balance between local producers, and develop a regional energy hub under a Western sphere of influence. This has been complicated by a concentration of MENA states in the Non-Aligned Movement, and with multi-vector foreign policies in Türkiye, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Oman, Yemen, Libya, Algeria, and Morocco. Most of which are at least partially disinterested in embracing the reforms required for full partnership with the U.S.

9.1 Neoliberalism and the Hobbesian Energy Trap

Neoliberal market reforms work to restructure markets towards self-regulation, but the strategic value of energy is so significant that the Liberal Leviathan's neorealist elements continually reinforce its securitization, and negatively impact energy diplomacy. Security threats are aggravated by the permanence and scale of energy's material constructs; processing facilities, terminals, pipeline infrastructure cross borders, connect regions, and project and reinforce state power.

In a spiralling bilateral relationship, what emerges is a Hobbesian energy trap where fear of the energy weapon results in a series of pre-emptive first strikes, both in self-defence. This is apparent in the EU-Russia energy relationship; Russian aggression generated fear of Moscow turning on Europe for supporting Ukraine. U.S. contributions to the energy weapon narrative made Brussels certain that Moscow would abuse the asymmetric relationship and deploy the energy weapon against Europe. Growing talk of sanctions in the transatlantic community and NATO mobilising on the Continent was sufficient to pique Moscow's defensiveness over demand insecurity. Brussels pulling the trigger on energy sanctions was the nail in the coffin for productive EU-Russia energy diplomacy, and Putin responded with force, driving the EU to diversify away from Moscow. Importantly, this has led to an oversecuritization of the energy economy.

The grim downtown in Europe's energy security has left the Commission distrustful of the energy market's ability to self-regulate, and the MOU is part of the race for what influence remains – a reflection of Lidl's strategic-oriented perceptions of the energy sector as too “critical” and “sensitive” to be left to entirely to the “whims of market forces.”³⁵² Short term LNG spot contracts accommodate strategic and security goals, allowing the greatest control over commodities but distracting from longer term market and diplomatic approaches.

Normally, U.S. preferences for a neoliberal international political economy would discourage such regulatory practices and interventions in the energy market. However, this only applies to actors outside the hegemonic system, which may form anti-U.S. cartels, like OPEC.³⁵³ If Brussels can negotiate favourable pricing regulations, Washington will have greater influence over market prices for its own exports.

Concerns over post-Covid 19 economic recovery which crashed global demand for oil and gas could be addressed by raising global energy prices. The dwindling American gas supply could be preserved by not exporting at low prices. As Russia generally resists requests to limit production, eliminating Russia's majority share of the European gas markets would achieve higher demand and profits U.S. energy. Sanctions limited Russia's ability to liquidate its energy supply, providing some relief to American demand insecurity and reduced Russian energy dominance on the Continent. But in the EastMed, realist energy strategies tend to have a spiral down effect on regional stability and significantly complicate diplomatic efforts.

9.2 Recursiveness and the Realist Approaches

The realist geopolitical and geoeconomic approaches tend to reinforce one another – as with the Hobbesian energy trap – and in the EastMed, their effects cannot be untangled

352. Lidl, *The Natural Gas Conundrum Transformation of the Central Asian Energy Security Complex After 1991*, 15.

353. Parra, *Oil Politics: A Modern History of Petroleum*.

from each other. Instead of reducing illicit activities, sanctions against Russia and Syria have tended to *increase* cooperation³⁵⁴ and pose a greater risk to supply route security. Brussels's attempted to address this by adopting anti-circumvention tools as part of the 11th sanctions package, which may be used against third-countries cooperative in the sale, supply, transfer, or export of sanctioned goods or technology.³⁵⁵ Intended to be used as a last resort, the tool has yet to identify any targets. Inclusion on the EU's updated list of entities "directly supporting Russia's military and industrial complex" suggests Damascus may be a future target of anti-circumvention policies. As a sanctions bypassing lifeline for Russia, Syria's impact on transit routes may pose a bigger challenge to geopolitical outcomes for the U.S. and Europe.

Securitization of transit routes are a critical element in managing the region's energy supply chain. This is generally achieved for the Suez and Bab-El-Mandeb with Egypt, and for the Dardanelles and Bosphorus with Türkiye's NATO presence. Nonalignment has kept the EastMed's strategic straits open and energy prices high³⁵⁶ during the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. Transit route neutrality has generally allowed passage to Russian vessels, with the exception of Ankara invoking the Montreux Convention in February 2022 to block Russian vessels from advancing EastMed operations, which was circumvented by Moscow.³⁵⁷ Ankara's move, while beneficial to Brussels, has highlighted the importance of its inclusion

354. Haid Haid, 'Wheat and War: How Sanctions Are Driving Russia-Syria Cooperation', Chatham House, 29 March 2023, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2023/03/wheat-and-war-how-sanctions-are-driving-russia-syria-cooperation>.

355. European Commission, 'EU Adopts 11th Package of Sanctions Against Russia for Its Continued Illegal War Against Ukraine', Text, Press Room, 23 July 2023, <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/home/en>.

356. Joe Macaron, 'How Does Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Impact the Middle East?', Al Jazeera, 17 March 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/3/17/how-does-russias-invasion-of-ukraine-impact-the-middle-east>.

357. Yörük, 'Russia Is Violating the Spirit of Montreux by Using Civilian Ships for War'.

in the EastMed energy network, at risk of turning this mechanism against Brussels. This can be addressed by integrating Türkiye into EastMed energy partnership, and leaning on Ankara's fears of Moscow tightening control in the Black Sea if Ukraine's entire coastline is captured.³⁵⁸

Moreover, sanctions have pushed Russia towards new buyers and rising influence in the Asian energy market.³⁵⁹ Diverting divert Asia-bound energy towards Europe has left natural gas shortages in Asia, creating new mass-markets for Russian oil and gas; energy-starved Pakistan turned to Moscow in 2022 after 72% of its natural gas imports from the U.S. were redirected towards the EU.³⁶⁰ Current Russian pipeline infrastructure in Asia cannot match European-bound export volumes, but this presents additional opportunities for cooperation and investment in Central, South, and East Asian energy supply routes. Russia's Asia pivot points to growing partnerships with India, China, and Türkiye that could shift the balance of power in Eurasia. Not least due to Saudi Arabia's recent admission to BRICS and discussions on defence cooperation between Saudi Arabia, Russia, China, Pakistan and Iran in the sidelines of the 11th Moscow Conference on International Security.³⁶¹

Ongoing partnerships between Egypt and Russian investors in the Suez Canal zone, Zohr field, and El Dabaa nuclear power plant are best countered in the same currency: cash. Reward wedging is evident in the energy infrastructure investments to Egypt and Israel provided in the MOU, while the Council prolonged a sanctions regime against Turkish drilling activities in the contested southern portion of Cyprus' EEZ. Importantly, these

358. Macaron, 'How Does Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Impact the Middle East?'

359. 'Where Can Moscow Sell Its Oil and Gas?', DW, 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/if-europe-is-done-with-russian-energy-where-will-moscow-sell-its-oil-and-gas/a-61386880>.

360. Renshaw, Disavino, and Disavino, 'Analysis: U.S. LNG Exports to Europe on Track to Surpass Biden Promise'.

361. Saudi Gazette, 'Saudi Arabia Discusses Defense Cooperation with Russia, China, Pakistan and Iran', Saudi Gazette, 17 August 2023, <http://saudigazette.com.sa/article/635025>.

selective accommodations promote neoliberal reforms, and are offered on an informal, short-term, and non-binding manner which minimizes commitment to deliver on outcomes.

Overarching neoliberal international organizations help exert geoeconomic pressure on EastMed energy partners, almost always in the interests of the U.S. and European architects. Still, these incentives do not guarantee compliance.³⁶² Weeks after a condemnation of Russia at the UN until 2022, the IMF approved a \$3 billion USD loan supporting Egypt's neoliberal reforms, including a Suez Canal Fund and privatization. In a rather comedic act of malicious compliance, the fund was created but accompanied by a presidential decree issuing control of the fund to a sovereign entity – the military.

The fight to privatize EastMed energy may be twofold. First, privatization weakens the symbiotic relationship between energy companies and governments in petrostates, whereby acting as agents of the state, companies project state power internationally through a combination of political and commercial motivations.³⁶³

Second, privatization allows foreign ownership of assets which pulls wealth away from the producer state and towards investors. Privatization also justifies political reforms. In unstable or authoritarian states, the operability and profitability of investments may be threatened by nationalisation of resources, terrorism, unfriendly taxation policies, hostile neighbours, and sanctions regimes, for example, following the Gulf War, and U.S. invasion, Iraq could only be a viable investment option if the “correct” type of government was installed which supported liberal economic reforms and offered some form of protection over the foreign assets. Any threat to that government can be then securitized, including the energy

362. Humeyra Pamuk, Simon Lewis, and Humeyra Pamuk, ‘U.S. to Withhold \$130 Mln of Military Aid to Egypt Over Human Rights - Official’, *Reuters*, 15 September 2022, sec. World, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us-withhold-130-mln-military-aid-egypt-over-human-rights-official-2022-09-14/>.

363. Poussenkova, ‘The Global Expansion of Russia’s Energy Giants’, 103.

and its revenues, and threatening opposition parties. Neoliberal reforms will support deepened interlinkages between Egypt and the U.S.-led IPE, which can be leveraged for balancing purposes, or to extract wealth.

Alignment with Saudi and the UAE is critical, as their suspended financial support could drive Egypt into insolvency, which would pose disastrous for Brussels and the U.S.³⁶⁴ The U.S. can work with the Gulf Monarchies, which also support the neoliberal conditions of Egypt's IMF loan calling for the demilitarization of Egypt's economy.³⁶⁵ This would greatly reduce the financial burden of the geoeconomic operations sustaining Cairo's partnership with the West. However, this could also create a geopolitical bind for the U.S. and EU, where OPEC cooperation might push for Egypt-Iran rapprochement.

Considering the Saudi-Greece memorandum of understanding on security and energy cooperation signed in August 2022, linking Saudi exports to Europe through Greece, received support from the U.S. and Europe,³⁶⁶ an expanded role for OPEC energy in Europe is not unconceivable. Working with Saudi would be an affront to Russia's continued efforts to weaken the U.S.-Saudi relationship since joining the OPEC+ coalition in 2016. Riyadh's political and economic support for Cairo could, offset resources for the U.S. and EU which could be reallocated towards advancing Washington's 'gas-OPEC' dream through the EMGF.

A U.S.-led, LNG-oriented energy cartel, with Egypt legitimizing Israel's regional dominance, and where Brussels has additional influence *vis-à-vis* its Member States is close

364. Stephan Roll, 'Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE: The End of an Alliance', Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), 23 August 2023, <https://www.swp-berlin.org/publikation/egypt-saudi-arabia-and-the-uae>.

365. Roll.

366. Jonathan Ruhe, 'U.S. Must Build on Rising East Med-Gulf Cooperation', NatSec Briefs (Washington D.C.: The Jewish Institute for National Security of America, 4 August 2022), https://jinsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/20220803_JINSA_SaudiGreece_v1-3.pdf.

to an ideal scenario for the Liberal Leviathan. Saudi-initiated price increases in the second quarter of 2023 threatened the European Central Bank with further inflation, leaving Brussels powerless as limited U.S. reserves cannot be released with abandon to absorb high-volume supply shocks of OPEC+.³⁶⁷ In theory, neither can current EastMed reserves, however, their value is more strategic as OPEC and BRICs rapidly deepen cooperation.

Israel's latest diplomatic achievements, including Arab-Israeli normalization, the Tripartite relationship with Greece and Cyprus, the EMGF, and the MOU were possible despite its reputation in the region. These demonstrate the Knesset's full cooperation with U.S. and EU interests in the EastMed, highlight Tel Aviv's strategic value as an *éminence grise* could procure additional gas supplies.

With help from Egypt, the thaw in Israeli-Lebanese tensions could work towards resolution of the disputed Block 1 maritime area along the northern Syria-Lebanon border, where an undisclosed Russian company was issued a drilling license in 2021.³⁶⁸ Syria's energy could potentially be harnessed by the EastMed hub for export to Europe. Existing pipeline infrastructure facilitated a June 2022 deal for transfer of Egyptian gas to Lebanon via Syria, which was complicated by the U.S. anti-Assad Caesar sanctions for actors working with Damascus.³⁶⁹ Lifting sanctions could work towards EastMed rapprochement with Syria and integration of its currently nationalised energy resources, although the U.S. will likely

367. Paola Tamma, 'OPEC+ Oil Cut Delivers Blow to ECB', *POLITICO* (blog), 3 April 2023, <https://www.politico.eu/article/opec-oil-cut-deliver-blow-european-central-bank-inflation/>.

368. Yara Dally, 'Une Vue Panoramique Du Conflit Sur Les Frontières Maritimes - Entre e Liban et La Syrie', *The Phoenix Daily*, 29 May 2021, <https://www.thephoenixdaily.net/les-affaires-nationales/une-vue-panoramique-du-conflit-sur-les-frontieres-maritimes-entre-le-liban-et-la-syrie-question-aborde-travers-diffrentes-perspectives-analytiques>.

369. Timour Azhari, 'Lebanon, Syria, Egypt Sign Gas Import Agreement', *Reuters*, 21 June 2022, sec. Energy, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/lebanon-syria-egypt-sign-gas-import-agreement-2022-06-21/>.

consider neither option until the Assad regime is removed, and the energy is privatised – but not by Russian companies.

As recently as October 2022, U.S. forces stationed in Northeastern Syria participated in the theft of approximately 80% of Syria's oil, which is then trafficked into Iraq.³⁷⁰ While this strategy succeeded in separating the Syrian state from its energy and reducing Assad's energy-based leverage, the hardline anti-Assad policies have only strengthened anti-West sentiments in Syria and Syria-Russia bilateralism. The U.S.'s aggressive approach in Syria only reinforces the need for Russia's presence in Damascus, from which Russian influence could deepen into Lebanon and beyond.

8.3 A Delicate Balancing Act

Trapped in the EastMed between two superpowers – the U.S. and Russia – Brussels must tread carefully as it develops and executes its energy security policies. The MOU points to Europe's impotency as a 'superpower' constrained by internal conflict over policy direction, but by external pressure from its biggest security provider. For the EU, realist strategies are used sparingly, usually in partnership with the U.S. against rival superpowers and their allies, and predominantly take the form of sanctions or balancing behaviour. Military and other hard power operations are often left to Member States through NATO. Europe's balancing act in EastMed Energy diplomacy plays out in relations with its hegemon, Member States, rival superpowers, EastMed states, clashing energy diplomacy strategies, and internal and external motivations.

As a key partner for the U.S. hegemonic alliance, Brussels has forfeited some degree of 'sovereignty' illusion – an illusion as this is not a privilege afforded without recognized statehood. In reality, constraints to sovereignty are most strongly felt by its Members. Despite

370. IANS, 'US Forces Steal 92 Tankers of Oil, Wheat from Syria to Iraq', ET Energy World, 18 October 2022, <https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/us-forces-steal-92-tankers-of-oil-wheat-from-syria-to-iraq/94929199>.

Brussels' rationally understanding the constraints to its strategic autonomy, the Commission has used energy security to extend the bureaucracy's reach and reduce procedural limitations and liabilities³⁷¹ – as bureaucracies inevitably do.³⁷² Whatever executive capabilities Brussels gains will only be fully realized through a state-like body with decision-making authority, only available at the cost of a “direct frontal assault” on Member States' core sovereignty.³⁷³ Thus, the EU serves as an added layer on top of the hegemon in constraining sovereignty, as a ‘manager’ of Member State participation in U.S. and EU energy diplomacy strategy.³⁷⁴ In effect, this advances the Commission's ongoing pursuit of executive power.

As a superstate organization without a monopoly on violence to project power externally, structural limitations on Brussels' diplomatic capabilities constrain the ability to pursue internally motivated energy strategy in the EastMed. However, this same quality makes the EU an ideal partner to assist in externally motivated strategies; in working directly with the Commission, Washington avoids the process of wrangling support from Member States, which would otherwise need to be negotiated individually in bilateral or multilateral settings.

Brussels should consider minimizing application of geopolitical strategies, which have significant implications for both energy diplomacy and regional stability. Geopolitical operations combatting Russian interference in EastMed energy are not particularly effective when used by Europe, especially where hard power is concerned. This is certainly the case

371. International Energy Charter, ‘Energy Charter’.

372. Reinhard Bendix, ‘Bureaucracy and the Problem of Power’, *Public Administration Review* 5, no. 3 (1945): 194–209, <https://doi.org/10.2307/973057>.

373. David Skidmore, ed., *Paradoxes of Power: U.S. Foreign Policy in a Changing World* (London: Routledge, 2016), 26.

374. Hugo Meijer and Stephen G. Brooks, ‘Illusions of Autonomy: Why Europe Cannot Provide for Its Security If the United States Pulls Back’, *International Security* 45, no. 4 (20 April 2021): 9–10, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00405.

with Russia-Syria sanctions bypassing activity increasing the amount of clandestine trade, which is nebulous and difficult to counter. If geopolitical operations are essential, soft balancing and global energy governance through the EMGF may be the least risky option in achieving energy security, and regional stability and cooperation.

Global energy governance fits the EU's niche as an architect of successful systems for regional cooperation, at least in Europe. Because its hegemon is a close ally, Brussels has an opportunity to engage in critical energy infrastructure development and do what it does best, project management. EastMed energy currently being developed under the 'Egypt option' exclusively designed for the European market, would likely produce an asymmetric energy relationship. Brussels could leverage other suppliers over the EastMed producers over pricing and demand. This leverage would solidify its position in the U.S. hegemonic hierarchy above the EastMed, as the 'manager' of the region's energy market

In this sense, Europe's global governance is the 'brakes' to U.S. geopolitical 'acceleration' in the EastMed. Though the overall objective is virtually the same, the EU's 'hollowness'³⁷⁵ due to a lack of self-defence capabilities and weak bureaucracy make Brussels a less threatening negotiating partner than the U.S. to most EastMed states, barring Israel. Brussel's ability to advance American objectives makes it an ideal intermediary for Washington. However, there must be a balance between the interests of the U.S. as Europe's main security provider and hegemon, and its nonaligned partners. If too much consideration is given to the U.S geopolitical operations, the fragile structure of the nascent regional partnership could be jeopardized.

Accommodating the positions of nonaligned partners would minimize incentives to work with more receptive partners, like Russia and could work in Europe's advantage to

375. Buzan and Wæver, 'Contradictions of the Liberal Leviathan'.

advance the global governance approach. Consider Rothstein's account that nonalignment makes a state inherently amenable to an attractive incentive.³⁷⁶ A weaker state participating in a hegemonic system finds itself in an asymmetric relationship the hegemon and balancing internally against stronger states for status within the hegemonic system. The weaker state a vulnerable target to manipulation by geopolitical or geoeconomic operations targeting the hegemon alliance system.³⁷⁷ These tensions have been previously worked by Moscow against Europe's energy interests, including on the Nabucco and Trans-Caspian pipelines circumventing Russia.³⁷⁸ The EU's trust and legitimacy must be won on soft power and good business.

Cultural attitudes are critical for Brussels. The success of Europe's soft power counterstrategy is contingent on credibility, which is impacted on two fronts. Europe's anti-Russian rhetoric and policies have been met with resistance by nonaligned partners. Capitalizing on EastMed nonalignment, Moscow has flooded Arabic-language social media channels with pro-Kremlin content and risked turning a pro-Russian tide amongst Arabic speaking populations,³⁷⁹ including occasionally partnering with state media to do so, as in

376. Rothstein, 'Foreign Policy and Development Policy: From Nonalignment to International Class War'.

377. Wigell and Vihma, 'Geopolitics versus Geoeconomics: The Case of Russia's Geostrategy and Its Effects on the EU'.

378. Zaur Gasimov, 'Russia Under Putin in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Soviet Legacy, Flexibility, and New Dynamics', *Comparative Southeast European Studies* 70, no. 3 (27 September 2022): 475, <https://doi.org/10.1515/soeu-2021-0061>.

379. Ahmed Nour, 'BBC Monitoring – Essential Media Insight', monitoring.bbc.co.uk (BBC, 2022), <https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/product/c203j4hs>. "Russian online media, including news websites and social media accounts, published in Arabic more than 125,000 posts and articles from 15 February to 30 May [2022], outnumbering posts by key pan-Arab media outlets - the Qatari Al Jazeera, the Saudi-funded Al Arabiya and the UAE-based Sky News Arabia."

Egypt.³⁸⁰ Brussels attempted to intercept Russian media from reaching EastMed audiences in 2023, by extending sanctions to the broadcasting licences of RT Arabic and Sputnik Arabic.³⁸¹ This was a grave error for Europe's soft power and credibility amongst Arab partners, as is the reticence to unilaterally condemn Israel's occupation as with Russia.

Attitudes across MENA have been coloured by painful historic interactions with European colonialism and modern interventions by Western powers. With anti-West or anti-European sentiments still dominating societal discourse, there is room for sympathy with Russian narratives.³⁸² Amongst Arab populations of the EastMed, cultural attitudes about the Russia-Ukraine conflict have a strong potential to lean towards support for Ukraine. The Palestinian and Ukrainian occupation bear enough similarities that support for the former would inspire support for the latter. Arab Barometer anticipates that unlike the Cold War era, modern Arab populations will strongly favour non-combatants in any new war.³⁸³ Evidently, Arabs are quick to support victims of occupation, but hypocrisy in the Israel narrative versus the Russian works against Brussels in gaining support for Ukraine and balancing against Russian influence. Socio-political similarities between Europe and Israel may supersede those with Arab partners, but brandishing this affinity could be perceived as a form of favouritism.

380. Anna Borshchevskaya and Catherine Cleveland, 'Russia's Arabic Propaganda: What It Is, Why It Matters', The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2018, 3, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/media/4209?disposition=inline>.

381. European Council, 'Timeline - EU Restrictive Measures against Russia over Ukraine'.

382. Borshchevskaya and Cleveland, 'Russia's Arabic Propaganda: What It Is, Why It Matters'.

383. Gerald Feierstein, 'As Great Power Competition in the Middle East Heats up, Polling Data Shows a Complex Picture of Popular Attitudes – Arab Barometer', Middle East Institute, 2023, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/great-power-competition-middle-east-heats-polling-data-shows-complex-picture-popular>.

European institutions are aware of the overall ambivalence from its Southern neighbourhood in investing in Europe-led initiatives, like the Union for the Mediterranean,³⁸⁴ and should monitor regional attitudes for perceptions of paternalism, imperialism, or colonialism. Reducing the emphasis on the North-South, core-periphery model currently characterizing Europe's perceptions of the Mediterranean could increase levels of trust with Europe's EastMed partners. Egypt in particular has a high degree of sensitivity to colonial interference and has designed its diplomatic service to resist European influence.³⁸⁵ Therefore Brussels is correct in its current strategy to defer to Egypt's leadership in the EMGF and establish Cairo as the 'hub'. However, these efforts must extend to regional partners where relations are strained.

Effective EastMed gas diplomacy will require "certain key states that either sit or are active in the region to work more closely with states that they have tried to keep at arm's length in energy dealings."³⁸⁶ Otherwise, the renewed gas diplomacy would only continue to reinforce and intensify existing tensions, rather than support increased regional cooperation and integration. A regional forum for energy cooperation would provide opportunities to advance normalization, and ideally rapprochement. The latter would counter Russia's interests in the preservation of conflict between EastMed states to stymie alliance-building, especially where it involves NATO. Even marginal improvements in regional stability could

384. Jolly and European Parliament, *Regional Integration in the Mediterranean - Impact and Limits of Community and Bilateral Policies*.

385. Hanan Kholoussy, 'The Private Affairs of Public Officials: Mixed Marriage and Diplomacy in Interwar and Post-Mubarak Egypt', *Die Welt Des Islams* 54, no. 3-4 (3 December 2014): 483-503, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700607-05434P08>.

386. International Crisis Group, 'Rethinking Gas Diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean', Middle East Report (Brussels, 26 April 2023), <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena-turkiye/240-rethinking-gas-diplomacy-eastern>.

impede Moscow's operations. Unfortunately, the current EU-oriented structure and provisions of the MOU, and the Egypt-Israel based energy hub do not facilitate this process.

Specifically, the EMGF and MOU must adopt a more inclusive membership framework to include Türkiye. As the NATO alliance's main liability, and rival to Europe's EastMed energy partnership, Ankara poses a risk to Europe's defence capabilities and energy security in the EastMed. Greater efforts could be made to encourage Member States Cyprus and Greece towards rapprochement with Türkiye, and resolution of EEZ disputes. Brussels would also benefit from Cairo-Ankara cooperation over transit security in the neutral Suez, Dardanelles, and Bosphorus straits – as Türkiye did with Russia through the Montreux Convention.

This is increasingly possible owing to generally improving relations between the littoral states since 2021. For Ankara, the 2023 normalization of relations with Cairo fits into a broader “regional reset” extending from the 2021 GCC. Ankara has already shown a willingness to engage in dialogue with the Knesset over facilitating Israeli gas flows to Europe through Türkiye.³⁸⁷ Additionally, improved Turkish-Egyptian relations could be a key factor in minimize Russian expansion into EastMed energy via Libya, as Ankara would likely not challenge Egypt's offshore discovery efforts post-normalization,³⁸⁸ which could add more energy to the supply mix for Europe.

However, regardless of the volume and origins of EastMed energy, there are limitations on natural gas' ability to resolve the ongoing political dynamic. Resource wealth

387. David O'Byrne, 'Could Turkey-Israel Rapprochement Lead to Gas Agreement? - Al-Monitor: Independent, Trusted Coverage of the Middle East', Al-Monitor, 1 June 2022, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/06/could-turkey-israel-rapprochement-lead-gas-agreement>.

388. Menekse Tokyay, 'Türkiye in Bid to Heal Ties with Egypt, Syria', Arab News, 28 November 2022, <https://arab.news/c8tqb>.

is an unsustainable solution for territory disputes and political instability³⁸⁹ due to their finite nature and changing demand. The literature is clear that energy security for petrostates is determined by security of demand. Therefore, Brussels must evaluate the sustainability of its energy diplomacy strategy and consider the Union's projected energy needs *before* it reaches the 2030 and 2050 targets.

While Egypt and Israel have been amenable to the MOU's provisions so far, total dedication to supplying the European market may be temporary. Brussels' ban on long-term contracts for unabated gas after 2049 and latest preference for spot markets would likely reduce producer's interest in supplying a market than cannot guarantee demand security and could generate more supply insecurity for the Continent.³⁹⁰ This was already an issue for Germany and Qatar where disputes over contract terms delayed an LNG agreement, the former for vying for short-term purchase options instead of the latter's 25-year proposal. Without certainty of a long-term buyer to guarantee returns, Doha would not agree to make the \$50 billion USD investment necessary for infrastructure upgrades until Germany agreed to a 15-year term several months later.³⁹¹

Europe's reticence to engage in long-term contracts stems partially from trauma inflicted in the EU-Russia relationship, partially to support for U.S.-led energy market reforms, and partially because Europe maintains leverage as a consumer without contractual obligation to the producer. Here, Brussels' can benefit from an asymmetric position in the

389. International Crisis Group, 'Rethinking Gas Diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean'.

390. Zlata Sergeeva, 'The Ban on Long-Term Natural Gas Contracts for the European Union: A Double-Edged Sword?' (King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center, March 2023), 17, DOI: 10.30573/KS--2022-DP15, <https://www.kapsarc.org/research/publications/the-ban-on-long-term-natural-gas-contracts-for-the-european-union-a-double-edged-sword/>.

391. Patrick Wintour, 'Germany Agrees 15-Year Liquid Gas Supply Deal with Qatar', *The Guardian*, 29 November 2022, sec. World News, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/29/germany-agrees-15-year-liquid-gas-supply-deal-with-qatar>.

EastMed energy relationship, supported by its exclusivity as a client. Importantly, creating a ‘client region’ in EastMed exclusively for energy export to Europe has long-term implications on regional stability and North-South relations, and may be ethically questionable given Europe’s colonial history.

There is an opportunity for the EU to steer the EastMed energy system in a sustainable and ethical direction. Limits on the EastMed’s lifetime production and export capacity could prove the Egypt option inefficient for export to Europe, and total supplies fall short of meeting both domestic and external demand. Refocusing gas diplomacy within the internal EastMed market could have a more profound effect on regional interconnectivity, cooperation, and stability. This could also reduce the eventual need for EastMed producers to compete on international LNG markets with prolific exporters Russia and Iran once EU demand wanes and targeted fossil fuel reductions are met. If the Commission can pause the discussion on foregoing fossil-fuel investments, there is a solid argument that Western-backed infrastructure developments in the internal EastMed energy market would improve Europe’s energy and physical security, possibly also benefitting from shareholder dividends.

For the EastMed, an energy sector managed by the EU bureaucracy, while clearly less desirable than independence, would still be preferable to direct oversight by the U.S. with the infinite horrors of *governance by military contractor* – the Halliburton arrangement in Iraq, for example. But there is no question that the Mediterranean is hungry for cooperation without the external power-games continually fragmenting the region. When the United Arab Union split, Nasser philosophised that “nowadays the concept of union is itself in crisis.... This kind of multiplicity of nationalist activities seems to lead us to clashes.... True political opposition would generate into regionalism.”³⁹²

392. Gamal Abdel Nasser, ‘Speech on the 11th Anniversary of the July 23 Revolution’, in *Arab Political Documents 1963* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1964), 333.

As a region itself, the EU would be impacted by a neorealist swing towards the Cold War's 'new regionalism'³⁹³ where the elevation of the primary system, and inseparability of regions from their larger systems, is merely a cover for U.S. primacy.³⁹⁴ In the words of NATO's Secretary General:

Europe has a basic choice: either it lapses back into the old power politics and balance of power diplomacy of past centuries or it moves ahead along the road leading to a new order of peace and freedom, whether this be based on multinational or supranational cooperation. Our choice is clear: we are going forward.³⁹⁵

Whether Wörner was issuing a call-to-action or a warning, a well-executed energy diplomacy strategy by Brussels could very well succeed in keeping U.S. hard power in the EastMed at bay. This will require striking the perfect balance of interests among all actors in the region – à la Bismark's realpolitik during the Concert of Europe. Perhaps a turn to the "old power politics" of past centuries' could reacquaint the Union with its inheritance of diplomatic prowess and advance an equitable approach to modern global energy governance.

393. Robert E. Kelly, 'Security Theory in the "New Regionalism"', *International Studies Review* 9, no. 2 (2007): 204, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4621805>.

394. Peter J. Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium*, Cornell Studies in Political Economy (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2005).

395. NATO, 'Address by Secretary General Manfred Wörner. The Atlantic Alliance and European Security in the 1990s' (Bremer Tabaks Collegium, Bremen, 1990), https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1990/s900517a_e.htm.

10 Conclusion

Natural gas is a bridge fuel. But it's not a bridge - it's a gangplank...we have renewable technology right now. – Josh Fox, Gasland

EastMed energy can be understood as a distinct yet fragmented subsystem within the broader Mediterranean and Middle East systems, considerably influenced by superpowers including the U.S., Russia, and Saudi Arabia vying for its integration into their respective spheres of influence. Since the discovery of prolific gas reserves in the 1990s, the region's energy resources greatly increased in importance, intensifying with the international energy crisis resulting from the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict. The subsequent reinvigoration of Cold War in the transatlantic community accompanied a spiralling energy security dilemma within Europe. In turning the EU's energy insecurity towards its Southern neighbourhood, Brussels has compounded the stressors on an already challenging web of EastMed energy diplomacy. The goal of this research, then, was to determine the extent of internal and external motivations driving the EU energy diplomacy strategy in the EastMed.

The Transatlantic consensus frames Brussels' EastMed strategy as externally motivated, focusing on Russia's use of realist energy diplomacy operations; Putin leveraging Europe's asymmetric energy dependence by restricting exports of natural gas amounts to use of the energy weapon. Europe's energy security is additionally threatened by Moscow's advancing interest in the EastMed energy resources, which constitutes a geopolitical operation – energy encirclement – and necessitates a diversification of Europe's energy imports away from Russian pipeline gas and towards an EU-oriented energy hub in the EastMed. Moscow is clear that energy is a key element of its foreign policy, and that the EastMed is a steppingstone for bilateral cooperation, a means of facilitating logistics for overseas military operations, and a locus of FDI and private sector cooperation for Russia's major energy companies. More covertly, the Kremlin's EastMed strategy is to provoke U.S.

action in the Rimland, and thus keep attention away from Moscow's more vital energy interests in the Heartland.

The prevalence of nonalignment and multi-vector foreign policies among EastMed producers disrupts the ability of external actors to easily weaponize the region's energy resources in their rivalries. Egypt, in particular, has benefitted from ongoing tensions between superpowers. While geopolitical operations targeting Cairo have been not been particularly successful, especially where they involve hard power, geoeconomic operations increasing FDI and IMF loans are at least temporarily effective. Despite angering Ankara, Brussels' global governance approach and utilisation of the EMGF in the June 2022 MOU has created a common aspiration for an EastMed energy hub. Control over this energy hub and exclusive access to EastMed LNG, though never explicitly mentioned, is likely a strong internal motivator for Brussels' energy diplomacy strategy in the EastMed. However, these nonaligned positions add an element of unpredictability in diplomatic relations with most regional actors, except the U.S.'s preferred dominant regional power Israel, which may have contributed to the realist undertones in the EU's energy strategy.

The EU energy diplomacy strategy has adapted its global energy governance approach towards less emphasis on partners meeting political criteria, for the unstable EastMed this is a curious point amidst intense energy securitization and violence on the Continent. The 2022 EU-Egypt-Israel MOU represents a hybrid of Europe's neoliberal institutionalism and American neorealism, pointing to Europe's deepened integration in the U.S. hegemonic project. Neoliberal mechanisms emphasising the establishment of a Euro-EastMed energy market and the central role of Brussels-backed institutions via the EMGF in its establishment. This focus on the regional Egypt-Israel energy hub masks Brussels' centrality in the partnership and points to the Union's adherence to core tenets of American energy neorealism. State power is permitted when U.S. led, through Brussels. As the MOU's

true centre of gravity, Brussels may exert its influence over the EastMed energy market politically, through balancing regional partners for the prize of ‘export hub’ status, and economically through implementing preferential regulatory processes.

While the Russia-Ukraine conflict has reignited the Cold War trauma for Europe leading to the adoption of energy securitization measures, this need not characterize the future of its energy diplomacy strategy. Transitioning to domestically generated renewables is unquestionably the strategy Brussels envisions for its energy future, which will eventually reduce the domestic energy security elements of its EastMed diplomacy agenda. While the U.S. has leveraged energy against Brussels while that leverage exists, energy self-sufficiency for its allies eliminates Cold War fears of energy dependence on anti-U.S. exporters. Washington will most certainly find alternative incentives for Brussels to intervene. Though ideally, the solution would not be military-oriented, NATO or otherwise, and would lean on peaceful diplomatic mechanisms involving dialogue, institutions, and rapprochement.

For Brussels, moving away from fixed energy relationships with single suppliers, long contracts, and dated pipeline infrastructure is a good interim strategy until the renewable transition is complete – even if the LNG refocus contradicts a larger strategic vision. In any case, shifting to a renewables-based energy system will not liberate Europe from the Liberal Leviathan’s influence, but energy self-sufficiency would dramatically weaken vulnerability to external energy weapons.

Danger arrives in the long-term, by designing a EU-centred EastMed energy subsystem for short- and medium-term benefit. Development of the EastMed energy network into a system specifically designed for the European market should also take into consideration necessary changes as demand falls. As self-sufficiency is increasingly achieved on the Continent, emphasis on this emerging EastMed energy network will fall away at the same pace. Europe’s full transition to renewables may leave the EastMed scrambling for

clients, and the resulting reconfiguration of the region's energy market may cause a new balance of power crisis for the U.S.

Significant costs in developing the EastMed's energy resources, particularly the offshore gas fields and LNG infrastructure, has prompted a synergising of public and private sector efforts. Governments can offload some of the costs to private stakeholders and is therefore a positive step in desecuritizing the region's energy supply. In the EastMed, the EMGF has been specifically designed to alleviate some concerns of energy security and foster regional cooperation. This is supported by the new regionalism model which affords an increased role to non-state actors in the energy sector. Should Brussels ultimately take a more noninterventionist or market-oriented than geopolitically oriented approach, the outcome may involve independent development of the regional energy infrastructure, possibly reorientation of the network away from exports towards domestic integration. This would minimize the external projection of state power by EastMed producers afforded by energy windfalls and could improve regional stability. Alternatively, independent development of export capacities might allow the region to develop into its own energy-based centre of gravity.

The risk for the EU and U.S is that without Western influence, EastMed energy resources and infrastructure may be developed by rival superpowers like Russia and China. In the worst case, a loss of U.S. dominance in the energy-based IPE could see a disruption of the global balance of power, the rise of a non-U.S. hegemon hostile to the U.S. and its allies would pose an existential threat to the EU. Being a weaker member of the alliance, owing to the 'hollowness' of its postmodern bureaucracy and institutions, could make the Union a target of geopolitical operations against U.S hegemony, including use of the energy weapon. Brussel's absence of Westphalian statehood generated an overreliance on leadership roles in EU-created institutions, and observer status in international Western-led intuitions to engage

in energy diplomacy. This capacity could be crippled under in a zero-sum global state system unmoderated by the Liberal Leviathan in favour of its key ally.

Less cynically, the EU doesn't necessarily need to 'escape' the from the Liberal Leviathan. Europe thrives in collaborative, liberal democratic environments, and while this may not characterize the U.S. method itself, the Liberal Leviathan seeks to construct some version of this system globally. In this context, Brussels' energy diplomacy strategy in the EastMed could be a means of cementing the EastMed into the Liberal Leviathan, rather than leaving the opportunity open for potentially hostile states to do so. The MOU could therefore be considered a snapshot of the inherent contradictions of this process, representing the many contradictions Europe is experiencing through its energy crisis: neoliberal institutionalism versus neorealist state centrism, the Russian versus the U.S. energy weapon, pipeline versus LNG gas, and ultimately fossil fuels versus renewables. But with its provision yet to materialise, there can be no certain conclusion whether Brussels' motivations are primarily oriented to relieving domestic energy insecurity through the EastMed, or a result of U.S. pressure to establish an energy subsystem of the Liberal Leviathan in the EastMed.

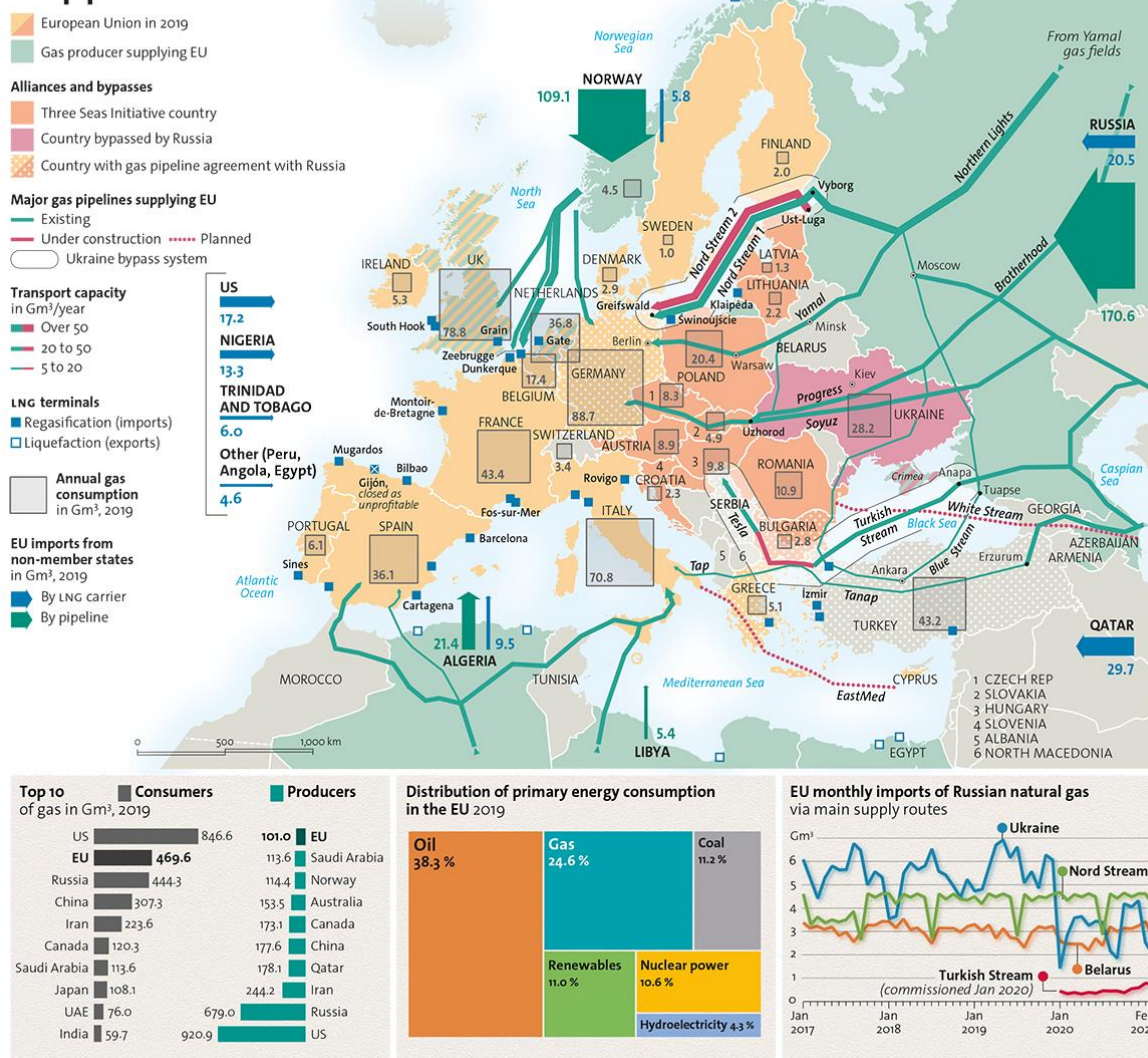
As the target market for EastMed energy and skilled in global energy governance's cooperative approach, Brussels is in a strong position to negotiate favourable terms supporting regional stability. Ethical assistance to develop of Palestine's energy resources and connectivity could advance the MEPP, liberate Gaza from dependence on Israeli imports, and improve humanitarian conditions. Integration of Türkiye in the EMGF could promote dispute settlement with other active members. Cooperation with OPEC Gulf Monarchies on Egypt could indirectly improve Brussel's relations with Iran, and secure additional energy supply from OPEC+, for example as proposed in the Saudi-Greece memorandum.

Ultimately, the goal for Brussels must be the deemphasis of fossil-fuels in the EastMed, which should include taking advantage of the Council's recommendations that

diplomatic FDI be reserved for renewables. These elements could be applied to the MOU's provisions for hydrogen and green energy to eventually actualize material cooperation on EastMed renewables. Non-fossil fuel-based energy independence for the EastMed and Europe would help uncomplicate energy-related geopolitical conflict and superpower interference. In any case, the path to universal transition to renewable energy is as long as it is challenging, giving the U.S. – and the EU – some time to reconfigure the Liberal Leviathan's hegemony.

11 Appendix A – Europe's Natural Gas Infrastructure

Gas pipelines and LNG carriers



Source: Marin, 2021³⁹⁶

396. Cécile Marin, 'The Battle Over Nord Stream 2: Gas Pipelines and LNG Carriers', Le Monde Diplomatique, 1 May 2021, <https://mondediplo.com/maps/gas-pipelines>.

12 Appendix B – The 2022 EU-Egypt-Israel MOU

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

**ON COOPERATION RELATED TO TRADE, TRANSPORT, AND EXPORT OF NATURAL GAS TO THE
EUROPEAN UNION**

BETWEEN

THE EUROPEAN UNION REPRESENTED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND
MINERAL RESOURCES**

THE STATE OF ISRAEL REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY

TOGETHER HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS THE "SIDES",

Emphasising the importance of regional cooperation between natural gas producing and consuming countries to support security of the energy supply;

Recalling the objectives defined under the Paris Agreement that has been ratified by the Sides and that defines their commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions;

Acknowledging that natural gas shall continue to play an important role in terms of energy consumption and electricity generation in the European Union until 2030, after which its use in the European Union will decline in line with its climate neutrality commitment by 2050;

Recalling the importance of the recent declarations, initiatives and agreements in implementing the cooperation of the Sides in the field of energy, in particular:

- The Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic partnership on energy between the Arab Republic of Egypt and the European Union signed in 2018;
- The Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Ministry of Energy of the State of Israel signed in November 2021, which aims to set forth a general framework to study the construction and operation of a pipeline to transport additional quantities of natural gas from Israel's offshore gas fields to Egypt;
- The East Mediterranean Gas Forum Statute signed on 22nd September 2020, which established a regional inter-governmental organization of natural gas producing, consuming and transit countries, which aims to coordinate structured discussions and develop joint initiatives with the objective of supporting and accelerating the establishment of an efficient and competitive regional East Mediterranean gas market.

Noting that the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Israel, along with four EU member-states (Cyprus, France, Greece and Italy), are members of the East Mediterranean Gas Forum, of which the European Union is an observer, and which serves as a platform for a structured policy dialogue on natural gas;

Noting the intention of the Arab Republic of Egypt to serve as a regional energy hub for natural gas;

With a view to recording their intention to work together on the transport, trade and export of natural gas to the European Union and enhancing their cooperation on their respective green energy transitions;

THE SIDES HAVE DECIDED to conclude the following Memorandum of Understanding:

Section 1

(Affordable, Stable and Secure Natural Gas Supply)

The Sides will endeavour to work collectively towards enabling a stable delivery of natural gas to the EU that is consistent with long-term decarbonisation objectives and is based on the principle of market-oriented pricing, to the extent that it coincides with each Side's domestic laws, regulations, policies and procedures.

Any shipment of natural gas from the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Israel to the European Union may be shipped inter alia via the use of the LNG infrastructure in the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The activities contemplated in this Memorandum of Understanding shall be without prejudice to, and shall not restrict the ability of, the Arab Republic of Egypt or the State of Israel to export natural gas to other buyers or through other routes.

Any natural gas to be shipped to the European Union will originate either from the Arab Republic of Egypt, the State of Israel, or any other source in the East Mediterranean region, including EU Member States in the region, that is deemed acceptable by the Sides.

This goal is without prejudice to the needs of the local consumption of the domestic markets, as well as to the existing and future contractual commitments of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Israel, or their licensees.

The Sides will endeavour to promote the reduction of methane leakages, and in particular examine new technologies for reducing venting and flaring and explore possibilities for the utilisation of captured methane throughout the entire supply chain.

Section 2

(Implementation)

The Sides will explore the possibility of working collaboratively to set forth the appropriate ways and means for implementing the purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding in order to expedite the export of natural gas to the EU. Such collaboration will focus on, but not be limited to the following areas:

- a) Formulating a plan for the efficient utilization of infrastructure in order to accelerate the export and shipment of natural gas to the EU;
- b) Developing a road map for attaining the requisite governmental and regulatory approvals for advancing the objectives of this Memorandum of Understanding;
- c) Endeavouring to encourage by the EU for European companies to invest in natural gas exploration and production in Israel and Egypt, including participation in competitive tenders for exploration licenses taking into consideration the EU's climate policies and its REPowerEU strategy;
- d) Exploring possibilities to apply carbon capture and carbon sequestration, and assisting in the creation of a plan to reduce emissions of natural gas to international industry-best-practice standards;
- e) Exploring ways to make funds available, including by the EU to develop technologies, and provide best-practice standards, knowledge and technologies regarding emissions reduction and natural gas decarbonization.

Section 3

(Environmental Protection)

The Sides will endeavour to ensure, jointly and severally, that future investments in projects or activities developed within the framework of this Memorandum of Understanding will not cause pollution of the marine or land environment, or damage by pollution to a coastline, shore facilities or amenities, or be a hindrance to vessels or fishing gear of any country.

Section 4

(Safety)

The Sides may consult one another with a view to preventing safety hazards to the extent necessary for natural gas infrastructure used for the trade, transport and export of natural gas between the Sides, in accordance with each Side's domestic laws, regulations, policies and procedures.

Section 5

(Promotion of Hydrogen, Green Energy Production, and Energy Efficiency)

The Sides will endeavour to encourage the Sides' public and private sector corporations to cooperate on the means for achieving green energy goals and combatting climate change in the following areas:

Hydrogen – Utilizing renewable and low carbon hydrogen in a large number of applications such as industrial processes, transportation and energy storage.

Green Energy – Developing safe and sustainable energy technologies and identifying innovative ideas for enhancing incentives for promoting the use of green energy, and finding solutions relating to their integration into the energy grid.

Energy Efficiency – Promoting energy efficiency.

Section 6

(Meetings of the Sides)

The Sides intend to meet in order to monitor the adequate implementation of the provisions of this Memorandum of Understanding, and may meet at least once a year at a place and time mutually agreed by the Sides, or upon the request of any Side.

The Sides, may, from time to time, propose a Ministerial level meeting for strategic matters, including the renewable energy transition.

Section 7

(The Laws in Force & Dispute Settlement)

Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding will create any legally binding obligations or commitments, or any financial obligations or commitments, between the Sides or in relation to any third party, under domestic or international law. This Memorandum of Understanding does not constitute an obligation to allocate funds.

The implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding and any other activity hereunder shall be in accordance with each Side's domestic laws, regulations, policies and procedures, as well as each Side's international obligations.

Any dispute that may arise between the Sides regarding the application or interpretation of this Memorandum of Understanding shall be settled amicably through mutual consultation or negotiation between the Sides, in good faith and in the spirit of this Memorandum of Understanding, through diplomatic channels, and will not be referred to any national or international tribunal or third party for settlement.

Section 8

(Confidentiality)

1. It is the intention of the Sides to exchange information generated in the course of the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding.
2. Subject to its applicable domestic law, a Side will not disclose to third parties any information received from any other Side, including any information expressed in writing or orally, without its prior written consent.
3. Notwithstanding the above, a Side may disclose information generated during the course of the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding, without obtaining the other Side's prior written consent, to any consultant or legal counsel retained by said Side, in order to facilitate the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding, provided that said Side requires its consultant or legal counsel to subject itself in writing to the terms of this section.
4. This section will not apply to information which was in the public domain before being disclosed or information which was already known by the receiving participant before its dissemination.

Section 9

(Duration & Termination)

This Memorandum of Understanding will come into effect on the date of its signature by the Sides and will continue to have effect for a period of three (3) years. It will be renewed automatically for two successive three (3) year periods.

This Memorandum of Understanding may be modified by the written consent of the Sides, and such modifications will come into effect with the same procedures that were followed for coming into effect of this Memorandum of Understanding on the date determined by the Sides. Any such modification will be included in an addendum signed by the Sides and will form an integral part of this Memorandum of Understanding.

This Memorandum of Understanding may be terminated by a six (6) months' prior written notice via diplomatic channels by any of the Sides. The termination of this Memorandum of Understanding will not affect any ongoing activity arising out of this Memorandum of Understanding, unless the Sides agree otherwise in writing.

Signed in Cairo on 15th June 2022, in three original copies in English language equally authentic.

For the European Union

**For the Ministry of Petroleum and
Mineral Resources of the Arab
Republic of Egypt**

Kadri Simson

Eng. Tarek El Molla

EU Commissioner for Energy

Minister



For the Ministry of Energy of Israel

Karine Elharrar

Minister



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