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Geopolitics Rewired

**Energy Corridors and the Strategic
Reordering of the Middle East**

by

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with foreword by

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Spring 2025

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About the Author



Dr Mustafa Demir

Dr Demir's expertise encompasses energy security, geopolitics, and the geoeconomics of energy. With a PhD focused on the geopolitics of energy, he has published extensively in these fields. Currently, he is working on a book project with Professor Hadfield, examining how energy/energy security has been reshaping EU foreign policy, with particular attention to the evolving critical geographies of energy and minerals.

His works aim to bridge scholarly and policy perspectives, offering critical insights into the role of energy in international relations.



Foreword



The global energy landscape of the 21st century has undergone a trinity of seismic shifts —geological, political, and strategic. The Middle East, long a crucible of hydrocarbon wealth and geostrategic rivalry, is once again driving both upheaval, and transformation. In contrast to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the contours of change are being drawn not solely by external powers, but increasingly through regional ambitions, post-conflict realignments, and the repurposing of infrastructure once mired in war.

I am delighted that this CBE Briefing Paper – authored by energy expert Dr Mustafa Demir – thoughtfully explores how energy and trade corridors have become pivotal tools of diplomacy and instruments of strategic reordering, reframing the geopolitical logic of the Middle East.

Demir sets the stage by exploring how energy security, once a passive component of foreign policy, is now a primary driver of regional engagement and international alignment. States no longer seek merely to safeguard access to oil and gas supplies; they aim now to shape the routes, agreements, and partnerships that define energy flows. This ability to wield this power has become especially salient in a global environment where transition away from carbon-heavy energy is reshaping demand centres, and where economic diversification and regional integration are gaining traction as tools of resilience and influence.

The re-entry of Syria into regional energy politics marks a critical pivot point. The political repositioning of Syria is closely linked to the evolution of alliances in the wake of the Assad regime, and a decade of civil war has relegated Syria from energy transit considerations. Now however, recent developments suggest that Damascus is gradually reestablishing its strategic utility. As Gulf states recalibrate their interests and normalization efforts advance, will Syria’s infrastructure and geography reemerge as potential assets in the evolving regional matrix?

At the heart of these complex dynamics is the Middle-Energy Corridor, a conflict-laden component of regional energy security. Stretching from the Gulf to the Mediterranean, Demir suggests that the Middle-Energy Corridor offers both a vision and a challenge: to reimagine borders not as barriers, but as links in a new network of cooperation and control. In this framework, Kurdish territories—long viewed primarily through a security lens—could well serve as pivotal energy intermediaries, provided that political will and economic incentives align.

Of prime importance in regional energy issues is Turkey: positioned centrally at the nexus of Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Turkey’s long-held aspirations to transform itself into a regional energy hub are now being materially underwritten by investments in transnational pipelines, liquefied natural gas terminals, and political brokerage. Ankara’s balancing act however is a tricky one. Balancing Western partners, Gulf investors, and volatile regional neighbours, Turkey’s ensuing decisions underscores the strategic value of energy as both a domestic policy imperative and a foreign policy lever.



In terms of other regional energy corridors, the Arab Gas Pipeline is of note. As Demir outlines, once stalled by conflict, cautious interest in the pipeline may reactivate broader strategic ambitions. The pipeline's revival not only reconnects regional energy markets but also symbolizes a shift from fragmentation to interdependence. Meanwhile, the long-dormant Qatar–Turkey pipeline project—initially stymied by geopolitical rivalry and the Syrian war—may also find new life amid shifting alliances and revived regionalism.

This CBE Briefing Paper concludes by reflecting on energy's role in shaping a new order and the potential for infrastructure to serve not just commerce but peace. Without indulging in idealism, it could be argued that as trade corridors supplant frontlines, and energy infrastructures traverse old battlegrounds, a new architecture of influence may arguably take form—one in which energy, diplomacy, and strategic geography intersect to offer admittedly fragile, but real possibilities, for regional stability and cooperation.



Professor Amelia Hadfield
Founding Director, Centre for Britain and Europe



Executive Summary

This report examines the evolving geopolitical order in the Middle East through the lens of energy security, regional realignment, and post-conflict diplomacy. It focuses on the collapse of the Assad regime in Syria and the subsequent ripple effects including reducing influence of Iran and Russia across the region, particularly the strategic reconstruction of Syria and the formal dissolution of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). These developments are not viewed as isolated events, but as part of a broader reconfiguration shaped by infrastructural diplomacy, foreign policy pragmatism, and shifting global energy dynamics.

At the heart of the analysis is the argument that energy security, encompassing access to oil, gas, electricity, and the infrastructure required to produce and transmit them, has moved from the periphery to the centre of foreign policy and regional order-making. Energy is now a defining force in shaping alliances, determining sovereignty claims, and guiding the terms of peace-building efforts. This is clearly reflected in the emergence of a new energy corridor stretching from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (the KRI) through Kurdish dominated northeastern Syria to the eastern Mediterranean, an axis increasingly prioritised in Western engagement, with Turkey positioned as a key transit and 'stabilisation partner' along with Saudi Arabia. These developments signal a departure from traditional norm-driven approaches in favour of security and economy driven pragmatism.

The report also highlights a marked shift in the foreign policy posture of Western powers, particularly the United States and key European countries. In the post-Assad era, these actors have adopted a more transactional approach, prioritising strategic stability and energy cooperation over democratic reform. This recalibration is particularly evident in their deepening relations with Turkey—despite ongoing concerns over democratic backsliding reflecting a wider trend in which geopolitical positioning and corridor security now outweigh liberal normative agendas.

Several major infrastructure projects are examined to illustrate these dynamics, including the Arab Gas Pipeline (AGP), the potential revival of the Qatar–Turkey pipeline, and the growing strategic importance of the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). These initiatives are not only redrawing the region's economic geography but are also reshaping its political architecture reinforcing some actors, sidelining others, and redefining the modalities of sovereignty and post-conflict recovery.

The report further draws attention to Gaza as a critical case for inclusive reconstruction. It argues that any sustainable recovery plan must place energy security at its core—not only in terms of fuel and electricity, but also the infrastructure needed to deliver water, operate ports, and ensure basic human services. Without such integration, Gaza risks remaining vulnerable to recurrent cycles of breakdown and marginalisation. Embedding Gaza within the region's emerging multilateral energy infrastructure could help stabilise and reintegrate it into broader peace-building frameworks.



Ultimately, the report contends that the Middle East is being reshaped not through ideologically driven interventions or normative frameworks, but through the logic of energy corridors, strategic necessity, and infrastructure-led diplomacy. In this new order, power is increasingly defined by connectivity, control, and cooperation and the terms of peace are being negotiated not solely at the diplomatic table, but through the construction of pipelines, ports, and power lines.



Introduction

In March 2013, I wrote about the then-emerging peace process between Turkey and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), framing it within the broader context of energy security and Turkey's strategic alignment with the West, particularly the European Union and the United States.¹ At the time, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRG) had consolidated its status as a semi-autonomous entity following the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime. In opening its territory to major Western energy companies, the KRG initiated a new phase of oil and gas exploration that placed the region firmly on the global energy map.² Turkey, capitalising on this opportunity, expanded its economic and infrastructural ties with the KRG, positioning itself as a vital conduit between Western energy markets and new sources of supply in northern Iraq. Against this backdrop, the peace initiative with the PKK appeared to serve not only as a domestic political strategy but also as a regional security measure to stabilise the emerging energy corridor.³ The aim was clear: to ensure the uninterrupted flow of energy through a politically volatile zone. However, in the years that followed, shifting regional dynamics driven by civil conflict, the rise of new armed actors, and international realignments derailed this momentum. The peace process faltered, and the geopolitical architecture underpinning the corridor fragmented.

Now, a decade later, the region has entered a new phase of transformation. In a development few would have anticipated in 2013, the PKK has formally declared its dissolution, bringing to an end a four-decade-long insurgency that had profoundly shaped the political and security landscape of Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. While this appears to be a domestic breakthrough, its timing and broader context suggest it is deeply embedded within a wider regional and geopolitical recalibration—particularly in light of the regime change in Syria and the corresponding erosion of Iranian influence in the region.

Energy as Foreign Policy

In the 21st century, defined by rapid digitalisation and the growing influence of artificial intelligence, energy has become more critical than ever. The exponential expansion of digital infrastructure has elevated energy security to the forefront of both political and societal agendas. From heating homes to powering data centres and electricity-intensive smart cities, demand for reliable and uninterrupted energy supply continues to rise.⁴ Moreover, the digitalisation of state functions, including defence, intelligence, and public administration, has reinforced the strategic importance of energy systems.

¹Demir, M. 2013. "Energy Security, Turkey, and the PKK or Obama, Erdogan, and Ocalan," https://www.academia.edu/5597354/Energy_Security_Turkey_and_the_PKK_or_Obama_Erdogan_and_Ocalan

²Lexology. 2024. In review: oil and gas exploration and production in Iraqi Kurdistan. Available at: <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=e3ccc4af-f10b-44ce-b5ec-2c4b29c5550e> ; Demir, M., 2019. *The geopolitics of Turkey–Kurdistan relations: cooperation, security dilemmas, and economies*. Rowman & Littlefield.;

³Hokayem, E. and Momtaz, R. eds., 2024. *Turbulence in the Eastern Mediterranean: Geopolitical, Security and Energy Dynamics*. Taylor & Francis. Available at: <https://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-dossiers/strategic-dossier-preview-turbulence-in-the-eastern-mediterranean/>

⁴ <https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2025/04/09/the-tricky-task-of-calculating-ais-energy-use>



Data centres, in particular, have become integral to national security, both as operational assets and as potential targets for adversarial action.

In this context, energy is no longer just a commodity, it is a core component of diplomacy, a foundation of digital sovereignty, and a powerful means through which regional and global actors project influence in fragile and contested spaces. Thus, energy security has not only emerged as a central priority in national security strategies but has also become a powerful instrument in foreign policy. It now functions both as a diplomatic asset and as a strategic lever. For instance, in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, energy has dominated the foreign policy agenda of the European Union, reshaping its external relations (Hadfield and Demir 2024).

Similarly, recognising energy as a foreign policy instrument is essential for understanding Western engagement in Syria, a country currently undergoing political transition and physical reconstruction. As Syria rebuilds, control over its energy infrastructure has become a significant geopolitical priority. This infrastructure including extraction, production, transmission, and digital monitoring systems is not only critical for economic recovery but also for establishing long-term political leverage. In a context where energy systems are increasingly integrated with digital state functions, influence over energy infrastructure equates to influence over the broader governance and administrative apparatus of the state.

Against this backdrop, Western powers who have been leveraging their energy companies, technological capabilities, and policy expertise, appear prepared to assume a central role in shaping Syria's post-conflict energy landscape. This engagement is likely to occur in close coordination with Turkey, which has long presented itself as both a strategic partner and a regional energy hub. In fact, Turkey is actively working to integrate Syrian energy infrastructure into its own national grid, perhaps effectively annexing parts of Syria through infrastructural connectivity (see map below). Control over construction of new energy systems, particularly in northern and eastern Syria, and then exploration licenses, investment in resource extraction, are emerging as key instruments of influence in this evolving geopolitical terrain. Through these means, energy is being used not only to power reconstruction, but also to reshape sovereignty, alliances, foreign policies and the balance of regional powers.



The Return of Syria Energy, Alliances, and Post-Assad Realignments

To fully grasp this shift, it is necessary to consider the parallel developments in Syria. In December 2024, the Assad regime finally collapsed, and Bashar al-Assad fled to Russia. In his place, a transitional administration emerged under Ahmed al-Sharaa—a figure best known for his former leadership of the jihadist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). Despite his controversial past, Western leaders, including senior officials from the European Union and U.S. President Donald Trump, have chosen to engage with him as part of a pragmatic strategy aimed at stabilising Syria and redrawing the post-Assad order.



Image: Al-Sharaa Meets Trump in Riyadh, May 2025

As part of the ongoing redesign of the region's geopolitical landscape, one of the most symbolic moments was captured not in a redrawn map, but in a photograph taken during a high-level meeting on 14 May 2025. The meeting brought together U.S. President Donald Trump, Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa, and Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan participated via phone. This was the first face-to-face engagement between the United States and a Syrian head of state since President Bill Clinton met Hafez al-Assad in Geneva 25 years earlier. Neil Quilliam of Chatham House described the moment as follows:



It was the first high-level US–Syria meeting since US President Bill Clinton met with Syrian President Hafez al-Assad in Geneva 25 years ago. This extraordinary moment seemingly gave al-Sharaa the US stamp of approval and signalled that the Trump administration has finally arrived at a Syria policy.⁵

President Trump remarked that it was the recommendations of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman that ultimately influenced his decision.

...President Erdoğan called me and said: ‘Is there any way you could do that? Because if you don’t do that, they don’t have a chance...So, I did it.’⁶



Following the meeting, President Trump made a surprise announcement during a speech in Riyadh that all U.S. sanctions on Syria would be lifted. The decision, which reportedly caught even members of his own administration off guard, was presented as conditional, hinged on the normalisation of diplomatic relations between Syria and Israel.⁷ This development signals a dramatic recalibration in U.S. policy towards Syria and reflects the growing role of energy diplomacy, regional integration, and political pragmatism in shaping the post-conflict order in the Middle East.

This surprising realignment underscores the continuing role of energy strategy in shaping international engagement. Alongside the political legitimisation of Syria’s new leadership, it shows strategic calculations. particularly those rooted in regional alliances and energy diplomacy, are now guiding Western engagement in the Middle East.

⁵ <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2025/05/meeting-al-sharaa-and-trump-has-shifted-balance-power-middle-east>

⁶ <https://apnews.com/article/trump-mideast-trip-uae-qatar-russia-ukraine-963b695c94b908a2f9c76271ea9d131b>

⁷ <https://www.dw.com/en/is-us-sanctions-relief-a-pivotal-turning-point-for-syria/a-72556332>



Middle-Energy Corridor: From Conflict to Corridor, A New Role for Kurdish Territories

At the heart of this new political geography is the emergence of a renewed energy corridor extending from the KRG in northern Iraq, through northeastern Syria, and toward the eastern Mediterranean. This corridor is fast becoming a critical artery for regional energy flows and is reshaping the strategic outlook of all actors involved, from Western capitals to regional governments. Importantly, the northern part of Syria is also believed to contain promising untapped energy reserves,⁸ making it increasingly attractive to international oil exploration companies seeking access to new frontiers.⁹

The reconfiguration of territorial control and alliances has gone hand in hand with a profound shift in the Kurdish question. The long-standing conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK appears to have reached its conclusion. Reports suggest that Abdullah Öcalan, still imprisoned, has played a pivotal role in persuading the remaining armed factions to lay down their weapons, thereby closing a chapter of armed resistance that has defined the Kurdish struggle across three states for nearly half a century.¹⁰

Taken together, these developments suggest that what appears as a series of isolated breakthroughs in Syria, Iraq, and Turkey are in fact deeply interconnected. They reflect the continued importance of energy corridors in the making and unmaking of regional orders, and how questions of insurgency, legitimacy, and diplomacy are being reframed through the imperatives of energy security.

The peace processes of the past, such as the Turkey-PKK talks of 2013, were driven in part by a vision of Kurdish inclusion within regional economic frameworks. That vision now returns under new conditions. With the dissolution of the PKK and the integration of Kurdish-led governance structures into broader energy strategies, the historical narrative of rebellion may give way to a new paradigm of regional partnership.

However, such a transition is fragile. The legacies of mistrust, militarisation, and political fragmentation remain. If the northern energy corridor is to be more than a pipeline vision, if it is to become a foundation for sustainable peace and development, then the West, Turkey, and the Kurdish actors involved must engage in a broader dialogue. This must include guarantees of local governance, environmental protection, and equitable revenue-sharing, lest the corridor become yet another arena of contestation rather than cooperation.

What began a decade ago as a tentative peace initiative has now transformed into an opportunity to reimagine the geopolitics of the region through energy and trade integration. The strategic geography of Iraq, the Kurdish region, and northern Syria is central to this transformation. As the West recalibrates

⁸ <https://oilprice.com/Energy/Energy-General/Internet-Report-Says-Syria-has-Largest-Oil-and-Gas-Fields.html>;

⁹ Argus. 2025. "UK Gulfsands Petroleum eyes return to Syria's upstream." Available at: <https://www.argusmedia.com/en/news-and-insights/latest-market-news/2659370-uk-gulfsands-petroleum-eyes-return-to-syria-s-upstream>

¹⁰ BBC. 2025. Kurdish group PKK says it is laying down arms and disbanding, 12 May. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/czel3ry9x1do>



its Middle East strategy in the wake of Assad's departure and in light of renewed great power competition, energy security remains the connective tissue. Whether this new corridor delivers peace, prosperity, or renewed conflict will depend not only on barrels and pipelines, but on political vision, historical reckoning, and genuine regional cooperation.

Map 1: Turkey's Energy Network



Source: Understanding the Energy Drivers of Turkey's Foreign Policy, [Carnegie Endowment](https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/02/understanding-the-energy-drivers-of-turkeys-foreign-policy?lang=en¢er=india) (2024)

Crossroads of Pipelines: Turkey as a Regional Energy Hub

The emergence of a middle-energy corridor linking the KRG, northern Syria, and Turkish infrastructure at Ceyhan resurrects and transforms the vision of Turkey as an energy hub (see the Map_1 above).¹¹ However, the parameters of this vision are no longer confined to state-to-state arrangements. Non-state actors, transitional administrations, and formerly insurgent movements now operate as key interlocutors in the political economy of energy. The PKK's dissolution may be read not merely as the end of an armed struggle, but as a recalibration of strategy in which Kurdish actors increasingly pursue influence through institutional and economic channels, particularly those tied to the energy trade.

¹¹ Demir, M., 2020. The Geopolitics of Energy. *Turkey in Transition: The Dynamics of Domestic and Foreign Politics*, pp.55-68.; <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/02/understanding-the-energy-drivers-of-turkeys-foreign-policy?lang=en¢er=india>



This evolving corridor may also be understood through Churchill's often-invoked dictum: "Safety and certainty in oil lie in variety and variety alone." The diversification of energy sources—and more importantly, routes—has been a long-standing objective of the European Union and the United States. With Russian energy increasingly politicised and Middle Eastern supplies unstable, the prospect of a new promising energy corridor backed by Western infrastructure investments is no longer far-fetched. Yet the complexity of such a corridor is confounding. It must traverse contested territory, balance Turkish anxieties, and navigate the shifting priorities of great powers.¹²

The Arab Gas Pipeline: A Strategic Asset in Transition

To contextualise recent regional developments—including the appointment and international recognition of Ahmed al-Sharaa as Syria's transitional president, and the PKK's declaration of dissolution marking the end of a decades-long insurgency—it is essential to consider the strategic significance of the Arab Gas Pipeline (AGP). Initially constructed to transport Egyptian natural gas northward to Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, the pipeline now functions in reverse, carrying Israeli offshore gas southward to Egypt for domestic consumption and re-export.

The Syrian section of the AGP has remained inactive due to years of conflict and infrastructure degradation. However, in the emerging post-Assad political landscape, the pipeline could re-enter regional energy calculations. Observers have noted that Israeli gas could potentially be used to address Syria's acute power shortages, provided that political agreements and security guarantees are in place.¹³

In this context, close attention should be paid to how the AGP evolves and branches out in the coming years. Its future trajectory—whether revitalised, expanded, or politically contested—will offer important insights into the reshaping of regional energy networks and the balance of interests among key state and non-state actors in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Levant.

¹² Demir, M. 2019. Ibid.

¹³ <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/does-syrias-electricity-crisis-have-israeli-solution>



Map 2: Arab Gas Pipeline and Extension



Source: The [National News](#) (2022)

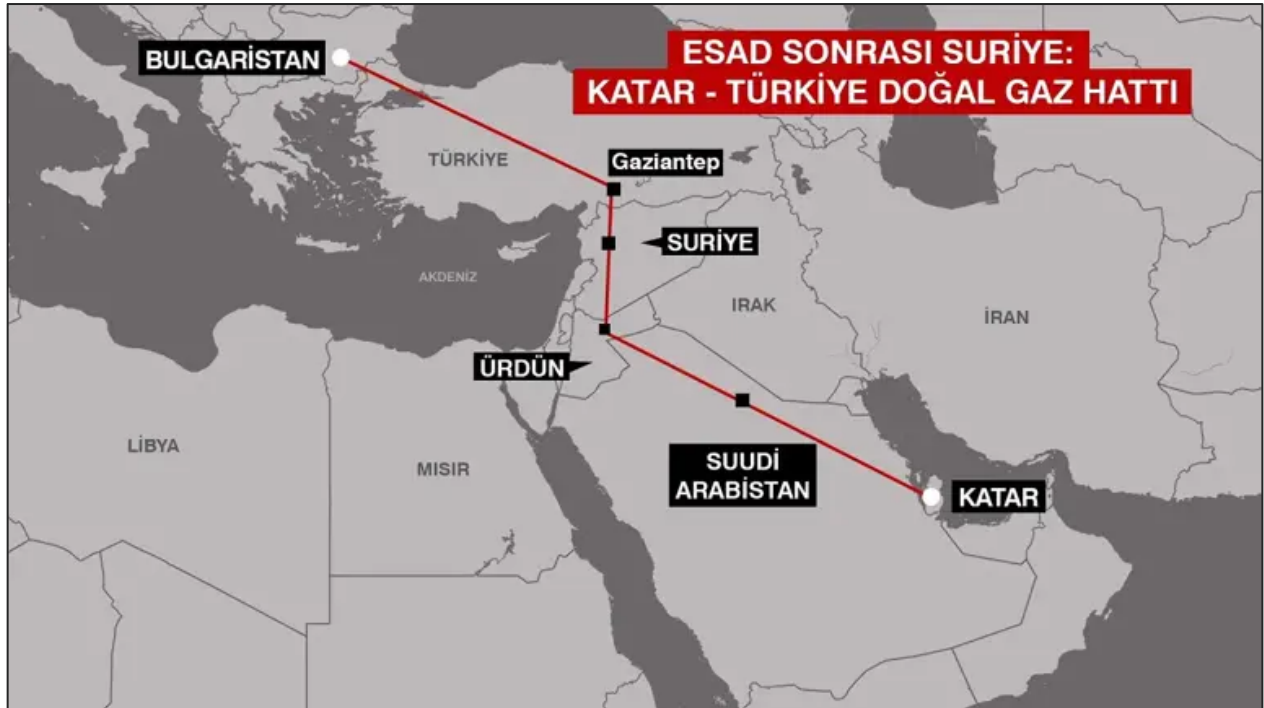
Revisiting the Qatar-Turkey Pipeline: A Dormant Vision with Renewed Potential

Originally proposed in 2009, the Qatar-Turkey pipeline aimed to transport natural gas from the massive South Pars/North Dome gas-condensate field, shared by Iran and Qatar, through Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Syria, ultimately reaching Turkey and European markets. The project was conceived as a strategic effort to diversify European energy supplies and strengthen regional economic interdependence. However, the outbreak of the Syrian conflict and broader regional instability in the following decade led to the abandonment of the proposal. Political fragmentation, shifting alliances, and security concerns rendered the project unfeasible, and it faded from the agenda of regional energy diplomacy. At the time, there was also discussion of linking the Qatar–Turkey pipeline to the Nabucco project—an EU-backed initiative intended to transport gas from the Caspian region to Austria via Turkey. Yet this vision failed to materialise. Despite initial backing from both the European Union and the United States, the Nabucco pipeline faced persistent EU challenges, including the lack of a secured supply source, economic viability concerns, and internal EU disagreements, and was ultimately cancelled in 2013.¹⁴

¹⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/article/opinion/dont-cry-for-the-nabucco-pipeline-idUS2328538655/#:~:text=The%20problem%20is%20that%20Europe,Romania%20%E2%80%94%20largely%20dependent%20on%20Gazprom.>



Map 3: Syria after Assad: Qatar-Turkey Natural Gas Line



Source: [CNN Turkey](#) (2024)

Today, in light of recent developments, including above explained renewed international engagement in Syria and growing European interest in alternative gas supplies, some sources and observers argue that the project could be revived.¹⁵ As one analysis notes: “Stability in Syria could allow the revival of the long-dormant pipeline project to connect Qatari natural gas fields with Turkey via Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Syria.”¹⁶ In the event of such a revival, the security of the pipeline route would be paramount. Ensuring stability across transit states would be in the direct interest of end-users, particularly in Europe. As such, the successful realisation of this project would likely entail greater political and financial investment by the ultimate consumers of the gas, who, in turn, would have a strong incentive to support long-term regional stability.

¹⁵ <https://www.trtworld.com/turkiye/the-revival-of-qatar-turkiye-gas-pipeline-offers-hope-amid-challenges-18251931>

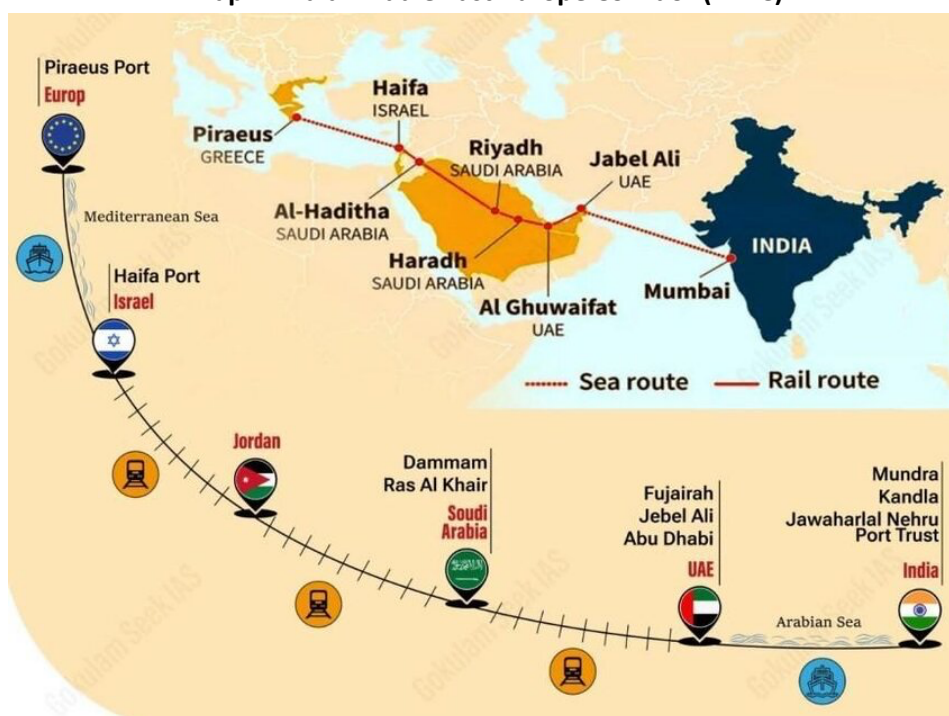
¹⁶ <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/12/turkeys-energy-hub-ambitions-have-new-momentum-after-assads-fall>



The IMEC Corridor: Realignments and Strategic Implications

Another important map to watch in the context of recent regional and global developments is that of the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)—a major infrastructure and investment initiative designed to facilitate trade and energy connectivity between South Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. It is proposed during the 2023 G20 Summit as a “transformative framework that is intended to connect Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe with multimodal transportation networks, renewable energy infrastructure, and digital connectivity.”¹⁷ Initially envisioned to bypass both Syria and Turkey, the corridor was intended to provide a more direct and politically stable route for goods and energy, reducing reliance on traditional transit states.

Map 4: India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC)



Source: [Gokulam Seek IAS Academy](https://www.gokulamseekiasacademy.com/) (2025)

However, the shifting geopolitical landscape marked by the conflict in Syria and growing Turkish opposition to exclusion¹⁸ has prompted discussions about possible rerouting. Increasingly, there is consideration of incorporating both Syria and Turkey into the corridor’s trajectory. This realignment reflects a broader Western effort to create a region defined by mutual dependence and reduced risk of open conflict, prioritizing the uninterrupted flow of trade and energy.

Gaza and the Prospect of Reconstruction

¹⁷ <https://www.grc.net/single-commentary/254#:~:text=furthermore%2C%20competition%20from%20other%20connectivity,step%20toward%20improving%20global%20connectivity.>

¹⁸ <https://www.railway-technology.com/news/turkey-alternative-india-middle-east-trade-corridor-plan/>



The war in Gaza continues to escalate with rising humanitarian costs and widespread devastation. Agreements to bring the conflict to an end, and to commence the reconstruction of Gaza cannot come too quickly. The sharp decline and in some cases, near disappearance of Russian and Iranian influence in the region,¹⁹ is likely to place mounting pressure on Israel to bring the conflict to a close.²⁰ While the current set of circumstances make the prospect of any positive change feel virtually impossible, the era of large-scale regional conflict across the Middle East must come to an end, replaced emphatically by a new phase of political recalibration and reconstruction. The cumulative impact of military fatigue, shifting alliances, and changing international priorities is reshaping the calculus of regional actors. Within this evolving context, Gaza, and its political, structural, financial and socio-cultural reconstruction cannot remain isolated from the wider regional transformations in the region, nor can its future be separated from the region's emerging strategic and infrastructural logic, including that of energy security.

In countries such as Syria and Iraq, military de-escalation has been accompanied by renewed diplomatic engagement and international involvement in post-conflict planning. In Israel, growing pressure from the international community,²¹ mounting public discontent, and widespread conflict fatigue are contributing to a shifting political climate.²² In this evolving landscape, the primary challenge is no longer simply how to end wars, but how to establish the foundations for a sustainable and inclusive peace. In concluding this CBE Briefing Note, the question is therefore the extent to which energy security might play a viable role in regional post-conflict reconstruction.

A forward-looking and durable strategy for rebuilding conflict-affected areas, particularly Gaza, must place energy security at the center of recovery and reconstruction efforts.²³ This means not only guaranteeing access to essential resources such as electricity, water, oil, and gas, but also investing in the critical infrastructure that underpins these systems: power generation facilities, desalination plants, port infrastructure, and transmission networks. Crucially, these efforts should be integrated into broader regional planning frameworks. Linking Gaza to a multilateral, cross-border energy and infrastructure network could help embed it within a stable and interdependent system, reducing the risk of future isolation and renewed instability. Energy infrastructure, in this context, becomes more than a technical or economic concern it becomes a strategic instrument for peacebuilding, resilience, and regional integration.

¹⁹ <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2025-03/how-saudi-arabia-and-us-might-reset-middle-east>

²⁰ <https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20250517-world-leaders-urge-israel-to-stop-its-deadly-military-offensive-in-gaza>

²¹ <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-israel-military-attack-gaza-strip-occupation-palestine/>

²² <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2025-04-21/ty-article-opinion/.premium/netanyahu-runs-out-of-scapegoats-for-his-forever-war-in-gaza/00000196-59dd-da35-a1d7-fbdc7770000>

²³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c0rz0jvvpww0>; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/5/17/gaza-likely-to-dominate-agenda-as-arab-league-meets-in-baghdad>



Conclusion: Energy, Order, and the New Architecture of Peace

The Middle East is entering a period of profound strategic realignment, one shaped as much by pipelines and corridors as by treaties, negotiations, or military interventions. As this report has demonstrated, energy is no longer a secondary or background variable in regional politics. It has become a primary driver of cooperation, competition, and conflict resolution, a structuring force that influences the region's emerging order.

The formal dissolution of the PKK and the rise of a Western-backed transitional government in Syria mark more than the resolution of long-standing internal conflicts. They signal a decisive shift in how political legitimacy, influence, and security are being redefined. Syria's regime change has acted as a triggering moment, catalysing a broader regional reordering around energy infrastructure, cross-border integration, and a new logic of interdependence.

From the potential revival of the long-dormant Qatar–Turkey pipeline to the reconfiguration of the Arab Gas Pipeline and the strategic significance of the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), infrastructure is no longer simply about transport, it is the very grammar of diplomacy. These projects are not only facilitating trade and energy flows but also redrawing spheres of influence and contestation across the region.

Turkey has emerged at the heart of this transformation. As NATO's second-largest military force and a long-standing energy corridor, it is being recast as a guarantor of infrastructure security and a key partner in post-conflict reconstruction, particularly in Syria. This strategic centrality persists despite concerns over democratic backsliding, underscoring the increasing pragmatism of Western foreign policy in the post-Assad era.

Gaza, too, must be understood within this broader framework. Although the conflict there remains acute, any meaningful reconstruction will ultimately depend on energy security—access to electricity, water, fuel, and the infrastructure to deliver them reliably. Integrating Gaza into regional infrastructure systems may prove to be not only a humanitarian necessity but also a political strategy to anchor long-term stability.

In this context, the self-dissolution of the PKK appears not as an isolated gesture but as part of a calculated response to a regional order in flux—one in which armed insurgency is giving way to infrastructural power. Connectivity, control, and cooperation now constitute the new sources of political capital.

As the Middle East continues to be redefined, energy security extends far beyond questions of supply. It is now integral to sovereignty, legitimacy, and the architecture of peace. The challenge ahead lies in ensuring that these evolving networks are not only efficient and secure, but also equitable and inclusive, capable of supporting a just and durable regional order.





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