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WORLD NEWS 02.06.14



Are These Gas Fields Israel's Next Warzone?

Rumors of war could become the reality as Israel vies with the other nations of the Levant for control of the huge riches beneath the sea.

When Israel looks at the greatest threat to its long-term hopes for the future, these days it's looking out to sea. The old issues are on the table, of course: Iran's nukes, the Palestinians, the Syrian slaughterhouse next door and growing regional instability. But if there's a place where a sudden, out-of-control war is likely to erupt, it's probably not going to be called the Sinai, the Golan, the West Bank (or Judea and Samaria). It's going to be called Leviathan, Dalit or Karish—the vast fields of natural gas and oil discovered in the deep waters between Israel and Cyprus over the last five years.

Who controls that wealth is likely to dominate the economic future of the region for generations to come. The Israelis know it. So do their allies, their rivals and their enemies. And tensions are mounting by the day.

"All the elements of danger are there," says Pierre Terzian, editor of the oil industry weekly Petrostrategies: there is competition for huge resources, there are disputed borders, and, not to put too fine a point on it, "this is a region where resorting to violent action is not something unusual."

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The United States government is watching warily, trying to broker diplomatic settlements and, so far, failing. No longer inclined to be the region's policeman on land or in the air, much less at sea, Washington is scaling back its presence in the Middle East while just about everyone else is increasing theirs.

Israel is rushing to create “the most technologically advanced fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean,” according to a report in Tablet Magazine. Turkey is flexing its maritime muscles with plans to spend as much as a billion dollars on a multi-purpose amphibious assault ship that will give its fleet blue water capabilities like never before. The Iranian-backed Hezbollah militia in Lebanon, meanwhile, is known to have naval missiles, and has used them in the past, sinking a cargo vessel and holing an Israeli warship during the Lebanon war of 2006. Russia is expanding both its naval and commercial presence in Syrian waters, despite the Syrian civil war. It inked a \$90 million, 25-year exploration deal with Damascus last Christmas Day.

The area in question was roughly defined in 2010 by the U.S. Geological Survey. It estimated that in an area of the Eastern Mediterranean dubbed the Levant Basin Province (PDF) there are some 122 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 1.6 billion barrels of oil—and possibly twice that much. The basin runs from near the Syrian port of Tartus (which is also where the Russians have their naval base), down the entire coast of Lebanon, Israel and Gaza, and out toward Cyprus.

If there's a place where a sudden, out-of-control war is likely to erupt, it's probably not going to be the West Bank. It's going to be the vast fields of natural gas discovered in the deep waters of the Eastern Mediterranean.

That oil and gas could be found there was not entirely a surprise. The first major discoveries were made, in fact, off the coast of Gaza in 2000 in waters supposed to belong to the Palestinian Authority. The British company BG Group estimated it could access a trillion cubic feet of natural gas in Gaza's offshore fields. But Israel effectively shut down that operation in 2001, after a new Palestinian uprising began. Then Hamas took over in Gaza in 2007 and a boycott was imposed. That same year, BG pulled out of negotiations with the Israeli

government and in 2008 shut its office in Israel. Since then, despite occasional headlines to the contrary, the whole operation has been on ice. As BG spokesman Mark Todd told me in an e-mail this morning, “our position on Gaza Marine has not changed for some time.”

Israel's position in the oil and gas world, on the other hand, changed radically.

Energy prices increased at least five-fold during the first decade of the century, making all kinds of exploration and extraction potentially profitable, even if it meant drilling many miles below the surface of the sea. Noble Energy out of Texas, partnering with Delek Group and other Israeli companies, started uncovering one major find after another in 2009 and 2010. That included the huge Tamar field, which started producing last year, and the enormous Leviathan field, which is estimated to hold 18 trillion cubic feet of gas. Altogether, there's supposed to be enough gas to meet Israel's requirements for the next 150 years.

"This means geopolitical power for Israel, which needs it now more than ever," Delek's Yitzhak Tshuva told a conference in 2011. And top Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have left no doubt they see these oil and gas resources as a huge factor securing Israel's political, diplomatic and economic future. Within a few years, indeed, Israel hopes to be a major supplier of gas to Europe and also to its Arab neighbors Jordan and Egypt.

The biggest threat to these projects could be Turkey. Under Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, its relations with Israel have gone from warm to cold, and just recently have begun once again to thaw. Turkey—and the northern half of Cyprus, occupied by its troops since 1974—have been largely left out of the Levant Basin boom. Ankara has been accused of saber rattling to intimidate would-be investors in the Aphrodite field that belongs to the internationally recognized government of Cyprus on the southern half of the island. But Turkey would also like to be the conduit for a pipeline taking Levant Basin gas to Europe, and that won't happen unless Cyprus and Israel want it to. So that has tempered Erdogan's truculence a bit.

The hottest flashpoint at the moment is between Lebanon and Israel, which remain, formally, in a state of war. The United Nations defined their mutual land border in 2000, but not the lines of demarcation between their 200-nautical-mile "exclusive economic zones." As the undersea gas rush heated up in 2010 and 2011, it turned out their claims overlapped by about 860 square kilometers (332 square miles) in a potentially rich portion of the Levant Basin.

Although the Israeli press frequently raises the specter of some aggression against its oil and gas installations by Hezbollah or even by the minuscule Lebanese navy, outside observers suggest the chance of such unprovoked attacks are slim to nonexistent. Because of its activities in neighboring Syria, "Hezbollah just doesn't have these kinds of resources and they are trying to manage a very delicate local mood," says a well-placed source close to the Shiite communities in Beirut. "More significantly, Iran has no interest whatsoever in this kind of collision now. And what Iran wants, Hezbollah does. It's the Israelis who are trying to take advantage of a nervous moment all around and see what they can get out of it."

In practical terms, says Terzian at Petrostrategies, nobody is going to invest with Lebanon in disputed waters. There are no Lebanese companies there capable of carrying out the drilling, and there is no military force that could protect them. But on the other side, things are different. “You have Israeli companies that have the ability to operate in offshore areas, and they could take the risk under the protection of the Israeli military.”

War on the high seas of the Eastern Med is not inevitable, of course. U.S. Ambassador Frederic Hof, now at the Atlantic Council’s Rafik Hariri Center, led the diplomatic effort to sort out those differences for much of 2011 and 2012. “EEZ disputes are very common around the world,” he tells me, and “they are normally settled through common sense compromise.”

But, then, common sense compromise has never been a common attribute among the nations of the Middle East.



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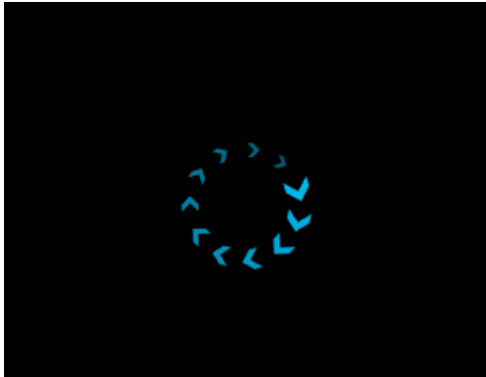
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Amir Cohen/Reuters

WORLD NEWS 08.04.14

Jesse
Rosenfeld

Under American Bombs in Gaza

Food for Palestinians and bombs for Israel. Uncle Sam gives to both—just not equally.

AL ATATRA, Gaza — During the brief ceasefire in a ferocious little war, as Gaza's people go back to their shattered homes to look for whatever is left to find, from Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun to Khuzaa, they come across the tailfins of American-supplied 120mm mortar rounds. The things are embedded in living room couches and rest amid smashed stucco and concrete slabs that used to be someone's walls. Craters and the twisted wreckage of buildings collapsed by bombs from the U.S.-made F16 "multirole fighters" in the Israeli air force are now part of the Gaza moonscape. Beneath some of the former homes and businesses, the bodies of those who couldn't escape American-supplied firepower are still decomposing.

Israel is the largest recipient of U.S. military assistance in the world—about \$3.1 billion a year these days, and some \$80 billion since the 1960s (without adjusting for inflation). As this war in Gaza drags on, Washington is committed to resupplying Israel with the weapons it needs to continue its assault. On July 30, the Pentagon, which stockpiles weapons in Israel, announced it was turning over large but unspecified quantities of 120mm mortar rounds (which were about to pass their shoot-by dates) to the Israeli military in a transaction so routine the White House didn't even need to be notified. Except that there's nothing routine about the Gaza slaughter. And that ammunition was needed by

Israel to continue its offensive.

Maybe that's why Palestinians were cynical when they heard U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry promise \$47 million in emergency humanitarian aid to Gaza at the end of July. Uncle Sam giveth, and Uncle Sam taketh away. But in the midst of this, their third major war in a decade, Gazans know that where they are concerned there's never remotely as much giving as there is taking away.

Some of Israel's depleted stockpiles of 120mm mortars are now scattered about the war-scarred home of the Abu Hashish family. They fled the town of Al Atatra near the Erez crossing to Israel on July 17 as Israeli bombardment intensified. Karim Abu Hashish took his wife and four kids to an UNRWA school shelter on the edge of Beit Lahiya.

“What I don't understand is why the Americans gives us food and then give bombs to Israel to kill us.”

When Israel announced this week it was redeploying its ground forces in the area, pulling back, the Abu Hashishes were some of the first families to pile their clothes, pillows and flower-patterned mattresses into a taxi and attempt to return home. The overcrowded school where the family had sought refuge was a scene of despair and squalor. Donkeys and horses crowded around the school's outer walls and broken water mains flooded the animal waste into the streets where hundreds of displaced kids tried to play. The families there wanted to go home whatever the cost.

But as the Abu Hashish family entered the eerie ghost town of shattered one-story homes around Al Atatra, they realized moving back while the war still raged might be a fatal mistake. Karim Abu Hashish bolted through his front door to find 120mm mortar rounds had punctured the walls and destroyed the rooms of his home.

Karim is a loyal member of the Fatah faction of Palestinians and a former employee of the Palestinain Authority (so he is among the “good guys” as far as Washington is concerned). But Karim has been without work since Hamas seized power in Gaza in 2007 and Israel imposed its seven-year blockade. He doesn't begin to have the resources to fix the shrapnel damage to his roof from the *last* Gaza war in 2012.

“It will take time to comprehend what’s happened here,” says Karim, standing in front of a Fatah poster in his small, dust filled living room with a gaping hole in the wall. “Maybe we will stay the night, maybe we will flee back to the school,” he said. An hour later, Israel shelled Al Atatra again.

For many Gazans, Israel’s use of U.S. supplied weapons to destroy their lives and kill their friends and relatives is a reality they resigned themselves to long ago. While there is anger at America as Israel’s enabler, there is more indignation at the hypocrisy of Washington offering aid to their maimed society, crippled with the help of Washington’s weaponry.

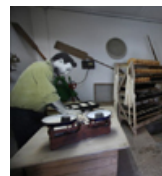
CRISIS IN GAZA



OLD HATE
EUROPE'S JEWS
PUNISHED FOR
ISRAEL'S WAR



TRAPPED
INSIDE THE GAZA
SCHOOLYARD
MASSACRE



DEEP STATE
ISRAEL'S SE
BULLET FAC

In the flattened north-Gaza town of Beit Hanoun, 24-year-old Tamer al Masri stands outside his family apartment next to his living room. The front wall is gone. It looks like a makeshift proscenium, the stage for what used to be his life. Tamer’s 10-year-old brother sits on a couch inside as neighbors and family pick through debris. Underneath the rubble is the other al Masri brother, an Al Qassem fighter who stayed after residents evacuated to try to slow Israel’s advance into Gaza.

“We have known about the use of U.S. weapons for a very long time,” he says, unfazed by America’s role in the death of his brother. “What I don’t understand is why the Americans gives us food and then give bombs to Israel to kill us.”



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PARTNER CONTENT

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THE NEW ALPHAS 08.04.14

Lenovo

Empowering Ideas: Dreaming With Your Feet On The Ground

from **lenovo.**

Each year, we are captivated by the brainpower of the latest generation of tech geeks, trailblazers, influencers, and scientists of every stripe. Globally, they're a surfeit of beautiful minds doing impactful work. At first, we may only be

familiar with their concepts, as typically they're little known outside of their professional field of colleagues. They are young, impassioned, best-in-class doers, builders, risk takers and game changers who are reshaping the world, attempting to make it smarter, more efficient, healthier... Plainly said, they are brains that make us drool.

Among them, anthropologists create protected areas for endangered species, astrophysicists investigate if there's life "out there" and where it may be, and scientists research treatments for infectious diseases not yet cured. Typically, they're not household names lavished across the evening's entertainment news headlines. But a coterie of driven creators and innovators who work quietly in labs and assorted think tanks across the country and the globe, whose imaginations are only slowed by their funding streams. Celebrities in their own rights, they are cross-talkers between disciplines, driving forces in education, and serial entrepreneurs.

FROM LENOVO



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SERIOUS WORK,
SERIOUS FUN



THE NEW ALPHAS
THE DOER
GENERATION



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THE RISE OF
THE SOCIAL
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One British philosopher recently posited that capitalism has gone awry not because there aren't enough regulations on businesses, but because consumer knowledge is in short supply. To his way of thinking, there's no need to ban 30-ounce soft drinks and fatty fast food, but rather an imperative to "better educate our desires" and seek out smart alternatives. It's a simple, yet bold notion that speaks to both sides of the contentious political spectrum.

"Be the change you want to be in the world" seems hackneyed, but fortunately many still take the slogan seriously, believing that if not them, then who? So, wunderkinds continue working on nuclear fusion in their basements and experts on how to alleviate hunger or decode fossils; visionaries imagine sustainable transportation; and designers rethink the nature of game development...

What is common among them is their tenacious single-mindedness and

dazzling optimism that help them launch their visions. Valuable traits they are for us all to mirror as we pursue our own goals to make a difference.

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Reuters

TECH + HEALTH 08.02.14

Kent
Sepkowitz

Caring for Ebola Patients Deeply Scary For Health Care Workers

An infectious disease doctor describes what might be going through the minds of health workers as they prepare to treat victims of Ebola.

With two patients infected with Ebola virus hurrying to their hospital, I imagine there are some healthcare workers at Emory University Hospital's isolation unit who are scared shitless.

I know I would be. The only time I ever have been really scared about catching a lethal infection was when SARS hit. Consider the specifics – a rapidly spreading, 10 percent fatal disease and no one knew what caused it, how it was transmitted, or why some people died and others didn't. Plus it hopped from China and Hong Kong to Toronto of all places, sickening and killing as it went – especially healthcare workers like me. Of the 8096 cases of SARS, 1706 occurred in healthcare workers — including many doctors who died.

So in 2013, when the call came that there was a person with possible SARS in our emergency room and could I come down and see her, I felt something I had not previously experienced. As an infectious disease specialist, I certainly had had my share of risky moments, but none of them scared me: I calmly had cared for AIDS patients before we knew what HIV was or how it was transmitted; I calmly had worked in a lab and cultured HIV on cells and

pipetted away supernatants; I calmly had worked at a Manhattan hospital, now closed, during the largest outbreak of extensively resistant TB (XDR-TB) in the history of the United States; I calmly spent time on smallpox preparations and I never have been faintly alarmed about influenza.

But SARS got to me. It was mysterious and lethal and picked off young and old. Carlo Urbani, the WHO doctor who was the world's expert on SARS, got it and died. Boom just like that. I was stunned.

And so, though I knew that no cases of SARS had hit the US and that the double gloves and double masks I was donning would likely protect me, even if the patient were the first on American soil, when the call came, I felt scared shitless.

SARS got to me. It was mysterious and lethal and picked off young and old. Carlo Urbani, the WHO doctor who was the world's expert on SARS, got it and died. Boom just like that.

So I think I know what some people at Emory Hospital might be feeling right now, though their challenge is exponentially greater than mine. First, they too are scared shitless – no doubt about it. It's the extreme version of the sick feeling a person gets when preparing to jump off the high dive for the first time. Animal panic always routs rational odds making. You figure everything will be OK but you wonder how why and where on earth you ended up where you ended up. What the fuck was I thinking?

Second, they wonder if their family will ever forgive them if they get sick. I worked in the HIV lab while my wife was pregnant with our first son and would stare out the window imagining my wife explaining to my fatherless boy about what happened to Daddy. Would she say I was a hero, someone who bravely tried to move science forward? Or that I was a selfish imprudent slob who thought that the chance at a small slice of glory was worth gambling with the happiness of loved ones?

Third, they are mad at the situation, the hospital, the patient, the world. There is something infuriating about being in such a situation, one where you realize the massive power and heartlessness of brute fate and your own puniness as history itself grinds forward.

But last, I suspect they will have a sense of pride that they are the ones, the

ones entrusted with this scary task. ICU sorts of rooms, such as I imagine the Emory facility has, always are a bit disorienting, full of machines and futuristic sounds and strange angles. Plus wearing gowns, gloves, goggles and masks imparts an eerie moonwalk sensation as one enters the facility.

Yet through all the noise and hubbub created by weird machines and the extra staff directing worker flow to make certain that everyone is doing the safest thing, there they are: the patients, Brantly and Writebol, very ill people on hospital beds with taped-down intravenous lines and oxygen, connected to various other tubes and wires. Frail, desperate people. And then, corny as it sounds, I imagine the workers will forget the fear immediately and think, ok what do I have to do to help these guys.



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NYPD

U.S. NEWS 08.04.14



Bronx Gunman Shot His Friend, Didn't Spill His Drink

A security camera caught the man in the red shirt and green cap firing on his pal—and then showed five men calmly stepping over the victim, recalling the infamous Kitty Genovese case.

The most shocking part of the security camera video is not where the gunman in a red polo shirt and green baseball cap empties his silver automatic pistol into his supposed friend.

Nor is it where the gunman then viciously pistol whips his victim repeatedly for having the temerity not to die.

Nor is it the way the gunman manages not to spill a drop of the drink in his other hand as he commits all this savagery.

The worst of it comes after the gunman delivers a final blow and departs this small grocery store on Webster Avenue in the Bronx.

One by one, five other men calmly step over the wounded man with horrifying indifference, evidencing no concern at all except maybe not stepping in the blood.

The third of the five men does pause for a moment as the victim struggles to

rise despite wounds to his head, chest, and both legs.

The victim then collapses and the third man just steps past him, as did the two men before, as do the two who come afterward.

Fifty years ago, the whole nation was shocked by reports that dozens of neighbors had done nothing on hearing the screams of Kitty Genovese as she was stabbed to death near her home in Queens.

The Bronx security camera video from early Saturday morning is in some ways more disturbing than that infamous, long ago failure of strangers to act.

The owner of the grocery reports that everyone involved in this new horror—the gunman, the victim, and the five others—know each other.

“They are all friends,” the owner, Ali Abdulla, told The Daily Beast on Monday. “They spend all day being together.”

He could not immediately explain how friends could suddenly behave this way.

“Overnight hate,” he said.

He is originally from Yemen, and he added, “It does not just happen in the Middle East,”

Abdulla has been running the store for 23 years. He was at McDonald’s early Saturday morning, getting dinner for his two late-night workers, when one of them called to say there had been a shooting. He hurried back and learned that a group of young men had come in after filming a rap video out on Webster Avenue.

The young men had been drinking, and an argument erupted over who was better schooled in rap music. The dispute had quickly escalated from spitting to deafening gunfire as the workers looked on in terror.

No thanks to his supposed friends, the 37-year-old victim is expected to live. The store was open for business Monday, the security camera that captured the disturbing images just inside the front door, the linoleum floor scarred in at least three places by bullets.

“You have empty boxes?” a woman asked.

“Empty boxes, come back at 6 or 7,” the clerk behind the counter said.

The victim’s brother entered the store wearing a dark blue shirt, gray shorts, and sunglasses, his hair in braids. He had good reason to believe that this was one place the gunman would not be found. He said nothing as he exited soon after.

The owner, Abdulla, stood outside, speaking about the local men of the street

and sounding like a voice from the bad old days, before New York became the safest big city in America.

He still had
his drink and
his gun in the
grocery when
he allegedly
answered
spit with
bullets.

“Every one of them walk with his pistol,” Abdulla reported. “Everybody walk around with a gun in his waist.”

A few doors up Webster Avenue stood Brightside Academy, which had signs in its windows announcing sign-ups for the full day pre-kindergarten program that was one of Mayor Bill de Blasio’s main campaign issues. He seems well on the way to making good on his promise to make it available to all.

Another issue was stop and frisk, which the police had been using to keep shootings down. The idea was to deter men such as the guy in the red polo shirt and green baseball cap from carrying a gun that they might pull out in a fit of fury.

After an equally disturbing video showed a cop applying an apparently fatal chokehold to a man suspected of selling individual “loosie” cigarettes, some critics accused the NYPD of using petty quality-of-life violations as “the new stop and frisk.”

In truth, the police have continued to stop and frisk, but generally with a higher threshold for making the search, as happened Saturday night, when cops spotted a young man placing something in a female companion’s waistband as they approached him outside a known drug-dealing location. The something was allegedly a .25 caliber pistol. The young man proved to be the very person who had made the chokehold video.

As for petty crime enforcement, even some top NYPD commanders have a mistaken understanding of its original intent when it was implemented during the mid-1990s, along with the other policing strategies by which Deputy Police Commissioner Jack Maple transformed New York.

Maple often emphasized before his untimely death from cancer that the petty crime enforcement was not an outgrowth of the famous “Broken Windows” theory proposed in 1982 by a pair of academics whom he called “snake oil salesmen.” That theory held that small signs of disorder foster serious crime.

Maple described his strategy as an outgrowth of the “breaking balls” theory long held by true crime experts, these being street cops. The idea was to catch criminals in petty violations with the hope that they either will be carrying a gun or will have an outstanding warrant for ignoring previous violations.

Had a cop seen the man in the red polo shirt with his drink out on Webster Avenue when they were just shooting the rap video, a public drinking summons and accompanying search might well have produced that silver pistol.

Had the cops still been pursuing stop and frisk as aggressively as before, the man might not have been carrying the gun in the first place.

But he still had his drink and his gun in the grocery when he allegedly answered spit with bullets.

On Monday, which happened to be the 13th anniversary of Maple’s death, the man was now being hunted by detectives, who were all but sure to catch him and charge him with the least petty of crimes.

The supposed friends who stepped over the grievously wounded man as he lay twitching and bleeding on the floor will face no charges at all.



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