



COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY**  
Lamar Smith, Chairman

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**Statement of Energy Subcommittee Chairman Randy Weber (R-Texas)**

*Eastern Mediterranean Energy: Challenges and Opportunities for U.S. Regional Priorities*

**Chairman Weber:** Good afternoon and welcome to today's Joint Subcommittee hearing examining energy opportunities in the Eastern Mediterranean. I want to thank my colleagues on the Committee on Foreign Affairs for working with the Science Committee to hold this important hearing.

Today, we'll have the opportunity to receive an update on U.S. diplomacy and regional energy development, and will conduct important oversight of the Department of Energy's ongoing cooperative research and development programs with our allies in the region. We'll specifically hear about DOE's energy engagement with Israel, the key U.S. ally in the region.

The Department of Energy plays a vital role in ensuring global energy security. By engaging with our allies through energy, environment, and technology cooperation, DOE provides opportunity for international researchers to access the scientists and research infrastructure at our national labs. It also gives U.S. researchers the chance to work with new partners on innovative research, and opens the door for future discoveries and technology breakthroughs. This kind of collaboration provides opportunity for international dialogue, and directly supports U.S. diplomatic efforts around the world.

In the Eastern Mediterranean, our strongest ally is Israel. So it's no surprise that DOE has a long history of cooperation with Israel on energy research and technology development.

Starting with a research partnership that was formalized in 1987, the Department has consistently prioritized this strategic partnership. Energy security is a key priority for Israel, and directly contributes to regional stability. By enabling Israeli development of their natural resources – including the sizeable Tamar, Dalit, and Leviathan off-shore natural gas deposits – the U.S. can promote economic growth and help establish trade relationships between Israel and its neighbors.

Noble Energy, a U.S. company based in Houston, TX, helped discover these gas fields. And today, the ongoing research partnership between DOE and Israeli scientists will provide technical expertise and technology to help successfully develop and export this resource. With regional partnerships to develop pipeline infrastructure, Israel's

natural gas resources could even fuel Europe, serving as an alternative to Russian natural gas and providing energy security to more U.S. allies.

DOE is also engaging with Israel on renewable energy, cybersecurity, desalination, and energy storage technology, and efforts to protect our critical infrastructure. Maintaining this dialogue and cooperation with our key ally should remain a U.S. priority. In the past year, we have seen DOE take a leading role in negotiating U.S. international agreements. In the case of the Iran nuclear deal and the Paris Climate Agreement, my colleagues and I have raised serious concerns. So I'm pleased to discuss DOE engagement where we see clear benefits for the U.S. and our allies and the potential for real breakthroughs in energy technology.

I want to thank Assistant Secretary Elkind and Special Envoy Hochstein for testifying to the Committees today. Your testimony will provide a valuable update to Congress on the impact of energy on regional stability, and how your respective Departments can best engage to support our allies and advance U.S. goals.

By supporting cooperative research and development with our allies, the Department of Energy can contribute to U.S. diplomacy, the security of our allies, and promote groundbreaking energy research.

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