Oil and Politics in the Eastern Mediterranean: the Lebanese/Israel fault line

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ABSTRACT:

Several maritime issues appeared the last ten years in the Eastern Mediterranean basin due to the delimitations of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). This shaping of new maritime borders meant to delineate sovereignty rights on maritime off shores resources, mainly oil and gas. Between Lebanon and Israel, the maritime dispute came to light in 2011 when Israel officially adopted its Exclusive Economic Zone. It was related to a general context: the spreading of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as a common reference around the globe; the exploration and offshore surveys that started in the 2000’s in the region of the Levant basin and the US geological survey confirming the huge potential in gas resources there. The presentation will intend to reach three main goals:

- Understanding the origins and the context of the contested maritime zone in the southern section of Lebanon’s EEZ and the legitimacy of Lebanon’s claim.
- Evaluating the reasons of this maritime issue in the context of gas exploitation, regarding the Law of the Sea and regional States’ behaviour.
- Assessing the evolution of the situation in the aftermath of the formation of the new government by the end of 2016 and understanding where we are heading now.

The presentation will provide a political sociology of the power struggle related to maritime boundary dispute and will bring legal and historical components of the case in order to highlight how a border issue related to hydrocarbon resources can be shape into a political issue which may trigger a confrontation along the Lebanese Southern border between Israel and Hizbullah.
Readings:


Unpublished papers / UN documents online:


Geographical coordinates for the delimitation of the northern limit of the territorial sea and exclusive economic zone of the state of Israel and Lebanon:

