Doha Forum 2025

I was pleased to attend this year's **DohaForum2025** with my **Gulfsands** colleagues **Sir Alan Duncan** and **Sir Charles Hendry**, a gathering that continues to serve as an important platform for dialogue on regional cooperation, diplomacy, and the future stability of the Middle East.

On the eve of the first anniversary of the fall of the Assad regime, it was great to see so much positivity from so many regarding the new era in Syria.

I had the privilege of participating in an invitation-only roundtable entitled "***The Path Forward for Transition in Syria***" alongside distinguished government representatives and hosted by **Charles Lister** of the Middle East Institute. Guest speaker was **Tom Barrack**, Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey & Special Envoy for Syria, and the discussion was far-reaching, insightful, and underscored the importance of a stable, unified Syria and the crucial role that the energy industry will play in Syria's transition.

In the main forum, **Syrian President, H.E. Ahmed Al-Sharaa** shared his vision for his country's future and position in the region. He rightly spoke of the importance of continued dialogue and cross-border cooperation as Syria and its neighbours navigate a rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape. I note in particular his calls for *"pragmatic engagement"* and a focus on *"reconstruction, economic renewal, and the dignity of our people."*. He further explained that *"Regional partnerships are no longer optional; they are essential .... built on sustained trust, transparency, and long-term economic commitment."*

We at Gulfsands couldn't agree more, and look forward to strengthening our engagement with the Syrian government as we prepare for a full return to operations.

"John Bell – Managing Director, Gulfsands"