

Russia and energy security in Caspian Sea Basin

Ghorban Khosravi

PhD in Geopolitics special in Energy Security

Payam e noor University, tehran, Iran Faculty of Social and Economic

Abstract:

During the Soviet Union era, all republics were under the same rule and the relations and foreign policies were pursued by the central government. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of the Caspian Basin countries, these countries tried to distance themselves from its undisputed heir (Russia) so more. Of course Russia also did not initially try to interfere in their affairs. With the west intervention and intrusion in this area, the Russians found that their back yard has been seriously attacked by their previous enemy and today's serious competitor. So they tried to improve this process. But the United States and West and their military and security arm, faced with the independent countries that they were unwilling to have a relationship with Russia. The hot market of energy and diversification of pipelines and energy security was an appropriate excuse for the West for this new relationship. Thus, Russia is facing a serious risk and this risk not only is related to Russia but to Iran and china. For this purpose, the only solution for this area is convergence process with the participation of all countries involved which several organizations, including the SCO have been responsible for this task in past years.

KEY WORDS: Russia- US.-China- Iran- Energy Security_ Caspian Sea Central Asia – Caucasus

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, as the only heir of the mighty superpower Russia leans on its sources and interests. However the collapse of the Soviet Union showed Russia in a weak position in the field of international relations nearly a decade, but the sleeping giant could rejuvenate and show itself. Having a significant share of global energy (First place in the world gas reserves and production) and also having significant amounts of oil, Russia can play a strategic role in the world to future energy policy. The Impact of interrupting gas to Ukraine on Europe faced these countries and the United States with spending huge investment in the diversification of energy lines. This is while all energy analysts know that for energy supply, especially the European gas; Sooner or later they will be more dependent on Russia. In this paper, the researcher tries to answer the question whether Russia will play a key role in energy security of Caspian region? How Diversification of energy lines can keep Russia away from its monopoly position?

Research method in this paper will be descriptive - analytic, using library resources and also use of information and statistics and maps created by the researcher by GIS software.

Russia in Central Asia and Caucasus:

In 1995 The Russian president issued a decree and emphasized on Russia's national interests in the region and strategic direction to the CIS countries. In this sentence, creating an exclusive sphere of influence and minimizing the presence and influence of foreign powers were emphasized.

In the region, Russia follows its economic interests through the exploitation of resources, especially oil, gas and raw materials in Central Asia and Caucasus, its Ethnic and cultural benefits through the protection of the rights of around 10 million ethnic Russian minority living in the region, its military-strategic interests by preventing instability and conflict in the region and its political interests by countering the spread of radical Islamism in the region.

One important aspect of relations between Russia and Central Asian republics in opposition to foreign influence became apparent in the Caspian Sea region. Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan leaders' tendencies to benefit from Western investment and reduce their

vulnerability against Russia are to be noted to deal with the consequences of political and economic convergence in this context.

In many ways, Moscow's policy in Central Asia and Caucasus regions has concentrated on preventing the influence of other powers in the region including Turkey, Iran and recently the United States.

Leading role of Russia in the surrounding republics has been considered. Wide activities for "peacekeeping" was conducted by Russia for example, in Tajikistan so that Russian strategists know these efforts for peace in the near abroad as means to strengthen and emphasize on the role of Superiority of Russian Federation.

In 1992, Russia developed its new strategy and named geographic areas of the former Soviet Union as Russia's national security resources.

Russia should not forget that if it leaves this area, others will enter the region; something that won't add anything to security of Russia. South Caucasus like Central Asia has great importance for Russia. Given that North Caucasus is located in southern Russia, any unexpected change in the North Caucasus is considered equal to undermine the country's territorial integrity. Especially if we consider that More than 100 ethnic groups live in the Russian Federation and 21 regions and autonomous republics based on ethnic boundaries are formed. Russians angry reaction to Orientation independence of Chechnya originated from this Russia's concerns.

Russia currently provides 44% of gas consumed in Europe. The country has a total of 33% gas and 1% oil, 20% coal and 14% uranium in the world, about one-fifth of the world's energy resources. Here the European Union is the largest consumer and investor in the energy sector (oil - gas) of Russia. Overall, Russia supplies 7% of EU energy. Preparation of 37% of oil, natural gas 24%, solid fuels 17%, nuclear energy 14%, and 7% of renewable energy for EU is Russia's contribution.

As regards to the production of 62 billion cubic meters of gas, Russia has 6/19% of world gas production in his hand in 2008.

Russia also wants to have the right to control how to sell gas from the Caspian Sea to Europe and Asia. And It wants to have a monopoly of political and economic competition of former Soviet Union. Washington also claims that energy imports from Russia are a potential political threat to Europe. Of course, some believe that this claim has not been established because Russia always values its transactions. Accordingly, nowadays it is estimated that 25% GNP and 50% of Russian budget revenues is achieved in this way.

Astapanov says: by using energy as a weapon; the new Russia is seeking to rebuild its empire. The symptoms include: Strategy 2020 in the energy industry to reduce environmental damage, improve technology in energy consumption, reduce energy costs and increase production capacity in oil and gas industry within the country.

Russia's gas industry is in the hands of the large company 'Gazprom'. This company with about 300 thousand personnel is the world's largest producer of gas and 20% of total gas in the world. Control of pipelines network in Russia, 90% of the country's oil industry management, Ownership of a quarter of world natural gas reserves are in the hands of this company. With this, having the power of global gas, Russians have not been disappointed. Meanwhile, in 2003, Putin announced at the meeting of Gazprom Board of Directors he expects that The Company become a powerful political and economic pyramid in order to influence other regions of the world Due to Gazprom resistance power in the political pressure exerted on the European Union through a gas cut to raise prices, was one of the cases that Russia imposed the issue of transport gas to Europe. According to IEA statistics in 2008 Russia is the major producer and exporter of natural gas with little more than 30% of its total production.