
Will The Gas Cartel Be Established And What Should Be Armenia's Expectations?

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The meeting of the ministers of gas exporter countries in Doha, capital of Qatar, may become the birthplace of a gas cartel like OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), which, as gas importers fear, may set the market prices. Countries, whose representatives were in Doha, have about 42% of the world gas production in their control; this is almost the share the OPEC countries possess.

/PanARMENIAN.Net/ States possessing energy vectors seem to have decided to display some pressure on Europe using economic methods, which always acquire political meaning in the end. Establishment of gas OPEC initiates from Iran's and Russia's wish to be least dependent on the USA and it should better be through Europe, for namely the European gas consumers will find themselves in difficult situation in case the cartel is really established. NATO thinks that the gas cartel will aim at giving Russia the opportunity to realize its political goals, first of all regarding the bordering countries of Georgia and Ukraine, through the energy policy implementation. Europe is perfectly aware that the economy will simply stop functioning without Russian gas, as it does not possess enough resources of its own. And Russia is considered the major gas supplier - Europe receives over 60% of the natural gas and 43% oil necessary. Many EU Countries, which are already anxious about the growing dependence on imported supplies from the East and their probable seizure in case of any conflict between Moscow and Eastern Europe countries, are concerned with Russia's participation in the forum together with its largest gas resources in the world. Besides the East still remembers well the oil embargo imposed in 1970's.

The first rumors about establishing the gas cartel appeared in November of 2006. It became known from NATO's internal report, which had somehow appeared in the Financial Times, immediately after which the RF President's press-service qualified the rumors as quite groundless. However in January of 2007 the religious leader of Iran ayatollah Ali Hominy made an official suggestion in Moscow about establishing "gas OPEC". Vladimir Putin called this suggestion worth attention.

House of Representatives of the US Congress turned to the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice with a letter regarding the establishment of gas OPEC. The letter demands to inform the Russian government that establishment of the gas cartel will be regarded as an intentional threat for the US, and the gas cartel itself - as "a global organization of blackmail and racketing", the Commersant writes.

Nevertheless, there is also another view point existing among experts; unlike oil, gas is sold according to long-term contracts and its most part is transmitted through pipe line, so instead of one global market many regional ones will exist. There is one more accepted truth; it will take at least a year or two for all the interested parties

to come to an agreement on the establishment of the cartel.

How this idea will tell on Trans-Caspian gas pipe line Armenia wants to connect to, is not clear yet. It is very probable that it may be the very regional project that gas supplying countries will be interested in.

True, everything depends on Azeri position, which will by no means agree with Armenia's participation in this project. Yet the encouraging fact is that Azerbaijan and Turkey are not included in the forum, while Iran and Russia, which are friendlier to Armenia, are.

The gas exporters' forum was intended to be organized in 2001 by Algeria, Brunei, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, Russia and Turkmenistan - countries having more than 70 world gas supplies in their control.

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