
Overcoming challenges

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Thanks to its policy after the Orange revolution Ukraine which is still calling Russia its "neighbor" and "historically close country" has managed to introduce a new term "adjacent gas transportation systems" of Russia and Ukraine amid the escalation of the gas conflict.

This term shows that the escalation of the conflict continues and there are many signs which prove that the goal of this gas war - total control of Ukraine by the US, turning Ukraine into a tool of American policy in Europe and even wider in Eurasia.

Can anyone see any other meaning in the following statement from the Charter on Strategic Partnership between US and Ukraine dated 19 December, 2008, which says that "the parties shall closely work together on restoration and modernization of the potential of Ukraine's gas transit infrastructure"? What is the interest of US here? The gas pipe from Russia doesn't go to US, does it.

And the issue has nothing to do with "democracy and human rights".

The restoration always comes after destruction, and what we see today is the process of destruction.

What countries declare their readiness to keep and modernize the gas transportation system of Ukraine? The EU and Russia. However Russia is being regarded as the country which wants to get control over Ukraine's gas transit network.

They talk about "provocative" transportation of gas by "Gazprom" for European countries via the route the Russian gas giant chose on 13 January.

Three members of the Ukrainian presidential administration (Baloga, Kislinsky and Sokolovsky) simultaneously speak about Russia's "gas attack" and claim that Gazprom is trying to avoid its bankruptcy by taking control over Ukraine's gas transit system: "it is obvious that Gazprom feels helpless failing to find a mechanism of gas balance for 2009", etc...

Brussels keeps on saying it has no intentions to interfere in the Russia-Ukraine gas row and thinks it will never learn the names of those who are to blame for the suspension of gas deliveries to Europe (actually, there is an opportunity to learn the names of the culprits). However, the EU members decide to hold another conference to discuss Ukraine's gas transportation system modernization in March, 2009. By the way, this is the third time when the information about the conference appears. But hardly anyone should expect this conference to take place... But why?

The Premier of Ukraine says the work of a three-sided group of observers will last not more than a month or two. And she knows what she is saying. And not because the day when the observers can start their work in Ukraine is still undefined and "RosUkrEnergo" control 75% of the national gas market (according to A. Gritsenko)...

In the meantime the people continue to consume the gas, though its burnout temperature is two or three times lower than it was last year (the gas meter is on, and the volume of fuel is multiplied by the tariff in hryvnas which increased by third). Dozens of factories halt production but the officials repeat the pumped gas is enough. The president instructs the country's Interior Ministry, the Emergency Situations Ministry and the Security Council to control the transit of gas...

Strange as it might seem, from a political point of view Ukraine is quite successful. Following the creation of the EU monitoring team on 11 January, President's Representative on International Energy Security Bohdan Sokolovsky said: "the creation of this group means the beginning of the implementation of one of the projects initiated by President Yushchenko in 2007-2008 as part of the Krakow Initiative outset by the leaders of Ukraine, Poland, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Lithuania.

On the official website of Victor Yushchenko we can read the following: "The project was proposed to establish a joint coordination center for monitoring the transit of energy resources from the Caspian, the Black and the Baltic Seas to the West".

In November, 2008, at the summit in Baku, Victor Yushchenko also proposed a series of projects aimed at modernizing infrastructure, but then his plans were left unnoticed. Among other things, Yushchenko suggested establishing a metrological center in the town of Boyarka outside Kiev as an affiliate of the East European regional metrological center, and an insurance company that would deal with the transit of hydrocarbons. His other proposals were a center for logistics and security and the Association of oil and gas operators.

Maybe the aforesaid projects do not contradict with the announcements made by Victor Yushchenko concerning the earliest integration of Ukraine's gas transit system into that of Europe, but they at least do not meet the interests of the European consumers as the EU is thinking of transit margin and resale of energy resources it receives from the producer.

The authors of the projects did not seem to be thinking of Russia at all. On 8 January Ukraine's Foreign Ministry said: "The fact that Ukraine is going to join the Energy Cooperation Treaty proves intention to follow the rules of the EU. Together we will be able to avoid new crisis in future".

Thus Kiev again urged Europe to use Ukraine as a tool against Russia. For how long? Europe will hardly benefit from this.

It seems that the ongoing gas dispute is just the beginning of work launched by the interdepartmental strategic group on Ukraine-Russia cooperation set by Victor Yushchenko in early December, 2008.

If so, the continuation may be even worse, especially amid the recent steps made by the Ukrainian leader in the military sphere. He turned down a NATO-like model of armed forces but said the country would anyway seek the Euro-Atlantic integration. He also plans to increase the army and switch on to the voluntary military service. This all proves that Ukraine is serving not NATO but US, willing to seize control of Europe with the help of big Ukrainian army.

*** From the one hand, these new old measures will lead only to further escalation of tensions between Russia and Ukraine. From the other hand, the peoples of Russia and Ukraine are becoming more aware of the real goals of the Ukrainian leadership: the official Kiev has been trying to undermine partnership between the two greatest countries of the Eastern Europe.

Friendly ties between Russia and Ukraine - this is what will always really matter.
