
'Iran is best path for regional gas'

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The managing director of the National Iranian Gas Export Company, Reza Kasaizadeh

Iran provides the shortest and most economic path to transfer Central Asian energy supplies to world markets, gas officials believe.

Iran, holder of the world's second largest gas reserves, currently exports around 10 billion cubic meters of gas to Turkey per year and is discussing agreements to transfer gas to its other neighbors, including Pakistan, the UAE, Kuwait and Bahrain.

According to plans, Turkey will become a key transit route for Iranian gas supplies to Europe. Gas will then be transferred to Greece, Italy and the rest of Europe.

'On one hand, Iran bridges the Caspian Sea and Central Asia to the Persian Gulf countries, Pakistan and India and on the other hand the country serves as a link between the Central Asian region and Europe,' said managing director of the National Iranian Gas Export Company, Reza Kasaizadeh, talking at an international exhibition titled 'Oil and Gas of Turkmenistan - 2008' in Turkmenistan's capital, Ashgabat.

The US Energy Secretary recently expressed confidence that the incoming Obama administration will maintain an interest in Caspian Sea energy resources.

'It is my firm belief that this effort and this region of the world will also be a priority for the next administration,' Samuel Bodman said last week at an energy summit in Baku, Azerbaijan, attended by presidents and senior officials from regional nations.

Since the Russia-Georgia military confrontation in August, during which a gas pipeline passing through Georgia was attacked, Europe has been considering the development of projects such as the Nabucco pipeline as alternatives.

Once completed, the Nabucco pipe will transport natural gas from Turkey to Austria, via Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary.

Meanwhile, Turkish Energy Minister Hilmi Guler said 'Turkey and Europe need Iran' to supply them with natural gas after the two countries signed an agreement on the development of Iran's South Pars gas field and the transfer of Iranian gas to Europe.

Under the agreement, Turkey is expected to annually transfer 35 billion cubic meters of Iranian gas to Europe.
