
In Fact, Baku-Tbilisi-Jeihan Pipeline Is Not Accurately Protected

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Fire on the oil-pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Jeihan (BTJ) is not yet put out and it may still continue for several days. As the Turkish side informs, repair work will last till August 14. Actually happened what was repeatedly spoken about: the pipeline passes through a hazardous zone and terrorist acts are not excluded. In spite of confirmations, Azerbaijan and Turkey are not able to ensure security of the pipeline.

/PanARMENIAN.Net/ The responsibility for the explosion in the BTJ pipeline terrorist act was undertaken by the Kurdistan Workers' Party. At the moment Baku-Supsa pipeline is enabled for exporting oil. Railway delivery of oil is also being discussed. The main oil provider in the BTJ is Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli (ACG) oil field, where more than 800 thousand barrels of oil is extracted a day. The accident might make the BP Azerbaijan apply all the transport alternatives of Jeihan: Baku-Novorossiysk (output - 100 thousand barrels daily), Baku-Supsa (output - 135 thousand barrels daily), railway of Baku-Batumi (carrying capacity - 300 thousand barrels a day), and Baku-Kulevi (carrying capacity - 200 thousand barrels a day).

As it turns out, the pipeline is not as secure as the U.S.A. would like to see it. But the present and future possible explosions may strike the Nabucco project, though it is already on the verge of collapse. Last Friday "Gazprom" signed two important contracts with Ashgabat, which outlined a new scheme of delivering the Turkmen gas. The first contract gives a thorough description of conditions on which Russia is going to purchase gas in Turkmenistan for the coming 20 years. The second contract is unique in itself as it makes "Gazprom" a regional donor for the Turkmen energy projects. As a matter of fact, both contracts ensure Russia's control over the export of the Turkmen gas. According to the second contract "Gazprom" must finance and build new transport networks, as well as extend the gas fields of Turkmenistan. According to the calculations of experts, the amount of financing the Turkmen projects will mount to USD 4-6 billion. Head of "Gazprom" Alexei Miller said: "We have agreed that "Gazprom" is to finance and build new large pipelines starting from the eastern part of the country, extend the gas fields and enlarge possibilities of the Turkmen sector to increase the flow capacity of the Caspian pipeline up to 30 milliard cubic meters." "Gazprom is to finance these regional projects in the form of 0%. Net profit of Turkmenistan is calculated 240-480 million," oil.ru reports.

Besides, Russia has revived its interest toward the idea of "gas cartel". President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev referred to this idea at the visit of the Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez in Moscow. "Such forum of gas exporters would promote a world balance on this matter. The forum might give answers to such questions as where and how much gas must be mined," considers the Head of "Gazprom".

Hitherto Moscow has been hypersensitive toward the European opposition's idea of such a cartel. However, the high prices for gas weaken the negative position of the EC.

The contracts with Turkmenistan further consolidated Russian control over the export of central gas. "Gazprom" has proposed Azerbaijan purchasing all of its gas at the European price (Medvedev visited Baku on July 3-4). Presently Baku is enthusiastically studying the Ashgabat agreements. The main point of such a move on the part of Russia is her serious treatment of the campaign conducted by the U.S.A. and the EC on initiating the Nabucco project, which, passing from Turkey through Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary, laid hopes on the Turkmen gas and on the pipeline that would join Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan on the seabed of the Caspian Sea. The project would join the system of pipelines passing through the Caucasus with the already existing pipelines, such as Baku-Tbilisi-Jeihan.

However, with no access to the Turkmen gas the vitality of Nabucco is put at stake. And without Nabucco the U.S. strategy directed to the reduction of European dependence on the Russian energy suppliers is useless. Accordingly, Washington faces a choice: to take what she is offered or to take nothing. In the light of the Friday agreements signed in Ashgabat the implementation of this project depends on the delivery of gas from the Middle East, in particular from Iran. As for Turkey, it is inclined to the idea of supplying the Iranian gas into Europe, and offers its mediation in the USA-Iran opposition.

Meanwhile, the Economist writes: "'Elite egoism" must probably be considered the most dangerous problem, since the scale of state willfulness in Azerbaijan has overstepped all the limits, even in comparison with such countries as Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, or such neighbouring states as Georgia and Armenia. For the last two years a whole range of large-scale enterprises have been "attacked" by the authorities like in the case of "UKOS". The Azpetrol Ltd, which specializes on the sale of oil products and is considered the most effective company of the country, was seized by the Government on the eve of the Parliamentary Elections 2005 and its shareholders were imprisoned. Shortly after it, the Turkish power supplier Barmek was made to terminate its activities in Azerbaijan. These are only the best known examples that confirm the fall of the business atmosphere in the country. However, the fact was not revealed in the international Mass Media: from the second half of 2006 Azeri businessmen initiated mass "migration" into Georgia and Kazakhstan, where, in their opinion, the business atmosphere was more appealing.
