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# Turkey : The Political Context of Energetic Developments

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Recently it has been much spoken about the prospects of Turkey to become an international energetic centre. For example, according to some calculations presented by the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of that country in 2008 if Turkey's oil transportation capacities (first of all oil pipelines) go on working with the same extent and if the planned projects are implemented then in 2012 6-7% of oil will flow through the territory of Turkey. In accordance with the same organ Turkey is in close vicinity of 72,7% of proven oil reserves and 71,8% of proven natural gas reserves.

Taking into account the well-known geographic advantages of Turkey it becomes clear that this country cannot but have serious financial objectives in the energy carriers' transportation business. But on the other hand, the essential changes, which can be observed in the foreign policy of Turkey both in general and in regional approaches, let us conclude that the aims of energy strategy of Ankara derive from Turkish foreign policy and must be firstly observed in that context.

Situational analysis Even today there are a number of factors, which speak about the close increase of the role of Turkey as an intermediary country in the international energy system.

Mainly after the Russian-Georgian war and recent gas conflict between Russia and Ukraine European states began to take more seriously the idea of getting Middle East, Caspian and Central Asian utilities through the territory of Turkey. For example, in the issue of natural gas the Europeans suppose that they have three alternatives to Russia, i.e. Norway, Algeria and Turkey<sup>1</sup>, but even today it is clear that the first two are not simply able to supply the necessary amount of gas, so that it would efficiently lessen the dependence on "Gazprom"<sup>2</sup>. Meanwhile, in the line of Turkey the sector, where almost the half of proven gas reserves in the world is concentrated, becomes available<sup>3</sup>. Of course, in the past the Turkish direction has also been topical for Europe but the new item is that now they reconsider the time schedule and we are still to see the new indices.

The second important factor is the American-Iranian and European-Iranian negotiations and the end of the Iraqi campaign of the US, which is planned for 2011. In case if those two processes have a successful result European consumers may get the access to two countries (Iran and Iraq) with reach utilities. Together those countries possess 20,5% of world proven oil reserves and 17,5% of proven gas reserves. But for Europe and the United States Turkey, in fact, is the only convenient option for the transportation of that oil and gas to the European Union and to lessen its dependence on Russia. The aim to reach the agreement in strategic sphere of energy must be regarded as one of the reasons of the current negotiations between the US and Iran. Energetic is the only sphere, perhaps, which creates an opportunity for serious agreements between Iran, the USA and Europe.

And finally, the third factor is the aspiration of Kazakhstan and mainly of Turkmenistan to enter western markets. Though till now Russia has managed successfully to keep its control over energy capabilities of Central Asian countries, one should not exclude that the "opening" of Iran will create an opportunity for the US and Europe to get to the energy resources of Central Asia.

As it was mentioned, the purpose of Turkey to become an international energetic centre is not restricted to mainly energetic or financial aims. It is remarkable that on January 2009 in Brussels during the talks on the possible accession of Turkey to the European Union, the prime-minister Erdogan connected the issues of the expediency of the "Nabucco", which will be built on the territory of Turkey, and the accession of Ankara to the EU.

Of course, the problem of "Nabucco" can hardly have any essential influence on the accession of Turkey to the EU but it seems unlikely that Ankara pins its hopes on it. This step by Erdogan pursues the aim to show the approaches formed in the foreign policy of Turkey while relating with the countries, which import energy carriers and in the future with the countries, which sell those energy carriers; to use the opportunities offered to an intermediary country.

If we try to formulate briefly that innovation, then Ankara intends to bring the facilities of the country, which is an energetic center, to the level of geostrategic position and military and political capabilities, and this will only attach weight to the country in the regional and global relations<sup>4</sup>.

The aforementioned is manifested by the fact that at present moment Turkey starts rather active energetic (first of all oil and gas) collaboration with all its neighbours: Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Greece, Russia, Israel, Balkan states. It is not a mere chance that the process of the normalization of the relations between Armenia and Turkey coincided with the agreements in the sphere of energetic (the agreement about purchase and sale of electric energy).

Conclusions The strategy of Turkey to become the energetic centre pursues two aims.

The first aim is to ensure the proper presence of Ankara in global decision-making in the ongoing process of the transformation of international political and economic system. In the past it was done mainly by being the NATO member and the most important ally of the US in the Middle East and Muslim world. But in new conditions when the weakening of NATO and the deterioration of the relations between Turkey and the U S can cause reduction of the weight of Turkey, Ankara believes that the capabilities introduced to the energeticcentre-country are to compensate those losses.

On the other hand, the energetic strategy of Turkey must be considered in the context of the changes taking place in regional policy of the country.

If since the establishment of the Turkish Republic Ankara has been the strong point of the western world in the Middle East, then today Turkey tries to take on a key role of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East and Turkey's transformation into the energetic centre is to enhance the influence of Turkey in the region. From this point of view, the decision of Ankara to initiate the process of the normalization of the relations with Yerevan is more notable than the unprecedented sharp approach of the Erdogan government to the actions of Israel in Gaza.

>From the point of view of the prospects, the security system Turkey is going offer to the changing region (the Middle East, South Caucasus, and the Balkans) is important. It is obvious that the transformation of the energetic picture of the region (the transformation of Turkey into the energetic centre is just it) cannot but cause the changes in the regional security system. "The Caucasian platform of stability and collaboration" initiated by Ankara is the part of the supposed offer of Turkey but it is

almost out of question that the main initiatives of Ankara are still to come. A lot will depend on the developments in Iraq, in the line of Syrian-Israeli relations, in the relations with Russia, Iran and Armenia and the developments in South Caucasus in general.

In case of our country, the essential factor is that the "transformation" of Turkey and the formation of new situation in the Middle East can "open" that region for us and increase the involvement of Yerevan in this direction. This means that in the near future the developments in the Middle East may have even more serious impact on the national security system of our country.

1-Libya may also be regarded as one of those alternatives but, taking into consideration that fact that this country is only to "open" for the western companies, Libyan direction is considered to a perspective one.

2-Today "Gazprom" provides about 40% , i.e. 140 billions cubic meters, of natural gas import in the European Union.

3-According to the "BP Statistical Review of World Energy, June 2008" eight countries of the Persian Gulf (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman) and four Caspian countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) together possess 45,05% of proven natural gas reserves of the planet.

4-Though today Turkey due to its inner capacities provides only 30% of its energy demand.

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