

## **The Geo-energy model of the Black Sea security**

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Traditionally, during the recent years, one of the main focal points in the world agenda, and maybe the most important, is the energetic one. It is already no surprise to anybody that presidents and premiers align their statements and activity with seeking political decisions for the strategic raw materials in the broad spectrum from the oil and gas to the alternative energy sources.

During the 21<sup>st</sup> century the Black Sea region concentrates political and economic energy, which in the last years has also its military dimensions in the context of the case of Ukraine in the Europe-Russia dichotomy and the Islamic State phenomenon – the devastating culmination of the ‘Arab Spring’ in the Middle East. The radicalization of the processes to the North and to the South and South-East in the broad Black Sea region does not change the geopolitical dimensions of the energy diversification as a whole. The launching or elimination of projects in the various scenarios of strategic projects, mostly in the gas and nuclear field, is ongoing. \

The natural gas and the whole cycle, from its production to transportation to consumers, continues to be a serious political trump-card which unites/disunites elites and societies. The increasing dependence on the strategic raw materials of Central Eurasia and the necessity from new, efficient transport corridors and technologies uninfluenced by the Russian energy monopolism, dictate the new rules of conduct and the new mechanisms in Europe and in the world. The geo-energetics and the geo-economy define the focal points in the conduct of the subjects at the international arena. In the last decade’s new/old configuration EU-NATO-USA-Russia the disharmony and confrontation show up more and more clearly and distinctly. The pro/con Russia policy gets through the prism of the European energy dependence and the warlike rhetoric. This is manifested in the intense negotiations in a various format for seeking of decision for the conflict in Ukraine, whose energy segment is part of the sporadic Russo-Ukrainian arguments on the gas price, the transit fees and obligations worth billions that are related thereto. The Ukrainian problem created also a qualitatively new focal point globally and regionally. It filled the strategic plans with content, but reanimated NATO politically and militarily and technically as well; the ambitions of the latter grow in direct proportion to the increased confrontation, emerged in relation to the Ukrainian crisis, between the West and Russia.

At the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the confirmed practice that Russia, in dynamic configuration with the powerful states from the EU or those from BRICS, to contend firmly its interests in the establishing energetics-security dichotomy, remains in the past.

The events, especially after Barak Obama became president in January 2009, confirm the imposing maxim that the energy dependence determines also the focal points on security geopolitically. It is manifested in the intense negotiations at various levels where the positions of Russia and the EU mismatch with those of the USA more frequently in respect to the European and global security architecture. This trend continues with varying degree of success until 2014, when the coup d'état in Ukraine fundamentally changed the situation in the Black Sea region. The hybrid war in Ukraine deepens the political and economic crisis in the EU-Russia relations. The confrontation has an effect to the energy sphere too, which results in negative dynamics of the economic and political processes with an increasing volume of declarations and statements. Their nature is limited to the Russian side playing around with a diversification of the gas supply routes through 'Southern Stream' and its unsuccessful exchange with the 'Turkish Stream' for the time being, as well as the repeated statements of European politicians and institutions in support of the so called Southern Gas Corridor, before which there are a lot of financial and geopolitical unknown issues.

The energy focal points of the forming new world order outline also the strategic security zones, which are concentrated in the Black Sea-Caspian area. The close link between the oil and gas field locations in the Caspian and Middle Asian regions and their transportation to the European continent reinforces the importance of Caucasus, whose security and integrity are a major condition for the stable energy supplies to the European market. The geo-energetic dynamics increasingly fosters the positions of Ankara, which does not conceal its plans to optimally use its strategic role of energy center for realization of its pan-Ottoman ambitions and the neutralization of the Kurdish threat inside and outside the Turkish borders.

Europe needs strategic raw materials, but in a situation, in which the only operating energy transportation system, feeding to a great extent the European states, is the Russian one, the range of the alternative supplies continues to be limited. Brussels cannot yet boast off with concrete results from the political and diplomatic courtship of states such as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan or Azerbaijan. The activity of Washington in political, economic and military terms should not be underestimated either. In the region the ambitions increased for economic expansion of Asian states like China, Japan, South Korea, whose offers are much more attractive and financially secured compared to the European energy projects that are full of high degree of unpredictability and bureaucratic obstacles. An example for this is the almost full orientation of Turkmenistan towards the Chinese gas market, while the plans for Turkmenistani gas transit to Europe have no progress.

The fact worth paying attention is that the increasing importance of the states from the Eurasian zone, which are rich in energy resources, increase enormously their regional and global significance. The choice options intensify their striving to separate and independent (as far as this is possible in view of the geographic proximity of Russia, which is also a large-scale exporter of energy resources) policy in the

region, based upon the most important, presently and in the long term, bargaining chip – the gas and oil as production and transportation.

The world is in front of new challenges. The two-way processes strengthen more and more – the economic globalization and the political fragmentation. The international security, as well as the building new system of international relations, outlines the new parameters and mechanisms, based on the decisive energy factor. Through it passes also the political discussion on the sovereignty and legitimacy globally and regionally as an active indication for the changes and the new focal points of the world order. The events in Ukraine and the Middle East prove more and more the reducing capacities of the states to cope with the military conflicts, whose ethno-confessional parameters blur in the migrant pandemic that is expanding its size towards Europe. The 2015 events show that the future of the continental states is put at stake. The bloody attempts in January and November in France, as well as the migration wave, consciously encouraged by the German chancellor Angela Merkel, destabilize the political order, increase the economic uncertainty and blow up the countries' social systems. The quickly increasing number of summits in different European – Eurasian, European – African or world format cannot hide the strengthening incapacity of the global and regional political elite to cope with the arrogant, aggressive and disrespecting-the-international-legal-principles 'Islamic State'. The international and national security services repeatedly prove the impossibility for preventive measures and the application of a long-term strategy for overcoming the threat of terrorist actions regionally and globally. The European and national institutions strengthen their political rhetoric, with which the demagoguery still prevails. The absence of coordination in the European system as well as the strengthening centrifugal processes in the EU put to a great test the opportunities for a constructive solution of the increasing number of problems, related to the security in the broad Black Sea region.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century, regardless of the high tech achievements, brings the world back to the geographic parameters of measuring the political and economic stratification. Unsuccessful proved to be the attempts of the American transnational corporations to impose the schist technology in Europe as an effective competition to the Russian gas. The energetics and its political segment continue to be a substantial part of the modern world. However, the problems are not solved, but increase in view of the fading power of the national and European institutions. The negative dynamics of the events in the Middle East, whose unpredictability is increasing with the active involvement of Russia in the conflict in Syria, as well as the growing importance and ambitions of Turkey, put the European and national institutions in a limited choice regime. The situation is getting complicated by the increase in the expenses for military purposes of the NATO states against the strategic enemy Russia, inspired by Washington. In the light of the November assassination attempts in France, however, the situation in the Middle East once again changes its focal points. The number of politicians from Europe and the Black Sea – Caspian region increases ever

more , who link the solution of the crisis in Syria with the active political and military participation of Russia. The emerging restructuring of the dynamic picture from the South is unlikely to change the geo-energetic picture. It's a fact that the subjects are the same, but neither the focal points, nor the quickly changing technologies, which can drastically change the energy technology, but not the geo-economy and geo-politics.

The incessantly expanding volume of negative challenges, which have irreversible economic and social dimensions, outline a future of weak states, strong transnational corporations, whose energy projects will be bound by corporate interests, but not with national, social or ethno-confessional. However, each of them will be actively used in the political rhetoric and activity for the creation of a world, whose dimensions will not have spiritual, but financial –oligarchic focal points.

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