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## The Competition of Major Powers for the Caspian Energy Resources

**Abstract:** *This article analyzes the competition among major, regional as well as littoral states. The Caspian Sea is the largest enclosed body of salty water in the world without having a natural connection to the open sea or any ocean. Moreover, it possesses immense hydrocarbon reserves in the subsoil. The geopolitical location of the Caspian Region is also essential for the Silk Road connecting Europe and Central Asia. So, due to its geopolitical position, availability of vast reserves of energy is an object of acute rivalry from both regional and non-regional powers. Competitions among major powers and conflictual claims of littoral states over its resources have influences on state strategies, programs, foreign policy concepts related to the region.*

**Keywords:** *Caspian Region, Major Powers, Littoral States, Hydrocarbon Resources, Geopolitics, Geo-economy.*

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**Introduction.** The Caspian Basin, for much of the twentieth century, was under the complete jurisdiction of Iran and the USSR, with the latter both enjoying naval dominance and controlling most of the natural resources. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the geopolitical situation in the region changed totally. Instead of two, now five riparian states, Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan having different legal claims on the Caspian Basin in their perspectives.

During the times of the Soviet Union, Moscow had full control over the region [1]. Because of the Soviet Union had a centrally commanded economy, the central Soviet government in Moscow had taken all crucial decisions related to the Caspian Basin and its resources. Export pipeline routes were constructed to connect the other Soviet areas in the Central and Siberian parts of the country through Russia heartland. Thus, the Soviet government had full power in the process of energy politics in the region in the past.

Nowadays, there are several projects like One Road-One Belt, international transport corridor North-South, which is the testimony of its special transport and logistics potential on the Caspian region. Also, the geographical position of the Caspian region is of great military strategic importance. Located between the West and the East, the region is a changeable formation with particular conditions for its transformation (in the case of weak interstate interaction) to the center of the international competition.

This article will review efforts made by decision makers of major and regional powers towards Caspian Basin states of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan; analyzes successes and failures of those efforts by looking at them through the prism of different variables such as national interests, priorities, alternatives, world views. It will also try to incorporate the regional energy politics prospects.

The article also covers the historical development of the region, comparative analysis of foreign policies of the major powers on the

region as well as the effects of foreign policy choices of major powers to the littoral states of the Caspian region. Thus, historical, comparative analyses are used to explain major powers' approaches to the region and countries in the basin. Foreign policy implications and energy security theories also utilize in this article.

Currently, there is a particular theoretical and practical experience in the field of studying the interaction of major powers and countries on the Caspian issues, which in recent years have occupied a specific function in the system of regional processes. In this regard, the littoral countries' foreign policy orientations are particularly relevant and their interaction with major and regional powers, due to their geopolitical positions, the presence of vast reserves of energy resources is the object of intense competition from both major and regional powers.

**Methodology.** During the research, a systematic approach and the traditional method of comparative analysis were used. The article provides relevant data from international and Kazakhstani open sources.

In the course of the study, the method of comparative analytical comparisons was used, which combines a descriptive and analytical approach. The authors resorted to collecting the latest data from primary sources with their subsequent synthesized processing. In the process of studying the sources were used the methods of content analysis.

**Geographical and Historical Background.** Together with the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War has changed the meaning and value of the Caspian geopolitics. For example, during the Cold War era, there were two countries which had the control of the Caspian Sea, Russia and Iran, but after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, this number has grown to eight with the independence of the Caspian states. With the rising number of independent states in the Caspian region, the competition has started both among littoral states of the region and also major and regional powers which are interested in the region for oil and natural gas reserves.

Currently proven reserves of fossil fuels resources are estimated between 18 and 35 billion barrels compared to the North Sea or the United States reserves. For natural gas, there are even higher estimation, around 236-337 trillion cubic feet. These enormous hydrocarbon reserves have been attracted major powers and their companies to the region. Given littoral states as opportunities as well as risks that cost of foreign policy actions if carefully planned and successfully implemented in the proper timeline would be returned with much higher benefits in means of both securities of a reasonably priced alternative to the Middle East energy supply and position of geopolitical area control and influence or vice versa.

Thus, the Caspian region is vital in terms of reserves of oil and gas re-serves which estimated of the fossil fuels "up to 3% and 4% of the world to-tal"[2] as well as transportation oil and gas to the main markets of consumers. In this sense, the Caspian region became a crucial region in world politics. In other words, with the end of the Soviet Union, the Caspian region and its energy resources opened for competition and exploitation of major powers. In this respect, different international actors want to enter and compete with regional actors for controlling oil and natural gas. Therefore, the Caspian regional security depends on energy security and safely transporting the Caspian energy reserves to the global energy market. For that reason, sustainable political and economic development of the Caspian littoral states hinged on the actors who are active in the Caspian region.

The region is confidently becoming one of the essential suppliers of oil and natural gas to the world market. Although the question of the real oil and gas reserves of the Caspian shelf remains open, the intensive work of local and foreign oil companies in commissioning already discovered deposits gives Caspian countries chance in the coming years to become one of the world's largest exporters of "black gold." In conditions, when local consumption of energy resources is somewhat limited, the central part of the extracted hydrocarbon raw materials goes to the external market.

One of the reasons why many outside states involve the competition in the region is to secure their energy supply because the Middle East has chaotic political conditions and its insecure conditions turned to consumer countries to look for the other energy resources. Moreover, the major powers have considered the region as a vacuum, so they have tried to fill the vacuum and extend their sphere of influence.

As the global superpower, the United States has in explicitly driven by its necessity to protect its global leadership and national interests who look for alternative energy supply, a decrease of Russian and Chinese influence over the region became increasingly involved into region's energy politics. This primary challenge to United States foreign policy pushed the United States decision makers had to face and find means for solution. Promoting alternatives export routes for energy resources along with financial investment into the region allowed the United States to reach some achievements in pursuit of its goals suggesting the success of immediately after the Soviet Union collapse. However, Russian dominance in the region and unquestionably, except Iran, influence on the Caspian littoral states are robust in the 1990s.

Therefore, geographically Caspian basin states of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan were considered to be the backyard of the Russian Federation. However, among these Caspian countries, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have successfully balanced Russian legacy, Chinese demands and the United States' ambition in the region. More or less, they have developed balanced and multi-dimensional foreign policies. Having multi-dimensional and multi-vector foreign and energy policies provide them with a chance to attract investment for their hydrocarbon reserves.

As the Caspian basin countries, even Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have significant oil and gas reserves, these countries need to carry their oil and natural gas reserves with pipelines to international markets. Major global and regional powers have promoted several different pipeline projects. They have played a kind of games for these projects to be realized.

## **Main Actors and Players of the Caspian Region**

### **a. Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan as one of the prosperous countries in the world in terms of oil and gas reserves. It is also "primary producer of oil" [3] in the Caspian region. Owing abundant hydrocarbon reserves makes Kazakhstan one of the major targets in the regional energy politics of Russia, the United States, and China. Kazakhstan's economy is heavily dependent on the energy sector. Energy resources represent a precious "key asset" [4]. Moreover, Kazakhstan has to diversify its hydrocarbon export and keeps good relation with its neighbors (Russia and China) and the global superpower (the United States). For Kazakhstan, it is the reason why it should have good relations with all (Russia, the United States, and China) major powers. That how Kazakhstan can keep to export and have cooperation with these countries in the energy sector. This approach seems attractive and beneficial for both these countries and Kazakhstan: it is in the interest of Kazakhstan to attract foreign investments and exporting its products. Besides, Russian, American, and Chinese companies are also interested in Kazakhstan oil reserves. In this case, the success of Kazakh energy policies are seen in terms of involvement of large Russian, American and Chinese oil companies on Kazakh energy market, but more importantly, Kazakhstan's refusal to rely purely on a single transportation outlet and build multiple pipeline systems which can export its hydrocarbon resources are essential. Kazakhstan is allied with all global powers for the necessity of foreign investments and efficiency of explorations [5]. Furthermore, allowing foreign companies to operate also creates a diversity of fossil fuels supply and export, continuing its quest for beneficial alternative projects. Even though Kazakhstan's high dependency on the hydrocarbon reserves, the relatively successful diversification of foreign investment exports lines suggest inevitable degree success of Kazakh energy policies.

Despite apparent successes currently, leading operating oil pipeline network through Russian territory still keeps landlocked Kazakhstan

vulnerable to the political and economic pressures exercised by Russia [1]. For instance, Russia made use of its sole export pipeline routes to influence and control the Kazakhstan government on price and quantity in the 1990s. Thus it is in high interest for Kazakhstan to build pipelines to China as well as alternative export routes to the West. In the case, completion of the Kazakh-Chinese pipeline has had a positive impact on Kazakhstan's foreign and economic policies [6].

Even though cheapest and the closest way to reach open sea is through Iran, due to tense relations between the United States-Iran, this energy route seems unlikely to attract financing support. Other proposed alternative routes are considerably costly and at some calculations considered to be inefficient in implementing as in future costs may not be covered [7]. Still, the outflow may be summed up by the cooperation with other oil holders in Caspian basin such as Azerbaijan. Specific projects were proposed, but once again, the cost-benefit analysis makes them less favorable even in comparison to the present situation.

#### **b. Azerbaijan**

Azerbaijan, as a Caspian Sea state, possesses significant amounts of fossil fuels reserves. In the first half of the twentieth century, oil Azerbaijan played a very significant role both for the world oil market and especially during the Second World War for the Soviet army who fought against Nazi Germany. Later years, Azerbaijan's oil lost its essential place in the Soviet Union. Currently, it is estimated to have less than Kazakhstan but still significant to attract foreign investors and therefore is on the agenda of Russian and American energy policies. Because of Azerbaijan's geopolitical location both for Caspian Basin countries and the Caucasus attracts the attention of Western countries, especially the United States. Western states supported to build a pipeline, called Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, from Azerbaijan through Turkey due to several reasons: close cultural ties between two countries, is a close ally of the United States and common and mutual of interests of Turkey and Western countries in the region and finally

having common border with Azerbaijan and the other Caucasus countries. Azerbaijan was quite cooperative and perceived as an opportunity to open the countries natural resources for the world market. It quickly agreed for openness in the attraction of foreign investments as right now many western oil companies, including British Petroleum and Chevron are operating there extracting oil and gas fields [8].

Azerbaijan also like Kazakhstan, suffered from not having directly open access to oceans or any open sea in the 1990s, no access to the international seaports and export made its dependence on Russian pipeline systems. However, with the support of the United States and its western allies, it managed to convince Russia to accept the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan route and attract foreign investments. An effort of American energy policies turned into significant success as they built the alternative route securing its own and ally's energy independence from Russia by finishing and beginning of operation of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. Thus, the September 1994 agreement is significant for Azerbaijan's history. The project named the "Oil Contract of the Century" signed [9]. After this agreement, Azerbaijan's foreign policy also changed. For that reason, Azerbaijan ascribed prominence to the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline project. On another side, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan success of the United States energy policy is pushing Azerbaijan towards inviting other Caspian Basin states to a joint project in exporting fossil fuels, especially Turkmenistan, which is looking for alternative routes.

#### **c. Turkmenistan**

Turkmenistan ranks fourth in the globe and third in the region in hydrocarbon resources [10]. According to the BP Statistical Review of World Energy, its gas reserves are estimated at 19.5 trillion cubic meters [11].

Turkmenistan is also a landlocked country just like Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan and was highly dependent on Russian pipeline connections due to the old structures which were built during the Soviet time. All of the pipelines to the world markets were routed through Russia, imposing significant economic and political constraints on

Ashgabat, thus making it interested in alternative routes to seek. One of the options for Turkmenistan is to join project of "Trans-Caspian gas pipeline" [12] from eastern Turkmenistan across the Caspian Sea through Azerbaijan, Georgia to the final destination Turkey and the European market. However, this project halted due to several reasons: disagreements over "disputable Serdar field" [7] between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan and issues relating to the share of participation in the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline project [13]. Western countries and companies have supported the project, but it could not agree with the other partners of the project and failed to convince ambitious Turkmen leadership to join the southern export route.

Another serious obstacle is Russian competing initiatives; the Russian government offered to carry Turkmen natural gas via "The Blue Stream" [1] pipeline to Turkey and the West. In addition to this, Turkmenistan reached a deal with China for a long term contract and has been built four pipelines which carry about half of the Turkmen natural gas to China. These developments are distracting all efforts initiated by the western countries and companies carrying to Turkmen the natural gas to the European market [14]. In addition to all these pipelines and projects, Turkmenistan is exporting a limited level of natural gas to its neighbor, Iran. Finally, the cost of building pipeline and transporting Turkmen gas to Europe not economic and unclear whether Turkmenistan has sufficient gas to supply it given most of its existing gas is tied up in export contracts with China.

#### **d. Russia**

Russian Federation is one of the key players in the Caspian region both as a littoral state and major power in world politics as well as energy market. Russia presently enjoys significant natural resources reserves of oil and gas on its share of Caucasus parts of Caspian shores. Because of its political and military power and its resources in the Caspian region, these capacities allow Russia to receive significant benefits from exporting their fossil fuels and achieve the necessary for funds to support their economic stability [15]. Left from the Soviet era, the Russian Federation has the

necessary facilities to sell its products to western partners. However, the more critical position that Russia has become a key "transit state providing the main routes for exporting energy resources of landlocked neighboring countries to lucrative world markets" [7].

Russian Gazprom Company is an excellent example that Russia as a country is changing its approach in part as a response to activities, policies, efforts of American and Chinese governments and companies in the region. Russian leadership had realized losing the status of its position of the only monopoly player due to the eventual construction of alternative routes and if policies continued the same way the whole regional supply market at all is replaced with more partnership and cooperation approach towards Caspian states coming from the Chinese and Western governments. Gazprom announced its intentions to participate in explorations and constructions of possible fossil fuels transportation routes in the region and already invested in the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline and is actively involved exploration in Kazakhstan [16]. Indeed, this sudden change of policy approaches by the Russian Federation is not fortuitous. There are economic reasons for Russian companies, but what could influence them to consider this particular option is to the large extent geopolitical and geo-economics ones: promotion of alternative routes by the United States and China.

Russia has wanted to be shipped Azeri and Kazakh oils from No-vorossiysk in which Russia has a transport harbor. Russia completed the oil pipeline from Kazakhstan's Tengiz oil fields to Novorossiysk. However, loading tankers in Novorossiysk is difficult, because the Black Sea has strong winds, and these prevent tankers from loading from the port all around the year. In other words, because of unsuitable weather condition in the Black Sea, Novorossiysk is considered not an appropriate port for shipping oil and gas [17]. Another disadvantage of the Russian route was related to the volatile condition in the northern Caucasus. After the Second Russian-Chechen war, the condition in the region stable but unrest in the region or sabotage to the pipeline is still



possible. Thus the North Caucasus is still Achilles Heels of Russia.

In conclusion, Russia still alone possesses significant influence and can determine and control the energy resources as well as energy policies of the Caspian states. It can introduce hard-line policies by setting specific quotas on production or transit prices to make states more flexible along with the Russian interests which it used to threaten in several times to ensure advantageous relations with landlocked countries of the Caspian Basin. Throughout the 1990s, Russia continued to resist the construction of alternative pipelines to keep its "monopoly position in the transportation of energy resources" [18]. However, that policy has been changed. Keeping Caspian states to continue to take Russia into account as a significant and dominant player in the region, Russia has developed a more delicate approach when dealing with each Caspian states. Russia is also aware of rising Chinese influence in the region, so Russia has used its hard and soft power on the Caspian states and different strategies to deal with potential competitors the region previously totally under the control and influence of Russia.

#### e. Iran

Iran is a littoral state of the Caspian Sea. It is a regional competitor for the Caspian hydrocarbon both over transportation and natural resources. There are two routes for exporting oil and natural gas through Iran. The first is the North-South route, this route from the Caspian Sea through Iran to the Persian Gulf. Second, Turkmen natural gas through Iran can pass to Turkey, and from there, it can pass the European market [19]. Moreover, Iran has a large reserve of the oil and natural gas in the region too.

Iranian geography allows the easiest and cheapest access for Caspian littoral countries towards seaports for further export activities [20]. However, the United States is firmly against these prospects and has placed pressure on all states in the region to prevent to use the Iranian route, because the United States considers Iran as one of "axes of evil" country [7]. For that reason, the United States prevented Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan have had close cooperation and

transfer their natural resources through Iran to the world market. Policy makers in the United States have more interest over containing Iran and preventing its economic growth and thus sacrifice most beneficial diversity of fossil fuels export routes to more costly ones or even to the degree of losing alternative options. Therefore energy policies are replaced with the more important issue of geopolitical goals of isolating presumed enemies.

#### f. United States

Following the demise of the Soviet Union, the United States government pursued the Russia-first policy. According to this policy, the United States accepted the Russian sphere of influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia. However, the second half of the 1990s, Russian revival of geopolitical and geo-economics dominance and clash with the American interests in the Caspian region pushed the American government to take contrary steps. The United States government identified several priorities related to the region, including to support western companies to invest and build alternative pipeline projects. Most of the largest oil companies, including "Chevron Texaco," "Exxon-Mobil," "British Petroleum," "Halliburton," have invested heavily in this region. Therefore priorities were formed in fixture of firm reliable connections with Caspian Basin states [21]. For instance, in the 1990s, the Clinton administration policies promoted for building Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline and other energy-related projects were designed to work out the protection of national interests of the United States as well as some of the regional players (including Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) [22]. In the same context, countering the construction of the Kazakhstan-China pipeline could also have been considered. However, since the early 2000s increasing Chinese interests and involvement has resulted in U.S. considerable loss of this energy-rich region. The United States has still concerns that a significant part of Caspian oil will follow the "Asian" routes – China and India, which sharply increase energy consumption.

Therefore the foreign policy of the United States in the region's energy sector has carefully designed and incorporates elements of world

energy sectors' demands and the competition with Russia as well as China. However, efforts to provide Caspian basin states with alternative routes masked with goodwill desire to prevent from dominance and control of Russia and China and secure regions free access to the world market and thus significant income revenues necessary for the development of these countries positioned the United States as a potential player for energy competition.

**g. European Union**

Since European Union countries are primary consumers of hydrocarbon resources, they largely depend on the Middle East oil and the Russian natural gas. To have energy security for the member countries, the European Union has attempted multiple sources for oil and natural gas as well as has secure energy routes and supply. For this reason, uninterrupted energy supply becomes a vital issue for the European Union countries.

Russia, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan are exporting a significant amount of oil and natural gas to the European Union member states. The European Union policy towards the Caspian region is shaped by the new geopolitical situation created by the collapse of the USSR. The main practical interest of the European Union is diversifying its oil and gas imports and engaging energy resources of Central Asia and the Caspian Sea to the European energy market. Europe Union countries attribute particular interest to the Caspian natural gas, especially from Turkmenistan. There is no pipeline system connect the Caspian natural resources with the European energy system. The European Union has taken several attempts to implement projects related to energy resources. In 1991 the European Union instigated a technical assistance program for the Caucasus and Central Asian countries in the construction of groundwork for a transportation system which is connected with the European system (TACIS). One of the stages of this program has become a project for the creation of an international transport corridor Europe - the Caucasus – Asia (TRACECA). In 1995, the European Union launched the INOGATE program (an interstate oil and gas pipeline project). The main objectives of the project are

technical aid in retaining operational condition and management of oil and gas pipelines of the CIS countries, as well as transport Caspian hydrocarbon to Europe.

Despite the mutual strategic interests, who are always stated by Western decision-makers and diplomats, the interests of the United States and the European Union in the region do not always coincide. For a long time, some of the European Union states criticized the United States government for supporting political and economic changes in the region may not produce the result which the European countries benefit it.

**h. China**

China, with its impressive economic growth, lacks natural resources of fossil fuels, which desperately demands them to farther boost its economic surge. To consider the geographical location of Caspian Basin states with vast fossil fuels resources is an excellent option for China to guarantee its energy supply. Therefore proposals for cooperation and market initiatives appeared on the stage of Caspian basin states.

Therefore, China, as the newest major actor in the region, has actively involved with the energy game in the Caspian region. The Caspian region is a transit region for the Chinese products to the European market as of old Silk Road. Thus China has developed the "One Belt One Road" project, which passes through the Caspian region [23]. As a result, Chinese influence in the region has also increased. Because China concerns the United States' activities in general Eurasia and in specific in the Caspian region, it will cooperate and coordinate its positions with Russia and Iran.

**i. Turkey**

Turkey backed the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) project for oil and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) for gas transportation. Turkey has also been supporting the TANAP project. BTC and BTE are working; the construction of the Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) project is also completed. Building BTC reduced tankers traffics at the Bosphorus, and Dardanelles Straits and BTC replaced the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline as the main way to export Azerbaijan's oil to the world market [24]. However, not all pipeline projects were successful. The one which is considered

but not constructed is Trans-Caspian pipeline from Turkmenistan through under the Caspian Sea to connect the TANAP project. If the Trans-Caspian pipeline is realized, Turkey will become an essential economic bridge between the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Europe. They would improve Turkish and European energy securities. However, geopolitical and geo-economic competition among major and regional powers as well as recently low prices of oil and gas made it impossible to build the Trans Caspian pipeline. Although Turkey and Russia had contested for the Caspian oil resources, they built a natural gas pipeline under the Black Sea, which is named Blue Stream and nearly completing the second one which is called Turkish Stream.

**The New Caspian Sea Convention.** The first treaty on the status of the Caspian Sea was signed in 1729. This treaty was on the delineation of the Caspian landscape, known the Treaty of Resht, settled between the Russian and the Persian empires, which regulated regional trade and commerce in the region [25]. In 1941, the Soviet Union and Iran signed a new treaty for the Caspian Sea. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, eight countries have emerged as the littoral states of the Caspian Sea. They could not sign a new treaty to define the new status and to share the Caspian Sea (even they could not agree Caspian is a sea or lake) until recently. However, in August 2018, the Caspian basin countries reached an agreement on how to share the Caspian basin, and this agreement opens the way to new investment and building new pipelines in the region. After the Convention was signed, Kazakhstan Foreign Minister said: “the methodology for establishing state baselines shall be determined in a separate agreement among all the parties according to this convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea” [26].

The New Caspian Sea Convention is open to different interpretations of countries which signed it. The convention formally allows each littoral country the right to lay pipelines in their respective sector in the Caspian shore, though a part of the agreement mentions that environmental consent is required from all five countries for launching any pipeline projects in the region. For example, Kazakhstan’s special envoy Zulfia

Amanzholova claims that the convention divides sea shelf as a lake and its surface as a sea [27]. On the other hand, Head of the Russian delegation at the Convention on the legal status of Caspian Sea clearly said that any Trans-Caspian pipeline would have to be approved by all Caspian littoral states on environmental grounds. Meantime, it was decided to establish a mechanism for regular consultations between Caspian littoral states at the level of deputy Foreign Ministers. As a result, after two decades of discussions, the convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea was signed by the heads of the countries of the «Caspian Five» (Russia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan). A turning point for the history of the region, the document was approved on August 12, 2018 at the summit of the presidents in Aktau (Kazakhstan).

**Conclusion.** Post-Cold War international and regional environment has significantly changed the regional politics of Caspian Basin states. Strive for the necessity of alternative fossil fuels export routes proposed, supported financially and primarily promoted by the United States and European policy-makers primarily changed the rules of negotiating about deals, in particular, replacing Russian monopolistic approach towards more cooperative and partnership-oriented one. Russian decision-makers have realized the inevitability of building alternative export routes and fearing loss of influence over the region responded with market-oriented policies and active participation in projects and as well offered involvement in their national projects.

The United States, European and Turkish foreign policy-makers have played a significant role in securing their national interests; however, some areas they failed. Nevertheless, some areas of success by convincing Caspian basin states in the necessity of construction of export routes apart from Russian lines. Azerbaijan at this term is the most successful partner as it formed Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline; success in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan can be interpreted in terms of their desire to join the construction of Chinese and Western alternative routes and allowed operation activities of the foreign business on Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan markets of exploration and

extraction of fossil fuels. Another result of the major players (especially the United States) can be seen in Caspian states rejection option of building pipeline via Iran.

The United States supported some oil and gas pipeline projects such as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, and China built pipelines for Turkmen natural gas and Kazakh oil. Although the United States' and China's efforts for shaping the region and influencing to the Caspian region. Russia is still the most important regional power. Because Russia has economic, political and military relations and co-operation with the littoral states in the region, these relations and cooperation provide an opportunity for being dominant and controlling transport route of the oil and natural gas in the region.

These conditions of old Russian dominance and growing Chinese power in the region significantly caused disturbance to the American

claim of being a sole global superpower and therefore influenced American foreign policy construction in terms of immediate identification of national interests, priorities, world view and alternatives of energy policy.

Consequently, the Caspian basin states Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan obtain significant energy resources and can achieve benefiting their natural resources and competitions of major powers. However, they all suffered from the old Soviet Union rooted dependence of exports routes via Russian territory. Alternative ways were discussed and are some alternative pipelines are already built, but the present significant Russian influence lowers down that opportunity and also not entirely accurate data on Caspian basin energy reserves makes projects less attractive for investments leaving Caspian basin to be still dominant by Russian Federation's energy politics.

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### **Энергетика саясаты: Каспий аймағы ірі мемлекеттерінің бәсекелестігі**

**Аңдатпа.** Мақалада Каспий өңірінің ірі державаларының энергетикалық саясаты мен бәсекелестігі талданады. Каспий теңізі әлемдегі тұзды судың ең ірі толық тұйықталған массиві болып табылады және көмірсутектердің аса бай қорына жатады. Ол жер қойнауындағы мұнай мен газдың мол шоғырланған ортасы. Каспий бассейні - Еуропа мен Орталық Азияны қосатын маңызды көлік бағыты болып табыла-

ды. Каспий өзінің геосаяси жағдайына байланысты энергия ресурстарының орасан зор қорының болуы өңірлік және өңірлік емес державалар тарапынан өткір бәсекелестік объектісі болып табылады. Аймаққа ықпал етуге барынша араласуда тек жағалаудағы мемлекеттер ғана емес, сондай-ақ АҚШ, Солтүстік Атлант альянсы, Еуроодақ, Қытай, Түркия т.б. елдердің стратегиялық, бағдарламалық, сыртқы саясылық тұжырымдамалары мен ресми мәлімдемелерінде бұл мәселе бойынша нақты заңды құжаттарда тіркелгенінен байқауға болады.

**Түйін сөздер:** Каспий, экспорт, әскери-стратегиялық, Каспий саясатының акторлары, қара алтын.

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### **Энергетическая политика: конкуренция крупных государств Каспийского региона**

**Аннотация.** В статье анализируются энергетическая политика и конкуренция крупных держав Каспийского региона. Каспийское море является крупнейшим полностью замкнутым массивом соленой воды в мире и представляет собой особенно богатые запасы углеводородов. Он содержит обширные залежи нефти и газа в недрах. Каспийский бассейн также является важным транспортным маршрутом, соединяющим Европу и Центральную Азию. Так, в силу своего геополитического положения наличие огромных запасов энергоресурсов является объектом острой конкуренции как со стороны региональных, так и нерегиональных держав. Претензии на влияние в регионе были зафиксированы в государственных стратегиях, программах, внешнеполитических концепциях и официальных заявлениях лиц не только прибрежных государств, но и США, Североатлантического альянса, Евросоюза, Китая, Турции и др.

**Ключевые слова:** Каспий, экспорт, военно-стратегический, акторы Каспийской политики, черное золото.

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