



საქართველოს სტრატეგიისა და საერთაშორისო ურთიერთობათა ქვანთხი უძინო
GEORGIAN FOUNDATION FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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**TURKEY'S ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE
SECURITY CHALLENGE: PROTECTING
PIPELINES AND BOLSTERING INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY COOPERATION**

ERIC R. EISSLER

EXPERT OPINION



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The publication is made possible with the support of the US Embassy in Georgia.

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Technical Editor: Artem Melik-Nubarov

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ISSN 1512-4835
ISBN 978-9941-0-6132-5

Introduction

In the past ten years, Turkey has been a rising star as an “energy hub” for the region. Two major pipelines and one soon-to-be refurbished railway corridor (Baku-Tbilisi-Kars) have been created. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) transports oil and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) transports natural gas. The next major and, perhaps, most important pipeline will be the Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline (TANAP) project which will transfer Azerbaijani gas through Turkey into Europe via the Trans-Adriatic Gas Pipeline (TAP). It is well known that for Europe, Turkey is the alternative route around Russia for energy supplies. It is also well known that Europe’s need for energy has been growing quickly and there are more and more pipelines being laid, either on the ground or on paper, and most of them are passing through Turkey. As it can be seen from the aforementioned pipelines and railway, all roads originate in Baku. Turkey is a major point of transit and not a major hydrocarbon producer. Nevertheless, Turkey can sometimes be an unreliable transit country due to terrorism on pipelines, overestimation and/or underestimation of its own gas needs and sometimes failing to deliver (Turkey-Greece ITG interconnector pipeline inaugural incident) the said energy.¹

Being an energy hub is Azerbaijan’s role along with other countries along the Caspian Sea. Azerbaijan is producing energy and sending it all throughout Central Asia, Russia, Turkey and farther on to Europe which is the biggest and most important market for the hydrocarbons located in Azerbaijan’s territory. With TANAP and TAP officially given the green light for construction, the role of Turkey will play an even more important role in Europe’s energy security. Taner Yildiz, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources of the Republic of Turkey, clarifies Turkey’s and Azerbaijan’s roles in the region as follows: “TANAP will take on the main role in Turkey’s mission of becoming a ‘bridge’ for transporting the rich energy resources of the East to the West where demand is on the rise.”²

Turkey has a unique geographic position that allows it to become an alternative to Russia and a major supplier of energy to Europe. Consequently, this grand geographic position comes with some challenges. At the international level, Turkey has disputes with Greece, Cyprus, Israel and Lebanon on maritime demarcation in the east Mediterranean where major hydrocarbon reserves have been discovered.

Turkey is known for being the bridge between Europe and Asia which often results with the government downplaying major security issues. Turkey has challenges with a terrorist organization known as the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) which is recognized as a terrorist organization by the US and the EU and which, in its quest for recognition, causes a multitude of security problems for Turkey; terrorism against government institutions as well as energy infrastructure.³ The sometimes "lawlessness" of eastern Turkey's regions constitutes a major issue for energy security in the region. Terrorist attacks and hot taps on pipelines cause disruption and cost millions of dollars in repairs, maintenance, lost revenue and ecological damage to the environment. As the global demand for energy continues to grow, attacking pipelines and energy infrastructure becomes more attractive to terrorists as potential targets. Thus, this article concludes with some suggestions that would ensure Turkey's energy infrastructure security for the future.

Turkey's Dependence on Energy Imports

Turkey is an energy debtor nation, because it must import most of its energy needs from other countries, as it does not produce more energy than it consumes. Turkey is the third biggest importer of natural gas from Russia. To further develop this dependence, on 28 December 2011, Ankara and Moscow signed an agreement to permit Russia to commence laying a pipeline in Turkey's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as part of the South Stream gas pipeline.⁴ The South Stream is necessary for ensuring a steady supply of natural gas for Turkey's growing needs in the future. This and the aforementioned information concerning Turkey's relations with Russia on the topic of natural gas further demonstrates that even the so-called "hub" and alternative route around Russia is still dependant on Russia for its own gas needs. Turkey relies heavily on natural gas imports from Russia. There are two pipelines which enable this transfer: one passing though Romania and Bulgaria; the other, the Blue Stream, which runs underneath the Black Sea to Turkey.⁵ In December 2012, Gazprom gave Turkey a 10% discount on natural gas, decreasing the price from \$415 to \$370 per 1,000 cubic meters, on a new contract that went into effect at the start of 2013.⁶

Iran is another major exporter of natural gas to Turkey. Like Russia, Iran can also cut supplies and be threatening towards Turkey, if it sees a reason to do so. Iran exports primarily to three main countries: Turkey, Armenia and

Azerbaijan.* Turkey is the biggest importer of Iranian natural gas, as it receives more than 90% of Iran's natural gas exports.⁷ However, since Russia is a bigger player in the energy game than Iran, Russia is the primary focus of this article.

Turkey's growing energy needs could also be its Achilles' heel because, in order to sustain such tremendous growth seen since the early 2000s, Turkey will need to increase the amount of energy it imports as its economy and, perhaps most important, its population grow. Turkey should not underestimate its energy needs for the future, especially with a young and growing population, which has been estimated to top out at ninety-seven million people by 2050.⁸ Most importantly, to ensure that the growing population receives the necessary supply of energy, the current state of the energy infrastructure security should be scrutinized.

Current State of Turkey's Pipelines

At this point in time, the security of the pipelines falls on the government which is enacted through the Gendarmerie (para-military police).⁹ However, the Gendarmerie has other tasks and responsibilities other than securing pipelines and it is because of these other responsibilities that 100% attention cannot be paid to the security of the pipelines. The Gendarmerie usually is the main law enforcing body outside the local police jurisdiction. The areas that the Gendarmerie is responsible for are usually vast, sparsely populated, rural areas. This means that the Gendarmerie has a large territory to cover and that forces can often be stretched thin in certain regions where there is a high level of terrorist activity.

The following quotation from a report by the Turkish International Strategic Research Organization (USAK) describes the general security situation of the Gendarmerie on the pipelines: "The security for the pipelines is provided by 35 Gendarmerie stations en route against terrorist attacks. For example, a protocol was signed between Turkish Pipeline Petroleum Company (BOTAŞ) and the General Command of the Gendarmerie to set up 33 protection teams and 13 protection stations along the route of the BTC Crude Oil Pipeline in Turkey."¹⁰ Despite what might seem like a large security force, most of the Gendarmerie's attention and duties have been

* Due to geography and national boundaries, Azerbaijan and Iran have a gas swap agreement, in order to supply gas to Azerbaijan's exclave Nakhchivan.

redirected towards local matters and policing other areas, rather than the pipelines.¹¹ “While there is [a] reportedly working rapport between the [Gendarmerie] and other Turkish security officials and the BTC pipeline security representatives, the layers of security are reportedly thinner than in Georgia or Azerbaijan.”¹² Most of the terrorist attacks occurred in the following regions due to their lack of security: Adana, Mardin, Erzincan, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye, Adana-Ceyhan, Erzincan-Refahiye.¹³ The Kirkuk-Yumurtalik oil pipeline and the Turkey-Iran natural gas pipeline are the two pipelines that are attacked most often and so far there have been a few attacks against the BTC and the BTE.¹⁴ A notable attack was carried out against the BTC in August 2008. While the world’s attention was fixed on the short war between Russia and Georgia, an explosion and fire engulfed a block-valve station in Refahiye, thus, taking the BTC offline for several weeks.¹⁵ It has still yet to be determined if it was a terrorist attack, or an accident—the Turkish government claims it was an accident—this exemplifies how unreliable energy infrastructure security in Turkey can be sometimes. For this incident, there were never any figures released on the total cost of damage or loss of revenue from the shut down pipeline. The amount of revenue lost could be quite high. The information below can illustrate a better picture on average revenue losses from hot taps and terrorist attacks.

In 2009, BOTAŞ released hot tap information from the past five years (2003–08). There were 72,729 barrels of oil stolen from its pipelines from more than 400 different incidents. This amount of oil in 2009 was worth more than \$5,002,157.¹⁶ Furthermore, every time a terrorist destroys a section of pipeline there is always a loss of oil spilling out of the destroyed pipeline. This is a large sum of revenue that is lost when a section of a pipeline is destroyed. In the time period of 1987–2010, 59 significant terrorist attacks were carried out against Turkish pipelines.¹⁷ Not only is the supply disrupted, but a team of workers must venture into possibly unsecured territory to fix the damaged section of the pipeline. In addition, there is also a significant amount of money that goes into repairing pipelines.

During a roundtable meeting, Reha Aykul Muratoğlu, Head of Transit Petroleum Pipelines at the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of Turkey, said that because of these terrorist attacks over the years, Turkey has become expert in repairing pipelines.¹⁸ This statement reveals two things: first, the fact that terrorist attacks are a frequent occurrence and,

second, Turkey has become an expert in quickly repairing pipelines rather than preventing attacks on them, thus wasting money and losing valuable hydrocarbon revenue for their suppliers. Further adding to the argument, Matthew J. Bryza, Director of the International Center for Defense Studies in Tallinn, Estonia, also stated that Turkey is adept in repairs but stressed that Turkey is not able to fully prevent attacks on its pipelines. Nevertheless, the most important thing is to keep any terrorists from gaining control of an area where there is a disruption, preventing the repairs.¹⁹ This would be a very critical situation indeed, if it would come to fruition. However, the likelihood of something like this happening in Turkey is slim. In order to remedy a pipeline takeover situation, the military would be called in to liquidate any terrorists in the area of a damaged pipeline section. The actions of the Turkish military would prove effective in preventing the takeover of any damaged pipeline area if they would need to be summoned.

There is some speculation that because of the issues with Turkey's lack of full security on its pipelines, some stakeholders from the supplier countries are becoming a somewhat upset by this. This was inferred by the tone taken by Konstantine Tsitsishvili during his presentation at the 2011 NATO Conference in Tbilisi.²⁰ While it has not yet been confirmed, the lack of security does pose a challenge to Turkey and it does put somewhat of a strain on relations with the supplier countries. Perhaps, interestingly enough since a majority of the energy companies working together are state owned they are most likely turning a blind eye towards these issues. The governments can be tight-lipped about security issues and especially when it comes to hydrocarbons—perhaps the world's greatest source of income—instead of blaming each other, they may take measures to ensure regional stability and security of these assets by working together on joint security. These issues have been brought up time and again. In Turkey, critical energy infrastructure security is often overlooked, exemplified earlier by the reassignment of the Gendarmerie. Speaking to *Today's Zaman*, Hasan Selim Özertem, from USAK, said the following on Turkey's energy infrastructure security:

The issue has been brought to the agenda of the National Security Council (MGK) several times and some NATO exercises have been conducted, but there is no clear definition of Turkey's critical energy infrastructure in the legislation. [he] stressed that the protection of Turkey's critical energy infrastructure is important to providing a sus-

tainable and reliable energy transportation service. According to [him], to have a national program for critical energy infrastructure protection will greatly help Turkey take proper and immediate action in case of fault, incident or attack, and play into the hands of Turkey against its rivals.²¹

The above passage reaffirms that there are many other policy analysts who are trying to draw attention to the fact that the government is not doing enough to ensure the protection of Turkey's energy assets. Is the Turkish Government ignoring these suggestions from the energy security analysts? In short, yes. Until recently, the government has not heeded the calls for improved protection. In late 2012, the government has seemed to have taken notice as evidence of new security measures have surfaced.

Towards Regional Energy Security Cooperation

In the second half of 2012, there have been some reports by the media that Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan will work together to ensure energy security. In a press release from *Trend*, a few quotes were published by the Georgian Ambassador to Azerbaijan, Teymuraz Sharashenidze. He is quoted as stating: "There are very close economic ties, particularly in the energy sector, between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline can serve as an example. When one talks about the military component of cooperation between our countries, first he means the issue of the security of joint projects. What is next is unknown, but it is likely that the parties will conduct joint military activities in protection of existing infrastructure such as pipelines."²² The last sentence is correct; "what is next is unknown" and there has not been much information on what these countries are doing now to improve their joint energy security venture, except that between 26 November and 3 December 2012 all three countries held joint military exercises outside of Ankara.²³ Previously, it was up to each country to provide its own security detail on its section of the international pipelines. The former Turkish Ambassador to Azerbaijan said in a press release in June 2006: "If a country is unable to accomplish something on its own, there is a mechanism for that. A joint commission will then come together and draw up an action plan."²⁴ Apparently, this so-called joint commission came together this or last year and decided that a regional security pipeline task force should be brought into play. Whether it was due to the security issues on the Turkish side of the pipe-

lines is not entirely clear as this kind of information is not easily obtainable. Additionally, this type of negative press would do Turkey a disservice on the international energy stage.

The Perfect Storm in the Eastern Mediterranean and NATO's Energy Security: Future Transnational Security Forces

Since the beginning of 2000, the eastern Mediterranean has been a place of dispute among coastal countries; prominently, Turkey, the Republic of Cyprus (RC), the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), Greece, Israel and, to some extent, Lebanon. The disputes are centered on the delimitation of maritime boundaries with a special interest in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The eastern Mediterranean is geopolitically and geostrategically important and this importance has increased with the news claiming that the area has oil and natural gas reserves. The Republic of Cyprus signed agreements with Lebanon, Egypt and Israel on delimitation of maritime boundaries. It has also initiated tenders to search and drill for oil in the areas it claims fall within the boundaries of its EEZ. As a counter act, Turkey and the TRNC signed an agreement similar to that of one signed between the RC, Lebanon and Egypt in 2011.

The offshore gas findings around Cyprus are supposed to be among the world's largest discoveries in ten years.²⁵ According to the information from the Institution of Civil Engineers, "Cyprus is a promising new area for hydrocarbon exploration proved by recently discovered gas fields in the vicinity of Egypt and Israel which testify that petroleum systems were active in the very thick Levantine and Herodotus basins."²⁶ When all of these facts are taken into consideration, it is easy to understand why Greece and the RC are insistent on their interests in the eastern Mediterranean. The actuality of the RC's and Israel's gas transiting through Israel and onwards to Europe is economically ridiculous. The most economically logical way is from the RC to Turkey but the politics between the RC, Turkey and, especially, Israel would not permit this.²⁷ Turkish academic circles and journalists generally interpret the RC's actions as an attempt at becoming an important regional actor through the means of the production of gas and oil. They also agree that the RC aims at severing the relations between Turkey and countries in the Middle East by signing agreements with them. Furthermore, by taking the issue to the EU and the UN, the RC attempts to tarnish Turkey's image in the eyes of Turkish academic circles and journal-

ists. Last but not least, these initiatives taken by the RC are considered to have the potential to unjustly restrict Turkey's maritime areas.²⁸

In this age of rapid globalization, as countries depend on one another for more and more commodities, the security of these commodities is beginning to be scrutinized by multinational entities. One major institution that has undergone a major role change since the fall of the Soviet Union is NATO. As its role has been diminished from the protector of the Soviet threat, it has had to reinvent itself. NATO has done this in order to assist in issues with its European members as well as potential candidates lying on the peripheries of geographical Europe which have much to offer in terms of energy.

As more and more attention has been paid to energy security in general, NATO is taking a larger multinational role in providing consultation on energy issues for allies.²⁹ It could be assumed that many partner countries would be interested in working with NATO and receiving its expertise in consulting on energy security.³⁰ For example, since 2006 Turkey has been hosting, in accordance with NATO framework, a course called International Course Eternity, held in Ankara. This allows Azerbaijan and Georgia to participate in training and sharing intelligence on energy security. As Georgia aspires to be a member in NATO, the current cooperation is a big step forward and it also realizes NATO's role in a wider sphere of energy security.³¹

These developments with multinational entities such as NATO could be paving the way for how the future of energy security is implemented. As Europe's energy needs continue to grow, significant importance is going to be placed upon securing the pipelines passing through Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. Unfortunately, obtaining further information on NATO's energy security is particularly hard for the public, given that the information is classified. Although, it could be hoped that in the near future NATO will declassify its energy security information so that it is easier for the general public to see what they are doing in this field. This will ensure better understanding of NATO's policy towards energy security and will hopefully produce a clearer vision of what is to happen to countries in the South Caucasus.

Special attention should be given to Georgia's method of protecting its energy assets. In 2006, the Ministry of the Interior launched its very own Strategic Pipeline Protection Department (SPPD). The SPPD, since its im-

plementation, has been phenomenal in securing the transnational pipelines that pass through Georgia's territory. During the 2011 NATO Emerging Security Challenges meeting held in Tbilisi, Georgia, the director of the SPPD, Konstantine Tsitsishvili, remarked that the SPPD is the state of the art task force in energy protection, as there have been no terrorist attacks or any hot taps on Georgia's section of pipelines since its implementation. Furthermore, the pipelines are using a sophisticated computer controlling system that runs on three main servers, independent of each other, in order to thwart cyber attacks.³² Needless to say the SPPD is a paragon for Turkey.

Conclusion

Given all of the above information, it is logical to question the state of energy security in Turkey. However, there is now progress finally being made in terms of international cooperation between the three countries. Turkey is essentially the middleman in the great energy game and it could be losing credibility because it cannot safely transit hydrocarbons through its territory, thus alleviating Europe's need for Russian gas.

In order to truly become a strong regional transit hub, Turkey must increase its security of its energy assets by creating a special energy security task force to significantly reduce or completely eliminate hot taps and terrorism against the pipelines in their own country. It should also be taken into account that Turkey, like Europe, is also dependant on Russia and Iran for natural gas despite the natural gas connections with Azerbaijan which are friendly and stable unlike the relations with Russia and Iran.

If Turkey does not take its energy security challenges seriously then it will risk losing its reputation as a growing regional 'energy hub' which it is striving to achieve. In addition to losing its reputation, it will also risk angering both its energy suppliers (Azerbaijan, Iraq and Iran) and its beneficiaries (Europe and the EU). The latter two are more important than angering the suppliers because of the EU's soft power and Turkey's will to join the EU.

Turkey should work together closely with Georgia and the SPPD. The new joint energy security venture (if it truly does come to fruition) between the three countries should develop a trans-national version of the SPPD in order to ensure greater energy security in the region. Using an energy security task force like the SPPD would be ideal for Turkey, considering that the eastern section of the country where many of the pipelines pass through

is very similar to that of the geographical landscape of Georgia. Unlike Georgia, the primary difference is the eastern section of Turkey is filled with pockets of PKK—despite the current “peace process”—which can be a threat against the pipelines. The security force modeled after the SPPD would of course be trained to deal with these types of terrorist threats and prepared to neutralize them before they occurred. In order to realize this project, current Georgian SPPD officers could be used to work with and train Turks on Turkish territory. This would be an immense benefit for Turkey’s energy security as Turkey is at a critical juncture pertaining to its state as a “regional energy hub.” A strong, dedicated, energy security force is needed for Turkey to cement its energy hub role as a permanent title.

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