

Nigar Asgarova
Senior Lecturer at Azerbaijan University of Languages
Faculty of International Relations and Management
Department of Regional Studies
asgarova.n@gmail.com

U.S. ENERGY SECURITY CHALLENGES IN
AZERBAIJAN DURING FIRST DECADE AFTER THE
COLLAPSE OF SOVIET UNION

SUMMARY

The article deals with the USA energy security policy in Azerbaijan during contemporary period which is defined with the collapse of Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Azerbaijan became a real strategic partner for U.S. which determines its energy security policy as the main point for the realization of national interests. The main factor of the realization of the USA energy security was directly connected with obtaining the rich carbo-hydrogen resources of the Caspian basin and realization of save transportation to the West.

Key words: Azerbaijan, the USA, energy security, Caspian basin, energy resources.

The energy security policy which is one of the major issues dealt on world politics in contemporary period is directly connected with the political processes and its impact throughout the world. One of the defining features affecting world oil market is the policy determined by U.S. policy makers according to national interests and national security of the country. All factors related to national interests, mainly

national security has always been forming the basis of global U.S. foreign policy or towards the concrete region since the establishment of America in XVIII century. The most important side of energy policy of U.S. is the provision of energy security as the guaranty of their national security policy of the USA [http, I].

Zbigniew Brezezinski who was National Security Advisor during the presidency of Jimmy Carter between 1977-1981 expressed his point of view about the role of regions rich of hydrocarbon resources: “Almost all countries from Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan to Saudi Arabia are the oil producing countries and this fact increases the importance of the regions. Thus, to obtain energy resources with such convenient prices played a vital role for three huge regions - Northern America, Europe and Eastern Asia where economy is dynamically developing. For this reason, to obtain a strategic dominance which relied on corporation, even based on mockery, is a substantial step towards the world hegemony”. [Бжезински 3б. р. 26] It is not difficult to understand the importance of Azerbaijan for U.S. as the country rich with hydrocarbon resources. There were some defining features which determined U.S. energy security policy in Azerbaijan.

One of the defining feature of the USA in the region was the save transportation of energy resources from Caspian basin to the West.

Second defining feature was connected with the geopolitical situation of Azerbaijan Republic which was quite complicated. Thus, global powers such as Russia, Iran and Turkey tried to defend their interests here as shared borders with Azerbaijan. U.S. supported Turkey as the member of NATO and was interested in Turkey’s increasing power and leadership in the region.

To understand better the defining features of the USA energy policy in Azerbaijan it is important to trace back to the end of XX century when Azerbaijan gained its independence after the collapse of Soviet Union.

The U.S. energy security policy in Caucasus is directly connected with the Republic of Azerbaijan. Because Azerbaijan is the sole country which is situated in Caspian basin and possesses rich hydrocarbon resources among three South Caucasian countries. Azerbaijan gained its independence in 1991 after the collapse of Soviet Union. Azerbaijan is one of the ancient countries which produced oil through centuries. According to some archeological evidence oil was used here in III and IV centuries B.C. But the industrial production of oil was only possible in XIX century. The first oil well was drilled in Bibi-Heybet in 1846. From the beginning of 1920's till the II World War Azerbaijan could get a success for being in the center of interests for its rich oil resources. Azerbaijan displayed an interest in corporation with Euro Atlantic organizations such as NATO and European Council. The USA and other countries recognized the independence of Azerbaijan and established their embassies here.

In the first years of its independence Azerbaijan (1991-1993) witnessed the change of some presidents and was involved to Nagorny Karabakh war following the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against Azerbaijan. The war caused the deterioration the relations both with Russia and the USA. Thus, with the strong support of Armenian lobby the U.S. Congress had passed amendment the section 907 to "the Freedom Support Act". This amendment banned any kind of direct U.S. aid to Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, Azerbaijan had an intention to normalize relations with the U.S. despite of Russian pressure and objection. Or on contrary, Azerbaijan's rich oil resourced attracted U.S. attention to Azerbaijan and demonstrated its will to re-establish relations with a country rich of energy resources.

During this period "the energy map" of Azerbaijan could draw the attention of American political elites to Azerbaijan. The USA acknowledged that it was impossible to deliver rich hydrocarbon resources to the West without Iran and Russian presence, and it would enable U.S. to decrease the influence of these two strong states both in regional and international level.

The Republic of Azerbaijan and Georgia played a great importance for the USA in the context of transporting Caspian oil and gas to the West. Besides the role of Azerbaijan in transporting energy resources of Central Asian countries which didn't have any exit to sea was priceless. The defining feature of the U.S. energy security policy in Azerbaijan was connected directly to this case. Lack of financial means, modern technology and skilled personnel Azerbaijan encountered with obstacles in developing its energy industry. It was inevitable for Azerbaijan to resort to the West to get financial aid and technical assistance for producing energy resources. It was a hard task for Azerbaijan to differentiate energy policy and simultaneously to balance interests of Russia, Iran and other regional actors. The situation had only changed as a result of exact and balanced policy carried out by the national leader Heydar Aliyev who came to power in 1993.

To reduce the increased pressure in the region and also to improve and better relations with neighboring as well as Western countries was the main direction of late president Heyder Aliyev in the foreign policy of Azerbaijan. This policy embraced to provide the interests of other countries here without any damage to national interests and security of Azerbaijan and simultaneously to other countries.

With the head of president Heydar Aliyev "Contract of the Century" was signed between State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR), "British Petroleum" and "AMOKO" and 11 leading oil consortiums of Western countries in 20 of September, 1994. [II, [http](#)] The main essence of contract consisted of the joint development of "Azeri" and "Chirag" oilfields and deep water part of "Guneshli" oilfield for 30 years. Azerbaijan government invited leading oil companies to be part of this contract. The contract envisaged the production of 511 million ton of oil for 7,4 billion of dollar. [Atakan Gül-Ayfer Yazgan Gül, s.56] The share of U.S. companies in this project was 40 %. [İdris Bal, s. 235]

New oil strategy of Azerbaijan Republic established a basis for provision of modern engineering and technologies for the economy of Azerbaijan, especially for industry and oil sector [Cəbi Bəhramov.səh. 120-129]. Besides, “Contract of the Century” introduced Azerbaijan to Western oil companies. Of course, it was impossible not to feel the pressure of Russia. *Russia offered Azerbaijan to purchase energy resources for more expensive prices.* This offer would be very profitable in commercial term, but Azerbaijan acknowledged that to fall into the sphere of influence of Russia could cause the danger to its independence and this contradicted to national interests of Azerbaijan. The attraction of Western business elite to Azerbaijan and to direct its export stream for different direction Azerbaijan could ensure its political and energy security. “Oil map” gave both political and economic stability and flourishing to the country, and also created a suitable condition for strengthening its position in an international level.

In second half of the 1990’s the USA enhanced the scope of relations with Azerbaijan. These years Bill Clinton’s administration admitted the fact about important energy resources and significant geo-political position of Azerbaijan.

U.S. foreign policy toward Azerbaijan was directly connected with strategical importance of energy resources of country. Azerbaijan obtained a principal position in construction of new export pipeline which had a great importance both for the USA and whole Western world [Pashayev H.M.New-York: Global Scholarly Publications, 2006].

The energy resources of Azerbaijan played a significant role in U.S. energy security policy and consequently the Bill Clinton’s administration attitudes towards official Baku relented. Thus, the increasing of oil production in Azerbaijan and the necessity to bring it to world market had led to the establishment of a significant strategic project – Main Export Pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan. The memorandum about BTC pipeline project was signed between Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia in 15 of May, 1998. On October 29 of the same year

Ankara declaration was signed with the participation of former president of the U.S. Bill Clinton.

Although the USA and its allies were interested in preservation of power balance in Caspian region the main obstacle for them was energy security policy of Russia in this region. The main basis of the USA oil transit policy in the region was the transportation of Caspian oil through save pipeline which couldn't be controlled by any other country.

Thus, the relations between Azerbaijan and the USA reached the peak after the realization of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and Baku-Tbilisi-Kars gas pipeline project. Through these pipelines Western countries obtained opportunity to get hydrocarbon resources of Azerbaijan without Russia and Iran's support. Turkey also became a significant transit country as NATO member.

It should be noted that 3.7 billion of dollar capital was invested to Azerbaijan oil industry during 1994-2003. According to facts scrutinized above were led flourishing and development of modern Azerbaijan. But it was only possible according to balanced and exact policy conducted by national leader of Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev. He determined oil strategy of country, established favorable relationship with neighbor countries, carried the realities of Azerbaijan to world community. Complicated geo-political situation of Azerbaijan demanded the pursuance more careful policy. The participation of regional actors and intrigues brought by them became a potential thread for national security of Azerbaijan. But Azerbaijan neglected all these threads under the presidency of Heydar Aliyev. Thus, the modern Azerbaijan was established by national leader- Heyder Aliyev is being successfully developed by current president Ilham Aliyev.

List of recommended literature

Atakan Gül-Ayfer Yazgan Gül, *Avrasya Boru Hatları ve Türkiye*, İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 1995, s.56)

Cəbi Bəhramov. “Əsrin Müqaviləsi” müasir Azərbaycan Respublikasının Neft Siyasətinin əsasıdır. Elmi əsərlər. Azərbaycan Milli Elmlər Akademiyası, Tarix İnstitutu. 61-ci cild. Bakı-2016. səh. 120-129

Contract of the Century http://azerbaijans.com/content_775_en.html

İdris Bal, “ABD’nin Orta Asya Politikası”, *Bağımsızlıklarının 10. Yılında Türk Cumhuriyetleri*, eds. Emine Gürsoy-Naskali, Erdal Şahin, Haarlem: SOTA, 2002, s. 235

Pashayev H.M. *Racing Up Hill: Selected Papers of Azerbaijan’s First Ambassador to the United States of America*. New-York: Global Scholarly Publications, 2006

Pierre, Tristam. *The U.S. and the Middle East since 1945. A Guide to Mideast Policy from Harry Truman to George W. Bush*. <http://middleeast.about.com/od/usmideastpolicy/a/me070909b.htm> I

Бжезинский Зб. *Выбор. Мировое господство, или глобальное лидерство*. М.: Междуна-родные отношения, 2004. С. 95, 26, 167.

РЕЗЮМЕ

В статье, говорится о политике энергетической безопасности США в Азербайджане и признаках, обуславливающих на современном этапе, то есть в 1991 году после распада Советского Союза и окончания холодной войны. Азербайджан превратился в стратегическую страну для США, которые считают обеспечение энергетической безопасности для себя приоритетом осуществления национальных интересов. Основными признаками, обуславливающими обеспечение политики энергетической безопасности, являлось овладение карбо водородными запасами Каспийского бассейна и доставка их на Запад безопасным маршрутом.

Ключевые слова: Азербайджан, США, энергетическая безопасность, Каспийский бассейн, энергетические ресурсы.