

THE ROLE OF THE CASPIAN SEA REGION IN THE GLOBAL ENERGY SECURITY SYSTEM

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According to the theory of balance of power, the main task of each state is self-preservation, whilst at the same time trying to strengthen their power and strength in the system of international relations, since this is precisely what guarantees the preservation of the state. Strengthening is a normal situation for any state, which naturally leads to a rivalry between states. Weak states that cannot ensure their own security join together in coalitions that allow them to protect themselves from submission to the hegemon or extinction.¹ The realism paradigm considers states as rational actors in the international system. Rational behavior is defined as behavior that serves the national interest of governments. The national interests of governments are defined as the acquisition of wealth, power and survival. In this framework, energy resources are seen as wealth and as an element to maximize the power of the state. The rational behavior of each government in relation to energy resources is determined by the need for these resources. Thus, the amount of production and consumption by each state has a decisive role in its foreign policy behavior. In the global energy structure, there are three different types of countries: energy producers, transporters and consumers. In general, rational behavior is defined for consumers and transporter countries as behavior that ensures sufficient access to energy resources at acceptable prices.²

The Caspian Sea has traditionally been the center of conflicting geopolitical interests of both regional and non-regional powers. The struggle for influence in the Caspian Sea region has its historical counterpart. In the early eighteenth century, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and weakened Persia vied with each other for influence on the Caspian Sea. The mentioned process can be compared to the events caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the twentieth century.³

The activity of the world's leading states in Central Asia and the Caspian region is manifested in various forms, in particular - diplomatic, economic, military, and finally, it reflects the main geopolitical reality, the growing rivalry for energy resources.⁴

The region has geostrategic importance and plays the role of a bridge in the supply of energy carriers between East and West. Thus, finding an optimal transit route for oil and natural gas is one of the main concerns facing the states of the Caspian region⁵.

After the Cold War, the struggle for resources in the region is one of the most important geopolitical events. In today's international system, energy carriers, are the most important factor, contributing to security, but at the same time creating regional and international conflicts.⁶ The increased demand for energy carriers in the world leads to the active involvement of external forces in the ongoing processes in

¹ Paul, Thazha Varkey, James J. Wirtz, and Michel Fortmann. *Balance of power: theory and practice in the 21st century*. (Stanford University Press, 2004), 3-4

² Winzer, Christian. "Conceptualizing energy security." *Energy policy* 46 (2012): 36.

³ Vaziri, Haleh. "A Diplomatic History of the Caspian Sea: Treaties, Diaries, and Other Stories, Guive Mirfendereski. With a foreword by HE Chehabi. New York: Palgrave, 2001 ISBN 0-312-24005-8, 261pp." *Iranian Studies* 37, no. 1 (2004): 163-165.

⁴ Томберг, Игорь. "Центральная Азия и Каспийский регион: новый этап" большой энергетической игры". *Центральная Азия и Кавказ* 5 (47) (2006): 24.

⁵ Heinrich, Andreas, and Heiko Pleines. "Mixing geopolitics and business: How ruling elites in the Caspian states justify their choice of export pipelines." *Journal of Eurasian studies* 6, no. 2 (2015): 110.

⁶ Zibakala Sadaghe, Javad Arab Amri, Manabe qeire motaref energy va jaigahe khalije fars dar siyasate amniate enerjii alate motahed, *Siasate Khareji* (2014):180.

the region, often geopolitically opposed parties.⁷ The Caspian Sea and the Central Asian region are important not only for energy resources, trade and economic opportunities but also for geopolitical security and ancient cultural and civilizational importance⁸. Considering the geopolitical and geostrategic importance of the region, special attention is paid to issues of security both in the Caspian Sea basin region and beyond. The region's energy reserves, trade and transport corridors influence regional and trans-regional actors in the field of stability and security⁹. All countries bordering the Caspian Sea are rich in hydrocarbons, which is why energy plays an important role in the region's geopolitics¹⁰.

According to H. Morgenthau, the main component of power is natural resources, which are divided into food and raw materials. H. Morgenthau believes that after the First World War, oil became an industrial and military source of energy. According to him, the need for oil reserves changed the importance of the power of the great powers. Great powers try to control these oil reserves and deprive their competitors of access to them, thus shifting the distribution of power in their favor.¹¹

In addition to the five littoral states of the Caspian Sea, other regional and global states (USA, Europe, China) are also interested in being represented in the region to protect their interests using political, and economic means.¹²

The main goal of the research is to determine the influence of regional and global players on the balance of power in the Caspian region after the collapse of the Soviet Union and to determine their role and positions in the search for alternative ways to transport energy resources.

⁷ Croissant, Michael P., and Bülent Aras. *Oil and geopolitics in the Caspian Sea region*. (Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999). 16.

⁸ Denoon, David, ed. *China, The United States, and the Future of Central Asia: US-China Relations, Volume I*. Vol. 1. (NYU Press, 2015). 262.

⁹ Molaei, Yousef, and Dayyan Jaanbaaz. "Geopolitics and balance of power in Caspian Sea." *Central Eurasia Studies* 9, no. 1 (2016): 151.

¹⁰ Tapia, Felipe Sánchez. "Geopolítica en el mar Caspio: los extraños no son bienvenidos." *bie3: Boletín IEEE'22* (2021): 208.

¹¹ Morgenthau, H. *Politics among nations: Struggle for power and peace*. (New York: Knop. 1948), 82-84.

¹² Kalehsar, Shokri. *US Energy Diplomacy in the Caspian Sea Basin*. (Springer International Publishing, 2021), 69-70.