

## Putin's regional policy across the Baltic and Black Sea-Turkey's Stream is a strategic alternative to South Stream

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### Abstract

*The tense relations between Russia and Ukraine, which was in turn a transit of Russian natural gas to the countries of the European continent, prompted Moscow to search for alternative ways to export its gas to Europe, and found its involvement in the Turkish Torrent project? Doing so would bring Russia closer to achieving some of its long-term geopolitical objectives. First, along with the "Northern Torrent 2" pipeline lines and the "Turkish current" across the Baltic and Black Sea Our research stems from the following central question: Is the transfer of Russian natural gas to Turkey across the western line passing from Ukraine, Moldova, Romania and Bulgaria, will stop with the opening of the first line in the Turkish Torrent project? An analytical view of the following statement: The answer to this fundamental question is based on The Turkish Torrent project will achieve strategic advantages for Turkey to make it present, influential and effective in the issue of energy distribution between the Middle East and Europe, the most important of which are: First: Turkey's role in the distribution of energy from the Middle East to Europe has increased with the change in the route of the South Stream export pipeline from Bulgaria to Turkey. ? Which prompted Bulgaria to sign an agreement with Serbia on the transit of natural gas through the pipeline "Turkish Torrent" aimed to transport gas from Russia across the bottom of the Black Sea to Turkey, and to Europe? Second: Russia benefited from the geo-strategic location of Turkey and its proximity to Europe in diversifying the routes of exporting natural gas to Europe beyond the Ukrainian Where high transit risks lie In this context, two strategic projects have been launched to transport the gas, "North Nile 2" and "Turkish Torrent" The Turkish Torrent project includes two pipelines across the Black Sea floor with a total capacity of 30 billion cubic meters of gas annually, one for the Turkish market and the other for European consumers And that the Russian natural gas exports to Turkey via the Western pipeline passing from Ukraine, Moldova, Romania and Bulgaria, will stop with the opening of the first line in the Turkish Torrent Project in 2018 Third, to strengthen the Russian-Turkish relations in the field of energy, especially after the Turkish Energy Market Regulatory Authority granted Russia a license to produce the power plant of the nuclear power plant of AQ Guo in Mersin State for 49 years Fourth: the realization of the Turkish President Erdogan that the Turkish Torrent project will achieve three strategic goals in the near and near future Agencies: First: the transformation of energy sources into a tool of peace, not a tool of war between Russia and Turkey Second: to achieve the dual benefit of the approach of mutual profit of the Russian and Turkish sides in several areas highlighted Third: The maturity of the Turkish-Russian relations and the enhancement of their cooperation in the field of energy will give Turkey the future the possibility of achieving a balance between Turkey's membership of NATO and its commitments of commitment, inherent in the Montoux Convention of 1936, which restricts the arrival of the landlocked forces to the Black Sea Through the Turkish straits including the Bosphorus Straits This fact prompted Turkish President Erdogan to pursue a pragmatic policy toward the energy file and to cooperate with the Russians because he (Erdogan ) realized two facts Turkey relies on Russia for nearly half of its natural gas imports Turkey's historical concerns from the Russians will ease Ankara's reaction to Moscow's takeover of the Crimea And that energy projects, mainly natural gas, are an important and reliable part of the energy security of the two countries (Turkish and Russian) in particular and that Russia is an important energy player in the region for having large resources of natural gas and strong infrastructure will benefit Turkey Especially as the project "Turkish Torrent" consists of two pipelines for gas transport pipelines with a capacity of 31.5 billion cubic meters of natural gas, as one of the lines will allocate natural gas to Turkey to meet their needs, and the second pipeline to transport Russian gas to Europe through Turkish territory*

**Keywords:** Turkish Torrent Project, Russian Natural Gas, Energy Security, Geopolitical Relations, Transit Routes

## 1. Introduction

The context of scientific and objective analysis of research requires

Ask the following central question:

What is the geo-strategic value of the implementation of the "Turkish Torrent" project, will it contribute to increasing the supply of Russian gas to Turkey, or will strengthen its position (Turkey) as a transit country for gas supplies to Europe?

The logic of the research imposes legitimate sub-questions, most notably:

Why did Russia choose Turkey to transport gas to Europe while changing the route in the South Stream export pipeline from Bulgaria to Turkey. ?

Is it because Russia considers Turkey to be one of the leading importers of Russian gas?

Where Turkey occupies the second place in the list of Russian customers with purchases in 2016 about 24.76 billion cubic meters of gas

Turkey currently imports Russian gas through two pipelines (1)

"Balkans" and "Blue Torrents")

Or is the discontent between Russia and Ukraine, which in turn was a transit point for Russian natural gas to the countries of the European continent, prompted Moscow to search for alternative ways to export its gas to Europe, and found its involvement in the Turkish Torrent project? What are the motives of Bulgaria to sign an agreement with Serbia on the transit of natural gas through the pipeline "Turkish Torrent" aimed to transport gas from Russia across the bottom of the Black Sea to Turkey, and to Europe?

Does Bulgaria's motives lie? (The cancellation of the former South Stream project has resulted in Bulgaria losing over \$ 400 million a year as potential revenues from Russian gas transit to its territory)

To find strategic alternatives to supply gas from fear (Bulgaria in the case if Russia wants to stop the transfer of gas through Ukraine will be able to take gas from the Turkish flood?

Finally, the question remains the most important (2)

Will the Turkish Torrent project fall under US sanctions against Russia or not?

What is the fate of foreign investment companies that provide goods and services for Russian gas pipeline projects financially and legally?

The most prominent Swiss companies

What is the fate of the agreements and their legal consequences, which Russia has with several countries to facilitate the project "Turkish current" and facilitate the process of gas flow towards Europe.

Gazprom, Edison Spa, (Edison SpA) and DEPA SA, a memorandum of understanding on the supply of natural gas from Russia to Greece and from Greece to Italy?(3)

## 2. Turkey geo-strategic location

Turkey, by virtue of its distinguished location, is already the natural bridge of energy transmission between the Middle East and Europe.

Turkey lies in the middle of the four regions

The Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East and the Gulf

This site puts Turkey in the geo strategic importance where it does not (4)

Indispensable for Russia? And Europe?

And the United States?

Who know the geography of these areas and their importance in transporting gas lines to Europe?

Turkey is located on the Anatolian peninsula

It is surrounded by three seas: the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Aegean Sea.

Because Turkey is located within the Anatolian peninsula,(5)

It has a central location within the world's land as it is a meeting point for three continents - Asia, Europe and Africa - across the Mediterranean

For centuries, Turkey has been a strategic corridor for the transition from the West to East and from East to West.

The countries of the Middle East are Turkey's most important transit country for the Western world. Where Turkey already plays the role of a natural bridge for energy transfer between the Middle East and Europe.(6)

The Middle East is the main supplier of energy, from which Turkey is a conduit for transfer to the EU, but the EU is increasing the energy suppliers and the transit countries to some extent to ensure access to gas supplies from several ports.

In terms of energy, Turkey is of great geopolitical importance to the EU.

It is also important for producers because it is the safest and easiest way to export.

Therefore, Turkey is carrying out projects that will make it transfer energy to the West and the Turkish Torrent project is a practical model.

For these reasons, Turkey is of great importance to the European Union and energy producers,

Thus, within the near future projects to be completed by Turkey, a key transit point will be an effective and effective geo strategy and an important route for transporting gas supplies to an indispensable Europe between East and West (7).

Russian energy experts are predicting that Turkey and Russia will boost their energy supply in the foreseeable future. The Europeans have a range of alternative projects for the Southern Corridor, now frozen (ITGI, SEEP, Nabucco West) All of them start with Turkey in

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particular. Thus, for the Russian gas, the implementation of the Turkish pipeline (the Turkish Torch project) allows for the simultaneous implementation of all these projects (4)

According to international statistics, more than 20% of the gas and oil required for Europe could come from the Caspian Sea, Central Asia and the Middle East (8)

(Turkey) can help diversify the European gas supplies away from Russia, but the current reality confirms the impossibility of implementing this may be achieved in the medium term?

### **3. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict and the geo-strategic value of the Turkish Torrent project and its impact on the transfer of Russian gas to Europe?**

Since the outbreak of the crisis between Russia and Ukraine, Turkey's geostrategic shares have risen to be a reliable alternative for Russia to supply gas to Europe.(9) In fact, Turkey is the only country close to the borders of Europe, which has a geostrategic location with enough resources to be a safe energy hub for Europe "by moving Russian natural gas to most European gas markets.

Noting that European countries can import Russian gas through the counting of ports, including Turkey or a pipeline through Armenia and Georgia, and then under the Black Sea.

But the Turkish Torch gas pipeline will be a strategic alternative to South Stream (10)

On 1 December 2014, after years of negotiations with the European side, which failed and Bulgaria suspended the implementation of the South Stream project on its territory and in June 2014, Vladimir Putin announced at a press conference during a working visit to Turkey the death of the South Stream project, Finally,

The "Turkish Torrent" project proposed a project to build pipelines to transport natural gas from Russia to Turkey

And the European countries, through the Black Sea to the Turkish mainland, to end at the Turkish-Greek border, where the establishment of large gas reserves, and then supply to consumers in Eastern and Central Europe (11)

It is a strategic geo option for Russia because it achieves strategic alternatives, notably:

First, to strengthen the energy security of the countries of South-East and Central Europe in light of the ongoing Ukrainian crisis because Russia and based on the expectations of energy experts put these countries in the construction of energy transmission lines to it through ports, notably Turkey and perhaps Bulgaria to provide appropriate political conditions which may be achieved in the foreseeable future The average?

Second, Turkey's role in the distribution of energy from the Middle East to Europe is increasing as the route of the South Stream export pipeline from Bulgaria to Turkey changes (12)

After Russia and Ukraine, a transit hub for Russian natural gas to the European continent, began to look for

alternative routes other than Ukraine to export their gas to Europe, and found their involvement in the Turkish Torrent project as a strategic step to be followed by future projects to build more Russian gas transmission lines To Europe and provided that Turkey is the center or axis of the passage of these lines, so Russia is ready to make political concessions to Turkey in Syria and Iraq in return for the success of the Turkish Torrent project and strengthen it with more networks of Russian gas transmission lines to Europe. The monopoly of the transfer of gas to Europe until 2035?

The Turkish pipeline consists of 4 pipelines with a capacity of 15 billion and 750 cubic meters of natural gas. The length of the project is 117 thousand km, 910 km under the Black Sea floor and 260 km above the ground (13)

On October 2, 2015, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said,

"There has been an amendment to the project to become only two lines and not four lines as previously agreed, with a total size of 31.5 billion cubic meters per year."

"Novak added

"The first line of the project will be allocated to Turkey alone, and will provide annually with 15.75 billion cubic meters, while the other line will be allocated to the rest of the European countries.

Russia's Gazprom is constructing the section that runs from the bottom of the Black Sea seaboard, while the Trans-Turkish section will be created jointly by the two countries, while the total cost of the project is expected to reach about \$ 19 billion (14)

The Turkish pipeline project starts from Russian territory and crosses the bottom of the Black Sea to enter Turkish territory through the northern Greek state of Qalqlar Illi and then to Greek territory, which will be a Russian gas reservoir at the end of the project.

Thirdly, it allows Russia to diversify its gas export outlets to Europe, and it may be a common interest between Moscow and Europe to exclude Kiev as a natural gas transit route to the heart of Europe (15)

Fourth, the pipeline provides Moscow with the possibility of exporting gas to Europe (Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia and Greece). In 2009, the Russian-Ukrainian relations were cut off and Russian gas supplies were cut off from these countries in winter. This experience will remain in the memory of these countries. The current situation until the emergence of a strategic alternative to enrich them from Russian gas, which is enslaved in the near future?) Or at least strengthen its sphere of influence in the energy sector again in Europe until 2035. Gazprom expects to (16)

Russia will pump about 63 billion cubic meters of natural gas a year. Turkey is expected to take about 14 billion cubic meters of gas per year and the remaining 49 billion cubic meters will be pumped into the European continent.

On the other hand, Gazprom agreed with Hungary (Hungary) to supply it with natural gas via the "Turkish Torrent" pipeline (17)

Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Siyaretto said that the "Turkish Torrent" branch to Hungary would be completed by the end of 2019. He added that Budapest considered it the best option, compared to other routes of gas supply.

Fifth: Russia's investment of legal and political consequences resulting from the end of the contract of supply of gas to Europe in 2019 to strengthen its role as a major supplier of gas to Europe

And through the new or old outlets decided by the Russian government of its own and perhaps impose conditions or prices suited to the disproportionate Europe, especially that the end of the contract in 2019 gives tactical advantages to Moscow to strengthen the strategic value of the supply of gas to Europe until 2035 as follows (18)

Continuation of gas contracts between Russia and member states

#### **4. The credibility of the Black Sea as a water surface and its geo-strategic value for the transfer of Russian gas to Europe?**

The Black Sea as a strategic watershed separating the Middle East, Russia, the Caucasus and Eastern Europe and the option of Turkey to supply Europe with gas? ..

Whatever the credibility of Turkey's option to supply Europe with gas, there are major brakes that will slow Turkey's entry into gas markets in Europe (19)

First: the need to produce more Russian gas

Second: the need to build the infrastructure necessary to transport it to Europe, because investment in the construction of pipelines to transport Russian gas through Turkey to Europe needs large amounts of money

For example, the cost of constructing the four lines of the Turkish Torrent project is about 11.4 billion euros, excluding VAT, and the first pipeline costs about 4.3 billion euros

These costs are recovered only over many years. Thus, such investments are not underestimated.(20)

Therefore, natural gas production requires much more investment than oil production, and the conclusion of a processing contract usually takes several years.

Fourth: to limit competitors to Russia in the field of gas production and export

In 2007, when Tehran opened gas supplies to the neighboring state of Armenia, Gazprom rushed to buy the pipeline project inside Armenia and build it in a small circumference to prevent its future use to transport gas to European markets.(21)

Moscow and Tehran could find themselves competing for a share of the gas market in neighboring Turkey.

As Turkey is already Russia's second biggest market for gas exports, Turkey's role in Russia's gas export strategy has escalated recently with the change of route

proposed by Russia in the South Stream export pipeline from Bulgaria to Turkey.(22)

Bulgaria and the Turkish Torch project and the search for strategic alternatives after the failure of the South Stream project?

The Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov's justification for the Turkish Torrent project was based on the following principles:

First: on the quantities of gas that Bulgaria will be ready to absorb through the project "Turkish Torrent" to transport gas "about 15.7 billion cubic meters(23)

Second: the signing of an agreement with Serbia, and we will get a flow of 10 billion cubic meters from Bulgaria to Serbia. "

"If Russia wants to stop gas transit through Ukraine, we can take gas from the Turkish pipeline," Borisov said.

Fourth: Bulgaria has begun to focus its efforts on the Israeli-Cypriot-led East Mediterranean gas project to export the eastern basin gas to Europe.

Since the suspension of the South Stream project, Bulgarian visits to Israel and Greece have begun to discuss energy projects under which Tel Aviv will export its gas (liquefied gas) to Europe via Greece and Bulgaria.(24)

The South Stream project could be boosted by Israeli-Cypriot export projects to Europe at the expense of Moscow.

Sofia aims to strengthen its regional position as a natural gas hub to Europe,

Although it remained a second-rate crossing compared to Turkey.

Fifth: Among the strategic alternatives Bulgaria's energy experts have proposed investing in the construction of gas pipelines by positioning its strategic location as a vital corridor for transporting gas supplies to Europe

The views of the experts emphasize two things:

The first is to link the planned gas lines with Turkey and Greece to enhance the security of its internal demand for natural gas(25)

Second: In order to avoid the repercussions of the Ukrainian-Russian crisis on energy supplies to Europe, energy experts in Bulgaria proposed linking the networks of Turkey and Greece to the countries of south-east and central Europe threatened by the energy sector because of the Ukrainian crisis, which may reflect the security of natural gas supplies to it, which may happen in the run The average perspective, and these countries have no other than the Turkish Torrent project because it is a geo-strategic project for energy security in the region?

Turkish Energy Minister Berat Albayrak said that the gas pipeline "Turkish Torrent" is a major project to supply gas to Turkey and diversify the supply routes of gas to the European Union.(26)

He added that "the Turkish Torrent project is supposed to build a pipeline for gas pipelines across the Black Sea to the European part of Turkey and from there to the border with Greece, the length of the sea section of the line will be about 910 km, and the land section within Turkish territory - 180 km.

The news agency "Novosti" Russian Novak as saying that "Turkey is interested in the gas directly without crossing other countries,(27)

In this context, there is at least one line within the Turkish Torch project with a capacity of 15.75 billion cubic meters of gas for the Turkish consumer. "

Turkish Prime Minister Yildirim said that the project "Turkish Torrent", which aims to transport Russian gas to Turkey and from Europe to Europe, will ensure energy security for his country and neighboring countries.

Turkey is taking a constructive stance on energy delivery from the eastern Mediterranean to Europe, and Turkey is seeking to build energy pipelines with Russia, Japan and China as well as major projects until 2023.(28)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, Peter Saaarato, the position of his country on the Turkish Torrent project, saying:

(Hungary believes that the supply of gas via the Turkish pipeline is the best scenario, since other routes of gas supply have not been worked out, that is, through Romania or Croatia. For this reason, Hungary has an interest in obtaining Russian gas from the South via (Turkey).

The completion of the "Turkish Torrent" project will allow the supply of Russian gas not only to Turkey, but also to consumers in south and south-east Europe. The project is planned to transport 31.5 billion cubic meters of gas annually. (29)

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the following results can be obtained:

First: Turkey, through the completion of the Turkish Torrent project, is seeking to achieve two strategic goals in the near term:

# Turkish Torch gave Turkey access to Russian gas at reasonable prices

By agreeing on a mechanism to reduce the price of Russian natural gas to Turkey, which is the second largest buyer of Russian gas after Germany.

With purchases of Russian gas giant "Gazprom" in 2016 27 billion cubic meters.

#The completion of the Turkish Torrent project will achieve geo-strategic advantages in the field of energy distribution between the Middle East and Europe and the realization of the project "Turkish Torrent", Turkey reaches a position to occupy a regional center for the transit of Russian gas to Europe in the near future

#Financial revenues boost the Turkish financial and economic status because it will generate (Turkey) the transit fees of Russian gas supplied to Europe estimated at about one billion dollars annually.(30)

Second: As for Russia, the Turkish Torrent project will achieve financial and economic benefits in addition to other advantages, the most prominent of which are:

# Reducing its dependence on Ukraine in transit gas

#. Increased supplies to southern Europe.

For example, Russia currently supplies gas to Turkey via the "Blue Nile" pipeline, which was run at the turn of the century, but its transit capacity is only 16 billion cubic meters of gas per year, forcing Russia to supply part of its supplies to Turkey via Ukraine, through Moldova, Romania and Bulgaria.

Russia will achieve geopolitical gains because it is practical and not hypothetical. According to Russian energy experts, it became a substitute for the "Southern Stream" project, which stalled at the end of 2014 amid escalating differences between Russia and the EU over the Ukrainian crisis.

# That Russian President Putin wants to close with Turkey in the field of oil and gas, to show Russia as a key player in the Middle East, the Balkans and Caucasus by adopting a strategy that:

Russian energy made from competitors partners?

# Russia's entry into the Turkish pipeline project between Turkey and Turkey shows that Moscow will continue to try to control Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Tehran and the rest of the other energy competitors through effective cooperation with them.(31)

Despite the complexities between Russia and these countries

Putin's regional policy is based on a practical application of Russia's strategy based on the principle "Russian energy is made up of competitors." The result of this strategy was to strengthen Russia's position

As a major supplier of gas to Europe

Through the investment of two conditions:

First: the continued imposition of international sanctions on Iran

In 2007, when Tehran opened gas supplies to the neighboring state of Armenia, Gazprom rushed to buy the pipeline project inside Armenia and built it into a small perimeter to prevent its future use to transport gas to European markets

Second: the Iranian-Qatari conflict on the demarcation of the field of the "North Gas / Faris South" between the two countries.

That the conflict between Doha and Tehran on the demarcation of these borders has been somewhat frustrated by the sanctions - parallel to the absence of investment in Iranian production in the disputed field And that this natural gas field is one of the largest fields in the world

Qatar's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG) And that it is the main area in which Iran invests new capabilities in the fields of gas and oil and that it will not be achieved in the foreseeable future or even in the medium term to consider:

The first concerns the impossibility of lifting international sanctions on Iran in the foreseeable future

The second concerns the completion of military, political and economic measures to strike Iran

As Israeli and US intelligence reports and research centers indicate that striking Iran has become a matter of time and that it will be achieved in the foreseeable future?

And that it (Iran) may be subjected to a tactical nuclear strike or exposure of its nuclear facilities and laboratories and laboratories for chemical and biological weapons fixed and mobile?

As well as some of its military positions and command and control centers

And even some of its military sites elected in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon to air strikes and missiles by Israel and the US-led international coalition?

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