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RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FOREIGN POLICY AND ENERGY SECURITY IN CENTRAL ASIA: A CASE STUDY OF KAZAKHSTAN

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ABSTRACT

Kazakhstan is major energy producer in Central Asia, and has been pursuing a multi-vector foreign policy since it gained independence from Soviet Union. It has played host to many multinational energy from Russia, China, the USA and Europe. Nazarbayev's multilateral and multi-vector foreign and privatization policies have had a significant impact on the country's energy [security] policy over the last three decades. Emphasizing good relations between itself with both global and regional powers, Kazakhstan has maintained a balance among Russian, Western and Chinese companies via defensive realist approach. This balance is especially visible in both the role that those companies play in exploration projects, as well as in the building of oil and gas pipelines.

Keywords: Geopolitics, Energy Security Policy, Central Asia, Republic of Kazakhstan, Defensive Realism.

ORTA ASYA'DA DIŞ POLİTİKA VE ENERJİ GÜVENLİĞİ İLİŞKİSİ: KAZAKİSTAN ÖRNEĞİ

ÖZ

Kazakistan, bağımsızlığından beri çok yönlü dış politika uygulamakta olan Orta Asya'da önde gelen enerji üreticisi ülkelerden biridir. Bu bağlamda SSCB sonrası bu yeni bağımsız devlet, Rusya'dan, Çin'den, ABD'den ve Avrupa'dan çok uluslu enerji şirketlerine ev sahipliği yapmaktadır. Nazarbayev tarafından uygulanmış olan bu çok yönlü dış politikanın otuz yıla yakın bir süredir ülkenin enerji politikası üzerinde önemli bir etkisi olmuştur. Birbirini etkileyen çok yönlü dış politika ve özelleştirme süreci, Kazakistan'ın enerji güvenliği politikası üzerinde belirgin bir etkiye sahip olmuştur. Küresel ve bölgesel aktörler ile iyi ilişkiler kurmayı ve sürdürmeyi vurgulayan Kazakistan yönetimi Rus, batı ve Çin şirketleriyle dengeli bir ilişki yürütmeyi başarmıştır. Bu bağlamda özellikle bölgedeki büyük güçlerin ilgilerinin artmasıyla Kazakistan'ın savunmacı realist politika uyguladığı görülmektedir. Bu politika çerçevesinde oluşturulan denge petrol ve gaz boru hatları projelerinde olduğu gibi sondaj ve üretim aşamalarında da görülmektedir. Makalede, nitel araştırma yöntemi ve vaka çalışması yaklaşımı kullanılarak, Orta Asya'daki en önemli enerji üreticilerinden biri olan, Kazakistan'ın enerji güvenliği politikası incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Jeopolitik, Enerji Güvenliği Politikası, Orta Asya, Kazakistan Cumhuriyeti, Savunmacı Realizm.

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Introduction

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, Central Asia has attracted the attention of the world's major powers due to its strategic and geopolitical location and natural resources. Global and regional powers sought to develop comprehensive relations with these countries and tried to be involved in the extraction of energy resources in the region. The rich reserves of oil and gas resources however has led to a fierce competition between different countries both regional and global. Meanwhile, the question of how to transfer these reserves to world markets was another issue on the agenda of the players involved in the region.

Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have been able to become the most attractive areas for foreign investment. In addition, these three countries, after independence, have pursued collective policies in the energy sector. Located in the same region, which has required the development of a collective transmission route, has been the primary reason for the adoption of common policies. Because of geopolitical necessities, the energy strategies of these countries may be called “collective policies”.

Kazakhstan, one of the major energy producers in Central Asia, has been pursuing a multi-vector foreign policy since independence. This policy has allowed Kazakhstan to pursue an energy security policy based on development of cooperative regional and international ties and collaborative relations with world powers in the region and beyond. In this regard, the Republic of Kazakhstan is hosting various multinational energy companies operating from Russia, China, the US and Europe. Examining the foreign policy of Kazakhstan, it can be concluded that the multilateral foreign policy defined by Nursultan Nazarbayev has had a significant impact on the country's energy policy over the last three decades. The country has been eager to diversify its relations. Therefore, next to Russia, it has been eager to expanded its economic as well as political relations with major powers and sign several cooperation agreements in the energy sector. This has resulted in foreign direct investment in Kazakhstan's oil and gas projects since independence (Derman et al. 2014, p. 9).

The main purpose of this article is to study the relationship between foreign policy and the energy security policy of Central Asian states in a case study of Kazakhstan. In this regard, the main questions of this study are:

- What influence did Kazakhstan’s foreign policy have on the energy security issue of this republic?
- Is the energy security policy of Kazakhstan consistent with its foreign policy or not?

The hypothesis is that Kazakhstan’s multi-vector foreign policy and energy security policy have a close relationship and mutual influence on each other. Kazakhstan’s energy security policy has been adopted with respect to improve cooperation between regional and sub-regional powers such as Russia, China and Western Countries (specially the United States). In order to explore this hypothesis, using a qualitative research method and a case study manner, it has attempted to briefly study the general energy security policy of the countries of Central Asia, and in particular the Republic of Kazakhstan. As well, to be answered the mentioned questions, based on document analysis, the role and share of multinational oil companies in Kazakhstan’s oil and gas projects have been studied.

This article explores the relationship between foreign policy and energy policy and explains the interaction between them. It is also an analysis of the importance of Central Asia in terms of security and hydrocarbon resources, as well as the role of global players in

the formation of the energy security policies in this region. In this sense, this study may be helpful for researchers of political economy, international relations, as well as energy and energy security studies and etc.

It should be noted that the article focuses on the relations between Kazakhstan's "energy supply security" and its foreign policy. In this context, it is natural that Kazakhstan's general foreign policy will exeed the working limits. On the other hand, Kazakhstan's relations with its neighbors are only mentioned within the scope of energy security, not all relations.

Energy in Some Internatinal Relations Approaches

The Era of Energy Geopolitics

According to offensive realism approach, history shows that states, as they become increasingly wealthy, turn to large armies and seek to increase their international influence. As the state becomes more powerful, it seeks to maximize its influence and control its international environment. Therefore, states will pursue aggressive strategies with the aim of maximizing influence in cases where they think that the country's relative capability has increased. Consequently, an increase in state power and national power leads to the developmentalist foreign policies. This approach predicts some activities of small powers as well, although not as much as the big ones. Minor powers cannot seek global or regional hegemony. They do not take actions in relations to power concerns, but mainly in relation to concerns such as the stability of borders, internal political security or resource issues (Valeriano, 2009, p. 184).

It should also be noted that the neorealist approach assert that the global system pressures the states to gain more power. Offensive/aggressive and defensive realism, which are sub-branches of neorealism, achieve different results according to the goals of the great powers. Mearsheimer, one of the representatives of offensive realism, says the international system encoureges the big powers to maximize their power visa-a-vis especially other big states contrary to the views of the defensive realists (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 21). So that economic or energy issues are very important to guarantee the strengthened independence in world politics. According to defensive realists, including Waltz, contends the systemic structure force the states to safeguard the status quo rather than gaining more power (Waltz, 1979, p. 126). In terms of these approaches, a defensive realist explanation of the region's energy rich countries Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan policies, especially in the context of relations with Russia and China, is more appropriate. However, there may be aggressive realist findings against their weaker neighbors.

From 1990s to the present, known as postmodern geopolitics, a geopolitical thought has formed. It seems that the idea of geoeconomics and the originality of the economy against the Edward Luttwak system are closer to reality than other approaches. Even in geopolitical theories of the postmodern era, such as the New World Order, Unipolar, Multipolar, Globalization and the End of the History of economics and economic relations, somehow it is obvious at the heart of all postmodern geopolitical ideas. In other words, the offering of geopolitical theories without considering economic power cannot explain the geopolitical situation of this century. Luttwak believes that the end of the Cold War is actually a change in the direction and movement of the world system from geopolitics to geoeconomics (Taylor, 2000, p. 377). However, considering that geoeconomics is a branch of geopolitics, it is more meaningful to say that change is from geostrategy to geoeconomy. This fact is more evident for the Eurasian geography. In reality, it is the powers that navigate and lead economic policies in the global system, and the result of this process is geoeconomics, which has emerged as a fluid phenomenon to cover a new competitive

environment in the global system and a way to justify and analyze the global policies of most Western powers (Glassner et al. 2004, p. 271).

In this regard, energy resources is one of the most important geopolitical variables in the modern political system of the world in interstate interaction between countries as well as in transfer of this resources. So that, energy appears as the latest generator of geopolitics by bringing back the importance of the territory. In this context, some researches have called geoeconomics, as energeopolitcs or "new energy order politics": neopolitics (Arıboğan et al. 2009, p. 110).

Moreover, in the new structure of the international political economy, energy as the Achilles heel of many regions and industrialized countries of the world; in such a way that there is no escape from dependence on it, at least for the next few decades. Ensuring energy security allows major industrialized states to even include war in their options. Today, energy transmission pipelines are becoming a component of global trade and further integration into world energy trade, and energy security in recent years has been one of the main challenges of the foreign policy of many countries (Cornelius et al. 2007, p. 10).

Robert Gilpin and Benjamin Cohen, referring to theories such as hegemonic stability, believed that since one of the fundamental indicators of hegemonic power is control over resources, pipelines and routes, considering that oil is energy and energy can be converted into money, and money creates control, and control is power. Thus, the hegemony of a hegemonic state depends on the control of four categories of resources: (1) control over world crude resources, including energy, (2) control over world capital resources, (3) control over global markets and (4) control over the production of high value-added goods (Keohane, 2002, p. 32). Given these assumptions, it is argued that the roots of the formation of international conflicts in the post-Cold War era have undergone a fundamental transition from ideology to competition for the conquest and seizure of natural resources (Nervins, 2004, pp. 255-256). Oil and gas, which was the cause of many wars in the 20th century, maintains its importance in Central Asia after Cold War era, as in many regions.

Energy Security Concept

For a long time, energy security has been a concern for industrialized countries and energy users. The security of energy supply was framed by the International Energy Agency (IEA), in which the rapid reaction system for the emergency oil field was formulated and agreed upon by all its members. Since oil and gas have the largest share of energy, so more energy security refers to oil and gas security. The energy concept has changed over time, and in addition to security of energy supply, security of energy demand has been included. On the other way, regardless of the political-economic stability of the countries producing and consuming energy, it is impossible to achieve long-term security of energy. As of 2020, the decrease in demand for fossil fuels, especially with the pandemic process, has brought energy demand security to the fore. This issue is a potential cause for concern for Kazakhstan as well as for other oil and gas exporters. It is another matter that demand security will jeopardize the security of supply after a while.

Energy has played a major role in the development as one of the most important factors of production and a great deal of economic growth and development. Therefore energy security has been another of concern for energy policymakers around the world. For decades energy security was considered to the most important issue of concern to industrialized countries and was defined as “adequate supply of energy at appropriate times and at reasonable prices” (IEA, 1985 cited in De Paoli et al. 2010, p. 6). In other words, developed industrialized countries expected the oil and gas supply would always

be provided at appropriate prices at any time when their economies require the continuation of their economic development and well-being of their people. However, this is considered a unilateral approach and has a devastating effect on the oil market.

Energy security mainly refers to the security of the oil and gas, since the bulk of the energy is made up of these two energy carriers. In this regard, the IEA also defines energy security as the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price. According to this organization, energy security means reliable, affordable access to all fuels and energy sources. Long-term energy security is mainly associated with timely investments in energy supply in accordance with economic development and environmental needs. As short-term energy security focuses on the ability of the energy system to quickly respond to sudden changes in the balance of supply and demand (IEA, n.d.).

For energy consumers, energy security is nothing but a guarantee that energy at the reasonable price is available at any given time, continuously and without interruption. However, in point of view of energy suppliers (producers), energy security is defined as security for energy demand. Producers tend to have an adequate demand for the energy they generate and spend a lot of money on. Otherwise, because, suppliers should endure much opportunity costs due to their investment void. There are also oil companies that play an important role in energy efficiency. These companies pay great attention to the profitability of their activities. The low barrier margin will lead to low investment in downstream activities with high handwriting by the company ultimately affecting energy efficiency (Thamodi et al. 2011, p. 25). The Figure 1 shows the triangle of energy security created by key market players, namely manufacturers, customers, and oil companies.

It is worth noting that although oil and gas and other energy resources have a major contribution to primary energy, the recent role of other renewable energies should be taken into account. It would also be reminded that oil currently holds highest share of energy in the world and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, but this energy security is not limited to oil.

Finally, two main international organizations are active in the field of energy security. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) represents the major oil producer and exporter countries, and on the other hand, the IEA represents the importer countries (mostly Western). These two organizations have different definitions of energy security, energy market security and security of energy issues. Among the countries of Central Asia, Kazakhstan is known as OPEC Plus member because of having wealthy resources of oil. OPEC Plus is a non-official gathering which has been established in order to magnetize collaboration and assistance between OPEC and non-OPEC member countries in the last few years. Except for Kazakhstan, no other Central Asian countries have a membership of any international active organization in the energy sector.

Energy Security from the Perspective of Liberalism and Realism

From the point of view of energy security and theories of international relations, in accordance with the principles of liberalism, the expansion of liberal democratic rules after the end of the Cold War, along with a capital-free market, created conditions that benefited much. Given the acceleration of the process of globalization and the increasing inter-state relations, the likelihood of rivalry between states has declined, and many liberals have argued that the struggle between major powers has become a far-fetched phenomenon. Liberals believe that the increased dependence of the great powers on the energy reserves of the southern countries should not lead to a conflict, and international energy markets should regulate and facilitate the relations between major consumers and producers. The resources of all major powers are intertwined and their energy security

does not separate energy security of other countries. Leading industrialized consumer actors are demanding maximizing the stability of the oil supply to the market and minimizing prices. Indeed, many western powers are equally aware of their economic and energy security with international and domestic suppliers of energy and their trading partners. Liberals also believe that the interconnected nature of the current global economy has created conditions that the state's energy security is dependent on that of the others and that all major powers have a common interest in maintaining global energy markets and as long as this economic order exists, the likelihood of a conflict between great powers and other energy sources is very small (Stokes et al. 2010, p. 380). As sum, liberals focus more on the economic field than the realists. From the liberal point of view, energy security refers to obaining energy resources at fixed and affordable prices. For them, the price is an important consideration in their dealing with energy security. They also agree that energy resources are limited and, in extraordinary and unexpected situations and periods, therefore, energy security can be secured by international and regional cooperation through regional and international institutions, such as the IEA or OPEC.

Contrary to liberals, the realists are skeptical about the continuation of the current liberal order, and they believe that some trends may bring us back to the geopolitical confrontation period. They argue that resource warfare over energy sources can lead to the loss of international cooperation: states may compete or even struggle to control energy reserves (Stokes et al. 2010, p. 382). Michael Klare considers the existence of competition for energy sources a feature of the contemporary world and in fact a zero-sum competition. He believes that if such competition continues, it is likely that there will be a conflict between big powers (Klare, 2008, p. 30). In fact, realists are motivated; the lack of energy resources could disrupt the global system and the emergence of a new international order in the field of energy, and ultimately become a system of neoclassical and state-oriented capitalism. They point out to states to take their own views on China's energy market rules. China's ambitions are concerned about the absolute dominance of the United States on the Persian Gulf oil, because they believe that the United States could control oil flow in the event of tensions between Beijing and Washington. Similarly, the Chinese authorities are in the process of signing direct and bilateral agreements with exporting countries outside the global energy markets (Downs, 2000, p. 45). By 2020, advanced cooperation and institutionalization have beeen established between China and exporting countries, and pipelines have been built. In this context, three Central Asian countries are extremely important.

On the other hand, realists point to a strategic rivalry among the powers in the Caspian Sea. Since the mid-1990s, with the emergence of large volumes of energy reserves in this region, Russia, China and the United States were trying to influence the regimes of Central Asian and the Caucasian countries. Each of these powers has provided them with a great deal of economic and military assistance. The issue of gas and oil pipelines has become a key issue. Meanwhile, the main priority of the United States has been to reduce the traditional domination of Moscow to these areas. The construction of a Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline to the west and restricting some sort of Russia's way to reach the world markets has been one of most important priorities of US (Yalçınkaya, 2015, p. 117). On the other hand, Beijing and Moscow are also contributing to the decline in US influence in the region. Undoubtedly, this competition is a new challenge for the current liberal order, and it is a sign of the beginning of the conflict in a tight competition between states concerned (Klare, 2008, pp. 115-120). In this context, the importance of the energy sector has been revealed in the offensive realistic approach, especially in terms of big powers.

The Russian attack on Georgia in 2008, as one of the key states in oil transit, and NATO's response to it, could be the beginning of a new era in the formation of a conflict between countries involved in this issue. Consequently, the realist view of energy security stems from their belief that energy security is part of national security and nobody can separate these two aspects of security. Energy is intimately linked to power, and without energy security, the national security will always remain elusive. They believe continuation of the current liberal order seems somewhat difficult and that some of the trends may restore the world system to the geopolitical period. And they also believe that conflict on energy resources can cause destruction in international collaboration, while states may strive or even conflict over the control of these resources.

Energy Resources of Central Asian Countries

Following the Middle East, Central Asia is the second most-rich region in the field of hydrocarbon sources. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have important sources of crude oil and natural gas, respectively, and Uzbekistan has also a significant wealth in terms of natural gas reserves. With regard to these reserves, these countries accounted for 3.6 percent of the world's oil reserves and 6.9 percent of the known natural gas reserves (Sevim, 2015, p. 201).

In regard to oil reserves Kazakhstan, with approximately 3.9 billion tons of crude oil (1.7 percent of the world's total crude oil), ranks 12th among oil producing countries in the world (BP, 2019, p. 14). In Central Asia, Kazakhstan is the richest country in the field of oil producing with petroleum resources.

Countries	Reserve	Ratio to world total reserve
	Billion tons	%
Kazakhstan	3.9	1.7
Turkmenistan	0.5	-
Uzbekistan	0.6	-
*** Kyrgyzstan**	0.5	-
*** Tajikistan**	0.2	-
Countries Total	5.9	1.7

Table 1: Petroleum Reserves in Central Asia

Source: BP, 2019

*Proved Recoverable Reserves Mt (metric tonnes) 2015/2014 // 2016 Survey of Energy Resources (World Energy Council)

In terms of natural gas reserves, according to the same report, Turkmenistan after Russia, Iran and Qatar is the fourth-largest producer of natural gas in the world. Turkmenistan's natural gas reserves are estimated to be about 19.5 trillion cubic meters, 9.9 percent of the world's total natural gas. Also, Uzbekistan with 1.2 trillion cubic meters of gas is in the twenty-first position and Kazakhstan with a 0.6 trillion cubic meter of natural gas is the twenty-third position located in the listings of the table (BP, 2019, p. 30).

Countries	Reserve	Ratio to world total reserve
	Trillion M^3	%
Turkmenistan	19.5	9.9
Uzbekistan	1.2	0.6
Kazakhstan	1.0	0.5
*** Kyrgyzstan**	6 Billion m^3	-
*** Tajikistan**	6 Billion m^3	-
Countries total	21.8	11

Table 2: Natural Gas Reserves in Central Asia

Source: BP, 2019

*2010 Survey of Energy Resources, World Energy Council

Along with the oil and gas sources in Central Asia, coal is another element in energy production. According to BP, Kazakhstan produces 25,605 million tons of coal and is the ninth country among coal producers. Moreover, in the region, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan occupy the second, third and fourth position, respectively (BP, 2019, p. 42).

Countries	Reserve	Ratio in the world's total reserve
	Million tons	%
Kazakhstan	25605	2.4
Uzbekistan	1375	0.1
Turkmenistan	-	-
*** Kyrgyzstan**	971	-
*** Tajikistan**	375	-
Countries Total	**31300**	**2.5**

Table 3: Coal Reserves in Central Asia

Source: BP, 2019

**2016 Survey of Energy Resources, World Energy Council

The upstream power sectors of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have the greatest hydropower capacity in the world, and they depend heavily on large and small-scale hydropower plants (Eshchanov et al. 2019, p. 1). Table 4 shows the Hydropower potential in Central Asia.

Countries	Installed capacity (MW)	Target for expansion (MW)	Production in 2016 (TWh)	Gross theoretical potential (TWh/year)	Technically exploitable capability (TWh/year)	Current utilisation (%)
Kazakhstan	2,372	170 (by 2020)	6.940	198.6	61.9	15
Kyrgyzstan	3,091	178 (by 2025)	13.320	163.0	99.0	13
Tajikistan	5,190	No data	18.740	527.0	317.0	5
Turkmenistan	1	No data	0.003	23.9	4.8	0
Uzbekistan	1,889	938 (by 2030)	10.950	88.5	27.4	39

Table 4: Hydropower potential in Central Asia (in GW)

Source: Eshchanov et al. 2019, p. 2

The five Central Asian countries Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan have about 70 million population, that is about 1% of the total world population. But according to above tables, 3.6% of oil reserves, 11% of gas reserves and 2.5% of coal reserves of world are located in these countries. The ratio of total primary energy consumption in these five countries to total global primary energy consumption is about 1.4%. It should be noted that in some parts of Central Asian countries, some solar power plants are being launched with support from the World Bank and UNDP, for example, a large project was implemented in Kazakhstan. Finally, it can be seen that Central Asian energy resources play a notable role in global politics and regional competitions. Due to such potential, Central Asian countries as remarkable players in the world order of energy security.

Energy Security Policies of Central Asian Countries

Following independence in 1991, the region of Central Asia has become more interesting for global players, especially for two main aspects: security and energy. Security aspects related to the geographic location that places the region near significant security threats for their global challenges, such as Afghanistan and Iran. Indeed, the security factor has received more attention after the September 11, 2001 attacks. Given the American-led Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, the growing US military presence and activities in the region have caused growing concern among the leaders of Russia and China. These two main players have promoted regional multilateralism to balance a substantial US presence, especially through security organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). In particular, the SCO was established to combat the "three evil" in the region: terrorism, separatism and religious extremism. Often in neighboring areas, these three phenomena are closely related, especially after the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). One of the key issues is the return of numerous fighters who came from Central Asia and participated in the Syrian war. This fear of security has particularly increased recently due to the partial defeat of ISIL. For this reason, the Turkmen-Afghan border has become one of the top priorities for external players, especially Russia and China (Raimondi, 2019, p. 3). Indeed, regional security is one of top priorities for these powers, since they consider extremely important to maintain regional stability and limit the spread of violence, which can easily undermine their internal stability and security.

In addition to security interests, the region has received increased attention for its natural reserves. In recent years, the potential of hydrocarbon reserves located in Central Asia has been strongly emphasized; in particular, major energy markets have identified natural resources located in Central Asia as a possible alternative to those located in the Middle East which is an unstable region. In Central Asia, as mentioned above, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are richer than Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in the field of oil and gas resources. Among these countries, Kazakhstan is rich in oil, while Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are rich in natural gas reserves. Particularly in the energy sector, Central Asian countries have pursued a 'multi-vector' foreign policy in order to balance Russia's dominant position and find ways for their economic development. However, another incentive to follow a multi-vector policy is to attract very much needed foreign investment. Indeed, all the countries of Central Asia have tried to attract foreign investors to acquire the necessary technologies and investments to improve production and exports. This has resulted in serious interest from foreign energy companies, mainly American, European and Chinese for the exploration, development and production of oil and gas resources through investments and partnerships. Nonetheless, the composition, partnership and investments of these corporations vary in each country. For example, Western companies played a more significant role in Kazakhstan than in other countries,

while China took an exceptional position in the Turkmen gas industry. Thanks to increased oil and gas production and rising oil prices after 2,000, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan increased energy production and witnessed a significant gross domestic product (GDP) growth of an average of seven percent per year (Raimondi, 2019, pp. 4-5).

Analyzed more closely, it is clear that the involvement of foreign actors in the energy sector of the Central Asian countries have gone through different phases: the Russian influence; the Western approach; and the rising China. Against this background, foreing actors in the early phases of independence took little interest in the region. This has largely been due to the political instability of the region which fostered the perception of unpredictability. However, as the conditions on the ground changed so was the involvement of foreign investors in the region. A multiplicity of actors are now competing with each other to secure an investment and control strategic assets in the region.

Improved investment opportunities in the last decade have allowed the countries of Central Asia to make a significant progress in the extraction and export of hydrocarbon resources. In this regard, it can be noted that Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan are in the center of the attention of many applicants for energy resources. While trying to overcome geographical problems, these two states have shown great interest in implementing pipeline projects on the eastern and southern routes, in addition to exporting energy resources to west through Russia. China, on the eastern route, and Afghanistan, on the southern route, have attracted considerable attention from especially Turkmenistan. The discovery of significant hydrocarbon reserves in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan has accelerated the implementation of pipeline projects to transport oil and gas to China. The expansion of energy cooperation with Kabul and Beijing ultimately led to the implementation of a number of pipeline projects that provided new routes for exporting oil and gas to foreign markets. TAPI (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India), Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline and Kazakhstan-China Petroleum Pipeline are among these projects. At the same time, these countries have tried to maintain and strengthen Western routes through Russia in order to preserve one of the most important ways of transferring energy to Western markets (Shaimergenov et al. 2006, p. 14).

Moreover, the importance of energy resources in Central Asia is determined by the amount of fuel produced and its role in the economic structures, exports and foreign exchange earnings of these countries. But the financial and technical constraints of these countries led them to establish relationships with various countries, especially global energy players. The economies of Central Asian countries are vulnerable to oil revenues. The export and sale of energy resources in this region is very important for the Central Asian countries, which have been independent for nearly three decades.

It should be noted that, unlike hydrocarbon resources, which contribute to the economic stability of Central Asian countries, water and other energy resources are still the subject of serious discussion and disagreement between these countries. Over the past 30 years, the countries of the region have not been able to reach an acceptable consensus on the principles of using water and energy resources of trans-boundary rivers and reach the permanent and fair deal. After the independence, Central Asian countries pursued an independent policy on the control and distribution of water resources. Each country pursues its national interests, focusing its own policy of control over water resources, which in many cases causes problems in the region. Only in 2015-2020, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have been able to agree on the CASA-1000 project to transfer electricity to Afghanistan and Pakistan and to work together on this multistate project (World Bank, n.d.).

Overall, due to many common characteristics such as geographical and common route of transmission and access to world markets, the Central Asian states have realized the benefits of developing colloberative schems and collective policies in the energy sector. That is why the energy policy of these countries can be called as "collective policy". Regional as well as multilateral cooperation in many transnational projects, such as Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline, Central Asia-Center Pipeline and CASA-1000 Hydroelectric project support this tendency. Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are collaborating with China in the Central Asia-China gas pipeline to connect Turkmen gas with the second West-East gas pipeline. Also these three countries have developed extensive cooperation over Central Asia-Center Gas Pipeline to export region's gas to Russia and Western clients. Moreover, in the framework of CASA-1000 Project, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have a close collaboration to transfer electricity to Pakistan through Afghanistan. This project inaugurated in 2016 with the participation of state-heads of beneficiary countries.

Kazakhstan Energy Security Policies: A Case Study

Kazakhstan has the second-largest oil reserves among the former Soviet republics. Currently, Kazakhstan's oil production is dominated by two giant onshore fields in the north-west of the country and one offshore field in the Caspian Sea (Ongarova, 2018, p. 5). Approximately half of the total Kazakhstani oil was produced from the Tengiz and Karachaganak oil fields in 2017, while the Kashagan oil field, producing about 225,000 barrels per day, began to increase production at the end of that year (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2017). According to the Oil & Gas Journal, as of January 2018, there were three large oil refineries in Kazakhstan - Pavlodar, Atyrau and Shymkent - with an oil processing capacity of 340 thousand barrels per day (Oil & Gas Journal, 2017, p. 22). Along with the oil reserves, Kazakhstan's proven natural gas reserves are estimated at 19.5 trillion m^3 as of June 2019 (BP, 2019, p. 30). In 2017, the Kashagan gas field became the main producer of Kazakhstani natural gas. Together with the Karachaganak and Tengiz fields, these three fields accounted for about 65 percent of the industrial production of natural gas in Kazakhstan (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2017). As of 2019 with 25,605 million tons of total recoverable coal reserves, it is also among the top ten countries in the world in terms of coal reserves. Kazakhstan is the top country in coal production in Central Asia. In terms of consumption, the country is among the top fifteen in the world. However, it only accounted for 2.4 of the world's total reserves in 2019 (BP, 2019, p. 42).

Kazakhstan is rich in hydrocarbon resources, but its energy sector needs significant rehabilitation and modernization in order to increase the efficiency of energy production and use. There are many problems in the extraction, operation and transfer of reserves international markets (Kalehsar, 2019, pp. 82-87). Kazakhastan's weaknesses have convinced the poltical leaders to establish a delicate balance between regional and global powers, which has resulted in a multi-vector policy. This policy has its roots in the post-Cold War period, while Moscow wanted to establish a sphere of influence over the former Soviet republics with the US trying to inflitrate and expand its control in the region (Özkan, 2011, p. 61). Undoubtedly, this competition, if evaluated correctly, meant an opportunity that the Nazarbayev administration exploited successfully. Because after the Soviet Union, some prominent Russians claimed that Northern Kazakhstan belonged to Russia (Yalçınkaya, 1997, p. 40). This situation forced Nazarbayev to follow a very balanced policy. As it is known, protecting the borders of the country constitutes the primary foreign policy agenda of a state (Sönmezoğlu, 2005, p. 271). The multifaceted relations in energy policies have actually guaranteed the borders of this country in the international arena.

The multi-vector foreign policy introduced in the early 1990s by the first President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. The concept involves "the development of friendly and predictable relationships with all states that play a significant role in world affairs and are of practical interest for our country." (Kaz Portal, 2015). Based on this rational, Kazakhstan has established good political and economic relations with regional and supra-regional powers: Russian Federation, EU, USA and China (Official Site of the President of Kazakhstan, 2014). It has continued to strengthen relations with the Russian Federation in all areas of political, trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation on the basis of the Treaty on Good Neighborhood and Alliance in the 21st century. Also, it had deepened comprehensive strategic cooperation with the China in the framework of political dialogue at the highest levels. Kazakhstan also has continued to strengthen its strategic partnership with the US, aimed at developing political, trade, economic, investment, energy, scientific, technical and humanitarian cooperation, and solving urgent issues on the international agenda. Moreover, it has had strengthened strategic partnership relations with European states with which relevant agreements have been concluded or are being developed, as well as with European institutions and associations (Official Site of the President of Kazakhstan, 2014).

On the legal basis of the multi-vector nature of the Republic of Kazakhstan with different countries, Russia has an active and effective role in the exploration, extraction and export of energy. Russia's Gazprom is one of the main energy players in this ex-Soviet republic. Currently, the legal framework of the Kazakh-Russian cooperation includes more than 450 treaties and agreements in various fields. Among the fundamentals, the Agreement between Russia and Kazakhstan on Good Neighborly Relations and Alliance in 21st Century, signed by Nazarbayev and Putin in November 2013 (Kremlin, 2013). The Intergovernmental Protocol of October 03, 2018, which amended the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Russian Federation on trade and economic cooperation in the supply of oil and oil products to the Republic of Kazakhstan forms the basis of cooperation with Russia (CIS Internet Portal, 2019). This document was signed on December 9, 2010. The amendments allows for improving the mechanisms for regulating the supply of petroleum products between the two countries and specific conditions for the flow of Kazakhstan oil outside the customs territory of the Eurasian Economic Union (Turgambaev et al. 2019, p. 4).

The EU is one of the main political and economic partners of Kazakhstan. The legal basis for relations between Kazakhstan and the EU is the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which entered into force in July 1999 (Zakon, 2020). On December 21, 2015, the Agreement on Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation was signed in Nur-Sultan (Astana), designed to facilitate and further develop comprehensive relations between Kazakhstan and the EU. This new agreement, which is the first such agreement signed by the EU with one of the partners in Central Asia, covers 29 areas of cooperation, ranging from investment, development of trade, infrastructure, and such areas as innovation, culture, sports, tourism, law enforcement cooperation and etc (ICTSD, 2015).

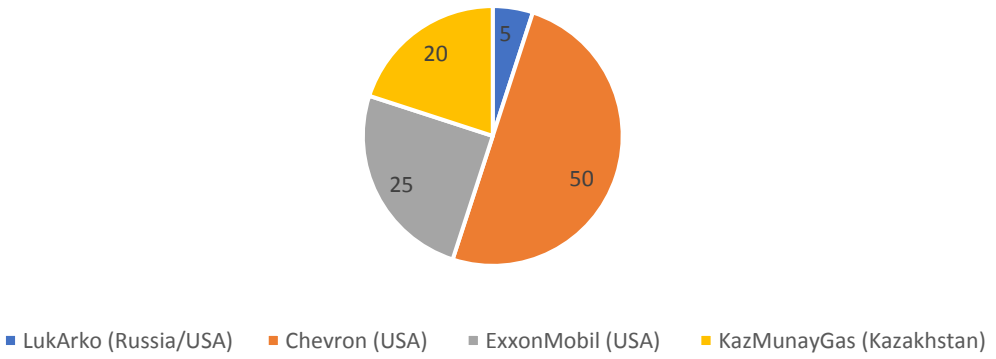
As far as the USA is concerned, one of the first foreign companies to start a business in Kazakhstan was Chevron Corporation, which began in 1993 to develop the Tengiz oil field. Note that this year is right after the collapse of the Soviet Union. With the participation of Chevron and Mobile, the Caspian Pipeline Consortium oil pipeline was built and commissioned in 2001. Chevron shares 15 percent of shareholders of this project (CPC, n.d.). In 2003, the Energy Partnership Commission was established, which plays an important role in coordinating energy cooperation between the US and Kazakhstan (Kazinform, 2013). Also, the Public-Private Partnership Program, adopted in February 2008 is designed to support the development of US energy projects in Kazakhstan and

attract US investment and innovation in the non-resource sector of the Kazakh economy. The United States and Kazakhstan raised their bilateral energy partnership to the level of the Strategic Energy Dialogue in 2017 (Forbes Kazakhstan, 2019). Moreover, a bilateral cooperation was confirmed by Trump and Nazarbayev in January 2018, and both leaders decided to strengthen cooperation in the field of trade, investment and human relations through regular high-level meetings as part of the Enhanced Strategic Partnership Dialogue (Turgambaev et al. 2019, p. 6). Worth noting, the joint projects of American and Kazakh companies are being implemented at the Tengiz and Kashagan oil and gas fields.

China is another country which has played a significant role in the energy sector of Kazakhstan. In 2015, the Ministry for Investment and Development of Kazakhstan and the National Development and Reform Commission of China signed a Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of industrialization and investment (Kazinform, 2019). In September 29, 2016, after several negotiations, a list of 51 projects were approved for a total of $26 billion in the areas of automotive, agriculture, oil and gas, construction, metallurgy, energy, transport and logistics, new technologies, etc. (Turgambaev et al. 2019, p. 7). There is also a Kazakh-Chinese Cooperation Committee co-chaired by the deputy heads of government of the two countries. This committee includes 10 specialized subcommittees, including those on energy cooperation. The total volume of the legal framework between Kazakhstan and China is more than 160 documents.

Likewise, since changing the constitution in 1995, Kazakhstan has carried out the process of transition to a free market, privatization of the energy sector and encouraging foreign investment in developing the country's oil and gas resources. In 1997, Kazakh government issued a decree on privatization and restructuring in the energy sector. Through this decree, all energy companies have gone through an incorporation process and became legally ready for future privatization and restructuring, where the Ministry of Oil and Gas and the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of Kazakhstan was given the responsibility to implement adopted policies (IAEA, 2019). In the framework of privatization of the energy sector, several western corporations have started to invest in the three largest energy fields in Kazakhstan: Tengiz, Kashagan and Karachaganak. In this respect, since 1993 the shareholders of TengizChevroil LLP are the corporations shown in Figure 1.

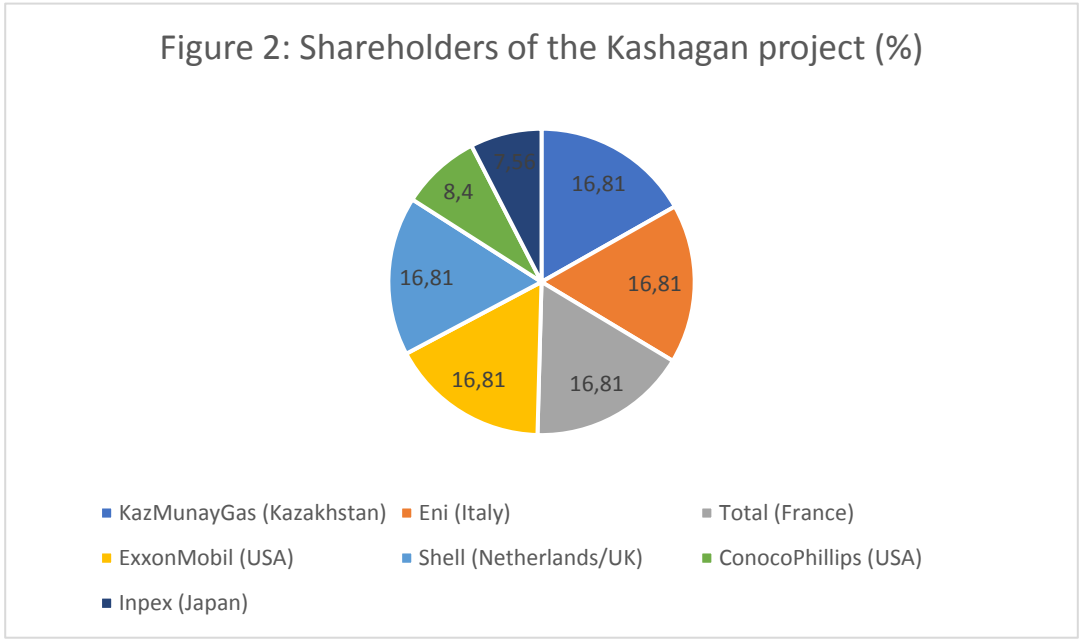
Figure 1: Shareholders of TengizChevroil LLP (%)



Source: (Energy Charter Secretariat, 2013, p. 77)

Moreover, the owners of the Kashagan field continue exploring in accordance with the North Caspian Production Sharing Agreement. The North Caspian Operating Company, owned by foreign and national investors, is currently the operator of the project. This corporation was established as the project operator in January 2009. The shareholders of the Kashagan project are shown in Figure 2.

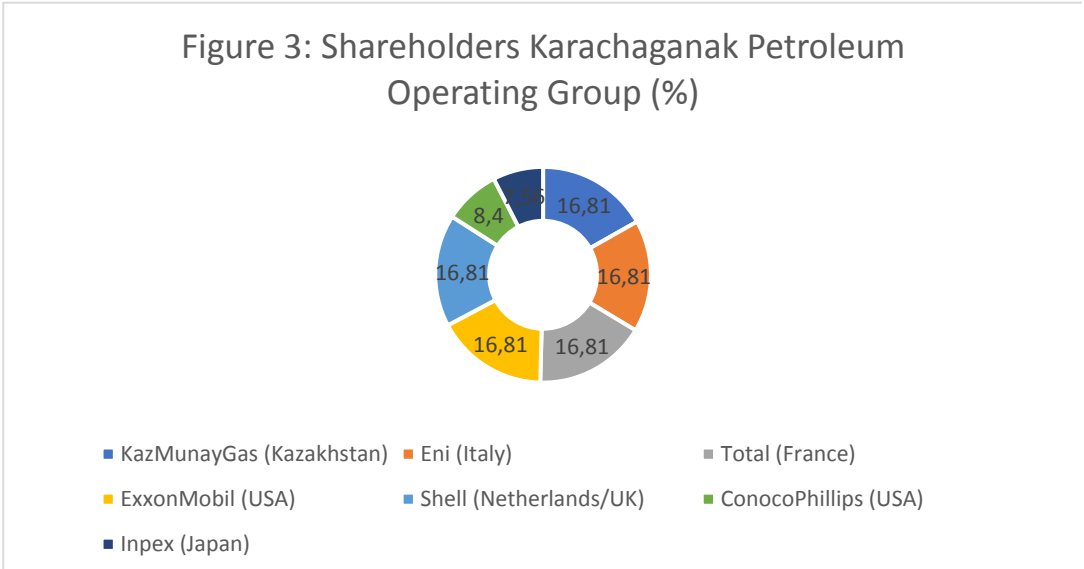
Figure 2: Shareholders of the Kashagan project (%)



Source: (Energy Charter Secretariat, 2013, p. 78)

The Karachaganak field was also developed by Karachaganak Petroleum Operating B.V., a joint venture established by several western companies headed by BG Group and Eni. Currently, Figure 3 shows the shareholders of the Karachaganak Petroleum Operating Group.

Figure 3: Shareholders Karachaganak Petroleum Operating Group (%)



Source: (Energy Charter Secretariat, 2013, p. 78)

In addition to the aforementioned Lukoil Russia Company, Gazprom and Rosneft are also cooperating with the local companies in the geological survey and development of oil and gas fields in Kazakhstan (Paramonov et al. 2008, pp. 2-5). Russia's Gazprom is the main player in the field of natural gas trade (exports and imports) in Central Asia, particularly in Kazakhstan. For instance, in 2017, the Gazprom Group purchased 13.8 billion cubic meters of gas from Kazakhstan for supplies to Europe, and in the same year, this company purchased 0.3 billion cubic meters of gas from Kazakhstan for supplies to Kyrgyzstan (Raimondi, 2019, p. 7).

Moreover, Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) holds a significant share in 9 oil and gas projects in Kazakhstan. CNPC shares in Kazakhstani projects vary in percentage. For example, CNPC's share in Aktobe project is 89.17 percent, in the North Buzachi project 50 percent, in MMG project 50 percent, in PK project 67 percent, in KAM project 25 percent, in ADM project 100 percent, in Shymkent Refinery 50 percent, in Northwest Crude Oil Pipeline 49 percent and in China-Kazakhstan Crude Oil Pipeline 50 percent (Bin, 2014, p. 601).

On the external energy security of Kazakhstan, a multi-vector hydrocarbon supply policy has been put to work to reduce dependence on any partner. Thus, Kazakhstan jointly with Russia expanded the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) to transport Caspian oil from Tengiz field to the Novorossiysk-2 Marine Terminal on Russia's Black Sea coast. Also, after the launch of the Kazakhstan Kashagan Oil Field and its commercial capacity, Kazakhstan created the Kazakhstan-Caspian Transport System (KCTS) to transport oil through the Caspian Sea and the territory of Azerbaijan to Turkey and international markets through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline.

Moreover, the KCTS includes the construction of the Eskene-Kuryk Oil Pipeline with the creation of the TRANS-Caspian system (Kuryk-Baku). It is important to note that the pipelines currently available in Kazakhstan have sufficient capacity to ensure oil exports from Kazakhstan in current volumes, but they may not be adequate if oil production in the future increases from current levels. Therefore, it was decided to return to the idea of building KCTS (Dellecker, 2008, pp. 7-8). Also, since Kazakhstan does not have access to the high seas, Russia is the only transit route for Kazakhstan and the rest of Central Asia to access the European markets. Since 2000, the Russian policymakers have taken many steps to maintain their geopolitical status as a transit route between Europe and Central Asia. To serve this purpose, Russia has invested in several major projects in Central Asia, e.g. signing an agreement to build a new pipeline connecting Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan gas to the Russian pipeline network (Bergsager, 2012, pp. 10-15).

It should be noted that Kazakhstan is also a member of Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) along with other Central Asian republics. Besides, TRACECA is an effective alternative for the access of the Central Asian and Caucasian republics to Europe outside of Russia (Yalçınkaya, 2011, p. 35). Despite Kazakhstan's intense relations with Russia, its founding membership in TRACECA is another indicator of its multi-vector foreign policy.

Moreover, Kazakhstan has increased the capacity of the Kazakhstan–China gas pipeline, launched in 2005. Recently, about 6.1 billion m^3 have already been exported through this route. A contract was also signed, to increase the export of Kazakh gas to 10 billion m^3 per year starting from 2019 (Inform Bureau, 2017). In 2018, the construction of 2 compressor stations of the Kazakhstan-China gas pipeline was completed. This increased the throughput of the Kazakhstan-China gas pipeline from 5 billion cubic meters to 55 billion cubic meters of gas per year (Energy Base, 2018).

It should also be noted that Kazakhstan wants to further increase its eastern route capacity and looks for alternative ways. On the other hand, China is desperate to reach the Central Asian resources due to the rapid growth of demand for energy. China's plans in this regard are somewhat ambitious, costly and have geopolitical implications in this strategic area of the world. In terms of hydrocarbon resources, for China, Central Asia is considered the second most important after the Middle East. In June 1994, the CNPC purchased 60 percent of Kazakhstan's Aktobinsk Oil Company worth $3.4 billion. The CNPC also announced that it will build a 3000-kilometer long pipeline with a value of $3.5 billion linking East Kazakhstan's regions to the Chinese western region of Xinjiang. Overall, since 1991, China has invested $ 20 billion in Kazakhstan, making Beijing one of Kazakhstan's largest partners in terms of foreign trade and economics (New Europe, 2019).

Kazakhstan, as an oil-exporting country, is more concerned about market security, transport security, and price security than oil extraction. Over 80 percent of the oil produced in Kazakhstan is traditionally exported. In order to ensure its energy security, Kazakhstan has signed a memorandum of understanding with other oil-exporting countries and agreed to reduce oil production in 2017 (BBC Russian News, 2018). However, the agreement was violated by Russia and Saudi Arabia in April 2020, a new memorandum of understanding has been signed. It should be noted that during the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic as of mid-2021, problems related to energy demand security will continue. In this case, some energy-rich countries can be expected to enter a new aggressive realist phase. When it comes to Kazakhstan’s relations with China, a defensive realist policy is observed.

To export its oil, Kazakhstan uses the CPC, Kazakhstan-China Pipeline (KCP), Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC), Atyrau-Samara and Omsk-Pavlodar-Shymkent-Uzbekistan. In addition to these three oil pipelines, two of the three longest main gas pipelines in the world pass through the territory of Kazakhstan and Central Asian countries. These are the Turkmenistan-China gas pipeline (also known as Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline) with a length of 7000 kilometers and the Central Asia-Center Gas Pipeline with a length of 5000 kilometers (KazTransGas, n.d.). The Turkmenistan-China gas pipeline, which runs through Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan (more than 1900 km in total) and China (4500 km), plays an important role in ensuring the growth of Chinese industry. The Kazakhstan part of the route is called the Kazakhstan-China gas pipeline. The total cost of the project is about $7 billion. The project capacity of the gas pipeline is 55 billion m^3 per year. At the same time, the capacity of the Central Asia - China gas pipeline can grow to 65 billion m^3 per year and become the largest gas supply system in the region (Overland, 2016, p. 123).

Also, Central Asia-Center is the world's third longest gas pipeline, and it is an important element in forming the overall resource base of Russia's Gazprom. This gas transport route passes through the territories of four countries of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Russia. According to a number of agreements between all participants in this project, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are purchasing and filling the gas pipeline, while Kazakhstan and Russia are engaged in natural gas transit. This main route is currently one of the veterans of the gas industry. The completion of its first stage took place in 1967 and at that time it was the largest gas pipeline in the world at approximately 3000 km in length. By 1985, the Central Asia-Center had become a multi-line system of main gas pipelines and gas outlets with an annual capacity of 80 billion m^3 (KazTransGas, n.d.). If we were to judge the dynamics of gas transport infrastructure development in the Central Asian region, the most appropriate indicators are the length of main gas pipelines, their technical condition, capacity, innovations in the gas pumping unit, as well as ways of diversification.

Beside oil and gas, Kazakhstan also has significant coal reserves as mentioned above. Kazakh mines are located in the Karaganda region and are one of the largest minerals in the region. Kazakhstan uses coal for electricity and heating. According to the IEA, Kazakhstan produces coking coal, patent coal, coke oven coke, lignite, and coal tar. For example, Kazakhstan produced 15,468 Ktoe (kiloton) of coking coal and exported about 11,331 Ktoe in 2016, while imports amounted to about 512 Ktoe in the same year. Kazakhstan has generated electricity on coal at about 70570 GWh by 2016 (IEA, 2019). It exports coal to Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Georgia, and especially to meet the needs of some regions imports (Nikolsky, 2018).

In regard to renewable energy sources, Green Energy Concept adopted in 2013 is the main legally action of Kazakhstan. This concept is long-term strategic planning and political support for several renewable energy sources; hydraulic plant power, wind and solar targets in the electricity sector. The Green Energy Concept began as part of the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy: A New Political Course of the Established State which sets clear guidelines for building a sustainable and effective economic model based on the country's transition to the green development path. This strategy plans rational use of natural resources large-scale introduction of new renewables and energy-saving technologies in the period 2020-2030. Also, in the 2030-2050 period, it plans to complete the transition to the green growth model transformation of traditional economic sectors and the development of new industries, based on renewable energy (World Bank Group vd. 2018, p. 7). Likewise, Astana International EXPO-2017, with the motto of Future Energy, is one example of implementing this policy. Kazakhstan also with the cooperation of various international organizations, including UNDP, and some European countries, are undertaking large projects to produce solar and wind energy power. Examples of these projects can be seen in the regions of Akmola (Nursultan) and Turkestan (Kazinform, 2016). Moreover, in early 2018, Kazakhstan has set its first plans and intentions for renewable energy, and in May 2018, the program has been approved by the government (Almaty Power Expo, n.d.). The government of Kazakhstan seeks to produce about one gigabyte of new solar energy and increase wind power, and this policy aims to reduce costs in terms of energy consumption and production (World Bank Group vd. 2018, p. 7).

The oil and gas industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan occupies a leading regional position, which makes it a world power of energy resources. However, just having resources is not enough, it is important to manage resources competently and efficiently by diversifying supplies in order to reduce dependence on any partner. This requires continuing a proactive multi-vector foreign policy and strengthening the international role and image of Kazakhstan. Also, due to its geographical distance from the high seas, Kazakhstan is dependent on other countries whose territories have to be used for the transit of energy resources. This requires ensuring, on the one hand, political stability along the entire transportation route, and, on the other, the availability of alternative, independent ways of transporting the extracted raw materials. In addition, Kazakhstan should continue to develop the projects of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium, the Kazakhstan-Caspian Transport System with access to Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, and gradually increase the capacity of the Turkmenistan–Kazakhstan–China Gas Pipeline. Also, the IEA predicts that almost 60% of all new generating capacity by 2040 will come from renewable energy sources, most of which will be competitive without any subsidy. In this regard, despite the rich reserves of hydrocarbons, Kazakhstan should develop renewable energy sources by attracting investment in clean energy. In this regard, Kazakhstan needs to consider the possibility of developing a state strategy for the development of renewable energy sources and provide its legal basis by adopting appropriate bills (Turgambaev vd. 2019, p. 2).

Kazakhstan's strong dependence on oil revenues, as well as foreign technology and investment in the energy sector, has turned it into a rentier state along with many OPEC members. In political economy, rent is income obtained without manuel or intellectual effort. In other words, rent refers to the revenues that a government obtaines through the sale and export of natural resources abroad. These revenues are not related to the productive activities of the domestic economy. Revenues from the sale of oil, natural gas, uranium, iron, copper, etc. are considered the most valuable examples of rent. According to Hazem Beblawi, any state that earns more than 42% of its total revenue from the export of rant materials is considered a rentier state (Beblawi, 1987). On the other hand a rentier state is financially dependent on foreign investment (Kuru, 2002, p. 55), imported technology, and foreign skilled labor, it is not uncommon to say that Kazakhstan is a rentier state. Another argument in favor of Kazakhstan being a rentier state is that the share of crude oil and related products in the country's total export is approaching 73% (ITA, 2020).

It is noteworthy that Kazakhstan is not the only rentier state in Central Asia. Turkmenistan is also a rentier state with high revenues from the extraction and export of natural gas.These two countries, as full-fledged rentier states, depend on oil and naturel gas revenues, which constitute the bulk of their annual GDP. Along with these two countries, Kyrgızstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are also considered semi-rentier states, as their economies are more dependent on imports than on exports and domestic goods.

Finally, considering the problem of ensuring the energy security of Kazakhstan in a comprehensive manner, it is important to note the immutability of its essence: ensuring multi-vector relations and uninterrupted supply of hydrocarbons. Also, the problem of Kazakhstan's energy security aggravated by the global dynamics of declining oil prices, mediated by the impact of anti-Russian sanctions, currency instabilities and a decrease in the country's total production in 2019 as well as the reduction in oil prices in 2020.

The geopolitical realities and rich energy resources of Kazakhstan, which cannot be considered a great power in terms of population, military power and economic capacity, forced it to implement a different strategy. Multi-vector foreign policy in the context of balanced policy with regional and global powers. In this context, the will to develop its national capacity in every field, to improve its regional effectiveness and to implement its independent policies has become very important. Although it is known that all these are elements of aggressive realism, it is possible to say that Kazakhstan between Russia and China geographically prefers "smart offensive realist" policies. Considering the different dimensions of these policies, the defensive realist version of the theory is used in this study. These policies are visible from the operation of oil and gas resources to pipeline construction, from investments in every field to renewable energy to developing cooperative relations with China and Russia, the EU and the USA.

Conclusion

After the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union, the potential of hydrocarbon reserves located in Central Asia has been strongly emphasized; in particular, major energy markets have identified natural resources located in this region as a possible alternatives to those located in the Middle East. Particularly in the energy sector, Central Asian countries have pursued a ‘multi-vector’ foreign policy in order to balance Russia's dominant influence.

In this regard, multiple external players have shown their interests in the region and tried to ensure their presence and control over strategic assets. In the past, players external to the region rarely focused their attention to the region; usually random and limited approaches were a common practice. Thus, it can be argued that the energy sector

in Central Asia went through different phases: the dominance of Russia; the Western interest; and the China's rise. In addition, the analyses show that the energy security policy of Central Asian countries is a collective policy, due to overwhelming commonality of conditions such as geographical and common route of transmission and access to world markets, the countries of Central Asia have pursued similar policies which have resulted in a collective and collaborative arrangements in the energy sector.

Based on the defensive realism approach, states do not seek power; they act to maintain the status quo (Battır, 2020, p. 147). Accordingly, Kazakhstan seeks to preserve its existing interests in the form of cooperation with various countries. In this regard, President Nazarbayev proposed the concept of a multi-vector foreign policy. The policy encourages constructive relations with different countries, such as Russia, EU states, US and China in the exploration, extraction and exportation of energy resources. The policy has been succesful in reducing the dependence of the country on any partner. As a result, the multi-vector foreign policy and the privatization process, which influenced each other, have had a significant impact on Kazakhstan's energy security policy. Emphasizing good relations with world powers, the country has maintained a relative balance in treaties and agreements with Russian, Western as well as Chinese energy companies. This balance is visible in the role of companies in exploration projects, as well as in the development of pipelines for energy transmission.

In addition, ensuring the security of states is the most important issue of defensive realism. As much as states care about their own security, they also care about global security and stability (Battır, 2020, p. 147). In this regard, in the framework of the defensive realism approach, Kazakhstan has tried to ensure the necessary security in its energy sector by diversifying its foreign and energy policies. Having good relationship with world powers and the investment of various international companies in its energy sector can prove this claim.

Considering that about 1/5 of its 18 million population is Russian, this energy-rich country is one of the countries with the lowest number of peoplle per square kilometer in the world with two important neighbors, namely China and Russia. This makes Kazakhastan extremely sensitive to geopolitical rivalries. Although offensive realism is an approach that explains the policies of great powers, it is possible to see the elements of this approach in the foreign policies of small states in some cases. Traces of this sensitivity can be seen in Kazakhstan's participation in alliances with Russia and China, such as the Shangai Cooperation Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union, and the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Because many factors such as creating a balance of power, security concerns, and seeking legitimacy, which are among the aims of states in alliance policies, are extremely important for Kazakhstan (Arı, 2017, pp. 296-298). In this context, as can be seen in some other minor powers, there are attitudes that can be explained by offensive realism in Kazakhstan's foreign policy, based on increasing its effectiveness on security grounds and balancing with multi-faceted policies. It is seens that the multi-vector foreign policy is a strategy preferred by other Central Asian countries. In this context, whether energy-rich or not, the former Soviet republics in the region apply common strategies in many areas, especially energy production, consumption, operation and tranportation

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