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CHINA'S CURRENT ENERGY POLICY TOWARDS THE CASPIAN REGION

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Energy is an essential material basis for human survival and development. The development of energy has enormously intensified the development of the world economy and human society. Over more than hundred years in the past, developed countries have completed their industrialization, consuming an enormous quantity of natural resources, especially energy resources, in the process. Today, some developing countries are ushering in their own era of industrialization, and an increase of energy consumption is inevitable for their economic and social development.

China is now the world's second-largest energy producer and consumer. The sustained growth

of energy supply has provided an important support for the country's economic growth and social progress, while the rapid expansion of energy consumption has created a vast scope for the global energy market. As an irreplaceable component of the world energy market, China plays an increasingly important role in maintaining global energy security.

Moreover, the industrialization of the economy in China, in combination with the rise of the middle class, has led to a rapid growth in energy consumption. As the share of industrial activity in the Chinese economy increased, the need for energy grew as well. At the same time, as industrialization raised wages, the Chinese middle class rapidly expanded. The rising prosperity of the increasingly urban population has created an additional boost in energy consumption.

As a result, Chinese energy demand rose dramatically, in particular over the past decade. Between 2001 and 2011, China's share of global energy use nearly doubled, rising from 11% to 21%. It surpassed the United States to become the world's largest energy consumer in 2010. [1]

The impact of the recent global financial crisis, as well as turmoil in many parts of the Middle East and North Africa in early 2011, have caused Beijing to further realize the importance of energy source diversification, the linkage of fiscal and monetary policy with energy policy, especially monetary policies that relate to international energy commodity trading, equity markets, and financial markets. Japan's recent nuclear crisis caused China to temporarily halt its nuclear development plans and reconsider nuclear safety issues and future nuclear development strategy. Major changes to the nuclear development strategy would most likely increase China's need for oil.

Energy security is dynamic, uncertain, and full of risk. Moreover, it is no longer one single country's issue, but is a global economic security issue. Global energy prices influence every corner of the world economy. Because of global diversity and the range of complex factors that influence global energy security, it can only be achieved via a relative balance between geopolitical power and soft power on the one hand, and hard power on the other. This implies, among other things, that a solution to China's domestic energy shortage cannot rely just on an energy usage policy in the narrow sense, as China has traditionally employed. Rather, energy security for China will require the integration of energy policy with macroeconomic policy – such as fiscal and monetary policies – and foreign policy, as well as international cooperation. [2]

The International Energy Agency (IEA) lists five “basic strategies” as essential for “import-dependent” countries to ensure energy security. The five strategies are “developing domestic resources to the maximum possible, creating strategic reserves, seeking foreign technology and investment, establishing reliable and secure oil trading channels, and making strategic investments in upstream production facilities abroad.” Historically, all nations in transition from energy import-independence to import-dependence have followed these five strategies. [3]

The strategies that China has been applied in the past few years in an attempt to secure energy supply can be summarized as follow:

1. diversifying energy resources by increasing production of natural gas and nuclear power, developing clean energy technology to generate gasoline and diesel from coal, and increasing the use of other renewable energy sources such as wind power and solar energy;
2. enhancing the existing oil and natural gas supply sources and exploring to find more new energy resource locations at the global level; diversifying import routes by reducing import dependence from the Middle East, and increasing imports from Central Asia and Russia in order to reduce transportation risk;
3. strengthening energy exploration and production (E&P) of new oil fields domestically and encouraging international cooperation in offshore oil exploration and production; and
4. increasing the number of Strategic Petroleum Reserve sites and raising mandatory stockpile requirements for major oil firms.

Though securing the supply side of energy resources is viewed as the most effective way to solve energy shortages or alleviate crises for a state-controlled economy like China, this is no easy task.

The changes in China's energy security policy over the past several decades have corresponded with China's development and changes in geopolitical power at the regional and

global levels. Strongly influenced by China's general strategy toward the outside world, China's energy security policy has been formed, developed, and transformed through several periods in the past few decades. [2, p.11]

Overall, China has developed a multidimensional and multi-pronged international energy strategy which seeks ultimately to support its rise and its integration into the global economy.

There is also evidence that China is not willing to rely solely on the promise of western integration and has developed alternative strategies. The first is that of strategic 'balancing' with resource-rich countries that have traditionally taken a more explicitly anti-western stance. A key country in this regard is Russia, which provides not only access to oil and gas resources that are significantly less vulnerable to US intervention but also geopolitical support for China's energy interests in Central Asia and, through its diplomatic support, in resource-rich 'rogue states', most notably Iran. A second strategy is that of developing an increased strategic presence and influence in the south-eastern and south-western dimensions of its foreign policy ambit, which extend from the Persian Gulf region across the Indian Ocean to South-East Asia and cover the main SLOCs for China's energy imports. Such an increase in strategic presence and influence inevitably involves a challenge to US hegemony in the region. [4]

As China becomes a major importer of oil and gas the Caspian region appears an attractive target in its search for security of petroleum supply. Until recently a passive observer of Central Asia's power plays, China has now thrust itself onto the center-stage of the region's energy geopolitics by winning several major oil and gas deals. Caspian oil may be considered a potential threat to Middle Eastern market share in the near to medium term as it could sharply reduce Asian demand for Persian Gulf products. Incremental output from Central Asia is expected to reach 2 mbd in the next ten years. The building of a pipeline to export this oil, through Iran or Afghanistan, or of a pipeline across China, could result in the bulk of Caspian oil going to Asia. [5]

The Caspian region has been undergoing radical change since the breakup of the Soviet Union. It is becoming internationalized to an extent not seen before, and a major reconfiguration of power and influence is taking place. The prospects for the exploitation of oil and gas in the region have raised the stakes of external actors.

Despite the fact that China is situated far from the Caspian region, it is concerned about stability in Central Asia because it has long borders with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and shared national minorities along these borders. Agreements on borders and demilitarization with Russia and the Central Asian states since 1996 have reduced tension between China and these states. Instead, the issue of separatism in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region of China and fear of the spread of radical Islamism have moved high on the Chinese security agenda. The presence of Uighur minorities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan creates a link between Xinjiang and these states and further to Afghanistan, where the Taliban regime is considered the main source of instability in the wider region. The Central Asian states' achievement of independence provides China with major new economic opportunities. China's increasing need for energy for its economic development causes it to look to the Caspian region for energy supply.

The Chinese government directed its oil companies to acquire interests abroad. Over the past few years, China has poured investments into Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan with two main projects: the Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline and the Turkmenistan-China gas pipeline (also known as Central Asia-China gas pipeline).

China began its full energy policy toward the Caspian region in the late 1990s. In 1997, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) signed a deal with the Kazakhstan government for buying 60% in AktobeMunayGas. One of the Chinese successes in Kazakhstan was signing a contract with the Kazakhstan for taking over the PetroKazakhstan (Petrokaz), an international petroleum company that registered in Canada. [6]

The Kazakhstan-Chinese oil pipeline Atasu-Alashankou was opened in December 2005. After the construction of this pipeline China began a negotiation with other Central Asian countries for the additional pipelines and suggested "Atasu-Alashankou pipeline will only be the first among many Central Asia-China pipelines". Following this, in 2006, China claimed its interest for the

construction of a natural gas pipeline from Kazakhstan parallel to Atasu-Alashankou oil pipeline. For linking China to the Caspian fields of Kazakhstan, in August 2007, CNPC signed a contract with KazMunaiGaz for extending the Atasu-Alashankou oil pipeline 700 km westward. With construction of the Kenkiyak-Kumkol section the main energy transportation infrastructure between two countries Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline was put into operation in July 2009 with the capacity of 20 million tonnes per year. [7]

Beijing decided to realize the idea of "Kazakhstan-China" pipeline for several reasons:

1. oil production in Kazakhstan increased, diminishing PRC's concerns about the pipeline filling; oil production increased more than twice between 1997 and 2004; it is predicted, that output expansion will be increased to 3,6 mln bpd at the end of 2015;

2. comparing to 2004, when the price doubled, in 1999 oil costed \$19. A new price made the project more valuable from the economic point of view.

3. unstable position of Moscow concerning the pipelining from Russia to China had also induced China to revalue the meaning of Kazakhstan-China pipeline. [8]

Energy cooperation between China and Turkmenistan also began at the last decade of the twentieth century. In 1992, CNPC and Mitsubishi came with a proposal for exporting Turkmenistan gas to China. With joining of Exxon in 1995, these companies agreed for a feasibility study and completed it in 1996. China signed a contract with the Turkmenistan for completion of Turkmenistan-China gas pipeline during the visit of Turkmenistan President Sapirmurad Niyazov to China in April 2006. The Turkmenistan-China pipeline consist of two pipelines, the first one opened in December 2009 is 1,833 km that begins from Turkmenistan to Xinjiang province of China, passing through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. From there on, it connects to the domestic pipeline network of China that travels 7,000 km. [9]

China also conducts various energy deals with Uzbekistan. During the visit of of Hu Jintao to Uzbekistan in 2004, the CNPC signed an agreement for oil and gas cooperation with Uzbekistan National Holding Company, Uzbekneftegaz. According to the oil and gas agreement between these two countries that signed before, Chinese energy companies began to refine oil and gas in Uzbekistan energy fields, where they posses preferential access to wells while drilling is complete. [10]

The energy cooperation of China with Iran also plays a crucial role in China's energy policy toward the Caspian region due to the geographical location of Iran, which has a direct border with both the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf. Cooperation with Iran viewed as strategically for countering the US supported Arab countries in order to preserve its energy interests in Persian Gulf. China is also interested in to construct pipelines, railways, and roads, which will link China directly to Iran and allow it to import oil and gas resources of Iran via secured transportation infrastructure in case of any conflict in Persian Gulf.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that China will increase its economic presence in Central Asia, actively participating in the development of transport and trade infrastructure in the region. At the current pace of economic cooperation, China has a real chance to become a dominant actor in the region. Importance of Central Asia to China will increase as the transcontinental auto corridor "Europe - China" railway crossing between Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran pipeline routes "Central Asia - China" will be completed, and also because of the potential creation of "Middle East - China" energy corridor through Central Asia.

As China's sustained deficit in the hydrocarbon raw materials will only increase, it is clear that the increase in energy imports will occur due to deliveries from our region. It is beneficial for Central Asia from an economic point of view because of a several reasons: 1) income from the transit of hydrocarbons; 2) diversification of routes of oil and gas transportation, reducing the dependence on routes to the West; 3) changes in the composition of foreign participants in the Caspian Sea and, therefore, reducing dependence on foreign companies.

The Caspian region has a special geopolitical position on the map in the center of Eurasia and as part of the world's biggest trade route. That is why it is becoming significant in the global relations. The Caspian region probably contains some of the largest undeveloped oil and gas

reserves in the world. Because of the rising instability of the Middle East energy supplies, the Caspian Basin has come into prominence as an alternative for the world's growing energy consumers.

Today the Caspian region rich in oil and gas reserves - one of the key components of modern energy policies. On the one hand, the Caspian states are showing increasing interest in diversifying export routes. On the other, China is a main importer of hydrocarbon resources and is becoming a much more active player in the Caspian energy market. China's substantial investments in oil and gas pipeline infrastructure linking it to its energy-rich neighbors, most notably Russia and the Central Asian states, have inevitably extended its geopolitical reach and influence.

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ОРТАЛЫҚ АЗИЯДА СУ ҚОРЛАРЫН БАСҚАРУДЫҢ САЯСИ- ЭКОНОМИКАЛЫҚ АСПЕКТІЛЕРІ

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Орталық Азияда айтарлықтай қақтығыстық потенциал су-энергетикалық қорларды қолдану мен басқару аясында жиналуда. Қызығушылықтардың қарама-қайшылығы территориялық орналасуларының трансшекаралық шарттарына сай, аймақ мемлекеттерінің су-энергетикалық қорларды пайдаланудағы әртүрлі бағыттағы көзқарастарымен түсіндіріледі.

Аталған қорларды біріккен мемлекетаралық пайдалану – өте күрделі үрдіс. Бұл өзара жол беру, ымыраға келу, сонымен бірге нақты жағдайларды қабылдау мен ұстануды талап етеді. Дегенмен, келісімге келу әрдайым жүзеге аспайды және де кейбір мемлекеттер су қорларын пайдалануда біржақты шараларға жүгінеді, бұл өз кезегінде аймақтың қалған елдеріне жағымсыз жағдайлар туғызады.

Осыған байланысты су-энергетикалық реттеудің келісілген әрі балансталған аймақтық механизмін құрастыру – Қазақстан Республикасының сыртқы саясатының орталық азиялық