

THE RUSSIAN AND CHINESE PETROPOLITICS IN THE CENTRAL ASIA

Burcu SUNAR¹ Yavuz CANKARA²

¹ *Istanbul University, the School of Economics, Department of Political Science and International Relations*

² *Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Public Administration*

Abstract: Relations between the Russian Federation and People's Republic of China, the two most important powers of the Central Asia, have gone through ups and downs historically. While China, the sleeping giant, has begun to revive since the 2000s, Russia has set its priority as becoming a great power under the presidency of Vladimir Putin. Hence, these actors of middle scale have no longer remained indifferent to each other in developing a policy against the USA, a great power, and defining energy policies of their own. Although they share the rival status and pursue similar objectives in the same geography, viewing the USA as a threat to their own securities, they solved the disputes between them at first and then opted for increasing mutual cooperation around the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Although each observes the growth of the other carefully, the USA's deploy of military bases in the Central Asia after the September 11 and possibility of staying permanently in the region urged these states to act on the same side.

Key Words: Petropolitics, Russian Federation, People's Republic of China, USA, Central Asia

INTRODUCTION

Petropolitics is a set of policies which instrumentalize energy resources in order to exert political and economic influence in international politics. These policies involve the ownership of lands with raw materials, production of technological infrastructure necessary for transforming these raw materials into energy and making their trade, and attempts for struggling over controlling pipelines needed for this trade and other systems of transmission. This policy of extracting political and economical advantages from the struggle is called petropolitics. To put it another way, the

geopolitics of hydrocarbon energy sources such as oil and natural gas is a part of geopolitics¹.

- 1 For a comprehensive analysis on struggle for energy resources, see Daniel Yergin, **Petrol: Para ve Güç Çatışmasının Epik Öyküsü**, İstanbul, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2007; Michael T. Klare, **Kaynak Savaşları: Küresel Çatışmanın Yeni Alanları**, İstanbul, Devim Yayıncılık, 2005; Suat Parlak, **Barbarlığın Kaynağı**, İstanbul, Anka Yayınları, 2003; Ahmet Öztürk, "Bir Çatışma Alanı Olarak Enerji ve Küresel Enerji Politikaları", **Dünya Çatışmaları**, Kemal İnat, Burhanettin Duran, Muhittin Ataman (Ed.), Ankara, Nobel Yayın Dağıtım, 2010, pp. 665-701; Gökhan Ürün, "*Petrol Piyasalarının Yapısı, Petrolün Etkileşim Ağları ve Petrol Şirketleri Arasındaki Rekabet Ortamı*", **Avrasya Dosyası Enerji Özel**, Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring



Geopolitics supports that geography is the most persistent component of the world politics and a construction of political geography is impossible without considering physical geography. Geography defines the actors in international relations and sphere of their trumps (Tezkan and Taşar, 2002: 12). In this case, natural resources within a certain geography are a natural trump. The pipelines constructed by the actor in order to strengthen its hand including where to and not to come them through, alliances formed and broken in order to build up and provide security are all part of pipeline geopolitics².

In this study, the struggle between Russia and China in energy-rich Central Asia will be mentioned and the way these two powers geostrategically position each other will be discussed. This study argues that although these two giant powers of

Asia are rivals to each other in the long run, they are a part of an indispensable strategic partnership in the short and medium run.

ENERGY-RICH CENTRAL ASIA

Having rich oil and natural gas resources, Central Asia stands as one of the main geographical areas of struggle for energy. It has begun to gain popularity as an energy rich region since the late 19th century. At this time, almost half of the world oil resources has begun to be extracted around the city of Baku and the city acquired the title “capital of oil” (Pala, 2001-2002: 232). Today as well, the countries surrounding the Caspian Sea and named as Caspian Quartet, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, are the main energy producer countries in the region. Iran bordering to Caspian and Russia the biggest political and economic power of the region has relatively less oil reserves in the Caspian. However, as far as Central Asia and the struggle for energy is concerned, the prominent countries are as follows: Caspian Quartet, Russia, Iran, and Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan with minor roles, and the southern countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and India and definitely the Asian giant China (Pala, 2003: 14-15).

In order to objectify the struggle for energy resources in Central Asia, it is important to look at the energy reserves, production and consumption levels in the regional and global level. According to the British Petroleum (BP) 2007 statistics, the region having the most oil reserve proven in the world is the Middle East (61%), while Europe and Eurasia rank the second (11%). At the bottom of the list, as it will be explained later, there are the main actors in the struggle of influence for

2003, pp. 94-132.

- 2 In this study, the struggle of petropolitics is focused on, yet, there is also a literature criticizing this struggle especially calling attention to the consequences of it for environment. Although it will not be mentioned in the article, for the examples of this literature, see John Barkdull, “Why Environmental Ethics Matters to International Relations”, **Current History**, Vol. 99, No. 640, December 2000; Miwao Matsumoto, “*The Uncertain but Crucial Relationship between a ‘New Energy’ Technology and Global Environmental Problems: The Complex Case of the ‘Sunshine’ Project*”, **Social Studies of Science**, Vol. 35, No. 4, August 2005; Paul C. Westcott, “*Ethanol Expansion in the United States: How Will the Agricultural Sector Adjust?*”, **United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service**, May 2007. (Online) <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/FDS/2007/05May/FDS07D01/fds07D01.pdf>; Sonja Boehmer-Christiansen, “*Science, Equity, and the War Against Carbon*”, **Science, Technology and Human Values**, Vol. 28, No. 1, Winter 2003, pp. 69-92.

oil such as North America including the USA (5%) and Asia-Pacific including the China (3%). Considering oil production percentages, while the Middle East emerges as the biggest producing power, Europe-Eurasia comes (22%) in the second rank, North America (16%) in the third rank, Africa (12%) in the fourth rank, Asia-Pacific (9%) in the fifth rank and South and Central America (8%) in the last rank. The consumption data, however, is the main data which explains the struggle for energy. Considering oil consumption, Asia-Pacific comes first (30%), while North America comes second (28%), Europe-Eurasia comes third (24%) and the Middle East comes fourth (7%) (BP Statistical Review of World Energy, 2008). Examining the proven oil reserve data of the BP in 2012, it is possible to view the progress made on the said percentages. The Middle East region still preserves its first place with 48.4%. Europe and Asia falling down the 10 percentage (8.4%), North America reaches 13.2 % during this time (BP Statistical Review of World Energy, 2013).

Focusing on the reports of different years prepared by the same institution provides a fertile ground to make sense of energy policies of the said countries.

Before touching upon the struggle for energy and pipelines between Russia and China, when considering only the findings revealed by this picture, it is seen that one of the first outstanding points is the imbalance between consumption and reserve and production rates. The biggest consumers in both their own regions and world-wide, the USA (23%) and China (9%), are not able to recompense what they consumed as neither reserves nor production. The reserve rate for the

USA is 2.5%, while China's reserve rate is 1%. While the USA supplies only 8 % of the world oil production, China is able to supply 4%. Russia holding the 6% of the proven world oil reserves and producing the 12% of the world production, consumes only 3.5% of the world reserve alone (BP Statistical Review of World Energy, 2008). Adding the Russia's influence in the Central Asia to this picture, it is possible to argue that Russia is in a more advantageous position compared to the China and the USA, the two countries which leads in oil consumption.

Russia has an indisputable superiority on natural gas as well. In terms of natural gas reserves, the Middle East holding the biggest share (41%) is followed by Europe-Eurasia (33%), Asia-Pacific (8%) and North America (4%). In production, Europe-Eurasia comes first with 36%, the North America second with 26%, and Asia-Pacific third with 13%. In consumption, Europe-Eurasia (39%) comes first, the North America (27%) the second, and Asia-Pacific (15%) the third. On a state basis evaluation, while the country having the most reserve is Russia (25%), the USA's reserve is 3.5 % and China's reserve is 1%. In production, while Russia comes first with 20% and the USA comes second with 18%, China appears as a natural gas-poor country with only 2%. The biggest consumers are the USA (22%) and Russia (15%) whereas China's consumption does not go beyond 2 % by the year 2008 (BP Statistical Review of World Energy, 2008). However, when it comes to 2011, Chinese consumption reaches around 3.5 % (BP Statistical Review of World Energy, 2011). In 2012 the biggest consumers are the USA (19.8%) and China (11.7%). Chinese growth rate shows its influence here statistically.



Russian consumption, on the other hand, goes back to 3.6 %. This picture demonstrates that the USA and Russia are in rivalry concerning natural gas and China begins to take part as a new actor in energy markets. This picture also reveals that natural gas, which is deemed to be a transition from oil to renewable energy, is an important part of social life and economy in the USA and Russia.

At this point, it is worth of mentioning shale gas as a petroleum-derived energy source. Investigations on shale gas have begun in the USA at first. While 8.5 billion m³ shale gas was produced in the USA in 1996, this amount went beyond 31 billion m³ in 2006. In other words, 5.9% of the USA's total gas production was extracted from shale gas. In 2005 the USA's shale gas production rate constituted 4% of the total gas production and it reached 25% currently. In 2012 May gas prices dropped 2 \$/MMB and seasonal prices changed between 2.0 and 2.8 \$/MMB. In the USA it was calculated that the producible shale gas reserve is around 24 Tcm and there is no need to import gas from outside for approximately 100-150 years (Filoğlu, 2013). In the long run, it is estimated that the USA will meet its own needs for energy and its dependence on external resources will terminate.

Only the reserve, production and consumption amounts are not able to explain the dynamics of the energy struggle in the Central Asia. Internal problems, political relations with other states, the geopolitical assumption of states inside and outside of the region, the issues such as how and in which ways energy sources should be transported are significant components which are

to be explained in order to draw a wider picture of the regional struggle³. It is quite difficult to develop a policy over the Central Asia due the fact that it provides a ground for interstate conflicts on the basis of energy reserves and quite often ethnic reasons, the great powers' claims for gaining influence in the region and religious radicalization (Tang, 2000: 360).

Therefore, in this study, it will be approached to petropolitics of Russia and China, the two countries which are in a position of obligatory proximity in the Central Asia, in a way to create an integrated portrait as far as possible.

RUSSIA AND CHINA FROM THE COLD WAR TO THE 1990S

Although they were within the same ideological camp in the Cold War, beginning from the 1950s, relations began to get tensed up between Beijing under the leadership of Mao Zedung deviating from the Marxist-Leninist line and Moscow, the camp leader. The main underlying reasons of the tension include the Chinese desire to follow a different path from Moscow in order to reach the Communist cause due to the different circumstances of each country; the rise of Mao as a charismatic leader and his actions contrary to the unity of the Camp and territorial disagreements between the two. China also tended to view Russia as a rule corrupting and exploiting

³ In order to appreciate the significance of the region, it is useful to remember the term "heartland" H. John Mackinder proposes for Eurasia meaning the key area to dominate the world. For the "heartland theory" of Mackinder, see H. J. Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History", *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 4, April 1904, pp. 421-437.

its society since the 19th century (Best, et. al., 2008: 336-338).

Bilateral relations of these countries had a chance to improve in the 1980s. After Mao's death in 1976, although China started to seek an alliance with the USA and cancelled the Friendship Agreement of 1950 with the Soviet Russia, Mikhail Gorbachev's reform policies changed this picture in a great extent. Gorbachev's coming to power as the General Secretary in 1985 paved the way for a revision of strategic evaluations in both countries. The dissolution of the Communist regime in Russia terminated discussions on leadership and different paths in socialism. Gorbachev's policies of "glasnost" (openness) and "perestroika" (reconstruction) changing the fate of the USSR became a turning point in Chinese-Russian relations (Menon, 2002: 96-97).

"Partnership strategy" between the two countries has begun to take shape at this stage. The dissolution of the Soviet Russia and emergence of the independent states in the Central Asia has changed the dynamics of the struggles for influence in this region. The states which were controlled by the Soviet Russia before the dissolution could not manage to form a strong and stable structure neither economically nor politically. Under these circumstances they have begun to rely in Russia and in China as a balancing power against Russia. Hence, after the end of the Cold War, Russia and China have continued to be important centers in the Central Asia. However, while the influence of the Soviet Russia was more dominant in the region during the Cold War, China has begun to shine out since the 1990s (Çolakoğlu, 2006: 38).

Nevertheless, this situation does not imply that Russia and China are two great rivals following opposite policies. As it will be discussed later, Russia and China have adverse interests which might prevent a harmonious relationship to develop between them in both short and long run. From the dissolution of the USSR in 1991 to the time they opened the way for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 1996, they tried to understand the new regional dynamics and adapt new circumstances avoiding taking radical steps (Çolakoğlu, 2004: 174). However, since the mid-1990s, beyond repairing the bilateral relations, Russia and China formed a "strategic partnership" and took significant steps in this regard (Wishnick, 2001: 797). Since this date, stability and security have become key concepts in the East Asia (Rangsimaporn, 2006: 477). For instance, the problem of territorial boundaries, one of the most troublesome issues, was resolved through agreements signed on May 1991 and September 1994, except several minor places. Thus, 98% of the total boundary length was defined and this issue was resolved at a great extent (Matyaev, 2004: 34).

The strategic partnership formed between Russia and China was essentially shaped by three factors. These factors are NATO's opening to the east, strengthening of the security alliance between the USA and Japan, and the uneasiness felt by Russia and China because of the unipolar world led by the USA (Tang, 2000: 361). Examining in a more detailed way, there are different types of motivation at different level of importance and urgency concerning the Russian and Chinese interest in the Central Asia. Getting an opportunity to diminish the number of soldiers being put in their own



boundaries through this new form of relationship, Russia and China acquired the potential to prevent possible security risks of the Central Asia beyond their borders (Somuncuoğlu, 2006: 18). Therefore, Russia could develop cooperative relations with the newly formed independent Turkic states and China regarding the issue of security on a common ground (Davutoğlu, 2001: 474).

RUSSIA AND CHINA'S ENERGY INTERESTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

China's Central Asian policies have necessarily a security dimension due to its minority and border problems. Particularly, China's one of the main concerns is that Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Region, also known as East Turkestan, may be affected by ethno-religious nationalisms in Central Asia. The presence of more than 40% of the oil, natural gas and other natural resources in the regions where minorities inhabit indicates that such an issue is also related to energy and therefore has an economic dimension. China has border disputes that have been newly resolved in an atmosphere of cooperation with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and also with Kazakhstan whose potential and proved oil reserves are at the most (Çolakoğlu, 2006: 39-41). Russia and China have been in competition with each other for a long time concerning the control over East Turkestan. East Turkestan region constituting one-sixth of Chinese territory is of vital importance for Beijing's security as well as for China's modernization plans due to its natural resources (Harris, 1993: 111).

On the other hand, it is often expressed that, China, a permanent member of the UN Security Council which also aims to become a main actor in the international organizations such as IMF, World

Bank and World Trade Organization (Sutter, 2002: 16) is a gradually growing economic actor and has the opportunity to control the USA economy through its investments there as a result of the USA's trade deficit against China. However, China draws a portrait of being almost entirely dependent on foreign energy resources despite its growing performance in the world economy in which the energy is a vital instrument (Lacoste, 2007: 179). One of the main parameters that need to be taken into account is this energy dependency of China in order to understand its interests in Central Asia. It is anticipated that China's oil imports are to be 60% in 2010 and 82% in 2023. China has no choice other than Middle East, Caspian and Russia in order to realize its energy import. At this point, China wants to diversify alternatives without being entirely dependent on none of these resources and seek for rapprochement with Central Asian countries and make bilateral energy agreements. Moreover, major part of China's investments in Central Asia is in energy sector. Its imported goods considering the trade with Central Asia are energy-related products as well (Çolakoğlu, 2006: 48-51).

Considering Russia, by putting aside China temporarily, Russia has started to pursue a different foreign policy doctrine in Vladimir Putin era. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia gave priority to the West rather than Central Asia and considered that the states that were formerly under the sovereignty of Federation would still be loyal to Moscow politically and economically. Russia began to give importance to integration policy only after 1993. Although Boris Yeltsin made revisions to domestic and foreign policy as a result of Russia's being at the

brink of disintegration due to its indifference to Central Asia, drastic changes were made in only 2000s after Putin came to power. Putin regarded Central Asia as one of the foreign policy priorities of Russia on the grounds that there is the necessity of cooperation with regard to the issues such as the fight against international terrorism and drugs, common security and trade as well as the protection of Russian population living in Central Asian states. However, one of the most fundamental issues for Russia is the governance of energy resources in Central Asian states. Central Asia became important for its energy resources particularly during Putin era although it was considered to be a site of agriculture during Soviet Union. Russia intervened in the region claiming that it is in the Russia's sphere of influence (Kamalov, 2008: 119-131).

Putin did not neglect tracking the taxes of private companies in order to solve the problem of transferring income generated through oil to American banks and to abroad which is considered as a matter of domestic policy as well as the main obstacle before oil production and export that may turn Russia into a great actor (Lacoste, 2007: 156). Putin's Russia pursued a foreign policy based on the principles of realpolitik, national security, military power and geostrategy. The objectives of the policy with regard to Far East are stability, border security and cooperation. In this regard, the strategic partnership with China would be developed, the relations with Japan would be strengthened, and rapprochement with South and North Korea that was neglected for a long time would be built again (Çolakoğlu, 2004: 177). The reasons behind such rapprochement attempts are Russia's deficiencies in the

economic and military areas that hinder Russia's pursuing an independent foreign policy in the region as well as the instabilities created by newly independent states in the Central Asia and their vulnerability against the external actors, the concerns due to radical religious movements and the risk of being under economic and political influence of the USA given the fragility of the region (Çolakoğlu, 2004: 180). Because of all these reasons, China would become the biggest partner of Russia in the Central Asia beginning from Putin's era.

The cooperation among China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan that was established in 1996 and called as the "Shanghai Five" was the most important step considering such an issue. The five states decided to hold regular meetings in order to deliver and exchange ideas for fighting against terrorism, separatism, religious extremism and illegal trade as well as for the economic development of the region (Lacoste, 2007: 183). Russia and China put an emphasis on strategic partnership in the multiple meetings and bilateral talks occurred in the subsequent years. Russia and China supported each other against NATO's threatening expansion policy towards the eastward concerning Russia, the Taiwan Strait crisis between the USA and China and the attempts of the USA for blocking China's efforts to be a member of World Trade Organization. They developed common policies with regard to the USA intervention in Iraq, NATO's intervention in Kosovo and Missile Defense Systems. From the mid-1990s, China and Russia opposed the interference of the USA in internal affairs by using the discourse of human rights. China supported Russia regarding Chechen problem and Russia



supported China considering Taiwan problem. In 2000, the two states objected to the development of national missile system by the USA on the grounds that this may result in the creation of unipolar military power that threatens their security (Wishnick, 2001: 800-801).

In 2001, the “Shanghai Five” took the name of “Shanghai Cooperation Organization”. Beginning from this date, the organization started to state its mission more clearly. The objection to the existence of a unipolar world order, the idea indicating that human rights violations do not provide the right to intervene in internal affairs of sovereign states and the necessity of resolving disputes through multilateral talks constitute the vision of Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The organization covered Eurasian continent after accepting India, Pakistan, Iran and Mongolia as observer states in Astana Summit held in 2005 (Çolakoğlu, 2006: 45-46). Moreover, Astana Summit is important since it called the USA for evacuating its military bases in Central Asia (Adibelli, 2006: 19). On the other hand, “The Treaty for Good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation” signed in 2001 between Russia and China is of crucial importance in showing that the relations between the two states have evolved (Vnukov, 2006: 40). According to the treaty, the two states reached consensus over important issues such as acting together against the US hegemony in the region, transferring technology and the supply of energy and arms (Cohen, 2007).

In June 2005, the leaders of the two states signed the document called “China-Russian Joint Statement on 21st Century World Order” and accepted that

they have the joint responsibility for the establishment of a just world order based on international law (Rogachev, 2005: 85). During this period, 22 separate documents between the two parties were prepared in order to establish cooperation on trade, energy and finance (Gouchan, 2007: 136).

Energy resources are one of the areas for economic cooperation between Russia and China. China tries to meet oil and natural gas needs by from Central Asian countries and Russia whereas Russia wants to diversify its market alternatives. Moreover, through selling oil to China, Russia holds the opportunity to make China dependent on itself (Kamalov, 2008: 299). There are two major pipelines regarding natural gas and oil in which China involves and they need to be completed in 2009 at the earliest. One of them is Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and China natural gas pipeline and the other is Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline. Russia and China also reached an agreement in 2006 for transporting natural gas from Western and Eastern Siberia to China through two separate lines. Siberia-Pacific pipeline project aims to provide Japan and Korea which are Asia’s major powers with natural gas through export (http://www.iea.org/textbase/papers/2008/caspian_perspectives.pdf). However, it is worth stating that Russia decided to locate the Pacific part of Eastern Siberia pipeline across Japan instead of China at the expense of extending the line.

Referring to the USA policies in the region is necessary, as mentioned above, in order to understand the dynamics behind the relations between Russia and China in Central Asia, particularly with regard to the energy dimension in their relations. However, the major effective

powers are not solely in competition with each other in a passive region. It is also important to consider how Central Asian countries respond to this competition and they are affected by such conflict. The most crucial point is that these countries are not passive any more. Rather, they emerged as actors actively manipulating the conflict of interest to their advantage. In this regard, the way Central Asian countries perceive their political, economic and security interests and develop relations with major powers gains importance. It is a misleading statement that all Central Asian countries have common interests and expectations (Torbakov, 2006: 28).

The countries such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan that gained their independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union and that are rich in terms of natural resources give priority to rapid economic development and aim to become important actors in the region. The easiest way for those countries that were under the sovereignty of the Soviet Union for long years is to export energy resources that may result in an increase in their revenues and their influence in the region in order to be economically and politically active. However, the states lacking such infrastructures to achieve this have two alternatives. They either build their own infrastructures that enable them to export their energy resources through the pipelines they construct themselves or make their resources available for the bigger flow of resources in the world through the initiatives of major powers, such Russia and the USA. In this context, the states that do not want to be dependent on a single source of energy manipulate the conflict between Russia and the USA while they also seek ways to build their own pipelines. Since

energy transportation and pipelines are regarded as a source of revenue and political influence, Russia and the USA are also seeking ways to distribute energy resources through their own pipelines by concluding agreements with Central Asian countries (Kamalov, 2008: 130-131). This constitutes the actual basis for the conflict among Russia, China and the USA over energy.

CONCLUSION

China wants to become the major power in Asia. China, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, aims to become a main actor in the international organizations such as IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organization. There are many reasons that motivate Russia to cooperate with China as Russia pursues the goal of becoming a dominant power again. However this does not mean that the cooperation between the two states will absolutely sustain for many years. Russia and China are both very important actors with regard to their territorial, economic and political supremacy in a geographically significant region in international politics. Therefore, through using the lens of realist paradigm, they are in rivalry with each other. The cooperation between the two states is a result of strategic and pragmatic concerns. During Putin era, the relations with China was deepened and diversified due to Russia's initiatives. However, the cooperation is still grounded on pragmatic concerns. In 2000, Putin used the metaphor of the bird referring to Russia. He mentioned that Russia is both a European and Asiatic state and in case of Russia's missing one of its wings, it could not be able to fly. Therefore, it can be claimed that Russia gives priority to its relations with the West and



utilizes the relations with China as a stabilizing force against the West. On the other hand, such a claim may result in regarding China only as a stabilizing actor rather than a growing political actor. Moreover, whether the stable progress of the relations between Russia and China may transform their relations from a strategic partnership into an alliance is often discussed.

However, it is a fact that Russia and China have conflicting interests with regard to borders, Korea and Japan. It is possible to argue that the most serious issue resulting in rivalry between the two states is the struggle for increasing political influence in the Central Asia and the projects facilitating the opportunity to benefit from the energy resources of the region at the maximum level. Russia's cautious approach towards the economic cooperation with China and being indifferent to China's long-lasting economic initiatives in the Central Asia offer a ground for understanding Russia's cooperation with China. The reason behind this is that the current relations are much more beneficial for Russia since China is dependent on Russia in terms of military technology and energy and Russia does not want such situation to corrupt against its advantage. A strict economic cooperation with China seems to be a disadvantage for Russia since as a result of this China's dependency on Russia in terms of energy will decrease. The aim of Russia is to sustain the position of "big brother" in order to regulate the routes of pipelines that provide China with energy. Moreover, through energy diplomacy, Russia established good relations with its neighbors in Asia and created status quo that may be considered to be stable. On the other hand, China has no reason to accept such status quo that is

to Russia's advantage over the long term since China has a rapidly growing economy and its dependency on energy has increased. Considering that the alliance between China and Russia is a strategic move against the USA which aims to establish a unipolar world order and become much more involved in Central Asia, an alliance between the USA and China may have a negative impact on the Russian-Chinese relationship. On the other hand, it is likely that the USA may enter into an alliance with Japan in the Pacific. Such a situation may result in closer relations between Russia and China. In this regard, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline that excluded Russia is a major success for the USA and other Central Asian countries under the influence of the USA. The withdrawal of the USA from the region may lead to a change regarding the common concerns that brings Russia and China together since the two states have still unresolved problems.

Neither the USA nor Russia has gained a victory with regard to the rivalry over pipelines in Central Asia. Russia does not have entirely control over the Caspian oil flow and abolish the influence of the USA over the region. USA could not be able to convince the oil companies to build pipelines bypassing Russian territory, either. In this regard, it may be argued that the USA will not easily withdraw from the region and let Russia control energy resources in the Central Asia. Similarly, Russia will try to increase its power in the international system through making China dependent on Russia as well as developing partnership with China.

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ORTA ASYA'DA RUS VE ÇİN PETROPOLİTİĞİ

Özet: Orta Asya'nın en önemli iki ülkesi Rusya Federasyonu ve Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti arasındaki ilişkiler tarihsel süreçte iniş ve çıkışlar göstermiştir. Aynı ideolojik tutum ve benzer politik yapıya sahip oldukları için Soğuk Savaş döneminde birlikte hareket ederek Batı kampına karşı daha güçlü olabilecek iken, bunun yerine benimsedikleri Sosyalizmin nüans farklılıklarını ön plana çıkartarak birbirlerine soğuk davranan Çin ve Rusya, aslında o dönemde de liderlik yarışı içerisinde yer almaktaydı. İki ülkenin bu tavrı aralarındaki sorunları ötelemek istemelerinde somut bir şekilde gözlemlenmektedir. Rusya Gorbaçov ile yeniden yapılanmaya gidince, Çin ile ilişkilerde yumuşama dönemi başlamıştır. 2000'lere geldiğinde ise iki ülkenin benzer atılımlar yapmakta oldukları görülmektedir. Uyuyan dev Çin, 2000'ler itibarıyla ekonomik açıdan önemli bir sıçrayış yaşamaya başlarken, Vladimir Putin'in başkanlığında Rusya da önceliğini yeniden büyük bir güç olmaya adanmıştır. Putin döneminde Rusya, sahip olduğu enerji rezervleri sayesinde petrolün varil başına fiyatı yükseldikçe önemli bir ekonomik kazanç elde etmiştir. Bu durum orta büyüklükteki bu iki aktörün, gerek bir büyük güç olan ABD'ye karşı bir siyaset belirlemede, gerekse de ülkelerinin enerji politikalarını tayin etmede birbirlerini dikkate almalarına yol açmıştır. Her ne kadar aynı coğrafyada birbirlerine rakip olsalar ve benzer hedefler gütseler de, ABD'yi ulusal güvenliklerine bir tehdit olarak gören bu iki ülke önce kendi aralarındaki ihtilafları çözümlenmiş, daha sonra da Şangay İşbirliği Örgütü çerçevesinde karşılıklı işbirliğini artırma yolunu seçmiştir. Her iki ülke de diğerinin gelişimine ihtiyatla yaklaşırsa da, ABD'nin 11 Eylül sonrası Orta Asya'da askeri üsler açması ve bölgede kalıcı olması tehlikesi iki ülkeyi birlikte hareket etmeye zorlamıştır. Rusya ve Çin Orta Asya'da belirgin bir şekilde güçlerini arttırmaya çabalarlarken, ABD'li stratejistler ve politik bilimciler onların bu iddialı duruşlarını analiz etmeye çalışmıştır. ABD tarafından 2000'lerin ikinci yarısından itibaren hazırlanan raporlarda hem Çin'in, hem de Rusya'nın bu hızlı yükselişlerinin bir noktada duracağı ve daha fazla yükselemeyeceği öne sürülmüştür. Bu nedenle uluslararası sistemdeki tüm aktörler, bu üç taraf arasında tek bir coğrafyada yaşanan gelişmeleri ihtiyatla izlemeye başlamıştır. Bir başka doğulu güç olan Japonya, Orta Asya'dan güvenliğine yönelik tehdit algılamaktadır. Japonya'nın 1990'lardan beri ABD ile yakın temaslarının bir diğer sebebi de budur. Çin ve Rusya'nın Orta Asya'da ittifak kurmaları bölgede yer alan diğer aktörler açısından da önemlidir. Başta Kazakistan, Özbekistan ve Türkmenistan olmak üzere bölgede varlıkları yadsınmaması gereken devletler bir büyük gücün hâkimiyetinde olmaktan ziyade, kendilerine nefes alabilecekleri bir alan yaratmak istemektedir. Dolayısıyla bu devletler Rusya, Çin ya da ABD'den birisini seçmek yerine bu devletlerarasındaki çekişmeden yararlanarak kendi başarı öykülerini yaratmak istemektedirler. Sonuçta Orta Asya sahip olduğu enerji kaynakları ile aslında tüm dünyanın ihtiyacı olan enerjiyi temin etmektedir. Fosil kaynakların kıtlığı ve insan ihtiyaçlarının sonsuzluğu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, Çin ve Rusya'nın stratejik hamlelerinin neden bu kadar dikkat çektiği ve yakından izlendiği daha anlamlı olmaktadır. İnsanlar için hayati önemde olan rezervleri kimin kontrol ettiği, dolayısıyla boru hatları vanalarının kimin elinde olduğu mühim bir husustur. Bu durum söz konusu ülkelere sadece ekonomik kazanç sağlamamakta, aynı zamanda siyasal açıdan sistemde söz sahibi olmalarına yol açmaktadır. Bölgede yer alan ve yarattıkları güç nedeniyle nispeten küçük büyüklükte sayılan devletler kaynaklarını, kendilerini geliştirmede bir araç olarak görmektedirler. Rusya ise Orta Asya'dan batıya iletilen petrol ve doğalgaz hatlarını kontrol ederek hem Avrupa ülkelerine, hem de dolaylı olarak ABD'ye meydan okuyabilmektedir. Aynı şekilde Çin, sahip olduğu insan gücüne, ekonomik güç de ekleyince Orta Asya'ya girmeye çalışan ABD'ye kendisinin göz önünde bulundurulması gereken bir aktör olduğunu hatırlatabilmektedir. Bu tablo Çin, Rusya ve ABD arasında yaşanan enerji çekişmesinin nedenlerini sergilemektedir. Şangay İşbirliği Örgütü sayesinde uluslararası sorunlarda ortak bir tutum ve davranış benimseyebilir hale gelen bu iki önemli

güç, aynı zamanda BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nin de iki daimi üyesi oldukları için ABD açısından korku yaratmaktadır. ABD, gittikçe güçlenmeye başlayan bu iki devletin kontrol altında tutulmazlar ve sürekli beraber hareket ederlerse, sistemi kendi lehlerine kilitleyebilecekleri kaygısı yaşamaktadır. Ancak Rusya ve Çin'in sistemde kalıcı bir birlikteliği uzun süre korumalarını beklemek çok da gerçekçi olmamaktadır. Zira iki devlet temel sorunlarda attıkları adımlarla barış tesis etmişlerse de, her ikisi de istediklerini elde ettiklerine inandıkları zaman yegâne aktör olma iddiasına bürünebilecektir, tıpkı Soğuk Savaş zamanında beraber hareket edememeleri gibi... Dolayısıyla bu birlikteliklerinin ne zamana kadar süreceği aslında başta ABD olmak üzere bölge devletlerinin akıllarını meşgul eden en önemli sorudur. Son yıllarda ne ABD, ne Rusya, ne de Çin Orta Asya'ya ilişkin beklentilerini gerçekleştirebilmiş değildir. Bu nedenle Orta Asya'da üç önemli güç arasındaki ilişkiler daha uzun süre petropolitik üzerinden şekillenecek gibi gözükmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Petropolitik, Rusya Federasyonu, Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti, ABD, Orta Asya